The Napoleon Series

The Autobiography of J.C.F. Koch

Translated by Marc Geerdink-Schaftenaar

JOHANNES CHRISTIAN FRIEDRICH KOCH (born 16 November 1785 in Wirminghausen, died 12 January 1872 in Leiden) joined the 1st Waldeck Regiment of the Batavian Republic on March 16 1803. Here began an impressive military career; he took part in the campaigns in Germany in 1805, 1806 and 1807, served in Spain in 1808-1814, took part in the 1815-campaign and finally was garrisoned in the fortresses Lillo and Liefkenhoek during the War of Belgian Secession (1830-1832). He was decorated with the Honorary Sabre of Stralsünd, the Military Order of William 4th Class, the Order of the Netherlands Lion, the Metal Cross and the St. Helena Medal.

The story describes daily life of the common soldier, especially the hardships they had to endure when on campaign. There are several little anecdotes that give more insight in the way soldiers camped, fought and tried to make the best of their situation, and he gives advice now and then for the modern soldier, based on his own experiences.

Koch wrote down his memoirs in the winter of 1864-1865, with the aid of his nephew, Captain of Engineers H.L. de Wijs. A descendant of H.L. de Wijs, G.E.W. de Wijs, made a transcription of the original in 1978. In 1998, a copy of the manuscript and the transcription were given by Mr. Noor van Andel to K.E. Heil, who was doing research on the Dutch Brigade in Spain. Together with his grandson, Mr. T.K.E. Heil, he made a digital document in 1999, which was sent to the editors of the military magazine “Mars et Historia”; they in turn sent it to ALVO publishing, who published these memoirs that same year. The original manuscript was given to the Dutch Infantry Museum; since that museum was closed in September 2014, the manuscript is currently in the depot of the new National Military Museum in Soesterberg.

The various writers have added punctuation marks to make the document easier to read. The translation I wrote stays as close to the latest published version as possible, although I have used the English spelling for several geographical names. I have added an arrangement in chapters of the full text, and several notes to clarify several historical details and typical Dutch sayings and words that are hard to translate.

Julianadorp, April 2015
Marc Geerdink-Schaftenaar

1 The service record of Johannes Koch is thus:
March 16 1803: Private, 2nd Company, Major Labaudes’ Battalion of the 1st Waldeck Regiment
October 1 1806: Corporal, 2nd Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Line Infantry Regiment
January 1 1811: Sergeant, 123ème Régiment d’Infanterie de Ligne
September 1 1812: The regiment is incorporated into the 130ème RI, Koch serves in the 4th Battalion
July 1 1813: promoted to 2nd Lieutenant
December 19 1813: promoted to 1st Lieutenant
1814: dismissed from French service, returned to the Netherlands on May 1st
June 26 1814: 1st Lieutenant, 19th –later 17th Battalion Militia Infantry
January 10 1815: 1st Lieutenant-Adjutant
1816: the 17th Battalion Militia Infantry is incorporated into the 2nd Infantry Afdeeling
17 February 1818: Captain-Adjutant
July 22 1822: Captain, 2nd Company, Flank battalion, 2nd Infantry Afdeeling
1840: Major, 5th Infantry Regiment; later transferred to the 1st Infantry Regiment
1844: dismissed from service;
October 1 1844: assigned as Commander-director of the Invalid House in Leiden
1848: given the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel
“Autobiography of J.C.H. Koch
Retired Lieutenant-Colonel,
Commander-Director of the Invalids House in Leiden,
Knight in the Military Order of William, 4th Class
and of the Order of the Netherlands Lion
decorated with the Honorary Sabre of Stralsund,
the Metal Cross and the St. Helena Medal.
Written by himself during the Winter of 1864-1865

Entering Service

I was born on November 16 1784 in the village of Wirminghausen, in the Principality of Waldeck, where my father Johannes Koch, married to Maria Catherina Banger, was a teacher and a landowner.

I was the second of ten children, three sons and seven daughters, who all have died, save my eldest sister Maria Catherina, who was married to a man named Bienze; my other sisters were also married.

My grandfather Adam Koch, who had also been a teacher, had another son besides my father, named Georg Friedrich, who was married to a lady from Dublin; the last time I’ve met this uncle and aunt was in Oldenburg, when they had four or five small children; I’ve never heard anything from them since.

Despite the fact that my father was a teacher and I had a good opportunity to study, the urge to do so never grew in me; my delight was more in performing manual labour, handling horses and the like, for which I had every opportunity, since, as I have mentioned, my father was a landowner as well; giving in to this delight I would certainly have been brought up to be a farmer, even though that was not what I truly desired, were it not that through a coincidence I had gone into service.

My father, it seems, had a cousin, named Backhaus, who was a quartermaster with the 1st Waldeck Regiment, which at the time was in Dutch Service. A grenadier of the 1st Battalion of that Regiment, named Christiaan Tiege, being a handsome soldier with a fine uniform, came to Wirminghausen on leave and brought with him a letter of said cousin, in which he suggested to my father to send me with Tiege to Holland and join the army.

My father, being absolutely convinced I had not the least desire for the military and not able to comprehend how I, having never been away for more than a two hours distance from my hometown, could have the courage to go out into the world alone, notified me jokingly of the proposal by cousin Backhaus, and was very much surprised and disappointed when I told him I would gladly accept the offer, because I had no greater desire than to join the army.

My father was sensible enough not to go against my desire; my luggage was made ready and on March 10 1803 I left with Grenadier Tiege to his garrison, which was Harderwijk at the time, being guided by my father and eldest brother up to my first night quarters.

It will be unnecessary to mention that having to say goodbye to my parents, brothers, sisters and other family and acquaintances brought me much sadness, but it was an especially heart wrenching moment when my father and brother left me, and I stayed behind alone with my
companion; my sense of honour had to speak up, to strengthen me in holding on to my decision; I had a lot to thank in that moment to that good soul Tiege, who spoke words of courage to me.

The first Prussian garrison we arrived at was Brilon, on the road from the Principality of Waldeck to Düsseldorf; for me, having never seen another soldier besides Tiege, it was a strange sight; from the guard at the Gates we were brought to the guard headquarters, where we were taken into interrogation by the commanding officer; the result was, that Tiege was accused of being a recruiter, was insulted in many ways, and the both of us being arrested, which surely was not a pleasant and promising start of my military career.

Soon we were visited by Prussian recruiters who did their utmost to make me go back on my decision to go to Holland; they said the Dutch were bad people living in an unhealthy country, and that I'd be climbing up the ranks faster in Prussia then in Holland; but when I remained steadfast in my resolve, we were released from arrest.

Our route went on through Westphalia, by way of Duisburg, Wesel and Emmerich, we were on the heath of Gelderland on March 15th on the march to Harderwijk, where we got lost, since there were no roads; and having seen nobody except a sheep herder; we arrived in the village of Putten at 11 o'clock in the evening, where we knocked on the door of the first house we saw, to ask for directions to Harderwijk, which the inhabitants couldn't tell us since they didn't speak German; however, they pointed us towards a Waldeck soldier who worked in Putten as a shoemaker, and he brought us to Harderwijk the next day.

There, I was welcomed most heartily by my cousin, 1st Lieutenant Backhaus, like I was his child. On March 17, I took up my residence in the barracks, received my clothing and was assigned to the second company of the Battalion of Major Labaude.

I can't say that I enjoyed the military life during that first time, and no wonder! The stiff clothing and especially the stock, to which I was not used, was surprisingly cumbersome; I didn't like the drill twice a day; and the wearing of a pigtail and powdered hair, which was dressed by the older soldiers, but for which I had to run several errands for them, I didn't like either. Finally I had completed the exercise, took up my first guard duty, to which I had to treat many a round, and was then made an equal among the experienced soldiers. I then thought that the good life would begin for me, and that I could enjoy the pleasures of Harderwijk, but I was very much mistaken; the only good that was to be found there was the abundance of fish, especially red herring; the beer was practically undrinkable, the soldiers were held in low esteem, and were constantly involved in fights with the students of the academy that was situated there at the time; many a time I thought to myself: "What had I gotten myself into by joining the army", but my motto was always: "persevere", although that required a lot of strength of character in instances like the following:

I had made an agreement with my bunk buddy Schneider to have my first watch with him, so he could help me on my way a bit; turning around during the Guard parade to see if Schneider was present, I received from our Lieutenant-Adjudant Schönstadt, who always had a very loose grip on his sabre, a smarting stroke across my back for looking behind me, which very much hurt my sense of honour; that stroke was somewhat compensated by my Company commander and 1st Lieutenant Neijer, who expressed their grievances to the Adjutant, who in

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2 The academy of Harderwijk, founded in 1599, was made a university in 1648 by the States General. The university had a dubious reputation, and was closed by Napoleon in 1811, along with the University of Franeker. The city council of Harderwijk, who realised the closing of the university led to a demise in income, requested to have either a new academy raised or that of another institution which could generate more income. An attempt to raise a new academy in 1815 failed. Instead, the recruiting bureau for the Colonial troops, destined for the East Indies, was situated in Harderwijk, and remained there throughout the 19th century.
his defence said that he didn't know me, expressed his regret about the whole incident, and promised it would never happen again; later, when Adjutant Schönstadt was Captain and I myself a 2nd Lieutenant, we regularly had a good laugh about the whole situation. From my stay in Harderwijk I remember still that there was a mint, where I had a gold coin struck, which I sent to my parents as a memento.

In June 1803 our battalion received orders to march to the camp at Zeist in eight days, which caused quite a stir; the backpacks were brought out and loaded, the canteens well filled, and we started our march, which took a long time and was very exhausting; because of the condition of the roads in those days, we could not travel further than 3 or 4 hours distance a day.

The men were dressed too stiffly and not used to the marching, so usually half of the men were laden on the transport wagons; very much exhausted, we arrived by the end of June at the Camp.

We were there with the 1st and 2nd Waldeck Regiments and were brigaded with the Saxe-Gotha Regiment; the grenadier companies were organised into a grenadier battalion, led by Lieutenant-Colonel von Pfaffenrath; the German Brigade was commanded by Lieutenant-General von Helderinck; also there were two Dutch Brigades, commanded by Lieutenant-General Dumonceau; the French troops were commanded by Marshal Marmont, who was also commander of the entire camp.

The troops were quartered in tents; at the beginning, cooking was done in so-called cooking pits, but during a wind, they filled up with sand, and could not be used; they were then replaced by field kitchens, of a model which is still used today.

The troops performed their manoeuvres separately, except on Sundays, when the manoeuvres were performed together, and which were followed that day by a ration of Jenever.

Primarily to keep the soldiers busy, the now still well-known Pyramid was built in the camp, which was worked on by men of every brigade in turn; the work consisted of bringing sand by wheelbarrows and was quite exhausting; in the middle of the Pyramid was a wooden tubular case, at the bottom of which was placed a lead box, containing a register of the names of all the officers and men present in the Camp.

By the end of October, there were a great many sick in the Camp, suffering mostly from the three-day fevers, including myself; despite the vigorous treatment of the doctors, it seems I could not get well whilst in the Camp, and so me and many others were sent to the Government Hospital in Leiden, at the building which today serves as a prison; the sick were transported on carts to Utrecht, and from there by canal boat to Leiden, where I was placed in hall number 7 of the Hospital.

The fever however would not go; I became more and more weak and very dispirited; the thought of Home never left me, and in one word, I felt very homesick, and it would have killed me there for sure, if it hadn't been saved by a coincidental circumstance.

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3 Lieutenant Christian Ludwig von Pfaffenrath, former commander of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Waldeck Regiment; he commanded the 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment of the Dutch Brigade in Spain.

4 This pyramid was first named after the commander of the military camp, Marshal Marmont. In 1806, King Louis Napoleon changed the name to the “Pyramid of Austerlitz”, in honour of the victory of Napoleon over the Russian and Austrian armies, much to the dismay of Marmont. The settlements of sutlers and camp followers near the military camp became a village that was named Austerlitz. The village of Austerlitz and the Pyramid still exist today; the monument has been restored between 2001 and 2012.
At a certain day that the usual doctor did his round of visits, he was accompanied by another doctor; arriving at my bed, in which I laid with the blankets covering my head, our usual doctor said: “I have a young man from Waldeck here, whose disease is unknown to me”; the other doctor, whom I later discovered to be the son of Surgeon-Major de Wit of the 1st Waldeck Regiment, and who had met me at my cousin Backhaus, saw my name on the card above my bed, pulled the blankets from my head and noticed immediately that me being homesick was the major cause of my illness; he spoke to me gently, promised me to let me go on leave, and had other men from Waldeck keep me company, with whom I kept talking about our country and about going on leave; when the weather was good, the men carried me in an armchair outside and placed me under the sun from noon to 1 o’clock; I was however very weak, that when I came outside, I was blind at first for about a quarter of an hour; meanwhile I recovered and after fourteen days, though still suffering the three-day fever, the good doctor De Wit told me that I had to leave the hospital, which me and a few other men of my regiment did very soon.

The 1st and 2nd Waldeck Regiments had left the Camp and had left for Groningen, to take up garrison there; we marched to Amsterdam, travelled with the ferry to Harlingen and continued our journey to Groningen on foot. We stayed there during the winter of 1803 to 1804; I was still suffering from the fever, but still performed my duties; here also, like in Harderwijk, there were many fights between the soldiers and the students, thus the main guardhouse was filled with prisoners every morning.

In the springtime of 1804, our Regiments went to the Camp at Zeist again, where we were not quartered in tents but in wooden barracks; every company was allotted four barracks, which were built by the men themselves, and for which they were allowed to chop the necessary amount of wood from the nearby forest.

In August 1804 the 1st Regiment marched to Alkmaar and was camped near that town in the villages of Egmond-Binnen and Egmond-Buiten, and in the dunes, in order to prevent a landing from the English that were patrolling the sea.

The march from the Camp at Zeist to Alkmaar was very exhausting and very unpleasant; in Amsterdam, we were housed in the so-called wooden ‘Logen’ in the Plantage, where one could not get any rest due to the enormous amount of fleas.

During the winter of 1804 to 1805 I was in the garrison in Alkmaar, and in the springtime of 1805, we went to the Camp in Kraantjelek near Haarlem.

**Campaign against Austria**

Because the French were planning a landing in England, there were fleets equipped in several harbours throughout the Empire, and thus also in our country, in Den Helder; because of that, almost all French and Dutch troops moved to Den Helder, to be embarked; I was stationed for a month on a brig, on which were present 1st Lieutenant Meijer, 2nd Lieutenant Geerbos and 80 NCO’s and privates.

This stay aboard ship was very unpleasant; hammocks were available only for half of the men, the rest has to lay down in whatever way they could; the drinking water had gone bad and was full of worms, without vinegar it was impossible to use it.

5 Accomodations.
The now large and flourishing town of Den Helder\(^6\) consisted then of nothing more than thirty or so small houses, including one inn; these houses were on top of a dyke, which was so muddy and impassable, that they had placed small stones a little apart, and jumping from one to the next, one could visit his neighbour; below at the dyke, it was much worse, because it was all water and swamp; there were no houses yet at the Nieuwediep, except for a simple landing stage\(^7\).

Fortunately for us, who were so sadly boarded, the Emperor of Austria declared war on France; as a result of that, the landing in England was abandoned and all troops had to be disembarked and march towards the Camp near Zeist; what disorderly situations happened during that hastened disembarkation and those marches is almost impossible to describe.

In a few days in Camp, everything had to be prepared for our march to Germany; the two Waldeck regiments were combined into one; supreme command of the Dutch troops was given to Lieutenant-General Dumonceau, whilst the 1st and 2nd Brigades were commanded by the Major-Generals Von Helderinck and Von Handel respectively, both from Waldeck; the Waldeck Regiment belonged to the 1st Brigade.

In forced marches were headed for the enemy; it was warm in autumn; we were dressed in full dress order; besides our many pieces of clothing, we wore large quantities of cartridges and heavy cooking pots; we were not accustomed to a campaign, and it is no small wonder that it was almost too much for me being a young soldier; I was so tired in the evening that I could hardly eat, and although my feet were run through, we had to march on again the next day.

We arrived before the fortress Ulm near the Donau river, at the same time as the French troops from Hannover; this fortress surrendered after a few days and a great many prisoners of war were taken; an Austrian Corps, about 10,000 men strong as they said, and under the command of Archduke Johann, had managed to escape; the Dutch Corps was ordered to go in pursuit of that Corps, but we could not, -or as I suspected: did not want to catch up on it.

From Ulm we marched to Augsburg near the Lech river (1805) where the pontoon bridge had been demolished and the terrain was below water level, so we were standing up to our knees in water in some places; we had to make camp outside the town, and because the weather was very bad, raining continuously, we were unable to start a fire and the soldiers were wet through and through, thus it was everything but pleasant. It was here, before Augsburg, that I saw Napoleon for the first time, and I remember how I, with my then youthful thoughts, wondered about how such a small man could be so powerful.

Because we couldn’t make a fire in the bivouac, we were of course unable to cook, which was all the more sad since there was meat in abundance; I came to an agreement with four of my friends that we had to help ourselves; we left the bivouac quietly with all our baggage, taking with us a large piece of meat, and went to a distant village, where we pretended to a rich farmer that we were quartermasters; we behaved quietly and calm, and me being a German I was able to speak with these people, and so soon enough we stood in their favour; we washed and cleaned ourselves, let our clothes dry and had soup made from the meat we brought, ate and drank well, and to that slept in a warm room; the lady of the house was instructed to wake us up at 5 o’clock next morning and to make sure we would have good, strong coffee and a bottle

\(^6\) Den Helder was of no significance, until Napoleon, after the failed Anglo-Russian invasion of 1799, decided to have a harbour built there; it would be heavily fortified, thus making it the “Gibraltar of the North”. The harbour and fortifications were ready by 1815, after his second abdication. It remained a naval harbour for the Royal Dutch Navy up to this day.

\(^7\) The Nieuwe Diep ['New Depth'] was a small bay east of the village Den Helder, which was used as a harbour for cargo ships in the 18th century.
of brandy; these folks didn’t even go to bed out of fear of not treating us well; when we had
dressed ourselves the next morning, the lady came to tell us that coffee was ready; she had
laid the table with plates and spoons and then brought a large iron cauldron with milk and a
large ladle in it, and we had a good laugh about this new way of drinking coffee, but what had
happened? The kind lady had never before drunk coffee in her life, and trying her best, she
had cooked the raw beans in milk, but these had remained hard as rocks; instead of coffee,
we drank the milk, which tasted good; our stomachs, backpacks and breadbags were filled up
good and we went all dry and merry to the bivouac where we arrived before the break of day
at our company and found our comrades all soaked and cold; we shared plenty of the bread,
the meat of the soup that we had kept, and the brandy.

From Augsburg, we marched to Donauwörth, where we crossed a large bridge across the
Donau, and then continued our march on the left bank of that river; lots of bad weather, very
bad roads, cold nights and having to bivouac was our share; part of the Austro-Russian army
was stationed in advance of the cities Stein and Krems, to cover the bridge across the Donau
south of the former city; then, there were endless manoeuvres and movements before the
battle begun\textsuperscript{8}, and when finally the fighting started, our Regiment was too far away to take part;
both sides suffered many losses, the bridge was demolished and completely burned during
the retreat by the enemy.

The first dead Russian that I saw, laying in a trail, made an unpleasant impression on me, but
soon I saw so many of them, that I got used to the sight of it; the French had thrown most of
their dead in water wells, but the Russian dead were all still laying on the battlefield, many of
them stood with their packs against the walls of the vineyards.

We remained on the battlefield with our Brigade, which I felt uneasy amongst all those dead.

Because it was very cold, we sat with our company around a large fire; due to lack of firewood,
the men gathered muskets from the battlefield and threw them on the fire, to burn the stocks
and butts, not considering that some of these muskets were still loaded; Sergeant Strüming
sat there also with his wife, who was the sutler of our company; the barrel of one of the muskets
lay just between her legs and went off, but because she sat on a backpack or something, she
only got a good scare out of it.

Because the wine cellars were mostly inside the vineyards, we had as much wine as we
wanted; in one of those cellars we heard talking in the back, and wading through the wine, we
went to take a look who was there; we found 20 Russian soldiers, amongst them a Dutchman,
who during the landing of the English and Russians in 1799 near Den Helder, had left Alkmaar
with the Russians as a drummer; we brought these soldiers out of the cellar, but as soon as
the French caught sight of them, they attacked and killed them all; we only managed to save
the Dutchman.

The reason the French were so vengeful against the Russians was this: the day before the
battle, the Russians had captured a French picket of about 200 men, locked them up in a
building and set it on fire; I later saw the pile of burnt Frenchmen; one of my comrades who
was there also, by the name of Klijnkoert, who was a merry fellow, and who had drank a bit
too much wine, said: “I have to have a taste of that French meat,” pulled a piece from a burnt
thigh and ate it whole.

When the bridge near Stein was rebuilt, we crossed the Donau and marched towards Vienna.
At night, we had to bivouac on straw in the bitter cold around a fire; many times the straw
catch fire, sometimes even the gunpowder in the cartridge box, I myself had a pair of new

\textsuperscript{8} The battle of Elchingen, 14 October 1805.
shoes burn on my feet, so that I woke up in pain; luckily I had an old pair I could wear, because many men walked with only rags on their feet.

In Vienna, we were housed in an old monastery; the good citizens of Vienna liked us very much, since we were from Waldeck and could speak to them; when we were on watch duty, we were visited by many civilians who presented us with many pleasantries, and treated us many rounds.

We were hardly eight days in Vienna, when a Dutch Regiment and the Waldeck Regiment were ordered to march to Austerlitz, where a battle would be fought; arriving at Nickelsburg, we heard that the grand battle, in which the French had been victorious, had already been fought; we had 2 to 3,000 prisoners of war delivered to take to Vienna. These were mostly Russians; I was more afraid of them than they surely were for me, and I could not understand how there could be such wild Barbarians in the world; as soon as they found a dead horse, they cut a piece from it and ate it raw, like dogs; they ate raw cabbage stalks like it was bread.

Later, our Regiment was ordered to march towards Wiener Neustadt; I was however so much fatigued and exhausted of the continuous marching, that I was taken into the hospital in Vienna; I don't remember much else from my stay in that hospital, other than that I was laying there sweating all the time; fortunately, 1st Lieutenant Meijer of my company came with some carts, in order to gather linens, shoes and socks for the troops; that good officer took me back to the Regiment, where I soon regained my health. Archduke Johann almost had moved around us, but before it came to that, the peace was signed, in which was stipulated that the French had to leave the country within fourteen days.

So we went marching again and reached the city of München in 14 days, where we would be billeted within its vicinity, and we were treated well; after a few days of rest, we continued through Württemberg, Baden and Hesse towards Nassau, where we were again billeted in the villages around Dietz; we had not complaints about our stay here as well.

Finally, the journey back to Holland began, where we would be garrisoned in Brielle; my late night quarters were to be in Oudenbosch, and although I had a billet for two men, I was however alone, because my comrade who was billeted with me was on guard duty; the inhabitant of the house where we were billeted was a fisherman, but he was not home, and so I was alone with his wife, who welcomed me very kindly; at lunch, she asked me what religion I professed, and when I said “Lutheran”, she lamented how such a handsome young man would be doomed; I laughed at what she had said and didn't think any of it; my comrade, who was a Roman Catholic and whom I told about this, was not surprised at all; I have thought about it later many times and told the story, but I can never understand clearly that there are people who are so dumb to really believe this.

However, I departed from the fishers' wife in good friendship. We stayed in Brielle only one month; many of us were sick, which was attributed to the bad drinking water, during my stay in Brielle, I had to deliver a letter to Major-General Von Helderinck in The Hague; I did such a return trip in one day, the speed of which much surprised Lieutenant-Adjutant Von Schönstädt, but we had learned to walk in Germany.

We left Brielle for Geertruidenberg, where our company commander Major Lahaude, who had not come with us to Austria, joined us again; he was very surprised when he saw me, because I had grown in that last year about 5½ inches; many other Captains wanted me as a Corporal

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9 The battle of Austerlitz, 2 December 1805
10 The distance between Brielle and The Hague is 30 kilometres (or 20 miles), so he walked 60 kilometres (about 40 miles) in a day.
in their Companies; the Major however was too fond of me to see me go, and because there was no vacancy for a corporal in his company, he made me a Corporal à la Suite and gave me the rank distinctions as a present.

When we were at Geertruidenberg, we were inspected on the road to Breda by King Louis, who was in a carriage with the Queen and their son\textsuperscript{11}.

Because another war was coming, this time between France and Prussia, we had marched again to the Camp at Zeist; arriving at the camp, the Waldeck Regiment had to perform Guard duties; near the hamlet De Krakeling, where foraging commenced, a guard of 1 NCO, 2 corporals and 24 men was placed, and since there were not enough NCO’s, I became commander of the guard and as such performed NCO duties; whilst on guard duty there, the Waldeck troops were incorporated into the Dutch troops, the 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} Waldeck Regiments in to the 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} Dutch regiments respectively, whilst the 5\textsuperscript{th} Battalion\textsuperscript{12} was incorporated into the Jager\textsuperscript{13} Regiment commanded by Chassé; they let me stand guard for three days, and was finally relieved; returning to the Camp, I was told by the Adjutant-NCO that I was assigned as Corporal to the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Company of the 1\textsuperscript{st} Battalion of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Infantry Regiment; if only they had assigned me as an NCO, since I had performed my guard duties as such, I would have been one, because at such circumstances, everything passes easily.

My company commander was the good Captain Groenia, who we kept at our Grenadier Company throughout the Prussian War and unto 1809 in Spain; the Battalion commander was Lieutenant-Colonel Storm de Grave, who remained my superior in Prussia and Spain, and who we have buried later in Breda as a Lieutenant-General; the Regiment was commanded by Colonel Lycklama à Nijholt.

On Campaign in Germany

In the Camp, we were inspected by King Louis and the next day we marched to Prussia, unto Wesel, in the vicinity of which we set up camp, where we stayed for fourteen days. We had little to do in this camp, so we went to Wesel every day, which at that time had a Bagno\textsuperscript{14} for state prisoners; they lay on plank beds, and the prisoners on each plank bed were by a chain around the leg fastened together to an iron rod, so that they had to make all their movements in unison.

Before our march to Hesse-Kassel, King Louis inspected us again; when manoeuvred in front of His Majesty, there was a strong wind; Major Schlosser of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Battalion, who wore a wig, had the misfortune to lose his hat and his wig with it, so that he stood in front of his battalion with his head all bald, shouting to his Adjutan “\textit{meine paroeke, meine paroeke}\textsuperscript{15}”, to which the whole column burst out in laughter.

\textsuperscript{11} Louis Bonaparte (Dutch: Lodewijk), a brother of Emperor Napoleon, was made King of Holland on 24 May 1806. He was married to Hortense de Beauharnais, the stepdaughter of Napoleon and Josephine. Their son, Napoleon Charles Bonaparte, died unfortunately in 1807.

\textsuperscript{12} The 1\textsuperscript{st} Waldeck Regiment became the 3\textsuperscript{rd} Battalion of he 2\textsuperscript{nd} Infantry Regiment, the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Waldeck Regiments became the 3\textsuperscript{rd} Battalion of the 3\textsuperscript{rd} Infantry Regiment. The 5\textsuperscript{th} Waldeck Battalion was a seperate battalion, raised in 1784; it served in the Cape colony. It was dissolved in 1806, the personnel was transferred to Chassé’s Jagers.

\textsuperscript{13} ‘Jager’ is the Dutch title of a type of light infantryman (German: Jäger, French: Chasseur); the Jager Regiments of the Batavian Republic, and later the Kingdom Holland, were distinguished by their green uniforms and were armed with rifles and hunting swords.

\textsuperscript{14} A Bagne or Bagnio is a type of prison. Many times it was a hard labour prison, like in France, but it could also be a housing for hostages or prisoners that would leave during the day for work. The French penal colony Iles du Salut was called a Bagne.

\textsuperscript{15} “My wig, my wig”.
The Elector of Hesse had not yet decided if he should choose the side of the French or that of the Prussians, and so advanced to Kassel in forced marches, to hasten the decision; we marched on day and night, foraging was done en route, two hour stops made from time to time, soup cooked and then on our way again, until we reached Kassel much earlier than we were expected.

During our forced march, we had suffered shortages, especially in food; and so, when we halted in Kassel, many men left the column, which was not prohibited; I too went with a few comrades to a village a half hour distant from our route, and at a farmers’ home, we had ourselves served well and provided with everything.

Because we had on our route to Kassel passed Paderborn and had marched further along past Waldeck, many men from Waldeck had gone home secretly; because I was not one of them, my mother had talked my father into coming with my brother to search for me; when they met my Regiment a few hours from Kassel, they heard that I was not there, and probably had gone home as well; thus they went back; meanwhile I had left the farmer very early that morning, without my comrades who didn’t want to come along, because I wanted to meet the Corps before it arrived in Kassel; and look: while I was marching on the road, all alone and thinking of home, suddenly my father and brother were standing before me; I recognized them immediately, but they didn’t at first; my brother recognized me first, saying: “Vater, das ist unsre Christian”\(^{16}\). I will never forget that meeting, and what I felt at that moment I cannot describe; my dear father could not let me go because he was so happy and so emotional; I spoke words of courage to him and promised to come home soon; we sat with each other on the side of the road under a tree, the weapons were laid aside, backpack, breadbag and the canteen filled with brandy were presented and used, which completely refreshed them; then we marched together to the Regiment, which already was in bivouac near the town of Hof Geismar, near Kassel. When arriving at the Company, the Captain who had already met my father, allowed me to stay in Hof Geismar, where I received a billet for three persons; we had good food and drink, and my father was much surprised how easy and merry military life was.

Early next morning I brought them outside the town, where we said goodbye emotionally and left each other; they were accompanied by my greetings and best wishes to my mother and sisters, and I returned to my Regiment.

The Hessians didn’t put up much of a resistance and let the French march into Kassel unhindered; what became of these troops is not known to me, all I saw was the French making a whole regiment of Hessian Dragoons dismount and taking the horses away for themselves; the Hessians later regretted that things went the way they did; if they had wanted, they could have halted us for a long time and done us much harm, because they had quite strong and very good troops.

Our marched continued next to Rintelen, where we arrived in the evening and found the Prussian Eagle still attached to the gate outside; this had to be taken down first before we entered; because it was very dark, the police ordered all windows to be illuminated so that we entered the enemy’s town with lights burning, which we found very enjoyable.

Next day we continued to Pyrmont, then a County that belonged to the Prince of Waldeck, on whose castle the King of Holland stayed for over a month.

The next morning we left in the direction of the strong fortress Hameln on the Weser, which had to be besieged; all entries and heights were occupied by us; the watch consisted of one officer and 50 men, of which a front watch was detached of one sergeant, two corporals and

\(^{16}\) “Father, that’s our Christian!”
15 men, of which I was part; me, being a corporal, was placed with three men as a “lost post” on the left of the road in a bush, with orders to keep an eye on the bridges over the Weser; we kept very quiet and laid on the ground to have better cover; at night we heard something coming, we stood up, levelled our muskets and called them, to which we heard the reply out of the silence “Prussians”; I told them to halt and let one man come forward, to which it became clear to me they were Prussian deserters; I made a report about this incident, after which the deserters were taken away; these watch duties as a “lost post” certainly weren’t the most enjoyable parts of military life.

Our troops kept a great distance at first from Hameln, and constantly changed position at night, but on the spots that were left, great fires were kept by some men who were left behind, and who walked in front of it to and fro; this was done to make the enemy think that there were many of us; with that same purpose, troops were placed at large distances in columns of companies, like they were reinforcements that came to join us.

Slowly we came nearer to Hameln, where we got stuck in the mud, could not make any fires and had little to eat, and finally this fortress surrendered to us, as did Neurenberg, without the enemy firing a shot. During the time we lay before Hameln, I was transferred to the Jagers of the Guard; my good Captain Groenia, who didn’t want to see me go because I also performed quartermaster duties for him, complained about it to the Lieutenant-Colonel Storm de Grave, but since that didn’t help, he went with me to the Colonel of the Jager Regiment, to express his objection against my transfer; the Colonel said that it was not up to him in this matter, but up to me to decide, and that I could return to my regiment if I wished to do so, and because of that I returned, with the Captain, to my company again.

After the surrender of Hameln, our two Regiments left with 20 captured Prussian flags for Bremen, where we stayed for eight days under very good conditions, which we could use, since we had suffered many shortages and because of the Autumn rains, our clothing had rotted on our body as it were.

Understandably, there was much talking about the strange surrender of the strong fortress Hameln; we had captured many prisoners, among them women and children; many of them walked away, and we didn’t try to hinder them, especially not the troublesome women and children; also, many Prussian prisoners enlisted in our service, about which we had nothing to complain, because they were good soldiers.

Because of an uprising in Kassel, our Regiment was ordered to go there with the utmost haste, and such was done in a trot as it were, covering 8 to 10 hours a day, which with soldiers as in our Regiment could be done easily, since the youngest amongst us already had served many years and all were full of ambition.

Our Regiment in the field consisted of only two battalions and yet numbered over 3,000 men; every Battalion consisted of one company of Grenadiers and one of Voltigeurs, and of eight companies of Fusiliers, each of 150 men; with such a troop entering the town there was no more uprising and soon everything was quiet.

Because we expected to stay here for several weeks, and I was only six hours away from my birthplace, I requested a four day leave, which I received; I left early in the morning and wished I could fly, would have run myself to death, such was my desire to home, where I arrived in the evening unexpectedly; the joy on that reunion was enormous on both sides.

I was overwhelmed with proposals the day after my arrival, to stay home and not to return to my Regiment; my dear father had already procured a promise from the Prince, that I would not be arrested if I stayed home.
To make the matter attractive, my parents suggested that I would marry, and to an only daughter and at that a most lovely girl, where I was of course invited for coffee that same afternoon, thus everyone expected that things were going well; but I was afraid of marriage, was too much attached to the military life and had too much ambition to wander around the world, to settle myself for the life of a farmer, which would have been a result of my marriage; so I kept myself dead calm at my fiancé’s, kept cold and stiff and said little to nothing, thus I disappointed the girl for sure and caused my parents a lot of grief, but I had no choice. I bid my parents, sisters and other family again a sad and heartily farewell, and was guided by my brother to Kassel; during the trip he did his utmost to try and convince me to return with him, but nothing could be done, and I already longed for my comrades again; if I had known I would not see them again for 18 years, as has happened, I would perhaps thought different about it.

When I arrived at Kassel, my Regiment had already marched to Hamburg the day before; the next morning, I left early to catch up on it, and found it after a few days in Celle in Hannover, where it held a resting day; my officers and comrades were glad that I had returned, and I was very much content to be with them again. And so I continued merrily the march to Hamburg, as a Fourier with the Quartermasters under command of 1st Lieutenant Baggelaar, who later died a General in Breda; we had our night quarters in Haarburg and were transferred to Hamburg the next day, where we were the first soldiers who had visited them; we had a festive welcome, and the townsfolk were very pleased with the Dutch. When Lieutenant Baggelaar requested that soon the billets were in order because the troops would arrive soon, he received the answer: “das braucht ja gar nicht” and that really was the case, because when the troops arrived, they were greeted by the Quartermasters, with the city council at its head, and all district chiefs took each one company with them and made sure everyone was billeted; the civilians were very content with the billets, so much that one complained to his district chief that he had only two men billeted, and wanted four, like his neighbour; as the Fourier, I was the last to be billeted because I had to fill in the billeting list; but it was no loss: the district chief brought me to a large house and said: “Hier kommen Sie bei einem reichten Geitzhals und müssen Sie sich nur auftisschen lassen”; I had a great time; he had two very charming servant girls who left me with want for nothing during the eight days I stayed there.

In Hamburg, the men were given the necessary clothing, and so we merrily continued our march, the pockets filled with Hamburg groats, through Mecklenburg and Pomerania; we crossed the river named the Peene and set up camp before Stralsünd.

Our army corps consisted of only one Regiment French Infantry, the 2nd and 3rd Regiments of Dutch infantry, one Dutch Regiment of Dragoons and two companies of Horse Artillery; the whole was commanded by Marshal Brüne, as far as I remember.

It was almost near the end of 1806 that we arrived before Stralsünd and the winter of 1806-1807 was very severe. A quarter of the infantry took up the advanced and front guards in straw huts; the remaining troops were billeted in and around the houses and sheep stables; during the night in those stables, we tucked our feet in the dung in order to keep them warm, which actually worked, but then it was harsh to get up at three or four o’clock in the night to march out in the cold and snow, and go on patrol until nine o’clock in the morning; if there was any money left in the purse, the cantinière was called upon for something to warm up inside, but wages were paid hardly or not at all and there was a want for money, which the inhabitants of course often had to compensate.

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17 “That will not be necessary”.
18 “Here you’ll stay with a real penny pincher, make sure you let yourself be served well.”
19 In the original text (Dutch): “Groaten”; German: ‘Groschen’. A Groat was worth 1/24 Reichsthaler or 1/12 Conventionsthaler.
Stralsünd was as good as enclosed on all sides and was constantly bombarded, which lasted until May, when the enemy tried to break out, they said with about 18,000 men; there was heavy fighting for three or four hours, there were many dead and wounded; but in the end we had to give way to the superior force; this retreat, which is known in history, was executed so regularly, that the enemy could do us no damage; we halted at Stettin.

At the beginning of our retreat, I was ordered with some men of the company, to go to the village where our food storage was and try to take away from there as much as possible; the enemy however was quickly underway to drive us out, so that we had to flee with our spoils to our troops that were waiting for us at half an hour distance; the rations were immediately given to the sick.

When I had recovered a bit from my excursion to the food storage, I suddenly felt a sharp pain between my legs because my legs were chafed, which had never happened to me before; Corporal Faas, who saw me struggling forward with my legs wide, gave me a piece of candle wax to rub on my legs; the wax however coming from his cartridge box and being full of gunpowder, I nearly fell unconscious to the ground from the severe pain after using it; upon seeing this and hearing the reason of it, my Captain Groenia had my pantaloons stripped off and had me sit down with my bare behind a pool of mud, which revived me, although walking was still difficult; I write this down as an advice to young soldiers who suffer from chafing, to always carry a piece of candle wax with them, as it likewise helped me later in the warm climate of Spain many times; it happened several times there that those, who did not take this precaution, were thus unable to go on and were taken prisoner.

On our retreat from Stralsünd, we marched calmly forth in column and were covered by our rear guard, which consisted of the cavalry and horse artillery; which kept the enemy at bay; our first halt was Greifswalde where we set up bivouac, while the French were billeted with the inhabitants of the town. Since we received very bad rations, I went with some men of my section foraging in town; arriving at a large house where 20 Frenchmen were billeted who enjoyed themselves very much there, we walked straight to the kitchen, where a large kettle with pork was hanging over the fire; because I could talk to the maid, I asked her for an iron fork and took two large pieces of pork from the kettle, and although the maid raised the alarm and shouted that such was for the French Gentlemen, this was to no avail and we ran off with our pork; along the way we gathered some bread, cheese and beer and thus supplied, we merrily returned to the bivouac and shared the spoils brotherly with our comrades.

The next day we joyfully continued our march, we crossed the river Peene again and were bivouacked around the town Anklam, situated near that river; we were doing well in the bivouac, but the alarm was sounded at night, because part of the enemy had also crossed the Peene, moved around us and took some prisoners from the guard at our park; the enemy was however driven away easily.20

While we left in the morning, a windmill standing on a height was set on fire; that burning windmill with wings turning was a nice firework that lit us up well during our retreat.

Whilst in bivouac at night, our retreat continued to Stettin, where we were billeted in the surrounding villages; because the enemy also retreated to Stralsünd, we followed him the third day up to the town of Pasewalk, where we stayed for eight days to await a reinforcement which was marching underway; we lay in bivouac around the town or in the barns inside [the town]; here we suffered again from bad rations, hunger and shortages; wages were not paid and so we had no money, so nothing could be bought; the men had to try to get something one way

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20 The Swedes attacked the Dutch force near Anklam on April 3rd 1807. The troops arrived at Stettin on April 7th.
or the other in order to satisfy their hunger and were no better off than beggars; in the countryside everything had been plundered, and whatever was left was hidden away; the soldiers therefore usually returned with nothing from their forays; the good boys of my section convinced me with quite some military filler\textsuperscript{21} to come with them on a foray; we knocked at the first house, which looked quite good, and demanded supplies. But the lady that answered lamented: “Ach liebe Herrn, ich kann Ihnen nichts geben, die Herrn Frantsozen haben alles mitgenommen”\textsuperscript{22}, which we could notice; so that’s when I thought: “having a watch in my pocket and still begging, that’s not right”; I took my boys with me back and requested Mrs. Maatjes, our sutleress, to give them bread, cheese and a drink, for which I gave her my watch and received 12 guilders in return.

Because the reinforcements had arrived, we advanced again early the next day to attack the enemy\textsuperscript{23}; he retreated in a forest, which had a small river in front of it, of which the bridge had been demolished; we advanced with our Regiment through the fields, crossed some ditches with the cartridge box under the arm and marched passed the forest to the place where the bridge had been and where there was a small inlet in the forest; here we found a platoon of Swedes, of which the officer had them open fire upon us, but without anyone of us getting hit; at the same time however, Captain Groenia gave the officer a severe blow in the neck with a cane; we were very lucky; the enemy ran away and we followed them; there was some hard fighting before the town of Ferdinandshof, and I was wounded by a bullet in my right thigh; the men carried me to the back, where an ambulance was, and where I was laid down in the straw; the Gentlemen Physicians were soon at hand, lay me on a table, stripped down my pantaloons without asking, felt first with their fingers, and then with an awl in the wound and said: “It has gone through and through”; although I was in a lot of pain, this message delighted me; I received a bandage and was transported to Pasewalk with several other wounded on a cart with straw, which took about four hours and caused me terrible pain; I spent the night in Pasewalk in a church on a bundle of straw, received a little soup and was then, without dressing my wound, transported further to Stettin, where was taken into the Hospital more dead than alive; my simple flesh wound was healed in almost 14 days; the twelve guilders of my watch that I had sold came in handy to buy meat and wine, which made my strength come back soon.

Because there were so many wounded of the army arriving, more space was needed in the Hospital, and all those who could walk on crutches were billeted in town to receive treatment there.

While I was coming across the market, billet in hand, to go to my quarter, I saw the baggage cart of our regiment and asked the accompanying 2\textsuperscript{nd} Lieutenant Ledel (nicknamed “Cross-eyed Ledel”) to take me along to the Regiment, which he would definitely not approve; he had hardly walked away, or my comrades put me on the cart in the hay; a few hours form the town, the Lieutenant discovered me and let me have it, although he took good care of me on the way; I was very happy to be with my comrades again and after fourteen days I was fully recovered.

A truce for a month was agreed upon with the Swedes\textsuperscript{24} and during that time I had seen the Prussian General Blücher and Troop Captain Schill visit Marshal Brüne several times in Anklam.

\textsuperscript{21} Original text (Dutch): “Militaire stopwoordjes”. I have no idea what is meant by this expression, it might refer to military slang.
\textsuperscript{22} “O, dear sirs, I cannot give you anything, the French have taken everything away!”
\textsuperscript{23} The advance began on April 13th; the Swedes were beaten back in the Battle of Balling, April 16th.
\textsuperscript{24} Truce of Schlatkow, April 18th 1807; the Truce was denounced by King Gustav IV Adolf on July 3rd. The second siege of Stralsünd began on July 24th. The town surrendered on August 24th, the nearby island of Rügen on September 7th.
When the truce was over, the Swedes left the guard at the Peene at twelve in the afternoon, and we advanced the next morning towards Stralsünd, which was again blockaded and bombarded; we were lodged in a camp of straw huts, where we were visited many times by a bomb from Stralsünd or balls from the English ships that cruised along the shore.

When foraging for the Company, I always had to be careful who I would entrust with the buckets which held the gin, because most soldiers were real connoisseurs; one day I gave the buckets to an old, trustworthy soldier, or so I thought, named Schiephorst, thinking that they were in good hands now, but after the foraging calling the assembly, Schiephorst and the buckets had disappeared; I looked for him everywhere and finally found him, lying behind a fence, the buckets between his legs; he was all black and blue and had died; he had tasted so much, that he had succumbed to it; if Schiephorst received his three pounds of bread, he would eat it immediately and say: “Now it is kept safe”, and even if he had little or no food, he would not complain about hunger.

Being situated before Stralsünd, our Regiment was ordered to leave the Camp and march to Lüneburg, where we were billeted in the villages near the Lüneburger Heath; we were billeted for six weeks and then late 1807 moved to the Duchy of Oldenburg, where our stay with the farmer was very good, and where the soldiers were allowed to do almost anything they wanted, which led to a lot of mischief.

I was billeted with twelve men at a rich farmer; at first he would serve them plenty of gin, but over time that became less, much to the dismay of the soldiers; they warned the farmer that if he didn’t serve them plenty of gin or brandy, he just wait and see what would happen. That farmer had some stables with livestock; one morning, my old, sly scoundrels would get up very early in the morning, without my knowing, and drove a nursing pin at the top of the tails of all the animals; as a result, the animals were distressed and would not eat, which left the farmer at a loss; the soldiers told him his animals had been put under a spell, and they would take the spell away, when he promised them to give them plenty of schnapps; he accepted that; we then had to leave the house; a few of the worst scoundrels stayed behind and pulled the pins out; after half an hour we were allowed back in and the cattle was calm and acted like nothing had happened.

Twenty men were billeted with another very rich farmer, this farmer had a large amount of grain that had not been threshed; the soldiers offered him to thresh all his grain if he would have them all made a new pair of boots, he had a shoemaker at home; but when all the boots were finished, so was the threshing.

I kept good order among my men as good as possible, and didn’t let them do anything they wanted, while I at the same time took good care of them; but they received no wages, and so sometimes some things had to give in, which by the way was asked from us by the commanders at that time.

We stayed during the Winter of 1807 to 1808 around Oldenburg and left in the Spring of 1808 to Holland, where we held a great pause in Coevorden, and the troops were treated to bread, cheese and beer by the civilians. From there we moved to Groningen, where the troops were treated very well in the Grand Church upon arrival; we were billeted there with the civilians for about two months and had an excellent time; I believe we were resting here for so long to make us healthy and strong and to prepare us for the War in Spain. From Groningen we marched to the Kamp at Waalsdorp, which was commanded by General Chassé; we stayed there for some time and had to bath ourselves in the sea every day, which helped cure the skin diseases we had caught when in bivouac.

**To Spain (1808)**
From Waalsdorp we marched to the Lines near Bergen op Zoom, where we camped and were
told that the 1st Battalion of our Regiment, together with a Battalion of Jagers, would go to
Spain; because there were many sick among the Jagers, that Battalion was replaced by a
battalion of the 4th Regiment, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Von Pfaffenrath.

That was some prospect! Two to three months of marching! We were equipped with enough
of everything for our long journey and the campaign: clothing, shoes, a sleeping bag, etc.; but
all that had to be carried and it was way too heavy and in time unbearable; added to that was
the trouble we had to keep our white clothes clean and that we had to march in full dress, with
tight pantaloons.

Our Corps was commanded by General Chassé, it consisted of two Battalions of Infantry, the
2nd Dragoon Regiment which had been with us before Stralsünd, and three companies of Horse
Artillery commanded by Captain Tripp. Our Regiment was commanded by Colonel Lycklema
à Nijholt, while the 1st and 2nd Battalion were commanded respectively by Lieutenant-Colonels
Storm de Grave and Von Pfaffenrath.

One can easily imagine that in the days before our departure, you could witness many
emotional separations; so many Dutchmen were going on a campaign far away, with a good
chance to never return.

Before our march to Antwerp, we were inspected by General Dumonceau, for whom we
marched past, and in his speech urged us to dignify the good name of the soldiers from
Holland, and to particularly take good care of our shoes and clothing. I'll never forget the march
from Bergen op Zoom to Antwerp; first we had to wait very long for the General to arrive in the
Camp of Kijk in de Pot, and then had to march nine to ten hours, burdened with such a load,
that no one of us was used to; we arrived dead tired in Antwerp.

The other day it went to Ghent, and further through Belgium to France, where we were all as
good as mute, since only a few of us knew how to speak French; our best eloquence consisted
of shrugging our shoulders; the soldier certainly needs to speak many languages, which will
be of more use to him then the greatest learnedness.

We marched for over a month through France; when billeted, we received nothing but the worst
sleeping place, water and fire and had to be grateful at that; the French pretended to be the
first nation, and they were at that time; also, we had to be very subservient. Our soldiers were
very discontented because they received nothing in their quarters, but they knew how to help
themselves many times.

25 Order of Battle for the Dutch Brigade (German Division, General Leval / IV Corps, Marshal Lefebvre):
Commander: Major-General D.H. Chassé
Chief of Staff: Lieutenant-Colonel Vermeulen, assisted by Captain P.H. Van Zuylen van Nijevelt
Quartermaster: O.J. Romar
Infantry (depot at Saint-Denis), Commander: Colonel A. Lycklama a Nijholt
1st battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment (Lieutenant-Colonel A.W. Storm de Grave)
2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment (Lieutenant-Colonel C.L. von Pfaffenrath)
Cavalry (depot at Versailles), Commander: Colonel O.F. van Goes (later replaced by Colonel J.B. Van Merlen)
3rd Regiment of Hussars (4 squadrons)
Artillery and Sappers, Commander: Major F.F.C. von Steinmetz
1 Company Horse Artillery (Captain H.R. Trip)
Field ambulance, Commander: Surgeon G. Sebel
26 The march began on September 2nd; the day before, a riot amongst the infantry had broken out about
delays in payment, which were calmed down after a promise that an advance payment would be made by the
government. The Financial problems however remained, as the Brigade received little to no support from local
authorities and commanders, which depleted the war chest very soon.
In a certain town, of which the name eluded me, I was with four men billeted with a Restauranteur, where also four others from the 2nd Battalion were billeted; my men had discovered that there was a roast turkey. Which was placed in a cabinet with a cloth over it; they took away the turkey and replaced it with a large boulder, carefully covered with the cloth; we ate the turkey, threw away the bones and went to bed; when the owners of the turkey wanted to eat it that same evening, they found the boulder under the cloth and immediately reported it at the main guardhouse, form which an officer and several men came to our house to investigate the case; the four men of the 2nd Battalion were suspected to be the perpetrators; when the officer wanted to enter our room as well, the Restauranteur said: “these people are not guilty of it, because they went to bed early”; we were laughing up our sleeves; the four poor innocents had to walk four days in the rearguard as punishment.

We received several necessities in Bayonne and marched a few days later we crossed the so called “Red Bridges” across the Bidaossa into beautiful Spain; we had been strangers in France, here in Spain it was much worse, because nobody knew a word Spanish, which made it very hard to meet our daily needs, and we, absolutely not knowing any directions, could not ask anyone for them either. Luckily we met a Swiss corporal who had deserted his regiment which was stationed in Madrid; he spoke German and Spanish and was kept at the General Staff as an interpreter, until we were able to help ourselves for the most part.

We moved to Bilbao at the Durango in the Basque provinces, crossing several towns and villages; the Spaniards already had occupied the entrance through the mountains and over the bridges. Here we were united with the Corps d'Armée of Marshal Lefèbvre (a native of Alsace), of which we formed the right wing.

Before we attacked the enemy, we were inspected by Marshall Lefèbvre, and after forming a square were addressed in German; he praised our conduct in Prussia against the Swedes and promised to lead us the next day into a fine wine country, knowing the Dutch were fond of wine, which he had noticed when he had the honour to meet us at the festivities at the Invalides in Paris; there was a parade next and then we marched; we started with climbing on the left side of a large mountain, of which we reached the top at eleven o'clock that evening and where we laid down because we were exhausted; at daybreak we saw that we were surrounded on all sides by the Spaniards; and so the dance began, and we soon had a number of dead and wounded; our soldiers began a ferocious attack on the Spaniards, and so it went for four hours, coming down one mountain and climbing up the next, unto a bridge across the Durango; when we had come down the first mountain and prepared to climb the second, my comrade Hofman, who came with me, said: “come, let’s have a good drink first” and gave me his wicker bottle which he had hung around his neck, we hardly started our advance or a bullet hit him right in the head; he was gone, and I hurried up the mountain to the troops.

Because we had so ferociously advanced towards the bridge, the Spaniards that were still in the mountains had to retreat, so as not to be cut off from the bridge, but we arrived there before they did and captured 4 to 5,000 prisoners.

When the Marshal and his staff arrived at our position and found our regiment standing in line, he took our flag, waved it in front of the lines and said that he would notify the King of Holland “that we had dignified ourselves to be called the first soldiers of France, and that the Grenadier Company (to which I belonged) would be his life guard from then on.

The next day there was little opposition from the Spaniards on our route to Bilbao; we bivouacked on the heights around the town; Bilbao is a beautiful town with broad streets, paved

27 The battle of Pancorbo, October 31st 1808.
with marble, and from it the river runs to the Spanish Sea, making it possible for seafaring ships, like many Dutch, can sail up to the town; I’ve spoken to several Dutchmen then.

Because I didn’t like the bivouac, I went with my comrades to the town on the first night, where I billeted myself in a large civilian house, saying I had been assigned to be their Sauve-garde; the inhabitants were very pleased with that; we were doing very well and could have everything we desired; the next morning, I made sure I came back to my company on time.

We occupied the area around Bilbao and other small towns for a few days, when our battalion was ordered to drive out the enemy from the towns and villages along the coast of Biscaie, under the command of General Chassé; when we had marched for two days, I was ordered to stay with five or six sick and several men who had no shoes, and return to Bilbao; I had a lot to put up with from the Spaniards; we could not understand each other and so it was very difficult to explain to them that I needed a cart; also, our troops had not behaved themselves very well in their night quarters, which had angered the Spaniards and they threatened to kill us all; I was saved from this peril by a priest or cura who supplied me with a transport; on the way we were surrounded by Spaniards who wanted to see us and threatened to kill us; I made sure to keep my sick and barefooters together, in order to defend ourselves every time and keep that mob away; the hardest part was to get a billet because we could not speak the language; to make things worse, one of the men who had no shoes had taken an old pair of shoes, and we had hardly left the village where this had happened, before the peasants came at us with ferocity and making death threats, that we had to defend ourselves and I ordered to fire at the intruders, after which we fled into the mountains; I recognized the road to a small town when we had come across a high mountain, because we had been there a few days earlier, and soon we came to the main road, and the worst danger was now over; there was a bridge at an hour’s distance, which was guarded by a company of the Baden Regiment, so we headed there.

On the main road we met a man with a basket of bread on his back; we were tired, hungry and had no money and it was no wonder that we took a bread from him; the man was very angry about that and wanted to attack us, to which I fired my musket at him. But over his head; he walked away from us and reached over a byway the guard at the bridge sooner than we did, and reported the incident; arriving at the guard, they wanted to arrest us and as much as I defended my case and whatever I did to be allowed to stay for the night, we had to leave for Bilbao that same night, where we arrived dead tired.

We remained in the area around Bilbao for some time in 1808 with the German Division; because we had to bivouac all the time, and it being the rainy season, our clothing had worn out because of the damp; this was also the case with the drum skins, which made all the drums useless; because a bugle is not affected by this, so must the bugle definitely be preferred above the drum.

We were replaced by a French division and marched via Vitoria, a large, beautiful town, to Burgos, also a large town with a strong castle, in which we would later be blockaded by the English; there was a large garrison there and Marshall Ney was governor. From Burgos we went to Segovia, which is situated on a mountain and has a fine waterway running towards the town. From there we crossed the Guadarrama Mountains and finally reached Madrid, the capital of Spain. We had marched from Bilbao to Madrid without a day of rest and having seen no enemies. Because Madrid was already packed with French, our Regiment was billeted in an old church or monastery, which had no windows or doors; our clothing had suffered so much during our marches that most soldiers were wearing almost nothing, and most had no shoes anymore; luckily I was still provided; no one in Madrid could tell what troops we were.

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28 A personal protector, a ‘bodyguard’, to protect them from plundering.
29 31st December 1808
Because they don’t sell long straw in Spain, but only cuttings, we lay in the church on the bare rocks; since it was very cold, we laid everything we had in our backpacks under us, the head on the cartridge box, the feet in the backpack and the old, worn down, unrecognizable overcoat as a cover. We received bad rations, and thus everything was in an uproar.

Fortunately, we soon marched to the town Alcala, four hours from Madrid, where we had better billets, received better rations and plenty of wine to drink; the warmth was good for us and slowly we became men and soldiers again. Our good Lieutenant-Colonel Von Pfaffenrath died in Alcala and was buried in a church; but I doubt if the resentful Spaniards will have let his corpse rest in peace there.

From Alcala we went to another small town, of which the name eluded me; we were now becoming acquainted with the land, and started to learn and fend for ourselves and supply ourselves with everything we needed; therefore we were merry and full of courage, to which the circumstance that we knew where to find good wine certainly attributed.

From this last town we marched to Aranjuez near the Tagus river, the summer residence of the Spanish royal family; there had been French and Polish troops before us, and we found on almost every tree a Spaniard who had been hung; we had to stand guard, to prevent these from being cut down, but we had to be careful; we stayed under arms the entire night, and we were shot at; Aranjuez, usually a fine place with its beautiful houses and broad streets and a proud royal palace, looked very sad.

Ocaña, Talavera, and Almonacid (1809)

Because the Spanish troops from Andalucia had gathered in great numbers near Ocaña, which is close to Aranjuez, we crossed the Tagus and at an hours’ distance encamped ourselves in the plain near the village Bajouna, where General Chassé was informed that a Dutch detachment of two officers and 200 men, accompanied by a detachment of Dragoons, which had left Madrid behind us, was raided by Spanish guerrillas and annihilated on a height near a forest of olive trees two hours away from us; the Dragoons had left the infantry to fend for themselves; we marched with our Regiment with great haste to the place where this was supposed to have happened, and we discovered their bodies, all naked, blackened by the sun and already partially decomposed; we buried the remains of those unfortunate victims of the hatred of the Spanish people with honour and sadness.

We returned to our first bivouac and waited for the 5th Army Corps, commanded by Marshal Marmont. The Spaniards advanced with their army, which was 80,000 men strong, from Ocaña to Aranjuez to attack us; our troops merely consisted of the German Division, two French Regiments, our Cavalry Regiment and a Regiment of Polish Lancers; because the 5th Army Corps would arrive the next day, which we counted on, we advanced early in the morning to attack the Spaniards; having to cross the Tagus, I was, belonging to the avant-garde, on the back of a horse of a Brigadier, who told me to hang on to him tight; when we almost had crossed the river, and the horse felt the ground, it suddenly sprang forward, which caused me to fall in the water with my pack and equipment; I soon got out, but my weapon had become useless; I soon replaced it with one of the Spanish guns that were already strewn across the other side on the shore; we drove the enemy back to Aranjuez and bivouacked there at night; the next morning we advanced again to attack the Spaniards again, who had taken up positions before and around Ocaña; it was a brave affair, but soon we were in trouble, because the 5th

30 This is not Lieutenant-Colonel Christian Ludwig von Pfaffenrath, but his brother, Captain Carl Wilhelm von Pfaffenrath, who also served in Spain alongside his brother. Christian Ludwig survived the campaigns in Spain.  
31 The Battle of Ocaña, 19 November 1809. Koch seems to make no mention of the battle of Mesas de Ibor (17th March 1809); Medellin (28th March 1809) is described erroneously later in his memoirs.
Army Corps still had not arrived yet; we already had suffered many dead and wounded and had no other option than to form square and retreat; when we halted with the square, in which I stood in the first line, a cannonball came in from behind, which took away the whole lower part of the body of private Beerens who stood behind me; because I stood with my right foot forward 'at ease', and thus a bit turned away, that same cannonball took away the bottom part of the backpack, the sabre and cartridge box; of course I had fallen down with Beerens; at that same moment, private Jacobs wanted to drag away Beerens, but again a cannonball comes, which took off the head of Beerens and shot Jacobs in two, while I got stuck underneath them; Lieutenant-Colonel Aberson came towards that confusion and called to me: “Koch, get up!” I crawled from underneath and managed to save my shako.

We could not move forward or backward with our square and suffered many dead and wounded, when to our fortune the 5th Army Corps arrived; now it went up and at the Spaniards at the double quick and with levelled bayonets; we were victorious and took 30,000 prisoners.

The two Cavalry Regiments were assigned to lead the prisoners. After the battle, I had to come front and centre, to show myself; General Chassé said that no one could believe someone could get so damaged without sustaining any further injury; meanwhile, both my buttocks were black and blue and I had trouble walking.

When I was hit, I wore my coat underneath my overcoat, which I had rolled up under my cartridge box to make walking easier; because the bullet had gone through that hump or bundle, there were five large holes in my overcoat, and the coattails of my coat were gone, so that it had been transformed into a jacket.

That evening, I stood guard at a soap factory, where two Corporals of my Company were brought to me from the battlefield; they were both injured at the shin; at night, they were fairly well, laid by the fire and drank a good glass of wine with us; next morning, I had them taken to the ambulance, where their wounded legs were immediately amputated; but they succumbed to the operation; the men who had taken them away, came back with the news that they had already died; I grieved for them, since they were a pair of fine boys.

When I came back from guard duty, I went with some good friends to the battlefield with a jug of wine, to enliven the unfortunate souls that still lay on the battlefield; also I had to supply myself with a backpack, sabre and cartridge box, and I wanted to see the place where I was shot at and amongst others had lost my coattails, because I had kept in one of the pockets a five franc piece; but the effort to found that place again was in vain.

Near the great heap of dead thrown together, of whom most were hit by cannonballs, which seemed to have rained down during the battle, we found a man who was still alive, although that will not have been for long.

I remember that during the battle a soldier placed a comrade, who was wounded and could not walk, on his backpack and carried him to the rear; he returned after a short time, saying: “I've unloaded him, because they have taken his head off.”

Among the wounded that were carried from the battlefield was also a French soldier, being from the Alsace, whose both legs had been shot off; he lay with his head on a cartridge box that he would no longer need; I let him have plenty of wine, and then asked him, because he spoke German, to give me the cartridge box, which he promptly did; he told me he was a shoemaker by trade and to have made and lacquered that cartridge box himself; I have carried it until I received an officers’ commission; I returned from the battlefield completely equipped.

The German Division was ordered to bring a great number of prisoners of war to France; a battalion stayed behind under command of Lieutenant-Colonel Groenia, while the Dutch
Company\textsuperscript{32} of that battalion was commanded by Captain Schönstadt; I remained with that company, because I could not walk properly and I was given the task of acting Sergeant-Major.

Our Company marched to a small town, of which the name eluded me, but was a four hours’ distance from Valladolid and where we stayed for some time; later we left for the main road between Valladolid and Burgos, where the troops were garrisoned by company in the villages, as an escort to the couriers, anticipating the return of the troops who had left for France with the prisoners.

My company was stationed in the village Turkemonde near the town of Dueñas; the day after our arrival there, a wounded courier arrived, who was escorted by Corporal Winkel and twelve men, and a few hours later, there was an express courier, that I had to escort with twenty men to the nearest village; in those days there was such a heavy fog, that until one o’clock in the afternoon, one usually couldn’t see two paces ahead; to which I had two men march in front, two in the rear and two on each side of the road; half an hours’ distance from the village we had to go to, the avant-garde called me: “there are Spanish brigands here”; I ordered them to open fire and went in with guns levelled, although I couldn’t see them because of the fog; the Spaniards fled, shouting and cursing, and all of a sudden we stood amongst the bodies of Corporal Winkel and his twelve men, that had already been stripped partially; the Spaniards shouted to us, that we would likewise be murdered if we did not surrender voluntarily; I called out “Werda” to them, and not receiving an answer, I ordered to opened fire and then a charge with the bayonet; the Spaniards did not await that attack and ran far away, to which I ordered the retreat immediately, because my courier had already fled back as soon as we saw the enemy; we were attacked a few times during our retreat, I then ordered to halt and give fire, at which we saw the Spaniards drop down in numbers; then again forward at the double, but disciplined and in closed ranks, and so we arrived in the last village that we had passed through, and where we learned that the Spaniards had already moved ahead of us, went around the village and had occupied the exit, expecting us to pass through it; I dismissed that idea, but went into a newly built, yet unoccupied house, after gathering many large boulders from the vicinity, which we piled on top of the stairs; we also took an axe with us to make embrasures in the floor of the ceiling; I then proceeded with some men to the upper level, placed two men at the top of the stairs met their guns levelled and the others in pairs left and right of the windows; the Spaniards, who did not see us coming, lost their patience and came to look for us; I saw them coming through an alley and they noticed us too; then, they all charged the house, but were received so friendly that some were left in front of the door; our house was fiercely fired upon, and we were called French thieves and rogues; they tried to set the house on fire, but that didn’t work well; to which they brought cuts of straw which they set on fire, but with no result; then they offered to bring us wine; I answered: “come and bring it”, but when they saw we awaited the wine with levelled bayonets, they ran away again, shouting “caracho demonis”\textsuperscript{33}.

All of a sudden we heard a lot of shouting, and those were our saviours, more specific the comrades of our company, who had almost run themselves to death to relieve us; there was much cheer when they found us still alive; the Captain and the General-courier as well expressed their great contentment and promised to recommend me for the Legion of Honour, but that never came to pass; our defence was announced to the Division in an army order.

When the fog had lifted a bit, and one could have a look around, the nearby garrison came towards the sound of the shooting to relieve us as well; they pursued the Spaniards, which was a group of Challucos, all on horseback and around 400 men strong; had we fallen into the

\textsuperscript{32} I have no idea what this means; it might be that this ‘Dutch’ company was new, and not, like the other companies perhaps, still mostly comprised of former Waldeck soldiers from the Waldeck Regiments.

\textsuperscript{33} Probably: “Caracho! Que Demonios!” [Damn! Such demons!]
hands of these barbarians, they would have mercilessly tortured us and then murdered us. Like they had done to so many before us.

After a few days, the German Regiments and ours returned from their expedition to France with the prisoners from Ocaña; we then marched by Valladolid in Segovia to Madrid, and looked better than the first time we came there, and were better able to help ourselves with everything.

Madrid is a beautiful, heavily populated town with fair promenades, some number of spring fountains, a beautiful Italian playhouse and at that time a garrison of 30,000 men.

From Madrid we went to Toledo, where the most beautiful cathedral of all of Spain is located; there was a Bishop of the Bourbon family here, who seemed to sympathize with the French.

From Toledo we went to Talavera, where the combined English, Spanish and Portuguese were waiting for us; during our march, several soldiers succumbed to the heat; when we arrived that evening in Talavera, they let us cross the Tagus to occupy an olive grove on the other side; in which there were already 20,000 English; immediately a fierce fire fight ensued, which was ended by the darkness; we laid down on our stomachs so as not to be hit by shots, but were still very much disturbed by grenades that were fired upon us; the next morning, the fighting commenced and we drove the English out of the forest, but we in turn had to retreat towards the forest and defend ourselves within it; we fired by files; I had pulled back the hammer, aimed and wanted to fire, but the hammer wouldn’t slam forward; I looked what could be causing this, and notices an enemy bullet had entered the stock near the trigger, thus the hammer couldn’t strike; I threw my useless gun away, and wanted to return to my troop, but I saw that everyone on the left and right had already retreated; all of a sudden, two Englishmen stood before me, who called out to me: “prisoner”, but I made right about face and made a run for it to get out of the forest; those Englishmen were so polite not to fire at me; when I came outside the forest, I saw my Battalion already in column and again the forest was attacked, and again the enemy was driven from it, but we had no luck that day, because we had to retreat a second time and now even beyond the Tagus, thus the enemy kept the field of battle.

Our army, commanded by the King of Spain and the Marshals Sebastiani and Victor, suffered many losses; amongst others, Lieutenant Steinmetz, commander of the German artillery, was killed, as was our good Lieutenant Meijer.

They said the Battle of Talavera was lost because an army corps coming from Portugal, that was supposed to attack the enemy in the back, did not arrive in time, it had been much delayed because of the difficult roads in the mountains, and it even had to destroy the ammunition carts when they were stuck, to prevent them from falling into the hands of the enemy; this army corps arrived a day after the battle.

After the battle, the enemy moved away into the mountains, taking many prisoners of war, among them a number of wounded from us and the French, with them. Those wounded were taken by the English to Talavera, as were the prisoners, and a brigade stayed behind with them to protect them; if they hadn’t done that as such, then all these unfortunate souls would undoubtedly have been murdered by the Spaniards; in Talavera, the prisoners and wounded

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34 The Battle of Talavera, 27-28 July 1809.
35 In the original text, Koch uses the word “aftrekker”, but this word means “worm” or “ball puller”, a device to retract bullets from the barrel. Most likely he means the trigger (Dutch: “trekker”), and “aftrekker” may have been a synonym at the time. Therefore I’ve translated it to ‘trigger’.
36 Koch mentions the word ‘prisoner’ in the original text.
37 The Corps commanded by Marshal Soult.
were handed over to the French, who gratefully acknowledged this magnanimity, departed from the English as friends and accompanied them with music out of Talavera.

Our army then had to move to Toledo because the garrison there had been encircled by the Spaniards, among them two regiments of priests and monks; when we entered Toledo, we were under heavy fire from every height; at night, at twelve o’clock, our grenadier and voltigeur companies had to advance, wade through the water and attack the enemy at the heights; this went well, the friars were found asleep almost everywhere and were killed without mercy; the soldiers knew very well that it was they who incited the Spanish people against the French.

The Spaniards retreated towards Almonacid in the province of La Mancha, where eight days later another battle took place, which I remember with pleasure; it was a very beautiful day, the battlefield was a large plain and I stood with my column on the slope of a mountain, from where I could overlook the entire battlefield with its different manoeuvres and firing being executed thereupon; from time to time were frightened by a grenade, but then everybody fell to the ground until it had detonated; a large cannonball came by once, instead of a grenade; everybody also fell down then, but remained lying down because we didn’t hear an explosion, and we would have been laying down a long time, if it wasn’t found out after some investigating what had happened, and then there was a lot of laughter about it; finally, it was our turn to attack, and we advanced in colonne d’attaque into the enemy, to which he retreated on a high mountain, which was provided with defensive works; two Polish Regiments were ordered to storm those works, but they had to retreat without success, and those Regiments hadn’t achieved almost anything; we then had to go around the mountain and marched in square to attempt it; soon we were charged by Spanish cavalry, who however were received so well by our grapeshot and bayonets, that they did not return; when we came behind the mountain, we were received anything but friendly by an enemy battery that had been positioned there to cover the Spanish retreat, and we lost many men; the Adjutant of General Chassé was also heavily wounded; despite that, the enemy was pursued in force, but we made only a few prisoners; the Spaniards retreated to the South of Andalusia.

We remained some time in and around the city Manzanares in the La Mancha province; here we drank the best wine in all of Spain, which grows near the town of Valdepenas, situated on the slope of the Sierra Morena Mountains

Guerrilla Warfare (1810)

As a result of a new War between France and Austria that had broken out, a large amount of troops were recalled from Spain; this resulted in many changes, and led us to move by Toledo to Talavera; I believe this that this still took place in 1809; we marched on and on without a day of rest, and we bivouacked at night, which, in a country as warm as Spain, is no small task.

Because so many troops had left, the situation of those who remained in the country, where all the inhabitants were our enemies, was not improving; we received no pay whatsoever, had to live from stealing and were plagued by vermin, in a way that is indescribable.

The retreating troops consisted of the German Division, which included three squadrons of Nassau Cavalry, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Von Rijnneck, who performed miracles

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38 The Battle of Almonacid, 11 August 1809.
39 The War of the Fifth Coalition, which broke out in April, when Austrian forces invaded Bavaria.
40 Major Julius von Reineck (born 13 September 1774 in Frankfurt am Main), commanded the 2nd squadron of the Nassau Regiment of Reitende Jäger. A chevalier in the Legion d'Honneur, he died in the battle of Lezuza, Spain, on 17 July 1811. His troop consisted of about 75-100 men.
with his little troop, and two French Divisions, all under the supreme command of Marshal Victor.

When we bivouacked near Talavera de la Reina, a detachment of one officer and thirty men of the 29th Dragoon Regiment, which was part of our Division, sent out on a reconnaissance to investigate if there were any enemies in the surrounding area; thus unnoticed[?41] they had arrived in the small town of Cerenas, situated in the mountains three hours from Talavera, where they were welcomed very friendly by the inhabitants and the clergy and received plenty of food and drink especially; the people said they knew nothing about an enemy, which was not true, because when the men were tucking in and were not thinking about the enemy, they were suddenly raided and everyone murdered.

When Marshal Victor heard of this, he ordered General Chassé to go there; we advanced towards there, being the Dutch, Nassau and Darmstadt Regiments, together with the 29th Dragoon Regiment to which the murdered men belonged; when we had defeated the enemy, the infantry regiments were placed around the town of Cerenas, in such a way that nothing could get out, and then the Dragoon Regiment entered, killing all the inhabitants, young and old; those who fled the town fell into our hands and were mercilessly finished off; then the town was plundered, everything that was somewhat useful was taken from the churches, monasteries and houses, and then set on fire.

I was with some soldiers in the town, to set fire to the houses which did not catch fire very well, and to take away whatever we could use; in an almost burnt house, I found in an upstairs room an old woman who was praying, and who they would have let burn unnoticed; I took her into my care and under an arm to the bivouac; when underway, we came through a small street where a woman from an upstairs window was scolding us in the most awful fashion; Drummer Meijerinck shouted to her: “Just you wait, you old hag, I’ll throw you down”; I wanted to prevent that, but I couldn’t because the soldiers were right and the woman did not stop cursing us and calling us names; some men went upstairs and threw her out of the window and onto the pavement, where she was finished off.

The old woman who I had taken into my protection, stayed at night with me in the bivouac, and kept praying constantly; the next morning, I brought her far away enough so as not to be in danger of being harmed anymore; I spoke enough Spanish to understand that she was very grateful; when I left her, she could run like a hare, despite her old age.

That plundering was of great use to provide us with several things, as we were short of many things; we returned well supplied to our bivouac, where we had a few days of rest. After that, we had to parade in front of the Marshal, which always was a premonition to an upcoming battle, and so it was now as well; the object was to occupy the reinforced mountain Messadi, situated in the province of Estremadura, a task that had to be undertaken by the two French Divisions named the Divisions de passage; meanwhile we remained in El Puente del Arzobispo near the Tagus; the French however could not reach their target, but it wasn’t an easy task; the main road zigzagged up the mountain, and at every corner there were artillery pieces and Spaniards, who could take cover because of the walls on each side of the main road; besides that, the French had to cross the water a few times before they reached the mountain.

After a few days of rest, the German Division was given by Marshal Victor the honourable task to seize the mountain, at which two French Divisions had bumped their heads. It took two days before we, the whole time fighting, taking up positions and wading through the water several times, had driven the enemy back unto the foot of the mountain, where we were fired upon from both sides; but now the worst part came, having to advance up the mountain; our

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41 Original text: “zoo ongemeerkt waren zij gekomen”; I have no idea what Koch means by the Dragoons being ‘unnoticed’.
Regiment had to follow the main road, the Nassau Regiment had to climb up the mountain on the right of us, and the Darmstadt Regiment on the left of us; the Baden Regiment and the Principal Battalion were kept in reserve; we had a heavy task to fulfil; the Spaniards also fired chain-shot, which buzzed around us, humming; one of those ended up amidst the staff of General Chassé, where it killed a few donkeys and a horse; because the Spaniards fired from up high to down below, many of our men were hit in the head and remained on their position, dead; this was almost also the case with me, because when climbing up, my shako was thrown in my neck, like I was given a blow against it, and it was impossible to loosen the chin straps; thank God we were finally at the top and the mountain was seized, and to our delight we saw the Spaniards flee along the other side of the mountain; when on the top, I said to private Klijnkoert: “unfasten my chin strap, because some rogue has blown my shako in my neck”; he did so, and now we saw that I had received a bullet through my shako; there were two large holes in it, and the wallet which was in there had been shot in two.

We had vis à vis the French gained a lot of honour and fame, but at the cost of a large number of dead and wounded, including also the good Captain Klapp, who died of the wounds he had received shortly after in the hospital in Talavera.

The next day, the enemy was pursued in the province of Estremadura; the bridge over the Tagus near Almaraz had been demolished, so we had to wade through the river; because there was a strong current, the cavalry was placed downstream, to pick up the infantrymen who fell down and drifted away; at night we remained on the other side, in order for us to dry up a bit.

The next morning we had to advance again, and cross a high mountain, which luckily was not defended by the Spaniards; that night we remained on that mountain and arrived the next day in Truxillo, a large, nice town, where I saw for the first time in its proximity a large cork oak with stripped of bark, as well as large black eagles, which we, in the distance, thought were large pigs; I saw on of those fly away with a human skeleton in its claws.

Truxillo was not defended, and we set up our bivouac in and around the town; here there was plenty of everything; whole heaps of pork and sausages were gathered by the inhabitants, and were just lying in the street; this meat however was spiced with so much pepper and garlic, that none of us could eat it.

Meanwhile, the enemy had already gathered themselves again near Merida, near the Tagus, and so the advance commenced; the result of this was a battle near Medellin near the Tagus, in which the French Dragoons had sabred down many thousands of Spaniards; the German Division suffered great losses in that battle; after that, our Colonel Storm de Grave had to occupy the fort at Merida with 300 men, while the army retreated to Truxillo.

Now a terrible disease broke out amongst our army, namely dysentery, which was caused by the men eating too much fresh pork and honey, and drinking too much sweet wine; the part of the army that had retreated from Truxillo had almost been annihilated within a month, and Colonel Storm de Grave was therefore left in the Merida fortress to fend for himself; he was

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42 Here, Koch makes a mistake: the Battle of Medellin was fought a year earlier, on March 28 1809. In this battle, the French dragoons played an important part, by first defeating three Spanish cavalry regiments, and later by breaking throug the Spanish centre. No quarter was given by the French, which led to a massacre amongst the Spanish soldiers, either being killed whilst fleeing before the French advance, or being killed after they had surrendered. French accounts give a number of 16,002 Spanish bodies buried in mass graves, against 1,000 French casualties.

43 Koch mentions it by the contemporary Dutch expression “Roode Loop” (“Red Squirts” or more literally “Red Run”), a name derived from the diarrhoea with blood the patient excretes. The disease was not unknown, and was notorious for being lethal to children and the weak.
blockaded and bombarded for six weeks by the Spaniards, until the French, returning from Portugal, were able to find and relieved him.

This defence was of great honour to the Dutch, and was announced in a general army order; Colonel Storm de Grave was promoted for it to the rank of Major-General.

I then left with two companies, commanded by Captain Groenia, to Almarez, where a bridge over the Tagus was being constructed, and where we had to occupy a fort. The dysentery started to rage among us as well, so because we had no cart to transport the sick, the soldiers were everywhere along the way, laying under a tree or near a house, dying; later, when we had learned to follow the Spanish eating habits and used a lot of garlic, onions and red peppers in our food, nobody suffered from it anymore.

When we had to leave from Almaraz, via Talavera to Toledo, I was suffering from dysentery too; and because I was too weak to march with the company, I stayed with the baggage cart; sitting was impossible, because the disease causes that one has to relieve oneself at any moment; staying behind was also no option, because that would mean one got murdered for certain; I therefore tied a rope behind a cart and held on to it, while I had cut away my pantaloons from behind, and so during the march, I only needed to bend over to lose the excess, and so I reached, for better or for worse, by trudging behind the cart, Toledo, where we stayed for a few days, and where I, with the help of Spanish remedies, soon regained my health.

The Dutch Regiment moved from Toledo to Almaguer in New Castilia, in the surrounding areas of which we roamed for some time, being harassed many times by the guerrillas (which we usually named Brigands), until the 1st Battalion commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Aberson, to which I belonged, the 1st Battalion of the Nassau Regiment and three squadrons of Nassau Horse Jägers, under the overall command of General Chassé, advanced towards Villanueva de los Infantes in the La Mancha province. All the houses in that town, which faced the market square, were occupied by the troops, while the entrances to the Market were barricaded with strong barriers with embrasures.

Here in Los Infantes, I received on 16 December 1810 the Honorary Sabre, as a reward for our actions before Stralsünd against the Swedes.

Because the guerrillas were marauding the area, General Chassé went with two Infantry battalions and the Horse Jägers to Murcia province, in order to drive them away and also to collect outstanding and indebted payments and other necessities; during that expedition, we had many severe clashes with the enemy.

We were en route for about 14 days, when General Chassé received the message about what happened meanwhile in Los Infantes, which resulted in us returning to that place with the utmost haste. After our departure, the Spaniards had secretly hidden themselves in all the houses in the town; of our two Battalions, only the sick, the administration, the tailors and shoemakers, etc. had stayed behind, commanded by a Nassau Captain as Garrison commander; these all resided in the Markets, of which the entrances were closed in the evening, and were not opened in the morning before the sun was well up and a patrol had gone around town to make sure there were no enemies; there was also a guard up in the tower.

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44 In the year 1810.
45 The Honorary Sabre of Stralsünd was a decoration, awarded to all officers and men who were involved in the sieges of Stralsünd and the actions in Pomerania against the Swedes. The same decoration was later also awarded to those who were wounded in Spain. The decoration was a lozenge shaped piece of light blue broadcloth, with an embroidered sabre and edge in gold, to be worn on the left chest for NCO and men; officers had the decoration directly embroidered on the uniform.
during the day, who searched the surrounding area with a spyglass, to see if there were any Spaniards underway; when everything was deemed in order, then the entrances to the market were opened and the guard was dismissed; one morning, when all this had taken place and the entrances had just been opened, though the guard was still present, all of a sudden the Spaniards stormed from all sides, killing Lieutenant Van Tiel and 20 men of the watch; the few troops that we then still had left, put up such a brave defence, that they not only drove the Spaniards from the Market, but also pursued them through the town and outside of it.

The Captain Garrison commander, who now distrusted the populace, took up positions in the Grand Church, which he put in a state of defence; the priests, fearing for their silver and valuables, requested that they take these outside, which they were allowed to do; General Chassé had only just arrived, when he ordered the silver had to be given back immediately, while I was ordered to put it away in a cellar in the church, which was locked safe and secured.

When the Governor had received the report on what had happened in Los Infantes, we were ordered to leave the town. Before marching out, I was ordered with four men to take out all the silver again that I had put in the cellar of the church, and put it in bags, and while at it, the clergy were looking on; but that rabble got what it deserved, because most of our disasters in Spain we owed to them, and the massacres were usually incited by them; besides, I have given them a few pieces back now and then, and still I had filled eight to ten grain bags; whatever was too big to put in the bags, was hammered flat; the populace had been forced to pay severe penalties for their betrayal by hiding Spanish soldiers in their houses. The troops were lined up on the Market, waiting for me; the silver was laden unto two carts and I went with them, ahead of the troop.

We went to Manzanares, where we stayed the night; when I brought the silver that night to the quarters of Lieutenant-Colonel Aberson into his bedroom, his Grace asked me if I hadn’t kept a piece for my troubles; to which I answered negatively in all honesty; the Lieutenant-Colonel was very displeased about this, saying he had deliberately given me that task, and that I had every opportunity to do so, since all that silver came to nothing anyway.

We returned to our former garrison in Almaguer, Colonel Von Pfaffenrath with the 2nd Battalion and the Administration already being there, and where we rested for about eight days; next, we marched to Andalusia again, where we crossed the Sierra Morena; the main road to cross this mountain was made by Germans; in the year 1740, the Spanish Government announced to all countries in Europe, that all Catholics, wishing to establish themselves in Spain as colonists, would enjoy every possible advantage; they would receive upon arrival amongst others free food, huts to live in, animals and tools would be handed out; lured by these pretty promises, 40,000 men, women and children from the Rhine Provinces, Bavaria, Baden, etc., led by some clergymen, travelled to Spain and upon arrival, were gathered in a bivouac or camp in La Mancha, on the slope of the Sierra Morena; these people, having used up everything they owned on their journey to here, were now completely at the mercy of the Spaniards, who treated them bad and forced them to build the main road across the Sierra Morena, that is over a four hours’ travel long, and still exists today, during which they were guarded by soldiers and treated like animals; when this work was done, the colonists were allotted farmlands, where they founded the town of La Carolina and thirteen villages.  

\[46\] La Carolina is the capital of the 12 Nuevos Poblaciones (“New Towns”), founded in 1767 by King Carlos III. His minister De Olavide, made a plan to populate the area around Despeñaperros gorge. This pass, known as “the gateway to Andalucia”, was on the Royal Highway from Cadiz to Madrid. Six thousand Catholic settlers arrived from Belgium, Germany, Austria and Switzerland; they were promised plenty of land and livestock, among others five chickens, five goats, five sheep, two cows, and a sow per family. Life was hard inthis remote area, ridden with badits, and within a few years, the number of settlers was reduced by half, from illness or having returned to teir native lands. The town differs from the usually more Moorish towns in Andalicia, being
We moved alongside the southern side of the Sierra Morena unto Andujar, where the French had lost a battle in 1807, and then moved to the aforementioned town of La Carolina, where we remained for some time; there were still some people that had arrived from Germany as a child in 1740, amongst others an old priest; these, and those that had been born during the first years of the settlement of the colonists in Spain, spoke German, because at first they were allowed to give their teaching in German; that permission being later revoked, the German language soon fell into disuse, and Spanish became the language of the young colonists.

The area looked bountiful and decent, and you could tell when looking at the inhabitants, with whom we were in very friendly terms, that they were not real Spaniards, we were told later that because the people were so friendly to us, the Spaniards out of revenge had burned down the town and the thirteen villages, which I don’t know if it is true, but I think the evil Spaniards were definitely capable of.

General Chasse was with the staff and the 2nd Battalion in La Carolina; the 1st Battalion was billeted in villages along the road; the 3rd and 4th company, of which I was part, were in the village of Alvazetta; these villages were fortified, and also the churches, in order to retreat into if need be, and be able to defend ourselves; there was a post office at the highest point in the village, and here we were also given the task of escorting Couriers.

General Cafarelli was said to be leaving Spain, taking with him a large treasure in money, and had to pass us and then cross the Sierra Morena; the dumb Spaniards having heard of this, attacked our village with 4 to 5,000 men and kept us busy fighting for two days; if they had left us alone for about an hour and set up an ambush in the Sierra Morena, then they certainly would have captured the General with his treasure, and now they had to flee unsuccessfully, when General Chassé with two Battalions, escorting General Cafarelli, arrived.

Our guard at the post office, of one corporal and six men, had been attacked and taken prisoner, while we already had some wounded. We brought General Cafarelli safely across the mountains and after having stayed a few weeks here, we marched again to Manzanares, the capitol of La Mancha.

VII. Incorporated into the French Army (1811-1814)

Meanwhile, Holland had been annexed by France, and in 1811 we became French troops; our Regiment became the 123rd Infantry Regiment and I was promoted to Sergeant; we had to pledge allegiance on the flag for three days and stand around shouting all day, in order to learn the French commands, which was not an easy task for us, because apart from the officers, hardly anybody spoke a word of French.

The guerrillas in the provinces of Navarra and Aragon, commanded by Mina, became so bold that not one courier could be sent off without an escort of 3 to 400 men; we had to go there, commanded by General Clausel; arriving in Madrid, one could see things were not going well for the French; all troops from the south retreated to this place, all courage had gone, all hope for reinforcements was gone because of the Russian war and our opponents grew stronger and stronger; the whole country, young and old, were our enemies; everything had been plundered, and what was still left, the farmers had hidden in the mountains, so we were hungry and were short on anything, and many times had to make due with a piece of horsemeat.

relatively Young and having a regular, colonial style grid layout. Some German family names in the area are still quite common, like Smidt, Kobler or Eisman.

47 Francisco Espoz Ilundáin (17 June 1781 – 24 December 1836), better known as Francisco Espoz y Mina.
On our expedition against Mina, the number of our Regiment changed to 130, being the last number of the French Regiments; it consisted of six battalions and two artillery batteries, of which only one was horse drawn; the pieces of the other battery were carried on mules; we were commanded by a general, like a brigade.

The English were a nuisance; they landed in Santander and we were sent there with the utmost haste, and we were at a distance of 70 hours; we marched every day about 8 to 10 hours, and that in such a warm country! We bivouacked at night; on our passage through Vitoria, we were handed out rations for 14 days and a double number of cartridges, so now we not only had to chance to walk to our deaths, but also to carry ourselves to death; arriving in Santander, the English had already boarded, or had retreated into the mountains, and we did nothing but deliver supplies to Fort St. Anthonie and lay two of our battalions in garrison there, which were still there in 1814; the English had tried to take the Fort after we had left, but they were badly mauled; in the fortress was a chapel, which was used as a food storage; the English had captured this chapel, but it was mined; the French exploded the mines, and the whole chapel, with several hundred English inside, blew up; they were given three days to search for their dead and bury them.

We retreated from Santander to Burgos, which we temporarily held in occupation; during that time, the great battle of Salamanca took place, in which the French were severely beaten by the English; Marshal Marmont was severely wounded, two others that took his place were shot dead and the fourth General who took the command, was not familiar with the position of the army, and messed everything up; the French spread out to all sides and fled to Burgos, where they arrived in chaos three days after the battle; Marshall Marmont came to Burgos, carried on a stretcher. There, the French were organised into battalions.

Because of this lost battle, a great convoy of sick and wounded had to be transported from Burgos to Vitoria, and such under escort of a battalion of our old Dutch 2nd Regiment and commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Aberson; such a command is the most difficult military problem to solve; a long column of carts with sick and wounded, who have to keep moving together and in an orderly fashion, and that need to be covered, and that in a country in which not only every human is hostile, but where one has to expect an enemy to come forward from every house, from behind every tree and from every height.

We had been marching for a few days when we were attacked by 4,000 Spaniards at a place, an hour distance from Panc Orbo, where we occupied a strong fortress; luckily, that fortress was nearby, and we were able to retreat under cover from it, otherwise it would have been impossible to save the convoy; we held our position against the enemy, until the convoy, that we had let pass, had reached the fortress, and then we followed it, but we had trouble keeping the enemy at a sufficient distance by keeping up a regular platoon fire and fire by files.

A doctor, having stayed behind a little to give a wounded Corporal a bandage, was almost attacked by the Spanish murderers; fortunately we were able to save him, but not the unfortunate Corporal.

We had two pieces of the Baden artillery with us, of which the crews behaved very courageously and were of great service to us; nevertheless, we still had a high number of dead and wounded; the French were every happy that the convoy had been saved without the loss of even one cart, and praised the Dutch for their brave conduct against a superior force. We delivered the convoy without any further misfortune at Vitoria.

After this trip, we went hunting with General Clausel for the guerrilla leader Mina, who was at Navarra; he spread out his troops, and so did we; we marched day and night and never caught him, and no wonder: he was aided by all the inhabitants, even the smallest child, and we were opposed and deceived by everyone; we could not spread out to much, otherwise we could
expect to be defeated for sure; this poaching and fighting with the guerrillas dragged on, while the roads were not even in the least getting safer.

We were ordered to assemble again, because the enemy was advancing towards Vitoria, where the whole French army was gathered, commanded by the King of Spain; soon, here would be fought a great battle, in which the French lost many prisoners of war, a great many cannon, and much of the money they had stolen in Spain. Command of the French army went from the King of Spain to Marhall Soult.

Many French fled to the fortress Pamplona, carrying still many millions in Spanish money, as was rumoured. We had not taken part in the Battle of Vitoria with our Regiment because we were in Aragon at that time, to cover the right wing of the positions in Saragossa; we retreated towards Saragossa, gathering all troops and taking them with us we met underway, and remained in and around that place for some time; I was billeted in a village outside Saragossa.

One day, while making my baggage in order in a barn, Captain Sprenger of the Grenadier Company came to me, giving the message that I had to get dressed and come to the Colonel of the Regiment for a meal; when I arrived there in time, there were three more Staff Sergeants and four Sergeant-Majors; no one knew what this meant, although many officers positions were vacant, there were even companies without officers; having placed ourselves at the table, the Colonel said: “Young men, first take a look under your plates before we start to eat”, and that was a surprise, our commission as 2nd Lieutenant! I was so happy, I could hardly eat; I was delighted to get rid of the backpack and the heavy weapons, and thought I could walk around the world, now being so lightly equipped; my commission started on July 1st 1813; three months later I was already a 1st Lieutenant, and thus my promotions went well, although we didn’t care for it much, since we didn’t receive any pay anyway, and live by the day; the Spaniards seemed to specifically target the officers; many of them died; when some were missing in the evening, new ones were commissioned the next day; in the end, no NCO wanted to become officer, until the Corps of Marechaussée were incorporated with the infantry; their NCO’s became officers, their corporals became NCO’s and the soldiers became corporals.

Finally we retreated from Spain, over the Pyrenees to Bayonne, where all returning troops were assembled in the so called Camp of Bayonne or Suza; we were more than satisfied to have left that murderous place.

We were however not left to rest for long, because the enemy followed us closely, and so we had to re-enter Spain to drive him away; this was done with to two or three divisions, commanded by Marshall Soult; our division commanded by Lieutenant-General Vermasen, formed the left wing. To drive away the enemy, we had to go down a small mountain, wade through a little stream and on the other side go up a mountain again; when we were below, we noticed there was a bridge at a height not far from us, which was used when the mountain stream had swollen because of the heavy rain into a large body of water. We pursued the enemy until midnight, when we halted and a storm and heavy showers began, and we received the message that the right wing was already pulling back, and that the Nassau Regiment had defected to the English; we had to retreat now, and so we went in the dead of night down the mountain; at daybreak we saw that the stream that we had crossed in the morning, had now grown into a sea, and there was no possibility of crossing it; there was nothing left to do than continue our retreat over the aforementioned bridge; but in front of it were some houses, which were occupied by great numbers of Spaniards; the only possibility for reaching the bridge was

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48 21 June 1813.  
49 Gendarmerie.  
50 The 2nd Nassau Regiment defected on 10 December 1813, after it heard that Nassau had joined the Allies on 16 November. The 1st Regiment had not heard about this, and was taken to Barcelona, where it was disarmed on 22 December and escorted into captivity in France.
to first take those houses; that succeeded, and we crossed the narrow bridge, which took a long time and cost us a lot of men; General Vermassen was shot on the bridge; 1st Lieutenant Von Steffenson, who wanted to cross the water with his horse, drowned. Finally we returned to the Camp, where we rested for a few days.

After the Battle of Vitoria, 12,000 troops, laden with money, had retreated to the strong fortress Pamplona, which troops we had to relieve; along the St. Jean Pied de Port we entered Spain, with all the force that was available to Marshall Soult; we reached after constant fighting Pamplona on the fifth day; but before we reached that place, we had to cross a bridge, which was occupied by the English and had at its top defensive works and cannon; thus we had to charge immediately with a whole Brigade; the English let us come up unhindered, but there we came upon a deep moat and received heavy fire, that we had to retreat with heavy losses; the charge was repeated several times, then on the right side, then on the left side of the mountain, but to no avail. We were unable to take that position and had to abandon the garrison of Pamplona, even though Marshall Suchet was still in Catalonia with 40,000 men and could just as easily have come to our aid.

When no more charges were undertaken and we, while retreating, were in the glen, the English started to pursue us, and were shot by them from the heights like dogs without the possibility to defend us; we placed the dead in heaps in front of us as a cover, and asked ourselves: “who will be the next to go up there?” At nightfall, we retreated up the heights behind us again, and thought we’d be out of range of the English cannon, but a man, laying sleeping on his backpack, was also shot there. At roll call, it became clear that of my company, having a strength of 100 men before the fight, only 14 men were left.

Before daybreak, we went down the mountain; at the bottom, we had to cross a river when we went around a corner, but this place was also in sight of the English artillery on the heights; we received heavy fire; everyone wanted to go past this dangerous point as quickly as possible, and thought only of oneself; those who had the misfortune to fall, were trampled and the losses we suffered were terribly high; on the second day of our retreat, our Brigade formed the rear guard; very early in the morning, we had to climb a high mountain in order not to be cut off by the English, but when we got up there, they were already there waiting for us; it was a matter of self-preservation, and so there was a fierce fight and the English were chased off again; some time later we had to retreat though and from below people shouted: “save yourself, save yourself”; we ran downwards with all our might; because I tripped whilst running, and stumbled a long way down, I lost my sword which I wore on a sword belt of broadcloth; looking upwards, I saw my sword with the shredded sword belt hanging from a branch, and I could not get it back again, so my only weapon was a cane; having arrived below, we would certainly have been cut off by the English, if it hadn’t been for the good Captain Sprenger and his Grenadier-Company stopping them and thus saving us.

My Captain de Moor had retreated down the mountain on horseback, ahead of us, but I didn’t see him again; shortly after, the Battalion-Commander Patterooi commanded me to send some men to hold the Captain, while he wasn’t feeling well; I went with them; one thought he was drunk, but the good fellow hadn’t even had a piece of bread in three days and was completely exhausted; shortly after, he lay dead on his horse; with the help of some sappers, we quickly made a hole, because the enemy was close behind us, and we buried our good comrade, as well as we could; I was now in command of the Company, and the proverb came to pass that their loss is your gain, because now I not only regained a sword and sword belt, but also a horse, which I immediately mounted.

51 1st Lieutenant Michael Stephenson as a stepson of General Chassé.
52 Koch quotes the traditional Dutch proverb in the original text: “De één zijn dood is de ander zijn brood” [literally: “The death of one is the bread (sustenance) of the other’’].
Meanwhile, we were still pursued; we had to pass between two high mountains and then cross a bridge over a stream, but the bridge had been demolished by the band of Mina, and so we stood there in a narrow, hollow road, everything mixed up, with the English artillery in our back, and had to let us get shot while completely helpless; until the enemy in front of us had been driven away and the bridge was repaired; everything was mixed up in chaos, and so we returned at Suza near Bayonne, where we were rallied again as well as possible.

The first day of our return, I was on watch duty immediately at an outpost on a mountain, where I could have some rest; I had placed myself near a large farmhouse, where I could take good care of my inner self, and bring everything back to order; I was glad to be out of the fighting and out of danger, and came up with the idea to write my parents, who hadn’t heard from me in six years, and, as I have heard later, already thought that I had died, but thank God I had made it through all those storms.

The enemy however didn’t leave us alone for long and came near us again, thus all kinds of precautions were taken. For example, fourteen days earlier, a mountain near the camp named La Couronne had been occupied by a whole Brigade; there was no water on that mountain, and so no cooking could be done, which was not good for the men that were there; they had dug holes for themselves to sleep in, from which they emerged like pigs when Assembly was beaten; the officers lay on straw in tents and crawled into a bag at night; first we had a stiff drink, and then we just fell down.

Our Brigade had been relieved and replaced by another since a few days, when the enemy arrived again and took the mountain; then the Camp, in which I stayed again, was attacked; the skirmishers were already battling each other, when my Captain Schindler requested me to gather some Corporals from another company, who were destined to be made Sergeants with us, because there were two vacancies open for NCOs; the Captain placed himself with the Corporals in front of the Company to introduce them, he had done so with one, when he was hit by a bullet in the knee; he was immediately placed on his baggage donkey, which was still behind the front and taken away; the second Corporal asked me if I wanted to introduce him, because otherwise he would not have been appointed; I held his hand and went along the front of the Company with him, and when we had just finished, he received a bullet in the neck which came out of his mouth; it was a horrible sight, because his tongue was hanging out of his mouth; he has recovered completely, but when I saw him again, he wasn’t able to speak very well; Captain Schindler died in the hospital in Bayonne; we have brought him with the company and with his friend, Lieutenant-Colonel Von Prein, from the Nassau Depot Regiment to his last resting place.

We were forced to leave the camp to the enemy and to retreat towards Bayonne, where we received some reinforcements, but the enemy was still too strong; fighting took place in and around Bayonne.

Me being company commander, I had to move to Toulouse where a reserve-battalion was being raised to receive the recruits; every company was assigned a place of assembly, and there the recruits were handed to us in bondage by the Marechaussée, in the presence of parents and family; this caused a lot of grief, and one can imagine what good and willing soldiers they made!

This didn’t last long, because the English attacked Toulouse on the 10th of April 1814; the French troops were standing in the outer works and received the English with their artillery very well, that they went back, but an hour later they had crossed the Garonne and attacked us in the back; then it was “save yourself” and we left the town; the recruits threw everything away, ran home immediately and could not in any way be stopped.
We marched with the two battalions, of which only the staff was present, to Agen, where we received recruits again, but when they had been clothed and armed a few days, they ran away again; nobody cared about that and no one asked about it, because the people in the South of France was not in favour of Bonaparte.

After a few days, I had to move with my company to the small town of Aiguillon, located where there rivers Lot and Garonne meet, where I had to serve as garrison-commander. During my stay there, the Duke of Angoulême passed by on his way to Spain to inspect the troops of Marshal Suchet; when he arrived, the civil guard and also my company came under arms, while I was requested to command these combined troops; after the Review and a mass in the Grand Church, I was invited to lunch, which was organised by the Mayor in honour of the Duke; His Highness, upon noticing that I was Dutch, addressed me in German, to which I expressed that us Dutch very much liked to be dismissed from French service to return to our fatherland; a note was made of this request by an adjutant and already after 14 days we were honourably discharged from French service.

Of our 2nd Dutch Regiment, which had become the 130th French Regiment after the annexation by France, and had then consisted of six marching battalions, there was only little available; two battalions were still besieged in the fortress St. Anthonie in Spain, two battalions, commanded by Major Dupic, had been marched towards the Rhine, and the remaining two Depot battalions, which were at Aiguillon, consisted of only nine officers and 52 NCO's and men, the whole of which I commanded, being the oldest.

We received a *Feuille-de Route*, in order to march in stages through France, a sufficient pay of the Regiment and our service records, and started our journey, with orange cockades on our shakos, which were given to us by the young ladies of Agen; our march through France took about two months.

In Brabant, we received billets for housing and food, and finally we arrived in our Fatherland, which we had longed for for six years. The first town we arrived at was Bergen op Zoom, where we also received our billets, but there our satisfaction with the Fatherland soon received a sensitive blow; I was hardly half an hour in my quarters, before my whole detachment was at my door, with the complaint that the civilians wouldn’t give them any food; I verified that story, and headed for the Local Commander, who was embarrassed by the situation; I then went to enter my complaint with General Drabbe, who ordered that my men would be fed in the clearing-house, while for the officers a table would be made with half a bottle of wine each.

The Minister of the War Department, having heard of the arrival of my Detachment, ordered the officers to come to The Hague, while the NCO’s and men were ordered to go to Amersfoort with a passport.

**In Service of the Netherlands**

When I arrived in The Hague, several High-ranking officers had already arrived, like the Lieutenant-Colonels Aberson and Sprenger, who welcomed me very heartily; I asked them what should be done now to join the army or to receive a commission again; Lieutenant-Colonel Sprenger promised me to act as my solicitor, and told me to come to him the next morning with my last commission, and that we would go to the War Minister Jansen himself; at our audience, I expressed my interests to His Excellency, and Lieutenant-Colonel Sprenger asked the Minister if he could have me as an Adjutant; His Excellency then answered that he could not carry out this request because he could not say at that moment when the Lieutenant-Colonel would be given a Battalion; but because there was, according to His Excellency, a shortage of persons to fill the Adjutants’ positions, I had to leave my address, and within four days I had received my commission as 1st Lieutenant with the 19th, later the 17th Land Militia Battalion, and shortly after that as 1st Lieutenant-Adjutant with that Battalion, which at the time
was in garrison in Breda, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel de Lanoij, later by Van Motz, and during the cantonments and the battle of Waterloo by Lieutenant-Colonel Wieling\textsuperscript{53}.

I was very happy to have been commissioned that soon again, and especially that I had been given the honourable task of Adjutant; I had a lot of ambition in the drill and every other practical task, and was renowned for being able to transform a peasant into a soldier in a short time, but having been on campaign in foreign countries almost all the time since 1803, the theory was unknown to me.

The 9\textsuperscript{th} Militia Battalion was also garrisoned in Breda; every day, I saw that the Captain-Adjutant Dolleman of that Battalion, gathered all the NCO’s and Corporals after the parade; I asked him what he was doing with them to which I was answered: “Well, theoretical lessons, don’t you teach theory to your NCO’s and Corporals?”, to which I answered that I did not, and explained to him that I knew nothing about that, and that I had never heard of any exercise, but my eyes were opened; I immediately bought every possible regulation, and studied like a recruit, day and night, until I knew them all by heart, right down from the school of the soldier, because my honour was at stake if I had to acknowledge that I, being an Adjutant, did not know the regulations.

It was, however, a difficult task for an Adjutant then to get a Battalion in good order; the NCO’s were untrained, most officers were from French service and knew nothing but to fight bravely; everything was wild and unorganised; there were many veterans, mostly replacements\textsuperscript{54} and also recruits, and still I had the satisfaction of having the whole bunch march well, and to present the Battalion, which came under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Wieling, with all honour.

Meanwhile, Napoleon had managed to escape from the island Elba, and had returned to France, ready to begin another War.

In the month of March of the year 1815, the Dutch army, consisting of three Divisions, was ordered to advance into Brabant;\textsuperscript{55} the first Division advanced to Doornik\textsuperscript{56}, the other two to the borders with France; I was in the 3\textsuperscript{rd}, commanded by General Chassé; we were billeted in the villages, so the whole army was spread out.

On the 14\textsuperscript{th} of June, we heard that Napoleon had gathered his troops and held a large review, which was always the indication of a fight that would soon take place, so we knew what to expect now.

We marched on the 16\textsuperscript{th}, and heard shots fired, but no one knew where this took place; that evening, we were ordered to retreat to the village of Nivelles; we first passed through the town, but were ordered to return and position us on a height south of the town; late that night, we moved down from the height and positioned us in an old encampment of the Scots; when we emerged from the huts the next day, our blue cloaks\textsuperscript{57} looked white because of the vermin.

\textsuperscript{53} Lieutenant-Colonel N. van Stolz Wieling
\textsuperscript{54} The recruits for the Militia Battalions were conscripts, but it was possible for recruits to send someone else to take their place. This was a lucrative business, with sometimes huge sums of money being paid for these replacements.
\textsuperscript{55} Brabant is the name used to denote the southern provinces, now present day Belgium; Holland was used to denote the northern provinces of present day Netherlands.
\textsuperscript{56} Tournai
\textsuperscript{57} This might refer to non-regulation dark blue overcoats. Regulations prescribed dark grey overcoats with two rows of buttons and a collar in the battalion colour, in this case orange for the Militia Battalions.
In the morning of the 17th of June, we were ordered again to advance; we passed through Nivelles again and positioned us on a height north of the town, from which we again descended to take up positions on the main road to Brussels.

When we had left Nivelles, I was at some distance behind the column, in order to try to have a drunk sapper of our battalion, who refused to go any further, to come along; while I was busy doing that, I suddenly saw four French chasseurs in my close proximity, to which I spurred on my horse and left the sapper; the chasseurs were polite enough not to fire at me.

In the evening of the 17th, a heavy storm broke, accompanied by heavy rain, showers that so much had soaked the ground that we, standing in the corn field beside the road, had to trample down the corn to prevent us from sinking into the ground.

That evening, we marched to Braine l’Alleud, where we have stood opposed to the French, them nor us being able to fire a single shot, because the muskets were completely wet.

During the night we were in bivouac on a height near the village, under the piles of arms, on a handful of straw; because I had sent out the flank company as skirmishers towards Quatre-Bras, I arrived at the bivouac no sooner than twelve o’clock at night, where Drum-major Swick had saved me two bundles of straw, on which I have slept quietly until the break of dawn.

In the early morning of the 18th, we began getting our weapons back into order and making ready to receive the enemy; at 10 o’clock our divisions were brought together, and with General Chassé at our head, positioned on the main road to Quatre Bras awaiting further orders.

At 11 o’clock the hostilities began, and soon with such an amazing fierceness; we had, from our position, a nice view of it, especially when the Cavalry advanced across the heights of the Quatre-Bras farm\(^58\) and charged; because the Nassau and Brunswick troops that bravely defended the farm had to retreat, an English officer rode up to General Chassé and handed him an order; we saw our General pull out his sword and then we knew what time is was; the General commanded: “Forward”, and we formed a \textit{kolonne d’attaque}, advanced in \textit{pas-de-charge} to the main road, deployed again there and opened a fire by file on the enemy.

On our march towards the main road, my horse was shot from under me; I let my valet come over to take off my portmanteau, saddle and harness, which was all new and had cost me \pounds 400; however, he came back to me with nothing, because the Prussians, thinking he wanted to steal, had given him a beating and would not listen to reason, whatever he tried to say; I was later given a restitution of just \pounds 200.

I knew from previous battles enough tricks to get another horse when one has lost his own, and I soon I had another, but I was holding it by the reins and had not even mounted it, when this also was shot, and now I had no more opportunity to catch another one, because we charged the enemy, the lieutenant-colonel on the right, and myself on the left of the column, to keep them together, until we saw the enemy in front of us like a mountain; upon that sight I shouted to the lieutenant-colonel: “What is to become of us?” to which he answered laconically: “just advance” and that we did; the artillery which accompanied our column, blasted the enemy with grapeshot and then we charged uphill with the bayonet; the artillery had soon reloaded and caught up with the column; they again fired with all their might, and now the enemy began to retire, being fiercely pursued by us; our losses were severe! I remember a woman, who had refused to leave her husband and walked with him in the company, being shot in two, as was an officer; a grenade exploded amidst our drummers and fifers, so that there were almost none left, to which our drum-major took a drum and beat the \textit{pas de charge}.

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\(^{58}\) Koch means the Hougoumont farm.
Our pursuit of the French went through the cannon and ammunition carts that they had left behind; from one of these carts I unharnessed a horse and rode on it until 12 o’clock at night, when we halted and the pursuit of the French was left to the Prussians; my valet tied the horse to a tree and lay beside it, but to my dismay it lay dead in the morning, so I had nothing again except for the clothes that I wore, because the portmanteau with my clean clothes had been lost with the first horse; luckily, I found in the portmanteau on the third horse a new pair of Nanking59 trousers and gaiters, and a pair of new shoes; everything fitted like it was made for me, and in this dress I marched to Paris.

Judging from my many experiences, I believe the Dutch have contributed a lot to the victory in the battle of Waterloo, but Napoleon himself had learned us in previous years how to attack and was now paid with his own lessons; however, there was little notification made of our attack.

If the Prince of Orange, with his small force, had not held up the French for such a long time, we would have come to nothing and the French would certainly have won the battle; because that obstruction gave the Dutch troops, that had been spread out along the French border, and the English, who were still in Brussel, Antwerp and Ghent, the necessary time to come together; also, the storm and the showers of the 17th that had slowed the French down a lot, was in our advantage; because of this and that we were able to receive the enemy properly on the 18th, and the fact that he French perhaps trusted too much in their luck, and a misunderstanding about orders given by Napoleon,60 was perhaps of great service to us.

After the battle we marched into France, and were in bivouacs every night; the rations that were handed out were very bad, and we were always hungry; it seemed the English were keeping a watch over us; they left early in the morning and marched an hour ahead if us, and everywhere we halted, we found the towns and villages occupied by them, and had to bivouac constantly; we never encountered an enemy until Montmartre near Paris, but there was a fight there; we remained on the battlefield for a few days; a soldier who had to cook the soup and couldn’t find a stick, hung the kettle on a musket he had found on the battlefield; he stood there all calm polishing his cartridge box just before the muzzle of the barrel, when the gun, which was still loaded, went off all of a sudden and shattered his lower body.

We then moved around Paris to the Bois de Boulogne, situated before the outskirt of St. Denis, where we were camped for a month and where I was camped under a tree; in all that time I had only once visited Paris.

We then moved into the cantonments near St. Denis and in the valley of Montmorency; our Battalion was in Grolis; although we were in the land of the enemy, we were not allowed on orders of the Duke of Wellington to demand absolutely nothing from the civilians, which to us, who had served under the French from 1806 to 1814 without pay and had always lived from the farmers, was very strange; when the civilians gave us something, we had to ask for a receipt, to prove that we had paid for it.

After the battle of Waterloo, the Military Order of William was created, to reward those who had distinguished themselves in the battle; at a review held by His Royal Highness Prince Hendrik, I had the honour of receiving the order 4th class, which was pinned on my chest by H.R.H. himself; this honour was given to only five knights of each battalion; the other orders were handed out by the Brigade Commanders.

59 A fine linen.
60 Koch probably refers to the contradicting orders given to the I Corps of d’Erlon, which marched for hours between Ligny and Quatre-Bras on June 16th, and did not take part in any of these battles, thus making a swift and decisive victory impossible.
When the peace was signed and Napoleon delivered to St. Helena, we moved out of France in 1816, and our battalion went to Mechelen; in that year, Afdeelingen⁶¹ were formed from the existing battalions; the 16th, 17th and 18th Infantry Battalions⁶² were combined with the 2nd Line Infantry Battalion to form the 2nd Afdeeling commanded by Colonel Speelman.

**Later Life and the Belgian Secession**

In 1818 we marched to Breda, where the entire Afdeeling was drawn together; I was promoted to Captain-Adjutant and married Miss Nissen from Breda, who gave me 12 children, three sons and nine daughters, of which one son and seven daughters are still alive.

In 1819 we were moved to the province of Zeeland, where we were garrisoned in Middelburg and Vlissingen, and in 1822 again to ‘s Bosch⁶³ where I was assigned as a Captain of the Depot of our Afdeeling; with the formation of the Flank battalion, I was given command of the 2nd Company of our Flank battalion.

In 1824, my wish to see my family once again, from whom I had been separated for 18 years, had grown to such extent, that I requested and received a leave for Germany for three months.

I first went to a cousin who lived in a small outhouse which was close to my place of birth, and presented myself; since my father had already died, I called for my oldest brother to come to me, but he didn’t know me at all; he then went home and announced my arrival, but nobody recognized me there as well; my dear mother sat in a large chair; I embraced her heartily and that fine woman cried bitterly; but not before I had stayed at home for about three days and told her many of my pranks of my youth, she said: “Now I truly believe you are my son”; although nobody recognized me, I still remembered all those persons from my younger years.

I spent those three months very pleasantly with my dear mother and family, although I already longed for my dear wife and children; when I left, I almost had no strength to say goodbye to my mother; she took me under her arm and brought me to the carriage, saying: “My son, your destiny is no longer here”, and when I drove away, she called to me: “Farewell forever”.

In 1827 we were moved to Bergen op Zoom and in 1828 to Breda, where we remained until the revolt in Belgium in 1830.

Upon the first news about the revolt in Brussel, we were ordered to march to Antwerp, where we arrived late in the evening and headed for the place le Meir and later to the Barracks; the next day, the weapons were gathered from the civilians and we camped at night at the aforementioned Place, where we were constantly insulted by the common folk, without being allowed to resist us against it. Because riots had also broken out in Mechelen, we were sent there with the Flank Battalion, but were ordered the next day to return to Antwerp, I believe because they thought we acted too harsh; in Antwerp, our Afdeeling moved into the Citadel.

Because it seemed the insurgents from Ghent wanted to capture the fortresses of ‘Frederik Hendrik’ and ‘Willem de Eerste’, which were in the 4th and 5th Districts in the Zeeland province, I was ordered by the Commander of the Citadel, being General Chassé, to make ready for an

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⁶¹ Because of an article in the Constitution, the name “Afdeeling” [Division] was used instead of ‘Regiment’, which would make it otherwise impossible for the army to be sent abroad. The ‘Afdeelingen’ were redesignated to ‘Regimenten’ in 1841 after a change in the Constitution.

⁶² These were Militia Battalions; every Afdeeling consisted of one Battalion from the Line, to which three Militia battalions were added, thus amalgating the Standing Army of volunteers and the Militia which consisted of conscripts into one army.

⁶³ ’s-Hertogenbosch (Bois-le-Duc)
expedition, with two officers and 200 men, all of whom had to be from the Zeeland province, without the general wanting to tell me where we had to go to.

We had been ready all day, when Colonel De Boer of the Staff came to warn me later that evening, to have the men assemble; the Colonel marched with us and an artillery-detachment of one sergeant and 30 men, commanded by Lieutenant Callenfels, and brought us to the basin, where four ships lay ready for us; when the troops had embarked, I was ordered to go to Breskens and drive out the enemy if he was there, and further, to move all war equipment that I might find in both fortresses to the island Walcheren. Because it was pitch dark and I, coming nearer to Breskens, had to be very careful, I let us anchor half an hour before Breskens; everything on shore was quiet, and we kept like that also; I then went with five men in a sloop to the shore, and headed for a village where I, whilst going through a garden, knocked on the door of a very small house, where the people, thinking we were Belgians, were so startled that they couldn’t answer any of my questions at first; finally, they assured me that there were no enemies in the village, an assurance that was repeated by the Mayor who I went to next.

Meanwhile it was daytime, and I went to the pier, let the ships pull ashore and the troops disembark, and went to the fortress ‘Willem de Eerste’, in which was a garrison of one officer and 20 men; we entered the fort without being called out by a sentry or the guard coming up in arms, while I found the commanding lieutenant still asleep; when I woke him up, he was so completely startled, that he didn’t recover his breath until we gave him a cup of tea; he also thought that we were Belgians.

Next day, I sent out detachments to everywhere where the Belgians showed themselves and let their flags be removed; the treasure chests of the receivers were lifted and sent to Walcheren, while the artillery lieutenant did the same with all the artillery equipment.
We were under orders of the Rear Admiral Gobins; I placed guards at the entrances to the village, who set out posts, while I ordered the mayors to notify me immediately if anything unusual happened; the mayor of Breskens requested me to act as commander of that town, to which I complied.

I spent six months with my detachment in Breskens, where I had large straw huts erected along the dyke of the Pier, where I went to at 10 o’clock in the evening with the NCO and men, set out an extra picket guard, and stayed until morning.

We were relieved in Breskens by the 1st Battalion of the 10th Afdeeling and went to Vlissingen, where we spent the winter of 1830-1831.

Then, in March 1831, two companies of our flank battalion were sent to the ‘Vlaamsche Hoofd’ above Antwerp and two others, of which I was part, to the fortress ‘Lillo’, where we were commanded by Major Van Jeetze.

Because the Belgians had gradually captured all the fortresses on the Scheldt, and would not let the post ships pass unto the Citadel of Antwerp, Major van Jeetze was ordered by General Chassé, after this went on for eight days, to send me, with four officers and 300 men, 200 men of the 2nd- and 100 men of the 9th Afdeeling, to the forts ‘Marie’ and ‘Pijptabak’, in order to capture these, so they could reach the ‘Vlaamsche Hoofd’ over land.

The next day, we were brought to the fortress ‘Liefkenshoek’ by Lieutenant-Colonel Lejeune, by way of the steamship “Curaçau” and a transport ship, where the 100 men of the 9th Afdeeling were embarked; the whole expedition was commanded by Rear Admiral Leuwe van Aduard; we arrived too late before the Fort ‘Marie’ in order to land, and the tide was low as well, so we spent the night aboard.

The next morning, my men had woken up early; I closely inspected their weapons, cartridges and flints and taught them how to carry the cartridges in a cloth around their body, in order to load faster; I then divided the detachment for the attack: two officers with 50 men each would attack the fort left and right, and me, following them closely with 100 men, the front, whilst the two officers and 100 men of the 9th Afdeeling would stay in reserve.

Because I was unfamiliar with the position of the fort, I went ashore with a few men to scout it, and to see if there were any enemy behind the dyke; according to rumours, the fort was occupied by 800 men garde-civique and 200 Liegeois Jagers.

Because the water had risen sufficiently to land, I went to the ship where the Rear Admiral Commander and Lieutenant-Colonel Lantz, Commander of the Navy, were on, and asked for further orders, amongst others what to do when the sign to disembark was given, like if I had to wait for all the troops to disembark first; to which Lieutenant-Colonel Lantz answered: “That’s not necessary at all, first come, first served”; I said nothing, but thought to myself: “that doesn’t fall on deaf ears” and went away. When the sign shot to disembark was fired, I was ashore in no time, divided the troops, ordered them not to fire until they were close to the fort, and let them advance at the double step with the musket levelled; coming near the fort, we received a heavy volley, but did not halt and went around the fort, to which the Belgians soon fled and we captured the fort; Lieutenant Goudenaer was the first to enter and tore the Belgian flag down; then the enemy was pursued to Callo; some had nestled themselves in the houses along the main road, which we soon set on fire; we drove the Belgians through Callo, but were not allowed to continue the pursuit; I gave the command to Lieutenant Goudenaer and returned, to capture also the Fort ‘Pijptabak’ with the 100 men reserve, which was done with little effort; there, I gave the command to 1st Lieutenant Paravicini di Capelli of the 9th Afdeeling...
and then went to the Fort ‘Marie’, where in the mean time the marine-forces had disembarked an reported to the Commander that we had driven the enemy beyond Callo.

Rear Admiral Leuwe van Aduard expressed his great contentment about the swift capture of both forts and gave me overall command of the infantry and marine forces that were in the forts, while he congratulated me with my rank of major, which I had most certainly proven to be worthy of in his opinion, but unfortunately I had to wait for that until 1840.

Because I had no Dutch flag to replace the Belgian flag that Lieutenant Goudenaer had torn down, a naval cadet came half an hour after the capture of the fort with a flag, which he raised, and for this act of valour he was the first on this expedition to be awarded with the Military Order of William. Because I already had received that order, I was given the Order of the Lion.

I was very content having so quickly been able to fulfil the honourable task that General Chassé had ordered me to do, and only half an hour after the affair had ended, I sent my report about it, by way of the ‘Vlaamsche Hoofd’ to the General, and received soon after that in a letter from Colonel de Boer, the Generals’ Adjutant, his expression of contentment about driving the enemy away and the punishment of his arrogance, adding that I had taken care of it in the Old Spanish matter.64

Now, the fort was reinforced to secure it from a sudden attack; the two pieces that were brought along were placed in a bastion where they were most needed, the dyke was broken through, cuts were made in the road, trees that were in the way cut down, the entrances to the fort equipped with palisades and cheveaux de frise, and the necessary drawbridges made ready; Lieutenant Keiser has been very valuable to me during these chores.

Later, the Belgians came creeping towards us again through the long standing corn in the field, and inflicted us some wounded; we were however ordered not to leave the fort, and could therefore not seek revenge; the navy then fired some shots at Fort Callo and on the houses near the dyke; some troops were put ashore to avenge themselves for the many insults they had to suffer in silence from the Belgian commoners; the sailors had become furious about that and handled the matter rough, they even set some houses on fire; I was strongly opposed to this, being in conflict with my instructions, but was not able to prevent this; even the naval officers were unable to do something against it.

I had kept the naval troops only 11 days on the fort, because they were completely useless for guard duty in- and outside; they left their posts and went to the farmers in the villages, and so absolutely no danger in that; I rather occupied the fort with just my 200 men, then make use of their help.

After having spent 14 to 15 days on Fort ‘Marie’, I was ordered to bring the forts bck to the state in which we had captured them, and then return with my detachment to ‘Lillo’ and ‘Liefkenshoek’; in total we stayed there for two months; the losses of the Belgians must have been severe, and some houses were damaged; we suffered overall only 25 dead and wounded.

After we left, some ships of the navy remained before the forts, which were again occupied by the Belgians and considerably armed with artillery; they also placed some pieces behind embrasures in the dyke and opened those from time to time to show their pieces to the navy, with the friendly request that they would remove themselves; this request was met with by

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64 General Chassé must have referred to their shared experiences in Spain. The way Koch instructs his soldiers to carry cartridges in a linen cloth, and the brisk bayonet attack favoured by General Cahssé, are lessons learned form the campaigns in Spain. Chassé himself was nicknamed “Papa Bayonet” by his troops for his preference of the bayonet attack, as he had again proven at Waterloo.
Lieutenant-Colonel Van Maaren with two gunboats; he came with these to 'Lillo', much to the surprise of and indignation of the naval officers, especially Lieutenant-Colonel Lejeune of the steamship "Curaçau" who said to me: "I will drag that Van Maaren for this and that with his bomber corvette to the Peerle, so he can either sink or swim". Shortly after however, the entire Navy arrived before 'Lillo' because the French had now come to 'Marie' to aid the Belgians, and had dug themselves in with their pieces behind the dyke, to which the firing of the ships was useless; Rear Admiral Leuwe van Aduard was killed there.

Meanwhile, the Citadel of Antwerp had surrendered, the occupation force was taken to France as prisoners of war and Colonel of Artillery Bake was given command of both Forts 'Lillo' and 'Liefkenshoek'; he was, upon his proposal, given permission by the Minister of War to raise a battalion of 1,200 volunteers, with whom he would cut the dyke near 'Liefkenshoek' and thus flood the land; this would have been of use before the French had arrived, but they were now positioned with a force of 5,000 men at the Doel near the dyke of the Scheldt.

We at 'Lillo' had no idea what would be done next; there was an expeditionary force in Fort 'Bath' but Major Boelen, the commander of those troops, who visited me at 'Lillo', also did not know when the expedition should take place.

Early one morning, I heard shooting at 'Liefkenshoek', and I hurried myself to the rampart to see what was going on, and there I saw, while bullets streamed around my head, that 1st Lieutenant Paravicini di Capelli, who died in that attack, chased away with 70 men the French troops that were positioned near the dyke, and that without waiting for the expeditionary force that was underway; then the French were in an uproar, and they advanced towards the dyke in large numbers, which forced our troops to retreat with losses.
The expeditionary force arrived in three steamships, the first at half past nine, the second at 10 o’clock and the third some time later, and the tide was low when they arrived, which resulted in the troops having to wade through the mud to disembark; so everything was badly prepared; during the disembarking, Commander Boelen was immediately severely wounded and his Adjutant Dolleman shot.

Meanwhile I was ordered to send 200 men without delay to ‘Liefkenshoek; but that is not done so fast if one doesn’t know anything about it beforehand; of my men, who were on the ships near the dyke of the Scheldt, 22 were wounded; the French opened a heavy fire on these ships and pierced them with bullets.

This expedition did not end well for us; it would have been better first to have talked about it with one or the other, and to have had a good discussion about the matters; Colonel Bake surely had meant well in his patriotism, but it seemed the right time for this had already passed.

Almost three years I have stayed at the fort, surrounded by enemies; every night I was fully dressed on guard or at the dyke, and I have endured many troubles and suffered from cold, but no poverty, because we received pay and good rations; by the way, a soldier must always be content, wherever he is sent; one is sometimes better off than the other.

Late in 1833, I was transferred to the main administration of the 2nd Afdeeling in Alkmaar, where I remained for seven years.

In 1840 I became a Major with the 5th Infantry Regiment and was assigned with that rank to the Flank Battalion of the 1st Infantry Regiment in Geertruidenberg; I was thus garrisoned in Bergen op Zoom, Vlissingen, and Nijmegen, and retired in the last mentioned town in 1844.

On the 1st of October 1844, I was appointed Commander-Director of the Invalid House in Leiden, where I still am to this day, and received the rank of lieutenant-colonel in 1848.
And here I shall end my life story, written down in truth, which I could have made double as long, when I had wanted to mention the countless fights with the Spanish guerrillas.

Those who will read my story certainly cannot believe any one person could have gone through so much without succumbing to it, and yet I am, now 81 years old, still fresh and healthy, thank God, and anyone will have noticed from my story, recollected from my early youth onwards, that my memory and mental health are still in good order.

I thank the good God, that He has, during my life, kept and protected me so clearly, and was willing to give me the power and desire to write this story as a memory for my dear children.

Leiden, the 18th of February 1865
(signed) J.C.F. Koch

For an amended copy, 's Bosch, the 18th of July 1865
Captain of Engineers
(signed) H.L. de Wijs"

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