

Life is Not for the Faint Hearted. It Takes Courage and It Takes Bravery.



By Bob Anderson, PhD, CMSgt. (Ret.)

**"I can now tell the rest
of the STORY!"**

Hello again my friends and readers.

As Memorial Day passed recently, I realized it was the first time in a long time I celebrated this holiday as a civilian. Well, not exactly a civilian, the correct term is veteran—one who has served. On May 6, 2006 I retired from the Air Force Reserve—ending thirty-two years of uniformed service. It was an honor and privilege to serve and I find I already miss parts of the military. I was blessed in my career and had the opportunity to go places and do things that few kids from East Texas get to do.

As most of you know, I recently spent six months in Iraq as Superintendent of the 732d Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron. During that time, I had some interesting and memorable experiences. I totaled 93 aircraft take offs and landings and seven vehicular convoys for about 6,000 miles in country— the last four months Balad Air Base was hit over 217 times by mortar and rocket fire. I had the honor of being in Baghdad during the first Iraqi election and seeing history in the making.

While I was there, I wrote several articles describing my thoughts about the question, "What Are We Fighting For?" I want to let you know that I will be continuing these articles which you will start receiving on a monthly basis. Some of the articles will be about Iraq and the folks I served with. However, most will discuss what is going on here on the home front as the war on terror continues. Now that I am Chief Master Sergeant, USAF (Ret), I've realized that like Paul Harvey, I can now tell the rest of the STORY—and I plan to do so. I shall take the opportunity to share my opinions on topics that we citizens need to hear about and take ownership of.

As American's, we experience freedoms everyday because someone somewhere has made a sacrifice so that we could experience the freedoms that we so often take for granted. The fact that I can write this article and that you can read it through the internet or email, is a freedom that has a price. So, how do we as citizens do our part in this fight against terror and the continued fight for our precious freedoms? How do we, as Captain Miller said to Private Ryan in the movie, Saving Private Ryan, "Earn this."

I don't know that any of us can ever really earn the right to experience the freedoms that we have, but we need to be doing the best we can. One way I'm going to do this is by sharing

my thoughts and opinions that are based on the concepts and beliefs of our founding fathers—true Patriots. I will share these thoughts boldly and with pride. The concepts of courage, honor, integrity, truth, resolve, sacrifice and many others—concepts that will not win you a popularity contest, but will definitely help you sleep well at night.

We earn the privilege of living in this great United States of America by how we live—by raising our children to be responsible and accountable citizens, to make good decisions and choices and to do the right thing whether people are watching or not. To be examples of this ourselves, to our children, co-workers and the many others that are watching us and listening to us. This is one way we can earn the privilege of these freedoms we experience every day. It takes courage, and courage will be one of the reoccurring themes in my articles. So let's begin, with an excerpt from my favorite book, *Illusions* by Richard Bach:

“Once there lived a village of creatures along the bottom of a great crystal river. The current of the river swept silently over them all— young and old, rich and poor, good and evil, the current going its own way, knowing only its own crystal self. Each creature in its own manner clung tightly to the twigs and rocks of the river bottom, for clinging was their way of life and resisting the current is what each had learned from birth.

But one creature said at last, ‘I am tired of clinging. Though I cannot see it with my eyes, I trust that the current knows where it is going. I shall let go and let it take me where it will. Clinging, I shall die of boredom.’ The other creatures laughed and said, ‘Fool! Let go, and the current you worship will throw you tumbled and smashed across the rocks and you will die quicker than boredom!’

But the one heeded them not, and taking a breath did let go, and at once was tumbled and smashed by the current across the rocks. Yet in time, as the creature refused to cling again, the current lifted him free from the bottom and he was bruised and hurt no more.

And the creatures downstream, to whom he was a stranger cried, ‘See a miracle! A creature like ourselves, yet he flies! See the Messiah, come to save us all!’ And the one carried in the current said, ‘I am no more Messiah than you. The river delights to lift us free, if only we dare let go.’ Our true work is this voyage, this adventure.”

This adventure, this life is not for the faint hearted. It takes courage and it takes bravery — they are not the same. What are we fighting for? I hope you continue to read these articles, as that will be their thrust!

God Bless our Troops and God Bless America!

Bob

About Bob Anderson, PhD, CMSgt. (Ret.)

Bob Anderson recently retired from the military after 32 years of honorable service with the Air Force. He is now focusing his time on his company, Back To Basics International, a

professional speaking and training organization. Bob's greatest passion is speaking to audiences and inspiring them to excel.

Earlier this year, he returned from a deployment in Iraq as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. While there, he was responsible for two law enforcement detachments and 32 Military Working Dog Teams. His 221 person squadron was scattered among 21 different locations throughout Iraq. He traveled to all of these locations while there, which was over 6000 miles. He was honored by receiving the Bronze Star Medal for distinguished service while in Iraq.

To contact Bob Anderson, please do so through his website at:

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