



## Private John Leo McKissick

John Leo McKissick, a son of Ray Eley and Susan Workman McKissick, was born on September 16, 1918, in Park City, Utah. He graduated from Park City High School where he played basketball and football. After graduating, he attended the University of Utah for three and a half years. He played football and was captain of the team in 1939. He married Marjorie Greenwood in 1938 and they had three children.

He entered the Marine Corps on June 15, 1944, and received his training at Camp Pendleton and San Diego, California. He was assigned to the **27th Marine Replacement Draft**, 5th Marine Division. He shipped overseas in November 1944, and would be part of the battle for Iwo Jima. He was killed-in-action on March 11, 1945.

At the time of his death, he was survived by his mother, spouse, his daughter, Nancy Rae McKissick; and his sons, Michael John McKissick and Patrick Carl McKissick. He was also survived by his three brothers, Emmett Ray, Don Eldon, and Clyde Thomas McKissick. He is buried in the Wasatch Lawn Memorial Park, in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The Division was officially activated on January 21, 1944, at Camp Pendleton in California and consisted of the 26th, 27th and 28th Marine infantry regiments. The 13th Marines (Artillery) was assigned to the Division also. They trained heavily in California and were then sent to Camp Tarawa in Hawaii for more extensive training. The Division was being trained to participate in the invasion of Iwo Jima.

On January 27, 1945, they along with the 4th Marine Division landed on the beaches of Iwo Jima. The 3rd Division landed on the fifth day. The battle for the island would become one of the most difficult battles the Marine Corps fought in its history.

The Marine Replacement Drafts were used to reinforce the troops that had landed and could be 100 or more replacements for the ongoing battle. Private McKissick became part of the 5th Division, but the records do not show which regiment he was assigned to when he was killed.

The 5th Marine Division's shoulder patch colors are red and gold which are the official colors of the Marine Corps. The Roman numeral "V" designates the division's number. The blue spearhead represents the function of spearheading amphibious landings.

The Division would spend 36 days on the island and suffered 1,068 killed and 2,874 wounded. This was the highest casualty rate of the three divisions that participated. This would be the division's only battle in World War II.