

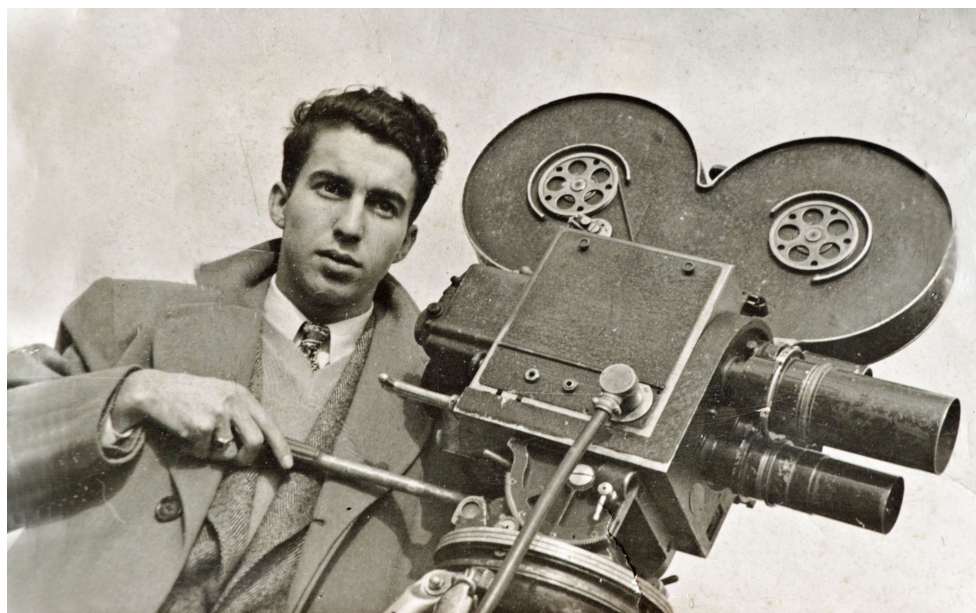
BLL Book Reviews – June 2014

Special Issue (Reissued Dec 2022)

Brewster Ladies Library
1822 Main Street
Brewster, MA 02631

In this issue: From Nineteen to Ninety: The Eventful Life of Jerry Kahn

(Reprint of this special Issue of the Book Reports for December 2022. Jerry Kahn is now 98 and has left Brewster and is living in upstate New York. His photographic career in peace and war is a fascinating one...Jim Mills)



Introduction

Jerry Kahn, a resident of Brewster and regular patron of BLL, has lived a very full and fascinating life. At the age of 19 he went into the US Army in 1943. Trained as a Motion Picture Photographer, Jerry spent two years in Europe during WW2. After many months in war-torn Britain and ten days in a bobbing ship in the English Channel, he landed at Normandy's Omaha beach on June 19th, only thirteen days after D-Day. In the following months Jerry was very busy photographing action in France and entered Paris on the day of its liberation in August 1944. Jerry then spent some time in Belgium dodging German Buzz Bombs and advanced with the allied troops into Germany filming much of the war damage and long lines of surrendering German prisoners.

Following his return to the States, Jerry pursued his photographic career. He first worked with Fox

Movietone News covering such events as the 1948 Presidential Conventions and President Truman's Inaugural the following year. From the late 1950s on, Jerry worked as a movie photographer for the New York TV stations, WNEW, WCBS, WABC and WNBC. During this time he covered many sporting and news events including the contentious 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago. He also had opportunities to meet and photograph many celebrities including Paul Newman, Richard Nixon, Sean Connery, Elvis Presley, George Burns and Michael Caine. He worked with many NY media personalities such as Gabe Pressman, Howard Cosell, Pia Lindstrom, and Peter Jennings. While living in New York, Jerry was a very close friend of Frank Loesser, the composer of such hit Broadway musicals as *The Most Happy Fella*, *How to Succeed Without Really*

Trying, and *Guys and Dolls*. Jerry Kahn retired to Cape Cod in the 1990s. The following document contains reminiscences and photos taken by Jerry of the many events of his life and the historical events that he witnessed, the interesting people he has met and covered and a description of the advances of

photography over the half century encompassed by this memoir. In preparing this chronicle, I have spent many enjoyable days meeting with Jerry and have immensely enjoyed his fascinating stories and perusing his large collection of historic photographs and memorabilia. Jim Mills

Early Life

Jerry Kahn was born in N.Y. City in 1924 and grew up in the New York metropolitan area. At age 5 his parents divorced. His mother worked selling fashionable clothing wholesale to retail outlets in the garment district. Jerry and his older brother were boarded out with friends in White Plains. When he graduated from Junior High he went to Roosevelt High School in Yonkers, NY and moved in with an aunt. One of his tasks, at that time, was feeding the dogs (two German Shepherds) using ground up horse meat, a primary source of dog food at that time. Jerry remembers that his uncle had a elegant car known as a Reo Royal which had a jump seat, and heavy metal bumpers. This car was like a beautiful Rolls with jump seats that unfolded out so you had five in the back and two up front. All in all this was a very classy car, with flower holders on the side and shades in the back, real steel bumpers, and silver color front vents. Jerry's uncle worked in the stock market district. He never managed to pass his driver's test, but he drove from Westchester to Wall Street every day. How he avoided a ticket for all those years Jerry will never know.

Entering the Army

Jerry entered the Army in the winter of 1943. He was inducted at Camp Upton, Long Island. He remained there for a month helping with new inductees before being sent to Camp Crowder, Missouri. In Missouri, Jerry went through Signal Corps Basic learning to be a code operator. Jerry remembers the cold barracks heated by Pot Bellied Stoves using coal with the accompanying strong coal smoke smell. Jerry's training, as a code operator involved typing messages into code machines in order to encode them for transmission. Jerry felt that this field did not make use of his experience and he contacted his former employer at Fox Movietone. They convince the Army to use Jerry as a Motion Picture photographer since the Army was looking for individuals who had experience in photography. When he was interviewed Jerry was asked detailed technical questions such as "What is the shutter degree of a Mitchell (camera Type)? He was floored by such questions but was still accepted into the Army Photographic Corp. Jerry was sent to the Army Pictorial Center in Astoria, Queens to be trained with motion picture cameras. At Astoria Jerry trained

In High School Jerry took photographs with an Argus camera of students and faculty around school to be used in the Class yearbook. He also organized the school movie club and would run the projector for students showing various films. After graduation in 1942 he took a job working for Fox Movietone News, a Movie Newsreel company, as an assistant cameraman. In the thirties and forties the newsreels were an integral part of any movie experience. Early movie cameras used at the time used 35mm film with 16mm portable cameras coming later. Jerry's Movietone work was as an assistant moving and setting up equipment in position for the photographer. Many jobs were sporting events especially football games. The primary area of news coverage was the NYC area up to Westchester County and as far south as Philadelphia. On one longer trip Jerry accompanied a new photographer to cover a tornado in Connecticut. This tornado struck the Plainville-Bristol section of the state on September 24, 1942.

with the son of Al Gold who was the Movietone cameraman who filmed the famous movie clip of the Hindenburg disaster at Lakehurst, NJ in 1937. Al Gold went to Lakehurst since the other cameramen did not want to go there. A dirigible landing was, at that time, such a routine procedure but, as it turned out, this landing was anything but routine. During his time at Astoria, Jerry also went through Army Basic training in New Jersey. When marching the recruits had to wear their gas masks during a very warm New Jersey summer resulting in a very hot and sweaty experience. In France Jerry used the Gas Mask's round container to carry ten 100ft rolls of 35 mm film. Each roll would provide 1 minute of video. (Film speed 95 ft/min)

During training at Astoria Jerry was sent out on a number of photo assignments. He learned the technical aspects of photography. In the early years the Army was using a single lens 35 mm Eyemo movie cameras. These early cameras had a single fixed field of view lens. The Army was, at the time, asking individuals to contribute motion picture cameras to the war effort since there weren't enough available.



Jerry (on left) in Training

Crossing to England

Jerry crossed the Atlantic to England in the fall of 1943. He and five other GIs went across on a Dutch liner, the only troops aboard. Their ship was part of a convoy that had many troop ships. The passage was fairly rough in the North Atlantic as winter approached. The chaotic ship movements caused many of the troops to frequently fall out of their bunks. Jerry would use a life preserver box during the rough periods

Stationed in England

Once he was in London, Jerry never had to do KP again. The British supplied food to the places where he and his group ate. The food was not the greatest but they ate where they were working, and had assignments all over England, photographing the build-up of army supplies, fields and fields of tanks trucks, guns, and of course the Army Air Corps taking off and returning from bombing runs and air battles. Jerry attended a briefing given by Eisenhower and his military staff. Taking indoor photos of the British and American military staffs, the British photographers would take time exposures by removing the cap over their camera lens for a period of time to expose their photographic plate and would cry out “caps off” to synchronize the cameras and to signify to the photo subjects should stay still for the exposure. The American photographers had flash bulbs for indoor shots and could use a fast shutter. Both groups used plate cameras with 4x5 inch photographic plates. In these cameras the cameraman focuses the scene on a ground glass screen before exposing the plate.

Jerry really doesn't remember too much of the work, but does remember all the good stuff, with girls, dancing, going out with them, meeting them in the parks, and in the dark at night, the only illumination produced by the bombs coming down. That all stayed with Jerry, the actual work never really stuck in his mind. They stayed in rented private buildings and ate in mess halls with the British. Their rooms were near Green Park in London and their group would assemble in the park for roll call in the morning. One of the major jobs in England was photographing the endless buildup of supplies for the upcoming invasion, miles and miles of weapons and trucks, as far as the eye could see. They also photographed the “fake” army under General Patton that was designed to

and avoid seeing the ship's motion helping him to avoid sea sickness. He was able to remain reasonably well during the stormy crossing. The GIs were put to use during the trip protecting the ship by manning Swiss made anti-aircraft guns. Their ship landed at Liverpool and Jerry was immediately put on KP (Kitchen Patrol) for his first day in England.

fool the Germans to our invasion intentions. All of these photos images were turned over to the Army due to their sensitivity and the danger of them leaking to the Germans. Pictures taken of bomb damage were also closely held, so that the Germans would have no idea of the effectiveness of their bombing. While Jerry was in London the Germans would still come over with one or two bombers a night. German Bombers continued to fly over London until May 1944. The first V-1 (buzz bomb) was launched at London on 13 June 1944. In one instance a number of British WACS were killed by a buzz bomb in a church in London.

Jerry would watch the anti-aircraft fire from the roof of his building. One bomb came down next to the building while he was on the roof but did not explode. Shrapnel would also fall on the city from the remains of the AA shells. The subways stopped at night to allow people to sleep in the tubes. Jerry's press office was next to a dance hall where Glen Miller played and they could frequently hear the music from the band. After the invasion of France, Miller would be killed flying across the English Channel. Jerry had an assignment officer who was very gung-ho and a stickler for shined shoes and other appearance items. This officer was uniformly disliked. Later on he went to France with the US Seventh Army and was run over by an American tank, Jerry thinks deliberately so. Jerry remembers going up north, on a vacation leave, to Liverpool to see the best Gilbert and Sullivan company doing the Mikado, a trip that he never forgot. At an USO club Jerry got to dance with John Kennedy's older sister, Kathleen known as Kick. Her older brother, Joe, and her husband, a British citizen, were killed in combat only months after their May 1944 wedding. Kathleen was also to die in an airplane crash after the war. At a Red Cross club Jerry also met Bob

Hopkins, the son of FDR's close advisor, Harry Hopkins. The GIs would constantly be propositioned by street walkers on the dark London streets. As Jerry said, you could talk to them but you couldn't see them.

In London, at that time, there were very thick fogs or more precisely smogs due to the heavy use of coal for heating in the city. Another aspect of the time was the widespread availability of horsemeat in the restaurants. It was his last week in London when with the first buzz-bombs arrived, the event sticking in his memory. Whenever he had free time, he used to get on a bus, not knowing where it would take him and ride it to the end of the line just to see the surrounding towns

and country. Though he did travel all over England on stories, but he never tired of seeing the sights. Of all his experiences Jerry remembers dancing at night the best. In London his group was working in a very posh section of London, where all the big brass were staying. Jerry has been back to London many times after the war since his wife came from London, and they took all of their vacations in England, and traveled all over Britain from top to bottom. Later on Jerry went with his eldest son who lived in London for a few years and then when he lived in Europe, they went touring through many of the European countries.



Eisenhower and Staff Prior to D-Day (Bradley- L; Eisenhower–Center; Montgomery–third on R)



Press at Eisenhower's Briefing (Jerry Kahn – Lower Left)



London Bomb Damage



Piccadilly Circus, London 1944

Bomb Damage London



Jerry in London



Jerry in London and Onboard Ship in English Channel

Ship-Board Card Game

Crossing to France

Jerry stayed on board his ship for about ten days waiting to cross to France, there were storms in the English Channel and there were priorities for the landing sequences. Jerry landed on Omaha Beach in Normandy on June 19, 1944 in an LST (Landing Ship Tank). By that time metal landing strips had been emplaced to make it easier to drive vehicles onto the beach. Their group had several jeeps and trucks with photographic equipment. Initially Jerry's group of photographers was attached to a Signal Corp Company but later on they were allowed to go off on their own. They went up to Cherbourg (the first port open for allied use) when it was liberated on June 27th. They found a beautiful chateau to stay in but it was taken away by an Army Colonel who decided that he wanted to stay there. They found a somewhat run down place that did have heat and facilities for cooking. So they could pick up their own food and cook it there. They went into an abandoned German fortification and found many cans of sardines which they managed to live off of for a while. The Army provided ten-in-one rations of

powdered foods which the troops did not find very edible. A typical menu included such canned items as butter-substitute spread, soluble coffee, pudding, meat units, jam, evaporated milk, and vegetables as well as biscuits, cereal, beverages, candy, salt, and sugar. Accessory items were cigarettes, matches, can opener, toilet paper, soap, towels, and water-purification (Halazone) tablets.

A partial dinner unit was enclosed in a cellophane bag-in-carton for easy distribution to the individual soldier for the noontime meal. Within the unit were biscuits, a confection, beverage powder, sugar, gum, and a can opener. These items were provided on the theory that an individual "snack" was sufficient for midday meals, when there would be neither time nor opportunity to prepare the ration for group feeding. Most of the regular units had food kitchens and Jerry's group tried whenever possible to eat with one of these units when filming their activities. The photographic groups, however, did not have any shortage of fuel.



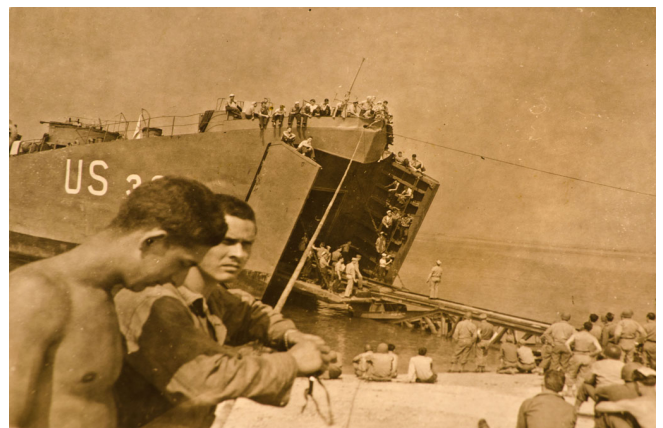
German Prisoners Omaha Beach



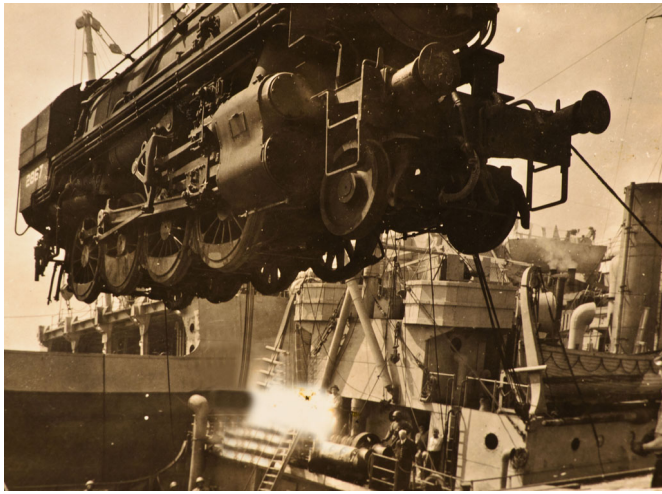
Bomb Explosion Omaha Beach



German Prisoners Cherbourg



LST Being Unloaded at Omaha Beach



Locomotive Being Unloaded at Cherbourg



Wounded Soldiers Being Evacuated at Cherbourg

Jerry filmed some of the action of the 30th Infantry Division. They were so near the front line at this point that he was concerned that the noise made when the movie camera he was running would tip off their position to the Germans. One intra-service problem cropped up when one General complained that the filming team was publicizing another Division, not his own. American troops were really shell shocked at that time particularly because of the impact

of the friendly fire from the sustained US Air Corps bombardment prior to the breakout from Normandy. When the American breakout occurred at St. Lo, the area had been so heavily bombed and shelled that it was strewn with rubble. This made it very difficult for the Americans to pursue the retreating Germans. One American bomb that fell short killed General McNair, the highest ranking American general (3- Star) to die in the Second World War.



General Lesley James McNair (May 25, 1883 – July 25, 1944)

Allied troops entered Paris on 24-25 August. The first two divisions were the 2nd French Armored Div. and the 4th US Infantry Div. Jerry's group entered Paris with the French Division. Not having radios they did not know what was happening and entering Paris was a surprise. Jerry said that it was just dumb luck that they happened to be there on liberation day. While there, they were able to stay in Versailles, just outside Paris, in a building that was made available by the mayor. While in Paris Jerry found the women, though a bit older than he, to be very friendly. The American soldiers, at that time had a lot of money and food which enhanced their desirability.

While there he saw De Gaulle in Paris while shooting was still going on from diehard Germans in the city. On August 25th General De Gaulle made his speech with victory parades held on August 26 & 29. Those who had collaborated with the Germans were punished in various ways. Some women were having their hair shaved off for having been too friendly to the Germans. Many women in Paris that Jerry met were quite sophisticated. Jerry went out with the daughter of the man who ran the swanky George V hotel in Paris. Jerry was in the Paris area for a couple of weeks before moving on to Liege in Belgium.



Jerry in Paris (Arc de Triomphe and Admiring Jeune Fille)



Woman Having Hair Shaved in Paris



Paris September 1944



Paris at Liberation



Jerry with Eyemo Movie Camera

In France and Belgium Jerry noted very strong pro-communist sympathies expressed by the population. This tendency certainly carried over into the immediate post-war period, showing up in many elections in the late forties and early fifties. One of Jerry's major jobs

was filming the supply efforts, the unloading of ships such as at Cherbourg and the organization of the trucks to deliver supplies to the front, the so-called Red Ball Express. Jerry and his fellow photographers would be able to get extra gas while filming these truck convoys.

Liege Belgium – Battle of Bulge

Jerry was in Liege in the fall of 1944. He would hear the buzz bombs going overhead. These unmanned V-1s had a characteristic buzzing sound due to their pulse jet engines that fired intermittently. Once the engine cut off they would begin their descent, exploding on contact. They would rattle his bed at night. A lot of the footage that Jerry shot of buzz bomb damage was not released by the Army since they didn't want the Germans to know how effective they were. In Richard Overy's, *The Bombers and the Bombed* mention is made that the Germans fired 12,000 V1s at Belgium in the last months of the war. While in Liege, on December 24th, one of the early, very noisy, German jet planes came over and dropped a bomb while Jerry was looking out a window and he got streaks of dust on his face that came off the window's venetian blinds during the blast. These were the first turbo-jet aircraft ever to be used in combat. The bomb fell across the river from where Jerry was but the force of the blast was great enough to blow down some of the doors in his building. The bomb fell on a truck that was unloading wounded GI's and all were killed. As Jerry said: "It was lucky for us they didn't have too many of these aircraft or the fuel to run them". At this point Germany was well ahead of the allies in jet technology. Jerry would bring canned food for the families of girls that he was going out with in Belgium

Jerry had gone to Amsterdam from Liege by barge on a canal. He was with a reporter and a still photographer on this family owned barge. It was interesting making the passage on the still functioning canal locks in the middle of a war. While Jerry was

Jerry had assignments as a movie cameraman, but he also had a still cameraman, a driver, and a reporter. This full crew would usually be used on assignments where he would be gone longer than a few days. For local assignments where he could get back soon, he didn't always have a full crew, but he didn't have to drive, he always had a driver. Most of the time he did have a still photo man shooting with him and on major stories had a reporter who did the writing. But he did cover some big ones stories without reporters such as the German prison camp with 55,000 prisoners which

Entering Germany

Jerry crossed the Rhine near a German POW Camp that he filmed. He later went into Cologne with a group of black troops who were putting in telephone service in what was at that time a segregated army. The German people by this point were sick of the war and were not hostile to the American troops. Their temperament was mostly passive. The GIs were told not to fraternize with the Germans but many picked up enough words, especially from the non-fraternizing literature supplied by the Army, to meet some young girls.

taking a movie clip of the skyline in Amsterdam, a German V2 rocket came down and exploded within his field of view. The V2 rockets were used as a basis for the Redstone rocket that launched the first American satellite in 1957. He stayed in Liege for a couple of months. When the Battle of the Bulge started in late December 1944 they had to retreat to the town of Namur also in Belgium.

During this period Jerry was working with a single lens 35mm Eyemo movie camera. He had more camera trouble than he could remember, off speed operation, scratches on the film. These problems didn't go away until they supplied him with a spider turret Eyemo, which in his opinion was a real camera. The Army really wasn't prepared to film the war, until 1945 when Jerry and his group got a proper operating camera. There was very little color film available and it was hard to get. It was available in 16mm cassettes but Jerry's Lieutenant took charge of most of it. One photo company, under a Colonel Stevens, who was shooting footage for Hollywood, had most of the color film available. The Colonel was the movie director George Stevens who made such well known films as *Gunga Din*, *I Remember Mama*, *A Place in the Sun*, *Giant* and *the Diary of Anne Frank*. Jerry's group was lucky to get workable 35 mm film, as some stories were ruined because the film was outdated or ruined because it sat around in boats too long before they got it. Jerry never remembered running out of film except on individual assignments, so they must have kept shipping film to them. The Army had to get film stock sent all over Europe to all the working cameramen, quite a problem.

made the Newsreels in America. Many years later a documentary was made on our mistreatment of German prisoners in a Canadian documentary.

Jerry commented that one of the biggest reporting mistakes in the war was giving all the D-day film to one officer to bring back to the ships and he lost it on the return to his ship. All our photos of D-day went into the ocean, only the British film of their landing was available for history. Now we have to rely on the re-enactments made for the movies to see what happened on that landmark day.

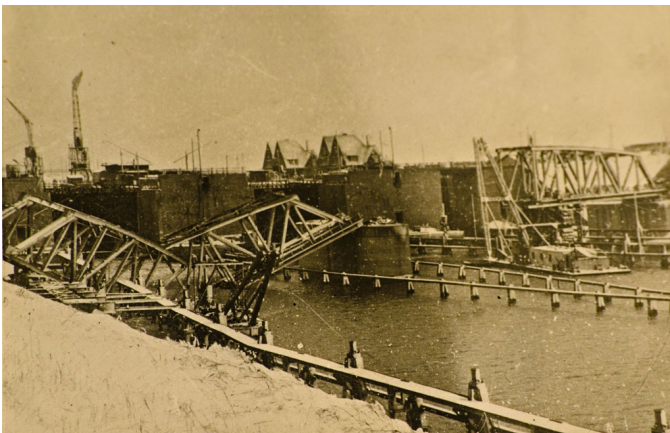
Going into Germany, Jerry went into the industrial area, the Ruhr, and filmed bomb damage of heavy industry at the Krupp Works. All that Jerry saw was rubble, the bombing of Germany had been so very intense. While advancing into Germany, Jerry went down into an underground storage area where the Nazis had hidden Fine Art Work and other valuables. Accompanying the group was the actor, Mickey Rooney, also dressed in an Army uniform. Rooney was in the service for 21 months in the 1944-5 period. Jerry also got the opportunity to film Bob Hope and Bing

Crosby performing for the USO in Europe. Jerry commented, "I never mentioned to you when I was deep in Germany near the end of the war that we went into some German villages that were made up as towns out of wood to look like towns, but had no one living in them, they were hoping we would waste bombs on them, I assume, there was nothing in them." Toward the end of the war Germany and most of Europe were starving, with real food shortage, and Jerry actually saw people eating out of garbage cans from a GI garbage dump in Germany. The Army took over a number of buildings for their own use when they entered Frankfurt, Germany, giving the occupants only

20 minutes' notice. An April 1945 report that Jerry has says that hundreds of German kids and parents jumped on garbage trucks and looted rotten oranges that were brought to be thrown out. It was really tough for civilians, especially in Germany. There were many refugees wandering about, many who were former prisoners of the Nazi regime. Europe was full of displaced people in the wake of the war, a situation that persisted for years. In Paris, just after the war, the population was not feeling the same food shortages that Jerry saw in Germany. Since Jerry did not have a radio, he did not know that the war was over until a few days later when he returned from an assignment.



Bomb Damage in Belgium



Wrecked Bridge



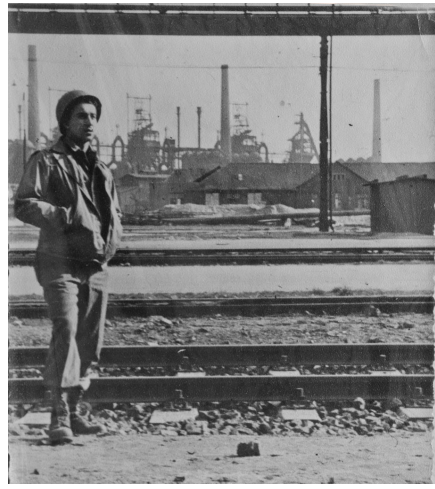
Jerry in Brussels



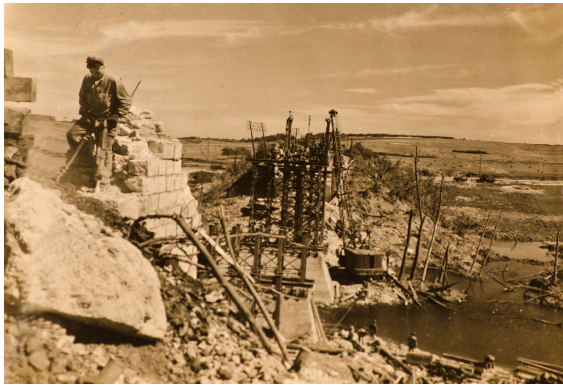
Bomb Damage in Germany



Clean-up in Belgium



Jerry in Ruhr (German Industrial Region)



Bridge Re-Building



German POWs in Germany

Occupation of Germany – German POWs

Many of the Russians that Jerry met had Asiatic features and seemed not be very knowledgeable about technology. For instance they did not seem to have any familiarity with the cameras that Jerry was using. With the war over, Jerry, like most other GI's, was impatient to go home. The order of return to the US for the GIs was based on the number of "points" that they had accrued. These points were based on the number of combat areas in which the GI had participated. As Jerry said he was in a number of these areas even though as a photographer he didn't engage directly in combat. He was able to return relatively early based on his accumulated points. So after the end of the war he crossed the Alps into Italy near Lake Como and then went to Milan. He passed by Lake Annecy in France on his way to Paris. In Paris, while awaiting his return to the US, Jerry was put in charge of all food services for the entire Photo Battalion by his Army Photo Company. He observed many GIs selling food supplies to the population and sending the funds so derived home. Jerry stayed two to three months in Paris. His group was then taken to Orleans, France but due to a clerical error, omitting his name from the list, he was not able to leave with

his friends for the US. In Orleans Jerry remembered that German prisoners were used as servant help. Jerry waited in a tent city in Orleans for a month until sent to Marseille for return to the US. He ended up with other soldiers who had lower points but had been living the good life in Paris during the interim.

The return trip sailed from Marseille, France to Boston in the summer of 1945. It was a leisurely trip but the ship did hit another storm. After that experience Jerry vowed that he would never take another ship across the sea because as he mentioned "there is no getting off, you are stuck out there." They then took a train from Boston to New Jersey to be mustered out of the service. Co-incidentally he was mustered out with the rest of his photo company that he left in Paris. They probably had a more direct routing to New York. The only souvenir that Jerry had brought back with him was a German officer's pistol. Many GIs returned with a lot of booty but they were only asked about these items and there was no search for them. Jerry knew one officer in Europe who spent a good portion of his time shipping back loot for his personal use, a privilege available to officers and not the average GI.

Back Home

Once back in the US Jerry took a trip to visit his father who was working as a studio manager and assistant director in Los Angeles. His father was a good friend of Darryl Zanuck who the president of the 20th Century Fox movie studio. He introduced

Jerry to a number of film stars such as Linda Darnell who starred in the movies, *Forever Amber* and *A Letter to Three Wives*. And he also had a soldier's dream, meeting, the number one GI pinup, Betty Grable. Jerry remembers Los Angeles as a lovely

place to visit before the massive post-war migration there. Crossing the US by train just after the war was a great experience taking many days on the route from NY to LA through Chicago. This was an

experience that, unfortunately, Jerry was never able to repeat. When Jerry returned to the East he started back working with Movietone News.



Jerry with Actress Linda Darnell

Movietone News

One of Jerry's early jobs with Movietone was as a photographer's assistant. He covered the historic 1948 presidential conventions. This included the Democratic convention in Philadelphia from July 12-14th. Harry Truman was re-nominated for the Presidency and the former Senate Majority leader, Alben Barkley, was named to fill the then vacant Vice Presidential slot. Southern Democrats were displeased with civil rights planks promoted by progressive Democrats, such as Hubert Humphrey, in the Convention Platform and walked out forming a separate Dixiecrat Party, naming South Carolina Governor, Strom Thurmond as their candidate for President. The Republican Convention was also in Philadelphia June 21-25 and nominated

New York Governor, Thomas E. Dewey for the presidency and California Governor, Earl Warren, for Vice President. Also split off from the Democratic Party, was the Progressive Party, which met outdoors also in Philadelphia naming former Vice President, Henry Wallace, for the presidency and Idaho Senator, Glenn Taylor as VP. An interesting note that Philadelphia was chosen by the political parties since it was near the center of the existing live TV linkage running from Boston to Richmond.

Jerry attended the Democratic, Republican and Progressive Party conventions as a member of the press and has many photos taken of the candidates and of him working there.



1948 Democratic Convention



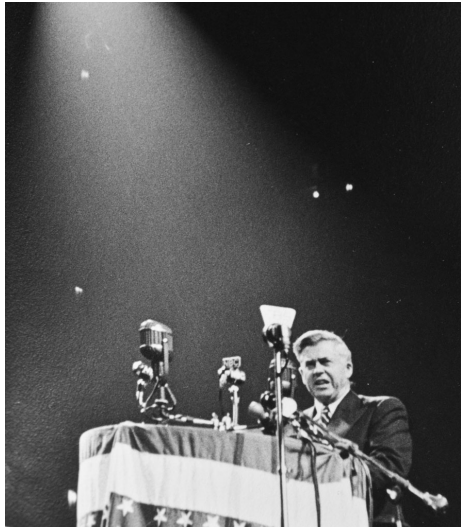
Governor Dewey Giving Concession Speech



Governors Dewey and Warren



Dewey and Warren and Families Wallace and Taylor at 1948 Progressive Party Convention



Henry Wallace



Jerry (far left) at 1948 Convention



Jerry at 1948 Political Conventions



Senator Barkley Giving Keynote Address at Democratic Convention

The 1948 election was the one of the great upsets in presidential history. The Republicans were sure that it was their year as the Democratic vote was being split three ways. Jerry and his crew spent election night at Dewey's headquarters being wined and dined by the Republicans for what they felt would be a major victory celebration. Harry Truman with his effective whistle-stop campaign was elected to a second term and had his inaugural in January 1949 which Jerry once more attended as a representative of Movietone.

Also in 1948 General Eisenhower accepted the presidency of Columbia University in New York. At his installation in the fall of the year many of his former colleagues in the military attended. The event was covered by Movietone with Jerry keeping a still picture record of the occasion attended by the then Army Chief of Staff, Omar Bradley, WW2 Admirals Chester Nimitz and William (Bull) Halsey and the leader of the Raid on Tokyo in 1942, General James Doolittle.



Truman and Barkley at 1948 Inaugural (on right with families)



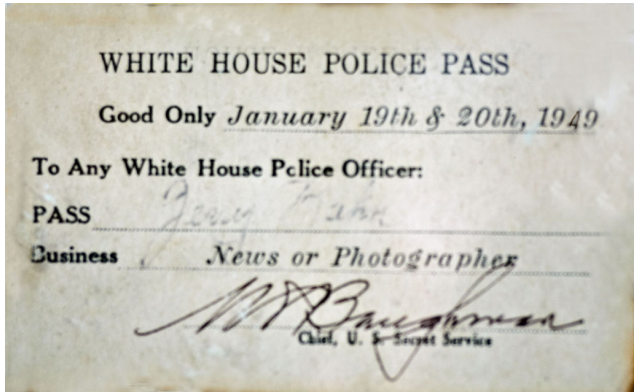
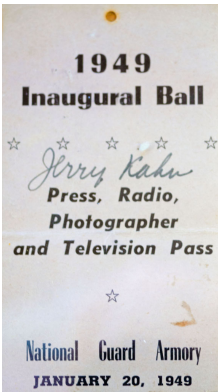
At 1949 Truman Inaugural

Eleanor Roosevelt, son, Elliot & wife, Fay Emerson

Truman's Daughter (Margaret)



At Eisenhower's Installation as Columbia's President (1948) (L. 4-Star General Omar Bradley - C. Bradley with Air Force Secretary Stuart Symington – R. General Jimmy Doolittle)



Admirals (L-Nimitz; R- Halsey) at Columbia

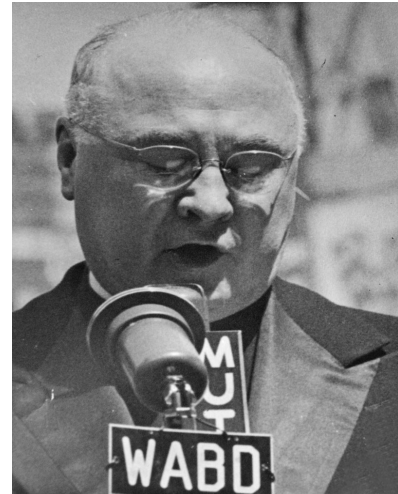
Inaugural Press Passes

Also in 1948 Jerry covered the World Series where the Boston Braves lost to the Cleveland Indians in six games. This was the only World Series in the 1947 -58 period that did not feature a New York team. This was a era of NY Yankee domination with frequent appearances by the Brooklyn Dodgers and NY Giants in the Series. Jerry captured a photo of the the Braves' manager, Billy Southworth, meeting on the field with the Indian's ace pitcher, Bob Feller. In 1949 one of his photos shows a meeting of the then New York Mayor William O'Dwyer. Also in the photo is Cardinal Spellman. A third figure proved somewhat of a puzzle, since he looked like John Foster Dulles who I had only

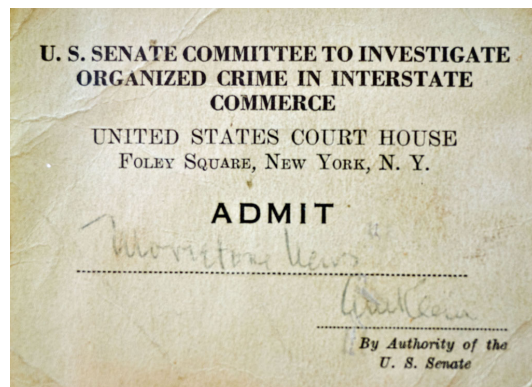
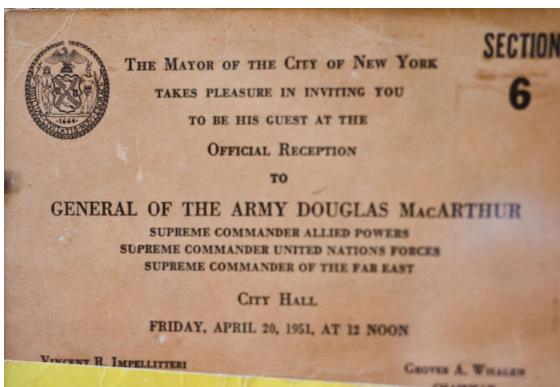
known as Secretary of State during the Eisenhower Administration. It turned out that Dulles was appointed to a vacancy in the US Senate from New York by Governor Dewey in the summer of 1949. He lost a special election in the fall, so his brief tenure in the job dates this picture well. The fourth figure, Jerry thinks is a Rockefeller but I have been unable to identify the individual. The presence of Cardinal Spellman, in the picture, may be related to a dispute between Spellman and Eleanor Roosevelt over the use of government funds to support parochial schools which was a hot issue at the time.



Boston Braves World Series Pin Billy Southworth (Boston Braves' Manager) with Bob Feller (Cleveland Indians' Pitcher) at 1948 World Series



Senator Dulles, Cardinal Spellman, Mayor O'Dwyer 1949 Cardinal Spellman



1951 NYC Reception for Gen. MacArthur Press Pass to 1950 Sen. Kefauver Hearings

United Press – Movietone was formed in 1948. The main function of the merged company was to shoot video for use on the budding new media outlet of television. Movietone had film laboratories in major cities around the country to develop movie film for local TV news outlets. One of the major film users on a national scale was NBC's Camel News Caravan (1949 – 56) with John Cameron Swayzee. In those early years the TV news was organized in format a lot like the Movie New Reels formats. Other users were ABC and BBC TV news. Before cables and microwave hookups, films would have to be delivered physically to the stations in a timely enough manner to still be newsworthy. Films were always edited after they were shot before being broadcast. Only in a live broadcast, seen more frequently today for breaking news, is the news not edited. Even when cable was available, the networks were reluctant to use it due to the high cost. Jerry remembers an exception in 1964 when he sent video of the Alaska Earthquake to ABC in New York because of the high priority of the news. Jerry also recalls the difficulty in man-handling the large rolls of film. At that time there were 1200 foot reels of 16mm film that needed to be processed. The film had to be handled in a changing bag to place it in a light tight canister. The film would frequently unwind and it was a devil of a time rewinding it in a bag where it could not be seen. Jerry said he was frequently "sweating blood" during these operations to avoid exposing and ruining a film containing important news coverage. Later on he was at the assignment desk scheduling photographers at Movietone. It was many years until Jerry graduated to camera man due to the tight

restrictions imposed by union membership which was a requirement for cameraman status. The next day after getting his union card Jerry was out working with local New York perennial TV reporter, Gabe Pressman at WNBC.

One of the major recurring events covered by Movietone was the Ship News. The interviewing of arriving celebrities on the many ocean liners that docked at New York was always of interest to the American public. Jerry with the press would board the ship before it docked to meet with the celebrities prior to debarking. Before the day of rapid jet crossings to Europe, the arrival of major ocean liners such as the Queens Elizabeth and Mary and The France was an event. The arrivals that Jerry witnessed included Elizabeth Taylor with her first husband Conrad "Nicky" Hilton, Rita Hayworth, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor and the young actress, Margaret O'Brien. The Taylor wedding, which took place in 1950, was quickly followed, a few months later, by her first divorce in early 1951. Jerry has kept many of the title cards that were used to introduce Movietone film segments. Some have his name as the arranger of the movie sequences and some that of his wife, Helen, as the narrator for the segment. His future wife Helen had a very cultured British accent and was in much demand as a narrator. In 1961 Jerry and Helen were married first in the US and then three months later in Great Britain, Helen's home. The wedding was covered by British Movietone newsreels. They went on a six week honeymoon in Europe. They were given special tours in Paris and Rome by local Movietone friends that Jerry had known from the war.



Newlyweds Elizabeth Taylor and Nicky Hilton

The Duke and Duchess of Windsor



Margaret O'Brien



Movietone Title Card with Jerry Kahn and Mel Allen



Rita Hayworth



**Sports Announcer
Mel Allen**



**Movietone Title Card with
both Jerry and Helen Kahn**



Helen Kahn



Movietone Title Card with Helen Kahn

Jerry covered a lot of NYC sporting events. Much of this work was on the weekends and at night, particularly Hockey and Basketball. In order to avoid having to pay overtime, Jerry would frequently have his weekdays off. Another frequent sport being covered was boxing with Muhammad Ali in many of the bouts. Jerry covered most of the championship bouts in the New York area. One sports announcer that Jerry worked with frequently was Howard Cosell who covered sports for decades with his distinctive staccato voice. Spyros Skouras, (the president of 20th Century Fox) called Jerry when he was working at Movietone

and asked to have the King and Queen (Paul and Anne-Marie) of his native Greece, who were attending a football game, be photographed by the crew as part of the coverage. The picture Jerry took of Mickey Mantle, Billy Martin and Joe DiMaggio, marked the only year, 1951, when both Mantle and DiMaggio were on the Yankee roster. As you might expect the Yankees were world champions that year. Billy Martin went on in later years to manage the Yankees. His disputes with the Yankee owner, George Steinbrenner, became legendary.



Yankee's Catcher Yogi Berra



**1951 World Champion Yankees
Mickey Mantle, Billy Martin and Joe DiMaggio**



Jerry Covering a Football Game

Jerry (C) with John Miller(R)

Jockey Eddie Arcaro

Early on (late 1940s) cameramen used flares to take movies at night. Early batteries were so heavy that they sat on the ground (they were lead-acid – liquid) while the 35 mm movie camera was on a tripod. Once while coming back from filming a football game one of the batteries tipped over in the station wagon being used and ate a hole through the wooden floor. During this period, Movietone also worked on developing the Cinemascope wide-screen motion picture process which was introduced to theaters in the early 1950s.

Jerry lived on the Upper East Side a few blocks from the composer Frank Loesser who wrote the music to many successful Broadway shows such as *The Most Happy Fella*, *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* and *Guys and Dolls*. Frank and Jerry's children used to play at the same playground in Central Park. This is where Jerry's wife, Helen, and Frank's wife, Jo, met. The families became good friends for many years. The Loessers and the Kahns had a summer place out in Southampton on Long Island and spent many summers together on the beach there. Frank Loesser died fairly young in his 50s and Jerry remembers seeing him the day before he died.

For quite a while Jerry covered Black News in New York. This news frequently involved music by such artists as Lionel Hampton and the band director, composer, Duke Ellington. In 1968 Jerry covered the big Rock festival in Woodstock, NY. Jerry was no fan of that music, he remembers the massive pressure waves created by the oversized and high volume speakers blasting the music out to the overflow crowds. Another aspect of the Woodstock concerts was the pervasive mud and almost complete lack of parking. In NYC, one venue that Jerry enjoyed

Many performers also were seen on a regular basis in local hotels such as Bobby Short with his inimitable singing style while performing tin-pan-alley show-tunes on the piano. At the time of their defections, Jerry also covered the Russian dancers Mikhail Baryshnikov and Rudolph Nureyev in 1974 and 1961 respectively. Jerry filmed interviews with the actor, Michael Caine and Sean Connery at the Plaza Hotel to plug their new movie, *The Man Who Would be King* (1975). Jerry developed a very high opinion of Caine as a result of his contacts with the actor. One artist who was interviewed and photographed in New York was

covering was the frequent Jazz concerts with Woody Allen playing the clarinet. Other music venues consisted of the French cabaret singer Charles Aznavour accompanying himself on the piano. When covering that event, Jerry had left a filter inside the camera by mistake cutting the light level by 2 or more stops. In order to save the day he asked the film processor was to overexpose the film to compensate. A gala event that Jerry covered was in September 1966, the Opening of Lincoln Center with a performance by Luciano Pavarotti in the new Metropolitan Opera House. He remembers covering operas such as Verdi's *Aida* with live animals on the stage.

Other performers Jerry frequently covered were glamorous starlets of the time such as Marylyn Monroe and Jayne Mansfield. Musicians covered by Jerry included Lena Horne, John Lennon and Yoko Ono and on their first visit to New York in 1964, the Beatles. Also covered were Comedians such as Bob Hope, George Burns, and Groucho Marx who frequently performed in the New York area. Once while covering Groucho Marx, the comedian felt insulted when Jerry did not ask for his autograph. While covering celebrities Jerry had felt it was out of place to use the occasion to collect autographs. In 1967 Jerry also covered the well-attended funeral of the actress/ singer, Judy Garland with much of the film/stage community attending. On numerous occasions he would also film performances by her daughter, Lisa Minnelli. Frank Sinatra, a native of the region, would frequently perform in New York. The primary thing that Jerry remembers from these events was Sinatra's noticeable and ill-fitting toupees.

the surrealist Salvador Dali. Jerry said that he used to scribble out little drawing at the time. Jerry does not recall, unfortunately, keeping any of these.

Jerry had the actor, Paul Newman, come into his office once when he worked for Fox Movietone. Newman asked if he could get a Press Plate for his car since he worked for 20th Century Fox. Jerry explained that wasn't possible since he wasn't a Movietone employee and wasn't registered as a reporter. As Jerry says, Press Plates were as good as Diplomatic Plates in allowing the driver to double park or park illegally without danger of receiving a ticket. Jerry was

involved filming later interviews with Mr. Newman concerning his auto racing activities but did not mention the earlier meeting.

In his 40s (1964) when Jerry got his union card as a cameraman and he was hired by WNBC (Ch. 4 in New York). Using a sound movie camera Jerry initially worked with reporter, Gabe Pressman. Jerry worked freelance for many years and later moved to WABC (Ch. 7) and worked there with Howard Cosell and Peter Jennings. He also worked for a time with Pia Lindstrom, Ingrid Bergman's daughter, at WCBS (Ch. 2) and with Mike Wallace (CBS). Jerry's only contact with CBS anchorman, Walter Cronkite, was one day sharing a cab ride home. While at WCBS, Jerry worked as the News Assignment Manager. Jerry also worked with John Miller, who frequently appears these days on national news, particularly CBS, as a national security expert. As a freelance photographer, Jerry usually worked with the local stations in New York and not very often with the New York based networks. Channel 5 (WNEW now WNYW Fox) hired Jerry as their first film cameraman. Later on Jerry hired other cameramen at the station and set up a film processing laboratory.

During the 60s he covered civil rights riots in Philadelphia (1964) and also covered the Black Panthers' (formed in 1966) meetings and news conferences with Huey Newton, Bobby Seale, and Eldridge Cleaver. The Panthers were very upset with the coverage of a Channel 5 reporter, Mark Howard.

They decided to attack the reporter's cameras but did so on a weekend when Channel 5 was not working and managed to destroy cameras from other TV stations. During this period Jerry covered riots in nearby Newark. To safeguard his camera he would hide it by placing it in a paper bag with a hole for the lens.

Jerry covered the story of the Shah of Iran while he was being treated in New York after he was forced out of Iran by the Ayatollah Khomeini during the Iranian revolution in 1979. A regular news gig was covering all of the New York Mayors through the year: Robert Wagner, John Lindsey, Abe Beame, Edward Koch, and David Dinkins. During one of President Nixon's visit to New York Jerry was walking backwards filming him and dropped his glasses and called out for everyone to halt including the President while he retrieved his specs intact and untrammelled. Many New York Governors held regular news conferences in the city. He covered Nelson Rockefeller's weekly meetings during his long tenure as NY Governor.

While at WNEW TV, Jerry worked with the reporter Christopher Jones. Jones was used as an on-screen financial TV advisor and spoke fluent Spanish which led to an almost disastrous assignment. Years later, while covering the Falkland's War in Argentina, Jones was abducted by several well-dressed men. He was robbed, threatened and dropped out of a car naked apparently due to the government's displeasure with his news coverage.



Jerry with Reporter Chris Jones



Jerry on the Job in the 1970s



Jerry Featured in an Ad for a Camera Battery

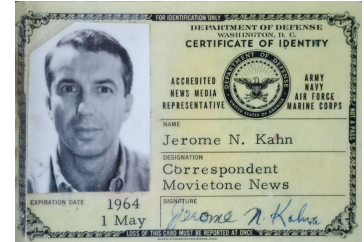


Elizabeth Taylor with a New York Reporter

Jerry went to a publicity show for McDonald's Hamburgers at the Waldorf Astoria and bit into a hamburger and hit a long tendon embedded in the meat. As a result of that experience, he would never go to a McDonalds again. In 1968 Jerry also covered the political conventions with the Democrats in Chicago and the Republicans in Florida. The Democratic Convention was by far the most contentious and as such newsworthy. The strong opposition to the prospective candidate, Vice President Hubert Humphrey, led to many street demonstrations and violent suppression by the Chicago police under the direction of the, then, mayor, Richard J. Daley. Jerry found the convention to be very stressful with the police targeting the press during the anti-war demonstrations that occurred there. The press, along with many of the demonstrators, was gassed (tear gas) by the Chicago police during that contentious convention. And Jerry had to resort to wearing a gas mask to do his job, a problem he had not encountered during the War.

Through the years Jerry's job required taking a helicopter to cover some stories. These jobs came up any time of the year and necessitated shooting out through an open door held in by a seat harness while buffeted by icy blasts of air. These flights had an element of danger since helicopters have a significantly lower level of safety compared to fixed

wing aircraft. Jerry said that during his years working in New York, a number of cameramen were killed on the job in helicopter crashes. The NY TV stations paid an extra hazardous duty allowance for their airborne employees. Flights took off and landed from Manhattan heliports located at various points around the island and flights usually were made along either the Hudson or East rivers avoiding prolonged flight over populated areas. Some of the events photographed from the air were fires, traffic and at the 1976 Bicentennial the Tall Ships sailing in New York Harbor and up the Hudson. In the early 70s Jerry recalls making a number of flights to photograph the World Trade Center while it was being built. On one regular flight he noticed a fire over in New Jersey. They flew for a closer look and got some footage of an oil tank burning in the Jersey Meadowlands. He was working free-lance for NBC at the time and not having any communications with his base could not report the news. By the time the film was returned and developed they were scooped by CBS. This event triggered the addition of direct air – ground communications on future flights. On other occasions standard airplanes and rarely blimps, since speed was essential in the news business, were used for aerial photography of the city. Nowadays modern technology has changed news gathering immensely allows the photography and reporting to be transmitted live from helicopters.



Press Passes for 1968 Political Conventions and Department of Defense

Through the years the technology available for remote TV camera work improved considerably. The early years it was all film with the need to develop and deliver the developed film to the TV stations for broadcast. By the late 50s, early 60s video tape became available eliminating the need and the time lost by developing film. Much later, direct broadcasting from remote locations became more common, allowing live coverage of events and eliminating any need for

editing the coverage. Not every news story involves live, talking heads at the studio. Most stories are shot on location and then stored on tape, edited for briefness, either on site, if its big and on-going story, or back at the station where it was cut as short possible so that there is time available for commercials. Only on major stories like World Trade Center attack will you have news coverage without breaks.

In the 1960's the news film was shipped to the stations, then cable transmission was beating the film shipments and eventually the film shipments came to an end. It was a big change from film to tape. Initially the tape equipment was very large and heavy. Nowadays camera and movie image storage are so compact as to be almost unnoticeable. The cameras available for you and your family today has more capability than the cameras the professionals had back during Jerry's years out on the street gathering news. Jerry has seen the changes from his years with the

brownie box camera through the advent of instant Polaroid film which was terrific in its time. Once Jerry was provided by Polaroid with a year or more supply of their film, hundreds of rolls, the type you had to rub some fixing solution on to make the image permanent after developing. Otherwise the image would fade upon exposure to light. With digital camera technology the Polaroid process is today largely passé. Most of us now have endless photos of our kids shot with the greatest of ease and with little expense. Today everyone is shooting pictures all the time with their

portable phones, computers and small cameras providing the capability to have still or moving pictures at any time and any place. What a dramatic change from Jerry's early days in photography!

After a half-century behind the camera, Jerry opted to retire in 1993. He and Helen decided to leave the big city for the more relaxed setting of Cape Cod. They had more than a decade of life together on the Cape before Helen passed away in 2007. Today Jerry maintains close contact with his two sons, Nicholas and Daniel. Daniel lives in the Czech Republic and has a thriving business importing sugar into the country and running a distillery making liqueurs and beer. He still maintains a keen interest in photography

developing some of his own film along with taking digital images. Nicholas lives in Hudson, NY and continues the family interest in photography as an artistic photographer, recently photographing in Australia, a trip sponsored by the Australian Photographic Society. Nicholas specializes in creating fictitious historical scenes. His work has been displayed at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and at the Smithsonian Institution. He has also published three books on photography with the Aperture Press. Jerry is enjoying the Cape Cod life living here in Brewster with his favorite walking companion, Oliver.



Jerry and Oliver – May 2014

**All photos (except the photo of General McNair
and of Jerry Kahn) were taken by Jerry Kahn
The text was written by Jim Mills**

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