

Date: Thu, 19 Nov 98 17:21:37 -0600
From: Hal Barker <hbarker@kwp.org>
Subject: Korean War Memorial

To Those Who Care:

I have watched the disintegration of the existing Korean War Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. It troubles me.

I was there at the beginning. I made the first donation in December 1984.

It is a well-known and established material fact that fiscal and supervisory restraints were not in place during the construction of the Memorial. This mismanagement led to the physical manifestation we now see on the Mall. Cause and effect.

During the summer of 1996, I initiated a General Accounting Office investigation on issues in relation to apparent removal of a \$500,000 Samsung donation from the Korean War Veterans Memorial Trust Fund at the Treasury. The explanation I received from the American Battle Monuments Commission on this issue was that the money "was not misappropriated, it just isn't there anymore".

I received other explanations over time, but the \$500,000 simply went away from the Treasury, to put it gently.

I was also told that the investigation was presented verbally to the House Veterans Affairs Committee, but was not reduced to writing. There is a reason for this.

My contact at the House Veterans Affairs Committee at the time was Mr. Mike Brinck, 202-225-3527. An investigation was conducted by the GAO, but I was urged by government officials to not request the investigation due to the nature of the findings.

As a tradesman involved directly in design and construction over the last 26 years, I have an old saying about construction. If you start having construction maintenance problems early on, then your problems will greatly increase. Early problems are generally caused by poor quality control, poor supervision, and lack of diligence. Keep in mind that millions of dollars were paid to an architect to watch every tiny detail of construction. And millions were apparently paid to engineers to watch every tiny detail.

As one who has physically sat at a drafting board for many years, I know a bit about design. And I've poured many caissons, set the forms, handled the steel, dug the trenches, used the transit. I've always been the detail man. The guy who checks every measurement 5 times. I'm the guy you see down in the trench, covered with mud, making certain the work is right. I'm also the guy who install the most expensive premium grade millwork in high-rise Dallas. I know exactly how the business works, and how the money flows.

Folks, even in Dallas, \$22,000,000 builds a lot of structure. I've worked for some very wealthy people, and for the cost of the Korean War Veterans Memorial, a billionaire can have a lot of palace. I've worked for billionaires on their homes. \$22,000,000 goes a long way.

Linda Wheeler of the Washington Post is looking into the problems.

I ask each and every person on this mailing list to call Ms. Wheeler at 202-334-6000 and leave her a message. Briefly, tell her in one minute that you care about the Korean War Veterans Memorial.

Or we can just forget it all, and watch the Memorial die.....

Hal

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