

Ralph Roberts Obituary

Obituary published on Legacy.com by Roach Funeral Home on May 6, 2026.

Ralph Arden Roberts, 97, passed away on Monday, May 4, 2026, in the West Virginia Veterans Nursing Facility, Clarksburg.

He was born February 28, 1929, on Poplar Creek in Nicholas County, WV, the fifth child of Granville Coneides and Nelly Mae Roberts.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife, Charlee Roberts who passed away in September 2023; brothers, Lester, Cecil, Lloyd, Junior and Dale; and one sister, Bernice.

He is survived by his stepdaughter, Angela Mitchell and husband, Doran; stepson, Jon Wiggin; his grandchildren, Amanda Compton, Michelle Cooper, Brandon Mitchell, and Christopher Mitchell; four great grandchildren; sister, Virginia; and several nieces and nephews.

Ralph's grandpa, John Roberts, taught him how to play the fiddle when he was young. He developed a deep love for both his instrument and the old-time fiddle tunes. He was also known for his unique style of cross bowing, a technique passed down through generations – his great grandfather had taught his grandfather, who in turn shared the old tunes with him. At the age of 14, Ralph's father sold their homestead on Poplar Creek, and the family moved to Powell's Mountain in Nicholas County, West Virginia.

Ralph's brothers – Cecil, Lester, and Junior – all served in World War II. Ralph and his brother, Dale, later enlisted during the Korean War, where Ralph served overseas as a combat medic. He entered service in March of 1949, and deployed to Japan, Persia and Korea in March of 1951. After returning to United States four years later, he joined the Air Force, working in air freight and routing for another four years.

By 1958 or 1959, Ralph was back in the States, taking on various jobs in Ohio, including work in the coal mines and on the railroad. He also spent time working in Wisconsin and New Jersey, where he was employed at a ketchup and soy sauce factory. Years later, he would jokingly say, "I don't eat ketchup – and you wouldn't either if you were me," reflecting his quiet but sharp sense of humor.

Ralph longed to return to the mountains of West Virginia. When he finally came home, he

worked at an airport tie yard for seven years until it closed. He then went to work for Coastal lumber in [Gassaway, WV](#), where he remained until his retirement in 1986. The following year he married Charlee May Wiggin.

Ralph and Charlee became well known in the fiddle community, attending the Clifftop Festival and other old-time music gatherings. He taught and shared his distinctive fiddling

style through workshops and events and was featured in Golden Seal magazine alongside other respected musicians. He also received recognition for his contributions to Appalachian Country music.

Ralph loved the mountains of West Virginia – ginseng gathering, mushroom picking or simply walking in the woods. He cherished his dog, Freckles, a loyal companion for many years. He was a soft-spoken man with a good sense of humor with a constant twinkle in his eye. Ralph was deeply loved by his family and friends and will be fondly remembered and greatly missed.

In keeping with Ralph's wishes he will be cremated and a private service will be held at a later date.

The family requests memorial contributions be made to the Wounded Warrior Project which was held in high standing for Ralph's service as a combat medic in the Korean War. <https://support.woundedwarriorproject.org>. [Wounded Warrior Project](#), PO Box 758516, Topeka, Kansas 66675-8516.

Arrangements by Roach Funeral Home, [Gassaway, WV](#).

Words of comfort and fond memories may be extended to the family at www.roachfuneralhome.com.

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