



Lawrence D. Bell Aviation Pioneer

Lawrence D. Bell devoted forty-four years to the aircraft industry. From a barefoot boy in Mentone, Indiana, 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 plane.

"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

VISIT THE

Lawrence D. Bell Aircraft Museum

Mentone, Indiana

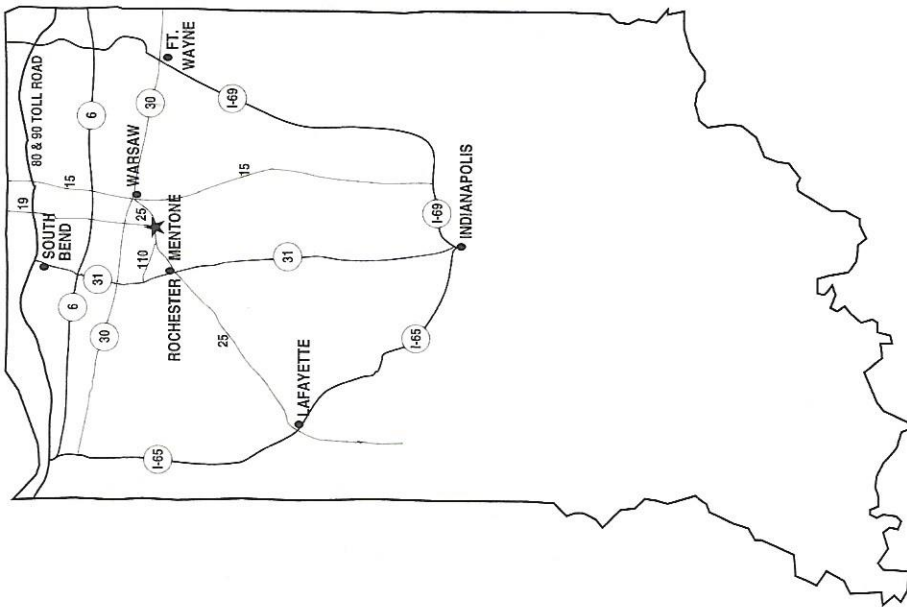
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Famous Bell Aviation "FIRSTS"

- 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 (Tarzon).
- FIRST helicopter designed specifically for anti-submarine warfare (HSL-1).
- FIRST airplane able to fly at speeds two and one-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
MUSEUM

OPEN JUNE 1 THRU SEPT.
SUNDAY 1:00 to 5:00 P.M.

YOU ARE INVITED TO VISIT THE *Lawrence D. Bell Aircraft Museum*

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

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 examination 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 age 20, Larry was shop foreman, and within a few years he became 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. 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 other honors, in

addition to having schools and parks named after him.

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

The citizens of Mentone, Indiana, and the surrounding community are preserving the memory of and developing appreciation for Lawrence D. Bell, aviation pioneer and native son. It is important that the story of Larry Bell's contribution to the development of aviation is recorded and artifacts belonging to him and related to the history of aviation are preserved and shared. Therefore, a museum was established at Mentone to house both personal and historical items related to Lawrence D. Bell and the history of aviation in America.

Adequate funding for a project of this magnitude in a small town such as Mentone has been possible only with assistance from interested and dedicated citizens from all walks of life and from all over the United States.

You are cordially invited to visit this unique museum and join others in the endeavor to preserve and share a portion of our nation's aviation history.

Phase I has been completed and exciting times are ahead as plans unfold for Phase II. Funds for the next phase will make possible construction of a hangar for acquisition, restoration and display of each model of Bell aircraft. An artist's illustration below.

Contributing Memberships available.

Tax deductible contributions may be sent to:
Lawrence D. Bell Aircraft Museum, Inc.
Box 411
Mentone, Indiana 46539

