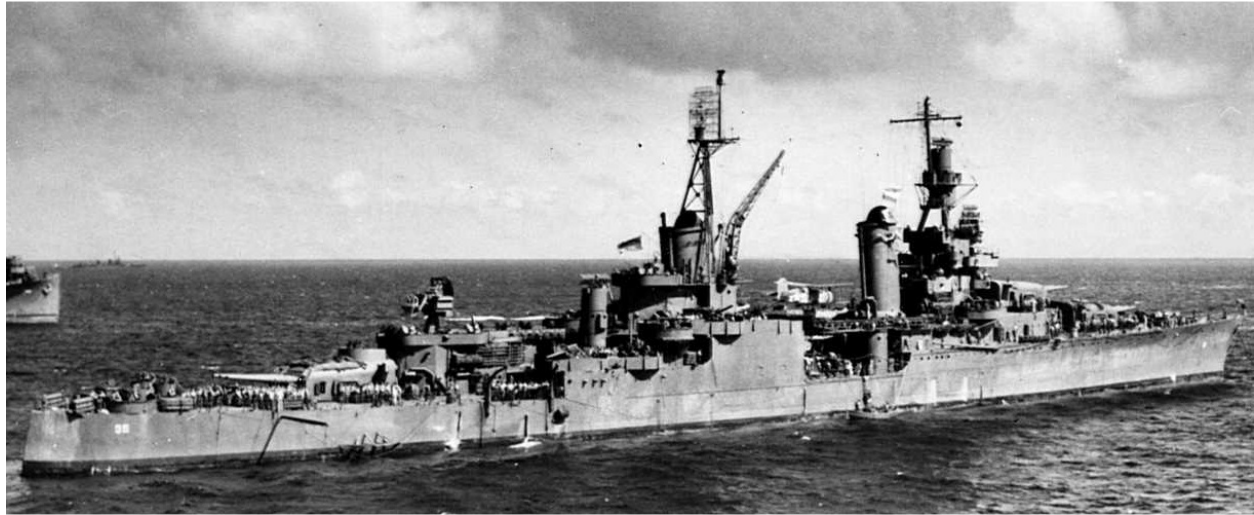


Webmaster note: This document was created by HPRA shipmate Joseph Paganus from the hand written recollections of Eugene Allen. The photo, from just 3 days prior to the torpedo attack, was added. This note from Joe Paganus:

On this anniversary of our Declaration from mother England, I thought you might like to read, that which was personally related and shown to me as a handwritten memoir, by a former neighbor of mine in Florida, one Eugene Allen from Mich. I have taken the liberty of transcribing and editing his original handwritten version i.e. spelling, parsing, etc. This is TRUE history as it was actually experienced, and there are NO embellishments or any other literary licenses taken as people are want to do nowadays, when any actual history is presented to us.

Hand written circa 2000 by:
Eugene R.Allen, F2C (EM)
USS Ralph Talbot, DD-390

As transcribed/edited 4/27/14 by:
Joseph E. Paganus, MM3 ('58-'60)
USS Hugh Purvis, DD-709



USS Indianapolis - CA-35 July 27, 1945

USS Indianapolis, CA-35 Redux

My thoughts of the survivors, and picking them up, from the cruiser Indianapolis.

I was on watch in the engine room when they rang up full speed. We didn't know until we were relieved from watch, what we were doing. They told us that we were on the way to find survivors from the cruiser Indianapolis (CA-35), which was sunk by a torpedo from a Jap sub at 0014 hours on 30 July 1945 in the Phillipine Sea. I don't remember how long it took for us to get to the area.

They announced that all hands, not on duty, were to go topside and pick out a spot to watch and report any sightings. I couldn't spend much time topside because of my watch and mess cooking.

On or about 4 Aug 1945, my first memory was a sighting of a raft, that when we got closer, it was empty. They announced that we were to be on lookout for bodies. If one was spotted we were to let them know so they could bring it to the ship and take the dog tags. It wasn't long before one was spotted and we pulled along side it. A small grappling hook was tied to a small hand line. The body was 15 to 20 feet from the ship. A sailor whirled the line around and let it go. It was a good throw and the grappling hook landed about 15 feet beyond the body.

The body was face down with arms and legs outspread. When they started to pull the land line in, it cut the body into two pieces before it moved even a couple of feet. That operation was then abandoned.

There was a raft sighted with two sailors in it. We had a sailor on board who tied a rope around his own midsection. He jumped overboard and swam to the raft. He took hold of the raft and then started to pull the line back to the ship. It wasn't working out too well, so he climbed back into the raft and the raft was then pulled to the ship. When it got to the ship, another sailor jumped into the water and held the raft steady alongside the ship. I will never forget what the men in the raft looked like. There wasn't any color to them. They were just white, the saltwater having washed and bleached away whatever coloration had been there on them. They were just white, The salt water washing all their color out of them. They had no remaining strength of their own. So, one man would lift them up out of the raft, to two other men on deck who would then carry them to sick bay. These men had to be very gentle and careful during this procedure of handling these survivors, because their body skin was so tender from such a long term exposure to the elements, that their skin would just peel away from their bodies. Whenever they saw men in a raft, they stationed two men with rifles, one forward and one man aft, in the event of any more shark attacks

The next raft we saw, contained five men in it. And again our guy jumped in the water, swam out, and climbed aboard the raft. The same retrieval procedure was used to bring those five men to safety. One of the surviving sailors weighed about 160 lbs. From his frame he had to be originally over 200 lbs before the torpedoing. When he was lifted to the deck, he said he was able to, and wanted to, walk on his own. But when he tried, the only way he could walk, was with one of our men on either side off him for support.

When the man was finally escorted to the deck he gave his name and rank and said he was from an LST that was in the area and that it was also sunk after picking up lots of survivors. It was decided that there couldn't have been an LST that far out in those waters. Probably a case of onset dementia from drinking salt water.

We saw only one raft after that. One with three men in it. All were in the same weakened condition; robbed of any body color and sapped of all their strength.

Our Captain had the cooks make up a broth before we picked up any more survivors so we would have it available for any newly rescued men. We knew they had not had anything to eat for a long time and would need nourishment. We were told by the men taking care of them, that when given only 3 or 4 spoonfuls, they could not hold it down. It took a couple of days before they were able to eat a little bit.

My duties kept me from seeing any more. The last thing I saw of the survivors was when they were transferred to the USS Register (APD-92).....a high speed transport converted from DDE-233. I remember the whaleboat making the runs from our ship to the other.

Our ship's log showed that we had recovered 24 men; and the list is as follows:

Blanthorn, B.	S1C
Campbell, H.E.	GMC3

Clark, O.	S2C
Colman, R.E.	F2C
Farmer, A.C.	COX
Fortin, V.L.	WT3C
Hupka, C.E.	BKR1C
Kiselica, J.F.	AMM2C
Lopex, D.B.	F1C
Mc Guiggan, R.N.	S1C
Nestas, N.A.	WT3C
Naspini, J.A.	F2C
Nichola, W.F.	S1C
Nixon, D.F.	(?)
Osborne, F.R.	(?)
Pace, C.	S2C
Pasket, L.M.	S2C
Price, J.D.	S1C
Reeves, C.O.B.	S2C
Shipman, R.L	(?)
Smith, C.L.	COX
Stevens, G.G.	WT2C
Thompson, D.A.	EM2C
Zink, C.W.	EM3C

When I think about it now, 55 years later, I still feel so sad that we couldn't have found and picked up more. We did try real hard to find more. I hope that all who survived had a good life after all that they went through.