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FAI GENERAL AWARDS FOR 2025

THE FAI GOLD AIR MEDAL (STATUTES 10.2)

Eligibility. The Medal is reserved for those who have contributed greatly to the development of aeronautics by their activities, work, achievements, initiative or devotion to the cause of Aviation.

[Oleksandr Halunenko \(UKR\)](#)

Oleksandr Halunenko, Hero of Ukraine with Gold Star No. 1, honoured test pilot of the USSR, honoured transport worker of Ukraine, honoured master of sports of Ukraine, 263-time world record holder in aircraft sports, master of sports of the USSR of international class, candidate of technical sciences, and assistant to the General Designer for flight issues of the Antonov Design Bureau. From 1975 to 1991 he was a test pilot at the Antonov Design Bureau, from 1991 to 1994 flight squad commander, and from 1994 to 1996 vice-president of the Antonov Aerotrek International Airline. Since 1996 he has worked as assistant to the General Designer for flight issues at the Antonov Design Bureau. During this time, Oleksandr Halunenko carried out a number of important flight tests on the An-28, An-72, An-74, An-32, An-124 Ruslan, An-225 Mriya, and An-70 aircraft. Mastered and flew the following aircraft: Yak-18U, L-29, L-39, UTI-MiG-15, MiG-17, MiG-21U, MiG-21PF, MiG-21FM, MiG-21SM, MiG-21UM, Su-7U, Su-7BM, Su-9U, Su-15, Yak-28U, Yak-40, Il-18, Il-76, Tu-16, Tu-124, Tu-154, An-2, An-12, An-14, An-14Sh, An-22 Antey, An-24, An-26, An-30, An-32, An-71, An-72, An-72P, An-72R, An-74, An-124 Ruslan, An-225 Mriya, An-70. From 2005 he has served as President of the Federation of Aeronautical Sports of Ukraine, during which time Ukrainian athletes have won at least 60 gold, 40 silver, and 50 bronze medals at FAI competitions and set 62 records in aeronautical and aerospace disciplines.

THE FAI GOLD SPACE MEDAL (STATUTES 10.3)

Eligibility. The FAI Gold Space Medal is reserved for those who have contributed greatly to the development of Astronautics by their activities, work, achievements, initiative or devotion to the cause of Space.

Not Awarded

THE FAI BRONZE MEDAL (STATUTES 10.4)

Eligibility. The Medal is reserved for persons who have rendered eminent services to the FAI in administrative work, in Commissions, or in the organisation of FAI sporting events.

[Jia Bing \(CHN\)](#)

Jia Bing has provided longstanding leadership of the Aero Sports Federation of China (ASFC) and played a pivotal role in guiding his organisation and team in the successful delivery of numerous FAI sporting events. Under his direction, ASFC has hosted several major FAI Category 1 events, significantly contributing to the international development and promotion of air sports. The ASFC team delivered the 2017 FAI Fly-in Expo in Wuhan, gathering aviation stakeholders from across the globe and enhancing the visibility of air sports. He played a leading role in securing and supporting the delivery of the FAI World Drone Racing Championships in Shenzhen (2018), Ningbo (2019), and Hangzhou (2024), with the FAI World Drone Soccer Championships planned for Shanghai in November 2025.

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These events were professionally executed and contributed to the recognition of drone racing and drone soccer as core FAI disciplines. Under his guidance, ASFC has also hosted a wide range of FAI-sanctioned competitions, particularly in skydiving. The successful bid to host the 2020 FAI General Conference, although cancelled due to circumstances beyond control, further reflects his commitment to the FAI and its values. The strong cooperation between ASFC and FAI, built on professionalism and mutual respect, demonstrates his effective leadership and continued dedication to advancing air sports, leaving a lasting impact on the global air sports community.

THE SABIHA GÖKCEN MEDAL (STATUTES 10.8)

Eligibility. The Medal is reserved for the woman who performs the most outstanding achievement in any FAI air sport activity in the previous year.

Luisa Rizzo (ITA)

Luisa Rizzo is the reigning F9 World Champion, having triumphed at the latest World Championship held in China, a historic milestone that crowns her as one of the top drone pilots in the world. She is the first Italian woman to join the National Drone Racing Team and has consistently demonstrated excellence in a highly technical and competitive discipline, pushing the boundaries of what is possible in unmanned aerial sports. Her journey reflects exceptional personal skill and determination, as well as a broader message of inclusivity in aviation. By breaking through traditional barriers, she has become a role model for young people, particularly girls, encouraging active participation in STEM fields and in the evolving landscape of aeronautics. For her pioneering spirit, world-class accomplishments, and ongoing commitment to fostering a more inclusive and innovative aviation community, she stands out as a leader in her field.

THE FAI SILVER MEDAL (STATUTES 10.9)

Eligibility. The Medal is reserved for persons who have occupied high office in FAI or in an aeronautical organisation in one of its member countries, and in the discharge of their duties have shown exceptional powers of leadership and influence, to the benefit of the whole international air sport community.

Mark Sullivan (USA)

Mark Sullivan is a pilot, competitor, and event organiser in hot air and gas ballooning. He served as the United States delegate to the FAI Ballooning Commission for 18 years and as its President for the past five years. He earned his commercial hot air balloon licence in 1983 and his gas rating in 1985, and currently has 3330 flight hours, including 2030 in gas balloons with 108 gas balloon flights. He won the U.S. National Gas Balloon Championships in 1995 and that same year founded the America's Challenge Gas Balloon Race, held annually at the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta. He won the FAI North American Hot Air Championship in 1992 and has twice received the FAI Montgolfier Award, in 1998 for service to ballooning and in 2005 for best performance in gas balloons, with two podium finishes in both the FAI World Gas Balloon Championships and the FAI Coupe Aeronautique Gordon Bennett, placing second in each. He has competed in the Coupe Aeronautique Gordon Bennett 23 times and the World Gas Balloon Championship 4 times, with his best result in both being second place. Flying with Cheri Edwards White, he won the America's Challenge Gas Balloon Race in 2008 and 2012. He has flown in 33 countries and 39 states and believes his 108 gas flights may be the most of any gas pilot in the history of U.S. gas flying.

THE DIPLOMA FOR OUTSTANDING AIRMANSHIP (STATUTES 10.10)

Eligibility. It shall be awarded to a person or a group of persons for a feat of outstanding airmanship in sub-orbital flight during one of the previous two years which resulted in the saving of life of others or was carried out with that objective.

Not Awarded

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THE PAUL TISSANDIER DIPLOMA (STATUTES 10.11)

Eligibility. It may be awarded to individual persons only who have served the cause of aviation in general and sporting aviation in particular, by their work, initiative, devotion or in other ways.

Fritz Gnass (CAN)

Fritz Preben Gnass has contributed over 50 years to the promotion of aero and space modelling in Canada. His involvement began in his teenage years, building and flying gliders on his family farm, later expanding to space modelling, particularly rocket gliders, during the space race. In 1988, he served on the FAI Jury for the first US/USSR Competition held in the USA at NASA's Wallops Island Launch Facility, Virginia. Since 2007, he has competed in more than 20 FAI Space Model Cups, earning 5 gold, 4 silver, and 4 bronze medals, as well as titles of Overall Champion (gold) and Overall Champion (silver). He has represented Canada in five World Championships—three in Space Modelling (USA, Serbia, Slovakia) and two in Model Aviation – F1B (Argentina, Mongolia). At the 2023 World Space Modelling Championships, he was part of the Canadian S2/P Precision Altitude Team that won silver, and was the oldest competitor in the event. He has also served as an FAI Space Modelling Judge and Technical Expert, Chairman of the Canadian Association of Rocketry (CAR), Editor of the CAR Newsletter Trajectory, and Space Modelling MAAC Committee Chairman. In 2024, he received the US NAR President's Award for Service in Support of NAR FAI Cup Events. At age 80, he continues to actively support North American FAI competitions.

Roberto Santamaria Koch (CHI)

Roberto Santamaria Koch has served the cause of aviation in Chile with dedication and leadership. He has made significant contributions to general and sport aviation, notably in modernising national aviation regulations for the benefit of sport pilots. He holds licences for gliders, aeroplanes, and helicopters, and serves as an instructor in multiple disciplines, including instrument flight, helicopter, and glider training. As both examiner and instructor, he is authorised by the Chilean Directorate General of Civil Aviation to evaluate and issue pilot licences for all these certifications. From 1991 to 1994, he demonstrated excellent management as President of the Santiago Glider Club. He has continuously organised aviation sports competitions and provided valuable collaboration with the Chilean Air Federation and its affiliated clubs.

Patrik Sainer (CZE)

Patrik Sainer is a seasoned pilot, instructor, aviation photographer, and journalist who has been publishing since 1995. A long-standing member of the Czech national ultralight flying team and the national team for air rally flying, he has earned numerous accolades over his career, including multiple Czech national championships, a silver medal at the World Championships, bronze at the World Air Games, bronze at the European Championships, and two gold medals in the World Cup. He also participated in the Himalaya High 2000 expedition and led the Sting Flies Round Europe expedition. In addition to competing, he is an experienced organizer of aviation competitions and events. Since 1998, he has been the publisher of the Airfield Database, a comprehensive resource for VFR flying in the Czech Republic and Slovakia—with the 30th edition set to be released this year. He is also the publisher of widely used aviation maps for the region.

Petr Burda (CZE)

Petr Burda is a former top-level aerobatic pilot and a member of the Czech national team, associated with the era of the legendary Zlín Z-50 aircraft. After ending his active competition career, he devoted himself intensively to training a new generation of powered aerobatic pilots as an instructor and coach. He currently serves as a prominent aerobatic judge, both in powered and glider aerobatics. He regularly participates in most aerobatic competitions, where he shares valuable advice and insights with the next generation of pilots from his judging position.

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[Angel Casado Alonso \(ESP\)](#)

Dr. Angel Casado Alonso, a long-standing member of the Royal Spanish Aeronautical Federation's General Assembly, has served as the Spanish Delegate to the International Gliding Commission (IGC) for over 20 years, participating in its board, subcommittees, working groups, and acting as Jury member and steward at numerous FAI events. He has played a central role in developing an advanced, financially viable live tracking system for broadcasting sailplane racing via the Open Glider Network (OGN), contributing to both the technical standards and device hardware enabling real-time tracking and scoring. His work has been instrumental in the FAI Sailplane Grand Prix series live tracking network and its technical support, as well as in enhancing OGN as a resource for Search and Rescue operations. In recent years, he led the development and implementation of Spain's iConspicuity project, expanding the national antenna network from 6 to 60 in one year through collaboration with aeronautical institutions and the government. His technical expertise, sustained contributions to air sports, and advancements in gliding technology have had significant national and international impact.

[Tom Arppe \(FIN\)](#)

Tom Arppe has developed, maintained and made several hundred updates selflessly and conscientiously with volunteer efforts to the Lentopaikat.fi service, which is managed by the Finnish Aviation Association since the service was transferred to the Finnish Aviation Association on 4 April 2014. Lentopaikat.fi is based on Finavia's lentopaikat.net service, which was launched in the spring of 2004. In Finland, there are about 70 official uncontrolled airports. In addition to this, many farmfields and light airfields. The website Lentopaikat.fi is focused on presenting them, providing benefits to aviators who are into recreational flying, as well as anyone else interested in the subject.

[Pasi Pirttikoski \(FIN\)](#)

Pasi Pirttikoski has been a member of the FAI Parachute Commission's ISC CF Committee (canopy jumping) since 2004. Already in 2006, he was the vice-chairman of this subcommittee and later the chairman. As a Finnish ISC deputy delegate or full delegate since 2006.

[Jean-Yves Glemee \(FRA\)](#)

Jean-Yves Glemee is a prominent figure in French aeronautical associations. He has been the founding president of Reves de Gosse for 29 years. Through this association, he promotes aeronautics to as many children as possible, both ordinary and those with disabilities. This educational project, approved by the Ministry of National Education, brings together able-bodied children and children with disabilities to change perceptions of disability and differences. Aged between 6 and 14, the children meet throughout the school year to develop a joint project. For children with disabilities, this initiative enables them to accept their differences as an asset. This inclusion initiative culminates in a flight connecting cities throughout France. The volunteer crews, known as the Knights of the Sky, offer all the children a day of entertainment and a plane ride. Since its creation, 78,000 visits have been made, 35,000 children have taken their first flight, 8,000 flights have been made and 220 cities have been visited. This project is supported by the French Air and Space Force, the Ministry of Justice, the Judicial Protection of Youth and has been under the patronage of the President of the Republic since 1995. A private pilot since 1989, Jean-Yves Glemee came up with the idea for Reves de Gosse while participating in the Saint-Louis Rally in Senegal. As pilots have to fly to maintain their skills, he decided to combine these flights with a charitable cause. He holds the National Order of Merit, is a Knight of the Legion of Honour, and is a recipient of the Aeronautical Medal.

[Attila Kositzky \(HUN\)](#)

Lieutenant General (ret.) HuAF Attila Kositzky, born 4 September 1943, has logged 3,369 hours and 36 minutes of flight time with 6,665 take-offs. He has flown a range of aircraft including Cessna 150, Cessna 172, ZLIN 226 Trener, Jak-18, Jak-18A, Jak-52, MiG-15 UTI, MiG-15BIS, MiG-17, MiG-21 U, MiG-21 UM, MiG-21 F 13, MiG-21 PF, MiG-21MF, and MiG-21BIS. Since 1970, he has held the qualification of First Class Pilot, and since 1980, First Class Fighter Pilot with Golden Wreath, awarded

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with the First Class Pilot Badge with Golden Wreath. From 1973 to 1997, he served as a test pilot, and from 1973 to 1999, as an air traffic controller, including at shooting ranges. He contributed to preparing and evaluating 10 airbase operating instructions and took part in reconstructing two airbases. He has flown from many airfields in Hungary—including Bacsbokod, Daka, Jakabszallas, Kecskemet, Kenyeri, Kunmadaras, Mezokovesd, Miskolc, Papa, Sarmellek, Siofok-Kiliti, Szentkiralyzabadja, Szolnok, and Taszar—as well as in Austria, Czechoslovakia, France, Poland, Great Britain, Sweden, and the Soviet Union. His published works include the biographies *Autorotation* (2000), *From Delta Wing to the Black Lady* (2008), *Sky Without Pilot?* (2013), *Fighter Pilots and Comrades* (2016), and *Pilote de MiG 21 La derniere vville* (2016, France), plus the novels *Call Sign Little Prince!* (2013) and *Brethren* (2016).

[Mohan Sharma \(IND\)](#)

Lt Col Amit Mohan Sharma has significantly transformed Indian air sports through his exceptional achievements and visionary leadership. In 2023, he led the Indian Hang-Gliding Team to its first participation in FAI Category II competitions, securing a historic gold medal and inspiring future athletes. His innovative contributions include designing a mechanical hang-gliding simulator alongside an advanced training curriculum, improving safety and accelerating skill development. With decades of expertise, Lt Col Sharma has reached remarkable milestones. In 2018, he led a record-breaking 476 km FAI world record in foot-launched powered hang gliding, demonstrating outstanding leadership and pioneering spirit. He has trained over 100 soldiers, mentored India's first female hang glider pilot in 2024, and served as a drone technology and aeromodelling instructor. His organisation of India's first national indoor and outdoor competitions has sparked enthusiasm and creativity among aspiring aviators. Experienced across eight air sports disciplines, Lt Col Sharma has reshaped Indian aviation and elevated it on the global stage. His relentless pursuit of excellence and commitment to advancing air sports exemplify the values of the Paul Tissandier Diploma, cementing his legacy as a visionary leader and innovator.

[Guido Guidi \(ITA\)](#)

Guido Guidi is a member of the Italian State Safety Programme Committee, representing Aero Club Italia within the National Civil Aviation Safety Programme. He is also a member of the Scientific Committee for legislative proposals in the Sport and Social category of the parliamentary intergroup Development of the South, Fragile Areas, and Minor Islands in the Chamber of Deputies. He is an experienced Commercial Pilot AMEL IR (Federal Aviation Administration, USA), Instrument Ground Instructor (Federal Aviation Administration, USA), Theoretical Knowledge Instructor (ENAC Italian Aviation Authority), and Accountable Manager for Declared Training Organisation Flight Schools in Italy. His educational background includes the 2022-2024 Stanford University, Stanford Engineering Centre for Professional Development Advanced Cybersecurity Programme. He has served as a board member, appointed by ministerial decree, of national sports federations and public entities with regulatory functions, with representation at both national and international levels. As a private pilot, he has transoceanic flight experience on single-engine general aviation aircraft, demonstrating a mindset focused on pushing personal limits and managing risk responsibly. His career reflects substantial contributions to the development and modernisation of aeronautical sport in Italy.

[Sandro Gargini \(ITA\)](#)

Sandro Gargini has been passionate about air sports since a young age, beginning with model aeroplanes at ten and progressing to powered flight at sixteen, becoming a first-degree pilot at seventeen and a second-degree pilot at eighteen. At twenty-one, he became a skydiver and at twenty-seven a gliding pilot, maintaining a valid pilot licence to date. He served in the Italian Air Force as an Air Defence Officer and NATO NADGE radar operator. Throughout his life, he became an instructor and examiner instructor of parachuting, participating in skydiving and rally powered flight competitions. He qualified as a national parachuting judge and later as an international FAI parachuting judge and was also a paraglider pilot. Gargini served as President of the Aero Club Etruria for eleven years and was a member of the Aeronautical Sports Commissions (CSA then CCSA) of the Aero Club d'Italia for ten years. He held the presidency of the Technical Parachuting Commission of the Aero Club d'Italia (CPS then STS) for ten years. Since 2015, he has been the Aero Club d'Italia Delegate at ISC/FAI and has attended all related meetings, currently serving as the ISC/FAI Ae CItaly Delegate. He led the Italian

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delegation ten times for major FAI Category 1 parachuting events, including the 2015 FAI World Air Games in Dubai. He designed and organised, with Aero Club d'Italia, the 75th ISC/FAI Meeting in Rome in January–February 2025, which was widely recognised as a success.

[Stefano Bianchetti \(ITA\)](#)

Stefano Bianchetti is a glider and helicopter pilot and instructor with extensive experience as a Helicopter Pilot for the State Forestry Corps, specialising in firefighting, search and rescue, and human external cargo operations in hostile environments. His professional career includes being an athlete for the State Forestry Corps team and an instructor in computer science and aeronautics. He has held leadership roles as President of Aero Club Rieti, Executive Board Member of the Italian Aero Club, and Head of Training for Heli Protection Europe, demonstrating strong teamwork, conflict management, and resource optimisation skills. Stefano's computer programming expertise includes software development using Visual Studio, Visual Basic, and Visual C++. He is the primary reference in Italy for EASA and NAA regarding interpretation and application of aviation regulations. Stefano served for many years on the Council of the Aeroclub of Italy as President of the Central Aeronautical Sports Commission, contributing significantly to resolving disputes. He has acted as an officer in FAI first category gliding championships held in Italy and is the designated contest manager for the 2027 World Gliding Championships.

[Hiroko Hirasawa \(JPN\)](#)

For approximately 15 years, Hiroko Hirasawa had worked key positions in microlight plane clubs and organizations throughout the Kanto region, dedicating to organizational development as a pioneering female pilot. Since 2016, she had also served in senior roles as Vice Chairperson and Chairperson of the Japan Microlight Aeronautic League. Through initiatives such as organizing the Japan National Championships and promoting safety awareness from both the technical and safety-consciousness perspectives of pilots and instructors, she had made significant contributed to the promotion and advancement of microlight plane.

[Chanil Park \(KOR\)](#)

In 1996, Chanil Park began radio-controlled (R/C) model airplanes and has been a member of the Korean Aero Model Association (KAMA), serving as an instructor pilot. Since 2002, he has contributed as an expert in the field of model aircraft by serving as a judge for various KAMA-organized Model Aircraft F3A Competition which was co-organized by other organizations., and by continuing to propagate the F3A sporting code and safety seminar at the annual KAMA Instructor Pilot Meeting, contributing to improve the F3A activities. From 2022, he became “the Technical Expert” and Subcommittee member of CIAM F3A Subcommittee, and he became the International judge of F3A, F3P, F3S and from 2024, he have the key role in organizing the “F3A Korea World Cup”

[Nikola Petkovski \(MKD\)](#)

Nikola Petkovski is a pilot, instructor, and aviation athlete whose flying career began in 1973 with glider training, followed by obtaining his PPL in 1975 and becoming an instructor in 1980. He has trained over 60 pilots and holds a CPL with advanced authorisations for instrument and aerobatic flying, as well as examiner status for CPL instructors, a position unique in North Macedonia. With over 12,000 flights and 6,000 flight hours, he has an extensive competitive record, serving for a decade on the Yugoslav national team and consistently ranking among the top in Aero Rally and Precision Landing competitions. His achievements include first team place at the Balkan Games and high placements at the Olympic Games in Turkey, the World Championships in Italy, and the European Championships in Poland. In 1982, he was named among the top 10 pilots in the Yugoslav Aeronautical Union. He has earned 5 gold, 7 silver, and 8 bronze medals, and has been recognised as Macedonia's best aviation athlete. Petkovski has led the Aeronautical Centres in Shtip and Kumanovo, served on the NAC Board, and is a listed aviation expert with the CAA. In 1996, he founded Boni Air, supporting aviation across the Balkans. He is currently President of the Kumanovo Aeroclub and continues to fly and train the next generation of pilots.

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[Anthony Van Dyk \(NZL\)](#)

Anthony (Tony) van Dyk started gliding as a 12-year-old member of a prominent gliding family. He became a gliding instructor at an early age and has served in that capacity for more than 50 years. Tony also became a very keen and successful competition pilot, winning many New Zealand regional and national competitions in the Standard Class over the years. He became involved in crewing for the New Zealand team at World Gliding Championships and later to represent New Zealand himself in several World Gliding Championships in the Standard class. Not only is Tony a very experienced and successful glider pilot, but he has also given massive club support, building hangars, building trailers, maintaining winches and the like. He has a natural skill in thinking around a problem then fixing it for good, often at his own expense. Tony has spent many years on gliding club committees in various roles including President, Treasurer and Chief Flying Instructor. He helped to establish a gliding club at a new airfield site on two separate occasions. Now in his '70s, Tony enjoys passing on his knowledge, encouraging new and young pilots, helping them to plan and prepare for their cross-country flying, and mentoring them along while airborne. Gliding has always been in Tony's heart. He has put in far more than his fair share to the gliding community. In short, Tony van Dyk sees it as his duty to care for his club and its individual members in any way he can.

[Warwick Bethwaite \(NZL\)](#)

Warwick Bethwaite has been gliding for more than 30 years and has served his fellow pilots at club and regional levels in New Zealand for most of that time. He rose through the ranks as an instructor, ultimately becoming Chief Flying Instructor at his club, a post he held for several years. As an instructor, Warwick gained a reputation for great rapport with his students. He was an enthusiastic supporter of the complete redevelopment of the pilot training programme at national level and its introduction nationwide in 2020. He was appointed to the role of Regional Operations Officer for the South Island in 2022, a high voluntary position in New Zealand gliding as part of the national Operations Team. This team is responsible for monitoring operational standards of gliding clubs, including auditing them and providing advice on a regular basis, the training of instructors, and the analysis of incident reports and dissemination of the lessons learned. However, it was not just Warwick's operational roles that defined his contribution to his home club, Canterbury. When the club was forced to move to a new site, he led the huge physical effort to convert former farmland, working tirelessly to remove fences, fill holes and level gradients, instal drainage, establish new grass, new fences and all the other things required to establish and maintain an airfield suited to gliding. The airfield at Springfield became operational in 2011 and has since gained the reputation as one of the best in New Zealand for gliding.

[Khalid Alkalbani \(OMA\)](#)

Khalid Al-Kalbani is a prominent and highly influential figure in the aviation scene of the Sultanate of Oman. With a relentless passion for flight and a continually evolving journey, he has carved a unique path through various aviation disciplines. In 2008, he founded the Al Dhahirah Amateur Aviation Team, which has since grown to include nearly 80 members, making it one of the most prominent amateur aviation communities in the country. Khalid began his aviation journey in the field of radio-controlled aircraft and later expanded into paragliding after undergoing intensive training in Thailand in 2014. Committed to knowledge transfer, he introduced these skills to the Omani youth — including his three sons — effectively nurturing a new generation of aviation enthusiasts. In 2019, he took his passion to new heights by training in ultralight aircraft in Ukraine. He then pursued advanced training to become the only gyrocopter pilot currently flying in Oman. Most recently, in 2022, Khalid became a certified tandem (paramotor trike) flight instructor, further cementing his role as a mentor and trainer in the aviation community. Beyond his technical expertise, Khalid is also a dynamic community leader, organizing major events at the Al Dhahirah team's headquarters with the attendance and sponsorship of ministers and senior officials. He has proudly represented Oman in prestigious international aviation events in countries such as Thailand, Italy, Cyprus, Germany, and more.

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[Alfred Andrist \(SUI\)](#)

Fredi Andrist combines both, being an active and successful sportsman and an official on several levels of the association since many years. At a sporting level, Fredi has been very active and successful both nationally and internationally in the FAI F1A, B and E categories for decades. In the F1E category, he has achieved a team vice world championship title and 2 team vice European championship titles and, of course, countless victories at Swiss championships and at various international competitions. He also celebrated many successes as team manager of the Swiss national free-flight teams, including several world and European titles. On the organizational level, Fredi has provided his services to the association for decades, as president and expert member of the Free Flight sporting commission, as head of finance and financial auditor of the Swiss Model Flying Association (SMV). He is also highly valued as an organizer of national and international competitions.

[Andy Hunziker \(SUI\)](#)

Andy has spent decades fostering a passion for ballooning in Switzerland. His achievements include becoming a student gas balloon pilot in 1975, obtaining his gas balloon pilot licence in 1976, and earning his hot air balloon pilot licence in 1979. That year, he founded and served as president of the Balloon Group Vordemwald to promote ballooning. He was Swiss Champion in Hot Air Ballooning in 1981 and Vice European Champion in 1982, the same year he became Switzerland's first hot air airship pilot. He trained as an instructor in 1984 and completed the first hot air balloon flight across the Alps from north to south in 1987. In 1991, he built the largest hot air balloon in the world (13,500 cubic metres) for passenger trips; the basket and envelope were later donated to the Swiss Museum of Transport in Lucerne. He self-published the book *Wind und Wolken als Begleiter* in 1997 and featured in the 2002 Swiss TV special *Home Sick, Where the Wind Takes Us*. Andy has completed 5,500 hot air balloon landings and 450 gas balloon landings. He has trained 11 hot air balloon pilots and retrained three from hot air to gas balloons. Andy continues to pilot balloons and has passed the presidency of Ballongruppe Vordemwald to Daniel Lemp. He has also inspired his son-in-law, who has been a hot air balloon pilot since 2021.

[Yves Burkhardt \(SUI\)](#)

Yves Joel Burkhardt has been involved in Swiss air sports and model flying since 1972. He completed preliminary gliding training in 1977 and served as President of the Swiss Model Flying Association from 1999 to 2011. He was a member and president of the organising committees for four Model Flying World Championships and European Championships held in Switzerland in 2000, 2007, 2013, and 2018. Since 1997, he has served on the AeCS Central Board, including roles as Chief Financial Officer and Deputy President. He was Secretary General of the Aero Club of Switzerland from December 2012 until April 2025, contributing significantly to the promotion of air sports nationally. At the international level, he was Vice President of the Federation Aeronautique Internationale, representing Switzerland and advocating for air sports globally. He presided over the organising committees for the 2018 FAI F4 Scale World Championships and the 2013 IJMC Jet World Masters, both held in Meiringen. Yves began his aviation career as a model aeroplane pilot and was successful in competition, including the Swiss Cup team glider towing event. He was made an honorary member of the Swiss Model Flying Association for his services to model flying.

[Bjorn Hardstedt \(SWE\)](#)

Bjorn Hardstedt is a person who can be defined in many ways. He is not just a paraglider pilot, instructor or chairman - he is also an inspirer who is passionate about changing Swedish airsport. With a career spanning decade, he has worked tirelessly to make aviation more accessible - especially in Stockholm. It is noticeable that Björn is a man with extensive experience in board work. For several years now, he has been chairman of the Fenix Paragliding Club and sits as chairman of the nomination committee for the Swedish Airsport Federation (he has in past also been a board member). In addition, he is also a member of the new district association, the Svealand Airsport Association. Bjorn has been in many different roles and really done work that has given a lot to many people.

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[Kjell Dalsheim \(SWE\)](#)

Kjell Dalsheim grew up in the small town of Dala-Jarna, where the village airfield is a defining feature. Every three years, the village hosts Flygfesten, northern Europe's largest air show. Early on, Kjell began with model flying before switching to gliding, a sport he remains active in. Since 1978, he has served as chairman of the Vasterdalarnas Flygklubb, a role he has held for 45 years. He has competed nationally in both model flying and gliding, participating in the Swedish, European, and Nordic Championships. Kjell was awarded the Swedish Airsport Federation's Gold Medal of Merit for his many years of distinguished service. His greatest successes are in gliding, where he was the first in Sweden to fly 1,000 kilometres in a 15-metre wingspan aircraft and set Swedish speed records on a closed course. Beyond his personal achievements, Kjell has significantly promoted air sports, serving as competition director for the Swedish Championship and as a key figure behind the large flying festival in Vasterdalarna. In the 1970s, when Flygfesten faced decline and was shelved, Kjell helped revive the event in the 1980s, transforming it into a popular folk festival that continues to grow in attendance and public interest.

[Jiri George Macak \(THA\)](#)

Jiri George Macak Jiri George Macak is the founder and president of the Burapha-thid Flying Association, an organization dedicated to promoting aviation across a wide range of aircraft, including paramotors, microlights, ultralights, antique airplanes, and especially taildraggers. Well known in the Thai aviation community, George has made a lasting impact through his deep experience and achievements in paramotor competitions at both national and international levels. He began flying at the age of 13 in 1997, starting with paramotors before advancing to weight-shift microlights. By the early 2000s, he had become a certified instructor in fixed-wing, three-axis aircraft. Guided by the philosophy, "You can do it if you work hard at it," George has inspired countless young aviation enthusiasts. Now a commercial pilot flying corporate aircraft, he remains actively involved in all areas of aviation, including skydiving, aerobatics, and instruction. He is especially passionate about paramotor trikes, microlights, and ultralights. George also works part-time as an aircraft mechanic at an MRO facility, committed to enhancing safety standards in Thai aviation to meet international benchmarks. He advocates for accessible aviation, encouraging people of all ages and genders to pursue their flying dreams. In addition to his many roles, he serves as a part-time pilot at a skydiving drop zone, operating the Pilatus Porter PC-6. With over 11,000 flight hours across more than 100 types of aircraft, Jiri George Macak is a respected leader, educator, and ambassador for aviation in Thailand.

[Mark Burns \(USA\)](#)

Mark Burns was named president of Gulfstream Aerospace Corp. in July 2015. Burns has spent over 35 years with Gulfstream, joining the organization in 1983 as a computer-aided design (CAD) operator. He then became involved in engineering for the GIV flight test program. Despite extensive travel worldwide and daily interactions with high-profile customers, Burns remains humble, unpretentious, and true to his modest Savannah, Georgia, roots. One of the many things to appreciate about Burns is that in conversation, he repeatedly deflected credit to his colleagues and expressed gratitude for the opportunity to lead a company he loves. Under Burns, Gulfstream aircraft have accumulated many FAI records, surpassing 700 since they began record-setting. Gulfstream's record-breaking achievements include numerous city-pair speed records, particularly with models like the G700. Key Aspects for Mark Burns: FAI Records: Burns appreciates and values Gulfstream's relationship with FAI and the NAA. Records are seen as a moral booster for pilots and an attraction for those who fly Gulfstream aircraft. Gulfstream's FAI History: Gulfstream has a long history of setting records, surpassing 700 over its 50-year history. City-Pair Speed Records: Gulfstream aircraft, especially the G700, have broken numerous city-pair speed records, demonstrating their long-range capability and efficiency. Specific Examples: The G700, for example, has broken records between major global hubs like Houston to Riyadh, Paris to Dubai, and Singapore to Istanbul. G650/G650ER: These models are also known for their record-setting performance, particularly in long-haul flights.

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[Rich Hanson \(USA\)](#)

Rich Hanson has made significant contributions to model aviation through decades of dedicated volunteer service on the Academy of Model Aeronautics board of directors. He has served as AMA President since 2017 and earned the Distinguished Service Award as Vice President of District X, along with the Meritorious Service Award. He is one of the few recipients of the AMA Fellowship Award, the organisation's highest honour for long and distinguished service. As a skilled modeler, Rich competed in both Pylon and Warbird Racing for many years and advocated strongly for racing enthusiasts. In his role as District Vice President, he effectively represented his district's concerns while considering the wider needs of the Academy. His clear, organised presentations consistently led to timely and effective actions, whether serving on committees or representing members. Rich devoted countless hours to resolving complex issues, helping to shape the AMA into the organisation it is today. His key contributions include leading the Club Disaster Relief program, which supports clubs recovering from natural disasters; chairing the Special Interest Group Committee for many years; chairing the AMA Bylaws Committee; serving as a key member of the Safety Committee; and playing a central role in developing and implementing the Flying Site Development and Improvement Grant program, which provides financial assistance to clubs for flying site enhancements.

THE FAI GROUP DIPLOMA OF HONOUR (STATUTES 10.13)

Eligibility. An FAI Group Diploma of Honour may be awarded to a group (design offices, scientific bodies, aeronautical publications, etc.) that has contributed significantly to the progress of Aeronautics or Astronautics during the previous year or years.

[Australian Aviation Hall of Fame \(AUS\)](#)

The Australian Aviation Hall of Fame (AAHOF) is in the Historical Aircraft Restoration Society Museum (HARS) at Albion Park Rail NSW, Australia and exists virtually through the website at www.aahof.com.au. Since its initial launch in 2010, AAHOF has inducted 61 Australians in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the development of aviation/aerospace in Australia. AAHOF has also recognised 12 organisations for their outstanding contributions to aviation and aerospace through the Southern Cross Award. In 2025, a further 4 Australians will be inducted into the Australian Aviation Hall of Fame, along with an aviation organisation recognised for its contribution through the Southern Cross Award. AAHOF has only existed for 15 years whereas our proud aviation heritage stretches back more than a century. Given our proud aviation/aerospace history, we continue to receive nominations for induction from families of those that were instrumental in advancements of the aviation/aerospace industry back as far as the early 1900's. We also receive nominations for the induction of individuals who have made significant contribution to aviation/aerospace in recent years. AAHOF continues to be committed to the cause of preserving our proud heritage of aviation and aerospace in Australia, recognising those that have made significant contributions to these disciplines, and inspiring our aviation/aerospace future.

[HPH Models \(CZE\)](#)

HPH models is a Czech company with deep roots in aviation and plastic modelling, originally founded after the Velvet Revolution by two brothers passionate about aircraft. Starting from custom-built aircraft models for pilots and manufacturers, the company quickly expanded into producing full-scale sailplanes. Following a tragic loss in 1994, the company evolved into HPH and in 2011 split into two distinct entities: HPH models, specializing in custom display models, collector kits, and museum collaborations; and HPH sailplanes, continuing full-scale sailplane production under different leadership. Based in Kutná Hora, HPH models combines traditional craftsmanship with advanced technologies such as 3D printing and CNC machining. The company, led by Jiří Hodan, operates with a small, dedicated team and external partners, continuously developing innovative models and expanding its range for collectors and aviation enthusiasts worldwide.

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[Athens Aeroclub \(GRE\)](#)

The Athens Aeroclub was founded in 1929 and operated continuously until the outbreak of the Second World War. It owned its own aircraft, which were made available for the war effort against the Axis powers. Historical records confirm that the last board meeting before the outbreak of WWII took place in October 1940, at the Hellenic Parliament building. The club's main activity at the time focused on flight training, including piloting airplanes and gliders, in collaboration with the country's major academic institutions — the University of Athens (Kapodistrian University) and the National Technical University of Athens (Metsovio Polytechnic). After the destruction caused by the Second World War, and having lost all its assets, the club was reorganized in 1952. Since then, it has operated under the same legal status. From its establishment to the present day, the Athens Aeroclub has been based at Tatoi Air Base in Dekeleia, providing aviation training to dozens of individuals — both young men and women — many of whom have gone on to pursue professional careers in aviation. In addition, the Aeroclub has always engaged in social and community-oriented activities, including forest surveillance, monitoring for marine pollution (oil spills), and delivering medical supplies to remote areas of the country.

[ANBO Eskadrile \(LTU\)](#)

ANBO eskadrile (en. ANBO Squadron) – a public initiative of Lithuanian aviators, amateur aircraft constructors and people, loving aviation – brought together with the idea to promote Lithuanian aviation history and national pride in aviation. Launched in 2015 by aircraft constructor Rolandas Kalinauskas and entrepreneur Edvardas Sabrinskas, ANBO eskadrile set for restoration of ANBO-II – first purpose-made Lithuanian trainer aircraft (1927), which has served its role both in training military pilots of the national Air Force as well as the first civilian pilots, when continuing its career as the second aircraft of the Aeoroclub of Lithuania. Other group's project included building replica of Niupot 24, presenting aircraft of own construction, annual organization of round-the-country flights ANBO eskadrile fast became notable in public life of Lithuania, with ANBO-II taking part as key element in various aviation shows in late 2010's, piloted and presented by the members of the group, dressed in restored 1930s Lithuanian Air Force officers uniforms. Further to display of historical aviation artefacts and their replicas, members of ANBO eskadrile are actively engaged in amateur aviation. A significant part of this group members is developing and building own aircraft, with Rolandas Kalinauskas, its informal leader holding unofficial national record of largest number of own constructed aircraft. Although the already started reconstruction of another group's project – the ANBO-III - a first mass-produced Lithuanian aircraft was cut short in 2021 with tragic death of Mr. Sanbrinskas in crash of ANBO-II, ANBO members are still actively promoting national aviation heritage, giving lectures, presenting historical artefacts and engaging public into aviation.

[Phil Phoenix \(MKD\)](#)

The Air Sport Association "Phil Phoenix" from Prilep is a distinguished aviation club in North Macedonia, has long contributed to aeronautics. Comprising experienced airplane pilots, instructors, and modelers ranging from ages 6 to 72, the club has played a vital role in preserving and advancing aviation and aeromodelling in the country. At a time when aviation activities were declining, Phil Phoenix ensured continuity by organizing national championships and cup competitions in Free Flight and RC categories. Their mission extended beyond borders, as they facilitated international participation and brought prestigious competitions to Macedonia. Since 2000, the club has hosted the "Prilep Cup – Prilep Trophy" World Cup in Free Flight, followed by the "Macedonia Cup" since 2012, and the "Phoenix Drone Racing" competition since 2017. These events have welcomed thousands of athletes from multiple continents, establishing Prilep as a key venue on the global aeromodelling map. In collaboration with the Aeronautical Federation of Macedonia, the club organized five major championships between 2016 and 2024, including World, European, and Senior Championships in various Free-Flight categories. Their outstanding reputation has earned them the rights to host the 2026 World Junior Championships (F1ABP) and European Senior Championships (F1ABCQ). As they celebrate 25 years since their first World Cup event, the achievements of "Phil Phoenix" stand as a testament to their unwavering dedication to aviation sports and international cooperation.

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[United Parachute Technologies \(USA\)](#)

United Parachute Technologies (UPT) has been a driving force in advancing the safety, performance, and accessibility of skydiving equipment worldwide. As the manufacturer of the industry-leading Vector 3 and Sigma tandem systems, UPT has revolutionized modern parachute system design through innovation, research, and an unwavering commitment to Excellence. UPT's engineering approach is rooted in real-world data from millions of jumps, resulting in systems that consistently set the standard for reliability and safety. The Skyhook RSL, a UPT invention dramatically reduces reserve deployment time and altitude loss during malfunctions—an innovation that has saved countless lives and earned widespread adoption across disciplines. The company's Vector 3 and Sigma systems also prioritize user-friendly design, ergonomic comfort, and fail-safe mechanisms, such as pin protection, zero bridle exposure, and ISO:9001-certified manufacturing processes. These features make their gear trusted by professional teams, military organizations, and weekend jumpers. UPT's influence goes beyond engineering—it fosters a culture of safety, integrity, and innovation within the global skydiving community. Through decades of development and education, UPT has elevated the standards of sport parachuting equipment, helping shape the future of the sport. For its groundbreaking contributions to the progress of aeronautics and its profound, ongoing impact on the global parachuting community, United Parachute Technologies is a deserving recipient of the FAI Honorary Group Diploma.

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FAI AWARDS FOR INDIVIDUAL DISCIPLINES

AWARDS FOR BALLOONING (BY LAWS 7.2)

THE MONTGOLFIER BALLOONING DIPLOMAS (BY LAWS 7.2.1)

Eligibility, Frequency and Number: Four Montgolfier Diplomas may be awarded annually, one to recognise each of the following:

the best sporting performance in the previous Montgolfier year in [Gas Ballooning](#)

[Stefanie Liller and Christian Wagner \(AUT\)](#)

Stefanie Liller and Christian Wagner achieved an extraordinary victory in the 2024 Coupe Aeronautique Gordon Bennett, completing a remarkable gas balloon flight from Münster, Germany, to Sagres, Portugal. Their performance in this FAI World Long Distance Gas Balloon Championship demonstrated exceptional skill, strategy, and teamwork. Their composed demeanour and precise final approach secured them the World Champion title, inspiring ballooning enthusiasts worldwide. Christian Wagner is a distinguished air sports athlete and unique World Champion across multiple FAI disciplines, including canopy piloting parachuting, underscoring his mastery of aerial sports. Stefanie Liller, an accomplished competitor and skydiving record-holder, contributed her expertise and determination to this success, establishing her as a leading figure in aviation sports. Their triumph in the Coupe Aeronautique Gordon Bennett stands as a milestone in ballooning history, reflecting the dedication and ingenuity of its participants and inspiring many through their outstanding achievement.

the best sporting performance in the previous Montgolfier year in [Hot Air Ballooning](#)

[Clement Seigeot \(FRA\)](#)

Clement Seigeot won the FAI World Hot Air Balloon Championship in Szeged, Hungary, securing the lead after the third task and maintaining it across all 18 tasks. He won two tasks and averaged 862.5 points per task. Beyond his individual success, Clement contributed significantly to the French team's second-place finish in the national rankings. A hot air balloon pilot since 2007, he is also a commercial pilot with over 2,500 flight hours in Australia and France. Clement has competed since the inaugural Junior FAI WHABC in 2012, accumulating 15 years of experience including three French National titles (2017, 2022, 2023), six silver medals, and two bronze medals, including at the 2014 Junior WHABC. He also helped the French National Team secure gold medals at the 2021 European Championship and 2022 World Championship. His 2024 World Champion title represents a significant achievement in hot air balloon competition.

the best sporting performance in the previous Montgolfier year in [Roziere Ballooning](#)

Not Awarded

a major contribution to the development of the sport of [Ballooning in general](#)

[Sam Parks \(USA\)](#)

Sam Parks has made a major contribution to the development of ballooning through extensive leadership and operational roles. He served as Director of Operations for the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta from 2018 to 2022 and became its Executive Director in 2023. An experienced flight instructor for both hot air and gas balloons, Sam founded and presided over the Iredell Aeronauts Society and was past President of the Carolinas Balloon Association. He held key leadership positions

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including President of the Balloon Federation of America, Southeast Region Director on the BFA Board, and USA Alternate Delegate to the CIA (Ballooning Commission of the FAI). Sam played a pivotal role in drafting HACD by-laws and unifying ballooning organisations in the US. He chaired sub-committees on NFPA rules enabling propane refuelling and hydrogen filling and co-chaired the “Call to Action” committee following the Lockhart Texas accident, working closely with the FAA on safety and regulatory matters. He has directed numerous major ballooning events including World Championships. His distinguished awards include the BFA Award of Excellence (1995), Distinguished Aeronaut Award (2003), President’s Award (2017), and Shields Trauger Award (2022). In 2015, he organised the first Manufacturer’s Summit in two decades, initiating the FIIT programme. Currently, he serves as a subject matter expert with the FAA on ADS-B requirements.

THE SANTOS-DUMONT GOLD AIRSHIP MEDAL (BY LAWS 7.2.2)

Eligibility, Frequency and Number: One Santos-Dumont Gold Airship Medal may be awarded annually to recognise:

- the best sporting performance in the previous Montgolfier year in airships,
- or
- a major contribution to the development of the sport of Airship flying in general.

[Alicia Hempleman-Adams \(GBR\)](#)

On 23rd April 2024, Alicia Hempleman-Adams set three FAI female records for Altitude, Distance, and Duration in a BX3 Airship, also earning three BBAC female records. She flew the BX3 to a maximum altitude of 1,261 metres, covering 20.447 kilometres in a flight lasting 1 hour and 5 minutes, taking off from Bethlehem, Connecticut, USA. These records were ratified by the FAI on 30th September 2024. The achievement was several years in the making, involving extensive red tape to re-register the airship in the USA and ensure its airworthiness. Alicia was superbly supported by a dedicated local crew familiar with both the airship and the surrounding terrain. The previous days had been warm with gusty winds, but the morning of the 23rd provided ideal flying conditions. Despite Alicia’s limited hours on the airship and flying over unfamiliar, heavily wooded territory—which the FAA stipulated as the flight zone—she displayed exceptional skill and courage. Communication was poor throughout due to limited mobile signal and the undulating landscape complicating tracking. Careful in selecting a landing site, Alicia skilfully touched down in the first large area of open grassland at Hawinton, Connecticut. Her outstanding determination and poise captured the world’s media attention. Through charming and humble interviews, Alicia has become a remarkable ambassador for female pilots, young aviators, and the sport of ballooning internationally.

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AWARDS FOR GENERAL AVIATION (BY LAWS 7.3)

THE CHARLES LINDBERGH GENERAL AVIATION DIPLOMA (BY LAWS 7.3.1)

Eligibility: The Lindbergh Diploma may be awarded annually to:

- *individuals or organisations that have contributed significantly over a period of not less than ten years to the progress and success of General Aviation in either air sport or transportation, or in the work of international bodies concerned with General Aviation; or*
- *to recognise technical breakthroughs in the field of General Aviation as an incentive toward general progress, and for the purpose of stimulating research and development of new concepts and equipment contributing to operational efficiency and flight safety.*

Stefan Pohanka (SVK)

Stefan Pohanka earned his Private Pilot Licence (PPL) and later his Commercial Pilot Licence (CPL), becoming an active competitor in Precision and Rally Flying. Over the years, he served as Chief Judge, Contest Director, Route Planner, and Scorer at numerous Slovak General Aviation events, as well as international competitions across all three categories: Rally Flying, Precision Flying, and Air Navigation Race. For 25 years, Stefan was president of the Aeroclub Dubnica nad Vahom, which, under his leadership, organised many international competitions in Rally and Precision Flying alongside local national events in Slovakia. He remains an active member of the Slovak General Aviation Commission and has held important positions such as Chief of SMS, flight instructor, inspector, and examiner, mentoring many young pilots throughout his career. Stefan has also contributed significantly to the development of computer programs used for Precision, Rally, and Air Navigation Race flying. This award recognises his lifetime contribution to general aviation and flying sports.

AWARDS FOR GLIDING (BY LAWS 7.4)

THE LILIENTHAL GLIDING MEDAL (BY LAWS 7.4.1)

Eligibility: It may be awarded for a particularly remarkable gliding performance, or eminent services to gliding, to a currently active glider pilot who has:

- *established an international record during the past year; or*
- *made a pioneer flight (defined as a flight which has opened new possibilities for gliding and/or gliding techniques); or*
- *rendered eminent service to the sport of gliding over a significant period of time*

Not Awarded

THE PELAGIA MAJEWSKA GLIDING MEDAL (BY LAWS 7.4.2)

Eligibility: The Pelagia Majewska Medal may be awarded annually to a female glider pilot to reward:

- *a particularly remarkable performance in gliding during the past year, or*
- *eminent services to gliding over a long period of time.*

Not Awarded

THE PIRAT GEHRIGER DIPLOMA (BY LAWS 7.4.3)

Eligibility: It may be awarded annually for eminent services to international gliding

Not Awarded

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AWARDS FOR ROTORCRAFT (BY LAWS 7.5)

THE FAI GOLD ROTORCRAFT MEDAL (BY LAWS 7.5.1)

Eligibility: The medal is to reward a particularly remarkable achievement in rotorcraft including use as a sporting vehicle, or eminent services to the development of rotorcraft over an extended period of time.

Not Awarded

AWARDS FOR PARACHUTING (BY LAWS 7.6)

THE FAI GOLD PARACHUTING MEDAL (BY LAWS 7.6.1)

Eligibility: The Medal may be awarded annually for an outstanding accomplishment in connection with parachuting. This may be in the realm of sport, safety, or, at the option of the Commission, an invention. It cannot be awarded to delegates to the FAI Parachuting Commission.

Michael Egger (AUT)

At the end of 2024, Michael Egger will retire from all NAC and FAI positions, handing over the Parachute-Ski Committee at the 2025 ISC plenary meeting in Rome after more than 25 years of service as chairperson and ISC alternate delegate for the Austrian Aeroclub. An active skydiver for over 40 years, Michael has competed in numerous FAI events, winning countless medals at the FAI Parachute-Ski World Championships. He served as an FAI judge for 25 years at various FCEs, SCEs, and national skydiving competitions. Since 1999, Michael has chaired the IPC Parachute-Ski Committee, delivering exceptional leadership in the sport, its rules, the FAI ranking list, and overseeing eleven World Championships without issues or protests. He was instrumental in resolving the World Cup Series matter, enabling all Parachute-Ski competitions to be conducted as Second Category Events under FAI rules, with judges and online results published on the FAI results page and ranking list. Demonstrating his commitment, Michael has secured a successor to chair the committee and found an organiser for the next Parachute-Ski FCE in March 2025.

THE LEONARDO DA VINCI PARACHUTING DIPLOMA (BY LAWS 7.6.2)

Eligibility: One Diploma may be awarded each year to a person who has achieved one of the following criteria: Been at least twice an Individual Champion or a Member of a Champion Team at a First Category Event

- *Established at least three World Parachuting Records;*
- *Have been at least three times an FAI/IPC Official at a First Category Event (Chief Judge, FAI Parachuting Judge, FAI Controller, International Jury Member or any combination thereof)*
- *Have been at least three times a Competition Director at a First Category Event*
- *Have been for at least six years the Chair of an IPC Committee (IPC Internal Regulations 6.7) or an IPC Bureau Member or any combination thereof.*

Elisabet Mikaelsson (SWE)

Elisabet began skydiving in 1976 and earned her first FAI Judges License in Arizona in 1993 for Formation Skydiving, later expanding to Artistic Event and Speed Skydiving. She has served as Chief Judge, Chief Technical Judge, FAI Controller, and Jury President at numerous competitions. Since 2009, Elisabet has been the Swedish Skydiving Alternate Delegate and Delegate. She currently holds the positions of Deputy Chair for the Speed Skydiving Committee and Chair of the Media and Promotion Working Group. In 2018, she was elected ISC First Vice President, a role she maintained until 2024 when she chose to step down. Additionally, she was elected CASI Secretary in 2019, a position she continues to hold.

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[Randy Connell \(USA\)](#)

William Randall Connell has served extensively in key official roles at FAI/ISC First Category Events, including Principal Judge, Event Judge, Chief of Judge Training, and Meet Director at World Championships, World Air Games, World Cups, and World Indoor Skydiving Championships between 2015 and 2023. He has been a member of the Formation Skydiving Committee for at least three terms and the Wingsuit Flying Committee for two terms. For multiple years, he acted as the primary on-site Official Observer for world record attempts in the USA. Additionally, Mr Connell has supported the USA Indoor Skydiving community as an advisor to the ISC Delegate and Head of Delegation at numerous Indoor FCEs for over seven years. His sustained service as an International Skydiving Judge, International Juror, and Meet Director exemplifies outstanding commitment to competition skydiving and fulfils the criteria for the Leonardo da Vinci Parachuting Diploma.

[FAUST VRANCIC MEDAL \(BY LAWS 7.6.3\)](#)

Eligibility: The Medal may be awarded, on the decision of the FAI Parachuting Commission, for technical innovation or achievement in parachuting. It cannot be awarded to Delegates to the FAI Parachuting Commission.

Not Awarded

[AWARDS FOR AEROMODELLING \(BY LAWS 7.7\)](#)

[THE FAI AEROMODELLING GOLD MEDAL \(BY LAWS 7.7.1\)](#)

Eligibility: It may be awarded annually to an aeromodeller of an FAI Member for outstanding merit in organisation activities. The recipient shall have:

- *fulfilled at least twice the function of Competition Director or a similar function at World or Continental Championships ; or*
- *fulfilled at least three times the function of an FAI jury member at World or Continental Championships ; or*
- *fulfilled at least five times the function of a judge or a similar function at World or Continental Championships ; or*
- *served at least three years as a delegate to the FAI Aeromodelling Commission, or served another function therein; or*
- *shown outstanding merits in developing aeromodelling by organizational activities.*

[Wolfgang Schulz \(GER\)](#)

Wolfgang served as Competition Director or in a similar capacity at two World Championships, the 1998 FAI F5B World Championship in Neuhausen Germany and the 2002 FAI F5B World Championship in Winterthur Switzerland, and for several years was World Cup Coordinator for F5B within the FAI Aeromodelling Commission CIAM. He showed outstanding merits in developing aeromodelling. In 1997, Wolfgang and Gernot Fink built the first modern timing device for F5B. This system consists of the Gasbox sensor that checks the motor status through the control receiver and measures motor run time and duration. These Gasboxes are connected to a PC interface that performs consistency checks and scoring. Since 1998 the system has been used in all F5B World Championships and nearly every World Cup and Contest Eurotour event. More than 20 units of the full competition version with PC interface are now in use worldwide. Wolfgang has been producing and selling the system at minimal hardware cost and has implemented over the years rule changes on all systems. The system is regarded by pilots as the ground truth for results and produces a real time protocol of signals that can be verified by the contest director and jury in case of protests. Many pilots also use the training version of the software to analyse and optimise their flights. F5B is regarded as the "Formula 1" of electric flight and this reliable timing device has been a key factor in achieving that status.

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THE ANDREI TUPOLEV AEROMODELLING MEDAL (BY LAWS 7.7.2)

Eligibility: It may be awarded to any aeromodeller who in the same year wins the World and National Aeromodelling Championships in the same class of models.

Not Awarded

THE ALPHONSE PENAUD AEROMODELLING DIPLOMA (BY LAWS 7.7.3)

Eligibility: The Diploma may be awarded to an aeromodeller of a FAI Member who has:

- obtained at least three times consecutively the title of national champion; or
- obtained at least once the title of world champion; or
- established at least three world records; or
- other outstanding sporting achievements

Slawomir Lasocha (POL)

Mr Slawomir Lasocha has achieved exceptional and sustained success in aeromodelling, meeting multiple eligibility criteria for the Alphonse Penaud Aeromodelling Diploma. He is a three-time consecutive National Champion in the S6A class (2020, 2021, 2022) and a two-time World Champion, winning in 2004 (S6B) and 2012 (S6A). He has also secured four World Vice Champion titles between 1998 and 2023, and four European Champion titles in 2007, 2013, 2017, and 2019 across various classes. His consistency is further demonstrated by six European Vice Champion titles and one European 2m Vice Champion title. In 2009, he was awarded the World Cup Overall Vice Champion in Class S4A. Beyond his individual accolades, Mr Lasocha has contributed significantly to team success, earning over 15 medals at World Championships, including seven Team World Champion titles, and over 20 medals at European Championships, including ten Team European Champion titles. In total, he has won 17 individual medals at World and European Championships. His career reflects not only repeated national and world victories but also outstanding sporting achievements at the highest international level. Through his dedication, skill, and sustained excellence, Mr Lasocha has established himself as one of the most successful competitors in the history of space modelling.

THE ANTONOV AEROMODELLING DIPLOMA (BY LAWS 7.7.4)

Eligibility: This Diploma may be awarded to an aeromodeller of an FAI Member for technical innovations in aeromodelling. The Antonov Diploma may be granted more than once to the same person for different technical innovations made in different years.

Angel Todorov (BUL)

Angel Ts. Todorov, aerospace engineer, expert, and manufacturer of rocket systems, has devoted his life to aeromodelling and space modelling, making significant technical innovations in the sport. Beginning in aeromodelling before specialising in space models, he became renowned for his expertise in RC gliders, achieving numerous medals at World and European Championships and World Cups, and for his development of high-performance space modelling motors under the name Jambol-Jet. Among his most notable innovations is the introduction of advanced wings and composite materials in the S8 class, incorporating improved airfoil designs for rocket gliders, which have achieved consistent international success. He designed a “modern type” long-burn motor, with specialised casing and propellant, greatly enhancing space model performance. Recognised as among the best in the world, his motors have been used to win many recent medals. He has also developed motors for all classes capable of withstanding extreme meteorological conditions, enabling reliable performance in harsh climates. In addition, he pioneered motor testing logistics that have substantially improved competition quality control. As a member of the Motor Manufacturer Working Group, Mr Todorov has played a vital role in raising safety standards and implementing improved regulations, with many of his proposals adopted internationally. His innovations have had a lasting and global impact on the technical development and competitive standards of space modelling.

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THE ANDREI TUPOLEV AEROMODELLING DIPLOMA (7.7.5)

Eligibility: It may be awarded annually to an aeromodeller of an FAI Member for an outstanding record performance in aeromodelling.

Joze Cuden (SLO)

Joze Cuden, former schoolteacher and later chief editor of the renowned Slovenian magazine TIM, has built an exceptional career in space modelling, marked by an outstanding record of competitive performance. Active in the sport since 1969, he has won numerous national and international championships, earning his first individual World Championship medal in 1992 in Florida, USA. He went on to become a two-time individual World Champion (2000 – S1B, 2010 – S1A), World Vice Champion (2014 – S1A), and four-time second World Vice Champion (1990 – S6A, 1992 – S3A, 2006 – S1A, 2014 – S5C). In total, he has secured more than 20 medals at World Championships, including seven individual and over 15 team medals. At European Championships, he has claimed the title of European Champion (2009 – S1B) and European Vice Champion (2011 – S1B), alongside a total of 10 medals, with two individual and eight team awards. Beyond his own results, Mr Cuden has guided numerous students to World and European titles, strengthened the Slovenian national team into one of the strongest in Europe and globally, and contributed to the sports development as organiser of the Ljubljana Cup, the longest running space modelling competition. Serving as delegate, Space Subcommittee member, and Chairman, he has influenced international aeromodelling governance. His technical innovations, particularly in classes S1B and S6A, remain in use today, further reflecting his lasting impact on the sport.

THE FRANK EHLING DIPLOMA (BY LAWS 7.7.6)

Eligibility: The Diploma may be awarded annually for outstanding accomplishment, by an organisation or individual, in connection with the promotion of aviation through the use of flying models.

Branko Bijelic (SRB)

Branko Bijelic, an aircraft mechanic with a lifelong dedication to aeromodelling, has demonstrated exceptional proficiency, particularly in free flight classes F1B and F1C. A member of the national team for over 20 years, he has also served as national team manager, leading his athletes to an impressive 17 medals. His personal competitive record includes third place at the World Championships in F1B, two second-place finishes at the European Championships in F1C, and fifth place individually at the European Championships, alongside multiple World Cup victories in both classes. As one of the founders of Aero Club “Wing” in Batajnica—one of the most successful clubs in the country—he has contributed to its more than ten years of activity and its strong regional reputation for organising the “Wing Cup” in F1A, F1B, and F1C classes. The club is recognised for its members’ consistent presence in the national team and its role in promoting new technologies in aeromodelling.

THE CIAM LEGENDS MEDAL (BY LAWS 7.7.7)

Eligibility: The medal is reserved for those who have, in the past, obtained at least three (3) times the title of FAI World Champion in any Aeromodelling or Space Models class. The World Champion title may be gained in different classes. This medal is for individuals only. Proposals may cover any period of time up to 31st December of the preceding year.

Bernhard Flixeder (AUT)

Bernhard Flixeder obtained the title of FAI World Champion 3 times in Class F3B. Once in 2013 as a junior, once in 2017, and last in 2023.

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AWARDS FOR AEROBATICS (BY LAWS 7.8)

THE LEON BIANCOTTO AEROBATICS DIPLOMA (BY LAWS 7.8.1)

Eligibility: The Diploma may be awarded to individuals or organisations that have contributed significantly to the sport of aerobatics.

Not Awarded

AWARDS FOR ASTRONAUTICS (BY LAWS 7.9)

THE Yu. A. GAGARIN GOLD MEDAL (BY LAWS 7.9.1)

Eligibility: The Yu. A. Gagarin Gold Medal may be awarded to an astronaut who, in the previous year, is considered to have made the greatest achievement in Man's conquest of Space.

Not Awarded

THE V. M. KOMAROV DIPLOMA (BY LAWS 7.9.2)

Eligibility: This Diploma may be awarded to astronauts, members of multi-seater crews, for outstanding achievements in the field of exploration of outer space in the previous year.

Crew of Axiom Mission 3 (Ax-3)

The crew of Axiom Mission 3 (Ax-3) was the first all-European astronaut team to the International Space Station, consisting of Commander Michael López-Alegría (U.S./Spain), Pilot Walter Villadei (Italian Air Force Colonel), Mission Specialist Alper Gezeravcı (Turkish Air Force Colonel), and Mission Specialist Marcus Wandt (ESA's first project astronaut and Swedish Air Force Lieutenant Colonel). López-Alegría has flown six missions on three spacecraft types, commanding both the ISS and Dragon, and is chief astronaut at Axiom. Villadei served as back-up pilot for Ax-2 and primary pilot for Ax-3. Gezeravcı, Türkiye's first astronaut, was selected in 2023, four years after the Turkish Space Agency's establishment. Wandt completed astronaut training in seven months, supporting new space access pathways via ESA and Swedish National Space Agency collaboration with private sectors. The 21-day Ax-3 mission, the longest commercial crewed spaceflight after a seven-day extension, conducted over 50 experiments including stem cell research, remote robotics, orbital avoidance, agriculture, and stress recovery.

THE KOROLEV DIPLOMA (BY LAWS 7.9.3)

Eligibility: It may be awarded to technicians or engineers having worked in orbit or on a celestial body in building structures and/or their equipment, or in a non-planned restoration or repair of a broken device to make possible the continuation of a mission, and, on this occasion, having demonstrated human work in space.

Not Awarded

THE ODYSSEY DIPLOMA (BY LAWS 7.9.4)

Eligibility: It may be awarded to a person or a group of persons whose actions, achievements, or works on earth, in space, or on a celestial body have safeguarded or may safeguard human life in space.

Not Awarded

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THE DIPLOMA FOR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE IN ASTRONAUTICS (BY LAWS 7.9.5)

Eligibility: It may be awarded to astronauts working as professionals (i.e. Government funded or perhaps as crew members of companies such as SpaceX) for their outstanding performance in exceeding the Karman Line. Whatever their role, they would have undergone a rigorous selection and training process after many years in prior fields of work and so their achievement would be among the high points of their career.

Not Awarded

AWARDS FOR HANG-GLIDING AND PARAGLIDING (BY LAWS 7.10)

THE PEPE LOPES MEDAL (BY LAWS 7.10.1)

Eligibility: The medal may be awarded for outstanding contributions to sportsmanship or international understanding in the sport of hang-gliding and paragliding. The medal will only be awarded for truly significant acts or services and will not necessarily be awarded every year.

Tavo Gutierrez (USA)

Tavo Gutierrez is selfless, persistent, and contributed vitally to the successful hospital transport of a fellow hang glider pilot during the 2023 El Penon Classic Race in Temascaltepec, near Valle de Bravo, Mexico. Without Tavo's level-headed, dedicated, and compassionate interventions, the incident could have been fatal.

THE FAI HANG-GLIDING AND PARAGLIDING DIPLOMA (BY LAWS 7.10.2)

Eligibility: It may be awarded to an individual who is considered to have made an outstanding contribution to the development of hang-gliding and/or paragliding by his or her initiative, work or leadership in flight achievement.

Laszlo Kerekes (HUN)

László Kerekes's extraordinary commitment to the growth, safety, and enjoyment of paragliding and hang-gliding makes him a highly deserving candidate for the FAI Hang-Gliding and Paragliding Diploma. His lifelong dedication, leadership, and willingness to help others have left a lasting legacy both in Hungary and the wider international free-flight community.

AWARDS FOR MICROLIGHT AND PARAMOTOR AVIATION (BY LAWS 7.11)

THE COLIBRI DIPLOMA (BY LAWS 7.11.1)

Eligibility: It may be awarded each year to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the development of microlight or paramotor aircraft.

Not Awarded

THE ANN WELCH DIPLOMA (BY LAWS 7.11.2)

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Eligibility: Diplomas may be awarded each year to the pilot or crew of a Microlight or Paramotor who, in the opinion of CIMA, made the most meritorious flight which resulted in a Microlight or Paramotor World record claim ratified in the year in question.

Paramotor

[Ramon Morillas Salmeron \(ESP\)](#)

For a record of reaching the altitude of 7250m in RPF2T.

Microlight

Not Awarded

AWARDS FOR AMATEUR-BUILT AIRCRAFT (BY LAWS 7.12)

THE PHOENIX DIPLOMA AND GROUP DIPLOMA (BY LAWS 7.12.1)

Eligibility: They may each be awarded for the best reconstruction or restoration of a vintage (more than 30-year-old) aircraft achieved by an individual amateur in the case of the Phoenix Diploma and by a group of any size or description (e.g. museum, sponsored group, society, company) in the case of the Phoenix Group Diploma.

Phoenix Diploma

Not Awarded

Phoenix Group Diploma

[Metodej Vlach Foundation \(CZE\)](#)

The replica of the Sopwith Triplane aircraft was built by a team consisting of several partners who had previously built accurate replicas of the Morane Saulnier BB from 1916, the Zlín XII from 1935, and contributed to the realization of the Caudron G3 from 1913. The main factor of this operation is the Metodej Vlach Foundation, directed by Ing. Vladimír Handlík. The Foundation manages the work and installs engines, purchased and overhauled by the Foundation, into the aircraft frames, equips them with flight instruments, performs test flights, and subsequently operates the aircraft. The airplanes then become part of the aviation museum exhibition in Mladá Boleslav in the Czech Republic. The president of the Foundation is Ing. Vladimír Handlík. The two other partners who contributed were Ing. Petr Tax and his team prepared the technical documentation, built the aircraft's airframe, and conducted structural testing, while the Historical Flying Club, led by Dr. Michael Oeljeklaus, fully financed the project. The Metodej Vlach Foundation oversaw the final stages, including painting, engine assembly, cockpit installation, upholstery, and flight testing conducted by Ing. Petr Handlík, son of the Foundation's President. This faithful and airworthy replica demonstrates the Foundation's strong commitment to preserving aviation heritage and maintaining high technical standards. The Metodej Vlach Foundation has previously led the restoration of several historic aircraft, including the Zlín XII, Morane BB, Klemm 25H, Sopwith Pup, Racek PB6, and M. Vlach aircraft, continuing its long-standing contribution to aviation history and craftsmanship.

THE HENRI MIGNET DIPLOMA (BY LAWS 7.12.2)

Eligibility: This diploma may be awarded to an amateur aircraft builder or a group of builders, who have developed an aircraft of any category (including microlights) which has one or more of the following characteristics:

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- *Low cost of operation and of building,*
- *Simple design (use of non-sophisticated design practices and techniques),*
- *Ease of construction and maintenance,*
- *Outstanding flying characteristics,*
- *Special features and innovative concept.*

Not Awarded

THE DAVID FAULKNER BRYANT DIPLOMA (BY LAWS 7.12.3)

Eligibility: This diploma may be awarded to an amateur aircraft builder or a group of amateur aircraft builders who have built a plan-built or a kit-built aircraft of any category. It does not apply to new design. The aircraft shall have received its certificate of airworthiness or equivalent and the builder(s) shall have been recognised in the applicant's country for best craftsmanship in the year before the award.

Michel Pallier (FRA)

Michel Pallier, a former Air France flight attendant and member of the RSA, embarked on the Hatz CB1 building project in 1986, dedicating 13,000 hours over 22 years to its completion. The aircraft's first flight took place in 2008, and since then it has logged 300 flight hours. The Hatz CB1 meets the eligibility criteria as an amateur plans-built aircraft, receiving its Certificate of Airworthiness in 2008. In July 2024, Michel was recognized for Best Workmanship at the Euro Fly-In in Brienne-le-Château, marking a significant milestone as this was the first time the award was presented.

AWARDS FOR ENVIROMENT (BY LAWS 7.13)

THE ANGELO D'ARRIGO DIPLOMA (BY LAWS 7.13.1)

Eligibility: It may be awarded to individuals or organisations that have contributed significantly to the defence of and respect for the environment affected by air sports. The activities may include scientific research, private, public or commercial events or activities, developed or promoted directly by Pilots, sport flying Clubs, NACs or Public or Private bodies as Small and Medium Enterprises.

Not Awarded

AWARDS FOR EDUCATION (BY LAWS 7.14)

THE NILE GOLD MEDAL (BY LAWS 7.14.1)

Eligibility: This medal may be awarded to a person, group of persons or organization to reward distinguished work in the field of aviation and space education, particularly during the year preceding its award.

Not Awarded

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AWARDS FOR MEDICO- PHYSIOLOGICAL (BY LAWS 7.15)

DR. PETER SAUNDBY DIPLOMA (BY LAWS 7.15.1)

Eligibility: This FAI Diploma may be awarded annually, on the recommendation of the FAI CIMP sub-committee, to individuals, groups or organisations that have contributed significantly to flight safety and sport pilot performance in a broad sense. For example, but not limited to: human factors concepts, training facilities, scientific research, medical fitness and assessments, limited capabilities at air sport pilots, anti-doping, air sport rulemaking, work in FAI Commissions and related activities.

Melchor J. Antunano (USA)

Dr Melchor J Antunano is an internationally respected aerospace medicine expert whose work has significantly advanced flight safety, pilot health, and sport aviation performance. He currently serves as Director of the US FAA Civil Aerospace Medical Institute (CAMI), leading global research in medical fitness, human factors, and aviation safety. A graduate of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, he completed his Aerospace Medicine Residency at Wright State University and was a post-doctoral research associate at the USAF School of Aerospace Medicine. His career spans over 860 professional presentations in 41 countries and 63 scientific publications. His work has addressed critical issues including human performance, flight crew training, and physiological risk factors in aviation, leaving a lasting impact on both civil and sport aviation. He is Past-President of the International Academy of Aviation and Space Medicine, the Aerospace Medical Association, and other key organisations. He is a Fellow of multiple professional associations and Honorary Member of eight national aerospace medical societies. Recognised with 85 awards for academic, administrative, and research achievements, he also holds licences as a pilot, parachutist, and scuba diver, giving him direct experience of the physiological demands of air sports. Through leadership, research, and international engagement, he has contributed significantly to aviation medicine and flight safety.

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