

World War II Patriotics

by
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Something stirs when you see these covers—it helps if you have some age experience and a sense of history—but these covers are moving. It's not necessarily the pictures of tanks and planes and soldiers; it's not place names or the war-time slogans...It's the times. The nation was at war; armies were locked in a titanic struggle; families dealt with shortages and rationing; and patriotism was the word of the day.

“Patriotic” would include any cover with a theme of patriotism, regardless of the time period. However, the majority of Patriotic covers are from the World War II era. Businesses flocked to put slogans and appropriate sentiments on their advertising; some Military covers sported the same; the government supported the dissemination of its conservation and other war-time policies...and match manufacturers came up with a plentiful array of stock graphics and designs to fit the needs of the nation. A whole era is recalled, a time of grave national crisis is relived, through these small bits of cardboard.

Buy Defense Bonds”, “We Are Proud To Be Americans”, “Keep ‘em Rolling”, “Keep ‘em Flying”, “A Slip Of a Lip Sinks a Ship”, “Save Your Paper”, “God Bless America”, and more. *[you say that last one today, and you're labeled a right-wing fanatic!]* Match companies and many other manufacturers changed over to produce needed war materials, materials which now became as valuable as gold. These covers reminded



Americans to conserve, support, and preserve the great effort the country was making. Paging through an album of these covers brings back the fervor and faith of a simpler time, when there were good guys and bad guys and we still knew who was whom.

Although there are no ‘fancy’ covers here (unless you classify spot strikers, etc., as Fancies), they’re not ‘cheapies’, either. They’re colorful and inventive. Some are masterpieces of advertising and propaganda. War-time art work is a field in itself. These are covers fit to grace any collector’s album.

And who made these covers? The government?...Only to a small extent. Americans, big and small, made them...tiny ‘mom and pop’ businesses and great industries, Fraternal organizations such as the Elks...each was proud to wave the flag in their own way. And it’s all preserved in World War II Patriotic covers, there for future generations to examine, puzzle over, and keep for yet more distant generations. Is there any wonder that this is a popular and prized category?

But there’s more! I tend to get carried away with my enthusiasm for my own favorites, but I shouldn’t short change other covers in this category. There are Full-Lengths, some Raised-Ink, lots of sets and series of stock designs. The real attraction here, as far as types go, are the pages upon pages of similar stock designs. Very impressive!

The late Win Lang, CA, reported having 2,844 as of June 1997. There is no listing on these covers.

No collecting fever stirring within you yet? Consider the additional attractions of age, rarity, and the resulting challenge. I won’t tantalize you with the unreasonable prospect of coming across a cover with “Go Get ‘em, Doughboys!” on it, but don’t forget that all these covers are a minimum 66 years old! And,

although it’s not difficult to occasionally come across these gems, it’s difficult to build a good collection. They’re there, though...tucked away in nooks and crannies all over the country...in rusting cans and tattered boxes, in attics and basements, in long-forgotten goods stored away from the passing of grandma or grandpa. There, in the darkness, away from prying eyes, the tanks are still rolling; the planes still flying.

