

ROY THOMAS' KUBERT TRIBUTE  
COMICS FANZINE

\$8.95  
In the USA

No.116  
May  
2013



# Alter Ego™



**JOE  
KUBERT**  
A GOLDEN &  
SILVER AGE LEGEND  
REMEMBERED



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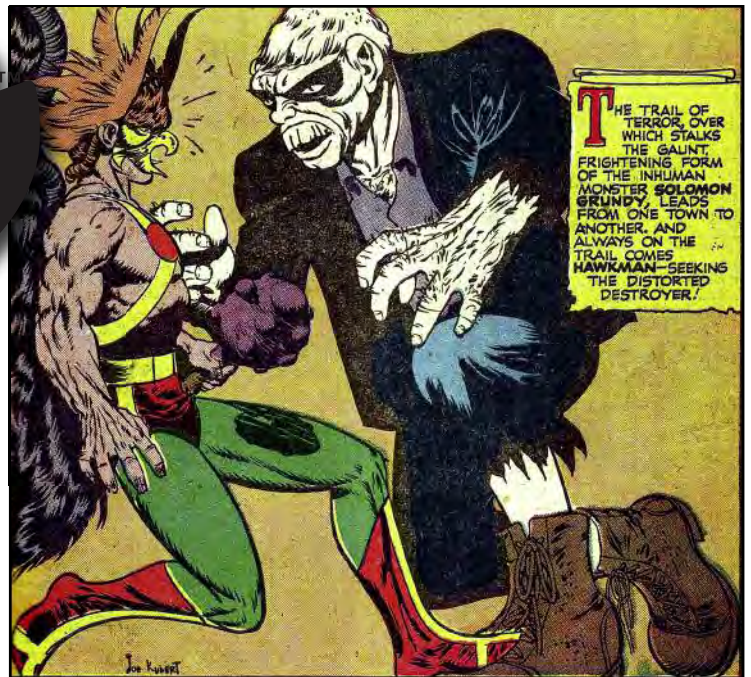
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**On Our Cover:** *Cover-portrait artist Daniel James Cox is the man who persuaded A/E’s editor to launch this issue in the pipeline just when he did—for ‘twas put on TwoMorrows’ schedule several weeks before Joe Kubert’s untimely passing. Daniel had sent in his interview with Joe about “Enemy Ace” which would dovetail well with material we had on hand from Bill Schelly and Richard J. Arndt... but Ye Editor had no idea Daniel was an artist until he received a scan of the fabulous portrait he’d painted of Kubert. Roy T.’s response: “Great! We’ll make this the centerpiece of the cover, and I’ll have images of Hawkman, Viking Prince, Enemy Ace, Sgt. Rock, Tarzan, and Tor added to frame it.” Almost before I finished that e-mail, Daniel had assembled the entire cover, melding black-&-white Kubert images with his portrait into a beautiful, flawless whole. We’re both glad Joe saw and approved it; we only wish he were also around to read the issue. [Portrait ©2013 Daniel James Cox; Tor TM & ©2013 Estate of Joe Kubert; Tarzan TM & ©2013 Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc.; other characters TM & ©2013 DC Comics.]*

**Above:** *Point of personal privilege. Ye Editor feels Joe Kubert was at his all-time best in 1953-54 issues of Tor; but even so, Roy’s favorite Kubert art was his 1940s “Hawkman”—and his all-time favorite drawing from that body of work is the splash panel of the “Hawkman” chapter of the “Justice Society of America” story “The Revenge of Solomon Grundy” in All-Star Comics #33 (Feb.-March 1947). So here it is—reproduced not from the DC Archives, but from RT’s personal bound volumes. Script by Gardner F. Fox. [©2013 DC Comics.]*

This issue is dedicated to the  
 memory of  
**Joe Kubert**



Alter Ego™ is published 8 times a year by TwoMorrows, 10407 Bedfordtown Drive, Raleigh, NC 27614, USA. Phone: (919) 449-0344. Roy Thomas, Editor. John Morrow, Publisher. Alter Ego Editorial Offices: 32 Bluebird Trail, St. Matthews, SC 29135, USA. Fax: (803) 826-6501; e-mail: roydann@ntinet.com. Send subscription funds to TwoMorrows, NOT to the editorial offices. Eight-issue subscriptions: \$60 US, \$85 Canada, \$107 elsewhere. All characters are © their respective companies. All material © their creators unless otherwise noted. All editorial matter © Roy Thomas. Alter Ego is a TM of Roy & Dann Thomas. FCA is a TM of P.C. Hamerlinck. Printed in China. ISSN: 1932-6890

FIRST PRINTING.

in the GOLDEN & SILVER AGES  
A Six-Part Remembrance  
-I-

# JOE KUBERT

## How A Comics Legend Built His Remarkable Career

by Bill Schelly

**O**n Sunday, August 12th, 2012, the comics world was rocked by the announcement that Joe Kubert, one of its towering figures, had passed away that day in Morristown, New Jersey. The cause was multiple myeloma.

The news was greeted with first shock and disbelief, then a deepening sadness as we contemplated the loss of a man of such towering importance in the history of comics, who was admired for his character as much as for his talents and many achievements. The writer-artist of Hawkman, Tor, and Sgt. Rock was gone.

The Internet abounded with heartfelt tributes to Joe from his colleagues, graduates of The Kubert School, and fans across the United States and around the world. More were expressed at his funeral on August 14th. We at *Alter Ego*—Kubert fans and admirers, all—owe a special debt to Joe, and while this Kubert-themed issue was planned before his passing, we would like to take this opportunity to express our condolences to the entire Kubert family, and to celebrate his life by reviewing some of the highlights of his extraordinary career in comics.



### Seventy Years—And Counting!

In this 1973 photo, Joe Kubert appears to be looking both backward and forward in time: at the splash page of the very first story he ever drew as a professional (for Holyoke's *Cat-Man* #8, Feb. 1942), at the tender age of 15—and his last comics work, when he inked this cover and the early pages of DC's *Nite Owl* #3 (Nov. 2012) over pencils by his son Andy. And, even then, stories written and drawn by Joe were still forthcoming from DC in the *Joe Kubert Presents* series. The "Volton" splash, which reveals the influence of the excellent Fox/Quality artist Lou Fine, was scanned from Mike Bromberg's *Volton Fanzine* #1 (May 2004), which in turn was reproduced from a vintage comic book Joe signed for Mike. ["Volton" art ©2013 the respective copyright holders; *Nite Owl* cover ©2013 DC Comics.]

*Alter Ego's* special debt to Joe, of course, arises in part from his role in cementing the love of the Justice Society of America in the hearts of the founders of *Alter Ego*. Jerry Bails and Roy Thomas formed a friendship specifically in appreciation of the JSA, and *A/E's* original impetus in 1961 was to support the team's recent revival as the *Justice League of America*. Joe's "Hawkman" chapters in *All-Star Comics* were among its best, and contributed in a very significant way to that inspiring run of issues (#33 to #37) which are some of the JSA's most memorable... for, as it happened, Joe was the favorite comic





### Joe & Alter Ego

(Left:) Joe's interview in *Alter Ego* [Vol. 1] #6 (Winter 1963-64) was the first interview in the original incarnation of this magazine, while that issue's cover art consisted of his photo and part of his cover for *Tor* #3 (May 1954). [Art ©2013 Estate of Joe Kubert.]

(Right:) Kubert gifted one-time *A/E* editor Ronn Foss with the original Silver Age Hawkman drawing which heralded the return of *Alter Ego* after two decades, with Vol. 2, #1 (Spring 1998)... as the flip side of Jon B. Cooke's *Comic Book Artist* #1. Illo courtesy of Bill Schelly. [Hawkman TM & ©2013 DC Comics.]

book artist of both Jerry and Roy.

Once *Alter Ego* was well and truly launched, and Ronn Foss took over the helm of the magazine for two key issues (#5-6 circa 1963), Joe contributed to the fanzine itself. The first thing Foss did was contact Kubert—who was also *Ronn's* favorite artist—for a by-mail interview. Joe agreed, and that landmark interview, brief as it was, was among the first ever given by a working professional to a comics fanzine. Over the ensuing half century, Joe Kubert helped us many times, such as by allowing *A/E* to print previously unpublished *Tor* comic strips (in issue #10 in 1969-70), and, later, by consenting to more interviews. He qualifies as a kind of patron saint of *Alter Ego* alongside Gardner Fox, Otto Binder, and Julius Schwartz... and thus we feel a special sense of loss at his passing.

When looking at the whole of Joe Kubert's career, the first thing one realizes is that it is vast. He was a working professional for 70-plus years, and as he once said, "I've never been out of work a day in my life." By the end, he had reached an amazing summit, but... how did he get there? How did this immigrant boy born in Poland (in an area now part of Ukraine) emerge from the humblest of beginnings to become a national treasure?

Let's walk along with Joe Kubert and see how the choices he made led him along the path toward comic book greatness, not only as an artist, writer, and editor, but as an educator and humanitarian.

## Step #1: Learn From The Best

Yosaif Kubert (who wasn't called Joe till he entered school) dreamed of drawing comics from the moment he discovered those four-color wonders in the Sunday newspaper. He made his first

halting attempts to re-create his favorite characters, and soon showed artistic potential. But as the idea of becoming a professional cartoonist grew in the following years, he realized the art classes in school weren't going to teach him about drawing comics. What to do?

Somehow young Kubert, who bought *Action Comics* #1 off the stands in 1938, had the chutzpah to knock on the doors of the various comic book publishers who were entering the field, and show his work to whoever would look at it. He was seeking a little advice, and ended up getting a lot more than that. He got an education working with some of the best artists in the fledgling business.

In the shop of Harry "A" Chesler, he looked over the shoulders of such artists as Jack Cole, Charles Biro, and Mort Meskin, watched them as they worked and learned about the tools of their trade. At MLJ, he was taught how to draw a German army helmet by Irv Novick. While erasing pages and inking panel borders at Will Eisner's production shop in Manhattan, he got to witness Will and artists such as Bob Powell and his idol

Lou Fine turning out features for Quality Comics, and later assisted on backgrounds on *The Spirit*, learning all along the way from the best in the business.

After getting his feet wet in the comic book art shops as a 15- and 16-year-old, Kubert found his way to DC (or National, as it was then known) and was given the opportunity to ink Mort Meskin's pencils on "The Vigilante," a popular feature in *Action Comics*. The lessons he learned while interpreting Meskin's beautiful artwork stayed with him the rest of his life. He was on his way.

## Step #2: Seize Opportunities

In the spring of 1944, Sheldon Mayer, editor in chief of All-American Comics (which had to all appearances severed its ties with National/DC), needed a new "Hawkman" artist. Kubert's work had caught his eye. With the ranks thinning during World War II, Mayer had to look a bit farther afield. Shelly gave Joe a try-out on a "Dr. Fate" chapter in *All-Star Comics*. Kubert worked his heart out on the job, and then on a second test, the "Hawkman" story in *The Big All-American Comic Book*.

Mayer was pleased by Kubert's effort and the potential he saw in the work, and gave Joe the job of handling the ongoing "Hawkman" stories in *Flash Comics*, where the Winged Wonder was a co-star. Understanding that he was still on a sort of probation, Joe re-doubled his efforts, and his artwork improved rapidly. After all, he had just graduated from high school and already his dreams were coming true. He wasn't going to let this chance slip away if he could help it. Kubert was repaid for his prodigious effort. His art on "Hawkman" established his reputation as an exciting new artist in the business, and became the foundation for all that followed.



attic of his family's house in Elizabeth, New Jersey. In 1948, he decided to expand his horizons both in terms of where he worked, and what he did.

Joe rented a hole-in-the-wall apartment in a rickety building on Park Avenue, and invited his buddies in the business to share the space and the rent. Now he was working shoulder-to-shoulder with hot up-and-comers like Carmine Infantino, Alex Toth, Howie Post, and others. That led

to a certain "cross-pollenization" of styles, inspiring him to develop a more evolved, sophisticated style.

Kubert met with publisher Archer St. John and reached an agreement to package whole comic books for publication. It was an opportunity for him to have a bit more creative freedom and to make a little more money. He invited his childhood friend Norman Maurer to be a part of it and gave work to Carmine

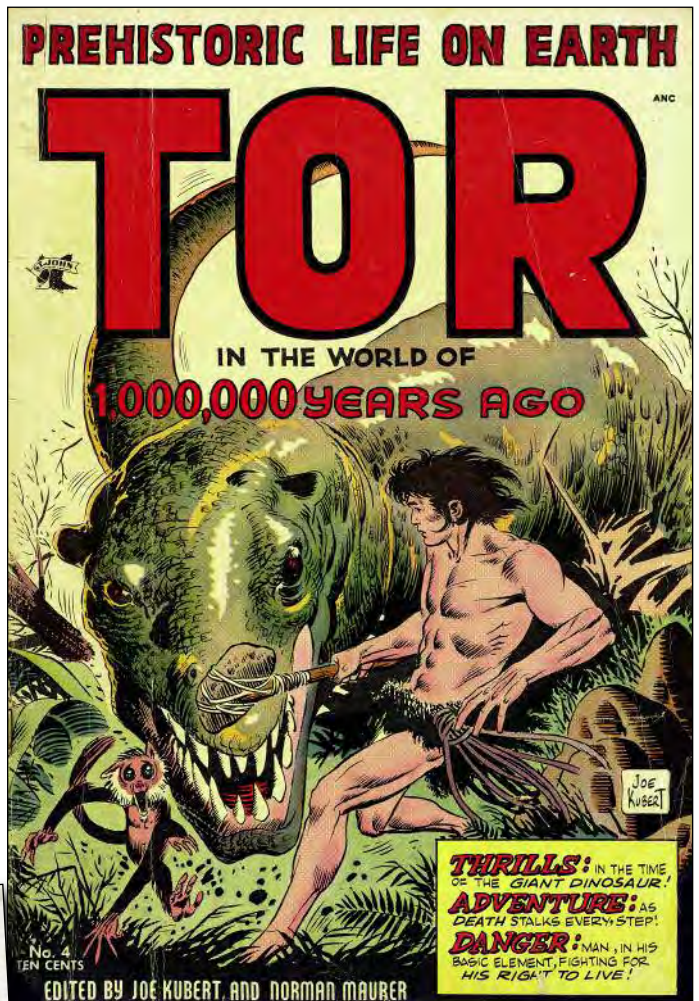
**A "Hawk-ward" Situation**

(Above:) Joe at age 13—and the splash page of his second super-hero full-art job for National/DC, his first featuring the Hawkman character with whom he would forever be identified, when he was all of 17 or 18. This story appeared in the oversize 1944 one-shot *Big All-American Comic Book*. Clearly, Joe passed the audition—and when regular "Hawkman" artist Sheldon Moldoff was drafted in '44, Kubert was tapped to become the Winged Wonder's regular artist. Thanks to Bill Schelly for the scans; the photo was originally made available to him by Joe & Muriel Kubert. [©2013 DC Comics.]

This tale was reprinted in 2004 in the hardcover *DC Comics Rarities Archives, Vol. 1*—but, outside of chapters of "Justice Society" stories in *All-Star Comics*, most of Joe's 1940s super-hero work for DC hasn't been collected. Hey, DC—how about publishing some volumes of *Joe Kubert's Golden Age Hawkman*—and for that matter, *Joe Kubert's Golden Age DC Super-Heroes*, gathering his work on "Johnny Quick," "The Vigilante," "The Flash," "Zatara," and "Sargon the Sorcerer"? And if you do, don't forget that previously-unpublished-by-DC third "Flash/Rose & Thorn" story! End of suggestion.

**Step #3: Expand Horizons**

For several years Kubert drew "Hawkman" and produced features on the side like "The Golem" in *The Challenger* and the odd strip for Avon, while still working in the



**Tor Of Duty**

(Left:) Joe and Muriel's 1951 wedding photo; this picture was given to Bill Schelly by Muriel Kubert for his 2008 biography *Man of Rock*. (Above:) *Tor* #4 (July 1954) was actually the fifth "Tor" issue published by St. John, there having been two 3-D issues between it and the 1953 *1,000,000 Years Ago* #1. See p. 66 for the cover of the latter, and the previous issue of *A/E* for the pair of mags officially titled *3-D Comics* #2. Thanks to Bill Schelly. [©2013 Estate of Joe Kubert.]



# “We’re In The Kind Of Business Where The Story Is King”

A 2010 Interview With **JOE KUBERT**

Conducted & Transcribed by Richard J. Arndt

**INTERVIEWER’S INTRODUCTION:** Joe Kubert began his career in 1938 at the age of twelve, either working for the comics shop run by Harry “A” Chesler or, if you count published work, in 1942 for MLJ Studios (the future Archie Comics Publications), inking a story of their new character, Archie. He did his first work for National/DC Comics in 1944 and did the bulk of his comic art for that company over the next seven decades. He worked there as a group editor from 1968 until 1986 and has done occasional freelance editing for DC since then. In the early 1950s, he was also an editor at St. John Publications, along with his partner and childhood friend Norman Maurer. Kubert’s most notable work has been on such characters as Tor, Enemy Ace, Sgt. Rock, Hawkman, Viking Prince, and Tarzan. He has also been a strong presence in the world of graphic novels with such books as Fax from Sarajevo, Yossel - April 29, 1943, Jew Gangster, Tex, and Dong Xaoi, April 1965. There are also hardcover collections of his work on all six of the above-named heroes.

In addition, he founded The Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art in 1976, which has taught and prepared numerous artists for the professional world of comics. He was also the editor-artist for PS Magazine, a U.S. military publication that specializes in the care and maintenance of military equipment....

**There’s Gold In That Thar Silver Age!**  
Joe Kubert, in a photo that appeared in the 1980s magazine *Comics Interview*—and an image of the original art for his cover for *The Brave and the Bold* #34 (Feb.-March 1961), the debut of the Silver Age “Hawkman,” courtesy of collector/dealer Mike Burkey’s website ([www.romitaman.com](http://www.romitaman.com)). Incidentally, the suggested bid for this page was a staggering \$150,000, so save your pennies. Photo credited to Jim Salicrup. [Photo ©2013 David Anthony Kraft; B&B cover art ©2013 DC Comics.]

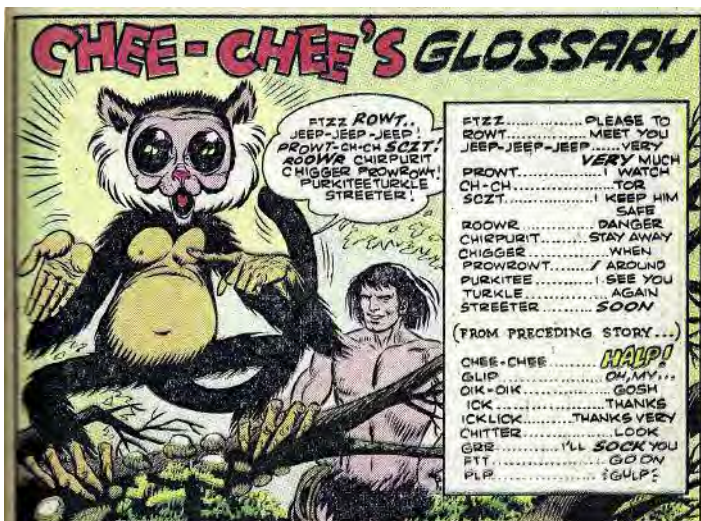


## "The Whole Time I Was In The Army, I Was Still Working For The Comic Book Publishers"

**RICHARD ARNDT:** I'd like to welcome Joe Kubert—artist, writer, and editor of comics for seven decades. Mr. Kubert, although you're best known as an artist, you've also been one of the leading editors for DC Comics for many years. If you don't mind, I'd like to concentrate on your work as an editor for this interview.

**JOE KUBERT:** All right.

**RA:** You were an editor at DC Comics for close to twenty years, but you didn't start your editorial career there. You actually started at St. John Comics in the 1950s, with Norman Maurer as your partner, isn't that right?



### Too Much Monkey Business

The cover of *1,000,000 Years Ago* #1 (Sept. 1953) can be seen in this issue's installment of "Mr. Monster's Comic Crypt" that begins on p. 61. Tor the Hunter starred in only the 11-page lead story in that issue; but, in addition to the first "Danny Dreams" episode therein, Kubert also illustrated (and probably wrote) a half-page "Chee-Chee's Glossary." Below it was Norman Maurer's cartoon depicting the era's overcrowded comic book shelves, in an ad for the three new titles the two friends were co-editing for Archer St. John. If you look closely, you'll spot some partial logos of actual comic books. The cartoon was right-on: within the next couple of years, the number of publishers and titles on sale would both shrink dramatically. ["Tor" art ©2013 Estate of Joe Kubert; ad art ©2013 the respective copyright holders.]

**KUBERT:** That's right, but it wasn't just as an editor. Norman and I packaged the books we edited, as well. Well, actually, I started there first. Norman, my partner, had been living in California. We had no partner relationship before this, but little by little, as I was taking on more work, the person I was interested in coming in with me and working with me was Norman. It was somewhat step-by-step. I stop to think about it now and I can't really think of any definitive plan for a partnership. It just fell into place.

**RA:** What titles were you packaging for them at the time?

**KUBERT:** Before the 3-D stuff, I was working on... *Hollywood Romances*, I think was one. [A/E EDITOR'S NOTE: The actual name of that two-issue St. John title was *Hollywood Confessions*.] That was one of the love or romance comic books. *Meet Miss Pepper* was kind of an Archie-type comic, perhaps a little bit more adult. I think I also did some work on some of the other books that Archer St. John, the publisher, was putting out as well. *House of Terror*, that sort of thing. I probably did a number of covers. It was just about at that time that I went into the Army. This was in the early 1950s.

**RA:** One question I'd like to ask about your Army service—did your experiences in the Army at that time influence to any major degree your attitude towards war comics?

**KUBERT:** Oh, no, no. When I was in the Army, I was probably doing work that was closer to being a civilian than being a soldier. I was in a special Army group that was putting together material for the troops. I was stationed in Germany. Most of the guys I took basic training with in Fort Dix were shipped off to Korea. I was lucky. For whatever reasons they had pulled me out, along with perhaps a handful of other guys, to be shipped out to other places in the world. I was shipped to Germany. I served there for about a year until I came home. I was in the Army about two years. There was very little experience that I had in the Army that could possibly relate to the comic books that I did later on.

Incidentally, the whole time I was in the Army, I was still working for the comic publishers. I would do the drawing on my off time. I set up a small studio in the office that I had and I continued doing work. I was married at the time, and my wife would bring the stuff to the publishers. I was working on comics the whole time I was in the service.

**RA:** *Tor* was one of the titles that you packaged for St. John, is that correct?

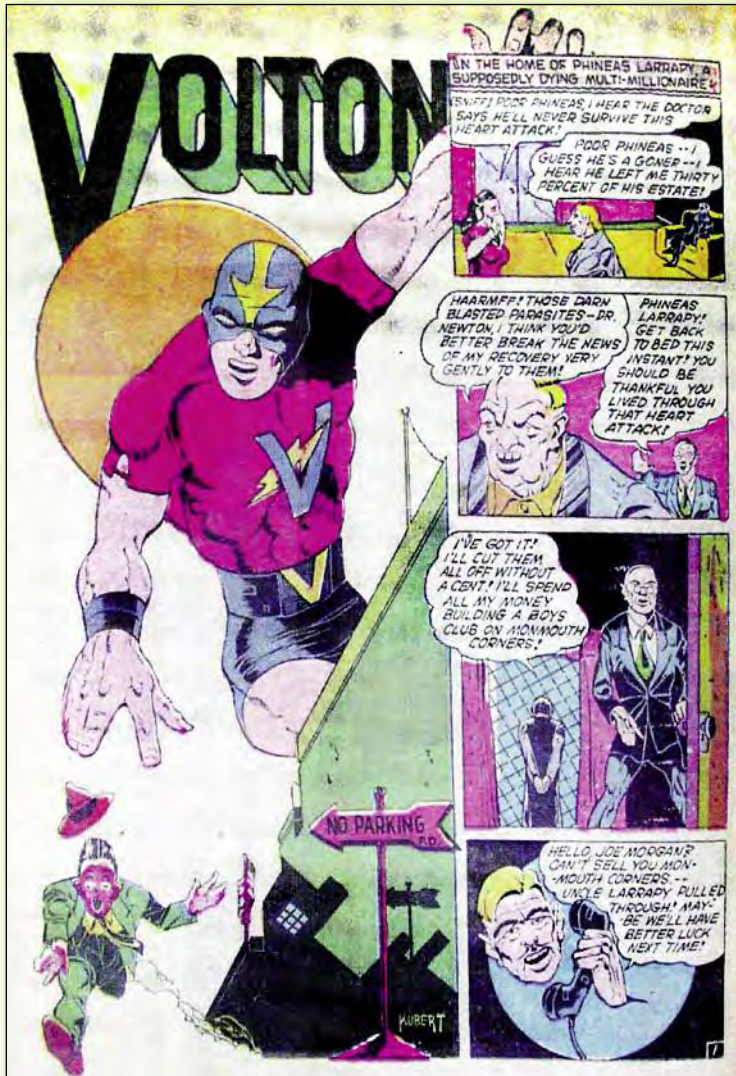
**KUBERT:** Yes, *Tor* was a character that I came up with while I was on the boat shipping over to Germany. Actually, on the boat while I was being shipped over. *Tor* is actually not such an innovative character. He's a stone-age Tarzan. Tarzan was a character that I'd always loved. One of the things that probably stimulated me to get into comics in the first place. When I was a kid I always read the stuff in the newspaper. Anyway, I had this idea for *Tor*. I put down the notes for the character while I was in the Army, and when I got out I went back to St. John. I had a whole slew of ideas to start putting out in books, and St. John was open to that. That was when I contacted my buddy Norman. I had so much to do in getting the books out that I thought he would be valuable and that it was something that he would want to do as well.

We had worked together before. We had started in the business together, as a matter of fact. We had attended the High School of Music and Art. That was when we were kids.

[Continued on p. 23]

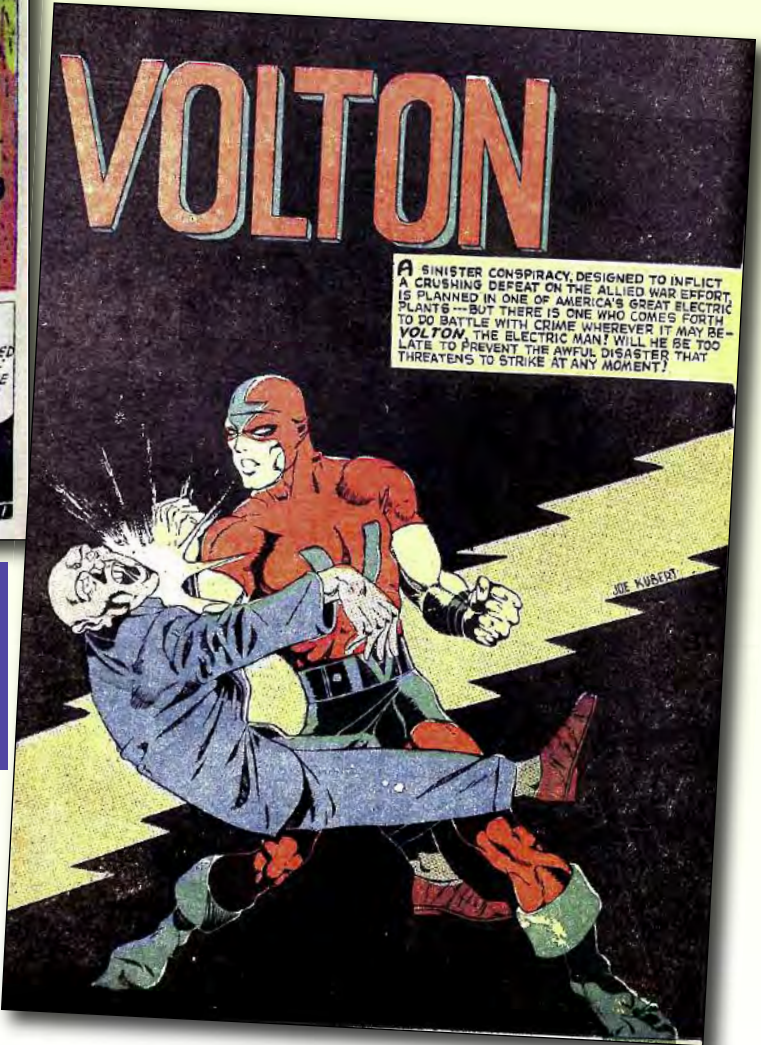
# KUBERT Before St. John

By the time he and Norman Maurer began to edit their own group of comics at St. John Publishing in 1953, Joe had been a professional artist for more than a decade. Over the next ten pages, you'll find a pulse-pounding potpourri of early Kubert goodies not discussed in great detail elsewhere in this issue of *A/E*, but which are definitely a part of the artist's first decade of work.



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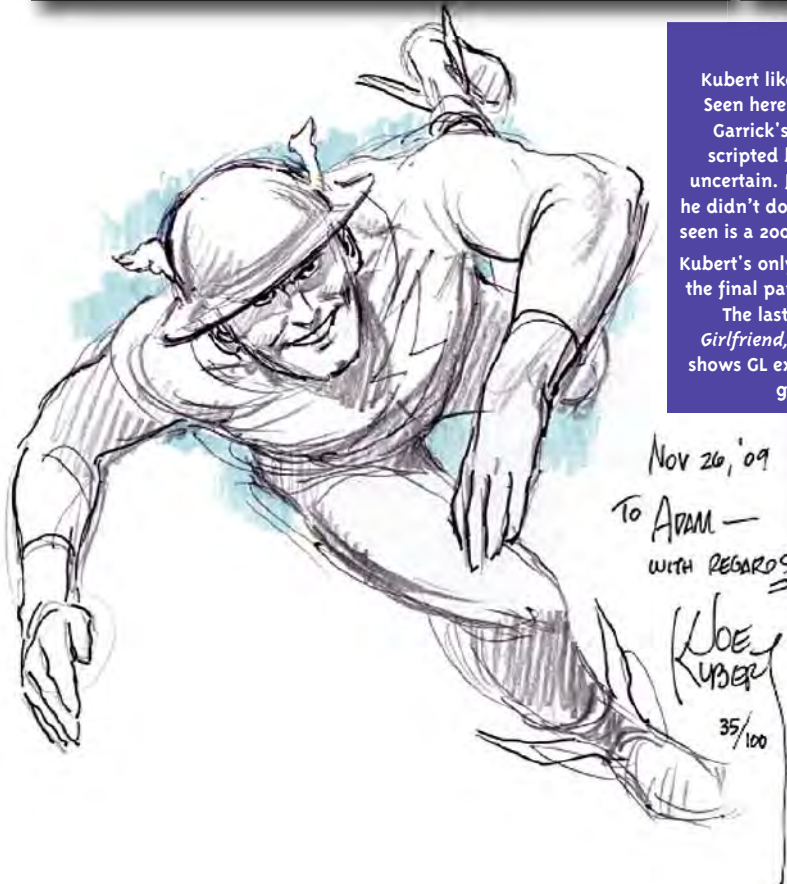
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**"Volton" Voltage**

Above is Joe's "Volton" splash page from Holyoke's *Cat-Man Comics* #10 (May 1942), while at right is the one from #11 (June '42). His "Volton" splash from #8 can be seen on p. 3. Scripter(s) unknown. All are taken from Mike Bromberg's digest-size *Volton Fanzine* #1 (May 2004), which reproduced the art directly from the original comics. You can contact Mike about it at [mike@designbymike.com](mailto:mike@designbymike.com). [©2013 the respective copyright holders.]





**Kubert Makes A Splash—With "The Flash"**

Kubert likewise drew a handful of stories in *Flash Comics* that starred "The Flash." Seen here are a tale of time travel with a twist from issue #88 (Oct. 1947) and Jay Garrick's first encounter with The Thorn (nee Rose) in #89 (Nov. '47), the latter scripted by Robert Kanigher. Inking of #88 is by Moe Worthman, with the writer uncertain. Joe clearly had a flare for drawing the Scarlet Speedster, and it's a shame he didn't do more of his adventures—or some of "Green Lantern," for that matter. Also seen is a 2009 sketch of the Golden Age Flash, courtesy of the Palantine News Network. Kubert's only known Golden Age drawings of the original Green Lantern were done for the final panels of the third, never-published Rose & Thorn story in the "Flash" series. The last two pages of that story were printed for the first time in *Superman's Girlfriend, Lois Lane* #133 (Sept.-Oct. 1971); below is the only panel in the tale that shows GL except for a far-off flying pose. Thanks to Glenn—who never got around to giving us his last name—and to Doug Martin. [©2013 DC Comics.]



# A Chat With JOE KUBERT

## Talking About Tor... Sgt. Rock & Robert Kanigher... The Kubert School... & The Future Of Comics

Interview Conducted by Bill Schelly

Transcribed by Brian K. Morris

**INTERVIEWER'S INTRODUCTION:** *Hard as it is for me to believe, over eight years have passed since I sat down with Joe Kubert in his office at the Kubert School to tape an interview with him for my biography Man of Rock. Joe and his wife Muriel made me feel very welcome during my visit to Dover, New Jersey, in 2004, even though Joe himself wasn't all that enthusiastic about the project. He wanted to focus on current and future projects, and isn't the type of guy who spends a lot of time thinking about the past. Moreover, he found the idea of a book about his life to be embarrassing, and he certainly didn't want anyone to think that it was his idea. Even so, I found that Joe was, by nature, a gracious individual, who tolerated my intrusion into his life with remarkably good grace. Maybe he realized how much the project meant to me.*

*Anyway, I have nothing but warm memories of that visit, and the response to Man of Rock when it was published in 2008 was most gratifying. Only now, for this issue of Alter Ego, have I revisited the transcript of the conversation Joe and I had that day, to pull out a few choice sections which I think will be as interesting to you as they were to me.*

*After discussing his childhood and his early years as an aspiring artist, his marriage to Muriel, and the 3-D period at St. John, our talk turned to a subject near to his heart: Tor, his caveman with a conscience, who was a huge milestone in his career in 1953 and 1954. I wanted to hear in his own words how the idea for Tor was born, and what it was that he was trying to accomplish with the character, as well as about numerous other matters. What follows is an excerpt from that interview, conducted on October 23, 2004. —Bill.*

### Talking about Tor

**BILL SCHELLY:** *When you returned from the military, it seems to me like this is the beginning of your mature period, artistically speaking. Because the themes you explored in Tor, your caveman character, are pretty deep. Would you agree?*

**JOE KUBERT:** Yeah.

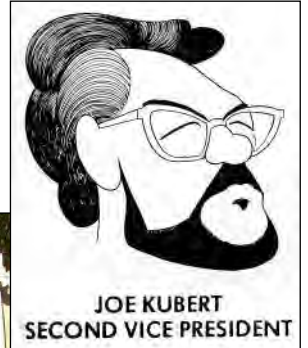
**BS:** *As I understand it, it came right after your military experience.*

**KUBERT:** Actually, the idea for Tor came when I was going over to Europe when I was in the military, not after. I still have notes that I made when I had the idea—someplace in the house.

**BS:** *How did the idea come about?*

**KUBERT:** When I was heading out, I was on the boat. I was working for a small newspaper they turned out on the boat, a daily thing they printed on—what do you call it again? A mimeograph machine.

**BS:** *If it had black printing, it would probably be mimeograph. You did the artwork on stencils with a stylus.*



#### School Days

The Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art, photographed in 2007 by Joe's son Adam Kubert—and a caricature of Joe done in 1982 (but probably not by him) for the National Cartoonists Society (with thanks to Shane Foley). [©2013 Estate of Joe Kubert.]

**KUBERT:** Yeah. They put out daily bulletins like that, and I was doing some work on that. I'll never forget the trip on the boat. Anybody who's been on a troop ship, you're sleeping four or six people on these pallets, packing one on top of another, down in the hold. But, you know, we're a bunch of guys who are all going through the same thing, so no big deal. But during the trip, I was sketching a character in a little spiral notebook ... that I felt was really a Stone Age Tarzan. And I named him Tor. That was my intention, my initial thought. I just got to thinking about the character in the, if I remember correctly, ten days to Europe on the boat. We landed in Hamburg, Germany, and I took the train down to the southern end of Germany where I was stationed in Sonthofen.

**BS:** *When you read the stories, you just feel that there was a sort of message in the "Tor" strips. That was new, although.... you hadn't written much before "Tor."*

**KUBERT:** No, just a little.

**BS:** *So this was you emerging as a writer/artist, coming into your full thing.*

**KUBERT:** That's right.

**BS:** *But you really can see a maturity, because Tor—he's sort of like Tarzan with dinosaurs, but the hook that makes Tor work so well is the idea of a caveman dealing with situations that might show him developing ethics and so on.*

**KUBERT:** My whole theory of this was that people really, essentially and basically, never really have changed in terms of having a sense of right and wrong, and they would react to some degree, basically, the same. People are still affected, I think, by the same things today that affected them hundreds of years ago and perhaps even back to the basics, back to the caveman.

**BS:** *It was certainly a canvas where it gets down to the basics...*

**KUBERT:** Yeah.

**BS:** *...so it's a good way to dramatize those things.*

**KUBERT:** Because that's the way I felt about it. And there are glitches and there are holes in those original stories, of course. I mean, I knew years ago that those beings at that time bore no physical relationship to the kind of things that I was drawing... and then having dinosaurs at the same time.

**BS:** *Well, it's a fantasy construct, created to dramatize these different ideas that you might have had.*

**KUBERT:** Right, right, right.

**BS:** *But it feels more contemporary.*

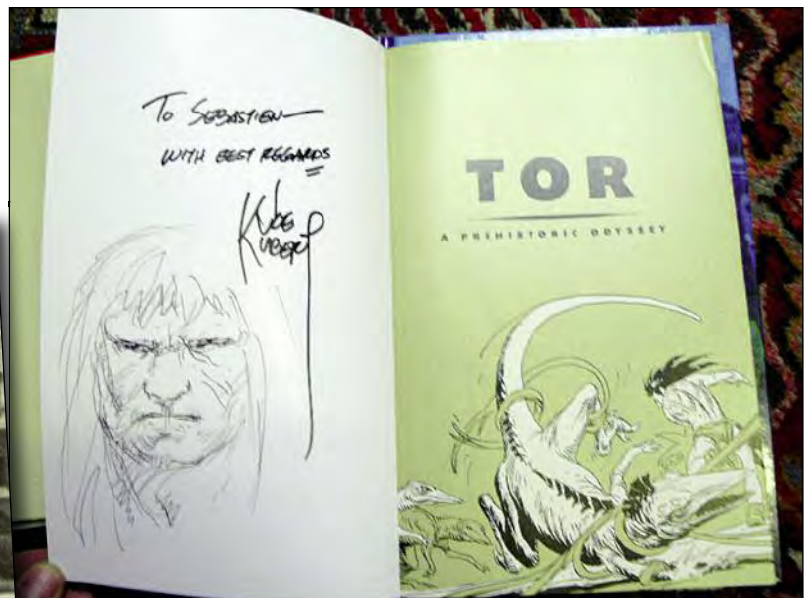


**A Personalized Primeval**

Joe Kubert & Norman Maurer's personalized introductions to the first issues of *St. John's 1,000,000 Years Ago #1* and *The Three Stooges #1* made readers feel a part of things.

(Above:) Joe drew his partner and himself on the first interior color page of the former comic, which featured the debut of his caveman hero Tor; this is the first panel of that intro. On the comic's inside front cover was a typeset greeting and the famous, oft-reproduced photo of Kubert & Maurer.

(Right:) The dynamic splash page of the first "Tor" story, the second interior page from that issue. DC reprinted the entirety of the six *St. John* issues in hardcover editions in 2001. [©2013 Estate of Joe Kubert.]

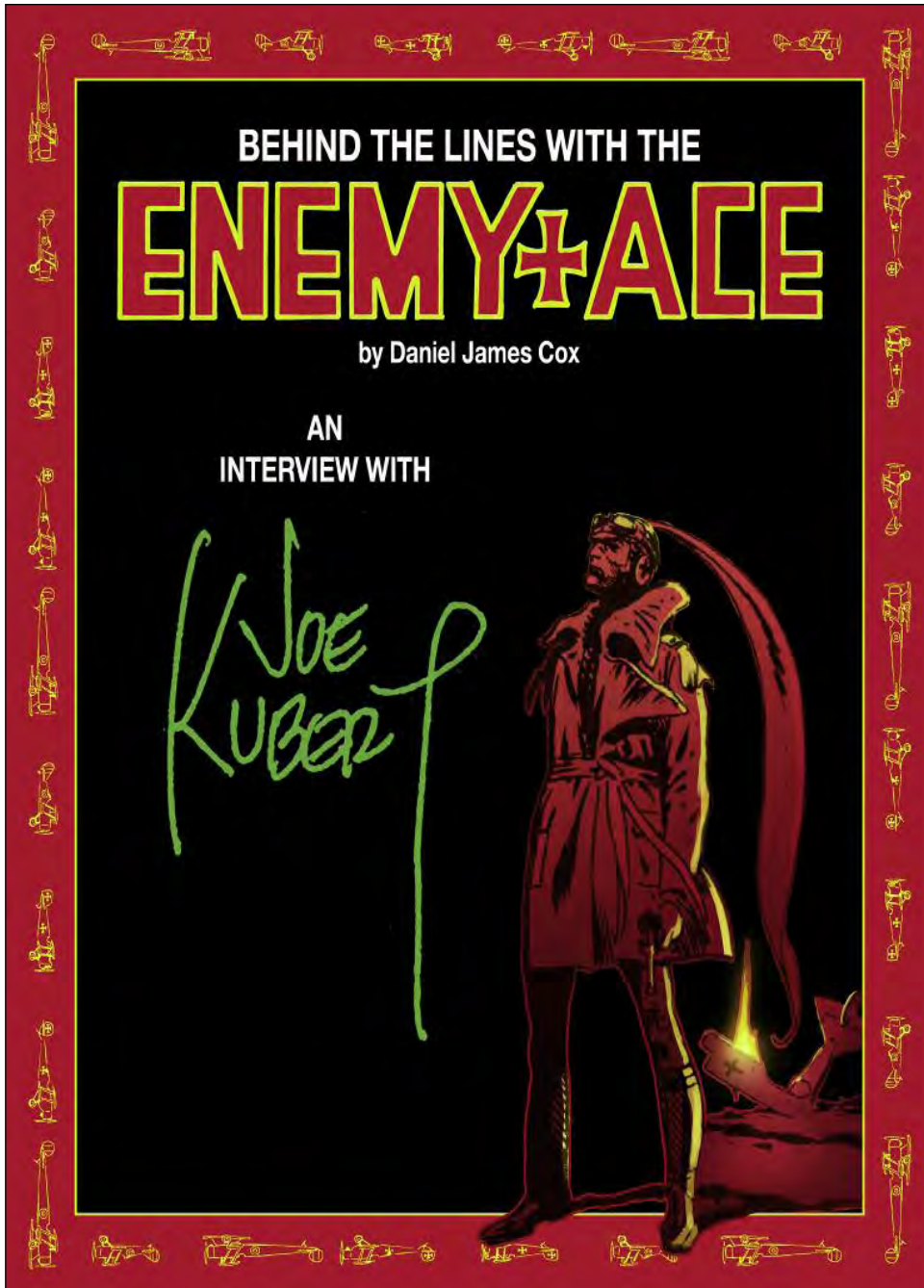


**An American Caveman In Paris**

(Left:) Joe in Paris, 1953, as a guest of the U.S. Army. It was during this tour abroad, during which he was stationed in West Germany, that he conceived the idea of Tor—and incidentally, what became the germ of 3-D comics. Thanks to Bill Schelly, who was given a copy of this photo by the late Muriel Kubert.

(Right:) A few years ago, the artist drew this head of Tor opposite the title page of a DC *Tor* hardcover. Scan sent by Belgian collector Dominique Leonard.

[©2013 Estate of Joe Kubert.]



**DANIEL JAMES COX:** *Joe, thanks for agreeing to do this. I don't want to gush too much, but I'm a huge fan of your work and consider "Enemy Ace" to be a groundbreaking series.*

**JOE KUBERT:** Well, thank you very much. I'm happy to talk about it.

**DJC:** *So take us back in time to 1965, when you are working monthly on Our Army at War for DC. Can you remember when was the first time Robert Kanigher mentioned the idea of "Enemy Ace" to you?*

**KUBERT:** I can't remember the time or precise year, but I was working closely with Bob Kanigher, who was probably one of the best and most prolific writers in the comic book business at the time. Bob was my editor for a long time and we had a great working relationship. I understood him and he understood me, and the results from that relationship we were both very happy with.

The idea of "Enemy Ace" came up when Bob was riding on the crest of the popularity of "Sgt. Rock" and he was constantly looking for something different to do... a new type of character or a different spin on the storytelling... and he hit on this idea of telling the story from the enemy side.

You see, we had attempted to do the Korean War and Vietnam War previously, but none of them were successful. But with "Sgt. Rock" and World War II, well, that was accepted, so Bob focused on World War I and decided to base the character on the infamous Red Baron. I thought that was a great idea and set about researching not only the Red Baron, but I also got as many books and as much material as I could find—books about the construction of the Tri-Wing Fokker that he flew—as I felt it was important that I find out what it might be like to be in one of those things before I could convey that to the reader. Which by the way, still

amazes me... paper, wood, and cloth flying thousands of feet in the air and having people shoot bullets at you. I mean, that's nuts. But anyway, the reason I did all that was because I wanted the stories to feel as realistic as possible.

**DJC:** *So did you purchase a toy model or anything so you could depict the Fokker from different angles?*

**KUBERT:** No, no... I didn't use models, as I felt that would restrict me. I didn't want it to be formal, strict, or too mechanical. I wanted to be able to exaggerate the forms, which I thought would result in much more dynamic flying sequences. So I read as many of the plans as I could find and studied World War I flyers, trying to get a feel for what the experience must have been like. One thing I

**INTERVIEWER'S NOTE:** *As a lifelong Joe Kubert fan, I eagerly devoured Bill Schelly's biography Man of Rock. Though it is a handsome and fitting tribute to Joe's considerable body of exceptional work, I found there wasn't as much information therein as I wanted to see about the development of what I consider the apex of Joe career... the Enemy Ace!*

*I soon realized that, if I was going to get to the bottom of how this series came about, then I would need to write the article myself. That meant interviewing Joe, which got me pretty excited.*

*Joe kindly agreed to the interview, and I recorded [the following] phone conversation with him on Tuesday, November 29, 2011....*

—Daniel James Cox.



would go from there. Then I sit down and make a number of sketches and start to get a feel for the character. As I drew, I found that I wanted him to be a Germanic-looking character (someone who clearly looks like a German), and also officious-looking. When he puts on his uniform, his attitude conveys confidence... the type of character who could be a lead in a romantic movie!

But I also wanted him to be the type of character who shows his emotion through his face... with his expressions. I also found that I liked him with high cheekbones and

almost feminine lip. But, most importantly, I wanted him to have "tight" eyes... almost birdlike, which I thought would be fitting for a World War I flyer. I also made him a tall character... a slim character who would be free to maneuver the Fokker.

And it was the same process for all the characters... The Black Wolf, St. George, The Hangman... they were all started as Bob's ideas!

**DJC:** *Fantastic... and clearly Von Hammer is a very intense character. And what about his outfit, with the distinct helmet? Did that come from research?*



**KUBERT:** The costume is an amalgam of all the photographs and flyers that I had found during my research, as all the flyers didn't dress alike. The clothes were different... some would wear scarves, while others wouldn't. But the helmet itself, and the emblem on the helmet and the goggles with the flair... I just made that up. It was artistic licence, because I doubt any flyer in his right mind would wear them!

**DJC:** [laughs] *That same year the "Enemy Ace" appeared in his own issue of Showcase #57... how did that come about?*

**KUBERT:** It was really a business decision and Bob's decision as the editor. Mostly they're a financial decision! In the end, the only reason we stopped "Enemy Ace" was because the sales didn't warrant it.

**DJC:** *Can you talk a little about that infamous cover of this issue: you chose to do a montage of the planes in a dogfight with [the image of] Von Hammer ghosted behind them (which was very cinematic for its time). Can you talk a little bit about your thought processes behind that?*

### Our Enemy Ace At War

(Above:) Splash page of the first "Enemy Ace" story, which appeared in *Our Army at War* #115 (Feb. 1965). (Above right:) Less than half a year later, after three appearances, ironically, in a title named after the U.S. Army, this feature about a First World War German pilot modeled loosely after Baron von Richtofen ("The Red Baron," seen in photo at right) was given a two-issue berth in DC's tryout comic *Showcase*, beginning with #57 (July-Aug. '65). Script by Robert Kanigher; art by Joe Kubert. The entirety of the series has been reprinted in two color hardcover editions of *The Enemy Ace Archives*, and in black-&-white in a *Showcase Presents* volume. [©2013 DC Comics.]

learned was that the cockpit had holes cut through the bottom of the fuselage so the pilot didn't have to look over the cockpit, but could look straight down and see what was below them! But that was just one of a number of things I learned, and I tried to get a feel for what it was like to fly. For example, how they maneuvered the plane, how the controls worked, the wires... until I understood the construction of the plane, which then allowed me to exaggerate the forms and illustrate the stories in a much more dynamic way than copying a model toy would. Hopefully, I achieved that!

**DJC:** *Well, obviously, since I'm writing this article, I'm biased... but yes—you certainly did!*

**KUBERT:** Oh, well, thank you very much!

**DJC:** *So let's talk a little bit about the development of Von Hammer as a character who has a distinct look... as do all your characters, which is one of the aspects of your work that I love. Can you talk a little bit about the process you went through designing him?*

**KUBERT:** It always starts with Bob! He would hand me a written description of what he felt the character could look like, and I

# A Brief Eulogy for JOE KUBERT – Humanitarian

A Speech By KEVIN BROGAN, September 8, 2012

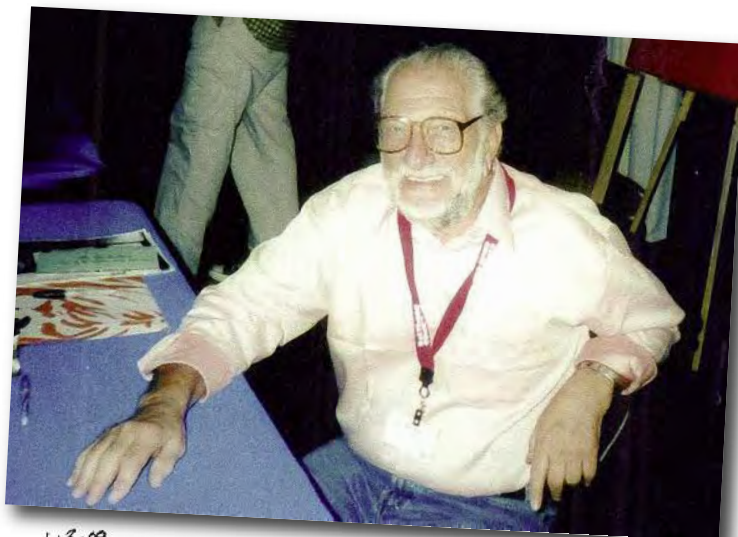
**A/E EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION:** Many at the 2012 Harvey Awards ceremony held at the Baltimore Comic Con were touched by the speech given by Hero Initiative volunteer Kevin Brogan to introduce the Dick Giordano Humanitarian of the Year Award on September 8, 2012. Some were moved to tears. Kevin and Hero Initiative Administrator Jim McLauchlin made a transcript of this short speech available to us, and, after a few introductory notes which we asked Kevin to write, it is presented below....

## One Fan's Story

**M**y childhood hobby was comics. I loved the stories and the art. I wrote and drew my own characters when I was young. (E.g., "BIRD Squad"—a 12-member team in the Bureau of Illegal Research and Development. In one of my stories the BIRD Squad yanks Superboy from the time current for illegal time travel. My thought at the time was it would be the predecessor to the Science Police. Jeanette Kahn never returned my phone calls.) Today I am an engineer, but in a parallel world where Gwen Stacy had lived or where The Huntress is Helena Wayne, only child of Batman and Catwoman, I am a comic book creator.

To bring some of that life into this world I work with Hero Initiative. As many of you know, Hero Initiative is dedicated to helping creators in need of financial assistance or dealing with medical issues. By being a part of this charity run by and for comics professionals, I am given the chance to be part of the comic book community. Where this community really thrives is at conventions; my favorite one is Baltimore Comic Con.

If you've ever been to Baltimore Comic Con, then you know what it feels like. Baltimore Comic Con is different



## Memories Of Joe

Joe Kubert at the Big Apple Con in New York City in November 2008 and a Hawkman drawing he did especially for Kevin Brogan that same year. The photo is courtesy of Jim Murtagh & Keif Simon. [Hawkman TM & ©2013 DC Comics.]

from the rest of the convention scene. It is 100% comic books, comic book art, comic book artists and writers. All things comics; nothing else. If you have been there, you know we are all the proverbial kid in the candy store, more so than any other convention. What makes this show special are the comic creators that have been guests, and Baltimore's commitment to them. Baltimore Comic Con is the host of the Harvey Awards.

Baltimore's commitment to the artists and its award show made it the ideal place for Hero Initiative to offer up its award of Lifetime Achievement and The Dick Giordano Humanitarian Award. Over the years we have given awards to legends—Stan Lee, John Romita, Jerry Robinson, Nick Cardy, Joe Kubert, Neal Adams—and the superstars—George Pérez, Walt Simonson,

in the **GOLDEN & SILVER AGES**  
A Six-Part Remembrance

-VI-



WHEN **JOE KUBERT** PASSED AWAY LAST AUGUST, HE LEFT BEHIND **THOUSANDS** OF BRILLIANT PAGES FROM HIS **EIGHT-DECADE** CAREER. JOE'S WORK WILL FOREVER REMAIN HIS **GREATEST** GIFT TO HIS FANS.

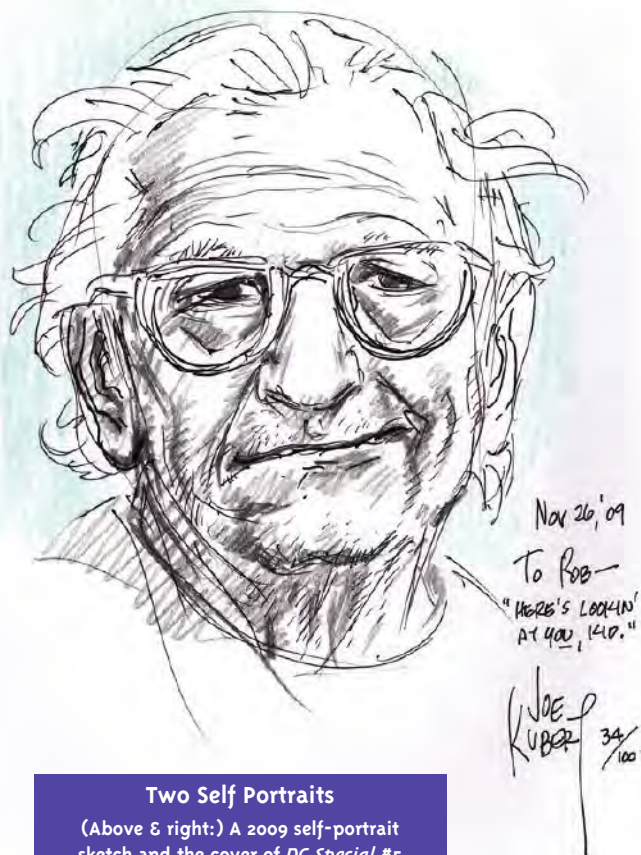
BUT A LUCKY FEW HAVE SOMETHING **EXTRA** TO REMEMBER HIM BY-- **PERSONALIZED** DRAWINGS DONE BY THE MASTER! MANY HAVE NEVER SEEN PRINT BEFORE.

THESE DRAWINGS, SHARED BY JOE'S DEVOTED FANS, ARE A FITTING TRIBUTE TO ONE OF COMICS' MOST **BELOVED** CREATORS.

THIS ONE'S FOR YOU, JOE!

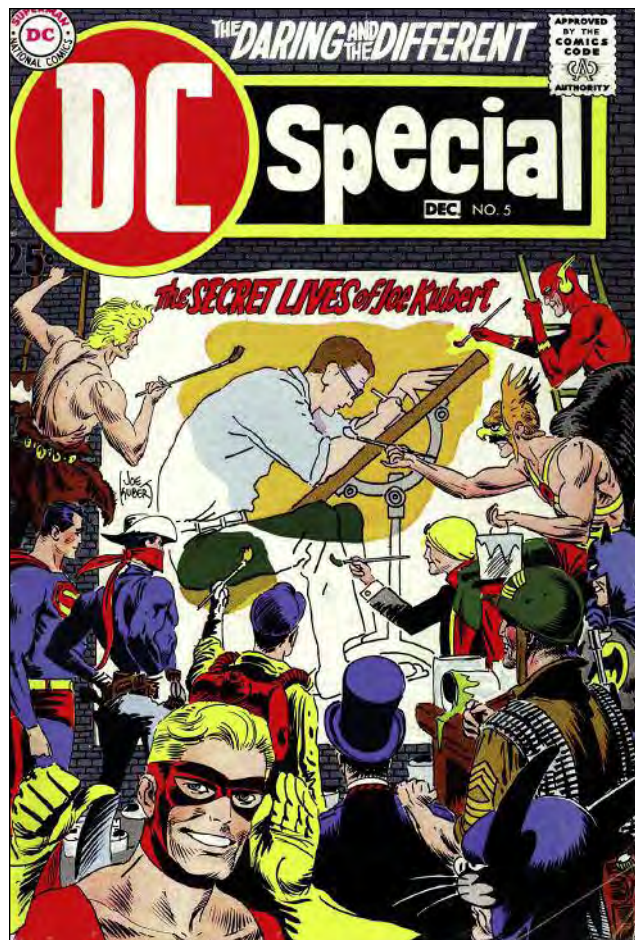
(Left:) 1990 cover to Al Dellings' *Joe Kubert: The War Years*. [Sgt. Rock, Hawkman, Viking Prince, Flash TM & © 2013 DC Comics; other art ©2013 Estate of Joe Kubert.]

**THE JOE KUBERT SKETCHBOOK!**



### Two Self Portraits

(Above & right:) A 2009 self-portrait sketch and the cover of *DC Special* #5 (Oct.-Dec. 1969). [©2013 Estate of Joe Kubert & DC Comics, respectively.]



## The Joe Kubert Sketchbook!

### The Rock of DC Co.

**J**oe Kubert's comics have been part of my life ever since I was a kid in the late '50s. Even then, Joe's elegant art always packed an emotional punch, whether on "Sgt. Rock" ("The Rock of Easy Co."), "Rip Hunter," "Sea Devils," or his classic "Hawkman" comics.

When I was a teenager drawing my own amateur comics, Joe was there to inspire me. No one drew wrinkles and baggy eyes better. He and Steve Ditko demonstrated how beautiful human imperfection could be.

Though Joe worked primarily for DC, he also produced striking work for Avon, Lev Gleason, EC, Marvel, St. John, and others. Regardless of the company logo, Joe Kubert always delivered art with uncommon heart and humanity. His lithe heroes, sexy women, and gritty backgrounds were instantly recognizable.

This was especially evident when I recently visited the *Joe Kubert Never Dies* website at: <http://kubertneverdies.wordpress.com>. This site consists of dozens of commissioned sketches and finished art by Joe, posted by his fans. We're pleased to present a small sampling of these rarely-seen treasures in honor of Joe Kubert—the Rock of DC Co.!

### A Sad Day

(Right:) Joe drew this pensive Hawkman drawing in 1993. Hawkman was one of Joe's signature characters in the '40s. Later he and writer Gardner Fox co-created a new Silver Age version in *The Brave and the Bold* #34 (Feb. 1961). [Hawkman TM & ©2013 DC Comics.]





P.C. HAMERLINCK'S

# FCA

Fawcett Collectors of America



## Part III of "The INDESTRUCTIBLE ANTAGONIST!"

#175  
May 2013



[Photo from back cover of *Captain Video* #1, ©2013 the respective copyright holders.]

### Special Introduction

In the previous two issues of *FCA* (and *Alter Ego*), we reprinted the first 13 pages of the above-titled story from Fawcett Publications' licensed comic *Captain Video* (June 1951). The three-media career of Captain Video's adventures (TV, comics, and movie serial) will be covered next issue. This story, whose scripter is uncertain, was penciled by George Evans and inked by Martin Thall. Thanks to Rod Beck and P.C. Hamerlinck for the scans of this 19-page spectacular.

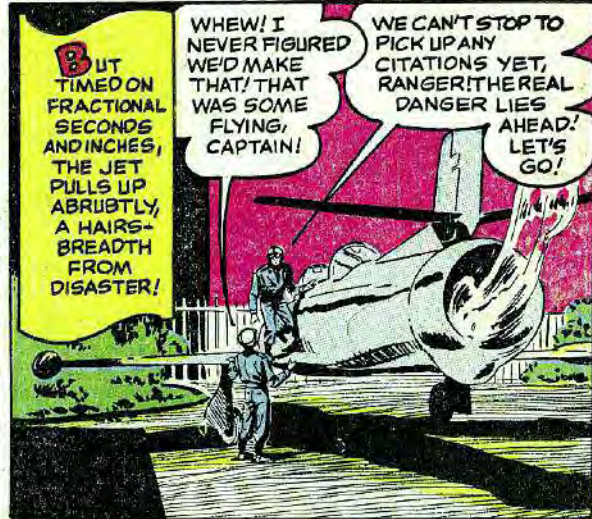
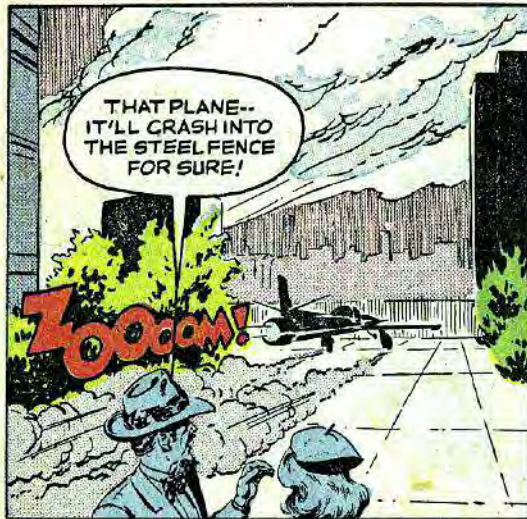
The tale begins with Captain Video and the young Video Ranger discovering that the brilliant scientist Prof. Seminik has been murdered—by his own creation, the diabolical robot Makino. Stealing the Captain's Whirlojet, Makino vows to prove his own superiority to the humankind that spawned him—by forcing men of science to try to ask him questions he cannot answer, then slaying them when he answers them easily, as he always does. The Captain and the Ranger barely manage to prevent Makino from killing a Nobel prize-winner, but find their ray-guns have no effect on the robot's super-alloyed body. In their auxiliary jet, the pair head for the United Nations in New York... which doesn't really have much of a runway for landing....

—Roy Thomas, Guest *FCA* Co-Editor.

**NOTE:** Artist/writer Marc Swayze had Captain Marvel handle his showdown with the evil robot Klang a bit more physically in *Capt. Marvel Adventure* #15 (Sept. 1942) than Captain Video did re Makino nine years later! [Shazam hero TM & ©2013 DC Comics.]



### CAPTAIN VIDEO



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**ALTER EGO #116**

**JOE KUBERT TRIBUTE!** Four Kubert interviews, art by **RUSS HEATH, NEAL ADAMS, MURPHY ANDERSON, SHEDDON MOLDOFF, IRV NOVICK,** and others, **MR. MONSTER'S COMIC CRYPT, BILL SCHELLY's** Comic Fandom Archive, FCA's Captain Video conclusion by **GEORGE EVANS** that inspired Avengers foe Ultron, cover by **KUBERT**, with a portrait by **DANIEL JAMES COX!**

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[Story page ©2013 the respective copyright holders.]

Roy T. here: The names that comics writers give incidental characters in their stories fascinates me. I'm forever trying to figure out their origins. Now, "Sir Reginald Darsely," the captive Nobel-winner from the preceding few pages, may have got his name from the celebrated "Mr. Darcy" in Jane Austen's immortal novel *Pride and Prejudice*... or maybe not. "Prof. Arvin Priestley" is a bit easier, since *Joseph Priestley* (1733-1804) was a famed natural philosopher and chemist who is generally (though not exclusively) credited with the discovery of oxygen. Wonder what we were all breathing before then?