



November 2022

Stratford Veterans Museum

VETERAN OF THE MONTH

MAJOR RICHARD STEELE



On April 2, 1942, soon after the United States entered WWII, Richard Steele, 20 years old, enlisted in the Marine Corps as a Private in the Aviation Ordinance School from which he graduated as an enlisted pilot with the rank of Technical Sergeant. Ordered to the South Pacific in 1944 and based on Ulithi Atoll, he flew scouting and bombing missions over the Western Carolina Islands until the war ended in September 2, 1945. Early 1945, he was temporarily commissioned 2nd Lieutenant shifting from enlisted pilot to officer. He stopped home through San Francisco. After discharge, he returned to Tech. Sergeant Rank, but then achieved 2nd Lieutenant in the Marine Corps Reserve. In 1946 he was promoted to 1st Lieutenant.

Recalled to duty during the Korean War, now Captain Steele, was assigned as an instrument officer of a Marine Attack Squadron.

During his military career, Dick flew eight or nine different planes including the Helldiver, Sky Raider and the Panther. He logged over 2000 hours from 1943-1956.

After returning home Dick still flew each month in the Reserve Squadron. During this time he was flying the F9F jet. Steele retired in 1987 from the USMC Reserve with the rank of Major.

Born and raised in Montclair, NJ, Dick and his wife Florence Rodey Steele moved to Oronoque Village in 1991. Mr. Steele has ancestors in both Curtis and Judson families and for many years was very active in the Stratford Historical Society. He and Florence enjoyed numerous visits to Boothe Memorial Park and Museum. Dick was also a volunteer with the Connecticut Air and Space Center.