

Napoleon re-divides his forces.

Napoleon moves towards Quatre Bras.

To support Ney to take Quatre Bras, Napoleon decided to move the 6th army-corps and the Imperial Guard to Marbais and to join them himself some time later. It was now around 10.30 a.m. ¹ The corps of Lobau was in a position north of Ligny, towards Sombreffe. From here it moved towards the Namur-road. Having been on the extreme left flank, in front of Wagnelée, the division of Subervie advanced via the Roman road and Les Trois Burettes. ² At some distance, the imperial guard followed in its wake. ³ The Young Guard was north of Saint Amand La Haye, while the grenadiers, the 1st regiment chasseurs and the heavy cavalry of the guard were north of Ligny.

The whole infantry of the Imperial Guard (except for the Young Guard) was assembled north of Ligny by 10 a.m. ⁴ Shortly after that Napoleon ordered it (plus the corps of Lobau), to march to Marbais. It did so at 11 a.m. (⁵) and followed the corps of Lobau. It marched in columns of sections. Between Brye and the Bois Delhütte, the Imperial guard was obliged to halt two or three times in all probability to restore some order in the column. ⁶

The letter written at noon by Soult to Ney shows that, by that time, both the Imperial guard and the corps of Lobau were between Le Trois Burettes and Marbais.

Not long after sending Lobau and the Imperial guard away, Napoleon sent Grouchy out on a mission; by then it was running towards 11 a.m. (see below). After completing the orders for Grouchy, and knowing that Quatre Bras was still held by Wellington, Napoleon now urged Ney to occupy the crossroads immediately. Accordingly, he sent Ney the following order:

En avant de Ligny, le 17 Juin, à midi.

à M.le maréchal Prince de la Moskowa 4^e [?] corps d'armée à Gosselies

Monsieur le maréchal, l'empereur vient de faire prendre position en avant de Marbais à un corps d'infanterie et à la garde impériale; Sa Majesté me charge de vous dire que son intention est que vous attaquiez les ennemis aux Quatre Bras, pour les chasser de leur position, et que le corps qui est à Marbais secondera vos opérations. Sa Majesté va se rendre à Marbais, et elle attend vos rapports avec impatience.

*Le maréchal d'Empire, major général,
Duc de Dalmatie ⁷*

It was between noon and 12.30 p.m. that Napoleon himself left the battlefield of Ligny for Marbais with the corps Milhaud and the division of Domon. ⁸ Following the road leading to Nivelles, Napoleon got south of Marbais around 1 p.m. ⁹

The reason for the emperor of halting here may have been that he was awaiting the news of Ney about the situation at Quatre Bras. However, this news did not come and, what was even worse, it soon appeared that Wellington had not evacuated the crossroads at all. Napoleon, growing very impatient, now sent out the following order to Ney:

Monsieur le prince de la Moskowa,

Je suis surpris de votre grande retard à exécuter mes ordres. Il n'y a plus de tems [sic] à perdre; attaquez avec le plus grande impétuosité tout ce que est devant vous. Le sort de la

patrie est dans vos mains.

1 heure après midi

*Napoleon*¹⁰



Contemporary buildings at Marbais.

The French column heading for Quatre Bras was preceded by a detachment of 100 men of the 7th regiment of hussars (brigade Jacquinot).¹¹ The detachment was pushed back by the British outposts, which were near the Bois Delhütte and Sart-à-Mavelines.¹² By now, Napoleon had decided to march straight towards Quatre Bras, without waiting for Ney. For this reason he placed his troops in the following positions: the artillery of the Imperial Guard and the 6th corps in the centre, the infantry of both these corps in the second line, Milhaud and Subervie to the right of the road and Jacquinot and Domon to the left of it. This formation was taken up next to the Bois Delhütte, on and on both sides of the road.¹³ From here to Quatre Bras was three kilometers.

At the same time, Napoleon sent out 500 horsemen towards Frasnes to communicate with Ney. However, by moving north of the Bois Delhütte and the Bois de Bruyère the group met with the red lancers of the Imperial Guard who held them for British cavalry. A skirmish of musketry fire ensued which however was soon brought to an end.¹⁴

During the march of the French towards Quatre Bras, their right flank was reconnoitred by patrols of light cavalry. In fact, it was before 2 p.m. that count Von Gröben was driven from his post near Marbais by French "Seitenpatrouilles". Later, as Von Gröben mentions, the "Seiten-Detachements" advanced over Tilly and later through Strichon and Villers-la-Ville, after which Von Sohr slowly went back towards Mont-Saint-Guibert. In all probability, these French horsemen were lancers or *chasseurs à cheval* of the division of Subervie, which moved north of the Namur-road.¹⁵

Grouchy's mission.

It was towards 11 a.m. that Napoleon told marshal Grouchy that he had to move the 3rd and the 4th corps of infantry towards Point du Jour.¹⁶

Point du Jour is at the crossroads of the roads towards Gembloux and Namur and that was where to both Exelmans and Pajol were reconnoitring the enemy. Pending further information resulting from these activities, Grouchy was to halt at Point du Jour and to await Napoleon's further instructions there. The conversation lasted just a couple of minutes.¹⁷ Then, Grouchy left Napoleon for Ligny between 11 and 11.30 a.m.¹⁸

Shortly after Grouchy had left for Ligny, however, Napoleon changed his mind about the use of both Domon's and Milhaud's cavalry. Napoleon felt he needed more cavalry for his own forces which were supposed to go to Marbais and from there to Quatre Bras. For that reason he sent Grouchy the following order through Bertrand:

Ordonnez au général Domon de se rendre sur le champ à Marbais. Il y sera sous les ordres du Comte de Lobau. Il dirigera des détachements sur les Quatre Chemins, route de Bruxelles, et se réunira par la gauche avec les troupes des 1er et 2e corps, qui occupent ce matin le village de Frasne et qui doivent aussi marcher sur les Quatre Chemins, où les Anglais sont supposés être. Ordonnez au général Milhaud de se rendre à Marbais. Il aura devant lui la cavalerie légère du général Domon. Il y trouvera le corps du Comte de Lobau et la garde.

Ligny, ce [sic] 17 Juin

Dicté par l'Empereur en l'absence du major général,

le grand maréchal,

*(signé), Bertrand*¹⁹

Eventually, the units led by Grouchy were the 3rd (not including the cavalry of Domon) and the 4th infantry-corps, the division of Teste of the 6th corps and the cavalry corps of Pajol (not including the division of Subervie) and of Exelmans. Teste's division was attached to Pajol's corps. In total Grouchy disposed of a force of about 30.000 men with 104 guns.²⁰

It was after 12 o'clock that Milhaud and Domon moved towards Marbais; Milhaud did so by turning around Sombreffe towards the Namur-road, while Domon may have moved to Les Trois Burettes via Wagnelée and the Roman road. Domon preceded Milhaud.²¹ Near Marbais, Domon attached his division to Lobau's corps, as he was ordered to do.

While the artillery and the infantry marched over the road itself, the cavalry moved through the adjacent fields.²² Another division of cavalry which was pulled by Napoleon to the main army was the one of Subervie (corps of Pajol). During the battle of Ligny, the division had fought in the vicinity of the 3rd corps, and then had probably been temporarily attached to this corps.²³

Grouchy received Napoleon's order related to the cavalry of Milhaud and Domon when he was on his way to general Gérard at Ligny. Shortly after, he met Soult, who was - in his turn - on his way from Fleurus to Napoleon. It was shortly after he had left Napoleon that Grouchy received Exelmans' report which dated from about 10.15 a.m. As this was the information Napoleon was waiting for, he immediately forwarded it to him.

In the possession of further information of both Pajol and Exelmans, Napoleon now decided to issue more particular orders to Grouchy. As Soult still had not returned from Fleurus, Napoleon had Bertrand write them. By then it was between 11.30 and 12.00 a.m. The document reads:

Ligny, 17th June 1815

Marshal, proceed to Gembloux with the cavalry corps of general Pajol, the light cavalry of the

4th corps, the cavalry corps of general Exelmans, the division of general Teste, of which – being detached from its army corps - you will take particular care, and the 3rd and 4th corps of infantry. You will explore towards Namur and Maestricht, and you will pursue the enemy. Explore his march and inform me about his movements, so that I will be able to find out what he wants to do. I transfer my headquarters to Quatre Chemins [sic], where the English were still this morning. So, our communication will be direct along the paved road to Namur. In case the enemy has evacuated Namur, write to the general commanding the 2nd division militaire at Charlemont to occupy Namur with several battalions of the national guard and a battery which he will organize at Charlemont. He will give the command to a brigadier-general. It is important to find out what the enemy wants to do; either he separates from the English, or they still want to unite to cover Brussels and Liège, in trying out the fate of another battle. In all cases, keep your two corps of infantry constantly united in a league of ground, and occupy every evening a good military position, having several avenues of retreat. Post intermediate detachments of cavalry, so as to communicate with headquarters.

Ligny, 17th June 1815

Dictated by the emperor in absence of the major-general, (signed) Bertrand ²⁴

Shortly after this order was written and sent, Soult dropped in from Fleurus. Napoleon had intended to write to Ney, and now this ran through Soult again. This resulted in the order as issued to Ney at noon.

As a result of the arrival of Exelmans report, Grouchy sent his aide de camp Bella to Gembloux to meet Exelmans and to see for himself about the latest situation there and to report back to him. Bella did so about three hours later (see below).

The division of Girard.

Initially, as a member of the 2nd corps, the division of Girard was supposed to join Napoleon with the main body of his army but not long after, it was decided by high command to be kept on the battlefield. During the battle it had suffered terribly: from the 3925 men, 1900 had fallen. The remaining 2000 men, now led ad interim by the senior colonel Matis (former commander of the 82nd regiment of the line) were put at the disposal of the *ordonnateur général* and baron Percy, the *chirurgien en chef* of the army. In this capacity the division was assigned the asks to bring the wounded from the field to ambulances in the neighbouring villages and Charleroi. At the same time, the division was used to restore order at Fleurus and to protect convois which were arriving there from Charleroi. ²⁵

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1. Some say it was 10 a.m.:

Ropes, J.C. - The campaign of Waterloo p.203

Löben Sels, E.van - Bijdragen tot de krijgsgeschiedenis etc. Vol.IV.p.

Charras - Histoire de la campagne de 1815 p.236

Ollech, Von - Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.172

Houssaye thinks it was 11 a.m. In: 1815.Waterloo p.232

2. According to Grouchy the division of Subervie marched with the 6th corps. In: Réfutations du livre Gourgaud etc. In: Grouchy, G.de - Mémoires du maréchal de Grouchy Vol.V p.172

3. De Mauduit claims the guardsmen found the 6th corps at Marbais; this meant that the corps of Lobau halted there for some time, for the guard to come up. In: Les derniers jours de la grande armée Vol.II p.207

4. General Petit's account of the Waterloo campaign. In: The English Historical Review. Vol.XVIII. 1903 p.324

J.F.Friant - Vie militaire etc. p.386

The battalion of sappers and miners, having been attached to the 3rd corps on the 15th of June, had not seen any action on the 16th. Now, it was re-united with the Imperial Guard. Cf. Lomier, E. – Le bataillon des marins de la garde p.448

5. Mauduit, H.de Les derniers jours de la grande armée Vol.II p.207

Colonel Duuring claims his regiment (the 1st regiment of chasseurs) left its position after noon.

General Christiani (2nd regiment of grenadiers) says it was 11 a.m. or noon. Cf. d'Avout, A. L'infanterie de la garde à Waterloo. In: Le Carnet de la Sabretache. 1905. p.33-54 and 107-128

Baron Rogniat confirms the army started to move between 11 a.m. and noon. In: Réponse aux notes critiques de Napoleon p.270

6. Mauduit, H. de - Les derniers jours de la grande armée Vol.II p.207

Mauduit erroneously mentions the Bois de Villers Peruin, in stead of the Bois Delhütte.

Colonel Duuring (1st battalion of chasseurs) would have got the instruction to go to the emperor, but shortly after that he met general Friant who instructed him to remain where he was. Cf. d'Avout, A. L'infanterie de la garde à Waterloo. In: Le Carnet de la Sabretache. 1905. p.33-54 and 107-128.

7. SHD, nr.C15, 1-5

Quinet, E. - Histoire de la campagne de 1815 p.426

Duc d'Elchingen - Documents inédits p.44

Pontécoulant, F.G.de - Souvenirs militaires. p.237

The general staff presumed Ney to be at Gosselies, while Ney had written from Frasnes on the evening of the 16th.

8. According to Charras Napoleon was then in a carriage. In: La campagne de 1815 Vol.I p.250

Colonel Petiet (staff-officer of Soult) claims Napoleon was escorted by his duty squadrons. In: Souvenirs militaires p.203

Delloye also believes it was after noon. In: Napoleon dans sa dernière campagne. Special number of the bulletin of the SBEN.1996. p.43

9. According to a local tradition, Napoleon would have made a halt at the house of a local at Marbais, called Delestange. Here, the emperor would have taken a small nap in a summer-house. Cf. Piérart, Z.J. - Le drame de Waterloo p.237

Delloye (see above) mentions a brief halt at Les trois burettes.

10. Cf. copy given by Chandler. In: Waterloo, the hundred days p.89

It would have been sold in 1970 at Sotheby's London. The order has the following note, written by colonel Gourgaud: "*Ordre d'attaquer la position de Quatre Bras écrite de la main de l'empereur Napoleon le seize juin [crossed out here: de juillet] mil huit cent quinze pour le maréchal Neij. Le général aide de camp de l'empereur le baron Gourgaud.*"

Gourgaud dates the document on the 16th of June, but by 1 p.m. on the 16th of June there was nothing for Napoleon to be surprised of in the sense of Ney not attacking Quatre Bras. In fact, Napoleon did not expect Wellington to be there in force and with that, that the crossroads would have to be contended for. However, witnessing the silence at Frasnes – Quatre Bras on the 17th of June from the Namur road just south of Marbais, the emperor realized Ney still hadn't moved even though Soult had just urged him to do so.

In this, Soult had also made it quite clear that Napoleon, coming from Marbais with part of his army, would support him in his offensive.

Other than that, the 2 p.m.order of the 16th of June not even makes the slightest allusion to any order just issued one hour ago. And if there would have been an order of this kind at 1 p.m. Soult would have written it. Now, in the absence of Soult on the 17th of June, at that particular hour, Napoleon wrote it himself.

11. Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de France etc. p.109

The only hussars present were those of the 7th regiment (Jacquinot's division).

It had spent the night at Villers Peruin. Cf. Chef d'escadron Dupuy - Souvenirs militaires etc.

D'Erlon had left the infantry division of Durutte plus three regiments of the division of Jacquinot near the battlefield, the moment he left for the one of Quatre Bras on the evening of the 16th of June. Cf.Durutte in the Sentinelle de l'armée, 8th March 1836

12. These were the men of the picket of the 18th regiment of hussars.

13. Mauduit, H.de - Les derniers jours de la grande armée Vol.II p.210-211

Lieutenant Hay (12th regiment of light dragoons) confirms the presence of a force of about 22.000 men with about 50 guns, in three lines. Cf. Hay, W. - Reminiscences under Wellington p.169

All in all there were about 28.000 men.

According to sergeant Cогlan (18th regiment of hussars) the French approached from a wood, in a very good order. Apart from that, the French guns opened fire. In: History of the 18th hussars

Sir H.Vivian, In his diary. In: Vivian, Cl. R.H.- Vivian, first baron Vivian p.271

14. Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de France etc. p.109-110

¹⁵ In this context, Napoleon claims that on the evening of the 17th of June general Milhaud " qui avait marché avec son corps pour maintenir les communications avec le maréchal Grouchy, rendit compte qu'il avait eu connaissance d'une colonne de cavalerie ennemie, qui, de Tilly s'était repleyée en toute hate sur Wavres."

If there would be some truth in this statement, it was clearly not through Milhaud as in cases like this no heavy cavalry was used, let alone a whole corps. In case there were patrols, they were composed of light cavalry, such as that from Subervie. In: Mémoires pour servir etc. p.114

Berton, in his turn, states a patrol of the 4th regiment chasseurs à cheval (division of Domon) would have pushed through as far as the bridge over the Dyle at Moustier. The regiment would have been detached by Domon to survey the left bank of the Dyle, as well as the area between the Dyle and Brussels road. There would have been an exchange of some carbine-fire with the Prussian cavalry. After that, the French would have returned to their division.

The mission in this way is very doubtful as the distance to Moustier is more than twelve kilometres. Yet, it confirms that French cavalry was patrolling on the right flank of the main army. In: Précis historique etc. p.50

16. Different hours are mentioned for the moment Grouchy was sent away:

11 a.m.:

Houssaye, H. - 1815. Waterloo p.232

Noon:

Grouchy. In: Observations sur la relation etc. In: Mémoires etc. Vol.V p.117 and in Relation succincte etc. p.19

Quinet, E. - Histoire de la campagne de 1815 p.304

Ropes, J.C. - The campaign of Waterloo p.206

Charras - Histoire de la campagne de 1815 p.239

12.30 p.m.:

Grouchy in "Bataille de Waterloo, par un combattant de Waterloo", from 1818. In: Mémoires du maréchal de Grouchy, Vol.V p.79

Le Sénécal. In: Mémoires du maréchal de Grouchy. Vol.IV p.128

Colonel De Bloqueville. In: Mémoires etc. Vol.IV p.146

1 p.m.

Grouchy. In: Réfutations du livre Gourgaud etc. In: Mémoires du maréchal de Grouchy. Vol.V p.113

Fragments historiques etc. In: Mémoires du maréchal de Grouchy. Vol. V p.275

Reaction to Rémy and Barthelémy. In: Mémoires du maréchal de Grouchy Vol.V p.498

Allocution du maréchal Grouchy. In: Le maréchal Grouchy du 16 au 19 Juin 1815 p.117

In another version Grouchy claims it was 1.30 p.m. Cf. Grouchy, In: Appendice. Campagne de 1815. Pièces officielles etc. p.15

¹⁷ Grouchy. In: Relation succincte p.21

¹⁸ Grouchy himself claims it was 1 p.m. In: Fragments historiques etc. In: Mémoires etc. Vol.V p.317

19. In: SHD, nr. C15, 5

This order is not mentioned in the register of staff. It was unknown for a long time, until Grouchy published it in 1842.

Chuquet dates it at 11.30 a.m., but the copy from Vincennes has no indication of time. In: Inédits Napoléoniens p.471

20. This figure is based upon the following calculation:

3rd corps: 12.500 + 40 guns

4th corps: 11.300 + 38 guns

Teste: 2700 + 8 guns

Pajol: 1300 + 6 guns

Exelmans: 2600 + 12 guns.

In all, about 5000 cavalry.

Grouchy himself mentions a number of 32.000 men. Cf. Grouchy in: Réfutations du livre Gourgaud etc. In: Mémoires du maréchal Grouchy Vol.V p.137 and in: Observations sur la relation etc. p.137 (of which 4870 cavalry).

Elsewhere, Grouchy gives a total 31.000. In: Fragments historiques etc. In: Mémoires du maréchal de Grouchy Vol.V p.277 At the same time, here he grossly exaggerates the Prussian strength, being of about 100.000

Gourgaud comes to 35.220 + 110 guns, but includes the division Girard. Exclusive this division, his total then is 32.060 + 102 guns.(he assigns both the 3rd and the 4th corps 38 guns each).

²¹ That morning, lieutenant general Delort had written his report to general Milhaud:

Mon général,

La 14e division de cavalerie, après avoir exécuté divers mouvements du centre à la droite et à la gauche de l'armée, a reçu directement l'ordre de l'Empereur, vers six heures et demie du soir, de se porter sur-le-champ à la poursuite de l'ennemi, en traversant Ligny. Parvenue sur les hauteurs qui dominent ce village, elle a rencontré une forte masse de cavalerie prussienne, appuyée par des carrés d'infanterie et par plusieurs batteries d'artillerie.

Malgré ces obstacles, le 1er escadron du 5e régiment à peine formé, ayant à sa tête le maréchal de camp Farine, le colonel Frère, de votre état-major, a chargé avec la plus grande vigueur et avec toute l'impétuosité possible la première ligne de cavalerie des ennemies qui a été enfoncée et mise en plein déroute, après avoir laissé bon nombre de morts sur le champ de bataille.

Une seconde ligne de cavalerie étant venue au secours de la première, les 5e et 10e de cuirassiers, successivement formés et avec ordre, ont encore culbuté cette seconde ligne avec la même intrépidité, sans être intimidés par le nombre des escadrons prussiens, trois ou quatre fois supérieure au notre.

L'ennemi, voulant à toute force reprendre le plateau sur lequel je venais de m'établir, pour appuyer les troupes de la garde impériale, nous a, en quelque sorte, environnés de son feu de mousqueterie et d'artillerie, tandis que sa cavalerie menaçait de nous charger de front, sur le flanc droit et en queue.

Dans une position aussi critique, des charges ont été exécutées sur tous les points, des carrés d'infanterie ont été enfoncés, mais un feu très meurtrier duquel ma division a beaucoup souffert, et la nuit survenue, nous ont empêchés de profiter de tous les avantages que nous avions

obtenus. Quelques prisonniers, parmi lesquels un officier général de cavalerie, et un obusier attelé sont restés en notre pouvoir. Cette pièce a été enlevée par le 9e de cuirassiers. Le colonel Frère et le général Farine ont été gravement blessés. Je l'ai été moi-même dans la première charge, mais légèrement, d'un coup de sabre au bras droit.

Je vous ferai connaître, mon général, par un rapport spécial, mes pertes en tués et blessés, ainsi que le nom des officiers, sous-officiers et soldats qui se sont le plus distingués. Je me borne à présent à vous dire que ma division, au milieu du feu le plus vif et le plus soutenu, est restée inébranlable, faisant toujours face à l'ennemi et le repoussant, de quelque côté qu'il se présentât.

Dans les divers charges exécutées à la fin de la journée, le prince Blücher a été renversé de cheval, est resté près d'une heure en notre pouvoir et ne s'est sauvé de ce danger extrême que parce qu'il n'a pas été reconnu par les uns ou qu'il a été réputé mortellement blessé par les autres.

Agréez, etc.

Le lieutenant général, Baron Delort

In: Delort. Notice sur les batailles de Fleurus et de Mont de Saint p.371-373

An other version, with some slight differences in details can be found in: Stoff, L. - Essai etc. p.129-130 The main difference lies in the extra sentence at the end stating: "*Le colonel Legay d'Arcy m'a parfaitement secondé et mérite le grade de commandant de la Légion d'honneur.*"

22. Mauduit, H.de - Les derniers jours de la grande armée Vol.II p.211

²³ At 10 p.m. Grouchy wrote to Pajol: " Vandamme a donné ordre à Subervie de vous rejoindre; ne l'a t'il donc pas fait ? " This would be an indication that, at that time, Grouchy (and Vandamme) were still unaware of the fact that the emperor had drawn it to his own army.

²⁴ SHD, nr. Based upon the original as supplied by mr. Du Casse in 1865.

Also see:

Cf. Grouchy, In: Appendice. Campagne de 1815. Pièces officielles etc. p.17-18

Quinet, E. - Histoire de la campagne de 1815 nr.7

Pollio takes this last version, but leaves out two important words: "[pour couvrir Bruxelles] et Liège." In: Waterloo p.300

De Pontécoulant, F.G. - Souvenirs militaires etc. p.198-199

He claims he bases himself upon the authentic handwriting, yet his version is different as the one published here. Apart from a few minor differences, he adds "sur le champ" right after "rendez-vous" in the beginning of the document and leaves out "et Liège". In his main text, however, while citing from the same order he quotes it as "Bruxelles et Liège."

Grouchy, G.de - Mémoires du maréchal de Grouchy. Vol.IV p.50-51 This version is different as the original copy from Vincennes. Houssaye publishes this version as well. In: 1815.Waterloo p.237

The order was published separately in 1840 by Bauduin, Paris under the title: " Ordre de l'empereur Napoléon au maréchal Grouchy, reçu sur la route de Namur, où Napoléon avait enjoint de se rendre au moment où il quitta le champ de bataille de Ligny pour se porter aux Quatre Bras. D'après la lettre autographe du grand maréchal du palais Bertrand. " Cf. Piérart,

Z.J. - Le drame de Waterloo p.238

Pascallet published it in 1842. Cf. Notice biographique sur le maréchal Grouchy p.79-80

Adolphe de Grouchy dates the order at 3 p.m. Cf. Grouchy, G.de Mémoires du maréchal de Grouchy. Vol.IV p.241

Chuquet dates it at 11.45 a.m. but the original has no indication of an hour. In: Inédits Napoléoniens p.471-472

25. Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de France etc. p.98

Charras - Histoire de la campagne de 1815 Vol.I p.180

Colonel Matis himself states in his unpublished memoirs: “Le lendemain de la bataille de Ligny, ma division (celle de Girard) fut appelée au grand quartier général, qui était aux Quatre Bras [...] Une heure après, je recus l’ordre de me rendre à Fleurus pour y arrêter des maraudeurs qui commettaient des désordre; et protéger l’arrivée des convois destinés à l’armée.” In: Quinet, E. - Histoire de la campagne de 1815 p.437-438

The surgeon d'Héralde (12th regiment of light infantry) doesn't give any useful information, as he was at Charleroi to take care of general Girard, who had got wounded at Saint Amand.

In: Delloye, S. - Les mémoires du chirurgien Dominique d'Héralde p.27

Grouchy claims the division was left at Fleurus to guard this village and to evacuate the wounded from the field. In: Réfutations du livre Gourgaud etc. in: Grouchy, G.de - Mémoires du maréchal de Grouchy, Vol.V p.112

Another publication claims Matis was left behind to care for the wounded and to guard Charleroi. Cf. Arvers, P. - Historique du 82^e régiment d'infanterie de ligne p.162