

# TRMSMA

THE ROHNA SURVIVORS  
MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION



[www.rohna survivors.org](http://www.rohna survivors.org)

June 2020

## Letter From the President

**By: Jason D. Markiewitz**

To all long-time members, I send my heartfelt regrets for not being able to attend last year's reunion in Virginia Beach as it was only the second I have missed since I joined this organization in 2010. To all of our new members, I regret not being able to meet you properly and hopefully I will be able to do so in Salt Lake City.

The era between 2016 and 2020 is an historic 5-year stretch of time where numerous 75th Anniversaries of key World War II milestones are being celebrated; our own being in 2018. This past year I was heartened by colleagues and fellow Airmen who traveled to the beaches of Normandy for the 75th Anniversary of D-Day; a celebration and a solemn reflection of the thousands who died storming the beaches in Operation OVERLORD, under auspicious weather conditions and in the face of fierce enemy fire. World War II was a turning point in history. Every battle won, every bullet fired, and every time our flag waved over fields from North Africa to Germany, from Paris to Peking, on The Philippines and Iwo Jima and every other island whose liberation came at great cost, was in the name of liberty and freedom.

It is thanks to people like you, the members of this great organization, who have dedicated yourselves to the preservation of just one key event in history, but who have sworn to never let that incident be similarly sunk in the annals of history. Every year I am reminded of exactly why we do this, why we meet once per year in cities across the country, and why we tell the stories of our families, survivors and casualties alike, and why we work diligently on creative ways to further educate the public and provide closure to those who still long for answers.

Thank you for your attendance at the 2019 Reunion, thank you for your dedication to this association, and I hope to see all of you in Salt Lake City in June 2021.



## 2020 Reunion Canceled Due to Coronavirus Pandemic!

**By: Deborah Sanchez**

For only the third time since its inception, The Rohna Survivors Memorial Association reunion is not being held. Until now the only other years that did not see a reunion were 1994 and 1997.

The reunions began in 1993, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the sinking of the Rohna. The hosts and coordinators of those early gatherings were John P. and Ruth Canney and Jim and Charlotte Clonts.

The 2020 reunion however, has the unique "honor" of being the first to be canceled due to a pandemic! Although we are unable to come together this year we have already reserved the dates of June 10-13, 2021 in anticipation of holding a reunion next year. It will be at the same hotel in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Despite the tourist and hotel industries being hit hard by our nation's and the world's current situation, the DoubleTree Suites by Hilton Downtown Salt Lake City has guaranteed us the same rates as this year for everything. We are grateful for this consideration.

It is our hope that those who were planning to attend this year's reunion will join us at our next gathering, whether that is in 2021 or later. Information regarding reunions will always be posted on the website at: [www.rohna survivors.org](http://www.rohna survivors.org).

Although we try to post the information 6 months in advance, this may not be possible for the 2021 reunion. Given the fluidity of the current national health situation, we will do our best to give notice as far in advance as possible.

Please stay healthy and safe during these unprecedented times. We look forward to when we can gather together again to honor the brave men of the HMT Rohna and the members of the KMF-26 Convoy.



## Does Anyone Know... ?

If you have information regarding any of the items below or any of the items in the guestbook on our website: rohnasurvivors.org, please contact Janice Pumelia at: jetpumelia@gmail.com or by mail at: Janice Pumelia, 56 Garland Court, Brooklyn, NY 11229

My Dad was a survivor of the Rohna. He passed away in 2010 at age 88. He didn't talk much about the sinking of the Rohna He was a radio operator during the war in the CBI theatre. if anyone knew him, I would appreciate hearing from them.

~ Tom Guilbault from Wilbraham, MA

Hi, My uncle Pvt. William Fairhurst was a casualty on the Rohna. He was from Philadelphia Unit SC. Looking for anyone who might have known him.

~ Denise Maccari from Philadelphia

My grandfather Dr. Wilmot Burgess Boone was aboard this ship and survived. He is no longer with us. There is no rank for him. It's my understanding that' he was OSS now CIA, looking for any information. Thank you,

~ Cheryl Richardson from Vancouver, WA

My cousin is Staff Sargent Francis McNerney. I'm wondering if there are pictures of the crew and if anyone is alive that remembers him please contact me. Thank you.

~ Lisa McNulty from Boston, MA

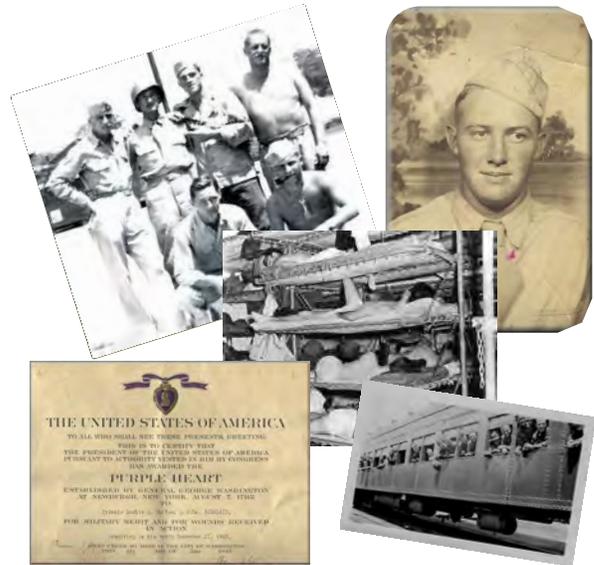
## A Memory posted on the Guest Book

My Uncle, John King, just past away on 5/1 at 95 years old. He was a signalman second class on the USS Pioneer (AM-105) and usually was stationed on the mast above the bridge with his flags or the signal light. Just recently he shared a memory of that night. During the rescue he used the signal light to scan the waters around the Pioneer for survivors. Like most he was sworn to secrecy and honored the oath for most of his life.

~ William P. King from Salem



## Research Corner



Here are some helpful websites if you want to conduct your own research. Listing here is **not** an endorsement of any of these sites, simply a primer to help you start your internet research. Most of them don't cost a thing!

National Archives Veterans Records  
[www.archives.gov/veterans](http://www.archives.gov/veterans)

Honor List of Dead & Missing Army & USAAF Personnel  
<http://www.archives.gov/research/military/ww2/army-casualties/>

Army Air Forces Historical Association  
[www.aafha.org](http://www.aafha.org)

Air Force Historical Research Agency  
[www.afhra.org](http://www.afhra.org)

US Army Air Forces Personnel Records (Casualties) Records of USAAF lives lost in WWII  
[www.usaafdata.com](http://www.usaafdata.com)

USAAF General Information  
[www.usaaf.com](http://www.usaaf.com)

CBI Roundup (Newsletters from WWII)  
<http://www.ex-cbi-roundup.com>

### *We have added to our Website Lists!*

We are happy to announce that with more people contacting us inquiring about loved ones, we have been able to identify and add the following names to our website.

**Survivors** - Malcolm Bovard; Everette Bradley; Harold Clayton; Rex Farris; Ellis Francis; Robert Kruidenier; Leon Matteson; Robert Tobey  
**Casualties** - Marion Farrell, Myron Seavey; John Veazie III

## DONATION REQUEST

TRSMA offers our members a choice this year. As always, checks in any amount made out to TRSMA are welcome and can be sent to Janet Delude, 182 Covina Avenue, Long Beach, CA 90803. Or please consider making a tax deductible donation to Rohna:Classified, the documentary being made by TRSMA Past President Michael T. Walsh and TRSMA member Jack Ballo, by using the link at [www.rohnaclassified.com](http://www.rohnaclassified.com)

## Articles & Story Submissions

Do you have a story of yourself or your loved one that you would like to share? Please submit your articles, questions, comments or stories to the Interim Editor at: [debsan1951@gmail.com](mailto:debsan1951@gmail.com).

## In Memoriam



|   |                   |                |
|---|-------------------|----------------|
| Steve Clark                                     | NOK               | d. 19 Feb 2020 |
| John Comple<br>Son-in-Law of Survivor Russ More |                   | d. 07 Jul 2019 |
| Hal Johnston                                    | Banfora           | d. 02 Feb 2020 |
| John King                                       | Pioneer           | d. 01 May 2020 |
| Crawford Laws                                   | Rohna<br>Survivor | d.             |
| Russ More                                       | Rohna<br>Survivor | d. 09 May 2020 |



## More Pieces of the Puzzle

By: **Janice Pumelia**

In our continuing search to find casualties of the Rohna who were never acknowledged, names of survivors who were never acknowledged are also starting to surface.

For the past several months I have been corresponding with Jack Tobey, son of Robert Walter Tobey who was never on the survivor's list. Jack contacted the Association to rectify this. Most of Robert Walter Tobey's military files were destroyed in the 1973 National Personnel Center. There were now no medical records available but Jack did have his discharge papers and an acknowledgement of receiving a Purple Heart. Like so many other survivors Tobey talked very little about the incident. He and other family members though, all heard the same story about being in the water a long time before being rescued. Bringing all of these pieces together, Robert Walter Tobey, 31st SC, will now be added to the list of survivors.

Most recently I was contacted right after our Reunion in Virginia Beach by a William Kruidenier, son of 1st lieutenant Robert D. Kruidenier, who was a survivor yet was never listed. Along with a newspaper article and letters of commendation, his son told me that he was rescued by the Clan Campbell and was mentioned in Carlton Jackson's book. There was his name right there on page 119! He also kept a journal throughout the war, devoting several pages to the Rohna. There are many more "amazing" details related to the lieutenant's experience on the Rohna and I have invited his son William to join us in Salt Lake City next year. Here's hoping he will come.

Finally, on a more personal note, I realized that a number of men in my father's unit were never listed as survivors. I have the original letter awarding my father, Anthony Pumelia the Purple Heart "for wounds suffered as a direct result of enemy action on 26 November 1943." There are 8 names on this list; only my dad, Sgt. Kenneth A. Levy and Sgt. Leon Matteson are listed. The other 5 names will now be added to the list of survivors.

More pieces of the puzzle. The search goes on.....



HMT Rohna Memorial  
Fort Mitchell  
National Cemetery  
Seale, AL



**HONORING A LEGACY**

**TRSMA Newsletter**  
c/o 4236 Hendrix Way  
San Jose, CA 95124