**Richard Ward Steele**Army Air Corp - PFC.

#### Hq & Hq 2nd Observation Sq 27th Bomb Gr. (L) V Bomb Comd. FEAF

RICHARD WARD STEELE wasborn in Paradise, MT on May 17, 1919.  He enlisted in Army Air Corps at Ft. Missoula, Mt.  On June 17, 1941 Richard was headed for the Philippine Islands.

"*I went to the Philippines on USS Republic on April 1, 1941.  Most of my basic training was at Clark Field, P.I.  I was assigned to 2nd Observation Squadron, on the same base. Later I transferred to Military Police Sdn. at Clark Field*".

Early in December Richard was assigned to Hq. and Hq. Sdn., Far Eastern Air Service Command at Nichols Field, P.I.  It was then that the Japs hit Nichols Dec. 8, 1941.

“*I moved to Bataan on Christmas Eve on small inter-island steamer and was captured April 9, 1942 on Bataan*". Forced to participate in Death March, Richard was moved on to Camp O’Donnell.  From there he went to Clark Field on work detail where he contracted tropical blisters on his entire body.  Next he was sent to Bilibid Prison for treatment and on then on to Cabanatuan.    
  
Richard was with the first 500 men sent to Japan on the hellship Mati Mati Maru, to Fukuoka Camp 17 where he would be forced to work in the coal mines. Liberated form Camp 17 August 15, 1945, Richard was sent to Nagasaki for processing to the Philippines to be sent home to the U.S.  Richard remained in the USAF and retired as Master Sergeant on September 1, 1962. He married Gertrude and they had four children; Dick, Rick, Sandra and Carol.

**Credit:** History of the Defenders of the Philippines Guam and Wake Islands 1941-1945 Turner Publishing Co