



Mini Page Heroes: Louis Zamperini

In honor of Veterans Day on Nov. 11, this week The Mini Page learns about an American hero and veteran, Louis Zamperini.

How much pain can a person endure? Thankfully, most of us will never know the answer to that question. But Louis Zamperini knew.

When Zamperini was very young, he was best known for getting into trouble. But in high school, he started getting attention for his running ability. He became one of Southern California's top athletes.

At 19, Zamperini was the youngest athlete to compete in the 1936 Olympic Games. That year the Olympics were held in Berlin, Germany, where Adolf Hitler and the Nazis were gaining power.

Zamperini didn't win a medal. He hoped to do better at the 1940 Olympic Games, but they were canceled because of World War II.

Going to war

Zamperini joined the U.S. Army Air Corps in 1941, shortly before the United States entered the war. He became a bombardier and flew missions over the Pacific Ocean.

While on a mission to find a missing pilot in 1943, his plane crashed. Of the 11-person crew, only Zamperini and two others survived.



Zamperini running at the University of Southern California.

Photos from the Louis Zamperini Trust and the Lorraine Roscoe Historical Society & Museum



Mini Fact:

Louis Zamperini was named the grand marshal of the 2015 Rose Parade. Sadly, he died in July 2014 at age 97.

Stranded on the ocean in a life raft, Zamperini, Francis McNamara and Russell Allen Phillips faced incredible pain. It came from the sun. It came from hunger and thirst. They were terrorized from below by sharks circling their raft and from above by the bombs and guns of Japanese airplanes.

Enemy territory

With little water or food, the men were weak, and McNamara died. Finally, after 47 days at sea, Zamperini and Phillips washed ashore almost 2,000 miles from where their plane had crashed.

Zamperini and Phillips had landed on an island controlled by the enemy, and they were taken prisoner by the Japanese. Because Zamperini was an officer and a famous athlete, his captors hurt him the most.

This time, his pain came from brutal torture at the hands of a camp officer known as the Bird. It came from imprisonment in a small isolation cell. It came from hunger. It came 24 hours a day for more than two years — and Zamperini survived.

Staying strong

How did he survive pain that for many would be impossible to endure? By praying and having faith that he would live. And by being determined to finish every race he ever ran.

During his time as a prisoner, Zamperini was officially declared dead by the U.S. military. But he returned as a hero to the country he loved after the war.

Search for stories

Some people call the men and women who fought in World War II the Greatest Generation. Many of their stories of courage have never been recorded.

Louis Zamperini's story was told in a book called "Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience and Redemption" by Laura Hillenbrand. In 2014, a movie was made.

You can help find and tell more stories like Zamperini's before they are lost completely. Talk to people in your family and community who served in World War II. Write down their stories.

Search online for the Veterans History Project (loc.gov/vets) and The Memory Project (thememoryproject.com/stories), programs that are dedicated to preserving the stories of our brave veterans.



Zamperini in uniform during World War II.

Resources



This issue of Mini Page Heroes is based on a chapter from "50 American Heroes Every Kid Should Meet" by Dennis Denenberg and Lorraine Roscoe. To order the book, go to heroes4us.com and click on "50 American Heroes Book" and "Order a Book."

On the web:

• bit.ly/2cIHrvi

At the library:

• "Louis Zamperini: Survivor and Champion" by Renee Taft Meloche

Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of Louis Zamperini are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:



ATHLETE, BERLIN, BOMBARDIER, BOOK, CALIFORNIA, CRASH, ENEMY, HERO, HUNGER, LOUIS, MOVIE, OLYMPICS, PLANE, PRISONER, SEA, UNBROKEN, VETERAN, WAR, ZAMPERINI.

H Y L K Z A M P E R I N I U S
U X K G O F I E N Z A E H N N
N G R A W O I N I F I E S B A
G N I L R E B D R V K I S R R
E S C I P M Y L O O R G E O E
R E I D R A B M O B F P N K T
Y M E N E H E R O O B I A E E
J E A A T H L E T E C Z L N V
K H S A R C H S I U O L P A S
K F H Q J P R I S O N E R E C

Cook's Corner

Pumpnickel Squares With Vegetable Cream Cheese

You'll need:

- 4 ounces light vegetable cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup chopped baby spinach
- 4 slices pumpnickel bread, cut into 4 squares each

- 1/4 cup pimento-stuffed green olives, thinly sliced



What to do:

1. Whisk together the cream cheese and spinach until blended.
2. Spread the cream cheese mixture onto the pumpnickel squares.
3. Top with sliced olives. Serves 4.

Adapted from "The Robin Takes 5 Cookbook for Busy Families" with permission from Andrews McMeel Publishing (andrewsmcmeel.com).

* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

7 Little Words for Kids

Use the letters in the boxes to make a word with the same meaning as the clue. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in the solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.

1. carrot or cauliflower (9) _____
2. container for eggs or milk (6) _____
3. bodybuilders flex theirs (7) _____
4. slow-moving animal (6) _____
5. small pool of water (6) _____
6. animal with a trunk (8) _____
7. where travelers sleep (5) _____

EL	TEL	TUR	TON
TLE	ETA	HO	ANT
BLE	LES	CAR	DLE
EPH	PUD	VEG	MUSC

Answers: vegetable, carton, muscles, turtle, puddle, elephant, hotel.



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Mini Jokes



Larry: How do lions like their meat cooked?

Lisa: Medium-roar!

Eco Note



Dolphins have been recorded having what appears to be a conversation "just like two people." Researchers at a nature reserve in Crimea couldn't tell what the dolphins were saying, but they did believe them to be in polite conversation.

adapted with permission from Earthweek.com

Thank You



The Mini Page thanks Dennis Denenberg, former teacher, principal and university professor, and Lorraine Roscoe, a champion of heroes of every kind, for help with this issue.

Teachers:

For standards-based activities to accompany this feature, visit: bbs.amuniversal.com/teaching_guides.html

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