

# Biographical Data

Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center  
Houston, Texas 77058



National Aeronautics and  
Space Administration

**ROBERT F. OVERMYER (COLONEL, USMC, RET.)**  
**NASA ASTRONAUT (DECEASED)**

**PERSONAL DATA:** Born July 14, 1936, in Lorain, Ohio, but considered Westlake, Ohio, his hometown. Died March 22, 1996. He is survived by his wife, Katherine, and three children. Hobbies included skiing, water skiing, boating, acrobatic flying in open cockpit biplanes, coaching baseball, and running.

**EDUCATION:** Attended and graduated from Westlake High School, Westlake, Ohio, in 1954. Received a bachelor of science degree in Physics from Baldwin Wallace College in 1958. Received a master of science degree in Aeronautics with a major in Aeronautical Engineering from the U. S. Naval Postgraduate School in 1964.

**ORGANIZATIONS:** Member of the Society of Experimental Test Pilots, Experimental Aircraft Association, and Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association.



**SPECIAL HONORS:** Awarded the USAF Meritorious Service Medal in 1969 for duties with the USAF Manned Orbiting Laboratory Program; awarded the USMC Meritorious Service Medal in 1978 for duties as the Chief Chase Pilot and support crewman for the Shuttle Approach and Landing Test Program; received an Honorary Doctor of Philosophy degree from Baldwin Wallace College, December 1982; awarded the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School Distinguished Engineers Award, January 1983; the USMC Distinguished Flying Cross (1983); and the NASA Space Flight Medal (1983).

**EXPERIENCE:** Colonel Overmyer entered active duty with the Marine Corps in January 1958. After completing Navy flight training in Kingsville, Texas, he was assigned to Marine Attack Squadron 214 in November 1959. Colonel Overmyer was assigned to the Naval Postgraduate School in 1962 to study aeronautical engineering. Upon completion of his graduate studies, he served 1 year with Marine Maintenance Squadron 17 in Iwakuni, Japan. He was then assigned to the Air Force Test Pilots School at Edwards Air Force Base, California. Colonel Overmyer was chosen as an astronaut for the USAF Manned Orbiting Laboratory Program in 1966. The program was canceled in 1969. Colonel Overmyer has over 7,500 flight hours with over 6,000 in jet aircraft.

**NASA EXPERIENCE:** He was selected as a NASA astronaut in 1969 after the MOL Program was canceled. His first assignment with NASA was engineering development duties on the Skylab Program from 1969 until November 1971. From November 1971 until December 1972, he was a support crew member for Apollo 17 and was the launch capsule communicator. From January 1973 until July 1975, he was a support crew member for the Apollo-Soyuz Test Project and was the NASA capsule communicator in the mission control center in Moscow, USSR. In 1976, he was assigned duties on the Space Shuttle Approach and Landing Test (ALT) Program and was the prime T-38 chase pilot for Orbiter Free-Flights 1 and 3. In 1979 Colonel Overmyer was assigned as the Deputy Vehicle Manager of OV-102 (Columbia) in charge of finishing the manufacturing and tiling of Columbia at the Kennedy Space Center preparing it for its first flight. This assignment lasted until Columbia was transported to the launch pad in 1980.

Colonel Overmyer was the pilot for STS-5, the first fully operational flight of the Shuttle Transportation System, which launched from Kennedy Space Center, Florida, on November 11, 1982. He was accompanied by spacecraft commander, Vance D. Brand, and two mission specialists, Dr. Joseph P. Allen and Dr. William B. Lenoir. STS-5, the first mission with a four-man crew, clearly demonstrated the Space Shuttle as fully operational by the successful first deployment of two commercial communications satellites from the Orbiter's payload bay. The mission marked the first use of the Payload Assist Module (PAM-D), and its new ejection system. Numerous flight tests were performed throughout the mission to document Shuttle performance during launch, boost, orbit, atmospheric entry and landing phases. STS-5 was the last flight to carry the

- more -

Development Flight Instrumentation (DFI) package to support flight testing. A Getaway Special, three Student Involvement Projects and medical experiments were included on the mission. The STS-5 crew successfully concluded the 5-day orbital flight of Columbia with the first entry and landing through a cloud deck to a hard-surface runway and demonstrated maximum braking. Mission duration was 122 hours before landing on a concrete runway at Edwards Air Force Base, California, on November 16, 1982.

Colonel Overmyer was the commander of STS 51-B, the Spacelab-3 (SL-3) mission. He commanded a crew of 4 astronauts and 2 payload specialists conducting a broad range of scientific experiments from space physics to the suitability of animal holding facilities. Mission 51-B was also the first Shuttle flight to launch a small payload from the "Getaway Special" canisters. Mission 51-B launched at 12:02 p.m. EDT on April 29, 1985 from Kennedy Space Center, Florida, and landed at Edwards Air Force Base, California, at 9:07 a.m. PDT on May 6, 1985. Mission 51-B completed 110 orbits of the earth at an altitude of 190 n.m.

Colonel Overmyer retired from NASA and the Marine Corps in May 1986.

Colonel Overmyer died on March 22, 1996, in the crash of a light aircraft he was testing.

MARCH 1996