

MEGO 8" SUPER-HEROES: WORLD'S GREATEST TOYS!™

Created by
BENJAMIN HOLCOMB



THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO MEGO WORLD'S GREATEST SUPER-HEROES

Characters™ & © 2007 DC Comics

Edited by
ROB CHATLIN

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INTRODUCTION TO MEGO

A family business founded in 1954, Mego Corporation evolved from a small import company into one of the most prolific manufacturers in the toy industry. Originally called Martin-Howard Corp. (after the names of founder D. David Abrams' two sons), the company sold a variety of products, acting as a sales representative for a number of importers. One such company imported various "lure" items, which are the relatively inexpensive toys retailers cleverly merchandise near checkout counters. Such products are also known as "hush up" toys, as parents are especially prone to impulse purchases that will quiet a fussy child.

In 1957, Abrams reached an exclusive agreement with a Japanese toy manufacturer to be their sole importer and sales representative. With the growing success, Abrams changed the company name to Mego.

The 1960s were very busy, and found the entire Abrams clan working for Mego. D. David's wife, Madeline, was employed from the outset, and sons Marty and Howard joined the family business in 1958 and 1967, respectively.

During 1963, Mego established a trading company in Hong Kong called "Lion Rock." Initially a broker, Lion Rock acted as Mego's agent in the Orient, and would go on to become Mego's principle manufacturer in Asia. In 1967, Mego entertained the notion of a public offering, and they immediately began the process of capitalization. In 1969, they filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), and joined the American Stock Exchange (AmEx) in May 1971.

The move toward a public offering coincided with a massive shift in Mego's business model. "Mego itself has really gone through a metamorphosis over the last four years," stated Mego president Marty Abrams in a December 1974 interview. "We had a non-proprietary line that we felt was a winding road to nowhere." The public offering allowed Mego to develop proprietary lines that otherwise would have been fiscally out of reach. The company had a specific transition plan, one that would take several years to implement. "We never intended to do it one year," confirmed Abrams. "It was a three-year program," he stated, that called for the complete elimination of non-proprietary products. By 1974, Mego no longer offered any of the 88¢ 'lure' toys that had defined the company throughout the previous two decades.

During the 1970s, Mego released massive quantities of many different types of toys, many of which have never been properly documented. From baby dolls and board games to electronic games such as 2-XL, Mego created products for every segment of the toy industry. In 2003, Magna Doodle (introduced by Mego in 1977, and still produced today by Fisher-Price) made the Toy Industry Association's "Century of Toys List" as one of the 100 most important toys made in the past century.

Mego made its most significant contributions to the world of toys when it established itself as a leading manufacturer of licensed dolls and action figures. By the time Mego secured its first character license, the practice existed for nearly forty years. Herman "Kay" Kamen created the licensing business as we know it when, in 1932, he was hired by Walt Disney as the merchandise licensing representative for Walt Disney Enterprises. In the 1970s, Disney was the largest licensor in the world, with Licensing Corporation of America (LCA), through whom Mego would acquire many licenses, following closely behind.

At that time, it was typical for a licensor to take five percent off the top, as well as a percentage of sales. Mego routinely avoided that paradigm and as they grew larger, they were granted licenses for very little, if any, advance against royalties. With astonishingly successful licenses such as



Right: Mego founder D. David Abrams in 1979.

Cher and Planet of the Apes, Mego became the premier manufacturer of licensed toys by the mid-1970s. In 1981, for example, Mego bought the rights to "The Dukes of Hazzard" television show (from LCA, incidentally) for a pittance of \$2,500.

An article in the March 1976 issue of *Playthings* discussed the licensing business and confirmed Mego's dominance in the field. "Mego, Azrak-Hamway, and Knickerbocker are companies that come to mind immediately," the article stated. "And, of course, the wunderkind of all, Mego, has had unprecedented success with Planet of the Apes, Star Trek, Super Heroes and most recently, The Wizard of Oz."

Mego had a fundamentally unique approach to product licensing. It was not then, nor is it today, uncommon to find random products imprinted with the likenesses of popular characters. Mego understood the appeal of immediate sales generated by such products, yet consciously avoided it. Using a baseball bat as an example, Abrams explained in a 1974 interview, "Hank Aaron, Willie Mays... putting that figure on it, there's a connection. But to put Batman on a baseball bat, there's no interconnecting meaning."

This philosophy is evidenced by Mego's approach to the license for famous daredevil Evel Knievel. While Ideal was granted the license to create Evel Knievel action figures, Mego endeavored only to create bicycle accessories. Speaking about using the Knievel license for kids' bike accessories, Marty Abrams stated, "This is how we feel in terms of our licensing. [Motorcycles and bicycles] are tied together, as are all of our products." Abrams and Mego were willing to forfeit the short-term sales of such products, in lieu of developing products with extended longevity. "We don't go into a property for one year. We do not try to milk it and move out," Abrams stated.

"Ours is a three, four, five year pull. And the success of our Super Heroes in terms of that, we've built [throughout] the second year a much stronger category and [in 1975], we'll be even stronger."

Mego's World's Greatest Super-Heroes (WGS) line was the most successful line of licensed toys for the company, catapulting them from 300th largest in 1969 to the 6th largest toy company (by volume) in the world, at its peak in 1976.

The WGS enjoyed one of the longer reigns in the history of action figures. Compared to unlicensed lines like GI Joe and Barbie, ten years may seem insignificant, but few other licensed action figure lines have ever enjoyed such longevity.

In addition to the WGS, Mego made some amazing and important toys, but it would be implausible to address them all in one tome. This examination will not attempt to scrutinize any toys that don't directly impact the principal subject matter: the glorious 8" World's Greatest Super Hero action figures of the 1970s and early 1980s.



Mego 2-XL from their 1980 product catalog.



Left: Mego president Marty Abrams poses with Sonny and Cher at the unveiling of their dolls, during a Mego party at the 1976 Toy Fair.

Perhaps the father of the modern action figure body, Robert K. Ostrander patented a “Jointed Doll” (filed January 17 1958, Patent No. 3,010,253 was granted on November 28 1961), which sired the construction concepts employed by many well-known, articulated action figures.

In fact, patents sought by Mego for their 8 inch body (including the Fist-Fighting body style), as well as by Hasbro for their 11½ inch G.I. Joe body, all cite Ostrander’s original concept.

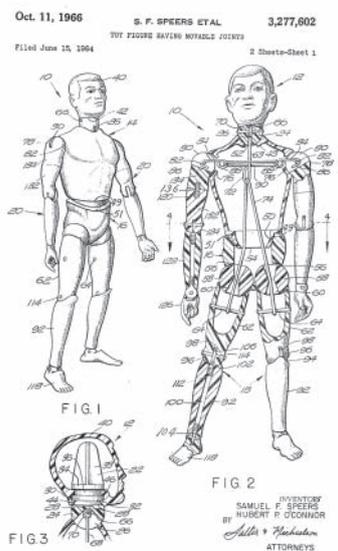
While he never received credit or remuneration for his invention from Mego or Hasbro (except within patent filings), Robert Ostrander later modified and licensed his patent to Unedda Toys, who used the body for their popular “Dollikan” lines of girls’ dolls. Robert Ostrander, Jr. proudly recalls his father’s invention, but did not realize it was such a vital contribution to Mego’s success. “My father’s claim to fame was that his was the first doll that could cross her legs,” said Ostrander, Jr. in an October 2005 interview.

The patents cited within Ostrander’s own patent are for rudimentary dolls (mainly baby dolls), all of which significantly differ from the advanced body construction that Ostrander pioneered. Many subsequent doll and figure patents cite Ostrander’s unique design, ostensibly the progenitor of the modern, articulated action figure body.

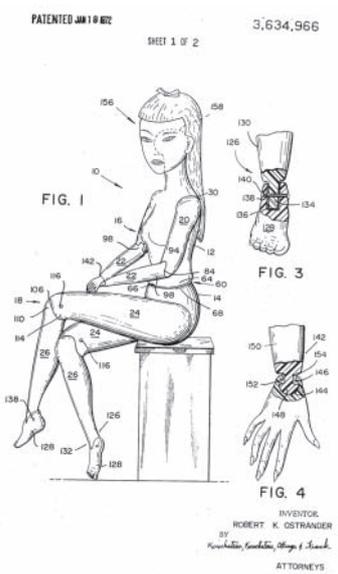
In order to exploit a patent for commercial gain, one must make at least one significant change to the patent, and then file for a new patent. This is precisely what Hasbro did when they patented their 11½ inch body and released G.I. Joe in January 1964. Mego, however, did not initially take this crucial step in manufacturing within the law. In February 1966, Mego released their 11½ inch “Fighting Yank” figure to disastrous results; Mego’s factory reportedly formed the Fighting Yank mold using an actual GI Joe figure. A litigious Hasbro recognized a unique thumbnail and pounced (undeterred, Mego modified the mold for Fighting Yank, producing the dolls until 1974).

Mego would not make the same mistake twice. In 1970, Mego founder D. David Abrams conceived Action Jackson, a pint-sized answer to Hasbro’s 12 inch GI Joe. Mego developed an 8 inch male body inspired by Ostrander’s “Jointed Doll,” although they did not seek a patent. This body is known today as the “Type O” Mego body, and features plastic rivets.

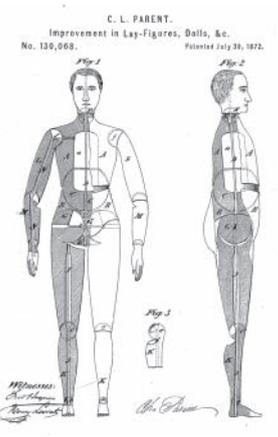
D. David Abrams found inspiration in basketball coach Phil Jackson, who was then the “sixth man” on the NBA’s New York Knicks. A fan-favorite, Jackson was dubbed “Action Jackson” for his ability to excite the crowd by entering the game in the fourth quarter. Armed with a concept, unique scale, and a clever name, Mego set forth developing the body, new head sculpts and costumes for their diminutive “Government Issue” Joes. Action Jackson hit the toy shelves on June 8, 1971.



Above: 1966 Patent for G.I. Joe body.



Right: Ostrander’s revised 1972 patent, often cited in Mego patent filings.



Above: One of the earliest “doll” patents, from 1872, cited by numerous patents.

The consummate family business, everyone in the Abrams family made valuable contributions to the company’s explosion onto the boys’ action figure scene.

D. David’s son, Howard (Howie) is credited with naming the company. A March 1976 article in *People Weekly* explained that D. David Abrams established the company, “borrowing the name from a childhood phrase of Marty’s little brother Howard (now a vice president), “Me go, too.”” This anecdote is often cited during discussions of the proper pronunciation of the name; many people often pronounce the name with a short “e” sound (Meg-O) instead of the long “e” sound (Mee-Go) the story suggests.

Madeline (Maddie) Abrams, was a designer who developed the costume patterns for some Mego figures. Madeline was the namesake of Mego’s extremely successful “Maddie Mod” line of girls’ toys, and the inspiration for Mego subsidiary Princess Grace Doll, Inc., which was launched during the 1950s and trademarked on May 10, 1967. Maddie Mod toys have as much to do with the evolution of the WGSH as anything; it was the success of the line that provided financial success and a new direction. Alan Ichiyasu was an independent sales representative for Mego from the late 1960s until the mid-1970s. Mr. Ichiyasu recalled that Maddie Mod was phenomenally successful, and ultimately accounted for 90% of his company’s sales volume for Mego products (by comparison, the Action Jackson line accounted for roughly 30% of their volume, for a short period). Revenue from Maddie Mod toys provided some of the working capital Mego needed to transition away from 88¢ promotions into the proprietary phase of the company’s history.

During Mego’s ascension to the top of the action figure market, D. David and Maddie lived in Hong Kong. Robert Ostrander, Jr., recalled Mego’s early and impressive presence in Hong Kong. “They used to call Maddie, “The Queen of Hong Kong” because she was so influential there.”



Above: Maddie Abrams (front row, center) flanked by husband D. David Abrams (right) and Parkdale Novelty’s founder Morris Kotzer (left) during a 1961 visit with a Japanese toy manufacturer working for both companies.

Parlaying the success of Maddie Mod, Mego entered a new phase, prompting the hiring of Neil Saul and the development of Action Jackson. At that point, Mego underwent significant restructuring, and many new employees were brought in to facilitate Saul’s vision of what Mego needed to do. Saul worked at Ideal while the company produced the Captain Action line, so his insight and experience with boys’ toys and Super Heroes proved invaluable.

Abrams' eldest son, Martin (Marty), guided the company's crucial transition. Joining the family business in 1958, Marty went on to preside after receiving a marketing degree from NYU. The aforementioned *People Weekly* article stated, "The senior Abrams, though adept at manufacturing, lacked the necessary flair for marketing." Marty became the company president in 1971, while "his father, now chairman of the board, moved to Hong Kong to supervise Mego's plants there and on Taiwan." Truly a marketing visionary, it was Marty's bold idea to bring Action Jackson to TV.

In early 1972, Mego hired a Madison Avenue public relations and advertising agency, run by the famous Mel Helitzer, to develop a series of expensive animated TV spots, designed to introduce Action Jackson to millions of cartoon-watching children. Unfortunately, the Stop-Motion and 2-D animation upset some adults. In order to reach the largest possible audience, commercials required approval from the National Association of Broadcasters' Code Authority (NABCA), an agency whose purpose, according to former NABCA supervisor Jim Steele, was "Not only to prevent false, misleading or deceptive advertising but, in a larger picture, [ensure that] government intervention was unnecessary."



Above: Mel Helitzer (right) consults with Childcraft vice president Saul Cohen in 1979.

With several Action Jackson commercials completed and ready for broadcast, Mego braced for possible rejection from the NABCA (see sidebar, page 249). Having already spent money creating the spots, and facing the possible loss of mass-market exposure through television, the company felt vulnerable. It was very possible they could be saddled with useless television spots and potentially unvendible volumes of raw fabric, plastic and even finished figures. Neal Kublan, who started as an Art Director at Mego in the 1960s and went on to become the Vice President of Research & Development, often dealt with the factories. Kublan explained that material recycling was a clever, frugal practice often employed by Mego. "Some of the material that we couldn't use," he explained, "[was] turned into reprocessed plastic and used over and over again."

In anticipation of the NABCA's refusal to recommend Action Jackson commercials, Mego executives sought alternative solutions for Action Jackson overstock. Fortunately, Stan Weston appeared and pitched the perfect idea to Mego (see sidebar, page 9).

It was Weston's innovative thinking that led to the development of G.I. Joe for Hasbro, in 1964. Also, Weston's is the solitary name attached to the patent for Captain Action, which Ideal Toys began producing in 1966. In 1970, Weston founded American Leisure Concepts (known today as 4Kids Entertainment), a powerful licensing company with contacts at LCA, the licensing arm of Warner Brothers at the time. It was Weston's ALC who brokered the Super-Hero deal with the licensors, and it was up to Mego to make it happen. "They wanted a \$50,000 advance for all the characters," explained Kublan. "Essentially, we had to pay \$50,000 up front, an advance against royalties."

The advance was a lot of money for a small company to risk, particularly given the recent public offering. Thus, the decision required approval from Mego's Board of Directors. "Nobody wanted to spend that much money," Kublan continued. "Captain Action had been such a disaster for Ideal a couple years earlier."

United States Patent (18) 4,903,158
 Wolf et al. (42) Jan. 18, 1977

(54) FIGHTING DOLL
 (57) Inventors: Yuhui Wolf, Pusan, N.J.; TH SHANG Wang, Kew-Fong, Hong Kong
 (52) Assignee: Mego Corporation, New York, N.Y.
 (21) Filed: Aug. 1, 1975
 (23) Appl. No.: 601,898

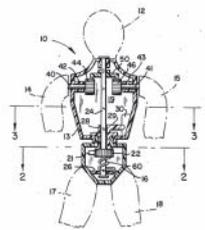
Related U.S. Application Data
 (43) Continuation-in-part of Ser. No. 355,434, Supp. 3, 1974, abandoned.

(52) U.S. Cl. 401/220
 (51) Int. Cl. 401/220
 (58) Field of Search 401/42, 140, 119, 120, 401/21, 106, 237/94

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 3,786,284 1/1974 Benbow et al. 401/18
 3,876,015 1/1975 Chen et al. 401/20

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13 Claims, 8 Drawing Figures



Right: Mego's *Fist-Fighting* body patent, granted in 1977. Mego never patented the standard male body (Type 1 or Type 2).

Kublan made the presentation to Mego's Board. Addressing concerns over the modest success of Captain Action, Kublan countered that Ideal's hero character "was one set, with a bunch of things to turn one character into many." Kublan's quick thinking could be mistaken for prescience, as he told the board members, "That's not what kids [are] looking for. They want their own to play with, so they [can] have an adversarial relationship." Kublan's pitch was successful and the Board approved the expenditure.

Despite Mego's fears of Action Jackson tanking, the 1973 Toy Fair promotional video proudly proclaims that 2.5 million Action Jackson figures were sold during 1972. Apparently, the threat of the NABCA's punitive action did not bring the expected devastation. Ultimately, Action Jackson was successful, but the anticipation of failure may have contributed to the birth of the World's Greatest Super-Heroes line.

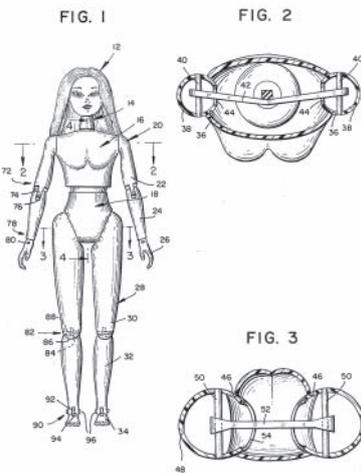
Mego Super-Hero figures were an instant success. From the outset, the figures were in such high demand that Mego had a difficult time producing enough toys to meet retailer orders.

Mego warehouse manager Ray Demato explained that Mego hired Mike McGaughey to deal with the constant inventory deficit. "He was in charge of the orders and allocations. His job was to divvy out the limited supply. If we had, for argument's sake, 20,000 cases of dolls, and he had 60,000 cases of dolls on order," it was up to McGaughey to decide, "how many units Toys 'R Us or Service Merchandise or Child World would get." Mego's independent sales representatives often exploited these situations. Alan Ichiyasu recalled that the overwhelming demand allowed the sales team to dictate terms to the buyers. "If the buyer wanted 10,000 pieces, I would tell him that he had to order 100,000 pieces, because he'd be lucky to receive 10% of the order." This method worked while the toys were hot, but it created a lot of problems once the popularity of the line waned. Eventually the supply caught up with the demand, and Mego would be able to fulfill the entire order, for which the buyer would be compelled to pay in full. "A lot of buyers lost their jobs," recalled Mr. Ichiyasu.

Large quantities of WGSB figures were distributed through wholesalers such as Greenman Brothers, out of Brooklyn. "[Greenman Brothers] would resell to the smaller toy stores" across the country, said Demato. "They also ran a toy chain called Playworld, which was local to Long Island. They had maybe twenty stores." [Ed. Note: there were fourteen Playworld locations]. Greenman Brothers bought in sufficient quantities to secure excellent pricing, and "they were pretty high on the pecking order, meaning when product got allocated, they always got something," Demato explained.

By 1973, Mego had learned some hard lessons about surviving in the highly competitive world of licensed and proprietary toys. A January 1974 article in *Advertising Age* discusses the stumbles the company made during 1973. Mego "found that its 'shotgun' TV ad thrust included 'too much of the wrong kind of TV, a poor sales-to-advertising ratio' and 'spotty' success with retailers, according to Neil Saul, Mego VP-Marketing." Confirming that Mego posted a loss for 1972, the article reveals that Mego hired a new advertising agency, Ed

U.S. Patent March 9, 1976 Sheet 1 of 2 3,942,284



Libov Associates, and spent 1973 producing a smaller advertising campaign with a "concentration strategy" that entailed slashing the number of spot TV markets from 69 to "the 23 accounting for the lion's share of sales." The new strategy was much more effective, and Saul exclaimed, "Mego was well into the black. By 1974, Mego's advertising budget was back to \$2 million, where it had been in 1972. The majority of the budget, not surprisingly, was devoted to the 'pre-Yule fourth quarter.'"

Left: Mego patented the female body (Type 1 Female) in 1976.

1972

By 1972, Mego was well established in the toy industry. With distribution secured in Australia and Canada, the company began forging sales channels in Great Britain and other countries. Mego acquired comprehensive licenses to produce action figures based upon famous comic book characters, and the creative team set forth immediately, developing prototypes and manufacturing production samples.

Six characters were selected to represent the line. Superman, Batman, Robin and Aquaman were immediately produced, while Captain America and Tarzan were depicted on the packaging. “We did a test that Christmas,” recalled Neal Kublan, “at EJ Korvette in fact, which was a discount chain in New York then. And [the toys] checked right out. It was instant.”

Mego’s original packaging concept was a graphical, cardboard box. These figures (issued between 1972 and 1976) were shipped in graphical display cases of two-dozen boxed figures. Each counter display box was shipped in a protective master carton. Retailers used the counter display boxes to merchandise the figures (see page 233). Ray Demato confirmed the continual distribution of counter display boxes in the United States, stating, “They were always included.”

The very first editions of 1st Wave Heroes, issued in solid boxes, utilize Type O bodies. It is very unusual to find Type O bodies on Heroes; Mego introduced the Type 1 body while still rolling out the initial World’s Greatest Super-Heroes.

THE 1ST WAVE

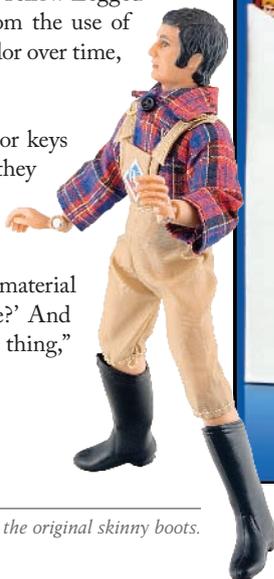
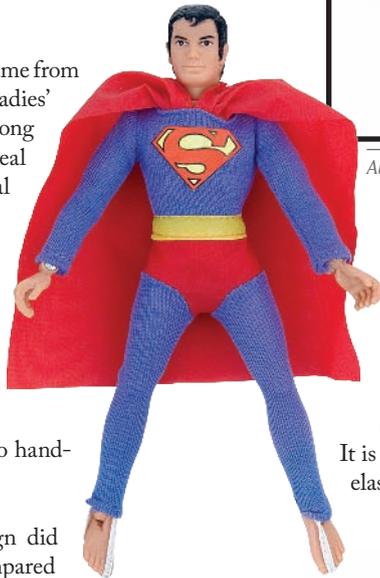
The polyester material used to create the costumes came from one of Mego’s factories that also manufactured ladies’ pantsuits. Polyester leisure suits were popular among men and women in the 1970s, and the fabric was ideal for creating tiny, form-fitting costumes. The original material has a distinct ribbing, like corduroy.

Batman and Superman required plastic boots, so Mego reused a mold from the Action Jackson Fisherman outfit. These narrow boots are quite difficult to fit over the polyester leggings, so Mego hemmed the leggings and added elastic stirrups (right), until a wider boot mold was created. Consequently, stirrup suits and the skinny boots go hand-in-glove (or foot-in-boot).

Once the fit problem was solved, the boot design did not change. Boots may differ slightly when compared to one another, but Mego made no other intentional modifications. The material used for later boots is more opaque than that of the skinny boots. Skinny boots should only come with figures packaged on 1st Issue boxes and variants of the 1st Issue blister cards (both Kresge and Mego branded), as Mego introduced the wider boot while the original 1st Issue card was still in production.

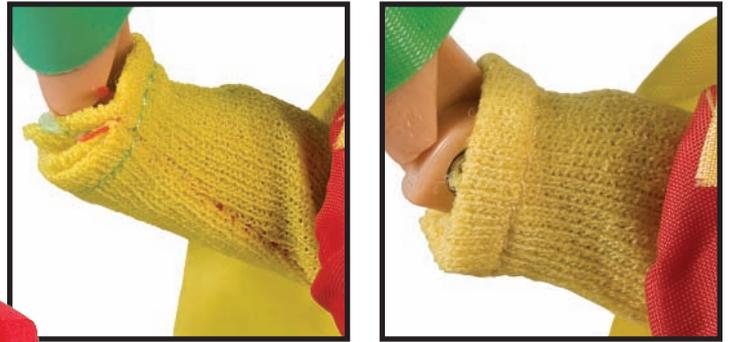
Neither Robin nor Aquaman required boots, but one particular mystery surrounds the green material used to produce their original costumes. Some of the earliest outfits appear to use yellow or chartreuse material, as opposed to green. These variations are known as the Yellow Sleeved Robin and the Yellow Legged Aquaman. Collectors debate whether this hue stems from the use of incorrect material, a chemical reaction that is fading the color over time, or a combination of the two.

Neal Kublan stated that his department would supply color keys to the factory. If the production samples were incorrect, they would be returned with a notation for color correction. The factories were loath to waste material, so if a specific color of fabric were unavailable, the factory would seek permission to use the available material. “If they ran out of material and said, ‘Can we use something [else] in the meantime?’ And we had to supply certain people... we used the next best thing,” confirmed Kublan.



Action Jackson Fisherman with the original skinny boots.

Some Robin and Aquaman figures issued in solid boxes contain outfits with yellow fabric that should be green. Turned inside out, the excess material folded over in the seam is green while the outer portion is yellow. These specimens support the theory of color fading. Other concurrently produced figures, however, contain outfits with yellow thread and consistent yellow polyester. While this does not prove that yellow fabric was intentionally used, it does support the possibility Mego issued a small quantity of figures with incorrectly colored fabric. However, it could simply mean that some outfits faded evenly. The only certainty is that several different colors exist today.



Above: Most Yellow Sleeved figures have green thread (left), while some rarer examples clearly have yellow thread (right), suggesting factory error in addition to fading.

There is another material variation that seems to be unique to the 1st Wave Heroes. There are numerous examples of Batman and Aquaman figures which feature canvas material for the trunks. This material is notably different than the early-issued nylon and later-issued polyester. It is conceivable Superman figures were manufactured using this material, yet no examples have materialized. It’s possible that the unique material was available only in black, which would preclude Superman. It is unlikely there are such examples for Robin, whose separate trunks with elastic openings could only be produced using the stretchy polyester.



The mock-up for the original counter display box was depicted on a one-sheet inserted into the 1972 Mego catalog... an announcement of things to come.

Mike Jamacian, an instructor at New York’s School of Visual Arts under whom Neal Kublan studied, reportedly designed the inaugural packaging style. Kublan started as an Art Director at Mego in the 1960s and went on to become the Vice President of Research & Development until he left the company in 1980. “Those first, closed boxes,” Kublan stated, “were a disaster.” He added that Mego was forced to modify the “solid” box by February of 1973. “The buyers had come in [to Mego’s showroom at Toy Fair] and started saying, ‘we can’t take these things. The kids rip open the boxes [and] take the accessories.’” This predicament was corroborated in a 1974 *Playthings* article. “Pilferage at the retail level remains a serious nation-wide problem, keeping both packaging experts and toy makers in search of improved theft-proof ways of presenting products on the shelf. One packaging executive reports that “all the manufacturers are going to seal-end boxes” instead of the old-fashioned tuck types which itchy hands seemed to find irresistible.”

The solid boxes include unprinted brown cardboard folded inserts to fill the space between the figure’s head and the top of the box. This was done in consideration of shipping, to prevent damages from freely bouncing figures. Due to their utilitarian appearance, these were often discarded immediately. Thus, many specimens today lack this cardboard spacer.

On the box sides, there are trademarks (™) next to Tarzan’s and Captain America’s names only. On both the 1st and 2nd Version boxes, the Tarzan and Captain America ownership attributions (“©1972 Marvel Comics Group All rights reserved” and “©Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc 1972 Mego Corp. Authorized User”) are inverted. This error was not corrected until the 3rd Version box.

According to documents filed by Mego with the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), Mego’s first use in commerce for “World’s Greatest Super-Heroes” is listed as “110872” (November 8, 1972). This dates correlates with Kublan’s recollection that the figures were tested at EJ Korvette stores during Christmas 1972. Kublan’s assertion that the packaging was revised by the following February suggests this packaging version was distributed to stores for merely three months. Such a limited time line certainly explains the scarcity and value of the solid boxes today.

Characters Issued

- Superman
- Robin
- Batman
- Aquaman

Instant Identification

- ▶ Box is solid with no acetate window
- ▶ The front and back are identical; to determine the front, Superman must appear at the top of the box’s left side panel



Top flap



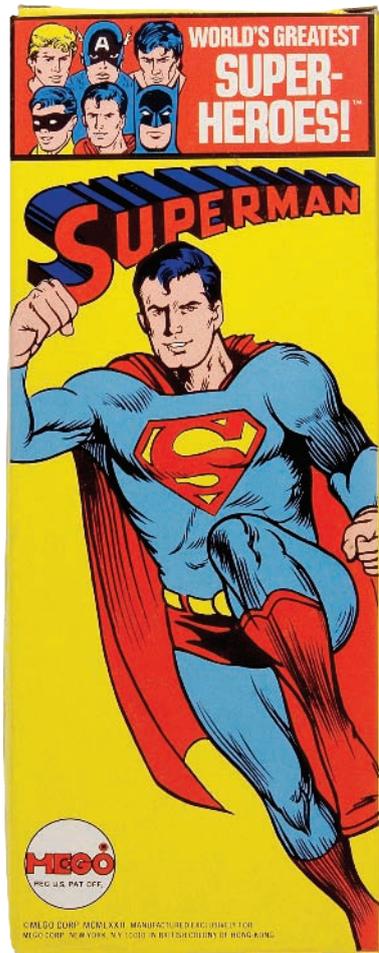
Bottom flap



The cardboard spacer kept the figure in place during shipment.



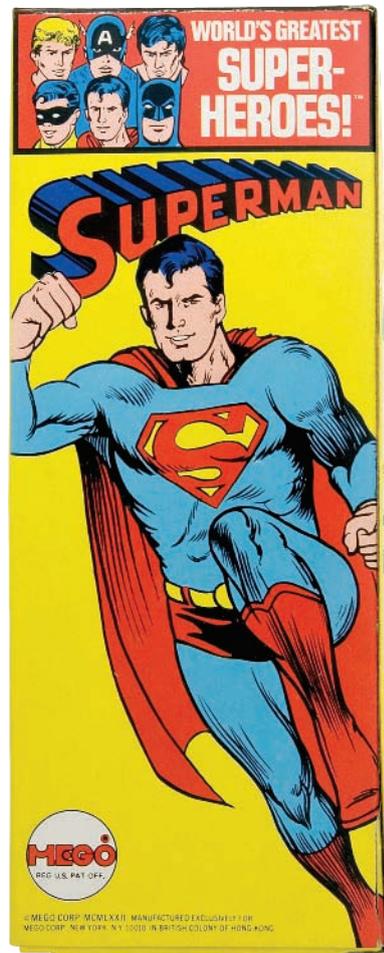
Left side



Front



Right side



Back



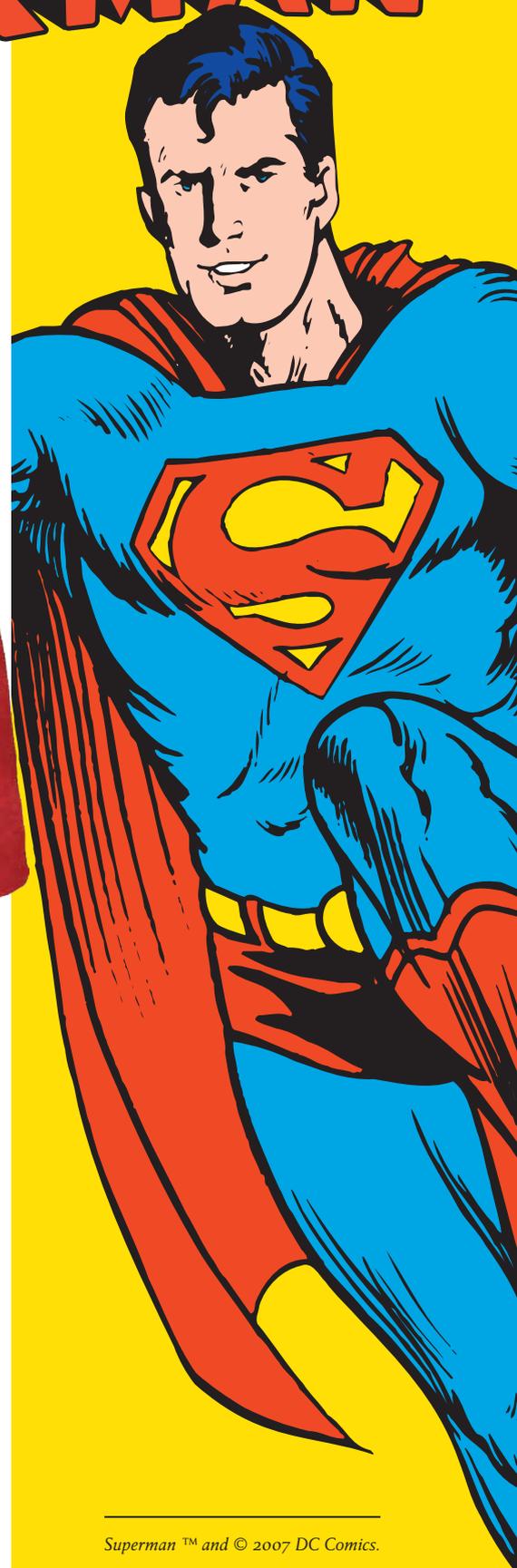
This is the only package variant that includes an additional emblem on Superman’s cape.

Superman remains one of the most popular of all Mego Super-Heroes. Superman was available from the inception until the demise of the line, and is second only to Batman in number of retail catalog appearances.

1300/51300



This Superman prototype appeared on a photographic one-sheet, inserted into the 1972 Mego catalog. The costume is clearly hand-made, evidenced by the jagged belt and hemmed cape. The emblem is hand-drawn and the boots are painted Action Jackson Fisherman boots. The head is a hand-painted, original sculpture.



Superman was always popular, but initial demand for the figure was not as high as Mego anticipated. During the first full year of production, Mego case-packed Superman figures equal to Batman (9 each, out of 24). By 1974, the second full year, only 4 Superman figures were shipped with each case. By 1975, the quantity further dwindled to only 3 figures per case. In 1977, Superman case pack quantities reverted to the original 9 units; the increase likely in anticipation of the forthcoming live-action film.

FIGURE

With the exception of a small number of Type O bodies used when the line debuted, Mego released Superman in 1972 on a flesh colored Type 1 body. From 1975 onward, Mego produced the figure on a Type 2 body. In 1976, Palitoy issued a Fist Fighting Superman in the United Kingdom (see “Fist-Fighters” section, page 147).

HEAD

The Superman head sculpt is a charming representation of the character, complete with the signature curl on the hairline. Mego immediately reused the head to represent boyfriend Don in the Dinah-mite line intended for girls. This figure kept with the Barbie concept that Dinah-mite overtly emulated, and Don was Mego’s answer to Mattel’s Ken. It was not unusual for Mego to reuse a head mold, and the company likely expected little buyer overlap between the two lines.

Within the WGSB, the head was also used to represent Clark Kent, when Mego created the Secret Identities figures exclusively for Montgomery Ward in 1974. The backs of Clark Kent and Superman necks are crudely inscribed with the legal notice, “N.P.P. Inc. © 1972”. Some Clark Kent heads (as with Bruce Wayne/early Batman and Dick Grayson/early Robin heads) bear faint or no inscription on the neck.

Superman used the same head sculpt throughout production. There are slight variations to the paint masks and material used over the years. New molds occasionally affected the shape slightly, but Mego made no aesthetic changes to the sculpt.



Above: 1974 Ward catalog detail shows the prototype suit, and Clark Kent as ultimately produced.



Above: Early head (above) used for Type 1 and Clark Kent figures, and later head (below) used for Type 2 figures.



OUTFIT

The Man of Steel comes with a blue bodysuit featuring sewn-in red trunks, a yellow stitched belt, and a red cape stitched to the collar. Superman figures have removable red boots, and the character's famous "S" emblem is a sticker applied to his chest.

The color of the polyester material changed over the years, so outfits will exhibit one of many different shades of blue. Early outfits have a decidedly purple tint. On some of the earliest Superman figures, the blue portion of the outfit is a corduroy-textured, polyester material. Known as the "ribbed" costume variation, all of the other 1st wave characters used a similar material. Ribbed Superman outfits are rare and should only appear on Type 1 outfits with nylon trunks. The ribbed outfits may or may not feature the stirrups (see page 15).

The original Superman bodysuit pattern has sleeves stitched to the torso separately, and is known as the "Sewn-Sleeve" variation. Later Superman outfits were cut from single pieces of cloth, and the sleeves are part of the torso pattern. This change was likely done to increase efficiency, by eliminating the labor required to cut and sew both sleeves to the torso of the outfit. The change was implemented during the Type 1 outfit, and remained throughout production of Type 2 bodysuits.

Several other characters have Type 2 outfits that revert to the Sewn-Sleeves pattern, after having been one piece suits for years. No examples of Sewn-Sleeve, Type 2 body Superman outfits have been discovered. Given the character's popularity, Superman costumes would have been produced continually, ostensibly throughout each costume pattern modification. Thus, Type 2 Sewn-Sleeve outfits may exist. While such a costume would be very rare, it is unlikely such a minute difference would increase desirability.

Mego issued this Type 2 outfit and figure in the 5-digit "old" logo box around Summer 1975, while transitioning from Type 1 to Type 2 bodies. The costume is unusual because it features nylon trunks rarely found on Type 2 outfits.



Across: 1st version Superman, with two large emblems, issued in the solid box only.



Emblem

The earliest Superman figures come with a large “S” chest sticker. These glossy paper emblems (below, left) are strikingly larger than subsequent versions. Probably to reduce costs, the larger stickers were quickly changed. Superman figures in the 1st Issue/1st Version box can contain either version sticker. The solid box was only issued for a few months, which gives an indication as to the rarity of large emblems. The large “S” stickers significantly increase the value of a Superman figure.

Superman comic book artist Paul H. Cassidy is credited with adding an “S” to the character’s cape. For a very short period when Mego first distributed Superman, they applied an additional large “S” sticker to the back of the cape. Superman figures with both large “S” stickers are extremely rare and will also increase the value of a loose Superman, even compared to a figure with only one large “S” sticker on the chest.

After reducing the size, Mego continued to produce the stickers with glossy paper (below, center). The glossy paper material remained unchanged until about 1978, around the time ©1977 Blister Cards were issued. These later Superman figures come with a modified “S” sticker known as the “cloth emblem” (below, right). Manufactured using a very thin, cloth-like material, these stickers maintain increased adhesiveness, making them less susceptible to falling off. Cloth emblems have a textured, matte finish compared to the paper stickers. Toward the end, Mego did not use either material exclusively. There are examples of ©1977 cards, as well as ©1979 cards, that use either paper or cloth material. Multiple production sites exhausting the supply of paper emblems at different rates may be responsible for this inconsistency.

Given that only 2nd Issue cards feature cloth emblems, this material should only appear on Type 2 Superman figures and never on Type 1 Superman figures.



Emblem variations shown Actual size

Trunks

Through the decade of production, Superman’s trunks experienced only one significant change: The initial Superman bodysuits have red trunks made from a shiny, stiff nylon. This is known as the “nylon trunks” variation. It is also possible that a corduroy material was temporarily used for the trunks, as with Batman and Aquaman, but there are no examples to confirm this.

Most Type 2 bodysuits feature polyester trunks. Though much scarcer, examples of Type 2 bodysuits with nylon trunks exist (see page 19). These specimens have only one snap set. Type 1 bodysuits with nylon trunks are accurate with or without stirrups, as the stirrup suit was discontinued well before polyester replaced nylon.

Cape

The red cape has one significant variation. For a short period, Superman capes were manufactured using a stiffer vinyl material, differing entirely from the typical nylon material. This variation is known as the “Vinyl Cape” variation. The Vinyl Cape is very difficult to detect from afar, but is striking upon close inspection. The Vinyl Cape material is more textured and rigid than the nylon version. The exact red vinyl material can also be found on equally rare Vinyl Cape Supergirl and Thor figures. It should be noted that this particular vinyl is different than the material used for the Vinyl Cape Batman and Shazam figures. Vinyl Capes only appear on Type 2 costumes, but it is unclear exactly when, or how frequently, this material was utilized for capes.

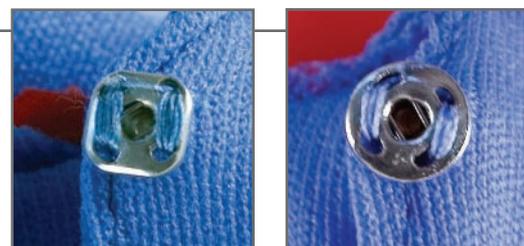
Superman figures with single large “S” stickers on the chest were issued only in the solid box and 1st Issue blister cards (both Kresge- and Mego-branded). Due to rarity and limited visibility of the back of the figure, no 1st Issue carded Superman figures have been identified with a second, large “S” sticker applied to the cape, and it’s unlikely they exist. Mego presumably eliminated the additional sticker quite promptly, even before manufacturing the 1st Issue Cards.

Snaps

Early Superman outfits contain two sets of snaps on the back of the costume, one at the neck, and another at the waistline. Sometime during the production of Type 1 outfits, Mego eliminated the snaps nearest the waistline, possibly as a cost cutting measure. Type 1 outfits can have one or two snap sets.

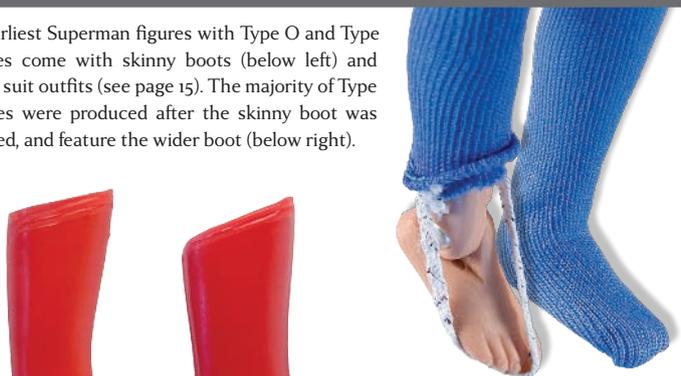
Double snap sets (much like the sewn-sleeves) mysteriously reappeared during production of Type 2 figures. Multiple production sites could be responsible for this. In 1979, Mego moved all costume manufacturing to new facilities in Mainland China. Type 2 outfits containing two sets of snaps are scarce, but genuine.

Most Superman outfits have metal snaps. The snaps changed slightly over the years, and they may be round or square. A more significant change occurred around 1981, when white plastic replaced the metal snaps. The change affected existing 8” lines still in production (e.g. Dukes of Hazzard). A Superman outfit with white plastic snaps is extremely rare, and should only feature a cloth emblem.



Boots

The earliest Superman figures with Type O and Type 1 bodies come with skinny boots (below left) and stirrup suit outfits (see page 15). The majority of Type 1 figures were produced after the skinny boot was modified, and feature the wider boot (below right).



Above: Original stirrup pants and subsequent closed-toe stockings.

Belt

Superman belts have two parallel stitches around the entire waistline. There were other characters (such as Aquaman and Captain America) with belts initially stitched in the same manner, while later versions eliminated the circumference stitch in lieu of a single stitch near the snap in back. However, Superman figures did not experience this modification. Even the 12” Superman figures issued in North America always feature circumference stitching, yet some foreign versions do not (e.g. the 12” Superman Denys Fisher distributed in the United Kingdom).

Earlier Superman belts were made from a vinyl that exhibits translucency, while subsequent belts are more opaque. This transition occurred during production of the Type 1 outfit, so no Type 2 outfits should contain a translucent belt. Once switched, the opaque material was used for the remainder of production.

Below: First-edition Type 1 figure, taken from Meگو's original packaging, the solid box. Note the reddish-blue polyester bodysuit, large emblem, translucent belt and skinny boots.



Left: Fist Fighting Superman, released in the UK by Palitoy.

Above: Type 2 Superman with polyester trunks, small emblem and wide boots.

1300	1300	1300	4-01-26	1300	4-01-27	2-4-01-27	1300	1300	51300	51300	51300	51300	51300	51300	51300
November 1972	Spring 1973	Spring 1973	August 1973	Fall 1973	Winter 1973	February 1974	Winter 1974	Spring 1975	Summer 1975	Spring 1976	Summer 1976	Spring 1977	Fall 1978	Spring 1978	Spring 1979
Hb1s-MX-3p-4d-O	Hb1w-MX-3p-4d-O	Hc1-DC-4H-M-O	Hc1-DC-4H-Kv1-O	Hb1w-MX-4p-4d-O	Hc1-DC-4H-Kv2	Hc1-MX-6H-O	Hb1w-DC-3p-4d-O	Hc1-DC-6H-O	Hb1w-DC-3p-5d-O	Hb1w-DC-3p-5d-N	Hc1-DC-6H-N	c2-DC-76	c2-DC-77b	c2-DC-77c	c2-DC-79

Superman packaging variations are nearly representative of every package created for 1st Wave WGSB figures. Only one packaging variation (©1977a card) has not surfaced, though it probably exists. At the very end of the line, Mego used leftover Superman backer cards to exhaust the inventory of figures, linking Superman to the strange “Kitchen Sink” cards, containing either Aquaman or Captain America figures (see page 250).

BOXES

There are six distinct box variations for all 1st Wave Heroes. For the 2nd and 3rd Version boxes, Superman is the only character out of the eight lacking a white stroke around the acetate window. The only other notable differences are color separation errors. The bottom edge of the cape should be visible between Superman’s legs. The illustrator forgot the black line differentiating the background from the cape, and the color separator filled the area between his legs with solid red, effectively overextending the cape. This was eventually addressed, but problems persisted. By the final window box, the red was completely removed from between Superman’s legs. In doing so, the color separator mistakenly eliminated the entire cape below Superman’s left arm. This error is unique to the backs of 8” Superman boxes, as all side panel illustrations are correct. The same illustration appears on packaging for other Mego WGSB toys (e.g. Bend N’ Flex figures), and in some versions the illustration is correct, including the missing black line. It’s a strong reminder that in the days before computers and master art files, art was often created and recreated, as necessary.



Above: The backs of 2nd Version (left) and 6th Version boxes (right) demonstrate the printing errors on the cape, different Mego logos, and revised Age Labeling.

USA Packaging Checklist

For collectors who differentiate large emblem specimens, there are seventeen different variations. For those interested only in packaging design changes, there are sixteen different package variations:

- Hb1s-MX-3p-4d-O: 1st Issue/1st Version (Mixed) “Original Solid” box
- Hb1w-MX-3p-4d-O: 1st Issue/2nd Version (Mixed) “First Window” box
- Hc1-DC-4H-M-O: 1st Issue/1st Version (DC) “Mego” card
- Hc1-DC-4H-Kv1-O: 1st Issue/2nd Version (DC) “Kresge” card
- Hb1w-MX-4p-4d-O: 1st Issue/3rd Version (Mixed) “4 Panel” box
- Hc1-DC-4H-Kv2: 1st Issue/3rd Version (DC) “Kresge Reorder” card
- Hc1-MX-6H-O: 1st Issue/4th Version (Mixed) “FOB HK” card
- Hb1w-DC-3p-4d-O: 1st Issue/4th Version (DC) “4 Digit/Old Logo” box
- Hc1-DC-6H-O: 1st Issue/5th Version (DC) “Shazam!” card
- Hb1w-DC-3p-5d-O: 1st Issue/5th Version (DC) “5 Digit/Old Logo” box
- Hb1w-DC-3p-5d-N: 1st Issue/6th Version (DC) “New Logo” box
- Hc1-DC-6H-N: 1st Issue/6th Version (DC) “Green Arrow” card
- c2-DC-76: 2nd Issue/1st Version (DC) “76” card
- c2-DC-77b: 2nd Issue/3rd Version (DC) “77b” card
- c2-DC-77c: 2nd Issue/4th Version (DC) “77c” card
- c2-DC-79: 2nd Issue/5th Version (DC) “79” card

Below: 1st version box and the often missing cardboard spacer.



Above: Japanese toy maker Popy issued Superman with a unique window box.

Below: All six Superman box variants. Only the first three depict Captain America, as the fourth box represents Mego's segregation of Marvel and DC characters.



Above: The only box to feature four panels per side, the 3rd version has no white border around the acetate.



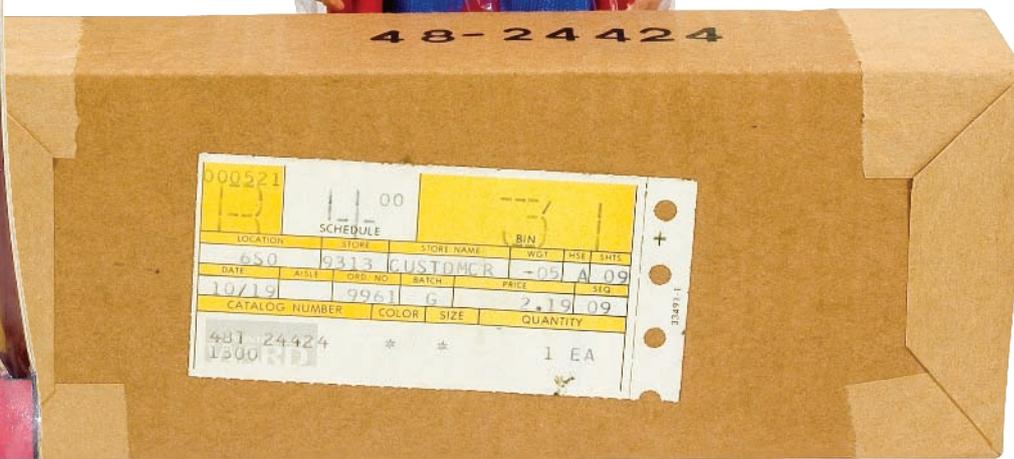
Left: Superman, manufactured and distributed in Mexico by Lili Ledy.



Left: 1973 Montgomery Ward Mailer box. Superman cost \$2.19 that year.



Right: Mego issued the final box in 1976, just before transitioning to the 2nd Issue card.





Above: Three of the six 1st Issue Superman cards. 1st Version Kresge (left), 4th Version Mego (center) and 5th Version Mego (right).



Above: All four, 2nd Issue U.S. card variants, left to right: 1976, 1977b, 1977c and 1979. No examples of a 1977a card have ever surfaced, though it may exist.

1301 / 51301



Batman is, unquestionably, the most popular of all the WGSB characters. Available from the inception until the demise of the line, Batman easily outsold all other characters. Offered in every 1st Wave packaging variant, Batman is the only Mego figure to appear in every retail catalog that included Mego Super-Heroes.

Batman sold continuously in the United States, as well as in every country Mego toys were distributed, including Australia, Belgium, Central and South America, China, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, and the United Kingdom. The universal popularity of Batman contributed to the line's international success. Two noteworthy foreign-issued Batman figures are the unique Mexican figure, manufactured by Lili Ledy, and the British Fist-Fighter issued by Palitoy in 1976. Both figures are relatively scarce and desirable to collectors.

Batman and Robin battle Joker and Riddler using the Mobile Bat Lab, a crime-fighting vehicle Mego introduced in 1975.



The "What's Selling" column in the February 1976 *Playthings* illuminated the public interest. "Roller Derby Skates moved well at \$7.99 and Mego's Superhero figures – Batman and Robin – at \$3.50 and the Mego Knights at \$3.69 did well." It is no accident the author specifically recognized Batman and Robin as characters eliciting noteworthy sales.

The WGSB vehicles and playsets veritably evidence the character's enduring popularity. Seven of the fourteen ancillary (non-figural) toys Mego produced were drawn specifically from the Batman mythology. Furthermore, both the Carry Case and the Hall of Justice have references to Batman.

FIGURE

With the exception of a small number of Type O bodies used when the line debuted, Mego released Batman in 1972 on a flesh colored, Type 1 body. From 1975 onward, Mego utilized the Type 2 body.

In 1975, Mego issued a special Fist-Fighting Batman in the United States. In 1976, Palitoy issued a similar Fist-Fighting Batman in the United Kingdom (see "Fist-Fighters" section, page 147).



Fist-Fighting Batman from the United States.

HEAD

Batman is one of only two Super-Heroes with two distinct head sculptures (Mr. Mxyzptlk is the other). Originally, the head sculpt represented Batman's alter ego Bruce Wayne, and figures included a removable cowl. These figures are known as "Removable Cowl" or "RC" Batman figures. This treatment was used only during 1972 and part of 1973, after which Mego eliminated the separate cowl. The new molded head was cast in blue rubber, and the exposed face is flesh-colored paint. A variety of hues was used throughout the years, so molded cowl Batman figures have flesh tones that range from very pale to deep orange.

Within the WGS line, the head was used for Bruce Wayne, when Mego created the Secret Identity exclusives for Montgomery Ward in 1974. The backs of Bruce Wayne and painted-cowl Batman necks are crudely inscribed with the legal notice, "N.P.P. Inc. © 1972".



Above: This full-page Baravelli ad from the 1974 Italian Toy Journal depicts Action Jackson with a Bruce Wayne head. There is no explanation for the oddity.

also appears on a figure known as "The Mystery Astronaut." A recently discovered, dated packaged specimen suggests the figure was produced in 1977, but little is known about the origin or history of the figure. It remains unknown whether the figure was a legitimate Mego release, or was an unauthorized factory production.

OUTFIT

The Dark Knight comes with a gray bodysuit featuring sewn-in black trunks. Every other accessory is removable: a yellow plastic utility belt, blue cape, blue vinyl gloves and blue plastic boots. The character's famous Bat emblem is a sticker applied to the chest. Early versions of the figure included a removable blue rubber cowl.

The color of polyester bodysuit material changed over the years, and outfits exhibit one of several shades of gray. Early bodysuits display a reddish tint. On the earliest Batman outfits, the gray portion is a corduroy-textured, polyester material. Known as the "ribbed" costume variation, early version outfits for the other 1st Wave characters use a similar material. Ribbed Batman outfits are rare and only appear on Type 1 outfits with nylon trunks. The ribbed outfits may or may not feature the stirrups (see page 15).

Both Superman and Aquaman have outfits with and without Sewn-Sleeves, but the pattern for every Batman bodysuit features sleeves cut from the same cloth as the torso.

Some Bruce Wayne heads (as with Clark Kent/early Superman and Dick Grayson/early Robin heads) bear faint or no manufacturer embossing on the neck.

Mego reused the Bruce Wayne head for several other characters through the years. In 1975, the head became the principle character in the Italian-exclusive Tex Willer line. In October 2005, a boxed example of a South African character named Jet Jungle was discovered. Reportedly available only in South Africa, the character uses a repainted Bruce Wayne head. The head



Above: Tex Willer (left). Millionaire Bruce Wayne (top), South Africa's Jet Jungle, the "Fittest Man in the World," (middle) and the "Mystery Astronaut" (bottom). All share the original Batman head sculpt.



Left: Type 2 Batman, taken from a 2nd Issue card.

Emblem

The shape and design of the bat emblem remained essentially unchanged throughout production, but there are two distinct materials upon which it is printed. For roughly two-thirds of Batman's production life, the emblem was printed exclusively on glossy paper material (above right). This emblem was used for all 1st issue cards as well as all boxes. Transitioning to 2nd issue cards, Mego introduced a textured emblem with a matte finish. This emblem first appears on ©1977 2nd Issue cards, but during that period, both materials were used interchangeably. ©1978 French Pin Pin cards can have either sticker. By the time

the ©1979 cards arrived in the United States, Mego phased out the paper material.



Gloves

The vinyl material used for gloves has a waffled texture (below, left) on one side only. Originally, the material was heat-sealed in the same position with both pieces waffle side down. Eventually, the production was altered, and all subsequently produced gloves expose the bumpy side (below, right), with the waffle texture on the insides of the gloves.

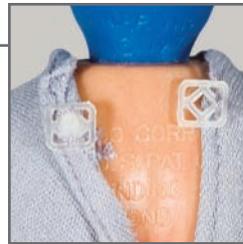
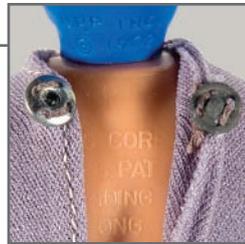
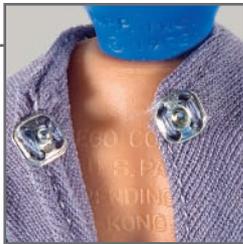


Snaps

Early Batman outfits contain two sets of metal snaps on the back of the costume, one at the neck, and another at the waistline. Sometime during the production of Type 1 outfits, Mego eliminated the set of snaps nearest the waistline, possibly as a cost cutting measure. Type 1 outfits can have one or two snap sets.

Double snap sets (much like the sewn-sleeves) mysteriously reappeared during production of Type 2 figures. Multiple production sites could be responsible for this. In 1979, Mego moved all costume manufacturing to new facilities in Mainland China. Type 2 outfits containing two sets of snaps are scarce, but genuine.

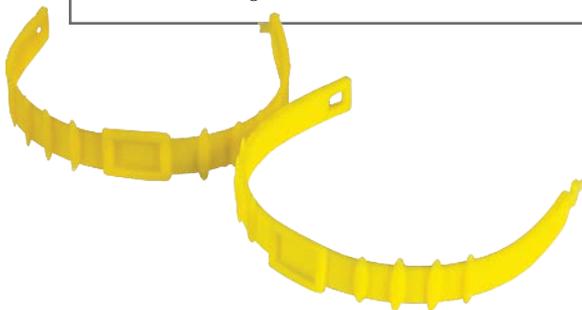
Most Batman outfits have metal snaps. The snaps changed slightly over the years, and they may be round or square. A more significant change occurred around 1981, when white plastic replaced the metal snaps. The change affected existing 8" lines still in production (e.g. Dukes of Hazzard). A Batman outfit with white plastic snaps is extremely rare, and should only feature a cloth emblem.



Belt

The original Batman belt is a dull, translucent yellow plastic (below, left). Perhaps to accommodate the requisite torso mobility of the Fist-Fighting Batman figures (in 1975), Mego lengthened the belt. Consequently, there are two different lengths of translucent Batman belts.

After they introduced the 2nd issue cards, Mego used a different plastic (below, right), which is brighter and more opaque than the original material. The mold is identical to the lengthened belt.





Batman's removable cowl



Cape

The cut pattern for all capes is the same, and features stitching around the neck. Mego utilized a variety of nylon, with numerous shades of blue. Earlier versions tend to be darker tones, and may exhibit a purplish tint. Aside from color shift, there is one significant and rare cape variation. For an unknown period of time, a small number of figures were issued with vinyl capes instead of the standard nylon. Superman, Supergirl, Thor and Shazam also have vinyl cape variants. For Batman, there are at least two versions of vinyl. The first is similar to the capes found on 12" Batman figures, first issued in 1976. The outer side is very smooth and shiny. The second version has a distinct waffle-texture on the outer side, similar to the vinyl gloves. The inner side of both capes is identical, with tiny bumps. The history of these materials is unknown, but both probably first appeared after the introduction of the 2nd issue card. No boxed or 1st issue carded examples have yet surfaced. There are known examples of vinyl capes sealed onto ©1976, ©1977 and ©1979 2nd issue cards, suggesting the materials originated from a specific factory as opposed to a specific point in time.



Above: A wide range of blue material was used for capes.

Boots

The earliest Batman figures with Type O and Type 1 bodies come with Skinny boots (left) and stirrup suit outfits (see page 15). The majority of Type 1 figures were produced after the skinny boot was modified, and feature the wider boot (right).



Trunks

Throughout the decade of production, Batman's black trunks experienced three significant changes. The initial bodysuits have trunks made from a stiff, shiny nylon. This is known as the "Nylon Trunks" Batman. For a short period, Mego used a unique material with a distinct texture. As the material is neither stiff nor shiny, collectors refer to the outfits as "Canvas Trunks." However, the material is actually a variety of nylon. This variation is difficult to detect with the naked eye, but the tactile quality differentiates it from the original Nylon Trunks version. This soft nylon is also found on some early Aquaman outfits, and appears on Type 1 figures exclusively.

Finally, Mego introduced polyester trunks matching the gray bodysuit. All Type 2 outfits feature polyester trunks, but there could be some specimens with nylon, as is the case with Superman. The original nylon trunks are scarcer than the polyester and are especially desirable to those collectors who prefer 1st edition figures. Nylon trunk outfits are accurate with or without stirrups, as the stirrup suit was discontinued well before the transition to polyester.

Right: Detail of differing trunks, in order of release. Nylon (left), Canvas (center) and Polyester (right).

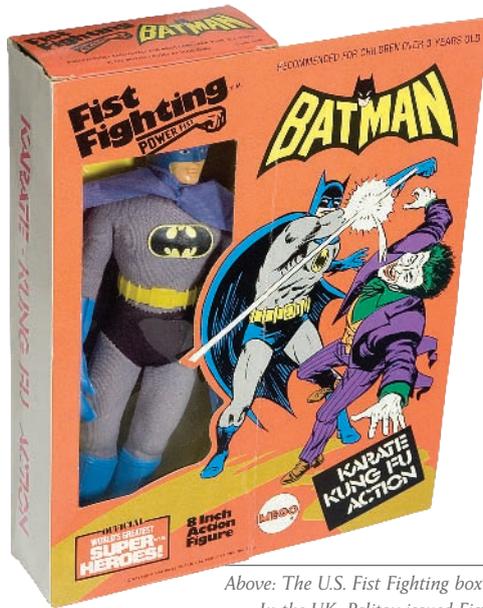


1301	1301	1301	4-01-26	1301	4-01-28	2-4 01-28	1301	1301	51600/1	51301	51301	51301	51301	51301	51301	51301	51301
November 1972	Spring 1973	Spring 1973	August 1973	Fall 1973	Winter 1973	February 1974	Winter 1974	Spring 1975	Summer 1975	Summer 1975	Spring 1976	Summer 1976	Spring 1977	Summer 1977	Fall 1977	Spring 1978	Spring 1979
Hb1s-MX-3p-4d-O	Hb1w-MX-3p-4d-O	Hc1-DC-4H-M-O	Hc1-DC-4H-Kv1-O	Hb1w-MX-4p-4d-O	Hc1-DC-4H-Kv2	Hc1-MX-6H-O	Hb1w-DC-3p-4d-O	Hc1-DC-6H-O	b-FF	Hb1w-DC-3p-5d-O	Hb1w-DC-3p-5d-N	Hc1-DC-6H-N	c2-DC-76	c2-DC-77a	c2-DC-77b	c2-DC-77c	c2-DC-79
		Mego	Kresge		Kresge	Kresge		Mego				Mego	1976	1977	1977	1977	1979

Batman encompasses every package created for 1st Wave WGSB figures, including the extremely rare ©1977a card, which Mego produced for only a few months. Only one such specimen is known to exist.

BOXES

There are six distinct box variations for all 1st Wave Heroes. In America, the unique Fist-Fighting Batman box features a flap. Interestingly, it is not the standard magenta used on other Batman packaging. Instead, the box is orange.



Above: The U.S. Fist Fighting box. In the UK, Palitoy issued Fist Fighters only on blister cards.

CARDS

Batman was issued on all six 1st Issue card variants, as well as all five 2nd Issue card variants. Robin is the only other DC character appearing on every version, a testament to the characters' popularity. Mego manufactured Batman figures each time 1st Wave heroes required additional inventory or a packaging modification.

Across: U.S. Fist Fighter.



USA Packaging Checklist

There are eighteen different package variations:

- Hb1s-MX-3p-4d-O: 1st Issue/1st Version (Mixed) "Original Solid" box
- Hb1w-MX-3p-4d-O: 1st Issue/2nd Version (Mixed) "First Window" box
- Hc1-DC-4H-M-O: 1st Issue/1st Version (DC) "Mego" card
- Hc1-DC-4H-Kv1-O: 1st Issue/2nd Version (DC) "Kresge" card
- Hb1w-MX-4p-4d-O: 1st Issue/3rd Version (Mixed) "4 Panel" box
- Hc1-DC-4H-Kv2: 1st Issue/3rd Version (DC) "Kresge Reorder" card
- Hc1-MX-6H-K-O: 1st Issue/4th Version (Mixed) "FOB HK" card
- Hb1w-DC-3p-4d-O: 1st Issue/4th Version (DC) "4 Digit/Old Logo" box
- Hc1-DC-6H-O: 1st Issue/5th Version (DC) "Shazam!" card
- b-FF: U.S. Fist Fighter box
- Hb1w-DC-3p-5d-O: 1st Issue/5th Version (DC) "5 Digit/Old Logo" box
- Hb1w-DC-3p-5d-N: 1st Issue/6th Version (DC) "New Logo" box
- Hc1-DC-6H-N: 1st Issue/6th Version (DC) "Green Arrow" card
- c2-DC-76: 2nd Issue/1st Version (DC) "76" card
- c2-DC-77a: 2nd Issue/2nd Version (DC) "77a" card
- c2-DC-77b: 2nd Issue/3rd Version (DC) "77b" card
- c2-DC-77c: 2nd Issue/4th Version (DC) "77c" card
- c2-DC-79: 2nd Issue/5th Version (DC) "79" card



Above: Five of the six Batman boxes, in chronological order from left to right. Not shown: Second version box, which is graphically similar to the 1st Version (far left) box, but with an acetate window.



Above: 1973 Montgomery Ward Mailer box. Batman cost \$2.19 that year.



Right: Japanese toy maker Popy issued Batman with a unique window box.





Above: 1st Issue, 1st Version (Kresge) card.



Above: Four of the five 2nd Issue U.S. cards: ©1976 (top left), ©1977b (top right), ©1977c (bottom left), and ©1979 (bottom right). Not shown, the ©1977a card has a "butterfly" peg hole and uncoated card back.



Side by side comparison of the two known vinyl cape variations.

U.S. ©1977b card (left) distributed in Italy by Harbert, and ©1979 French-language card (right) distributed in France by Pin Pin Toys.

