- [Joan] Good evening. I am so pleased to be here, and I have the greatest admiration for the Nursing profession. One of my dearest friends has been a nurse for many, many years. And I hope that by the end of this presentation, that you'll have even a greater respect for your profession. For more than two decades, the National Women's History Museum has researched, collected and exhibited the contributions of women to the social, cultural, economic and political life of our nation in the context of our collective history. We use innovative and engaging online exhibits, educational programs, and outreach efforts to communicate the breadth of women's experiences and accomplishments to the widest possible audience, which includes teachers, students, academics, scholars, those interested in history, and those who want to see women's contributions included in our nation's narrative. Sharing this knowledge inspires and encourages women and men, people of all classes, races, and cultures to move into the future with respect, equal confidence, greater partnership, and opportunity. Our mission is to educate, inspire, empower, and shape the future by integrating women's distinctive history into the culture and history of the United States. The image that you see here is of the three founders of the Woman Suffrage Movement that are depicted in the statue that Maryanne mentioned, that was one of the first efforts of the museum. These women worked their entire lives to gain women the vote, and yet they did not live to see it. Each year we honor women who have made a significant difference in their fields and serve as inspiration to future generations. [music] Women have woven the very fabric of our nation, whether through the essential role of motherhood or in the fields of education, healthcare, business, technology, actually you name it, and women have been there. It is beyond time for the women of our nation to be recognized. [music] - [Hillary] I look forward to the day when both my granddaughter and grandson can visit a National Women's History Museum, and come away feeling a little braver, walking a little taller, knowing they stand on the shoulders of generations of history makers and trailblazers. [music] - [Maya] This museum will be the first of its scope on Women's History in any Nation's Capital in the world. [music] - [Marsha] The museum would be covered entirely by private donation. - [Carolyn] Women stand on historical quicksand. With each step we take forward, the steps behind us disappear. Women have to recreate the wheel with every generation. - [Laura] I think it's really important to have a museum that focuses on women, because half of the population is left out in many, many cases in Women's History. In the history of the United States, the role that women play is very often left out. [music] - You can tell we have a Los Angeles Council, they love glitz. We have
honored some amazing women over the years, but there are many more who deserve a place where people can hear their stories and know that women who make up 51% of our population, played a significant role in building our country. So you might ask, where are the women? History as we know it is ripe with stories about our forefathers and the many great men who built and shaped this nation. Without question, their stories deserve to be told, they were in fact great men to whom we owe much. Women have always made up at least half of our country's population, but upon review of the mainstream American History, it appears that half of our population is largely absent. On average, only 14% of the figures in today's U.S. History textbooks are women. Only 9 of the 100 statues in the U.S. Capitol's Statuary Hall are women, and the stories of those brave women are largely unknown. Of the 152 national monuments in the National Park Service, only 3 are dedicated to historic female figures. One is Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad National Historic Park. Secondly, there's the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument on Capitol Hill. And the third is the Rose Atoll Marine National Monument in American Samoa. None of the 30 national memorials managed under the National Park Service specifically honor women. Although there is a monument named after the four-wing saltbrush shrub. You got to find humor with this. It even took until 1997 to build a war memorial for women in our nation's capital, but women have played a role in war since the Revolutionary War. From Deborah Sampson who disguised herself as a man, so she too could fight, and who was wounded, but to avoid being discovered, removed the shrapnel from her leg herself. Two, the Civil War nurses, to the nurses who were prisoners of war during World War II. And of course, all the women who serve in a variety of non-combat and now combat positions to keep our country safe, and protect the freedoms all of us enjoy today. Before World War II, the prevailing view of a woman's role was that of wife and mother. Many occupations were reserved for men, and some states barred married women from holding jobs. The need to mobilize the entire population behind the war effort was so compelling that political and social leaders agreed that both women and men would have to change their perceptions of gender roles, at least as long as there was a national emergency. The armed forces launched crash recruiting drives, including rallies, national advertising campaigns, community outreach programs, and appeals to college students. The Army Nurse Corps, which was established in 1901, and the Navy Nurse Corps established in 1908 sprang into action to support the combat mission. Members of the Nurse Corps served in the U.S. and throughout the world wherever American troops were. A serious shortage of military and civilian nurses throughout the war prompted continuing recruitment efforts. - [Narrator 1] The preparation for the moment that would bring the Army Nurse to your side began months before back home in the United States. After three years of professional schooling, the nurses were given four weeks of basic training. In those early days, perhaps the nurse wondered why she had to sit through seemingly endless classes and submit to rigid discipline. Often while muscles ached and groaned, she may have wondered why it was necessary to take those long hikes or grope her way through a gassed area, yet there were demands that would require of her perfect physical health and stamina, the strength to stand up under the rigors of combat nursing. Four weeks of basic training finished, the Army Nurse was ready to serve wherever the Army needed her most. She might have found herself stationed in a general hospital right here at home, or perhaps assigned to a mobile hospital unit overseas. After she arrived, she may have helped to build the very hospital in which she worked. For the field hospital or the evacuation hospital, like a circus, had to be able to pack up and move on at a moment's notice. Its primary function was to offer immediate surgical treatment to the wounded, and that meant following ever changing battle lines. Everyone pitched in when a mobile hospital went up, enlisted men, doctors, and nurses. Just one small instance where basic training paid off, those muscles toughened and hardened during the four weeks of basic back home, were equal to the job. First and foremost, and at all times she was a nurse, offering professional and skilled care to the sick and wounded. A nurse first, a woman
second, and an officer third might well serve as the slogan for every member of the Nurses Corps. Complete recovery of the patient in war or peace depends not only upon the use of drugs, but on the skill with which they are administered, and the care that follows. The nurse must be capable of recognizing at once any symptoms in her patients which demand immediate treatment, because if serious consequences are to be avoided, medical treatment must be on hand the moment any symptoms appear. Professionally skilled and capable, in her there is the tenderness of all women, of mother, and sister, and friend. Her voice and touch lend encouragement, instill hope. It’s the surgeon who saves a man’s life. It’s the nurse whose tender care helps him to live. And yet praise is offered, long hours of tireless service were remembered and recognized. The Army Nurse, decorated for bravery and valor above and beyond the call of duty. - The Nurse Corps sprang into action as nurses stationed at Pearl Harbor rushed to treat the wounded on shore and aboard hospital ships, one such nurse was Lt. Annie G. Fox. Lt. Fox was the station hospital’s Head Nurse at Hickam Field. The 30-bed hospital opened in November, 1941 with only six nurses. Lt. Monica E. Conter described the unit as, ”The happiest group of nurses anywhere under the grandest Chief nurse, Lt. Fox, who enjoys everything as much as we do.” Fox joined the Army Nurse Corps in 1918 at the end of World War I. While no stranger to military service, the surprise attack landed her in combat for the first time. The 47-year-old quickly took control of the situation as bombs rained down on the base. First-hand accounts of the attack by hospital staff described a terrifying and chaotic situation, enemy airplanes flying so low and close that the nurses could see the pilots talking to each other, and that was followed by explosions and masses of black smoke after each dive. Casualties poured into the hospital within minutes of the first bombing raid. Hospital staff leaped into action as the constant noise of torpedoes, bombs, machine guns, and anti-aircraft guns filled the air. As the attack progressed, casualties multiplied while bombs fell around the hospital itself. One bomb left a 30-foot crater only 20 feet from the hospital wing, and another fell just across the street. The smoke and fumes were so severe that the hospital staff, fearing a gas attack, donned gas masks and helmets as they tended the wounded. The casualties suffered from serious shrapnel runes, particularly in the abdomen, chest, face, head, arms, and legs, and the casualties were so numerous that nurses had time only to administer pain medication before triaging them on to Tripler Hospital. As Head Nurse, Lt. Fox rallied the nurses and organized the hospital’s response to the assault. The wives of officers and non-commissioned officers reported to the hospital to help, and Lt. Fox organized civilian volunteers to make hospital dressings by the hundreds, and assist with the patient care. Lt. Fox herself participated in surgery, administering anesthesia, and during the heaviest part of the bombardment and afterwards, she and the other nurses tended to the wounded. On October 26, 1942, in recognition of her efforts, Fox became the first woman in American History to be awarded the Purple Heart. Her citation read in part, "During the attack, Lt. Fox in an exemplary manner performed her duties as Head Nurse at the station hospital. She worked ceaselessly, with coolness and efficiency, and her fine example of calmness, courage, and leadership was of great benefit to the morale of all with whom she came in contact." Though at the time, the Purple Heart award was most commonly awarded to service members who were wounded by enemy forces, it was occasionally awarded for any "singularly, meritorious act of extraordinary fidelity or essential service." The Purple Heart award criteria changed in 1942 to be limited to only those wounded as a result of any enemy action. So on October 6th, 1944, Lt. Fox was awarded the Bronze Star medal in replacement for her Purple Heart, which was rescinded. The report of The Decorations Board cited the same acts of heroism as for the Purple Heart. The Army Nurse Corps had fewer than a thousand nurses on December 7th, 1941, the day of the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. Eighty two of them were stationed in Hawaii, serving at three Army medical facilities that infamous day. But by the end of World War II, more than 59,000 American nurses had served in the Army Nurse Corps. Nurses were closer to the front lines than in any prior conflict, providing invaluable service at great personal risk. ©2017 National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Inc. All rights reserved.
Nurses received 1,619 medals, citations, and commendations during the war, including 16 medals awarded posthumously to women who died as a result of enemy fire. Lt. Fox and her thousands of fellow nurses exemplified the courage and dedication of all who served. Nurses knew that they might serve overseas in combat zones, and the work was exhausting, and the living conditions were challenging and dangerous. Some of the first prisoners of war were military nurses and civil servants who were stationed in the Philippines, a U.S. territory at the time. They spent three years imprisoned in Santo Tomas Internment Camp. And here’s a piece of their story. ♪ [music] ♪ - [Narrator 2] Early in World War II, after Japan struck at Pearl Harbor and invaded Guam in the Philippines, 5 Navy Nurses on Guam, and 11 Navy and 67 Army Nurses, 3 Army Dieticians, and 1 Army Physical Therapist in the Philippines were captured and interned. These were the first American women prisoners of war. News of Pearl Harbor came as unexpectedly as had the attack. Later that day, December 8th, across the International Date Line, the sounds of Japanese aircraft were heard overhead. The Naval Hospital on Guam was hit, while in the Philippines, Baguio, Camp John Hay, Fort Stotsenburg, Clark Field, Del Carmen Field, Nichols Field, Cavi di, and Corregidor were also struck, and Manila too was bombed. The five Navy nurses on Guam were captured on December 10th, and imprisoned in Japan until the repatriation the following August. Meanwhile, patients and hundreds of new casualties poured into Manila on crowded trains, in ambulances, trucks and buses. From December 8th, until after Christmas, daylight air raids continued without pause, while on Luzon, enemy forces swarmed ashore. In two weeks, the Japanese changed this peaceful world into one of confusion, destruction, and death. The next day, Navy Nurses moved with their patients to Santa Scholastica, just outside of Manila, and were captured a few days later. On Christmas Day, hospital number one went into operation at Lumahai, on the southeast coast of Buhutan. Between then and January 25th, major surgery was performed on more than 1,200 battle casualties. On April 7th, 1942, hospital number one was bombed, patients were killed, and two nurses were injured. Then the word came to evacuate to Corregidor the following day. Boats carrying the Army Nurses crossed the narrow bay to the island fortress, while dodging Japanese aircraft. They arrived to find Corregidor already under siege. The nurses were afraid of the Japanese, yet they faced them in army coveralls wearing no military insignia, only their Red Cross arm bands. The nurses were left alone with their patients, both American and Japanese, while their shrinking stores of food water and medical supplies were cut even more. Then on June 25th, they were moved out of the tunnel, to the topside ruins of Fort Mills Hospital. A week later, the Army Nurses were marched to the docks to be taken by boat, then by truck to Manila, there to eventually join the captured Navy Nurses held since March at Santo Tomas University, now a Japanese internment center. Two weeks after the Santo Tomas liberation, the nurses at Los Banos were rescued and moved by amphibious half-tracks to the safety of the American lines. ♪ [music] ♪ Then they all came home, deeply affected by their experiences. And with a renewed understanding of what freedom is. - [Woman 1] I'm glad that I served in the Navy, and served my country in that manner. - [Woman 2] And it was truly an unusual education, I looked at it as such. It was hard, it was terrible, and many terrible things happened. But I wouldn't trade it for anything. - [Woman 3] I would do it all over again. ♪ [music] ♪ - World War II also brought significant and lasting changes to the American home front. Women supported the war effort at home by growing victory gardens and supporting the rationing effort. These victory gardens boosted morale, expressed patriotism, safeguarded against food shortages on the home front, and eased the burden on the commercial farmers who were working arduously to feed the troops and civilians overseas. By 1944, an estimated 20 million victory gardens produced roughly 8 million tons of food, which was the equivalent of more than 40% of all of the fresh fruits and vegetables consumed in the United States. Women also engaged in traditionally male jobs, and it became socially acceptable for married women to work. Millions of women migrated to cities and moved across the country. And with the end of the war, the expectation...
was that life would go back to normal. Women could be homemakers and revert to traditional female job occupations, but many women stayed in the workplace, although they were often displaced from the better paying manufacturing jobs by returning veterans. Some women moved into the growing corporate offices and commercial establishments, performing administrative functions. By 1950, women made up 29% of the civilian workforce, and that has grown steadily to 1 half of the American workforce today. It's thanks to women like Annie Fox, and all the Rosie the Riveters who paved the way for those of us in this room. It's because of them and the many women who came before them and after them, that we are compelled to tell their stories. That's why every day for the last 20 years, our team has had a singular focus, to ensure that women's contributions to our history and culture are incorporated into our nation's narrative. Women's stories have not been told, not been told completely, and in some cases just forgotten. With your help, we can continue to focus on raising the awareness about the need for a Women's History Museum, and advocating for the legislation needed to make it a reality, one that will be an enduring inspiration for future generations. We have lobbied Congress for a National Women's History Museum to be located on the National Mall. In 2014, we successfully worked with members of Congress to establish a congressional commission. It was the first congressional commission for a museum that was required to be privately funded. Our organization raised the money that was needed for the commission's work. In November 2016, the commission delivered its report to Congress, stating that our country deserves a museum located on the National Mall that is dedicated to the contributions of women to our nation's history. We couldn't agree more. In March, this past March, Representative Carolyn Maloney a Democrat from New York, and Representative Ed Royce a Republican from California, introduced legislation that would establish a National Women's History Museum, and designates two possible sites on the National Mall. And in June, Senator Susan Collins, a Republican from Maine, and Dianne Feinstein a Democrat from California introduced a companion bill in the Senate. When girls and boys learn about accomplished women in history, they become more aware of the possibilities and opportunities in their own lives, and that gender should not be a deciding factor in what we can and cannot do. It's important for men and boys to see accomplished women in history, so they're aware that the women were important in shaping our nation, and that their female classmates and eventual colleagues have value and opinions that are worth hearing. We've been doing this for a long time, but I know that we're making progress. Recently, I received an email from a historian who said that the field of women's history is in much better shape today than it was a decade ago, and that is thanks to the museum's work. We are well on our way to achieving the dream. We want to ensure that gender is not a deciding factor in what future generations can do, and that no one tells any girl that she can't. - [Girl 1] Don't tell me I can't say what I want. - [Girl 2] Don't tell me I can't be an inventor. - [Girl 3] Don't tell me I can't be a soldier. - [Girl 4] Don't tell me I can't be a movie star, I am Anna May Wong. - I am Rosa Parks. I refused to give up my bus seat to a white person. - I am Tabitha Babbitt. I invited the circular saw. - [Girl 5] Don't tell me I can't fly. - [Girl 6] Don't tell me I can't be an explorer. I am Sacajawea. - [Girl 7] Don't tell me I can't be a scientist. I'm Gerty Theresa Cori, I won a Nobel Prize in Physiology. - I am Deborah Sampson. - [Girl 9] Don't tell me I can't open my own business. I'm Estee Lauder, I started a global empire that now has $7 billion in annual sales. - I disguised myself as a man to fight in the Revolutionary War. - [Girl 10] Don't tell me I can't be a spy. - [Girl 11] Don't tell me I can't be a journalist. - I am Mary Elizabeth Bowser. - I'm Amelia Earhart. - I stared in over 40 films from the silent era to the talkies. - [Girl 12] I am Jovita Idár. I was an editor, a publisher, and I even founded my own newspaper. - During the Civil War I was a maid for the Confederate President. He thought I was illiterate, but I actually had a photographic memory. - I was shot twice in my first battle, and removed the bullets myself. - [Alfre] These are just some of the women who have changed history, don't let them be forgotten. - Become - a member - and support - the National - Women's - History - Museum. - Follow
us on Twitter and Facebook. - I hope that you will learn more about how to get involved with our efforts from the museum and learn more about the amazing women who came before us. You can follow us on social media, and go to our website womenshistory.org. So I would be happy to take your questions. - [Woman 4] Thank you for this. As a grandmother, I'm really excited to share the museum with my granddaughter. What do you need us to do? What can we do at this point in the journey? - You can contact your member of Congress and urge them to support legislation. In the House of Representatives, the bill number is H.R19, after the 19th Amendment, giving women the vote, so that one's a nice, easy one to remember. And then in the Senate, it's S.1498. But, in urging the members of Congress, wherever you live urge your Representative and your Senators to support this effort. The more they hear about it, obviously the more pressure that there will be on them to take some action. - Thank you. - Yes, thank you. - Anyone else? Well, thank you so much. Again, I have the deepest admiration for the nursing profession, and I hope you feel stronger and more powerful just by seeing what the women have done who have come before you. Thank you. ♪ [music] ♪