



**MAJ Lewis Douglas Bell**  
**Class 50-54**  
**KIA**

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 9, 1918 (amended by act of July 25, 1963), takes pride in presenting the Distinguished Service Cross (Posthumously) to Major (Field Artillery) Lewis Douglas Bell (ASN: 0-4009726), United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Company B, 1st Aviation Battalion, 1st Infantry Division. Major Bell distinguished himself conspicuously by gallantry against an armed hostile enemy force at the cost of his life on 5 March 1966 in the Republic of Vietnam. Major Bell was serving as Pilot of a UH-1D helicopter when he learned that the perimeter of the 2d Battalion, 28th Infantry was surrounded and under heavy attack by a regimental-sized Viet Cong force in the vicinity of Lai Khe, Binh Duong Province. The insurgents had pressed so close to the perimeter of the American units that mortar and supporting artillery fire were relatively ineffective and the defenders had begun to run critically short of small arms ammunition. Though they realized that delivery of ammunition into the middle of a raging jungle battle was extremely hazardous and called for exposure to withering Viet Cong machine gun fire, Major Bell and his crew voluntarily undertook to deliver fifteen hundred pounds of explosive cargo into the battle area. On the approach to the landing zone the helicopter and crew were hit time and time again by heavy machine gun and small arms fire. Knowing the ammunition was desperately needed to save the besieged infantrymen, Major Bell and his crew ignored their own wounds and personal safety and continued through the heavy fire to the landing zone. The crew members began to unload the ammunition even though they were being repeatedly wounded by the ever increasing Viet Cong fire. Though the entire crew had been seriously wounded in their efforts, all the ammunition was successfully unloaded and Major Bell managed to fly the helicopter out of its untenable position, moments later the helicopter was shot down by a deadly cross fire of .50 caliber machine guns, killing all aboard. The heroic actions of Major Bell and his crew supplied the needed ammunition to turn the tide of battle and save numerous American lives. Because of this ammunition resupply the heavily outnumbered infantry units completely routed the insurgents, killing over 200 Viet Cong and capturing supplies and equipment which included four .50 caliber machine guns. Major Bell's conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity, at the cost of his life, above and beyond the call of duty was the mainstay of the successful camp defense. His actions were an inspiration to the American defenders, displaying magnificent leadership and conspicuous bravery. Although wounded, he never relented from his determined effort to resupply the heavily beleaguered infantry units. Major Bell's courage and determination, in the face of overwhelming firepower, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

**General Orders:** Department of the Army, General Orders No. 16 (April 4, 1967)

