

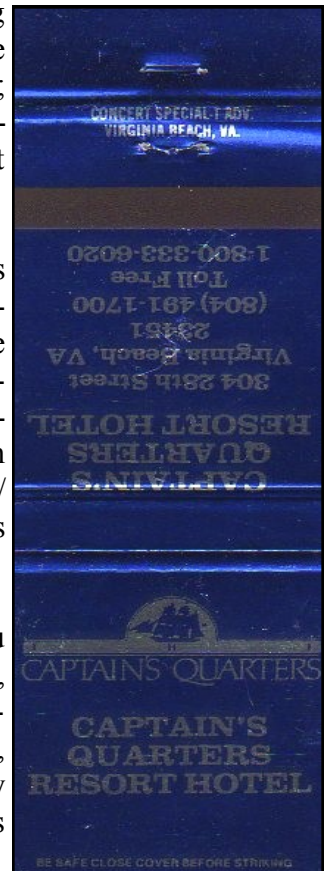
Metallics!

by
Mike Prero

I'm probably close to being the only one in the hobby who has any interest in Metallics. In all my years as a collector, I can't recall *any* of my traders ever indicating that they collected Metallics. But, what can I say? I like them! They're different; they attractive (somewhat); and...George Mallory would have collected them because...they're there! Still, I don't collect them...but I might have talked myself into it by the end of this article.

You won't get much out of the pictures here, but Metallics are covers that have a metallic-looking surface over the entire outside (possibly by a thin aluminum covering, in the earlier issues, at least). They were first introduced by Universal c. 1934 (I have a 1934 dated Metallic), although eventually all the big manufacturers were putting out their own versions. Universal's trademark was "Metallic"; Monarch/Superior also called theirs "Metallic"; Lion called theirs "Taffetta"; Match Corp. had "Foil-Glo"; and so forth.

Numerically, this could be a big category, especially if you include Cameos and Cameo-like covers here. It seems to me, though, the latter might be a sticking point. *Would* you include Cameos in a Metallic collection? Strictly speaking, they're certainly Metallics, but most Cameos have so many other things going on on the outside that one hardly notices



continued on p.3

that they're also Metallics. And, there are more than 7,000 Cameos listed. Put together with the other Metallics, that would definitely make Metallics one of the bigger categories. In any event, Metallics are fairly common and easy to find. I found over 1,600 different just in my dupes (not counting Cameos).

Metallics come in a variety of colors. Silver and gold are the two most common, of course, but you'll also find copper, blue, green, red, among others...even black. They also come in all the standard sizes - 10s, 20s, 30s,40s, plus Jewels, Jewelites, and even boxes. Not surprisingly, 20-strikes are the most common.

Although they appeared 80 years ago, there are loads of reverse-strikers to be seen, as well as lots of front-strikers, showing that Metallics have proved popular across the decades. How so? Well, the metallic surface is its selling feature. It tends to attract the eye...and, after all, from the advertiser's perception, that's the whole point!

And, speaking of the metallic surface, there seems to be two basic types—shiny and dull. The typical Metallic cover (and certainly the most numerous) has a shiny, highly polished veneer. This type, to my way of thinking, is also the most attractive.

There is another type, though, those Metallic covers having a dull finish, such as you would expect to see on a bar of lead or iron. They still look metallic, but they're missing that telltale sheen. Aye, and therein lies the rub! Some degree of judgment is called for with this type, since it may sometimes be rather difficult to decide whether that cover is, indeed, a Metallic or simply a silver or gold colored cover.

Of course, there may have been collectors in the past, or there may be collectors in the future, who



bypass the above problem by simply collecting the shiny type. I suppose you might be able to call such collectors 'purists' in the sense that they're only collecting the more obvious looking Metallic covers.

There's also the decision (problem) as to whether Cameo and Cameo-like covers are to be included in a Metallic collection. As pointed out on p. 1, they're obviously metallic, but that fact is often lost amidst all the fancy debossing to be seen on such covers. So, in a quandary, I asked collectors what they would do...by putting the question to them in an RMS Insta-Poll (November/December 2014). Most respondents said 'no.'

...And *yes!* Since writing this last year, I *have* started collecting Metallics. I currently have 4,413 (no Cameos).

