



## Charles A. Totten

Charles A. Totten was born to Paul A. Totten and Rose (Applegate) in Marengo, IN on February 12, 1942. He grew up in South Bend, IN. Rose was a homemaker with five children (of whom Charlie was the oldest). Paul was a truck driver. Charlie was a veteran of the United States Army stationed in Korea, where he met his wife, Kyong. He was trained in electronics at Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama, working on Surface to Air Hawk Missiles.

After discharge, he went into Bethlehem Steel's new Burns Harbor plant near Chicago as an electrical helper, a Union hourly position. He also drove a truck at his father's firm on the weekends a few times. The long hours and no sleep incited him to dedicate his life to the steel industry.

As a non-engineer, Charlie was a rarity. But he supervised many and had the ability to find their mistakes. He started in the 160-inch Plate Mill for about eight months, then moved to the 80-inch Hot Strip Mill. He was the first at Burns Harbor to pass the craft test to be an A Rate Motor Inspector. He then became Exempt Turn Foreman and, three years later, Finishing Foreman, in charge of the four process lines at the hot strip mill. Two years later, he was promoted to Assistant Electrical Foreman. Then, he was sent to the plate mill as the Electrical Foreman in charge of everything electrical in the 160-inch Plate Mill. He was asked to take charge of the 160-inch Plate Mill Electrical Department, and then moved to supervise crane repair as Electrical Foreman. Charlie then went to the plate mill and back to crane repair. In 2002, he was promoted to Senior Supervisor as Bethlehem fell into bankruptcy. With downsizing, he was put in charge of a department of 750 Union hourly people and 49 salaried supervisors. That was enough for him, and Charlie retired after 37 years of service at Bethlehem Steel. While there, he was known for innovative problem solving and crane innovations, e.g., a sheave assembly retainer system, crane bridge wheel assemblies, solid-state controls on D.C. electrical contactor panels, wheel flange/crane rail protective lubrication, safety enhancements.

He then worked for 10 years as the National Accounts Manager for Integrated Mills at P&H Cranes visiting 11 major steel mills offering cranes and parts and service for them. Finally, T&M Equipment hired him as a salesman for Southern Indiana and Kentucky.

Charlie was proud of receiving AIST Distinguished Member and Fellow awards and the 2002 Gold Reliability Achievement Award. He also co-chaired 21 Crane Symposiums in a row!

He enjoyed traveling and was a proud member of American Legion Post 133 of Leavenworth, IN and the VFW of English, IN Post 6160. He passed away on January 18, 2019 at the age of 76.