



Washington, DC (January 22, 2010)

Today at a State Department press conference, Ambassador Klaus Scharioth, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the United States; Dr. Heribert Rech, Minister of the Interior for the state of Baden-Wuerttemberg; Ambassador J. Christian Kennedy, the Department's Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues; Ambassador Stuart E. Eizenstat and Robert M. Edsel, President of the Monuments Men Foundation for the Preservation of Art and author of *The Monuments Men*, announced the discovery of a leather bound album containing photographs of works of art Nazi Leader Adolf Hitler intended for the planned Gemäldegalerie Linz, more commonly referred to as the "Führermuseum." This album, which has been in private hands since the end of World War II, will be given to the Federal Republic of Germany following a three month exhibition at The National WWII Museum in New Orleans. It is representative of the millions of cultural items, missing since the end of the war, which the Monuments Men Foundation hopes to help recover in the coming years.

The Führermuseum was an unrealized museum complex planned by Adolf Hitler for his hometown, the Austrian city of Linz, to display the collection of art plundered or purchased by the Nazis throughout Europe during World War II. When Hitler made his final selection of the works of art he wanted to include in the Führermuseum, 31 albums known as "Gemäldegalerie Linz" albums, which contained exquisite photographs of these selected items, were created for Hitler. The albums represented his 'virtual museum' and were among his most treasured possessions. At war's end 19 of these albums were found at Hitler's home in Berchtesgaden by the Monuments Men as they began the process of deciphering Hitler and the Nazi's art looting operation; today they are located at the Deutsches Historisches Museum in Berlin, where 16 are on display. Until now, the remaining 12 albums were presumed destroyed.

At the end of World War II, U.S. soldiers entered Adolf Hitler's home in the Bavarian Alps, and many of them, including Private John Pistone, picked up trinkets as a souvenir, proof that he had been inside. Pistone took an album filled with photographs of paintings, and for sixty-four years the album has sat on a bookshelf in his home in Ohio; its significance unknown, until now. When a friend noticed the album, he did some internet research and learned about the Monuments Men Foundation for the Preservation of Art, a not-for-profit organization that received the 2007 National Humanities Medal, and has been involved in the restitution of other valuable WWII documents. Upon hearing about the album from the friend, Mr. Edsel immediately traveled to Ohio and confirmed that Mr. Pistone's album, Gemäldegalerie Album XIII, is part of the series compiled for Hitler featuring art he personally selected for his Führermuseum.

Gemäldegalerie Linz Album XIII is a highly important discovery because it contains works of art by 19th century German masters, which were to be the core of the Linz collection. Hitler loved works of art by Makart, Menzel, Spitzweg, and Schwind because as a fellow artist he personally identified with them. They were men who were underestimated in the beginning of their careers, then found success and established careers in Germany. For example, Von Schwind was a member of the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts, built a career in Munich, and then later returned to Austria amidst much praise. This was exactly what Hitler had wanted to do as well.