

Bill Mayne

12 Feb 1954 – 16 July 1993, 39, NSS 15404

William R. Elliott, Paul and Elizabeth Duncan and Steve Bittinger

Born in Corpus Christi, Texas, William Allen "Bill" Mayne was a Texas caver who moved to Tallahassee, Florida, and took up cave diving. Bill had done 120 cave dives and was certified, but he died in Clearcut Sink with friend Ariel Goldberg in a double accident.

From Ancestry.com by Elizabeth Duncan and Paul Duncan

[Ancestry.com has the 18th of July, 1993 as his date of death but it seems clear to me from the blog that he died the night of Friday, 16 July 1993. Sunday, the 18th, was the day his body was recovered.]

From American Caving Accidents – 1993. NSS News, 1994, Part 2. p. 405.

Clearcut Sink, Florida

AA-out of air, inexperience

16 July 1993

On Friday evening, July 16, two certified cave divers, **William Mayne** and **Ariel Goldberg**, entered Clearcut Sink in Wakulla County, Florida. Mayne was described as a highly skilled technical diver with over 150 logged cave dives, 20 in the Clearcut System. Goldberg was less experienced. They stashed extra tanks near the entrance to use for decompression on the way out. Apparently they became separated with Goldberg becoming disoriented and getting lost. Mayne then spent too much time trying to find him before starting out. He ran out of air a few minutes from the extra tanks. His body was found about 500 feet from the Clearcut Entrance at a depth of 90 feet. Goldberg apparently found the way out after a while but ran out of air. His body was found about 50 feet from the Venture Entrance to the system. There were no signs of panic or fear. Their equipment was checked by the Navy and there was no sign of malfunction.

References:

1. Rob Korn "Comments on the Wakulla County Sheriffs Dept" Electronic Mail, Cavers Forum Jul 19, 20, 1993.
2. Charlie Mayne "In Memory of" Ibid Jul 21, 1993.

Excerpt from a scuba blog:

07/19/1993

Greg Ryan

I just read on the bit.listserv.scuba-l group that Bill Mayne died while cave diving on Friday last week. I only knew Bill over the net, and we had been regular correspondents on cave diving. Ironically we first made contact when he supplied me with information about the death of one of my friends in a Florida cave diving accident.

I, for one, will sadly miss him.

If anyone knows of any more details regarding this accident, could you please forward them to me. I would be particularly interested in any reports from the NSS or NACD.

Greg Ryan gr...@cs.su.oz.au

I've included below a newspaper report which Joe Clark <jcl...@mailer.fsu.edu> posted to bit.listserv.scuba-l:

The following is reprinted without permission from the Tallahassee Democrat, 7/19, B1:

The bodies of two cave divers were recovered Sunday afternoon, ending two days of searching at a sinkhole in Wakulla County....

According to (the Sheriff's Dept.), one of the bodies at Clearcut Sink was identified as Bill Mayne, 39, of Tallahassee....the (second) unidentified victim was a 29-year-old student at Florida State University.

"We're still investigating the case, and the divers' equipment will be examined. We're also waiting on autopsies," (a spokesman) said. "When we find out further information, we will be able to comment more."

Autopsies are scheduled for this morning at Tallahassee Memorial Regional Medical Center.

Officials said both victims at **Clearcut Sink** had recently received their certification as cave divers. They had been expected to return from a diving expedition at 10:30 pm on Friday.

When neither of the divers returned Friday night, a relative of Mayne's called the Leon County Sheriff's Dept....

Teams of divers, including volunteers, began searching for the two victims at **Clearcut Sink** at 10:30 am Saturday and continued until 8 pm.

The search resumed at 9 am Sunday, and divers first located Mayne's body downstream, at a depth of 90 feet, and 550 feet inside a cave. (The spokesman) said divers did not bring Mayne's body to the surface until 5:30 pm, in order to avoid stirring up sediment on the bottom of the cave, which would have impeded the search for the unidentified victim.

The unidentified FSU student was located 50 feet from a cave opening at **Venture Sink**, which connects with Clearcut Sink, at 5:30 pm. His body was removed from the water upon recovery.

Officials said these were the first sinkhole deaths in the area since Parker Turner, a world record-setting cave diver, died at Indian Springs last year....

Paul_Thomas Duncan

19 September 2019

Bill moved to Tallahassee to teach computer science then got into cave diving.

In the mid-70's, Bill was working for Memorial Hospital in Corpus Christi as a computer operator. My first wife, Edna Garcia, Bill and I would often meet after work to eat at our favorite Mexican food place then visit for a while. We would often play a pyramid game (that I can't remember the name of) in which two opponents would have to take one or more beads from one of the rows of beads that composed the pyramidal layout. The object was to leave your opponent with the last bead. Bill wrote a program that he ran on the computer at work that allowed him form a strategy that meant he could not lose if he went first. The results of the program also allowed him to win if his opponent ever let the remaining beads fall into one of several patterns he'd memorized. He did this before anyone else I knew had ever even touched a computer "in-the-flesh."

He went to work for one of the branches of the federal government in DC and apparently made an impression. The Dept of Defense approached Bill asking him to go to work for them; they particularly wanted Bill and his set of skills but he just wasn't interested. Finally, their representative came back and asked what they

could offer that would tempt Bill to change his mind. He said 6 weeks a year off and I want it at the start of my employment - and he got it. He traveled in South America including Peru during part of that first 6 weeks; the Shining Path was still active at that time.

Bill married a really nice, sharp girl. I understand that he and she had begun the process of adopting a child; his death terminated that. In essence, she lost both a husband and a child. I still get sad.

Bill's early caving in Mexico:



Bill Mayne and Donna Atkins at Sótano Hondo de Pinalito, 1974. Steve Bittinger.

1982 AMCS ANL 12, p. 3

Sótano Hondo de Pinalito [Hidalgo] was first located by Steven Bittinger, Donna Atkins, and Bill Mayne in **December 1974**. They explored down to the water crawl at an estimated depth of 175 meters. They made a sketch map and report that appeared in the A}ICS Activities Letter No.3. The cave was visited again in December 1975 by Dino Lowrey, Carmen Soileau, Peter Strickland, and Steve Zeman. They apparently did not succeed in pushing farther than the previous group.

p. 57, map of **Cueva de Cuchillo**, Sierra De Minas Viejas, Rancho Minas Viejas. N. L., Mexico
Suunto & Tape Survey **April, 1980** By: Dwight Boecker Mike Laughlin Bobby Brook Dan Kunefelter Ruir
Clarke **Bill Mayne** Paul Duncan Alan Montemayor Jim Clements Fred & Dede Paschal Jay Jorden Jay Swindel
Drafted January, 1981 by Paul Duncan.

1991 AMCS AMCS 18, p. 30

Discoveries In Pozo de Montemayor, by Bill Steele

...In the **fall of 1980**, a new cave was discovered on top of the mountain range east of Bustamante. Upon the insistence of the owner, Senior Pedro Elizaldi, Pozo de Montemayor was named after the first caver to descend the 35-meter entrance pit, **Alan Montemayor**. From the entrance pit, five short drops led to the top of a monster. **Dan Klinefelter and Bill Mayne** were the first to descend this 115-meter, freefall pit. Over the ensuing years it was visited infrequently. In addition, other caves nearby were explored and proved to be interesting. However, the area was not considered to have potential for world-class, deep caves. Pozo de Montemayor was the deepest cave at Minas Viejas at 236 meters, half that depth coming in one shaft.