



+ NAVY NURSE CORPS LEGENDS **+** **ANGELS OF THE AIRFIELDS**



- During World War II, the U.S. Navy established a flight nurse program to provide critical **en-route medical care for wounded personnel** being evacuated from combat zones.
- These nurses flew on missions aboard **R4D and R5D Skytrain aircraft**, transforming these planes into airborne ambulances.
- In 1945, Navy flight nurses made history by serving on active battlefields at **Iwo Jima and Okinawa**.



ORIGINS OF FLIGHT NURSING

- **SEPTEMBER 1942.** The joint-service South Pacific Combat Air Transport Command (SCAT) begins using cargo planes to evacuate wounded servicemen during the Guadalcanal campaign. Navy pharmacists mates are added to these flights in November 1942.
- **MARCH 1943.** SCAT formally establishes a joint medical section comprised of Army and Navy flight surgeons to supervise and select casualties for air evacuation in theater.
- **JUNE 1943.** The Army establishes the Army Air Force School of Air Evacuation at Bowman Field, Kentucky, to offer specialized training for its flight nurses. The Navy begins sending nurses to the school later in the year.
- **NOVEMBER 1944.** Recognizing the need for flight nurses in the Pacific War, the Navy establishes the School of Air Evacuation Casualties at Naval Air Station Alameda, California. There are 24 nurses selected for the first course of instruction.
- **MARCH 1945.** Navy flight nurses land on active battlefield (Iwo Jima).



NAVY MEDICINE *FAST FACTS*



🚢 AIR EVACUATION SCHOOL 🚢

- Applicants to the Navy Air Evacuation School were required to have “good character references” and be “**excellent swimmers.**”
- The 8-week course consisted of lectures / demonstrations on **survival training, air evacuation techniques, flight physiology, first aid and treatment of patients in non-pressurized cabins.**
- The course hallmark was an intensive **18-hour “watermanship” training** organized to simulate conditions of a water landing / crash scenario. Prospective flight nurses were required to **swim underwater, swim one-mile,** and be able to tow patients **440-yards in 10 minutes.**



Did you know?

Navy flight nurses helped evacuate over **11,770** casualties from **Okinawa to Guam.** Each flight, which could accommodate up to 60 patient litters, took about **eight hours.**

🚢 FIRST NURSE ON IWO JIMA 🚢

When the Naval Air Transport Service (NATS) Douglas R4D broke through the clouds of volcanic dust and smoke to land on Iwo Jima on March 6, 1945, it carried more than whole blood and medical supplies for the wounded. On board this inaugural air evacuation flight was a 22-year old nurse named **Jane Kendeigh**, marking the first time in history that a Navy flight nurse appeared on an active Pacific battlefield.



"Our rewards are wan smiles, a slow nod of appreciation, a gesture, a word—accolades greater, more heart-warming than any medal."

~Ensign Jane Kendeigh, 1945