



Robert Charles Bell

June 2, 1925 - January 17, 2025

Robert (Bob) Charles Bell

Bob Bell passed away in Bell County, Texas on January 17, 2025. He was born to Arthur Franklin Bell and Margaret Eveyln Bell (Venhuizen) in Albany, Illinois at their home on June 2, 1925.

His family had struggles and challenging times during the Great Depression. Bob's family heard many stories about those hard times. His older brother Lawrence (Bud) enlisted in the Army Air Corp in 1942. So, in the spring of 1943, his junior year in high school, Bob talked his parents into allowing him to enlist in the Navy. He served honorably aboard the USS Hugh Hadley (DD 774) in the Pacific Theatre. During the Battle of Okinawa his destroyer shot down 26 Japanese Kamikaze planes before being knocked out of commission and nearly sinking. The ship received a Presidential Commendation for their heroic efforts.

Bob returned to Clinton (IA) High School late fall of 1945 and graduated with the class of 1946. That winter he met a beautiful brunette, Janet Happs. On May 11, 1946, they eloped in Morrison IL and soon started their family. First Roland (Rollie) in 1947, then Luann in 1949 and then Margaret in 1950.

They moved to southern California in June 1951. He got a job in the aerospace industry. First with Hughes Aircraft and then with Garrett Air Research. He became a purchasing agent and worked on every manned space project from Mercury to the last Apollo program. Focusing on the life

support systems of these various space crafts. It was one of the highlights of his life being able to be a part of America's space program that resulted in landing a man on the Moon.

He retired from Garrett Air Research in the mid-1970's and began a career in real estate. Bob and Janet moved from Fullerton CA to Paradise, CA. He continued to sell real estate as an associate broker until 2004.

Bob was involved in his community. He was an active member of the Paradise Board of Realtors and was elected President of the Board in the early 1990's. He was also a member of Kiwanis International and was President of the Paradise Kiwanian's for several terms. He was a board member of the Salvation Army in Butte County, CA. He was active in the VFW, DAV and American Legion in Paradise, CA and when he moved to Texas was a member of American Legion Post 526 in Holland, Texas. He was a member of the USS Hugh Hadley "Tin Can Sailor" chapter. And attended many of the crew reunions throughout the country. He was the last known surviving crew member of the USS Hadley.

A lifelong tinker, Bob spent many hours imagining and building worthwhile tools and helpful household items for his family's use. He even built a homemade camper in the late 1950's for family camping trips. He is fondly remembered by family members as "Mr. Gadget" for all the wonderful devices he fabricated.

He loved to go camping with his family. Made treks to most all the National / State Parks in California, Oregon and Washington on vacations.

He loved baseball. Bob played ball in and around Clinton IA throughout his youth and he continued playing fast pitch softball for company teams. He was a catcher in the high-level leagues in the Los Angeles CA area. He played fast pitch softball well into his 50's. He loved the LA Dodgers and was proud of their World Series victory this past season.

He had a love for critters, especially dogs. He and Janet had a special fondness from Yorkshire Terriers, and had three that were notable Liberty Belle, Anna Belle and Bonny Belle.

At eighty-nine years old he and Janet moved to Texas to be closer to their son in 2014. They found a cute little house in Temple, Texas. He loved gardening and always had immaculate lawns and landscaping around the homes he owned. He had a natural green thumb.

Above everything he loved his wife Janet and his family unconditionally. He always had a positive attitude, and he never met a stranger. He was a great story and joke teller. He was a great father and companion until the day he died. He had a heart for helping people. He and Janet would have celebrated seventy-nine years of marriage this coming May. He was a member of the Greatest Generation. He was baptized in the United Presbyterian Church, and he knew Christ. He was a great American patriot.

He is survived by his wife Janet, brother-in-law Gary Happs, son Roland (Rollie) and wife Donna, daughter Luann Ballachey and husband John, son-in-law Wally Hutton, grandson Matthew Bell and wife Sonja, granddaughter Maureen Bell and partner Vicky Haycock, granddaughter Kim Hutton, grandson Josh Grooms, seven great-grandchildren, one great-great-grandchild, and nephews and nieces spread throughout the country.

He is preceded in death by daughter Margaret Hutton and granddaughter Michelle Hutton, parents Arthur and Margaret Bell, sister Leone Carlsen and husband Carl, brother Lawrence (Bud) Bell and wife Wilma, sister-in-law Theo Laurent and husband Edward, sister-in-law Marilyn Lahm and husband Kenneth, niece Sharon Crumley and niece Kathy Lawless.

Our family would like to thank the staff at Garden Estates in Temple, Texas for caring for our father.

He chose to be cremated. There will be a family memorial service at a future date.

Tribute Wall



“ Sorry to you and your family at Bob’s passing. I live in Clinton and was a good friend of Gary’s. I’ve tried to contact him but haven’t been able to reach him. God Bless Bob and may he rest in peace.

lou paaske - February 19, 2025 at 05:20 PM



“ Blue Caribbean Bouquet was purchased for the family of Robert Charles Bell.



January 30, 2025 at 12:38 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Robert Charles Bell.

January 30, 2025 at 12:38 PM