

ALCATRAZ TO BE SCRAPPED TO BECOME PEACE CENTRE?



When the image of Alcatraz appears in one's head, it is usually connected with the brutality of the America's famous old prison and the well known Clint Eastwood film 'Escape from Alcatraz', which deeply portrayed the gruesome, gory and eery atmosphere of the dreaded building. It was well-known for being a prison which no inmate could dream of escaping from and simply had to put up with the nightmare that went on inside. The Eastwood film tells the story of two men escaping from Alcatraz, yet most probably they succeeded only partly as they were never found and most probably drowned in the surrounding ocean. Therefore, nobody successfully escaped form Alcatraz.

As a result of the old prison's brutal reputation, tourists have been flocking to see the building ever since its closing. Many have become enraptured in its reputation and attracted by the type of tour it offers. For a reasonable fee, tourists are shown around the old cells and informed about how the inmates were forced to live. The tour guides are even able to provide stories about individuals, just as the part played by Clint Eastwood. Most of the inmates were ruthless criminals; many were murderers thus making the stories just that little more fascinating. Souvenirs in the form of books and t-shirts make the visit complete. A further advantage of the tour is that photography is permitted and many walk away with piles of memories form the old prison.

However, Alcatraz does not please everybody nowadays and many San Francisco residents has been debating for some time as to whether the prison should remain functional as a museum or whether it should be converted into a peace centre. It is undeniable that the building is coming apart, yet some believe that making it a peace centre would destroy Alcatraz's image. The project still looks likely to go ahead as new and bright ideas do tend to win over tradition, especially where old prisons are concerned.

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