



## John Robert Ratcliffe Sr.

July 8, 1944 - July 3, 2017

Bluefield, WV- John Robert “Bob” Ratcliffe, Sr., 72, of Bluefield, WV, was given life and entered his Earthly home on July 8, 1944 and departed for eternal life in Heaven on July 3, 2017.

Bob was born in Bluefield, WV to the late Thomas Alexander Ratcliffe and Ila Jean Scott Ratcliffe. He was a 1963 graduate of Graham High School and a 1966 graduate of Bluefield State College. He began working for AEP in 1966 and retired in 1999 after 33 years of employment. He was a veteran of the U.S. Army National Guard.

Bob was a very talented man who had many diverse hobbies. He enjoyed artwork, clockwork, and wood working. He also orchestrated many pyrotechnic displays through the years. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, and cooking. He was a former member of Triangle Sportsman Club where he enjoyed shooting skeet and trap, and he also liked archery.

Bob was most renowned for his musical talent as a guitarist, and he was a former member of numerous local bands.

He was a member of Cumberland Heights Baptist Church where he had previously served as a Deacon, Sunday school teacher, and was active with the music department.

Bob is survived by his loving wife, Susan Rebecca Atwell Ratcliffe; two children, Robyn Suzanne Nelsen of Seabrook, TX, and John Robert Ratcliffe, Jr. of Bluefield, WV; sister, Donna Coleman and husband Greg of Athens, WV; brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, Barbara Atwell of Bluefield, WV, Andy and

Terri Atwell, and Mark and Anne Atwell; three aunts, Ellen Scott Windle and husband Eddie of Bluefield, VA, Mary Ruth Scott of Bluefield, VA, and Dorothy Scott of Milan, IN; a host of cousins, nieces and nephews, special musical friends, Dwight "Wacky" Bryant, Allen Burgess, Donnie Goins, Don Whitt, Larry Gilpin, Ron Dash, Tim Noel, R.T. Andrews, Wayne Kitts, and many more; special neighbors, Charlotte and Tracy Parker, and Sheila Noel; special friend, Tom Gibson; and his feline friends, Booger and Pea Dad.

Funeral services will be held on Thursday July 6, 2017 at 2:00 p.m. from the Mercer Funeral Home Chapel with Pastor J.H. Kestner officiating. The family will receive friends on Thursday from 1:00 p.m. until the service hour.

Burial will follow at Grandview Memory Gardens where John Ratcliffe, Jr., Mark Atwell, Jeff Atwell, Eric Atwell, Greg Coleman and Barry Vaughn will serve as pallbearers.

Memorial contributions, if desired, may be made to Cumberland Heights Baptist Church, 3811 E. Cumberland Road, Bluefield, WV 24701 or to the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation, 733 Third Avenue, Suite 510, New York, NY 10017.

Those wishing to share memories or condolence messages with the family may do so by visiting [www.MercerFuneralHome.com](http://www.MercerFuneralHome.com) Mercer Funeral Home & Crematory is serving the family of Mr. John Robert "Bob" Ratcliffe, Sr.

# Cemetery Details

## Grandview Memory Gardens

Bluefield, VA

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUL 6. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (ET)

Mercer Funeral Home Chapel  
1231 West Cumberland Road  
Bluefield, WV 24701

## Funeral Service

JUL 6. 2:00 PM (ET)

Mercer Funeral Home Chapel  
1231 West Cumberland Road  
Bluefield, WV 24701

# Tribute Wall



“ *John Robert Ratcliffe Sr.*

October 05, 2023 at 06:08 PM



“ *My condolences, thoughts and prayers are with you and your family, Becky.*

*David Church*

David Church - July 08, 2017 at 08:31 AM



“ *Becky, Pip and I send our sincere sympathy to you and your family. We are out of town but want you to know you are in our prayers 🙏.*

Fran and Pip - July 06, 2017 at 09:33 AM



“ *Dear, Becky, I was shocked to see that Bob had passed. I still have memories of him singing with The Gospel Light Quartet at Edgemont Baptist Church. His voice and professional Guitar playing just made our performances sound sensational. Katie and I wish the best for you. I am sure the Lord knows your sorrow and may you take comfort in the fact that Jesus cares for you and that Bob is in a better place now.*

*Many people will miss our dear friend Bob.*

*Katie and Ken Gray*

Kenneth Gray - July 06, 2017 at 09:28 AM



*Thank you Kenny..... John jr.*

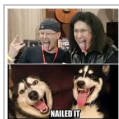
**John Ratcliffe** - July 15, 2017 at 01:56 AM

DG

“ *Hello Becky. I am so very glad that I got to visit with Bob last week, rather than waiting to July 5. I have great memories of Bob when we played with the Swing Kings. Bob was always kind of gentlemanly and a bit dignified when we would play on the road. I got to laughing this afternoon thinking about a trip we made to Bristol, TN. Band member Alan Johnston was a prankster and if he could have some fun...well, he always managed to do so. We stopped to get some sodas and such at a discount store. Alan led the way, and he and Bob wound up in the ladies department. Alan picks up the largest bra he could find and shouts to Bob, "This is a double sling shot." Well, Bob was completely embarrassed and Alan just chuckled on the way out of the store. I can still see Bob's face as he told the rest of us what Alan had does...and then he laughed, too. Many folks who were and still are in music will tell you what a truly fine musician he was, and I know first hand how he pleased and often awed people with his skill.*

*Yesterday (the 4th of July) I thought of him and his work with fireworks. Now he is where he can enjoy the Heavenly display of fireworks. Bob was a kind man and will be missed greatly. Love from Donnie and Betty*

**Donnie and Betty Goins** - July 05, 2017 at 06:34 PM



*Thanks guys. Dad talked a lot about you all. I miss him more than anyone could comprehend.....John jr.*

**John Ratcliffe** - July 15, 2017 at 01:59 AM

RY

“ So sorry about the death of Bobby. We have fond memories of him and his family while growing up in West Graham. What a talented guitarist. Still can hear him playing his guitar on a summer night. Donna, our thoughts and prayers are with you and the entire family.  
Randy Yost and Missy Wallace Simpson

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**Randy Yost** - July 05, 2017 at 01:26 PM

MA

“ My name is Merle Ayers. I was 13 years old when I met Bobby and started playing with the Red Coats. He had a very kind, gentle spirit about him I will never forget. I remember when he got his Gretsch Country Gentleman guitar. My father was a guitar player as well and he and Bobby shared a love for finger-picking. I regret to this day losing touch with some of my musical kindred spirits and as I've gotten older the memories of wonderful gifted and talented people like Bobby GOD brought into my life have gotten more and more precious as I look back. One of my fondest of Bobby was recording the very first (and last) Red Coat 45 rpm record at Salem Recording Studio in Salem, Va. We did this slow song we had written and asked him to put some tasteful, soulful licks in certain spots and what he improvised off the top of his head and played was nothing short of stunning. I still have some copies of that old 45 with Bobby on guitar and if you would like one I would be happy to get one to you to preserve a small part of his legacy.  
Thought, prayers, and condolences, to all of the family,  
with a heartfelt thank you Bobby,  
Merle Ayers

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**Merle Ayers** - July 05, 2017 at 01:26 PM



Yes...we would love one!!! I've only heard one song from the original Red Coats.....John jr.

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**John Ratcliffe** - July 15, 2017 at 02:02 AM

SF

“ *Rebecca, I heard of your loss via FB. I am so sorry, and so soon after losing and Eddie. Prayers for you and your family.*

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**Sheila (Portis) Fischetti** - July 05, 2017 at 12:00 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of John Robert Ratcliffe Sr..*



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July 05, 2017 at 11:34 AM



“ *You guys are in our thoughts and Prayers,*

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**Fran Justus** - July 05, 2017 at 07:38 AM



“ *May the love of God surround you and your family during this difficult time,  
May you come to know that the love of God is with you always,  
  
May your memories of John Robert Ratcliffe, Sr., give you peace, comfort and strength...  
  
Rest now in the arms of our Lord your mission on earth is complete. I thank you for your service to our Country and my Freedom. You will not be forgotten..  
My thoughts  
and prayers to the family of ....  
  
US Army National Guard Veteran, John Robert Ratcliffe, Sr., is “A True American Hero” God Bless†  
  
† Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. John 15:13 †*

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**Cheryl Skinner, Tri-state Military Museum** - July 05, 2017 at 07:34 AM

AB

“ *I can remember rehearsals when the band would be learning a new song. After the band had learned there parts I would tell Bobby to get his. He would just look at at me and say lets do the song, I have my part. He could hear things that I could not even dream of hearing.  
You will be missed. My prayers and thoughts are with the family.  
Allen Burgess*

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**Allen Burgess** - July 04, 2017 at 02:00 PM

JR

*Thank you Allen. I know my dad is loving this!.... John jr.*

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**John Ratcliffe** - July 04, 2017 at 03:09 PM

DL

*We have some good memories of Bobby being a member of the RedCoats. Princeton,Bluefield,Roanoke to Myrtle Beach. Wonderful Musician. Thank you for them. Prayers for the family. RIP*

**Dan Lockhart** - July 04, 2017 at 03:36 PM



*Thank you Danny*

**John Ratcliffe** - July 04, 2017 at 10:17 PM

DW

*What can I say. He was "the" teacher of The RedCoats---plus many other talents. Never heard a bad word about Bobby. Everyone who knew him knows this to be the truth.  
Will miss you my friend. I would say RIP, but I know God had you (probably) doing the fireworks yesterday in Heaven.  
As I always said when I came to visit you at your house when leaving--  
"see you later Bob"  
Wacky*

**Dwight** - July 05, 2017 at 09:21 AM



*Thanks Wacky. Dad had shared countless memories about you. I miss him.*

**John Ratcliffe** - July 15, 2017 at 02:05 AM

DM

*“Becky and family,so sorry for your loss and praying God will comfort all of you.*

**Debbie Mariotti** - July 04, 2017 at 01:58 PM