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16MM PROFESSIONAL CAMERAS
SINCE 1931

50 years ago in the Journal

Harold B. Franklin, "A Year of Sound,"
March 1930

Standardization would be of advantage in considering the sound-on-film and disk method of recording and reproducing. The present condition where studios and exhibitors have the choice of sound-on-film and disk methods is one that has resulted in duplication. Standardization will eventually eliminate one or the other, and in the interest of greater efficiency it would appear that the system of recording sound on film will ultimately be the standard adopted by most producers . . .

Pessimistic forecasts concerning the sound motion picture have been made on the basis of novelty or of difficulty in foreign distribution; but more recently others have arisen in connection with what seems to be the next development — television. It has been held by some that before sound pictures can reach their potential audience television will snatch it away . . . There is at this moment a need of clear vision and close thinking on the part of constructive minds; for the highest resourcefulness, the readiest initiative will be required to offset the opposition that looms ahead in the distance.

John L. Cass, "Illusion of Sound and Picture," March 1930

If a medium of expression is to be powerful, the medium itself must be so utilized that it retires into oblivion as it does its work. This is true in the case of the printed word, the spoken drama, pantomime, the silent motion picture, and the talking motion picture.

. . . The effort of many years in silent pictures has created a technique of skilled photography combined with ingenious cutting which has proven many times that a perfect illusion may thus be created . . . In dialogue sequences, quality and volume remain constant while the cutter jumps from across the room to a big close-up. At such times one becomes conscious that he is witnessing a talking picture, this condition indicating that the illusion has been partially destroyed at that point.

Progress will demand better understanding of photography by sound engineers, and better understanding of sound by camera men. Artistic results without the present distractions will require the following: (1) More accurate and detailed scripts, for technical planning. (2) Complete understanding of plans between director, camera man, sound engineer, and set designer. (3) Elimination, in so far as possible, of "ad libbing" by the director.

If the foregoing conditions are met, the

work expended in intelligent planning will remove much of the present load of responsibility from the shoulders of the cutter, and should react to lower the cost of production by the minimizing of delays on the set. Sound has already forced forethought on the makers of motion pictures to the end that the savings have practically cancelled the cost of recording. This tendency will continue, and should serve to materially reduce cost of production as compared to the old silent picture methods of prodigal extravagance. The talking picture of the future will be engineered by a team of highly intelligent and cooperative technicians, cinematographer, and sound engineer, who must have a broad vision, and who must drop, in so far as possible, the prejudices of the past. Rapid strides are being made in this direction, which augurs well for the future of the film industry.

25 years ago

Edward L. Scheiber and Hugh C. Oppenheimer, "Combat Television," March 1955

The concept of using television as a means of battlefield communications has long provided a fertile field for the imagination and has presented us with many intriguing possibilities. With the rapid development of television some of these flights into fantasy have approached the realm of reality. Although early in the history of television, experimentation and tests were made of possible military applications, it has been only recently that positive results have been possible . . .

The use of the vidicon cameras was clearly indicated. Besides being small and highly portable, they are capable of sufficient resolution, possess an excellent signal-to-noise ratio, and are quite simple in setup and operation. The vidicon has a suitable life expectancy, and in general does not require the care that an image orthicon does . . .

Television is not a cure-all for military communications problems, but it is an important supplement to our regularly accepted means of pictorial communications and can effectively increase the amount of information available to a commander in the field. It will be thoroughly tested before being adopted for general military employment, but the work done by the Signal Corps Interim Tactical Television System can provide a new and important tool in the conduct of modern warfare.