



Donald H. Shown

November 23, 1920 - June 19, 2012

Donald H. Shown, 91, passed away Tuesday and Emeritus in Napa, CA.

Mr. Shown was born in Oregon and was a longtime resident of Vallejo before moving to Napa. He was a member of the Church of Ascension and the Masonic Lodge in Vallejo. He was a proud survivor of the sinking U.S.S. Indianapolis.

Survivors include his sisters, Mary Goldsberry, Geraldine Gunn and Laverne Pope; his brother, Richard Shown; and numerous nieces and nephews.

At his request no services will be held and inurnment will be private.

Please visit the online tribute at twinchapelsmortuary.com.

Arrangements are under the direction and care of Twin Chapels Mortuary, Vallejo (707) 552-6696.

Tribute Wall

“ He was one of the greatest of the Greatest Generation. He grew up in the Roaring '20s and through the challenges of the Depression, served his country bravely the entire World War II, then led a quiet, unassuming life in Vallejo that enriched family and friends.

Born November 23, 1920 in Twickenham, OR, Don's early childhood was spent on a sheep ranch along the John Day River. During summers he and his dad herded the sheep to high country, living on beans and pan baked biscuits. When it was time for school, Don shared the horse ride to the one room school house with what were eventually four younger siblings. The ranch was lost to the hard realities of the Depression, so the family moved to his grandma Davis' house in Olympia, WA.

Upon graduating from Olympia High, there was simply no work to be found. With war clouds on the horizon, he joined the Navy. Looking back at his mother standing on the porch as he walked down the street to the induction center, staying firm in his resolve to do what he had to do, was the hardest thing he ever did, he often said.

Assigned to the USS Indianapolis, one of Don's first taste of ship life was in the galley while they were stationed at Pearl Harbor. They were out on maneuvers on that fateful day, December 7, 1941. He served throughout the war on the Indy in a dozen battles from the Aleutian Islands to the South Pacific, rising to Chief Fire Control Officer. His battle station was atop a tower mid ship, directing the big guns. There, he had a front row view when a screaming Kamikaze slammed into the deck during the Battle of Okinawa.

When the Indy was hit by two torpedoes July 30, 1945, he was sleeping in his berth. Knowing from the Indy's immediate listing that she was not going to survive, he rallied his shipmates to abandon ship, making it over the railing himself with only a kapok life jacket. Soon the life jacket became water logged and worthless. He survived four days and five nights in shark infested water by pairing

up with his buddy back to back, sharing rest breaks while the other treaded water.

Returning to civilian life, Don soon bought a house on Springs Rd where he lived simply and happily for over 50 years. He married Nenorah Silvas, the ardent love of his life for 42 years, who kept him well fed with three square meals a day and her famous desserts. Though he never had any children of his own, he was active in the lives of his extended family and step family.

He worked as a civilian at Mare Island for a while, then various naval installations as an electronics technician. His home shop, decorated with "naughty" posters of Raquel Welch and Bo Derek, produced a TV set in the 60's and a table using an anti-aircraft shell casing. He built many ship models, but most notably, that of the USS Indianapolis. That model was always on display next to his war medals.

A great outdoorsman, if Don's International Travelall and camper were not parked next to his house, he was at one of his many hunting or fishing trips. Understandably, he often swore with a sailor's salt that he never wanted to be in any body of water bigger than a bathtub. Yet you could easily find him in his little fishing boat, patiently casting for trout on a calm lake. It was there in the woods that he shared his love for the outdoors with step great grandsons Mike and Eddie, a love he had gotten from his dad during those high country campouts.

Don was a Christian, attending Ascension Episcopal Church in Vallejo. He also found a way to express his faith in the fraternity of Naval Lodge, ultimately becoming Master Mason. In his later years he relished having scripture read to him, leaning forward in his easy chair and repeating key inspirational words.

He was a keen member of the Indianapolis Survivors Org. He often went to the reunions to reminisce and share a camaraderie that not many would understand. In his later years a baseball cap with the

*Indianapolis insignia was always on his head, festooned with
reunion pins. Anybody walking in the grocery store*

Steve Shown - June 22, 2012 at 11:22 PM