



## Bust of Isabella D'Este at the Kimbell Art Museum



*The Bust of Isabella d'Este in the saltmine of Altaussee, Austria in May 1945.*

salt mine in Altaussee, Austria. In early May 1945, during the closing days of the war, the Monuments Men were in a race against time to locate the last great Nazi repository of stolen works of art. A key tip led them to the Steinberg mine. They arrived to discover that a Nazi plot to destroy the salt mine and its priceless contents, including more than 6,000 paintings, had only hours before been thwarted, a harrowing story recounted in *The Monuments Men: Allied Heroes, Nazi Thieves, and the Greatest Treasure Hunt in History*.

Hidden inside the mine were many of civilization's greatest artistic masterpieces including Michelangelo's *Bruges Madonna*, Jan van Eyck's *Ghent Altarpiece*, and two Vermeer paintings (*The Astronomer* and *The Artist's Studio*), to name just a few. Of the many photos taken inside the salt mine, we had not come across the photo above before. The photo shows the Kimbell's terra cotta bust of Renaissance art patron Isabelle d'Este being removed from the mine. We recognized the sculpture immediately and knew it had to be the Kimbell's version and not a copy because of the vertical firing-line cracks on the sculpture's front. We were aware that the Kimbell's provenance for the bust made no mention of being in Hitler's art hideout.

This summer, the Monuments Men Foundation and Kimbell Art Museum in Ft. Worth, Texas announced that a Renaissance portrait bust in the Kimbell collection had been stolen by the Nazis during World War II and was one of thousands of works of art found in the Altaussee Salt Mine in Austria.

This incredible discovery occurred in conjunction with an unrelated project. In the fall of 2009, while researching the missing albums containing photographs of the works of art destined for Adolf Hitler's Linz Museum, we came across a war-time photograph of the Steinberg

*From the Desk of Robert M. Edsel*



Our discovery that a fourth major work of art in the Dallas - Fort Worth area was part of Hitler and the Nazis' cultural theft of Europe highlights the extent of the looting operation. Fortunately, the end result was purely historic: the Kimbell's ownership is 100% validated. Visitors to that great museum will, however, have an extraordinary chance to see a magnificent work of art in a setting far different than the cold, dark salt mine in Austria where it was found by the Monuments Men. The Foundation's research on other such leads continues.

My summer was spent completing research on the Monuments Men operation in Italy. The story is filled with heroism and courage as these few men worked tirelessly to preserve Italy's priceless cultural treasures and rescue 700 masterpieces stolen by the Nazis from Florence's great museums. It is a story I look forward to sharing with the public in my next book about these great heroes and their work in a country in which I lived for almost five years.



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When the Monuments Men discovered the cache of artwork in the Altaussee salt mine, they had to remove the art as quickly and as carefully as they could from a narrow mine shaft. The artworks were then taken to the Munich Collecting Point, which was housed in the former Nazi party headquarters in Munich, as it was one of the largest buildings left standing after the war. Upon the arrival of the works of art in Munich, the Monuments Men created property index cards for each object. In researching those cards we discovered the “smoking gun”: Altaussee inventory card number 1246, which documented the arrival in Munich on June 28, 1945 of the terra cotta bust of Isabelle d’Este, which at the time was “attributed to Leonardo da Vinci.” The back of the inventory card revealed that the sculpture was returned to the Netherlands on June 3, 1946.

With these inventory cards and photo as evidence, Foundation President Robert Edsel met with Kimbell Director Eric Lee to explain the discovery, and turn it over to his team to piece together the history of the bust from the time of its acquisition by Hitler’s agents.

Nancy Edwards, the Kimbell’s Curator of European Art and Head of Academic Services, began researching the story and was able to determine that the sculpture was sold by art collector Dr. Otto Lanz to Hitler’s key art advisor, Hans Posse, who in 1939 was appointed by Hitler to build the collection that would form his Führer Museum. When the sculpture was returned to the Netherlands after the war, Dutch officials believed that the sale to Posse had been a legitimate - not forced - sale, and that the work would not be returned to the Lanz family. The bust was then sold at auction in March 1951 and was purchased by Anna Gertrud Lanz Kijzer, Otto's daughter, for 35 guilders (then about \$10) as a gift for her brother Dr. Adrian Berchtold Lanz who had always liked it. Because the work had belonged to Otto Lanz before the war and to his son after, the Kimbell had logically and fairly assumed that it had been in the family for the war's duration. Nancy’s work documents with clarity the path of the sculpture and reaffirms the Kimbell’s ownership today.

The bust is currently on display at the Kimbell as part of the permanent collection. Director Eric Lee says a photograph of "Isabella" being transported out of the salt mine may at some point be included on the label along with its wartime provenance.

The Monuments Men Foundation was proud to work with Dr. Lee, Dr. Edwards, and the Kimbell Art Museum to bring to light this important part of history. This not only honors the legacy of the men and women who served as Monuments officers but fulfills a key component of the Mission Statement of the Foundation. The Kimbell Art Museum has once again handled a Nazi-era provenance case in the most exemplary manner.



*Attributed to Gian Cristoforo Romano, Italian (c. 1465–1512)  
Portrait of a Woman, Probably Isabella d’Este, c. 1500  
Terracotta, formerly polychromed  
21-3/8 x 21-1/2 in. (54.3 x 54.6 cm)*



## Departed Hero: Colonel Seymour J. Pomrenze

by Robert M. Edsel



*Col. Pomrenze at the Offenbach Archival Depot after World War II. (NARA)*

Monuments Man Colonel Seymour Pomrenze has passed away at the age of 95. A decorated US Army veteran and loving father and husband, Seymour played a significant role in the restitution of looted items during WWII.

A former member of Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower’s staff, Pomrenze served as the first director of the Offenbach Archival Depot in 1946, the collecting point for stolen Judaica treasures. He was instrumental in the restitution of thousands of looted archives, including those of the Strashun Library in Vilna, Lithuania. The library was the premier Jewish library in Europe before World War II, and luckily survived the Nazi destruction of Vilna. The contents of the library, along with those of the YIVO building in Vilna, were looted for eventual placement in the anti-Semitic “Institute for the Study of the Jewish Question.” Pomrenze oversaw the return of tens of thousands of items from the Strashun Library to the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research headquarters in New York.

After his wartime service, Pomrenze worked as a consultant to the National Archives, and as a records manager and archivist for the U.S. Army from 1950 until 1976. He taught as an adjunct professor in records management at American University in Wash-

ington, D.C. until 1980. Colonel Pomrenze received degrees from the Illinois Institute of Technology, the University of Chicago, and the Spertus College of Jewish Studies.

Seymour Pomrenze served 34 years of active and reserve service with the Army of the United States. During my last visit to Seymour’s home, I had the opportunity to see the numerous military awards he had received for his service, and very deservedly I should add. They included a World War II Victory Medal, a Bronze Star medal for his service in Vietnam, the Legion of Merit, Asiatic-Pacific Medal with three bronze stars, as well as the Netherlands Government Silver Medal of Honor for his work as a Monuments Man with the MFAA.

In 2007, Seymour joined me and three other Monuments Men on stage at the White House as the Monuments Men Foundation received the National Humanities Medal from President Bush for, as the citation read, “sustained efforts to recognize the contributions of the scholar-soldiers of the Second World War. Our civilization is forever indebted to a handful of men and women who, in an era of total war, rescued and preserved a precious portion of the world’s heritage.” It was one of my proudest moments to be able to share the stage with Seymour and the other Monuments Men that day, and one that I will always treasure. Representing these great heroes is an honor and we will miss Seymour greatly.



*Col. Pomrenze and Robert Edsel in 2006.*





*Monuments Man Harry Ettlinger and Foundation President Robert Edsel at The National World War II Museum.*



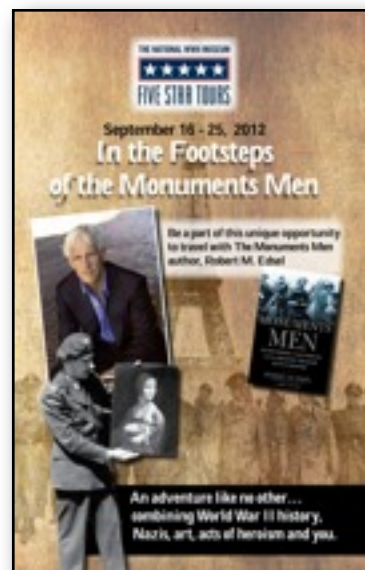
*Robert Edsel speaking at the Virginia Historical Society in May.*

## “In the Footsteps of the Monuments Men” European Tour

The European tour has been rescheduled by The National World War II Museum for September 2012. The museum’s Five Star Tours will join with Robert M. Edsel to offer a tour in search of a different kind of wartime hero: the Monuments Men. This exclusive inaugural trip will be led by Edsel himself. It departs September 16, 2012 from Paris, on a 10-day adventure of discovery – retracing the route the Monuments Men took across a battered, war-torn continent. Along the way are visits to some of the artistic treasures saved from ruin as well as sites where the Nazis stashed their stolen plunder, ending at the salt mines of Altaussee, Austria.

The tour includes travel from Paris to the tour's final destination in Munich, luxury accommodations and meals, as well as the opportunity to experience history in an intimate-sized group with Edsel.

Space is extremely limited. Get more information and a detailed itinerary or book your journey at [www.nationalww2museum.org/travel](http://www.nationalww2museum.org/travel) or 1-877-813-3329 ext. 257.



### ROBERT M. EDSSEL SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS AND BOOK SIGNINGS

Oct 22, 2011	International Convention of Exhibition and Fine Art Transporters (ICEFAT) - Members Only	Las Vegas, NV
Jan 23, 2012	Town Hall of Denver	Denver, CO
Apr 13, 2012	Authors in April Lecture at Louisiana State University	Shreveport, LA

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