

**Steele, Richard Corporal Co. A 1<sup>st</sup> TN Inf.**

**Spanish American War 1898-1899 Muster records WPA project**

1. Steele, Richard L. Pvt Co. H, 4<sup>th</sup> TN Inf.

Franklin, TN

July 8 1898 at Knoxville, TN

Transferred to Co. G per R. O. #79, July 13 1898. No clothing issued by state

**2. Steele, Richard Corporal Co. A 1<sup>st</sup> TN Inf.**

Nashville, TN

May 20 1898

Presidio San Francisco Cal

Originally enrolled and mustered in with Co. as private. Apptd Corpl July 1 98 R.O.# 59 ½ same date. Sick in qtrs. Sept 7 to 29 1898. Oct 26 to 28 1898. Not in line of duty. No clothing drawn from State. Services honest and faithful.

Partial letter:

Chutes and the roads running through the park is smooth as any floor you can see girls and boys riding around on wheels. The park contains about five hundred acres and pretty girls can be seen all over the park.

Auntie you can tell Uncle John that us Tennessee boys seem to have these other regiments bluffed, They say we haven't got any uniforms but we can drill and scrap, Three of four days ago the Astor Battery from New York entered in to camp Merritt right across the street from us, but when they came here the Red Cross Society tried to treat them royal and the lieutenant walked out and didn't say a word towards thanking the society, but marched them out in a rough manner, and what the papers did to him was a plenty.

Yesterday one of our men were down the street in a store and two of these Astor Battery men were in there and as they were standing there on of them said something against Tennessee and our man hit them both over the head with a bayonet. They are both in the hospital while our man is in the guard house but think they will be good now.

Well it is nearly tine to drill and had better close. I will let you all hear all I can.

Hoping to hear from you again soon. I remain your truest Nephew.

Richard Steele

San Francisco Cal. June 20 1898

Dear Auntie,

We had our second drill today and I don't any more mind going out to drill, than do going out t play a game of ball. Friday evening after we settled we all went to the bath house out on the coast about three miles and went in, which made us all feel like new boys. We all put on bathing suits and some of the boys went in 9 foot water. Some in 6 and some in four, but I could hardly swim in four foot, so I just contented myself by something good.

Yesterday we were allowed to go to town and stay two hours at a time, so I went to town twice and we got a pretty good view at the town, but the most important place was China town, it contains about four blocks and there the Chinese are all together and trade with each other.

Auntie tell all of my friends to write to me even the little girls I used to know, for it would make me feel right happy to hear from a once pretty little girl from Nashville, but Nashville can't beat Frisco on pretty girls because they are all pretty and are as sweet as these plums that grow out here. I don't see how I will ever be able to come to Nashville again after mixing with the Western people.

Auntie I guess you thought that last letter was scratched by a chicken, but I wrote it on the train and it ran over part of the road like a wagon, but I think big sis can make it out.

Well I guess I had better close for they are going to call roll we don't know when we will leave and are not worrying over it for we are having such a good time.

Good Bye,

Your true nephew

Richard Steele

I am getting fat.

Frisco, Cal. July 4<sup>th</sup> 1898

Dear Auntie,

As we are off for about two hours I thought I would write to you all and tell you all I can. We left our camp this morning about seven thirty to enter the parade, and I suppose we marched about ten miles, but the time past away fast, for every step we marched we cheered by the California people and some of them say we drilled better than any regiment out of fifteen or twenty although we were not equipped. The people would say they are ragged but they can drill. But we will be soon and I will then have to wear corporal stripes, so if I get a chance I will try and send you a picture of the youngest and the youngest drilled corporal in \_\_\_\_\_ I think I will do my best and take every little thing that comes along, I remembered what Uncle John told me before I left to take anything they offered me, I will now close as I am writing to you all. Please write soon to your loving nephew.

Richard Steele excuse writing I want to see the fireworks. Dear Aunt Kate.

Frisco, Cal. July 1 1898

Dear Auntie,

As I have got a little time, I will try to write you a few lines. I would have written two or three days ago, but I have been so busy drilling I haven't had time to do anything. We are now being equipped and I also have a squad to drill every morning as Captain has appointed me one of his corporals which I did accept and will accept all I can get, but at the same time there is old men in the company I would like to see get the position because I am young, yet in the manual(?) and I am the youngest among the corporals.

Auntie we are all getting along fine and I run across new friends every day. I didn't believe I could mix around with people so well.

I think I will try to send you a cheap photograph of myself with a corporal suit on.

Tell all my friends I am getting along fine and to write and don't you think one moment I am not safe for I am with too nice a crowd of boys. I have gained about five more pounds. I am hoping to hear from you soon. I am your most loving nephew.

Richard

San Francisco Cal.

Aug 15<sup>th</sup> 98

Dear Uncle John (Shields),

Your kind letter was received yesterday. I am glad to hear you are still living, but you want to get rid of that cholera quick as possible, for I know what it is as I have been troubled with it lately myself, but am about well now.

Uncle John you would certainly laugh if you were to visit the city about now, and ask a citizen about that Tennessee Regiment, He would tell you they are the worst men for fighting you ever saw. The New York boys run from us like as if we were \_\_\_ as we have come out ahead in every scrap so far, but when we first moved to the Presidio where we are now situated some of them made the remark they were going to throw us in the bay when they caught us out, but it is the other way now.

This morning when I got up someone says "catch that negro" and about four hundred men started after a negro. He had hit one of our men with a pair of brass nucks and run you might say for his life, for I tell you the boys who chased him tried to kill him, someone struck him in the head with a rock while others trying to cut him with knives, but Major Cheatham came in time with the guards to keep off the crowd, but if he had been five minutes later the negro would have been cut all to pieces. It looks like this regiment has got to have somebody to fight any way, but we still have some hope of going to Manila, that is what Major Bayless told us at our non com school today. Well I guess I have said enough and my time is up, Hoping to hear from you soon. I remain your true nephew.

Richard Steele

San Francisco Cal. Aug 20<sup>th</sup> 98

Dear Sis Maria,

Your kind note of the fourteenth came this morning and I take pleasure in writing you a decent letter and not a note. Sis you say come home. I would if it weren't for one little thing and that is Uncle Sam won't let me, nor tell you I don't really think we will go to Manila but we are able to be put in charge of some garrison post, which will tickle the officers to death, but it is different with us boys, for I tell you, after a boy stays in this kind of business two years, he isn't worth killing afterwards; and another reason we come in this thing to fight Spaniards and not to clear up the barren parts of the U.S., so I wouldn't; be surprised if William J. Mc(Kinley) wouldn't turn us out in a month or so.

Sis I guess the pictures have reached you by now and want to tell you not to send JM\_\_ until I tell you, for it all depends on that coming letter which hasn't arrived yet, and I know you are kicking but I am going to have my mug struck again soon all alone and I guess you would rather have one of those instead of this and I have several other friends who have asked me for one well as I have a letter Miss Wilke Eve's and Mr. E. E. Wheeler's to answer I will close and start on the next hoping you will answer soon I remain your truest brother

Richard Steele

Maria the report is now we will go to Honolulu right away.