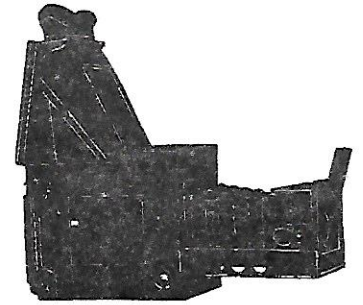


**LAST ISSUE
PLEASE RENEW!**

GRAFLEX HISTORIC QUARTERLY



VOLUME 4 ISSUE 4

FOURTH QUARTER 1999

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GRAFLEX AERIAL CAMERAS - A FIRST LOOK
by a Contributor

Aerial cameras are very specialized and have great appeal to the general public due to their unique shape and size. However, they are almost never found in the general photographic catalogs. They are also absent from the Eastman Professional catalogs which were issued while they owned Graflex. However, the Graflex company in its many forms produced a surprising number of aerial cameras for the armed forces of the USA. The story of Graflex aerial cameras is a hard to pin down with any real accuracy. Information on these cameras is sparse and I am sure what follows is but a part of the story.

The story of Graflex Aerial Cameras goes back to the W.W.I era . The first Graflex aerial camera is apparently a wood and brass, 4 x 5 glass plate camera. Its identity is "Signal Corps US Army PCB No. 71." It was reportedly manufactured by the Folmer & Schwing Div. of Kodak. It used a film back which was much like the bag magazine. The lens was a 8.5" f4.5 Hawkeye. The 2 photos (figures 1a, 1b) are courtesy of in the PHOTOGRAPHIC

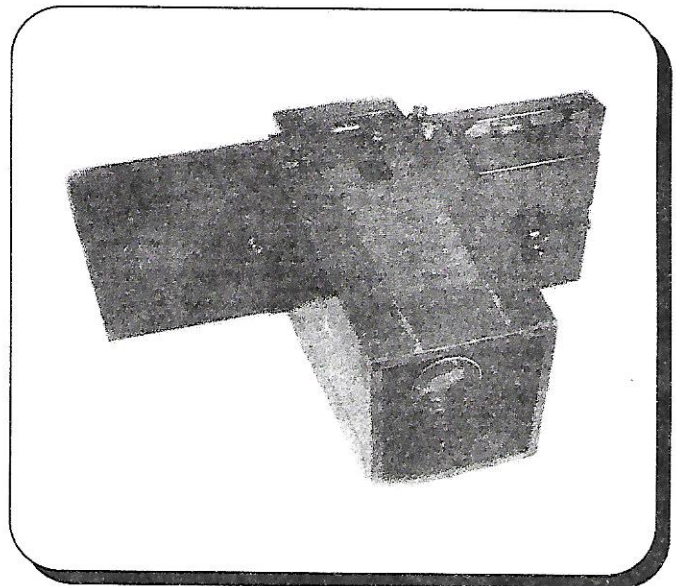


figure 1a

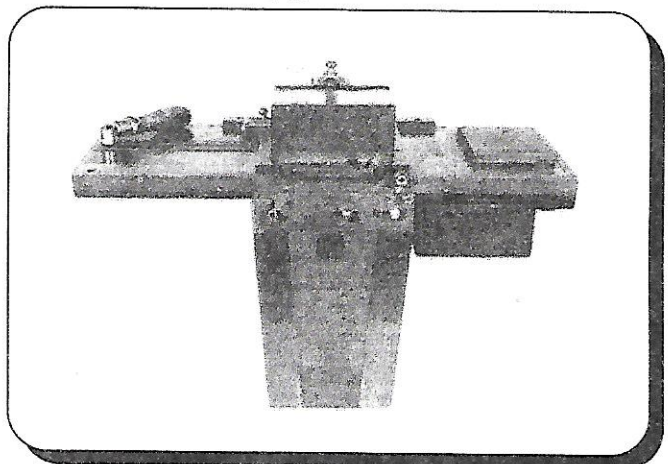


figure 1b

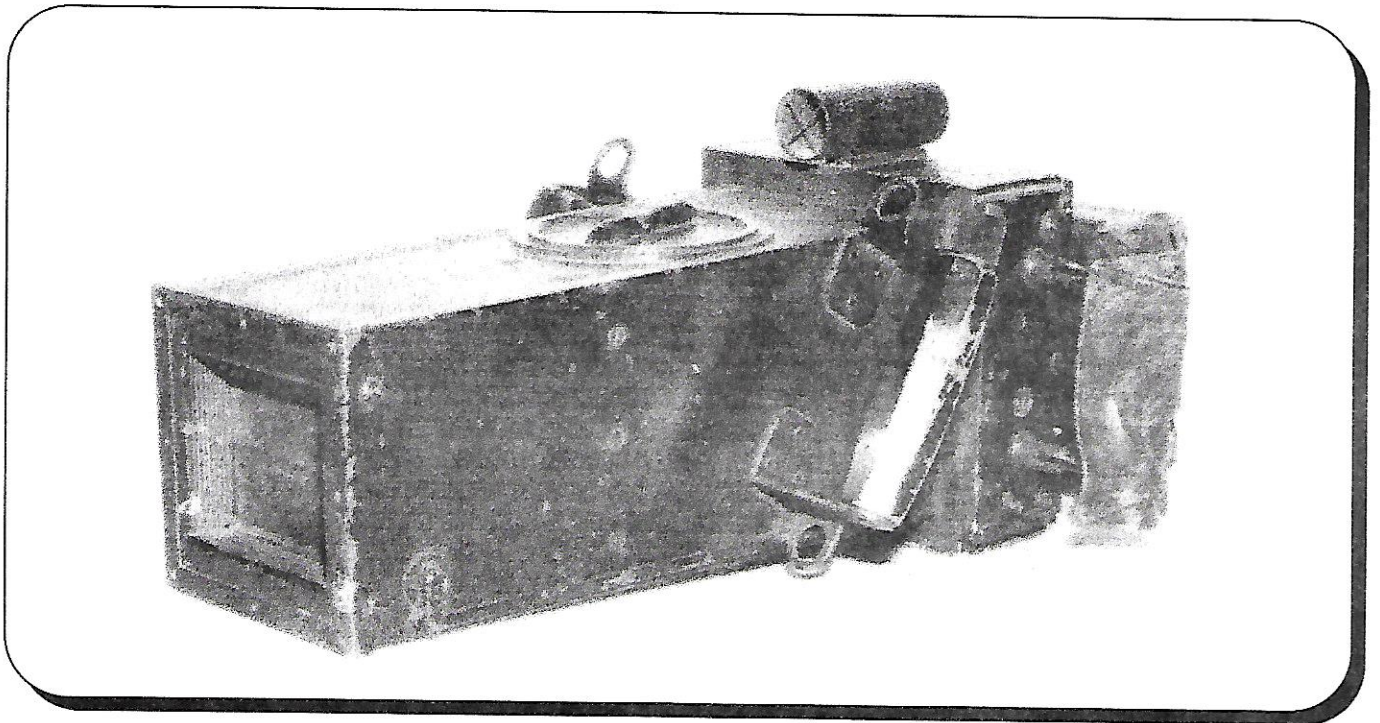


figure 2a

JOURNAL. More information on the camera can be found in Vol. 3 # 2, Spring 1986, page 13

Another W.W.I vintage unit is the Folmer & Schwing A-1 Aerial Camera. (figure 2) It is a 4x5., hand held aerial camera. It has a 10 inch, fixed f-stop of f4.5 Kodak Hawkeye lens with both a front and a focal plane shutter. The camera is constructed of aluminum and is light for its size. It was designed for oblique aerial work.

Still another Graflex aerial camera of this vintage is the K-5 (figures 3a and 3b, next page) The K-5 took pictures 7 1/16 x 9 1/2 inches and could be fitted with a 12 inch or a 20 inch lens, each with its own lens cone. The camera has a single aperture focal plane shutter. Shutter speeds from 1/60 to 1/280 combined with the 1 3/4 inch aperture to make the exposure. The camera was usable for either

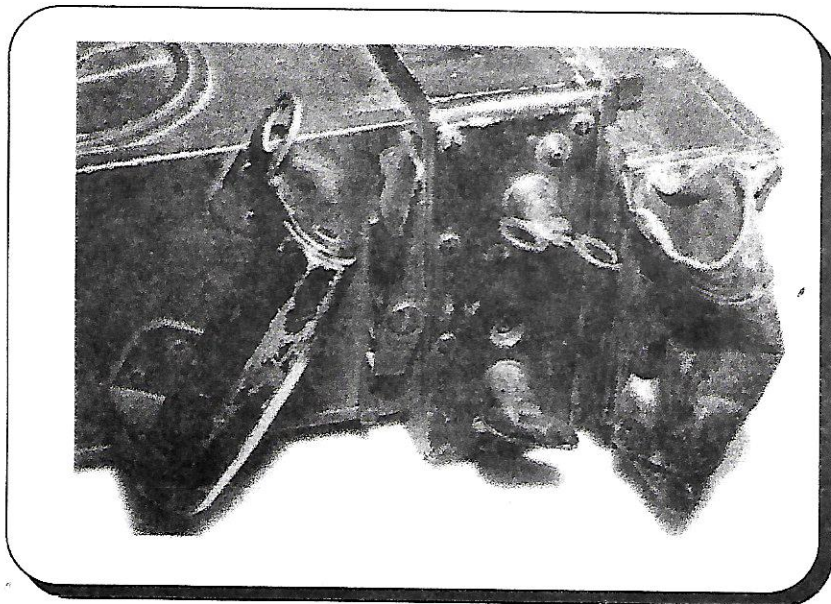


figure 2b

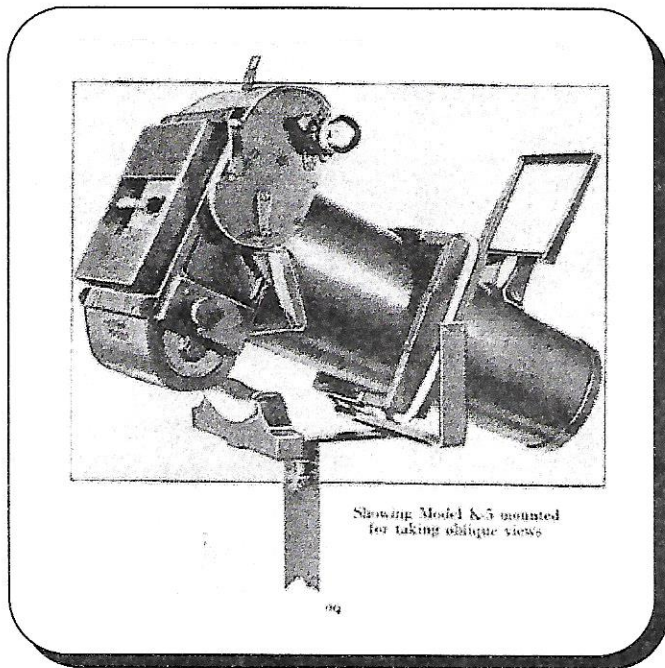


figure 3a

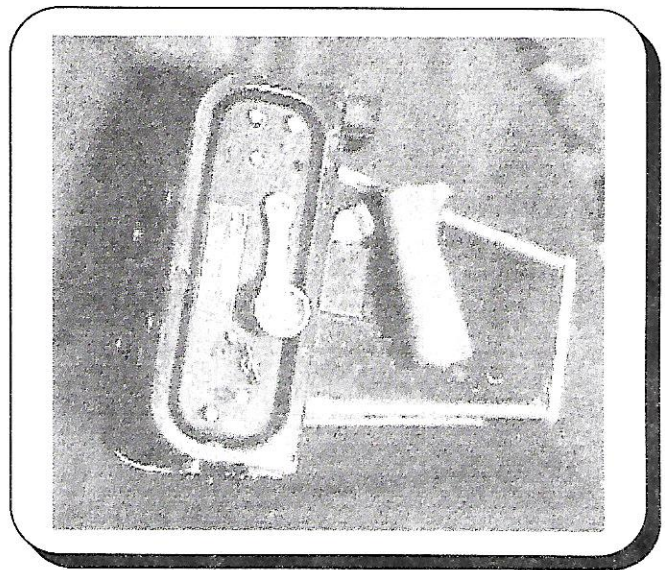


figure 4a

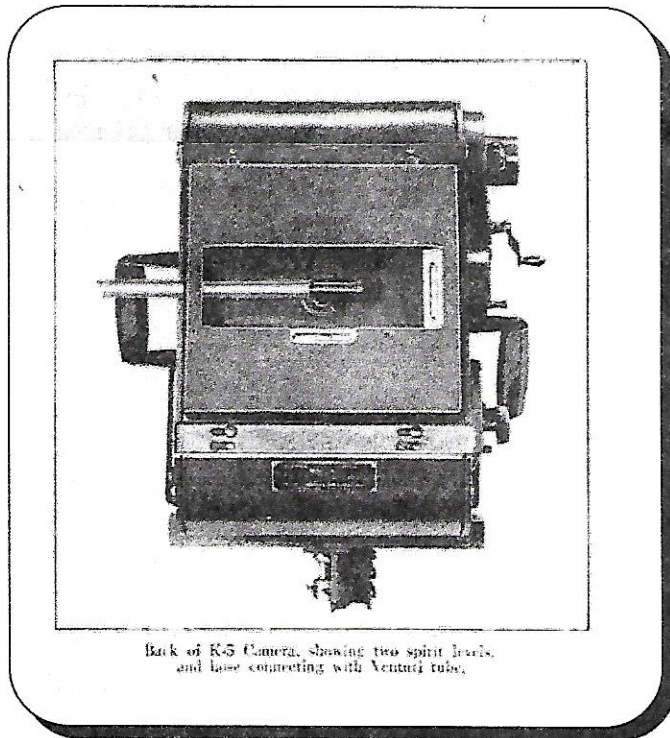


figure 3b

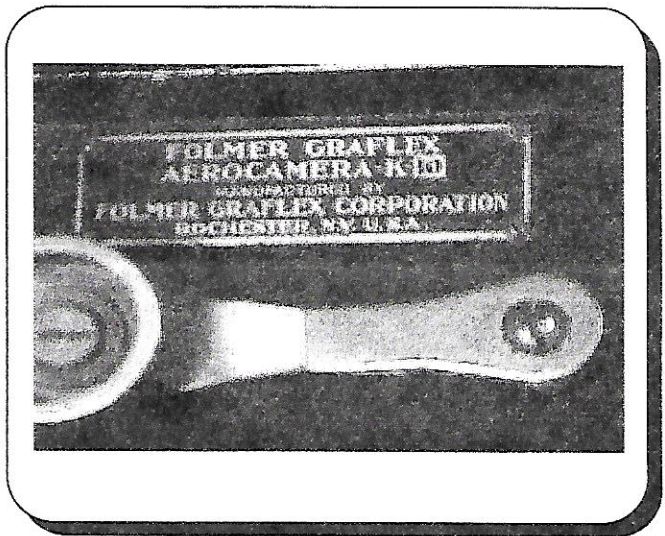


figure 4b

vertical or oblique views. Both the K-5 and the A-1 were shown in a Graflex booklet "Graflex: the Universal camera for making better Pictures" [1919]. In addition, both are in several Burke & James catalogs during the

1930's-40's. The K-5 cost ranged from \$312 with a lens cone but no lens to \$414.00 with a 20 inch or an 11 3/4 Heliar . The A-1 sold for \$89.00 in the 40th mid year Burke & James catalog.

Another big aerial camera from this period is the K-10, a 7 inch roll film aerial camera that recorded 5x7 images. It is a hand held camera, weighing 20 pounds. It has a 10 inch Eastman Anastigmat (figures 4a and 4b) The K-10 resembles the later Fairchild K-8 of WWII.

There is still another "Folmer," a 13 x 18 centimeter automatic and semi-automatic plate camera. Not many were made. It used a 2 plate compartment plate holder that shifted the exposed plate to a second box by means of a lever and rack. The movement was done with air from a

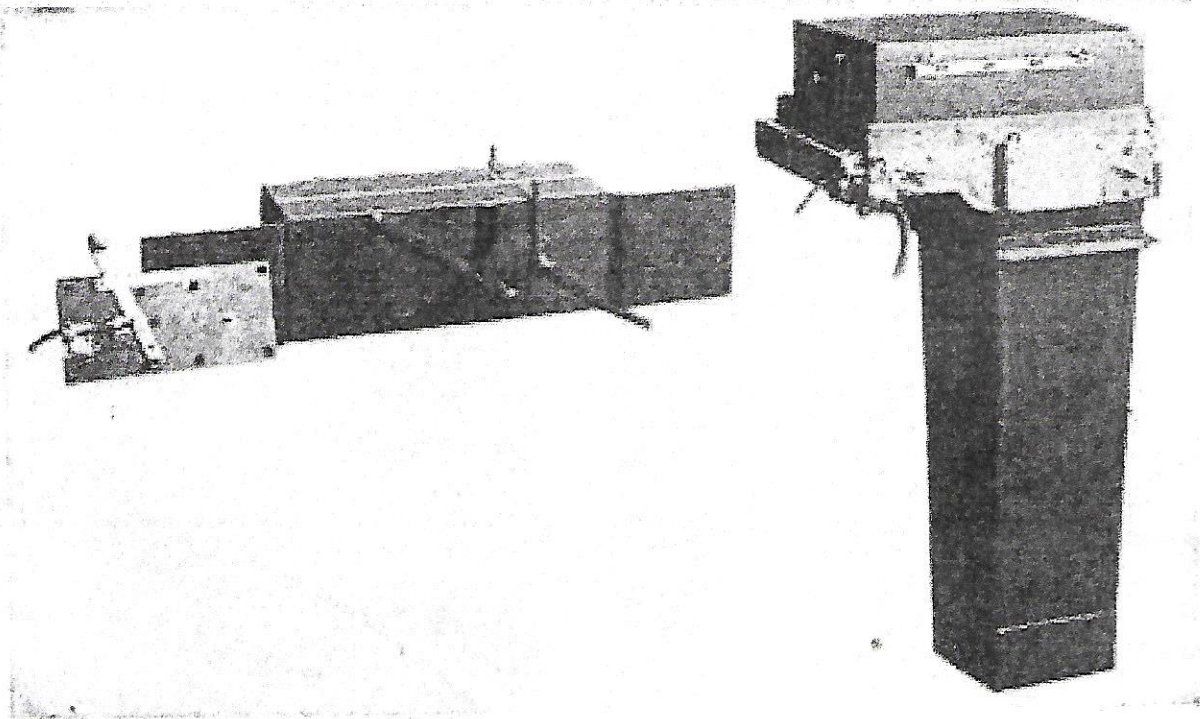


FIG. 58.—Folmer 13x18 centimeter automatic and semi-automatic plate camera.

figure 5

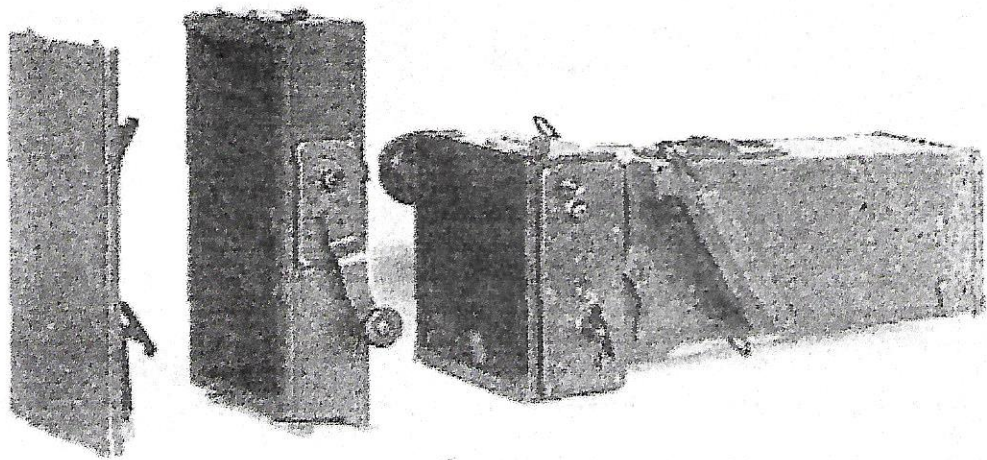


FIG. 59.—U. S. Air Service hand camera, with two-compartment magazine.

figure 6

tube in the airplane's slip stream or could be done by hand.

The K-5 and the K-10 are roll film cameras so multiple exposures were not a problem. The A-1 and the "PCB 71" are plate cameras. Folmer & Schwing division also developed several multiple exposure devices to use on plate cameras. [figure 6].

This concludes first look at Graflex aerial cameras. The period of W.W.II, 1941-45 witnessed a vast growth in aerial

photo reconnaissance and the development of many aerial cameras. Graflex, a free standing company since 1926, was a key contributor to this field. The quarterly will look at the W.W.II period in a future issue

The editors welcome any one reading this to provide additional info on any of the cameras or suggest different Graflex products from this period...

Letters

Dear Editor,

Leather believed to substantially duplicate the thin leather used for camera bellows and hoods is available from:

Shaff Piano Supply Company
451 Oakwood Road
Lake Zurich, IL 60047
Ph: (847) 438-4556
800-747-4266

This material is called "thin pneumatic leather" and is only available as complete hide of 4-6 square feet at \$12.50 per square foot. It is brown, but seems to dye OK to black and to "red bellows" red. (There is also "medium" and "thick", but I have not seen specimens. It is called "pneumatic" since it is used for flap valves in organs and player pianos.) At Shaff's 800 number, one Jack Rain was quite nice and was interested in the camera bellows application. He suggested asking for him as others at Schaff were piano oriented. He said that they would do a limited amount of comparing a bellows template with hides to find a hide of suitable dimensions. If anyone is interested in a sample, please send a note and a return-addressed, 33 cent stamped envelope to Steve Church, 151 Jacquelyn Ct., Ridgecrest, CA 93555

Dear Editor:

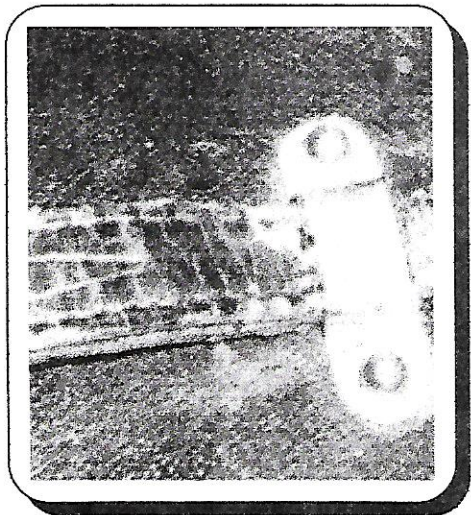
WITH REFERENCE TO THE ARTICLE "THE GRAFLEX MYSTIQUE" PART I, BY ED ROMNEY. ED WRITES OF THE QUALITY, RELIABILITY & WEAKNESSES OF THE GRAFLEX CAMERA. I WOULD LIKE TO COMMENT ON HIS STATEMENT REGARDING THE HEAVINESS OF THE CAMERA & THAT IT IS SO CLUMSY THAT THE SHEER WEIGHT HAS PULLED HANDLES LOOSE ON MOST OF THE OLDER CAMERAS. THE HANDLE ITSELF WILL NOT BREAK IN A HUNDRED YEARS, BECAUSE IT IS SO RIGID & ALMOST HALF AN INCH THICK. WHAT REALLY BREAKS IS THE LOOP WHICH HOLDS THE HANDLE TO THE TOP OF THE CAMERA. THERE IS A GOOD REASON WHY THAT HAPPENS. IT IS NOT DUE TO THE WEAKNESS OF THE LEATHER BUT ROT OF THE LOOP BEARING THE WEIGHT OF CAMERAS 60-80 YEARS OLD. THERE ARE METAL U FASTENERS WHICH COULD BE RE-INSTALLED, AVAILABLE IN LEATHER SHOPS. ENCLOSED PLEASE FIND PHOTOGRAPH ILLUSTRATING.

I INSTALLED THE FIRST SYNC IN A 5X7 STEREO GRAFLEX IN 1979. I WORKED FOR MARTY FORSCHER AT PROFESSIONAL CAMERA REPAIR IN NEW YORK CITY FROM 1963 UNTIL I OPENED MY OWN BUSINESS IN 1977. I WORKED ON GRAFLEX FROM 4X5, 2X3, STEREOS, SUPER GRAPHIC TO XL RANGEFINDER GRAFLEX, INCLUDING ALL 4x5 SPEED GRAPHIC. I AM ONE OF THE FEW ALL AROUND MEN LEFT IN THE COUNTRY WHO CAN MODIFY THEM & HAVE PARTS AVAILABLE FOR MOST OF THEM. I WOULD ESPECIALLY LIKE TO STRESS THAT NO WORK IS DONE HERE WITH GLUE, EPOXY OR CEMENT, EXCEPT TO GLUE LEATHER.... I RECEIVED A GRAFLEX FROM A CUSTOMER IN IDAHO WHO WANTED A GRAFLEX BACK MODIFICATION. I SAW A VERY INTERESTING SYNC CONNECTION BY SMEATOS OF MILWAUKEE, WHICH MAY INTEREST YOUR READERS. IT IS VERY NEAT, FUNCTIONAL AND IN ALL MY

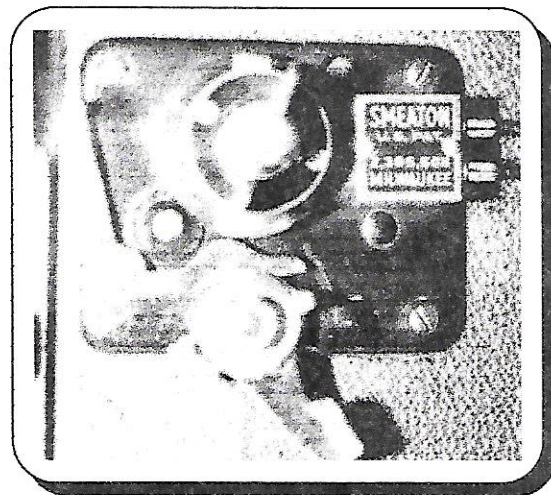
YEARS I HAD NEVER SEEN ONE. THE CUSTOMER ALSO INFORMED ME THAT SMEATON ALSO MADE AN ELECTRONIC FLASH WITH FOUR HEADS & A POWER PACK. I HAVE NEVER SEEN IT. THE CUSTOMER PROMISED TO MAIL ME A PICTURE. I WILL FORWARD IT TO YOU WHEN I RECEIVE IT, IF IT WOULD BE OF INTEREST.

YOURS TRULY, Konnie Lang

Ed: Thanks, Konnie, be sure and send it. In previous issues we have had several methods of resolving the broken handle hold-down problem, but yours is another method yet.



Left: Konnie's strap hold-down for SLR's.



Right: An unusual flash sync. on an SLR shutter control.

Dear Editor:

The little squib on parts to operate the reset iris release [on Super D's, a "wanted" ad in a previous issue - Ed] brought a nice answer from a retired tool maker.... so, I am indebted to GHQ for a fine lead.

Cliff Scofield

Editor: Glad it helped you, Cliff. For the rest of our readers, we have a nice article with Cliff's reminisces of many decades of Graflex use:

Odds and Ends - Memories of Graflexes

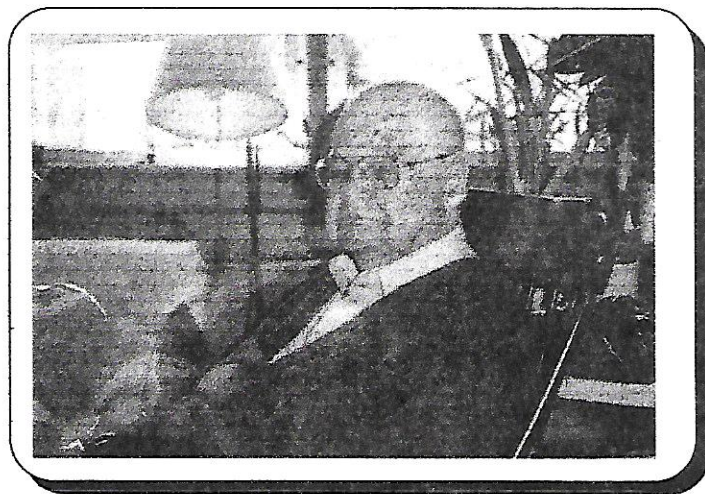
by Cliff Scofield, as told to J.C. Welch of GHQ

Editor's note: Cliff is our most senior Graflex user and has experiences going way back. We have distilled a few tidbits from his letters.

- One episode we had was a torn curtain on the job in the countryside. I removed a strip at the bottom of the curtain, and using a NEEDLE & THREAD sewed a repair. Finished the job and fixed it right, later-at home. Today I would use Pliobond as cement.

- At the Camera Club New York City about 1929, we saw some members lacing reading glasses inside the hood [SLR] for sharper focus.

- Doing a full figure seated outdoors, ladies' legs and shoulders seemed too prominent. Taking the Graflex [SLR] away from the bellybutton position to an overhead view, looking up into the ground glass gave a nice parallel perspective and a happy picture. At a parade, all hemmed in, no low angle was possible - you can again hoist the camera above you. Same thing on words written in snow, or a view of



Cliff Scofield at his Connecticut home

a brook with images in the ripples - up high captured some quirky witch like images once. So don't go 100% on middle of the tummy viewpoints.

- On perspective, when we did group pictures, if there were no embankment or stadium seats, tables, or chairs, we would seat them on the grass and put the camera elevated from a second story window, where we could look down and see good separation between individuals.

- More comments on strange Graflex doings: I sold an RB-D to a fellow in California. It had a 9-1/2" with preset iris lens [like later Super D's] marked U.S. Navy, Brooklyn Navy Yard. It worked fine with parts that looked like parts from an alarm clock.

- An article on flash brought back the memory of seeing a photographer for the NY World Tel NYUC blown out inside from a bottle of flash powder he had left open in his pocket. He was around the corner from the old Camera Club at W. 68th using an 8x10 view. He made several exposures, then put the bottle away uncorked. Fate did the rest I believe.

- An NYC food photographer, Mr. Weisehan, used a tripod mounted 45 Super D, surrounded by lamp stands and other things. He disliked going way around to reset the iris, so he drilled a hole in the lensboard cage, attached a strong fishline leader to reset the iris, and would pull it from behind, saving much time.

- A Linhof 45 revolving back off a Technika IV, milled down, fits a Super D. The same Graflok accessories fit it. But in milling one must mill off the fat rod inside the back, otherwise the ground glass can get crushed. Makes a lovely looking back, with more style than the straight Graflok.

- A prism replacing the hood on a 3x4 Super D in a Bridgeport, CT camera store.

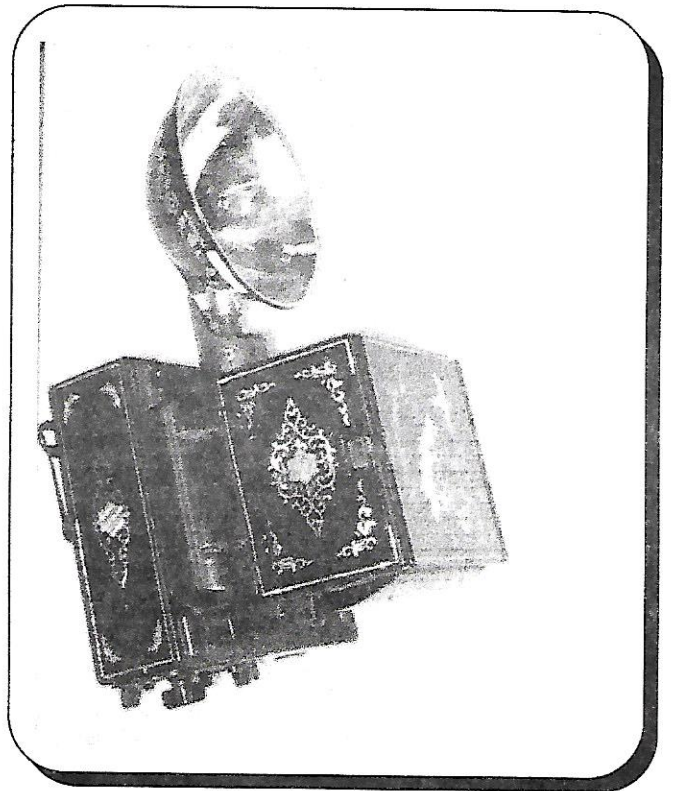
- A mirror focus panel replacing the hood on a 4x5 Super D. It was home made and used a cigar box with mirror off an older Graflex SLR. Whatever it was had a direct look at the mirror's image on ground glass with another mirror to direct that image straight back at you - a giant viewer!

- A western Massachusetts owner took two D's mounted on a swivel socket, so he used one for focus, and the other with a flash contact on the front shutter as his "taking" lens. [like a giant twin lens reflex]. They were made to coincide focus on portraits, etc. in a studio

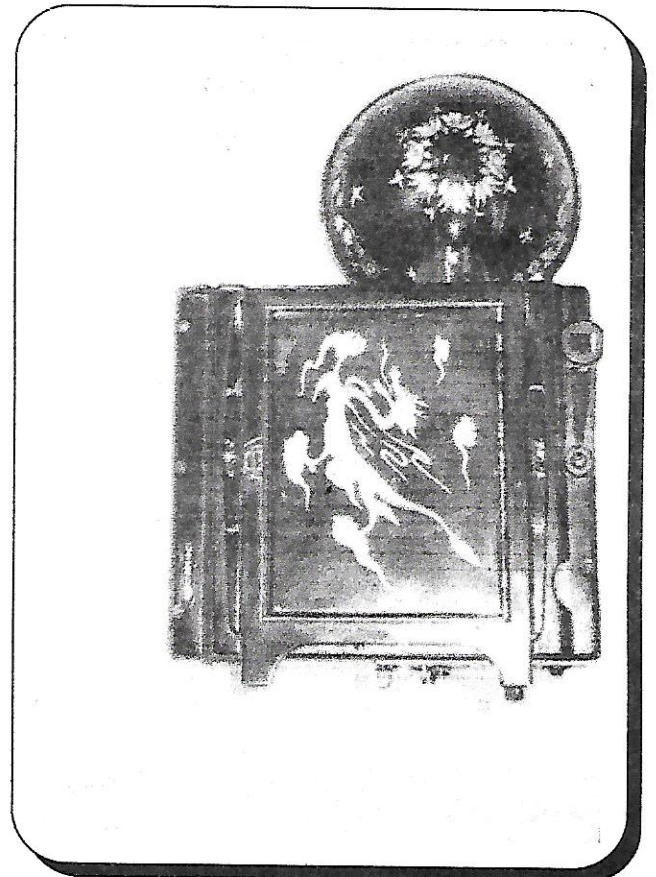
That's all Cliff could come up with at this time. We'll direct any questions about his stories to him.

MORE TREASURES AT GEORGE EASTMAN HOUSE by Mike Hanemann

This Combat Graflex is like no other in existence. There is little known about the very ornate version of the W.W.II Combat Graflex. It appears that the camera was done in cloisonné by the South Korean Government and presented to the US Army General commanding in Korea. It was a gift in appreciation of the general's actions in defending South Korea against invasion in the early 1950's.



Top & bottom: views of the exotic Combat Graphic from the South Korean Government



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.

WANTED: Copy, original or Xerox of booklet "Photography from the Air." Contact Mike Hanemann, address at right.

WANTED: Pre-Anniversary Speeds 5x7 & 4x5. Also appropriate orig. lens w/o shutter for c.1914 Speed 4x5 [e.g. B&L Zeiss Tessar Ic #15 (6")]; also 65mm Optar WA or WA Raptar for Pacemaker 23. Nate Skipper, 1108 Country Club Dr., New Bern, NC 28562 252-637-6703

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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email)

NOTICE:

STARTING WITH OUR NEXT ISSUE, WE WILL BE FEATURING A NEW COLUMN: "ASK TIM HOLDEN." [Tim worked for Graflex for many years]. Send inquiries to Mike Hanemann, address above.



At left - lots of Graflexes and Elwood enlargers. Photo taken sometime - when?