

## **The presence of baron Percy and Larrey at Mont Saint Jean.** <sup>1</sup>

Nowadays, in the room of the farm of Le Caillou a tablet can be found mentioning all the officers and others who spent there the night of the 17th of June. Under them would have been the baron Percy, *chirurgien en chef* of the Armée du Nord and baron Larrey *chirurgien en chef* attached to the Imperial Guard.

Yvan, the personal surgeon of Napoleon wasn't in the Armée du Nord in 1815. Though he was the personal surgeon of the emperor since 1800, he fell in disgrace to Napoleon in 1814.

Baron Larrey was attached to the Armée du Nord; it was Larrey who took care of colonel Sourd after he got wounded on the afternoon of the 17th of June.

Larrey's presence at Le Caillou is not confirmed by other witnesses like Saint Denis, Bertrand or Marchand. Larrey must have been with the Guard; Larrey himself is not clear about the place where he spent the night. <sup>2</sup>

On the 18th of June, Larrey was ordered by Soult or Drouot to establish the central ambulance of the guard in the annexes and barns of Le Caillou. <sup>3</sup>

In the early stages of the battle, while not having a lot to do yet, Larrey must have been in the surrounding of Napoleon, but Larrey himself is not very clear about that. <sup>4</sup>

On the night of the 18th Larrey was instructed by one of the aide de camps of Napoleon to leave the battlefield, which he accordingly did. During this retreat he fell into enemy's hands.

Though baron Percy was in the Armée du Nord, it remains a mystery whether he spent the night of the 17th of June at Le Caillou. Since 1811 he didn't take parts in any campaign because of his bad health.

Percy was in variance with Larrey in 1815 as Larrey felt he was passed over by the nomination of Percy as *chirurgien en chef* of the Armée du Nord.

The mutual irritation must have existed for much longer and this was stimulated by the fact that Larrey could be very impatient and hot-tempered.

Often Percy was further in the rear to organize hospitals in the second and third echelon and to organise evacuations. This must also have been the case at Waterloo. It was probably at Ligny or Charleroi that Percy learned about the defeat at Waterloo.

Revised: 17th December 2010 - Copyright © Pierre de Wit

1. Evrard, E. Le service de santé français à la bataille de Waterloo. In: Revue Belge d'histoire militaire. XXV, december 1984, nr.8. pp.653-665.
2. Larrey, D. Relation médicale de campagnes et voyages de 1815 à 1840. Paris, 1844. p.6
3. Cf. P.Triaire, in: Le Baron Larrey Dominique et les campagnes de la révolution et de l'empire 1768-1842
4. According to Triaire, Larrey had one of his posts near La Belle Alliance