

# Virginians at War

## WWII: Battle of Iwo Jima

### Resource Packet

Contains: Glossary, Timeline, Profile of a Soldier, Images, Discussion Questions, Additional Resources

**Program Description:** Virginians at War: WWII - Iwo Jima addresses the strategic importance of the Japanese-controlled island of Iwo Jima during World War II, and the struggle and sacrifice required to conquer it. World War II Marines and sailors speak about their memories of the days before the battle began, the process of landing on the island, kamikaze pilots, and public understanding of events afterwards including representations in film.

**Copyright:** Virginia War Memorial Foundation, 2005

**Length:** 15:32

**Streaming link:** <https://vimeo.com/367104891>

#### Featured Speakers:

PFC Thomas H. Billingsley, Richmond  
1st LT Charles C. Cooper, Richmond  
LTjg Paul Bernard Heffner, Midlothian  
CPL Earl H. Henley, Manakin Sabot  
1st SGT Herbert B. Newman, Triangle  
CPL Tommy Reekes, Powhatan  
T4 Glen D. Smith, Amelia  
S 3/C Charles R. Thomas Jr., Chester  
S 1/C Donald J. Tyson, Richmond  
LTjg John C. Weissler, Midlothian



# GLOSSARY

## IMPORTANT TERMS

- **B-29:** the Boeing B-29 Superfortress; a heavy bomber plane flown by the U.S. during WWII and the Korean War
- **Banzai attack:** a technique used by the Imperial Japanese forces to swarm a target with waves of human soldiers
- **Kamikaze:** a Japanese plane that crashes into a target deliberately, causing destruction of both the plane and the target
- **Knee mortar:** Type 89 Grenade Discharger; a Japanese grenade launcher used during WWII that could be fired by propping the base of the launcher against a soldier's leg
- **LCVP:** Landing craft, vehicle, personnel; Higgins boat; boat used for amphibious landings during WWII (sea to land)
- **LST:** Landing Ship, Tank; the name for ships used to support amphibious operations by carrying troops, vehicles, and supplies to shore without supporting infrastructure (docks, piers, etc.)
- **Napalm:** a flammable mixture of a gelling agent and a fuel, used in bombs as well as flamethrowers
- **Operation Detachment:** the operational name for the American invasion of Iwo Jima in 1945
- **P-51:** the North American P-51 Mustang; a single-seat fighter plane used by the U.S. during WWII and the Korean War
- **Seppuku:** a form of Japanese ritual suicide
- **Strafing:** attacking repeatedly with bombs or machine guns from low-flying aircraft
- **Zippo tanks:** Sherman M4A3 tank equipped with Navy Mark I flame thrower, a valuable U.S. weapon used at Iwo Jima

## IMPORTANT PLACES

- **Iwo Jima:** a volcanic island in the Pacific ocean, south of the Japanese mainland
- **Mount Suribachi:** a 554 ft. high mountain on the southern end of Iwo Jima Island
- **Hill 382 "Meatgrinder Hill":** a hill on the northern end of the island that saw intense fighting
- **Central Field (Motoyama #2):** airfield on Iwo Jima, located in the center of the island
- **South Field (Motoyama #1):** airfield on Iwo Jima, located towards the southwestern part of the island
- **Motoyama #3:** airfield on Iwo Jima that was under construction during the Battle of Iwo Jima, located towards the northern part of the island

## MEDALS

- **Medal of Honor:** the highest U.S. military decoration given for "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life, above and beyond the call of duty" - 27 awarded for action on Iwo Jima, more than any other battle in U.S. history



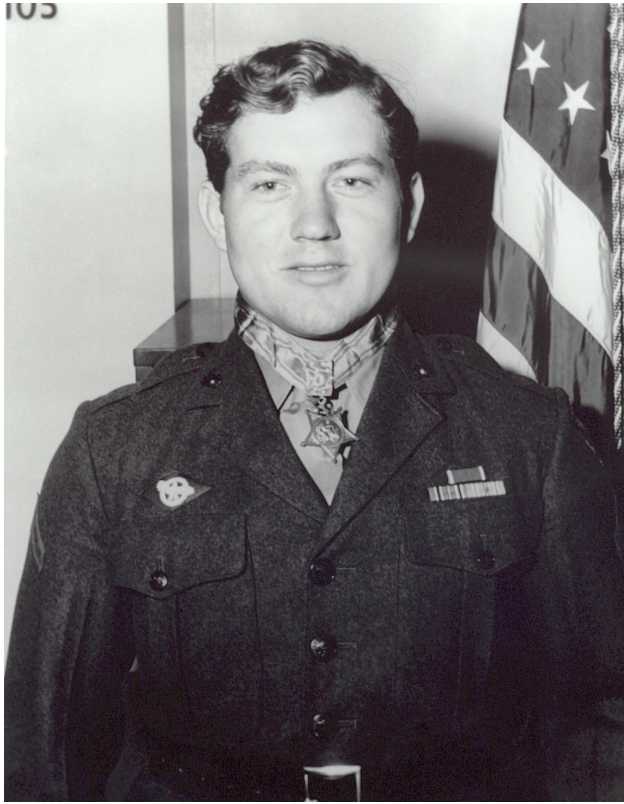
# IWO JIMA TIMELINE

- **May, 1944:** Japanese Prime Minister Tojo Hideki instructs General Kuribayashi Tadamichi to defend the island of Iwo Jima; General Kuribayashi orders construction of underground network
- **September-October, 1944:** Operation Detachment is developed by Pacific theater commanders and other U.S. representatives
- **February 19, 1945:** the first Marines land on Iwo Jima
- **February 21, 1945:** General Kuribayashi orders a kamikaze attack on U.S. ships
- **February 23, 1945:** U.S. Marines secure Mount Suribachi and raise the U.S. flag
- **February 24, 1945:** U.S. troops secure the south airfield (Motoyama #1)
- **February 27, 1945:** U.S. troops secure the central airfield (Motoyama #2)
- **February 28, 1945:** U.S. troops secure the north airfield (Motoyama #3)
- **March 2, 1945:** U.S. troops secure "Meat Grinder" Hill 382
- **March 3, 1945:** U.S. troops secure Hills 362A and 362B
- **March 8, 1945:** the Imperial Japanese Navy leads a nighttime banzai attack to drive away Marines, but fail
- **March 10, 1945:** U.S. troops secure the Amphitheater and Turkey Knob
- **March 16, 1945:** United States declare Iwo Jima secured
- **March 26, 1945:** American forces win the last major engagement at Iwo Jima, securing the island



Rocket trucks at Iwo Jima,  
February 28, 1945  
(U.S. Marine Corps)

# PROFILE OF A SOLDIER: JACKLYN HAROLD LUCAS



**Rank:** Private First Class, U.S. Marine Corps.

**Birthday:** February 14, 1928.

**Entered Service** in Norfolk, VA.

**Unit:** 26th Marines, 5th Marine Division.

**Date of Action:** February 20, 1945.

**Awards:** Medal of Honor, Purple Heart.

PFC Lucas (U.S. Marine Corps)

**Medal of Honor Citation:** For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving with the 1st Battalion, 26th Marines, 5th Marine Division, during action against enemy Japanese forces on Iwo Jima, Volcano Islands, 20 February 1945. While creeping through a treacherous, twisting ravine which ran in close proximity to a fluid and uncertain frontline on D-plus-1 day, Pfc. Lucas and 3 other men were suddenly ambushed by a hostile patrol which savagely attacked with rifle fire and grenades. Quick to act when the lives of the small group were endangered by 2 grenades which landed directly in front of them, Pfc. Lucas unhesitatingly hurled himself over his comrades upon 1 grenade and pulled the other under him, absorbing the whole blasting forces of the explosions in his own body in order to shield his companions from the concussion and murderous flying fragments. By his inspiring action and valiant spirit of self-sacrifice, he not only protected his comrades from certain injury or possible death but also enabled them to rout the Japanese patrol and continue the advance. His exceptionally courageous initiative and loyalty reflect the highest credit upon Pfc. Lucas and the U.S. Naval Service.





Map of the “pork chop”-shaped island of Iwo Jima

(Encyclopedia Britannica)





Marines, Coast Guardsmen and Seabees praying before landing  
on Iwo Jima

(National Archive)

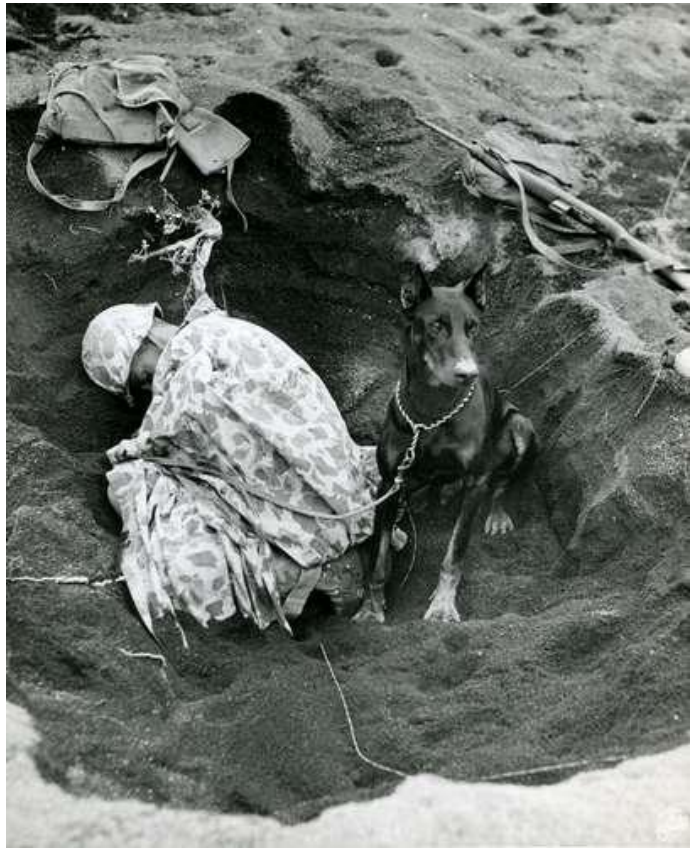


ENS Jane "Candy" Kendeigh, the first U.S. Navy flight nurse to reach Iwo Jima, tending to a wounded soldier

(Naval History and Heritage Command)



U.S. Marine Corps Private Rez Hester of the 7th War Dog Platoon taking a nap in a foxhole while Butch, his Doberman, stands guard during the Battle of Iwo Jima



(U.S. Marine Corps)



USS LSM-238 unloading equipment on Iwo Jima, February 1945

(U.S. Coast Guard)





Marines raising the flag on Mt. Suribachi, Iwo Jima, February 23, 1945

(Joe Rosenthal, Associated Press)

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was it about Iwo Jima that made it such an important battle? What did United States forces stand to gain by attaining victory?
2. What experiences among soldiers at Iwo Jima stand out in particular? Why was the Japanese empire, despite being on its last legs, still such a dangerous foe?
3. Considering that the interviews in the videos were with Virginians, what was it like for them, men from the other side of the whole world, in particular?
4. Consider also women like ENS Jane “Candy” Kendeigh, a paramedic rather than a soldier. What other perspectives were likely a part of this effort, playing crucial roles while never actually fighting?

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

To learn more about the experiences of Virginians in World War II, view *Virginians at War: WWII Submarines* and other films at [vawarmemorial.org](http://vawarmemorial.org). Looking to do more research? Check out the links below.

- <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Battle-of-Iwo-Jima>
- <https://www.history.navy.mil/browse-by-topic/wars-conflicts-and-operations/world-war-ii/1945/battle-of-iwo-jima.html>
- <https://www.usmcu.edu/Portals/218/Closing%20In-Marines%20in%20the%20Seizure%20of%20Iwo%20Jima%20PCN%2019000313100.pdf>
- Colorized footage from the Battle of Iwo Jima: <https://youtu.be/5Y0gdFisD9k>