

## CAPTAIN CARLETON C. CHAMPION, JR., U. S. NAVY, RETIRED

Carleton Cole Champion, Jr., was born in Savannah, Georgia, on September 20, 1896, son of Carleton C. and Frances Heyward Champion. He attended the University of South Carolina for two years before entering the U. S. Naval Academy on appointment from the First District of South Carolina in 1916. As a Midshipman he served in the USS WYOMING and USS KANSAS, operating with the Atlantic Fleet during World War I (summers of 1917 and 1918). Graduated with the Class of 1920 on June 7, 1919 (course completed early due to National emergency), he was commissioned Ensign in the U. S. Navy from that date, and by subsequent promotions attained the rank of Captain, to date from October 1, 1942. He was transferred to the Retired List in that rank on January 1, 1947.

After graduation in June 1919, he served for a year in the USS MICHIGAN, then was transferred to the USS OLYMPIA, operating in European waters. He returned to the United States in June 1921, and during the next year served successively in the USS ABEL P. UPSHUR and USS SATTERLEE, units of Destroyer Force, Atlantic Fleet. In June 1922 he reported to the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, where he completed flight training and was designated a Naval Aviator on December 26, 1922. He subsequently served with Aircraft Squadrons, Battle Fleet, until June 1925, and for two years thereafter was assigned to the Bureau of Aeronautics, Navy Department, Washington, D. C. There he did aircraft power plant test and development work.

Incident to experimental work in the development of a new type supercharger, he established two world records for altitude in 1927 - one for land planes, the other for sea planes - which stood for about two years. On May 5, 1927, flying a regular service Navy seaplane, a single-seater Wright Apache, he took off from NAS, Anacostia, and climbed to an altitude of 33,455 feet, breaking the previous record made by a French naval officer at Sartrouville on March 28, 1927. On July 25, that year, flying an Apache single-seater fighter plane, he reached an official altitude of 38,474 feet, later recognized by the Federation Internationale Aeronautique as the record for land planes. This record was established despite the fact the engine caught fire several times and the pilot had to sideslip and dive his plane to extinguish the flames. (He had earlier won first place in the speed and efficiency races for both transport and commercial planes at the National Air Races in Philadelphia in 1926, and was a member of the Schneider Cup racing team.)

In June 1927 he returned to Annapolis as a student in aeronautical engineering at the Naval Postgraduate School. He continued the course at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, from which he received the degree of Master of Science in June 1929, and immediately joined Observation Squadron THREE of Aircraft Squadrons, Battle Fleet, attached to the USS OKLAHOMA. In November 1929 he was transferred to duty as Aide on the Staff of Commander Aircraft, Scouting Fleet, his title changed in October 1930 to Aide on the Staff of Commander Carrier Division ONE, U. S. Fleet, and again in June 1931 to Aide on Staff, Commander Aircraft, Scouting Force.

Detached from staff duty on June 20, 1932, he had a tour of duty at the Naval Aircraft Factory, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, then, from August 1935 to December 1936 he commanded the USS GANNET, seaplane tender. Relinquishing that command, he commissioned Patrol Squadron 16, based on the USS THRUSH, and

while in command of that squadron had additional duty as Commander Patrol Wing FOUR. In May 1938 he again returned to the Naval Academy, this time for duty on the Staff, and served there until September 1940.

Ordered to the Puget Sound Navy Yard, Bremerton, Washington, he assisted in fitting out the USS BISCAYNE, seaplane tender, and assumed command when she was commissioned on July 3, 1941. He was detached from the BISCAYNE in October 1942, and from November of that year until July 1943 successively commanded the Naval Air Stations, Coco Solo, Canal Zone, and Norfolk, Virginia. While at the latter, from February 22, 1943, he had temporary duty with Fleet Air, Quonset Point, R. I. and at the Naval Air Station, New York, additionally. In July 1943 he became Commanding Officer of the Naval Air Station, Livermore, California, remaining there until late 1946, when he was relieved of all active duty, pending his retirement in January 1947.

Captain Champion has the American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp; the American Campaign Medal; and the World War II Victory Medal; and (for World War I) the Victory Medal, Escort Clasp. He also has the White Eagle of Serbia, awarded for World War I service.

Navy Office of Information  
Biographics Branch  
23 March 1961