

Saddest War Memorial In The World



The scandalous tragedy of the Waikiki Natatorium

Each day visitors from our World War One Allied Countries walk through Kapi'olani Park to find our War Memorial - to pay their respects in memory of the Great War, The War To End All Wars, Lest We Forget etc. And our Pacific neighbors, Australia and New Zealand, lost enormous numbers of their servicemen in terrible battles. In all Allied countries, even in the smallest towns, such a war memorial would be immaculately maintained, with surrounding gardens and an atmosphere of peace and reflection. It would be unthinkable to allow such a memorial to be neglected, especially now that the 100 year war remembrances have begun.

But not here. Our Waikiki Natatorium War Memorial, opened in 1927, has been so awfully neglected over so many years that it is now a virtual slum. The pain seen in the eyes of our visitors is profound. Ask them what they think of it and you will hear "how could they allow this? "

The squalor starts at the gates, rusted, unpainted and secured with a rusty padlock. Beyond them lies a ghostly chainlink fence with several Danger Keep Out signs attached. Through here you will see the rusted, rotting concrete carcass of the once beloved Ocean Swimming Pool, slowly sinking below the waves, unrepaired since 1950. The two side arches are secured with the ugliest deteriorated plywood and on each is posted a severe Smoking Prohibited By Law sign. Really? Rust is streaming from the light fixtures and the repaired cracks in the plaster have not been painted so they look like scars. But Lo! There is a bronze plaque affixed below the right side light. Let's see who is remembered here. Oh, it's the City Councillors honoring their own members and the building industry that got the remodeling contract in the year 2000. Are you kidding?





How nice of the City to allow Ocean Safety to park all their pickups, jet skis and other equipment here. The parking lot in front of the memorial is depressing, dusty and neglected. No gardens grace the entrance and the park area here is just a sandy dirt track. Some yards inside the park you will find the war Memorial Stone with a plaque containing the names of a few of the US and British war casualties. No garden surrounds it.

The City is now receiving comments on their latest State Historic Preservation Determination (“SHIPD”) plans for the Natatorium. Don’t expect any agreement among the various interested parties. Rebuild the entire pool, demolish it all, keep the bleachers, move the memorial arch back, build ocean groins and make a new beach etc. It’s a good time to visit natatorium.org and learn all about this ill-fated War Memorial. Let your council members know what you think.

Hey, how about telling them, or just yell at them, before you waste hundreds of thousands of our tax dollars on consultants once again, at least spend just a few thou to fix and clean up the entrance so that we cease insulting our Allied visitors so very deeply. Not to say how our own residents also feel so disrespected.