



Eisenhower Audio Recording Discovered



General Eisenhower and his wife Mamie departing the Met. (photo courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art Libraries.)

The Monuments Men Foundation is proud to announce the discovery of an audio recording of General Eisenhower speaking about the importance of art and its protection during war. The speech was delivered at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City on April 2, 1946 at an event in which General Eisenhower was presented with an Honorary Life Fellowship from the museum with a citation that read: "To Dwight D. Eisenhower, soldier, diplomat and statesman, through whose wisdom and foresight irreplaceable art treasures were saved for future generations." Francis Henry Taylor, Director of the Met and advisor to the Monuments Men, stated that General Eisenhower

"more responsible than any other, made it possible for the world in which great civilizations of the past could continue for future generations."

Early last year we became aware of the text of General Eisenhower's remarks, but further sleuthing resulted in our discovery of the audio recording of the event. The subsequent process of transferring the content from lacquer disk to digital medium consumed a lot of time, but in late November of last year, we finally heard the results – and they are stunning in both clarity and delivery.

"It's a remarkable audiotape. There's always a difference between reading a transcript and hearing the general giving a speech on the importance of art," said Karl Weissenbach, director of the Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum in Abilene, Kansas. He said it was a unique occurrence to hear Eisenhower speak only on the topic of art.

General Eisenhower played a critical role in the success of the Monuments Men during World War II. His issuance of historic orders to all soldiers stating they should "respect those monuments so far as war allows"

From the Desk of Robert M. Edsel



It's been a very busy few months for the Foundation, in particular all the preparatory work concerning our discovery of the Eisenhower audio recording. This remarkable piece of history is as important to our understanding of the work of the Monuments Men and General Eisenhower's key role in enabling their work to proceed as it is contemporary in its relevance. As our news today is filled with images of the citizens of Cairo standing shoulder to shoulder to protect their legendary museum from looters, we can truly appreciate the timeless importance of what General Eisenhower said concerning the protection of cultural property during armed conflict. The Foundation is very proud to make this recording and accompanying visuals available to the public.

This newsletter also contains news of many other exciting developments, in particular our upcoming "In the Footsteps of the Monuments Men" trip being coordinated with The National World War II Museum. This will be a once in a lifetime opportunity. I hope you will consider joining us.



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empowered the Monuments Men to do their job. This proved to be the most comprehensive effort in history by an army to fight a war while mitigating damage to cultural treasures and monuments.

During the speech, Eisenhower remarked that he was struck by his soldiers' interest in visiting cultures of historic civilizations but also warned against failing to respect what is important to the members of those cultures: "The freedom enjoyed by this country from the desolation that has swept over so many others during the past years gives to America greater opportunity than ever before to become the greatest of the world's repositories of art. The whole world will then have a right to look to us with grateful eyes; but we will fail unless we consciously appreciate the value of art in our lives and take practical steps to encourage the artist and preserve his works." He praised "the officers and men of the combat echelons whose veneration for priceless treasures persisted, even in the heat and fears of battle."

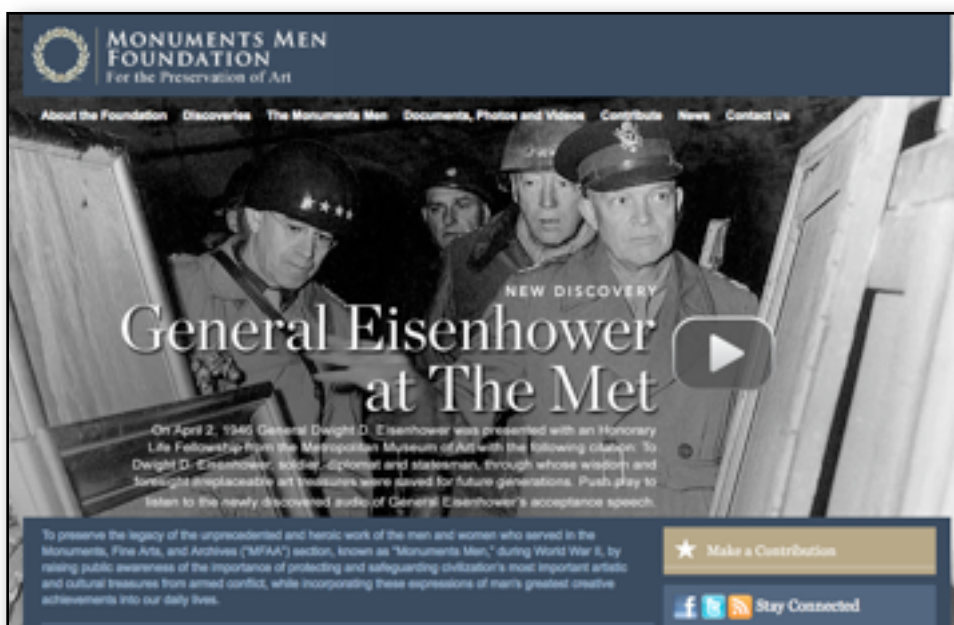


*General Eisenhower speaking at the Met in April 1946.
(photo courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art Libraries.)*

Eisenhower's granddaughter, Susan Eisenhower, said "I'm always intrigued by hearing voices from the past talk about things that have contemporary relevance."

We have created a version of the audio recording in which we have laid in images and archival footage of the events and people he is discussing, along with photographs from the event. The viewing time is less than fifteen minutes. The video clip may be found on our website at:

www.monumentsmenfoundation.org



Visit our New and Improved Website!

In addition to viewing the Eisenhower video on our website, you'll find that we've revamped the entire site in order to bring a greater emphasis to our latest discoveries and efforts, and provide easier navigation for visitors.



Saving Italy to be Published in Spring 2013



*Monuments Man Captain Deane Keller pictured alongside Primavera by Botticelli, found in a castle in the Tuscan countryside.
(photo courtesy Yale University Libraries)*

Foundation President Robert M. Edsel's next book on the Monuments Men, with a working title of *Saving Italy*, will be published by W.W. Norton in the spring of 2013. The book will cover the adventures of the Monuments Men as they struggle to solve the greatest theft in Italy's long history: seven hundred works of art – including paintings by Leonardo da Vinci and sculpture by Michelangelo – stolen by the Nazis from Florence's world renowned museums. In addition to Monuments Men Capt. Deane Keller and Lt. Frederick Hartt, among others, the Vatican, OSS, and Nazi SS General Karl Wolff all have a dramatic role in the rescue of the Florentine treasures.

“In the Footsteps of the Monuments Men” European Tour

In September 2011, The National World War II Museum's Five Star Tours will join with Robert M. Edsel, to offer a tour in search of a different kind of wartime hero: the Monuments Men.

This exclusive inaugural trip will be led by Edsel himself. It departs September 16, 2011 from Paris, on a 10-day adventure of discovery – retracing the route the Monuments Men took across a battered, war-torn continent. Along the way are visits to some of the artistic treasures saved from ruin as well as sites where the Nazis stashed their stolen plunder, ending at the salt mines of Altaussee, Austria.

The tour “In the Footsteps of the Monuments Men” includes travel from Paris to the tour's final destination in Munich, luxury accommodations and meals, as well as the opportunity to experience history in an intimate-sized group with Edsel. Space is extremely limited. Get more information and a detailed itinerary or book your journey at www.nationalww2museum.org/travel or call 1-877-813-3329 ext. 257.

THE NATIONAL WWII MUSEUM
FIVE STAR TOURS

September 16 - 25, 2011
*In the Footsteps
of the Monuments Men*

Be a part of this unique opportunity
to travel with *The Monuments Men*
author, Robert M. Edsel

*MONUMENTS
MEN*
ALLIED SOLDIERS, NAZI THIEVES,
and the CRAZIEST MISSION OF
WAR IN HISTORY
ROBERT M. EDEL

*An adventure like no other...
combining World War II history,
Nazis, art, acts of heroism and you.*



Robert M. Edsel Presented with Texas Medal of Arts



Award recipients with Texas Governor Rick Perry.

On March 1, Foundation President Robert Edsel was honored for his two books about the Monuments Men with the Texas Medal of Arts Award for Literature by the Texas Cultural Trust in Austin, Texas. The Awards spotlight and celebrate the creative excellence, exemplary talents and outstanding contributions by Texans in selected categories, ultimately featuring the best in Texas. The Awards honor citizens who have achieved greatness through their creative talents as well as those whose philanthropic generosity has opened doors to artistic opportunity for Texans of all ages.

The two-day event began with a legislative reception and brunch hosted by Texas First Lady Anita Perry. The awards were presented by Texas Governor

Rick Perry at a formal afternoon ceremony at the Texas State Capitol. A Gala Dinner and Awards Show at the Long Center for Performing Arts followed that evening. The highlight of the event was the Awards Show, emceed by *60 Minutes*' Scott Pelley, which featured several performances, including Barbara Smith Conrad and a rousing finale by Ray Benson and Billy Gibbons of ZZ Top.

The 2011 Texas Medal of Arts Awards honorees were Barbara Smith Conrad (Lifetime Achievement), Robert M. Edsel (Literary), Tom Staley (Art Education), James Drake (Visual Arts), Alley Theatre (Theatre), H-E-B: boasting a long history of supporting the arts throughout the state (Corporate), Bob Schieffer (Journalism), Ray Benson (Multi-Media), Ernest and Sarah Butler: Major donors to Austin Symphony Orchestra, the Blanton Museum of Art, the Long Center, Ballet Austin, University of Texas School of Music, and the Austin Lyric Opera (Individual Patrons), Marcia Gay Harden (Film–Actress), Bill Paxton (Film–Actor), and ZZ Top (Music).

The Texas Medal of Arts Awards, inspired by the National Medal of Arts, has been bestowed upon 59 Texas leaders and luminaries in the arts and entertainment industry for creative excellence and exemplary talents since its inception in 2001. Previous honorees include Willie Nelson, Tommy Lee Jones, Horton Foote, Laura W. Bush, Van Cliburn, Robert Rodriguez, Walter Cronkite, Nancy B. Hamon, Sandra Cisneros, Robert Rauschenberg, Clint Black, Nasher Foundation, Lyle Lovett, Austin City Limits, Neiman Marcus and Exxon Mobil.



Ray Benson and Billy Gibbons performed at the Awards Show.



In Memory of Maria Altmann



*Maria Altmann with Klimt's Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer.
(Photograph courtesy of Ann Jobansson/Corbis)*

On February 7, 2011, Ms. Maria Altmann passed away at the age of 94. She and her husband escaped Nazi-occupied Vienna and immigrated to the United States, leaving most everything they owned behind. In 1998 she began a battle to recover her family's collection of paintings by Gustav Klimt, stolen by the Nazis in 1938. In perhaps the most well-known restitution case of this century, Altmann and her attorney, E. Randol Schoenberg, fought for seven years, through the Los Angeles Federal Court, U.S. Supreme Court, and finally an Austrian mediation panel, to have the paintings returned to her.

The famous collection included Klimt's *Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer*, an iconic portrait of Altmann's remarkable aunt. The portrait of newlywed Adele was revealed in 1907 and caused a sensation in the art world. As Anne-Marie O'Connor wrote in the *Los Angeles Times*, the painting "was a masterpiece of his gilded phase and a sublime embodiment of Vienna's golden moment of artistic and intellectual vitality." Adele died in 1925, stating in her will that she wished for her husband, Ferdinand, to donate the paintings to the Austrian National Gallery upon his death. The Austrian government argued that because of this request, the paintings rightfully belonged to the Austrian state collection. However, Adele had no way of knowing the fate that would befall Jews in Austria under the Nazi regime, and ultimately gave

Ferdinand control of the paintings by leaving them to him. His will specifically stated that the paintings should be left to his niece, Maria Altmann, and her two siblings. Ferdinand fled to Switzerland to avoid Nazi persecution; the paintings were soon confiscated, and after the war made their way into the Austrian National Gallery.

Maria Altmann and her husband Fritz narrowly escaped the Holocaust. Fritz was sent to Dachau but managed to be released in exchange for his foreign accounts. The couple fled on foot to Holland and later settled in California. Fifty years would pass before Altmann heard of the paintings again. By the time she initiated the restitution process, she was an 82 year-old grandmother and widow, but nonetheless determined in her fight. She famously said in 2001, "They delay, delay, delay, hoping I will die, but I will do them the pleasure of staying alive."

In January 2006, the Austrian mediation panel finally ruled in Altmann's favor - returning the five Klimt paintings to her. The paintings were exhibited at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Neue Galerie in New York before being auctioned at Christie's. Ronald S. Lauder bought *Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer* for a record \$135 million and placed the painting on permanent display at the Neue Galerie. The other four paintings were sold to private collectors. Maria Altmann and her story feature prominently in *The Rape of Europa*. Extended inter-



Robert with Maria Altmann in 2008.

views with her may be seen in *The Rape of Europa Collector's Edition*. She was an ardent supporter of the Foundation's efforts, and we will miss her.

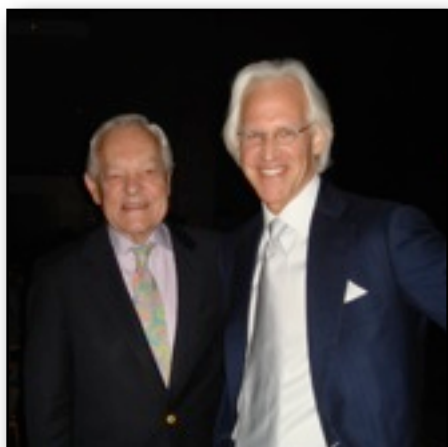


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Mardi Gras and More!



It was a tremendous honor for the Monuments Men Foundation to be represented at this year's Bacchus Mardi Gras Parade at the invitation of The National World War II Museum in New Orleans. This year's theme for the parade was very fitting - "Bacchus Salutes America's Greatest Generation." The floats above vibrantly fulfilled the theme - with giant combat soldiers and Victory Gardens.

The Foundation board members and employees were thrilled to meet legendary news correspondent Bob Schieffer, as well as Texas music greats Ray Benson, ZZ Top, and Lyle Lovett at the Texas Medal of Arts event.

We'd like to thank...

The Texas Cultural Trust, Ken Scott, Martha Schneider, Jamie Stengel at the Associated Press, Rick Steves, Tim Tattan, Karl Weissenbach, Dr. Nick Mueller and The National World War II Museum, Gen. Carl Reddel (ret.) and the Eisenhower Institute, Susan Eisenhower, Jim Moske and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

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



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ROBERT M. EDSSEL SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS AND BOOK SIGNINGS

Virginia Historical Society

Richmond, VA

May 5, 2011

To subscribe to the *Monuments Men Newsletter*, or to provide us with comments, please contact Elizabeth Hudson: ehudson@monumentsmenfoundation.org

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