

## Guy Alford

In 1951 and '52, Guy Alford of Georgia worked frantically to accumulate information on his family for a book he planned to publish. He had much of it spread out on the bed in the process of some final organization when he died. For almost forty years all his papers rested on the shelf in his daughter-in-law's garage. As a result of the generosity of Mrs. Evelyn Alford Smyly, AAFA now has this collection. Information about Guy Alford or material from his collection will appear in many subsequent issues of the quarterly.

The following is from an article that appeared in the *WYOMING STATE TRIBUNE* 11 May 1943. The main headline was clipped off, but a secondary headline reads "52-Year-Old Veteran Was Captain in World War I."

*A recent release to "Yank" from a "coast artillery position in Panama," to the effect that "Pop," a 52-year-old soldier, was recently promoted to corporal and no longer holds a unique position as one of the oldest privates in the army, has brought a nomination of his successor from the Fifth QM training regiment at Ft. Warren.*

*The nominee is Pvt. Guy Alford, Company B, also 52 years old, who at present is in charge of the indoor rifle range. In contrast with "Pop," who in previous service had never progressed beyond the grade of private first class, Alford attained the rank of captain in the last World War.*

*Enlisting for the first time in 1912, Alford served continuously until July 1919, progressing through all of the enlisted grades from buck private to first sergeant, and from lieutenant to captain.*

*Now in the quartermaster corps, where high-powered, efficient trucks are a matter of course, Alford recalls when trucks were first introduced into army service. Stationed at Eagle Pass, Tex., in 1916, Alford's company was informed at retreat one evening that in half an hour they would entruck and proceed to a point about 100 miles away to participate in an anticipated border raid. At the appointed hour, three trucks pulled up and hauled the men away. En route to the anticipated scene of action, however, two of the trucks broke down and had to be hauled in by the third, making the short trip an all-night ordeal.*

### Commissioned as Infantry Officer

*After serving on the border for several years, Alford attended the brigade school for selected non-commissioned officers and was commissioned a lieutenant in the infantry and later to the rank of captain, serving in the aviation section of the signal corps in France.*

*Stationed at an air service production center in France, Alford points out that during the last World war planes were*

*used mainly for reconnaissance and observation. His work, he adds, concerned assembling the Liberty plane and involved experiments, such as synchronizing machine guns and propellers, and attempting to bullet-proof gas tanks.*

*After the war, Alford resumed his law practice in Swainsboro, GA., and spent his spare time in historic research on patriotic Americans from Georgia. In spite of his lucrative civilian occupation and his age, Alford feels it is his duty to lend the benefits of his military background to the prosecution of another war.*

Two days later the same paper carried a photograph and another short article:

### Oldest Private. . .



"The 5th quartermaster training regiment at Ft. Warren has nominated Guy Alford, 52, former attorney at Swainsboro, GA., as the oldest private in the army. The regiment claimed the distinction for Alford after learning that another 52-year-old soldier in a Panama coast artillery unit was promoted to corporal. Alford, now in charge of an indoor rifle range at Ft. Warren, was a captain in the first World War. He enlisted in 1912 and moved up to a captain before leaving the army in 1919."