



Bennington passes Mt. Suribachi and Iwo Jima, where, on 19 February 1945, almost twenty years ago, she launched aircraft for support strikes over the Iwo Jima beachhead.

Better Pictures

A Few Hints on Buying a Camera



By Tom Meade, PH1

EDITOR'S NOTE: During our tour of Far East ports, many Sailors and Marines aboard Bennington will wear a camera like a uniform accessory. Many dozens more will buy foreign-made cameras with which to capture scenes from their Oriental Cruise of 1964. The article below, written by Tom Meade, PH1, of the Bennington Photo Lab, is designed to aid you in selecting your camera and at the same time, offer helpful hints in the art of taking quality photographs.

"Which camera should I buy?"

This question is asked almost every day by someone coming into the Ship's Photo Lab seeking the advice of an experienced Navy Photographer. There can only be one answer: "Buy the camera that suits your particular needs best." If you desire slides or super prints to insert into your photo album, a visit to the Ship's Store will eliminate an exhaustive search through camera counters on our store stocks several types of amateur cameras. Eastman Kodak and Ansco manufacture fixed-lens cameras in the low price range which fill the needs of shutterbugs who desire snapshots.

If you happen to be a serious hobbyist and aspire to become a professional, you have a wide selection to choose from, the micro film to the 120 film size in still cameras to the 35mm camera and projectors. Should you plan building a complete camera kit with accessory lenses, adapters, tubes, bellows and other components, you'll find the more expensive models to your liking. It is easy to spend in excess of \$1,000, depending on the extent of your ambitions. Generally speaking, 35mm professional-type cameras will cost (as the Far East market) from \$75 to \$200, with features and quality comparable to each other, so much so in fact that it is advantageous, in some instances, to buy two \$75 cameras vice one \$200 camera, depending, as always, on your own particular needs.

The reflex models seem to be the most popular sellers over here but, remember, there are good reasons for direct viewfinder systems along with the reflex models. It is very difficult to focus the reflex in dark scenes. Actually there are only two professional reflex models using 120 film manufactured in Japan that this writer is familiar with; a twin lens model with interchangeable lenses and bellows between the lens and the camera body which runs about \$90 at the exchange. The other, a single lens reflex costing in excess of \$300. Naturally, there are several amateur twin lens reflex models priced less than \$50.

Remember, buying an expensive camera is, in itself, not going to give you good pictures. All it can do is record what you see. Compose your subjects and place them in the proper light situations. Read the instructions that accompany your film and when all else fails, follow directions.

For those interested in movie cameras, good luck. It takes skill and patience to make a movie. Some of the do's and don'ts can be compressed into a short paragraph.

After buying the camera of your choice, read the manual, make a few dry runs and then load your first roll of film. Moving the movie camera is okay when following a moving subject but do it slowly, keeping the subject framed at all times. Fanning a camera (moving it like a paint brush) will guarantee you lousy pictures. Hold the camera still and, if at all possible, have the action move towards you. Keep your scenes longer than four seconds to insure good viewing. Subjects can be recognized in less than twelve seconds. Don't linger on the subject longer than twelve seconds or your audience will become bored when viewing. Use signs for scene identification, leaving enough time for you to read the signs completely through the viewfinder.

Most 35mm cameras are equipped with a 200mm lens. This feature is good for making shots with correct composition without moving in with the camera. But the 200mm lens should NOT be used in and out as the name leads one to believe. Move the lens to get the subject size you desire and then commence shooting. Lipping in and out with the zoom lens is very distracting but, in some cases, it can prove to be quite comical.

Do buy a projector while you are successful. A good camera should have its product projected through a unit of similar quality. Recommended 35mm cameras are: Minolta SR-1 single lens reflex for \$75; Nikon F single lens reflex for \$160; Canon direct view finder for \$160; Pentax single lens reflex for \$110; and the Petri single lens reflex for \$55. Recommended twin lens reflex 28 by 28 using 120 film are: Ricoh-Plex for \$30; Toshiba Rat for \$50; Minolta Auto Cord for \$45; Minolta G-3 (with interchangeable lenses) for \$80.50; and the Bionica (a single lens with interchangeable accessories) for \$300 and up.

All the 35mm movie cameras in the Far East are of the amateur type and seem to be of good quality.

Good luck and good shooting, and if you get good pictures, pass them along to the Cruise Book Editor and let us all enjoy them. You will enjoy seeing them in published form.