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ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS FROM THE WOOD LIBRARY-MUSEUM

Anesthetic Safety Was No Mystery for Paul M. Wood, M.D.



In her quintessential detective novel *Green for Danger* (1944, left), Christianna Brand composed a riveting who-done-it amidst the backdrop of a rural British World War II hospital. The local postman was rushed to surgery, but his delivering days were done after a mislabeled medical gas tank spelled the end. Drawing directly upon her volunteer experiences in the military hospitals during the war, Brand illuminated the safety hazards in amassing non-standardized gas cylinders (right). Already investigating this polychromatic puzzler in the United States, Paul M. Wood, M.D., Founder of the Wood Library–Museum of Anesthesiology and Secretary of the American Society of Anesthetists, led a coalition of physicians, hospitals, and industry groups who petitioned the United States National Bureau of Standards to recognize uniform color coding of medical gases in 1941. Providing wartime anesthesia in a military hospital was notoriously chaotic and complex with heterogeneous supplies. Thankfully, safety super-sleuth Wood was on the case. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists’ Wood Library–Museum of Anesthesiology, Schaumburg, Illinois.)

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