

## Bell and Hammer



In Memory Of  
Donald Paul Shockey  
1942  
Given by his Sister

Donald Paul Shockey's history is amazing and tragic. Census records indicate that Donald was born in Oregon around 1921, the son of Moses and Bessie Shockey. On the 1940 United States Federal Census record, Donald is living with his brother-in-law and sister, Jennie, in Cope, Washington County, Colorado. He was listed as a laborer on their farm.

Donald enlisted in the United States Navy on March 17, 1941 and boarded the U.S.S. Vireo on June 13, 1941. The Vireo had significant involvement during WWII, and its history is challenging to summarize. This summary will not do it justice, so the free use Wikipedia.com's history will be attached so that readers can get a better appreciation of the sacrifices of the men on this ship. It is well worth reading.

The Vireo was was running operations out of Pearl Harbor at the time Donald would have boarded. Pearl Harbor was attacked by the Japanese December 7, 1941. At the time of the attack, the Vireo was in "upkeep status." The crew had to assemble the engines and get them going to join the battle. They shot down one Japanese bomber, and the ship survived. The Vireo was fitted for different jobs over time. At the time of Pearl Harbor, it appeared to be minesweeping and towing, which continued in the months after the attack.

In May of 1942, the Vireo was sent on a secret mission to Midway Island. After heavy bombing and the loss of at least four U.S. ships during the Battle of Midway, the Vireo was sent in to tow the U.S.S. Yorktown, which took heavy damage. The Vireo did not have the engine strength to efficiently tow the Yorktown. The U.S.S. Hammann was sent in to help salvage the struggling Yorktown. On June 6, a Japanese submarine torpedoed the Hammann, as it was helping the Yorktown, sinking it quickly. The Yorktown, still being towed by the Vireo, took two more torpedo hits and began to sink. The towing cable was cut, and the Vireo circled back around to help with rescues off the Yorktown. This put the Vireo directly above the sunken Hammann. As rescues were happening, depth charges went off on the sinking Hammann. The Yorktown, on its side, was banging heavily against the Vireo, but the rescue mission was completed. The Vireo took severe damage to its rudder as a result of the depth charges. This caused it to run aground when trying to get into the shipping channel at Midway Harbor, causing further damage and requiring towing. The ship did make it to safety. It then made its way back to Pearl Harbor for emergency repairs at the end of June, 1942. Vireo was refitted as a towing ship in August.

Photo # NH 43603 USS Vireo at Guantanamo Bay, January 1920



"USS Vireo (AM 52)" by U.S. Navy photo - <http://www.navsource.org/archives/11/02052.htm>.  
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Around October, six ships were sent to tow barges containing much needed gasoline into Guadalcanal. Among them were the Vireo and the U.S.S. Meredith. On October 15th, they were spotted by Japanese airplanes. Four ships turned back, but the Vireo and Meredith continued on. When they received word that Japanese ships were in the area, they also decided to turn back. Given the slowness of the Vireo, a decision was made to offload Vireo's men to the Meredith and to torpedo and sink the Vireo. After the men boarded the Meredith, and they were pulling away to torpedo the Vireo, Japanese planes attacked, sinking the Meredith. The Vireo and the two gasoline barges that had been in tow escaped unharmed, and a few men from the Meredith managed to get back to the Vireo. Donald Paul Shockey was not among them. His body was never recovered.

There are two memorials for Donald, one in the Philippines and one in Akron Cemetery in Washington County, Colorado. Donald was awarded the Purple Heart after his death. He had a sister, Hazel Shockey Hirsch who was buried in Brighton in 2006. It appears he had another sister, \*\*\*\*\*, who appears in our parish registers. It is likely she donated the bell.

The bell is very heavy. It is on the altar and used by acolytes at points during the service.