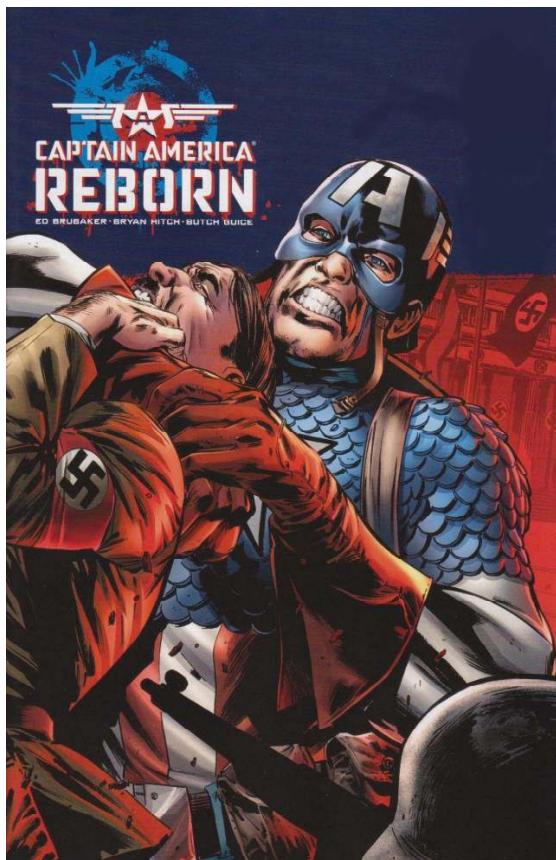


# The Star-spangled Avenger

Adapted from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



**Captain America** first appeared in *Captain America Comics* #1 (Cover dated March 1941), from Marvel Comics' 1940s predecessor, Timely Comics, and was created by Joe Simon and Jack Kirby. For nearly all of the character's publication history, Captain America was the alter ego of **Steve Rogers**, a frail young man who was enhanced to the peak of human perfection by an experimental serum in order to aid the United States war effort. Captain America wears a costume that bears an American flag motif, and is armed with an indestructible shield that can be thrown as a weapon.

An intentionally patriotic creation who was often depicted fighting the Axis powers. Captain America was Timely Comics' most popular character during the wartime period. After the war ended, the character's popularity waned and he disappeared by the 1950s aside from an ill-fated revival in 1953. Captain America was reintroduced during the Silver Age of comics when he was revived from suspended animation by the superhero team the Avengers in *The Avengers* #4 (March 1964). Since then, Captain America has often led the team, as well as starring in his own series.

Captain America was the first Marvel Comics character adapted into another medium with the release of the 1944 movie serial *Captain America*. Since then, the character has been featured in several other films and television series, including Chris Evans in 2011's *Captain America* and *The Avengers* in 2012.

## The creation of Captain America

In 1940, writer Joe Simon conceived the idea for Captain America and made a sketch of the character in costume. "I wrote the name 'Super American' at the bottom of the page," Simon said in his autobiography. "No, it didn't work. There were too many 'Supers' around. 'Captain America' had a good sound to it. There weren't a lot of captains in comics. It was as easy as that. The boy companion was simply named Bucky, after my friend Bucky Pierson, a star on our high school basketball team."

Simon said Captain America was a consciously political creation; he and Jack Kirby were morally repulsed by the actions of Nazi Germany in the years leading up to the United States' involvement in World War II and felt war was inevitable: "The opponents to the war were all quite well organized. We wanted to have our say too."

*Captain America Comics* #1 — cover-dated March 1941 and on sale in December 1940, a year before the attack on Pearl Harbor but a full year into World War II — showed the protagonist punching Nazi leader Adolf Hitler in the jaw; it sold nearly one million copies. While most readers responded favorably to the comic, some took objection. Simon noted, "When the first issue came out we got a lot of... threatening letters and hate mail. Some people really opposed what Cap stood for." Captain America immediately became the most prominent and enduring of that wave of superheroes introduced in American comic books prior to and during World War II. With his sidekick Bucky, Captain America faced Nazis, Japanese, and other threats to wartime America and the Allies. Stanley Lieber, now better known by his pen name Stan Lee, contributed to the character in issue #3 in the filler text story "Captain America Foils the Traitor's Revenge," which introduced the character's use of his shield as a returning throwing weapon. Captain America soon became Timely's most popular character and even had a fan-club called the "Sentinels of Liberty."

## Biography of a hero from wartime to joining the Avengers

### 1940s

Steve Rogers was born July 4, 1920, in the Lower East Side of Manhattan, New York City, to Irish immigrant parents. His father died when Steve was only a child and his mother died of pneumonia while Steve was a teen. By early 1940, before America's entry into World War II, Rogers is a tall but scrawny fine arts student specializing in illustration. Disturbed by the rise of the Third Reich Rogers attempts to enlist, only to be rejected due to being in poor shape. U.S. Army General Chester Phillips, looking for test subjects, offers Rogers the chance to serve his country by taking part in a top-secret defence project — *Operation: Rebirth*, which seeks to develop a means of creating physically superior soldiers. Rogers volunteers for the research and, after a rigorous selection process, is chosen as the first human test subject for the Super-Soldier serum developed by the scientist "Dr. Josef Reinstein", later retroactively changed to a code name for the scientist Abraham Erskine. In the 2002 miniseries *Truth*, it was revealed that the Super-Soldier serum was first tested on African-American soldiers before being given to Rogers.

That night, *Operation: Rebirth* is implemented and Rogers receives injections and oral doses of the Super-Soldier Serum. He is then exposed to a controlled burst of "Vita-Rays" that activate and stabilize the chemicals in his system. The process successfully

alters his physiology almost instantly from its relatively frail form to the maximum of human efficiency, greatly enhancing his musculature, reflexes, agility, stamina and intelligence. Erskine declares Rogers to be the first of a new breed of man, a "nearly perfect human being." The process he underwent has varied from account to account. In the original 1941 story, he was injected with the formula. When the origin was retold in *Tales of Suspense* #63, the Comics Code Authority and its prohibitions on demonstrations of drug use were in force, and the injection was replaced with drinking a formula. In *Captain America* #109, the Vita-Rays were first introduced, although a dialogue comment preserved continuity by mentioning that he had also drunk the formula beforehand. The retelling of the story in *Captain America* #255, however, stated that all three were used in combination. In addition, the limited series, *The Adventures of Captain America* reveals that Rogers also underwent rigorous physical training in combat prior to his enhancement.

After the physical transformation, a Nazi spy reveals himself and shoots Erskine before being overcome by the now enhanced Rogers. Because the scientist had committed crucial portions of the Super-Soldier formula to memory, duplicating it perfectly would be unlikely.

The U.S. government, making the most of its one super-soldier and to hide all information about Operation: Rebirth and its failure, re-imagines him as a superhero who serves as both a counter-intelligence agent and a propaganda symbol to counter Nazi Germany's head of terrorist operations, the Red Skull. To that end, Rogers is given a uniform modeled after the American flag (based on Rogers' own sketches) a bulletproof shield, a personal side arm, and the codename Captain America. He is also given a cover identity as a clumsy infantry private at Camp Lehigh in Virginia. Barely out of his teens himself, Rogers makes friends with the camp's teenage mascot, James Buchanan "Bucky" Barnes.

Barnes accidentally learns of Rogers' dual identity and offers to keep the secret if he can become Captain America's sidekick. Rogers agrees and trains Barnes. Rogers meets President Roosevelt, who presents him with a new shield, forged from an alloy of steel and vibranium, fused by an unknown catalyst. The alloy is indestructible, yet the shield is light enough to use as a discus like weapon that can be angled to return to him. It proves so effective that Captain America forgoes the sidearm. Throughout World War II, Captain America and Bucky fight the Nazi menace both on their own and as members of the superhero team the Invaders. Captain America also battles a number of criminal menaces on American soil.

In late April 1945, during the closing days of World War II, Captain America and Bucky try to stop the villainous Baron Zemo destroying an experimental drone plane. Zemo launches the plane with an armed explosive on it, with Rogers and Barnes in hot pursuit. They reach the plane just before it takes off, but when Bucky tries to defuse the bomb, it explodes in mid-air. The young man is believed killed, and Rogers is hurled into the freezing waters of the North Atlantic. Neither body is found, and both are presumed dead. It is later revealed that neither character actually died.

## Late 1940s to 1950s

Captain America continued to appear in comics for the next few years changing from World War II-era hero to trying to defeat the United States' newest enemy, Communism. The revival of the character in the mid-1950s is short-lived, and events

during that time period are later retconned to show that multiple people operated as Captain America. These successors are listed as William Naslund and Jeffrey Mace.

Jeffrey Mace was so devoted to emulating Captain America that he had had his appearance surgically altered to resemble Rogers. He came to be formally addressed as the "1950s Captain America". Furthermore, he also treated himself and a protege to an acquired Nazi copy of the Super-Soldier serum to become the new Captain America and Bucky, but were unaware of the necessary Vita-Ray component. As a result, the raw chemicals administered began to have serious detrimental effects on the pair's minds, rendering them both violently paranoid and regarding even innocent people as communist sympathizers during the height of the Red Scare of the 1950s (senator McCarthy would have been proud). After it became evident that the two were insane, they were captured and placed in indefinite cryogenic storage by the US Government until they could be cured of their mental illness. The 1950s Bucky would be cured and go on to be Steve Roger's partner for a time under the Nomad identity.

## 1960s

Years later, the superhero team the Avengers discovers Steve Rogers' body in the North Atlantic, the Captain's uniform under his soldier's fatigues and still carrying his shield. After he revives, they piece together that Rogers had been preserved in a block of ice since 1945, surviving in such a state only because of his enhancements from Operation: Rebirth. The block had begun to melt after the Sub-Mariner, enraged that an Inuit tribe is worshiping the frozen figure, throws it into the ocean. Rogers accepts membership in the Avengers, and although long out of his time, his considerable combat experience makes him a valuable asset to the team. He quickly assumes leadership, and has typically returned to that position throughout the team's history.

Captain America is plagued by guilt for having been unable to prevent Bucky's death—a feeling that does not ease for some time. Although he takes the young Rick Jones (who closely resembles Bucky) under his tutelage, he refuses for some time to allow Jones to take up the Bucky identity, not wishing to be responsible for another youth's death. Insisting that his hero finally move on from that loss, Jones eventually convinces Rogers to let him don the Bucky costume, but this partnership lasts only a short time; a disguised Red Skull, impersonating Rogers with the help of the Cosmic Cube, drives Jones away.

Rogers also reunites with his old war ally Nick Fury, who is similarly well-preserved due to the "Infinity Formula." As a result, Rogers regularly undertakes missions for the security agency S.H.I.E.L.D. for which Fury is public director. Through Fury, Rogers befriends Sharon Carter, a S.H.I.E.L.D. agent, with whom he eventually begins a romantic relationship.

Rogers later meets and trains Sam Wilson, who becomes the superhero the Falcon, one of the first African-American superheroes in mainstream comic books.

Since then Cap has continued with his long and illustrious career up to the present day.

**The rest, as they say is History.**



Steve Rogers' presumed death during the "Civil War" storyline, 2006. Art by Steve Epting.

## Powers and abilities

Captain America has no superhuman powers, although as a result of the Super-Soldier Serum and "Vita-Ray" treatment, he is transformed from a frail young man into a "perfect" specimen of human development and conditioning. Captain America's strength, endurance, agility, speed, reflexes, durability, and healing are at the zenith of natural human potential. Rogers' body regularly replenishes the super-soldier serum; it does not wear off.

The formula enhances all of his metabolic functions and prevents the build-up of fatigue poisons in his muscles, giving him endurance far in excess of an ordinary human being. This accounts for many of his extraordinary feats, including bench pressing 1200 pounds (545 kg) and running a mile (1.6 km) in 73 seconds (49 mph/78 kph). Furthermore, his enhancements are the reason why he was able to survive being frozen in suspended animation for decades. Rogers cannot become intoxicated by alcohol, drugs, or impurities in the air and is immune to terrestrial diseases. He is also highly resistant to hypnosis or gases that could limit his focus. The secrets of creating a super-soldier were lost with the death of its creator, Dr. Abraham Erskine. However, in the ensuing decades there have been numerous secret attempts to recreate Erskine's treatment, only to have them end in failure.

Rogers' battle experience and training make him an expert tactician and an excellent field commander, with his teammates frequently deferring to his orders in battle. Rogers' reflexes and senses are also extraordinarily keen. He has blended judo, western boxing, kickboxing, and gymnastics into his own unique fighting style and is a master of multiple martial arts. Years of practice with his indestructible shield make him able to aim and throw it with almost unerring accuracy. His skill with his shield is such that he can attack multiple targets in succession with a single throw or even cause a boomerang-like return from a throw to attack an enemy from behind. In canon, he is regarded by other skilled fighters as one of the best hand-to-hand combatants in the Marvel Universe. Although the super-soldier serum is an important part of his strength, Rogers has shown himself still sufficiently capable against stronger opponents, even when the serum has been deactivated reverting him to his pre-Captain America physique.

Rogers has vast U.S. Military knowledge and is often shown to be familiar with ongoing, classified Defense Department operations. He is an expert in combat strategy, survival, acrobatics, military strategy, piloting, and demolitions. Despite his high profile as one of the world's most popular and recognizable superheroes, Rogers also has a broad understanding of the espionage community, largely through his ongoing relationship with S.H.I.E.L.D. He occasionally makes forays into relatively mundane career fields, including commercial arts, comic book artistry, education (high school history), and law enforcement.

Although he lacks superhuman strength, Captain America is one of the few mortal beings who has been deemed worthy enough to wield Thor's hammer.

## Weapons and equipment

Captain America uses several shields throughout his history, the most prevalent of which is a nigh-indestructible disc-shaped shield made from an experimental alloy of steel and the fictional vibranium. The shield was cast by American metallurgist Dr. Myron MacLain, who was contracted by the U.S. government, from orders of President Roosevelt to create an impenetrable substance to use for tanks during World War II. This alloy was created by accident and never duplicated, although efforts to reverse-engineer it resulted in the discovery of adamantium.

Captain America often uses his shield as an offensive throwing weapon. The first instance of Captain America's trademark ricocheting shield-toss occurs in Stan Lee's first comics writing, the two-page text story "Captain America Foils the Traitor's Revenge" in *Captain America Comics* #3 (May 1941).

When without his trademark shield, Captain America sometimes uses other shields made from less durable metals such as steel, or even a photonic energy shield designed to mimic a vibranium matrix. Rogers, having relinquished his regular shield to Barnes, carried a variant of the energy shield which can be used with either arm, and used to either block attacks or as an improvised offensive weapon able to cut through metal with relative ease. Much like his vibranium shield, the energy shield can also be thrown, including ricocheting off multiple surfaces and returning to his hand.

Captain America's uniform is made of a fire-retardant material, and he wears a lightweight, bulletproof "duralumin" scale armour beneath his uniform for added protection. Originally, Rogers' mask was a separate piece of material, but an early engagement had it dislodged, thus almost exposing his identity. To prevent a recurrence of the situation, Rogers modified the mask with connecting material to his uniform, an added benefit of which was extending his armour to cover his previously exposed neck. As a member of the Avengers, Rogers has an Avengers priority card, which serves as a communications device.

Read Captain America's first appearance and origin in *Captain America Comics* # 1, (March 1941). Then read on for a retelling of the story as narrated by Cap to Nick Fury in *Captain America* # 109 (January 1969).

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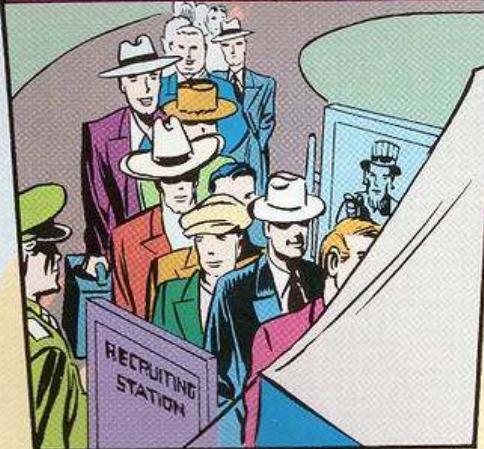
# CAPTAIN AMERICA

CASE No.1.

Meet  
**CAPTAIN  
AMERICA**

**U.S.A. ... 1941**

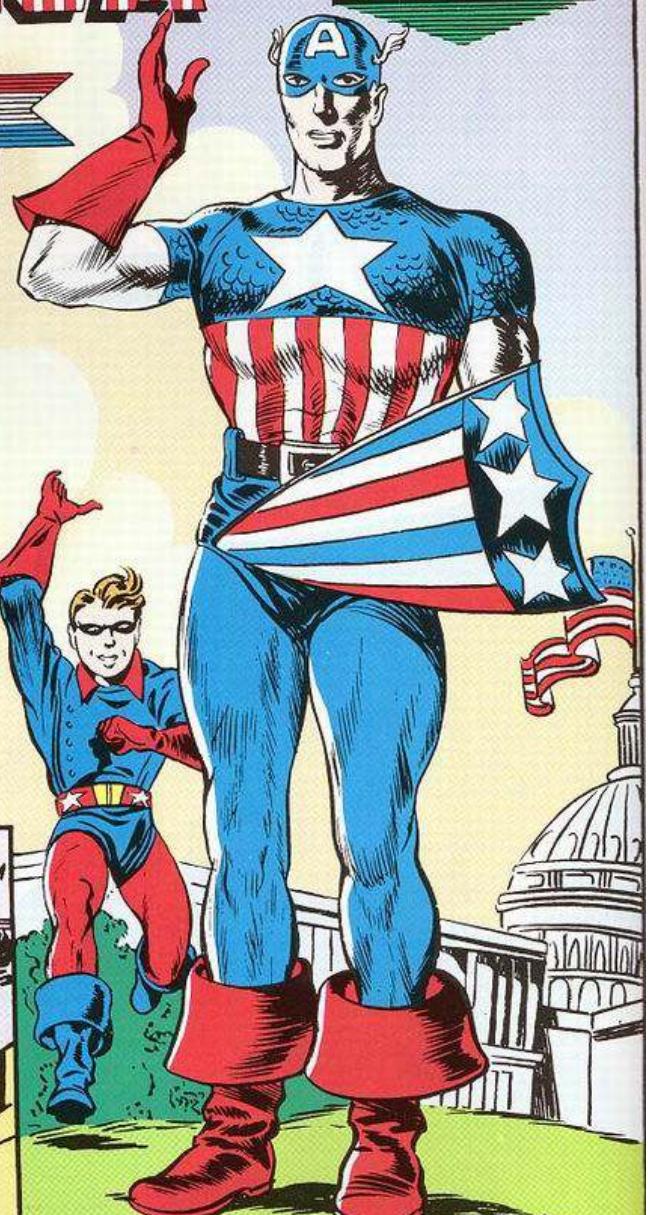
AS THE RUTHLESS WAR-MONGERS OF EUROPE FOCUS THEIR EYES ON A PEACE-LOVING AMERICA... THE YOUTH OF OUR COUNTRY HEED THE CALL TO ARM FOR DEFENSE...



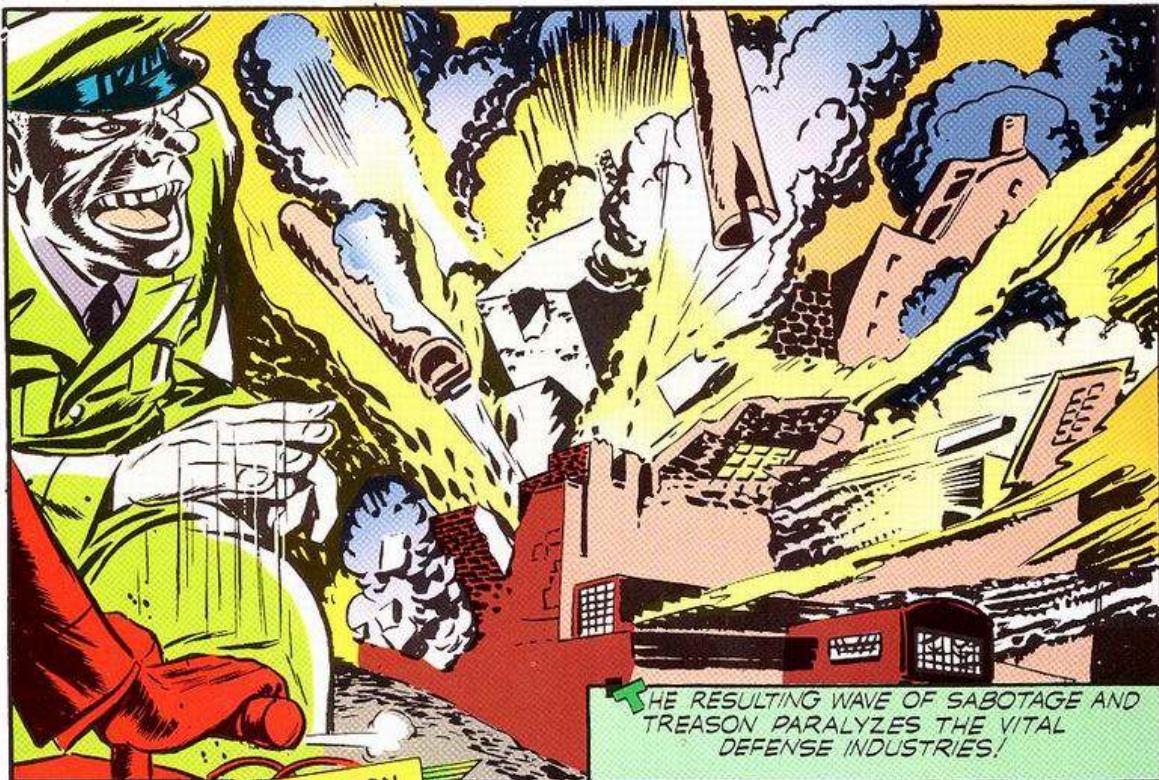
BUT GREAT AS THE DANGER OF FOREIGN ATTACK... IS THE THREAT OF INVASION FROM WITHIN... THE DREADED FIFTH COLUMN....

IT WAS EASY JOINING THE ARMY WITH THE FORGED PAPERS--NOW TO CARRY OUT THE FUEHRER'S PLANS!

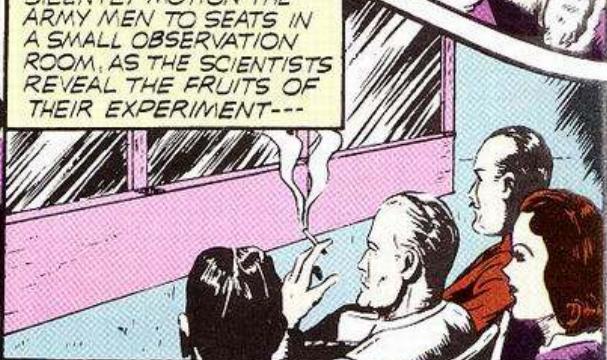
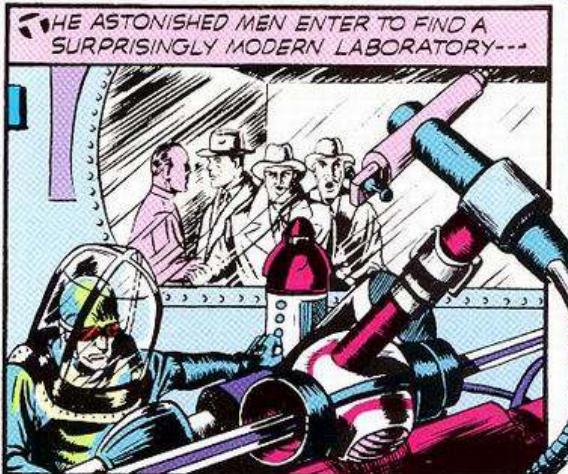
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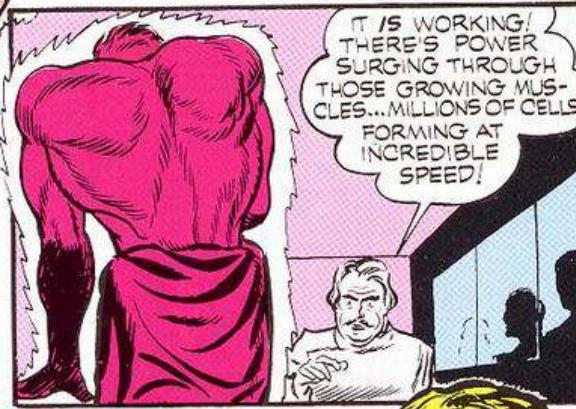
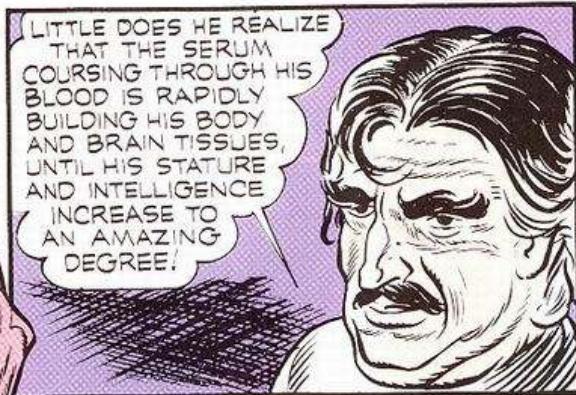
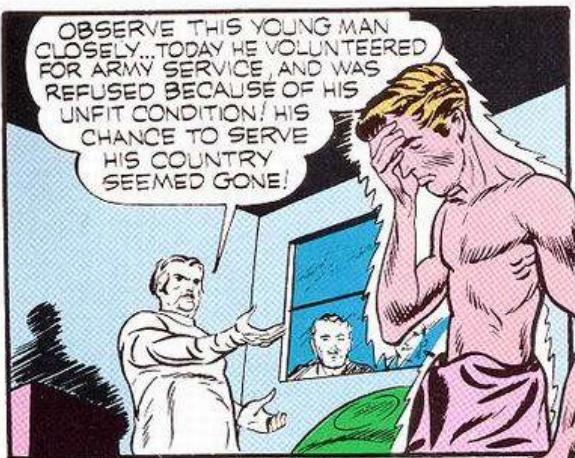


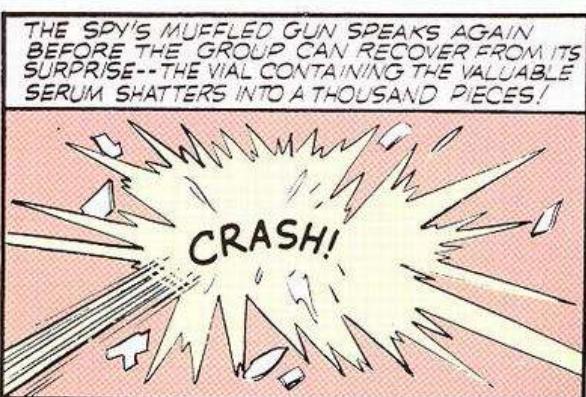
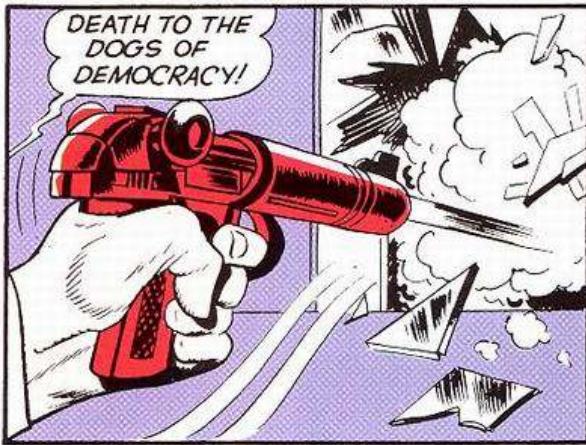
by JOE SIMON and JACK KIRBY



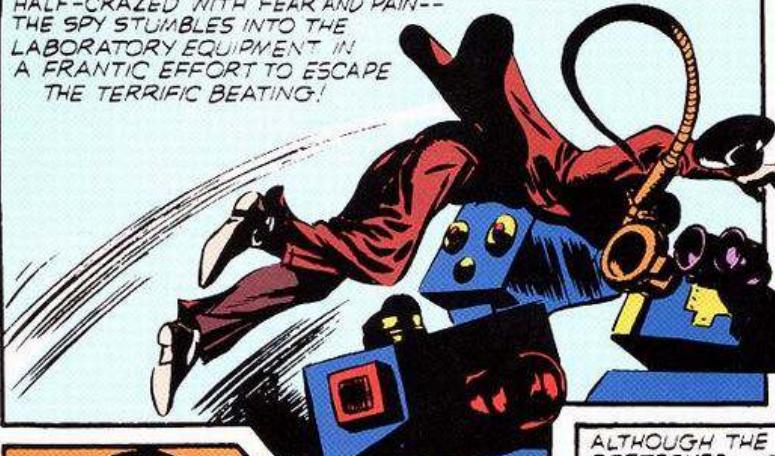








HALF-CRAZED WITH FEAR AND PAIN--  
THE SPY STUMBLIES INTO THE  
LABORATORY EQUIPMENT IN  
A FRANTIC EFFORT TO ESCAPE  
THE TERRIFIC BEATING!



ALTHOUGH THE WONDER SERUM HAS BEEN DESTROYED--ITS FIRST CREATION... CAPTAIN AMERICA, BECOMES A POWERFUL FORCE IN THE BATTLE AGAINST SPIES AND SABOTEURS!

## CAPTAIN AMERICA CAPTURES SPY RING!

CAPTAIN AMERICA PREVENTS DAM EXPLOSION

CAPTAIN AMERICA... NATION'S NO. 1 SPY BUSTER!



WHO IS CAPTAIN AMERICA? A WHOLE NATION THRILLS TO HIS DARING EXPLOITS. HIS NAME BECOMES A SYMBOL OF COURAGE TO MILLIONS OF AMERICANS... AND A BY-WORD OF TERROR IN THE SHADOW-WORLD OF SPIES!



AT CAMP LEHIGH, OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY, BUCKY BARNES, MASCOT OF THE REGIMENT, APPROACHES PRIVATE STEVE ROGERS...



THAT SAME NIGHT... WHEN BUCKY VISITS STEVE'S TENT... HE MAKES A STARTLING DISCOVERY---

WHAT IN--?

HELLO... STEVE! I CAME DOWN TO-- WHA--WH--WHY YOU'RE CAPTAIN AMERICA!

YOU LITTLE RASCAL! I OUGHT TO TAN YOUR HIDE! I GUESS YOU GOT ME DEAD TO RIGHTS--- I AM CAPTAIN AMERICA!

GOSH... GEE WHIZ... GOLLY!! I... I NEVER THOUGHT...



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8



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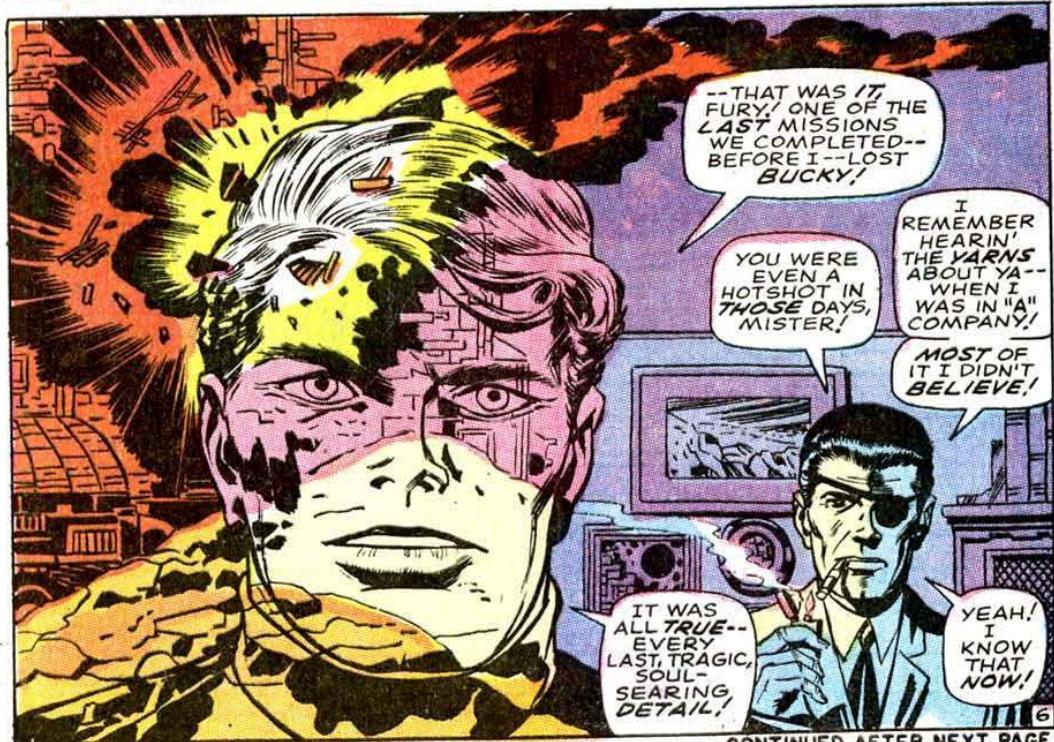


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NO MATTER WHAT  
I MAY HAVE BEEN--  
NO MATTER WHAT I  
AM TODAY--OR MAY  
BECOME TOMORROW--  
MY DESTINY MUST BE  
SHARED--BY THOSE  
WHO HAD A HAND IN  
IT!

ALL THOSE COUNTLESS,  
UNNAMED SCIENTISTS--  
CHEMISTS--THERAPISTS--  
ALL DEDICATED--ALL  
UNSUNG--WHO VOLUNTEERED  
THEIR TIME--THEIR TOIL--  
THEIR GENIUS--

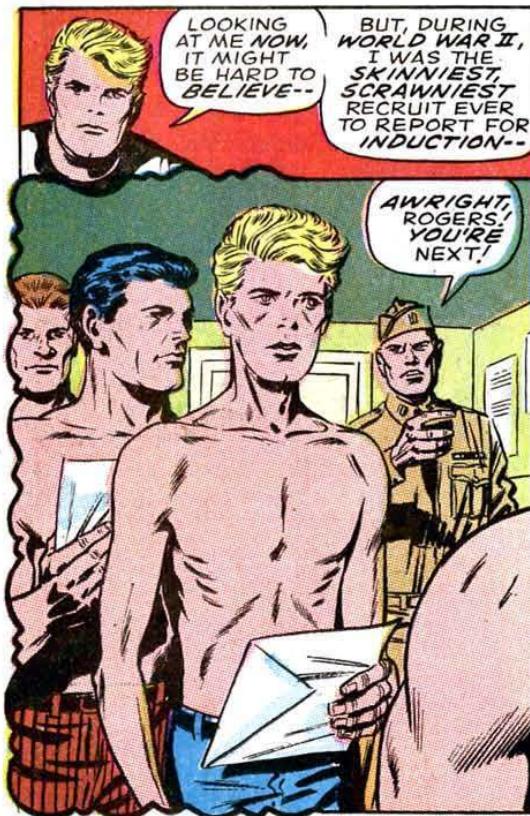
--SO THAT  
**CAPTAIN  
AMERICA**  
MIGHT  
LIVE!

MAN! IS  
HE CARRYIN'  
A KING-SIZE  
CHUNK OF  
MEMORIES  
INSIDE'A HIM!

YA CAN ALMOST  
SEE THE PAST  
COMIN' BACK--WRAPPIN'  
ITSELF AROUND 'IM--  
TRAPPING HIM LIKE  
IT ALWAYS DOES--  
NEVER LETTIN' 'IM  
GO FREE!

I REMEMBER  
HOW IT ALL BEGAN!  
IT SEEMED LIKE ANY  
OTHER DAY TO ME  
THEN--HOW COULD  
I KNOW--HOW COULD  
I EVEN HAVE  
SUSPECTED--

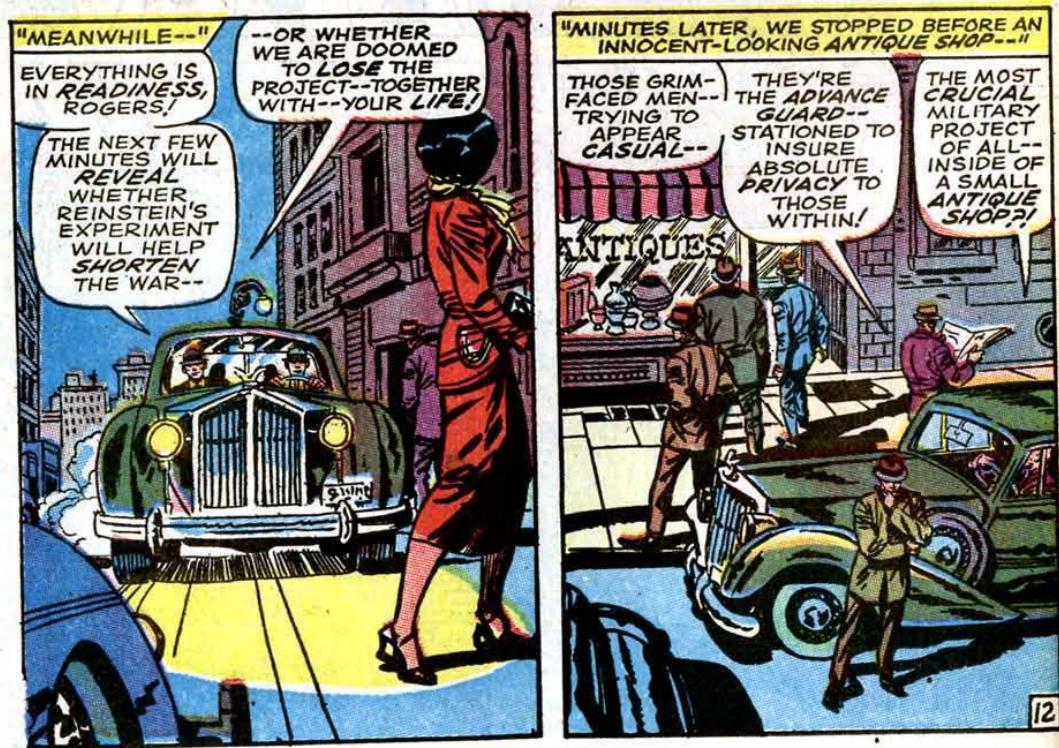
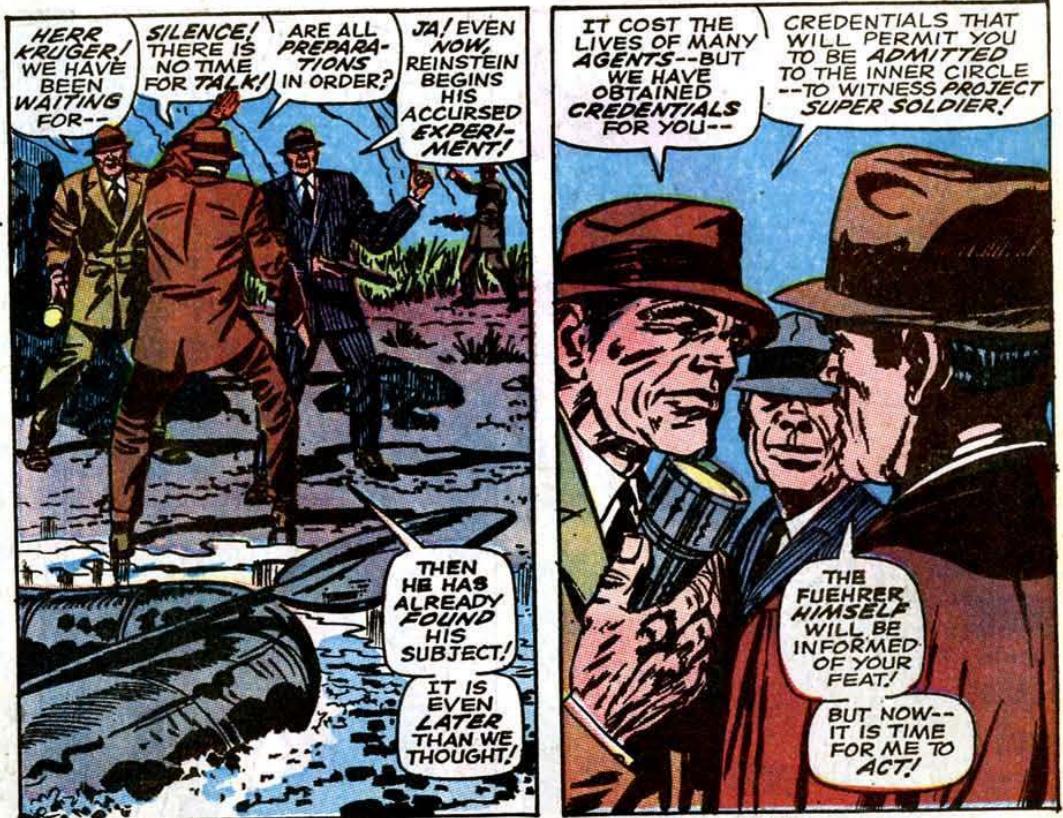
--THAT I  
WAS ABOUT  
TO BE--  
**REBORN!**



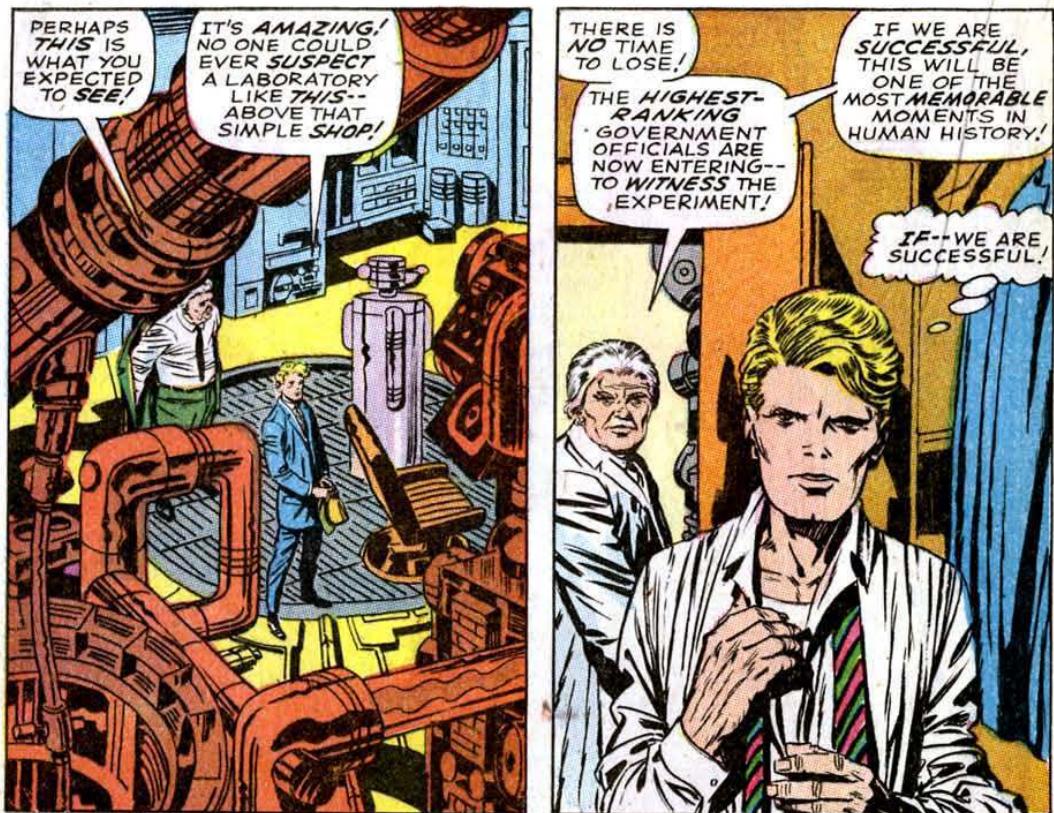
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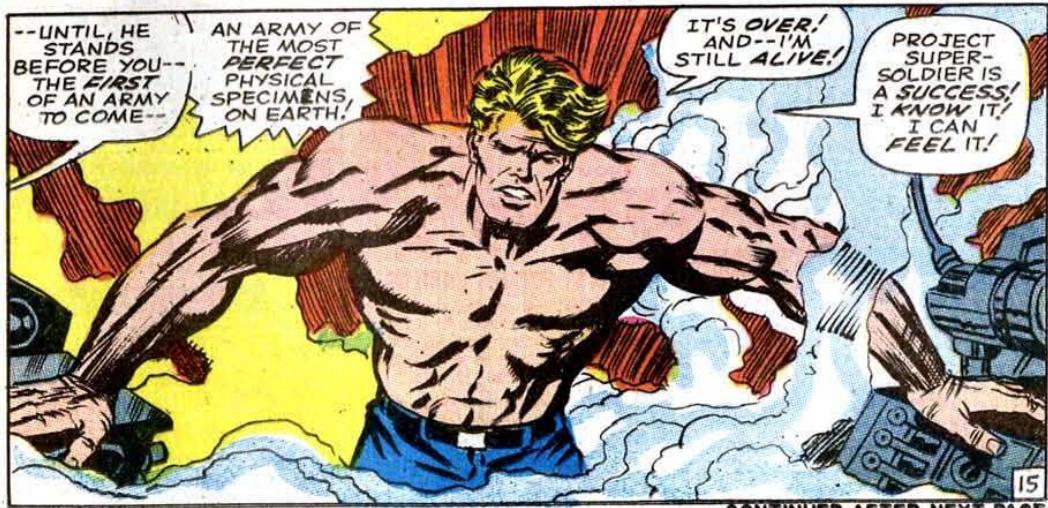
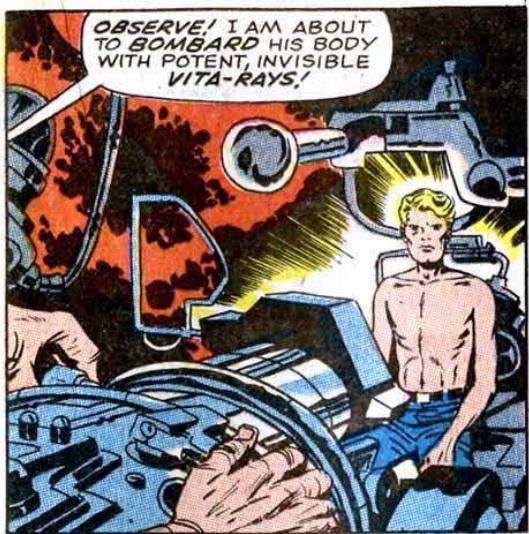












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