

HISTORICAL SECTION

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AG(SHAEP/G-5/751)

26 May 1944

SUBJECT: Preservation of Historical Monuments.

TO : G.O.C. in Chief, 21 Army Group,
Commanding General, 1st U.S. Army Group
Allied Naval Commander, Expeditionary Force,
Air C-in-C, Allied Expeditionary Force.

1. Shortly we will be fighting our way across the Continent of Europe in battles designed to preserve our civilization. Inevitably, in the path of our advance will be found historical monuments and cultural centers which symbolize to the world all that we are fighting to preserve.

2. It is the responsibility of every commander to protect and respect these symbols whenever possible.

3. In some circumstances the success of the military operation may be prejudiced in our reluctance to destroy these revered objects. Then, as at Cassino, where the enemy relied on our emotional attachments to shield his defence, the lives of our men are paramount. So, where military necessity dictates, commanders may order the required action even though it involves destruction of some honored site.

4. But there are many circumstances in which damage and destruction are not necessary and cannot be justified. In such cases, through the exercise of restraint and discipline, commanders will preserve centers and objects of historical and cultural significance. Civil Affairs Staffs at higher echelons will advise commanders of the locations of historical monuments of this type, both in advance of the front lines and in occupied areas. This information, together with the necessary instructions, will be passed down through command channels to all echelons.

(Signed)

DWIGHT D EISENHOWER
General, U.S. Army.

Copies to:

The Under Secretary of State, The War Office,
Commanding General, European Theater of
Operations, U.S. Army (copies for FECC),
The Under Secretary of State, The Air Ministry
The Secretary, The Admiralty.

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