

“Special Delivery – An Unsung Hero Pigeon

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.

Based upon information contained in an Article by Mr. Harry Squires, in the magazine *National Guard*, one of the components of the Pigeon Service was the 280th Signal Pigeon Company; the 280th was established in early 1941 by the Signal Corps out of Fort Monmouth to breed and train pigeons. The 280th was formed at Camp Clairborne, in Louisiana.

The article by Mr. Squires titled “When all Else Fails, Send a Pigeon” (*National Guard*, July 1991) provides biographical information for “hero pigeons”, including a pigeon named “Special Delivery.” Special Delivery’s story follows.

Special Delivery was a red male pigeon, of a kind widely used by the Engineer Water Supply Battalion in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations in Italy. There the carrier pigeons have been credited as being a major factor in maintaining successful water supply operations. As Mr. Squires explains, “the distant water points in that area frequently had no means of communication with company or battalion headquarters except by truck over miles of rough and sometimes insurmountable mountain roads.”

Special Delivery earned the distinguished record of having carried more than 20 “urgent messages for supplies and parts without a mishap and always displayed speed and courage.” As the article states, after the war, Special Delivery was housed in the “Churchill Loft.” The “Churchill Loft” was located at Fort Monmouth, and the home to a number of WWII hero pigeons.