

CAPTAIN GEORGE M. BELL
MEDICAL CORPS, UNITED STATES NAVY

George Mefford Bell was born in Ashland (Boyd County), Kentucky, on November 26, 1906, son of George G. and Jessie (Hedrick) Bell. He attended public schools in Ashland; in 1928 received the degree of Bachelor of Arts from Centre College, Danville, Kentucky; and in 1934 was awarded the degree of Doctor of Medicine from the University of Louisville Medical School, Louisville, Kentucky. Prior to entering the Naval Reserve, he practiced medicine in Ashland.

On September 12, 1941 he was commissioned Lieutenant in the Medical Corps of the U. S. Naval Reserve. Advancing progressively in rank, he attained that of Captain, to date from July 1, 1955, having transferred to the Medical Corps of the Regular Navy on January 18, 1950.

Reporting for active duty in November 1941, he was assigned to the Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Illinois, where he served as Medical Officer until August 1943. He next had similar duty with Mobile Hospital #9 and in January 1944 reported as Medical Officer of Hospital Unit #2 on board the USS LST 464. He is entitled to the Ribbon for, and a facsimile of the Navy Unit Commendation awarded that landing ship tank. The citation follows:

"For extremely meritorious service in support of military operations as First-Aid Ship during the Campaign to recapture the Philippines from October 24 to December 30, 1944. Operating gallantly despite the blacked-out harbor, rough waters, enemy Japanese gunfire and repeated dive-bombing and suicide-plane attacks, the USS LST 464 carried on her vital service of receiving and caring for casualties prior to their transfer to hospital ships. Maintaining constant readiness to aid as the number of wounded and injured increased under the fury of the enemy's fanatic opposition, she responded promptly and competently to all calls for help and proceeded boldly to beach or ship to take aboard men stricken in battle, often far in excess of her designed capacity. The courage and skill of her medical officers, her corpsmen and the stouthearted crew who manned her, and their tireless efforts under the most gruelling conditions, made the LST 464 a symbol of devotion to duty. Although a small ship and only one among the many hundreds participating in the Philippines invasion, she was recognized by the enemy as a potential factor toward the success of our forces and was singled out as a major target for Japanese airmen."

He was Medical Officer at the Naval Hospital, Hollandia, New Guinea, from December 1944 until November 1945, when he was released to inactive status. He returned to Ashland, Kentucky, where he practiced medicine until December 1949. Again called to

active duty, he was assigned as Medical Officer at the Naval Hospital Oakland, California until August 1950. He then joined the First Marine Division as a Regimental Surgeon and in that capacity saw action during the hostilities in Korea. "For meritorious service in connection with operations against the enemy while serving with a Marine Artillery Regiment in Korea from November 28 to December 10, 1950..." he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal. The Citation further states in part:

"Commander Bell, serving as Regimental Surgeon, displayed great professional skill, courage and ability in the performance of his duties. On one occasion, he worked five days and nights without rest administering medical attention to not only Marines of his own regiment but those casualties of other units that had become separated from their original organizations. Regardless of how limited facilities were, or how low medical supplies were, he always managed to care for all casualties immediately..."

He is entitled to the Ribbon for, and a facsimile of the Presidential Unit Citation awarded the First Marine Division, Reinforced, for outstanding services at Inchon, Korea from September 15 to October 11, 1950.

Between April 1951 and October 1953 he was Medical Officer at the Naval Dispensary, Treasure Island, San Francisco, California, after which he had like duty at the Marine Corps Base, Camp Pendleton, California. He remained there until January 1957, when he reported as Medical Officer at the Naval Station, Adak, Alaska. He was hospitalized from January to June 1958, and is now Medical Officer at the Naval Station, Long Beach, California.

In addition to the Bronze Star Medal, the Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon and the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon, Captain Bell has the American Defense Service Medal; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with two stars; the American Campaign Medal; the World War II Victory Medal; the National Defense Service Medal; the Korean Service Medal with four stars; the United Nations Service Medal; and the Philippine Liberation Ribbon. He also has the Korean Presidential Unit Citation and the Philippine Presidential Unit Citation.

Dr. Bell is a member of the American Medical Association and a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons.

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