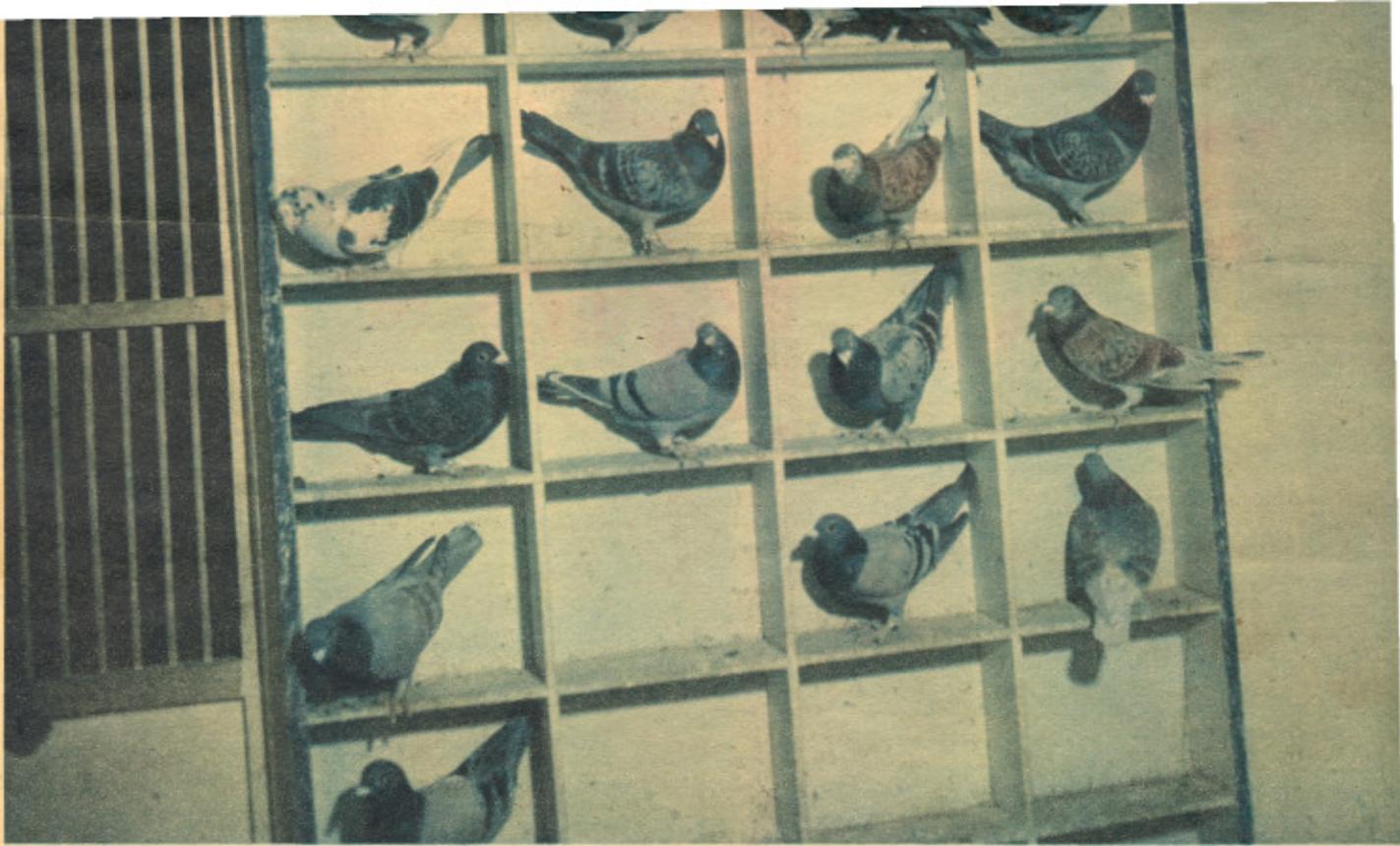


COLOR PHOTOS BY PORTER



Awaiting eviction notice at Army's last pigeon loft at Ft. Monmouth. Army had 54,000 carrier pigeons in W



Otto Meyer, technical adviser of the Signal Corps Pigeon Breeding and Training Center, Ft. Monmouth, with two of 16 remaining hero birds at loft. "G. I. Joe", at left, saved British brigade in Italy in World War II; "Yank" carried important messages for Gen. George Patton in Tunisia.

PIGEONS

(Continued From Preceding Page)

Mr. Russo, as well as other civilian breeders, resents the implication that the pigeons have lost their value for military use. Many have worked with the birds in combat and feel that the Army is being shortsighted and forgetful of the part they played in both world wars and the Korean conflict.

DURING the Mediterranean campaign in World War II, according to Signal Corps records, the carrier pigeon was the only means of communication available to ground forces on 20 different occasions. The airborne carriers carried 215 "urgent," "secret" and other vital messages during a 46-day period in the Tunisian campaign.

The Army experimented with use of carrier pigeons as far back as 1850. The birds were first used in combat by the 5th Infantry on duty fighting Indians in the Dakotas in 1878. In this early experiment the pigeons fell prey to the large number of hawks in the area and their effectiveness was greatly reduced. Today the pigeons are trained to fly above the hawks and their losses from this cause are negligible.

The experiments were discontinued until 1888 when a loft was built at Key West, Fla. Some birds were used by Gen. Pershing's troops on the Mex-

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