TRSMA
THE ROHNA SURVIVORS MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION
www.rohnasurvivors.org
April 2024

2023 Rohna Reunion in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania Wrap-Up

By: Stan More
TRSMA Board Member

Our 27th annual Rohna Survivors Memorial Association reunion was held in Harrisburg PA in June 2023. This year there were two day trips planned. Harrisburg is close to both Gettysburg and Hershey, so there was no need to choose between them. Both of those visits far exceeded my expectations. And there was a lot of conversation about them at our usual welcoming dinner on Wednesday evening.

The next day we arrived at the Gettysburg National Military Park, and started our tour in the visitor's center and museum. That included a visit to a "dome" exhibit with a 360 view of the battle area in 3D which made you almost feel as if you were there. We saw exhibits with maps and discussions about the three day battle which included day by day troop movements. It was hard to imagine the actual numbers with 165,000 troops converging on a town of only 3,500 residents. There wasn't a plan to do battle around Gettysburg, but local roads converged on the town like spokes on a wheel. With the hills and ridges surrounding the town as natural defensive positions, the battle found the location from the local geography.

Full of information about this historic battle from the museum, we boarded our bus for an in-person tour of the actual battle grounds in perfect weather making several stops as we toured. This included viewpoints which showed what each army, Union or Confederate, would have seen. When we viewed the 3rd day final battlefield, I was amazed how small it was. You could view the entire battlefield in one glance. It was sobering to know that there were 50,000 casualties in those three days. With the size of this final battlefield, you would not have been able to walk across the field without stepping over those who were killed and injured. While this was the decisive battle that led to the Union victory, the human cost was overwhelming. The reality of what we saw left me numb and a little bit shaken. It's not something I will ever forget.

Our visit to Hershey's Chocolate World the next day was a complete change of mood and made for a day of fun. In addition to the huge visitor center, we toured the town of Hershey by bus. When Milton Hershey founded the company in 1903, he also began creating a "model" town which would include housing for the workers. This also included some small mansions for the executives. But the highlight, of course, was the chocolate factory.

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Rohna Classified: It's Time to Tell the Truth -- Screening Event

By: Deborah Sanchez
TRSMA Vice President

On the eve of the 80th anniversary of the Rohna sinking, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, the families and friends of those aboard the Rohna gathered together for the first screening of the long awaited documentary, Rohna Classified: It's Time to Tell the Truth. This screening was the culmination of countless hours of research and years (including through the pandemic) of hard work by the documentary filmmaker Jack Ballo and a dedicated staff, whose focus and goal was to "get the word out"; one of the cornerstones of this organization.

Although Rohna Classified is its own entity, TRSMA worked hand-in-hand to create the event that took place the weekend of the screening. Jack's vision was to have the film shown on the weekend of the 80th anniversary along with a ceremony for the many NOK families who would be attending.

The film was shown at the New Brunswick Performing Arts Center on Saturday, November 25, 2023 to a packed house. A Q&A session was held following the film with a reception afterward. Many of those who came for the film stayed overnight, attending the commemoration ceremony in Monument Square Park the following day. This ceremony, held November 26, 2023, marked the 80th anniversary of the Rohna's sinking and paid tribute to the casualties, their families and all who were aboard the Rohna that fateful day.

There are photos of the weekend's events on our website at: www.rohnasurvivors.org

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2023 Reunion Wrap-Up (continued)

And all of us had a chance to make our own chocolate bars. After suiting up in full length aprons and matching headgear, we chose the kind of chocolate and other ingredients for our personal chocolate bar, and then follow that bar down the line until it is wrapped, boxed, and labeled with our name! Hershey was not stingy, and we all had large sized, thick chocolate bars to take with us.

That night we had our Girls (and Boys) night out as usual at a restaurant named Gilligan's. It was the largest group I can remember for one of these nights with 24 attending. They had a separate room for us, and with the great wait staff, this became another "event"!

Our Saturday night banquet was another mood change for us. The banquet opening is always formal and dignified which included Cynthi Stefenoni and Amelia Abney singing the national anthem and the presentation of the Table of Remembrance. Jack Ballo was the keynote speaker with a presentation on the making of the Rohna Classified Documentary. That was the most exciting topic of interest for our group this week as we awaited the premiere of the documentary in November.

We departed after a wonderful Sunday breakfast as usual and an opportunity to say our goodbyes.

In 2024, we will return to Columbus, GA, for a re-dedication of the Rohna memorial plaque at Fort Mitchell National Cemetery, just over the Georgia border in Alabama.

New Orleans WWII Museum News

By: Janice Pumelia
TRSMA Secretary

We've finally been recognized by the WWII Museum in New Orleans! Our President, Jason Markiewitz, wrote an article about the Rohna that is now part of their website articles.

You can go to their website: www.nationalww2museum.org to read it. Once on their Home Page click on 'The War'. Scroll down to 'All Articles' and click again. From there, go to the second page scrolling until you see "The Sinking of the HMT Rohna". The article was posted on November 17, 2023 to coincide with the 80th anniversary of the sinking.

Continuing the Connection...

It's important that we recognize when a survivor, their widow or a NOK is deceased. Even if we are notified long after the event. The newsletter is the vehicle the association uses to keep members informed and is the only place where we post the information of a member's passing. Even when we convert to an online format for the newsletter, this information will be included in the newsletter.
So, if you have information regarding a survivor or other member's passing, please contact us with their name and date of passing (if available) using one of the following:

Email: debsan1951@gmail.com
Phone: (408) 265-3951 (Home) (408) 656-2246 (Cell)
US Mail: Deborah Sanchez - 4236 Hendrix Way
San Jose, CA - 95124

Another Piece of the Rohna Puzzle...

By: Amelia Abney

A year ago today, sitting at my desk and finishing up my Latin homework, I could never have imagined that in a year I would publish my first article, make three fast friends, and travel halfway across the country to honor the lost men of a ship I didn't even know existed.

In November 2022, at the annual reunion for my great-grandfather's division in World War II, I met a woman who had recently completed her master's degree in World War II studies. Her name was Laura Bailey, and soon she invited me to contribute to the website which housed the capstone projects for the program, since I wasn't exactly eligible to earn the degree. She asked me if I would be interested in collaborating with her on an article she had planned before I dove into writing about the 90th Division on my own. I agreed, and asked her what monument she wanted to write about. That was the day I learned the story of the HMT Rohna.

I was hooked, and soon Laura set up a meeting for us with two other people: Dr. Jack Chisum, who has spearheaded the effort within Stories Behind The Stars to write all the stories of the Rohna's casualties, and Janice Pumelia, whose many virtues and accomplishments any reader of this newsletter is well familiar with. I was able to interview Janice, then promptly, and accidentally, wrote the article myself. Laura graciously declined my invitation to rewrite half of the article herself, which would have been more aligned with our original plan, and published it on the Global Monuments website.

From there, the four of us have remained in close contact, with Janice keeping us informed on TRSMA happenings, Jack keeping us updated on the STBS Rohna project, and all four of us working to gain recognition for the Rohna from the National WWII Museum.

In June, I was fortunate enough to travel from Texas to Pennsylvania for the 2023 TRSMA reunion, and meet Janice in person for the first time.

I count myself deeply blessed to have had the opportunity to be involved with such an incredible, tenacious group of people, and I wait with excitement to see what great strides forward we are able to take next for the remembrance of the HMT Rohna and her men.

In Memoriam

John Cooper, Jr. USS Pioneer d. 3 Dec 2012

Charles Osgood Passed Away January 23, 2024
Mr. Osgood was the first newsman of note who spoke to the nation about the Rohna tragedy in his 1993 national broadcast, "The Osgood File". He closed his program with what became our tagline, "It's not that we forgot. It's that we never knew."

THE ROHNA SURVIVOR'S MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION
2024 REUNION

June 12-June16, 2024 ~ Columbus, Georgia

The reunion will be held at Hilton Garden Inn Columbus

1500 Bradley Lake Blvd, Columbus, GA 31904
(706) 660-1000

Room rate is: $173.48 per night including taxes & fees, free breakfast (2 per room), free WIFI and free parking.

MAKE YOUR HOTEL ROOM RESERVATION BY May 12, 2024

Please tell the reservation agent at the time of your booking if you require an ADA room.
The hotel does not have an airport shuttle. Your best options are Taxi or Uber.

Registration is $199.00 for adults; $146.00 for Children ages 4-10
The registration fee includes the following:

- Welcome Package with Name Button, Itinerary, List of Attendees and Local Information
- Wednesday Welcome Dinner Buffet
- Thursday Programs
- Friday Tour ~ Memorial Plaque Rededication Ceremony, Lunch and National Infantry Museum Tour
- Saturday Morning Membership Meeting
- Saturday Night Banquet Dinner & Program
- Sunday Farewell Breakfast Buffet
- Hospitality Room Stocked with Snacks, Beverages & Cocktails all 4 Days

Registration Fees for all Survivors and Convoy Members are paid by the Association.
Additional funds are also available to Survivors and Convoy Members for this reunion.
Contact Deborah at (408) 265-3951 for more information.

All Memorabilia is welcome! We'll display your loved ones WWII memories.

To make your room reservations call the Hilton Garden Inn Columbus Hotel at (706) 660-1000
Our group reservation code is: Rohna Survivors Memorial Association
Be sure to mention this at the time of your booking.

IF YOU STAY EXTRA NIGHTS, THE ROOM RATE IS AVAILABLE 3 DAYS PRE AND POST.BASED ON AVAILABILITY

If you have any problems making your reservation, **CALL THE REUNION BRAT** at (360) 663-2521. Give us your reservation confirmation number and we will make sure you get the correct room and rate.

PLEASE JOIN US IN SHARING OLD MEMORIES, MAKING NEW ONES and REMEMBERING THE MEN OF THE ROHNA!

For more information or any questions, contact
The Reunion Brat ~ Phone (360)-663-2521 ~ EMAIL: thereunionbrat@hotmail.com
Deborah Sanchez ~ Phone: (408) 265-3951 ~ EMAIL: debsan1951@gmail.com ~

REGISTRATION FORMS AND PAYMENT NEED TO BE RECEIVED BY May 12, 2024

THE ROHNA SURVIVORS MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION
2024 REUNION REGISTRATION
June 12 - June 16, 2024 ~ Columbus, Georgia

MY NAME IS:_____

Please circle one of the following. I am a: SURVIVOR CONVOY MEMBER Relative/Friend

If you are a CONVOY MEMBER (not Rohna) or Convoy Member's relative, PLEASE FILL IN THE CONVOY SHIP'S NAME: _____

If you are a Relative/NOK/Friend of a Survivor, Non-Survivor or Convoy Member, please give their name and relationship to you below. Also indicate if they are a: SURVIVOR NON-SURVIVOR CONVOY MEMBER

_____Relationship to you_____

The above named person is: LIVING DECEASED (Please circle one)

YOUR ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

GUEST NAME(S) (Please indicate if your guest is related to a Survivor, Non-Survivor, or Convoy Member and how. Use back of form if necessary.) _____

_____

BANQUET MEAL SELECTION(s): BEEF _____ CHICKEN _____ SALMON _____ CHILD _____

(Please indicate number of each meal for your party, i.e.; BEEF 2 , CHICKEN 3 , etc.)

PLEASE LIST ANY SPECIAL "FOOD NEEDS": _____

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, NOTIFY:_____Phone:_____

IS THIS YOUR FIRST REUNION? YES _____ NO _____

BASIC REGISTRATION FEE: ***Number of ADULTS Attending _____ x $199 = $ _____***

Number of CHILDREN (age 4-10) Attending _____ x $146 = $_____

~~~ POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL FEES ~~~

Cost for those attending ONLY the Saturday Night Banquet Dinner*:*

Number of ADULTS Attending Banquet Only _____ x $61 = $ _____

Number of CHILDREN (age 4-10) Attending Banquet Only _____ x $28 = $ _____

Total $_____

PAYMENT IS DUE NO LATER THAN May 12, 2024

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO: **The Reunion BRAT**

MAIL TO: **The Reunion Brat ~ 16817 Mountainside Drive East Greenwater, WA 98022**

CONFIRMATION OF REGISTRATION AND ITINERARY WILL BE SENT OUT VIA MAIL BY MAY 16, 2024.

CANCELLATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY May 29, 2024, IN ORDER TO BE REFUNDED. ANY CANCELLATION RECEIVED AFTER THIS DATE IS NON-REFUNDABLE.

Research Archives

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

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

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

Air Force Historical Research Agency --- www.afhra.org

US Army Air Forces Personnel Records (Casualties) Records of USAAF lives lost in WWII --- www.usaafdata.com

USAAF General Information --- www.usaaf.com

Entries from the Guest Book

If you have any information regarding any of the following website Guest Book entries (rohnasurvivors.org), please let us know by contacting Janice Pumelia at: jetpumelia@gmail.com or by US Mail at: Janice Pumelia, 56 Garland Court, Brooklyn, NY 11229

Jessica Batten from Fairmont, WV wrote on June 1, 2023 at 1:54 pm
Hi! I discovered this website while doing research about my maternal grandpa's brother, Pvt. (Isaac) Paul Dawson. I didn't know he existed until around 2015, and I wish I had found this site then so that I could have had a better chance of finding a SC survivor to ask about him. All of my first cousins agree, our grandpa only told them that he had a brother who died in the war. As he died in 1999, we're not entirely sure he knew of his brother's fate. Any information anyone has about Paul would be greatly appreciated. His siblings have since passed away, as have many of his nieces and nephews, but a few still remain. Thank you for maintaining this site and for all the information!

Unfortunately, this newsletter doesn't have enough available space to print more guest book entries. We encourage you to visit the website if you are able, and read some of the amazing stories that people have shared with us. We hope to have another newsletter out before the year's end and will include more guest book entries at that time.

Online Only Newsletter... being delayed.

We're delaying changing the newsletter to an online only format. Due to the many folks who have written us saying that they do not have a computer and as such, are not online and will miss receiving the newsletter once we convert to that format, we have decided to delay the conversion at this time.

We do, however, wish to minimize our paper mailings, so we need your help. ***If you would like to continue receiving* a printed *newsletter, please fill out the form below and mail it back to us at your earliest opportunity.*** This will help us to create a new mailing list with names and addresses of only those who wish to receive a physical copy of the newsletter.

However, if you are able to receive the newsletter electronically, we would appreciate it if you would go our website at: www.rohnasurvivors.org and use the link provided to register for our online newsletter.

Thanks for your help. The Newsletter

For a hard copy of the newsletter please fill out the form below and mail to:
Deborah Sanchez - 4236 Hendrix Way - San Jose, CA - 95124

(Cut along the dotted line)

I would like to continue receiving the TRSMA Newsletter by mail.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ **STATE:** _____ **ZIP CODE:** _____

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

HONORING A LEGACY

TRSMA Re-dedication Reunion Information and Registration Inside!