

Cecil Lamar Champion, Jr. *LtCol. USMC (Ret.)*

CONTRIBUTED BY: GRAHAM L. CHAMPION, SON

“It was an honor to wear the uniform of the United States Marine Corps and I am still honored to have had that opportunity.”

- Cecil Lamar Champion, Jr., LtCol. USMC (Ret.)

Cecil Lamar Champion was born in Montgomery, AL, on September 30, 1923. He attended Cloverdale Jr. High and Lanier High School, and he enjoyed playing tennis in his youth. LtCol Champion decided to join the Marine Corps while attending Auburn University. After enlisting in the Naval Aviation Cadet Program, Champion completed flight training and was commissioned a 2nd Lt in the USMC. He was promoted through his years of his service, and retired as LtCol in May of 1964.

Over the years, LtCol Champion was stationed at locations across the world, beginning at Cherry Point, NC. While stationed at Honolulu, HI, Champion flew transport missions to the Chinese mainland. He later moved to El Toro, CA, and then to South Korea, where he served in photo reconnaissance during the Korean conflict. He was a flight instructor in Pensacola, FL, before flying helicopter missions into Cambodia and Laos in 1959-60 as a Squadron Commanding Officer in Southeast Asia.

LtCol Champion then went on to Quantico, VA, piloting Marine One for Eisenhower and Kennedy. Following this post, he served as the Director of the Marine Corps Landing Force Development Center Helicopter Section.

Throughout his years of service, LtCol Champion held tight to his 1923 silver dollar, a special reminder of luck and family at home. Champion retired voluntarily on May 31, 1964, in Quantico, VA, and returned to his hometown of Montgomery, AL. He entered the Insurance business, earning the CLU designation, and joined the Maxwell AFB Retired Officer's Association.

Words of Wisdom for Younger Generations

Remember that freedom is not free. If good young men and women do not join our military, our country will not prosper as it should.

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