**The beauty of hang gliding**

Have you ever wonder how the beauty of hang gliding came to be? I know I have. It always interested to know how man figured out to fly. But not fly like your are in a big machine, fly like you yourself is souring through the air.

According to the USHPA (US hang gliding and pair gliding association) thank to the work of Fracis Rogallo and many others just like him, we are able to take life to the air.

From the time of the ill-fated flight of Icarus to the turn-of-the-century pioneers of the sport, man has attempted free flight in just about every phase of modern history. As the Wright Brothers continued their pursuit of powered flight, they honed their flying skills in "hang gliders". After their famed Kitty Hawk flight, the world became increasing interested in the technological advances of powered flight, leaving hang gliding for another generation.

Drawing from the ideas of Leonardo da Vinci, Otto Lilienthal, and the Wright Brothers; Mr. Rogallo, an aeronautical engineer for NASA, created the first flexible wing in the late 1940’s. The wing was unique in that it was inexpensive and easy to build and although it could be deployed like a parachute, it could also glide forward and be steered. The original wing had a glide ratio of 3:1 which meant that for every foot it dropped it would fly three feet forward.

The design was revolutionary at the time and although it was used by NASA and the military, it would eventually become famous for its original intent – foot launched personal powerless aviation or hang gliding.

The Athnet website adds and lets us know that when pictures of these trials were released, aviation enthusiasts in Australia and America immediately saw the potential of the Rogallo Flexwing for recreational flight. The hang glider was reborn.

By the late 1960s, enthusiasts, armed only with pictures cut out from magazines, were building their own bamboo and polythene Rogallos and leaping off the nearest sand dune. With little or no information to go on, initial progress was often slow and hazardous.

Then in May 1971 the Otto Lilienthal Anniversary Meet was held in California. This event attracted enthusiasts from all over the country and really caught the public’s imagination. One of the heroes of the day was Tom Dickinson, who managed to stay aloft in free flight for 15 seconds, covering a distance of over 300 ft. The meet attracted over 50 pilots and is regarded by many as the real starting point of hang gliding as we know it today.

Thanks to these amazing talented people, we have the privilege to experience how it is like to fly as if we naturally could. Hang gliding has become super popular and now almost anyone can do it.