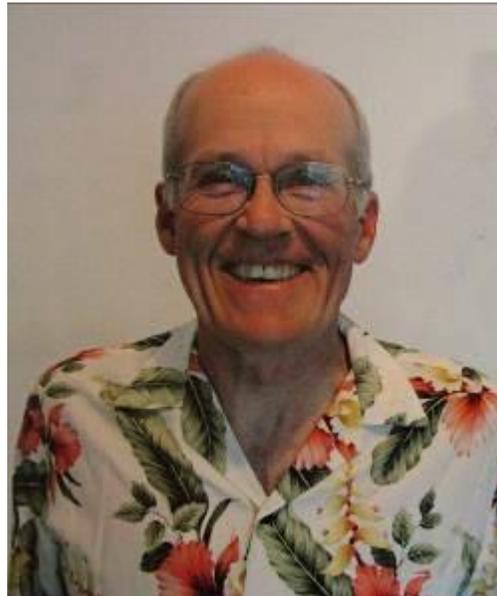




**FÉDÉRATION AÉRONAUTIQUE  
INTERNATIONALE  
Ballooning Commission**

**Hall of Fame**

**Bruce Comstock, USA  
Inducted 2001**



**BRUCE COMSTOCK**  
USA  
Inducted 2001  
Aeronaut Extraordinaire  
B. 24 July 1943

**Bruce Comstock has won** major championships and set world records in sport ballooning. He has served his fellow balloonists and built a major balloon manufacturing company. He was the first U.S. balloonist (and the second in the world) to earn the FAI Gold Ballooning Badge with all three Diamonds. This requires having made flights of 9,000 meters (29,528 feet) altitude, 500 kilometers (310 miles) distance, 24 hours duration, and one meter pilot-declared-goal accuracy. Comstock has set world balloon records for duration, distance and altitude.

Image courtesy Jim Thompson

*Photo and plaque published with permission of the Anderson/Abruzzo International Balloon Museum in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA*

Bruce Comstock, born on the 24<sup>th</sup> July 1943, has done much of what there is to do in sport ballooning, from winning major championships to setting world records, from serving his fellow balloonists to building a major balloon manufacturing company.

Comstock is one of the more successful ever competition balloon pilots. He has won one World and six U.S. National Hot Air Balloon Championships. Comstock won the World Hot Air Balloon Championship in June 1981, in Battle Creek, Michigan. He has won six U.S. National Hot Air Balloon Championships -- four more than anyone else. Comstock won the U.S. National Hot Air Balloon Championships in 1972, 1976, 1977, 1979, 1982, and 1987. He finished in the top three places of the U.S. Nationals in 11 of the last 16 years of his competition career.

Comstock is a successful veteran of World Hot Air Balloon Championship competition. He has finished 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 6th, and 7th in World Hot Air Balloon Championships. In addition to his win in the 1981 World Championship, these include 4th in 1973, in Albuquerque, New Mexico; 2nd in 1977, in York, England; 6th in 1979, in Uppsala, Sweden; 3rd in 1989, in Saga, Japan; and 7th in 1991, in St-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Quebec, Canada.

Comstock has also set world balloon records for duration, distance and altitude. On June 17-18, 1980, he and fellow pilot David Schaffer became the first persons to fly a hot air balloon for more than a full day, setting a new world hot air balloon duration record of 24 hours, 7 minutes, 58 seconds. On December 3, 1980, he and fellow pilot Jeff Van Alstine bettered the existing world hot air balloon distance record by more than 80 miles in a flight of 494.6 statute miles, from Anderson, Indiana, to just south of Raleigh, North Carolina. On September 22, 1996, he and fellow pilot Steve Fossett set a new world altitude record for Roziere (temperature controlled gas) balloons, of 27,477 feet.

On January 15, 1994, Comstock more than doubled the world's hot air balloon Long Jump competition distance record by flying 645 statute miles on less than 37 gallons of fuel, from Atlantic, Iowa to Huntland, Tennessee. This flight was more than twice as far as the previous longest Long Jump flight, and was at the time the second longest distance ever recorded in a hot air balloon of this size. This performance has yet to be exceeded.

Comstock was the first U.S. balloonist, and the second in the world, to earn the International Aeronautic Federation (FAI) Gold Ballooning Badge with all three Diamonds. This requires having made flights of 9,000 meters (29,528 feet) altitude, 500 kilometers (310 miles) distance, 24 hours duration, and one meter pilot-declared-goal accuracy.

Comstock shared balloon technical advisor and launch director duties for two of the world's then longest distance balloon flights ever, and for the longest duration solo flight ever. These include the Solo Spirit non-stop flight half-way around the world from St. Louis, Missouri to eastern India in January 1997, the Pacific Peregrine non-stop flight from Seoul, Korea to Saskatchewan, Canada in February 1995, and the J Renee flight from Rockford, Illinois to central Myanmar in February/March of 2000. Comstock also designed and built the electronic balloon autopilots which made these solo flights possible, and has provided autopilots for other long distance flights. He has also been a technical advisor and launch team member for several other very long distance Roziere flights.

Comstock served on the International Juries for the 2nd World Hot Air Balloon Championship in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in 1975, and the 1st World Gas Balloon Championship in Augsburg, West Germany, in 1976.

In 1977 Comstock received the Montgolfier Diploma, the world's highest honor for a balloonist, for his impressive, consistent performance in balloon competition. This award is granted by the International Aeronautic Federation (FAI), the world governing body for sport aviation.

Comstock has also served the ballooning community in a variety of ways. He was President of the Balloon Federation of America (BFA), the national organization of balloonists, and the U.S. delegate to the International Ballooning Committee of the International Aeronautic Federation from 1973 to 1975.

From 1971 to 1972 he was Editor of *Ballooning*, the magazine of the BFA. He was a member of the BFA Board of Directors from 1972 to 1975.

Comstock started flying balloons in 1970. He has been an active balloon pilot instructor since 1971. He has made more than 1,500 balloon flights (several thousand logged hours). He has a reputation among ballooning friends as a competent and cautious pilot.

Comstock has served as a Designated Examiner for balloon oral and flight tests for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and has been an FAA Designated Manufacturing Inspection Representative (DMIR) for purposes of inspecting newly manufactured balloons for airworthiness certification. He has received the FAA Service Award for preparing educational material on ballooning and instructing FAA personnel in the basics of safe ballooning.

Until early 1994, Comstock owned and managed Cameron Balloons U S, a leading U.S. balloon manufacturing company. In 1972, he established the first FAA-certificated balloon maintenance facility in the United States, and is an FAA-certificated balloon repairman.

Comstock has a strong, continuing interest in all forms of lighter-than-air flight. He is a long-time enthusiast of gas ballooning, having made 14 flights, including a flight from Murren, Switzerland, 140 miles over the Alps (1974), a 1520 mile Roziere flight from Aspen, Colorado to Altoona, Pennsylvania (1995), and a Roziere world altitude record flight (1996). His gas balloon experience includes pure gas flights using hydrogen, helium, and anhydrous ammonia as lifting gases, and Roziere flights using helium.

He has piloted both gas and hot air airships (blimps). In a series of flights beginning in 1975, he developed techniques for safe night flight in hot air balloons.

Comstock is also a certificated airplane pilot.

Comstock was graduated by the University of Colorado and studied at The University of Michigan graduate school. His current focus is the planning and making of challenging balloon flights. He resides in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Additional photos and information can be found on the Balloon Federation of America's National Balloon Museum Website: <http://www.nationalballoonmuseum.com/HallofFame>