

A PUBLICATION OF THE NIKON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



MARCH 31, 1996

**NHS-51**

**'NHS-CON5' ISSUE!!**

The Nikon  **JOURNAL**



**THIS ISSUE..**

PG.1--NHS-CON5 IN TOKYO!!  
PG.12-NIKON F2 "COPIES"  
PG.16-"TORCA, TORCA, TORCA!"

**ROBERT ROTOLONI**  
EDITOR/PUBLISHER



# EDITORIAL NHS-CON5 TOKYO 1996

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 ODDS N' ENDS..."U.S. GOVERNMENT PROPERTY" NIKONS!!  
 BY STEPHEN GANDY

I have filled nearly half of this issue with coverage of NHS-Con5 (with more slated for #52 as well), which will be remembered as a truly historic event by all those who were fortunate to have attended. I feel that "historic" accurately describes this fifth meeting of our Society, for we were able to meet with some of the very men who created the Nikon and assured its prominence in the early years. Men whose vision and hard work produced the foundation upon which the most important and influential photographic system in the world now proudly stands. We also were afforded a tour of the original Oi factory in the Shinagawa district where we walked the very halls amongst the very rooms where all the Nikon rangefinders, as well as the reflexes up to the F3, were designed and assembled. We saw the same buildings where the glass was made and the lenses produced. We were also shown a selection of prototypes, some of which have never been shown before to anyone outside of Japan, including the mythical "SPX" and the "Nikon L" (more on these prototypes next issue!). We toured the famous JCII museum and met for two hours with Tatsuhiko Arakawa, the man who wrote not one, but three books on the early history of Nikon. Add to this a meeting with the authors of the famous book "The Collectors Guide to Japanese Cameras" (Koichi Sugiyama and Hiroshi Naoi), and a day at the famous Matsuya camera show, the likes of which we in the West have never seen, and you can see why I use the word historic. But before I get into the details, which I now realize is going to take more than one issue of this Journal, I need to use this space for some thank-yous and acknowledgments, for NHS-Con5 never could have happened without the work of certain people. No way could a meeting half a world away from many who attended have been successful without a great deal of time spent and hard work!

First of all I wish to thank all those members who made the effort to attend. A trip such as this is expensive yet we had 19 members from Europe and 6 from the U.S. venture 12,000 miles or more to spend a week in the land of Nikon. I may not get each and everyone of you pictured within these pages, but I want to acknowledge each of you! From Europe: Paul & Mark Bonner, Jon Bos, Hans Braakhuis, Tony & Leon Hurst, Jack Hvinden-Haug, Rudi Hillebrand, Yuki Kawai, Jaap Korten, Peter Lownds, Josef Mayrhofer, Tom Mates, John Millham, Walter Oosterlaan, Ulrich Schneider, Ernst Thiel, Rutger Teuscher, & Jean-Pierre Vergine. From the U.S.: Al Brody, Bill Kraus, Jim & Setsuko Martin, and Mike Otto. There were many of our  
(continued on page 1)

## NEXT ISSUE

The deadline for the next issue of the NIKON JOURNAL, #52, is June 1, 1996. Please get all contributions to me by this date so I can get #51 out on schedule! THANK YOU! RJR



**ROBERT ROTOLONI**  
EDITOR/PUBLISHER



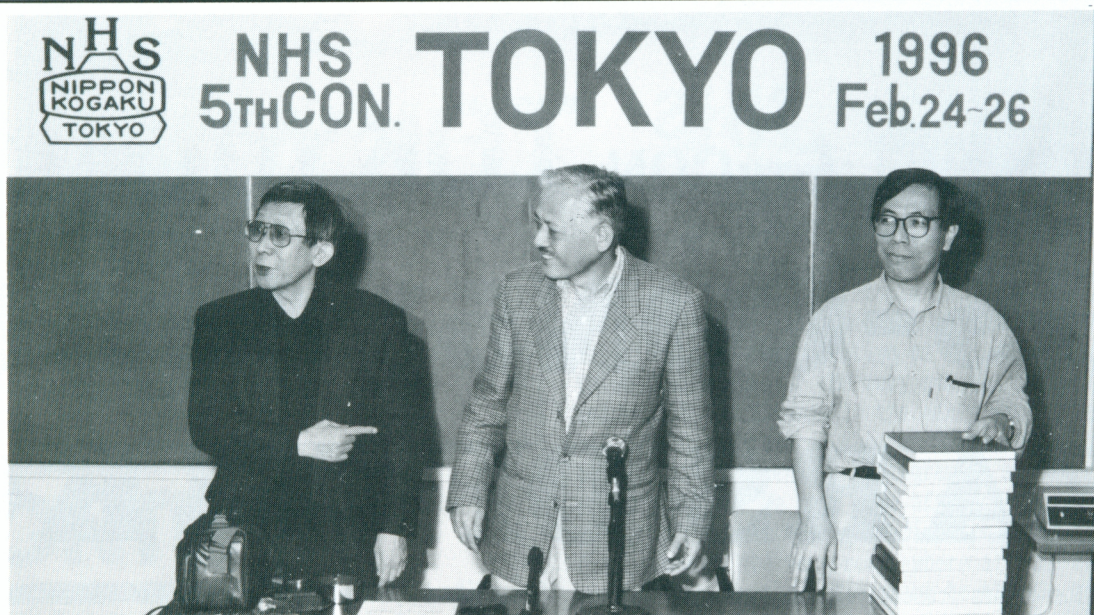
# 'NHS-CON5' & 50 YEARS OF NIKON

Japanese members plus others present, all of whom added much to the festivities! I hope I do not leave anyone out: Mikio Awano, Toshiharu Hashimoto, Yutaka Hattori, N. Hatsushiba, S. Kawagoe, Fusakazu Okamoto, Tad Sato, Kazuo Satoda, Katsuharu Takashima, S. Takashima, Akito Tamla, Hiroshi Tabata, Kuniomi Yamasaki and Akira Yokomachi. Then there were men such as Shuichi Sakai of the JCII Museum who I had met in 1987 when he was the director of the Pentax Gallery. And let us not forget our friends at Nikon who helped make the Monday main meeting such a success: Mikio Ito, Yoshiyuki Nakano and Kenji Toyoda (the latter two gentlemen also led us through the Oi factory the following day). Buy my special thanks must go to the three gentlemen who honored us with their presence on Monday. They graciously spent over 7 hours with us, answering countless questions and signing hundreds of autographs. I am speaking of three very special men who each played extremely important roles in the design and production of the Nikon,

from its beginnings right after the war into its ascent to prominence during the reign of the Nikon F. I am speaking of Masahiko Fuketa, Shigetada Fukuoka and Takateru Koakimoto! You all have read about the first two gentlemen in previous issues of the Journal, as this was my second meeting with them, the first having been in June 1991. But the third name probably sounds very familiar to many of you! Yes, it is the very same "T. Koakimoto" you have seen on so many of those camera body inspection slips in your collections! All three gentlemen were fundamental in developing the camera system that we all so love today, and all three rose to the highest positions in Nippon Kogaku! All three were in the meeting room the entire day; all three answered our many questions; all three discussed the prototypes present in the room (including the "Nikon L" recently covered in these pages!!) And you wonder why I use the word "historic"? Believe me, it was a once-in-a-lifetime experience for all who attended!



The entire American & European contingent in the lobby of the Shinagawa Prince ready to leave for the JCII/Arakawa meeting!



Festivities began on Saturday. Above (L to R) Koichi Sugiyama & Hiroaki Naoi, co-authors of the "Collectors Guide to Japanese Cameras", & Akito Tamla, organizer of NHS-Con5! (Lownds)

Below, a the view from our meeting room looking north on the Ginza. Yes, that young lady is nearly 10 floors tall! (RJR)

I will use some of the hundreds of photos that have been sent to me by various members to tell the story in a more graphic way, but just a few more words at this time. As with any group effort, there are always those few who stand out, who work a little harder to make it all happen..... I must thank Peter Lownds for using his abundant organizational skills to put together the large European contingent (which dwarfed the U.S. presence!), and for his immeasurable help with all the meetings!....Tony Hurst for yet another superb slide presentation!....Bill Kraus for again filling a speaker slot so well!....Setsuko Martin for guiding our rag-tag group through the Tokyo train system!....Yuki Kawai for his excellent translations at the meeting and his great sense of humor!....Tad Sato for his help with translations and all the "great toys" he showed us!....Hattori-san for his hard work ensuring that group photos were made at each event!....And last, but not least, Akito Tamla! It was Tamla-san who made all the arrangements including hotel rooms, meals, tours at JCII and the Oi factory, meeting rooms and all the countless little details that needed to be taken care of for the convention to have been a success. And he did his job perfectly! We could not have asked for a better organized 5 days than what Tamla-san arranged for us. To make all the events come together on time without any problems is an awesome task! Tamla-san was up to every challenge and I know that everyone that was there knows that it all worked so well because of his efforts! Tamla-san, I and the entire Convention group thank you for all that you did for us! You made it a success!

One note of news. Within hours of returning home to the U.S., Bill Kraus ended up in the hospital with emergency surgery! I am happy to say that he is recovering and will be back on his feet shortly! I saw Bill on Tuesday afternoon just before he left and little did we know that half a day later he would be so ill. Fortunately, it did not happen while he was somewhere over the Pacific in the plane! Get well Bill!!!!



# THE 'JCII' MUSEUM

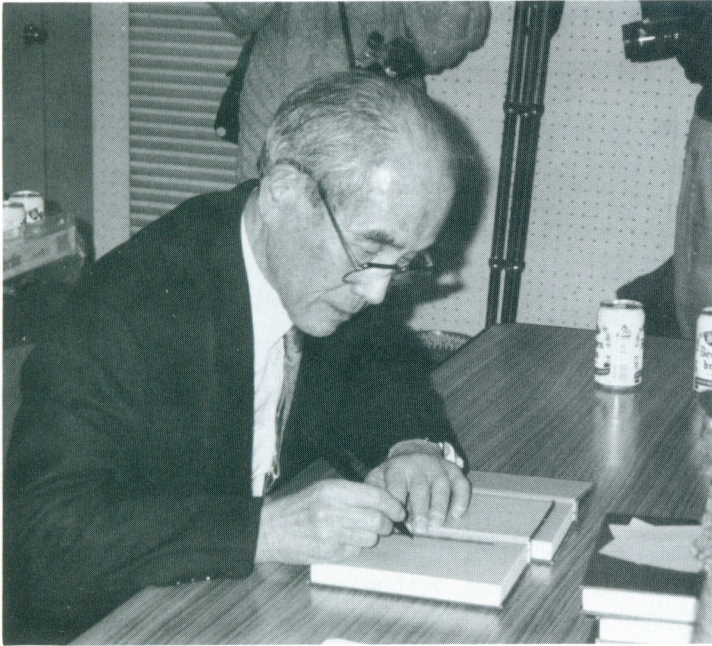


Above-The entire group outside JCII. Mr. Shuichi Sakai, the museum curator. Below-Tad Sato and his Nikon S2 Underwater Housing draws a crowd. Bottom-Your editor and Arakawa-san exchange gifts. (All photos Nikon Club Tokyo (NCT))



Above-Yuki Kawai in his role as translator & Tamla-san. (Kraus) Below-L-R..Al Brody, Jim & Setsuko Martin and Peter Lownds at the JCII Museum on Sunday. (NCT)





Arakawa-san was gracious enough to autograph his books for those present. (Kraus)

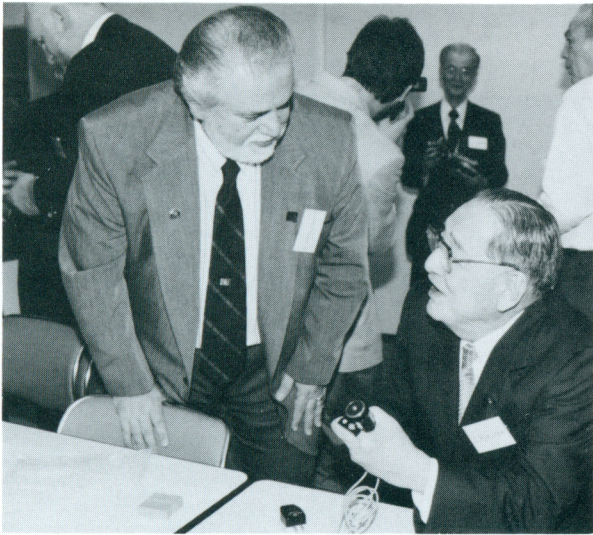


Arakawa-san brought his famous black Nikon S for all to see. This same camera is pictured in his books and your editor has dreamed of seeing it for over 15 years. Now I can say I have! Thank you Arakawa-san for bringing it. (Lownds)

# THE ARAKAWA MEETING!

Below-L-R..T. Arakawa (his son who was his translator), Al Brody, Arakawa-san & N. Hatsushiba admire the black S. (NCT)





Top Left-Rotoloni & Fukuoka-san discussing an early prototype pistol grip for the S2E. Top Right-Fukuoka-san, Fuketa-san & Rotoloni admiring the special "F" that was presented to Fuketa-san by Peter Lownds. (Bonner) Mid Right..Tamlas-san during his opening talk to the Convention. Lower Right-Our three Special Guests with a table full of Prototypes! Above-Tony Hurst presented a set from his series of our Nikon Journal rear cover photos to Nikon Corporation! (Kraus)



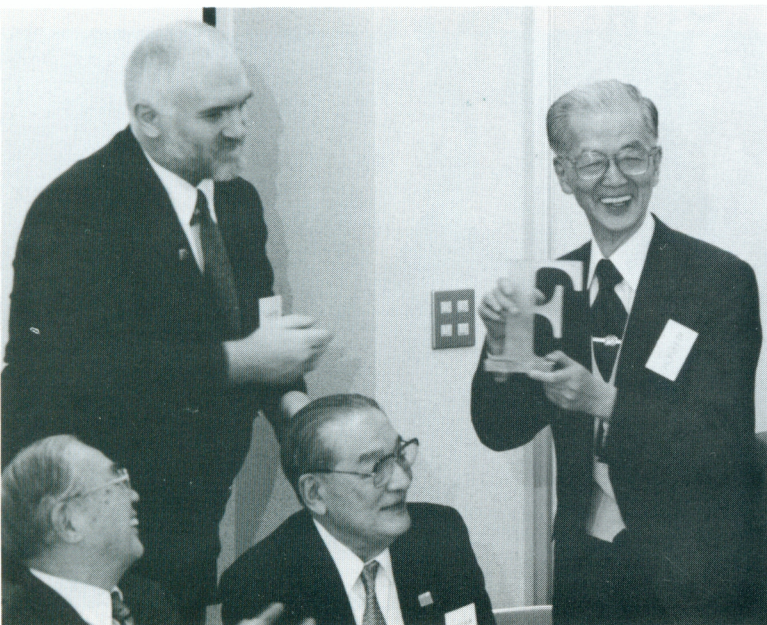


Top Left-Takateru Koakimoto, whose name appears on so many of those inspection slips you have seen over the years, with one of the prototypes. (RJR)

Top Right-Masahiko Fuketa, who gave us all those wonder Nikons from the Model One all the way to the "F"!!

Bottom Right-Shigetada Fukuoka, the father of the Nikon S36 Motor Drive, discusses one of the prototypes.

Bottom-Peter Lownds presents Fuketa-san with a sculpture of the famous "F" used on the first Nikon reflex camera!







L-R..Yuki Kawai, Takateru Koakimoto (holding two Nikon I cameras) & Tad Sato. (NCT)



Above-Fuketa-san with a Nikon I, the way it all began. (NCT)  
Below-Bill Kraus gave yet another great talk on literature. (Lownds)

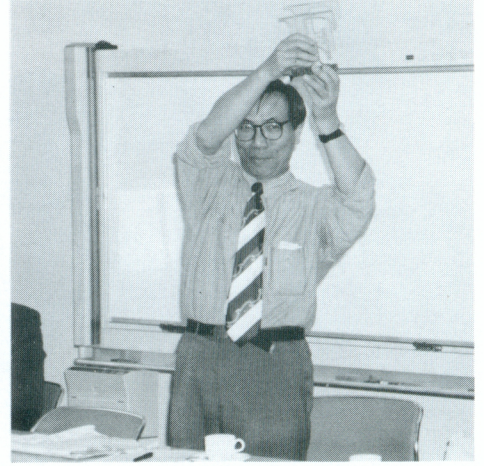


L-R..Mikio Awano (editor of "Camera Collectors News"), T. Hagiya (editor of "Camera Review") & S. Takashima (president of "All Japan Classic Club" (AJCC)). (NCT)



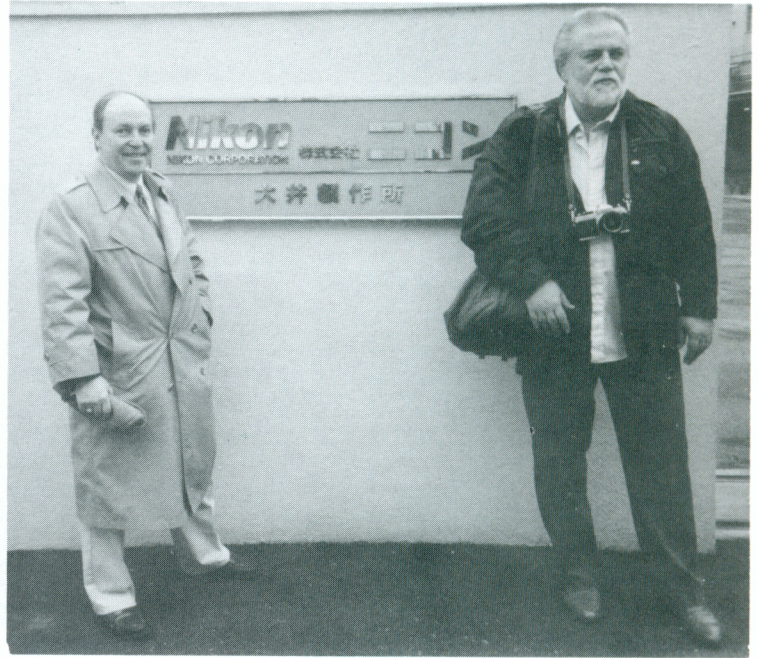
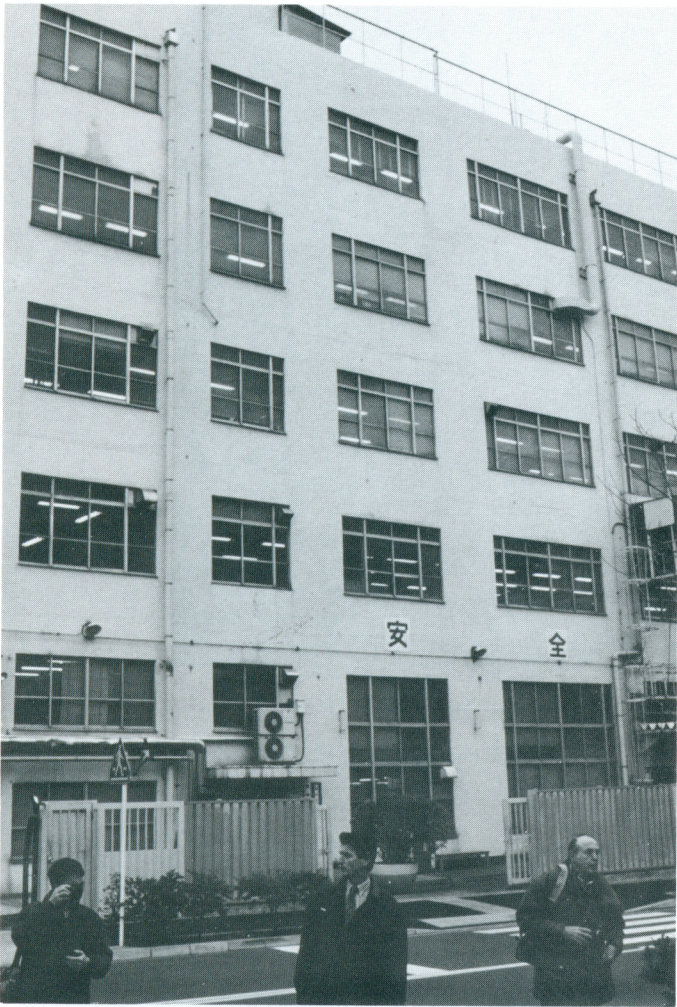
L-R..Ryoko Koakimoto (his nephew), Katsuharu Takashima, and Takateru Koakimoto. (NCT)





Upper Right-Tamla-san gets his "F" as does Tony Hurst in appreciation for all their contributions (brought by Peter Lownds). (Bonner) Lower right-Fukuoka-san giving one of his many autographs. (NCT) Below-Yuki Kawai received an original of the rear cover of this very issue! (Kraus)





Above-It was the 5th floor where the rangefinders were made!  
 Upper right-Bill Kraus & RJR near the gate of the Oi factory in Shinagawa. Right-We were expected!!  
 Below-I couldn't resist this shot! Now wouldn't you like to have one of these? (RJR)





Above-L-R..Jaap Korten, Tony Hurst and your editor in front of "Nikon House" on the Ginza at night! (Lownds)

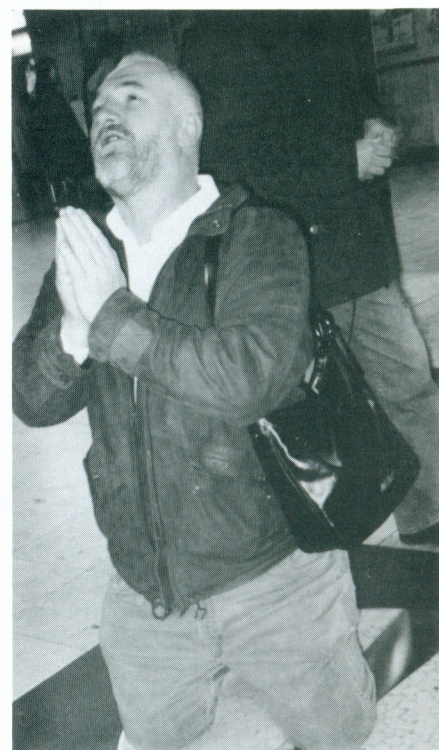


Left-Window shopping at Katsumido Camera, one of the main stores in the Ginza. Rudi Hillebrand shooting a window full of Nikons. (RJR)





L-R..Jaap Korten, John Millham, Tony Hurst and Jon Bos at Saturday evening dinner, enjoyed by all! (Kraus)  
 Below-Just shooting the sights of Tokyo, a paradise for photographers. (Kraus)

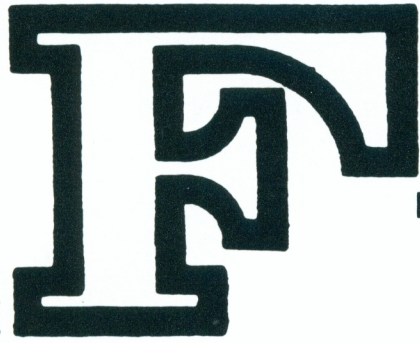


Right-I'm not quite sure what Peter Lownds is praying for, but I hope he got it!  
 Below-AND A GOOD TIME WAS HAD BY ALL!!



**12**

**THE**

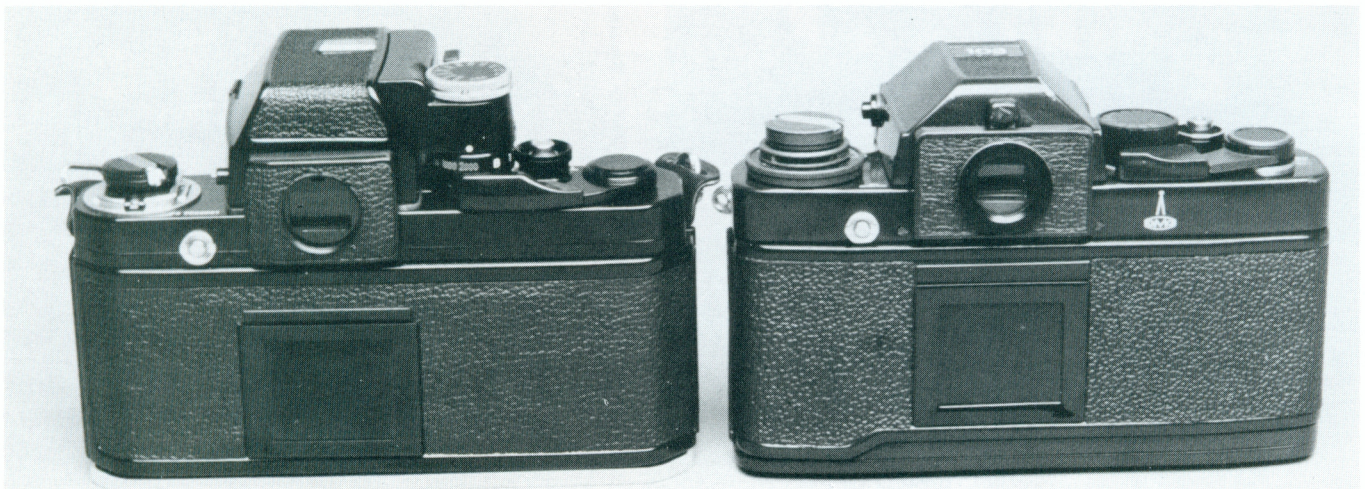
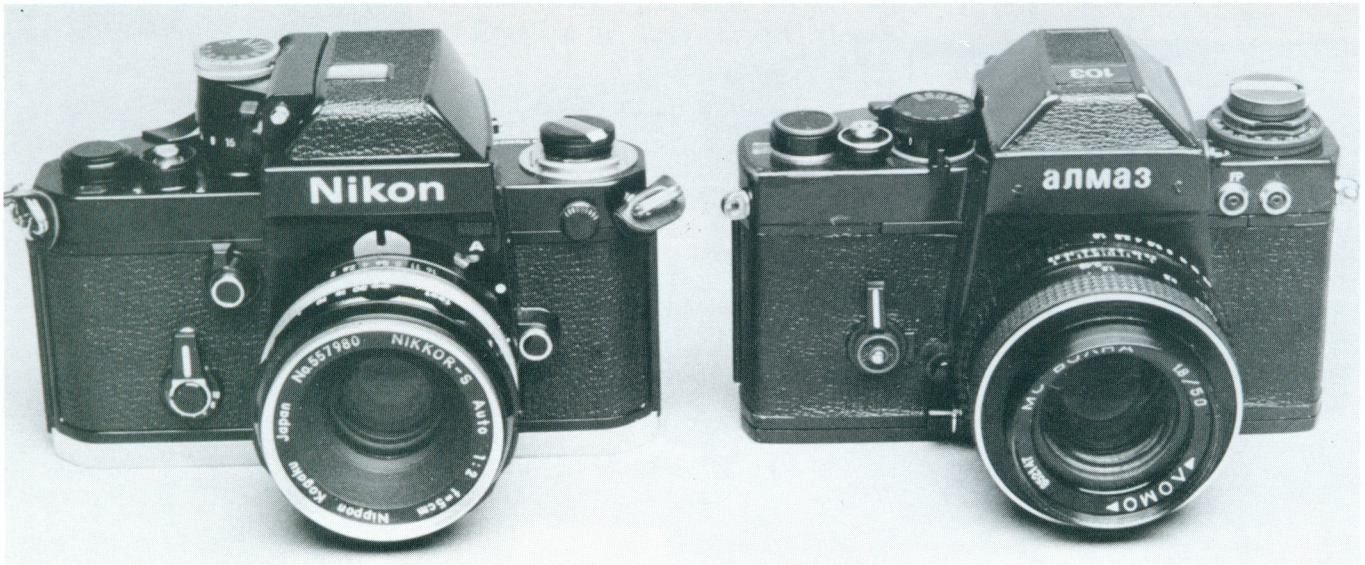


by

**Chris Kok**

**--SPOT!!**

**TWO NIKON  
F2 COPIES**



It is well known that the Nikon rangefinder cameras were copied by a number of Japanese camera manufacturers. The notable ones are the "Condor", "Rafuray" and "Avigo". Then, you have the "Neoca", "Brumberger", "Yashica 35" and "Ogikon 35E", the list being non-exhaustive, which were also styled after the Nikon S2 and S.

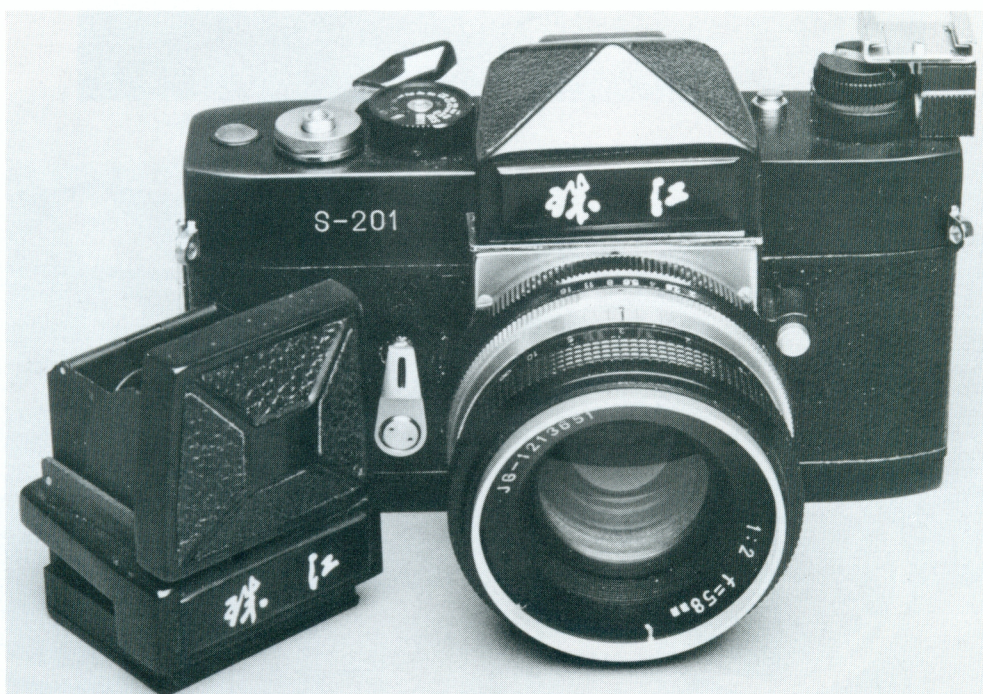
It is, however, less well known that there were in fact Nikon F2 copies as well. The one which comes closest to the real thing is the Russian Almaz single lens reflex. There are altogether 3 models of the Almaz, namely the "101", "102" and "103", respectively. Models 101 and 102 were produced between 1978 and 1980. Both models incorporate a TTL metering system similar to the Nikon F2. It is unknown how many 101s were ever made, although it is believed to have been only a few. As for the 102, about 20 are rumored to have been produced. Due to the limited production of the 101 and 102, they are more appropriately considered as test models. In 1982, model 103 was introduced and less than 10,000 were made, with production ceasing in 1987. The 103 comes with an interchangeable prism finder (being a close copy of the F2 Photomic finder except for the metering). Whilst the camera was

supposed to be motor drivable, it is unknown whether an actual motor was ever produced for it. Nor is it known whether any other prism finder was made.

Another camera that does not come quite as close to a copy of the Nikon F2 is the Chinese made "Ju Jian S-201" single lens reflex camera. The standard finder of the S-201 is a pyramidal eye-level finder without metering similar to the F2 eye-level finder. It also offers an interchangeable waist-level finder which again closely resembles that of the Nikon. A number of lenses were made for the camera ranging from a 35mm/f2.3, a 58mm/f2, and a 105mm/f2.5 (Nikon copy) to a 45-90mm/f3.5 Zoom (also a Nikon copy). However, it does not offer motor drive. The camera, once available in large numbers, is getting harder and harder to find today, especially in nice working condition. A complete set with the interchangeable prisms and lenses is even harder to locate.

Both the Almaz and the S-201 are good copies of the Nikon F2 and evidently reflect the popularity and reputation commanded by Nikon throughout the world, including Eastern Europe and China.

Chris Kok.







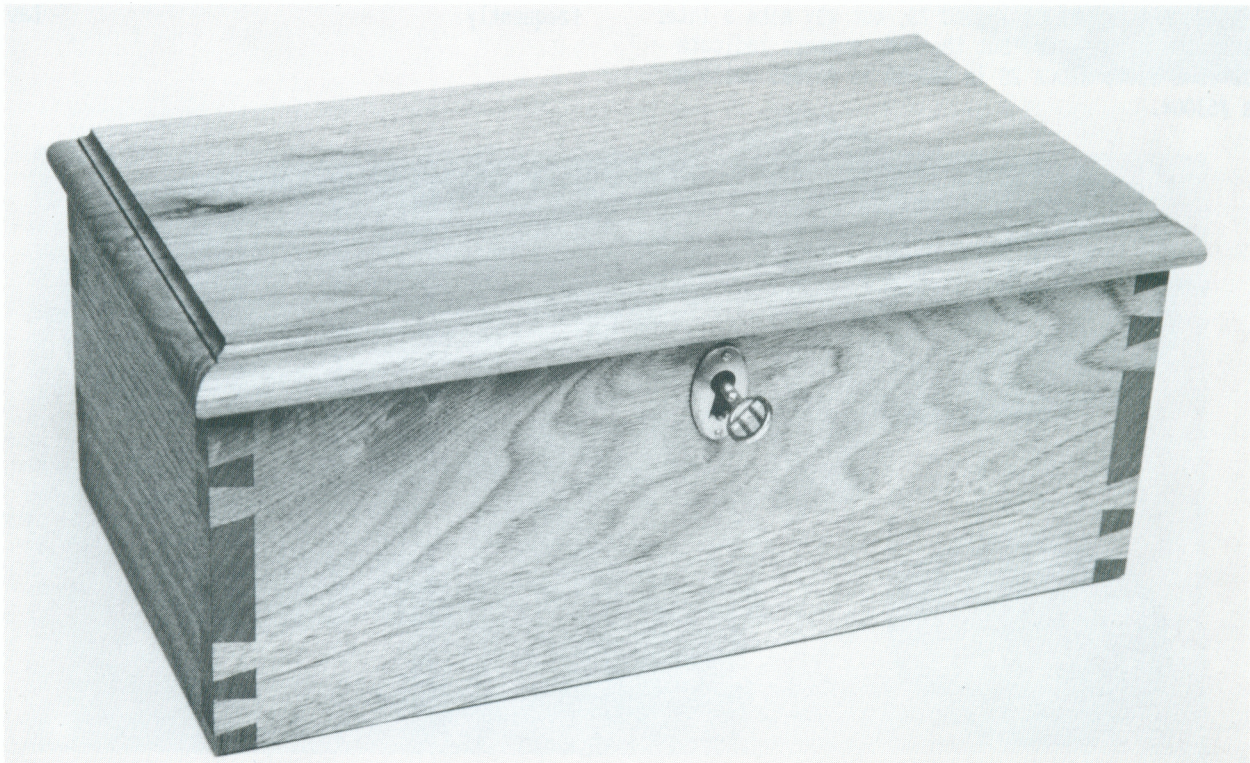
by  
**Larry Beckwith**

# NIKON ART!



"A work of art". The rangefinder Nikon could be so regarded. Accordingly, this art form ought not be relegated closet space but prominent space as, for example, the coffee table.

With that in mind I, retired from teaching cabinetry, wrought a Nikon display case that provides a complementing arrangement for enjoying "Nikon Art" as a focal point in my home. The Nikon display/presentation case is fashioned from solid hardwood, hand dovetailed, and fitted to accept a Nikon body and a favorite Nikkor or two. Solid brass machined lid support, hinges and lock escutcheon have been used (peerless quality items not commonly encountered at your local hardware store). The case has been designed to include desiccant protection and a clear Lexan MR5 humidity barrier/dust cover inset to protect contents when the top is open for display. The top has been embellished with a "black brass" engraved overlay lettered Nikon and designation of camera model. An attendant benefit, Nikon sets have appreciated substantially as a result of being "artistically encased". I would like to think that this is an effort in "Nikon Conservation".



# 16

# TORCA,

# TORCA,

by

Lau Jorgensen

# TORCA

I work as a Lab-Manager in one of the largest photo shops in Copenhagen, FOTO/C, and we always have a large stock of second hand equipment, mostly Nikon, Leica, Hasselblad and other quality gear, but now and then we buy odd cameras like the TORCA. I saw the close likeness to an RF Nikon & thought that it might be a nice item to display with my RF Nikons, so I bought it....one of the fringe benefits that comes with my job. My Nikon collection is founded on cameras bought at FOTO/C....long before I was employed there.

When I saw the articles in the NHS Journal on the various Nikon look-alikes, I looked at my TORCA and the similarities struck me once again. As the last article on the NEOCA and the BRUMBERGER seem to be another in a series about Nikon imitations, I felt that I could give a small contribution to the Journal, which has given me many a joyful moment, by telling the other members about the TORCA.

It is a leaf shutter, fixed-lens, rangefinder camera. The body is #63004 and the 45mm/f3.5 NEOKOR anastigmat is #26243. The shutter is a RECTUS B, 1-300. Strangely, the TORCA does not have a wind lever, only a knob!

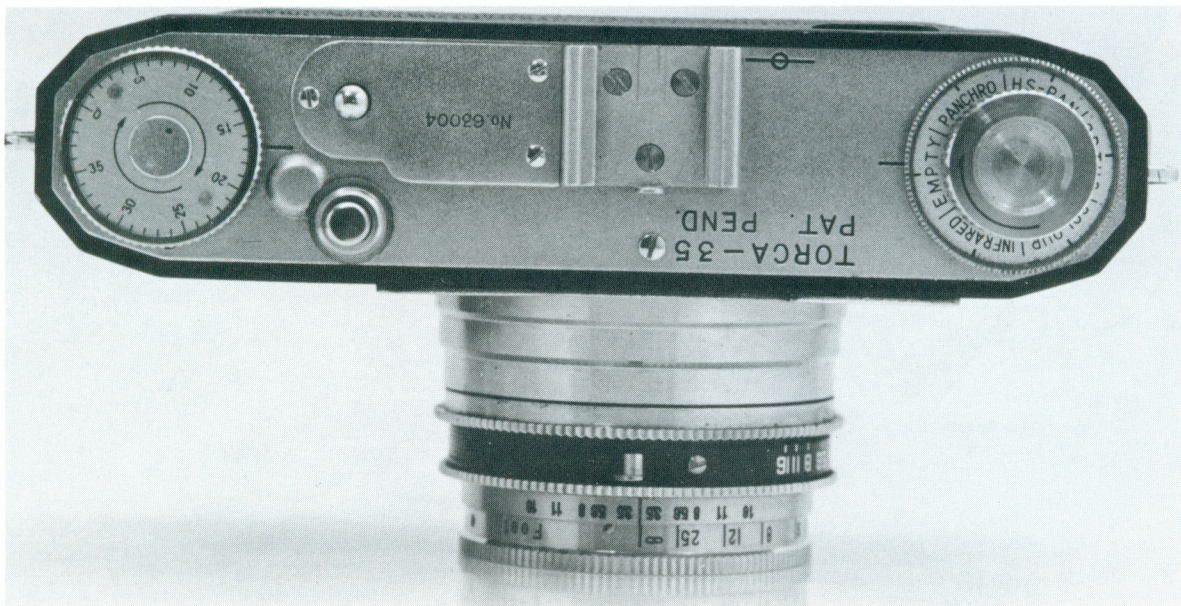
It is stated in McKeown's that the camera is from c 1956, a year later than the NEOCA 1S and 2S, but why make a later model without a wind lever? But the body numbers indicate that this is a fact; NEOCA 2S in NHS-50 is #62085 while my TORCA is #63004.

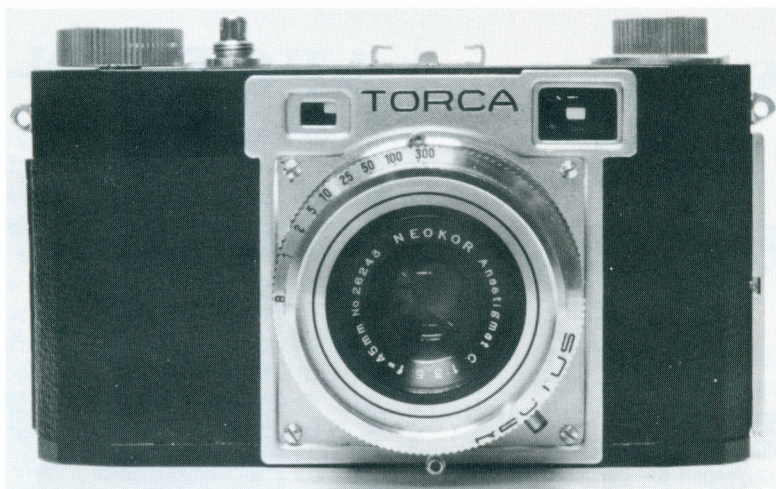
Both the TORCA and NEOCA were apparently made at the same Neoca factory (possibly the BRUMBERGER too). Perhaps the BRUMBERGER is made from NEOCA tooling bought by another company (like the old MINOLTA SLRs that turned into SEAGULLS!).

All this just because the camera resembles a NIKON S. It is rather fun to do a little research on an otherwise overlooked little gem from Japan. I hope that many other NIKON look-alikes will turn up and that collectors all over the world will take the time to write about it in the NHS Journal if they have one, or if some other odd variant of the NEOCA family surfaces. I for one will follow the articles with great interest.

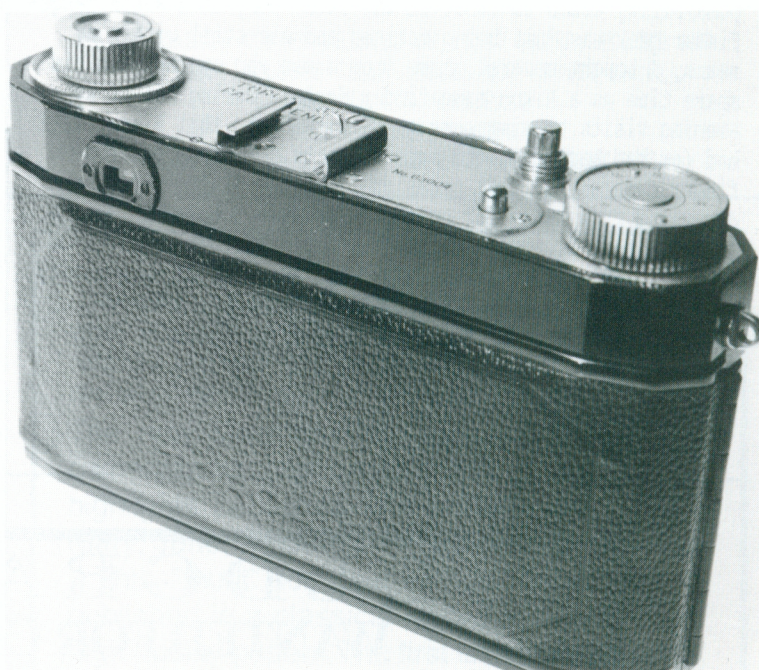
McKeown's 9th Edition, page 325  
Torca-35..c1956 Rangefinder 35mm  
styled similar to Nikon S2. An early  
name variant of the Neoca-35. Neokor  
anastigmat f3.5/45mm in Rectus B, 1-300  
shutter. Uncommon. One recorded sale in  
1992 at \$200.

I have been unable to find the TORCA in other books about collectable cameras, although the NEOCA is mentioned frequently.  
Lau Jorgensen.





NHS  
NIPPON  
KOGAKU  
TOKYO



## LETTERS..

## LETTERS..

## LETTERS

From Alan Blake...

Stephen Smith's article on the Nikon F and the anomalous high serial number set me thinking. Assuming the quoted last production numbers from Braczko are correct and the possibility that spare top plates for servicing were pre-numbered in an out-of-sequence series is not so, then another tenuous possibility comes to mind. In the late '70s, when Nikon rangefinder gear was just being noticed and was still within my means, I bought several items from a man who operated in his spare time as a Nikon rangefinder dealer. During one of my evening visits to view some goodies, he said that Nikon still had (or had had) complete sets of parts for certain rangefinder cameras and that occasionally a new camera would be generated from these for some particularly honored personage. At the time I accepted his assertion but (forgive me if I am wrong) cannot remember seeing any mention of such an activity in your book or in the pages of the Journal. Is there any evidence that this was done? If it were true then it poses the question of what serial numbers were applied, was the same done for the "F" and could this explain the anomalous high serial number?

## AUCTION NEWS

Once again Mr. Uwe Breker has asked me to insert the newsletter for his latest photographic auction slated for May 11, 1996. As you can see from the enclosed literature his auctions contain a vast assortment of items photographic from the small and inexpensive to the large and very expensive. His catalogs are unique in that every item is illustrated, not just certain ones! It is a very well made catalog and can be retained as a source of information for future use. Why not contact them, order a catalog, and get on their mailing list. They have a number of auctions each year and it would be wise to follow the auction market. So much of what is really interesting is now coming out through auctions as other sources of quality photographica diminish. (RJR)

## PLEASE NOTE

My plans for NHS-52 are to give the Tokyo convention more coverage. I hope to go more into the factory visit with a few more photos, much more information on the prototypes we saw that day, coverage of the black Nikon S that Arakawa-san brought with him, more people & places shots and just a more personal story or two. I couldn't possibly get it all in this issue so look for more in NHS-52!

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The famous Nippon Kogaku Room where early Nikon items are on display is situated in a separate area of Grays of Westminster. It was opened on the 25th July 1992 as part of our celebrations of the 75th Anniversary of Nikon. The name Nikon comes from the first four letters of the original company name: Nippon Kogaku to which the letter 'N' was added. The stock is, of course, ever-changing, but typically includes Nikon Rangefinder, the Nikon F family and all the F2 models, lenses and accessories. Grays of Westminster have become renowned for the quality of their equipment, and have set a standard to which other dealers aspire. People who demand and value top quality will not be disappointed. Furthermore both written and telephone queries will always be dealt with in a prompt, friendly and helpful manner.

Grays are usually the first place that collectors contact for early and rare Nikon cameras, lenses and accessories. We are regularly consulted by writers, researchers, television and film production companies for advice and supply of Nikon equipment for both period and modern films. All this can be viewed in delightfully comfortable old-fashioned surroundings where we welcome part exchanges of other quality equipment.

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*"... the kind of service of which legends are made  
... Grays of Westminster."*

Amateur Photographer magazine



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## "NHS" PRODUCTS

To the right is our latest list of "NHS PRODUCTS". You will notice 3 new items, 2 of which are a little different than our normal fare. Along the lines of our previous efforts at reprinting interesting & important Nikon literature we now have the "Lens List of Special Optics..Nikon Industrial and Commercial Lenses", which contains info on some really rare & unusual Nikkors, many of which you may never have heard of. The other two items are our NHS Membership Directory and our Nikon Journal Index for the first 46 issues. Sales of these products help hold down Society dues.

NIKON HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL

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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

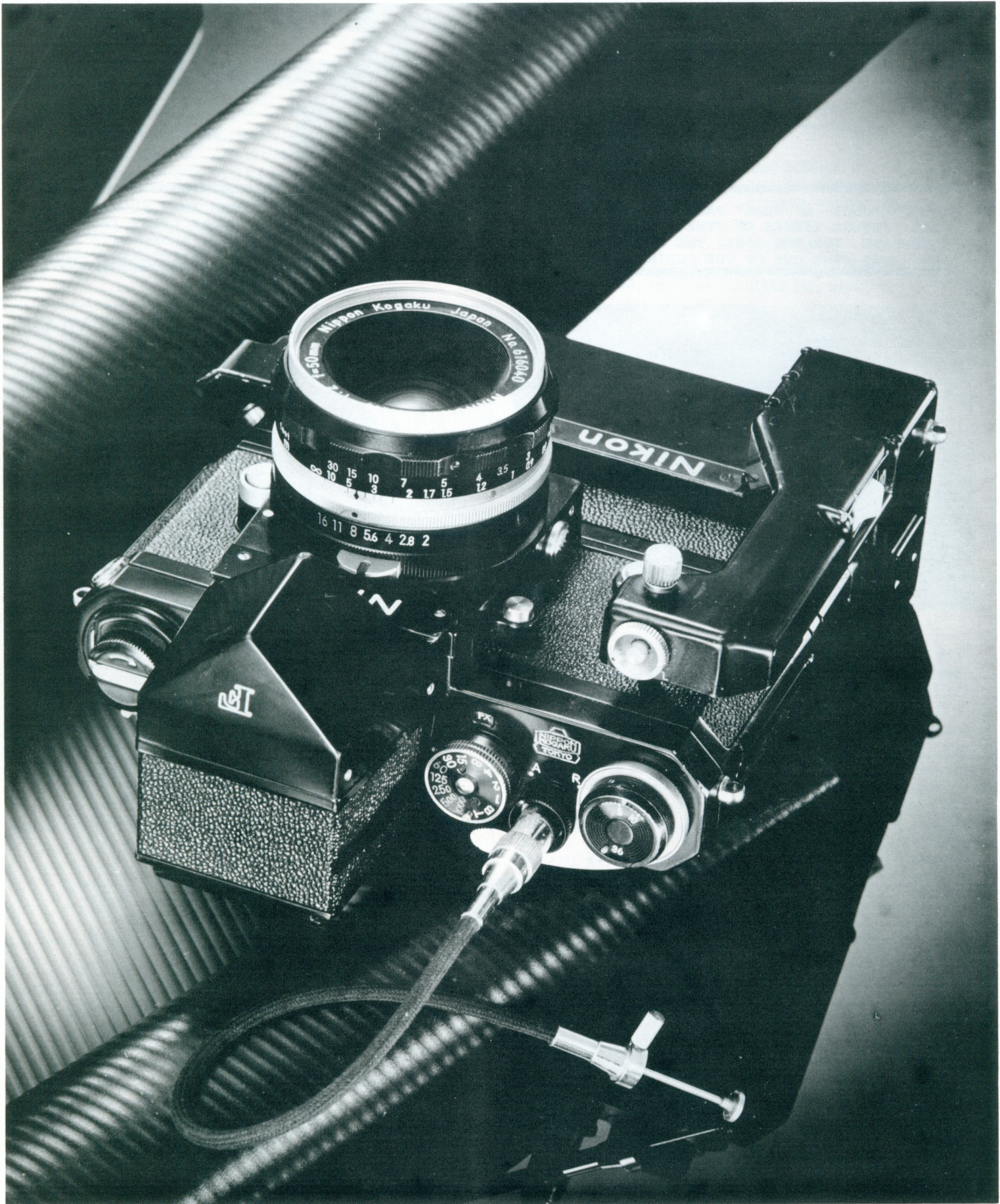
THAT YOU POSSESS AN ITEM THAT FULFILLS THESE CRITERIA, PLEASE SEND ME AT LEAST TWO OR MORE VARIED VIEWS OF YOUR ODDITY ALONG WITH ANY INFORMATION THAT WOULD BE OF INTEREST. THANKS!



From Stephen Gandy we have photos of some reflex Nikons once owned by the U.S. Government! First we have 2 shots of one of the F3s recently disposed of. Note "US GOV PROPERTY" engraved on the pentaprism as well as the baseplate.

Next is a Nikon F known as the KE-48C. These cameras were made for the US Air Force. Note "US GOVT PROPERTY" engraved. The serial number, 7082351, on the back plate matches that on the top plate, and suggests a production period of 1970. This is supported by the bottom line which reads "WARRANTY EXPIRES 71 MAY"! I guess even the government gets only 1 year! Production probably in the 200-300 range.





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

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