

Walter W. Alford
Oct 31 1909 -Mar 5 1998
AAFA# 0073

WALTER WILLIS
ALFORD
1909-1998
AAFA #73

No source
_____, LA—4 March 1998

Lt. Col. Walter Willis Alford
(Died March 5, 1998)



FRANKLINTON—Retired United States Marine Corps Lt. Col. Walter Willis Alford, 88, a native of Mt. Hermon and a resident of Franklinton, died early yesterday morning at Riverside Medical Center.

He retired from the Marine Corps with 30 years of service and was a veteran of World War II. He was also a member of the Disabled American Veterans.

He is survived by his wife, Mary Ellen Alford of Franklinton; a stepson, Carl Obanion [*sic*] of Tustin, CA.; two brothers, Keith Alford of Mt. Hermon and Milton Alford of Pearland, TX; and several nieces and nephews.

Visitation will be held at Crain Funeral Home from 5-9 p.m. today and after 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The funeral is scheduled for 11 a.m. tomorrow in the funeral home chapel.... Burial will follow in Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church Cemetery.



Walter W. Alford
1909-1998

Walter Alford's Marine Corps Memories

Walter Alford, AAFA #73, sent AAFA this article on 30 Aug 1993 with his regrets that he could not be at the 1993 Annual Meeting.

MIDWAY MIRROR
February 1993

Reflections of the Past

By Col. Walter W. Alford, USMC (ret),

The well-worn phrase of "Join the Marines and See the World" certainly did apply to Walter W. Alford. Mr. Alford became Private Alford in the USMC November 9, 1926. His first duty station was in Panama and then on to Nicaragua, where he celebrated his 18th birthday, and where, as Private Alford tells us: "They separate the men from the boys."

"In September, 1927, I reported into the 51st company, 5th Marines and was immediately sent across the lagoon to a small detachment at El Bluff, the port of entry. Possession of any firearms was against the law and I was given the job of searching all boats of all sizes when they entered the port.

"I always take another man with me when searching a boat. One Marine was named Meetze and I believe it was he that was with me when I searched a motor schooner, about 80 feet long, named L.M. Anderson, owned by a black man of the same name. We searched the entire ship, and was up in the skipper's cabin, where there was a metal cabinet about 5' high. I reached out and opened the door and the skipper reached in and pulled out a pistol which he jammed into my stomach. I could see two high powered rifles in the cabinet. My assistant and I were not armed, as it hadn't seemed necessary, and rifles were always in the way when searching boats.

"It so happened that Meetze was just

inside the cabin door as I began telling the captain what was going to happen to him and his schooner if he shot a Marine. There were a dozen or so Marines at our barracks just above the dock and I told him that my helper could duck out the door of the cabin and spread the alarm. At this point, Meetze caught on and did just that, while I continued to lecture the captain. I told him that if he would hand over his pistol, I would guarantee his safety. My attitude seemed to surprise him, and after a few moments he suddenly handed the pistol over to me.

"I tucked the two rifles under my arm and we left the schooner and halfway up the hill, we met the rest of the detachment of Marines coming towards us with rifles at the ready. I stepped in front of my prisoner and had the rest of the men fall in behind us with rifles still at the ready. When we reached our barracks, the NCOIC telephoned the captain at Bluefield (Captain Donald Kendall) and reported the situation, and was told to send me and my prisoner over to Bluefield. After that, whenever the captain came over to El Bluff, he would first talk to the NCOIC and then come over and hold a separate session with me. He really managed my career from then on, and I had some very interesting experiences there.

"Funny thing about the LM incident. I never was scared—just indignant, which seemed to impress Anderson more than anything else. All of this on just about my 18th birthday.

"I served in the Second Nicaraguan Campaign and re-enlisted at New Orleans in January, 1931. After a few months there, I was sent to Key West, Florida. It was there that I applied for Motion Picture School at Quantico and New York. After graduation, I was

sent to Parris Island for duty as an operator.

"In 1933, I requested duty with the 4th Marines in Shanghai, China. Navy transport Henderson dropped us off at the west coast of San Diego. I said 'us' because all of my buddies at Parris Island elected to go with me, leaving the PFC in charge all alone. He was one of the reasons my buddies and I decided to transfer. The Henderson came back three or four months later and picked us up. It was our first trip to the West Coast, and we enjoyed the layover.

"When the Henty Maru came back and picked us up, they had gotten sound projectors to replace their old equipment, so I volunteered me and my buddies to install the equipment for him and train their man on the long run to China. The motion picture screen was mounted on the foremast and the projection booth was set at the passenger's deck front. We got the machine set up and found that the projection lens that "threw" the picture on the screen 30 or 40 feet, were the wrong 'throw' and it looked like we were stuck, but that sort of thing was right up my alley.

"I never was too strong on the electrical side, but a mechanical problem was meat to me. I had the ship's shop make a 'metal collar' which would fit the new projector and presto—have you ever been the hero of the hour?

"We had enough film to last a couple of months. The ship's C. O. had to post a special Navy guard up there to keep the young lady passengers out and to make sure that I and my boys left the passenger deck after the show.

"I joined the 4th Marine Regiment at Shanghai on September 19, 1933. The following spring I volunteered for duty

aboard the flagship of the Asiatic Pacific and began to associate with people like then-Captain, Chester W. Nimitz, 1st Lt. 'Chesty' Puller (made Captain at Yokohama), Frank Jack Fletcher and a few others who are almost immortal. I got aboard just in time to go to Japan for the first time. Also aboard was Admiral Upshaw, who was C-in-C of the U. S. Asiatic Fleet.

"Of course, as flagship, we spent most of our time in China (Shanghai, Tsingtao) with trips to the Philippines. Then too, we went to Australia and came up through what was then the Dutch East Indies, Bali and most of the coastal cities—Singapore, Hong Kong—you name it. It was an education in itself.

"After returning to the states as a corporal in 1936, I went to San Diego for duty. Good men were stacked up there trying to get promoted. They hadn't learned what I had taken a few years to learn. It was almost impossible to get any promotion in the lower grades unless you went to sea. So, I went to sea again on U.S. New Mexico, and was just in time to take the exam for sergeant, which I made at the end of my first month aboard.

"I was gun captain on a 5-inch battery, and I made an 'E' the first two years, and I only missed it by one shot on my third year. They had changed the firing interval without telling me, so I found my timing was off. Good training maybe, but I sure hated to lose that third 'E'.

"Now that I was a sergeant, there was no more need to go to sea duty, as promotions about Sgt. were made from HQMC. I went to San Diego and was immediately absorbed in training Defense Battalions. We would train one and then split it and train the new ones.

"I had gotten married in the mean-

while and was making plans for my future, when in June 1941, the 6th Def. Bn. was abruptly ordered overseas, first to Hawaii and then on to Midway, where I went with the advance party, arriving August 11, 1941. I was 1st Sgt. of C Battery (5-inch) and made the HQ list for Sgt. Major and was transferred to Bn. Hq. where five or six of us senior non-coms were recommended for a commission.

"I remember 'Deacon' Arnold and I were interviewed together and neither of us took it seriously. If you don't know 'Deacon,' you have missed something. A legend in his time, which went back to the end of WWI. We were all promoted to warrant officer and a short time later, they divided us by age those of us below a certain age were appointed 2nd Lt. and those above remained as warrants. I was barely within the age limit, and made 2nd Lt. and there was no stopping me after that. I was on the verge of making major when the atom bomb spoiled everything and all ranks were frozen. It wasn't until the Korean War that I made it.

"Anyhow, back at Midway, we had barely settled in when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and shelled us from sea on December 7, 1941. Our Navy was destroyed, and we were left totally exposed, sticking out like a sore thumb towards Japan.

"As a trained artillery man, I was second in command of a 7-inch shore battery. Admiral Nimitz won the Battle of Midway, with a little help from us, but it was touch and go. After Midway was secured, I was sent to Camp Pendleton to help form the 4th Marine Division. We sailed 20,000 strong, from San Diego, in January 1944, direct to our target, the Japanese air station on Roi-Namur, Kwajalien and then to our base on Maui from which we later sailed to

attack Saipan, Tinian, back to Maui and finally off to Iwo Jima.

"I can't say enough about my DUKW company boys. We made the landing under constant fire. A DUKW is a marvelous amphibious truck. We put 47 artillery pieces and ammunition ashore under fire. Some of the troops were wounded but we never lost a single man. Those Marines will always share with me the Bronze Star I was awarded. I am as proud of them as I was of our defense of Midway.

"I have been fortunate to have served in some illustrious company in my time. I retired from the Marine Corps on August 1, 1956, in the rank of Lt. Col. I am 83 years of age and live with my wife Mary Ellen, in Franklinton, LA. I fully intend to attend the upcoming 6th Def. Bn. reunion to be held this coming June at Natchez, MS and hope to meet a lot of my Midway brothers." ❖





CONSEJO DEPARTAMENTAL DE ELECCIONES
DEPARTAMENTO DE BLUEFIELDS

Bluefields, 11, Septiembre, de 1928.

Muy señor mío:

Tengo el honor de comunicar a Ud. que en esta fecha esta nombrado por el Presidente del Consejo Departamental de Bluefields, de acuerdo con Artículo 22 del reglamento electoral del como Presidente Propietario del directorio electoral del canton de Rama

Ud. esta facultado para tomar el juramento a los demas funcionarios del mencionado canton.

El juramento del cargo de Ud. sera tomado por el Presidente del Consejo Departamental.

Ce Ud. atto. y s. s.

Charles F. B. Price
Charles F. B. Price
Presidente.

Al Sr. Walter W. Alford,

Base de la Infanteria de Marina.

Copy from my file to show you that I sometimes tell the truth

Walter W. Alford 0073
b. Oct 31 1909 & d.
Lived in Franklinton, LA
Family JOH807LA/JAM687VA
Attended 1 meeting(s).



REPUBLIC OF NICARAGUA

NATIONAL BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Managua, Nicaragua,
November 5, 1928.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

(1) Walter W. Alford, Pvt., 51st Co., 5th Regt., U.S.M.C.
served creditably with the American Electoral Mission in Nicaragua during the Elections of 1928, for the Supreme Authorities, in the capacity of

(2) _____ Chairman
of the local election board of the Canton of (3) Rama
Department of (4) Bluefields

F. R. McCoy
F. R. MCCOY,
Brigadier General, U. S. Army,
President,
National Board of Elections.

(1) Name, rank and organization.
(2) Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, etc.
(3) and (4) Canton and Department.

Copy from my file to show you that I sometimes

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ANCESTORS

1. **Walter Willis Alford** born Oct 31 1909, Washington Parish, LA, occupation Lt. Col. U.S.M.C., married May 11 1941, in Yuma, AZ, **Mary Ellen Coursey**, born Aug 2, 1909, Cooke County, TX. Walter died Mar 5 1998, Franklinton, Washington Parish, LA, buried: Mt. Pisgah Cem., Washington Parish, LA.

Parents

2. **Daniel Prophet Alford** born Oct 17 1886, Washington Parish, LA, married Sept 15 1906, in Washington Parish, LA, **Bessie Ella Belle Smith**. Daniel died Apr 3 1936, New Orleans, Orleans Parish, LA, buried: Hammond, Tangipahoa Parish, LA.

3. **Bessie Ella Belle Smith** born Mar 2 1890, died Sept 11 1974. She was the daughter of **Walter Lorraine Smith** and **Emma Julia Warren**.

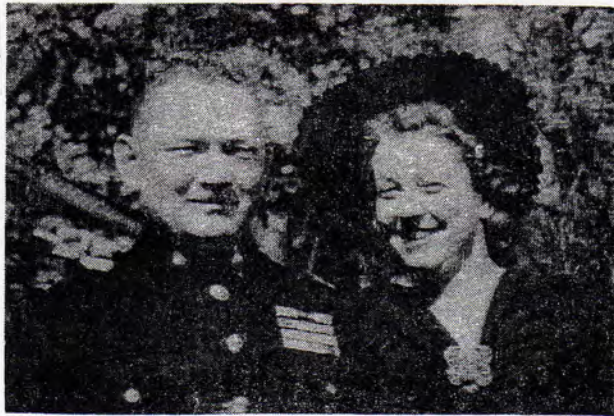
Alford Grandparents

4. **Willis Jacob Alford** born May 30 1847, Washington Parish, LA, married Dec 11 1873, in Washington Parish, LA, **Claretta Gemima Brumfield**. Willis died Dec 30 1891, Washington Parish, LA.

5. **Claretta Gemima Brumfield** born Jan 3 1852, Washington Parish, LA, died Oct 17 1923, Bogalusa, Washington Parish, LA.

Alford Great-Grandparents

8. **John Seaborn Alford** born Oct 11 1807, Washington Parish, LA, occupa-



*Walter Willis Alford and his wife,
Mary Ellen Coursey Alford*

tion Farmer, married 1834, **Margaret Brumfield**. John died Nov 15 1891, Washington Parish, LA, buried: Alford Cemetery, Alford Cemetery, Washington Parish, LA. John Seaborn Alford is buried on property that was his farm. It was later known as the Iddo Alford Farm and in the 1990's was owned by Nolan David Alford, AAFA #425.

9. **Margaret Brumfield** born Feb 9 1819, Pike County, MS, died Sept 8 1885, Washington Parish, LA, buried: Alford Cemetery, Washington Parish, LA. She was the daughter of **Willis Brumfield** and **Virginia Nancy Holmes**.

Alford Great-Great-Grandparents

16. **Jacob Alford** born Aug 15 1761, Butte County, NC, occupation Farmer, married (1) about 1785, in NC, **Elizabeth Bryant**, born June 20 1765, died 1789-92, Cumberland County, NC, married (2) about 1792, in Cumberland County, NC, **Frances Seaborn**. She was born about 1766, VA, died after 1860, Washington Parish, LA. Jacob died July 16 1824, Washington Parish, LA. Though born in Bute County, NC, Jacob lived in Franklin County after some reorgani-

zation of counties and later moved to Cumberland County where he was enumerated in 1790. Before 1795 he moved to Montgomery County, GA where tax and land records show he lived until about 1806. By 1807 he was in LA where his twin sons were born. LA land records prove that he had settled on land in what was to become Washington Parish by December 1807.

Alford 3rd Great-Grandparents

32. **Julius Alford** (James², John¹) born Sept ___ 1717, St. Peter's Parish, New Kent County, VA, married **Lucy** ____. Julius died Nov __ 1771, Butte County, NC. The source cited for the birth gives only the month and year. (From a source not known at this time the date of the 4th crept into the files. It has been removed until the source can be determined.)