

“ROSIE” MARIAN WYNN

Richmond Kaiser Shipyard #3 Pipe Welder 1944-1945



Marian Parsons Wynn was born on August 19, 1926, the third of 11 children. Her father answered the call for war work in 1942 and came out to Richmond, CA to become an Electrician Leadman in Kaiser Shipyard #3. Marian was anxious to follow but promised her father she would finish high school first before taking a 3 day Greyhound bus trip out to California.



A wartime memory that sticks out in Marian’s mind was attending a local fair back home and being paired up to ride the Ferris wheel with a young man that she did not know. When

they got to the top of the rotation she recalls that a blackout happened; the wheel stopped and from afar she could see all the lights go out in the distance, almost in a row, till it came closer to the fair. She said sitting up there in the dark and the quiet was remarkable, especially because you really did not know if this was a practice blackout or the real thing and here she was stuck up high atop a Ferris wheel! It turned out to be practice as the lights went back on in reverse order.



Marian hired on at Shipyard #3 as a Pipe Welder in an area called West Storage on Canal Blvd. She worked in a large building with one side open to the elements. It was here where pipes were brought to her crew and they would weld the pipes together. The building is no longer there but you can still see where it was set in to the side of the hill. She would make a \$1.00 an hour, with time & a half on Saturday and double time on



Sunday. She had to wear leathers, a scarf to cover her hair and neck (to avoid the burning sparks) and welding helmet. These two pictures show her crew in a group photo as well as a close up of Marian in her outfit. Many shipyard workers gained experience while on the job and there were many accidents that resulted in injuries or even death. Thankfully, the most that happened to Marian was getting a piece of hot slag that went up into her eye, resulting in a trip to the Kaiser hospital. It hurt terribly at first but soon she was able to return to work and had no ill-effects from it.



Marian’s brother Don served in the Army Signal Corps. He was killed in France in 1944 and is buried in Normandy.

Housing was extremely hard to come by but her father had been fortunate enough to live in a trailer in one of the many trailer parks that had popped up in the city of Richmond. The managers of his trailer park had a handsome young son in the Navy stationed at Treasure Island that was



soon to become Marian’s husband. They were married for 60 years until his passing in 2005. (The picture of the two of them shows the trailer that she and her father lived in).

