
Note: This is being written on December 7, 1991, at 9:15 a.m. Pearl Harbor time, and 1:15 p.m. Apple Valley MN time. I have just witnessed the commemorative ceremonies at the USS Arizona Memorial, the ship on which Dad's brother and my uncle, Frank Peter is buried. The ship was destroyed by a bomb shortly after 8 a.m. Honolulu time on December 7, 1941.

Dad's memories of 1940-42, which precede and follow these comments, do not mention the events of Pearl Harbor and his brother's death. During June, 1991, at Rutland ND, Dad and I discussed the events of those days in December, 1941. At the time of the bombing he was teaching at Rutland Consolidated and we were living with Miss Robbins and Mrs. Lawson and her daughter Crystal at the teacherage on the school grounds.

December 7 was a Sunday in 1941. The first news about the attack on Pearl Harbor would have reached North Dakota not long after noon.

The folks had a battery operated radio but Dad recalled that on December 7 they were not listening to the radio. The first word of the bombing at Pearl Harbor was received when Miss Robbins returned to the teacherage late in the afternoon. At this point there was no word about Frank's status.

Dad's parents, and his sister Josie, were in California - Grandma and Grandpa living at Long Beach, and Josie in Los Angeles, at the time of the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

During the week following the attack it was first announced that John Grabinski, a sailor from Grafton and Frank's friend, had been killed. It was only later in the week that it was learned that John Grabinski was safe, but that Frank Bernard had been killed aboard the Arizona.

There was no funeral for Frank; and the family did not get together. There was nothing anyone could do. There apparently was little talking about the tragedy experienced by Henry. His student at the time, Orville Nelson, seemed surprised when I wrote him in November, 1991, concerning Dad's loss at Pearl Harbor. In a letter dated December 2, 1991, Orville said "Guess we were always talking about something else, anyhow I don't remember us ever talking about [Dad's brother] losing his life from the Japanese attack."

Dick Bernard
December 7, 1991
