



do. What is required in this case is an official list of protected monuments. It cannot include every building that lays claim to beauty or interest; so general a rule would tie the soldier's hands and jeopardize military operations. When everything is at stake we must be content to save the best. So for every region of Italy there is a little book which lists the monuments of paramount importance in that region; the same is true of France and Belgium, Holland and Greece, of Germany, Burma, and Malaya; in fact, of every theatre of war. This book, which is issued to all officers of the fighting forces down to battalion commanders, is the monuments officer's charter. For the safeguarding of the listed monuments he has the authority of the general order and instructions which serve as the book's preface. "I therefore direct," writes Field Marshal Alexander, "that every officer brings continually to the notice of those serving under him our responsibility and obligation to preserve and protect these objects to the greatest extent that is possible."

Against the first of the dangers to which a building is exposed there may be nothing that one can do. If the enemy occupy and defend a building, and it has to be captured, its destruction may be necessary to its capture; if they use it for military purposes—and the Germans have no hesitation in using a

church tower as an observation post—then, too, it must become a target for our guns. "Military necessity," writes Field Marshal Alexander, "remains in all cases the overriding consideration. However," he goes on, "it is the personal desire of the Supreme Allied Commander that, subject to the limitations imposed by military necessity . . . historical and cultural monuments should be spared from bombardment or attack by our land, sea and air forces."

I will give you one or two illustrations of what this goodwill can do. In Normandy, Caen had to be laid waste before our troops could fight their way in; but the two great minsters founded by William the Conqueror which were the chief glory of Caen are still there, standing miraculously among the ruins, one of them scarcely damaged and the other absolutely untouched. In Italy, Ravenna was a key-point in the German line of defence, and when the news came of the fighting there, instinctively one thought of the Ravenna churches with their priceless mosaics, the most glorious relic in all Italy of early Christian art; but in that sorely battered town all but one of the churches are intact, and not one of the mosaics has suffered any hurt. Even in German Aachen, bombed and shelled into a heap of rubble, Charlemagne's great cathedral survives relatively unharmed. By design, not by accident: the cathedral is one of the buildings listed in the army book for this area.

Again, as the Allies fought their way forward towards Arceno, in the middle of the battle a battery commander was hailed by an elderly Italian civilian who told him that in a villa hard by, actually in the firing-line, there were stored pictures from the galleries of Siena and Grosseto. At once the officer detailed men to guard the treasure-house, and when at night a party of Germans attacked it with a view to stealing or burning the treasures there, the guards drove them off and saved some of the greatest paintings in the world.

In this first phase, while monuments are still in enemy hands or in the battle-line, the monument and fine arts officer's main function is to advise. His more