



Leonard J. Chlup

June 25, 1939 - March 7, 2026

A Memorial Mass will be held for Leonard on Tuesday, March 31, 2026, at 10:00 a.m., at St. Ann Catholic Church in Burleson, Texas (100 SW Alsbury Blvd., Burleson, Texas 76028).

Praying of the Rosary will be held at St. Ann's before the Memorial Mass at 9:30 a.m.

It was Leonard's wishes to be cremated; there will not be a visitation or viewing.

In place of flowers, the family asks that donations be made in Leonard's memory to:

- Wounded Warrior Project: <https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/>
- St. Jude Children's Research Hospital: <https://www.stjude.org/>

Leonard's Memorial Mass will be livestreamed. Click the link below to be directed to the livestream.

Facebook livestream link: <https://www.facebook.com/SaintAnnCatholicChurch>

A celebration of life will be held in Leonard's honor in Fillmore County, Nebraska, in early summer 2026. Details to be announced at a later date.

Leonard J. Chlup was born to James and Rose (Kvasnicka) Chlup on June 25, 1939, on the family farm in Exeter, Nebraska, and passed away on March 7, 2026, surrounded by his family at home in Crowley, Texas at the age of 86.

Leonard grew up on the farm in Exeter. Proud of his Czech heritage, he embraced polka music throughout his life. He began playing the trumpet at age 12 and in 1955, joined the U-Neta Orchestra, performing several nights a week while completing high school. His musical journey led him to bands that included The Royal Five and the Math Sladky Band—one of Nebraska's most renowned traditional polka bands. His trumpet playing was featured on many recordings and radio broadcasts, and he performed to audiences across the Midwest, Texas, and Canada. In 2011, he was honored with induction into the Musicians' Hall of Fame in Milligan, Nebraska, for his lifelong dedication to promoting Czech music.

Leonard proudly served his country in the United States Navy, enlisting in October 1961. He performed radar duties aboard the destroyer USS Morton (DD 948) and also served as the ship's bugler. His naval service took him around the world and included duty during the Vietnam War. He was honorably discharged in February 1966, and his veteran status remained a lifelong source of pride. He and his wife, Carolyn, enjoyed attending reunions with his shipmates over the years. Leonard's service later inspired his granddaughter, Emma Zimmerman, to follow in his footsteps and enlist in the Navy in 2025; he proudly attended her graduation and gave her a heartfelt salute.

Leonard met his wife, Carolyn J. Hupka, at a polka dance while home on extended leave in 1965. They were married in June 1966 at St. Teresa's Catholic Church in Lincoln, Nebraska, where they made their home and raised their three children—Jim, David, and Julie. The family created many memories on camping trips throughout Nebraska, often caravanning with

relatives and friends, including camping on the family farm in Exeter. His kids and grandkids were the pride of his life.

Leonard's working years included early jobs as a cabinet maker, and he was later employed by the Soil Conservation Service as a cartography printer for many years. In 1982, his job relocated to Fort Worth, Texas, and the family settled in Crowley. Leonard subsequently joined the U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing in Fort Worth, where his attention to precision, printing knowledge, and memorable personality earned him recognition as one of the facility's senior pressmen.

Leonard retired in 2002 and though he had left the farm, the farm never left him. After inheriting a portion of the family farm in Exeter, he pursued his lifelong dream of building a cabin overlooking the prairie on the south 80 acres—a place that had lived in his heart since childhood. During retirement, he and Carolyn spent many summers at the farm as part of the local community, welcoming their kids and grandkids for visits. Leonard's vision was that the farm would become part of their heritage and birthright. Additionally, Leonard and Carolyn spent their retirement years camping throughout the US and spending many weekends attending athletic events, concerts and other activities of their grandchildren.

Although he retired from performing polka music after moving to Texas, Leonard continued sharing his musical gifts at St. Ann's Catholic Church in Burleson, Texas. For more than 30 years, his trumpet echoed through the chapel, enhancing worship at both English and Spanish masses. He was beloved at the church and recognized as Musician of the Year in 2015.

Leonard loved his family, dogs, Shiner Bock, fried chicken gizzards, Czech food, polka music, old movies (particularly westerns), popcorn, vintage pickup

trucks and hot rods, dancing in the kitchen with daughter Julie, woodworking, playing dominos, and many evenings sitting on the porch of his cabin with Carolyn and his family enjoying sunsets across the Nebraska prairie. He and Carolyn enjoyed going out to breakfast and raising their coffee cups each morning with a praise of "Thank you, Jesus!" to begin each day.

He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Carolyn (Hupka) Chlup of Crowley, Texas; his children, Jim Chlup and wife Cyndi of Mansfield, Texas; David Chlup and wife Kristin of Fort Worth, Texas; and Julie Zimmerman and husband Steve of Arlington, Texas; as well as his sister, LaVerne Kempkes of Lincoln, Nebraska.

Leonard was a proud grandpa to Cameron Chlup and Carson Chlup (children of Jim and Cyndi); Lauren Chlup and Lily Chlup (children of David and Kristin); and Ethan Zimmerman and Emma Zimmerman (children of Julie and Steve).

His best friends were Tom Murphy of Lincoln, Nebraska, Johnny Halama (deceased) of Milligan, Nebraska, and Melvin Motis (deceased) of Exeter, Nebraska. He was also a second dad to his kids' many friends, who affectionately referred to him as "The Main Dude."

Cemetery Details

Exeter Cemetery

Exeter, NE 68351

Previous Events

Rosary

MAR 31. 9:30 AM (CT)

St. Ann's Before The Memorial Mass
100 SW Albury Blvd.
Burleson, TX 76028

Memorial Mass

MAR 31. 10:00 AM (CT)

St. Ann Catholic Church
100 SW Alsbury Blvd.
Burleson, TX 76028

Tribute Wall

TD

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



T. D. - March 29 at 12:48 PM

JD

“ Carolyn and family we want to let you all know we are thinking of you. Those two had a lot of fun together and are joined again in heaven. The Halamas

JoDee Dunker - March 12 at 12:58 PM

MV

*Dear Chlup Family,
Our deepest sympathy to your family. Thinking of all of you at this most difficult time. Many all wonderful memories and stories bring you comfort in the days ahead. Heaven has gained a kind and genuine soul. Tom & Mary Lou Vossler*

Mary Lou Vossler - March 12 at 02:47 PM

GT

Carolyn and Family, My deepest sympathy to you in the loss of Leonard. May your faith comfort you and the shared memories bring comfort to each of you. Vernon had many special memories of times with Leonard. I have never forgotten hearing Leonard play his music. He was very talented. He will be missed.

Sending hugs and prayers for God to comfort you. Grace Thomsen

Grace Thomsen - June 23 at 09:49 PM