

# “ROSIE” MARIAN SOUSA

*Richmond Kaiser Shipyard #3 Draftsman 1943-1944*



Marian McKey Sousa was born January 6<sup>th</sup>, 1926 in Eugene Oregon – the daughter of Sgt. L.H. and Mildred McKey. In 1940, her father, a career serviceman who was a WW I Vet, was transferred to the Astoria, Oregon area at Fort Stevens so the family moved to the coastal town of Seaside. Marian was 15 that December 8<sup>th</sup> when she sat in her High School’s auditorium to hear the speech by President Roosevelt, declaring that the U.S. was now at war with Japan because of the devastating attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

In the summer of 1942, Marian rode a Greyhound bus from Oregon to Richmond, CA., to be the babysitter for her young nephew, so her sister, Phyllis, could join her husband as a welder, building deckhouses in Pre-Fab in

Shipyard #2. Marian met her future husband - a Coastguardsman- that summer and didn’t return to Oregon as planned. Instead, she enrolled in Richmond High School for her senior year. They married in the Spring of 1943 and upon graduation she was recommended for a special Engineering Drawing course at U.C. Berkeley by her high school art teacher, learning how to read and draw blueprints.



Six weeks later, the day she graduated was the day she was hired to work as a Draftsman – making revisions to the blueprints of the troop transports built at Kaiser Shipyard #3 in the Engineering Department. She was located in a room with other young people while the Architects, the senior men draftsmen, were in another room, doing the intricate, technical work. Her job was to take the Architect’s drawings, erase areas and draw in any revisions. She recalls fondly that the Architects never looked down on them and they treated them with respect.



A second sister, Marge, arrived and became a welder in Shipyard #2 also. After their father was transferred to Camp Stoneman in Pittsburg, CA., their mother Mildred placed the youngest McKey daughter in Kaiser’s childcare and joined the growing workforce of women as a painter. Four McKey women were involved in the war effort now!

Phyllis & her husband had a house in San Pablo and though it was small it housed both sides of their families. The beds were in a constant rotation by the family members working in the day, swing or graveyard shifts.

Marian worked a year before impending motherhood ended her time as a home front worker. And those same Architects gave her a surprise baby shower! She volunteers now as a “Rosie” at the Rosie the Riveter WW II Home Front N.P. where she can still see the area where she worked so many years ago.

