

THE MAN BEHIND THE NAME 'ROSCOE'
6/17/2009 Revised

Greetings,

A few days ago, young nephew of mine who happens to have an unusual interest in his Uncle Capt. Roscoe E. Anderson (my oldest brother) Google'd that name and was so excited about the results that he contacted me. We are only 2 blocks apart. Reading the info on Bob's website opened a floodgate of memories about 'Buster' (that's Roscoe's nickname here in Louisiana; it's Ross in California.) The nickname 'Buster' stuck because he was a boxer and street fighting was a hobby for everyone in New Orleans where he was born. It was a tough neighborhood. While studying the website, I was overwhelmed with nostalgia about the USAF and the brother I hardly knew- especially the mutt named after him and the world surrounding the dog that was completely unknown to me.

Note: I may revise this letter if my research is fruitful but this is the best I can generate at this time. Forgive me if I ramble a little. Edit this as you see fit.

First, a little background. Buster, born Dec. 8th, 1926, got his name from his granddad's close friend and confidant Roscoe Conklin-a Senator from New York. Granddad Adolph Anderson (President & CEO of United Fruit and Steamship Co.) had a mansion in Bay St. Louis, MS (next to the mansion owned by Benito Mussolini) and used to go duck hunting in his 74' yacht. How extravagant! He lost his fortune in the cotton market crash one year before the big stock market crash of '29 and never recovered.

When I was born in '42, Buster was in the Navy V-5 program at Southeastern State University in Hammond, Louisiana. That University now has an archival department with memorabilia on the graduates who are war veterans. For Buster, it's known as The Roscoe Anderson Collection and can be accessed on the University website.

http://wwwdev.selu.edu/acad_research/programs/csIs/historical_collections/archival_collections/a_b/Roscoe_Anderson_Coll.html

He served several tours in Korea and hated to see the war end because he wanted to be an ACE. He was flying F-80's when he flew into a cable stretched across a valley that caused him to crash land in North Korea. He made it back safely and flew F-86's after that. He was credited with a MIG kill in 1953. <http://jppgleize.club.fr/aces/korus2.htm>

When his other younger brother Cedric (4 years younger) got married, Buster performed aerobatics in his F-80 after the ceremony. It was a 'WOW' show to watch since no one there had ever seen a jet plane much less the aerial gyrations required in a dog fight.

My last sight of Buster was at McDill AFB in '62, right after I had completed USAF tech school in electronic cryptography at Lackland AFB in Texas. I also met some of his pilot buddies and, I believe, Capt. Lewis. Thereafter, we corresponded occasionally until I received the telegram informing me of his death at Yokota, Japan Sept. 8th, 1964. In 1965, I was scheduled to transfer to a communications site either in Vietnam or Thailand when my Security Officer encouraged me to return to college under the surviving son exemption to help support my mother now 56 years old. My dad died when I was 11. I had not realized the discipline, the purposefulness and comradeship I learned while being in the military. It's the time in your life when you are really 'alive.'

Well, the moment I set foot on campus, I instantly regretted my decision to leave the Air Force. I found myself awash in a sea of purposeless, party-going morons and over-stuffed classrooms.

The Vietnam War and the activities surrounding both Buster and Roscoe which I should have taken part in were a big mystery-now revealed by Bob's website. Thank you Bob! After Buster died, my remaining family soon lost contact with his family as we lived a continent apart.

The best part of this site -the mutt known as Roscoe- lives in my heart. It's as though my brother lives on and not only in memory. It just goes to show the bond that develops among men and women of purpose. I cried for a long time after viewing this site because it revealed to me so much of what I wanted to be a part of and what I had missed.

Three years ago, I was given a present of a tiny Yellow Lab that we named Samson. He looks just like the picture of Roscoe on Bob's website. He has the run of the house and sleeps on my bed or anywhere else he wants to. When we look into each others eyes, it's as though a memory long ago forgotten is awakened.

As one gets older and returns to civilian life (or whatever), nostalgia for the purposeful life sets in. There is a purpose in the military especially when working together in close quarters and in defending one's country and population that can only be described as 'Spiritual'. That nostalgia found a focal point in the one common factor involving hundreds of dedicated men and women at Korat RTAFB; that focal point was Roscoe. He was the point connecting us all together.

To paraphrase the words of Paramahansa Yogananda, "It would be a strange world if when we are born, we are born into a world of strangers and enemies." We will all meet again, in another time and place and maybe another world where we will perhaps be again defending liberty and freedom.

Have a good day! Contact me at any time if you so choose to do so.

Peter Anderson

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