



Lawrence D. Bell, founder and board chairman of the Bell Aircraft Corp., Buffalo, N. Y., which produced the world's fastest and highest flying airplane, died Saturday at the age of 62. Bell was a native of Mentone.

Mr. Bell had been in ill health since last May. He entered Buffalo General Hospital eight days previous. Death was attributed to a heart ailment.

"Larry," as he was better known at Mentone and vicinity, was considered the dean of the nation's aircraft executives. He founded the company at Buffalo in 1935 and served as president until last September, when Les-ton P. Faneuf succeeded him.

Bell Aircraft developed and built the rocket plane, X-2, which reportedly flew 2,200 miles an hour, or three times the speed of sound, minutes before it crashed last month. Earlier the X-2 had set an altitude record of 126,000 feet.

The company also produced the first plane to crack the sound barrier, the first jet plane, the first commercial helicopter and

the first jet plane to take off and land vertically (VTOL).

Bell was born in Mentone on April 5, 1894. His first job in aviation was as a mechanic for two exhibition pilots when he was 18. Two years later he was employed at Glen L. Martin's factory and at 20 years of age was appointed superintendent. In 1917 Mr. Bell moved to another Martin plant in Cleveland, Ohio. In 1928 Bell went to Buffalo with Consolidated Aircraft Corporation, and as this firm moved to the west coast Bell then organized his own firm.

Mr. Bell was selected to give the dedication address for the new Mentone school unit two years ago and a year later was here to dedicate a new school library which was established by the Bell Foundation.

School Holds Memorial Service

Tuesday morning a memorial service was held at the Mentone school for Mr. Bell. Dale Kelley gave an address on the life of the noted man.

It is reported also that the private model plane collection of Mr. Bell's is to be presented to the Mentone school.