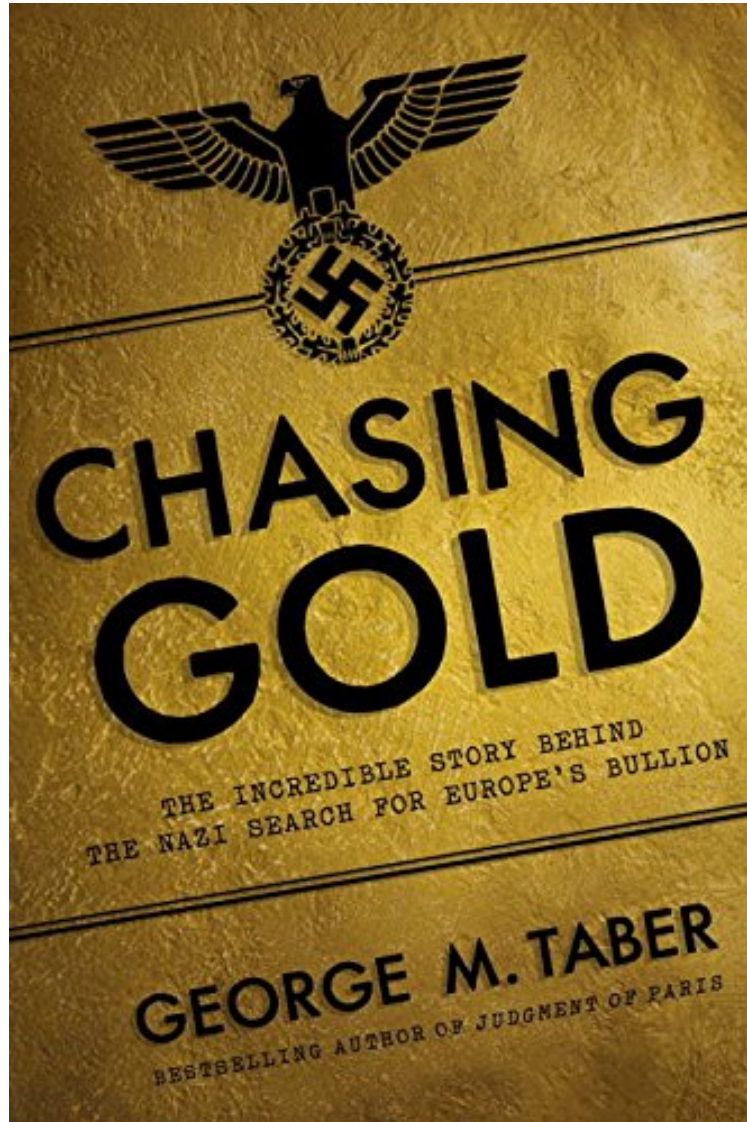


[Mobile book] Chasing Gold: The Incredible Story of How the Nazis Stole Europe's Bullion

Chasing Gold: The Incredible Story of How the Nazis Stole Europe's Bullion

George M. Taber

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George M. Taber : Chasing Gold: The Incredible Story of How the Nazis Stole Europe's Bullion before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Chasing Gold: The Incredible Story of How the Nazis Stole Europe's Bullion:

13 of 14 people found the following review helpful. A Tale Full of Ruthless Plunder, Desperate Maneuvers and Narrow Escapes By Charles P. Alexander Once upon a time, long before Bitcoin and PayPal and mortgage-backed

securities, the world's monetary system was based on gold. Real money, the only kind of money that everyone on Earth would accept, took the form of shiny coins or glittering bars. Instead of being merely entries in a database, it was heavy stuff, so heavy that large amounts of it had to be stored in vaults and transported on trucks, trains or ships. If you want to see what lengths men would go to what evil they would do, what heroic feats they would perform to get and keep gold, you can do no better than read the new book *Chasing Gold: The Incredible Story of How the Nazis Stole Europe's Bullion* (Pegasus Books, New York), by George M. Taber, a former Time magazine correspondent and editor. Taber's enjoyable previous books, written after his 21 years at Time, have all been about wine, including the bestseller *Judgment of Paris*, which recounted the historic 1976 blind taste test in which a group of California wines shockingly bested some of France's finest vintages. But ever since his early days in Times Bonn and Paris bureaus, Taber has been gathering material for a bigger project. *Chasing Gold* is his magnum opus, and a magnificent one it is. Besides covering the highlights of World War II in highly readable fashion for anyone not already an expert in European history, the book is a meticulously researched and tensely dramatic account of the movements of gold just before and during the conflict a story full of ruthless plunder, desperate maneuvers and narrow escapes. The title of Taber's book, with its emphasis on the Nazi thefts, doesn't do his tale justice. Sure, the Nazis financed their war machine by stealing at least \$598 million worth of gold from Europe's central banks, and that doesn't count all the coins, jewelry and gold teeth snatched from the millions of concentration camp victims. The Gestapo even raided a monastery in Yugoslavia and came away with nearly a ton of gold that had been hidden there. But, to me, even more fascinating are the extraordinary stories of how, as Germany threatened to occupy all of Europe, banks and governments managed to keep much more gold out of the Nazis' clutches. In Taber's riveting narrative, we ride along as a caravan of gold-laden Polish buses try to outrace the relentless advance of the German army, and we feel like we're on board the French cargo ship *Victor Schoelcher* (which had previously hauled bananas from Africa to Europe) as it eludes German mines, U-boats and the Luftwaffe in French coastal waters and somehow gets a load of gold to Casablanca. The routes gold took were often long and tortuous. Some of Poland's gold traveled, by various trains and ships, across Romania and the Black Sea to Istanbul, then overland to Beirut, across the Mediterranean to France, then to Casablanca, to Dakar, and eventually to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. We meet villains, like Bruno Melmer, an SS officer who delivered valuables stolen from death-camp prisoners to the German Central Bank in Berlin, and heroes, like Fredrik Haslund, a political appointee who directed the perilous transport of gold out of Norway while unknowingly walking around with a case of scarlet fever. Then there were characters who were simply dunderheads, like the customs agents in the port of Le Verdon, France, who, even as the Nazis were on the march, would not allow an emergency shipment of part of the French national gold reserve to leave the country until the proper paperwork was drawn up. Some players in these dramas faced impossible dilemmas. When the British cruiser *HMS Edinburgh*, carrying a load of gold away from the Soviet Union, was crippled by a German torpedo, Rear Admiral Stuart Bonham Carter, with a heavy heart, ordered another British ship to sink the *Edinburgh* rather than let the Nazis capture the vessel and its precious cargo. The sunken gold wasn't found until the 1980s, by treasure hunters. But as grim as much of *Chasing Gold* is, Taber kept a sharp eye out for bits of color and humor. As British sailors were helping unload gold from the former Polish cruise liner *Sobieski*, which had safely arrived in Halifax, a heavy ingot dropped through a hatchway to the fourth deck. A sailor looked down and shouted, "Is that gold okay?" A midshipman barked back, "What about our bloody heads?" The climax of *Chasing Gold*, which is previewed in the book's prologue, comes when, as the war neared its end in the spring of 1945, the Third Army of U.S. General George Patton discovered a vast trove of stolen gold and artworks that had been hidden by the Nazis in old salt mines and tunnels beneath the German village of Merkers. Arriving with General Dwight Eisenhower to inspect the discovery, General Omar Bradley told Patton that if they were still in the old freebooting days, when a soldier kept his loot, you'd be the richest man in the world. Patton didn't say a word, and just grinned. So, is Taber's book just a quaint historical tale with little relevance in today's Digital Age? Has gold lost its allure in troubled times? Hardly. During the first 12 years of the 21st Century, a period that encompassed the 9/11 attacks, two wars, a financial crisis and a global recession, the price of an ounce of gold surged from about \$300 to almost \$1900, before falling back now to about \$1200 as the world economy recovers. If we ever again come close to anything like the chaos of World War II, or if malevolent hackers ever take our precious Internet down for the count, governments and individuals may once more be frantically asking: "Where is our gold? How can we get it to safety?"

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Money on the Run By Tleeminnieme Rousing tales of how each country tried to get their national gold reserves out and away from the quickly advancing Nazi machine. Sometimes the gold escaped in unmarked trucks careening through aerial bombing raids or was smuggled on some of the last ships to leave Europe. Sometimes the money went from country to country, each time the thinking that the Nazis would never reach there, only to have to rush it out again. Lots of handy maps so you can "follow the money". Highly recommend. 4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Between 3 and 4 stars, but could simply not bring myself to round up to a full 4. By Kevin I liked the book. Taber did an incredible job in his research. There is very little opinion, almost everything contains a footnote reference to back it up. Very good job sticking to facts... With one obvious exception: When describing relationship between Italy and Albania, "Italy is only forty miles east across the Adriatic Sea" (Pg. 198, last sentence of the 2nd paragraph). Italy lies to the

west of the Adriatic Sea (Albania to the east). This, ironically enough, contains a footnote. I wasn't nitpicking, nor did I spend time fact checking everything in the book. This simply jumped out at me b/c it's easy to identify the error, especially when every chapter opens up w/ a diagram/map (a feature which I really, really appreciated, especially in the middle part of the book). The book can be summed up as follows:- 1st 1/4 sets up the economic stage, introduces the major players, and describes gold's important role in Germany's war machine- Middle 1/2 is detailed account of how countries being invaded by Nazis hid or shipped their gold and currency across the Atlantic- Last 1/4 is the detailed account of how the Nazis hid or transported their gold and currency, as allied forces recovered territory. When I say "detailed account," I MEAN "detailed account." Taber lists names of ships, captains, bank employees, EVERYONE imaginable. He provides dates, communication transcripts, the number of people involved in just about every step of transporting the gold (from bank to trucks, from trucks to trains, from trains to ports, from ports to ships, from ships to US or Canada ports, from ports to trains, from trains to banks, to other banks, etc). This is where I deduct stars. I really enjoyed the beginning and the end, but did have to force myself not to simply skim through most of it. The book presented amazing information, but the meat of it (the middle half) was a repetitive loop of "the central bank vault held X tons of gold, it was loaded on X number of trucks, by X number of workers, and took X number of hours. It took X amount of days to get to port/train station. It took X amount of hours to unload from trucks and load on boats/ships. No one knew what the boxes contained until one crate fell, broke, and gold coins/bars spilled on the floor. It took X amount of days to reach the US/Canada. Captain of the sent a coded communication saying that they had arrived." What I feel bad about is that I do not have any suggestions as to how the information in this cat and mouse tale could have been delivered without it being so dry - It's a lot of information, all important, and most of it necessary. I just feel that the way it was presented in this book didn't quite hit the mark.

In the highly anticipated new book from the bestselling author of *Judgement of Paris*, George M. Taber reveals the integral role gold played in World War II, from its influence on the Nazi war machine to the ultimate triumph by the Allies and the fall of Berlin. A USA Today "New and Notable" Book. For the entire history of human civilization, gold has enraptured people around the globe. The Nazis was no less enthralled by it, and felt that gold was the solution to funding Hitler's war machine. Gold was also on the mind of FDR across the Atlantic, as he worked with Europe's other leaders to bring the United States and the rest of the world out of a severe depression. FDR was hardly the first head of state to turn to gold in difficult times. Throughout history, it has been the refuge of both nations and people in trouble, working at times when nothing else does. Desperate people can buy a loaf of bread or bribe a border guard. Gold can get desperate nations oil to keep tanks running or munitions to fight a war. If the price is right, there is always someone somewhere willing to buy or sell gold. And it was to become the Nazi's most important medium of exchange during the war. *Chasing Gold* is the story of how the Nazis attempted to grab Europe's gold to finance history's bloodiest war. It is filled with high drama and close escapes, laying bare the palate of human emotions. Walking through the tale are giants of world history, as well as ordinary people called upon to undertake heroic action in an extraordinary time. 8 pages BW photographs

A meticulously researched and tensely dramatic account of the movements of gold just before and during the conflict. A story full of ruthless plunder, desperate maneuvers and narrow escapes. - The Huffington Post. Rarely can a story about central bankers, bullion holdings and maritime shipping be described as thrilling. Nazis, of course, tend to liven things up. But outrunning the Nazis was only the first obstacle. *Chasing Gold* glitters with an engaging narrative. - Shelf Awareness. An absorbing examination of an important and rarely covered episode in WWII. - Booklist. A crisp, well-documented history. A chilling tale vividly told. - Kirkus. If a crazed ideology motivated the Nazis in their drive for European hegemony, gold was the instrument that Hitler needed to make his dreams a reality. Independent scholar Taber (In Search of Bacchus) provides a detailed account of the German economists, some committed Nazis, and others merely technocrats who helped Hitler obtain the reserves he needed. Relates the account of World War II from the perspective of gold, something that will attract a variety of readers. - Library Journal. About the Author. George M. Taber is the author of the bestselling *Judgment of Paris*, which recounts the story of the famous 1976 event when unknown California wines defeated top French ones. Taber's second book, *To Cork or Not to Cork*, won the Jane Grigson Award and was a finalist for the James Beard Award. Before turning to writing books, Taber was a reporter and editor with *TIME* magazine for twenty-one years, based in Bonn, Paris, Houston, and New York.