

LOCAL NEWS • News

Volunteers sought for historic WWII ship restoration project in East Bay

As the last surviving ship built in the Richmond Kaiser Shipyards during World War II, the Red Oak Victory acts as a “floating museum”



The SS Red Oak Victory ship docks at Kaiser Shipyard No. 3 in Richmond on July 19, 2014.

By **SIERRA LOPEZ** | slopez@bayareanewsgroup.com | Bay Area News Group

PUBLISHED: August 14, 2025 at 4:30 AM PDT

RICHMOND — A call has gone out for welders, construction workers, donors and other volunteers to help support the revitalization of the Red Oak Victory, a World War II ship docked off the Richmond shoreline that is in need of major repair.

Preservation work on the Red Oak Victory will take place Aug. 18-29 as part of the Victory Ship Revival initiative. The two-week restoration project aims to repair and renovate the deck, masts, tubs and smokestacks.

The effort is part of a year-long commemoration marking the 25th anniversary of Rosie the Riveter World War II Home Front National Park. The museum, located in the Richmond Marina next door to the historic Craneway Pavilion, honors the wartime contributions of women and the historic societal changes that followed.

Supporting the initiative is a partnership among the SS Red Oak Victory, a branch of the Richmond Museum Association; the Rosie the Riveter Trust; the Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front National Historical Park; International Boilermakers Local 549; and the city of Richmond.

“This project captures the heart of the National Park. It represents dedication to sharing the story of the home front, collaboration, and the power and ability of women,” said Sarah Pritchard, executive director of Rosie the Riveter Trust, in a press release. “By investing in Red Oak Victory’s upkeep, we honor the legacy of the women and men who built her and help secure her place as a landmark of American resilience and ingenuity.”

The Red Oak Victory was among hundreds of ships built in Richmond’s Kaiser Shipyards during World War II. The cargo vessel was assembled and launched in November 1944, and traveled throughout the Pacific Ocean carrying ammunition before being decommissioned from the U.S. Navy in 1946 following the war’s end, according to the Red Oak Victory website.



After completing a number of other voyages in support of the Korean and Vietnam wars and providing humanitarian assistance to India and Pakistan throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the ship was placed in permanent storage for nearly three decades at a military anchorage site in Suisun Bay.

By 1998, the Red Oak Victory was returned to Richmond where it has been overseen by the Richmond Museum Association ever since. About \$2 million was spent between 2002 and 2011 to overhaul the ship but “weather and time has taken a toll on the deck and superstructure,” according to the Richmond Museum Association.

As the last surviving ship built in the Richmond Kaiser Shipyards during World War II, the Red Oak Victory acts as a “floating museum,” the association said.

“The SS Red Oak Victory represents the spirit of Richmond. It tells the story of everyday people who stepped up during a time of national need and built something that still stands today,” Mayor Eduardo Martinez said in a statement. “Restoring this ship means protecting that story and making sure future generations can learn from it. We are proud to support this effort and thank all those involved for keeping history alive.”

People without specialized skills can also volunteer in other construction and non-construction related roles. Donations can also be made to help the Victory Ship Revival initiative reach its funding goal of \$125,000 to buy materials for the project.

“These Modern Day Rosies aren’t just restoring a ship — they’re preserving a legacy,” said Fred Klink, director of marketing for USS Red Oak Victory, in a statement. “This vessel tells a powerful story of what American industry and community can achieve. With the help of today’s Rosies, we’re ensuring that story continues for future generations.”

Visit redoakvictory.us/victory-ship-revival/ to learn more about the project and how to volunteer or donate to the initiative.

News Nearby: A hyperlocal newsletter with stories reported around a location that matters to you.

Email address

SIGN UP

By signing up, you agree to our [Terms of Use](#), [Privacy Policy](#), and to receive emails from The Mercury News.

 The Trust Project 

Around the Web

REVCONTENT



Advertisement for Earthquake Brace+Bolt. The background is orange. At the top, it says "GET UP TO" in small white letters, followed by "\$3,000" in large blue letters. Below that, it says "TOWARD A SEISMIC RETROFIT" in small white letters. At the bottom, there is a white box with "EARTHQUAKE BRACE+BOLT" in red and blue letters, and "SEE IF YOU QUALIFY" in white letters on a blue background.