



THE PUTNAM VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PO BOX 297 ♦ 301 PEEKSKILL HOLLOW RD.

PUTNAM VALLEY, NY 10579

(845) 528-1024 ♦ PutnamValleyHistory@gmail.com

OUR AMERICAN HISTORY

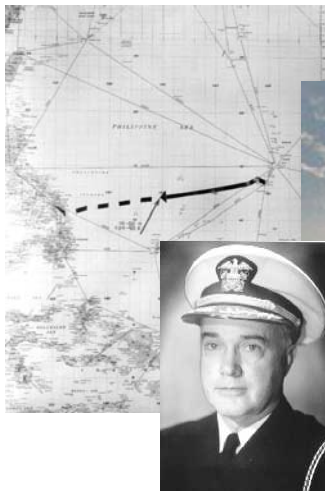
A FREE PROGRAM SERIES - OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

The Sinking of the USS Indianapolis

A Story of Tragedy, Heroism, Deception and Redemption

With Michael Bennett and John Fiorella

Saturday July 9, 2016 at 10:00 am



It was late July, 1945. But to the few remaining survivors, despite the passage of time, the memories linger, thick enough, almost, to reach out and touch. "That night started out just fine," Don Blum recalled. He was on watch, directing three quad 40mm guns on the ship's starboard side. In the pitch black of night, with radar to warn of approaching enemy aircraft, all was calm. The ship had just left Guam, heading for the Leyte Gulf in the Philippines where it was to rendezvous with the battleship USS Idaho, preparing for the expected American invasion of the Japanese mainland. Not known to the crew, they had just delivered a very special cargo. It was twenty-one year old Ensign Blum's first time at sea. In fact, he had only been aboard the ship for one day before departing San Francisco for Pearl Harbor. Two weeks and some 6000 nautical miles later, the ship steamed ahead through the dark of night at 17 knots, in moderate seas and with poor visibility. Many of the ship's 1196 crewmembers were asleep below deck, leaving the large ship eerily quiet. "I had been eating a sandwich," said Blum, when shortly after midnight a Japanese submarine slammed two torpedoes into the Indianapolis. In 12 minutes the American ship was gone, along with three hundred of her crew. Ensign Donald Blum and nearly nine hundred of his shipmates were floating in the Pacific Ocean. Waiting. Hoping. Most would never live to see rescue. Those who did would never forget their five days in hell: thirst, hunger, exposure... and the sharks. Those who survived would have to live with those memories forever.

Michael Bennett and Jon Fiorella

Putnam Valley Historical Society Member Michael Bennett has been fascinated by the heroic and tragic story of the men of the USS Indianapolis for decades. He has written several articles and given public presentations on the subject following his interview with an Indy survivor in 2010. Jon Fiorella's research into the sinking of the Indianapolis could fill volumes of research notebooks – and it does! An award winning science teacher for forty-three years, Fiorella now spends much of his time performing and giving presentations on his extensive research.

**This FREE program will be held at the Putnam Valley Grange Hall
128 Mill Street ♦ Putnam Valley, NY 10579 at 10:00 am**