

**James J. KIMBLE**

***Soldier and Savior: Visual Propaganda, Narrative Inevitability,  
and the Case of the Kid in Upper 4***

This essay investigates the rhetorical dynamics of “the Kid in Upper 4”, a World War II advertisement in American newspapers and magazines that purported to voice the thoughts of a lonely GI on his way to war. The ad and its sequels – which many advertising historians consider to be some of the most influential appeals of all time – allow scrutiny of the relationship between war-time depictions of soldiers and what some have termed “messianic militarism”. Building both on narrative theories of discourse as well as on recent work in visual rhetoric, the essay argues that the Kid figure represented a twist on the existing trope of heroic soldier depictions in that it emphasized both identification and deification. Ultimately, the analysis suggests that the Kid’s episodic adventures were compelling because they presented readers with a comforting version of the sacred inevitability of an Allied victory.

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