



## John Richard Champion

July 6, 2009

Myrtle Beach First Sergeant John R. Champion Jr., age 41 of Myrtle Beach died on July 6, 2009 in Beaufort, NC. First Sergeant John R. Champion is a native of South Carolina. He was born in Charlotte, NC. He attended Socastee High School and immediately joined the US Army at the age of 17. He went to basic training in Ft. McClellan, AL and advance medical training at Ft. Sam Houston, TX. John also attended Airborne school at Ft. Benning, GA upon his initial entry. First Sergeant Champion has held many assignments worldwide Korea, Italy, Turkey, Singapore, Germany, Iraq, Afghanistan, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Darfur. He was also stationed in Ft. Bragg, NC, Ft. Irwin, CA, and Ft. Polk, LA. He spent 10 years in the 82nd Airborne Division and 11 years serving as a Special Forces operator. His combat tours include Iraq, Afghanistan, Haiti, Rwanda, Darfur, Bosnia, and Kosovo. First Sergeant Champion served two terms in Iraq and Afghanistan and two terms in Desert Storm. His awards include the Soldiers Medal for actions during the Towle Stadium shooting on 27, Oct 1995 and was presented the Silver Star, the Bronze Star with "V" device for actions in combat while deployed to Afghanistan along with the Air medal for saving the lives of over 20 German Soldiers who were critically wounded; Meritorious Service Medal 4th award, Good Conduct Medal 7th Award, Humanitarian Service Medal 2nd award, South West Asia Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service and Expeditionary Medals, Kuwait Liberation Medal, Joint Meritorious Unit Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, The Combat Medical Badge, Air Crewman Badge,

Master Parachutist Badge, Air Assault Badge, Special Forces Tab, Airborne Tab, Belgium Commando Badge, German Fitness Badge, National Defense Service Medal, War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Southwest Asia Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, and Army Achievement Medal. He assisted in the search and rescue of victims in the 9/11 tragedies of the twin towers and the Pentagon. Upon retiring from the US Army in 2005 he went to work for the US Government for two years with Project HOPE serving in Africa to stop Genocide in Darfur. He held a Bachelor of Science degree from Campbell University. He was residing in Beaufort, NC where he was the Sr. Vice Commander of VFW Post 2401 and was operating a restaurant in Morehead City, NC. He was preceded in death by his father, George Kornbau Sr.; birth father, John R. Champion, Sr.; and his brother James Hunter Champion. He is survived by his mother, Gloria S. Kornbau of Murrells Inlet; daughter, Madison Caroline Champion of Stafford, VA; sisters, Leslie J. Champion of Tampa, FL, Susan Celeste Edwards of WV; stepbrothers, Michael L. Kornbau of Myrtle Beach, Gerald Kornbau, Jeff Kornbau, George Kornbau, Jr. all of York, PA; and nieces, Tori and Taylor Edwards of Inman. A memorial service will be held at 11:00 AM Thursday, July 16, 2009 at Goldfinch Funeral Home, Beach Chapel in Murrells Inlet with General Randy West officiating. An online guest book is available is [www.goldfinchfuneralhome.com](http://www.goldfinchfuneralhome.com) In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Veteran of Foreign Wars of US, Department of NC Relief Fund, PO BOX 25337, Raleigh, NC 27611 or to Veterans of Foreign Wars of US, VFW Post 10420 Relief Fund, PO Box 308, Murrells Inlet, SC 29576. Goldfinch Funeral Home, Beach Chapel is in charge of arrangements.

# Tribute Wall

RG

“ I knew John while he was a cadet in AFJROTC, he was a student of my father. He was very kind and I know he was a great soldier. I've no doubt his family was very proud of him and his successful career. My condolance to his family.

Robin T. Gift - December 22, 2024 at 10:53 PM

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“ He was a man so humble that very few knew he was sf and even fewer knew his accomplishments. He lead by example, was respected by all, and aggressively came to the defense of his own unbound by inhibitions or political correctness. Deployed with him, was jmpi by him, jumped from the same birds as him, was trained by him, was cussed out by him, did pt nearly every morning for 2 years with him, he payed forward the best of himself and honored the ones that selflessly sacraficed the best of themselves to mold him into the bad ass soldier he was all while asking for nothing in return. I'll see you on the other side 1sg champion and thank you for believing in us.

Amo - August 10, 2016 at 11:38 AM



“ I'll miss you brother, you were a good friend and I'll always remember the good times that we shared. Rest in peace John##imported-begin##Walter Nestor##imported-end##

August 12, 2010 at 01:02 AM



“ I met John when we were stationed in Italy. He and my husband were the best of friends. I can still close my eyes, see and hear him coming through our apartment door saying "hey what's for breakfast". He was absolutely loved by our family, he was there when our 3 girls, now teenagers and older were just babies. I still remember John being with us when we drove hours up the mountain in Italy and our youngest screaming the entire ride, John declined to ride back with us. We laugh about it to this day and still tell our daughter about John and the trip. John.. you are missed my husband misses you something fierce, you were a wonderful and dear friend, I wish you could have been part of our lives for many, many years but cherish the years you were in our lives and thank you for being such a good friend to my family but love you for being such a good person and friend to my husband. You made an impact, were always loved and will always be missed, may you now rest, exhale and be at peace. With all our Love the Infante family.##imported-begin##margie infante##imported-end##

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February 19, 2010 at 02:55 AM



“ How sad it was to hear of John's passing. He was one of those friends that leave an indelible impression on a kid, and was never far from my thoughts over the years. In our high school JROTC class, we all knew then that he was going to be a great soldier. Now, when I think of him, I think of some of our foolish antics and laugh, and then I think of his great accomplishments, and smile. John will be missed. He sure left his mark.##imported-begin##Shane Graves##imported-end##

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February 11, 2010 at 09:27 AM



“ I was extremely sad to hear about 1SG Champion. He was my Platoon sergeant and 1SG at Ft. Bragg, NC and I have never seen a better Paratrooper, Non-Commissioned Officer, or Leader. He had a genuine concern for his soldiers and he will be greatly missed. I would not be in Vicenza, Italy right now if it weren't for all the stories he told me about this place. My condolences to his family and God Bless.##imported-begin##SSG ROBERT COX##imported-end##

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September 21, 2009 at 03:32 PM



“ I am a member of the VFW 10420 Post as was there when John's Memorial was in session. I never knew this man but I felt such a reverence, such love for this man in the room that I went up and looked at his picture. I was looking at a true American hero, passing too young. When I found out all he had done I was amazed. He lived more in his lifetime, affected change for the good for so many, then most of us can after 70 or so years. I am so sorry we have lost this treasure. My sympathies to all his family, but at least you had this remarkable human being in your life. Georgia Jansson VFW Ladies Aux 10420##imported-begin##Georgia Jansson##imported-end##

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July 24, 2009 at 08:36 PM



“ Lesley and Family, My sincere condolence in the loss of John. I'm glad I had to opportunity to have met him. I know he will be missed greatly but rest assured, he is with god and there is peace within his soul. Sincerely, Robin##imported-begin##Robin Gift##imported-end##

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July 19, 2009 at 09:32 PM



“ DEAR FAMILY, WHAT A WONDERFUL MAN JOHN WAS, WE WILL MISS HIM DEARLY. I GREW UP WITH JOHN MY BROTHER AND SISTER WERE ALSO VERY CLOSE TO HIM THERE NAMCES ARE JODY & KENDRA CHESTNUT MY YOUNGER SISTER, KRISTEN GRADUATED WITH CELESTE. OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS ARE WITH YOU ALL . JOHN WILL FOREVER BE THOUGHT OF A TRUE AMERICAN HERO..... PLEASE LET US KNOW IF THERE IS ANYTHING WE CAN DO FOR YOU - #(843) 222-8050 WITH LOVE, MANDY CHESTNUT##imported-begin##AMANDA CHESTNUT##imported-end##

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July 17, 2009 at 07:49 PM



“ The world needs more men like this one.##imported-begin##Internet passerby##imported-end##

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July 16, 2009 at 08:20 PM



“ On behalf of the members of VFW Post 2401 please accept our heartfelt sympathy at the loss of our friend John. In lieu of flowers we will be making a donation in John's name. He will be missed. Barbara Patton##imported-begin##Barbara Patton##imported-end##

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July 16, 2009 at 11:59 AM



“ Gloria Our deepest sympathy Ed & Joan##imported-begin##Ed & Joan Grace##imported-end##

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July 16, 2009 at 10:34 AM



“ My heart goes out to his family. John was my friend he made me and family smile and laugh so many times. He was always there for us no matter what and we miss him.##imported-begin##Jamie Edwards##imported-end##

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July 15, 2009 at 03:34 PM



“ Mrs. Kornbau and family, I was sad to see John's obituary in the paper. I immediately recognized him. I grew up in Surfside and went to Lakewood Elementary and St. James with John. I even looked at our old yearbooks and laughed. I haven't seen him since high school, but I was so proud to read all of about his life. Our prayers are with you and your family. Winnie Brown King##imported-begin##Winnie Brown King##imported-end##

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July 14, 2009 at 07:35 PM



“ John and I served in Vicenza, Italy and Ft Bragg,NC. Airborne brothers forever Rest in Peace Paratrooper Dwayne Davidson 1SG 82nd Abn Division (Retired)##imported-begin##Dwayne Davidson##imported-end##

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July 14, 2009 at 01:42 PM



“ SO SORRY TO HEAR ABOUT JOHN. HE WAS SUCH A GOOD PERSON.HE WILL BE MISSED BY HIS FAMILY AND FRIENDS. YOU HAVE OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHY.YOU ARE IN OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS. KARAN EDWARDS & JACK NEWMAN##imported-begin##KARAN EDWARDS##imported-end##

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July 13, 2009 at 06:47 PM



“ *My thoughts and prayers are with John's family and friends. He was a really great person, a good friend a true american hero. John will be greatly missed.##imported-begin##Kendra Chestnut Ledman##imported-end##*

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July 13, 2009 at 11:30 AM