

French headquarters.

At dawn, the first thing Napoleon had on his mind was to make sure whether Wellington still held his position. From several reports it soon became clear that he did. ¹ As a result Napoleon issued – through Sout – from Le Caillou the following order for the necessary preparations; by then it may have been about 5 a.m. ²

At imperial headquarters, 18th June 1815

The emperor orders that the army will be ready to attack the enemy at 9 a.m.

The army-corps commanders will assemble their forces, will prepare their weapons, and allow the soldiers to prepare soup; they will also allow them to eat, so that by 9 a.m. sharp everyone is ready and can enter into the order of battle with his artillery and ambulances in the position of battle which the emperor has indicated through his order of yesterday evening.

The lieutenant-generals commanding the army-corps of infantry and cavalry will immediately send officers to the chief of staff to report about their positions and to carry orders.

*The marshal of the empire, chief of staff,
Duke of Dalmatia ³*

Apparently, Napoleon felt it was possible to start the attack by 9 a.m. but in the following hours of the early morning more information dropped it became clear that this was impossible due to the scattered state of the army. ⁴ The duke of Bassano, seated at Le Caillou, wrote about to the minister of foreign affairs at a time that the situation was developing:

Son Excellence le ministre des affaires étrangères. De la ferme de Caillou près Plancenoit, le 18 juin 1815

Monsieur le duc,

J'ai reçu les deux tables de chiffre d'après la méthode de M.Henrichs que Votre Excellence a bien voulu m'envoyer. Je la prie de vouloir bien me faire connaître si elle a eu la complaisance d'envoyer une table pareille à M.le comte Berlier pour ma correspondance avec lui. Cette correspondance sera très suivie et ce serait un avantage que de pouvoir se servir alternativement du chiffre ordinaire et du chiffre nouveau.

Dans la situation actuelle de l'armée, les communications sont faciles d'un corps à l'autre, mais cet état de choses changera vraisemblablement bientôt. S.M. ordonne de me pourvoir d'un certain nombre de tables que je puisse donner au major général pour cette correspondance. J'ai l'honneur de vous prier de m'envoyer d'abord six, puis six autres et d'ordonner qu'elle soit différente de celle que je viens de recevoir. Peut être même conviendrait-il qu'il n'y eut pas plus de trois tables semblables. Le chiffre d'un des corps d'armée peut tomber entre les mains de l'ennemi et trahirait tous les autres.

La campagne a commencé par un très beau succès. La victoire de Ligny sous Fleurus est d'une très haute importance. La droite et le centre ont écrasé l'élite de l'armée Prussienne. Le moral de cette armée s'en ressentira longtemps. La gauche n'a pas obtenus des résultats aussi décisifs mais ils ont aussi leur importance.

Lord Wellington commandait en personne au combat des 4 chemins, entre Sombreffe et Nivelles. Les anglais, surtout les écossais ont été très maltraités. On évalue leurs tués et leurs

blessés à 4 mille hommes. Notre armée est aussi bonne que dans nos temps les plus prospères. Quoique le temps nous contrarie, nous aurons bientôt d'autres nouvelles à vous annoncer. À l'exception du général Letort, qui a été grièvement blessé, dès le début et avant les affaires d'importance toutes les personnes que Votre Excellence connaît à l'armée se portent bien.

*Veillez agréer etc.
Le duc de Bassano*⁵

It may have been at Le Caillou that a local guide, with the name of Jean Baptiste Decoster, was led to Napoleon. Decoster was a Flemish peasant, owing a tiny farm on the east-side of the Brussels-road, between La Belle Alliance and the farm of Rossomme, about 800 metre north of this farm, in the corner of the road and the track leading to Plancenoit. His capacity of speaking French was poor. Having fled for the French army on the evening of the 17th of June to the forests of the abbey of Aywiers, Decoster and his family had spent the night there. The next morning he visited the church at Plancenoit and from there he went to his see his brother in Plancenoit. Here he was asked by French officers whether he knew the surroundings. Having said he did, he was sent to Napoleon, accompanied by a letter of recommendation.⁶⁻⁷



Decoster, as depicted on 16th September 1815.

It may have been towards 7.30 a.m. that Napoleon sat down for breakfast at Le Caillou with some members of the imperial staff, like Bertrand, Soult, the duke of Bassano, his brother Jérôme, Drouot, Ney and others.⁸ There is no doubt that the main subjects discussed here were the announcement of the general way how Napoleon intended to fight the battle against

Wellington, the time needed for the troops to arrive in the front line to take up their planned positions, the time needed for the fields to dry up and the situation of the enemy. At the same time, Ney was assigned the tactical control of the battle.⁹

In this situation, Wellington was not the only subject of discussion. In general terms, the situation of the Prussian army was discussed as well. Patrols had sourced the information since the day before that a fairly strong column of Prussian forces had been heading towards Wavre, but this was not considered an immediate threat.¹⁰

The meeting led Napoleon to see about the situation of his forces for himself and after finishing his breakfast he accordingly left Le Caillou, followed by his staff. By then it may have been about 8 a.m.¹¹ From Le Caillou, he advanced over the chaussée as far as La Belle Alliance and a bit beyond, to the line of skirmishers.¹² From here he assured himself about the enemy's presence and gave colonel Haxo, commander of the engineers the instruction to find out about any entrenchments in Wellington's position.¹³

As Napoleon was near La Belle Alliance, he was in the immediate vicinity of the 1st corps taking up its positions and from there he probably went for some distance into its positions east of the Brussels road.¹⁴ Here, he also spoke briefly with d'Erlon.¹⁵ Wherever Napoleon went, acclaims of those units in his immediate vicinity were obviously inevitable.

It has been suggested as if Napoleon, when leaving his post near La Belle Alliance for Rossomme, would have inspected his full army as it took up its positions.¹⁶ Yet, this so-called "inspection" was restricted to his passage to and from the centre of his frontline and - for some extent - to one for some distance into the 1st corps on the right wing.¹⁷

Napoleon was dressed in his usual outfit: the long grey greatcoat, the typical black cocked-hat and black boots. His uniform may have been the one of a colonel of *the chasseurs à cheval* of the Imperial Guard, i.e. a green dolman, with white facings and white trousers.¹⁸ He rode his charger called Marengo.¹⁹

As he was heading back, Napoleon could see for himself how the 2nd corps, the 6th corps and the Imperial Guard were advancing towards their positions in the order of battle as he had designed it the evening before.

The initial position chosen by the emperor for conducting the battle was on a knoll just south of the farm of Rossomme, to the west of the road, and south of a track which leads from there to the Bois du Caillois. Engineers had cut steps in the slope for easy access. Napoleon and his staff most probably reached it somewhere between 9.30 and 9.45 a.m.²⁰

Napoleon and his staff installed themselves on the height as straw had been put on the ground, furniture installed and maps were unfolded.²¹ As Napoleon sat down, Soult was in his immediate vicinity and the others at some distance awaiting instructions.²²



The knoll just south of the former farm of Rossomme and the view south from there, west of the chaussée.

It was somewhere before 10 a.m. that Napoleon received Grouchy's report from Gembloux, dated 10 p.m.²³ It prompted Napoleon to write Grouchy through Soult and he wrote him accordingly:

*In front of the farm of Caillou
18th June 1815, 10 a.m.*

Marshal, duke of Dalmatia, chief of staff, to His Excellence marshal Grouchy, at Gembloux or in front

Marshal, the emperor has received your first report dated at Gembloux. You only speak to His Majesty about two Prussian columns which have passed through Sauvenières and Sart-à-Walhain; yet, reports say that a third column, which was rather strong, has passed through

Géry and Gentinnes, heading for Wavre. The emperor charges me to inform you that at this moment the emperor will be attacking the British army which has taken up a position at Waterloo, near the forest of Soignes.

Thus, His Majesty desires that you will direct your movements upon Wavre, in order to approach us, to establish an operational connection and to link communications, while pushing in front of you the forces of the Prussian army which have taken this direction and which could halt at Wavre, where you ought to arrive as soon as possible.

You will pursue the enemy columns which have taken to your right with some light troops in order to observe their movements and pick up their stragglers.

Inform me immediately about your dispositions and your march, as well as about the intelligence you have about the enemy and do not neglect to link your communication with us. The emperor desires to have news from you very often.

*The marshal of the empire, chief of staff,
Duke of Dalmatia ²⁴*

The order was handed over to colonel Zenowicz and he left with the order around 10.30 a.m. ²⁵

It had been since the day before that patrols of Subervie had been on the look out to the east to find out about any enemy presence. That day they had passed through or along Tilly, St.Géry, Strichon, Villers la Ville, Ways, Bousval, Thy and they now continued into the valley of the Lasne. ²⁶ By 9.30 a.m. they bumped into Prussians patrols which preceded some kind of force which was east of Chapelle Saint Lambert. This information was passed on straight to central headquarters. ²⁷

Puzzled by its identity and exact intention, high command concluded that this Prussian force was either looking for a possible union with Wellington beyond Brussels or for one south of the forest of Soignes. Therefore, count Lobau was given the task of controlling the right flank of the main army and take precautions in case this Prussian force would threaten the army. It was therefore that Ney wrote him – most probably around 10.30 a.m. - the following instruction:

The English are massed on the Mont Saint Jean, that means in front of the forest of Soignes. In case the Prussians pull back beyond Brussels and Soignes, restrict yourself in sending thousand horsemen in pursuit and come to join us with your forces. However, in case they attempt to come in front of the forest at that Mont Saint Jean, form a screen and bar their road.

Ney ²⁸

By the time Lobau got it, his forces were already on the move towards the order of battle opposite Mont saint Jean. As a result of these instructions, Lobau decided to send his 1000 men strong cavalry-division of Domon to a position on the extreme right flank of the 1st infantry corps, between the Bois de Ranson and that of Fichermont, facing east. ²⁹ Here, the 7th of hussars (division Jacquinot, 1st corps) now linked up to Domon's left flank. ³⁰

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¹ Cf. Baudus, M.E.G. de - Etudes sur Napoleon p.224

General Drouot. In: Cf. Additional particulars to the battle of Waterloo etc. Vol.II p.111

Colonel Gourgaud's account. In: AN, Fonds Gourgaud 314 AP30

Gourgaud. La campagne de 1815 p.71

Mémoires pour servir etc. p.121 Here Napoleon claims he received this information from reconnaissances and also two Belgian deserters.

² According to Houssaye it could have been between 4 and 5 a.m. In: 1815.Waterloo p.316

3. In: SHAT (copy), nr.C15 nr.5

WSD, Vol.X p.501

Duc d'Elchingen. Documents inédits p.52

De Pontécoulant, erroneously, dates it at 8 a.m. In: Souvenirs militaires p.339

Marchand claims that Napoleon dictated a text to Gourgaud early that morning; this may very well have been this document, yet as written down by Soult and not Gourgaud. In: Mémoires etc. p.163

⁴ Marchand claims that Napoleon sent out colonel Gourgaud by daybreak to find out about the state of field. Drouot, from his side, would also have pointed to the dreadful state of the ground. In: Marchand, L.J.N. - Mémoires de Marchand etc. p.162-163

⁵ Tondeur, J.P., P.Courcelle, P.Meganck, J.J.Pattyn - Le Caillou. Waterloo 1815. Les Carnets de la campagne no.10 Editions de la Belle Alliance, 2007 p.88

6. Jean Baptiste Decoster (1762-1826) came from Korbeek-Lo, near Leuven. He was married and had seven children. After 1815, he went living at JoliBois as his farm had been badly mauled during the battle and as the house had to be reconstructed he couldn't afford the rent. According to Decoster himself, he owned in 1815 more than 1.5 hectares of land (2 bonniers). The house of Decoster is not indicated on the map of Ferraris. Now, it is called the ferme De Koster. Other names of the house are: maison Lacoste, maison Gorlier, maison Ledecq, ferme Minne. Nowadays, the house is very hard, if not impossible to recognize, as it has highly changed by modern brick facades, the extension with a barn on its south side and the addition of an extra floor (in 1947).

Cf. Barral. - L'épopée de Waterloo p.111

Barral, G. - Itinéraire etc. p.121

Neck, L.van - Waterloo illustré p.112

Lachouque, H. - Waterloo p.191

Navez, L. - Le champ de bataille et le pays de Waterloo en 1815 et actuellement p.170

In total, three accounts of Decoster are available. These are no direct accounts, but ones written down by others on his behalf. In some respects they overlap, but in many others they don't and are therefore extremely confusing.

The first one is one taken by a traveler from Decoster at Waterloo on the 15th of August 1815. It recalls that Decoster would have been led to Napoleon but where remains obscure. It situates Napoleon between 1 and 4 p.m. near Rossomme and between 4 and 7 p.m. on the roof of [!] Decoster's house.

Cf. The battle of Waterloo also of Ligny and Quatre Bras etc. Vol.I p.153-154

The second would have been given by Decoster at Waterloo at the cabaret Jean de Niveles, this version being translated from an attested copy in Brussels, on the 16th of January 1816.

Here it is suggested as if Decoster met Napoleon in the farm of Rossomme in the early morning. Napoleon would have left the farm at noon for a position on the opposite knoll, which he would have kept until 5 p.m. when he moved to a position opposite the farm of Decoster himself.

Cf. Additional particulars to the battle of Waterloo etc. Vol.II p.116-121

Smithers, H. - Observations made during a residence in Brussels and several tours through the Netherlands etc. p.258-263

Both accounts make no allusion to Napoleon's visit to the frontline. The third account, however, does. It is not dated and states that Decoster was introduced to Napoleon in a house opposite the place where Napoleon had spent the night [Le Caillou]. From there, Napoleon advanced beyond La Belle Alliance from where he observed the enemy's position. No mention is made of the position near Rossomme. Cf. The battle of Waterloo also of Ligny and Quatre Bras etc. Vol.I p.154-155

In the first account, Decoster is portrayed as someone of whom Napoleon particulars "about every house, tree, wood, rising ground etc." while in the second his information seems to have been limited to that one the distance of several cities in Brabant in relation to the battlefield.

About this last element one can have serious doubts about its correctness: first of all as Napoleon was not a fool and was well able to read maps and secondly while it cannot be expected from Decoster, as a local peasant, to know about all these distances.

All in all, there is reason to have doubts whether Decoster would not have been of very much use to Napoleon.

Napoleon would also have asked him for information only before the battle, not during the battle itself. Cf. Decoster cited by jonkheer Reneke de Marees van Swin, who met him on the battlefield on the 29th of June 1818. In: Mededelingen van de Vereniging Officieren Cavalerie, Dec.1966, nr.4

Adkin expresses his doubt whether Decoster has ever been a guide at all, as a careful investigation of his credentials would have cast serious doubts on this. When confronted with a blacksmith from La Belle Alliance, Decoster would have been unable to refute that they had been in hiding together some 10 miles away on the day of the battle. Where Adkin has acquired this information is unclear. Cf. The Waterloo companion p.148

7. According to a local tradition, another guide would have been led towards the emperor. This man was Joseph Bourgeois, from Odeghien (a hamlet about 8 kilometres northwest of Braine l'Alleud). Being too nervous, however, he was dismissed. In: Houssaye, H. – 1815.Waterloo p.322

⁸ Napoleon dates the breakfast at 8 a.m. In: Mémoires pour servir etc. p.124

Marchand puts the breakfast later, at 9 a.m. In: Marchand, L.J.N. - Mémoires de Marchand etc. p.163

Gourgaud, in his turn, states it took place around daybreak. In: La campagne de 1815 p.72

The presence of Jérôme and Reille is confirmed by Marchand. In: Mémoires etc. p.163

For Jérôme, cf. the letter of Jérôme to his wife, dated 15th July 1815. In: Bonaparte, J. Mémoires et correspondances etc. Vol.VII p.21 and in Martinet, A. Jérôme Napoleon, roi de Westphalie p.273

Colonel Trefcon, chief of staff of the 5th division of Bachelu, says that Reille himself was with his corps and that he met Napoleon outside near Le Caillou, just as the emperor had finished his breakfast. In this situation, hours more or less match: as Napoleon was leaving Le Caillou (at 8.a.m.) Reille was about to halt his corps near this farm. In: *Carnet de campagne* p.185-186

Reille himself doesn't mention any meeting with Napoleon that morning at all. In: *Documents inédits* p.60-61

Reille's presence at the breakfast held in Le Caillou is therefore highly unlikely.

Napoleon mentions the presence of several officers, but doesn't give any names, except for Ney. In: *Mémoires pour servir etc.* p.124

Saint Denis mentions Bertrand and Soult. In: *Souvenirs du mameluck Ali sur l'empereur* p.110

⁹ By daybreak, Ney had sent out his aide de camp Levassieur to find out about the intentions of the enemy and about the state of the field. Levassieur learned from the vedettes that it seemed as if the enemy was intending to threaten the French right wing. He then went to Ney, whom he found with Napoleon [at Le Caillou] and to whom he told this information. In: *Souvenirs etc.* p.295-296

¹⁰ Foy claims he had eaten a meal, accompanied by Jérôme Bonaparte, at the inn of the Roi d'Espagne during the night of the 17th of June. During this meal, the waiter had told them he had heard on the 16th of June an officer of Wellington's staff say that Wellington was planning to make a stand at the entrance of the forest of Soignes with the intention that the Prussians - by coming from Wavre - would attack Napoleon on his right flank.

The version of this event is repeated elsewhere by Foy in a slightly different way, in the sense that an officer of Wellington's staff would have stated on the 17th of June that Blücher was falling back upon Wavre with the intention to join Wellington south of Brussels.

The first version is simply nonsense as by the evening of the 16th of June there was no such thing as an intended retreat of Wellington to Mont Saint Jean, nor any of the Prussians as far as Wavre, so let alone any intention for a junction south of Brussels.

It cannot be fully excluded, however, that some information about a Prussian retreat upon Wavre, and no more, may have seeped through along this line on the 17th of June.

If this would be correct, it can only have been some foreign member of Wellington's staff speaking French as it is highly unlikely that a local waiter in 1815 in Genappe was able to understand English.

Cf. General Foy in his journal. In: Girod de l'Ain, M. - *Vie militaire du général Foy* p.275, 278-279

Cf. Glover, G. - *Waterloo, myth and reality* p.173

Colonel Baudus states that Soult, fearing Wellington's strength, would have advised the emperor to call back Grouchy but this would have been in vain. Cf. Baudus' *Notes sur la campagne de 1815* In: *Bibliothèque Thiers, Fonds Houssaye Ms.T 2605 nr.597*

¹¹ Couquébau. In: *La Belle Alliance. Ode dédiée à S.A.R. la princesse d'Orange etc.*

Couquébau is the pseudonym of Henri Boucqueau, the son of the proprietor of Le Caillou in 1815.

Jardin, equerry of Napoleon, claims it was 9.30 a.m. Cf. his account. In: Beaucour, F. - La campagne de Waterloo vue par Jardin L'Aîné, un écuyer de Napoleon In: Bulletin de la Société belge d'Etudes Napoleoniennes (1992), nr.17 p.27

Decoster, Napoleon's guide, believes it was 6 a.m. In: Smithers, H. – Observations etc. p.258

Delloye puts the departure on 9 a.m. In: Napoleon dans sa dernière campagne p.49

For adjudant Zenowicz it was 9 a.m. In: Waterloo, déposition etc. p.28

The fact that Napoleon left after his breakfast to the frontline is corroborated by Marchand. In: Mémoires etc. p.125

Also see Gourgaud. In: AN, Fonds Gourgaud 314 AP30

¹² Mémoires pour servir etc. p.125

Gourgaud. La campagne de 1815 p.72 and in: AN, Fonds Gourgaud 314 AP30

Marchand. Mémoires etc. p.163

D'Erlon confirms the visit of Napoleon to his outposts to verify himself of the fact that Wellington had chosen position. He would have said to d'Erlon: "Ordonnez aux troupes de faire la soupe, de mettre les armes en état, et nous verrons vers midi." In: Le maréchal Drouet, comte d'Erlon etc. p.97

The instructions were probably given at a much earlier hour (cf. the order of the very early morning), but the expectation to assess the situation towards noon confirms the order as issued by 11 a.m. (see below).

Since long, the Fédération touristique du Brabant has marked a position not far from La Belle Alliance on the high bank on the south side of the road which leads towards Plancenoit as the observation post of Napoleon during the battle. In itself, this is incorrect, but it might be that it was this position which Napoleon used as a vantage point during his brief reconnaissance in the morning hours.

¹³ Mémoires pour servir etc. p.125

Lieutenant Riddock (44th regiment, brigade Pack) states that around 9 a.m. a group of about 30 horsemen passed the Anglo-German-Netherlands frontline at a distance of about 100 metres of the line from right to left. They were fired at by the brigade of Best, and then went off. This group may very well have been the reconnaissance as done by Haxo.

This also applies to the group of French officers, protected by a squadron of hussars, which - according to major Van Gorkum - advanced over the Brussels road almost to the farm of La Haye Sainte. He mentions a time of 8 a.m.

In: BL, Add.ms.34.704 p.122-126

In: Nagelaten papieren (private collection).

¹⁴ This position may have a relation to the position as marked as an observation post by the Fédération touristique du Brabant, on the north side of the road which connects La Belle Alliance to Plancenoit, not far from La Belle Alliance. In: Speeckaert, G.P. & I.Baecker. Les 135 vestiges etc. p.128

The source of this allocation remains unknown.

Zenowicz, however, mentions the brief observation as done by the emperor and Soult, while having the suite further to the rear from a knoll in front. In: Waterloo. Déposition etc. p.28

¹⁵ Cf. D'Erlon himself. He states the emperor would have said: "ordonnez aux troupes de faire la soupe, de mettre les armes en état, et nous verrons à midi." In: Le maréchal Drouet etc. p.97

16. In: Mémoires pour servir etc. p.132-132

Cf. Houssaye, H. 1815. Waterloo p.326

Saint Denis does the same but situates it the moment after the units had taken up their positions.

In: Souvenirs etc. p.145

17. Lieutenant Martin (45th regiment of the line) In: Souvenirs etc. p.284

Canler, L. (28th regiment of the line) In: Mémoires de Canler p.26

Marchand mentions the enthusiasm of the troops the moment Napoleon left Le Caillou, but as such doesn't mention an inspection. In: Mémoires etc. p.163

However, colonel Trefcon, chief of staff of the division of Bachelu, clearly states the enthusiasm of the division in seeing Napoleon. In: Carnet de campagne p.186

According to captain Chapuis, his regiment, the 85th of the line (Durutte's division), was not allowed to cheer as it passed the emperor when it moved towards its position in the frontline. In: Waterloo. Notice p.45

On the 16th of June a general order had gone out stating: "Ordre de ne point rendre d'honneurs à l'Empereur quand il se trouve aux avant-postes."

A visit of Napoleon on his right wing was obviously caught up by allied units, such as those of Best and others. Cf. General Best. In: VPH, nr.24 and in BL, Add.Ms. 34.704 p.278-282

Lieutenant Müller of the Hanoverian artillery. In: Kannicht, J. - Und alles wegen Napoleon p.70

Lieutenant Hope (92nd regiment). In: Letters etc. p.246

Sir Hussey Vivian. In: BL, Add.ms.34.706 p.99-107a

Lieutenant Von Berckefeldt (Münden battalion). In: Geschichte des Königlich Hannoverschen Landwehr Bataillon Münden. He confirms the cheering of "Vive l'empereur"

18. According to lieutenant Putigny (33rd regiment, division Berthézène) Napoleon wore the uniform of a colonel of the grenadiers of the Imperial Guard during his visit on the battlefield of Ligny on the 17th of June. In: Putigny, B. - Le grognard Putigny, baron d'Empire n.p.

Decoster confirms the boots, the trousers, the coat and the hat. Yet, he mentions that Napoleon wore a violet waistcoat. Decoster spoke to professor Benzenberg in the summer of 1815. Cf. Benzenberg's letter to Gneisenau, dated 30th august 1815. In: Delbrück, H. Das Leben etc. Vol.IV p.614

19. The horse would have got wounded on the tigh; after that Napoleon would have ridden his white Arabian mare called Marie. Cf. Maxwell, H. The life of Wellington. Vol.II p.60.

Another historian claims he rode on Marie first (10 a.m. to 3 p.m.), then Desirée (3 p.m. until 7 p.m.) and then Marengo. He would have left it at Le Caillou during the general retreat to switch for another horse. Cf. Barral, G. – Itinéraire etc. p.64

According to Decoster he would have ridden a small, grey horse. Decoster spoke to professor Benzenberg in the summer of 1815. Cf. Benzenberg's letter to Gneisenau, dated 30th august 1815. In: Delbrück, H. Das Leben etc. Vol.IV p.614

²⁰ Gourgaud confirms the return from the frontline to a knoll near Le Caillou. In: AN, Fonds Gourgaud 314 AP30

Mémoires pour servir etc. p.133

On the other hand, the plan in the Mémoires situates him around 10 a.m. west of the *chaussée*, about half way between the farm of Rossomme and the Decoster house.

Baudus. Etudes sur Napoleon p.225

Craan, W.B. An historical account etc. p.14

Mauduit, H.de – Les derniers jours etc. Vol.II plan (position nr.1)

Lemonnier-Delafosse, J.B. – Souvenirs militaires p.230

Aerts, W. – La nuit de Napoleon etc. p.12-18

²¹ Baron Petiet. In: Souvenirs militaires p.213 He assigns him a position near to La Belle Alliance by the way.

Jardin, equerry of Napoleon. Cf. his account. In: Beaucour, F. - La campagne de Waterloo vue par Jardin L'Aîné, un écuyer de Napoleon In: Bulletin de la Société belge d'Etudes Napoleoniennes (1992), nr.17 p.27

Baudus – Etudes sur Napoleon p.225

Chef d'escadron Lemonnier-Delafosse – Souvenirs militaires p.230-231

²² Chef d'escadron Lemonnier-Delafosse – Souvenirs militaires p.230-231

This aide de camp of general Foy was for about two hours waiting for the divisional artillery not far north of Napoleon's position on the Brussels road.

²³ The distance Gembloux – Le Caillou is about 30 kilometres. In case the messenger left Gembloux around 11 p.m. and as he had to travel in darkness, it might have cost him between four and five hours to reach imperial headquarters.

For 4 a.m. see: Matason, R.J. - The Napoleon-Grouchy dispatches of 17-18 June 1815: another look p.23

24. Copy in register of staff. In: AN, Nouv.acq. nr.4366

Aerts, W. - Opérations etc. p.227-228

Grouchy, G.de - Mémoires du maréchal de Grouchy. Vol.IV p.79, Vol.V p.161-162 and p.229-230

Grouchy, de - In: Fragments historiques etc. p.21

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

Soult erroneously cites Grouchy with Sauvenière as one of the directions the Prussians would have gone to; this should be Perwez.

25. Zenowicz, G. - Waterloo. Déposition etc. p.29-30

Zenowicz himself states he arrived at Le Caillou at 10 a.m. and that he had to wait there for at least one hour, and then left towards noon, which would have been a few minutes before the battle started. As this was actually around 11.30 a.m., it would then have been towards 11.30 a.m. that he left.

Yet, in connection to the distance he had to travel (more than 45 kilometres) and his time of arrival (4 p.m.), it is not more than logical to suppose that Zenowicz left around 10.30 a.m. as it would take him at least 5 hours to cover the distance involved.

Zenowicz rode through Rossomme, Le Caillou, Genappe, Quatre Bras, the Roman road, Gembloux and Walhain to the heights of Wavre. The fact that Zenowicz rode through Gembloux is confirmed by Zenowicz himself.

It remains a mystery why colonel Zenowicz was allowed to carry out a delicate mission like this as he was not an imperial aide de camp or *officier d'ordonnance*. Cf. Maes, P. - 18 Juin 1815. Enquête sur un ordre du Caillou etc. In: Special ABN, nr.65 p.52

²⁶ Cf. Reports of count Von Groeben, colonel Von Ledebur (18th of June) the confrontations of the British cavalry with French cavalry at the Dyle, the one of Falckenhausen with a patrol at Maransart and the Prussian messenger carrying a letter of Bülow, who was taken prisoner by a patrol, probably somewhere in the area Lasne, Beau-Chêne, Cheval de Bois.

Captain Taylor (10th regiment of hussars) explicitly refers to a French patrol passing along a road away to his left, in search of any Prussian presence. In: BL, Add.ms.34.703 p.80-90

Military logic is that a force such as Napoleon carried with him obviously had reconnaissances on both of its flanks. On its left flank on the 17th and 18th of June, French patrols were sighted between Arquennes and Nivelles, at Lillois, in the vicinity of Bois Seigneur Isaac and towards Braine le Chateau.

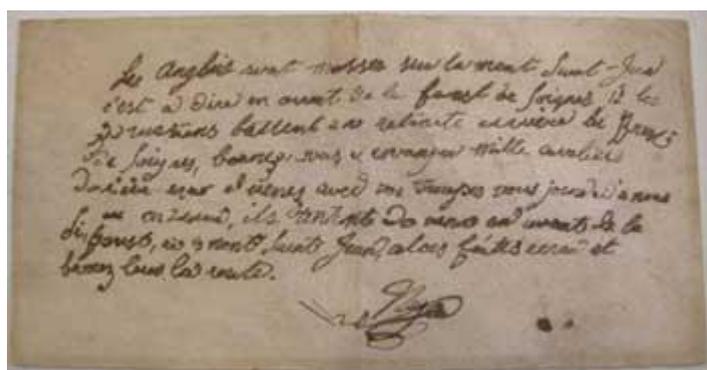
²⁷ Cf. The official French bulletin. In: Bas, F.de – La campagne de 1815 Vol.III p.551

According to De Mauduit, colonel Bro of the 4th regiment of lancers (division of Jacquinet) would also have sent out reconnaissances to the east. These patrols would have seen a squadron of Prussian lancers and runners around 11 a.m., but this news would not have been conveyed to central headquarters. In: Les derniers jours etc. Vol.II p.286

There is no reference though to these patrols in the memoirs of Bro himself.

Lieutenant general Delort confirms that news about a Prussian presence at St.Lambet had dropped in before 11 a.m. In: Stoff, L. Essai sur le général Delort, d'après ses archives et les archives du ministère de la guerre 1792-1815 p.151

²⁸ The handwriting of the main text is different as of Ney's signature. A beginning and a date are lacking. The document measures about 8 cm x 17 cm.



The document was discovered in October 2013 by the author on the website of Lord Russborough's Annex, a fine art gallery in Port Hope, Ontario, Canada where it was offered for sale. Not long after it was sold back to the descendants of Ney.

According to Russborough the document was handed down in the papers of a French emigré to Canada. In 1980 it was purchased by then wellknown Toronto dealer in manuscripts

Marskell & sons (now deceased). From 1982 until 2011 it was in the hands of a private collector in Port Hope, from whom Russborough purchased it. Cf. www.russborough.com

29. The fact that the division was placed here in the morning is corroborated by baron Bruno, commander of one of the cavalry brigades of Jacquinet's division. In: *Le 3^e chasseurs à cheval etc.* p.88

Houssaye is right in remarking that Napoleon is incorrect in stating that Domon was at a distance of 3000 toises (which is equivalent to 5580 metres) to the right. This would mean that the cavalry would have pushed as far as Lasne, which was not the case, except for its patrols. In: *1815.Waterloo* p.346

Cf. *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de France etc.* p.137

³⁰ Cf. baron Bruno, commander of one of the cavalry brigades of Jacquinet's division. In: *Le 3^e chasseurs à cheval etc.* p.88