

sigscene

News from U. S. Army Signal Center and School



Some Reunions Are For The (Signal Corps) Birds

FORT MONMOUTH, NJ.—"JOHNATHAN LIVINGSTON SEAGULL, huh? Playing the Post theater!"

The remark, uttered derisively, drifted down from the roof ridges along Harmon Avenue. HARMON AVENUE? Good heavens! Wasn't this PIGEON AVENUE back in 1957?

The temporary buildings in the 600 Area looked even more temporary in the gloom of the darkening afternoon. Inside, sweated employees complied with the General's request to lower the thermostats. "Johnathan Living..." a faint whirr of wings was almost lost to the ear in the "whoosh" of a gas-saving bicycle heading for Brigade headquarters.

"Apparently they thought we'd never come in on the old post again. If they HAD to change the name, why didn't they call it Meyer Avenue? Wonder where good, old Otto" is nowadays? Heard he booked for Virginia when he retired... bet he didn't go for that street name change. Well, c'est la guerre, as we used to say in the Big One... c'mon, let's go join the girls over on the radar antennas. They're inspecting our so-called replacements."



"... good old Otto Meyer..." (US Army Photo)

"JOHNATHAN LIVINGSTON SEAGULL!" This time the derision was full-throated. "How did that guy rate a book AND a movie, anyway?"

"Now, Joe, you mustn't spoil our reunion with bitterness. Don't be so hard on the youngster. After all, WE had our share of recognition in our day. You're still among the biggest attractions in the Signal Corps Communications Museum, and everybody asks about us." Lady Karen performed a dainty pirouette on the outer rim of the big electronic saucer. "And remember the excitement here the day we ETS'd and went off to all those zoological gardens and museums? Why, nearly every paper in the country carried the story."

"Yeah, you're right, but when I think of that flyboy being in the movies and playing THIS post theater, it sure ruffles my feathers. Bet he couldn't carry birdseed to the West Gate!"

Seeming not to hear his reply, Lady Karen wondered aloud if any of her old human buddies were still around. Perhaps they'd remember the 31 missions she flew under fire in the Italian campaign. And that was long before women's lib, too!

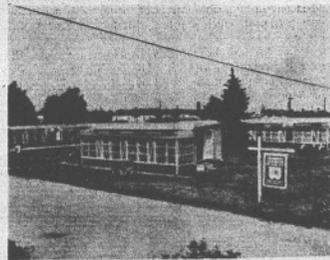
"But, Karen, I can understand how Joe feels about the fess they're making over young Seagull," said Burma Queen, musingly. "Golly, I was only two months old when that bomber crew parachuted me behind the lines. In WW Two we didn't have the time to fool around practicing swoops and swirls. I had to fly 325 miles across some of the highest

peaks in Burma. And the weather there! Just impossible! I made it in nine hours, though." She nibbled a seed that had fallen on the supports of the antenna, and as though forgetting the others, murmured "Yes, it would be nice to see some of the guys who were saved the day I got that message through."

Their reveries were interrupted by Global Girl. Never keen on hanging around on electronic equipment, anyway, and anxious to see if she could get up to the old speeds that took her on far-flung flights across the Mediterranean, she suggested that they all dash over to SATCOM's radome and splash it up a bit just for the hell of it. Always a liberated female, she hated it when the others got weepy. If people wanted to know what SHE did in the Big One, they could darn well look it up in the Museum files. "It's all there," she muttered to herself as she streaked off the antenna.

Her suggestion to spatter the radome brought a burst of raucous laughter. Yank was reminded of a sentence in a Time magazine story when they'd been phased out here in '57: "As the Signal Corps pigeonnaires got ready to sell their charges to potential buyers, they held one sweet hope: One fine day all 1,000 well-trained birds would come home in on Fort Monmouth and settle daintily all over the electronics boys' fancy antennas." Smiling at the memory of that quote, and with his old pal, Apex, at his side, he joined the others on the flight to the radome.

Flying over the familiar terrain, Yank fought to suppress a lump in his throat. It had been great here when he had returned from overseas duty. He and Apex, the two Joes—G. I. and Jungle—and all the others, used to sit around the Churchill Loft and bat the breeze. He remembered how proud he felt when Otto or Sgt. Lucas** pointed him out to the endless groups of touring school children and told of how he'd flown the message announcing the fall of Gafsa in the Tunisian campaign. He and Caesar had been in that one. In fact, old "Caesar" had 44 combat flights under his wing, including a jaunt of some 300 miles across the Mediterranean.



"... we used to sit around the Loft here and..." (US Army Photo)

Now as they slowed for a landing on the radome, Yank glanced over his shoulder at the others. It was the first opportunity he'd had to see how many of his old buddies had checked in for the reunion.

He recognized C.O.D., Special Delivery, Pro Patria, Scoop, Eureka, Anzio Boy, and Geronimo. Lady Karen headed up the WAC unit—Burma Queen, Flipper, and Crossed Flags. He let an appreciative eye rest on Crossed Flags... "that little blue-check female," he thought, "is just as pert and pretty as she was when she was dodging bullets in the invasion of Southern France." It was the irrepressible Global Girl, however, who had them all in stitches. Busily

splashing up the radome, she was saying, "Nowadays, the media is the message, and we're sure getting it through."

He missed G. I. Joe and Jungle Joe. "Oh, they dropped off at the Museum in Myer Hall. With Seagull playing the post theater, and getting so much publicity, they wanted to check their personnel records." Geronimo spiraled in midair as he spoke. "Strange, but Joe must have forgotten that I was in a movie back in 1962. It was called 'The Pigeon That Took Rome,' with Charlton Heston and Elsa Martinelli. Of course, I was the star. I was retired then and living in Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle. That movie was fun and quite exciting, but nothing like those 30 jobs I flew back in the 40's. I remember, especially, that seven-day stint when our outfit crossed the Volturno River north of Naples... well, maybe my movie will make the late show one of these nights."



"... when Sgt. Lucas told how I carried the news from Gafsa..." (US Army Photo)

Meanwhile, back at the Museum, the two Joes had joined a large group of touring Cub Scouts. G. I. almost burst his pin feathers as Curator Ed. Norris*** began his commentary: "G. I. Joe," Ed was saying, "is believed to have made the most outstanding flight by a homing pigeon during World War Two. He carried the message from the British 10th Corps Headquarters which resulted in saving the lives of a thousand British soldiers. He flew 20 miles in 20 minutes. In 1946 the Lord Mayor of London personally presented him with the Dickin Medal for gallantry. And he later received Congressional recognition in this country."

Aaaaah... the memory of that trip to London! Joe ducked behind the Civil War display and wiped his eyes. Leave it to the British to put on such a good show! He remembered it as though it had been yesterday.

He was quartered here in the Churchill Loft, known as the Army's Pigeon Hall of Fame, when the word came that they wanted him in London for the ceremony. At first he was a little shook... surely the Signal Corps didn't expect him to fly the Atlantic at his age! They could just send that medal by mail! He was finished with fuss and feathers! He'd call the Veterans' Administration and complain! Duty be damned!

Otto and the other guys just laughed at his goings-on. They knew he was going VIP by plane via Paris. "Take it easy, Joe," they said, "you'll have your own quarters, your own rations, and copies of your papers." They were right, of course, and when he got to Paris... Wow!... the red carpet was out when they saw his letter from the French Consul in Washington. It commended him to the authorities

(Continued on next page)

Winged Shades Home In On Fort

in Paris and asked them to do all in their power to facilitate the journey of "ce Pigeon voyageur qui a rendu pendant la guerre des services certain à l'Armée Américaine." Ooo la la!

It was getting dark in the Museum; Ed and the Cub Scouts were gone. Joe knew he'd soon have to join the flock on the flight back into history... but he DID want to relive that glorious moment in London. In his mind's eye he saw the whole scene. There he was at the Tower, his cage emblazoned with the grand insignia of the United States Army Signal Corps... two Yeomen of the Guard, in their Tudor uniforms, standing on either side... more field marshals, wing commanders, and Embassy staff members than you could shake a stick at....

Col. H. Caskeet-James, resplendent in full uniform, stepped forward and stated: "This is the first occasion that the Dickin Medal has been awarded to an animal or bird other than British." Then he read the citation... while Joe stood at attention (they didn't call him G. I. for nothing and he wasn't letting them down!)... all his breeding and his Army training came to the forefront... he thought of his buddies back at Fort Monmouth... of his gallant World War One predecessors: the glorious Cher Ami, Kaiser, Spike... he thought of Otto Meyer and Kind, old Sgt. Harry Lucas... and most of all he thought of those British boys at Colvi Vecchia....



"There he was at the Tower...." (US Army Photo)

With misty eyes he heard Col. James say "I now have the great pleasure in asking Major-General Sir Charles Keightley, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., late commander of the Fifth British Corps in Italy, to present the Medal to G. I. Joe."

It was done. The great honor with its green, brown, and blue ribbon was slipped around his neck....

It was 4:15. The night duty CO had taken up his post at the Meyer Hall reception desk. He'd best get going. The flock was waiting for him in the trees on the Avenue of Memories... as he joined them and flew away, the words were unmistakable....

"Johnathan Livingston WHO?"

*****Otto Meyer**, Technical Advisor and commander of the Army Pigeon Service Agency of 54,000 birds in World War II. Former resident of Fair Haven, N.J. Now residing in Virginia.

****Sgt. 1st Class Harry W. Lucas**, veteran pigeonaire. Reported to Ft. Monmouth from Camp Crowder, Mo., in 1946. Retired here 5 Jul 61 at age 74. Former resident of Oceanport, N.J.

*****Ed Norris**, Curator, Signal Corps Museum, Fort Monmouth. Retired master sergeant, 317th Signal Construction Bn. Resident of New Shrewsbury.

Rhode Island Reserves end post training Saturday

A 72-man detachment of the 455th General Hospital, Warwick, R.I., will complete their two weeks' annual training at Fort Monmouth this Saturday.

The 455th is the third of eleven Army Reserve hospital units scheduled to train here this summer.

It is the first time the 455th has trained at Fort Monmouth. Previous annual training sites included Fort Meade, Md., Fort Belvoir, Va., and Camp Drum, N.Y.

At Fort Monmouth, the 455th reservists have been involved in parallel training at Paterson Army Hospital.

The range of duties performed during training includes activities in the operating room, pharmacy, lab, dental, nursing and food service sections. The training has been characterized by a close interfacing of reservists and active duty personnel, which is in line with the new "One Army" concept.

Home base of the 455th is the Lloyd S. Cooper, III, Reserve Center, Warwick, R.I. The unit's weekly training schedule includes on-the-job training at six local hospitals, the Warwick Community Center, and Ladd School, a state facility for retarded children. The unit also provides public

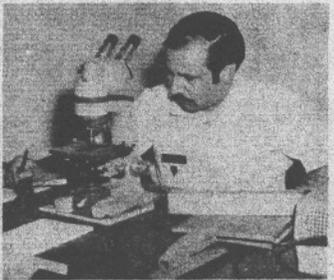
service in the form of free X-ray and immunization clinics and participation in local health fairs.

The second section of the 455th General Hospital, consisting of about 140 reservists, are assigned to concurrent annual training at Walston Army Hospital, Fort Dix, where they are augmenting and assisting the regular Army staff.

The new commander of the 455th is Col. Abraham G. Kaufmann, a physician at the Veteran's Administration Hospital, Brockton, Mass. The acting commander during annual training is Lt. Col. John T. Tierney, who is Assistant Director of Health for the State of Rhode Island in civilian life.



LAB SPECIALIST—Spec. 4 Frank H. Sippy, an Army Reserve lab specialist from Coventry, R.I., and a teacher in civilian life, conducts blood gas analysis at Paterson Army Hospital. (US Army Photo)



TECHNICIAN—Spec. 6 William A. Belnerhassett, a lab technician from North Providence, R.I., performs blood smear studies at Paterson Army Hospital. (US Army Photo)



FILLING ORDER—A civilian pharmacist from Warwick, R.I., and an Army reservist with the city's 455th General Hospital, Spec. 4 Kenneth A. Powell, (seated) dispenses prescriptions at Paterson Army Hospital. At right is a member of Fort Monmouth hospital staff. (US Army Photo)



ON-TRAINING a major part of COBET, is given some practice as (from left to right) PO1 James Forrester, C&L Co., SP4 John R. Hamilton, K Co., and SP5 Jimmy L. ... B. Co., inspect and test a test tone generator with an oscilloscope and multimeter. Instructors William Economos and SFC Quinton T. Gerds look on. (US Army Photo)

schools a more effective method of teaching basic electronics and to develop a standard course of instruction that will prepare the student to begin any of the Army's electronic equipment repair courses.

Specific objectives derived from this goal were to improve the effectiveness and reduce the cost of training electronic technicians for the services, to reduce the time-ratio between schooling and productive service to the Army and to integrate these essentials into a complete training program geared to the lowest practical aptitude level.

Perhaps the most unique aspect of the course as COBET developed resulted in five basic concept statements as follows:

And that the course conclude in tests designed to ascertain the student's ability to perform required tasks under specified conditions and within the terminal performance objective time and achievements standards.

Much of the COBET classroom equipment was shipped to Fort Jackson in 1973. However, COBET instruction at Ft. Monmouth was retained to train students converting from one MOS to another, students of allied nations, and certain students from the other services. At the same time COBET Division instructors can provide quick-response feedback to COBET Development Division course designers on modifications to the course that can only be determined during its implementation in the classroom.

15 May 75
A New Life

DALAT is the South Vietnam National Military Academy. It has a four-year training program similar to West Point. In the reflective poem that follows, one of the South Vietnamese officers, all of whom are DALAT graduates, and who are enrolled in the C-E School's 53-week systems engineer course, has expressed his deep feeling for his Alma Mater, his shock, sorrow, and sense of loss, and his resolve to meet the future with determination as he faces a new life.

It Is But A Souvenir

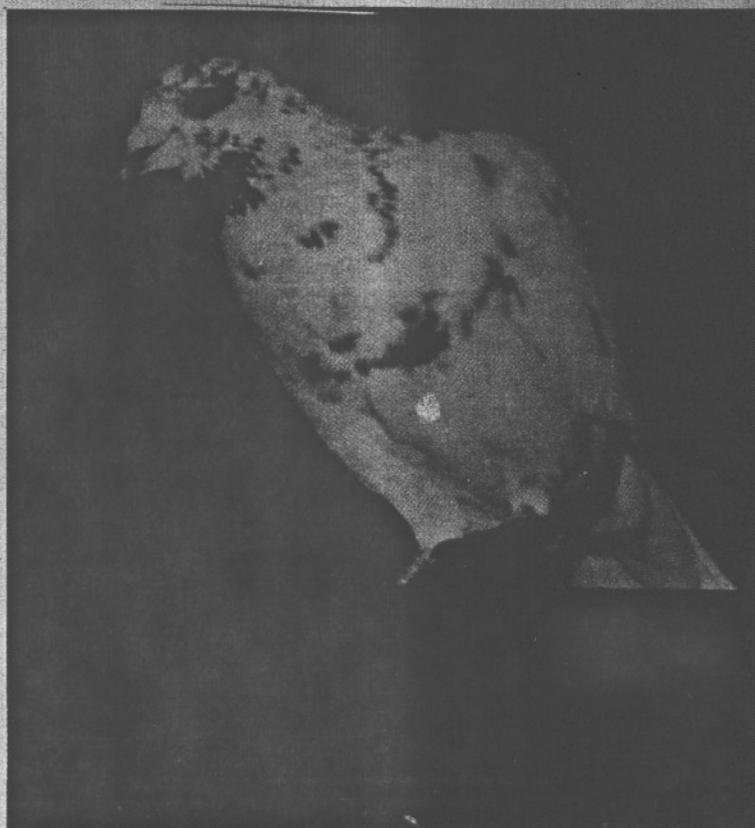
DALAT, two syllables lovely and absolute!
 But now, they are indifferent, strange and acute!
 My heart is totally broken in sorrow
 What is the rest of my life and how is tomorrow?
 Now everything I got from you is but a souvenir
 Due to you I stayed in the Army almost twenty years!
 The love I gave you is eternal but it was forgotten
 Because the solemn area was taken by others for permanent
 Oh my heart, how sorrow it is!
 The tear is running through my pen and flooding all over like this

The worries piled up but the time is passing so slow
 And Spring wind is in front of the window
 Blowing slightly but can stab my heart!
 So I have no more absolute and smart!

DALAT, you are the first lover of my life
 But I know: Everything can stay only in a certain time
 Permits nobody think of it and goes away too fast
 So let's put behind everything which is in the past

Believe me I TRY TO MAKE A NEW LIFE
 I am sure you know the reason that I told you the like
 I am almost died once and I don't like to be in twice
 But I want to shout: "Now I have a REAL LIFE"

Fort Monmouth May 3rd, 1975



AN IMAGINARY STORY about a class reunion of Signal Corps pigeons at Fort Monmouth appeared in The Message last year just about this time. This year, the reunion was more than imaginary as an evidently well-read member of the real-life pigeon set decided to take a first hand look around the School and see what was happening on the old stomping grounds. SIGSCENE reporter, Sp4 Bob Miller was hastily dispatched to interview the full bird pigeon as soon as it started its unscheduled tour of the Signal Communications Museum in Myer Hall. Unfortunately, Sp4 Miller was badly in need of a refresher course in pigeonese and was only able to understand a coo here and a coo there. He concluded however, that it's a good thing we didn't write a reunion story about Hannibal's elephants. Sp5 Michael Harpold, also of the SIGSCENE staff, caught the banded bird in his camera lens as it seemingly searched out the display housing those two WW II heroes, GI Joe and Jungle Joe.

26th Armed Forces Day

ARMED FORCES DAY, celebrated on May 17 this year, all branches of the Armed Services. Although the powered, rapid-firing rifle has replaced the musket, Armed Forces Day stands as a reminder to today's soldier—that he has inherited something more valuable and more than any material handed down through 200 years of our nation's history. That something is the tradition of

courage, duty, and honor.

President Harry S. Truman, at the request of Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson, designated Armed Forces Day to be observed on "the third Saturday in May." The first Armed Forces Day was Saturday, May 20, 1950.

This 26th annual observance of Armed Forces Day is an

appropriate occasion for Americans to become better acquainted with their Armed Forces and to recognize the men and women who are serving their country.

This year's theme is: "American Forces—Vigilant, Vital, Volunteer." It illustrates the readiness of today's military men and women in a voluntary environment. (ANF)