



Bert Thomas, Honor Swimmer, United States of America, 1969



Personal Website (None known)

Bert Thomas was the first person to cross the 29 km (18-mile) Juan de Fuca Strait between Vancouver Island in Canada and the American state of Washington in 11 hours and 17 minutes in 1955 on his fifth attempt in 8.8°C (48°F) water. He was inspired by IMSHOF Honoree Florence Chadwick's unsuccessful attempt and he inspired future crossings by IMSHOF Honorees Cliff Lumsdon, Marilyn Bell and Vicki Keith. Bert went on to swim 30.2 km in 1956 Puget Sound in 15 hours and 23 minutes and the English Channel in 1958 in 19 hours and 31 minutes. He was the first swimmer to attempt a two-way crossing of the English Channel.

[Expanded Biography \(Openwaterpedia\)](#)

[Long Swims Database \(Marathon Swimmers Federation\)](#)