Having warned Graham to prepare against a French thrust towards San Sebastian, Wellington, still in ignorance of Cole’s situation, instructed the Light Division and Dalhousie’s 7th to support Hill; Pack’s 6th was sent south. On reaching Almendoz and receiving Cole’s belated dispatch, he ordered both Cole and Picton (then near Pamplona) to hold the French advance from Roncesvalles at Zubiri, in the Arga valley.

By 10.00 on 27 July Wellington had entered Olagüe, in the Ulzama valley south of the Puerto de Velate, only to learn that Cole and Picton were already much further south in the parallel valley. Wellington and Fitzroy Somerset pressed on, to reach the bridge at Sorauren, where the later was sent back with an instruction to Q.M.G. Murray to re-route Pack to enter the valley much further south. By then, Cole’s Division had already taken up a position on a ridge between the two valleys (later known as ‘Cole’s’), to which Wellington ascended, first skirting the base of a 1½-mile-long parallel ridge along which Clause’s troops were deploying. The two ridges were connected by a wide saddle of land further east before reaching the Arga valley and a separate hill (defended by Spanish troops) commanding the village of Zabaldica, towards which Reille’s vanguard was advancing. Further south, the road to Pamplona was blocked near Huarte by Picton (facing Foy), with additional Spanish units defending a lower ridge extending west.

Soult was cautious, and it was not until next morning, after a stormy night, that the action commenced, with five French divisions – heavily outnumbering the Allies facing them – descending into the intervening valley to attack Cole’s ridge, the column crossing the saddle being the first to come into collision with the defensive line, which had the musketry advantage. The Allied left flank was pushed back until Wellington ordered a counterattack, reinforced by units from Byng and Stubbs, an onslaught which sent the enemy sprawling back into the valley and to the safety of their own ridge, although stiff fighting took place to retain the Spanish-held hill.

Although four hours of daylight remained, Soult did not return to the attack. He had already suffered as many as 4,000 casualties; but those of the Allies were also heavy: some 2,650. The French were in a hazardous situation, having run out of rations. While attending to their wounded next day, and while Soult was making up his mind what to do, Wellington had ordered Hill to take up a position near Lizaso, where he might receive support from the Light Division (approaching Irurtzun), which would frustrate D’Erlon’s approach; Conroux’s Division was savaged in his pre-emptive attack on the 6th Division, which had by now entered the Ulzama valley from the west. Meanwhile, artillery and ammunition was arriving and being hauled to the summit of Cole’s ridge.

Ominous sounds of movement were heard before dawn on the 30th. As day broke, the bulk of Soult’s army was seen hurrying up both the Arga and Ulzama valleys, although some units were also moving towards the village of Sorauren itself, which, together with ‘Clausel’s Ridge’, was now subjected to a vigorous bombardment prior to a coordinated attack from Cole’s Ridge.

Maucune’s Division was effectively wiped out; but Foy’s units, in and near Zabaldica, were able to extract themselves from the hazardous position they found themselves between Cole and Picton, and flee north. The only troops retreating comparatively unscathed from Sorauren were those retiring up the Ulzama valley, although losing many prisoners en route.

For the remainder of their retreat, see latter part of Map 38.
His presence immediately recognised by welcoming shouts of ‘Douro’ from Campbell’s Portuguese.

The 28th was coincidentally the fourth anniversary of Talavera.

With the village of Beunza beyond Hill’s left wing.

In this action, Pack was wounded, and replaced by Pakenham.