

LIBERTY CALL

A look from atop



JOCS(SW) Phil Eggman photo

Tourists enjoy the view of Waikiki from atop Diamond Head. The open area to the middle left is Kapiolani Park which was once a horse racing track. The white structure to the right of it is the Honolulu band shell where big named artists come to the islands to perform. The lush, green area above that is the sprawling Honolulu Zoo, home to hundreds of tropical animals. The tall buildings above the zoo are the world famous Waikiki beachfront hotels and highrise apartments for local residents. The hike to the top of Diamond Head is about 2.5 miles.



J02 Greg Cleghorne photo

Diamond Head is visible for miles along Oahu's coastline. This view is from "Magic Island" or Ala Moana Beach Park. Locals and tourists alike enjoy the long walkway, golden-sand beach and crystal clear waters.



JOCS(SW) Phil Eggman photo

Part of the Diamond Head experience are tunnels and steep stairways. A flash light is needed as the World War II tunnels are not lighted.

Wonders of the "Pacific" world

By J02 Greg Cleghorne

NAVY REGION HAWAII

People may come and go, but nothing quite defines a region and a culture like its landmarks.

London is synonymous with Big Ben; Paris has the Eiffel Tower, New York has the Statue of Liberty and Hawaii has Diamond Head.

It's fitting that one of Hawaii's most recognizable landmarks is a natural one. Renown for its natural beauty and miles of golden-sand beaches, volcanic black-sand beaches, an active volcano, steep, picturesque cliffs, waterfalls, dense, tropical valleys and the home of the Grand Canyon of the Pacific on Kauai, its no wonder nothing says Hawaii quite like Diamond Head.

Proudly standing on the southeastern shore of Oahu, the Diamond Head crater is another pacific marker of Pele's path of fire and creation.

According to Hawaiian legend, Pele is the Hawaiian goddess of fire and volcanoes. She is credited with bringing the Hawaiian Island chain to the surface of the pacific, providing the Hawaiian people with new, fertile land to inhabit and cultivate.

Diamond Head stands more than 600 feet and is one of Hawaii's most distinguishable landmarks. The name Diamond Head was coined during sailing ship days when early European sailors scaled the extinct volcano and found sparkling rocks they believed were diamonds. They weren't diamonds, but the name stuck.

Today, some of the interior is the home of the Hawaii National Guard and - in years past - was often the backdrop for several Hawaii 5-0 episodes. The rest of it is a natural preserve.

Every year, thousands of visitors hike the crater and are treated to one of the most breathtaking vistas of Oahu. The tall, resort hotels, fronted by golden-sand beaches of Waikiki, look like children's building toys in the distance from the volcanic summit.

For the history buff, there are remnants of World War II gun batteries at the summit and much of the pathways and tunnel were established during the war years of the forties.

Those visitors to Diamond Head should be sure to wear comfortable shoes for the few miles of hiking, comfortable clothing and bring their own bottled water. A flashlight is provided on a first-come, first-served basis.