During and following WWII, a special multinational group of more than 350 men and women served behind enemy lines and joined frontline military units to ensure the preservation, protection, liberation and restitution of the world's greatest artistic and cultural treasures. This band of unsung heroes, formally referred to as the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives (MFAA) section, or commonly referred to as the Monuments Men, worked tirelessly to track down, identify and catalogue millions of priceless works of art and irreplaceable cultural artifacts, including masterpieces by Da Vinci, Michelangelo, Rembrandt and Vermeer, that had been stolen by Hitler and the Nazis. The story of the Monuments Men, including their heroics and exploits in rescuing and safeguarding...
many of the worlds greatest artworks for the benefit of mankind, has
never before been fully revealed until now, with the publication of
Rescuing Da Vinci, an exhaustively researched historical account written
by Robert M. Edsel. Mr. Edsel can best be described as a successful
athlete and business entrepreneur turned modern day Indiana Jones. Mr.
Edsel has dedicated the last five years of his life to painstaking and far-
reaching research to unravel the secrets of the Monuments Men and, in
so doing, to make the world aware of their unprecedented contributions,
both during and after WWII, and to ensure that these unsung heroes
receive appropriate recognition from the United States government, as
well as the broad public. The detailed documentation, inventories and
photographs developed and catalogued by the Monuments Men during
and following World War II, have made possible, and continue to make
possible, the restitution of stolen artworks of to rightful owners and their
descendants. Long after WWII, many Monuments Men went on to
come renowned directors and curators of preeminent international
cultural institutions, including the National Gallery of Art, the Metropolitan
Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Toledo Museum of Art,
and the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, among many others, as well as
professors at esteemed universities such as Harvard, Yale, Princeton,
New York University, Williams College and Columbia University. Others
became founders, presidents, and members of associations such as the
New York City Ballet, the American Museum Association, the American
Association of Museum Directors, the Archaeological Institute of America,
the Society of Architectural Historians, the American Society of
Landscape Architects, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the
National Endowment for the Arts, as well as respected architects,
archivists, artists and musicians. Mr. Edsels book is captivating in
several respects, from the graphic, garish reminders of the faces of the
great plunderers, to the singular beauty of the art they sought to steal.
And it is a high and overdue memorial to the Monuments Men, who did
the herculean job of tracking down and repatriating the great art.
-- William F. Buckley Jr.

Rescuing Da Vinci by Robert M. Edsel.
Subtitled: Hitler And The Nazis Stole Europes Great Art, America And Her

After borrowing this book from the Plymouth Public Library, I was initially
disappointed when I opened the book. It seemed that the book was all
text. The book has some 300 pages and I would estimate
that there are some 25 full pages of text, including the index and
bibliography in the back of the book. Having said all this, it is my opinion,
that all those pictures were required to tell the complete story.

Page after page, photo after photo, I would find a painting or sculpture that
I recalled from my art history classes, which was a long time ago. The
book would show the 1940s picture on one page, with a person, perhaps in
a period German uniform, collecting the item. And, then, on the facing page, often in full color, would be a present day view of the object. See, for example, pages 204 and 205, were Jan Vermeers The Artists Studio, 1665-1666 is displayed on page 204 in black and white and in full color on page 205. This mixture of historical fact and present day view is carried out throughout the book.

The book begins with an explicit condemnation of the Nazi conquest. It is shown that the Nazi Germans prepared rather extensive documents identifying the art works of various nations and earmarking those works for transportation to the Third Reich. This is an amazing example of the arrogance of the Teutonic thoroughness of Hitler, Göring and the rest of the Nazi leadership. Speaking of Göring, it would seem that at the height of the war, his country cabin, called Carinhall, probably had more and better art than most museums in the western world. Page 45 records that Göring had a collection of approximately 1700 paintings. Sadly, there are too many pages in the book showing or identifying works of art that had been destroyed or had been lost. Page 285 shows, for example, Raphaels Portrait Of A Young Man, 1516, which is still missing.

Still missing is the so-called Amber Room which was once located in the city of Königsberg in what was once Prussia. There are entire books, available on Amazon, dealing with the lost Amber Room. With the emphasis on the sins of the Third Reich, little notice is taken of the fact that the Soviets stole the entire city of Königsberg, which is now called Kaliningrad. In fact, Kaliningrad is a tiny piece of Russia, (the so-called Kaliningrad Oblast) stuck between Poland and Lithuania. In Kaliningrad, Russian is the official language and the postage stamps are Russian. Interesting.

And, of course, on a more mundane, but very telling level, there are the 5000+ bells that were stolen and the Dutch trolley cars being prepared for reparation to the Netherlands.

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Rescuing Da Vinci: Hitler and the Nazis Stole Europes Great Art - America and Her Allies Recovered It by Robert M. Edsel - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!