



May 8th, 1945: “Victory in Europe” Day



Surrender by Generals of the German High Command. From left to right: Major General Wilhelm Oxenius, an aide to General Jodl; Colonel General Gustav Jodl, Chief of Staff of the German Army; and General Admiral Hans Georg Friedeburg, Commander in Chief of the German Navy

The end of the war in Europe, a war that consumed the lives of more than 50 million of people, was formally announced on this date 62 years ago. With the announcement came the terminus of the Third Reich and the rule of Hitler and the Nazis, and an end to the nightmare that his 12 years of leadership wrought on many countries, none more so than Russia. On May 7th, at 0141 hours, Germany's surviving leaders signed the documents of surrender, to go into effect at 2301 hours on May 8th, 1945.

May 8th also marked the discovery of the enormous repository of Nazi loot in the salt mines at Alt Aussee, Austria. Monuments Men Capt. Robert Posey and Pfc. Lincoln Kirstein were among the first to discover the treasure trove when they arrived with the United States Third Army. Van Eyck's *Ghent Altarpiece*, Michelangelo's *Bruges Madonna*, and Vermeer's *The Astronomer*, were among thousands of works of art found hidden in the various mine chambers. The

From the Desk of Robert M. Edsel

We Did It! House to Pass the “Monuments Men” Resolution

Full details may be found on page 2 of this newsletter, but Congress is on the brink of passing a resolution which, for the first time, formally honors the service of the men and women from 12 nations who served in the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives section during World War II. We have also succeeded in our efforts to find sponsors for a similar resolution in the Senate: Senator James Inhofe (R-OK), and Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA).

I expect the Senate resolution to be submitted and passed in June at which time we will, in conjunction with our Congressional and Senate Sponsors, host a ceremony at which all living Monuments Men and women will be formally honored. It is my hope that this will take place on June 6, 2007, the 63rd anniversary of the D-Day landings in Normandy.

For all those who contacted their member of Congress, thank you for making a difference!

Sincerely,
Robert M. Edsel

*“I cannot thank you enough for all you have done to bring the film, *The Rape of Europa*, and the book, *Rescuing Da Vinci*, into being. I have poured over the book, enjoying both the photographs I knew and those that are new to me. It has given me great pleasure to remember that time and to know that Lynn Nicholas' research has been furthered by the important book and film you have supported.”*



repository was so full that it took six weeks to evacuate just the most prominent works of art.

On that same day, Capt. Walker Hancock began the evacuation of an important repository at Bernterode, Germany. This mine, in which hundreds of prisoners worked underground, served as a munitions dump for much of the war. Found off the main corridor, behind a five foot thick brick wall, was a room containing the coffins of four German leaders and the Prussian crown jewels. Hancock was responsible for removing many of these treasures, including the coffins. As the tiny elevator neared the surface, Hancock, sitting atop the coffin of Frederick the Great because of limited space, heard “God Save the King” playing on the radio and the sounds of GI’s celebrating. The “Star-Spangled Banner” followed: the war in Europe was over.



*The coffin of Frederick the Great, found in the Bernterode mine in Germany.
(photo courtesy of the Walker Hancock Collection)*

Congressional Resolution Update

H. Con. Res 48 was offered by Congressman Robin Hayes (R-NC) as an amendment to H. R. 1585 during the Armed Services Committee’s markup of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008. The Committee approved this amendment on May 9th, and it is expected to be submitted for vote and passed the week of May 14th. Thank you all for your support of this resolution which will finally provide the Monuments Men the recognition they deserve. We could not have come this far without your help and the support of so many members of Congress, in particular Congresswoman Kay Granger (R-TX).

Senate Resolution

Senator James Inhofe (R-OK) and Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) have agreed to sponsor the Senate Resolution honoring the Monuments Men. Both Senators serve on the Armed Forces Committee and hail from states with living Monuments Men. Robert met with aides to more than 15 Senators on his most recent trip to Washington, including a brief meeting with Senator Inhofe. Your help in adding the names of other Senators in support of this resolution is critical. Please contact your Senators and ask them to indicate their support by emailing Dan_Barron@inhofe.senate.gov or Jay_Maroney@kennedy.senate.gov. Our website, www.rescuingdavinci.com, will continue to update our progress.

This book is a beautiful tribute to those art historians, museum directors and curators who had the foresight to preserve as much of the European masterpieces of art as they could under the most difficult and trying circumstances. I am pleased to share this book with my family as it gives us a wonderful appreciation for those unsung heroes of World War II who made it possible for us all to enjoy this timeless art.



Salvatore Scarpitta (1919-2007)

by Robert M. Edsel



(Salvatore Scarpitta, Catalogue Raisonné)

Salvatore Scarpitta, an accomplished artist and Monuments Man, died last month at the age of 88. He was a sensitive man whose quiet observations touched my heart. Clearly ill and weathered by time, he nonetheless quite poetically expressed his feelings and recollections to me during our visit in late October, 2006. With his fluency in Italian and “sympatico” attitude of understanding both American and Italian culture, he shared with me meaningful observations about his service in the MFAA section during World War II. Three times during our interview Salvatore, who in his bari-

tone voice pronounced his well-chosen words in a deliberate, drawn out fashion, said to me “I’ve lived all my life to meet you.” He was brought to tears when I asked him about his work as a Monuments Man.

In Italy, unlike Germany, there were more clear cut examples of Monuments officers of both Great Britain and the United States working side by side in an effort to restore damaged structures, and to protect and return stolen works of art. Salvatore worked under the direction of the great British Monuments officer, John Bryan Ward-Perkins. It thus came as no surprise when I learned from Salvatore that years later he painted a portrait of this officer—and friend—



*Painting of Monuments Man—
J.B. Ward-Perkins by Salvatore Scarpitta
(Salvatore Scarpitta, Catalogue Raisonné)*

who he so greatly admired. I asked Salvatore if he was proud to be a part of the MFAA, to which he replied, “Oh absolutely, it was a joy. [Our work there] wasn’t just an occupation but a kind of form of custody and preservation, and that was a remarkable achievement. This was unprecedented. This was an absolutely new approach to war.” Later in the interview, I asked Salvatore to comment on his feelings, both as an artist and Monuments Man, about the protection of these great cultural treasures, to which he replied: “I had a form of affection that’s called ‘love’ for these monuments [men]. I felt they represented real monuments of humanity, and they went through terrific tribulations keeping focus on the main thing, which was the art, not just the thing. So you’ll find in our studies and our work the attitude of people who want to preserve this heartbeat, and we did it very well, I thought. I was a very critical young kid, but the attitude that we demonstrated was of terrific attachment to this history of the artists and of the people that respected their work.”

To read Scarpitta’s full biography, please visit our website at www.rescuingdavinci.com/HelpSolve/list_mfaa.aspx

“The photographs are amazing. It is an excellent way for students to learn not only about art, but also about the history of World War II. I am very impressed by Mr. Edsel’s dedication and commitment in bringing to light the important work of the ‘Monuments Men.’ This is truly an ‘untold’ story. This is great public diplomacy stuff too.”



Jacques Goudstikker Sale at Christie's

by Robert M. Edsel

The first sale of paintings recently restituted to the heirs of Jacques Goudstikker took place on April 19th at Christie's Auction House in New York City. Ironically, this sale occurred one day prior to the anniversary of Hitler's birth-date. This sale included only 45 of the 202 works returned to Marei von Saher and her family by the Dutch government earlier this year. Many of the others will be sold in London (July) and Amsterdam (November) later in the year. It was a somber affair for several reasons, not the least of which was a very weak sale. In my opinion, the works selected for this sale weren't particularly good: many were in poor condition. A number of lots didn't sell; many others struggled to meet the minimum estimate. In this market, great works in great condition sell very well; all else suffers. The focus leading up to and including the sale was money, the lawyers and treasure hunters who recovered these works (and in at least one instance, new litigation against Ms. von Saher by an attorney claiming millions of dollars of unpaid fees!). Sadly, there was no mention of the men and women who truly saved these works of art, THE MONUMENTS MEN. I expected as much.

Restituted Painting Goes Full Circle, Returns to the Kimbell Art Museum

While most of the focus leading up to last month's Old Master sale at Christie's centered on the Goudstikker paintings, there was another restituted painting for sale by the heirs of John and Anna Jaffe, represented by Mr. Alain Monteagle. The work of art was a painting by J.M.W. Turner entitled *Glaucus and Scylla* which had been returned to the family last year by the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas. It was an excellent example of how smoothly a restitution case can unfold if both claimant and the holder of the work of art diligently and expeditiously review the evidence of the claim and keep lawyers at bay. In near record time, the Kimbell evaluated the claim of Mr. Monteagle and his family members and determined that in fact, the Turner painting had been confiscated by Nazi officials and members of the Vichy regime in France in 1943.



photo courtesy of the Robert M. Edsel Collection.

In the most fitting of conclusions, the Kimbell repurchased the painting for almost \$6.5 million. This was a good outcome for the heirs, and for the Kimbell, as the work of art will soon be hanging on the wall of the museum, having arrived with with honor and dignity. No longer just a painting or work of art, it has now become an icon of Hitler and the Nazis' theft of Europe and the treasure hunt that continues to this very day as victims keep searching for their belongings.

"Your beautiful book brought to my mind many family souvenirs. My family's art collection was looted by the Nazis and the Vichy regime. With great efforts, we have obtained the restitution of Guardi, Goya and Tenier paintings from the Musées de France."

-Alaine Monteagle, heir to John Jaffe, whose recently restituted painting by J.M.W. Turner from the Kimbell Art Museum, was re-purchased at auction by the Kimbell Art Museum in April



Theatrical Release of *The Rape of Europa*

Begins May 18th, 2007 in San Francisco

We are so pleased to announce the theatrical release of *The Rape of Europa*. After six months of screenings at film festivals and museums across the country, the film will begin its roll-out across screens nation-wide on May 18th. After a tremendous reception at the San Francisco International Film Festival with three sold out screenings, the film will make its theatrical debut on several screens in the San Francisco Bay Area. Theaters include the Embarcadero Center Cinema (San Francisco), Shattuck Cinemas (Berkeley), the Rafael Film Center (San Rafael), and the Aquarius Theatre (Palo Alto). We are expecting the theatrical release in New York City and Boston to begin this summer.

For those not familiar with *The Rape of Europa*, it is a 2-hour documentary film based on Lynn H. Nicholas' book of the same title. It was written, produced, and directed by Richard Berge, Bonni Cohen, and Nicole Newman, and co-produced by Robert M. Edsel. Joan Allen narrates this breathtaking chronicle about the battle over the very survival of centuries of western culture. In a journey through seven countries, the film takes the audience into the violent whirlwind of fanaticism, greed, and warfare that threatened to wipe out the artistic heritage of Europe. *The Rape of Europa* begins and ends with the story of artist Gustav Klimt's famed *Gold Portrait*, stolen from Viennese Jews in 1938 and now the most expensive painting ever sold.



Today, more than sixty years later, the legacy of this tragic history continues to play out as families of looted collectors recover major works of art, conservators repair battle damage, and nations fight over the fate of ill-gotten spoils of war.

Accolades for *The Rape of Europa* include: “Official Selection,” Full Frame Documentary Film Festival; “Official Selection,” San Francisco International Film Festival; and “Audience Award for Best Feature Documentary,” River Run International Film Festival, Winston-Salem. The *Toronto Star* recently reviewed the film and declared that it “may be the most stunning documentary of the year.”

Visit www.therapeofeuropa.com for updated information on theatrical releases across the country.

“As an art historian with a personal remembrance of World War II, I was emotionally overwhelmed by your magnificent Rescuing Da Vinci. Your book should be in wide release for the historical edification of all. How fortunate we are to have photographic documentation of Hitler’s looting and destruction, and we owe you a huge debt for assembling the contents of your wonderful book.”



National Archives Film Screening

On Wednesday evening, May 9th, the National Archives held a screening of *The Rape of Europa*, which was attended by almost 300 people. The film was introduced by Robert Edsel, which provided him an opportunity to give the audience a progress report on the Congressional/Senate Resolutions recognizing the Monuments Men. Following the film, there was a panel discussion moderated by Michael J. Kurtz, Assistant Archivist for Records Services of the National Archives and author of *America and the Return of Nazi Contraband: The Recovery of Europe's Cultural Treasures*. Authors Lynn H. Nicholas and Mr. Edsel participated in the discussion.



Panelists at the NARA screening. From left to right: Michael J. Kurtz, Lynn H. Nicholas, Robert M. Edsel (photo courtesy Bruce Guthrie)

The National Archives is a remarkable world treasure open to all visitors at no cost. Its endless resources and talented staff played an invaluable role in providing source material for both Ms. Nicholas' and Mr. Edsel's books.

Behind the Scenes: "Angels"

by Robert M. Edsel

Many people have helped us in the telling of this great story and each of its component parts. Our success is the sum total of those acts of generosity, expressions of good will, and shared determination to make this story known to all. Too often these essential "angels" are not seen by the public, yet they are no less deserving of praise. In each issue I intend on mentioning the names of some of our "angels." Each knows what they've done to help us. To all of them, mentioned or not, we say "thank you." The Monuments Men and their families are eternally appreciative.

This month we would like to thank:

Margaret Queen, Chet Inglis, Delores Barzun, Catherine Knowles, Elizabeth Dow, and Elliott Dlin.

For comments on the Monuments Men Newsletter, please contact Elizabeth Ivy: eivy@laurelpublishingllc.com

For Media Inquiries, please contact Evins Communications: RME@evins.com

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UPCOMING EVENTS

ROBERT M. EDSSEL BOOK SIGNINGS

Houston, TX	Barnes & Noble	June 11-12
Valley Forge, PA	Barnes & Noble	June 16
New York, NY	Lotus Club	June 18

THEATRICAL OPENING DATES

San Francisco	Embarcadero Center	May 18
Berkeley	Shattuck Cinemas	May 18
San Rafael	Rafael Film Center	May 18
Palo Alto	Aquarius Theater	Late May

FILM SCREENINGS

Museum of London	May 16
5:30 reception, 6 pm screening followed by panel with Lynn H. Nicholas	
Worcester Jewish Community Center Film Series	
Worcester, MA	May 20
Boston Museum of Fine Arts	May 31- June 15
Sid Jacobson JCC, Greenvale, NY	June 6
Miami Jewish Film Festival	June 7
Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art	
Hartford, CT	June 16
Oklahoma City Museum of Art	June 21-24
Martha's Vineyard	June 24- August 12
St. Louis	June 25