



Alabama Public Television Education

## A Major League Sailor: USS Alabama's Bob Feller



Society for American Baseball Research. <https://sabr.org/bioproj/person/bob-feller/>.

The USS Alabama was home to a major league baseball pitcher who was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962. Robert “Bob” Feller began his career as a 17-year-old rookie pitching for the Cleveland Indians in 1935. His 100-mile-per-hour fast ball set records for striking out batters in the major leagues even before he graduated from high school.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Feller was the first major leaguer to [enlist](https://www.thefreedictionary.com/enlist) in the military. After basic training, Feller was made a [chief petty officer](https://www.thefreedictionary.com/chief+petty+officer) and was assigned as a

physical training officer, but he wanted to go into combat so he applied for [gunnery](https://www.thefreedictionary.com/gunnery) (<https://www.thefreedictionary.com/gunnery>) school and sea duty. After four months of naval gunnery school in Newport, Rhode Island, he was assigned to the USS Alabama as a gun captain on a 40 MM anti-aircraft mount that had a crew of 24. He served on the USS Alabama from December 1942 until January 1943. While on the USS Alabama, Feller practiced throwing baseballs to keep his pitching arm in shape. He lost count of the number of balls that ended up at the bottom of the ocean.

After the war, Feller returned to the Cleveland Indians and had a successful baseball career with 266 wins and 2,581 strikeouts, according to the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

You can read more about Bob Feller's baseball career on the National Baseball Hall of Fame website: <https://baseballhall.org/discover/inside-pitch/bob-fellers-starting-debut>.

You can see a photograph of Bob Feller with the USS Alabama Baseball Team on the National Baseball Hall of Fame website: <https://collection.baseballhall.org/PASTIME/bob-feller-uss-alabama-baseball-team-photograph-between-1943-august-and-1945-april-0> .

You can hear more about Bob Feller's time on the USS Alabama on the National Museum of the Pacific War website: <https://digitalarchive.pacificwarmuseum.org/digital/collection/p16769coll1/id/3893/> .

You can see a Bob Feller baseball card on the Smithsonian National Museum of American History website: [https://www.si.edu/object/bob-feller%3Anmah\\_665253](https://www.si.edu/object/bob-feller%3Anmah_665253) .

Watch this video from *PBS NewsHour* about Bob Feller's career and life here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aGokv7T1CaU>

## From Words to Art: Using Symbols to Create a Baseball Card

Directions: After reading about the story about Bob Feller and watching the USS Alabama video, complete the following:

1. List three adjectives that you would use to describe Bob Feller.
2. List three adjectives that you would use to describe the USS Alabama.
3. Draw a symbol for each of the six adjectives. (For example, Bob Feller “stepped up” to be a leader who enlisted first. Draw a footprint or some baseball shoes.)
4. Create a baseball card for Bob Feller that includes at least four of your symbols. At least one will represent his service on the USS Alabama.
5. On the back of the card, add “statistics” from Bob Feller’s career during the war OR USS Alabama “statistics” during the war. Additional research may be necessary.