

**Nemo's Nightmare:  
Mythmaking and Community  
For HTY 200  
12/13/06  
Bryan Luciano**



The truths of a single human's earthly deeds are rarely saved for posterity. For a child searching for an accurate portrait of an ancestor, a relation never met in the flesh, those truths become obscured by the fables and fabrications of others. Mortal men and women, who attain notoriety in life, are remembered on a vast and graduated scale. This scale weighs their deeds within the scope of the ever-expanding concentric circles of community. These circles begin at the most personal level, and radiate outward, encompassing larger collectives within their sphere of influence; the self; friends and family; communities and counties; states and sovereign nations; the global community. Within whatever sphere one's deeds are remembered, the truths of those deeds, and the lives that constituted the prologue and epilogue, are inevitably exaggerated and elevated. This elevation—and in the following case the simplification—of one man, warps the story as perceived within the span of four generations. The deeds of Franklyn J. Burbank were found worthy enough to be saved, in some degree or another, within various communities; The United States Army chose to honor him with the Distinguished Service Cross, the second highest medal of valor given to an elite group of 13,500 American service men and women; His unit's martial deeds are also recorded in the annals of the 'Yankee Division,' a military community consisting of New England's National Guard regiments; The Company of two-hundred fifty men in which he served, and the sacrifices they made, hold a place in Maine's martial history within the rank-and-file of the 'Ole' Second Maine' or the 103rd infantry regiment; Again his deeds exist at the local level, and again they are warrior's tales, centered on a hill near Chateau-Thierry, France, where many men threw down their lives to 'repay their debt to Lafayette.' Only when it reaches the familial level, does the minutia of civilian and mundane deeds

become faintly visible, always at risk from exaggeration, elevation, and simplification. What exists of *his* story, both civil *and* martial, is saved in the temporal halls of memory, a few dusty tomes, soldier's stories and their monuments, and within a weathered old chest that accompanied him from Maine, to Europe, and home again. Whether done consciously or not, Franklyn Burbank had his life's colorful thread woven into a greater aural tapestry, depicting the tenacious will of men, juxtaposed by the atrocious wastes of total war. Franklyn Burbank's thread has three strands braided to make one; Family, Community and the drab strand of war that camouflages the former two.

Franklyn Josiah Caleb Burbank was born in Livermore Falls, Maine on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June, 1888. He was the son of Sylvanus Burbank of Massachusetts who relocated to Maine before 1872, and married Celinda Goding of Jay on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 1872. Sylvanus was in the clothing trade, setting up a business in the small mill town of Livermore Falls. Sylvanus and Celinda had six children beginning with their daughter Elzada, born August 29<sup>th</sup>, 1873; Brothers Herbert, born June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1875; Orah, born January 19<sup>th</sup>, 1877; Thomas, born April 20<sup>th</sup>, 1879; Harold, born June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1881; and their last child Franklyn. Franklyn would meet with his first familial tragedy at the age of five, when his brother Harold drowned two days after Christmas, 1892.<sup>1</sup>

Franklyn's first exposure to the military came with the enlistment of his brother Orah into the vaunted 2<sup>nd</sup> Maine infantry regiment. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Maine gained it's notoriety in The Civil War, serving in many infamous battles including Gettysburg, where their depleted ranks were joined with the 20<sup>th</sup> Maine under the command of legendary

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<sup>1</sup> Sedgley, George Burbank. *Genealogy of The Burbank Family*. (Maine: The Knowlton & McLeary Company, 1928), 325.

Lawrence Chamberlain.<sup>2</sup> This history was not lost on the small towns of Maine. Towns that were erecting Civil War Monuments during the late nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries.<sup>3</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> Maine in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was made up in a similar fashion to that of Civil War regiments, with Companies consisting of men of specific regions. C Company's majority was made up of men from Livermore, Livermore Falls, Chisholm and Jay, with others from outlying proximate towns such as Chesterville, Wilton and Canton.<sup>4</sup> The Burbank Family has an American military heritage going back to The Revolutionary War.<sup>5</sup> Add to this an older brother in uniform, young Franklyn, like many young boys, must have been enthralled with the adventures one could have within the ranks of the army. He would enlist on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 1908 at the age of nineteen.<sup>6</sup>

It is unclear when, but at an early age Franklyn became known as 'Nemo.' It was a nickname that was woven into his identity throughout the entirety of his life.<sup>7</sup> One could infer that the origins of this name would have come from one of four places: A knowledge of Latin, (nemo translates to 'no man' or 'nobody'); Odysseus' reply to the Cyclops in Homer's *The Odyssey*; The popular anti-hero of Jules Verne's novels: *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* and *Mysterious Island*; or, and most likely, it came from the comic created by Winsor McCay entitled "Little Nemo." The comic ran between 1905 and 1913 in the New York Herald and the New York American. It depicted a small boy, who would have to surmount modern day problems in his nightmares, only to narrowly

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<sup>2</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Maine Infantry, <http://www.me.ngb.army.mil/About%20Us/Camp%20Keyes/default.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Sturtevant, Reginald H, *A History of Livermore*. (Maine: Twin City Printery, 1970), 204

<sup>4</sup> Presson, George M, *Annual Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Maine for the Year Ending December 31, 1916*. (Augusta: Maine State Legislature, 1929).

<sup>5</sup> Sedgely, *Genealogy*, 374.

<sup>6</sup> Burbank-Dumais Family Private Collection, *Enlistment Records*. This consists mainly of documents stored in Farnklyn Burbank's war trunk. It contains maps, photos, clipped articles, receipts etc...many of which cannot be traced to their root source.

<sup>7</sup> Jean (Burbank) Luciano, Interview with author, October 3, 2006.

escape injury and death by being awoken.<sup>8</sup> I suggest the source “Little Nemo” in that nicknames are usually given rather than taken. Also, Franklyn was of slight build and small stature and subsequently, may have received the moniker from his larger schoolmates.<sup>9</sup> For whatever reason, the name stuck, and was used more frequently than his given name. Franklyn Burbank had become ‘Nemo’ Burbank. The blue-collar town of Livermore was, and is, knit tightly. Everyone knew everyone, they worked in-and-around the same mills, they drank and ate at the same taverns and restaurants, their families married regionally, and they all fueled the infamous rumor mill. ‘Nemo’ was no exception to this rule.

In 1910 Franklyn was employed by International Paper Company as a spare hand.<sup>10</sup> The Otis Mill in which he worked is the hub that connects Livermore Falls, Jay and Chisholm.<sup>11</sup> His brother Orah also worked in the same mill as a machine tender.<sup>12</sup> Labor difficulties were commonplace at the Otis Mill, with strikes in 1908 and again in 1910. “It is interesting to note that [Company C] was organized in Livermore Falls on May 15, 1908, just prior to the strike that began in August of that year.”<sup>13</sup> Company C was mustered on March 7<sup>th</sup>, 1910 to presumably dissuade strikers from violent action.<sup>14</sup> The paradox is that both Orah and ‘Nemo’ Burbank were associated with both organizations. As a spare hand, an unskilled worker, ‘Nemo’ may not have been represented by the union. Orah, on the other hand, was a machine tender, a position long

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<sup>8</sup> Winsor McCay, <http://www.bpib.com/illustrat/mccay.htm>

<sup>9</sup> See Picture, *F. Burbank and class at age fifteen in Appendix A.*

<sup>10</sup> Maine State Archives, *1910 U.S. Federal Census.* (Androscoggin County, Roll 536).

<sup>11</sup> Sturtevant, *Livermore.* Chisholm takes its name from Hugh Chisholm, a giant in the Pulp & Paper industry.

<sup>12</sup> Archives, *1910 Census.* Roll 536.

<sup>13</sup> Kellman, Peter. *Divided We Fall: The Story of the Paper Makers' Union and the Future of Labor.* (New York: The Apex Press, 2004), 52.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

backed by union representation. Franklyn Burbank cast his lot with the military and the unstable paper mill, hoping to find security in one or the other.

‘Nemo’s’ rank rose quickly in Company C. He served with numerous men, rotating in and out of service. The old guard and the new, all recognized him as a long-standing member of this local militia. During his decades of service, he cemented himself securely into the history of this unit. He received the rank of Corporal on July 6<sup>th</sup>, 1908; Sergeant on January 21<sup>st</sup>, 1909; and Quarter Master Sergeant on February 7<sup>th</sup>, 1909.<sup>15</sup> Both brothers stayed in the National Guard, ‘Nemo’ reenlisting on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 1911.<sup>16</sup> The Burbank’s lost their mother Celinda on July 24<sup>th</sup>, 1911. Her death certificate cited Angina as the reason for her early passing.<sup>17</sup> The casualties being taken with the ranks of his immediate family, must have made the risks of military life ironically mundane. Franklyn continued to devote himself to progressing up the chain-of-command and was made an infantry Sergeant on August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1911. His brother Orah made 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant at this time. ‘Nemo’ made 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant on April 15<sup>th</sup>, 1912.<sup>18</sup> On October 28<sup>th</sup> 1913, Frank married Hazel Wilkins of Jay.<sup>19</sup> He again reenlisted into the Maine National Guard on April 4<sup>th</sup> 1914; his duties did not often take him from his family. He received the rank of 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant on April 29<sup>th</sup> of the same year, and was now third in the order of command of C Company.<sup>20</sup> His daughter Irvine was born May 31<sup>st</sup>.<sup>21</sup> His brother Orah

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<sup>15</sup> Burbank--Dumais. *Family Collection*, Enlistment Papers.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., Enlistment Papers.

<sup>17</sup> Maine State Archives, *Records of Deaths, Births, and Marriages*. 1910-1920. Angina is commonly cited as the cause of death in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>18</sup> Burbank, Dumais. *Family Collection*. Enlistment Papers.

<sup>19</sup> Sedgeley, *Genealogy*, 352

<sup>20</sup> Burbank, Dumais. *Family Collection*.

<sup>21</sup> Sedgeley, *Genealogy*, 352.

was made Captain of the company at this time.<sup>22</sup> In August World War One had begun and many changes were in store for C Company.

After his enlistment, the bonds between the members of C Company became tighter. As of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1916, C Company was constituted entirely of men from either Jay, Chisholm, or The Livermores, (Livermore, East Livermore, and Livermore Falls). Some of the men had served together for several years at this point. The Company and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Maine were sent to training camps annually, and trained within the State as well. Officers were sent to various schools, most notably in Plattsburg, New York, where they were taught to lead the men under their command and fine tuned map reading and tactical skills.<sup>23</sup> Duties did not consist solely of a military nature, a C Company baseball team was established, and would play against other Company baseball teams such as Rumford's B Company, both at home and while deployed.<sup>24</sup> However there was a sense of urgency from higher up to get National Guard regiments ready for possible overseas deployment.<sup>25</sup> Members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Maine were federalized on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1916, and soon they would depart for Laredo, Texas for duty on the Mexican-American border.<sup>26</sup>

With congressional approval of the National Defense Act on June 3, 1916, National Guard units...were also called for duty on the border. In mid-June President Wilson called out 110,000 National Guard for border service.<sup>27</sup>

Thirty men out of the company's ranks were discharged prior to deployment.

Captain Orah Burbank and 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Ozro Roys, Jr. were Honorably Discharged on June 30<sup>th</sup>, followed by twenty eight enlisted men and Non-commissioned Officers on the

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<sup>22</sup> Presson, *Adjutant General: 1916.*, 26

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 26

<sup>24</sup> Burbank—Dumais, *Family Collection*, Logbook of Company C.

<sup>25</sup> Stracham, Hew, *The First World War*. (New York: Penguin Books, 2003).

<sup>26</sup> Presson, *Adjutant General: 1916.*, 28

<sup>27</sup> Mitchell Yockelson., "The United States and the Mexican Punitive Expedition," *Prologue Magazine* 29, no. 3. (1997) <http://www.archives.gov>.

4<sup>th</sup> of July. The Company was bolstered by temporary transfers, many men came from Rumford's B Company.<sup>28</sup> The local newspaper The Livermore Falls Advertiser printed the following article on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1916:

Long before the time of departure, an exceedingly large throng of people assembled at the [Maine Central Railroad] station to witness the going away of Company C...on Thursday.<sup>29</sup>

The locals, and many recently discharged veterans, witnessed something rarely seen in these sedentary rural Maine towns: Men they all knew embarking on a long journey to foreign soil.

The purpose of the Mexican Border Campaign was to secure the American border against further incursions by Pancho Villa and revolutionary Mexico. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Maine did not engage in cross-border excursions with General John 'Blackjack' Pershing, however, they did not spend their time idly.<sup>30</sup> Days were spent digging trenches, deploying in defensive positions to guard against occasional cross-border raids, and learning to operate in a foreign land.<sup>31</sup> The United States was training an army to go fight in the trenches of France. It had not been a camping trip, and any man would have been fooling himself to think the next deployment was going to be any better. The men were learning to appreciate their now distant homes, and many, when given the opportunity, would leave the ranks of the military, never to be away from their family again.

C Company arrived home on November 5th and was met with a hearty welcome. 'Nemo' said of it, "Company C...arrived home Wednesday afternoon, and was given a

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<sup>28</sup> Presson, *Adjutant General: 1916.*, 29. Rumford is another town dependant on the pulp and paper industry, located thirty miles up the Androscoggin river from Livermore Falls.

<sup>29</sup> Sturtevant, *Livermore.*

<sup>30</sup> Published paper on saved website.

<sup>31</sup> Presson, *Adjutant General: 1916.*, 28.

reception by the citizens of Livermore Falls which showed the boys the high regard in which they were held.”<sup>32</sup> The men of the Maine National Guard would not enjoy a long respite. More change was coming, and along with it, the beginning of Nemo’s nightmare of 1918. The following dispatch was sent to Governor Carl Milliken on April 12<sup>th</sup> 1917:

Having in view the necessity of affording a more perfect protection against possible interference with postal, commercial and military channels and instrumentalities of the United States in the State of Maine and being unable with the regular troops available at his command to insure the faithful execution of the laws of the Union in this regard, the President has thought proper to exercise the authority vested in him by the Constitution and laws and to call out the National Guard necessary for the purpose. I am, in consequence, instructed by the President to call into the service of the United States forthwith, through you, the following units of the National Guard of the State of Maine...Second Regiment Infantry, National Guard of Maine.

BAKER,  
*Secretary of War*<sup>33</sup>

Upon arriving at Camp Bartlett in Westfield, Massachusetts, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Maine was bolstered by attaching 1500 men from the 1<sup>st</sup> New Hampshire and smaller units from Massachusetts, Vermont, and Rhode Island, and renamed the 103<sup>rd</sup> infantry regiment. The Companies were brought from 150 men to 250. C Company was full of massholes and rogues. On one hand, men from one locale would not risk annihilation due to a bad day in the field. On the other hand, the Companies were unfamiliar with each other, and so large as to not be easily maneuvered. During this time 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Huntington ‘Hunty’ Frothingham entered the regiment. He was the Goliath to ‘Nemo’s’ David. The 1<sup>st</sup> battalion, which included A, B, D, and C Company, left Hoboken, New Jersey on the steamer ‘Celtic’ September 26<sup>th</sup> and arrived at Liverpool England on October 9<sup>th</sup>. ‘Nemo’ and his mates encountered no submarines during the voyage. By October 21<sup>st</sup>, the entire

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<sup>32</sup> Sturtevant, *Livermore*. 185.

<sup>33</sup> Hanson, James, *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Maine: 1917-1919*. (Maine: Maine State Legislature, 1929). 14.

'Yankee' Division was in France, making them the first complete American division in France.<sup>34</sup>

After disembarking in France, the men began a hectic training schedule. They became further exposed to the art of trench warfare and trained six hours a day, five days a week. Some of the newer junior officers were sent to the Officers' School at Gondrecourt for a rigorous month of instruction. On February 8<sup>th</sup> C Company, with the rest of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, were the first units of the 'Yankee' Division to occupy a defensive front near Soissons. Here the 103<sup>rd</sup> experienced its first casualties. The 26<sup>th</sup> Division was at this front until March 19<sup>th</sup>. During the withdrawal, elements of the 103<sup>rd</sup> were shelled by artillery and strafed by enemy aircraft. Germany had begun their decisive push. The Yankees were not allotted the rest they had envisioned.<sup>35</sup>

On April 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Division was moved to the Toul Front. C Company held the line at Vertuzey.<sup>36</sup> During this period, around April 9<sup>th</sup>, 'Nemo' Burbank plucked a rose from 'no-man's land,' and added it to his personal effects.<sup>37</sup> The Germans repeatedly attacked the allied lines by assault, artillery, and gas. The men of the Yankee Division gained their first intense battle experience.<sup>38</sup> On June 15<sup>th</sup>, back in Livermore, Maine, Sylvanus Burbank died of a heart attack. With the loss of his father, 'Nemo's' all-too-real nightmare had begun. The next day the Germans led a major assault that was repulsed by the Americans. The cost for the 103<sup>rd</sup> was fifty-four killed and thirty-five wounded. None of these casualties were from C Company. One man was taken prisoner by the Germans,

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<sup>34</sup> Hanson, *Adjutant General: 1917-1919*, 295.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 296.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 299.

<sup>37</sup> Burbank—Dumais, *Family Collection*. The rose was wrapped in a letterhead dated April 9, 1918, and was placed in a paper pouch with "Rose no-man's land 1918," scrawled upon it.

<sup>38</sup> Hanson, *Adjutant General: 1917-1919*, 300.

but he was rescued by the actions of a group of volunteers. On June 28<sup>th</sup>, The Division was relieved by the 82<sup>nd</sup> 'All American' Division.<sup>39</sup> This is the unit that would receive so much acclaim under the impromptu leadership of Sergeant Alvin York later in the war.

From July 4<sup>th</sup> until July 15<sup>th</sup>, the 'Yankee' Division held back the assaulting Germans on the Champagne-Marne Front.<sup>40</sup> The Marne River was the defensive line that stopped the initial German assault in 1914, and subsequently ruined the German's hope of a quick and decisive domination of France as prescribed in the 'Schliefling Plan.' (WW1) The VII German Army was astonished at the ferocity in which the American's fought.<sup>41</sup> The following is an excerpt from the memoirs of a German infantryman recounting the final assault on July 15<sup>th</sup>:

[The Americans] had lain in the grain, in a semicircular formation, had let us approach, and then from 30 to 50 feet had shot almost all of us down. This foe had nerves. One must allow him this boast; but he also showed a bestial brutality... "The Americans kill everything!" That was the cry of horror of July 15<sup>th</sup>, which long took hold of our men. At home meanwhile they were sarcastic about the imperfect training of the enemy, about the American "bluff" and the like. The fact that on July 15<sup>th</sup> more than 60 per cent of our troops led to battle were left dead or wounded upon the battlefield may substantially be charged to his credit.<sup>42</sup>

Two days after this repelled attack, the order of battle would change. The Americans would switch from defensive, positional warfare to offensive, open warfare. The Germans—working class men like their counterparts on the other side of the trenches--were to exact a penalty for their comrades deaths that were 'charged to his credit.'

On July 18<sup>th</sup> the assault began. The 26<sup>th</sup> Division and the 167<sup>th</sup> French Division were to attack fortified German positions. Specifically Hill 193 and the railroad

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<sup>39</sup> Hanson, *Adjutant General: 1917-1919*. 300-304.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 304.

<sup>41</sup> Strachan. *The First World War*.

<sup>42</sup> Kurt Hesse, *Memoirs & Diaries: Defeat at the Marne, July 1918*.  
<http://www.firstworldwar.com/diaries/secondmarne.htm>

embankment south of it, this was at the foot of Hill 190. Plans did not go off as they were expected. The French, who had a better understanding of the costs of attacking fortified highland positions, hesitated, and then withdrew without taking objective Hill 193. The Americans came close to achieving all their objectives, notwithstanding considerable difficulty getting their troops into a position for attack.<sup>43</sup> The following is a message sent by pigeon on the morning of the 18<sup>th</sup>:

PIGEON MESSAGE: Time 6:05 o'clock

Location: At [Belleau Woods] where 3d Battalion [of the 104<sup>th</sup> New Hampshire] was to start from. Did not reach starting-off place until attack had started. Machine Gun Company did not arrive until 5:10. Their ammunition did not arrive. Infantry companies all late on account of lateness of arrival of ammunition and other supplies. When they arrived it was broad daylight and fully exposed and companies being shelled by the enemy. Battalion now scattered about woods, taking whatever cover they can find, as woods are being shelled by high explosive.<sup>44</sup>

Breakdown in communications between the various chains of command, the inability of Captains of the "ninety-day wonder"<sup>45</sup> sort to navigate Belleau Wood by map at night, and a complicated attack relying on good communication between a French and American Division, had resulted in a disjointed advanced line that could not be defended. The order was given to pull back to Belleau Wood. The assault would be renewed on the twentieth of July.<sup>46</sup>

July 20<sup>th</sup> was a clear and sunny day. Not an ideal day for launching an assault on fortified German lines. But were they fortified? According to German reports no. What was left was a rear guard consisting of veteran German machine gun crews "belonging to

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<sup>43</sup> Hanson, *Adjutant General: 1917-1919*. 306.

<sup>44</sup> Marshall, George C. *Infantry in Battle*. (Washington D.C. 1939), 17.

<sup>45</sup> Richard S. Faulkner, Maj. USA, "What Price Glory, Captain Flag: Leader Competence in the American Expeditionary Forces." Diss., University of Georgia, 1996. <http://cgsc.cdmhost.com/cgi-bin/showfile.exe?CISOROOT=/p4013coll2&CISOPTR=507>.

<sup>46</sup> Hanson, *Adjutant General: 1917-1919*. 317.

the 201<sup>st</sup> Division of General Von Boehn's VIIIth German Army."<sup>47</sup> The retreat had been underway since the 17<sup>th</sup> of June.<sup>48</sup> Whatever the German lines consisted of on the 20<sup>th</sup>, The 26<sup>th</sup> Division was going to throw its full weight upon them. "By [Field Order] 99, 52<sup>nd</sup> Brigade (which included C Company), 'J' day and 'H' hour...was sent as 20<sup>th</sup> July, 1918, and 15 o'clock respectively. At 15:25 a message from 52<sup>nd</sup> brigade stated that 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion (Companies A, B, C, and D) got away promptly to the assault."<sup>49</sup> C Company was in the vanguard of the assault. The following are extracts for Lieutenant Donald 'Dangerous Dan' McGrew which recounts the battle as he saw it from where he was sighting in the artillery battery under his command:

1<sup>st</sup> Battalions right flank [which includes Company C] was already over the railroad embankment. The Germans were...shelling the...[railroad] embankment and the space between [the embankment and Hill 190]... The speed with which the German machine guns now fired was astounding. Men who lived through it simply shut their eyes and shook their heads when it was mentioned to them. The racket was appalling...but louder than this racket, louder than any other noise can make, was a Great Quiet which came and settled down upon this bloody field where scores of men were dying...I could not believe it possible that one man would be left alive...Then the miracle happened which left the few German prisoners taken in a daze for days. They said that only God could understand it – tho [sic] it may be that some of [the Germans] began to shoot a bit wildly towards the last. Between eighty and one hundred men emerged from the wheat at the foot of the slope...and ever as they went men slumped like sodden bundles of stuffed clothing, or, spinning heavily, came rolling over and over down the incline until they struck a hump and lay there with their dead faces shining oddly in the ghastly sunlight. And then suddenly I recognized two unmistakable figures at the head of this dwindling force. Gigantic Hunty Frothingham...was on the left and diminutive "Nemo" Burbank was on the right. These two lieutenants, it developed later, were the only effective officers left in their respective organizations. Hunty...had but eighteen or twenty men behind him...and "Nemo" had not more than a dozen...I then turned the glasses towards "Nemo," followed a string of dead and wounded Americans which led to the position he had taken by

<sup>47</sup> Donald McGrew, "History of the Pine Tree Legion," *Lewiston Evening Journal*, July 28, 1921.

<sup>48</sup> Evans, Martin M, *1918: The Year of Victories* (New Jersey: Chartwell Books, 2002), 177.

<sup>49</sup> Hanson, *Adjutant General: 1917-1919*. 317. At the time of this attack, James Hanson was the Makur in charge of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion which encompassed C Company. Very descriptive concerning other assaults, when writing about July 20<sup>th</sup>, all he is able to report is; "Notwithstanding heavy losses, the objective was reached."

assault, and saw him firing a German machine gun from the midst of several grey bodies which littered the ground. I could see but four Americans with him.<sup>50</sup>

The assault on Hill 190 had met with success at an enormous and somewhat avoidable cost. The battlefield held innumerable heroes; both standing and unable to; both American and German; both living and dead. I have found only two documents where Franklyn Burbank discusses this battle. One is his logbook in which he wrote; "July 20<sup>th</sup> 1918. attacked and took objective hill #190. Chateau Thierry map with loss 1 officer 22 men killed 122 men 3 officers wounded 1 officer and 5 men dying from wounds at 8:45."<sup>51</sup> These numbers were not the highlight of war stories told to the folks back home. The other mention came three years to the day of the battle. During a reunion of the 103<sup>rd</sup> at Camp Keyes in Augusta, Maine and with one word offers up evidence on how much truth the local press was offered, or how much they were willing to publish. When asked for his recollections of that harrowing day, Captain Burbank could only utter one thing for posterity; "Ugh."<sup>52</sup> (Lewiston Evening Journal July 20<sup>th</sup>)

Never again would C Company lead an assault, being held in reserve or sent out as a second or third wave. They were under strength from troops that were too green, and too inexperienced to implement any solutions gained from the survivors' trial by fire. The continuing burden of war was distributed equally among communities spanning greater New England; Rumford's B Company was nearly annihilated along with Dexter's A Company and Oxford County's D Company. Many of the attached men from

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<sup>50</sup> McGrew, "*History of the Pine Tree Legion*". Aug. 7 & 8 1921. Donald McGrew is credited as a 'writer of short-stories,' and his testimony appears inflated.

<sup>51</sup> Burbank, *Logbook*. During the offensive lasting from July 18<sup>th</sup> to July 26<sup>th</sup>, the 103<sup>rd</sup> infantry incurred 1200 casualties. The largest toll taken out of the entire 26<sup>th</sup> Division.

<sup>52</sup> *Lewiston Evening Journal*. "103<sup>rd</sup> Holds Reunion," July 20<sup>th</sup> 1921.

Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Vermont fell as well.<sup>53</sup> July 20th was a day that stuck with the surviving men for all their lives. ‘Nemo’ Burbank was no exception.

‘Nemo,’ however, was not allowed to wake from his nightmare after July 20<sup>th</sup>, not even after the Armistice on the “eleventh day of the eleventh month at the eleventh hour.” While awaiting his return home, although not engaged in combat, ‘Nemo’ Burbank’s beloved wife Hazel passed away. Hazel had contracted pneumonia while ailing from appendicitis and died on February 2<sup>nd</sup> 1919.<sup>54</sup> The strands were woven into one tragic thread while he was ‘over there.’ Captain Franklyn Burbank would miss the reunion that he prayed for, during the two years he was away, by only two short months. While doctors were miraculously saving the wounded service men in France, a twenty-three year old woman died of a relatively curable ailment. ‘Nemo’ had less-and-less to return home to. Where was his infant daughter Irvine?

Company C arrived in Boston on April 5<sup>th</sup>, 1919 aboard the steamer U.S.S. America.<sup>55</sup> On April 25<sup>th</sup>, the 26<sup>th</sup> ‘Yankee’ Division marched through Boston in a parade of outstanding proportion. Leading his much altered C Company, Captain Burbank must have been preoccupied with thoughts of the friends and family he had lost. And then the shouts rang out, “NEMO, NEMO...” With a sharp glance to the right he beheld a sight. The concussion knocked ‘Nemo’ Burbank awake, it was his cousin holding aloft Frank and his departed wife’s daughter Irvine. ‘Nemo’ was navigating out of his nightmare.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Hanson, *Adjutant General: 1917-1919*. 322.

<sup>54</sup> Maine State Archives. *Births, Deaths, and Marriage Records*. 1908-1922, Roll 8.

<sup>55</sup> Benwell, Harry A, *History of the Yankee Division*. (Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1919), 244-245.

<sup>56</sup> Jean (Burbank) Luciano, Interviews with author.

Captain Franklyn Burbank would return to his humble origins. Not much had changed in Livermore Maine. He got his old job back at International Paper until the strike of 1921.<sup>57</sup> He remarried in November 1919 to Florence Smith. He had two more daughters; Constance and my wonderful Grandmother Jean.<sup>58</sup> After the strike, he worked for the Maine Central Railroad until his new wife fell ill. He quit the job to be at her side. The experiences of war, of being separated from family dictated his new priorities. Even with a new family, he never ceased to serve his community and his comrades.

He served with the local volunteer firefighters, and he was the first commander of American Legion Post 10. It was christened the George Bunten Hall, named after an eighteen year old local football star that died of wounds received on July 20<sup>th</sup>. The Legion served many purposes, one being a repository for men who could only speak unabashed before a select audience who had also bore witness to the nightmare of modern warfare. The Legion also had within it a more exclusive club. The Forty and Eight Club was made up of elected members, who had to walk down the streets of Livermore Falls, clothed only in a diaper with a placard reading, ' I want to join.' The club met in a rail car that was meant to carry forty infantrymen or eight horses, hence the name. The purpose was to raise funds deemed for worthy charitable organizations. It also served as a place to imbibe alcohol during the period of prohibition.<sup>59</sup> Captain Burbank disliked the exclusivity of the Veterans of Foreign War. He felt that any man having to spend time from his family was an honorable veteran.<sup>60</sup> As the Post 10 American Legion commander, he was integral in honoring the men he served with by helping in the

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<sup>57</sup> Maine State Archives, *1920 U.S. Federal Census*. Androscoggin County, Roll 638.

<sup>58</sup> State Archives, *Birth, Marriage and Death Records*.

<sup>59</sup> Maine State American Legion Commander Donald Simoneau, Interviews with author, October, 2006.

<sup>60</sup> Jean (Burbank) Luciano, Interviews with author.

erection of memorials and monuments. At one extreme, the local monument was placed in a small park on the right of the Universalist Church he worshipped at, and a stones throw from both the Legion Hall, and his home on Depot Street. At the other extreme, a distant monument in the heart of France, the final resting place of forty-seven men from Maine, three of them from his shattered Company.<sup>61</sup> The brochure requesting money from the survivors utilized the same call to arms that rallied them to throw their young lives at other working-class combatants:

It is hoped to have our Memorial completed by the autumn of 1928. It is hoped that a grand [Yankee Division] Pilgrimage to France will be made to dedicate it...[W]hat cause can come nearer to your purse-strings...Do it now, Now, NOW! 'He who hesitates is lost.' Here is the subscription blank—here is the envelope—here is OPPORTUNITY. The barrage is lifting, the dawn is flickering. Is your bayonet fixed? Is your jaw set and square? UP AND AT 'EM!<sup>62</sup>

'Nemo' Burbank would never return to France. He and his fellow legionnaires had to set their jaws at every funeral honoring veterans with whom they had served. The last decade of his life was spent in the employ of Livermore Falls High School as a Janitor, and he had also received the rank of Major, and finally Lieutenant Colonel in the Maine National Guard. At the outbreak of World War II, he attempted to go active duty but failed his physical due to a respiratory illness common with World War One vets who had been gassed. He settled for advising the young men signing up for this new, yet similar war.<sup>63</sup> For the benefit of all he collected and preserved photographs, official reports, newspapers and other miscellaneous documents that are indispensable in telling his story, along with that of the men with whom he served. Franklyn Burbank passed

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<sup>61</sup> Aisne-Marne American Cemetery. <http://www.abmc.gov/cemeteries/cemeteries/am.php>

<sup>62</sup> Sanborn, Philip N. *YD Overseas Memorial Committee*. Printed in the United States. This document was included in the *Burbank--Dumais Family Collection*.

<sup>63</sup> Jean (Burbank) Luciano, Interviews with author.

away on May 2<sup>nd</sup> 1956. The town historian, Reginald Sturtevant, submitted the following article to the local papers:

‘Mission Accomplished’ The power to command men and the power to lead men are two vastly different things. With a slip of paper the Government can give you the one, but the other, if you have it not, no one can give you. Frank Burbank was one of those who did have it. It is a quality hard to define. Those who remember Frank will think most often of his humorous blue eyes, half squinted to avoid the curl of smoke from the cigarette characteristically stuck in the corner of his mouth; but they will remember also how the blue could turn to the blue of steel and ice when he had to face down a man twice his size, or look death squarely in the face. It was, no doubt, the realization that not confusion, nor terror, nor imminent destruction could shake his cool, confident self-control that made men so willing to trust themselves to his judgment when they dared not trust their own. The D.S.C. he wore was eloquent witness that their confidence was not misplaced; and in tribute to the memory of the man who helped so well to write Chateau-Thierry among the place names of history, the line of people, old and young, who past by his bier was a long, long, line. It sometimes seemed strange that a man with that great quality should not be called to other leadership after the fighting had ended, instead of slipping back inconspicuously to humble, humdrum tasks like the rest of us. It sometimes seems we are not overly generous to heroes, with a modest retirement allowance and a little bronze cross. It must have been that to rise in time of national crisis to command hundreds of men, to lead them, skillfully and bravely through the Valley of the Shadow to triumphant success, and to bring them, most of them, safely back, was his real mission in life among us, and all that passed before or since only incidental.<sup>64</sup>

The line at his funeral bier was one of the longest the town had ever witnessed.

The focus on Franklyn Burbank’s martial achievements dilutes the pedagogical potential of the truth of his story, and the stage where the key chapter took place. This *truth* was miraculously, although not completely, saved by a veteran packrat who, consciously or not, created an archive for many. The story should teach the results of failed diplomacy, both on the Western front and the Labor front. It elucidates trends inherent in the early twentieth century: Latin American interference; Foreign intervention; The death of monarchy; Abandonment of Progressive politics; The lack of effective health care; The continued existence of tight-knit community; The blind hatred fueled by hyper-

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<sup>64</sup> Burbank, *Family Collection*. Newspaper Clipping written by Reginald Sturtevant. 1956.

patriotism; Rugged American Volunteerism; And the waste of war. Franklyn Burbank was forever one of the keepers of C Company's legacy, and for a time, a living monument to their deeds and sacrifices. By extracting the single thread of his life, and reweaving the story of *all* who took part in 'The War To End All Wars, and by understanding why the men of central Maine followed a leader when many other units were not willing to, a fleeting piece of history of a few men from the mill and farm towns of rural Maine, preserved during their lives on Earth, can be regained, with more truth and clarity, for posterity. It is easier for one to grasp such momentous events if taught on a more local and personal scale. The truth was made simple and grandiose in the various elite halls of veterans, and by the few friends and family privy to the stories. Stories told by the few soldiers who had the stomach to emote it to the innocent. The remembrance myth brought up around him obscured the *truth* in the story, and may have taken away from the stories that dead men can no longer tell. With it, some of the potential to dissuade the younger generations from war was also lost. Even a shallow glance into the depths of truth reveal with just this one man, the zeitgeist of a changing, and tragic century.

Appendix A



Fifteen year-old Franklyn 'Nemo' Burbank, front and center, with Livermore High School Classmates ca. 1905.



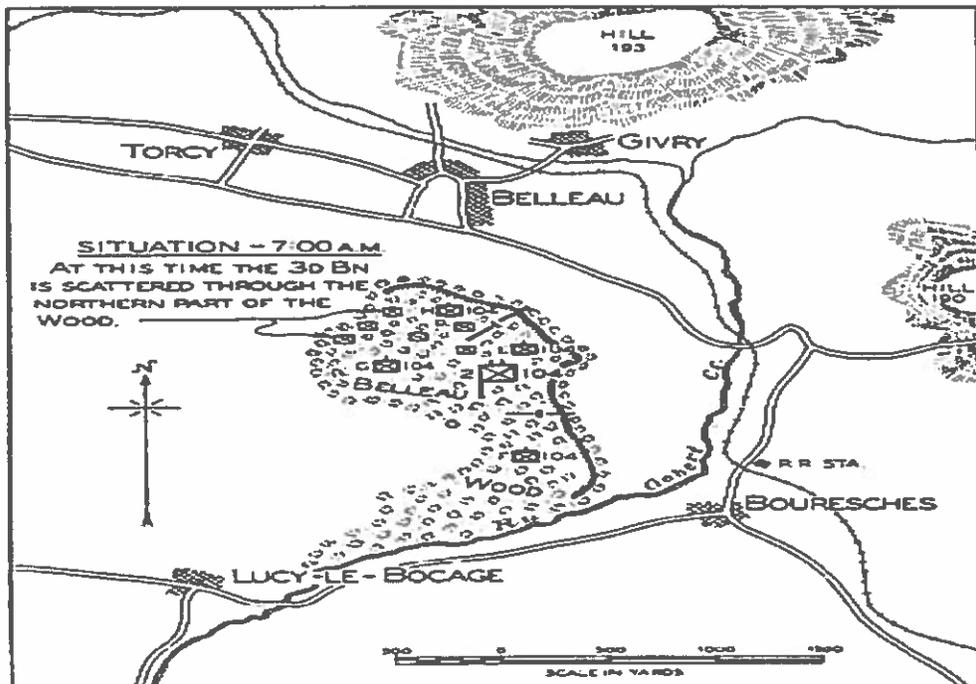
Trench drills on Mexican Border, 1916.



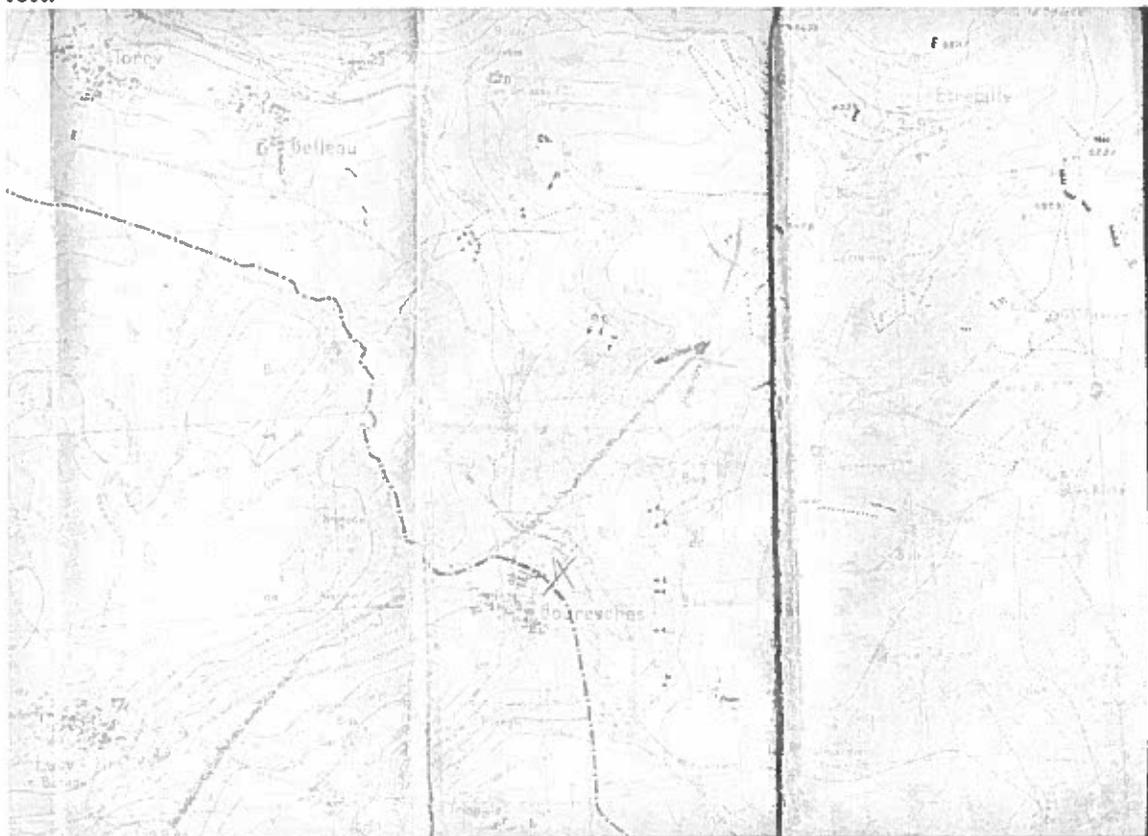
Cpl. Burbank ca. 1909 and nearing retirement below.



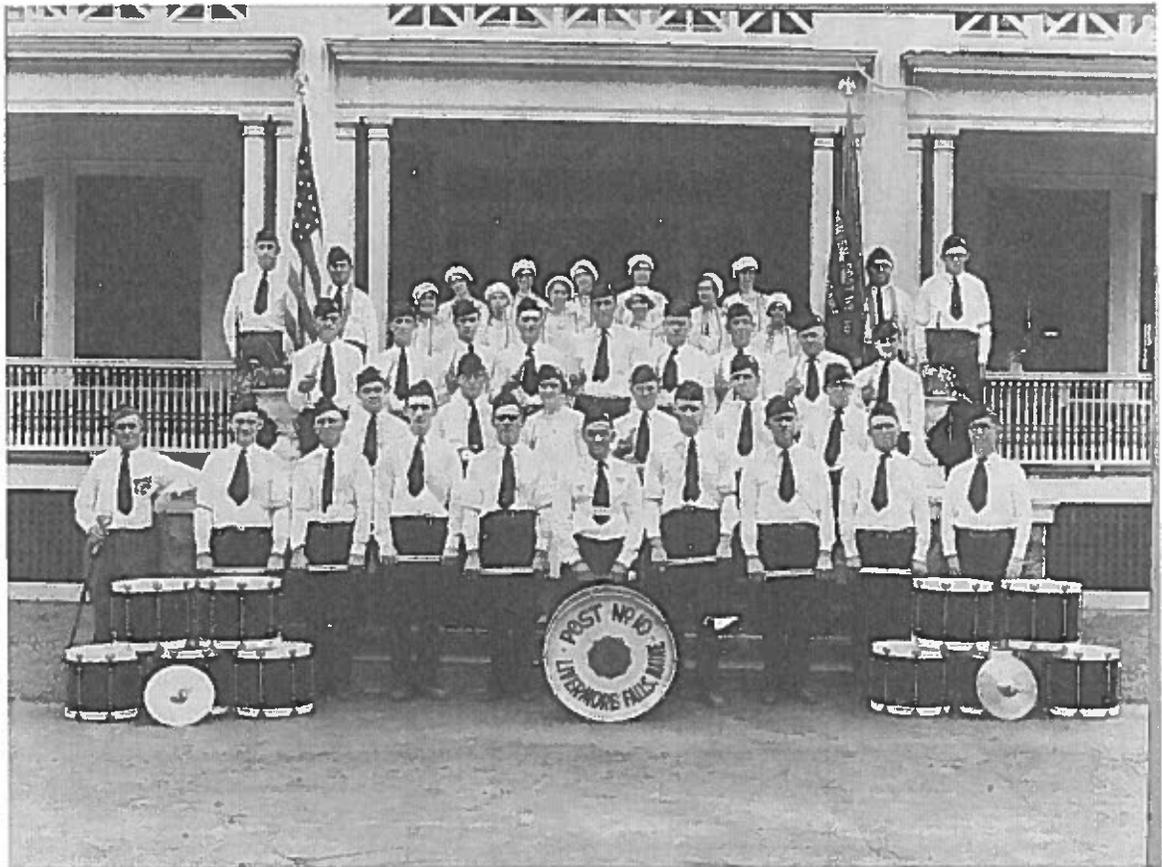
Company C Baseball team, 'Nemo' is lying on the left.



Situation on July 18 1918, with New Hampshire Regiment scattered. Notice Hill 190 at left.



Frank Burbank's original map of July 20 1918. The X is Hill 190.



American Legion, Post 10. Commander Burbank is on far left.

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