

Hospitals

Talk about an unsung category! The source of these covers dried up almost overnight as cigarette smoking was linked with cancer. Not surprisingly, then, looking among my some 740 Hospital covers, I find that almost all are front-strikers. The days when hospitals issued their own covers are long gone now, but on the bright side, of course, you won't have to worry about hunting down all those new issues anymore!

These covers can be found in all sizes, and a goodly number will be from WW II military hospitals and VA hospitals, both of which were issued almost exclusively in 40-strike size. Both of the latter types are often collected separately, as either part of a larger Military collection, or as the separate category of VA Hospitals, or just VA, itself. Personally, I can hardly think of a "Hospital" collection as all-encompassing without including *all* hospital covers, so whether they happen to be Military, VA, public, or private, they all go into my collection.

Some distinctions have to be made, however, in some cases. Do sanitariums, rest homes, etc. count as "hospitals." Even though these facilities may provide hospital-like services to some degree, I don't include such covers with my collection, since I judge them to be a different type of care-giving institution, and I believe most collectors would agree. Thus, there would be nothing to prevent *you* from including them with your own hospital collection, but when a trader wants "hospitals," he's not expecting to receive these "adjunct" covers.

"Hospitals" is not a popular category within the hobby. Almost all of the covers are rather lackluster in appearance, with the possible exception of the Military covers, and the category is rarely heard of at all. I suspect at least part of the reason for the lack of popularity, here, is that most people don't like to think of hospitals in the first place (how many of us have had a "good time" at a hospital?!)

...Perhaps a good PR job could turn this category around....but it won't be by me!

