Extract from Chapter '**The Waterloo Campaign 1815'**
from the Amazon book
'Private Donald Campbell 92nd Foot 1803-1822'

Battle of Waterloo 18th June 1815

18th June 1815	**Battle of Waterloo**	
Commander-in-Chief	Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington	
Corps.	Reserve	
Division	**Brigade**	**Regiments**
5th Division Lt. Gen. Sir Thomas Picton	**9th Brigade** Maj. Gen. Sir Denis Pack	3/1st Foot 42nd Foot 2/44th Foot 92nd Foot

James Hope (92nd Foot) writes, "The storm continued to rage with very nearly the same violence till eight o'clock, a.m. About nine, the clouds began to disperse, and before ten the day cleared up. About eight, the Commissary presented us with a tolerable allowance of beef, but the value of it might have been saved to the country, for few deigned to look at it. This present was soon followed by another of a more acceptable kind, however, brandy, which met with a much more kindly welcome."

Sergeant Robertson (92nd Foot) writes, "We were aroused by daylight, on the morning of the 18th, and ordered to stand to our arms, till the line should be constructed. During the time I never felt colder in my life, every one of us was shaking like an aspen leaf. An allowance of gin was then served out to each of us, which had the effect of infusing warmth into our almost inanimate frames, as before we got it, we seemed as if under a fit of ague."

James Hope continues, "The enemy showing no disposition to resume the offensive, we were withdrawn from our advanced position in the puddle, to a dry one considerably in rear of it. Here we lighted fires, pulled off our jackets, shoes, etc., and endeavoured to make ourselves as comfortable as existing circumstances would permit. In hopes of procuring a little repose, we had begun to construct huts, in one of which three of us were fast asleep, when the sound of the bugles called us to prepare for a renewal of the scenes of the 16th."

Many were fast asleep when the order was given to fall in, prime and load, and take up their position. Then Wellington, looking calm and confident, rode along the line on his favourite horse named 'Copenhagen' after his first European victory. The Allied army in position in front of Waterloo amounted to about 67,600 of all arms, of whom 12,500 were cavalry, with 156 guns. About 24,000 were British, and 5,800 were of the King's German Legion in British pay. The rest were Hanoverians, Brunswickers, Nassau contingent, and Netherlanders (ref. Alison).

On the 18th June, the 92nd battalion included 1 Field-officer, 2 captains, 15 subalterns, 4 staff, 27 sergeants, 12 drummers, and 361 rank and file. Several officers and men were able to take their places, although still pained from wounds received at Quatre Bras.

Napoleon, in estimating the chances of success, which he thought greatly in his favour, considered one British soldier equal to one Frenchman, and one French soldier equal to two of Wellington's other troops. The composition and discipline of the British were not equal to the army which fought from the Pyrenees to Toulouse, with which its leader said "he could go anywhere and do anything." A large part of that army was in America, and was replaced by battalions which had seen no service, but several of the most distinguished Peninsular regiments were there. Many of

the Continental troops had served under Napoleon, the country of others had been conquered by him, and all were inclined to believe him invincible. Wellington, therefore, placed most reliance on the British and the German Legion, the other troops being posted alternately between them.

Sergeant Robertson continues, "We were now ordered to stand to our arms, prime and load, fix bayonets, wheel into line, and be ready to act in any manner required. By this time the action had begun on the right, and the Duke and his staff had taken up their station on the green height in the rear of La Haye Sainte, where he could see the whole of the line from right to left."

Description of the Waterloo battleground

The position taken by Wellington was along the ridge, half a mile south of Mont St. Jean, a hamlet two miles south of the village of Waterloo, which is nine miles south of Brussels. From the hamlet of Mont. St. Jean to the crest of the ridge the ground rises gently, and along the ridge runs a road or lane from Wavre and Ohain on the east, to Braine-la-Leude on the west. This lane crosses the high road from Brussels by La Belle Alliance to Quatre-Bras and Charleroi. On the east of the crossing, it was fenced by hedges, and on the west it was formed by a cutting with high banks on each side.

These banks and hedges were pierced for the passage of cavalry and artillery. From this road the ground slopes down into a shallow valley. About three hundred yards down the west side of the road to Charleroi stood the farm of La Haye Sainte, and on the other side of the road was a gravel pit. Near La Haye Sainte an abattis (tree barrier) was placed across the road, which then crossed the valley and ascended gradually to La Belle Alliance on another ridge parallel to that of Mont St. Jean. About twelve hundred yards east of La Haye Sainte, and five hundred yards south of the Ohain road, were the farms of Papelotte and La Haye, and a little further south was the hamlet of Smohain. At some distance west of the Charleroi road, and about five hundred yards south of the Ohain road, was the château of Hougoumont, with a walled garden and woods. At the back of this position was a ravine near Merbe Braine. This position was occupied by the Allies, as were the house and gardens of Hougoumont and the farm of La Haye Sainte, and also Papelotte and La Haye. A picket of the 10th Hussars was posted at Smohain. By the left, Wellington communicated with Blucher at Wavre through Ohain, and the Marshal had promised to support him with one or more corps as might be necessary.

Sergeant Robertson writes, "Beyond the hedge on our front was a fallow field, having a gentle ascent towards it, and being placed rather in the rear of the slope, the French cannoniers could not hit us with their shot, but they made some shells to bear upon us, which made great havoc in our ranks. As yet we had not fired a shot, but what had been discharged by our out-posts."

The French army, 74,000 strong, of whom over 15,000 were cavalry, with 246 guns, was superior in numbers, in horsemen, and in artillery, and was composed of experienced soldiers of the same nation, animated by an enthusiastic confidence in their leader and in themselves. Napoleon also expected Grouchy's Corps of about 30,000 men, which had been sent to observe the Prussians.
The French position was along the ridge or plateau of La Belle Alliance, opposite and parallel to that of the Allies. The distance from right to left of the army was less than three miles. At no point were the opponents more than a mile apart, and in some places they were much nearer.

James Hope writes, "About eleven o'clock, Napoleon, with a numerous staff, appeared on the heights immediately opposite to our division. The imperial cortege was no sooner observed by our artillery, than they greeted it with a royal salute. At first the French Chief seemed to relish the compliment paid him, but conceiving, no doubt, that we were rather troublesome with our manners he soon turned the head of his horse and rode off."

The Allies' defensive positions

The Fifth Division, commanded by Sir Thomas Picton, was stationed immediately on the east of the Charleroi road, having Bylandt's Netherlanders Brigade in front. The Eighth or Kempt's Brigade formed the right of the division.

The Ninth, or Pack's Brigade, was some little distance to the left, and in rear of the Ohain road on the reverse of the ridge, where they stood in battle order. The 1st Royals on the right, the 42nd, 92nd, and 44th on the left, the Light Companies being extended in front. On the left of Pack were Hanoverian and Netherlands infantry, some of them holding the farm of Papelotte, supported on the extreme left by Wandeleur's and Vivian's British Light Cavalry, while the Third and other Divisions were on Picton's right. The reserve, including most of the cavalry, was in the rear, and artillery was posted at intervals along the front line.

Napoleon's only fear had been that the Allies would retreat during the night to join the Prussians. "Now," he said, "Wellington has thrown the dice, and they are for us." Napoleon had never encountered British infantry. Soult, who knew their quality, advised him to hasten Grouchy's recall. "Because you have been beaten by Wellington," retorted the Emperor, "you think him a great general. I tell you Wellington is a bad general, and the British are bad troops." He then asked Reille's opinion, as he also had often fought against them in Spain, who answered, "Well posted as Wellington knows how to do, and attacked in front, I look on the British infantry as invulnerable by reason of its calm tenacity and the superiority of its fire, but they do not manoeuvre so quickly. If one could not vanquish them by a direct attack, one might do so by out-manoeuvring them". (ref. Houssaye).

Napoleon broke off the conversation with an exclamation of incredulity, and proceeded to pass his columns in review as they took up their ground. It was little more than 1,000 yards from where the Emperor made this his last inspection, to the position of the Gordon Highlanders. With a telescope they could see the formidable force of their antagonists and distinguish the columns of their battalions.

Their music and their shouts of "Vive l'Empereur!" could be faintly heard by the Highlanders, who fully realised the power they had to contend with, and that the fate of Europe depended on the result of the approaching combat.

The British officers were visited by the Duke of Richmond, who had ridden from Brussels. After congratulating the officers present on the battle of the 16th, he told them he had just seen the Commander-in-Chief, and that Prince Blucher was on the march to their assistance. This news produced a motivating effect on the minds of the soldiers.

These lines were chanted by the men, having been altered by one of them, to suit the occasion

"Now's the day and now's the hour,
See the front of battle lour,
See approach Napoleon's power,
Chains and slavery.
Lay the proud usurper low,
Tyrants fall in every foe,
Liberty's in every blow,
Let us do or die."

Overview of the Waterloo battle events

Wellington had placed the Allies in a defensive position. The object was to keep Napoleon at bay until the Prussians could arrive in support. Napoleon strove to break through the British before Blucher's reinforcements could arrive. But Napoleon was prevented from attacking until the sun had rendered the wet clay land fit for the operations of cavalry and artillery. Wellington's dispatch says that at "about ten o'clock" the French commenced a furious attack on Hougoumont, held by a few foreign troops and a detachment from Byng's Brigade of Guards, who maintained the post throughout the day. This attack was accompanied by a heavy cannonade upon the whole Allied line, followed by repeated attacks of cavalry and infantry, occasionally mixed, but sometimes separate. In one of these the French seized the farm of La Haye Sainte, after a desperate resistance by the detachment of the King's German Legion who had held it. They had expended their ammunition, but the French prevented them from communicating their bad situation.

The repeated attacks of French cavalry were uniformly repulsed by artillery and infantry, and the Allied cavalry charged at strategic opportunities. These attacks were continued until about 7pm, when the French made a desperate effort with cavalry and infantry supported by artillery, to

force the Allied left centre near La Haye Sainte. After a severe contest, the French attack was repulsed.
Wellington observed that the French troops retired from this attack in great confusion, and that the march of Bülow's Prussians by Frischermont upon La Belle Alliance had begun to take effect. As Marshal Prince Blucher joined with a corps of his army to the left of the Allied line by Ohain, Wellington determined to attack the enemy, and advanced the whole line of infantry, supported by cavalry and artillery. The attack succeeded at every point, the enemy was forced from his position, and fled in confusion. Many of the Allies had kept their ground during the day, as firmly as the British and Germans, but others had given way, and some could not be rallied even in a second line, and some, without firing a shot rode off to Brussels, filling the city with consternation.

The battle commences. 11.15am
The battle had begun by a furious attack on Hougoumont, and Napoleon hoped that Wellington would weaken his centre to repel it. As this did not happen, and being aware by an intercepted dispatch that the Prussians were advancing, he ordered Marshal Ney to force the centre by an attack which was accompanied by a cannonade along the whole line. A battery of eighty guns thundered from its position immediately opposite the 92nd, which suffered some loss.
Wellington retired his infantry (except Bylandt's Brigade, and part of the 95th, who held the gravel pit opposite La Haye Sainte) so as to shelter them behind the crest of the ridge, while his artillery remained in advance and replied to that of the enemy for half an hour.

Sergeant Robertson writes, "The French were now busy forming columns to their own right, which was directly in our front, and we were expecting every moment to be attacked, as all on the right of our division were warmly engaged."
"We were well cautioned to be steady and keep together, as, in all likelihood, we would be first attacked by cavalry, who would try to break our line, and, above all, to mind what word of command was given, whether to form square, or whatever else the order might be."

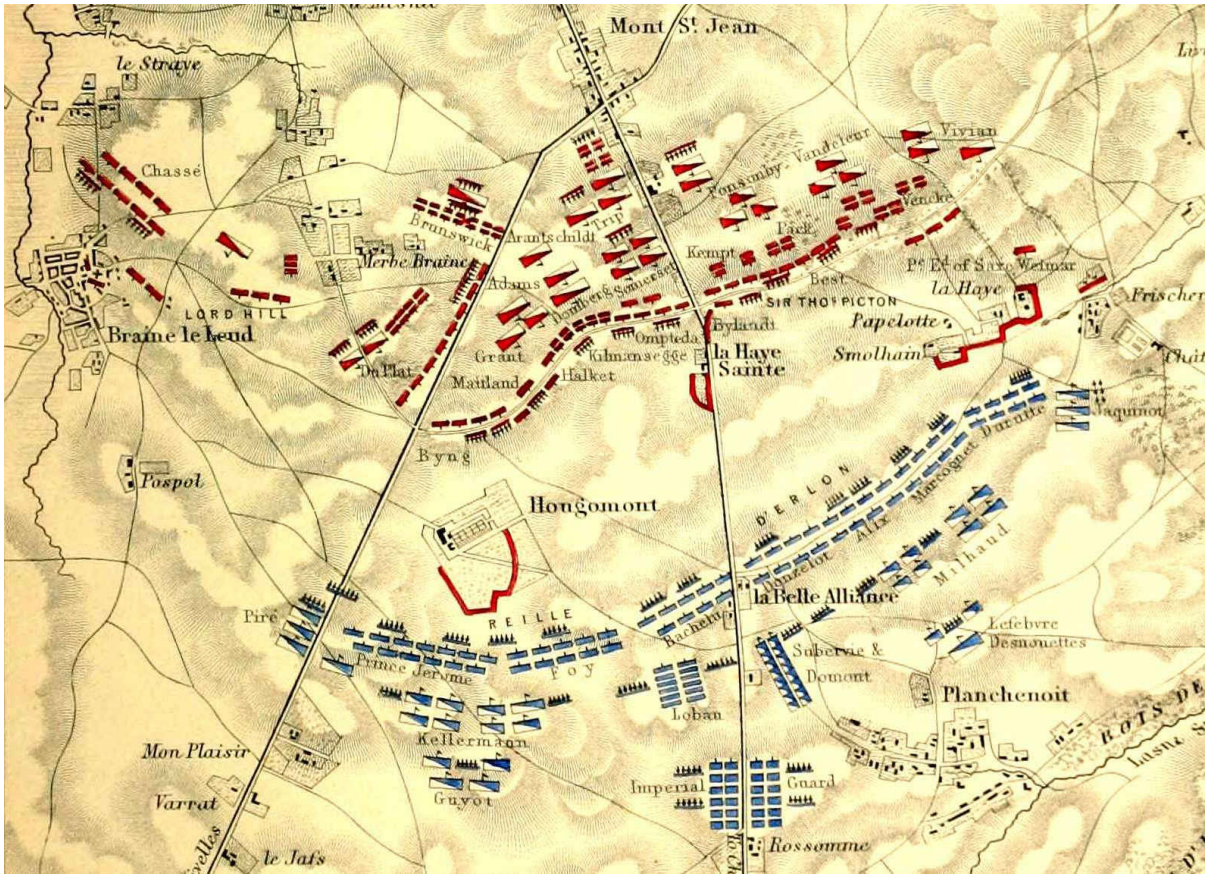
1.00pm
James Hope writes, "About one o'clock he opened a most tremendous fire upon our division, from numerous artillery planted along the ridge on which his infantry were posted. Under cover of this cannonade, he pushed forward three columns of infantry, each from three to four thousand strong, towards the heights we occupied. Under cover of his artillery, Bonaparte caused the right and left columns formerly mentioned, supported by the third column, to move forward and attack the heights on which our division was posted. With drums beating, colours flying, and eagles soaring above their huge head-dresses, the enemy advanced in solid column to the attack."

The land was covered with crops of grass and standing corn, but without fences. The cannon balls crossed each other above the advancing French until they neared the British, when the French guns ceased, but those of the Allies continued firing. The valley was filled with smoke by the musketry of the light troops who covered the assault on La Haye Sainte. The advanced companies of the 95th were driven from the gravel pit, and Bylandt's Dutchmen, suffered badly from artillery fire in their exposed position by Donzelot's troops. After some resistance, the Dutchmen finally retreated through the Fifth Division, and fled the field.
Picton was shot through the temple as he gave Kempt's Brigade his last order to charge. Donzelot's masses were driven back, but renewed the fight.

Sergeant Robertson continues, "At this time, our men were falling fast from the grape shot and shells that the French were pouring in among us, while as yet we had not discharged a musket. The artillery attached to us had now commenced a brisk fire, which drew a great deal of the French upon our ranks, as we were immediately in rear of the artillery. At length a large column of French infantry was seen advancing in our direction."

The post abandoned by Bylandt's Brigade was reoccupied by the 3rd Battalion Royal Scots and the 2nd Battalion of the 44th. These battalions maintained their ground for some time, but were eventually compelled by superior numbers to give way (ref. Hope 'Memoirs'). The position at Papelotte had been taken from the Nassau troops who held it.

There had been changes of position by the battalions of Pack's Brigade, and the 42nd was posted at an important spot considerably to the left of the 92nd, who were lying down concealed from the French.



Having passed by Donzelot's right, Marcognet led his column of 3,000 strong, to the hedge of the Ohain road, and cried "Victory"! At this point, the Gordons were ordered to stand to their arms. Sir Denis Pack said earnestly, "92nd, all the troops in your front have given way, you must charge this column." (ref. Cannon's 'Record'). He then ordered the line to form fours deep, and close on the centre.

James Hope writes, "The Belgians had left us, the Royals and 44th had also retired to our rear, and the 42nd regiment being posted on an important spot considerably to our left, from which they could not move, the hazardous attempt devolved upon the 92nd regiment, then about two hundred and thirty strong".

On arriving at the hedge, the enemy formed in close column, opposed to us a front not larger than our own, but then they had ten similar fronts to support the one in view. In fact, their numbers were three thousand, ours two hundred and thirty. Perceiving the urgent state of affairs, and the absolute necessity that existed of adopting some decisive measures, Sir Denis Pack, said, with much earnestness, "Ninety-second, you must charge! All the troops in your front have given way."

1.30pm

Sergeant Robertson writes, "Everyone was now eager to be led on, and as the way which they were taking indicated that it was upon that part of the line where the 92nd was stationed that the attack would be made, General Pack ordered us to advance, and line the hedge, to oppose the advance of the column. But when we got to the side of the hedge, we found the French were there as soon as we."

The enemy, on reaching the hedge, and thinking themselves victorious, had ordered arms. But becoming aware of the advancing Highlanders, were in the act of shouldering their muskets when

they received a volley at twenty yards from the 92nd, which they at once returned. The 92nd regiment responded with cheers, and then advanced. On arriving within thirty paces of the French, the whole column, panic struck, wheeled to the right-about, and in the confusion, attempted to escape. Perceiving the disorderly manner in which the French infantry were retiring, the 1st, 2nd (Scots Greys), and 6th regiments of heavy dragoons were ordered to attack (ref. Hope 'Memoirs').

Sergeant Robertson writes, "We cheered loudly, and called to the Scotch Greys, who were formed up in our rear, 'Old Scotland for ever!' Upon which some person in the regiment called out to 'charge', when, all at once, the whole regiment broke through the hedge, and rushed headlong on the French column. The onset was so sudden and unexpected, that it threw them into confusion."

The 92nd commenced a bayonet charge, and the leading rows of the French columns attempted to retreat, but were prevented by the mass of their own troops behind them. By dropping their muskets and calling "prisoner", the French were spared and told to go to the rear. At this moment the Scots Greys, who were the left regiment of the Union Brigade cavalry (Royal Dragoons, Scots Greys, and Inniskillings), came forward.

The Scots Greys advanced directly upon the French column, and while charging past the flanks of the 92nd called out, 'Hurrah, Ninety-second, Scotland for ever!' Anxious to accompany their gallant countrymen into the middle of the fight, many of the 92nd laid hold of the bridles and stirrups of the Greys, but instead of advancing at an accelerated pace, they were knocked down, and some of them severely injured. The cavalry advancing down the valley, and in the fury of battle, captured two eagles, and took 2,000 prisoners. (ref. Hope 'Memoirs').

Sergeant Robertson writes, "At this critical moment, the Greys flew like a whirlwind to our assistance, and having got round the flanks of the column, they placed themselves between the enemy and our line."

Long after that day, individuals who witnessed the charge spoke of the small body of bonnets and plumes lost amid a crowd of shakos.

Sergeant Robertson writes, "While we pushed them hard in front, the other regiments in the brigade, the (Royal Dragoons) and Enniskillen Dragoons came at full speed to our aid."

"Some of the French soldiers who were lying wounded were calling out "Vive l'Empereur !' and others firing their muskets at our men who had advanced past them in pursuit of the flying enemy" (ref. Siborne 'Waterloo Letters' No. 168. Lt. R. Winchester 92nd).

To those who cried "Quarter!", "Prisoner!" the answer was generally "Well, go to the rear, damn ye."

After this success the regiment was recalled. Sir Denis Pack rode up and said, "You have saved the day, Highlanders, but you must return to your former position, there is more work to be done" (ref. Cannon's 'Record'). As they re-formed, they saw the cavalry of their countrymen continue to ride towards two batteries half-way up the opposite slope. The recall was sounded, but they did not, or would not, hear it. The Greys lost their colonel and many officers.

Sergeant Robertson continues, "After the charge already mentioned, we were not troubled for a long time, nor did we fire any for two hours. During all this time, however, we suffered much from the enemy's artillery. We were ordered to sit down and rest ourselves. During this intermission, we had a fine view of what was passing on the right. I could see the French cavalry make those terrible charges which frequently drove ours to the rear, but who, when they came to the forest, faced about, and beat them back in turn."

James Hope writes, "The result of this attack must have deranged the plans of Napoleon dreadfully, for an almost total suspension of hostilities on his part took place, from a quarter past three, till about twenty minutes from four."

“Heavy as the cannonade was in the early part of the action, it was trifling in comparison to what followed. The cannon-balls were dispatched from the enemy's lines in such numbers, that it was no uncommon thing to see one rolling on the ground towards us, and two or three at the same time flying over our heads, or carrying off some of the men in the ranks. By four o'clock, the battle had become general. Our centre was furiously attacked by a great body of French cavalry, principally cuirassiers, supported by artillery, and a large force of veteran infantry. The French dragoons were extremely bold, galloping round the squares of British infantry, brandishing their swords, and even challenging some of the British officers to single combat, conduct which appeared to many of us more nearly allied to frenzy than bravery. However, they succeeded in penetrating to the crest of the eminence, but being there met by the third division, and right of the fifth, they were instantly sent back reeling on their reserves.”
“The field of battle now assumed a horrid aspect, many parts of it being so thickly strewed with the mangled corpses of the enemy, that it was scarcely possible to walk without treading on them. The wounded were in a most pitiable condition, particularly those, who, unable to remove themselves, were kept in constant terror, either of being shot, or trod to death. But all their lamentations, their prayers, and their cries for assistance, were drowned amidst the clash of arms, and the thunder of five hundred pieces of cannon, which spread death in every direction, and made the ground under our feet actually tremble.”

The fight at Hougoumont still raged, but elsewhere the action was arrested while both parties regained their positions. During the interval a cuirassier left his regiment and crossed the valley towards the British, who, thinking him a deserter, did not fire. He rode up close to the hedge, stood up in his stirrups, waved his long sword, crying “Vive l’Empereur !” to the British infantry on the other side, and galloped back unhurt.

Wellington had again retired his infantry for shelter behind the crest, and Ney, seeing this and the escorts of prisoners and wounded going to the rear, thought the British were giving way and ordered a charge of 5,000 horsemen. But the British General had no idea of retreat. His infantry stood up and formed squares. The artillery horses were sent to the rear, but the guns remained in action, their fire at close range causing such destruction to the cavalry coming up at a trot through the deep ground and standing corn, that the survivors of the leading squadrons hesitated. Their trumpets again rang out the ‘Charge.’ “Vive l’Empereur!” was the cry. The gunners ran to the shelter of the squares, the guns were taken, but the enemy had not the means of spiking or carrying them off.

4pm
Sergeant Robertson writes, “About four o’clock the enemy made another attack on our part of the line, by a large body of lancers, who rode up to our squares with as much coolness as if subjecting us to a regimental inspection. We kept up a smart fire upon them, however, and put them to the right-about. But before we had succeeded in turning them, they did us considerable damage by throwing their lances into our columns, which, being much longer than the firelock and bayonet, gave them a great advantage over us.”

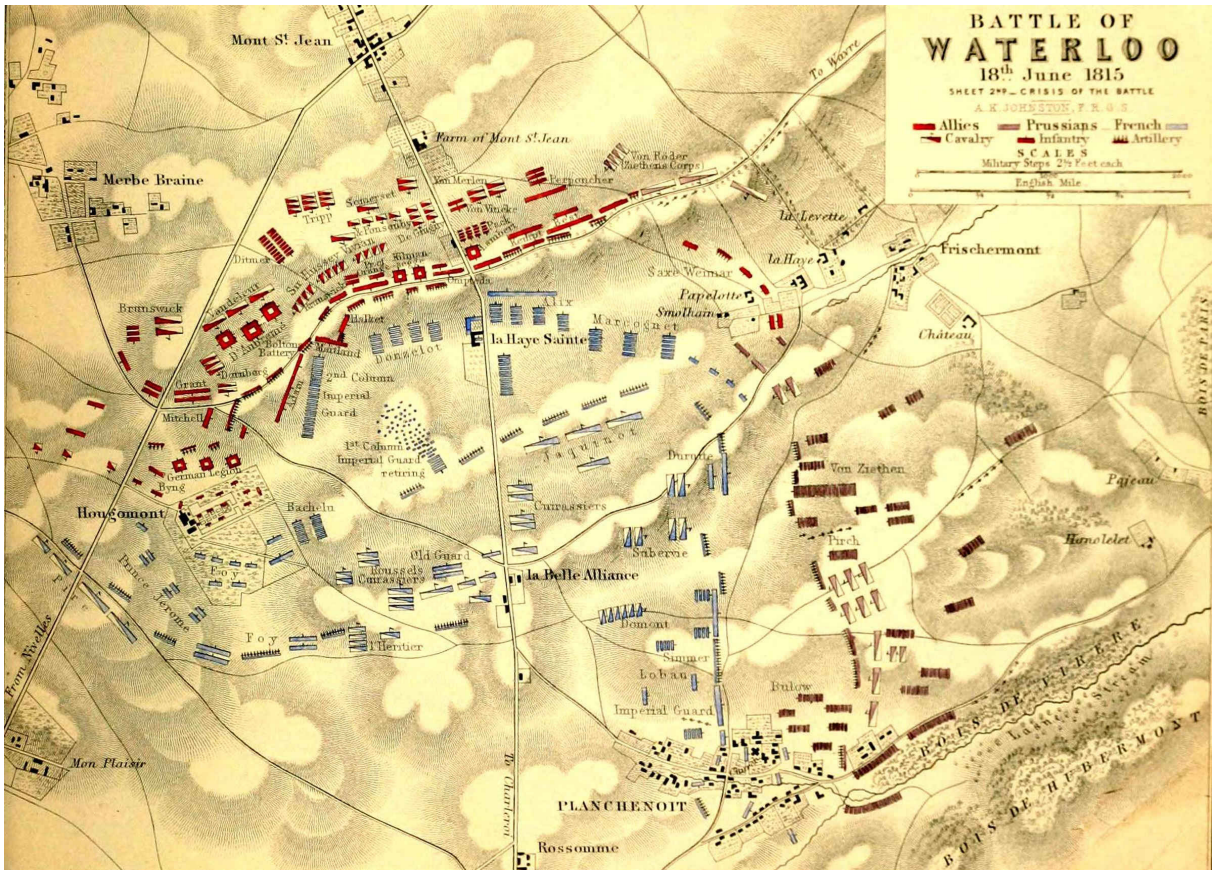
“The bullets rattled on the cuirasses with the noise of hail on a slate roof,” yet the Allied musketry, though it broke their ranks, did not dismay them. Cuirassiers, lancers, chasseurs rode on, whirling round and between the squares, striking at the front rank with the sword, firing pistols in their faces, some even throwing their lances at the men. But as a breach was made, “Close up!” was heard, and the place of the fallen was filled. Squadron followed squadron in wave after wave, but the infantry squares stood firm.

The cavalry even charged squares in the second line. Then Uxbridge sent the Dutch and Brunswick cavalry, who had not been engaged, to charge the enemy in their disorder. The French cavalry fell back between the squares, only to fall under more musketry fire, and retreated. The gunners ran back to their guns, and again the British batteries belched forth their destructive fire. But the French horsemen rallied and re-formed, then slowly advanced once more, under a fire of grape shot, again to the height of Mont St. Jean. The French on La Belle Alliance, seeing them

through the smoke, cried “Victory!” Fresh brigades were sent to defeat the British, and more than sixty squadrons advanced (ref. Houssaye).
Some among the Allies thought all was over, but the squares stood firm. The gunners felled entire ranks and then ran back to the shelter of the squares of bayonets. And still more French squadrons advanced. Charge succeeded charge until the squares seemed submerged in the tide of cavalry. But as the smoke of the firing cleared away, the squadrons were seen receding from them. The squadrons moved back and forward, hindering each other, and making their charges less vigorous. The air was a furnace of fire and smoke, and the men could hardly breathe. Thirteen French cavalry generals were wounded. Ney had three horses killed under him at this time, and stood brandishing his sword near an abandoned battery. (Ney had five of his horses killed before the end of the day - ref. Houssaye)

Wellington ordered his cavalry forward, and for the third time the French left the plateau. These attacks continued with little intermission. In vain, the horsemen, reduced in numbers, pressed their tired chargers against the squares, now protected by a rampart of dead men and horses. After these two long and hardly contested hours, the infantry became assured they were invincible. It was the hostile French cavalry who were demoralised, and retired discouraged, though not dismayed, from each attack. Nevertheless, the Allies’ powers of resistance were severely tried. Papelotte had been taken by the French, many guns were without gunners, General Ponsonby was killed and his brigade was reduced to two squadrons. Several other generals were wounded, most of Wellington’s staff were “out of combat”, and brigades were reduced to handfuls of men. Some of the allied troops had fled to Brussels, ammunition was short, and officers arrived telling Wellington of desperate situations, and requested orders.

Ney sent a message to Napoleon for fresh troops. “Troops!” exclaimed the Emperor; “Where does he expect me to take them from? Does he think I can make them? He had, however, fourteen battalions of his Guard, and others of that chosen body had at four o’clock partially arrested the advance of the Prussians. The near approach of the First Prussian Corps now made Napoleon play his last card in his desperate game. Seeing the allied line disordered, he desired his batteries to redouble their fire. Bonaparte gave the command of the attack to Ney, and harangued his Guards, whose advance was seconded by the other divisions and by the cavalry.



7.00pm
Wellington passed along his line of battle giving his orders. The brigades were again advanced from their shelter in the squares. The reserve artillery was brought to the front, and ordered not to reply to that of the enemy, but to concentrate their fire on the columns of assault. The centre was strengthened, and the 92nd, which at this time, at about seven o'clock, was near the extreme left of the line, was ordered up to the left of the main road near the gravel pit at La Haye Sainte. The Highlanders were moving in column at quarter-distance when a shell fell in the midst of the battalion. The companies in rear of it faced about, and doubled to the rear until it had burst. They then doubled back to their proper distance without any word of command, and arrived in time to take part with the Fifth Division in driving the enemy from the crest of the position above La Haye Sainte.

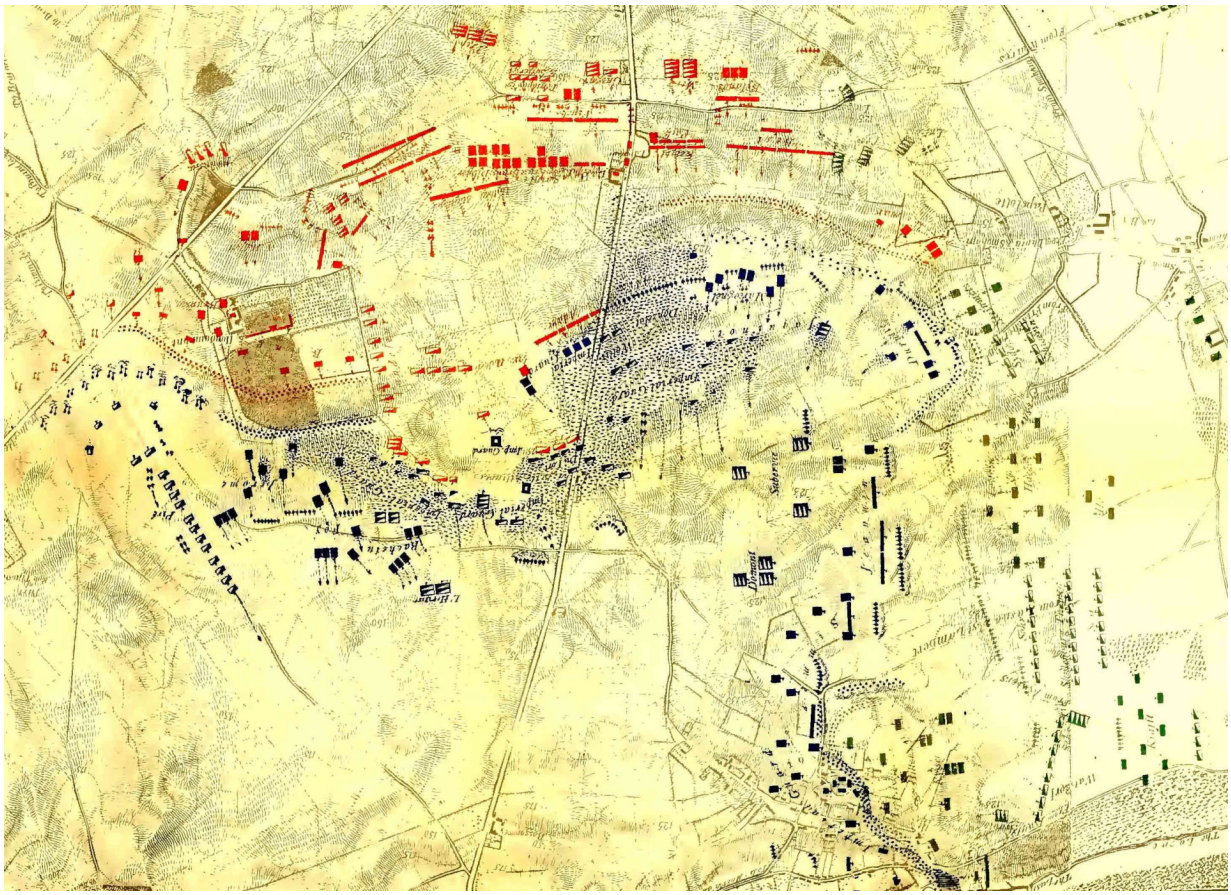
Sergeant Robertson writes, "At this time, we could distinctly see large columns of infantry forming in our front, with numerous bodies of artillery, when we expected we were to be called to sustain a charge from all kinds of arms. We were again ordered to line our old hedge to be in readiness to receive them. When we saw the dense masses collecting in our front ready to rush upon us, we looked for nothing but that our line would be broken, and utter discomfiture would be the consequence. The bodies of our brave artillerymen lay beside the guns which they had so bravely managed, and many a cannon had not a gunner left to discharge it. At this time there was scarcely an officer left in our regiment."
"While we were in this state, with life and death in the balance, the French column began to move forward. An awful pause ensued! Every man, however, was steady. At length they came within pistol-shot of our lines, when a volley of rockets was let off by a brigade that had been formed in the hedge, which threw them into entire confusion."
"To complete this disorder, we at the same instant, gave a loud huzza, and poured a well-directed volley upon them. This unexpected and rather rough reception made them turn and run. We now opened our files along the hedge, as the wider they were kept, there was less danger to be apprehended from the round shot, and in this way we remained for a long time. Notwithstanding this precaution, however, they were occasionally taking off some of us."

Those who attacked the British right were repulsed after a gallant struggle. Those above La Haye Sainte, who were fighting with the Fifth Division, saw the Guard on their left defeated, and the cries "La garde recule!" "Nous sommes trahis!" sounded the knell of the grand army of France. The charge of the British forced many into the gravel pit in a disorderly manner. The enemy retired in confusion, but still they protected their rear with skirmishers along the other side of the gravel pit and of the farm of La Haye Sainte.

By 7pm, all the Prussians had arrived at the scene of active operations. Napoleon, in order to bring the conflict to a close, brought forward his Old Guard. Placing himself at their head, he accompanied them to the bottom of the valley, but no farther; there he remained to witness the result of this last struggle for victory. (ref. Hope 'Memoirs')

Sergeant Robertson writes, "It was now seven o'clock, and by this time there was no officer in the regiment but the commanding officer (whose horse had been shot), the adjutant, and very few sergeants. I had charge of two companies and was ordered to pay particular attention to any signal or movement I might see in front, for which purpose I was furnished with a spy-glass. In a short time one of our skirmishers came running in and called me to look at the French lines, as something extraordinary was going on. At this instant, an aide-de-camp came galloping down our rear, and calling out, 'The day is our own, the Prussians have arrived'. All eyes were now turned to the right to look for the signal to charge, which was to be given by the Duke of Wellington. By this time the aide-de-camp had returned to the Duke, who was standing in his stirrups with his hat elevated above his head. Every eye was fixed upon him, and all were waiting with impatience to make a finish of such a hard day's work. At last he gave three waves of his hat, and the three loud cheers that followed the signal were the heartiest that had been given that day."

The army moved forward in its current order. Battalions, batteries, and squadrons advanced to the sound of drums, bugles and bagpipes. At this sight the last divisions of French infantry, and almost all the cavalry, hastely moved towards the plateau of La Belle Alliance. When Napoleon saw the sudden crumbling of his line of battle, he felt that he was irretrievably beaten. At first he tried to organise the retreat. He formed the Old Guard in squares, and sent some squadrons against the British light cavalry, who, comparatively fresh, easily defeated them. The allied troops halted for a minute in the valley, and then pressed on. Wellington rode with his advanced troops, regardless of bullets which were falling round him. When urged not to expose himself so much, he replied, "Never mind, let them fire away, the battle's gained, my life's of no consequence now." The rout was complete.



Napoleon fled, attended by a small escort. Wellington and Blucher met about 9.15pm near La Belle Alliance. The bands of the Prussian cavalry played "God Save the King," their infantry soldiers sang Luther's hymn, "Now thank we all our God," and the troops mutually cheered each other. Blucher, it is said, wished the battle to be called after La Belle Alliance, in memory of this meeting, but Wellington decided that his victory should be named after the village where his headquarters were established the night before at Waterloo.

The British general represented that his men were exhausted and were hardly able to continue the pursuit. "Leave that to me," replied Blucher, "I will send every man and horse after the enemy", and Ziethen continued the pursuit during the whole night without intermission, giving no rest to the wearied and dejected French, of whom only about 40,000 crossed the frontier out of the 74,000 who fought at Waterloo, and these escaped only to disperse. The loss of the Allies, exclusive of the Prussians, on the 18th was 15,380 officers and men in killed, wounded, and missing, of whom 8,481 were British and of the King's German Legion in British pay (ref. Alison). The honours of the day were divided, the British gained the battle, the Prussians completed the victory.

A graphic account of the battle of Waterloo is by the Duke himself in a letter to Lord Beresford, one of his Peninsular generals:—"You will have heard of our great battle of the 18th. Never did I see such a pounding match. Both were what the boxers call gluttons. Napoleon did not manoeuvre at all. He just moved forward in the old style in column, and was driven off in the old style. The

only difference was that he mixed cavalry with his infantry, and supported both with an immense quantity of artillery. I had the infantry for some time in squares, and we had the French cavalry walking about us as if they were our own. I never saw the British infantry behave so well."

Later, tears were seen on Wellington's cheeks when the lists of killed were brought to him, and his words expressed deep sorrow rather than the pride of victory.
In a letter from his headquarters in Waterloo on 18th June 1815, immediately after the battle, Wellington writes, "My heart is broken by the terrible loss I have sustained in my old friends and companions and my poor soldiers. Believe me, nothing except a battle lost can be half so melancholy as a battle won: the bravery of my troops hitherto saved me from the greater evil; but to win such a battle as this of Waterloo, at the expense of so many gallant friends, could only be termed a heavy misfortune but for the result to the public." (ref. William Davenport 'Memorable Battles in English History')

The 92nd bivouacked by the light of the young moon near the place where Bonaparte had stood most of the day.

Sergeant Robertson writes, "It was now dark, and we were ordered to halt for the night, while the Prussians marched past us. The place where we bivouacked was immediately at the end of the house where Bonaparte had stood all day (La Belle Alliance), which was by this time filled with the wounded. As we had not got any water during the day, numbers of us went in search of it."

The 92nd mourned the loss fourteen N.C. officers and soldiers killed in action. Six officers and ninety-six N.C. officers and men were wounded, of whom many died of their wounds.

The Gordon Highlanders had been commanded throughout the day by Major Donald MacDonald (Dalchoshnie).