



Bill Smith

Notable – Accomplishment/Contributions, Montgolfier Diploma, Shields Trauger Award

(502) 338-6397

aeroforce1@bellsouth.net

Bill Smith is a native Kentuckian with an extensive background in aviation. During his 30-year military career with the Kentucky Air National Guard, he specialized in aircrew survival, air traffic control and fire protection. While serving as a combat controller from 1988-2000, he made 246 static line and freefall parachute jumps and served as a jumpmaster. He retired from the military at the top enlisted rank of chief master sergeant in February 2003 and is now focusing full-time on ballooning. Bill has a commercial pilot rating and has accrued over 1,500 hours in hot air and gas balloons. He is a six-time winner of the BFA long jump competition, flying over 750 miles in his record-breaking effort in 2017 and earning the prestigious Shields-Trauger Award from the Balloon Federation of America (BFA) and the Montgolfier Diploma from Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI). Bill is the seventh U.S. balloon pilot to earn the FAI's gold sporting badge with three diamonds and also the seventh to merit the Distinguished Aeronaut Pilot Achievement Award from BFA. In 2018, he finished second place as the co-pilot of the USA-2 team in the Gordon Bennett gas balloon race. In 2021, he was selected to receive the BFA Bill Murtorff Spirit of Ballooning Award. Bill was the president of the Balloon Society of Kentucky 2008-2009 and is a frequent contributor to its newsletter as well as BFA's *Ballooning* magazine. Bill often shares his experiences by training student pilots and speaking at safety seminars and conventions. He also has a balloon repairman certificate and operates Aero Force Balloons Repair Station in Shelby County, Kentucky. He currently serves as the BFA Long Jump Committee Chairperson.

Significant flights:

- 02/24/2014: 226 miles, 4h 6m, Effingham IL to Georgetown KY, BFA Long Jump first place
- 02/20/2015: 413 miles, 6h 37m, Greencastle IN to Vale NC, BFA Long Jump first place
- 02/11/2016: 690 miles, 9h 29 m, Mt Pleasant IA to Mocksville NC, BFA Long Jump first place
- 02/09/2017: 750.6 miles, 109 mph max speed, Lennox SD to Tompkinsville KY, BFA Long Jump record and first diamond performance for FAI gold badge.
- 01/06/2018: 12h 3m duration, Simpsonville KY to Glendale KY for second diamond performance for FAI gold badge
- 06/16/2018: 31,387' altitude, Shelbyville KY to Simpsonville KY for third diamond performance for FAI gold badge
- 09/28 - 10/01/2018: 56h 20m, 569 miles, Bern Switzerland to Salerno Italy, 2nd place Gordon Bennett world gas balloon race as copilot with Andy Cayton
- 11/17/2020: 692 miles, 112 mph max speed, Fargo ND to Catlin IN
- 1/14/2021: 101 miles, 2h 40m duration, Kanab UT to Valle AZ over the Grand Canyon
- 2020-2021: conducted eight flights to test the Comstock 2020 balloon autopilot

03/21/2021