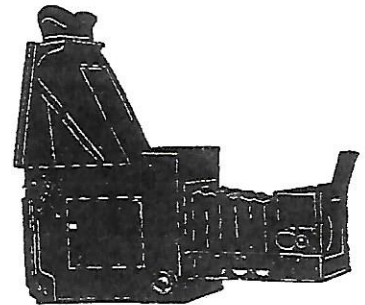


# GRAFLEX HISTORIC QUARTERLY



VOLUME 1 ISSUE 3

FOURTH QUARTER 1996

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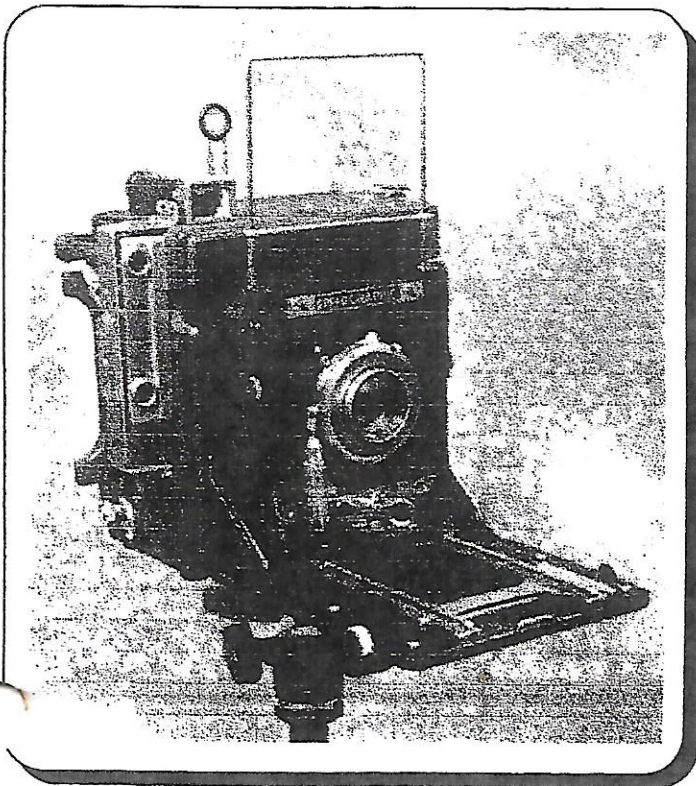
*This quarter and the next few we are fortunate to feature several articles originally submitted for the earlier Graflex Historical Society Journal:*

## THE HERITAGE OF THE COMBAT GRAPHIC by Bill Baker

In 1912 Graflex first introduced their now famous Speed Graphic "Top Handle" model which provided a compact folding camera in a large format. In 1928 the Speed Graphic was redesigned with the handle now affixed to the side, a straight bellows, and a between-the-lens shutter. This was in addition to the focal plane shutter, whose speed now had been increased to 1/1000 second.

It had an optical view finder and the new addition of a sturdy wire sports finder, incorporated as a fold up unit on the front standard, which press photographers found useful when shooting fast action. This camera would see the advent of flash synchronization and a synchronized rangefinder manufactured by Kalart. [These features were added to many of the Speed Graphics from this period] Rangefinders were not new, as Ernst Leitz produced models that could be attached to a camera, but not in concert with the lens.

In 1940 after 50 years of producing superior cameras, the Folmer Graflex Corporation (1926-1945) would place on the market its now famous Anniversary Speed Graphic which was produced in the 4x5 and 3-1/4x4-1/4 inch film sizes. These cameras were the culmination of the two previous models with some added features of their own. They were now offered with the Kalart rangefinder and flash sync as standard equipment. The optical viewfinders were redesigned into covered units with parallax correction and removable masks. The focusing knob of the

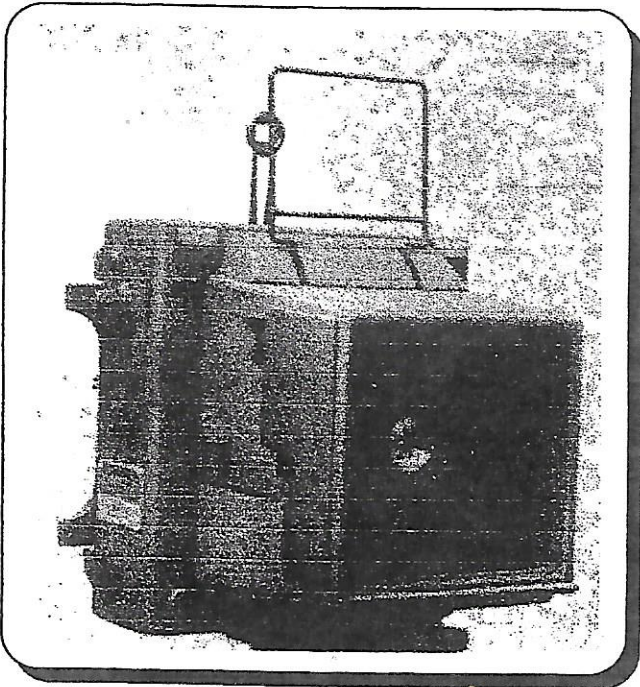


previous camera was replaced with dual knobs which were much more convenient and durable.

All of the hardware was now chrome-plated brass, as were the tracks. Speed Graphics were now the workhorses of professionals, the armed forces, and especially the press. It was a camera to do everything.

In 1941, with the advent of World War II, the output of the Graflex factory would be funneled into the war effort. Thousands of 4x5 Anniversary Speed Graphics would find their way into Army and navy photographic units all over the world. The new chrome models became totally black as chrome went the way of "Lucky Strike Green" (How many of you old timers remember the green Lucky package?) The loss of chrome plating on the black Graphic can also be accounted for because shiny objects on the battlefield gave one's position away.

During the later years of WWII, Graflex developed the "Combat Graphic," later to acquire the name of "Graphic 45" after the war was over. This was an offshoot of the Anniversary model in that it used the same spring back, rear sports finder, and the same focal plane shutter. It was unique in that it did not have a bellows, and was constructed entirely of wood. The focussing was accomplished with a special Eastman Kodak Supermatic shutter and lens that had a front element that screwed in and out via a serrated wheel on the side of the camera. It also had a mechanical flash sync of 20 msec. The flash gun supplied had a bayonet base that attached to the side of the camera. The batteries for the flash were housed in the bottom of the body inside the camera. Three "D" cells supplied the voltage to fire the lamps. This was a very unique camera.



*Combat Graphic*

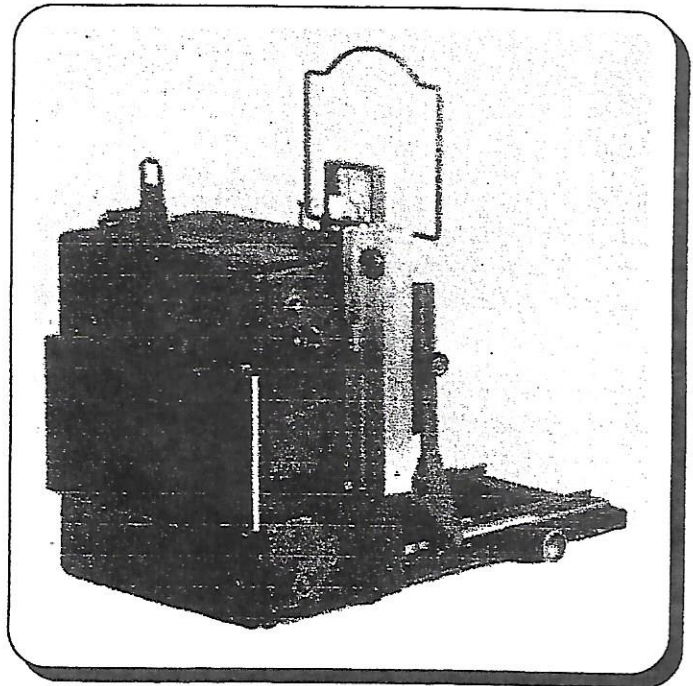
## BIG BERTHAS by Jim Chasse

Having collected Graflexes for several years, I always wanted what was probably one of the more fascinating and unusual Graflexes ever made. Having only seen photos of these cameras, I was thrilled to receive a letter from a fellow collector stating he was releasing a "Big Bertha," because it took up too much room. I immediately jumped into my car, drove 8 hours, and purchased it. I strapped it into the back seat as you would a passenger (it filled the seat) and drove home - a very excited and happy Graflex collector.

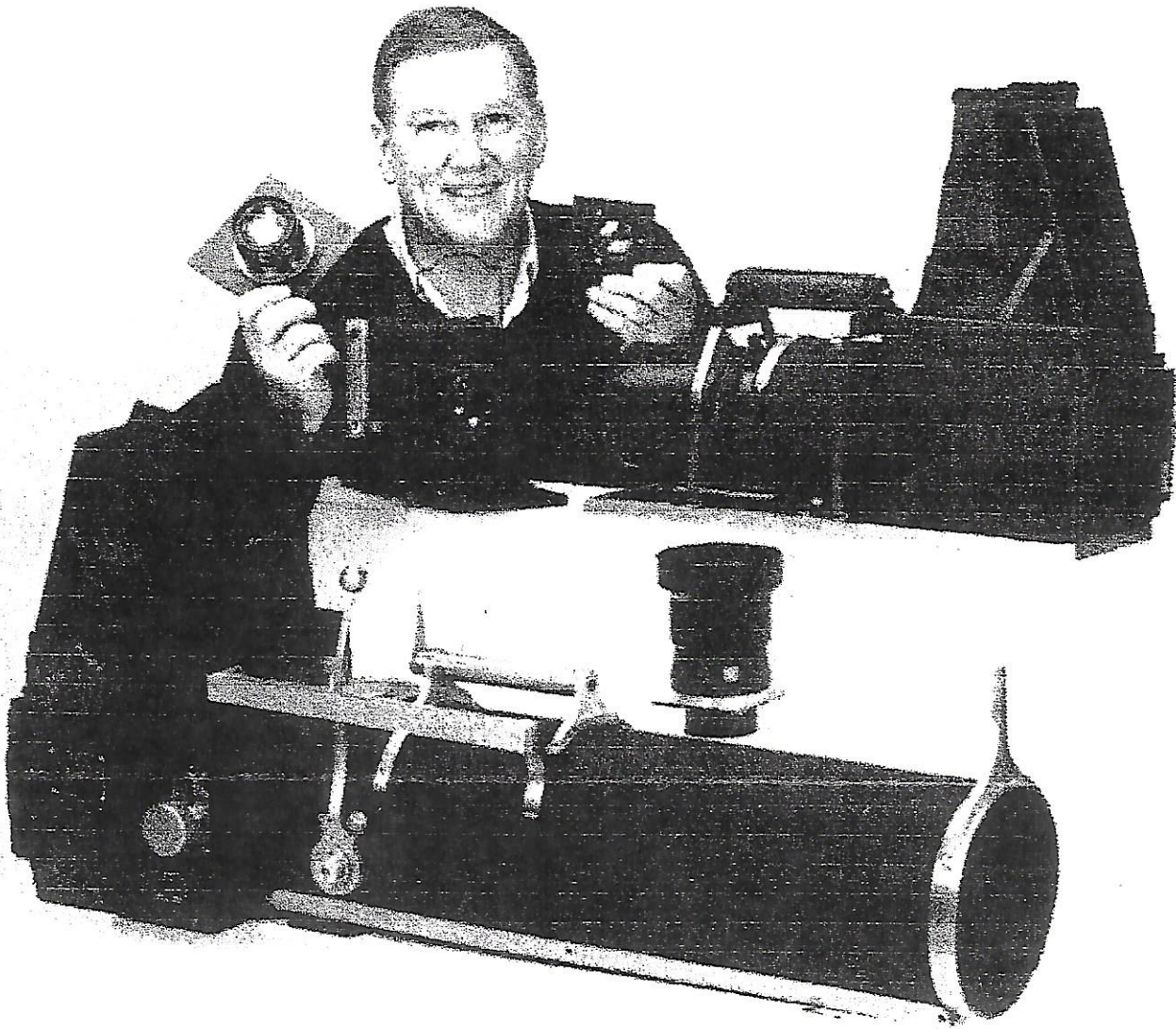
Would you believe it - a month later at an obscure and small small camera show outside Boston, a dealer friend who knew I collected Graflexes, said, "I have a Baby Bertha I just acquired from a very old newspaper photographer who shot sports for the *Boston Globe* in the 1930's. What a find and a thrill! A "Big" and a "Baby" in two month's time after several year's collecting.

These are very impressive cameras and are the topics of conversation with anyone who sees them, even if they do not fully understand just how novel these cameras are. Construction is extremely sturdy, and detailing is very well done. The "Baby" lens shade was surely made by a cobbler, as the leather is padded and slips over the lens very snugly. Focussing is very smooth even for a lens arrangement this size.

When I show people the standard 5x7 Home Portrait Graflex and lens next to the Big Bertha, it helps in explaining to interested parties what these cameras were in their day: incredible pieces



*2x3 Revolving Back Speed Graphic. (Chasse collection)*



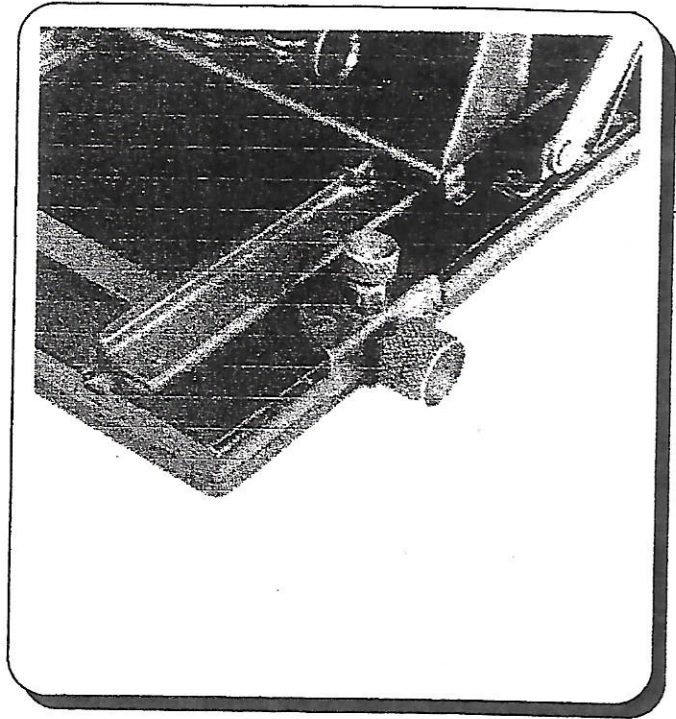
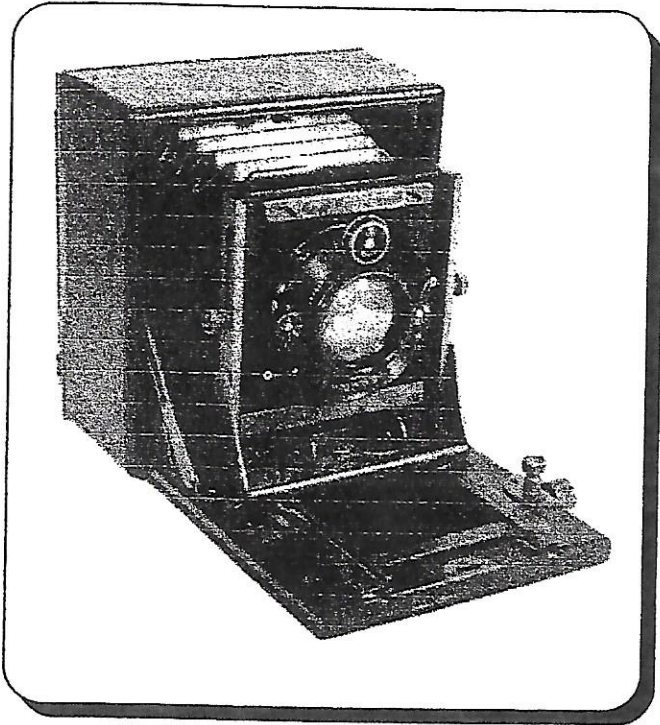
*Author Jim Chasse and his Berthas*

## NUMBER 142033 "SPECIAL"

by Gerard Spiegel

The Big Bertha lens is a Zeiss 700mm (28 inch) f5 I believe  
The camera was assembled by Frazzolini, according to the side  
plate. The Little Bertha lens is a Zeiss jena 400mm f4.5 on a  
4x5 RB-D body. I am holding the standard focal length lenses  
for comparison. I have also included a picture of another rare  
Graflex, the 2x3 Speed Graphic *Revolving Back* (3x4 Chassis).

Due to the apparent willingness of Folmer & Schwing, Folmer  
Graflex, etc. to manufacture cameras designed to a buyer's  
specifications (sometimes only a single piece), we as collectors  
occasionally find these unique items. Too often, they are  
orphans with no provenance, but #142033 does come with a  
birth certificate. According to T.T. Holden, this camera appears  
on his Folmer & Schwing master list as a "Special," and was the  
only one produced.

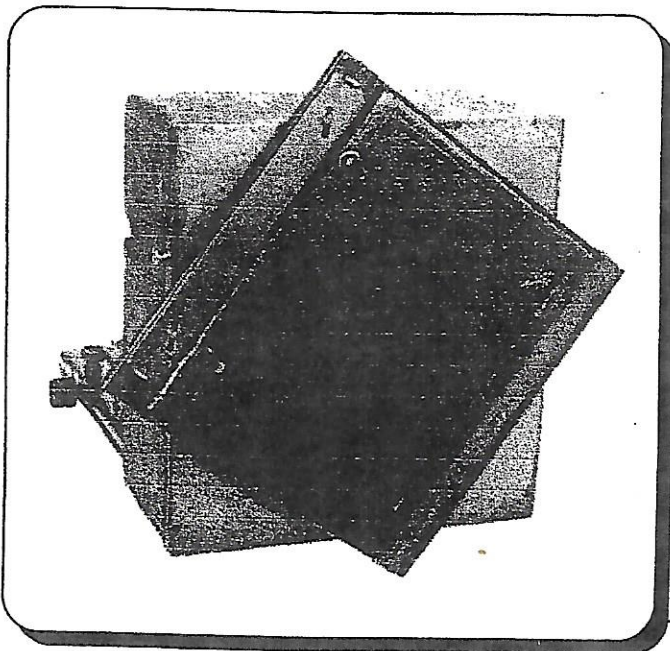


*Number 142033 "Special" Graphic Camera*

The "Special" is a 4x5 side handle Graphic (handle now missing), without a focal plane shutter, with a revolving back, and also with focussing for left hand use. These were the special requirements for some unknown buyer ca. 1924. The body dimensions are slightly larger than those of the 4x5 Graphics of the time - 6-3/8" wide, 7" high, and 3-5/8" thick closed. It appears to be a direct result of Folmer & Schwing Division having used the revolving back assembly of a standard production RB Auto Graflex rather than design a completely new

rear end. In effect, the body was built to suit the back. This back is of the sliding bar Graflex type, so the camera uses Graflex,

not Graphic film holders. Unlike standard production backs, the rear door over the ground glass is not spring loaded, and has no side curtains. Also, it is not a light gauge aluminum stamping like the standard ones, but is a piece of heavy gauge (14 or 15) aluminum plate., so the only really practical way to use it is with the hinges on the bottom, as its weight will close it if it is positioned with its hinges at the top. There is just no logic to this arrangement.



Due to the focussing knob being on the left side, the body is notched on that side to receive it. The smaller knob, seen in the accompanying photo, and perpendicular to the focussing knob, is a lock knob. As the camera has double extension bellows, this is a worthwhile control. The front lens standard has regular 4x5 RB Auto Graflex hardware, with a 3-3/4"x3-3/4" lensboard. Although the camera has a 6" Schneider lens, the focal capacity is 13".

The finder (now missing) must have been very special, as the top leather bears the imprint of a 2"x2-1/2" baseplate, quite a bit larger than anything on Graphics of the time. It was also centered on the concealed button at the top, indicating that there had to have been a way to reach the button with the finder mounted. All the other details of fit and finish inside and out are typical of Graphics of the time.

So, there it is - one more item to be added to the slowly growing list of unusual or unknown Graflex cameras that have been quietly sitting in collections, waiting to appear in the pages of the GHQ.

# NEW GRAPHIC<sup>®</sup>

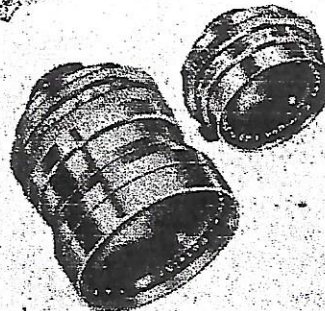
only 35mm camera

# 35 ELECTRIC

with built-in power drive

**AUTOMATICALLY WINDS THE FILM  
AND COCKS THE SHUTTER**

with 30mm f2.8 lens  
**\$237.50**  
Available also with  
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The great new Graphic 35 Electric, with such features as interchangeable film advance and shutter settings, and interchangeable lenses, makes it easier than ever to get good pictures. Set the exposure index dial and adjust the shutter speed. You know the shutter speed. The exposure is simple and camera automatically records for the next shot. You control the exposure without ever taking your eye from the viewfinder. The exposure meter pointer is clearly visible both through the viewfinder window and through window at top of camera. Brightest Eye-Indicator with 2 moving red needles is easy to read, automatically adjust back to the interchangeable lenses. It's a completely automatic camera - nothing to wind and no camera in world for the remarkable price. Discover how much camera Graflex offers you in this compact, easy-to-use, practical 35mm. Write: Graflex, Inc., 115 Broadway, N. Y., N. Y. 10038. A subsidiary of General Precision Equipment Corporation.

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**WATER COOLED EXPOSURE CONTROL** - Simply match the exposure meter pointer with bright transparent marking visible in the viewfinder. Automatic parallel structure and bright line filter. For manual and telephoto lenses.

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Price includes federal tax where applicable and no charge for postage to the nearest post office.



*A Graflex 35mm that many did not know about!*

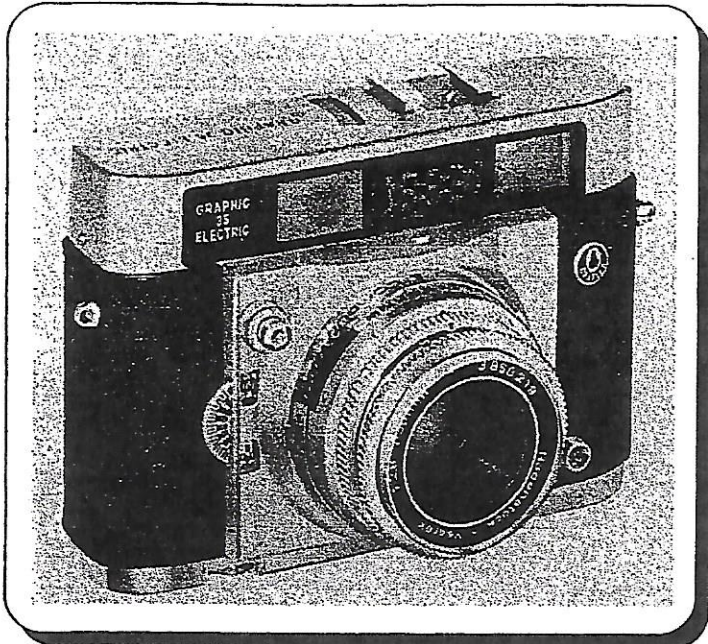
## THE SMALLEST GRAFLEXES by Mike Hanemann

GRAFLEX is well known for its medium and large format cameras. Like other American camera companies however, Graflex plunged into the 35mm field in the mid 1950's. This experiment lasted into the early 1960's and was not very successful. Graflex offered seven different cameras, one with interchangeable lenses, two with a choice of lenses (f2.8 or f3.5), and one stereo model. Most of us have seen and perhaps own one or more models, likely as not the GRAPHIC 35. This camera was introduced in 1955, 3 years after Graflex purchased the rights to the Ciro 35. More on this model will be covered later. This article covers what the author thinks are the most interesting two of the Graflex 35mm cameras: The GRAPHIC 35 ELECTRIC and the GRAPHIC 35 JET.

The Graphic Electric first appeared as the Iloca Electric in a report on new European cameras in *Modern Photography*, Jan. 1959. By December 1959 it was advertised in the leading photo magazines and written up in the "New Product Report of *US CAMERA* (pg 90, 12/59). It offered auto exposure, auto advance, and lens

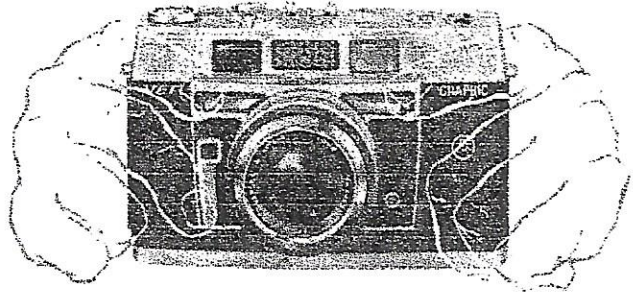
interchangeability. You could get an f2.8 Rodenstock - Iloca - Ysarex 50mm or an f1.9 Iloca - Quinon 50mm; a Steinheil Culmignon 35mm f4.5 and a Rodenstock - Iloca - Rotelar 135mm f4 telephoto were also offered. The viewfinder contains frames for the 50mm and 135mm lenses. The 35mm frame was the very outer edge of the finder. Power was from two penlight batteries. The lenses were mounted in front of a leaf shutter like that used by Kodak and others. Shutter speeds were 1 to 1/500 sec. Some drawbacks were: film counter was set inside the camera, and the lenses were not great with an acceptable user range of only F5.6 - F8. Smaller apertures than f8 saw a rapid fall off of definition. Wide open the 35mm evidenced some fall off at the edges. The best review of the Graphic 35 Electric appeared in the March 1960 *Modern Photography*. The electric drive was rated at three pictures in five seconds.

The GRAPHIC 35 JET appeared on the scene in 1961. The "Jet Power" label came from its CO2 powered film advance, a problematic feature that led to a manual advance model later. The Jet retained the "push button focusing" of the Graphic 35. The lens is a Graflex Optar f 2.0, 50mm. In addition to the CO2 powered model there was also a conventional lever wind advance model. The



"Jet-O-Matic" (CO<sub>2</sub>) motor released the shutter, advanced the film and recocked the shutter. The camera offered "Match coupled meter for daylight," "Match colors for flash" was similar to the Graphic 35. The Jet was made for Graflex by the Kowa Optical works in Nagoya, Japan. Big 2 page ads appeared in late 1961 introducing the camera (Oct. 1961 *US camera*). Later, ads were only one page long. Both cameras used a typical German hard case similar to the Kodak reflexes, Voightlander, and Zeiss 35mm cameras of the same period. Brown seems to have been the "in" color.

ONLY THE GRAPHIC 35 JET GIVES YOU  
THIS **NEW PICTURE POWER**

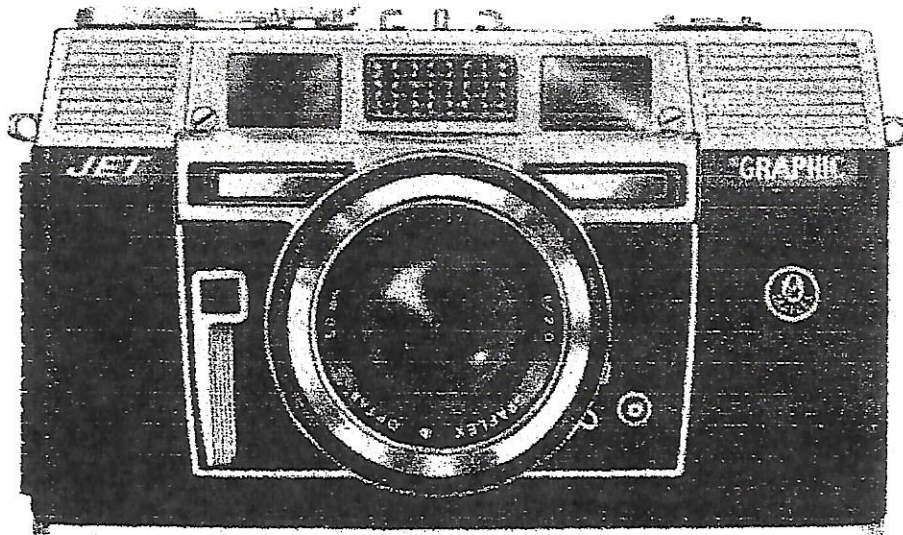


FULL-CYCLE JET-O-MATIC DRIVE  
FULL-RANGE PUSH-BUTTON FOCUSING  
FULL-TIME EXPOSURE CONTROL

Both cameras were included in stories about motor driven cameras. The first was an article, "A Complete Report On Motor Cameras" (*Popular Photography* May, 1961) and again in "Automatic Advance Cameras: The New Revolution" *C-35*, Aug-Sept, 1962.

Have any of our readers used either of these cameras? If you have, please write us about your experiences and adventures with them.

## NEW GRAPHIC 35 JET



*The ads for Graflex 35mm cameras are all from  
the Hanemann collection*

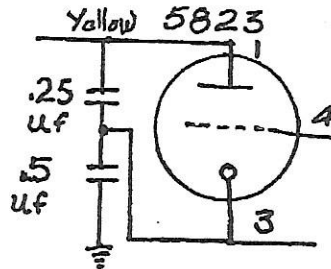
The following article was written by Bill Baker for the earlier, unpublished issue of GHS

### Graflex Strobe IV Repair

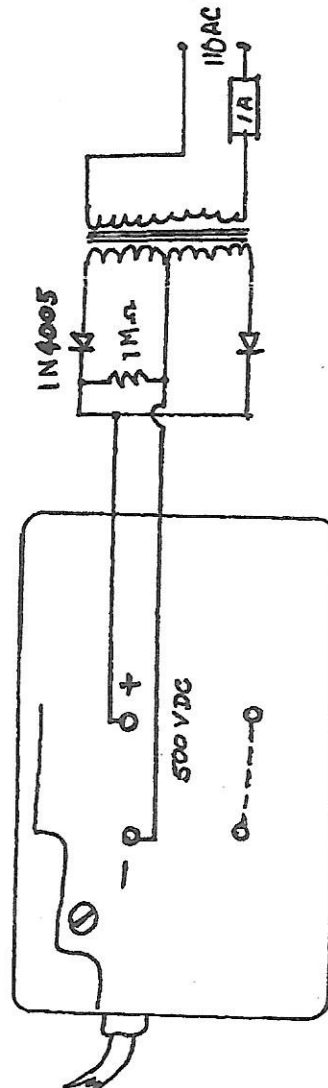
I acquired a strobe unit in a package deal. I built an AC power supply of 500 VDC as I did not want to buy the very expensive batteries used to operate it. I was very disappointed that it didn't work.

I looked it over and finally decided to try to discover the problem and make necessary repairs. I had to get into the flash head so I discovered if I removed the big screw used to hold the rubber cup that attached to flash gun I could pry the plastic case up around the power cord and the sync trip sockets and slide the plastic case away from the flash reflector. I found two capacitors attached to the base of the 5823 tube socket. As from previous experience with other flash units these capacitors were leaking and had to be replaced. You can get usable replacements from Radio Shack. Replace the .25 uf cap with a .22 uf RS# 272-1070 and the .5 uf with two .1 uf capacitors in series RS# 272-1069. By placing the capacitors in series you achieve one half of the capacitance of a single unit. You will need a small soldering iron, rosin core solder and some solder wick RS# 64-2090 to unsolder and reattach the new capacitors. Be sure you do not have the power cord attached to the flash head while you replace the parts. The base unit has eight 450 mf capacitors at 500 vdc which equates to 2000 mf, a very lethal voltage. Now we have to build a power supply to run the flash. I had an old TV transformer which when connected in a full wave configuration gave 500 VDC (see schematic). I made a small circuit board and placed a fuse holder and fuse of 1 amp and two 1N5404 diodes RS# 276-1104, then attached the transformer leads and AC leads to the board. Attach the positive and negative leads to the banana plugs on the underside of the flash base (see schematic) with a

red (+) and black (-) banana jack RS# 274-725 and plug in the AC cord and charge the capacitors. Use a cord plugged into the sync jack to trip the unit. If all is well then the flash tube ignited.



Replace Both Capacitors



AC Power Supply Strobe-Flash IV

**WANT AD POLICY:**

*Any subscribers wishing to place a want ad selling or seeking Graflex-related items may send them to the GHQ for inclusion at no charge (at this time). The editors reserve final publication decisions.*

**SUBSCRIBER NOTICE:**

If anyone did not receive the previous issue of this newsletter, please contact the address below. Sometimes one goes astray!

WANTED: Polaroid film backs to fit 3x4 and 4x5 GrafLEX cameras (not the usual Graflock backs). These should use modern Polaroid (tm) pack film. Does anyone know of one or have experience in adapting another? Frank Pereto, 150 Mediterranean Dr., Weymouth, MA 02188.

**Graflex Historic Quarterly**

*The Quarterly is dedicated to enriching the study of the Graflex Company, its history, and products. It is published by and for hobbyists, and is not a for-profit publication.. Other photographic groups may reprint material provided credit is given GHQ and the author. We would appreciate a copy of the reprint.*

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