

## A grieving father, Henry Bernard, speaks out at a California picnic

this item was submitted to the American Legion Magazine in 1991. The newspaper article was found by Loria (Collette) Kelly of East Grand Forks MN

At left is the original of the article in the Grand Forks Herald. It is very hard to read. The entire article is very long, and has the headline "3,500 Attend State Picnic in California". This picnic was somewhere in Los Angeles, and probably about February 12. The following reference is about half way into the article, and is the only personal reference in the article (other than speeches and names of people in attendance).

From Grand Forks Herald  
February 17, 1942

A touching incident occurred during the program. In complimenting Americans of Polish descent for their patriotism Niemo read a press report telling of the death of a young man of Polish descent at Pearl Harbor, the young man being a native of the Grafton area. When he had finished reading a man and his wife arose in the audience, the man asking if he might interrupt for just a moment. Niemo graciously complied and the man said the report of that boy's death later was found to be an error, but that the man actually killed at Pearl Harbor in the first news report. "The boy killed," said the man, "was our son!" The couple standing were Mr. and Mrs. Henry Bernard, long time residents of Grafton. The entire audience arose and stood in silence for a moment in honor of the dead hero and the parents who made the sacrifice.

"A touching incident occurred during the program. In complimenting Americans of Polish for their patriotism, [Lech T.] Niemo [counsel for the Republic of Poland in Los Angeles and a Los Angeles lawyer who grew up in Minnesota] read a press report telling of the death of a young man of Polish descent at Pearl Harbor, the young man being a native of the Grafton area. When he had finished reading a man and his wife arose in the audience, the man asking if he might interrupt for just a moment. Niemo graciously complied, and the man said the report of that boy's death later was found to be in error, but that the man actually killed at Pearl Harbor was the pal of the boy mentioned in the first press report. "The boy killed," said the man, "was our son!" The couple standing were Mr. and Mrs. Henry Bernard, long time residents of Grafton. The entire audience arose and stood in silence for a moment in honor of the dead hero and the parents who made the sacrifice."

I can see Grandpa doing this, and it is emotional to even type this now.

Uncle Frank's pal was John Grabenske of Warsaw, and he indeed was initially reported killed in action at Pearl. Dad used to keep in touch with him in retirement in Arizona, but the last contact from Arizona to Dad from John's wife was that his health was failing. He probably is no longer alive.



LATE JUN 1941 -  
LONG BEACH CA  
from left:  
Henry + Josephine Bernard  
Jessie Whitaker, Frank Bernard  
Richard (Dick) Henry + Esther  
Bernard.