

R. M. "Dick" Alford, AAFA #0633

He is better known as "Dick" and Past President of our AAFA. Dick joined the organization after retiring from the medical profession because he developed an interest in genealogy and wanted to find more about his roots. He was elected president after asking Gil Alford how he could help out as a volunteer. This is Dick's auto biography.

I was born in Waukegan, IL, on May 21, 1925, and lived there until I left for college almost 18 years later.

I started school in the fall of 1930 ending up in a small midyear class. We were from all walks of life and ethnicity. With the Depression, no one seemed to be better off than anyone else. I moved onto high school in 1939, again in a small intimate class, again from all walks of life and ethnic origin. I still have good friends from that small group.



Standing: Sons Richard M. "Dick" and Harold Alford
Seated: Lillie Nelson and Fred E. Alford

During the Depression, my father had several jobs, but finally built a steel fishing boat and was a commercial fisherman for six years to about the time WWII began. Mother was at home until the war began and my brother and I neared time to think about college. As for family, they consisted mainly of my mother's immediate family.

My paternal grandfather, Ernest Cutler Alford, died in 1920 before my birth and Grandmother Katie Moody Alford lived in California where I saw her but one time in 1929. My father's brother, Russ Alford, his wife and son Willis lived in Waukegan and were the only other Alfords that existed. My first contact with another Alford was a black mess man aboard ship.

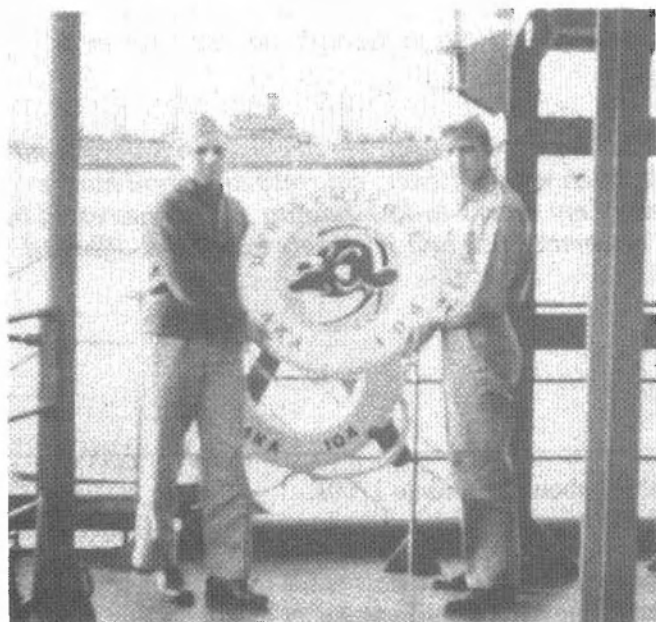
In February 1943, upon completion of high school, I left for the U. of Michigan and started on the path of medicine. During that semester, the V-12 Navy college program was hatched. I took the test, was accepted and was sworn into the Navy before turning 18. I was sent to Ursinus College in PA where I spent the next two years, followed by four months at Bainbridge Naval Hosp. before going back to the U. of Michigan for medical school in the fall of 1945, still in the Navy.

After one semester, we were discharged and with the benefit of the four months at Bainbridge, I was awarded four semesters of GI Bill. With semester tuition at \$225, my total medical education did not cost my parents or myself any great sum.

For internship, I was accepted at the Research Hospital in Kansas City, MO, where in the final month, the Korean War began. Having gone back into the Navy at the beginning of the internship to get more than the \$50/mo, I received orders to the Bremerton Naval Hospital in Bremerton, WA where I spent just five weeks before receiving orders aboard ship in Bremerton and left the following day for Japan. There we unloaded cargo, but during the process, weathered a typhoon, the eye of which went right over us.

We then headed for Korea where we picked up the Marines and took them around the peninsula for the landing at Inchon. Those of us who were not involved in the landing itself viewed the happening from the far distance. We were involved in other activities, but spent much of our time between actions in Japan. We

were given a week of R&R in Hong Kong before returning to the US. The ship made a re-supply trip to Point Barrow, Alaska, for the well drillers in the summer of 1951, and it was on this trip during a supply stop in San Francisco Bay that I met Connie on a blind date. I saw her on a few other occasions and we were married less than two years later.



Dick Alford with roommate on board USS Seminole, while overseas in Korea

In that fall, I was given shore duty at the Corona Naval Hospital in Corona, CA, and in June was discharged to begin a refresher year General Practice residency at Ravenswood Hospital in Chicago, during which time our marriage occurred. I ended up practicing in Chicago with a doctor from Ravenswood. It was there that our children were born and we made a lot of good friends. But after 14 years, we tired of the big city and in looking for places to go, ended up in Lewiston, ID. It turned out to be a great move for all. Our children became dedicated Northwesterners and have stayed close by.

While in Chicago, after a few happenstance cases involving the use of thyroid hormone, I became very interested in its use and over the years learned a great deal about it that the rest of the profession has not taken note of, or has ignored. It was in Lewiston where I resumed doing obstetrics that I learned that its deficiency is the primary cause of the breakdown of health, intelligence and general moral fiber of the country. I had

a very enjoyable practice here but since retiring, my goal has been to try to educate the profession as to what they are failing to do. They are being a very hard nut to crack.

Over the years, Connie and I have been very active in the church. I was active in Family Practice organizations and am now active in local community activities.

I became interested in genealogy in the waning years of practice, found out about AAFA and joined in 1993. In communicating with Gil, we found that I was a descendant of Benedict Alford who came to New England in about 1634 and was one of the Puritans that settled around Hartford, CT. It has become an addiction and I have spent many hours tracing Connie's and my ancestry. I have enjoyed working with AAFA and meeting its members. We are a fine group of people.



Connie and Dick Alford