

David Hogan Frohn

Born: July 30, 1921
Hometown: Los Angeles, CA
Class: 1943
Service: Merchant Marine
Position / Rank: Deck Cadet
Date / Place of death: November 7, 1942 / Champerico, Guatemala
Date / Place of burial: November 9, 1942 / Champerico, Guatemala (initial);
June 8, 1943 / Holy Cross Cemetery, Los Angeles, CA (final)
Age: 21



David H. Frohn signed on as Deck Cadet aboard the SS Francis Drake on September 3, 1942 at Los Angeles, CA. This was his first ship after completing the curriculum at the San Mateo, CA Basic School. He joined Cadet-Midshipman Victor Hugo, the Engine Cadet for the voyage to South and Central America.

On November 7, 1942 the Francis Drake was anchored about a mile off of Champerico, Guatemala. As was customary in that port, transportation to and from ships anchored offshore was provided by a harbor launch, towing a small lighter. At 1900 hours on November 7, 1942, David Frohn and seven other crew members, including the ship's Second Mate, Mr. Carey, and Armed Guard Commander, Lt. Brady, boarded the lighter for the short trip ashore. Unfortunately, the short trip ended in tragedy.

According to the report made by the ship's master to the American Counsel in Guatemala City, at about 1915, as the launch and its lighter made its turn to come alongside the pier, a swell capsized the launch. The Second Mate and Lt. Brady realized that the lighter would likely collide with the capsized launch. They shouted to the rest of the men to jump in the water and swim for the beach. However, only the two officers jumped into the water. They successfully made their way to the beach.

When the lighter collided with the capsized launch the radio operator, a steward and possibly David Frohn were thrown into the water. Due to the darkness and their efforts to keep the lighter from sinking, the men aboard the lighter lost track of the men in the water. Only after everyone else had made it ashore did anyone realize that Cadet-Midshipman Frohn was missing. A search for him was organized immediately and

continued for several hours after the accident without success. David Frohn's body was recovered until the following day, November 8, when it washed up on the beach about a mile from the accident.

Burial services for Cadet-Midshipman David Frohn began at November 9 at 1400 when pall bearers, four of the ship's officers and crew and four of the ship's Armed Guard Sailors bore the flag draped casket and body to Champerico's Catholic Chapel where a Requiem High Mass was celebrated by Father August F. Herrera. From the chapel, the body was taken to the local Catholic cemetery where David Frohn was buried with his Rosary and prayer book.

David Frohn's belongings and wages were turned over to the U.S. Shipping Commissioner in Los Angeles when the ship arrived there a few weeks later. Although Guatemalan authorities normally required the deceased's body to remain in a Guatemalan cemetery for at least four years, David Frohn's remains were exhumed in April 1943. His remains were brought back to his parents in Los Angeles for a final service at St. Gregory's Catholic Church and burial at Holy Cross Cemetery on June 8, 1943.

Cadet-Midshipman David H. Frohn was posthumously awarded the Pacific War Zone Bar, the Victory Medal, and the Presidential Testimonial Letter.

David H. Frohn was the only son of David Watson Frohn and Helen Frohn. The elder Frohn, who went by his middle name, was a linotypist for the Los Angeles Times. David was born in Clarksdale, MS.