

THE UNSUNG HEROES OF



JOHN BARRY

“When we met him, we knew he was the kind of person we wanted to work with.”

GARY KURTZ

ONCE UPON A GALAXY: A JOURNAL OF THE MAKING OF THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, 1980.

The labyrinth corridors of the DEATH STAR space station, the interiors of the vast Rebel hangar located within the ancient and mysterious Massassi temple on Yavin Four, the pristine white/lime green walls of the Rebel Blockade Runner spaceship (hiding a time buying crew as they ready themselves in the task of repelling Imperial boarders), the lived in look of the desert oasis of the planet Tatooine, and the used, functional interior that is Han Solo's Millennium Falcon.

Just a few of the spectacular sets created for the original STAR WARS. Sets so amazing and believable, that they would leave a lasting impression on many a STAR WARS fans imagination, not just those spellbound by the movie at the time of its first release, but impacting on the mindset of a further generation as well, with another yet to come.

Though sparsely described in his three original script drafts, George Lucas had created all of these fascinating locales for STAR WARS successfully, and meticulously, within his head, but it was up to a group of highly talented individuals to bring his fantastic movie making dreams to reality.

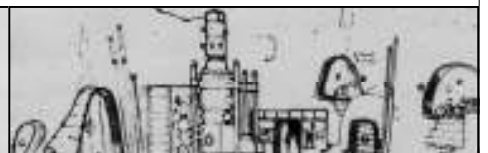
Ralph McQuarrie was the first. His eerily beautiful renderings of a galaxy far, far away had helped sell the ideas of the film to the possible American studios interested in making it. But it was up to a highly talented Production Designer to bring those drawings to believable, and, above all else, filmable and practical reality.

That man was John Barry....



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Below: Barry's original production drawings for the Falcon interior, a Dewback and the Lars Homestead.





THE DREAM TEAM. Now properly established at the ELSTREE STUDIOS production offices from late 1975 onwards, Production Designer John Barry (centre) gets to work in bringing the STAR WARS universe to life with the help of his good friends L-R: Set Decorator Roger Christian, Art Director Leslie Dilley, Construction Manager Bill Welch, and Art Director Norman Reynolds.

In December 1975, the official green light was finally given by TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX for production to commence on THE STAR WARS (before it's name change to just STAR WARS, and long before anyone had serious hopes for any sequels- this was still just a one off film to many people making it, including its creators-George Lucas and producer Gary Kurtz), with a budget set at a disappointing, but set in stone, seven million dollars (a far cry from the normal average budgeted movies made at that time (the early to mid seventies), which normally came in at around twelve to fourteen million- STAR WARS first budget soon proving an unrealistic figure for a science fiction film, especially one so epic in scale, using untried experimental effects), Prior to FOX's full commitment, Lucas had already been financing the STAR WARS project's earliest two years of script/ pre-production development (including the new special effects house ILM, which would have to be built from scratch to incorporate the script's heavy amount of effects shots) and conceptualization elements with his own money- made from the profits coming in slowly but surely for directing AMERICAN GRAFFITI). Prior to that final greenlit, Kurtz had also begun his own full preliminary work on the film, from 1974 onwards, establishing where it was to begin principal interior photography, and which important behind the scenes personnel were to be hired for their skills in bringing Lucas's brave new science fiction/fantasy universe for young people to reality for the duration of the film's making.



For studio space, Kurtz traveled the United States but found that the majority of the American soundstages (at FOX, Sunset Goewer (COLUMBIA's old complex), Culver City or at WARNER BROTHERS) were either too small or already occupied for the specific time slot period that THE STAR WARS needed for filming. Traveling further a-field, Kurtz began an investigation of the European film facilities. Italy was almost considered as a studio venue, but it too would prove to be in a situation similar to America, the large majority of stages either booked, far too small, or they just couldn't handle the upcoming epic movies huge production requirements. With time running out, only one country seemed able to provide viable filming potential: England.

Visiting England in late 1975, Kurtz was fortunate to discover a selection of possible venues. Ideally, PINEWOOD STUDIOS was the best place to stage the film (and, to its credit, it would eventually build the enormous 007 stage- which would eventually be used for UNITED ARTISTS then most recent James Bond production: THE SPY WHO LOVED ME), but it's system of internal staffing laid too heavy a price overhead on Kurtz, for which Lucas and the STAR WARS CORPORATION could not afford.



Above top: John Barry and George Lucas confer over topographical photos of the Tunisian landscape. Above images: a selection of 1975 location photos recently re-discovered in 2009 by Ralph McQuarrie at his US Los Angeles home/art studio.

Continuing the search, Kurtz then went to the legendary ELSTREE STUDIOS. With the last film to be made there-MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS-completed some time previously, the studio had



Above: at an office at ELSTREE STUDIOS in 1976, Barry and Lucas sort out some adjustments being made to the constantly in development See-Threepio mask. Below: the duo work out the angles of the Rebel fighter bay located within a temple on planet Yavin IV.



become a ghost town. Before it was about to be sold off as prime real estate, a fate that would eventually befall half of it's premises in the late nineties, Kurtz would be able to step in and negotiate for the studio to be used exclusively for the film for seventeen weeks, hiring the entire complex for shooting during the summer of 1976, and using all of it's available nine sound stages (though one had been pre-booked for use for a period by Paul McCartney and his band WINGS in creating their new album), booked at a bargain price, and saving the studio from extinction for a long period of time to come (where it would be used for two other STAR WARS films and the first three INDIANA JONES adventures). The only problem that ELSTREE couldn't solve was that it didn't have a big enough stage to house two important sequences that had to be set on the Rebel base planet of Yavin IV (the secret hangar bay hidden within a huge temple (and its adjoining interior command centre/pilot briefing area), and the huge audience chamber where the heroes receive their medals at the film's conclusion. With ELSTREE's two largest studios booked to house the Mos Eisley spaceport interiors/ exteriors that were not being filmed on location, and the labyrinth like DEATH STAR space station interiors, Kurtz, wisely taking precautions, managed to book an additional London based studio- SHEPPERTON, and its enormous stage H- to handle any size problems.

Several other factors also determined the choice of England as a base of operations for STAR WARS. Not only was there a pool of tremendously talented and hard working freelance production people available to make the film, but the country was conveniently close to

Tunisia in North Africa (when it was eventually selected to become the planet Tatooine for the film's primary location filming-more on that later). Being shot outside the US would also lend the project some secrecy and help Lucas avoid any hostile studio execs from FOX (of which there were already many anxious, shuffling suits, unsure whether this new science fiction project, of which they had invested a great amount of money in, and in a time of great financial difficulty for the company (after the flops of the musical DOCTOR DOOLITTLE and the historical epic CLEOPATRA in recent years, as well as the eventually released LUCKLY LADY in 1976), would be a success). Adding to the UK's favour was the fact that it was becoming more cost efficient to make motion pictures there during that seventies period, thanks to a special tax discount made to film makers by the British government (a benefit that would last until the early eighties), which Alan Ladd Jr., the Head of Production at FOX insisted should be taken advantage of to the full.

With the sound stage deal now set, and the use of British technicians a part of the country's working regulations anyway, mid to late 1975 saw the hunt for key production personnel, who would be in charge of the departments working feverishly to bring the film to life, begin to pick up greater speed. Kurtz and Lucas, already aware that the British film technicians were amongst the finest in the world (with their long experience at making epic and smaller scale trend setting movies), were determined to get the best people available, especially those who had previously worked on fantasy or adventure films. With their reputations for working with film pioneers like Stanley Kubrick, Albert R. Broccoli, and David Lean, the caliber of hired moviemakers available was extraordinary: from Roberts Watts (whom Kurtz had previously met in 1973), Special effects man John Stears, to Gilbert Taylor (who would last minute replace Lucas/Kurtz's original first choice of film-maker, Geoffrey Unsworth), and, finally, the extraordinarily talented Production Designer: John Barry.

Barry, born in London, England in 1935, was originally an architect, doing some stage design work on the side, before entering the film business as a draftsman. After working for FOX, at PINEWOOD STUDIOS, on his first movie job-the epic Elizabeth Taylor film vehicle CLEOPATRA (before the film's London shooting was abandoned



Above: once more in John Barry's design/art department offices, Lucas works with him on the set development of the Mos Eisley Cantina for filming in April/May 1976. Opposite left: the full maquette of the Cantina set interior.



Above top left: an early 1976 maquette of the newly re-designed *Millennium Falcon* spacecraft within the DEATH STAR. Above: carpenters are almost finished on the one third built recreation of the vessel. Opposite left: the final touches are made to the ship and its Mos Eisley docking bay enclosure. A specially painted back curtain behind the ship gives the illusion of greater size.

and transferred to Italy), he went on to become assistant to the famous Art Director Elliott Scott (who would later work on the INDIANA JONES film series), at the British MGM studios (where they would work together on the classic 1960's Patrick McGeehan spy TV series DANGER MAN), before going solo, working on his first project as an art director- the movie DECLINE AND FALL... OF A BIRD WATCHER (1969), a film based on the Evelyn Waugh comedy novelettes. From then onwards, Barry's career would quickly advance, and he would soon make the jump to Production Designer working on the popular Clint Eastwood action film KELLY'S HEROES in 1970, as well as the unusual 1973 science fiction film PHASE IV (alongside UK effects man John Stears), about super intelligent ants (in which he also worked with legendary feature

film credits designer turned director, Saul Bass)). Though his impressive, tirelessly created work on the abandoned Stanley Kubrick movie NAPOLEON was never realized, the famous director, impressed with Barry, both as a person and as a production designer, would hire him for his next ambitious project- an adaptation of the controversial Alistair Burgess science fiction fantasy/morality tale- A CLOCKWORK ORANGE.

Intrigued with his amazing production design work on Kubrick's controversial, and later UK banned, 1971 film (especially the way that ORANGE's pop art imagery mixed with unusual real life settings), and being known in the industry for his strong visual style of juxtaposing incongruous items to create disturbing effects, Barry's further work, on the Stanley Donen UK filmed production of the movie THE LITTLE PRINCE would forever cement itself into the minds of George Lucas and Gary Kurtz (its production design, based on the Antoine de saint-exupery's fantasy, being set against the incredible fantasy backdrop of a barren, desolate world which had been filmed in Tunisia, a location discovered for the principal exterior photography by Barry) and making him a person of note to consider working with them on THE STAR WARS.



Above: working from highly detailed reference models sent over to them via the newly formed INDUSTRIAL LIGHT AND MAGIC in Van Nuys, California, John Barry's construction team gets to work building a full size X-wing (above right) and a partially built Y-wing fighter for SHEPPERTON's June filming.

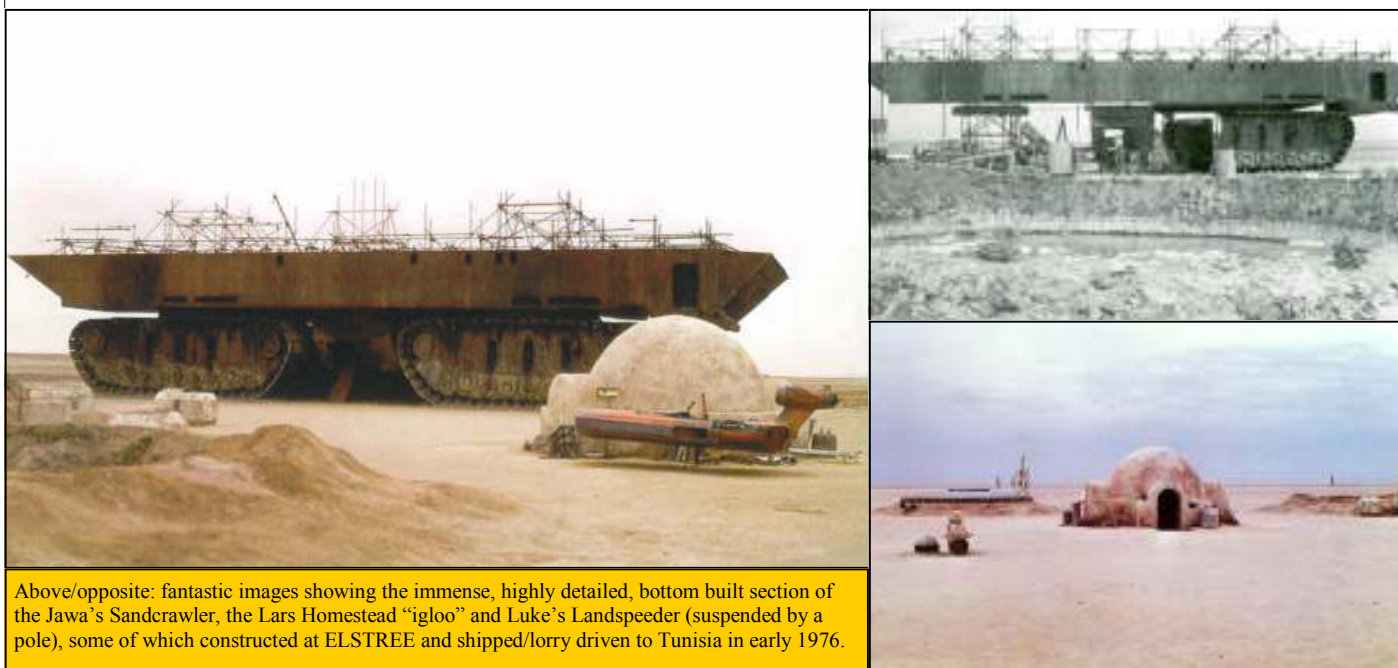


Having previously met with another Production Designer, Anthony Masters, about the possibility of working on THE STAR WARS (which came to nothing anyway), Kurtz, with Lucas, made a Fourth of July trip to the then US filming of the 1975 FOX movie comedy/box office star vehicle LUCKY LADY (which starred Burt Reynolds, Gene Hackman and Liza Minelli), written by Lucas old friends -Willard Huyck and Gloria Katz- and also directed by Stanley Donen. There, the duo signed the services of that film's esteemed cinematographer Geoffrey Unsworth, then, hearing good word of mouth from people on both the LUCKY LADY set and within other areas of the film industry, met up with that film's other visual talent-John Barry (who had been working in Mexico for seven months), to discuss THE STAR WARS script and their ideas for it's design and making.

With nearly a quarter of the sci-fi movie's budget going to be spent on the films production design, set construction and costumes, Barry, still a relatively new talent within his industry, showed great enthusiasm for the project, and was keenly interested in being at the forefront of designing an entirely new genre universe (at that time, he was also trying to get his own sci-fi movie project- SATURN 3 (about a couple, living on an asteroid, terrorized by a vicious technocrat and his robot servant) - made into a feature), and quickly signed on to the project when offered it by Lucas and Kurtz (though, unavailable for a specific start date, the legendary Elliot Scott would start up some preliminary work in UK Post Production prior to Barry's final arrival on the project from August 1st 1975, working firstly from rented premises at the LEE ELECTRICS offices in London).

With Barry's thumbs up to the job, a confident Kurtz and Lucas were thrilled to have his respected talents on board. Liking the quiet, reserved, but sharp and determined film-making pair, Barry, soon brought along his trusted production crew (Art Directors Norman Reynolds and Leslie Dilley (good friends who'd worked with Barry on previous projects) , the young up and coming Set Decorator Roger Christian (the third talent hired to officially start UK Pre-Production work on the movie, along with UK Practical Special Effects Chief John Stears (who was the first), construction manager Bill Welch, and the unique talents of movie veteran Harry Lange (who had previously worked on 2001 in creating amazing technological control panels)), who quickly threw themselves into the unique project one hundred percent.

Whilst based at LEE, Barry would firstly help out with the realization and construction of two tricky design/effect challenges-





Cursing Artoo for leaving him, Threepio (Anthony Daniels) wanders near the remains of a Tatooine Kratt Dragon (in reality a re-used prop from a DISNEY film).

Artoo Detoo (of which Roger Christian, with carpenter Bill Harman, would build the first prototype base in cardboard and plywood, using one of the early Ralph McQuarrie paintings as a construction basis) and Luke Skywalker's Landspeeder- Barry's primary responsibility was to design and supervise the construction of the vast amount of interior/exterior set requirements needed for the movie (working from the films main visual reference sources at that time-the aforementioned work by McQuarrie-with Barry going to the US to meet with him and Lucas, on August 20th 1975, about what sets were to be adapted and brought to life, not only for the studio filming but those that needed to be built for the overseas shoot as well (of which, at

the time of his hiring, a location had not yet been finalized)- Barry's ideas and abilities in making these sets work practically and with the saving of time and money would soon impress his US colleagues, especially McQuarrie, who liked the way that he had brought his own DEATH STAR interior paintings to reality). Barry would continue to adapt the paintings (which had been originally commissioned to help sell the production to film studios (and which had convinced FOX's Alan Ladd Jr. into backing the project in the first place)) to reality as much as possible by December 1975 for the upcoming filming.

Accompanying Kurtz, and Production Supervisor, Robert Watts (who had already done some preliminary work looking at Spain and America), Barry would travel to North Africa, Morocco, and the Middle East on scouting expeditions. Having worked in Tunisia before, Barry knew that a lot of what was needed for the film could be found there, and that its native architecture was closer to George Lucas's vision than anything their other eventual location choice, Morocco, could so far provide. Arriving with the Production Unit Manager, his hunches would soon prove correct, with Barry helping find the right locations dictated in the screenplay and checking their practicality for building sets at them. Barry and his colleagues would find out what needed to be re-dressed, and would assess, and solve, any problems that may hinder the production, or cost extra money.

With the Tunisia recce soon completed, and hundreds of topographical pictures set up on a huge wall at ELSTREE, Lucas and Barry would whittle down and determine the most suitable, photogenic, and unusual places to film the location scenes for the movie. Barry and the STAR WARS company then liaised with the Tunisian government for filming permission. For outdoor scenes set beyond the sand planet of Tatooine, location scouting would also be done several years later, in the filming schedule's Post Production phase, in Guatemala, at the Tikai National Park (and it's wonderfully ancient Mayan temples) for the sequences involving the lush and mysterious jungle planet of Yavin IV (those scenes would be specifically photographed by John Dykstra's special effects team, who were working from California (and who were closer to the location for filming than anybody else)).

Ever busy, Barry continued reading and re-reading the ever changing shooting script (at that time, the third version of THE STAR WARS, completed in August 1975, was being used for reference) as the final budget for the film was being locked in. As the often tense budget negotiating with FOX took place towards the end of that year, many great elements of that, and the later Fourth Draft scripts for the film, would be sadly dropped, with the frustrated Production Designer and Lucas/Kurtz having to unhappily make some serious compromises and cuts to the look of the film and its story to get it on track for the budget (with the passing of time, however, the crew would soon realize that the cuts would actually *help* the script become more defined in its focus). With the new changes/revisions, and the road to principal photography getting ever nearer, the need for tighter liaising with Lucas and Kurtz on every aspect of the production, as well as with the all important team headed by John Dykstra at the INDUSTRIAL LIGHT AND MAGIC effects facility in Van Nuys, California, and the work that they were doing separately on the project (with regards to exterior spacecraft designs, creatures and other environments, which may have to be blended in with the interior work Barry and his people were doing in the UK), was an absolute all encompassing necessity. With his team of 300 art department staff (including the construction crew), Barry would prove exceptional on handling the film's art direction and budget, and for his abilities at handling the logistics of a multi set studio picture and creating practical, budget saving ideas.

Wanting a "used" universe previously unseen in science fiction films, George Lucas would take great pains to let Barry and the other designers/construction crews know that he wanted the STAR WARS worlds and people inhabiting it to look real and



Above far top: an unknown cameraman gets ready to shoot a scene looking down into the bowel-like interior of the Sidi Driss hotel. Middle: Mark Hamill takes a breather at the re-dressed location. Above: in a specially posed shot, with re-arranged actor positions, Luke has dinner with Uncle Owen (Phil Brown) and Aunt Beru (Shelagh Fraser).



The fishing town of Djerba gets a special makeover STAR WARS style, when it is transformed into Mos Eisley spaceport. Specially constructed props, like an abandoned ships main engine, hide some of the local indigenous scenery.



lived in, that it wouldn't be the gleaming walls and incredible high technology seen in previous genre films and television series. Where budgetary considerations came into effect beyond the creation of the established sets needed for filming, Barry, working with Lucas, Kurtz, and new Director of Photography- Gilbert Taylor (replacing Geoffrey Unsworth at the last minute, when he decided to work on the Vincente Minelli film A MATTER OF TIME instead)- would find ways of improving/refining the designs to suit their needs prior to set building.

In all, thirty sets were to be constructed for THE STAR WARS. Interlocking jigsaw sets in particular (where pieces of set/s could be re-dressed and re-arranged to look like new sections, or even a whole new set, whilst old pieces of scrap and junk heap materials were also used as set decoration throughout the movie (specially selected for use on the sets by an ingenious Roger Christian, and literally bought in in huge amounts from various airplane graveyards), which looked right for the movie's design aesthetic, would be used for the upcoming DEATH STAR interior shooting, as part of the inventive drive to keep costs down as much as possible. The planning, adaptation and construction of said sets (made mostly out of wood, fiberglass and other plastics) continued from November 1975, whilst Lucas was casting the essential roles of Luke, Leia, Han and the rest of the supporting cast, and then through the duration of its principal photography in 1976.

With his strong design aesthetic, it wasn't just the sets that John Barry would work on- the all important design for the movie's main villain, Darth Vader, would specifically need his help and input in being brought to life. Alongside the films costume designer, John Mollo, and Ralph McQuarrie's original paintings, Barry's design techniques for

the Dark Lord, especially with regards to the distinctive, totally threatening mask that he wore, would help give the Dark Lord his iconic monumental stature of evil (with the final approved mask design sculpted at ELSTREE by Brian Muir). Barry would also help Ralph McQuarrie design the full face of See Threepio- giving the golden robot big, rounded, art deco eyes, instead of the small eye slits he originally had (Barry would further bring in the talented sculptor, the late Liz Moore, to work on the masks prototype eyes. From there, she went onto design the original C-3PO costume progressively in three different versions until she reached the distinctive design that is known world-wide today (though the characters practical reality/construction would also continue to have input from Lucas, Daniels, Norman Reynolds and others right up to the point of location filming in March 1976).

With the casting period finally over (after a painstaking three month process), and George Lucas's Fourth Draft filming script completed in January, it was decided, to buy time for the set construction at ELSTREE, and for John Dykstra and his team to develop the effects work in Los Angeles, that the films location photography in Tunisia would begin first. This meant that the move of one hundred and thirty personnel, equipment, sets and specially built props to Africa had to begin sooner rather than later- a tough job that, fortunately, Robert Watts, who had previously worked on diverse and highly challenging organizational duties for films like the hectic, heavily overseas based JAMES BOND adventures THUNDERBALL and YOU ONLY LIVE TWICE (the latter filmed in the mystical land and culture of Japan), was more than up to meeting- though he would recall, in an interview twenty years later, that it was a very tight deadline for getting things done.

Eight weeks in all were planned for Pre-Production of the movie in Tunisia, starting off in the sleepy town of Tozeur. Arriving ahead of the filming team and actors (who would begin principal photography proper in March 1976, and had eleven days to complete it all (part of the original seventy filming days FOX had allocated to an unhappy Lucas)), Barry, with a separate team to the one working on the ELSTREE sets, would oversee the construction of the Lars homestead exteriors at two places (the above ground level of the Moisture Farm slightly re-designed and re-dressed from it's original drawings (to make use of available materials found at the location), on a salt flat area called Chott el-Jerid (with Barry designing a low domed entrance and some vaporator towers (created in the UK and nicknamed "Christmas trees" by the crew, built with



Whilst on location in Tunisia (presumably Djerba) during March/April 1976, John Barry confers with two of his UK team-mates (names unknown) over some upcoming construction blue prints/designs.



The sequence of Luke re-united with Biggs and friends at Anchorhead's Tosche Station sadly never made the final movie.



interchangeable components- so no two were exactly alike) that would be scattered round the location), whilst it's underground exterior shots (where Luke Skywalker, Owen and Beru Lars have dinner) were filmed at the Sidi Driss resort in the village of Matmata, a hotel consisting of pit like dwellings twenty feet deep, with rooms hollowed out of the sides. The pit dwelling interiors had to be set dressed to look even more unusual and other worldly (the room selected as the dining area was originally a kitchen, and the ceiling had become blackened with smoke- Barry, scraping some of the blackened area, going back to the red mud of the cave, would create an interesting primitive style mural in the process)).



The later scene where Luke Skywalker encounters Ben Kenobi for the first time (in the Junland wastes), and Artoo's capture by the Jawas would be shot at Chott el-Jerid, at a section containing an eerie and desolate area of brown stone canyons (later used as a location in RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK, and becoming a well known tourist spot called STAR WARS CANYON).

Gullies, defloes and dunes would also be used for other Tatooine sequences, and Barry would utilize each locations atmospheric flavor to the full with his unique set dressing abilities. Using a dune in Nefta, Tozeur, he re-dressed an animal skeleton's polystyrene remains used previously by DISNEY at ELSTREE during the filming of their period comedy ONE OF OUR DINOSAURS IS MISSING and placed it on a hill at the site to eerie effect, creating a heightened sense of desolation and danger for the Tatooine desert sequence where Threepio (originally Artoo in the production storyboards) wanders the dune sea on his own, looking for help and rescue.

Above top: Aunt Beru (Shelagh Fraser) in her kitchen. Above: Threepio (Anthony Daniels) watches as Luke (Mark Hamill) tends to Artoo Detoo (Kenny Baker) in the underground Lars Garage.

In addition to the sets that were bought over, many of the props that Barry had provided a unique helping hand in designing, with the other UK and US production designers, were also to be heavily utilized on location, including Luke Skywalker's air floating Landspeeder, and the Jawa Sandcrawler, making their way to the site via a specialized lorry transport service.

Originally constructed from the plans as a vehicle far too big-a comfortable four seat prop that would not be practical for use by Lucas and his crew on the small Tunisian locations roads, the Landspeeder would be a much modified framework built on the top of a Bond Bug chassis (a three wheeler type car), unfortunately proving to be one of the most difficult props ever to build and film effectively. Two versions of the final approved craft were constructed: one that moved on hidden wheels (which would be covered up by the optical effects people in the US in various ways, including smearing vaseline over the individual frames to blot out the wheel movements!!), the



Above: no longer a cave, Obi-Wan Kenobi's home would instead be a quaint little hovel with lots of intriguing set decoration related to his time on Tatooine.



Opposite top: the DEATH STAR docking bay is now built around the *Millennium Falcon* prop. Opposite middle: a view of the completed set. Below: the final look of the set during a break in the June 1976 filming of the sequence where the Rebel heroes escape from the space station. Far below: an earlier scene showing the ship's original capture and arrival in the docking bay, flanked by around thirty Imperial Stormtroopers and a curious Darth Vader (Dave Prowse).



other operated on a crane device. A second, generic Landspeeder (this one operating fully on ground level) would also be built, appearing in the Mos Eisley exterior shooting (and making a very brief appearance in the garage of the Lars homestead).

For the Sandcrawler, Barry and his team, adapting the design slightly from Ralph McQuarrie's original creation (which had also been previously refined by ILM production artist Joe Johnston), created a partially built, though huge, bottom half to the vehicle (the top half being realized by matte painting). So big was the Sandcrawler prop brought to life by John Stears that it's presence on the Tunisian border upset the nearby country of Algeria- worried that an invasion army was getting ready to attack them!! With the prop unable to move, long shots of the vehicle roaming the desert were later achieved via a remote controlled miniature in 1977 Post Production.

The sequence where the Stormtroopers search the droid abandoned escape pod, looking for the stolen DEATH STAR plans, called for one of the Imperials to be riding an unusual reptilian life form, native to Tatooine, called a Dewback. The Dewback was a specially constructed life-size dummy. Due to production problems, however, it would unfortunately have very little performance movement-the head moving only very slightly, controlled via a stick jutting it from one side to the other. Though visually impressive, its lack of movement upset Lucas, who decided that the creature, and another specially created beast (later named the Jerba), could only be used for long shots.

With the location exterior sets installed and any set dressing required now complete, principal photography on STAR WARS ("THE" eventually removed from its title) had gotten underway on 25th March 1976,

though any problems the production people had previously faced in getting the film on the road to reality paled into insignificance with what was to come. On the second day's filming, the first winter rainstorm in fifty years hit Tunisia, bringing a host of problems to filming there, and the weather conditions would continue to deteriorate for the next two days that shooting progressed. Major disaster highlights included the hotel filming at the Sidi Driss losing a day due to the torrential rain (causing major flooding of the underground pits), and the stranding of two production vehicles in the mud of the salt flats at Chott el-Jerid (an event that temporarily shut down filming).

As fierce sandstorms now arrived to hit the area, specially made goggles were supplied to shield the 130 strong crew from the terrifying, strapping high velocity winds (the wind would even knock down the impressive Sandcrawler set at Nefta before it had even been before the cameras). Natural elements such as sand would also play a part in the chaos, clogging the film cameras and ruining other important equipment. And then there were the problems with the robot droid props, with up to fifteen specially designed and built robots breaking down constantly- either during filming or just before the cameras were ready to roll- delaying things further and losing the Production Team vast amounts of further time and money (some of the specially built robots- designed in conjunction with John Stears- would never make it into the final cut). The countries terrain, already bad, got worse to the point that all the equipment had to be carried by slow moving donkeys. Filming days were soon to have extended hours in order to make use of every shard of available sunlight, with two to three cameras often being used to shoot scenes. In a move agreed by Kurtz with the rest of the production crew/actors, days would also be re-arranged for shooting (even if meant losing one day of a weekend), so that the film could catch up with it's production schedule. To put the final nail in the coffin, many members of the crew were hit with terrible bouts of dysentery.

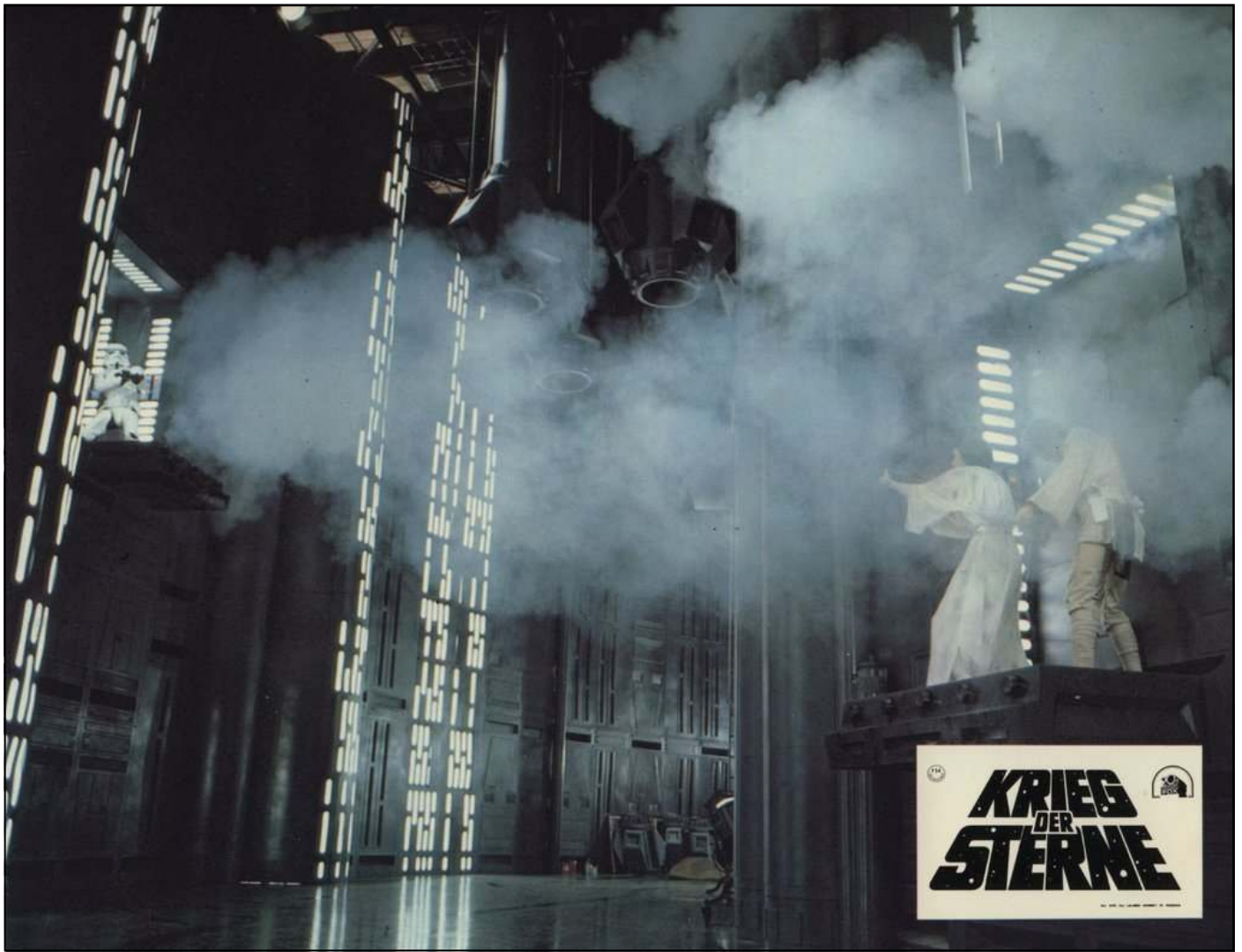
Despite all of the above problems (which Lucas would call "good omens" when the crew of EPISODE ONE: THE PHANTOM MENACE were hit by similar problems when they returned to the country for filming in 1997), the film crew persevered on their mission to film STAR WARS.

Moving to the town of Adjim/the offshore fishing village islands of DJerba- the alleged home of the legendary Lotus Eaters of Greek mythology), scenes would be shot of Luke and Ben's arrival at Mos Eisley spaceport (of which the outside of a building would become the entrance to the Cantina), later deleted scenes of Anchorhead, and the exterior of Ben Kenobi's home (in reality a fishing hut).

With the Tunisian filming finally wrapped (though there were still shots that had not been finished, due to effects problems and continued bad weather conditions (one exterior set had to be scrapped due to George being unhappy with the finished construction, but, at this time of writing, it is unknown what that set actually was)), Barry and his full production team of artists and builders, now returned to ELSTREE, would concentrate fully, and exhaustively time-wise, on the following interior sets for the movie: those interiors set on Tatooine (including the (eventually unseen) Tosche station interior at Anchorhead, and the Lars

Opposite right: a February 1976 maquette for the re-designed interior of the *Falcon*-the ship no longer a centralised length deck. Below images: a selection of images showing the revised interior of the smuggling vessel- showing the vast set decoration applied to it by Roger Christian.





Above top: no longer captured, Princess Leia Organa (Carrie Fisher) returns fire on the lower level of the chasm set (note the ground floor mirrors and the cardboard prop cut outs at the end of the set). Opposite left: the Imperial War Room set. Below left: one of the many snake-like designed corridors of the DEATH STAR at ELSTREE-May 1976, with panel lighting conceived by Gilbert Taylor.



homestead (a kitchen, a two section garage with inter-juncture corridor))), Ben's small hovel home (originally planned as a cave but changed due to budget restrictions), the Jawa Sandcrawler interior (a set much bigger than what was eventually seen on screen), the Cantina interiors with their small alcove sections (of which one far wall would later be replaced with a matte painting as Lucas wanted to hide off some unwanted scenery), the streets of Mos Eisley that were not realized on location (with clever background paintings and a fake distance outdoor stairway making them look bigger than they actually were), the interior of the *Millennium Falcon* (including a corridor (which had to be shot on a raised set-so that the actors could hide in Han Solo's smuggling compartments), the flight deck (built on a special rig platform), a living/crew area) and a cockpit (with a lucky dice improvised to it), all of which were painstakingly set decorated by Roger Christian using a variety of materials (including the aforementioned airplane scrap parts) to make the ships interior look believable in the STAR WARS universe-taking a full six week period before it was achieved to his satisfaction and "looked right"- eventually, the interior would become his proudest work on the film), the DEATH STAR interiors (a specially designed, snake like set of corridors (allowing parts of the set to look different from other angles (and making the corridors look bigger than they actually were)- a command antechamber, prisoner cell block area (corridor, control