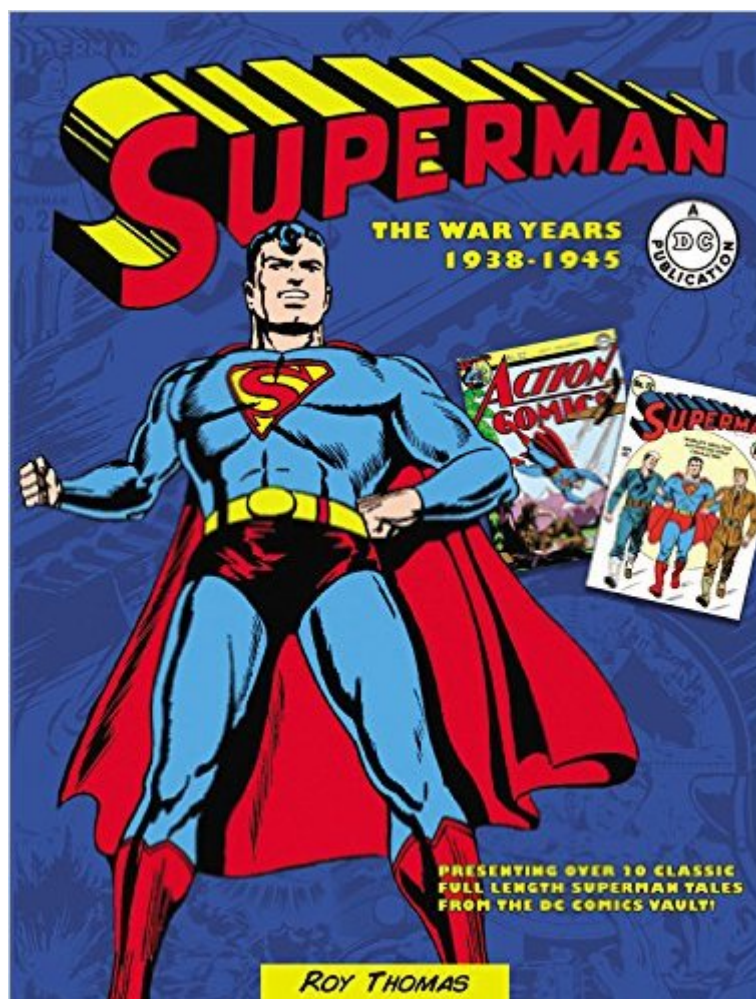


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# Superman: The War Years 1938-1945



## Synopsis

Faster than a speeding bullet! More powerful than a locomotive! It's a bird, it's a plane, it's Superman! The Man of Steel is one of the most recognized characters in pop culture. Though he may not be from this planet, his dedication to protecting its people is inspiring. Superman: The War Years 1938-1945 shows how his introduction at the start of World War II lifted the spirits of a weary country and brought people the hero they so desperately needed.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (17 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

I loved this volume. I'm annoyed when people try to pretend to be authorities on various subjects, and then down rate items, based on factors that have absolutely nothing to do with the item they're supposed to be rating. That's all too often the case with comics, video collections and other specialty media. This is a great book of Superman comics. If you are a fan of Superman, or are buying for a fan, you can't go wrong. Unless you are a hard corps nerd, and have been collecting since the 40's, you probably don't have all of these stories. And if you do, they're rarely as nice or accessible as this. Hardcover books (especially in the world of comics) are always welcome additions to someone's library and his edition is a heavy, well made, book will be no exception. The pages are thick, glossy and colorful. The printing is legible, but it still has that classic comic book look about it. Whether you are buying this as a gift, or for yourself, you won't regret this purchase. I bought it for a nephew who's just getting into classic comics. I read through it and almost decided to keep it myself. He was extremely grateful, both for the content and the quality of it. It's much better than I

thought it would be, and I expected a very good book.

I thought this was a fascinating tome on Superman and WWII. Roy Thomas collects more than 20 stories and covers from Action Comics and Superman that have to do with WWII, including the very first Superman story. Thomas also appropriately divides this collection in five parts which are congruent with America's relation to the war, and includes his own editorial comments and historical facts as a background for the stories to follow. In this respect, Thomas's work is almost scholarly, and it is quite informative. Through Thomas's five divisions, readers get to see Superman's evolution from a pacifist/isolationist to a direct participant in a war effort according to America's own evolution during this period. And if you are not so aware of WWII history, the information here is helpful in giving you a glimpse at America's shifting position throughout the war. The stories included here are the ones where WWII, whether directly or indirectly, are the center or background for the plots. Thomas also includes a couple of features: one from Look magazine and another one from newspapers. However, there was one small question-mark raised at the end of this tome. Was there supposed to be one story after the fifth division titled "The Battle of the Atoms"? I was left wondering. Readers also get to see early characterizations of Clark Kent, Lois Lane, a more destructive Superman, and a first glimpse at a red-headed Luthor. This volume was nicely done and carefully prepared.

I will admit that my comments on this book are tempered by several things. The primary point is that the majority of the stories in this book have been reprinted many, many, many times. The hardcover Superman Archives reprinted Superman 1-35 and the Action Archives reprinted the Superman stories from Action Comics 1-68; well into 1944. The lesser priced Superman Chronicles paperbacks were designed to reprint every Superman adventure in chronological order. The ten volumes that were published (and I think they stopped) collected Superman 1-19 and Action Comics 1-56; basically everything to December 1942. The new DC Superman Omnibus reprints the earliest adventures of Superman, from his 1938 debut through 1940. So here are three extensive series that reprint all the same stories — not to mention the reprints that already appeared in Annuals and comics. So the question becomes, why reprint them all again? There is some interesting commentary in this volume framing the history and issues of Superman in the 1940s (although the atomic bomb story mentioned in the final pages is not there). It could be that the goal of this book was to collect a number of stories in one volume where the Archives and Chronicles are many volumes. If price is an issue, well this book is a third of the price of the

Omnibus, less half of one volume of the Archives and about the same price as two volumes of the Chronicles. So it has it on price. This book also reprints a couple sequences of the Superman Sunday strip which have already been reprinted by IDW. So, all in all, this is a lower priced smorgasbord compared to the others but not extensive. But my real disappointment is that all of these books skip 1946-1956 as if what happened from the end of World War II to the beginning of the Silver Age didn't exist. As I said, there are many, many volumes that reprint stories through the mid-1940s, and many books that pick up with Showcase #4 (the Flash) in 1956, but the Superman stories, the Batman stories, the Wonder Woman stories from 1946-56 are hard to find. Why not reprint those? Finally, the stories here are reprinted about the same size as the original comic. If you are going to print a book the size this book is, I'd prefer that the images be scaled up to fit the page rather than having a color pattern take up a portion of each page. If you want a taste of Superman from his start through 1945 this is a fine assortment of stories that is very reasonably priced for a thick hardcover. I still wait for some publisher to take the characters past 1945 and into the hard to find stories of the 1950s.

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