OCTOBER 21, 1956

In Loving Memory of

LAWRENCE BELL, AIR LEADER, DEAD

Developer of First U. S. Jet and World War II Fighters Founded Concern in 1935

DESIGNED VARIABLE WING

Early Associate of Martin Specialized in Research —Company Built X-2

BUFFALO, Oct. 20 (AP)—Lawrence D. Bell, founder and board chairman of the Bell Aircraft Corporation, died today at the age of 62.

Mr. Bell succumbed to a heart ailment in Buffalo General Hospital. He entered the hospital eight days ago, but had been in declining health since last May.

He is survived by two brothers, Clyde Bell of Baltimore and Vaughn Bell of Santa Monica, Calif., and a sister, Mrs. Mary Mills, also of Santa Monica.

45 Years in Aviation

Lawrence Dale Bell, who was in his forty-fifth year in aviation, was the dean of the country's aviation executives.

Since his first employment in aeronautics as a mechanic for two exhibition pilots—his brother, the late Grover E. Bell, and Lincoln Beachy, the famous barnstormer—Mr. Bell had contributed greatly to the progress of American aviation.

He was responsible for the development of the P-39 Airacobra and the P-63 Kingcobra, fighter planes used extensively during World War II, and the P-59, the first United States jet airplane. He assisted in the production in important volume of the Boeing B-29 Superfortress and in the design and construction of the X-1, an experimental plane first to surpass the speed of sound.

Mr. Bell was also credited with the design and construction of the X-5, the world's first airplane to vary wing sweep in flight; the helicopter that received the world's first commercial license, as well as a series of military helicopters; and the design and production of guided missiles and rocket motors.

Born in Menton, Ind., on April 5, 1894, Mr. Bell became associated actively with aviation at the age of 18. After graduation from high school, and less than a year after his association with his brother and Mr. Beachy, he made his first contribution as a con-

Lawrence D. Bell

as bombs.

He then joined the Glenn L. Martin Company as an apprentice. Proof that aviation was in its infancy was the listing of the Martin company under "amusements" in the telephone directories of the day.

In a space of seven years, Mr. Bell rose to become superintendent of the aircraft factory. During this time he hired Donald W. Douglas, who was destined to become another leading figure in America's aviation history.

Constructed Bombers

Mr. Bell was soon promoted to vice president and general manager of the company. He was active in the construction of the first famous twin-engine Martin bombers.

In the late Nineteen Twenties he left Martin and went to Buffalo to join Consolidated Aircraft Corporation, becoming vice president and general manager of that company in 1929. Uuder his direction, Consolidated continued to develop flying boats.

When the company was moved to San Diego, Calif., Mr. Bell decided to stay in Buffalo and form his own company with the aid of a small group of close associates.

The Bell Aircraft Corporation was formed in the summer of 1935. It was in the midst of a depression year and the new company encountered hard sledding. During the early days of the corporation's life, payrolls were met by taking surplus contracts from established corporations.

Mr. Bell's ideas, however, always turned toward research, development and production. The Airacuda, the first all-Bell plane, took wing in 1935. This was followed a year later with the smaller, faster Airacobra, which contained a number of innovations, including a 37-mm. cannon sighting through the hollow hub of the propeller.

Expanded Plant Facilities

A large expansion of plant facilities enabled the production of the Kingcobra and the Aracomet, as well as the RP-63 armored airplane used to improve the marksmanship of aerial gunners. During the shortage of critical material, Mr. Bell and his engineers conceived and designed the Army Air Forces'

new measure of remote control for high-speed, high-performance, operational-sized aircraft.

After he had been requested to take part in the B-29 bomber program, Mr. Bell produced 663 Superfortresses, an average of one B-29 a day from the first delivery.

During World War II Mr. Bell served simultaneous terms as president of the National Aircraft War Production Council and the Aircraft War Production Council, East Coast, Inc.

A close student and an ardent advocate of rotary-wing aircraft for many years, Mr. Bell developed an experimental aircraft in 1941 with Arthur M. Young, a Princeton graduate who had devoted a dozen years to helicopter research. Today, Bell helicopters are operating in many parts of the world. They were used extensively in the Korean war and are an integral part of the equipment of the various branches of the armed forces.

When his aircraft company was requested to submit a proposal for an experimental plane to attack the barrier of supersonic speed, Mr. Bell insisted there would be no previous aircraft standards. He cautioned his engineers to throw the books away.

Won Collier Trophy

On Oct. 14, 1947, after exhaustive studies in which Bell engineers had overcome seemingly insurmountable problems, the X-1, the Air Force's first rocket-propelled airplane, flew faster than the speed of sound. (The speed of sound is approximately 700 miles an hour at sea level.) Capt. Charles E. Yaeger was the first pilot to fly the plane.

The tiny plane was later presented to the National Air Museum, Smithsonian Institution. The X-1 was designed to fly at a top speed of 1,700 miles an hour at an altitude of 80,000 feet. Mr. Bell received the Robert J. Collier Trophy for this achievement.

The demand for a plane that would travel faster and rise to a higher altitude was becoming a military necessity. Mr. Bell and his engineers again went to work, using the X-1 as a basis for further development.

In July of this year, the Bell X-2, a small, needle-nosed airplane equipped with a rocket engine powerful enough to move a Navy cruiser, set a new speed record of 1,900 miles an hour, more than twice the speed of sound.

The predecessor of the X-2, the X-1A, established in 1954 an altitude record of 90,000 feet, more than seventeen miles. In September of this year, the X-2, carried aloft by its "mother" plane at Edwards Air Force Base in California, climbed to an altitude of 126,000 feet, the fringe of outer space.

Mr. Bell's contributions to aviation history earned him widespread recognition. In addition to the Collier Trophy, he was the recipient of the Guggenheim Medal; a Presidential Citation; an honorary degree of Doctor of Engineering from Clarkson Memorial College of Technology and the Chancellor's Medal of the University of Buffalo.

He also received an honorary

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Mr. Bell's engineers also developed equipment that brought

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He also received an honorary Doctorate of Science from Hobart College; the French Legion of Honor, and an Air Force Association citation for "inspirational leadership in the field of guided missiles."