

Unsung heroes

Running dictation

1 Megan Coffee

In 2010, Haiti was struck by a massive earthquake, which destroyed more than 250,000 homes. Dr Megan Coffee, an American expert in infectious diseases, set off to Haiti to help. She knew that diseases like tuberculosis (TB) would spread quickly in a place where people were having to live without clean water or adequate shelter.

Coffee didn't have a hospital, so she set up a tent where people could come for treatment and advice. Six years later, she's still in Haiti. She gave up her job, which was at a top university back in the United States, and she now does not receive a salary. Since she arrived, however, she has saved thousands of lives.



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2 Mary Seacole

Mary Seacole was a Jamaican nurse who risked her life to treat wounded soldiers during the Crimean War. When Mary heard about the war, she immediately travelled to England because she wanted to help the soldiers. She found that the War Office refused her offer of help because she was black. Seacole was determined, however, and she decided to set up her own hospital, which she called a hotel, in Kadikoi, Crimea. She treated hundreds of soldiers there, and on the battlefield, for their wounds. She also treated diseases such as cholera, which the soldiers caught from the unsanitary conditions. This took enormous bravery as she could easily have been killed or caught a fatal disease herself.

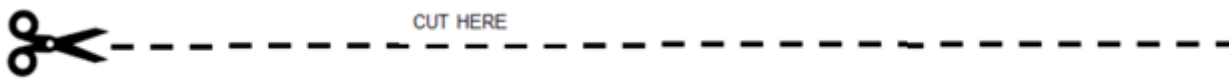


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3 Hilary Lister

In 2005, Hilary Lister made history by sailing solo across the English Channel. Many people had done this before, but none of the previous sailors were quadriplegic. This means not being able to use any part of your body from the neck down. Hilary was not born quadriplegic, but gradually lost the use of her body due to a disease.

At first Hilary felt that she had lost everything, but when she first tried sailing, she felt that 'it turned a light back on inside me'. She controlled the boat through a computer, which was operated by her mouth. It took her 6 hours and 13 minutes to sail the Channel using this assisted technology.



4 Mary Anning

Mary Anning was born in 1799, the daughter of a poor carpenter. Yet she became one of the most important female scientists in history. Mary and her father, Richard, used to collect fossils to sell to tourists. A fossil is an animal or plant which turned to rock thousands of years ago. At that time, people did not really know what fossils were, but in 1812 Mary found the skeleton of a huge dinosaur, an ichthyosaur. This changed what people believed about the beginning of the world. Mary made many other important discoveries, but her work was not taken very seriously because she was a woman and uneducated.



5 Irena Sendler

Irena Sendler was a social worker and humanitarian in Warsaw, Poland, during the Second World War. She is thought to have saved at least 2,500 Jewish children from being sent to the Nazi prison camps. Sendler found ways of getting the children away to safety. She provided false identity papers to help the children stay safe. In 1943 she was caught by the Nazi soldiers, but would not tell the Nazis the names of the children she had saved or the people who had helped them. She was sentenced to death, but escaped and began her work again, using a different name. After the war she received many honours, including the gold Cross of Merit in 1946.