

MILITARY GOVERNMENT  
OF GERMANY

MONUMENTS, FINE ARTS  
AND ARCHIEVES



MONTHLY REPORT OF MILITARY GOVERNOR  
U. S. ZONE 20 SEPTEMBER 1945

No. 2

CLASSIFICATION CHANGED TO:  
**CANCELLED**  
PROPERTY OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL  
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GRADING COMMITTEE

## SYNOPSIS

The immediate problem confronting Monuments Fine Arts and Archives is the inspection of over 667 known or reported repositories of cultural material. Those which prove to contain loot as well as those providing unsatisfactory protection from weather must have their contents evacuated to collecting points.

The policy of unilateral restitution of cultural materials held in the United States Zone of Germany has been instituted and the return of the Van Eyck Altarpiece to the Belgium Government was the first such restitution. Practical difficulties however, make progress slow.

Little progress has been made in the salvage of archives or the preservation of monuments.

GENERAL

The objectives of Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives are the protection, preservation and restitution where necessary of religious, artistic, historic and other cultural buildings or materials in Germany and the reactivation of German civilian administration concerned therewith.

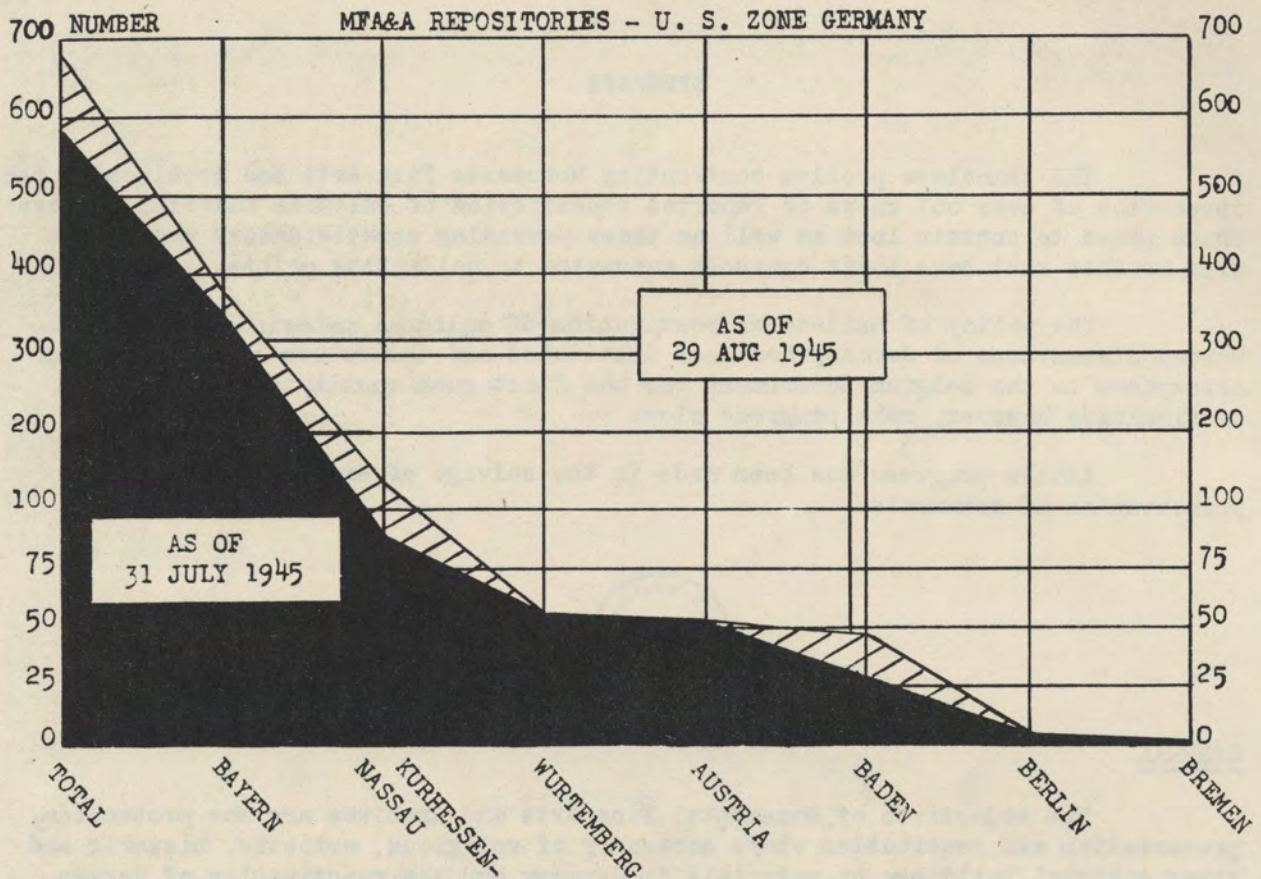
Due to lack of reports at this time no data is available on activities of similar branches in the other occupied zones of Germany.

MONUMENTS, FINE ARTS AND ARCHIVES IN THE U. S. ZONE.Monuments.

Progress in the protection and salvage of artistic and historic monuments has not been great. During the course of the month 54 monuments were inspected and emergency repairs on seven are now in progress. The difficulties experienced in obtaining building materials has delayed work in this field, inasmuch as civilian housing projects have first priority. This is particularly unfortunate in the case of the magnificent eighteenth century churches of southern Germany. Many of these have suffered such damage that the rigors of winter weather will do much to ruin the delicate stucco decorations of their interiors. German authorities are given every encouragement to carry out such repairs under supervision of experts.

Fine Arts.

The most urgent need in the United States Zone is the inspection of the 677 known or reported repositories. Field reports concerning these repositories have been ordered in order to establish a coordinated plan of evacuation. It is intended to evacuate only those repositories which are inadequate places of storage for cultural materials and those which are suspected of containing objects looted by the Germans from occupied countries. The total number of repositories already evacuated is twenty, twelve to the collecting point at Marburg and eight to Munich. The custodianship of a number of repositories has been turned over to the German civilian authorities but exact figures are not yet available.



The most spectacular discovery of hidden objects was made at Nuremburg when the Imperial Insignia of the Holy Roman Empire were discovered in a sealed room 80 feet underground. Twenty-one Germans were questioned by an Intelligence Officer before the hiding place was revealed.

Four collecting points are now in operation at Munich, Marburg, Frankfurt and Wiesbaden. All of these are used to house works of art, with the exception of Frankfurt Collecting Point which specializes in Jewish libraries that were looted by the Germans from countries in both eastern and western Europe. The newest of the collecting points, Wiesbaden, began operations on 20 August with the receipt of the first shipment of art objects from the Berlin Museum which had been temporarily housed in the Reichsbank at Frankfurt.

MFA&A COLLECTING POINTS

Number of Objects  
Received or Inventoried  
-August 1945-

Marburg-	- - - - -	1165
Munich -	- - - - -	2369
Wiesbaden-	- -	Not Reported
Frankfurt-	- -	Not Reported
		3534

An Arts Document Center has been established at the Munich Collecting Point and the records assembled here will be those dealing with suspected loot. Examples are documents covering Hitler's purchases for his proposed great museum at Linz and the operations of the notorious Einstatzstab Rosenberg which handled works of art taken from Jewish private collections.

Unilateral restitution of looted cultural materials held in the U. S. Zone of Germany will be carried out.

a. Looted cultural materials will be returned to the governments of pre-war ownership and not to private individuals. In consequence such materials will be returned as they are identified under United States supervision. This will not preclude submission of claims by the governments or, through such governments, by individuals claiming to be pre-war owners.

b. In general looted cultural materials will be returned to the accredited representatives of the governments of the countries of pre-war ownership at the point at which they are held in the United States Zone. The governments concerned will be responsible for packing and transport.

c. The United States Military Government will exercise all reasonable care in the protection and handling of looted cultural materials which fall under its control but disclaims any responsibility for deterioration suffered by such objects while under its control or while in the hands of the Germans. Furthermore, any payments made by the Germans to the governments or individuals of pre-war ownership may be credited against the reparations claims of the government concerned.

Restitution of these looted objects of art was begun when the famous alterpiece of the Adoration of the Lamb by the brothers, Van Eyck, was flown by special plane from Munich to Brussels. On 22 August 1945 it was delivered to representatives of the Belgium Government. This great work of art had been stolen by the Germans from France, where it had been placed by the Belgium Government for safe keeping. The Germans had intended it to be one of the chief masterpieces in the collection which was being assembled for Hitler and which was to have formed the Fuehrer Museum at Linz. Similar restitutions of important works will shortly be made to France and Poland.

A procedure by which unmistakable loot can be quickly returned to its country of origin has been worked out, but much remains to be done in discovering and identifying these stolen works of art. Interrogation of German Art dealers and other art personalities with Nazi connections continues and sheds much light on the business of art transactions in the Third Reich.

#### Archives.

Little further progress can be reported in the salvage of archives. A collecting point for books and archives is being organized at Freising.

