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BRAVE, BOLD AND FEARLESS FIRSTS:

The Wartime Experiences of Two Women at Iwo Jima and Okinawa



**Navy War Correspondent
Barbara Miller Finch**

In October 1944, Finch became the first female war correspondent to receive credentials from the U.S. Navy in the war. Her first assignment on October 9, 1944 covered a press conference with Pacific Fleet Commander Admiral Chester W. Nimitz at his headquarters in Honolulu.

To gain access to the battlefield, Finch volunteered as a nurse's aid with the Naval Aid Transport Service (NATS). On March 2, 1945 she became the first American woman and female reporter to land on Iwo Jima during wartime.

On April 7, 1945, as the American Forces fought the Imperial Japanese on the island of Okinawa, Finch became the first female war correspondent to cover the battle.

On May 8, 1945, Finch was granted the rare opportunity to board the submarine Spadefish (SS 4211). Up until this point, the Navy had kept nearly all press away from submarines.



**U.S. Navy Flight Nurse
Ensign Jane "Candy" Kendeigh**

On March 6, 1945, 22 year old Ensign Jane "Candy" Kendeigh became the first female U.S. Navy flight nurse to land in Iwo Jima during wartime.

Between March 6-21, Kendeigh and her fellow flight nurses contributed to the evacuation of 2,293 American wounded from Iwo Jima. The U.S. Navy then sent Kendeigh to participate in War Bond drives. Kendeigh requested leave from the War Bond drive to return to the combat zone and arrived in time to be a part of the first flight into Okinawa.

On April 7, 1945, Kendeigh became the first female U.S. Navy flight nurse to make wounded evacuation trips to Okinawa. Okinawa marked the first time the Navy evacuated more casualties by air than sea.

Neither Kendeigh, nor any of her fellow flight nurses lost a single patient in the air during evacuation.