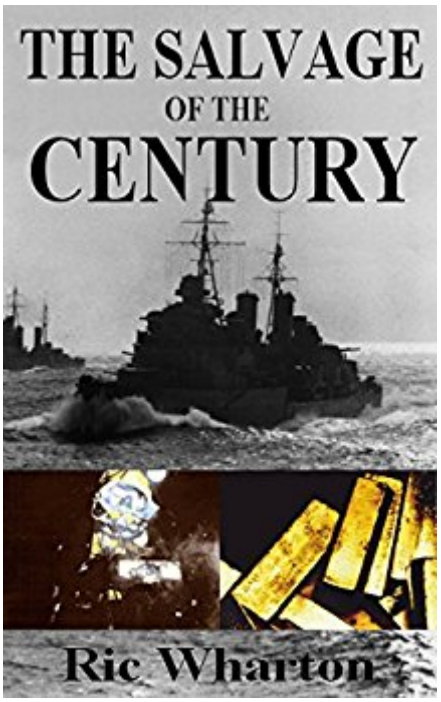
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The Salvage Of The Century



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Synopsis

This is the true story of one of the most ambitious and successful marine salvage operations ever undertaken.The story begins in 1942, in the darkest days of the second world war. Hitler had invaded Russia and was rampaging towards Moscow with Stalin fighting for survival. America had not yet entered the war and Britain stood alone fighting for her own survival.Winston Churchill recognized immediately that Operation Barbarossa, the German surprise attack on Russia, would give him the breathing space he needed to get America into the war and to prepare for the invasion of occupied Europe.Russia was neither equipped nor prepared for the German invasion and came very close to capitulation. Stalin demanded help from Britain to supply urgently needed war materials. The only possible route to ship supplies to Russia was around the north of Norway to Mumansk in the Barents sea and so the infamous Arctic Convoys were started.America, while not yet in the war, supplied the war materials, by convoy on British Merchant ship to the west coast of Scotland. The convoys were then reformed into the Arctic convoys to Mumansk generally escorted by a heavy Cruiser and numerous smaller destroyers and escort vessels.The convoys operated from 1941 to 1945 during which time they shipped more that 12,000 tanks, 20,000 aircraft, 350,000 tons of explosives, 400,000 motor vehicle, 135,000 rifles and vast quantities of fuel and other supplies.During those convoys just over one hundred warships and merchantmen were lost, along with thousands of lives.One of the most tragic and heroic losses was the heavy cruiser HMS Edinburgh in April 1942.Churchill simply did not trust Stalin and insisted that all the shipments be paid for at the time in gold. Stalin drained RussiaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s gold reserves and transported the bullion from Moscow to Murmansk.The gold bullion payments were always shipped on the lead escort vessel of the returning convoy. In April 1942, this was HMS Edinburgh.Zigzagging ahead of the returning convoy at 33 knots, just below the ice cap, she was struck by two torpedoes and mortally damaged. The crew heroically kept the ship afloat and were heading slowly back to Murmansk when they were attacked by three German destroyers. With all the gun directors out of action, they succeeded in hand laying the guns and sinking one of the German destroyer, the Hermann Shoemamn. The Germans then broke off the engagement, but not before one of their torpedoes hit the HMS Edinburgh again.The survivors abandoned ship and HMS Edinburgh sank in over 800 feet of water in the Barents Sea, taking 5 Ã Â tons of StalinÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Gold to the bottom with her.This is the true story of how Ric WhartonÃ¢â ¬â„¢s company, Wharton Williams Ltd. (2W) found the wreck and, using newly developed oilfield saturation diving technology, recovered all the bullion without any diving accidents. The gold was worth Ã Â£50 million at the time, Ã Â£200 million at todayÃ¢â ¬â„¢s prices.It is a fascinating story of detailed research,

skullduggery and dishonesty and gold fever of governments. The salvage remains a world record for the value of gold bullion recovered and the water depth of the recovery operation. Ric Wharton has had a long career in the diving and salvage industry and this book gives a fascinating insight into the exciting world of diving salvage.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Right from the start The Salvage of the Century grips you as a must read. The coverage of what is still today a breath-taking dare devil salvage is truely superb. The mix between pushing the boundaries of human capability, and the romance of discovering and recovering a huge amount of gold makes the book film material. Every diver’s dream is to discover a hidden treasure, in The Salvage of the Century that is exactly what the team did. Unlike most pleasure divers who flock to the safe warm waters in search of their own find of a lifetime, these guys worked in sub zero temperature in some of the most unforgiving waters known to man. The expedition was straight out of a James Bond book, Ãƒâ Ã Â£50,000,000 of gold bullion on an unarmed British vessel in Russian waters, I quite expected the authour to be Ian Fleming. Except like any good book that is entirely based on reality there is a twist!In summary this a superb account of risk,expoloration and

courage under the high seas, told passionately by Ric Wharton.

I wrote this book to record this extraordinary and record breaking event, in detail and as it actually happened. The book reveals the great courage and suffering of the HMS "Edinburgh" crew when she was sunk in 1942 in the Barents Sea after and epic engagement against overwhelming odds. The book also details the bravery of my pioneering diving crew, who entered the wreck and recovered the gold bullion working under the most hazardous conditions. The book has some 100 photos and illustrations that really bring the story to life. Even though I wrote the book, I am still fascinated every time I read it. I have been a diver and wreck hunter all my life and still cannot believe that this actually happened to me.

Deservedly five stars. The story is extraordinary, so is the author and his crew. His account of the dishonest, vulgar and deeply disappointing behaviour of the British government alone makes this book worth reading. I recommend pages 111-112, 116-117, 135 and 195. Quote: 'Their behaviour in this project is symptomatic of how they have taken the "Great" out of "Great Britain". Bravo, Ric, for your civil courage !

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Diver Magazine has just announced "The Salvage of the Century" has been selected as the Publication of the Year by the readers of their magazine.

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