



## DECEMBER 2020

### ADIÓS, 2020! Edition: USS Indianapolis Legacy Org Three-Minute Update

Hello again, Indy Family!

At long last, it's time to say goodbye to what for many (most?) people has been a very trying year. So: Adiós, 2020! Don't let the door hit you in—



Oh, wait, this is a G-rated newsletter.

As we all look forward to a brilliant 2021, please take three minutes to speed-read through all the latest on the USS *Indianapolis* Legacy Organization:

#### **Great Minds Think Alike: The *Indianapolis* African-American Crew Project**

Lost at Sea family member Janice Alston had been researching her family's genealogy for several years when her aunt, Arlene Taylor, let her in on some family history: Janice's great uncle, Steward's Mate 1c Henry L. Jackson, had been on the *Indianapolis* when the ship was torpedoed in 1945 after carrying out a major mission.

Then Arlene learned there was going to be a 75th anniversary memorial ceremony for lost-at-sea crew members. Janice was ecstatic.

“We got the family together virtually, and we all watched the ceremony,” Janice says. “The ceremony was beautiful, and it made our family so proud to see his name scroll across the screen, knowing he was part of a very important piece of history.”

But Janice wanted more information. When the ceremony was over, she called her aunt and noted that there had been no mention of any African-American survivors. “I told her I really wanted to find out more about the African-Americans who were on the ship,” Janice says. “And not just for me and our family, but for all the African-American crew members and their families.”

As it happened, Jane Gwinn Goodall, daughter of rescue pilot Chuck Gwinn, was already on the case. While researching biographical information for the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Book, Jane had found that it was particularly hard to verify birth dates or hometowns for the twenty-eight African-Americans on Indy’s final sailing crew. She resolved to undertake a separate project to do just that. After the 75<sup>th</sup> reunion, she formed a research committee and when Janice learned of it, she said, “Without hesitation, yes, I would love to be a part of the research committee.”

From the Navy’s records, the committee had Henry’s mother’s name, Hattie Mae, listed as next of kin, and his hometown listed as Washington, D.C. Using those clues, Janice went to work. Turns out Henry Jackson was born in Beaverdam, Virginia, not Washington, D.C. (where he registered for the draft), and Janice was able to locate a delayed birth certificate for her great uncle. The originally reported “unknown” birthdate was confirmed to be January 16, 1907. He had boarded *Indianapolis* in April 1944 and fought during five of Indy’s ten battles. Henry was 38 ½ years old when *Indy* was sunk.

Janice applied the same amount of care with each of the other 27 African American crew, and thanks to her dedication, and that of the rest of the African-American Project Committee, Legacy has been able to fill in many more missing pieces of information on these unsung heroes. “Even if we don’t find a lot about the African-Americans that were on USS *Indianapolis*,” Janice says, “at least we can make it known that they, too, served their country.”

### **If You Ordered Congressional Gold Medals from the U.S. Mint, Fear Not...**

If you ordered replica Congressional Gold Medals or cases, you may have received a scary cancellation email from the Mint. Fear not! Peggy Campo (I call her “Super Peggy”) has confirmed with the United States Government that quoted prices will be honored.

To check the status of your order, please visit <https://catalog.usmint.gov/track-order> and use the order number sent in your email confirmation at the time of ordering.

### **“Angel” Scholarship Program**

The 2021 application period for the USS *Indianapolis*/Gwinn “Angel” Scholarship is fast approaching. Prospective and continuing college students can earn scholarship money by researching the Indy story, remembering the sacrifices, and reflecting on USS *Indianapolis* CA-35 stories that exist within their own families.

If you are a direct descendant of a Survivor, Lost-at-Sea crewmember, Rescue crewmember or Honorary Survivor, you are encouraged to apply. (Please note, previous award recipients are not eligible.) This is a competitive process, and all work must be original.

The application period opens on January 15 and ends March 31, 2021. Here is the direct link for the scholarship application, which resides online at the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation:

<https://gtrcf.academicworks.com/opportunities/895>

### **Still Growing!**

Legacy’s membership continues to grow. As of December 31, we have 130 current members, including 36 brand new members since August 2020. Thirty-one percent of our members are related to a Survivor; 24% are related to a Lost at Sea crew member; 4% are related to Rescue and Recovery; and 41% are otherwise affiliated (friends, educators, Honorary Survivors, etc.).

Thank you to those who renewed their general memberships in December: Brett Barnes, Dorothy (Dottie) Buckett, Gary Gilcrease, and Deb Polise.

And we were blessed with five new members in December: Craig Baumann, Abby Heideman, Barbara Ketchum, Walter (Wally) Leavitt, and Ruth Kephart Southard. Welcome!

### **Thirty-Two Indy Survivors Walk into a Bar...**

During our December Zoom meetings, we learned about a cruise that Dick Thelen took with 31 other survivors and Chuck Gwinn, the pilot (and “angel”) who first spotted the oil slick Indy left when she sank. The survivors met a man at a bar on the cruise ship, who bought the brave sailors all the drinks they wanted for multiple nights. As far as we know, they didn’t leave him penniless.

Dick also showed us some old reunion photos of fellow Zoomer and Survivor, James Smith, that were in Dick’s collection of memorabilia. Last week, we sang Happy Birthday to our newest (and youngest) Zoom caller, Maggie, who is related to Lost at Sea crewman, Harley Moore.

To participate in our weekly Zoom call with Survivors, please contact Jennifer Brunson at [WeR5Bs@hotmail.com](mailto:WeR5Bs@hotmail.com)

### **Generous Hearts**

Bouquets of gratitude go out to our December donors: Marian Taiscish, Richard Rea, Walter Leavitt, James Merrigan. Thank you so much for supporting Legacy...we couldn't carry on the mission without supporters like you!

Remember, December 31<sup>st</sup> is the last day to get that 2020 tax break for charitable donations. To donate to Legacy, please visit [USSIndianapolis.org](http://USSIndianapolis.org). And don't forget: Amazon shoppers can support Legacy all year long. It's easy! Just visit [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com) and choose USS Indianapolis CA-35 Legacy Organization (EIN 82-5498977) as your charitable choice.

### **Sharing the Indy Story Across the Nation**

The Legacy Education Committee is looking forward to three virtual sessions with students and teachers who are members of National History Clubs (NHC) across the USA. A moderator and three expert presenters will focus on telling the complete story of USS Indianapolis CA 35 in three parts over January, February and March. NHC teachers and students will receive pre- and post- assignments that deepen their understanding of the history of USS Indianapolis CA 35. When the NHC Zoom sessions launched earlier this fall, 137 people attended from all over America. We're very excited about this new way to share the Indy story!

### **Reminder: 2021 Challenge Coin Design Contest**

Just a reminder that it's time for a new USS *Indianapolis* (CA-35) challenge coin, and Jason Witty—grandson of Survivor Eugene Morgan, retired Navy chief, inaugural Legacy Chair, and challenge coin designer extraordinaire—is holding a design contest:

Please submit design ideas that include the following:

- The Indiana state flag
- US flag with '48 stars'
- Rescue ship names
- Rescue aircraft names

Design submissions should include a written description of each side of the coin, including the meaning or symbolism of each design element. The key here is "keep it simple!" Deadline for design submissions

is March 1, 2021. To ask design questions or to submit your design, please contact Jason at [jjwitty78@yahoo.com](mailto:jjwitty78@yahoo.com).

That's it for today's Three-Minute Update...See you next month!

Lynn ☺

Lynn Vincent

Legacy Chair

Honorary Survivor