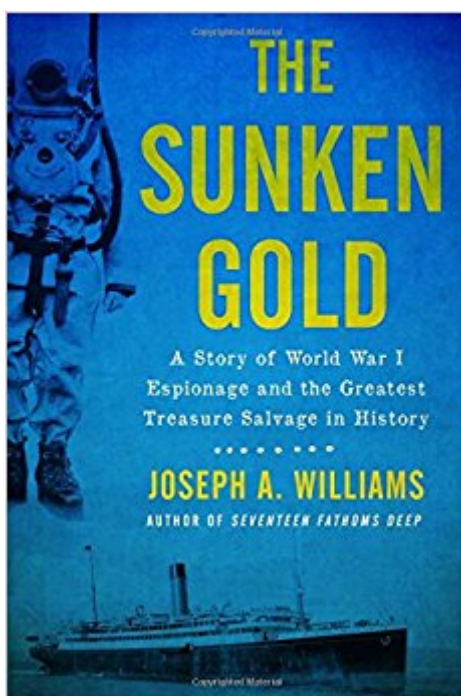


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# The Sunken Gold: A Story Of World War I Espionage And The Greatest Treasure Salvage In History



## Synopsis

On January 25, 1917, HMS Laurentic struck two German mines off the coast of Ireland and sank. The ship was carrying 44 tons of gold bullion to the still-neutral United States via Canada in order to finance the war effort for Britain and its allies. Britain desperately needed that sunken treasure, but any salvage had to be secret since the British government dared not alert the Germans to the presence of the gold. A Lieutenant Commander Guybon Damant was the most qualified officer to head the risky mission. Wild gales battered the wreck into the shape of an accordion, turning the operation into a multiyear struggle of man versus nature. As the war raged on, Damant was called off the salvage to lead a team of covert divers to investigate and search through the contents of recently sunk U-boats for ciphers, minefield schematics, and other secrets. The information they obtained, once in the hands of British intelligence, proved critical toward Allied efforts to defeat the U-boats and win the war. But Damant had become obsessed with completing his long-deferred mission. His team struggled for five more years as it became apparent that the work could only be accomplished by muscle, grit, and persistence. Using newly discovered sources, author Joseph A. Williams provides the first full-length account of the quest for the Laurentic's gold. More than an incredible story about undersea diving adventure, *The Sunken Gold* is a story of human persistence, bravery, and patriotism.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Joseph A. Williams makes history come alive in his latest book, as though the readers are

standing on the slanting decks of the sinking Laurentic. His thorough investigation into the aftermath that leads to the recovery of gold deals with all the behind-the-scenes politics and advances in technology at that point in history. This book is a valuable resource on many fronts.

•Michael Poirier, coauthor of *Into the Danger Zone: Sea Crossings of the First World War* “Joseph A. Williams has uncovered one of the greatest stories of World War I, a tale of U-boats, lost treasure, and the tenacious diver determined to recover it at all costs. Simply put, this book is a real gem.”

•James M. Scott, 2016 Pulitzer Prize finalist for *Target Tokyo: Jimmy Doolittle and the Raid That Avenged Pearl Harbor* “A wild and woolly tale of pressurized goats, black arts, and maritime gold, all beautifully told. Williams has a real gift for fleshing out the human story from arcane historical facts. I was taken by the whole thing, and devoured the whole of it in two thrill-filled nights.”

•James Nestor, author of *Deep: Freediving, Renegade Science, and What the Ocean Tells Us About Ourselves* “A fascinating, meticulously researched, historical adventure of gold salvaged under impending doom of War and Wind.”

•Bernie Chowdhury, author of *The Last Dive* “A well-told tale of naval exploits in which gold is the MacGuffin.”

•Kirkus Reviews

Joseph A. Williams is the deputy director of the Greenwich (CT) Library and the author of *Seventeen Fathoms Deep: The Saga of the Submarine S-4 Disaster and Four Years Before the Mast: A History of New York’s Maritime College.*

Having had the privilege of reading the advance copy I can only say that this is a thrilling story of perseverance on many levels and courage beyond that would make one quiver at the thought of doing it. And a rare glimpse into British determination at gathering grim war intelligence from the most unlikely of places. Also story of the ultimate treasure salvage beyond the wildest of dreams and it is still going on today! One of the best reads I have had all year.

The loss of the torpedoed *Laurentic* in 1917 is one of the great forgotten stories of the First World War. Had the British gold she carried not been salvaged from deep water off of Ireland, the war itself might have had a very different ending. In the course of recovery, Commander G.C.C. Damant and the Oxford professor, J.S. Haldane, laid the foundation of modern diving. It is astonishing that this story has taken a century to be told, and Joseph Williams tells it extremely well.

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