

## A Tribute to Charlie Van Norman



True Friend, Wise Leader, and a Great Man

February 1, 1943 – June 17, 2015

On June 17, 2015, Charlie Van Norman passed away after living a remarkable life of over 72 years. His journey through life left indelible footprints in the hearts and minds of a great many people who are very thankful that Charlie played a part in their lives. Charlie was a true friend, a wise leader, and a great man. This document attempts to provide an overview of the impactful life Charlie led and list his many accomplishments and achievements. Charlie was an impeccable engineer who always ensured the smallest details were correctly addressed, so in tribute to him this document contains more details about his life than you might find in similar documents.

Charles Vernon Van Norman was born in Los Angeles, California on February 1, 1943 to parents Philip and Nora Van Norman. Charlie was the second child in the family; his sister Betty was born in 1941. His brother H. Ralph was born in 1946, completing the family unit and making Charlie the middle child. Charlie graduated from California Polytechnic Institute San Luis Obispo in 1964 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Aerospace Engineering.

Charlie was hired as a civilian employee at the Air Force Flight Test Center (AFFTC), Edwards AFB, California in the summer of 1964 shortly after graduating from Cal Poly. His hiring initiated the compilation of a long list of important assignments and significant achievements over the next 34 years. Listed below are the positions and responsibilities Charlie held at Edwards AFB, starting with his very first position and ending with the final position he held before retiring from civil service in 1998:

Performance Engineer, 6/1964 to 1/1966

- Assigned tasks of increasing responsibility for evaluation of the performance of the YAT-28E, RB-57F, Lear Jet Model 23, U-10B and XC-142A.

Performance Project Engineer, 1/1966 to 1/1971

- Technical lead for performance evaluations of the C-123K, C-5A, EC-47Q, NC-123X, C-130A, C-130B, B-52A and B-52G.

Lead Performance and Flying Qualities Engineer, 1/1971 to 1/1976

- Led a team of flight test engineers in the conduct of flight testing of the A-9A, YF-16, B-1B, and various aircraft associated with the Have Idea program.

Section Chief, Performance and Flying Qualities Branch, 1/1976 to 1/1979

- Responsible for supervision of flight test engineers assigned to the YC-14, YC-15, A-7D, O-2, and KC-135 test programs.

- AFFTC Program Manager for Joint Air Force/NASA testing of the F-111 TACT, HiMat, AFTI-16 and AFTI-111 research aircraft.

- Supervised flight test engineers and directed instrumentation and data processing support for a variety of classified flight test activities conducted offsite.

Deputy Chief, Flight Dynamics Division, 6520 Test Group, 1/1979 to 1/1980

- Responsible for directing flight test engineering planning, execution and reporting for all aircraft performance, flying qualities, propulsion, and flight control systems development test and evaluation activities at the AFFTC.

Deputy for Data, Air Launched Cruise Missile CTF, 1/1979 to 12/1979

- Position created to understand and correct complex and very serious data acquisition, interoperability, and processing issues associated with the multiple ranges, multiple airborne platforms, and multiple contractors that supported the ALCM program. These issues had already delayed the program and threatened to totally stop all flight test activity.
- Successfully resolved all issues associated with data production and eliminated the data backlog, thus allowing the test program to proceed.

Deputy for Operations and Chief, Computer Sciences Division, 1/1980 to 1/1983

- Responsible for directing the real-time and post-flight data support for all flight test activity at the AFFTC. Support provided three shifts per day and seven days per week.

Deputy Director, 6521 Range Squadron, 1/1983 to 1/1984

- Consolidation of the Computer Sciences and Range Divisions of the 6520 Test Group created the 6521 Range Squadron. Responsible for management/supervision of civilian personnel, director of manpower and budget, and functioned as Operations Officer.

Director and Deputy Director, B-2 Combined Test Force, 1/1984 to 1/1988

- Director of B-2 CTF during formative period. Responsible for test facility design and construction, development of technical support equipment, acquisition of personnel and planning of the development flight test program.
- Led CTF during period of rapid growth from 10 to over 1000 personnel. Following appointment of a test pilot as the CTF Director, assumed the position of Deputy CTF Director and Director of Development Test and Evaluation.
- As Deputy Director, responsible for overall engineering and technical support activities of CTF. Responsible for CTF budget and manpower programs.
- As Director of Development Test and Evaluation, responsible for planning, provisioning, and execution of the DT&E test program. Responsible for planning of the low observables test program, including requirements definition for development of the test range facilities.

Technical Director, 6520th Test Group, 1/1988 to 1/1989

- Responsibilities were closely parallel to those described for the position of Senior Technical Advisor. The Technical Director position was converted to the Senior Technical Advisor as a result of reorganization.

Senior Technical Advisor, 1/1989 to 2/1998

- Flight test, logistics test, and technical support authority to the 412th Test Wing Commander. Provided technical expertise and direction to more than 4,500 personnel of whom more than 500 were professional engineers, mathematicians, computer scientists, computer engineers and engineering psychologists.
- Defined technical tasks for 1,400 contractor personnel.
- Principal advisor to the AFFTC Commander concerning resource allocations, downsizing, organizational re-engineering, and contractor award fee determinations.
- Member of various Air Force and Tri-Service committees and boards providing policy, direction, and oversight of the test infrastructure investment accounts for the DoD.

Charlie retired from civil service in February 1998. He moved from his home in Lancaster, California to a new home he designed and built in Wellington, Nevada. He started working as a government support contractor and compiled the following list of assignments and achievements:

Senior Member Executive Staff, Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC), 7/1998 to 10/2005

- Business development as well as serving on proposal development and review teams.
- Technical Director for CSC J-TECH Proposal Team. Participated in selection of subcontractor team. Directed development of proposed innovations. Responsible for validating that proposed technical solutions were within CSC capabilities.
- Industry Co-Chairman for of a study on Public-Private Partnership. Study was co-sponsored by the DoD and the NDIA and identified, evaluated, and recommended public-private partnership options for reducing the total cost of operating, sustaining and modernizing the DoD T&E infrastructure. Results endorsed by the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology and reported to Congress.

Subject Matter Expert - Systems Engineer, TYBRIN Corporation, 9/2003 to 10/2005

- Responsible for development of the AFFTC Comprehensive Range Roadmap addressing land, airspace, range facilities, frequency resources, targets, instrumentation (including scoring devices), range operations, safety, environmental factors, geography, local community and governmental use of adjacent lands, legal liability, rehabilitation, range cleanup/decontamination, future plans, etc.
- Responsible for conducting analysis and recommending changes to AFFTC management processes and procedures as a result of downward-directed changes in installation commander responsibilities.

Business Developer, TYBRIN Corporation, 10/2005 to 11/2007

- Responsible for business development activities

Senior Technical Advisor and Business Manager, Systems Engineering Group, TYBRIN Corporation, 11/2007 to 3/2011.

- In November 2007, as a result of an internal TYBRIN reorganization which decentralized business development, Mr. Van Norman was moved from the corporate BD organization to the Systems Engineering Group (SEG). His business development activities remained unchanged but were principally focused on contract opportunities in the western region of the US.
- Served as a technical advisor on programs within the SEG.

Senior Technical Advisor, Business Manager, Systems Engineer, INQU LLC, 3/2011 to 6/2015

- Member of a tri-service working group supporting the DoD Test Resource Management Center (TRMC) in developing an Unmanned and Autonomous Systems Test (UAST) roadmap. Drafted major sections of the roadmap and advised TRMC leadership on issues associated with conducting safe and effective tests of UAS.
- Responsible for business development activities

Charlie worked on the UAST project up until just a few weeks before his passing when his health had deteriorated to the point he could no longer do any work. His dedication to

advancing the aviation capabilities available to our warfighters was evident to all who worked with him, right up to the day he could no longer work.

Other achievements, awards, memberships, and degrees during Charlie's career are listed below:

- Society of Flight Test Engineers Kelly Johnson Award Winner (1996) (Award on display at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum in Washington DC)
- Outstanding Civilian Career Service Award, 1998
- Award for Exemplary Civilian Service as Senior Technical Advisor, 1993-1996
- Award for Meritorious Civilian Service as Senior Technical Advisor, 1989-1996
- Award for Meritorious Civilian Service for B-2 Contributions, 1984-1988
- Outstanding AFFTC Civilian Employee, 1988
- AFFTC Management/Supervision Excellence Award, 1985
- AFFTC Civilian of the Year, 1982
- Fellow & Life Member, Society of Flight Test Engineers (SFTE)
- Senior Member, American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA)
- Member, International Test and Evaluation Association (ITEA)
- Past Chairman, Range Commanders Council Executive Committee
- Past Member, AIAA Flight Test Technical Committee
- Past U.S. Member, NATO Advisory Group for the Aerospace Research and Development (AGARD) Air Vehicle Integration Panel
- Past Chairman, Flight Test Committee of AGARD
- Past Chairman, Flight Test Editorial Committee of AGARD
- Past Chairman, Smith Valley Township Advisory Council
- Past Chairman, Smith Valley Cemetery Board
- Past Chairman, Smith Valley Master Planning Committee
- Past Member, Lyon County Room Tax Board
- Past Member, Lyon County Impact Fee Committee
- Master of Science Degree in Mechanical Engineering, University of Southern California, 1974

Charlie loved airplanes, so much so that he built a 2/3-scale P-51 Mustang from scratch with his friend Dick Fisher. Charlie was an aerospace engineer and Dick was a structural engineer, so between them they designed and built an amazing aircraft that first flew in 1979. At the end of this document you will see a picture taken during Charlie's first flight in his scale P-51. Charlie and Dick subsequently sold their scale P-51 and it currently resides in a flight museum in Florida.

Charlie was a devout Baptist who did more than just regularly attend church -- he held long-term leadership positions in Baptist churches in Lancaster and Wellington. He faithfully attended church services even when it wasn't convenient to attend. One of Charlie's long-time friends and coworkers remembers a time long ago when he and Charlie were in Marietta, Georgia during a temporary duty assignment to support testing of the C-5A Galaxy cargo aircraft. He said he and Charlie had to stay in Marietta over a weekend, so Charlie located a

Baptist church and they attended church services together on that Sunday morning. Charlie's old friend says one of his fondest memories of Charlie is attending church services with him on that Sunday long ago in Marietta.

Charlie married his first wife Dianne in July 1965. They had three children: Michael, Timothy, and Christine. Tragically, Dianne passed away unexpectedly on August 30, 2009 in their home in Wellington, Nevada. Several years later Charlie established contact with Carol Luckenbach, a close friend from the time before he met Dianne. Charlie and Carol eventually restarted a relationship that had ended over 50 years earlier and Charlie moved to San Francisco to be near Carol. Charlie and Carol married in Las Vegas on March 29, 2014. Two of Charlie's grandchildren, Amanda and Brandon, lived with Charlie and Carol until Charlie's health reached the point he and Carol could no longer provide proper care for them. A very sad day for Charlie and Carol was the day Amanda and Brandon had to be relocated with other family members.

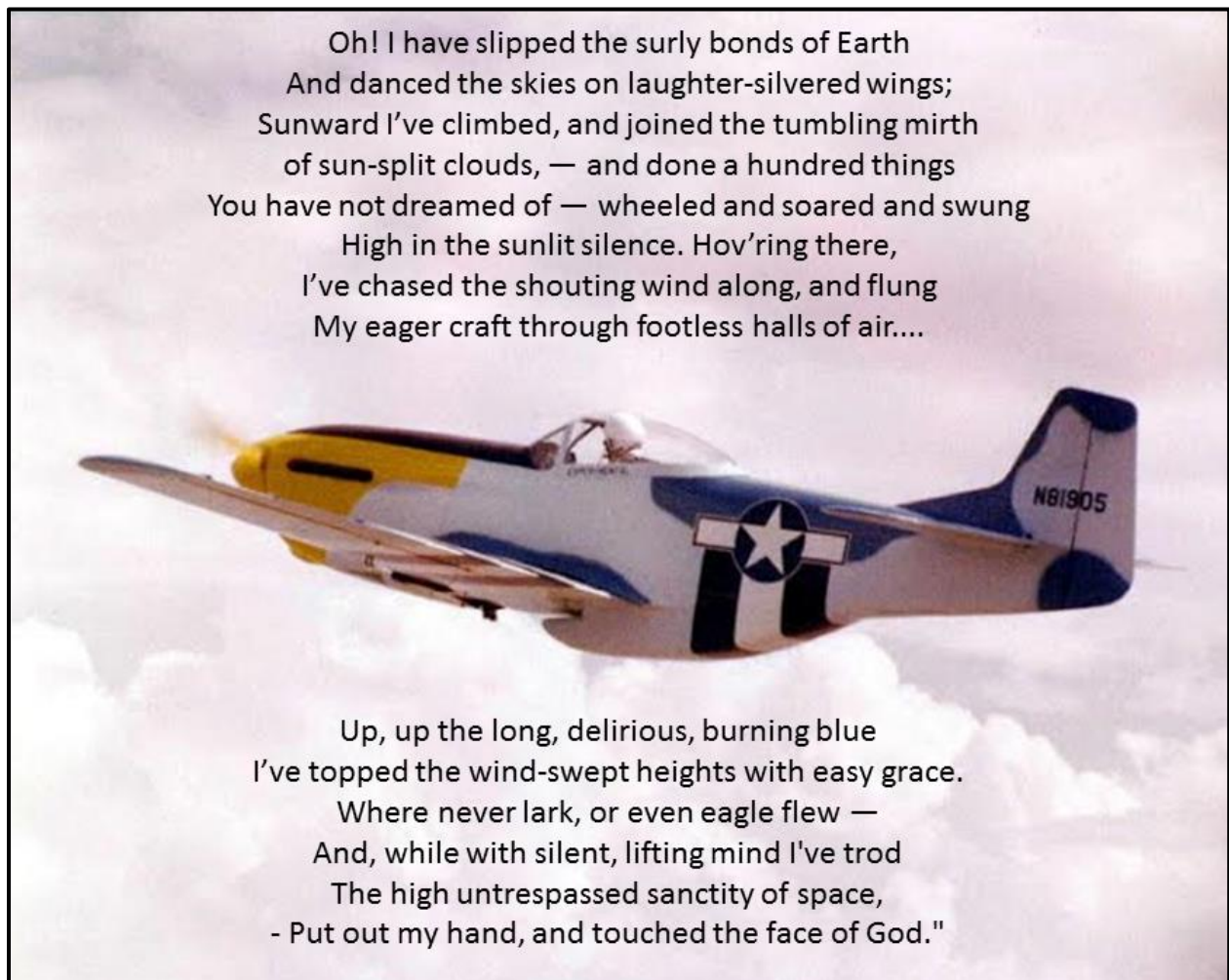
Another sad day occurred in April 2014 when Charlie was diagnosed with Mesothelioma after falling ill while visiting family in Arizona with Carol. After temporary treatment was provided to Charlie, he and Carol returned to their home in San Francisco. Charlie entered into a cancer treatment program in hopes of extending his life as a Mesothelioma patient, but sadly the treatments proved to be unsuccessful and he decided to stop treatments and enjoy his remaining time with Carol. Charlie fought the disease until the very end, with Carol constantly by his side providing loving support. All those who know Charlie are very grateful to Carol for the love and support she provided to Charlie during his final years.

A common theme that is very evident among the many comments posted on Carol and Charlie's Caring Bridge website is that Charlie was a true friend to a great many people. Charlie was the type of friend who would go out of his way to provide help and advice to any friend-in-need. When friend's encountered life-changing events in their lives such as family members being diagnosed with cancer, Charlie always stepped up to offer his help and support. Charlie befriended a great many people while working at Edwards AFB and he did whatever he could to help them improve their lives and careers. Despite being a senior leader for many years, Charlie treated employees on the lowest rung of the ladder as well as he treated those on the very top rungs. Those who knew Charlie could always depend on him, no matter the circumstances. That is indeed the definition of a true friend.

Charlie was a wise leader, so much so that he was promoted time-and-again to higher levels of responsibility while working at Edward AFB. A wise leader is a leader who knows what needs to be done and knows how to motivate their troops to get the right things done. All those who worked for or with Charlie over the years, without exception, list Charlie as one of the wisest leaders they ever had the pleasure of working with. No matter the schedule pressure, no matter the pressure from higher management above him, Charlie was the type of leader you could depend on to do the right things to get the right job done.

Charlie was a great man. A great man takes care of his family no matter what situations arise, good or bad. Charlie's family faced many challenges over the years, but Charlie always did the

right things to overcome the challenges and keep the family unit strong. A great man takes care of his friends, and as stated above Charlie's friends continue to laud his friendship and support. A great man leaves the world better off than when he arrived, and as evident by the many accomplishments listed above, Charlie did many things to improve his community and expand the capabilities of the United States Air Force and its warfighters. Without doubt, Charlie Van Norman was a great man.



Charlie is pictured above during his first flight in the 2/3 scale P-51 Mustang he built from scratch with his friend Dick Fisher. This picture truly symbolizes Charlie's love of aviation, his amazing skills in working with aircraft, and provides a fitting background for the words of the famous aviator's poem titled "High Flight".

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