



## Norman Ray Butler

December 29, 1935 - November 14, 2024

Norman Ray Butler, 88, of Porter, Oklahoma, was born on December 29, 1935, to Caleb Terrell Butler and Ethel Cora (Stevens) and peacefully passed away Thursday, November 14, 2024 in Tulsa, OK.

Norman graduated from Porter High School in May 1954 and immediately enlisted in the United States Air Force on June 9, 1954. His career in the Air Force spanned 35 years, during which he rose to the rank of Colonel and became a decorated command pilot.

Colonel Norman R. Butler was Chief of Staff of the 42d Air Division, Eaker Air Force Base, Ark. After serving seven years as a Strategic Air Command bombing and navigation technician and flight line maintenance supervisor, Colonel Butler entered Officer Candidate School and was commissioned 23 March 1962. After completing pilot training at Vance Air Force Base, Okla., in May 1963, Colonel Butler was assigned to James Connally AFB, Texas, as a T-29 pilot for the Undergraduate Navigator Training Program. During his three years at James Connally, he served as a line pilot and wing scheduling officer. Colonel Butler was assigned to the 22d Tactical Air Support Squadron, Vietnam, in May 1966. For the next year, he served as a brigade forward air controller with Advisory Team 93. During that time, he flew over 1,000 hours of combat and directed more than 800 tactical air strikes. Following his tour in South Vietnam, Colonel Butler was assigned to the Flight Test Division of the Rome Air Development Center, Griffiss AFB, N.Y. As a flight test project pilot, he helped plan and conduct flight tests on systems being developed for

application in the Southeast Asia conflict. In February 1968, Colonel Butler deployed to the Republic of Korea in response to the Pueblo incident. After completing the U.S. Army Tank Qualification Course, he served as an armored forward air controller with a U.S. tank battalion stationed on the demilitarized zone. In January 1970, Colonel Butler graduated from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Okla., and was awarded an undergraduate degree in business administration. He attended Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB, Ala., from August 1970 to June 1971. In July he was awarded a master's degree in business administration from Auburn University, Auburn, Ala. In September 1971, Colonel Butler was assigned to the air staff in the Force Structure Assessments Division at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. During his four years there, he conducted and directed numerous studies to assess U.S. and allied weapons systems requirements. He was extensively involved in studies that led to the development and acquisition of the A-10 and Airborne Warning and Control System. Following the Pentagon tour, Colonel Butler was assigned to the 17th Bombardment Wing, Beale AFB, Calif. He served as chief, operations training division until his assignment to the Air War College, Maxwell AFB, Ala., in May 1978. After completing Air War College in May 1979, he was assigned to the 96th Bombardment Wing, Dyess AFB, Texas, where he commanded the 917th Air Refueling Squadron. In May 1981, Colonel Butler was assigned to Strategic Air Command Headquarters, Offutt AFB, Neb., as a senior controller. In June 1982, he was assigned as the 100th Air Refueling Wing vice commander, Beale AFB, Calif. He became the vice commander of the 19th Air Refueling Wing at Robins AFB, Ga., on 13 May 1983 and commanded the wing from October 1983 to October 1984. He then commanded the 305th Air Refueling Wing, Grissom AFB, Ind., until assignment to his present position in February 1985. A command pilot with more than 5,600 flying hours, Colonel Butler's decorations include the Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star Medal Air Force Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Air Medal with 18 oak leaf clusters, Air Force Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal with one oak leaf cluster,

Vietnam Service Medal with three battle stars, and Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with silver and bronze stars. Colonel Butler's date of rank in his current grade is 1 March 1981.

Beyond his military service, Norman was a devoted family man and active member of his community. Norman had a deep love for nature and a lifelong passion for birdwatching, finding joy identifying different species. Gardening was another cherished pastime. Norman's love for cooking shone through as he created meals that brought family and friends together. Norman also had a profound affection for animals, valuing their companionship and care. Whether it was a loyal pet or wildlife, he treated animals with kindness and respect, embodying his gentle and nurturing spirit. Above all, Norman treasured the time he spent with his loved ones, creating memories filled with love and warmth that will be cherished by all who knew him.

Norman is preceded in death by his parents; daughter, Cynthia Butler; brother, Pat R Butler; and sister, Jane Scoggins.

Norman is survived by his wife, Paula Jo Butler of Porter, Oklahoma; his daughter, Tracey Butler of Bluffton, SC; grandson, Tyler Michael Freeland of Bluffton, SC; and granddaughter, Alexys Lynne Freeland of Fayetteville, NC. A viewing will be 12PM - 7PM, Wednesday, November 20, 2024, at Clifford D. Garrett Family Funeral Home in Fort Gibson.

A celebration of life with full military honors will be held on Thursday, November 21, 2024, at 12:30 PM at Fort Gibson National Cemetery, with Brother Justin Kinman officiating.

The family has entrusted Colonel Norman Butler's care, service, and burial to Clifford D. Garrett Family Funeral Home in Fort Gibson.

# Cemetery Details

## Fort Gibson National Cemetery

1423 Cemetery Road  
Fort Gibson, OK 74434

# Previous Events

## Viewing

NOV **20**. 12:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Clifford D Garrett Family Funeral Home (Fort Gibson)  
1224 E Poplar St  
Fort Gibson, OK 74434  
(918) 478-2555

## Graveside Service

NOV **21**. 12:30 PM (CT)

Fort Gibson National Cemetery  
1423 Cemetery Rd  
Fort Gibson, OK 74434  
(918) 478-2334

# Tribute Wall

LB

“ 2 files added to the album Norman



Larry Butler - January 09, 2025 at 11:39 AM

TB

“ My sweet daddy! I don't know how I'm going to function without you. You were my everything and I miss you so very much. It was an honor to always be my "Daddy's girl". You loved me like no other and were always so very proud of me. You gave me my work ethic and strong sense of values and ethics and have always been my North Star. The respect that I have for you is unwavering. I strive to always be the person you told me I could be and I know my success in life stems from your guidance and support. I am so proud of you and your accomplishments. You were a badass fighter pilot and leader and I will always strive everyday to live up to the amazing example that you set for me. Gods speed Daddy. I can't wait until we reunite with you in the arms of Jesus. I love you unconditionally and forever!



Tracey Leigh Butler - November 20, 2024 at 11:59 PM



“ *Tender Tribute was purchased for the family of Norman Ray Butler.*



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November 20, 2024 at 03:41 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Norman Ray Butler.

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November 20, 2024 at 03:41 PM



“ *Lawrence Erickson purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Norman Ray Butler.*



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**Lawrence Erickson** - November 20, 2024 at 11:46 AM



“ *Lawrence Erickson planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Norman Ray Butler.*

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**Lawrence Erickson** - November 20, 2024 at 11:46 AM

PB

“ 1 file added to the album Norman



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**Paula Butler** - November 19, 2024 at 03:40 PM

JF

“ Jim and Judy Folsom purchased the Fairest of All for the family of Norman Ray Butler.



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**Jim and Judy Folsom** - November 18, 2024 at 11:17 AM

JF

“ Jim and Judy Folsom planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Norman Ray Butler.

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**Jim and Judy Folsom** - November 18, 2024 at 11:17 AM

KB

“ I cut Norms' hair for 25 years and he was the most loyal and punctual client you could ask for. He always wanted to look nice and presentable. I loved hearing about his flying that he was so talented at. He also loved nature and would never hurt any animal. He would literally catch and release his fish. I loved, and will miss, his true kindness.

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**Katrina Boyd** - November 17, 2024 at 11:23 AM

CS

*Norman Butler was the dad I wished I had grown up with. He made me feel like I could do anything I set my mind to. Always encouraging and supporting, listening and giving advice when asked. Norman was one of the most stellar persons I have ever met and he will be missed more than words can say. My life has been blessed in so many ways by knowing him and by having his love.*

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**Connie Shipley** - November 20, 2024 at 03:35 PM

LB

*Rest in peace Norman. I wish I had found out earlier.*

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**Larry Butler** - January 09, 2025 at 11:11 AM