Private Frank J. Markling

**Hometown:** Millerville, Minnesota

**Entered Service:** May 13, 1918

**Unit:** 5th Marine Regiment, 2nd Battalion, 51st (G) Company

**Rank:** Private, U.S. Marine Corps

**Cemetery:** Section Q, Site 3277
Fort Snelling National Cemetery
Minneapolis, Minnesota

November 9, 1895 - October 22, 1984

RESEARCHED BY JEREMY MILLER
Before the War

Frank Joseph Markling was born in Millerville, Minnesota, on November 9, 1895. Frank was the youngest of 17 children born to Ludwig and Barbara. The Marklings were a pioneering family. Prior to Frank’s birth, Ludwig and Barbara settled on an unbroken farm in the Leaf Mountains of Ottertail County, Minnesota. They built a one-room house of rough logs with a slough grass roof.

Later the growing family moved to Millerville where they continued to farm and opened a country store. Frank worked around the farm and helped out at the store throughout his childhood. Like his brothers, Frank did not attend high school so he could work on the farm. After Ludwig retired, he and Barbara moved to Alexandria, Minnesota, and Frank moved to Garfield, Minnesota, to live and work on his brother-in-law’s farm. Barbara Markling passed away on August 8, 1914 and Ludwig on April 5, 1918.

Military Experience

Shortly after his father’s death, Markling enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps and began basic training on May 13, 1918 at Parris Island, South Carolina. After completing the seven-week boot camp, he was transferred to Company C, 4th Separate Battalion in Quantico, Virginia, for five weeks of additional training before departing for France. On August 12, Markling boarded the USS Henderson and departed for Europe, arriving after 13 days at sea, in Brest, France, on August 26. He received a week of additional training in preparation for the move to the front. On September 6, Markling joined his combat unit, 51st Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment.

St. Mihiel

The St. Mihiel Offensive was scheduled to commence on September 12. Markling and his new unit moved forward into position during the night in order to remain unseen by the Germans. It rained throughout the evening of September 11 and into the morning, so the men were wet and muddy. The offensive began at 5:00 a.m. with Markling’s 5th Marine Regiment following in support of the 2nd Division’s lead units. By midday, the division pushed forward five miles and reached the operational objective, taking control of the high ground.
north of Thiaucourt. Markling’s company relieved the lead units and prepared their defenses for an anticipated counter-attack, which never fully materialized. On September 16, the 5th Marines were relieved in place and began a two week movement in preparation of their next offensive.

**Blanc Mont**

The Blanc Mont Offensive began with an attack in the early morning of October 3. The 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines supported the 6th Marines spearheading the assault. As the 6th Marines continued to move forward, the French units on their left fell back and exposed their flank. Markling’s battalion maneuvered to fill the gap and faced intense machine gun and artillery fire, but wrested control of high ground from the Germans and reestablished the line.

The attack continued on the early morning of October 4 when Markling’s 2nd Battalion leapedfrogged over the 6th Marines and led the assault. The Marines faced heavy machine gun and artillery fire while repelling counter-attacks to both exposed flanks. By the end of the day, their lines were consolidated and defenses set.
The 6th Marines passed through their lines to continue the assault the following day. The 5th Marines continued in the support position until October 9, when the offensive ended. The Blanc Mont offensive was costly for Markling’s company, with 12 killed and 63 wounded. The 5th Marines rested and moved many miles over the course of three weeks to support the Meuse-Argonne Offensive.

On October 29, Markling was transferred to the base hospital and diagnosed with flat feet. From there he was sent to Bordeaux and on December 23 and was transferred to Blois Casual Company 333. Markling departed Europe the following day, arriving in Quantico, Virginia on January 6, where he joined the 203 Casual Company until his discharge on May 17, 1919.
Meuse-Argonne Offensive
The 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines began the Meuse-Argonne Offensive on the morning of November 1 from a position about five miles west of the present day Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery, with the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines leading, and the 2nd Battalion in the lead support position. After the first objective was met, the 2nd Battalion took the lead and met heavy resistance from machine gun positions, artillery and aircraft. The battalion continued advancing north in support of the lead units.

On November 4, the 5th Marines dug in for the day, facing extremely heavy machine gun and artillery fire. The next day, the Marines moved forward to take a position between the army’s 9th and 89th Infantry Divisions, where they stayed for two cold and rainy days. It was so cold the Marines had to break ice from their fighting holes.

There is conflicting evidence as to whether Markling participated in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. On November 7, Markling was listed as missing on the 51st Company muster rolls, but he showed up in the Army’s 89th Division rolls, where he was listed from November 9 through 18.

Veteran Experience
After returning home from the Marine Corps, Markling again lived and worked on his brother-in-law’s farm. On August 29, 1922, Markling married Clara Lorsung in Millerville, Minnesota. On January 2, Clara gave birth to a baby boy who was either stillborn or died the same day. Clara Markling passed away the following day, January 3, 1923.

On May 25, 1925, Markling married Bessie Genevieve Parker and in 1929 they moved to Monticello, Minnesota. The couple had six children, four sons and two daughters. Markling worked at the Elk River Cement Factory until World War II when he went to work at the Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant in New Brighton, Minnesota. After the war he worked until his retirement at the Central Lumber Company of Monticello. Markling was a member of the Monticello American Legion and VFW. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, and spending time with his family.
Commemoration

On October 22, 1984, Frank Joseph Markling died in his home at the age of 89. He is buried in Minneapolis, Minnesota, at Ft. Snelling National Cemetery, section Q, site 3277. Bessie Markling died in 1986 and is buried next to her husband.
Bibliography

2nd Division; Records of the American Expeditionary Forces (World War I), Records of Combat Divisions, 1913-1939, Record Group 120 (Boxes 51-54); National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

2nd Division; Records of the American Expeditionary Forces (World War I), Records of Combat Divisions, 1913-1939, Record Group 120 (Box 79); National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

2nd Division; Records of the American Expeditionary Forces (World War I), Records of Combat Divisions, 1913-1939, Record Group 120 (Box 86); National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.


Frank Markling, Official Military Personnel File, Department of the Navy. U.S. Marine Corps, Record of the U.S. Marine Corps, RG 127, National Archives and Records Administration - St. Louis.


Profile: Private Frank J. Markling

Bibliography (con't)


