

**LEWIS DOUGLAS BELL****CLASS 50-54**

is honored on Panel 5E, Row 113 of  
the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

**Full Name:** LEWIS DOUGLAS BELL  
**Wall Name:** LEWIS D BELL  
**Date of Birth:** 5/1/1932  
**Date of Casualty:** 3/5/1966  
**Home of Record:** FT WORTH  
**State:** TX  
**Branch of Service:** ARMY  
**Rank:** MAJ  
**Casualty Country:** SOUTH VIETNAM  
**Casualty Province:** PR & MR UNKNOWN



Major Bell was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary heroism while serving with Company B, 1<sup>st</sup> Aviation Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division.

***From thewall-usa.com***

Doug Bell was and is the best friend I ever had. From our meeting in September, 1960 in the 503rd Aviation Company in Germany our families were inseperable. We stayed in close touch after Germany and I will never forget that call from Cynthia in early March, 1966 when she said "Jim, Doug is missing." I flew immediately to Texas and then to California to escort Doug's body home. Doug gave his life to help save the lives of others. That is the kind of man he was and I will never forget him. I am so very proud to call him "friend."

Jim Morton  
Friend and comrade in arms  
December 14, 2003

## **AWARD OF THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS**

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 re-supply 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 re-supply 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.

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

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**From www.flyarmy.org**

**MAJ Lewis Douglas Bell**

Status: Killed In Action from an incident on 03/05/1966 while performing the duty of Pilot.

Age at death: 33.8

Date of Birth: 05/01/1932

Home City: Ft Worth, TX

Service: AT branch of the reserve component of the U.S. Army.

Unit: B/1 AVN 1 INF

Major organization: 1st Infantry Division

Service: AT branch of the U.S. Army.

The Wall location: 05E-113

Short Summary: Shot down by 12.7 mm Chinese AAA weapon north of Lai Khe with CPT R. M. Caloboso.

Aircraft: UH-1D tail number 63-12995

Service number: O4009726

Country: South Vietnam

MOS: 1981 = 19 Rotary Wing Aviator (Unit Commander)

Primary cause: Hostile Fire

Major attributing cause: aircraft connected not at sea

Compliment cause: weapons

Vehicle involved: helicopter

Position in vehicle: pilot

Started Tour: 02/17/1966

"Official" listing: helicopter air casualty - pilot

Length of service: 12

Location: Unknown Province

Reason: aircraft lost or crashed

Casualty type: Hostile - killed

married male U.S. citizen

Race: Caucasian

Religion: Methodist (Evangelical United Brethren)

The following information secondary, but may help in explaining this incident.

Category of casualty as defined by the Army: battle dead Category of personnel: active duty Army Military class: officer

This record was last updated on 07/02/1997

## Helicopter UH-1D 63-12995

Information on U.S. Army helicopter UH-1D tail number 63-12995

Date: 03/05/1966

Incident number: 0E005ACD Accident case number: 0E005

Unit: B/1 AVN 1 INF

This was a Combat incident. This helicopter was LOSS TO INVENTORY

This was a Logistics Support mission for Resupply , to Forward Area.

Unknown this helicopter was on Take-Off at UNK feet and UNK knots.

South Vietnam

Count of hits was not possible because the helicopter burned or exploded.

Small Arms/Automatic Weapons; Gun launched non-explosive ballistic projectiles less than 20 mm in size. (7.62MM)

Systems damaged were: PERSONNEL

Casualties = 06 DOI . . Number killed in accident = 6 . . Injured = 0 . . Passengers = 2

The helicopter Crashed. Aircraft Destroyed.

Both mission and flight capability were terminated.

Exploded

costing 11450

Original source(s) and document(s) from which the incident was created or updated:

Defense Intelligence Agency Helicopter Loss database. Army Aviation Safety Center

database. Survivability/Vulnerability Information Analysis Center Helicopter database.

Also: OPERA, UH1P1, 01253, CRAFTX, CASRP (Operations Report. Crash Facts

Message. Casualty Report. )

Loss to Inventory

Crew Members:

CP CPT CALIBOSO ROBERT MALUENDA KIA

**P MAJ BELL LEWIS DOUGLAS KIA**

CE SP5 NETH DANNY A KIA

G SP5 BARNWELL RAY MAX KIA

Passengers and/or other participants:

CPT GEREAU RICHARD NORMAN, AR, PX, KIA

SFC EMMETT GARY WILLIAM, AR, PX, KIA

This record was last updated on 09/20/1998