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**THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE**  
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Hist Battle of Argentan - 305th Engr Bn



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**ROOM MB-858 PENTAGON**

Aug 44

# HISTORY OF THE *Battle of Argentan* 305TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION

## 1. Original unit.

- Designation: 305th Engineer Combat Battalion
- Date of organization: 15 July 1942
- Place of organization: Camp Forrest, Tennessee
- Authority for organization: T/O 5-15 as amended by T/O 5-15, dated 15 July 1943.
- Sources from which personnel was obtained: Cadre from 12th Engineer Combat Battalion and Selective Service Draft.

## 2. Changes in organization: Organized under T/O 5-15 as amended by T/O 5-15 dated 15 July 1943.

## 3. Strength, commissioned and enlisted.

- At beginning of period: 1 August 1944: 29 officers, 3 Warrant officers, and 600 enlisted men.
- Net increase each month: For month of August 1944: 2 officers.
- Net decrease each month: For month of August 1944: None.
- At end of period: 31 August 1944: 31 officers, 3 Warrant officers, and 600 enlisted men.

## 4. Stations

- Golborne Park, England until 6 August 1944.
- Thereafter, through France from Utah Beachhead East to Challans, France.

## 5. Marches

- Purpose: To force the retreat or capture of the German Military occupying France.
- Length of daily march.

<u>Length of march</u>	<u>Points between which marched</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Weather &amp; Roads</u>
6 miles (by foot)	From: Utah Beachhead To: Transit Area	6 Aug.	Weather: Clear Roads: Gravel
12 miles (motor)	From: Transit Area To: St. Jores, France	7 Aug.	Weather: Clear Roads: Pavement
45 miles (motor)	From: St. Jores, France To: E of Avrenches	8 Aug.	Weather: Clear Roads: Pavement
75 miles (motor)	From: E of Avrenches To: SE of Montsurs	9 Aug.	Weather: Clear Roads: Pavement
20 miles (motor)	From: SE of Montsurs To: SW of Conlie	11 Aug	Weather: Clear Roads: Gravel
32 miles (motor)	From: SW of Conlie To: E of St. Mars	13 Aug	Weather: Rain — Roads: Pavement
23 miles (motor)	From: E of St. Mars To: S of Jublains	15 Aug	Weather: Rain — Roads: Pavement
46 miles (motor)	From: S of Jublains To: S of Montrae	17 Aug	Weather: Fair Roads: Pavement
9 miles (motor)	From: S of Montrae To: S of Almeneches	18 Aug	Weather: Fair Roads: Pavement
388 miles (motor)	From: S of Almeneches To: NE of Villesneaux	26 Aug	Weather: Fair Roads: Pavement
28 miles (motor)	From: NE of Villesneaux To: NW of Challans	28 Aug 30 Aug	Weather: Fair Roads: Pavement

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<u>Length of March</u>	<u>Points between which marched</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Weather &amp; Roads</u>
40 miles (motor)	From: NW of Challons To: SW of Laheyecourt	31 Aug 1 Sept	Weather: Fair Roads: Pavement

#### 6. Campaigns.

- a. Name of: Battle of Argentan
- b. Duration: 3 days
- c. Purpose: To drive the Germans out of the pass where they were dug in at Argentan.
- d. Authority ordering: Headquarters, 80th Infantry Division.

#### 7. Battles.

- (1) a. The Battle of Argentan is the only prominent one for the month. The strength of the opposing forces is unknown and the state of preparedness, German 88's apparently were the predominating weapon. The morale of the Germans was low and discipline was poor.
- b. Many mines had been previously planted by the Germans in this sector; road blocks were numerous, keeping the Engineers busy in this respect. The Engineers were never employed as Infantry during this phase, however, 49 German prisoners of war were taken and evacuated by us.
- (2) Elements Affecting Action
  - a. Engineer reconnaissance was outstanding from our S-2 and much valuable information was obtained from the French civilians. In one instance, a civilian reported the exact location, by map, of 11 mines planted in the Argentan sector.
  - b. The attitude of the civilians here, except in one or two instances, was cooperative and friendly, and their attitude had a demoralizing effect on the Germans.
  - c. The terrain through the Argentan sector was hilly and scattered small forests existed. \*
- (3) Action
  - a. Headquarters to which unit was assigned: Headquarters, 80th Infantry Division, 1 mile South of Almenèches, (352138), 1:50,000.
  - b. Mission: Our's was solely the Engineer mission. Bridges were built, roads swept for mines, road blocks cleared, narrative is attached hereto.
  - c. Communications were maintained successfully with four (4) SCR 284 radios, and by telephone.
  - d. Not applicable.
  - e. Not employed.
  - f. Supply was maintained 100% efficiently through the entire phase. Later, however, gasoline became a problem since its sole means of transport depended upon truck movement (all railroads were out).
  - g. Casualties were slight compared to our accomplishments; only 2 enlisted men were killed and 13 wounded.

#### 8. Commanding officers in important engagements.

- a. Engagement: Battle of Argentan
- b. Names of officers:
  - (1) Battalion Commander: Major A. E. McMillan
  - (2) Executive Officer: Captain Charles G. Spohn
  - (3) Assistant Division Engineer: Captain William S. [redacted]

(4) Company Commanders:

- (a) Captain JULIUS C. ZEL, Company "A".
- (b) Captain ROBERT C. MARSHALL, Company "B".
- (c) Captain ALFRED E. WRENN, Company "C".

9. Losses in action; officers and men. (Month of August 1944)

- a. Engagement: Battle of Argentan
- b. Names.
- c. Killed.
  - (1) PFC George Baker
  - (2) Tec 4th Frank Rishaw
- d. Wounded: 13 enlisted men.
- e. Missing: 2 enlisted men.
- f. 49 Prisoners of War were taken.

10. None.

11. Photograph of Argentan (after battle) attached.