

Wednesday, November 23, 1960

## Captain Steele Retires, Recalls Colorful Army - Air Force Career

On Monday, Air Force Captain Royale L. Steele shed his blue uniform for the last time to close out a brilliant 22-year military career. Tomorrow when he sits down for Thanksgiving dinner with his wife Rhoda and eight-year-old twin daughters, Randi Ann and Mary Jean, he can look back upon a war-marked career in a true spirit of thankfulness.

A Silver Star, Bronze Star and Purple Heart pretty well tell of his combat experiences and today he has only the limited use of his left hand--a result of a stabbing from the point of an Imperial Japanese officer's sword during fighting in the Leyte Campaign (Philippines). Shot and bayoneted and left for dead, Steele survived the ordeal, was evacuated and returned to Hawaii for a year's recuperation.

Steele, who ironically spent 11 of his 22 years in the Army, was already a veteran of five years service when he completed Cavalry Officer's Candidate School at Fort Riley, Kansas. Just a year later he was leading a platoon through the jungles of Luzon.

Commanding General of the now famous 32nd Red Arrow division was Major General W. H. Gill, who said of his division on Dec. 22, 1944, "Today the Red Arrow Division successfully completed its primary mission of forcing passage south through the mountains from Pinamopao to the Ormoc Valley. After 36 days of the bitterest hand to hand fighting yet experienced in this war, the Division has annihilated the 1st Imperial Jap Division (reinforced), and by determined action has shortened the completion of the Leyte Campaign."

It was this same 32nd Infantry Division that compiled the longest combat record of any American division in any war with 654 days. But the 32nd paid its price for glory too. Casualties were reported at 10,812 including 2,439 among its dead.

Nine days after General Gill's General Order No. 104, Steele's "aggressive and calm leadership, his lack of concern for personal safety and his inspiring courage" won for him the Silver Star near Baranbang, Leyte.

During retreat ceremonies here Monday afternoon the retiring Captain Steele, who incidentally retires as a permanent major, performed his last official act as an Air Force officer when he assisted Mitchel Air Police in lowering the flag.

Following his Army stint with Artillery, Infantry and Light Tank units, Steele has served with Air Force's TAC, ARDC and Hq ADC and Hq ConAC. He most recently served with the Director of Reserve Personnel at Hq ConAC where fortunately for him he'll return in a civilian capacity as an assistant Branch Chief within the Directorate of Reserve Personnel.

Last January he was graduated from Mitchel College with a Bachelor of Science degree in General Business, specializing in Personnel Management and Industrial Relations. He originally began his education by enrolling at New York University in 1951.

Captain Steele and his family will reside at a new home now being constructed in neighboring Garden City, L. I.



NOVEMBER 21, 1960 -- Captain Roy Steele performed last official act prior to retiring here Monday when he assisted Mitchel Air Policemen AIC Frank W. Maurer (left) and AIC Wyman Young in lowering flag at retreat ceremonies. Capt. Steele retired with 22 years service.



JANUARY 12, 1945 -- Second Lieutenant Roy Steele, 24, receives the Silver Star for gallantry in action as a cavalry platoon leader during Leyte campaign in the Philippines. Major General W. H. Gill, commanding the famed 32nd Red Arrow Division makes the presentation.