

525th Port Battalion Duties Questions and Analysis

In an effort to keep the military fully supplied with materiel from the United States, port battalions moved into close proximity of the war zone to provide not only supplies but also to construct various facilities. Therefore, it was important for port battalion commanders to know where the combat units were located in order to keep the supplies moving in a timely fashion. To supply the initial battles of Sicily and Italy, port battalions were located in Great Britain and North Africa. As the war moved into France and Germany, the North African battalions followed the combat units. George B. Davis was a member of the 525th Port Battalion which served to supply the war efforts in Sicily, Salerno, and Anzio from March 1944 to February 1945 when the battalion moved to Southern France. The 525th Port Battalion followed the combat troops into Germany to work with transfer units, to guard German prisoners of war, and to build necessary facilities.

Directions: You are a soldier with the 525th Port Battalion in Mole Millerand, Oran, Algeria. Supply ships have arrived from the United States. You must unload the cargo, organize the supplies, and disperse needed items to each location. American soldiers are located in Sicily, Salerno, and Anzio, Italy, as well as France, and Germany. Use the map of the Rome-Arno campaign to assist your decision making.

Use your knowledge of World War II and port battalions to answer the questions to the best of your ability with your partner. The supply list has been provided to assist you in making critical decisions regarding which supplies should be sent to troops and when each shipment should be sent.

ARMAMENTS	TRANSPORTATION PARTS	FOOD	MEDICAL SUPPLIES	CLOTHING	NON-ESSENTIALS
ammunition	gasoline	k-rations	penicillin	gloves	cigarettes
rifles	tires	water	bandages	socks	gum
explosives	spare parts	canned goods	cotton swabs	long underwear	pencils/pens
knives	oil	dried goods	stretchers	shirts	mail
handguns	transmission	fruit	needles	pants	stationery
artillery	tools	meats	aspirin	coats	chocolates
		coffee		scarfs	

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Access Rome-Arno Campaign Map at

http://www.abmc.gov/sites/default/files/interactive/interactive_files/ROME_web/index.html

1. On the Prelude section of the Rome-Arno Campaign, maneuver the map so that you can locate the 525th Port Battalion stationed in Oran, Algeria.
2. On September 9, 1943, combat troops are no longer fighting in Sicily. General Patton is still stationed in Palermo awaiting orders to move to England.
 - What kind of supplies will these troops need on a daily basis?
 - How often should shipments be sent to Sicily?

Consider this:

American combat troops landed at Salerno September 9, 1943, which was the beginning of the Allied Italian Campaign. By January 1944, Allied armies faced the Germans just north of Naples at the Gustav Line, the section of Italy between Salerno and Anzio that stretched across Italy from the western to the eastern coast. The Allies' goal was to reach Rome, expel the Germans, and liberate the Italians.

3. As the combat troops fight through the winter
 - What supplies will these troops need?
 - Why would clothing shipments change for the combat soldiers?
 - Explain how the supplies for Salerno are different from the ones shipped to General George Patton and his troops in Sicily.
 - The Quartermaster must decide where cargo is sent: how does he determine which supplies are a priority?

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4. Allied Armies arrived in Rome in June of 1944. Patton and his soldiers still remained in Sicily, while others prepared for D-Day in Great Britain.
- Should the 525th Port Battalion stay in Oran to distribute supplies to the combat troops in Italy?
 - Study the ABMC map and consider the following:
 - If the 525th Port Battalion is moved, what would be the next most logical port location?
 - How much further do the supply ships have to travel from the United States to the new port?
 - Is it worth the time to move, since all buildings and dock equipment must be constructed at the new location? Explain your reasoning.
 - Why would it be more advantageous to remain in Oran until the combat troops move into Northern Italy and France? Why not?

Consider this:

In August 1944, the Allied combat troops attacked Southern France in Operation Dragoon. General Dwight D. Eisenhower deemed southern France an important staging point as battalions could easily supply combat troops from this location. By September two ports, Marseille and Toulon, were opened for use. The 525th Port Battalion moved into Marseille in February 1945 from Algeria via Italy. The battalion followed the combat troops into Germany and became part of the Continental Advance Section, CONAD, which maintained the highways for transporting supplies in and around Germany to combat units. The 525th Port Battalion also took on the responsibility of guarding two German Prisoner of War companies.

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5. When the 525th Port Battalion arrived in Germany the soldiers took charge of Prisoners of War companies. Of the following list of facilities, prioritize and briefly explain why each building is necessary to accommodate not only the prisoners but also the combat troops and the battalion itself.

Facility options: barracks, schools, hospital, latrines, mess hall, recreational buildings, garages, warehouses, church.

Consider this:

As part of a Transfer Unit with CONAD, the 525th Port Battalion unloaded supply trucks, organized materiel, and then reloaded other trucks. Drivers would drive 12-hour shifts night and day to deliver necessary cargo to combat units. General Eisenhower recognized the critical role transportation units played in the war effort when he stated, "In any war, there are two tremendous tasks. That of the combat troops is to fight the enemy. That of the supply troops is to furnish all the material to insure victory. The faster and farther the combat troops advance against the foe, the greater becomes the battle of supply" (U.S. Army Transportation Museum).

6. Why should the U.S. Army provide a separate unit to transport supplies rather than have each combat unit have its own trucks and drivers?