In 2007 the President of the United States presented to the Monuments Men Foundation for the Preservation of Art the National Humanities Medal for its work recognizing and honoring the scholar-soldiers who, during the most destructive war in history, saved so much of our shared cultural heritage from theft and destruction. This is our nation’s highest honor for work in the humanities.

Since then, the Foundation has introduced these men and women, from fourteen nations, to a global audience through books, documentaries, a feature film, and soon an exciting investigative television series. The term “Monuments Men” has become ubiquitous; journalists now use it without explanation. Volunteers in war-torn areas, and at sites of natural disasters, regularly refer to themselves as modern-day Monuments Men, inspired by the legacy of the Monuments Men and Women of World War II.

While the Foundation has experienced enormous success in raising worldwide awareness of the Monuments Men and the importance of preserving our world’s shared cultural heritage, the forces of evil intent on destroying it have been very busy, too. ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and the perennial threats---natural disasters, budget shortages, and perhaps the greatest danger of all---complacency, have claimed far too many cherished works of art, monuments, and religious objects that had survived for centuries to the betterment of our civilized world. Our work continues.

Using the public’s unceasing interest in stories about World War II and the exploits of the Monuments Men and Women, the Foundation continues to engage and inspire audiences. In the past ten years the work of the Foundation has resulted in these heroes being honored with the Congressional Gold Medal, our nation’s highest civilian award. It has preserved their legacy by compiling and making public detailed biographies on each of the men and women who served in the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives section. The Foundation has continued the mission of the Monuments Men and Women by locating and returning some of the hundreds of thousands of works of art and other cultural treasures still missing to their rightful owners.

But the educational component of our mission remains key. Changing the future begins with educating our youth and inspiring them to take an active and lifelong role as advocates for the protection of this rich cultural inheritance of ages past. Foundation staff members regularly work with students and teachers on various inquiries, in particular surrounding National History Day projects. We are also engaged with Civil Affairs commanders and the soldiers of the U.S. Army under their command who are deployed overseas adding to the legacy of Monuments Men past.

The Monuments Men Foundation is the only organization of its kind. Our ability to continue this work depends on your support. Please join us as we help others preserve for future generations the beauty and knowledge our generation has been fortunate to enjoy.
JUNE 6, 2007
A ceremony at the Senate marked the passage of Congressional Resolution in both houses honoring the Monuments Men. On the same day, the Monuments Men Foundation for the Preservation of Art was founded.

NOVEMBER 15, 2007
The Monuments Men Foundation for the Preservation of Art received the 2007 National Humanities Medal from President George W. Bush.

“THESE MEN [AND WOMEN] RISKED THEIR LIVES TO PRESERVE OUR WORLD’S CULTURAL TREASURES. BY TELLING THEIR STORY, YOU HAVE ENSURED THAT THEIR DEEDS WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN.”

( President Bill Clinton)

OCTOBER 22, 2015
After nine years of work in Washington, D.C., the Foundation succeeded in its efforts to pass legislation awarding the Monuments Men and Women with the Congressional Gold Medal, our nation’s highest civilian honor. President Obama signed the bill into law in 2014. The Foundation spent one year working closely with officials at the U.S. Mint on the design of the Medal, which was presented during a ceremony at the Capitol in 2015. Four of the six then-living Monuments Men and Women were able to attend, along with more than 200 family members of Monuments Men since passed.
To date the Foundation team has located and filmed or taped interviews with twenty-one Monuments Men and Women. It has also researched and written biographies on each of the 344 Monuments Men and Women, and many of the key figures who helped create the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives section. These biographies have been published on our website and are used regularly by visitors and other researchers.

EDUCATING OUR YOUTH

“My name is Giorgia. From now on, when I will find myself in front of one of the paintings saved by the Monuments Men, it will be even more moving knowing what they went through during WWII. I hope people will appreciate them as much as I do. I will talk about them to whoever I know.”

(High School Student, Italy, Giorgia B.)

Foundation staff regularly visits campuses to speak with students at schools and universities; works with students nationwide on their National History Day projects related to the Monuments Men; and responds to general inquiries year round.
"Owners experience enormous joy when their cultural property, long thought lost, is returned to them. Often it’s not the material, but it’s the emotional, sentimental value of the object that is the source of their joy...The Monuments Men Foundation continues the legacy of the legendary Monuments Men."

(German Ambassador to the United States, Peter Wittig)

The Foundation has located and returned to the rightful owners more than twenty works of art and other cultural and religious items that had been missing since the end of the war. Thanks to our toll-free number, 1-866-WWII-ART (1-866-994-4278), we have already gathered more than 100 leads on other missing objects. The Foundation has also identified numerous works of art in museums that had incorrect or incomplete provenance histories and has worked with those institutions to correct those histories. Prominent examples include the Meadows Museum of Art in Dallas and the Kimbell Art Museum in Ft. Worth.
The Foundation has developed an ongoing relationship with U.S. Army Civil Affairs soldiers who continue to be deployed to conflict areas in Iraq, Afghanistan, and countries in Africa. We have been invited on base to participate in briefings about their work today, listen to the challenges they must overcome, and share with them the experiences of their predecessors during World War II. We have also developed working relationships with the Cultural Heritage Protection Unit of the Italian Carabinieri (Military Police) and the FBI Art Looting team in Washington, D.C.

**Raising Worldwide Awareness**

“The Monuments Men didn’t do it for glory... they tried to recover these works of art, not for themselves, not for their country, but for all time, and for all cultures, because they knew that if you destroy a culture, and the European spirit was almost broken by the Nazis, then there’s nothing to return to; it’s what makes us human.”

(Academy Award recipient, Actress Cate Blanchett)

The Foundation worked with George Clooney, Columbia Pictures, and 20th Century Fox on the production of *The Monuments Men*, a film that has been seen by tens of millions of people in more than 100 countries. As a result, “Monuments Men” has become a ubiquitous reference to those people engaged in the protection of cultural heritage. It has become part of the world’s lexicon. People working to protect cultural property in today’s war zones now refer to themselves as modern day Monuments Men. Politicians around the world, responsible for protecting cultural heritage, now know the term and something about the service of these men and women during World War II. Recently, “Monuments Men” even appeared as a question on the timeless television show, *Jeopardy!*
The Foundation is participating in a new original investigative television series, *Hunting Nazi Treasure*. The new co-production between Corus Entertainment's HISTORY Canada and More4 (Channel 4), is produced by Saloon Media (Toronto) and BriteSpark (UK). *Hunting Nazi Treasure* will air in Canada and the UK in Fall 2017 and in the U.S. and other TV stations around the world in early 2018.

"**The National World War II Museum is excited about working with the Monuments Men Foundation to build a permanent exhibit to not only honor the work of these heroes, but allow the public a chance to experience their remarkable story. Their role in rescuing so many of the world's artistic and cultural treasures is one of the great episodes of World War II.**"

(President and CEO, The National World War II Museum, Dr. Nick Mueller)

The National WWII Museum will soon be building a permanent exhibition to honor the Monuments Men and Women. The Monuments Men Gallery will be a keystone component of its Liberation Pavilion, the final building in its $400 million campus. The gallery will be housed inside a recreated salt mine similar to those the Nazis used to hide stolen works of art. Groundbreaking on the Liberation Pavilion should begin in 2018 with an opening of the Monuments Men Gallery the following year.

The Monuments Men Foundation depends on the support of the public to continue its important work. If you have an interest in becoming a lead donor to the Foundation or serving as a Trustee, please contact Robert Edsel via email at info@monumentsmenfoundation.org or telephone at 214-219-1222. We would love to hear from you!