



VALE BERNIE SHAW

Australia's First Top POP

'E' CERTIFICATE # 293 POPS AUSTRALIA #3 POPS USA # 898
TOP POP DOWNUNDER #1

Bernie Shaw lost his fight with cancer on 30th November last year at age 76. He organised the Australian Chapter of POPS (Parachutists Over Phorty Society) in 1981 and was the inaugural Australian Top POP from 1981 until 1994. Bernie was the man behind the First World POPS Meet held at the Ettamogah Pub near Albury in 1990, and as Guest of Honour at the 9th World POPS Meet & Championships at Toogoolawah in 2008, was publically acknowledged for his contribution to the sport and to senior skydiving in this country and internationally.

Bernie was a 30 year member of the APF, joining in the year of his first jump at Labertouche in Victoria's East on 30th October 1967. He was regarded as the parachuting king of the Latrobe Valley, location of Bernie's hometown, Morwell. If you needed someone to jump into a wedding, a football match, a union meeting or even a birthday party, you would get in touch with Bernie and he would arrange it. Some of Bernie's Latrobe Valley parachute displays would have been on the fringe of legality but they were always carried out with the utmost care for safety.

If the conversation turned to "parachuting firsts" Bernie was likely to point out that he made the first "legal" jump from a glider in Australia. His annual accuracy events at Benambra [in the mountains near Omeo in far eastern Victoria] were legendary amongst the POPS who managed to find their way there.

As well as kicking off the POPS organization in Australia and the idea of biennial gatherings of POPS members around the world, Bernie was also instrumental in creating The Leather Jacket – the symbol awarded at each POPS International Meet to the participant that best personifies the POPS spirit. [Read this story at: <http://www.pops2010.it/awards.html>]

Bruno Imberti, Top POP Italy and recipient of the Leather Jacket at the 8th World POPS Meet at Eloy, Arizona in 2006, sent a heartfelt message after receiving news of Bernie's passing, and finished with these words, which speak for us all:

Blue Skies to Bernie! May God Almighty keep his flight out of turbulences and allow him to land in a soft part of Heaven.

By Ian Robertson

Top POP Australia #3

World Top POP #6

Parachutists Over Phorty Society Australia

