



Leon John Clem, Sr

September 28, 1934 - February 21, 2026

Leon John Clem, Sr., a devoted husband, loving father, cherished grandfather, and proud veteran, passed away peacefully at his home in Statesville, North Carolina, on February 21, 2026. He was 91 years old.

Leon was born on September 28, 1934, in Benton Harbor, Michigan, to Harold and Dolly Clem. He grew up in a large family and was one of ten siblings.

Leon's life was marked by dedication to his family, his work, his faith, and his country.

At the age of 17, Leon answered the call to serve his nation. On July 29, 1952, he enlisted in the United States Army as an infantryman. During the Korean Conflict, he served with distinction on Pork Chop Hill and was injured in combat. For his bravery and service, Leon received the Combat Infantry Badge, the Purple Heart Medal, and the Expert Rifle Badge. He completed his military service on July 28, 1955.

After returning home from service, Leon embarked on a long and industrious career. He worked at Clark Equipment in both Michigan and North Carolina as a factory worker and foreman before retiring as a proud member of the United Auto Workers (UAW). Later in life, he continued working with GL Wilson in warehouse operations and welding before retiring once again. His craftsmanship as a welder was admired by many.

Leon's personal life was filled with love and devotion. He married Barbara Clem and together they built a family rooted in faith and strong values. After Barbara's passing, Leon found solace and community at Westminster Church

of God. A man of deep faith throughout his life, Leon had been raised Catholic but also spent time worshiping as a Protestant before joining Westminster Church of God.

Leon had a passion for the outdoors and enjoyed fishing, trapping, hunting, ice fishing, and snowmobiling. He loved spending time playing cards with family members and cheering for Detroit sports teams as well as Michigan football. His dedication to veterans' causes was evident through his involvement in presenting awards for ROTC area programs associated with the Purple Heart.

Leon is survived by his siblings Edith Lechenet, Gloria Fryback, and Gary Clem; his children Marla Nikolai; Leon Clem Jr. (Debra); Andrew Clem (Rosie); Dennis Clem (Jennifer); Denise Doan (Tim); grandchildren Lisa (Jacob Sr.), Whitney, Danielle, Jay, Devin; Lisa (Mikel), Michael; Marcus; Ernest (May), Mary Ann; Tiffany (Kenneth), Matthew (Kaylee), Mason (Stephanie); fifteen great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren; and numerous extended family members who will forever cherish his memory. He is preceded in death by his beloved wife Barbara; parents Harold and Dolly Clem; brothers Dale Clem; Bob Clem; Leslie Clem; Jim Clem; James Clem; Russell Clem; daughter Wanda; son-in-law Bernie; granddaughter Nicole.

A man of integrity who lived a full life dedicated to those he loved most deeply-his family-Leon leaves behind an enduring legacy of strength and kindness that will be remembered by all who knew him.

A Graveside Service with military honors will be held at 12:30 PM on March 2, 2026 at the Salisbury National Cemetery Annex, 501 Statesville Blvd, Salisbury with Pastor Aaron Hollifield officiating.

In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made toward Purple Heart Homes located locally within Statesville NC.

Cavin-Cook Funeral Home & Crematory, Mooresville, is serving the Clem family. Condolences may be made to the family at www.cavin-cook.com.

Cemetery Details

Cavin-Cook FH & Crematory

494 E. Plaza Drive
Mooresville, NC 28115

Previous Events

Graveside Service

MAR 2. 12:30 PM - 1:00 PM (ET)

Salisbury National Cemetery
501 Statesville Blvd
Salisbury, NC 28144

Tribute Wall

PG

“ I'm happy my husband got to know and meet Uncle Leon they had some things in common.

Patt George - February 27 at 12:03 PM

DH

“ Dear Family! Leon was by far one of my hero's. Leon and his brothers were dedicated to our freedom and sacrificed their lives defending it. I am so sorry that the distance between Michigan and North Carolina and life's challenges got in our way to spending time together. I will be forever grateful that Leon gave his life to our Lord Jesus Christ. Our thoughts, prayers and our love are with you all. God Bless.

David Haase - February 27 at 10:55 AM

PM

“ Uncle Leon was one of the 4 brothers that looked like Grandpa they had that strong Clem look. I can remember weekends at their house riding the horse and playing with the pigs and collecting the eggs from the chickens. He will be missed. No more Facebook appearances either.

Pamela Myers - February 27 at 10:51 AM

DD

“ My dad was cherished by all who loved him. The middle picture was taken at Westminster Church of God on Easter several years ago. This tree Dad said was always a beautiful tree in the Spring. Third picture is of Dad and my twin Dennis we had a family outing if memory serves me right it was for our birthday. 1st photo was taken at Church a year or two before he had hard time getting into the van to go to Church after he couldn't attend anymore he was on his tablet did not like missing the message from Pastor Aaron.



Denise Doan - February 27 at 07:50 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* was purchased for the family of Leon John Clem, Sr.



February 24 at 06:30 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Leon John Clem, Sr.

February 24 at 06:30 PM