

HEADQUARTERS  
3RD UNITED STATES ARMY  
FORT SAM HOUSTON, TEXAS

17 February 1943.

General Orders No. 19

Section IV.

".....is hereby given authority to activate the 295th  
Engineer Combat Battalion....."

This is the story of a battalion, a baby of World War II. It was conceived in Texas, and born in Camp Shelby, Mississippi. Its life blood was drawn from New England and the Middle Atlantic States. Its cadre, the non-commissioned officers who moulded the unit into a functioning force, came from the 11th Engineer Combat Regiment then stationed in the Panama Canal Zone. The officers came from all over the United States.

There was no history, no great tradition that the battalion had to live up to; it was formed to do a job in a world at war. There was no celebration when the unit was activated on 3 March 1943. Work started immediately. The clerks, musicians, coal-miners, laborers, college men, schoolboys, sons, brothers, and fathers, civilians all, came from the induction centers, got off the trains, and were assigned to companies. These assorted men were to become the 295th Engineer Combat Battalion.

The transition was not easy; it involved sweat, blood, and tears. The battalion commander and the S-3 burned the midnight oil preparing training schedules and performing other executive tasks. The S-4 harried supply sources for materiel; the men were feverishly engaged in the intricacies of close-order drill, making beds the Army Way, and all the other details that go to make Basic Training. There were many who could not stand the gaff, and many who decided that, by hook or by crook, they would get out. Some did, but those that remained knew that their job would be hard and they buckled down to it.