

The Napoleon Series

Waterloo Memoir of P.P. Roorda van Eysinga

Translated by: [Marc Geerdink Schaftenaar](#)

Dr. PHILIPPUS PIETER ROORDA VAN EYSINGA (born in Kuinre, 1 December 1796 – died in Utrecht, 14 October 1856) entered service as a *Fourier* with the 18th National Militia Infantry Battalion. He was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant of the 2nd Company. The battalion was renumbered as the 19th National Militia Infantry Battalion on March 24th 1815 and then sent to the southern provinces, where it was assigned to the 1st Brigade of the 3rd Netherlands Division.

He was promoted after the campaign in France to 1st Lieutenant and transferred to the 20th National Militia Infantry Battalion, which was garrisoned in Grave. He was only 21 years old at the time. Realising his military career was at a dead end, he volunteered to go to the Dutch East Indies. He left on June 18th 1819 on board the corvette “Galathea” and arrived in Batavia on November 8. Persuaded by his family, he left the army and became a civil servant. He quickly learned several languages, including Malaysian, Persian and Arabic. During his career as a civil servant, he travelled several times around the Dutch East Indian colonies, including the island of Java; he also published a Malaysian-Dutch and Dutch-Malaysian dictionary, a Javanese-Dutch dictionary, a book of Javanese poetry, and a translation of the Qur’an and several other Islamic books. He gave lectures to Dutch government officials on Eastern languages. And despite his time-consuming commission as Captain-Adjutant with the Batavia Home Guard, he corresponded with about a dozen native rulers in their own language.

After years of intensive work and many publications, his health began to deteriorate. On June 2nd 1830, Roorda van Eysinga, his wife and two children returned to Hellevoetsluis and settled in Kampen in October. He was appointed a professor at the University of Leiden as well as chairman of the local department of the “Maatschappij tot Nut van het Algemeen” [Society of Public Benefit]. He was also made a knight in the Order of the Netherlands Lion. In 1836, he lectured East Indian studies at the Royal Military Academy in Breda. Meanwhile, he kept publishing translations.

It was in this period that he also wrote the memoirs of his father, the minister Sytze Roorda van Eysinga, to which he also added his own memoirs regarding his travels in the Dutch East Indies and his service in the Dutch army. These memoirs were published in four successful volumes.

However, he and his family still wanted to return to the Dutch East Indies. They therefore left on May 20 1843 from Rotterdam on the ship “Sara Lydia” and arrived on November 2nd. After again making a tour around several principalities, he retired and returned to the Netherlands in December 1848 on the ship “Generaal List”. He settled in Leiden and worked on his “General Dutch-Malaysian Dictionary in the Court-, Common- and Lodge Language”, which was published in 1854. He spent the rest of his life in Utrecht, where he died in 1865.

The memoir of the 1815-campaign by Roorda van Eysinga describes the period from March to December 1815. The translation here is shortened; many descriptions of towns and landscapes, as well as several philosophical thoughts and other matters he gives elaborate descriptions of, are left out. The translation follows the publication closely. Although sometimes a bit elaborate and romantic in style, it offers an insight in the workings of a newly raised infantry battalion on campaign. Of note are his descriptions of the horrors of war, such as plundering and pillaging by stragglers and deserters, and of the officers’ conduct under fire.

Julianadorp, April 2015
Marc Geerdink Schaftenaar

Excerpt from: “Several Travels and Fortunes of S. Roorda van Eysinga [...]; as well as of his son, P.P. Roorda van Eysinga [...]. Published by the latter. Second Volume”; published 1831 by Johannes van der Hey en Zoon, Amsterdam¹.



[...] The army of the Netherlands also had to advance against BONAPARTE; our battalion, the eighteenth², was also included, which brought me much delight; I would after all be so lucky to go to battle, defend my fatherland and to aid in either chasing away or destroying the disturber of the earth. France's king had already fled; he had to be elevated to the throne again and France was to be made happy again; great resolutions, for which much was required.

I came to see myself as a person of importance; I thought I would be of service, and did not know that a 2nd Lieutenant was only noted as a dot in a large battle; we left Nijmegen on March 15th 1815, moved through Grave, a strong fortress, but one that offers much unpleasantness: narrow streets, old fashioned buildings that cannot please the eye, and later in 1818, I found out I had not been mistaken, because I was convinced that the aforementioned town offered unpleasant quarters; the first night we were billeted in a village, where we were treated

very well, had a good sleep and continued our march the next day. If I remember correctly, we had spent the night in Eindhoven and then continued to Vechelen, large, well populated and thriving village, continued our march the next day to Bergeijk, and soon arrived in Mol, where good beer can be found. From time to time we went hunting in the vicinity of the villages where we stayed for some time, shot wild pigeons and partridges, and we found the countryside ever more pleasant, the more we advanced into it. From time to time I was in the company of the Captains DE HAAN³ and MENS⁴, which was for me a very special honour, because they deserved respect for their societal virtues. [...] They had covered themselves with glory in Spain, Italy, Germany, Poland and Russia, and had received the blessings of those unfortunate souls they had rescued. Both had distinguished themselves so much by distinguished deeds, that they had been most richly awarded with the order of knighthood; they wore it with honour and glory⁵, and he, who had gratefully bestowed it upon them, had never to be ashamed of his gift. [...]

¹ Dutch: "Verschillende Reizen en Lotgevallen van S. Roorda van Eysinga [...]; mitsgaders die van deszelfs zoon P.P. Roorda van Eysinga [...]. Uitgegeven door laatstgemelden. Tweede deel."

² The battalion had already been renumbered the 19th National Militia Infantry Battalion, but Roorda van Eysinga makes no mention of it.

³ Captain Cornelis de Haan, Knight in the Military Order of William, 4th Class³

⁴ Captain Cornelis Hendrik Menso, Knight in the Military Order of William, 4th Class

⁵ Captains Menso and De Haan were two of many officers and men in the Netherlands army, that had been decorated with the Legion d'Honneur and/or other decorations during their military career, and all were allowed to continue wearing their decorations and keep their titles.

Soon, we came to Diest, a place not unpleasant, where much good beer is brewed. Being billeted with a brewer, I was in the best possible accommodation one could enjoy. My stay in Diest was very pleasant; my landlord and his family enabled me to enjoy every pleasure which could be offered by dignified persons to a stranger who treats them well. It grieves me not to be able to write down their names, because my diary was lost; but I still heartily show my gratitude to them. In most towns, I only remained for a day after fatiguing marches, and therefore had little opportunity to get to know the most important things of every place, which grieves me. It is unpleasant to move through the villages, towns and countries, without acquiring the knowledge which they can offer us, though in war it usually is like that. But I have the pleasure not to blame myself regarding neglecting any investigation of the places that I have visited. I always aspired to find during the short time that I spent somewhere to discover everything remarkable that was to find there; but how faulty are usually the memories and notes of early years; one guesses, and those guesses is usually what is left of it.

From Diest we went to Tirlemont, a nice little town that has a very large marketplace. I received a billet with a pair of old gouchers; they did not please me, I took another billet and was billeted with some good inhabitants. Generosity and hospitality were the friends of the household; there was much harmony. Somewhat heated by the continuing marches and the guard duties that followed, I kept to my room on day, and was very surprised to find a very young and blushing girl watching over me. She brought me a refreshing drink, offered it to me with interest, it had a healing effect, to which I felt refreshed. If it was because of the drink, or of the enchanting sixteen year old girl, I leave to the nature connoisseur. [...]

We had to march to Louvain and were underway treated to very beautiful views. The land became more hilly, beautiful fields of grain adorned it and made the farmer hope for a good harvest. [...] Usually, they eat very well in Brabant⁶, a good soup, good meat, vegetables, a cup of strong coffee and a glass of cognac or rum are part of the meal.

From Louvain we left for Brussel, the well-known second metropolitan city, at least in continental Europe, in those days, Brussel was called the second Paris; this is enough for one to imagine it. We stayed there for only two days, we held a review before the king of the Netherlands, and had an audience with H.M. The crown prince spoke with us in that worthy and martial, even brotherly tone, which is so pleasant and motivating for the officer. [...] We left for Oisquerq and Fauxbourg, where there is a castle, that was designated to be our quarters. Captains DE HAAN and MENS0 were billeted in the same, to my delight; the master of the house received us friendly, but on that true civil tone, which always demands our respect. This gentleman had many fads, including a very fine lathe, which he employed for his own use. The garden around the castle was arranged tastefully, behind it was a corn mill, which was driven by water. We only stayed one day and left this pleasant lodging unwillingly.

From Oisquerq, we went to Braine le Comte and already found the roads filled with troops, which announced a battle to come. Several companies remained in Braine le Comte, but the second and third left for Ecoissine à Laigne, where there are several stone sawmills, which are driven by water. There is a large castle of one of the chamberlains of the king; it offers a dignified view and has some nice little arbors, which have grown over the aisles, which down to the ground are open from above.

We marched to La Haute Haussière, where everything was much to my delight, apart from the company of an officer, which was ever so dissolute, excessive and very rude in his expressions. There were three lovely farm girls, which had enjoyed a decent upbringing in an institution, something which is certainly not strange in Brabant. As soon as we entered the

⁶ The southern provinces of the United Netherlands, now present day Belgium.

house, they received us with kindness and did their best to welcome us very well; their morals were still unspoilt, this was confirmed by the aforementioned officer himself. We had to stay here several days; the war plan was explained, the army corps formed and cantonments determined to encamp the army until the upcoming battle. Our battalion was assigned to the third division, commanded by Lieutenant-General CHASSÉ, who already had served a long time and had acquired a lot of fame in Spain. This division consisted of two brigades; we belonged to the first, which was commanded by Colonel DITMERS⁷, with the rank of major-general. He was an honourable man, who already counted several years, and had been a fervent supporter of the Orange dynasty. He longed for the moment to show this.

After we had been assigned, we approached the French borders and take up positions at Peronne, a village where we were received very well. We sent out outposts, which were connected to the line; we began our service in the field, and had to send out patrols, do our night rounds, scout the land, arrest every suspicious person and fire upon all that would not answer the call of 'Werda!' or take them prisoner. My 1st lieutenant, a young man, already displayed symptoms of old age in his youth. He stumbled wherever he went, his body, emaciated and starved by his endless lusts, was no match for the fatigues of a campaign. He had constant headaches, the least of colds made such an impression on him that he had to stay in his room. [...] He had to accompany the night watches and patrols, like I had to, and was thus commanded to do, but every time he was not well, and requested me urgently to take his place. First, I did this out of pity, and because I don't like to refuse something, but those patrols were very unpleasant and fatiguing. To go through forests, bushes and untrodden roads in the dark, always exposed to rain and wind, was not something I wanted to do, if I was not ordered to do so. I spoke about this with MENS0, who agreed with me wholeheartedly, gave the 1st lieutenant a severe reprimand and forbade me to take his shift. But this was for only a few times, because after his excellency⁸ had been on guard duty at the outposts at night, he had to go to his room immediately, being so fatigued that he had to go to bed and was unfit for duty for at least eight days. But he would soon leave us, as I will probably mention later.

From time to time, the officers made a tour on horseback, and I accompanied them on a very good riding horse of my landlord. We crossed the land and halted now and then at an inn nearby. On one of these tours, I rode with a lieutenant of the grenadier company;⁹ we were at some distance from the other gentlemen, who took up lodgings in an inn. We decided to go to a village, which was not too far ahead of us, spurred on the horses, and soon reached it. We had hardly entered there, or we were warned that there were French pickets on the other side of the village, that every now and then rode into the village. We were very cautious, knew all the side roads and lanes of the countryside that we had observed carefully during our rounds. Soon we saw six hussars with loose reins coming at us. We spurred on our horses, made a turn around the church, behind which were many lanes, covered by hedges and large trees, and rode on those paths that had several lanes that lead not far away to our outposts in the open fields. Fortunately, the hussars took another path, and thought they could catch up with us at the end of it, but were very much mistaken, because when they ran into our outposts, they were forced to turn back. We were very happy to have gotten away that good and did not dare to be so reckless again. We reported that the French were already nearby, and the watchfulness was doubled.

We soon took another direction with our army, which made Sint Vaast the cantonment of our battalion. We had to make daily manoeuvres, fire and make ready for battle. We had many excellent officers that had served a long time under BONAPARTE, made fortunes and had

⁷ Colonel Detmers, commander of the 1st Brigade, 3rd Netherlands Division.

⁸ Satirical remark.

⁹ This is of note, since the ranks of Grenadiers and Voltigeurs were discontinued in the new Netherlands army from 1814 onwards. The flank companies, both designated as light companies, were from then on known as left- and right flank companies, the men as 'flankers' [flanqueurs].

received titles. They always spoke of their campaigns with enthusiasm, and our battalion was called "the French Battalion". Our brigade commander knew this, and was perhaps somewhat afraid that our officers, once we were in a battle, would return to the eagles of their former master. The experience proved otherwise.

On June 13th 1815, the General March was beaten, the army advanced and assembled at the fields around Fai and the surrounding places, the weather was very unfavourable, and the roads were almost impassable because of the many pours of rain. In the evening, we halted, after we had advanced and retreated again. MENS0 wished me luck with my first bivouac. I found myself once again in a strange situation, the ploughed up ground was my bed, and sheaf of half ripened corn was my pillow, I had to reconcile with the conditions, which I soon managed. MENS0 knew from experience that it was important to have the stomach provided for, and saw to it, as best that he could, that we never had any scarcity. Also, he was a caring captain for his men, whom loved him very much; the 1st lieutenant complained and lamented enormously: "This is a dogs' life," he said, "my fathers' pigs were indefinitely better taken care of, had fresh straw every day, and were well fed."- But all his begging was of no use here, he had become so effeminate and self-indulgent, that he could not get used to the life in the field, but he was ordered by our captain not to leave us.

We marched to Nivelles on the 15th, where we halted in an orchard. Nivelles seemed like a nice place to me, and the inhabitants were very attentive, providing us with food and drink. The outposts already were in a skirmish, which gave us hope, that we would soon go into battle with BONAPARTES' elite troops, who had made themselves renowned all over the world because of their glorious deeds. [...]

On the 16th of June, we were in the bivouac outside Nivelles, and heard several heavy bombardments in the directions of Quatre-Bras, we advanced in quick marches. I commanded the second section of the first platoon, the first lieutenant the second platoon; having advanced for some time, an NCO of the second platoon came to tell me that the first lieutenant who commanded them, had gone missing. I notified this to the captain, who was very much angered by this. He ordered me to command the second platoon; I handed my section to the sergeant-major and took command of the second platoon. I was angry with my first lieutenant, but inside I was delighted about my new command. I now commanded half the company, and understood that I could be of service; I knew very well that, if the captain was sick or wounded, I could command the company, because already many lieutenants were lacking. Of the first company, one had stayed behind; of the second, my first lieutenant had disappeared; of the third company, the first lieutenant was with the army carts; the fourth was lacking a lieutenant; the fifth a captain; and the sixth had a second lieutenant who was still very young; which made that no company could spare an officer. It had been a mistake, that no better care had been taken in this, how would the cadres be supplemented if we had been on a lengthy campaign; but let me mention as well that the army had been raised not long ago, and could not have reached that perfection one would look for in veteran troops.

That evening, we came to an open field and prepared ourselves so as not to be taken by surprise. Our guards were doubled, and I was out on patrol all night, took a swig of cognac and a piece of *kommisbrot*, which tasted very good because I was so hungry. Having gathered my platoon, I gave them a speech in which I condemned the disappearance of the lieutenant, but accounted that to matters of illness. I ordered every one of them to shoot me if I would take a step back when under fire, but swore that I would not hesitate to run through with my sword anyone who would withdraw. My soldiers cheered to this, and I gave them each a drink.

Our bivouac was outside Nivelles, and we were already under arms before dawn. The first order we received was to load our weapons. A hallowed shivering came over me, I was rejoiced, full of enthusiasm, but felt the importance of this order; we marched on with death in our weapons. I was sad, but proud, I acknowledged the horrors of war, but was convinced that

we would triumph or die, as defenders of a good people, and not as bandits. I had led a good life. Just like other people, I valued life, but was not afraid to sacrifice it for my fatherland. I saw the conscience of some so-called heroes awaken and their courage fade.

The 17th of June 1815 was a very unpleasant and discouraging day. The general had placed our battalion in an orchard, where we had to stay as an observation corps, there were no provisions for us, which was unforgivable. If a cock is not wound up, it will come to a halt. If a troop is not given food, it will become weak and dispirited. Fortunately we had some excellent officers who could encourage the young soldiers.

We had received very few provision since June 13th, so it is obvious that we started to suffer shortages. It was decided to take whatever was needed from the nearby farms. I was sent over with fifty armed men to provide the battalion with provisions. After travelling for half an hour, we came to the aforementioned farms, and were much surprised to see one of the most inhumane sights. A beautiful woman was severely mistreated by several deserters and violated by one of these monsters. I immediately had the entrances to the farm and the yard occupied, and had the brutal soldiers taken prisoner. It grieves me to say that amongst the prisoners were also Dutchmen, the scum of the nation. I made a report of the incident, signed it and let my NCO's confirm it with their signature. – We took the plundered gold and silver from our prisoners and gave it back to the owners. The cattle had mostly been killed, and lay dying in the yard, chest and cabinets had been forced open, the furniture wrecked, the bottoms of the beer barrels in the cellar smashed in, which made that storage room look like a pond.

We had to return and took only some meat and potatoes, we comforted the poor country folk the best that we could and expressed our regrets that we could not leave them a guard to protect them. They thanked us thousandfold, their gratitude was without bounds. They gave us a cart with horses to transport the provisions to our bivouac, and kissed our hands. The prisoners followed us in the rear guard, and we soon returned to the orchard where our battalion was stationed. The provisions were handed out, and soon fires could be seen, soup was cooked all around, and each prepared himself to a meal. – The soup was soon ready, the mess tins were filled and we started to fill our empty stomachs.

All of a sudden, an adjutant of general CHASSÉ arrived, with the order to immediately retreat to Nivelles with forced marches. The army had already retired, they had not been able to locate our battalion, and the adjutant was delighted to find us in time. The French were advancing in column, and had come so close that we could hear their drum. Had we been stronger, we could have ambushed them, and possibly have thrown back in disarray, but what can one battalion do against an entire army? Our soup was thus thrown away reluctantly at the moment we thought we could alleviate our hunger. Seldom was I in a worst time. Having to flee with an empty stomach was certainly discouraging. I picked up a piece of the soup meat and started to march, or better, joined the battalion on a hasty retreat. The French were snapping at our heels, so we hurried towards Nivelles. Here we witnessed again an unpleasant sight, several wounded of the bloody battle of the 16th crawled around, invoking the help of humanitarians. This one had lost an arm that one a leg, the third had several sabre cuts and a fourth had received several other wounds. It was sad to see our comrades suffer so much, but encouraging to see the heroes' fire glare in their eyes that burned for revenge. Many among them shouted that, once they had recovered, they would avenge themselves on the French, who had only defeated them by sheer numbers. We could not stay, and continued our retreat with haste, we managed to catch up with the army's rear guard, and soon retake our place in the Third Division. They thought that we were already lost, and were happy to see the Eighteenth Battalion again. The French army, confident of the successes it had, thought for sure they could annihilate us; but it certainly had not come to that yet, our column halted, moved into line in a backwards motion, and thus formed a line, which, covered by artillery and cavalry, caused so much doubt with the French generals, that they left us in peace. [...] [I]f the

French army had pushed through in force in the evening of the 17th of June, we might not have withstood it.

Those spirits that guard this earth, opened the floodgates of heaven, flooding wavy came down, remaking the grain fields into oceans, the land into a swamp, and hindered all hostilities; rattling thunder strokes thundered through the air, and the horrible chain lightning swept through the atmosphere, threatening the daring mortal who dared to start any theatre of blood with death. [...] Darkness followed soon, and developed a veil, under which the hostilities of the 17th of June 1815 were ceased.

We entered Braine la Leu, and took up positions in the streets, but the rains were so heavy, that every street looked like a river which flooded away the soldiers that had gotten a hold on a sheath of straw. The hunger became severe, and I decided to get some food for my men, despite the terrible storm. I reached my goal with difficulty. Having entered a great house, we got into a fight with Prussian troops, that wanted to prevent us from entering. Hunger makes a sharp sword, as the saying goes. This we found out for ourselves, and in a blink of an eye, the Prussians were out of the house. One of their NCO's gave me a punch in the chest, but he paid so dearly for it, that he soon had little to say, but humbly begged for mercy. We didn't bother with him, and filled our empty stomachs, then we rested and slept like there was no enemy. [...]

On the 17th of June, I encountered many particularities. That day came to an end, in which many things had happened for the prosperity of Europe. Indeed, we had retreated, but were more concentrated then before. The rains had flooded the roads, such that the French artillery could advance very slowly, and encountered many difficulties on the 18th, as we shall see.

Darkness still covered the earth, the cattle still slumbered, when we were awoken to make ourselves ready for battle. The dawn lingered and seemed to be reluctant to share its wonderful glow with the world, as if it was aware of how terrible that day would be. The sun remained hidden behind dense clouds, who threatened to burst, to prevent any scenes of murder. The face of nature was very sad, and seemed already to be in mourning about the misery that the 18th of June would bring.

I worked with my NCO's to have the weapons that were wet and rusty, be brought in good order. My soldiers were good-humoured and in a short time the weapons in a good state. Many backpacks were laden with unnecessary items. I convinced my men that such could be most inconvenient for them, and they rid themselves of those goods that were not immediately part of their uniform. The wet items were dried as much as possible, and at six o'clock we were completely ready.

General DITMERS, having received reports that some farmers in the vicinity were plundered, immediately ordered that our company would haste itself to that place, where the rapacity of dishonourable soldiers spread fear and despair. My captain, the honourable MENSÖ, commanded us, and led us to those places where theft and plunder raged. Hastening our steps, we soon came to the aid of the unfortunate. Just as on the last day, we saw all the terrible that the riotousness of such soldiers causes, who rather go after loot than meet an honourable death under the banners of their corps. I will not mention the horrors that my eyes witnessed, it suffices to say that crime paraded in its hellish glory. We punched through the plunderers, but were angrily attacked by them. My captain, who always kept his wit and his manly posture, had already foreseen and calculated this. He ordered some shots to be fired, and waved with his mighty hand the glittering sabre, hitting many a wretch. Within moments, several unworthy creatures lay beneath our feet, and those that were not wounded we had tied up, those who fled we had pursued, many of them were shot down or captured. The surrounding areas thus cleared, we returned to Braine la Leu, gave our report to the general, handed over the prisoners, and retook our place in the battalion.

General DITMERS received the order from the division commander to defend Braine la Leu to the last man. Because of this order, all entrances were blockaded with carts, earth, rocks and whatever one could obtain. Everyone prepared himself to repel a storm, and thought that he would find his resting place in this *bourg*, but it was decided otherwise. At nine o'clock a counter order came. We had to depart in column, but had no idea as to where we would march to. Soon we were outside Braine la Leu and were alerted by some bullets that were sent to us by the enemy as a welcome. The flints were again checked upon, the touch holes pricked through and the cartridges filled up. Many old soldiers tied kerchiefs around their waist, and stuck cartridges in them in part, so as to have access to those deadly pills¹⁰. I thought this was very useful and easy, and had my men make use of this means of speeding up annihilation.

We advanced, led by the honourable general DITMERS, who soon proved to be a man whose courage could be an example to all of us. An enemy projectile came flying, which smashed into the ground just in front of his horse, which then pranced, put up its ears and seemed frightened. The general seemed to not have noticed anything, petted the animal and kept his position. Captains DE HAAN and MENS0 gathered the young officers, encouraged them, with the impression to keep the ranks closed. In them, one could see the men which the ancient histories name us as examples. The burned with desire to challenge the enemy, in their eyes the fire of true heroes kindled, but their wise gaze indicated that, despite all courage and knowledge of war, the chances in war are uncertain. I started to notice that some officers that had boasted so much, seemed to be suffering from a loss of strength. One of them had in the garrison always tormented the younger officers, and portrayed them his former glorious exploits. He had stormed mountains that had been covered by batteries, put entire squadrons in disorder, had taken strong fortresses, and indeed had spread chaos among entire armies. When I heard him say that in a sturdy voice, I may not have believed everything of it, but supposed that he was someone who would dare to stand his ground; but I had been mistaken, a dud hit his overcoat which he wore rolled up on his chest, he dropped to the ground and wanted to seem unconscious. Lieutenant DU BOIS went to him, looked at his chest and found neither wound nor bruise. He claimed however to be severely wounded and left the battlefield most disgracefully. I expected to see more of those officers, and prayed they would make themselves known, so we could finally see which officers we could rely on. Another officer took off his decorations, threw his shako, coat, epaulet, etc. away, mounted a millers' horse and deserted his soldiers in the heat of the enemy fire, he fled and showered himself with everlasting indelible shame, nevertheless he received the decoration on which it says: "for bravery, leadership, loyalty"¹¹. But let me return to the narrative of the important day of the 18th of June, and report about the battle of which much would depend for Europe. [...]

After we had left Braine la Leu, we marched to the plains of Waterloo, which was very suitable for a battle. We advanced in column and soon formed squares with several battalions. Our front was opposite to Mont St. Jean, where the French had positioned their artillery most favourably. Our division was on the right flank of the allied army, and soon experienced the destruction of heavy artillery fire. The French aimed their pieces expertly and made us feel all the horror of it. Our artillery, which was also very well equipped, soon answered the first shots of the enemy. A thousand metal mouths spewed the destructive lead and iron upon each other, our square was in range of the enemy fire, without being able to do anything. With our weapons

¹⁰ This practice is mentioned in other sources as well and seems to be peculiar to veterans from the campaigns in Spain.

¹¹ The motto for the Military Order of William [Dutch: "*Voor Moed, Beleid en Trouw*"]. Besides captains De Haan en Menso, the Military Order of William, 4th Class was awarded to captains Dirk Schäfer, Gerard Meijer and Gerardus Josephus Johannes Rochel. One of these is possibly the officer that is mentioned here.

NB: besides these officers, the following NCO's and other ranks were awarded: adjutant Willem Teunissen, sergeants Christiaan Freijer, Cornelis van Schie and Jan Michiel Kijl, Flanker Antonie Aarts and Fuselier Pieter Beelen.

at support arms, we had to let us be destroyed by cannon fire. The colonel of the Fourth Battalion was stopped in his command by a bullet and taken away. Some officers suffered the same fate, and the ranks of soldiers were so much scourged, that our square was soon the sight of the most terrible kind. Not being allowed to leave our position, the dead and wounded remained amongst us, which caused great discouragement among our troops, of which most had never seen any action, and who still felt a spark of human fire glaring within themselves.

General CHASSÉ, who from time to time rode up and about the area to take the right measures, noticed our terrible disposition, which could no longer benefit us any longer, and made us change positions immediately, the square made a left turn, marched forward in the quick step, made a right turn again, advanced towards the main brick road and deployed into order of battle. Now the soldiers became heated, first we welcomed the enemy with battalion firing and then with platoon firing. The advancing French cavalry forced us to three times to form a column of attack and retreat. We recovered every time and advanced again. Part of the English artillery had to abandon their positions in a hurry and severely exposed us. The firing became so persistent, horrible, even furiously all consuming, that it truly looked as if heaven and earth would collapse. The earth thundered on her pillars, the buzzing lead whistled and shrieked through the air, which made a deafening noise, the smoke of the hellish powder darkened the skies, thus the whole made a confusing spectacle. The lightning of the cannon glittered through the smoke and the following thunder deafened the ears. We attacked and were attacked; there was no more fighting with cold bravery anymore; no, it was with a furious despair that the ranks crashed onto the other ranks. Revenge, anger, the need for self-preservation spurred the minds and powers to only live in killing. We forced the French back to an orchard. They took up a position there and defended themselves, like one could only expect from the noble French guard. It pained me to help destroy these brave troops. I lamented that they were servient to such ill-fated objectives, but the moments were too precious and all human feelings had to be silent, to be specific these feelings which could make one tender hearted; because the true human feelings were here, to be of service of humanity in general. Step by step we became masters of the orchard and made our way through the corpses. The perishing French, who could still fire a musket, still fired upon us, even when drawing their last breath they shouted: "Vive l'Empereur!" At the moment that we had cleared the orchard, the French cuirassiers came upon us in anger. Captain DE HAAN took a drum that lay on the battlefield, and beat the *pas de charge*. His thundering, his rattling voice electrified the ranks, his glittering eye and flashing blade poured fire in our hearts. "To triumph or die!" he shouted and crashed with his unleashed troops into NAPOLEONS' elites¹².

The levelled musket raged excessively among the proud cavalry. DE HAAN fought like a lion. His gigantic stature gave him the advantage to fight against the horsemen. We were maddened by his example, and pushed and thrust and murdered and raged among the French. The eagle bowed down before the lion, and the cuirassiers were murdered or fled. MENSÖ performed miracles of bravery; with the advantageous stature of DE HAAN, he combined immense strength, every sabre cut by him was lethal, he made horse and rider shiver, and fought those on foot whose horse was killed, or he had pulled from their horses. [...] The culmination of the blood thirst drew near. General CHASSÉ upon noticing this, took off his hat, waved it in the air and shouted: "Long live the Prince of Orange!" This battle cry was repeated by the thousands of warriors that served under him. The general had the muskets levelled, the cavalry advance with greater speed and ordered the infantry to charge, wither to triumph or die. Now there was no other means of survival, other than fearless bravery. Self-interest effected on both sides with excessive rage, but we fought for a sacred cause. Our troops advanced fiercely, shouting and crying: "Long live the Prince! Long live the general!" Our army was like a rapid mountain stream. The war cries resounded to the French as a deadly tiding, indeed the shouts deafened

¹² This action is described in the correspondence of general Chassé, who remarked that he had "the pleasure of seeing about three hundred cuirassiers flee before fifty Dutchmen".

the thunder of the cannon. With anger, grudge and fury, we crashed into the French ranks, overthrew their columns, a terrible blood bath and unprecedented massacre commenced. The French shouted: "The guard dies, but never surrenders!"¹³

Our impact was too much for them, they started to fall back. [...] Again, the cuirassiers came flying against us. This last throe was enormous, there was murdering and butchering, no quarter was given. The lamentation of the dying and maimed heroes were deafened by cries of revenge. [...] "Sauve qui peut" was the cry of the fleeing of our enemies. Our cavalry and that of the Prussians were terribly pursuing them. The soldiers could not be restrained, and until late at night, they fully vented their fury, and painted the earth red with the blood of those who had had the whole of Europe bathe in blood and tears. Now, here and there the cry of joy rose: "Victory! We have won!" was heard all around. [...]



It was already very late in the evening of the decisive battle before I had gathered all my troops. As soon as we had advanced *en tirailleur*, the men had spread out by pursuing the French, and we had difficulties finding each other again. Many brave ones had been killed and wounded by my side, the remaining I thanked in the name of the fatherland for their courage and their enthusiasm. My fear about my fellow officers whose fate was not known to me yet, did not last long. We had become separate in the heat of battle. Foreign troops had joined us. The last attack we had made had not been executed in that calmness that keeps the ranks closed or makes the divisions close up to each other. The cry "Victory or death!" had made every soldier act for himself. Each had sought to save himself, and much can be attributed to that for making the French give way. An attack as such had confused them. They did not expect this.

¹³ This is a legend which Roorda van Eysinga probably added to his –overall rather theatrical- account of the battle out of artistic motives. The commander of the Imperial Guard, Cambronne, always denied having said that, and recent studies revealed that he probably was captured earlier during the battle.

Soon the officers arrived at the place where the First and Second Companies had joined with the honourable brigade commander DITMERS, and it was an unknown pleasure that I felt for finding many of my brothers in arms again. I had thought they had died, and imagined: "How blissful it will be if we meet our dear acquaintances again on the youngest day".

General DITMERS cried of joy and many thanked God. The night had already covered the terrible, of human blood fuming battlefield, with her veil, before we could rest a little. I shared a piece of *kommisbrot* with general DITMERS. He asked me for it; I had taken this piece from a French caisson, it was my only booty, but at that moment better than anything else. The general had always been thankful for it, and said afterwards that I had done him a great favour with it.

The day of the 18th June had been heated, I was delighted to be able to take some rest. On the 19th we woke up early, thinking the French might have assembled again, to disturb us again, or because of the arrival of new troops, attack us again; but there were no French to be seen, except the prisoners, wounded and killed. We let our soldiers keep busy with bringing their weapons and clothing in order, which looked rather detrimental because of the mud.

I have just given an overall description of the battle of the 18th, now I will tell some peculiarities that have been printed into my memory for ever.

A good soldier of our company was very sad, but went on voluntarily, he spoke to me and said he had the premonition that he would be wounded. I tried to talk him out of this unfavourable thought, but before I had finished, a cannonball took away his leg, which grieved me because he was an honourable and careful soldier.

Some Prussians, who had mistaken me for a French officer, took me prisoner and wanted to kill me. I showed them my orange sash, but they were too dumb to recognize this rank distinction. Now my soldiers came rushing and I was again free. Four English soldiers, who had become wounded, had moved into a ditch, to dress each other; having just sat down, a howitzer shell fell next to them, it exploded immediately and made the four wounded blow up in pieces. This was the most terrible sight one can imagine, and therefore I shall leave it.

Women followed us with gin, and incited the troops. One of these heroines was shot in two, another badly wounded, and despite of these disheartening scenes, the other sutleresses stayed faithfully with their companies. They were like TRIJN REMBRANDTS,¹⁴ who threw the Spaniards from the city ramparts. There was one with our battalion who had witnessed the campaign in Russia, and who had saved her life by swimming across rivers several times, and who exceeded many a hero in bravery.¹⁵

On the 19th I was sent back to Nivelles with the *fouriers*, to collect rations; the other officers were either company commanders, or had gotten sick, which meant many tasks were left. I went to Nivelles in haste.

¹⁴ Trijn Rembrandts (c. 1557 – 1638), heroine of the Siege of Alkmaar (1573), also nicknamed the "Kenau of Alkmaar" (named after another famous female hero). Because her story was written down in 1661, there is doubt that she actually existed, but she has become part of the many legends surrounding this important period of the history of the Netherlands.

¹⁵This is most likely the wife of Sergeant Van Kempen. Van Kempen had taken her into his protection in Russia, when they were taken prisoner together at the Berezina. Her first husband had been killed. Van Kempen joined the Russo-German Legion, shortly after they were married. Together they returned to the Netherlands, where he joined the army again, now with the 19th Battalion National Militia Infantry. She followed him again as *cantinière*. Witness to their wedding was good friend and army buddy Jan Willem van Wetering, a sergeant with the 1st Flank Company, 4th Battalion National Militia Infantry. He wrote in his memoirs how he gave his watch and money to Mrs. Van Kempen, in case something would happen to him. This will be described in the memoirs of Jan Willem van Wetering, which I will translate at a later date [MGS].

Before I continue, I must tell about an example of the revenge of the Prussians. When they discovered in the morning that some wounded Frenchmen had crawled into a farmhouse to dress themselves or to take shelter, they set the house on fire. The cries for help of the unfortunate was horrible. Captains DE HAAN, MENS0 and lieutenant-adjutant VAN DIJK dashed to it, to save the unfortunate; ladders were used to carry them out of the house that was in flames. I did all I could to be of service; we managed to save many, and we when we were convinced that there were no more left, we heard there were still some in the attics, not able to come down from it. Ladders were placed at every opening, the flames grew higher and higher, and we were in danger of suffocating in the fumes, or to be buried by the beams crashing down. Finally, we managed to save the last man. Soon after, the roof of the house collapsed [...].

When we arrived in Nivelles, the streets, houses, hospitals, churches and other buildings were filled with wounded, dying and already deceased soldiers. The amputating of arms and legs was so common, that everywhere the heart wrenching moaning could be heard. There were not enough able surgeons to help everyone, which meant that apprentices also had to perform them. I could not obtain any rations; the stores had been moved, and not being able to witness the horrible sight of the suffering wounded, I returned with my NCOs to the bivouac, to find the battalion. The same was already on the march and far ahead of me. My NCOs were all tired and wanted to take a rest. I let them eat something in a small farmhouse, ate something as well, but could not decide to let the battalion, which was still waiting for rations, stay unaware of the breaking down of the storages. Therefore, we had to march on again and hasten our steps, but we did not reach the battalion until the next morning.

I gave my commander the unpleasant message that I was not able to bring any rations because the stores had been moved, and was not received very friendly. I slept very pleasantly for a short time, because I was convinced that I had done my duty; but, instead of being able to take a decent rest, I was awoken for the advance, got up, ordered my platoon and soon went onward again.

We set course for Maubeuge, and were very surprised not to meet any enemies whatsoever. When we halted at night and wanted to rest ourselves, I was ordered to collect straw with some men, which because of the distance we had to travel, caused me even more tiredness. I was however glad to have kept a sheath for myself, which a captain wanted to fight over with me. I had a good night's sleep, and was woken by the *reveille*. We were now in a strange land; we had crossed the borders of our fatherland and were on French soil, on the grounds of the nation, which, by the interweaving of fortune, had been given the name of *la grande nation*. [...]

We marched on continuously in forced and quick marches, did not receive our rations and suffered a lot because of it. The Duke of WELLINGTON gave strict orders not to demand anything from the farmers. Our bivouacs were always surrounded by a string of sentries that had to prevent anyone from going out plundering. The officers were threatened with being discharged if a soldier of their company was caught stealing from a farmer. This made our situation precarious. WELLINGTON wanted to present himself as a friend and negotiator for France, restore LOUIS to the throne as king, and so make a good impression. This plan was sensible and political to approve a heavy tribute on France afterwards; but we suffered for it, while the English were supplied with everything in their bivouacs. We marched day and night, made few stops and wore ourselves out, so much so that many soldiers fell down on the main road and perished.

Our goal was to reach France's capital quickly. There were already troops ahead of us that had taken away everything before us. We marched towards Paris with such haste, that I wasn't able to take notice of the remarkable things that happened during the march. We went through

Bavre, Roye, Pont Saint Maxence and Senslis, and rested at Blanc Menil, which had been partially burned, so that we could again find nothing to eat. My captain however showed me a tower, in which many pigeons were found. We went to it, and were fortunate to catch several of those in the dusk.

Next morning, we went outside early, and found a potato field, which did not meet our expectations, because the potatoes were only half ripe; but it was better than nothing. We dug up some potatoes, returned and ate these with our pigeons.

In Blanc Menil, horror and destruction reigned. The inhabitants had mostly fled. Several of the infirm and the elderly sat on the rubble of their former glory. The most excellent book collections were partially burned, and some were close to being consumed by the flames, so it was no burden upon my conscience that I took some book parts from the destructive fire.

From Blanc Menil we marched to Paris. The gilded roof of the Hôtel des Invalides glistened with splendour in the distance [..]. Paris would once again be occupied by the Allies. [...]

The army halted before the strongholds of Paris. A feeling of reverence for France's capital seemed to overwhelm our commanders. WELLINGTON and BLÜCHER knew the enthusiasm and revenge that infuriated their armies, and feared the hopeless consequences that could come of it, if Paris was to be plundered by greedy soldiers, and the despair of its' inhabitants would be pushed to the limit. The French that were on guard on the strongholds, grimaced and gnashed their teeth, not being able to bear the thought that the city of the great nation would once again be occupied by the barbarians of the north.

We moved around Paris, and went to the Boulogne Forest (Bois de Boulogne), where we set up our camp and soon had plenty of rations, so that we forgot all that we suffered.

Late in the afternoon after we arrived in the Boulogne Forest, I was given leave to go to Paris, where I had to acquire several goods. I went on my way, and arrived in the great metropolis. Many sensations got hold of me, curiosity played a major part, and a certain pride of entering as a victor also would not go away from me. I bought several necessities and refreshed myself in an inn, where many old grenadiers of NAPOLEON were still around, who spoke of the Allies with such mutiny and were so angry, that I thought it wisely not to stay any longer. I went again to my camp, where I arrived safe and sound.

Several days later I was given leave to go to Paris for some time. I had some Napoleons and Louis d'Or with me, so I thought I would strike a dashing figure in the great city. I wore my new uniform, my best epaulet upon my shoulder, my Parisian boots shone bright as a mirror, and I thought I would make quite a spectacle. But I had been completely wrong, no one person in the whole of Paris notices the *sous-lieutenant*, everyone passed me by without as much as looking at me, why, many a man would bluntly bump into me in the bustle, which I perceived as disrespectful, and disappointed me in my expectations. The turbulence, the swarming, the shouting in the streets was maddening and intoxicating, such that one could not see or hear. Hundreds of *fiacres* rode around disorderly, the cracking of the whips whistled in the air. Singers, songstresses, fruit sellers and postmen swarmed around in confusion. Tisannesellers¹⁶, merchants, men of state, cobblers, pickpockets, doctors and quacks, all hurried to the utmost. One hindered the other, everyone was terribly busy, and not seldom did disputes arise, which led to circumstances that were the cause of fights that one could see erupt between hairdressers and 'black robes'¹⁷ [...]. Sometimes, the bustle was so intense, that it dazzled me, and I'd find myself lucky to catch my breath in some coffeehouse. [...]

¹⁶ Sellers of 'tisane' or herbal tea.

¹⁷ Clergymen

When I returned to camp from Paris, I found myself deceived by my expectations. My battalion had been moved, and nobody could tell me in what direction it had gone. Not knowing where to go, I returned to Paris, hoping to find some officers of our battalion of division. I did not deceive myself, because I soon met some acquaintances, who notified me that our battalion was in Montmagny. I now placed myself in a *fiacre*, which brought me soon to St. Denis, from where I would look up my battalion on foot, always asking the way to Montmagny. Wanting to praise the intentions of the French to be of service to strangers, I must confess that the roads were pointed out to me correctly, such that I could not fail to reach my destination. I found my corps in the evening, and soon thought myself to be much happier in a simple farmers' cottage, than in the bustling, indecent and corrupt city of Paris.

From Montmagny, we marched to Denil, a neighbouring village at the foot of the mountain of Montmorency, and were housed in the castle of general BRUNE, where we found only a gardener, who was assigned to care for us. We had ample rooms, a fine garden with ponds, grottoes, a hermitage, arbours and *bossages*, but our food was plain. The gardener swore to us by St. JOSEPH and MARY, that he could not present us something better. We had to do with whatever little we received, which was easy, since we had no way of obtaining anything else. The surroundings of the castle were very pleasing, and the peasant girls ever so charming.

Later we took up housing in the castle of Villa Taneuse, and after meeting with Mrs. LE SAGE¹⁸, resident of the same, we found ourselves like royalty. Nothing was spared to make our lives more pleasant. The hunting, fishing, walks, excursions to Paris and the environs, soon drove away the sad images that had kept the bloodbath of Waterloo alive within me. [...]

I expect one will forgive me, that I had not obtained that local knowledge in France, which one finds with meticulous travellers. I was second lieutenant with a company of infantry, of which its first lieutenant had removed himself out of cautiousness before the beginning of the battle of Waterloo; thus I was constantly on duty, and since I never had any valid pretext to take leave, because of my good health, and I didn't want to ask for it out of sense of duty, I let nothing untested to practice my men more and more; so that I received the approval of the good captain MENSÖ, and have the men bond with me more and more. This was all that I need as an officer, but not enough to satisfy my desire for exploration. It grieved me that I did not notice that which would probably deserve more attention, than whatever I can say about France. Because I had resolved to take no notes of anything other than what I had seen and heard, I shall not be able to tell anything special about our travels back to the Netherlands, since we stayed in most stopping places only for one night. [...]

On the 30th of November 1815, we were ordered to start our journey back, so as to garrison in Antwerp. We would enter the Netherlands as victors who had fought for the fatherland, to receive the well earned praise. We would see our land of birth again and meet our families again, who longed for us. Certainly a thrice happy thought; it filled us all with joy, and yet many felt with me a strange melancholy.

I was a conqueror in France; a beautiful country lay before my eyes, I was surrounded by one of the most beautiful valleys, but it was to no avail; duty called and all had to be silent before it. [...]

¹⁸ The village of Villetaneuse and its inhabitant, Madame Lesage, are described in the "Dictionnaire Topographique des Environs de Paris" (2nd edition, edited and published by Charles Oudiette, Paris 1817): "Ce village , situé à l'extrémité de la plaine de Saint Denis , est divisé en deux parties inégales, dans l'une desquelles, qui est la plus petite, se trouvent l'église paroissiale, et un château autrefois seigneurial, appartenant à madame Lesage."

The calfskin sounded, but this time it sounded dreadful to me. Night still spread her ash grey veil over the snow covered earth. The cold was quite unusual in France, and made many chatter his teeth. The farmers lit us up with lanterns, and in that same light, I saw many a tear glistening in the fair eyes of the blossoming peasant girls, who probably had given the saviours of their country too much love.

I left with difficulty the honourable mrs. LE SAGE and her benevolent housemates. [...] I felt my calm return, and found peace with my company, who received me with a loud 'hoezee'. "Attention, Division!" restored the equilibrium of upset hearts. After having shouldered arms, we pivoted by the right into column and soon marched off, walking in *pas de route*. The tired drummers soon put away their sticks, so that we noticed nothing but the severe cold in the dark of night. My heart however still burned for the fair places we left. I greeted them with the dearest of greetings, and hoped I would once again amuse myself in those delightful fields.

The cold was very beneficial for the march back, such that we walked for seven or eight hours with ease, and spent the night sometimes in hamlets, sometimes in small towns or large villages. In one of these hamlets, which was located quite far from the main road, our company had to stay for a night. One might possibly remember the patriarchal way of living of the inhabitants of it, and I remember clearly thinking of the patriarch ABRAHAM, when I entered the humble hut of it. What little was presented for us, tasted very good, because hunger seasoned the food, and the so-called mattresses or bags, although not looking very clean, served us as well as the downy beds in the most excellent bed frames of royal palaces, in which we sometimes stayed as well. Such was because of the tiredness, which would make us sleep so sound, that no forty-eight pounder cannon could have woken us.

Remarkably, the inhabitants of this hamlet had never had any experience with billeting of troops, thus they thought it was strange having troops accommodated with them, and especially strange hordes of which they had not formed a positive image. They were very much surprised about the unprecedented military order which was common with us, and it seemed they regretted that we stayed with them for one night only. We left again the next morning, with the wishes of good luck from the peasantry, who gave many thanks to the officers for the good treatment our soldiers had given them. I felt again that there was also much to enjoy in the military class. I could not remember all the villages and towns, but I do remember we had a day of rest in Amiens, and stayed there for two nights.

I had the good fortune to be accommodated with a zealous royalist, who, as he said, would give a thousand lives for LOUIS XVIII. [...]

After a heartily goodbye, I departed the next morning, and saw little of importance until Lille. We were not allowed to enter Arras according to the treaty, and we had pass it on our right. Some officers grumbled about this and thought it was unreasonable that a fortress was kept shut for the liberators of France. I had another opinion about that and suspected that the allies might have had sensible motives for it. [...]

In a few marches we had advanced to Lille, but were again not allowed to enter, so we were billeted in the nearby suburbs, or rather villages. I was billeted with an officer of the National Guard of Lille, who seemed a good and honest man to me. [...]

The next day we marched from Lille to Bisieu, the first village of the Netherlands. It will not be surprising to anyone that, when I crossed the border of my fatherland, my heart pounded in my chest. Exalted and pleasant feelings flowed through my soul. As a victor I entered the land of the Batavians and the Belgians, and it seemed to me having brought no dishonour to their memento. The lion had shamed the eagle, and thus I felt without any pride that I could bravely hold my head up high.

When we arrived, the villagers cried with enthusiasm: "Vive le Prince d'Orange! Vivent les braves guerriers!". And I have to admit regrettably, that their cry was more sincere than the cold, obligatory thanks that we received later in the towns. When I remember an open letter, which was sent by the Netherlands to the army before the decisive battle, and the strong words of confidence in us that it contained, with the promise that we, when we had won, would be received with open arms, then I have to blush, and feel hurt to have such a good memory; but the conviction of having done good is enough; the man of honour satisfies himself with earning the honour, and does not want a cold praise, which is as idle as it is deceitful.

We soon reached Tournai neat the Scheldt, and marched through it without wanting to stay there. I found nothing more repulsive than the gin which they have in these parts, and is certainly made from potatoes or turnips, in short, I have seldom drank anything so distasteful, and yet I saw families who in the evening had already been intoxicated, and made the strangest displays come to pass, and made pantomimes emerge, that modesty forbids to describe.

We soon reached Brussels, and went by Mechelen to Antwerp, without encountering anything extraordinary. [...] It was in Mechelen, that I had to pay my landlord for the lodgings that I had consumed in half a day. This was already the beginning of the patriotism and gratitude to the saviours of the Netherlands.

We had to garrison in Antwerp, and arrived there on December 15th 1815 in the afternoon. I received a billet on the Place de Meir, the largest in town, and expected to have a pleasant stay in one of the large houses there, but I soon was disappointed in my expectations. As soon as the gate of the palace that I had to enter was opened, a dim windbag stood before me, who showed me the way to my room, and said in a wry voice: "Voilà votre chamber." I was very much surprised to find an instruction of the landlord in front of the hearth, under the likeness of NAPOLEON, how an officer should behave in his house, that if he would not be inside at ten in the evening, the door would be locked, and that all efforts to open it be in vain. Having put on my uniform, I took the instruction and wrote underneath: "The writer of the above must address himself to me immediately." I then gave it to my valet to give it to the landlord, who had me notified that he had urgent business to attend. I ordered a corporal and two men to bring the man to me, and soon the arrogant master of the house arrived in the middle of them. He wanted to speak first, but I interrupted him and told him he was unworthy to accommodate an officer, that he was lucky to have not been given a rough guest, and that I had the honour to leave his house immediately. He apologized and requested that I would do him the honour of having lunch with him. I let him know that he would not have that honour, greeted him and went to a guest house to take up residence. After three days, we were housed in the barracks in the citadel, and had a good stay there. The walks around the earthworks were very nice. We stayed in Antwerp for a year. [...]"

Placed on the Napoleon Series: May 2015