

The divisional orders for the division Chassé were to go to Waterloo. However, while being on the heights near Braine l'Alleud, lieutenant colonel Van Delen got the instruction of Constant Rebecque to put the division into closed columns in battle orders in front of the village.<sup>1</sup> In his turn, Constant Rebecque had got the instruction of colonel De Lancey to let the division of Chassé occupy the entrances of Braine l'Alleud.<sup>2</sup>

While the troops were busy taking up their positions, general Chassé entered the position. Having reconnoitred it himself he accordingly ordered his troops to march through the village and take up positions on the other side. And this was accordingly done.

During this movement the 2<sup>nd</sup> line battalion got the order to occupy and reinforce the exits of the village. The moment the brigade of Detmers had taken up a position in rear of the village, the one of d'Aubremé did the same.<sup>3</sup>

However, towards the evening this position was changed again.<sup>4</sup> The brigade of Detmers was ordered to occupy Braine l'Alleud and to defend it at its utmost. The different battalions took up their positions in and around the village.

The 35<sup>th</sup> battalion of light infantry was near the southern entrance of the village having outposts towards Pospol (800 metres south of Braine l'Alleud); the 2<sup>nd</sup> line battalion occupied the eastern edge of the village, while the 4<sup>th</sup> battalion of national militia was north east of it, near the windmill (<sup>5</sup>). The 6<sup>th</sup> battalion of national militia, as well as the 19<sup>th</sup> battalion of national militia, were placed on the market-square and the 17<sup>th</sup> battalion of national militia had its position between the village and Merbraine in order to keep up the communication with the British units. To accomplish this, it had sent out a flank-company as skirmishers.<sup>6</sup> The battalion of light infantry nr.35, the 2<sup>nd</sup> line and the 4<sup>th</sup> national militia all had their outposts and were covered by hollow roads, gardens and hedges.<sup>7</sup>

The other brigade of the division, the one of d'Aubremé, was that night south-west of Braine l'Alleud, near the farm of Du Vieux Forest and directly east of the road leading towards Braine l'Alleud. It had its front parallel to the road leading to Nivelles, having thrown the right wing slightly backwards. In front of the brigade was the valley of the Haine. This valley was marshy and overgrown with hedges and bushes. It was the 36<sup>th</sup> battalion of light infantry which covered this front and this battalion had also detached a company of flankers to the other side of the stream where French cavalry patrols of Piré were present.

From left to right the remaining battalions of the brigade were in the following order: 10<sup>th</sup> battalion of national militia, 3<sup>rd</sup> battalion of national militia, 12<sup>th</sup> battalion and 3<sup>rd</sup> battalion of line infantry.<sup>8</sup> The battery of Lux was in all probability near the 4<sup>th</sup> battalion of national militia, while the one of Krahmer was in front of the farm of Vieux Foriez, in the centre of the position of the brigade of d'Aubremé.<sup>9</sup>

The ammunition waggons were in all probability north-west of the brigade of d'Aubremé.<sup>10</sup>

During the night the outposts of Chassé were informed that French patrols (probably those of Piré) were in the vicinity of Bois Seigneur Isaac (two kilometres south-west of Braine l'Alleud) and as a result Chassé detached his 13<sup>th</sup> battalion of the line there to occupy the wood. It also got the instruction to fall back towards Halle in case a retreat was deemed necessary.<sup>11</sup>

Towards 5 p.m. the two brigades of the cavalry division of Collaert of Trip and De Ghigny rejoined the one of Van Merlen.<sup>12</sup> All three brigades took up their bivouacs west of the farm of Mont Saint Jean, in a hollow in the angle of the roads leading to Brussels and Nivelles. One squadron of the 4<sup>th</sup> regiment of light dragoons (brigade De Ghigny) arrived here during the evening as it had been in outposts to cover the retreat.<sup>13</sup> The brigades were side by side: the brigade of De Ghigny to the left leaning on the Brussels-road, the brigade of Van Merlen in the centre and the one of Trip to the right, leaning on the Nivelles-road.<sup>14</sup> Brigade general Ghigny, with his staff, had settled in the farm of Mont Saint Jean.<sup>15</sup> The artillery was near the cavalry

and was joined into one battery.<sup>16</sup>

That evening, these troops were alarmed by the approach of some unidentified cavalry and artillery units. Some patrols were sent out and the battery of Gey took up a position; after some time, however, the troops appeared to be British ones.<sup>17</sup>

Of the 2<sup>nd</sup> British division, Adam's brigade was initially posted in the vicinity of Gomont, but soon after it was led to a bivouac in a ploughed field just south of Merbraine, facing Gomont. Later, around 10 p.m., the brigade was moved to a position about 400 metres east of Merbraine, on the slope of the height east of this hamlet.<sup>18-19</sup> General Adam established his headquarters in the farm of Cambray in Merbraine.<sup>20</sup> The brigade of Duplat had taken up a bivouac south of this hamlet, between it and the Nivelles-road.<sup>21</sup> The brigade of H.Halkett stood that night immediately south of Merbraine.<sup>22</sup> In general, the 2<sup>nd</sup> division had its position between the Nivelles road and Braine l'Alleud.<sup>23</sup> The brigade of Mitchell (Colville's division) arrived in its position immediately south of Merbraine during the evening.<sup>24</sup>

Of the forces of prince Frederik of the army of the Netherlands, the Indian brigade took up a bivouac (when is not known) on the plateau north of Lembecq, two kilometres south of Halle, between the roads of Halle - Enghien and the one of Halle - Braine le Comte. Here it formed a support and reserve for the 1st division of the army of the Netherlands.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> brigade of the 1<sup>st</sup> division (De Eerens) left from Saintes towards Tubize (five kilometres south of Halle). One battalion occupied the village and placed posts and pickets on the road leading to Braine le Comte.<sup>25</sup> Two battalions got a position on the height of Tubize (Vogerberg, Muschenberg) to the left leaning on the Bois de Lembecq.<sup>26</sup> Some companies held the bridges of the Senne at Tubize and of the Seneffe at Clabecq; a detachment made some reconnaissances on the opposite bank.

Another two battalions were at Braine le Chateau and Benchereau (<sup>27</sup>); they both had the instruction to observe the road coming from Nivelles and to send patrols towards Wautier-Braine in order to communicate with the main army.

The battalions at Braine le Chateau also had got the instruction to pull back, in case of a retreat, as slowly as possible to facilitate the retreat of the troops at Tubize. The line of retreat was Halle, through Plasmarque or Le Flamand and Schemberg. The one for the units at Tubize was through Vogerbergh and Romain to Halle. The 1<sup>st</sup> brigade (d'Hauw) had its bivouac on the heights in rear of Siantes, having its left wing towards Tubize. Detachements were observing Bierghe, Saint Renelde, Ophain and the passages of the Senne. Pickets were reconnoitring the road of Halle- Enghien.<sup>28</sup> The baggage as well as the reserve-park of the 1st division of the army of the Netherlands and the Indian brigade took their position at about one kilometre in rear of Halle, towards Brussels. The artillery of the 1<sup>st</sup> division was at Ramelo, in rear of Saintes, to the road of Halle - Enghien.<sup>29</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> division had its headquarters at St.Renelle.<sup>30</sup>

The cavalry-brigade of Von Estorff arrived in the position of Halle in the very early morning of the 18<sup>th</sup> of June. One regiment came in rear of Saintes, between Saintes and Mussain, having outposts and patrols towards Haute-Croix, Enghien and Quenast. The other regiment of hussars came in a position in rear of Tubize and near the farm of Herbosch, having pickets in front of Tubize and outposts and patrols on the road to Braine le Comte and Oisquercq. One company was detached to Vogerberg in order to support the 2<sup>nd</sup> brigade of De Eerens, with patrols towards Plasmarque, Vraimont, Landuit, Braine l'Alleud, Wauthier-Braine, Braine le Chateau and Haut Ittre. That night, prince Frederik had his headquarters at Halle.

It was in the early evening of the 17<sup>th</sup> of June that the company of sappers led by captain Esau, while escorting a column of baggage, reached Waterloo. It had just arrived when Esau got the instruction to head for Brussels. Having marched for about 30 minutes, dusk fell in and Esau decided to take a bivouac at the side of the road. However, shortly after, the company was confronted by dozens of horsemen, infantry, artillery-men, baggage, munitions carts etc.

retreating in disorder over the great road towards Brussels, having panicked after the French bombardment around 7 p.m. Despite the chaos and confusion, Esau was able to lead back his company towards Brussels without real problems. Having got there by 11 p.m., the unit spent the night in this city.<sup>31</sup>

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1. Cf. account of captain Rochell (19<sup>th</sup> battalion of national militia). It is sergeant Wiegman of the 6<sup>th</sup> battalion of national militia who states that he was on sentry at Gomont until somewhere in the evening when the position of the division was changed (see below). In: Wiegman, C. - Quatre Bras en Waterloo p.66

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Journal of Constant Rebecque In: NA, 2.21.008.01 nr.25

Constant Rebecque, as major Van Gorkum, met colonel De Lancey while falling back along the Brussels road. After that, they both assisted him in assigning units their positions. Van Gorkum did so for the 2nd division, and Constant for the 3rd division of the army of the Netherlands. Cf. Van Gorkum's memoirs. In: private collection.

3. Account of captain Rochell (19<sup>th</sup> battalion of national militia). In private collection.

4. Report of lieutenant colonel Van Delen. In: NA, nr.21.3.14.01 nr.8

Report of colonel Detmers. In: NA, nr.2.13.14.01 nr.8

Account of captain Rochell (19<sup>th</sup> battalion national militia), in private collection.

5. Sergeant Van Wetering (4<sup>th</sup> battalion of national militia). This mill would have served as an observation-post. Cf. his diary. In private collection

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Diary of lieutenant Koch, 17<sup>th</sup> battalion of national militia. In: Infantry Museum Harskamp

Cf. 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant Holle in his letter to his parents dated 10<sup>th</sup> July 1815. In: Stadsarchief Dordrecht. Family-archive Blussé. 68-28 nr.21

7. Reports of lieutenant colonel Van Delen and colonel Detmers (see above).

Journal of Constant Rebecque In: NA, 2.21.008.01 nr.25

Colonel Detmers in a letter dated 1<sup>st</sup> August 1815 to Chassé. In: Verzameling van alle rapporten etc. CBG, family-archive Rochell Box 8 nr. 7

The inhabitants of the village were forced to supply the troops with food. Cf. Captain Rochell. Rochell adds that space on the central square of the village was so small by the presence of the 6<sup>th</sup> battalion of national militia that his battalion, the 19<sup>th</sup> battalion of national militia, was forced to take up order of battle.

8. Journal of Constant Rebecque In: NA, 2.21.008.01 nr.25

9. Dam van Isselt, W.E. - De Noord-Nederlandse batterij etc. p.47

Bas, F.de & T'Serclaes de Wommersom - La campagne de 1815 aux Pays Bas. Vol.II p.22

Van Löben Sels places the battery of Lux in Braine l'Alleud, and the one of Kraemer near the brigade of Detmers. In: Bijdragen etc. Vol.IV p.567

1st lieutenant Bentinck, of the battery of Lux, claims his battery had a bivouac south-west of Braine l'Alleud. Cf. His letter. In: NL-ZuRAZ, Van Löben Sels, 0302 inv.nr.262

10. Bas, F.de & T'Serclaes de Wommersom - La campagne de 1815 aux Pays Bas. Vol.II p.22

Van Es claims a position in rear of the farm of Delton, which is, in fact, the farm of Du Vieux Foriez. Cf. Es, N.J.A.P.H. van - De krijgsverrichtingen etc.

11. Report of lieutenant colonel Van Delen. In: NA, 2.13.14.01.nr.8

12. Report of major Hoyneck van Papendrecht. In: Bas, F.de & T'Serclaes de Wommersom - La campagne de 1815 aux Pays Bas. Vol.III p.424

Captain Kraijenhoff (4<sup>th</sup> regiment light dragoons, brigade De Ghigny) says the regiment marched late that afternoon via Rouliers [?], Witterzé (near the Nivelles-road) and along Gomont. Cf. account in Rijksmuseum, nr.NM 10255b

Lieutenant colonel Van Heerdt (chief of staff of the same brigade), however, claims the brigade reached the farm of Mont Saint Jean by 7 p.m. In: NL-ZuRAZ, Van Löben Sels, 0302 inv.nr.263

13. Report of major Hoyneck van Papendrecht. In: Bas, F.de & T'Serclaes de Wommersom - La campagne de 1815 aux Pays Bas. Vol.III p.424

Squadron sergeant-major Fundter (4<sup>th</sup> regiment of light dragoons). In: Geschiedenis van het 4<sup>e</sup> regiment lichte dragonders p.13

14. Account of captain Kraijenhoff (4<sup>th</sup> regiment of light dragoons). In: Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, nr.NM 10255b

D.Theys (2<sup>nd</sup> regiment of carabineers). In: LMB, archief-fonds Franse periode, part IV,box 33

Lieutenant colonel Van Heerdt says the troops had a position in two lines per regiment. Cf.account of Van Heerdt. In: CBG, nr. 95 and in: NL-ZuRAZ, Van Löben Sels, 0302 inv.nr.263

Squadron sergeant-major Fundter (4<sup>th</sup> regiment of light dragoons). In: Geschiedenis van het 4<sup>e</sup> regiment lichte dragonders p.13

He confirms the regiment was “en bataille”.

15. Account of lieutenant colonel Van Heerdt. In: CBG, nr.95 and in: NL-ZuRAZ, Van Löben Sels, 0302 inv.nr.263

Diary of lieutenant colonel Renno. In: Groninger Museum, Groningen. Collection Offerhaus Foundation. Renno and Van Heerdt claim the British general Cooke was there as well Lieutenant colonel Renno also slept there.

<sup>16</sup> Account of captain Petter. In: NL-ZuRAZ, Van Löben Sels, 0302 inv.nr.262

Lieutenant Van Wassenaar states the artillery had a position to the right of the Brussels-road. In: NL-ZuRAZ, Van Löben Sels, 0302 inv.nr.262

<sup>17</sup> Letter of lieutenant Van Wassenaar. In: NL-ZuRAZ, Van Löben Sels, 0302 inv.nr.262

18.Lieutenant general Adam. In: BL. Add.Ms.34.706 p.406-413

Lieutenant G.Gawler (1<sup>st</sup> battalion, 52<sup>nd</sup> regiment). In: BL. Add.Ms. 34.704 p.88-97 and 34.705 p.369-382

Colonel Reynell (1<sup>st</sup> battalion 71<sup>st</sup> regiment). In: BL. Add.Ms. 34.703 p.234-239

There are no real data about the position of the bivouac of the brigade of Duplat. The only thing we know is that the grenadier company of the 1st line battalion KGL had formed outposts for this battalion. Cf. Journal of this battalion. In: NHH, Hann.38D.nr.236 p.27-28

According to lieutenant Eyre (2<sup>nd</sup> battalion, 95<sup>th</sup> regiment) his battalion had a position that night “in a wood in advance”, while the troops in the early morning plundered some farms. The wood cannot be determined but the farms were those of Merbraine. Cf. His letter to his mother dated 28<sup>th</sup> June 1815.

The fact that the 3<sup>rd</sup> battalion of the 95<sup>th</sup> regiment was near Merbraine can also be taken from the account of colonel Ross. In: Knight, corporal – The British battalion etc. p.18 He states the bivouac here was established at 11 p.m.

19. Ensign W.Leeke situates the 1<sup>st</sup> battalion of the 52<sup>nd</sup> regiment after 10 p.m. at about 300 metres in rear of the British position and 450 metres of Merbraine. Here the battalion formed an open column of companies. Cf. Leeke, W. The history of Lord Seaton’s regiment Vol.I p.16 R.Cusick initially gives a position south of Braine l’Alleud (till 7.30 p.m.) and then one east of Merbraine. In: Waterloo. The legacy of Sir John Moore. In: The Waterloo Journal Vol.20 nr.1 p.2

20. Leeke, W. – He mentions the largest farm present in this hamlet.

21. Cf. Major Meijer (4<sup>th</sup> battalion of the line KGL infantry). In: BL, Add.ms.34.704 p.270-273 According to lieutenant Kuckuck (3<sup>rd</sup> battalion line infantry KGL) the brigade had lost some men of detachments as being taken prisoner, but he doesn’t specify where this may have been. In: BL. Add.Ms.34.705 p.35-38

According to J.Hamilton, a member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> line battalion KGL, it was general De Lancey in person who assigned the troops here their positions. Cf. J.Hamilton in a letter dated 21<sup>st</sup> June 1815. In: NAM, Manuscripts, transcripts and printed documents, letters, notebooks and printed pamphlets relating to the battle and battlefield of Waterloo, nr.7905/5.

22. Report of captain Von Dreves (York battalion). In: NHH, Hann.41.XXI, nr.151 p.70-72

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Sir H.Clinton’s letter dated 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1815. In: NLS, MS 3615 f.39

24. Lieutenant Holmes (1<sup>st</sup> battalion, 23<sup>rd</sup> regiment) BL, Add.Ms.34.705 p.209-212  
Private John Abbott (1<sup>st</sup> battalion, 51<sup>st</sup> regiment) Letter in NAM, nr. 7607/34

Cannon claims the 1<sup>st</sup> battalion of the 23<sup>rd</sup> battalion arrived late in the evening. Cf. Cannon, R. - Historical records of the British army. Royal Welsh Fusiliers p.153

25. According to F.de Bas the battalion was the 18<sup>th</sup> battalion of light infantry, but his source for this claim remains unclear. In: La campagne de 1815 aux Pays Bas. Cartes et plans, plan VIII

26. According to F.de Bas these battalions were the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion of militia. In: La campagne de 1815 aux Pays bas. Cartes et plans, plan VIII.

27. According to F.de Bas these were the 18<sup>th</sup> battalion of national militia and the 1<sup>st</sup> battalion of line infantry.

Cf. Bas, F.de & T'Serclaes de Wommersom - La campagne de 1815 aux Pays Bas. Cartes et plans, plan VIII.

28. Cf. Dagboek der operatien en bewegingen etc. p.11-12

F.de Bas assigns to the brigade the following positions, mentioning no source: the 6<sup>th</sup> battalion of line infantry in the mill of Sainte Renelde; the remaining battalions in battalion-columns to the right of the road leading to Enghien, from left to right: national militia battalions nr.15, 14, 9 and the 4<sup>th</sup> line battalion. And the companies of the 16<sup>th</sup> battalion of light troops in and around Bierghes. In: La campagne de 1815 aux Pays Bas. Vol. cartes et plans, plan VIII

29. Journal of the count of St.Aldegonde. In: NA, 2.13.14.02 nr.7

General correspondence of count St.Aldegonde. In: NA, nr.2.13.14.02 nr.6 - item nrs.39,40 and 41

Bas, F.de & T'Serclaes de Wommersom - La campagne de 1815 aux Pays Bas. Vol.cartes et plans, plan VIII.

30. Löben Sels, E.van - Bijdragen tot de krijgsgeschiedenis etc. Vol.IV. p.593

31. Klijnsma, S.F. - De nagelaten aantekeningen van Sent Foppes Klijnsma. In: De Beweging 1910, I-249, II-1