



## Charles Taylor “Master Mechanic” Award

Charles Edward Taylor was born May 28, 1868, and died January 30, 1956. He built the first aircraft engine used by the Wright Brothers to power their first controlled flight. As a bicycle mechanic for the Wright Brothers, he worked in their Dayton, Ohio bicycle shop. During the early 1900’s, both Wright Brothers became increasingly interested in controlled powered flight and sought out the skill of Charles Taylor as a machinist and mechanic to produce an engine that would power their airplane in flight.

Taylor designed and built an aluminum water-cooled engine in six weeks to power the first successful controlled flight. The engine block weighed 152 pounds. The Wright Brothers wanted an engine that would produce at least 8 horsepower; however, the engine produced by Taylor produced 12 horsepower.

In 1908, Taylor helped Orville Wright build the “Military Flyer,” which was an airplane the Brothers were demonstrating to the Army in an attempt to interest the military in their airplane. The Wright Brothers’ demonstration took place at Fort Myers, in the Washington, D. C. area. This flight was the first aircraft powered flight that had a fatal accident. During the demonstration flight, a propeller malfunctioned causing the airplane to crash – injuring Orville and killing his passenger, Lt. Selfridge (an Army officer).

The Charles Taylor Master Mechanic Award is named in honor of Charles Taylor, the first aviation mechanic of powered flight. It recognizes the lifetime accomplishment of senior mechanics. The award is sponsored by the Federal Aviation Administration and the Roll of Honor is located on the FAA website at [www.FAA.safety.gov](http://www.FAA.safety.gov). To be eligible for the Charles Taylor Master Mechanic Award, the FAA has requirements listed as follows:

1. Must be a citizen of the United States.
2. Must have worked for a period of fifty years in an aviation career.
3. The applicant must have been an FAA-certified mechanic or repairman working on N-registered aircraft maintained under the Federal Aviation regulations for a minimum of 30 of the fifty years required. The remaining 20 years may be accepted if that individual served as an aircraft mechanic or repairman in the United States military or worked as an uncertificated person in a United States aviation maintenance facility that maintain United States registered aircraft, either domestic or overseas; or worked as an uncertificated person in the aircraft manufacturing industry in the United States, producing US-type certificated or US military aircraft.

As a recipient of the Charles Taylor award in 2005 by the FAA’s Daly City Certificate Management Office, I was given a book along with the award when I received it. The book talks about the life of Charles Taylor as the first airplane mechanic to make an airplane engine and have it power an airplane in flight.

The Charles Taylor award is given to honor those Aviation Maintenance Technicians who have worked in the field of aviation for fifty years, while working for at least 30 of the fifty years as a licensed mechanic. I received my award in 2005 while working for the Federal Aviation Administration as a safety Inspector.



In 1952 as a 17-year-old youth, I enlisted in the United States Air Force and in 1954 I graduated from aviation maintenance school at Chanute Air Force Base in Illinois. After ten years of military duty I was discharged and immediately joined the California Air National Guard as an airplane mechanic. I retired from the Reserves after 27 years of service. During this period of time I was also working for United Air Lines as a mechanic and retired from United after 29 years of service. After my retirement from United, I was hired by the Federal Aviation Administration as an Aviation Maintenance safety inspector and worked in that capacity until my retirement in 2005. Currently, I am still active with my Airframe and Power plant licenses and Inspection Authorization.

