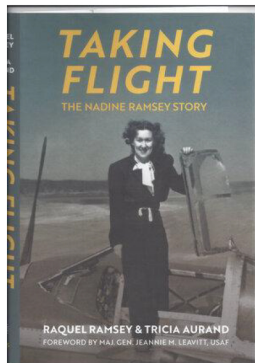


PHILIPPINE SCOUTS HERITAGE SOCIETY

Taking Flight: the Nadine Ramsey Story, by Raquel Ramsey and Tricia Aurand.

A book review by Chris Schaefer.



I highly recommend *Taking Flight* for two reasons: the personal story of three extraordinary people and what made them tick; and the story of women pioneers in American aviation. It's a great read.

In these thoroughly researched pages authors Raquel Ramsey and Tricia Aurand introduce you to three exceptional people—Nadine Ramsey, her mother Nelle and younger brother Ed. If you met any one of them on the street in 1930s Wichita, Kansas, your immediate impression would be of ordinary Americans struggling with the many obstacles posed by the depression. If you dug a little deeper you would find the terrible and deeply personal tragedy that beset this family. You would think that their future looked grim.

But you would be wrong. Ramsey and Aurand invite us to accompany Nadine, Nelle and Ed on an extraordinary journey where we watch each one of them overcome terrible setbacks, then forge ahead to achieve remarkable successes. All three of them. Again and again.

As a young woman, in the midst of the depression and in a man's world, Nadine Ramsey became enamored with airplanes. She set a goal, saved up money for flying lessons, and shouldered her way into the barnstorming world of aviation--a lifestyle that was largely closed to women.

Simultaneously, Nelle worked and expanded her small cosmetology business until she became one of the leading business persons in Wichita, of any gender. As World War II approached, Ed volunteered for military service with the Philippine Scouts, was trapped in the Japanese invasion of Bataan and disappeared into the Pacific jungles--Missing in Action.

Nadine joined 302 other young, patriotic women who signed up as Women's Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) to fly and deliver cargo, bomber and fighter airplanes for the Army Air Forces. They qualified to fly fast, twin-engine P-38 fighters and huge B-17 bombers. They studied navigation and meteorology, become instrument pilots and developed skills which should have set a course for lucrative professional careers. But it was all snatched away from them on a male whim before the war was even over.

The subsequent lives of all of these women could have been permanently degraded by the insult, depression and disillusionment. But they weren't. These young women capitalized on what they had and moved on. Nadine dove into the business side of aviation, started at the bottom, and again found success. She made mistakes, she found solutions and she found success again. She married, enjoyed, and rejected three husbands along the way, two much younger than she. This is a woman who lived life on her own terms. Her brother, Ed Ramsey, returned from the Pacific a decorated war hero. He had escaped from the Japanese and built a huge Filipino guerrilla organization that was instrumental in aiding General MacArthur's return to the Philippines. Now he embarked on a new career and became a successful businessman in Japan and then in the Philippines. Nadine's mother, Nelle, expanded her own business and became a nationally recognized professional in her field as well.

As you read *Taking Flight* you will get to know interesting people on a personal level, not just as stories about pilots, daredevils and businessmen. Nadine Ramsey flew airplanes. But Nadine Ramsey was much more than that. So were Nelle and Ed. Part of the fun of this book is to pursue the answer buried in its pages—what drove this family? What made these three people so determined, so resilient and so strong as they each took flight?

Chris Schaefer.

Author of *Bataan Diary*, screenwriter of *Forgotten Soldiers* and member of the Philippine Scouts Heritage Society.