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JUNE 30, 1989

NHS
NIPPON
KOGAKU
TOKYO

24

"THE NIKON F"
30TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL!!

THE NIKON  JOURNAL



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ROBERT ROTOLONI
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

THE NIKON Journal

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EDITOR/PUBLISHER

MEMBERS

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SERIES ARE APPRECIATED, AND EVERY
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OF ALL SUBMITTALS AS SPACE AL-
LWS. PLEASE TYPE ALL MANUSCRIPTS
AND MAKE ALL B/W PHOTOS AT LEAST
"3 BY 5" AND GLOSSY. A SEAMLESS
BACKGROUND IS PREFERRED AND TRY
TO MAKE PHOTOS HIGH CONTRAST.
YOU WILL BE GIVEN A BY-LINE UN-
LESS ANONYMITY IS REQUESTED AND
ENCLOSE AN "SASE" IF RETURN OF
THE MATERIAL IS DESIRED.....
THANK YOU.

EDITORIAL

As I sit here writing my 24th Editorial, I can't help but wonder where all the years have gone. It is hard for me to believe that I have actually gone through the process of planning and laying out The Journal two dozen times, but I have! The old adage that "time flies by when you are having fun" is true, but this task has been made easier, and more fun, for the simple reason that each issue is the result of the efforts of more than just your editor. As in the past, this 24th "Nikon Journal" is what it is because of the contributions of various members of the Society. From the very beginning I have wanted, and encouraged, The Journal to be a participatory publication open to any member who feels he wishes to contribute. This makes for a varied and more interesting publication in my eyes. Besides, you wouldn't want to have to read just my prose every issue, would you?

As has become a regular event in the pages of The Journal, member John Baird has written another installment in his "Tales of Nippon Kogaku" column. This time John has come up with his first "Nikon Trivia Test", with the next one due in about 30 years! See page 18.

Also in this issue is another interesting article by Fred Krughoff. On page 15 Fred goes over the not-so-common Nikon "PA" Copy Stand. Because of a lack of space only a minimal number of pages were given me to cover the copy stands when doing my book. In this issue Fred has gone into much greater detail and has also included some fine illustrations of this interesting accessory.

By now I am sure it is obvious to you that this issue of "The Journal" is a very special one indeed! Thirty years ago this June, at the IPEX show, Nippon Kogaku unveiled, for the public and the press, a machine that would become the undisputed "king" of 35mm photography for the next 15 years and spawn a series of successors that reign supreme to this very day! It was the announcement of not only the most important Nikon ever made, but also the most famous camera in the world: the NIKON F!! No other camera or system would ever come close to dominating the recording of human history as did the Nikon F during the 60s' & 70s'. If one thinks of all the amazing events of those tumultuous years and then realizes that over 90% of all those images that recorded it were shot with the Nikon F, one begins to get some feel for the degree of dominance that the Nikon F deservedly enjoyed during those years. However, most of us take the Nikon F for granted because it is so prevalent in our lives. It can be found in nearly every camera store and pawn shop in the world, not to mention those that show up at camera shows. Over 1,000,000 were made, and most are still in service today. But what many of us fail to realize is that the venerable "F" is anywhere from 17-30 years old, depending on when it was made, which can make it older than some of the rangefinders we are searching for!

About a year ago member Calvin Ho mentioned to me that he thought he would be willing to do an article to commemorate the 30th birthday of the Nikon F. It was then that we realized that The Journal's publication date would fall within the very same month as the anniversary, and work began on this special issue. Calvin has done a great deal of work including the gathering together of all the parts necessary to duplicate an original 1959 Nikon F outfit with all of its accessories. Member Pete Smith supplied Calvin with a very early production camera as well as some lenses. This editor was pleased to be able to help in a small way in order to make this special issue just that!! Special! Starting on page 4 and running for 10 pages is Calvin's fine article and photographs as well as some vintage ads. In addition, he supplied me with an original of the very first Nikon F ad, which appears on the back cover. You will also note that the Odds n' Ends is devoted to a reflex item and that this issue of The Journal sports a "unique" cover in line with this event.

I hope that all of you enjoy this special issue and I would like to express my gratitude to Calvin Ho for all the work he did to make it possible, and to Peter Smith for giving him a helping hand. For those of you who have asked for reflex coverage, here it is. Enjoy.

You will notice that we have 16 new members this issue, so we are constantly attracting new blood. However, as is the case every year at this time, the September issue is when the bulk of the memberships are up for renewal and I hope that all of you who receive a notice in this Journal do rejoin. Please don't set the notice aside, but try to get your dues to me as soon as possible. Costs are going up all the time, but if we can keep our numbers up, then, hopefully, there will be no need for any increase. To be honest about it, we have yet to break even, but if we can maintain 150 or more members, and maybe sell a few "NHS" T-shirts and patches, we can keep our head above water. So please remember to send in your dues renewal as soon as possible.

Remember that NHS-Con2 is scheduled for the spring of 1990. At least 4 of our European members have expressed the desire to attend & I know it will be a successful meeting. I hope to see many of you here in Chicago in about 9 months!

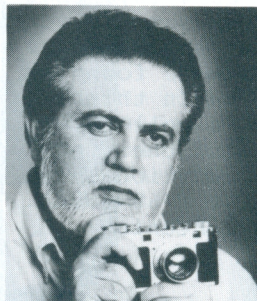


Photo: Tony Hurst

ROBERT ROTOLONI
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

THE EARLY NIKON "S"

by *ROBERT ROTOLONI*

PART 3

In Part Two of this series, which appeared in NHS-23, we touched upon a sampling of some of the many small variations that can be found in the early Nikon S production. The existence of so many manufacturing variables suggests an even larger number that have yet to be found, or documented. This article is devoted to one such variable that, even to this day, is nearly unknown to most Nikon collectors. Although I was aware of the existence of at least one example of this variation when I wrote my book, it could not be totally verified at that point in time and was, therefore, omitted. With only one example known, which could have been a simple one-of-a-kind error and not a variable, it didn't seem appropriate to include it back in 1983. However, one of the prime reasons for a Society such as ours is to promote the continued research into all aspects of Nikon collecting, and to accumulate more knowledge and make it available to the members. The Journal is in actuality a running supplement to the book, & can be used to correct, expand, update and add to the information found in the book. This article is a good example of an addition to that which was covered in the book, which was written in early 1983.

The final illustration in Part Two raised a question about the serial number of the body that was pictured. It is obviously an "8 digit" Nikon S, but it is nowhere near the block of serial numbers normally associated with this well known variation. It is camera #60945261! However, this is NOT the camera I was aware of back in 1983, whose number is 60945161, which is very close to this example! Camera 60945161 was all by itself six years ago. No one could completely explain its existence or verify its number, since it did not have a matching numbered back! Many theories were put forth, but the one that made the most sense was that the actual number of the camera was 6094516, & that the final digit had been added for some reason unknown at that time. However, it could not be called a variation unless others were found, & they have been! Besides the camera in this article, which is in this author's collection, three others have now surfaced, and their numbers are very interesting. The additional examples are.....#60944991, 60945101 & 60945201. Looked at another way is very enlightening!

- 60944991
- 60945101
- 60945161
- 60945201
- 60945261

Lets' do one other thing to this list.....

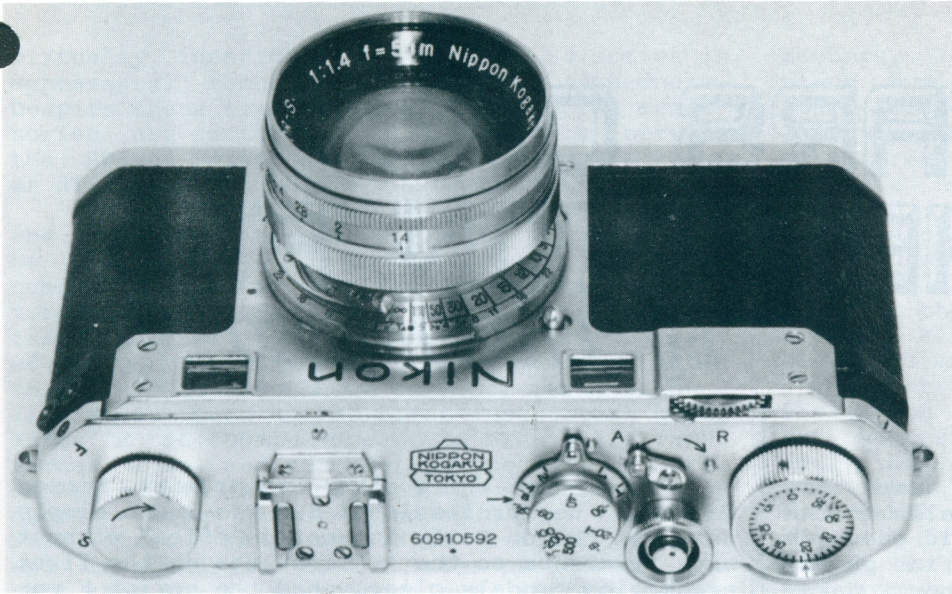
- 6094499..1
- 6094510..1
- 6094516..1
- 6094520..1
- 6094526..1

Interesting, isn't it! An obvious pattern has now become evident with the discovery of these four additional cameras, which no longer allows that single example, 60945161, to be dismissed as a one-of-a-kind error. It is a member of a small batch of bodies which have had an eighth digit, in all cases a "1", added to the end of their original 7 digit serial number! But why? What is the significance, if any, of the "1"? Are there any known bodies within this group that do not have the 8th digit? What 7 digit cameras bracket this batch and how close are they in number? Are all the known examples in this 8 digit batch identical, or are there variations within this small sampling as well? Are the back numbers the same? Are any other examples from this batch, or another for that matter, known? As is often the case, evidence to answer one question ends up causing an even larger number of questions of its own. Because of a lack of space in this issue, I cannot go into the detail this subject deserves. However, I will use this article to begin a discussion of this new variation and follow up with more in NHS-25.

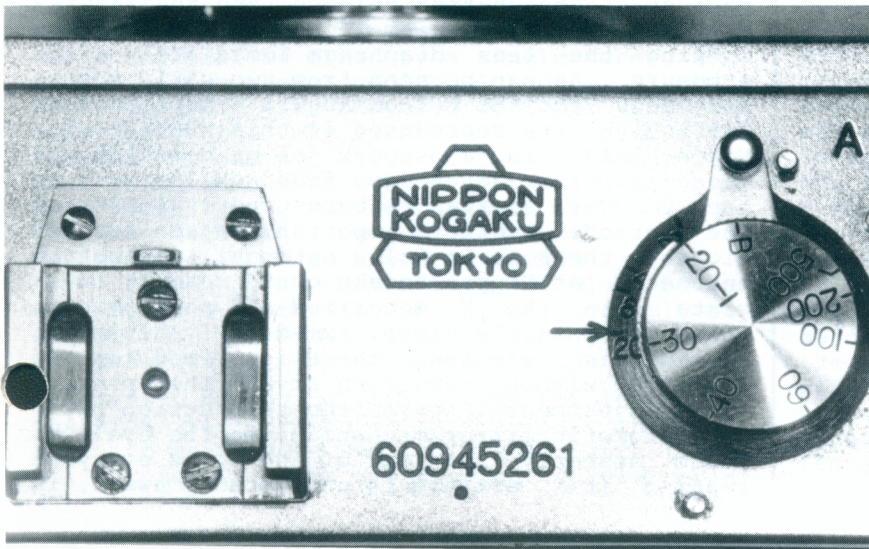
Disregarding the "1" leaves us with a batch of very early Nikon S cameras running from number 6094499-6094526, or 27 units. To date no cameras with 7 digit numbers that would fall between these two bodies has been reported to me, so our sample of 5 numbers runs consecutively without a break. This batch is bracketed by regular 7 digit bodies in the following way...

- 6094433
- 6094467
- 6094499..1
- 6094510..1
- 6094516..1
- 6094520..1
- 6094526..1
- 6094546
- 6094547

In NHS-25 I will go into greater detail about bodies 60944991 & 60945261 as well as 6094467, which is one of the bracketing cameras. These 3 cameras are very different from each other & make for an interesting comparison. I also hope to have more info on this new batch of 8 digit Ss by then but let me leave you with this. It was told to me while in Japan that Nikon made about 20 Nikon Ss with duplicate numbers!!!!??



In the above photo is a "standard" eight digit S from the more familiar batch beginning at #60910000 & going up to about #60911300. This group of cameras was made after the MIOJ era and have proper features for their vintage: narrow wind & rewind knobs; large finger guard; extra top plate screw; black-eye synch sockets. The camera to the right is one from the small batch of very early "Ss" that have had the extra digit "1" added at the end. Note the wider knobs and the smaller finger guard as well as the missing top plate screw. Also, this camera has red-eye synch and F & S letters, & is marked MIOJ in its leather! Below a close-up of the top serial number & the matching number inside. Note how the "1" just barely fits at the edge of the indentation that forms the camera's back ridge! More next time. (Robert Rotoloni)



30 YEARS OF THE NIKON F!!

by *CALVIN HO*

Most of you by now are well aware that this issue of the Nikon Journal falls on the 30th. Anniversary of what few would question is the most famous in the line of fine photographic instruments produced by Nippon Kogaku: the Nikon F!! To pay special tribute to this landmark camera, I've endeavored, with the help of Peter Smith and Robert Rotoloni, to assemble an original Nikon F outfit consisting of the major accessories that were introduced with the F in June of 1959! Although the original Nikon F reflex system was comparatively modest in size and scope, many of its member accessories represented truly forward looking & trend-setting designs, forming a nucleus that would later grow into what was certainly the most comprehensive photographic system of its time. From its inception, the Nikon F system was intelligently and thoroughly thought out, as if to envision every major technical improvement of the coming decade. It therefore comes as no surprise that, as this system evolved, the basic Nikon F body remained virtually unchanged during a lifetime spanning nearly half of the thirty years we are celebrating, leading to a million of them having been produced, a great many of which are still in active use today!

First displayed to the American public at the June 1959 convention of the Master Photo Dealers & Finishers Association in Philadelphia, the Nikon F was one of several new 35mm single-lens reflex designs introduced that year by Japanese manufacturers. Although 35mm professional photography was dominated by the rangefinders throughout the 1950s, these new SLRs--particularly the Nikon F--sparked a definite trend away from RFs toward reflexes, which have prevailed to this day. One only has to consider some of the now familiar features of the Nikon F that no other reflex had at the time to realize how truly modern the Nikon F must have appeared in 1959. Back then the F was the first and only reflex to offer such exclusive features as mirror lockup, depth of field previewer, completely automatic re-opening lens diaphragm, provision for motor, dual coupled metering, 100% exact field coverage: in short, features that since have been maintained in each of the F's successors up to and including the new F4, and which are now taken for granted as standard offerings in any professional 35mm SLR!

For a short while after its premier, Nippon Kogaku's new professional SLR was known simply as the "Nikon Fully Automatic Reflex" without any reference to the "F", even though the first production models clearly had the script F engraved on their prisms! However, the now famous letter was soon officially added in advertisements and brochures. Most likely the "F" stands for "Flex". Since the other "big four" camera manufacturers around this time added the term "flex" when naming their first SLRs (e.g., Canonflex, Contaflex), it is natural to think that Nippon Kogaku could have called their new reflex the "Nikonflex", but instead chose to abbreviate it to Nikon F.

During the decade of the fifties even the most advanced of precision crafted SLRs were slow & cumbersome to use, suffering from image "blackout" in those having simple nonreturning mirrors, and image "dimout" in models equipped with preset or semi-automatic lenses. All of these limitations inherent in earlier SLR designs were at once overcome in the new Nikon F which is why it can truly be called a "fully automatic" reflex. Many of the key innovations which contribute to its automatic functioning are to be found in the central mirror chamber: the instant return mirror with positive action independent of gravity, so that the mirror returns with the camera held in any position; the depth of field previewer, which acts instantaneously and reversibly, and is entirely independent of the shutter release; and the internally coupled mechanism for automatically re-opening the lens diaphragm immediately after exposure. As can be seen from two early advertisements for the F from August & September of 1959, which are reproduced in this NHS article, Nikon Inc. did a superb job of pointing out these superior advantages found exclusively in the F over similar features in rival SLRs of the period. Another important reason for designing the F to be fully automatic was so the engineers at Nippon Kogaku could readily integrate into the F motorized SLR photography. This is possible since, immediately after the shutter is released, the F is primed for the next shot without requiring any further presetting adjustments. Apart from this action packed automatic mirror mechanism and the eyelevel prism assembly, the rest of the F, as everyone reading this article is undoubtedly aware, is

virtually identical to the SP/S3/S4 series in appearance, mechanics, quality and ruggedness. Despite these similarities, however, few accessories are actually interchangeable between the RF and reflex systems due to the F's larger dimensions and different lens mount.

It is common knowledge that numbering for the F began in the 6400000 block. What may not be widely known is that the first production camera is numbered 6400001! This camera is pictured in the May 1959 issue of the Japanese trade journal "Photographic Industry", a copy of which Tsuyoshi Konno kindly made available to me. It is also shown in other early Nikon F literature such as the first instruction book. Nikon F #6400001 appears to be a fully functional item, and not a prototype. What's more, on this camera is mounted the very first production Auto Nikkor-S 5cm/f2.0 lens #520001!! This first F manufactured is virtually identical in appearance to the later production, except that the film advance lever & frame counter cover are of the RF variety, e.g., a smaller lever set underneath a counter cap having fewer concentric circles engraved on it. Pictures of F #6400011 in other early Nikon literature show that this camera is now fitted with the normal F wind lever and counter cover. One of the earliest bodies in an American collection is F #6400141, which belongs to Mr. Peter Smith. This very early example, shown in figures 1 & 2, should give readers a good idea of what F bodies from the first production batch actually look like.

At first glance Peter's 1959 version looks like any other run-of-the-mill F. However, upon close inspection (which we as collectors are quite accustomed to doing!) a number of small, but noticeable, differences come to light. The most pronounced is that the self-timer lever is engraved with diagonal cross hatches and is molded with very sharp corners. In addition, the film advance lever on this F is solid except for the tip, which is hollowed out underneath. Indeed, it appears that the first 500-600 Fs were fitted with this early type wind lever. On Fs from subsequent batches, the lever is similar in design, but is now entirely hollow! Like on the SP/S3/S4 series of RFs, the film reminder dial is dual colored, all dials including the frame counter are engraved, and the shutter speed dial is fixed by a single screw. However, unlike the preceding RF bodies, Nikon Fs were equipped with titanium foil shutters from apparently the very first cameras produced. For reasons beyond the scope of this article, I am led to believe that bodies up to at least number 6404000 were manufactured in 1959, but many of the details I've just mentioned can still be found in Fs up to about #6408000!

It appears that a batch of black bodies was produced in the 6400900 block, possibly representing the first black Fs made. Early black Fs presently known to exist include #6400966,

(formerly belonging to Robert Rotoloni), and #6400908 illustrated in this article in photos sent to me by Mike Symons (Fig3). Since I know of chrome Fs with 64008xx and 64010xx serial

numbers, it is likely that this early batch of black bodies was limited to about 100 units. Black bodies with earlier (or for that matter, slightly later) serial numbers have not yet been brought to my attention, so I'm unable to estimate how many black 1959 Fs were actually produced, or whether 64009xx is actually the first batch. Aside from the distinguishing features present in all 1959 bodies, these early black Fs also differ from those produced later in that the lower portion of the shutter speed ring is also painted black, as was done on the black RFs made around the same time.

Contrary to what may have been said, the finish on the early production Nikon Fs is of the highest quality. In my opinion, these early bodies are actually better constructed than the later production in some small, but noticeable ways. For instance, in all 1959 versions I have owned or examined, the wind lever pushes in flush with no extra play whatsoever; the removable back fits on absolutely snugly; and the camera seems to rattle less when given a light shake. As I already mentioned, all numbered dials are engraved, giving optimum visibility in poor lighting. Some of these dials found on later Fs are anodized, which can be considered a technological advance, but they are actually harder to read in dim light.

As can be seen in the boxed-like-new outfit in Fig4, Nikon Fs purchased in 1959 came packaged in large gold "F" boxes lined with grey velveteen. Unlike the box, however, the instruction booklet is multicolored in design, with black, violet and red figures printed over a white background. Both the original box and instructions actually carry a minor grammatical misprint which reads "Full Automatic Reflex." Later this was corrected to "Fully Automatic Reflex", which appears in the first revision of the instruction book dated November 1959! A large cloth stitched brown leather everready case was provided for the F. An interesting feature of this first design is that the top piece can completely fold up and out of the way when bringing it over the camera to open or close the case. This extra clearance, a feature missing from later versions, is especially helpful when storing cameras fitted with the clip-on meter, which the case was designed to accommodate.

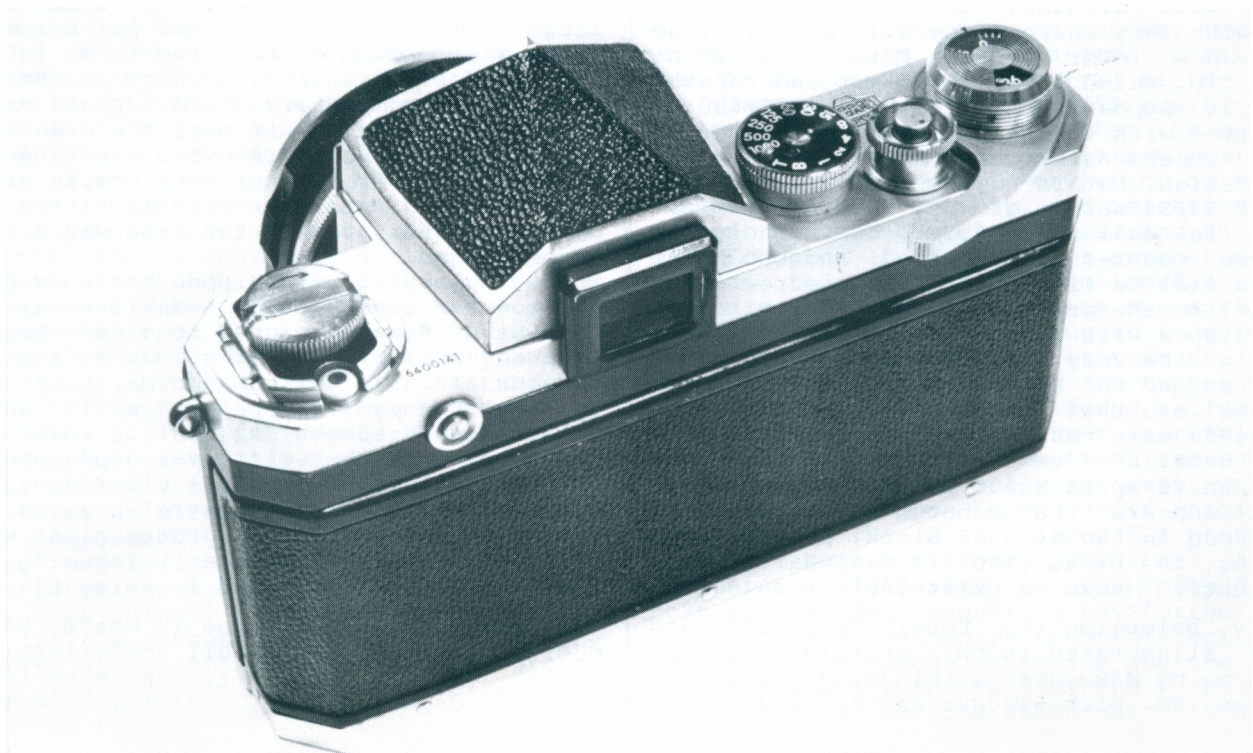
In keeping with Nippon Kogaku's principle of modular construction & maximum versatility, the Nikon F was designed to offer complete interchangeability of viewfinders and focusing screens (Fig5). While Fs normally were equipped with the eyelevel prism & split-image fresnel focusing screen "A", in 1959 these could be replaced with the waistlevel hood, and screens "B" (fresnel lens w/central clear spot, identical to "A" except the central beam splitter is missing) and "C" (plain ground glass w/central cross hairs). In the early focusing screens, the frames were finished in shiny black enamel

with the lettering painted in white. Later production screens had a dull nonreflective black finish with the lettering painted in various colors, usually white, red or yellow. The first



Fig1-Top-A front view of Peter Smith's very early Nikon F serial #6400141 with the proper Auto Nikkor-S 5cm/f2 lens #522628 mounted.

Fig2-Bottom-Rear view of "F" #6400141, one of the earliest Fs' in an American collection. (Most photos in this article, and the cover, by Calvin Ho.)



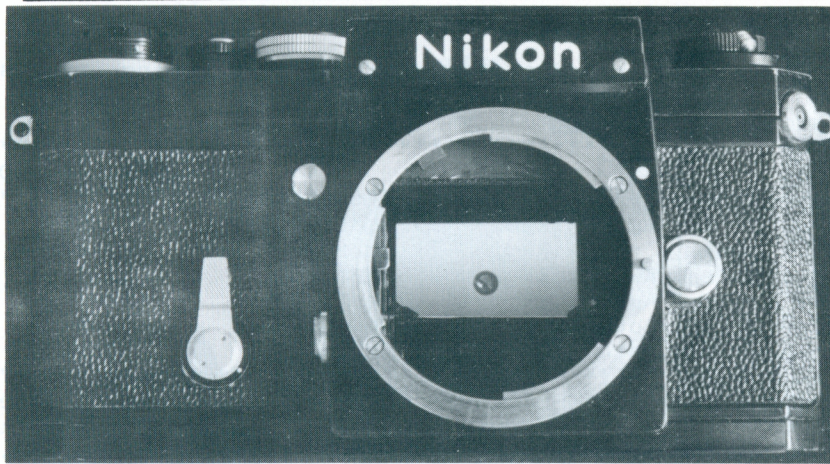


Fig3 a&b-Nikon F #6400908 in black paint finish! This example is the earliest known black F in an American collection, and very well could be one of the first black bodies made in 1959! (Photos courtesy of Mike Symons).

Fig4-Bottom-A 1959 Nikon "F" boxed-like-new outfit consisting of an original box, instruction book, and leather everready case. (Box & book courtesy Robert Rotoloni).





version prism is equipped with a square eyepiece, and carries the engraving "Nippon Kogaku Japan" underneath the prism roof, as can be seen in Fig5. Early waistlevel finders have flat tops with the triangle logo engraved in a central circle. Bought separately from the camera, these finders came fitted with a black plastic finder cap in a brown leather case complete with a green velveteen optician's cloth! Black plastic rectangular diopter attachments from -5.0 to +3.0 strengths were available in 1959. Since the square eyepiece on the early prism is not equipped with threads as is found on later versions, the first type of diopter was secured instead by sliding it over the eyepiece frame.

Nippon Kogaku built into the F a large and solidly secured bayonet mount which has remained basically unchanged to this day in all of the F's successors. This F mount was originally designed to accommodate an exclusive set of four lenses with fully automatic diaphragms, designated "Auto Nikkors". Premiering with the F in June of 1959, these lenses were, from left to right in Fig6, the Auto Nikkor-S 3.5cm/2.8; Auto Nikkor-S 5cm/2; Auto Nikkor-P 10.5cm/2.5; and Auto Nikkor-Q 13.5cm/3.5. The two telephotos are essentially the same design as their RF counterparts, whereas the 3.5cm wide-angle lens was of a special retrofocus design (reverse telephoto) in order to provide enough clearance for the mirror to swing up unimpeded by the rear lens element. In addition to the automatic diaphragm, which is spring controlled by a small pin next to the rear element, the original four Auto Nikkors were fitted with an aperture coupling prong designed to mate with the Model I clip-on exposure meter. This now ubiquitous half-moon shaped attachment can be found on most Auto Nikkors up to the newest AIS variety, thereby making the latest Nikkors compatible with the earliest F bodies! As described in my previous articles on the clip-on meters, this method of aperture coupling is unique to the F series, and is the single most important feature that allowed owners of the F during the 1960s to constantly acquire the latest in light metering technology simply by adding the current Photomic prism. (A full description of the original Model I clip-on meter that was introduced with the Nikon F in 1959 can be found in Part 1 of "Nikon F Clip-on Meters" in NHS-21).

The first versions of the Auto Nikkors carry the following distinguishing markings similar to those found on the contemporary RF Nikkors. First, the lenses are calibrated in "cm" focal lengths; second, the infrared focusing point is designated with a red "R"; third, the focusing scale is marked in feet only; finally, both the focusing and aperture numbers are marked with small "ticks" to precisely indicate the position of each setting (see Fig6). Those owning more recent Auto Nikkors will note by comparison that many of these small markings are missing from subsequent versions produced as early as 1960! Regarding serial number blocks assigned to the original set of

Nikkors for the F, the following interesting pattern emerges.....

```

*****
          LENS                      SERIAL # BLOCK
*****
Auto Nikkor-P 10.5cm/f2.5          12xxxx
      Nikkor-O 2.1cm/f4.0          22xxxx
Auto Nikkor-H 2.8cm/f3.5          32xxxx**
Auto Nikkor-S 5cm/f2.0            52xxxx
Auto Nikkor-Q 13.5cm/f3.5        72xxxx
Auto Nikkor-S 3.5cm/f2.8          92xxxx
*****

```

**This block is not known for certain since no 1959 examples have yet come to my attention, and it actually could be 30xxxx. However, the 2.8cm lens was introduced late in 1959 & is not considered to be amongst those lenses introduced with the F in June of 1959!

It thus appears that Nippon Kogaku used the prefix "2" in the second digit to designate the early F Nikkors. It also seems likely that the serial number block of the Auto Nikkor-S 5cm/f2 lens originates from combining the focal length and maximum aperture numbers, as was often done by Nippon Kogaku when assigning serial numbers to the RF Nikkors.

The original set of Nikkors for the F was standardized to accommodate 52mm screw-in filters and series VII accessories. The proper lens cap for these early Nikkors is the black plastic snap-on type with the triangle logo. Shades for the reflex Nikkors are individually marked & engraved like the RF variety with the triangle logo & "Nippon Kogaku Japan". An additionally stenciled in "F" marks the shade as being the reflex version. Shades for the 2.1cm & 3.5cm lenses are of the screw-in type, while those for the normal & telephoto Auto Nikkors snap onto the filter mount. I should also mention that owners of the 1959 Nikon F weren't limited to using only the Auto Nikkors. By attaching the N-F adapter tube one could mount onto the F any of the earlier RF Nikkor telephotos from 18cm and up that were originally designed for use on the RF reflex housing!

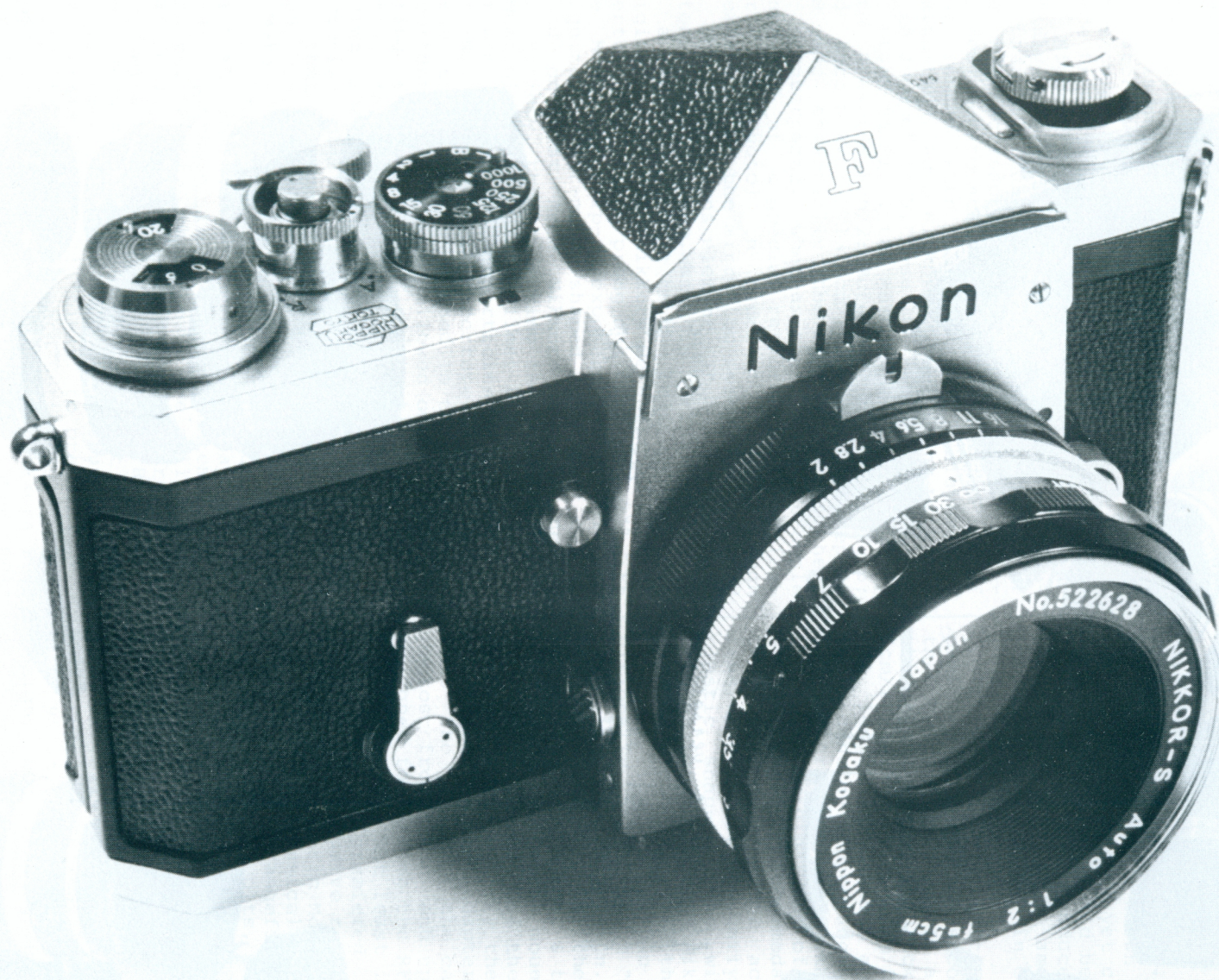
Last but not least is the final major accessory that premiered with the F in June of 1959: the exclusive reflex version of the famous Nikon Electric Motor Drive, the F36 (Fig7). This motor is basically identical in concept & design to the rangefinder S36 unit, but being powered by 12 volts, it is a bit faster with speeds of up to 4 frames per second possible with the mirror locked up. In addition, the F36 was equipped with an extra dial giving the user the option of varying the framing speeds. Like the RF motor, early F36 units were powered via a one meter cord by a grey vinyl external battery pack holding, in this case, eight "C" type batteries. Like the one made for the S36 9 volt power pack, a voltmeter of similar design, but reading up to 12 volts, was made available as part of the F36 outfit in 1959.

From a collector's point of view, very little at present is known about the varieties and serial numbers of early F36 motors, since



Fig5-Top-The versatile Nikon F interchangeable finder system.
Fig6-Bottom-The original Auto Nikkor lenses & their proper shades and caps for the Nikon F, offering aperture-coupled metering with the Model 1 clip-on exposure meter.





On this page is the classic 1959 Nikon F while on the facing page is presented an original Nikon F outfit as it might have appeared at the 1959 IPEX show! The collection consists of....

Nikon F #6402465 with eye-level prism and Auto Nikkor-S 5cm/f2 #522628.
Nikkor-O 2.1cm/f4 #220181 and accessory finder #200527 (courtesy of Peter Smith)

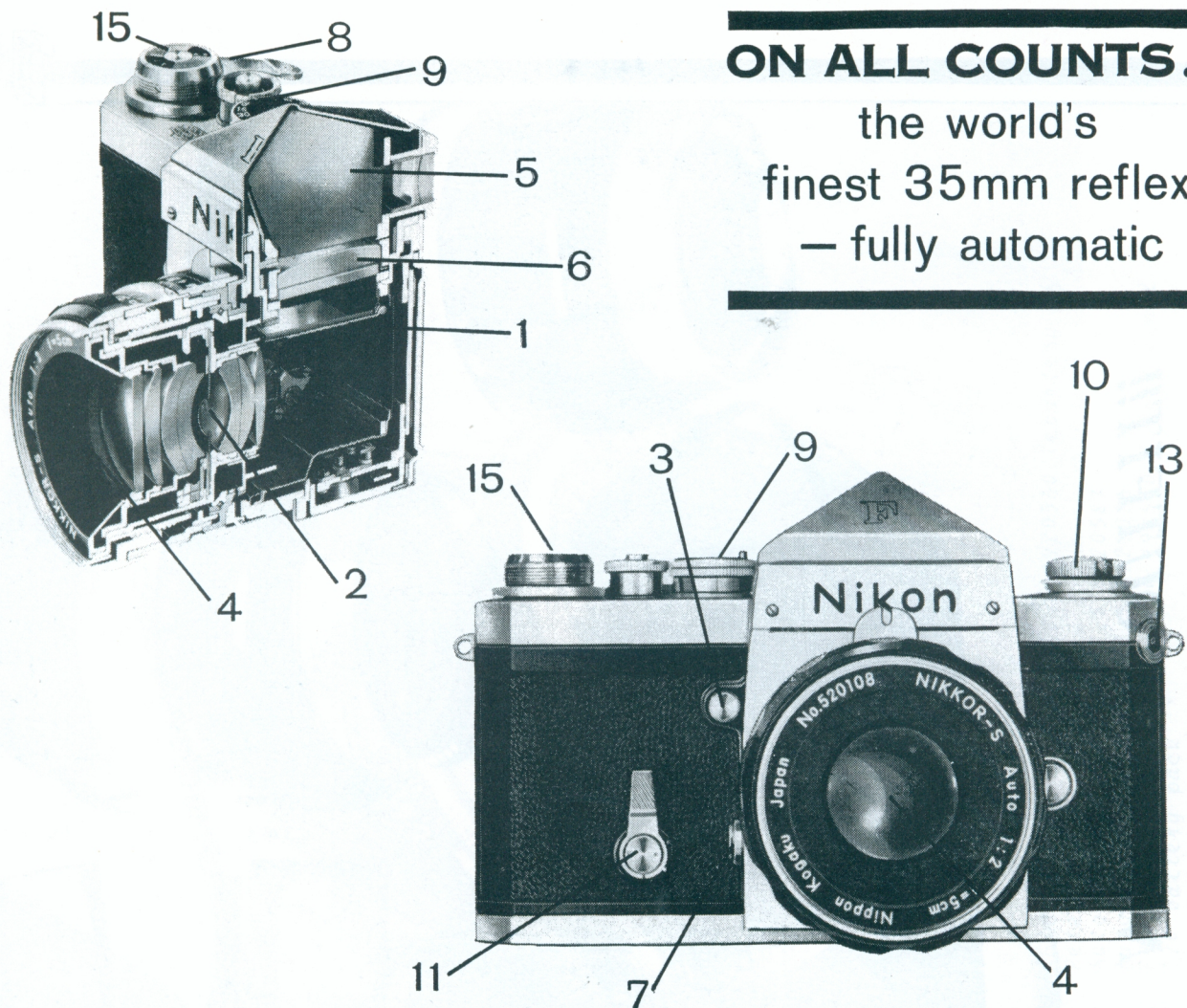
Auto Nikkor-S 3.5cm/f2.8 #920560 (courtesy of Peter Smith)
Auto Nikkor-P 10.5cm/f2.5 #120587
Auto Nikkor-Q 13.5cm/f3.5 #721026
F36 electric motor drive #98580 & grey vinyl 12V battery pack
Model 1 meter #978139 w/incident attachment
Waist level finder
Focusing screen
Grey plastic flash coupler

THE CLASSIC 1959 NIKON F OUTFIT!!



ON ALL COUNTS...

the world's
finest 35mm reflex
— fully automatic



NIKON AUTOMATIC REFLEX

Smoothness, speed, hushed precision—these are the first delightful impressions you have of the new Nikon Automatic Reflex as you put it through its paces. You look through the finder—you see the whole field. The lens is wide open—the image bright, clear. You focus and frame your subject, and shoot. At this point the camera takes over. Except for the hardly perceptible flutter of the mirror and the almost inaudible click of the shutter, you would hardly know the exposure had taken place. The image is still in your finder—bright and clear and sharp as before—the lens wide open, ready for the next picture.

Here are some of the remarkable features of the Nikon Automatic Reflex:

1. INSTANT-RETURN AUTOMATIC MIRROR flips up as you release the shutter, then returns to viewing-focusing position—instantly, automatically.
2. INSTANT-REOPEN AUTOMATIC DIAPHRAGM closes down to 'taking' aperture as you release the shutter, instantly reopens to full aperture, ready for the next picture without further adjustment.
3. INSTANT-ACTION PREVIEW CONTROL permits you to preview depth-of-field at 'taking' aperture or to select 'taking' aperture on the basis of desired depth-of-field. Press the button, and the diaphragm closes down, release it, and the diaphragm instantly reopens to full aperture.
4. AUTO-NIKKOR LENSES assure unsurpassed optical performance—faithful color rendition and superb resolution. Auto-Nikkor lenses with instant-reopen automatic diaphragms are available in 35mm f/2.8, 50mm f/2, 105mm f/2.5 and 135mm f/3.5. When interchanging these lenses on the

Automatic Reflex, no attention need be paid as to whether or not the shutter had been wound or the diaphragm pre-set.

5. REMOVABLE EYE-LEVEL PENTA-PRISM VIEWFINDER interchanges with accessory folding hood and magnifier for waist-level focusing and viewing.
6. CONVEX, LENTICULAR FOCUSING SCREEN gives maximum and uniform brightness over the entire field. Has built-in prismatic, split-image rangefinder. Interchanges easily with accessory screens, one with clear spot and cross-hair reticule, and the other with fine-ground spot. Finder field coincides precisely with film area—covers 100% of the image recorded on the film.
7. MIRROR LOCK secures mirror in 'up' position. Permits use of camera with deeply set, extreme wide angles lenses, such as new 21mm Nikkor f4.
8. Single-stroke film transport lever.
9. Non-rotating shutter-speed dial.
10. High-speed rewind crank.
11. Calibrated dual-purpose self-timer.
12. Fully compensated flash synch control.
13. Single terminal for flash-bulbs and speedlights.
14. Completely removable back.
15. Automatic 'O' reset exposure counter.

ELECTRIC MOTOR DRIVE (not shown) exclusive Nikon accessory permits power driven single exposures . . . or bursts of 2 or 3 or more, through an entire roll, at the rate of up to 4 exposures per second.

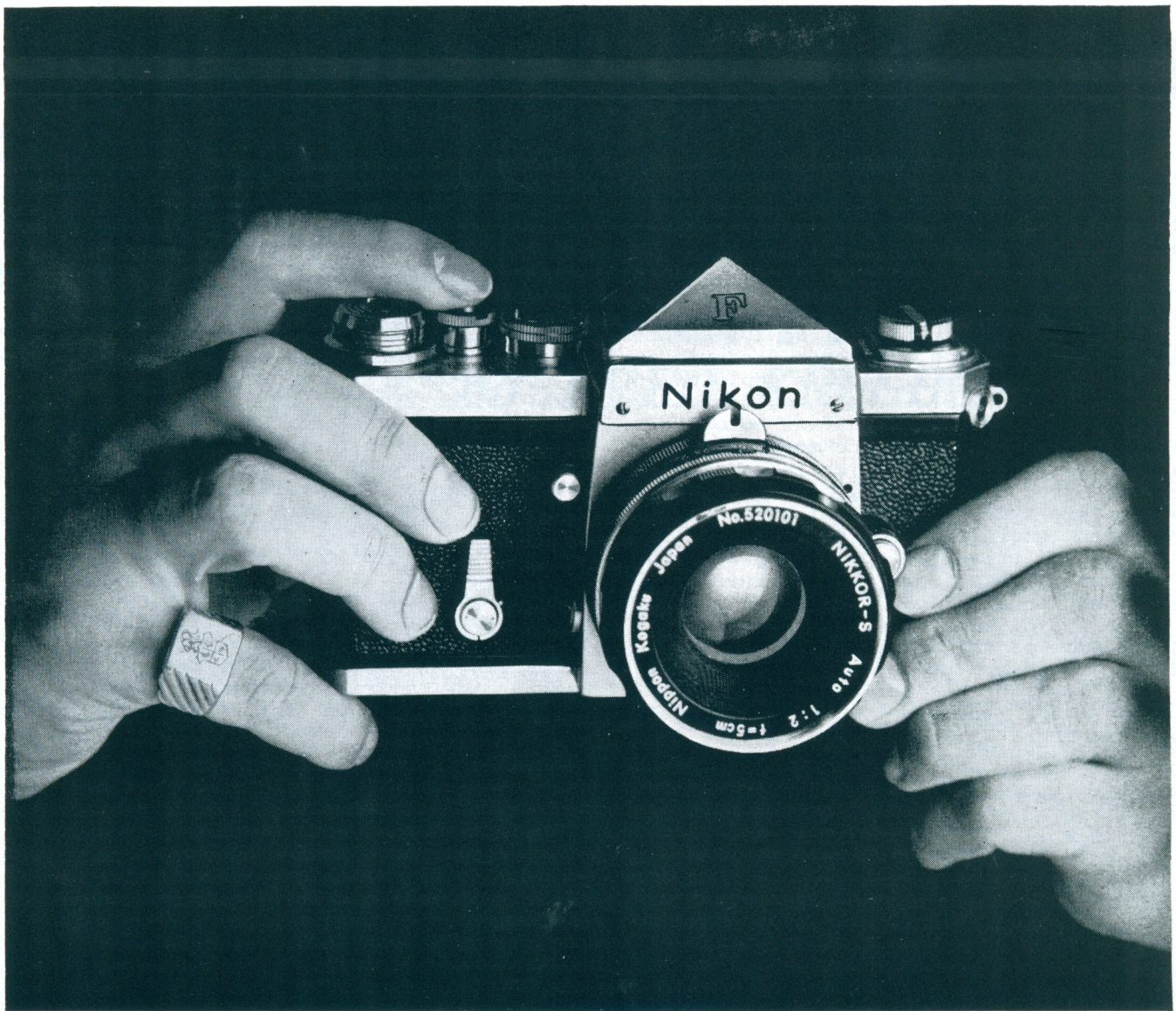
COUPLED EXPOSURE METER (not shown) exclusive Nikon accessory couples to both the diaphragm and the shutter. Responds to either setting. And there are a host of other features and accessories—all of which combine to make this the most advanced reflex '35' of our time.

NIKON AUTOMATIC REFLEX with 50mm Auto-Nikkor f2 Lens, \$329.50

At your Nikon dealer or write to Dept. MP-3

NIKON Inc., 111 Fifth Avenue, New York 3, N. Y. In Canada: Anglophoto Ltd., 880 Champagneur, Montreal, P.Q.

THIS AD APPEARED IN AUGUST 1959



check and see how the automatic features of the new
NIKON F AUTOMATIC REFLEX
have been developed to ultimate perfection

1. The automatic features of the Nikon F—Instant-Return Mirror, Instant-Reopen Diaphragm, Instant-Action Preview Control—are internally coupled.

2. The Instant-Return Mirror automatically returns to precise focus position regardless of the angle of the camera—even if held upside down.

3. The Instant-Reopen Diaphragm automatically stops down and instantly reopens without disturbing or moving the diaphragm setting—even if that setting is between aperture markings.

4. The Auto-Nikkor lenses for the Nikon F Automatic Reflex may be interchanged at any time. And the automatic diaphragms remain fully operative whether they are interchanged before or after the shutter is wound.

5. The Instant-Reopen Preview Control for observing depth-of-field does not have to be re-set manually. Press the button, and the diaphragm automatically closes down to 'taking' aperture. Release the button, and the diaphragm reopens instantly—automatically.

6. The Instant-Action Preview Control is entirely independent of the shutter release mechanism. When using the Preview Control it is impossible to cause an accidental exposure.

7. The automatic action of the mirror and diaphragm is so incredibly fast, it is virtually imperceptible in the finder. Even with the camera and accessory Electric Motor Drive—shooting at the rate of 3 exposures per second, there is

still a continuous, bright image constantly visible in the finder. The image never blacks out; never dims.

The qualities we have enumerated are especially revealing of the maker's intense devotion to perfection. You will discover many more qualities in the New Nikon F Automatic Reflex, each equally deserving of your admiration, and each further demonstrating that the Nikon F is the finest automatic reflex you can own. See for yourself.

Nikon F Automatic Reflex with 50mm Auto-Nikkor f2 lens, \$329.50 at your Franchised Nikon Dealer. For fully descriptive literature write to Dept. MP9 Nikon Inc., 111 Fifth Avenue, N. Y. 3.

In Canada: Anglophoto Ltd., 880 Champagneur, Montreal, P.Q.



THIS AD APPEARED IN SEPTEMBER 1959

"five digit" motors are not commonly seen, and motors with very early numbers have yet to come to my attention. (F36 serial numbers range from 96-97xxx to 15xxxx, hence units under number 100000 are referred to as "five digits".) Nevertheless, from pictures in early F literature, it appears that the first type is of the chrome-on-chrome variety without markings on the black painted panels on each side of the motor. Thus, it would be identical in appearance to the late Type 6 S36 motor produced around the same time. Serial numbers could begin as early as the 96xxx block, but they certainly reach into the 97000s', since 97xxx motors are known to exist. Pictured in the motorized outfit in Fig7 is F36 #98580, which is an example of the most often seen variety of the five digit motors. This type is of the black-on-chrome variety, with engraved onto the side panels a script "F" and triangle logo, along with the serial number (for a front view of this motor see the group photo Fig9. This motor is also shown in Part 2 of the "Nikon F Clip-on Meters in NHS-22). Some of the earlier versions of the five digit black-on-chrome motor have neither the triangle logo nor the serial number engraved on the right side panel, others carry the logo but no number, while yet a third type carries the number but no logo! In addition, all

of these versions lack the guide table commonly found on the backs of later F36 motors. Instead a small paper guide table with the identical information is sometimes found affixed (by an external adhesive that resembles scotch tape!) to the grey battery pack, as is the case for the one pictured in Fig7. Hopefully as more five digit motors surface in the future we will be able to fill in the gaps in our knowledge of this fine & unique accessory.

In commemoration of the 30th Anniversary of the Nikon F, I now present in Fig9 the original Nikon F outfit as it might have appeared at the 1959 Philadelphia show!! The outfit should speak for itself, & I hope that you find it a fitting tribute in our celebration of the "world's finest 35mm reflex".

HAPPY 30th, NIKON F!!!

 Acknowledgments..I wish to thank Peter Smith & Robert Rotoloni for contributing items from their collections to the early Nikon F outfit; Tsuyoshi Konno & Mike Symons for providing information on early Fs; Tony Rosenwald of Del's Camera for his assistance in obtaining early F accessories; and the NHS members who have sent me serial numbers and other information on Nikon reflex equipment.

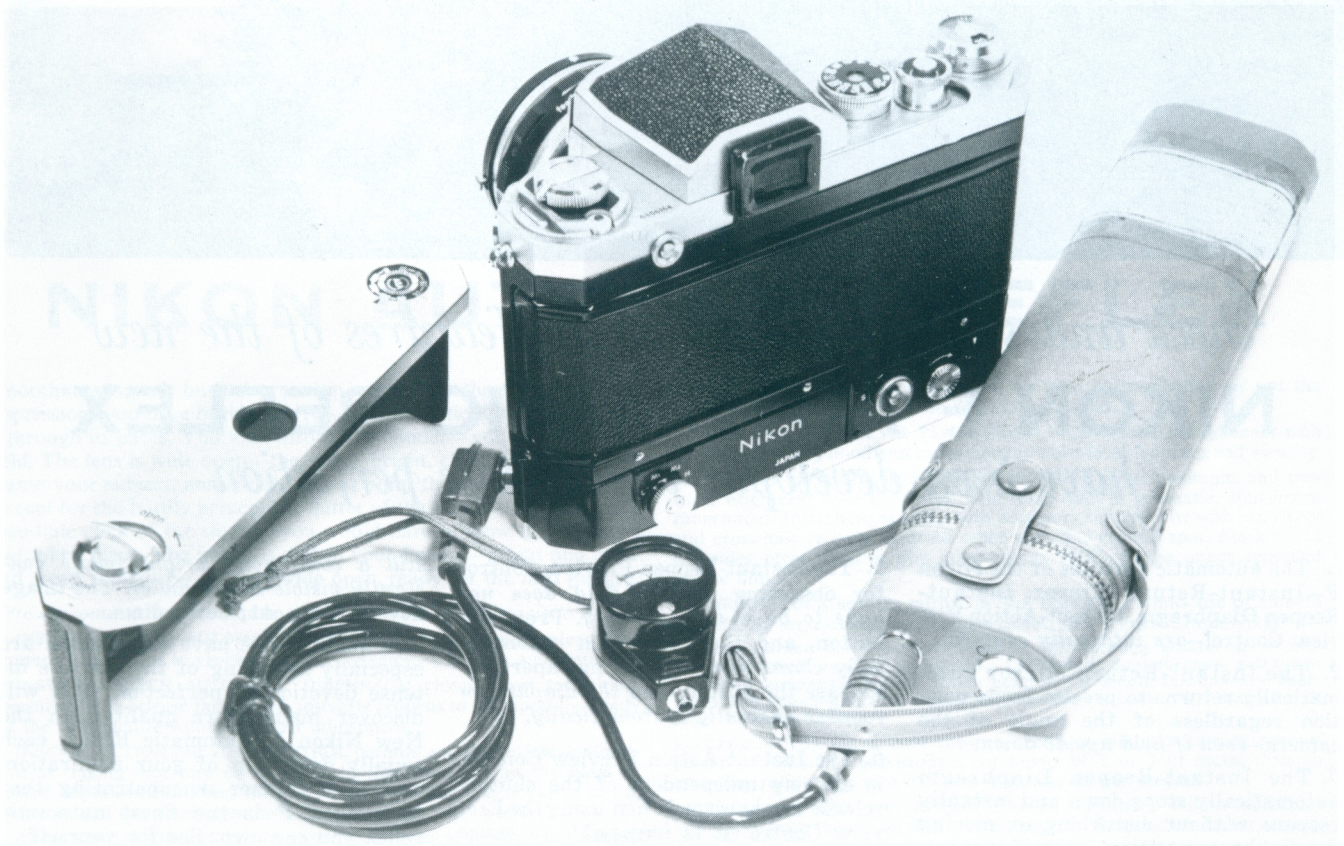


Fig7-Motorized Nikon F photography with the F36 electric motor drive outfit consisting of the drive, battery pack, one meter cord & the voltmeter. Since the F36 added so little bulk and weight to the F, it was generally left on the camera permanently and the separate standard back was stored for future use.

THE NIKON "PA" COPY STAND

by FRED KRUGHOFF

The "PA" copy stand is a radical departure from the earlier types produced by Nippon Kogaku. The "S" and "SA" units are complicated to set up and do not provide the versatility and ease of use that the "PA" does. The "PA" stand is capable of copying much larger documents. While the earlier Model "P", produced in 1955, probably by an outside contractor, was an effort to correct the shortcomings of the "S" & "SA", it to had a serious problem, since it was designed using extension tubes instead of bellows. While I have been unable to locate a "P" in Nikon mount, I have used one in Leica screw mount and found it to be inferior to the later "PA". The "P" described in Nikon price sheets was supplied with a table-clamp only.

The "PA" then offers a real improvement because of its bellows focusing method. In addition, the unit can be turned 180 degrees so that really large areas can be photographed, in effect making the unit double as a tripod with focusing.

As first supplied in 1958, the "PA" came in a carrying case which doubled as a baseboard, but soon a separate baseboard & a table clamp were offered. In addition, a wideangle adapter, part #MRP901, was offered, which did allow the use of outside bayonet mount lenses as well as the Bellows Unit Model One.

The unit will copy from 1:1 to 1:17 on the baseboard as supplied, and at distances closer than 1:1 the Bellows focusing attachment can be used. The "PA" comes supplied with an auxiliary close-up lens for the 50mm/f2.0 Nikkor and a ring to adapt the lens to the 50mm/f1.4. Also included with this lens, in a small hardwood case, is an anti-reflection ring. This small ring was also supplied with the "SA" and is really necessary to eliminate any flare reflected from the inside surfaces of the Nikon lens mount. Without a lens in its mount, the Nikon rangefinder bayonet exposes a great deal of chrome which, if left uncovered, would cause a large amount of flare and subsequent loss of contrast. The ring successfully covers the inside of the lens mount with a flat black surface ribbed to match that of the throat of the camera itself.

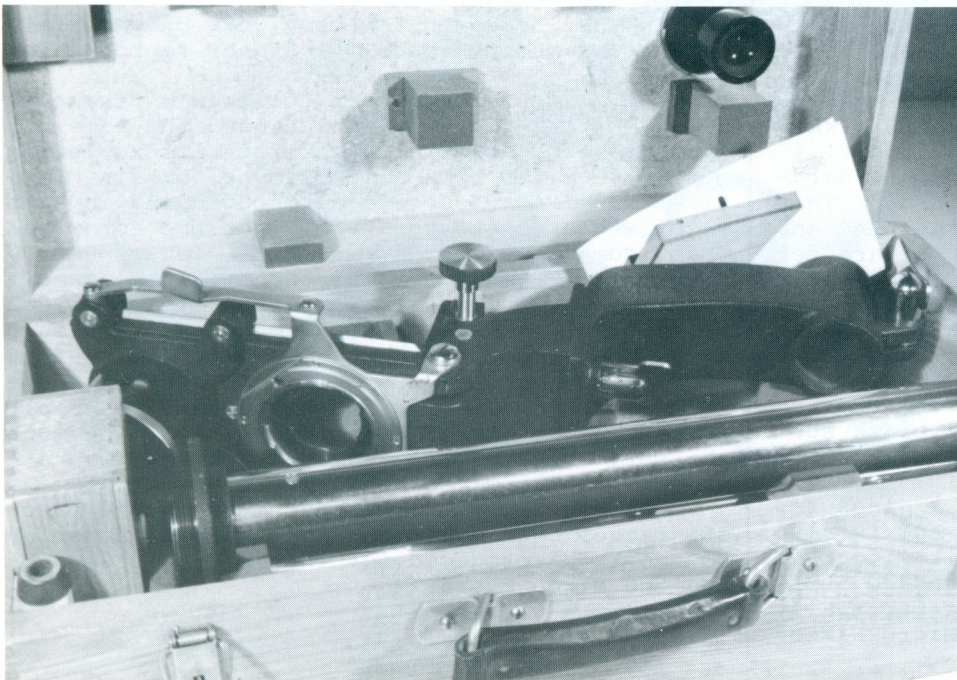
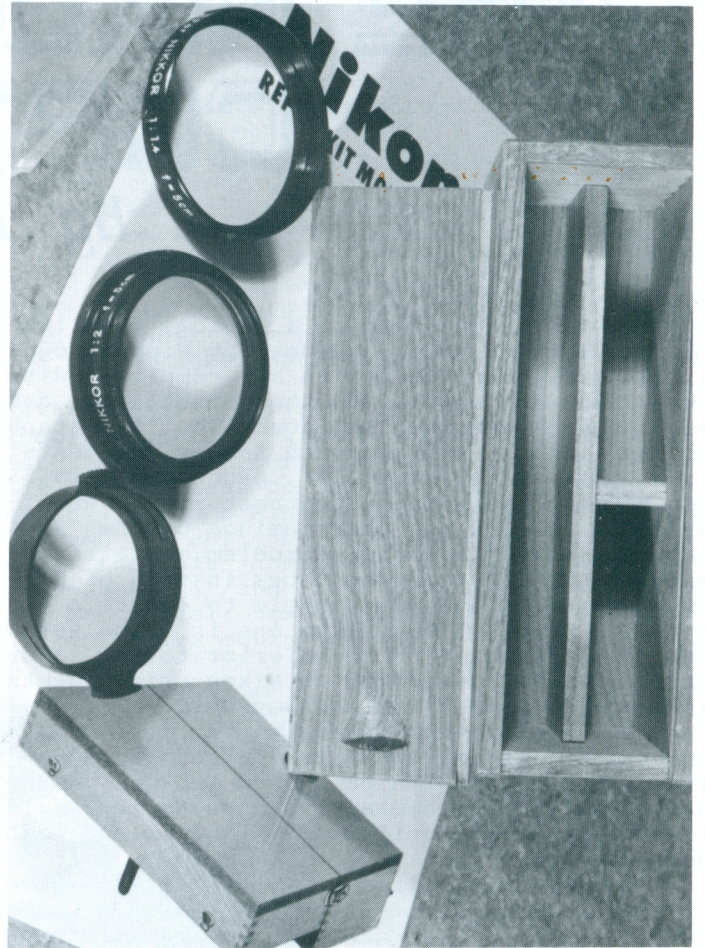
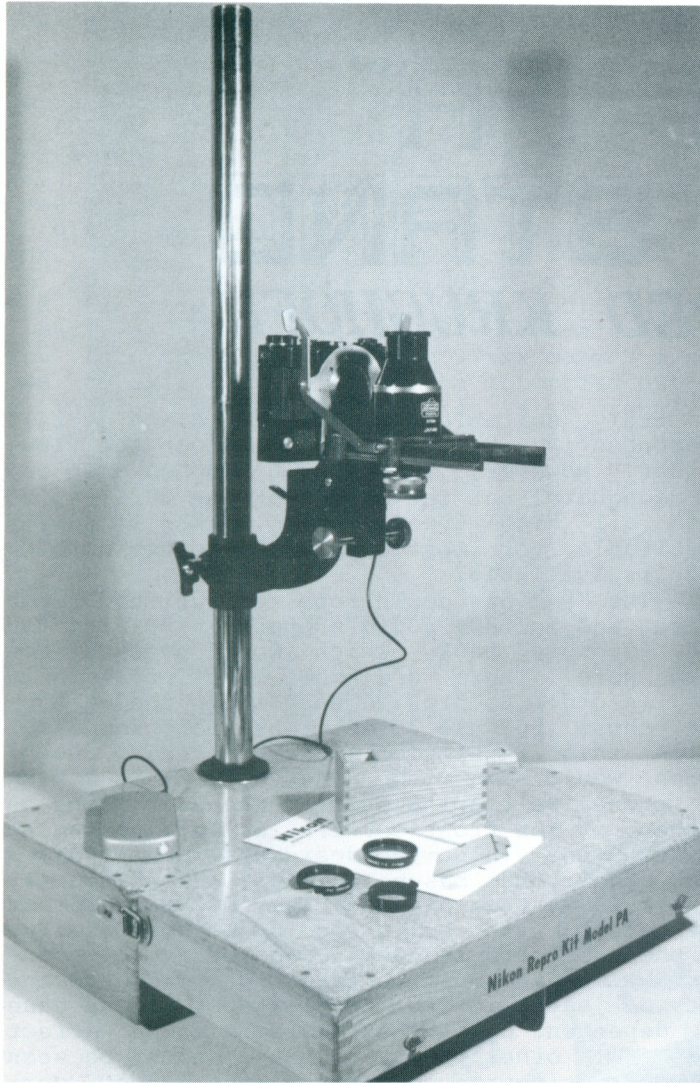
In actual use the copy stand is a pleasure. The setup only takes a few moments and is also obvious, since all the parts fit together easily. Once set up, either the standard 50/f2 or the 50/f1.4 could be used, but for really serious work, only the 50mm/f3.5 Micro-Nikkor

is truly suitable. Its flat field and overall sharpness is actually visible through the viewfinder! However, the 50/f2.0 stopped down can be adequate, but the design of the 50/f1.4, as with all high speed lenses, makes it really unsuitable for most copy work, unless nothing else is available.

The "PA" has ample room to mount the motor drive and in fact could support an SP with the 250 exposure back, which would be ideal for copy work. There are some minor problems in use. In order to provide easy setup the designers chose to use 3 feet to support the base. While this is simpler than using four, two of which would need to be adjustable, this design is prone to tipping over if the user leans on either of the front corners, which I seemed to do constantly! Also the designers chose pressed wood for the baseboard. While dimensionally more stable than plywood, they did not protect the edges with solid wood or plastic banding so the baseboard is easily damaged at the corners. Also care must be taken not to damage the outside hardware for the flatness of the base is dependent on this hardware being in perfect shape. In other words, the case cannot be seen as protecting the copy stand when closed. Certainly for heavy studio use the baseboard or table clamp might be more suitable. Since the stand was designed for copy work only to 1:1, a bellows must be used for higher reproduction ratios.

The "PA" was soon followed by the "PF" model for the Nikon F, which used the same box and mounting bracket. At first reflex viewing would seem to be an improvement, but in practice the "PA" was very easy to use and, in some ways, superior to the "PF". Once the setup has been completed and the camera & lens mounted, the time taken to focus, then flip the camera into position, was minimal. The 5.5X eyepiece and ground glass give a much clearer image than that produced by the Nikon F with waist level finder. And most importantly, since the rangefinder has no mirror, exposures, especially at higher magnifications, should be much sharper. The lack of a mirror release was always a problem with the Nikon F.

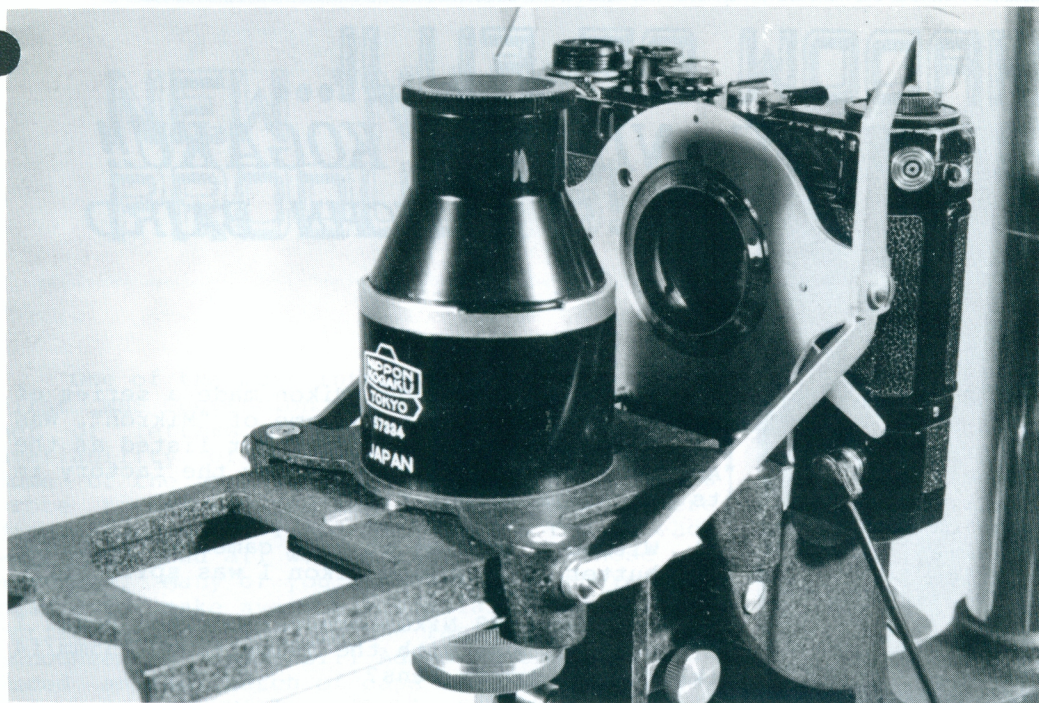
In closing, I think that this is one piece of rangefinder equipment that remains superior to anything produced for the same purpose during the Nikon F era.



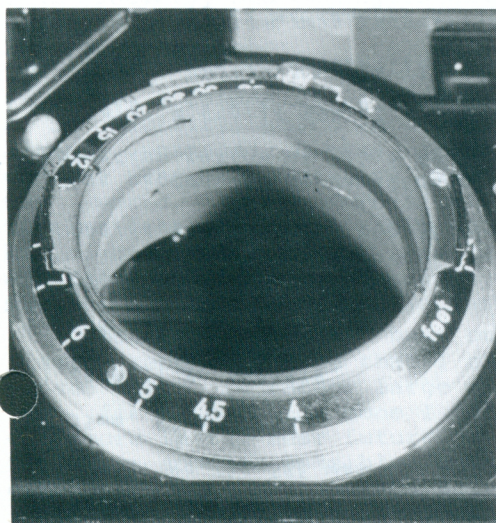
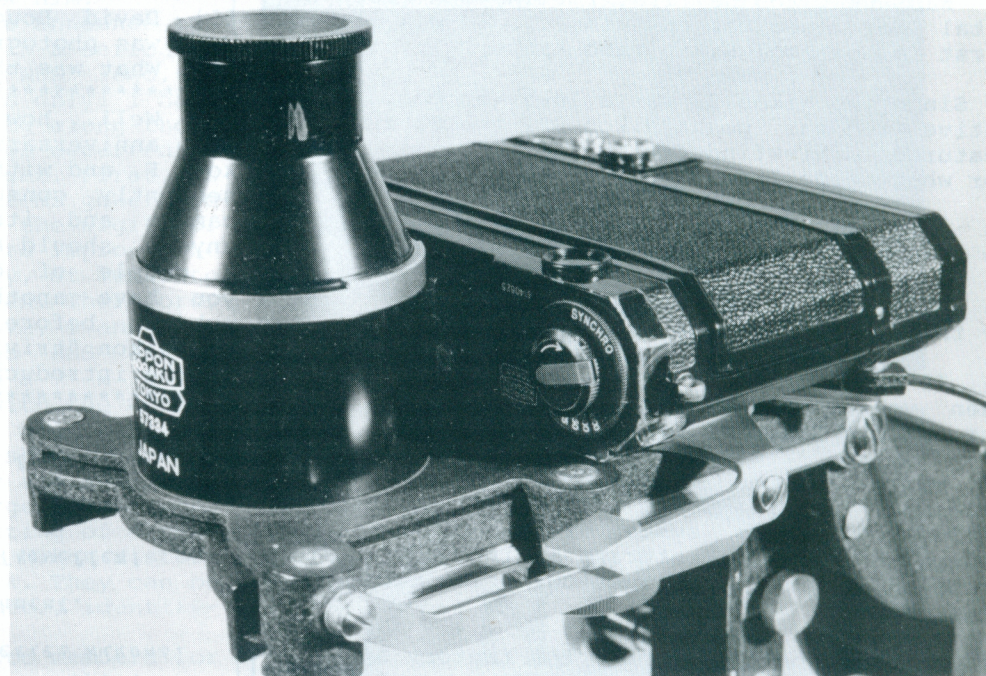
Top left-Nikon PA copy stand completely setup & ready for use.

Top right-The close-up lens and the adapter for the f1.4, plus the anti-reflection ring described in the text. Please also note the small wood box used to store these rings and the adapter.

Left-The Nikon "PA" stored in its special wood carrying box for protection and "cautious" transport. See text.



NHS
NIPPON
KOGAKU
TOKYO



The two large photos show the position of the camera stage for focusing (top) and shooting. In the focusing position, the 5.5x magnifier is used for highly accurate focusing. Then as the camera is lowered into the taking position the eyepiece slides out of the way, all in one smooth motion. Note that the camera cradle has enough clearance to allow the use of the motor drive. The special anti-reflection ring is shown removed and mounted into the "throat" of the camera, where its finish matches that of the ribbed light chamber of the camera itself. This ring eliminated any possible flare off of the shiny surfaces normally visible with the lens removed. All photos by Fred Krughoff.

IN THE SHADOW OF FUJI...

TALES OF NIPPON KOGAKU!!

BY JOHN BAIRD

Since the Nikon F was introduced thirty years ago, a lot has been written about Nikon cameras and Nikkor lenses..therefore, it would be safe to assume that any "genuine" Nikon fan should be able to pass a Nikon "trivia test" without any problem at all. So..below a modest example based on well-known articles, books, advertising material and factory price lists.

- 1) The Nikon S2 was introduced in what year?
- 2) Was the Nikon SP first fitted with cloth or metal foil shutter curtains?...and was it the first "motorized" Nikon rangefinder?
- 3) Since the Nikon S3 was a lower priced alternative to the posh Nikon SP, the S3 instead featured a viewfinder with "etched" framelines for what three lenses?
- 4) What was the serial number block set aside by the factory for the Nikon S4?
- 5) What was the serial number block set aside by the factory for the Nikon S3?
- 6) If you correctly answered questions 4 & 5, then you should know the starting serial number for the Nikon F...which was?
- 7) While on the Nikon F...for professionals covering the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, Nippon Kogaku introduced a new system of Tele-Nikkor ultra telephoto lenses featuring an interchangeable focusing mount...name the four prime lenses in this system.
- 8) For use on the Nikon F the factory brought out the 50mm/f1.4 "CRT" Auto-Nikkor. What was this lens used for?
- 9) Match the following maximum apertures with the correct S-series Nikkor lenses:
f4, f2.5, f4.5, f6.3, f5----
180mm, 250mm, 350mm, 500mm, 1000mm.
- 10) What was the Nikon BCB-3?
- 11) What was a Nikon Microflex?

12) During the 1950s Nikon made a series of binoculars with the tradename of "Mikron". Was the Mikron "6 x 18" binocular listed as the "Aristocrat" or "Traveller" by the factory in its price lists? Don't look!!!

13) Without looking at your camera..the high-low shutter dial on the Nikon I was split at??

14) In May 1958 Nikon brought out the Model I Bellows for use with the 105mm/f4 or 135mm/f4 Nikkor short mount lens?

15) David Douglas Duncan's book on the Korean War was photographed entirely with Nikkor lenses. What was the name of that book?

Well...how did you do? After all, it's the 30th anniversary of the introduction of the Nikon F, and with all the words written and subsequently consumed regarding this particular camera and its rangefinder based ancestors, anyone should have at least correctly answered a couple of questions. Well...if you didn't, you have another 30 years to study-up on this subject before some clown comes up with another Nikon "trivia test" on the 30th anniversary of the introduction of the Nikon 4004S!!!!

- 1) 1954
- 2) Cloth! No, the S2E was the first motorized!
- 3) 35mm, 50mm, 105mm.
- 4) 6500001 to 65999999.
- 5) 6300001 to 63999999.
- 6) 6400001.
- 7) 400/64.5, 600/65.6, 800/68, 1200/811.
- 8) For photographing oscilloscope images at re-production ratios of 1:5.5 to 1:4. Circa 1962.
- 9) 180/62.5, 250/64.350/64.5, 500/65, 1000/66.3.
- 10) Flash bulb attachment for S-series Nikons.
- 11) Prism reflex microscope attachment.
- 12) Aristocrat! The 7x35 was the Traveller!
- 13) 1/20th of a second.
- 14) 135mm/64 Nikkor-Q short mount lens.
- 15) "THIS IS WAR!"

NEW "N.H.S." PRODUCTS!

One of the more interesting results of our first NHS Convention was the rather large number of letters I received enquiring about the availability of the T-shirts and caps shown in some of the photos in The Journal. Many of you wrote to ask how you could obtain them, & were disappointed to learn that only a few of each were made and all were grabbed up by those who attended. Many of you then asked if there were plans to make available similar items for the entire membership. In the last Journal was an announcement from Bill Adams that he had produced another batch of caps with the NHS logo, and these are still available from him.

In this issue I would like to announce the arrival of, hopefully, the first in a series of "official" products bearing the "NHS" logo, to be made available to the members only! I have been thinking of doing something along these lines for some time, and two things occurred to convince me that the time was right. First, was the obvious interest in such items generated by the Convention. Second, was the urging of my accountant to do something to improve the fiscal condition of the Society, at least to the point of trying to break even. Therefore, in response to both of the above, I announce the availability of the first two "NHS" items: a yellow T-shirt emblazoned with a 7" x 7" reproduction of our logo along with the words, "The Nikon Historical Society", all in black. These are high quality American shirts made of 50% polyester & 50% cotton. They are available in medium, large and extra large. The second item is a 3" sew-on patch consisting of a yellow background with our logo, The Nikon Historical Society, and edging in black. They can be sewn onto shirts and jackets, etc., identifying you as a member.

The T-shirts are available to members for \$11 (US & Canada), \$13 (Europe), & \$16 (Japan & S. Pacific), which includes first class and airmail postage! Please state sizes in all orders! The patches are \$4 each anywhere in the world. All proceeds will be used to further the efforts of this Society. Anyone who has suggestions for additional products are encouraged to write me. Hopefully this will be a successful adjunct to the Society.

Those of you who have put off ordering, please keep in mind that I can only re-order these items in rather large quantities & once this first batch is gone I may not be able to get more in the near future. So get your order to me as soon as possible. Remember, this is an effort to keep the Society solvent without any increase in membership dues! Thank you.



Classified

WANTED...Nikon 21mm lens and/or 21mm lenshood; rangefinder illuminator; black SP with or without motor drive. P-H van Hasbroeck, 34 Bury Walk, London, SW3 6QB, England. 01-352-8494.

FOR SALE...The following literature.....

Nikon World..Vol. 2, 1968, #s 1 & 3.
Vol. 3, 1969, #s 1 & 2.
Vol. 4, 1970, #s 3.
Vol. 5, 1971, #s 1 & 3.
Vol. 6, 1972, #s 1,2 & 3.
Vol. 7, 1973, #s 1,2 & 3.
Nikon Image Book (1975)

Roy Vose, 13434 Christian Barrett Drive, Moorpark, CA, 93021. (805) 529-0304.

WANTED...Looking for the camera to go with my Nikon S #6107847. If anyone has either camera #6107846 or #6107848 in his collection please let me know. I would like to hear from you. Michael Salvano, 110 Aro Street, Wellington, New Zealand.

WANTED...Starting 1959 Nikon F collector would like to get in contact with F collectors in the United States. Please send me your list. Fred Jansz, P.O.Box 252,3700 AG, Zeist,Holland

WANTED...Clean Nikon Rangefinder. I'll pay 25% more than McKeown's Price Book. Write or phone Peter Lownds, W. de Zwijgerstraat 24, Rotterdam 3043 VD, Holland. 010-4159136

BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL!

PLEASE ADD THE FOLLOWING SERIAL NUMBERS TO OUR LIST OF BLACK NIKON RANGEFINDER BODIES!

6194116

6202577

6206456

"NEXT ISSUE"

The deadline for the next issue of "THE NIKON JOURNAL" will be September 1, 1989 and will be not only the 25th Journal, but also our Sixth Anniversary Issue! Although it will be hard to follow up this special edition, I hope to mark this event with an interesting Journal. Those of you who wish to submit articles and ideas for NHS-25 please get them to me by this date!

NEW ADDRESSES!!!

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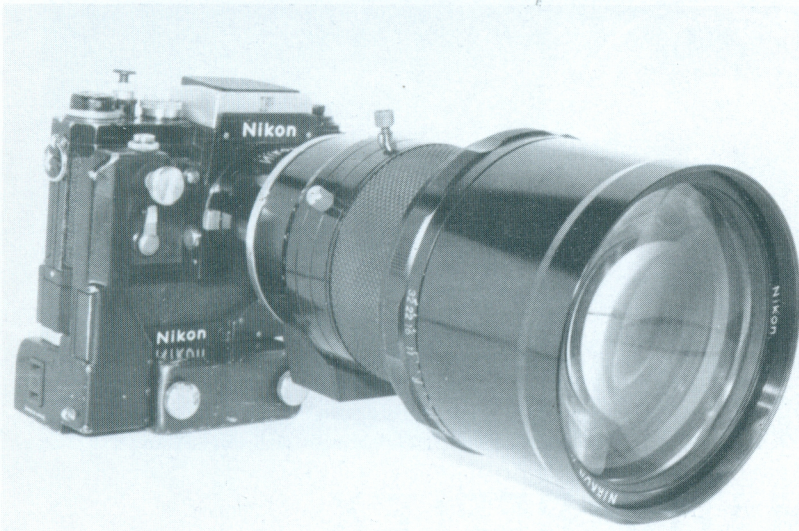
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odds 'n ends

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!

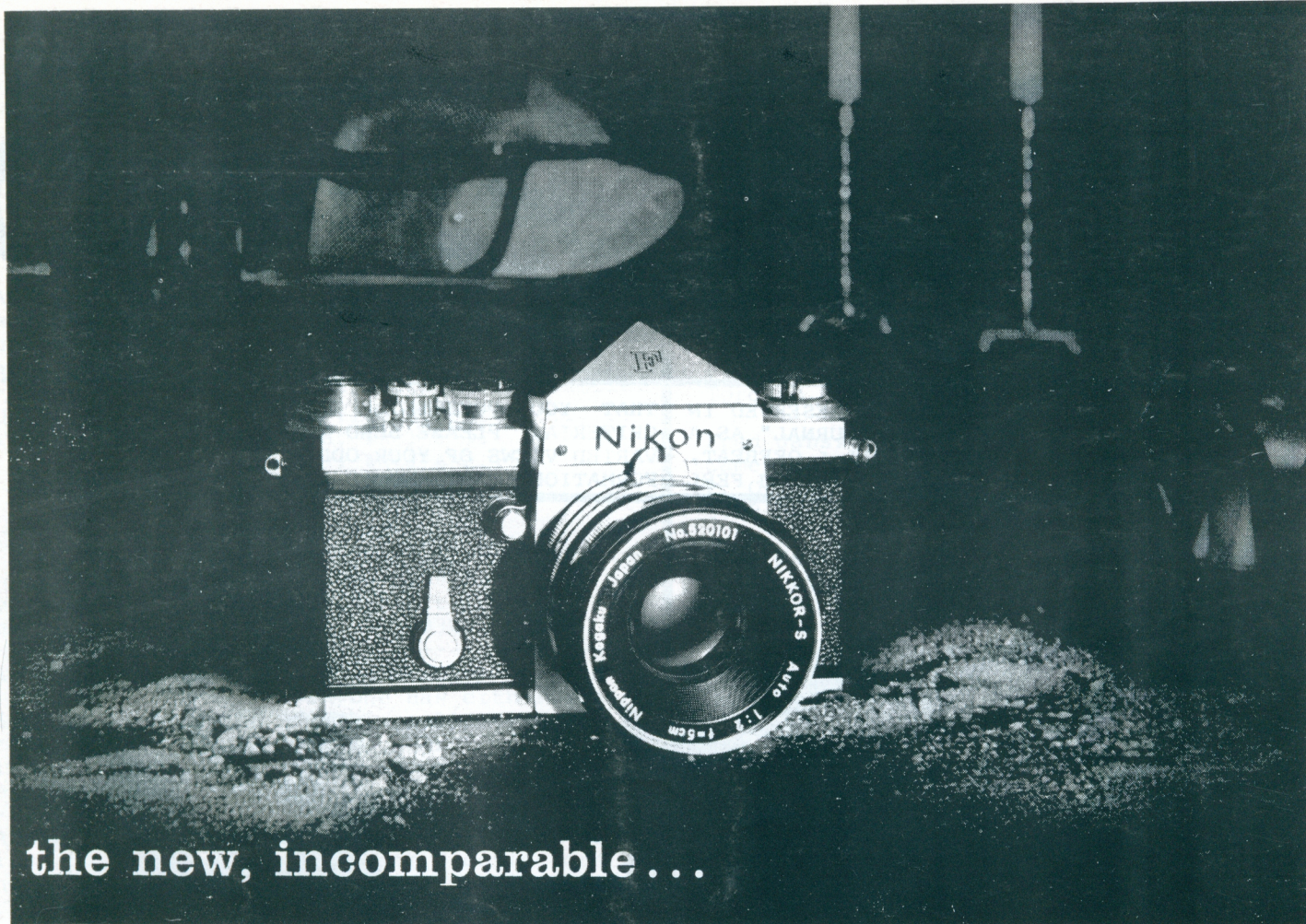


In keeping with the reflex theme of this issue, I thought I would feature this unusual, and rather rare, Nikon lens from the "F" era. Most of you are familiar with the exotic and very popular ED-IF series of high speed super-telephoto Nikkors that seem to be everywhere these days. They ushered in an era of high quality long range photography under almost any lighting conditions. Probably the most famous and desired lens in the series is the 300/f2.8 Nikkor, which has sold in very large numbers. What is not generally known is that this very famous lens was preceded by another which is virtually unknown. Pictured here is an example of the 300mm/f2.8 Nikkor-H from 1971! Correct, 1971! It was first announced in the same supplement to the Nikon-Nikkormat Handbook that also included the new Nikon F2!

How does it differ from the 300/f2.8 we are familiar with? For one thing it isn't marked as an "ED" lens although the text states it possesses "newly developed optical glass". The lens consists of 6 elements in 5 groups, weighs 6.6lbs & takes a 122mm filter, like the current lens. One other point; it stops down to f22 in 1/3 clickstops and has a MANUAL diaphragm! Now that is different! There is no meter coupling prong and the camera can be rotated for vertical & horizontal shooting. In addition there are 2 locking levers used to preset your focusing ring! The example in the book is #603001 & this lens is #603060, so they made at least 60 units!

(Robert Rotoloni)





the new, incomparable...

NIKON AUTOMATIC REFLEX

...with instant-return automatic mirror, instant-reopen automatic diaphragm, and instant-action preview control

Nikon quality has a special significance wherever 35mm cameras are used or discussed. The most knowledgeable, the most critical users of 35mm equipment have come to respect the Nikon name beyond all others. The new Nikon Automatic Reflex shares in this heritage of excellence — standing head-and-shoulders above any other single-lens reflex — in demonstrable features, performance and quality.

From the moment you first hold the new Nikon Automatic Reflex to your eye its quality becomes apparent. The image is full-size, bright and clear. Focusing is fast, easy, positive. You frame your subject, you shoot. Except for the almost inaudible 'click' of the shutter nothing seems to have happened. The image is still visible in the finder, bright and clear as before.

In the instant of exposure, the lens diaphragm closed down to the pre-selected 'taking' aperture — the mirror flipped up — the shutter flashed across the film plane. Then, instantly, automatically, the mirror returned to viewing position and the diaphragm reopened to full aperture.

The result of this unique Nikon design is a speed and ease of handling not usually associated with single-lens reflex cameras. This will come as no surprise to 35mm enthusiasts, to whom Nikon speed and ease of handling is a firmly established tradition.

The Nikon quality inherent in this new camera makes itself felt in many ways... in the exclusive depth-of-field Preview

Control that stops the lens down to 'taking' aperture at a touch of your finger, and lets the diaphragm spring open again when your finger is removed. It is reflected in the fresnel-type interchangeable focusing screen that gives you an unmatched brightness of field, and in the built-in split-image rangefinder that serves as a further aid to focusing.

It is apparent in the way the mirror locks up and out of the way to accommodate very deep-set lenses, and in the removable eye-level roof-prism which interchanges with an accessory waist-level finder. It is reflected in the precise alignment of lens, mirror and roof-prism — what the finder 'sees' is *exactly* what registers on the film. But most of all, Nikon quality makes itself felt in the way all of these features combine to provide you with a superb photographic instrument.

Incomparable Nikkor Lenses are standard equipment for the Nikon Automatic Reflex. They are available in focal lengths ranging from 21mm f/4 extreme wide-angle through 1000mm f/6.3 super-telephoto. Four of these lenses, 35mm f/2.8, 50mm f/2, 105mm f/2.5 and 135mm f/3.5 are designated Auto-Nikkors, and are equipped with instant-reopen automatic diaphragms. All lenses above 180mm can be adapted to fit both the Nikon Automatic Reflex and the Nikon SP.

New Nikon Automatic Reflex with 50mm Auto-Nikkor f/2, \$329.50

**THIS NIKON F INTRODUCTORY AD
APPEARED IN THE JULY 1959
ISSUES OF MODERN & POP PHOTO**