



Richard Boyd Coder

Obituary published on Legacy.com by Parker-Millard Funeral Service and Crematory on Feb. 26, 2026.

Richard (Dick) Coder, 94, passed away at his home in [Columbia, MO](#) early Wednesday morning, January 21, 2026 with family at bedside.

Dick was born February 20, 1931 to Don Wilkes Coder and Maude (Shunkwiler) Coder in [Patton, Pennsylvania](#). He grew up in the Patton,

Altoona, and Johnstown area. He graduated from Johnstown High School in 1948. Dick attended Loch Haven State Teachers College in Loch Haven Pennsylvania. He studied mathematics and Physical Education. He left school early to go to Mississippi to become an airplane mechanic with Graham Aviation where his brother, Bob, also worked. When Dick's draft notice came, Bob told him to go into the Navy. "They'll tell you what to do."

Dick joined the Navy in 1952 and began his training as a radar technician. He went to numerous schools in Treasure Island, California and Great Lakes, Illinois. He served aboard the USS Gilbert Islands for a 7 month tour of the Mediterranean. Returning to Boston, he helped decommission a ship. While in port August of 1954, Hurricane Carol struck the Boston area and destroyed the steeple on the Old North Church. They rode out the storm aboard ship.

After Dick served his hitch in the Navy, he enlisted in the Air Force. No more sea duty! He began his Air Force career at Vance AFB, Enid, Oklahoma. From there he served a 6 year tour in Toul-Rosieres, France working on radars. When he returned, he was assigned to Ellington AFB, Houston, Texas. While there, he saw the beginnings of NASA, testing the space capsules in the enlisted men's swimming pool. He sent a communications unit to President Johnson's ranch following President Kennedy's assassination, November 1963. He then served a year at King Salmon AFS, Alaska. He learned just how frozen a radar could get!

K.I. Sawyer AFB, Gwinn, Michigan was his next duty station. July, 1967, a Marine F-4C crashed on take off diving into the radar unit that was along side the runway killing three airmen who were in the unit. Dick and his crew worked to get a new radar unit and quickly reestablished radar communications after some long hard work. Assignment to Keesler AFB in Biloxi, Mississippi followed. While there Dick and his family experienced Hurricane Camille, August 17, 1969, causing them to lose almost all of their possessions. They evacuated to Columbus, Mississippi. Dick had requested another duty assignment. He was reassigned to Sheppard AFB in Wichita Falls, Texas. Dick later retired from the Air Force, September, 1972 with 20 total years

of service.

Dick and his family moved to Amarillo, Texas. After working a year at the Post office as a mail handler for Civil Service, Dick was able to get a position with the FAA as a radar technician. Dick had been taking courses throughout his entire military career. He continued attending schools through the FAA for technicians and air traffic control radar technicians. He worked at the Amarillo Airport as a radar technician for four years before transferring to Albuquerque, New Mexico. He worked there for 10 years before retiring to move to Enid, Oklahoma. While there his wife of 39 years passed away. He remarried September, 1998 to Georgina (Huber) Vance. They moved to [Columbia, Missouri](#) November, 2000.

Dick continued his passion for learning. He discovered The Great Courses by The Teaching Company. He studied courses in math, physics, history, health, and philosophy. He enjoyed books by and about Einstein, Lisa Randall, Brian Green, Stephen Hawking to name a few.

Dick enjoyed music. He liked real country, bluegrass, jazz. One of his greatest joys was seeing Roy Rogers and the Sons of the Pioneers in 1936. While stationed in Boston he was able to see Sarah Vaughn and Ella Fitzgerald. He recalled being at a dance when the band leader gathered all the dancers to the middle of the floor surrounding them with the band while they played "Harlem Nocturne". Concerts with artists such as Guy Clark, John Prine, Jeff Daniels, Don Williams, Riders in the Sky, B.B. King, Suzy Bogus, Big Smith were special treats, and great road trips. Dick could sing a pretty good bass. He had a good ear and enjoyed listening to new artists on TV.

Dick had many adventures in his life. He was 6 years old and helped his dad who was a civil and mining engineer and his brother Bob survey private mines. Dick liked feeding the little donkeys. His dad took him to the sites where they were blasting tunnels for the Pennsylvania Turnpike. He said he liked seeing the heavy mats they used to cover the blasts. Living in Altoona, they lived close to the railroad tracks. It became Dick's job to clean the window sashes every morning because of all the ash from the trains. He went to the Horseshoe Curve to watch the trains. When a new diesel train came through, people weren't sure it would make it up the tracks. There weren't any reports of that happening, but they were great to watch. He and his brother Bob worked for the local newspaper in Johnstown delivering newspapers and pocket books to news stands. He also worked as a fire fighter occasionally during the summer months. He had some great stories.

Dick was sickly as young boy due to a ruptured appendix and later a peri-renal abscess. His dad fashioned a barbell for him out of a mop handle and bricks and his dad taught him how to use it. His dad also built a boxing ring in the basement and taught Dick and Bob how to box. The boys came up with 'sword' fighting on their own. Dick took swimming lessons at the YMCA at his mother's insistence. "They have 10 free lessons". The coach was a balding old man according to Dick. He could effortlessly glide down the pool and back. The boys soon learned the coach had been Johnny Weismuller's first coach. If he didn't think you could be a swimmer, you could be a diver. Dick spent the summer before his senior year in high school working in a chain factory in

York, Pennsylvania. He stayed in the YMCA and after work he would go to the York Barbell Company to train with some of the Olympic weightlifters like John Grimek, Steve Stanko, and Emerick Ishikawa to name a few. Dick said the lifters at York taught him what not to do when lifting. He continued to weight lift the rest of his life. He was able to attend the Show-Me-State games regularly after moving to Columbia. He was able to attend the State Games of America several times. Dick enjoyed the competition and meeting the other lifters. He was most often the oldest lifter there. He followed the advice of his high school Civics teacher, John L. Felton. "Make sure you wear out not rust out!"

Dick was active in several organizations: the American Legion Post 202, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 280, NARFE, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Fraternal Order of Eagles Aerie 2730, VFW National Home for Children, Clark's Championship Gym, University of Missouri Gymnastics Booster, Show-Me-State Games, State Games of America.

Dick is survived by his wife of 27 years Georgina Huber Coder, his daughter from a previous marriage Terry Shober (John) of Marietta, Pennsylvania, grandchildren: Jonathan Shober and Jessica Shober, Nephew Wayne Coder (Denise) of St. Charles, Missouri, Niece Jane (Fryer) Pierce of Bolingbrook, Illinois. Rosemary Coder of Florida.

Dick was preceded in death by his parents, John Wilkes Coder and Maude Coder of [Johnstown, PA](#), sister Phyllis Fryer of Lisle, Illinois, brother Robert (Bob) Coder of Florida, nephew Gary Coder, niece Sharon Reynolds.

Celebration of Life will be April 18th from 2-4 PM at the American Legion Post 202 3669 Legion Lane [Columbia, MO](#). Visitation and light refreshments Military honors will be rendered.



SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR
DEPARTMENT OF MISSOURI

www.suvcwmo.org

Mark Alan Coplin
Commander

commander@suvcwmo.org

DEPARTMENT ORDER NO. 11
Series 2025-2026
26 February 2026

Passing of Brother Richard Boyd Coder

It is with this sorrow that the Department of Missouri, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, reports the passing of Brother Richard Boyd Coder on 21 January 2026.

Brother Coder was a member of Tiger Camp #432

Brother Coder was born in Patton, Pennsylvania in 1931. He graduated from Johnstown High School in 1948. He attended Loch Haven State Teachers College in Loch Haven Pennsylvania. He studied mathematics and Physical Education. Dick joined the Navy in 1952 and began his training as a radar technician. After serving in the Navy, he enlisted in the Air Force. He began his Air Force career at Vance AFB, Enid, Oklahoma. He was later assigned to Ellington AFB, Houston, Texas. Dick was active in several organizations: the American Legion Post 202, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 280, NARFE, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Fraternal Order of Eagles Aerie 2730, VFW National Home for Children, Clark's Championship Gym, University of Missouri Gymnastics Booster, Show-Me-State Games, State Games of America.

Celebration of Life will be April 18th from 2-4 PM at the American Legion Post 202 3669 Legion Lane Columbia, MO. Visitation and light refreshments Military honors will be rendered.

In memory of Brother Coder, the Department's Charter and website shall be draped, all Camp Charters and websites shall be draped, and all brothers shall attach a black mourning ribbon to their membership badge. Following the Department's mourning policy, this Order shall remain in effect for seven days from this date.

Ordered this 26th Day of February 2026,

Attest:

Mark Coplin, PCC
Commander
Department of Missouri SUVCW

Gary Scheel, PDC
Secretary
Department of Missouri SUVCW