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## Mary Jane LaPlante, police sergeant

By Jacques Kelly, The Baltimore Sun

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Mary Jane LaPlante, a retired Baltimore City police sergeant who handled military aircraft during World War II, died of complications from Alzheimer's disease Friday at Carroll Lutheran Village. She was 88 and lived in Westminster.

Born Mary Jane White in Baltimore and raised on Linnard Street, she attended St. Bernardine's Parochial School and was a 1940 graduate of the Institute of Notre Dame. She attended the University of Maryland, College Park.

Family members said that as a young woman, Mrs. LaPlante wanted to learn to fly a plane and bicycled from her home off Edmondson Avenue to the old Rutherford airfield near Woodlawn, where she took flying lessons. She also flew out of the old Harbor Field near Dundalk. She joined the Maryland Civil Air Patrol when it had two women members.

"Shortly after Pearl Harbor, she was drilling at the 5th Regiment Armory when her group was told that women were not allowed to march on the floor," said her husband, William LaPlante. "That rule got changed in a few hours."

She joined military service during World War II as a WASP — Women Airforce Service Pilots — and attended a military flight school in Sweetwater, Texas. She later joined the Marine Corps and went through boot camp at Camp Lejeune, N.C. She trained in Norman, Okla., and worked on the flight line at Quantico, Va. She taxied aircraft and readied them for take off.

In 1948 she joined the Baltimore Police Department, serving at headquarters downtown and in the rackets division and division of crimes against persons. She also helped investigate illegal abortions. She retired as a sergeant in 1973.

Mrs. LaPlante was a member of the Marine Corps League, Piney Branch Golf Club, Ladies of the Elks and the 99 Flying Group. She was a sports fan and a member of the Colts Corral No. 1. She had season tickets to the Baltimore Colts and attended the 1958 NFL championship game in New York. She was also an Orioles and University of Notre Dame fan.

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She donated her body to the Maryland Anatomy Board.

A memorial Mass will be held at 11 a.m. Thursday at St. Bartholomew's Roman Catholic Church, 3071 Park Ave., Manchester.

Survivors include her husband of 62 years, an electrician and retired Monumental Life Insurance employee; and a brother, Thomas G. White of Towson.

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