

A PUBLICATION OF THE NIKON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JUNE 30, 1991



32

NHS-CON3 INFO INSIDE!

THE NIKON

JOURNAL



**THIS ISSUE..**

PG.2--THE "TRIFOCAL" SP!!!  
PG.8--THE "NASA NIKON" DUMMY!  
PG.14--EARLIEST 35MM FINDER?

ROBERT ROTOLONI  
EDITOR/PUBLISHER





# THE NIKON JOURNAL

VOLUME EIGHT--NUMBER FOUR--JUNE 30, 1991  
THE "NIKON JOURNAL" IS PUBLISHED FOUR  
TIMES A YEAR BY "RJR" PUBLISHING, INC.  
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FAX NUMBER... (708) 868-2352

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# EDITORIAL

Our "Journal" has always been a showcase for the unusual, the rare, and the unique. We have covered many items over the years that have never been mentioned or written about in the photographic press, and I think we should be proud of this fact. Some items that come to mind are the Nikon-16; the SP2 prototypes; the manual 300mm Nikkor f2.8; the FEA; the High Speed Nikon Fs; Dummy display items; the black 1000mm Nikkor f6.3 and others. Not only have we been, in most cases, the first publication to address many of these pieces, but we have done it with style, producing in-depth articles containing a wealth of information and many photo illustrations. This latest issue of the "Nikon Journal" is no exception! As a matter of fact, this time around we have three candidates for membership in this rarefied club! They range from a newly documented version of the 35mm finder, through one of the most unusual "F" items Nikon ever made, to a detailed article that finally solves one of the great "myths" that has been part and parcel of Nikon collecting for the last 20 years! More "firsts" for the "Nikon Journal" of which all of you are a part.

On page 14 is an article by "Cy" Meyer on a very unusual version of the 35mm Nikon finder. I had mentioned in my book that very few of the individual finders were serial numbered, and to a certain extent this is still true. However, in the intervening 8 years it has come to light that more were numbered than we had first thought. The 35mm finder in this article is a fine example of this. We were not aware of its existence way back then, but now 3 such pieces have been verified so we can now give it its due. Thank you Cy for sending it to me, which made this well illustrated article possible.

You will find that again the "F-Spot" feature has grown to a full size article (this seems to be becoming a habit lately...I guess it is a true measure of the growing importance of the reflex Nikons in the scheme of things, and another sign that our Journal remains at the forefront of Nikon collecting). Beginning on page eight, and running for 6 pages, is a heavily illustrated article on one of the most unusual Nikon reflex items ever made. Nikon has always played a part in the U.S. space program going back to the 60s' and the Nikon F. Many of you have seen one or two photos of these "NASA Nikons" at one time or another as they have been used in various promotional material over the years. However, this is the first time that one has been given extensive coverage of any kind, and you can see it here! But...as is usually the case, your magazine goes one step further! Not only is this special Nikon F3 shown, but also three equally unique lenses! In addition, it has another claim to fame, but turn to page 8 and see what I mean!

We now come to the feature article for this issue. Every field of collecting has its mythical pieces, many of which remain precisely that, and are never proven to actually exist. However, once in awhile a "myth" becomes reality, adding yet another chapter to the overall story. This issue of "The Journal" is proud to lay to rest one of those myths and to finally bring to life (through some superb photographs) an item that has always been rumored to exist, yet never really proven. On page 40 of my book I mention this very camera as having been reported to me. Now after nearly 10 years of knowing of its existence we can finally examine it in detail. I called it an SP2, but this was before I saw the prototypes of the SP2 at the factory. So for the sake of accuracy it is not labeled as such in this article, but given, by its new owner, a more appropriate name-"THE TRIFOCAL NIKON SP"!

Unlike the SP2 prototypes I saw at the Ohi factory in Shinagawa Tokyo, this camera does not have a "zoom" type finder similar in function to the Variframe covered in NHS-31. That was the main new feature seen on the factory prototypes that were introduced to me as the "SP2", a name used by Nikon collectors for the mythical replacement for the SP that was on the drawing boards when the RF era ended. The camera on page 2 is not the same! It is more of an evolutionary SP model that addresses and corrects some faults in the original design. It actually occupies the same position that the Leica M2 did in relation to the M3. That is, this can be called the wide-angle SP as its finder system accommodates lenses from 35-105mm. Its new owner, Fred Krughoff, has gone to great lengths to produce this landmark feature, to the point of actually disassembling the camera and comparing it with production SPs. In addition, member Geoff Spear, who is a professional photographer in New York, volunteered his time and expertise to produce the superb photos. Thanks to both of them we have not only verified this camera, but also have now given it its correct place in the Nikon family. The SP2s may never have gone beyond prototypes, but this camera was definitely made and ranks as one of the rarest of Nikons!

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**!!ANNOUNCING "NHS-CON3" AND THE "NHS" AWARDS!!**

Spring of 1992 marks the time for the third Convention of the "NHS"! Plans are now being made to hold "NHS-CON3" in the Seattle, Washington area. The first two NHS Conventions were held in Chicago and, through feedback from those who attended, were a resounding success. Chicago was chosen for the simple reason that it is where I live, and since I needed to do the groundwork of setting it up, it seemed only logical to do it here. However, in an effort to make NHS-CON3 accessible to possibly more people, I have decided to hold #3 on the West Coast. There are various reasons but two come to mind first. I have a relatively large number of members on the West Coast from Arizona up to Canada, which will hopefully increase attendance (some of my East coast members tell me that traveling to Seattle is really not much more than going to Chicago). Second, I now have members who are willing to do much of the work involved. Bill Adams, John Baird and Mike Symons have agreed to handle many of the tasks required, making a West Coast Convention possible. Look for more info in NHS-33, but start to plan for spring of 1992 now!! You will also find a nominating form in this issue for a new feature suggested by Calvin Ho.....that is the first "NHS-AWARDS"! See page 16 for more details and I hope to see many of you next spring in Seattle!!

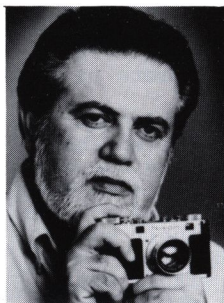


Photo: Tony Hurst

**ROBERT ROTOLONI  
 EDITOR/PUBLISHER**



THE

# "TRIFOCAL SP"

by Fred Krughoff

For many years Nikon SP #6215374, a camera with a peculiar finder, had been reported around New York City. It was described in the "Nikon Rangefinder Camera", by Robert Rotoloni, as a Nikon SP2. Purchased as a used camera in the spring of 1975 in a now closed 32nd street store, it was used for many years without thought of its being out of the ordinary. When I purchased it recently, the camera had finally become unusable due to neglect. But when the camera was first shown to me, covered with dust, I knew it was not just unusual, but really significant. First it is important to separate it from camera #6223719 which is pictured on page 42 of Rotoloni's book.

The camera on page 42 is reported to have no 28mm finder, but it is obvious from the photo it still has a cutout in the mask under the front glass, and it also has a standard 50 to 135 frame selector dial. If the camera has no 28mm finder it would seem unlikely it came that way from the factory. There really is no point. It would have cost more to manufacture, package and catalog a special body without a finder than to just leave the finder in place. Nikon did once build a camera without a 35mm frame and no auto frame counter for a small savings, the S4, and it did not do well for the company. It is common for Japanese companies to build marketing features into cameras so that there will be a price point at every 50 dollars, but Nikon would not have left the finder out in such a sloppy manner. A special eyepiece would have been built and the mask would have been cut. There is just no history of Nikon ever leaving a camera model in such an unfinished state.

Camera #6215374, however, is not an SP with the 28/35 finder missing! I am going to give it a new designation and call it the "Trifocal SP" because that is just what it is! This camera has frame lines for 35, 50 and 105mm lenses. The frames are parallax corrected and projected. The 28/35 finder is not present, and there is no cutout for it, either in the front mask, or in the eyepiece!

Because it needed cleaning, I disassembled it completely and was able to take photos of parts which are rarely seen by the collector. Before discussing the details the photos reveal, I should make a few notes about the camera in general.

It is an original black camera, and came from the factory with a motor plate. Often these plates are drilled aftermarket, but this one does not have any of the marks usually associated with a plate that was drilled later (the holes are the right size and are painted black on their edges. There are no marks for centering the drill and the cut holding the lever was done with a mill.) The body has a titanium shutter, as would be expected for this serial number range.

The first question which came to my mind when I looked at the body, and considered spending a small fortune on it (the owner had talked to every dealer in New York!) was; is this camera a factory original? There is no question that a skilled craftsman could build a trifocal finder into the camera..after all Pro Camera here in the city has fitted two Nikon F2's together into panorama cameras..a finder would be easy! When I began taking the body down I was looking for that one item which only someone at the factory could do.

Figure Two is the most important photo, showing that one special part I was looking for; illustrated is the viewfinder mask from a standard SP and the mask from #6215374. It can be seen in the photo that the lower mask from #6215374 does NOT have a cutout for the 28/35 finder! At first this would seem a small thing, but this is the one piece which could not be fabricated by even the most skilled workman! It must be die-cut, and it is clear that #6215374 was not only die-cut but on the same die-cutting machine as the standard mask. The cutter for the 28/35 hole was simply removed before the cut was made. While the backlighted photo does not show it, the paint on both pieces is also exactly the same. When I found this piece I knew I had acquired a factory prototype of great rarity and importance.

Why would Nikon go to the trouble of making this camera, and how did it find its way to New York City? I can't really answer the second part of the question but it would be reasonable to find prototypes at Ehrenreich Photo. How it got out the door will probably remain a mystery, but it joins other prototypes and mock-ups which are in collector's hands around New York City.

Why it was built is more obvious. The lack of a decent 35mm finder was always the Achilles heel of the SP. At a time when Nikon and others were making the wide angle lens really popular the little side finder was really poor. It would not have been as bad had Nikon not chosen to also include a 28mm frame in the same finder. That made the 35mm frame so small most pros used a separate optical finder in the flash shoe. This body served the same purpose as the Leica M2, one of the most popular and useful rangefinder bodies ever built. The other photos show the various details, but none is as important as the mask in the second photo!

Figure 3 & 4 show the frame selector ring. This was not a machined piece but cast, so a standard part was modified. The standard version is on the left in both photos. The back of the dial has been modified by filling in the milled slot with lead. This was done to prevent the selector from moving as far as the standard dial. Also one of the click-stops was filled in. The





**ALL PHOTOS by GEOFF SPEAR**



frame selector dial was engraved for 35, 50 and 105 not by filling in the numbers but most likely by turning over the insert shown in Figure 3 and engraving new numbers. This ring is normally glued down after the rangefinder frames are set. The most interesting point about this part is that the "10.5" setting is on the opposite side of the "5" setting from the standard part! This is because #6215374 used an entirely different frame selector cam.

Figure 5 shows this frame selector cam. Again the standard part is on the left. It is easy to see the enormous difference between the two cams. The frames created by this cam are very similar to those found in the Leica M6, where the wide angle frame is very close to the outside edge of the finder. There was always room for a 35mm finder in the SP...Nikon simply chose not to put it there because, like the 28mm finder in the Leica M6, it stretched the limits of the finder past the original design (the M6 finder was only meant to go to 35mm, but 28mm can be squeezed in). Also this photo shows that the center of the cam has no gear for the rewind. This is because it was not necessary to go around the 28/35 finder in the body casting, and so the regular straight shaft of the Nikon S3 was used (Figure 6 shows that shaft and the rewind knob/lever assembly).

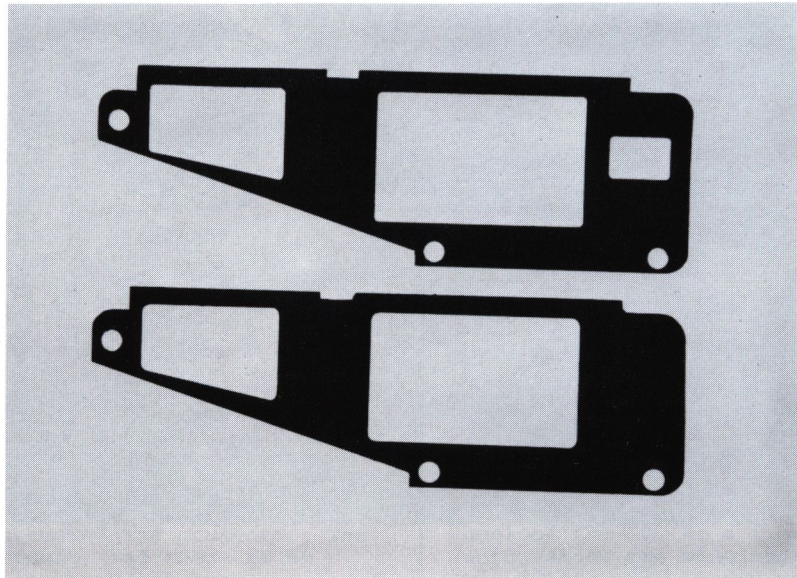
Figure 7 very clearly shows the area that is left open by the lack of the 28/35 optical

finder. Normally there was a gear on the bottom and a small shaft and gear running up between the main finder and the smaller one, but all that was not needed so a more efficient and direct route was taken. Figure 8 shows the empty 28/35 cavity from the front.

Figure 9 shows the back of the camera and the special eyepiece. This part was made of aluminum and there was no evidence that the standard eyepiece was filled in to create the smaller opening. Close examination from the inside shows no evidence of modification, so it is safe to assume that the part was cut from a blank with no opening.

Figure 10 shows the front of the camera. The focus scale is in meters. This certainly separates it from normal U.S.A. production SP cameras. Figure 11 shows the serial number and a close-up of the frame dial in assembled position.

So what does all this mean? Did Nikon hope to build a different SP to replace the rather poorly thought out S3? After all the S3 has always seemed a strange design. They gave us the 35mm finder but took away the parallax correction and projection! Parallax correction for telephoto lenses is very important, making the S3 accurate only for 35 & 50mm lenses. This left out Nikon's most famous lens, the 105mm/f2.5. Clearly the 35mm/f1.8 was also one of their greatest lenses.



*Fig.2-Illustrated in this photo is the unique viewfinder mask mentioned in the text. The standard type (top) has the small cutout for the 28/35mm finder, while that used in this special camera does not. This part is produced by the die-cut process, and would be impossible to duplicate by any other method. Note that these two masks are identical in all respects save for the missing 28/35 cutout. This is the part that more than any other supports the argument that this is a "factory" item and not something fashioned by a skilled repairman.*

*Geoff Spear.*



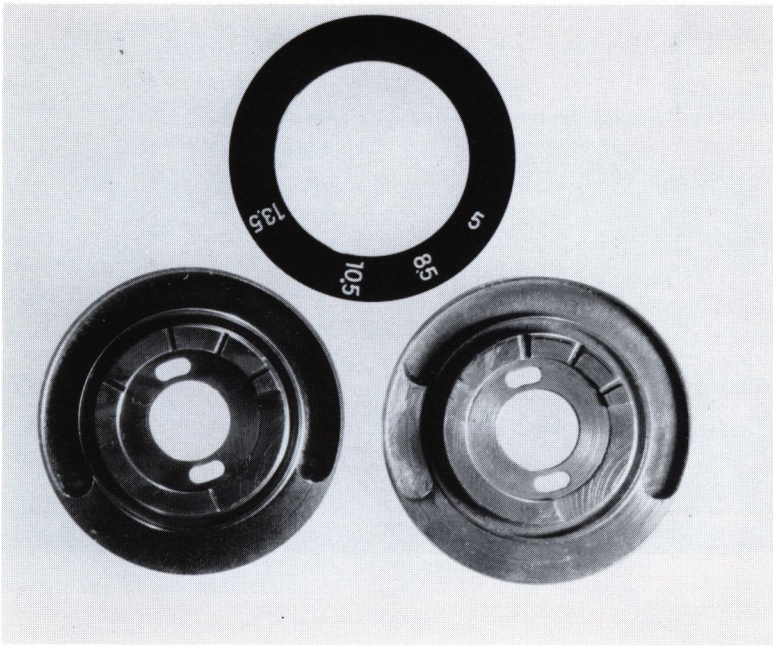


Fig.3-Underside view of a standard frame selector ring (left) and the modified version (right). Note that only three click stops remain on the modified type since this camera only had three framelines. The fourth stop IS present but has been filled in and is only slightly visible. Also note that approximately the last 25-30% of the milled slot has also been filled in, since less movement was needed. Therefore, the dial on the TRIFOVAL SP is actually a standard production piece that has been specially modified for this camera's unique finder system! Geoff Spear.

Fig.4-Topside view of the frame selector rings. Note that the standard type (left) has calibrations for 4 lenses (5, 8.5, 10.5 & 13.5) as did all Nikon SPs, while the TRIFOVAL SP version has only 3 such markings, and they are very different! Gone are the 8.5 and 13.5 settings to be replaced by the 3.5 calibration! In addition note that the location of the 10.5 setting is on the opposite side of the 5 calibration! This would necessitate a different cam configuration, which is illustrated in the next photo. Geoff Spear.

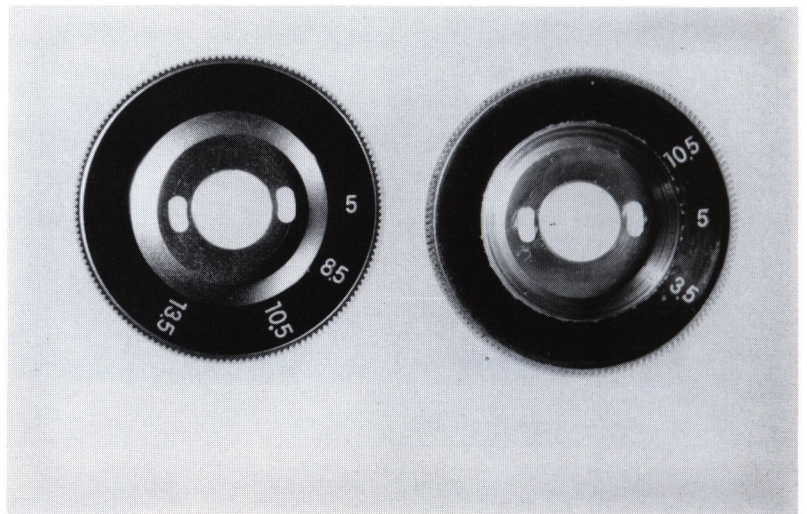
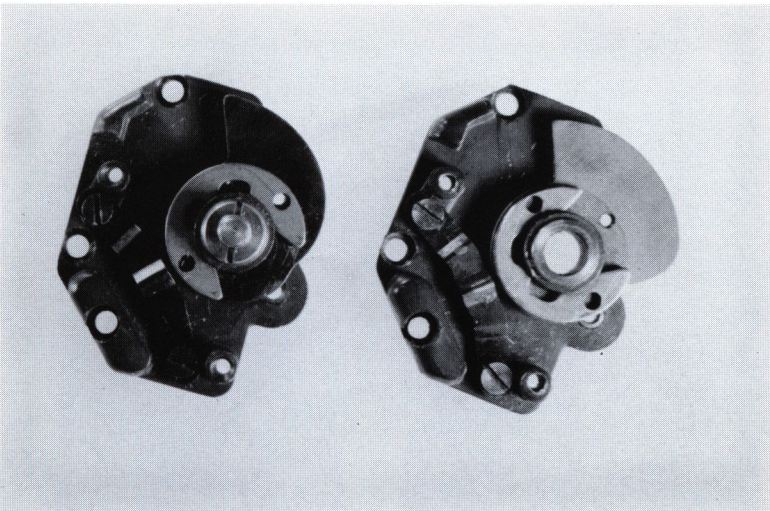


Fig.5-This photo clearly shows the differences between the frame selector cams of a standard SP (left) and the "TRIFOVAL SP" (right). In both cases the cam is located at about 2 o'clock. Note the pronounced bulge at the 3 o'clock position on the TRIFOVAL version. These are definitely two different cams! Not only does it key in just three framelines but, unlike the regular SP, it also does it one at a time! Gone are the multiple lines of the SP! This camera displays only the frame required giving a much less cluttered view. The multiple lines were both loved and hated by Nikon users, so why not do it differently on this modified camera? Fred tells me he likes it much better and I tend to agree! Also note the missing gear for the rewind. In the TRIFOVAL version only a simple hole is present to allow a standard S3-type rewind shaft to pass through. Geoff Spear.





The Trifocal SP provides the user with almost the perfect answer in a clean and very elegant way. A 28mm finder could have easily been provided covering 4 really important lenses. After I cleaned #6215374 I used it with one of my dioptors and finally I have an SP which really works!

This camera body has been around for some time. Many had dismissed it as not being that important or failed to notice what it really was, not just a missing 28/35 finder. I find it to be one of the most interesting pieces I have in my collection because it represents a creative solution to the problems of the original SP and certainly qualifies as the rarest piece I own. Keep looking, they must have made two!!

\*\*\*\*\*

I want to thank NHS member Geoff Spear for taking the great 4x5 Polaroid photos used to illustrate this article. He gave an entire day on short notice from his valuable studio time. His excitement over this beautiful piece was one of the main reasons I was able to purchase it. Also Jim Lager of Ken Hansen Photo in New York City must be thanked for his valuable help in the purchase. The camera would not be in the NHS Journal without these friends.

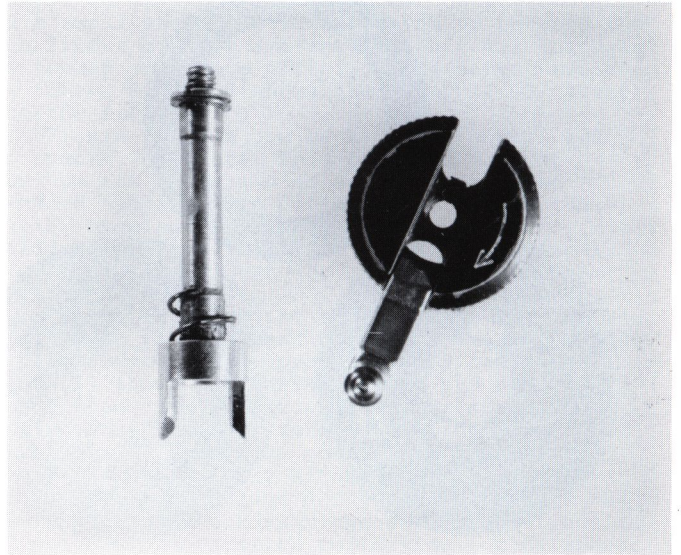


Fig.6-Because the 28/35 finder is no longer present, this special Nikon used a standard S3-type straight rewind shaft.

Fig.7-This view clearly shows the resultant empty cavity left by the missing 28/35 finder. Normally this area would be extremely crowded; a by-product of the very ambitious finder system of the SP. A straight through rewind shaft was not possible on the standard SP because of this tightly packed design.  
Geoff Spear.

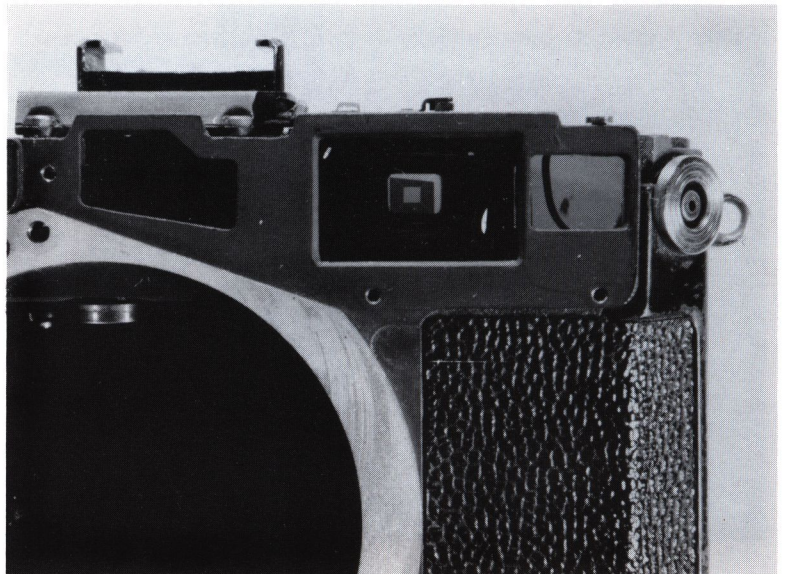
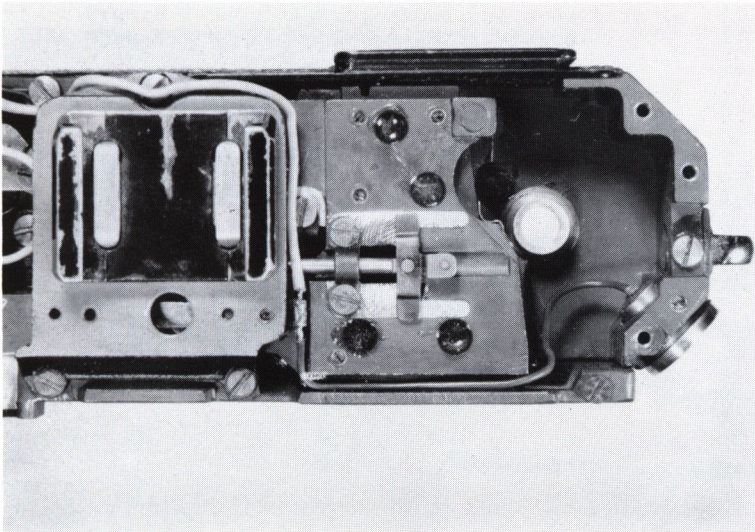


Fig.8-In this photo the empty cavity can be seen from the front. Because the body is a casting the frame opening for the 28/35 finder is still present. Since this opening was effectively blanked off by the modified viewfinder mask in Fig.2, filling in the opening would have been totally unnecessary.  
Geoff Spear.



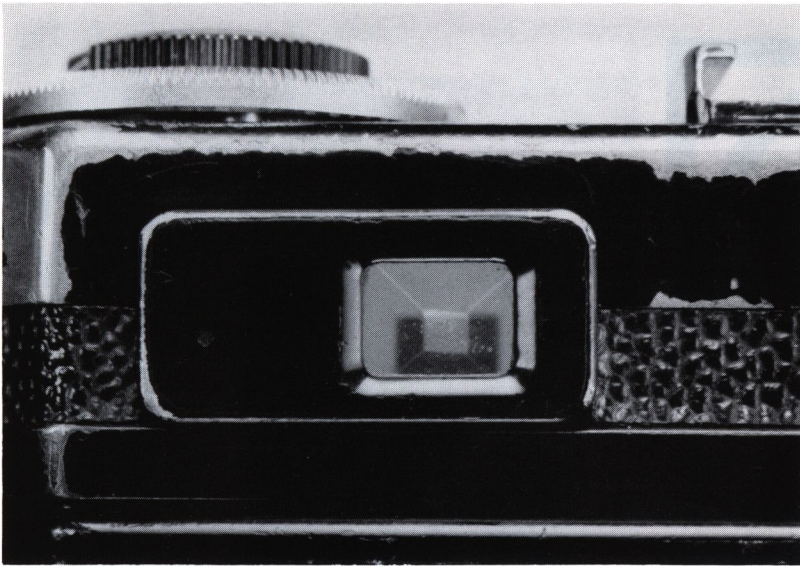


Fig.9-The aluminum eyepiece frame of the TRIFOCAL SP does not have the cutout for the 28/35 finder! It has not been filled in, since an internal examination shows that the inside surface has not been modified in anyway. This eyepiece NEVER had the cutout!  
Geoff Spear.



Fig.10-In this front view of the TRIFOCAL SP note that the distance scale is in meters and not feet. This is generally found only on cameras meant for either the Japanese or European markets as all those shipped to North America were calibrated in feet. This suggests that this camera was never officially imported into the U.S. but could have been purchased overseas or sent here for evaluation purposes. How it got into the marketplace is anyone's guess.  
Geoff Spear.

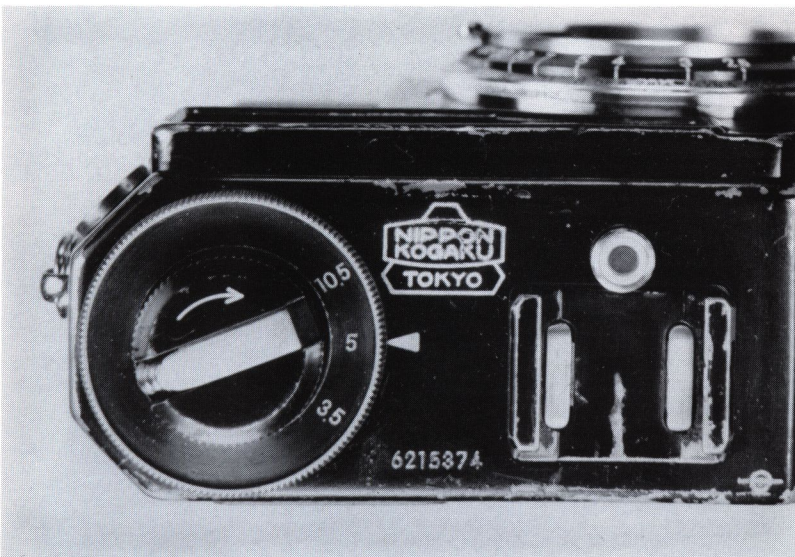


Fig.11-Top view of TRIFOCAL SP #6215374 showing the serial number, which shows no signs of having been altered in any way. Also note the unique tri-position frame selector dial!  
Geoff Spear.



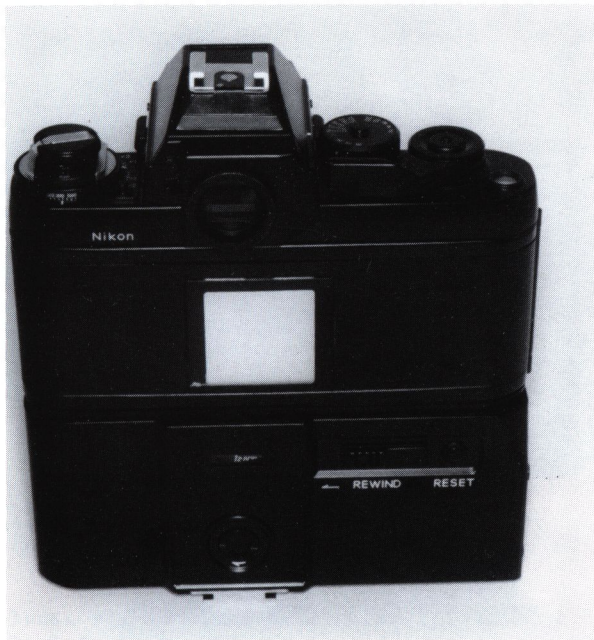
# THE F--SPOT!!

## 'NASA NIKON' by PETER LOWNDS

Most of you I am sure are familiar with the fact that the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), has been a user of Nikon equipment for many years (going back to the Nikon F). One of the more recent projects for which Nikon played a part was the Skylab space station. One item on board was a specially modified Nikon F3 with motor and lenses. Some of those items were used by Nikon in their advertising for the F3 during the 1980s'. They have also been on display at various times and places, as Nikon is justifiably proud of its part in recording man's exploration of outer space. Like myself, many of you have seen something on these "NASA NIKONS" and wondered if you would ever get a close look at one (or even a chance to fondle one!). With the help of member Peter Lownds I have finally had such a chance. Peter is the proud owner of a NASA F3 outfit consisting of the camera, motor and three lenses. He was kind enough to hand carry the outfit here to the U.S. in March and leave it with me so I could have the opportunity to study and photograph it in detail for the Journal. This I have done, the results before you now. However, there is one "little" difference, as is often the case with items covered in our Journal. We strive to showcase the unusual, the unique and the rare, and this item is no exception.....for this "NASA NIKON" probably never left the ground! Why? Because dear members this outfit is a.....DUMMY!!!!.....Enjoy!!!!

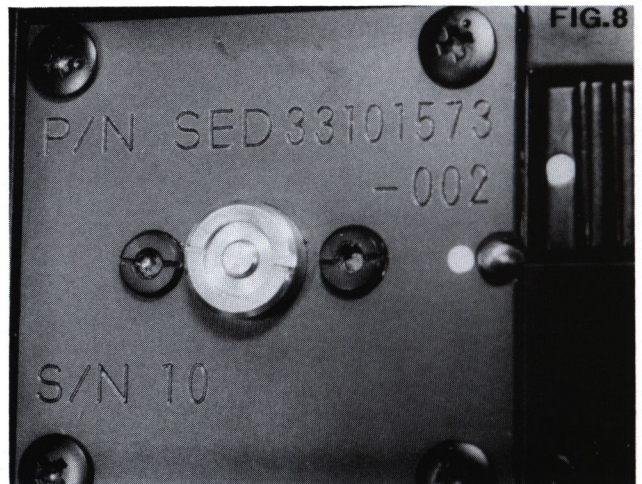






Although upon first inspection this "NASA NIKON" set appears quite normal, there are countless differences between it and its regular production counterparts. Since we have to begin somewhere lets start with the body/motor segment of this outfit. Fig.1 & 2 show a camera seemingly like any other, yet Fig. 3 illustrates a very different quick mounting tripod plate. Note the numbers on the front of the motor; first there is a part number (P/N SED 33101585-301) then the serial number (S/N 10), elements of which repeat throughout this set! However, the body itself has no serial # of any kind, nor is the "F3" present on the front! "Nikon" is engraved on the rear but on the opposite side of the prism. The selftimer is missing as are its index dot and "LED". The mirror lockup lever is larger and moves, but doesn't function. The mechanical shutter release is also larger and moves, but the shutter doesn't function in this DUMMY. The motor is permanently attached and made of heavy gauge metal. Like the body there is absolutely NO leather anywhere on this gear, only black painted metal. The motor is deeper than the production type and shaped differently as well. It also extends forward to a point even with the lensmount.

R. Rotoloni.





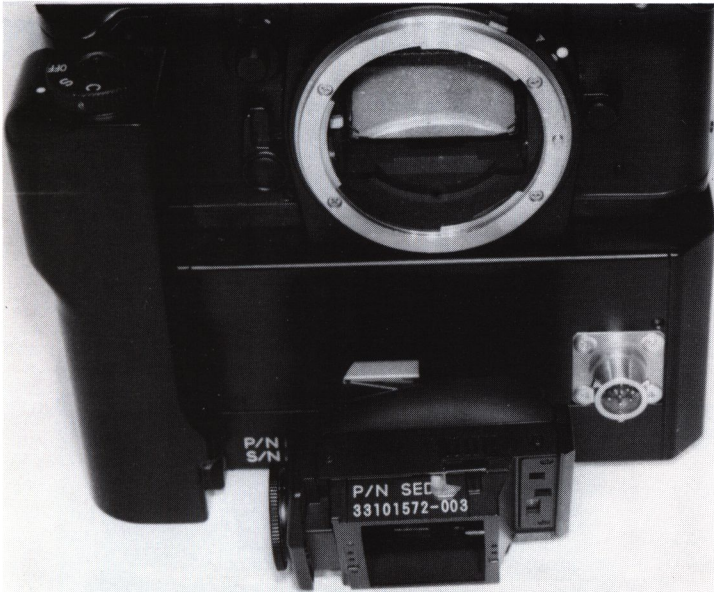


Fig. 6, 7 & 8-The battery pack is removable & has 2 sets of numbers. Externally P/N SED331101573-002 and S/N 10. Internally the same P/N has a -301 suffix and the S/N is 1027. The motor housing is empty as it would be in a DUMMY, but the battery pack is inserted and removed as normal. Note that the frame counter goes to "72"! NASA probably used a thin base film such as Ilford to get as many frames per load as possible without having to go to a bulk back (however, a 250 shot back was made!). The frame reset button and rewind lever are frozen as are the setting wheel and the counter itself. The O-S-C knob on the grip is frozen and the actual release button is missing. Fig. 4 & 5-The camera back is removable as normal but has no pressure plate. The film boxtop holder found on production cameras is present but in this case an erasable memo pad is affixed. Note that the interior looks fairly normal. A shutter curtain is present (but doesn't move) as is the film guide roller, data-back contacts, film sprocket and guide rails. What is missing is the take-up spool! The back lock works normally and its release lock near the rewind cluster does function. There are no numbers present anywhere inside the camera or on the camera back. Note the absence of a regular serial number to the right of the eyepiece. R. Rotoloni.

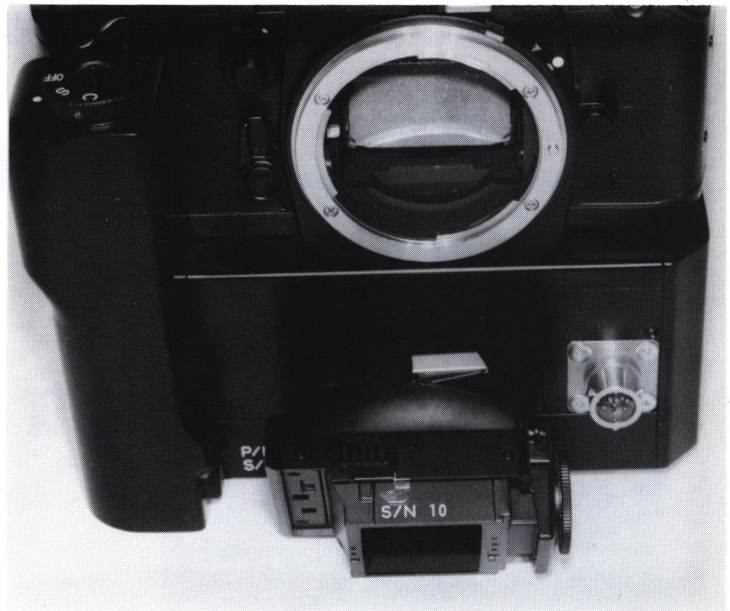
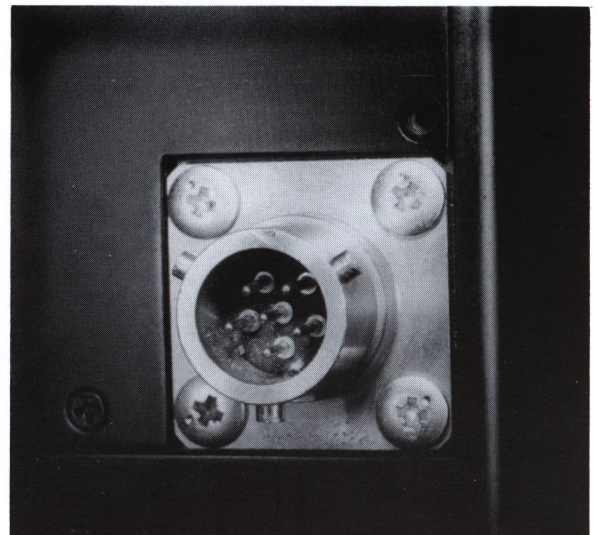
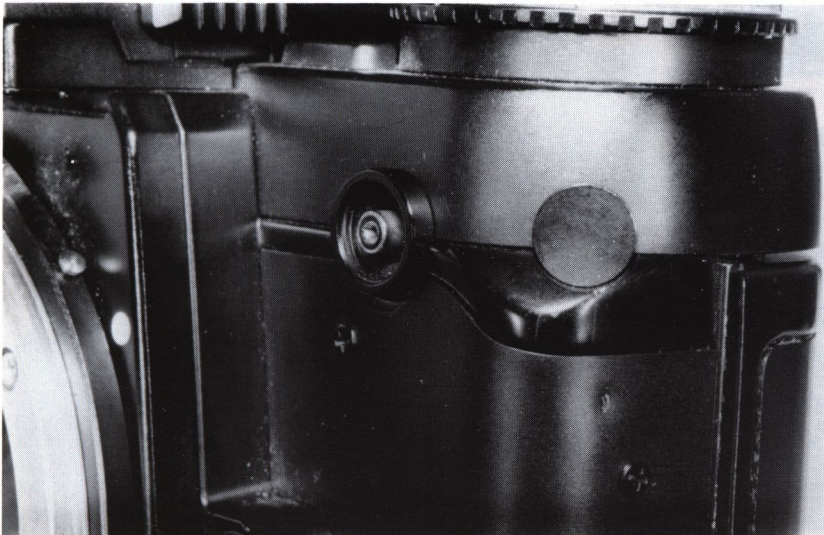


Fig. 9 & 10-The prism is removable per the usual method. However, there is no prism glass but at least 2 pieces of glass for the eyepiece. There is no eyepiece blind but the lever does move. It has a hot shoe (like the F3P) and the illuminator button is present. It also has the same series of numbers engraved, which can be seen after removal from the camera. They are P/N SED33101572-003 and S/N 10 (do you get the feeling that the actual serial number of this set is 10?). Many small variations make this camera different from the standard type. They include: all fittings are black (PC socket, lens release, shutter release and depth of field buttons, shutter dial and exposure compensation dial locks); no strap lugs present (black metal plugs fill the holes!); frame counter window is round and elevated with strong magnification; no multiple exposure lever; no shutter release lock or index; no focal plane index mark; wind lever moves but does nothing; shutter dial moves freely; AI meter coupler moves and works. Also note in Fig. 12 the very large modified power connector which has three locking studs. Fig. 11 shows the metal "skin" that has been applied with both glue and screws to replace the leather! R. Rotoloni.





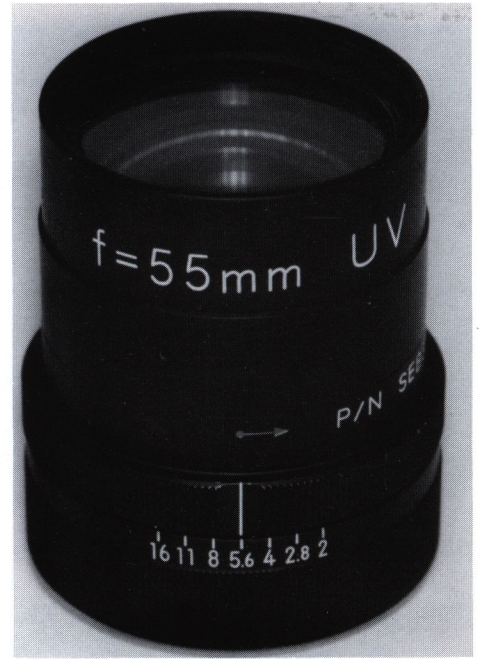
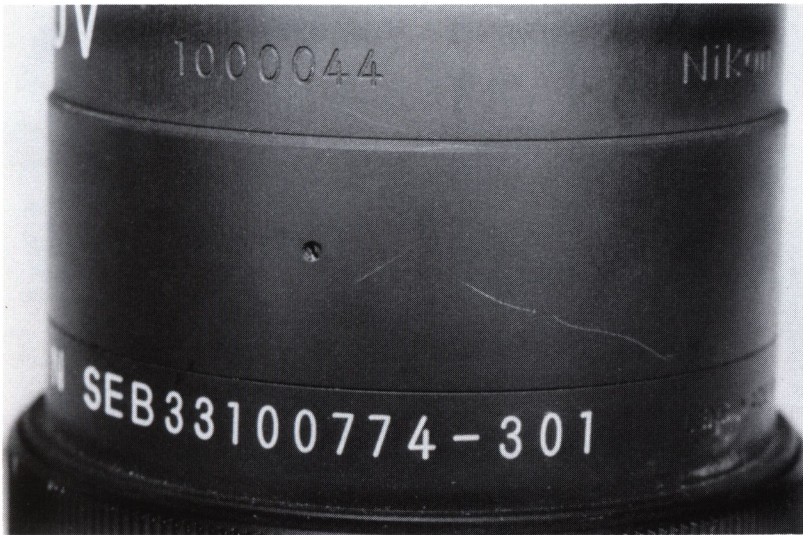


Hopefully I have spent sufficient time and space describing the NASA F3 body/motor unit to give you an idea of how it differs from the standard production item. Also it is not functional in any way..no prism or meter parts; no winding capability; no guts to the motor; no take-up spool or moveable shutter curtain. Although nowhere can be found the word "DUMMY", and the trouble was taken to engrave all those official looking numbers, this is obviously a DUMMY camera and motor. Now lets take a look at the 3 lenses that came as a set with this outfit, starting with the 55/f1.2. Fig.13-16. This matte-black finished lens appears to be a standard issue item that has been specially painted and engraved..simply plucked out of regular inventory, repainted and numbered, and sent to its fate. Even its original production serial number (800024) and the standard Nippon Kogaku markings can be seen under its new paint job! The diaphragm blades function normally as does the focusing ring. Even the meter fork is present (also painted black). It is calibrated only in feet and the scale is in orange! The diaphragm and depth of field scales are in white. Even the red "R" for infrared is present. All of these points make this pre-AI vintage 55mm/f1.2 Nikkor look quite normal, but is it? As with the F3 unit, this lens has both a part # and special serial #. In this case P/N SEB33100009-301 and S/N 10 (there's that #10 again!). These markings are in white and quite visible. But this lens holds two additional surprises. On its rear surface near the bayonet is engraved "DUMMY-1"!! Unlike the body/motor unit this lens is identified as a Dummy item! (Does the #1 signify that additional Dummy units exist?) The second surprise is only evident when mounted on a camera, for this lens does not focus to infinity! Even though the focusing ring has the standard scale and seems to function normally, this lens will not focus correctly. Therefore, this part of our "NASA NIKON" outfit is, like the body/motor unit, also a "DUMMY" product.

R. Rotoloni.

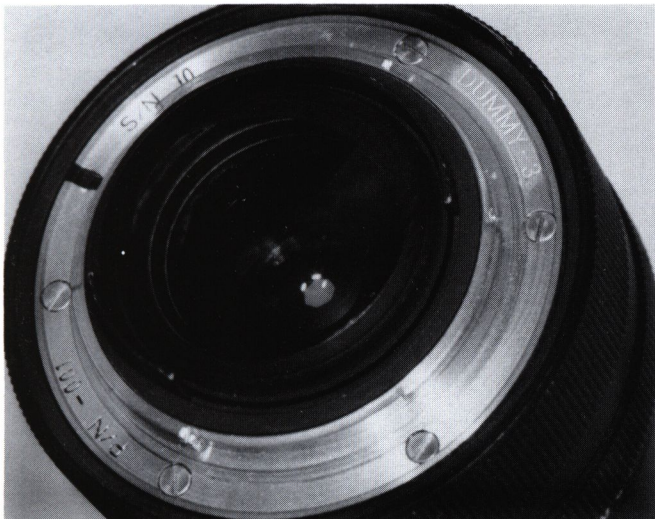




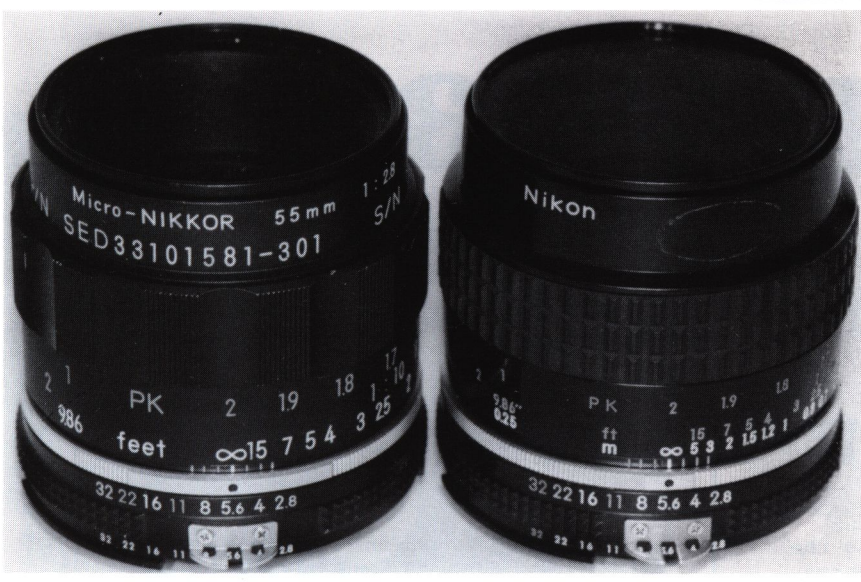


The second lens in the set is actually the most interesting. Many of you have seen the 55mm/f4.0 "UV" Nikkor pictured in the Cooper/Abbott books. Well it looks like Nippon Kogaku made one for NASA, although its shape is very different from that in Cooper/Abbott (which looks very much like a standard 55mm Micro), and its speed is f2.0! This lens is also finished in a matte-black paint like the 1.2 optic. Again the original production serial number can be read and it is #1000044! (Could they really have made at least 44 of these??) P/N SEB33100774-301 as well as S/N 10 are boldly engraved in white. (Note that like the 1.2, the P/N suffix is also "301" and again the serial # is 10!!) Unlike the other two lenses this one is prominently identified in a very large engraving, "f=55mm UV", near the front rim! The manual diaphragm on this lens does function and the scale is in white. There is an orange "arrow" near the diaphragm index whose purpose is not known (see Fig.18). A metal stud is screwed into the diaphragm ring for quick adjusting and it too is numbered (Fig.20)! Believe it or not, but someone actually went through the trouble of engraving a P/N on this tiny little stud! It is P/N SEB33100773-002! Amazing! On the rear surface is engraved..P/N-001, S/N 10 and DUMMY-3! The first 2 numbers are painted in white the Dummy-3 marking has been burnished but is still readable! Reflections suggest only two elements are present in this lens and no image is visible when mounted on a camera!

R. Rotoloni.







The third lens in our set differs from the others in many ways, and actually contains a very weird collection of features. On one hand this lens more closely resembles its standard production counterpart in physical appearance, while on the other hand it has no original serial number and is not marked DUMMY anywhere! It is a 55mm/2.8 Micro-Nikkor of AI vintage, and even though it looks more "normal" than the others, it has no diaphragm blades at all! Linkage for the auto mechanism is there, and the aperture control ring works normally, but there are no blades! A closer look reveals the following. In Fig. 22 I have placed it next to a regular production lens for comparison. Note that the AI type aperture ring and fork are identical. However, the NASA lens has an earlier vintage metal focusing ring and not the rubber type. The focusing scale is only in feet, therefore, the numbers are larger and easier to read. The scale is white. The "PK" scale is also larger and it is in orange.

Fig.23-Unlike the other lenses only the focusing ring is matte-black while the rest of the barrel is identical to the standard lens. Near the front rim are engraved the identification numbers.. P/N SED33101581-301 and S/N 10. However, in this case there are two extra digits after the S/N which are not painted in. It actually reads S/N 10 09! (Again the -301 suffix is present as well as the #10!) A proper PK-13 ring is present in this set and it is finished in a matte-black, but not quite as dull as the other two lenses. Its identification numbers are P/N SED33101581-002 (the main number is identical to that on the lens) and S/N M10! It is possible that the "M" harkens back to the previous rings for the Micros that were known as "M" rings. However, like the lens, two extra unpainted digits follow the S/N, which actually reads as S/N M10 01. All engravings on this ring are in white.

R. Rotoloni.



Fig.24-Note the corresponding P/N on both the lens and PK ring. The AI system is present on the PK ring and does function. As mentioned there are no Dummy engravings anywhere on this lens and it too does not focus to infinity! Although not marked as a Dummy, the missing diaphragm blades and regular serial number suggests it is. One thing for sure, its P/N and S/N numbers make it part of this "DUMMY NASA NIKON" set! The fact that every numbered piece has the S/N 10 engraved on it suggests that this is an original matched set. How many sets were made is not known, and how many Dummy sets were produced is anyone's guess. Two, three or maybe just...one!?!?

R. Rotoloni.



# AN EARLY 35mm FINDER

by 'CY' MEYER

Collecting Nikon rangefinder equipment offers many rewarding experiences..getting the last item to round out a collection of lenses, viewfinders or whatever..finding a pristine camera with all documentation and accessories..turning up a misengraved lens or camera..or finally taking the plunge and buying a Nikon I are just some of the experiences most of us still look forward to.

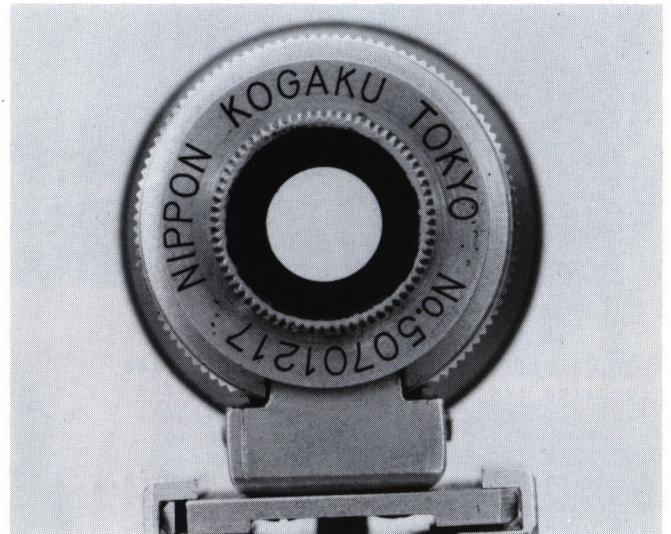
Finding an item which obviously belongs to the Nikon rangefinder classification but which does not appear to fit the description of any heretofore known example and, therefore, is possibly not just scarce or rare, but actually unique is, of course, one of the most pleasant of those experiences. It does, however, also pose a puzzle which begs a solution.

Such an item is the serially numbered 35mm chrome viewfinder pictured here. There is little variation among the 35mm chrome finders and most of those differences, though small, are easily discernible. A few were apparently made during the Occupation and are engraved "Nippon Kogaku Tokyo" rather than, like the post-occupation finders, "Nippon Kogaku Japan". Also, those which were made for use with Leica cameras (and which have the letter "L" engraved on the underside of the foot) and those made for use with the Contax cameras (and have the letter "C" on their foot) have minor differences in the configuration of the foot in order to accommodate to the Leica and Contax accessory shoes. Some finders (e.g., varifram, varifocal, 21mm and many black britelines) have serial numbers on the underside of the foot. But, as "The Book" points out, no 35mm chrome finder has been previously reported bearing a serial number.

The pictured finder obviously does not fit into the established pattern, and raises a number of questions which so far are unanswered.

The date, or even the approximate date, of its manufacture is unknown. Its engraving, "Nippon Kogaku Tokyo", tends to indicate that it was made before the end of the Occupation, that is before 28 April 1952, otherwise it probably would have been engraved "Nippon Kogaku Japan". Assuming that it probably (but by no means certainly) was made to be used with a Nikkor 35mm lens, it could have been made anytime between March 1948 (the date usually given for the introduction of the 35mm Nikkor) and April 1952. The paucity of 35mm chrome finders with the "Tokyo" engraving is strong evidence that only a few were made during the Occupation. Most early owners of the 35mm Nikkor lenses probably used them with the Variframe or Varifocal finders.

The placement of the serial number also raises a number of questions. As mentioned above, many of the other Nikon finders had the serial



number on the underside of the foot. Why does this one have its serial number engraved on the rear surface? Does this place it concurrent with the early Variframes made for the Nikon I and M cameras which had top mounted numbers? Is its serial number indicative of its date of design (or manufacture)? Do the first 3 digits (507) indicate July 1950? And, if so, what do the remaining 5 digits represent? Could this really be the 1,217th such finder made!?!?

Also, notice that the engravings on this finder are "finer" (and smaller) than those on other examples, even those of the "Tokyo" period. (The engravings most closely resemble those on the face of the 35mm screwmount lenses of the "Tokyo" period). It's possible that a finer engraving style was used to allow room for the rather long serial number.

One collector who has seen this finder offered this theory: "The first 3 digits of the serial number (507) possibly indicate a design date of July 1945! Although Nikon was not in production of 35mm lenses then, it is known that at about that time they produced a few prototype 35mm lenses for use on the Canon cameras. Canon modified their 50mm viewfinder so that a separate 35mm finder was unnecessary, but it is possible that Nikon was unaware of Canon's intentions and, therefore, designed a viewfinder to be used with those early 35s'?"

If anyone has seen a similar finder or can provide information which would answer the above questions, such information would be appreciated!

\*\*\*\*\*  
Cy was gracious enough to ship this very unusual item to me so I could have the opportunity to examine it personally and to photograph it for this article. Two other such finders have come to my attention in recent years. I was able to handle and examine #50701230 on my last trip to Japan in 1989, and #50701039 has also been reported to me. If memory serves me well, #50701230 was identical to that pictured here, but having not seen the third example I cannot describe it with any certainty. (Editor)



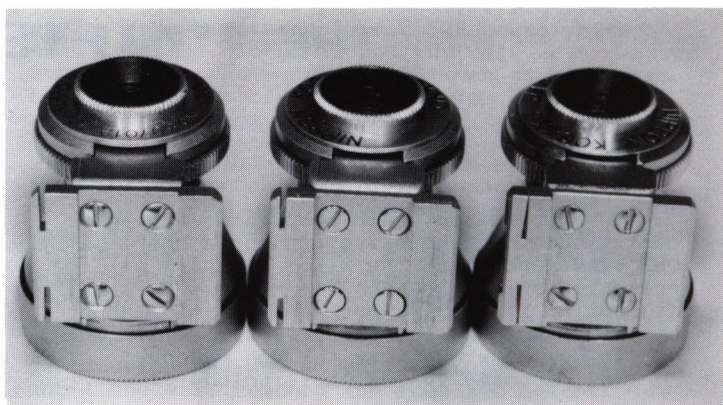
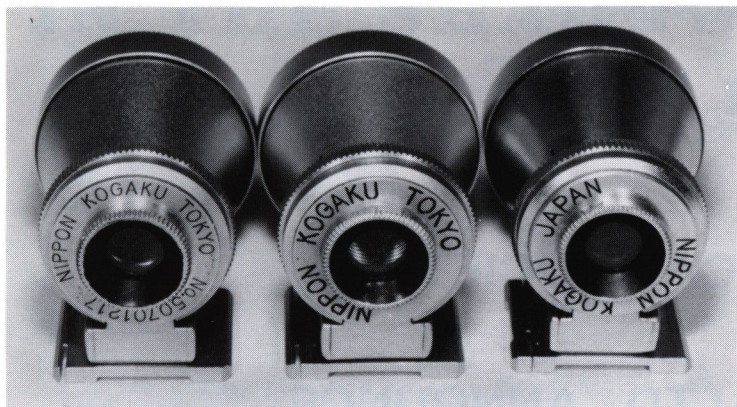


Fig. 1 is a close-up view of the serial number on this very interesting finder. Why such a long number for such a minor accessory is a little strange to say the least. In Figs. 2 through 5 I have placed this very early finder alongside its probable two succeeding versions for comparison. In each photo they are arranged from the earliest (L) to the latest (R). The most important photo is #2, which graphically illustrates the changing engraving style used by Nippon Kogaku. Our featured finder has both a thinner and smaller style, possibly because of the presence of the serial number. Note that it would have been quite difficult to insert this long number into the succeeding finders, as their type style is too large. The middle finder is probably from the Occupation because of the "TOKYO" engraving, while the finder on the right is obviously post-occupation. I have included four views of all three finders for a better comparison. Except for the engraving differences they actually appear to be quite similar. However, and this is hard to tell from the photos, the chrome finish gets brighter as we go left to right. Our featured finder has the dullest finish (very much like a Nikon I or M), while the middle version is just a little brighter. The final type is noticeably brighter than the earlier versions. In Fig. 6 we have the case for our featured finder (L) next to a standard type. Note the differences in both size and closure configuration. What can't be seen in this photo is the lovely orange tint to the leather of the earlier type. R. Rotoloni.



## NHS-CON3

SEATTLE SPRING 1992

THE NIKON HISTORICAL SOCIETY &  
CLASSIC CAMERA CO.,LTD. ANNOUNCE..

## THE "NHS" AWARDS

Several awards, each comprising a plaque, certificate or decorative pin and a complimentary ONE YEAR renewal to The Nikon Journal, will be presented during NHS-Con3 to members for their dedication in seeking out, and learning about classic Nikon collectibles. "YOU", as a member, get to nominate and vote for the winners!

The proposed awards will include...

- 1) For unearthing the most surprising Nikon item(s) from a dealer's junk bin!  
3rd place.....THE "SIFTER" AWARD.  
2nd place.....THE "TRAWLER" AWARD.  
1st place.....THE "DREDGER" AWARD.
- 2) For the Nikon find(s) of greatest historical or collectible significance!  
THE "BIG CATCH" AWARD.
- 3) For the most interesting and inexpensive find by a beginning Nikon collector (less than 2yrs)  
THE "NOVICE" AWARD.
- 4) For bringing back a Nikon collectible found in the strangest place in the world.  
THE "REELER" AWARD.
- 5) For discovering the most unusual/obscure Nikon collectible(s) here-to-fore unknown to the NHS.  
THE "ESOTERICA" AWARD.
- 6) For the most unbelievable Nikon bargain(s) discovered at a yard sale, pawn shop, etc.  
THE "STEAL" AWARD.
- 7) For the best written contribution(s) to the "Nikon Journal".  
THE "JOURNALIST" AWARD.
- 8) For the best photographic contribution(s) to the "Nikon Journal".  
THE "PHOTO-ARTIST" AWARD.

- 9) For the NHS member whose endeavors on behalf of Nikon collecting most inspire the membership to continue to seek & study Nikon collectibles.  
THE "INSPIRATION" AWARD.

For the purpose of these awards any camera, lens, accessory, experimental piece, literature, etc., produced by Nippon Kogaku, or by another manufacturer exclusively for the Nikon system, qualifies as a Nikon collectible.

To send a nomination, write down your nominating statement on the enclosed submission form. Please read the procedures on the back of the form before composing your nomination. Send completed forms to..

NHS AWARDS  
c/o Earl Wong  
P.O. Box 8175  
Van Nuys, CA 91409-8175 USA

Questions concerning the NHS Awards may be directed to..

Calvin Ho  
Caltech 1-87  
Pasadena, CA 91126  
Tel..(818) 585-0653

Additional forms may be requested by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to either of the above addresses. Forms which are cleanly photocopied are also acceptable.

The "NHS AWARDS" are co-sponsored by the Society and Classic Camera Company Ltd., London.  
\*\*\*\*\*  
PLEASE NOTE.....PLEASE NOTE.....PLEASE NOTE....

If anyone in the membership can donate their services in producing pins, plaques, certificates and/or metal engraving work for the NHS Awards, please contact Calvin Ho at the above address!!!!  
\*\*\*\*\*  
You will find a nominating form inserted in this issue of The Journal. Please use this form to make your nominations. Because of weight restrictions only 1 form could be inserted. We ask that those of you making multiple nominations please Xerox the form.



# IN THE SHADOW OF FUJI...

## Tales of Nippon Kogaku!

by John Baird

It was my pleasure to have Bob Rotoloni out here, that is here in Washington state, during April for the spring Seattle show. In getting ready for his stay, I was cleaning up my work area...uncovering bits and pieces of stuff I hadn't seen...let's say for sometime. One document that I un-earthed was the product of the British Intelligence Objectives Sub-Committee. This report was on the Japanese optical industry just following the end of the war in 1945. It is a fairly long report covering a variety of areas including the types and designs of optics produced during the war by Japanese lens makers. In addition, this report contains a summary of the types of optical glass produced by Nippon Kogaku including the chemical composition of various glasses and the manner in which a mix was heated. Along with this an explanation on the types of clay melting pots used in making optical glass was furnished, describing the different types of materials used and the procedure by which these large pots were created. In reading this particular section it occurred to me that the production of these clay pots required a lot of effort and research to make...if the glass made in these pots was to be of the finest quality...and it was apparently so. Nikkor lenses replaced many German made lenses during the Korean conflict.

According to this report, first released in December of 1945, pots used in the production of optical glass in Japan were usually of one ton capacity, although several companies sported pots able to hold two tons. Folks, that's a lot of weight for a pot that will be heated to the point where the mix dissolves into a molten sea of glass!! These pots were made from clay, and the impurities were removed from the raw clay by hand! To facilitate this process, large pieces were first broken with a hammer and inspected. After this initial inspection, the clay was laid outdoors to break down naturally, increasing the plasticity of the material. After weathering and other purification treatments, the clay was dried and then crushed in a jaw-like device, and then ground in an edge runner mill. Finally, different types of clays were combined with water before the actual building up of each pot.

The pot-maker took the clay, which contained about 20% water, from the kneaders, and threw it forcibly against a hard board and spread it! This board was fitted with two handles so it could be

lifted. When this "bottom" of the pot attained the required thickness...about 8cm for a one ton pot and 10cm for a two ton version...the board was turned over. The pot bottom was reversed and laid upon a second board and the edges of this clay slab were covered with rough cloths to prevent too rapid drying. The time required for drying ranged between 70 and 120 hours. After this time the cloths around the edge were removed and the edge was wedged up between the hands so that a thin rim of clay, about 7cm high, rose around the bottom. Rolls of clay, about 20cm long and 7cm in diameter, were prepared and spread along the outside of the rim. The building up from the bottom continued, with each layer of clay being laid upon the other until a wall of clay reached a height of 25 to 30cm. Again, rough cloths were placed on the clay wall, and it was left to dry slowly. The side of the pot was smoothed by a flat piece of wood. When this first section of the pot wall was sufficiently dry to support the next section, the pot-maker would continue to add new layers, each 20 to 25cm high, until the wall reached the required height. Usually each wall featured about three or four sections. In addition, during the building-up process, the humidity and temperature were kept well controlled and maintained as it required about 12 to 16 days for the clay to dry and about 2 to 4 months of aging after that before each pot could be used for its one and only melt of optical glass!

During the war the melting of optical glass was done in gas furnaces. The clay pots were pre-heated in the melting ovens before charging with the raw glass mixture. In each case a final check for cracks was made by using water-cooled metal mirrors attached to long poles!

Whew! That's a lot of work and messing around just to make glass for a few camera lenses! Nippon Kogaku, in order to produce these clay pots more rapidly, during the war developed a method called "slip-casting" where the entire pot was cast, more or less, in a large mold. Regardless of all of this, just think of all the effort and cost that went into the making of the pot that the glass was melted in! Glass...ground and polished before being fitted into each Nikkor lens...before its final inspection at the hands of Mr. Watanabe and his brass hammer!!



# NIKON JOURNAL EXCLUSIVE!

## NEWS FLASH!!!

## THE "UNO" SIGHTED!!



Reports have been coming in to this editor from all over the world concerning a flood of sightings of the latest mystery to confront 20th century man. From as far away as Katmandu and the west slope of Mt. St. Helens (after the smoke cleared), to as close as Munster and the shores of Lake Michigan, hundreds of collectors of brass and chrome have been visited by this strange and cosmic apparition. Obviously from a galaxy far, far away, neither the scientific community nor the press have come up with an explanation. All reports to date state that this latest E.T. to visit our small planet has been as benign and inquisitive as his more famous kin, but no one has determined whether he is as cuddly. We will have to wait for the verdict on that.

Those who have seen this "UNO" tell us of a being who spends most of his time just looking around with sort of a lost and bewildered look on his face. He is characterized as very large with excessive facial hair that possibly has migrated down from the upper areas of its head. However, its most distinctive feature are its strange beady eyes. They appear to be computer like

orifices that are capable of controlling the amount of light by a completely silent diaphragm mechanism. In addition it is thought that they give the "UNO" a decidedly wideangle view of our world with no vignetting but possibly some light fall-off at the edges.

Those who have personally come in contact with the "UNO" state that he is quite congenial and speaks with a slight accent. However, he has been reported to become a bit excited when confronted with certain pieces of brass and chrome bearing the "NIKON" logo. At this time it is not known why he reacts in such a way (or why anyone in their right mind would). Hopefully more of you will be fortunate to make contact and the Journal would appreciate any and all information concerning the "UNO". Until then keep your eyes towards the skies (or on your table), for one never knows where the "UNO" will land next.

Reproduced here is the only known photograph of the "UNO" and, again, your Journal is the first to run it. Another coup for the "NHS"! I want to thank Peter Braczko for supplying this photo of the "UNIDENTIFIED NIKON OBJECT"!



## “NHS” PRODUCTS

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Our "NHS Products" list continues to expand. Through the efforts of member Peter Lownds, we have been able to produce a compendium of repair manual reprints for the series of Nikon motors that most interest this society. Printed and bound as one portfolio are the repair manuals for the S36 and S72 motors for the rangefinder series, and both the early and late manuals for the F36 motor as well as the F250 back made for the Nikon F! All 5 manuals are bound together as one & available for \$17.00 in the U.S. and \$20.00 for overseas, postpaid! You can't go wrong on this one, and it makes for a great companion volume to the SP repair manual!

Also I am happy to announce that John Baird's excellent monograph, "The Japanese Camera", is again available. The initial press run had sold out but more have now arrived. I have also acquired an additional supply of the Nikon calculators. A complete listing follows...

TIE CLASP/CUFF LINK SETS...	\$15.00 US
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**CLASSIFIED**

WANTED...Boxed S & S2. I am looking for the viewfinder for the 21mm/f4 Nikkor for the Nikon F. Nikkormat slide projector and Nikon movie cameras wanted. I am also seeking Calypso underwater type cameras and accessories (pre-dates Nikonos One). Danilo Capuani, via S. Spirito 10, I-40026 Imola (Bo), Italy. Fax # (542) 43170.

FOR SALE...Nikon RF plastic rear caps for telephotos (85mm and up). Found a bundle of them in Thailand all in truly excellent condition; \$6.95 each or 2 for \$13.00 plus 45 cents each postage. Send order to; Brian Wolfe, 4351 Sepulveda Blvd., Culver City, CA 90230.

WANTED...3.5cm black briteline finder. Call David Miller at (514) 274-1468. Thank you!

WANTED..Top prices paid for all Nikon rangefinder finders. Please call or Fax with what you have. Richard Tillis..(516)599-6013..Fax (516)599-3369.

WANTED...Clean Nikon rangefinder. I'll pay 25% more than McKeown's Price Guide. Write or phone. Peter Lownds, W. de Zwiijgerstaat 24, Rotterdam 3043 VD Holland. Tel...(010) 415-9136.

WANTED...Collector seeks rangefinder items; Nikon bodies, lenses and accessories. Nikkors in screw mount. Canon bodies and lenses in particular the 19mm, 25mm, 50mm/f0.95, 200mm and Mirror Box. All types of Leica copies. Nikkors for F...Fisheye, OP, 55mm UV, PS 55mm Micro 1:1, 400-600-800-1200mm lens heads & mount. Per Kullenberg, Ollingvej 11, 6933 Kibaek, Denmark. Tel..45-971-91393.

WANTED...Black Nikon F eyelevel in EX+ or better condition. Can offer Minolta Prod 20s as possible bartering item. Wolfgang Kuster, In der Wehrhecke 6, D-5300 Bonn 1-Rottgen, West Germany.

WANTED...Nikkor 28/f3.5 RF lens w/caps/hood/fdr; Nikkor 105/f2.5 RF lens w/caps/hood/fdr. Please send info on condition and price to..... Craig Swearingen c/o Skylark, 5506 F.M. 1960 W., Houston, Texas 77069.

FOR TRADE...18cm/2.5 Nikkor w/shade/caps in Nikon bayonet. Wish to exchange for 18cm or 25cm or 5cm Micro-Nikkor in Leica screw mount. Tony Hurst, 35 Carysfort Ave., Blackrock, Co. Dublin, Ireland. Tel...Dublin 2-884896.

FOR TRADE...Black Nikon F #7345955 (Apollo) w/1.4 and F36 motor w/N-36 Remopak battery. Also Canon L-1 w/1.2/Canon UV filter. Will trade for Nikon RF. James Leatham, PO Box 50355, Parks, AZ 86018.

WANTED...For Olympus Pen-F..lenses, accessories & special purpose bodies. Offers to; Jaap Kortten, Helsingipad UG, 3067 RP Rotterdam, Holland.

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**NEXT ISSUE**

The deadline for the next issue of The Nikon Journal will be September 1, 1991. For those of you with articles, ads, photos & letters for NHS-33, please get all contributions to me by that date. Thank you!

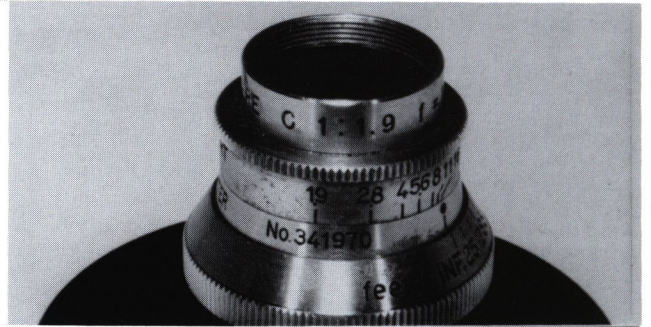
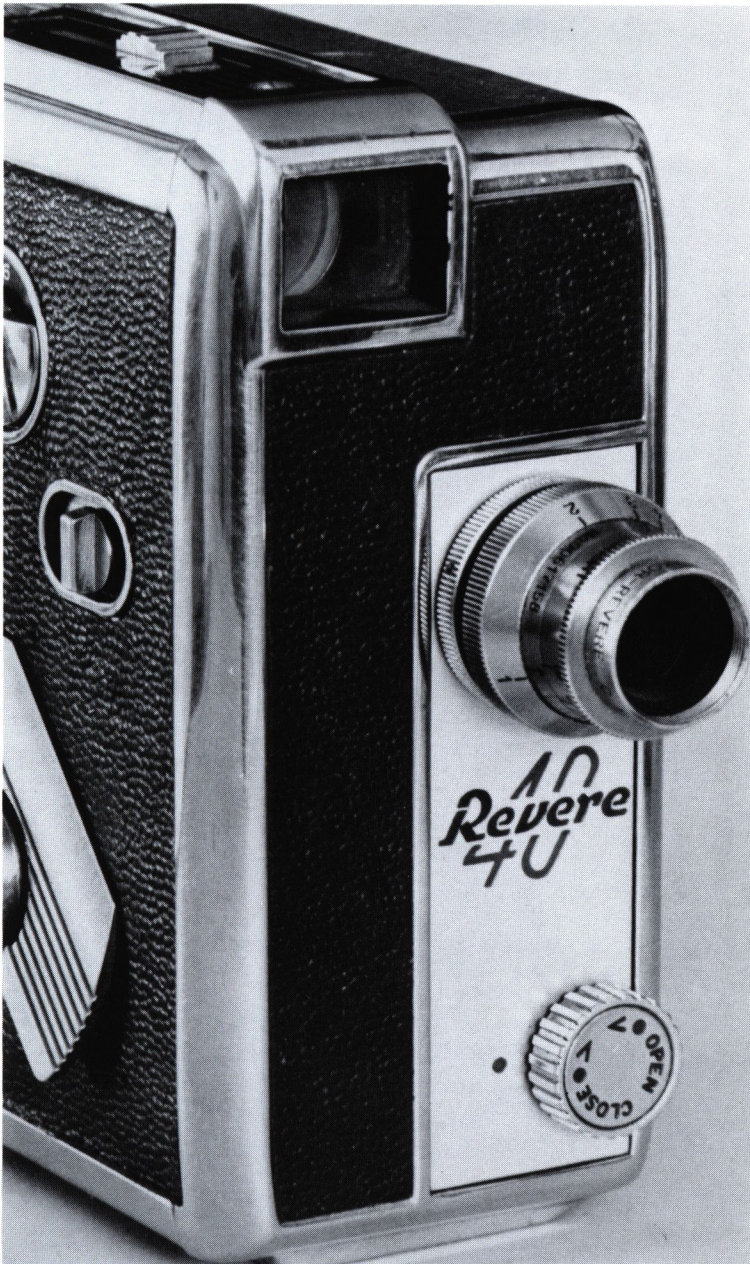


# odds 'n ends

THIS "ODDS N' ENDS" PAGE WILL BE RESERVED IN ALL FUTURE ISSUES OF "THE NIKON JOURNAL" AS A SHOWCASE FOR THE RARE, THE UNUSUAL & OFFBEAT, OR JUST THE OUT OF THE ORDINARY! IF YOU FEEL

THAT YOU POSSESS AN ITEM THAT FULFILLS THESE CRITERIA, PLEASE SEND ME AT LEAST TWO OR MORE VARIED VIEWS OF YOUR ODDITY ALONG WITH ANY INFORMATION THAT WOULD BE OF INTEREST. THANKS!

## CINE-NIKKOR REVERE?



Many years ago that colossal collector of the quaint and the unusual, Bill Kraus, showed me yet another item I had never heard of but, as usual, Bill owned an example of! During a visit way back when he handed me a rather common and mundane Revere 8mm movie camera. Now come on Bill, we are collectors of the classic Nikon RF system, so why would I possibly be interested in a dime-a-dozen Revere 8mm, hundreds of which I'd seen and passed on over the years. Well, Bob, take a closer look at this one and tell me what you see. Alright Bill, I'll bite, let me see what is so special about your Revere. Of course there was something interesting (or why else carry this thing around?)...there it was staring me in the face...a 13mm/f1.9 CINE-NIKKOR-REVERE!! That's right folks...a Nikkor lens on a lowly Revere 8mm camera! A U.S. made 8mm camera! Not only did Nikon supply these lenses to Revere (a Chicago company!), but they also engraved the Revere name on the lens! This is the only time I am aware of where Nikon engraved someone else's name on their optics! Amazing! Needless to say I began a ten year search for one & did find it right here in a Chicago pawn shop. Peter Lownds was with me, and thought I was crazy till I showed him the lens! Within weeks he had found one also! Pictured here (by Tony Hurst) are his #90617158 (MIOJ?????!!!!) and my #341970, obviously of later vintage. So it appears that Nikon made these for Revere as far back as the very early 1950s'. Now all of you will have to examine the thousands of little Revere 8s' you see at all the shows!! Have fun!!!







**Created For The 'NHS' by TONY HURST**