

lower; there was the problem of keeping its weight down; there was the difficulty of engineering the specially designed ten-foot drive shafts and reduction gear connecting the Allison engine with the propeller. After many tests and improvements in the original design, the Army ordered eighty in addition to the original order of thirteen in October 1939.

"By February 1940 the Airacobra was out of the experimental stage, and Bell revealed the details of its construction to the public. Its speed was 400 miles per hour with a full military load; its cruising range more than 1,000 miles at 325 miles per hour. It was able to operate above 36,000 feet, and with its synchronized cannon and machine guns had 'tremendous offensive potentialities.' (In 1942 Bell announced that special equipment had been devised which permitted the Airacobra, essentially a short distance fighter plane, to make long hops.)

"By the time details were revealed, Bell Aircraft had orders for ninety-three Airacobras on its books and a backlog of \$7,400,000. Firmly believing that a period of expansion lay ahead, the directors of Bell turned their attention to the problem of turning out these planes in quantity. They appropriated money for machine tools, built plant additions, and by the end of 1940 mass production was under way. By the end of 1941 Bell Aircraft was employing more than 10,500 people, and occupying 700,000 square feet in the Buffalo factory and 240,000 square feet in a Niagara Falls assembly plant. And important contributions to the 'aviation way' of plane production had been made."...

SOURCE: CURRENT BIOGRAPHY, 1942. H. W. Wilson, 1943. pp.62-63.

"BELL, LAWRENCE DALE...student Poly. High Sch., Santa Monica, Cal.; m. Lucille Mainwaring, July 17, 1915. Became shop foreman Glenn L. Martin Co., airplane mfrs., Los Angeles, 1912, later v.p. and gen. mgr.; became gen. sales mgr. Consol. Aircraft Corp., Buffalo, 1928, later v.p. and gen. mgr.; with associates organized Bell Aircraft Corp., 1935; completed airplane, the Airacuda, twin-engine fighting plane mounting 2 cannons, 1937; began making the Airacobra, pursuit plane with 1 cannon, 1939, in mass production for U.S. Army. Pres. Aircraft War Prodn. Council, East Coast, Inc.; pres. Nat. Aircraft War Prodn. Council. Received (with John Stack and Charles E. Yeager) Collier trophy for aid in supersonic flight; chairman board W. J. Schoenberger Co., Cleve., Erie Ins. Co.; dir. Irving Airchute Co., Niagara Share Corp. Mem. Soc. Aeronaut. Sciences, Aero Club of Buffalo (pres. 1932-34), Aircraft Industries Assn. (board govts.) Mason. Clubs: Buffalo, Buffalo Country, Saturn."...

SOURCE: WHO'S WHO IN AMERICA, 1956-1957. Marquis--WHO'S WHO, 1956. p.187.

"BELL, LAWRENCE D(ALE) Apr. 5, 1894-Oct. 20, 1956 Airplane manufacturer; began career at Glenn L. Martin factory in Los Angeles; president and general manager of Bell Aircraft Corporation, Buffalo, New York (beginning in 1935); was responsible for design and construction of World War II fighter planes and of first U.S. jet plane; contributed to development of helicopters, guided missiles, and rocket motors; co-winner of Collier Award in 1948."...

SOURCE: CURRENT BIOGRAPHY, 1957. H. W. Wilson, 1958. p.45.