

Hash Report

Run 226 – The Orthwaite Salient

Hare: Brother Henry

Michael Gove will probably disagree with this but attitudes to Sunday's Hash were polarised between the Officer Class and the footsoldiers on the ground.

Brother Henry set the pack off with rousing words from Henry V, portraying the coming ordeal as somehow noble. For the troops it was more Ypres than Agincourt as these lines from Wlilfred Owen (from Dulce et Decorum est pro Patria Hashing) say only too vividly:

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
Till on the haunting flares fells we turned our backs,
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.

There was a feeling of optimism about the walking and running packs. The first hash of the year and we were all certain it was going to be all over by Christmas, well at least 12.30. There was a spring in the step despite the arctic wind as hashers old and new gathered by the roadside. The Recruiting Officer showed some initial concern about Sam, bright eyed and full of get up and go, but after he successfully lied about his age, he was duly conscripted.

Stan disgraced the uniform by eating the CO's cap but before a court martial could be convened, the cry of On On sent the troops over the top.

After crossing various fields and paths the pack entered what was left of Peter Wood after the previous day's bombardment and once more it was back into the mud and slime of the trail. Someone once remarked 'Isn't it strange that farmers always put the gates in the muddiest parts of the field?' and somehow the logic was irrefutable on a day like that.

Brother Henry did a superb job of keeping the pack together with a number of regroupings and it was on to the Caldbeck Road which was a welcome respite with some firmer footing for half a mile or so. The road signs showed that Tipperary was a damn sight closer than the On In but nonetheless we soldiered on. Meanwhile the walking pack had aborted their mission early but navigated a safe route home.

There was disappointment in the ranks as the trail missed Overwater Hall, noted as one of the finer fleshpots to rival even Armentieres or Poperingen, and there was still no rest as we met Little Tarn for the first time and then finally down and back to base.

It was a day when boys turned into men, women turned into men and hashers turned into the pub with more appreciation than usual. When we got home, muddy washing was hung out (and it was a good drying day in that wind) on the Siegfried Line and there was a challenge to a game of football by whoever we were fighting against.

Medals should be awarded to all those who turned up, white feathers are in the post for those who failed to be there and there is a mention in this dispatch for Brother Henry who single-handedly set the trail on several occasions against overwhelming odds – a Great Run, in fact the run to end all runs?

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