

# Letters to the Editor

## City should either preserve memorial or build another

To the Editor:

The city auditorium, stage and balcony were built by this community to honor the 101 Riley County servicemen who died in World War II and about 2,000 other county veterans who survived. The facility was named Peace Memorial Auditorium in their honor.

The lead organizations in planning and promoting the Peace Memorial Auditorium back in 1946 to 1955 were the VFW (the Veterans of Foreign Wars), the Riley County Historical Society, Daughters of Veterans, the American Legion, Spanish American War Veterans and others that wanted to honor our veterans. The auditorium was a great tribute to the city of Manhattan.

However, that was 50 years ago, and the building has not been maintained to the level needed to be remembered either as a living memorial or an active auditorium.

Times have changed. We now have air-conditioning, advanced lighting systems, sound systems and other technology that the Peace Memorial does not have and whose absence makes the auditorium virtually undesirable and unusable.

As a veteran of a foreign war and the son of a World War II veteran, I am disappointed that the Peace Memorial was let go for so long and now is nothing more to the city than wasted space. It gets used only a few hours a year. I can see why the city wants to tear the heart out of it to make office space.

Before the facility — the only memorial we have to honor World War II veterans — is torn down, I challenge the city to do

the honorable thing and build a new memorial that correctly gives tribute to the veterans who fought for this country's freedom. This way, veterans like Jim Sharp, who fought in the Battle of the Bulge and took part in turning the war in our favor, will not be disrespected when they walk into City Hall.

The only thing the City of Manhattan has for the settlers and veterans is a plaque that's 2 feet wide and 3 feet tall. The people who gave their lives to settle this land and defend it are remembered only by a plaque. Junction City has done a wonderful job honoring vets with its city park and the Washington Street roundabout. We should follow Junction City's lead.

Our efforts are supported by the board of the Historical Preservation Society.

Again, I challenge the city to do the right thing and either preserve the present memorial or build a memorial that pays proper tribute to those who gave so much for Riley County and this great country.

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