

# Monuments Men



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It's not often that a World War II film comes my way that stirs my soul. It's even rarer that what stirs my soul is not the personal story of an individual or a small group of people standing up for what is right against the Nazi's or an escape from a German internment camp despite impossible odds. It's not that I don't enjoy a good war film, but most war films have the same basic features,

people get shot, blown up, or killed, then the battle is decided on the basis of a group of people taking a stand, or out thinking the enemy. *Monuments Men* is not such a film. It tells the story of a small group of middle aged soldiers and their contacts that have been given the job of finding and recovering the art that the German's confiscated during their march across Europe.

*The Monuments Men* is very loosely based on The Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives program (MFAA). The program was officially started about two years before the events in the film take place. Their job during the war however was essentially the same: the recovery and preservation of historical art. While their numbers were small, they were a larger group than was shown in the movie. If you look at the cover of the DVD you will notice the battle uniforms and the presence of a number of actors such as George Clooney and Matt Damon, often associated with action films. If you are expecting an action film, as I believe many were, you will be sorely disappointed. You would do well to notice the age and condition of some of the rest of the stars pictured: Bill Murray, John Goodman, and Dimitri Leonidas. These are not your typical soldiers. The group is made up of museum curators who are working behind Allied lines at their job, receiving little support for their services except after the battle has been won and they are actually recovering the "objects of art." There are few guns and very little violence. What stirs my soul in this film is not the acting, not the situations the men find themselves in, but that the governments would actually make an effort to protect and find art objects in time of war. It gives me hope for our leaders that they will continue to treasure not just the technical progress of man's history, but the record of their artistic accomplishments.

*The Monuments Men* is another of those films which I feel deserved better reviews and box office than it got. Like some other movies I have blogged about I think this is a film out of time. It might have fared better if it had been made in the fifties. It's a film more about peace, than war. It's more about heart, than blood and more about life than death and finally, more about building than destruction. If you're looking for action war movie this is not the film for you. It is instead a reminder that history is more than just a story of battles won and lost; it is also about the heart of the human race.

Posted by Keith C. on December 26, 2014

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