

"G.I. JOE"

"G.I. JOE" is the most outstanding military pigeon in history and is credited with saving the lives of at least 100 British allies during World War II.

The British 56th Brigade was scheduled to attack the city of Colvi Vecchia, Italy, at 10 a.m., October 18, 1943. The U.S. Air Support Command was scheduled to bomb the city to soften the entrance for the British Brigade. The Germans retreated leaving only a small rear guard and as a result the British troops entered the city with little resistance and occupied it ahead of schedule.

All attempts to cancel the bombings of the city, made by radio and other means of communication, had failed. Little "G.I. JOE" was released with the important message to cancel the bombing. He flew 20 miles back to the U.S. Air Support Command base in 20 minutes and arrived just as our planes were warming up to take off. If he had arrived a few minutes later, it might have been a different story.

Gen. Mark Clark, Commanding the U.S. Fifth Army, estimated that "G.I. JOE" saved the lives of at least 1000 of our British allies.

In November 1946, "G.I. JOE" was shipped from Fort Monmouth, N.J. to London, England, where he was cited and awarded the Dickin Medal for gallantry by the Lord Mayor of London. "G.I. JOE" is the only bird or animal in the United States to receive this high award.

"G.I. JOE," a dark checker pied white flight cock, was hatched March 24, 1943, at the Pigeon Section in Algiers, Algeria, North Africa. Later he was taken to the Tunisian front, then to Bizerte, and from there to the Italian front. After World War II, "G.I. JOE" was housed in the Churchill Loft, U.S. Army's "Hall of Fame" at Ft. Monmouth, N.J., along with 24 other pigeon heroes.

In March of 1957, the remaining pigeon heroes were placed with different zoological gardens throughout the U.S.A. "G.I. JOE" was placed with the Detroit Zoological Gardens where he died June 3, 1961, at the age of 18. "G.I. JOE" was returned, mounted, and placed in the Historical Center, Meyer Hall, at Fort Monmouth, N.J.

--- Otto Meyer, U.S. Army (Retd.)

(Former Commander of the U.S. Army Pigeon Service)



"Old Sarge" Harry Lucas holding the famous G.I. Joe



American Racing Pigeon Union
P.O. Box 18465
Oklahoma City, OK 73154-0465
1-800-755-2778
www.pigeon.org

For more information, your local contact is: