

Russia may have war gold

By DESMOND WETTERN,
Naval Correspondent

MORE than £50 million of gold bullion lost with a British warship in the last war may now be in Russian hands.

Despite the wreck of the 12,000 ton cruiser *Edinburgh* being an official war grave which should not be disturbed it is now considered highly possible by salvage experts that the Russians have already raised the gold.

It was loaded in a Russian port and was to help pay for Western arms supplies. The entire consignment, of more than five tons, went down in 1942 when the *Edinburgh* was torpedoed in the Barents Sea north of Norway. It was then reckoned to be worth £1½m.

In 1953 the Anglo-Dutch salvage company Risdon Beazley Marine made a search for the wreck but reckoned the sea and weather conditions in the area were too bad and the depth at which the *Edinburgh* was believed to be lying, 800-900 feet, too great.

But shortly after their search a team of Russian experts went to Britain to examine equipment and techniques and in 1956 the Russians bought a deep diving observation chamber.

Under the insurance arrangements for the gold, one third would now belong to Britain and the rest to Russia if it is salvaged.