**George D. Benedum, Jr.**

George was born in Philadelphia, PA on February 3, 1921 and lived most of his life in Harrisburg. In February 1941, shortly after graduation from John Harris High School, Harrisburg, George enlisted in the United States Army. He received his basic training at Fort Dix, New Jersey and was sent to the Philippines in July of 1941. George served in the Air Warning Unit as a radio operator. When the Japanese invaded, he managed to evade the Bataan Death March and served with a local guerrilla outfit until captured by the Japanese on March 8, 1943 in Abra Province in North Luzon.

He was held prisoner of war in Provincial Capitol. From there George was sent to Vigan in Illocos SVR Province through to San Fernando in Launion Province for about one week, and then transferred to San Fernando Pampanga. From there he went to Cabanatuan. In July 1943, he went to Manilla, then by hell ship to Japan via Taipei, Formosa to camp #17 Omuta, Furoka, Japan. While in prison camp, he worked sixteen hours per day in coal mines existing on meager rations.

George was released in August 1945, after the Atomic Bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, thereby saving thousands of American lives, his included. He returned to the United States via hospital ship as George was declared too ill to travel by air.

George was hospitalized at Newton D. Banker General Hospital until it closed May 18 1946 where he took a discharged rather than be transferred to another Army Hospital. He returned to his home in Harrisburg, but later spent several months in Deshan VA Hospital in Butler, PA.

One of his favorite stories was that upon returning to Harrisburg, the local Selective Service Board notified him that he had never signed up for the draft. When his health improved, he was employed in Harrisburg and later by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation under the governor’s office.

George was married on September 15, 1952 to Helen Hammond Skinner of Kearneysville, WV. They established a home in Harrisburg, and he continued to work for the commonwealth as an accountant until his retirement July 15, 1981. George enjoyed his retirement as it gave him more time for his avid interest in reading, mostly history, and his personal stamp collection.

**George’s Personal Account**

I served in World War II under the command of Lt. Arnold in the Philippine Islands. I was stationed at IBA Zambaies Province where I was a radio Operator. In early December or late November of 1941, we were detached under Lt. Arnold to go to the north to set up a new position at Cape Bojeador in Northern Luzon. I was assigned as the radio operator with this group when we arrived at our destination in early December, having been escorted by a Philippine Engineer Group to reinforce bridges, etc. because of our heavy equipment, we started to set up our unit. We did not have time to become operational with either our radar unit or our radio.

On December 8, 1941, between 9:00 and 10:00 A.M., we saw our camp, then banked away after getting a good look at us. We were not bombed. I particularly remember the following who were with us in the group under Major Cushing: Ernest Zaidja , who was captured in February of 1943 and sent to bilibid Prison. As far as I know, he never got to Cabanatuan; Luis Goldbrum , as you already know; Clyde Mchenry – I was with him until shortly before I was captured. I was captured March 8, 1943 in Abra Province in Northern Luzan, where I was held in prison in the Provincial Capital. From there, I was sent to Vigan in Illocos SVR Province, then to San Fernando in LA Union Province for about one week and then to San Fernando Pampange, then Cabanatuan. In July 1943 I was sent to Manila, then transferred by hell ships to Japan via Taipai, Formosa to Camp # 17 Omuta, Fukuoka Japan. I was released in August of 1945.

In 1946, after my discharge, I was interviewed by army Intelligence officers for about one week for a period of about two hours every day concerning our guerilla activities, evasion tactics, etc. It might be possible to get hold of these.

Sincerely yours, George D Benedum, Jr.