

## **The situation at Quatre Bras on the early morning of the 17<sup>th</sup> of June.**

General headquarters. The preparations for the retreat.

The night of the 16<sup>th</sup> of June was a clear one. It was just before dawn, around 3.30 or 4 a.m. that some British dragoons erroneously approached the French line of sentries south of Piraumont too much. A sharp skirmishing fire started which rapidly spread over the whole line. The outposts of the brigade of Kielmansegge and those of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brunswick light infantry were involved in this fire. <sup>1</sup>

Not long after, also the battalion Münden of the brigade Kielmansegge pulled together and gave off some fire. <sup>2</sup> But before general Picton had been able to put an end to this firing, the battalion of Bremen had already been suffering considerably. But losses were not only on the Anglo-Netherlands-German side; also the posts of the divisions of Quiot and Donzelot had suffered some casualties. The French skirmishers made several attempts to drive back the battalion of Bremen, but the battalion sent out detachments and these successfully drove back the French from the declivity in their turn. Though the Hannoverians had a good position with the stream and the swamp plus hedges in front of them, it was only by 9 a.m. that the French fire died down. <sup>3</sup> Before daybreak, there also was some skirmishing in front of the Bois de Bossu. <sup>4</sup> The troops were preparing their weapons. The wounded were taken of and a lot of them were brought into the buildings at Quatre Bras and to the farm of Gémioncourt by strong detachments of heavy cavalry. <sup>5</sup> The surgeons, however, were much hindered in their work by the lack of supplies, which were still further to the rear. On the French side, the situation was more or less similar and this was mostly due to the fact that the ambulances had for a great deal gone back to the rear after the unsuccessful charge of the cuirassiers. <sup>6</sup>

General headquarters.

Wellington had his headquarters at Genappe in the inn of Le Roi d'Espagne. After he had risen at 3 a.m. he sent a courier towards Brussels informing the authorities here that he intended to attack the enemy. <sup>7</sup> Some time later, he left for Quatre Bras. <sup>8</sup> It was around 5 a.m. that he got there. <sup>9</sup>

It may have been in these hours that Wellington received the following report of the duke De Feltre from Ghent, which he had written at 6.30 p.m.

*“Un de mes officiers arrive de Namur à l’instant. Voici ce qu’il m’apprend: que les Français étaient à Charleroi hier. Ils ont poussé jusques près des Quatre Bras, et à Gosselies dans la journée; on s’est beaucoup battu. Il y a eu beaucoup de blessés. On en a vu 43 voitures de blessés Prussiens. Le feu a cessé à 8 heures du soir. Deux escadrons Prussiens ont beaucoup souffert. Les Hessois se sont bien battus. Le maréchal Blücher ayant marché contre les Français, il se sont retirés, et ont pris l’ancienne route des Romains en allant sur Nivelles pour attaquer l’armée Anglaise. Le prince Blücher est rentré à 10 heures du soir de Sombref; à 10 heures du soir les Prussiens étaient encore maître de Fleurus. Le lieutenant-général Bourmont a quitté de l’armée de Buonanaparte et est arrivé le 15 à*

*Namur, d'où il me mande qu'il a quitté (lui, Bourmont) Florenne ce matin-là, et qu'il a laissé le 4<sup>me</sup> corps sous les ordres de Gérard à Philippeville, lequel devait marcher le 15 sur Charleroi. Le reste de l'armée de Buonaparte était massé vers Beaumont. Le 4<sup>me</sup> corps est celui qui était en Lorraine. J'ai cru utile de donner ces détails à Votre Excellence. J'ai etc.*

*P.S. Je n'ai pas de lettre de Votre Excellence depuis celle écrite hier à 9 heures ½ du soir. Le Roi se tient prêt à partir. M.le duc de Berri m'écrit d'Alost à 2 heures après midi que V.E. lui a fait dire verbalement de se tenir prêt à marcher sur Bruxelles ce soir ou dans la nuit, après avoir laissé le nombre de gardes nécessaires pour la garde du Roi; qu'il marchera avec la totalité du corps, à moins d'ordre contraires. ”<sup>10</sup>*



The inn of Au Roi d'Espagne at Genappe.

About 6 a.m. the prince of Orange joined the duke at Quatre Bras.<sup>11</sup> Here, Wellington also had a conversation with Sir Hussey Vivian.<sup>12</sup>

After having inspected and observed the battlefield, Wellington came to the conclusion that Napoleon had cut off the communication he had with Blücher. French posts were on his extreme left flank, observing the great road leading to Nivelles. Having still no official information from Blücher, the Duke now decided to send out a patrol to find out about the situation of the Prussian army.

Accordingly, Sir Alexander Gordon, aide de camp of Wellington, was sent out early that morning.<sup>13</sup> He was accompanied by a troop of the 10<sup>th</sup> regiment of hussars, which was led by captain Grey.<sup>14</sup> Lieutenant Bacon (10<sup>th</sup> regiment of hussars) informs us about a French sentry at a position west of Marbais, at about five kilometres of Quatre Bras.<sup>15</sup> This sentry could be seen from the opposite height; in the intermediate depression was a single house, where some French horsemen had dismounted. Leaving his main force on and near the road on the height, Bacon was sent forward with a small escort. The moment Bacon approached the house too near, the

French sentry on the opposite height started to fire with carbines. The French post near the house fell back and Bacon was called back. It became clear that the enemy was in control of the road and the patrol fell back too, until it encountered a by-road of which a local farmer told to Gordon that the Prussians had passed here.<sup>16</sup>

Now, captain Grey left a part of his detachment on the road with instructions to observe the French movements and fall back to the regiment in case of necessity. Grey himself, Sir Alexander Gordon, lieutenant Bacon and a small escort now turned to the east. Not long after they found the Prussian rearguard of Von Sohr on the height of Arbres de Vénérable near Mellery.<sup>17</sup>

It was through small country roads that Gordon returned to Quatre Bras; the escort rejoined the regiment here. The detachment, led by captain Grey, did the same, without being harassed.<sup>18</sup> Gordon reached Quatre Bras before 9 a.m. (<sup>19</sup>), the time the Prussian major Von Massow joined the duke.<sup>20</sup>

Of the 10<sup>th</sup> hussars another troop, the left one of Howard's squadron, under captain Wood, would have been sent out by Sir H. Vivian to patrol. Earlier that morning, the squadron had relieved as a picket a squadron of the 18<sup>th</sup> hussars. The patrol soon fell in with Prussian stragglers, informing Wood about the Prussian defeat. Soon after, it also met French vedettes who retired on the approach of the hussars. Captain Wood decided to inform the Duke immediately and ordered his patrol to return quietly to its squadron. While going back to Quatre Bras, Wood would have met Gordon and Grey.<sup>21</sup>

About the situation of the duke during the arrival of Gordon, captain Bowles (Coldstream Guards) tells us: "...soon after daybreak the Duke of Wellington came to me, and being personally known to him he remained in conversation for an hour or more, during which time he repeatedly said he was surprised to have heard nothing of Blücher. At length a staff officer arrived, his horse covered with foam, and whispered to the Duke who, without the least change of countenance, gave him some orders and dismissed him. He then turned round to me and said: Old Blücher has had a damned good licking and gone back to Wavre, eighteen miles. As he has gone back, we must go too. I suppose in England they will say we have been licked. I can't help it, as they are gone back, we must go too."<sup>22</sup> At that particular moment, Wellington would have been in a simple hut built of branches, just in rear of the farm of Quatre Bras.<sup>23</sup> Gordon told the duke about the fact that the Prussian army had left the field of battle, that the 4<sup>th</sup> corps of Bülow hadn't participated in the battle, that the army was moving towards Wavre and that the French did not pursue.<sup>24</sup>

Wellington now decided to fall back to the position of Mont Saint Jean and to accept battle there, in the presumption that he would receive Prussian support.<sup>25</sup> Having considered his situation, Wellington decided to start the retreat and immediately issued his first orders. They read:

*Instructions for the movement of the army on the 17<sup>th</sup> June 1815*

*The 1st division to keep piquets only in the wood on the right of the high road, and to be collected on the road to Nivelles, in rear of the wood.*

*The 2nd division of British infantry to march from Nivelles on Waterloo at 10 o'clock.*

*The 3rd division to collect upon the left of the position, holding by its piquets to the ground it now occupies.*

*The brigades of the 4th division, now at Nivelles, to march from that place on Waterloo at 10 o'clock. The brigades of the 4th division on the road from Braine le Comte to Nivelles, or at Braine le Comte, to collect and halt at Braine le Comte this day.*

*All the baggage on the road from Braine le Comte to Nivelles to be sent back to Braine le Comte, and to be sent from thence to Hal and Bruxelles.*

*The 5th division to collect upon the right of the position in three lines, and the 95th regiment to hold the gardens.*

*The 6th division to be collected in columns of bataillons, showing their heads only on the heights on the left of the position of Quatre Bras.*

*The Brunswick corps to be collected in the wood on the Nivelles road, holding the skirts with their piquets only.*

*The Nassau troops to be collected in the rear of the wood on the Nivelles road, holding the skirts with their piquets only.*

*The 2nd division of the troops of the Netherlands to march from their present ground on Waterloo at 10 o'clock (then marching). The march to be in columns of half companies at quarter distance.*

*The 3rd division of the troops of the Netherlands to march from Nivelles at 10 o'clock.*

*The spare musket ammunition to be immediately parked behind Genappe, as well as the reserve artillery. The wagons of the reserve artillery to be parked in the Foret de Soignes.*

*The British cavalry to be formed at 1 o'clock in three lines in rear of the position at Quatre Bras, to cover the movement of the infantry to the rear, and the retreat of the rear-guard.<sup>26</sup>*

The specific one for lord Hill reads:

*To general Lord Hill*

*17<sup>th</sup> June 1815*

*The 2nd division of British infantry to march from Nivelles on Waterloo at 10 o'clock.*

*The brigades of the 4th division, now at Nivelles, to march from that place on Waterloo at 10 o'clock. Those brigades of the 4th division at Braine le Comte and on the road from Braine le Comte to Nivelles, to collect and halt at Braine le Comte this day.*

*All the baggage on the road from Braine le Comte to Nivelles to return immediately to Braine le Comte and to proceed immediately from there to Hal and Bruxelles.*

*The spare musket ammunition to be immediately parked behind Genappe*

*The corps under the command of Prince Frederick of Orange will move from Enghien this evening and take up a position in front of Hal, occupying Braine le Chateau with two bataillons.*

*Col. Estorff will fall back with his brigade on Hal and place himself under the orders of Prince Frederick.*

*W.De Lancey<sup>27</sup>*

And the specific order for the prince of Orange reads:

*June 17<sup>th</sup> 1815*

*Extract from the general movement of the army for this day.*

*The 1st division to keep picquets only on the right of the high road, and the division to be collected on the road to Nivelles in rear of the wood.*

*The 3rd division to collect upon the left of the position holding by its picquets the advanced posts it now occupies. The 2nd division of the troops of the Netherlands to march from their present ground on Waterloo.*

*Wm.de Lancey*

*N.B. The march to be in a column of half companies at quarter distance.*

*The 3rd division of the troops of the Netherlands to march from Nivelles at ten o'clock. The spare musquet ammunition cars to be parked immediately behind Genappe.*

*W.de Lancey*<sup>28</sup>

These orders were issued around 8 a.m.<sup>29</sup> Shortly after sending out Gordon to find out about the Prussians, the duke received some letters from England.<sup>30</sup> Later, having issued his orders for the retreat, he laid down in the field, covered his face with a newspaper and had a small nap. After that, he observed the French positions again and seemed wondered about the peace in the French lines. Sir Hussey Vivian remembers his saying that it was "not at all impossible that they also might be retreating."<sup>31</sup>

Not long after, major Von Massow arrived. He first reported to Von Müffling, but as Von Massow spoke French he was led towards Wellington by Von Müffling to talk to the duke directly.<sup>32</sup> Having heard about the situation of the Prussian army, Wellington told Von Massow about his decision to fall back upon the position of Mont Saint Jean.<sup>33</sup>

It was also shortly after Wellington had issued his order for the retreat, that he sent colonel Delancey towards the position of Mont Saint Jean with instructions how to place the different units of the army there. With him, he carried the map of the area which had been drawn some time before by the engineers. He took up a central position on the ridge of Mont Saint Jean, accompanied by some other officers, amongst whom one was sir Charles Broke, to accomplish this task.<sup>34</sup>

The preparations for the retreat towards the position of Mont Saint Jean.

Before being able to start their retreat, the different divisions were assembled. The one of Cooke was assembled north of the Bois de Bossu, along the road towards Namur, leaving pickets in the wood. The 3<sup>rd</sup> division was assembled north of this road to the left of Quatre Bras. For this, the brigade of Von Ompteda moved from its position near the Brussels road towards one in and southwest of the Bois des Censes.<sup>35</sup> The brigade of C.Halkett advanced in the same direction,

having been instructed to do this under cover and having done so, it took up a position in the second line in rear of the one of Von Ompteda.<sup>36</sup> This was around 10.45 a.m.<sup>37</sup> Kielmansegge formed his brigade in rear of the one of C.Halkett in third line.<sup>38</sup>

Captain Shaw, deputy assistant of the QMG of the division, was sent ahead towards the Dyle to find a route, independent of the Brussels road. He found one through Bézy and Ways la Hütte. Shaw had taken over the duties of major Jessop, QMG, after his fall at Quatre Bras.<sup>39</sup>

The 5<sup>th</sup> division had to remain in position until further notice. The order states "to collect upon the right of the position in three lines, and the 95<sup>th</sup> regiment to hold the gardens."

The brigade of Best (6<sup>th</sup> division) was instructed to form each of its four battalions in column in a covered position, to the left of the position, near the 5<sup>th</sup> division.

Of the Brunswick corps, the Leib battalion, as well as all the three line-battalions were in the Bois de Bossu. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> battalions of light infantry, plus two guns and a detachment of hussars were in and around Piraumont.<sup>40</sup>

About the situation of the Brunswickers, Hofschröder writes: "Much of the morning at Quatre Bras was spent gathering supplies and restocking ammunition, neither of which was particularly easy. Part of the Brunswick baggage train had gone missing during the previous day's fighting, for example. The sergeant-major of the Jäger eventually found his battalion's baggage waggon in Brussels, empty in the Willebroek canal, its drivers having disappeared with its horses. The ammunition waggon was fortunately located at the far end of the city, but only by the evening of 18 June could it be brought to Waterloo. Fortunately, others of the Brunswick supply waggons that had been left at Genappe soon arrived, and their contents were quickly distributed. Oberst Olfermann, now in command of the Brunswick contingent since their Duke's death the day before, forbade any casual foraging by his troops but organised parties soon brought in cattle that were slaughtered and cooked.

Meanwhile, the Brunswickers used the time available to reorganise and replace the lost unit commanders with field promotions. Kapitain von Bülow I of the 1st Light Battalion and Kapitain von Schwarzkoppen of the 1st Line were both promoted to major and command of their battalions. Major von Wolfradt received the command of the Line Brigade in place of Oberstlieutenant von Specht, who had lost his nerve, and Major von Strombeck, former commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Line Battalion, was buried."<sup>41</sup>

The Nassauers of Von Kruse took up a position with the battalions in closed masses with intervals, further to the right of its bivouac, in rear of the wood, in front of which it had pickets.<sup>42</sup>

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Netherlands division of Perponcher was collected north of the Bois de Bossu and the Namur-road. By 6 a.m. the light battalion nr.27 also had returned from Nivelles.<sup>43</sup>

As soon as the general retreat from the battlefield started, the brigade of Sir Hussey Vivian advanced to a position, squadrons en échelon, having the 1st regiment of hussars on its left, in a hollow along the Brussels road east of Quatre Bras. The picket of the 18<sup>th</sup> regiment of hussars was on the Namur road, close to Piraumont and those of the 10th regiment of hussars south of Quatre Bras.<sup>44</sup>

During the night of the 16<sup>th</sup> and the whole morning of the 17<sup>th</sup> of June, the brigade of Sir Ormsby Vandeleur was probably north east of Quatre Bras.<sup>45</sup> During the night, the brigade of Von Dörnberg was somewhere between the Bois de Bossu and the Brussels road, south of

Quatre Bras. During the morning, it moved more towards the Namur road and Hautain le Val.<sup>46</sup> The moment the French cavalry approached the crossroads, Grant's brigade was somewhere towards Hautain le Val.<sup>47</sup> It was also around 11 a.m. that the right squadron of the 15<sup>th</sup> regiment of hussars which was in picket at Hautain-le-Val was called back to its regiment. Of the Union brigade, at least the Scots Greys began to put themselves into readiness by 4 a.m., to advance up to the wood by 10 a.m. There, they formed their line until they were pulled back.<sup>48</sup> By 2 p.m. both brigades of British heavy cavalry were in the second line, probably near the Brussels road near Quatre Bras.<sup>49</sup> All troops of the Royal Horse Artillery were near the cavalry brigades to which they were attached. Captain Gardiner's troop had almost reached Nivelles on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June; by 2 a.m. it had marched off again and left for Quatre Bras where it joined the brigade of Vivian.<sup>50</sup> Mercer's troop, being attached to the brigade of Vandeleur, was immediately east of Quatre Bras, in rear of the farm, its front towards Sart-Dame-Avelines.<sup>51</sup> Captain Ramsay's troop was probably in the vicinity of the brigade of Von Dörnberg. Captain Webber Smith arrived with his troops on the battlefield between 10 and 11 a.m. and joined the brigade of Sir.C.Grant.<sup>52</sup> The troops of Bull and Whinyates were in reserve, but their locations are unknown.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Wachholtz, F.von - Geschichte des herzoglich Braunschweigischen Armeekorps etc. p.35

Major Von Wachholtz in his report dated 16th September 1841. In: former [www.1815.ltd.uk](http://www.1815.ltd.uk) Original in:

Colonel Von Herzberg, of the Brunswick staff. In: BL, Add.ms.34.706.11

Another (anonymous) officer, of the 1st battalion 95th regiment, claims the skirmishing broke out at 2 a.m. In: Letter cited in: Swiney, G. - Historical records of the 32<sup>nd</sup> (Cornwall) light infantry p.125

<sup>2</sup> Lieutenant Fr.Bülow (battalion Münden), in a letter dated 26<sup>th</sup> August 1815. In: Kannicht, J. - Und alles wegen Napoleon p.206

3. For this action see:

Captain Von Scriba. In: NHH, Hann.41.XXI, nr.151 p.32-35

Scriba, C.von - Das leichte Bataillon etc. p.84

Mercer, C. - Journal of the Waterloo campaign. Vol. p.259

The general Hanoverian report. In: NHH. Hann.41.XXI, nr.156 p.27-49

Lieutenant Riddock (44<sup>th</sup> regiment). In: BL, Add.ms.34.706 p.293-297

Schneidawind, F. - Der letzte Feldzug etc. p.82

Captain Wildman (7<sup>th</sup> regiment of hussars), aide de camp of Lord Uxbridge, in his letter to his mother dated 19<sup>th</sup> of June 1815. In: NAM, nr.8112-53

Martinien, A. - Tableaux etc. p.236, 246

Lieutenant colonel Müller of the battalion Bremen gives a full listing of the losses sustained by the battalion:

Killed: one corporal, one skirmishers, four privates.

Wounded: captain Von Lepel, ensign Brüel, Meyer, two subalterns, one corporal, three Schützen, two hornblowers and 42 privates.

Missing were 23 men, but these were most stragglers. Cf. NHH, Hann.41.XXI, nr.151 p.37-40

The action is also mentioned by lieutenant Kincaid (1<sup>st</sup> battalion, 95<sup>th</sup> regiment).In: Adventures in the Rifle Brigade

According to captain Leach (1<sup>st</sup> battalion, 95<sup>th</sup> regiment) the fire between the pickets started at around 23.30 p.m. to continue until dawn. In: Rough sketches etc. p.377.

The strong skirmishing fire is also mentioned by lieutenant Hemingway. This would have been given by the flankcompanies of his regiment (the 33rd) and some German units. In: his letter dated 16<sup>th</sup> August 1815. In: Waley, D. – A new account of Waterloo p.63

Ensign Oppermann (battalion Münden, brigade Best) asserts that at that time his brigade was in third line. Cf. his letter dated 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1815. In: Kannicht, J. - Und alles wegen Napoleon p.204

4. Private Clay (2<sup>nd</sup> battalion 3<sup>rd</sup> Foot Guards). In his recollections etc. In: former [www.1815.ltd.uk](http://www.1815.ltd.uk) Original in Regimental Headquarters Scots Guards.

Lieutenant colonel Leighton-Cathcart-Dalrymple (15<sup>th</sup> regiment of hussars) mentions a musketry fire at 6 a.m. His regiment was in rear of the wood. Cf. His journal. In: NAM, nr.7207-22,14-21

Private Farmer (11<sup>th</sup> regiment of light dragoons) mentions a dropping fire of musketry kept up in the woods to the right and left of his bivouac and which continued throughout the night. In: The light dragoon p.149

According to a sergeant of the Royal Artillery drivers (battery Sandham), the skirmishing fire ceased about 7 a.m. Cf. his letter to his father, dated 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1815. In: Caledonian Mercury, 8<sup>th</sup> October 1815

5. Major Radcliffe (1<sup>st</sup> regiment Royal Dragoons, brigade Ponsonby). In: letter dated 7<sup>th</sup> July 1815 to general Sir.H.Fane. In: NAM, nr.6310-36

Parties of the Royal Horse Guards were involved in bringing wounded men to the rear as well. Cf. private J.Rothwell in a letter to his brother dated 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1815. In: The Waterloo Journal. Vol.32 nr.2 p.33-34

6. The atmosphere that morning is vividly described by:

Colonel Van Zuylen van Nijevelt. In: Historisch verhaal etc. In: NA, nr.2.13.14.01 nr.8

Mercer, C. - Journal of the Waterloo campaign. Vol.I, p.257-261

Jackson, Sir B. - Notes and reminiscences of a staff officer p.26-31

The squadron of captain Kennedy Clark of the Royal Dragoons assisted in transporting wounded to Quatre Bras. In: BL. Add.Ms. 34.703 p.3-5

<sup>7</sup> Cf. bulletin of baron Van de Capellen dated 7.30 a.m. He states that the courier had left from Genappe at 5 a.m. but this is in relation to the distance - almost 30 kilometres - impossible. Other than that, Wellington got at Quatre Bras by 5 a.m., so he sent the man out before that same hour.

8. Account of lord FitzRoy Somerset. In: NAM, Book of manuscript copies of Waterloo letters. Nr.6507-1

9. Lieutenant Hope (92<sup>nd</sup> regiment). In: Letters from Portugal etc. p.236. Hope was right in rear of Quatre Bras and could see what was happening on and around the Brussels road.

Captain Jessop (QMG department) says the duke arrived on the ground soon after daylight. In: Recollections of Waterloo, by a staff officer p.8

<sup>10</sup> HL, MS61 WP 7.2.20 p.553

<sup>11</sup> Journal of Constant Rebecque In: NA, 2.21.008.01 nr.25

Constant Rebecque claims he left Nivelles before dawn. That may have been at 3 or 3.30 a.m.

He also states that the prince arrived at Quatre Bras one and half hour later than he did; in case he did around 4.30, this was around 6 a.m. This also corresponds to the time Wellington arrived.

12. Siborne, W. - History of the war in France etc. Vol.I p.246

13. Sir Basil Jackson believes it was between 6 and 7 a.m. In: Notes and reminiscences of a staff officer p.26

This confirmed by captain Jessop (QMG department). In: Recollections of Waterloo, by a staff officer p.8

According to Lord FitzRoy Somerset Wellington left Genappe at 3 a.m. and sent out Gordon immediately after his arrival at Quatre Bras. This may well have been then around 5.30 a.m. In: NAM, Book of manuscript copies of Waterloo letters. Nr.6507-1

Wellington himself states that he sent him out "shortly after daylight." In his memorandum, dated 1842. In: WSD, Vol.X p.527

According to Aerts, it was between 3.30 and 4 a.m. that Gordon was sent out; in his mind he returned before 7 a.m., having covered almost 20 kilometers. In: Etudes etc. (manuscript) p.101, 108 and 110

14. Liddell, R.S. - The memoirs of the tenth Royal hussars p.140-141

Lieutenant Bacon (member of the escorte). In: BL, Add.Ms.34.708 p162-166

Lieutenant colonel Manners (10th regiment of hussars). In: BL, Add.Ms.34.703.23

According to Von Müffling it was Delancey himself who was dispatched, but this is extremely unlikely.

Von Müffling in a letter written to general Von Hofmann. In: Hofmann, G.W.von - Zur Geschichte etc. p.135 and in: The memoirs of baron Von Müffling etc.p.240

Wellington himself states Gordon was escorted by two squadrons of the 10<sup>th</sup> regiment of hussars. Cf. his memorandum. In: WSD, Vol.X, p.513-531

15. Another source states it was at about five miles from Quatre Bras, but this near to Les Trois Burettes which is way too much to the front, into enemy territory. Cf. Boger, A.J. - The story of general Bacon p.121

16. Liddell, R.S. - The memoirs of the tenth royal hussras p.140-141

17. Cf. Bleibtreu, C. - England's grosse Waterloo-Lüge p.154

In some accounts it is being asserted that Grey and Gordon found the Prussians near Tilly and that they actually spoke to general Zieten. Cf.

Cf. Müffling, F.von. In: WSD, Vol.X,p.512

Müffling, F.von – The memoirs of baron Von Müffling etc. p.240

Von Müffling in a letter written to general Von Hofmann. In: Hofmann, G.W.von - Zur

Geschichte etc. p.135 Von Müffling also claims here that it was Delancey, but at the same time he calls him an adjutant of the duke, which is more in line with Gordon's position.

Ollech, Von - Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.179

Houssaye, H. - 1815.Waterloo p.259

Hamilton-Williams, D. - Waterloo, new perspectives p.237.

Boger, A.J. - The story of general Bacon p.123

However, from the description given by Bacon one can clearly derive that it was near Mellery.

Also Aerts and Von Lettow Vorbeck have their doubts about the encounter as described above.

Cf. Aerts, W. - Etudes etc. (manuscript) p.110-111

Lettow Vorbeck, O.von - Napoleons Untergang Vol.III p.360

In his memorandum, Wellington himself asserts that Gordon met general Zieten at Sombreffe ! In: WSD, Vol.X.p.513-531

18. Lieutenant Bacon. In: BL, Add.Ms.34.708 p.162-166

19. Some say it was 7 a.m. Cf.

Lord FitzRoy Somerset. In: NAM, Book of manuscript copies of Waterloo letters. Nr.6507-1 Von Müffling. He states the information dropped in by chance, without mentioning any courier. In: C.v.W. Geschichte des Feldzugs der Englisch-Hanovrisch-Niederländisch-Braunschweigschen Armee etc.p.18

Major Von Wachholtz in his report dated 16<sup>th</sup> September 1841. In: former [www.1815.ltd.uk](http://www.1815.ltd.uk) Original in: NSA, VI HS.18 nr.8

Lettow Vorbeck, O.von - Napoleons Untergang. Vol.III.p.360

Aerts, W. - Etudes etc. (manuscript) p.110

Bleibtreu, C. - England's grosse Waterloo-Lüge p.155

Others believe it was between 7 and 8 a.m. Cf.

Lieutenant R.Winchester (92<sup>nd</sup> regiment). He states that he then "received intelligence that Blücher was retiring with his army on Wavre." In: BL, Add.ms.34.706 p.242-247

For 7.30 a.m., see:

Houssaye, H. - 1815.Waterloo p.259

Ollech, Von - Geschichte des Feldzugs von 1815 etc. p.179

Liddell, R.S. - The memoirs of the tenth Royal hussars p.140-141

Baron Vincent states that Wellington learned about the Prussian retreat at 8 a.m. and this may very well be the news transmitted by Gordon. He writes: "[...] à 8 heures du matin lui [Wellington] parvint la nouvelle que le maréchal Blücher [...] avait été forcé de se retirer jusqu'à Wavre [sic] [...]". Cf. his letter of the 17th of June, 5 p.m. to prince Schwarzenberg. Original in Kriegsarchiv Vienna. From: GSA, VPH-HA, VI, nr.VIII nr.3 p.36-38

F.de Bas claims it was 9.30 a.m. Cf. Bas, F.de & T'Serclaes de Wommersom - La campagne de 1815 aux Pays Bas. Vol.II p.3

Sir Basil Jackson claims it was 10.00 a.m. In: Notes and reminiscences of a staff officer p.31  
According to lieutenant Bacon it was just before 9 a.m. In: BL, Add.Ms.34.708 p162-166  
Also see: Journal of Constant Rebecque In: NA, 2.21.008.01 nr.25  
According to major general Hussey Vivian, the patrol of Gordon had returned within one hour; in that case it would have left at 8 a.m. In: BL, Add.Ms.34.707 p.19

According to captain Jessop (of the QMG department) Gordon and his party returned by 10 a.m. In: Recollections of Waterloo, by a staff officer p.10

20. Cf. Von Müffling. In: Hofmann, G.W. - Zur Geschichte des Feldzugs von 1815 p.135  
For 9 a.m. of Von Massow: Cf. Sir Augustus Frazer. In his letter dated 17<sup>th</sup> June 9.30 a.m. In: Sabine, E. Letters of colonel Sir Augustus Frazer p.542  
Von Müffling – The memoirs of baron Von Müffling etc. p.241  
Captain Wildman believes Wellington heard about the Prussian defeat at 11 a.m. Cf. his letter dated 19<sup>th</sup> June 1815 to his mother. In: NAM, nr.8112-53  
The arrival of a Prussian officer of the general staff is confirmed by sir George Scovell. Cf. his account. In: NAK, WO 37 / 12, fol.2  
According to Von Pflugk Hartung, Massow reached Wellington at 8 a.m. or later. In: Wellington und Blücher am 17.Juni p.378

<sup>21</sup> Captain Ch.Wood in a letter to the editor of the USJ, dated 11th June 1841. In: USJ, 1841 II p.389  
Wood claims his information led Wellington to retire his army, as Gordon would have arrived too late to make this possible. However, this is not correct.  
Also see: Liddell, R.S. - The memoirs of the tenth royal hussars p.140-141  
Von Müffling states that Wellington sent out adjudants to find out about the Prussians, but who reported back to the duke that the French occupied the namur-road. In: Geschichte des Feldzugs der englisch-hanovrisch-niederländisch-braunschweigschen Armee etc.p.18

22. Captain Bowles (Coldstream Guards) in a memorandum. In: A series of letters of the first earl of Malmesbury, his family and friends Vol.II p.446-447  
Bowles doesn't mention the name of Gordon.

<sup>23</sup> Journal of Constant Rebecque In: NA, 2.21.008.01 nr.25

<sup>24</sup> Von Müffling – The memoirs of baron Von Müffling etc. p.240  
Von Müffling. In: Hofmann, G.W. - Zur Geschichte des Feldzugs von 1815 p.135

<sup>25</sup> Von Müffling in a letter written to general Von Hofmann. In: Hofmann, G.W.von - Zur Geschichte etc. p.136

26. WD, edition of 1852 p.144

They have been taken from De Lacy Evan's copies as he adds to them:

*NOTE. The foregoing orders issued at about 9 o'clock on the morning of the 17th June, on the ground of the action at Quatre Bras, in consequence of the Prussian Army being found to have retired from the position of Ligny.*

*Copied from the Duke's writing. Saw the Duke write them while seated on the ground. They are my own original copies, taken at the moment.*

<sup>27</sup> HL, MS61 WP 8.2.4

The last part can be found as a separate note, without date or signature in the archives of prince Frederik or Orange with a few slight differences, as:

"Pr. F. will move from [...] Enghien this evening and take up the position in front of Halle, occupying Braine le Chateau with two battons [sic].

Coll. [sic] Estorff to fall back on Halle & put himself under the orders of P.F."

Under the note is stated in another handwriting: "at 3 o'clock" – could this be the time of arrival ? The distance between Quatre Bras and Enghien is approximately 38 kilometres; presuming the order left around 9 a.m., it could reach the prince between noon and 1 p.m.

In: KHA, A37 VIIIb4

28. KHA, nr.A40 XIII 10

29. Cf. Hervey in a letter to Mr.Carroll (1815) in: Leeds, F. A contemporary letter on the battle of Waterloo. Nineteenth Century 1893 p

According to Sir George Scovell, present at Quatre Bras, Wellington would have said to colonel De Lancey: " We must retire, but there is no cause to be in a hurry. " Cf. account of Sir G.Scovell. In: NAK, WO/12 fol.4

These words probably have been taken from those of Von Müffling who advised the duke not to start the retreat right away, but that at least in his experience the French would not advance before 10 a.m. Cf. WSD, Vol.X.p512 and Von Müffling's memoirs p.240-241

Von Müffling erroneously claims that Wellington ordered the retreat after the receipt of Von Massow's information, but as has been shown that this is impossible from the hours involved. In: Hofmann, G.W. , Zur Geschichte des Feldzugs von 1815 p.136

Aerts also shows that Wellington issued his orders before 9 a.m. In: Etudes etc. (manuscript) p.103

The fact that the orders were issued around 8 a.m. can also be derived from the fact that for instance in these orders sir G.Clinton is being asked to leave from Nivelles at 10.00 a.m. In case this order would have left headquarters after 9.00 a.m. this would have been impossible. Taking into account one hour for the ride to Nivelles and the time prepare the march, the order was issued around 8 a.m.

30. Siborne, W. - History of the war in France etc. Vol.I p.250-251

31. Cf. Sir H. Vivian. In: BL, Add.Ms.34.707 p.50-57

<sup>32</sup> Von Müffling – The memoirs of baron Von Müffling etc. p.240

<sup>33</sup> In the early evening of the 17<sup>th</sup> of June, baron Van Panhuys – the representative of the Netherlands at Prussian headquarters – wrote to baron Van der Capellen: “Le duc de Wellington avait fait dire ce matin que s’il apprenait que le feldmaréchal n’étant pas en état de le soutenir en cas d’attaque, qu’il prendrait une position à Braine la Leu (Waterloo).” In: NA, 2.04.01 nr.771

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Account of lord FitzRoy Somerset. In: NAM, Book of manuscript copies of Waterloo letters. Nr.6507-1

Cf. account of Constant Rebecque. in: NA, 2.21.008.01 nr.25

Also see the memoirs of major Van Gorkum of the general staff of the army of the Netherlands.

Cf. the observations on the 17<sup>th</sup> of June.

35. Hibbert, C. - The Wheatley diary etc. p.60

Captain Von Brandis, aide de camp of colonel Von Ompteda, mentions a move of the brigade to the chaussée before 11 a.m. but doesn’t describe it in detail. In: Dehnel, H. - Erinnerungen deutscher Officiere etc. p.284

Siborne erroneously claims the brigade also was in Sart-à-Mavelines; this was impossible due to the fact that this village was in rear of the extreme left flank. In: History of the war etc. Vol.I p.252

36. Siborne, W. - History of the war in France etc. Vol.I p.252

Lieutenant Pattison (33<sup>rd</sup> regiment) mentions this march towards the Bois des Censes. In: BL, Add.Ms. 34.707 p.509-512

37. Cf. lieutenant Pattison (33<sup>rd</sup> regiment). In: BL, Add.Ms.34.707 p.509-512

38. Siborne, W. - History of the war in France etc. Vol.I p.252

Also see major Müller of the battalion Bremen who indicates that the brigade rejoined the division and the Brunswickers near Genappe. From this can be seen that the brigade formed a rearguard.

Of the same battalion around 10.30 the 1st and 2nd company, led by major Müller, were sent towards the Namur road in order to clean their muskets.

During the retreat, however, both these two companies rejoined the brigade. Two other companies led by colonel Langrohr also was left at Quatre Bras, but for whatever reason remains unclear. They too, joined the brigade near Genappe.

Cf. major Müller and captain Von Scriba. In: NHH. Des.41 E, XXI<sup>k</sup> Nr.2 37-40 and

Hann.41.XXI, nr.151 p.32-35

<sup>39</sup> Shaw Kennedy, J. - Notes on the battle of Waterloo p.17-18

<sup>40</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> lieutenant Köhler (Leib-battalion) in his report dated 20<sup>th</sup> December 1827. In: NSA, VI Hs.18 nr.7.2

Private Bosse (2<sup>nd</sup> company 3<sup>rd</sup> battalion of the line) in his diary. In: NSA, 249 AN 191

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Hofschröder, P. - The Waterloo campaign The German victory p.25 He cites from Kortzfleisch, Vol.II p.84-85

For the distribution of the supplies, see: Colonel Von Herzberg, of the Brunswick staff. In: BL, Add.ms.34.706 p.23-55

Ensign Lindwurm (4<sup>th</sup> company, 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion of Brunswick line infantry) confirms that all commanders of the battalions of the line complained about lieutenant colonel Von Specht, commander of the brigade of line –infantry, by leaving the field on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June under the pretence that he was unwell. In a letter dated 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1815. In: NSA 249 AN190

42. Cf.diary of the Nassau regiment. In: VPH, nr.71

43. Historisch verhaal etc. In: Bas, F.de & T'Serclaes de Wommersom - La campagne de 1815 aux Pays Bas. Vol.III p.325

Lieutenant colonel Grunebosch. In: NL-ZuRAZ, Van Löben Sels, 0302 inv.nr.265

44. Sir H.Vivian. BL. Add.Ms.34.707 p.50-57

Captain Taylor (10<sup>th</sup> regiment of hussars). In a letter to mr.Brownrigg, dated 16th july 1815. In collection A.Lagden.

Captain Von der Decken (1<sup>st</sup> regiment of hussars). In: NHH, Hann.41.XXI, nr.152 p.27-29

Lieutenant colonel Manners (10<sup>th</sup> regiment of hussars). In: BL. Add.Ms.34.703 p.103-108

According to lieutenant Cartwright of the 10<sup>th</sup> regiment of hussars, skirmishing lasted from 4 till about 10 a.m. I his letter to his mother, 21<sup>st</sup> June 1815. In: The memoirs of the 10<sup>th</sup> royal hussars p.163

45. Captain Tomkinson (16<sup>th</sup> regiment light dragoons). In: BL. Add.Ms.34.708 p.177-181

Captain C.Mercer. In: Journal of the Waterloo campaign Vol.I p.265

46. Aerts, W. - Etudes etc. (manuscript) p.122

47. Aerts, W. - Etudes etc. (manuscript) p.122

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Private Boulter (Scots Greys) in his letter dated 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1815. In: NAM, nr.9501-118

49. Aerts, W. - Etudes etc. (manuscript) p.122

50. Lieutenant Ingilby (Gardiner's troop). In: BL, Add.Ms.34.706 p.465-467

Lieutenant Swabey, letter dated 24<sup>th</sup> June 1815. In: King's Hussars Museum

According to Gardiner the general retreat started shortly after his arrival, so maybe he arrived at 8.00 a.m. Cf. his journal. In: NLS, MS 3615 p.66

51. Mercer, C. - The journal of the Waterloo campaign. Vol.I p.265

52. Captain Walcott (troop of Webber Smith). In a letter he mentions 10 a.m. In: BL. Add.Ms. 34.704 p.184-185