

## Film Review: 'The Monuments Men' Has Been Drained of Personality

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on February 6, 2014 - 10:12am

- [Bill Murray](#) [2]
- [Bob Balaban](#) [3]
- [Brian Tallerico](#) [4]
- [Cate Blanchett](#) [5]
- [Film Review](#) [6]
- [George Clooney](#) [7]
- [Grant Heslov](#) [8]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [9]
- [Hugh Bonneville](#) [10]
- [Jean Dujardin](#) [11]
- [John Goodman](#) [12]
- [Matt Damon](#) [13]
- [The Monuments Men](#) [14]

George Clooney's "The Monuments Men" is processed cheese. It is a film that has been rewritten, edited, and refined until it has lost all sense of purpose or identity. There's no flavor left. It is a film that defies genre; not quirky enough to have a comedic personality despite a cast that almost always supplies edge and not engaging enough to work as drama or thriller. With awkward editing that belies a long post-production, a frustrating screenplay, and a cast that looks as bored as you will be at times, you may not see a more star-studded disappointment this year.



Rating: **1.5/5.0**

In a horrendous bit of framing that feels added post-test screenings, Frank Stokes (George Clooney) explains the impact of war on art to a receptive Truman near the end of World War II. While the focus clearly needs to be ending the conflict and saving as many lives as possible, there is reason for concern that the world's greatest art will be destroyed, either in the process of combat or in waves of purposeful destruction at the end of the war. And there's reason to believe that Hitler's SS is stealing art, not just from the Jews they murdered, but from churches and museums around Europe. Art belongs to us all. And it needs to be returned to its rightful place. Truman agrees but men can't be sacrificed. Stokes will have to go and he'll bring his most art-loving colleagues with him.



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Over the course of a clever opening montage, Stokes assembles his "Stokes' 7" for this mission – James Granger (Matt Damon), Richard Campbell (Bill Murray), Walter Garfield (John Goodman), Jean Claude Clermont (Jean Dujardin), Donald Jeffries (Hugh Bonneville), and Preston Savitz (Bob Balaban). At the absolute BEST, each of these characters gets a lonely character beat. Preston is easily aggravated, especially when his Private status is brought up. Donald used to drink and longs for some sort of redemption from what he feels is a life wasted. And, well, that's about it. Rarely, have actors with as much personality as Goodman, Damon, and Murray been used as such pawns; such bland characters. If it were not for the A-list talent playing them, these characters wouldn't stand out from the crowd of soldiers with whom they sometimes travel.



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*"The Monuments Men" stars George Clooney, Matt Damon, Bill Murray, Cate Blanchett, John Goodman, Jean Dujardin, Hugh Bonneville, and Bob Balaban. It was written by Clooney & Grant Heslov and directed by Clooney. It will be released on February 7, 2014.*

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