

## Burma Queen – An Unsung Hero Pigeon

Always in search of information on Army communications programs, CECOM Historians recently discovered an article reprinted in the 1 December 1998 edition of *The Racing Pigeon Digest* (originally published January 1946 in the *Racing Pigeon Review* under the title “Army Pigeons: Hall of Fame”) that provides biographical information for some pigeon hero’s of WWII, including a pigeon named “Burma Queen.” The Army’s Signal Corps used pigeons for communications from WWI, and into the Korean War; to this end, the Pigeon Service was active at Fort Monmouth until its discontinuance in 1957.

“Burma Queen” a blue check hen carried Serial Number USA 44 SC 19071 was stationed at Burma during some of the heaviest fighting in that theater. She delivered a number of important messages, including a message that allied troops operating on the Thailand/Burma border of Burma had been attacked “by an overwhelming force of Japanese troops.” These forces had found it necessary to destroy their radios and codes to avoid capture, so they were out of touch with rear command.

A B-25 Mitchel Bomber was dispatched by the rear allied command post to attempt to spot and regain contact with the retreating troops. “Burma Queen” was aboard the bomber, and was parachuted to the “open arms of the troops below when they were found.” Although she was at the time only 5-months old, and had only been settled into her loft at the rear base for eleven weeks, she was able to return home with an “extremely important message” and complete her mission.

To carry out this mission, she was released at 0600 hours, and flew 320 miles over some of the highest mountains in Burma and arrived at her loft at 1500 hours. As this article states, her accomplishment was made all the greater by the fact that she was released 120 miles off the course she was trained to fly.” The article goes on to state that pigeoneers “themselves deemed this feat impossible, but “Burma Queen” proved to be a real champion Signal Corps pigeon.