USS Indianapolis

Located at Senate Avenue and Walnut Street on the north end of the Canal Walk in downtown Indianapolis is the National Memorial to the U.S.S. Indianapolis. During World War II this heavy cruiser delivered secret components for the atomic bomb to Tinian Island in August 1945. On its return voyage the Indianapolis was sunk by a Japanese submarine. Of the 1197 men who went into the water when the ship went down, only 318 survived. The Memorial was formally dedicated in 1995. It is an outdoor site available to the public 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Engraved on the south face of the monument are the names of the ship’s company and one passenger who made up the final crew.

Operation Hours
IWM Office:
Monday - Friday; 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

IWM Museum:
Wednesday - Sunday; 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

SSM Museum:
10:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Wednesday to Sunday May through October
Friday to Sunday November through April

Indiana War Memorial Commission
431 N. Meridian St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204
Entrance is on Michigan St.
Phone: 317-232-7615
Fax: 317-233-4285
www.in.gov/iwm
The Indiana War Memorial Plaza Historic District, in the heart of downtown Indianapolis, is composed of predominantly Neoclassical buildings and structures, landscaped open space, and sculptural ensembles.

The plaza, along with the Indiana Soldiers and Sailors Monument, two blocks to the south, and the USS Indianapolis Memorial, five blocks west, comprise the holdings of the Indiana War Memorial Commission. The commission operates these facilities in pursuit of the inscription carved in stone above the main entrance to the World War Memorial:

“To commemorate the valor and sacrifice of the land, sea and air forces of the United States and all who rendered faithful and loyal service at home and overseas in the World War; to inculcate a true understanding and appreciation of the privileged of American citizenship; to inspire patriotism and respect for the laws to the end that peace may prevail, justice be administered, public order maintained and liberty perpetuated.”

The Indiana War Memorial Museum, a chronological museum depicts our history from the Revolutionary War through our current conflicts. The Colonel Eli Lilly Civil War Museum gives a glimpse into the lives of the Civil War Soldier at battle and on the home front. The War Memorial Plaza also boasts monuments to Vietnam, Korea, and World War II as well as beautiful fountains and statuary.

Soldiers and Sailors Monument

Recognized as one of the world’s outstanding monuments, the structure has come to symbolize both the City of Indianapolis and the State of Indiana. The Limestone used for the monument is gray oolitic limestone from the Romona quarries of Owen County. It stands 284 feet, 6 inches high, only 15 feet shorter than the Statue of Liberty. It cost $598,318 in 1902. It has been estimated that building a similar structure today would cost more than five hundred million dollars.

The commission for the monument construction requested architects to submit design proposals. Of the seventy proposals turned in, two finalists were chosen. Then from the two, Bruno Schmitz of Berlin, Prussia (Germany) received the appointment.

There are a number of art works either built into the Monument, or placed throughout the grounds. Bruno Schmitz brought with him Rudolf Schwarz. Schwarz was sculptor for the statuary groups “War” and “Peace”, “The Dying Soldier”, “The Homefront” and the four statues at the corners of the Monument that represents the Infantry, Cavalry, Artillery, and Navy.

The lower level of the Monument houses the Colonel Eli Lilly Civil War Museum. The museum portrays Indiana’s contribution to the American Civil War, the war that saved the union from being split into two nations and ended the institution of slavery.

Two hundred thirty-one feet above the balcony level of the Monument is a glass enclosed observation deck, providing a panoramic view of downtown Indianapolis. Visitors reach the observation deck by walking 330 iron stairs or riding an elevator, which takes them to step 290, and walking the final flight.