

AUSTRALIAN CENTURION DETAILS

19. **Bill Dillon (22/03/1938)**
23-24 Nov 1979
20:51:06
Duncan McKinnon Reserve, Glenhuntly, Vic

Bill Dillon, born 1938, did not take up athletics until his children started in Little Athletics. They showed an early interest in racewalking so Bill, who was then working as a fireman, got into the act himself in an effort to lose weight and get fit.

He was soon hooked, joining Glenhuntly Athletics Club alongside Clarrie and Ian Jack and Terry O'Neill. Like Terry, he used the summer season track walks and winter season road walks to hone his skills as a walker and competed in a number of interstate events, most notably the Canberra 20 Mile Championship which he finished on 4 occasions (1974-1976 and 1979), his best time in that event being 3:11:28.



Bill (far right) competes in the 1978 Victorian 30km championship. From left to right, other walkers include Jim Bannon, Burce Dudon, Claude Martin, Joe Anderson and Ken Hall

His first centurion attempt was in October 1975 at the George Knott Athletics Track in Clifton Hill. Although ultimately unsuccessful, his final distance of 119.2 km in 17:43:32 showed enough for Centurion captain Fred Redman to comment in his race report

This report would not be complete' without reference to a very gallant performance by Bill Dillon, a truly amazing effort, glorious in failure and only a matter of time before Bill too will become a worthy addition to our steadily growing band. I am certain that Bill would have completed his 100 on this occasion but unfortunately running out of time as he was, he made the right decision to retire when he did and so avoiding unnecessary, further punishment although he still looked good. Bill was conned into the race only a few weeks before and I am sure did not know what he was letting himself in for. Only inexperience proved his undoing, but nothing is surer now that when he tries again, as try he will, he will convert this wonderful initial effort into success.

Four years later in November 1979, he decided to give it another go, once again at the annual qualifying event in Clifton Hill. While this event saw Ian Jack and Terry O'Neill both qualify, Bill was once again unsuccessful in that he was forced to retire at 54 miles, completed in 11:51:00. He had been suffering from a virus and it showed.

He knew he was in top form and just needed another opportunity. VAWC came to the fore, scheduling a further attempt 3 weeks later at his home track in Glenhuntly on 23-24 November. On this occasion, he was successful, passing through 50 miles in 9:41:31 for an excellent first half and slowing only slightly to finish with an excellent time of **21:51:06**. At last - **Australian Centurion number 19**.

That was Bill's final foray into the world of long distance walking. He continued with his racewalking career for some years until finally retiring and moving to far east Gippsland with his wife Judy.