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MARCH 31, 2009

NHS-103

2009 ~ THE YEAR OF THE NIKON F!!
NIKON F!! JOURNAL



THIS ISSUE
1959 ~ 2009

50 YEARS OF THE NIKON F!!
WE CELEBRATE ITS STORY

ROBERT J. ROTOLONI
EDITOR/PUBLISHER



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NIPPON KOGAKU TYPE I CAMERA

By RICHARD LANE

NHS -104 DEADLINE!

The deadline for the next issue of our *NIKON JOURNAL*,
NHS-104, is **JUNE 1, 2009**. Please get all correspondence to
me on time so I can bring it out on schedule. Thank you.
RJR.

EDITORIAL

“THE YEAR OF THE NIKON F” begins with this issue of the Journal. It is hard to believe that the ‘F’ is 50 years old, yet if I think about it I was dreaming of owning one back when I was 15 or so, and that is 45 years ago! So yes, the ‘F’ has hit 50, but I think it has held up better than I have. It still looks shiny and new to me.

All 4 issues of the Journal that will have a cover date of 2009 will contain articles and information on the venerable Nikon F. It is true that the current digital generation (D2, D3) are awesome feats of technology and that the pro models that succeeded the ‘F’ (F2, F3, F4, F5, F6) corrected some shortcomings and were more modern (AF, better metering and motors) and easier to use and reached a pinnacle of construction with the F4. But for some reason the ‘F’ to my eyes is still the most elegant and graceful SLR Nikon ever made. So we will celebrate the camera that not only put Nikon on the map, but also nearly destroyed all its competition during the sixties.

I start things off with a short review of some of the earliest literature and ads on page one where you might see some things you were not aware of. For our ‘F-Spot’ feature beginning on page six we have a superb article on a very rare accessory for the ‘F’ that I am sure most of you have never heard of. Written by Peter Lownds and beautifully illustrated by Tony Hurst, the ‘Mikami’ Rapidwinder is an item I wish I had. Then on page 11, Peter Lownds adds a short list of interesting facts and anecdotes on the Nikon F I am sure you will enjoy.

Our resident Nikon F expert, and author of the definitive text on the entire system, Uli Koch, has written an overview of the ‘F’ with special emphasis on something else most of you are probably not aware of. See page 12 for his article and learn about those Nikon Fs with cloth shutters. (?)

Since I have three more issues this year to fill I am still in need of material on the Nikon F. I have quite a bit and much is already in the pipeline, but I can never have too much. So send me what you feel is interesting and it might make it into these pages.

On page 17 Wes Loder has some new information about that seminal event in Nikon history: The visit by Duncan and Bristol to the Nikon factory that led to the ‘discovery’ of the Nikkors and the Nikon and to Duncan shooting his famous book on the Korean War with only Nikkor lenses. I must admit I have never heard this part of the story before.

Page 16 is our Convention page where you will find the latest on **NHS-Con12 scheduled for May 10-16, 2010 in Bruges, Belgium**. Chris and Hans have already begun to assemble a program and we will all have a great time. It may seem a long way off but the next 13 or so months will fly by and we need to get started right now. We will be there the week of a famous event that means one thing: **hotel space is at a premium!** We must start getting our numbers together so we can reserve the hotel rooms now! Please read page 16 and respond as soon as possible. I hope to meet with Chris and Hans in Antwerp about March 20th so I should have more info for you in NHS-104. This should be a wonderful meeting as Bruges is a very special place.

1959~2009

THE NIKON F AT 50!

By 1958 many 35mm photographers were aware that technology was quickly eliminating many, if not all, of the shortcomings prevalent in single lens reflexes of the early fifties. As these design flaws were being overcome and corrected, certain advantages that the fabulous rangefinder 35s of the day, which had, for the most part, reached the pinnacle of their designs, were slowly vanishing or diminishing in importance. Sooner or later the manufacturers were going to overcome enough SLR shortcomings with new technology and produce a camera type that would have many advantages over the RF camera. It was only a matter of time. In 1959 the time finally arrived as many major players released their first SLR cameras. Amongst them was Nippon Kogaku.

Unlike most others, N-K was able to base their SLR design on their very successful RF flagship, the Nikon SP. Using the same basic body design with removable back, wind and rewind mechanism, selftimer design, same method of loading and, most important of all, the same shutter mechanism, they came up with an SLR that felt and handled just like their SP and needed no relearning process. But beyond this they devised features for their SLR that proved to be superior to all others and would be so well designed that many are still found in their current cameras. Their instant return mirror was just that...fast and accurate and reliable. Their automatic diaphragm system was so well designed it never needed to be redesigned! Their finder was the only 100% accurate one made and their interchangeable screens made keeping up with viewing and coating technology quite easy. The same for their removable prism system. It not only allowed for waist level and high magnification finders, but also came in very handy when TTL metering became the rage and the Photomic system emerged. And finally their bayonet lens mount. Fifty years later and it's still with us! Designed with a wide throat that would allow for

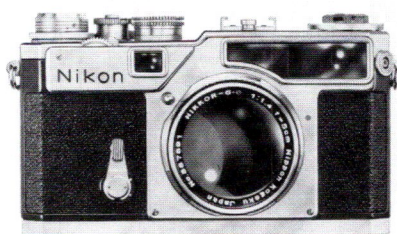
very fast and wide optics, it was simple and strong and full proof. And it just keeps on working. But I could go on forever talking about Nikon's entry into the SLR world in 1959. We all know how advanced it was and how so many of its features seemed to defy father time and keep it on the cutting edge for over 13 years without a major change to the body. This was while all other makers were changing their models almost yearly. Not so Nikon. They didn't need to. They had a winner from day one. **They had the NIKON F!**

To celebrate the 50th birthday of the single most successful and influential Nikon model ever made, I have decided to devote the majority of the 4 Journals to be published in 2009 to

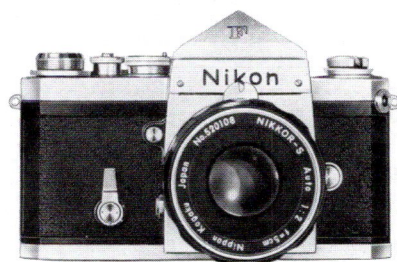
coverage of the Nikon F. I will try to approach this from various angles and I am already receiving help from members who are contributing articles and ideas to this project. Nikon F expert Uli Koch as well as Peter Lownds and Tony Hurst have all come to my aid with this first of four issues.

I thought I would kick things off with some very early literature on the Nikon F that many of you may not have seen. Taking into account that 'most' of my members are about the same age as me, give or take 10 years, the arrival of the F could have come well before you were into photography or Nikons. I was just shy of my 11th birthday when the Nikon F came to America. I became involved with photography the following year and by the time I was 15 I dreamt of someday owning one. But it wasn't until 1967 that it became possible for me. Therefore, the first 7 years of the F's reign passed by me. The early years were lost as I got into the F in the mid and late sixties. So I thought I would start my personal coverage of the

Nikon F with some early information that is now nearly 50 years old. Fifty years, yet the Nikon F still is a viable picture maker and feels modern and capable in my hands. Why not go out and shoot with one of yours. You might like it! **RJR**



rangefinder-coupled or automatic reflex
the finest '35' you can own is a **NIKON**



To say of one's camera — "It's a Nikon" — to say that it is equipped with a Nikkor lens, is to imply a measure of quality that has yet to be equalled — a quality that has achieved universal acknowledgement and recognition, especially among the knowledgeable, critical users of fine 35mm equipment.

Your choice between these two unusual instruments depends only upon your needs or preference — rangefinder or reflex. For they are both, in all other respects, the same — the same reputable, reliable make, the same meticulous quality, the same incomparable Nikkor optics and the same superb performance.

With a Nikon, you have every right to expect the finest results, for the instrument in your hands is the finest money can buy.

NIKON SP RANGEFINDER-COUPLED '35' with Universal Viewfinder System providing built-in finders for six different focal length lenses: 28, 35, 50, 85, 105 and 135mm, and 50mm Nikkor f/2 Lens, \$329.50 (with f/1.4 lens, \$375).

NIKON F AUTOMATIC REFLEX '35' with Fully Automatic Features: Instant-Reopen Diaphragm, Instant-Return Mirror and Instant-Action Preview Control, 50mm Auto-Nikkor f/2 Lens, \$329.50.

See and examine both cameras at your Nikon Dealer. For further information write to Dept. PP-10.



NIKON INCORPORATED, 111 Fifth Ave., New York 3, N. Y.
In Canada: Angiophoto Ltd., 880 Champagne St., Montreal, P.Q.

2

NOW THERE ARE TWO GREAT '35's... BOTH NIKON!



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

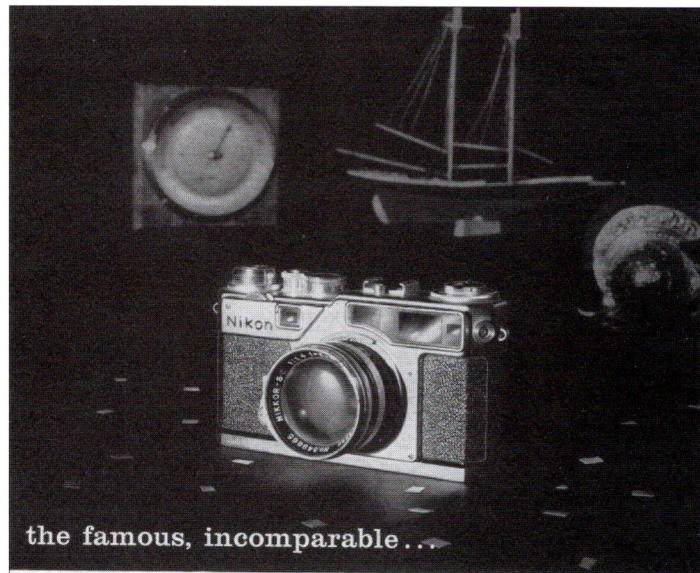
Control that stops the lens down to 'taking' aperture at a touch of your finger, and lets the diaphragm spring open again when your finger is removed. It is reflected in the french-type interchangeable focusing screen that gives you an unmatched brightness of field, and in the built-in split-image rangefinder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

rangefinder-coupled or single-lens reflex



the famous, incomparable...

NIKON SP

...the world's only rangefinder-coupled 35mm camera with a built-in Universal Viewfinder System

The Nikon SP is undoubtedly the most advanced rangefinder-coupled 35mm camera of our time. Its built-in Universal Viewfinder System alone distinguishes it as the only rangefinder-coupled '35' to realize the full potential of lens interchangeability—enabling you to choose and use the 'right' lens for the picture, faster and with greater confidence.

The Universal Viewfinder System of the Nikon SP provides the correct viewing fields for six focal length lenses—28, 35, 50, 85, 105 and 135mm—the six focal lengths used most often in 35mm photography. There's no need for accessory finders—no time wasted slipping them on and off. There is nothing to interfere with the speed and ease of handling that is an integral part of the quality that Nikon users enjoy.

The ingenious grouping of the SP controls is another case in point. With thumb on the film transport, middle finger on the

focusing wheel and forefinger on the body release, it is possible to advance the film, focus the lens and trip the shutter with three fingers of one hand—in as little time as it takes to say: 'advance—focus—shoot'.

There is virtually no picture situation which the Nikon SP cannot meet. Scenes of impossible pictures made possible by the SP's speed and ease of handling are so numerous that the quality of the Nikon SP range from 21mm extreme wide-angle to 1000mm super-telephoto.

Nikon SP with 50mm Nikkor f/2, \$329.50 with f/1.4, \$375.

Nikon S-3, identical to the Nikon SP, but equipped with built-in Trifinder Finder for 35, 50 and 105mm lenses. With 50mm Nikkor f/2, \$269.50, with 50mm Nikkor f/1.4, \$315.00

...and these are the performance-tested features shared by the new

Nikon Automatic Reflex and the famous Nikon SP

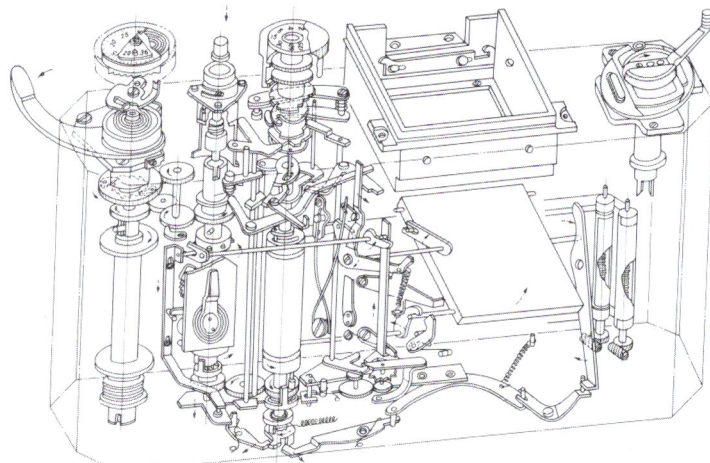
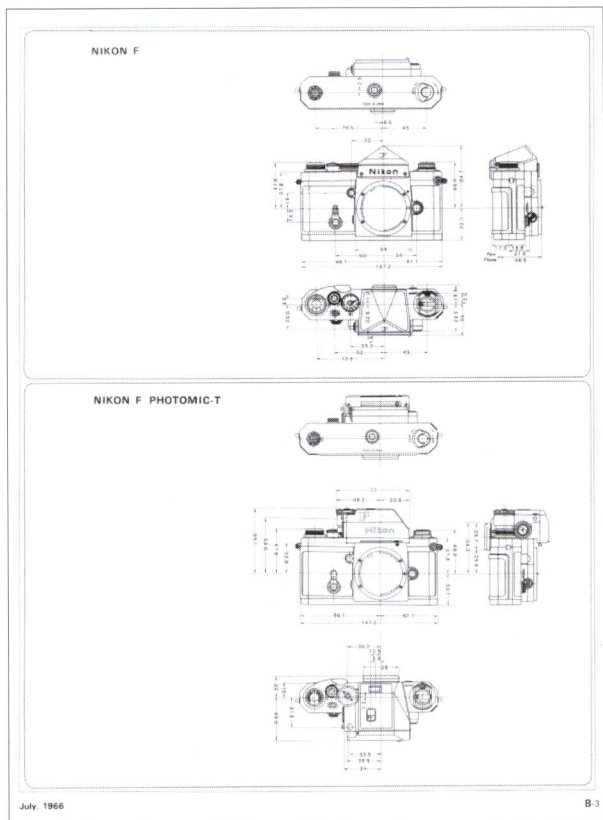
• single-stroke film transport • high-speed rewind crank • non-rotating speed selector dial • shutter speeds: 1 sec. to 1/1000th • automatic 'O' read exposure counter • color-coded flash sync control • calibrated self-timer • removable back • fast take-up spool... plus a wide assortment of wide-angle and telephoto Nikkor lenses—battery operated Electric Motor Drive—Coupled Exposure Meters—and an impressive array of other special purpose accessories.



NIKON INC., 111 Fifth Avenue, New York 3, N. Y. In Canada: Anglaphoto Ltd., Montreal

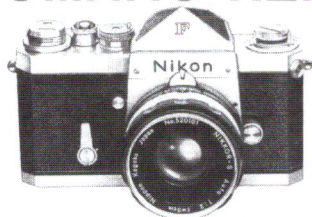
the finest '35' you can buy is a NIKON!

The 2-page ad spread above ran in the July 1959 issue of Popular Photography which would have hit the newsstands within days of the Nikon F going on sale June 1st! Note how the SP gets equal billing with the new SLR and that they were initially promoted as complimentary products. We all know how the Nikon F took over from the rangefinders within a year of its release. But that is hindsight. In mid 1959 no one knew just how quickly a well designed SLR would surpass an equally well designed RF. So they played both cards and promoted them as siblings. These detailed drawings below are from a publication given to dealers only. They date from about 1966.



On June 1st, 1959...Nikon assumes absolute leadership in 35mm camera design...the new

NIKON AUTOMATIC REFLEX



featuring:

- INSTANT-RETURN AUTOMATIC MIRROR • INSTANT-REOPEN AUTOMATIC DIAPHRAGM
- DEPTH-OF-FIELD PREVIEW CONTROL • INCOMPARABLE NIKKOR LENSES

to share top honors with the famous NIKON SP, the world's only rangefinder-coupled '35' with a built-in

UNIVERSAL VIEWFINDER SYSTEM



ON JUNE 1st, NIKON - who gave you the SP, the most advanced rangefinder-coupled '35' - will bring you the same precision and unmistakable quality in a single lens reflex... the Nikon Automatic Reflex.

Beyond question, the Nikon Automatic Reflex will be the finest camera of its type available anywhere. Even its appearance will be typically Nikon... trim, smart and distinguished. And, it will offer the professional or amateur user a combination of automatic features that far outstrips anything he may have seen before:

INSTANT-RETURN AUTOMATIC MIRROR - springs back to viewing position, automatically, in the wink of an eye.

INSTANT-REOPEN AUTOMATIC DIAPHRAGM - returns to full aperture the instant exposure is made.

The result is a new ease, a new accuracy in 35mm reflex photography. You hold the Automatic Reflex to your eye, and you see a brilliant image of your subject. You shoot.

Your subject is still visible in the finder with full brilliance and clarity. For the first time, you have discovered what 'fully automatic' really means.

And you know that what you see in the finder is precisely what registered on the film, because lens, mirror and finder-prism are aligned with the precision and accuracy that is a Nikon tradition.

DEPTH-OF-FIELD PREVIEW CONTROL permits you to view your subject at 'taking' aperture. At a touch of your finger, the lens stops down. Remove your finger, and the diaphragm springs open again. This remarkable feature is another Nikon exclusive!

Here are some of the precision features shared by the Nikon Automatic Reflex and the Nikon SP: • Single-stroke film transport • high-speed rewind crank • non-rotating speed selector dial • shutter speeds: 1 sec. to 1/1000 plus "T" and "B" • automatic "9" reset exposure counter • color coded flash sync control • calibrated dual purpose self-timer • removable back • fixed take-up spool... plus the widest assortment of accessory lenses available anywhere.

NIKON AUTOMATIC REFLEX with 50mm Nikkor f/2 lens, \$329.50

See the impressive array of Nikkor lenses and Nikon accessories on the reverse side.

This 2 page ad spread would have appeared in about April or May of 1959 to announce that the new Nikon F would go on sale on June 1st. They mention the date a total of three times in the ad. They really wanted to get the word out and I am sure the dealers appreciated it. Joe Ehrenreich always had a close relationship with his dealers. Having been one himself in the tough New York market, he knew their needs and wants perfectly. One salesman talking to another. In this ad is listed all the automatic features that may seem a bit mundane to us today, but in 1959 this was hot stuff. The instant return mirror, instant reopen diaphragm and depth of field preview seem to be the highlights. But keep in mind that this was the first time all three features appeared in one camera! But also note that they again are tying the F in with the SP. They still show the SP and mention it by name. Note the last paragraph where they list the features the two cameras share. Below is page 2 of the ad listing the accessories for the new Nikon F. Wait a minute...are those RF lenses? Yep! Not a reflex lens in sight! And even the motor shown is an S36, not an F36! Interesting times. The photo at lower left is reproduced from the original instruction manual for the Nikon F. Look closely and you will see that the serial number of the body is....6400001..the very first production Nikon F body! I wonder where it is?

NIKON ACCESSORIES

for the new Automatic Reflex extend its versatility to virtually every photographic application

NIKKOR LENSES

Acclaimed the world over for their unique combination of high speed, high resolution and color correction, Nikkor lenses are acknowledged today to be the finest in 35mm optics. They proved a major factor in the fast growing popularity of the Nikon cameras - right up to the current SP - and will contribute substantially to the desirability of the Automatic Reflex.

Nikkor lenses are now available in focal lengths ranging from 21mm extreme wide angle to 1000mm telephoto. The 35, 50, 105 and 135mm lenses for the Automatic Reflex will be equipped with Instant-Return Automatic Diaphragms.

A MAGNIFICENT NEW NIKKOR LENS 21MM f/4 EXTREME WIDE ANGLE

This new lens exhibits the same qualities that have made Nikkor a byword for excellence in the 35mm field... incredible resolution at all apertures, full color correction, and the highest speed of any lens of its kind.

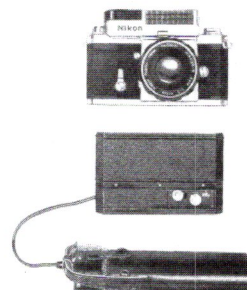


DIAPHRAGM-AND-SHUTTER COUPLED EXPOSURE METER

Alignment of pointer with indicator needles automatically sets both shutter and diaphragm for correct exposure. ASA settings from 6 to 4000. 400% light booster available as an accessory.

ELECTRIC MOTOR DRIVE

Battery operated, the Nikon Electric Motor Drive brings automatic firepower to the Nikon Automatic Reflex. Permits power-driven single exposures, bursts of 2 or 3 or more, or continuous firing through an entire 36-exposure load, at the rate of 4 exposures-per-second.



High-Speed Film Rewind Crank

Write for the name of your local Nikon Dealer.

NIKON INCORPORATED, 111 Fifth Avenue, New York 3, N. Y.

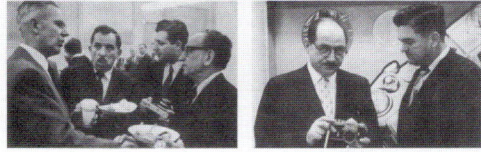
REMEMBER: Delivery date of the Nikon Automatic Reflex... June 1, 1959

SEEN AT THE NIKON OPEN HOUSE APRIL 8, 9

On April 8 and 9 Nikon played host to several hundred camera dealers from the New York region, to leading professional photographers, and to editors of major magazines and newspapers at Nikon headquarters in N. Y. The guests received personal demonstrations of all of the new products. These pictures, made with Nikon SP and 35mm Nikkor f/3.5 lens by available light, reflect the excitement of the occasion.



Left: A black momentarily interrupts John Joseph's demonstration to Frank Ward of Bert Gole Photo, Montclair, New Jersey. Lower left: "Big" Miller, N. Y. World Telegram, Morris Gordon, Western Electric, Len Spiegel, Modernizer, Sam Fark, N. Y. Times, pause for refreshment during discussion of Nikon Automatic Reflex. Below: John Howell of Bayliss Camera, Pasadena, Texas watches Nikon president Joe Ehrenreich put the new Automatic Reflex through its paces.



How Automatic is Automatic?

Time was when the word "automatic" meant that something worked by itself. And that's what an attractive prospect for all of us lay human beings that the word was picked up to describe all kinds of things for sale.

In the camera field the word was handled around until consumers undeniably came to suspect "automatic" as just another adjective like "sensational" or "super" or "terrific."

And when the 35mm single lens reflex made its bid for popularity these last couple of years, this old warhorse of a word took an even worse shellacking. Everything was automatic!

When it became obvious that first focusing a single-lens reflex wide open, then turning the diaphragm ring carefully to the correct aperture before pressing the shutter release, was laborious, slow, and impractical for 35mm shooting, lens designers came up with the "pre-set" lens (which was shortly advertised as an automatic pre-set lens). Which, of course, it wasn't.

When the stopping-down became a job for the camera itself to accomplish, the old word groaned and squealed as it was pushed to its limits. On some cameras, heavy pressure on the release held the diaphragm down to correct aperture for the exposure. On others, a spring-loaded lever stopped the lens down, but required the user to reopen the diaphragm manually. On some, winding the shutter reopened the diaphragm. Yes, you didn't have to turn the aperture ring just before taking the picture. (But, come now, these cameras weren't automatic either.)

Later, when image blackout became an evil which no camera designer could ignore any longer, reflex mirrors were designed to return directly after the exposure. But how? Why, simply by removing your finger from the shutter release, and if you did it fast enough you might see the expression on your model's face. Finger pressure on the shutter release pushed the mirror up, relieving the pressure allowed it to return to viewing position—usually after 2, 3, 4, or 5 bounces. Automatic? Not really.

As for previewing depth of field at taking aperture before the exposure, of course you could—if you didn't expect to see the image again at full aperture. Once you stopped it down manually it stayed stopped down, and you shot viewing a dim image which couldn't really be focused for best composition.

When we introduced the Nikon Automatic Reflex we cast around for words to describe its genuinely automatic design. Because, on the Nikon Automatic Reflex the diaphragm really closes down and reopens instantly and automatically, and the mirror moves up and then returns instantly and automatically—with no ifs or buts.

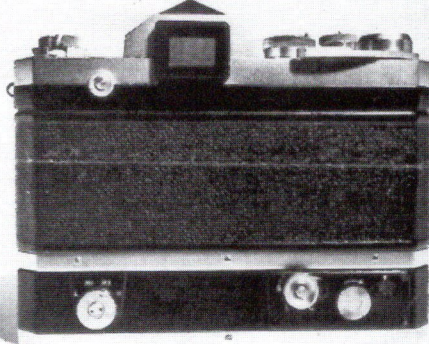
We were not successful—in finding a new word, that is. And so "automatic" is part of the name. Yet, there's justice in the choice. For the truly automatic design of this new Nikon can revive the original meaning of the word.

We hope so. But in the meantime tell your customer that when we named the Nikon an "Automatic Reflex," we mean automatic.

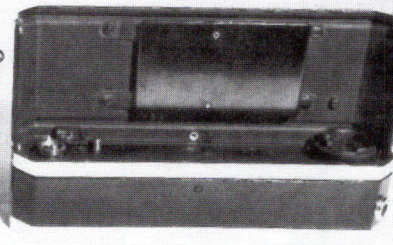
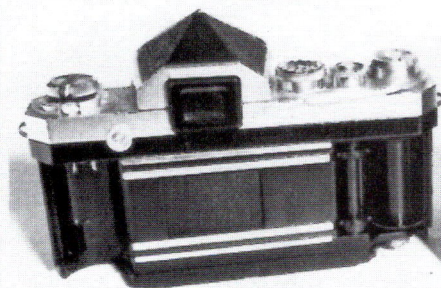
The 2 photos above are from the April/May 1959 issue of the 'Nikon Merchandiser', an in-house publication meant for dealers and employees. The lead story is of course about the F being shown at the Philly show the previous March 22nd. It is a typical PR type sheet. Note Joe in the lower right photo above. He was always a hands-on guy! What I find interesting is the reduced prices for the SP/S3 (upper left corner of front page). A \$40 reduction that prices the SP at \$329.50 with the f2. The exact same price as the new F with the f2! Below is the November 1959 issue. It debuts the F36 motor, which was shown in Philly as well. But look very closely at the photos. Not a piece of leather on the motor nor the familiar 'F' on the front. A 'naked F36'! With 2 chrome plates!

See better—electrically

That slogan's for picture shooting. Not lighting. It describes effectively the electric motor built into the base of a Nikon reflex back, clever, compact, adding to its height only one inch! One picture at a button touch. Or 36. Never miss an act, an expression, a mood. Never miss.



This is how it looks



NIKON merchandiser

published monthly by Nikon Incorporated, 111 Fifth Avenue, New York 3, N. Y. • ORegon 4-7970

VOLUME III, No. 2

APRIL, MAY 1959

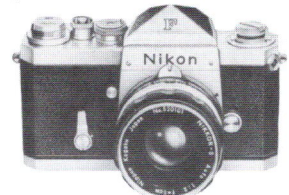
NIKON SP, S3 Prices Reduced

50mm f/1.4 and f/2 Also Reduced
A \$40 reduction in the list prices of the Nikon SP and S3 cameras has been announced. Also affected are the prices of all 50mm Nikkor f/1.4 and f/2 lenses.

The new schedule of prices, effective April 15, lists the Nikon SP with 50mm Nikkor f/2 lens at \$329.50. (List price of the Automatic Reflex with 50mm Auto-Nikkor f/2 is also \$329.50.) With f/1.4 Nikkor the SP lists at \$375. The Nikon S3 with 50mm Nikkor f/2 is \$269.50, and with f/1.4 lens \$315. The longtime Evo-

(Continued on page 4)

Incomparable New



NIKON AUTOMATIC REFLEX

Philadelphia, March 22—Nikon revealed its long awaited single-lens Automatic Reflex as a companion to its famed Nikon SP in this city today.

Industry observers noted that with the Nikon Automatic Reflex selling alongside the SP, Nikon becomes the first major quality 35mm camera manufacturer with top level precision cameras in both the rangefinder and eye-level reflex classes.

An instant reopen lens diaphragm and an instant return reflex mirror distinguish this new Nikon as a totally automatic single-lens reflex. Dealers inspecting the camera noted a striking characteristic: focus, compose the scene, trip the shutter of the Reflex and—except for a telltale click of the shutter—nothing appears to have happened. The image is still visible in the finder in all its brightness and clarity. What happens is that instantly after exposure the mirror automatically returns to viewing position and the diaphragm automatically reopens to full aperture.

Nikon lenses with instant reopen

automatic diaphragms for the Reflex will be available initially in focal lengths of 55, 50, 105, and 135mm. These will be designated Auto-Nikkor lenses.

A unique new exposure meter for the Reflex couples to the diaphragm and shutter, permitting the photographer extra flexibility and speed in setting the correct f/stop and shutter speed combination for any shot. The Reflex also takes the well-known Nikon Electric Motor Drive for rapid-fire single exposures, bursts of 2, 3, 4, or more, or continuous firing through an entire 36-exposure load at a variable rate of 2 1/2, 3 or 4 frames per second.

An unusual feature is a depth-of-field preview control which permits stopping the lens down to taking aperture. When the button is released, the diaphragm springs wide-open again.

Nikon's traditional concern for excellence and painstaking detail shows itself in the design of the eye-level

(Continued on page 4)

WERE YOU IN PHILADELPHIA? PICTURES PAGE 5

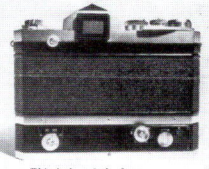
NIKON merchandiser

Nikon, 111 Fifth Ave., N. Y. 3 • More Information? Write Us, or Call ORegon 4-7970

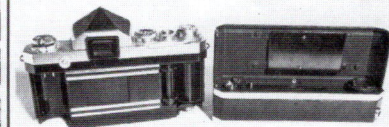
saying

See better—electrically

That slogan's for picture shooting. Not lighting. It describes effectively the electric motor built into the base of a Nikon reflex back, clever, compact, adding to its height only one inch! One picture at a button touch. Or 36. Never miss an act, an expression, a mood. Never miss.

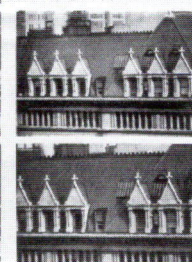


This is how it looks



and this is how it fits

last month . . .



Look at the top picture. See the controls on the base? They mean simplicity. They also mean the motor is vastly versatile. For instance, rotate the left dial to one of four positions, and you may make pictures two, two and half, or three, or even four per second! Turn the ring on the release button to "S" and each time you touch the button you make one picture, electrically, instantly. Turn ring to "C" and while you press (press the motor).

we are zooming

You remember we told you about our zoom lens, and showed you how it looks—less slightly longer than a 210mm telephoto, and weighing not much more. A lens which is seven-inches: 85, 105, 135, 150, 180, 200, 225mm. A lens sharp for black and white, sharp for color, and which DOESN'T DISTORT. Thought you'd like to see what it does.

NOVEMBER, 1959

Intermediate Adapter Tube For Telephoto Nikkor

Use of the adapter tube is necessary for fitting onto the Nikon F camera the 180, 250, 350 or 500mm telephoto

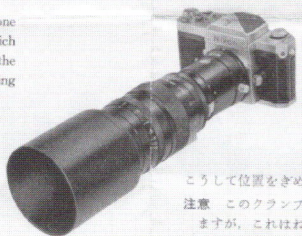
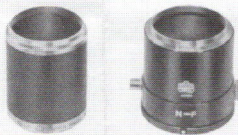
Nikkor lens which has primarily been designed for use in combination with the Nikon reflex housing and the Nikon S series camera.

Attach the adapter to the front of the Nikon F camera body in bayonet fashion and then the lens on to the adapter in the same way.

The adapter is available in two types, one with and the other without a device, which permits the camera body to turn on the optical axis, after the lock screw being loosened, and click into the horizontal or vertical position. Once the camera has been positioned, fasten the lock screw.

Caution!

Do not unscrew the small knob found on the tube in the opposite side of the lock screw referred to above.



NIPPON KOGAKU K. K.



日本光学工業株式会社

FA0301 (59, 10, 11) B

超望遠ニッコールレンズ用 N-F リング

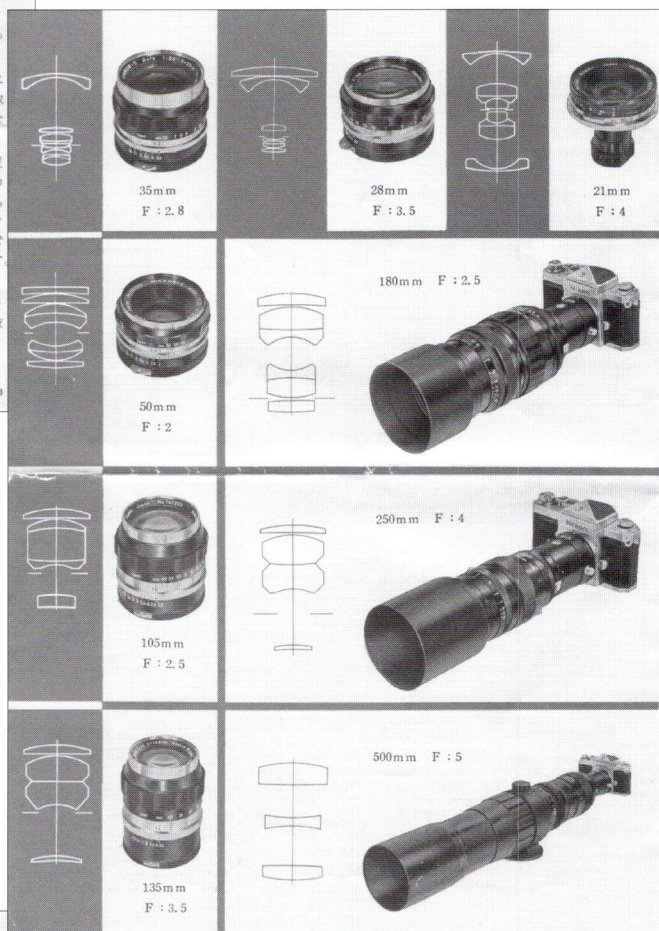
ニッコール超望遠レンズ 18cm, 25cm, 35cm, 50cm レンズは本来レフボックスによってニコン S2, S3, S4, SP カメラに取付けて用いるレンズですが、レフボックスの代りにこの N-F リングによってニコン F カメラに取付けて用いることができます。

この N-F リングには固定式のものと回転式のものとがあります。

いずれにしてもリングをカメラに取付け、そしてレンズをリングに取付けるにはベネットによって行ないます。

固定式のリングではカメラの位置は横になったままですが、回転式のリングでは、ローレットの切っであるクランプネジをゆるめればカメラは縦にも横にも回転し、クリックで正しく 90° とまってセットできます。こうして位置をきめたならば、クランプします。

注意 このクランプネジの反対側に突出したノブがありますが、これはねじって抜かないようにして下さい。抜くとスプリングが飛び出しておかしくなります。



Importer and factory produced literature can be very informative, or it can be very misleading! Especially the very early vintage material. You have just seen some EPOI ads run in the US photo magazines that are a bit less than accurate as to what is really available. But sometimes the early stuff is really interesting because it illustrates items long out of production, or interim products that were soon to be replaced, or esoteric accessories we just go crazy trying to find a half century later. Here are some early examples of interesting and informative literature. Above is the NF tube which was quite important early on because, as seen to the right, the RF teles from 180 to 500 were promoted heavily for use on the new F, giving it the largest lens system for any modern SLR at the time. Below some early accessories shown here, including the quite uncommon 135mm S~F Focusing Adapter, which is nearly impossible to find today! And look at that lens cap. Looks like the one on your SP normal doesn't it?



Photo: T. Tsuda

MISCELLANEOUS

ACCESSORIES FOR NIKON



Panorama Head

Used for taking panoramic 360° field picture consisting of a series of exactly spaced exposures. Click-stops at every picture angle for 35mm, 50mm, and 105mm lenses and colored indices for 28mm, 80mm and 135mm lenses.



Cable Release

Necessary for slow shutter releasing to avoid camera jer.

Film Cassette

Precision and robust film cassette for 36 exposure load.



Bubble Level

Ensuring perfect horizontal positioning of camera, this is a necessary device for panorama and architectural photography. To attach to the Nikon F, the Flash Unit Coupler is needed.



Focusing Adapter

Nikkor 135mm F: 3.5 in Nikon S or Leica mount comes in use on the Nikon F by means of this adapter.



Nikon Compartment Cases

Made of selected cowhide, velveteen lined, with shoulder strap.
Model FB3 - Gadget bag for camera, interchangeable lenses and accessories.
Model FB4 - Gadget bag for camera, Motor Drive, interchangeable lenses and accessories.
Model FB1 - Fitted case for camera, BC3 flash and accessories.



Viewfinder Correction Lenses

Slipped over the rear peep side of the eye-level finder to accommodate near or far sighted eye of the user. Supplied for +0.5, +1, +2, +3 and -3 dptr.



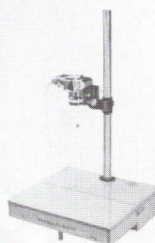
Lens Hoods

The following types are available for Nikkor lenses in Nikon F mount.
32mm Screw-in for 21mm F: 4.
Screw-in for 28mm F: 3.5.
Screw-in for 35mm F: 1.8.
Snap-on for 50mm F: 2.
Snap-on for 58mm F: 1.4.
Snap-on for 105mm F: 2.5 or 135mm F: 3.
34.5mm Snap-on for 180mm F: 4.



Repro Kit Model PF

Versatile outfit for flat copies and for photographing small objects. Fitted carrying case serves as a copy table. Plain base board and table clamp for the upright post are also available.



Lens Front Cap

Snap-on type. 32mm. Commonly used on the Nikkor lenses from 21mm to 135mm.



Camera Body Cap

To protect the interior of the camera when the lens is removed.

Eveready Leather Cases

Hard, semi-hard and soft cases for Nikon F are available.



6 THE **IF** --SPOT! 'MIKAMI' RAPIDWINDER BASEPLATE

Late one evening, while sitting in my armchair without a care in the world and a large glass of brandy in my hand reflecting on the day, the silence was broken by my phone ringing. Who is calling me at this time of night? On the line was someone talking in broken English about something that fits on the base of a Nikon F camera but was not made by Nikon. He sounded like the Swedish chef from the Muppets show. We both decided it would be better if he sent me a few faxes, as hand signals, and his English, did not work very well over the phone.

He said he would have to drive to his brother-in-law's house in the next village who was the proud owner of a fax machine. I was just about to retire when my fax started to print out a black toilet roll. I could just make out the outline of a Nikon F with a strange base. We talked on the phone for some time but it is hard work haggling with somebody who doesn't speak your language. A fair amount of money eventually changed hands and I was the proud owner of a Nikon F with a rapid wind lever base!

Leica have been producing rapid wind lever bases for their cameras for decades. Their later

versions are known as the Leicavit ('vit' from 'vitessa' is a French abbreviation for 'speed transport' or 'rapid'). Canon have also made such bases, first as add-ons for their bottom loading models then later as built-ins on their back loaders such as the models V & VI. Their Canonflex was the first single lens reflex to have a rapid wind lever on its base. But we are not interested in Canon, and the only reason I mention it is because Tony Hurst has a few for sale. So we will move on.

I have been asking all the major collectors in the NHS and have found only 5 who have seen or had a chance to buy one of these lovely toys in the last 25 years.

- Uli Koch used my model to illustrate it in his book on the Nikon F

PETER LOWNDS & TONY HURST

- Tony Hurst had a chance to buy one in England but was outbid on it.
- Mike Otto had one and sold it to Japan about 5 years ago
- Robert Rotoloni saw one on a table at one of the Chicago shows 25 years ago but someone beat him to it
- And my set came from Sweden about 13 years ago.

I saw one on display in Tokyo in the maker's box but not for sale. Only for looking at through glass! You would think that a place like the JCII Museum in Tokyo would have one on display but they don't.



You are all lucky because I was given a fine screw driver set recently so we are now able to take the rapid wind base to bits...well not to bits, but at least remove the cover and take a look inside.

My first impression was this item was made in a garden shed....or in someone's basement! To say that it's agricultural is an understatement. Corners filed down, large screws used. It would not have surprised me if I found 'International Harvester' stamped on some of the larger pieces. My reasoning for thinking it was shed built is the rapid wind base is in near mint condition

yet the F camera back looks as if its been around the block a few times and then repainted...with a 2 inch brush!

But the fantastic thing about this winder is that it works, and works very well. To remove it from the camera body is very simple and a great improvement on the F36 motor connection. Engraved are the words 'Open & Close' and by turning a large chrome dial through 180 degrees the back can be easily removed. We can now see how the trigger base is put together and how it works. Nowhere on the unit is there a serial number or model name.

To convert the linear motion to a rotary one, the designer has taken the simplest route. He used a strong watch spring connected to a second chain about 12cm long. There is a guide



rail holding the trigger in place. I have experimented with the speed that it could be fired. The best I got was 28 frames in 10 seconds, or 2.8 frames per second. Not bad!

To get the trigger out of the base you need only to lightly push down and it pops up from its stored position. The chrome trigger is basic in construction being folded from one piece of metal. It does all that is required of it.

Not much is known about the Mikami company of Tokyo. I can't even find out if it is still alive and producing for the Japanese photo industry. What I do know is that they also made for the Nikon F a 4x5 inch plate back film holder so that an image could be made by using a 35mm camera. Exposure had to be increased by 6 stops so it was as useful as a chocolate teapot. They went on to make some of the 'Speed Magny' Polaroid backs for the Nikon F and F2.

After talking to Rotoloni-san we came to the conclusion that these were most likely prototypes made in a very small batch and sent to various importers around the world to see if there was a market for a rapid wind base for the F. It could be useful in colder climates where batteries would fail in the F36 motors or even where users wanted speed but not the expense or weight of the Nikon motors. Since only 5 have shown up so far we must conclude that it was not the success that Mikami were looking for. Had this project gone well my rapid wind base would only be worth small change instead of being a valuable item in my collection. Thanks Mikami!

As you can see from these photos, the 'MIKAMI' Rapid Winder Baseplate is an elegant design in that it faithfully follows the contours of the Nikon F body, much like the F36 motor does. Because of this it appears to be an integral part of the 'F' when it is mounted. Its open/close feature is actually an improvement over the F36 design. However, this 'elegance' is, for the most part, only skin deep, as inside the 'MIKAMI' looks nearly prototypical in construction and fit and finish.

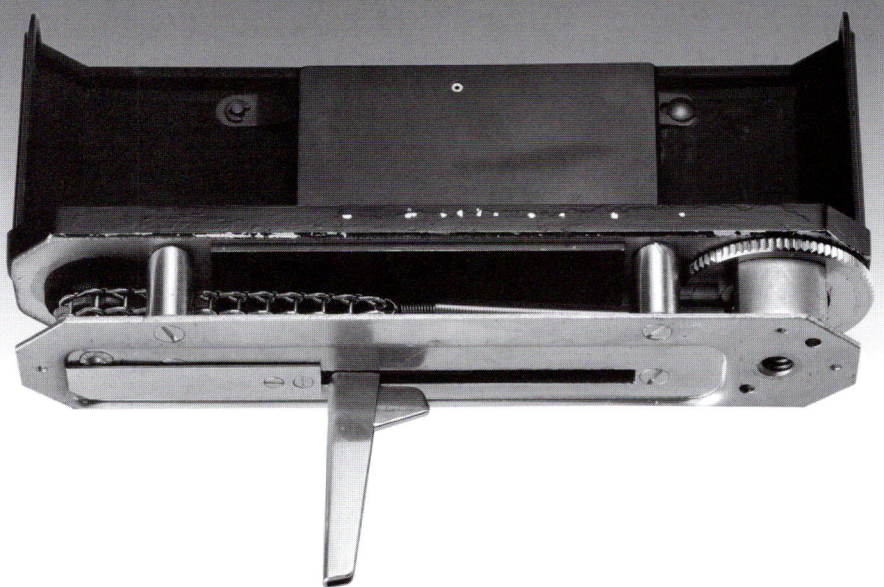


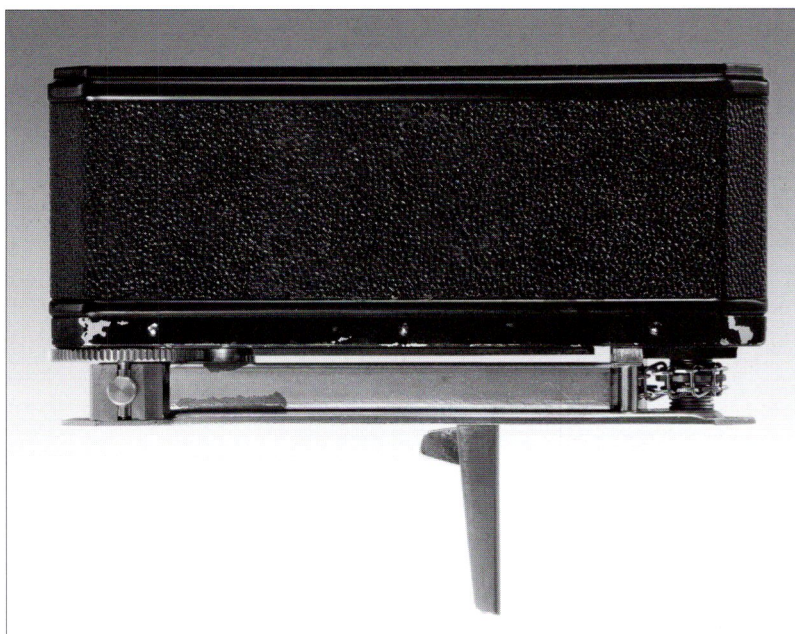
**ALL
PHOTOS BY
TONY
HURST**



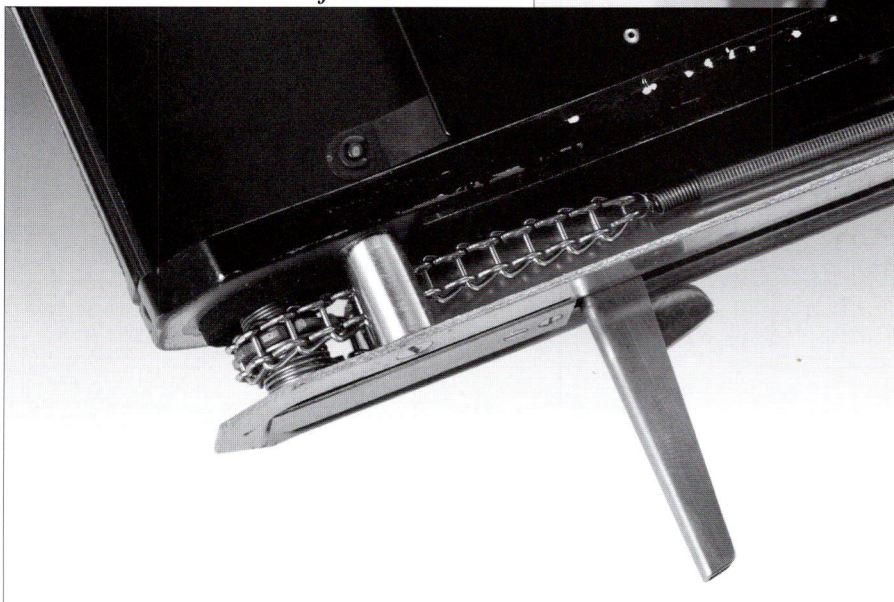
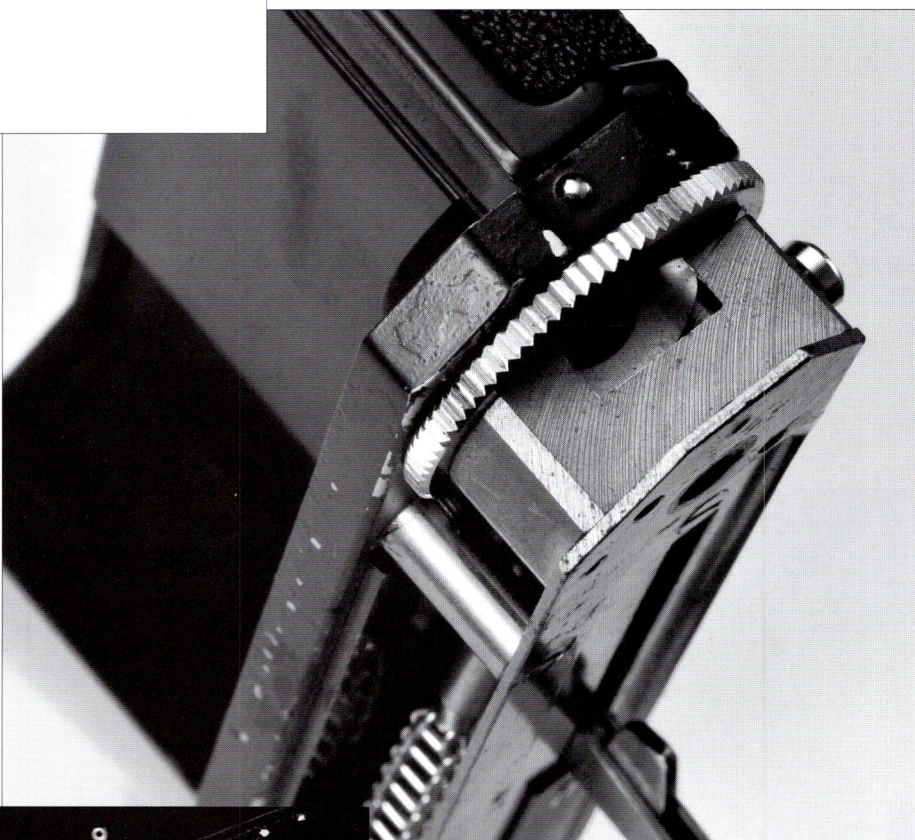


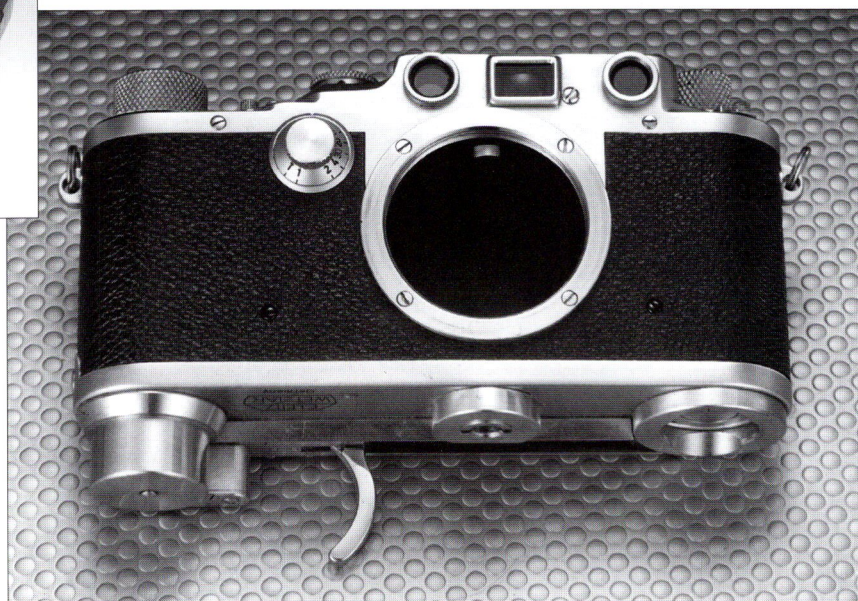
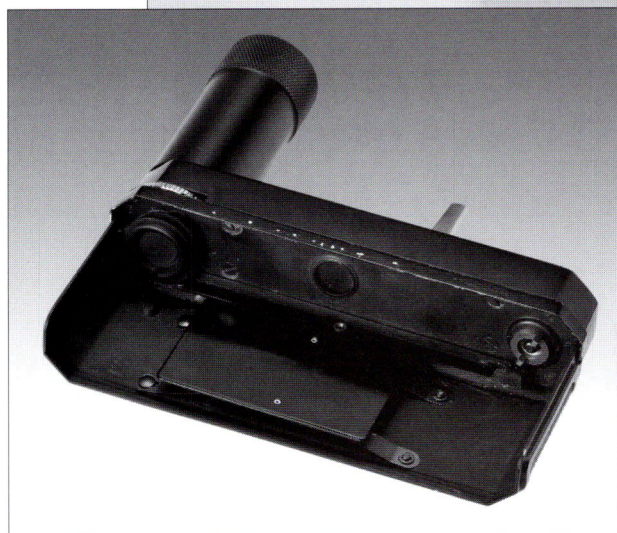
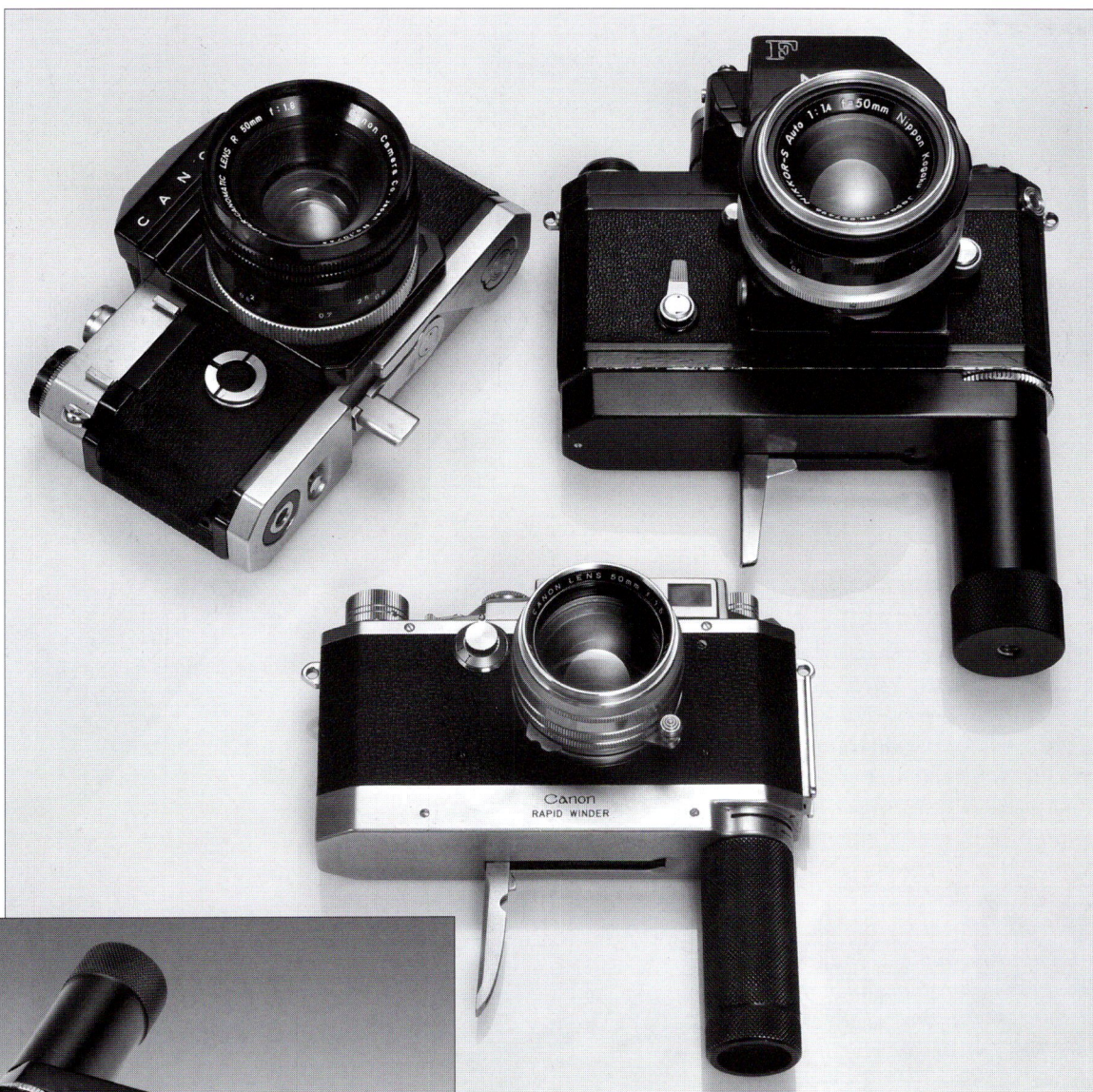
Trigger operated rapid winders go way back. Leica have been producing them since the thirties for their screw mount series which only had knob wind. However, even after the arrival of the 'M' series with its rapid wind lever, Leitz continued to produce a baseplate winder to this very day. Nippon Kogaku had a trigger winder on the drawing boards for the Nikon M/S series as at least one drawing still exists. Why they never made it we do not know (but I wish they had!). With the arrival of the S2 and its rapid wind lever (although the first prototypes still had knob wind!) N-K rightfully decided the trigger winder was redundant. Besides, they would eventually debut the S36 motor for the S2 and a hand powered trigger just did not fit their plans. Which is why they never made one for the 'F' either. N-K's removable back design made such a device simple. Look at these photos. The 'MIKAMI' is not complicated at all.





Maybe we can still use the word 'elegant' when discussing the 'MIKAMI' winder if we limit it to its simplicity in addition to its external contours. But that is about as far as we can go. Look at these close up photos. A very simple design without a lot of parts and gears. Just a neat little chain and spring mechanism that, as Peter says, works perfectly. I guess a Volkswagen will still get you from point A to B, even if the ride isn't as inspiring as one in a Mercedes. That sums up the 'MIKAMI'. A simple design that does its job without any frills. Obviously the basic design has been thought through. However, look at the machine marks and rough finish evident in the photo at right. Is this part of a prototype batch? Why no serial number or model name? Would a production version have been better finished? Maybe, although the design may not have been improved beyond this point. I have regretted not getting the one I saw decades ago. It was like new in its box! Such is life.





Top photo..Canon made a rapid winder for their bottom loading series which was a very nice unit (I have owned a few). Beautifully made, it matched the body perfectly and was well balanced. With the arrival of their back loaders (Model V on) they built it into some of the better models. Their early SLRs also came with trigger winders but they eventually abandoned the idea. Right..the early Leitz version made for their SM series. A more open design than Canon's or their own "Leicavit" made for the later 'M' series. Above...The 'MIKAMI' off camera. A very neat and tidy design.

DID YOU KNOW? LORE & ANECDOTES ABOUT THE 'F'..BY PETER LOWNDS

Masahiko Fuketa, who designed everything from the Nikon One through the Nikon F, was at our NHS-Con5 in Tokyo in 1996. We were greatly honored by his presence. I asked him if it was true that the 'F' in Nikon F stood for 'Fuketa'. He just smiled and said no. But his old friend standing next to him, Fukuoka-san, nodded his head and said yes. The Japanese are famous for not wanting to be the center of attention. Fuketa-san...ever the polite gentleman.

The planned introduction of the Nikon F was to have been at the same time as the SP! It was delayed for some technical reasons, but Joe Ehrenreich had a part in it as well. He did not like the looks of the F! He felt the prism had too sharp a point to it! How wrong he was. He also wanted 100% of the production capacity used for the SP. His argument was that he could sell the rangefinder cameras. Weren't Leica and Contax selling their rangefinders quite well? Thank goodness the powers that be knew better.

Behind his back the people at NK had a nickname for Joe. They called him 'typhoon-san'. He would arrive in Tokyo like a force-10 gale after a 22-hour flight from the States and start meetings right away. He would ask questions about new products and also had drawings of his ideas as well as requests from dealers and pros back home, some rather strange.

I remember talking to a camera dealer in Los Angeles who had been one of the thousands invited to the introduction of the Nikon F at the Philadelphia show. Nikon had a large booth with a Nikon F and motor mounted with a lighted counter. At the opening of the show the motorized F was switched on and the counter started. At the end of the show it was displaying over 500,000 exposures! It never stopped day and night for 6 days. If that's not a recommendation to go out and buy an F then I don't know what is.

How many parts in an F? I have spent the last few weeks looking through old and interesting documentation about the Nikon F. I found some old parts and assembly books dated March 5, 1960. I spent two hours counting the parts listed, including screws and rivets. A Nikon F with straight prism has a total of 967 parts. It was very interesting as they talk about parts 2399 and 2400, which is the 'CLOTH SHUTTER', and also that parts 2397 are the bands that hold the curtains in place and they are made of pure silk! And that part 2003B is 6400001, the left top cover! Be truthful. Who wouldn't give their wife's right arm to have that in the collection?

Werner von Braun, the famous German rocket scientist, was once asked 'would he like to go into space?' 'No...not on a rocket that's made from parts that are purchased from the lowest bidder!' Such is the way things are done on such projects. But a way was found around this problem when it came time to acquire photographic equipment. NASA wanted to use Nikons on missions into space. The camera, lenses and also microscopes. NASA and Nikon worked very closely on the project and in the end NASA had their contracts department draw up the final document, which ran to 72 pages. On the bottom of the very last page was a sentence that, in reality, cancelled out all other competition. It read:

"The supplier of the 35mm cameras and lenses should have at least 10 years experience producing and using a single lens reflex camera with an interchangeable electric motor drive."

Well, there was only one such camera in all the universe at that time.....the NIKON F!

The Nikon F has played a role, sometime a leading one, in some famous motion pictures over the years. Do you remember...

'THE BRIDGES OF MADISON COUNTY' (with Clint Eastwood our intrepid Nikon user)

'THE KILLING FIELDS'

'APOCALYPSE NOW' (Who can forget crazy Dennis Hopper and all those Fs around his neck?)

'GOLDFINGER'

'BLOW UP' (Probably the most exposure Nikon ever got on the motion picture screen. And David Hemmings seemed to know what he was doing.)

(There was another movie with Nick Nolte and Gene Hackman set in S. America, but I think he used the F2 in that one. RJR)

Nikon has done countless ads over the years and that could be an article onto itself, but two stand out for me. One was of a black Nikon F that had fallen out of an airplane at 12,000 feet and landed in frozen snow. The camera was found 2 years later and returned to its original owner, non the worse for its ordeal.

Nikon worked very closely with quite a few large press organizations. One that springs to mind is Time-Life. I remember one advertisement, a full pager with 4 or 5 Nikon Fs burnt to a cinder, a charred smoldering mass with a lens just a blob of melted glass. And Time-Life making the point of what they sometimes do when trying to get the story. They wanted to get a few pictures of the launch of an Apollo mission to the moon and set their remote cameras a little too close to the rocket. On subsequent missions they moved further back and used longer lenses. Very sensible. It became a challenge to Nikon's ad department to show how durable the Nikon F was.

I wish we were able to produce a few of the famous people seen using the Nikon F. When the Beatles first arrived in New York in 1964, Paul McCartney stepped off the Pan-Am Boeing 707 with a large camera bag over his shoulder and a black Nikon F around his neck. On their first, and only, trip to the Netherlands, all four Beatles had a Nikon F around their neck as they went on a tour of Amsterdam on one of the canal boats. As far as we know the fab four did not stop off in the red light district!

(Other famous people known to use the Nikon F that I can remember are: Ringo Starr, Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Richard Nixon, Sammy Davis, Jr., and Yul Brynner. I am sure there are others. RJR)

The war in Vietnam played a major part in the reputation of the Nikon F. It was the first war shot in color and the first shot almost exclusively in 35mm. Photojournalists arrived in Saigon in the 100s, most armed only with 3 or 4 Nikon Fs, a bag full of film and one change of underwear. Many had their lives saved by an F stopping a bullet. They were in the front lines constantly under attack and quite often the gear was left behind in a bucket of water or in a stream after a major battle wrapped only in a plastic bag sealed with a rubber band. They would go back themselves, or have a local go to where the battle had been and collect the gear, still dry and working. The Nikon F had a reputation for working under whatever the conditions.

The Nikon F shares a birthday with the first professional Nikon digital camera, the D1 of 1999. I don't think the digital cameras will ever have the same prominence and feel that the Nikon F still has after 50 years. Happy birthday, Nikon F. Thank you for all the pleasure and service you have given.

50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE NIKON 'F' SYSTEM...BY ULI KOCH

In March 1959, Nippon Kogaku offered the world the new and unique Nikon F camera, their first SLR. After the development of the Nikon S Rangefinder series to an absolute high point with the SP, the time was ripe to create an even more practical camera for their prospective clients, the photo reporters and other professional photographers, as well as dedicated amateurs.

One competitor in Japan had been offering SLR cameras for years, the Asahiflex. In late 1957 this camera had several of its flaws corrected and was updated to the more practical Asahi Pentax S model. One of the main high-class competitors in Germany, Zeiss, had the Contaflex SLR on sale since 1953, also with several disadvantages for professional users. In late 1958/early 1959 Zeiss launched the Contarex (Bullseye) SLR camera. Kodak had the Retina Reflex since 1957 & both the first Canonflex & Minolta SLR, the SR-1, were also released in 1959.

NK decided to eliminate all, or most, of the shortcomings of the other SLRs on the market. There was some development required, but it was not an overly ambitious project, as most of the solutions were already state-of-the-art in the late 1950s. The goal of NK was to use all the latest and best innovations in one camera without violating any patents. Therefore, the engineers at NK had to use all their abilities and all their market know-how to create a practical SLR for the professional photographer. Now, what were the features and improvements the new Nikon SLR should possess? Let's look at some of the answers, which can be found in one of the first Nikon F (USA) brochures:

- Instant-return mirror
- Instant-reopen diaphragm
- Instant-action preview control
- Full coupling of an automatic exposure meter

Also NK advertised in the same brochure: "The new Nikon Automatic Reflex Model F shares in this heritage of excellence—standing head-and-shoulders above any other SLR—in demonstrable features, performance and quality."

Other features announced in this brochure were:

- Bayonet lens mount
- Non-rotating shutter speed dial
- Single-stroke film advance lever
- Fastest & most accurate shutter curtain action using Titanium foil
- Fixed take-up spool
- Calibrated dual-purpose self-timer

- High-speed film rewind crank
- Exposure counter with automatic '0' reset
- ASA film reminder
- Completely removable back

Not only was it a unique camera, NK also offered the broadest variety of lenses and accessories produced for an SLR camera to that date. The genius of the Nikon engineers was that they combined the current state-of-the-art innovations in one camera while having the foresight to anticipate the needs of the market well into the following decade, needs that were not known at its introduction. That's real innovation. It was the possibility to use the camera as part of an ever growing and evolving modular system. Here are the main basic reasons for the success of the Nikon F as a modular camera.

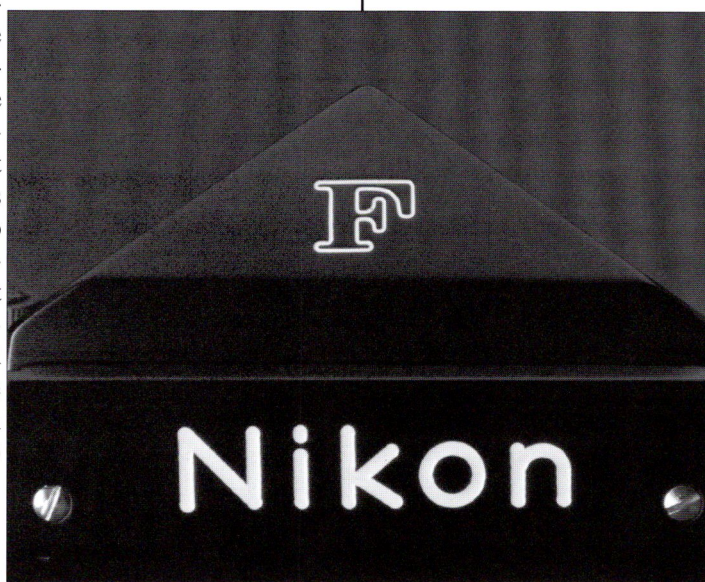
- 1) The interchangeable finder system allowed the owner to use different finders as they were developed for different photographic situations. Perhaps the NK engineers

were not aware of the huge advantages this finder system would allow. The camera was able to keep up with the developments in exposure metering technology including TTL measurements. This was a very important advantage for the F as the costs of development were only for the exposure system and not the body as a whole and on the other hand the users saved a lot of money buying a new finder instead of a new camera.

2) With the interchangeable screens the professional was able to use the best screen for their special application/lens. Starting with 3 screens in 1959, the system grew

to 21 varieties by the early 1970s. Different in effect, they were adjusted for different lenses to allow optimum focus and brightness. Unlike others brands the Nikon F screen shows 100% of the exact image that will reach the film.

- 3) The shoe under the rewind lever was not so important, but it was used to support flash units and separate optical finders. The method for mounting the finders was not robust enough to also allow for shoe mounted accessories.
- 4) Some users wondered where do you put the camera back when changing film, but it was more comfortable than loading a Leica which was often used by the same pros.



This removable back allowed for the easy addition of a motor drive, something no one else offered for an SLR at that time. With the easy change of an inner baseplate and a small modification (done by an authorized repair shop) the motor drive was adjusted to the camera. Both didn't cost the user much money (the US price was \$20!). NK offered a slightly modified S36 that became the F36 for the Nikon F and later an F250 allowing 250 shots without changing film was also available. For both motors many accessories were offered (standard battery pack, cordless Powerpack, cassettes, pistol grips, cables, wireless controls, film loader, etc). Other companies also made accessories such as the JPI and TPI Remopacks and the Mikami Speed Magny Polaroid backs.

- 5) One other genius part was that 'hole' on the front of the camera. It is only a 'hole', but what it allowed you to do! That is the Nikon F bayonet lens mount. The NK engineers decided not to use the popular M42 screw mount but created their own bayonet mount which is nearly unchanged to this day. All Nikon users are grateful to NK to be able to use older lenses (perhaps not with every function) and not like other manufacturers who changed their mounts almost as often as they developed new cameras. This was an important feature on the road to success for the Nikon F. It allowed for the use of the broad variety of Nikkor lenses ultimately ranging from the 6mm Fisheye to 2000mm Mirror optic. Secondly, the mount made possible a large number of accessories for close-up, copying, and microscopic work.

The camera itself was announced and shown at the Philadelphia 'Master Photo Dealers & Finishers Association' show in March 1959. Sales in the US started on June first. Most of the nearly 865,000 Nikon F cameras were standard production in chrome or black, with or without the motor drive modification. Only a very small number of Nikon F cameras differed from the norm such as the 'Hand Fundus Model', the 7 & 9FPS 'High Speeds', and the 'NASA' cameras. Several cameras were modified by third parties for special purposes such as the 'Questar' telescope models and the 'High Precision' bodies. Then there were the US Navy modified cameras for air-to-air photography. All these cameras had many parts in common and all had the landmark Titanium shutter curtains. All that is save for a very few of the earliest Nikon F bodies that were produced with cloth

shutters, usually within the first 100 made. No official information from the Nikon Corporation is available to explain this, as our friend, Mikio Itoh from Nikon Archives, was not able to locate any mention about these first cloth shuttered Nikon Fs. The first camera was 6400001, which is pictured in several official brochures. Other cloth cameras that are known at this time include; 6400008, 6400012, 6400019, 6400027, 6400031, 6400037, 6400050, 6400064, 6400072 and 6400086.

There are three main questions about this rare variation.

- 1) Why do cloth shutters exist?
- 2) When were they produced?
- 3) How many were produced?

My assumptions and shared knowledge with other collector are:

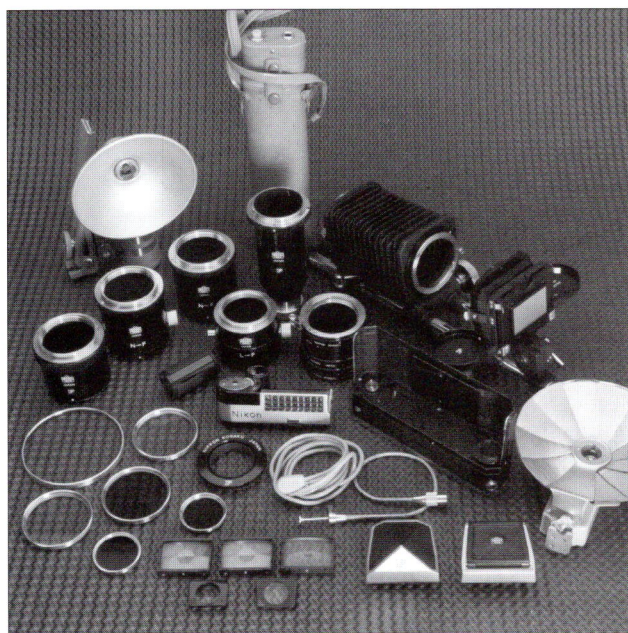
- 1) The most conclusive answer is that NK wanted their new camera to be tested by a few select users, but the new titanium foil was not available at that time, or it was available but for technical reasons it wasn't ready. Therefore, NK decided to manufacture a small trial run and used the up-to-date cloth shutter from the Nikon SP.
- 2) If the first assumption is correct, then NK produced these cloth Nikon Fs before the official start of serial production with a chronological margin of several months for testing this trial batch. The engineers at NK needed feedback from the users and needed time to make any changes to these trial cameras before starting full production. Therefore, these cameras should have been produced in early 1959 or, possibly, very late in 1958.
- 3) The cloth shuttered camera with the highest serial number known to date is 6400086, and the earliest verified titanium body is 6400141. (Camera 6400074 has a titanium shutter but seems to have been modified at a later date.) A Japanese collector told me that NK produced the first 20 Nikon F cameras for internal use as a trial. Then the first official batch of 100 cameras was produced with this cloth shutter. The second batch and all succeeding bodies had the new titanium foil curtains.

These first Nikon F cameras were the basis of the greatest milestone in the history of NK. They had more milestones before and after, but the genius of the Nikon F system was the most outstanding milestone. The new D3/D700 digital cameras may be another equally outstanding highpoint in NK's history.

In a brochure 'Macro Photography with the Nikon F', the author, Jerome Brown, stated (about 1967): "The Nikon F camera and its extensive array of accessories and lenses provides the most versatile system ever brought to 35mm photography".

It's the late fall of 1959 and you have decided you want to own the just released Nikon F system! You have the money and the connections to help you obtain what you want even though most of it is in very short supply! It's selling like hotcakes and many items are backordered, but you manage to get all the major items currently available. More will come, but you have your basic outfit and you are ready to begin shooting with the first really 'usable' SLR with all the right features and the quality to go with them. You have entered the Nikon F era, which will quickly become the best and most awesome 35mm SLR system ever made!

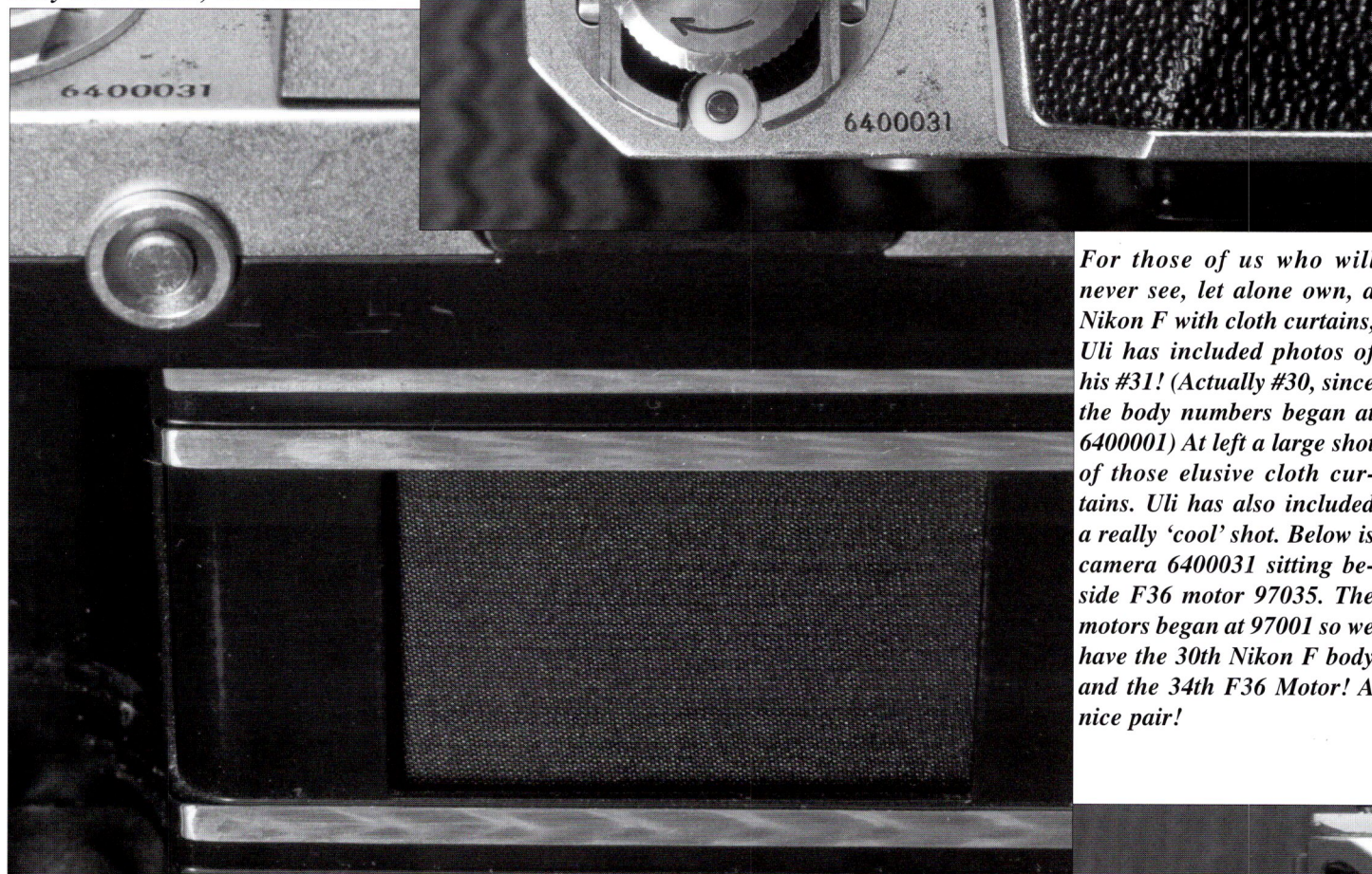




The 4 photos above are perfect examples of what was available 'in the beginning'. Most of what you see here is from the early sixties and would evolve with time. But even this early you had the most lenses of any concurrent SLR system to say nothing of finders, close-up gear, meters, filters and, of course, the only viable motor drive system in the world! A little later came special models like the High Speeds (below, left) and military models like the KS-80A (right). What you see here would grow exponentially over time!

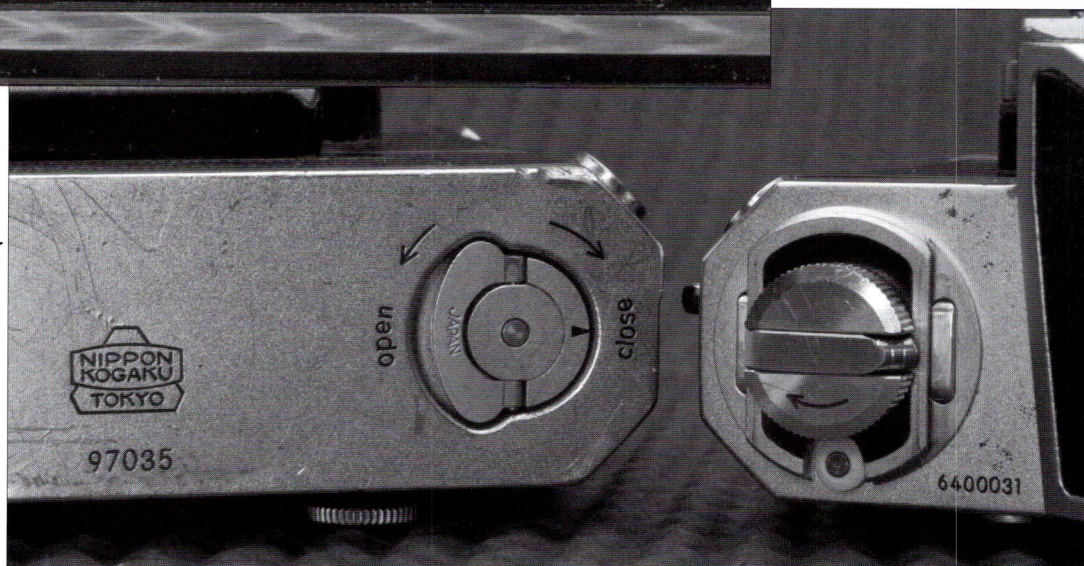


Uli speaks of the very early cameras that were released with the same cloth curtains found in the concurrent Nikon SP shutter. Even though 'all' Nikon F literature speaks of the ground breaking Titanium curtains as one of the most advanced features of the new "F", approximately the first 100 bodies left the factory with cloth. The exact reason is not known, but I lean towards the Titanium curtains not being quite ready when these 'preproduction' or 'test' cameras were made. So as not to delay their release, cloth was used.



For those of us who will never see, let alone own, a Nikon F with cloth curtains, Uli has included photos of his #31! (Actually #30, since the body numbers began at 6400001) At left a large shot of those elusive cloth curtains. Uli has also included a really 'cool' shot. Below is camera 6400031 sitting beside F36 motor 97035. The motors began at 97001 so we have the 30th Nikon F body and the 34th F36 Motor! A nice pair!

**ALL
PHOTOS BY
ULI
KOCH**



NHS-CON12--WILL BE IN BRUGES, BELGIUM MAY 10~16, 2010

NHS-Con12 co-chairmen, Christophe Sap and Hans Ploegmakers, have sent me the latest news for this convention info page. As you can see, the dates have been set and a preliminary itinerary is already in the works. Those of you who attended the meeting in Vienna will remember that Hans put together a program that covered over 5 days of activities. He and Chris plan on doing a similar series of events this time around. They have already begun the process. Here is what Chris and Hans have sent me as of March 1st.

Bruges is one of the most beautiful cities in Europe. The entire city center has been declared an Historical Site and is on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Romantic canals surround the center of the city and you can easily imagine yourself back in medieval times. The wealth of museums is as striking as this city's stirring history, and all are within walking distance.

So we have decided to organize the next NHS convention in Bruges. And we have to begin making plans now for the next 13 or so months will go by very quickly. Our plans will cover more than one or two days for we want to surprise you with a complete multi-day and multi-event meeting. Our program will be full of activities, history and fabulous picture possibilities. Current plans include:

- **Monday May 10th...begin arriving**
- **Tuesday May 11th...day trip to the city of Ghent, Belgium**
- **Wednesday May 12th...day trip to the Belgian capitol, Brussels, including the Atomium building**
- **Thursday May 13th...a day in Bruges for the annual 'Holy Blood Procession', which is an UNESCO World Heritage event that draws thousands of people every year!**
- **Friday May 14th...day trip to Ypres, the WWI battlefield where we will visit their special Museum (I have been there..fabulous..RJR). Ypres is known as the**

'Trenches of Death', the heart of the First World War. A sad but historical place that should never be forgotten. We plan to be there for the daily 'Last Post Ceremony' at 8PM

- **Saturday May 15th...Convention Day! And a special program for the ladies is also planned.**

You can come in on whatever day that will fit your schedule but we do hope you can make them all. Therefore, it is time to start making your plans and try to keep the entire week free.

Because of the 'Procession' on Thursday, there will be a great lack of hotel rooms in Bruges. So we have already decided to make reservations in one of the hotels in the center of town, and it is never too early to do this. We will lock the hotel in shortly but we have one problem. We need to have a general idea of how many rooms to reserve and how many will stay the entire week.

Please let us know as soon as possible if you plan to attend, or think you willeven maybe...!

This is important or we run the risk of not having enough rooms for all our members during this very busy week in Bruges. Please contact us at the addresses that follow.

If you would want a less expensive hotel a 15 minute or so walk from the convention hotel, please let us know.



If you have questions about anything...contact us!!

Christophe Sap
Hans Ploegmakers
Robert Rotoloni

csap@skynet.be
ploegmakers@talensfoto.nl
rotoloni@msn.com
r.rotoloni@sbcglobal.net

LET US KNOW AS SOON AS YOU CAN! THANK YOU

NEW INFORMATION ON THE 'DISCOVERY' OF THE NIKON....

BY MICHAEL WESCOTT LODER

A six-page story in the November 2008 Smithsonian, adds more color and dimension to the story of the 'discovery' of the Nikkors and Nikon in June 1950. The story of Life's David Douglas Duncan first meeting and testing Nikkor lenses is well known. It is so well known that several different versions of the story exist, differing in their details, although none deny the essential point that Duncan and Horace Bristol were so impressed with the Japanese lenses that they replaced their German normal and telephoto optics with Nikkors, then proceeded to use them to cover the Korean War when it erupted days later. But in the previously published stories, no mention was ever made of John Rich, a correspondent with the International News Service who was stationed in Tokyo while these events were going on. His role in the discovery was minor, but the images he later shot with his own Nikon M now constitute the largest collection of color pictures of the Korean War that exist. Check out pages 62-67 of the November Smithsonian, or go to their site on the web, which includes all the pictures reproduced in the magazine, plus several more.

After reading the story, I contacted Rich directly and spoke to him at length via phone at his home in Cape Elizabeth, Maine. He added more details to the story than the Smithsonian article gave and revealed a life filled with travel and adventure.

Rich is a native of Maine and attended Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine, graduating with a degree in French. He got a job working for an Augusta, Maine, newspaper before moving to the Portland Herald. When the US got into WWII, he was exempted from the draft because he was the sole support for his father. Nevertheless, he was determined to volunteer and figured that if he could gain a commission, he would still be able to support his family. He learned about a Japanese language program being set up by A. E. Hindmarsh, Dean of the Harvard Law School, who was also a Lt. Commander in the Naval Reserves. At that time, Rich speculated that there were fewer than 500 people who knew Japanese other than Issei and Nisei. He volunteered, was accepted and sent to the University of Colorado where he spent a year of concentrated study before graduating. The program took maybe 500 personnel through the course and most served as ensigns in the Navy. Rich instead accepted a commission in the Marines. He was assigned to the 4th Marine Division and shipped out with them for the landing at Roi-Namur in the Marshall Islands. This was to be the first of four combat, first wave, beach landings he made. He next went in on the landings at Saipan and Tinian before a trip back to Hawaii. The final landing was on Iwo Jima where he was again part of the first wave. On each of these islands, he spent his time trying to get close enough to the caves the Japanese soldiers had carved out so he could talk to them and convince them to surrender rather than fighting to the death. Iwo Jima proved the hardest. He did not leave until the 4th Division had been pretty much 'used up' and the island declared 'secure'—although he recalled that the rifleman assigned to him still had to warn him to take cover behind a bulkhead as they were leaving on an LST because someone was still shooting at them.

After the end of the war he took a job as an overseas correspondent for the International News Service, who immediately shipped him to Japan. There he witnessed and reported on the first public outings by the Emperor and later covered the war-crime trials. He sent out and received reports from the US in Morse Code and via short wave radio in the early days. He had a Japanese assistant who would be up each

night transcribing the transmissions. He would then take the reports and correct them and turn them into news reports.

Rich would be stationed in Japan continuously through the end of the Korean War. Prior to 1950, he made only 2 trips outside of Japan, one to Shanghai, where he witnessed that city's fall to the Communists. The other was a plane trip to Korea in a little two-seater. He remembered being warned to keep an eye out for YAKs, North Korean war planes.

Even though he had developed enormous experience and competence as a reporter, he had almost no knowledge of photography, having only ever used a Kodak Brownie. But sometime in June 1950 he walked into the Tokyo Correspondents (Press) Club and ran into Duncan and Bristol, both of whom he knew. They were about to head over to the Ohi factory to meet with Dr. Nagaoka, N-K's president. Rich did not remember Jun Miki being with them, which is why when Duncan saw him he immediately recruited Rich to join them as a translator. He went along for several more trips while Duncan and Bristol visited the factory, tested various lenses and he even had dinner with Nagaoka. At some point during these visits, Nagaoka gave Rich a Nikon camera.

Duncan and other photographers, including Rich's friend Carl Mydans, gave him lots of advice on how to use his new camera. Duncan's consistent demand was that Rich needed to 'move in', get closer. With no photographic responsibilities or darkroom skills, Rich opted to use Kodachrome film and have some fun taking snapshots. Kodachrome (the original was only ASA-12) was available in Tokyo along with the early mailers, which consisted of a cloth sack with a drawstring closure and an address label attached. He shipped his films back to the US for processing. Sometimes it was months before he saw the results. When he got the slides, he held them up to a light, looked at them and then put them away. Eventually he would shoot nearly 1,000 color slides.

When the North Korean invasion began on the 25th of June, Rich was down on the coast. Recalled to Tokyo, he shipped out on a landing ship for the Pusan Peninsula a few days later. Along with duffel and typewriter, he took his new Nikon. He proceeded to take pictures everywhere and of anything that caught his eye. The results give a unique view of Korea at a time when the only images the public saw were in B&W. Rich never considered that what he was doing might be historically or visually important, but he did take care of the slides, packing away their boxes in a Japanese lacquered tea chest that was lined with tin. Taken out 50 years later, the pictures remain sharp and clear with colors as vibrant as the day they were recorded.

Rich used the Nikon throughout the Korean War only to have it stolen out of his room in the Commodore Hotel in New York City while on a trip back to the States. He met his wife, Doris, while in Korea and later worked for NBC News. He continued to do correspondence work into the 1990s. He describes combat as 'stimulating', an understatement considering his activities, although he admitted that his first day on Iwo Jima was the worst experience he had. He is now retired and lives with his wife in Cape Elizabeth.

Bibliography:

Tucker, Abigail. 'One Man's Korean War.' Smithsonian, Vol. 39, no. 8 (November 2008), pp. 62-67.

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/people-places/korean-war.html>

Phone interview with John Rich, 31 October 2008.

LETTERS..FEEDBACK AND BOOK UPDATES

From Nico Van Dijk...

Recently I was lucky in acquiring an 8-digit Nikon S that is consecutive with another I already own! What is really interesting is that the aperture scales on their bayonet mounts differ. On #60910366 the scale starts with '1.4' and a red 'R', while that on #60910367 starts at '2.0' with no red 'R' present. Strange.

On page 232 you show 50/f2 Nikkor #230027: as a uniquely numbered specimen. Could this lens have been a mis-engraving (originally meant to be #623027) which has been corrected by adding a '0' and a colon? Would lens #623027 exist? *(Possible, but it seems to be a lot of work to correct a two-penny part. Easier to just toss it and start over. Maybe....RJR)*

On page 246 you are wondering why there are two lenses with #5005268 and #5005953 and others with #50050101. I think that the first two are numbered correctly but reaching #50051000—for whatever reason—NK left out the '1' for thousand and gave these lenses #50050xxx, which was corrected later with #50051xxx. *(This would seem a logical assumption save for one problem. The earliest lens seen in the literature announcing the new f1.4 is #50050101....logic does not always work when tracking serial numbers. Thank you Nico. I love feedback like this. RJR)*

From Jim Emmerson...

Some new serial numbers for you....

5cm/f3.5 #570538 Nikkor-QO in SM on Canon #15265

Nikon S2 #6142386 w/358097 Aluminum f1.4!

Nikon S2 #6141604 w/358142 Aluminum f1.4!

Varifocal Zoom Type One #11026 for Contax

Varifocal Zoom Type One #11484 for Contax

Finally 2 additional rare Variframe Type Two finders to report to the members.... #7126 and #71212! *(Both these finders set a new starting point for this rare item. Previously the earliest known was #71224! Photo to the right. Thanks Jim. RJR)*

From Mike Symons...

I found dealers' booklet on the Nikon S dated October 1954 with two interesting items pictured. On page 18 is shown an item called the "Range finder Adapter" or what we collectors call the "Eyepiece Diopter Corrector". On page 493 of your book you mention that the only reference you have for this rare accessory is in the 'General List of the Nikon S System' (a rare item itself!). So now we know that it is pictured in at least one other piece of official Nikon literature.

In the same booklet on page 14 is a photo of the black Variframe finder Type 7. On page 482 you mention that this new black finder, with the 10.5cm indent, was introduced in 'about 1955(?)'. Well, based on this booklet we can see that it was 'out' on or before October 1954. *(It appears that my readers really concentrate on my book. This is great! I am learning something new every day! RJR)*

Some further serial number update reported to me.....

Nikon One #609223 has been seen.

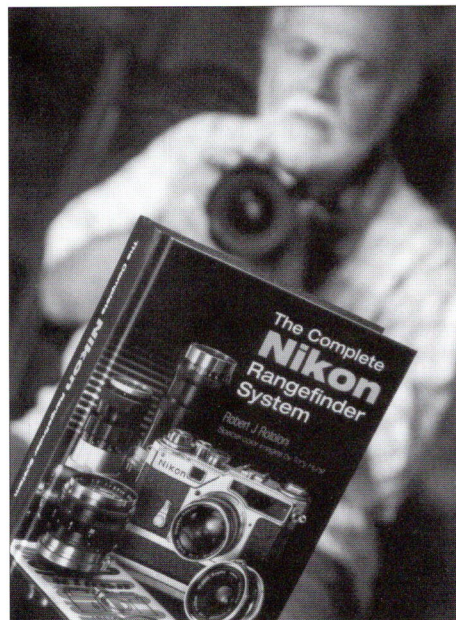
Please add S72 motor #95015 to our small list of 12!

Another black 1000 has been found and it is a new 'high' for our list. Lens #100640 in its case was recently collected. We now know of 6! Also a Grey 1000 #100647 has been reported.

.....
From Paul Bonner... I thought the Anniversary issue was a terrific piece of work. How you managed it and your daughter's wedding at the same time was something of a miracle! Your run-down on the highlights of the first hundred Journals was particularly valuable for those, like me, who joined only after the first decade (at issue 39). And Tony's two-page centerpiece was his best montage yet.

.....

NOW AVAILABLE FOR IMMEDIATE SHIPMENT



I am pleased to announce that the US inventory of my book is in place and all orders can be processed for immediate shipment. Since it became available the beginning of March, I have been shipping within 48 hours of receiving payment.

I am happy to announce that I have sold over 240 copies myself with at least 125 of those going to NHS members. That still leaves quite a few members who have not ordered as yet (although many overseas are buying locally), and remember that I do sign and label those copies ordered through me.

Those of you who wish to obtain a signed copy from me need only to contact me and it will be done. I did not mention previously that, besides signing the book, I have also had made up labels stating to the fact that 'this copy has been purchased directly from the author'. Prices are as follow and include postage:

United States	\$100 including Priority shipping.
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I can accept checks (US/Canada only), money orders, bank wires, cash or PAYPAL. My email addresses (rotoloni@msn.com & r.rotoloni@sbcglobal.net) are my Paypal account numbers. Please make all checks/money orders payable to RJR PUBLISHING or myself (NOT THE SOCIETY!)

SIROVICH ARTICLE MEMBER FEEDBACK

I really enjoyed the article by Bruce Sirovich in NHS-102. I have always been very curious about the true differences between the Contax and Nikon lenses and mounts, and have been suspicious of the explanations that people have offered, especially when there were so many different theories that didn't agree with each other. I agree with Bob that Sirovich has gotten to the bottom of it, and I also think that Scherer made a valuable contribution about the helical pitch being the same. I had to read the Sirovich article a few times before I felt that I understood it pretty well. In the interest of promoting discussion I have written a summary of the main points of his article, leaving out most of the data, and throwing in a few thoughts of my own. If I am wrong about something, please correct me. I really welcome all comments and new ideas.

The distance from the lens flange to the film plane (the back focus) is the same in the Contax and Nikon bodies. Therefore, either type of lens, mounted on either type of camera body, and focused at or near infinity will give sharp focus and proper depth of field for distant objects. This is true regardless of the actual focal length of the lens that is being used.

The actual focal length of a Zeiss "5cm" internal mount lens is somewhat greater than that of a corresponding Nikon "5cm" lens (let's say 53mm versus 51mm). Therefore, the lens elements of the Zeiss lens are mounted a little bit further out in the lens barrel, further away from the film plane and lens flange. Due to this greater focal length, the image scale of a photo taken with the Zeiss lens should be a few percent greater. This can be tested.

In order to focus correctly at a given nearby distance (say 4 feet), the Contax lens ($f=53\text{mm}$) must be moved a little further out from the infinity focus position than is required for the Nikon lens ($f=51\text{mm}$). Since the pitch of the focusing helicoids of these two camera bodies is virtually identical, then in order to achieve this further extension, the Contax mount must be rotated through a greater angle compared to that required by the Nikon lens. This difference is reflected in the differences in the positions of the engraved focusing distances on the two camera body focusing mounts, with those on the Contax having a longer displacement than the corresponding marks on the Nikon.

The other difference between these two cameras must be in the linkage (rangefinder coupling lever) between the rangefinder optics and the part of the body focusing mount that communicates the focal position of the lens to the rangefinder. Since (for non-infinity focus) the relationship between (1) **the distance to the in-focus object** and (2) **the amount of lens extension from the infinity focus position** is different between the two camera/lens systems, it follows that the linkage between the rangefinder prisms and the focusing mount must also be different for these two cameras.

To summarize, in the camera bodies the back focus and the helical pitch are the same for both Contax and Nikon. The only difference is the linkage between the rangefinder and the body mount. In the internal mount lenses there is no mechanical difference. The only difference is the actual focal length of the optics and the position where they are mounted.

The external mount lenses, which have their own focusing helicoids (that engage and work through the body mount helicoid), present a more complex situation than the simpler internals. We know that there are differences between the Nikon and Contax external mount lenses, but whether these differences reside in the actual focal length, the lens helicoid pitch, or the helicoid throw and corresponding engraved markings (or all of the above) is not clear to me.

Jeffrey Felton



THE AUCTION SCENE

I only have one auction to report on this issue, as not too much happens during the Holiday Season and the dead of winter. More sales will be held as we enter the spring.

Stan Tamarkin held his 24th Photographica auction on Sunday, January 11th, in Woodbridge, Connecticut. As always, there was an amazing selection of Leica equipment, some other classics such as a Contaflex TLR, an Ermanox and a Reid III. And also, as always, Stan had some Nikon rangefinder gear for sale. Not quite as much as there has been in the past, there still were some interesting pieces and one really rare one. The rarity was the black S3, #6312151. Now this is not an Olympic camera, of which maybe 2,000 were made. No, this was the black version of the standard S3, of which **maybe 250 were ever made!** A truly uncommon item and it didn't sell! Yes, it was only in user condition, but, unlike the Olympics, these earlier black S3s are difficult to find in any condition. Another very interesting item that did not sell was an S4 w/f1.4 in near mint condition with its **original box!** It should have sold! You can never figure auctions. Below are some hammer prices including the 15% buyers fee:

Nikon S3 chrome w/35mmf2.5.....\$1150
Nikon S3 chrome w/f1.4.....\$1150
Nikon SP chrome w/f1.4.....\$1725
85mm/f1.5 w/black BL finder!.....\$1725
50mm/f1.1 External mount w/front cap.....\$3700

SATTERWHITE BOOK!

Long time professional photographer (and NHS member) Al Satterwhite has added yet another book to his list of published work. This one is titled 'TITANS' and consists of some of the photos made during his extensive personal coverage of both Muhammad Ali and Arnold Schwarzenegger back in the 1970s'. Working for organizations such as Time-Life and Sports Illustrated, gave Al access to many events and people. But he has a special affinity to the two men he covers in great detail in this volumn. Take the time to look it up at your local book store or library. The ISBN # is 978-1-85443-231-5 and it sells for \$89. Also see Al's website for details about purchasing archival Digital or Alumiprints directly from him or select galleries. Contact him at: www.alsatterwhite.com or avsfilm@tx.rr.com or (310) 880-7600.

RJR

20

CLASSIFIED ADS

WANTED... Nikon S #6095837 w/5cm/f2 #620764. This was the first Nikon RF I bought many years ago and then sold it. I would like it back to keep this time. If anyone out there has it and would like to sell it please contact.. **Robert at.....** bobr.skunklabs@sympatico.ca

WANTED... Nikon RF Nikkors: 21/f4.0 w/fdr, 50/f2 collapsible #609xx, 50/f3.5 collapsible in Nikon BM, 35/f1.8 with Black Front Rim!, 50/f1.5 #907xx & #905xx (also in Leica SM), 50/f1.4 #316xxx & #33128x, 85/f2 #903xx, Variframe fdr #705xx or #712xx, Nikon I five digits serial number, Nikon M six digit serial number, 'Sardine' type battery pack for S36, Varifocal 'Zoom' finder 'MIOJ', Nikon Periscope Attachment. **Biagio Guerra Fax.....702-492-6269 or email guerrabn@aol.com**

WANTED: Nikonos V, Nikon F, F3, F4 spares, AIS rear lens mounts. Will take any dead or faulty items. Also, Realtree, Wimberley, BushHawk items, etc. **FOR SALE/TRADE ITEMS...** Books, instruction and repair manuals, test articles, import advertisements, etc. Also, few items of Nikon, Pentax, Canon, Olympus, Minolta, Ilford, Cine, Wildlife. Trade for Nikon and related Bronica, Mamiya, Contax-Kiev, Cine, USA Wildlife magazines, etc. Send for lists. **Ian DC Shephard at this email address dcian@fastemail.us. Thank You.**

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JL. PLUIT TIMUR BLOK F 2 UTARA, NO. 15
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PLEASE ADD THE FOLLOWING NIKON RF BLACK BODY SERIAL NUMBERS TO OUR UPDATED AND REVISED 'NHS BLACK LIST' LAST PUBLISHED IN NHS-90!

6157533	6180637	6194061	6194071	6202533	6206814
6212180	6220677	6307471	6312151	6320643	6320790
6320941	6321284	6321711	6321998	6322516	6600002

THE FOLLOWING NUMBERS ARE THOSE OF 'FAKES'!

6200769 6209947 6230411 6303303 6308808 6310642

'NHS' RED DOT F LIST

PLEASE ADD THE FOLLOWING NIKON F RED DOT BODY SERIAL NUMBERS TO OUR COMPLETE LIST PUBLISHED IN NHS-82.....

6583486 6583682 6584220 6587541 6587721 6588745
6589384 6591583 6594406 6594701 6597816 (black)
6599914 6600012 6602132 6602290 6602486

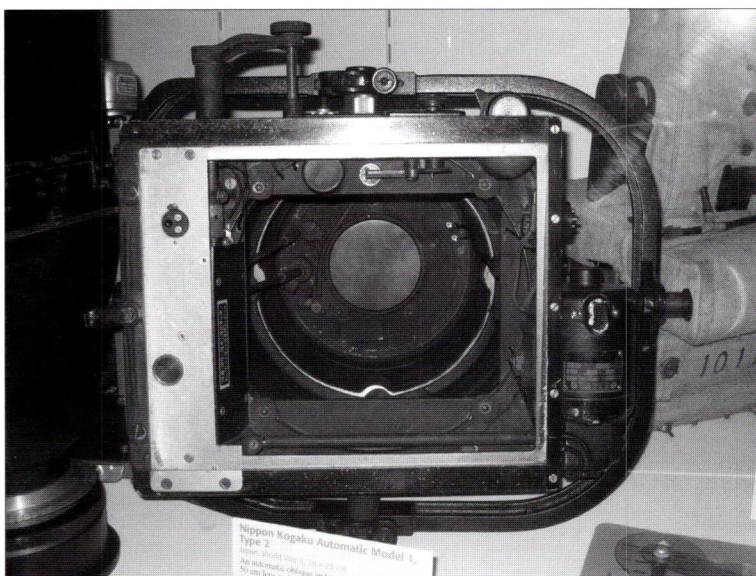
(Please see the website of NHS member Matthew Lin. He keeps a running list of Red Dot Fs on his site and updates it regularly. Look to his site for the most complete and accu-

odds 'n ends

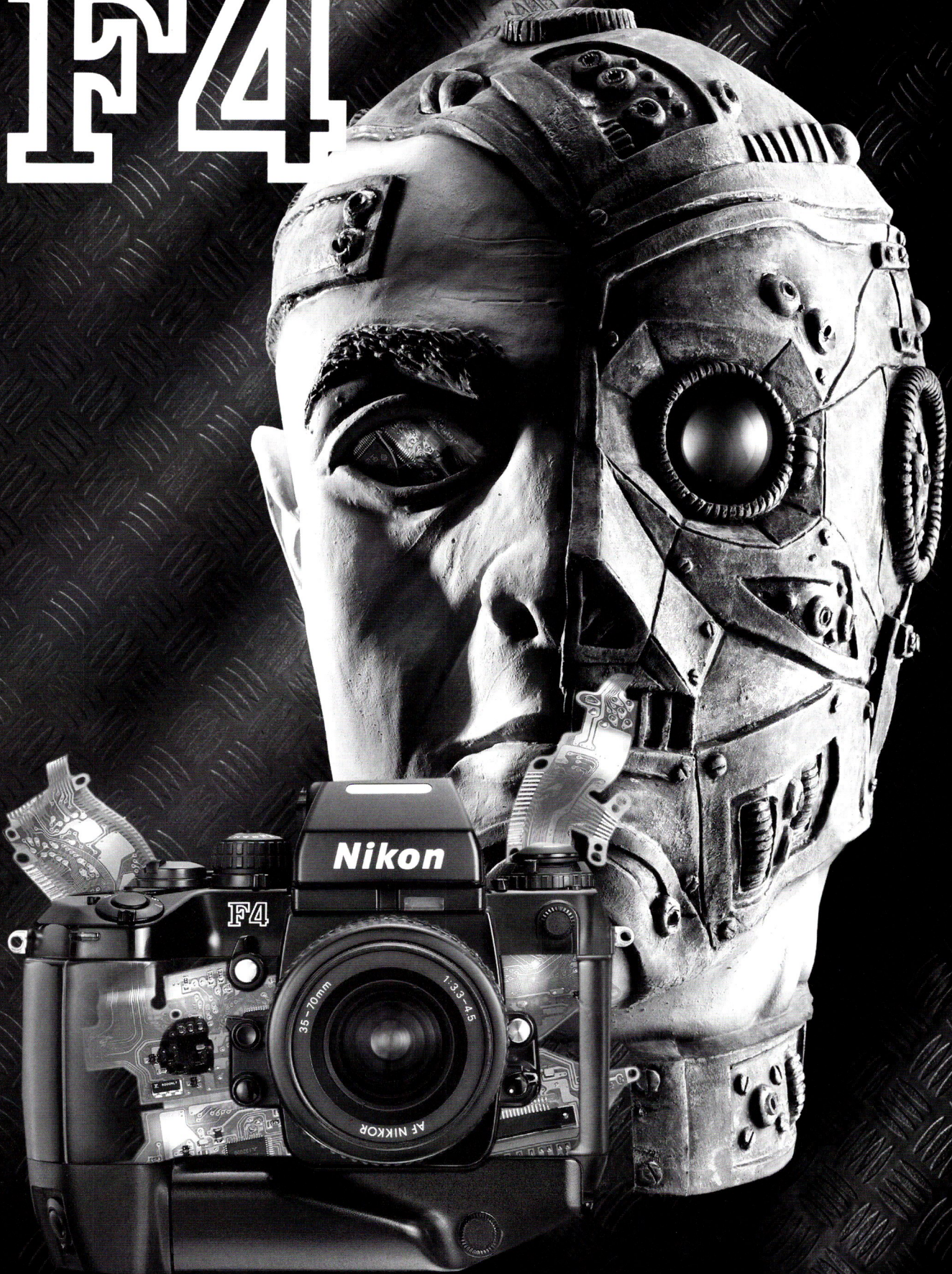
NIPPON KOGAKU TYPE I CAMERA

I thought you might like to see these images of a Nippon Kogaku Type I aerial camera from World War II. They were posted online by the NASM (National Aeronautical & Space Museum). I saw this camera in their Dulles museum display case about two years ago. However, at that time they had the camera lens facing the back of the case so I was not able to see this view of the 50cm f5.6 Aero-Nikkor. The data plate on the camera is marked Nippon Kogaku. These cameras must be very rare as this is the only one I have ever seen. Konica also made this camera with a Hexar lens and they are much more common.

Richard Lane



F4



Created For The "NHS" By Jerry Hunt

NIKON CORPORATION

FUJI BLDG. 2-3, MARUNOUCHI 3-CHROME, CHIYODA, TOKYO 100, JAPAN