

HEADQUARTERS
629TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION
APO 230, US ARMY

26 January 1945

SUBJECT: Combat Experience Report

TO : AT Officer, VII Corps, APO 307, US Army.

The Battle of Sadsot Alias The Battle of Sad Sack.

The evening of 27-28 December 1944 seemed the same as any other as the men around the Company CP rolled out their bed-rolls and went to sleep. A call had alerted the unit to the fact that an enemy patrol was moving in the general direction of the Company CP. Later a call was received calling off the alert as the patrol was unaccounted for. However, at 0200 we were awakened by mortars, landing uncomfortably close. Thirty minutes later Pvt. Jim Colbert of Edwardsville, Indiana alerted everyone, because of small arms fire growing louder and louder. In remarkably short time, Capt. Charles Grimsbaw, of Shawnee, Oklahoma and 1st Lt. Anthony Covatta, of Louisville, Kentucky, had a perimeter defense set up around the house. Even the company T-2 was pressed into service, being put out as the point. Machine-guns firing from hastily erected ground-mounts were pouring an incessant stream of lead into the enemy, aided by cooks, mechanics, and supply personnel firing rifles and carbines which appeared from unknown sources.

The Jerries had already burned two houses to the ground and were advancing towards the one that was the CP for Co A of the 629th TD's.

It was our good fortune that three destroyers just returned for a rest (?), were near. Sgt. Ralph Raborg, of Richmond, Virginia, and his crew kept hammering .50 caliber death into the woods filled with the Kraut raiders. Sgt. Al Lipino, of Baltimore, Maryland, and his crew also accounted for many.

For over two hours, the tiny village of Sadsot sounded like a basic training machine gun range, but the out-numbered headquarters platoon wouldn't admit the Germans were getting the upper hand. T/5 Barney Young, of Lancaster, Ohio and Cpl. Bill Blue, of Greenfield, Indiana, threw the knockout punches in the form of three-inch shells. Fired point-blank at a range of 300 yds, the HE was hitting directly in front of the enemy. Evidently the Huns hadn't anticipated anything as potent as that back in a CP area. Their screams of pain and confusion were audible over the din of battle. From that point on, there was no doubt as to the outcome. Welcomed assistance in the form of two companies of paratroopers from the 509th Para Bn arrived between 0430 and 0500.

At 0900 the firing was still sporadic, but it was possible to venture out to see the results of the nocturnal adventure. The final count was 187 dead Jerries. Add to this the 60 prisoners sent to the PW cage, and the fact that not one of our men received a scratch----yes, it could be called a successful evening. All in all, over a hundred rounds of 3" HE, 1200 rounds .30 Cal, MG, 4000 rounds of .50 Cal, 6 rockets and an unknown amount of rifle, pistol, and carbine ammunition were fired. Later estimates of enemy were between 400 and 500 men from the 25th and 26th Pz Regiments.

For the Commanding Officer:

JAMES A DEER

Major, FA (TD)