



**TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE**  
COMMISSIONER DAWN BUCKINGHAM, M.D.

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1700 N. Congress Ave. • Austin, TX 78701-1495 • 512-463-5339 • FAX: 512-475-1415

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Voices of Veterans: Seaman First Class L.D. Cox Shares His Story of Service with the U.S. Navy Aboard the USS Indianapolis**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Contact: Kimberly Hubbard**  
**(512) 936-9582**  
**media@glo.texas.gov**

AUSTIN — Today, Texas Land Commissioner and Veterans Land Board (VLB) Chairwoman Dawn Buckingham, M.D., is proud to introduce the next installment of the series highlighting the VLB's Voices of Veterans oral history program. In this special episode, we highlight the service of a Veteran who sailed aboard the USS Indianapolis and survived the ship's sinking. Today, we hear the story of U.S. Navy Veteran Seaman First Class L.D. Cox and his experiences aboard the USS Indianapolis and after its tragic sinking.

Cox was born on a farm in Sidney, Texas. While in college, he volunteered to join the Navy, saying, "I saw posters [and] billboards that said join the Navy and see the world, and then I saw another one that said a girl in every port, and I thought that's for me."

After basic training, Cox was assigned to the USS Indianapolis. "Well, of course, what really amazed me was the size of it. It was a heavy cruiser, and it was a beautiful ship. It had the clipper bow on it, which is the only one in the fleet that did, and the size, it carried right at 1,200 men, personnel, and I never had been on a ship like that."

## VOICES OF VETERANS



name

Cox, L.D.

military branch

Navy

rank

Seaman  
First Class

conflict

WII

date interviewed

8/22/2008



interview  
available on  
voicesofveterans.org

Mr. Cox, a member of the US Navy from Aug. '44 to Mar. '46, served as a helmsman aboard the USS Indianapolis and took part in the battles of Okinawa and Iwo Jima.

He was also part of the crew that delivered the atomic bomb aboard the USS Indianapolis.

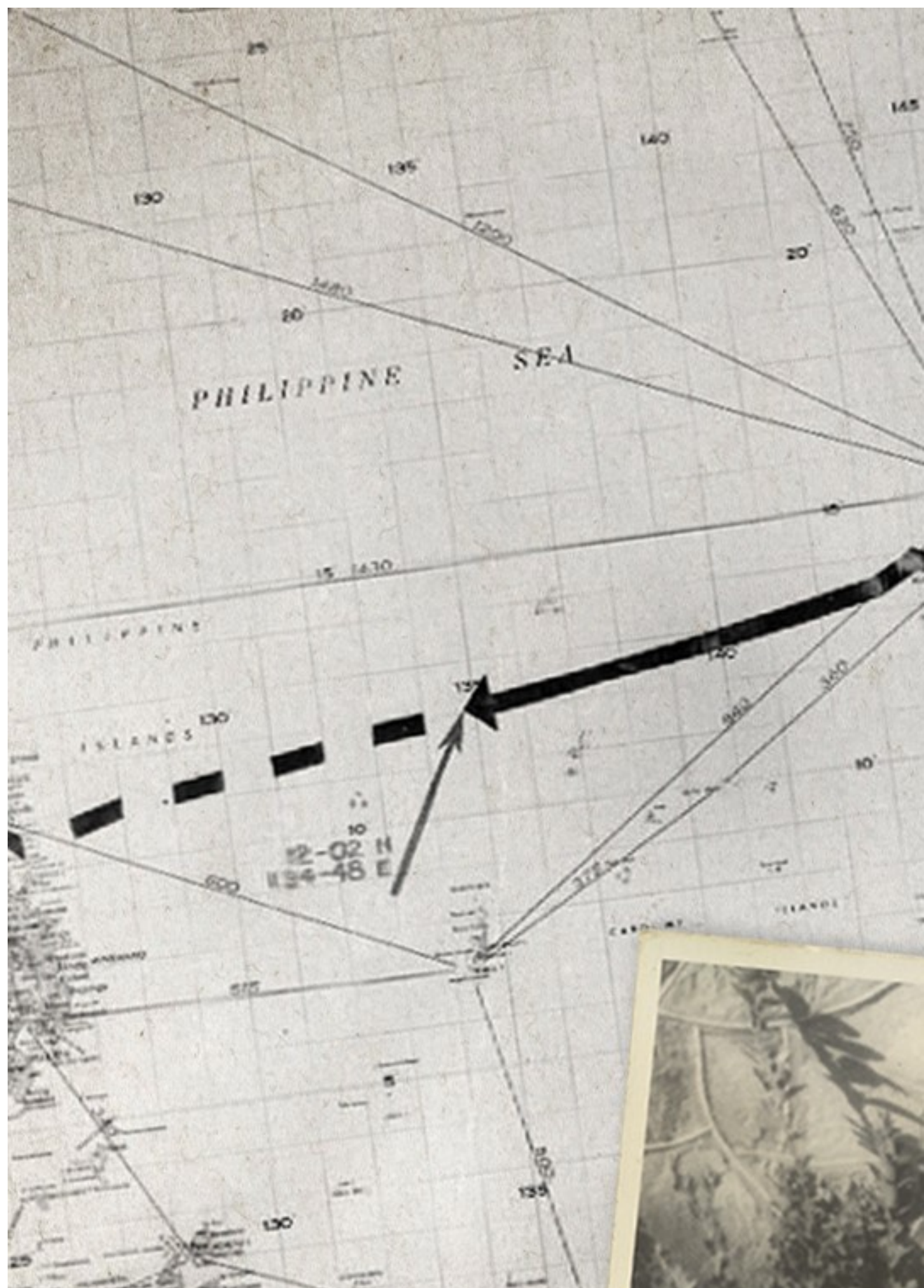
The ship was later sunk by a Japanese submarine and he literally spent five days and four nights floating in the water with other men of the ship until he was rescued.

He left the Navy as a Seaman First Class.

Cox worked as the Horizon Forward Lookout in the Deck Division. He recounted his experience at Iwo Jima and confirmed that he witnessed the raising of the American flag on Mt. Suribachi. Cox said that when the flag rose, you "felt your scalp tingle and your tears come and see what a glorious thing we were fighting for."

Cox spoke of the sinking of the USS Indianapolis and the horrors of being adrift in the ocean for multiple days and nights. He said, "Men were going out of their heads," as many were injured, and there was no fresh water or food. Some men drank salt water and perished, while sharks took others.





"We had 'em every day, and you could see, you could see... half a dozen or more fins circling, you could look down underneath you for 20 feet down, you could see 'em circling down underneath where you were, and all different sizes. In fact, one buddy not over three feet from me, a shark came up from the depths and took him and covered me with water, and down he went, and we didn't see him anymore."

When the men were finally spotted, Cox recalled being overcome by emotion after they saw a plane change course and fly directly over them. "You could see an old boy in the hatch a-waving to us, and that's whenever my hair stood on end, that's whenever I had cold chills, and tears started flowing."

To listen to Seaman First Class L.D. Cox tell his story, click the button below

[Seaman First Class L.D. Cox's Story](#)

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Veterans can email [VoicesofVeterans@glo.texas.gov](mailto:VoicesofVeterans@glo.texas.gov) to tell their stories. Please note that the Veteran must be a resident of Texas at the time of their interview.

Voices of Veterans is a state agency's first Veteran oral history program. It records the stories of Texas Veterans through their time in service and after returning home from combat.

The VLB records interviews with veterans over the phone or in person. Their interviews are then permanently archived in the Office of Veterans Records at the GLO, where they join the historical documents of other Texas heroes such as Sam Houston, Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie, and William Barret Travis.

Veterans' interviews are also available to researchers, historians, genealogists, and the public. These precious records inspire future generations and remind us of our Veterans' sacrifices.

To listen to the over 500 archived stories of Veterans documented through the GLO's Voices of Veterans oral history program, click the button below:

[Voices of Veterans](#)