Task for Reg Saunders: an Indigenous War Hero

Reg Saunders images

This image shows Reg Saunders removing his shirt before fighting a drunken soldier who refuses to follow an order. The exaggerated musculature of RS’s body emphasises his physical strength and the smile on his face suggests something of his character: he is not afraid to fight to uphold his principles. The verbiage in the speech bubble explains RS’s reason for fighting. This is a medium shot with RS displayed front-on to the viewer but there is no involvement between the viewer and RS. His gaze is directed not at the viewer but at the drunken soldier in the cell. The image is dominant but the print text in the text box is important in explaining the significance of what is happening: the legend of RS is born.

This is a long shot showing violent action involving a large number of soldiers, all of whom have been depicted in a fairly generic way except for RS who is foregrounded in the image and recognisable by his brown skin. The strong vectors formed by the extreme angle of RS’s legs and by the angle of his gun and bayonet represent him as a soldier capable of ruthlessly killing his enemy. This shot is cinematic and the viewer sees the scene dispassionately from a distance. RS, however, occupies a position of power because he is located above the gaze of the viewer. The scene is vibrant because of the saturated colours, despite the dark shading, which suggests the viewer’s likely emotional response to the scene.
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