

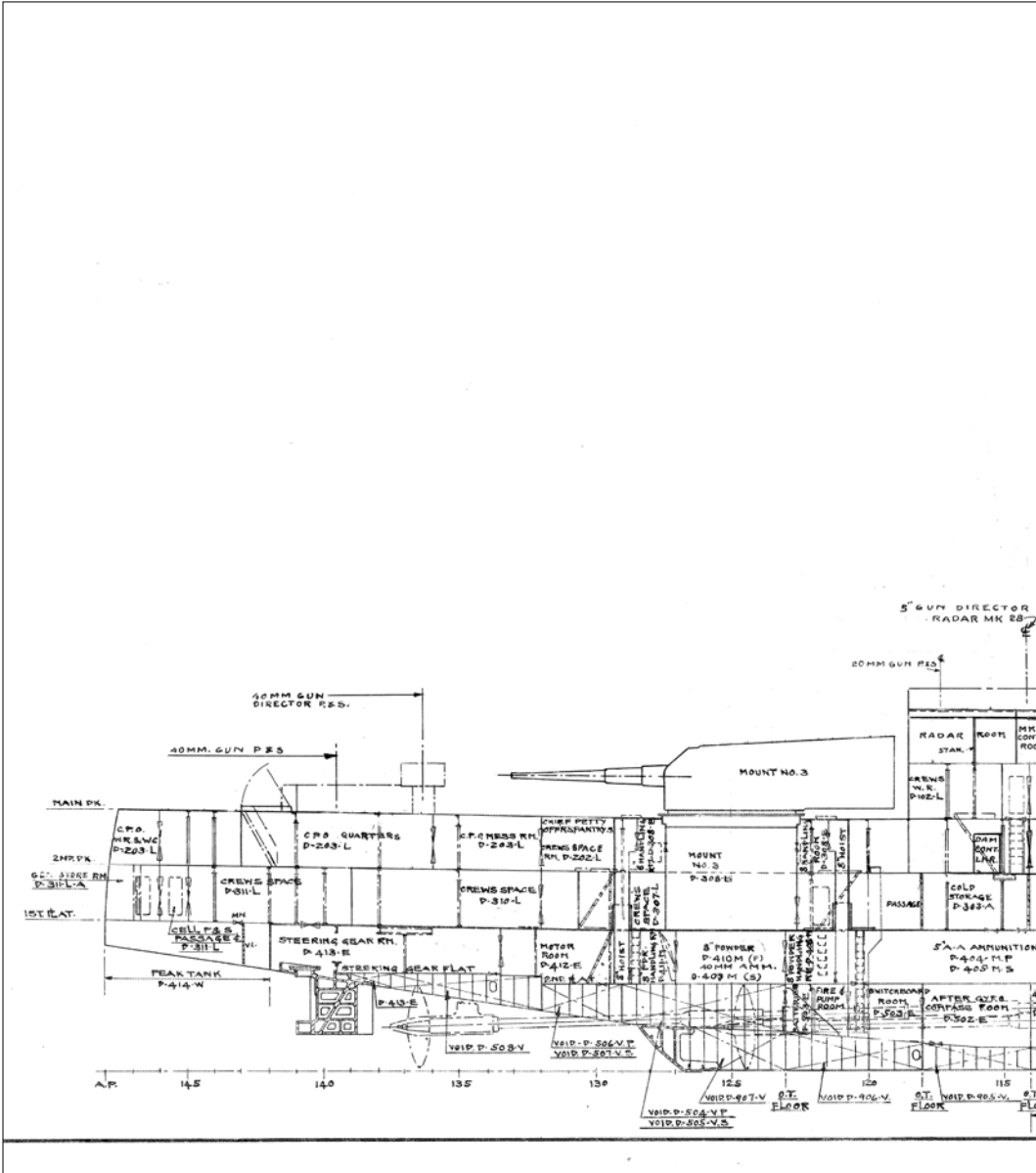
A GRAVE MISFORTUNE

The USS *Indianapolis* Tragedy

Richard A. Hulver
Peter C. Luebke, Associate Editor

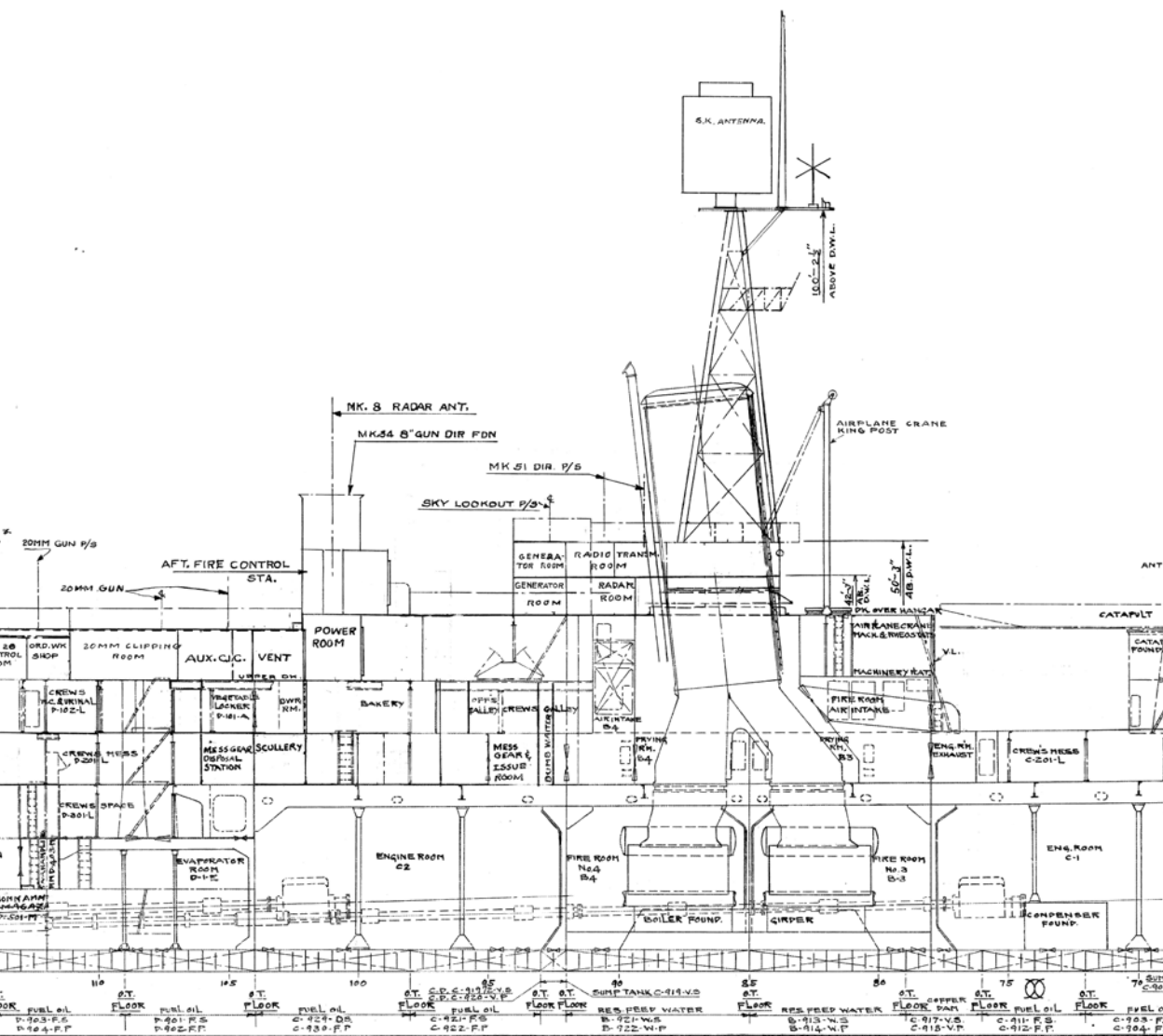


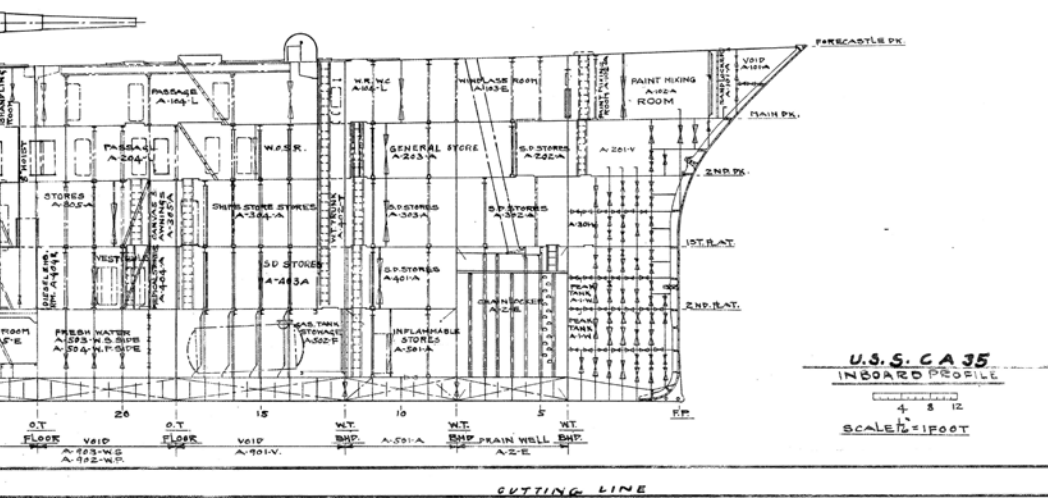
Front Cover. USS *Indianapolis* bow-on view, taken off the Mare Island Navy Yard, California, 10 July 1945, after her final overhaul. Photograph from the Bureau of Ships Collection in the U.S. National Archives, NHHHC Photo, 19-N-86913.



FM-1. Final plans for the *Portland*-class heavy cruiser *Indianapolis* (CA-35), 3 January 1933 (inboard profile).

RG 19, NARA II, College Park, MD





U.S.S. CA 35
 INBOARD PROFILE
 4 8 12
 SCALE 1/8" = 1' 0"

CUTTING LINE

A GRAVE MISFORTUNE

The USS *Indianapolis* Tragedy

CONTRIBUTIONS TO NAVAL HISTORY NO. 7

A GRAVE MISFORTUNE

The USS *Indianapolis* Tragedy

Richard A. Hulver
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**To those touched by the tragedy of
the loss of USS *Indianapolis***

This work is dedicated to the Sailors and Marines who lost their lives on the final voyage of USS *Indianapolis* and to those who survived the torment at sea following its sinking. The good seamanship of these men brought the successful delivery of components for the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, contributing to the end of the Second World War. This book is also dedicated to the crews of the rescue ships that saved survivors' lives, identified the dead, and provided a proper burial at sea to those lost; to the air crews that provided critical rescue support; and to the medical staff at sea and on shore that tended to survivors. Finally, it is dedicated to those families that lost the irreplaceable and to those whose loved ones lived with the scars of their ordeal for the remainder of their lives.

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METHODOLOGY AND SECURITY STATEMENT

This volume presents the final chapter of *Indianapolis*'s decorated service history using primary source documents. Documents were carefully selected to represent the whole story of the final months of *Indianapolis*. This volume should not be considered the definitive documentary history of *Indianapolis*. If the entirety of rescue deck logs, war diaries, after-action reports, trial transcripts, investigation reports, and correspondence were presented in one volume, it would be thousands of pages in length. This volume is a representative sample of those documents and will lead those who want to learn more about *Indianapolis* to the pertinent archival collections.

All documents in this volume are from public archives and have been declassified by the proper declassification authorities. Although these documents are publicly available, all street addresses and service numbers have been silently deleted in accordance with privacy laws. Names of historical actors were kept original, with explanatory notes as necessary. All efforts to maintain transparency have been taken.

The documents are transcribed and presented as closely to their original form as possible. To maintain the voice of the writer, spelling in all correspondence was left as written. In the source notes for documents, editorial codes tell readers the type of document (a listing of these abbreviations is found below). It is noted in the source note when portions of the documents were omitted due to redundancy, space limitations, or content. When sections have been omitted from the middle parts of a document, ellipses within square brackets appear to show where material was not included; omissions from the start or end of documents have been done silently, with notation in the source note. Minor formatting changes were made to memoranda and lists for ease of reading. For example, many documents were typed entirely in capitals; here the capitalization has been rendered normally. In addition, some minor stylistic changes have been used, such as standardizing italicization of ships' names. Square brackets have been used within the text to indicate where text or explanation not found in the original has been inserted; in most cases

explanation or additional information appears in an endnote. Intelligence and radio dispatches were also formatted for readability; key information such as sender, recipient, date, precedence, and so forth was kept in the transcriptions and other information related to decoding has been placed in an explanatory endnote. Spelling and grammar were kept as was in the original document unless corrections were absolutely necessary for understanding. It is noted whenever these changes were made, either with the square brackets or in a footnote.

The story of *Indianapolis* is not an entirely positive one for the U.S. Navy, but as this volume demonstrates, failures were studied and immediately addressed. So as to not repeat failures, or forget the lessons learned, the accurate narrative of *Indianapolis* must be readily available to the Navy and American public.

Document Codes

- TD Typed Document
- TDC Typed Document Copy
- TDS Typed Document Signed
- TDSC Typed Document Signed Copy
- TR Transcription
- TRC Transcription Copy
- AL Autographed Letter
- ALS Autographed Letter Signed
- TL Typed Letter
- TLC Typed Letter Copy
- TLS Typed Letter Signed
- TLSC Typed Letter Signed Copy

COMMANDING OFFICERS, WWII RECORD,
AND SUMMARY OF FINAL CREW

Commanding Officers of USS *Indianapolis*

Commanding Officer	Assumed Command
John Morris Smeallie, Capt.	11/15/1932
William Stanley McClintic, Capt.	12/11/1934
Theodore Stark Wilkinson, Cmdr. (acting)	1/24/1936
Henry Kent Hewitt, Capt.	3/16/1936
Thomas Cassin Kinkaid, Capt.	6/07/1937
John Franklin Shafroth Jr., Capt.	8/27/1938
Edward William Hanson, Capt.	8/11/1940
Morton Lyndholm Deyo, Capt.	7/11/1942
Nicholas Vytlačil, Capt.	12/2/1942
Einar Reynolds Johnson, Capt.	7/30/1943
Charles Arthur Ferriter, Cmdr. (acting)	10/19/1944
Einar Reynolds Johnson, Capt.	11/6/1944
Charles Butler McVay III, Capt.	11/18/1944

USS *Indianapolis* WWII Battle Stars*

1. Bougainville Air Action and Salamaua-Lae Raid	20 February 1942 and 10 March 1942
2. Aleutians Operation: Attu Occupation	25 May 1943–2 June 1943
3. Gilbert Islands Operation	20 November 1943– 8 December 1943
4. Marshall Islands Operation: Occupation of Kwajalein and Majuro Atolls and Occupation of Eniwetok Atoll	29 January 1944– 8 February 1944 and 17 February 1944– 2 March 1944
5. Asiatic-Pacific Raids: Palau, Yap, Ulitihi, and Woleai Raid	30 March 1944– 1 April 1944
6. Marianas Operation: Capture/Occupation of Saipan and Guam and Battle of the Philippine Sea and Capture/Occupation of Guam	11 June 1944–10 August 1944 and 19–20 June 1944 and 21–23 July 1944
7. Capture/Occupation of Tinian Island	24–25 July 1944
8. Western Caroline Islands Operation: Capture/Occupation of Southern Palau Islands	6 September 1944– 14 October 1944
9. Iwo Jima Operation: Fifth Fleet Raids Against Honshu and the Nansei Shoto and Assault/Occupation of Iwo Jima and Fifth Fleet Raids Against Honshu and the Nansei Shoto and Fifth Fleet Raids Against Honshu and the Nansei Shoto	15–16 February 1945 and 15 February 1945–6 March 1945 and 25 February 1945 and 1 March 1945
10. Okinawa Gunto Operation: Fifth/Third Fleet Raids in Support of Okinawa Gunto Operation and Assault/Occupation of Okinawa Gunto	17–25 March 1945 and 26 March 1945– 5 April 1945

* *Navy and Marine Corps Awards Manual*, Part IV: Campaign and Service Medals (NAVPERS 15,790 [REV. 1953]).

Summary of Final Crew

8 August 1945

Memorandum To: Captain C.B. McVay III, USN

Attached is a roster of all personnel officers and enlisted men about [on board] the USS *Indianapolis* (CA 35) at the time of sinking, 30 July 1945

List I is a roster of ~~80~~ [78 McV]* officers attached to the ship and one (1) passenger, Captain Crouch, USN

List II is officers and enlisted men of Com5thFleet staff aboard the USS *Indianapolis*

List III is a roster of two (2) officers and thirty-seven (37) Marine personnel attached to the USS *Indianapolis*

List IV is a roster of enlisted personnel aboard ship. Page twenty is roster of aviation detail. Note two (2) men of Flag Allowance Com5th Fleet, are included in ship's roster.

List V is report of Navy dead and wounded by Ensign Donald J. Blum, USNR

List VI is report of wounded Marines by Ensign Donald J. Blum, USNR

List VII is Roster of dead and wounded at Base Hospital #20

	Off.	Enl.	Total
Total Personnel Aboard 30 July 1945	84 [82 McV]	1114	1198 [1196 McV]
Total Wounded Survivors	15	301	316
Casualties: "Dead"		4	4
Missing:	69 [67 McV]	809	878 [876 McV]

List I through IV have the wounded survivors marked with a "W". The known dead are marked "Dead". All other personnel are therefore missing.

Very respectfully,

Lee B. Cottrell,
Lieutenant, USNR.

* Struck through numbers were struck through on the original document with blue ink and corrected numbers written in beside them and initialed by Captain McVay.

Source: TD; "Enclosure in Court of Inquiry Transcript," CINCPAC 1945 Flag Files Screening Documents, RG 38, Box 45, NARA II, College Park, MD.



Figure FM-2. Under the New York skyline, *Indianapolis* (CA-35) with President Franklin D. Roosevelt aboard, enters the harbor during the fleet review, 31 May 1934. *Indianapolis* served as President Roosevelt’s unofficial ship of state. He embarked on her multiple times, including the instance shown in the photograph above, when he and members of his cabinet reviewed the fleet on the Hudson from the deck of *Indianapolis*. His most notable cruise aboard *Indianapolis* was his South American “Good Neighbor” tour from 18 November 1936–15 December 1936.

NHHC Photo Collection, NH 678

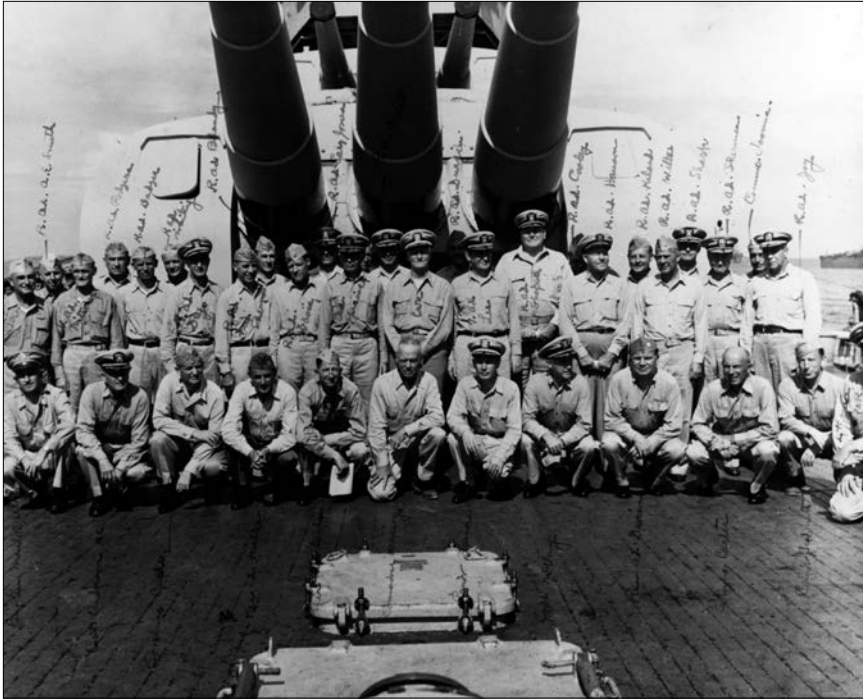


Figure FM-3. On 3 February 1945, Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet (standing center) convened a meeting on board *Indianapolis* with all flag officers present at Ulithi Atoll. At the time, the cruiser was the Fifth Fleet Flagship of Admiral Raymond A. Spruance (left of Nimitz). Her captain, Charles McVay III, is in the bottom row, fifth from right (head turned to his left). When Nimitz boarded the ship and broke his flag on 2 February, it marked the first time a five-star flag had flown from the vessel. He departed the ship on 4 February.

NHHC Photo Collection, NH 49708

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This volume would not be possible without the support of each component of the U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command (NHHC) and the charge of our Director, Rear Admiral Samuel Cox (Ret.), to tell the most accurate and complete history of the U.S. Navy possible so that the hard-won and hard-learned lessons of the past can be utilized to enhance the warfighting effectiveness of today's Navy and to inform the American people of the sacrifices made on their behalf. Special thanks must be given to Peter Luebke for his thorough editorial review and to Christopher Havern Sr. for help in planning, researching, and editing. Both Peter and Christopher offered constructive criticism and support through the entirety of this project. Alucard Capulet transcribed countless pages of archival documents related to *Indianapolis*, and the familiarity he developed with the subject caused him to point out many small details in the records that might have otherwise been overlooked. There is no way that this project could have been completed with such timeliness and thoroughness without the work of Mr. Capulet. The guidance and suggestions from Regina Akers, Robert Cressman, and Mark Evans, are also much appreciated. My branch head, Kristina Giannotta, and section head, Christopher Ghiz, granted me the freedom to develop, research, write, and see this lengthy project through. Their backing made this project possible. John Paulson at the Naval Historical Foundation helped tremendously analyzing rescue data, ships' data, and explaining submarine tactics. Naval Archivist Nathaniel Patch, at National Archives II, College Park frequently directed me to documents and collections. His expertise undoubtedly made this a much richer volume. Dr. Jun Kimura of Tokai University, Japan, graciously pulled *I-58* records for NHHC during one of his research trips to the Military History Research Center, National Institute for Defense Studies in Tokyo and provided us with the scans of those documents. Dr. Kimura was assisted by historian Kiyoshi Yamada. Japanese naval architect and researcher Yutaka Iwasaki gifted his translation of these documents to NHHC. The work of these gentlemen brought additional details on Commander Hashimoto's perspective of the attack. The Underwater Archeology Branch at NHHC

analyzed the historic data found in the *LST-779* records and generated a new search area for *Indianapolis*. The work of underwater archeologists Robert Neyland, Alexis Catsambis, Blair Atcheson, and Abigail Casavant provided a more detailed picture of the final route of *Indianapolis* than previously available. They also generously answered any question that I threw their way and helped me better understand the movement of survivors in the water and the mechanics of a ship sinking. Janis Jorgensen at the United States Naval Institute graciously allowed the use of images from its A. J. Sedivi Collection. Sedivi was the photographer on *Indianapolis* and did not survive the sinking. The photographic record he left brings the storied service of his ship to life.

This manuscript was completed and ready to enter the publication phase on the day the wreckage of *Indianapolis* was discovered. Thank you to Paul Allen, Vulcan, Inc., and their research team led by Robert Kraft on R/V *Petrel* for graciously allowing us to include images of the *Indianapolis* wreck site in the postscript to this volume.

Preparing a project of this scope is a lengthy and sometimes stressful process. I thank my wife, Caitlin Spurlock Hulver, for her steadfast optimism and encouragement.

Any errors within the volume are the author's and no fault of the individuals who graciously lent their support.

AUTHORS



Richard A. Hulver earned his PhD from West Virginia University with specialties in U.S. Foreign Relations and Public History. He has written about United States military commemorative sites from World War I and World War II on foreign soils. Currently, he works in the Histories and Archives Division of the Naval History and Heritage Command (NHHC). Previous federal service included providing historical support to aid the mission at the United States Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM), World War I commemorative work for the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC), and contributions to the U.S. Army Chief-of-Staff's 2003–2011 Iraq War Study Group based at the National Defense University (NDU).



Peter C. Luebke earned his PhD from the University of Virginia, where he studied United States military history. Before joining Naval History and Heritage Command, he participated in multiple public history projects. In addition, he worked in the field of historic preservation at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and authored or coauthored several National Register of Historic Places nominations, including that of *Wisconsin* (ex-BB-64). Currently, he is an editor for the *Naval Documents of the American Revolution* project at NHHC.

INTRODUCTION

It is indisputable that the loss of life attributed to the sinking of *Indianapolis* could have been mitigated had the proper individuals in the Navy realized sooner that the ship was overdue. Unfortunately, this was not the case. The United States Navy did, however, learn from this disaster and took immediate steps to ensure that no Sailor or Marine would again face a similar situation. Escort requirements were stiffened, lifesaving equipment improved, and more rigid movement reporting procedures put in place. The story of *Indianapolis* continues to serve as a point of departure for learning, as evidenced by this volume. Actions of captain and crew of *Indianapolis* throughout their ordeal, and in the aftermath, stand as exemplars of the highest traditions and honor of the United States Navy.

Indianapolis (CA-35) was a decorated World War II warship that is primarily remembered for her worst 15 minutes. The *Portland* class cruiser was commissioned on 15 November 1932 and became Flagship, Scouting Force, U.S. Fleet in 1933. She also served as President Franklin Roosevelt's ship of state, carrying him to the review of the U.S. Fleet on the Hudson River on 31 May 1934 (see Figure FM-2) and on a Good Neighbor cruise to South America in 1936. She served with distinction from the attack on Pearl Harbor through the delivery of components for the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, much of it as Admiral Spruance's flagship for the Fifth Fleet. *Indianapolis* earned ten battle stars for her service in World War II and was credited with shooting down nine enemy planes. This decorated record of service is, unfortunately, overshadowed by the first 15 minutes of 30 July 1945 when she was struck by two torpedoes from Japanese submarine *I-58* and sent to the bottom of the Philippine Sea.

The sinking of *Indianapolis* and the loss of 880 crew out of 1,196*—most deaths occurring in the 4–5 day wait for a rescue delayed because of an unreported non-arrival—is a tragedy in U.S. naval history. The court-martial of the ship’s captain, Charles Butler McVay III, for endangering his ship through negligence by failing to zigzag when U.S. Navy tactical doctrine deemed it prudent, despite Pacific Fleet Commander-in-Chief Admiral Chester Nimitz’s recommendation against, further mires the story in controversy. Embracing the lessons of *Indianapolis*’s final voyage, the failed operational protocol in the aftermath, and the treatment of Captain McVay can teach the current Navy lessons in the responsibility of command, the need for clear operational procedures, the need for vigilance at all times, and the importance of proactively conveying honored Navy command traditions as a means of putting controversial leadership decisions in context. Emphasis on the lessons learned from *Indianapolis* will not only honor her final crew, but allow for a refocus on her commendable service.

The chain-of-events that ultimately placed *Indianapolis* on the trajectory for her sinking began in the early morning hours of 31 March 1945, during the pre-invasion bombardments of Okinawa. Around 0700 a Japanese single-engine plane was spotted in a vertical dive at the ship. The ship’s 20-millimeter guns opened fire, but less than 15 seconds after it was spotted the plane was over the ship. Tracer shells tore into the plane, causing the pilot to swerve, but he managed to release a bomb in his final seconds of life

* The Navy’s official number of survivors, established days after the rescue and endorsed by Captain McVay, is 316 (see document Summary of Final Crew, page xv). This figure was determined by counting the living crewmembers convalescing at two Navy hospitals at Samar and Peleliu and cross checking them with a final ship’s roster recreated in Pearl Harbor after the rescue concluded. The incorrect inclusion of Radio Technician Second Class Clarence William Donnor as a passenger on the final roster created a longstanding discrepancy in the final casualty numbers. Donnor was not actually on the ship when she sank. However, when it was determined that he had not died on *Indianapolis*, he was incorrectly labeled as an *Indianapolis* survivor. This mistake led some to believe that there were 317, not 316 survivors. Document 4.6 in Chapter 4 clears up the discrepancy. Donnor’s exclusion from the historic survivors list makes the 316 number correct, but his inclusion on the Navy’s 1945 list of those killed and those onboard makes those figures off by one, respectively. The longstanding confusion surrounding the final number of casualties is further evidence of the chaotic nature of the loss and the tragedy that crew, their families, and friends still live with. A comprehensive list of all onboard and their disposition following the conclusion of rescue operations is presented in the back matter of this volume.

from a height of 25 feet and crash his plane on the port side of the after main deck. The plane toppled into the sea, causing little damage; but the bomb plummeted through the deck armor, the crew's mess hall, the berthing compartment below, and the fuel tanks still lower before crashing through the bottom of the ship and exploding in the water under the ship. The resulting effect was similar to the detonation of a mine. The concussion blew two gaping holes in the ship's bottom and flooded compartments in the area, killing nine crewmen and leaving the ship in need of major repairs. Captain McVay described the kamikaze attack as his ship's "bloodbath." He believed that the event taught several lessons. He himself gained a sense of the way the ship reacted to an underwater explosion and how much stress she could take. This affected the way he initially reacted to the torpedo hits that his ship took almost exactly four months later. Secondly, he believed that the episode caused the crew to take battle damage more seriously than they previously would have. He felt that the crew's experience off Okinawa made them more aware of the danger their ship was in after being hit by torpedoes and saved lives by compelling them to get topside to await the "abandon ship" call before it was passed orally due to internal radio failure.

Indianapolis limped home to Mare Island, San Francisco under her own power, arriving in early May for refitting. In the three months at Mare Island, the makeup of Captain McVay's crew changed dramatically. Approximately 25 percent of the crew turned over; most new assignments were fresh recruits. McVay's desire to train up his untried men before moving back to the forward area for preparation of the invasion of mainland Japan weighed heavily on his mind. Notice on 12 July that *Indianapolis* was chosen to perform a top-secret delivery at high speed to Tinian on 16 July pushed up redeployment plans approximately two months. On 15 July, a large wooden crate was placed in the empty port hangar of *Indianapolis* and a metal canister in the empty flag staff's quarters. McVay knew not what he carried, only that every hour saved in delivery would reportedly shorten the war by that much. *Indianapolis* left Mare Island the morning of 16 July with a crew that had not gone through their planned training and nearly 100 passengers being taxied to the Pacific Theater. Sailing at 28–29 knots, *Indianapolis* delivered its cargo to Tinian on 26 July, setting a speed record for the Pearl Harbor leg in

the process. After the delivery of cargo and passengers, the ship made a short overnight transit to Guam for routing instructions to its next assignment in the forward area.

During *Indianapolis's* stopover in Guam for routing to the Philippines, Captain McVay inquired about getting the needed training there before moving closer to the fighting, only to learn that training was no longer available in the Marianas. McVay was likely relieved to learn that *Indianapolis* would join Task Group 95.7 for two weeks of training immediately upon arrival at Leyte. His concern for training was made even more evident by his request for routing instructions to put him at his final stretch into Leyte in the early morning hours so that he could maximize the last few miles with antiaircraft practice in the best light to follow the tracer rounds. For an early morning arrival, McVay had two routing options. He could leave on 27 July, travel at 24–25 knots and arrive at Leyte the morning of 30 July, or leave the morning of 28 July, travel 15.7 knots, and arrive the morning of 31 July. Having just pushed his engines on the top-secret delivery, McVay opted for the slower speed transit. Unbeknownst to him, this decision placed his ship directly in the path of Japanese submarine *I-58*. McVay's inquiry about getting an escort was dismissed, as the area *Indianapolis* would traverse was viewed as a backwater with minimal enemy threats, and there were no escort vessels available as every combatant ship was needed for patrol or combat operations with the pending invasion of Japan. The risk of sharing intelligence from top secret ULTRA intercepts that indicated otherwise, and was not pieced fully together, was not deemed worthwhile for such a routine transit. McVay's routing instructions did mention three several day old possible enemy submarine contacts around the ship's prescribed route—Convoy Route *Peddie*.

The intelligence available to Captain McVay, the absence of any moonlight when he was on the bridge prior to retiring to his cabin, along with his concern for getting the crew prepared to enter the anticipated bloodbath that an invasion of Japan would be, all factored into his decision to cease zigzagging the night that his ship was sunk. Feeling pressed for time and that visibility was poor, he used the discretion granted him under his routing orders and ceased zigzagging the night of 29–30 July to make up any time lost during required daylight zigzagging. Unfortunately, the poor

visibility justifying this decision improved just as *Indianapolis* came in range of Japanese submarine *I-58*. The middle of the night between 29 and 30 July 1945, in the waters of the Philippine Sea, *I-58* was at the right place and *Indianapolis* was not. A temporary change in weather conditions heightened the good and bad fortunes of each.

Japanese language records written by submarine Commander Mochitsura Hashimoto shortly after WWII from the National Institute for Defense Studies in Tokyo provide a good description of the enemy's perspective of the attack on *Indianapolis*. At 2226 (all times adjusted to *Indianapolis* ship time), the moon had risen, and Hashimoto looked through his periscope and determined that visibility was too poor for *I-58* to surface. The submarine finally surfaced at 2335 and immediately identified through binoculars what was initially thought to be a surfaced enemy submarine to the east at a distance of 10,000 meters. Hashimoto then initiated his attack, submerged, and acquired his target perfectly silhouetted by the moon in his night periscope. Three minutes later, and still unaware of the exact identity of his target, Hashimoto ordered his crew to prepare six Type 95 torpedoes with Type 2 Mod. 1 warheads for attack and also manned the *Kaiten* should they be needed. According to Hashimoto's hand-drawn sketch, by 2348 *I-58* was prepared to attack and was within 3,000 meters of its target's starboard side, completely undetected. Hashimoto, within 1,500 meters, fired the first of his Type 95 torpedoes with a solution of 11 knots (not the actual 17 the *Indianapolis* was travelling) at 2356—all were on their way by 0002. According to his testimony during Captain McVay's court-martial, he was unaware if his target was zigzagging or not. His spread of six torpedoes and underestimated speed suggests that he suspected zigzagging, however.

The first torpedo hit directly in front of Turret I at 0003, causing a large explosion. Fire from the explosion allowed Hashimoto to view three water pillars in quick succession. The target reportedly came to a stop at 0004 when a fourth explosion took place. The apparent success of the Type 95 torpedoes caused Hashimoto not to deploy his eager *Kaiten* crews on an unnecessary suicide mission. After 18 minutes from the first hit, the lights flickered at the center of *Indianapolis* and ten loud explosions were heard—several making much more noise than the torpedo hits. *I-58* then turned away from the ship

and distanced itself from its target in anticipation of a counter-attack. At 0030, all explosions had ceased and *I-58* returned to the location finding no signs of any ship. Hashimoto surfaced and moved through area at 0100 and determined that his crew had succeeded in sinking the enemy ship. At 0145 he submitted his report to Kure of a successful sinking of one *Idaho*-class battleship with three torpedo hits at 0003 30 July. Hashimoto provided coordinates in his report, and Allied intelligence intercepted the message. The grid coordinates were not recovered, however, and the message was viewed as a typical Japanese exaggeration of attack or an attempt to lure in potential targets.

The United States Navy investigation concluded that only two torpedoes hit the starboard side of the ship, one nearly tearing off the bow at frame 7, and the other hitting just forward of the bridge at frame 50 near the main communications room. Damage from the torpedoes to the forward engine room stopped engines No. 1 and No. 4. Lieutenant Richard B. Redmayne, the ship's Chief Engineer of only 10 days, reached the after engine room and ordered the failing No. 2 engine shut down. Unable to communicate with the bridge, Redmayne made the decision to increase the only functioning engine, No. 3, to full speed. Unfortunately the acceleration caused by that engine allowed the ship to plow ahead and circle to port with water pouring into her wrecked bow. Captain McVay made the decision to hold off on issuing the "abandon ship" order in the first few minutes because the ship listed only three degrees, and she had been able to stay afloat under similar conditions after the kamikaze bomb hit at Okinawa. Minutes later, the ship's executive officer returned to the bridge after assessing the damage and advised his Captain to issue the order, which he did. Captain McVay then decided to descend the bridge to get to Radio Room One to ensure that a distress signal made it off the ship. He realized that without escort the distress signal was his crew's only hope for quick rescue. As McVay made his way from the bridge, the ship listed further starboard each minute, going to 25 degrees, 45 degrees, and 60 degrees. Within 12 minutes, she listed 90 degrees starboard, plunged by the head, rolled completely over, and assumed an up and down position before her unchecked descent into some of the deepest water on Earth. No distress signal ever left the ship, few life rafts deployed, and

the crew was scattered in the water having left the moving ship in piecemeal fashion. The 200–300 Sailors and Marines who went down with the ship faced a quicker end than many of their fellow crewmates would in the upcoming days.

Up to 800 crewmen of *Indianapolis* went into the water following the sinking. These men were broken down into seven different groups of varying sizes and became spread out over approximately 25 miles. Almost all men had either pneumatic life belts or kapok lifejackets. The fortunate survivors, which were few, had life rafts with canned meat, malted milk balls, and some water. Captain McVay, one of the last swept off the ship, ended up in a group of 30 with life rafts. He continued to act as captain and led what he thought were the only crew left. The largest group was comprised of some 300–400 men with nothing except the life vests they wore into the water. It is likely that around 100 men who went into the water died within the first few hours due to wounds sustained in the torpedo explosions. The rest faced slow death from dehydration, overexposure, and exhaustion; all the while witnessing deaths from intentional salt water ingestion, hallucinatory driven attacks against fellow crew, mental collapse, and shark attacks.

A Navy rescue was not quickly mounted because damage to the ship's communications system prevented a distress signal from being sent. Misinterpretation by port authorities at Leyte Gulf of Pacific Fleet Instruction 10CL-45, a directive issued in early 1945 to ease communication burdens placed on port officials by prohibiting the reporting of combatant ship arrivals, led to the non-arrival of *Indianapolis* going unreported until the discovery of her survivors in the water four days after her sinking. The hard realization that *Indianapolis* was not missed set in for Captain McVay and his crew as days dragged on with no apparent rescue underway. It is likely that the survivors were spotted on their second night in the water. An Army Air Force Captain piloting a C-54E from Manila to Guam spotted “naval action” in the form of star shells and tracers around 1900 on 31 July, 430 miles east of Manila. The incident was reported to the officers at Operations and Navigation at Guam, but was dismissed on the assumption that “if it was naval action, that the Navy knew about it.” The pilot, in all likelihood, was viewing flares fired from *Indianapolis* survivors in life rafts—enough to give

the appearance of a naval battle. This oversight exemplifies the need for communication between the services.

Survivors were accidentally spotted around noon on 2 August, 84 hours after entering the water, when Lieutenant (j.g.) Wilbur Gwinn, the pilot of a Lockheed PV-1 twin-engine patrol bomber, spotted an oil slick while adjusting a malfunctioning antenna. He dropped altitude and followed the oil slick thinking that he had discovered a damaged Japanese submarine or cargo ship. Instead, he identified around 30 heads bobbing within the oil and a separate group of about 150 individuals. Not knowing who the survivors were, but suspecting that they were American, the PV-1 dropped a sonar buoy and a life raft. Gwinn also requested a rescue ship and air support. A relief PV-1 and a PBY Catalina were en route from Palau to the scene within an hour, along with several fast vessels. At 1520, the PBY arrived on the scene and its pilot, Lieutenant Adrian Marks, decided to make a risky water landing—partially due to witnessing sharks feeding on remains in the water. Marks used his plane as a rescue ship, ferrying between groups of survivors and pulling those most in need of rescue inside the plane and onto its wings. Destroyer escort *Cecil J. Doyle* (DE-368), commanded by future Secretary of Navy, Lieutenant Commander Graham Claytor Jr., arrived to survivors around 0000 3 August. Claytor saw air rescue operations and flares in his two hour approach to the scene and made the decision to illuminate the sky with the ship's search light to provide rescue planes his location and to give men in the water hope—a dangerous move in waters with potential enemy submarines. Three more ships arrived in the early morning hours of 3 August. It was not until these ships started pulling in survivors that they learned they were rescuing the crew of *Indianapolis*. Captain McVay's group was among the last to be picked up shortly after 1300 on 3 August, as the wind pushed their rafts considerably further north of the floating men. McVay did not realize that any of his crew, outside of those in his group, had survived until he saw the rescue operations underway to his south. Almost immediately, he conveyed to his rescuers the fact that he was not zigzagging when sunk.

Three hundred-sixteen of the ship's final complement survived. The Hiroshima A-Bomb, for which *Indianapolis* delivered components to Tinian, was dropped 6 August as survivors convalesced in Naval Base Hospital

No. 20 Peleliu and Fleet Hospital No. 114 Samar. Japan surrendered on 15 August, bringing a close to WWII. Public release of the *Indianapolis* loss was set to occur approximately 48 hours after the last condolence letter went in the mail to family; this was intended to ensure that all next-of-kin would learn the news prior to the public. This administrative decision unfortunately led to the public release of *Indianapolis* coinciding with news of Japan's surrender on 15 August. A court of inquiry to investigate the sinking and assign responsibility convened 13–20 August in Guam under the direction of Pacific Fleet Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Chester Nimitz. After hearing testimony from Captain McVay, other survivors, and port authorities from Guam and Leyte, the court recommended that McVay face trial by court-martial for hazarding his ship by not zigzagging and for failure to issue the call to “abandon ship” in a timely manner. Furthermore, the port director at Leyte was to receive a letter of admonition, and disciplinary actions for communications officers of Task Force 95.7, which *Indianapolis* was to join in Leyte, were recommended. CINCPACFLT Nimitz disagreed with the court's findings regarding McVay. He suggested that Captain McVay be given only a letter of reprimand. Admiral Ernest King, Chief of Naval Operations, and James Forrestal, Secretary of Navy, uncharacteristically went against the recommendation of McVay's operational commander. Admiral King believed that there were many “sins of omission” that contributed to the large loss of life in the *Indianapolis* sinking, but that Captain McVay's failure to resume zigzagging, or to take specific measures for his officer on deck to do so if visibility improved, directly violated U.S. Fleet Tactical Orders and required formal trial.

McVay's trial was held in the first week of December 1945 on the 3rd deck of Building 57 on the Washington Navy Yard in rooms overlooking Leutze Park. Captain McVay was convicted of negligence, hazarding his ship by not zigzagging, despite testimony from *I-58* Commander Hashimoto during that trial that the maneuver would have had no impact on the outcome. He was acquitted on the charge of failing to issue “abandon ship” in a timely manner. The court's board unanimously recommended that Captain McVay's sentence of a loss of 100 lineal numbers to his temporary grade of captain and his permanent grade of commander be remitted due to his

outstanding service record. Admiral King and Secretary Forrestal concurred. McVay was convicted but received no sentence. The Navy Department's 23 February 1946 press release regarding McVay's conviction and remittance of his sentence clearly stated that the captain was "neither charged with, nor tried, for losing" his ship. The remittance of the sentence further added to the controversy aroused by future researchers into the subject. Emotion and misunderstanding of Navy tradition have falsely caused the public to view McVay as the Navy's scapegoat. The mixed-message of the conviction with no punishment ultimately hurt the Navy's reputation and ruined the career of a fine officer. McVay would never command at sea again, but he returned to service and was promoted to the rank of rear admiral upon retirement in 1949.

The Navy addressed many of the contributing factors for the loss of life at sea immediately after the 2–3 August rescue. Escorts became a requirement for all U.S. ships with crew of 500 or more. Additionally, the misinterpreted reporting procedure was remedied. It became a requirement for any U.S. ship five hours overdue to be immediately reported and procedures for better ship movement reports initiated. The discretion for zigzagging given to captains sailing the Pacific waters was taken away, and all combatant ships were directed to zigzag at all times. Captain McVay also advocated for life-saving equipment improvements. He urged the Navy to provide parachute flares in emergency kits, to adopt a life preserver with a pocket containing freshwater, for dull colored life rafts to be replaced with bright yellow ones, and for the susceptible wooden water breakers to be replaced with watertight metal ones—just to name a few.

Captain McVay's conviction and the remittance of his sentence did not close the story of *Indianapolis*. McVay's suicide in 1968 and the 1975 *Jaws* monologue strongly emphasizing the role of sharks in the survivors' ordeal brought increased public attention and dramatic flair to the sinking and the Navy's treatment of Captain McVay. Authors in the following decades wrote books on *Indianapolis* focusing not on the ship's decorated service, but primarily on conspiracies. McVay was cast as the Navy's scapegoat in a broader effort to cover its own shortfalls. Unconfirmable claims of received and ignored distress signals from *Indianapolis* surfaced. Released ULTRA

intelligence showing the Navy's awareness of Japanese submarine activity along Route *Peddie* falsely ignited accusations that the Navy intentionally put *Indianapolis* in danger. Discrepancies in Japanese submarine *I-58*'s final *Kaiten* count in comparison with claimed deployments of *Kaiten* raised questions of a Japanese attempt to cover up the use of suicide torpedoes in the attack on *Indianapolis*. Public interest in the sinking peaked in the late 1990s when Florida middle school student Hunter Scott received national attention for a History Day project, supported by survivors, geared toward the exoneration of Captain McVay. The project sparked congressional interest.

In 2001, a joint congressional resolution was passed and signed into law by President Clinton expressing that evidence made available since McVay's conviction effectively cleared the captain of responsibility for the loss of his ship and recommended that a Presidential Unit Commendation (PUC) be given to the final crew of *Indianapolis*. Legally, the 1945 conviction could not be overturned by the contemporary Navy. The only alteration to the case that a sitting SECNAV could make would be the remittance of McVay's sentence—something already done by SECNAV Forrestal immediately after the trial. A presidential pardon of McVay would similarly only take away a sentence already remitted. The President is the only individual who could conceivably overturn McVay's conviction—this would be precedent breaking, considered beyond the scope of presidential authority, and largely ceremonial. Such a ceremonial pardon already took place when Secretary of Navy Gordon England ordered that the joint congressional resolution clearing McVay of blame be placed in McVay's official file in 2001. In the same year, the Navy Awards Board determined that the crew of *Indianapolis* did not meet the criteria for a PUC, but their actions in the delivery of the atomic bomb components from 16–26 July 1945 did merit a Navy Unit Commendation (NUC). No official Navy presentation ceremony of the NUC to survivors took place, as survivor animosity toward Navy leadership remained heightened.

The year 2016 marked the 71st anniversary of the sinking and another spike in public attention on the loss—including a big screen adaptation of the story, talk of future films, documentaries, and planned expeditions to locate the wreckage of the warship. Naval History and Heritage Command (NHHC) revisited the sinking to make sure that an accurate history was

made available to the public, to offer lessons learned from the tragedy to the Navy, and to properly commemorate the sacrifices of the crew. These efforts contributed to the discovery of the ship in August 2017.

In this book appear primary source documents that tell the story of the *Indianapolis*, its sinking, rescue efforts, investigations, aftermath, and continuing commemoration efforts. These documents have been drawn primarily from United States Navy records and represent a selection of available material. These contemporary documents will permit readers to investigate the story of *Indianapolis* for themselves, to draw their own conclusions, and to identify topics for further research. Many of the documents in this volume appear for the first time, such as the deck log of a hitherto unidentified landing ship, tank (LST). Research in the course of preparing this volume led to the identification of *LST-779*, and its deck logs enable a better knowledge of *Indianapolis*'s location when she was sunk. Other documents that appear in this volume likewise help us better understand this tragic event.

Much has been published on the *Indianapolis* disaster. Inevitably, errors and misinterpretations have crept into the now-standard accounts—exaggerated claims of faulty intelligence, an elaborate Navy cover-up, misunderstandings of the atomic bomb mission, and a sensationalized focus on the presence of sharks in the story. The documents here correct some of those errors and allow readers to see how the event unfolded and how the Navy responded. More importantly, it makes widely available the testimony of survivors and participants. It is hoped that the documents here will spark a greater interest in the service of *Indianapolis* and her crew. This volume also stands as a small example of the Navy's moral obligation to ensure that the sacrifices of all those who served are not forgotten by telling the complete history—good and bad.

Returning to the Forward Area: Atom Bomb Delivery and the Final Voyage

The U.S. Navy recorded Captain McVay's oral history on 27 September 1945, two months after his ship delivered atomic bomb components to Tinian. In this extract from the interview, Captain McVay describes how damage sustained in the pre-invasion of Okinawa positioned his ship for the top secret delivery mission. McVay additionally provided information regarding transit to Tinian and the first day of the routine voyage to Leyte and the forward area of the war.

Document 1.1: Oral History of Captain Charles B. McVay III, Describing Delivery of A-Bomb Components [Extract]

The *Indianapolis* had come to the Navy Yard, Mare Island in early May 1945, to get heavy underwater damage repaired from a Kamikaze hit that she took off Okinawa on 30 March [31 March]. We had more time there than anticipated and knew that we were due back in the forward area at the earliest practical date.

On about 12 July, I got orders which indicated that we had to perform some special mission, so that we knew that we would not be able to take our usual refresher course on the west coast, but had been told we would receive that in the forward area. On 15 July, I was in San Francisco, and talked with

Admiral Purnell and Captain Parsons¹ who I know were connected in an intimate way with a secret project, but I did not know what this project was. I was informed at that time that when we were ready for sea on 16 July, we would proceed as fast as possible to the forward area. On Sunday, the 15th of July, about noon, we were at Hunters Point and they put on us what we now know was the Atomic Bomb.²

We sailed from San Francisco, 0800 the morning of 16th July. We ran into a little rough weather outside Golden Gate, so the first day we only made 28 knots. The next two days we made 29 knots and we discovered when we arrived in Pearl that we had established a new record from Faralons Light Ship to Diamond Head.³ The old record, which is given in the World Almanac of 1944, was established by the *Omaha* in 1932 when she made a trip which took 75.4 hours. We made the trip in 74 1/2 hours.

When I arrived at Pearl, I knew the approximate date that I had to get out in the Marianas and since we were able to reach that area in within a week prior to the time that I knew I had to arrive, I said that I would make from Pearl to the Marianas a speed of 24 knots at which I would arrive out at Tinian the morning of the 26th. We made this sustained speed without any difficulty so that we arrived in Tinian the morning of 26 July and unloaded the material and the bomb which was later to be dropped over Hiroshima.

We left Tinian immediately upon unloading and went to Guam, an overnight trip, where we arrived the next morning and went through the usual antiaircraft practices. We got into Guam around 1000. We replenished ammunition, stores and fuel and left Guam Saturday morning⁴ at about 0930. We were given a routing from Port Director, Guam, and a speed which we were told to maintain except under conditions which we thought we had to make a greater speed in order to avoid either navigational or other obstructions.

We had no incidents whatsoever. We passed an LST⁵ headed toward Leyte, as we were also, on Sunday,⁶ and talked to them. They were north of us and they were preparing to go further north in order to get out of our area to do some antiaircraft shooting. My instructions from Guam called for me to make an SOA⁷ of 15.7 knots and to arrive at Leyte at 1100 Tuesday, 31 July.

Source: TR; Extract from “Oral History of Charles B. McVay III, Captain USN,” recorded 27 September 1945, transcribed 1 October 1945, 34 pp. Copy of original in *Indianapolis* Ship History Files, Naval History and Heritage Command Archives, Washington Navy Yard.

The damage suffered in the kamikaze attack off Okinawa on 31 March 1945 placed Indianapolis on its fateful trajectory. The repairs necessitated by the damage put Indianapolis at Mare Island in July 1945 and in a position to be the ship to deliver the atomic bomb components. The experience of the attack also informed Captain McVay’s reaction to the torpedo hits that sank his ship; the previous kamikaze attack gave him a sense of how his ship reacted to heavy damage below the waterline. Indianapolis arrived at Mare Island for repairs on 3 May 1945, and they were completed 13 July 1945.

**Document 1.2: Report of War Damage to *Indianapolis* off Okinawa
31 March 1945 [Extracts]**

4. On 31 March 1945, *Indianapolis* was in column astern the *Salt Lake City*, distance about 1000 Yards, closing to take station 600 yards astern *Salt Lake City*. Condition I was set in the AA battery. At 0708, a single enemy fighter plane, an “Oscar,”⁸ was sighted emerging from a low overhanging cloud in an almost vertical dive slightly on the starboard side of the ship. The plane was apparently headed for the ship in a suicide dive, probably aimed at the bridge. Eight 20mm guns were brought into action, but the time was so short that only five of them had time to empty their magazines before the plane crashed on the port side of the main deck aft, at frame 112–113, at the edge of the waterway. The plane probably was out of control before it struck, as tracers were seen to enter the plane. Just before striking the main deck, the plane’s left wing tip struck the floater net rack on the splinter shield of the aft 20mm gun platform and this shock probably caused the bomb or bombs to release. The bomb causing the major damage pierced the main deck plating before the plane struck. Measurements indicated that this bomb probably was carried under the plane’s left wing. It is possible that there was a second bomb under the plane’s right wing, as several witnesses reported

hearing a second explosion. If this was the case, it is probable that the second bomb was released at the same time as the first and went harmlessly over the side. Immediately after the plane crashed on the deck, it toppled overboard into the sea and there was a deadened sound as the bomb or bombs exploded. A column of oil and water shot up through the deck and covered the main deck aft with a layer of fuel oil, sea water and some gasoline from the plane's tanks. Fortunately there was no fire, but the ruptured compartments flooded almost immediately. The ship soon reached its maximum draft and list, and inspection revealed the water-tight boundaries of the damaged area to be holding. With the flooding controlled it was decided there was no immediate danger and the ship proceeded to Kerama Retto where emergency repairs were made by USS *Clamp* (ARS 33).

[...]

8. The plane's port bomb, estimated to have been a 500 lb., AP, delayed-action fuze type bomb,⁹ pierced the main deck at the same place as the plane's motor. From [a photograph] it is apparent that the bomb penetrated the main deck before the plane's engine struck, as the bomb hole may be seen in the plating which was subsequently ruptured by the engine. The bomb passed through the 25 lb. HTS main deck plating and entered compartment D-201-L, crew's quarters, destroying a diving gear locker. The bomb then pierced the 25 lb. HTS second deck plating, 39" forward of bulkhead 114 and 43" inboard of the ship's shell, making a circular hole about 13" in diameter, and entered crew's mess, D-301-L. Beneath the second deck the bomb struck a 5" fuel oil overboard discharge line, damaging the line and deflecting the bomb forward. The bomb continued through D-301-L, pierced the 9 lb. MS first platform deck, entered fuel oil tank D-6-F, passed through this tank and out through the 30 lb. MS plating of "F" strake at frame 112. As the bomb cleared the ship, the delayed-action fuze finally took effect and detonation occurred just outside¹⁰ of the shell plating.

9. The effect of the underwater detonation of the bomb was that of a small torpedo. Much of the force of the explosion was transmitted back into the ship through the hole from which the bomb had emerged, blowing the edges of the bomb hole inward and increasing the size of the hole to approximately four by five feet...

[...]

13. General flexure of the ship was noted. No important damage resulted to the ship's structure, but all three ship's airplanes were damaged by shock. The starboard airplane was knocked off its catapult to the quarter deck and the port plane was knocked askew on its catapult, badly damaging both planes. The third plane, which was parked on the quarter deck, on the ship's centerline, was damaged when the starboard plane fell on it. Both catapults were damaged. The starboard catapult had the outboard and inboard catwalk distorted and life lines and stanchions in the amidships section bent and torn away. The port catapult also had life lines and stanchions damaged. After minor repairs by the ship's force, both catapults were put back in operation. The whip of the foremast damaged some radar equipment, and spring bearings and No. 2 HP air compressor suffered shock damage.

14. From April 1 to 7 the *Indianapolis* was given temporary repairs by *Clamp* (ARS 33). Patches were welded on the main deck, blown up plating on the first platform was cut away and temporary stiffeners were installed. Soft patches were placed over the holes in the hull by divers and concrete was poured in the interior. *Indianapolis* patched the bomb hole in the second deck with its own velocity power tool. Later *Indianapolis* proceeded to Guam where repair forces chipped out the concrete and removed soft patches with the intent of replacing them with steel plate, but this was found to be impractical and the soft patches and concrete were replaced. Soon after, *Indianapolis* proceeded to Navy Yard, Mare Island for permanent repairs.

Source: TDS; Extracts from "Report of War Damage to USS *Indianapolis*, Okinawa 31 March 1945," Enclosure in Commandant Navy Yard Mare Island to Bureau of Ships, 7 August 1945, signed by A. O. Gieselmann, Planning Officer. War Damage Reports, RG 19, Entry P1, Boxes 30–31, NARA II. Sections omitted provide detailed analysis of structural damage caused by bomb. References to specific photos of bomb damage contained in the report have been removed.



Figure 1-1. Hole in main deck caused by Japanese bomb at Frame 114 port side.

Photograph taken by *Indianapolis* (CA-35) ship photographer Alfred Sedivi. BUSHIPS War Damage Reports, RG 19, Boxes 30–31, NARA II, College Park, MD. Declassified, Authority [NND960035]



Figure 1-2. *Indianapolis* (CA-35) Chaplain Thomas Conway conducts funeral services for crewmen killed by kamikaze attack off Okinawa while the ship is anchored at Kerama Retto for repair. Three burial services were held for the nine Sailors. Their bodies were recovered in stages as water was pumped from flooded compartments. The service for one Sailor was held at 1730 on 31 March, a service for six at 1600 on 1 April, and for two at 0800 on 2 April. The funeral service pictured above is for the six crewmen on 1 April, Easter Sunday. All bodies were removed from *Indianapolis* for burial on Zamami Jima. Captain McVay considered this incident his ship's bloodbath, and he felt confident that all crew present for it had learned the hard realities of war and stood ready to respond to damage in the future.

Courtesy of United States Naval Institute—A. J. Sedivi Collection



Figure 1-3. The damaged *Indianapolis* (CA-35) at Kerama Retto, Ryuku Islands, photograph dated 2 April 1945. *Indianapolis* is listing noticeably and water is being pumped from starboard aft. According to the *Indianapolis*'s deck logs, from 0300–0600 on 2 April the ship fired more than 300 rounds from its 20mm and 40mm guns at enemy aircraft operating in the area. At 0800, burial services were held for the final two crewman recovered from flooded compartments below deck. At 0855, shortly after the morning burial services, a kamikaze splashed into the water approximately 5,000 yards from a CVE. The photo was taken from *New Mexico* (BB-40) and *YMS-327* is forward of *Indianapolis*. *LCT-1414* is approaching *Indianapolis* starboard to replenish her spent ammunition. *Indianapolis* is anchored for repairs prior to her return to Mare Island, San Francisco, for her final overhaul. She arrived at Kerama Retto under her own power on 31 March at 1221, escorted by *Twiggs* (DD-591). *Clamp* (ARS-33) moored alongside *Indianapolis* to port after arriving to assist with repairs.

Navy Photograph 80-G-316816, NARA II, College Park, MD

This 14 July 1945 intelligence dispatch from the headquarters of Commander-in-Chief Pacific, Pearl Harbor had the highest security classification, top secret ULTRA. As such, the intelligence was held closely and only distributed to a select number of individuals on the staffs of Chief of Naval Operations and Commander-in-Chief Pacific, then to subordinate commands on a strictly need-to-know basis. Because ULTRA was one of the United States' most closely guarded secrets during the war, intelligence derived from it would only be used if the information might affect operational-level decisions. Routine wartime operations could not receive ULTRA intelligence due to the risk

of the Japanese learning that their codes had been broken. This dispatch indicated that the U.S. Navy was aware that Japan planned to deploy four submarines armed with suicide Kaiten torpedoes for offensive action against Allied forces operating in the Philippine Sea.

Document 1.3: ULTRA Dispatch Outlining Japanese Submarine Operations Between Leyte Gulf and Okinawa

14 July 1945

From: CINCPAC PEARL

For Action: All Holders 35-S¹¹

Information: CINCPAC ADV. HDQTRS., CTF 77, CINCAFPAC,
COMSEVENTHFLT

Precedence: OP OP OP

Submarine *I-53* departing Bungo Channel 141700 for patrol station midway between Leyte Gulf and Okinawa. This is first of 4 subs which have been directed sortie western inland sea for offensive patrols against Blue Shipping¹² and for reconnaissance. This is ULTRA. Following are available details regarding other three. *I-58* departing (18th) for patrol in vicinity position 500 miles north of (Palau?). *I-47* and *I-367* depart 19th for patrol on line between Okinawa and Marianas. The former 355 miles from Okinawa and latter (450?) miles from Marianas. All subs carry 5–6 human torpedoes probably on deck and probably in addition to regular torpedoes. In apparent effort increase effectiveness anti-sub operations in Tsugaru-Soya Straits area all magnetic detector equipped planes of Saeki Air Group directed 10 July proceed Ominato and report to Comdr. Ominato Guard District Escort Force. Evidence 12th that radars urgently requested for 30 Jills of Night Torpedo Attack Unit of Air Group 131 believed at Katori.¹³

Source: TDC; "ULTRA Extracts," Photocopies in USS *Indianapolis* file, Box 396B, Naval History and Heritage Command Archives, WNY. Originals from COMNAVSECGRU File 5830/114.



Figure 1-4. Japanese Submarine *I-58* is prepared for scuttling, off Sasebo, Japan, during Operation Road's End, 1 April 1946.

Official U.S. Navy Photograph, now in the collections of the U.S. National Archives, NHHC Photo, 80-G-260244

Atomic bomb components for Little Boy, the bomb dropped on Hiroshima, were loaded onto Indianapolis on 15 July, and the ship departed with them the morning of 16 July. The plan of the day for the departure day from Captain McVay's submission of final deck logs to the Chief of Naval Personnel provided a sense of the activity on the ship prior to departing on its top-secret mission.

Document 1.4: Indianapolis Plan of the Day for 16 July

PLAN OF THE DAY FOR MONDAY 16 JULY 1945
ROUTINE AS PER SECTION 51 and then SECTION 55 SHIP'S
ORGANIZATION BOOK.

0530 Reveille.

0600 Breakfast. Secure patrols.

0630 Shore Leave and Liberty expires on board for Port Watch.

-Shift into the Uniform of the Day (topside personnel):

Officers – complete uniform

Enlisted men – undress Blues, blue-dyed hats.

0645 Make preparations for getting underway. Be prepared for high speed.
-Hoist in #1 Station Wagon upon its return.

0645 U. S. Guard Mail and OM trip to Yard.

0730 Division Officers report Readiness for Sea to First Lieutenant.

0730 Station Special Sea Details. Set Condition of Readiness III, Material Condition Y (Modified).

0800 Quarters for muster and getting underway.
Division Officers conduct sight muster.

0800 Underway, assisted by NYD tugs and pilot and NYD line handling party.

0830 (About) Retreat from quarters.

0830 Turn to.

0930 Gunnery Dept. issue binoculars and helmets, Control Aft.

1030 Set Condition I in the Anti-Aircraft Batteries.

1100 Commence BAKER firing runs, 5" Battery.

1130 Commence GEORGE firing runs, 5" and automatics.

1135 Mess Gear.

1150 Pipe to noon-day meal.

1200 Commence TARE firing runs, 5" and automatics.

1220 Relieve the watch.

1230 Commence UNCLE firing runs, 5" and automatics.

1300 Completion of firing. Resume Condition III in AA batteries.

1300 Noon-day meal for AA Batteries.

1300 Turn to. Ship's work.

1400 Gunnery Dep't. Officers report to Wardroom for lecture by Gunnery Officer.

1445 Censors assemble in Wardroom.

1500 All Main Battery firecontrolmen report to Control for instruction (C Gunner Harrison).

1500 Radarmen (off watch) report to Radar Aft for telephone talker instruction (Lt. Jenney).

1500 After Ammo. Supply Party report to #3 mess hall for instruction (Lt. jg) Ullman.

1600 Division Officers assemble in Wardroom (Executive Officer).

1600 Gunnery Dept. issue pistols, armory.
1630 Pipe sweepers.
1655 Mess Gear.
1715 Pipe to supper.
1900 Retard clocks one hour to zone plus 8.
1930 (About) Sunset. Darken ship.
1945 Eight o'clock reports.

Notes:

1. Examinations for advancement in rating will be conducted tomorrow. See note 7 of 14 July Plan of the Day.
2. It is imperative that the expenditure of fresh water be reduced.

[signed J. Flynn]

J. A. FLYNN

Commander, U.S.N.

Executive Officer.

Source: TDSC; "July Plans of the Day from Deck Logs for USS *Indianapolis*" submitted to Chief of Naval Personnel by Captain McVay 10 October 1945, transcribed 1 October 1945, signed by J. A. Flynn, CDR, USN [USS *Indianapolis*, Executive Officer]. RG 24, Deck Logs, NARA II. Cover page notes that smooth deck logs for July could not be reconstructed because rough deck logs and quartermaster's notebooks were lost with the vessel.

In the official U.S. Army history of the Manhattan Project, historian Vincent C. Jones described the delivery of the atomic bomb components from Los Alamos, New Mexico, to the waiting Indianapolis: "Most of [Little Boy's] components and the U-235 had left Los Alamos in mid-July in the custody of Maj. Robert R. Furman, a special projects officer from Maj. Gen. Leslie Grove's Washington headquarters and Capt. James F. Nolan, chief medical officer at the New Mexico installation. They traveled by automobile from Santa Fe to Albuquerque, by airplane to Hamilton Field near San Francisco, thence to Hunters Point to board the cruiser Indianapolis." Lieutenant Lewis Haynes, the Medical Officer aboard Indianapolis described

the circumstances of the A-bomb components being loaded onto the ship and the delivery mission in the extract from his oral history with historians from the Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED).

**Document 1.5: Oral History with Captain (Ret.) Lewis Haynes, MC,
USN [Extract]**



Figure 1-5. Lieutenant Lewis Haynes.

Photograph courtesy of Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED)

[...]¹⁴

Anyway, I went back to Connecticut and saw my family then came back to Mare Island when our repairs were completed. Then we were supposed to go on our post repair trial run. But instead, on July 15th, we were ordered to go to Hunter's Point in San Francisco, where we anchored. Hunter's Point was also a busy naval shipyard. After getting underway, we all went up to the bridge and Capt. McVay told us we were going to dock at Hunter's Point and take on some cargo.

We went alongside the pier and I was amazed to notice that there was a quiet, almost dead Navy Yard. Two big trucks came alongside. One truck had a bunch of men aboard. They came aboard the ship including two Army

officers, Capt. [James F.] Nolan and Maj. [Robert R.] Furman. I found out later that Nolan was a medical officer. I don't know what his job was, probably to monitor radiation. The other truck contained a big crate which was almost the size of this room which was loaded by crane and put in the port hangar. And I noticed of the men who came aboard, when I filled out their health records, some went to every division on the ship. When we got to Pearl, they all left. Two men carried another container, a canister about 3 feet tall and about 2 feet square up to Adm. Spruance's cabin where they welded it to the deck. I had that thing welded to the deck above my cabin for the 10 days. Later on, I found out that this was the bomb core and the large box in the hangar contained the device for firing the bomb, bringing the two pieces together to form the critical mass.

We stayed tied up to the pier until after we got this cargo on board. Then we pulled away from the pier and anchored out off Hunter's Point. This was July 16th. What we were really waiting for, I found out later, was for them to explode the bomb at Alamogordo to see if it worked.¹⁵ And after the bomb was exploded at 4 o'clock in the morning, we got dispatch orders to proceed. As we got underway, Capt. McVay called us to the bridge again and he told us we were on a special mission. "I can't tell you what the mission is. I don't know myself but I've been told that every day we take off the trip is a day off the war." Later, Maj. Furman came into my hospital bed on Guam, sat down on the bed and told me about it. He told me that they only had the one bomb of the type "Little Boy" was. The Little Boy type bomb had two portions of uranium at both ends of a tunnel with charges at each end. The fission was created by firing the charges simultaneously and bringing the two halves of the softball together at the center under great force.

Capt. McVay told us that his orders were that if we had an "abandon ship," what was in the admiral's cabin was to be placed in a boat before anybody else. That was our priority. McVay told us this in a staff meeting.

Did you know what the cargo was?

I had no idea. I don't think Capt. McVay knew. We had all kinds of guesses as to what the cargo was. I had additional duty as medical officer on Adm. Spruance's staff. The day we left I signed a dispatch as a member of the

staff, which went only to the staff. It was addressed to all commanders and said that the *Indianapolis* was under the command of the Commander in Chief. Of course, that was Harry S. Truman. The ship was not to be diverted from her mission for any reason whatsoever, which meant that we could sail through a battle and the commander couldn't take us there. From that point on I said, "My God, what have we got that's under the control of the president?" And I talked to Capt. McVay and he talked to us officers. We discussed what it might be and he thought it might have something to do with bacteriological warfare. I don't think he really knew that it was part of the atomic bomb.

Anyway, by the time we hit the Farallon Islands we were making 33 knots. The *Indianapolis* still holds the ship's speed record from San Francisco to Pearl Harbor.

Normally, when you went into Pearl Harbor during the war, you had to take your turn going in. There were ships going in and out of the harbor. The harbor was very busy. As we came around the entrance to go toward the submarine net there were all these ships—carriers and everything else sitting out there not doing anything.

We had a straight run in. The net was open. Normally, there were boats tooting at each other and motor whaleboats and everything going back and forth. That harbor was deserted. We went alongside the dock and I told the executive officer that I wanted to transfer a man who had fractured his leg to the hospital. He said that no one was to leave the ship. I insisted that the man should be in the hospital. He had a fractured ankle which was in a cast. He repeated that nobody was to leave the ship.

We were tied up for 6 hours, refueled and went out. The harbor was still empty and as we went through the gate and left, all the ships that had been waiting as we went in were still floating out there waiting for their turn. Then I really knew that what we had aboard was awfully important.

After we left Pearl Harbor heading for Tinian, one of the crewmembers, a man named [RdM3 Harold J.] Schechterle, developed acute appendicitis and so Mel Modisher, my junior medical officer and I took his appendix out. Schechterle was one tough boy. I did the appendectomy under regional block because we couldn't get the spinal to work. It was a red hot, acute appendix.

When I finished sewing him up, I said to Schechterle, “OK, Schechterle, you can go back to your bunk now.” He sat up and said okay and swung his legs over the side of the table and we all laughed and helped him get to his bunk in sick bay. The day before we were sunk he asked to be returned to his own bunk which was a good thing because everyone in sick bay was killed by the explosions. Schechterle abandoned ship, was 4 days and 5 nights in the water and survived.

It was just a straight run to Tinian at as much speed as they could economically go, which I think was about 25 or 26 knots. Everybody was at Condition Able which was 4 hours on, 4 hours off. It was like going into battle the whole way out. The trip from San Francisco to Tinian took a total of 10 days.

When we got to Tinian we went into the harbor and anchored. All these LCIs came out and as they took our special cargo aboard I noticed there were a couple of general officers handling these crates like they were a bunch of stevedores. They were Air Force officers. Then again, I was sure we had something important.

How long did it take to unload all this stuff?

It didn't take long. And after we unloaded it we immediately got underway and headed for Guam. It was at Guam that we got our orders. I thought we were going to go back to Pearl to pick up Adm. Spruance. Instead, we were ordered to the Philippines for training exercises preparing for the invasion of Kyushu.

[...]

Source: TR; Extract of “Oral History with Capt. (Ret.) Lewis Haynes, MC, USN, U.S. Navy Medical Department Oral History Program,” interview conducted by Jan K. Herman, *Historian*, 5, 12, 22 June 1995, BUMED Archives. The remainder of the interview deals with Haynes' naval experience prior to and after the *Indianapolis* sinking. He also covers in detail his experience during the torpedo attack, the sinking, and his time in the water. For more on the Manhattan Project, see Vincent C. Jones, *United States Army in World War II, Special Studies, Manhattan: The Army and the Atomic Bomb* (Washington DC: Center of Military History, 1985).

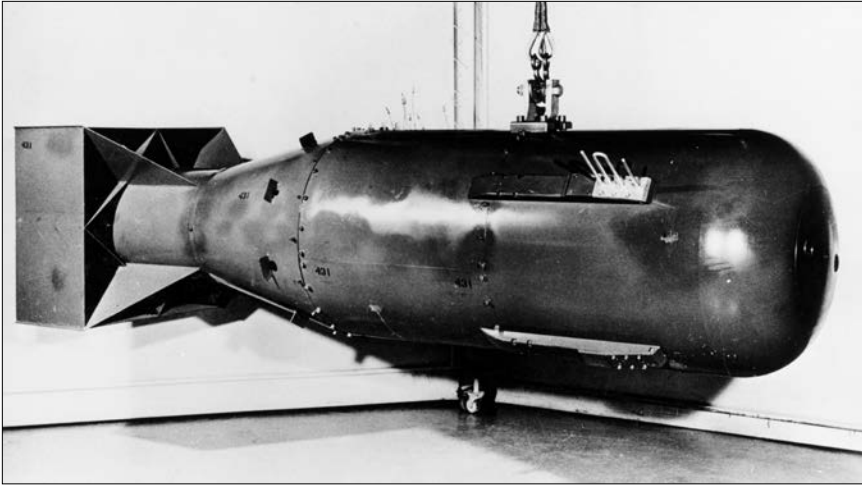


Figure 1-6. Nuclear weapon of the “Little Boy” type, the kind detonated over Hiroshima, Japan, in World War II. The bomb was 28 inches in diameter and 120 inches long. It weighed about 9,000 pounds and had a yield equivalent to approximately 20,000 tons of high explosives. *Indianapolis* (CA-35) delivered the components for Little Boy to Tinian where it was assembled.

Courtesy of Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory, NHHC Photo Collection, NH 123862

The following ULTRA dispatches from 18 and 19 July 1945 confirmed the 14 July intelligence report that Japanese submarines were deploying for offensive action in the Northwest Pacific. Submarine I-58 left the Inland Sea of Japan through the Bungo Strait and entered the Pacific on 19 July, a day behind schedule, due to problems with some of its Kaiten periscopes. I-58, along with I-47, I-53, and I-367, had orders to patrol the Allied shipping lanes between Leyte, Saipan, Okinawa, Guam, Palau, and Ulithi.

Documents 1.6 and 1.7: ULTRA Dispatch Reporting Departure of Japanese Submarines for Offensive Actions and the Departure of I-58.

18 July 1945

From: CINCPAC Pearl

For Action: All Holders 35 S, COMINCH

Information: CINCPAC, CINCAFPAC, COM 7th FLEET, CTF 77

Precedence: OP OP OP

This is ULTRA. Submarines *I-47* and *I-367* depart east entrance Bungo channel 19 July at 1930 and 2000 respectively for offensive patrols against Blue Shipping. Both will be stationed on line between Okinawa and Marianas. Former about 350 miles from Okinawa and latter about (450?) miles from Marianas and both equipped with human torpedoes. All detachments of Air Group 901 (Japan Sea Air Escort Air Group) were notified 16th that Blue Subs had not been detected in Japan Sea since 11 July. Evidence enemy found destruction of oil processing installations at Balikpapan unexpectedly difficult and discovered destruction by explosives more effective than burning. Evidence heavy damage inflicted in Kamaishi attack 14th with “enormous” damage to one unspecified factory and important machinery. Evidence 12 July transportation difficulties seriously hampering accumulation stockpiles of aviation fuel and ammunition in preparation for Operation Homeland.¹⁶

Source: TDC; “ULTRA Extracts,” Photocopies in USS *Indianapolis* file, Box 396B, Naval History and Heritage Command Archives, WNY. Originals from COMNAVSECGRU File 5830/114.

19 July 1945

From: CINCPAC Pearl

Action: All Holders 35 S, COMINCH

Information: CINCPAC ADV HQTRS, CINCAFPAC, COM 7th FLEET, CTF 77

Precedence: OP OP OP

This is ULTRA. Submarine *I-58* equipped with human torpedoes departing eastern entrance Bungo Channel 191935 enroute patrol station about 500 miles north of (Palao?). Nil information on track except that after 210330 course will be 160. Submarines *I-401* and *I-400* departed Maizuru 18 July at 16[??] And 18[??] respectively arriving Ominato morning 20th. These subs comprise force to carry out “Arashi” Operation (attack on Ulithi anchorage involving use of six sub-borne aircraft). Departure date from Ominato unknown. Enemy planning lay mines off expected invasion beaches in homeland using new type mine

especially designed against landing craft and laid in waters where depth is less than 15 meters (8.2 fathoms). Completion this mining in Kyushu Shikoku area planned by end of August and in unspecified sector of Tokyo area by end of September. Evidence 15 July Comdr 5th Air Fleet requested installation of searchlights on suicide attack planes.

Source: TDC; "ULTRA Extracts," Photocopies in USS *Indianapolis* file, Box 396B, Naval History and Heritage Command Archives, WNY. Originals from COMNAVSECGRU File 5830/114.

The following three dispatches relate the scheduled course of Indianapolis from Tinian, Guam, and onward to Leyte. Upon arrival to Leyte on 31 July, Indianapolis was to report to CTG 95.7 for training prior to joining the armada of Vice Admiral Jesse Oldendorf, Commander Task Force 95, in preparation for an invasion of the Japanese home islands. Rear Admiral Lynde D. McCormick, Commander Task Group 95.7 was Admiral Oldendorf's direct subordinate and anchored in Leyte aboard Idaho (BB-42). Dispatch 280032 notifying CTG 95.7 of Indianapolis's departure from Guam and ETA at Leyte was received by McCormick, but the message stating that he was to arrange training was garbled and never decoded by his communications staff. In McCormick's testimony at the Court of Inquiry into the Indianapolis loss, he explained that his training group departed Leyte around 1000 31 July for two days of training. He expected Indianapolis to be waiting to join them when they returned to Leyte 2 August, but the ship was still not present.

Document 1.8: Dispatches Dealing with *Indianapolis*'s Routing, 26–28 July

26 July 1945

From: CINCPAC ADV HQ

Action: INDIANAPOLIS (CA 35)

Info: PD TINIAN, PD GUAM COMMARIANAS, CTF 95 CINCPAC PEARL, COM 5th FLT CTG 95.7

Precedence: Routine

Upon completion unloading Tinian report to Port Director for routing to Guam where disembark COM 5th Fleet Staff Personnel. Completion report to PD Guam for onward routing to Leyte where on arrival report CTF 95 by despatch for duty. CTG 95.7 directed arrange 10 days training for *Indianapolis* in Leyte Area.¹⁷

26 July, 1945/1021

From: PD Saipan 260918z

Action: PD Guam

Info: SCOMA, COMMARIANAS, CTG 94.10, CINC PAC ADV HQ

USS *Indianapolis* (CA 35) departs Tinian 26th 0830Z (GCT). SOA 10. 15 Miles west of Rambler. Destination Guam. ETA 262000Z. WP 32 QPF 31 QPH 119. Communications accord USF 70A and PAC 70B.¹⁸

28 July 1945

From: PD Guam

Action: SCOMA/PD TACLOBAN/CTG 95.7

Info: COM 5th FLEET, COMMARIANAS, CTF 95,

COMPILSEAFRON, CINCPAC BOTH, COMWESCAROLINES

Precedence: Priority

USS *Indianapolis* (CA 35) departed Guam 2300Z 27 July. SOA 15.7 knots. Route Peddie thence Leyte. ETA Position PG 2300Z July ETA Leyte 0200Z 31 July. Chop 30 July. QP 32 QPF 31 QPH 119 QH 5 QHA 37 QNH 35. USS *Indianapolis* guards NPM F.¹⁹

Source: TD; "Dispatches Dealing with Departure and Arrival of *Indianapolis*," 26–28 July 1945. These were submitted as evidence to the Court of Inquiry convened to investigate the loss. In CINCPAC 1945 Flag Files, RG 38, Box 45, NARA II. The entire collection spans approximately 150 dispatches covering 26 July 1945–16 August 1945.

The correspondence from the Joint Intelligence Center Pacific Oceans Area Estimates Section to the Advanced Headquarters of Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet on 27 July 1945, demonstrated attempts by U.S. intelligence officers to make sense of the information coming in to them. Notable in this exchange was the belief that submarine I-58 had been damaged or sunk days after departing the Bungo Strait. This estimate was made the day that Indianapolis received its routing instructions for the transit from Guam to Leyte. It is also worth noting that the intelligence chart showing submarine locations was not scheduled to arrive to Guam until the morning of 28 July. Indianapolis departed Apra Harbor in Guam approximately 0900 that very day.

Document 1.9: JICPOA Estimates of Japanese Submarine Locations and Belief that I-58 Was Sunk

27 July 1945

From: Lt. Comdr Johnson

To: Lt. Showers

Reference your 262. Do not RPT do not believe anti-submarine group presently working over I-47 assigned patrol station should be shifted because current contacts in that area probably authentic. Estimate this sub near 22-00NAN, 132-00EASY.

Review of submarine data and above contacts makes us now RPT now believe victim of plane attack off Anami Oshima on 21/22 July may be I-58. This sub departed Bungo at 1930/19 for estimated patrol station near 15-30NAN, 134-30EASY. Schedule called for a course of 160 degrees approximately 32 hours after sortie from Bungo, suggesting original course from Bungo was southwesterly. Projected course of 160 degrees from position of plane attack off Amami goes through estimated patrol stations of both I-47 and I-58. I-58 is considered a supply type sub which further confirms her identity as the victim.

I-400 and *I-401* were originally scheduled to depart Maizuru on 17 July for Ominato. The despatch to which you referred was addressed to *I-14* scheduled to depart Ominato at 1500/17 for Truk. Captain Carlson has reworked this despatch and it now RPT now reads: “will send documents for Truk by land leaving Maizuru morning of 17th”.

Submarine chart will be placed aboard Guam bound plane tomorrow morning.²⁰

Source: TDC; Joint Intelligence Center Pacific Ocean Areas. United States Navy File of SIGTOT Messages From JICPOA Estimates Section to CINCPAC Advanced Headquarters, March–August 1945 [SRMD-005]. Located in Navy Department Library Special Collections, WNY.

Commander Johns Hopkins Janney, navigator of Indianapolis, received the following two documents, Routing Instructions and Intelligence Report, the evening before the ship's departure for Leyte. The instructions were generated after routing officers discussed the transit with Captain McVay earlier in the day. McVay desired to arrive to Leyte at dawn because it was the best lighting for anti-aircraft firing practice. This meant that Indianapolis could travel between 24–25 knots and arrive the morning of the 30th, or 15.7 knots and arrive the morning of the 31st. Having just completed a high-speed transit, McVay opted for the slower speed to rest his engines. He was notified that no escort ship was available for Indianapolis, but that the enemy threat in the area did not merit one. It would later be learned that additional enemy submarine intelligence gathered from top secret ULTRA was not included in this report due to security concerns and likely an incomplete picture of the actual submarine threat. As the previous intelligence dispatches demonstrate, estimates on Japanese submarine deployments remained vague or incorrect, reflecting the difficult task of intelligence work. The routing instructions provided a basic guide for getting from point A to B by a designated time, and the U.S. Navy left much to the discretion of the commander of a combatant ship during the transit.

Document 1.10: Routing Instructions and Intelligence Report for *Indianapolis*

PDG 1849

OFFICE OF THE PORT DIRECTOR

28 JULY 1945

/s/ J.H. Janney

From: Port Director, Guam.

To: Commanding Officer, USS *Indianapolis* (CA 35).

Subj: Routing Instructions.

Encl: (A) Intelligence Report. (B) Approach Instructions. (C) Flight Briefing Bulletin.

1. When in all respects ready for sea on or about 0900 King, 28 July, depart Apra Harbor, proceed Leyte via the following route positions:

Code Letter	Latitude	Longitude
MNG	13-35 N.	144-00 E.
BWV	13-14	143-00
CFL	12-30	138-00
DCM	11-44	132-30
EHO	11-06	128-05
PG	10-37	126-00
HN	10-41.5	125-40

Thence Leyte as directed by branch Port Director's Office on Homonhon Island.

2. Speed of advance shall be at 15.7 knots. Distance to position PG 1123 miles. ETA 0800 I, 31 July. Distance Guam to ETA point (10-54 N, 125-20 E.) is 1171 miles. ETA 1100 I, 31 July.
3. Friendly submarines may be observed west and south of Guam in established haven and training areas; they will be escorted by surface vessels. Your route takes you clear of these areas.

4. See Intelligence Reports (Enclosures A and C) for information of our own and enemy forces.
5. Crossing and joining traffic may be encountered in the following areas:
 - a. Apra to 142-30 E.
 - b. 138-30 E. to 137-30 E.
 - c. 134-30 E. to 131-00 E.
 - d. 127-00 E. to destination.
6. Commanding Officers are at all times responsible for the safe navigation of their ships. They may depart from prescribed routing when in their judgment, weather, currents, or other navigational hazards jeopardize the safety of the ship. They shall return to the prescribed route as soon as safety permits. Zigzag at discretion of the Commanding Officer.
7. A Fleet Unit Commander, while carrying out a movement, is authorized to originate supplementary messages when the military situation permits. These messages shall contain information of:
 - a. Breakdown.
 - b. Changes in orders or corrections of erroneous information.
 - c. Weather conditions or any circumstances which cause a deviation from schedule of more than 40 miles in controlled waters or delay in ETA of over (3) hours.

These messages shall be addressed (if approaching Philippine Islands) to Commander Philippine Sea Frontier.

8. Communications shall be conducted in accordance PAC 70 (B).
9. Port Director, Guam will make your departure report including Queen messages: QP 32, QPF 31, QPH 119, QN 5, QNA 37, QNH 35 held by you.
10. On arrival destroy these instructions; carry out basic orders incorporated in CinCPacAdvon 260152.

[Certified a True Copy, Signed, J.J. Waldron]

OPERATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SECTION²¹
NOB, GUAM, M.I.

Intelligence Brief for GUAM to PHILIPPINES (This brief is a part of your secret routing instructions and merchant ships must turn in with same at next port of call.)

FOR: [Left Blank]

Date: 27 July 1945

The enemy held bases within approximately 300 miles of your route are as listed below. No enemy offensive activity from any of these bases has been reported in recent months unless specifically mentioned under this heading:

ROTA	14:09N	144:37E
WOIEAI	07:21N	143:53E
SOROL	08:08N	140:23E
YAP	09:31N	138:08E
BABELTHAUP	07:30N	134:34E

Enemy Submarine Contacts:

22 July – Sub sighted surfaced at 10:34N-132:47E at 0015K.

Hunter-Killer ordered.

25 July – Unknown ship reports sighting a possible periscope at 13:56N-136:56E at 250800 K.

25 July – Sound contact reported at 10:30N-136:25E. Indications at that time pointed to doubtful submarine.

Enemy Surface Contacts:

None

Friendly Ship Movements:

It is impracticable to attempt to enumerate all the ship movements which might pass within visual range of your route, however, the positions at which your route crosses or approaches regular shipping lanes is indicated in your routing instructions.

General Information:

1. Friendly submarines are operating south and west of Guam and possibly in the vicinity of Ulithi. They should be escorted at all times when in the vicinity of these islands.
2. Several instances of floating mines have been reported in the Forward Area recently. A sharp lookout should be kept and a report made if any sighted.
3. Firing Notice – Guam:
 - a. There will be sleeve and drone AA firing practice from Agat between 1000-1500, danger area 12,000 yards to seaward, 235-305 degrees from Agat.
 - b. Until further notice, the area in the vicinity of Santa Rosa Reef, SW of Guam, as well as balance of area A-8, will be used as AA ships gunnery area.
4. Menace to Navigation:

PCE-898 sighted large floating palm stump with three feet above water at 260945Z in position 14:53N-132:48E.

[Certified a True Copy, Signed R.E. Orr, Intelligence Officer]

Source: TDS; "Routing Instructions for USS *Indianapolis* (CA-35)," Port Director Guam to Captain Charles B. McVay III, 28 July 1945, original signed by J. H. Janney, CDR, USN, Certified True Copy of Instruction signed by J. J. Waldron for W. F. Brooks and signed by R. E. Orr, Intelligence Officer, submitted as Exhibit in Court of Inquiry convened to investigate the loss. CINCPAC 1945 Flag Files, RG 38, Box 45, NARA II, College Park, MD.

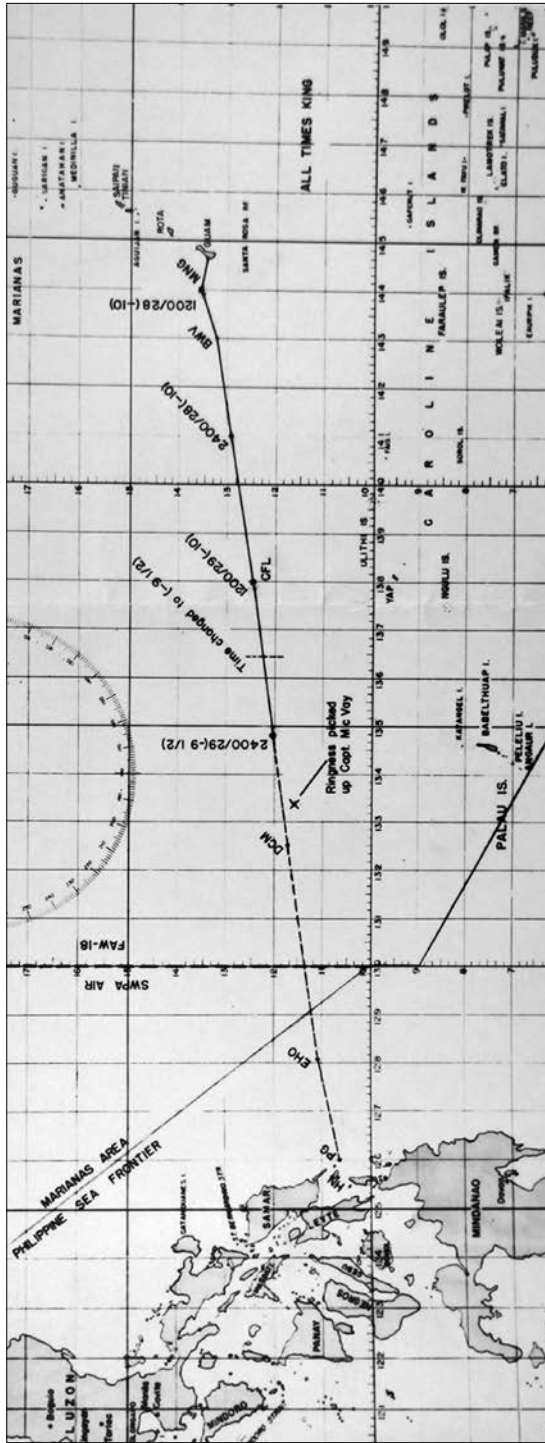


Figure 1-7. Detail of segment of *Indianapolis* (CA-35) route from Guam to Leyte taken from Court of Inquiry Exhibit.

From "Indianapolis Court of Inquiry," CINCPAC, Pacific Flag Files Screening Documents, RG 38, Box 45, NARA II, College Park, MD.

The 3400 section of Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine U.S. Fleet, USF 10A defined the tactical zigzag doctrine that U.S. naval commanders would follow during World War II. Captain McVay cited his understanding of this doctrine in the subsequent investigations and believed that the weather conditions and enemy submarine threat defined in 3410 did not meet the requirements for zigzagging the night of 29–30 July.

Document 1.11: U.S. Navy Zigzag Tactical Doctrine and Example of Pattern

3400. Zigzag.

3410. Ships and dispositions shall zigzag during good visibility; including bright moonlight, in areas where enemy submarines may be encountered, unless the accomplishment of the task assigned will be jeopardized by the reduced speed of advance, increased fuel consumption, or both.

3411. When the disposition as a whole is ordered to zigzag, each station unit including the guide station unit, will regulate without signal, its speed so as to make good the fleet speed along the fleet course.

3412. When the limiting speed of slow ships in the disposition prohibits their complying with paragraph 3411, the OTC²² may either:

- (a) Prescribe a new and slower fleet speed; or
- (b) Prescribe the speed for the guide to take during the zigzag.

3420. Zigzag plans are contained in the following publications.

Plan 1, and Plans 3 to 10 inclusive – General Tactical Instructions.

Plans 19 to 26 inclusive – USF 10A

Plans 1Z to 43Z inclusive – Zigzag Diagrams, for Single Ships and Convoys, 1940.²³

3421. For convenience, zigzag plan 1, and plans 3 to 10 inclusive, are reproduced in appendix 2 with plans 19 to 26.

3422. Zigzag plans should be selected primarily from considerations of submarine menace and size, shape and speed of disposition.

3430. Zigzagging by task organizations containing only U.S. naval vessels, or allied men-of-war regularly attached and equipped with U.S. naval tactical and signal publications, shall be in accordance with section 37, General Tactical Instructions, as excepted below, and the optional special rules given in paragraphs 3450 to 3459, regardless of the source of the zigzag plan.

[. . .]²⁴

Source: TD; *Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine U.S. Fleet, USF 10A* (U.S. Fleet: HQ of COMINCH, 1944). The omitted portion deals primarily with instructions for altering a zigzag course. And, *Zig-Zag Diagrams for Single Ships and Convoys 1940* (London: Signal Department, Admiralty, 1940). Both available from Navy Department Library, WNY.

ZIGZAG PLAN NO. 5

FOR GENERAL USE IN SUBMARINE AREAS

SUITABLE FOR A SINGLE SHIP, FOR A FORMATION
OR DISPOSITION WITH SPEEDS UP TO 15 KNOTS.

DISTANCE MADE GOOD = 91.5% OF DISTANCE RUN.

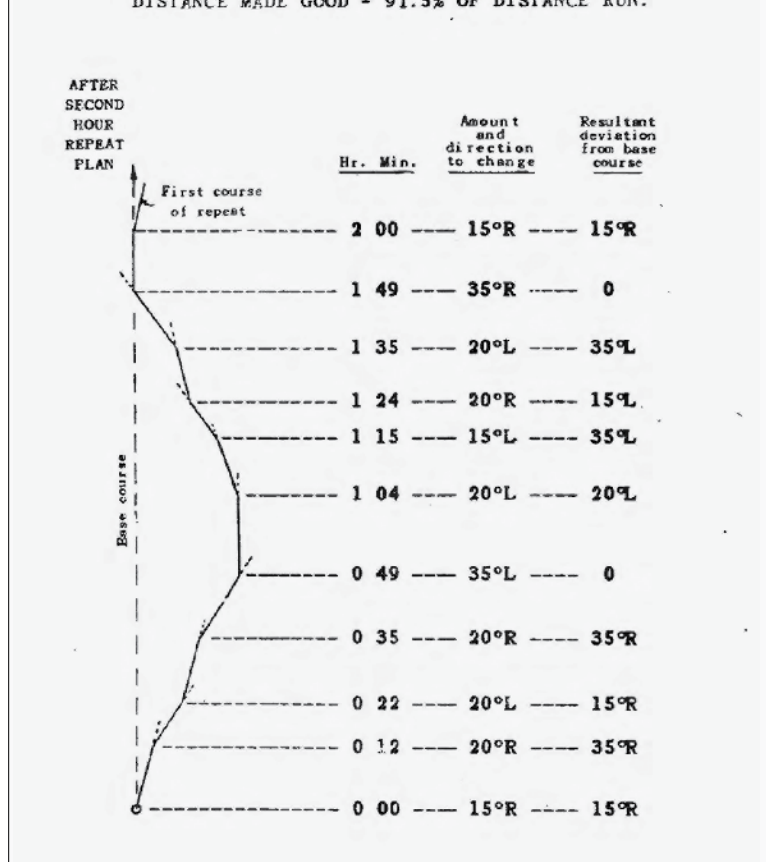


Figure 1-8. Zigzag Plan No. 5 from *U.S. Fleet Current Tactical Orders and Doctrine* (USF 10A, 1944). While the specific zigzag plan that Captain McVay used during the daylight hours of his final voyage is not known, this pattern serves as an example of a likely possibility. Plan No. 5 is very similar to Convoy Zigzag Plan No. 40Z from *Zig-Zag Diagrams for Single Ships and Convoys 1940* (London: Signal Department, Admiralty, 1940). Smooth deck logs for *Indianapolis* (CA-35) in April 1945 indicate that she used Plan 40Z while steaming independently without escort. Although a publication of the Admiralty, zigzag patterns from this British publication were among those available to combatant commanders in accordance with *U.S. Fleet Tactical Orders and Doctrine* (USF 10A, 1944). The major difference between the Plan No. 5 and Plan 40Z was the side the zigzag run was made off of the base course. Plan No. 5 had the ship zigzag starboard to the base course, while 40Z was port of the base course.

LST-779 was only recently identified as the LST passed by Indianapolis around 1300 29 July. The passing of an unidentified LST was mentioned by Captain McVay in his oral history and in the after-action report submitted by the Peleliu Island commander to HQ of COMINCH Pacific. Captain McVay recalled passing an LST moving north for firing exercises after midday. While the deck logs of LST-779 do not mention the encounter, its movements north at 1300 for firing exercises and its position along Convoy Route Peddie leaves little doubt that it was the last U.S. ship to make visual contact with Indianapolis. After the encounter, LST-779 remained slightly north of Route Peddie while Indianapolis remained on a slightly southern course. LST-779 was at too far a distance north to witness the attack on Indianapolis in the first few hours of 30 July, or to spot any survivors or flotsam in the water at daybreak.

Document 1.12: Deck Logs of LST-779 for Voyage from Guam to Samar along Route Peddie

Sunday 29 July, 1945

0000–0400 Underway as before in passage from Guam to Samar, P.I., course 261°T., speed full. [signed] Lt. (jg) N. R. Ellis, USNR.

0400–0800 Underway as before, course 261°T., speed full. 0615 C-54 Skymaster passed overhead on portside, going in same direction. [signed] Ens. H. L. Luckey, USNR.

0800–1200 Underway as before on course 261°T., speed full. [signed] Ens. E. S. Hinline, Jr., USNR

1200–1600 Underway as before on course 261°T., speed 280 R.P.M. 1312 Held General Quarters to conduct firing exercises. 1317 c/c to 280°T. 1319 c/c to 300°T., 1320 c/c to 330°T. 1321 c/s to 2/3 ahead. 1322 c/c to 350°T. 1353 Secured from firing exercises. 1357 c/s to standard. 1358 c/s to full, c/c to 261°T. 1400 c/s to flank. 1410 Secured from General Quarters, stations regular sea watch. [signed] Lt. (jg) A. E. Higgins, USN.²⁵

1600–1800 Underway as before on course 261°T., speed flank (300 R.P.M.s).
[signed] Ens. N. V. Wahl, USNR.

1800–2000 Underway as before on course 261°T., speed flank (300 R.P.M.s).
[signed] Lt. (jg) W. A. Griffith, USNR.

2000–2400 Underway as before on course 261°T., speed flank. 2200
Changed speed to full (290 R.P.M.).
[signed] Ens. Peter Pierce, USNR.

Monday 30 July, 1945

0000–0400 Underway as before, 261°true, speed full (290 R.P.M.) in pas-
sage from Guam to Samar, P. I.
[signed] Lt. (jg) Alan S. Wood, USNR.

0400–0800 Underway as before on course 261°T., speed 290 R.P.M.
[signed] Lt. (jg) James Glover, USNR.

0800–1200 Underway as before on course 261°T., speed full, 290 R.P.M.s.
0800 Changed course to 255°T.
[signed] Lt. (jg) N. R. Ellis, USNR.

1200–1600 Underway as before, course 255°T., speed full, 290 R.P.M.s.
1425 Changed course to 260°T. 1430 Southern, H.G., S2c, 865 18 95
released from brig by order of Commanding Officer.
[signed] Ens. H. L. Luckey, USNR.

1600–1800 Underway as before on course 260°T., speed 290 R.P.M.s. 1630
Set clocks back one hour.
[signed] Ens. E. S. Hinline, Jr., USNR.

1800–2000 Underway as before on course 260°T., speed 290 R.P.M.s. 1915
Contacted ship by radar bearing 009°R., distance 10 ½ miles. 1945 Ship
passed to port distance 1 ½ miles.
[signed] Lt. (jg) A. E. Higgins, USN.

2000–2400 Underway as before on course 260°T., speed 290 R.P.M.s.
Contacted ship by radar bearing 040°R. at 16 miles. 2028 Ship passed to

starboard 5 miles. 2203 Radar contacted ship 290°R. range 14 ½ miles. 2230 Airplane bearing 270°R., distance 7 miles. Challenged by radar. Friendly. [signed] Ens. N. V. Wahl, USNR.

[. . .]

Source: TDS; *Log Book of USS LST-779, Commanded by Lieutenant Joseph A. Hopkins, USNR, Attached to 36th Division, 18th Group Squadron, 6th Flotilla, U.S. Pacific Fleet: Commencing 1 July 1945 at sea en route from Iwo Jima to Guam, and ending 31 July 1945 at sea en route from Guam to Samar, P.I.* [Extract/Remarks Sheet]. LST-779 July/August 1945 Deck Logs, signed by Joseph A. Hopkins, LT., USNR, RG 24, NARA II, College Park, MD. Omitted columnar sheets and entries dealing with departure from Guam and arrival to Philippines. All times noted in the Log Book for 29 July noted as -10 King time *Indianapolis* crossed the line into -9 1/2 Item-King time the afternoon of 29 July. Japanese submarine *I-58* was on -9 time.



Figure 1-9. Image of *LST-779* as waves crash against beached LVTs (the one in the foreground, 5A-30, named *FELICE*), *LST-779* unloads at Iwo Jima Yellow Beach 1, 26 February 1945. Suribachi looms in the background). Note weathered camouflage and duplicate identification numbers. *LST-779* provided the flag used in the iconic flag raising on Mount Suribachi.

Navy Photograph 80-G-317961, NARA II College Park, MD

When Indianapolis did not arrive at Leyte on 31 July, she was subsequently added to the expected arrival lists for 1 August and 2 August. Also note that LST-779 had an expected arrival for 1 August, traversing the same route as Indianapolis.

Document 1.13: Expected Arrivals at Leyte Gulf

**LEYTE GULF EXPECTED ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES
31 JULY 1945**

SOPA²⁶-(COMBATDIV 3, USS IDAHO); (RADM L. D. MC CORMICK)
 SOPA-(ADMINISTRATIVE FOR 3RD FLEET); (COMSERON 10);
 (RADM A. E. SMITH)
 SOPA-(ADCOMP HIBSPAC, CAPTAIN C. H. PETERSON);
 (COMLSTFLOT 29 IN LC (FF) 998)
 SOPA-(ADMINISTRATIVE FOR LEYTE GULF LESS 3RD FLEET);
 (CNOB²⁷, LEYTE GULF – TACLOBAN); (COMMODORE, J. H.
 JACOBSON, USN)

NOTE: (a) This list is compiled by CNOB, LEYTE GULF as of 2000 daily on date prior to that shown above.

(b) The value of this list lies in its accuracy, completeness and prompt dissemination. It is requested that CNOB, be informed of errors or omissions.

(c) Symbols used: # Operational Control COMSERON 10; *Operation Control CNOB.

EXPECTED INDEPENDENT ARRIVALS

SHIP	FROM	REMARKS	BERTH
31 JULY			
GEN MEIGS (AP 116)	GAMBIA		E 12
FACILITY (AM 233)	ULITHI		57
STRENGTH (AM 309)	ULITHI		57
EL RENO VICTORY		(FOR SUBIC)	17

ROBT. INGERSOL		509
JANSENS	ILOILO	
FRANK WIGGINS	MANUS	GUIUAN
MILO (APB 2)		GUIUAN
LCI 639	GUAM	L.C.A
CAPE MEREDITH		282
WILBUR WRIGHT	BATANGAS	24
ALHENA (AKA 9)	MANILA	(THEN FINSCHAVEN)
YP 289, YF 1042	BIAK	
LSM 31	TALOMA	L.C.A
TP 120	ILOILO	TAC
WARRICK (AKA 89)	MANILA	9
FS 175	BATANGAS	TAC
FS 267	ZAMBO	“
ALEXANDER WOOLCOTT	MACALJAR	(THEN USA)
ATA 215	ENIWETOK	(TOWS YF*929,*942,*943)
LCI 340		L.C.A
FS 392	HOLLANDIA	TAC
P.T. BARNUM	BIAK	213
LST 636	BIAK	L.C.A
FLYING DRAGON	TOWNSVILLE	
LT 531	MINDORO	TAC
LT 650	MANILA	TAC
BRITAIN VICTORY	ULITHI	134
LST 755,757,1034	ILOILO	L.C.A

CAPE NEWENHAM	ULITHI	
HODGES (DE 231)	ULITHI	
INDIANAPOLIS (CA 35)	GUAM	
FAIRFIELD (AK 178)	MACALJAR BAY	
1 AUG		
UPHAM (AP 129)	MANILA	
T. W. DRENNON	BIAK	
LST 779	GUAM	GUIUAN
LST 640	MOROTAI	L.C.A.
PCE 850	MANUS	
TITANIA (AKA 13)	MOROTAI	509
LIPAN (ATF 85)	GUAM	45
MATACO (ATF 86)	GUAM	45
ROBT. S. COUSINS	ULITHI	

[. .]

Source: TD; "Expected Arrivals and Departures Leyte Gulf," 31 July 1945. Certified True Copy James D. Brown, Lt., USNR, submitted as Exhibit in Court of Inquiry convened to investigate the loss. CINCPAC 1945 Flag Files, RG 38, Box 45 NARA II, College Park, MD. Omitted Arrivals August 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 and expected departures.

Sunk—Firsthand Recollections of the Attack and Time in the Water

Captain McVay gave his recollections of the attack on his ship, its rapid sinking, and his crew's time in the water in his official oral history. It conveys how rapidly Indianapolis sank and the urgency with which Captain McVay had to act. Captain McVay's oral history varies little from the responses he gave at his court of inquiry and court-martial, but it does offer more immediacy and a different narrative style. The less formal nature of the interview allowed him to answer more freely and discuss issues that he personally deemed important to the story. McVay's description of his time in the water following the sinking gives a sense of the distance between groups of survivors and the relative isolation McVay's raft group faced. While McVay provided only secondhand accounts of other groups' ordeals, his dismissive attitude toward sharks is notable given the notoriety shark attacks gained in future retellings of the Indianapolis story.

Document 2.1: Oral History of Captain Charles B. McVay III [Extract]

On Sunday night, the 29th of July, we had been zigzagging up until dark. We did not zigzag thereafter. We had intermittent moonlight, so I am told, but it was dark from about 2330 until sometime earlier the next morning.

At approximately five minutes after midnight, I was thrown from my emergency cabin bunk on the bridge by a very violent explosion followed shortly thereafter by another explosion. I went to the bridge and noticed, in

my emergency cabin and the charthouse, that there was quite a bit of acrid white smoke. I couldn't see anything.

I got out on the bridge. The same conditions existed out there. It was dark, it was this whitish smoke. I asked the Officer of the Deck if he had had any reports. He said "No, Sir. I have lost all communications, I have tried to stop the engines. I don't know whether the order has ever gotten through to the engine room."

So we had no communications whatsoever. Our engine room telegraph was electrical, that was out; sound powered phones were out, all communications were out forward. As I went back into my cabin to get my shoes and some clothes, I ran into the damage control officer, Lieutenant Commander Casey Moore, who had the midwatch on the bridge as a supervisory watch.

He had gone down at the first hit and came back up on the bridge and told me that we were going down rapidly by the head, and wanted to know if I desired to pass the word to abandon ship. I told him "No."

We had only about a three degree list. We had been through a hit before, we were able to control it quite easily and in my own mind I was not at all perturbed. Within another two or three minutes the executive officer came up, Commander Flynn, and said, "We are definitely going down and I suggest that we abandon ship."

Well, knowing Flynn and having utter regard for his ability, I then said, "Pass the word to abandon ship."

As I had this word passed, I turned to the Officer of the Deck. This had to be passed verbally, the man on watch, the boatswain's mate, had to go below. Two people did go below and the word was passed. However, I knew from past experience that we had had in Okinawa, since we had our blood bath, you never had to pass the word for anybody to man the general quarters station or get on topside when something was wrong. The ship and crew sense it. They come to their stations immediately. So I am sure that everybody who could get up topside was up topside before we ever passed the word.

Then I turned to the Officer of the Deck, Lieutenant Orr, and said, "I have been unable to determine whether the distress message which I told the Navigator to check on has ever gotten out."

I had asked Commander Janney,¹ the navigator, when I first went on the bridge to make certain that he got a message out. He went down below and that was the last I saw of him. So knowing that it was absolutely essential that someone be notified where we were, since we were unescorted, I felt that was the most important thing to know at this moment and told the Officer of the Deck I was going to Radio Room One, below the bridge, to find out for myself if this message had gotten out. Also I wanted to take a look at a part of the main deck which some people had said had split near No. 1 stack. Also I could not visualize why we were going down by the head. Nobody had given me any report that we were other than just badly damaged.

I passed through the charthouse and picked up in my emergency cabin a kapok life preserver which I put on and stepped out on the after side of the Bridge and Captain Crouch² who was a passenger and who had been sleeping in my cabin said, "Charley, have you got a spare life preserver?" I said, "Yes, I have. I've got a pneumatic life preserver," and I stepped back into my cabin and picked this up and handed it to, I believe, a seaman quartermaster by the name of Harrison and asked him to blow this up for Captain Crouch.

I then stepped to the ladder on the bridge which leads down to the signal bridge and as I put my foot on the first rung, the ship took a 25 degree list to starboard. People started to slide by and I went down to the signal bridge. As I reached that platform, she went to about 40 or 45 degrees. I managed to get to the ladder leading from the signal bridge to the port side of the communications deck. As I reached the communications deck, she seemed to be steadied at around 60. There were some youngsters there that were jumping over the side and I got to the lifeline on the communications deck and yelled at these boys to not jump over the side unless they had life jackets, or to go back by the stack which was just behind me and cut down the life raft, or the floater net rather, and throw that over the side before they jumped.

Within another few seconds the ship listed to 90 degrees and I jumped to the forecabin deck and pulled myself up on the side and started to walk aft. She apparently stayed in this position for some time, at least long enough for me to walk from abreast the bridge to approximately No. 3 turret on the after deck, at that point I was sucked off into the water by what I believe was

a wave caused by the bow going down rather rapidly, because I found myself in the water and looked above me and the screws, port screws, which by this time had been stopped, were directly overhead.

I immediately thought “Well, this is the end of me,” and turned around and immediately swam away from the descending screws. Within a few seconds, I felt hot oil and water brush over the back of my neck and looked around and heard a swish and the ship was gone.

[. . .]³

To go into some detail of what I have been told conditions were in this life preserver group:⁴ first of all, I would like to give thanks to the Commander, Western Sea Frontier, who was able to put enough pressure on somebody to enable us to get our supply of kapok life preservers. We were unable to obtain any until about 48 hours from the time we were due to leave, and ComWestern Sea Frontier, himself, his office unearthed some someplace, and had we not had these, of course, we now know we would have saved almost nobody, but fortunately these were new and although I understand kapok is only supposed to hold up for about 64 hours, we know that these held up for as long as four days.

It’s true that after about 48 hours the wearer had sunk low enough in the water so that if his head fell forward he would drown. Consequently, the people had to look out for one another. One tried to sleep while the other watched him. Very little sleeping was done the first 48 hours, but after that the people became so exhausted that they would drop off to sleep. There were apparently two groups of these survivors all in approximately the same position.

The reason I knew nothing about them was because we were apparently around seven to ten miles north of them. They were being carried southwest with the current, whereas we were being either blown a little northeastward or else being held just against the current. So that is the reason, another reason, why when morning came, we could not see any of this survivor group which was south and, as I said before, we did not know of their existence until we saw planes and ships down south and then we knew that there must be somebody there.

There are all kinds of horrible stories that have come out of the experiences that this life preserver group had. They're very unpleasant. I hope none of the parents will ever know that their boy was in that group for some time and then could not keep up until help arrived, but for the record, we had two doctors in that group, the senior doctor and the junior doctor and a Chief Pharmacist's Mate who were all saved. They were, of course, topside administering aid to people aboard ship who had been injured prior to the ship rolling over and that is why they were apparently among the survivors.

The people who were in this group had mass hallucinations. One of the stories is that three or four people would swim away at dark and the next morning they'd come back and say, "Why, the *Indianapolis* didn't go down after all. She is just over there and we were on her all night. We got fresh milk, we got tomato juice, we got water." When they would tell these stories, immediately there would be a break from the group and these people would try to swim away in the direction in which they thought the *Indianapolis* was.

Another hallucination that they had was some of them said they had been on an island all night where they had coconut milk and were able to refresh themselves and after those stories were told people would then break away from the group.

It was in that way that so many people apparently died of exhaustion. Either that or else they drank salt water and went completely out of their head. One that comes in my mind particularly was Captain Parke⁵ of the Marines. He was a very strong, athletic man, a young man, he just killed himself by exhaustion through trying to keep those people who were swimming away, trying to keep them with the group. He died of exhaustion, from that alone. The injured, of course, that were in that group didn't last more than 24 hours.

The people who had the kapok life preservers on tied themselves together to try to keep themselves together during the night. They also had quite a long piece of manila line which they had taken off a ring life preserver which they used to secure their ties on their kapok life jackets, which they managed to keep together during the night, but it must be realized that most of those people within 48 to 60 hours went out of their head. Some of them lived through the period, but those who went out of their head earlier than,

say 48 to 60 hours, didn't last. The people that were down in that group feel quite sure that a number of people just gave up hope because they would be with the bunch at sundown and in the morning they would be gone, so they feel that people just slipped out of their life jackets and just decided that they didn't want to face it any longer. We do know that people who had pneumatic life jackets were able to get kapok life jackets from people who did die or just slipped out of the jacket and it was found in the morning.

How many people actually got off the ship I don't think anybody will ever know but we tried to make estimates, we made guesses, I think we actually guessed at a figure between five and six hundred, but I don't believe that anybody could definitely say, if you pinned them down, that that number did get off, because they weren't seen that night. It was too dark to see anybody until between two or three o'clock in the morning when the moon came out.

But the following morning they counted noses down there and they had a considerable group, quite a number more than actually were survivors in the final analysis. We had that group down there, I shouldn't say "we" because I was not with it, I didn't know it existed until Friday morning when I was picked up. I have been told by officers who were in that survivor group that there were people who when they did find something to eat would try to hide it, and they got food Thursday.⁶ Planes came out and dropped food and water and things like that to them.

They were, I think, you might say a cross-section of what you would expect in any group of 300 people. There were a few who were willing to sacrifice their lives for others and did so. There were those who were in more or less of an exhausted state and stupefied and they didn't know much of what was going on. There were others who took the attitude that "I'm going to save myself and the hell with everybody else." But, I don't think that you can censure any of that because so many people by that time were out of their heads, most of them didn't know what they were doing.

You can't pin anybody down. There are people who think certain things happened. Nobody naturally, now, in their right mind would ever admit that he did anything like that and he would deny it if you confronted him with it. There were no flagrant cases that we could bring to light, there were just people who said, "Well, I know somebody who got more food than I did,"

and somebody said, “Well, I didn’t have any food at all. I wasn’t eating anything.” So you can’t definitely state that there were really, you might say, acts of violence.

We had sharks, or rather they had sharks down there. We know that because we have two survivors who were bitten by sharks and as I told this one boy in the hospital. I said, “You’d better take some castellanne paint and put on that thing before it heals up because nobody will ever believe you’ve been bitten by a shark.⁷ You might as well outline the teeth mark and you will have it for the rest of your life and can say ‘I know I was bitten by a shark.’”

We have one boy who was bitten on the thigh. The group down there said that on the calm days, they knew there were sharks around because they could see them underneath. They didn’t actually seem to bother them on the surface. It was different with my group who were in rafts. We had a shark that adopted us apparently sometime in the early morning of Monday. We couldn’t get rid of him. The kids who were in rafts by themselves on this one raft were scared to death of this shark because he kept swimming underneath the raft. You could see his big dorsal fin and it was white, almost as white as a sheet of paper, apparently spent most of his time on the surface and this fin had bleached out so he didn’t blend in with the water at all.⁸

Source: TR; Extract from “Oral History of Charles B. McVay III, Captain USN,” recorded 27 September 1945, transcribed 1 October 1945, 34 pp. Copy of original in Indianapolis Ship History Files, Naval History and Heritage Command Archives, Washington Navy Yard.

Yeoman Second Class Otha Havins was berthed inside of the ship opposite the torpedo hits. The space he occupied that night had housed the components for the atomic bomb delivered to Tinian. Havins’ description of the sinking shows how little time there was for anyone to act. Havins was fortunate to be among the survivors who located a life raft in the water amid the chaos. He does not provide much detail about his time in the water, but his brief description of Captain McVay shows his view of his captain’s leadership.

Document 2.2: Written Account of Survivor Otha Alton Havins, Y2, USNR, Post-Rescue

I was sleeping in my sack which was located on the Mezzinenine in the port Hangar. I was awakened by a loud rumble and by the viribration and something like water or oil hit me in the face. I immediately jumped out of my sack and landed on someone and I asked what hit us. I then ran in my Office which is located in the Port Hangar and dressed, I also put my rubber life belt on and went down on the quarterdeck to see if there was something I could do. There was plenty to do, but ten minutes doesn't give a fellow much time to do much of what had to be done. Upon reaching the quarterdeck a Sailor ran out of #1 mess hall with bad burns on his arms and chest and was screaming for a doctor, and another fellow and I layed him on a cot and covered him with a blanket and told him we would get a doctor. Just then a fellow came up from below covered with oil, but I don't think He was burned, but he couldn't see for the oil and asked someone to wipe his eyes, I cleared away the oil from his eyes as best I could while the other fellow went in search of a doctor or corman. I then turned to help one of the Victor Division men with his life belt and get him over the side. By this time the ship was listing badly to starboard. I crawled on hands and knees to life line port side of quarterdeck and climbed through the life line and blew up my life belt forgetting to tighten up the escape valve, then I walked down to the keel and told another Victor Division man it was time to make tracks. I hit the water and took about half dozen strokes then someone wraped their arms around mine and down we went. I busted his grip on the way up then he grabbed my legs and when the ship went under it pulled the two of us with it, but with the help of God we came back up then the fellow with me let go and went down. I swam out and found a do-nut raft and hung on for dear life because I was very much winded. Glenn and I started yelling we had a raft and for people to join us. One fellow yelled over that he couldn't swim, so Glenn and I swam over with the raft. Soon there after we spotted a big life raft so the five of us swam over and climbed aboard. About three hours later the Captain

and three men came over and we tied our rafts together, from there Captain McVay was in charge.

[signed]

Otha Alton Havins, Y2/c

Source: ALS; "Account of Survivor Otha Alton Havins, Y2, USNR," Correspondence Relating to the Sinking of USS *Indianapolis*, RG 24, Box 1, NARA II, College Park, MD. These are handwritten letters of survivors shortly after rescue prepared for the Navy's initial investigation into the loss. Spelling and punctuation are as originally written.



Figure 2-1. View of starboard side of *Indianapolis* (CA-35) off the Mare Island Navy Yard, California, 10 July 1945, after her final overhaul and repair of combat damage. On the night of 30 July two torpedoes fired from Japanese submarine *I-58* slammed into this side of *Indianapolis* at frame 7 (slightly aft of the hull number) and frame 50 (directly below the navigation bridge).

Photograph from the Bureau of Ships Collection in the U.S. National Archives. NHHC Photo Collection, 19-N-86199



Figure 2-2. Detail view of ship’s forward stack, superstructure and hull, from alongside her starboard side amidships, at the Mare Island Navy Yard following her final overhaul, 12 July 1945—the day that Captain McVay received notification of his top secret mission. Circles on photograph mark recent alterations to the ship. Note the life rafts and floater nets. The ship sunk by the starboard side and went down within 15 minutes of being hit. Many of the life rafts did not release when underwater. Also note the bow of *Hercules* (AK-41) in the left distance.

Photograph from the Bureau of Ships Collection in the U.S. National Archives. NHC Photo Collection, 19-N086917

Questions regarding the transmission of an SOS message and the precise location of the sinking remain central in the Indianapolis story. Radioman First Class John Moran directly addressed these topics at the Court of Inquiry. Moran’s testimony provides a crucial perspective on whether Indianapolis transmitted a distress signal and, if it did, what it gave as its location, as he was one of the Sailors who physically keyed the distress signal, as well as latitude and longitude. Moran did not believe that the message from his radio room left the ship, nor did he recall the exact coordinates.

Document 2.3: Testimony of Radioman First Class Joseph John Moran, USN, at Court of Inquiry, Guam, 14 August 1945

Examined by the judge advocate:

1. **Q. State your name, rate, and present station.**

A. Joseph John Moran, radioman first class, U.S. Navy, survivor of the U.S.S. *Indianapolis*.

2. **Q. Tell the court what you know regarding the sinking of the U.S.S. *Indianapolis* on 30 July.**

A. At the time of the explosion I was sleeping in the coding room on the main deck, starboard side, forward. I immediately dressed, and as the passageways were filled with fire and smoke, I went through a port hole to the forecandle deck and from there to the communications deck. The ship had stalled and taken a slight starboard list and we were taking water over the starboard side of the well deck. At this time the ship seemed to steady and gave me the impression that it was not sinking. From the communication deck I went into radio room number One and was there approximately four to five minutes when the ship started to roll to starboard. On the orders of the Communication Watch Officer all radiomen evacuated radio One and I went aft on the communication deck again.

3. **Q. State what you observed as to the conditions of radio One.**

A. All power, both normal and emergency, was out. The only lights we had were battle lights and flashlights.

4. **Q. What do you know about the condition of radio Two?**

A. All I know is what I have picked up from other survivors as I was never in radio Two.

5. **Q. What messages did you hear, either transmitted or attempted to be transmitted?**

A. From radio One we set up what should have been TCK-3, as the word from radio Two by messenger was that we had 4235 kilocycles on CW cable Three. I transmitted the following message, "NQOV" code which was: "XRAY VICTOR MIKE LOVE – WE HAVE BEEN HIT BY TWO TORPEDOES"; then I gave the position by

latitude and longitude-the numbers I do not remember; “NEED IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE.” This passage was sent in groups, twice the first time, and repeated in groups once, followed by two Q signals meaning “I AM UNABLE TO USE RECEIVER.” This was the only message we sent from radio One.

6. **Q. Have you any definite indications as to whether that message did or did not get on the air?**

A. I had no definite indications either way and we were very much in doubt, as the pilot light, which should have been lit, was out. Control cables went through passage ways which were on fire and later under water, and we had no definite word from radio Two that the transmitters were keying.

7. **Q. Explain your statement “control cables went through passage-ways and were under water.” Did you know that there was water over them?**

A. Before I went into radio One, the ship at the well deck was awash, and control cables drop from radio One to the second deck and run aft on the starboard side and up into radio Two. It was approximately two or three minutes after I left the communication deck before we started transmitting.

8. **Q. Explain more in detail what light you referred to by your statement that the light should have been on.**

A. In the motor generator circuit of all transmitters controlled remotely from radio One there is a communication light which should normally burn after relays for turning on the motor generator are energized. This light was not burning when we attempted to turn on our transmitter. The transmitter will run, however, without the light burning.

9. **Q. What was the source of your auxiliary power in radio One?**

A. For auxiliary power we drew alternating current from the forward Interior Communication room, located on the second platform at frame 50.

10. **Q. Did you know whether the transmitter in radio Two was operating?**

A. From indications in radio One the transmitter was not operating.

11. **Q. What were the indications?**

A. The pilot light was not burning, and between the time we started transmitting the control cable we were using would have been under water and previously exposed to fire. There was, however, no definite indication for us in radio One that the transmitter was not operating.

12. **Q. Did you know the condition of the meter of the transmitter TK-3 in radio Two?⁹**

A. No, sir, we had no way of noting transmitter meters from radio One.

13. **Q. Were any messages recorded received after the explosion?**

A. Not in radio One. All power was out, we had no receivers.

14. **Q. Tell as best as you can what planes or ships you saw while you were in the water, and when you saw them, up to the time you were picked up?**

A. Monday morning at approximately 1000 we sighted a PB Ventura and about five minutes later a B-29. Those two planes were on a northeasterly course and passed to the south of us, about five miles, flying I would say at about 2000 feet. Wednesday afternoon a plane, believed to be a C-47, passed overhead, very low on a westerly course. Wednesday night, near midnight, we sighted running lights of a plane flying northeast, and we fired flares, and he appeared to circle once and then continued on course. Thursday afternoon approximately at 1500 we sighted two Grumman Avengers to the southwest on the horizon, and very low. They appeared to be searching the water. Friday morning we sighted a PB Ventura which started searching to the north and picked us up about one-half hour later. About 1030, same morning, we sighted two vessels on the horizon to the southeast, one of which, the U.S.S. *Ringness*, picked up our group.

Examined by the court:

15. Q. How many survivors were in the group in which you found yourself?

A. We started out with one officer and nineteen men. The officer, Lieutenant Freeze, died Tuesday evening at approximately 1807.¹⁰

16. Q. Were you on a raft or supported by a life jacket?

A. We had four life rafts and one floater net; all men were on rafts.

17. Q. What was the condition of these rafts?

A. One raft started to sink on Monday and we used the floater net underneath it to keep it afloat. All other rafts remained in good condition.

18. Q. What was the condition of the equipment on the rafts?

A. We had plenty of provisions and water; however, we did find three of our water casks to be dry.

19. Q. Tell us what caused the raft to sink.

A. It seemed to get water-logged at the start. It was a balsa wood raft as far as I know, and by Monday morning she was barely afloat.

20. Q. How many explosions did you hear?

A. I heard only one myself.

21. Q. Where did you think the explosion took place?

A. The impression I had was that the forward boilers blew up as the passageway right outside the compartment I was in was alongside the drying rooms. These passageways were burning very hot and smoke filled them.

22. Q. You spoke of a message being sent from Communications; where was the data obtained for that message?

A. Lieutenant Driscoll, the Communications Watch Officer, gave me the message to send. I think he got his position from the Junior Officer of the Deck, who was seen by other men in the survivors' group, down in radio One, and who ordered a distress message sent.

23. Q. Did both radio One and Two draw their auxiliary or emergency power from the same source?

A. Negative. Radio One drew auxiliary power from the forward Interior Communication room while radio Two had a two-KVA moto generator which got its direct current from the after electrical board.

24. **Q. Have you a fairly clear idea of the interval of time the ship went down after the explosion?**

A. I had estimated that as not more than ten to fifteen minutes.

None of the parties to the inquiry desired further to examine this witness.

The court informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statements concerning anything relating to the subject matter of the inquiry which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness made the following statement:

Our first aid gear requires some modifications, as they were supposed to be waterproof, and all gauze bandages were saturated with salt water when we opened the packages. We had only two tubes of burn ointment and burns seemed to be the most prominent casualty aboard the ship. Also, it would seem advisable to have at least one side of all life rafts painted a bright yellow as blue camouflage is hard to spot in the water. These packages had not been tampered with as far as we could observe. They were sealed in a paraffin wrapper.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

Source: TD; Records of Proceedings of a Court of Inquiry Convened at Headquarters, Commander, Marianas, Guam by order of Commander-in-Chief, United States Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas to Inquire into all the Circumstances Connected with the Sinking of the USS *Indianapolis* (CA-35) and the Delay in Reporting the Loss of that Ship, 13 August 1945 (Volumes One and Two and Papers Concerning), CINCPAC 1945 Flag Files, RG 38, Box 45, NARA II, College Park, MD. COI testimony took place 13–20 August 1945.



Figure 2-3. Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, commander of the Fifth Fleet awards a Purple Heart to Joseph J. Moran, RM1, survivor of *Indianapolis* (CA-35), which was lost to enemy action in the Philippine Sea, as fellow survivors await similar awards at Naval Base Hospital No. 18, Guam, Marianas on 13 August 1945.

Navy Photograph 80-G-490311, NARA II, College Park, MD

Lieutenant (j.g.) Richard Redmayne, USNR, became the Chief Engineer of Indianapolis when Commander Glen F. DeGrave was beached at the Pearl Harbor stop for overage. He thus had held this position for only four days when Indianapolis was torpedoed. Redmayne remarkably made it to his battle station, the after engine room, within minutes of the torpedo hits. The after engine room seemed relatively stable given the circumstances. With no communication with the bridge, or understanding of the full extent of the damage to the ship, Redmayne made the decision to keep the one functioning engine at full speed. This decision unfortunately kept the ship moving

forward and increased the amount of water pouring into the opened bow. In addition to describing his decision-making process at his battle station following the torpedo hits, Redmayne recounted what he considered inappropriate behavior by Sailors in the water in his testimony. The Court ultimately ruled that all of Redmayne's accusations against crewman were inadmissible because he was likely "out of his mind" when he perceived witnessing them.

Document 2.4: Testimony of Lieutenant (j.g.) Richard Banks Redmayne (Chief Engineer), U.S. Naval Reserve, at Court of Inquiry, 15 August 1945

A witness called by the judge advocate entered, was duly sworn and was informed of the subject matter of the inquiry.

Examined by the judge advocate:

1. Q. State your name, rank, and present station.

A. Lieutenant Richard Banks Redmayne, U.S. Naval Reserve, survivor of the U.S.S. *Indianapolis*.

2. Q. State to the court all matters pertaining to the inquiry which happened from the time about one-half hour before the explosion until the time you were picked up.

A. One-half hour before the explosion I was on the bridge as Junior Supervisor of the Bridge Watch. About a quarter to twelve I left the bridge and went down to the wardroom and had a sandwich, and went from there up to the Head of Department head, at frame 54, on forecastle deck, amidships. While in the head, the first explosion occurred, and it seemed to be directly below me. And simultaneous with the explosion, I heard and smelled a fire just outside the head door. I opened the door and went through the fire to the port passageway. I walked aft on the port passageway and down the ladder to number Two mess hall, and from there into the after engine room. When I arrived in the engine room the ship had a ten degree starboard list and number Three engine had just been secured due to loss of vacuum. Number Two engine was able to make 160 turns and still maintain a vacuum of twenty-five inches. Both main generators

were running in the after engine room, and we had lights down there. We had sound power communication with the forward engine room, number Four fire room, and Repair Five. The officer watch reported that he lost the electrical lead forward and had no steam in the forward engine room. After I had been down there about five minutes, Nightingale, machinist's mate first class, who had the chief machinist mate watch in the forward engine room, came down to the after engine room and reported that he had abandoned the forward engine room due to lack of lights, heat, smoke, and the heavy list. He asked if he should return to the forward engine room. My answer was no. Shortly thereafter a chief oil king and one of his assistants reported to the after engine room and asked if they should pump fuel oil from the starboard fuel tanks overboard. They were told to do so. I then noticed that the ship seemed to be remaining steady with but about a fourteen degree starboard list, so, since we had no communications with the bridge, I started up to the bridge to find out what the complete picture was and what the Captain wanted done. When I got up to the top of the ladder from number Two mess hall, the ship seemed to list rapidly to starboard and I went aft by hand walking on oxygen bottles which were normally in vertical position. As soon as I got on the main deck aft, I went into the water just as the ship was about to capsize. I swam away from the ship to starboard, and I was fully clothed, and after five minutes in the water I found a kapok life jacket. About half an hour later, I found a group in a life raft, which I joined and during the next three hours we joined up with two other life rafts, which were fully loaded, and with people on two floater nets. We secured the three life rafts and the two floater nets, and drifted that night, picking up other survivors and water breakers and provisions that floated by. We had about one hundred fifty men in our group. Monday was uneventful except for two planes that passed over head, neither of which saw us. No food was given out Monday. Monday night one plane passed over, but didn't notice us, even though we fired two Very pistol shells. Tuesday morning we buried one man by the name of Barker, radio technician first class, who was on Commander FIFTH

Fleet Staff. Tuesday afternoon one cracker was given out to each man. And Tuesday evening, about 2000, a low flying plane with running lights on passed over us, but did not notice our Very flare. Wednesday morning another cracker was issued to each man and one malted milk tablet. I had told the men that all the rations would be kept on one raft, and wouldn't be issued without my permission. Even after those orders were given, a group of men on one raft were noticed frequently to be eating and once in a while drinking some water. The ringleader seemed to be a man by the name of Morgan, boatswain's mate second class. Wednesday several men went out of their minds and attempts to stop several of them from swimming away failed. Our attempts at fishing were unsuccessful due to the presence of numerous sharks. On Wednesday afternoon it was decided that we would send four men in a raft south in an attempt to hit Ulithi or Palau. These men left our group about 2000. Wednesday evening more and more men seemed to be going out of their minds and drinking salt water and swimming away. Several instances of homosexual relations were reported. Then during the night Wednesday, I went out of my mind. Next thing I remember I was being taken aboard the U.S.S. *Bassett*.¹¹

3. **Q. Who was in the engine room when you arrived there?**
A. Ensign Herstien¹² was the officer of the watch and Rue, machinist's mate first class. I don't remember the names of the other men who were down there.
4. **Q. Are any of these you mentioned survivors?**
A. I don't think any of them are survivors.
5. **Q. Do you know what the status of the engine room telegraphs were in the after engine room when you arrived there?**
A. I think they were both dead.
6. **Q. Do you know if the officer of the watch had had any communications with the bridge after the explosion?**
A. He had no communication. He told me that.
7. **Q. Do you know what the effect of the explosion was on the fire main?**

A. I noticed that we had only about ten pounds of fire main pressure in the engine room, and fire and flush pump in the after engine room was running, so I assumed the fire main was ruptured forward.

8. Q. Did you receive any reports of the status or conditions of the fire rooms?

A. I received no report as to the condition of them. The officer of the watch reported that he had attempted to contact number One fire room immediately after the explosion by sound powered phone and ship's service phone, but he was unsuccessful.

9. Q. What was the condition of the steam pressure on the main steam line when you first arrived in the after engine room?

A. Three hundred pounds, sir.

10. Q. What happened to the steam pressure?

A. It remained steady at three hundred.

11. Q. For how long?

A. We still had three hundred pounds of pressure when I left the engine room.

12. Q. How and where did you receive your burns?

A. I got burned when I came out of the Head of Department head.

13. Q. Were you burned solely by flames, or did you touch any metal which might have burned you?

A. My right hand was burned by flames, my left finger tips were burned when I supported myself on the deck with left hand.

14. Q. Do you know what happened to the four men and the raft which you started in the direction of Palau or Ulithi?

A. They rejoined our group thirty hours later.

15. Q. Did the irregularities of the man named Morgan impress you as being subject to special censure?

A. Yes, sir.

16. Q. Have you anything more to state on that subject other than what you have already stated?

A. No, sir.

17. **Q.** Have you any comments to make other than those you have already made concerning the material condition of the rafts or equipment?

A. In the first place, the water in the water breakers was no good, and the containers which contained articles on the rafts were not watertight. Some of the Very flare containers were not watertight. In my opinion, about twice as many Very Flares should be provided for each raft. We had no top in order to protect us from the sun. That is all.

18. **Q.** At about the time that you left the bridge to go below, describe the visibility conditions existing as far as concerns the state of the moon, the direction of the moon, and your estimate of the range of visibility in various directions.

A. I don't remember the direction of the moon. All I remember is that the visibility during the watch as from good to excellent.

19. **Q.** Do you remember the state of the moon?

A. No, I don't remember.

20. **Q.** Do you remember whether visibility appeared to you greater on one side of the ship than the other?

A. No.

21. **Q.** What would you estimate the range of visibility on the starboard side?

A. Five miles.

22. **Q.** Do you mean that you could see dark unlighted objects five miles away from the ship?

A. Large objects, yes.

23. **Q.** What material or readiness condition was the ship in, and did you notice any violations?

A. Material condition was YOKE, modified.

24. **Q.** Did you notice during the period of your watch, or up to the time of the explosion, any violations in the material condition as regards hatches, doors, or ports?

A. No, sir.

Examined by the court:

25. **Q.** In the first part of your testimony you said the first explosion occurred when you were in the head. What was your sensation and impression with regard to that explosion? What did you think it was?

A. I thought it was a torpedo.

26. **Q.** You didn't mention a second explosion, did you feel, hear, or see a second explosion?

A. Yes, sir, immediately after the first one.

27. **Q.** What was your impression with regard to the second explosion as related to the first?

A. The sound was similar, but it impressed me as being a little bit farther away, forward.

Cross-examined by Captain Charles B. McVay III, U.S. Navy, an interested party:

28. **Q.** You mentioned that the visibility that night was approximately five miles. Did you notice that five-mile visibility before or after the sinking? In other words, when [did] you ascertain the visibility was five miles?

A. When I was on the bridge.

29. **Q.** You say that you couldn't remember the direction or state of the moon. Is it possible that you don't remember either of those facts because, even though the moon had already risen, it was obscured by cloud cover?

A. Yes, it is possible.

Re-examined by the judge advocate:

30. **Q.** To what do you attribute the source of fire which you encountered just outside the head?

A. I don't know.

31. **Q.** Was the entire passageway in that area a mass of flame or what was the size of it?

A. I don't know, sir, I closed my eyes when I went through.

32. Q. Have you an impression as to the direction from which the flame was coming, whether forward or aft or from either side of the ship?

A. My opinion is that it came up through the hatch there.

The judge advocate made the statement that this witness was not present at either reading of the official report and narrative of the Commanding Officer before the assembled survivors, due to inability for physical reasons to attend those proceedings.

Re-examined by the court:

33. Q. Have you anything to lay to the charge of the Commanding Officer, or of any other officer or man with regard to the loss of the United States ship *Indianapolis*?

A. Nothing than what I have already indicated.

None of the parties to the inquiry desired further to examine this witness.

The court informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relative to the subject matter of the inquiry which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

Source: TD; Records of Proceedings of a Court of Inquiry Convened at Headquarters, Commander, Marianas, Guam by order of Commander-in-Chief, United States Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas to Inquire into all the Circumstances Connected with the Sinking of the USS *Indianapolis* (CA-35) and the Delay in Reporting the Loss of that Ship, 13 August 1945 (Volumes One and Two and Papers Concerning), CINCPAC 1945 Flag Files, RG 38, Box 45, NARA II, College Park, MD. COI testimony took place 13–20 August 1945.

The accusations of unauthorized use of rations brought against Boatswain's Mate Second Class Eugene Morgan¹³ by Lieutenant (j.g.) Richard Redmayne led to further questioning from the Court of Inquiry. The court ultimately determined that the allegations were sufficiently refuted by witnesses and recommended no further proceedings against Morgan. The three testimonies

below represent charges against and in defense of Morgan. Morgan's own testimony is also included. The court declined to recommend that the Navy pursue further action against Morgan. The testimony regarding these alleged events has been included because it demonstrates the hardships the survivors faced in the water and underscores the extreme circumstances they faced. These testimonies also indicate how the limited rations were distributed and how the rotation between time in rafts and water functioned. Captain McVay effectively addressed such issues in the extract that opened this chapter, "You can't pin anybody down. There are people who think certain things happened. Nobody naturally, now, in their right mind would ever admit that he did anything like that and he would deny it if you confronted him with it. There were no flagrant cases that we could bring to light." Essentially, the extraordinary circumstances that the men of Indianapolis were placed in created a scenario incomprehensible for judgment by ordinary standards.

Documents 2.5–2.8: Testimony from Ensign Harlan Malcom Twible, USN; William Edward Simpson, Boatswain's Mate Second Class, USNR; Eugene S. Morgan, Boatswain's Mate Second Class, USNR, 15–16 August 1945.¹⁴

[Testimony of Harlan Malcolm Twible, Ensign, U.S. Navy, at Court of Inquiry, 15 August 1945, pp. 68–71]

At this stage of the proceedings it appeared to the court that Eugene S. Morgan, boatswain's mate second class, U.S. Naval Reserve, had an interest in this subject matter of the inquiry. He was accordingly called before the court and advised to that effect, and that he would be allowed to present during the course of the inquiry, examine witnesses, and introduce new matters pertinent to the inquiry in the same manner as a defendant. With the permission of the court, he introduced Commander Frank E. Bollman, U.S. Naval Reserve, as his counsel.

A witness called by the judge advocate entered, was duly sworn, and was informed of the subject matter of the inquiry.

Examined by the judge advocate:

1. Q. State your name, rank, and present station.

A. Harlan Malcom Twible, Ensign, U.S. Navy, survivor of the U.S.S. *Indianapolis*.

2. **Q. Where were you at the time of the explosion?**

A. Sky amidships.

3. **Q. Where did it appear to you that the explosion or explosions occurred?**

A. Well, the first one I thought occurred forward and the second one I knew must have occurred forward of the second stack as soot and steam and sparks came out of that stack.

4. **Q. What did you judge to be the nature of the explosion?**

A. At the time of the explosion I had no idea what the explosion was caused by. I thought it might be boilers blowing.

5. **Q. How long had you been on watch at the time of the first explosion?**

A. About four hours and fifteen minutes.

6. **Q. Please state the condition of visibility existing in the five minutes prior to the explosion as respects atmospheric conditions, the condition of the moon and the direction of the moon and the distance which you could observe a dark object on either side.**

A. Well, the moon wasn't out, or else it was covered up by clouds, and I remember looking down towards the quarterdeck to see if my relief was coming. We were relieved late that night. I could make out motion down there, but could not tell who the men were. That night we had a check to see if the men we had on lookout duty were relieved, by phoning to the men who had charge of the guns.

7. **Q. What was the state of elevation and direction of the moon at the time of explosion?**

A. Well, the moon wasn't out, it might have risen.

8. **Q. What visibility did you have to starboard at about the time of the explosion, visibility based on your ability to sight a darkened ship?**

A. I don't know about that, sir. I don't know how far you could have seen that night. The only thing I could say is that I could make out motion on the quarterdeck. You couldn't make out anything on the horizon.

9. **Q. Were you using binoculars?**

A. No, sir.

10. **Q. Were the lookouts using binoculars?**

A. Yes, sir.

11. **Q. What check were you making on the lookouts?**

A. We had instructed the men in charge of the mounts to report lookouts on the shields every half hour.

12. **Q. While you were in the water, if you observed any irregularities connected with the use of emergency rations and water, please state them.**

A. There was one raft that did have food and they were eating it after they had been ordered not to use food not rationed. Although I didn't see any specific person taking the food, several of the men complained that the raft was in charge of Morgan, and that he was stealing the food. I, thereupon, reported this to Mr. Redmayne. He put the food in the charge of Chief Benton. Later on we got complaints again, whereupon I said in a clear voice, "The first man I see eating food not rationed, I will report if we ever get in." Wednesday afternoon I swam to one of the rafts and found them eating food. I asked them if they hadn't heard the order I previously gave. They said if Morgan could eat it, why couldn't they, whereupon I went to Morgan's raft and found no food. But later on I found that the food in the cans was sunken by punching holes in the top of the inner lid. I then went back to the two rafts, Morgan's and this other one, and got both cans of food. I also got floating water casks. I can't say where they came from. The water casks were then put in the charge of myself and Sergeant Greenwald. We rationed the water after that, and I am sure, none of it was stolen from that time on.

13. **Q. You mentioned Morgan, can you identify him more fully?**

A. Yes, sir, this is the man right here.

The witness pointed to the interested party, Eugene S. Morgan, boatswain's mate second class, U.S. Naval Reserve.

14. **Q. What do you mean by saying that you found tins punctured below the water? Do you mean empty cans, or hoarded and hidden rations?**
A. Hoarded and hidden rations.
15. **Q. How far away from the raft in which Morgan was located were you when you gave the instructions regarding what you would do if you found anyone eating food without being properly rationed?**
A. I was in the nets.
16. **Q. Is there any doubt in your mind as to whether Morgan heard that remark?**
A. No, sir, there is no doubt in my mind. Furthermore, I went up to the group of rafts, and said that they weren't acting like seamen, but like a bunch of boots. That alone, I think, should have made those men think a little about their status.
17. **Q. Had you heard Morgan receive orders from anyone else in authority relative to the manner of handling emergency rations and water?**
A. I believe Chief Benton did. I couldn't swear to that.
18. **Q. My question was, did you hear anyone?**
A. No, sir. There is doubt in my mind.
19. **Q. About how many men did you have in the raft and about how many in the water in your group?**
A. Well, I spent the last night in one of the rafts, and I should say that there must have been nearly sixty in the three rafts we had. On Wednesday night one of the rafts had left to see if they could attract help.
20. **Q. How many men do you estimate were on the rafts and how many in the water, in your group, on the second day?**
A. On the second day, I should say about sixty on the rafts and about sixty in the water.
21. **Q. What was your policy on who should be in the rafts and who should be in the water?**
A. We tried to put all injured and ill men in the rafts and those who

didn't have life belts. However, we found that some men were getting rid of their life belts so that they could get into the rafts.

22. Q. In this connection, did the actions of Morgan come to your attention?

A. I believe he was in the rafts all the time and some of the men with him were in the rafts all the time.

23. Q. Was he so badly injured that he should have been in the raft all the time, or should he have taken his turn?

A. I don't think he was any worse off than any of the rest of us, and was capable of hanging on to the nets. Therefore I don't think he should have been in the raft all of the time.

24. Q. Did you hear anyone order him to take his turn being in and out of the raft?

A. No, sir.

25. Q. What other persons to your knowledge have definite information on the actions of Morgan at this time?

A. Chief Benton, Mr. Redmayne, Mr. Blum, Mr. Howison, and Sergeant Greenwald.

26. Q. What other men do you refer to as seemingly in the same unit with Morgan, eating rations and drinking water when they shouldn't, and staying on the raft without taking their turn?

A. I don't know the names of any of the others due to my short time on the ship. However, I do recognize Morgan because I was the recorder on a summary court martial, and it was he who brought the accused so that I could read the specifications to them.

27. Q. At what time did you first observe the moon on the night of the explosion?

A. I was in the water, sir. After 1225.

28. Q. If the moon had risen earlier, why would you not have observed it earlier?

A. The clouds were the only hindrances of visibility.

Cross-examined by Eugene S. Morgan, boatswain's mate, second class, U.S. Naval Reserve, an interested party:

29. **Q. You say that there was no food in the raft in which Morgan was in?**

A. None that I could see.

30. **Q. Did you see Morgan eating at any time?**

A. I never saw Morgan eating food.

31. **Q. How far away were you from Morgan's raft when you gave this order?**

A. I was on the net, the nearest side of which was to the raft.

32. **Q. Approximately how far from Morgan?**

A. I can't say, exactly, just how many feet it was from his raft, even at the greatest distance, the farthest raft could not have been, well, over forty or fifty feet away.

33. **Q. What time of day was it?**

A. Afternoon.

34. **Q. Was Morgan visible to you when you gave that order?**

A. Morgan was not visible to me.

35. **Q. Do you know whether Morgan was sleeping or not?**

A. No, I do not know whether he was sleeping or not.

36. **Q. You didn't recognize any of the individuals by name in that raft?**

A. I did not recognize any of the individuals in the raft by name.

Re-examined by the judge advocate:

37. **Q. When you discovered that the tinned food was being hidden, was Morgan present at the time, and aware of your discovery?**

A. Morgan was present on Wednesday when I discovered food in that raft.

38. **Q. Was there any intimation that he was connected with the hiding of the food?**

A. No, sir. All I know was that the men complained about his stealing food.

39. Q. Was Morgan the senior person on his raft at that time?

A. I cannot say, because I did not know the rest of the men. I would like to add that Thursday morning a man came down with cans of crackers, and told me that Morgan had sent the crackers.

40. Q. Do you recognize that man?

A. I cannot recognize him.

Recross-examined by Eugene S. Morgan, boatswain's mate second class, U.S. Naval Reserve, an interested party:

41. Q. All of the testimony is by speech of others?

A. Complaints of others. I never saw him eating.

Re-examined by the judge advocate:

42. Q. Was Morgan present when those complaints were made?

A. Morgan was never present. The men would swim up to me on the nets and tell me. That was the reason for the order I gave that morning.

43. Q. On your observations, during the time you were receiving those complaints; do you consider that the men were irrational?

A. The men were not irrational at that time.

44. Q. Were any irrational?

A. Some were irrational.

Examined by the court:

45. Q. Did you retain full possession of your sense during the entire ordeal?

A. Yes, sir.

None of the parties to the inquiry desired further to examine this witness.

The court informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the inquiry which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

[Testimony of William Edward Simpson, Boatswain's Mate Second Class, U.S. Naval Reserve, at Court of Inquiry, 16 August 1945, pp. 87, 90–93]

Eugene S. Morgan, boatswain's mate second class, U.S. Naval Reserve, an interested party, moved to strike out all testimony which had been introduced regarding Morgan on the ground that it was hearsay, and that the precept did not cover the offenses concerning which Morgan was accused.

The judge advocate replied.

The court announced that it did not sustain the motion to strike.

Eugene S. Morgan, boatswain's mate second class, U.S. Naval Reserve, an interested party, moved to strike the words, "the ringleader seemed to be a man by the name of Morgan, boatswain's mate second class," which words had appeared in the testimony of Lieutenant Richard B. Redmayne, U.S. Naval Reserve, on the grounds that it was improper opinion of evidence.

The judge advocate replied.

The court announced that it did not sustain the motion to strike.

[. . .]¹⁵

A witness called by Eugene S. Morgan, boatswain's mate second class, U.S. Naval Reserve, an interested party, entered, was duly sworn, and was informed of the subject matter of the inquiry.

Examined by the judge advocate:

1. **Q. State your name, rate, and present station.**

A. William Edward Simpson, boatswain's mate second class, U.S. Naval Reserve, survivor of the U.S.S. *Indianapolis*.

Examined by Eugene S. Morgan, boatswain's mate second class, U.S. Naval Reserve, an interested party:

2. **Q. From the time that the *Indianapolis* was sunk until you were rescued, did you see Morgan, the interested party?**

A. Yes, I saw Morgan every day.

3. **Q. Continuously?**

A. He was right close by me. He swam around the floater net that I was in, and I was on the floater net for the first two days. The third day I saw him in the life raft. On the afternoon of the third day I saw him swim about 200 yards without a life jacket after a bag of rations, he brought it back and turned it over to the people on the life raft who had charge of all the rations.

4. **Q. Did you hear an order issued that all rations should be placed in one raft?**

A. I did.

5. **Q. When was that order issued?**

A. On the afternoon of the third day.

6. **Q. Was that Wednesday?**

A. Yes.

7. **Q. Was that before or after Morgan swam out and got the bag of rations?**

A. That was after.

8. **Q. Did you ever see Morgan eating any improperly issued rations during that period?**

A. No, sir.

9. **Q. Did you ever see Morgan on the raft which held the rations?**

A. No, sir.

Cross-examined by the judge advocate:

10. **Q. What happened to the bag of food which you say that Morgan brought back this 200 yards?**

A. He brought it back, and one of the cans had slipped out of the bag, and one of the fellows brought it back. There were three cans in the bag and one of them slipped out, and some other fellow brought the bag back and Morgan brought the other can back.

11. **Q. Did Morgan deliver the part which he recovered to the controlling officer?**

A. He brought it up to the raft where the officers were.

12. **Q. How well did you know Morgan?**
A. I was in the same division with him for about two years. I used to work for him.
13. **Q. Was Morgan so much under your observation during this period in the water that you could have detected any incidents of his partaking of food or water which was not properly rationed?**
A. I couldn't see him at night; at night I couldn't see anything.
14. **Q. Were you in charge of the raft on which Morgan was located?**
A. No, sir.
15. **Q. Was Morgan on any special raft?**
A. Not that I know of.
16. **Q. Was he in any one particular raft?**
A. I saw him in just one raft and that was on the afternoon of the third day.
17. **Q. Was that where the corpsman was?**
A. Yes.
18. **Q. Was there anything the matter with Morgan at that time?**
A. There was one of his eyes all fouled up.
19. **Q. You say that you have known Morgan for two years?**
A. I have known him for two years.
20. **Q. Do you know his reputation for obedience to orders?**
A. Yes.
21. **Q. What is it?**
A. Good.
22. **Q. What was Morgan, acting master at arms?**
A. Yes, on board ship.
23. **Q. In your observations, did you see chief Benton?**
A. Yes.
24. **Q. Was chief Benton sick at any time?**
A. I would say he was.

25. **Q. When was that?**

A. That was now and then throughout all the time we were in the water.

26. **Q. Was his mind affected, do you think?**

A. I couldn't say about his mind; I know he put up a "holler" about his stomach hurting him.

Examined by the court:

27. **Q. Did you hear any men make a complaint or claim to anybody with regard to the issue of food or water?**

A. Not concerning any one particular person. I heard there was always a big growl about the time chow was to be issued.

28. **Q. Did Morgan take charge at the time food was regularly rationed?**

A. Not that I know of.

29. **Q. Did you hear any man complain about Morgan?**

A. No, sir.

30. **Q. Or make any remarks about Morgan?**

A. No, sir.

31. **Q. Did any officer come to the raft at any time and caution you about not using rations which had not been properly issued?**

A. I did not hear anything regarding that.

32. **Q. Did you hear any orders issued by any officer with regard to the rationing of food?**

A. It was all to be turned in to one raft was all that I heard.

None of the parties to the inquiry desired further to examine this witness.

The court informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the inquiry which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.¹⁶

[Testimony of Eugene S. Morgan, Boatswain's Mate Second Class, U.S. Naval Reserve, at Court of Inquiry, 16 August 1945, pp. 94–96.]

Eugene S. Morgan, boatswain's mate second class, U.S. Naval Reserve, an interested party, requested that he be sworn as a witness. His request was granted and he was duly sworn, having been informed by the court that his examination would be governed by the same rules as govern the examination of an accused who takes the stand at his own request in a trial by court-martial.

Examined by the judge advocate:

1. **Q. State your name, rate, and present station.**

A. Eugene Stanley Morgan, boatswain's mate second class, U.S. Naval Reserve, survivor of the U.S.S. *Indianapolis*.

Examined by Eugene S. Morgan, boatswain's mate second class, U.S. Naval Reserve, an interested party:

2. **Q. You were afloat from the time of the sinking of the U.S.S. *Indianapolis* until you were rescued, on Thursday?**

A. Until Friday morning, about 2:30.

3. **Q. Were you in the same group with these boys that have testified?**

A. Yes.

4. **Q. Did you, or did you not, have any unissued rations for your own use?**

A. No, I did not.

Cross-examined by the judge advocate:

5. **Q. During that period of little over four days that you were in the water until you were rescued, did you obey all orders given to you by officers who may have addressed you and whom you recognized as such?**

A. I could hardly make out anybody to recognize them, my eyes were bad, and as far as I know, if there were any orders issued to me, I obeyed all orders.

6. **Q. Do you remember Ensign Blum swimming close to your raft and admonishing you regarding the use of rations?**

A. I heard somebody yelling when they were passing out rations. They were passing out rations and I knew that cans were coming around. I heard somebody yell, I don't know who they were yelling at.

7. **Q. Who was passing out rations?**

A. I don't know, it was the third time they passed out rations.

8. **Q. Was it somebody in your raft who was controlling the issue of rations?**

A. Cans were just passed around the rafts, to be passed around to the ones in the rafts, and if there was any left, to be passed on to the next raft. The pharmacist's mate was in charge.

9. **Q. Were you ever told that you were to be considered in the category of those who would stay on your raft at all times?**

A. The pharmacist's mate on the third day when I got in took care of me. We were re-shuffled, and I was put on this small raft. The pharmacist's mate said that I belonged on this raft.

10. **Q. What did the pharmacist's mate tell you?**

A. In what way do you mean that?

11. **Q. About your staying on the raft all the time.**

A. He said, "You belong in here," and he started naming the men who would be in that raft.

12. **Q. What did you understand about taking turns being in the raft and being in the water?**

A. The first day and the second day men were complaining about not being able to get on a raft. I was complaining because we could not get into a raft. The floater net was difficult and hard and I just had a life jacket and it was always slipping down to my legs, and I was having a hard time keeping from going down. I remember I was complaining we wanted to take turns on the raft, so we could have some time out of the water. Finally, on the third day the pharmacist's mate got me on this raft which they claimed had the broken bags.

13. **Q. You stayed on the raft from the third day on?**

A. No, not all the time.

14. **Q. Please explain the circumstance, as you understand them, surrounding the use of partially filled ration cans.**

A. The pharmacist's mate was talking about that. He said he had read in Popular Mechanics that taking two cans, filling one of the with salt water and somehow filling the other around it, and then holding it in some way for the sun to evaporate the salt water and make fresh water for drinking. I don't know whether he got any, but he tried it.

15. **Q. Do you know anything about the use of cans partially filled with rations being used for purposes other than the storage of rations?**

This question was objected to by the interested party, Eugene S. Morgan, boatswain's mate second class, U.S. Naval Reserve, on the grounds that it went beyond the scope of the direct examination, and that if answered would be originating evidence.

The judge advocate replied.

The court announced that the objection was sustained.

16. **Q. What is the name of the pharmacist's mate to whom you refer?**

A. All I know is that he was Anthony.¹⁷ I don't know what the rest of his name is.

17. **Q. What rate?**

A. Pharmacist's mate first class, I believe.

18. **Q. Was there a medical officer in your group?**

A. No, there was no medical officer. The pharmacist's mate was the only corpsman in the group. He was the one and only one as far as pharmacist's mates was concerned.

None of the parties to the inquiry desired further to examine this witness; he resumed his seat as an interested party.

[...]¹⁸

The interested party, Eugene S. Morgan, boatswain's mate second class, U.S. Naval Reserve, made a motion to have his name withdrawn as an

interested party on the ground that the evidence produced before the court in no way involves him.

The court announced that the motion was denied at the present time, but that the court would give the motion further consideration and inform the interested party if it should reverse its present decision at a later time.¹⁹

Source: TD; Records of Proceedings of a Court of Inquiry Convened at Headquarters, Commander, Marianas, Guam by order of Commander-in-Chief, United States Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas to Inquire into all the Circumstances Connected with the Sinking of the USS *Indianapolis* (CA-35) and the Delay in Reporting the Loss of that Ship, 13 August 1945 (Volumes One and Two and Papers Concerning), CINCPAC 1945 Flag Files, RG 38, Box 45, NARA II, College Park, MD. COI testimony took place between 13–20 August 1945.

The following account of Water Tender Second Class George G. Stevens, USNR, stands out among similar survivor accounts in the Navy's investigation file. Stevens' succinct, but detailed, testimony imparted the sense of urgency he faced during his ship's quick sinking. Many of the men's accounts in this collection did not discuss the time in the water. In a few short sentences, Stevens described the totality of misery his group of 100–150 swimmers faced, with only 17 surviving. Stevens' recounting of sharks plaguing his group indicated that his was one of the most affected groups.

Document 2.9: Written Account of Water Tender Second Class George G. Stevens, USNR, Post-Rescue

I was sleeping in living compartment D.202L Annex. The explosion through me around in my sack. Then I climbed out of bunk & dress rapidly putting my dungrees trowsers on wrong side out then when noticing them changed them around. Then waited in the compartment & trying to find out where the hit was for a couple minutes. Then started for Fire room #4 I was stop in #3 mess hall & I talked to a few fellow's who were sleeping on the quarter deck. Then ship was listing to starboard so bad that I decided it was time to hit the water. I left #3 mess Hall and went to the port side of fan tail just aft of motor whale Boat where every body was going over the side & yelling jump, when I climbed through the life line I slid down the side hitting the

shaft forward of the screw gard. hurting my back. then splashed down in the water with some one jumping right on top of me. I then blew up my rubber life belt which was strapped around me using my hand to get away from the ship. I swam for a bunch of men who were on a cork life netting where I caught hold of. I then turned around & the ship was going down with fantail sticking straight out of the water & she sunk fast. we spent the night floating & spiting fuel oil which some swolled a great deal of. The water was rather rough. & they were from 100 to 150 men in the bunch on the netting with me, then the rest of the days in the water was miserable, The first day we had water & some food rationions, but during the night some one tried to get in the water & ruined all we had. We all prayed sang some religious song's. The sharks started bothering the third day & killed a queit a few men. a lot of the men went crazy or out of ther head due to the hot sun & scare & wouldnt try to live. Planes spotted us the evening of the fourth day. when they dropped three rubber life rafts, one raft contained a radio, but didn't do us much good all there was to try to radio was water tenders & sea men, we were rescued by a tin can²⁰ around 0830 the next morning. There were around 17 of us who lived out of about a 100 or a hundred & fifty,

[signed]

G.G. Stevens WT2/c

Source: ALS; "Account of Survivor G. G. Stevens, WT2, USNR," Correspondence Relating to the Sinking of USS *Indianapolis*, RG 24, Box 1, NARA II, College Park, MD. These are handwritten letters of survivors shortly after rescue prepared for the Navy's initial investigation into the loss. Spelling and punctuation kept original.



Figure 2-4. Willie Hatfield, S2, and Cozell Lee Smith, COX, (shark bite on left hand) at Naval Base Hospital #20, Peleliu Island, 5 August 1945. In the series of nearly 100 photographs taken of survivors, the only reference to a shark attack wound is in this image. Because Captain McVay was taken to the same hospital as Smith, it is likely that he was one of the two survivors with shark bites that McVay mentioned.

Navy Photograph 80-G-336770, NARA II, College Park, MD

As a senior officer in his group, and the ship's doctor, Lieutenant Haynes was an individual who men in the water looked to for leadership and counsel. Haynes' group of survivors, the largest and only one with no rafts or provisions, went through one of the most difficult ordeals. Haynes' recollections below describe the sense of helplessness he faced in the situation. Haynes could provide no medical relief as the Sailors and Marines that he had grown to know through his extended time on Indianapolis succumbed. Personal advice, decent burials, and self-preservation replaced medical treatment. This account from Haynes captures the totality of the misery his group faced in the water.

**Document 2.10: Oral History with Captain (Ret.) Lewis Haynes, MC,
USN [Extract]**

All the men were at their guns.

There were the 5-inch mounts?

Yes. All the men were at their stations at general quarters. We got a whole bunch of life jackets and went back down and started to put them on the patients. I remember I was putting it on a warrant officer. I never used his name because I didn't want his family to know. His skin was hanging in shreds and he was yelling "Don't touch me, don't touch me." I kept telling him we had to get the jacket on. And I was putting the jacket on when the ship lurched right over. And he just slid away from me, he and all the patients and the plane on the catapult all went down in a big, tangling crash to the other side, which was now the low end of the ship. I was standing right alongside the lifeline and I grabbed it and climbed through. And by the time I did, the ship was on its side.

They all disappeared over the side?

They probably all died. The plane came down on top of them, all the rescue gear and everything we had out went down, patients and everything together.

I stood up on the side of the ship and slowly walked down the side. Another kid came and said he didn't have a jacket. I had an extra jacket, I handed it to him, and he put it on. He was ahead of me. He went to jump and he hit something on the side of the ship and fell in the water. I went down and jumped into the water which was just fuel oil.

Was the ship still moving at this point?

The ship was still going forward so when it started to go it went fast. It was 12 minutes from the time we were hit until the ship went down.

You literally walked down the side of the ship, past the boot top and onto bottom paint.

Yes. I was walking on red paint.

Was there enough light to see very well?

There was enough light from the moon that you could see. It kept coming in and out.

As it rolled and you were walking down the side what could you see?

I wasn't alone. It was covered with people climbing down.

Could you see the screws from where you were?

Not then, but when I jumped in the water and grabbed hold of my life jacket and held myself, I didn't want to get sucked down so I kicked my feet to get away. And then the ship rose up like the ceiling there. I thought it was going to come down and crush me. And the ship kept leaning out away from me, the aft end rising up and leaning over as it stood up on its nose. And as the screws went by, I vaguely remember seeing someone standing on the screws but I can't be sure.

Was there still forward motion?

Yes. The ship was still going forward at probably 3 or 4 knots. When it finally sank, it was over a hundred yards from me. Most of the survivors were strung out for a half a mile or a mile behind the ship.

You said earlier that when you poked your head through the porthole, it felt like a deep freeze. What did the water feel like when you went into it?

I don't remember. Being in the water wasn't an unpleasant experience except that it was black fuel oil and you got it in your nose, and you got it in your eyes. As the ship went up, I thought I would be sucked down with it but it had just the opposite effect. Because the ship went down so fast because of the forward momentum, the air burst out of the compartments and there were explosions of air that turned you end over end and kept blowing us all farther away. I went tumbling ass over teakettle in the fuel oil and water. And the ship was gone. And suddenly it was very quiet.

Did you hear anyone yelling at that point?

No. There were people all around me but nobody was yelling.

At this point, then, everyone was a swimmer.

As the ship rolled, the swimmers all walked down the side like I did. The captain and a lot of the men and perhaps those people on the afterdeck—the gunnery crew that was up there—when the ship rolled, they all fell off on that side. And as it rolled over all the liferafts and all the floater nets went off on that side, opposite to our side. Capt. McVay and 10 men had two liferafts and two floater nets between them. And another group had four or five rafts and floater nets. There were another 145 of them on that side who were thrown into the water with the rafts.

They were the lucky ones. Everything ended up in the water near them and the guys on your side ended up with nothing.

Nothing. And when the ship went down so fast and the air blew out of the compartments like explosions, they went that way and we went this way and never the twain would meet. We never saw them again. When you're in the ocean at sea level and there are big waves you can't see very far.

We started to gather together. We all looked the same, black oil all over—white eyes and red mouths. No personalities at all. You couldn't tell the doctor from the boot seaman. Everyone swallowed fuel oil which made everyone sick. And then everyone began vomiting. And it was in your eyes, it was in your nose. Later, when the sun came up the covering of oil was a help. It kept us from burning. But at that time, I could have hidden but somebody yelled, "Is the doctor there?" And I made myself known. From that point on—and that's probably why I'm here today—I was kept so busy I had to keep going. But without any equipment, from that point on I became a coroner.

The vomiting further dehydrated everyone.

Sure. And this was midnight and most of the men were probably dehydrated to start with because they'd been asleep. A lot of them hadn't had fluid for some time. And they began to get very thirsty. And that was the big problem I had as time went on. Trying to keep them from drinking saltwater.

A lot of the men were without life jackets. The kapok life jacket is designed with a space in the back. Those who had life jackets that were injured, you could put your arm through that space and pull them up on your hip and

keep them up out of the water. And the men were very good about doing this. Those with jackets supported men without jackets. They held onto the back of the jacket, put their arms through there and held on floating in tandem.

When daylight came and we began to get ourselves organized into a group and the leaders began to come out, and they knew I was the doctor, I began to find the wounded and we began to find the dead. And when we got to the dead, the only way I could tell they were dead was to put my finger in their eye. If their pupils were dilated and they didn't blink I assumed they were dead. We would then laboriously take off their life jackets and give it to men who didn't have jackets. In the beginning I took off their dogtags and said "The Lord's Prayer" and let them go. Eventually, I got such an armful of dogtags I couldn't hold them any longer. Even today, when I try to say "The Lord's Prayer" or I hear it, I simply lose it.

What happened when the sun came up?

When the sun came up it reflected off the fuel oil and was like a search light in your eyes that you couldn't get away from. And everyone got photophobia. So I had all the men take their clothes off and we tore them into strips and tied them around our eyes to keep the sun out.

When first light came we had between three and four hundred men in our group. I would guess that probably seven or eight hundred men made it out of the ship.

The second night, which was Monday night, we had all the men put their arms through the life jacket of the man in front of him and we made a big mass so we could stay together—Capt. Parke and the others swam around the outside and we supported one another. Some of the men could doze off and sleep for a few minutes. We kept the wounded and those who were sickest in the center of the pack and that was my territory. The next day we found a life ring with a long line attached to it floating and I could put one very sick man across it to support him. All the others would grab a hold of the line and it would curl around so they would just curl around the center.

There was a man in the water with you named Cdr. [Stanley W.] Lipski. Could you tell me about him?

Stan Lipski and I were good friends. He was very badly burned. His hands were burned down to tendons and his face was badly burned by the flash fire. He had burned his eyes so he couldn't see and he had to be supported, held out of the water. All of us in my group ended up with a huge ulcer on our thigh where you supported a man and the waves rubbed your skin away. Stan took a long time to die. That was one message he gave me for his wife. He said he loved her and wanted her to marry again.

Did she?

I don't know but I did tell her. She was a lovely woman; I hope she did.

Your own injuries, the burns you had, the saltwater must have been quite irritating.

It was at first but then the fuel oil acted like a protective covering after you got over the pain of the thing. If I tried to touch or grab something there was pain but most of the time I was comfortable in the saltwater.

You said that because you had no medical equipment or anything you acted as an advisor to the men.

There was nothing I could do but give advice, bury the dead, and save the life jackets, and try to keep the men from drinking the saltwater when we drifted out of the fuel oil. When the hot sun came out and we were in this crystal clear water, you were so thirsty you couldn't believe it wasn't good enough to drink. I had a hard time convincing the men that they shouldn't drink. The real young ones—you take away their hope, you take away their water and food, they would drink and then would go fast. I can remember striking men who were drinking water to try and stop them. The saltwater acted like a physic. The men would get diarrhea, then get more dehydrated, then become very maniacal. In the beginning, we tried to hold them and support them while they were thrashing around. And then we discovered we were losing a good man to get rid of one who had been bad and drank. As terrible as it may sound, towards the end when they did this, we shoved them away from the pack because we had to.

Wasn't hypothermia another problem?

The water in that part of the Pacific was warm and good for swimming. But body temperature is over 98 and when you immerse someone up to their chin in that water for a couple of days, you're going to chill him down. So at night with everybody tied together we would take the strings from the leg part of our jackets which normally kept the jacket from riding up, and we would tie it to the man next. Everybody was tied together and they all had severe chills. And after they were chilled, they ran a fever and then they all became delirious. On Tuesday night, in my group, some guy began yelling, "There's a Jap here and he's trying to kill me." And then everybody started to fight. They were totally out of their minds. A lot of men were killed that night. A lot of men drowned. We untied ourselves from the man next and shoved him away and everybody scattered in all directions. And when we got back together the next day there were a hell of a lot fewer. But you couldn't blame the men. They weren't attacking their buddies. They were fighting Japs. It was mass hysteria. You became wary of everyone. It was a beautiful moonlit night and we were drifting in these big seas. You'd see somebody and back off, and they'd back off. Till daylight came, you weren't sure.

In fact, there were mass hallucinations. It was amazing how everyone would see the same thing. One would see something, then someone else would see it. One day everyone got in a long line. I said, "What are you doing?" Someone answered, "Doctor, there's an island up here just ahead of us. One of us can go ashore at a time and you can get 15 minutes sleep." They all saw the island. They also saw the ship just beneath the surface, and the scuttlebutt²¹ down there. And they would dive down to get a drink of water and the salt water killed them. They could see it. You couldn't convince them. Even I thought I saw the ship once. I fought hallucinations off and on. Something always brought me back.

There was an incident when one of the men began hitting you.

I thought someone was splashing water in my face and I got very angry with him and told him to stop. It was a hallucination. What actually was happening was that the water was splashing in my face from breaking waves. It wasn't always calm.

Can you talk about Father Conway? You mentioned earlier how he had selflessly loaned you the money so you could go home to Connecticut.

Father Conway was a big help. He took part in burying the dead and he gave a lot of solace. He like Capt. Parke and all the rest totally exhausted themselves. He finally died. [Rich?] was supporting Father Conway and he called me and said he couldn't hold him any more. And I took over holding the father. He was delirious and out of his head. He was blessing me and hitting me on the forehead and chest. We tried to hold him and eventually he went into a coma and we let him go.

You were in the water for 4 1/2 days without water or food. In some of the books I've read, they talk of these casks of water that floated by. What was the story on that?

Those were the raft people. We had nothing. I think I saw one potato float by once. There was nothing to eat or drink for 4 1/2 days.

One of the most horrifying aspects of the Indianapolis disaster was the fact that sharks were a constant menace. Did you have any encounters with them?

I saw one shark. He was about this long and he went around in front of me in the afternoon. I remember reaching out trying to grab a hold of him. I thought maybe it would be food. However, when night came, things would bang against you in the dark or brush against your leg and you would wonder what it was. But honestly, in the entire 110 hours I was in the water I did not see a man attacked by a shark. However, the destroyers that picked up the bodies afterward found a large number of those bodies—in the report I read—56 bodies were all mutilated by fish. Maybe the sharks were satisfied with the dead; they didn't have to bite the living.²²

Source: TD; Extract of "Oral History with Capt. (Ret.) Lewis Haynes, MC, USN, U.S. Navy Medical Department Oral History Program," interview conducted by Jan K. Herman, *Historian*, 5, 12, 22 June 1995, BUMED Archives. The remainder of the interview deals with Haynes' naval experience prior to and after the *Indianapolis* sinking. He also covers in detail his experience during the torpedo attack, the sinking, and his time in the water.

After the war, the U.S. Navy interrogated Commander Mochitsura Hashimoto, who had commanded I-58 when it sank Indianapolis. This memorandum in the Bureau of Ship's War Damage Reports on Indianapolis gives the enemy combatant's perspective, perhaps the best account of the specific damage done to the ship. As the Japanese destroyed many official records during the final stages of the war, Hashimoto's testimony provides the most immediate and reliable information. The U.S. Navy had a keen interest in the type of ordnance used to sink Indianapolis. I-58 carried six Kaiten torpedoes and, according to Hashimoto's memoir Sunk: The Story of the Japanese Submarine Fleet, 1941–45, had unsuccessfully used two of them in an attack on an enemy tanker two days before encountering Indianapolis. Commander Hashimoto adamantly held throughout investigations that he deployed no Kaiten against Indianapolis because the situation did not require their use.

Document 2.11: Memo on USN Interrogation of Commander Hashimoto on 2 November 1945

NAVY DEPARTMENT
BUREAU OF SHIPS
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

26 March 1946

MEMORANDUM FOR FILE

Subj: Loss of *Indianapolis*

Ref: (a) Interrogation of Comdr. Hashimoto, XIJN, Tokyo on
2 November 1945.

1. Comdr. Hashimoto interrogated 2 Nov. 1945. He was the Commanding Officer of XIJN submarine *I-58* on the night of 30 July 1945 when the *Indianapolis* was torpedoed and sunk.
2. It was reported that he fired six torpedos, four of which hit and two missed. These torpedos were 53cm diameter, Type 95, with warhead charge of 500

kilograms, with 60% TNT and 40% Hexa. The depth setting was 4 meters. Five of the torpedos had combination magnetic and inertia type pistols with a charge of 470 kilograms and the sixth torpedo had a simple inertia pistol with a full charge of 500 kilograms.

3. The range was 1,500 meters and the target angle was 60° on the starboard bow of the *Indianapolis*. All six torpedos were fired using periscope control with the *Indianapolis* actually in sight.

[signed]

E. C. HOLTZWORTH

Commander, USN

FROM BUREAU OF SHIPS, NAVY DEPARTMENT,

WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

Source: TDS; "Interrogation of Comdr. Hashimoto, 2 November 1945" from "Bureau of Ships War Damage Report for the USS *Indianapolis*," signed by E. C. Holtzworth, CDR USN, RG 19, Entry P1, Boxes 30-31, NARA II, College Park, MD.

Commander Hashimoto wrote this account either during the war or shortly after. This description of the attack provides more detail than Hashimoto's court-martial testimony and his 1954 memoir, Sunk. Hashimoto described how he kept a visual of Indianapolis throughout his attack maneuvers, that he scored at least two hits, that he used conventional torpedoes rather than Kaiten, and that he did not encounter survivors when he resurfaced to verify the sinking. The scenario recounted by Hashimoto, from making contact with Indianapolis through the sinking, was ideal for a submarine commander. Hashimoto's account also highlighted the incredible role of luck in the sinking; he surfaced close by his target, poor visibility improved and left his target perfectly silhouetted by the moon, and he launched a full-spread of six torpedoes at point-blank range. Being completely unaware of the enemy's presence, the crew of Indianapolis stood little chance against a competent enemy commander in such a situation. This account has been translated from the original Japanese by Mr. Yutaka Iwasaki. A similar version of Hashimoto's

after-action report is also available in the National Archives at College Park, Maryland, in the volume of the U.S. Navy's Technical Mission to Japan dealing with Japanese Submarine Operations.

Document 2.12: Commander Hashimoto's Recollection of the Attack²³

Captain Hashimoto's Report

July 29th, 1945 Summary of combat action by submarine *I-58* against U.S. battleship

July 28th, 1945

PM 14:00/ At the point of Palau 20 degree and 410 nautical miles distance, we attacked a large oiler and one destroyer by *Kaiten*[.] Thereafter move toward west by surface running.²⁴

July 29th, 1945

19:52/ Visibility was low. Therefore we had stayed under water.²⁵ Did careful sonar monitoring, had no contact. Then after the moon rise, observed through periscope and found no target.

23:05/ Surfaced. (note: The moon rise at 21:56, the age 20.6) Soon by binoculars with a magnifying power of 10, under east moon, we found something that was high at middle most alike surfaced submarine. Quick dive to depth 19m. At this time, the target angle on the bow was 0 degrees, bearing range 10,000 meters. Soon after the dive, we could catch the target through night periscope.

23:08/ Ordered 'Torpedo battle station and *Kaiten* battle station.' Turned to the left and went toward the target, set attack course. The target came below the moon, the celestial phenomena aided us. Keep the periscope up and observing, waiting the target approach. Though the type of target still unidentified.

23:09/ [Ordered] 'Shooting method number six.'²⁶ 'Action torpedo battle' 'Aboard skipper, *Kaiten* boat number six.'

PM 23:18/ 'Aboard skipper, *Kaiten* boat number five.' Meanwhile set the sub condition against depth charge attack, except *Kaiten* fitting. The target was

still coming under the course near 0 deg. angle on the bow. Though we heard no sonar pinging, therefore I judged the enemy did not have hostile intention, Kept approaching. At about 3,000 meter distance, I knew the target coming toward the right. At the same time the target had fore and aft mast, it meant the target was heavy cruiser or bigger ship.

23:26/ Began shooting.

23:32/ Complete six torpedoes shooting. (As shown in attached figure of battle.)

Torpedo data and etc.

Track angle : right 60 deg.

Firing bearing : 1,500 meter

Gyro angle : right 28 deg.

Torpedo spread angle : 3 deg.

Shooting interval : 3 seconds

Torpedo type : torpedo TYPE 95 Mark 2

War head type : One was Mark 2, Five were Mark 5.

Target speed : 12 knots, straight ahead.

23:33/ While periscope watching, hit one torpedo. By this torpedo I saw a flame rise at No.1 turret, also three large water columns.

23:34/ Heard four torpedo hit sounds. Soon propeller sounds ceased. Therefore we see the ship stopped.

23:51/ At center flash light broke up. Before and after this event, we heard some series of explosion sound ten times. (In them, four to five were more loud than torpedo hit sound). Furthermore before and after this time we heard sonar ping, therefore I feared counterattack and turned to show our own stern. Continuously waiting for the finishing of next torpedo attack.

July 30th, 1945

00:00/ Because of the cease of the explosion sounds, I did periscope observation and knew there was nothing of a surface ship. Immediately turned [toward the enemy]. Returned back to sank ship by submerging running.

Though we saw no target. Surfaced around 0030. Moon bright, visibility good. Some waves. We spotted no floating debris, but based on the circumstances before and after, concluded that the sinking was a certainty. I feared the threat of escort vessel and alert airplane, decided as soon as possible to leave current position. Running toward north-East by surface running, speed 13 knots.

[02:30] After we had ran about two hours, then saw enemy airplane. Therefore dived. Since then we ran toward north-west. While going away, Aug. 1st, 1945 01:15 I had radioed following combat report:

July 29th, 1945 PM 23:33 At the point xxxx we had sank *Idaho* class battleship (confirmed). Three torpedoes must hit.

At that time, sonar condition was not good, therefore at the range 1,000 meters the device could catch the target sounds. Enemy did nothing effective counterattack. We had no damage. *Kaiten* was only stand by, no chance to attack.

Source: TD; Mochitsura Hashimoto, "Documents Related to *I-58* Submarine between the Shōwa 19 and 20 Periods," accession date 9 October 1958, reference code 04 Sensuikan 58, Military History Research Center, National Institute for Defense Studies, Tokyo, Japan, assisted by historian Kiyoshi Yamada. The document, prepared shortly after the war, was processed into the archives in 1958. Documents provided by Dr. Jun Kimura, Tokai University. Translation given to the U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command by Japanese naval architect Yutaka Iwasaki. Glynne Walley, assistant professor of Japanese literature and East Asian languages and Literatures at the University of Oregon, also contributed in translating portions of this document. U.S. Navy's translation available in *U.S. Naval Technical Mission to Japan: Ship and Related Targets, Japanese Submarine Operations* (Index No. S-17), "Japanese Technical Mission to Japan," RG 38, Box 5, NARA II, College Park, MD.

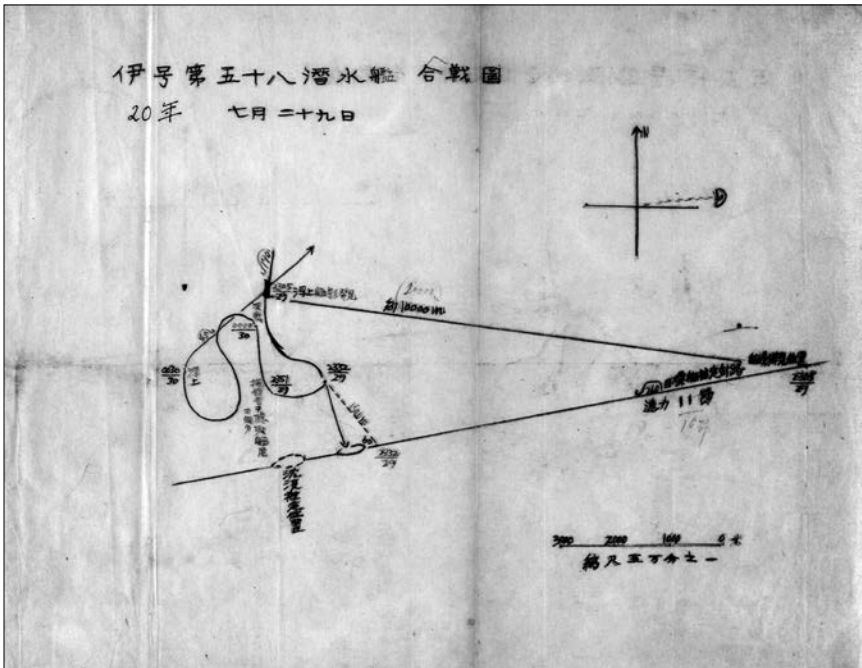


Figure 2-5. Commander Hashimoto’s sketch of the attack. Translation done by naval architect Yutaka Iwasaki. Battle diagram of *I-58* Submarine 20th Year (Shōwa) July 29th. The diagram has magnetic north, and then depicts the location of the moon to the east. The scale in the corner is in meters (the scale is 50,000 to 1). The submarine was headed on course 190 at time 2305 on the 29th when it surfaced and saw the silhouette of a target at approximately 10,000 meters off its starboard side. Apparent course and speed of the target was 260 at 11 knots. The submarine maneuvered into position 1,500 meters off the starboard beam where it took 6 shots at time 2332. The dotted line is the apparent location of where the ship was sunk. The submarine performed a starboard, then port, then starboard turn before setting out on course 045 at approximately 0030 on the 30th. From same source as Document 2.12 note. Mochitsura Hashimoto, “Documents Related to *I-58* Submarine between the Shōwa 19 and 20 Periods,” accession date 9 October 1958, reference code 04 Sensuikan 58, Military History Research Center, National Institute for Defense Studies, Tokyo, Japan, assisted by historian Kiyoshi Yamada. The document, prepared shortly after the war, was processed into the archives in 1958.

Documents provided by Dr. Jun Kimura, Tokai University

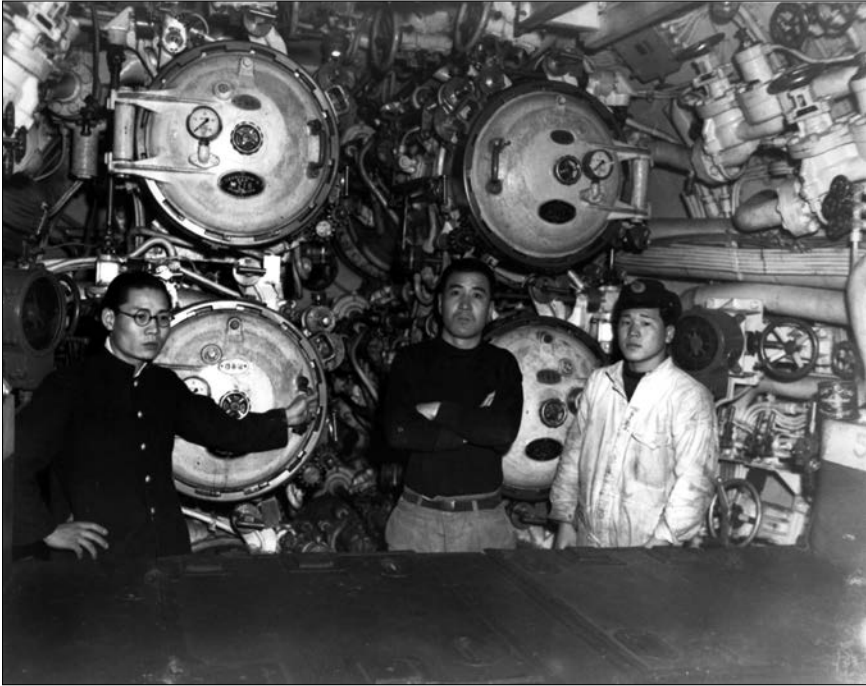


Figure 2-6. View in the forward torpedo room of *I-58*, showing 21-inch torpedo tubes and three crew members. Taken at Sasebo, Japan, 28 January 1946. This submarine torpedoed and sank *Indianapolis* (CA-35) on 30 July 1945.

U.S. Marine Corps Photograph. NHHC Photo Collection, USMC 139986

U.S. intelligence intercepted Commander Hashimoto's message of his successful attack but could not identify the type of ship reported sunk or its location. Skepticism of the authenticity of such Japanese reports was also high as they frequently were exaggerated or were made falsely to bait additional targets to the area in a rescue attempt. The summary of incoming intelligence from JICPOA noted the report from I-58; however, it questioned the accuracy of Hashimoto's report due, in part, to previous intelligence that had reported that I-58 had been sunk on 22 July (see Chapter 1, Document 1.9).

**Document 2.13: U.S. Intercept of Hashimoto's Sinking Confirmation
and Joint Intelligence Center Pacific Ocean Area 29 July 1945
Summary of ULTRA Intelligence**

30 July/0048

JN-25-P-91

62

From: SA TE KO 4

To: Navy Vice Minister; Combined Naval Force Headquarters;
Commander Advance Expeditionary Force

From Captain Submarine *I-58* (16595).

29th at 2332 attacked and sank one [blank]. Sinking confirmed. [blank].
Position of hits (unrecovered grid).

(FRUPAC-300756-DISC-DI)

GI Comment: Despatch of 29 July/2238 (item 36 page 20, RI Summary
300500/Q July) ordered Subs *I-58*, *I-53*, *I-47*, and *I-367* to carry out
attacks against the supply line between Leyte and Okinawa and also to
intercept Blue striking force if it should return.

NEGAT identifies: RI KU O 0- Tokyo Bureau of Military Preparations.²⁷

Page 41, 31 July P.M.

[END]

[. . .]

Summary of Ultra Dispatches
0000/29-2400/29 July 1945

Jap Subs Scope

292100 July—*I-53* reports that at 1442/24 she fired #1 *Kaiten*, and at
1515 heard an explosion. (Comment: This attack sank the DE *Underhill*.)
At 1446/29 she sent #2 *Kaiten* against and AP and DD and at 1715
observed a loud explosion. Patrol comparatively uneventful.”

300848 July—Sub *I-58* reports that at 29/2332 she attacked and sank one blank, at blank posit. (Comment: did someone say the *I-58* was sunk?)

Sources: TDC; ULTRA Extracts, Photocopies in USS *Indianapolis* file, Box 396B, Naval History and Heritage Command Archives, WNY. Originals from COMNAVSECGRU File 5830/114. Joint Intelligence Center Pacific Ocean Areas Summary of ULTRA Traffic, 1 July–31 August 1945 [SRMD-007, Part IV]. Located in Navy Department Library Special Collections, WNY.

The special enemy submarine summary from the JICPOA estimates section and the reply from CINCPAC HQ the days prior to the discovery of Indianapolis crew in the water presented doubt about the report of a successful sinking from I-58 on 29 July. It is evident from the summary that the earlier report of I-58's sinking continued to confound analysts. CINCPAC HQ desired that the report be expanded to include other Japanese submarines and also wanted additional similar reports prepared and disseminated in the future. The thorough, but routine, tone of the documents reflected the always evolving nature of intelligence collection and analysis.

Documents 2.14 and 2.15: Special Submarine Summary Prepared by JICPOA Estimates Section 1 August 1945 and Reply from CINCPAC Advanced Headquarters

1 August 1945

From: Johnson

To: Showers

Special submarine summary. On 22 May a *Kaiten* Special Attack Unit was organized consisting of *I-36*, *I-361*, and *I-363* to which the *I-165* was added on 13 June. They proceeded to the area east of Marianas, 400 miles southeast of Okinawa, 400 miles northwest of Marianas and east of Marianas respectively. Subsequently *I-165* was directed to patrol west of 155-00E and *I-36* east of 155-00E.

On 21 June *I-36* torpedoed *Endymion* (ARL-9) at 12-41-N., 156-30E and on 28 June launched two *Kaitens* but was unable to confirm any damage

(believe intended victim was *Antares* (AKS-3) at 13-10N., 154-57E). *I-36* arrived back in Kure on 10 July, and *I-363* arrived Empire on 28 June.

On 30 July Japs admitted nothing had been heard from *I-361* or *I-165* since they sortied. They were to have returned to Yokosuka on 15 June and Kure on 13 July respectively. (Good indications *I-361* was sunk 31 May at 22-22N., 134-09E., by USS *Anzio*, and *I-165* was sunk 27 June at 15-28N., 153-39E., by NAB Tinian Plane.)

On 31 July C of S 6th Fleet reported that nothing had been heard from *I-13* since she sortied from Ominato on 11 July. Consider *I-13* definitely sunk by USS *Anzio* on 16 July at 34-20N., 151-12E.

Now confirmed that *I-53* sank *Underhill*. *I-58* reported making an attack at 2332/29 sinking one blank. Position of hits unknown. Am still of opinion that *I-58* was the submarine attacked off Amami O Shima on 21/22 July from which attack she escaped apparently undamaged.

On 29 July *I-53*, *I-58*, *I-47*, and *I-367* were ordered to proceed to station operation within 50 miles of blank positions to destroy shipping RPT shipping on the Leyte-Okinawa supply route and to intercept and attack enemy returning task forces. Using tentative solution grid, FRUPAC gets approximate position 19-50N., 128-SoE for position assigned to *I-367*. On 31 July *I-363* were added to this *Kaiten* Force. *I-366* carrying 5 *Kaitens* sorties after 1 August for patrol station 500 miles North of Palao. (Presumably relieving *I-58*). *I-363* carrying 5 *Kaitens* sorties after 6 (?) August for patrol station 450 miles northwest RPT northwest of Marianas. (Believe station same as that formerly assigned to *I-367* and that *I-363* is relieving the *I-367*).

CCN: Line six last paragraph

“to *I-367*. On 31 July *I-363* and *I-366* were added to this *Kaiten* force.

2 August 1945
From: Showers
To: Johnson

Submarine summary your number 315 much appreciated here. Captain Layton suggests that current information on *I-14*, *I-400*, and *I-401* be included that that summary then be given to Commander Hudson for dissemination to all holders 35-S. Further suggests that similar special submarine situation summaries be similarly handled from time to time when available information warrants. That is all.²⁸

Sources: TDC; Joint Intelligence Center Pacific Ocean Areas. United States Navy File of SIGTOT Messages From JICPOA Estimates Section to CINCPAC Advanced Headquarters, March–August 1945 [SRMD-005] and [SRMD-006]. Located in Navy Department Library Special Collections, WNY.

Commander, Amphibious Forces U.S. Pacific Fleet desired to test the new RATT (radio teletypewriter) technology and asked that Indianapolis participate in a communications test on the morning she was to arrive in the Philippines on 31 July, using the call sign KTIA. The dispatch below shows Indianapolis's failure to participate in the scheduled test and indicates that the Navy had little idea that Indianapolis had been missing for more than 24 hours. Failure to make further inquiry into why Indianapolis did not participate in the test was investigated at the Court of Inquiry into the loss. Ultimately, since the technology was so new and required such highly skilled operators, the failure to establish communications caused little alarm. The equipment was newly installed on Indianapolis and untested.

Document 2.16: Failed Attempt to Contact *Indianapolis* on High Frequency Radio Teletypewriter the Day After Sinking

31 July 1945/0908
From: COMPHIBSPAC 310620
Action: CINCPAC ADV HQ
Info: *Indianapolis* (CA 35), COM3RDFLT, COM5THFLT

Precedence: Priority

My 300320 unable to contact *Indianapolis*. On HF RATT or cue circuit either directly or by relay through RDO Guam. Request *Indianapolis* advise at what time she will be ready for further test. Will discontinue cue circuit until that time.

REF: Your 290027. Unless other directed following procedure will govern HF RATT test.....

CORRECTED COPY: CW in 1st and 4th lines changed to cue per 311020²⁹

Source: TD; "Dispatches Dealing with Departure and Arrival of *Indianapolis*," 26–28 July 1945. These were submitted as evidence to the Court of Inquiry convened to investigate the loss. In CINCPAC 1945 Flag Files, RG 38, Box 45, NARA II, College Park, MD. The entire collection spans approximately 150 dispatches covering 26 July 1945–16 August 1945.

Army Air Force Captain Richard LeFrancis and the crew of his C-54 flying east from the Philippines to Guam likely viewed flares fired by those survivors of Indianapolis fortunate to be in rafts during their first full night in the water. They apparently fired so many as to give the appearance of a small naval engagement. Had further investigation or an inquiry to the Navy regarding the perceived naval battle taken place following the report of LeFrancis, the possibility might have existed for a faster realization of the nonarrival of Indianapolis. This report was forwarded from the Fourth Air Force HQ, Office of the Assistance Chief of Staff, A-2, San Francisco, California, to the Office of Naval Intelligence, Western Sea Frontier, Federal Building, San Francisco, California, on 21 August 1945. It subsequently went from Commander Western Sea Frontier to COMINCH Pacific on 23 August. It reached the office of the CNO as part of COMINCH Pacific's 14 December 1945 Action Report. Captain LeFrancis's report, paired with the conflicting intelligence about I-58 and the failed RATT test with Indianapolis showed how confused things were in the massive Pacific Theater in 1945. Allied leaders were planning for the final stages of the war—preparations for the

delivery of atomic bombs and an invasion of mainland Japan were ongoing when Indianapolis went down. Communications between the different services were less than ideal during the war, but it is not surprising for the Army Air Forces to make the assumption that the U.S. Navy would be aware of one of its ships being in an engagement. Captain LeFrancis was not aware that Indianapolis had not been reported overdue and that the U.S. Navy had failed to keep track of one of its own ships.

Document 2.17: Army Air Force Report Regarding Possibility of Viewing Naval Action Involving *Indianapolis* on Night of 31 July 1945

AIR BASE HEADQUARTERS

Base Intelligence Office

Hamilton Field, California.

15 August 1945

Date

SUBJECT: Naval Action Possibly Involving U.S. Cruiser *Indianapolis*, 430 Miles East of Manila, 30 July 1945.

Summary of Information:

Captain Richard G. LeFrancis, ASN: 0-729029, Sq. "G", 1503rd AAF Base Unit, ATC Hamilton Field, California, reported to the Counter Intelligence Office on 15 August 1945 that in view of reports in the press about the U.S. Cruiser *Indianapolis* this information is submitted. Captain LeFrancis was pilot of C-54E #070 on a flight from Manila to Guam at approximately 430 miles east of Manila at approximately 1900 hours GCT on 30 July 1945. He and his crew saw Naval Action and the fire of star shells, tracers, and heavier Naval Artillery. One passenger aboard on this flight was a Brigadier-General who was in command of the artillery of the 33rd Infantry Division. This General's name is unknown but thought to be either Paxton or Buxton. This General also witnessed this action and expressed the opinion to Captain LeFrancis that it appeared two ships engaging one.

Captain Joe Parshall of the 1504th AAF Base Unit, Fairfield-Suisun AAB was Navigator on this flight and his log, on file at the Fairfield-Suisun

AAB, should record this information in more detail. This information was turned over to officers at Operations and Navigation at Guam but no record or report was made and Captain Le Francis was dismissed with the statement that if it was Naval Action the Navy knew about it. Captain Le Francis states that he turned this information in again in view of the press reports that it is not known as to the action which caused the loss of the Cruiser *Indianapolis*.

Source: TD; "Summary of Information Available in Regard to the Sinking of the USS *Indianapolis* (CA-35) Based on the Interrogation of Survivors," within Action Report, Island Commander Peleliu, Loss of the USS *Indianapolis*, 6 August 1945, "Action Reports Peleliu Island Command," RG 38, Box 70, NARA II, College Park, MD.

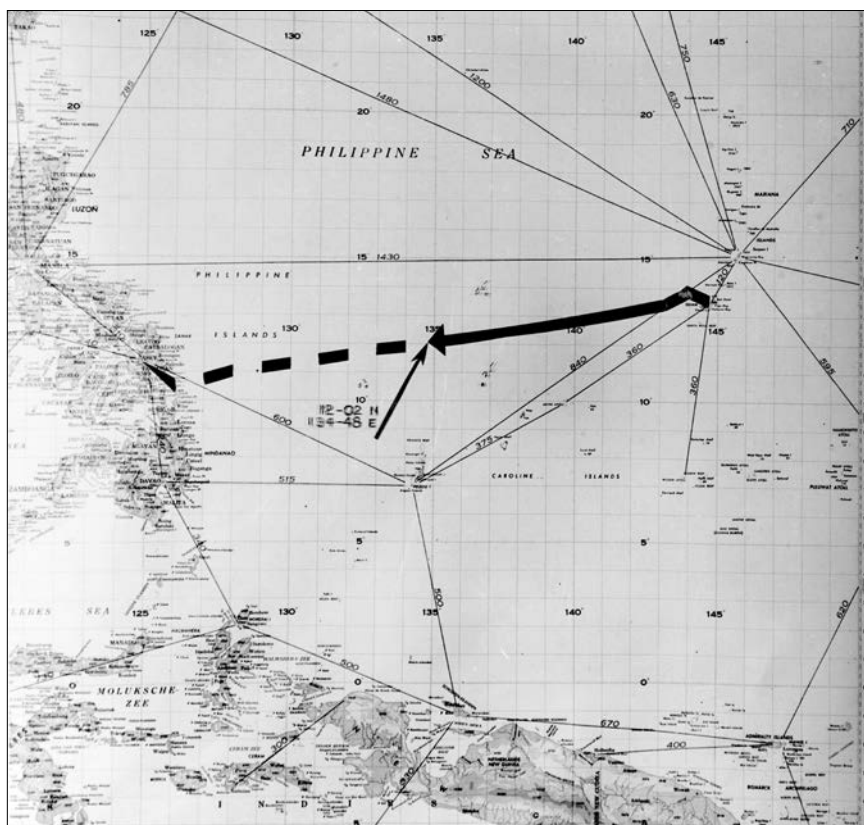


Figure 2-7. Chart of the Western Pacific, showing *Indianapolis*'s (CA-35) track from Guam to her reported sinking location, with a dashed extension showing her intended route to the Philippines.

Official U.S. Navy Photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives. NHHC Photo Collection, 80-G-701777

The “action report” submitted by Commander, Peleliu Island, on 6 August, days after the rescue, provided critical details of Indianapolis based on testimony from her recently rescued crew. The summary gave details of the final day of the voyage, the attack, and the experience of survivors in the water. Many of the key points raised in this document, such as the failure to recollect the exact position of the sinking, potential sightings of a surfaced Japanese submarine, and the inability to signal patrol planes, served as the focus of subsequent investigations and studies of the sinking.

Document 2.18: Summary of Sinking Based on Interrogation of Survivors Prepared by Office of Island Commander Peleliu Island Command, 6 August 1945

1. At the time of the attack, the USS *Indianapolis* (CA-35) was travelling on a course approximately due west at 17 knots, not zigzagging. The degaussing coils were not turned on. The ship was completely blacked out. The weather was good, with general unrestricted visibility. There was some cloud cover, which obscured the moon part of the time. Captain McVay reports that there was a peculiar, confused sea, with trough which he later estimated to be about 10 feet deep.

2. There was no contact made either visually or by radar prior to the attack. The ship was not equipped with sound gear. Radio silence had not been broken prior to the attack, but an LST had been spoken visually at about 1400 (-9 ½) on Sunday, 29 July. The *Indianapolis* had passed this vessel on approximately the same course.

3. The attack occurred at about 0015 (-9 ½) at a position estimated to be approximately 11°46' N., 133°25' W. (This estimate is based on the position of survivors when picked up.) Captain McVay states that he felt two distinct explosions, which were almost simultaneous. Two survivors (Kemp, D.P. Jr. SC3c and Kenly, O.W., RdM3c) who were on deck at the time report seeing two distinct flashes on the starboard bow of the ship. Other survivors also testify that there were two explosions. Captain McVay also states that there was acrid, white smoke on the navigating bridge and in the captain's

emergency cabin immediately after the explosions, causing him to believe that one of the eight inch magazines may have exploded.

4. The first explosion threw Captain McVay out of his bunk in his emergency cabin just off the navigating bridge. He states that the explosions had a whipping action on the ship, giving it an effect similar to that caused by a bomb exploding under the surface close to the ship. He went out on the navigating bridge, noticed that there was water on the bridge and in the chart house, and returned to his cabin for his shoes and some clothing. Power had failed and all communications on the ship were out. A few minutes later the damage control officer reported to the captain that the ship was settling by the head very fast and that the situation looked serious. Soon afterward the executive officer reported to the captain that he did not believe the ship would stay afloat much longer and that he recommended that the ship be abandoned. The order to abandon ship was then given by the captain and was passed verbally.

5. Attempts were made to transmit distress signals on both 4235 kc and 500 kc. Moran, J.J., RM1c, states that he attempted to send the following message on 4235 kc "NQO V XVML HIT BY @ TORPEDOES I POSITION LONG _____ LAT _____ NEED IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE". (He does not recall the exact position sent.) However, the pilot light on the key was not burning, and he does not believe the transmitter was functioning. Hart, F.J., RT2c reports that Chief Radio Electrician Woods sent "SOS: repeatedly on 500 kc from Radio 2, and that both he and Woods believed the transmitter was functioning properly. Hart confirms Moran's opinion that the remote key in Radio 1 was not operating the transmitter, which was located in Radio 2.

6. After Captain McVay had given the order to abandon ship, he started down the ladder to the signal bridge with the intention of ascertaining whether a distress signal had been sent. At this point the ship, which had been listing about 5° to starboard, took a decided list of about 60° to starboard, and soon afterward was listing 90°. The captain seized a life line, crawled up to the port side of the ship, and walked along the side to a point about 150 feet from the stern where he was sucked off the ship into the water by a wave.

7. Captain McVay reports that although the ship was first reported settling by the head, this was not immediately apparent from the bridge.

However, as the list increased, the head settled lower, and before the ship finally sank it had rolled over on its starboard side. The captain and other survivors estimate that the entire elapsed time from the first explosion until the ship disappeared did not exceed fifteen minutes.

8. A majority of the survivors were unable to find life rafts and spent the entire time in the water in life jackets until they were sighted and rafts were dropped by aircraft. These men were in considerable worse shape than the others when rescued. A large number of men who had only life jackets died of exposure before they were found.

9. Captain McVay saw no evidence of any enemy craft in the area at any time after the sinking. However, a group of officers and men who were a number miles from the captain report that after dark on the night of 30 July red and green lights were seen which appeared to be one or more craft on the surface. Lt. Commander L. L. Haynes (MC) who was with this group states that the lights blinked back and forth as if signaling, then moved rapidly apart and disappeared. One of the men in the water blinked a flashlight at the red light and Dr. Haynes believes it flashed back. Dr. Haynes is of the opinion that these lights may have been on two enemy submarines.

10. Dr. Haynes states that after the second day most of the men who were near him were subject to fantastic hallucinations. These were contagious, so that a hallucination which started with one man was quickly accepted and shared by others. For example, one of the men told the others that he had located the stern of the *Indianapolis* just below the surface, and that he had dived down, entered the ship, and drank a large quantity of fresh milk. This report was accepted as true by a large number of men, all of whom attempted to locate the vessel by diving.

11. All of the survivors report that a large number of aircraft passed over or near them before they were finally sighted and rescue operations commenced. Their efforts to signal these planes both with signaling mirrors in daylight and Very pistols at night were apparently unsuccessful.

Source: TD; "Summary of Information Available in Regard to the Sinking of the USS *Indianapolis* (CA-35) Based on the Interrogation of Survivors," within *Action Report, Island Commander Peleliu, Loss of the USS Indianapolis*, 6 August 1945, "Action Reports Peleliu Island Command," RG 38, Box 70, NARA II, College Park, MD.

CHAPTER THREE

Rescued

This extract from Captain McVay's oral history interview describes his rescue. Among the last to go into the water from Indianapolis, McVay was also one of the last to be rescued. McVay's life raft group drifted considerably farther north than the men floating in the water, and the captain did not know if anyone other than those with him survived the sinking until he witnessed the airplanes maneuvering for rescue operations. The difficulty of spotting objects in the water from the air meant that McVay's group went undetected by aircrew involved in the search and rescue effort, but an ammunition can on their raft was picked up by the radar of the high-speed transport ship Ringness (APD-100) that was vectored to the search area. McVay's description details his leadership of the group of survivors, taking a realistic view of potential rescue and the need to ration supplies accordingly.

Document 3.1: Oral History of Captain Charles B. McVay III, Describing His Rescue [Extract]

Of course, we knew later that they didn't know that we were missing, so consequently, they didn't expect to see anything. It's the same old thing, if an aviator doesn't expect to see anything, he doesn't see it. He's too busy trying to fly his plane.

I was not particularly perturbed by not being picked up by planes, nor were the people with me, because I had told them that they probably couldn't see us or wouldn't see us until they had really discovered we were missing.

And I was basing my hopes on ships. I did not believe that any ships could reach the area prior to about sometime Thursday.

Well, around Thursday noon, we did see quite a ways to the south of us a plane circling and later some other planes circling. I didn't know what they were doing down there, and then that night we saw some searchlights of ships down there, so we naturally thought, well, there must be other survivors. They were quite a ways south of us and we said, "Well, I guess we do have other people than just this small group that is apparently is quite a ways up north here." But the planes kept getting further away from us and I must admit I had several misgivings, I commenced to think I was north of the northern limit of their search. I thought that "We are in a fine fix now. If they're going south all the time and we're going north, why, it looks as though they'll miss us."

Well, on that assumption, I decided to cut the rations in half. We had been getting 1.2 ounces of spam, the two crackers, the two malted milk tablets, which seemed to sustain us. Nobody seemed to be particularly hungry, but that night when I saw the ships down there, I decided that I would let them have the normal ration. We had been too excited during Thursday to eat. We didn't eat until after dark, by that time we had seen the searchlights so I said, "Well, I'll give you the normal ration again. We won't cut it in half."

The next morning we saw planes quite a ways to the north of us. It was making a box search and it was gradually getting closer to us, so we felt a lot better. It made this very wide search, would disappear and come back again, then go way north and then come back on a westerly leg and fly its easterly leg fairly close to us. Just about the time that we had figured out the next sweep he should see us, somebody said, "My God, look at this, there are two destroyers bearing down on us. Why, they're almost on top of us."

So one of the kids said, "Well, the hell with the planes, we know these people will pick us up." They were almost on top of us when we saw them.

When one of them, the USS *Ringness*, the APD 100, picked me up and the group on my raft, the other one the USS *Register*, APD 92, went on north and we discovered there was another raft north of us which we had suspected, and picked up that small group. We were never sighted by a plane.

The *Ringness* picked us up by radar. We had a 40 mm, empty ammunition can which I had spent a good deal of energy and time trying to get to,

thinking it was an emergency ration, but we picked it up anyhow and saved it and she apparently got a pip from this can. She picked us up at only 4,046 yards, but she had not seen us visually at that distance, and the only reason she knew something was there was because of the radar pip. So it goes to show how difficult it is to see anybody in the water, when you have a large ground swell, or a heavy ground swell.

She came along side and, as I say, picked us up. We were all able to crawl aboard on our own power. People were pretty well exhausted, I think more or less nervous exhaustion. I think we had lost probably about 15% of our weight and I was naturally so elated to get on the ship, as were the others that we didn't turn in at all. We were given something to eat, ice cream, coffee, such as that. The doctor said, "You can eat all you want," which most of us did. We drank quite a bit of water. Nervous energy kept us going. I did sleep quite a bit that night and the next morning, let's see, that was the morning of the 3rd that we were picked up. We sort of lolled around all day of the 5th and we got into Palau on the 6th when we were put in the hospital.

Source: TR; Extract from "Oral History of Charles B. McVay III, Captain USN," recorded 27 September 1945, transcribed 1 October 1945, 34 pp. Copy of original in *Indianapolis* Ship History Files, Naval History and Heritage Command Archives, WNY.



Figure 3-1. *Ringness* (APD-100) photographed in about 1945, flying a long homeward bound pennant.

Courtesy of Donald M. McPherson, 1971 U.S. NHHHC Photograph, NH 73857

Dispatches to and from air and surface units involved in the Indianapolis rescue operation were submitted as evidence during the Court of Inquiry held in late August 1945. The following dispatches provide an overview of the entire rescue effort, from its launch on 2 August to the 9 August conclusion. While the Navy failed to notice or act on Indianapolis's failure to arrive at Leyte, it did mount a speedy and thorough rescue immediately after aircraft spotted survivors. Coordination between surface, air, and shore establishments worked to locate survivors and diverted needed assets to the scene as quickly as possible. Prioritization of rescue based on conditions of survivors in the water, availability of rafts, and proximity to other survivors undoubtedly saved lives. Almost all survivors were out of the water within 24 hours of the initial sighting by Lieutenant (j.g.) Chuck Gwinn, and the hospital ship Tranquility rushed to Peleliu to treat and transport survivors arriving there. Once all survivors were out of the water, the arduous task of body recovery, identification, and burial began. The search was discontinued only after surface and air units felt that they had exhausted all efforts and no more bodies were being found.

Document 3.2: Dispatches Regarding Discovery of *Indianapolis* Survivors and Rescue Operations, 2–9 August 1945

2 AUG 45/0244

From: PLANE 19 of FLIGHT 258

Action: COMMARIANAS, COMFAIRWING 18, RDO GUAM, OINC FLIGHT A258, COMWESCARSUBAREA, RDO HONO

Precedence: Urgent

Sighted 30 survivors 011-30 North 133-30 East dropped transmitter and lifeboat emergency IFF on 133-00.¹

2 AUG 1945

From: ONIC FLIGHT 258

Action: PLANE 19 of FLIGHT 258

Dumbo enroute ETA 1500K. Remain on station.²

2 AUG 45/0344

From: PLANE 19, FLIGHT 258, 02045

Action: COMMARIANAS, COMFAW 18, COMWESCARSUBAREA,
CINC FLIGHT 258

Precedence: Urgent

Send rescue ship 11-54 N 133-47 E 150 survivors in life boat and jackets
dropped red ramrod.³

2 AUG 45-0414

From: COMARIANAS 020409

Action: CTG 94.5

Info: CINCPAC ADV HQ, CTU 94.6.2

Precedence: Urgent

Order two destroyers at best speed to 11-54N 133-47E. Rescue 150 sur-
vivors in lifeboats.⁴

2 AUG 45/0714

From: COMPHILSEAFRON 020516

Action: CTU 95.2.16, CTU 75.2.15

Info: COM7THFLT, COMMARIANAS, NOB LEYTE,
COMWESCARSUBAREA

Precedence: Urgent

Bassett APD 73 proceed to vicinity 11-54N 133-47E to search for 150
survivors. *Dufilho* DE 423 proceed to 11-30N 133-30E to pickup 30
survivors in lifeboat. They have transmitter and emergency IFF on 133.
Keep origination advised and ETA.⁵

2 AUG 45

From: READD by RDO ULITHI

Action: *Madison* DD 425, *Ralph Talbot* DD 390, 6NE (Don't break)/6UK2
(Don't break)

Info: COMMARIANAS, ATCOMULITHI, COMPHILSEAFRON

2DDs enroute from Ulithi to assist in rescue. 8 planes will drop more than sufficient boats and life rafts between 1800 and 2000K. Latest position reported to be Latitude 11-45 North Longitude 133-35 East.⁶

2 AUG 45

From: CINCPAC ADV HQ

Action: Ringness (APD 100), Register (APD 92)

Info: COM7THFLT, COMMARIANAS, COMPHILSEAFRON,
COM3RDFLT, COMSERVDIV 102, CTU 30.9.15

Precedence: Urgent

Proceed immediately to pick up survivors reported at lat 11-54 north long 133-47 E from unknown ship. Report results by dispatch.⁷

2 AUG 45/0756

From: COMWESCARSUBAREA

Action: *Cecil J. Doyle* (DE 368)

Info: COMMARIANAS, ATCOM ULITHI, CTU 94.11.2, CTG 94.11,
Plane 19 of Flight 258, VPB 152

About 30 survivors sighted by 19v258 approximate latitude 11-30 N longitude 133-30 E. PV remaining vicinity until 1500 K (-10) and Dumbo enroute to circle until rescue effected. Proceed maximum practical speed to rescue survivors. On completion reutnr [return] Peleliu. Use airsea rescue procedures and communications any info addee having ships in vicinity requested to assist GO.⁸

2 AUG 45/1523

From: COMPHILSEAFRON, 021342

Action: CTU 35.2.15, CTU 75.2.16

Info: CINPAC ADV HQ, COMARIANAS, COMWESCARSUBAREA,
ATCOM ULITHI, COM7THFLT, COM3RDFLT

Precedence: Urgent

1st vessel on scene advise originator and all addees identity of ship survivors are from and cause of sinking.⁹

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND917001

NAVAL MESSAGE

NAVY DEPARTMENT

DRAFTER	EXTENSION NUMBER	ADDRESSEES	PRECEDENCE
FROM USS CECIL J DOYLE DE 368		ASTERISK (*) MAILGRAM ADDRESSEE	1
RELEASED BY C.T.B. 717		FOR ACTION COMMESCARSUBAREA	2 OPOPOPOP
DATE 2 AUG 45		R. Ad. E. Buckmaster	3 PRIORITY
FOR CODE ROOM 1950			4 ROUTINE
DECODED BY MANUEL		INFORMATION CTF 94	5 DEFERRED
TYPED BY MANUEL / Monty			6
ROUTED BY			7
UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED THIS DISPATCH WILL BE TRANSMITTED WITH DEFERRED PRECEDENCE AND AS ADMINISTRATIVE.			8
021500 NCR 4001			9 OPOPOPOP
			10 PRIORITY
			11 ROUTINE
			12 DEFERRED
			13
			14
			15
			16 IF OPERATIONAL
			17 CHECK BELOW
			18 <input type="checkbox"/>
			19
			20
ORIGINATOR FILL IN DATE AND TIME:	DATE	TIME	OCT

ON OUTGOING DISPATCHES PLEASE LEAVE ABOUT ONE INCH CLEAR SPACE BEFORE BEGINNING TEXT

PASSED BY CINCPAC/POA ADVHED AS 021545 TO COMINCH FOR ACTION.
(CECIL J DOYLE DE 368 SENDS ACTION TO COMMESCARSUBAREA INFO CTF 94) 7/30-180NE LEYTE

HAVE ARRIVED AREA. AM PICKING UP SURVIVORS FROM USS INDIANAPOLIS (CA 35) TORPEDOED AND SUNK LAST SUNDAY NIGHT.

HOLD DO NOT SHOW
Ad. EDWARDS } WANT ANY INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON POSSIBLE SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT OF CA (35)
R. Ad. BIERI } LOCATION SHEET SHOWS HER IN PORT PHILLIPINE AREA

UPGRADED TO TOP SECRET
PROBABLY TO BE NVB
18 8/5 Thru

ACTION	
P-0	
P-00	
P-01	
P-02	
P-03	
P-07	
P-1	
P-2	
P-30	
P-3	
P-30	
P-31	
P-30	
P-33	
P-34	
P-4	
FX0 1	
FX37	
FX40	
Y-00	
Y-00	

Make original only. Deliver to Code Room Watch Officer in person. (See Art. 76 (4) NAVREGS)
021500

OPNAV 16-47

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1944 16-41423-3

Figure 3-2. Lieutenant Commander Graham Claytor Jr., skipper of Cecil J. Doyle (DE-368), was the first to arrive to scene of the Indianapolis (CA-35) survivors, around 0000 3 August. Doyle was thus the first to notify higher command that the survivors being picked up by planes since earlier in the day were Sailors and Marines from Indianapolis. This dispatch from Doyle sent shockwaves through the Navy. Note the messages written on the dispatch and the sense that individuals were trying to piece the situation together.

Scan from COMINCH Chart Room, Pacific Dispatches, 1 July-15 August 1945, RG 38, NARA II, College Park, MD. Declassified, Authority [NND917001]

2 AUG 45

From: CTG 75

Action: PD Guam

Info: CTG 95.7, CTG 95, CINCPAC ADV, COMMARIANAS,
COM5THFLT, COMWESTCAROLINES, CINCPACPEARL, SCOMA,
Indianapolis

Your 280032 July. *Indianapolis* (CA 35) has not arrived Leyte. Advise.
REF: 280032 (12466-B) USS *Indianapolis* (CA 35) departed Guam
2300Z 27 July. SOA 15.7 knots. Route Peddie thence Leyte. ETC...¹⁰

2 August 1945

From: CINCPAC ADV HQ

Action: COMINCH

Precedence: Routine

Survivors being picked up in position Lat. 11-54 N Long. 133-47 E.
State that *Indianapolis* (CA 35) was torpedoed and sunk 29 July while
en route Guam to Leyte. Fragmentary reports indicate at least 200 sur-
vivors many of whom injured. Many rescue ships in position. No report
thus far of Captain McVay. Will forward information as received.¹¹

3 AUG 45

From: COMWESCARSUBAREA

Action: ATCOM Ulithi

Info: COMMARIANAS, CO VPB 152, USS *Madison* (DD 425), USS
Doyle DE 368, PLAYMATE 3

Order all available Dumbos to conduct expanding square search to
locate additional survivors. Use origin lat 11 deg 45 min N long 133
deg 35 min E. Keep clear of center of square area 10 miles on each side
to avoid interference with forces now in center rescue area. Also keep
voice transmissions to minimum reporting only when new groups of
survivors sighted. At such times circle survivors until surface ship gets in
position to take survivors aboard then resume search. Determine search
interval by weather condition in area DND knowledge that many single

survivors may be located by careful search. Search to be extended to distance 75 miles from origin. Dumbos search as long as endurance permits and resume search daylight 4 August on same plan. Voice calls SOPA Mahogany. Dumbo circling area Playmate 3. PV Gambler 5 and 6.¹²

3 AUG 45

From: CO VPB 23

Action: CNO (DCNO) AIR

Information: COMMARIANAS, CTG 94.11, COMAIRPAC,
COMAIRPACSUBCOMFWD, COMFAW 2, COMWESCAROLINES

PBY-5A en bound trip 6472 landed at scene of *Indianapolis* sinking to take men aboard who might not have survived until ship arrived. Suffered damage on water during night due to heavy load of survivors and sea conditions. Unable to take off so abandoned and destroyed. Replacement required.¹³

3 AUG 1945

From: *Ringness* (APD 100)

Action: CINCPAC ADV. HQ

Information: CTU 95.7.5, COM3RDFLT, COM7THFLT,
COMPHILSEAFRON, COMSERVDIV 101, DDPELELIU,
COMWESCARSUBAREA

Precedence: Operational Priority

UR 020740. Proceeding Peleliu 030700 with *Register* (APD 92). Have 37 survivors aboard including Captain Charles McVay 3RD USN CO. *Register* 37 survivors including ensign Ross Rogers Junior USNR 440725. Lieut. Howard Bruce Frieze USN died and buried at sea from life raft on Tuesday 31 July.¹⁴ Captain picked up Lat. 11-35 Long, 133-21 with 9 other rafts within radius of four miles and states believes ship hit 0015 sank 0030 I zone minus nine one half 30 July position on tract exactly as routed PD Guam. Speed 17 not zigzagging. Hit forward by what is believed to be 2 torpedoes or mine followed by magazine explosion.¹⁵

3 AUG 45

From: USS *Bassett* (APD 73)

Action: COMPHILSEAFRON

Info: COMAIRPAC, CTG 95.7, COMMARIANAS, SOCMA,
COMWESCARSUBAREA, CTU 94.11.1

USS *Bassett* departing for Leyte 00530. ETA 040700. All times I (-9).
145 survivors aboard. USS *Madison* recovered 90. USS *Dufilho* 1. Ships
remaining to form scouting line and search during daylight.¹⁶

3 August 1945

From: CINCPAC ADV HQ

Action: CTG 94.5, TRANQUILITY

Info: PD ULITHI, SOPA SERON 10 ULITHI, CINCPAC Pearl,
COMWESCARSUBAREA, ISCOM PELELIU, COMMARIANAS,
COMDESPAC, COMSERVPAC, PD GUAM, COMSERON 10,
ISCOM GUAM

Tranquility (AH 14) report PD Ulithi for routing and when RFS¹⁷ ear-
liest possible proceed immediately Peoeliu [Peleliu] at best sustained
speed. On arrival report by dispatch to CTG 94.5 for duty connection
loading, care and hospitalization *Indianapolis* survivors as may be direct.
When *Tranquility* (AH 14) no longer required in Palau CTG 94.5
sail ship to Guam for discharge survivor patients and further orders by
CINCPAC AD. HQ.¹⁸

4 AUG 45

From: CNS SAMAR 040753

Action: COMMARIANAS, COM SW CAROLINES, SUBCOM
CAROLINA AREA, COMINCH, COMSERVDIV 101,
COMPHILSEAFRON, CTG 95.7, CTU 95.7.5, COMSERON 10, CTF
95, CINCPAC/POA PEARL HQ, CTG 94.5, CTU 94.5.3, CTU 94.5.1
Info: NOB LEYTE, COMSERVPAC

Precedence: OP OP OP

5 Officers, 144 enlisted survivors ex USS *Indianapolis* at Flt. Hosp. 114.

Senior survivor Lt. Richard Banks Redmayne USNR. 2 deaths en route to hospital. Regular report on two being made Flt. Hosp. 114.¹⁹

3 AUG 45

From: USS *Madison* (DD 425) 030250

Action: COMPHILSEAFRON, COMWESCARSUBAREA, CTU 94.6.2

Precedence: OP OP OP

Bassett returning Leyte with about 150 survivors. *Cecil J. Doyle* to Peleliu with about 93. *Talbot 22*, *Ringness 37* including CO. Rafts and survivors scattered 50 miles. Additional survivors in view of planes. Surfaced Dumbos 1 returning other crew removed Dumbo destroyed. Continue air search 100 miles from 11-42 133-20 strongly recommend. Will continue search until relieved.²⁰

From: CINCPAC ADV HQ

Action: COMWESCARSUBAREA

Info: COMMARIANAS, ISCOM PELELIU

12 male war correspondents, 1 female correspondent, LT CDR Harold Requa USNR Public Information Officer, and 2 enlisted photographers will arrive Peleliu about 1200 Sunday 5 August 1945 to interview *Indianapolis* survivors. Arrange for accommodations as practicable. Group will return about 6 August.²¹

4 AUG 45/1212

From: COMWESCARSUBAREA, 040741

Action: CINCPAC BOTH HQ, COMMARIANAS

Information: COMPHILSEAFRON

Precedence: OP OP OP 164060

170 survivors *Indianapolis* have been hospitalized at Peleliu. *Bassett* (APD 73) delivering 145 survivors to Leyte. Report of results today's search not yet received. Am making thorough surface and air search of all possible area during daylight tomorrow for survivors and to clear area of floating objects and to identify and bury floating dead. Captain McVay in excellent physical and mental condition.²²

5 AUG 45/0214

From: *Madison* 042350

Action: COMWESCARSUBAREA

Precedence: OP OP OP

One half sweep completed. Strongly recommend moving line 75 miles westward on return sweep. This area thoroughly covered. Continuous movement southwest of flotsam has been noticed. Request additional air coverage. Bodies now reported by plane at posit MN1-40N 133-10E.²³

6 AUG 45/1002

From: *French* (DE 367), 060651

Action: COMWESCARSUBAREA

Info: COMMARIANAS, CINCPOA/PAC ADV HAQ, VPB 23, 152

Precedence: OP OP OP

Between 25 and 30 bodies will have been recovered by dark with no more in sight. Recommend that search continue with planes tomorrow but that if no further recoveries are made by noon vessels return to base. Believe about half identifiable.²⁴

6 AUG 45/ 1344

From: CTU 94.7.1, 08230

Action: COMMARIANAS

Precedence: Priority 165949

Your 052341, searched area 10 miles square centered at lat 13-30 north long 145-07 east. Results negative. Search abandoned at dark.²⁵

7 AUG 45

From: *French* (DE 367)

Action: COMWESCARSUBAREA

Recommend search continue at least till darkness today in view of fact 10 more bodies just found.²⁶

7 AUG 45/1153

From: COMWESCARSUBAREA, 070825

Action: *French* (DE 367)

Info: COMMARIANAS, CINCPAC ADVHQ, ATCOM ULITHI, CTG 94.1, VPB 152, VPB 23

50 life rafts yellow and gray reported on bearing 020 degrees from point Princeton spread out between 11-25 N 135-52 E and 11-55 N 136-04 E. No survivors sighted. 1 DE proceed area reported to arrive daylight 8 AUG. Investigate identify and pick up or sink rafts. Look for survivors and report. If you consider present mission completed both DE proceed. 2 airplanes will arrive daylight new search posit. Advise if 1 DE will remain present location.²⁷

8 AUG 45/0902

From: COMWESCARSUBAREA, 080604

Action: *French* (DE 367)

Info: CINCPAC ADV/HQ, COMMARIANAS, CTU 94.6.1

Precedence: OP OP OP

If results todays search negative discontinue search return to port. If positive continue search at daylight advise.²⁸

9 AUG 45

From: *French* (DE 367)

Action: COMWESCARSUBAREA

Info: COMMARIANAS, CTU 94.6.1, CINCPAC ADV HQ

Precedence: Priority

No rafts sighted. ETA Peleliu 9 August 1500 K.²⁹

Source: TD; "Rescue Dispatches, 2–9 August 1945. These were submitted as evidence to the Court of Inquiry convened to investigate the loss. In CINCPAC 1945 Flag Files, RG 38, Box 45, NARA II, College Park, MD. The entire collection spans approximately 150 dispatches covering 26 July 1945–16 August 1945. See Figure 3-10 in this chapter for an example of original format.

The 6 August after-action interviews of U.S. naval aviators Lieutenant (j.g.) Wilbur Gwinn, Lieutenant Commander George Atteberry, and Lieutenant Robert Adrian Marks vividly describe the discovery of Indianapolis survivors and the first attempts at rescue. Gwinn spotted the survivors on a routine patrol for enemy ships from his twin-engine Lockheed Ventura only by accident. A malfunctioning antenna led him to move from his usual position in the plane and in doing so brought his attention to a large oil slick on the surface of the sea below. Upon following the slick with hopes of encountering a damaged Japanese submarine, the crew spotted splashing swimmers in the water. Gwinn immediately worked to get rescue ships on the scene, and his commander George Atteberry was quickly en route to the scene in another PV, with Adrian Marks in a PBY shortly behind. Atteberry relieved Gwinn and worked with Marks to support his landing and locate survivors in the water. A steady flow of Navy and Army³⁰ rescue planes remained on the scene and aided the surface rescue for the duration of the operation. According to the 9 August report submitted by Lieutenant Commander Atteberry, Commander, Patrol Bombing Squadron 152, to the Commander of Western Carolines Sub Area during the six days of rescue operations, 63 flights were dispatched to the search area and 260.1 total hours were spent over the rescue grid.

Document 3.3: 6 August 1945 Correspondent Interviews of Lieutenant (jg) Wilbur Gwinn and Lieutenant Robert Adrian Marks

6 August 1945

Questions asked by Correspondents of Lieut. (jg) W.G. Gwinn, USNR., Lieut. R.A. Marks, USNR., and Lt. Commander G.C. Atteberry.

Questioning and narrative of Lt. (jg) Gwinn:

Q: Was [*sic*] you the first person to sight the survivors?

A: Yes I was.

Q: Will you describe how it happened?

A: I took off at 0910 on my regular sector search, carrying a crew of five men. While flying at 3000 feet I noticed an oil slick on the water, and went down to 900', following the oil slick to a group of survivors in the water. We estimated the first group seen as totaling about 30.

Q: How long did it take you to reach the first group of survivors, by following the oil slick?

A: The oil slick covered a radius of about 30 miles.

Q: What time did you spot the oil slick?

A: We spotted the survivors at 11:18 and got dispatch off at 11:25.

Q: Could you see the survivors waving?

A: Yes, very easily. At 900' we could see them waving. From that time on until about 12:45, we investigated the whole area, finding up to 150 personnel in the water. We dropped emergency rations and equipment.

Q: Did you drop the equipment to the first group or to another group?

A: We dropped them to the men who seemed to be swimming free of any rafts.

Q: Were the first 30 you spotted on a raft?

A: They were hanging on the side of a raft.

Q: What was your first impression when you saw these first survivors?

A: I don't know—it was a funny feeling. The oil slick was large, seeming to indicate a large vessel having been sunk, but I didn't know of any large craft being lost or going down, and didn't know just what kind of vessel it was.

Q: Was there any doubt in your mind as their being our people?

A: No.

Q: What information was in the message that you sent back?

A: 30 survivors sighted—position—send assistance.

Q: What was the position?

A: About 280 miles north.

Q: After 12:45 what happened?

A: After that we circled surfaced survivors until first assistance came, which was at 14:15. First plane to the scene was a Ventura piloted by Lt. Commander George C. Atteberry.

Q: Were there any PBVs there at the same time as Commander Atteberry?

A: Lt. Marks arrived shortly afterwards in a PBV.

Q: Your job was to stay around the survivors until rescue came?

A: Yes, the idea was to have someone there at all times.

Q: Did they wave when you went over?

A: Yes, they hit the water with their hands, so that they could easily be seen clearly. They were pretty well covered with oil and difficult to see otherwise.

Q: Did you go back to the scene at any time?

A: I was scheduled to go back, but didn't have the aircraft available. I went back on the 4th, but didn't pick up any more survivors.

Q: The first word they had from you was at 12:05 is that right?

A: Transmission went on the air at 11:25 and another one at 12:45. Both messages were "Rogerred".

[Lieutenant Commander Atteberry explained that it takes considerable time to decode and process these messages through the regular communications center, and therefore they had decoded the message themselves and had taken action immediately as they deemed necessary.]

Q: What time did you get to the area?

A: At 12:15 and Gwinn left immediately.

Questioning and narrative of Lt. Marks:

Q: Were you in the stand-by plane at the field?

A: The stand-by plane was already out on another strike—I happened to be around at the time is all.

Q: Were you on duty?

A: Yes, I was on duty. As soon as Commander Atteberry got the message, he saved several minutes by by-passing the official word and saving time in getting out. First word that we had was a PV circling a life raft. I presumed that a plane had been ditched and I took off at 12:42. Commander Atteberry took off about a minute after I did, but his plane was capable of greater speed

and he arrived at the scene ahead of myself. I was to go up and relieve the PV on station and keep the survivors in sight, and drop emergency equipment.

Q: What kind of plane did you have?

A: PBV – amphibious aircraft.

Q: You got there at what time?

A: After take off at 14:10, I received second message from the PV about the report of 150 survivors—I at first thought the message was garbled up, but thought it would be a good idea to get to the scene as quickly as possible. At 15:03 I began picking up signals from the PV; at 15:50 I made visual contact with Commander Atteberry and established voice communication with him via voice radio. I sighted the survivors at once and the Commander advised me that there were a great number of survivors scattered around, and asked me not to drop any equipment until I was shown the whole area. Otherwise, I might have dropped the whole lot to the first group, not realizing there were anymore. So I followed him on a tour of the area and looked over the situation.

Q: How long did it take you to patrol this area?

A: About a half an hour. Scattered small groups were everywhere, without any help except life jackets, and I thought that they needed the assistance more than the ones on the rafts. I knew that no ship would be on the scene until midnight, so after looking the area over, at 16:05 I commenced dropping survival equipment with the end in view of getting assistance to the small groups who had nothing but life jackets.

Q: Did you have any extra survival equipment?

A: Yes, I dropped all extra equipment and also dropped all of my plane's equipment, except one life raft, necessary for emergency.

Q: Did you make up your mind to go down at that time?

A: I figured that the only way we could save the single groups would be to land near them if possible. At 16:25 I sent a message to the base advising of the number of survivors, asking for survival equipment, etc., about 16:30 I decided a landing would be necessary to gather in the single ones. This decision was based partly on the number of single survivors and the fact that they were bothered by sharks. We did observe bodies being eaten by sharks.

Q: At this time you did not know how long they had been in the water?

A: No. So accordingly, at 16:30 I notified Commander Atteberry that I was going to attempt an open sea landing. I made all the necessary preparations for landing.

Q: Was this your [first] open sea landing?

A: Yes—an area for landing was selected with the purpose of picking up the most survivors and Commander Atteberry was to fly above me to assist in this. At 17:05 a power stall was made into the wind. The wind was due North, swells about 12 feet high. The plane landed in three bounces, the first bounce being about 15 feet high.

[Lieutenant Commander Atteberry explained here how dangerous it is to make an open sea landing in this kind of plane.]

Immediately after landing a survey of damage done to the plane exposed rivets pulled loose and some seams ripped open. My plane captain and navigator effected emergency repairs, plugging rivet holes with pencils and stuffing the seams with cotton. The radio compartment took on water slowly and would have to be bailed out during the night – 10 to 12 buckets of water per hour. The hull of the ship survived very well. While the Navigator was inspecting the damage, my Co-Pilot went aft to organize the rescue party. We proceeded to locate survivors, the single ones, being aided by Commander Atteberry advising me via voice radio just where to go. It was very difficult to see good because of the high swells and without a doubt we would have missed many if it hadn't of been for Commander Atteberry directing our actions. We tried to bring the survivors close to the port side and throw a life raft to them. Considerable difficulty was had because of the speed of the plane taxiing and the survivors were dragged through the water. We had to cut the plane's motors quite a few times and considerable time was lost in starting and stopping. We got better at picking the people up as time went by. We had the ladder out and I had a man on the ladder to grab any men who drifted by. The survivors could not help themselves very much, as most of them were weakened terribly and could not grab the ladder and climb up by themselves. Further difficulties were caused by the fact that the men were

burned and every time we grabbed them it caused extreme pain. Some of them had broken arms, legs, etc., and extreme care had to be used in handling them. Every effort was made to pick up the single ones, and it was necessary to avoid passing near the ones on life rafts because they would jump on the plane. Between the time of our landing and darkness, we picked up over 30 single survivors, most of them were in critical condition and would probably not have survived the night. Men brought aboard were issued water and given limited first aid treatment by our first aid group. Just before total darkness we headed for group of men on life rafts, which had been dropped to them. We were later told by the Doctor from the *Indianapolis* that it was very fortunate that we had headed for this particular group of survivors, as they were the ones who were in the worst shape, and had been put on life rafts by the Doctor because of their serious condition. We brought the plane alongside of the rafts and took the men aboard. They were put on the wing and issued water and covered by parachutes. There were about 25 men on the wing. During the process of bringing the men up on the wing, the fabric was broken in many places. After dark, several shouts for help were heard near by and my radioman and another crew man volunteered to go out in a rubber boat to pick them up. I wished them good luck and they cast off. It wasn't long until they were back with two additional men. It was very difficult for them to locate the plane after they had shoved off because of the fact that the auxiliary unit had gone out and we had no lights on the plane. We did have some carbide lights that worked to a good advantage. About 23:15 we sighted the search light of the Destroyer Escort *Doyle*. There was a plane circling us at the same time dropping parachute flares near us so that the *Doyle* could locate us. We tossed the carbide lights out to help location. The ship came up to us immediately upon arriving on the scene, which was about 0015. They dispatched a motor whale boat with a Doctor and first aid party and commenced transferring survivors. From 0045 to 0330 this transfer in progress. Due to the heavy swells, the process was difficult. A number of cases were stretcher cases and most of them were only able to stand with assistance. The men from the *Doyle* displayed high skill and seamanship in the entire job. We counted 56 survivors in all who were transferred to the *Doyle*. In order to execute the transfer of the survivors, it was necessary for the *Doyle's* boat

to lay next to the plane, and the boat did considerable damage to the plane. I inspected the plane and decided that a take off was extremely hazardous and was not justified. I requested that all salvageable gear be removed and ordered that the aircraft be destroyed. At 0600 the crew and myself were picked up at 0800 the plane was destroyed by 40mm gun fire from the *Doyle*.

Q: Who was it that first identified and advised the base that the survivors were from the *Indianapolis*.

A: I think the *Doyle* sent the first message. I was too busy to code a message of this nature.

Q: This word did not get back here until Friday morning then?

A: That is right.

Q: Did you get much time to talk to the men?

A: Yes, we talked to a large number of them.

Q: What was their first reaction?

A: Their first one was to ask for water. Every man in the water would be yelling for water as we went past them. The details of the ship's sinking were varied, because the men were off their head and gave various stories such as: An LCI had picked up 30 men on the day after the sinking and had left the rest of them: A PBY had landed and picked up several men, and then took off without offering any assistance at all to the rest of the survivors. Such stories as these were listened to all night long.

Q: Were there any deaths on your plane?

A: No, all of the survivors on my plane survived. I think two of them died since, but at the time we put into port with the DE they were all living.

Q: Were you pretty crowded on the DE coming back?

A: The crew had to give up their quarters, but they were pretty well organized. It was very fortunate that the *Doyle* carried a Doctor – most DE's do not, but he surely saved a lot of lives by being aboard.

Q: The *Doyle* had other survivors besides yours didn't she?

A: Yes, she picked up over 30 more – I don't know the exact number.

Q: Did you see many dead in the water as you patrolled around?

A: We saw some dead in life jackets – most of them that died had slipped their life jackets and sunk. We were only looking for live ones of course.

Q: Was this when you saw the sharks?

A: Yes, we saw them when we first arrived.

Source: TD; “Action Reports Western Carolines Sub Area,” RG 38, Box 80 NARA II, College Park, MD. Interview comes from “Identification of Bodies” portion of report, dated 15 August 1945.



Figure 3-3. Lieutenant (j.g.) Wilbur G. Gwinn, USNR, was the pilot of the Ventura patrol bomber that sighted the survivors of *Indianapolis* (CA-35) in waters of the Philippine Sea.

Navy Photograph 80-G490324, NARA II, College Park, MD



Figure 3-4. Lieutenant Robert Adrian Marks of VPB 23 standing next to a Consolidated PBY-5A Blackcat, 8 August 1945. Marks' was the first Catalina plane to the scene of survivors on 2 August, and he determined it necessary to make an open sea landing to save lives. His plane was too badly damaged on the landing to attempt a takeoff the following day and was scuttled by the guns of *Cecil J. Doyle* (DE-368).

Navy Photograph 80-G-364866, NARA II, College Park, MD.

Lieutenant Commander Graham Claytor Jr., skipper of Cecil J. Doyle, arrived at the location of Indianapolis survivors in the first minutes of 3 August. Claytor's ship was the first on the scene and the first to identify the survivors as being from Indianapolis to area commanders. Claytor made the dangerous decision to shine his ship's searchlight into the night sky to help pilots get a fix on his location and inspire the men in the water, many of whom were on the brink of death. Cecil J. Doyle deployed its whale boat by 0010 to bring survivors off of Adrian Marks' disabled PBV. The first survivors were lifted onto the deck of Doyle at 0300. At 0720, after unloading all survivors, crew, and salvageable gear, Doyle's 40mm guns sank Marks' Catalina, which had been damaged during its landing and the rescue operations. Doyle departed the scene for Peleliu midday on 3 August with 93 survivors on board. After refueling on 4 August, Doyle arrived back on the scene of the Indianapolis rescue at 0600 5 August and continued the search and recovery mission until 8 August, when it departed with French for Peleliu.

Document 3.4: After-Action Report of Cecil J. Doyle (DE-368)

COPY

DE 368/A16

U.S.S. CECIL J. DOYLE (DE 368)

c/o Fleet Post Office, San Francisco, Calif.

SECRET

Memorandum Report on Rescue of Survivors of USS *Indianapolis* (CA 35) August 2–4, 1945.

1. At 1405 King, while en route to Kossol Passage from vicinity of 10° 57'N, 136° 23'E after completion of an unsuccessful JASASA operation, ComWesCarSubArea's secret despatch 020245, ordering air-sea rescue of survivors sighted by 19V258, at position 11-30 North 133-30 East, was received. This message was decoded and course reversed at 1418 King, and speed gradually increased to 22 ½ knots. At this time the ship's position was 08°-34'(N) 135°-10' (E). At 1435K communication was established on 4475 KC with

Gambler Leader, the VPB 152 search plane who was already at the scene. This vessel assumed the call of Birddog One and thereafter maintained continuous communication with search and rescue planes engaged in the operation.

2. At about 1830 King a despatch giving further details obtained from planes was forwarded to ComWesCarSubArea by 2716 KC voice. Several corrected positions were received, both from PELELIU and planes, and slight course corrections accordingly made. Information from the planes was received that first one and then two dumbos had made successful water-landings and had gathered near them a large number of survivors, many of them in a critical condition. At 1633 King ComWesCarSubArea's despatch 020601 was received, indicating that USS *Ralph Talbot* (DD 390) and USS *Madison* (DD 425) were en route. At 1856K voice communication was established with the *Madison* on 2716 KC and his ETA determined to be about 0345 King; at 2000 King, voice communication was established on the same circuit with the *Ralph Talbot*, and his ETA determined to be 0400 King. Both DD's were informed that this ship's ETA was 0000 King.

3. At 2149 King, the loom of an aircraft flare was sighted ahead and verified by voice radio with planes at the scene. From this time until arrival at the dumbos on the surface, flares were continuously visible. At 2242 King, this ship illuminated the sky with 24" searchlight to give planes our position and to encourage survivors in water. Later reports indicated that this beam was sighted at the scene and was helpful for this purpose. From this time on, searchlight was used intermittently and frequent sweeps ahead were made to avoid possibility of running down survivors. At this time it was thought that the majority of the most critically injured survivors were near the planes on the water, and it was determined to proceed directly to them first and to return to search for other groups later. A Very's pistol flare was seen at some distance shortly before reaching the planes on the water, but its investigation was deferred for this reason.

4. At 0000K the planes in the water were sighted and at 0010K the ship's motor whaleboat was lowered and proceeded to the nearest dumbo, Number B-72. The position of the planes at this time was 11°45' (N), 133° 35' (E). Wind was from NNW, about 8–10 knots, and the planes were drifting steadily in a direction of about 160°T. The first survivors were brought on

board at 00300K, and as soon as details could be determined urgent secret despatch 021500 was forwarded to ComWesCarSubArea, reporting arrival on scene and identity of survivors.

5. Thereafter the whaleboat continued to shuttle between ship and plane with survivors, and the ship cruised slowly in the vicinity searching with searchlights and aircraft flares for other groups. At 0300K two rubber liferafts with seventeen (17) survivors were located (first indication was hearing whistle blown by one of the survivors) and ship maneuvered alongside. At 0443K, two more rubber rafts were found by searchlight and twenty-two (22) more survivors taken aboard. In the meantime, fifty-three (53) survivors had been ferried from the first dumbo (B-72), nearly two-thirds of whom were stretcher cases, and one from the other dumbo on the water. At this time a total of ninety-three (93) survivors had been taken on board. Search was continued throughout the night without further success, the motor whaleboat remaining in the water and investigating all objects located by searchlights. The B-72 dumbo had been so damaged that the pilot thought a take-off impracticable, and at his request, after no further survivors were located in the area, the motor whaleboat returned to the plane and removed the remaining crew and all salvageable gear. This was at 0600 King. The boat was then hoisted aboard and search continued in the vicinity to the south of the dumbos, where the pilots reported other survivors had been seen before dark. Planes still flying in the area were unable to locate any further groups of survivors in the darkness.

6. In the meantime, other ships had arrived in the area. At 0110K, a searchlight was observed to the north and the ship identified by exchange of signals as the USS *Bassett* (APD 73). She was asked by signal to close this ship and assist with her four LCVPs, and warned to proceed cautiously to avoid running down survivors. She soon encountered several groups of survivors whom she picked up. TBS voice communication could not be established with her, but she remained within visual signaling distance. She was subsequently asked to send a boat when possible to take off crew and gear of Dumbo B-72, but this was cancelled when she reported all her boats engaged with survivors and when this vessel found its boat free and no more survivors in the vicinity.

7. At about 0315 King, a second ship arrived in the area and was identified

as the USS *Dufilho* (DE 423). Communication was established on TBS and MAN (34.8 MC), and she was informed that the survivors were from the USS *Indianapolis* and were scattered over a large area. She was also notified that both surfaced planes had been investigated and survivors in the immediate area picked up. At 0353K the USS *Dufilho* reported a good underwater sound contact, and all lights were extinguished and the ship maneuvered until the contact was classified as probably non-sub a short time later. The USS *Dufilho* proceeded to search north and east of the surfaced planes, in an area which had not been covered, but found no more large groups. She picked up one (1) survivor before daylight.

8. Between 0130K and 0230K, calls were exchanged on 4475 KC and 2716 KC with the destroyers *Madison* and *Ralph Talbot*. In answer to questions, they were informed that this ship was at the scene and picking up survivors, and that searchlights were being used. The number of survivors on board at that time and the ship's position were reported to the USS *Madison*. Subsequently searchlights were seen over the horizon, which were believed to come from these two ships, and communication was established with them also by MN (30.14MC). The TBS receiver of this ship was giving difficulty and had to be secured for several hours for repairs but communications were maintained on other circuits. The USS *Madison* asked for and received reports from all ships present on the number of survivors each then had on board. In answer to another question, *Madison* was informed that none of this ship's survivors was then in critical condition, and that this ship would be able to remain in the area for a daylight sweep. At about 0615K, as soon as the crew from the abandoned dumbo B-72 had been taken aboard, a report was made by MN to *Madison* stating that one dumbo would attempt take-off at dawn and that the other had been abandoned and received from *Madison* to stand by the plane which was to take off until it was airborne, and to sink the other at discretion. Thereafter, further search for survivors was made south of the two planes, without success, and at 0720K the B-72 was burned and sunk by 40MM Fire. The other dumbo thereafter made a successful take-off.

9. Just prior to this, shortly after dawn, visual contact was first made with the two destroyers. The USS *Madison* was advised that the dumbo pilot on board reported survivors had been seen well to the south of him the

previous night, and a scouting line was accordingly formed by *Madison* with this ship as at which the dumbo was destroyed. Several planes were in the vicinity, and, after discussing the matter with the dumbo pilot, it was suggested to the *Madison* that at least two of them be sent off to search at some distance from the ships. This was done, and later in the morning two other rafts of survivors were found by these planes and closed and picked up by the destroyers. During this daylight search this ship passed from twenty-five (25) to fifty (50) individual bodies floating in lifejackets, and investigated and picked up a number of rubber rafts, all empty. The location of the bodies was reported to *Madison*, but the search was not stopped to recover them as it was still believed that more survivors could be found. At 1220K, *Madison* ordered this vessel to proceed to Peleliu to discharge survivors, and course was set direct to Peleliu, speed 22 ½ knots. Several more empty rubber rafts were located and recovered shortly thereafter, but no further survivors were seen. Peleliu was reached at 0200K on August 4th, and survivors discharged.

10. It is believed that once the survivors were discovered, everything was done to recover them that could have been done by planes or ships. No difficulty was experienced in communicating with planes, and very little with other ships, in spite of temporary TBS failure. Considerable difficulty was had in communicating with Peleliu and most messages required one or more relays with considerable delay. Until the USS *Madison* arrived shortly before dawn and took charge, this vessel as the first on the scene gave instructions and information to planes and the other ships as they came up, although no time was taken in the short time before the *Madison* arrived to determine which of the three ships was actually the senior. (The USS *Ringness* (APD 100) was not in the immediate area and had no contact with this vessel prior to dawn). Each was engaged in searching an area not previously covered by any other and it was felt that more could be accomplished by giving each ship all the available information and having him search independently until daylight than by attempting to prescribe what each should do. Planes in the air seemed unable to locate any more groups of survivors at this time. This vessel was preparing to send an amplifying report to ComWesCarSubArea on the ships present and total number of survivors picked up when the *Madison* arrived; thereafter all reports were made to him as SOP.

/s/ W.G. Claytor, Jr./t/ W.G. CLAYTOR, JR.,
Lt. Commander, USNR,
Commanding Officer

Source: TDSC; Action Reports Western Carolines Sub Area, "USS *Cecil J. Doyle* (DE-368) Memorandum Report on Rescue of Survivors USS *Indianapolis* (CA-35) 2-4 August 1945," RG 38, Box 80 NARA II, College Park, MD.



Figure 3-5. (L to R) Huie H. Phillips, S2, USNR; John Oligar, S1, USNR; and Glenn L. Milbrodt, S2, recovering in Naval Base Hospital #20 Pelelieu, 5 August 1945.

Navy Photograph 80-G-336776, NARA II, College Park, MD



Figure 3-6. *Indianapolis* (CA-35) survivors receiving glucose and saline. Illustration by U.S. Navy combat artist Alexander Russo.

Navy Art Collection, 88-198-bo



Figure 3-7. Funeral of Fred Elliot Harrison, S2, at U.S. Army Forces (USAF) cemetery, Peleliu No. I, Grave No. 150, Row 10, Plot No. 6. C.D. Denham, ChC USNR officiating. 6 August 1945. Fred Harrison, S2, USN, and Robert Shipman, GM3, USNR, survived the ordeal in the water and were rescued but arrived to the hospital at Peleliu in critical condition. They succumbed to exhaustion from overexposure on the morning of 5 August.

Navy Photograph 80-G-336754, taken by Bureau of Aeronautics. NARA II, College Park, MD



Figure 3-8. Survivors of *Indianapolis* (CA-35) are taken aboard the landing craft at Peleliu that will transfer them to *Tranquility* (AH-14), 6 August 1945.

Navy Photograph 80-G-336740, NARA II, College Park, MD



Figure 3-9. Transfer of survivors of *Indianapolis* (CA-35) from landing craft to *Tranquility* (AH-14), 6 August 1945.

Navy Photograph 80-G-336734, NARA II, College Park, MD

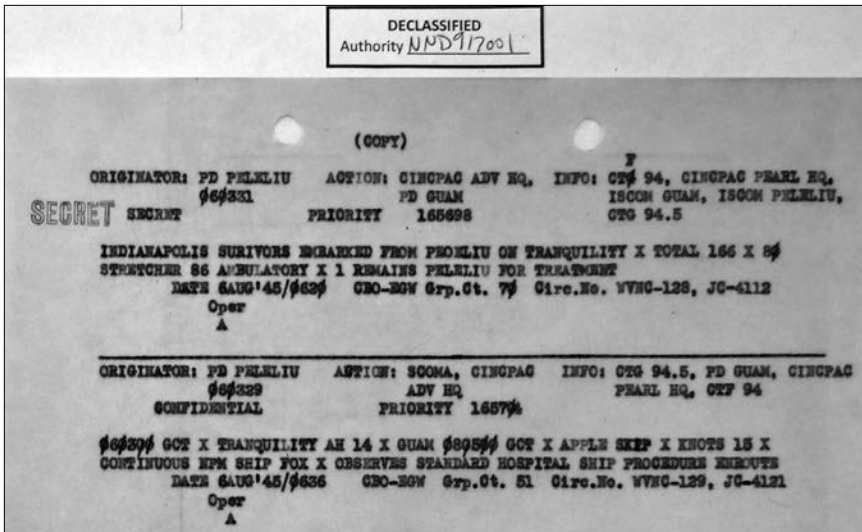


Figure 3-10. “Rescue Dispatches,” 2–9 August 1945. In Commander-in-Chief, Pacific 1945 Flag Files, RG 38, Box 45, NARA II. The entire collection spans approximately 150 dispatches covering 26 July 1945–16 August 1945.

NARA II, College Park, MD. The above image is a scanned portion of the dispatch collection from the Court of Inquiry file at NARA II. Declassified, Authority [NND917001]



Figure 3-11. An unidentified survivor of *Indianapolis* (CA-35) aboard *Tranquility* (AH-14), 6 August 1945.

Navy Photograph 80-G-336733, NARA II, College Park, MD



Figure 3-12. *Tranquility* (AH-14) arrives in Guam with survivors of *Indianapolis* (CA-35). Joseph Jacquemot, S2, a survivor, listens to one of the ship's radios, 8 August 1945.

Navy Photograph 80-G-326949 taken by J. G. Mull, PHoM1, NARA II, College Park, MD



Figure 3-13. Survivors of *Indianapolis* (CA-35) are brought ashore from *Tranquility* (AH-14) at Guam, 8 August 1945. Nurses and Sailors are watching from the hospital ship's deck. Note *Tranquility's* nested lifeboats and busses on the pier.

Official U.S. Navy Photograph, now in the collections of the U.S. National Archives. NHHC Photo Collection, 80-G-K-5986



Figure 3-14. Commander Eugene Own examines dressings of Lieutenant Commander L. L. Haynes (MC) at Naval Hospital Guam. Captain Charles B. McVay III stands at right.
Courtesy of BUMED Archives



Figure 3-15. Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, commander of the Fifth Fleet, pins a Purple Heart on Clarence E. McElroy, S1, survivor of the cruiser *Indianapolis* (CA-35), at Base Hospital # 18 Guam, Marianas, on 13 August 1945.

Navy Photograph 80-G-490312, NARA II, College Park, MD

*Accusations of four-flushing,³¹ cowardice, and incompetency and malin-
gering during the rescue of Indianapolis survivors were brought against
the skipper of Basset, Commander Harold J. Theriault, USNR, by his
executive officer, Lieutenant J. W. Henderson. The CNO ordered a special
investigation by the Navy Inspector General and it was determined that
there were no serious faults of which Theriault was guilty and that the
accusations primarily stemmed from personal differences between the two
officers. The findings of the Inspector General investigation are presented
in this volume because they offer a sense of how ships actually conducted
operations during the Indianapolis rescue and the many difficulties crews
faced. This extract shows the seamanship needed to deploy small boats in
high seas, approach survivors in the water, and return them safely to the
ship. It did not escape rescue crews that Indianapolis was sunk by enemy
torpedoes and that they were traversing the same waters. Although com-
mitted to rescuing the crew of Indianapolis, those who participated in the
rescue effort acutely felt the need to avoid becoming casualties themselves.
According to its records, Basset left the scene with 148 survivors.*

**Document 3.5: Description of *Bassett* Rescue of *Indianapolis* Survivors
from Navy Inspector General Investigation [Extract]³²**

(C) RESCUE OF SURVIVORS OF THE INDIANAPOLIS:

10. Allegation: “Inexperienced boat crews were used although more experi-
enced personnel were available.”

Findings: When the *Bassett* reached the location of the survivors of the
Indianapolis and commenced rescue operations, three LCVP’s were put
in the water. The regular boat crews, composed of men who were nor-
mally assigned to these boats and who were the most experienced men
available for this purpose, were the first crews assigned to these boats.
Each boat was in charge of an experienced boat officer. Additional per-
sonnel were assigned to each boat to assist in handling the survivors.
As the rescue operations progressed, the enlisted personnel assigned to
the boats became exhausted from their physical efforts and required

replacement. It soon became necessary to assign to the boats men with little or no small boat experience, but in all cases, the most experienced men were used first.

11. Allegation: “The third boat was lowered away improperly and dangerously.”
Findings: There is no evidence that the third boat was lowered away improperly and any more dangerously than was occasioned by the heavy rolling of the ship due to the deep swells which were then running. There does appear to have been some confusion connected with getting the boat clear of the side but Ensign Wren, the boat officer, displayed little or no initiative in taking charge and “laying off” with his boat to await orders.³³
12. Allegation: “Rescue work was carried on without advance instructions or orders from the Commanding Officer.....”
Findings: While en route to the designated location of the survivors, the Commanding Officer of the *Bassett* selected his boat officers, made provision for his CIC “set up” and reviewed the general plan of rescue operations with the interested officers.
13. Allegation: “. . . , there was no coordination between ship and boats through CIC and boat radios.”
Findings: The coordination between the ship and boats through the CIC and boat radios was, at the commencement of rescue operations, good; however, as the evening wore on, the handling of survivors in and out of the boats under decidedly adverse conditions, damaged the antennas and radio sets in the boats to the extent that communication between the ship and boats by this means was virtually impossible.
14. Allegation: “No vectors to and from survivors and other boats were furnished, even when specifically requested.”
Findings: Throughout the rescue operations, the CIC experienced difficulty in identifying on their radar screen, the various groups of survivors. These groups of men in the water and on rafts had no radar wave reflecting material and showed up on the screen as a scarcely identifiable “pip,” when seen at all. The CIC was manned by the normal “general quarters”

detail, all of the members which were experienced in their duties. It must be borne in mind that radio voice communication between the ship and the boats was not of the best, except in the initial stages of this operation, which fact is no doubt responsible, in part at least, for any failure on the part of CIC to vector the boats on their missions.

15. Allegation: “No answer was received to a specific request for instructions as to whether the first officer rescued should be immediately returned to the *Bassett*, to the end that higher authority might be more promptly advised as to details of the casualty, or whether further rescue work should precede return to the ship.”

Findings: The Commanding Officer of the *Bassett* did not reply to the request from Ensign Wren as to whether he, Ensign Wren, should return to the ship with the first officer rescued (who strongly demanded that he be taken at once to the *Bassett*) because he considered the request to be a foolish one in that such procedure would necessitate an extra round trip for the boat, leaving men in the water in the dark with the increased possibility of losing contact with these survivors.

16. Allegation: “Upon return to the ship, Ensign Wren was ordered to make the windward side, but finally came along quarter to leeward on his own initiative, after perceiving the extreme difficulty and danger involved in attempting to unload survivors on the windward side.”

Findings: At the time of the rescue of the survivors, heavy swells were running but there was little or no wind. Neither side of the *Bassett* could, under the condition then pertaining, be considered as being the lee side and every effort was made by the Commanding Officer to keep the ship on a course which would cause a minimum of rolling. As operations progressed, it was frequently the case that boats were discharging alongside both sides of the fan tail simultaneously.

17. Allegation: “When difficulty was experienced in taking aboard at the fantail survivors from Ensign Wren’s LCVP, the Commanding Officer ordered the boat, containing about 25 survivors, to be hoisted to the rail. Lieutenant Commander (then Lieutenant) Reginald R. Axtell, (D),

USNR, First Lieutenant, advised against this procedure, and, after the boat very nearly capsized while an attempt was being made to secure the falls, informed the Commanding Officer that he would continue only upon orders issued upon Commander Theriault's own responsibility. The boat was then ordered to resume unloading at the fantail."

Findings: After rescue operations had proceeded for some time and with much difficulty, in that each survivor presented an individual problem while being handled from the bouncing small boat to the rolling ship, the Commanding Officer decided, in the interest of expediting matters, to attempt to hoist a boat containing survivors, to the rail for discharging.

There were approximately sixteen persons in the boat in question and, since the boat handling gear of vessels of this class is designed to handle boats when fully loaded with combat personnel, no difficulty from this source was anticipated. The crew were, in the main, at battle stations, some men were away in the small boats, and a large group of men were on the fan tail assisting with the survivors. Under the existing circumstances, the men most experienced in hoisting the boats under adverse conditions were not then all available. The attempt to hoist the boat was made, but after experiencing difficulty securing the falls and lacking a full crew of experienced winchmen on deck, the effort was abandoned. Had this scheme proved successful, much time would have been saved.

18. Allegation: "The Commanding Officer argued for about one-half hour with then Lieutenant Axtell concerning the order of the former that two dead bodies be brought aboard prior to a boatload of survivors in grave physical condition."

Findings: At one time, a small boat containing several survivors and two bodies was towed to the ship. The survivors were removed and the bodies were left in the boat which was tied up astern. There was some conversation between the Commanding Officer who was then on the bridge, and the First Lieutenant, who was on the fan tail, as to whether the two bodies in the boat should be taken on board at that time. This conversation was conducted through the telephone talkers who were assisting these

officers and intermittently covered a period of approximately ten minutes. During this conversation, the handling of survivors from an LCVP alongside continued without interrupting and no delay was experienced from this source. The small boat containing the bodies broke away before the bodies were removed and was not recovered by the *Bassett*.

19. Allegation: “The Commanding Officer denied . . . request for permission to make an additional trip to pick up three life rafts full of survivors sighted while returning to the ship on what proved to be the last trip. No other vessels nor boats appeared to be near these survivors, and Commander Theriault ordered the LCVP to be hoisted aboard, and left the area without directing other vessels to these survivors.”

Findings: As one of the rescue boats was returning to the *Bassett* with survivors, on what proved to be its last trip, Ensign Broser, the boat officer, thought that he saw at a distance, flares which appeared to indicate a group of survivors. No life rafts, boats, or nets were sighted on that occasion, nor were any survivors actually sighted. Their presence was only assumed. Ensign Broser reported this sighting of flares to the Commanding Officer who took no action on the information and left the scene under the following conditions:

- (a) There were already on board the *Bassett* 148 survivors, some of whom were in need of immediate hospitalization, and no more survivors could be handled by the ship’s medical officer.
 - (b) At least one destroyer was in the immediate vicinity and, if keeping a proper lookout, was in position to sight the survivors in question.
 - (c) There were seventeen rescue vessels at the scene and a box search of the area was then being “set up.”
 - (d) Day was breaking and there should have been no difficulty in contacting the survivors in question with the rescue facilities then available.
20. Allegation: “The Commanding Officer did not carry out his intention, announced in a dispatch to Commander Philippine Sea Frontier, to pick up 200 survivors and return to Leyte, instead hurriedly departing the area with approximately 148 survivors. The Commanding Officer is

alleged to have expressed fear of being torpedoed, which was considered to be the motive prompting precipitate departure of the vessel.”

Findings: Although the Commanding Officer had informed ComPhilSeaFron in his despatch 021903 August, that he was departing the scene for Leyte when he had taken on board 200 survivors, when 148 survivors had been received on board, some of whom were in urgent need of hospitalization, and when it was ascertained that ample vessels and planes were in the area to complete the rescue, it was decided to depart immediately for Leyte in the interest of attending to the survivors then on board. Commander Theriault stated that he was concerned as to the possibility of being torpedoed as he had on board insufficient life saving equipment to take care of the personnel then in the *Bassett*. This concern had no bearing on his decision to depart the area when he did, as was evidenced by the fact that his ship had been steaming through the night at a speed of less than four knots on a comparatively steady course and that searchlights, deck lights and signal lights had been freely used through the rescue operations.

[...] ³⁴

Source: TDS; “Investigation of Alleged Inefficiencies and Ineptitude on the part of Certain Officers in Connection with the Rescue of Survivors of USS *Indianapolis*,” signed by Felix Johnson, RA, USN, Assistant Chief of Naval Personnel. From SECNAV General Correspondence, RG 50, Entry UD 16, Box 2696, NARA II, College Park, MD. Extract selected for detailed description of rescue operations, omitted sections include findings of investigation, general chronology of *Bassett*’s service, and biographies of officers.

Once it became known that the survivors in the water discovered on 2 August were the crew of Indianapolis, the headquarters of Admiral Nimitz, Commander-in-Chief Pacific, contacted subordinate Pacific commands to determine if an overlooked transmission from Indianapolis went out the night she was sunk. Dispatches submitted as evidence in the Court of Inquiry showed that, between 4–7 August, the following commands responded to the CINCPAC directive as receiving no transmissions: Tinian, Guam, Saipan,

Two Jima, Ulithi, Peleliu, and Canberra. No reports of any reception of a distress signal were brought to light in the Court of Inquiry or subsequent investigations of the loss of Indianapolis. Reports of reception of a distress signal eventually came to light, but no substantiated evidence of receiving a distress message was provided.

Document 3.6: Command Responses to CINCPAC Inquiry About Possible Reception of S.O.S. Transmission from *Indianapolis*

3 AUG 45

From: CINCPAC ADV HQ

Action: COMMARIANAS, COM7THFLT

Info: COMPHILSEAFRON

Precedence: Routine

Request RADSTAS be directed check radio logs of ship shore circuits and 500 KCS for any possible transmissions from INDIANAPOLIS (CA 35) on night of 29 July KLD.³⁵

Source: TD; "Dispatches Dealing with Departure and Arrival of *Indianapolis*," 26–28 July 1945. These were submitted as evidence to the Court of Inquiry convened to investigate the loss. In CINCPAC 1945 Flag Files, RG 38, Box 45, NARA II. The entire collection spans approximately 150 dispatches covering 26 July 1945–16 August 1945.

As the Indianapolis crew was being pulled from the water, Navy intelligence sought an answer to why they did not know their location. The Joint Intelligence Center Pacific Ocean Areas (JICPOA) Summations from the United States Navy File of SIGTOT Messages to CINCPAC Advanced Headquarters, offer a high-level conversation between the offices of Captain Edwin T. Layton, intelligence officer CINCPAC; Captain John S. Harper, officer-in-charge, Fleet Radio Unit, Pacific (FRUPac); and Captain Thomas H. Dyer, FRUPac's chief cryptanalyst. The messages show three of the Navy's most important cryptological officers attempting to figure out why Navy intelligence failed to recover the Japanese location of the Indianapolis attack. This exchange again shows that clear answers are not always present in fragmented intelligence.

**Document 3.7: Conversation Between CINCPAC HQ and JICPOA
Regarding *Indianapolis* Loss**

[CINCPAC Advanced HQ to JICPOA Estimates Section]

No. 277

3 August

From: Captain Layton

To: Captain Harper

In view of *Indianapolis* repeat *Indianapolis* sinking probably by Japanese submarine *I-58* and probability that there will be some looking into matters here, desire your opinion on probable reason we have no Dog Fox positions in view of at least one known transmission from this submarine to deliver message time 300048 and earlier transmission from submarine *I-53* (message time 292100). Are submarines using unknown frequencies which previeeee [*sic*] prevent interception of original transmissions? Also desire that we be informed of any other known transmission from *I-58* since arriving in patrol sector. Will appreciate prompt reply.³⁶

[JICPOA Estimates Section to CINCPAC Advanced HQ]

CIC NR 321

3 August 1945

From: Capt. Dyer

To: Capt. Layton

Harper not presently available. Cannot state positively but consider RPT consider likely *I-58* and *I-53* transmissions on other than regular sub frequency as it was not picked up by sub search watch at either Able or Hypo. Message was copied on Empire Broadcast. Regular search watch occasionally picks up subs on other frequencies but chances are slim of picking up any special frequency used for occasional RPT occasional short transmission unless we have information from decrypt. No additional *I-58* message or transmissions can be found.³⁷

Source: TDC; Joint Intelligence Center Pacific Ocean Areas. United States Navy File of SIGTOT Messages From JICPOA Estimates Section to CINCPAC Advanced Headquarters, March–August 1945 [SRMD-005] and CINCPAC Advanced Headquarters to JICPOA Estimates Section, March–August 1945 [SRMD-006]. Located in Navy Department Library Special Collections, WNY.



Figure 3-16. Captain Edwin Layton commanded the Combat Intelligence Unit on the Staff of Commander-in-Chief, Pacific. NHHHC Photo Collection, L38-51.04.01.

This memorandum providing a summary of ULTRA intelligence regarding the loss of Indianapolis was passed to Admiral Ernest King, Chief of Naval Operations, on the day that major rescue operations took place. It was prepared by Lieutenant Commander William R. Smedberg III, an aide to the CNO. This memorandum shows the pieces of intelligence falling into place for the Navy, unfortunately much too late.

Document 3.8: *Indianapolis* Intelligence Memorandum to Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral King

[TOP SECRET ULTRA]

United States Fleet
Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief
Navy Department
Washington 25, D.C.

3 August 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR F-00

Subject: U.S.S. *Indianapolis*, Sinking of.

1. The following information derived from ULTRA sources indicates that four Japanese submarines were known to be operating between Okinawa and Leyte Gulf, and that *I-58* probably was responsible for the sinking of subject ship
 - a. On 13 July, CINC 6th Fleet organized a *Kaiten* Suicide Attack Force comprising submarines *I-53*, *I-58*, *I-47*, and *I-367*. These submarines were directed to sortie from Bungo Suido between 14 and 19 July to patrol assigned areas in the Philippine Sea. The first 3-named submarines were to carry 6 *Kaiten* each, the *I-367* was to carry 5. The patrol areas assigned were as follows:
 - *I-53* – Vicinity of midpoint between Leyte Gulf and Okinawa. (*Kaiten* from this submarine probably sank *Underhill* (DE) on the 24th.)
 - *I-58* – Vicinity of a point 500 miles north of (Palau?).
 - *I-47* – On a line between Okinawa and the Marianas, about 350 miles from Okinawa.
 - *I-367* – On a line between Okinawa and the Marianas, about (450?) miles from Marianas.
 - b. At 292238I, these submarines were ordered to shift their patrol areas in order to attack the Blue supply line between Leyte Gulf

and Okinawa and to intercept the Blue Striking Force, should it return through this area.

- c. At 300048I, *I-58* reported that at 292312I, she attacked and sank one _____. She also states that the sinking was confirmed. (The position was included, but has not been recovered as yet.) Comment: The dispatch reporting the sinking of *Indianapolis* states that she was torpedoed and sunk on Sunday night (29th). Available information indicates that she was northeast of Leyte Gulf. Of the four submarines operating between Leyte Gulf and Okinawa, *I-58* is estimated to be in the southernmost position and nearest to Leyte Gulf.

Very respectfully,

W.R. Smedberg, III.

Source: TDC; Declassified. Original classification, Top Secret ULTRA. "ULTRA Extracts," Photocopies in USS *Indianapolis* file, Box 396B, Naval History and Heritage Command Archives, WNY. Originals from COMNAVSECGRU File 5830/114.

All Indianapolis survivors were rescued by day's end on 3 August. The operations in the days following were almost purely body recovery, identification, and burial. The extract from the after-action report of Helm shows the gruesome nature of this work. The bodies of most Sailors were in advanced stages of decomposition, and many had been mangled by sharks. The condition of bodies made identification nearly impossible unless physical items present on the body could provide a clue to the wearer's identity. Deceased crewmen were buried at sea following the identification attempt. The pervasiveness of sharks during the rescue most likely contributed to their presence in all aspects of the Indianapolis story.

Document 3.9: After-Action Report of *Helm* (DD-388) Regarding Body Recovery [Extract]

U.S.S. HELM (DD388)

6 August 1945.

From: The Commanding Officer.

To: The Commander Western Carolines Sub-Area

[...]³⁸

4. All bodies were in extremely bad condition and had been dead for an estimated 4 or 5 days. Some had life jackets and life belts, most had nothing. Most of the bodies were completely naked, and the others had just drawers or dungaree trousers on—only three of the 28 bodies recovered had shirts on. Bodies were horribly bloated and decomposed—recognition of faces would have been impossible. About half of the bodies were shark-bitten, some to such a degree that they more nearly resembled skeletons. From one to four sharks were in the immediate area of the ship at all times. At one time, two sharks were attacking a body not more than fifty yards from the ship, and continued to do so until driven off by rifle fire. For the most part it was impossible to get finger prints from the bodies as the skin had come off the hands or the hands lacerated by sharks. Skin was removed from the hands of bodies containing no identification, when possible, and the Medical Officer will dehydrate the skin and attempt to make legible prints. All personal effects removed from the bodies for purposes of identification, and the Medical Officer's Reports are forwarded herewith to you in lieu of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery and the Personal Effects Distribution Center, Farragut, Idaho, on the assumption that you will assemble such effects from all ships recovering them. After examination, all bodies were sunk, using two inch line and a weight of three 5"/38 cal projectiles. There were still more bodies in the area when darkness brought a close to the gruesome operations for the day. In all, twenty-eight bodies were examined and sunk. The last bodies were picked up in position Lat. 11°26' N, Long. 132°37' E.

[...]

Source: TDSC; Action Reports Western Carolines Sub Area, "USS *Helm* (DD388) Memorandum Report on Search of Survivors USS *Indianapolis* CA-35) 4–5 August 1945," 6 August 1945, signed by A. F. Hollingsworth, RG 38, Box 80 NARA II, College Park, MD.

As the search for Indianapolis survivors ended and the crew convalesced in hospitals at Samar and Peleliu, the cargo that they delivered to Tinian on 26 July was used in the war effort. Captain William Parsons, USN, was weaponer and bomb commander aboard the Enola Gay during its 6 August mission over Hiroshima. Parsons was an innovator in ordnance and radar, and critical to the development of the atomic bomb. He was head of Ordnance Division in Project Y of the Manhattan Project as well as officer-in-charge of the overseas technical group of the Los Alamos Laboratory. Additionally, he served as Dr. Robert Oppenheimer's technical deputy. After witnessing the successful detonation of the uranium bomb at the 16 July Trinity Test in Alamogordo, New Mexico, he was flown to Tinian to await the Indianapolis's delivery. In the following weeks, the bomb was assembled and preparations for the mission took place. The fate of Indianapolis was known prior to the Hiroshima mission. Some viewed the success of the mission as fulfillment of Indianapolis's delivery and as retaliation for I-58's attack. The documents below detail the first intercepted reports from Japanese sources of the effects of the bomb on Hiroshima and Captain Parson's description of the mission to the U.S. media. A second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki 9 August, before Imperial Japan surrendered on 15 August. With the war concluded, many of the Indianapolis survivors travelled home in late September on board Hollandia (CVE-97). At 1400, on 24 September, they were mustered on deck during the transit home and paid their semi-monthly wage.

Document 3.10: Descriptions of 6 August Atomic Bomb Dropping on Hiroshima from U.S. Intelligence and Captain William Parsons, USN

General Headquarters

United States Army Forces in the Pacific

Military Intelligence Section, General Staff

ULTRA Intelligence Summary

No. 118

9/10 August 1945

Contents and Significant Items

[...]³⁹

Par. 6 Hiroshima: Japs rpt atomic bomb dam.

[...]

II AIR

6. On 7 Aug, 12 Army Flying Div (Ozuki, SW Honshu) rptd to C/S Air General Army, Vice C/S Air HQ...15 Army C/S as follows:

“Eye witness account of 6 Air Army and this Div in regard to bombing of Hiroshima.”

“Bomb used . . . resulting conditions: A violent, lrg, special-type bomb giving appearance magnesium was dropped over center of city this morning by a formation of 3 or 4 planes (also said there was only one plane) (some say it was attached to a parachute). Est that, having been dropped fr a plane, it exploded at a certain altitude above ground.”

“There was a blinding flash and a violent blast (over city center, flash and blast were almost simultaneous but in vicin of the airfield blast came 2 or 3 second later), and a mass of white smoke billowing up into the air.”

“Flash was instantaneous, burning objects in immediate vicin, burning exposed parts people’s bodies as far as approx 2 mi away and setting fire to their thin clothing.”

“Blast levelled completely or partially as many as 50,000 houses within radius of 2 mil and smashed glass blocks (sic) etc.”

“Losses: Majority of houses within city were completely or partially levelled. Conflagration spread all over and many important areas were dest by fire. Majority of Government buildings were either levelled or dest by fire. Many people were injured by burns fr flash or by objects shattered by blast, particularly glass fragments and as far as was obsvd . . . one-third of residents were either seriously or slightly injured.”

“Countermeasures: Personnel, a/c, etc have been moved underground (partially underground) . . . walls if they are strong are alright.”

“We must keep a strict watch even for small nbrs of planes.”

(GIW 65)

[...]

[END]

Meet Your Navy

Capt. W. S. Parsons

August 13, 1945

ANNCR: As the entire world stands by while the Japanese Government deliberates the problem of war or peace, the minds of statesmen, armchair strategists, soldiers and sailors turn toward the staggering fact that a weapon now exists which, in a matter of seconds, can wipe cities from the map. One of the few men in the world to understand the secrets of the atomic bomb is Captain William Sterling Parsons, United States Navy, who has been engaged in its development for the past two and a half years. Captain Parsons is an Associate Director of the Los Alamos Project, which is the name given to the organization set up near Santa Fe, New Mexico, for the development of atomic power as a weapon of war. In addition to his experiences in the beginnings of the bomb, Captain Parsons has seen the practical demonstration of it when he flew over the city of Hiroshima on the morning of August 6th. Captain Parsons is at our microphone here on Guam now to tell us something about his experience as a weaponeer harnessing the basic power of the universe. Captain, what has been your part in the development of the atomic bomb?

Captain: You have correctly described me as a weaponeer. It is a coined word which might mean part physicist part engineer and part weapons tester.

ANNCR: Can you tell us something of the early days at the Los Alamos Project?

Captain: The project itself was and is under the direction of Dr. J.R. Oppenheimer, a renowned professor of physics at the University of California and Cal Tech. Although our director is a civilian and we are not strictly speaking a military organization, we have been under the closest military guard, and our work has been carried out in great secrecy. Until recently

our families, who were living at the project, were not even permitted to visit elsewhere.

ANNCR: And now, Captain, will you describe for us your historic attack on the city of Hiroshima?

Captain: Well, it began something like a Hollywood premiere with flash bulbs and cameras firing away at us before we took off in the darkness of an airfield in the Marianas. We flew northward to Japan, passing Iwo Jima in the morning light. As we approached the Japanese home islands, the weather began to clear and my hopes rose with the sun. I can remember thinking to myself—and believing it—we’re in for a lucky day.

ANNCR: Did the crew of your plane know what you had aboard?

Captain: They knew we had something new and very powerful in the way of a bomb, but they did not know any details about it.

ANNCR: And from what we have heard, your lucky day hunch was correct.

Captain: It certainly was. As we approached the city of Hiroshima, I had approximately six minutes to look before we dropped our bomb. I could see the green lawns of the army division headquarters and docks and streets. And best of all, I could see that there was not a cloud over the target. Because of excellent work by the navigator and the bombardier we made a perfect approach.

ANNCR: And then came the crucial moment—“Bomb Away.”

Captain: Right. And as soon as our bomb was away, our bomb bay doors slammed closed to permit the high speed required to get away from the area as quickly as possible. We had just rolled out of a turn when the bomb exploded. All of us, who had been waiting tensely, saw what appeared through our dark goggles to be a huge blue flash. This meant the bomb had functioned. The next crucial question was what would happen when the blast struck us. This was answered seconds later when we received two sharp jolts very much like close ack-ack bursts. We were then free to turn and look at the city which had been Hiroshima. As we did so, each crew member saw the results of our bomb and there was a spontaneous exclamation of “My God!” A huge white mushroom cloud had risen three or four miles in less than two

minutes. At the base of the mushroom stem there was an even more sinister cloud which was boiling, and practically covered the entire city. It was dark brown and must have consisted of pulverized buildings and smoke. We had seen enough, and headed for home.

ANNCR: Captain Parsons, what was the feeling you had on the Hiroshima Mission, one of great excitement?

Captain: No. To all outward appearances the bomb was the same as the test models we had dropped so many times in the States and out here. The principal emotion was an overpowering sense of responsibility for the proper delivery of this greatest weapon of all time.

ANNCR: Thank you, Captain William Sterling Parsons, United States Navy. From the Island of Guam we return you now to Great Lakes.

[END]

Source: TDC; Declassified. General Headquarters Southwest Pacific Area, Military Intelligence Section, G-2, ULTRA Intelligence Summaries, No. 1-137, 15 April–29 August [SRH-203, Part 6]. Located in Navy Department Library Special Collections, WNY. AND, TR; “Papers of Rear Admiral William S. Parsons,” 1943–1952, NHHHC Archives, WNY.



Figure 3-17. Captain William “Deak” Parsons (kneeling right), the weaponeer for the Hiroshima mission, supervises the loading of the “Little Boy” uranium bomb into the bomb bay of the B-29 *Enola Gay* on Tinian, 5 August 1945.

Photograph in RG 77-BT, NARA II, College Park, MD

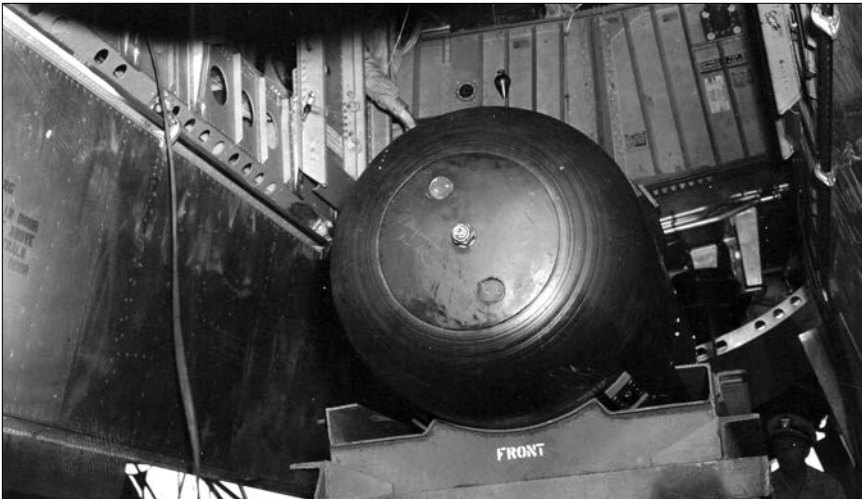


Figure 3-18. The “Little Boy” bomb being lifted into the bomb bay of *Enola Gay*, 5 August 1945.

Photograph in RG 77-BT, NARA II, College Park, MD

Moving Forward— Condolences and Investigations

Captain McVay, in this extract from his oral history, described his disbelief and embarrassment that he was the only senior officer to make it off of the ship. He related how he felt a great responsibility for the loss of his ship and crew, and how several times throughout the ordeal he pondered if survival was his best option. This short, but powerful, testimony shows how the tragedy weighed on him and would continue to do so for the remainder of his life.

Document 4.1: Oral History of Captain McVay Describing Loss of Officers and Thoughts on Future [Extract]

All my other heads of departments, except the senior doctor and the chief engineer, are missing. I talked to the damage control officer; the navigator; to Captain Crouch, a passenger; to my executive officer; and in fact talked to all the heads of departments except the chief engineer and the gunnery officer before the ship went down. I talked to them on the bridge. Whatever happened to those people, I haven't the faintest idea. I can only say that, as somebody put it, maybe they went back to their room to get a flashlight, a knife, or some money or something else. That's the only thing that would make any sense to me.

I can't believe that they got in the water and were never seen and it's true that we did not see any of them, so they must have gotten caught and not gotten off. It was very embarrassing to me, being the old fud on the ship, to

find out that there is nobody between me and, well, the doctor's about 31 or 32, but I have no line officer above a reserve lieutenant. I can't account for that in any way except possibly the fact that when I thought I was going to be sucked under with the ship, I tried to swim away.

You have rather peculiar thoughts that go through your mind. I thought that, well, it may be embarrassing if I'm the only one left, or at least if I, as a Captain, am left and my ship is gone. But, I decided that I would attempt to save myself. I must admit that I had the thought that it would have been much easier if I go down, I won't have to face what I know is coming after this. But, something stronger within me decided that, spurred me to get out of the way, at least to attempt to save myself.

And, on the raft, of course, I had a great many hours to think of the disaster and I knew of some of the people I had lost. I hated to think of having to see their wives and a great many of them I knew quite well, having been in the States over two months just previously. Most of them had been up at Mare Island. I knew there was nothing I could say to them, and I think probably the fact that I enjoyed life, that I thought of many a cocktail hour that you have at home after you have an exhausting day and you come back and take a bath and can relax for a few minutes and get away from the worries of the office. I thought I would certainly like to repeat some of those evenings and I guess that's what kept a good many people going. They just thought of some of the happiness that had been theirs in life and decided they'd stick it out.

On the other hand, we know of many people who apparently just decided it wasn't worth it.

Source: TR; Extract from "Oral History of Charles B. McVay III, Captain USN," recorded 27 September 1945, transcribed 1 October 1945, 34 pp. Copy of original in *Indianapolis* Ship History Files, Naval History and Heritage Command Archives, WNY.



Figure 4-1. Last photo of officers of *Indianapolis* (CA-35) before leaving California with atomic bomb components. L to R—front row: Commander Johns Hopkins Janney (killed), Captain Charles B. McVay III (survived), Commander Joseph Ambrose Flynn (killed), Commander Glen F. DeGrave (not on ship/left ship at Hawaii). Back Row: Thought to be Lieutenant Commander Charles Monroe Christensen (not on ship), Lieutenant Commander Kyle Campbell “Casey” Moore (killed), Lieutenant Commander Lewis Leavitt Haynes, MC (survived), Lieutenant Commander Earl O’Dell Henry (killed), Lieutenant Commander Charles David Hayes (killed).

Courtesy of United States Naval Institute—A. J. Sedivi Collection

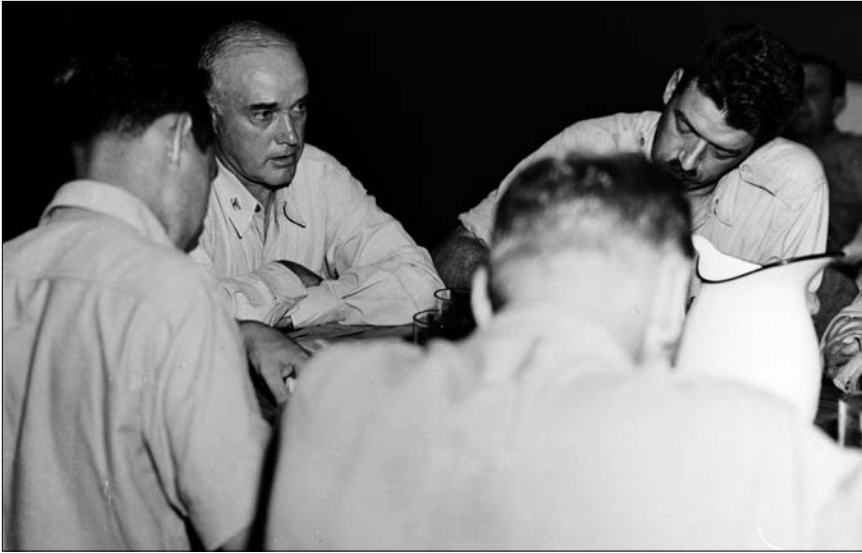


Figure 4-2. *Indianapolis's* (CA-35) last Commanding Officer, Captain Charles B. McVay III, tells war correspondents about the sinking of his ship. Photographed on Guam in August 1945, following the rescue of her survivors.

Official U.S. Navy Photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives. NHH Photo Collection, 80-G-490321

Captain McVay's first after-action Report was submitted on 12 August. The more detailed 26 August report is provided below. The investigation into what exactly happened to Indianapolis had just begun when these reports were submitted. McVay's reports themselves served as the foundation upon which the investigation would be built. He was unaware of what awaited him when these reports were prepared, and he primarily focused on determining the final whereabouts of surviving crew. All details of McVay's report would be heavily scrutinized in the upcoming months and revisited during the Court of Inquiry called for by Fleet Admiral Nimitz. McVay's description of visibility conditions the night of the sinking given in this report became a particularly troublesome issue for him—although he later clarified that he described visibility as it was in the water after the sinking, not on the ship immediately after the torpedo hits. Much of the final report was devoted to recommending improvements in lifesaving equipment to the Navy.

Document 4.2: Captain McVay's After-Action Report

Naval Base Hospital #18, Navy 926

26 August 1945¹

From: The Commanding Officer.

To: The Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet.

Via: Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas.

Subject: Action Report U.S.S. *Indianapolis* 450 miles east of Leyte Gulf 30 July 1945, Including Circumstances of the Resultant Sinking of the Ship.

Part I. General Narrative

1. The *Indianapolis* on 30 July 1945 was enroute GUAM to LEYTE GULF under orders to report on arrival to Commander, Task Group 95.7. The ship was steaming singly on course 262° T, making revolutions for 17 knots. Zig-zagging had been discontinued at 2000, 29 July. [All times used are zone (-9 ½)].
2. At 0005, 30 July 1945 a violent underwater explosion occurred in the vicinity of frame 7 starboard side followed immediately by a second similar explosion in the vicinity of frame 50 starboard side. These explosions were believed to have been caused by two torpedoes fired from an enemy submarine. A terrific blaze shot through the entire forward half of the ship immediately following the explosion, and the ship commenced flooding rapidly forward to list to starboard. Because the second torpedo hit was in the vicinity of the I.C. room², all ship's service telephones, M-C circuits, and all sound powered circuits with the exception of a few AA battery circuits and part of the 2JV circuit were put out of commission. Due to the lack of communications and the fact that the explosion caused the engine order telegraph to go out of commission, the OOD was unable to stop the engines. At 0008 the Commanding Officer instructed the Navigator to deliver the following message to Radio I: "We have been hit by two torpedoes, Latitude ____N, Longitude ____E, we are sinking rapidly and need immediate assistance." It is now known this message did not get out due to loss of power. Radio II transmitted an S.O.S. call on 500 K.C. which also apparently failed to get out due to antenna grounds. There was no electric power in the forward half of the ship.

3. All attempts to fight fire were unsuccessful due to loss of pressure on the fire main which is believed to have been caused by a ruptured fire main. By 0010, the list had increased to approximately 12° and at this time the Damage Control Officer reported to the Commanding Officer that the damage was serious. The Damage Control Officer was then directed to investigate the damage more thoroughly and to keep the Commanding Officer informed. At approximately 0015 the Executive Officer reported to the Commanding Officer that the damage was extremely serious, the ship was going down rapidly by the head, and recommended that the ship be abandoned. The Commanding Officer immediately gave the order to abandon ship, this order was passed orally. The ship took a decided starboard list to about 30°, about a minute later another decided list to about 65° continuing to 90° where she remained about two minutes then plunged down by the head rolling completely over as she sank out of sight.
4. There was a 10 knot wind from the south west and a slight swell from the West. The current set south west, drift a little under one knot. The sky was cloudy with intermittent moonlight.³ It is estimated that 700 men got off the ship, and it is believed that about 60 of these men drowned the first few hours that they were in the water. The remainder of the men formed into the 7 following groups: (practically all men had either Kapok life jackets or pneumatic life belts).
 - a. 150 on 4 floater nets with no food or water.
 - b. 150 on 2 floater nets and 3 rafts with 9 standard ration cans and 2–3 gallon water breakers.
 - c. 300 without benefit of rafts, food, or water.
 - d. 50 without benefit of rafts, food, or water.
 - e. 19 on 4 rafts with food and water.
 - f. 10 on 4 rafts and 1 floater net, with 1–3 gallon water breaker, 1 can rations, and 1 box cigarettes.
 - g. 2 men on one floater net, no rations.
 - h. 1 man on 1 raft, 1 can ration, no water.

These groups were not visible to one another.

5. During the following 4 days approximately 8 aircraft were sighted. All attempts to attract attention by use of flares, reflecting mirrors, one green marker dye, and yellow cloth were futile. Many men died from one or more of the following causes:
 - i. Injuries received aboard ship.
 - ii. Dehydration and exhaustion.
 - iii. Drinking of salt water.
 - iv. Miscellaneous-Sharks, drowning and pneumonia.

At about 1130, 2 August the southern group of survivors were sighted by a Navy Ventura search plane. At 1230 other Navy planes began arriving in the area to search and aid in rescue operations. One whaleboat and several rubber life rafts were dropped. The following rescue ships arrived on the scene at approximately 0030, 3 August:

- v. U.S.S. *Register* (APD 92)
- vi. U.S.S. *Bassett* (APD 73)
- vii. U.S.S. *Ringness* (APD 100)
- viii. U.S.S. *Cecil Doyle* (DE 368)

These four ships commenced rescue operations immediately. By noon 3 August, all survivors had been picked up. 149 were taken to Fleet Hospital #114, Samar by *Bassett*. 169 were taken to Base Hospital #20 Peleliu Island, Palau Group by *Cecil Doyle*, *Ringness*, and *Register*.

6. The treatment given the survivors aboard the aforementioned ships was excellent and in keeping with the highest traditions of the naval service.

Part II. Preliminaries

1. Although the explosions were believed to have been caused by two torpedoes fired by an enemy submarine, no submarine was seen and no torpedo wakes were observed. Nothing was on the radar scope.

Part III. Chronological Order of Events

0005 Ship struck by one torpedo starboard side.

0005+ Ship struck by second torpedo frame 50 starboard side.

0008 Contact report sent to Radio I. (This did not go out due to power failure).

0009 S.O.S. Sent by Radio II. (This did not get out due to antenna being grounded).

0013 "Abandon Ship".

0020 Ship Sank.

Part IV. Ordnance

No comments.

Part V. Damage

1. Ship sank.
2. Summary of damage.
 - a. Torpedo hit in the vicinity of frame 7, starboard side.
 - b. Torpedo hit in the vicinity of frame 50, starboard side.
 - c. Forecastle deck ruptured athwartships in the vicinity of frame 50.
 - d. Communications deck ruptured athwartships at forward stack.
 - e. Fire throughout forward half of ship.
 - f. Immediate flooding by water and fuel oil of second deck from bow to frame #78.
 - g. Bow broken and bent to starboard at approximately frame #9.
3. Damage control.
 - a. All communications were lost.
 - b. Central station destroyed.
 - c. Patrol I abandoned due to loss of communication.
 - d. Repair II abandoned due to fire, smoke, and fumes.
 - e. Fire fighting and damage control measures were attempted by Repair III, General Quarters Damage Control Personnel, and volunteers surrounding the entire damaged area. Cessation of these measures was necessitated by rapid flooding and burning oil.
 - f. All pressure was lost on the fire main.

Part VI. Special Comments

1. Communications:
 - a. Receiving apparatus destroyed in Radio I.
 - b. Power lost in Radio I.
 - c. Radio II transmitted messages keyed by Radio I.

- d. Fire crept into Radio I from above at 0010 causing abandonment.
 - e. Radio II abandoned at about 0017.
2. Navigation:
- a. Steering control was lost immediately.
3. Engineering:
- a. Circuit breakers on forward distribution board tripped out.
 - b. Steam pressure was lost immediately in the forward engine room, causing No. 1 and No. 4 main engines and all auxiliaries forward to stop.
 - c. Forward engine room abandoned at about 0010.
 - d. Immediately after the explosion vacuum was lost on No. 3 engine but 25 inches of vacuum was maintained on #2 main engine. 160 r.p.m. was made.
 - e. No. 2 fire and flushing pump was running at maximum speed maintaining a fire main pressure of 10lbs in the after engine room.
 - f. No. 3 & No. 4 main generators continued to run.
 - g. No. 4 fireroom continued to supply after engine room with full steam pressure (300 lbs).
4. Medical:
- a. The explosion caused a large number of casualties, exact number not known. The majority seen before the ship sank suffered from severe flash burn and fractured extremities. Very few of these survived the period of immersion. First aid treatment was being given up to the time the ship sank.

Part VII. Personnel Performance and Casualties

No Comments. Submitted in separate correspondence.

Part VIII. Lessons Learned, Conclusions, and Recommendations

1. Recommend following:
- a. Hydrostatic releasing device for all life rafts and floater nets.
 - b. Abolishment of pneumatic life belts.
 - c. Abolishment of horsecollar type Kapok jacket.
 - d. Provide pocket in Kapok jackets containing sun hood and 11 oz. sealed can of water.

- e. Replacement of wooden water breakers with 11 oz. sealed cans of water.
 - f. Men expend minimum amount of energy in water. Men should stay in groups even though no rafts are available.
 - g. Smoke pots for use in daytime.
 - h. Leave cardboard separators out of flare containers and use space gained for more flares. Parachute flares replace present type so time of burning will be prolonged.
 - i. Several reflecting mirrors be furnished to each raft.
 - j. All rafts be equipped with radar reflectors.
 - k. All life rafts be “flat top” and “flat bottom” type because of discomfort in sitting on round type.
2. Again it has been demonstrated that a ship with such a small GM⁴ cannot survive underwater damage even though over sixty percent of the ship remains undamaged. List cannot be controlled fast enough to prevent her capsizing.⁵

Chas. B. McVay 3d [signed]

Chas. B. McVAY III.

Cc: CominCh (Advance copy), CinCPac (3 advance copies), ComCruPac, ComCru Division FOUR

From: CinCPac

To: CominCh

1. Forwarded.
2. If comment is considered appropriate, it will be included in CinCPac’s Monthly Report of Operations in the Pacific Ocean Areas for the month concerned.

G.E. Prall, By direction

Source: TDSC; “USS *Indianapolis* After Action Report,” 26 August 1945, Navy Retain File, NARA II, College Park, MD. Copies of the 12 August 1945 and 26 August 1945 after-action reports are also available in *Indianapolis* Ship History Files, Box 396A, Naval History and Heritage Command Archives, WNY.

The “Opinions” and “Recommendations” of the Court of Inquiry Board came after hearing five days of testimony from crew, port authorities, rescue pilots, and representatives from Admiral Nimitz’s HQ and Rear Admiral McCormick’s CTG 95.7. Convening just a week after the rescue for the purpose of broadly figuring out what happened to Indianapolis, the inquiry testimony is one of the best sources available to researchers. The proximity to the sinking and ongoing war also means that some facts related to intelligence, as well as Japanese accounts, were not available. The court identified the primary points of failure in the sinking of Indianapolis and the rescue effort—failure of Captain McVay to zigzag during good nighttime visibility, lack of a distress signal, misinterpretation of 10CL-45’s directive of reporting combatant ship arrivals, failure of Port Director Tacloban to bring non-arrival to the attention of higher command, failure of CTG 95.7 to inquire into Indianapolis’s non-arrival for training, and search and reconnaissance planes flying too high to spot small objects in the water. The court also recognized that faulty lifesaving equipment and vague operational procedures contributed to the loss of lives and recommended corrections. The court found that through his command decisions Captain McVay “incurred serious blame” for the loss and recommended that he face trial by general court-martial. It was recommended that disciplinary letters be placed in the files of Port Director Operations Office Tacloban and Commander CTG 95.7 for failure to communicate that Indianapolis was overdue.

Document 4.3: Opinions and Recommendations Presented by Court of Inquiry Board for *Indianapolis* Sinking

The court, having thoroughly inquired into all the facts and circumstances connected with the allegations contained in the precept and having considered the evidence adduced finds as follows:

FINDING OF FACTS

[...]⁶

OPINIONS

1. That the Operations Officer, on staff of Commander Marianas, considered the danger from submarines along the route “Peddie” practically negligible at the time *Indianapolis* sailed from Guam.
2. That visibility on night in question was good with intermittent moonlight.
3. That in view of all attendant circumstances including Fleet doctrine, sound operational practice required *Indianapolis* to zigzag on the night in question.
4. That regular patrols for damage control were maintained in *Indianapolis* on the night of her sinking.
5. That an adequate bridge watch and lookouts were stationed aboard *Indianapolis* on the night in question.
6. That the ship was in normal wartime cruising condition, condition of readiness THREE, material condition YOKE modified, immediately prior to the explosions.
7. That it cannot definitely be determined whether or not condition of water tight integrity prescribed by material condition YOKE modified, was being strictly observed.
8. That there is conflicting testimony as to whether there were one or two explosions, but the court is of the opinion that two major explosions occurred within in a matter of seconds, one forward of frame 15, the other at about frame 55.
9. That the origin of the explosions cannot be clearly established since testimony of survivors is contradictory and inconclusive.
10. That, due to the violence of the explosions, with resulting damage to radio installations, radio personnel were uncertain as to whether or not a distress signal actually left the ship.
11. The court is of the opinion that no distress message did leave the ship.
12. The court is of the opinion that delay in attempting to send a distress message was caused by:
 - (a) Loss of internal communications
 - (b) Damage to radio installations
 - (c) Some uncertainty regarding proper frequency to be used.

13. That deficiencies in life saving equipment reported by some of the survivors were in part due to conditions beyond the control of the ship, i.e., design and type of equipment furnished by the Department.
14. That first aid kits did not contain sufficient quantities of remedies for burns and for eye trouble caused by the salt water and fuel oil.
15. That insufficient or brackish water found in breakers might have developed after they were cast loose from the ship, or might have been the result of inadequate or insufficient inspections.
16. That standard life rafts and kapok jackets, due to their neutral color, are difficult to sight.
17. That testimony of Lieutenant Richard B. Redmayne, U.S. Naval Reserve, regarding immoral conduct of unnamed man in the “sick bay raft” was based on hearsay⁷ and, due to mental condition of that officer at that time, may have been imagined.
18. That certain testimony tending to incriminate Morgan, Eugene S., boatswain’s mate second class, U.S. Naval Reserve, regarding unauthorized use of water and rations which has been introduced is largely refuted by witnesses in Morgan’s behalf.
19. That failure of search planes on July 30 and August 1 to sight survivors in water in area where ship sank, while regrettable, cannot be attributed to carelessness or inattention to duty on the part of the plane crews in question.
20. That normal search and reconnaissance of the area where ship sank was being conducted at altitudes in accordance with prescribed doctrine, from which altitudes it was extremely unlikely that small objects on the surface of the water could be detected.
21. That the sighting of the survivors of *Indianapolis* was accidental.
22. That failure to inquire into the reason for non-arrival of *Indianapolis* at Leyte on schedule was primarily due to a faulty system which had grown up. This led to resultant complacency on the part of responsible personnel by reason of the instructions contained in Pacific Fleet Confidential Letter 10CL-45 and Commander Seventh Fleet Confidential Letter 2CL-45, pertinent paragraphs of which are quoted:

“The Commander of a Fleet Unit making a movement will not

originate a movement report. He shall, however, when the military situation permits, issue such supplementary reports as may be required to apprise those who need to know of:

- (1) Changes in orders or corrections of erroneous information contained in movement reports; and
- (2) Deviations from prescribed routing of more than 40 miles or changes in prescribed ETA of more than three hours.”

and

“Arrival reports shall not be made for combatant ships.”

23. That directive in Pacific Fleet Confidential Letter 10CL-45 regarding non-reporting of arrivals of combatant ships was intended to reduce heavy communication load and for security purposes.
24. That there was a definite belief in the minds of responsible personnel of Commander Philippine Sea Frontier and Port Director, Tacloban, that the prohibition contained in the directives regarding not reporting arrivals of combatant likewise prohibited, by implication, reporting of non-arrivals.
25. That the intent of Pacific Fleet Confidential Letter 10CL-45, paragraph 3(b), is that port authorities and others concerned be kept advised of prospective arrivals of combatant Fleet units. In case of unexplained non-arrival, the court is of the opinion that Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, expected action to be initiated by those concerned.
26. That it should be the duty of the Port Director to whom a ship is routed to account for her arrival or non-arrival.
27. That failure of communication personnel on CTG 95.7 staff to correctly decode Cincpac dispatch 260152 prevented CTG 95.7 having all possible information regarding employment of *Indianapolis* in the immediate future.
28. That attention might have been drawn to failure of *Indianapolis* to arrive at Leyte Gulf at appointed time, if those in charge of radio teletype tests had endeavored to communicate with her by other means.
29. That the most probable cause of the explosions was that the ship had been struck almost simultaneously by two torpedoes from an enemy submarine.

30. That the next most probable cause of the explosions was that the ship struck one or more mines.
31. That the least probable cause of the disaster was a series of explosions within the ship.
32. Although the court has been unable to establish the fact that the ship was torpedoed, it has expressed its opinion that the most probable cause of the explosions was torpedo hits. It has also expressed its opinion, in spite of conflicting testimony, that visibility on night in question was good with intermittent moonlight. The moon, in last quarter of its phase had risen at about 2205 ITEM.⁸ The court is, therefore, of the opinion that failure of the ship to be zigzagging at the time of the explosions occurred was a contributory cause of the loss of the ship. This opinion, however, cannot be given full weight for the following reasons:
 - (a) Possession of radar by the enemy makes tracking and accurate attack relatively simple, whether a ship is zigzagging or not, unless, in the case of a ship making fifteen knots or more, the submarine happens to be in poor initial position.
 - (b) If the ship struck mines or was sunk by internal explosions, zigzagging made no difference.
33. The court is of the opinion that failure or inability of the ship to transmit a distress message was the primary cause of delay in connection with reporting the loss of the ship and delay in initiating rescue operations.
34. The court is of the opinion that failure of any naval activity in Leyte Gulf to inquire into the reason for the non-arrival of *Indianapolis* was a contributory cause of the delay in reporting the loss of the ship and delay in initiating rescue operations.
35. The court is of the opinion that instructions contained in Pacific Fleet Confidential Letter 10CL-45 and Seventh Fleet Confidential letter 2CL-45, with particular reference to the following:

“The Commander of a Fleet Unit making a movement will not originate a movement report.

He shall, however, when the military situation permits, issue such supplementary reports as may be required to apprise those who need to know of:

- (1) Change in orders or corrections of erroneous information contained in movement reports; and
- (2) Deviations from prescribed routing or more than 40 miles or changes in prescribed ETA of more than three hours.”

and

“Arrival reports shall not be made for combatant ships.” were the primary cause of the failure of any naval activity to inquire into the reason for non-arrival on *Indianapolis* at its ETA.

36. That CTG 95.7 and Port Director, Tacloban, were action addresses on Port Director, Guam, dispatch 280032 announcing ETA of *Indianapolis* and, therefore, the court is of the opinion that responsibility rested upon these officers regarding arrival of *Indianapolis* at Leyte, or her failure to arrive. However, responsibility of CTG 95.7 regarding arrival of *Indianapolis* at Leyte was lessened because of his absence from port at the ETA of *Indianapolis*. The concern which he otherwise might have felt was further lessened by his failure to receive Cincpac dispatch 260152.
37. That although responsibility of Port Director, Tacloban, with respect to reporting non-arrival of combatant ships was not clearly laid down either in his orders or in any instructions or directives issued by higher authority, the court is of the opinion that responsibility did exist which is implicit by the nature of his duties.
38. That responsibility for delay in connection with reporting the loss of *Indianapolis* rests with the following:
 - (a) Lieutenant Stewart B. Gibson, U.S. Naval Reserve, for failure to bring to the attention of the Port Director, Tacloban, the fact that *Indianapolis* was overdue and that he had received no supplementary movement report setting a new ETA, or announcing a change of orders.
 - (b) Communication staff of CTG 95.7 for failure to decode Cincpac Secret dispatch 260152 which directed that officer to arrange ten-day training period for *Indianapolis* in Leyte area.
39. The court is of the opinion that a contributory responsibility for loss *Indianapolis* rests upon Captain Charles B. McVay III, U.S. Navy, for failure to order zigzag courses to be steered.

40. The court is also of the opinion that a contributory responsibility rests upon Captain Charles B. McVay III, U.S. Navy, for delay in connection with reporting the loss of that ship, due to failure to send out a distress message.
41. The court is of the opinion that no offenses were committed except as indicated in opinion 42.
42. The court is of the opinion that no blame for loss of *Indianapolis*, or for delay in reporting loss of that vessel, attaches to any officer or man except as follows:
 43. (a) Commanding Officer, U.S.S. *Indianapolis* incurred serious blame for failure to order zigzag courses to be steered on the night in question.
 44. (b) Commanding Officer, U.S.S. *Indianapolis* incurred serious blame for failure to send out a distress message.
 - (c) Operations Officer, Port Director, Tacloban, incurred blame for failure to bring to the attention of Port Director, Tacloban, the fact that *Indianapolis* was overdue.
 - (d) Communications staff of CTG 95.7 incurred blame for failure to decode Cincpac Secret dispatch 260152.
45. The court is of the opinion that the record of this inquiry contains matter of interest in the cases of the following officers, but not of sufficient interest to make them defendants or interested parties or to warrant further proceedings against them:
 - (a) Rear Admiral Lynde D. McCormick, U.S. Navy;
 - (b) Commodore Norman C. Gillette, U.S. Navy;
 - (c) Commodore Jacob H. Jacobson, U.S. Navy;
 - (d) Captain Alfred M. Granum, U.S. Navy;
 - (e) Lieutenant Commander Jules E. Sancho, U.S. Naval Reserve.
46. That all personnel losses and injuries were incurred in line of duty, and not as a result of their own misconduct.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The court recommends that further proceedings be had as indicated below:
 - A. That Captain Charles B. McVay III, U.S. Navy, be brought to trial by general court-martial on the following charges:

I. CULPABLE INEFFICIENCY IN THE PERFORMANCE OF HIS DUTY

under Article 8, Section 10, articles for the government of the Navy,

II. NEGLIGENTLY ENDANGERING LIVES OF OTHERS

under Article 22, articles for the government of the Navy.

- B. That a letter of admonition be addressed to Lieutenant Stewart B. Gibson, U.S. Naval Reserve, based upon Opinion 38(a) of this record of proceedings.
- C. That CTG 95.7, Rear Admiral Lynde D. McCormick, U.S. Navy, be directed to take necessary disciplinary action with regard to blame incurred by his communications staff.
2. That no further proceedings be had in the case of Morgan, Eugene S., boatswain's mate second class, U.S. Naval Reserve.
 3. That Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, include in Confidential Letter 10CL-45, instructions regarding reports of non-arrival of any vessel routed to the Port Director at port of destination.
 4. That since the rescue of the survivors in areas under search is an important wartime mission, altitudes at which aerial searches are flown should be adjusted with due regard to changing military situations which develop in the area under search.
 5. That in enemy submarine waters, ships without anti-submarine escort zigzag at all times without regard to state of visibility.
 6. That life rafts be provided with bright yellow tarpaulins for protection from sun and weather and also to attract attention.
 7. That first aid kits for life rafts, etc., be packed in watertight containers and that adequate quantities of remedies for burns and for eye troubles caused by fuel oil and salt water be provided.
 8. The court recommends that subject to the foregoing, no further proceedings to be had.

Charles A. Lockwood Jr.,⁹
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy, President,

George D. Murray,¹⁰
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy, Member,

Francis E. M. Whiting,¹¹
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy, Member.

Source: TD; “Findings and Facts of from 13 August 1945 Court of Inquiry into Loss of *Indianapolis*” in CINCPAC 1945 Flag Files, RG 38, Box 45, NARA II, College Park, MD.

Admiral Chester Nimitz, Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, disagreed with the court that the Indianapolis skipper should be court-martialed. While he felt that blame rested on McVay, he viewed a letter of reprimand as sufficient punishment. Nimitz also moved to file disciplinary letters to the Operations Officer and Port Director at Tacloban. He desired additional information from CTG 95.7 before choosing a course of disciplinary action for Rear Admiral McCormick. Nimitz also supported the court’s recommendation to clarify instruction 10CL-45 and implement a more rigid movement reports instruction to prevent such mishaps from happening in the future. On 11 August 1945, Nimitz had also increased escort requirements in his theater, reporting to Admiral King that “since Indianapolis all ships with over 500 persons aboard are escorted between Ulithi and Philippines regardless of speed.”¹²

Document 4.4: Admiral Chester Nimitz’s Disagreement with Court of Inquiry Findings

DECLASSIFIED

A17-24

United States Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas
Headquarters of the Commander in Chief

Serial 006596

c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, California

6 SEP 1945

The Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, does not agree with the court in its recommendation that Captain Charles B. McVay III, U.S. Navy, be brought to trial by general court-martial. He did incur blame for failure to order zig-zag courses steered on the night in question, and for failure to send a distress message immediately after the explosions. His failure to order a zig-zag course was an error in judgment, but not of such nature as to constitute gross negligence. Therefore, a letter of reprimand will be addressed to Captain McVay in lieu of a general court-martial.

The Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, considers that blame was also incurred by Lieutenant Stewart B. Gibson, U.S. Naval Reserve, Port Director Operations Officer, Tacloban, Leyte Area, for his failure to bring to the attention of the Port Director, Tacloban, the fact that the *Indianapolis* was overdue and that he had received no supplementary movement report setting a new ETA, or announcing a change of orders. A letter of reprimand will, therefore, be addressed to Lieutenant Gibson. Blame was also incurred by Lieutenant Commander Jules E. Sancho, U.S. Naval Reserve, Acting Port Director, Tacloban, for not reporting the fact that *Indianapolis* was overdue. Although he was only acting Port Director at the time of this incident, he cannot escape responsibility. A letter of admonition will be addressed to Lieutenant Commander Sancho.

It is noted that Captain McVay and Lieutenant Gibson were not designated defendants, as required by Section 734, Naval Courts and Boards. However, the court did accord them all the rights of defendants, including the right to make an argument in their own behalf, which Lieutenant Gibson did. Since they were each accorded all the rights of defendants, they were not prejudiced by the court's failure to refer to them as such. It is also noted that the court is of the opinion that the record contains matter of interest in the cases of the following: Rear Admiral Lynde D. McCormick, U.S. Navy, Commodore Norman C. Gillette, U.S. Navy, Commodore Jacob H. Jacobsen, U.S. Navy, Captain Alfred M. Granum, U.S. Navy, and Lieutenant Commander Jules E. Sancho, U.S. Naval Reserve. The court erred in failing to accord the rights of defendants to the above named officers. Statements have been obtained from each of the above, except Rear Admiral McCormick, and are attached as a part of the record in accordance with 736

(c), Naval Courts and Boards. It is not considered practicable to hold the record longer for receipt of the statement from Rear Admiral McCormick. When received by the convening authority, it shall be forwarded to the Judge Advocate General with a copy of this record.

The Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, is of the opinion that the court should have further investigated the matter of the receipt of CINCPAC dispatch 260152 of July by Commander Task Group Ninety-Five Point Seven on 26 July 1945, which ordered Commander Task Group Ninety-Five Point Seven to arrange a ten day training period for the *Indianapolis* in the Leyte Area. However, it is not considered practicable to return the record for such action. By copy of this endorsement, Commander Task Group Ninety-Five Point Seven is directed to take necessary disciplinary action with regard to blame incurred by his communications staff regarding above dispatch.

Recommendation number three is approved in principle.¹³ A revision of PacFleet Letter 10CL-45 providing for peacetime movement reports is soon to be published, and this revision will include specific instructions as to action to be take in the case of non-arrival vessels.

Subject to the foregoing remarks, the proceedings, findings, opinions, and recommendations of the Court of Inquiry in the attached case are approved.

C. W. Nimitz

Fleet Admiral, U.S. Navy

Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas.

Source: TDC; "Letter from Admiral Nimitz to Admiral King disagreeing with recommendation of Court of Inquiry to bring Captain McVay to trial by Court-Martial," 6 September 1945, Copy in CINCPAC 1945 Flag Files, RG 38, Box 45, NARA II, College Park, MD.



Figure 4-3. (L to R) Admiral Raymond Spruance, Vice Admiral Marc Mitscher, Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz, and Vice Admiral Willis Augustus “Ching” Lee Jr. photographed on board *Indianapolis* (CA-35) on 3 February 1945. The original photograph has been autographed by Admiral Spruance and Fleet Admiral Nimitz. Collection of Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, USN.

Official U.S. Navy Photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives. NHHC Photo Collection, NH 49705

The Navy launched a service-wide effort to learn from the Indianapolis tragedy. The extract from the Navy Bureau of Ships’ report below provides its expert analysis on how the ship responded to the torpedo hits, the progression of flooding, and ultimate reason for sinking so quickly. The report determined that there was nothing that the crew could have done to save the ship given its cruising condition and where it was hit. The liability of the older cruiser classes in comparison with those built during the war was also mentioned. The crew of a newer three-deck cruiser at General Quarters might have been able to save their ship under circumstances similar to those faced by Indianapolis.

**Document 4.5: Bureau of Ships 2 October 1945¹⁴ Report on
Indianapolis [Extract]**

Navy Department
Bureau of Ships
Washington 25, D.C.¹⁵

2 October 1945¹⁶

Subject: Loss of U.S.S. *Indianapolis* (CA 35)

Encl: (H.W.)

(A) Marked up Booklet of General Plans.¹⁷

[...]¹⁸

F. *Indianapolis* capsized and plunged by the bow as a result of progressive flooding forward. At the time of the damage, the ship was in material condition modified YOKE which provided for all second deck doors and certain hatches to spaces below to be open. Although survivors reported that attempts were made to close the W.T. door, frame 14, on the main deck and the armored hatch leading to the forward engine room, it is doubtful whether any doors or hatches in flooding areas were closed after damage.

Displacement at the time of damage at the reported mean draft of 23½ feet was slightly less than 15,000 tons. Corresponding GM as shown in the latest inclining experiment booklet was 3.31 feet, corrected for free surface.

The initial list presumably was caused by off-center flooding of stowage spaces on the second platform and the turn to port immediately following the hits. No explanation was given for the turn to port as no orders for a left turn had been given. As flooding progressed, water pocketed on the low side thus increasing the starboard list and at the same time the ship quickly changed trim by the bow. Although little definite information as to flooding below the second deck is available, the fact that the ship went down by the bow so rapidly is sufficient evidence of extensive flooding.

[...]¹⁹

Undoubtedly a majority of spaces forward of frame 59 (which includes the forward fireroom) actually flooded. Spaces directly in way of the hits flooded rapidly from the sea, while others flooded relatively more slowly. As

flooding progressed, free surface effect²⁰ in the various compartments, including fireroom No. 2 and the forward engineroom, probably was sufficient to produce a condition of negative GM which was the real cause of capsizing.

Thus with unrestricted flooding forward it was inevitable that the ship would capsize and plunge by the bow. If the second deck had not flooded, it is reasonable to assume that a state of longitudinal equilibrium would have been reached and transverse GM would have remained positive. The forecastle would have been under but the ship would have remained afloat.

G. The fact that *Indianapolis* was lost under such tragic circumstances was unquestionably due to the fact that doors in second deck bulkheads were open at the time of damage.²¹ The initial flooding undoubtedly was extensive, but could progressive flooding have been stopped on the second deck even as far aft as bulkhead 59 (the extension of the bulkhead separating the two forward firerooms) as assumed in Condition A described above and shown on the enclosure, the ship would have gone down much more slowly, if at all. It will be recalled that of the older heavy cruisers which survived one or two torpedo hits, including *Minneapolis*, *New Orleans*, *Portland*, *Pensacola*, and *Chester*, all were in Condition ZED with all General Quarters stations manned at the time of damage.

No criticism of the ship's personnel is implied in the above statements. She was traveling in an area presumably safe from submarines under conditions where General Quarters and Condition ZED were not warranted. It is a fact that for purposes of access in manning General Quarters stations the majority of doors on the second deck must be open when not in condition ZED.

H. This case serves to emphasize that the three deck cruisers of later classes have measurably greater power of survival under conditions of heavy damage than the earlier CAs with only two complete decks.²²

E. C. HOLTZWORTH [signed]

Cdr., USN.

D. B. RIVES, [signed]

Lt. Cdr., USNR.

[END]

Source: TDS; "Bureau of Ships Report on Loss of USS *Indianapolis*," 2 October 1945, War Damage Reports, Entry P1, RG 19, Boxes 30-31, NARA II, College Park, MD.

The Navy sent out notices to families that their Sailor or Marine on Indianapolis had been missing in action on 12 August. Many families could not accept what they were hearing as the news arrived over the following days. Charles and Ruth Donnor in Big Rapids, Michigan, were one of those families. The notification about their son, Radio Technician second-class Clarence Donnor, USNR, was especially confounding. The Donnors had spoken to Clarence since the Navy said that he had gone missing and knew that he was in the United States. Clarence's mother, Ruth, wrote directly to the Chief of Naval Personnel, Vice Admiral Randall Jacobs, to help the Navy resolve the error.

Clarence had been ferried to Indianapolis the day before she departed Mare Island, but within an hour of arriving onboard, he was ordered to return to shore. There Clarence learned of his acceptance into an officer training school at Fort Schuyler, New York. The new orders directed Clarence to arrive in New York no later than 7 September, superseding his former assignment to a radar center in the Pacific. Despite Mrs. Donnor's efforts to correct the record in Washington, errors crept into personnel records. Clarence's arrival as a passenger on Indianapolis was recorded, but his departure apparently was not. When the ship's final roster was recreated following the sinking, Clarence was the only enlisted Sailor on board listed as a passenger. Because he did not show up among the survivors in hospitals at Samar or Peleliu, Clarence was listed as one of the 880 killed on Indianapolis.

Because he was listed as killed on Indianapolis, when the Navy discovered that he was alive, Clarence's status was switched from "missing" to "survivor." This clerical error contributed to long standing discrepancies in Indianapolis casualty numbers.

The correspondence below from Clarence Donnor's personnel file, accessed by Naval History and Heritage Command in late 2017, finally brought the casualty questions to a conclusion.

Three hundred-sixteen Sailors and Marines survived the Indianapolis tragedy. Donnor's presence on the Navy's 1945 tabulations of missing and total onboard changed those totals from 880 to 879 and 1,196 to 1,195 respectively. This case is representative of the fog of war and inherent difficulties in casualty calculations. It must be remembered that 879 families did not escape the devastation that the Donnor family did.

**Document 4.6: Letters Concerning *Indianapolis* Passenger RT2c
Clarence W. Donnor**

PERS 53211-RMS

35815-A-877-209

12 August 1945

TELEGRAM

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Donnor

Big Rapids, Michigan

I deeply regret to inform you that your son Clarence William Donnor Radio Technician Second Class USNR is missing in action on 30 July 1945 in the service of his country. Your great anxiety is appreciated and you will be furnished details when received. To prevent possible aid to our enemies please do not divulge the name of his ship or station unless the general circumstances are made public in news stories.

Vice Admiral Randall Jacobs

The Chief of Naval Personnel

[END]

Big Rapids, Mich.

Aug. 13, 1945

Vice Admiral Randall Jacobs,

Chief of Naval Personnel,

Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

You sent us a telegram stating that our son, Clarence W [William]. Donnor R.T. 2/c [USNR], was missing in action July 30.

We are pleased to inform you that we have talked with our son since that date and also had a postal card and letter. He is now enroute to a naval school in New York.

We think that some mistake was made because of the change made in his plans at Shoemaker, California. He was taken to Treasure Island and from there ferried to the Cruiser *Indianapolis* to be a passenger to some island base in the Pacific. He had been on the ship but a half hour when the call came through for him to take his gear and go back to Shoemaker. There he was finally told of the further training he was to receive and to report to a naval school in New York on Sept 7.

We are surely happy to know he is safe and well. Perhaps this will help to keep your records straight.

Yours truly,

Mrs. Charles Donnor

[Ref 35815-A-877-209, Missing, Received Aug 17 1945]

[END]

Pers 5323a eq

24 August 1945

Mrs. Charles Donnor
Big Rapids, Michigan

Dear Mrs. Donnor:

This Bureau is pleased to confirm the information contained in your letter of 13 August 1945 concerning the welfare of your son, Clarence W. Donnor, Radio Technician second class, United States Naval Reserve.

Any anxiety you may have been caused by the telegram stating that your son was missing, is deeply regretted.

The Navy Department joins in your pleasure that your son is safe. By direction of the Chief of Naval Personnel.

Sincerely yours,

H. B. Atkinson
Commander, U.S.N.R.

Officer in Charge
Casualty Section

[END]

Source: TL & TLS [Mrs. Donnor's letter was a signed original]; "Correspondence Relating to Casualty Status of RT2c Clarence W. Donnor," Navy Personnel File of Clarence William Donnor, National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, MO. Street addresses have been removed from all family correspondence.

As Captain McVay faced a thorough Navy investigation and scrutiny of his conduct, he also had a responsibility to survivors and families of his lost crew. Captain McVay signed over 800 condolence letters in the months following the loss of his ship. McVay's letters came to families after notification from the Navy that their loved one was confirmed killed or missing in action. This letter to the parents of Seaman Second Class Alfred Patterson is representative of those posted by Captain McVay. A sampling of the responses to McVay's letters shows that many families felt gratitude that McVay contacted them regarding their loss. Frequently, families initiated follow-up correspondence, requesting further information on their loved ones and specific information on their service and death. Families also expressed their shock that the Navy had allowed such a disaster to happen. Sometimes they expressed disbelief that their Sailor had been lost.

Document 4.7: Example of Condolence Letter from Captain McVay

Pers-8249-LK

September 29, 1945

PATTERSON, Alfred Thompson, S2c, USN-I

My dear Mr. and Mrs. Patterson:

It is with great sorrow that I, as Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. *Indianapolis*, write you concerning your son, Alfred Thompson Patterson, Seaman second class, United States Navy, who lost his life as a result

of the sinking of the *Indianapolis* in the early morning hours of July 30, 1945.

The *Indianapolis* was enroute to the Philippines from Guam after a run which set a new speed record from San Francisco, and after delivery of an atomic bomb she was approximately 450 miles from Leyte when two heavy under-water explosions occurred on the starboard side forward. She filled rapidly with water through the gaping holes in her under-water body caused by this explosion and within fifteen minutes sank. Many men lost their lives almost instantaneously. The exact manner in which your son met his death is not known, but it is believed that he went down with his ship.

The first group of survivors were picked up Thursday, August 2, 1945, and the rest, of which I was one, the next morning, bringing the total to fifteen officers and three hundred one enlisted men. For days there-after the area where the ship went down, and where any possible survivors could be, was searched by ships and planes but no other survivors were picked up.

Nothing that I can say will lighten the burden which is yours at this time, but I do want you to know that your son had done his part in the team-work which made the *Indianapolis* an efficient fighting unit of the fleet.

The surviving officers and men of my command join me in the expression of wholehearted sympathy to you in the great loss which you have sustained.

Very sincerely,

Chas. B. McVay III
Captain, U. S. Navy

Mr. and Mrs. Alfred T. Patterson
Lorado, West Virginia

Source: TL; "Records Relating to the Sinking of USS *Indianapolis*," Condolence Letters, RG 24, Box 1, NARA II, College Park, MD. Street addresses have been removed from all family correspondence.

Carmellia Neu, the widow of Seaman Second Class Hugh Herbert Neu, corresponded with Captain McVay several times following his initial condolence letter. The loss of S2 Neu left a hole in the life of his wife and also left her with many unanswered questions. She saw her husband's skipper as the best source of information, but he was able to offer her little other than a photo and assurance that her husband could not still be alive. The correspondence continued into the period that McVay was undergoing court-martial proceedings in Washington DC. Mounting frustration came with each of Mrs. Neu's letters.

Document 4.8: Correspondence between Captain McVay and Carmellia Neu, a Wife of Deceased Crewman

Denver, Colo²³

Chas. B. McVay III

Captain US Navy.

Dear Captain.

you just dont know how much I have appraceate hearing from you.

It seem like yesterday that my husband and I has left Mare Island Calif. I still Can believe that Hugh is gone its one of the hardest thing too do. But I still have hope that he'll shew up some-place.

I just Can tell you how I feel. Sometimes life isnt worth living for. And I know that you understand Also know how you feel but those are thing that Can be helped.

Now Captain McVay if it isnt too much trouble for you I Could like to have a picture of Indeanoplois Cruiser also a picture of Hugh Class picture. My mother in law has a picture of his class on it 43-436 the number. Ill be more than glad to pay you for these picture for theyll mean so much to me.

I really would like to know more about the boys and just what took place. Their was so many defferent stories about the USS. Indeanoplois that I can hardly believe it. But if you find out more about please let me.

And I sure do thank you lot hoping to hear from you soon.

Your truly:

Mrs. Carmellia Neu

Denver Colo

[END]

Pers-8249-adc

October 17, 1945

My dear Mrs. Neu,

Today I received your letter requesting a picture of the *Indianapolis* and also a class picture of Hugh's.

Enclosed is the picture of the ship, but I regret to say that I do not know what could be meant by "class picture" unless it was taken when Hugh attended some service school. We do not have a copy here in the Bureau and we do not know where to obtain one.

I am sorry that I can give you no further information concerning your husband. All available information was contained in my letter to you of September 28, 1945.

Again may I express my deepest sympathy to you.

Very sincerely,

CHAS B. McVAY, III

Captain, U.S. Navy

Mrs. Carmellia Neu

Denver, Colorado

[END]

Denver. Colo
October 28. 1945
Chas B McVay III
Captain U.S. Navy.

Dear Chas:

I sure do thank you for the picture of U.S.S. Indianapolis.

Ill not be satisfied until you Will Answer my questions. I just Can believe And wont believe that my husband is at the botten of that terrible sea:

Now you said that you were 450 miles from Leyte. Was their Any Island near by that their was a chance of boys swimming to it. Was it nite or day time? If it was nite were the boys sleeping? And just where was Hugh at. I also would like to know, what was Hugh in. Top deck or botten Deck.

And you also said that most mens lost their lives instantaneously.

Now was Hugh one of these or was one of boys that died third or fourth days.

And you said also that their was no other survivors Picked up.

May I write too some of those survivors that were picked up, if they knew my husband. Are these survivors now in States or still in hostipal. And I also would like to know how Come that Indianapolis Cruisers was not escorted.

I wished I could talked too you instead of writing because their is lot more I like to know. It just dont seem right for so many boys losing their lives for something that they havn't done.

Mr. McVay you just dont know how its hurts to see the boys Coming home that my husband used too around with, and him not do. I just can tell you I feel. And if Hugh has lost his life "has you say" What have I too live for? this war will never be over with, if Hugh dont come home. I know you Can understand and know just how I feel. Because it hasn't been too easy for me, To think that he had to come war and lose his life

I just have a feeling that Ill hear from him soon.

I really dont think that no one know what become of all those boys.

And beenging you were one I just know what a feeling you had and still you dont knew if all those boys when down with this ship.

I have heard different storyis about U.S.S Indeanoplois. And it really Ashamed that it had too happen.

I hope I hear from you soon, and I am still in hopes and have lot of faith that some of those boys will shewed up.

Your sincerely:

Mrs Carmellia Neu

Denver. Colo

[END]

Pers-8249-LK

Neu, Hugh Herbert, S2c, USNR

November 9, 1945

My dear Mrs. Neu,

Your letter of October 28th in which you ask for further information concerning the loss of the U.S.S. *Indianapolis* has been received.

I will attempt to answer all of your questions as best I can from the known facts.

The *Indianapolis* was over three hundred miles from the nearest island when she sank and the water was over 1200 fathoms deep so I do not believe anyone could have reached land.

The ship sank shortly after midnight and so most men were asleep when the explosion occurred. Since all records went down with the ship, to my knowledge not even a scrap of paper was saved. I have no way of determining whether your husband was on the upper deck or below deck at the time the ship went down.

My statement about survivors meant to convey that in my opinion there could be no survivors other than the fifteen officers and three hundred one enlisted now known to be alive. That these officers and men were picked up over a twenty-four hour period and though a search was

continued for many days thereafter by both ships and planes covering a wide area no other person was even found.

There is enclosed a copy of the list of survivors and their home addresses. All survivors have been returned to the mainland.

I can fully understand how hard it is for you to overcome your grief and in this you have my heartfelt sympathy. I also know how difficult it is for you to believe I have told you all I know but when you realize that all this happened in a few minutes in the middle of the night and that we saved no records of any description maybe that will help explain why no more is known.

Very sincerely,

CHAS. B. McVAY, III
Captain, U.S. Navy

Mrs. Carmellia Neu
Denver, Colorado

[END]

Denver. Colo

Dear Captain McVay III

I thank you very much for list of survivors you send.

Now Captain McVay there still is a few thing I like to know on till than Ill not be satisfied.

What is the mystery behind U.S.S. Indianapolis Cruiser.

Why is pag 2 missing and there are suppose to be 316 survivors and their 308.

your storys to not Click together, there is something funny. Now if my husband is gone has you say. I want more details about him being missing. And if he is in hospital someplace, I also want to know.

I knew you feel the same way as I do if you were in my places.

I don't see why those poor boys had to suffer for something that they weren't to blame.

Yours truly?

Mrs Carmellia Neu

Denver.Colo

[END]

Pers-8249-LK

Neu, Hugh Herbert, S2c, USNR

December 10, 1945

My dear Mrs. Neu,

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter received several days ago concerning your husband, Hugh Herbert Neu.

All possible information concerning your questions were furnished in my letters to you dated October 17 and November 9. I regret there is nothing I can add to the information contained in my letters of said dates.

It is difficult I know for you to understand why we cannot furnish more information. However, when it is realized the ship sank in the middle of the night in a very short time and that no records whatsoever were saved, that may explain our difficulty in piecing together a coherent story.

I am enclosing a complete list of survivors with red underscoring at top of list that I hope will clear up the misunderstanding you have in mind regarding the survivors.

Very sincerely,

CHAS. B. McVAY, III

Captain, U.S. Navy

Mrs. Carmellia Neu

Denver, Colorado

[END]

Source: ALS and TL [all letters from Mrs. Neu are handwritten and signed, McVay's letters are typed]; "Records Relating to the Sinking of USS *Indianapolis*," Miscellaneous Letters, RG 24, Box 1, NARA II, College Park, MD.

Other families voiced frustrations and pressed Captain McVay for explanations. Letters from families asked McVay to explain how the ship sank, why it sailed alone, and why it took the Navy so long to mount a rescue. These frank and pointed questions capture the main controversies of the event. Because many bodies could not be recovered, many of the initial notifications gave a missing-in-action rather than killed-in-action status. This classification sometimes gave families a false sense of hope that their loved one might have been misidentified somehow, survived by being captured by a Japanese ship, or swam to a deserted island. The letters below provide examples of these types of questions and McVay's responses.

Document 4.9: Examples of Common Questions for Captain McVay in Next-of-Kin Correspondence²⁴

Oct 1st 1945

Charles B. McVay III

Captain U.S. Navy

Re: Pers-8249-eid

Robert Craig Barker RT 1/c

U.S.S. *Indianapolis*

Dear Capt. McVay:

Thank you kindly for your most welcome letter. It contained the most information I've received from the Navy.

The first week my husband was in Boot Camp we talked over the changes Navy Life would mean to us and that is when I learned to never say why. So now that the Navy says my Darlin is gone I feel I have a right to ask a few whys.

Why was the *Indianapolis* sent from Guam to Leyte alone? Why was she so long over due and no action taken? What caused the explosions?

I realize I'm only one of hundreds of thousands that are wondering what happened to their loved ones, I don't mean to be selfish or unreasonable, I'd just like the truth of the circumstances. If it cannot be told I'd appreciate knowing and you need not say why.

I know how you must feel living thru such a terrible experience and my heart goes out to you.

Thank you again

Very truly,

Mary Lou Barker
Los Angeles, Calif.

[END]

BARKER, Robert Craig, RT1c

Pers-8249-LK

October 8, 1945

Dear Mrs. Barker:

Your letter of October 1st which contained certain questions relative to the *Indianapolis* reached me this morning - I will answer such of your queries as I can.

It is my personal opinion that the ship sank as the result of two under-water explosions. These explosions could be the result of the ship hitting mines or by being hit by torpedoes - I have no facts and therefore can only guess as to which it was that struck the ship.

The other questions you have asked are matters of policy of which I have no knowledge and consequently would not have any information on which to base and answer.

I am sorry not to be able to help your further and am most appreciative of the kind and sympathetic vein in which your letter was written.

Very sincerely,

CHAS. B. McVAY, III
Captain, U. S. Navy

Mrs. Mary Lou Barker
Los Angeles, California

[END]

Mon Oct 1: 1945
Okemah, Okla

Capt. Charles McVay 3.

Dear Commander of the USS *Indianapolis*, received your letter of the 25th of Sept, the 29th. We know you are honest and sincere, about our son Wayland Dee Campbell shipfitter third class U.S.N.R. believed to have lost his life on July 30-45; But we are inclosing you a picture, taken from "The Grit Magazine of Aug. 26" in which we are sure that one of the survivors shown in this picture is our son we are marking with a cross on left sleeve now if it is possible we would like for you to investigate, the place and date and names of survivors shown in this picture.

We wrote the managing Editor of this magazine and he said because of censorship, he could not give places and dates, we are inclosing a clipping of the address of this paper, we will be very thankful if you will do what you can in this matter. Hoping to hear from in the future.

Respectfully

Mr. & Mrs. Alph Campbell
Okemah, Okla

[END]

Pers-8249-adc
October 5, 1945

My dear Mr. and Mrs. Campbell,

Your letter of October 1st, enclosing the newspaper clipping showing some of the survivors of the *Indianapolis*, reached me to-day.

The picture was taken on the Island of Peleliu the morning of August

6th, when all of us were transferred from the Fleet Hospital there to the hospital ship, U.S.S. *Tranquility*, which carried us to Base Hospital #18 on Guam.

I was among the survivors on Peleliu and I regret to state that your boy was not there with us.

There is enclosed the newspaper clipping and a copy of the original picture which shows more clearly the features of the man you apparently have mistaken for your boy.

Very sincerely,

CHAS. B. McVAY, III

Captain, U. S. Navy

Mr. and Mrs. Alph Campbell

Okemah, Oklahoma

[END]

Source: ALS and TL [letters from families handwritten and signed, McVay letters typed]; "Records Relating to the Sinking of USS *Indianapolis*," Miscellaneous Letters, RG 24, Box 1, NARA II, College Park, MD.

Catholic chaplain Lieutenant Thomas Conway, USNR, came on board Indianapolis in August 1944. He was well liked and respected by the crew for his kind heart and steadfast demeanor in battle. Conway conducted the funeral services on the deck of Indianapolis for the nine crewman killed in the kamikaze attack off Okinawa on 31 March 1945. During the ship's overhaul in the United States, Conway traveled across the country to visit personally the families of all nine Sailors. He made it off the ship when it sunk and was part of the largest group of survivors. Conway pushed his physical limits while in the water. For three days, he continually swam between groups providing spiritual solace, encouragement, and last rites. Delirium overtook Father Conway in the early morning hours of 2 August. After a period of wildly thrashing against fellow survivors, he slipped into a coma and was released into the sea while his shipmates prayed over him. This

letter from Father Conway's brother mentions his piousness, an attribute that McVay also notes. This correspondence also addresses the timing of the Navy's announcement of the loss of Indianapolis, which came on the same day as the announcement of victory over Japan. Many viewed this timing as an effort to bury the Indianapolis tragedy under V-J Day headlines. Captain McVay acknowledges the unfortunate timing, but shed light on the decision-making process behind the announcement and its poor timing.

Document 4.10: Correspondence Relating to the Death of Thomas Conway, Chaplain, USN

Mr. William J. Conway

Glendale 8, California

Oct. 18, 1945

Dear Captain McVay:

Thank you very much for your kind letter concerning my brother, Father Conway. I have been trying for some time to obtain some details, particularly from some of the survivors, but your letter was the first to throw any light on them.

I am still quite confused, however, since you didn't give the date of his death and you did say that he received a Christian burial at sea. Tom's record also states that he received the Purple Heart. Does this mean that he was wounded and died shortly after the ship sunk? If so, this isn't consistent with the report given by the news, nor a letter forwarded by the Military Ordinariate which gave his death as Aug. 2, from drowning.

Tom, wasn't just my brother, he was much more than that. Through every stage of my life he has been there sharing the joy and carrying most of the burdens. It is difficult to imagine that his physical presence is gone. It is more difficult to sustain the manner in which the Bureau of Naval Personell handled the whole situation. Although Tom never cared to be a hero, and cared less to have me make him one, I do beleive that he deserved a little more timely recognition than a nameless "Catholic Chaplain." The fact that the "Catholic Chaplain" had died was public knowledge two weeks before I had received any word other than he was missing. The fact

that our greatest Naval Catastrophe came along with the announcement of VJ day indicates that the Navy is most anxious to cover up.

It isn't Tom's death that hurts so much, for I know that death must eventually come to all of us, and there couldn't be a more fitting way for a priest to die than along with those for whom he had been ordained to serve. I believe I have a right to know more of the facts leading up to his death after the ship sunk. So please, as soon as you have the time available, will you give them to me.

I have another favour to ask and I hope you will grant it. The last time Tom was here he mentioned a letter you had written to the Bureau regarding the trip he made to the next of kin of the casualties of the Kamikaze attack. Would you please send me a copy of that letter if it is available?

I am enclosing some of Tom's memorial cards which I would like you to pass on to his fellow Officers (and to yourself of course), since I don't know how I can reach them. I have many more of them and will gladly send them to any of the enlisted men that would like one. I would very much appreciate hearing from any of the men.

Thanks again for your kind letter, and I hope that you have completely recovered from your ordeal. I am

Very sincerely,
William J. Conway²⁵

[END]

Pers-8249-LK

CONWAY, Thomas Michael, Lt., USNR

November 2, 1945

My dear Mr. Conway,

Your letter of October 18th in which you ask for certain information concerning your brother, Chaplain Conway, reached me a few days ago. I will attempt to shed what further light I can from the facts as I know them. First let me thank you for the Memorial Cards which I will forward on to the surviving officers as you suggested.

From what several of the survivors who were in the same group with your brother have said, it was concluded that he died from exhaustion, in his sleep, on the second day of August and the group said prayers as his body was committed to the seas. Commander L. L. Haynes (MC), United States Navy, our senior doctor whose home address is Fairfield Connecticut,²⁶ was in the group with your brother and may be able to give you further details.

Concerning the award of the Purple Heart. It is the policy of the Navy Department that the Purple Heart will be awarded posthumously by the Secretary of the Navy in the name of the President to any person who, while serving in any capacity with the United States Navy, since December 6, 1941 is killed in action or dies as the direct result of wounds received in action with an enemy of the United States or as a result of an act of such enemy. The underlined phrase would cover your brother's case.

I believe I can explain the coincidence of the announcement of the sinking of the *Indianapolis* on V-J Day. When the ship went down all our records went with her, to my knowledge we did not save even a scrap of paper. Thus a ship's muster roll of the crew had to be made up at Pearl Harbor, T.H., along with a roster of the ship's officers. This was done and the completed lists were handed to an officer who was flown to the forward area where he checked the lists with the survivors at the hospital on Samar, P.I. He then flew to Palau and checked the survivors there thence to Guam where I went over the list with him. This officer immediately left Guam by air for Washington where he arrived late Saturday, August 11th. The casualty section then prepared all telegrams completing them Sunday, August 12th when they were sent out. To be certain that the next of kin had received official notification that their loved ones were missing prior to learning through the press that the ship to which they were attached had been sunk thus leaving them in complete ignorance, forty-eight hours was allowed to elapse prior to releasing the story to the press. Thus it was I believe merely an unfortunate coincidence that caused the release to the press of the sinking of the *Indianapolis* to fall on V-J Day and not an attempt on the part of the Navy to cover up.

I have not been able to locate the letter you asked for and do not wish to wait any longer so will mail this to you and continue a search for the other letter which when found I will have copied and forwarded on to you.

With renewed sympathy.

Very sincerely,

CHAS. B. McVAY, III

Captain, U. S. Navy

[END]

Source: TLS; "Records Relating to the Sinking of USS *Indianapolis*," Miscellaneous Letters, RG 24, Box 1, NARA II, College Park, MD.



Figure 4-4. Father Thomas Conway delivers a sermon to Sailors on the deck of *Indianapolis* (CA-35), undated, USN.

Courtesy of United States Naval Institute—A. J. Sedivi Collection

The correspondence from Seaman Second Class Vernon Fleshman's family described how they dealt with their grief. It reminds readers that the Indianapolis loss came so close to the war's end. Fleshman's family wished Captain McVay no ill will, but instead acknowledged the enormous burden he carried for each lost crewman.

Document 4.11: Correspondence to McVay from Family of Seaman Second Class Vernon Fleshman, USN

Sunday P.M.

Sept 30th, 1945

Dear Capt. MacVay III and those men you command.

Your kind and thoughtful letter came to us Sat. and usually I can sit down and write most any kind of a letter, but yours finds me not only at a loss of words, but a quiet feeling comes over me, so to speak; I feel my son or rather I feel a sense of nearness you understand? that something anyway I have been waiting for; call it contact or whatever you may care to name the reason, but I have read over fifty letters & cards, papers and neighbors and close friends and until yours came I couldn't be sure I mean. "Hope burned low, being his mother, I am quite proud of my son and he rode, safely a dangerous cargo, fate took him on the return trip," Please accept my small effort to convey my full meaning and appreciation of your letter.

I am aware that you may have written hundreds of such letters and many more yet perhaps, but the fact remains I have my assurance at last from the only one left to write me.

Capt. MacVay, his youth and it being his first boat and sea Voyage does hurt me thru & thru, yes, our Blue Star has turned to gold and it had to happen the last week in the war; No doubt you have felt the agony of losing such a number of your command and seeing such a grand old Cruiser go down in a few minutes; Many a night you probably wake up and still see those, "port hooks" and that potatoe crate and it all.²⁷ I have

reviewed it from every angle, my clippings came from several states and so far I beleive I was priviledged to read most of the true accounts of this tragedy in your life and mine.

Our boy was baptized in the Bethany Baptist Church in K. C. Mo. while on his last visit and you may realize how I feel about that; he was saved by water; "Greater love hath no man than to give his life that others might live", just a boy, but he died like a man and Capt. MacVay all you and I can do is, Watch and Pray for we never know whose next, do we? Christ said he would come again & he will, the dead shall rise out of the sea also,

Vern's father spent 22 months in World War I in France.

May I close, hoping you are in fair health at this time and able to take up your official duties and how I hope your next assignment will sail under a luckier star or may we say a more Peaceful ocean.

Would you grant me a very special favor, that is of course, granting it is in your power. Could you locate me a picture of the boat that won that terrible war and took my boy. I want to frame it by his Photo either to hang up or stand near it in our home here.

Again I thank you,

Vernon's Mom and
Dad, Alva L. Fleshman
And Mae Fleshman

[END]

FLESHMAN, Vern
Pers-8249-LK
October 12, 1945

My dear Mr. and Mrs. Fleshman,

Your very kind letter reached me today. I appreciate more than words can express the understanding manner in which you have written.

I am enclosing a picture of the *Indianapolis* as you requested.

In closing, may I again express my deepest sympathy to you.

Very sincerely,

CHAS. B. McVAY, III

Captain, U. S. Navy

Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Fleshman

Raymondville, Missouri

[END]

Source: ALS and TL [letter from Fleshman family handwritten and signed, McVay letter typed]; "Records Relating to the Sinking of USS *Indianapolis*," Miscellaneous Letters, RG 24, Box 1, NARA II, College Park, MD.

Conviction and Clemency

The question of zigzagging became the central piece of the prosecution's case that Captain McVay had hazarded his ship, despite ample testimony that zigzagging would not have made a difference. An extract of McVay's testimony at his court-martial opens this chapter. Documents showing the decision to convene the court-martial and then sort out the findings are presented. McVay gave his testimony at the end of the nearly two-and-a-half week trial. Prior to McVay's testimony, Mochitsura Hashimoto, the Japanese commander of submarine I-58, testified that zigzagging would have made no difference in the outcome of his attack on Indianapolis. Decorated U.S. submarine captain Glynn Donaho, qualified by the court as an expert witness, similarly testified that if faced with a zigzagging enemy in the same situation as I-58, he would have merely altered his calculations slightly before launching his torpedoes and sinking the ship. He himself had sunk 23 enemy vessels during the war, all of which had been zigzagging. Extracted below is the portion of McVay's testimony dealing with his decision to cease zigzagging at nightfall, his understanding of U.S. Navy tactical doctrine, and his trust in his officers. McVay clearly felt that his officer-of-the-deck would have resumed zigzagging should he have felt the weather conditions required it, as had been done in the past. When pressed to answer if he specifically gave this order prior to retiring for the night, McVay answered in the negative because he thought it had been covered by standing orders. A statement made by McVay in his response to question 68 below ultimately foreshadowed the decision on the case, "I know I can not shirk the responsibility of command."

Document 5.1: Captain McVay's Testimony at His Court-Martial, 18 December 1945 [Extract]

The accused was, at his own request, duly sworn as a witness in his own behalf.

[...]¹

Cross-examination of Captain McVay by judge advocate:

42. Q. Were you proceeding singly and unescorted?

A. I was.

43. Q. Did you have any standing orders for the officer-of-the-deck to start zigzagging in case of clear weather and good visibility?

A. I did. I had in my standing orders the conditions under which the ship should zigzag. I did not specifically have in there to start zigzagging when the moon shown, when the visibility was good—I didn't have in there to start anything at any particular time. They were instructions as laid down in U.S.F. 10 Baker², the war instructions and such.

44. Q. Will you give the court the reasons for not zigzagging or causing a zigzag course to be steered on the night in question?

A. Will you read that again, please?

45. Q. Will you give the court the reasons—your reasons for not zigzagging or causing a zigzag course to be steered during the night in question?

A. To answer that question fully, I would like to go back to about 2100 when I was on the bridge, and the fact that I was on the bridge when the moon rose. The visibility was poor, and conditions were such that in my opinion we did not—conditions were such as not to require the ship to zigzag.

46. Q. If I understood your direct examination correctly, your order to the navigator to get off a distress message was given before the Executive Officer reported to you after the explosions occurred; is that correct?

A. I think you misunderstood—a distress message—

47. Q. I will withdraw that question, and make it a direct question. Was the order to get off a distress message given before the Executive Officer reported to you after his inspection of damage below?

A. The navigator did not—was not ordered to get a distress message off; the officer-of-the-deck had ordered that previously. The navigator was

told, when I knew the ship had to be abandoned, which was when the Executive Officer told me—he was told, as an added precaution, to send out that message because I could not determine whether a message had been sent or not.

48. Q. Did your watch standers have any orders, subsequent to your leaving Guam, with regard to zigzagging, other than what you have stated were contained in your standing night orders?

A. Well, we zigzagged on the 29th during the daytime and until it became dark.

50. Q. To whom did you give orders for such zigzagging?³

A. I can't recall to whom I gave them. It was routine to zigzag.

51. Q. By that I mean, what official capacity would the officer have been holding on the ship to whom you gave them?

A. Well, it was so routine to zigzag during daylight in good visibility, that I can not recall as—of course, the officer-of-the-deck would be responsible for it; is that what you mean?

52. Q. Yes. I am trying to establish to whom you issued the chain of orders from you—you make the decision and eventually the ship zigzags; to whom are those orders given?

A. I would tell the officer-of-the-deck, or if conditions were such that he thought the ship should zigzag, he would notify me that he had commenced zigzagging on his own initiative.

53. Q. You just said that if the OD thought the conditions required zigzagging, he could do it on his own initiative and then report to you?

A. Yes, if I wasn't out on the bridge where he could ask me.

54. Q. Did he have any specific orders which required him to do what you just said he would do—that is, the OD?

A. The standing orders required him to do that. Naturally, under conditions laid down in Fleet Orders and Doctrines.

55. Q. Did you at any time after the explosions send any messenger to the engine room with instructions?

A. I did not. I presume the officer-of-the-deck did.

56. **Q. Did you tell the OD, Lieutenant (junior grade) McKissick, to cease zigzagging during the second dog watch on 29 July?**
A. I told him he could cease zigzagging when it became dark. That was routine. I told him that.
57. **Q. What orders regarding zigzagging did you normally put in your night order book?**
A. Ordinarily, in the night order book, I would put moonrise: such and such a time; usually fifteen or twenty minutes prior to that time, commence zigzagging.
58. **Q. Do you remember what specific orders, if any, you gave on the night of 29-30 July in that regard?**
A. As I stated before, I told the officer-of-the-deck, I think Lieutenant McKissick, that he could cease zigzagging at dark, and there were no other specific orders given.
59. **Q. Were any of the ship's papers saved?**
A. None whatsoever.
60. **Q. Did you put the time of moonrise in your night orders on 29-30 July 1945?**
A. I can not recall whether it was in there or not. I myself did not put it in.
61. **Q. Wasn't it customary for the navigator to actually write the orders; you inspected them, and then if you approved, without any corrections, you signed them; was that customary?**
A. That was customary.
62. **Q. Did you cause a course to be plotted on a chart relative to your projected track, called "Contact Reports"?**
A. I did, or rather, the navigator did, and we went over them together.
63. **Q. Did you examine your routing instructions carefully before you departed from Guam?**
A. I did.
64. **Q. You did not, then, include in your night order book, as well as you can remember, any specific orders regarding zigzagging during moonlight on the night of 29-30 July?**

A. You mean was it written in pen and ink that they should?

65. Q. Yes.

A. As far as I can recall—no.

66. Q. Was the OOD required to zigzag unless you specifically ordered it?

A. The standing night orders covered that, as I have said before, that you zigzag during good visibility, bright moonlight, and the substance of that paragraph regarding zigzagging in the U.S.F. 10 Baker.

67. Q. If the OOD did not zigzag during good visibility, and it was your opinion that he should have, would the blame be on the OOD?

A. Will you repeat that, please?

68. Q. It has been established that it was a standing order and doctrine, if it was good visibility and the OOD didn't zigzag, and you came out on the bridge and noticed that—would you hold the OOD at fault?

This question was objected to by the accused on the grounds that it was a question of law and immaterial to the charges and specifications for which the accused was on trial.

The judge advocate replied.

The court announced that the objection was not sustained.

A. I don't understand the first part of that question.

The reporter read the question last numbered 68.

A. Well, I would probably censure the officer-of-the-deck for not zigzagging under those conditions, or ask him why he had not notified me if there was some question in his mind about whether he should zigzag or not. I know I can not shirk the responsibility of command.

69. Q. In your opinion, your standing orders were sufficiently explicit without an additional notation in your pen and ink night orders, to require the officer-of-the-deck to zigzag if the moon rose and visibility conditions were good?

A. They are the summation of U.S.F. 10 Baker regarding zigzagging, if that is clear.

70. **Q. I believe you testified, Captain, that you went out on the bridge about the time the moon should have risen, and that you did not see it rise; did you leave any instructions to be called when the moon was visible?**

A. No, I left instructions that I was to be called if any changes occurred in the weather conditions.

71. **Q. Did you know that in condition YOKE modified on the Indianapolis all the watertight doors on the second deck were open?**

A. I not only knew it, but was quite perturbed about it. It was an accepted risk that BuShips was also upset about.⁴

72. **Q. When you arrived on the bridge after the explosion, what did the damage control officer report to you?**

A. He did not have time to make a thorough inspection below decks. He had the supervisory watch and he left immediately and went down below, to the main deck, took a look, and came up and notified me that we were badly damaged in his opinion.

73. **Q. Do you recall whether he said anything further to you—anything further than that you were badly damaged?**

A. He said we seemed to be down by the head.

74. **Q. After you gave the order to abandon ship, did you believe there was time and adequate means for the order to have been passed throughout the ship?**

A. Since the public address system was out and all forms of communication were out, it would be, in my opinion, impossible to get word to every part of the ship by word of mouth in the short time available. We knew that there had been some flooding forward; we knew that people couldn't get access to places, and I, naturally, do not think so with the condition of communications that you could get word to every part of the ship in that short time.

75. **Q. At what time did you make up your mind the ship was lost?**

A. When the Executive Officer reported to me on the bridge that, in his opinion, she was sinking and that we should abandon ship.

76. Q. Did you personally order the word passed, “All hands abandon ship”?

A. I told the officer-of-the-deck to pass the word, “All hands abandon ship.” I personally told him that when the Executive Officer was standing along-side of me.

77. Q. Do you know what means he utilized to carry out your orders?

A. He had no means other than messenger.

78. Q. Was the boatswain’s mate there?

A. Well, I meant he had no means other than word of mouth to get that word about the ship. I don’t recall who was there at that time.

The accused did not desire to reexamine this witness.

Examined by the court:

79. Q. In your recollection, had the officer-of-the-deck on the Indianapolis ever started zigzagging when the need for that became apparent and then notified you of it?

A. Yes, not once but several times; they were brought up to do that.

80. Q. Then your doctrine as laid out in your standing night orders had been demonstrated effective; is that correct?

A. That is correct.

Neither the accused, the judge advocate, nor the court desired further to examine this witness.

The witness made the following statement:

I only want to reemphasize the fact that I considered the supervisor and officer-of-the-deck on the 8 to 12, and on the midwatch that night, competent officers, and I believe that if conditions had been such as to require them to zigzag they would have done so and informed me—that is, in their opinion if conditions were such as to warrant it, they would not have hesitated to notify me that they considered that they should.

Source: TDC; Extract from Court-Martial of Captain Charles B. McVay III, held in Navy Retain File, NARA II, College Park, MD.

Chief of Naval Operations Ernest King did not concur with the recommendations of Fleet Admiral Nimitz to place a letter of reprimand in Captain McVay's file in lieu of going forward with a general court-martial. He felt that Captain McVay's decision not to zigzag given the weather conditions at the time of the attack on Indianapolis was negligent enough for him to face trial. Initially, he decided to wait until the Navy Inspector General (NIG) could conduct a more thorough investigation into the loss before he made a decision on whether or not to have McVay court-martialed. The NIG investigation was launched mid-October 1945 and expected to last approximately a month. It is not known why, but Admiral King reversed course and moved forward with the court-martial prior to the completion of the NIG investigation. The orders placing Captain McVay under arrest and directing him to report to the president of his court-martial, Rear Admiral Wilder D. Baker, were issued on 29 November 1945. His trial was to be held on the third deck of what are now the offices of the Naval History and Heritage Command on the Washington Navy Yard in a room overlooking the parade ground of Admiral Leutze Park and what was then the commandant's residence. The charges and specifications of the case are presented below.

Document 5.2: Official Charges Brought Upon Captain McVay

NAVY DEPARTMENT

HOLD FOR RELEASE

UNTIL READ IN OPEN COURT MARTIAL

EXPECTED DECEMBER 3, 1945

To: Captain Thomas J. Ryan, Jr., U.S. Navy

Judge Advocate, General Court Martial, Navy Yard, Washington, D.C.

Subject: Charges and specifications in case of Captain Charles B. McVay III, U.S. Navy

1. The above-named officer will be tried before the general court martial of which you are judge advocate, upon the following charges and specifications. You will notify the president of the court accordingly, inform the accused of

the date set for his trial, and summon all witnesses, both for the prosecution and the defense.

CHARGE I

THROUGH NEGLIGENCE SUFFERING A VESSEL OF THE NAVY TO BE HAZARDED SPECIFICATION

In that Charles B. McVay, III, Captain, U.S. Navy, while so serving in command of the USS *Indianapolis*, making passage singly, without escort, from Guam, Marianas Islands, to Leyte, Philippine Islands, through an area in which enemy submarines might be encountered, did, during good visibility after moonrise on 29 July 1945, at or about 10:30 p.m., minus nine and one-half zone time, neglect and fail to exercise proper care and attention to the safety of said vessel in that he neglected and failed, then and thereafter, to cause a zigzag course to be steered, and he, the said McVay, through said negligence, did suffer the said USS *Indianapolis* to be hazarded; the United States then being in a state of war.

CHARGE II

CULPABLE INEFFICIENCY IN THE PERFORMANCE OF DUTY SPECIFICATION

In that Charles B. McVay, III, Captain, U.S. Navy, while so serving in command of the USS *Indianapolis*, making passage from Guam, Marianas Islands, to Leyte, Philippine Islands, having been informed at or about 12:30 a.m., minus nine and one-half zone time, on 30 July 1945, that said vessel was badly damaged and in sinking condition, did then and there fail to issue and see effected such timely orders as were necessary to cause said vessel to be abandoned, as it was his duty to do, by reason of which inefficiency many persons on board perished with the sinking of said vessel; the United States then being in a state of war.

JAMES FORRESTAL

[END]

Source: TDC; The Sinking of USS *Indianapolis*: Navy Department Press Release, Charges and Specifications in Case of Capt. Charles B. McVay III, USN, 3 December 1945, Copy in Navy Department Library, WNY.



Figure 5-1. Crowd at a rally in Leutze Park on the Washington Navy Yard during World War I. View looking south, with Building 58 at left, and Building 57 at right. Captain McVay's trial was held in a makeshift courtroom on the 3rd deck of Building 57, upper left section. At the time of the trial, Building 57 was used for ordnance inspection and instruction. It currently serves as the office space for the Naval History and Heritage Command. The view from the window of the courtroom overlooked Leutze Park and the residence of the Navy Yard commandant, once occupied by Captain McVay's father, Admiral Charles McVay Jr.

NHHC Photo Collection, NH 79428

Captain McVay's court-martial was open to the public and widely covered by the press. The most attention grabbing headline of the 16-day trial was the testimony of Commander Mochitsura Hashimoto, captain of I-58, the Japanese submarine responsible for sinking Indianapolis. It is unclear exactly who in the Navy led the movement to bring in an enemy combatant to give testimony against the U.S. captain whose ship he sank. Revelations of despicable acts done to Americans by the Japanese during the war led to a heated public outcry in the United States for bringing Hashimoto to Washington, D.C. Over 150 people packed into the courtroom the day of

Hashimoto's testimony. When it was announced that Hashimoto would take the stand, McVay's counsel, Captain John P. Cady, gave an impassioned objection. Judge Advocate of the court-martial, Captain Thomas Ryan Jr., acknowledged the objection, but allowed Hashimoto to testify after taking an oath both in Japanese and English to ensure that he could face prosecution for perjury.

Document 5.3: Navy Press Release Announcing Hashimoto's Upcoming Testimony

NAVY DEPARTMENT
IMMEDIATE RELEASE
PRESS AND RADIO

DECEMBER 12, 1945

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESS:

Commander Iko (also spelled Machitsura)⁵ Hashimoto of the Japanese Navy is scheduled to appear as a witness tomorrow in the General Court Martial of Captain Charles B. McVay III, U.S.N., former commanding officer of the USS *Indianapolis* (CA 35).

Commander Hashimoto, former commanding officer of the Japanese submarine *I-58*, was summoned from Japan by the Navy Department. He was unable to bring with him any official documents from the submarine because, he said, they had all been destroyed before the surrender of *I-58* to the United States forces at Sasebo about the middle of November.⁶

Commander Hashimoto will be asked to take two oaths when he appears in court. The first oath will be the one usually taken by witnesses, as provided by Article 41, Articles for the Government of the Navy, with the word "affirm" substituted for the word "swear," and the words, "This you do under pain and penalty of perjury," substituted for the words, "So help you God."

The Japanese oath, administered in Japanese court martials, follows: "I swear to tell the truth, neither adding thereto nor concealing any matter whatsoever."

Commander Hashimoto had been in command of the *I-58* from the time of her commissioning in September, 1944, until her surrender. He described the submarine as about 300 feet long, with maximum surface speed of 16 knots and maximum speed submerged about seven knots. The *I-58*'s complement was 119 men and 11 officers.

The *I-58* at first carried one aircraft but it was never used. Commander Hashimoto said the *I-58* later discontinued carrying it.

The Japanese Commander said that his submarine was never under attack from surface craft, but was bombed by American planes at Kure in the middle of June, 1945. He said the bombs fell fairly close, but the submarine was not seriously damaged. He said that he never suffered personal injury at any time during the war.

Commander Hashimoto is 36 years old, married, with three children, all boys, ages six, four, and two. His home is at Kure. The Commander was graduated from the Ita Jima Naval Academy⁷ in 1931. He then served on a destroyer and a cruiser, and in the so-called China incident in 1937, saw service aboard a gunboat and a minesweeper. In 1939, he went to a gunnery and torpedo school for three months then entered the submarine service where he remained throughout the war.

The Commander, who does not speak English, had never been in the United States before. He described his visit as "pleasant."

[END]

Source: TDC; "Official Navy Press Releases Dealing with Loss of *Indianapolis* and Trial of Captain McVay." Copies of originals are available in the Naval History and Heritage Command Archives, Washington Navy Yard, and Navy Department Library, WNY.

Hashimoto's testimony was somewhat anticlimactic. The slight and unassuming commander entered the courtroom wearing an ill-fitting blue-black suit, but gave a poised testimony. With no official records in his possession, Hashimoto, purely from memory, answered questions and marked coordinates on charts when requested. The critical piece of his testimony at the court-martial is presented below. When asked if it would have made any difference to him if Indianapolis had been zigzagging when I-58 encountered her, Hashimoto responded in the negative. Given the perfect attack position he found himself in, and within point-blank range, any competent submarine captain would have found success.

Document 5.4: Commander Hashimoto's Testimony at Captain McVay's Court-Martial, 13 December 1945 [Extract]

[...]

68. Q. Was the target zigzagging at the time you sighted it?

A. (As given by interpreter Commander Bromley⁸) At the time of the sighting of the target, there was an indistinct blur, and he is unable to— was unable to determine whether or not it was zigzagging.

69. Q. Was it zigzagging later?

A. (As given by interpreter Commander Bromley) There is no question of the fact that it made no radical changes in course. It is faintly possible that there was a minor change in course between the time of sighting and the time of attack.

70. Q. Would it have made any difference to you if the target had been zigzagging on this attack? [The question was repeated.]

A. (As given by interpreter Commander Bromley) It would have involved no change in the method of firing the torpedoes, but some changes in the maneuvering.

71. Q. How long was she on the surface when you testified that you first sighted a dark object? You said you crash-dived; how long do you estimate you were on the surface?

A. (As given by interpreter Commander Bromley) He estimates the time that elapsed from the sighting of the target until the time he was completely covered as fifty seconds.

Reexamined by the judge advocate:

72. Q. Did you use radar which was in your ship at any time in relation to the sinking of this ship about which you have testified?

A. (As given by interpreter Commander Bromley) The radar was not used from the time he submerged until the time – from the time he submerged, that is, until after the attack was completed.

73. Q. Please repeat that.

A. (As repeated by interpreter Commander Bromley) The radar in his ship was not used from the time he submerged until he had completed the attack.

74. Q. Which submerging do you mean?

A. (As given by interpreter Commander Bromley) The reference was intended to mean from the time he submerged after having sighted the target.

75. Q. Did the radar assist you in any way to pick up this target?

A. (As given by interpreter Commander Bromley) Prior to surfacing, the visibility was good. Because the visibility had improved, radar was used to search for planes and for a limited time to search for surface craft with no contacts.

The accused did not desire to recross-examine this witness.

Examined by the court:

76. Q. You testified earlier that your first estimate of the target speed was twelve knots; did you make an estimate in order to fire torpedoes?

A. (As given by interpreter Commander Bromley) He used the speed of twelve knots to fire his torpedoes, sir, a target speed of twelve knots. Subsequent to the firing, when a chart was made up, he revised his estimate of target speed down to eleven knots.

77. **Q. Were any observations made of the target after crash-diving?**

A. (As given by interpreter Commander Bromley) The target was observed after he crash-dived.

78. **Q. By what means?**

A. (As given by interpreter Commander Bromley) He made continuous observation using a night periscope.

Neither the judge advocate, the accused, nor the court desired further to examine this witness.

The witness said that he had nothing further to state.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

At this point the judge advocate stated that he had no more witnesses present to testify for the prosecution at this time. The judge advocate further stated that none of five men who had been expected to arrive this morning had reported in, but that at least one or two other witnesses would be present to testify in the morning.

The court then, at 2:35 p.m., adjourned until 10 a.m., tomorrow, Friday, December 14, 1945.

Source: TDC; Extract from Court-Martial of Captain Charles B. McVay III, held in Navy Retain File, NARA II, College Park, MD.

I swear to tell the truth,
neither adding thereto nor
concealing any matter whatsoever.

Mochitsura Hashimoto.

眞實を述べ何事をも
又何事をも附加せざる
事黒秘せず
折言ふ

橋本以行

Figure 5-2. Commander Hashimoto's signed oath. From exhibits section of court-martial.

Extracted from Court-Martial of Captain Charles B. McVay III, held in Navy Retain File, NARA II, College Park, MD

This report, published days after the trial, described its conclusion and what was to be expected in the months to come. At the end of closing arguments, and before deliberations began, Captain McVay's commendations and citations were read aloud, with the only blemish on his record the loss of Indianapolis. During deliberations, Captain Ryan recorded that the charge of negligence by failing to zigzag was proven and that culpable inefficiency by not issuing a timely order to "abandon ship" was not proven. Only the acquittal on the charge of culpable inefficiency regarding the timely order to abandon ship was announced. Silence on the first charge meant that a

conviction for negligence pending review by higher authorities. McVay left the courtroom knowing that his career was effectively over. The next step was waiting to find out his sentence.

Document 5.5: Report on the Conclusion of McVay's Trial

Army and Navy Journal

December 22, 1945

McVay Trial Ends

Finding that a charge of culpable inefficiency was “not proved,” a Navy court-martial on 19 Dec. concluded the trial of Captain Charles B. McVay, 3rd, charged with negligence in the loss last 30 July of his command, the cruiser *Indianapolis*.

The *Indianapolis* was sunk by a Japanese submarine in the Philippine Sea. She went down within 15 minutes after being hit, with the loss of 860 men of her complement of 1,196.

The court in its findings did not specifically state that it had found Captain McVay guilty on the charge of neglect. Sentence on the single conviction was not announced. It will be referred to the Secretary of Navy, who will make it public. This announcement is expected within a month or six weeks. Should the sentence as approved by the Secretary of the Navy carry a penalty of dismissal, it will be reviewed by the President and announced by him.

Meanwhile it is entirely possible that counsel for Captain McVay may submit a brief to the Secretary of the Navy in mitigation of the implied conviction and sentence. The Judge Advocate General of the Navy may also find errors of the law which would alter the court's findings. The court, or any member or any number of members may recommend clemency.

Finally, the Secretary of the Navy himself may set aside or mitigate the court's findings. The court rendered its verdict after deliberating two hours and 34 minutes, during which time it had lunch. Its findings were announced by its president, Rear Admiral Wilder D. Baker, who asserted that the court had found “the specifications under the second charge not proved.” He then said the court was open to hear any evidence in aggravation, mitigation or extenuation.

Capt. Thomas J. Ryan, Jr., judge advocate, said he had no evidence of aggravation. Capt. John P. Cady, defense counsel, then offered in mitigation Capt. McVay's record, and asked that commendations and citations it contained be read.

"I can say off-hand that the only unfavorable entry pertains to the loss of the *Indianapolis*," Capt. Ryan said. "In general this record deserves the classification of an outstanding record during the entire period of the accused's service."

He then read three commendations for McVay's service in connection with training of the District Naval Reserve in 1936-1937, and commendations from J. Weldon Jones and Francis B. Sayre for his services as aid to the high Commissioner of the Philippines in 1938-1939.

The prosecution contended that Navy regulations did not attempt rigidly to prescribe precisely what a commander's actions should be under all conditions requiring a zigzag course to be steered. Regulations are for guidance only, it was contended, the responsibility for their application being that of the commander.

It is understood that the court's failure to state findings on the charge of negligence is tantamount to an announcement of conviction, although there has been announced no official conviction as yet.

In his defense Capt. McVay testified that he gave no specific orders to zigzag the cruiser to escape enemy submarines the night it was sunk because in his opinion visibility was poor and conditions were such that he did not believe zigzagging was necessary.

Source: TD; "McVay Trial Ends," *Army and Navy Journal*, 22 December 1945, 558. Navy Department Library, WNY.

Many in the public closely watched the outcome of the McVay court-martial and called for leniency from Secretary of Navy Forrestal in the interim period between the judge advocate's verdict and the approval/sentencing from the highest levels of the Navy. Republican New York City Mayor Fiorello La Guardia shared his feelings about the case to Forrestal by forwarding the SECNAV a letter he had written to Captain McVay. The letter from Mayor La Guardia to Captain McVay showed an awareness of the internal punishment McVay must have faced in addition to whatever disciplinary decision might come from the Navy.

Document 5.6: Thoughts on the McVay Court-Martial from New York City Mayor Fiorello La Guardia

CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK 7, N.Y.

PERSONAL

December 26, 1945. A

Honorable James V. Forrestal
Secretary of the Navy
Washington 25, D.C.

Dear Jim:⁹

This is how many of us feel about the McVay case.

Sincerely,
Fiorello [signed]

Enclosure¹⁰

Discuss with Adm Nimitz and Adm Denfeld¹¹

[END]

PERSONAL

December 26, 1945. A

Captain Charles B. McVay, 3rd
Navy Department
Washington, D.C.

My dear Captain McVay:

This is from just one American, and there are millions of others like me, who continue to have confidence in you as a sailor, Commander and an American. I am at a loss to understand the entire proceeding. Had you been zigzagging in low visibility and your ship attacked, it would have been just as logical to blame you for lack of discretion in following a General Order. All I know of the hearing is what was reported in the press and I fail to find any affirmative proof that there were no enemy ships in waters where a zigzag course would have brought your ship. I suppose it's all in the game but not according to the rules as we have been taught to understand them. It must be hard to take.

You must consider yourself a casualty of the war, caught in a misdirected barrage. Your injury, though, is where it hurts the most and the Navy medics have no drug to deaden the pain. There is no penicillin to heal the wound. You will have to take it philosophically.

Best wishes to you and please re-learn how to smile.

Sincerely,
Mayor¹²

Source: TLSC; "Fiorrelo La Guardia to James Forrestal" with enclosure "Fiorrelo La Guardia to Charles McVay," 26 December 1945, SECNAV Public Correspondence Files, copies of originals in *Indianapolis* ship history files, Naval History and Heritage Command Archives, WNY.

A letter from wartime Captain Thomas G. Murrell¹³ to Forrestal suggested that many U.S. Navy officers made similar command decisions as Captain McVay, thinking that they were in the right, but were fortunate to avoid the worst-case scenario situation that McVay found himself in on the night of 30 July 1945.

Document 5.7: Appeal for Clemency to SECNAV Forrestal from Captain Thomas Murrell

Thomas G. Murrell
San Francisco, California¹⁴

January 11, 1946

Honorable James A. Forrestal, Sect'y of the Navy
Navy Department
18th and Constitution Avenue
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Capt. Charles McVay, U.S.N. is not a friend of mine; I know him. I doubt whether he knows me. He has always impressed me as being an unusually capable officer.

I am writing as a civilian with the background of service in World Wars I & II and as a war-time Commander of a combatant ship and later as a Division Commander.

I urge clemency for Capt. McVay. If he was guilty, most of your war-time Commanders were guilty, I among them. Even the Type instructions left, as I remember, some latitude for judgment as to when ships should zig-zag. As you know the evasive effect of zig-zagging was bought at the expense of reduced advance.

After twenty-eight years duty in the Navy and Naval Reserve the Navy is close to my heart. The civilians to whom I have talked have gathered the impression that Capt. McVay never would have been tried

had it not been for the deplorable loss of life following the torpedoing of his ship. Punishment of Capt. McVay will do nothing to bring back those who are lost, as you well know. Civilians with whom I have talked feel that others who were unfortunate in the early days of the war went unpunished and were even commended in situations where there was just as much culpability.

I hope that you will feel that my service in the Navy entitles me to express a hope of clemency for Capt. McVay.

Very respectfully,

T. G. MURRELL [signed]

[END]

22 January 1946

Dear Captain Murrell:

This is to acknowledge your letter of January 11th and to express my appreciation of the motives which prompted you to write as you did in urging clemency for Captain McVay.

The record of the General Court Martial of Captain McVay is still in process of review and has not yet reached me for action. Therefore, you can appreciate how inappropriate it would be for me to express an opinion at this time.

I am sure you can understand that during the time we were actually at war, it was impracticable to order court martials for all the cases where ships or lives were lost in circumstances where negligence might have been involved. This does not imply, however, that punishment was not meted out when considered warranted, although it did not acquire the unfortunate publicity which attached to Captain McVay's trial by General Court Martial.

I personally know of no similar case where the responsible individual was commended and sincerely hope that such was not the case.

In closing, let me assure you that Captain McVay's case will receive careful consideration by me.

Sincerely yours,
JAMES FORRESTAL

James Forrestal

Captain T. G. Murrell, USNR,
San Francisco, California.

Source: TLSC and TLC. Murrell letter signed, Forrestal letter typed with signature stamp; “T.G. Murrell to Forrestal,” 11 January 46 and “Forrestal to T. G. Murrell,” 22 January 46, SECNAV Public Correspondence Files, copies of originals in *Indianapolis* ship history files, NHHC Archives, WNY.

The findings of the Navy Inspector General investigation into the loss of Indianapolis launched by Chief of Naval Operations Ernest King were submitted to him and his successor, Admiral Chester Nimitz, two weeks after Captain McVay's court-martial ended. Days before, Secretary Forrestal had inquired as to the status of the report as well. The most extensive and thorough of all the Navy investigations into the loss, the NIG looked not only at fault for the sinking, but also for answers as to why the ship went unreported for so long. The investigation ultimately confirmed the verdict from the court-martial but more broadly assigned blame for the loss of life associated with the Navy's failure to notice that Indianapolis was missing. Perhaps the most important aspect of the report is in point 1 of its recommendations: "that the lessons now learned be disseminated to the naval services."

Document 5.8: Navy Inspector General Report on Loss of *Indianapolis* [Extract]

This report will not be issued to anyone without permission from administrative aide (now Capt. Dietrich) or Vice Chief of Naval Operations. Refer all inquiries to Off. In Chg. PO.¹⁵

1/23/46, Capt. McDill collected green & pink copies and said they would be in custody of Adm. Ramsay, VCNO.¹⁶

DUPLICATE COPY FOR THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

NAVY DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
WASHINGTON

7 January 1946

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS:

1. This report is submitted in duplicate in order that a copy may be supplied at once to the Secretary of the Navy, who has expressed his desire to see it as soon as it is completed.
2. The duplicate copy is supplied direct to the Secretary through the Chief of Naval Operations in order that he may secure the comments of Fleet Admiral King upon this report. It is believed that the Secretary will desire Admiral King's comment as he, King, prepared the original endorsement on the court of inquiry in this case, in which endorsement the suggestion was made that the Inspector General be directed to secure the additional information desired.

C. P. SNYDER [signed]¹⁷

[END]

Op-08 /OK
(SC) A17-25
Serial: 006p08

NAVY DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
WASHINGTON

7 JAN 1946

From: The Naval Inspector General.
To: The Chief of Naval Operations.

Subject: Investigation of the Sinking of the USS *Indianapolis*, and the Delay in Reporting the Loss of that Ship.

References:

- (a) CNO's directive to NIG, Serial 009p03, of 18 Oct. 1945.
- (b) NIG's Confidential Memo. to CNO, Serial 01p08, of 19 November 1945.
- (c) NIG's Secret Letter, Serial 001P08, to CNO, of 30 November 1945.

Enclosure:

(A) Facts and Discussion of Facts.

1. By reference (a), the Chief of Naval Operations directed the Naval Inspector General to:

- (a) Inquire fully into the routing chosen for the USS *Indianapolis* from Guam to Leyte and considerations governing the escorting of the ship on this trip;
- (b) Take testimony from certain additional survivors;
- (c) Investigate further the matter of the receipt of the Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet's despatch 260152, of July, by Commander, Task Group 95.7.

2. By references (b) and (c), the Naval Inspector General reported progress in the investigation, which is now completed. During the progress of the investigation, senior assistants to the Naval Inspector General proceeded to Pearl Harbor, Guam, San Pedro, and Marietta, Pennsylvania, and have examined 50 witnesses, many of whom were brought from considerable distances to Washington. The record contains over 600 pages of sworn testimony which is exclusive of that taken by the Court of Inquiry previously held in this case. Among the witnesses interrogated have been: Vice Admiral C. H. McMorris, Chief of Staff to CinCPac; Vice Admiral J. D. Murray, Commander, Marianas; Vice Admiral Jesse B. Oldendorf, Commander Task Force 95; Rear Admiral L. D. McCormick, Task Group 95.7; Commodore N. C. Gillette, Chief of Staff, temporarily in command of the Philippine Sea Frontier; Commodore E. E. Stone, Assistant Chief of Staff for Communications, CinCPac's Staff; Commodore J. B. Carter, Assistant Chief of Operations, CinCPac's Staff – as

well as key officers in various organizations concerned, including Captain C. B. McVay, eight surviving officers, and 21 key men of the USS *Indianapolis*.

3. The Naval Inspector General has reached the following conclusions in the premises enumerated in part (a) above:

CONCLUSIONS

(a) Routing chosen and considerations given to the escorting of the ship:

(1) Route “Peddie”, the only direct route established from Guam to Leyte, and which was used in routing the *Indianapolis*, was set up in a current directive issued by the Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, which appears to take due regard of the existing war situation and accepts certain risks as necessary. No other route was considered. Circuitous routes were available but were considered no more safe. The policy with regard to escorting was also set up by the Commander in Chief, Pacific, and was based on supplying escorts where most needed. In routing, escorting, briefing of commanders of routed units, and diverting of vessels, in the Marianas Area, the constantly changing war intelligence situation was given consideration by the Staffs of Commander, Marianas, and the Commander, Naval Operating Base, Guam. In the case of the *Indianapolis*, there appears to have been a failure on the part of the Surface Operations Officer, Captain O. F. Naquin, on the Staff of ComMarianas, to cause to be passed on to the Office of the Port Director, Guam, certain information of enemy submarine activity which was necessary in connection with the routing of vessels and the briefing of their commanding officers. Inasmuch as this failure of Captain Naquin prevented this information from reaching the Routing Officer and Captain McVay, it may be considered as a contributory cause to the loss of the *Indianapolis*. (See Facts, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 17).

(b) With regard to: (b) – Testimony from additional witnesses (survivors):

(1) The *Indianapolis* was well manned and organized, her officers were in the main experienced and competent and her crew well disciplined and as well trained as was possible under the conditions prevailing at the time. (See Facts, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 16, 18, 19, 21, 23, 25).

(2) The Communication Department of the ship was properly organized to meet this emergency and functioned as well as was possible under the circumstances. All reasonable means were employed to transmit distress messages but it is doubtful if these attempts met with any degree of success. (See Facts, 19).

(3) The Commanding Officer of the *Indianapolis*, Captain Charles B. McVay, III, USN, failed to exercise due diligence to safeguard his vessel and its personnel in the following particulars:

a. His failure to zigzag at night during partial moonlight and good visibility. (See Facts 11, 17).

b. His failure to exhaust all possible sources of intelligence regarding enemy activity in the waters through which he was about to pass. There was at least one message received in his ship regarding submarine activity, with which he was not familiar. (See Facts 9, 17).

c. Failure in the *Indianapolis* to use all possible means of passing emergency orders to its personnel; that is, by bugle and by the employment as messengers of all persons available on the bridge. (See Facts, 20).

(4) There were material deficiencies in emergency equipment under the cognizance of various bureaus of the Navy Department. Examples are:

a. Life rafts: No automatic or mechanical releases; no radar markers on rafts; no colored markers furnished.

b. Water supply: Outmoded wooden water breakers subject to leakage and difficult to prevent contamination of fresh water with salt water.

c. Medical supplies: Poorly packaged and in many cases water-soaked and useless.

d. Food supplies: Poorly suited to emergency conditions.

e. Probable cause of failure to communicate distress message – failure of power to radio transmitters. (Material deficiencies covered by facts 19, 20, 22, 23, 24).

(c) With regard to: (c) CinCPac's Despatch 260152 of July, and the delayed search for survivors:

(1) Communication failures played a vital part in the delayed search for survivors. Some of these were due to the fortunes of war, others were due to the rapid increase in the size of the Navy and the consequent inexperience and lack of training of personnel involved. Examples are:

a. The basic failure of the *Indianapolis* to successfully communicate to any vessel or station a distress message. This failure, while it must be ascribed to the fortunes of war, nevertheless should be considered in developing emergency radio transmitting equipment and in considering means for preventing loss of life at sea. If a distress message had been communicated, the loss of life and suffering of survivors would have been greatly reduced. (See Facts 19).

b. The failure to deliver to Commander, Task Force 95, Vice Admiral Oldendorf, despatch 280032 of July, from the Port Director, Guam, which left Commander Task Force 95 not completely supplied with information concerning the movements of the *Indianapolis*. He took no action because there was none he could intelligently take. (See Facts 31, 36)

c. The garbled transmission or reception the Flagship of Commander, Task Group 95.7 (Rear Admiral McCormick), of CinCPac Advance Headquarters despatch 260152 of July, which left this officer incompletely supplied with information regarding the orders given the *Indianapolis* and no reason to inquire where she was. (See Facts 30, 32).

d. The faulty general practice of ordering combatant units to one destination and then diverting them to another without giving information of the change to all interested commands, which fault was aggravated by communication failures. (See Facts, 39).

(2) The Combat Intelligence Unit on the Staff of the Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, failed to correctly evaluate an enemy report of an undetermined sinking in the area then being traversed by the *Indianapolis*. This report was completely processed about 16 hours after the actual sinking of the *Indianapolis*, but little credence was given the report as it was believed it was intended to deceive. There was no substantiation until

the survivors of the *Indianapolis* were sighted. This Combat Intelligence Unit under Captain E. T. Layton performed brilliantly during the war. Evaluating enemy reports into combat or operational intelligence is not an exact science. Errors will occur. (See Facts 7, 27).

(3) The Philippine Sea Frontier organization failed to follow up on the movement of an important unit of the fleet when that unit became overdue at a port under the cognizance of that command. The specific instances are:

a. The plot of vessels at sea was maintained at Tolosa, Leyte, for the Headquarters of the Philippine Sea Frontier, and at Guam for the Headquarters of Commander, Marianas. The *Indianapolis* was correctly carried on both plots and was scheduled to have arrived at Leyte at 1100, 31 July, Leyte time and date. Her marker was removed from the Guam plot when no news was heard from her and time had expired for her normal presence in the Marianas area, which is considered normal procedure with no blame attached. Under normal conditions no concern as to her non-arrival at Leyte would be felt until she was 8 or 9 hours overdue. Several additional hours would elapse incident to despatch traffic necessary to check her movements, so that in all probability search for her would normally not have commenced until she would have been approximately 24 hours overdue – that is, the forenoon of 1 August. The survivors of the *Indianapolis* were actually sighted at about 1025 on 2 August, Leyte time and date. Search action was never instituted by the Philippine Sea Frontier Command. However, her marker was left on the plotting board as having arrived in Leyte Gulf. (See Facts 26, 29).

b. Lieutenant Stuart B. Gibson, USNR, the Operations Officer under the Port Director, Tacloban, was the officer who was immediately concerned with the movements of the *Indianapolis*. He was cognizant of the fact that the *Indianapolis* was overdue but made no report of the fact to his superiors. (See Facts, 33).

c. The Acting Port Director, Lieutenant Commander Jules C. Sancho, USNR, at Tacloban, was not aware that the *Indianapolis*

had not arrived and that she should be considered as being overdue. This was a dereliction of duty on his part. In his capacity as Acting Port Director it was his responsibility to keep himself informed on such matters. (See Facts, 33).

d. This lack of appreciation of responsibility in this case on the part of these two officers, was largely occasioned by a directive of the Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, then current, which specifically prohibited the reporting of the arrival of combatant vessels. This was interpreted by Lieutenant Gibson as also prohibiting the reporting of the non-arrival of vessels of this category.

e. Provisions for the directive in question, which was prepared in CinCPac's Headquarters and issued by the Chief of Staff, Vice Admiral McMorris, USN, referring to reports of the movements of combatant ships, have subsequently been clarified by competent authority. (See Facts, 34).

f. While not excusing the failure of Lieutenant Commander Sancho and Lieutenant Gibson to use the initiative and good judgment expected of naval officers, the dereliction may be partly attributed to the weakness of organization which has been brought on by the exceedingly rapid expansion of the Navy to meet its wartime requirements. (See Facts, 33, 34).

g. In view of the volume of shipping which was being handled at the Port of Tacloban, it would appear that the important assignments of Acting Port Director and of Operations Officer of the Port should have been given to more experienced officers than was the case. Bearing in mind the lack of experience of these officers, it was incumbent upon their superior officers to exercise closer personal supervision over the manner in which their duties were performed than was actually the case (See Facts, 33).

h. The Commander, Philippine Sea Frontier, Vice Admiral James L. Kauffman, USN, had been absent from his command since the first of July, 1945, on temporary duty status in the United States. Commodore N. C. Gillette, USN, was in temporary command, and therefore responsible for operations pertinent to his assignment; it

was incumbent upon him to check up on the efficient operation of the organization set up by his superior whom he had temporarily relieved. The Operations Officer of the Headquarters Staff, Captain A. M. Granum, USN, was intensively occupied in diversion of shipping in typhoon areas and other operations. (See Facts, 35). These facts do not, however, relieve Commodore Gillette and Captain Granum from their responsibility connected with the failure of their subordinates to take appropriate action to ascertain the whereabouts of the overdue *Indianapolis*. The junior officers, who were directly concerned with this failure, were members of the organization which was being administered by these officers. For this demonstrated weakness in the organization under their control, brought on through their failure to give closer personal attention to the work of these inexperienced juniors, Commodore Gillette and Captain Granum must bear the responsibility, with Vice Admiral Kauffman, sharing the responsibility for any basic defects in the organization which were developed by events. (See Facts, 35).

i. The responsibility for the ambiguous order with regard to not reporting the arrival of combat vessels (10CL-45), which was prepared in the Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, and signed by Vice Admiral McMorris, Chief of Staff, must rest with that Headquarters. (See Facts, 33, 34).

(4) Planes on anti-submarine patrol are not effective as general lookouts for personnel adrift unless life rafts are provided with radar reflectors. (See Facts, 40, 41).

RECOMMENDATIONS

4. From the Facts, and conclusions drawn therefrom, there is no doubt that there were faults of omission and commission contributory to the loss of the *Indianapolis* and the subsequent suffering and loss of life due to delay in rescuing survivors. Responsibility extends from the Commander in Chief, Pacific, to the Lieutenant Operations Officer, Tacloban, and into the Bureaus of the Navy Department. It must be borne in mind that planning and preliminary

work connected with impending operations of great moment were under way and occupied the attention of all senior commanders, and they could hardly be expected to personally concern themselves with the constant whereabouts of a single vessel making passage from Guam to Leyte, although the organization and standing orders of the command and all its ramifications should have provided for all contingencies.

The undersigned has refrained from making any definite recommendations in this case as he was charged primarily with securing additional and clarifying information and amplifying the work of the original Court of Inquiry. He believes the task has been performed in an exhaustive manner and that subsequent action must be taken by high executive and administrative authority, after study of the subject matter submitted herein. They only must decide whether the exigencies of the situation require more than:

- (1) That the lessons now learned be disseminated to the naval service;
- (2) That the public be informed of the reasons surrounding the loss of the *Indianapolis* and the delay in rescuing her survivors; or
- (3) Whether admonishment or even punitive action be taken in the case of those responsible.

In any case, it is recommended that the Facts, appended hereto, be studied carefully before action is taken. The Assistants to the Naval Inspector General who made this investigation, and who are thoroughly informed of the subject matter of the testimony, including that contained in the record of the Court of Inquiry, are available to answer questions which may be raised in the study of the case.

C. P. SNYDER [signed]

[...]¹⁸

Source: TDS; "Navy Inspector General Report of USS *Indianapolis* Sinking," 6 January 1946, SECNAV/CNO General Correspondence Files, Entry UD16, RG 50, Box 2696, NARA II, College Park, MD.

Captain McVay's conviction stood and the sentence given was for him to lose 100 numbers in his temporary grade of captain and to lose 100 numbers in his permanent grade of commander. The seven members of the court unanimously remitted the sentence, however. They recommended that due to the "outstanding previous record of the accused, and our belief that no other commanding officer who lost his ship as a result of enemy action has been subjected to a court-martial, we strongly recommend Charles B. McVay, 3rd, captain, U.S. Navy, to the clemency of the reviewing authority." The appeal for clemency gained ground with higher authorities, and ultimately the same individuals who called for Captain McVay to face general court-martial chose to remit his sentence.

Document 5.9: Admiral King's Recommendation to Remit McVay's Sentence¹⁹

25 January 1946

From: Fleet Admiral E. J. King, U.S. Navy.

To: The Secretary of the Navy.

Subject: Record of Proceedings in the General Court-Martial in the Case of Commanding Officer, U.S.S. *Indianapolis* – Captain Charles B. McVay III, U.S.N.

Enclosure: (A) Record of Proceedings.

1. The record of proceedings of the subject General Court-Martial is returned herewith.
2. I concur in the recommendation of the Chief of Naval Personnel that the sentence awarded Captain McVay be remitted on the ground of his excellent record and the unanimous recommendation to clemency made by the members of the Court.

E. J. KING

FILE COPY

Source: TD; "King's Recommendation to Remit McVay Sentence," Papers of Ernest J. King, Box 16, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

In consideration of the outstanding previous record of the accused and our belief that no other Commanding Officer who lost his ship as a result of enemy action has been subjected to a court martial, we strongly recommend Charles B. McVay, 3rd, Captain, U.S. Navy, to the clemency of the reviewing authority.

Wilder D. Baker
Wilder D. Baker,
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy, President.

Paul S. Theiss
Paul S. Theiss
Commodore, U.S. Navy, Member.

William S. Popham
William S. Popham,
Commodore, U.S. Navy, Member.

Homer L. Grosskopf
Homer L. Grosskopf,
Captain, U.S. Navy, Member.

Heman J. Redfield
Heman J. Redfield,
Captain, U.S. Navy, Member.

John R. Sullivan
John R. Sullivan,
Captain, U.S. Navy, Member.

Charles B. Hunt
Charles B. Hunt,
Captain, U.S. Navy, Member.

Figure 5-3. Court's recommendation for clemency, page 384A of Court-Martial.

Extracted from Court-Martial of Captain Charles B. McVay III, held in Navy Retain File, NARA II, College Park, MD

The outgoing CNO, Admiral Ernest King, used the findings of the NIG investigation to draft a final statement on the loss of Indianapolis for SECNAV Forrestal to make. King's statement reinforced the findings of the Court-Martial Board, but also assigned blame to individuals for the non-reporting of Indianapolis. Fundamentally, King believed that a key point of failure was the placement of inexperienced naval reservists in billets that, ideally, needed individuals with years of naval experience. The rapid expansion of the service due to the demands of a two-ocean war and mounting casualties made such personnel decisions a necessity. Comments on Admiral King's draft were made by Edward Hidalgo,²⁰ Secretary Forrestal's special assistant. Hidalgo proposed some changes to the text below in a memo written on 2 February. He reasoned that Admiral King might feel differently about some of the points that he made if it were known to him that the statement might be released to the press.

Document 5.10: Draft of Proposed Statement for the Secretary of the Navy by Admiral King

26 January 1946

Memorandum for Secretary Forrestal

Subject: Loss of U.S.S. *Indianapolis*.

References: (a) Court of Inquiry re subject.

(b) Reports of Naval Inspector-General in amplification of reference (a).

(c) General Court-martial of Captain C. B. McVay, 3d, Commanding Officer.

1. My comments to you on reference (a) were submitted while I was Chief of Naval Operations. References (b) and (c) have become available since I was relieved as Chief of Naval Operations on 15 December 1945. This comment on all three references, in combination, is submitted at your oral direction.

It is inherent in organizations, large and small, that their efficiency depends on the efficiency of their personnel, individual and collective. The corollary is that the larger the organization the greater the number of its

component parts and the more likely that human errors will occur. The head of an organization has authority that carries with it the concomitant responsibility but he is, inevitably, dependent upon his subordinates to perform their assigned duties with intelligence and common sense. This whole matter of the unfortunate and regrettable loss of life in the *Indianapolis* can be attributed to a combination of “sins of omission” on the part of a few people. Any one omission, by itself, would not necessarily have had serious results but taken together these omissions had the gravest consequences.

While not excusing the failure of subordinates to use the initiative and ordinary good judgment expected of naval officers, derelictions during the war are, in some measure, attributable to the rapid expansion of the Navy which made necessary the use of reserve and of temporary officers in positions of considerable responsibility. Seventy-eight percent of the naval officers in the Pacific were reserves who, lacking the seasoning of experience that can be acquired only by years of service, could not be expected always to deal capably with all non-routine situations that confronted them. The consequent burden on officers of the regular Navy was tremendous and did not always permit the close supervision or the thorough indoctrination and training of subordinates that is essential to efficiency.²¹

Three matters connected with the loss of *Indianapolis* are pertinent. These matters are the absence of escort craft, the situation in *Indianapolis* and the long period (over 3 days) that elapsed before survivors were discovered and rescued.

Indianapolis was ordered to proceed from Guam (in the Marianas) to Leyte (in the Philippines) without escort, primarily because those available were needed for duties regarded as of greater urgency. Escort ships, particularly the larger types suitable for ocean service, were in great demand throughout the war. They were needed not only for antisubmarine protection, but also for use in anti-aircraft defense screens. Accordingly, it was the practice in certain areas (where air attack was unlikely) to sail cruisers and other combatant vessels unaccompanied, thus conserving available escorts for the protection of the more vulnerable ships, particularly troop transports. This was done in the Atlantic as well as in the Pacific. In the circumstances that existed at the time of her sailing I consider that application of

the practice to *Indianapolis* was justified, though, of course, hindsight makes clear that the absence of an accompanying vessel in this instance was a grave misfortune.

The commanding officer, Captain McVay, was tried by general court-martial and was acquitted of failing to issue and to see effected such timely orders as were necessary to cause the vessel to be abandoned, and was found guilty of “through negligence suffering a vessel to be hazarded”, in that, when torpedoed, *Indianapolis* was steering a straight course in violation of current United States Fleet Tactical Orders, applicable to all ships, which required that vessels zigzag during good visibility, including bright moonlight, in areas where submarines may be encountered. *Indianapolis* was within an area in which it was known that Japanese submarines might be encountered; the moon was up; the visibility was good enough for the Japanese submarine to make a successful attack, as demonstrated by events. While the general circumstances should have made it unnecessary for Captain McVay himself to order a zigzag course or to take specific measures to insure that his officer of the deck did so, the fact remains that the ship was not zigzagging and Captain McVay must, in the nature of things, be held responsible. The court therefore properly found him guilty of negligently exposing his vessel to an unnecessary hazard.

Account must be taken of the fact that the two officers who knew most about the matter did not survive the disaster. One of these officers was on watch as officer of the deck from 8 P. M. to midnight, the other was officer of the deck from midnight until 15 minutes after midnight, when the ship was torpedoed. Captain McVay had retired to sleep while the night was very dark and the ship was the, permissibly, on a straight course. Captain McVay in his written instructions (“night orders”) to the officer of the deck did not direct zigzagging if visibility improved. After visibility had improved some time after moonrise (10:30 P.M.), the officer of the deck did not so inform the Captain (it was among his duties, as specified in Navy Regulations, to report changes in weather), nor did he himself initiate a zigzag course. One can only speculate as to the reasons. Both officers concerned (the two that had the deck watch before and after midnight respectively) were experienced and presumably knew what should be done. However that may be, Captain McVay

need not be condemned too severely for trusting experienced watch officers to take proper action without specific orders, nor an officer of his outstanding record be punished too greatly in the absence of any knowledge of why neither of the two officers of the deck did anything when visibility improved.

The gist of the circumstances attending the delay in discovering the survivors is as follows: *Indianapolis* left Guam on 28 July, routed (by the Port Director at Guam) to Leyte. The Port Director at Leyte was informed that she was due on the morning of 31 July. When she failed to arrive, the operations officer in the Port Director's Office (Leyte)—Lieutenant Stuart B. Gibson, U.S. Naval Reserve—who was plotting the to-be-expected progress of the vessel, made no report to his superiors, who naturally assumed she had reached port on time. Two reasons were advanced for failure to report the vessel overdue. The first reason was that instructions issued by the Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet contained the phrase that “arrival reports shall not be made for combatant ships.” Lieutenant Gibson singularly interpreted this to mean that no report should be made if a vessel failed to arrive. The second reason advanced was that ships were at times diverted at sea without notice being given to the scheduled port of destination. It is a fact on the occasions a vessel, meeting a task force at sea, would be absorbed into the force without there being an opportunity to report the fact at once because of radio silence. Further, at times, vessels deviated from assigned courses to detour around typhoon areas (in response to broadcast storm warnings), or for other reasons, with ensuing delay in arrival. Consequently, the failure of a vessel to arrive on time was not necessarily an indication that anything had happened to her. However, failure of a ship to arrive as scheduled was not a matter that could be disregarded, and Lieutenant Gibson was at fault in not reporting to his immediate superior the fact that *Indianapolis* was overdue. Lieutenant Gibson's immediate superior (Lieutenant Commander Jules C. Sancho, U.S. Naval Reserve, who was acting Port Director) shares in the fault in that he was responsible for the proper functioning of the Port Director's organization.²²

The survivors of *Indianapolis* were discovered by a reconnaissance plane on 2 August. The plane was one of a number that were engaged in antisubmarine search between Guam and the Philippines. Due to the fact that these

planes were flying high in order to make the best use of radar in detecting submarines, several passed near the survivors without seeing them before they were finally found on 2 August. Rescue operations proceeded promptly after the first sighting of the survivors. Aircraft dropped additional rafts and picked up some of the men. A number of fast vessels were hurried to the scene to pick up the rest and to search the wide area through which survivors had scattered. Rescue of the living was completed on 3 August.

There was also criticism of life saving equipment. This equipment has been under constant improvement during the war. As a general rule it has been found adequate in other cases where ships have sunk. However, the experience of the *Indianapolis* crew demonstrated the need for further improvement. This matter has been, and is being, given the continuous attention of the Navy Department.

After review of the record of the general court-martial in the case of Captain Charles B. McVay 3rd, Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. *Indianapolis* at the time she was sunk by a Japanese submarine on 30 July 1945, and of all the attendant circumstances including his excellent record and the unanimous recommendation for clemency made by the members of the general court-martial, I think it would be appropriate to remit the sentence.

The Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet has reprimanded Lieutenant Gibson and admonished Lieutenant Commander Sancho, which appears to require no further action in their cases.

I speak for all hands of the Navy in expressing deep regret at the loss of life incident to the sinking of the *Indianapolis*, and in extending heartfelt sympathy to the families of those who were lost.

Source: TD; "Memorandum from CNO King's Office to SECNAV Forrestal Regarding Loss of *Indianapolis*," Papers of Ernest J. King, Box 16, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

After the Chief of Naval Operations and Navy Chief of the Bureau of Personnel endorsed the recommendations of the Court-Martial Board to remit McVay's sentence in its entirety, Secretary of the Navy Forrestal concurred. Captain McVay's conviction of negligence would forever be present in his personnel file; however, no official punishment came. McVay was released from arrest and restored to active duty. Once Forrestal's decision was made and no presidential action taken, the conviction became permanent. The non-sentence, the conviction of negligence, and its contributory association with the loss of a U.S. warship, meant that McVay would never command at sea again. The positive trajectory of his career was over. McVay's next assignment was as chief of staff and aide to Rear Admiral Aaron Stanton Merrill, Commandant, Eight Naval District, New Orleans and Commander Gulf Sea Frontier. He served in this capacity until his retirement in 1949. Upon retirement, McVay received a "tombstone" promotion to rear admiral.

Document 5.11: Forrestal's Remittance of McVay's Sentence

THE SECRETARY OF NAVY
WASHINGTON

20 February 1946

The record of proceedings in the foregoing general court-martial case of Captain Charles B. McVay 3rd, U.S. Navy shows that he was acquitted of (II) Culpable Inefficiency in the Performance of Duty, and convicted of (I) Through Negligence Suffering a Vessel of the Navy to be Hazarded. He was sentenced to lose one hundred (100) numbers in his temporary grade of Captain and to lose one hundred (100) numbers in his permanent grade of Commander.²³

The proceedings, findings and sentence are approved. In view, however, of the recommendations of the Chief of Naval Personnel and Fleet Admiral E.J. King, based upon the outstanding record of Captain McVay, which clearly evidences his long and honorable service, performance of duty of the highest order including combat service in World War II, numerous

commendations, and the award of the Expeditionary, China Service, Silver Star and Purple Heart Medals, and further, in view of the unanimous recommendation to clemency signed by all members of the court, the sentence is remitted in its entirety.

Captain McVay will be released from arrest and restored to duty.

James Forrestal [signed]
Secretary of the Navy

Source: TDSC; "Forrestal's Remittance of McVay Sentence," Attachment to McVay Court-Martial," Navy Retain File, NARA II, College Park, MD.



Figure 5-4. On 21 November 1945, Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal (center) announced that Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz (right) would replace Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King (left) as Chief of Naval Operations.

Official U.S. Navy Photograph. NHHHC Photo Collection, 80-G-701553.

SECNAV Forrestal and his staff scrutinized the technicalities of the McVay case closely before deciding the final outcome (see document 5.11 above) and announcing that outcome to the public. Multiple drafts of the Navy's official press release regarding the conviction of Captain McVay and decision to remit his sentence went through the offices of Admiral King and Secretary Forrestal. Included here are comments from Forrestal's special assistant, Edward Hidalgo, on the press release and the final press release distributed by the Navy. The thought process revealed in this memo to Forrestal demonstrated the technical legal issues involved in the McVay case, and the difficult decision that Forrestal ultimately needed to make about the case. Hidalgo made it clear in his comments that Captain McVay was not charged by the Navy for losing his ship, but for hazarding it by not zigzagging the night she was lost. The Court of Inquiry, Court-Martial, and the Navy Inspector General investigation all concurred on the issue of zigzagging. Forrestal apparently agreed with Hidalgo's opinion that it was not for him to overturn a decision made by the Navy Judge Advocate and approved by the Chief of Naval Operations and Chief of Naval Personnel. The final press release made clear that McVay was found guilty only of not zigzagging during a time when Navy doctrine said that he should have been. Forrestal's decision to uphold the conviction while remitting the sentence has consistently been the most controversial piece of the Indianapolis story. The notion that Captain McVay was the Navy's scapegoat for the tragedy is largely unfounded, as efforts were made to make sure the public knew that the captain was not to blame for the great loss of life.

Documents 5.12 and 5.13: Notes on Proposed Navy Press Release Regarding McVay Court-Martial and Final Press Release

13 February 1946

MEMORANDUM TO THE SECRETARY:

Attached is a revised draft of the McVay release. The changes appear in paragraph one. Additional thought indicated the necessity of clarifying the point

covered by the sentence “He was neither charged with nor tried for causing the loss or sinking of the *Indianapolis*” strictly from the viewpoint of fairness, it seemed reasonable to foresee an interpretation in certain quarters that the conviction on the second charge (as approved by all the endorsements) implied that McVay had been convicted for the loss or sinking of the ship.

In line with the foregoing the record has again been reviewed with particular emphasis on whether the alternative should be adopted of reversing the conviction on the second charge. Although the problem is not an easy one, it is believed that this alternative is not expedient. Although you have it in your power to reverse the conviction without advancing any particular reasons therefor, I consider this to be strictly a legal problem in which the Secretary of the Navy acts in a capacity comparable with that of an appellate court. Measured by this test there seems to have been sufficient evidence to support the court’s finding:

1. That McVay was responsible for the safety of his ship;
2. That the ship was not zig-zagging;
3. That in accordance with the U. S. Fleet Orders it should have been zig-zagging.

It is true that the causal nexus between the failure to zig-zag and the loss of the ship appears not to have a solid foundation. In fact, a good percentage of the testimony on this issue was given by a witness for the defense (Captain Donaho) who in effect stated that Zig-zagging merely increased the difficulty of an attack. The fact remains, however, that the technical charge on which McVay was convicted (as now further clarified in the attached draft) was that of “hazarding” his ship—not of causing its loss or sinking.

I discussed the attached statement with Mr. Hensel before his departure. I believe he would favor additional language to the effect that McVay was convicted of a super-technical charge, etc. It is felt, however, that such language would tend to lead into implications of apology for ever having tried McVay. I still feel strongly that we ought to stick to bare-bone facts without indulging in opinions.

Mr. Hensel²⁴ also felt that the release should be by the Secretary of the

Navy rather than the Navy Department. I can't feel very strongly either way on this point.

I favor omitting the words in the last paragraph —“Prior to the loss of the *Indianapolis* ”—as carrying a possible implication concerning his conduct during the disaster.

Admirals Gingrich, Colclough, Sherman, Ramsey, and Radford have approved the attached.²⁵

Your approval is attached for signature.

Respectfully,

Edward Hidalgo [signed]

[END]

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS AND RADIO FEBRUARY 23, 1946

REPORT ON COURT MARTIAL
OF
CAPTAIN CHARLES B. McVAY, III, U.S.N.
COMMANDING OFFICER, USS INDIANAPOLIS

Captain Charles B. McVay, III, U.S. Navy, was tried on December 3–19, 1945, by a Naval Court Martial composed of seven members. His trial followed the sinking of the USS *Indianapolis* by a Japanese submarine and was based upon two charges: First, inefficiency in failing to issue and insure the execution of orders for the abandonment of the USS *Indianapolis*: Second, Negligence in “Suffering a Vessel of the Navy to be Hazarded” by neglecting and failing to cause a zigzag course to be steered when visibility conditions and information concerning enemy submarines required him under current United States Fleet Tactical Orders to zigzag in order to minimize the danger from submarine attack. Captain McVay was acquitted of the first charge and therefore was cleared of responsibility for the loss of lives incident to the abandonment of the ship. He was convicted of the second charge. He was neither charged with, nor tried for, losing the *Indianapolis*. The sentence

imposed by the court decreed the loss of one hundred numbers in his temporary grade of Captain and one hundred numbers in his permanent grade of Commander. In view of his outstanding previous record, the court unanimously recommended clemency.

The proceedings, findings and sentence were found legal by the Judge Advocate General and were approved by the Chief of Naval Personnel. This approval, however, was accompanied by the recommendation that in view of Captain McVay's excellent record and the unanimous recommendation for clemency by the court, the sentence should be remitted and he should be restored to duty. Fleet Admiral King, Commander in Chief and Chief of Naval Operations at the time of the disaster in July 1945, concurred in the recommendation by the Chief of Naval Personnel. Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal has approved these recommendations and has remitted the sentence of Captain McVay in its entirety, releasing him from arrest and restoring him to duty.

Captain McVay has a record of capable and gallant service to his country. During World War II he had extensive combat duty; he received numerous commendations and the award of the Silver Star Medal for heroism in action and the Purple Heart Medals.

[END]

Source: TLSC; "Memo from Edward Hidalgo to James Forrestal Regarding Edits to Navy Press Release on McVay's Conviction," 13 February 1946. Photocopy of original from *Indianapolis* Ship Files, Box 396A, NHHC Archives, WNY. Originals in RG 80, NARA II, College Park, MD. And, TDC; "*Indianapolis* Press Releases," Navy Department Library, WNY.

The press conference held on a Saturday in the Pentagon marked the culmination of the Indianapolis ordeal for the Navy. It coincided with the final release of McVay's conviction and sentence remittance and the U.S. Navy's final report of the loss, Narrative of the Circumstances of the Loss of the USS Indianapolis.²⁶ In the press conference below, CNO Admiral Nimitz along with his Deputy CNO, Vice CNO, and Chief of Naval Personnel walked reporters through the Navy's final report and fielded questions. The

type of questions asked by the press foreshadowed the lingering questions that the Navy continues to face to this day—namely circumstances of McVay’s conviction. Nimitz assumed some responsibility for his role in the disaster as Commander, Pacific Fleet. He also reiterated points that he made at the very start of the investigations he initiated with the Court of Inquiry on Guam. He acknowledged that he had only recommended that Captain McVay receive a letter of reprimand instead of facing trial by general court-martial. Acting Port Director Tacloban, Lieutenant Commander Jules Sancho, USNR, received a Letter of Admonition and Port Director Operations Officer Tacloban, Lieutenant Stewart Gibson, USNR, received a Letter of Reprimand for their failure to bring the non-arrival of Indianapolis to light. These disciplinary actions were recommended by Admiral Nimitz following the Court of Inquiry. Two more punishments were announced by the Navy the day of the press conference. Operations Officer Philippine Sea Frontier, Captain Alfred Granum, and acting Commander Philippine Sea Frontier, Commodore Norman Gillette, both learned that they would receive Letters of Reprimand for not applying closer supervision to the inexperienced junior officers under their command.²⁷ On 9 December 1946, Secretary Forrestal made the decision to remove the disciplinary letters from the four censured officers’ files, sending them all an identical letter of notification.

Document 5.14: CNO Admiral Chester Nimitz’s Press Conference on McVay Decision and Closing of *Indianapolis* Investigations

MINUTES OF PRESS CONFERENCE

HELD BY FLEET ADMIRAL CHESTER W. NIMITZ

23 February 1946 – 0945

(Guests: Admiral D.C. Ramsey,
Vice Admiral L.E. Denfeld, and
Vice Admiral F.P. Sherman)²⁸

CAPTAIN CHAMBLISS: We are all in, Admiral Nimitz.

FLEET ADMIRAL NIMITZ: Well, gentlemen, we asked you to meet with

us this morning so that we can tell you all we know about the loss of the *Indianapolis* and to give you an opportunity for asking questions.

I will lead off with a letter which I received from E. Connelly, Burlingame, California.²⁹ Apparently it wasn't dated. Do you happen to know? I got it about two weeks ago.

THE PRESS: It's dated February 6. Copies were issued to us.

FLEET ADMIRAL NIMITZ: Yes. Well, they left it off of mine. It's addressed to me and says:

“Dear Sir:

We have searched the press and other publications diligently for acknowledgement by you, for your part in the mistake and inefficiency connected with the sinking of the USS *Indianapolis*. To date we have seen nothing.

On behalf of the 1,203 bereaved families [you] owe to us, and yourself to make a Public Statement.

We hold the Navy responsible for the loss of our son, which they refuse, so far, to do. When does the Admiral and officers at Guam and Leyte go on trial, or is this thing being whitewashed.

Sincerely,”

And then signed “E. Connelly.” That was the name. Now, my reply to that—and both of these are released for publication is:

“My dear Mr. Connelly:

I share profoundly your sorrow that your son was lost with the USS *Indianapolis*, as you informed me in your letter February 6.

As Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet and the Pacific Ocean Area, I carried the broad responsibility for all operations of the Pacific Fleet in the areas under my command. This included, of course, responsibility for both successes and failures. To the extent that a Commander in Chief should be held responsible for failures or errors of judgment on the part of subordinates, I must bear my share of responsibility for the loss of the *Indianapolis*.

There is no thought of exonerating anyone in the Navy who should be punished for his performance of duty in connection with the sinking of the *Indianapolis* and the attending loss of life.

I wish again to express my sympathy and to assure you that I am deeply sensible of your personal loss. In view of the large number of our citizens who have suffered deeply as a result of the sinking of the *Indianapolis*, I am authorizing the publication of your letter February 6 and this reply.”

In addition to the Court of Inquiry that was held subject to my order, the Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral King, sent the General Inspector and several assistants into the Pacific to make an exhaustive inquiry into this whole matter. As a result of his investigation, we have prepared a narrative which gives to the best of our knowledge all the facts in connection with the loss.

Admiral Sherman, instead of reading the narrative, will go over it page by page to give you an opportunity to answer questions, and we will endeavor to give you all information in our possession. We have no desire whatever, no intention, to hide anything or to prevent disclosure of our mistakes. I now turn the meeting over to Admiral Sherman.

THE PRESS: Admiral, according to this narrative, it says that within 16 hours of the actual sinking of the *Indianapolis* there was an indication that the Japanese had sunk a ship in the location where the *Indianapolis* was presumed to be. Was that indication from magic messages?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: What page is that?

THE PRESS: Page 5.

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: Before answering this, I'd like to suggest that after I answer this, that we then revert and go through it consecutively because I think we will clear things up better.

That indication was a partial breaking of a Japanese code as where something appears that was a word or a phrase that we could not break at that

time. In the breaking of codes, it is not a complete job. We will often get one piece and won't get the other, and then two weeks later you may pick up another code group and you go back and you find that message you only got a little sense out of now begins to make more sense.

THE PRESS: Presumably, that message or clause had come from the sub which she had contacted a little while ago?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: Yes.

THE PRESS: Would you think it is a safe assumption that it did come from the sub?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: I know that it came from the sub.

THE PRESS: Regardless of –

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: It came from a sub. Which one at that time – we didn't know that he'd sunk something and what that was we didn't know.

THE PRESS: He had sunk –

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: Yes. In other words, it was a report from a Japanese unit in that location, which had to be a submarine, and said that he had sunk something, and that was about all we could get out of it at that time.

Now, if we can, does anybody have anything on the – any question to ask about the first page?

FLEET ADMIRAL NIMITZ: In connection with the opening part of this narrative, I think it's important to understand the background of the situation as it existed at the time and the background under which we were working, rather sitting here in hindsight and looking at this thing with all the cards laid up. It always meets with different and perhaps better conclusions. Go ahead.

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: Well, let's turn to page 2 then.

THE PRESS: I think we are all pretty familiar with this because this was told in the court-martial, until we get down to the point where you explain the reasons behind it.

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: Page 3? Page 4?

THE PRESS: Admiral, at the bottom of page 3, I see they say the attack occurred during “good conditions of visibility.” As I remember it at the court-martial, there was some dispute about that. I remember Captain McVay said he came out from his cabin on the bridge and couldn’t see the deck even. Apparently, the Navy feels visibility was perfectly good.

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: I think it would be more accurate to say that after having the benefit of the inquiry, the Inspector General’s further investigation, and the evidence before the court-martial, that it seems to be well established that the visibility was actually good for that time of night and good within the accepted meaning of the tactical orders which differentiate between good visibility or high visibility at night and low visibility.

THE PRESS: Wouldn’t that make it all the more important the man should have zigzagged?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: Well, as you know, the finding of the court-martial was that the visibility was such that the requirements of the U. S. Fleet tactical orders which required zigzagging were applicable. That is the finding of the court.

THE PRESS: Well, this report, then, that is the final finding, as related to the narrative here, would seem to strengthen that direct fact.

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: Well, that is the opinion of the Court of Inquiry. That is the finding of the Inspector General and also the finding of the court-martial.

THE PRESS: Sir, what was the recommendation of the Court of Inquiry? Was it that Captain McVay should be court-martialed, or that he should be reprimanded?

FLEET ADMIRAL NIMITZ: The recommendation of the Court of Inquiry was that he should be court-martialed.

THE PRESS: Admiral Sherman, on page 3 here, this phrase, “At the time of her departure from Guam, the *Indianapolis* was not at peak efficiency” – does that mean mechanically the ship, or its personnel, which?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: Its personnel. You see, the *Indianapolis* had been in the Navy Yard and it was our practice, whenever a ship finished an overhaul and then had a considerable personnel turnover, to give her a period of about ten days to two weeks of operational training back on the coast – target practices and damage control exercise under way, and things of that sort. We did that wherever possible before the ships got out into the combat area where they couldn’t get that training as efficiently. In the case of the *Indianapolis*, it was decided to omit that training on the coast and to conduct it later so that we could expedite the arrival in the Marianas of the bomb which was dropped on Hiroshima.

FLEET ADMIRAL NIMITZ: And furthermore, it took into account the long passage at sea during which she could do a very considerable amount of training, not as effectively as they could with services on the coast, but they could do a great deal within their own resources to train themselves to meet ordinary emergencies that a single ship encounters.

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: Is there anything else on that third page that anybody wants to explore? How about page 4?

THE PRESS: There was no confirmation needed, Admiral, to remove a ship from its board (at the bottom of page 4) of arrival at Leyte – no confirmation needed to declare that it had arrived – say, assume it had unless information to the contrary was received – in the absence of information to the contrary?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: Well, that is what actually happened in Leyte. It was a fair assumption that a vessel had arrived as scheduled, that no information was received to the contrary providing that you could also assume – which was the case – that if the vessel failed to arrive, that you’d

be informed. The assumption that you can depend that a ship has arrived is necessarily dependent on the other assumption that if she does not arrive, you will be told.

THE PRESS: Sir, what is the value of this daily plotting? Is it purely an exercise in arithmetic? I mean, it is based on no known facts except the presumptive speed of the ship and route she's going on. I mean, what is the value of having the pin on the board for the *Indianapolis* if you're just basing it on the arithmetic of some junior officer in fleet headquarters?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: Well, to conduct operations at sea with the large numbers of ships that were operating then, and even in conducting our operations now, you cannot do it intelligently unless you have laid down on a plot the position of each unit as you estimate it. Now, during the war, it was always necessary to know where each unit would be under the orders that it had so that, for instance, if a submarine contact was made in the Atlantic or that one convoy got into trouble, then you could divert the other convoys, and without having daily reports as to where they are, you had a plot which showed the complete relative position. For instance, in conducting operations in the Pacific, we plotted not only the positions of our own forces, using the best information available, but we also plotted the position of enemy forces, using the best information available, and from that plot we could then make decisions as to what orders should be given that pertain not only to the handling of convoys, but to the handling of fighting forces at sea.

Now, the only bar to having more complete reports is, first, that if ships at sea open up and use their radios, they reveal their position, and secondly, that in order to get the most important messages, you have to screen out and eliminate all unnecessary radio traffic, and in a headquarters where messages are piling up in great numbers, if you can have a system by which you are informed where there is a change in plan for a particular unit, then you do not need to have them sending in messages which merely say that they are continuing to do what was planned for them.

THE PRESS: Sir, if you had decided when the *Indianapolis* was halfway to

Leyte to divert her to Okinawa, let's say, would the Philippine Sea Frontier have been informed of that change?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: Very definitely.

THE PRESS: Where were the headquarters of the Sea Frontier – Manila?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: No. The headquarters of the Philippine Sea Frontier were at Tolosa, which is on the island of Leyte, about twelve to fourteen miles south of Tacloban.

THE PRESS: Would there have been a security problem involved in notifying the Commander, Philippine Sea Frontier, since he's on the same island, that the *Indianapolis* had arrived in Leyte, if she had? What I am getting at is, unlike Cincpac at Guam, a message back to Guam saying, "The *Indianapolis* has arrived," does present a security question?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: Yes.

THE PRESS: But on the same island and the distance not being great and communications presumably being land-borne, by then would there have been security involved in reporting, well, from Guam to Cincpac, for example, from Yap to Cincpac, that the *Indianapolis* had arrived?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: No.

THE PRESS: Conversely, would there have been a security problem in a telephone call from the Leyte Port Director to the Commander, Sea Frontier?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: No. Actually what happened was that daily a list of arrivals and expected arrivals went from the Port Director's office at Tacloban, went by jeep, down to the Sea Frontier office apprising them of what was going on, and it was the failure of the Sea Frontier office to do anything about the fact that the *Indianapolis* was listed as due to arrive on two successive days and never did arrive. That failure is one of the contributing causes for the delay in realizing that something had gone wrong and that is the basis for the action taken in connection with the Sea Frontier.

THE PRESS: I can understand removing the pin from the board in the Marianas on the basis of your arithmetic, but I don't quite understand why they would remove the pin in Leyte purely on the basis of arithmetic.

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: They shouldn't have.

THE PRESS: I see it later says, "This was the routine method of handling the plot of combatant vessels." That's why I raised that question so specifically.

FLEET ADMIRAL NIMITZ: That is on the assumption that the people on that end are doing what they were supposed to do. They didn't do it.

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: To elaborate a little further, you have asked about the security considerations. The one thing that we do not want to have happen – for instance, in connection with security – we did not want the Port Director at Ulithi, for instance, to recite the list of the units of a carrier task force when they arrived because the codes available to a Port Director are a little lower grade than the ones that a task force commander uses, and there's no reason for having him put out a lengthy message when a task force comes into port.

THE PRESS: Well, Admiral, in view of the fact most of the lives lost in the *Indianapolis* were as a result of delay in picking up the survivors and not as a result of the sinking of the ship, is this considered a closed case, or will there be a further action against that Port Director?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: Well, this closes the action in that the operations officers in the Port Director's offices, and the Acting Port Director, and the operations officers directly above him, and the Acting Sea Frontier Command have all been reprimanded or admonished.

THE PRESS: What will that mean then? Does that preclude any further promotion of these officers? I don't quite understand what a Letter of Reprimand is going to mean.

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: Well, a Letter of Reprimand is a serious affair and it is made a part of the official record in the case of that officer, and it is one of the documents which is considered in connection with the

further advancement or the employment of that officer. It is considered along with letters of commendation and other reports on his performance of duty.

THE PRESS: Well, is that in practice now? Is that going to mean that this officer probably will not get any decent commands in the future, or won't get any further promotions, or is that to be decided without looking over his complete record?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: That is something which would have to be decided at the time by the officers who have to make such decisions, and they must take into account all of the circumstances and everything that is known about the officer.

THE PRESS: Sir, I notice that these last two, Sancho and Gibson, are Naval Reservists. Are they still on active duty?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: Gibson, definitely not. I am not sure about Sancho. It is my impression that he is not.

THE PRESS: Sir, I wonder if we could be told what these letters say? – I mean, how harsh a reprimand is and what is said precisely as to their responsibility.

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: Well, these letters of Reprimand and Admonition, like all others, recite the circumstances, point out the errors made, and state precisely the responsibility that exists. They then state that the document be made part of the official record and make reference to other provisions which entitle an officer who receives such a letter to file any statement that he cares to make and that also will become part of his record.

THE PRESS: Sir, who signs the Letters of Reprimand and Admonition?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: They may, in ordinary custom, be signed by the Secretary, by the Commander in Chief, or by other officers in similar positions. In this case, the letters to the two Reservists were signed by the Commander in Chief. The letters to the two regular officers were signed by the Secretary of the Navy.

THE PRESS: Which Commander in Chief?

FLEET ADMIRAL NIMITZ: I signed them.

THE PRESS: Admiral Nimitz, the then Commander, is what I was getting at.

THE PRESS: Who was Chief of Naval Personnel? I notice in recommending action here he is not named. Who was it then?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: That was Admiral Denfeld. You are referring to the recent action recommending clemency?

THE PRESS: Yes.

THE PRESS: Admiral, what is Commodore Gillette's current duty, do you know?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: He is in the – is it the Mare Island Hospital?

VICE ADMIRAL DENFELD: He's at Long Beach.

ADMIRAL RAMSEY: He is attached to Terminal Island. He is under –

VICE ADMIRAL DENFELD: –awaiting assignment.

ADMIRAL RAMSEY (Continuing): Rear Admiral Wilson.

THE PRESS: I didn't catch that, Admiral.

ADMIRAL RAMSEY: I say he is attached to an activity at Terminal Island in California.

THE PRESS: What kind of an assignment is he likely to get?

FLEET ADMIRAL NIMITZ: I would suggest we let Denfeld, the Chief of Personnel – Denfeld, suppose you give the group – go back a little bit – go back to our promotion system, which is by selection, and the effect of Letters of Reprimand and Admonition, how such letters affect their future assignments.

VICE ADMIRAL DENFELD: Of course, in normal selection processes in peacetime, everything goes before the selection boards – all their records,

anything for them or against them, their physical records, their health records – and everything is taken into consideration, and under normal circumstances I would say that anybody who had a letter of Reprimand similar to the ones that these officers had received, that they would not be selected for promotion.

THE PRESS: Well, does the letter contain anything precisely, as the Secretary's letter did in the cases of Admiral Kimmel and Admiral Stark, which is a statement by the Secretary that never again shall they hold positions involving responsibility, I think?

VICE ADMIRAL DENFELD: No, as far as I know, these letters do not contain anything like that.

THE PRESS: Admiral Denfeld, my specific question on both Gillette and Granum is what future assignments are they likely to get? What kind of assignments? Will they get command of ships or will they be out in the sticks some place?

VICE ADMIRAL DENFELD: I think they will be in the continental United States on some duty. I don't think they will get any –

THE PRESS: Admiral Denfeld, would you say that Captain McVay's record has suffered more seriously than that of these other gentlemen?

VICE ADMIRAL DENFELD: Well, that's all relative. I think that Captain McVay's as a result of this, will probably. While he will be restored to duty and subject to any assignment which we might give him, I question that he will ever get a command of great responsibility as a result of this.

THE PRESS: The effect of remitting a hundred numbers doesn't make it any more likely that he will get a flag, does it?

VICE ADMIRAL DENFELD: Oh no, no.

THE PRESS: Admiral, comparatively speaking, how severe is the dropping of a hundred numbers as a sentence?

VICE ADMIRAL DENFELD: Well, the dropping of a hundred numbers

in the case of a captain going up to promotion of rear admiral – in normal times, it would mean that he wouldn't be considered for probably three or four years beyond the time of when he would normally be considered for selection.

THE PRESS: I was thinking, sir, rather of other cases – I mean other court-martials. Is a hundred numbers a rather severe sentence?

VICE ADMIRAL DENFELD: It is a severe sentence for a captain. Of course, it's all relative in different ranks. In the junior rank it wouldn't mean so much as it would in the senior rank.

THE PRESS: Sir, it is my understanding that he is not going to be set back a hundred numbers.

VICE ADMIRAL DENFELD: That is correct.

THE PRESS: Did you ever know of a captain who had a court-martial record who got a flag?

VICE ADMIRAL DENFELD: I think we have had cases.

FLEET ADMIRAL NIMITZ: Here's one right here! (Laughter).

VICE ADMIRAL DENFELD: It all depends on how serious the court-martial is.

FLEET ADMIRAL NIMITZ: I was court-martialed as an ensign for running the USS *Decatur*, an old destroyer, ashore.

THE PRESS: Where was that, sir?

FLEET ADMIRAL NIMITZ: In the Philippines, in the Batangas Harbor, about 1908.

THE PRESS: Sir, to return to the narrative account –

FLEET ADMIRAL NIMITZ: I was reprimanded for that. My ship was not damaged, but I was reprimanded.

THE PRESS: To return to the narrative account, all the way though – this is

quite apart from the normal expected arrival time of the *Indianapolis* – there's been at issue a dispatch sent from Guam, requesting a plane to come out with a target so the *Indianapolis* could shoot her way into port. Remember, we asked you about that on Guam the first time we talked to you after the *Indianapolis* went down? Was that message sent? Did it arrive? Did the aircraft go out? Obviously, it didn't find her.

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: Well now, first there was a message which was sent from Guam which did reach Admiral Oldendorf at Okinawa, which should have reached Admiral McCormick off Leyte, which contained the instructions from Cincpac for the movements of the ship, and that message failed to reach Admiral McCormick because the address was garbled. If the text had been garbled, he could have asked for a repeat on it, but the address was garbled. Therefore, it was not even decoded on his ship. Now, the message which asked for the specific arrangements, as far as I know, there is no record of that message actually ever being sent, and that message was to have originated, I believe, from the *Indianapolis*.

THE PRESS: She was to have broken radio silence?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: It was Captain McVay's intention that that message be sent.

THE PRESS: Be sent from the *Indianapolis* after she left?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: It is my belief – and if you want precise information on this, I will dig it out for you, but it is my belief that the message actually never was sent, although it had been Captain McVay's intention that such a request should be made.

THE PRESS: Well, after he was picked out of the water, he talked as though it had been sent.

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: Yes.

THE PRESS: And he expressed at that time the feeling that the fact that the target plane did not find him, quite apart from arithmetic again, certainly indicated to Leyte or somebody that he wasn't around, and I notice that is

not mentioned at all in the summary, though it is mentioned in the early part of his dispatching orders.

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: Dispatch? There is no record that any such message was sent, and I have discussed that personally with Captain McVay, and my impression that the message actually was not sent was confirmed.

THE PRESS: Of course, there was no aircraft sent out?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: Yes. I may say that Captain McVay has seen this narrative. I showed it to him before it was used and told him I did not want inadvertently to have anything in there which he would take issue with or which would in any way place him unnecessarily in an unfavorable light, or his ship, or any of his officers or men, and he has been through this and did not take exception to any of it except, of course, that we had the understanding that he had plead “Not guilty” and was not agreeing to the finding of the court and that sort of thing, but I mean this accessory thing.

THE PRESS: There was no aircraft out looking for the ship at 6 a.m. the morning of the 31st?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: No.

THE PRESS: Admiral Denfeld, I notice you say there is a question whether McVay will be given an important position. Does that hold, despite the fact that the whole sentence was remitted and still stands as a black mark against him?

VICE ADMIRAL DENFELD: Well, of course, anybody that has a court-martial and has lost his ship –there is always a question whether he will give him another one or not.

FLEET ADMIRAL NIMITZ: He was convicted on one charge there, I believe. The conviction was not remitted; the sentence was remitted.

THE PRESS: Admiral Sherman, what was the relationship of the Philippine Sea Frontier in the chain of command?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: Well, to explain that properly, I will have to go back to the beginning because there were some changes made during the period of the war. The Philippine Sea Frontier was originally established shortly after we retook the Philippines as a part of Admiral Kinkaid's command, Admiral Kinkaid then being the Commander of the Seventh Fleet. Now, for purposes of naval administration, Admiral Kinkaid was responsible directly to the Commander in Chief, U. S. Fleet, in Washington. Operationally, Admiral Kinkaid was responsible to General MacArthur, as Commander in Chief of the Southwest Pacific, and General MacArthur again was operationally responsible to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Then, in early April, a general administrative reorganization took place by which the Seventh Fleet and the Sea Frontier which had then been set up and organized were transferred to the Pacific Fleet for purposes of administration. For purposes of operation, however, they remained under General MacArthur, and the Philippine Sea Frontier is still operationally under General MacArthur and has been ever since it was established, but for purposes of naval administration it passed under Admiral Nimitz as of the twentieth of April, which was about the same date that General Richardson and his Army Forces in the Central Pacific passed to General MacArthur for purposes of Army administration. Those changes were made in order to get a more extensive control of the Army under General MacArthur, of the Navy under Admiral Nimitz, in order that we might husband our resources and make the maximum available for the invasion of Japan that we were preparing for.

The only visit that I ever made to this headquarters at Tolosa was made – Admiral Nimitz and I went there together on I would say roughly the 27th of December, because we spent Christmas Day with Admiral Halsey at Ulithi. We went over then to visit General MacArthur who had headquarters at Tacloban, and we went down to the beach on a very rainy day and inspected the buildings – not inspected them, but visited them, where Admiral Kinkaid's and the Sea Frontier's headquarters were then being erected. After they passed to Cincpac for purpose of naval administration, General MacArthur's headquarters and Admiral Kinkaid's headquarters had moved up to Manila, and I never saw them after that.

THE PRESS: It is accurate to say then that you uphold the court's finding of 'Guilty.' You do, however, remit the recommended sentence, but he's guilty; he stands guilty as charged?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: (nodded affirmatively).

THE PRESS: I'd like to ask also the current assignment of Captain Granum. Do you have that, Admiral Denfeld?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: Captain Granum is on duty in the Navy Department, and I am not sure as to which office. That we can find out for you if you would like to have it.

THE PRESS: I would like to.

THE PRESS: Admiral Nimitz, would you expand on one sentence of your letter to Mr. Connelly, which says, "I must bear my share of responsibility for the loss of the *Indianapolis*"? To what extent was the Philippine Sea Frontier under your control at the time of the incident?

FLEET ADMIRAL NIMITZ: Only administratively, not operationally, and "administratively" there is meant to mean I was responsible for keeping them up in personnel and for general matters of administration.

THE PRESS: Does the Commander, Marianas, have any responsibility once a ship leaves his port about her getting there or about searching for survivors in case they're lost?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: He has full responsibility for matters like that within his area.

THE PRESS: Had she crossed the line?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: She had not crossed the line, and the search that found her was the Commander, Marianas, search.

THE PRESS: As long as the ship was lost in the territory of the Commander, Marianas, did he have any responsibility of keeping in touch with her until

she got out of this territory? I am not trying to convict him, just asking a general question.

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: No, because under the system prevailing when the ship went to sea, he was entitled to assume that she was undamaged unless he heard otherwise. That system is approximately parallel to the one that we use in the case of aircraft. If I take off from Anacostia, bound for Norfolk, and I don't show up, it's Norfolk's responsibility for detecting that fact and doing something about it even though I may have had a forced landing only ten miles south of Anacostia. If I don't tell them about it, they are entitled to assume I am doing all right, but the failure to arrive is required to be corrected immediately.

THE PRESS: Admiral Sherman, in the final analysis of this whole thing, in addition to the black mark on Captain McVay's record, hasn't the same thing been accomplished by all of these months of trial and everything as when Admiral Nimitz sought to close the case out months and months ago in the Pacific with a letter of Reprimand, and it was reopened here in Washington?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: Well, we're dealing with intangibles there to a degree. I would say that certainly from the point of view of what the officer concerned has undergone, that he has had a much harder time than – he has undergone greater mental hardships than would have been the case if the subject had been closed with the reprimand by the Commander in Chief, Pacific.

THE PRESS: Could we confirm for quotation that the Admiral did recommend that the Court of Inquiry's recommendation for court-martial should be set aside and that the case should be closed with a reprimand?

FIRST ADMIRAL NIMITZ: The reprimand is not a bar to further action by the higher authorities through which the papers pass. In other words, my recommendation in the matter had to go to the Secretary, and my action had to be reviewed by the Secretary.

THE PRESS: But that was your recommendation, sir?

FLEET ADMIRAL NIMITZ: My action was to give him a Letter of Reprimand instead of a General Court and to take action, one, with a Letter of Reprimand to Gibson, and I think, a Letter of Admonition to Sancho – that is correct? – which was the recommendation of the Court of Inquiry.

THE PRESS: Is it the feeling – was it the feeling of the Department that Captain McVay’s lapse in failing to zigzag in disputed weather was more serious than the failure of Commander, Philippine Sea Frontier, to notice that the ship was not in their port?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: Of course, I can’t speak for the things that caused the Commander in Chief, U. S. Fleet, and the Secretary of the Navy to arrive at the conclusions that they did. However, as a result of the further investigation undertaken by the Inspector General of the Navy and the further information which was brought out in the General Court, the Philippine Sea Frontier was shown to be more involved than had been shown in the Court of Inquiry.

THE PRESS: Well, I am wondering why Captain McVay was court-martialed, and the officers responsible either directly or indirectly for the unusual length of time in which a search was not instituted were let off, so to speak, with a reprimand, rather than a finding of “Guilty” in a court-martial?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: Well, I can’t say as to the reasons which led to that decision.

THE PRESS: Who makes the decision now affirmatively that Captain Granum and Commodore Gillette and the two Reserve lieutenants shall not be subject to court-martial?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: Well, that decision is made by the Secretary of the Navy with the advice of the Chief of Naval Operations, the Chief of Naval Personnel, and the Judge Advocate General of the Navy.

THE PRESS: The now Chief of Naval Operations, or the then Chief of Naval Operations?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: The now Chief of Naval Operations. In other words, the action represented by the conclusion of this narrative has been taken by the Secretary of the Navy with the advice of his present principal subordinates in light of all the information now available.

THE PRESS: Admiral, can you tell us, sir, how this Jap sub commander was located and who made the decision to bring him here to testify? His appearance seemed to come as quite a surprise to the defense.

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: I don't know the details of how he was located, and I do know that his being brought here was a result of a request by the defense that he be brought.

THE PRESS: Request by the defense?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: By the Judge Advocate.

THE PRESS: Are we satisfied that he is the exact commander of the sub that did sink the *Indianapolis*? I mean, his plotting was about 75 miles from where he hit it.³⁰

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: Well, I think so. I think it is reasonable to accept that he is.

THE PRESS: Was he ever asked if he sent a message to home base reporting that he had got a cruiser or a battleship, or whatever he may have claimed? I never saw the communiques about that time. I mean, I never saw the Jap communiques. We are referring now to the intercepted messages Hashimoto has had – if he had seen the report to fleet headquarters?

VICE ADMIRAL SHERMAN: I believe that would verify it but can't say that positively. I have read all these papers, but I have read so many of them I'd have to check that by going back to the record.

THE PRESS: Well, thank you, Admiral.

Source: TRC; "Transcript of Press Conference with Admiral Nimitz Regarding Final Word on *Indianapolis* Investigations," 26 February 1946, copy from NHHC Archives, WNY, original from RG 80, NARA II, College Park, MD.

The Navy resolved to learn from Indianapolis and took steps to assure that the circumstances would not be repeated. The Bureau of Ships “Lessons Learned” report below addressed all criticisms of life-saving equipment brought up in the Indianapolis investigations. Extracted below is the portion dealing with communications, as it was determined that the failure to get out a distress signal was the primary contributor to the great loss of life. To address these issues, BuShips placed battery powered emergency radio transmitters on U.S. Navy combatant ships and also placed Army model hand powered transmitters on the life rafts of all vessels of the Navy’s active and reserve fleet ship of the LCI type and larger. These steps were taken to make sure that rescue ships would quickly arrive at the location of a ship in distress or Sailors in the water.

Document 5.15: Bureau of Ships Report on Lessons Learned from Indianapolis, 7 March 1946 [Extract]

Code 5811

C-CA35/382 (5811)

CONFIDENTIAL

NAVY DEPARTMENT

Bureau of Ships

WASHINGTON, D. C.

7 – MAR 1946

To: The Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: Abandon Ship Equipment – Criticisms of in Connection with Loss of USS *Indianapolis*.

Ref: (a) CNO ltr. Op-09-OG; Serial 34P09 of 23 January 1946.

(b) INSGEN ltr. Op-08/OK; (SC) A17-25; Serial 017P08 of 1 February 1946.

[...]³¹

(e) Criticism:

“Ship’s radio: Apparently because of loss of power to all available radio apparatus, it was impossible for the ship to send a radio distress message in the period of about 30 minutes that elapsed between the time *Indianapolis* was torpedoed and the time she sank.”

Reference (b) comments further as follows:

“3. With regard to the ship’s radio, the fundamental failure which resulted in the delay in rescue and the large loss of life was in radio communications. The ship’s Communication Department was well organized and manned. The radio equipment was modern, and believed to be efficient. There were many manned receiving stations in easy range of the equipment for both 500 and 4235 kilocycles. Survivors believed they transmitted messages on both of these frequencies, but no record has been received of a receipt of a message, which leads to the inescapable conclusion that the emergency radio provisions were not all that could be desired for life-saving purposes.”

Comment:

According to the radio plans available in the Bureau of Ships, the USS *Indianapolis* had three radio rooms located as follows:

- (1) Radio Central (Radio I) – Communication Platform, frames 47 to 53, centerline.
- (2) Radio Transmitter Room (Radio II) – Third Superstructure Deck, frames 88 to 92, centerline.
- (3) Emergency Radio Room (Radio III) – First Superstructure Deck, frames 63 to 66, centerline.

Radio Central was equipped with no transmitting facilities except remote keys for control of the transmitters in the Radio Transmitter Room. Both the Radio Transmitter Room and the Emergency Radio Room were fitted with transmitters capable of transmitting distress signals on the proper frequency. Actually the *Indianapolis* had transmitting equipment on board far in excess

of the vessel allowance by reason of her being flagship for Commander, Fifth Fleet. Each Radio space was provided with a primary and emergency source of power as follows:

Radio Central – Primary power from the forward turbo generator switchboard located in the forward engine room. Emergency power from the forward diesel generator switchboard in the forward diesel generator room.

Radio Transmitter Room – Primary power from the after-turbo generator switchboard in the after engine room. Emergency power from the forward diesel generator switchboard in the forward diesel generator room.

Emergency Radio Room – Primary power from the after turbo generator switchboard located in the after engine room. Emergency power from the after diesel generator switchboard in the after diesel generator room.

The forward diesel generator required manual starting but the after diesel generator was fitted for automatic starting on loss of the primary source of power. According to an analysis of the damage to the *Indianapolis* made in the Bureau of Ships on the basis of written statements of the survivors supplemented by informal interviews with the Commanding Officer, all power would have been lost to Radio Central but power would have been available to the Radio Transmitter Room from the after turbo generator switchboard in the after engine room and to the Emergency Radio Room from both the after turbo generator switchboard and from the after emergency diesel generator switchboard. The Bureau of Ships considers that the generator power supply arrangements on the *Indianapolis* possessed a degree of flexibility that would assure some power supply under almost any probable condition of damage. Since the records of the various investigations into the loss of the *Indianapolis* and the testimony before the court-martial of the Commanding Officer have not been made available to the Bureau of Ships, the Bureau cannot comment further as to whether or not power was actually available to these spaces. It is requested that the testimony in this regard be furnished to the Bureau of Ships for study and further comment.

In order to permit transmissions of distress signals from a ship in which all generated power to the radio rooms has been lost by reason of damage, the Bureau of Ships has recently authorized a rearrangement and relocation

of two model TCS radio transmitter-receiver equipments allowed for large combatant ships to provide battery power for continuous operation in excess of two hours. One of these transmitters will be located in the forward part of the ship and will be operated from the primary conning station; the other will be located from in the after part of the ship and will be operated from the after conning station. In addition, the Bureau has obtained oral approval from the Chief of Naval Operations for the fitting of life rafts with Army Model SCR-578 transmitters, which are available in surplus Army stock. These will be furnished to all vessels of the Active and Reserve Fleets of the LCI type and larger. They are capable of transmitting a distress signal by the use of hand power and are to be considered an immediate interim measure until a better and more suitable equipment can be obtained.

3. The Bureau of Ships considers that a recurrence of the circumstances of the survivors of the *Indianapolis*, their lack of sufficient rafts with attached supplies and the long delay in their rescue, is not likely. It is unlikely that some generated power supply will not be available to the ship for distress signals, but, in that event, two battery-powered TCS will be available in large combatant ships to start rescue vessels to the scene. Emergency distress transmitting radio units as part of the life raft equipment will assure communication after a sinking. The lack of authorized automatic release devices and the failure to release toggles or to cut the lashing of the rafts during the 30 minutes elapsing between the torpedoing and the sinking need not be repeated in any future disasters. The failure and unsatisfactory condition of abandon ship supplies and equipment was due in large measure to the overcrowding of the few rafts floated and the circumstances noted above.

4. The Bureau of Ships will continue the development of improved abandon ship equipment.

B. L. Osborne [stamped]
Chief of Bureau³²

Source: TD; "Bureau of Ships Report to CNO regarding Lessons Learned from Loss of USS *Indianapolis*," 7 March 1946, War damage Reports, RG 19, Entry P1, Boxes 30–31, NARA II, College Park, MD.

Remembering *Indianapolis*

Twenty-three years of internal torment caused by the loss of his ship and crew ended for Rear Admiral Charles B. McVay III, (Ret.) on 6 November 1968. On this date, the last skipper of Indianapolis fatally wounded himself outside of his Connecticut home. He was seventy years old. The circumstances of McVay's death served as a reminder of the continuing tragedy of the Indianapolis and led to increased efforts from many survivors to clear their former captain's name of any wrongdoing.

Document 6.1: Obituary of Rear Admiral Charles B. McVay III

Adm. McVay, 70, Commander of Torpedoed Ship

Morris, Conn. (AP)—Retired Rear Admiral Charles McVay III, who commanded the cruiser *Indianapolis* when it was sunk by a Japanese submarine with a loss of 880 lives in World War II, has died at the age of 70. Police said he died of a “self-inflicted” gunshot wound.

McVay, who was court-martialed for failing to keep the ship on a zig-zag course in enemy waters, but was later exonerated, wept at the first reunion of survivors of the *Indianapolis* in 1960.

He died Wednesday at Charlotte Hungerford Hospital in Torrington, Conn., about three hours after police, responding to a call, found him lying in the yard outside his home.

The 1960 reunion was exactly 15 years after the cruiser was torpedoed

by a single Japanese submarine, on July 30, 1945, after carrying vital parts of the atomic bomb to Tinian for the final crushing blows of World War II.

The cruiser sank in 12 minutes. It was the last major U.S. loss of the war. Only 316 survived out of the crew of 1,196. By “pure chance” according to the pilot of a Navy patrol plane, the aircraft’s crew spotted the survivors of the *Indianapolis* on rafts four days after the sinking. The torpedo had knocked out the cruiser’s electricity and no distress signal could be sent out.

Source: TDC; “Obituary of Rear Admiral Charles B. McVay III” from the *Washington Star* in *Indianapolis* Ship Files, Box 396D, NHHHC Archives, WNY.

The Indianapolis story largely slipped out of public focus following 1946, only gaining attention on anniversaries, the death of Captain McVay, and the release of the 1975 blockbuster Jaws. Hunter Scott, a middle school student from Pensacola, Florida, made the story of Indianapolis and the perceived injustice of McVay’s conviction the focus of a History Day project in 1997.¹ Scott’s project relied heavily on interviews with the some 150 survivors still alive at the time of his project, and his project turned into a mission to exonerate Captain McVay. It ultimately gained national attention. His work convinced legislators that Captain McVay had been unfairly convicted, and legislation with exoneration language and a recommendation for a Presidential Unit Commendation to the final crew of Indianapolis moved through both houses of Congress. Scott himself testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee as a 12-year-old in September 1999. His prepared statement is presented below.

Document 6.2: Statement by 9th-Grade Student Hunter S. Scott before the Senate Armed Services Committee, 14 September 1999

PREPARED STATEMENT BY HUNTER SCOTT

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Armed Services Committee.² Thank you for the opportunity to testify here today in support of Senate Joint Resolution 26.

My name is Hunter Scott, I am a ninth-grade high school student from Pensacola, Florida. My journey to this Committee as a witness began over 3 years ago when I saw the motion picture “Jaws” in which one of the actors portrayed a survivor of the U.S.S. *Indianapolis* and described in chilling detail how he and other survivors floated for 5 days in shark-infested waters before they were spotted by accident and rescued.

When that scene was over, I asked my dad if the story was true. He said it was and suggested I research the story for a sixth grade history fair project. I was amazed how little information I found about the U.S.S. *Indianapolis* in history books.

I put an ad in our local Navy Newspaper asking for information about survivors of the *Indianapolis*. A call led me to Maurice Glenn Bell, who lives in Mobile, Alabama. In the fall of 1996 I met with Mr. Bell and heard the *Indianapolis* story first hand. The story was as chilling as what I had heard on *Jaws*. Mr. Bell gave me a list of all 154 remaining survivors. Over the course of the next year I called, or wrote, every one of them. Over 80 responded to my request for information and filled out a questionnaire I sent them. One of the questions was whether they felt Captain McVay’s court-martial was justified and his conviction fair. All the responses I got back were unanimous, and most were strongly worded in outrage and anger over the court-martial and conviction of their captain.

It seemed to me that after doing so much to help shorten the war and after the nightmare of his ship being lost, his crew being killed and drowned around him, and his own struggle for survival for days in the open sea—the court-martial of Captain McVay was not right. Then I learned that hundreds of Navy ships were lost in combat during World War II, but none of their captains were court-martialed. I wondered why Captain McVay was the only one, and I found that others have wondered too. The three major books written about the disaster and virtually every television documentary all concluded that Captain McVay’s treatment by the Navy was shameful. Even naval historians tend to agree.

Abraham Lincoln once said, “The probability that we may fail in a struggle ought not to deter us from the support of a cause we believe to be just.” I began this “just cause” to exonerate Captain McVay and to gain a

Presidential Unit Citation for the U.S.S. *Indianapolis* and her crew when I was 11 years old. What started as a school history project has now turned into a mission to right a wrong that was inflicted 54 years ago. I know you are here today because you believe deeply in American democracy and in the fact that you can make a difference for the constituents you represent. I am no different than you in this belief, and that is why I have journeyed here, as a representative for my heroes, the men of the *Indianapolis*. Through this journey I have learned the great price my presence here today has cost. I have learned that democracy is a treasure so valued, men and women are willing to give their lives in its pursuit. I know 880 men of the U.S.S. *Indianapolis* made the supreme sacrifice. I pray some of those who gave their lives are looking down on what we are doing at this moment with a smile knowing their sacrifice was not in vain.

I am sure each of you have something of special meaning in your office that reminds you why you entered politics. In my pocket I carry one of my most precious possessions. Captain McVay's dog tag he received when he was a cadet at the Naval Academy. As you can see it has his thumb print on the back. I carry this as a reminder of my mission, and in memory of a man who ended his own life in 1968. I carry this dog tag to remind me that only in the United States can one person make a difference. I carry this to remind me of the privilege and responsibility I have to seek truth and carry forward the torch of honor passed to me by the men of the *Indianapolis*.

In 1806 Thomas Jefferson wrote, "Political interest can never be separated in the long run from moral right." Fifty-four years after the court-martial of a man who should never have been brought to trial, we are now in the "long run," and you have the opportunity to do what is "morally right." You can set the historical record straight concerning Captain McVay. When I started this mission there were 154 living survivors. Today there are only 134 still with us. Please honor these men passage of Senate Joint Resolution 26. Please restore the reputation of their captain which was taken from him. Please restore the honor of their ship while some of these men are still alive to see this dream become a reality. Don't forget about the men of the U.S.S. *Indianapolis* for the second time in 54 years.

Thank you for allowing me the privilege to speak before you today, on

behalf of my heroes, the men of the U.S.S. *Indianapolis*. Some of my heroes, are here today. You should hear their story rather than mine. But, on their behalf and in the name of justice, I thank you for sponsoring Senate Joint Resolution 26 and urge you to do all you can to obtain its passage.

Source: TD; Extract from *The Sinking of the USS Indianapolis and the Subsequent Court-Martial of Rear ADM Charles B. McVay III, USN—Hearing before the Committee on Armed Services United States Senate, One Hundred Sixth Congress, First Session, 14 September 1999* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2000).

The Navy's response to legislation introduced in 1998 appears below. The letter to the Chairman of Senate Armed Services Committee from the Office of the Secretary of Navy made its way through the offices of the Chief of Naval Operations and Chief of Legislative Affairs. It summarized the actions taken by the Navy regarding Indianapolis in the fifty years since McVay's court-martial. It also presented the Navy's stance on why it could not support awarding a Presidential Unit Commendation to the crew, as well as why the Navy's original decision on the McVay case had been upheld.

Document 6.3: Navy Response to Senate Resolution Calling for Presidential Unit Commendation to *Indianapolis* Crew, May/ August 1998³

The Honorable Strom Thurmond⁴
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-6050

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This is in response to your request for the Secretary of Defense for the views of the Department of the Navy on S. 2177 and S.J. Res. 53, "To express the sense of Congress that the President should award a Presidential Unit Citation to the final crew of the USS *Indianapolis*, which was sunk on July 30, 1945."

Department of the Navy strongly opposes the bills.

The circumstances surrounding the sinking of USS *Indianapolis* have been reviewed extensively since 1945. Navy examined the history of the USS *Indianapolis* in August 1975, as a result of requests from Senators Hartke and Eagleton⁵ that USS *Indianapolis* be awarded the Presidential Unit Citation. An independent legal study of the court-martial of Rear Admiral McVay was conducted in 1992 at the request of Senator Richard Lugar.⁶ In June, 1996, Navy prepared an extensive legal review of Rear Admiral McVay's court-martial in response to congressional inquiries from, among others, Representative Floyd Spence,⁷ Chairman of the House National Security Committee. The conclusions of the respective reviews are that awarding of the Presidential Unit Citation to USS *Indianapolis* is not appropriate and that the court-martial of Rear Admiral McVay was legally sound, no injustice was done, and no remedial action is warranted. No new facts or circumstances have arisen that were not previously considered in reaching our position on these issues.

To justify the Presidential Unit Citation, a unit must clearly render itself conspicuous by extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy. The sacrifices of the crew of *Indianapolis* are most conspicuous in enduring the aftermath of enemy action. The United States Navy lost many fine ships in World War II, such as those at Pearl Harbor, which did not receive unit recognition. More than fifty submarines were lost with all hands during the war, yet they were not recognized with a unit award. Not awarding the Presidential Unit Citation does not reflect on the heroism of the many brave men who went down with the ship, or who subsequently perished at sea, or those that survived the sinking and were rescued. The criteria for the unit award simply are not met. It is appropriate that the sacrifices these men made be acknowledged and honored, but this unit award is not the appropriate means to do so.

Legislation similar to S. 2177 and S.J. Res. 53 has been introduced in the House as H.R. 3710. The House bill goes further than S. 2177 and S.J. Res 53 by proposing to exonerate Rear Admiral McVay from responsibility for the sinking of the *Indianapolis* in addition to providing a sense of Congress regarding the award of a Presidential Unit Citation for the crew. The House bill may eventually come before the Senate or its provisions be considered in

conference. Navy strongly opposes H.R. 3710 in part for the same reasons we oppose S. 2177 and S.J. Res. 53—the criteria for award of the Presidential Unit Citation have not been met in the case of the USS *Indianapolis*. Additionally, Navy opposes H.R. 3710 because the court-martial of Rear Admiral McVay was consistent with all applicable law, Navy regulations and the tradition of a commanding officer’s ultimate accountability for his ship. We believe these decisions, and the ancient traditions and customs on which they are based, should not be disturbed.

The Office of Management and Budget advises that, from the standpoint of the Administration’s program there is no object to the presentation of this report for the consideration of the Committee.

Sincerely,

Copy to:

The Honorable John W. Warner
Ranking Minority Member

Source: TLC; Copy of letter “Chief of Naval Operations to Chief of Legislative Affairs,” 11 May 1998, *Indianapolis* Ship Files, Box 396D, NHHHC Archives, WNY.

The letter from Senator Bob Smith, member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, to his colleagues seeking co-sponsors for legislation regarding the exoneration of Indianapolis Captain McVay showed the political momentum generated by the Hunter Scott project. Public debate about the controversies of Indianapolis would continue for several years and ultimately be addressed by the U.S. Navy.

Document 6.4: Letter from Senator Bob Smith to Colleagues Seeking Co-sponsors on *Indianapolis* Legislation, 20 April 1999

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-2903

April 28, 1999

Dear Colleague:

I am writing to seek your support for the attached joint resolution regarding the U.S.S. *Indianapolis*. It commends the crew of the U.S.S. *Indianapolis* for selfless and heroic service to the United States during World War II, and restores the reputation of Captain Charles Butler McVay III.

Days before the end of World War II, the United States Navy heavy cruiser U.S.S. *Indianapolis* was torpedoed and sunk by a Japanese submarine. Only 316 of the 1196 crew members survived this attack and the subsequent fight for survival in the Pacific Ocean. During this five day ordeal they endured shark attacks, exposure, and lack of food and water. This was the greatest sea disaster in the history of the United States Navy. In December 1945 the ship's commander, Captain McVay, was court-martialed and convicted for failing to zigzag the night of the torpedo attack. He later committed suicide.

For many years the crew of the *Indianapolis* have fought to restore his good name. They believe that evidence at the time and materials declassified in recent years prove that Captain McVay was not at fault. Indeed, they have maintained that their ship was sent into harm's way without proper escort and that Captain McVay's court-martial was held to divert attention from the mistakes of others, including shore-based personnel who failed to notice that the ship had not arrived on schedule. Their cause has gained momentum with the assistance of 13 year old Hunter Scott, who has helped to bring national attention to this crusade. His efforts have been reported by a number of national media outlets, and he has been named by *George Magazine* as one of the "20 Most Influential People in American Politics."

This legislation expresses the sense of the Senate that Captain McVay's conviction was a miscarriage of justice, and also encourages the President to award a Presidential Unit Citation to the crew of the U.S.S. *Indianapolis*. Congressman Joe Scarborough⁸ will be introducing this legislation in the House of Representatives. If you would like to be an original co-sponsor of this Senate joint resolution, please contact Jim Dohoney in my office by close of business on Thursday, April 29th. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Bob Smith, U.S.S. [signed]

Source: TLSC; "Letter from Senator Bob Smith Seeking Co-sponsors for *Indianapolis* Legislation, 28 April 1999," *Indianapolis* Ship Files, Box 396D, NHHC Archives, WNY.

In 2001, the Navy decided to award the crew of Indianapolis the Navy Unit Commendation for its 16–26 July 1945 mission to deliver the atomic bomb components to Tinian. The Presidential Unit Commendation asked for by Congress was denied because the requirements for the award were not met—primarily “heroism in action against an armed enemy.” Indianapolis faced no enemy action during the bomb delivery, nor did the ship have a chance to take action against the submarine that sank them on 30 July 1945.

Document 6.5: Awarding of a Navy Unit Commendation to Final Crew of *Indianapolis*

Department of the Navy
Office of the Secretary
NAVY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350-1000

1650
Ser NDBDM/0409
30 January 2001

From: Secretary of the Navy
To: Chief of Naval Operations
Subj: RECOMMENDATION FOR PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION

Encl: (1) OLA ltr LA-62/62S set 115 of 25 May 99 with ends
(2) OLA ltr LA-62 of 9 Sep 99 with ends

1. After considering the recommendations contained in the enclosures (1) and (2), the awarding of the Navy Unit Commendation, as the more appropriate award, vice the Presidential Unit Citation to USS *Indianapolis* (CA 35) is approved. In addition, it must be noted that

award is approved for the period 16 July 1945 to 26 July 1945, vice the recommended period of 7 December 1941 to 30 July 1945.

Robert B. Pirie, Jr. [signed]
Secretary of the Navy
Acting

Copy to:
OLA

[END]

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350-1000

The Secretary of the Navy takes pleasure in presenting the NAVY UNIT
COMMENDATION to
USS INDIANAPOLIS (CA35)

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

For exceptionally meritorious service in support of operations against the enemy in the Pacific Theater from 16 through 26 July 1945. USS *Indianapolis* (CA 35) demonstrated unparalleled success by independently traversing the theatre at a record-setting, high speed of advance. The critical military components that she delivered significantly contributed to the specific mission accomplishment and ultimately were used to end the Second World War. By their truly distinctive achievements, unrelenting perseverance, and unfailing devotion to duty, the officers and enlisted personnel of USS *Indianapolis* (CA 35) reflected great credit upon themselves and upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

Secretary of the Navy
Acting

Source: TDSC; "Navy Unit Commendation Decision," 30 January 2001 *Indianapolis* Ship Files, Box 396D, NHHHC Archives, WNY.

The 11 July 2001 letter from Secretary of Navy Gordon England signified accomplishment of the mission launched by Hunter Scott in 1997 and Indianapolis survivors in 1946. The congressional action, supported by President Bill Clinton and the American public, led the Navy to place a letter of exoneration in the personnel file of Charles McVay along with the text of a congressional provision added to the 2001 Defense Authorization Act that provided a sense of McVay's lack of culpability in the loss of so many of his crew. Largely a symbolic gesture, the exoneration did not overturn McVay's conviction.

Document 6.6: Exoneration Letter Placed in Captain McVay's File by SECNAV Gordon England

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350-1000

11 July 2001

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS

Subj: ADDITION TO THE MILITARY PERSONNEL RECORD OF
REAR ADMIRAL
CHARLES B. MCVAY, III, USN

1. In 1945, then-Captain Charles B. McVay, III, USN, was the Commanding Officer of USS *Indianapolis* (CA35). During a transit from Guam to the Philippines, USS *Indianapolis* was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine and sank. Captain McVay and just over 300 of his men were rescued after five days in the water. Following investigation by a Court of Inquiry, a General Court-Martial convicted Captain McVay of negligently hazarding his vessel by failing to steer a "zig-zag" course. He was sentenced to the loss of 100 lineal numbers. The Secretary of the Navy approved the findings and sentence, but remitted the sentence in its entirety. Captain McVay was advanced to the grade of Rear Admiral upon retirement in 1949.

2. Following extensive review, including testimony in 1999 before the Senate Armed Services Committee by then-Vice Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Pilling,⁹ and then-Judge Advocate General, Rear Admiral Hutson,¹⁰ Congress included in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001 a “Sense of Congress” provision. This provision, at Section 545, states, in pertinent part, that:

1. [t]he American people should now recognize Captain McVay’s lack of culpability for the tragic loss of the USS *Indianapolis* and the lives of the men who died as a result of the sinking of that vessel; and
 2. Captain McVay’s military record should now reflect that he is exonerated for the loss of the USS *Indianapolis* and so many of her crew.
3. In recognition of this Sense of Congress, insert into Rear Admiral McVay’s military personnel record a copy of Section 545, National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001.

Gordon R. England [signed]

[END]

Source: TLSC; “SECNAV Gordon England’s McVay Exoneration Letter,” 11 July 2001, *Indianapolis* Ship Files, Box 396D, NHHHC Archives, WNY.

Below is the text from the FY 2001 National Defense Authorization Act added to McVay’s file. The addition to the file, coming 55 years after McVay’s conviction, has not ended public interest in the Indianapolis. The complicated nature of the story, legal technicalities, conspiracy theorists, and the shark-centric focus on the story generated by Jaws obfuscates an episode in the history of U.S. naval history that needs to be told accurately.

Document 6.7: *Indianapolis* Extract from Fiscal Year 2001 National Defense Authorization Act

SEC. 545. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON THE COURT-MARTIAL CONVICTION OF CAPTAIN CHARLES BUTLER McVAY, COMMANDER OF THE U.S.S. INDIANAPOLIS, AND ON THE COURAGEOUS SERVICE OF THE CREW OF THAT VESSEL.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Shortly after midnight on the morning of July 30, 1945, during the closing days of World War II, the United States Navy heavy cruiser U.S.S. *Indianapolis* (CA 35) was torpedoed and sunk by the Japanese submarine *I-58* in what became the worst sea disaster in the history of the United States Navy.

(2) Although approximately 900 of the ship's crew of 1,196 survived the actual sinking, only 316 of those courageous sailors survived when rescued after four and a half days adrift in the open sea, the remainder having perish[ed] from battle wounds, drowning, predatory shark attacks, exposure to the elements, and lack of food and potable water.

(3) Rescue for the remaining 316 sailors came only when they were spotted by chance by Navy Lieutenant Wilbur C. Gwinn while flying a routine naval air patrol mission.

(4) After the end of World War II, the commanding officer of the U.S.S. *Indianapolis*, Captain Charles Butler McVay, III, who was rescued with the other survivors, was court-martialed for “suffering a vessel to be hazarded through negligence” by failing to zigzag (a naval tactic employed to help evade submarine attacks) and was convicted even though—

(A) the choice to zigzag was left to Captain McVay's discretion in his orders; and

(B) Motchisura Hashimoto, the commander of the Japanese submarine that sank the U.S.S. *Indianapolis*, and Glynn R. Donaho, a United States Navy submarine commander highly decorated for his service during World War II, both testified at Captain McVay's

Court-Martial trial that the Japanese submarine could have sunk the U.S.S. *Indianapolis* whether or not it had been zigzagging, an assertion that has since been reaffirmed in a letter to the Chairman of the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate dated November 24, 1999.

(5) Although not argued by Captain McVay's defense counsel in the court-martial trial, poor visibility on the night of the sinking (as attested in surviving crew members' hand written accounts recently discovered at the National Archives) justified Captain McVay's choice not to zigzag as that choice was consistent with the applicable Navy directives in force in 1945, which stated that, "During thick weather and at night, except on very clear nights or during bright moonlight, vessels normally cease zig-zagging."

(6) Before the U.S.S. *Indianapolis* sailed from Guam on what became her final voyage, Naval officials failed to provide Captain McVay with available support that was critical to the safety of the U.S.S. *Indianapolis* and her crew by—

(A) disapproving a request made by Captain McVay for a destroyer escort for the U.S.S. *Indianapolis* across the Philippine Sea as being "not necessary";

(B) not informing Captain McVay that naval intelligence sources, through signal intelligence (the Japanese code having been broken earlier in World War II), had become aware that the Japanese submarine *I-58* was operating in the area of the U.S.S. *Indianapolis*'s course (as disclosed in evidence presented in a hearing of the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate conducted September 14, 1999); and

(C) not informing Captain McVay of the sinking of the destroyer escort U.S.S. *Underhill* by a Japanese submarine within range of the course of the U.S.S. *Indianapolis* four days before the U.S.S. *Indianapolis* departed Guam for the Philippine Islands.

(7) Captain McVay's court-martial initially was opposed by his immediate

command superiors, Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz (CINCPAC) and Vice Admiral Raymond Spruance of the 5th Fleet, for whom the U.S.S. *Indianapolis* had served as flagship, but, despite their recommendations, Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal ordered the court-martial, largely on the basis of the recommendation of Fleet Admiral Ernest King, Chief of Naval Operations.

(8) There is no explanation on the public record for the overruling by Secretary Forrestal of the recommendations made by Admirals Nimitz and Spruance.

(9) Captain McVay was the only commander of a United States Navy vessel lost in combat to enemy action during World War II who was subjected to a court-martial trial for such a loss, even though several hundred United States Navy ships were lost in combat to enemy action during World War II.

(10) The survivors of the U.S.S. *Indianapolis* overwhelmingly conclude that Captain McVay was not at fault in the loss of the U.S.S. *Indianapolis* and have dedicated their lives to vindicating their Captain McVay.

(11) Although promoted to the grade of rear admiral in accordance with then-applicable law upon retirement from the Navy in 1949, Captain McVay never recovered from the stigma of his post-war court-martial and in 1968, tragically, took his own life.

(12) Charles Butler McVay, III—

(A) was a graduate of the United States Naval Academy;

(B) was an exemplary career naval officer with an outstanding record (including participation in the amphibious invasions of North Africa, the assault on Iwo Jima, and the assault on Okinawa where the U.S.S. *Indianapolis* under his command survived a fierce kamikaze attack);

(C) was a recipient of the Silver Star earned for courage under fire during the Solomon Islands campaign; and

(D) with the crew of the U.S.S. *Indianapolis*, had so thoroughly demonstrated proficiency in naval warfare that the Navy entrusted him and the crew of the U.S.S. *Indianapolis* with transporting to the Pacific theater components necessary for assembling the atomic bombs that were exploded over Hiroshima and Nagasaki to end the war with Japan (delivery of such components to the island of Tinian having been accomplished on July 25, 1945).¹¹

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS CONCERNING CHARLES BUTLER MCVAY, III.—With respect to the sinking of the U.S.S. *Indianapolis* (CA 35) on July 30, 1945, and the subsequent court-martial conviction of the ship's commanding officer, Captain Charles Butler McVay, III, arising from that sinking, it is the sense of Congress, based on the review of evidence by the Senate and the House of Representatives—

(1) that, in light of the remission by the Secretary of the Navy of the sentence of the court-martial and the restoration of Captain McVay to active duty by the Chief of Naval Operations, Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz, the American people should now recognize Captain McVay's lack of culpability for the tragic loss of the U.S.S. *Indianapolis* and the lives of the men who died as a result of the sinking of that vessel; and

(2) that, in light of the fact that certain exculpatory information was not available to the court-martial board and that Captain McVay's conviction resulted therefrom, Captain McVay's military record should now reflect that he is exonerated for the loss of the U.S.S. *Indianapolis* and so many of her crew.

(c) UNIT CITATION FOR FINAL CREW OF U.S.S. INDIANAPOLIS.—The Secretary of the Navy should award a Navy Unit Commendation to the U.S.S. *Indianapolis* (CA 35) and her final crew.

Source: TD; "Text from 2001NDAA," copy in *Indianapolis* Ship Files, Box 396D, NHHC Archives, WNY.

The remarks given by Rear Admiral (Ret.) Samuel J. Cox, Director, Naval History and Heritage Command, to the Indianapolis survivors and their families at the 71st reunion in Indianapolis, Indiana, are a fitting conclusion to this volume.¹² Ten of the remaining 23 survivors were present for the remarks. The mission of the Naval History and Heritage Command is to enhance the war fighting effectiveness of the U.S. Navy, using the power of history and heritage to pass on hard-won lessons and to inform the American people of the great sacrifices made on their behalf. Director Cox's remarks demonstrate the application of this mission. He placed the Indianapolis in the broader context of its World War II service and he addressed the controversies surrounding the sinking. His conclusions show that the U.S. Navy endeavors to learn from the episode so that such a tragic story will not be replicated. Only by telling the full story of Indianapolis can her final crew be properly commemorated.

Document 6.8: Keynote Remarks by Rear Admiral Samuel Cox, USN (Ret.), Director, Naval History and Heritage Command at 71st Anniversary Reunion of USS *Indianapolis* Survivors' Group, 9 July 2016

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Those two essays are going to be a very tough act to follow.¹³ They are both incredibly moving, and I would very much like to get a copy of both if I may.

Words will fail to adequately express the incredible honor it is to have been invited here to speak tonight. I think everyone in this room knows that there is an increasingly fleeting chance to say thank you to those who served, sacrificed, and persevered during the time of our nation's greatest peril, World War II. So I would like to take this opportunity to offer my deepest gratitude and respect to the survivors and their families, and especially to the loved ones of those lost at sea.

I knew the USS *Indianapolis* story before I was in kindergarten. My grandfather and my father both served as enlisted Sailors in the U.S. Navy. I grew up surrounded by ship models, *Jane's Fighting Ships*, and just about

every book published on the U.S. Navy in World War II. My punishment for being bad was to not be allowed to watch re-runs of the TV show, *Victory at Sea*.¹⁴ And it just so happened that as I came of age to first be aware of the outside world, the U.S. Navy, and the concept of history, I was living right here in Indianapolis. So although other kids identified with home sports teams, I always viewed the USS *Indianapolis* as “my ship.” And I followed developments over the years very closely.

This is now bookended by that fact that in my headquarters in the Washington Navy Yard, one floor above my office, is the room in which Captain McVay’s court-martial was held (December 1945). I also remember clearly that when Captain McVay took his own life in 1968, it was the subject of discussion in our home, and sadness. Both my father and grandfather strongly believed that the court-martial of Captain McVay was unfair.

There is no question that the loss of USS *Indianapolis* is one of the blackest episodes in the history of the U.S. Navy. But I also believe that even in loss and tragedy, there are examples of extraordinary valor and sacrifice that deserve to be remembered, that serve as an inspiration to Sailors today and in the future, and there are lessons learned that must be preserved and passed on, and are relevant even now. The *Indianapolis* story has these in abundance.

Our current Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral John Richardson¹⁵, has stated that we must “know our history” so as to not re-learn the lessons of the past, the hard way. He has also stressed not only the importance of personal integrity, but also institutional integrity. Or put another way, we must not lie to ourselves. So I am not the Minister of Propaganda. My mission as the Director of the Naval History and Heritage Command is to preserve and present as accurate an accounting of the history of the U.S. Navy as humanly possible. And to be blunt, there is much about the sinking of the USS *Indianapolis* and the aftermath that I would not choose to characterize as the Navy’s finest hour.

Even after congressional exoneration of Captain McVay and Secretary of the Navy Gordon England’s decision (in 2001) to place the congressional resolution in Captain McVay’s service record, the controversy, and cloud of misunderstanding, persists to this day.

As recently as a few weeks ago, someone in the Navy expressed to me the

opinion that, “the Navy doesn’t give awards for getting sunk.” This resulted in significant separation between my seat and my chair and a “Whoa! Foul!” Let’s start with ten battle stars in some of the most crucial and brutal combat across the entirety of the three and a half years of the Pacific War. The crew of the USS *Indianapolis* distinguished themselves with great courage and fighting skill long before the first Japanese torpedo hit, much of it as the flagship for Admiral Raymond Spruance and the Fifth Fleet, the flagship for the largest armada of warships ever assembled in the history of mankind, probably forever.¹⁶ I am not going to go through the entire war history of the USS *Indianapolis*, but I do intend to cover it in some detail, because I think it important. To the extent that anyone remembers and talks about the USS *Indianapolis* today, it is almost always exclusively focused on the sinking, and the long litany of miscommunication, misinterpretations, missed intelligence reports, and other mistakes ashore that resulted in so many Sailors dying, and of course, sharks. But there is so much more, and I believe it especially important to the families of those lost at sea to know that your loved one isn’t just a hero because he died in the sinking. He is a hero because his courage played an important role in achieving final victory in the most costly war ever waged.

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, the USS *Indianapolis* was off at Johnston Island conducting gunnery drills (with several minesweepers). As she participated in the search for the Japanese attack force, she steamed through waters thick with Japanese submarines . . . the Japanese had deployed over 25 submarines to the waters around Pearl Harbor. It is likely only through pure chance that the USS *Indianapolis* did not suffer the same fate in the first days of the war as she did in the last days.

USS *Indianapolis* then provided critical protection to U.S. aircraft carriers that launched among the very first retaliatory offensive strikes against the Japanese, on New Guinea, in March 1942. These carriers then participated in the crucial Battle of the Coral Sea (May 1942)¹⁷, which resulted in two Japanese carriers put out of action, so that at the decisive Battle of Midway a month later (June 1942)¹⁸ the odds were four Japanese carriers against three U.S. carriers, instead of six to three, which probably changed the outcome of that most important battle of the war.

Meanwhile, the USS *Indianapolis* was sent to operate in the Aleutian Islands in brutally cold, foggy, and dangerous Alaskan waters, not even counting Japanese submarines. The USS *Indianapolis* sank a Japanese munitions ship (*Akagane Maru*) attempting to resupply the Japanese garrison on Attu, one of the islands they had captured, which exploded with the loss of all hands.¹⁹ Japan's inability to reliably resupply their troops on Attu and Kiska contributed significantly to their loss of Attu and decision to abandon Kiska, which no doubt resulted in saving many U.S. troops.

In numerous actions through the rest of the war, the USS *Indianapolis* not only served as the flagship but also conducted frequent close-in bombardments of Japanese-held islands to include Tarawa, Kwajalein, Guam, Iwo Jima and others, in range of Japanese return fire. Although there is no way to know for certain how many U.S. Marines survived these bloody battles thanks to USS *Indianapolis*'s fire support, the number is probably significant. During the battles for Tarawa and Makin Island, the USS *Indianapolis* operated in waters near the escort carrier USS *Liscome Bay* (CVE-56), which was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine with the loss of most of her crew, over 650 (Including Doris Miller, the first African-American to be awarded a Navy Cross, for his courage in action at Pearl Harbor.)²⁰ Once again, fate spared the USS *Indianapolis*, but she shared the danger.

And then, the epic battle of Okinawa in the spring of 1945, with USS *Indianapolis* once again serving as Admiral Spruance's flagship right in the thick of it. Far more American Sailors were killed or injured, 9,000 casualties including almost 5,000 killed, than at Pearl Harbor. The number of U.S. ships sunk or seriously damaged by Japanese kamikaze suicide attacks numbered over 100. It is one thing to be willing to die for one's country. It is quite another to face an enemy that intends to die for his, demonstrating an extraordinary and terrible resolve.

Over my desk, I have a painting of a kamikaze about to hit the aircraft carrier USS *Hornet* (CV-12), and I have carried a copy for many years.²¹ It serves to remind me, and my staff, that whenever we start feeling sorry for ourselves about what a bad day we might be having . . . well, we can't really even comprehend what a real bad day is. And frankly I intend to hang a copy of the USS *Indianapolis* being hit by two torpedoes in my conference room to

serve the same purpose. But another thing about the painting, even though the kamikaze is about to hit, you can see that every gun on that ship is still blazing away. None of the gunners are running, even those who are going to die when that plane hits. They are showing a resolve every bit as great as that pilot. And it is exactly that same kind of courage that was exhibited repeatedly by the crew of the USS *Indianapolis* in that horrific battle.

The USS *Indianapolis* shot down six planes off Okinawa. In today's environment of high-body count movies and video games, that might not seem like such a big deal. But one plane took the aircraft carrier USS *Enterprise* (CV-6)²² out of the war. Two planes took the carrier USS *Bunker Hill* (CV-17)²³ out of the war. One plane with two bombs grievously damaged the carrier USS *Franklin* (CV-13)²⁴, and put her out of the war. So, every one of those planes shot down by the USS *Indianapolis* mattered.

And when USS *Indianapolis*'s time came on 31 March 1945, her gunners had less than 25 seconds to react to the kamikaze as it came out of the sun, and still they hit it, and the plane itself struck a glancing blow with minimum damage. But in his last instant of life, the pilot released a bomb which penetrated clean through the ship and out the bottom, exploding just underneath the ship. This by-the-way is how modern torpedoes are designed to work, exploding just underneath the ship, which maximizes the damage to the ship. Yet, through hours of heroic damage control efforts, the crew managed to save their ship.

This attack also demonstrates that there is no safe place on a warship in battle; the entire crew shares the danger. Many of the nine Sailors who died were deep in the ship, some drowned by fuel oil from a ruptured tank. The fact is that whether a Sailor lives or dies in a battle at sea is about as random an event as can be imagined. In order for a ship to be successful in battle, every Sailor must do his (and now, her) duty with the utmost efficiency and effectiveness, irrespective of the chance that at any instant a bomb, shell, mine, or torpedo could blow them to eternity.

The kamikaze attack set in motion a chain of destiny. Had it not been for the severe damage, the USS *Indianapolis* would not have been at Mare Island in July 1945. Had it not been for USS *Pensacola*'s (CA-24) engineering casualty, which prevented her from carrying the atomic bomb components to

Tinian as planned, the USS *Indianapolis* would have still been at Mare Island when the war ended, and everyone would have survived, except those lost in the kamikaze attack.²⁵ Instead, the USS *Indianapolis* came out of the repair yard early, and still made the fastest transit to Pearl Harbor ever recorded and then to Tinian Island, playing a pivotal role in the execution of perhaps the most momentous decision ever made by a U.S. President. And as horrible as that bomb was, it would have been dwarfed by the carnage to Japanese and Americans that would have resulted from an invasion. Millions of descendants are alive today because the USS *Indianapolis* executed her mission to perfection.

My point in all of this is that all 1,196 men aboard the USS *Indianapolis* on 30 July 1945 were heroes long before the *I-58* fired her six torpedoes, and all 1,196 deserve to be remembered that way.

Over the last couple of days, most of you have attended some superb presentations covering the events of the sinking and the struggle for survival. And frankly, there are those in the audience who know those events far better than I, because you, the survivors, lived it. So I am going to skip ahead to the controversial court-martial of Captain McVay.

In the entire history of the United States Navy, no commanding officer of a ship has ever been court-martialed for losing his ship as a result of enemy action, except for Captain McVay. Navy leadership, under Secretary James Forrestal and CNO Ernest King, had every legal authority to convene the court-martial, even though both Fleet Admiral Nimitz and Admiral Spruance recommended against it. And of the charge that stuck, failure to zigzag, the result was cut and dried since Captain McVay made no secret that the ship was not zigzagging at the time the torpedoes hit. So, the Navy did not even need to hold a trial to convict Captain McVay of that specific charge. But as Captain Bill Toti has eloquently written, the fact that something is legally correct does not necessarily make it just.²⁶

What is certain is that the trial was a media circus, and with the end of wartime censorship, the Navy lost any ability to control the frenzy, and the result was a perfect storm of media, congressional, new administration, family, and public pressure to blame someone due to the sheer horror of the event. The publicity was what the Navy leadership wanted, to relieve the

pressure by demonstrating that someone was being held to account, Captain McVay, but also diverting attention from the plethora of other mistakes made by numerous officers off the *Indianapolis*, some very senior. But the Navy was also in a box of its own making. Whether inadvertently or on purpose, the news of the sinking was withheld for almost two weeks until a couple hours before President Truman announced the end of the war. Note my use of the passive voice, which obfuscates responsibility, because I have yet to find record of anyone who owned up to that decision. It is difficult to imagine anything more cruel to the families of those lost than to experience the depth of grief as the entire rest of the nation erupts in euphoria, or worse, to have experienced the euphoria only then to learn that their loved one was dead. So when the court concluded that Captain McVay was guilty of negligently hazarding his ship by failure to zigzag, the anger and invective directed against him by some of the families of those lost was understandable and completely predictable, and in some cases, far less forgiving of the captain than were the survivors.

From a pure legal standpoint, the members of the court-martial board had no choice but to convict. The charge was failure to zigzag and he wasn't zigzagging. Case closed. By the regulation, Captain McVay had the discretion to zigzag or not during periods of night and poor visibility. It was a judgment call. That his ship was torpedoed demonstrated that his judgment, in perfect hindsight, was in error. But even the members of the board recognized the fundamental unfairness by immediately and unanimously recommending clemency, that the sentence (loss of 100 numbers on his permanent rank of commander, and 100 on his temporary wartime rank of captain) be remitted, and that Captain McVay be restored to duty.

War itself is fundamentally a mistake. It doesn't take too much digging into any battle in history to realize that each is a series of multiple errors in judgment. Whether victor or vanquished, both sides make mistakes, usually many. The side that makes the fewest mistakes usually wins, or the side that by good fortune is able to capitalize on the other's mistake at the right time. The reason is that war is hell. War is chaos. Commanders must make split-second decisions based on uncertain information. To hesitate for better information can result in getting blown out of the water. The Pacific

war is fraught with errors in judgment, so Captain McVay was actually in good company.

As examples, the Battle of Savo Island (August 1942) was a worse disaster than the USS *Indianapolis*; three U.S. heavy cruisers and one Australian cruiser caught by surprise and sunk, with the loss of almost 1,100 Sailors, with minimal damage to the Japanese.²⁷ It is easy for an armchair historian like me to point out all the mistakes made by Admirals Callaghan and Scott²⁸ at the first night battle of Guadalcanal (November 1942) but they paid with their lives and another 1,200 Sailors, including the five Sullivan brothers.²⁹ The Battle of Tassafaronga (November 1942) was another disaster where a few Japanese destroyers defeated a much larger U.S. force.³⁰ At the battle of Leyte Gulf (October 1944) the great Admirals Halsey and Kinkaid made a potentially catastrophic mistake by thinking the other had San Bernardino Strait covered, saved only by the heroic ultimate sacrifice of hundreds of U.S. Sailors.³¹ One of the most iconic photos of the war, in almost every book, shows a plane falling in flames from the sky, almost always identified as Japanese. Actually it is one of ours, shot down by us.

Commanders make calculated risk decisions. Sometimes they pay off, sometimes they don't. Admiral Marc Mitscher took a calculated risk at the Battle of the Philippine Sea (June 1944) when he ordered his carriers to turn on their lights, risking many thousands of Sailors to save a few hundred aviators trying to find their way back in the dark.³² I mentioned the USS *Franklin* earlier. Her skipper took a calculated risk to give his men some rest after many hours at general quarters, which is exactly when one lone plane slipped through and hit the ship with two bombs. The crew of the USS *Franklin* saved their ship, at the cost of almost 800 lives.³³ Her skipper was not court-martialed, nor should he have been.

Even during the rescue of the survivors of the USS *Indianapolis*, there were numerous calculated risks taken. The pilot of the PBY, Lieutenant Adrian Marks, took a calculated risk when he violated standing orders and landed his plane in the open ocean to save 56 survivors. The landing broke his plane so it could not take off, the reason why such landings were forbidden. But he could have easily crashed his plane and instead of being a hero, he and his crew would be dead. The skipper of the USS *Cecil J. Doyle*, the

first ship to arrive on the scene, took a calculated risk when he turned his searchlight to the sky, providing a literal beacon of hope that saved many lives, but also served as a possible “sink me” message to any Japanese submarines that might have been around. The USS *Doyle*’s skipper, Commander Graham Claytor, got away with it, and went on to be Secretary of the Navy in President Carter’s administration.³⁴

Captain McVay, too, took a calculated risk. His decision to cease zig-zagging was not an oversight, or negligence, or lack of proper training for the crew; it was a deliberate decision trying to balance two contradictory requirements. First, after the severe strain on his power plant from the previous high-speed transit, he did not want to risk breaking down in the middle of nowhere while transiting alone. Second he wanted to maximize the daylight training time when the ship was to arrive at Leyte in order to get his crew badly needed gunnery training. The first requirement necessitated slower speeds, and the second faster speeds. By ceasing zigzagging, Captain McVay could accomplish both. Standing orders gave him the discretion to cease zigzagging at night in low visibility. Visibility was poor when he gave the order. Unfortunately for the *Indianapolis*, the moon broke through the overcast at just the right time to give the submarine *I-58* “good enough” visibility to take the shot.

The only person to blame for the loss of the *Indianapolis* was Commander Mochitsura Hashimoto, skipper of the *I-58*, and he was just doing his duty, with considerable skill in setting up and executing an almost perfect shot, and given the grievous losses suffered by the Japanese submarine force, with considerable courage. Which leads me to a key observation. The war with Japan was as brutal and vicious as any in history. It could be considered a near-miracle that Japan could then make such a rapid transition to a peaceful, democratic nation that has proved time and again to be a great friend and ally of the United States, with a highly capable navy that is now on our side. So perhaps the greatest lesson of that terrible war is that never again must the United States and Japan face each other on opposite sides of a field of battle.

So let me transition to what is going on today. I don’t really have a good segue for this so please bear with me. There is a new movie about the USS *Indianapolis* coming out, probably around Veteran’s Day, called *Men of*

Courage starring Nicolas Cage.³⁵ I do not know if it will be a good movie or a bad movie. The trailers are out, and you can see them on YouTube. It certainly looks like an exciting movie, although many in this room will instantly recognize it was filmed on a battleship not a heavy cruiser. What I do know is that the Department of Defense and the Department of the Navy declined to provide support to the film production.

Regardless, I am using the movie as a forcing function for my command to review all documentation and to look for additional sources before the movie comes out. My intent is to ensure that the senior Navy leadership and the American public are provided with the most accurate and up-to-date account possible. You all know that it is not a pretty story, but my intent is to be truthful. I have had my staff reach out to researchers in Japan to glean more from Japanese language sources. Although most relevant Japanese documentation was destroyed just before the end of the war, we have found some interesting things, although most corroborates what we already know. Nevertheless, we have found that Commander Hashimoto initially reported three hits on the USS *Indianapolis* rather than just two, and he also reported that when he surfaced some time after the attack he sighted flotsam from the wreck, which differed from his testimony at the court-martial that he saw nothing.³⁶ He also testified at the trial that visibility was “good” at the time of the attack, which is how it is characterized in the trial documents and Navy press releases, but which differs from the recollection and testimony of USS *Indianapolis* survivors. In Japanese language sources, Commander Hashimoto reported that before the attack, visibility was so poor that he had to abort attempts to surface because he couldn’t see out of his periscope, which does match the recollections of USS *Indianapolis* survivors.

We have also been able to finally identify the LST that was the last ship to see the USS *Indianapolis* before she was sunk. Using *LST-779*’s logs, we have been able to determine that her course would not have enabled her to see the sinking or survivors, but it has helped us determine a more accurate position for the sinking.³⁷ We have also been working with the U.S. Naval Academy oceanography department on improved drift model analysis which we think, when coupled with the *LST-779* data and Japanese-language information, will give us a more refined search area, which is about 30 miles off

the official loss position. We believe this data will be useful in future expeditions to find the ship. At least one by Dr. Ballard is in the planning stage. I would caution that the bottom topography in the area is like the Himalayan Mountains turned upside down and inside out and filled with water, so the chances of finding the ship will be difficult at best. And, unfortunately, the Cayman-flagged research ship that reported itself in the last several days, to our surprise, to be searching in the area of the USS *Indianapolis* sinking, is probably not quite in the right area.

We have also been investigating some of the “conspiracy theories.” It is true that Captain McVay’s father, a Navy admiral, had once publicly admonished a young Ernest J. King for bringing women aboard his ship, and King never shook that reputation. But as CNO during World War II, King also personally selected every commander of large warships. If he were out for revenge, he could easily have denied Captain McVay the opportunity for the plum assignment as captain of the Fifth Fleet flagship. It is also plausible that political pressure was brought to bear on Forrestal and King on behalf of one of the officers lost in the sinking, however, intense political pressure came from many quarters, so it is not plausible that one bereaved congressman was responsible for Captain McVay’s court-martial.³⁸

We also are looking at the intelligence reports that Captain McVay did not have access to, either prior to the attack or during the court-martial. I personally believe that the ULTRA intelligence was not precise enough to have made much difference, nor was the reporting of the sinking of the USS *Underhill*, which Captain McVay did not get, since *Underhill* was actually a considerable distance from the position of the *Indianapolis* sinking, farther than a submarine could go in that time. The intelligence reports that Captain McVay did receive, although vague, did include the potential for submarine attack in the vicinity of his track, and that threat was considered ever-present anyway. There is no evidence that the bridge watch or the lookouts were any less alert than they should have been, even if they had known for sure a submarine was in the area. The potential for submarine attack was reportedly on everyone’s mind, and there is no evidence that Captain McVay willfully disregarded the threat. He simply calculated that on a dark night in poor visibility in a huge expanse of ocean the odds of a submarine being in exactly

the right spot were slim. Unfortunately Commander Hashimoto got lucky, and Captain McVay was not.

I have probably been overly long-winded, so let me conclude.

I have always viewed Captain McVay as a hero. Some accounts make it seem that Captain McVay was despondent that the sinking wrecked his career, since even though the sentence was remitted, he never served at sea again. From my reading of his character, I really doubt that his career prospects were very high in his mind. Captain McVay was Navy to his core, and I believe that he would have done anything possible to accomplish his assigned mission even at the risk of his ship and crew. But I also believe that he truly wanted to bring every man in his crew home alive. His failure to do so weighed very heavily on him for the rest of his life. He was imbued with the Navy principle of the absolute responsibility of command, whether his fault or not didn't matter to him. Even if he did everything right, he still had to live with the responsibility that at best, his best wasn't good enough. Yet he bore that responsibility with absolute dignity and professionalism throughout the aftermath.

But what I think really sets him apart as a hero was how he performed while adrift in the sea. He survived the sinking. He could have taken the time-honored tradition of going down with his ship. But I believe his sense of duty to his crew precluded that option. He wasn't just a man in the water fighting for his personal survival. He never relinquished command even while floating on a raft. He remained in command of everything within view, maintaining military order, and making decisions that saved the lives of others. Any reasonable person could forgive him had he put his own survival first under the circumstances. But Captain McVay continued to exhibit extraordinary leadership throughout the entire ordeal. It is one thing to display great leadership when things are going good. It is quite another to do so during the most hellish conditions imaginable, when there was nothing in it for him, except an indomitable will to do the right thing. I submit that this is the epitome of command leadership and should serve as an inspiration to all future naval officers.

So in my opinion Captain McVay was a hero, and the survivors were heroes, although I believe they would all say that they were just doing their

duty. But I think everyone would agree that the greatest heroes were those who were lost at sea, those who made the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of our nation.

At every memorial service for a Sailor fallen in battle or lost at sea, the Navy makes a solemn promise to their families that we will remember them, that we will not forget the sacrifice made by their loved one. As the Director of Naval History it is my duty to ensure that the Navy keeps that promise. And I can assure the survivors and the families of those lost at sea that I will do my utmost to ensure that the sacrifice of the USS *Indianapolis* and her brave crew is never forgotten.

Thank you.

Source: TD; "Remarks of Rear Admiral (Ret.) Samuel J. Cox, Director, Naval History and Heritage Command, at 71st Anniversary Reunion of USS *Indianapolis* Survivor's Group," 9 July 2016. Available at www.history.navy.mil.

POSTSCRIPT

On 19 August 2017, nearly 72 years to the day of the announcement of the sinking of Indianapolis and VJ Day, her wreckage was located over three miles below the surface of the Philippine Sea. The wreckage was found by a research crew on board Research Vessel (R/V) Petrel, owned by Microsoft co-founder and philanthropist Paul G. Allen.¹ The press release about the discovery indicates that data from LST-779 contributed to locating the ship and suggests that the wreckage was further west than the historic Navy position. Media interviews with Indianapolis survivors relay a sense of closure to their story. Undoubtedly, research will continue on the wreck, which rightfully remains protected as the final resting place of many of her brave Sailors.

NHHC Press Release Announcing Discovery of *Indianapolis* Wreckage, 19 August 2017

Researchers Announce Wreckage from USS *Indianapolis* Located

Story Number: NNS170819-02 Release Date: 8/19/2017 12:53:00 PM

From Naval History and Heritage Command, Communication and Outreach Division

WASHINGTON (NNS)—A team of civilian researchers led by entrepreneur and philanthropist Paul G. Allen has announced they have found the wreck of the World War II cruiser USS *Indianapolis* (CA 35), which was lost July 30, 1945.

This is a significant discovery considering the depth of the water in which the ship was lost—more than 18,000 feet. Around 800 of the ship's 1,196 Sailors and Marines survived the sinking, but after four to five days in the

water—suffering exposure, dehydration, drowning, and shark attacks—only 316 survived.²

The wreck was located by the expedition crew of Research Vessel (R/V) *Petrel*, which is owned by Allen, 5,500 meters below the surface, resting on the floor of the North Pacific Ocean.

“To be able to honor the brave men of the USS *Indianapolis* and their families through the discovery of a ship that played such a significant role in ending World War II is truly humbling,” said Allen. “As Americans, we all owe a debt of gratitude to the crew for their courage, persistence and sacrifice in the face of horrendous circumstances. While our search for the rest of the wreckage will continue, I hope everyone connected to this historic ship will feel some measure of closure at this discovery so long in coming.”

Indianapolis was lost in the final days of World War II when it was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine in the early morning hours of July 30, 1945. The *Indianapolis* sank in 12 minutes, making it impossible to send a distress signal or deploy much of its life-saving equipment. Prior to the attack, the *Indianapolis* had just completed a secret mission delivering components of the atomic bomb used in Hiroshima that would ultimately help end the war in the Pacific.

“Even in the worst defeats and disasters there is valor and sacrifice that deserves to never be forgotten,” said Sam Cox, director of the Naval History and Heritage Command. “They can serve as inspiration to current and future Sailors enduring situations of mortal peril. There are also lessons learned, and in the case of the *Indianapolis*, lessons re-learned, that need to be preserved and passed on, so the same mistakes can be prevented, and lives saved.”

Others have searched for *Indianapolis* in the past. Among the elements that made this effort different was Allen’s recent acquisition and retrofit of the 250-foot R/V *Petrel* with state-of-the-art subsea equipment capable of diving to 6,000 meters (or three and a half miles).

“The *Petrel* and its capabilities, the technology it has, and the research we’ve

done, are the culmination years of dedication and hard work,” said Robert Kraft, director of subsea operations for Allen. “We’ve assembled and integrated this technology, assets, and unique capability into an operating platform, which is now one amongst very few on the planet.”

The other key factor in the discovery was information that surfaced in 2016 when Dr. Richard Hulver, historian with the Naval History and Heritage Command, conducted research that led to a new search area to the west of the original presumed position.

Hulver’s research identified a naval landing craft that had recorded a sighting of *Indianapolis* hours before it was torpedoed. Using that information, the research team developed a new position and estimated search, which was still a daunting 600 square miles of open ocean.

Allen-led expeditions have also resulted in the discovery of the Japanese battleship *Musashi* (March 2015) and the Italian WWII destroyer *Artigliere* (March 2017). His team was also responsible for retrieving and restoring the ship’s bell from HMS *Hood* for presentation to the British Navy in honor of its heroic service. Allen’s expedition team was recently transferred to the newly acquired and retrofitted R/V *Petrel* specifically for continuing exploration and research efforts.

The 13-person expedition team on the R/V *Petrel* is in the process of surveying the full site and will conduct a live tour of the wreckage in the next few weeks.

Their work is compliant with U.S. law, respecting the sunken ship as a war grave and not disturbing the site. USS *Indianapolis* remains the property of the U.S. Navy and its location will remain confidential and restricted by the Navy. The crew of the R/V *Petrel* has collaborated with Navy authorities throughout its search operations and will continue to work on plans to honor the 22 crew members still alive today,³ as well as the families of all those who served on the highly decorated cruiser.

The Naval History and Heritage Command, located at the Washington Navy Yard, is responsible for the preservation, analysis, and dissemination of

U.S. naval history and heritage. It provides the knowledge foundation for the Navy by maintaining historically relevant resources and products that reflect the Navy's unique and enduring contributions through our nation's history, and supports the fleet by assisting with and delivering professional research, analysis, and interpretive services. NHHC is composed of many activities including the Navy Department Library, the Navy Operational Archives, the Navy art and artifact collections, underwater archaeology, Navy histories, ten museums, USS *Constitution* repair facility and the historic ship *Nautilus*.

Source: TD; "NHHC Press Release Announcing Discovery of USS *Indianapolis* Wreckage," 19 August 2017. Available at <https://www.history.navy.mil/>.

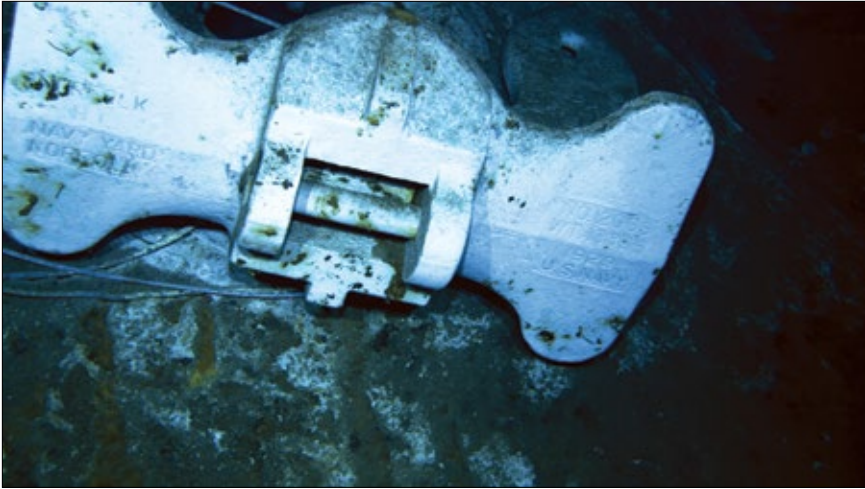


Figure P-1. An image taken by a remotely operated vehicle shows the bottom of an anchor clearly marked “U.S. Navy” and “Norfolk Navy Yard.” The anchor is consistent with the one visible in the front cover photo dated 10 July 1945 just weeks before the ship was lost.
Photo courtesy of Paul G. Allen



Figure P-2. An image taken by a remotely operated vehicle shows what appears to be the painted hull number “35.” Based on the curvature of the hull section, this seems to be the port side of the ship. Using Figure 2-1 as a reference (see page 45), the number is painted in the same font, and the “3” aligns with the circular feature above it in both photos.
Photo courtesy of Paul G. Allen

Conditions of Readiness and Material Conditions

Indianapolis sailed in condition of readiness Three, material condition modified Yoke (all second deck doors and certain hatches to spaces below open to allow better air flow for comfort of crew) at the time of her sinking.

Conditions of Readiness for Action

*Pertains to personnel manning their stations.

There are modifications of these readiness conditions on different types of ships, or in different task forces, usually indicated by adding a letter to the readiness of the condition number. *U.S. Naval Tactical Orders and Doctrine*, 1944, stated that “responsible commanders, by striking a common sense balance between security and rest, shall strive to bring their commands into action at the peak of fighting effectiveness.”

Condition of Readiness	Description
ONE	Action imminent. General Quarters.
TWO	All battle stations fully manned and alert.
THREE	Cruising. Night or day low visibility. Surface or submarine action possible, air attack improbable.
FOUR	Cruising. Day or night high visibility. Danger of surprise air or submarine attack exists. Surprise attack by surface force improbable.

Material Conditions of Closure

*Pertains to states of closure of doors, hatches, valves, and other fittings and systems.

Defined in the *Damage Control Instructions (FTP 170)*, ships are classified according to the number of progressive steps through which they may go in effecting complete closure for battle. There are generally two-material-condition ships and three-material-condition ships (larger ships, such as *Indianapolis*). Conditions of readiness influence the material condition. Commanding officers may establish modified material conditions of closure to suit varying readiness conditions for war cruising. This practice is more common in the case of large ships. Fittings, doors, hatches, valves, etc. are classified and marked X, Y, Z, and W to permit quick and accurate setting of proper material condition.

Three-Material-Condition Ship

Condition	Fittings Closed
X-Ray	X
Yoke	X and Y
Zebra	X, Y, and Z (W opened or operating)

Two-Material-Condition Ship

Condition	Fittings Closed
Baker	X and Y
Able	X, Y, and Z

Material conditions Able and Zebra are the final material conditions of closure for battle, attaining maximum material resistance to damage consistent with operating the ship offensively. Material conditions Baker, X-ray, and Yoke are considered minimum standards only.

APPENDIX 2

Crewmember Ratings

Abbrev.	Rating	Abbrev.	Rating
<i>ACMM</i>	Aviation Chief Machinist's Mate	<i>CRM</i>	Chief Radioman
<i>AerM</i>	Aerographer's Mate	<i>CRT</i>	Chief Radio Technician
<i>AM</i>	Aviation Metalsmith	<i>CTC</i>	Chief Turret Captain
<i>AMM</i>	Aviation Machinist's Mate	<i>CWT</i>	Chief Water Tender
<i>AOM</i>	Aviation Ordnanceman	<i>CY</i>	Chief Yeoman
<i>ART</i>	Aviation Radio Technician	<i>EM</i>	Electrician's Mate
<i>B</i>	Boilermaker	<i>FC</i>	Fire Controlman
<i>BGM</i>	Buglemaster	<i>FCO</i>	Fire Controlman Operator
<i>Bkr</i>	Baker	<i>F</i>	Fireman
<i>BM</i>	Boatswain's Mate	<i>GM</i>	Gunner's Mate
<i>Bug</i>	Bugler	<i>HA</i>	Hospital Apprentice
<i>CBM</i>	Chief Boatswain's Mate	<i>MaM</i>	Mailman
<i>CCk</i>	Chief Cook	<i>M</i>	Metalsmith
<i>CEM</i>	Chief Electrician's Mate	<i>MM</i>	Machinist's Mate
<i>CFC</i>	Chief Fire Controlman	<i>MoMM</i>	Motor Machinist's Mate
<i>CGM</i>	Chief Gunner's Mate	<i>PhM</i>	Pharmacists's Mate
<i>Ck</i>	Cook	<i>PhoM</i>	Photographer's Mate
<i>CM</i>	Carpenter's Mate	<i>PR</i>	Parachute Rigger
<i>CMM</i>	Chief Machinist's Mate	<i>PTR</i>	Painter
<i>Cox</i>	Coxswain	<i>QM</i>	Quartermaster
<i>CPhM</i>	Chief Pharmacist's Mate	<i>RdM</i>	Radarman

Abbrv.	Rating	Abbrv.	Rating
<i>RM</i>	Radioman	<i>S</i>	Seaman
<i>RT</i>	Radio Technician	<i>SSMB</i>	Ship's Service Man Barber
<i>SCB</i>	Ship's Cook Butcher	<i>SSML</i>	Ship's Service Laundryman
<i>SC</i>	Ship's Cook	<i>SSMT</i>	Ship's Service Man Tailor
<i>SF</i>	Shipfitter	<i>StM</i>	Steward's Mate
<i>SKD</i>	Dispersing Storekeeper	<i>St</i>	Steward
<i>SK</i>	Storekeeper	<i>TC</i>	Turret Captain
<i>SKV</i>	Aviation Storekeeper	<i>WT</i>	Water Tender
<i>SM</i>	Signalman	<i>Y</i>	Yeoman

* The Aviation Detail consisted of three Curtiss SC-1 *Seabawks* and supporting crewman of Cruiser Scouting Squadron (VCS) 4.

APPENDIX 3

Indianapolis Casualties

The casualty lists below were compiled from the Navy's 1945 lists that were submitted as evidence in the Court of Inquiry convened to investigate the loss of Indianapolis. The spelling of names were left as they appeared in the historic records. All personnel should be considered regular crew unless otherwise noted. The list of survivors is a compilation of the rosters created at Navy Hospital #114 Samar and Navy Hospital #20 Peleliu. These were the two hospitals that Indianapolis survivors were initially taken to prior to being moved to Guam. The only survivor to not appear on either of these lists was F2c Verne Foster. Foster did, however, appear on the list of those rescued by Bassett, and this ship was the only of the rescue ships to take survivors to Samar. Foster was listed as wounded on the other 1945 lists. Taken together, survivor lists give proof-of-life for 316 Sailors and Marines. The four Sailors who died post-rescue were clearly marked as deceased and not counted among the living. RT2c Clarence Donnor and Corp. Edgar Harrell were incorrectly listed as killed on Navy lists. Corporal Harrell survived and was taken to Peleliu, Clarence Donnor was incorrectly assumed to have been on the ship and thus appeared on Navy lists. These lists cumulatively represent the total onboard Indianapolis at the time of its sinking—1,195.

SURVIVORS (316)

*Denotes an officer

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate	Hospital	
1	Adams	Leo	Harry	S2c	Samar	
2	Akines	William	Roy	S2c	Peleliu	
3	Allard	Vincent	Jerome	QM3c	Peleliu	
4	Altschuler	Allan	Harry	S2c (RDM)	Peleliu	
5	Anderson	Erick	Thorwold	S2c	Peleliu	
6	Andrews	William	Robert	S2c	Samar	
7	Anunti	John	Melvin	M2c	Samar	
8	Armistead	John	Henry	S2c	Peleliu	
9	Ashford	John	T (Jr.)	ART3c	Peleliu	Aviation Detail
10	Ault	William	Frazier	S2c (RDM)	Samar	
11	Baldridge	Clovis	Rogers	EM1c	Samar	
12	Barto	Lloyd	Peter	S1c	Peleliu	
13	Bateman	Bernard	Byron	F2c (WT)	Peleliu	
14	Beane	James	Albert	F2c	Samar	
15	Beaty	Donald	Lee	S1c	Samar	
16	Belcher	James	Robert	S1c (RM)	Peleliu	
17	Bell	Maurice	Glenn	S1c	Samar	
18	Benton	Clarence	Upton	CFC	Samar	
19	Bernacil	Concepcion	Peralta	FC3c	Samar	
20	Bitonti	Louis	Peter	S1c	Peleliu	
21	Blanthorn	Bryan		S1c (GM)	Peleliu	
22	Blum*	Donald	Joseph	Ensign	Samar	
23	Booth	Sherman	Chester	S1c	Samar	
24	Brandt	Russell	Lee	F2c	Samar	
25	Bray	Harold	John (Jr.)	S2c	Samar	
26	Brown	Edward	Joseph	S1c	Peleliu	
27	Brundige	Robert	Henry	S1c (GM)	Peleliu	
28	Buckett	Victor	Robert	Y2c	Peleliu	
29	Bullard	John	Kenneth	S1c	Peleliu	
30	Bunai	Robert	Peter	SM1c	Peleliu	
31	Burdorf	Wilbert	John	Cox	Samar	
32	Burton	Curtis	Henry	S2c	Peleliu	

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate	Hospital	
33	Campbell	Hamer	Edward (Jr.)	GM3c	Peleliu	
34	Campbell	Louis	Dean	S1c	Peleliu	Aviation Detail
35	Carter	Grover	Clifford	S2c	Samar	
36	Carter	Loyd	George	Cox	Samar	
37	Carter	Lindsey	Linwell	S2c	Peleliu	
38	Carver	Grover	Cleveland	S1c	Samar	
39	Cassidy	John	Curran	S1c (RM)	Peleliu	
40	Celaya	Adolfo	Valdo	F2c	Samar	
41	Centazzo	Frank	Joseph	SM3c	Peleliu	
42	Chamness	John	Desel	S2c	Samar	
43	Clark	Orsen		S2c	Peleliu	
44	Clinton	George	William	S1c	Peleliu	
45	Coleman	Robert	Edward	F2c	Peleliu	
46	Collier	Charles	Rives	RM2c	Samar	
47	Costner	Homer	Jackson	Cox	Peleliu	
48	Cowen	Donald	Rodney	FC3c	Samar	
49	Cox	Loel	Dene	S2c	Samar	
50	Crane	Granville	Shaw (Jr.)	MM3c	Samar	
51	Daniel	Harold	William	CBM	Samar	
52	DeBernardi	Louie		BM1c	Samar	
53	Dewing	Ralph	Otto	S1c (FC)	Samar	
54	Dezelske	William	Bruce	MM2c	Peleliu	
55	Douglas	Gene	Dale	F2c	Samar	
56	Drayton	William	Harry	EM2c	Samar	
57	Dronet	Joseph	E J	S2c	Samar	
58	Dryden	William	Howard	MM1c	Samar	
59	Eck	Harold	Adam	S2c	Samar	
60	Erickson	Theodore	Mentzer	S2c	Peleliu	
61	Erwin	Louis	Harold	Cox	Peleliu	
62	Ethier	Eugene	Edwin	EM3c	Samar	
63	Evans	Claudus		GM3c	Peleliu	
64	Farmer	Archie	Calvin	Cox	Peleliu	
65	Farris	Eugene	Francis	S1c (RM)	Peleliu	

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate	Hospital	
66	Feakes	Fred	Atkinson	AOM1c	Samar	Aviation Detail
67	Fedorski	Nicholas	Walter	S1c	Peleliu	
68	Felts	Donald	J	BM1c	Peleliu	
69	Ferguson	Albert	E	CMM	Peleliu	
70	Fitting	Johnny	Wayne	GM1c	Peleliu	
71	Flaten	Harold	James	WT2c	Samar	
72	Fortin	Verlin	Laverre	WT3c	Peleliu	
73	Foster	Verne	Elmer	F2c	Samar	
74	Fox	William	Henry (Jr.)	F2c	Samar	
75	Francois	Norbert	Edward	F1c (MM)	Peleliu	
76	Funkhouser	Robert	Morris	ART2c	Peleliu	Aviation Detail
77	Gabrillo	Juan		S2c	Samar	
78	Galante	Angelo		S2c	Peleliu	
79	Galbraith	Norman	S	MM2c	Peleliu	
80	Gardner	Roscoe	Wallace	F2c	Peleliu	
81	Gause	Robert	P	QM1c	Peleliu	
82	Gemza	Rudolph	Arnold	FCO3c	Samar	
83	George	Gabriel	Vincent	MM3c	Samar	
84	Gettleman	Robert	Alfred	S2c (RDM)	Peleliu	
85	Gibson	Buck	Warren	S1c	Samar	
86	Gilcrease	James		S2c	Samar	
87	Gladd	Millard	(Jr.)	MM2c	Samar	
88	Glenn	Jay	Rollin	AMM3c	Peleliu	Aviation Detail
89	Goff	Thomas	Guy	S1c	Samar	
90	Gooch	William	Leroy	F2c	Peleliu	
91	Gray	Willis	Leroy	S1c	Peleliu	
92	Green	Tolbert	(Jr.)	S1c	Samar	
93	Greenlee	Charles	Ians	S2c	Peleliu	
94	Greenwald	Jacob		1st Sergeant	Samar	USMC
95	Griffith	Robert	Lee	S2c	Peleliu	
96	Hanson*	Harley	Clarence	Machinist	Peleliu	

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate	Hospital	
97	Harrell	Edgar	Alvin	Corporal	Peleliu	USMC
98	Harrison*	Cecil	Manly	Chief Gunner	Peleliu	
99	Hart	Fred	Junior	RT2c	Peleliu	
100	Hatfield	Willie		S2c	Peleliu	
101	Havener	Harlan	Carl	F2c	Samar	
102	Havins	Otha	Alton	Y3c	Peleliu	
103	Haynes*	Lewis	Leavitt	Lt. Cmdr.	Peleliu	
104	Heller	John		S2c	Peleliu	
105	Hensch*	Erwin	Frederick	Lieutenant	Peleliu	
106	Hershberger	C	Lamar	S1c (FC)	Samar	
107	Hind	Lyle	Lewis	S2c	Samar	
108	Hinken	John	Richard (Jr.)	F2c	Samar	
109	Hodge	Howard	Henry	RM2c	Peleliu	
110	Hoopes	Gordon	Herbert	S2c	Samar	
111	Horner*	Duward	Richard	Gunner	Samar	
112	Horvath	George	John	F1c (MoMM)	Samar	
113	Hoskins	William	Orsond	Y3c	Peleliu	
114	Houck	Richard	Eugene	EM3c	Peleliu	
115	Howison*	John	Donald	Ensign	Samar	
116	Hubeli	Joseph	Francis	S2c	Samar	
117	Hughes	Max	Meredith	Pfc	Peleliu	USMC
118	Hupka	Clarence	Kilmer	Bkr1c	Peleliu	
119	Hurley	Woodrow		GM2c	Samar	
120	Jacob	Melvin	Carl	Pfc	Samar	USMC
121	Jacquemot	Joseph	Alexander	S2c	Peleliu	
122	James	Woodie	Eugene	Cox	Peleliu	
123	Jarvis	James	Kenneth	AM3c	Peleliu	Aviation Detail
124	Jensen	Eugene	Wenzel	S2c	Peleliu	
125	Johnson	William	Albert	S1c	Peleliu	
126	Jones	Clinton	Leroy	Cox	Samar	
127	Jones	Sidney		S1c	Peleliu	
128	Jurkiewicz	Raymond	Stanley	S1c	Peleliu	
129	Justice	Robert	Eugene	S2c	Samar	

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate	Hospital	
130	Katsikas	Gust	Constantine	S1c	Samar	
131	Kazmierski	Walter		S1c	Samar	
132	Kees	Shalous	Eugene	EM2c	Peleliu	
133	Kemp	David	Poole (Jr.)	SC3c	Peleliu	
134	Kenly	Oliver	Wesley	RdM3c	Peleliu	
135	Kerby	Deo	Earl	S1c	Samar	
136	Keyes	Edward	Hiram	Cox	Peleliu	
137	King	A	C	S1c (Y)	Peleliu	
138	Kinzle	Raymond	Arthur	Bkr2c	Samar	
139	Kirkland	Marvin	Faulk	S2c	Samar	
140	Kiselica	Joseph	Frederick	AMM2c	Peleliu	Aviation Detail
141	Kittoe	James	William	F2c	Samar	
142	Klappa	Ralph	Donald	S2c	Peleliu	
143	Klaus	Joseph	Frank	S1c	Peleliu	
144	Koch	Edward	Chris	F1c (EM)	Samar	
145	Koziara	George		S2c	Peleliu	
146	Kreis	Clifford	Eddy	S1c	Peleliu	
147	Krueger	Norman	Frederick	S2c	Peleliu	
148	Krueger	Dale	Frank	F2c	Samar	
149	Kurlick	George	Robert	S1c	Peleliu	
150	Kuryla	Michael	Nicholas (Jr.)	Cox	Peleliu	
151	Lane	Ralph		CMM	Samar	
152	Lanter	Kenley	MacKendree	S1c (SM)	Peleliu	
153	LaPaglia	Carlos		GM2c	Samar	
154	Laws	George	Edward	S1c	Samar	
155	LeBow	Cleatus	Archie	FCO3c	Samar	
156	Leenerman	Arthur	Louis	RdM3c	Peleliu	
157	Lockwood	Thomas	Homer	S2c	Peleliu	Aviation Detail
158	Loftis	James	Bryant (Jr.)	S1c	Peleliu	
159	Lopetz	Sam		S1c	Samar	
160	Lopez	Daniel	B	F2c	Peleliu	
161	Lucas	Robert	Andrew	S2c	Peleliu	
162	Lucca	Frank	John	F2c	Samar	

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate	Hospital	
163	Maas	Melvin	Adolph	S1c (SF)	Samar	
164	Mace	Harold	A	S2c	Samar	
165	Mack	Donald	Fleming	Bug1c	Peleliu	
166	Maday	Anthony	Francis	AMM1c	Peleliu	Aviation Detail
167	Makaroff	Chester	John	S1c	Samar	
168	Maldonado	Salvador		Bkr3c	Samar	
169	Malena	Joseph	John (Jr.)	GM2c	Samar	
170	Malski	Joseph	John	S1c	Samar	
171	Matrulla	John		S1c (FCO)	Peleliu	
172	Maxwell	Farrell	Jacob	S1c	Peleliu	
173	McCall	Donald	Clifton	S2c	Samar	
174	McClain	Raymond	Bryant	BM2c	Peleliu	
175	McCoy	Giles	Gilbert	PFC	Peleliu	USMC
176	McCrary	Millard	Virgil (Jr.)	F1c	Samar	
177	McElroy	Clarence	Ernest	S1c (GM)	Peleliu	
178	McFall	Walter	Eugene	S2c	Peleliu	
179	McGinnis	Paul	Wendell	SM3c	Peleliu	
180	McGuiggan	Robert	Melvin	S1c	Peleliu	
181	McHenry	Loren	Charles (Jr.)	S1c (RM)	Samar	
182	McKenzie	Ernest	Eugene	S1c	Peleliu	Aviation Detail
183	McKissick*	Charles	Brite	Lieutenant (jg.)	Peleliu	
184	McKlin	Henry	Theodore	S1c	Samar	
185	McLain	Patrick	Joseph	S2c	Peleliu	
186	McVay*	Charles	Butler III	Captain	Peleliu	
187	McVay	Richard	Calvin	S2c	Samar	
188	Meredith	Charles	Everett	S1c	Samar	
189	Mestas	Nestor	A	WT3c	Peleliu	
190	Meyer	Charles	Thomas	S2c	Samar	
191	Mikolayek	Joseph		Cox	Samar	
192	Milbrodt	Glen	LaVerne	S2c	Peleliu	
193	Miner	Herbert	Jay	RT2c	Samar	
194	Mitchell	James	Edward	S2c	Samar	

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate	Hospital
195	Mitchell	Kenneth	Earl	S1c	Peleliu
196	Mitchell	Norval	Jerry (Jr.)	S2c	Peleliu
197	Mlady	Clarence	Charles	S1c	Peleliu
198	Modesitt	Carl	Elsworth	S2c	Samar
199	Modisher*	Melvin	Wayne	Lieutenant (jg.)	Peleliu
200	Moran	Joseph	John	RM1c	Peleliu
201	Morgan	Eugene	Stanley	BM2c	Samar
202	Morgan	Glenn	Grover	BGM3c	Peleliu
203	Morris	Albert	Oliver	S1c	Samar
204	Moseley	Morgan	Miller	SC1c	Samar
205	Mowrey	Ted	Eugene	S1c	Peleliu
206	Muldoon	John	James	S2c	Peleliu
207	Mulvey	William	Robert	BM1c	Peleliu
208	Murphy	Paul	James	FC3c	Samar
209	Myers	H	B	F2c	Samar
210	Naspini	Joseph	Anthony	F2c (WT)	Peleliu
211	Nelsen	Edward	John	GM1c	Samar
212	Nelson	Frank	Howard	S2c	Samar
213	Newhall	James	Franklin	S1c (GM)	Peleliu
214	Nichols	James	Clarence	S2c	Samar
215	Nightingale	William	Oliver	MM1c	Samar
216	Nixon	Daniel	Merrill	S2c	Peleliu
217	Norberg	James	Arthur	CBM	Samar
218	Nunley	Troy	Audie	S2c	Peleliu
219	Nuttall	Alexander	Carlyle	S1c	Samar
220	Obledo	Mike	Guerra	S2c	Peleliu
221	O'Donnell	James	Edward	WT3c	Samar
222	Olijar	John		S1c	Peleliu
223	Orsburn	Frank	Harold	SSML2c	Peleliu
224	Outland	Felton	James	S1c	Peleliu
225	Overman	Thurman	David	S2c	Samar
226	Owen	Keith	Nichols	S2c	Samar
227	Pace	Curtis		S2c	Peleliu

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate	Hospital	
228	Pacheco	Jose	Cruz	S2c	Samar	
229	Palmiter	Adelore	Aurthor	S2c	Peleliu	
230	Paroubek	Richard	Anthony	Y1c	Peleliu	
231	Pasket	Lyle	Matthew	S2c	Peleliu	
232	Paulk	Luther	Doyle	S2c	Peleliu	
233	Payne	Edward	Glenjoy	S2c	Peleliu	
234	Pena	Santos	Alday	S2c	Samar	
235	Perez	Basilio		S2c	Samar	
236	Perkins	Edward	Charles	F2c	Samar	
237	Peterson	Avery	Clarence	S2c (FC)	Samar	
238	Phillips	Huie	Harold	S2c	Peleliu	
239	Podish	Paul		S2c	Peleliu	
240	Podschn	Clifford	Albert	S2c	Peleliu	
241	Pogue	Herman	Crawford	S2c	Samar	
242	Poor	Gerald	Melbourne	S2c	Samar	
243	Potts	Dale	Floyd	S2c	Peleliu	
244	Price	James	Denny	S1c	Peleliu	
245	Quely	William	Charles (Jr.)	PR3c	Peleliu	Aviation Detail
246	Ramirez	Ricardo		S1c	Peleliu	
247	Rathbone	Wilson		S2c	Samar	
248	Rawdon	John	Herbert	EM3c	Peleliu	
249	Redmayne*	Richard	Banks	Lieutenant	Samar	
250	Reeves	Chester	O B	S1c	Peleliu	
251	Rehner	Herbert	Adrian	S1c (SM)	Peleliu	
252	Reid	Curtis	Franklin	S2c	Peleliu	
253	Reid	James	Edgar	BM2c	Samar	
254	Reid*	John		Lieutenant	Peleliu	
255	Reid	Tommy	Lee	RdM3c	Samar	
256	Reynolds	Alford		GM2c	Samar	
257	Rich	Raymond	Anthony	Pfc	Peleliu	USMC
258	Riggins	Earl		Private	Samar	USMC
259	Rineay	Francis	Henry (Jr.)	S2c	Peleliu	
260	Roberts	Norman	Harold	MM1c	Samar	

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate	Hospital	
261	Robison	John	Davis	Cox	Samar	
262	Rogers	Ralph	Guy	RdM3c	Peleliu	
263	Rogers*	Ross	(Jr.)	Ensign	Peleliu	
264	Russell	Virgil	Miller	Cox	Samar	
265	Saathoff	Don	William	S2c	Samar	
266	Sanchez	Fernando	Sanhec	SC3c	Samar	
267	Scanlan	Osceola	Carlisle	S2c	Samar	
268	Schechterle	Harold	Joseph	RdM3c	Peleliu	
269	Schmueck	John	Alton	CPhM	Peleliu	
270	Seabert	Clarke	Wilson	S2c	Peleliu	
271	Setchfield	Arthur	Lawrence	Cox	Peleliu	
272	Shaffer	Robert	Patrick	S1c	Peleliu	
273	Sharp	William	Hafford	S2c	Peleliu	
274	Shearer	Harold	J	S2c	Peleliu	
275	Shown	Donald	Herbert	CFC	Samar	
276	Shows	Audie	Boyd	Cox	Samar	
277	Simpson	William	Edward	Cox	Samar	
278	Sinclair	James	Raymond	S2c	Samar	
279	Sitek	Henry	Joseph	S2c	Samar	
280	Sladek	Wayne	Lynn	BM2c	Samar	
281	Slankard	Jack	Crocker	S1c	Samar	
282	Smeltzer	Charles	H	S2c	Samar	
283	Smith	Cozell	Lee (Jr.)	Cox	Peleliu	
284	Smith	Frederick	Calyin	F2c	Samar	
285	Smith	James	Wesley	S2c	Peleliu	
286	Sospizio	Andre		F1c	Samar	
287	Spencer	Daniel	Frederick	S1c	Peleliu	
288	Spencer	Roger		S1c (RM)	Peleliu	
289	Spinelli	John	Anthony	SC2c	Peleliu	
290	Spooner	Miles	Lewis	Private	Peleliu	USMC
291	Stamm	Florian	Marian	S2c	Samar	
292	Stephens	Richard	Park	S2c	Samar	
293	Stevens	George	Golden	WT2c	Peleliu	
294	Stewart	Glenn	Willard	CFC	Samar	

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate	Hospital
295	Sturtevant	Elwyn	Lee	RM2c	Peleliu
296	Suter	Frank	Edward	S1c	Samar
297	Tawater	Charles	Hoyt	F1c	Samar
298	Thelen	Richard	Peter	S2c	Peleliu
299	Thomas	Ivan	Mervin	S2c	Samar
300	Thompson	David	Alvin	EM3c	Peleliu
301	Thurkettle	William	Clarence	S2c	Samar
302	Torretta	John	Mario	F2c	Samar
303	Turner	Charles	Morris	S2c	Peleliu
304	Twible*	Harlan	Malcom	Ensign	Samar
305	Uffelman	Paul	Roland	Pfc	Samar USMC
306	Umenhoffer	Lyle	Edgar	S1c	Peleliu
307	Underwood	Ralph	Ellis	S1c (RDM)	Samar
308	Van Meter	Joseph	William	WT3c	Peleliu
309	Walker	Virgil	B	F2c	Samar
310	Wells	Charles	Orville	S1c (RDM)	Samar
311	Whiting	George	Albert	F2c	Samar
312	Wilcox	Lindsey	Zeb	WT2c	Samar
313	Wisniewski	Stanley		F2c	Peleliu
314	Witzig	Robert	Marin	FC3c	Samar
315	Woolston*	John		Ensign	Peleliu
316	Zink	Charles	William	EM3c	Peleliu

DECEASED POST-RESCUE (4)

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate	Hospital
1	Harrison	Fred	Elliott	S2c	Peleliu
2	Peterson	Ralph	Renny	S2c	Samar
3	Russell	Robert	A	S2c	Samar
4	Shipman	Robert	Lee	GM3c	Peleliu

OFFICERS LOST (67)

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate
1	Backus	T	H	Lieutenant (jg)
2	Barry	C		Lieutenant (jg)

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate
3	Billings	R	B	Ensign
4	Brophy	T	D (Jr.)	Ensign
5	Candalino	P	L	Lieutenant (jg)
6	Christian	L	E (Jr.)	Electrician
7	Clinton	L	J	Lieutenant (jg)
8	Coleman	Cedric	Foster	Lieut. Flag Allowance Commander (CD)
9	Connelly	D	F	Ensign
10	Conway	T	M	Lieutenant
11	Crews	H	C	Lieutenant (jg)
12	Davis	S	G	Lieutenant (jg)
13	Dowdy	L	S	Chief Carpenter
14	Driscoll	D	L	Lieutenant (jg)
15	Eames	P	H (Jr.)	Ensign
16	Flynn	J	A	Commander
17	Foell	C	D	Ensign
18	Freeze	H	B	Lieutenant (jg)
19	Fuchs	H	F	Machinist
20	Gauss	R	C (Jr.)	Ensign
21	Gerngross	F	J (Jr.)	Ensign
22	Goeckel	E	S	Lieutenant (jg)
23	Hale	R	B	Lieutenant
24	Hayes	C	D	Lieut. Commander
25	Haynes	R	A	Lieutenant
26	Henry	E	O	Lieut. Commander
27	Herstine	J	F	Ensign
28	Hill	N	P (Jr.)	Lieutenant
29	Hill	R	N	Ensign
30	Huntley	V	C	Chief Ship's Clerk
31	Hurst	R	H	Lieutenant
32	Janney	J	H	Commander
33	Jenney	C	I	Lieutenant
34	Jump	D	A	Ensign
35	Keeney	R	A	Ensign

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate	
36	Koppang	R	I	Lieutenant (jg)	
37	Lipski	S	W	Commander	
38	MacFarland	K	I	Lieutenant (jg)	
39	Malone	M	L (Jr.)	Lieutenant (jg)	
40	Marple	P	T	Ensign	
41	McGuirk	P	A	Lieutenant (jg)	
42	Miles	T	K	Lieutenant	
43	Moore	K	C	Lieut. Commander	
44	Morgan	T	F	Ensign	
45	Morse	K	H	Lieutenant (jg)	
46	Moynelo	H	C (Jr.)	Ensign	
47	Orr	J	I (Jr.)	Lieutenant	
48	Park	D	E	Ensign	
49	Parke	Edward	L	Captain	USMC
50	Pessolano	N	R	Lieutenant	
51	Roche	J	M	Lieutenant	
52	Sikes	T	A	Ensign	
53	Spencer	J	D	Lieutenant	
54	Spencer	S	A	Boatswain	
55	Stauffer	Edward	H	1st Lieutenant	USMC
56	Stimson	D		Ensign	
57	Stout	K	I	Lieut. Commander	
58	Swart	R	L	Lieutenant (jg)	
59	Teerlink	D	S	Chief Pay Clerk	
60	Triemer	E	A	Ensign	
61	Trudeau	E	A	Lieutenant	
62	Ullmann	P	E	Lieutenant (jg)	
63	Whallon	L	F (Jr.)	Lieutenant (jg)	
64	Whitman	R	T	Lieutenant	
65	Williams	R	L	Machinist	
66	Woods	L	T	Chief Radio Electrician	
67	Crouch	E	M	Captain	Passenger

ENLISTED LOST (808)

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate	
1	Cromling	Charles	J (Jr.)	Sergeant	USMC
2	Tracy	Richard	I (Jr.)	Sergeant	USMC
3	Harrell	Edgard	A	Corporal	USMC
3	Kenworthy	Glenn	W	Corporal	USMC
4	Straughn	Howard	V (Jr.)	Corporal	USMC
5	Brinker	David	A	Pfc	USMC
6	Brown	Orlo	N	Pfc	USMC
7	Davis	William	H	Pfc	USMC
8	Dupeck			Pfc	USMC
9	Grimm	Loren	E	Pfc	USMC
10	Hancock	Thomas	A	Pfc	USMC
11	Holland	John	F (Jr.)	Pfc	USMC
12	Hubbard	Gordon	R	Pfc	USMC
13	Hubbard	Leland	R	Pfc	USMC
14	Larsen	Harlan	D	Pfc	USMC
15	Lees	Henry	W	Pfc	USMC
16	Messenger	Leonard	J (Jr.)	Pfc	USMC
17	Munson	Bryan	C	Pfc	USMC
18	Murphy	Charles	T	Pfc	USMC
19	Neal	William	F	Pfc	USMC
20	Reinold	George	H	Pfc	USMC
21	Rose			Pfc	USMC
22	Spino	Frank	J (Jr.)	Pfc	USMC
23	Thomsen	Arthur	A	Pfc	USMC
24	Wych	Robert	A	Pfc	USMC
25	Bush			Private	USMC
26	Kirchner	John	H	Private	USMC
27	Marttila	Howard	W	Private	USMC
28	Redd	Robert	F	Private	USMC
29	Adams	Pat	L	S2c (SM)	Flag Allowance
30	Barker	Robert	C (Jr.)	RT1c	Flag Allowance
31	Bradley	William	H	S2c (SM)	Flag Allowance
32	Telford	Arno	J	RT3c	Flag Allowance

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate	
33	Wenzel	Ray	G	RT3c	Flag Allowance
34	Abbott	George	S	S1c	
35	Acosta	Charles	Mack	MM3c	
36	Adorante	Dante	W	S2c	
37	Albright	C	E (Jr.)	Cox	
38	Allen	Paul	Franklin	S1c	
39	Allmaras	Harold	D	F2c	
40	Alvey	Edward	W (Jr.)	AerM2c	
41	Amick	Homer	Irvin	S2c	
42	Andersen	Lawrence	J	SKD2c	
43	Anderson	Vincent	U	BM1c	
44	Anderson	Sam	G	S2c	
45	Anderson	Leonard	O	MM3c	
46	Anderson	Richard	L	F2c	
47	Annis	James	B (Jr.)	CEM	
48	Anthony	Harold	R	PhM3c	
49	Antonie	Charles	J	F2c	
50	Armenta	Lorenzo		SC2c	
51	Arnold	Carl	Loyd	S1c	Aviation Detail
52	Ashford	Chester	W	WT2c	
53	Atkinson	J	P	Cox	
54	Aull	Joseph	Harry	S2c	
55	Ayotte	Lester	James	S2c	
56	Baker	Daniel	Albert	S2c	
57	Baker	Frederick	H	S2c (RdM)	
58	Baker	William	M (Jr.)	EM2c	
59	Ball	Emmet	Edwin	S2c	
60	Ballard	Courtney	J	SSMB3c	
61	Barenthin	Leonard	W	S1c (FC)	
62	Barksdale	Thomas	L	FCO3c	
63	Barnes	Paul	Clayton	F2c	
64	Barnes	Willard	M	MM1c	
65	Barra	Raymond	James	CGM	
66	Barrett	James	B	S2c	

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate
67	Barton	George	S	Y3c
68	Batenhorst	W	J	MM3c
69	Batson	Eugene	C	S2c (RDM)
70	Batten	Robert	Edmon	S1c (GM)
71	Batts	Edward	Daniel	StM1c
72	Becker	Myron	Melvin	WT2c
73	Beddington	C	E	S1c
74	Bedsted	Leo	A K	F1c (MoMM)
75	Beister	Richard	J	WT3c
76	Bennett	Ernest	F	B3c
77	Bennett	Dean	R	HA1c
78	Bennett	Toney	Wade	St3c
79	Benning	Harry		S1c
80	Berry	Joseph	(Jr.)	StM1c
81	Berry	William	Henry	St3c
82	Beukema	Kenneth	Jay	S2c
83	Beuschlein	Joseph	C	S2c
84	Biddison	Charles	L	S1c
85	Billingsley	R	F	GM3c
86	Bilz	Robert	Eugene	S2c
87	Bishop	Arthur	(Jr.)	S2c
88	Blackwell	Fermon	M	SSML3c
89	Boege	Raynard	R	S2c
90	Bogan	Jack	Roberts	RM1c
91	Bollinger	Richard	H	S1c
92	Borton	Herbert	E	SCB2c
93	Boss	Norbert	George	S2c
94	Bott	Wilbur	Melvin	S2c
95	Bowles	Eldridge	W	S1c
96	Bowman	Charles	E	TC1c
97	Boyd	Troy	Howard	GM3c
98	Brake	John	(Jr.)	S2c
99	Braun	Neal	F	S2c
100	Brice	R	V	S2c

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate
101	Bridge	Wayne	Aron	S2c
102	Bright	Chester	Lee	S2c
103	Briley	Harold	V	MaM3c
104	Brooks	Ulysses	Ray	CWT
105	Brown	Edward	A	WT3c
106	Bruce	Russell	W	S2c
107	Brule	Maurice	J	S2c
108	Bruneau	Charles	A	GM3c
109	Budish	David		S2c
110	Bunn	Horace	George	S2c
111	Burkhartsmeier	A	T	S1c
112	Burkholtz	Frank	(Jr.)	EM3c
113	Burleson	Martin	L	S1c
114	Burrs	John	William	S1c
115	Burt	William	G A	QM3c
116	Bushong	John	R	GM3c
117	Cadwallader	John	J	RT3c
118	Cain	Alfred	Brown	RT3c
119	Cairo	William	G	Bug1c
120	Call	James	Edward	RM3c
121	Cameron	John	Watson	GM2c
122	Camp	Garrison		StM2c
123	Campana	Paul		RDM3c
124	Campbell	Wayland	D	SF3c
125	Cantrell	Billy	G	F2c
126	Carnell	Lois	Wayne	S2c
127	Carpenter	Willard	A	SM3c
128	Carr	Harry	Leroy	S2c
129	Carroll	Rachel	W	Cox
130	Carroll	Gregory	K	S1c (FCO)
131	Carson	Clifford		F1c (WT)
132	Carstensen	Richard		S2c
133	Castaldo	Patrick	P	GM2c
134	Castiaux	Ray	Vernon	S2c

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate
135	Casto	William	H	S1c
136	Cavil	Robert	Ralph	MM2c
137	Cavitt	Clinton	C	WT3c
138	Chandler	Lloyd	Nyle	S2c
139	Chart	Joseph		EM3c
140	Clark	Eugene		Ck3c
141	Clements	Harold	P	S2c
142	Cobb	William	Lester	MoMM3c
143	Cole	Walter	Henry	CRM
144	Collins	James		StM1c
145	Colvin	Frankie	Lee	SSMT2c
146	Condon	Barna	T	RdM1c
147	Conrad	James	P	EM3c
148	Conser	Donald	Lynn	SC2c
149	Consiglio	Joseph	W	FC2c
150	Cook	Floyd	Edward	SF3c
151	Cooper	Dale	(Jr.)	F2c
152	Copeland	Willard	J	S2c
153	Countryman	Robert	Edward	S2c
154	Cox	Alford	Edward	GM3c
155	Crabb	Donald	Calvin	RM2c
156	Crites	Orval	D	WT1c
157	Crum	Charles	Junior	S2c
158	Cruz	Jose	Santos	CCK
159	Curtis	Erwin	Eugene	CTC
160	Dagenhart	C	R (Jr.)	PhM2c
161	Dale	Elwood	Richard	F1c (B)
162	Daniello	Anthony	G	S1c (SM)
163	Davis	James	Clark	RM3c
164	Davis	Kenneth	G	F1c (EM)
165	Davis	Thomas	Edward	SM2c
166	Day	Richard	R (Jr.)	S2c
167	Dean	John	Thomas (Jr.)	S2c (RDM)
168	Defoor	Walton		RdM3c

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate	
169	Demars	Edgar	Joseph	CBM	
170	Dement	Dayle	P	S1c	
171	Denney	Lloyd	(Jr.)	S2c	
172	Dimond	John	Nelson	S2c	
173	Dollins	Paul		RM2c	
174	Donald	Lyle	Herbert	EM1c	
175	Doney	William	J	F2c	
176	Donnor	Clarence	W	RF2c	Passenger
176	Dorman	William	B	S1c	Aviation Detail
177	Dornetto	Frank	Paul	WT1c	
178	Doss	James	Monroe	S2c	
179	Doucette	Roland	O	S2c	
180	Dove	Bessil	Raymond	SKD2c	
181	Drane	James	Anthony	GM3c	
182	Drummond	James	J	F2c	
183	Drury	Richard	E	S2c	
184	Dufrairie	Delbert	E	F1c (MM)	
185	Dunbar	Jess	Lee	F2c	
186	Durand	Ralph	J (Jr.)	S2c	
187	Dycus	Donald		S2c	
188	Eakins	Morris	B	F2c (WT)	
189	Eastman	Chester	S	S2c	
190	Eddinger	John	W	S1c	
191	Eddy	Richard	Leroy	RM3c	
192	Edwards	Roland	J	RM1c	
193	Edwards	Alywin	C	F2c	
194	Egolf	Harold	Wesley	S2c (RDM)	
195	Elliot	Kenneth	Anthony	S1c	
196	Elliott	Harry	W	S2c	
197	Emery	William	F	S1c (QM)	
198	Emsley	William	J	S1c	
199	Engelsman	Ralph		S2c	
200	Epperson	George	L	S1c	
201	Epperson	Ewell		S1c	

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate
202	Ernst	Robert	Carl	F2c
203	Eubanks	James	H	S1c
204	Evans	Arthur	Jerome	PhM2c
205	Everett	Charles	Nelson	EM2c
206	Evers	Lawrence	Lee	CMM
207	Eyet	Donald	Archie	S1c
208	Fantasia	Frank	A	F2c (WT)
209	Farber	Sheldon	Lee	S2c (RDM)
210	Farley	James	W	S1c
211	Fasthorse	Vincent		S2c
212	Feeney	Paul	Ross	S2c (RM)
213	Ferguson	Russell	M	RT3c
214	Figgins	Harley	Dean	WT2c
215	Firestone	Kenneth	F	FC2c
216	Firmin	John	Alden H	S2c
217	Fleischauer	D	W	S1c (Y)
218	Fleshman	Vern	L	S2c
219	Flynn	James	M (Jr.)	S1c (FCO)
220	Frank	Rundolph	A	S2c
221	Franklin	Jack	Ray	RdM3c
222	French	Douglas	O	FC3c
223	French	Jimmy	Junior	QM3c
224	Fritz	Leonard	A	MM3c
225	Frontino	Vincent	F	MoMM3c
226	Frorath	Donald	H	S2c
227	Fuller	Arnold	A	F2c
228	Fulton	William	C	CRM
229	Gaither	Forest	M	FC2c
230	Gardner	Russell	T	F2c
231	Garner	Glenn	R	MM2c
232	Gibson	Curtis	W	S2c
233	Gibson	Ganola	F	MM3c
234	Gilbert	Warner	(Jr.)	S1c
235	Gill	Paul	Edward	WT2c

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate
236	Gilmore	Wilbur	A	S2c
237	Gismondi	Michael	V	S1c
238	Glaub	Francis	A	GM2c
239	Glovka	Erwin	Samuel	S2c
240	Godfrey	Marlo	Roy	RM3c
241	Golden	Curry		StM1c
242	Golden	James	L	S1c
243	Gonzales	Ray	Adam	S2c
244	Good	Robert	Kenneth	MM3c
245	Goodwin	Oliver	A	CRT
246	Gore	Leonard	F	S2c
247	Gorecki	Joseph	W	SK3c
248	Gottman	Paul	James	S2c
249	Gove	Carroll	L	S2c
250	Greathouse	Bud	R	S1c
251	Green	Robert	Urban	S2c
252	Greene	Samuel	Gile	S1c
253	Greer	Bob	Eugene	S2c
254	Gregory	Garland	G	F1c
255	Greif	Matthias	D	WT3c
256	Gries	Richard	C	F2c
257	Griest	Frank	David	GM3c
258	Griffin	Jackie	Dale	S1c
259	Griffiths	Leonard	S	S2c
260	Griggs	Donald	Ray	F1c
261	Grimes	James	F	S2c
262	Grimes	David	Elimer	S2c
263	Groce	Floyd	Vernon	RdM2c
264	Groch	John	Thomas	MM3c
265	Guenther	Morgan	E	EM3c
266	Guerrero	John	Gomez	S1c
267	Guillot	Murphy	Urban	F1c (EM)
268	Guye	Ralph	Lee (Jr.)	QM3c
269	Guyon	Harold	Louis	F1c (WT)

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270	Haberman	Bernard	S2c	S2c
271	Haduch	John	Martin	S1c
272	Hale	William	F	S2c
273	Hall	Pressie		F1c
274	Halloran	Edward	G	MM3c
275	Ham	Saul	Anthony	Cox
276	Hambo	William	P	PhM3c
277	Hammen	Robert		PhoM3c
278	Hamrick	James	J	S2c
279	Hancock	William	A	GM3c
280	Hankinson	C	W	F2c
281	Hansen	Henry		S2c
282	Harland	George	A	S2c
283	Harp	Charlie	Herdin	S1c
284	Harper	Vasco		StM1c
285	Harris	James	Davis	F2c
286	Harris	Willard	E	F2c
287	Harrison	James	M	S1c
288	Hartrick	Willis	B	MM1c
289	Haubrich	Cloud	D	S2c
290	Hauser	Jack	Isaac	SK2c
291	Hayles	Felix		Ck3c
292	Haynes	William	A	S1c (GM)
293	Heerdt	Raymond	E	F2c
294	Heggie	William	A	RdM3c
295	Heinz	Richard	A	HA1c
296	Heller	Robert	J (Jr.)	S2c
297	Helscher	Ralph	John	S1c
298	Helt	Jack	Edward	F2c
299	Henderson	Ralph	L	S1c
300	Hendron	James	R (Jr.)	F2c
301	Hensley	Clifford		SSMB2c
302	Herbert	Jack	Erwin	BM1c
303	Herndon	Duane		S2c

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304	Hickey	Harry	Todd	RM3c
305	Hicks	Clarence		S1c (SC)
306	Hiebert	Lloyd	Henry	CM1c
307	Hill	Clarence	Max	CWT
308	Hill	Joe	Walker	StM1c
309	Hines	Lionel	Gordon	WT1c
310	Hobbs	Melvin	Dow	S1c
311	Hodgins	Lester	B	S2c
312	Hodshire	John	W	S2c
313	Hoerres	George	J	S2c
314	Holden	Punciano	A	St1c
315	Hollingsworth	J	L	StM2c
316	Holloway	Andrew	J	S2c
317	Holloway	Ralph	H	Cox
318	Hoogerwerf	John	(Jr.)	F1c (MoMM)
319	Horr	Wesley	Alan	F2c
320	Horrigan	John	G	F1c (EM)
321	Houston	Robert	G	F1c
322	Houston	William	H	PhM2c
323	Hov	Donald	Anthony	S1 (RM)
324	Huebner	Harry	H	S1c (GM)
325	Hughes	Lawrence	E	F2c (WT)
326	Hughes	Robert	A	FC3c
327	Hughes	William	E	SSML2c
328	Humphrey	Maynard	L	S2c
329	Hunter	Arthur	R (Jr.)	QM1c
330	Hurt	James	Edward	S2c
331	Hutchison	Merle	B	S2c
332	Igou	Floyd	(Jr.)	RM2c
333	Izor	Walter	Eugene	F1c
334	Jackson	Henry		StM1c
335	Jadloski	George	K	S2c
336	Jakubisin	Joseph	S	S2c
337	Jeffers	Wallace	M	Cox

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate
338	Jensen	Chris	A	S2c
339	Jewell	Floyd	R	SKV1c
340	Johnson	Sidney	B	S1c (FC)
341	Johnson	Harold	B	S1c
342	Johnson	Walter	M (Jr.)	S1c
343	Johnson	George	Glen	S2c
344	Johnson	Elwood	W	S2c
345	Johnson	Bernard	J	S2c
346	Johnston	Earl	R	BM2c
347	Johnston	Lewis	E	S1c (RM)
348	Johnston	Ray	F	MM1c
349	Johnston	Scott	A	F2c
350	Jones	George	Edward	S2c
351	Jones	Jim		S2c
352	Jones	Kenneth	M	F1c (MoMM)
353	Jones	Stanley	F	S2c
354	Jordan	Henry		StM2c
355	Jordon	Thomas	H	S2c
356	Josey	Clifford	O	S2c
357	Jurgensmeyer	A	J	S2c
358	Karpal	Daniel	L	BM1c
359	Karter	Leo	C (Jr.)	S2c
360	Karsten	Stanley	Otto	HA1c
361	Kawa	Raymond	Philip	SK3c
362	Keith	Everett	E	S1c
363	Kelly	Albert	R	S2c
364	Kennedy	Andrew	J (Jr.)	S2c
365	Kennedy	Robert	A	S1c (Y)
366	Kenny	Francis	J P	S2c
367	Kephart	Paul		S1c
368	Kern	Harry	Gilbert	S1c
369	Key	S	T	EM2c
370	Kight	Audy	Carl	S1c
371	Kilgore	Archie	C	F2c

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate
372	Killman	Robert	E	GM3c
373	Kinard	Nolan	Dave	S1c
374	Kincaid	Joseph	E	FC2c
375	King	Clarence	(Jr.)	StM2C
376	King	James	Thomas	S1c
377	King	Richard	Eugene	S2c
378	King	Robert	Harold	S2c
379	Kinnaman	Robert	L	S2c
380	Kirby	Harry		S1c
381	Kirk	James	Roy	SC3c
382	Kirkman	Walter	W	SF1c
383	Klein	Raymond	James	S1c
384	Klein	Thiel	Joseph	SK3c
385	Knersschild	A	N	S1c
386	Knoll	Paul	Edward	Cox
387	Knott	Elbern	Louis	S1c (FC)
388	Knudtson	Raymond	A	S1c
389	Knupke	Richard	R	MM3c
390	Koegler	Albert		S1c
391	Koegler	William		SC3c
392	Kolakowski	Ceslaus		SM3c
393	Kollinger	Robert	E	S1c
394	Konesny	John	Mathew	S1c
395	Koopman	Walter	F	F2c
396	Kouski	Fred		GM3c
397	Kovalick	George	R	S2c
398	Kozik	Raymond		S1c
399	Krawitz	Harry	J	MM3c
400	Kron	Herman	E (Jr.)	GM3c
401	Kronenberger	W	M	GM3c
402	Kruse	Darwin	Glen	S2c
403	Krzyzewski	John	M	S2c
404	Kuhn	Clair	Joseph	S1c
405	Kulovitz	Raymond	J	S2c

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate
406	Kusiak	Alfred	M	S2c
407	Kwiatkowski	M	J	S2c
408	Labuda	Arthur	Al	QM3c
409	Lafontaine	Paul	S	S1c
410	Lakatos	Emil	Joseph	MM3c
411	Lake	Murl	Christy	S1c
412	Lamb	Robert	Clyde	EM3c
413	Lambert	Leonard	F	S1c
414	Landon	William	W (Jr.)	FCO2c
415	Laparl	L	E (Jr.)	S2c
416	Lapczynski	Edward	W	S1c
417	Larsen	Melvin	R	S2c
418	Latigue	Jackson		StM1c
419	Latimer	Billy	F	S1c (RM)
420	Latzer	Solomon		S2c
421	Laughlin	Fain	H	SK3c
422	Leathers	William	B	MM3c
423	Lebaron	Robert	W	S2c
424	Leluika	Paul	Peter	S2c
425	Lestina	Francis	J	S1c
426	Letizia	Vizencio		S2c
427	Letz	Wilbert	Joseph	SK1c
428	Levalley	William	D	EM2c
429	Leventon	Mervin	C	MM2c
430	Levieux	John	Joseph	F2c
431	Lewellen	Thomas	E	S2c
432	Lewis	James	Robert	F2c
433	Lewis	John	Robert	GM3c
434	Linden	Charles	G	WT2c
435	Lindsay	Norman	Lee	SF3c
436	Link	George	Charles	S1c
437	Linn	Roy		S1c
438	Linville	Harry	J	S1c
439	Linville	Cecil	H	SF2c

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440	Lippert	Robert	G	S1c
441	Little	Frank	Edward	MM2c
442	Livermonre	Raymond	I	S2c
443	Loch	Edwin	Peter	S1c
444	Loeffler	Paul	E (Jr.)	S2c (QM)
445	Loftus	Ralph	Dennis	F2c
446	Lohr	Leo	William	S1c
447	Lombardi	Ralph		S1c
448	Long	Joseph	William	S1c
449	Longwell	Donald	J	S1 (Y)
450	Lorenc	Edward	R	S2c
451	Loyd	John	Francis	WT2c
452	Luhman	Emerson	D	MM3c
453	Lundgren	Albert	D	S1c (FCO)
454	Luttrull	Claud	A	Cox
455	Lutz	Charles	H	S1c
456	Mabee	Kenneth	C	F2c
457	Machado	Clarence	J	WT2c
458	Madigan	Harry	F	BM2c
459	Magdics	Steve	(Jr.)	F2c
460	Magray	Duwain	F	S2c
461	Makowski	Robert	T	CWT
462	Malone	Cecil	Edward	S2c
463	Malone	Elvin	C	S1c
464	Maness	Charles	F	F2c
465	Mankin	Howard	James	GM3c
466	Mann	Clifford	E	S1c
467	Mansker	Lavoice		S2c
468	Mantz	Keith	Hubert	S1c
469	Marciulaitis	C		S1c
470	Markmann	F	H	WT1c
471	Marshall	Robert	W	S2c
472	Marshall	John	Lucas	WT2c
473	Martin	Albert		S2c

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate	
474	Martin	Everett	G	S1c	
475	Massier	George	A	S1c	
476	Mastrecola	M	M	S2c	
477	Matheson	Richard	R	PhM3c	
478	Mauntel	Paul	John	S2c	
479	McBride	Ronald	Gene	S1c	
480	McBryde	Frank	E	S2c	
481	McClary	Lester	Earl	S2c	
482	McClure	David	Leroy	EM2c	
483	McComb	Everett	A	F1c	
484	McCord	Edward	F (Jr.)	EM3c	
485	McCorkle	Ray	Ralph	S1c	
486	McCormick	Earl	W	MoMM2c	
487	McCoskey	Paul	F	S1c (RDM)	
488	McCoy	John	S (Jr.)	M2c	
489	McDaniel	Johnny	A	S1c	
490	McDonald	F	G (Jr.)	F2c	
491	McDonner	David	P (Jr.)	F1c (EM)	
492	McDowell	Robert	E	S1c (SM)	
493	McFee	Carl	Snyder	SC1c	
494	McGinty	John	M	S1c	
495	McGuire	Denis		S2c	
496	McHone	Ollie		F1c	
497	McKee	George	E (Jr.)	S1c	
498	McKenna	Michael	J	S1c	Aviation Detail
499	McKinnon	Francis	M	Y3c	
500	McLean	Dougald	B	EM3c	
501	McNabb	Thomas	(Jr.)	F2c	
502	McNickle	Arthur	S	F1c	
503	McQuitty	Roy	Edward	Cox	
504	Meade	Sidney	Howard	S1c	
505	Mehlbaum	Raymond	A	S1c (SC)	
506	Meier	Harold	Edward	S2c	
507	Melichar	Charles	H	EM3c	

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate
508	Melvin	Carl	Lavern	F1c (EM)
509	Mencheff	Manual	A	S2c
510	Mergler	Charles	M	RdM2c
511	Metcalf	David	W	GM3c
512	Michael	Elmer	Orion	S1c
513	Michael	Bertrand	F	Bkr3c
514	Michno	Arthur	R	S2c
515	Mikeska	Willie	W	S2c
516	Miller	Artie	Ronald	GM2c
517	Miller	Glenn	Evert	S2c
518	Miller	George	Edwin	F1c (MM)
519	Miller	Samuel	G (Jr.)	FC3c
520	Miller	Walter	R	S2c
521	Miller	Walter	W	S1c
522	Miller	Wilbur	H	CMM
523	Mills	William	Harry	EM3c
524	Minor	Richard	Leon	S1c
525	Minor	Robert	Warren	S2c
526	Mires	Carl	Emerson	S2c
527	Mirich	Wally	Wayo	S1c
528	Miskowiec	Thomas	F	S1c
529	Mitchell	Paul	Boon	FC3c
530	Mitchell	Winston	C	S1C (FC)
531	Mitchell	James	H (Jr.)	SK1c
532	Mittler	Peter	J (Jr.)	GM3c
533	Mixon	Malcom	Lois	GM2c
534	Moncrief	Mack	D	S2c
535	Monks	Robert	Bruce	GM3c
536	Montoya	Frank	E	S1C
537	Moore	Donald	George	S2c
538	Moore	Elbert		S2c
539	Moore	Harley	Edward	S1c
540	Moore	Wyatt	Patton	Bkr1c
541	Morgan	Lewis	E	S2c

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate
542	Morton	Charles	W	S2c
543	Morton	Marion	Ellis	SK2c
544	Moulton	Charles	C	S2c
545	Mroszak	Francis	A	S2c
546	Murillo	Sammy		S2c
547	Murphy	Allen		S2c
548	Musarra	Joe		S1c
549	Myers	Charles	L (Jr.)	S2c
550	Myers	Glenn	Alan	MM2c
551	Nabers	Neal	Adrian	S2c
552	Neal	Charles	Keith	S2c
553	Neal	George	M	S2c
554	Neale	Harlan	B	S2c
555	Neu	Hugh	Herbert	S2c
556	Neubauer	Richard		S2c
557	Neuman	Jerome	C	F1c
558	Neville	Bobby	Gene	S2c
559	Newcomer	Lewis	W	MM3c
560	Newell	James	Thomas	EM1c
561	Nichols	Joseph	L	BM2c
562	Nichols	Paul	Virgil	MM3c
563	Nielsen	Carl	A C (Jr.)	F1c
564	Nieto	Baltazar	P	GM3c
565	Niskanen	John	H	F2c
566	Norman	Theodore	R	GM2c
567	Nowak	George	Joseph	F2c
568	Nugent	William	G	S2c
569	Nunley	James	P	F1c
570	Nutt	Raymond	Albert	S2c
571	O'Brien	Arthur	J	S2c
572	O'Callaghan	Del	R	WT2c
573	Ochoa	Ernest		FC3c
574	Olderen	Bernhard	G	S1c
575	O'Neil	Eugene	Elbert	S1c

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate
576	Orr	Homer	Lee	HA1c
577	Ortiz	Orlando	R	Y3c
578	Osburn	Charles	W	S2c
579	Ott	Theodore	Gene	Y1c
580	Owens	Robert	S (Jr.)	QM3c
581	Owensby	Clifford	C	F2c
582	Pagitt	Eldon	Ernest	F2c
583	Pait	Robert	Edward	BM2c
584	Pane	Francis	W	S2c
585	Parham	Fred		ST2c
586	Patterson	Kenneth	G	S1c
587	Patterson	Alfred	T	S2c
588	Patzer	Herman	Lantz	EM1c
589	Payne	George	David	S2c
590	Pender	Welburn	M	F2c
591	Perry	Robert	J	S2c
592	Peters	Earl	Jack	S2c
593	Peterson	Darrel	E	S1c (FC)
594	Peterson	F	A	MaM3c
595	Peterson	Glenn	H	S1c (RM)
596	Petrincic	John	N (Jr.)	FC3c
597	Peyton	Robert	C	StM1c
598	Phillips	A	N (Sr.)	F2c
599	Pierce	Clyde	Alton	CWT
600	Pierce	Robert	W	S2c
601	Piperata	Alfred	J	MM1c
602	Pitman	Robert	Fred	S2c
603	Pittman	Almire	(Jr.)	ST3c
604	Pleiss	Roger	David	F2c
605	Pohl	Theodore		F2c (MoMM)
606	Pokryfka	Donald	M	S2c
607	Poore	Albert	F	S2c
608	Potrykus	Frank	Paul	F2c
609	Powell	Howard	Wayne	F1c

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate
610	Powers	R C	Ottis	S2c
611	Poynter	Raymond	Lee	S2c
612	Praay	William	Theo	S2c
613	Prather	Clarence	J	CMM
614	Pratt	George	Roy	F1c (EM)
615	Priestle	Ralph	A	S2c
616	Prior	Walter	Mathew	S2c
617	Puckett	William	C	S2c
618	Pupuis	John	Andrew	S1c (Bkr)
619	Purcel	Franklin	W	S2c
620	Pursel	Forest	V	WT3c
621	Pyron	Freddie	H	S1c
622	Rabb	John	Robert	SC1c
623	Ragsdale	Jean	Obert	S1c
624	Rahn	Alvin	Wilder	SK3c
625	Raines	Clifford	J	S2c
626	Rains	Rufus	Brady	S1c
627	Ramseyer	Raymond	C	RT3c
628	Randolph	Cleo		StM1c
629	Rathman	Frank	J	S1c (FC)
630	Realing	Lyle	Olan	FC2c
631	Reed	Thomas	William	EM3c
632	Reemts	Alvin	Thomas	S1c
633	Reese	Jesse	Edmund	S2c
634	Reeves	Robert	A	F2c
635	Regalado	Robert	H	S1c
636	Reilly	James	F	Y1c
637	Reinert	Leroy		F1c
638	Remondet	E J	(Jr.)	S2c
639	Reynolds	Andrew	Eli	S1c
640	Reynolds	Carleton	C	F1c
641	Rhea	Clifford		F2c
642	Rhodes	Vernon	Lee	F1c (WT)
643	Rhoten	Roy	Edward	F2c

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate
644	Rice	Albert		StM1c
645	Rich	Garland	Lloyd	S1c
646	Richardson	John	R	S2c
647	Richardson	Joseph	G	S2c
648	Rider	Francis	Allan	RdM3c
649	Riley	Junior	Thomas	BM2c
650	Roberts	Charles		S1c
651	Roberts	Benjamin	E	WT1c
652	Robison	Marzie	Joe	S2c
653	Robison	Gerald	E	RT3c
654	Rockenbach	Earl	A	SC2c
655	Roesberry	Jack	R	S1c
656	Rogell	Henry	Tony	F1c
657	Roland	Jack	A	PhM1c
658	Rollins	Willard	E	RM3c
659	Romani	Frank	Joseph	HA1c
660	Roof	Charles	Walter	S2c
661	Rose	Berson	Horace	GM2c
662	Ross	Glen	Eugene	F2c
663	Rothman	Aaron		RdM3c
664	Rowden	Joseph	Geren	F1c
665	Rozzano	John	(Jr.)	S2c
666	Rudomanski	Eugene	W	RT2c
667	Rue	William	Goff	MM1c
668	Rust	Edwin	Leroy	S1c
669	Rutherford	Robert	A	RM2c
670	Rydzeski	Frank	W	F1c (EM)
671	Saenz	Jose	Antonio	SC3c
672	Sain	Albert	F	S1c
673	Salinas	Alfredo	A	S1c
674	Samano	Nuraldo		S2c
675	Sampson	Joseph	R	S2c
676	Sams	Robert	Carrol	StM2c
677	Sanchez	Alejandro	V	S2c

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate	
678	Sand	Cyrus	Harvey	BM1c	
679	Sanders	Everett	R	MoMM1c	
680	Sassman	Gordon	W	Cox	
681	Scarborough	Fred	R	Cox	
682	Schaap	Marion	John	QM1c	
683	Schaefer	Harry	W	S2c	
684	Schaffer	Edward	J	S1c (GM)	
685	Scharton	Elmer	D	S1c	
686	Scheib	Albert	Eddie	F2c	
687	Schewe	Alfred	Paul	S1c	
688	Schlatter	Robert	L	AOM3c	Aviation Detail
689	Schlotter	James	R	RdM3c	
690	Schnappauf	Harold	J	SK3c	
691	Schooley	Dillard	A	Cox	
692	Schumacher	A J	(Jr.)	CEM	
693	Scoggins	Millard		SM2c	
694	Scott	Burl	Down	StM2c	
695	Scott	Curtis	Marvin	S1c	
696	Scott	Hilliard		StM1c	
697	Sebastian	C	H	RM2c	
698	Sedivi	Alfred	J	PhoM2c	
699	Selbach	Walter	H	WT3c	
700	Sell	Ernest	F	EM2c	
701	Sellers	Leonard	E	SF3c	
702	Selman	Amos		S2c	
703	Sewell	Loris	Eldon	S2c	
704	Shand	Kenneth	W	WT2c	
705	Shaw	Calvin	Patrick	GM2c	
706	Shelton	W E	(Jr.)	SM2c	
707	Shields	Cecil	N	SM2c	
708	Silcox	Burnice	R	S1c	
709	Silva	Phillip	Gomes	S1c	
710	Simcox	Gordon	W	EM3c	
711	Simcox	John	Allen	F1c (MMR)	

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate
712	Sims	Clarence		Ck2c
713	Singerman	David		SM3c
714	Sipes	John	Leland	S1c
715	Sitzlar	William	C	F1c
716	Smalley	Howard	Earl	S1c
717	Smeraglia	Michael		RM3c
718	Smith	Carl	Murphy	SM2c
719	Smith	Charles	Andy	S1c
720	Smith	Edwin	Lee	S2c
721	Smith	Eugene	Gordon	BM2c
722	Smith	George	Robert	S1c
723	Smith	Guy	Nephi	FCO2c
724	Smith	Henry	August	F1c
725	Smith	Homer	Leroy	F2c
726	Smith	Kenneth	Dean	F2c
727	Smith	Olen	Ellis	CM3c
728	Snyder	John	N	SF3c
729	Snyder	Richard	R	S1c (SM)
730	Solomon	William	(Jr.)	S2c
731	Sordia	Ralph		S2c
732	Sparks	Charles	Byrd	Cox
733	Speer	Lowell	Elvis	RT3c
734	Spindle	Orval	Audry	S1c
735	Spomer	Elmer	John	SF2c
736	Stadler	Robert	H	WT3c
737	Stanforth	David	E	F2c
738	Stankowski	Archie	J	S2c
739	Stanturf	F	R	MM2c
740	Steigerwald	Fred		GM2c
741	Stevens	Wayne	Allen	MM2c
742	Stewart	Thomas	A	S2c
743	Stickley	Charles	B	GM3c
744	Stier	William	G	S1c (FCO)
745	Stone	Dale	Eugene	S2c

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate	
746	Stone	Homer	Benton	Y1c	
747	St. Pierre	Leslie	R	MM2c	
748	Strain	Joseph	Mason	S2c (RDM)	
749	Streich	Allen	C	RM2c	
750	Strickland	George	T	S2c	
751	Streiter	Robert	C	S2c	
752	Stripe	William	S	S2c	
753	Strom	Donald	Arthur	S2c	
754	Stromko	Joseph	A	F2c (WT)	
755	Stryffeler	Virgil	L	F2c	
756	Stueckle	Robert	L	S2c	
757	Sudano	Angelo	A	SSML3c	
758	Suhr	Jerome	Richard	S2c	
759	Sullivan	James	P	S2c	
760	Sullivan	William	D	PTR2c	
761	Swanson	Robert	H	MM2c	
762	Swindell	Jerome	H	F2c	
763	Taggart	Thomas	H	S1c (RDM)	
764	Talley	Dewell	E	RM2c	
765	Terry	Robert	Wayne	S2c	
766	Thielscher	Robert	T	CRT	
767	Thorpe	Everett	N	WT3c	
768	Tidwell	James	F	S2c	
769	Tisthammer	B	E	CGM	
770	Toce	Nicolo		S2c	
771	Todd	Harold	Orton	CM3c	
772	Tosh	Bill	Hugh	RdM3c	
773	Trotter	Arthur	C	RM2c	
774	Truitt	Robert	E	RM2c	
775	Tryon	Frederick	B	Bug2c	
776	Tull	James	Albert	S1c (GM)	
777	True	Roger	G	S2c	Aviation Detail
778	Turner	William	C	MM2c	
779	Turner	William	H (Jr.)	ACMM	Aviation Detail

	Last	First	Middle	Rank/Rate	
780	Ulibarri	Antonio	D	S2c	
781	Underwood	Carey	Lee	S1c	Aviation Detail
782	Wakefield	James	N	S1c (QM)	
783	Walker	A	W	StM1c	
784	Walker	Jack	Edwin	RM2c	
785	Wallace	Earl	John	RdM3c	
786	Wallace	John		RdM3c	
787	Walters	Donald	H	F1c (EM)	
788	Warren	William	R	RT3c	
789	Waters	Jack	Lee	CY	
790	Watson	Winston	Harl	F2c	
791	Wells	Gerald	Lloyd	EM3c	
792	Wennerholm	Wayne	L	Cox	
793	Whalen	Stuart	D	GM2c	
794	White	Earl	Clarence	TC1c	
795	White	Howard	McKean	CWT	
796	Wileman	Roy	Weldon	PhM3c	
797	Willard	Merriman	D	PhM2c	
798	Williams	Billie	Joe	MM2c	
799	Williams	Magellan		StM1c	
800	Wilson	Frank		F2c	
801	Wilson	Thomas	B	S1c	
802	Wittmer	Milton	R	EM2c	
803	Wojciechowski	M	J	SM1c	
804	Wolfe	Floyd	Ralph	GM3c	
805	Yeaple	Jack	Thomas	Y3c	
806	Zobal	Francis	John	S2c	
807	Hopper	Prentice	W	S1c	Aviation Detail
808	Hopper	Ray	L	AM1c	Aviation Detail

LIST OF ACRONYMS, RANKS, AND RATINGS

**Primarily taken from *Glossary of U.S. Naval Abbreviations*,
OPNAV-29-P1000 (Revised April 1949)**

35-S Specific group of security clearance holders for ULTRA channel
ABLE “A” in the joint Army and Navy phonetic alphabet
ADCOMPHIBSEAPAC Administrative Command, Amphibious Forces,
Pacific Fleet
ADM Admiral
ADVHED Advanced Headquarters
AKS General Stores Issue Ship
AP Armor Piercing (when in reference to ammunition or ordnance) or
Transport (when in reference to vessels)
APD High Speed Transport
ARL Repair Ship, Landing Craft
ARS Salvage Vessel
ATCOM Atoll Commander
ATF Fleet Ocean Tug
B Indicates “bomber,” when used for United States aircraft
BB Battleship
BM Boatswain’s Mate
BuAir/BuAer Bureau of Aeronautics
BUAIR/BUAER Chief, Bureau of Aeronautics
BuMed Bureau of Medicine
BUMED Chief, Bureau of Medicine
BuOrd Bureau of Ordnance
BUORD Chief, Bureau of Ordnance
BuPers Bureau of Naval Personnel
BUPERS Chief, Bureau of Naval Personnel
BuSanda Bureau of Supplies and Accounts
BUSANDA Chief, Bureau of Supplies and Accounts

BuShips Bureau of Ships
BUSHIPS Chief, Bureau of Ships
C Indicates transport or cargo aircraft when used for United States aircraft
CA Heavy Cruiser
CAPT Captain
CDR Commander
CFAW Commander, Fleet Air Wing
CHOP Change of Operational Control
CIC Combat Information Center
CINCAFPAC Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Army Forces in the Pacific
CINCPAC Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet
CNB Commander, Naval Base
CNO Chief of Naval Operations
COI Court of Inquiry
COM Commander of a military organization (e.g., Com5thFleet, ComAirPac [Commander Air Forces, Pacific])
COMAIRPACSUBCOMFWD Commander, Air Forces Pacific Submarine Command Forward
COMDESPAC Commander, Destroyers, Pacific Fleet
COMFAIRWING Commander Fleet Air
COMINCH Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet
COMMARIANAS Commander Marianas
COMNAVSECGRU Commander, Naval Security Group Command
COMPHIBSPAC Commander, Amphibious Forces, Pacific Fleet
COMPHILSEAFRON Commander, Philippine Sea Frontier
COMSERON Commander, Service Squadron
COMWESCAROLINES Commander, Western Carolines
CTF Commander, Task Force
CTG Commander, Task Group
CTU Commander, Task Unit
CV Aircraft Carrier
DA Delayed Action or Direct Action (Bomb Fuze)
DD Destroyer
DE Destroyer Escort

DND Do Not Dispatch
ENS Ensign
ETA Estimated Time of Arrival
F Fireman
FRUPAC Fleet Radio Unit, Pacific
FS Feet per second (ordnance)
FTP Fleet Training Publication
GM Metacentric height
HTS High Tensile Steel
HYPO “H” in the Joint Army-Navy phonetic alphabet
I Incendiary, when used in reference to ammunition or ordnance
IC Interior Communications or Information Center
IFF Identification, Friend or Foe
INSGEN Inspector General (Navy)
ISCOM Island Commander
JAG Judge Advocate General
JICPOA Joint Intelligence Center Pacific Ocean Areas
LC Landing Craft
LCA Landing Craft, Assault
LCI Landing Craft, Infantry
LSM Landing Ship, Medium
LT Lieutenant
LT (j.g.) Lieutenant, Junior Grade
LVT Landing Vehicle, Tracked
M Metalsmith
MC Megacycles, or USN officer designation for Medical Corps
MN Very high frequency voice radio (FM)
MS Medium Steel plating
NARA National Archives and Records Administration
NHHC Naval History and Heritage Command
NIG Navy Inspector General
NOLA Navy Office of Legislative Affairs
NUC Navy unit Commendation
OINC Officer-in-Charge

OP Operational Priority

OTC Officer-in-Tactical Command

P. I. Philippine islands

PB Patrol bomber, when used to designate United States aircraft

PBY Catalina; twin-engine Navy patrol-bomber (VPB [MS]),
manufactured by Consolidated-Vultee

PCE Patrol Vessel, Escort

PD Port Director

PhM Pharmacists Mate

PUC Presidential Unit Citation

PV-1 Ventura; twin-engine Navy patrol-bomber (VPB [ML]), landplane
manufactured by Lockheed-Vega

RADM Rear Admiral

RATT Radio Teletypewriter

RDM Radarman

RDO Radio; Wireless

RM Radioman

RT Radio Technician

S Seaman

SC Seahawk; single-engine Navy observation-scout (VO/V5),
manufactured by Curtiss

SC Ship's Cook when in reference to a Sailor's rating

SCOMA Shipping Control Officer, Marianas

SCR Summary Control Report

SERON Service Squadron

SIGTOT Signal Corps One-Time Tape

SOA Speed of Approach

SOC Seagull; single-engine Navy obs-scout (VOS), manufactured
by Curtiss

SOPA Senior Officer Present Afloat

SOS Radio Distress Call

TARE Target firing runs

TCK A model of radio transmitting equipment for ship to shore
transmissions

TNT A high explosive
TP Target Practice
UNCLE “U” in the Joint Army-Navy phonetic alphabet
USF United States Fleet
USMC United States Marines Corps
USN United States Navy
USNR United States Naval Reserve
USS United States Ship (commissioned Navy vessel)
VADM Vice Admiral
VCNO Vice Chief of Naval Operations
VPB Patrol-bombing plane
WNY Washington Navy Yard
WT Water Tender
Y Yeoman
YF Provision Store Lighter or Range Tender
YP District Patrol Vessel

NOTES

Chapter One

1. R. Adm. William Reynolds Purnell was the Navy representative on the Military Policy Committee, which oversaw the Manhattan Project. He was on Tinian coordinating preparations for the dropping of the atomic bombs with Navy and Army leadership. Capt. William Sterling “Deak” Parsons, USN, was head of Ordnance Division in Project Y of the Manhattan Project and officer-in-charge of the overseas technical group of the Los Alamos Laboratory. He was an innovator in ordnance and radar and worked directly under Dr. Robert Oppenheimer as his technical deputy. Parsons, temporarily promoted to commodore for the first atomic bomb mission, was the weaponeer and bomb commander aboard the *Enola Gay* for its 6 August 1945 mission over Hiroshima. *Indianapolis* delivered the atomic components used for the Hiroshima mission. The Hiroshima mission and Capt. Parsons are covered more fully in ch. 3 of this volume.
2. They did not carry the fully assembled atomic bomb *Little Boy*, but components for that bomb.
3. An extinct volcano on the Hawaiian island of Oahu; a prominent landmark from the sea.
4. 28 July.
5. *LST-779*.
6. 29 July.
7. Speed of Approach.
8. Nakajima Ki-43 Hayabusa.
9. Handwritten comment in margin, initialed H., “Japs don’t have one. Have 5 AP & G.P.”
10. Handwritten comment in margin, “Doubtful.”
11. 35-S refers to Cryptographic Channel 35-S, which was a more limited distribution channel for the CINCPAC Daily Intelligence Bulletin. It was first used in July 1944 when the CNO and CINCPAC Daily Intelligence Bulletin, used since the beginning of the war, was discontinued in favor of a more limited distribution system.
12. Blue Shipping refers to Allied shipping.
13. Declassified. Original classification: TOP SECRET DISPATCH/ TOP SECRET/ TOP SECRET-ULTRA/ From: CINCPAC PEARL/Released By:[blank]/Date 14 July 1945/TOR Coderoom: [blank]/Decoded by: Kennedy, Plumley; Paraphrased by: EXACT/Checked by: Martin/Routed by: Dodd/Dittoed by: [blank]/For Action: All Holders 35-S, COMINCH/ Information: CINCPAC ADV. HDQTRS., CTF 77, CINCAFAC, COMSEVENTH-FLT/Precedence: OP OP OP/Originator fill in Date and Time Group: 140232, Page 1 of 2/ F-341 (6 Copies), OP-2[?]-3-[?]1-P (2 Copies).
14. The question that Haynes is directly responding to is “Did you make any stops on the way back [from Okinawa]?”
15. On 16 July, the Manhattan Project successfully detonated a test device at the Trinity Site, near Alamogordo, New Mexico. After the successful test, *Indianapolis* was sent on her way.

Notes to Pages 18–40

16. Declassified. Original classification: TOP SECRET DISPATCH/ TOP SECRET ULTRA/ From: CINCPAC Pearl/Released By: [blank]/Date 18 July 1945/TOR Code Room: [blank]/Decoded By: Pohly/ Paraphrased By: EXACT/Checked By: Martin/ Routed By: Dodd/ Dittoed By: [blank]/ For Action: All Holders 35 S, COMINCH/ Information: CINCPAC, CINCAFAC, COM 7th FLEET, CTF 77/ Precedence: OP OP OP/ Originator till in Date and Time Group: 180209, Page One/OP-20-3-01 (2 Copies), F-341 (6 Copies).
17. Declassified. Copy, Court of Inquiry. Original classification: Secret. Document REF No: 260152; At foot of copy “CORRECTED COPY: Last Sentence Added, 260152, SENT/0624/EK.”
18. Declassified. Copy, Court of Inquiry. Original classification: Secret. Document REF No: 155073; Circ. No. JDS 75, JC 18772. CBO-JDF.
19. Declassified. Copy, Court of Inquiry. Original classification: Secret. Document REF No: 280032; NPM No JC 13709; Code Room No. 12469 (B). At foot of copy “A True Copy. Attest:/W. E. Hilbert,/Capt., U.S. Navy,/Judge Advocate.”
20. Other information on document: #298/BE V RE/ TOD 270452 Z ALB/ R JHD.
21. This is the referenced Enclosure (A).
22. Officer-in-Tactical Command.
23. *Zig-Zag Diagrams for Single Ships and Convoys 1940* (London: Signal Department, Adm. ty, 1940).
24. Only included portion dealing with zigzag instruction.
25. Further details of the gunnery drills were provided on the columnar sheet: 1312 General Quarters, 1316 All guns manned and ready, 1324 Gunnery practice. Shot down five out of eight balloons released, 1353 Secured from gunnery practice, 1410 Secured from General Quarters.
26. Senior Officer Present Afloat.
27. Commander, Naval Operating Base.

Chapter Two

1. Johns Hopkins Janney, Cdr., USN. Janney did not survive.
2. Capt. Edward Crouch did not survive the sinking. He was awarded a Bronze Star for his service as Operations Officer on the staff of Commander Cruisers and Destroyers Pacific, and Commander Task Force 15 during the period 21 January 1943 to 2 January 1944. During this period he was involved with the planning and coordination of operations. Crouch also worked to prepare doctrine and fleet tactical publications, a job requiring him to work in the combat area to observe task force operations. He then served as Director, Maintenance Division, Bureau of Ordnance, Navy Department, Washington, DC. When *Indianapolis* was sunk, he was on his way to report for temporary additional duty at Advanced Headquarters, Commander-in-Chief Pacific. Because McVay was an old acquaintance of Crouch, he opted to travel by sea to his assignment instead of his originally planned air transport. McVay gave Crouch his own quarters on the voyage.
3. In the portion of the interview omitted here, Capt. McVay primarily discussed his experience with his group in the rafts—condition of the men, rationing of supplies, sense of isolation, and attempts to signal passing aircraft. He also described the circumstances of his rescue, which is included in ch. 3 of this volume.

4. McVay is referring to the largest group of survivors whose only supplies were the life vests or pneumatic life belts with which they entered the water.
5. Capt. Edward L. Parke, USMC.
6. For an example of what McVay talked about here see the Court of Inquiry document extracts within ch. 2.
7. Castellani's Paint is a bright magenta red topical solution used to treat dermatological issues.
8. Capt. McVay goes on to describe the trouble that this shark caused their fishing attempts. Their raft had a fishing kit, and McVay, an experienced saltwater fisherman, led his men in catching small bait fish to use for catching bonita or mackerel from large schools swimming near their rafts. Every time they caught a bait fish and cast it out, the white finned shark would eat it. McVay was dismayed that no one in the raft had taken a sheaf knife into the water with them because he felt that they could have killed the shark, and caught fish, had they had one available.
9. Herbert Jay Miner, RT2, USNR was in Radio Room Two and he believed that transmitter TCK-3 was "putting out on the air" for several minutes because he saw the plate current meter jumping on each key and the antenna current meter jumping slightly. RT2 Miner testified on day one of the Court of Inquiry. No contemporary reports of any received messages from *Indianapolis* suggest that the transmitter had not been functioning as Miner believed. Multiple Navy investigations attempted to discover whether or not *Indianapolis* had successfully transmitted a distress signal, and if it had, whether any U.S. bases or units had received it. Investigations into multiple leads began, but ended quickly due to lack of evidence. No evidence indicating reception of a distress signal was brought forward in legal proceedings. Since the sinking, individuals have claimed that portions of distress signal had been received. Often these accounts appeared many years after the fact. To date, no contemporary evidence of a received distress signal has come to light. That is, while it is possible that Miner was correct, no independent corroboration beyond personal recollection has been presented. If a distress signal did not make it off the ship, it is by no fault of the radiomen and technicians who manned their stations until the last possible moment.
10. Another radioman from Radio Room One, Elwin Lee Sturtevant, RM2, described the death of Lt (j.g.) Howard Bruce Freeze in testimony at the Court of Inquiry on 14 August. Sturtevant described Lt. Freeze as being badly burned on his hands and face. Freeze died on a raft Tuesday evening, but was not buried at sea because of sharks following the raft at that time. The following morning, Freeze was buried quickly without services while most of the men still slept. Sturtevant's experience around Lt. Freeze led him to recommend that the Navy include morphine in the medical kits on life rafts. He recalled Freeze stating that he would have preferred dying from morphine than from burns.
11. Opinion No. 17 of the Court read "That testimony of Lt. Richard B. Redmayne, U. S. Naval Reserve, regarding immoral conduct of unnamed man in the 'sick bay raft' was based on hearsay and, due to mental condition of that officer at that time, may have been imagined."
12. Ens. James Franklin Herstine, USNR (did not survive).
13. BM2 Morgan passed away 27 June 2008. His grandson, a MM1 at the time, spread his grandfather's ashes at the Navy coordinates for *Indianapolis*'s sinking from the deck of *Ohio* (SSBN-726) on 2 October 2008.

Notes to Pages 60–94

14. The portion of the trial dealing with Morgan was broken into two days, 15–16 August. Lt. Redmayne introduced accusations against BM2 Morgan in his testimony the afternoon of the 15th, Ens. Twible's testimony at the end of that day supported Redmayne's. On the following day, 16 August, scheduling issues required R. Adm. Lynde McCormick, USN, Commander Battleship Division Three, Commander TG-95.7 to testify about *Indianapolis's* non-arrival for prearranged training. The early morning hours of the inquiry focused on this issue. Once witnesses had completed their testimony on this issue, the focus turned back to BM2 Morgan.

15. Prior to BM2 Simpson's testimony, FM2 J.M. Torretta, USNR, M2 John Melvin Anunti, USNR, testified about Morgan. For concerns of space in this volume, testimony has been selected that presents perspectives from both sides.

16. Next witness called by Morgan was FM2c Harlan Havener, USNR, then COX Virgil Russell, USNR.

17. Harold Robert Anthony, PhM3, USNR (killed).

18. The interested party, Lt. Stewart B. Gibson, USNR, also made a motion to have his name withdrawn as an interested party on the ground that the evidence produced before the court in no way involved him. The court announced that the motion was denied at the present time, but that the court would give the motion further consideration and inform the interested party if it should reverse its present decision at a later time.

19. Opinion No. 18 of the Court stated "That certain testimony tending to incriminate Morgan, Eugene S., boatswain's mate second class, U. S. Naval Reserve, regarding unauthorized use of water and rations which has been introduced is largely refuted by witnesses in Morgan's behalf." Furthermore, Court Recommendation No. 2 stated "That no further proceedings be had in the case of Morgan, Eugene S., boatswain's mate second class, U. S. Naval Reserve."

20. A destroyer.

21. Water fountain.

22. See extract from *Helm* (DD-388) After Action Report in ch. 3, Document 3.9.

23. All times are *I-58* time (9 hr., not *Indianapolis* 9 1/2 hr.), for *Indianapolis* time add 30 minutes.

24. It is unknown what target Hashimoto is talking about here, as no reports of U.S. ships being attacked on this date by an enemy submarine have been located as of the printing of this volume.

25. They stayed under water to keep from being observed from the air.

26. It means "six torpedoes stand by."

27. Declassified. Full Addressee and Filing Information on Dispatch: 30 July 0048/ JN-25-P-91/62/ From: SA TE KO 4/ To: NO FU TE 27 (RI KU O 0) (Navy Vice Minister); MA SO MA 01) (KO E YA 5) (COMBINED NAVAL FORCE Headquarters); SI U RI 14 (NE KI TA 1) (Commander ADVANCE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE)/ Page 41, 31 July P.M./ IMPORTANT: - The information contained herein is not to be reproduced or referred to in any manner which may disclose its source/TOP SECRET ULTRA. A revised version of this intercept from the same date added "obtained three torpedo hits," however; the ship type and position of attack remained unrecovered.

28. Declassified. Full Addressee and Filing Information on Intercept: RE V BE/ NR 276/ 2 August 1945/ TOD 020625/ GWR ACK PLSE KK/ (retyped for purpose of clarity).

29. Declassified. Copy, Court of Inquiry. Original classification: Secret. Document REF No: 159838; NPO2 1101, CBO-HGW, Grp. Ct. 80, Circ. No. JC 22466.

Chapter Three

1. Declassified. Copy, Court of Inquiry. Original classification: Confidential. Document REF No: 161624; CBO-JHM, Circ. No. Opintel JC 884.

2. Declassified. Copy, Court of Inquiry. Original classification: Confidential. Code Room No: A-#565; DTG 020155, CKT No. JC NR 633.

3. Declassified. Copy, Court of Inquiry. Original classification: Confidential. Document REF No: 161668; CBO MGW, Grp.Ct. 26, Cric. No. Op Intel, JC 912. Red ramrod refers to an expendable sono-buoy.

4. Declassified. Copy, Court of Inquiry. Original classification: Secret. Document REF No: 161692; CBO-SMR, Circ. No. FA 43.

5. Declassified. Copy, Court of Inquiry. Original classification: Classified. Document REF No: 161843; CBO-SMR, Grp.Ct. 80, Circ. No. OpIntel. NPO 250, JC 1045.

6. Declassified. Copy, Court of Inquiry. Original classification: Confidential. TOR: 1130. (Corrected Copy). DTG 020737, CKT No. JC-874, Code Room No. #892-A.

7. Declassified. Copy, Court of Inquiry. Original classification: Confidential. Document REF No: 020744; GRP. CT. 24775, Originator-301, CWO-HLB, SENT/0758/CY/2.

8. Declassified. Copy, Court of Inquiry. Original classification: Secret. Document REF No: 161652; CBO-WJS, Grp.Ct. 156, Circ. No. GC 752.

9. Declassified. Copy, Court of Inquiry. Original classification: Confidential. Document REF No: 163181; NPO-334, CBO-MWS, Grp. Ct. 27, Circ. No. JC-1336.

10. Declassified. Copy, Court of Inquiry. Original classification: Secret. WU: ETB, CWO: BB, TOR: 2309, TOD 11-2316, DTG 020848, CKT No. JC NR 1101, C.R. No. 1029-A. Dispatch referenced as 280032 is among dispatches in ch. 1, Document 1.8 of this volume.

11. Declassified. Naval Message, Navy Department/From: CINCPAC ADV HQ/Date: 03 JULY [typo] 1945/TOR Code Room: 0119/Decoded by: HARTIGAN/Typed by: HARTIGAN/BECKMAN/For Action: COMINCH/Precedence: ROUTINE/Originator fill in date and time: 022208, NCR 4237/CINCPAC ADV HQ sends action COMINCH.

12. Declassified. Copy, Court of Inquiry. Original classification: Secret; TOR: 0552, DTG 030125, CKT No. JC 1240, C.DROOM No. A01181.

13. Declassified. Naval Message, Navy Department/From: CO VPB 23/Date: 3 AUGUST 45/TOR Code Room: 2136/3/Decoded by: HAMILTON/Typed by: HAMILTON/not readable/Addressees:/For Action: CNO (DCNO) AIR/Information: COMMARIANAS, CTG 94.11, COMAIRPAC, COMAIRPACSUBCOMFWD, CFAW 2, COMWESCAROLINES/Originator fill in time and date: 031120, NCR 4905.

14. Howard Bruce Freeze, Lt. (j.g.), USN.

15. Declassified. From: RINGNESS (APD-100)/Released By:/Date: 3 AUGUST 1945/TOR Code Room: 2220/Decoded by: Hamilton/Typed by: Hamilton/Buckman/Routed by:/For Action: CINPAC ADV. HDQTRS/Information: CTU 95.75, COM THIRD FLEET, COM SEVENTH FLEET, COMPHILSEAFRON, COMSERVDIV 101 (SEE

BELOW)/Precedence: OP OP OP OP Priority/Originator fill in Date and Time Group: 030855, NCR 4925.

16. Declassified. Naval Message, Navy Department/From: USS BASSETT/Date: 3 AUGUST 1945/TOR Code Room: 2313/Decoded by: Smith/Typed by: Smith/Hartig/For Action: COMPHILSEAFRON/Originator fill in date and time group: 022030, NCR 4954.

17. Ready for Sea.

18. Declassified. Copy, Court of Inquiry. Original classification: Confidential. Document REF No: 030150; SENT/AU/0551/3RD.

19. Declassified. Naval Message, Navy Department/Drafter: CNB SAMAR/Date: 4 AUGUST 1945 1626/TOR Code Room: GOODNIGHT/Decoded by: GOODNIGHT/not readable/For Action: COMPHILSEAFRON, COMMARIANAS, COM SW CAROLINA AREA, SUBCOM CAROLINA AREA, COMINCH, CTU 94.5.1, COMSERVDIV 101, CTG 95.7, CTF 95, CTU 95.7.5, CTG 94.5, COMSERVRON 10 CTU 94.5.3, CINCPAC/POA PEARL/Information: COMSERVPAC, 1 BAD CALL (BEING SERVICED)/Precedence: OP OP OP/Originator fill in date and time: 040753, NCR 5583.

20. Declassified. Naval Message, Navy Department/From: USS MADISON/Date: 4 AUGUST 45/TOR Code Room: 2348/3-/Decoded by: LANDO/Typed by: HAMILTON/not readable/For Action: COMPHILSEAFRON, COMWESCARSUBAREA, CTU 94.6.2/Precedence: OPOPOPOPOP PRIORITY/Originator fill in date and time group: 030250, NCR 4966.

21. Declassified. Copy, Court of Inquiry. Original classification: Secret. Originator-62, Release-62, Priority, 040758, Sent/0825/QU.

22. Declassified. Naval Message, Navy Department /From: COMWESCARSUBAREA/Date: 5 AUGUST 45/TOR Code Room: 1112/Decoded by: HUGHES/Typed by: KULKA/not readable/For Action: CINCPAC BOTH COMMARIANAS, COM3RDFLT/Information: COMPHILSEAFRON/Priority: ROUTINE/Precedence: RRRRRR. ROUTINE/Originator fill in date and time group: 040741, NCR 6194.

23. Declassified. Copy, Court of Inquiry. Original classification: Secret. Document REF No: 164553; CBO-BJL, Grp. Ct. 76, Circ. No. JC-3229.

24. Declassified. Copy, Court of Inquiry. Original classification: Secret. Document REF No: 165803; DBO-CLF, Grp. Ct. 96, Cir. No. JC-4197.

25. Declassified. Copy, Court of Inquiry. Original classification: Secret. Document REF No: 1659494; Grp. Ct. 11, Circ. No. JC4305.

26. Declassified. Copy, Court of Inquiry. Original classification: Confidential; WU:RPV, CWO: JLG, OP, DTG 070115, CKT No. JC 3325, C. R. No. A-2955.

27. Declassified. Copy, Court of Inquiry. Original classification: Secret. Document REF No: 166809; CBO-GVB, Grp. Ct. 161, Circ. No. RGPT 468, JC 4958.

28. Declassified. Copy, Court of Inquiry. Original classification: Secret. Document REF No: 167628; CBO-ASD, Grp. Ct. 52, Circ. No. RGP-560, JC-5557.

29. Declassified. Copy, Court of Inquiry. Original classification: Secret; WU:RPV, CWO: FR, DTG 081027, CKT No. JC 4317, C. R. No. A-3739/TOR: 1458/ TOD: 11-1512.

30. Army crew involved in the rescue were from the 4th Emergency Rescue Squadron stationed in the Palau Islands.

31. Falsely inflating perceptions of war service by displaying service ribbons that one is not entitled to wear.
32. Omitted sections preceding extract are NIG recommendations, historical summary, and biographical sketches.
33. L. Peter Wren wrote *Those in Peril on the Sea: USS Bassett Rescues 152 Survivors of the USS Indianapolis* (Richmond, VA: L. Peter Wren, 1999). Included as an addendum in this book is a photocopy of *Bassett's* deck log listing the survivors it rescued.
34. Analysis of allegations against Theriault of four-flushing, cowardice, malingering, and incompetency were covered after the overview of the *Indianapolis* rescue. The allegation of four-flushing was the only one that the NIG found to have backing. Cdr. Theriault wore the Commendation Ribbon and the Asiatic-Pacific Ribbon when he was not entitled to do so.
35. Declassified. Copy, Court of Inquiry. Original classification: Secret. Document REF No: 030231; 24891, Release-5, Shot to-53 502, SENT/AU/0330/3rd.
36. Declassified. Original classification: Top Secret ULTRA. CINCPAC Advanced HQ to JICPOPA Estimates Section. Other information on document: RE V BE/ NUMBER 277/3 August/ From: Capt. Layton/ To: Capt. Harper TOD: 022326/ INT ROGER KK/ R RMM.
37. Declassified. BE V RE/CIC NR 321/3 AUGUST 1945/ TOD: 300437/ WAJ AC PLS/ P JDS.
38. Omitted portions before and after describe *Helm's* arrival to the scene and a list of bodies recovered and identifications that they were able to make.
39. All other sections of ULTRA Intelligence Summary have been excluded because they do not pertain to this volume.

Chapter Four

1. Capt. McVay's first after-action report was submitted to the Secretary of Navy on 12 August 1945. This report was only two pages long and did not contain the detail of the 26 August report. The 12 August report most notably lacked the damage assessment and life-saving recommendations. One significant piece of information contained in the 12 August report that was not in the 26 August report was a position of the sinking—“2. The position of the ship at the time she was hit was Lat. 12° 02' N, Long. 134° 48' E. which position may be also considered as that where she sank since she remained afloat only about fifteen minutes after she was hit. The depth of the water was over 1200 fathoms.” These coordinates became the official Navy position for the sinking; however, they are most likely an estimate based on where the ship should have been if following its routing instructions exactly. New evidence has shown that the ship was likely southwest to this position.
2. Interior Communications room.
3. Capt. McVay's description of the visibility here became a critical piece of the prosecution's case against him in the 3–19 December 1945 general court-martial. McVay reported in his testimony at the court-martial that following the torpedo hits he could not assess the damage because there was no moonlight and it was so dark on the bridge that he could not see anything or anyone. The judge advocate inquired, if it was this dark, why he did not report this in his official after-action report. McVay responded that “at the time I made out that official report the matter—the question of visibility did not appear to me to be one of importance. I prepared the report under some duress. It had to be made in a hurry. In order to submit it, I said what the visibility was, as I remembered it, after I got in the water” (Court-Martial,

356). McVay then agreed that duress was an ill-chosen word, but instead he was “being pushed for time” to get ready for the Court of Inquiry. McVay also reported in his testimony that although multiple versions of his After Action Report were prepared, he changed the content of the original report very little, and only added enclosures from material received from rescue ships. Despite McVay’s clarification of his visibility statement, the presence of contradiction did not serve him well.

4. Metacentric height—the distance between a ship’s center of gravity and its metacenter. A higher GM figure represents greater stability.

5. The vulnerability of *Portland*-class cruisers to capsize if hit in the right place due to added wartime weight and a nearly nonexistent metacentric height was well known to Capt. McVay. Fifth Fleet Commander Adm. Spruance was aware of the weakness of his flagship as well. In the Court of Inquiry, the judge advocate questioned Capt. McVay about his ship being a “class of cruisers reported as being a soft ship.” Capt. McVay responded that “The Bureau of Ships is particularly concerned over their stability; they have a 1.56 GM in the light condition and a little over two feet plus in the fully loaded condition. They are not expected to right themselves when they list greater than 65 degrees. They are so tender there are strict orders not to add any weight that cannot be fully compensated for. I have heard high ranking officers state as their opinion that they feel certain this class of ship could hardly be expected to take more than one torpedo hit and remain afloat.” The judge advocate followed this, inquiring of McVay, “Did you add any material topside weight during your recent overhaul?” McVay replied affirmatively, “Yes, we did, but I was told it had been fully compensated by the removal of the starboard catapult, one gasoline tank, some splinter shields, and some minor changes. We received three SC planes in place of our SOCs, which added quite a bit of weight. They did not give me an 8,000 gallon emergency distilling plant because I could not find sufficient compensating weight to be removed (COI, 7-8).”

6. As it would be redundant, the “narrative” and a “facts” section of the Court of Inquiry have been excluded here.

7. See testimony of Lt. Richard Redmayne, ch. 2: Document 2.4.

8. ITEM refers to the -9 time zone in the Pacific. *Indianapolis* was transiting between -9 1/2 KING and -9 ITEM.

9. Lockwood commanded Pacific Fleet Submarine Force during World War II and is credited for moving the U.S. submarine force from a lagging service into a highly effective one by war’s end.

10. Murray was Commander, Marianas Islands, at the end of World War II. He accepted the Japanese surrender of the Caroline Islands on board his flagship, the other *Portland*-class cruiser, *Portland* (CA-33).

11. Whiting commanded Cruiser Division 14.

12. Declassified. CINCPAC ADV HQ to COMINCH, 11 August 1945, ULTRA Extracts, Photocopies in USS INDIANAPOLIS file, Box 396B, Naval History and Heritage Command Archives, WNY. Originals from COMNAVSECGRU File 5830/114.

13. This recommendation refers to a revision of 10CL-45 to specify non-arrival reports. The first steps of action taken regarding this recommendation follow the noted line.

14. Document itself undated, 2 October 1945 handwritten on front page.

15. Other information in header: Section 424/Confidential.

16. Handwritten.

17. Booklet of marked-up plans is not included in archival copy.
18. Excluded from the 11-page report is the general narrative of the sinking, and discussion of damage (Points A–E).
19. Excluded here are GM calculations based on different conditions of flooding (Conditions A, B, C).
20. Term describing how fluid moves in the direction of the list or roll when inside a vessel; this effect therefore intensifies the roll or list.
21. Underlined in pencil on document.
22. This confirms Capt. McVay’s account of the weakness of the class given in the Court of Inquiry.
23. All letters written by Mrs. Neu were handwritten. Her spelling and phrasings were left as present in the originals.
24. Handwritten letter.
25. Hand signed.
26. Street address omitted.
27. In Capt. McVay’s oral history he described a potato crate bumping into him immediately after the ship went under and his using this as a flotation device until a life raft went by minutes later.

Chapter Five

1. Excluded is McVay’s testimony about the circumstances of his departure during the examination by the judge advocate, routing instructions, intelligence reports, visibility at the time of the sinking, the high quality of his officers, the attack, and his actions immediately after.
2. See Document 1.11, ch. 1. The zigzag doctrine outlined in USF 10 Baker was included in the updated version of USF10A provided.
3. No question 49 present.
4. See Bureau of Ships, 2 October 1945 Report in ch. 4, Document 4.5.
5. Because Sino-Japanese ideographs have multiple phonetic readings, the combination of characters for Hashimoto’s given name could be read as either “Iko” or “Mochitsura,” though Mochitsura is the proper reading.
6. 1945.
7. Naval Academy Etajima in Hiroshima.
8. Cdr. John R. Bromley translated on McVay’s behalf. The other Japanese translator present was Francis Royal Eastlake, Office of Naval Intelligence.
9. Secretary of Navy James Forrestal.
10. Enclosure is the letter below.
11. Handwritten on bottom of letter. Refers to Adm. Chester Nimitz (Chief of Naval Operations) and Adm. Louis E. Denfeld (Chief of Naval Personnel).
12. Stamped, Fiorello La Guardia.
13. Murrell commanded *Gillette* (DE-681).

14. Street address omitted.
15. Handwritten note taped on envelope.
16. Signed M. S. Barrett.
17. Adm. Charles Philip Snyder, Navy Inspector General (May 1942–April 1946).
18. Excluded here to prevent redundancy is Enclosure A of the NIG Report, “Facts and Discussion of Facts.” This section included findings on historical background, the routing instructions, testimony from survivors, and the delayed search for survivors. The essence of the discussion portion comes through in the conclusions extract above. STAMPED [Route to Sec Nav, 7 January 1946], 10 pp. Cover routing slip indicates that SECNAV copy was returned to S-C Files from Adm. Kemp’s office on 1 March 1946.
19. Adm. Louis Denfeld, Chief of Naval Personnel, submitted his concurrence with the members of the court and recommendation for sentence remittance to Secretary Forrestal on 22 January 1946.
20. Lt. Edward Hidalgo, USNR served as an air combat intelligence officer onboard *Enterprise* (CV-6) during World War II. The year after the war he was SECNAV Forrestal’s special assistant. President Jimmy Carter nominated Hidalgo to be his SECNAV. Hidalgo held that office from 24 October 1979–20 January 1981.
21. In a 2 February 1946 Memorandum to SECNAV Forrestal, Hidalgo remarked on Adm. King’s address that he felt strongly that “drawing the traditional line of demarcation [between regular Navy and the Reserves] should be omitted.” “Memo from Edward Hidalgo to James Forrestal Regarding Edits to Navy Press Release on McVay’s Conviction,” 2 February 1946. Photocopy of original from *Indianapolis* Ship Files, Box 396A, NHHC Archives, WNY. Originals in RG 80, NARA II, College Park, MD.
22. Hidalgo also recommended in his 2 February memo to Forrestal that specific references to Lt. Gibson and Lt. Cdr. Sancho be deleted and replaced with merely the title of their offices. Hidalgo opined that “there is a strong feeling among men who command our ships (friends of mine on DEs) in the South Pacific area that the failure to report the arrival of a ship not only was the accepted and common practice, but was a procedure entirely consistent with CINCPAC instructions. A further consideration with respect to the naming of these men is the fact that fairness would seem to require the naming of all or none. Other parties are involved in errors of judgment, etc., at Guam and elsewhere who appear to deserve no special claim to anonymity.”
23. Cdr. Roger D. Scott provides the following legal analysis of the McVay conviction: “Capt. McVay was tried and convicted under the Articles for the Government of the Navy. The Articles for the Government of the Navy did not provide for appeals. Power to reverse a Navy conviction remained with the convening authority, who could be reversed only by the Secretary of the Navy or the President. Accordingly, once Secretary Forrestal took final action on the court-martial and the President did not intervene, the judgment was final. Capt. McVay was not entitled to collateral review pursuant to a writ of habeas corpus because he was not sentenced to confinement. He was released and restored to duty. Nor was Capt. McVay entitled to review in the Court of Claims because the sentence, as approved by the Secretary, did not affect his pay. Congress has ‘no power whatever’ to revise or reverse a court-martial judgment. In 1983 Congress limited the power of the military boards for correction of records in court-martial cases to corrections that reflect clemency and actions taken by reviewing authorities. The Board for Correction of Naval Records, therefore, does not have authority to set aside a court-martial conviction. At this point in time, the only power possessed by military authorities over a final judgment 50 years old is

the power of the Secretary of the Navy to remit or suspend any unexecuted part of Capt. McVay's sentence—but Secretary Forrestal has already remitted the sentence in its entirety. As provided by law, then, the judgment of conviction is 'final and conclusive' and is 'binding upon all departments, courts, agencies, and officers of the United States, subject only to ... the authority of the President.' The President has constitutional power to grant pardon but, in the post-conviction setting, 'a pardon is in no sense an overturning of a judgment of conviction ... ; it is an executive action that mitigates or sets aside punishment for a crime.' Capt. McVay received no punishment that may be set aside by pardon; moreover, the Pardon Attorney's office at the Department of Justice related that applications for posthumous pardons are not accepted under current Executive policy. The President, however, has unlimited discretion to grant pardons and may make an exception from his own policy as he sees fit. Given the current legal understanding of the limited effects of a post-conviction pardon, however, Capt. McVay's conviction is not subject to legal reversal by any recognized means. A Presidential pardon granted as an exception to policy would be chiefly ceremonial." Roger D. Scott, "Kimmel, Short, McVay: Case Studies in Executive Authority, Law and the Individual Rights of Military Commanders," *Military Law Review*, Vol. 156 (June 1998), 190–193.

24. Herman Struve Hensel was the Navy's General Counsel from July 1941–January 1945, then held the office of Assistant Secretary of Navy until 28 February 1945.

25. Adm. John E. Gingrich served as then Under Secretary of Navy Forrestal's aide from 1940–44. He then served as the first commanding officer of *Pittsburgh* (CA-72) for the final year of World War II. After the war, he was promoted to rear admiral and assigned to Chief of Personnel Adm. Louis Denfeld's staff as director of the Naval Reserve. V. Adm. Oswald Symister Colclough served on submarine duty during World War II and also as captain of *North Carolina* (BB-55). Following the war, he was Judge Advocate General of the Navy and retired as Commander, Submarine Force Pacific, in 1949. V. Adm. Forrest Percival Sherman was Deputy Chief of Naval Operations. Adm. DeWitt Clinton Ramsey was Vice Chief of Naval Operations. Adm. Arthur Radford was Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Air.

26. Edward Hidalgo noted his opinion to SECNAV Forrestal on 16 February that in the upcoming press conference, "we must squarely face a seemingly inevitable question as to whether the Navy is to conduct additional investigations and, if not, what disciplinary action has been taken in addition to the McVay trial. My present understanding is that our investigations are at an end. If true, we should say so frankly. In this connection a decision will have to be made as to our position with respect to the letters of reprimand to Gibson, Drago or any other which may presently be contemplated. Obviously, great care will be required to be persuasive as to our impartiality and over-all fairness in this respect." Copy in *Indianapolis* Files, Box 396A, NHHHC Archives, WNY. Original in RG 80 NARA II, College Park, MD.

27. A memorandum to Secretary Forrestal from Edward Hidalgo dated 21 February showed the rush to notify Gillette and Granum of their pending public reprimands. Hidalgo wrote "it is important that the letters to Gillette and Granum be delivered as much in advance of the press release as possible. Granum is in Washington; Gillette on the west coast. The goal of the press release on Saturday is still being contemplated." Copy of Memorandum in Box 396A, NHHHC Archives, WNY.

28. V. Adm. Louis Denfeld (Chief of Naval Personnel).

29. Street address omitted.

30. Cdr. Hashimoto was asked to plot the position of his attack on a chart during the court-martial. He did so from memory and qualified the point as an estimate.

31. Not included were criticisms and addressed solutions for life rafts, emergency fresh water supply, emergency medical supplies, and emergency food supplies.

32. CC: INSGEN, BUMED, BUSANDA, BUAIR, BUORD, 645, 980, 633, 660, 429, 5805, 5803, 309.

Chapter Six

1. Scott later became a naval aviator.

2. Committee members present: Sen. John Warner (R–VA), Chairman; Sen. Robert Clinton “Bob” Smith (R–NH); and Sen. Max Cleland (D–GA).

3. Copies of the letter to Sens. Thurmond and John Warner with Navy Office of Legislative Affairs cover letters are dated 11 May 1998 and 12 August 1998.

4. Sen. Strom Thurmond (R–SC).

5. Sen. Rupert Vance Hartke (R–IN) and Sen. Thomas Eagleton (R–MO).

6. Sen. Richard “Dick” Lugar (R–IN).

7. Rep. Floyd Spence (R–SC).

8. Rep. Charles Joseph Scarborough (R–FL).

9. Adm. Donald L. Pilling, VCNO October 1997–October 2000.

10. R. Adm. John Dudley Hutson, Judge Advocate General of the Navy 1997–2000.

11. 26 July 1945.

12. R. Adm. Samuel J. Cox, USN (Ret.) graduated with distinction from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1980 and had a distinguished 37-year naval career as an intelligence officer. He became the 14th Director and Curator of the Navy (office established in 1944 and renamed Naval History and Heritage Command in 2009) on 29 December 2014. Director Cox’s remarks were transcribed from memory shortly after they were delivered, with only minimal changes for clarification purposes. He also noted that he refers to McVay as “captain” throughout his remarks, in spite of the fact that he received a “tombstone” promotion to rear admiral upon his retirement (which was given to those who distinguished themselves through valor or merit during World War II, until the program was ended in 1959) because McVay preferred to be referred to as captain throughout his retirement.

13. Essay prizes are given at the event each year. The two essays referenced were written by Holly Evans and Kathryn Palmer, descendants of *Indianapolis* and Lost at Sea families for the Gwinn “Angel” Scholarship, named for the pilot who first sighted the survivors, Lt. (j.g.) Chuck Gwinn, and presented by his widow in attendance.

14. *Victory at Sea* was a 26 episode documentary television series about the Navy during World War II that aired on the NBC network from 1952–1953.

15. Adm. John Richardson began serving as the 31st Chief of Naval Operations on 18 September 2015.

16. Relatives of Adm. Spruance were also in attendance, which is apparently the case at every *Indianapolis* reunion.

17. 4–8 May 1942, see Robert J. Cressman, *The Official Chronology of the U.S. Navy in World War II* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2000), 91–93.

18. 4–6 June 1942, see Cressman, *Official Chronology*, 100–102.

19. 19 February 1943.
20. Sunk by Japanese submarine *I-175* on 24 November 1943, southeast of Makin Island, Gilberts.
21. The painting depicts a near miss while *Hornet* supported operations on Okinawa through April 1945.
22. Damaged by a kamikaze plane on 14 May 1945, during Okinawa operations.
23. Damaged by two kamikaze planes on 11 May 1945, providing support for the invasion of Okinawa, 346 of crew killed.
24. The attack took place on 19 March 1945, see Cressman, *Official Chronology*, 303.
25. Nine Sailors killed, see ch. 1. *Pensacola's* deselection for the mission is described in Katherine Moore, *Goodbye Indy Maru: A Navy Wife Remembers* (Lori Publications, 1991), 138. Moore recounts a scene in which her husband, Lt. Cdr. Kasey Moore, USNR (killed in the sinking), told her that *Pensacola* had failed sea trials and *Indianapolis* had thus been selected to deliver a “weapon to end the war.” This recounting, in part, seems to be the origin of several citations of *Pensacola's* disqualification from the mission. Some questions exist about the accuracy of the conversation Moore recalls, however. It is highly unlikely that Moore would have known what was being delivered, as Capt. McVay was not even aware until he was told after the bomb had been dropped. *Pensacola's* war diary from the period indicated that she did have some trouble getting to full speed in rough seas in her initial trials, but full speed was obtained and no other difficulties were reported in the subsequent trials.
26. William J. Toti, “The Sinking of the Indy & Responsibility of Command.” *Proceedings* (Naval Institute Press, October 1999), 34–38. In his article, Toti finds that the Navy followed the letter of the law, but in doing so they committed a grave injustice against an honored career naval officer.
27. This was the first major naval engagement of the Guadalcanal campaign and took place on 9 August 1942. The ships sunk were *Astoria* (CA-34), *Quincy* (CA-39), *Vincennes* (CA-44), and HMAS *Canberra*. See Cressman, *Official Chronology*, 113–114.
28. R. Adm. Daniel Judson Callaghan, commander of TG 67.4, was killed on the bridge of his flagship *San Francisco* (CA-38) by enemy fire on 13 November 1942. He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. R. Adm. Norman Scott died in the same engagement on board his flagship *Atlanta* (CL-51). Scott was also posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. See Cressman, *Official Chronology*, 131.
29. The five Sullivan brothers were all on board *Juneau* (CL-52). The cruiser was sunk in the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal on 13 November 1942, when torpedoes fired from Japanese submarine *I-26* struck the already battle-damaged ship causing a massive explosion that sank the ship in less than a minute. Thinking that there were no survivors, and in dangerous waters, U.S. ships sailing with *Juneau* departed the scene without searching for survivors (of which there were more than 100). The survivors were left at sea for eight days before being rescued—only ten survived—687 of the 697 crew died. The tragedy of *Juneau* is a worthy comparison to *Indianapolis*—while the loss of life was not as great, nearly all hands died on *Juneau*, the loss of life worsened by the delayed rescue. See Dan Kurtzman, *Left to Die: The Tragedy of the USS Juneau* (New York: Pocket Books, 1994).
30. 30 November 1942, off Tassafaronga Point, Guadalcanal. TF 67 under command of R. Adm. Carlton H. Wright comprised of four heavy cruisers, one light cruiser, and six destroyers surprised and engaged eight Japanese destroyers—heavy damage was taken by *Pensacola* (CA-24), *New Orleans* (CA-32), and *Minneapolis* (CA-36). *Northampton* (CA-26) was sunk,

Notes to Pages 294–303

but with light loss of life. Only one Japanese destroyer was sunk. See Cressman, *Official Chronology*, 135. The battle was a tactical defeat for the United States, but it did prevent the Japan from reinforcing its land forces.

31. Adm. William F. Halsey Jr. and Adm. Thomas C. Kinkaid. For a description of Battle of Leyte Gulf see Cressman, *Official Chronology*, 265–69 and Samuel Eliot Morison, *Leyte, June 1944–January 1945, History of United States Naval Operations in World War II*, Vol. 12 (1958); John Prados, *Storm Over Leyte: The Philippine Invasion and the Destruction of the Japanese Navy* (2016).

32. 19–20 June 1944, see Cressman, *Official Chronology*, 237.

33. The attack took place 19 March 1945, see Cressman, *Official Chronology*, 303.

34. Secretary of Navy, 14 February 1977–24 August 1979.

35. Limited U.S. release on 14 October 2016.

36. In the process of researching for this book, NHHC historians encountered varied translations and accounts of Hashimoto's attack. Some indicated that he saw flotsam upon surfacing after the attack, others that he relied on his crew's observations to confirm that their target had sunk.

37. Richard Hulver, "Where Was the *Indianapolis* When She Sank?," *Surface Warfare* (Fall 2016, Issue 52).

38. The lifting of wartime censorship meant that the *Indianapolis* loss was very much in the public spotlight and a topic that congressmen addressed on behalf of their interested constituents. The most vocal congressional responses were directed toward the Navy's treatment of McVay and its decision to bring an enemy combatant to the United States to testify against a U.S. captain. See Doug Stanton, *In Harm's Way*, 248.

Postscript

1. At the time of writing the location of the wreck site had not been announced, nor had any type of complete survey of the site. Thus, we were unaware of the disposition of the wreckage. Only a small selection of photographs have been released.

2. The Navy based its figures on official paperwork, which is the standard procedure. The 316 number of survivors was correct. The numbers of missing/killed and total onboard were each one off due to the incorrect inclusion of RT2c Clarence W. Donnor. NHHC updated the *Indianapolis* casualty numbers during the preparation of this volume.

3. As coverage of the story developed, it was announced that the number of living survivors was actually 19.

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Back Cover. USS *Indianapolis* view from astern, off the Mare Island Navy Yard, California, 10 July 1945, after her final overhaul. Photograph from the Bureau of Ships Collection in the U.S. National Archives, NHHC Photo, 19-N-86914.

