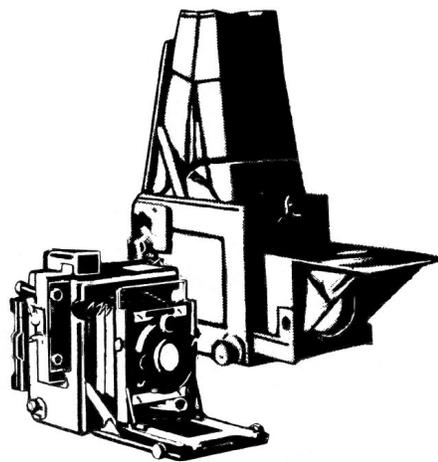


GRAFLEX HISTORIC QUARTERLY

Since 1996



VOLUME 15 ISSUE 4

FOURTH QUARTER 2010

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Speed Graphics in the US Army Air Corps/Forces and US Air Force

By Bruce Thomas
(Coffs Harbour, Australia)

We all know the Speed Graphic was the staple US military still camera before, during, and for some time, after WWII. While the Army/Signal Corps was the greatest user of these cameras and generally the only branch of the Forces to have specially modified parts (the black Kodak Supermatic shutters) or whole cameras (the olive drab PH-47-J and KE-12(1) Pacemaker Speed Graphics), the other Forces used pretty much off-the-shelf cameras.

Going back to WWI, the US Army Signal Corps was issued Kodak 3A (finished in brown leather and brass hardware) cameras, a total of a few hundred Graflex 3A, Tele Graflex (both in brown leather and brass hardware) cameras, and possibly some standard Speed Graphic cameras. Between the World Wars, specially designated military Graflex cameras seemed to have died out.

In about 1937, however, the US Army Air Corps contracted Graflex to supply the USAAC designated "Camera, Ground-Type C-3," an off-the-shelf 4x5" Speed Graphic, equipped with a dial-set Compur shutter and a Carl Zeiss Tessar lens. After 1940 the same designation (C-3) was applied to the new Anniversary model 4x5" Speed Graphic, and this continued until about 1943, under different contract numbers. A departure from the seemingly strict Armed Forces 4x5" format occurred when Graflex supplied the US Army Air Forces with Miniature Speed Graphics, imaginatively named "Camera, Ground-Type C-4." Strangely, although all the C-4 cameras known to me have 1941 serial numbers, Air Forces documentation suggests they weren't supplied until 1943. Sometime after 1947, the latest Pacemaker Speed Graphic was supplied under contract as - yes, you guessed it - the "Camera, Ground-Type C-6." Early in the 1950s, all military Graflex contracts were done

through the General Services Administration, no matter which branch of the Forces the cameras were destined for, so it is quite possible for a Navy or Army camera to have an "AF33 (xxx) xxxxxxxx" contract number.

The only way for the collector to positively identify one of the above cameras is if the large metal (or plastic for the C-4) nomenclature plate is attached to the outside of the front, or drop bed. If the plate is missing, but there are four small rivets or even rivet holes in the door, it is probable, if the camera is a standard Speed Graphic, that it is a C-type camera. A white circular Acceptance Stamp (see details under C-4 below) and/or three dots in the viewfinder of a Miniature Speed Graphic or all black wartime Speed Graphic are other hints.

Here are details of the officially designated USAAC/USAAF/USAF versions:



C-4 Miniature Speed Graphic

The Army Air Forces C-4 Miniature Speed Graphic ("Camera, Ground-Type C-4") was one of the few exceptions, being, as far as my research has uncovered, the only "official" military Mini Speed ever issued. The three in my collection are all 1941 models, with serial numbers 292625, 293525 and 293703. This seems to be the only year of manufacture for the C-4 model, although strangely, a 1943 Air Forces manual states that apart from having 2 cameras "in hand," there were to be deliveries of 298 camera sets in April '43 and another 600 delivered in May '43, suggesting a total of only 900 C-4 camera sets, at a cost of \$109.26 each.

The major difference between the Air Forces version and the standard camera is the special black solenoid, allowing the shutter to be tripped by the flash handle, mounted on a small black custom plate screwed to the lensboard and immediately above the lens. This same solenoid was later used, with slight modifications, in the wooden-bodied US Navy/USMC Combat Graphic toward the end of WWII.



C-3 4x5" Pre-Anniversary and Anniversary Speed Graphics

This ("Camera, Ground-Type C-3") is the most common version of the AAF Speed Graphics. The C-3 history spans both the pre-Anniversary and Anniversary Speed Graphics, and the earliest (Pre-Anniversary) example in the collection is serial number 197145, from 1937. My C-3 Anniversary model serial numbers are 268369 (1940), 308065 (1942), 320902 (1943) and 321051 (also 1943). All cameras appear to be stock standard models of their time, meaning some have chrome metal parts, and others are all black. The all black wartime Anniversary models have the three red dots on the front of the top viewfinders, while the Pre-Anny version and earlier Anniversary versions have no dots. All cameras have a metal military nomenclature plate fitted to the outside of the front door.

The 1937 model has a Wollensak Alphax with a No. 32 Kodak Anastigmat f/4.5 6 3/8" lens. As the lens serial number begins with "EC," I believe it was replaced by the AAF in 1941, as my earliest Anniversary C-3 also has the same shutter/lens combination. Research suggests the early pre-Anniversary C-3 cameras were originally fitted with a dial-set Compur shutter and a Carl Zeiss Tessar of 13.5cm or 15cm focal length. The Alphax shutters are connected to the first model (c1941) Graflex flat top solenoid which is mounted on the right side, as viewed from the front of the camera.

All the wartime C-3 Anniversary models seem to be fitted firstly with a No. 3 Supermatic shutter and No. 32 Kodak Anastigmat f/4.5 6 3/8" lens and later the silver No. 2 Supermatic shutter and 127mm Ektar lens, although there appears to be considerable overlap. I have seen a photo (in a 1943 Air Forces manual) of a C-3 equipped with a Graphex shutter and an unknown lens, which looks large enough to be the No. 32 Kodak or maybe a 135mm Optar. All of mine have the standard Graphic spring back, and I haven't seen any with a Graflex back. Whether any C-3s were made after 1943 is not known, so if anyone has any information on later ones, please let me know. A May 1943 USAAF publication mentions 4778 cameras already "at hand" with further procurements of 400 (April '43), 400 (May '43), 491 (June '43), 500 (July '43) and a further 300 for each month August through December 1943, giving a grand total of 8,069 camera outfits (see next paragraph) at the cost of \$243.35 each.

The C-3 came in a fully loaded black leather, purple lined case



device for centering subjects at very close distances, at 4 feet, 2 feet or 18 inches when the viewfinder rear eyepiece distance is set at 6 feet.

Yet another difference, but only in contrast with the C-3 and C-6 4x5" cameras, is the use of a plastic military nomenclature plate, on the outside of the front door, instead of the usual metal version. Most of the plastic plates are now brittle and very fragile. On two of my cameras, the plates are now missing, but the four rivet holes show where they were. The C-4 plate is about half the size as those on the C-3 and C-6 Speed Graphics.

Two of the cameras are fitted with the small silver-faced Graphex shutter and Graflex Optar f4.5 101mm, and the above mentioned black solenoid, while the third camera (number 293525) is fitted with a silver-faced Kodak Supermatic No. 1, an Ektar f/4.5 101mm with an "EC"(1941) serial number prefix, and an early Graflex solenoid. Whether this last camera left the factory equipped like that is speculation. It is certainly different from other (and that's not many) C-4 cameras I have seen. All three cameras have a circular white Acceptance Stamp* on the inside of the bed: number 292625 and number 293703 have small stamps, approx 9mm diameter, while number 293525 (again the odd one) has a 15mm diameter stamp. All C-4s have the standard Mini Speed Graphic spring back, of course, with the built-in focal plane shutter flash sync.

The C-4 was supplied in a small unmarked brown leather-cased outfit, that seems poorly equipped when compared to the other military outfits, or "camera sets." Inside the case is the camera, lens hood and K2 filter, a two-cell Graflex flash with 5" reflector, two flash sync cords, one double-sided Graphic sheet film holder, and a Graphic film pack adapter. Barely enough room is left for a couple of flash bulbs.

* Acceptance Stamp: When a camera was delivered, especially to the US Army Signal Corps or Air Force, they were inspected, and, if satisfactory, they were marked with an Acceptance Stamp...circular and in white paint for ASAAF cameras and square or triangular in red paint for Signal Corps cameras. The USAAF version stamp on the C-4 cameras is in at least two sizes and in the larger version (the one I can read) has the letters "AN" (Acceptance Number) in the top half of the circle and "R196" in the lower half. Not all USAAF cameras have the stamp, but similar markings appear on some of the 16mm aircraft gun cameras as well.

with "CASE TYPE C-3 CAMERA" proudly stenciled in white across the front. Inside was the camera, a Crown No. 1 wooden tripod, 3-cell Graflex flash, side extension flash, 7" and 5" reflectors, flash cords, six Graphic double-sided sheet film holders, a Graphic film pack adapter, lens hood and filter holder, filters, a black focusing cloth, and, in some outfits, a Bausch & Lomb 88mm wide-angle lens. There was also room for film, flash bulbs and a light meter. I swear every photographer finished the war 4" shorter after carrying that lot around!



C-6 4x5" Pacemaker Speed Graphic

The "Camera, Still Picture, 4x5 Negative, Type: C-6" is a stock black leather/chrome hardware Pacemaker Speed Graphic, the only non-standard features being the C-6 nomenclature plate on the door and a matching large metal depth-of-field table, for the fitted Graflex Optar 135mm lens, mounted on the camera top. The shutter is a Graphex (X) version. My camera (number 851216) is from 1949 and has the "brand new" Grafluk back attached, but I have seen others with the standard Graphic spring back. This camera just reminded me of another little quirk of all military Pacemakers - the serial number plate in the drop bed generally faces the photographer, rather than the front edge of the bed. The only real exceptions I've found to that discovery are the Signal Corps KE-12(1) and the US government top rangefinder Speed Graphics.

Again, the full cased outfit was virtually the same as the above C-3 outfit but housed this time in an olive drab green Vulcanoid case. The standard flash units in this later outfit were updated to Graflite models, but everything else is basically the same, including the Crown No. 1 tripod. There is a full list of the C-6 camera set components attached under the lid. My outfit also came with an Optar 162mm lens and appropriate viewfinder mask.

C-6 4x5" Beseler Press

This one, also named "Camera, Still Picture, 4x5 Negative, Type: C-6" is included only as it pretty much shared the same outfit as the C-6 Speed Graphic. The case has slightly different dimensions from the standard Graflex case, and there was no tripod included, but nearly every accessory in the brown Beseler Vulcanoid case came from Graflex! Again, the flash was a Graflite model with 7" and 5" reflectors, and there were six Graphic sheet film holders and a Graphic film pack adapter, a lens hood and filter set.

The camera was fitted with a rear focal plane shutter and a Rapax shutter/Wollensak Raptar 135mm lens. It used its own version of the Grafluk back, so all the usual Graflex accessories could be used. It seems this outfit was made only in 1958, then reliability and cost, at a rumored \$800 each, forced the Air Force or Beseler (see below) to cancel the contract. Alas, the rangefinder and rear shutter on mine also do not work.

Again, according to Tim Holden: "*Beseler people were good friends of ours, and, as a matter of fact, one of the guys who evaluated the Graphic "70" eventually went to Beseler. They thought they could produce a 4x5 focal plane shutter camera which would compete satisfactorily with the Speed Graphic. They used a two-curtain type focal plane shutter. We spent a lot of time and made many experimental models of two-curtain shutters for the Graflex line but were never able to get anything we were satisfied with and would be simple and easy to make and would be as dependable. Consequently, Beseler bid on a bunch of cameras which we bid on, and they found out that that type of curtain shutter was more difficult to make than they had expected. I believe that they supplied a few of the cameras but finally defaulted on the contract. Graflex finally finished up supplying the Speed Graphics.*"

The civilian Beseler is quite a scarce camera, making the military version, especially in the complete cased outfit, very rare.

Later Speed Graphics

As mentioned in the opening paragraphs, sometime in the early 1950s, the various branches of the Forces lost their individuality when it came to camera designations, although the Signal Corps managed somehow to continue with their own versions. Top rangefinder Speed Graphic, Super Graphic and Super Speed Graphic cameras were supplied to the Air Force, Navy and other government agencies, still with metal nomenclature plates but with generic names such as "Camera, Still Picture, Press Type, 4x5." It is therefore a little difficult to pinpoint which branch used which camera.

The Collecting Side

When you live both south of the equator and around the globe, the buying options for the collection are very limited, with the major auction site the only real source of US military camera equipment. Even discovering some wanted items online takes patience, searching skills and a lot of luck! Those other live auctions, featuring a few attractive items, usually end at some ungodly hour of the Down Under night, so they rarely get my full attention.

Many military cameras were defaced or disguised after the various wars and aren't really worth collecting, unless, of course, they are incredibly rare. Some sellers don't mention a military connection at all in the description; however, the photos might show a hint of an Acceptance Stamp, a corner of a metal nomenclature plate or, in the case of the Army Air Forces cameras, those three dots in the viewfinder - but don't tell anyone! If anyone has any further information or any other camera variation I might need, please contact me through my website: <http://graflex.coffsbiz.com>.



Catching the Elusive Century Graphic

By Jim Hurtle

This is a story about when I was a high school student photographer, the desire to own any 2¼ x 3¼ Century Graphic, and, much later in life, finding them aplenty.

Rewind the calendar to 1969, when the family moved in my sophomore year in high school from Cincinnati, Ohio, to Scottsdale, Arizona. I joined the high school newspaper and yearbook staff as a student photographer. I used my Pentax H1a for most of the work; however, larger photos demanded higher quality (larger) negatives. I used the school-owned Yashica TLR on occasion, which had a malfunctioning flash sync. Julia, the yearbook company representative, showed me how to use the school's 4x5 Anniversary Speed Graphic, including how to load film holders and process sheet film. However, the 4x5 Graphic was cumbersome, since the school's Beseler enlarger did not have a lens that would cover the 4x5 format.

One of my peer student photographers had a Century Graphic (red bellows and all) with a very good lens (a Schneider Xenotar) and got good results. I looked in every Phoenix area pawn shop and camera store for a Century Graphic that I could afford, but, at that time, they were all priced way out of my reach or were not in good working order. The Century Graphic still had quite an appeal and fetched a good price. I settled for a Yashica-Mat EM that I bought for \$30, until I could find an affordable Century.

Unbeknown to me was the desire of the fellow student photographer to trade in his Century Graphic for a Minolta SLR 35mm camera (even if he offered it to me, I could not have afforded such a mint Century). He traded in the camera for the Minolta at a local camera store. Once Julia, the yearbook com-

pany representative, learned that he had traded the camera, she immediately went to the store and purchased the entire Century outfit with the Xenotar lens, roll holders, and lots of other accessories. This camera became her favorite for group pictures and color work, since it would take 120 roll film, and she let me use it occasionally. Julia Miller later authored a book for student photographers, [News and Yearbook Photography](#), and this Century Graphic is featured in one of the illustrations.

I took many photographs for the yearbook and newspaper with my Pentax H1a, Yashica TLR, and occasionally the school's 4x5 Anniversary Speed Graphic. I later went on to Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma, to get an Electrical Engineering degree; however, I worked for a few semesters as a student photographer on the [Daily O'Collegian](#) staff, using my Pentax H1a. I worked holidays, summers, and weekends for Pipkin Photo Service (camera store) in Oklahoma City, always on the lookout for a used Century Graphic. In my four years of part-time camera shop employment, a Century Graphic never surfaced.

I landed my first full-time job as an electrical engineer at P&G's paper products plant in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, and, in my leisure, enjoyed photography. I always would check area photo stores for a used Century Graphic. I finally gave up and purchased, through the mail, a new-but-discontinued Omega-Rapid 100 outfit at a clearance price. I used it perhaps 10 times and was disappointed. I wanted ground-glass focusing and limited front movements that a Graphic would offer and the ability to use sheet film, so an entire roll of 120 film would not have to be wasted for just a few shots.

Don, who owned the local camera shop, sold me a 4x5 Super Graphic in perfect working order (even the electric trip worked). I still use this camera for critical work. However, I still was looking for a working Century Graphic. During the 1980s, before digital photography was around, I was doing articles for telecommunications history publications and needed a camera that I could photograph antique telephones with minor perspective correction and was economical to use, as I did not want to waste an entire roll of 120 film to photograph one or two items for an article. A quick glance at the local small-town newspaper in Southeast Missouri, circa 1985, indicated that a Century Graphic outfit was for sale. The camera was mint. \$150 got the whole deal including the film holders, series 6 filters, roll backs (2), Graflite flash gun, film pack adapter, and a gray Vulcanoid case. I bought the Century and began using the camera immediately. In spite of the fact that the camera has the much-maligned Graftar 103mm f4.5 triplet lens with simple 5-speed shutter, it became one of my favorite cameras.



Later after we moved to Northern Kentucky, I took a picture of Kentucky's old capitol in Frankfort that took a ribbon in a monthly contest (above article title).

Living in Northern Kentucky (Greater Cincinnati) where there are camera shows (swaps) multiple times per year and antiques malls, I started finding Century Graphics to be plentiful.

In the 1990s, I found myself still acquiring a few more Graphic 2x3 cameras including:

Century with a Graffar shutter (the second one)

Century that I retrofitted with a Schneider Xenar 100mm f3.5 Linhof lens

Century with an f4.5 Xenar and red bellows Miniature Speed Graphic with an Ektar lens (with a late, coated f/4.5)

2x3 Crown Graphic with an Optar lens



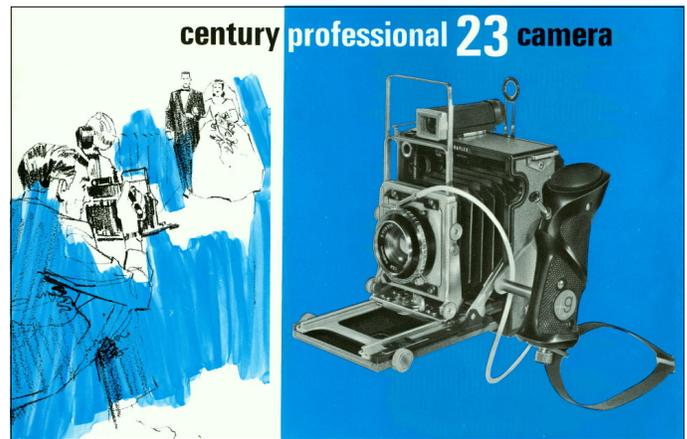
Century Graphics

Digital photography (with a Canon EOS) is typically the way I do photography for travel, fun, and articles. However, I still enjoy loading some film holders and taking photos with these great Graflex cameras. Kodak's discontinuance of Tri-X Professional film in 2x3 sheets and Ilford's lack of general availability of FP4+ and HP5+ films did pose an inconvenience. However, Freestyle Photo's continued availability of Efke and house-brand 2x3 sheets still allows me to use these cameras with sheet film. Recently, I was able to order FP4+ (2 boxes) on a yearly special-order basis through Freestyle and Ilford.

I prefer sheet film over 120 roll backs, as I can take and develop as many or as few shots as I need, and the film is flat. I get great developing results by using stainless steel hangers in total darkness with 1/2 gallon hard-rubber tanks. My Omega D5 enlarger has the special film holder for the slightly narrower sheet-film format, and using HC110 Dilution B is economical. I use it for 20 sheets.

In summary, it took me 17 years to find my first Century Graphic, and I have found a whole bunch more since then. I just need more time away from my "day job" to use these great cameras. Retirement is eminent once our daughter graduates from college, so the opportunity to use the Centuries will be there.

[Ed. We encourage readers to submit articles about their experiences with Graflex cameras.]



The Century Professional

By Ken Metcalf

The 2 1/4 x 3 1/4 Century Graphic was introduced to dealers in the August 1949 issue of Graflex Trade Notes, with delivery by Christmas.... if ordered promptly. The initial retail price for the "Camera Value of the Century" was \$109.50.

"Effective Immediately" headlined Graflex Trade Notes for January 1950. Supposedly based on "hundreds of requests for a camera under \$100.00," Graflex reduced the retail price of the Century to \$99.50. For dealers with cameras in stock, Graflex had the goofy idea to remove the viewfinder (the only difference between the two cameras), but leave the mounting plate. Although in an earlier issue of the Quarterly, it was stated that the "Century" name was used because of the price, this does not appear to be correct.



Shown above is an outfit put together around a 1966 "Professional" camera. The Century is still a good camera for the user, as well as the collector, primarily because of the availability of roll film, accessories and quality lenses. In assembling this outfit, all accessories were available in 1966, though, as with the Strobflash and lens, not necessarily the top of the line. Although more appealing with a red bellows, the Professional model had a gray body and black bellows. Graflex was purchased by General Precision Equipment in 1956, and it was called the Graflex, Inc. subsidiary; therefore, the camera name plate still used that name.

The price of the outfit was determined by the lens/shutter fitted to the camera.

Lens	Order Code	Dealer Cost	Retail Price
101mm Graflex Graftar f/4.5 in a No. 0 Prontor SVS shutter	CY530P	\$223.69	\$335.50
80mm Rodenstock Heligon f/2.8 in a No. 0 Synchro-Compur shutter	CY58P	\$297.27	\$450.50
100mm Zeiss Tessar f/3.5 in No. 0 Synchro-Compur shutter	CY341P	\$273.69	\$410.50

Prices effective September 1967.

OUTFIT P (Professional)

Lens/Shutter See above chart. This camera is fitted with an 80mm Schneider Xenotar f/2.8 in a No. 1 Compur M-X shutter, which was available at the time. Compur and Prontor shutters require a Cap Cord. (catalog number 2721 for the 20" straight version, and catalog number 2821 for the Expand-O-Cord 13" to 36" version)

Kalart Rangefinder Model E-6-C (catalog number 3101)

Graflite Mounting Plate Kit (catalog number 2754)

Century Multi-Grip (catalog number 9127) If purchased separately, avoid the catalog number 7383 and 7386 xl grips, as the mounting plates are made for the xl cameras.

RH/10 Rapid-Vance Roll Film Holder (catalog number 1253, blue lever) Also, the RH/8 (red lever), RH/12 (green lever) and RH/20 (yellow lever) roll holders could be used on the Century or xl cameras. For the camera user, Bill Inman (GHO Volume 7, Issue 3) recommends the Graphic Pro Model II (introduced in 1971 and bearing the Singer name on the case and carriage) as a much improved version. In Bill's opinion, the new roll holder dropped the color coded advance lever in favor of a black and silver lever to make the holder look more like a 35mm camera. From samples, it appears that some of the Model II roll holders had all-black advance levers.



Left, RH/10 General Precision era Roll Holder. Shown is yellow dark slide handle, which is one of several colors that could be ordered for roll holders and film pack adapters. Right, Singer Pro Model II.

Long Optical Finder (catalog number 9132, and 9133 for the mounting clip) The long finder was recommended for extension over the film carriers.

Added Items

Graphic Film Pack Adapter (catalog number 1232) It was made from 1945 through 1973, including a red letter GPE version.



Graphic Sheet Film Holder (catalog number 1212) This holder, called "Type 5," was introduced in 1949 by Graflex, Inc. and could be used on cameras with a Graphic or Graflok back on Graphic and xl cameras. The improved Riteway holder was introduced in 1952, but only in the 4x5 size.

Graflite Jr. Battery Case A mounting plate was supplied with the basic unit and attached to the Kalart rangefinder, but mounting clamps, a battery case and 5" reflector can be assembled in parts or as a single unit.

Carrying Case What is pictured is the Customcase (catalog number 4228), made from brown leather, which was no longer sold in 1966. What was available in 1966 was the fiber Vulcanoid Handicase (catalog number 4212) with dimensions of 9 x 17½ x 9-3/4.

Stroboflash I (catalog number 2006) This unit was chosen because of the compact Power Pack and the nerdy Belt Holster. Also available at the time were the Stroboflash II and IV. See the Quarterly, Vol. 13, Issue 1, for details.

Item to be Added

Graphmatic Film Holder (for six sheets of film, catalog number 1266) for Graphic 2¼ x 3¼ and xl cameras. A version for Graflex cameras was produced, but it was discontinued after 1956, while the Graphic model continued until camera sales were discontinued in 1974. For this camera, the holder should have "CAT. NO. 1266 Graphic" and the words "General Precision." Earlier holders, 1949-1954, have an octagonal logo with the Graflex camera in the middle on the back of the holder. From 1954-1956, they have a circle around the octagonal logo. In these earlier holders, the wording was either "23" Graflex or "23" Graphic. From 1956 General Precision is used, and after 1966, Singer is shown in red. Also, see the GHO, Vol. 7, Issue 4, for more details.





Using a Process Lens on a Speed Graphic

By Adam Robins

One of the well-known features of the Pacemaker Speed Graphic is the focal plane shutter, a curtain with slits of different sizes in it, that is pulled through the focal plane. This, as an experimenter and photographic kit-basher, was very attractive to me when I was selecting my first 4x5 press camera.

I picked up a Pacemaker Speed Graphic with a Kodak 127mm f/4.7 Ektar lens a few years back. I have found the 127mm lens to be quite versatile and a great general-purpose lens for a lot of what I do with my Speed Graphic. Still, that curtain shutter kept calling to me. Sometimes, while watching a video in the basement on a warm summer evening, my hands would find their way to my Speed Graphic, and I would start winding and firing the focal plane shutter several times in order to make it a little more limber.

I started looking around for another focal length. Aware that, with my focal plane shutter, I didn't necessarily need a lens set in a shutter, I started looking at shutter-less options. Brass barrel lenses have become popular in recent years among those looking for the particular characteristics and "bokeh" they impart to an image. Because of this, they are a bit dear for my budget, which tends toward the low side in photographic circles. While I would love to try one some day, I hit upon another option. I began looking at process lenses.

Process lenses from the graphic arts industry are not terribly hard to find. Many of them are made for flat reproduction, and, therefore, are best suited to flat subjects. I had read that, stopped down a bit, they often make decent enough landscape lenses. Since I use my Speed Graphic primarily on a tripod, and primarily on still subjects, and since my shooting style tends toward stopped down photos and increased depth-of-field, the inherent limitation of a process lens is not a major consideration for me.

I shopped around a bit at secondhand shops and on that well-known on-line auction site, and I eventually found and received an Ilex Paragon 7½" f/4.5 lens, or the equivalent of about

191mm, which is closer to a "normal" lens for a 4x5 camera. The lens arrived in near perfect condition, with just a little scuff on the aperture ring. Since there is no shutter, there are very few moving parts, so the condition of the glass is a major consideration. Not having been carried extensively in the field or stored in some dank basement, the glass is nice and clean, with no visible hazing, separation, or fungus. The aperture can be tightened all the way down to f/32. On cloudy days, which are numerous in the Pacific Northwest where I live, I find that I close it down to only about f/8 or f/11 when shooting film such as Efke PL 25 M and shoot at 1/30 second.

The lens indicates that it was manufactured for Camerz. I have done some research into what Camerz products were used for primarily. It appears that they made long roll cameras for projects such as school portraits. This particular lens has no focus feature built in, so if it had been used in the past for such a purpose, it would have most likely been mounted on a camera with a bellows track and a knob for adjusting focus, much like the Speed Graphic. I would still be interested in learning more about Camerz.

Gary L. Quay, a photographer friend and fellow large format enthusiast, offered a Speed Graphic lensboard for my project. I took my camera over to his house, forgetting to bring the lens. Fortunately, I had the dimensions, so we cut a rough hole in the board and finished it out with a mill file.

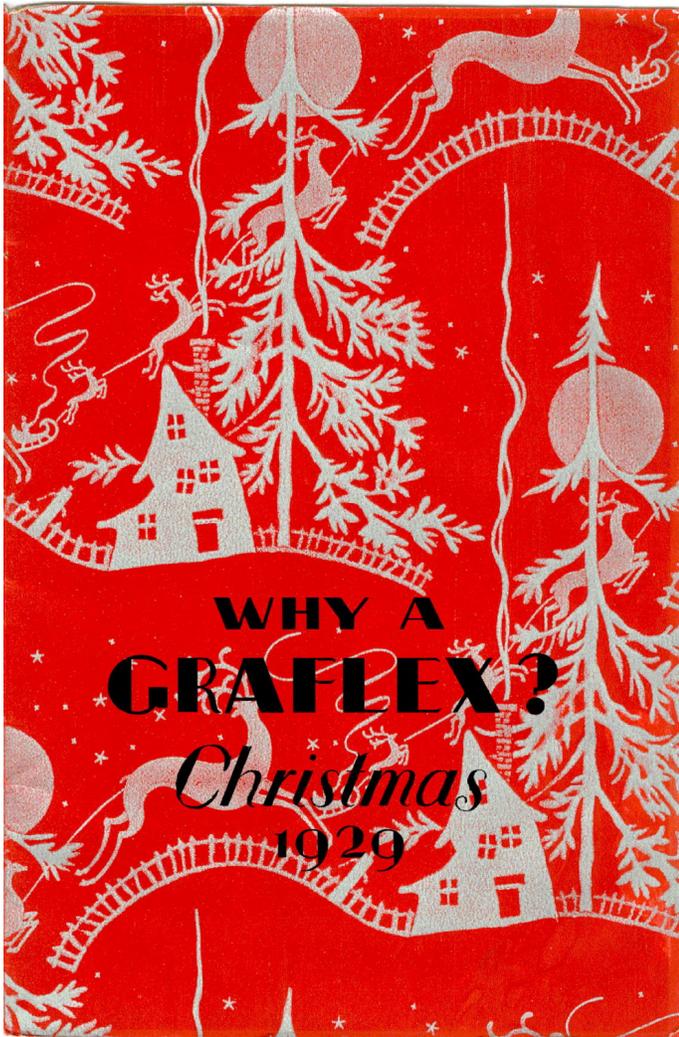
I took the lensboard home and filed it a bit more to fit the lens. While cutting the metal of the board, we had cut a little too far out on one axis, but this was still within the area covered by the flange of the lens. The flange attaches via threads on the barrel of the lens. Screwed all the way in, the flange does not quite cinch down tightly against the sides of the board, so I have made a shim "washer" out of styrene. Eventually, I may buy an actual metal washer, but, given the barrel size, this is not a standard hardware store item.

I look forward to trying out additional shutter-less lenses with this camera to see what sort of results I can get with some of these all-but-forgotten cast-off lenses.

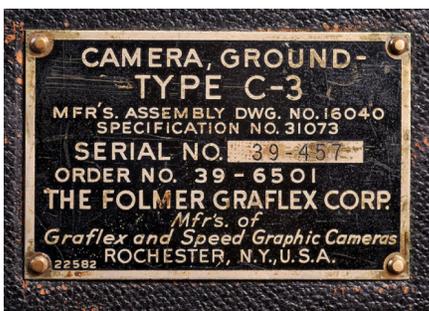


Graflex Historic Quarterly

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



Why A Graflex? Christmas 1929. 5-1/2 x 8-1/2 Folmer Graflex Corp. 20-page brochure. The cover is made from French folded paper, possibly wrapping paper. Because the cover is in poor condition, Bob Lansdale used PhotoShop to masterfully combine an inner page with the cover text.



1939 contract plate for 4x5 Pre-Anniversary Speed Graphic, courtesy Bruce Thomas.

Editor and publisher: Ken Metcalf
One-year subscription: mail US\$14
email Free

[Payable to **Ken Metcalf**]

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Mystery Auto Graflex Feature. Original?

From Jim Flack -

It seems to be an adjustable stop for the lens when racked all the way in. There is a metal tab on the inside of the camera that the screw contacts when fully retracted.

I have looked at dozens and dozens of pictures of the same model Graflex that are listed on eBay, and I have never seen another Auto Graflex with this feature. The grey paint color exactly matches the other hardware on the camera and it looks to me as if it was original when manufactured.

If you have seen this feature, or have an idea about its origin, please let Jim know at jimflack@tampabay.rr.com.