



John Dornan Meikle

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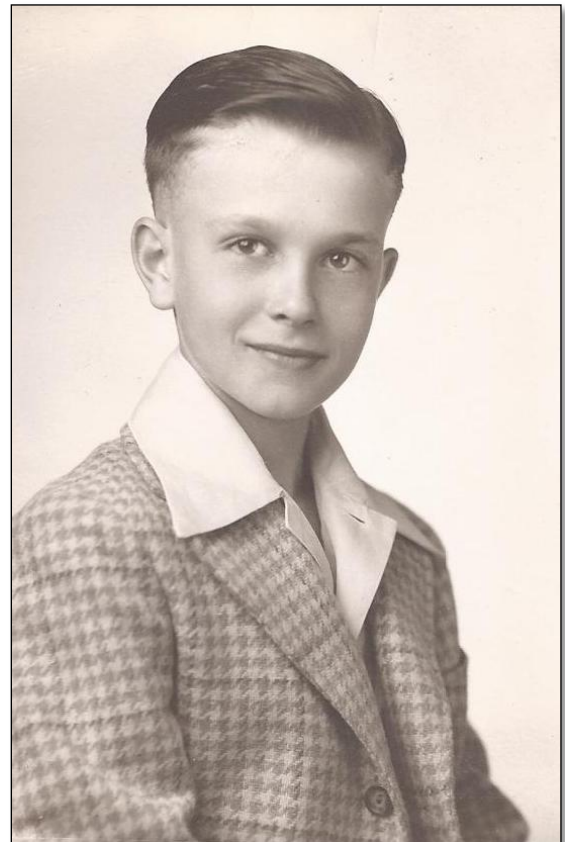
Born February 1, 1933

Killed in Action December 15, 1950

John Dornan Meikle was born on February 1, 1933, the son of Lawrence David “Dave” and Roma Gale Montgomery Meikle, and the stepson of Myrtle Cain Meikle. He was named after John Dornan, his father’s good friend. His birth mother called him “Dornie”. He had two younger half sisters, Jewel and Linda. Dornan was born in Washington County, Pennsylvania and lived there much of his childhood before moving to Carson, Virginia when his father was stationed in the Army at Fort Lee. Dave Meikle later remarried to Myrtle Cain and settled in Carson. Dave worked as a civilian employee at Ft. Lee after discharge from the Army and Dornan attended Carson High School. Although he loved his birth mother, Dornan was very close to his stepmother, always referring to her as Mother.



Dornan with his father, Dave Meikle



One of Dornan’s school pictures

Dornan did not enjoy school and wanted to go out on his own. Since he was 17 years old, he had to persuade his father to sign for him to go in the Army before finishing school. He enlisted on June 5, 1950 and was sent to Ft. Knox, Kentucky for training, where he arrived on June 10 and stayed until October 12. Unfortunately, the Korean War broke out on June 25, 1950. After completing training at Ft. Knox, Dornan visited home. From there he went to Ft. Lawton, Washington where he stayed until October 28 before shipping out to Korea. There he was assigned to Company B, 7th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division.

The family still has two letters Dornan wrote while in Korea, both of which are included later in this memorial biography. One was dated "3 days after Thanksgiving", which would have been Sunday, November 26, 1950, and the other was dated December 9, 1950. The first letter was postmarked in Capron, Virginia, not Carson, on December 11, just four days before he was killed. That letter was marked as "Missent" and forwarded to the Meikle home from there. The second letter possibly arrived after he was reported to be Missing in Action. Both letters are reproduced in this biography. It was apparent that Dornan was concerned about his mother and father in these letters, telling them not to worry about him and to use the money he sent them for Christmas. Sadly he was lost in combat on December 15, 1950, two months before his 18th birthday. At the time this memorial biography was prepared, Dornan's stepmother, Myrtle, related the following:

"Dornan joined his Father and me in Virginia as a teenager. After attending school in Prince George County, his only desire was to join the military, thinking it would be a glorious adventure. After basic training, he came home for a very short visit and immediately left for combat in Korea. His adventure proved to be very short lived, leaving us all heartbroken. He made me feel very loved and I will always miss him."

Unfortunately, it was just before Christmas when the family was notified that Dornan was Missing in Action. The Christmas tree was up at the Meikle home and Dornan's Lionel train set was running below the tree. When the MIA notification came to the house, Dornan's father went over and turned off the train, and it was never run at the house again. From then on Christmas was an unhappy time for his father. Notification that Dornan was actually Killed in Action was apparently received on Sunday, January 7, 1951.

Although the Army officially listed Dornan as Killed in Action, his remains were never recovered, so his Purple Heart was awarded posthumously. Later on, Dave arranged to have Dornan's Purple Heart and associated documents displayed at the Ft. Lee Quartermaster Museum. The display case for the exhibit was personally made by his father. This was one way in which Dave helped preserve the memory of his son. The display was exhibited for nearly 30 years, from 1966 until 1992. A newspaper article about this display is included below.

Seventeen years later, Linda coincidentally married on December 15th. At the time of the wedding, Dave told his daughter and his new son-in-law, Robert, that he lost a son on December 15th and gained a son on December 15th.

Dornan's name is inscribed at the Honolulu Memorial, National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, the Virginia War Memorial in Richmond, Virginia and the War Memorial Monument at Prince George, Virginia. In addition, there is a monument in his memory at Arlington Cemetery. Records state he received the following awards:

Purple Heart
National Defense Service Medal
Korean Service Medal
Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation
United Nations Service Medal
Republic of Korea War Service Medal
Combat Infantryman Badge



Dornan with his sister, Linda.
Note that he is wearing a clown nose, which depicts his comical nature.



Dornan in uniform in 1950.

Both of Dornan's sisters were young when he joined the Army, however they have never forgotten him, nor has his stepmother Myrtle. His youngest sister was just three years old when Dornan left, but she remembers being carried on his shoulders when he came home on leave. She had the following to say about Dornan and her memories of him:

"All my life I have longed to have a big brother. Even though I hardly remember the short time I had Dornan in that role, I feel I know him. I vaguely remember, at three years of age, being the little sister he carried upon his shoulders. From those in my family who have shared fond remembrances, he would have been the perfect big brother for me. He was fun loving, comical and also a jokester, but most of all he loved his family. As next of kin, I have spent many years of my adult life in contact with Department of Army personnel searching for any records that still remain from his short time in the military, and ensuring that DNA is on file in case any recoveries in North Korea are ever found and used for identification purposes. I pray that someday we will meet again."

His sister, Jewel, provided the following recollection:

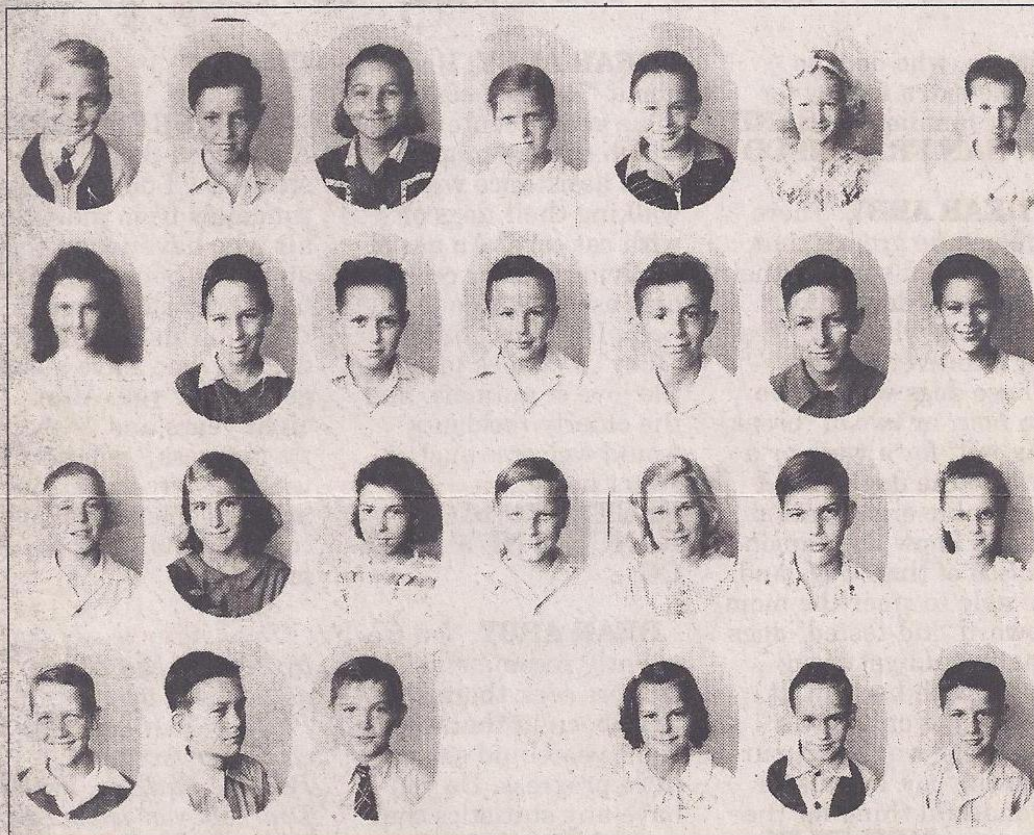
"I was seven years old when Dornan was reported as Missing in Action and I have fond memories of him. He was handsome, fun loving and I idolized him. On Sundays I would beg him to read the newspaper comics to me and he would charge me a nickel each time. My mother packed his school lunches and thought he asked for too many sandwiches, so one time she put dog food on two and he came home angry!

I also remember he went to the Crescent Lodge near Petersburg where he met and talked to Tex Ritter, and was impressed. Dornan didn't like school at Carson, all he wanted to do was join the Army, even though Daddy objected.

After his death in December 1950, Daddy would grieve for his only son every December. I regret the Army would take a 17-year old, give him basic training and send him to combat, but that was Dornan's choice."

As of December 2014, his stepmother Myrtle as well as his two sisters, Jewel and Linda are still living, however Dornan's father passed away in 1990. The collection of information, mementos and pictures included in this document were provided by Dornan's stepmother and sisters, who have preserved these items and cherished his memory since his death.

Yesteryear



Here is an old picture of a class at the Speers School. Top row, from left, Frank Green, Jimmy Godfrey, Margaret Flint, Rose Marie Mitchell, Dick Heffran, Shirley Cowell, Dornan Meikle; third row, Nora Lee B., Jimmy Heffran, John Caban, Jack Chalfant, Gary Allshouse, Eugene Burke and John Stankiewicz; second row, Billy Shafer, Vivian Reese, Molly Simpson, Karl Jacobs, Virginia Jorewicz, George Stedman and Sharma Soles; bottom row, Jack Green, Buster Stedman, Tommy Cunningham, Betty McDonald, Jimmy Sutherland, Jimmy McLaughlin. Thomas Cunningham, of Charleroi, submitted the photo.

One of Dornan's classroom pictures from Speers, Pennsylvania before moving to Virginia

On the following two pages is a copy of the original letter written by Dornan from Korea, dated three days after Thanksgiving, which would have been Sunday, November 26, 1950. This letter was postmarked at the Capron, VA post office on December 11, so it was probably delivered to the Meikles a few days later, about the time he was killed. Since it may be hard to read, a typed copy follows the original.



3 days after
thanksgiving

Well mother don't ~~drain~~ ^{at least} ~~drain~~ dead I am
~~trying~~ ^{at least} writing you a letter, but don't
expect to much because I am not in a
very good place to be writing, I am in
my ^{booth} ~~booth~~ writing on my shovel, it
is not very often that you get a chance
to write at all over here, I was in
Japan now so you can guess where I am.

We got the good news yesterday
that the KOREAN war was over, well
that is a bunch of shit, We are not
playing games over here. Mother if you
could send me a box of candy & a few
~~Cigarettes~~ Cigarettes I would love you for
the rest of my days, we don't get
Candy at all & not very often do we
get any Cigarettes. Mother please don't expect

any money from me for X MASS because

we don't get paid over here. For other I
guess you know that right now my
chances on coming back home are not
very good it may not sound like
just the right thing to say to the folks
back home but I want to dad because
I think you can understand. If I don't
get to come back home remember that I love
you & dad & all very very much. But
aside from all the bad things every thing
is going good, I still like the army but
you don't know what it would be like
to be home. Well don't forget to
send me some Candy & Cigarettes if
you can, my address is on the
envelope so I ~~will not~~ will not
put it in fear. Remember that I love all
of you very much & always will.

all my love

Pornie

000 XXXXX + + + 000000

(Below is a typed version of the letter above with original spelling)

3 days after thanksgiving

Well mother don't drop dead I am at last wrighting you a letter, but don't expect to much because I am not in a very good place to be wrighting. I am in my foxhole writing on my shovel. It is not very often that you get a chance to wright at all over hear. I am not in Japan now so you can guess where I am. We got the good news yesterday that the KOREAN war was over, well that is a bunch of shit, we are not playing games over hear. Mother if you could send me a box of candy and a few cigarettes I would love you for the rest of my days, we don't get candy at all and not very often do we get any cigarettes. Mother please don't expect any money from me for XMASS because we don't get paid over hear. Mother I guess you know that right now my chances on coming back home are not very good it may not sound like just the right thing to say to the folk's back home but I want to tell you and dad because I think you can understand. If I don't get to come back home rember that I love you and dad and all very very much. But aside from all the bad things every thing is going good, I still like the army but you don't know what it would be like to be home. Well don't forget to send me some candy and cigarettes if you can, my address is on the envelope so I will not put it in hear. Rember that I love all of you very much and always will.

All my love

Dornie

OOOOXXXXXXXXXXXXOOOOOO

Letter below from Dornan dated December 9, 1950. It appears to have been written on the outside of an envelope.

Dear Dad
DEC. 9, 1950
Well this is not a very nice
letter but I am sitting by a fire
with 3 other friends & had this money
order in my wallet & thought I had
better send it. PLEASE use \$10. of it
to send me some CANDY & COOKIES.
USE the other for XMAS ^{some} Pome
XMAS 00

I am doing alright over here
& don't worry about me
WRITE & TELL ME
WHEN YOU GET
THIS.

Killed in Action Notification Letter

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
UNITED NATIONS COMMAND
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

8 January 1951

Dear Mr. Meikle:

The untimely and tragic loss of your son, John, who met his death on the field of battle in Korea, has shocked all of us deeply. Some measure of comfort may be derived from the knowledge that he died in the service of his country and in the defense of a peace-loving people.

I am confident that his devotion to duty, at the cost of all he held dear, will hasten the day when ruthless aggression shall disappear from the face of the earth and free men everywhere will live together in peace and harmony.

Our faith enables us to withstand the shock and grief of death. It is my earnest prayer that Almighty God will sustain and strengthen you in this hour of trial. While the loss of your beloved one will be a hardship, we know that no life is really lost for those who have faith in God.

Sincerely yours,


DOUGLAS MacARTHUR

Mr. David Meikle
Carson, Virginia

The Meikle family was initially notified just before Christmas 1950 that John Dornan was Missing in Action. Based on the newspaper article below dated Wednesday, January 10, 1951, on Sunday, January 7, 1951 the Department of Defense notified the Meikles that Dornan was confirmed Killed in Action. The letter above dated January 8, 1951 was possibly delivered later that week.

The Progress-Index

PETERSBURG, VIRGINIA, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 1951

John D. Meikle Killed In Korea

**17-Year-Old Carson
Youth Was Serving
With Infantry Division**

John Dornan Meikle, 17, son of L. D. Meikle, of Carson, was killed in action in Korea December 15, according to a message received by his father Sunday from the Department of Defense.

Meikle, who was serving with the Third Infantry Division, entered the service last June 9 and has been overseas since late November or early December. He was at home on furlough early in October, leaving October 10 to return to duty.

Young Meikle was born in Speers, Pa., February 1, 1933, and moved to Carson about two years ago to join his father, who came to Fort Lee in 1944, where he now is employed. He was former student of Carson High School.

Purple Heart Notification



SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON

2 February 1951

My dear Mr. Meikle:

The President has requested me to inform you that the Purple Heart has been awarded posthumously to your son, Private John D. Meikle, Infantry, who sacrificed his life in Korea.

The medal, which you will receive in a short time, is of slight intrinsic value, but rich with the tradition for which Americans have so gallantly given their lives ever since the days of George Washington, whose profile and coat of arms adorn the medal.

Little that we can do or say will console you for the loss of your loved one. He has gone, however, in honor and in the company of patriots. Let me, in communicating to you the country's gratitude, also express to you its admiration for his valor and devotion.

Sincerely yours,

Frank Pace Jr

Frank Pace, Jr.
Secretary of the Army

Mr. Lawrence D. Meikle,
Carson, Virginia.

John Dornan Meikle's Purple Heart Award (below and next page)







THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO ALL WHO SHALL SEE THESE PRESENTS, GREETING:
THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
AUTHORIZED BY ORDER OF
GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON, AUGUST 7, 1782
HAS AWARDED
(posthumously)

THE PURPLE HEART

TO
Private John D. Meikle, RA 13 351 291, Infantry

FOR
WOUNDS RECEIVED IN ACTION
resulting in his death 15 December 1950

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND IN THE CITY OF WASHINGTON
THIS 2nd DAY OF February 1951

Alvin O. Widener



Frank Pace Jr.

SECRETARY OF WAR



IN GRATEFUL MEMORY OF

Private John D. Meikle

WHO DIED IN THE SERVICE OF HIS COUNTRY

in the military operations in Korea
on December 15, 1950

HE STANDS IN THE UNBROKEN LINE OF PATRIOTS WHO HAVE DARED TO DIE

THAT FREEDOM MIGHT LIVE, AND GROW, AND INCREASE ITS BLESSINGS.

FREEDOM LIVES, AND THROUGH IT, HE LIVES—

IN A WAY THAT HUMBLER THE UNDERTAKINGS OF MOST MEN

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Harry Truman".

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



**Quartermaster Museum Display Features Purple Heart Decoration
It Was Awarded Posthumously To Pvt. John D. Meikle Who Died In Korea**

One Original Medal Remains

**Purple Heart Respected Honor,
First Awarded By Washington**

FT. LEE—One of the best known and most respected military decorations is the Purple Heart, awarded to any member of the armed forces who is wounded in action against an enemy.

George Washington established the first U. S. military decoration in 1782 when he awarded three of his soldiers the Badge of Military Merit (Purple Heart) for acts of unusual bravery.

The Purple Heart was not used

again after the Revolutionary War until 1932.

The first Purple Heart decoration was a silk or cloth heart of purple trimmed with white lace. The present decoration is a heart-shaped medal of purple enamel on bronze with a profile head of George Washington in the uniform of the Revolutionary Army.

The medal hangs from a ribbon of purple silk with a narrow white stripe along the ribbon edge. Accompanying the Purple Heart is a special citation to the recipient and a ribbon bar of the original award.

Sometimes the decoration is presented posthumously to the family of a person who has died as a result of a heroic act.

Such was the case in the decoration awarded to Pvt. John D. Meikle, an infantryman from the Tri-City Area, who died Dec. 15, 1950 in the service of his country in the military operation in Korea.

Lawrence Meikle, the father of

the deceased soldier and an employe of Ft. Lee, in recent years presented the decoration and citations to the Quartermaster Museum where they are incased in a special display case in one of the viewing sections.

Meikle is supervisor of the Ft. Lee shop which makes the display cases used in the museum.

In discussing the Purple Heart decoration, museum historian Jesse Travis said only three decorations were awarded by George Washington and that only one of those is still in existence.

He says he had the privilege of seeing this original decoration several years ago while attending a meeting of historians in Pennsylvania. Travis says he's not sure where that original decoration is at this time, but he believes it is part of the West Point museum collection and "it was a thrill to see it."

Monument at Arlington National Cemetery

(Note: Birth year should be 1933)



*Honolulu Memorial, National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific
and Dornan's inscription on the Tablets of the Missing*



MEIKLE JOHN D
7 INF 3 DIV

*Virginia War Memorial, Richmond, Virginia
and Dornan's Inscription*



WILLIAM A. HICKOKER
★ JOHN D. MEIKLE

*Prince George County War Memorial and Dornan's Inscription
at the Historic Prince George Courthouse*



JOHN D. MEIKLE



John D. Meikle

*Prince George County, VA
Born February 1, 1933*

*U.S. Army
Private
Serial Number 13351291*

*Killed in Action
December 15, 1950*

*Private Meikle was a member of Company B, 7th Infantry
Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division. He was Killed in Action
while fighting the enemy in North Korea on
December 15, 1950.*

*Private Meikle was awarded the Purple Heart, the Combat
Infantryman's Badge, the Korean Service Medal and the United
Nations Service Medal.*

THE KOREAN WAR VETERANS HONOR ROLL



6·25 전쟁 종군기장

KOREAN WAR SERVICE MEDAL

**Awarded on the 50th Anniversary
of the KOREAN WAR**

December 2014

This memorial tribute can be obtained by contacting:

The Prince George Regional Heritage Center

P.O. Box 452

Prince George, VA 23875

804-863-0212

pghistory@aol.com