



May 8, 1945: “It’s Over Over Here”

As we mark the 65th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe, we have the opportunity afforded us by the passage of time to consider how different our world would be had it not been the policy of the western Allies to protect artistic and cultural treasures “so far as war allows.” The instruments of this policy were the men and women of the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives section, or “Monuments Men” as they came to be known.

There were no more than 80 Monuments Men in all of Europe by war’s end, charged with the responsibility to protect each nation’s patrimony. These “scholar-soldiers” - museum directors, curators, art educators, artists, architects and librarians - changed our world by preserving it. Imagine: most every museum in Europe emptied of its contents, closed for almost six years. It was the greatest upheaval of cultural treasures in history! Millions of library books, paintings, church bells, religious relics, and other artistic treasures had been hidden in thousands of salt mines, caves, and castles. As the war in Europe ended and millions of soldiers began their return home, the work of the Monuments Men was just beginning. It would last six years, almost twice as long as the United States’ participation in the war itself, as the gathering and sorting of millions of objects began in earnest. In a break with thousands of years of history, the policy of the western Allies was clear: “To the victors do NOT belong the spoils of war.” By the time the last Monuments Man returned home in 1951, more than five million cultural objects had been returned to the countries from which they were stolen by Hitler and the Nazis. No single country benefitted more than Germany itself. It was, in essence, a “Marshall Plan” for culture, two years before the Marshall Plan was conceived.

Sixty million lives lost; destruction on a scale unknown to man before or since; irreplaceable parts of the civilization of our planet lost forever. But right and goodness prevailed; much of civilization did survive, all at an enormous cost. We honor the sacrifices of others by learning from these experiences and not repeating their mistakes. We honor them by remembering.



From the Desk of Robert M. Edsel



In April *The Monuments Men* was published in French, this month it will be published in Norwegian and Dutch, just three of the seventeen languages in which the book will be translated, making it available to millions of readers in their native language.

The most conspicuous language missing from this list is, ironically, German. More so than any other nation, Germany benefitted from the role of the Monuments Men. I hope in the months ahead a German publisher will publish this heroic story and make it available to the citizens of Germany.



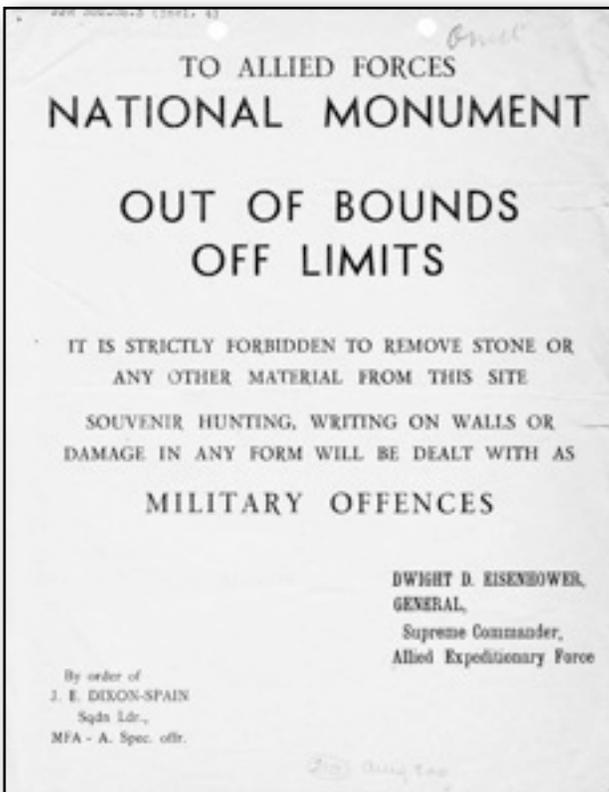
Ike: “We are Bound to Respect those Monuments so far as War Allows”

With this historic order General Eisenhower established, clearly and succinctly, the policy of the western Allies concerning the protection of cultural treasures during combat. Ike’s orders were issued in Italy on December 29, 1943; similar orders were distributed prior to the D-Day landings at Normandy.

Having borne the brunt of Nazi propaganda which characterized American and British troops as barbarians, bent on stealing and destroying the patrimony of Italy, General Eisenhower and his advisors were keenly aware of the importance of proving those assertions false. No longer would Allied commanders be free to use “battlefield necessities” as a catch-all explanation for damage to important cultural monuments. Genuine analysis by commanders in the field as well as those coordinating aerial bombing missions was required before jeopardizing any of Italy’s thousands of churches, monasteries, and other revered monuments.



Gen. Bradley, Lt. Gen. Patton, and Gen. Eisenhower inspect German museum treasures found at Merkers mine on April 12, 1945.



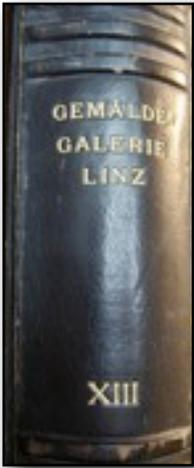
An “Out of Bounds” poster, signed by Eisenhower, that Monuments Officers used to protect cultural monuments. (Both photos courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD)

These initial orders were put to the test at the battle of Monte Cassino. Despite an effort to comply with Ike’s order and avoid damaging the Abbey at Monte Cassino, protracted combat with horrifying loss of life caused a firestorm of controversy over the painful debate of whether a human life was worth saving a work of art. After months of stalemate, the Abbey was destroyed in a punishing bombing run. Ironically, this neither ended the stalemate nor resolved the debate. But the onslaught of Nazi propaganda that followed made it clear for western Allied leaders and the Monuments Men just how high the stakes were to protect monuments and other works of art from damage.

Ike’s orders must ultimately be judged not only a success, but an inflection point in how cultural property should be protected during armed conflict. Mistakes were made: of that there can be no question. But those mistakes pale in comparison to what was saved or not damaged. For that we owe an enormous debt of gratitude to General Eisenhower and other western Allied leaders, and to the Monuments Men.



Final Journey Home: Gemäldegalerie Linz Album XIII



Album XIII; one of the photographs of a painting in Album XIII, Siesta at the Court of the Medicis, was only recently restituted to its rightful owners by Germany in 2009.

On May 18, Album XIII will arrive in Berlin where it will be formally presented to the Deutsches Historisches Museum by Monuments Men Foundation president Robert M. Edsel. This will complete the journey home which began with its discovery in late 2009 in the possession of a U.S. Army veteran living in Ohio.

On January 22, the Linz Album was symbolically presented to Germany in a ceremony at the U.S. State Department. Following the ceremony, the album, along with ERR Album 6, was displayed at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans, Louisiana for 90 days, where it was seen by an estimated 90,000 people. Both albums then traveled to the Eisenhower Presidential Library in Abilene, Kansas for a brief exhibition in conjunction with the 65th anniversary of VE Day. By placing both albums on public display, the Monuments Men Foundation hopes that veterans and their families who might unknowingly possess similar cultural artifacts might contact the Foundation and express a desire to return them to their rightful owners.

This album, one of 31 such albums created for Adolf Hitler, of which only 19 were originally thought to have survived the war, is extremely important be-

cause it contains photographs of the works of art personally selected by Hitler for the museum he intended on building in his hometown of Linz, Austria, commonly referred to as the Führermuseum. Album XIII is particularly significant because it contains works by German and Austrian 19th century painters, such as Markart and Menzel, so beloved by Hitler. This album, like the still missing 11 albums, was thought to have been destroyed during the war. Until now, scholars believed that these missing albums were at the *Wolfsschanze* or Wolf's Lair,

Hitler's headquarters on the eastern front, where they were either destroyed at war's end, or taken by Red Army troops. That this album was found at Berchtesgaden was quite a revelation and makes it increasingly likely others will eventually be located.

The Monuments Men Foundation wishes to express its gratitude to noted art historian Dr. Birgit Schwarz for her assistance with research on Gemäldegalerie Linz Album XIII.



Ceremony at U.S. State Department on January 22, 2010. Deputy Secretary of State for Resources Jacob Lew, Baden-Wuerttemberg Minister of the Interior Heribert Rech, Monuments Men Foundation President Robert Edsel, German Ambassador to the United States Dr. Klaus Scharioth, and U.S. Army veteran, John Pistone. (photo courtesy of Life)



Honoring The Heroes of Civilization



June 5, 2007

Senator Hillary Clinton took time out of her busy schedule to meet with Robert Edsel and Monuments Men Bernie Taper, Harry Ettlinger, and Horace Apgar at her office in Washington, D.C. Senator Clinton was delighted to receive a copy of *Rescuing Da Vinci* on behalf of her husband, former President Bill Clinton.



June 6, 2007

A ceremony at the Senate marked the passage of Congressional Resolutions in both houses honoring the Monuments Men and their work. Pictured from left to right: Monuments Men Bernie Taper, James Reeds, Harry Ettlinger, and Horace Apgar, Representatives Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ) and Kay Granger (R-TX), Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX), and Robert Edsel.



November 1, 2007

Chief Archivist of the United States, Professor Allen Weinstein, and Robert Edsel stand before one of the two "Hitler Albums" that was donated to the National Archives by the Monuments Men Foundation for the Preservation of Art.



November 15, 2007

The Monuments Men Foundation for the Preservation of Art received the 2007 National Humanities Medal. President George W. Bush greeted Robert Edsel and Monuments Men James Reeds, Seymour Pomrenze, Harry Ettlinger, and Horace Apgar in the East Room of the White House.

(Eric Draper, White House.)



Heroes Unknown to Germany



In the Conservatory, painted by Edouard Manet, was found in the mine at Merkers in April, 1945. The Monuments Men later returned it to the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum in Berlin. Today it is prominently displayed at the Alte Nationalgalerie Berlin. (National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD)

In the course of my many interviews with the Monuments Men and women who served during combat operations and in the post war period, I heard a common observation over and again: "I'm most proud of my role, and that of those who served in the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives section, in getting the cultural life in Germany jump started after the war." Monuments Man Ken Lindsay told me how proud and protective he was of the *Bust of Nefertiti* which sat on the corner of his desk at the Wiesbaden Collecting Point for months after having been discovered in a Merkers, Germany salt mine. This was just one of tens of thousands of treasures from the Berlin museums hastily evacuated in the closing months of the war and subsequently discovered by the Monuments Men.

Monuments Man Bernie Taper told me the sense of pride he experienced when seeing a play by Shakespeare for the first time in his life - in German. Monuments Men Craig Hugh Smyth and Walter Farmer wrote passionately of their efforts to protect the cultural patrimony of Germany during the post war period until the museum buildings, archives, and

libraries could be rebuilt and their contents returned. In the interim, they regularly organized temporary exhibits at the collecting points to allow German citizens the opportunity to resume doing what they had done for centuries before the war: visit museums and enjoy seeing beautiful works of art from the German collections.

The Monuments Men's duties included not only locating and protecting cultural treasures and monuments in liberated Allied countries, but also those of Germany. But for most Monuments Men, it was not just a duty, it was their firm belief that it was the right thing to do. Monuments Man Lincoln Kirstein said it best in March 1945 when he wrote: "The horrid desolation of the German cities, should, I suppose, fill us with fierce pride...but the builders of the Kurfürstliches Palais, of the Zwinger, of Schinkel's great houses, and of the Market Places of the great German cities were not the executioners of Buchenwald or Dachau. No epoch in history has produced such precious ruins...less grand than Italy, less noble than France, I would personally compare it to the loss of Wren's London City churches, and that's too much elegance to remove from the surface of the earth."

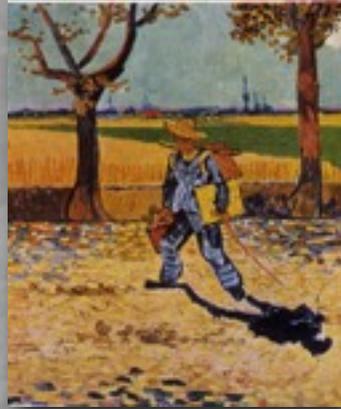
And no nation or its cultural patrimony benefitted more from the creation and presence of the Monuments Men than Germany.



Monuments Man Ken Lindsay with the Bust of Nefertiti at the Wiesbaden Collecting Point in late 1945. Today the sculpture may be seen at the Neues Museum in Berlin. (Ken Lindsay Collection)



WHAT'S IN YOUR ATTIC?



Missing Paintings by Raphael and Van Gogh



Missing Cultural Documents

During World War II, Hitler and the Nazis stole millions of cultural items, including paintings, sculpture, entire libraries, stained glass, church bells, Torah scrolls, and documents. After the war many of these items were dispersed by displaced persons and soldiers of all sides. Today, hundreds of thousands of these items are still missing, oftentimes in the possession of soldiers or their heirs, unaware of its origin or that it can't be legally sold.

If you have in your possession such an item, or know of someone who does, please contact the Monuments Men Foundation and allow us to work with you, anonymously or overtly, in returning this item to its rightful owner.

For more information, please visit www.monumentsmenfoundation.org or contact us at (214) 276-1596 or ehudson@monumentsmenfoundation.org

The Monuments Men were museum directors, curators, art historians, and educators who worked to protect monuments and other cultural treasures from the destruction of World War II. In the last year of the war they tracked, located, and ultimately returned more than 5 million works of art and cultural items stolen by Hitler and the Nazis.

The Monuments Men Foundation continues their mission by facilitating the recovery and return of important cultural treasures that were stolen and sometimes "liberated" during and after World War II. We offer research services to people concerned about the legality of an item in their possession and can assist in the return to the rightful owner of such items. The Monuments Men Foundation was awarded the 2007 National Humanities Medal by President George W. Bush, for its role in preserving the history of the Monuments Men and women. It is an IRS 501(c)(3) approved not-for-profit organization.



Monuments Woman Mary Regan Quessenberry:

1915-2010

Monuments officer and U.S. Army veteran Mary Regan Quessenberry died on April 8, age 94. Mary was our sole living connection to the beginning of the Monuments Men efforts and the key people whose vision led to its creation. From Langdon Warner, the great scholar of Asian art and swash-buckling explorer, to Paul Sachs, the founder of the first museum studies course in America, to Mason Hammond, legendary professor of Classics at Harvard: Mary studied under all of them at Harvard. We were so fortunate to find her and film her memories and stories while she was in good health.

Mary Regan Quessenberry played an important role in the post-war work of the Monuments Men, assisting with efforts to return millions of works of art to the countries from which these treasures had been stolen.

The United States entered World War II in December 1941. By July 1942 Mary had given up her job as a high school art teacher and was in uniform serving with the WAAC (Women's Auxiliary Army Corps). Over 400,000 women applied to be part of the first group of women to serve in the U.S. military; only 450 were chosen. She would later become a recruiter for the WAC (Women's Army Corps), where one of the highlights was meeting the Churchill family when they visited Boston. Mary was sent overseas in 1943. Prior to becoming a Monuments officer, she trained with the U.S. Army 8th Air Force under General Doolittle; she was also sent to the Royal Air Force base at Medmenham as part of the Central Interpretation Unit and later received orders to report to General Carl Spaatz. At that time he commanded the 8th, 9th, and 15th Army Air Corps and led the strategic bombing campaign against Germany reporting directly to General Eisenhower. Mary became "company commander of the 550 WACs who ran Spaatz Headquarters." For her service as company commander, Mary received a Bronze Star.



WAC Mary Regan Quessenberry during World War II.

Following the Allied victory, Mary read in *Stars and Stripes* that officers with an art history background were needed as Monuments Men. Despite having more than enough points to return home, Mary traveled to Berlin to volunteer for service with the MFAA. As a Monuments officer stationed in Berlin, Mary traveled to the Munich Collecting Point, Wiesbaden Collecting Point, various repositories, and badly damaged cities. She worked with fellow Monuments officers Bancel LaFarge, Rose Valland, Charles Kuhn, Calvin Hathaway and others to restitute stolen works of art to their rightful owners. She served as a Monuments officer until 1948, when she retired as a Major after an extraordinary and accomplished military career.

Mary returned home to the United States and taught humanities at the University of Florida, and married her husband Tim Quessenberry in 1965, who preceded her. We shall miss her greatly.



Mary and Robert in September 2009



International World War II Conference



In March, Robert was honored to be a keynote speaker at this fascinating conference, alongside many of the world’s renowned World War II historians, including three time Pulitzer Prize winner Rick Atkinson, Donald L. Miller, Carlo D’Este, Sir Max Hastings, and Gerhard Weinberg, among others. Hosted by the National World War II Museum in New Orleans, this conference was attended by more than 350 people. It was a wonderful experience to introduce and discuss the Monuments Men to this very well informed audience.

Tribute to a Friend



Dr. Edmund “Ted” P. Pillsbury, former director of the Kimbell Art Museum (1980-1998), significant contributor to the international art scene, and friend to the Monuments Men Foundation, died March 25, 2010. He was 66.

Ted Pillsbury was once characterized by the New York Times art critic John Russell as “one of the most gifted men in the American museum profession.” In the course of his professional career, Ted, like most pioneers, was dynamic, always willing to take the calculated risk. He was visionary, restless, competitive, curious, impatient, driven, confident, enthusiastic, and passionate. Excellence governed his decisions. Scholarship was non-negotiable. He trusted his eye, his intellect, and his own counsel.

Ted was educated by some of the Monuments Men and was friends with many others. His death deprives us of an important connection with so many of the men and women who helped build the cultural treasures we enjoy today. We mourn his loss.

Visit our Websites www.monumentsmenfoundation.org and www.monumentsmen.com



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ROBERT M. EDSSEL SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS AND BOOK SIGNINGS

Eisenhower Presidential Library
Sandhills Community College

Abilene, KS
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May 7, 2010
November 2, 2010