

The fall of Ligny and the charge of the Prussian cavalry.

By about 6.30 p.m the emperor was informed that the mysterious column at the horizon was the corps of d'Erlon. ¹ Napoleon now decided to make a decisive effort at Ligny, hoping he would be able to isolate the Prussian their right wing from the rest of the army.

For this large-scale attack, Napoleon used nine battalions of the guard (of which three were already launched towards Ligny, i.e. the 3rd and 4th regiments of grenadiers), the heavy cavalry of the guard, the majority of the artillery of the guard and the cuirassiers of Milhaud. At the same time, Lobau was on his way to Fleurus.

To the left, the 1st regiment of chasseurs marched in a column of divisions, and was followed by the sappers and miners of the guard. To their right (at about 175 metres) marched the 2nd regiment of grenadiers in column of divisions, on half battalion distance, followed by the 1st regiment of grenadiers. The third column, some metres to the right of the grenadiers, was formed by the reserve-artillery of the Imperial guard, having 8 guns in front.

The 3rd and 4th regiment of grenadiers went in front of the 2nd grenadiers, taken in from their former position, but their exact position is not known. In second line were the heavy cavalry of the guard (to the right) and the division of Delort of Milhaud (to the left). Each of these columns had a front of a squadron of 64 files. The other division of Milhaud, the one of Wathier, somehow remained in reserve. ² The total number of troops involved in this offensive on the centre of the Prussian line was about 9000 men. ³ Meanwhile, the corps of Lobau had started to emerge from Fleurus. ⁴

About 7 p.m. Napoleon put himself at the head of this mass of troops and led them to Ligny. ⁵

At the same time the remainder of 21 Prussian battalions were struggling at Ligny (⁶) under the pressure of the troops of the 4th French corps.

Von Henckel in position near the Bois du Loup and near the brigade of Von Steinmetz, was allowed by (to him superior) major general Von Steinmetz to pull towards Sombreffe with the 4th Westphalian Landwehr and the 24th regiment of the 1st brigade. The reason for this was the fact that Henckel was requested by captain Von Grevel, an adjudant of Thielmann, to come to assistance there right away. ⁷

Von Henckel took one battalion of his 4th regiment of Westphalian landwehr [⁸] and in approaching Sombreffe, he met major general Von Borcke who said his assistance wasn't necessary at all. Henckel, furious of what had happened, now returned to his other units and the moment he got there, the French had penetrated through the Prussian centre (see below). ⁹

It was towards 8 p.m. that Napoleon's reserve approached the village of Ligny, while the village itself was bombarded by the guns of the heavy artillery of the Imperial Guard. ¹⁰⁻¹¹

Just before entering the village, the nine battalions of the Old Guard formed dense columns, loaded their weapons and would have got instructions not to take any prisoners. The moment the battalions were about to enter the village they formed sections and half-sections, depending on the ground; the men went in at a double-quick pace the moment the artillery had suspended its bombardment. ¹²

While the remainders of the corps of Gérard joined in the advance, the units of the Imperial guard now crossed through Ligny with the bayonet without encountering any serious resistance whatsoever.¹³

The Prussians left Ligny in great haste and after 20 minutes the first French troops could be seen emerging from it on the north side and they were now about to climb the heights of Brye.¹⁴

At the foot of the declivity, the first battalions of the Imperial guard (2nd, 3rd and 4th grenadiers) reformed their columns per divisions.¹⁵ They were covered by the duty-squadrons and the gendarmerie d'élite.¹⁶ Due to the presence further away of Prussian cavalry, these three regiments of grenadiers formed battalion-squares.¹⁷

Shortly after, the 1st regiments of grenadiers and of chasseurs emerged from Ligny and went to the right, in the direction of Sombreffe.¹⁸

The relation between the battle-order in which the reserve would have advanced towards Ligny and the directions of the units which formed part of it isn't always very clear, unless changes took place while advancing.

The remains 4th French corps joined in the attack of Napoleon's reserve, but their exact share remains obscure.¹⁹ Apart from this, statements about the direction of the advance are contradictory.

While from the Prussian side it is claimed that a mass of the Imperial Guard, cuirassiers and horse artillery penetrated between Ligny and Sombreffe [²⁰], from the French side the action is mostly depicted as if all units penetrated actually through Ligny itself, which was physically impossible.²¹

The truth of the total manoeuvre may have been somewhere in the middle and it may very well have been that at least the cuirassiers of Delort moved partly through the east part of the village and also to the east of it.²²⁻²³ The role of the artillery of the Imperial Guard is obscure.²⁴

The heavy cavalry of the guard probably didn't have any direct share in the action, and followed in the wake of the other units.

As Blücher saw the French column emerging from Ligny, he sent his aide de camp, count Von Nostitz there to find out about the situation.²⁵ By that time, colonel Hardinge was hit on his left hand by a cannonball and had to be taken to the rear; there it was amputated.²⁶

Major general Von Krafft was able to collect and reorganize some of his units in rear of Ligny, by the success of two squadrons of the 1st regiment of Westphalian regiment of Landwehr cavalry which, led by major Von Wulffen, drove back the French infantry. Not long after, however, Von Wulffen had to go back for the French fire from a close distance.

Now, French cavalry charged Von Krafft's units, which now formed squares. In this, the 1st and 2nd battalion of the 9th regiment of infantry distinguished themselves.²⁷

Both the 1st and 2nd battalion of the 21st regiment (Von Langen) had been put forward in line by lieutenant colonel Von Reckow to drive back the French: while the 1st battalion was threatened by the advance of the Imperial Guard, the 2nd battalion was severely damaged by Delort but it managed to form a square and pull back in this formation; its Schützen-platoons, coming from Ligny, did the same and managed to reach their battalion and follow it in its rear.²⁸

The 1st and 2nd battalion of the 29th regiment (brigade of Von Jagow) which were in rear of Ligny since about 4.30 p.m. (after their actions at Saint Amand la Haye) were now moved forward to help halting the French advance. While they advanced under strong fire, they were

charged by French cavalry and drove those off. Nevertheless, covered by skirmishers of both battalions which were led by captain Von Bismarck, they slowly retreated towards Brye. In covering the battalions, Von Bismarck managed to retake four 12-pounders and a gun. Companies led by the captains Von Rohr and Von Stock retook another gun.²⁹

In vain, the squadrons of the 1st regiment Westphalian Landwehr cavalry four times tried to charge a square of the French Imperial Guard, which was supported by a body of cuirassiers, but it was in vain.³⁰

Despite the strong French gunfire, several Prussian battalions managed to reach Brye. The cavalry of Von Röder was supposed to pursue the French after the Prussian offensive, but now count Von der Gröben saw the crisis in the centre and Von Röder got orders to turn the tide.³¹

Blücher also counted upon Henckel, Von Stülpnagel and Von Borcke, but Henckel had just gone back to Sombreffe to re-assemble and Von Stülpnagel was still far away from Ligny.³²

Von Borcke was needed by Thielmann as, by now, Hulot had taken Potriaux and was threatening Sombreffe.³³

Blücher now decided to launch Von Röder's cavalry (three regiments) without any support whatsoever, despite the advice of Von Nostitz who would have recommended him to charge after a flank operation of the squadrons of Von Treskow first, so that Von Röder could well prepare his charge. But Blücher ignored this advice, and launched Von Röder's cavalry, the 6th uhlans in front, led by lieutenant colonel Von Lützow. Von Röder himself followed with the 1st West-Prussian dragoons in support, with the 2nd regiment of Kurmark Landwehrcavalry in their left rear. At that moment, this regiment had already suffered from enemy fire.³⁴

In this way, the 6th regiment of uhlans under colonel Von Lützow led the charge and charged a French square, of which the men appeared to be wearing the uniform of national guards, but in fact they were the 4th regiment of grenadiers of the Imperial Guard, wearing shakos in stead of bearskins.³⁵

The speed in which the uhlans advanced was so high that they didn't see a ditch, which broke their ranks for a short time; just at that time they got the fire of the 4th regiment of grenadiers. 13 officers and 70 men fell.³⁶ Colonel Von Lützow was taken prisoner.³⁷ The moment the cuirassiers showed up, the regiment retreated.³⁸

In rear of the uhlans, other regiments of Prussian cavalry had followed. The officers of the 2nd regiment of dragoons (West-Prussian nr.2) insisted that the regiment would charge, though general major Von Röder protested. When it did, Von Röder headed the charge in front of the right wing of the regiment. While advancing the regiment kept its formation, though it had to go over into a gallop right from the start. Additionally, the space for charging was limited due to the presence of the 6th regiment of uhlans and some Westphalian and Berg Landwehrcavalry. However, the regiment was suddenly charged by cuirassiers in its left flank, and at the same time the uhlans went about and touched upon its front. This situation made the regiment retire in confusion. A second charge on the French cuirassiers failed as well. Another charge of the 2nd regiment Kurmark Landwehr on the French right flank was in vain too, the moment the French were reinforced. The regiment wasn't able to collect completely due to the presence of two hollow roads, but the part which did charged again until it was forced back by French infantry- and artillery-fire.³⁹

All these troops were recollected and charged again but also on that occasion they went about as

soon as they were confronted by the enemy. The moment they had gone, Von Röder himself decided to join some infantry and fall back with them.⁴⁰

It was in all probability in this first wave of Prussian cavalry that Blücher led the regiments which supported the 6th regiment of uhlans, the 2nd regiment of dragoons (West-Prussian nr.1) and the 2nd regiment of Kurmark Landwehrcavalry.⁴¹

As this cavalry went about, Blücher included, his horse was wounded by a bullet in its left flank, immediately behind the girth.⁴² Blücher tried to run through as far as he could, but the horse got weaker and weaker and Blücher yelled to Nostitz, his aide de camp: " Nostitz, nun bin Ich verloren ! " At the very same moment the horse fell down and the Prussian commander, having fallen on his right side, came half under the horse.⁴³

Nostitz, his horse being wounded at the neck, immediately dismounted and came to protect Blücher by holding his pistol in his hand. Meanwhile, the Prussian cavalry had passed having units of cuirassiers on their heels, but due to the darkness and the speed of the action, they didn't take notice of the situation.⁴⁴

Meanwhile, another attempt to halt the enemy would have been done by a large number of squadrons of Landwehrcavalry (four of the 1st regiment Kurmark Landwehr and sixteen division-squadrons).⁴⁵ This action didn't have any success either, also because of the darkness.⁴⁶

Again, the decimated 6th regiment of uhlans would have charged again and was now supported by the squadrons of the regiment Königin Dragoons no.1 (of the brigade of Von Thümen), those of the 5th regiment Brandenburg Dragoons and of the 3rd regiment Brandenburg uhlans, led by major-general Von Treskow.

They were able to drive back and pursue the bodies of cuirassiers which had repulsed the Prussian cavalry some time before.⁴⁷ All these regiment fought against the cuirassiers of Delort and the heavy cavalry of the guard, but further details are missing.⁴⁸ Now, Nostitz asked the uhlans for help and it was sergeant Schneider of the 6th regiment of uhlans who gave his horse. Blücher, slightly benumbed, was hoisted on the horse and led away by Nostitz, major Von dem Bussche-Ippenburg and some uhlans. This group brought him to Mellery.⁴⁹

In the confusion, two Prussian batteries were almost lost: the horse battery no.2 (brigade Von Treskow) and the footbattery no.3 (brigade Von Pirch II). The horse battery had supported the cavalry north of Ligny, but was suddenly surrounded by French dragoons of the Imperial Guard; its crew however managed to escape and take its guns back to Brye.

The foot battery no.3 was overtaken in its retreat by French cavalry between the mill of Bussy and Brye and it was in this situation that it lost one of its guns.⁵⁰

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1. Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire etc. p.97
Gourgaud - La campagne de dix huit cent quinze etc. p.50
Houssaye, H. - 1815.Waterloo p.181
Charras - Histoire de la campagne de 1815 Vol.I p.170

2. Mauduit, H.de - Les derniers jours de la grande armée Vol.II p.82-83
Colonel Petit. General Petit's account of the Waterloo campaign. In: The English Historical Review. Vol.XVIII.1905 p.323
Accounts of captain Prax, colonel Duuring and colonel Christiani. In: d'Avout, A. - L'infanterie de la garde à Waterloo. In: Carnet de la Sabretache. 1905
In his report of the 17th of June Delort says that, before this attack took place, his division had carried out some movements to the left and to the right and that he was ordered by 6.30 p.m. to pursue the Prussians. In: Stouff, L. - Essai etc. p.129

Houssaye gives a wrong picture of the advance as if there were two columns of the Imperial Guard: one consisting of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th regiments of grenadiers, which penetrated west of the village, while the second one, consisting of the 1st of chasseur and grenadiers, attacked Ligny on its eastern part; the 4th corps would have advanced in the centre, with the division of Pécheux in front, followed by the one of Vichery. In: 1815.Waterloo p.183

However, the infantry advanced in two waves of regiments: in the first the 2nd, 3rd and 4th regiments of grenadiers and which was followed by the one of the 1st of grenadiers and chasseurs.

Houssaye doesn't see that the 1st regiments of grenadiers and chasseurs only went east, after they had emerged from the village, as a second wave in rear of the other grenadiers.

3. 1st regiment grenadiers: 1280 men.
2nd regiment grenadiers: 1000 men
3rd regiment grenadiers: 1100 men.
4th regiment grenadiers: 500 men
1st regiment chasseurs: 1300 men
Division Guyot: 1700 men
Duty squadrons: 200 men
Division Delort: 1700 men
Sappers/miners/engineers: 219 men

This total excludes the remainder of the 4th corps, the 6th corps and the division Wathier of the corps of Milhaud. The fact that only Delort participated can be derived from Delort's account as well a letter of 9 a.m. of the 17th of June from the general headquarters stating: " Si Delort avait été un peu soutenu, il prenait en un quart d'heure 50 pièces de canon ". In: SHAT. C15, nr.5

The French report of the battle states: " les cuirassiers du général Delort, ceux du général Milhaud etc ", as if Delort had a separate command.

In: Bas, F.de & T'Serclaes de Wommersom - La campagne de 1815 aux Pays Bas. Vol.III p.456

In his letter to Davout of the 17th of June, Soult only mentions Delort.

However, Michel Ordener, commander of the 7th regiment cuirassiers, says all regiments of the corps participated in the action. Cf. Lot, H. - Les deux généraux Ordener p.90

4. Houssaye, H. - 1815.Waterloo. p.183

At 3.30 p.m. Napoleon had sent Lobau the order to advance to Fleurus. By that time the corps had a position somewhere halfway between Charleroi and Fleurus, probably between Gilly and the forests further east It may have been there since midday.

Lobau may have received Napoleon's new order by 4.15 p.m.; his units left for Fleurus some time later, where the first ones got by 5.45 p.m.

General Teste, however, states his division left at 5.45 p.m. Teste does not provide any information on the marches of his division or the 6th corps before that moment on the 16th of June. In: Souvenirs du général baron Teste p.168

5. Cf. the French report written on the 20th of June at Laon. In: Bas, F.de La campagne de 1815 Vol.III p.455

Saint Denis, L.E. Souvenirs du mameluck Ali etc. p.106

Mauduit, H.de - Les derniers jours etc. Vol.II p.87

Delort. Notice sur la bataille etc. p.370

6.These were the battalions of the brigades of Von Jagow (6), Von Henckel (6), Von Krafft (5) and Von Langen (4).

⁷ This move towards Sombreffe is confirmed by the account of an anonymous member of the regiment. In: Dresdner Blätter, 1849. Cf. www.societyofcontrol/library/history/dresden.txt

⁸ There is no clear idea which battalion this may have been, maybe the 2nd. In this, Henckel is contradictory: on the one hand he states that he took the whole regiment and on the other he specifies one battalion (the 2nd). Cf. Henckel. In: Erinnerungen p.355-356 and his account in KA, VI.E.7.I.144 in GSA,VPH-HA,VI nr.VII.5.p.112-113 Also in the regiment of the 1st brigade he is not consequent: the 12th in the first account and the 24th in the second (which dates from 1815). As this one is older, this version of the events is more probable.

9. Henckel von Donnersmarck, count - Erinnerungen etc. p. 355-356

Cf. Tagebuch des Königlich Preussischen I.Armeekorps etc. (Kriegsarchiv VI.E.13) In: Pflugk Harttung, J.von - Die Schlacht bei Ligny In: Die Armee 1.Jg.1902 nr.2 p.23

It confirms that the brigade headed for Sombreffe by a misunderstanding.

Gottschalck, M. - Geschichte etc. p.81

Leszczyński, R.von - 50 Jahr Geschichte des Königlich Preussischen 2.Posenschen

Infanterie-Regiments nr.19 p.166

Damitz, Von - Geschichte des Feldzugs von 1815 etc.p.167

Von Reiche has a slightly different version of the events as he describes the movement of Von Henckel as a retreat. He spoke to Von Henckel and according to Henckel his brigade met the one of Steinmetz near Brye. Von Steinmetz, senior to Henckel, gave him a regiment of his brigade and then allowed him to pull back to Sombreffe.

Cf. Reiche, L.von - Memoiren etc. p.192

The regiment involved would have been the 24th (1st and 2nd battalion). Cf. Cf. Zychlinski, F.von Geschichte etc. p.273

10. Soult, in his letter of the 17th of June to Davout.

Clausewitz, C.von - Campagne de 1815 p.86

8.30 p.m. is the version of the prince of Von Thurn and Taxis, the Bavarian plenipotentiary at the headquarters of Blücher. In: Aus drei Feldzügen etc. p.3124-325

The same hour is given by baron Van Panhuys, representative of the Netherlands in Prussian central headquarters. Cf. his report to baron Tindal, dated 17th of June 1815. In: NA, 2.02.01 nr.6585

Damitz, Von - Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.165

It should be noted that the distance from the position of the Imperial Guard near Fleurus to one in front of Ligny (over the road leading from Fleurus to Point du Jour) is about 4 kilometres and the units would need about an hour to cover it. Additionally, it is a fact that the French advanced on the heights on the other side of Ligny at dusk, so by 8.30 p.m. and later.

At that time, Soult wrote to Joseph from his position in front of Fleurus that the French were actually emerging from the village (see below).

Colonel Von Reiche adds the French breakthrough took place around 8.30 p.m. In: Memoiren etc. p.192

In Gneisenau's idea it was 9 p.m. Cf. his report to Von Knesebeck, dated 17th of June (see below).

For this hour, also see colonel Von Reiche, in: Über die Kriegsbegebenheiten etc. In: KA, VI.E.7.I.p.1 In: GSA.VPH-HA,VI nr.VII nr.5 p.58

According to lieutenant general Delort the Imperial Guard was given the order to take Ligny; half an hour later Delort was given the instruction to follow the Guard. Cf. his report of the 17th of June to general Milhaud. In: Stoff, L. - Essai etc. p.129-130

For 7 p.m. see:

Gourgaud - Campagne de dix huit cent quinze etc. p.50

Report of Von Zieten, dated 8th July 1815 In: Reiche, L.von - Memoiren etc. p.418

The official French report. In: Bas, F.de & TSerclaes de Wommersom - La campagne de 1815

Vol.III p.455

7.30 p.m. is given by:

Mauduit, H.de - Les derniers jours etc. Vol.II p.84

Charras - Histoire de la campagne de 1815 Vol.I p.173

It should be noted that the distance from the position of the Imperial Guard near Fleurus to one in front of Ligny (over the road leading from Fleurus to Point du Jour) is about 4 kilometres and the units would need about an hour to cover it. Additionally, it is a fact that the French advanced on the heights on the other side of Ligny at dusk, so by 8.30 p.m. and later.

At that time, Soult wrote to Joseph from his position in front of Fleurus that the French were actually emerging from the village (see below).

In this context, the French claims as if Ligny fell at 7 or 7.30 p.m. is incorrect. Cf. General Petit (1st regiment of grenadiers). In: The English Historical Review Vol.XVIII,1903 p.323

The official French report of the battle. In: Bas, F.de - La campagne de 1815 Vol.III p.456

11. Saint Denis, L.E. - Souvenirs du mameluck Ali etc. p.106

Mauduit, H.de - Les derniers jours de la grande armée Vol.II p.86-87

Houssaye, H. - 1815.Waterloo p.183

Colonel Duuring (1st regiment of chasseurs) indicates that the advance was in column per division and under Prussian gunfire. Cf. d'Avout, A. - L'infanterie de la garde à Waterloo. In: Carnet de la Sabretache.1905 p.115

12. Mauduit, H.de - Les derniers jours de la grande armée. Vol.II p.86

In some reports and accounts eight battalions are said to have been involved, but there were nine: 1st regiment grenadiers (two), the 2nd regiment grenadiers (two), the 3rd regiment grenadiers (two), the 4th regiment grenadiers (one battalion) and the 1st regiment chasseurs (two).

Cf. Damitz, Von - Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.166

The official French report - in: Bas, F.de & T'Serclaes de Wommersom - La campagne de 1815 aux Pays Bas. Vol.III p.456

In his letter of the 17th of June to Davout, Soult writes about six battalions of the Old Guard.

13. General Petit (1st regiment of grenadiers). In: The English Historical Review.Vol.XVIII.1903 p.323

Mauduit, H.de - Les derniers jours de la grande armée Vol.II p.87

General Christiani (2nd regiment grenadiers). In: d'Avout, A. -L'infanterie de la garde à Waterloo. In: Carnet de la Sabretache. 1905. p.111

Colonel Duuring (1st regiment chasseurs). In: In: d'Avout, A. - L'infanterie de la garde à Waterloo. In: Carnet de la Sabretache. 1905. p.115

To the left in the village, major general Von Krafft had a short succes by driving back the French with two of his battalions, but the attempt failed in the overall Prussian collapse. Cf.

Report of major general Von Krafft. In: KA, VI.E.15.4 in GSA, VPH-HA, VI,nr.VII.5.p.16

14. Of the 23rd Prussian regiment of infantry (Von Langen's brigade) the column led by captain Von Busse had fallen back to an entrance on the north side of the village; while doing so, its skirmishers had lost the communication with their unit, but as they fell back too they rejoined their battalion, the 1st, led by major Von Buttlar, in the centre of the village. In rear of Ligny these troops were all received by units of Von Krafft. Busse, Von Geschichte des Königlich Preussischen 23.Infanterie Regiments p.171-172

¹⁵ Mauduit, H.de - Les derniers jours etc. Vol.II p.88

16. Cf. general Petit (1st regiment of grenadiers). In: The English Historical Review. Vol.XVIII.1903 p.323

¹⁷ The French infantry, having emerged from Ligny, would have taken up a front in half a circle. Cf. Tagebuch des Königlich Preussischen I.Armeekorps etc. (Kriegsarchiv VI.E.13) In: Pflug Harttung, J.von - Die Schlacht bei Ligny In: Die Armee 1.Jg.1902 nr.2 p.23

18. Cf. general Christiani (2nd regiment of grenadiers). In: d'Avout, A. - L'infanterie de la garde à Waterloo. In: Carnet de la Sabretache. 1905. p.111

Colonel Duuring (1st regiment of chasseurs). In: d'Avout, A. - L'infanterie de la garde à Waterloo. In: Carnet de la Sabretache. 1905. p.115

General Petit (1st regiment of grenadiers). In: d'Avout, A. - L'infanterie de la garde à Waterloo. In: Carnet de la Sabretache. 1905. p.107

¹⁹ Capitaine Francois (30th regiment, division Pécheux) claims his division followed the Imperial Guard into the village (and after this the one of Vichery, as well as Milhaud), but that his own regiment didn't join in. Gérard himself, however, claims his corps preceded the Imperial Guard in entering Ligny.

In: Journal du capitaine Francois p.882

Gérard - Quelques documents etc. p.42

Charras states the division of Vichery, as well as the division of Wathier, after clearing Ligny, turned towards Sombreffe but he gives no source for this statement. In: Histoire de la campagne etc. Vol.I p.177

²⁰ Blücher to the Prussian king in his report, dated 17th of June (see below).

Colonel von Reiche in his report. He confirms the French penetrated at the left wing of the village. In: KA.VI.E.7.I.7 In: GSA, VPH-HA. VI nr.VII.5.p.50

Yet, the official Prussian army-report states as if the French infantry turned the village of Ligny on one side and the cuirassiers at the other. In: Bas, F.de La campagne de 1815 etc. Vol.III p.448

²¹ Charras briefly touches upon this point in a footnote. He mentions Thiers stating the Imperial Guard did not pass through the village, but he also cites Drouot that it did, and Charras agrees with him.

Cf. Drouot in his speech dated 23rd June and in a note dated 1819. In: Histoire de la campagne etc. p.175

²² According to M.Ordener, colonel of the 7th regiment of cuirassiers, Milhaud turned the village. Cf. Lot, H. - Les deux généraux Ordener p.90

The other French witness who claims a penetration east of Ligny is general Berthézène, although he was from the 3rd corps.

He states the village was turned “du côté de Sombreffe” and in a note: “C’était le point le plus faible du village; le débouché en était assez large et plusieurs ponts de pierre y facilitaient le passage de la rivière.” In: Souvenirs militaires etc. p.365

It is in this context that Piérart cites the local guide Simon (with whom he had spoken) and who had advised Napoleon during the battle to attack east of Ligny and not to the west of it, due the difficult passage here. In: Le drame de Waterloo p.133

Scott Bowden gives a full order of battle for Milhaud, placing the brigades of Dubois, Vial and Travers in first and the one of Farine in second line, but his source for this formation remains unknown.. Cf. Bowden, S. - The armies at Waterloo p.63

23. Napoleon would have ordered Delort at the entrance of Ligny to pass through the village as fast as he could, follow the Imperial Guard and charge all the troops he could find at the other side of the village. He also would have added: " Beacoup de vigueur mais de l'ordre et pas d'étourderie au moins. " Cf. Delort - Notice sur les batailles etc. p.370-371

The presence of troops of the Imperial Guard and of cuirassiers is confirmed by captain Francois of the 30th regiment of the line (divisie Pécheux). At that very moment his regiment was at the right side of Ligny. The remains of the 30th regiment didn't participate in this last attack; Francois doesn't give any reason but in all probability the fatigue of the soldiers was the major factor. Cf. Francois, captain - Journal du capitaine Francois etc. p.884-885

Around this time colonel Rumigny, in his rather confusing memoirs, mentions the advance (led by him) of a battalion of the 72nd regiment which inflicted a heavy losses to a Prussian battalion near the churchyard. The 72nd regiment formed part of the division of Bachelu (2nd corps) [!] It would have been this battalion with which he would have tried to take the village, followed by a second battalion of this regiment, until it became clear that the Imperial Guard advanced and took it by storm. So far, Rumigny had intended to turn the Prussian left flank. In: Souvenirs du général comte de Rumigny etc. p.101-102

It should no be excluded that during the advance Delort got in rear of the 2nd , 3rd and 4th regiment grenadiers and in front of the 1st regiments of grenadiers and chasseurs.Cf. Colonel Duuring. In: d'Avout, A. - L'infanterie de la garde à Waterloo. In: Carnet de la Sabretache.

1905.p.115

²⁴ According to the commander of the 1st regiment of chasseurs of the Guard, colonel Duuring, the artillery of the Guard successfully fired at the enemy on the other side of Ligny. In: d'Avout, A. - L'infanterie de la garde à Waterloo. In: Carnet de la Sabretache. 1905.p.115

²⁵ Nostitz, Von - Das Tagebuch etc. p.27

²⁶ According to Hardinge himself, he was hit just before the French cavalry broke through. He was operated by the Prussian surgeons twice, at 2 and again at 5 a.m. Cf. his letter to count d'Urban, dated 23rd June 1815. In: NAK, WO 135/3

The time is corroborated by colonel Von Nostitz and dr. Bieske himself, who carried out the amputation. In: Tagebuch p.27 and in: Bieske, C.L. - Der Feldmarschall Fürst etc. p.29

27. Report of major general Von Krafft. In: KA, VI.E.15.4 in GSA, VPH-HA, VI,nr.VII.5.p.17

This cavalry may have been the duty squadrons and the gendarmerie d'élite, which initially had success against the Prussians. Cf. General Petit (1st regiment of grenadiers). In: The English Historical Review. Vol.XVIII.1903 p.323

²⁸ Schreiber, H. - Geschichte des Infanterie-Regiments Von Borcke (4.Pommerschen) nr.21 p.99

²⁹ Report of captain Von Bismarck from former Kriegsarchiv. In: Wellmann, R. - Geschichte etc. p.105-106

Von Bagensky – Geschichte des 9ten Infanterie Regiments p.238

³⁰ Harkort, F. - Die Zeiten des ersten Westphalischen Landwehrregiments p.50

31. Von Röder's report. In: Lettow Vorbeck, O.von - Napoleons Untergang Vol.III p.533

32. Henckel, immediately after his arrival at Sombreffe, would have gone back to the front but it was too late. Cf. Reiche, L.von - Memoiren etc. p.192

33. Damitz, Von - Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.165

34. Von Röder's report. In: Lettow Vorbeck, O.von - Napoleons Untergang Vol.III p.533

And in: KA, VI.E.7.I.156 in GSA, VPH-HA, VI nr.VII.3 E.p.76

35. Cf. colonel Duuring (1st regiment of chasseurs) In: d'Avout, A. - L'infanterie de la garde à Waterloo. In: Carnet de la Sabretache.1905.p.115

Mauduit, H.de - Les derniers jours etc. Vol.II p.88

Also see Von Röders report. In: Lettow Vorbeck, O.von - Napoleons Untergang Vol.III p.533
Captain Von Petersdorff of the 6th regiment of uhlans claims they charged two squares of the Imperial Guard and which had a position in a low ground. Cf. Report of captain Von Petersdorff (6th regiment of uhlans). In: KA, VI.E.7.II.177 in GSA, VPH-HA, VI nr.VII.3 E.p.27

36. Damitz, Von - Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.167

Von Ollech mentions colonel Von Lützow himself, 3 captains, 8 lieutenants, 2 sergeants, 1 trumpeter of the staff and 70 men. Ollech, Von Die Geschichte etc. p. This number is based on the number given by major Von der Gröben. In: Pflugk Hartung, J.von - Belle Alliance. Die Schilderung der Ereignisse etc. p.7

³⁷ Soult to Ney, about 8 a.m. 17th June 1815. In: SHAT. C15, nr.5

38. Von Röder's report. In: Lettow Vorbeck, O.von - Napoleons Untergang Vol.III p.533

According to Von Ollech the uhlans retreated only when they were fired at again by the French infantry. And according to De Mauduit the duty squadrons pursued the uhlans and dispersed a Prussian square. By this action, the uhlans had been able to re-assemble and charged the French cavalry, which went back in rear of their infantry. The moment the diensteskaders charged again the Prussian lancers went back.

Cf. Ollech, Von - Geschichte des Feldzugs von 1815 etc. p.155

Lieutenant general Delort mentions in his report of the 17th of June to general Milhaud the taking prisoner of a Prussian cavalry officer, but whether he means Von Lützow remains unclear. Cf. Delort. In: Stouff, L. - Essai etc. p.129-130

In his report of the 30th of June general Von Röder only mentions the fall of colonel Von Lützow; apparently he didn't know of him being taken prisoner. In: Lettow Vorbeck, O.von - Napoleons Untergang Vol.III p.533

39. Cf. Von Röder's report.

Major Von Kameke (2nd regiment of Kurmark Landwehr cavalry). In: KA, VI.E.7.II.185 in GSA, VPH-HA, VI nr. VII.3 E.p.36-38

Major Von der Gröben. In: Pflugk Hartung, J.von - Belle Alliance. Die Schilderung der Ereignisse etc. p.7-8

Report of Von Zieten about the cavalry of his corps during the campaign. In: KA, VI.E.3.15 in GSA, VPH-HA, VI nr.VII.3 E.p.3

40. Von Röder's. In: KA, VI.E.7.I.156 in GSA, VPH-HA, VI nr.VII.3 E.p.77-78

Report of Von Zieten about the cavalry of his corps during the campaign. In: Former KA, VI.E.3.15 in GSA, VPH-HA, VI nr.VII.3 E.p.3

⁴¹ Nostitz, Von - Das Tagebuch etc. p.28-29

⁴² In the Dutch royal archives there is a “Note sur l’endroit où le maréchal Blücher est tombé avec son cheval à Ligny le 16 juin 1815.” Though there is a reference to a marking in a map, the map itself is missing. It also refers to the miller of Brye as being able to give more information. In: KHA, nr.A37, VVIb, nr.41

⁴³ According to Gore this event occurred in front of the mill of Bussy, towards Ligny. As Gore visited the area this information probably comes from a local tradition. In: Explanatory notes etc. p.71

44. Nostitz, Von - Das Tagebuch etc. p.29-30

Delort thinks that some cuirassiers did see Blücher but that they thought he was mortally wounded. He also thinks Blücher would have been in French “hands” for about one hour ! Cf. his report to general Milhaud of the 17th of June. In: Stouff, L. Essai etc. p.129-130

Von Reiche thinks Blücher wasn’t noticed by the enemy because of his plain uniform. Cf. Reiche, L.von - Memoiren etc. p.193

45. Damitz, Von - Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.167

46. Immediately after coming out of Ligny, the 1st squadron of the 5th regiment of cuirassiers (it had barely been formed), led by major general Farine and kolonel Frère, charged the first line of Prussian cavalry and forced her back in confusion.

A second line of Prussian cavalry was brought forward but was forced back as well by the 5th and 10th regiment of cuirassiers. Cf. Delort in his report, dated 17th June. In: Stouff, L. - Essai etc. p.129-130

This second wave of Prussian cavalry might have been this line of Landwehr cavalry or the one consisting of the 6th regiment of uhlans, the Königin dragoons, the regiment of Brandenburg dragoons nr.5 and the 3rd regiment of Brandenburg uhlans (see below).

General Christiani (2nd regiment grenadiers) mentions the sudden charge of Prussian lancers which passed through the intervals of the squares. The grenadiers were unable to use their muskets as the squares were not yet in echelon. In: d’Avout, A. - L’infanterie de la garde à Waterloo. In: Carnet de la Sabretache.1905.p.111

⁴⁷ According to prince Thurn und Taxis these Prussians were dragoons . Cf. his diary in the Kriegsarchiv Wien (F.A.Hauptarmee 1815 XIII 47). Published by: Pflugk Harttung, J.von - Archivalische Beiträge etc. Jahrbücher für die Deutsche Armee und Marine 1906 p.614

48. Report of Von Zieten about the cavalry of his corps during the campaign. In: KA, VI.E.3.15 in GSA, VPH-HA, VI nr.VII.3 E.p.2-9

49. Nostitz, Von - Das Tagebuch etc. p.30-32

Nostitz tells that, in the confusion, he initially didn’t know where to bring Blücher, but

decided to go to Tilly. When he reached Mellery, Blücher indicated that he could not go further, and then he was brought to a house at the far end of the village. Here, Blücher was laid out on a layer of straw on the floor. Nostitz then rode out, having left a few horsemen to guard the house, to find out about the situation and soon found general Von Steinmetz who took care of a proper guard for the fieldmarshal.

The fact that it was Schneider is confirmed by captain Von Petersdorff. In: Report of captain Von Petersdorff (6th regiment of uhlans). In: KA, VI.E.7.II.177 in GSA, VPH-HA,VI nr.VII.3 E.p.28

Initially, Schneider followed the regiment on foot, but later took a French horse.

Also see: Bothe, H. - Geschichte etc. p.147

Damitz,Von - Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.168-169

According to prince Thurn und Taxis, Blücher would have charged once again after his fall ! He mentions Tilly instead of Mellery. Cf. Diary of prince Von Thurn und Taxis, Bavarian plenipotentiary at the headquarters of Blücher, in the Kriegsarchiv Wien (F.A.Hauptarmee 1815 XIII 47). Published by: Pflugk Hartung, J.von - Archivalische Beiträge etc. Jahrbücher für die Deutsche Armee und Marine 1906 p.614

A short version of the events was also communicated to baron Tindal by major Bausch, who was sent by baron Tindal on a mission to general major Van Panhuys, representative of the Netherlands at the Prussian headquarters on the 16th of June, on the 17th of June. In: report of major Bausch to baron Tindal, 17th of June. In: NA, 2.02.01 nr.6585

50. This was the howitzer taken by the 9th regiment of cuirassiers. Cf. Delort's report to Milhaud of the 17th of June.