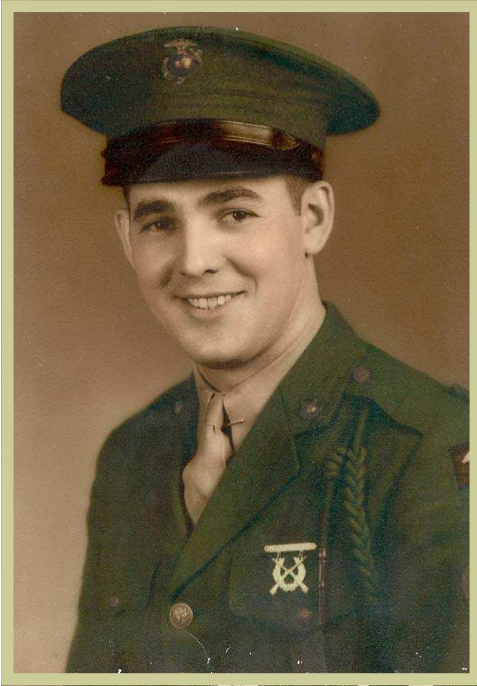


Leo Edward Ketchum

U.S. Marines



Leo Edward Ketchum
U.S. Marine Corps
WWII Veteran of The South Pacific

Leo Ketchum enlisted in the Marine Corps in September, 1939 at the age of 20 at Springfield, Illinois. After basic training at Paris Island, South Carolina, his 22nd Marine Brigade, 6TH Marine Corps Regiment was assigned to Iceland with the task of protecting the North Atlantic coast. The polar bear on his left sleeve indicates that he served with the 6th USMC Regiment before the start of WW II. When the war started, his unit was returned to the USA. His first assignment was to the Samoan Island to aid in building of defenses in anticipation of a Japanese assault on the island. In April, 1942, the 22nd was reassigned to the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade and on August 7, 1942 put ashore in the invasion of Guadalcanal. Their supplies were lost when 40 Japanese planes attacked their supply ships. Two ships were lost and one was destroyed by fire when a Japanese plane crashed aboard her. Twelve enemy planes were shot down. In October,

the 1st Marine Division was relieved as Army units took over their positions.

The next assignment for the 22nd was to Eniwetok Atoll where two assault landings were made and a third to relieve the 106th Regimental Combat Team. Next, they cleaned up the smaller islands in the Kwajalein Group. Leo's 22nd Brigade then fought in the battle for Samoa in February, 1944. It went on to the invasion of the Marshall Islands. Then reassigned to the 4th, made up of all the Marine Raider Battalions, they harassed the Japanese on a number of islands. The 22nd then recaptured Guam, returned to Guadalcanal and formed the 6th Marine Division. They went on to take Okinawa. Leo was badly wounded and evacuated to a medical ship and then to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. While there, recovering from his wounds, Leo had a joyful and long overdue reunion with his brother, Rex Ketchum, also a Marine. They had not seen each other for more than six years.

Leo received a Purple Heart and was discharged in March, 1946 after serving six and a half years. He lived in Springfield the rest of his life and died on November 13, 1997. Burial was at Camp Butler National Cemetery in Springfield.

Leo E. Ketchum
Springfield, Illinois