



# **The Sinking of the USS Indianapolis: The Harrowing Story of One of the U.S. Navy's Deadliest Incidents during World War II**

*Charles River Editors*

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\*Includes pictures \*Includes accounts by survivors \*Includes a bibliography for further reading \*Includes a table of contents “I awoke. I was in the air. I saw a bright light before I felt the concussion of the explosion that threw me up in the air almost to the overhead. A torpedo had detonated under my room. I hit the edge of the bunk, hit the deck, and stood up. Then the second explosion knocked me down again. As I landed on the deck I thought, ‘I’ve got to get the hell out of here!’” – Dr. Lewis Haynes The United States lost hundreds of ships during the course of World War II, from the deadly explosion of the USS Arizona during the attack on Pearl Harbor to the sinking of John F. Kennedy’s PT-109, a patrol boat with a crew of less than 15. However, few of the ships lost in the Pacific suffered a fate as gripping or tragic as the sinking of the heavy cruiser USS Indianapolis on July 30, 1945. The USS Indianapolis had been launched nearly 15 years earlier, and it had already survived kamikaze attacks while fighting the Japanese. In July 1945, the cruiser and its crew of nearly 1,200 delivered parts for the first atomic bomb to an air base at Tinian, but due to a chain of events and miscommunication, the cruiser veered into the path of a Japanese submarine shortly after midnight on July 30. Torpedo attacks sank the ship within 15 minutes of the encounter, and about 300 men went down with the ship, but unfortunately, the trials and tribulations were just starting for the survivors. After the call to abandon ship and distress signals were sent out, nearly 900 men found themselves in the water, but the Navy remained unaware of the fate of the Indianapolis, so the survivors would end up spending over 4 days adrift at sea. Those who didn’t drown had to deal with the effects of dehydration, starvation, and exposure, but while those conditions were terrible enough, the most notorious aspect of the story was the presence of sharks, and the seemingly random nature in which they attacked the sailors. The sailors could never be sure if a gruesome death was coming at any instant, especially at night, and while it’s unclear how many men were actually eaten by sharks, salvage efforts eventually found the remains of nearly 60 bodies that indicated they were bitten. By the time rescue efforts were completed, just 300 men were saved, and the fallout over the episode was intense. To this day, the sinking of the USS Indianapolis is controversial, and historians continue to debate who shouldered the most blame for what occurred. The Sinking of the USS Indianapolis: The Harrowing Story of One of the U.S. Navy’s Deadliest Incidents during World War II chronicles the tragic fate of the ship and everything the survivors had to endure in the aftermath of the sinking. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about the USS Indianapolis like never before, in no time at all.

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