



Neal Samuel Roark

August 28, 1930 - June 1, 2012

Kind and gentle father, Cold War Warrior Neal S. Roark dies

Date 1 June 2012

Milledgeville, Georgia- Neal S. Roark, age 81, died June 1 2012. Born in Birchwood, Tennessee on Aug. 28, 1930, Roark (Neal) left Birchwood Tennessee and began a life that touched all parts of the globe. Roark and his siblings moved from Birchwood, TN and ultimately settled in Gallion, Alabama. Upon completing high school and he hitch hiked to Auburn where he joined the Army Air Corps and graduated with a degree in agriculture. After graduation, Roark went active duty in the United States Air Force and traveled the world. While in the USAF, he married his wife of 54 years Betty Jo (Jody) Roark.

Roark served twenty three years in the United States Air Force retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel. While in the USAF, Roark participated in experimental Air refueling operations (96th Air Refueling Squadron), flew numerous combat missions over Vietnam, flew in the escort mission that took the first US President (Nixon) to China. Roark served for 17 years in the elite branch of the USAF called the Strategic Air Command (SAC) under General Curtis Lemay. Roark served one tour at the University of Alabama as a Professor of Aero Space Studies-where he routinely interacted with Coach Paul "Bear" Bryant on the progress of athletes in the Reserve Officer Training Program. Over this time period in the USAF, Roark received the Air War Medal for

classified sustained aerial combat flights in KC 135s over Vietnam, participated in the Blue Eagle Squadron in Hawaii and was utilized by the USAF to teach and train air refueling to the elite forces of the French Air force Mirage fighter units. In his last assignment he trained and mentored junior officers through USAF ROTC, the Air Command and Staff College and the Squadron Officer School.

On retirement from the USAF, Roark went back to his first love of agriculture running a cattle farm for 30 years in a small town called Ramer outside of Montgomery, Alabama. Roark raised cattle, adored horses and had a fondness for the unique herding instincts of Australian cattle dogs. In addition to agriculture Roark sat on the board of MONCRE Telephone Cooperative, the Ramer Water Board and participated in many local organizations.

Roark was involved with the Masonic lodge and holds the distinction of the 50 year service pin and the title of a Master Mason and a Shriner. Roark held degrees from both Auburn and Alabama. Neal S. Roark was a quiet man, slow to anger, but a man of solid principle willing to fight for the right causes. He was a courageous leader and a great father. Neal S. Roark is survived by his wife and two sons, Charles and George and one grandchild named Morganne.

The family will receive friends Monday, June 4, 2012 at McKoon Funeral Home, 38 Jackson St, Newnan, GA from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM. Funeral services will be held at Fort Mitchell National Cemetery, Ft. Mitchell, AL Tuesday, June 5, 2012 at 2:00 PM EASTERN. In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to Shriners Hospitals for Children, Office of Development, 2900 Rocky Point Drive, Tampa, FL 33607.

McKoon Funeral Home & Crematory 770-253-4580

Cemetery Details

Ft Mitchell Cemetery

553 AL-165
Fort Mitchell, AL 36856

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN 4. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

McKoon Funeral Home
38 Jackson Street
Newnan, GA 30263
(770) 253-4580
care@mckoon.com

Service

JUN 5. 2:00 PM (CT)

Ft Mitchell Cemetery
553 AL-165
Fort Mitchell, AL 36856

Tribute Wall

DL

“ *God Bless! Words cannot express my feelings for your loss.*

Darrell Lester - June 04, 2012 at 01:25 PM

SF

“ *I am sending my prayerful support for all the family. Jody, my love goes out to you and the family also. God Bless you all.*

Sharon Fleming - June 03, 2012 at 07:21 PM

TO

“ *George (and family) - I am so sorry to hear of the loss of your father. I know how incredibly difficult it is and just wanted you to know we were thinking of you. His obituary was beautiful and he sounded like an amazing man. It sure sounded like someone else I know. :) Hang in there, my friend. Please know we are thinking about you and that we love you!*

Tina and Luis Ortega - June 03, 2012 at 10:28 AM