

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 760097
SL NARA Date 2/10/97

VIII - 1/1

~~TOP SECRET~~

201 Eisenbahn
x Me Sharkey

19 April 1945

SUBJECT: Gold bullion, currency and other property discovered by Third Army near Merkers

TO : Commanding General
European Theater of Operations

1. Attached hereto, marked Inclosure 1, is a summary inventory of currency and financial assets found by the Third Army near Merkers and now stored in the vaults of the Reichsbank, Frankfurt-am-Main. This report is a preliminary inventory made on the basis of information listed on Reichsbank tags attached to sealed bags, boxes and other parcels. It is interesting to note that from information available this is estimated to be about 4/5 of the total gold held by the Reichsbank.

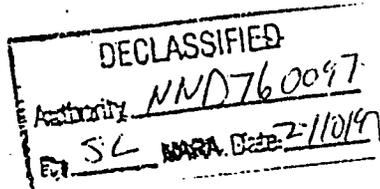
133/3

2. A complete and accurate inventory of the gold bars, coins and currency is now under way. This will probably take from three to six weeks to complete. We have found the Reichsbank assay certificates of the gold bars which will be helpful in their identification. In my opinion it would be of great assistance if we had two expert weighers of gold bars and another expert who could study the assay certificates and other records with a view to identification. It is proposed to send a request to AGWAR to obtain these experts from the US Treasury Department.

3. You will note that there are 18 sacks which contain gold or silver bars which we are informed belonged to the SS Troops. In addition there are 189 boxes, parcels, suitcases, and trunks which are also said to have been their property. A hasty examination of the contents of some of these boxes and parcels show them to contain some items which might be used as evidence in the trials of some war criminals. Several boxes and parcels contain gold and silver pieces (in some cases plated) of all categories, such as handbags, bracelets, rings, earrings, spectacle rims, cigarette cases, vanity cases, as well as tableware, candlesticks, and Passover cups. Several boxes and parcels contain currency, gold and silver coins of various national origin. Several boxes contain bags or boxes of stones of varying value obviously taken from pieces of jewelry and in most cases the valuable ones were not separated from those of less value. Several parcels contain gold dental crowns, bridges and plates.

19 APR

VIII-1/2



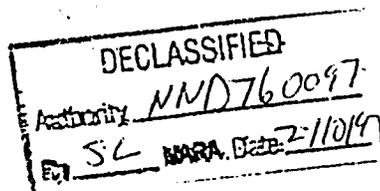
this is a small box containing thousands of gold dental crowns, bridges and plates. Also there is a small suitcase containing thousands of silver crowns, bridges and plates. The lower half of the box contains several hundred rough moulds of gold about the size of a cookie or 50-dollar piece if we had such. It is logical to assume that these gold pieces were melted gold crowns, etc. Another package contains a savings bankbook on a bank of Amsterdam with spectacles, false teeth and several other minor personal articles.

4. It is believed that this SS property contains evidence which might be useful in the prosecution of war criminals. To date we are unable to determine the persons to whom these parcels belong. However, if we find the records of the Reichsbank in Berlin, it may be possible to identify some persons or organizations with the numbers on the parcels. In view of the possibility of using this material as evidence against war criminals I secured this property in a separate room in the vault. It is believed that an expert criminal investigator should be the first to examine each of these parcels with the view of determining whether or not it contains articles which might be utilized as evidence. In conjunction with this investigation it is proposed to ask G-2 to send their most efficient investigator to inspect this material to determine its value as evidence. It might be desirable to inform Judge Rosenman of this evidence as it might support the US thesis of convicting the SS Troops as a whole at a single trial. This material and the story surrounding it would make excellent material to prove to the peoples of the world the extent to which the SS Troops carried out their fiendish crimes.

5. During the movement of this treasure from the mine to Frankfurt one British officer, Major F. W. A. Fairfax-Cholmley, has been present. While he is aware of the general picture, he has not been furnished a copy of the detailed contents listed on Inclosure 1. Instructions are requested as to whether or not Brigadier Babington-Smith, Chief of the Financial Branch, G-5 Division, SHAEP, should be furnished a copy of this inclosure. If it is provided, there is no doubt that he will furnish a copy immediately to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and also to the Foreign Office who have made informal inquiries to him for such information.

6. There were 1214 wooden cases of paintings and miscellaneous objects, 393 unpacked paintings, 2091 boxes of prints, drawings and engravings, and 140 rolls of oriental rugs and tapestries moved from the mine to the Reichsbank building in Frankfurt. This move was completed at 2330 hours, 17 April. The Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives Section of this Division are investigating this material to determine how and where it can best be stored. For the present it is in a secure place,

VIII-1/3



~~_____~~

properly guarded by the guards established for the gold bullion and currency. Temporarily it is protected from damage resulting from moisture and dust. It may be necessary to find at a later date another warehouse or storage room for this material.

7. There are 30 carloads of Reich patent office records, and we have been informed that this includes all their patent records up to about a year ago. Inasmuch as these patent records are of immense value to the industrialists of the world, we are moving them to Frankfurt and will store them in the Reichsbank building. No doubt once there is knowledge that these records are in our possession, there will be a demand from all sides that they be made available for inspection.

8. There is attached herewith as Inclosure 2 a draft letter to General Marshall containing information on the gold bullion and currency found in Merkers. ⁽¹⁵⁾

20 April 45
 To: G-5
 Gen McSherry
 amended and signed
 by C/S
 J.B.M/s/

FRANK J. McSHERRY
 Brigadier General, GSC
 Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff, G-5

Letter Signed
 20 April 45
 W.B. Smith /s/