

## **The retreat of Wellington's army from other points than Quatre Bras.**

Introduction.

From the times of departure and arrival it can be concluded that those forces which pulled back over the road which leads from Nivelles towards Mont Saint Jean most probably did so in the following sequence: the division of Chassé, the division of Collaert (except for the brigade of Van Merlen) and the division of Clinton, to which was attached the brigade of Mitchell (4<sup>th</sup> British division), which followed in its wake.<sup>1</sup>

The army of the Netherlands.

After Wellington had issued his preparatory orders for the retreat from Quatre Bras around 8 a.m., Constant Rebecque left from there for Nivelles to carry those for Chassé and Collaert. He was then most probably accompanied by major Van Gorkum.

After they had got at Nivelles, they probably handed these orders to both these divisions by 10 or 10.30 a.m. At the same time, they were instructed to take care that general headquarters of the army of the Netherlands was to retire from Braine le Comte through Nivelles safely towards Espinette, between Waterloo and Brussels. For that reason they had to establish Trip's brigade of heavy cavalry, as well as a battery of horse artillery south of Nivelles, on the road towards Roeulx.

It was towards 12.30 or 1 p.m. that Constant Rebecque, now accompanied by both major Van Gorkum and captain Heinecken, left from Nivelles for Quatre Bras.<sup>2</sup> However, it was at Thisnes that they were informed that Wellington was evacuating the crossroads. After that they continued their way through Fontenet and Vieux Genappe to Genappe, which they reached just before the confrontation with the French cavalry would take place.<sup>3</sup>

Of Chassé's division, the brigade of d'Aubremé had a position north of Nivelles; three companies of 12<sup>th</sup> battalion of the line were in advanced posts, while the brigade of colonel Detmers was at Arquennes.

In the very early hours of the 17<sup>th</sup> of June, Chassé ordered Detmers to place the 19<sup>th</sup> battalion of national militia on the road Petit Reux les Nivelles - Nivelles; this order was carried out at daybreak.<sup>4</sup>

At 11 a.m., Chassé got the order from Constant Rebecque at Nivelles to assemble his division and march to the position of Mont Saint Jean. At 9 a.m. Constant Rebecque himself had ridden to Nivelles to move up the 3<sup>rd</sup> division as well as the cavalry of the army of the Netherlands.<sup>5</sup>

Shortly after, colonel Detmers got the instruction to collect his brigade and link up with the other brigade of the 3<sup>rd</sup> division of the Netherlands, of d'Aubremé.<sup>6</sup> This was accordingly done north of Nivelles, on the road leading to Lillois, as the brigade of d'Aubremé was north of the town.<sup>7</sup> The departure of the division as well as its march was extremely difficult because of the heat and the presence of all kinds of units and baggage of Alten's division and numerous wounded which had come from the field of Quatre Bras.<sup>8</sup>

The road which connected Nivelles to Mont Saint Jean (over 11.5 kilometres) started at the Porte de Bruxelles, led along the Cense Petit Bateurs (to the left), the Cense de La Poste (to the left), the Cabaret Bethlehem (to the left), l'Espinette (to the left), along the hamlets of Witterzé (to the left) and Lillois (to the left), the Bois de Neuve Cour (to the right), the Chateau de Mon Plaisir (to the right), the Chateau de Gomont (to the right) towards Mont Saint Jean. In all probability, the stretch of the road between Nivelles and Witterzé was lined with trees.

Due to the heat and the dust the march was slow and heavy. The result was a high number of

stragglers, but the officers did their best to have them join the column.<sup>9</sup> The division of Chassé most probably arrived near Braine l'Alleud between 3 and 4 p.m.<sup>10</sup>

It was Constant Rebecque who gave Collaert his instructions around 11 a.m. These were to go back to the position of Mont Saint Jean through Nivelles, while leaving one squadron at Nivelles in order to protect the retreat of the corps' headquarters baggage train. The cavalry left not long after.<sup>11</sup> In the end, the unit to cover the baggage train was a company of the 4<sup>th</sup> regiment of light dragoons, led by captain Koltrop.<sup>12</sup>

It was around daybreak that the 4<sup>th</sup> regiment of light dragoons had already sent out two squadrons, to which were attached two guns and one battalion of infantry, to keep open the entrance to Nivelles but from its position in front of it, it hadn't been able to observe this entrance.<sup>13</sup>

Before Collaert reached Nivelles, reports dropped in about French cavalry approaching from Hautain le Val. Accordingly, Collaert ordered 1<sup>st</sup> lieutenant-paymaster Van Uchelen and the 1st squadron of the 4<sup>th</sup> regiment of light dragoons to put themselves east of Nivelles to cover the retreat. At the same time, Collaert moved his remaining forces through Nivelles towards Mont Saint Jean. Eventually, the French didn't pose any threat as they moved to the south, but the one squadron reunited with the other regiments later that evening. Before it did so, however, it was charged by some French hussars patrolling somewhere between Arquennes and Nivelles. In this confrontation, 1st lieutenant-paymaster Van Uchelen and a few dragoons were taken prisoner and led to Charleroi.<sup>14</sup>

Clinton's division.

From about 1.30 a.m. onwards, the division of Clinton had its bivouacs between Braine le Comte and Henripont (which is east of the Bois de la Houssière). At Braine le Comte general Clinton found the order for his division to march through to Nivelles. Due to the scattered state of the division, the extreme bad condition of the roads, the fatigue of the troops and the crowded roads (baggage and other troops), it was at dawn that the vanguard of the 2<sup>nd</sup> division left from his positions between Braine le Comte and Henripont for Nivelles.<sup>15</sup> The troops were drenched by the heavy rain which had fallen during the night.<sup>16</sup>

It was around 7 a.m. on the 17<sup>th</sup> of June that they reached Nivelles.<sup>17</sup> It was here that Clinton found the order to proceed immediately towards Quatre Bras, and he complied with it right away, but the order was countermanded by the order to halt, which at least part of the division did at about 4500 metres east of Nivelles.<sup>18</sup> By then it was 9 a.m. The troops started to make a meal, when they were ordered to go back to Nivelles, and from there to move towards Mont Saint Jean. By that time, it was probably late in the morning.

It is ensign Leeke who gives a vivid account of the march of his battalion, the 1st battalion of the 52<sup>nd</sup> regiment towards the position of Mont saint Jean.<sup>19</sup>

It was around 7 a.m. that the battalion had reached a bivouac in an orchard near Nivelles and used a breakfast.<sup>20</sup> The march was resumed around noon over the road leading towards Waterloo.

Shortly after its departure, the battalion met several units of British cavalry and artillery, which went through the fields along the road. The road itself was used by the infantry. Despite this situation the march was slow due to the fatigue of the troops.<sup>21</sup>

About halfway Nivelles and the position of Mont Saint Jean, the battalion (and probably the whole division) halted for more than two hours in a field about 200 metres to the left of the road. Meanwhile, carts full of wounded were on the move over the road towards Brussels.

Despite the halt, the division suffered from a high number of stragglers; accordingly, five

officers were sent out to get them back.

It was near Lillois, that in the distance, near Maison du Roi and Rossomme, French troops could be seen. This was the vanguard of Napoleon's troops heading forward over the Brussels road.

The 1<sup>st</sup> battalion of the 52<sup>nd</sup> regiment now halted and got the instruction to load its muskets, while being in open column of companies. French cavalry patrols approached up to 200 metres, but the troops continued their march unmolested. By then, it was around 6 p.m.

North of Gomont, the first unit(s) turned right on the lane leading to the complex. However, shortly after they returned, and resumed their march towards the position of Mont Saint Jean.

There is no clear reason for this situation, but the most probable one is a miscommunication about the destination. Adam's brigade was preceded by those of Hew Halkett and Duplat. These units probably arrived in the position between 5 and 6 p.m.<sup>22</sup> Adam's brigade joined them probably around 7 p.m.<sup>23</sup>

Colville's division.

Of Colville's division the brigade of Mitchell was on the night of the 16<sup>th</sup> of June between Braine le Comte and Nivelles, and the remainder of the division was near and in Braine le Comte. General Colville rode to Nivelles and it was here that he learned from Lord Hill that the army was supposed to fall back towards the position of Mont Saint Jean.<sup>24</sup>

While the other two brigades (those of Lyon and Johnstone) had marched to and halted at and around Braine le Comte, the brigade of Mitchell had to march off at 10 a.m. From now on it was temporarily attached to the 2nd division.<sup>25</sup>

While the other two brigades were kept at Braine le Comte until the morning of the 18th of June, Mitchell led his brigade in a cumbersome march, as the dusty road was crowded with troops and bagages of all kinds and the sun was burning hot. Just once a halt was held for about one hour in a corn field.<sup>26</sup>

Prince Frederik's forces.

According to general headquarters orders, prince Frederik of Orange had to move his troops (the 1st division and the Indian brigade) on the evening of the 17<sup>th</sup> of June from Enghien to a position south of Halle, while placing two battalions at Braine le Chateau. Even before he got these orders, the prince was informed from Braine-le-Comte, on behalf of Lord Hill, by Sir Charles Broke (assistant-quartermaster of the staff) about the events of the 16th of June. Broke wrote:

*Immediate*

*H.R.H. Prince Frederick of the Netherlands, Enghien*

*Braine-le-Comte, June 17 1815*

*Sir,*

*I have the honour to inform Your Royal Highness that the following is the latest movements ordered by the Duke of Wellington for the 2nd corps.*

*2nd Division to 4 Bras thro' Nivelles.*

*4th Division to continue its movement thro' Braine-le-Comte on Nivelles.*

*Lord Hill is now at Nivelles. There is no further instruction respecting Your R'Highnesses Corps.*

*I understand that the enemy attacked yesterday our troops, which however kept their ground. Bonaparte is said to have been there.*

*I have the honour to be your Royal Highness humble serv.*

*Charles Broke*<sup>27</sup>

The order to take up positions south of Halle reached the prince in the early afternoon. Accordingly, his quarter-master general, the count of St.Aldegonde, gave the orders to the 1<sup>st</sup> division and the Indian brigade. He also informed his adjudant general, colonel Van Roye van Wichem, of the orders he had issued in the following letter:

*Hoofdkwartier te Enghien, den 17 Juny 1815*

*Op last van Zijne K.H.heb ik de eer Uwe Ed. Gestr. kennis te geven dat het armée corps zig om vijf uuren hedenmiddag op marsch zal begeven om de positie van Halle te bezetten. Uw Ed.Gestr.gelieve dien ten gevolge order te geven dat de fourgons en het voerwezen tot het hoofdkwartier behoorende om 4 uuren zig op marsch begeven, ten einde agterwaards van die stad na de zijde van Brussel te parqueeren. Het artill. reserve park volgt dezelfde directie op hetzelfde uur.*<sup>28</sup>

The orders for lieutenant general Anthing were:

*Hoofdkwartier te Enghien den 17 Juny 1815*

*Ingevolge de bevelen van Z.K.H. zal zig de brigade door Uwe Excell.gecommandeerd wordend heden namiddag om 4 en 4 1/2 uur in beweging zetten zodanig dat zij voor vijf uuren door de stad Enghien getrokken zijn en het hoofd der colonne kunne formeeren. De batterij artill [sic] zal aan het hoofd der brigade marscheren, die de weg na Halle volgen zal, tot op een half uur afstands van deeze stad, alwaar zij zal bivouaqueren op het plateau agterwaards Lembecq tusschen de beide straatwegen van Enghien en Braine le Comte, het front na Lembecq gerigt. Alle wagens met levensmiddelen, fourgons en de ambulance zullen om 3 uuren afmarscheren langs den zelfden weg door Enghien op Halle, en een parq formeeren ter regterzijde van den weg na Brussel een vierendeel uurs agterwaards Halle. Uwe Excelll.gelieve de strengste bevelen te geven dat alles de colonne volge, en geene traineurs terugblijven.*

*De bestemming der brigade is om de eerste divisie als reserve en soutien te dienen. Deeze divisie zal heden avond de stellingen van Saintes, Tubise en Braine le Chateau voorwaarts Halle bezetten.*

<sup>29</sup>

The other order for Stedman was:

*Hoofdkwartier te Enghien, den 17 Juny 1815*

*Volgens de dispositien van Z.K.H. zal de 1e divisie zig om 5 uuren heden middag van Enghien op marsch begeven, zoodra de Indiaansche brigade, welke het hoofd der colonne uitmaken zal, door Enghien zal gedefileerd hebben.*

*De artill [sic] zal aan het hoofd der colonne marscheren langs den weg na Hall, tot omtrent op*

*de hoogte van Ramelo agterwaards van Saintes alwaar zij parqueeren zal.*

*De troupen tot de divisie behorende zullen ook langs den straatweg na Hall marscheren tot op de nabijheid van Saintes, alwaar de brigades volgens onderstaande dispositie hunne stelling nemen zullen.*

*De tweede brigade, door goede gidsen geleid, zal ogenblikkelijk van Saintes na Tubise marscheren; dat dorp zal door een bataillon, 't welk zijne voorposten en piquet op den weg na Braine le Comte uitzetten zal, militairement bezet worden.*

*Twee bataillons zullen en bivouacq op de hoogtes geplaatst worden en zig stellen [?] hunnen linkervleugel aanleunen aan het bosch van Lembecq. Eenige compagnien zullen gedetacheerd en geplaatst worden als voorposten bij de brug van Tubise, en te Glabbecq en bij de andere overtogten der beek welke door deeze plaatsen heen loopt, en welke is [..] door een detachment moeten geeclairceerd worden.*

*Twee bataillons zullen Braine le Chateau bezetten zoo als ook Beauchevain en zig in communicatie stellen met de troupen welke Wautierbraine bezet houden. Het punt van Braine-le-Chateau is van het uiterste gewigt als liggende op den weg van Bruxelles na Halle. Het moet militairement bezet en door alle hindernissen [sic], welke het terrein aanbied zig ten nutte te maken, verdedigd worden zooals ook door het afmaken [?] der bruggen in geval van retraite...*

*Ingeval van retraite zullen zig de bataillons bij Braine le Chateau geplaatst terugtrekken door Plasman of Le Flament en Schemberg op Hall, het terrain egter lang genoeg verdedigende om aan de bataillons op hunnen regtervleugel geplaatst tijd te geven zig over Vogerbergh op Romin en Hall in gelijke rigting met die welke bij Braine le Chateau geplaatst zijn te kunnen terugtrekken.*

*De capitain [...] van het geniecorps zal te Tubise bij de aankomst der brigade zig bevinden en aan dezelve de nodige ophelderingen omtrent de positie geven. De eerste brigade zal haar bivouac neder.slaan op de hoogte een weynig agterwaards Saintes met den linkervleugel na Tubise.*

*De dorpen en gehugten Bierghe, St.Renelde, Ophain en de overtogten over de beek zullen door detachementen bezet worden, zooals ook door genoegzaame piquetten om de aannadering der .... om de groote weg van Enghien te kunnen observeren.*

*Uwe Excell. gelieve de verdeeling der detachementen te reguleeren, alsmede het detail der positie. De hoogtens tusschen Saintes en Tubise zeer gunstig zijnde voor de artillerie en om kragtdadig verdedigd te kunnen worden, zullen het nog des te meer van de Indiaansche brigade welke en reserve op de hoogten agterwaards Lembecq zal geplaatst worden.*

*Het voerwezen en de equipagien der divisie zullen zig om 4 uren in marsch zetten en zig begeven op Hall, de stad doortrekken en in een parcq vereenigd worden een vierendeel uurs agterwaards de stad op de weg na Brussel. Het hoofdkwartier van Z.K.H. zal in Hall zijn.*

*Uwe Excell. zal gelieven deszelfs uiterste zorg aan te wenden opdat alles de colonne volge en geen traineurs agterwaards blijven.*<sup>30</sup>

And Stedman's orders for the 1st division were:

*Hoofdkwartier Enghien 17 Junij 1815*

*Alle bagagien zonder onderscheid alsmede de wagens met de vivres voor morgen, zullen oogenblikkelijk zich buiten Enghien op de route of steenweg naar Halle vergaderen, dezelve zullen zich in colonne van een wagenfront bijzijden de steenweg op de grandweg plaatsen, en hunnen weg aldaar gezamenlijk voortzetten op Halle alwaar deze voertuygen achter de stad rechts van deze steenweg op Brussel onwijd de bagages van de Indiaansche brigade zullen*

*parqueeren.*

*De heer onderinspecteur Van Haeften wordt met deze beweging belast en zal aan deze voertuigen de directie hierboven voorgeschreven geven, en bij dezelve blijven.*

*De ambulance alleen zullen zich op het [...] marsch gereed maken, en de divisie volgen waartoe de heer Krabacher nader order zal ontvangen.*

*Appèl zal hedenmiddag niet geslagen worden wijl de divisie nog hedenmiddag zal moeten marcheeren, de order tot dit slaan der watermarsch zal nader bepaald worden.*

*Indien de artillerie overcompletee fourages boven het getal van een [...] op de paarden moeten mede genomen worden, zal insgelijks achterwaarts Halle in het park worden gezonden.*

*De luitenant-generaal,*

*Gen.Stedman*<sup>31</sup>



The central place at Braine le Chateau.

It was between 4.30 and 5 p.m. that the units left their positions following the road Enghien - Petit Enghien - Bierghes and Saintes; the Indian brigade formed the advance guard, having the artillery and the 1<sup>st</sup> division in its rear.<sup>32</sup>

As soon as the Indian brigade reached the position of Halle, it took up a position on the plateau between the roads leading to Enghien and Braine le Comte, in rear of Lembecq, facing this village. In this way it was in reserve and in support of the 1st division which stood in a position between Saintes, Tubise and Braine le Chateau.

Of this division, the brigade Eerens reached its new positions between 2 a.m. and daybreak. It had one battalion at Tubise and this battalion had outposts on the road leading to Braine le Comte. Two other battalions were on the heights in rear of Tubise, to their left leaning upon the forest of Lembecq. Some of its companies were as detachments in outposts near the bridge over the Hain at Tubise, Glabbecq and at the Hain itself. Of the same brigade, two other battalions (the 18<sup>th</sup> battalion of chasseurs and the 18<sup>th</sup> battalion of national militia) were at Braine le Chateau and Bencherau in order to establish a communication with the units supposed to be at Wauterbraine (which did not appear to be the case). Braine le Chateau, on the road connecting Nivelles and Hal, was considered an important point and therefore the units were supposed to occupy the position by making an optimal use of the terrain. For that reason, De Eerens ordered

his men to barricade all the entrances to the low grounds of the stream and at Braine le Chateau he crenelated the walls of the chateau and of the local cemetery. The other brigade of the 1<sup>st</sup> division of the army of the Netherlands, the one of d'Hauw, was placed on the heights in rear of Saintes having its left wing towards Tubise. The artillery of captain Wijnands was placed upon a height near Sainte Renilde.<sup>33</sup>

In general, the position was covered with detachments observing the enemy from points like Bierghes, Sainte Renilde, Ophain and the numerous passages over the Hain, the Senne and the Lanebeek.<sup>34</sup> All the baggages of the different units were sent, through Brussels, to the bridge of Laeken.<sup>35</sup>

There is no information available about the exact whereabouts of the reserve-park of the army of the Netherlands, but on the 17<sup>th</sup> of June all trains and baggage were sent to Halle and Brussels.<sup>36</sup>

Of the reserve-artillery, the battery of captain Dubois left on the early morning of the 17<sup>th</sup> of June from Nivelles for Ixelles. Dubois had the instruction to keep close to the large reserve-artillery park, but he failed to do so. He only managed to find it at 10 p.m. near Ixelles, near the road leading from Brussels to Namur. Here general Gunkel, the commander of the artillery on the staff, was present. After a halt of several hours the battery was ordered that night to follow the park and take up a position on the road between Brussels and Vilvoorde and to await further orders there. Having arrived there, the troop got the instruction to leave for Mechelen which it did. It got there around 8 a.m. Here it was joined by the park, but soon after (around 1 p.m.) both units got the order of Gunkel to return to Brussels. However, this was virtually impossible as the road was completely blocked by all kinds of vehicles, people coming from Brussel and the battlefield

Meanwhile, the battery of Kempfer had arrived north of Brussels too and the decision was taken to proceed to Mechelen. All units arrived there during the night.<sup>37</sup>

The company of sappers, led by captain Esau and that morning still in position on the market-square of Braine le Comte, got the instruction to escort the baggage and the train. For doing so, the company was split in two. One part was to escort the front of the column, the other one the rear. Here some members of the military police assisted too. To get to Nivelles took a long time due to the bad state of the roads; on top of that, the column had to halt in front of this town as a lot of units had to pass to the front. As soon as the column had finally entered Nivelles it had to wait for another two hours again to let some units pass along, until it was sent towards Waterloo as well. By then it was 1 p.m.<sup>38</sup>

Lambert's brigade.

On the evening of the 16<sup>th</sup> of June, the brigade of Lambert had been ordered to leave from Assche towards Genappe. The brigade proceeded to Brussels on the morning of the 17<sup>th</sup> of June. In all probability the brigade left around 8 a.m., at least that is what the battery of Braun did.<sup>39</sup> While being on the march general Lambert received further orders to go to Halle. In doing so, Lambert got new instructions during the afternoon to halt at Espinette (six kilometres north of Waterloo, in the forest of Soignes). It was here that the brigade (including the battery of captain Braun) bivouaced during the afternoon, evening and night of the 17<sup>th</sup> of June.<sup>40</sup>

The cavalry of Von Estorff.

The brigade of Von Estorff (two regiments) was at Lens. It was during the night that it left, through Enghien, for the position of Halle. For this brigade the following orders had gone out

during the night of the 17<sup>th</sup> of June:

*Hoofdkwartier te Halle den 17 Juny 1815*

*De twee regimenten hussaren onder Uwe orders Mijnheer de Kolonel, bestemd zijnde voor het arméekorps van Z.K.H. prins Frederik, zie hier de dispositien welke Hoogstdezelve goedgevonden heeft te bevelen omtrent derzelve dienst bij het arméekorps geposteed voorwaarts Hall.*

*Een regiment zal een weinig agterwaards Saintes geplaatst worden tusschen deeze plaats en het gehugt Mussain. Hetzelve zal zijn voorposten en piquets op een militaire wijze uitzetten en patrouillen uitzenden in de directie van Haute Croix aan de eene zijde, en in de rigting van Enghien langs den straatweg van Hall na Enghien welke door Saintes gaat aan de andere zijde, en eindelijk na Quenast.*

*Het andere regiment zal positie nemen op den straatwegen van Hall na Braine le Comte agterwaards het dorp Tubise, bij de boerenhoeven Hersbosch; deszelfs piquetten kunnen voorwaarts Tubise geplaatst worden, en hunne patrouillen laten gaan op den weg van Braine le Comte en tot aan Oostquerque.*

*Eene compagnie van dit regiment zal moeten gedetacheerd worden tot nabij Vogerbergh, een hallef uur agterwaards ter linkerzijde van den straatweg van Hallel na Braine le Comte. Dit detachment is bestemd om als soutien te dienen voor de infanterie brigade geplaatst tusschen Tubise en Braine le Chateau, het zal zijne patrouillen doen gaan in de rigting van Vraimont, Plasman of Flamant en Landoite.*

*Indien er rijdende artillerie bij Uwe brigade gevoegd was zou de Uw H.Ed.Gestr. gelieven die te plaatsen een quartier uurs agterwaards Saintes regts van de straatweg van Hall na Enghien in de omstreek van Ramilo. Het voerwezen en de fourgons zullen zig door Hall bij het parcq van het arméekorps moeten voegen, welk parcq een hallef uur agterwaards van die stad nabij den weg naar Brussel geplaatst is.*

*Op last van Z.K.H., de graaf van St. Aldegonde* <sup>41</sup>

Colonel Von Estorff received his orders very late. <sup>42</sup> The brigade arrived near Halle during the early hours of the 18<sup>th</sup> of June. <sup>43</sup>

The 3<sup>rd</sup> regiment of hussars.

Having had a very tough march, this regiment (brigade Von Arentschildt) had arrived at Nivelles at 10 a.m. After taking a brief halt there, it resumed its march to reach its goal, near Waterloo, at 3 p.m.

After a couple of hours the regiment was ordered by Lord Uxbridge to go to Brussels. Having faced a lot of problems (of what type is unknown) the regiment finally reached the capital late that evening. <sup>44</sup>

In his instructions dating from the morning of the 17<sup>th</sup> of June, Wellington had issued the general instruction that all baggage which was on the road between Braine le Comte and Nivelles had to return to Braine le Comte, in order not to hinder the troops marching on the roads from Nivelles to Mont Saint Jean and from Enghien to Halle. From Braine le Comte, this baggage had to go back as far as Halle and Brussels.

The divisions of Perponcher and Cooke had sent their baggage on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June to Waterloo and Brussels, and one can assume that those of Alten had halted at Nivelles. Those of Picton

and the Brunswickers halted in the forest of Soignes.

There is almost no information available about the British reserve-artillery. According to the orders of the evening of the 16<sup>th</sup> of June it was supposed to move towards Quatre Bras, but by orders of the morning of the 17<sup>th</sup> of June it had to be moved to a position in rear of Genappe, while parking its carts in the forest of Soignes. Of Ross' battery it is known that it marched from its bivouac near Vilvoorde all night, and then through Brussels to the south over the road leading from the capital to Charleroi when it received through major Drummond at dawn the instruction to proceed to Quatre Bras. Some time later in the day it received the second order and it was near Genappe that Ross bumped into the army which fell back towards Mont Saint Jean and that's what he did as well.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> However, it is captain Rochell (19<sup>th</sup> battalion of militia, division of Chassé) who claims the presence of a British division in front of his. Cf. Captain Rochell. Account in family archive.

<sup>2</sup> Constant Rebecque himself states it was after 10 a.m. Cf. Journal of Constant Rebecque In: NA, 2.21.008.01 nr.25

3. Cf. Journal of Constant Rebecque In: NA, 2.21.008.01 nr.25

Cf. Major Van Gorkum. In his diary and memoirs, p.69-75. In: private collection

Van Gorkum, having ridden from Nivelles to Quatre Bras on the very early morning of the 17<sup>th</sup> of June, claims he had a conversation with the Duke of Wellington there. By that time, Wellington had been informed about the situation of the Prussian army and had taken the decision to draw back towards the position of Mont Saint Jean. Accordingly, Van Gorkum was instructed to inform the prince of Orange of this decision and of his intention to establish his headquarters at Waterloo. At the same time, he was instructed to take care that general headquarters of the army of the Netherlands were to retire from Braine le Comte through Nivelles safely towards Brussels. For that reason he had to establish Trip's brigade of heavy cavalry, as well as a battery of horse artillery south of Nivelles, on the road towards Roeulx.

While returning to Nivelles, Van Gorkum would have met the prince of Orange and Constant Rebecque near Hautain-le-Val and, while the prince proceeded to Quatre Bras, Van Gorkum and Constant Rebecque proceeded to Nivelles to prepare the march of the headquarters and the forces covering it.

Van Gorkum's and Constant's versions of the events do not run parallel; in their essence the one of Constant has been chosen for as Van Gorkum wants to draw too much credit to himself for missions he did not really accomplish on his own. Apart from that, the prince did not get that late at Quatre Bras.

It was near the Brussels road that Van Gorkum got separated from both Constant and Heinecken as Van Gorkum's horse refused to leap over a ditch, initially.

4. Reports of lieutenant colonel Van Delen and colonel Detmers.

In: NA, 2.13.14.01 nr.8

Account of captain Rochell (19<sup>th</sup> battalion of national militia). In: private collection. In his mind, the battalion took up its arms at 2 a.m., to leave at 3 a.m., to have a brief march and an eventual position in an orchard.

5. Cf. Lieutenant colonel Van Delen. In: NA, nr.2.13.14.01 nr.8

Constant Rebecque In his journal. In: NA, 2.21.008.01 nr.25

6. According to Detmers it was towards afternoon. The division left towards noon. In: NA, nr.2.13.14.01.nr.8

For the 19<sup>th</sup> battalion of national militia, captain Rochell claims it left around 10 a.m. Cf. Account of captain Rochell (19<sup>th</sup> battalion of national militia), in private collection.

2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant Holle of the 6<sup>th</sup> battalion of national militia gives the impression as if the brigade spent the night in (or near) Nivelles. Cf. 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant Holle in his letter to his parents dated 10<sup>th</sup> July 1815. In: Stadsarchief Dordrecht. Family-archive Blussé. 68-28 nr.21

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Diary of lieutenant Koch (17<sup>th</sup> battalion of national militia). In: Infantry Museum Harskamp, the Netherlands.

8. Cf. Lieutenant colonel Van Delen. In: NA, nr.2.13.14.01.nr.8

1<sup>st</sup> lieutenant Bentinck (battery Lux). In: NL-ZuRAZ, Van Löben Sels, 0302 inv.nr.262

Account of captain Rochell (19<sup>th</sup> battalion of national militia). In private collection.

Sergeant Van de Wetering (4<sup>th</sup> battalion of national militia). Diary. In private collection

According to 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant Roorda van Eysinga of the 19<sup>th</sup> battalion of national militia, this battalion plundered the area due to the lack of supplies. The battalion would also have been delayed in its departure, but finally it would have re-connected to its division north of Nivelles. Cf. Roorda van Eysinga, P.P. In: De recensent der recensenten. 1831 nr.6 and 7 p.233.

9. Captain Rochell (19<sup>th</sup> battalion of national militia). Captain Bentinck of the battery of Lux confirms the slowness of the march as well as the presence of numerous other units on the road. Cf. In: NL-ZuRAZ, Van Löben Sels, 0302 inv.nr.262

10. Private A.H.Munter (4th battalion of national militia) states it was 3 p.m. Cf. his letter dated 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1815). NIMH, no reference

According to captain Rochell (19<sup>th</sup> battalion of national militia) at the moment of arrival at Braine l'Alleud a storm broke out; this was most probably around 4 p.m.. Cf.account in family archive. Also see the account of lieutenant Koch , 17<sup>th</sup> battalion of national militia. In: Infanterie Museum Harskamp.

J.H.Fruyt van Hertog claims it was 6 p.m. In: Geschiedenis van het 7e regiment etc.

For this hour, also see 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant Holle in an account dated 1856. In: Stadsarchief Dordrecht. Family-archive Blussé. 68-28 nr.26

11. Account of lieutenant colonel Hoyneck van Papendrecht (chief of staff of the cavalry). In: Bas, F.de & T'Serclaes de Wommersom - La campagne de 1815 etc. Vol.III p.424

Christemeijer claims the men rode in a full trot towards Mont Saint Jean, while leaving caissons and baggage-carts at Nivelles, so that supplies were completely lacking that night. In: Geschiedverhaal etc. p.11-12.

Diary of lieutenant colonel Renno. In: Groninger Museum, Groningen. Collection of Offerhaus Foundation.

Lieutenant colonel Van Heerdt, chief of staff of Ghigny, however claims the brigade left at around 10 a.m. Cf. His account In: NL-ZuRAZ, Van Löben Sels, 0302 inv.nr.263

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Constant Rebecque. In: Na, 2.21.008.01, nr.25

Muilwijk, E. – Standing firm at Waterloo p.21

<sup>13</sup> Diary of lieutenant colonel Renno. In: Groninger Museum, Groningen. Collection of Offerhaus Foundation.

14. Lieutenant colonel Hoyneck van Papendrecht. In: Bas, F.de & T'Serclaes de Wommersom - La campagne de 1815 aux Pays Bas. Vol.III p.424

Squadron sergeant-major Fundter (4<sup>th</sup> regiment of light dragoons). In: Geschiedenis van het 4<sup>e</sup> regiment lichte dragonders p.13

Lieutenant colonel Van Heerdt (chief of staff of De Ghigny). In: NL-ZuRAZ – van Löben Sels 0302 nr.263

Diary of lieutenant colonel Renno. In: Groninger Museum, Groningen. Collection Offerhaus Foundation.

Renno, however, mentions only leaving some men and not a complete squadron.

15. Cf. Leeke, W. - History of Lord Seaton's regiment Vol.I p.11

Journal of the 3<sup>rd</sup> line battalion KGL (brigade Duplat). In: NHH, 38D. nr.816 p.22-25

Lieutenant Hart (1<sup>st</sup> battalion, 52<sup>nd</sup> regiment) says it was 1.30 a.m. Cf. letter dated 20th June 1815. In: NAM, nr.8111/84

The same is for captain Von Dreves (Osnabrück battalion). In: NHA. Hann.41.XXI, nr.151 p.70-72

J.Hamilton (member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> line battalion KGL, brigade Du Plat) claims it was 7 a.m. Cf. his letter dated 21<sup>st</sup> July 1815. In: NAM, Manuscripts, transcripts and printed documents, letters, notebooks and printed pamphlets relating to the battle and battlefield of Waterloo, nr.7905/5.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> battalion of the 95<sup>th</sup> regiment left at 3 a.m. Cf. colonel Ross (3rd battalion of the 95th regiment). In: Knight, corporal. The British battalion etc. p.17

The 1<sup>st</sup> battalion of the 52<sup>nd</sup> regiment moved off, after a brief halt, from Braine le Comte to Nivelles at 2 a.m. There it halted from 7 till 11 a.m. and then started its (slow) march towards the position Mont Saint Jean. Cf. G.C.Moore Smith. The life of John Colborne p.215

16. Cf. Leeke, W. History of Lord Seaton's regiment Vol.I p.11

J.Hamilton (member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> line-battalion KGL, brigade Du Plat). Cf. his letter dated 21<sup>st</sup> July 1815. In: NAM, Manuscripts, transcripts and printed documents, letters, notebooks and printed pamphlets relating to the battle and battlefield of Waterloo, nr.7905/5.

<sup>17</sup> Moorsom, W.S. – Historical records of the 52<sup>nd</sup> regiment p.245

Clinton himself claims it was at 5 a.m. that he reached Nivelles, but this is impossible as the distance between Braine le Comte and Henripont is about 3 kilometres, which would need about three hours for the infantry to cover. Cf. Sir H.Clinton's letter dated 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1815. In: NLS, MS 3615 f.39

In the total trajectory 5 hours have been taken for the units to cover the distance of 20 kilometres between Ath and Enghien (over a good road), about 5 hours for the distance between Enghien and Braine le Comte and the same for the one between this place and Nivelles (both distances being about 13 kilometres).

Assistant commissary-general Tupper Carey of the commissariat department, and attached to the division Clinton, had left from Enghien later as his division did as he had to make arrangements for the supplies for the division, but eventually overtook it and reached Nivelles during the night. In: Reminiscences of a commissariat officer p.726

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Sir H.Clinton's letter dated 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1815. In: NLS, MS 3615 f.38

Journal of the 1<sup>st</sup> line battalion KGL. In: NHH, Hann.38D. nr.236 p.27-28

Journal of the 3<sup>rd</sup> line battalion KGL In: NHH, Hann.38D. nr.816 p.22-25

It is very well possible that Adam's brigade did not get to the point that it moved off towards Quatre Bras, as there is no mentioning of it (see below).

19. Leeke, W. - The history of Lord Seaton's regiment Vol.I p.11-13

20. Cf. Leeke, W. - History of Lord Seaton's regiment Vol.I p.12

The brigade did so, as also a member of the 1st battalion of the 71st regiment did so; also the luggage of the brigade was sent to Brussels. Cf. Journal of a soldier of the 71st regiment Private E.Gill (1<sup>st</sup> battalion, 52<sup>nd</sup> regiment) talks of a break between 3 and 9 a.m. Cf. Gill, E. A narrative of the life etc. p.106

21. According to Leeke, a battalion of the army of the Netherlands crossed the road, while heading for Genappe. It is still a puzzle which battalion this could have been. Cf. Leeke, W. - History of Lord Seaton's regiment Vol.I p.12

22. Journal of the 1<sup>st</sup> line battalion KGL. In: NHH, Hann.38D.nr.236 p.27-28

Report of lieutenant Von Müller (2<sup>nd</sup> line battalion KGL). In: NHH, Hann.41.XXI.nr.152 p.51-53

Journal of the 4<sup>th</sup> line battalion KGL. In: NHH, Hann.38D.nr.236 p.118-119

Captain Scheuch (battalion Bremervörde, brigade H.Halkett). In: NHH, Hann.41.XXI nr.151 p.65-68

Major Hammerstein (battalion Salzgitter, brigade H.Halkett) In: NHH, Hann.41.XXI.nr.151 p.60-64

J. Hamilton (member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> line battalion KGL) states it was 6 p.m. Cf. his letter dated 21<sup>st</sup> July 1815. In: NAM, Manuscripts, transcripts and printed documents, letters, notebooks and printed pamphlets relating to the battle and battlefield of Waterloo, nr.7905/5.

Lieutenant Lyra of the Osnabrück battalion (brigade H.Halkett) believes it was about 4 p.m. In: NHH, Hann.41 XXI nr.157

According to major Meijer (4<sup>th</sup> battalion KGL line infantry) it was between 4 and 5 p.m. In: BL, Add.ms.34.704 p.270-273

23. Lieutenant Hart (1<sup>st</sup> battalion, 52<sup>nd</sup> regiment). Cf.his letter dated 20<sup>th</sup> June 1815. In: NAM, nr.8111/84

Ensign Leeke believes it was about 7.30 p.m. Cf. Leeke, W. - History of Lord Seaton's regiment Vol.I p.14

Private E.Gill (1<sup>st</sup> battalion 52<sup>nd</sup> regiment) claims in his mostly unreliable journal that it was then 3 p.m. Cf. Gill, E. A narrative of the life etc. p.106

And private Lewis (2<sup>nd</sup> battalion / 95<sup>th</sup> regiment) believes it was 4 p.m. when his unit got in touch with the enemy. Cf. his letter dated 8<sup>th</sup> of July 1815 to his sister. In: former [www.1815.ltd.uk](http://www.1815.ltd.uk) Original in: Dorset History Centre, Dorchester D/FIL/Z5

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Colville papers, C41283/TD 97/1 In Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh. Letter of Colville to his brother dated 19<sup>th</sup> June 1815.

Cf. Colville, J. – Portrait of a general p.200

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Colville papers, C41283/TD 97/1 In Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh. Letter of Colville to his brother dated 19<sup>th</sup> June 1815.

A private of the 91<sup>st</sup> regiment (brigade Johnstone, division Colville), Andrew Jordan, confirms that he marched on the 17<sup>th</sup> of June from Audenarde towards a large village [Braine le Comte] at four leagues distant and that he spent the night there. In: Biographical memoirs of Andrew Jordan, formerly a Waterloo soldier p.102

26. Letter of private Wheeler, 1<sup>st</sup> battalion 51<sup>st</sup> regiment. In: The letters of private Wheeler p.168-169 Cf. For years of a soldier's life. In: USM, 1844, II p.408

Wheeler mentions the some Belgian heavy cavalry, passing by in a trot at Nivelles. These may have been men of Trip's brigade, as they left Nivelles around 11 a.m. and Mitchell left about one hour earlier.

Captain Daniel (7<sup>th</sup> regiment of hussars) saw the 14th regiment of the brigade of Mitchell pass through Nivelles around 3 p.m. Daniel had reached Quatre Bras the night before at midnight, but had spent the night at Nivelles. In: Journal of an officer etc. p.386, 389

G. Th.Albemarle, an ensign of the 3<sup>rd</sup> battalion of the 14<sup>th</sup> regiment, claims his brigade (Mitchell) left at 3 p.m. in stead of 10 a.m. In: Fifty years of my life Vol.II p.16

Albemarle also mentions the presence of Belgian cavalry, delaying the battalion for about two hours.

27. In: KHA, nr.A37 VIIIb nr.4

28. Generale correspondentie van de graaf van St.Aldegonde In: NA, 2.13.14.02 nr.6 item nr.39

29. Generale correspondentie van de graaf van St.Aldegonde In: NA, 2.13.14.02 nr.6 item nr.40

30. Cf. Generale correspondentie van de graaf van St.Aldegonde In: NA, 2.13.14.02 nr.6 item nr.41

31. Cf. orderbook of the 1<sup>st</sup> division. In; NA, 2.13.52 nr.1 item nr.153

32. Journal of the count of St.Aldegonde. In: NA, 2.13.14.02 nr.7

Dagboek der operatiën en bewegingen etc. p.10

According to major general De Eerens his brigade left by 6 p.m. from Enghien. Cf. his account. In: NA, Collection 145, De Eerens, inv.nr.64 p.267

<sup>33</sup> Captain Wijnands calls the position of his battery near "Sainte Ernelle". Cf. his letter. In: NL-ZuRAZ, Van Löben Sels, 0302 inv.nr.262

Cf. Major general De Eerens' account. In: NA, Collection 145, De Eerens, inv.nr.64 p.267-269

Muilwijk speaks of a high road connecting Nivelles with Halle and / or Braine l'Alleud, but in 1815 this was not a chaussée. Cf. Carte Topographique et Militaire de la Belgique et du gd. Duché de Luxembourg" - L.Capitaine, 1836

<sup>34</sup> The positions of the forces of prince Frederik as described here have been taken from the different orders.

Cf. Dagboek der operatiën en bewegingen etc. p.11-13

Cf. Sketch of the position. In: KHA, A37.VIIIb nr.9

35. Journal of the count of St.Aldegonde. He also mentions reserve-artillery which was placed north of Halle, but which guns he means is not clear. In: NA, 2.13.14.02 nr.7

36. Dagboek der operatiëen en bewegingen van het 2<sup>e</sup> korps van het Koninklijk Nederlandsch leger etc. p.12

37. First lieutenant Sierevelt (Dubois' troop). In: NL-ZuRAZ, Van Löben Sels, 0302 inv.nr.262  
It is not clear under whose order Dubois was acting. There is some evidence that Gunkel wasn't with the artillery for the first couple of hours, though Van der Wijk claims the opposite. Cf. Account of adjudant general Van der Wijk. NA, nr.2.13.13.01 nr.4

Van der Wijk met Gunkel and the battery at Waterloo. Van der Wijk, at Nivelles, isn't very specific about the reasons why he went back towards Waterloo and Brussels.

On the one hand he claims he received orders from the prince of Orange (through colonel du Caylar, major Van Hooff and major Ampt), but he doesn't specify what kind of orders these were.

On the other hand he claims he wanted to go to the prince of Orange, but that he got the information that the prince was very busy and that the general headquarters were moving to Waterloo and from there to a village just south Brussels. Then Van der Wijk left Nivelles at 10 a.m. He arrived at Waterloo at 1 p.m. where he met Gunkel.

38. Cf. Notes of 1st lieutenant Klijnsma of this company. While being just out of Nivelles, the storm began. By then it was around 2 p.m. This may have meant that the company had arrived it around 10 a.m. Cf. Klijnsma, S.F. De nagelaten aantekeningen van Sent Foppe Klijnsma. In: De Beweging, 1910 I-249 and II-1. The company would have arrived in Waterloo in the late afternoon. In: NL-ZuRAZ, Van Löben Sels, 0302 inv.nr.262

39. Account of captain d'Huvelé (battery Braun). In: NHH, Hann.41.XXI, nr.151 p.152-155

40. Smith, Sir H. - The autobiography etc. p.266

He mentions Epinay in stead of Espinette, but his description is the same (i.e. to the Brussels side of the forest).

Lieutenant Drewe (27<sup>th</sup> regiment). BL, Add.ms.34.706. nr.113

Captain d'Huvelé (battery Braun). In: NHH, Hann.41.XXI.nr.151 p.152-155

Captain Braun. In: NHH, Hann.41.XXI, nr.151 p.149-151.

Sergeant Lawrence (40<sup>th</sup> regiment) doesn't mention any name of a bivouac. Cf. Mémoires d'un grenadier anglais p.207

The Regimental history sees some contradictory information in the marches of the brigade. While some state that the brigade was ordered to Assche first, the "MS.Record of services" would state that the brigade left Ghent on the 16<sup>th</sup> and then went through Brussels without Halleting, to reach the battlefield on the morning of the 18th. Cf. Regimental history p.253

41. Cf. Generale correspondentie van de graaf van St.Aldegonde In: NA, 2.13.14 nr.6 – item nr.42

42. Report of major Von der Busche (Bremen & Verden hussars).In: NHH, Hann.41.XXI, nr.152 p.25

Journal of the count of St.Aldegonde. In: NA, nr.2.13.14.02 nr.7

43. Report of colonel Von Estorff. In: NHH, Hann.41.XXI, nr.152 p.36-37

Report of major Von den Busche (Bremen & Verden hussars). In: NHH, Hann.41.XXI, nr.152 p.25

44. Journal of the regiment. In: NHH, Hann.38D.nr.233 p.198-202  
Account of captain Friedrichs (3<sup>rd</sup> hussars). In: Kannicht, J. - Und alles wegen Napoleon p.63

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Ross, H.D. - Memoir of field-marshal sir H.D.Ross p.60