



## Benjamin "Benny" Dunn

February 17, 1917 - March 29, 2012

Benjamin Dunn, 95, of Murphysboro, passed away at 4:53 a.m. Thursday, March 29, 2012, at the Heartland Regional Medical Center in Marion, Illinois.

Benjamin was born on February 17, 1917, in Gorham, Illinois, to Thomas G. Dunn and Frances M (Van Eman) Dunn.

He married Johanna Mifflin on March 19, 1949, in Piggott, Arkansas, and she preceded him in death on May 17, 2001.

Benny started teaching in 1939 in the Gorham School System at Baum School, a one room country school. In 1940, he taught in the Gorham Grade School, teaching 6th, 7th and 8th grades in Social Studies and coaching basketball.

Then he went in the U.S. Army. Mr. Dunn was captured by the Japanese on Java on March 8, 1942 and was a prisoner of war until September 2, 1945. He was sent to Singapore, Burma and Thailand and was worked as slave labor for the Japanese.

In the fall of 1947, he started teaching history and Physical Education at the Gorham High School and served as baseball and basketball coach for eight years. In 1955, he became the Superintendent of the Gorham School System

until 1967. Then from 1967 to 1972, he served as the Superintendent of the Newman Community Unit School System, and in 1972, he served as the Superintendent of the Anna-Jonesboro School System until his retirement in 1974.

In 1979, he authored the book "The Bamboo Express", which tells about his experiences as a prisoner of war and working on the Japanese Death Railway.

Mr. Dunn was a member of the First Presbyterian Church in Murphysboro, Illinois. He was a member of the Jackson County Retired Teachers Association and the Illinois Retired Teacher Association, a member of the American Legion Post # 127, V.F.W. Post # 7190, Disabled American Veterans, the American Ex-Prisoners of War, and the Texas Lost Battalion Association.

He is survived by one son and two daughter in laws Tom and Elaine Dunn of Cobden, and Tempa Dunn of Chatham, IL;

six grandchildren Aaron Dunn and his wife Michelle Dunn, Kyle Dunn and his wife Stacey Dunn, Abby Dunn, Katie Haley and her husband Chad Haley, Angela Hayman and her husband Scott Hayman, and Kevin Thornburg and his wife Sylvia;

ten great grandchildren Madalyn Dunn, Chole Dunn, Jacob Dunn, Emma Dunn, Riley Dunn, Lauren Hayman, Isabel Hayman, Jesse Warner, Brandy Warner, and Lydia Thornburg,

and many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by one son Joe Dunn on July 4, 2008, two brothers

Tom Dunn and Joe Bob Dunn, and three sisters Catherine Magill, Isabel McClelland, and France Dixon, and his parents.

# Tribute Wall



“ Benjamin "Benny" Dunn

October 23, 2023 at 06:26 AM



“ My father Elkhart Oetjen of Jacob IL passed away a few months ago. He grew up in Gotham and was a pupil of Mr Dunn's. I remembered him speaking of Mr Dunn's service in WWII a few times as a child but didn't remember the specifics. In my fathers things I found a paperback book with an eye w a tear on the cover. I opened it and inside the front cover it read; to Elkhart Oetjen one of my favorite students! Benny Dunn. It was the "Bamboo Express". I've read his incredible story several times and after seeing the blockbuster movie "Unbroken" I couldn't help but draw the similarities between the two experiences. I planned to write a short story based upon his story for the paper there and had just very recently begun to search for relatives of Mr Dunn's not knowing he was actually still alive. I stumbled upon his Obituary in that endeavor. How very sad I had not had the opportunity to start my search a bit sooner, I would have loved to have been able to meet him and just sit down and chat with him. What an incredible man he must have been. Another real irony here, my uncle from my mothers side was involved in liberating " the lost battalion" I don't know if they ever met personally or even realized they had grown up just a few miles from each other, my uncle grew up in Ava and moved north right after the war ..my sincere condolences for your loss, he was obviously a very special person. Very Best Regards, Mike Oetjen

Michael Oetjen - July 29, 2017 at 12:41 AM