

all its Officers. I found it very well formed, occupying the strong fence above the hollow lane, keeping up a desultory fire, till suddenly, a shout arose on all sides, when we jumped out of the ditch and charged across the Orchard clearing the French before us, and pursued into the wood by the Gate at the corner of the Garden wall. The ditch had been very deep, & had been full of water, but when I reached it, was completely filled with killed and wounded so as to form a complete bridge.³

The gate was less than thirty yards from the garden wall, and so the Coldstream Guards posted inside were able to pour a most destructive fire into the French, as they tried to negotiate the ditch beyond. Scores were felled, and as the Allied troops in the orchard came up, they added to the slaughter by firing while lying under the cover of a bank.⁴

With the orchard secure, and the ground immediately behind Hougoumont occupied by the squares of the King's German Legion, Colonel Francis Hepburn instructed the Acting Adjutant, Ensign Berkeley Drummond, to ride back to the heights for ammunition:

Hepburn was in command of the Brigade when he sent me up the hill from near the Farm Yard for more ammunition, which I applied personally for to Sir John Byng, who I found on the rising ground above Hougoumont with a Brigade officer. I had posted him letters before this from Hepburn, he wishing me to report how matters were going in the Farm House, & to arrange about the Barn that he was afraid the Men might fail to account of.⁵

The Staff officer to whom the request was made was Captain Horace Seymour, Aide-de-camp to Lord Uxbridge:

I was called to by some Officers of the 3rd Guards defending Hougoumont, to use my best endeavours to send them musket ammunition. Soon afterwards I fell in with a private of the Waggon Train in charge of a tumbrel on the crest of the position. I merely pointed out to him where he was wanted, when he gallantly started his horses, and drove straight down the hill to the Farm, to the gate of which I saw him arrive. He must have lost his horses, as there was a severe fire kept on him. I feel convinced to that man's service the Guards owe their ammunition.⁶

The contents of the wagon were distributed amongst the garrison, and the crisis was averted. However, the Germans at La Haie Sainte were less fortunate. They failed to obtain a supply of ammunition, and were obliged to abandon the farm; whereupon

