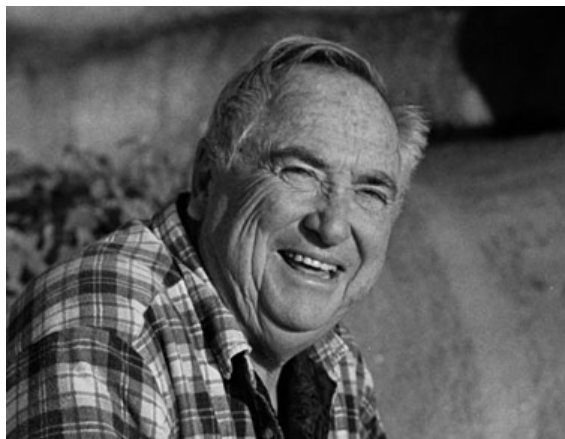


FAI Gold Air Medal for Bill Moyes!

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"Bill Moyes developed the sport from a local phenomena to a worldwide thing of staggering proportion, and thousands and thousands of people are now flying because of what he's been doing." So declared John Dickenson, inventor of the Modern Hang Glider and also a FAI Air Gold Medal recipient. The CIVL nomination continues...

"Bill Moyes learned to fly in 1967 and stretched the Dickinson wing limits, breaking successive altitude and endurance records, being the first to fly off a mountain and soar on a ridge. In 1969, he started selling his own gliders and went around the USA, Europe and the Pacific, giving demonstrations, showing his trade, raising awareness, making followers, spreading the Dickinson wing, proving that it could soar, glide and go up like no others.

When CIVL was created, Bill became involved as a Delegate or Vice-President for 9 years. He played a vital part in changing hang gliding from a recreational activity into an internationally recognized sport.

In 1969, Bill Moyes founded Delta Wing Kites and Gliders, that became Moyes Gliders and grew to be the most successful hang glider manufacturer, still active today, having sold thousands of gliders, all having a reputation of combining safeness, sturdiness and performance.

Now over 80 years old, Bill is still active in hang gliding circles, in manufacturing and competitions. CIVL believes that Bill Moyes, although closely defeated last year for the FAI Air Gold Medal, rightly deserve to be nominated again. He would certainly be a worthy recipient."

Well, the recipient was considered "worthy" by FAI Vice-Presidents who awarded the FAI Gold Air Medal to Bill!

Through Bill, our sport is honoured by the FAI award. Thanks, Bill, for your dedication!

**As Ken de Russy puts it...**

"A quote attributed to Bill Moyes in an interview I saw somewhere comes to mind and always colors my view of the tenacity and spunk of that guy. Moyes said "Every time we flew we bled!" He is an icon of our sport and created a mass movement of personal flight. It is hard to beat that for a legacy!



As *And The World Could Fly* (published by CIVL-FAI) puts it...

"As a kid I had a dream that I could fly. I dreamt it so often and vividly that I knew it really was possible to make that dream come true. I didn't fly like Superman with my arms out in front of me. Nor did I flap my wings to fly. I wasn't a bird. I was a boy with wings. I used to sit on the cliffs overlooking the beach and watch the seagulls skimming by and marvel at the aerodynamics of their design. I still watch birds. Galahs do the most spectacular acrobatics – it's their speciality. They have short wings in the same way as all aerobatic planes have short wings. But galahs can fold them up close to their body when they go through branches. We can learn much from birds. I used to lie there and watch them and feel sure it was possible for me to fly like that. Of course other people said that it couldn't be done. But whenever someone says something can't be done, that's when I have to do it."

Bill Moyes was born at Bronte, Australia, one of Sydney's southern beach suburbs, in the early 1930s. He left school soon ('I didn't enjoy it much. It was a waste of good fishing time'), married his sweetheart Molly at 17 and started to work both at Molly's fruit shop and as an auto electrician. Soon he bought his own auto-electric garage, which became for many years THE garage, both factory and museum of all his gliders (ah, the rocket-propelled prototype hung to the roof beams!).

Bill was also a typical Australian sport fanatic who swam every day in the ocean and became a water-ski champion. He was a good friend of Jack Murray, one of the great extroverts. Murray was better known as 'Gelignite Jack' – a madman driver who has been in the toughest car trials, around Australia and around the world. He was also one of Australia's first water skiers: there, he pioneered the sport, spouting it at every water hole, teaching thousands. Bill and Jack were inevitably attracted by the flat kite competition. Bill Moyes:

"The slalom was six buoys 50 ft either side of the centre line over a 1400 ft course. When a competitor achieved a perfect pass, the rope was shortened by 15 ft and he repeated the course. The rope length began at 130 ft. After seven years of competition we were completing perfect passes with 55 ft of rope. This was exciting as we smashed plenty of kites. The World Water Ski Union eliminated kite flying in 1975 because of the unacceptable number of fatalities."

Just as inevitably, they came across the new type of gliders that were being used. It happened in 1966. Bill Moyes again:

"I was looking for a better machine than our regular kites. I knew that Jack Murray had a Ski Plane built by Aero Structures. I asked Jack where to get one and he told me not to buy one, but to try a Ski Wing as the Ski Plane was too heavy and needed a lot of power to pull it. I called Mike Burns at Aero Structures and John Dickenson came to Sydney Harbour to give me a flight lesson in December 1966...

"All our flights were from tow-boat. The main problem with this method is that you are dependent on the skill of the boat driver to pull you at just the right speed. Too slow and you can't get airborne. Too fast and you go up at too steep an angle and can't avoid flipping over. Then there's always the risk that the tow-rope will snap before you're safely airborne."

On May 17 1967, Moyes set the altitude record at 1045 ft. On this day, his friend Bill Bennett was a witness from the Kite Club. He flew in a plane alongside him, filming the flight. Bill Bennett was amazed and wanted to fly himself, which he soon did.

The two Bills were fearless flyers and natural born showmen. Their chase for records and hang-gliding publicity created an enormous press following. Duration and altitude records see-sawed between the two barnstormers.

Jack Murray describes one of those performances:

"I went up to the opening of the Burrendong Dam – the new one out of Wellington, bigger than Sydney Harbour. There were 20,000 people there. It was a fabulous day – not a cloud in the sky. Anyway Bill Moyes is up there and as the program started I just noticed him skiing quietly away. After an hour we forgot all about him. Well, he went way, way back – eight miles upstream – and then he started his run with this 2,000ft long cable. We were watching the bare-foot skiing when suddenly, out of the blue, the announcer says 'Here comes Billy Moyes – and he's high!' We were all standing round and looking and couldn't see him, so we just went on watching the bare-footing. Another three or four minutes passes and the announcer says: 'Yes, there he is, he must be all of 1,000ft up – he doesn't look any bigger than a Coke bottle!' Well, be blown if we could see him or the boat that was towing him. Then suddenly it shot out from behind an island going like mad. And it hasn't got that far to go because just up here is the end of the lake. Well, we just stared at the boat – then looked for Bill – and strike me if he wasn't straight above us! Everybody, all together, 20,000 of them, just gasped. There was a deathly silence, he drops the rope. He was three minutes coming down. Then he goes in a glide, a long turning glide. You could have heard a pin drop – there wasn't a bloody sound. Down he came, you had to see it to believe it. It's the best act I've ever seen; he came down and landed there right at the edge of the water. He didn't have to swim a stroke – just stepped straight onto the beach, nodded and walked off."

Moyes was always willing to take risks. In an attempt to find new methods, he tried launching himself from a motorbike, riding along the sand with the kite strapped to his back until he got up enough speed to become airborne. Someone else was left to collect the runaway bike! That idea didn't work, but undeterred and even though he wasn't as good on snow-skis as he was on water-skis, Bill put himself in the record books in the winter of '67 as the first person ever to ski off Mount Crackenback in the Australian Alps, for a one-and-a-half-mile glide. Early in 1968, on Lake Ellesmere, New Zealand, he attached himself to a 9,900ft cable behind a speedboat and took the record to 2,900ft. Then in 1969 he made an attempt to fly from Sydney to Brisbane, a distance of about 600 miles. He was towed in the air by a boat that struggled along in the open sea for 189 miles, until huge waves swamped the vessel and opened her up. The attempt had to be abandoned after almost seven hours. This mad effort gave Bill the endurance record.

Bennett would not let himself be left behind. He broke records too, flew higher than a mile, got towed for two hundred; balloon-dropped from 10,000ft ... and left

the skis behind for the first take-off on foot.

If flying was good enough for Australia, it was good enough for the World. The two Bills went to the USA and began touring, billed as the Birdmen of Australia.

Bennett was the first to visit the US in May 1969. He eventually moved to California as the '60s came to a close... He founded Delta Wing Kites and Gliders in 1969, and manufactured hang gliders for twenty years.

Moyes followed soon. Accompanied by his wife Molly, he crisscrossed the country. He became the highest-paid thrill-show performer in the USA. In big outdoor shows, he donned a flashy white jumpsuit and thrilled audiences by being towed up behind a dune buggy and then cutting loose and executing supposedly graceful spins and turns on the flight down to earth (once the buggy drove too fast; the kite climbed too quickly and flipped over; Bill fell 300 ft to the ground. He was badly injured and was laid up for six weeks). In 1970, he descended 4,800 ft from the rim of the Grand Canyon to land at Phantom Ranch. Later, to beat the altitude record, he got towed by an airplane – his most turbulent and scariest experience. The plane, a Stearman, was too fast and he graphically describes how the wing rattled as he hung on grimly while the battens 'shot out of it like spears!'

In 1969, Moyes took his glider along to Europe and gave a demonstration at the World Water-ski Championship in Copenhagen, Denmark. He met fellow water skiers, showed his trade, made followers...

Back in Australia, Moyes' auto-electrical business was thriving and Bill had the time and money to fulfil his new passion. Bill had no formal training at all in aerodynamics. Instead, he had something far more valuable: an instinctive understanding that he has developed by avid reading and keeping an open mind:

"Every week I would build a new kite in the workshop, changing and modifying the design to improve its aerodynamics. The first kites I made flapped like rags. Then someone suggested that I should read High Speed Sailing, an American book about sailing on ice. I picked up a lot of good tricks from that book about battens and airfoil shapes and flexibility. I just kept on experimenting until I got it right. I started with a 13 ft wing, and then I built a 12 ft for my son, Steve, and a 17-footer that nearly killed me! Those wings were named after the lengths of the leading edges and keel, which were all equal. I then started opening the nose angle, first to 90°, then 100°, with a 14 ft and a 15 ft. Next, in 1968, I reduced the length of the keel and made a 16 x 15 footer – the first higher-aspect-ratio glider! In 1969 we were already flying off the mountains. I built a 19 x 15 and then a 20 x 12 with a 120° nose angle that was really difficult to fly. In 1972, I added a keel pocket and called the wing the Stinger because its long keel reminded me of a mosquito sting. But this innovation remained confidential: what was called the Rogallo Standards were still all-powerful!"