

Obituary

Carlos H. Elmer

Carlos Hall Elmer, a Life Fellow of the SMPTE, died May 22, 1993, at his home in Kingman, Ariz. His career in photography included both the scientific and documentary photographic fields. In his 72 years, he photographed the beauty of the Grand Canyon and the disintegration of airplanes in tests at China Lake Naval Air Station in California. He knew just where and how to set a high-speed Fastax camera to acquire sufficient data for analysis for a propeller breaking apart when a concrete block was shoved into it. He also could catch in his panoramic camera the early morning sun just as it revealed the beauty of trees and cactus covered with fresh snow.

Elmer was born in Washington, D.C., on July 22, 1920. His family moved to Kingman, Ariz. in 1926. He was a nine-year-old boy when he met Charles Lindbergh as the colonel came to dedicate an airstrip in Kingman.

Elmer was a graduate of the University of California at Los Angeles, and he was a photographer with the USAC 7th Air Force in the Pacific Theatre from 1942 to 1945, even though he started out as an infantry captain in Hawaii. He finished his military service at Wright Patterson Field Photo Lab in 1946. A career at China Lake followed his discharge; he was in charge of the photo



Carlos H. Elmer (1957)

lab and sled photography until 1961. He was associated with Traid Camera Corp. and L & W Photo for several years, and then published scenic books.

He wrote and illustrated nine books in six languages, and his photographs have appeared in the *Arizona Highways* magazine for most of the 50 years he collaborated with its publishers. In 1989, the Kingman Area Chamber of Commerce presented him with its Lifetime Achievement Award for his work.

Elmer was proud of his membership in the Royal Photographic Society in recognition of his pictorial prowess.

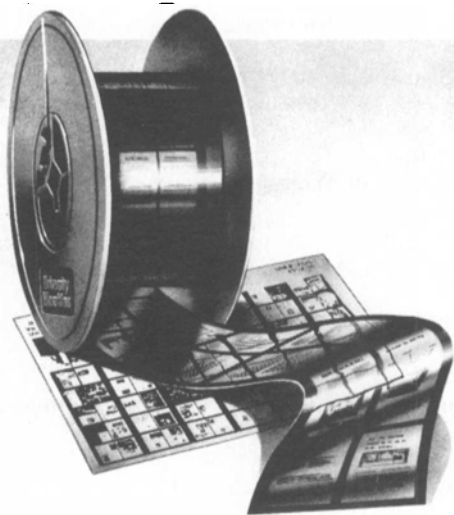
The 9th International Congress on High-Speed Photography in Denver, Colo., held in 1970, occupied three years of his time. As the Congress chairman, he planned and organized a successful and informative meeting. A quote from the Assistant Chairman Bob Shoberg was that "Carlos was a dollar-a-year man," so at the Congress Shoberg forked over three bucks, and said that Elmer was paid.

Elmer was one of the early members of the Society of Photographic Instrumentation Engineers, and participated in almost every yearly meeting in San Diego. He also attended most of the 20 International Congresses on High-Speed Photography starting in 1952 through the last one, which was held in Victoria, British Columbia.

He joined the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers in 1949, and in his 44-year membership served the Society in many areas including acting as vice-president for photo-instrumentation affairs. He was named a Fellow in 1953 and a Life Fellow in 1985.

Perhaps the ultimate tribute to Elmer's ability is a statement from his longtime friend, Donal Clayton: "Carlos was the pure photographer. He could use the simplest equipment and produce exquisite photographs. I seldom ever saw him use a light meter."

—Lincoln L. Endelman



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