

## Cold War Pilot

By the time Lawrence Neal Meader of Orangeburg graduated from Clemson in 1954, the armistice had been signed and the border between the two Koreas had been restored. Even though that hot war had ended, the Cold War was still frosty and the United States continued to prepare men to serve on freedom's front lines.

Lawrence Meader majored in industrial education. He was a member of the Tri-County Club and Iota Lambda Sigma, the national education fraternity. He served as a second lieutenant in the Cadet Corps and attended Air Force ROTC summer training at Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana in 1953.



After finishing Clemson, Meader was accepted into the Air Force's flight training program and assigned to the 3306<sup>th</sup> Pilot Training Group at Bainbridge Air Base, Georgia. Bainbridge Air Base had closed before the end of World War II, but with the Korean War, it had been reactivated, once again serving as a flight training base. The 3306<sup>th</sup> was a contract flight school operated for the Air Force by Southern Airways. During 1954 and 1955, the base transitioned to T-28 Trojan training aircraft for its flight students. In addition to American officers and aviation cadets, these students came from Italy, Portugal, Venezuela, West Germany, Japan, France, and South Vietnam.



The T-28 was a two-seat, radial-engine trainer used by both the Air Force and the Navy. It was powered by a 1,425-horsepower engine that could propel the aircraft to a maximum speed of 340 miles per hour. The Trojan would help prepare student pilots to transition to the even faster jets then in the Air Force inventory.

On Tuesday, November 29, 1955, Second Lieutenant Meader took off from Bainbridge in a T-28 for a routine training exercise. During the flight, the aircraft's engine failed, causing the airplane to crash. Meader was killed.

Second Lieutenant Lawrence Neal Meader was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

