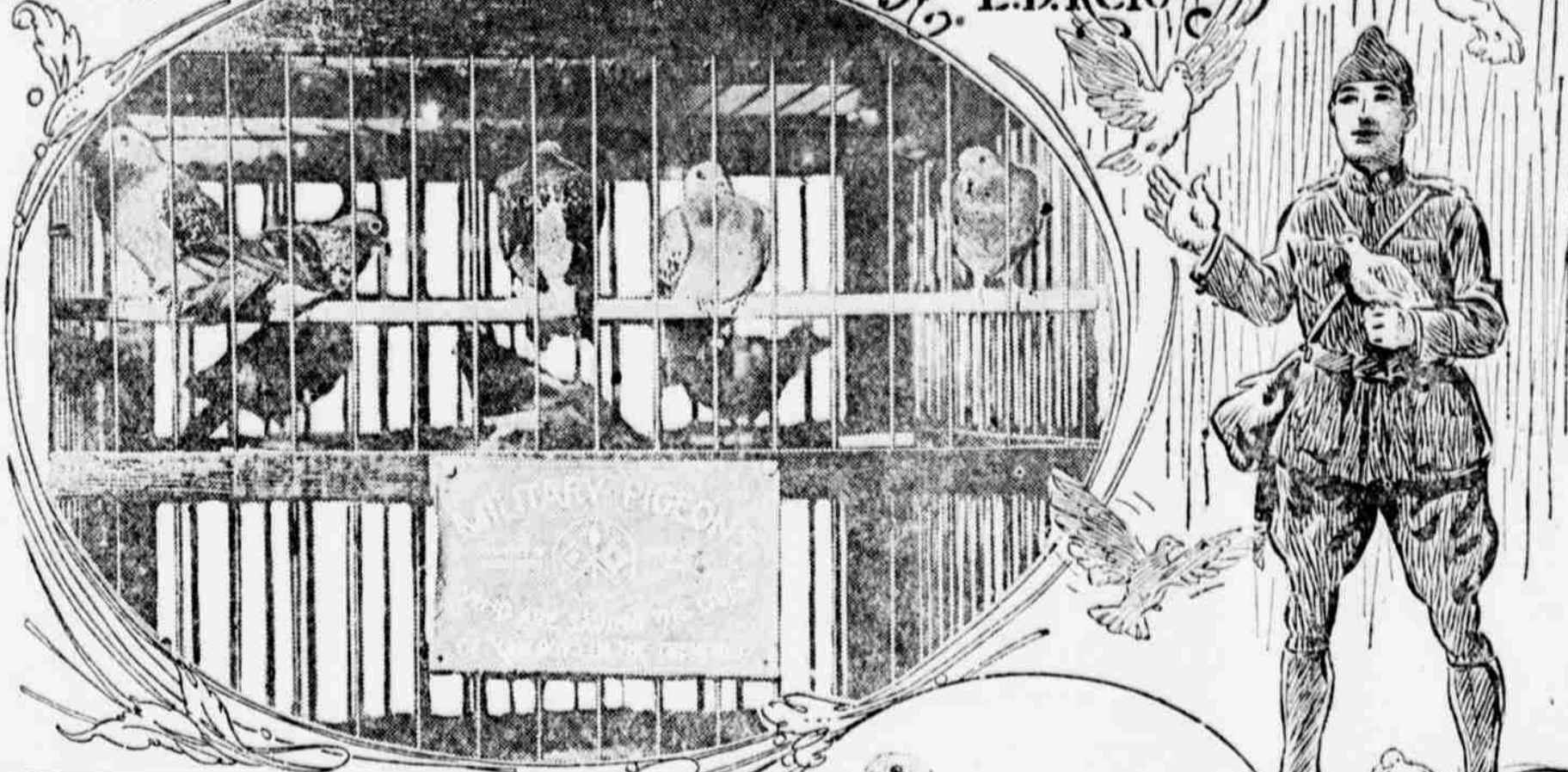


# Pigeons' Part in Winning War

By E.B. Reid



## Uncanny Instinct of Homers Saved Lives of Many Soldiers During Struggle Just Ended

**T**HE records of this war are replete with stories of the courageous work performed by carrier pigeons while saving the lives of our soldiers, but no incident better illustrates what they have accomplished than their activities in the battle of Bethancourt and Dead Man's hill. An entire French regiment was cut off from their comrades, completely surrounded for four days, and with no method of communicating word of their plight to the general command. That fourth night one of the men scouting in No Man's Land stumbled over a dead comrade on whose back was strapped a basket carrying two little pigeons that during the four-day battle had been safeguarded by the body of their caretaker. Tenderly the scout brought the basket and birds back to the colonel on the hill. Early the next morning messages were written, affixed to the legs of the birds, which, exhausted and dust-soiled, but imbued with indomitable spirit and pluck, were liberated—wafted into the air by the prayers and wishes of the regiment, bearing with them the only remaining hope for these thousands of men and the happiness of other thousands in their families at home. Shortly afterward both birds fluttered wearily into their loft back at headquarters; and in a scuffle ordered by the general the enemy was driven back and the regiment saved.

One of the officers of that regiment is now in Washington, and he has promised himself that now the war is over he will have a loft of the best birds he can get, and the best care and attention that is possible will be but a slight part of his measure of appreciation and gratitude to the little feathered messengers to whom he and his comrades owe their lives.

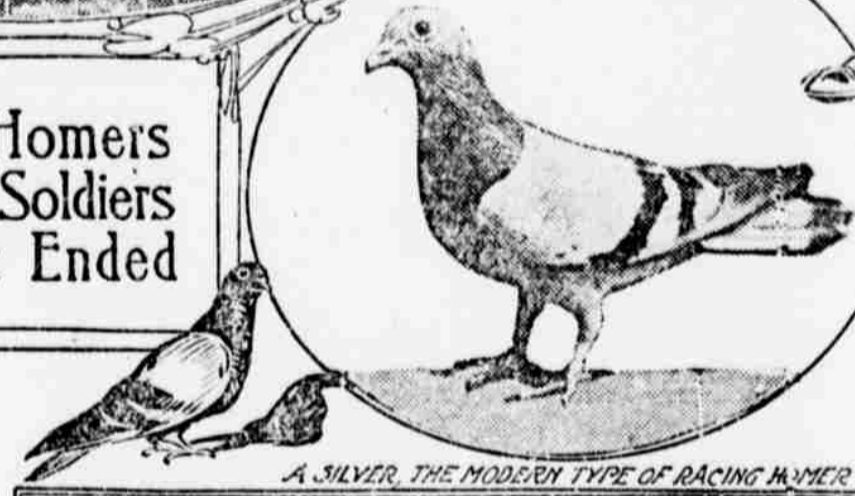
These little birds have been used in almost every conceivable way to get word back to the reserves or to headquarters when all other means of communication failed.

Carrier pigeons are not only used by the infantry and the navy, but are used frequently by the air service. At the Dunkirk hydroplane station they have an enviable record. There has not been a single accident to a plane, nor the loss of a plane in combat, where word of the occurrence was not brought back by the pigeons which are a part of the equipment of the planes. Instances of the value of the messengers could be multiplied without number, but it is more interesting to recount how these birds are bred, reared and housed under war conditions.

The pigeon's ability to do all of these wonderful tasks lies in its faculty of orientation, that is, its power to know as soon as it is released in what direction its home loft is and to fly directly to it. The perfection to which orientation is developed in the highly bred and trained homer was recently demonstrated at a pigeon fly conducted by the pigeon section of the signal corps, when 3,100 homing pigeons were released in Washington for a fly to New York city, 224 miles. To a single bird, these pigeons ran out of their coops and arose in the air with the speed of an express train, and after taking a half circle to get their bearing were off for New York. Every one of the pigeons was reported to have arrived promptly and the first arrival made the trip in 5 hours and 40 minutes. Surely it did not stop to read many sign posts on the way.

Just how the homing pigeon developed this power of orientation is a moot question, but it is certain that it has been cultivated through centuries until now it is almost uncanny. What guides the pigeon back to the loft where it first "took to the air" is a quality called by many names, and you will find that each person knows that he has the answer to the riddle. Some call it innate love of home; others attribute it to faculty, atmospheric conditions, sight, or memory. Personally, I cannot call it anything more or less than instinct, highly developed. We find it in lesser degree in horses, dogs and cats, and in other birds it seems to be developed a little less markedly, but with sufficient accuracy so that they migrate annually thousands of miles without the aid of any other compass than their instinct.

When we remember the potent power of selection and think of the years and generations of careful breeding and selection which the homing pigeon has undergone it is not so wonderful that they have developed the homing instinct to a high degree. I have seen their cousins, the fan-tailed pigeons, bred to such a degree of fineness that they weighed only a few ounces apiece and were



so nervous that they could not stand still—they were like the hair-spring of a watch, constantly preening and ducking and on the move. In very early times homing pigeons were in vogue in Egypt, Greece and among the Romans. Racing pigeons has been a royal and national sport in Belgium, France, Italy, Turkey, Egypt and England for hundreds of years. It was introduced into this country in the seventies and has enjoyed a fair and steady growth until now there are three national homing pigeon associations with a membership of more than 2,000 breeders.

Much time is spent in teaching the pigeon all of the tricks which count when the bird is actually racing in competition with other pigeons. It is taught to enter the loft immediately upon its return, for a bird that does not enter so that the message it carries can be taken from it is of very little value as a messenger. Nothing is more exasperating to the fancier or racer than to have the pigeon return and cool its anatomy and view the scenery for a half hour before entering the loft. It is nearly sufficient cause to make the trainer of pigeons lose his faith in pigeon nature; besides it gives the neighbors a chance to make remarks about the fullgrown men playing with birdies. Once the bird is inside the loft it cannot emerge, since each loft is equipped with a trap through which the bird can enter at any time but cannot go out unless the trap is set for exit.

The ordinary barn variety of pigeon or those bred for the production of squabs for market and the racing homing pigeon should not be confused. They are as distinct and have as many points of difference as have the big draft horse and the high-strung, nervous racing horse. The ordinary pigeon has very little homing ability, whereas the homing pigeon is kept and bred exclusively for that faculty. They are also bred for speed, and every muscle which is used in flight is developed almost at the expense of the other muscles of its body. In races the actual speed recorded is almost beyond belief. Speeds of 1,850 to 1,900 yards per minute, or 90 miles per hour, have been made for short distances, and it is not extraordinary for a bird to cover in excess of 500 miles in a single day. The record for 1,000 miles is 1 day, 11 hours, 24 minutes and 11 seconds, and was made by a bird named Bullet, and the longest successful race was 1,689 miles from Denver, Colo., to Springfield, Mass. (time 22 days, 3 hours, 22 minutes), although instances are recorded where birds sent from New York to the Pacific coast as breeders, have, on liberation or escape, returned from California, over the mountains and plains to their old homes in New York.

At various times in this country the army and navy have decided to use carrier pigeons in their work, but with indifferent success until the recent war. The old reports are rather amusing when considered in the light of present-day knowledge of what can be done with the birds when handled properly. Pigeons were used in the navy more than 20 years ago, but failed through lack of proper care. At the time of the Mexican border trouble pigeons were again tried, but with little success for the same reason and through lack of time for acclimatization.

Homing pigeons were first put on a business-like basis in the army in March, 1917, in the eastern department. In November of that year the pigeon section of the land division of the signal corps was organized, and since then rapid progress has been made in this country and

abroad. Hundreds of lofts have been built and equipped in this country, and in the early days many pigeons were shipped overseas. Men have been selected and trained in the science of pigeon breeding, rearing and flying. Many of these have already found service overseas in the care of lofts and the birds of our armies. It has been necessary to train a large number of people in this work, as it was practically new to each person who took it up. The training of officers and men in the use and care of the birds at the front and in the forwarding of messages all took time. Unfortunately the pigeons could only fly and could not talk, necessitating the writing of the messages. Some wag has proposed to improve the pigeon by crossing it with a parrot, thus eliminating the necessity of writing the messages. However, the pigeon might have something to say about the matter.

One of the most difficult parts of the work of introducing pigeons into the army service was to instill into the minds of the officers and men the fact that the pigeons are reliable. That they are reliable is proved by the experience overseas, where the birds are retained in forward positions while any other method, whether telephone, telegraph, induction buzzers, wireless, wigwag or runner is available, and only the birds remain, then through barrage, gas, and every other of the diabolical inventions of war, more than 97 per cent of the messages entrusted to our pigeons are safely and speedily delivered by them to headquarters. These messengers are carried to the front in especially constructed wicker baskets which can be carried handily by the soldier entrusted with their care. Back of the lines the pigeons are kept in either of two kinds of lofts or home, stationary or movable, but the essential feature of each is the same. Every effort is made to make each bird comfortable, happy and attached to its home. This is done most effectively by the method of feeding, as the approach to the bird's affection is through its stomach, the same as with genus homo. Each loft is equipped with a trap through which the birds are taught to enter and leave without fear. Each time the bird enters the trap an alarm is automatically rung, notifying the attendant of the return of the bird, that the message may be immediately obtained and forwarded to headquarters.

Before the late war if you had told a pigeon fancier that you could move his pigeon loft as far as 50 miles and that the pigeon would return to it swiftly and accurately he would probably have laughed at you and said something about your being a novice in the pigeon racing and breeding game. The movable loft is one of the advances in pigeon lore that the war has brought out. This is a very important development, as it is highly desirable that the lofts always be near to military headquarters and available for instant removal with headquarters as conditions may require. These movable lofts are very well constructed and are interesting homes for these itinerant messengers. They are outfitted with nesting boxes, observation traps, storage space for feed, water, and accommodations for one or two attendants who are constantly on duty. In fact, they remind one of the circus wagons that travel with the smaller circuses about the country.

Another innovation developed was the "owl express." There were pigeons at the front that developed the faculty for seeing at night and these were called veritable human night owls. In fact, they came home much more steadily and accurately than some of their civilian brethren, who were wont to be habitual riders of the "owl express."

The sport of racing and breeding pigeons is due to receive an impetus as a civilian sport now that the war is ended, and the progress made under war conditions should not be allowed to lapse. Thousands of soldiers will have become familiar with the birds and will have a warm regard for them. There will be many who will share the feeling of the officer who was mentioned in the first part of this article as having been saved by the pigeons in the battle of Bethancourt and Dead Man's hill.

## ROSY DREAM OF BALLET DANCER

Careless in Chicago Hotel Betrays Naval Officer Said to Be \$25,000 Short.

## TWO BLISSFUL WEEKS

Posing as Wealthy Cotton Planter, Money Was Spent Freely for Tailor-Made Suits, Furs, Etc.—Kiss Was Undoing.

Chicago.—Lives there a chorus girl with soul so dead who never to herself hath said, as she boiled the eggs and coffee over the hall room gas jet:

"Well, it's my turn next for one of those millionaire husbands, with a liveried chauffeur and champagne suppers and everything."

And what boots it to repeat that this was the rosy dream of Miss Lucille O'Den, ballet dancer, who, when our story of the nonplussed detective and the Arabian knight opens was on the Pantheons time at Grand Rapids, Mich., carefully chaperoned as always by her mamma, Mrs. O'Den.

The Arabian knight with the magic purse was none other than Chief Warrant Officer James Aloysius Donohoe of the United States navy, and he is charged with having embezzled \$25,000 pay roll funds. But—for two perfect weeks Lucille achieved her dream.

A Tempestuous Wooer. As R. E. Easterly, son of the third richest cotton planter in Louisiana, by god, sub, Mr. Donohoe splurged into the O'Den ken at Grand Rapids. And what between wine dinners and motor trips, Mr. Easterly proved a most tempestuous, ardent wooer.

They came to Chicago, where they registered at the La Salle hotel, Lucille and Mamma O'Den having a suite in which were no gas jets, but electric chandeliers, Louis XIV furniture, Ming vases and Persian rugs, and all that. And, of course, there was the \$200 tailor-made suit, the \$300 fur and the \$200 spending money.

House Detective J. Abrams of the sixth floor the other evening when he suddenly encountered in the front parlor what at first he thought was a new statuette group of Cupid and Psyche.

Their lips clung in a kiss. Mr. Abrams, a detective of chivalrous impulses, waited a considerable interval and looked closer.

"No," he soliloquized, "this guy isn't Cupid. Cupid never wore no pin-



Their Lips Clung in a Kiss.

checked coat and vest and pants and Psyche wasn't dressed this warm."

Another interval passed into eternity. A fire engine changed below.

A bellboy passed paging Mr. Somebody from Somewhere. A telephone bell jangled raucously. A chow dog yipped.

Mr. Abrams could hear the fire engine returning.

"Time!" called Mr. Abrams. They broke.

Too Late! "Where's a minister?" queried Mr. Easterly, for it was he. "We want to get married right away."

"You can't get married now. It's too late."

And then Abrams subjected him to close questioning. His suitcase was found to contain \$7,000 in greenbacks. The federal authorities were notified and Donohoe confessed his identity.

Lucille is going back on the midnight time. And thus ends the story of how Mr. Donohoe was betrayed by a kiss.

## OBJECTED TO JUDICIAL KISS

Chicago Couple Married by Judge Who Is Content to Take His Customary Fee.

Chicago.—Robert Adair Campbell stood before a judge here with his bride-to-be, Miss May Blanche Barnet. "We want to be married," he said, "but we do not want the judicial kiss which is customary at such times."

The judge smiled and tied the knot, contenting himself with the usual fee which Campbell paid and fed.

## LOOK AT CHILD'S TONGUE IF SICK, CROSS, FEVERISH

HURRY, MOTHER! REMOVE POISONS FROM LITTLE STOMACH, LIVER, BOWELS.

GIVE CALIFORNIA SYRUP OF FIGS AT ONCE IF BILIOUS OR CONSTIPATED.



Look at the tongue, mother! If coated, it is a sure sign that your little one's stomach, liver and bowels needs a gentle, thorough cleansing at once.

When peevish, cross, listless, pale, doesn't sleep, doesn't eat or act naturally, or is feverish, stomach sour, breath bad; has stomach-ache, sore throat, diarrhea, full of cold, give a teaspoonful of "California Syrup of Figs," and in a few hours all the foul, constipated waste, undigested food and sour bile gently moves out of the little bowels without griping, and you have a well, playful child again.

You needn't coax sick children to take this harmless "fruit laxative;" they love its delicious taste, and it always makes them feel splendid.

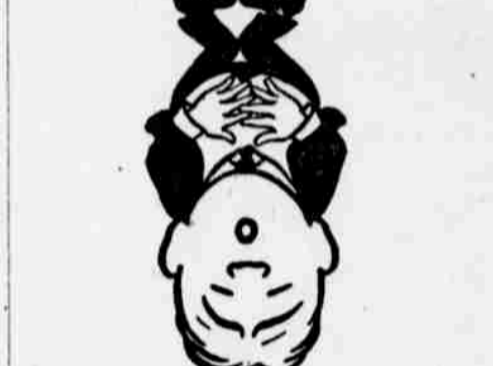
Ask your druggist for a bottle of "California Syrup of Figs," which has directions for babies, children of all ages and for grown-ups plainly on the bottle. Beware of counterfeiters sold here. To be sure you get the genuine, ask to see that it is made by the "California Fig Syrup Company." Refuse any other kind with contempt.—Adv.

Novel Excuse. One morning my little sister was washing herself when we heard her exclaim: "Mamma, I can't wash my ears; there is too much fancy work in them."—Chicago American.

## UPSET STOMACH

PAPE'S DIAPEPSIN AT ONCE ENDS SOURNESS, GASES, ACIDITY, INDIGESTION.

Undigested food! Lumps of pain; belching gas, acids and sourness. When your stomach is all upset, here is instant relief—No waiting!



The moment you eat a tablet of Pape's Diapepsin all the indigestion pain, dyspepsia misery, the sourness, gases and stomach acidity ends. Pape's Diapepsin tablets cost little at any drug store but there is no surer or quicker stomach relief known. Adv.

Precautions. She—"I have a perfectly killing automobile costume." He—"Then please do not wear it on this trip."

## WOMEN SUFFERERS MAY NEED SWAMP-ROOT

Thousands upon thousands of women have kidney and bladder trouble and never suspect it.

Women's complaints often prove to be nothing else but kidney trouble, or the result of kidney or bladder disease.

If the kidneys are not in a healthy condition, they may cause the other organs to become diseased.

Pain in the back, headache, loss of ambition, nervousness, are often times symptoms of kidney trouble.

Don't delay starting treatment. Dr. Kilmer's Swamp-Root, a physician's prescription, obtained at any drug store, may be just the remedy needed to overcome such conditions.

Get a medium or large size bottle immediately from any drug store.

However, if you wish first to test this great preparation send ten cents to Dr. Kilmer & Co., Binghamton, N. Y., for a sample bottle. When writing be sure and mention this paper.—Adv.

Rara Avis. Knicker—Is Jones original? Bocker—Very; when he accepts a job he doesn't let on that it is a great sacrifice.

Don't Forget Cuticura Talcum. When adding to your toilet requisites. An exquisitely scented face, skin, baby and dusting powder and perfume, rendering other perfumes superfluous. You may rely on it because one of the Cuticura Trio (Soap, Ointment and Talcum). 25c each everywhere.—Adv.

Few are successful in living up to their photographs.