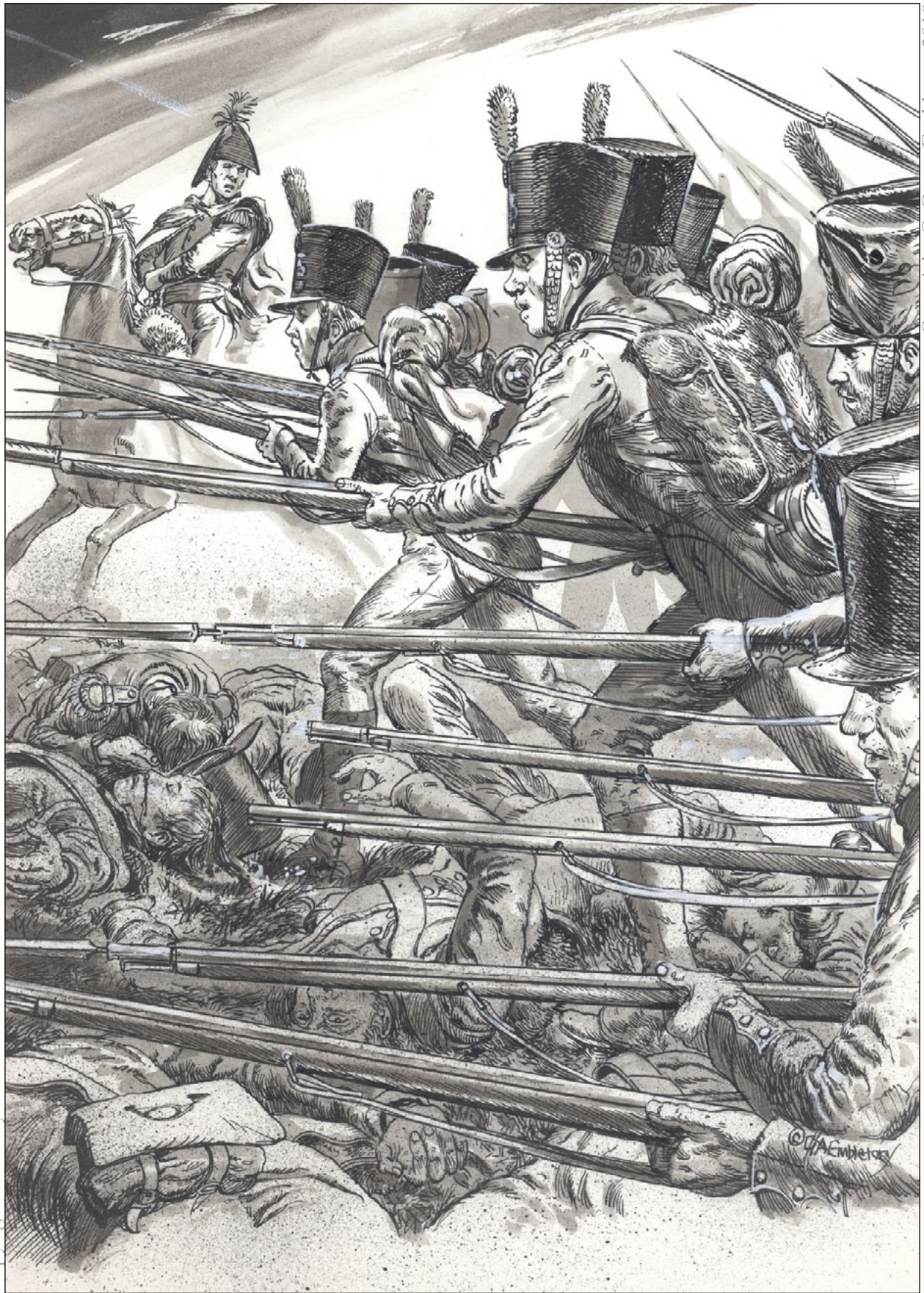


# David Chassé

Stadsarchief, Zutphen; collectie familie van Löben Sels; Nr.II, nr.8.2. Letter, dated 27th April 1836, from General Baron David Hendrik Chassé, the former Lieutenant-General commanding the 3rd Netherlands Infantry Division, to Colonel Charles Nepveu (translated from Dutch):

It is with pleasure that I comply with the request made in your letter of the 5th instant, nr. 342, in which you expressed a desire to receive an account of the movement and actions of the division I commanded in the battle of Waterloo on 18th June 1815, towards 7 o'clock in the evening &c. &c., which I have the honour to submit as far as this is possible. Unfortunately, it has taken considerable effort to gather the material to comply with this request and to compile the account, because the records relating to the former 3rd Infantry Division were deposited with the 4th Great Military Command in 1816, and the remnants which I discovered in 1829 when accepting the command were in such a sorry state that they proved to be of little use, while all of the documents relating to the period of the 5th to 25th June have disappeared, and everything that could have been of any importance is no longer available. In addition, the maps &c. I had drawn of this campaign in 1830 were lost by a fatality during the revolt in Belgium. After much effort I have been able to confirm the strength of the division as it was, more or less, at the conclusion of the battle and have included this accordingly. You will understand from this that the infantry battalions differed considerably in strength, for example the 13th Infantry Battalion had a strength of 690 men. In order that it should make no difference in appearance on the map, on which the position of the division in the evening about seven o'clock is shown, I have divided the total of the infantry by 10 and thus counted each battalion as 527 men, while the Jägers can almost be counted as 600 men. To avoid confusion within the plan that you sent to me I have copied the terrain on which the military operations of the 3rd Infantry Division took place against the plan and marked the position of this division for the requested time, while the forward movements that took place later are shown with red dotted lines, on which I think it is necessary to observe that during this advance and arrival on the height there were no troops, not a single man belonging to the Allied army, between my division and the Garde Impériale, which has been misrepresented on the plan by de Craan. For additional information I herewith attach a copy of my report, sent on the 4th July 1815 to H.R.H., from Bourgette, as well as a letter written by me to General Lord Hill, and the reply I subsequently received.

As you have provided me with some particulars of the events on that memorable day, I have determined to tell you the reasons which caused me to advance without having received any orders and to attack the Garde Impériale at the *pas de charge*. When I saw that an English artillery battery positioned on the left and forward of my division had stopped firing, I went there to enquire the reason and learned that there was no ammunition. At the same time I saw the Garde Impériale advancing, while the English troops were leaving the plateau en masse and moving in the direction of Waterloo; the battle seemed lost. I immediately ordered the battery of horse artillery under the command of Major van der Smissen to advance, to occupy the height and to direct an emphatic fire upon the enemy column. At this time I also ordered Major-General d'Aubremé to have the brigade he commanded form two



squares in echelon and to form a reserve with the foot artillery. I positioned myself at the head of the 1st Brigade and advanced in closed columns at attack pace against the French (Lt-Col Thiele was killed in this attack and was replaced by Captain Buhlman). Having closed to within a few paces of the enemy I observed that they made a rearward movement, and I pursued them on foot until the onset of darkness prevented us from continuing any further.

At the moment I forced the French to yield I had the Allied cavalry next to me advance so as to support my attack, this movement was followed shortly thereafter by the entire infantry and cavalry, against which the enemy soon retreated in complete disorder, it being superfluous to recount the result further here. What the operations of the other divisions of the Netherlands army might have been on that memorable day, I am afraid I am unable to inform you, for I was stationed with my division, which was attached to another army corps, and located entirely on the right flank of the army so that the other divisions fought completely outside my view. Baron Chassé

The strength of the 3rd Netherlands Infantry Division after the Battle of Waterloo on 18th June 1815:

1st Brigade – commanded by Colonel Detmers:

35th Jäger Battalion – commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Arnault [sic]: 20 officers and 561 men; total 581 and 7 horses.

2nd Line Battalion – commanded by Colonel Speelman: 23 officers and 448 men; total 471 and 8 horses.

4th Militia Battalion – commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel van Heeckeren: 24 officers and 487 men; total 511 and 9 horses.

6th Militia Battalion – commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Thielen: 22 officers and 470 men; total 492 and 7 horses.

17th Militia Battalion – commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Wieling: 26 officers and 508 men; total 534 and 8 horses.

19th Militia Battalion – commanded by Major Boellaerd: 28 officers and 365 men; total 383 [should read 393] and 5 horses.

2nd Brigade – commanded by Major-General d'Aubremé:

36th Jäger Battalion – commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Goethals: 22 officers and 600 men; total 622 and 8 horses.

3rd Line Battalion – commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel l'Honneaux: 28 officers and 590 men; total 608 [should read 618] and 2 horses.

12th Line Battalion – commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Bagelaar: 24 officers and 393 men; total 417 and 8 horses.

13th Militia Battalion – commanded by 2nd Colonel Aberson: 26 officers and 664 men; total 690 and 10 horses.

3rd Militia Battalion – commanded by 2nd Colonel Lawick van Pabst: 21 officers and 521 men; total 542 and 4 horses.

10th Militia Battalion – commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Braade: 24 officers and 601 men; total 625 and 8 horses

Grand total for the infantry: 268 officers and 6208 men; total 6476 [should read 6496] and 94 horses.

Artillery – commanded by Major van der Smissen:

Horse Artillery – commanded by Captain Lux: 4 officers and 115 men; total 119 and 4 horses.

Artillery Train – Ditto: 3 officers and 136 men; total 139 and 258 horses.

Foot Artillery – commanded by Captain Krahmer [sic]: 5 officers and 116 men; 121 and 122 horses.

Artillery Train – Ditto: 2 officers and 85 men; total 87 and 159 horses.

Grand total for the artillery: 14 officers and 452 men; total 466 and 543 horses.

Stadsarchief, Zutphen; collectie familie van Löben Sels; Nr.II, nr.8.2, Annex A. Report, dated 4th July 1815, from the Lieutenant-General Baron David Hendrik Chassé, commanding the 3rd Netherlands Infantry Division, to H.R.H., the Prince of Orange (translated from Dutch):

The strenuous marches the 3rd Division has undertaken since the 18th June and the numerous delays en route are the reason that I have not had the honour to provide Your Royal Highness with a list of officers who distinguished themselves on this glorious day until this moment. I must state that I would not have accomplished this task, with details of the movements and the involvement of the division, if I had not been induced to write, having just seen the report by the Duke of Wellington, and the great disappointment this has evoked to my expectations, having written to General Lord Hill, under whose command I was placed by Your Royal Highness, previously. I feel obliged to address myself freely on this matter to Lord Hill with a letter, a copy of which I insert. I hereby provide Your Royal Highness with a full report of the operations of my division on this day.

The positions which Lord Hill had assigned to me were the following: one battalion remained in Braine la Leud [sic]; two battalions forming the right wing were so to stay close to this village, the left wing extended to the 2nd English Division, while the rest of the division was positioned behind the village, with the left towards the 2nd Division which I have mentioned previously, while its right was extended as far as possible towards the Forêt de Soignes.

Towards 3 o'clock in the afternoon the division received the order to form an oblique front line along the high road from Nivelles to Brussels. The brigades were formed in columns, some of them in open lines, some in squares. This manoeuvre was executed with such calmness, despite the heavy canon fire which caused considerable loss in the lines, that it would have honoured the most experienced soldiers. They remained for several hours in this uncomfortable position, looking death in the face with intrepidity, and when one of their comrades was hit they shouted: 'Long live the King! Long live our country!'

Towards the evening I noticed that the fire of the artillery upon the height in front of us was slackening considerably, although not stopping completely; I immediately went there to enquire the reason and I was told that they were running out of ammunition. At the same time I saw that the French Garde Impériale was moving to attack this artillery, and so I did not hesitate one moment; I ordered our artillery upon the same height and its commander, Major van der Smissen, commenced a heavy fire. I then ordered Major-General d'Aubremé to remain in two columns one behind another, en echelon, and I marched together with the 1st Brigade, under the command of Colonel Detmers, in closed column against the enemy and I had the pleasure to witness the Garde Impériale retire from the confrontation with our brigade. I followed the fleeing enemy until the darkness of the night prevented us from doing so any longer. I bivouacked with my troops until the morning, when I received the order to go to Nivelles where the 2nd Brigade and the artillery awaited my return in the best of order.

I am highly satisfied with my whole division and its behaviour, especially the soldiers, who have not been in the ranks longer than ten months and who were little more than recruits. They have given proof that the blood of their ancestors flows through their veins. The two commanders of the brigade, Major-General d'Aubremé and Colonel Detmers, as well as Major van der Smissen, the commander of the artillery, displayed the utmost calmness, bravery and prudence. I hereby insert the reports of the brigade commanders and also that for the artillery, which will allow Your Royal Highness to read the special events of this day. It is a pity that Colonel Detmers did not mention Colonel Speelman in his report, for he was extremely brave and satisfied me especially, as well as enhancing his well-earned reputation; the same can be said for Colonel Aberson and Lieutenant-Colonel l'Honneaux.

It is also my duty on this occasion to mention to Your Royal Highness, a moment of distinct bravery. When the Grenadiers of the Garde Impériale were attacked and pushed back by Colonel Speelman and a part of the 1st Brigade, I saw on my left, the enemy moving on a small height. I went there immediately and found Captain de Haan of the 19th Militia Battalion with some brave soldiers; it was exactly at this precise moment that we profited from the disorder in the enemy ranks, and so, not to give them time to reform their lines, I ordered an attack. He jumped over a hedge with his soldiers, reformed his line of about fifty men, and the murderous fire he inflicted caused death and confusion among the enemy's lines. He took advantage of their confusion and advanced with the bayonet against them. I had the unspeakable joy to witness 300 Cuirassiers run away from 50 Dutchmen.

Captains Geselschap and van Hemert of the 4th Militia Battalion were also distinctively brave. I saw the latter, whose company was still in the best order, fighting courageously against the cavalry.

I would not calculate with the well-known generous character of Your Royal Highness would I not recommend these brave officers to His Grace, the Duke. I think that it is also my duty to mention the officers of my staff, Major and Chief of the General Staff van Delen, my adjutants, Captains de Boer and van Omphal, Captain Beelaerts and Captain of engineers Anemaet, as well as His Majesty's chamberlain, Lieutenant Baron van Grovestins. All of these officers fought with extraordinary

distinction and rendered excellent service to myself. I admired the courage of Baron van Grovestins, who fought his first battle; the others have shown that they are good, experienced soldiers.

Almost two months ago I asked for the rank of a Lieutenant-Colonel for Major van Delen and for the rank of a Major for Captain de Boer: both of them are officers serving with glory for many years now. Lieutenant-General Baron Chassé

Stadsarchief, Zutphen; collectie familie van Löben Sels; Nr.II, nr.8.2. Annex. B. Letter, dated 5th July 1815, from Lieutenant-General Baron David Hendrik Chassé, commanding the 3rd Netherlands Infantry Division, to General Lord Hill, commanding the 2nd Allied Army Corps (translated from French):

It was only yesterday that I read the report by His Grace the Duke of Wellington concerning the battle of the 18th instant. On this day I had the honour to serve with my division under the orders of Your Excellency. However, as there was no mention of my division whatsoever, I presume that its conduct eluded Your Excellence's attention, while writing your report to the Duke of Wellington. Therefore, I find myself in the difficult position of having to explain the facts to Your Excellency, as they occurred, and the part that my division played in the success of that day.

Towards evening I noticed that the fire of the artillery on the heights in front was slackening, and I immediately went to enquire the reason why; I was informed that there was a shortage of ammunition, I could distinctly see that the French Garde Impériale was advancing towards these pieces; foreseeing the dire consequences I advanced my artillery to the brow of the height and ordered it to maintain a heavy fire, at the same time leaving the 2nd Brigade in reserve, formed in two squares en echelon, and under the command of Major-General d'Aubremé, I formed the 1st Brigade, commanded by Colonel Detmers, in closed columns and charged the French Garde Impériale. I had the pleasure to see the French retreat. Tactfully, I did not report this fact as I was entirely convinced that Your Excellency would mention this in your report to His Grace, having honoured me two days after the battle (being then at Nivelles), with an expression of your satisfaction of the conduct of my artillery, without reference to the infantry; but I see my error. I believe that I would fail in my duties to the brave men that I had the satisfaction to command, and even towards the whole of my nation, if I did not try to remedy this omission by asking our commander-in-chief to render justice to these brave troops who, I am convinced, deserve full merit; they have attached too much value and are too sensitive to the honour of having contributed to such a glorious victory. Baron Chassé

Stadsarchief, Zutphen; collectie familie van Löben Sels; Nr.II, nr.8.2. Annex. C. Letter, dated 11th July 1815, from General Lord Hill, commanding the 2nd Allied Army Corps, to Lieutenant-General Baron David Hendrik Chassé, commanding the 3rd Netherlands Infantry Division (translated from French):

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated the 5th of this month, which I received only yesterday. In the report which I had the honour to submit to His Grace the Duke of Wellington concerning the battle of the 18th June, I particularly mentioned the conduct of your division on that



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day, and did not omit to describe the movement that it made to repel the attack by the French Garde Impériale. Unfortunately, the report by His Grace the Duke of Wellington had already been sent to London before the arrival of my own; however, I am assured that His Grace is aware of the fine conduct of the troops under your orders during this glorious day, and that you may rest assured that it will always be my greatest pleasure to vouch for it. I remain your obedient servant. Hill.

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