

## Waco Tribune Herald Archives

### 11/15/04 Veteran's Notebook: WOMEN PILOTS HONORED

By Richard L. Smith Tribune-Herald staff writer

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--- Women pilots honored---

Deanie Parrish, of Waco, was among the surviving Texas members of the Women Airforce Service Pilots, or **WASPs**, who were inducted Saturday into the Texas Aviation Hall of Fame. The black-tie induction event was held at the Lone Star Flight Museum in Galveston.

Parrish became a **WASP** in 1943. She was one of 1,074 women from among 25,000 applicants who were accepted into the program. The **WASPs** flew military aircraft during World War II in the United States. Their jobs were diverse and included ferrying and flight-testing all types of Army Air Force planes. The **WASPs** blazed a trail for other women in aviation while helping make more male pilots available for overseas combat during World War II.

In 1996, Parrish became associate director of Wings Across America. The project helps document, preserve and publish the history of the **WASPs**. Its offices are located at Baylor University. Her daughter, Nancy Parrish, is director of Wings Across America. The two of them together have traveled to 19 states to videotape interviews with 106 **WASPs**.

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bomber on a number of raids into hostile territory. These included sorties to curtail hydroelectric power that supplied most of North Korea and Manchuria. It was a harrowing proposition because near one target, Suhio, was a Manchurian safe-haven for Russian MiGs.

"The plan was to rendezvous three air groups from three carriers off the east coast of North Korea, fly across mountainous terrain at tree-top level and arrive over Suhio on the second that the MiGs were engaging the Air Force's F-86 Sabres," he writes. "If we were too early or too late, we would be sitting ducks."

Exploits of Atkinson's squadron mates are as much a feature of his book as his own war tales. He relates one particularly incredible story about a fellow pilot who flew fighters.

Pilot Frank Soberski experienced three escapes from death during carrier landings. The third time was a landing after enemy gunfire shattered his jet's windshield and blinded him. Pat Murphy, who had flown with the Navy's Blue Angels precision jet team, was flying alongside on this mission and guided Soberski by radio for a blind,