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## **Life Lines: The Lanier Phillips Story**

Christine Welldon



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African-American serviceman Lanier Phillips was just eighteen years old when he was rescued from a sinking warship off the coast of Newfoundland in 1942 – a turn of events that transformed his life and ignited a lasting passion for civil rights. The son of sharecroppers from the Deep South, and the great-grandson of slaves, Lanier knew only hatred for white people. As a child he was told never to look a white man in the face, for fear of a lynching. His experience with the villagers of St. Lawrence, Newfoundland, taught him that racism can be overcome and that the first change must come from within. Lanier went on to a distinguished career in the US Navy as the first African American sonar technician. He joined the Civil Rights Movement, marched with Dr. Martin Luther King, and told his story of transformation for the rest of his life.

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