

# Augusta Military Academy

## Oral History

Chris Harrison, '42  
July 15, 2001



I have told most of my memories of AMA in the Bayonet several years ago. Most of my good ones are of “**Boots**,” **Maggie Bell**, the PMS&T’s **Sergeant Collison** (the tall, thin one), **Cyrus McCue**, **Tino Kasunich**, “**Wac**” **Craft**, “**Rosicrucian**” **Ragno** (the graduate of Norwich University who was a Rosicrucian and tried to convert a bunch of us, old “**Pooh Bear**” **Webb** - hated him, and Maggie Bell kept trying to convert him to Presbyterianism, **Mother Mac** and **Promoine Palace Fontaine**.

I have, I regret to say, always admired and respected **Colonel Roller**, but I always thought (and I think, acted) that the Major was the most complete s--t and BS artist. **Hoover** and I did not get along (my fault, had to do with the fencing team), but I certainly admired and respected his English course. I don’t frankly remember that he taught Latin, but I may have had my fill of that in seventh and eighth grade back in Philly. I do know I was into Cicero, but darn if I remember any, much, although occasionally I can translate a short maxim for someone dumber than I am.

### Background Of The “Augusta Bell Society”

What I know about the “Augusta Bell Society,” comes from the ad that appeared in the 1942 and 1943 “Recalls” and from what my Mom and Dad told me way back then. I guess I called it the **Maggie Bell Society** because it was in her honor that it was formed.

My Dad might have liked his booze -- at any rate he enjoyed a quiet drink before supper and he got in a lather if he could not get it. I don’t remember if there was such a place, or where the liquor store might have been (other than the illicit source across Route 11, opposite the gates of AMA, patronized in my day by such people as Wasco and others).

At any rate, “**Mike**” or “**Boots**” **Robinson**, at that time our doughty commandant and his equally doughty wife **Maggie Bell Roller Robinson**, always appeared to have a considerable supply on hand. Consequently, my Dad and some others whose noses for hidden liquor were quite remarkable when they were thirsty, soon discovered (probably by a primitive pre-breathalyzer sniff) that Mike and Maggie Bell were sources.

The whole bunch from 1941 onwards became good buddies (as Dad would bring liquor down from not quite so dry Maryland or from Pennsylvania, on his occasional trips through the Valley) and **Sr. Aguilera** supplied some too on his and Sra. Aguilera’s infrequent but happy trips up from Cuba. Their wives conceived an abiding affection for Maggie Bell.

The Society was made up of: **Mrs. A. S. Roach (Auntie Bell)** from Boonsboro, Maryland; **Mrs. A. E. Winslow (Gertie Bell)**, Cleveland, Ohio; **Mrs. F. A. Carter (Rustie Bell)**, Washington,

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D. C.; **Mrs. L. G. Aguilera (Maria Bell)**, Havana, Cuba; **Mrs. J. W. Haley** ("B" Bell -- this was Chris Harrison, '42

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Jack Haley's mother), Bristol, Rhode Island; **Mrs. J. V. Hunt** (Martha Bell), Greensboro, North Carolina; **Mrs. H. N. Harrison** (Margie Bell -- my mother), Centreville, Maryland and **Mrs. L. P. Montgomery** (Monty Bell), Library, Pennsylvania.

So you can see that it was all out-of-staters, and only three Southrons in their midst, Auntie Bell, Margie Bell and Martha Bell, if you don't count Maria Bell!

I think what bound them together was the unlimited hospitality they received from Mike and Maggie Bell (not all alcoholic, I assure you -- my mother and the other ladies didn't drink very much) and a general detestation of Major and Mrs. Roller. I do know they all liked the Colonel, maybe his wife, too, but that I wouldn't know and don't remember.

The Haleys and Dad and Mother were friends from the Summer of 1941, I know, as we visited them in Bristol one Summer and they spoke at length about the Hurricane of '38 which had washed away one of Dad and Mother's friend's house on the Island. Jack and I got along pretty well, although he was a year or two my senior, I believe he was Class of '42, or was that his roommate **Bill Brown** of Endless Caverns?

Whew! All that to explain a fun and funny little joke played on the Major, which is essentially what it was, with Maggie Bell's enthusiastic endorsement and Mike's backing, I'm certain.