

Pers-6249-LK

September 27, 1945

RUTHERFORD, Robert Arnold RM2(T) USN 337 90 80

My Dear Mr. and Mrs. Rutherford:

It is with great sorrow that I, as Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. INDIANAPOLIS, write to you concerning your son, Robert Arnold Rutherford, Radioman 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 thereafter 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, Captain, U. S. Navy

23 SEP 1945

Mr. and Mrs. John Rutherford  
507 South Herman Street  
Lebanon, Illinois