

Featured Stories – Teachers Resource

This resource gives more background information on each featured story, including links for further reading.



Julie Fitzell

Julie Fitzell grew up in Te Awamutu. She joined the Navy when she was 19 years old and became a Writer. This job involved learning a range of administrative and legal tasks. As a young sailor, she deployed to Antarctica with a team that unloaded supplies for scientists at McMurdo Station.

Julie Fitzell was part of the Māori Cultural Group in the Navy. She went to Bougainville, where haka were instrumental in creating cultural connections and setting the tone for peacekeeping work.

Julie Fitzell “commissioned from the ranks”, which means she was selected to become an officer after she was a rating.¹

She served twice in Afghanistan, the first time at sea on HMNZS Te Kaha in 2003. Two years later she returned to Afghanistan, this time to distribute humanitarian aid across 14 provinces.

Julie Fitzell is also a remarkable leader for her community work. She is a champion for Pasifika Sailors, for women’s rights, and for the LGBTQI+ community. In 2013, she was the manager of New Zealand’s first Invictus Games Team.

Today Julie Fitzell is a Captain in the Navy.

The Julie Fitzell Collection

The artefacts in this collection are focused on the range of deployments in Julie Fitzell’s career, and on her work with the Invictus Games. Find out more about the artefacts at <https://navymuseum.co.nz/learn/museum-in-a-box/julie-fitzell-page/>

Two medals of interest from Julie Fitzell’s medal set are her medals for long service. Julie Fitzell received one, the Royal New Zealand Navy Long Service and Good Conduct Medal, for her service as a rating. She then received the other, New Zealand Armed Forces Award, for her service as an officer.

More resources

- **Soldiers Without Guns** – video <https://www.nzonscreen.com/title/soldiers-without-guns-2019> Documentary about the civil war in Bougainville, and New Zealand’s involvement. Julie Fitzell appears as part of the New Zealand contingent. Please note this video contains images and themes of war and may not be appropriate for all viewers.

¹ People in the Navy are graded according to the level of responsibility they have. These are called ranks. A rating is the first rank. An officer is ranked above a rating.

- **Unloading supplies Antarctica** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EXL5oFX97YM> A video which shows the NZDF offloading supplies in Antarctica. This is not the deployment Julie Fitzell was on.
- **Invictus Games website** <https://www.invictusgamesfoundation.org>
- **Jack Church** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XK9l0YzjEzI> A New Zealander's Invictus Games Story

William Sanders

William Edward Sanders was born in Kingsland, Auckland, in 1883. His family soon moved to Takapuna and he attended Takapuna Primary School. Even as a boy he loved the sea. When he was 16 he began work as a cabin boy on steamships.

By the outbreak of the First World War, Sanders was becoming an experienced sailor. He joined the Royal Naval Reserve, and after some training took command of a type of ship called a Q-ship. Q-ships were Navy ships that were disguised to look like ordinary ships. They were designed to lure German U-boats into surface fighting. They were warships, but their guns were hidden. The sailors dressed and acted like merchant sailors, rather than trained Navy sailors. The plan was for the U-boat to surface and inspect the Q-ship, and when the U-boat was at close range, the Q-ship would suddenly uncover their guns and begin firing.

Lieutenant Commander William Sanders took command of a Q-ship called HMS *Prize* in 1917. HMS *Prize* fought against three different U-Boats. For his bravery and leadership against U-93 on April 1917, he was awarded the Victoria Cross, the highest military award for gallantry in the Commonwealth. He is the only New Zealander to have been awarded the Victoria Cross for naval action.

The third time *Prize* faced off with a U-Boat, *Prize* was sunk. Sanders and all his men went down with the ship.

The William Sanders Collection

Some artefacts in this collection are focused on the battle between HMS *Prize* and the U-Boat *U-93*. Other artefacts highlight Sanders' lasting legacy around Auckland's North Shore. Find out more about the artefacts at <https://navymuseum.co.nz/learn/museum-in-a-box/william-sanders-page/>

A key medal of interest is William Sanders' Victoria Cross, the highest and most prestigious military award in the Commonwealth. First awarded by Queen Victoria during the Crimean War, there have been only 1,358 awarded. The most recent Victoria Cross in New Zealand was awarded to Willie Apiata in 2007. One fifth of Victoria Crosses have been awarded posthumously.

More resources

- **HMS Prize** <https://navymuseum.co.nz/explore/by-collections/ships/prize/>
- **The Reluctant Hero**
A moving four part series on Corporal Willie Apiata VC, NZ Army, following his story as he was awarded the Victoria Cross. Please note this series covers sensitive topics such as war and trauma, and may not be suitable for all viewers.
<https://www.nzonscreen.com/title/reluctant-hero-2008>

Lincoln Martinson

Lincoln Campbell Martinson joined the New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy in 1921. He was 16 years old when he joined the Navy. He became a Signaller, which means he specialised in different kinds of communication, using signal flags, semaphore and morse code. Lincoln Martinson went to the U.K. twice to train with the Royal Navy.

In 1939, at the start of the Second World War, Lincoln Martinson was in the ship HMS *Achilles*.² He was the Chief Yeoman of Signals, which means he was in charge of the communications unit on the ship. In December 1939, HMS *Achilles* took part in the Battle of the River Plate, and contributed to the downfall of the German ship *Graf Spee*. (For more about this battle, see link below) The ships' crew of HMS *Achilles* comprised many New Zealanders, including Lincoln Martinson, who convinced the Captain to fly the New Zealand national flag during the battle. Lincoln Martinson was injured during the Battle of the River Plate, later losing his leg from the injuries. Even though he was injured, he asked for continual updates about his team during the battle.

After losing his leg, Lincoln Martinson continued to serve New Zealand throughout the war. He returned to Auckland and became an instructor, teaching signalling to new trainees at the Navy base in Devonport.

The Lincoln Martinson Collection

The artefacts in this collection are focused on signal flags, and on the homecoming celebrations for *Achilles* after the Battle of the River Plate. Find out more about the artefacts at <https://navymuseum.co.nz/learn/museum-in-a-box/lincoln-martinson-page/>

One medal of interest in Lincoln Martinson's medal set is the Distinguished Service Medal, which he was awarded for his actions during the Battle of the River Plate. He was specifically commended for his concern for the Signals team during the battle.

More resources

- **Navy Signals Today** – video and activity
<https://www.facebook.com/NZNavy/videos/navy-signal-flag-competition/339376864817085/> A fun signal flags activity from the Navy today! The contest period has closed.
Please note: the signal card included in Lincoln Martinson's collection is from the Second World War, and the flags have different meanings today. The video includes a shot of the modern international signal flags!
Answer to the activity: "BZ Navy" (In the Navy, BZ is short for "Bravo Zulu", and it means "Well done!")
- **The Battle of the River Plate** <https://navymuseum.co.nz/explore/by-themes/world-war-two-by-themes/the-battle-of-the-river-plate/>
- There are many Morse Code and Semaphore videos and teachers' resources online

² HMS is the label given to Royal Navy ships and stands for His/Her Majesty's Ship, in this case referring to King George VI, the king at the time. During the Second World War, New Zealand ships were called HMS until October 1941 when the Royal New Zealand Navy was created. From that point onward, the ships were called HMNZS, His Majesty's New Zealand Ship.

Aubrey Dalton

Aubrey Edward James Dalton was born in rural Canterbury in 1919. He joined the Royal Navy in 1941 during the Second World War on a “hostilities only” basis, which meant he would only serve during the war. He trained at Motuihe Island, in the Waitemata Harbour, which was used as a training base during the war, and then he went to the UK for further training.

Aubrey Dalton joined HMNZS³ *Kiwi* after training. HMNZS *Kiwi* was patrolling with another ship HMNZS *Moa* in Guadalcanal in 1943. They were both minesweepers. They were looking to intercept the supply chain for the Imperial Japanese Navy. *Kiwi* and *Moa* came across the Japanese submarine called *I-1* and engaged in battle which ended in the defeat of the *I-1*. (For more about this battle, see link below) Aubrey Dalton was stationed on the Oerlikon gun, which was mounted on the bow, or front, of the ship. This was a dangerous station because of its position. Aubrey Dalton held fire on the *I-1*, so the submarine was unable to effectively use its gun. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal as well as the US Navy Silver Star, for his actions. He was eligible for a medal from the United States because *Kiwi* and *Moa* were serving in a US task force at the time.

The Navy Museum does not have a lot of information about Aubrey Dalton beyond his service in the Navy.

The Aubrey Dalton Collection

The artefacts in this collection focus on Aubrey Dalton’s uniform and rank, as well as his time in HMNZS *Kiwi*, when the ship came up against the *I-1*. Find out more about the artefacts at <https://navymuseum.co.nz/learn/museum-in-a-box/aubrey-dalton-page/>

One medal of interest in Aubrey Dalton’s medal set is the US Navy Silver Star, which he was awarded for his actions during the battle against the *I-1*. His courage and determination were specially mentioned in the medal citation.

More resources

- HMNZS *Kiwi* <https://navymuseum.co.nz/explore/by-collections/ships/kiwi-moa/>

³ HMNZS is the label given to New Zealand Navy ships and stands for His/Her Majesty’s New Zealand Ship. During the Second World War, New Zealand ships were called HMS until October 1941 when the Royal New Zealand Navy was created. From that point onward, the ships were called HMNZS.

Winkie

NEHU.40.NHS.1 was a carrier homing pigeon from Dundee, Scotland. She served with the Royal Air Force (RAF) in the Second World War.

RAF planes often carried pigeons on board. In February 1942, NEHU.40.NHS.1 was on a Beaufort bomber when it flew over Norway, which was occupied by Germany at the time. The bomber was hit by anti-aircraft guns, and managed to fly part way home towards Scotland before it crashed into the freezing waters of the North Sea. The plane was destroyed, but the four man crew made their way to the life boat. They also released NEHU.40.NHS.1 and her companion. Having flown 16 hours through wintry weather covered in oil from the crash, only NEHU.40.NHS.1 made it home. Her owner George Ross reported Winkie's return to the RAF, who using the bird's flying speed and direction were able to locate the stranded crew. All four men survived.

NEHU.40.NHS.1 was so exhausted from her flight that her eye fluttered. She was renamed Winkie by the men whose lives she saved.

11 months later, Winkie became the first recipient of the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA) Dickin Medal, for the part she played in locating and rescuing the four crew members.

When Winkie died, she and her Dickin Medal were donated to Dundee Art Galleries and Museums.

The Winkie Collection

The artefacts in this collection focus on Winkie's story, as well as Purple Poppy Day, the day which commemorates the contribution of service animals. You can find out more about the artefacts at <https://navymuseum.co.nz/learn/museum-in-a-box/winkie-page/>

We are featuring Winkie's Dickin Medal in this collection. The Dickin Medal was created by Maria Dickin, the founder of the PDSA, to commemorate the special service of animals in war. Winkie's citation mentions the difficult conditions she flew through, and her contribution to saving the lives of the plane crew.

More resources

- Booklet about Winkie from the PDSA https://www.pdsa.org.uk/media/5491/47646_dm-75_recipient-book_01_winkie_digital.pdf
- Carrier homing pigeons at war, an article from the Smithsonian Institute <https://airandspace.si.edu/stories/editorial/homing-pigeons-contributions-world-war-2>
- Purple Poppy Day, an article from the National Army Museum Te Mata Taua <https://www.armymuseum.co.nz/visit/events/purple-poppy-day/>