

By: Bell of Montgomery

H.C.R. No. 112

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, The Texas Legislative Medal of Honor was established
2 to recognize gallant and intrepid service by a member of the state
3 or federal military forces, and U.S. Army Sergeant Major Jerry L.
4 Bell of Leon County proved himself a deserving recipient of this
5 prestigious commendation through his heroic actions during the
6 Vietnam War; and

7 WHEREAS, A native of Leon County and a fourth generation
8 Texan, Jerry Lynn Bell enlisted in the U.S. Army in Houston; after
9 distinguishing himself as a tank commander, he was assigned from
10 May 1969 to June 1970 as a non-aviator crew member with Troop B, 7th
11 Armored Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry, in Vietnam; serving as an
12 observer on light observation helicopters that conducted
13 reconnaissance over hostile territory, he repeatedly demonstrated
14 his willingness to place himself in harm's way to protect his fellow
15 soldiers; and

16 WHEREAS, On February 25, 1970, Sergeant Bell took part in a
17 mission in which an accompanying helicopter was shot down, severely
18 injuring its crew; exposed to intense fire while his aircraft
19 advanced toward the crash site at treetop level, Sergeant Bell
20 suffered shrapnel wounds to his left arm and chest but kept the
21 enemy at bay by firing on their position with his machine gun; his
22 efforts provided cover to facilitate a rescue of the aviators in the
23 downed craft, and he also assisted by keeping his helicopter's
24 rotor clear of obstacles and tending to injured crew members on the

1 ground; after the wounded were evacuated for medical treatment, he
2 and the pilot returned to the combat zone and marked the enemy
3 fortifications so that they could be targeted by gunships,
4 artillery, and air strikes; and

5 WHEREAS, Sergeant Bell took part in numerous other combat
6 missions during his 13 months with Troop B in Vietnam, and at one
7 point, he made 25 flights over a three-week period; his willingness
8 to go above and beyond the call of duty was recognized with numerous
9 commendations; in addition to the Purple Heart he received for his
10 shrapnel wounds, he was honored with the Distinguished Flying
11 Cross, the Army Commendation Medal, the Bronze Star with "V"
12 device, multiple Air Medals, the Vietnam Service Medal with four
13 bronze service stars, the Meritorious Service Medal with one oak
14 leaf cluster, and the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with palm
15 ribbon; and

16 WHEREAS, This dedicated soldier ultimately completed 21
17 years of active duty in the armed forces, attaining the rank of
18 sergeant major, and he was posted to Germany and Korea, among other
19 locations; his final duty station was at Fort Bliss in El Paso,
20 where he was the enlisted advisor to the 2nd Brigade, 49th Armored
21 Division, of the Texas National Guard; after retiring from the
22 military, he served as a postal carrier in Leon County, worked for a
23 construction company, operated a gun store, and successfully ran
24 for mayor of Leona; he passed away on January 10, 2021, at the age of
25 77, leaving behind his wife, Alice Bell, his four children, Jerry,
26 Harold, Kimberly, and Wendy, and many grandchildren and
27 great-grandchildren; and

1 WHEREAS, Jerry Bell distinguished himself through his acts of
2 extraordinary courage, patriotism, and selflessness on the
3 battlefield, and it is indeed fitting that he be honored with the
4 highest military award conferred by the State of Texas; now,
5 therefore, be it

6 RESOLVED, That the 88th Legislature of the State of Texas
7 hereby direct the governor of the State of Texas to posthumously
8 award the Texas Legislative Medal of Honor to Jerry L. Bell in
9 recognition of his valiant service during the Vietnam War.