

Unlocated manuscript sources.

Introduction.

The number of books and publications dedicated to the Waterloo-campaign is vast. Yet, only a very few of them have been based upon a thorough consultation of the manuscript sources available. These can be found in all kinds of archives, libraries and private collections all over Europe. Apart from those which I didn't have the opportunity yet to consult, we are also left with a number of archives or single documents which (probably still) exist, but of which I have no knowledge of their current whereabouts.

Belgium.

Probably the first attempt to collect accounts of people present in the campaign was carried out in a more or less systematic way by W.B.Craan (1776-1848) in 1815 and 1816.

As engineer of the land registry office of southern Brabant, he intended to draw a detailed plan of the battle of Waterloo.

For that plan, he did not only take detailed measurements of the field of battle itself, but he also gathered oral and written accounts of men present in order to be able to draw in the plan the units of all armies involved and also to write an adjoining account of the battle himself. In this sense, Craan can be regarded as probably the first historian of the campaign.¹ Craan published his project in 1816.

Apart from this account, Craan wrote after 1840 a 69-pages long manuscript in which he described the way he had worked in developing the project. He did so to defend the way he had worked, as by then all kinds of other publications about the battle had been published.

This manuscript is missing, but fragments have been published in 1850.²

From this manuscript it can be taken that Craan actually did receive several accounts in writing, probably from people from all armies involved but so far these accounts have not been located.³

In 1855, Bruno Renard published (anonymously) his "Réponse aux allégations anglaises sur la conduite des troupes belges en 1815".

Renard (1804-1879) was, as an officer in the Belgian army, in his later life also minister of war and adjutant of the king.

His publication was a reaction to the British allegations towards the Dutch / Belgian troops and was essentially built around three letters which he had written to the editor of the "Indépendance Belge" before. Renard used information supplied by numerous officers, but until now their accounts have been unavailable.⁴

The Netherlands.

Another institution which was bombed in (march) 1945 was the so-called "Krijgsgeschiedkundig archief" (military history archive) of the Dutch army in The Hague, founded by lieutenant colonel F.de Bas.

It contained books, manuscripts and maps. We know, thanks to the presence of copies of registers which survived the raid, that, as far as the campaign of 1815 was concerned, it contained a lot of copies of documents from other archives in the Netherlands and abroad, it also possessed several original documents and copies of documents which have until now appeared to be impossible to trace.

France.

In april 1835 general Pelet (in 1815 commander of the 2nd regiment of chasseurs), as director of the army's historical section, sent a questionnaire around amongst officers of the Armée du Nord of 1815 about the Waterloo campaign. The reason he did so was his particular interest in the campaign; Pelet himself had also written his journal and memoirs.

Some of the results of this survey have been published by d'Avout in the *Carnet de la sabretache* in 1901 and 1905.⁵

Yet, it should not be excluded that more of these accounts have been written and sent to Pelet. Yet, these have not been located in any collection so far.

In 1847 and 1848, a two-volume work entitled "Les derniers jours de la Grande Armée etc." was published in France by captain Hippolyte de Mauduit.

In 1815, De Mauduit had been a sergeant in the 2nd battalion of the 1st regiment of grenadiers of the Imperial Guard.

By the time he published the book he was director of a military magazine, the *Sentinelle de l'armée*. Consequently, for the book he used his own observations, but from the position he was in, he was also able to gather all kinds of information about the campaign, including direct accounts of members of the French army of 1815.⁶ Yet, despite contacts with members of his family and several archives, it has not been possible to locate De Mauduit's papers.

Pierre-Emmanuel-Albert, Baron du Casse (1813-1893), a French military and military historian, was the first editor of the correspondence of Napoleon.

In 1865 Du Casse made original orders and reports written during the campaign of 1815 from his collection available for copying by the historical section of the French ministry of war, the *Service historique de l'armée de terre*.

These copies were accordingly taken, but where Du Casse's papers are is still a mystery. One wonders how it had been possible that these official papers could have come in his hands at all.⁷

The same applies to the original of the register of staff, kept by Soult (and later Grouchy) during the campaign and of which only a copy survives in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris. Its exact provenance is not indicated but an introductory note linking it to Grouchy makes it most probable that the original came from his private papers.⁸

United Kingdom.

It was during the battle of Waterloo that colonel De Lancey, Wellington's deputy quarter master-general, was mortally wounded. In this position, he was responsible for the copying and dispatching of Wellington's orders and for this reason these papers are of eminent significance for the historiography of the campaign of 1815. Yet, so far, nor Wellington's original instructions for De Lancey, nor De Lancey's own copies which must have been deposited in the QMG's registers have so far been located.

After De Lancey had got wounded, lieutenant colonel Sir Charles Vere Broke, a senior AQMG under De Lancey's department, took over his duties. Documents issued by Broke during the advance to Paris are all loose sheets, suggesting that the custom might have been to take loose sheets in the field, using some for the outgoing messages and others for the duplicate copies, and to collate the latter and bind them as and when the opportunity arose. Wellington's letter book registers were compiled at the end of each month in alphabetical and chronological order and it seems reasonable to suggest that the QMG's documents were treated similarly.⁹

In the circumstances of De Lancey's fall and its subsequent events, there is in 1815 no trace of any concern about the papers. This can very well be explained by the fact that after his fall - as a routine - his documents were saved by those responsible for doing so.

Early in 1838, William Siborne made an attempt to locate them. To do so, he wrote to colonel Gurwood, the man who was at that time working on the publication of Wellington's despatches.¹⁰

Resulting, in March 1838, Gurwood wrote in his reply: "... the particulars could be best ascertained, that is the orders of movement etc. from the registers of the QMG's dept. which of course were never mislaid, even at the unfortunate moment of col. Delancey's death. I should think col. Freeth might give you some hint where these are to be found. I recollect the account of the passage of the Sambre at Charleroi having arrived at Bruxelles about dinner time on the 15th, for I was then at Hd. Qs., but I was too much occupied with the expectation of the ball at the Duke of Richmond to recollect much about what else was to take place that night, further than that I heard everything was to move at daylight. These particulars I fear will not be shown in his Graces papers. I will however carefully look over them on my arrival at Apsley House after the 15th April and let you know."¹¹

The result of this investigation is unknown, but what is certain is that Gurwood inquired most probably before 1838 at sir Willoughby Gordon, then in command of the QMG's department, about the whereabouts of the documents involved himself, but the attempt failed.¹² Somehow, however, the colonel Freeth told him that he thought there *were* kept at the QMG department.

Colonel Freeth was, as officer of the Royal Staff Corps and with the post of assistant quartermaster-general at the Horse Guards, running the archives there.¹³ Despite this information, for some reason, Gurwood did not push through his investigation.

Due to this lack of success, Gurwood turned to several officers such as lord Hill, general Colville and general Lambert in an attempt to reconstruct the original instructions issued to the different units during the campaign, and with these he did as far as he could.

In July 1838, Gurwood finished the manuscript for the publication of volume nr.12 of the Wellington despatches, which were eventually published in November of the same year.

As the result of his enquiries, Gurwood wrote in a footnote in this volume: "The original instructions to colonel De Lancey were lost with that officer's papers. These memorandums of movements have been collected from the different officers to whom they were addressed." The footnote as such belongs to the "Instructions for the movement of the army on the 16th."¹⁴

Apparently, Gurwood did not investigate the story - wherever it may have come from - about the destruction of the original papers by Delancey's widow, who died in 1822. It is hard to imagine that these valuable papers, of the duke himself, as state property, would have been destroyed by lady Delancey.

Yet, in 1842, the search for the document got a new stimulus and this might very well have been by the initiative of the duke of Wellington himself. It is highly probable that the duke needed these papers as material for writing his Memorandum which was due to be published that same year. As a result it was in September 1842 that Gurwood met colonel Freeth, but yet again, this attempt did not yield any results: at the QMG's department no copies of orders of movement of the 15th of June or any registers of these orders appeared to be available.¹⁵ An attempt at least to locate those from the cavalry through lord Greenock did not have any result either.¹⁶

It was between September 1842 and December 1845 that Gurwood somehow got in touch with colonel De Lacy Evans, who must have been able to procure him with original copies of Wellington's instructions written for colonel Delancey during the campaign of 1815. As no

correspondence between Gurwood and De Lacy Evans has ever surfaced, it remains unclear how Gurwood found out about these papers.¹⁷

Gurwood died in December 1845 and later editions were compiled and issued by the 2nd duke of Wellington, but the one of 1847 was still edited under Gurwood's supervision.¹⁸

In the edition of 1847 of the Wellington's despatches, the same type of footnote states: "Original copies preserved by colonel Sir De Lacy Evans (on the staff) have been handed by sir De Lacy Evans to the compiler."¹⁹ And by 1852, the footnote read:

"These instructions for the movement of the army were issued at 5 p.m. on the 15th June, two hours after the duke of Wellington received the intelligence that the French army had attacked the Prussian and Belgian posts on the Sambre and had taken Charleroi. The original instructions of the 15th, 16th and 17th June, in the hand-writing of the duke of Wellington, for colonel De Lancey, DQMG, were lost with the papers of that officer after his death. Original copies, however, preserved by colonel Sir De Lacey Evans, who was with colonel De Lancey when they were issued and dispatched to the different corps of the army, have been handed by Sir De Lacey Evans to the compiler. The memorandums of movements detailed by the DQMG to the officers in command of corps and divisions have been compared, and are in conformity with the instructions contained in the original copies."²⁰

Since the middle of the 19th century, by far the vast majority of the papers used by Gurwood and the 2nd duke of Wellington to reconstruct the sets of orders dated 15th, 16th and 17th of June (as published in 1838, 1847 and 1852) have not come to light. The papers involved are De Lancey's copies at the QMG department, those in the former hands of De Lacy Evans and those of the individual commanders they were written to.²¹

Prussia / Germany.

While they have their huge importance for the history of the campaign, from the Prussian side we are faced with the almost total absence of the complete Prussian archives as they used to exist in Berlin, in the so-called "Kriegsarchiv des grossen Generalstabes", which formed (from 1937 onwards) part of the "Heeresarchiv".

In april 1945 almost the whole archive would have been destroyed during a bombing raid by the allies on Berlin. After 1945, its remains were transferred to the former Soviet-Union, from where they eventually got back in the former "Militärarchiv" in Potsdam (the former DDR) in 1988.

Later, after the reunion of Germany, all – from east and west- archives were merged into one, the Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

It is there that copies of Prussian reports of the former Kriegsarchiv des grossen Generalstabes in the (uncatalogued) papers of Julius von Pflugk Harttung have been deposited. During his studies, it was Von Pflugk Harttung who copied a number of them, particularly those about the 15th and 16th of June.

He, as well as some other German historians like Von Lettow Vorbeck and Von Ollech, worked on the original documents then still present in Berlin.

There is no certainty whether there are still remains of the former Kriegsarchiv des grossen Generalstabes in Russia; as long as this is lacking, there is still hope that they might be found after all at some point of time. In fact, there are serious indications that they have been deposited in the Russian State Military History Archive (RGVIA) in Moscow.

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¹ Cf. T'Sas, F. Guillaume Benjamin Craan le premier historien de Waterloo

² Cf. Heuschling, X. Notice biographique sur Guillaume Benjamin Craan etc. p.11-14

³ Houssaye mentions a letter written by the count of Lobau to Craan, dated 12th january 1817. Houssaye got it from his grandson, mr. De Grandmaison. We have not been able to track it down. In: 1815.Waterloo p.346

What we did track down is a letter written by Craan himself, dated 20th october 1815, to Gneisenau with a request for all kinds of information about the prussian operations at Waterloo. In: GSA, VI HA, Gneisenau's papers, kt.23

⁴ The officers Renard mentions are (with their rank in 1855): lieutenant general Capiaumont, colonel Breuer, Renette and Huybrecht (36th battalion of chasseurs), general major baron Van Rode (35th battalion of chasseurs), lieutenant colonel Van Vinkeroye (3rd battalion of the line), general majors Geroges, De Quaita and Pletinx (8th regiment of hussars), general major De Merx, Brion, colonel Courtin, counts d'Yve de Bavay and De Renesse (5th regiment of light dragoons), lieutenant general De Brias and De Mercx, general major De Lobel (2nd regiment of carabineers), general-major Winssinger (battery of Stevenart). In: Réponse etc. p.44

The letter written by colonel De Mercx (commander of the 5th regiment of light dragoons) to Renard can be found in the "Notice biographique sur le général major Édouard de Mercx de Corbais" written by Roland Marchot (p.75-77).

⁵ In: "La cavalerie de la garde à Waterloo." In: Carnet de la sabretache (1901), p.360-373

Basically, this article contains the account of general De Brack, in 1815 captain in the lancers of the Imperial Guard.

In: "L'infanterie de la garde à Waterloo." In: Carnet de la sabretache (1905), p.33-54, 107-128 This article contains, amongst others, the accounts of Petit (commander of the 1st regiment of grenadiers), Christiani (commander of the 2nd regiment of grenadiers), Guillemin (chef de bataillon in the 3rd regiment of grenadiers) and Duuring (chef de bataillon in the 1st regiment of chasseurs).

There is also a letter written to Pelet by general Guyot, dated 27th april 1835. In: Carnets de campagne p.395-397

⁶ For instance:

General Durutte, commander of the 4th division of the 1st corps

[rank unknown] Année, of the artillery of the 2nd corps

Lieutenant general Bourmont, commander of the 14th division of the 4th corps

Adjutant Clouet, a member of Bourmont's staff

Colonel Sourd, commander of the 2nd regiment of lancers (division Subervie)

Colonel Bro, commander of the 4th regiment of lancers (division Jacquinot)

Captain Chapuis, of the 85th regiment of the line (division Durutte)

General Brue, commander of the 2nd brigade (division Durutte)

Baron Bruno, commander of the 1st brigade (division Jacquinot)

⁷ From what can be taken from the notes of the Service historique on Du Casse's papers they contain copies, documents in print and originals.

Amongst this last group are reports of Pajol to Grouchy (15th of June), Soult to Grouchy (16th of June), Exelmans to Grouchy (16th and 17th of June), Pajol to Grouchy (17th of June), Vandamme to Grouchy (17th of June), Bertrand to Grouchy (17th of June), Soult to Grouchy (10 a.m. 18th of June).

⁸ In: BNP, Nouv.acq. nr.4366

It was already back in 1840 and 1866 that two historians complained about the illegal possession by Grouchy of this document, as being a document of an official state character. Until now, the original hasn't come to light.

Cf. Fadeville, T. - *Aperçue critique sur Napoléon et sur les hommes de son époque* p.79
Pontécoulant, F.G. de - *Souvenirs militaires* p.58

⁹ Cf. Miller, D. – *Lady De Lancey at Waterloo* p.184

¹⁰ The original letter is unavailable.

¹¹ In: BL, Add.ms.34.706 p.460-461

¹² William Siborne apparently dropped the subject, as there is no trace of any further investigation from his side.

¹³ Hofschroer, P. *Wellington's smallest victory* p.123-124

¹⁴ In: *Despatches* Vol. XII p.474

¹⁵ Colonel Gurwood wrote to Wellington on the 1st of September 1842:

“I have seen colonel Freeth this morning, who thinks he shall be able to find in the archive of the Quartermaster-general's department the orders of movement of the 15th of June 1815. Those which I inserted in the twelfth volume of the *Despatches* I obtained from other quarters, as I had heard that Lady De Lancey had destroyed the originals among her husband's papers. But there must be a copy of them in the Quartermaster-general's department, over which neither Sir William nor Lady De Lancey could have had any control. I recollect, however, referring to Sir Willoughby Gordon for them when compiling the twelfth volume, but without success. Colonel Freeth, however, thinks they are in the office. If so, they will afford proof of the hours in which they were circulated to the different corps and divisions, if they do not also state the exact hour they were received from your Grace for such circulation.” In: HL, WP nr. 8.3.3 and MS61 WP 7.2.21 p.763

A letter from Gurwood to Wellington, dated 2nd of September 1842 states:

“I am going to the Horse Guards to see colonel Freeth, in the hope that he will have found out the book of the orders of movement on the 15th of June, as it will be very important to obtain it, in detail. I have no doubt but that they related to the movement of the whole army. Those inserted in the 12th volume of the *Dispatches* pages 472-474 & 475 & 476 were collected by me from lord Hill's, general Lambert's and sir C.Colville's papers.” In: HL, WP: 2 / 91 *Political correspondence etc* .nr.113.

Gurwood wrote to Wellington on the 6th of September 1842:

“I was at the HQ today and I regret to say that colonel Freeth has been unable to find any documents of movements between the 12th of June and July 1815. It appears that the QMG office, although in great pen and ink order when there is little to do, is always the contrary

during very active operations, and there is no registries of memorandum of movement. Colonel Delancey I hear was particularly careless on these subjects but after his death, these orders might have been collected from the corps, if not from the divisions, to which they were issued.” In: HL, WP nr. 8.3.5.

¹⁶ On the 14th of September 1842, lord Greenock wrote to colonel Gurwood: “I fear that I have no documents in my possession of the description or dates to which you refer, otherwise I should have had much pleasure in forwarding them to you. The only one I can find among the papers I have examined of a date previous to Waterloo is a part of the order issued on the night of the 15th of June for the assembly and march of the cavalry on Quatre Bras. I do not recollect any written orders having been received from Delancey on the 16th, 17th & 18th of June. Whatever directions were given respecting the movements of the cavalry during those days were either communicated verbally or contained in private notes addressed to the Marquess of Anglesey.” In: HL, WP 8.2.3 and MS61 WP 7.2.21 p.764

¹⁷ In 1910, in the context of the famous “De Lancey disposition” which basically belongs to this category of documents, Robinson added that “colonel Gurwood is said to have returned all MSS to the owners and sir De Lacy Evans’s papers have not, it is understood, been preserved.” From where he got this information remains unclear. In: Waterloo and the De Lancey memorandum p.590

¹⁸ HL, MS 61 Wellington papers DA68.12W4 - The dispatches of the duke of Wellington Vol.VIII by colonel Gurwood C.B., K.C.T.S
The original dispatches were edited between 1834 and 1839 by colonel Gurwood. In the second edition, edited in the period between 1842 and 1847 by Gurwood, additional material was incorporated, but the extra items were reprinted in the second main set of dispatches, the so-called Supplementary despatches, which were accordingly published in 15 volumes between 1858 and 1872.

¹⁹ The dispatches of field marshal the duke of Wellington (Gurwood) Vol.VIII London, Parker, Furnivall and Parker, 1847 p.142

²⁰ In: HL, MS61 WP DA68.12W4

The same principle of original copies of Wellington’s instructions, taken by De Lacy Evans applies to the instructions for the movement of the army on the 17th of June, as here is stated: “NOTE. The foregoing orders issued at about 9 o’clock on the morning of the 17th June, on the ground of the action at Quatre Bras, in consequence of the Prussian Army being found to have retired from the position of Ligny.

Copied from the Duke's writing. Saw the Duke write them while seated on the ground. They are my own original copies, taken at the moment. De Lacy Evans.” These were not issued in earlier editions of the Wellington despatches as those of 1852. In: WD, ed. 1852 p.144

²¹ Lord Hill’s papers at the British Library contain nothing of the kind.