

Cher Ami

During World War I, Major Charles White Whittlesey led a battalion of Americans fighting in France. In October of 1918, he and 500 of his troops got trapped in enemy territory. They had no food and no ammunition for their weapons.

Major Whittlesey was worried that other Americans would shoot his troops since they were behind enemy lines. He tried to send them a message by pigeon. The first two pigeons that he used were shot down. Finally, the third pigeon succeeded.

The successful pigeon's name was Cher Ami. Her message read, "We are along the road parallel to 276.4. Our own artillery is dropping a barrage directly on us. For heaven's sake, stop it." When the message was delivered, the other Americans stopped firing. The troops were saved.

Cher Ami delivered twelve messages during her service to the U.S. Army Signal Corps. She received the Croix de Guerre medal for bravery. When she died in 1919, her body was displayed at the Smithsonian museum in Washington, D.C.

Cher Ami was one of many pigeons that served during the war. Pigeons who carry messages in this way are called Carrier pigeons. They have small

tubes attached to their legs. The message sender writes a note on a piece of paper and rolls it inside the tube.

Carrier pigeons belong to a special breed of pigeon called Homing pigeons. Homing pigeons are bred to find their way home over long distances. When the pigeon is released, it flies to the place that it mentally marked as home.

Carrier pigeons have been used to deliver messages since ancient times. They are still used in remote areas to communicate across long distances. The longest known flight for a Homing pigeon was 7,200 miles. The pigeon flew from France to Vietnam in 1931.



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NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1. How many messages did Cher Ami deliver during World War I?
 - a. 1918
 - b. 12
 - c. 276
 - d. 500

2. How do Carrier pigeons carry their messages?
 - a. In tubes attached to their legs
 - b. In their beaks
 - c. Tucked under their wings
 - d. Tied around their necks

3. What is special about Homing pigeons?
 - a. They are colorful
 - b. They don't fly
 - c. They can find their way home over long distances
 - d. They carry messages

4. Which of the following is most likely the reason why Cher Ami won the Croix de Guerre medal?
 - a. Because she was a Carrier pigeon
 - b. Because she knew how to fly home
 - c. Because she delivered twelve messages
 - d. Because she flew through gun fire

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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