

A Soldier's Mother

As doughty a character as her illustrious soldier son, who led the 9th Army's smash into Germany, is 87-year-old Mrs. Elizabeth Simpson of Aledo, mother of Lt. Gen. William Hood Simpson. She it was, more than anything else except his own single-minded determination, that enabled him to realize his boyhood ambition for a military career, thus contributing a fine soldier to her country's service.

With the resoluteness of the pioneer Parker County (and Tennessee) stock from which she came, Mrs. Simpson put aside her maternal misgivings and helped her 16-year-old son to enter West Point in 1905. Her fears were based on the feeling that a busy Army career meant virtual loss of her son, and that is what happened. Few times since have continual Army assignments, often in far places, given him time to visit her except at infrequent intervals.

But she has had the pride and satisfaction of watching his steady advance to his present high military station. With keen eye and alert mind despite her years, she has kept as fully informed in recent months of his accomplishments in France and Germany as the news would permit.

In World War I, she watched two other sons march off to war, one to become a captain and the other a first lieutenant before returning to civil life at the end of the conflict. She once remarked that "I was in that war just as much as Woodrow Wilson."

The military strain runs deep in the Simpson family—and Mrs. Simpson has more than a touch of indomitable fighting spirit. To a joking suggestion that Hitler might parachute down on the ranch where, until recent weeks, she lived alone except for a woman companion, she replied grimly that if he did he would have plenty of bullet holes in him when he landed.

Millions of American women have learned in the last four years to give up their sons to their nation's service. Mrs. Simpson learned it 40 years ago.