



Forum: Comic Book Corner

Topic: Favorite defunct Comic Book Company

Subject: Gold Key

Posted by: DavidEdwardMartin

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I must be old. GOLD KEY Comics was my favorite defunct line. They were an operation of Dell Comics who gained independence and produced some really neat books.

--> Wally Wood produced two grim and utterly merciless issues of TOTAL WAR, which he then left when Gold Key wanted to tone it down a little. Still, as M.A.R.S. PATROL: TOTAL WAR it was still a unique look at a contemporary war fought in modern America.

--> Russ Manning did a great run on TARZAN and various spinoff books.

--> SPACE FAMILY ROBINSON was a unique comic book, a non-militaristic space exploration book. Dan Spiegel's artwork gave a mind-opening array of aliens, their ships, and their worlds.

--> MAGNUS ROBOT FIGHTER was Russ Manning's scifi take on Tarzan.

--> TUROK SON OF STONE actually predated Gold Key by several years but it flourished, giving us a great epic of Indian warriors trapped in a valley filled with prehistoric life, from dinosaurs to cavemen.

--> DOCTOR SOLAR MAN OF THE ATOM was GK's superhero book. A physics or chemistry lesson hidden in every adventure tale.

--> BORIS KARLOFF and TWILIGHT ZONE, two horror books that did pretty well despite being saddled with pre-Warren CCA limits.

--> RIPLEY'S BELIEVE IT OR NOT, an anthology of true weird happenings.

--And a host of entertaining one-shots like--

FIREBALL XL-5

G8 AND HIS BATTLE ACES

DOC SAVAGE

JOHN STEED AND EMMA PEEL (someone else had the name "Avengers" apparently)

KING KONG (which I stupidly did not buy at the time because it cost 35 cents, which I thought was ridiculously expensive!)

Gold Key had no ads for the first several years of their life. Which meant the back cover was a reprint of the cover art, minus the cover text. This was wonderful, as the Gold Key covers WERE PAINTED! AND BY REAL BOOK ILLUSTRATORS! Classics Illustrated was the only other company using painted covers at the time.

When TSR was in their 1980s ascendancy, they were thinking of buying the Gold Key properties and reviving the comics line. Unfortunately/Fortunately nothing came of that plan. A couple years later, Jim Shooter's Valiant Comics bought MAGNUS, SOLAR, and TUROK. Drastically revamped to appeal for the Dark Age of Comics, they lacked the charm of the originals.