

Today's News

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Congressional Resolution Honors the Monuments Men



Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ), Monuments Man Sgt. Harry Ettlinger, Rep. Kay Granger (R-Fort Worth), Author Robert M. Edsel (Photo: Business Wire)

WASHINGTON--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Members of the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives section (“MFAA”), commonly referred to as the “Monuments Men,” were recognized for their heroic and valiant efforts “to locate, identify, catalogue, restore, and repatriate priceless works of art and irreplaceable cultural artifacts” during and after World War II, with the passing of Congressional Resolution H. Con. Res. 48 on Thursday, May 17, 2007. The Resolution was inspired by Robert M. Edsel, whose exhaustively researched book, *Rescuing Da Vinci*, reveals and recounts the exploits of these unsung heroes.

The Congressional Resolution was included as an amendment to the Armed Services Committee’s National Defense Authorization Bill for Fiscal Year 2008 (HR 1585) by Congressman Robin Hayes (R-Concord), which was passed by the House by a vote of 397 – 27. Congresswoman Kay Granger (R-Fort Worth), along with Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-NY) and Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ) were the original co-sponsors of H. Con. Res. 48. The efforts of “the Monuments Men were significant and they deserved to be honored for it,” said Ms. Granger, who spearheaded the development and passage of H. Con. Res. 48 after meeting with Mr. Edsel and learning of the incredible role these men and women played in preserving these cultural treasures throughout World War II and the years that followed.

Mr. Edsel and Sgt. Harry Ettlinger, one of the 12 known surviving Monuments Men, joined Rep. Granger and Rep. Frelinghuysen for the introduction of the Resolution late last year. A similar Resolution will be introduced in the Senate next month by Sen. Inhofe (R-OK), Sen. Kennedy (D-MA), Sen. Hutchinson (R-TX) and Sen. Boxer (D-CA). A ceremony is being planned to honor the Monuments Men in Washington, DC on June 6, 2007, to coincide with the 63rd Anniversary of the “D-Day” landings in Normandy.

On the occasion of the bill’s passage, Mr. Edsel said: “From the outset, my goals in writing *Rescuing Da Vinci* were to raise public awareness for the Monuments Men and to help these unsung heroes achieve the recognition they so justly deserve for their unprecedented contribution in rescuing so many of the world’s most valued art treasures from the Nazis. It is important for us as a society to learn from the rich legacy of the Monuments Men and women about how to protect and safeguard civilization’s most important works of art and cultural treasures. Words cannot adequately express my gratitude to Ms. Granger, Ms. Slaughter and Mr. Frelinghuysen for all of their efforts and support in recognizing the Monuments Men and their extraordinary contribution to mankind.”

Sgt. Ettlinger, who supervised the recovery of stolen art from the German salt mines in Heilbronn-Kochendorf, stated, “On behalf of the Monuments Men, I am grateful that Congress has acknowledged the importance of preserving art and culture. While we do not consider ourselves to be heroes because we did the job given to us, I would like to thank Rep. Granger and her colleagues for recognizing our contribution.”

S. Lane Faison, III, son of recently deceased Monuments Man S. Lane Faison, Jr., had the following to say: “This is a great day for art and for all those who endeavored to preserve it from the ravages of war. While recognition has come too late for most of them, may the remaining few and all their families savor the day long overdue but never too late. For all of those in some way connected to the Monuments Men, we owe special thanks to Robert Edsel and all of his associates who made this day possible.”

Said Lynn Nicholas, author of *The Rape of Europa*, which recounts the systematic theft, deliberate destruction and miraculous survival of Europe’s art treasures during World War II, “It’s wonderful that Congress has recognized the achievements of these unsung heroes who were so modest about their own accomplishments but who, in fact, saved the entire patrimony of Europe for posterity.” A documentary film based on *The Rape of Europa*, and co-produced by Mr. Edsel, opened in theaters in San Francisco Friday, with a wide release expected later this summer.

About Robert M. Edsel

Mr. Edsel, who was formerly a nationally ranked tennis player, as well as a successful business entrepreneur in the oil and gas industry, sold his company and moved to Europe with his family in 1996. While in Florence, he developed a great passion for art and architecture and became curious as to how all the monuments and great works of art survived the devastation of World War II. What began as a question evolved into an impassioned journey to unravel the secrets and heroics of the unsung heroes who saved the world's greatest art and cultural treasures for the benefit of humanity. In addition to his book, *Rescuing Da Vinci*, and the documentary, *The Rape of Europa*, Mr. Edsel is establishing a not-for-profit foundation with objectives that include promoting educational programs about the history of the Monuments Men and facilitating the recovery and return of stolen works of art. This initiative has as its objective immortal recognition of the Monuments Men and their incredible contribution to world culture. Mr. Edsel is a native of Dallas, Texas and is highly sought after for lectures and personal appearances. *Rescuing Da Vinci* is available at www.amazon.com, www.bn.com, and bookstores nationwide.

About The Monuments Men

The Monuments Men, a special multinational group of more than 350 men and women, served on frontline military units, to ensure the preservation, protection, liberation and restitution of the world's greatest artistic and cultural treasures. This "band of unsung heroes," worked tirelessly to track down, identify and catalogue millions of priceless works of art and irreplaceable cultural artifacts, including masterpieces by Da Vinci, Michelangelo, Rembrandt and Vermeer, that had been stolen by Hitler and the Nazis. The detailed documentation, inventories and photographs developed and catalogued by the Monuments Men during and following World War II, have made, and continue to make possible the restitution of stolen artworks to rightful owners and their descendents. After WWII, many Monuments Men went on to become renowned directors and curators of preeminent international cultural institutions, including the National Gallery of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, as well as professors at esteemed universities such as Harvard, Yale, Princeton, New York University and Williams College. Others became founders, presidents, and members of associations such as the New York City Ballet, the American Society of Landscape Architects, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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