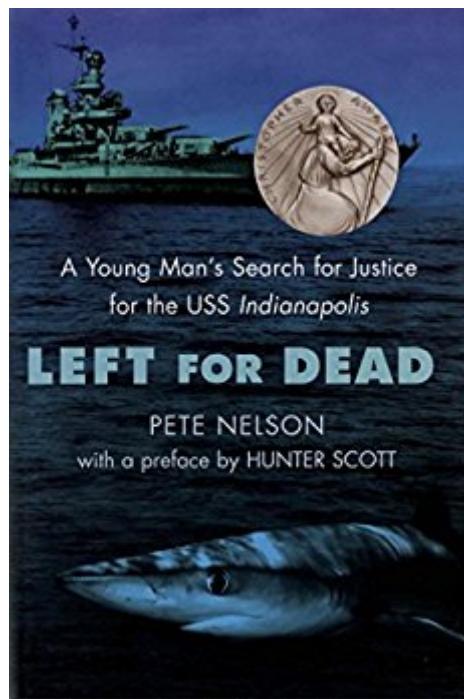


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# Left For Dead



## Synopsis

For fans of Unbroken, Left for Dead is the incredible story of a boy inspired by Jaws to help bring closure to the survivors and their families of the World War II sinking of the USS Indianapolis. Just after midnight on July 30, 1945, the USS Indianapolis was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine. The ship sank in 14 minutes. More than 1,000 men were thrown into shark-infested waters. Those who survived the fiery sinking—some injured, many without life jackets—struggled to stay afloat in shark-infested waters as they waited for rescue. But the United States Navy did not even know they were missing. The Navy needed a scapegoat for this disaster. So it court-martialed the captain for endangering his ship. The survivors of the Indianapolis knew that their captain was not to blame. For 50 years they worked to clear his name, even after his untimely death. But the navy would not budge—until an 11-year-old boy named Hunter Scott entered the picture. His history fair project on the Indianapolis soon became a crusade to restore the captain's good name and the honor of the men who served under him.

Praise for Left for Dead: Christopher Award Winner

An ALA-YALSA Best Nonfiction for Young Adults

Book Description: Compelling, dreadful, and amazing.

VOYA: This exciting, life-affirming book about war heroics and justice . . . proves without question the impact one student can have on history.

Booklist: Well written and well documented | this excellent presentation fills a void in most World War II collections.

School Library Journal: Young readers . . . will no doubt be inspired by the youth's tenacity and by the valor of those who served on the Indianapolis.

The Horn Book: From the Trade Paperback edition.

## Book Information

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## **Customer Reviews**

Captain Charles Butler McVay, skipper of the USS Indianapolis, was court-martialed after the tragic sinking of his ship on July 30, 1945. Despite the objections from Admiral Nimitz, Admiral Ernest J. King, chief of U.S. Naval Operations, insisted that the court martial proceed. What occurred was one of the most incredible cases of injustice in U.S. Naval history. McVay was convicted for failure to steer in a zigzag pattern. This maneuver is supposed to make a ship more difficult to hit in case of a torpedo attack, although this theory was completely disproved during the trial. The Japanese captain of the submarine which sunk the Indy was brought in to testify against McVay. It was his opinion that he still would have sunk the Indy regardless of the zigzagging. Another charge of failing to order abandon ship in a timely fashion was overturned. The survivors of the Indianapolis always felt that their captain was used as a scapegoat by the Navy to cover up their own mistakes, and they have spent years trying to clear their beloved captain's name. In 1996, a young boy named Hunter Scott was watching the movie Jaws. One of the characters in the film portrayed a survivor from the Indianapolis. After seeing the film, Hunter became more interested in the story of the Indy. He used its story as a theme for a history project he was working on. This 11-year old boy did the unthinkable. He made it his goal to clear McVay's name. He sent out numerous questionnaires to survivors and conducted personal interviews as well. Newspapers picked up on Hunter's crusade and soon the whole country was aware of his efforts. Appearances followed on Late Night with David Letterman as well as trips to Capitol Hill to lobby members of Congress.

In my experience as a children's librarian, when a kid comes up to me looking for information about the navy (and trust me, it happens) I usually end up throwing them headlong into the appropriate section of non-fiction books with the hope that follow-up questions will not be forthcoming. Needless to say, I don't know much about the navy. Fortunately, I've just read a navy-rific book that I may definitely recommend to little navy lovers everywhere (and, interestingly enough, navy haters too). "Left For Dead", has everything a good non-fiction story should. Action, adventure, shark infested

waters, and a young optimistic hero who wins in the end. Though certain elements of this book rankled me at the most inappropriate of times, I have enough sense to see that in spite of its flaws, "Left For Dead", is an excellent encapsulation of how sometimes one boy can change history itself. If you're like the hero of this story, eleven-year-old Hunter Scott, then you probably learned about the sinking of the USS Indianapolis as he did through the movie "Jaws". Remember that scene where Robert Shaw's talking with Richard Dreyfuss and Roy Scheider about how he once served on that ship? Remember how he describes the sharks eating the men after their ship sank and that it took some five days to be rescued? Well after seeing that scene Hunter knew he'd found the perfect history fair project. Trouble was, the history books seemed to have obscured knowledge of the Indianapolis and its unlucky crew. So Hunter set about contacting the survivors and talking to them. As he did, one thing became incredibly clear to him. Many of the survivors were convinced that their captain, one Mr. Charles Butler McVay III, was wrongfully court-martialed for the sinking of the ship.

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