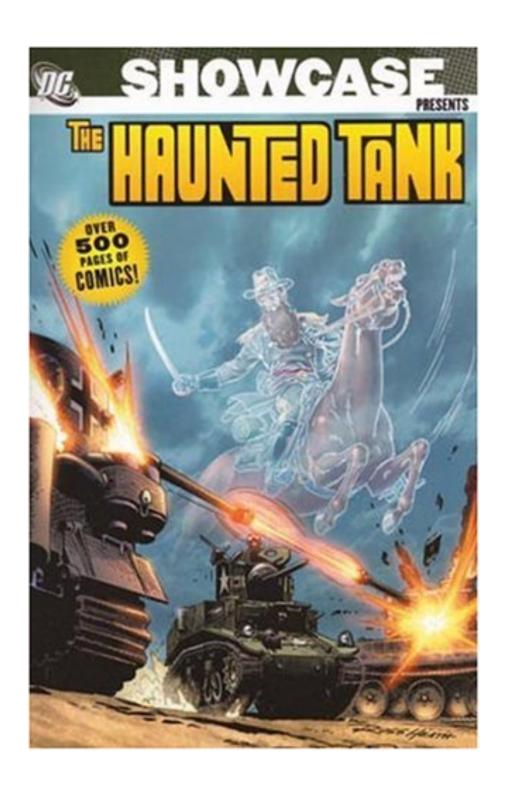


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Grade 4 Up—Cavalryman Jeb Stuart is a spotter for a small crew of men in an equally small M-3 tank during World War II. The tank's small-caliber cannon and short firing range make it an unlikely survivor against the enemy's heavier artillery, but through guile and unexpected warnings it is able to maneuver through a series of combat triumphs. The warnings come from the ghost of Jeb Stuart, a former general in the Rebel army and the namesake of the tank's spotter. The individual stories are a series of strategic mysteries: how to outwit superior firepower, how to find a ghost tank in a battlefield, how to signal to one's comrades that a spy has infiltrated their unit, and so forth. Despite the enigmatic clues provided by the guardian ghost, the odds never feel like they are unrealistically stacked, and the victories of the M-3's crew seem fairly won, and hard won, which creates a satisfying suspense. And while the prose is overcooked and the regular reintroduction of the ghost and the fact that only Jeb can see him gets tiresome, the detailed artwork is exceptionally good, with beautiful technical detail and lush, textured shadows. This reprint volume is likely to be better at providing dedicated readers with a fascinating view into a unique story conceit than at finding new readers and exposing them to a historical genre of comics gone by.—Benjamin Russell, Belmont High School, MA Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

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Stunning Russ Heath Art highlights this Book!

By Tim Janson

The Haunted Tank is one of the more bizarre concepts produced by DC Comics in the 1960's and serves to

display that DC wasn't quite as stodgy as modern day critics have made them out to be during the decade of the 1960's. This belief largely stems from DC's super hero comics largely not matching the innovation that Marvel was showing with the genre at the time. It seems much of their innovation came in titles that may have seemed disposable at the time, and yet were not only very good, but had some of the very best art being produced at the company in the early 60's.

On the surface, the story of a WWII M3 Tank that is haunted by the ghost of Confederate Civil War General Jeb Stuart may seem ridiculous, and it is, but that doesn't mean it's not very good. We meet the crew of the tank: Rick, Arch, Slim, and the tank commander Jeb Stuart Smith who was named after the famous Confederate hero. Friends since childhood, the four now find themselves in Europe as crew of the tank which is aided in times of need by the good general's ghost. Only Jeb Smith ever seems to hear and see the ghost who comes to him with advice from time to time, often cryptic and Jeb takes it all in stride. After all, something had to help them stand up to German Tiger tanks that were far larger and out-gunned the little M3's.

The stories in the book follow a basic formula with the crew's M3 usually coming up against greater odds or obstacles and the spirit of Jeb Stuart helping out. The writer, Bob Kanigher was smart enough to not always let it be this spectral aid that gets the crew out of harm's way, often it's the little advice the ghost gives Jeb that allows he and his crew use their own skills to the best of their abilities. This may all seem pretty silly by today's standards but when you consider the era of the early 1960's, WWII was very glamorous among kids, particularly since most were children of veterans themselves. These stories from G.I. Combat #87 - 119 all came out 15 - 20 years after WWII ended yet the war was still very front and center in pop culture in films, TV, and comic books. And if you're the average early 60's kid, what's better than combining slam bang tank battles with ghosts? Heck, it's marketing genius if you ask me!

The other thing that makes these stories wonderful is the fantastic art mainly done by Russ Heath and Joe Kubert...two renowned comic legends who toiled away on what was certainly a second or third string title. I'm a huge Kubert fan, particularly of his Tarzan work, but Heath really outdoes him on this book, especially the magnificent covers which are reproduced inside. Check out the cover to issue #103 as American jeep collides with a German tank. The tank's main gun is smashing through the jeep's windshield as the American soldiers leaps from it, firing his machine gun at the Nazi gunner. Great stuff! In addition to these issues of G.I. Combat, the book also reprints Brave & the Bold #52 featuring a team-up of the Haunted Tank, Sgt. Rock, and Lt. Johnny Cloud.

Just a fabulous throwback to the early 1960's!

Reviewed by Tim Janson

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.Great compilation.By Pen NameOne of my favorites growing up. Great compilation.

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