



Taking Flight

**Retired Beverly High ESL Teacher
Raquel Ramsey writes book on
trailblazing female pilot**

**What inspired you to write
*Taking Flight: The Nadine
Ramsey Story*?**

This book was a promise to my husband, Col. Edwin P. Ramsey, 26th Cavalry Philippine Scouts. He passed away June 28, 2013. He was buried in Arlington with full military honors. He said to me, "You need to write my sister's book, because she has more guts than I ever did." I said, "Honey, that's not possible."

He was the last horse-mounted cavalry charge in U.S. Army history, decorated by General MacArthur and he stayed four years behind enemy lines forming the Guerrilla forces—actually he [was] a Green Beret even before there were Green Berets.

And he [responded], "Wait [until] you find her story."

But all I had were boxes of photographs. Just looking at [those] photographs, I was like "Oh wow, I have to do huge research."

That's exactly what I did, because my husband passed away. ... That was the same year I also retired from Beverly High after 50 years in the profession. I got so busy with his documentary—I was executive producer of *Never Surrender: The Ed Ramsey Story*. And that took me [until] right after he passed away.

So three years ago, when I finished the production of *Never Surrender* and all of his honors all over the United States and the world, I started with the research. I found more and more

from the National Archives. I found [more] from the Smithsonian. I realized what an incredible woman she really was.

Tell us about your relationship with your sister-in-law Nadine Ramsey and what she was like.

... She's six years older than my husband and she passed away at the age of 85 in 1997, when they opened the Women's Memorial. My husband is buried in Arlington and she is in the Women's Memorial in Arlington, but they did not allow women to be buried there. So, her ashes were scattered on Long Beach airport here. That goes back to what she wanted her burial to be.

Nadine was the sweetest, most loving person. We had a date, like every day I would call her at four o'clock in the afternoon and she would be waiting for my call. She lived in Long Beach and every week, Ed and I would go there and take her out of the convalescent hospital after she had to come in because of so many crashes that she had and her spine. But before that, she lived in different places and apartments in Long Beach. So we would go there every Saturday, take her out—she loved hamburgers. She had special places where she wanted this type of hamburger or this type of hamburger. We would have such fun and spend the afternoon with her. That was like a religious act, every single week.

Of course when she passed away, it was so hard. But we went to the opening of the

Women's Memorial and we were there walking through the ceremony. Of course, some of her memorabilia was placed in the Women's Memorial.

Who were the Women Airforce Service Pilots?

The Women Airforce Service Pilots [were] women who flew—and [Nadine] flew everything, the P-38s and the P-51s—all the planes. Since the men were at war, they had to bring the aircraft to the places where the men would meet them for the war. So she flew every type of military aircraft, so she was not just a flyer. She became a part of the Women Airforce Service Pilots. The role was to support men during the war, like flying the aircraft [from] one airfield to another airfield so that the men when they were there would pick up the aircraft and be able to use it for the wartime. This is all over the United States, Canada and the world. She was always in

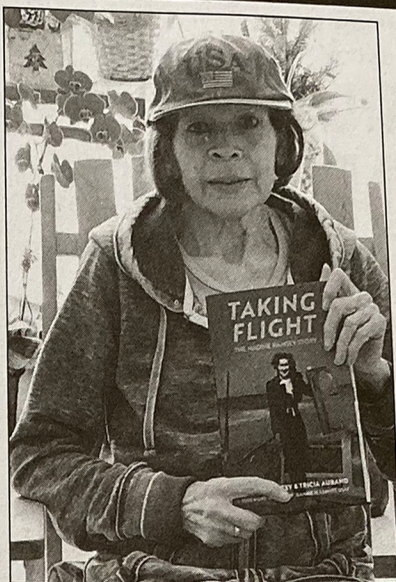
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Canada and the U.S.

How did Nadine get into flying, especially as a woman in the 1930s?

In 1938, she was a spunk and racing pilot. This is what is interesting, because she's a Kansas girl. That's where the Ramsey family [was]. Her mom had no idea that she was already going to school and then going to get training to fly. She was really a woman ahead of her time and she was telling her brother, my husband who rode horses, “No, no, no—you need to concentrate on flying because the war is coming and you need to be ready for that.”

My husband loved horses, so he was in the cavalry at the



Raquel Ramsey (above left) wrote a book about her sister-in-law, Nadine Ramsey (above right)

Oklahoma Military Academy where his mom placed him. ... My husband is in the [Oklahoma Military Academy] Hall of Fame and when he was inducted into [it] he had mentioned that if it were not for the Oklahoma Military Academy, he would have been a juvenile delinquent.

of her time. So I said I'll honor mom, I'll honor Nadine and I'll honor my husband.

Tell us about your career at Beverly.

I was 24 years at [the] Beverly Hills Unified School District. I was the coordinator of the English program—English as a second language. I handled international students from all over the world, from K–12 placement. Aside from being coordinator, I was teaching five classes [on] English literature ... poetry, Shakespeare and American literature.

Who were some of your colleagues during your time at BHUSD?

Oh my gosh, they are just wonderful. One of them [was Beverly High Assistant Principal] Toni Staser. Another person is Karen Boyarsky, the librarian at Beverly High who was also there for more than 35 years. We worked [together] every day, because I would bring the students to the library to do research for my classes on biographies and different topics that I would give [them]. The students came from all over the world and they were, according to Karen, the most diligent, en-

thusiastic and fabulous students. I am so thrilled for that. [I also worked with] Corinne Carlson, French teacher and head of the Foreign Language department, who is still there. ... I was under the foreign language department because English was a second language.

What do you hope readers take away from *Taking Flight*?

I think that readers will understand what love does to a family. My message through this book is that not only am I so proud of the heroism of my sister-in-law and my husband, but the whole Ramsey family. They went through the Depression, they went through the hardest times during the war. My husband [did] four years behind enemy lines, decorated by MacArthur. They were survivors. Why? Because they wanted to succeed in the mission they carried.

Purchase Raquel Ramsey's book on Amazon or the University Press of Kansas. To purchase an autographed copy for \$36, email her at raquiramsey1946@gmail.com.