

Dauntless Combat Pigeons Get Message Through

That was the title of the article published in the December 1943 Signal Corps Message. Pigeons were vital to communications during this era, with the Signal Corps using them from WWI, and into the Korean War. The Pigeon Service active at Fort Monmouth until its discontinuance in 1957. The article had the subtitle “Brave Birds Deliver Their Communications Despite Hazards and Wounds”, and depicted how the pigeons services were employed in battle.

Photo 1 = The photo-story begins with a member of the 828th Signal Pigeon Company arriving at Camp Edison (an outpost to Fort Monmouth). Here, Pigeoneers trained day and night in simulated battlefield conditions under the command of MAJ Joseph F. Spears.

Photo 2 = Pigeoneers hurried to set up the pigeons homes using their mobile pigeon lofts removed from the special trailer; they used combat training to camouflage the lofts.

Photo 3 = Furious resistance of the enemy and the need for silent communication placed great demands on the Pigeoneer who could find themselves in need of additional pigeons. Here they are sending a bird back to headquarters to request additional pigeons which would be flown to the area and parachuted down in special bird boxes.

Photo 4 = Birds could be requested by the front lines; they would be loaded into four-bird carriers and delivered by special messengers.

Photo 5 = At the front messages were placed in a small capsule attached to the bird's leg; a special box allowed this without removing the bird from the carrier. The bird was then released.

Photo 6 = Despite difficulties encountered on the way, possible injury by shot and shell, smoke and noise of battle, and natural obstacles, the pigeon would arrive at its home loft.

Photo 7 = Clasped by tender and knowing hands, the bird was relieved of the message, a messenger stands by to see that the message gets to its destination.

Photo 8 = Without delay, the message was hurried to message center.

The mission was accomplished! But not without the aid of those gentle little birds who performed a vital function for the Army.