

## The death of Sir William De Lancey. <sup>1</sup>

Wellington described De Lancey's fall thus: "De Lancey was with me, and speaking to me when he was struck. We were on a point of land that overlooked the plain. I had just been warned off by some soldiers (but as I saw well from it, and two divisions were engaged below, I said "Never mind") when a ball came bouncing along *en ricochet*, as it is called, and, striking him on the back, sent him many yards over the head of his horse. He fell on his face, and bounded upwards and fell again. All the staff dismounted and ran to him, and when I came up he said, "Pray tell them to leave me and let me die in peace." I had him conveyed to the rear." <sup>2</sup>

It is unclear whether De Lancey was mounted or dismounted when he was hit, but his cousin lieutenant colonel De Lancey Barclay (1<sup>st</sup> Foot Guards) and assistant adjutant general, would have convinced him to be carried off to the rear.

Accordingly, Barclay ordered some soldiers to bring De Lancey in a blanket to a barn of the farm of Mont Saint Jean. <sup>3</sup>

The other day, upon the instigation of Sir George Scovell, he was transferred from there to a more quiet place at a local cottage at the hamlet of Mont Saint Jean. Meanwhile, Scovell also informed De Lancey's wife who was at Antwerp through the local British commander there, general Mckenzie. At the same time, Scovell summoned expert medical help.

De Lancey had been married on the 3rd of April of that year and his wife, Lady Magdalene Hall, had been travelling with him throughout Belgium. <sup>4</sup> She now joined him in Mont saint Jean the day after the battle.

It was also here that the duke of Wellington paid him a visit on the 20th of June. <sup>5</sup>

Despite the devotion of his wife, De Lancey died on the 26<sup>th</sup> of June. <sup>6</sup> Autopsy done by Dr.Hume proved that eight of his ribs had become disconnected from his spine and that one of them had perforated one of his lungs. <sup>7</sup>

De Lancey was buried on the 28th of June at the remote churchyard of St.Josse Tennode, Brussels, south of the road to Louvain. <sup>8</sup> The tablet which marked his grave states:

"This stone is placed to mark where the body of colonel Sir W.Howe De Lancey Q.M.G. is interred.He was wounded at the battle of Belle Alliance (Waterloo) on the 18th June 1815."

In 1889 the churchyard was abolished and De Lancey's remains were interred in the British monument at the churchyard of Evere. The epitath reads:

"Here lie the remains of colonel Sir William H.de Lancey Quarter Master General of the British Army who was wounded at the battle of Waterloo June 18 and who died June 26 1815.

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1. Cf. Journal E.Heeley (assistant of Sir G.Scovell). In: NAM, nr . 8409-98  
Report of colonel Elphinstone (33rd regiment). In: BL, Add.ms.34.703 p.50

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Samuel Rogers Recollection, as quoted in: Dictionary of National Biography p.754-755.

3. Account of lady De Lancey. In: Ward, B.R. (ed). A week at Waterloo in 1815. Lady De Lancey's narrative etc. p.50-51

4. Ward, B.R. (ed). A week at Waterloo in 1815. Lady De Lancey's narrative etc. p.12-13  
Lady De Lancey lived from 1793 to 1822.

That night, or on the morning of the 19<sup>th</sup> of June lieutenant Hay (12<sup>th</sup> regiment of light dragoons) paid a visit to De Lancey. Cf. Reminiscences under Wellington p.203

Also Smithers thinks he was carried off the field on the 19th of June. In: Observations made during a residence etc. p.239

According to W. Fraser, De Lancey was dismounted, while fastening Wellington's cloak at his own saddle, when he was struck. In: Words on Wellington p.75, 201

5. Cf. Lady De Lancey. In: A week at Waterloo in 1815. Lady De Lancey's narrative etc. p.76  
In this connection it is remarkable that Wellington initially supposed De Lancey was dead (cf. his official report to Lord Bathurst of the 19<sup>th</sup> of June) but that, after having paid him a visit, he wrote to Lord Bathurst on the 22nd of June:

"It gives me the greatest satisfaction to inform you that Colonel De Lancey is not dead; he is badly wounded, but his recovery is not doubtful, and I hope will be early." Cf. WD, Vol.XII p.497

6. That De Lancey died at Mont Saint Jean and not in Waterloo becomes clear in reading the account of Lady De Lancey in which she writes about the cottage standing at roads, of which the one in front led to Nivelles. In: Ward, B.R. (ed). A week at Waterloo in 1815. Lady De Lancey's narrative etc. p.71

Cf. the tablet on his tomb at Evere and the letter of Adam to a ms.E, dated 26th June 1815. In: BL, MSS EUR F89.8

From the account of Lady De Lancey it can be understood that Sir William was also attended by surgeons Stephen Woolrich and James Powell. In: Ward, B.R. (ed). A week at Waterloo in 1815. Lady De Lancey's narrative etc. p.78,83

7. Sabine, E. (ed) - Letters of colonel Sir Augustus Frazer, K.C.B., commanding the Royal Horse Artillery etc. Letter dated 29th June 1815 (in which he quotes Dr.Hume) p.582

<sup>8</sup> The place of this old churchyard must probably have been where now the Place St.Josse can be found, opposite the church and south of the road which leads to Louvain.