

John Franklin (July 2010) *Waterloo: Hanoverian Correspondence, Volume One – Letters and Reports from Manuscript Sources, 1815 Limited*, 192 pages including 10 colour plates by Gerry Embleton and 4 colour maps. ISBN: 978-0-9563393-3-1. Price £20 for Paperback



This is the second of a series of “Correspondence” books produced by “1815 Limited” to present translated transcripts exclusively from contemporary manuscripts so are distinct from other publications in that there are no footnotes. These are supplemented by an on-line subscription archive that over the next 5 years will encompass all participants in the Waterloo campaign. The first of two volumes on the Hanoverian and Kings German Legion (KGL) has been taken from 49 original manuscripts held in the Niedersächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv in Hanover. The second volume on the Hanoverians will be taken from printed sources and should be out in April 2011.

The KGL was formed after Hanover had been overrun by the French in 1803. In 1814, the Hanoverian Army was reformed from selected cadres from the veteran KGL, new drafts and former soldiers that had fought for Napoleon. In 1815, there was not enough time to re-integrate the KGL that had fought so well in the Peninsular.

Most of the KGL infantry battalions were less than 300 men strong and had 6 rather than 10 companies. According to Captain Adolphus Hesse 2nd KGL Line Battalion had 21 officers, 25 serjeants and 302 other ranks. [p46] The 5th KGL Line Battalion was reduced to only 5 companies with 24 officers, 17 serjeants and 291 other ranks after detachments according to Adjutant Wilhelm Walther. [p76]

There are 22 KGL and 27 Hanoverian manuscripts presented in this high quality paperback. A quarter of the accounts in the book (12) are after action reports, half of which were by the brigade commanders and a further one by the commander of the 5th British Division. Two thirds (22 plus another 10 with no date give) relate to the general order dated 28 October 1824 that requested reports from officers still serving in the Hanoverian Army upon the Waterloo campaign.

In 1835, Commander in Chief of the British Army, Lord Hill, requested information on the role of the KGL and Hanoverian Battalions to assist the construction of the Waterloo Model being made by Lieutenant Siborne. He was assisted by Major and Assistant Quartermaster-General Carl Jacobi who had served as a Captain in the Lüneberg Light Infantry Battalion. The report is given in full and is a very clear account of the campaign involving the Hanoverians and KGL by brigade and even by unit [see pp9-33]. The translator gives reference to the 8 maps that were submitted with the report which alas were not reproduced. [p33] This report for its clarity is probably worth buying the book alone. Another three accounts were written about 1840 and the final one in 1854.

Many of the letters and reports in edited form had been published in German by Dr. Julius von Pflugk-Harttung in his 1915 book entitled *Belle-Alliance (Verbündetes Heer): Berichte und Angaben über die Beteiligung deutscher Truppen der Armee Wellingtons an dem Gefechte bei Quatre Bras und*

der Schlacht bei Belle-Alliance. This important book has become a standard work among German speaking historians though almost unknown elsewhere. John Franklin by accessing the original papers in the Niedersächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv in Hanover was able to correct the errors and misidentification that Pflugk-Hartung had made in 1915 in his German edition. About half of the KGL and Hanoverian letters were left unidentified. John Franklin has for the first time attributed to each report or letter to a person. Many of the documents were not reproduced in full and according to John Franklin, the most important were the omissions in the Carl Jacobi manuscript that he has reproduced in full.

The reviewer has extracted a series of extracts based upon my various areas of interest so many are upon the Artillery.

#### EXTRACT 1: Muddy Ground

Brevet Major Heinrich Kuhlmann [dated 1 Dec 1824] commander of the 2nd Horse Artillery King's German Legion attached to 1<sup>st</sup> British Infantry Division.

“We stood on the plateau of a small height overlooking cultivated fields, and because of the rain which had fallen during the night the sodden ground made it almost impossible to move the 9-pdr cannon and the heavy 5½-in howitzer by hand.”

Brevet Major Heinrich Kuhlmann, commander of 2nd Horse Artillery, KGL [p35]

#### EXTRACT 2: Light Dragoons against Cuirassiers

Maj-Gen Wilhelm von Dörnberg at the head of the 1st KGL Light Dragoons counterattacked an enemy Cuirassier regiment. The Light Dragoons could do little against the enemy breast plates and lamented “if we only had our old swords!” This was a reference to their long heavy cavalry Pallasches that they surrendered upon being converted from Heavy to Light Dragoons.

[About 4pm] “... an enemy Cuirassier regiment advanced at the trot. It found its way through the infantry squares and the artillery battery on the heights. As my two regiments were Light Cavalry, I ordered them to remain in column and at the moment that I believed that a counterattack would ensure the greatest success, I ordered the 23rd Regiment to charge the enemy's left wing, while I attacked the right wing with the 1st Regiment... This attack was completely successful, and the Cuirassier Regiment was completely dispersed.”

Maj-Gen Wilhelm von Dörnberg commander of 3rd British Cavalry Brigade [p172-3]

#### EXTRACT 3: No counter-battery fire

The orders of the Duke of Wellington are repeated in most of the artillery accounts

“The Duke of Wellington, who visited us on a number of occasions, personally ordered me not to exchange fire with the enemy artillery... At this time a strong enemy artillery battery of the highest calibre fired at us from a position of 1200 paces away, but because of the order I had received from the Duke of Wellington, I did not return fire.”

Brevet Major Heinrich Kuhlmann, commander of 2nd Horse Artillery, KGL [p35]

#### EXTRACT 4:

Captain Wilhelm Braun [c1824: pp151-152] commanded 1st Hanoverian Foot Artillery. He reported in May 1815, his company was armed with 6-pdrs wagons from various countries, probably Westphalian and French. On 8-9 June, the company was fully equipped as 9-pdr battery from the British stores and were given instruction in its operation by a Lt and some NCOs from the KGL.

“On the 8th and 9th June I received the complete equipment for a 9-pdr battery with all the appropriate reserves from the English Arsenal at Ghent, and due to the extraordinary undertaking of Lt von Schulz and several artillery corporals of the KGL, who were made available to me by Lt-Col Sir J. Hartmann of the same corps, it was possible to practice with the battery and for me to learn within a very short space of time the correct method of handling the ordnance which had been supplied.”

Captain Wilhelm Braun commanded 1st Hanoverian Foot Artillery [p151]

#### EXTRACT 5: British 9-pdrs

By 7pm most batteries had expended their ammunition and could only carry on fighting by borrowing ammunition from RA batteries. This clearly showed how sensible it was to standardise upon British ordnance and equipment despite most only receiving it only a week before.

“Lt-Col Abye joined us with the English foot artillery battery ... and as we had fired many more rounds than they had, they supplied us with some ammunition.”

Brevet Major Heinrich Kuhlmann, commander of 2nd Horse Artillery, KGL [p36]

“Towards 6 o'clock in the evening the battery had been reduced to such an extent, due to the number killed, wounded and those who had carried their wounded comrades to the rear etc., that only 3 cannon could be operated... It was towards 7.30pm when the last cannon finally exhausted the last of the ammunition.”

Lt Friedrich d'Huvelé of the 1st Hanoverian Foot battery [p156].

#### EXTRACT 6: Defeat of a French horse artillery half battery.

At about 6:30pm, three 6-pdr guns of French Horse Artillery deployed within canister range [300 yards or less] of the 1st Hanoverian Foot Battery who outclassed them with their Blomefield 9-pdrs and the French were forced to withdraw.

“At this time [6.30pm] three cannon belonging to the enemy's horse artillery moved to N, which fired at the battery with canister. But after a few shots from our Hanoverian Battery one of these enemy's cannon was destroyed and the other withdrew.”

Lt Friedrich d'Huvelé of the 1st Hanoverian Foot battery [p157].

#### EXTRACT 7: Ammunition and men exhausted

The accounts show that few of the KGL and Hanoverian Batteries could be operational for the pursuit of the French Army.

“The 1st Horse Battery was the only one which received orders to pursue the enemy.”

Brevet Major Augustus Sympher commander of 1st Horse Artillery, KGL [p64]

“On the morning of 19th... Only two cannon and 2 ammunition wagons were fit for service. The cannon were manned by 1 serjeant and 8 gunners.”

Lt Friedrich d'Huvelé of the 1st Hanoverian Foot battery [p157].

#### **Closing comments**

There are a few places that the layouts seem a little confused and it is unclear why they are in a larger font and not indented as I assume they are part of the report [see pp39-40, pp82-83, p86 etc.]. The ten action quality illustrations by Gerry Embleton are an important addition to the understanding

of Waterloo that has been neglected in English for too long. The simple transcript style may not suite everybody but the serious research will enjoy this blank canvass approach as being the next best thing to visiting the archives themselves. This book is recommended to the historian, re-enactor and wargamer who will enjoy the fascinating accounts especially the overview report by Carl Jacobi. The appendix gives details of the contents of the book.

*Reviewed by* Dr Stephen Summerfield,  
Loughborough University  
10th November 2010

## **APPENDIX: Letters and reports contained in this volume.**

The approximate dates are given by the reviewer and the ranks are given on the day of the battle.

### **General Staff Overview**

In 1835 Major and Assistant Quartermaster-General Carl Jacobi who had served as a Captain in the Lüneberg Light Infantry Battalion. [1835: pp9-33]

### **Letters and Reports by Divisional and Brigade Commanders made in**

[5 in 1815, 1 probably 1815 and 3 in 1824]

#### **DIVISIONAL COMMANDERS**

- 3rd British Infantry Division
- Lt-Gen Count Carl von Alten [20 June 1815: pp65-69]

#### **BRIGADE COMMANDERS**

- 1st King's German Legion Brigade, 2nd British Infantry Division
- Lt-Col Friedrich von Wissell [20 June 1815: pp37-41] in three letters gives details of the 455 casualties of 1st KGL Brigade on 18 June 1815.
- 1st Hanoverian Infantry Brigade, 3rd British Infantry Division
- Maj-Gen Friedrich von Kielmansegge [c1815: pp81-87]
- 3rd Hanoverian Brigade, 2nd British Infantry Division
- Col Hugh Halkett [24 June and 13 July 1815: pp47-49]
- 4th Hanoverian Infantry Brigade, 6th British Infantry Division
- Col Carl Best [10 Dec 1824: pp158-170]
- 5th Hanoverian Infantry Brigade, 5th British Infantry Division
- Col Ernst von Vincke [7 Jan 1825: pp141-146]
- 3rd British Cavalry Brigade, British Cavalry Corps,
- Maj-Gen Wilhelm von Dörnberg [11 Nov 1824] pp171-173

### **Letters and Reports by the KGL and Hanoverian Artillery made in 1824**

- [1 in 1815, 3 in 1824 and a further 4 probably in 1824]
- Commander of the King's German Legion artillery
- Lt-Col Wilhelm Hartmann commanded the KGL Artillery [c1824] pp7-8
- 4th Foot Artillery King's German Legion
- Captain Andreas Cleeves, commander, [25 Nov 1824: pp131-136] He states that his battery was joined by Lt Robert Manners RA as a volunteer.

- 1st Horse Artillery King's German Legion
- Brevet Major Augustus Sympher [c1824: pp63-64]
- 2nd Horse Artillery King's German Legion attached to 1st British Infantry Division
- Brevet Major Heinrich Kuhlmann [1 Dec 1824: pp34-36]

#### HANOVERIAN ARTILLERY

- Commander of the Hanoverian artillery attached to 5th Division
- Major Ludwig Heise [13 July 1815: pp150-151].
- 1st Hanoverian Foot Artillery
- Captain Wilhelm Braun, commander. [c1824: pp151-152].
- Lt Friedrich d'Huvelé [6 Dec 1824: pp152-157]."
- 2nd Hanoverian Foot Artillery
- Captain Carl von Rettberg, commander, [c1824: pp137-140]

#### **Letters and Reports by the KGL Infantry**

[2 in 1824 and a further 5 accounts probably in 1824]

#### KGL LINE INFANTRY

- 1st Line Battalion King's German Legion
- Lt Leopold von Rettberg [c1824: pp41-43]
- 2nd Line Battalion King's German Legion
- Major Georg von Müller [23 Nov 1824: pp43-45]
- Adjutant Adolphus Hesse [c1824] pp46-47
- 5th Line Battalion King's German Legion
- Lt Col Wilhelm von Linsingen (commander) [17 Nov 1824] pp73-75
- Ensign and Adjutant Wilhelm Walther [c1824] pp75-78
- 8th Line Battalion King's German Legion
- Captain and Adjutant Julius Brinckmann [c1824] 78-80

#### KGL LIGHT INFANTRY

- 2nd Light Infantry Battalion King's German Legion
- Major Georg Baring [c1824]

#### **Letters and Reports by the KGL Cavalry**

[5 made in 1824]

#### KGL CAVALRY

- 2nd Light Dragoons King's German Legion
- Brevet Major Augustus Friedrichs [24 Jan 1825]
- Captain Wilhelm Seeger [28 Nov 1824: pp175-178]
- 1st Hussars King's German Legion
- Captain Georg von der Decken [21 Dec 1824: pp 178-179]
- 3rd Hussars King's German Legion
- Captain Wilhelm von Schnehen [11 Nov 1824: pp180-182]
- Captain Quintus von Goeben [29 Nov 1824: pp182-185]

#### **Letters and Reports by the Hanoverian Infantry made in 1824**

[2 in 1815, 7 in 1824, 2 in 1840 and 1 in 1854]

## HANOVERIAN LIGHT INFANTRY

- Bremen Light Infantry Battalion
- Major Heinrich Müller [9 Dec 1824: pp87-107]
- Captain Carl von Scriba [4 Dec 1824: pp107-118]
- Lt Wilhelm von Tschirschnitz [16 Nov 1824: pp119-126]
- Verden Light Infantry Battalion
- Major Julius von Schkopp [3 Dec 1824: pp126-130]

## HANOVERIAN LANDWEHR

### Bremervörde Landwehr Battalion

- Ensign Friedrich Scheuch [9 Nov 1825: pp54-55]

### Giffhorn Landwehr Battalion

- Oboist Christian Schacht [25 Aug 1815: pp148-150]

### Hamelnd Landwehr Battalion

- Major Wilhelm von Strube, commander [10 Nov 1824: pp146-148]

### Osnabrück Landwehr Battalion

- Lt Wilhelm Richers [8 Sept 1854: pp55-58]
- Ensign Friedrich Lyra [c1840: pp58-61]
- Serjeant Conrad Frühing [c1840: pp61-63]
- Captain Ludwig Dreves [3 Jan 1825: pp51-53]

### Salzgitter Landwehr Battalion

- Major Friedrich von Hammerstein [24 June 1815: pp49-51]