Most Snapshots taken by soldiers during WWII were taken on a Brownie.

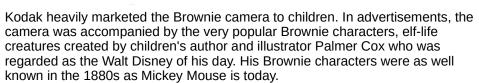## The story of the humble Brownie camera that took over the world

In 1900, the Eastman Kodak Company introduced the humble Brownie camera and a revolution began.

This small, simple box launched a new industry and forever changed the way we communicate. Photojournalism, the motion picture industry, medical x-rays, satellite imaging, the internet " every technology we use to communicate with pictures can trace its ancestry to that first black box.

Frank A Brownell designed and manufactured the first Brownie. It was a simple, black, rectangular box covered in imitation leather with nickeled fittings. Low priced, it was a simple point-and-shoot, hand-held camera which was perfect for children to use. To take a snapshot all you had to do was hold the camera at waist height, aim, and turn a switch.

The Brownie camera was very affordable, selling for $1 each. Plus, for only 15 cents, a Brownie camera owner could buy a six-exposure film cartridge that could be loaded in daylight.

Kodak heavily marketed the Brownie camera to children. In advertisements, the camera was accompanied by the very popular Brownie characters, elf-life creatures created by children's author and illustrator Palmer Cox who was regarded as the Walt Disney of his day. His Brownie characters were as well known in the 1880s as Mickey Mouse is today.

Children under the age of 16 were also encouraged to join the Brownie Camera Club, a free club in which they could earn prizes for good photos and receive a photographic art brochure.

The success of the Brownie camera was enormous. In the first year, 150,000 cameras were shipped "three times the previous record."

The Brownies were in production for 70 very successful years. Over that time, there were 125 Brownie camera models, some minor name changes No 1 Brownie, No 2 Brownie, No 3 Brownie " and some major name changes " Brownie Target, Beau Brownie, Brownie Hawkeye. There were also some minor physical changes to the revolutionary Brownie were usually black, they sometimes came in other colours, usually palm-size but sometimes larger. More noticeable physical changes included some Brownies with folding bellows and some with flash capability.