

PATENT SPECIFICATION

(11) 1 357 223

1 357 223

(21) Application No. 29181/71 (22) Filed 22 June 1971

(31) Convention Application No. 48364

(32) Filed 22 June 1970 in

(33) United States of America (US)

(44) Complete Specification published 19 June 1974

(51) International Classification G03B 17/18

(52) Index at acceptance

G2A 401 403 473 474 482 483 489 526 542 547 602 607 616

640 659 701 706 711 CS

(72) Inventors RICHARD JOSEPH BRESSON and RICHARD CLARENCE PAINTON



(54) PHOTOGRAPHIC CAMERA

(71) We, EASTMAN KODAK COMPANY, a Company organized under the Laws of the State of New Jersey, United States of America, of 343 State Street, Rochester, New York 14650, United States of America, do hereby declare the invention, for which we pray that a patent may be granted to us, and the method by which it is to be performed, to be particularly described in and by the following statement:—

This invention relates to photographic cameras having photo-electric exposure control means.

It is an object of this invention to provide an improved photographic camera exposure control means.

According to the present invention, there is provided a photographic camera having a photo-electric exposure control means comprising a photoresponsive means arranged for regulating an aperture of the camera lens and for varying the exposure interval of the camera shutter as a function of scene illumination and warning means for indicating "low-light" scene conditions characterised in that the warning means serves also for indicating when the shutter is open under said conditions.

The invention will be described further, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:—

Figure 1 shows an exploded perspective view of the preferred embodiment of the shutter and diaphragm mechanisms of an exposure control apparatus of a camera according to the invention;

Figure 2 shows a circuit diagram for controlling the mechanisms shown in Fig. 1;

Figure 3 shows a photoresponsive means which can be used in the exposure control circuit shown in Fig. 2.

A photographic camera having an exposure control means according to the

present invention includes an adjustable diaphragm mechanism including a member movable to any position along a path for varying an exposure aperture in accordance with the level of scene light and a shutter mechanism controlled by an electronic time-delay circuit that establishes the length of an exposure interval. The time-delay circuit preferably is of the integrating type for continuously measuring the total accumulated amount of light energy impinging on a photoresponsive member in the timing circuit. After the diaphragm mechanism has been actuated to adjust the exposure aperture in accordance with the level of scene illumination, the shutter mechanism is then actuated to initiate an exposure interval under the control of the electronic timing circuit that terminates the exposure interval in accordance with the exposure aperture adjustment and in accordance with the amount of illumination actually received during the exposure interval by the photoresponsive member in the timing circuit. The shutter timing circuit can compensate for the exposure aperture setting, for example, by adjustment of an electrical parameter of the timing circuit to vary its time constant, or preferably by varying the aperture of the photoresponsive member used in the timing circuit in accordance with the adjustment of the exposure aperture by the diaphragm mechanism.

Referring now to the accompanying drawings, Fig. 1 shows the exposure control apparatus of a camera according to a preferred embodiment of the invention, including an objective 10 for forming an image on photographic film F, a two-bladed diaphragm mechanism 12 for establishing a variable exposure aperture in alignment with the optical axis 14 of the objective, and

[Price 25p]

a two-bladed shutter mechanism 16 for initiating and terminating an exposure through the objective.

The diaphragm mechanism 12 includes a pair of blades 18 and 20 that are slidably mounted upon suitable support means (not shown) for equal and opposite movement relative to the lens axis 14. Each of these blades has a tapered aperture 22 and 24, respectively, overlying each other to define an exposure aperture 25 aligned with the optical axis 14. The apertures 22 and 24 are disposed with their tapered portions extending in opposite directions with respect to each other along the line of travel of the two diaphragm blades, such that opposite movement of the blades 18 and 20 will enlarge or diminish the size of the exposure aperture 25. Each of the blades 18 and 20 also has a second tapered aperture 26 and 28, respectively, similar to the tapered aperture 22 and 24, overlying each other to define a second variable aperture 29 overlying a photocell 30. A lens 32 having an optical axis 33 is positioned to form an image of an object scene on the photocell 30 through the variable photocell aperture 29. Thus, opposite movement of the diaphragm blades 18 and 20 will result in a variation of the size of the aperture 29 over the photocell 30 simultaneously with the variation of the size of the exposure aperture 25. The diaphragm blades 18 and 20 are each connected to opposite ends of an armature 35 rotatably driven by an electro-mechanical transducer 36, which in this embodiment is a servo motor having input leads 38, 40 and 42. The operation of this servo motor will be described in further detail with respect to the circuit in Fig. 2 below.

The shutter mechanism 16 is a conventional two-blade system, which is shown in Fig. 1 in its cocked position preparatory to actuation to affect an exposure. The shutter mechanism includes a pair of shutter blades 44 and 46 which are slidably mounted upon suitable support means (not shown) for movement relative to the exposure aperture 25. When the blade 44, which is the "opening" blade in this embodiment, is in its cocked position shown, it is retained against the bias of a spring 48 by a latch member 50 which is biased by a spring 52 into latching engagement with a detent 53, in which position the latch member engages a pin 54. The "opening" blade 44 has a second detent 56 positioned to engage a detent 58 on the blade 46, which in this embodiment is the "closing" blade. Thus, blade 46 is retained in its cocked position against the bias of a spring 60 by the interengagement of the detents 56 and 58. In their respective cocked positions the "opening" blade 44 is retained in a covering relationship with respect to the

exposure aperture 25, and the "closing" blade 46 is retained in an uncovering position with respect to the exposure aperture. When the blades are in their respective cocked positions, the spring 48 urges the "opening" blade 44 to an uncovering position with respect to the exposure aperture, and the spring 60 urges the "closing" blade 46 to a covering position over the exposure aperture.

The "closing" blade 46 also includes a second detent 66 having a cam surface 68 adapted to engage a retaining lever 70 pivotally mounted on a pin 72 and biased by spring 74 in a counterclockwise direction into engagement with the detent 66. The opposite end of lever 70 is connected to an electromagnetic keeper 76 positioned adjacent a pole of an electromagnet 78 when the shutter blade 46 is in its cocked position. The electromagnet 78 is energized and de-energized by an electronic timing circuit discussed in more detail below with respect to Figure 2. When the electromagnet is energized it holds the lever 70 in its retaining position shown in Figure 1, to hold the blade 46 in its uncovering position when the detents 56 and 58 become disengaged upon release of the "opening" blade for movement to its uncovering position, thereby initiating an exposure interval. Thereafter when the electromagnet 78 is de-energized, the bias of spring 60 overpowers the bias of the weaker spring 74 to cause the detent 66 to cam the lever 70 in a clockwise direction, thereby releasing the "closing" blade for movement to a covering position with respect to the exposure aperture and terminate the exposure interval.

For actuation of the shutter mechanism 16 to effect an exposure, it is provided with a shutter actuation button 80 mounted in an external position on the camera so as to be available to a camera operator. The button 80 is mechanically coupled to a rod or bar 82 that is slidably mounted on mounts (not shown) for movement toward engagement with a detent 84 on shutter latch lever 50, when the shutter actuation button 80 is depressed. Initial movement of the slide bar 82 causes a projection 86 thereon to engage a contact of a normally open switch S1, thereby causing the switch to be closed. Continued movement of the slide bar 82 causes it to engage the detent 84 and rotate the latch 50 in a clockwise direction out of engagement with the detent 53 on the "opening" shutter blade 44, thereby releasing the blade for movement under the influence of spring 48 to an uncovering position with respect to the exposure aperture 24 to thereby initiate an exposure interval. When the "opening" blade 44 moves away from its cocked position, it

moves out of engagement with one of the contacts of a normally closed switch S2, thereby causing that switch to open.

As shown in Figure 1 the shutter mechanism is in its cocked position preparatory to actuation of the shutter blade to effect exposure by the operator. When the camera operator depresses the shutter actuation button 80, switch S1 closes energizing the exposure control circuit shown in Figure 2, then latch 50 is rotated clockwise to release the "opening" blade for movement to its uncovering position with respect to the exposure aperture to thereby initiate an exposure interval and open timing switch S2. When shutter blade 44 moves to its uncovering position, the detent 56 moves out of engagement with the detent 58 on the closing shutter blade 46. However, the electromagnet 78 is energized by the exposure control circuit when the switch S1 is closed, as described below, and latch 70 is held in its retaining position by the electromagnet to prevent the "closing" blade 46 from moving away from its unblocking position. After a period of time determined by the circuit in response to the level of illumination detected by a photoresponsive member in the circuit, the electromagnet 78 is de-energized to release the "closing" blade 46 for movement to its blocking position to terminate the exposure interval. Following an exposure the shutter blades can be returned to their cocked positions by movement of a cocking lever 62 to engage a detent 64 thereon with the detent 56 on the "opening" blade to move the blades back to their cocked position, shown in Fig. 1.

As described above when the shutter actuation button 80 is depressed, switch S1 is closed prior to the release of the "opening" blade. Closure of the switch S1 energizes the circuit, shown in Fig. 2 from a battery source 90. Because of the particular bias voltages established as a result of this closing of the switch S1, a trigger circuit, indicated as block 92, is energized into a conductive state almost instantaneously. When the trigger circuit 92 is in a conductive state, it causes a current through a coil 94 of the electromagnet 78 to retain the "closing" shutter blade 46 in its initial uncovering position after the "opening" blade 44 has moved away from its initial position.

The trigger circuit 92 has an input terminal 96 connected to a junction 97 between a variable photoconductive resistor 98 and a capacitor 100 which are connected in series through a switch S3 and the switch S1 across the battery source 90 to operate as an integrating circuit. The junction 97 is grounded through the switch S2, so that the voltage at the input terminal 96 of the trigger circuit 92 is maintained at ground potential, when switch S2 is closed. How-

ever, when the "opening" blade 46 is released from its cocked position, the normally closed switch S2 is opened, as explained above, to cause the capacitor 100 to be charged through the photoresistor 98 at a rate determined by the resistance value of the photoresistor. The photocell 98 is disposed to receive light from a scene being photographed, so that its resistance value is functionally related to the level of scene brightness. Thus, when switch S2 opens, the voltage at 97 changes from its initial ground potential to a predetermined value in a period of time depending on the well-known time constant "RC" of the integrating circuit, which is determined by the value of the capacitor 100 and the value of resistance 98 as established by the intensity of the light from the scene to be photographed. When the voltage at the input terminal 96 of trigger circuit 92 reaches the predetermined value, the trigger circuit is caused to trigger or switch from its conductive state to its nonconductive state thereby causing the electromagnet 78 to rapidly reduce its attracted force on the keeper 76 so as to release the blade 46 permitting it to move to its blocking position under the biasing force of spring 60. Thus the exposure interval is initiated simultaneously with the activation of the integrating circuit by the opening of switch S2, and it is terminated in response to triggering of the trigger circuit 92 after a period of time determined by the integrating circuit according to the illumination incident on the photoresistance 98. Therefore, the time between the release of the blade 44 and the release of blade 46 is dependent upon the value of the resistant 98 in the integrating circuit, which is determined by the level of scene illumination incident thereon. Thus, a high light level under very bright conditions produces a low resistance value of resistance 98 and has a small "RC" time constant for the circuit which results in a short exposure time. Similarly a low level of scene brightness produces a high resistance value and has a longer time constant for the circuit which results in a long exposure time under dim light conditions.

A voltage divider circuit, including a second photo-resistor 102 in series with a variable resistance 106, is connected in parallel with the integrating circuit. The voltage divider is connected through switches S3 and S1 across the battery source 90 to provide a voltage at a junction 104 that is functionally related to the level of illumination incident on the photoresistor 102. Connected to the junction 104 is an input terminal 38 of an aperture control circuit shown as block 110 having bias potential leads 40 and 42, which is energized when switch S1 is closed to actuate op-

positely poled drive coils 112 and 114 of servomotor 36 which are selectively energized according to the input voltage. The aperture control circuit can be a differential amplifier, such as disclosed in Specification No. 1312381. Other examples of control circuits that can be used to control the aperture according to this invention are disclosed in U.S. Patent 3,427,941 issued to L. M. Metzger on February 18, 1969. When switch S1 is closed, the armature 35 of the servomotor 36 is rotated by the drive coils 112 and 114 to adjust the diaphragm blades 18 and 20 in respectively opposite directions to increase or decrease the exposure aperture to a size suitable for the level of illumination incident on the photoresistor 102. This adjustment of the exposure aperture continues after the switch S2 is opened to initiate the exposure interval, and continues until the switch S1 is reopened by release of the shutter actuation button 80. Thus, the exposure aperture is adjusted before an exposure interval and during the exposure interval to correct for any changes in illumination during the exposure interval.

Also connected to the junction 104 is an input terminal 116 of a second trigger circuit, indicated as block 118, for controlling an indicator circuit. The output terminal 120 of the trigger circuit 118 is connected to the collector of a PNP transistor T1. The base of the transistor T1 is connected to the output terminal 97 of the shutter control trigger circuit 92, and the emitter of the transistor T1 is connected in series with an indicator lamp 122 through switch S1 to the battery source 90. The trigger circuit 118 is adapted to be switched between a conductive state when the voltage at the junction 104 is below a predetermined value, and a nonconductive state when that voltage is above that predetermined value. When the switch S1 is closed and the trigger circuit 92 is energized to a conductive state, the transistor T1 is biased into a conductive state so that lamp 122 is energized if the trigger circuit 118 is rendered conductive in response to a low scene light condition. When the lamp 122 is energized to indicate low scene light, it remains activated until the shutter control trigger circuit is de-activated to a nonconductive state at the termination of an exposure interval. Thus, the lamp 122 remains energized through the exposure interval, and it is turned off when the exposure interval is terminated. Accordingly, the transistor T1 functions as an "and" gate, so that the lamp 122 is turned on only when both trigger circuits 92 and 118 are activated to their conductive states. This arrangement enables the lamp 122 to provide a low light signal, as well as a "shutter-open" signal

when a low light condition will result in a long exposure time. On the other hand, when the level of scene light is above a predetermined value, the trigger circuit 118 is not energized to a conductive state and the indicator lamp 122 remains off. Although no "shutter-open" signal is provided in this latter situation, such a signal is not necessary since the shutter speed is relatively fast.

Several types of well-known trigger circuits are suitable for use as the trigger circuits 92 and 118. A Schmidt trigger is one example of such a typical prior art circuit. Further description of the details of the trigger circuits 92 and 118 is considered unnecessary, since their structure and switching functions are well known in the prior art.

Preferably, the photoconductive cells 98 and 102 are constructed as two independent photoconductive portions of a single structure. An example of such a structure is shown in Figure 3 in which the photocell includes a layer of photoconductive material on which is located three discrete electrodes 132, 134 and 136, connected respectively to three terminals 132a, 134a and 136a. The outer electrodes 132 and 134 include strip portions 132b and 134b, respectively, which are interlined with respect to each other in spaced parallel relation. The center electrode 136 comprises a single elongated strip that undulates between the strip portions of the outer two electrodes in spaced parallel relation with those electrode strip portions. This structure provides a first photoconductive resistance between the terminals 136a and 132a, and a second photoconductive resistance between the terminals 136a and 134a. The photoconductive areas of each of these two discrete photocells are thus defined as two side-by-side undulating paths defining a plurality of alternate strips of photoconductive material in interlined, spaced, parallel relation. This multiple photocell unit provides a single structure for detecting illumination over the entire field of a scene with two photoconductive output signals.

When an exposure is to be made with a photoflash apparatus, the gang switch S3 is switched into contact with terminals 124 to disconnect the photocells 98 and 102 from the battery source 90, and to connect the fixed resistor 126 in series with the timing capacitor 100, and to connect a second indicator lamp 128 across the battery source 90 through switches S4 and S1. The fixed resistance 126 in series with the timing capacitor 100 provides a predetermined shutter speed for flash operation. Preferably the switch S3 is actuated to engage contact 124 automatically in response to insertion of a photoflash apparatus on the camera.

The switch S4 can be connected to means for sensing the presence of a flashbulb that is in condition for firing. For example a detector can be adapted to sense the presence or absence of a firing pin in a percussive type of flashlamp, and to close switch S4 when such a firing pin has been displaced from its energized position for indicating that the flashlamp is "dead."

When the camera is used with photoflash apparatus, the aperture can be adapted for adjustment by the aperture control circuit to a nominal position, or it can be adapted for adjustment by a mechanical coupling with the focusing mechanism on the camera in a manner well known in the art.

The invention has been described in detail with particular reference to preferred embodiments thereof, but it will be understood that variations and modifications can be effected within the scope of the invention as defined in the appended claims.

WHAT WE CLAIM IS:—

1. A photographic camera having a photo-electric exposure control means comprising a photoresponsive means arranged for regulating an aperture of the camera lens and for varying the exposure interval of the camera shutter as a function of scene illumination and warning means for indicating "low-light" scene conditions characterised in that the warning means serves also for indicating the shutter is open under said conditions.

2. A camera as claimed in claim 1 wherein the warning means comprises a lamp arranged to be illuminated under low-light scene conditions.

3. A camera as claimed in claim 2 wherein the lamp is arranged to be illuminated when the shutter is open.

4. A camera as claimed in claim 3 wherein the photoresponsive means has two outputs, a first output being connectable to a light level reference circuit to provide an output therefrom under low-light conditions, and a second output connectable to an integrating circuit for determining the exposure interval to provide an output therefrom during integration, and wherein the lamp is connected in circuit so as to be illuminated in response to an output from both the reference circuit and the integrating circuit.

5. A camera as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the photoresponsive means comprises two photoconductive cells, a first of the cells serving to control the lens aperture and the second cell serving to control the exposure interval.

6. A camera as claimed in claim 5 wherein the two cells are mounted on a single substrate and each is arranged to view the same scene area.

7. A camera as claimed in claim 6 wherein the substrate supports two interdigitated conductors with a third common conductor extending sinuously therebetween the area of the substrate between the conductors being coated with a photoconductive material.

8. A camera as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the photoresponsive means, in addition to regulating an aperture of the camera lens, serves simultaneously to adjust an aperture regulating the light received by the photoresponsive means so as to provide a null system.

9. A camera as claimed in claim 8 wherein regulation of the camera lens aperture is arranged to occur prior to and during, if necessary, the exposure interval.

10. A camera as claimed in any preceding claim further including, for flash operation, a changeover means serving to connect a further warning means in the circuit, the further warning means being indicative of the preparedness of the camera to operate under flash conditions.

11. A camera as claimed in claim 10 wherein the changeover means serves to disconnect the photo-responsive means and to connect a fixed resistor in circuit to provide a predetermined exposure interval.

12. A camera as claimed in claim 10 or 11 wherein the changeover means is arranged to be operable in response to the connection of a flash device to the camera.

13. A camera as claimed in claim 10, 11 or 12 wherein means are provided for sensing whether a flash device, when connected to the camera, presents a fireable flash bulb and the further warning means comprises a lamp illuminatable if an unfireable flash bulb is presented.

14. A camera as claimed in claim 10, 11, 12 or 13 wherein the changeover means is arranged to couple the lens aperture regulating means of the camera to a focussing means of the lens.

15. A photographic camera substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to and as illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

L. A. TRANGMAR, B.Sc., C.P.A.,
Agent for the Applicants.

The switch S4 can be connected to means for sensing the presence of a flashbulb that is in condition for firing. For example a detector can be adapted to sense the presence or absence of a firing pin in a percussive type of flashlamp, and to close switch S4 when such a firing pin has been displaced from its energized position for indicating that the flashlamp is "dead."

When the camera is used with photoflash apparatus, the aperture can be adapted for adjustment by the aperture control circuit to a nominal position, or it can be adapted for adjustment by a mechanical coupling with the focusing mechanism on the camera in a manner well known in the art.

The invention has been described in detail with particular reference to preferred embodiments thereof, but it will be understood that variations and modifications can be effected within the scope of the invention as defined in the appended claims.

WHAT WE CLAIM IS:—

1. A photographic camera having a photoelectric exposure control means comprising a photoresponsive means arranged for regulating an aperture of the camera lens and for varying the exposure interval of the camera shutter as a function of scene illumination and warning means for indicating "low-light" scene conditions characterised in that the warning means serves also for indicating the shutter is open under said conditions.

2. A camera as claimed in claim 1 wherein the warning means comprises a lamp arranged to be illuminated under low-light scene conditions.

3. A camera as claimed in claim 2 wherein the lamp is arranged to be illuminated when the shutter is open.

4. A camera as claimed in claim 3 wherein the photoresponsive means has two outputs, a first output being connectable to a light level reference circuit to provide an output therefrom under low-light conditions, and a second output connectable to an integrating circuit for determining the exposure interval to provide an output therefrom during integration, and wherein the lamp is connected in circuit so as to be illuminated in response to an output from both the reference circuit and the integrating circuit.

5. A camera as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the photoresponsive means comprises two photoconductive cells, a first of the cells serving to control the lens aperture and the second cell serving to control the exposure interval.

6. A camera as claimed in claim 5 wherein the two cells are mounted on a single substrate and each is arranged to view the same scene area.

7. A camera as claimed in claim 6 wherein the substrate supports two interdigitated conductors with a third common conductor extending sinuously therebetween the area of the substrate between the conductors being coated with a photoconductive material.

8. A camera as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the photoresponsive means, in addition to regulating an aperture of the camera lens, serves simultaneously to adjust an aperture regulating the light received by the photoresponsive means so as to provide a null system.

9. A camera as claimed in claim 8 wherein regulation of the camera lens aperture is arranged to occur prior to and during, if necessary, the exposure interval.

10. A camera as claimed in any preceding claim further including, for flash operation, a changeover means serving to connect a further warning means in the circuit, the further warning means being indicative of the preparedness of the camera to operate under flash conditions.

11. A camera as claimed in claim 10 wherein the changeover means serves to disconnect the photo-responsive means and to connect a fixed resistor in circuit to provide a predetermined exposure interval.

12. A camera as claimed in claim 10 or 11 wherein the changeover means is arranged to be operable in response to the connection of a flash device to the camera.

13. A camera as claimed in claim 10, 11 or 12 wherein means are provided for sensing whether a flash device, when connected to the camera, presents a firable flash bulb and the further warning means comprises a lamp illuminatable if an unfirable flash bulb is presented.

14. A camera as claimed in claim 10, 11, 12 or 13 wherein the changeover means is arranged to couple the lens aperture regulating means of the camera to a focussing means of the lens.

15. A photographic camera substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to and as illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

L. A. TRANGMAR, B.Sc., C.P.A.,
Agent for the Applicants.

