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Media Contact:
John Bartholomew
Public Information Officer
Indianapolis Department of Metropolitan Development
Office: (317) 327-6709

Statue of USS Indianapolis Survivor Unveiled at City Market

INDIANAPOLIS – Mayor Greg Ballard joined in honoring James E. O’Donnell, survivor of the USS Indianapolis, at the unveiling and dedication of a life size statue located downtown in the Whistler Plaza at the City Market. The statue will serve as a tribute to those who served and sacrificed on the USS Indianapolis.

“The story of the USS Indianapolis and its crew is so inspiring, so filled with courage and perseverance,” said Mayor Ballard “This statue is more than just a piece of granite recognizing and honoring the sacrifice of one man, it represents the generation that saved the world from tyranny and allowed us the precious freedoms we enjoy today.”

The black granite statue is located on the west side of City Market, weighs approximately 1,200 pounds and sits upon a base exhibiting an etching of the USS Indianapolis. Funded through private contributions, the statue shows O’Donnell facing southwest in the direction of the Philippine Sea where the USS Indianapolis was sunk 8,866 miles away in July of 1945.

“I think it’s amazing. I didn’t expect anything like this,” said O’Donnell when told about the statue by his wife Mary Alice. He went on to say, “I don’t know that I deserve anything like this because so many other people have done so much more then I have. The real heroes are the ones that didn’t come back.”

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The ship, with a crew of 1,196, sank in 12 minutes after two torpedoes from a Japanese sub slammed into its hull. Only 317 men survived for four days and five nights in shark infested waters until they were spotted by a plane on anti-submarine patrol.

The date of December 7th was chosen for the unveiling because it marks the entry of the United States into World War II 68 years ago.

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