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Olivia Newcomb

THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER



RACE

CULTURE

IDENTITY

**WHAT WAS THE MOTIVATION IN CREATING
'THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER' IN RELATION TO
RACE, CULTURE, AND IDENTITY?**

The concepts of **race**, **culture**, and **identity** are prominent throughout the comics in which The Unknown Soldier is displayed in. The Unknown soldier is a character who has bandages all over his face from being injured during World War II. This is one example in which we can see hidden identity within comics, specifically in *The Unknown Soldier* comics.



**Closing Editorial Statement
continued...**

The Unknown Soldier is very important to recognize in comic books because he is a character that even people who love comic books seem to dismiss. As a character, The Unknown Soldier gives us an opportunity to discuss concepts of race, culture, and identity. People of color can relate to The Unknown Soldier because, oftentimes they might want to hide the color of their skin to be seen as more than just a designated race. In defying the stereotypes that may be given to them immediately when someone sees the color of their skin, if they are able to mask their race, they are seen beyond the color of their skin. In my penultimate point, this can relate to the masked identity of The Unknown Soldier and how he is not confident in his body and the way he looks post-accident. Finally, culture is oftentimes masked when someone is hiding their race, they are also shamed of the culture that they come from in that the color of their skin will determine the way in which someone views them.

The Unknown Soldier is a fictional comic book character that is featured predominantly in war comics. The Unknown Soldier was a soldier in WWII, fighting for America and freedom for the United States. The Unknown Soldier masks his identity and doesn't make it an objective in his heroic missions to be recognized for all of the good things he does for American citizens. The Unknown Soldier was unfortunately injured in the war and was left with scars covering his whole face, this is why he is wrapped up with bandages. The four characters discussed throughout this booklet help us in developing the overall characterization of The Unknown Soldier and different characters that can relate to him. When analyzing characters, especially in comic books it is important to look at subsequent characters that can relate to the character that is being analyzed. When searching for characters in relation to The Unknown Soldier, I gained a lot of information about The Unknown Soldier.

Who Created The Unknown Soldier?



Joe Kubert

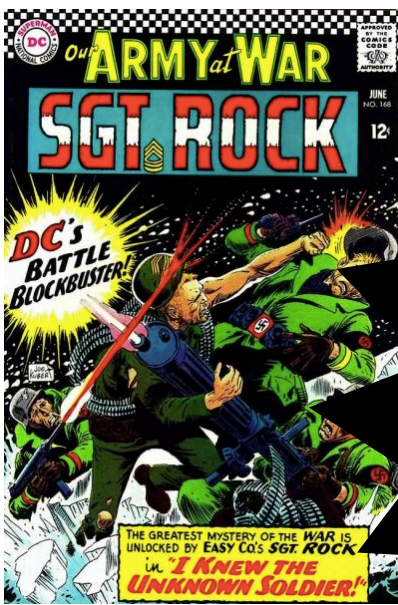
A Polish Born American comic book artist who worked for DC comics. Kubert has spent his whole life surrounded by comics and has inflicted this on his students and children. Kubert has been in the comic and graphic novel industry since he was 11 years old.



Robert Kanigher

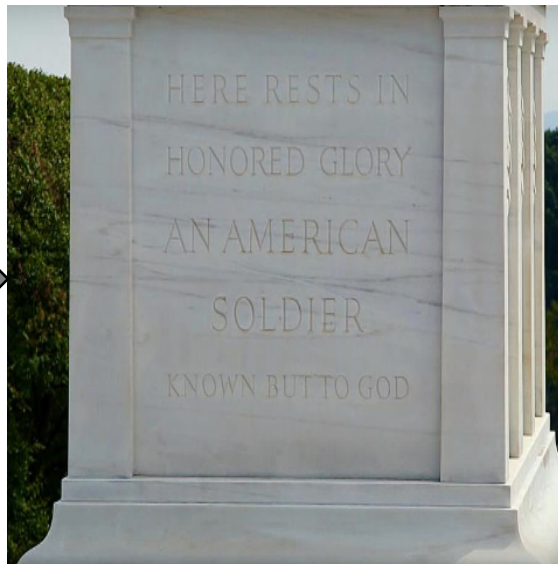
Kanigher is an American comic book artist who had worked closely with the Wonder Woman comics for over twenty years. He has also spent many years working closely with Joe Kubert, on the Sgt. Rock character who is a main character in a lot of the comics that The Unknown Soldier has featured in. He has received many awards and is important to recognize when discussing The Unknown Soldier.





The Unknown Soldier was first displayed in *Our Army At War* issue 168, released in June 1966.

This comic book character is named after The Tomb of the Unknown soldier which is a monument in Arlington, Virginia. This monument was created to notice the soldiers who had fallen in the war but **were never identified.**



How is this related to The Unknown Soldier, as a comic book character?

How might The Unknown Soldier feel in day to day life?



HIDDEN

DISGUISED

UNIDENTIFIED

STRONG

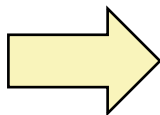
IMPACTFUL

PRIDEFUL

CULTURE



Culture is related to both identity and race in the sense of taking pride in who you are and where you come from.



If one feels the need to mask their personal appearance such as The Unknown Soldier, their culture and where they come from is also masked.

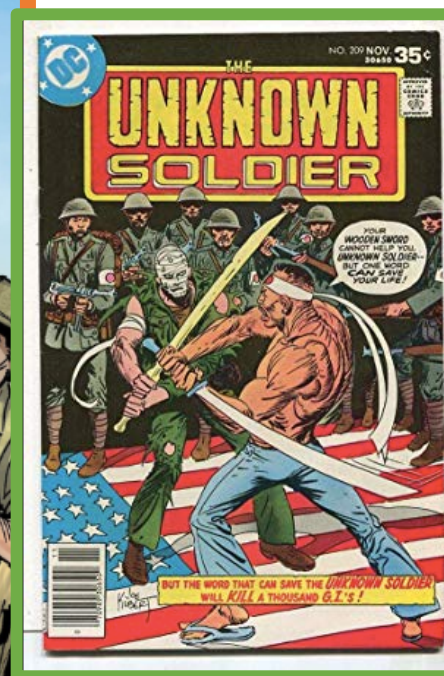
The Unknown Soldier as a character...

Wears bandages on his face to cover the scars from WWII.

Depicts the hardships and violence that took place during WWII.

Is a fictional war comics character, in DC comics.

Represents all of the soldiers that have fallen in the war and were never identified.



Harry

Who is Harry?

The Unknown Soldiers brother.

Saved the Unknown Soldiers life, but "couldn't save my face," said The Unknown Soldier.

His brother is one of the reasons as to why The Unknown Soldier was so successful in being an 'undercover agent.'

Was also in the war at the same time as The Unknown Soldier.

In the war at the early part of World War II.

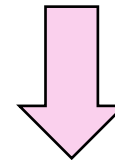
Harry helps in giving us the characterization of The Unknown Soldier and his selfishness is noted from his response when his brother fell over the bomb for him.

Harry in comic...

IDENTITY



Due to the Unknown Soldiers face constantly being covered up, he is feeling the desire to hide who he is and what he looks like.

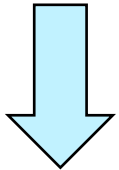


A lot of people can relate to the Unknown Soldier in the way that we all sometimes feel the need to mask who we are so we are seen for our personality instead of our physical appearance.

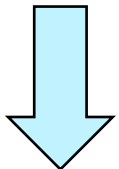
Identity in this sense can relate to race. Oftentimes with people of out of the 'norm' (people of color) identities that are commonly judged due to the color of their skin. Including generalized stereotypes around those specific races, people of color may feel the need to mask their identity.

RACE

People of color can resonate with The Unknown Soldier. The Unknown Soldier does not feel comfortable with the scars covering his face, therefore, he covers it up with bandages.



In the newer Unknown Soldier comics, The Unknown soldier is clearly black, as you can see from the little skin he shows.



People of color can relate to The Unknown Soldier in the feeling of having to mask what they look like for acceptance in society. This is similar to the Unknown Soldier because he doesn't want his physical appearance to take away from all of the good he does for the world.



Race is a major role in characterization of The Unknown Soldier.

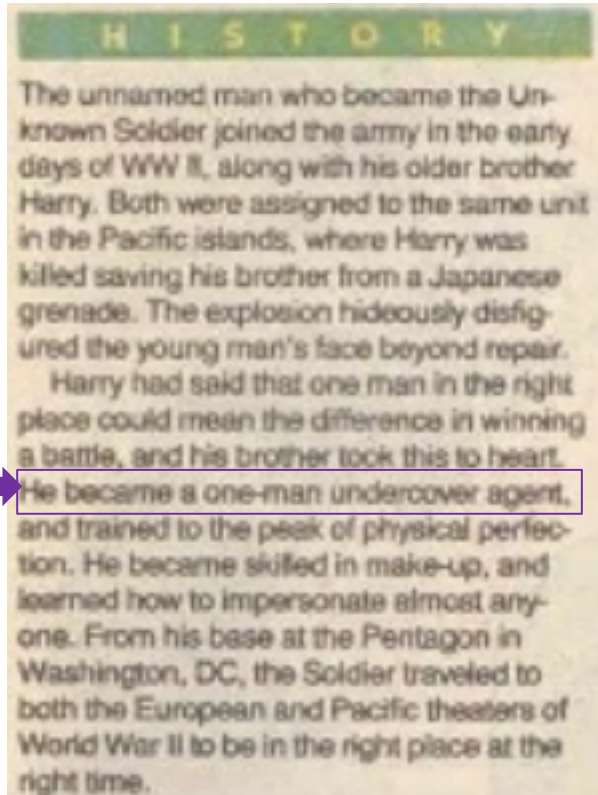
This is slightly ironic, because up until this point we did not know that about the Unknown Soldier and his accident, we find out about this more into this page, in the fourth panel.

This is the point in which the identity of The Unknown Soldier would forever be questioned. He soon would cover his face, and blame his brother for his following days on the Earth with the way his look. His brother fell on-top of the bomb to save his life, and he is still angry at his brother for not doing enough to protect the Unknown Soldiers face.



Why should The Unknown Soldier thank his brother Harry?

Although The Unknown Soldier had severe trauma to his face, this, sadly, is what gave him the courage to save people.



The trauma, in-turn 'helped' the Unknown Soldier in developing his characterization and what made him such a fun character to read about in the comics he was present in.

Harry in fact did not ruin The Unknown Soldiers life, but helped The Unknown Soldier in not being so shallow, and cold hearted.

Who is William Clyde?

Who should care about The Unknown Soldier?



1. Anyone who has known someone that has been in the service can resonate with the character, The Unknown Soldier. He is a great depiction of what soldiers may have undergone while in the services.

2. Anyone that has ever felt hidden behind their own identity, and had to mask who they are.

3. Anyone that likes ANY kind of comic! The Unknown Soldier is very, well...unknown, he is an astounding hero and can relate to almost any human being that walks on Earth!

EVERYONE!

Why do these characters matter?

Harry

Harry helps us in learning more about The Unknown Soldier as a character and why he is covered in bandages.

William Clyde's mission in life is to find the hidden identity behind The Unknown Soldier, won't let him hide behind the bandages.

William Clyde

Sgt. Rock

Sgt. Rock is a close ally of The Unknown Soldier and helps in developing the heroic qualities of The Unknown Soldier in the war.

Ed Marks has many similarities with The Unknown Soldier and their experiences in the war. He has also had hardships during his time in fighting for the U.S.

Ed Marks

Developing the Unknown Soldier into who he is today.

William Clyde

Who is William Clyde?

A comic book character who was first introduced in *The Unknown Soldier* Vol. 1. He is later seen in Vol. 2, 3 and 4.

A CIA agent that seems to be searching for the Unknown Soldier.

His mission and job in life is to find out the real identity of The Unknown Soldier, and his story and mission in life.

Somewhat of a villain, he tries to find out who The Unknown Soldier is, even though he doesn't want to be discovered.

William Clyde forces everyone to care about the hidden identity behind The Unknown Soldier.

This is one way that we can see The Unknown Soldier feeling anger towards his now hidden identity.

William Clyde assumes that The Unknown Soldier wants his identity to be revealed.



In reality, The Unknown Soldier is doing just fine taking other peoples identity who 'deserve' it. These were his heroic tendencies, depicted in this cover.

Sergeant Rock and The Unknown Soldier...

A War Comic series outlining the Vietnam War, to show the hardships that the soldiers in this war endured.



This comic has many parallels to the comics that The Unknown Soldier appears in such as *Our Army At War* and the *Sgt. Rock* series.

This includes the battles that all U.S. soldiers face especially when they were forced to fight for America in The Vietnam War and WWII.

Ed Marks

Who is Ed Marks?

Known as a rookie soldier in the comic book *The Nam*.

There are many challenges that soldiers have to face when entering the war. This includes battles that they face on their own and battles that every soldier has to encounter. Ed Marks learned all of these first hand and did not have an overall pleasant experience in the war like some of the other characters (Sgt. Rock). He ends up finishing his tour in Vietnam and goes home.

A soldier in the Vietnam War. He is called a 'greenie' because he is a new soldier in the war and that is what they call new soldiers.

Ed Marks can resonate with The Unknown Soldier because they both went through a lot of trauma during their time in the war.

Sgt. Rock

Who is Sgt. Rock?

Also created by Kubert and Kanigher.

A fictional war comics character, he premieres in many of the same comics as The Unknown Soldier.

First appeared in *Our Army At War* issue 83. He was premiered before The Unknown Soldier.

Kanigher relates Sgt. Rock to his own life, by giving him Kanighers own military serial number.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

What parallels are there between Sgt. Rock and The Unknown Soldier that helps in developing their characterization?

Ruthless and an aggressive combat fighter who takes out any enemies in his way.

Died at the close of WWII.

Depictions of soldiers and what it was like fighting in WWII.

Allies of one another.

Soldiers in WWII, and both originally from America but fighting elsewhere.

Both missions of the soldiers were beneficial for fighting for America and what is best for American citizens.

Saves people without the need to be recognized



Sgt. Rock

Sgt. Rock has not faced as many hardships as The Unknown Soldier.



Sgt. Rock, is a more well known comic book character, in comparison to The Unknown Soldier. This is the main reason as to why I chose him as a point of comparison. He was a close ally to the Unknown Soldier and played an important role in War Comics.

The Unknown Soldier has had many struggles regarding his facial features and hidden identity. These are hardships that Sgt. Rock has not had to face. Sgt. Rock is the stereotypical soldier in which fights for his country and later dies in using his body to shield an innocent young child, in *DC Universe: Legacies #4*.



The Unknown Soldier