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"Signal" by Pigeon

U. S. Army birds carry messages and maps where radio or telephone cannot operate

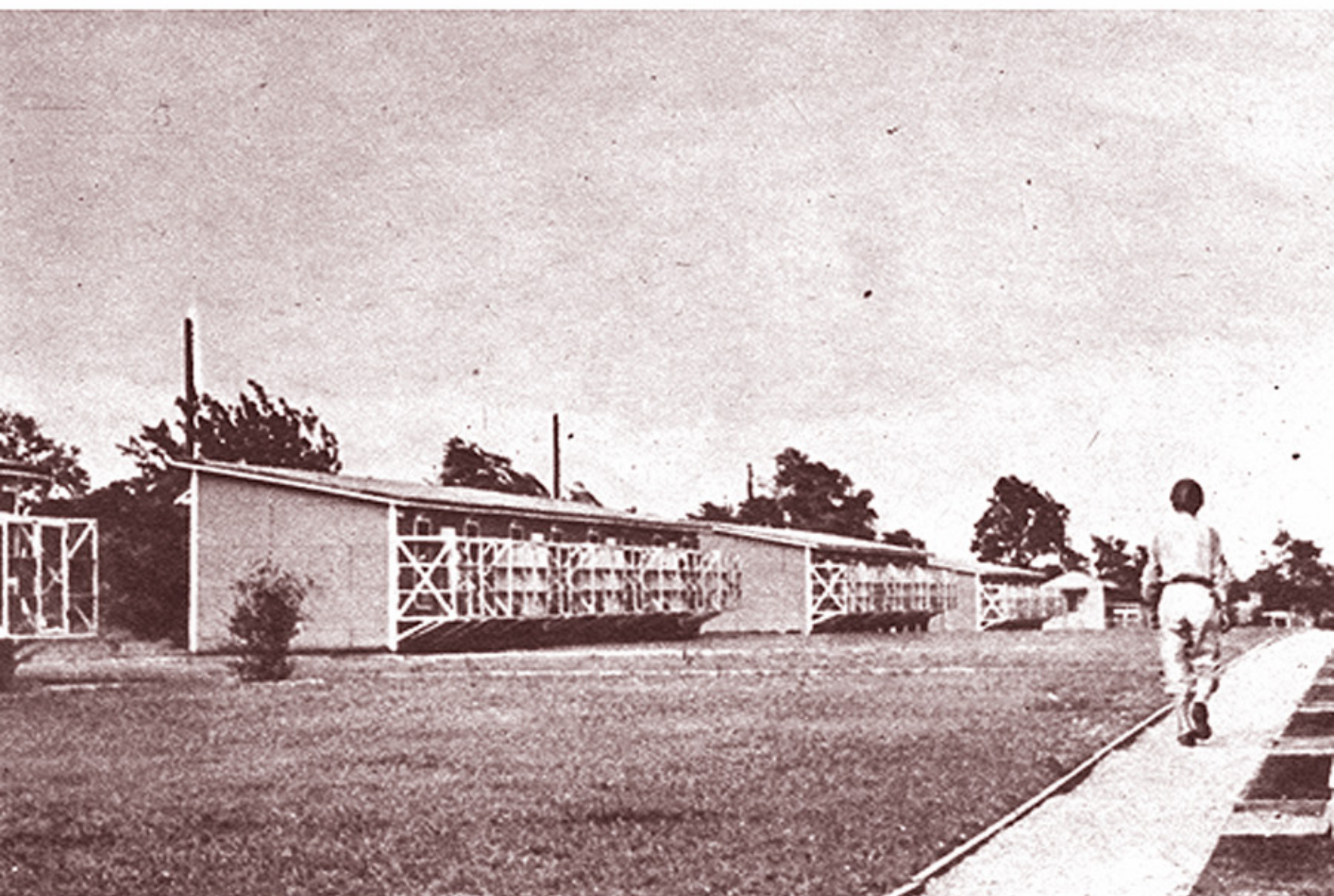


When our troops stormed and retook the town of Gafsa, Tunisia, they released a Signal Corps carrier pigeon named "Yank" who flew back to headquarters at Tebessa, Algeria—98 miles—in an hour and 52 minutes. Yank got there ahead of all other means of communication. He is only one of thousands of pedigreed birds bred and trained by our Signal Corps pigeoners for missions requiring absolute secrecy. When a bomber crash-lands behind the enemy lines the men dare not radio their position. They write it in code on a slip of paper, fasten it in a water-proof capsule to the leg of a pigeon and away he goes at 50 miles an hour. No one has ever shot down an Army pigeon, although many have returned wounded by shrapnel.

Since 1400 B. C. these birds have acted as couriers—they are the oldest instruments of war still in use. Although they form only a small part of our tremendous Signal Corps resources, the Army maintains a corps of expert pigeoners who have rendered their birds, by scientific training and breeding, 10 per cent stronger than those used in World War I.

Longest flight record of a U. S. Army bird is 1400 miles, covered in four days. A French Army pigeon made a journey of three weeks from France to its home loft in Indo-China—7,000 miles away.

War birds



LARGEST BREEDING AND TRAINING CENTER FOR UNCLE SAM'S FEATHERED COURIERS IS CAMP CROWDER, MISSOURI. BIRDS ARE HOUSED IN LOFTS SHOWN ABOVE



NIGHT FLIGHT: 14 years of experiment and breeding have given the U. S. Army a night flying pigeon. Here Staff Sergt. Charles Purpura releases one for test flight.



COMBAT TEAM of infantrymen starts on maneuvers with two pigeons in one of the new release boxes and equipment for sketching enemy positions. Birds released are seldom noticed by the enemy and are impossible to shoot down.

War birds



OBSERVER traces map of terrain, shows distribution of enemy forces and fortified positions. The tracing, and a covering message in code, is transmitted to the base by pigeon carrier. This method is 96 per cent reliable.



NEW RELEASE BOXES enable any soldier, with a few instructions, to use pigeons. A panel in the side of the box is opened, giving access to the pigeon's leg. A light plastic capsule containing the message is strapped on.



HEADING HOME: through a leafy window in the forest the messenger soars gracefully, starts on his journey. Longest pigeon flight on record was from France to Indo-China, 7,000 miles, which the bird covered in three weeks

War birds take part in air and sea operations



TAKE-OFF from bomber: bird is held facing the air-flow and released. "Signal by pigeon" cannot be intercepted.



PIGEON IS SEEN directly below the tail of the plane. As bomber pulls away from him, he circles once, then heads straight toward the home loft. Science can't explain homing instinct



RUBBER ARK SENDS FORTH A DOVE. BOMBER CREWS, FORCED DOWN AT SEA, REPORT POSITION BY COURIER. A RADIO WOULD BETRAY THEIR LOCATON TO ENEMY SUBS