

Basic Detail Report

00054803

Title

USS HENDERSON Zippo lighter box

Date

1957

Primary Maker

Zippo Manufacturing Company

Medium

Ink on paper

Dimensions

Overall: 82 × 60 × 14 mm, 12 g

Name

Box

History

This commemorative lighter for USS HENDERSON was part of collection belonging to Vanessa Roberson. Her story is told here by her grandson, Jeff Allan: "My grandmother spent her last 10 years in a fog of dementia, but I could still squeeze a memory from her, even a cackle, if I mentioned the navy balls of the '50s. They were the brightest spots in her life. She lived in Sydney's King Cross, just minutes away from where the navy - and visiting navies - used to dock their ships at the city's naval base. The excitement and glamour of an incoming fleet brightened an otherwise poverty stricken life. Vanessa Roberson, known as Zena to her family, Van to her friends, grew up in country New South Wales. Born in 1912, she married early and spent her days cooking for the farm workers on her property. She would rise early, collect eggs and milk, prepare breakfast for 20 men and take it out to the back paddocks, returning only in time to begin the process over again for a cooked lunch. The rest of her time was spent washing, cleaning and looking after her only son. Meanwhile, her husband openly slept around town and had little time for her. At some stage, in her late 30's, Vanessa left. She arrived at Sydney's Central station with a son under one arm and a wooden mantle clock under the other.