

Proclamation

City of Palm Springs

CALIFORNIA

WHEREAS, Doris Howard, a 101-year-old veteran of the U.S. Army Nurse Corps - who attained the rank of First Lieutenant - came to Palm Springs in June 1942 during World War II to help convert the El Mirador Hotel into a 1,600-bed general hospital. She was the seventh RN to arrive for duty. Named after the 21st Surgeon General of the U.S. Army, Torney General Hospital supported troops returning home from overseas and the Desert Training Center, where Gen. George S. Patton was preparing his soldiers for battle in the North African desert; and

WHEREAS, Doris first worked to get beds, sheets, blankets, medications, and instruments stocked throughout the hospital, and later took on duties in the Emergency Room during the night shift. A year after arriving in Palm Springs, the hospital was fully staffed and the grounds had grown exponentially, and Doris was ready to do more for her country, and requested overseas duty; and

WHEREAS, Doris was assigned to the USS Comfort (AH-6), a newly commissioned hospital ship operating with a U.S. Navy crew and U.S. Army medical personnel. Setting sail from San Pedro on June 21, 1944, the ship crossed the Pacific Ocean bound for Hollandia, New Guinea, where a major Army hospital had been established to handle casualties from the Philippine operations. The hospital ship evacuated the wounded from Leyte in the Philippine Islands, Subic Bay and Lingayen Gulf in Luzon and Okinawa; and

WHEREAS, as Allied forces made their final push toward Japan in April 1945, the USS Comfort joined the invasion force at the Battle of Okinawa, where Doris nursed an endless stream of wounded patients, some who required limbs to be amputated and shrapnel to be removed; and

WHEREAS, The USS Comfort returned to Okinawa from Guam on April 23, 1945 after evacuating many wounded in the Battle of Okinawa, and on the night of April 28, 1945, inside the post-surgical ward, Doris began her 12-hour night shift treating some of the 517 patients aboard the ship. Enemy planes could be heard roaring overhead and suddenly, the vessel shook violently when a Japanese kamikaze struck the ship, plunging through its decks and into its surgery unit, instantly killing six nurses, four surgeons and seven patients; and

WHEREAS, The gasoline in the kamikaze plane caught fire, ignited a massive explosion, and threw Doris, who weighed 90 pounds, off her feet and into the bulkhead, where she cracked her head and soon discovered she lost her hearing, but in spite of her injuries, refused to abandon her post or the servicemen in her care, even with orders to abandon ship - which were later rescinded; and

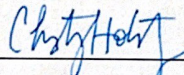
WHEREAS, with their surgical, X-ray and laboratory facilities destroyed, Doris, as part of the medical staff, converted the mess hall into an operating room and the barber shop into a first aid station. Doris' hearing gradually returned, and she continued her regular shifts, as the now-wounded ship sailed to Guam and received temporary repairs before continuing to California; and

WHEREAS, Doris was awarded the Women's Army Corps Service Medal, American Campaign Medal - WWII, Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal - WWII with 16 Battle Stars, World War II Victory Medal, World War II Army of Occupation Medal and the Philippine Liberation Medal - World War II; and

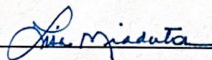
WHEREAS, It's been 78 years since Doris left Palm Springs after serving as a nurse at Torney General Hospital - now Desert Regional Medical Center - and her family thought it fitting for her to return to Palm Springs to revisit the site where she served so many decades ago.

NOW, THEREFORE, We, the City Council of the City of Palm Springs, California, by the power vested in us, do hereby pay special tribute to:

Doris Howard



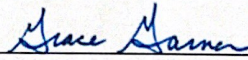
Christy Holstege, Mayor



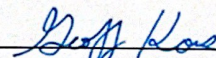
Lisa Middleton, Mayor Pro Tem



Dennis Woods, Council Member



Grace Garner, Council Member



Geoff Kors, Council Member