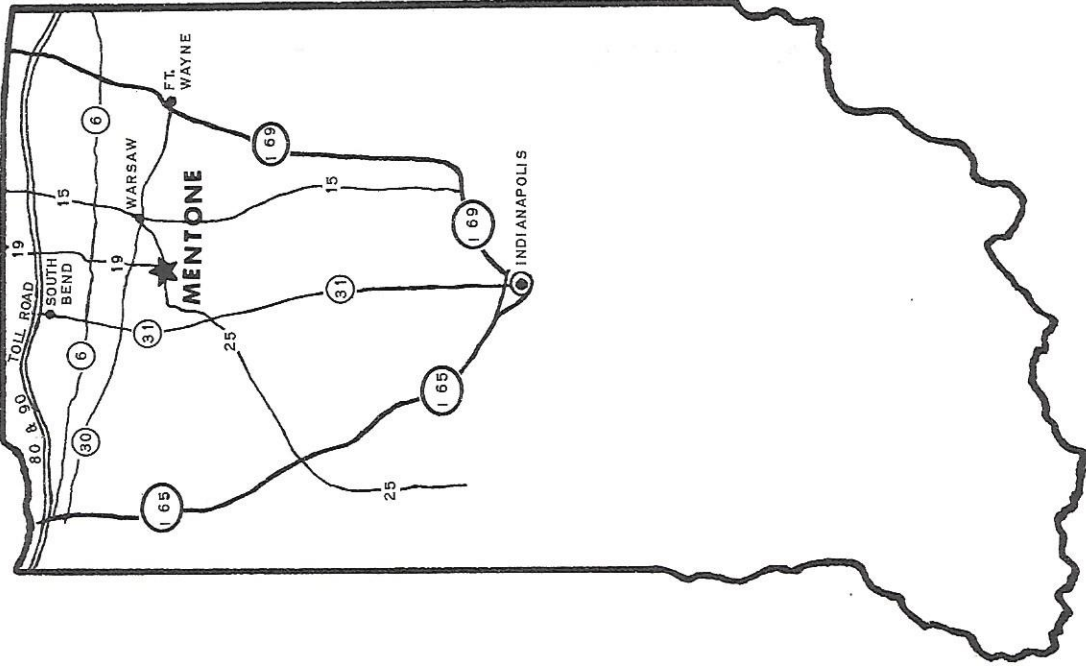
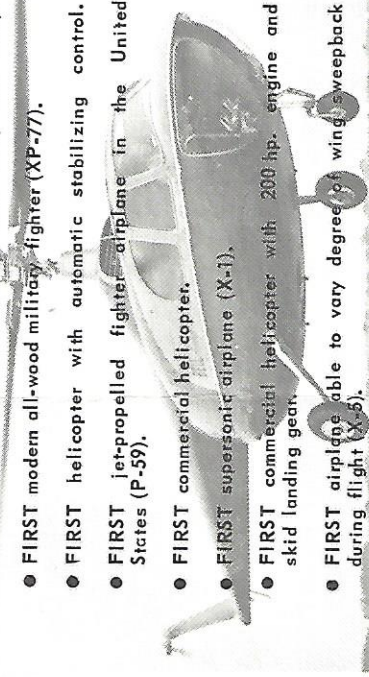


1894-1956

## Famous Bell Aviation 'FIRSTS'

- FIRST twin-engine escort fighter (Airacuda).
- FIRST aircraft to mount 37 mm. cannon and flexible gun turrets (Airacuda).
- FIRST modern multi-place fighter, establishing a new type for the Army Air Force (Airacuda).
- FIRST American fighter airplane designed around its armament (P-39 Airacobra).
- FIRST use of tricycle landing gear on modern military aircraft (P-39).
- FIRST satisfactory .50 caliber machine gun shock dampener which became standard for both Army and Navy.
- FIRST modern all-wood military fighter (XP-77).
- FIRST helicopter with automatic stabilizing control.
- FIRST jet-propelled fighter airplane in the United States (P-59).
- FIRST commercial helicopter.
- FIRST supersonic airplane (X-1).
- FIRST commercial helicopter with 200-hp. engine and skid landing gear.
- FIRST airplane able to vary degree of wing sweepback during flight (X-5).
- FIRST radio-guided bomb (Tarzan).
- FIRST helicopter designed specifically for anti-submarine warfare (HSL-1).
- FIRST airplane able to fly at speeds two and a half times the speed of sound and at altitudes of 90,000 feet (X-1A).
- FIRST turbine-powered helicopter (XH-13F).
- FIRST jet-propelled vertical take-off and landing airplane (VTOL).
- FIRST automatic carrier landing system.
- FIRST convertiplane incorporating tilting-rotor system (XV-3).



LAWRENCE D. BELL  
Aviation Pioneer

devoted forty-four years to the aircraft industry. From a barefoot boy in Mentone, the town of his birth, he became chairman of the board of one of the nation's foremost aircraft firms, Bell Aircraft Corporation. This firm produced such significant aviation contributions as the nation's first jet propelled airplane, the world's first commercial helicopter, the world's fastest and highest flying airplane, the Bell X-1A, and the first jet vertical take-off and landing airplane.

*"Show me a man who cannot bother to do little things and I'll show you a man who cannot be trusted to do big things."*

Lawrence D. Bell

Lawrence Dale Bell was born in Mentone on April 5, 1894, the youngest son of Isaac and Harriet Sarber Bell. Known to everyone as Larry, he attended school in Mentone until 1907 when he moved to Santa Monica, California, with his family.

In January, 1910, Larry and an older brother, Grover, attended the first major U.S. air show at Dominguez Field near Los Angeles. Immensely impressed, they returned home and built a plane of their own. It was only a model, but it flew and it changed the lives of both Bell brothers.

In 1912, a month before Larry was to graduate from high school, Grover, who had recently learned to fly, asked him to join the great stunt pilot Lincoln Beachey and himself as a mechanic. Larry easily passed the final examinations that ended his formal education and joined the pilots, completely enjoying his work. Beachey temporarily quit but the Bell brothers continued attending air shows. Grover was killed in a crash in 1913 and Larry vowed to quit aviation. In a short time, however, friends convinced him to return to the field and he went to work for Glenn L. Martin.

At 20, Larry was shop foreman and within a few years was vice-president and general manager of the Martin Co. In 1928, he left to join Consolidated Aircraft in Buffalo, New York.

Consolidated moved to California in 1935 and Larry decided to form his own corporation. The company, Bell Aircraft Corporation, had a slow beginning. Its undaunted engineers continued to perfect new designs. In the first 20 years of its existence, the company recorded 20 firsts (shown on the front). For these firsts, Larry was honored with the Daniel Guggenheim Medal, the Collier Trophy, a presidential citation, the French Legion of Honor, honorary degrees and many others in addition to having schools and parks named in his honor.

At his death in 1956, Larry Bell was dean of American aviation, having served the industry 44 years.

The citizens of Mentone and the surrounding community are interested in preserving the memory of and developing appreciation for Lawrence D. Bell, aviation pioneer and native son of Mentone, Indiana. It is important that the story of Larry Bell's contribution to the development of aviation be recorded and artifacts belonging to him which relate to the history of aviation be preserved and shared. A museum will be established and maintained at Mentone to house both personal and historical items related to Lawrence Bell and to the history of aviation in America. Funds raised will make possible acquisition and restoration of each model of Bell aircraft built during and following the World War II era.

Preservation of this historical collection is timely during our Bicentennial years. People have become much more aware of the importance of preserving both records and memorabilia. A museum to house the valuable papers, aircraft models, and other mementos given to the Mentone community by Lawrence Bell is the ideal way to preserve these artifacts for posterity. Such a museum would also provide a valuable educational source for people of all ages interested in learning more about the history of aviation and the life and times of Lawrence Bell. The Mentone community has great pride in Larry Bell's accomplishments and wishes to share with visitors coming to the Mentone area.

Adequate funding for a project of this magnitude in a small town such as Mentone will be possible only with the assistance from interested and dedicated citizens from all walks of life and from every corner of our country.

This is an invitation to join with us in our endeavor to preserve and share with others a portion of our nation's aviation history. We welcome your gift of any size.

Please send your tax deductible contribution to:  
Lawrence D. Bell Aircraft Museum, Inc.  
Box 411.  
Mentone, Indiana 46539