

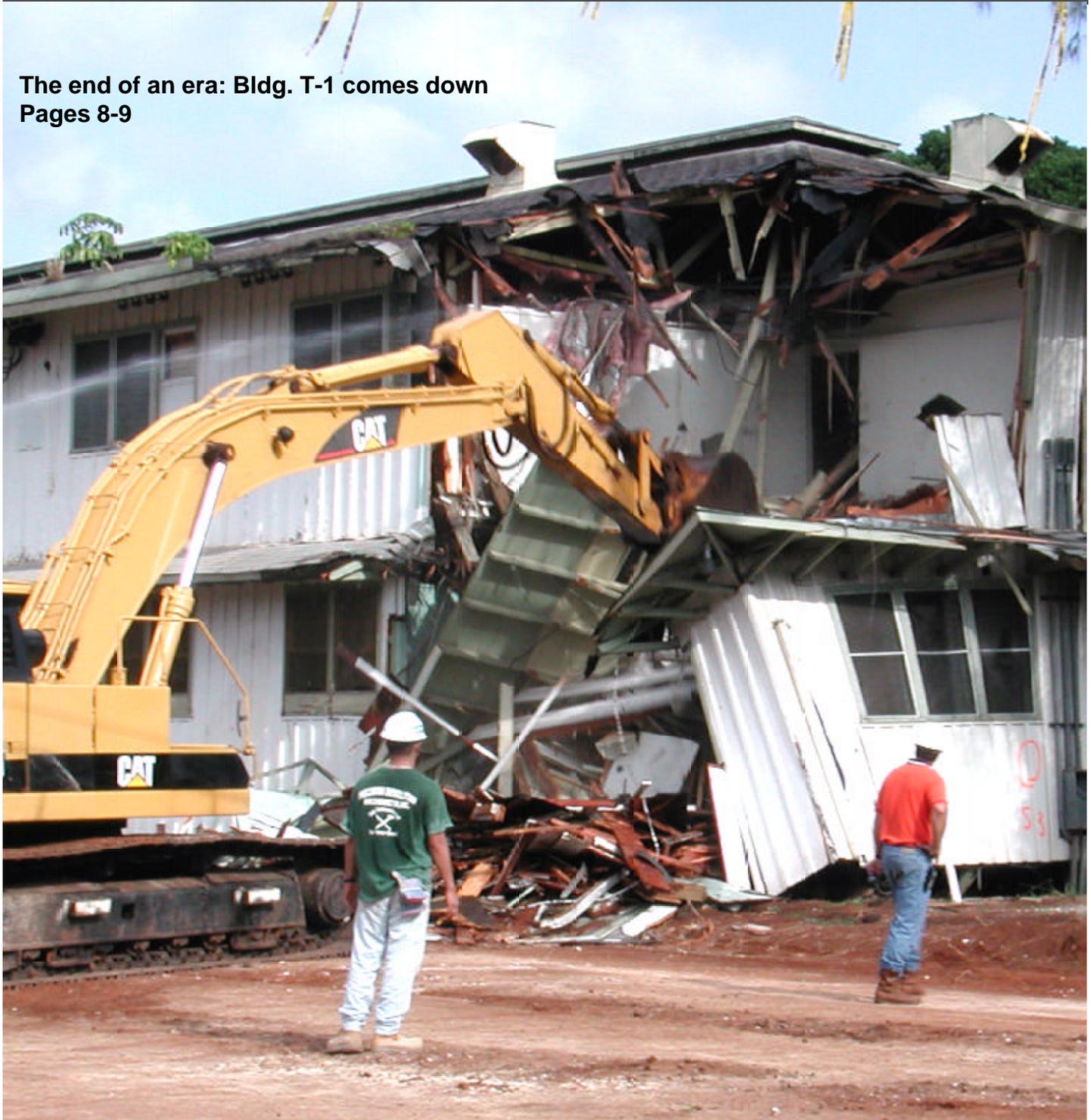
# The Pacific Connection



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**Stupidity:** *We are all born ignorant, but one must work hard to remain stupid.* —Benjamin Franklin, American statesman

## Building T-1 finally comes down

*Story and photos by Alexander Kufel*

It took only three days of demolition with two medium-size “back hoe excavator” machines to reduce a building that stood for more than sixty years to an unglamorous pile of rubble. Building T-1, a massive two story wood frame structure used by administrative offices of HED for at least 20 years, finally came down in March. T-1 had withstood strong winds, termites, wood rot, the threat of fire, and occupation by Tripler Hospital, the U.S. Post Office, and the Army Corps of Engineers

during its long lifetime as a “temporary” structure.

“The only surprise we found during the demo was that the building was remarkably termite free,” said John Clarke, Contractor Quality Control manager/superintendent for the prime contractor. “There also had been some concern that there might be an exodus of rodents, but DPW (Directorate of Public Works) vector control did such a good job during the past few months that there were none.”

*See “T-1,” page 9*



*(Above, left to right) Day One. Ten feet from the end the walls and floor are chipped so the outer walls can fall inward. (Below, left to right) By mid-day of the first day the former post office is history. By the end of Day Two, spaces occupied by HED Information Management and Resource Management are history as well.*



**Advice:** *Advice is what we ask for when we already know the answer but wish we didn't.* —Erica Jong, writer

## T-1

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DPW utilities foreman Andy Shigemoto said that DPW also was responsible for rerouting water lines and cutting off the power to T-1 and that DPW worked well with HED. “We have a good relationship with the Corps of Engineers and everything went smoothly,” he said.

“The demo work went very well,” said HED project manager Gerald Young. “Time was taken for testing of various parts of the building right up until the last moment to ensure that the debris met landfill requirements. Asbestos in the floor tiles

was removed before the demo began, and testing was done for lead, cadmium and arsenic,” he said. Initially, the contractor’s employees donned protective clothing throughout the hazardous removal process.

While the “L” shape of T-1 and its dimensions of 220 feet by 70 feet with a covered lanai on one side and 90 feet by 60 feet on the other did not present any particular problems for the subcontractor—Precision Demolition and Construction, Inc.—the nearness of the building to civilian neighbors just outside of Fort Shafter did. Although dust screens, 25 feet high, extended along

*See “T-1,” page 10*

### Former occupants reminisce

## Tales of T-1 evoke memories for many

Some sources say T-1 was built in 1936. However, the building does not appear on maps of the post from 1937 or 1941. The type construction and the existence of plywood blackout screens on some of the windows suggest that it was actually built during World War II. HED archaeologist Kanalei Shun said that although the office buildings and quarters located on Palm Circle were determined a National Historic Registered Places (NHRP) landmark in May 1987, structures such as T-1 are listed as belonging to Category III: Properties that contribute to the significance of other properties but do not individually meet NHRP criteria and therefore are included in the Army’s Facilities Reduction Program.

In terms of the human adventure in and around building T-1 at Fort Shafter, Corps of Engineers’ employees emotions ran high as the building came down.

Eric Bjorken, SO, said that he and his wife, Polly, RE, met in T-1 and that he was thinking of asking the demolition

contractor for the water cooler as a souvenir. Darryl and Joanne Hasegawa also met in T-1 and married.

And then there are the stories: of friendships, of characters, of pulling all-nighters at the end of the fiscal year, of holiday and going away parties. These in turn lead to other stories...of things that go bump in the night, of cold chills in certain parts of the building.

It may have been a temporary structure right from the start, but when small groups of POD and HED people gather nowadays talk invariably turns to T-1.

“We had it all, I have plenty to write about,” said accounting technician MaryAnn Tilton, RM-F. “I was in that building from Jan. 7, 1980 until we moved here to 525 this past summer. I actually cried when we moved, after all it was my home for so many years. Silly me. I will definitely cry when it comes down,” she said. (And she did.)



*Day Three. War zone or construction site? The two-story reinforced vault is all that remains by the third day.*

**Character:** *Success is always temporary. When all is said and done, the only thing you'll have left is your character. —Vince Gill, singer/musician*

## T-1

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the perimeter fence separating Fort Shafter from the Moanalua Gardens neighborhood, the clearance was only 15 feet. Young said that mechanical demolition was determined to be the least intrusive means of bringing down the structure and the lack of clearance on the “ewa” side of the building required a lot of skill on the contractors part to get the walls to buckle in the desired direction. Debris was left in place until all the walls were down and used to help the excavators reach the higher parts of the roof line as they “chewed” their way through the building.

No explosives were used to implode the walls, but in the end the effect was the same. There also were no complaints from the neighbors. Young said that the contractor and Randy Chun, an HED construction representative, went door-to-door throughout the neighborhood informing people verbally and through information sheets about what was going to happen during the actual demolishing process.

This project also includes landscaping and site work, including a sound-dampening berm along the west end of the site. Immediate plans are to provide additional parking in the area and a picnic spot.

In Department of Defense parlance, a “T” in front of a building number means that the structure is on borrowed time from the day it’s completed.

Young said that this demolition is just one part of the Army’s Facility Reduction Program that ends in 2003 and could possibly affect any buildings on Fort Shafter with the “T” designation. Many buildings have already been demolished, but this particular one is of sentimental interest to Corps employees. Young said,



*These two stone pillars behind the rapidly disappearing T-1 once marked an entrance to Fort Shafter.*

too, that T-1 did not meet the criteria for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places and therefore was earmarked by U.S. Army Garrison, Fort Shafter for demolition because of the expense of maintaining an old wooden building on base.



*Already abandoned and on the eve of demolition, building T-1 was home to several major Division and District work groups during its long life.*