

already received from Vandamme the order to attack the Russians in front of Castricum. This battalion performed this task very well: it advanced in line in perfect order, without firing, till they had reached a distance that their fire would have a maximum effect. At this distance, a volley was opened with a telling effect on the Russians. Although they outnumbered the single Batavian battalion heavily, the Russian infantry was broken instantly.

Now the way was cleared to attack Castricum, which was defended by 7 Russian grenadier battalions and most of their artillery. Pachtod was ordered to attack Castricum with some companies of the 4e and 49e Demi-Brigade, followed by 3 battalions, commanded by Brune himself. After heavy house to house fighting,

Castricum was retaken. The Russians lost 7 of their guns to the Franco-Batavian troops. Général de Brigade Barbou was ordered to pursue the Russians with a force of cavalry along the edge of the dunes, but while achieving this he was attacked in flank by a squadron of British cavalry, commanded by Colonel Commings, which was concealed in the dunes. The French 2nd Régiment Dragons, which was leading the pursuit, was routed instantly, and took in his flight the rest of the cavalry with them. The British didn't pursue. Pachtod pursued the Russians in the direction of Limmen. At the Schilpwater he was stopped because the bridge over it was demolished by the retreating Russians. 2 Russian guns made it impracticable for the Franco-Batavians to force a crossing, and Pachtod had to content himself with busying the Russians with skirmishing fire. D'Essen, feeling himself too weak to attack again, asked for help to Abercromby. Abercrombie's position at the beach was, as we will see later, not so good either, but after repeated requests from d'Essen he decided to reinforce d'Essen with 4 battalions, commanded by himself. He found the Russian infantry tired and disordered, but the arrival of the British troops raised the spirits again. Abercrombie decided to attack with his British battalions the Franco-batavians by way of the dunes, to give the Russians the chance to attack from Limmen. At 17.00pm, Abercrombie attacked, in cooperation with the Russians who had repaired the bridge across the Schilpwater. Again a heavy fighting ensued, much heavier than before.

The Franco-Batavian troops, exhausted by the day long battle and lacking ammunition, couldn't resist the attack of the fresh British troops, and were pushed out of Castricum. After being rallied by Boudet and Fuzier, the Franco-Batavians again attacked, but couldn't stop the advance of the enemy. The troops were entangled in close combat in the dunes, and the situation was very confused. The British cavalry had turned the left wing of these troops, and things were looking bad for the Franco-Batavians. At this critical moment, the initiative of a Batavian Lieutenant Colonel, who already had distinguished himself in the battles prior to this one, saved the day. Lieutenant Colonel Quaita, commander of the Batavian Regiment Hussars, had received, already some hours ago, the order from Brune to use his regiment at the time and in a way he thought was best. Now Quaita found the time had come. He ordered his regiment to charge the British cavalry, and at the same time he inspired the infantry to attack, by calling; "La cavallerie ne-tirez plus, en avant enfants de la patrie, battez la charge aux bajonettes, pas de charge!", ordering the infantry to stop firing and attack the enemy with the bayonet.

The cavalry charge was supported by the French 10e Régiment Dragons and the 4e Régiment Chasseurs à Cheval. This proved to be the turning point. The British cavalry was routed, leaving behind many prisoners. At the same time, Vandamme drove the enemy before him with the 42e and 49e Demi-Brigade in the direction of Bakkum, while Pachtod drove the Russians before him in the direction of Limmen. Castricum was retaken, and many prisoners were made. The darkness ended the pursuit.

The fight on the beach

What had happened at the beach meantime? Général de Division Gouvion, who had been ordered to take up positions in the dunes and on the beach to stop the advance of a British column commanded by Abercromby, already had received message about the fighting between the enemy and Boudet. At 08.00am he ordered Général de Brigade Simon to advance into the dunes with his brigade, to watch the enemy and to maintain contact with the centre. Général de Brigade Aubrée was ordered to take up position on the beach with his brigade west of Bakkum, and to attack the enemy if they showed up. Gouvion himself stayed with the reserve, composed of 2 battalions of 72e Demi-Brigade and the chasseurs (???) of the 5e Demi-Brigade. Not long after this, a British column advanced along the beach, preceded by 4 squadrons of Light Dragoons and 4 guns, covered in their flank by a force of skirmishers moving along the edge of the dunes. To stop their advance Gouvion ordered the advance of a squadron of the 16e Chasseurs à Cheval. Covered by them he deployed a battery across the beach, consisting of the 4e compagnie du 4e Régiment Artillerie à Cheval and a division of the Batavian 1st company Horse Artillery. This force was supported by another squadron of the 16e Chasseurs à Cheval and a half battalion of the 68e Demi-Brigade. The British cavalry only saw the cavalry squadron, and charged it. After coming within canister range, the cavalry unmasked the artillery battery, which took heavy toll from the enemy. The British retreated with heavy losses. Pursued by the French cavalry, the British cavalry retreated as far as Egmond aan Zee, but then rallied on the British infantry. The French cavalry didn't engage these troops, but retreated orderly to their former position. General Aubrée ordered nearly all his infantry into the dunes, to engage the British skirmishers that tried to turn his flank.

General Simon was also in serious trouble in the dunes. He and his entire brigade were nearly surrounded by a much superior British force, and Simon was desperately trying to extricate his brigade. Gouvion noticed the peril of his subordinate, and advanced with the reserve along the beach. West of Bakkum, he left 6 companies of the 72e Demi-Brigade to keep the British in check, and moved into the dunes with the rest of his troops. There he encountered 4 British battalions that had taken up a position on a small level in the dunes, half way between Bakkum and the beach. To engage these troops, he ordered the 3 companies of grenadiers of the 72e Demi-Brigade to move into the dunes to the right of the plain, and positioned the rest of the 72e Demi-Brigade in line at the edge of the plain, his left covered by 2 companies of the 2nd battalion in skirmishing order. After the arrival of the grenadiers in their designated position, he advanced into the plain with his line, and opened a heavy platoon fire on the surprised British. Supported by the

The Anglo-Russian landings in Holland, 1799

**Geert van Uythoven,
Netherlands**

PART 6 The Battle of Castricum (Battle of Egmond), 6th October 1799

Preliminaries

After the battle of Alkmaar the Franco-Batavians received reinforcements, by at least the 51e Demi-Brigade (3 battalions), 98e Demi-Brigade (2 battalions), and Général de Division Pachtod. The Franco-Batavian outposts were at Akersloot, Limmen and Bakkum and in the dunes, as already told in part 5. There were numerous clashes between patrols from both sides. The Anglo-Russians were making many reconnaissances, probing for weak spots in the Franco-Batavian defences. For example at 4th October, a reconnaissance in force was performed by 200 British light dragoons. They surprised a French infantry piquet, and charged them in a very unfavourable position. Fortunately for them, before the dragoons could reach them, they were attacked by a squadron of Dutch hussars, commanded by Colonel Quaita (the same one that counter-attacked the British cavalry on the beach the 2nd October). Their attack broke the light dragoons instantly, and the British were pursued back to their own lines.

As already stated the battle that was fought on the 6th October was planned by neither sides. York had decided to fight a last decisive battle (probable on the 7th October), but to gain the right starting positions on the 6th he attacked the Franco-Batavian outposts. The attempt to take these outposts would escalate in to a complete battle, with both sides feeding in more troops.

The Battle of Castricum (See Map 11)

At 6th October (a Sunday), at about 07.00am, the 2nd Guards Brigade (Burrard), supported by the 1st Brigade (Coote) attacked the French outpost at Limmen. De advance guard was formed by 3 companies of the 1st Guards and a company of the 2nd Guards, and was commanded by Colonel Cléphané. At Limmen, the British had no trouble in pushing back the French, and after the taking of this village the advance was continued to Akersloot. This village was occupied by the Batavian 1st Bat/1st H.B., a French battalion and a squadron of cavalry. These troops were commanded by the Batavian Lieutenant Colonel James Nicholson. Nicholson positioned his troops carefully and waited for the British to arrive. After a few minutes fighting, the French battalion was broken and routed, except of a small nucleus of men and their officers. All attempts to rally the battalion were useless. Nicholson continued the battle for an hour but was then ordered to retreat by Général de Division Boudet, and to join the 2nd Batavian Division at Uitgeest, commanded by Major General Bonhomme. He achieved to retreat orderly, demolish-

ing all the bridges behind him. At this part of the terrain, nothing more happened for the rest of the day. Nicholson's losses were about 150 men, mainly missing troops from the broken French battalion; Batavian losses were 1 wounded and 11 missing.

About the same time a Russian column, commanded by Major General d'Essen, advanced from the villages Egmond op de Hoef and Egmond Binnen and attacked the French outposts at the village Bakkum and in the dunes. Their orders were to take the outposts and then to stop their advance, but apparently the Russians were impressed with the ease they defeated the French, and continued their advance. Next, they attacked the village of Castricum. Brune, at his Head Quarters at Beverwijk, soon received information about the Anglo-Russian movements and took measures. Boudet was ordered to advance with a French column from Noorddorp over Heemskerk to Uitgeest, to reinforce the 2nd Batavian Division (Bonhomme). Général de Division Gouvion was ordered to take up positions in the dunes and on the beach, and to stop the advance of a British column commanded by Abercromby (who was advancing along the beach from the village Egmond aan Zee).

Général de Division Pachtod defended Castricum with 43e Demi-Brigade and some artillery, without losing an inch ground to the enemy. Upon receiving the message that part of the Russian troops had already turned his flank by way of the dunes and threatened to cut him off, he thought it advisable to evacuate his position at Castricum and to retreat. He retreated in the southeast direction and took up a new position with his infantry in the dunes south of Castricum, and his artillery on the road to Noorddorp, in a way that it could fire on anything on the road to Castricum, the edge of the dunes, and the terrain to the northeast of his position. At this position the French held their ground against the subsequent Russian attacks, till they were reinforced by 5 battalions (French and Batavian), accompanied by Vandamme and Boudet and the Commander in Chief Brune himself, and later by the 49e and 99e Demi-Brigade and more troops. After the arrival of these forces, heavy fighting ensued in the dunes. Ground was lost and recovered again, until ammunition on both sides was low, and only weak musketry was maintained.

At about 15.00pm, a strong Russian force advanced to the terrain east of Castricum, threatening the troops at Uitgeest. This movement was much hampered by the terrain, which was intersected by many ditches. Brune suspected that because of this manoeuvre, the Russians that were opposite him in the dunes had to be very weakened. To keep the Russians east of Castricum busy, he ordered a battalion of the 42e Demi-Brigade and the 1st and 3rd battalions of the Batavian 6th H.B. to engage them. This move effectively stopped any Russian advance on this part of the battlefield. Then he ordered his troops in the dunes to attack the opposing Russians with the bayonet. The Russians didn't wait for them and retreated in disorder, leaving the dunes and trying to rally in the low fields between Castricum and Bakkum. Brune now advanced from the west in the direction of Castricum. In front of this village, a great Russian force had taken up positions. These troops had to be dislodged first, so as to retake Castricum. Before Brune could give his orders to achieve this, these Russians were attacked by the Batavian 2nd Bat/1st H.B., commanded by Major Bernard Philip Achenbach. This Major

sign that they had suffered in the attacks, especially the British. (York's reason for not pursuing was the exhaustion of the troops and the great difficulties that were encountered). York made his entry at Alkmaar, and set up his headquarters which were soon attended by the Prince of Orange.

The Franco-Batavian losses are not known (York estimated their losses at 4000 men and 7 guns). It may be clear that the French had suffered badly, at least as badly as the Anglo-Russians, while the Batavians, who weren't engaged much, had only light losses: Daendels' losses were 15 wounded. The official Anglo-Russian losses were as follows:

British troops: 237 dead, 1102 men wounded, 193 men missing.

Russian troops: 170 men dead or missing, 423 men wounded.

That the attack didn't succeed (except the subsequent retreat of the Franco-Batavian army) was mainly due to the following factors:

1. De Russians were moving to cautiously, and by advancing to slow (and later refuse to advance any further) deprived Abercromby of his reserves and the cover on his left wing.

2. Abercromby advanced to cautiously. His orders were to cut off the Franco-Batavian retreat, but now the French troops had the time to retreat, and take up new positions. The even had the time to reinforce their left wing with reinforcements from the centre and the right wing.

3. Their was no cooperation with the fleet, which could make Vandamme's position on the beach untenable.

So again a decisive battle had not been fought, York was in desperate need of one. The distance between his troops and Den Helder was now too great to supply the troops sufficiently. The area that they now occupied had been denuded of supplies by the opposing army. The weather was wet and deteriorating, and most of the soldiers had to sleep without cover. Furthermore, hopes of the taking of Amsterdam were small, it having been turned into an impregnable fortress by Kraijenhoff. York would make one final attempt to gain a decisive victory and eliminate the Franco-Batavian army.

The morale of the Franco-Batavian troops was very high. In spite of their retreat, they didn't think themselves beaten. In every combat it was clear that they were more than a match for the British and especially for the Russians. Beside this they were fighting in their own country and for their own country. They were acquainted with the terrain, and were supplied with everything they needed. Also the French, and especially the Batavian troops were led by very capable officers, something that was not (always) the case with their opponents. The Franco-Batavian Commander in Chief wasn't that capable either, but all his subordinate commanders were prepared to act on their own initiative, according to the situation. Of course they were secure in the knowledge that if something did go terribly wrong, Brune was the first who would be blamed. The Russians and British had very capable commanders, but their efforts were too no effect because of the mistakes of the high command, the friction between the British and Russians, and last, but not least, the unfamiliar terrain where they had to fight on. What was needed in this kind of terrain, were rash commanders who didn't look over their shoulders to often, who dared to take decisions and could act independently. It was simply, not the terrain where a



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commander could set up his Head-Quarters on a hill in the centre of his lines and lead all his troops from there. On each occasion the Anglo-Russian troops were divided into separate columns and issued with detailed orders, only to have them changed at the last minute, because of the ever-changing strategic situation. Beside this, the soldiers were already fighting for nearly five weeks, mostly to their ankles or knees in the mud, without a dry place to sleep, and without enough food and other supplies. Many soldiers at this time wore only rags and were barefooted. Hundreds fell sick every day and there was nowhere they could be nursed properly.

The Batavian government was in poor spirits, most of North-Holland was occupied by the enemy and the damage done to this province was enormous. Vast tracts were flooded and made unusable for agriculture by the salt water. Whole villages were nothing more than ruins, and dikes, canals, bridges and roads were destroyed. Brune didn't take any notice of the Batavian government's pleas. The Batavian republic was nothing more than a French satellite, and could only decide matters that didn't dispute French interests.

York's plan for the decisive battle.

The battle of that was to occur on 6th October was not intended by either side.

York had decided to fight a last decisive battle (probable on the 7th October), but to gain the right starting positions on the 6th he attacked the Franco-Batavian outposts at Bakkum, Limmen and Akersloot, who were blocking the roads to the south. With the possession of these he could start his attack closer to the Franco-Batavian positions, and by using the roads rather than travelling across country, his troops would be less tired on arrival. The attempt to take these outposts would escalate to a complete battle, with both sides feeding in more and more troops. Daendels didn't take part in this battle, his troops were too far from the battlefield, and separated from it by very difficult terrain.

Next issue part 6

6th October 1799, the battle of Castricum
(also called the battle of Egmond).

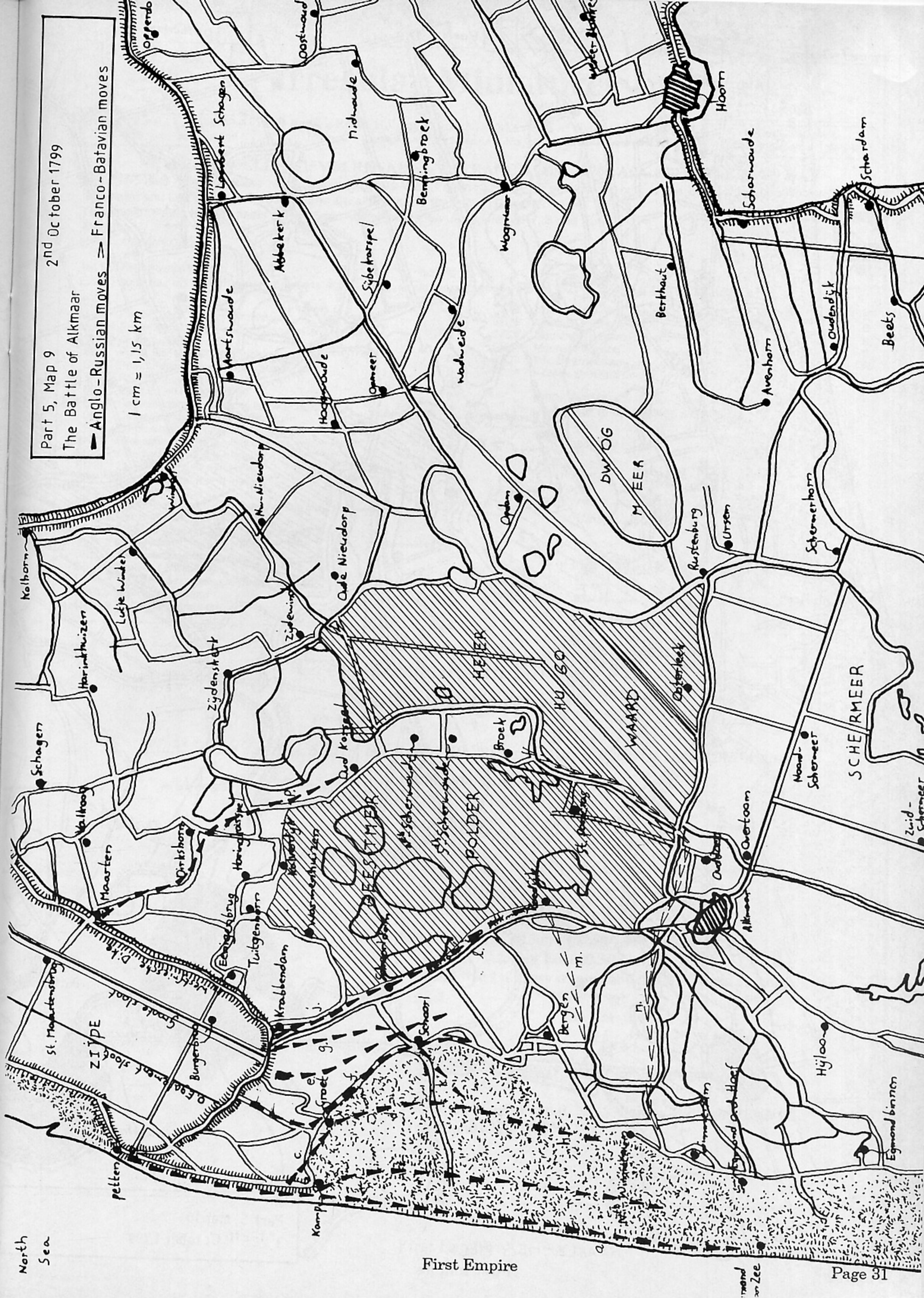


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Part 5, Map 9 2nd October 1799

The Battle of Alkmaar

— Anglo-Russian moves — Franco-Batavian moves

1 cm = 1,15 km

dislodging the French from their position, and the villages of Schoorl and Schoorlham were taken. After this the Russians advanced to the south, but then d'Essen stopped their advance, and limited their actions for the remainder of the day to the bombarding of the Franco-Batavian positions at Bergen and Koedijk. This gave the French the time to reinforce and rally their troops. They took up a strong defensive line from Koedijk across the fields to Bergen, and from there dominating the dunes to the east to the coast. The dunes here were about 300 feet high. At the east side they were very steep, and planted with very thick brushwood, to the sea the slopes were much more flat. York believed that a decision couldn't be reached before the French were dislodged from the dunes. To achieve this, Coote was ordered to advance through the left part of the dunes (h). He did this, with the 85th Regiment of Foot in front on his right wing. The Brigade of Major General Chatham was ordered to advance with one battalion on Coote's left wing along the edge of the dunes. His other three battalions to connect on the 85th Regiment of Foot on Coote's right wing (k). In this way the British advanced, the three battalions of Chatham in line with the 85th Regiment of Foot in front, and connected with them the remainder of Coote's battalions in oblique formation. In this way they succeeded in dispelling the French from the dominating part of the dunes, and to drive back the French to the environs of Noord-Wimmenum.

At this stage time was right to undertake an attack on Bergen, but Major General d'Essen refused to attack. The brigades of Lieutenant General Dundas (Brigades Coote and Chatham) were too weak to undertake this attack and to occupy the dunes and were also without the necessary artillery, which couldn't advance into the dunes. So the British had no choice then to stay in the dunes and maintain in their position. The refusal of d'Essen to attack is not mentioned in York's official report, probably for political reasons. There is no doubt d'Essen's refusal, it being mentioned in various sources. The French, seeing the Russian hesitation, decided to attack in two columns, the British troops in the dunes. They were driven back, one column by the 85th Regiment of Foot, the other by the 27th Regiment of Foot. At this stage McDonald arrived on the British right, and, seeing the time was right, he undertook an attack on the French, and succeeded in dispelling the French out of the dunes into the open terrain south of Bergen. Now 11 British battalions took up position in the dunes, and the French, commanded by Général de Division Boudet and Gouvion (promoted on the battlefield the 19th September), were too weak to resist these superior numbers. But still they occupied Bergen.

Abercromby meanwhile had continued his advance along the beach, and had already advanced south of Bergen (a). The absence of the Brigade McDonald, who had to cover his left flank, forced him to advance cautiously, and to undertake many reconnaissances on this flank. Thus far he hadn't encountered any serious opposition. The French were aware of Abercromby's advance. Général de Division Vandamme received reinforcements, including some Batavian troops. Bonhomme had to send 3 battalions infantry, the Regiment Hussars and the 1st Cie Horse Artillery (m); Daendels had to send 2 battalions infantry, the Regiment Dragoons and the 2nd Cie Horse Artillery (n). Clearly Brune didn't underestimate a British advance along the beach. However, because of the

distance the reinforcements had to cover, most of them came to late. Only the artillery and the Hussar Regiment (which received the order to reinforce Vandamme at 05.00pm) took part in the battle. Vandamme took up a strong position in front of the village Egmond aan Zee: The infantry was positioned in the dunes, and the artillery was placed across the beach covered by the cavalry. In this position he waited for the arrival of the British. Upon their arrival, the British were welcomed by heavy artillery fire and musketry from the dunes. They received heavy losses, however, after heavy fighting, that lasted until dark, the French were forced back to Egmond aan Zee. Vandamme made use of the fall of darkness to surprise the British with an attack of the French cavalry. Their charge succeeded and the British horse artillery was forced to abandon their guns, which were taken. The charge was stopped by the British cavalry commanded by Colonel Paget, and they had to retreat, pursued by the British cavalry who retook the lost guns. On their turn the British cavalry was attacked by the Batavian Regiment of Hussars, which, commanded by Colonel Quaita and supported by the musketry from the dunes, succeeded in stopping and driving them back. At this stage it became too dark to fight, and a restless night followed, with both sides remaining under arms.

Vandamme's position now was unstable. The British could easily outflank him now they controlled the dunes. So in the night Vandamme retreated (some sources state without the permission of Brune).

Burrard succeeded in taking the part of Schoorlham on his side of the Kanaal van Alkmaar, and continued his advance (l), supported by the gunboats. The 2nd Batavian Division, still commanded by General Major Bonhomme (after the wounding of Lieutenant General Dumonceau) had to retreat inside the entrenchments near the village Koedijk. At this point Burrard couldn't advance any further, because the position was too strong. So the rest of the day nothing happened on this part of the battlefield.

The fourth column, commanded by Lieutenant General Pulteney, made three attacks on the position of the Batavian troops at Oudkarspel (p). The British didn't make any impression on Daendels, who had entrenched his troops in a very strong position. Pulteney kept the Batavians under fire, but this didn't prevent Daendels to send part of his troops to reinforce the left wing of the Franco-Batavians.

Franco-Batavian retreat (see Map 10)

The retreat of the left wing under Vandamme made the rest of the Franco-Batavian position untenable. So Brune was forced to retreat with his whole army.

His Head-Quarters were moved from Alkmaar to Beverwijk. The 2nd Batavian Division (Dumonceau) was united with the French troops, and occupied the terrain between Uitgeest and Wijk-aan-Zee, with Castricum in the centre of their position. Outposts were at Akersloot, Limmen and Bakkum and in the dunes. The 1st Batavian Division (Daendels) retreated to Purmerend and flooded the terrain to his front, creating an unapproachable position. To occupy this position 4000 men were sufficient. The rest of the Franco-Batavian army, about 20,000 men, had to defend the left wing. They had to defend a strip of terrain, about 7 km wide, between the Lange Meer and the sea. The Franco-Batavian retreat wasn't interfered with by the Anglo-Russians, clearly a

The Anglo-Russian landings in Holland, 1799

Geert van Uythoven, Netherlands

PART 5

The Battle of Alkmaar, 2nd October 1799 Anglo-Russian plan of attack

York decided to attack the Franco-Batavian positions for a second time on 2nd October. Again the attack would be made in four columns:

The first column, on the right wing, was commanded by Lieutenant General Abercromby. It was to consist of 7910 infantry and 1010 cavalry (9 squadrons light dragoons), all British troops. These troops consisted of the 1st Guards Brigade (Doyle), the 2nd Brigade (Moore), the 4th Brigade (commanded by General Major Hutchinson, Lord Cavan having been wounded on the 19th September), and the 5th Brigade (McDonald). Abercromby had to advance along the beach to Egmond aan Zee, and from there to Egmond op de Hoef, and to cut off the Franco-Batavian retreat.

The second column was commanded by General Major d'Essen. It was to consist of 8000 Russians with their artillery, the regiment hussars and the cossacks. The greater part of them had to advance along the Slaperdike, and at their arrival at the road from Groet to Kamp, move to the left in the direction of Groet and Schoorl to Bergen. The brigade of Major General Zedmoradzky had to cover the left flank of these troops, and had to advance through the terrain between the Slaperdike and the Kanaal van Alkmaar. They then had to support the attack on Bergen, and to attack Schoorl from the west.

The third column was commanded by Lieutenant General Dundas. It was to consist of 6130 infantry and a squadron of the 11th Regiment Light Dragoons, all British troops (2nd Guards Brigade (Burrard), 1st Brigade (Coote) and 6th Brigade (Chatham)). These troops were split in the separate brigades and received the following orders:

The 1st Brigade (Coote) started from Petten, and had to follow the advance guard of Abercromby, circumnavigate Kamp through the dunes, and clear the road to Groet. In this way they first supported the Russians in their advance to Groet, and then they had to cover the right flank of them.

The 6th Brigade (Chatham) had to follow the Russian brigade of Zedmoradzky, and then move to the right to join with the left wing of General Major d'Essen, and support him with the capture of Bergen. Also this brigade had to maintain contact with Abercromby's troops.

The 2nd Guards Brigade (Burrard) started from Tuitgenhorn and Krabbendam, and had to advance at the northeast side from the Kanaal van Alkmaar in the direction of Schoorl. They then had to attack Schoorl simultaneously with the Brigade Zedmoradzky. This attack would be supported by 7 gunboats in the Kanaal van Alkmaar. Burrard also had to maintain contact with the fourth column.

The fourth column was commanded by Lieutenant General

Pulteney. This column was 6930 infantry and a regiment cavalry strong. It consisted of the 3rd Brigade (Don), the 7th Brigade (Prince William), the 8th Brigade (Manners), the 18th Regiment Light Dragoons (2 squadrons) and 2 Russian battalions. Their orders were to cover the left flank of the Anglo-Russian army, to threaten the Batavian Division of Daendels and to prevent in this way the possibility of Daendels reinforcing the left wing of the Franco-Batavian army. Pulteney was free to use his troops in any other way, if he thought the situation made it necessary.

This plan of attack made it clear that York had learned from his earlier mistakes. This time 23,000 men attacked on a small front, with both flanks effectively covered (by the North Sea and the Kanaal van Alkmaar). If Abercromby acted the correctly, he could cut off the retreat of the French and destroy them completely. In this way a decisive victory could be gained. The Russians were placed in the allied centre so they would be supported closely by the British. They wouldn't have a reason to complain about being abandoned. Also this was done because of the British distrust of the Russians after their disorderly retreat from Bergen.

The battle of Alkmaar (see Map 9)

Abercromby's column had to wait for low tide to start their advance along the beach. At 06.30am he advanced, with the Brigade of McDonald, reinforced with 2 battalions, acting as advance guard. McDonald attacked the village Kamp and succeeded in driving of the French easily. After the taking of Kamp he advanced southeast into the dunes, and then after some time to the southwest, to rejoin Abercromby (b). This proved to be impossible for the moment, because of the extent of the dunes and the many engagements with the French. The Brigade Coote, which followed McDonald and his advance guard, turned left at Kamp, and followed the road to Groet. Brushing aside the French, they cleared the road for the Russians, and captured Groet (c). At this village, General d'Essen refused to advance any further till the dunes at his right and in front of him were occupied by the Brigade Coote. This was done by Coote (d), in cooperation with McDonald (b). Zedmoradzky, meanwhile, also advanced (e), supporting the column of General d'Essen (f) on his right flank, and himself supported by the gunboats in the Kanaal van Alkmaar. He was followed by the British Brigade Chatham (g), 150 light dragoons and the reserve artillery. At the other side of the canal, Burrard advanced with his brigade in the direction of Schoorl, covering the left wing of Zedmoradzky and Chatham, and maintaining in contact with Pulteney by way of some infantry detachments.

Upon discovering the advance of Zedmoradzky and d'Essen, the French withdrew their outposts and took up a position between Schoorl and the Kanaal van Alkmaar. Their left wing resting on the dunes, and their right wing covered by the canal. From this position they opened fire on the advancing enemy. In spite of this fire, the Anglo-Russians were still advancing. Coote by way of the dunes, and already advancing beside Schoorl (d), and d'Essen on the road to Schoorl (f), still very reluctant. Zedmoradzky showed much more energy, but he was hampered by the terrain, which was intersected by many ditches. The movement of the artillery was especially very difficult. At around 11.00am, after several attacks, supported by Chatham, Zedmoratzky succeeded in

advance and the bad behaviour of the Russian troops in Bergen were the cause of the defeat; the Russians had the opinion that the British had abandoned them. The mistrust that was the result would hamper all operations from now on. The opposite was the case in the Franco-Batavian army. Relations between the French and Batavians were much improved, and morale was high. The glory of the victory was increased by the capture of 7 flags and the Russian Commander in Chief Lieutenant General Hermann. Also taken were 20 guns, 6 howitzers, 18 ammunition caissons, 24 transport waggons and 4,000 muskets! In the following days some reinforcements arrived; 4 battalions and 4 squadrons French troops (3 battalions from the 22e or the 42e Demi Brigade, the sources are contradicting, 1 battalion from the 72e Demi Brigade and 4 squadrons of the 4e Regiment Chasseurs a Cheval), bringing the total Franco-Batavian strength to about 22,000 men (from these about 13,000 French). 6 Batavian battalions had received such heavy losses that they had to be abolished, and the men distributed over the other battalions. The positions, which were still the same as before the battle of the 19th, were strengthened. The Heer Hugowaard and the Geestmer-Polder were inundated, so the Anglo-British could only attack along the Langendijk, by way of Oud-Karspel. At this place the redoubt was strengthened and reinforced with other defences. The ring-dike around Bleekmeer was levelled. It was clear

now for York that it was impossible to attack this place with any hope of a good result.

The British fleet was still busy with troubling the Batavian coast. De Lemmer was taken, and a landing was performed at Genemiden. Also two armed vessels appeared in front of Harderwijk, and claimed the city. An Orangist, Rottiers van Duyvelande, offered York assistance to take Delfzijl with 150 Batavian deserters and a ship. He would enter the harbour of Delfzijl with the help of some civilians, and in the night the men would leave the ship and surprise the small garrison, in the same way Breda was taken from the Spaniards with the use of a peat-boat, some hundred years earlier. But York refused the offer. All these actions were a nuisance to the Batavians, but not very dangerous. It would have been much more dangerous if York had used his fleet to outflank the Franco-Batavian positions, and had landed troops in their back. This never happened.

The Anglo-Russians were reinforced with some Russian troops and some British detachments, but many more men were disabled by sickness. But in spite of this York still had some 30,000 men ready to fight. So again York decided to attack.

Next issue part 5

2nd October 1799, the battle of Alkmaar

Reader's Review

Video Review:
AUSTERLITZ. 1805.
Supplier:
Campaigns in History.
Cromwell Films Ltd.
Price: £14-99 plus £1-95 p&p

Reviewed by John Walsh

Although I was disappointed with the 1812 video (see issue 9) I decided to purchase Austerlitz for two reasons. Firstly, I wanted to create a balance. (1812: Napoleon losing. Austerlitz: Napoleon winning.) Secondly, I like to support anyone that tries to make the Napoleonic Period more accessible, (which is also why I joined the Napoleonic Association).

On first viewing my thoughts were: "Great book, shame about the video." But after several sittings I realised the main fault, besides being poor in sound quality, is the length. An hour seems far too short for the price.

However, you can see they've tried to improve things. No lengthy previews or introductions here and thankfully no tanks rumbling across the screen in between cavalry charges. But it begins so suddenly I thought the cassette needed rewinding or there was a part missing.

The War and Peace footage is again enjoyable and again too short. And, due I imagine, to economic reasons, several clips are repeated and I spotted a couple that had also been used in the 1812 video.

On the positive side the subtitles are more effective when Captain Coignet and Major-General Stutterheim speak in their native language. Sadly this nice touch was spoilt by having the same actor portraying Captain Coignet that played Sergeant Bourgogne.

As for the MODERN reenactments, as advertised on the video cover, we are offered one short Naval scene? But at

least this time they were more liberal with the 3-D computer mapping.

As I say, the sound quality was again poor in places, although not as bad as on 1812. But overall, it's a much better product and the best part of the product being the book.

If like me you don't already own any material concerning Captain Coignet, then you're in for a treat. Unlike 1812, it's not just a copy of a video script. I started reading it and could not put it down.

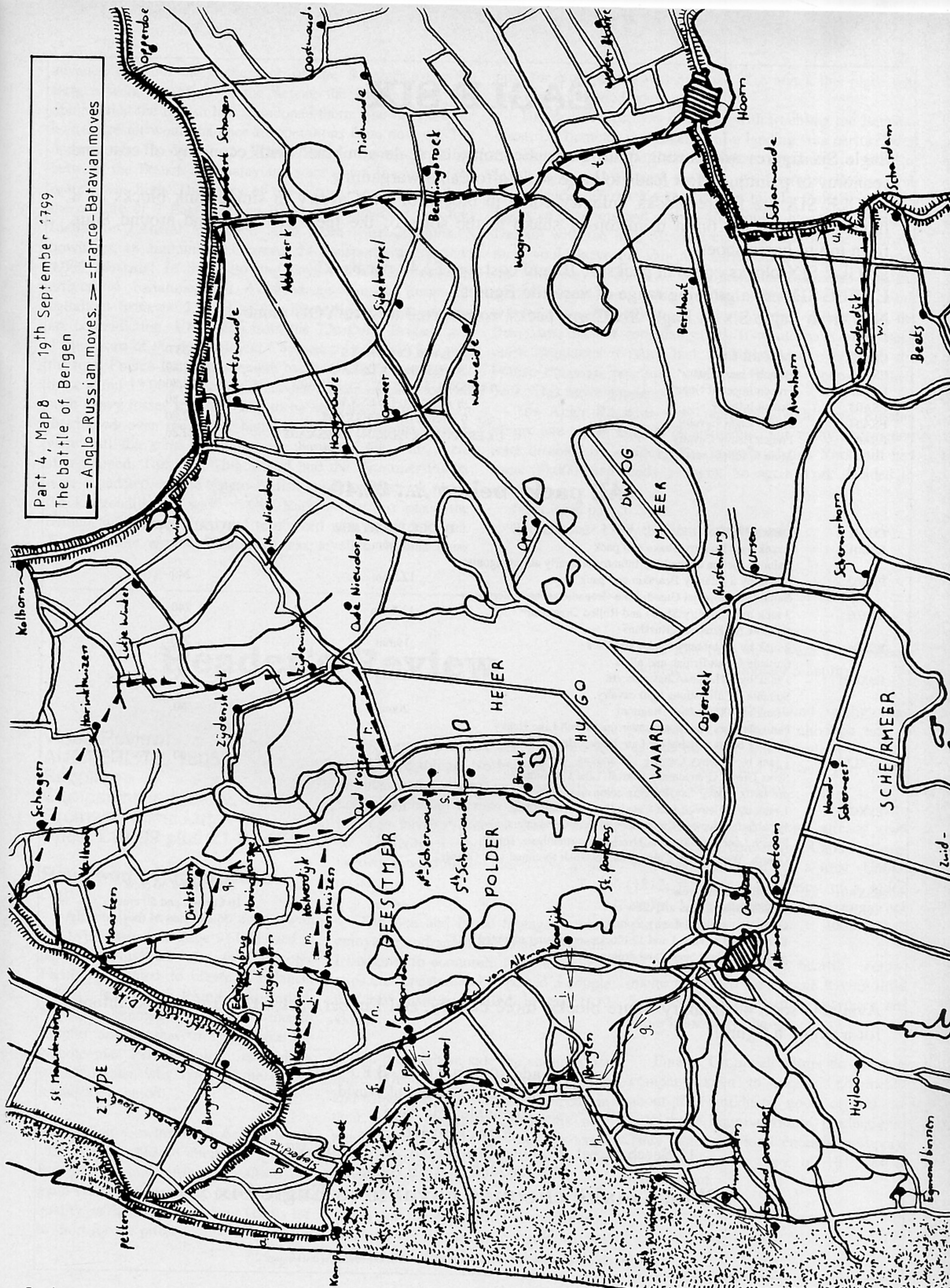
So again, I would heartily recommend the video for anyone having little knowledge of the battle, but there are more informative books.

Finally Cromwell Films do seem a company keen to receive comments about their products, good or bad, to help them improve future productions. They were also kind enough to supply me with a free copy of 1812 as a replacement.

Part 4, Map 8 19th September 1799

The battle of Bergen

— = Anglo-Russian moves. — = Franco-Batavian moves



attacked so unexpectedly, took flight back into the redoubt. In doing this they masked the fire of the artillery. At the same moment a caisson exploded inside the redoubt, and making use of the arisen disorder, the British troops entered the redoubt with the grenadiers. The Batavians now had no chance left to stop them and Daendels ordered the retreat, leaving behind his artillery. The Batavians didn't get the chance to recover, closely pursued as they were by the British. All the Batavian troops that were placed at the side of the Langendijk behind the circular canal to watch Coote were made prisoner. In total the British made in this attack 42 officers and 1314 N.C.O.'s and soldiers prisoner. Only at the end of the Langendijk, at Broek, could the British advance (s) be stopped by the grenadier company of 1st Bat/1st H.B. and the three companies grenadiers of 4th H.B., commanded by Lieutenant Colonel James Nicolson and Major Adriaan Willem Storm de Grave. These troops were posted so that Pulteney didn't think himself strong enough to attack without reinforcements. So Pulteney tried to get Coote with his brigade across the circular canal. This took much time: because of the absence of bridging material the crossing had to take place with boats, who first had to be fetched. While the crossing was taking place Pulteney received the message of the defeat of the right and second column, and the order to retreat to the Zijpe positions. So late in the afternoon Pulteney retreated with his troops.

Till that moment the Franco-Batavian position was precarious. Although on the left wing the battle was won by the Franco-Batavians, the centre was pierced by the British, who had occupied the Langendijk all the way to Broek. Because of this danger, and because Brune was angered by Daendels' defeat, Daendels was ordered to recapture his lost positions. Daendels opened his attack at the same moment Pulteney started his retreat. So the retreating British were hotly pursued by the grenadiers, losing about a hundred men and 4 officers as prisoners. The Batavians recovered all their lost artillery, captured a field-hospital and the two disabled British guns from in front of the redoubt. Apparently the British didn't have the time or possibility to take the guns with them.

Left column

As already written in part 3, the left (4th) column already advanced on the 18th, and consisted of 9,000 British under Lieutenant General Abercromby. He didn't meet any resistance on his way to Hoorn (t), because there were no troops posted east of Daendels' position. To secure this flank, Daendels had ordered a strong reconnaissance in the direction of Hoorn in the night of the 16th. The reconnaissance force consisted of a small detachment of cavalry, commanded by Cavalry Captain Sterke, and 170 men infantry from the 7th H.B. under Captain Thompson. The cavalry returned to Daendels after a short rest in Hoorn, while the infantry stayed on the request of the local commander, Major van der Mey. This was the situation when in the middle of the night of the 18th Abercromby arrived in front of the city. Two parliamentarians with a trumpeter arrived in front of the north-gate, asking the commander to come out to receive a verbal message from Abercromby. Major van der Mey, knowing what was happening, tried to gain time. Knowing he had no chance to hold the city with the few troops he had at his

disposal, he at least would try to save the garrison and to let them escape to Monnikendam. In order to obtain this he ordered Captain Thompson with him after making his troops ready to leave. By some reason Thompson didn't receive this message, and after the third demand of the parliamentarians, he opened the north-gate (with the necessary precautions) and walked out of the gate to meet the parliamentarians. With the gate nearly open a British column stormed the gate, overpowered the guard and took Major van der Mey prisoner, and after this also Captain Thompson with all his men. Hoorn was filled with troops, gazed at by the amazed civilians. Abercromby entered the city, and took possession of Hoorn in name of the King of England and the Prince of Orange.

After the taking of Hoorn Abercromby continued the advance in the direction of Purmerend (u). He found that all the bridges had been removed and the roads destroyed in many places. An attempt to advance in the direction of Schermerhorn failed also because of the same reasons (w). The Batavian engineers had done their job very well. So Abercromby was compelled to stay where he was, and wait for news from the other three columns. In the evening of the 19th, he received the order to evacuate Hoorn and to retreat to the Zijpe positions. He started his retreat the next morning at 08.00am, but it lasted till the 22nd till the last British troops left Hoorn.

Aftermath

The Anglo-Russian attack was beaten off with heavy losses on both sides.

Losses were as follows:

British: 1017 men dead, wounded or missing.

Russians: 2970 men dead, wounded or missing.

Total Anglo-Russian losses: 3987 men.

Batavians:

1st Division (Daendels) 25 dead, 114 wounded, 1356 missing.

2nd Division (Dumonceau) 72 dead, 228 wounded, 1052 missing.

Batavian artillery park 58 dead, wounded or missing.

Total Batavian losses: 2905 men.

French losses: 850 men.

Total Franco-Batavian losses: 3755 men.

The main reasons for the failure of the Anglo-Russian attack were:

1. The attacks didn't take place simultaneously. 'Day-break' is not the right way to appoint the time of attack.

2. The forces on the right wing of the Anglo-Russian army were much too weak to defeat the opposing forces. Further the reserve of the right column was moving too far behind the Russians, and couldn't give the much needed support on the right time.

3. It wasn't difficult for York to reconnoitre the terrain in the direction of Hoorn and Purmerend and to obtain information about the removal of the bridges and the demolishing of the roads. Now the column of Abercromby made a useless move on the far left wing of the Anglo-Russian army, and couldn't take part in the battle (Later York would boast that he didn't use 15,000 of his troops in this battle!).

Already there was friction between the British and the Russians: The British had the opinion that the reckless

Kragt Vischer. He asked to carry the flag and lead the column. But the moment he had crossed the bridge, he was killed by a bullet. He fell from his horse, but the frightened animal dragged the flag in the direction of the enemy. Sergeant Westerheide saw this happen, ran after the horse, and retrieved the flag in a hail of bullets. This attack failed and a new attack was ordered. The flag was now carried by Cadet van Wartum; he too was killed. Officers and N.C.O.'s were killed; more than half the battalion were already out of action. At that moment Adjutant General Vichery arrived with the order to stop the attacks until the artillery arrived. Upon its arrival the British were forced to leave their cover and retreat. In this way the 2nd Bat/6th H.B. erased the shame caused by their behaviour in the battle of Zijpe (see part 3, second column).

Third column

Also at daybreak the troops of Lieutenant General Pulteney began their advance. As planned, the 3rd Brigade (Major General Don) advanced through Dirkshorn to Oud-Karspel accompanied by Pulteney (q), while the 1st Brigade (Major General Coote) advanced through Schagen by Niderper-verlaat to the Heer Hugowaard (r). Pulteney ordered the 2nd Bat/17th Foot to Kalverdijk to act as a reserve, and continued the advance to Oud-Karspel with the remainder of his brigade. His advance had to take place by way of a dike, the Langendijk, so narrow that only 8 men could move abreast. In front of Oud-Karspel they approached a redoubt, constructed across the Langendijk. Pulteney ordered an immediate attack on the redoubt, and this attack was made with much vigour. At the redoubt it was just about time for the change of the guards, so Colonel Crass, commander at this sector, with two whole infantry battalions, in cooperation with the French Adjutant General Durutte (added by Brune to Daendels' staff), placed his infantry behind the parapets, and let the British advance to within 30 paces. At this distance the British were received by such heavy musketry and canister, that they retreated with heavy losses. The British found cover behind the ring-dike around Bleekmeer and in a corn-field. After restoring order, Pulteney now ordered forward his artillery, and an artillery-duel followed. In spite of the heavy losses sustained, the Batavian artillery kept up the fight and managed to disable two British guns and set the caissons on fire. Pulteney now ordered a second and a third attack, but both attacks were beaten off with heavy losses for the attackers. It was clear now for Pulteney and Don that they had to wait for the advance of Coote, who could attack the Batavian position on their right wing and in the back. Pulteney didn't stay idle: Reinforced by the 3rd Guards Regiment and 2nd Bat/5th Rgt Foot he ordered Don to take the 3rd Guards and 4 companies of the 40th Rgt Foot and to try to outflank the Batavian position on their left through the heavily ditched terrain. Colonel Spencer was ordered to maintain fire on the Batavian positions with the rest of the troops, and to attack the Batavians at the right opportunity. The time was now 10.00am.

Daendels at that moment was very busy. Receiving news of Dumonceau's wounding, and a request from Major General Bonhomme for reinforcements, he ordered Major General van Zuylen van Nyevelt to take with him 1st and 2nd Bat/4th H.B., the dragoon regiment and the horse artillery, and to

reinforce Bonhomme. This reinforcement didn't have any effect; only three platoons of dragoons were engaged and lost a lieutenant, a corporal and 7 troopers killed, while many dragoons were wounded. In the meanwhile the 1st British Brigade under Coote, advanced by Niderper-verlaat to the Heer Hugowaard and threatened the right flank of Daendels. At this place the Coote couldn't advance any further: All the bridges across the circular canal were removed, and on the other side of the canal Daendels had posted some infantry and artillery. Daendels, receiving message about the advance of British troops in the direction of Hoorn (the British left column) ordered a battalion to occupy Schermerhorn, and another battalion to Purmerend and Monnikendam to secure his back. After taking these precautions he moved in person to the redoubt in front of Oud-Karspel. Arriving there he found that the British artillery was totally silenced, and only some sporadic musketry made clear there were still some British troops in front of the redoubt. On his left flank there was no sign of the outflanking British troops under Don (Don had ordered his troops to lie down in the corn). At that moment he received another request from Bonhomme: his troops were attacking the British, and to aid these attacks he requested Daendels to support them by advancing also. After receiving the same request of Adjutant General Durutte and Colonel Crass, a company of grenadiers were ordered to undertake a sally and to capture the two disabled guns that were left behind by the British. This sally proved to be disastrous: as soon the grenadiers reached the open terrain in front of the redoubt, Don ordered his troops to raise and to attack the grenadiers in the flank, while at the same time Colonel Spencer attacked the grenadiers in front. The grenadiers,

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and hastened to Schoorl. This was his most important position, because of the bridge across the Kanaal van Alkmaar. When Dumonceau arrived here he noticed the enemy was already leaving Krabbendam and advancing in the direction of Warmenhuizen (j), and he could hear by the firing that they had already advanced to behind his position on the left wing; so the chance was big that he had to evacuate Schoorl. His first care was to prevent his troops at Warmenhuizen from being cut off, and he also decided on an attack on the enemy at his left wing, to release some pressure of the obviously hard pressed French troops. The troops that were placed on the road between Schoorl and Warmenhuizen were the 1st and 2nd Bat/7th H.B., 2 companies jagers and 3 field guns, all commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Justinus Verhorst. Verhorst, hearing the noise of the fighting in the direction of Groet, and later Schoorl, had ordered 4 companies infantry and some jagers, all commanded by Major Charles Frederik Broman, to occupy Warmenhuizen. It was not very long that he noticed the advance of the 3 Russian battalions of Major General Zedmoradzky, who was advancing straight through the pastures to Warmenhuizen. When he received at 07.00am the order from Dumonceau to withdraw on Schoorl, it was by now too late for the troops at Warmenhuizen; they were already cut off by the 1st Regiment British Guards, which had advanced from the direction of Tuitgenhorn (k). Major Broman had no other choice then to surrender with his troops (07.00am); the Anglo-Russians took 500 prisoners. Verhorst succeeded in his retreat to Schoorl with all his troops and 2 field guns. To impede any quick advance by the enemy he removed all the bridges behind him. At Schoorl in the meanwhile, Dumonceau had ordered Major David Bruce with 6 companies of grenadiers to cross

bullet in the chest. After passing over the command of his Division to Major General Bonhomme, he had to leave the field. Possibly the wounding of Dumonceau was the cause of a misinterpretation of orders: instead of only 50 men, Verhorst left Schoorl with both battalions of 7th H.B. Schoorl now was only weakly defended. The only luck was that Verhorst first ordered Lieutenant Engineer Everard Everts to demolish the bridge. Everts succeeded in doing that, but was killed in the process.

As we have already seen the second column, commanded by Lieutenant General Dundas, began the advance at daylight, so about two hours later as the right column. The 3 Russian battalions of Zedmoradzky and the 1st Regiment British Guards took Warmenhuizen. The 3rd Regiment British Guards and 2nd Bat/5th Regiment of Foot were then directed to the east, to make contact with the third column (Lieutenant General Pulteney) (m). Now Schoorl was attacked, from the west by the Brigade Manners (f), and from the north by the second column (n). Because of the removal of the bridges, it took some time for the second column to reach Krabbendam and the attack could not be made until 09.00am. Schoorl was too weakly defended, and it took little time to take the village. The Duke of York immediately started repairing the bridge and hearing of the Russian debacle at Bergen, ordered the 3 Russian battalions of Zedmoradzky, the 1st Guards Brigade and the 35th Rgt Foot (commanded by Prince William) to join the Brigade Manners and stop the French pursuit. These troops now attacked the Franco-Batavian troops in Schoorl from the north and east (p), while the retreating Prussians from the right column were advancing from the south. The Franco-Batavian troops at Schoorl could do nothing but surrendered and were made prisoner, and Schoorl was captured for a second time. All attempts to rally the Russians had no effect. The terrible heat and pressure of the pursuing Franco-Batavians caused York to order the retreat at 14.30 PM.

The only British troops left at Schoorl were the 2nd Regiment Guards and the 1st Bat/5th Rgt Foot, commanded by Lieutenant General Dundas. They were supported by 3 gunboats armed with carronades in the Kanaal van Alkmaar. The Batavian troops before this position were now commanded by Lieutenant Colonel G.A. Martuschewitz (commander of the Batavian artillery). He was sent to this point by Bonhomme, with orders to act as he thought the situation made necessary. Without the support of artillery, the 2nd Bat/6th H.B., commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Anthing was ordered to attack Schoorl. With a bayonet attack the British were dislodged from Schoorl and thrown back across the (now repaired) bridge across the canal, where the British took positions behind a dike and in the houses.

Trying to dispel the enemy from there, the Batavians took heavy losses from the musketry and the fire from the gunboats, and were thrown back. Again they attacked, and again were thrown back receiving heavy losses. Now Anthing took the flag and put himself at the head of the column. "Just follow me one more time", he roared, and with drums beating, the battalion followed him. But the flagpole was shot through, and the pole was now too short for the flag to be seen by all the men. This was noticed by Adjutant Major Teunis



English cavalry on patrol by Anthony Barton

the Kanaal van Alkmaar, to join a French battalion that had retreated there from Groet, and to advance in the direction of Schoorl (l). Also Lieutenant Colonel Antony Benedict Carteret was ordered to cross the Kanaal van Alkmaar with the 1st and 3rd Bat/H.B. at Koedijk, and to advance on Bergen from the east (i). At the arrival of Verhorst with his troops, he ordered Lieutenant Colonel Scato Hendrik Burs Trip with the remainder of the 4th Battalion Jagers and the Captain Jozef Jacobus van Geen with 50 men of 1st Bat/7th H.B. to support Bruce. While giving these orders, Dumonceau was hit by a