



THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF
By SCOTT WELLER



THE UNSUNG PHOTOGRAPHERS OF STAR WARS: A NEW HOPE-1976 AND 1977



Above images: contact sheets of costume test reference photos of numerous Cantina patrons, including the legendary Tonnika Twins (a.k.a. space hookers).

Since their early beginnings, it has long been an established tradition by worldwide film and television companies that on-set photographers are assigned to their forthcoming projects with the task of capturing images for future promotional purposes. Charged with the task of essentially capturing “the essence” of what’s being visually created, one or two of these hard working people would be working on the making of a motion picture or series for its duration-literally taking thousands upon thousands of pictures of the film’s critical scenes, characters and costumes for use, not only in the aforementioned movie publicity machine, but also in providing costume reference and continuity for the behind the scenes people in their daily work. These photographers not only work in the

studio, they also travel with the production company wherever it goes, be it the local woods outside the studio or to the far flung reaches of the deserts of Tunisia or the barren snow lands of Antarctica- their jobs in promoting the film being just as crucial as the Directors and cinematographers themselves. And, like their illustrious colleagues, their images last just as long as the celluloid frames that play in the movie houses. One just has to browse the many film and television books out there to see the many striking and historic images these on-set photographers have captured for those movies over the years-those memorable images that we have known and loved so many times over (and how many times have the photographers captured dramatic scenes in movies more intensely and powerfully than the directors and cinematographers who shot those scenes in the first place!!).

One thing is certain, though. None of the film images of the last 100 years have captured the grandeur and mystique of those taken for that certain little saga called STAR WARS...



More April/ May 1976 costume test photos of the Cantina aliens seen in STAR WARS, some of which are shot on the Docking Bay 94 set at ELSTREE.



JOHN JAY

Born in Brixton, South London, John Jay would be known within the industry for his enthusiasm and striking photography, and would be used to the varied and exciting environments of both the science fiction and epic movie genres, having gone on to be a set photographer for such landmark movies as 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY, WHERE EAGLES DARE, QUATERMASS 2 and THE DAY THE EARTH CAUGHT FIRE, as well as some TV work including Gene (STAR TREK) Roddenberry's one off TV movie series pilot, an early X-FILES type horror/supernatural vehicle, called SPECTRE. Though Jay's work on THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW had impressed the film-makers at FOX, with whom he had a strong relationship with the company, and who recommended him to Producer Gary Kurtz, it may well have been his work on 2001 that had cemented itself in Kurtz's mind as Jay being the right choice to handle the photographic requirements for the movie (and many of the movie's key creative personnel, like Robert Watts and Stuart Freeborn, had previously worked on that film also).



Film and TV stills photographer John Jay whilst on location filming for the 1969 war film adventure WHERE EAGLES DARE.

Originally, Jay, in early 1976, wasn't sure if he would have a chance of getting the stills job on the film at all-other well known photographers had tried and found their interview process with the film's Producer, Gary Kurtz, to be very tough. Traveling to ELSTREE, Jay, not bothered if he got the job or not but thinking he will give it a go regardless, enters Kurtz's beautiful office. The interview does not go well and the Producer is quite quiet and subdued before he asks Jay what cameras he would use if he were the stills man. Certain that he wasn't going to get the job, Jay excused himself early from the interview. A short period later, however, he would receive word from FOX that he would be doing the stills for the movie.

Once involved in the film from its Post Production period onwards, of which time was sparse as everybody was working feverishly to be ready in reaching the scheduled filming dates in



Tunisia in March 1976, Jay would be given a free hand in what he shot for the film, handling the vast requirements of the film's photography-a task that ranged from shooting all the necessary material needed for the FOX and THE STAR WARS CORPORATION publicity machine. First shooting takes in colour, then subsequent ones in black and white, Jay also photographed the numerous sketches, storyboards and drawings for the art department (headed in the UK by John Barry), and the continuity shots used by the hairdressing and continuity departments (run by Stuart Freeborn and Anne Skinner), of which his surviving material would eventually be assimilated into the huge LUCASFILM ARCHIVE from the mid 1980's onwards. For all of the filming, Jay used world famous Hasselblad cameras- which he thought were the best in the world. On location, there would be problems, especially in the almost overwhelming location filming of Tunisia, where he found that the sand there was "like face powder". He continues to Marcus Hearn in an interview with the UK STAR WARS magazine in 1997: "I had to be careful when I was reloading, because if anyone near me moved then the sand flew around



A selection of classic film still imagery taken by John Jay during the 1976 location and studio filming for THE STAR WARS.

in the air in currents. I got polythene bags in the end and reloaded the cameras inside them. It was the only way I could get away with it. When I was taking pictures, I would keep the camera inside the bag and poke the lense through a hole I'd cut in the front." The intense summer heat hitting Britain in 1976 would also take its toll on both Jay and the cast and crew members during the studio filming at ELSTREE-with the vast DEATH STAR hangar soundstage holding the *Millennium Falcon* half-prop having to have it's huge doors opened at varying non-shooting moments, so as to let cool air in.

The film would be an exhaustive, but highly enjoyable job for Jay, who would shoot thousands of pictures over a five to six month period (later stills photography on the STAR WARS films would top 70-80,000 stills being captured, by Ralph Nelson Jr. and Albert Clarke, in certain time periods). Despite his enjoyment on set and his strong cinematic sense in taking stills, however, STAR WARS, to Jay, was just another kids picture, being amongst the people who thought it was going to be a load of old rubbish-though he would be blown away by the final movie when he saw it with his comrades at the first press screening in London in 1977.

In that filming period, Jay would strike up a strong friendship with numerous members of the cast and crew, some of which he had worked on UK related film projects with before, Of the US



contingent, Jay had a positive relationship with George Lucas- who, despite the pressures, the photographer found to be calm and knowing in what he wanted filmed (just like Stanley Kubrick had been on 2001)-who had a major say in what pictures by Jay were eventually released as promotional mages, and actor Mark Hamill, on set throughout the difficult location filming at Tunisia and within the controlled confines of ELSTREE STUDIOS in Borehamwood. Of the rest of the cast, Jay would later go on to work with Harrison Ford again for the on set photography of FOX's HANOVER STREET, directed by Peter Hyams, and also shot in England.

According to the MAKING OF STAR WARS book by J.W. Rinzler, Jay was only available to take on set photography for a certain period of time each week at ELSTREE STUDIOS-the exact reasons for this are unknown but we can only assume that was due to budgetary constraints imposed on the production by TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX, especially with STAR WARS being such a low budget production when it was being made in 1976. Photographic duties on those other days would be handled by Gary Kurtz, who would also have the rights, with the STAR WARS CORPORATION contracts signed, to all of Jay's photographic material. Additionally, other photographers would be available on selected days at both ELSTREE and SHEPPERTON studios to cover certain filming (more on that later..)

Shockingly, a lot of Jay's photographic material for the film, including the trusty negatives, would either be lost or destroyed a short period after the films completion, with LUCASFILM/ Gary Kurtz and TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX having to re-create a large variety of black and white stills for promotional purposes from Jay's surviving contact sheets-that the picture quality of those reproduced images, from the contact sheets, are of such a good quality, even today, is a strong testament to the respected photographer's work.

After STAR WARS, Jay would work on numerous films including a brief return to the HAMMER HORROR film company he had been involved with photography wise in the late 1950's and early 60's. He eventually retired from the industry in 1985, unhappy with the then





state of the film industry and it's working conditions.

John Jay sadly died on the 29th April 2005 though his superb photography continues to live on in the numerous books, magazine and products available on STAR WARS over the last thirty years.



GARY KURTZ

In addition to Jay's sterling work, STAR WARS Producer Gary Kurtz, himself a respected cameraman, would also take a stunning amount of on set photography, mostly, from what we have seen in his important contributions to STAR WARS related projects over the years, black and white behind the scenes pictures-and some of the best we've ever seen, too!!-capturing the cast and crew of the film's at their prime.

Over the last seven years, many of the images taken by Kurtz, as well as some of those images taken by John Jay that weren't released for promotional use, have been on display at numerous fan events and conventions, and long time UK STAR WARS fan/collector Jason Joiner assists Kurtz in making selected colour and black and white photographs, from both STAR WARS and THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, available for autograph use by the actors doing signings at these events. At some point, Kurtz plans to do a book, or possibly an exhibition of the





A selection of behind the scenes pictures-some of which exist at LUCASFILM, and some of which are also within Gary Kurtz's private collection.

photography so keep an eye out when it happens.

AND THE REST...

What you may not know is that there were other photographers -apart from those talented two gentleman- who worked on that first film (and its sequel) who have not been properly credited for their work-men who had created images that have since become just as iconic as the films themselves. Images that have been used in every promotion, of every type, since the film's arrival in cinemas in 1977.

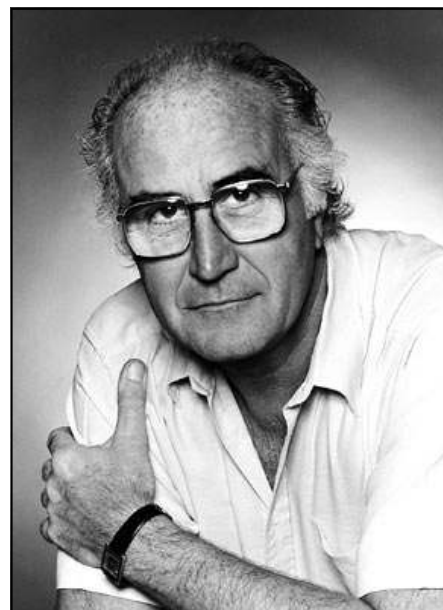
STAR WARS AFICIONADO un-earths...

THE UNSUNG PHOTOGRAPHERS OF STAR WARS: A NEW HOPE

DAVID STEEN

A respected photographer who started out in the same route as other sixties photographic icons, like David Bailey and Patrick Litchfield, doing trend setting fashion shoots for popular women's magazines followed by reportage for the various news and culture magazines of the sixties and seventies, Steen, his reputation growing as a trusted and efficient photographer, with a strong eye for composition, would be involved in numerous photo shoots for the British film industry as it neared the end of it's first life in the late seventies. Later handling photo duties for the first two SUPERMAN films (especially in relation to the flying effects), Steen would be responsible for taking posed cast pictures of the principal STAR WARS cast members during the ELSTREE/SHEPPERTON filming at certain points between April-July 1976.

Steen would also be involved in some of the studio filming photography, we presume helping out on day/s where John Jay may not have been available (if he was indeed only working four days a week-though Jay took photos of the Throne Room sequence at SHEPPERTON in May



1976, Steen was or all of the exists of him and readying his Harrison Ford from Carrie

As well as shots against a un-credited Steen posed shot of the drawn, whilst “buns” and costume, stays Chewbacca. Over and several white out-take in which the cast camera, from the KIT sent to newspapers in different, very have appeared and one of the pictures-

WARS FAN CLUB as a poster in 1977/8 (printed by Scandecour of Sweden), and then on the covers of numerous magazines (including a recent ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY magazine last year).

Having had a brief opportunity to speak to him on his STAR WARS work, Steen revealed that he took a lot of pictures of the film, not just posed shots of the then unknown stars (for editorial use and costume reference), and not just at ELSTREE for STAR WARS, but also at BRAY STUDIOS for EMPIRE too, taking reference photos of the various models and devices built for



May 1976. Above: David Steen (behind Leia) takes shots of Carrie Fisher, as Princess Leia, giving medals to Mark Hamill as Luke Skywalker, and Harrison Ford as Han Solo. Alex McCrindle as Dodonna watches, as Anne Skinner takes continuity notes.



Above: alternate posed shot of the new heroes of the Rebellion. Opposite right: a proud, medal bearing Luke looks towards Leia.

also present for some of sequence, and a photo watching the filming, camera, for the scene of receiving his medal Fisher.

shooting individual cast studio background, an would shoot the classic Han and Luke, guns Leia, wearing her medal ceremony near a protective the years this image, others-one black and from a different angle face directly towards STAR WARS PRESS magazines and 1977, and one slightly blurred colour shot, everywhere in the press electronically, and is definitive STAR WARS appearing in the STAR



the film (Steen recalls seeing, and photographing, some model filming being done there as well-this was all interesting news to me as I thought no model work had been attempted for the film in this country-if anyone out there has any more information on this please let me know..).

A serious, artistic years, STAR WARS, to photo assignment, and not a job that he remembers passing of time. Having time, which he thought was decipherable, Steen, not keep his work (photos, sheets), had signed a regrets, with Producer Gary LUCASFILM kept all of material he shot for the situation for photographers which has intensified and issue with the emergence the last twenty years, and publicity demands required outside promotion and wake of home like Video and DVD). released a book on his Steen considers it a shame had something to keep for work on STAR WARS in the book...



Above: a different take of the classic group shot, shot by David Steen in 1976, would be used for the STAR WARS Thirtieth Anniversary celebration cover for EMPIRE film magazine. Below: a selection of other images from the photo shoot.

photographer in his later Steen, was just another a very good one at that-very little of with the read the script at the rubbish and un- having any power to negatives and contact contract, which he Kurtz in which the photographic film (a not uncommon working on film sets, become a complicated of the film star egos in due to the huge for the film company's media interests in the entertainment products Having recently career in photography, that he couldn't have representation of his

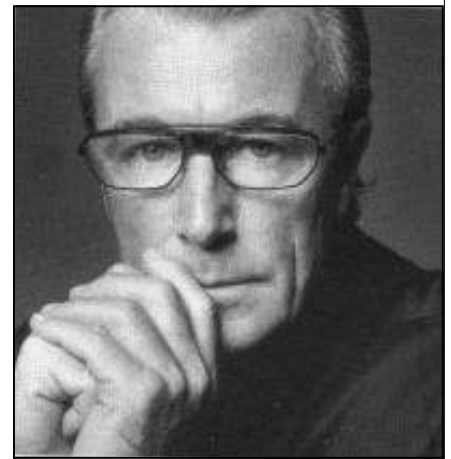
One thing that is very interesting to note is that, apart from the well known images, none of Steen's work, that we know of (LUCASFILM records may not be accurate either as a lot of information on the making of the first film is missing or in private collectors hands), on the STAR WARS film sets seems to have surfaced anywhere else-it's mostly John Jay's and Kurtz's work out there-again from what we've been able to ascertain. What's happened to



Steen's material? Was it lost at ELSTREE? Floundering in some archive at FOX? Did **it** make it to the LUCASFILM ARCHIVES, or, once again, is it in private hands? We know that the contact sheets for some of the posed images of the famous four cast shot are with Gary Kurtz and the Jason Joiner archive, but where's the rest? (John Knoll revealed on the STARWARS.COM site that the LUCASFILM archive has boxes of black and whites negs and contact sheets that he looked at, for researching his 365 DAYS book, that have still not yet been revealed-could they be there in a scene not unlike the closing images of RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK?) Will we ever see any more un-published, rare images? With the Saga's upcoming anniversary, let's hope more mysterious and fascinating pictures from the archives, especially from Steen, will be uncovered...

TERRY O'NEILL

What can I say about one of the finest photographer's Britain has ever produced? And where to start with the people and places he's photographed. Terry O'Neill has certainly been living a life three time's over-he's been traveled the world, knows everyone that's ever been influential, and has been in every type of situation in his photo assignments, as well as being married to one of the 1970's most beautiful women-Faye Dunaway!! With a career spanning



Above: superb, recently unearthed black and white of Hamill and Fisher. Below: a selection of posed Terry O'Neill/David Steen cast photography taken during the summer of 1976.

fifty years, O'Neil has photographed them all. Until recently, I was very surprised that, with his film set work of the early seventies, that he hadn't been involved in shooting any material linked to a STAR WARS film. How wrong I was. It was only when I spoke to David Steen that I discovered that O'Neill had worked with him on the first two STAR WARS films as well, also handling certain studio shoots and on-set photography (including classic images of Luke in his Yavin Medal Ceremony costume holding a blaster, and a recently unearthed shot showing Hamill as Luke protecting Carrie Fisher as Leia with his lightsaber)-making a total of four photographers on set covering those first two crucial films of the saga (once again we ask- **WHERE IS ALL THIS MATERIAL!! AND WHY HAVEN'T WE**





Great posed image by O'Neill of Mark Hamill taken one Sunday morning in 1976. Opposite: three other posed studio images of our main film heroes.

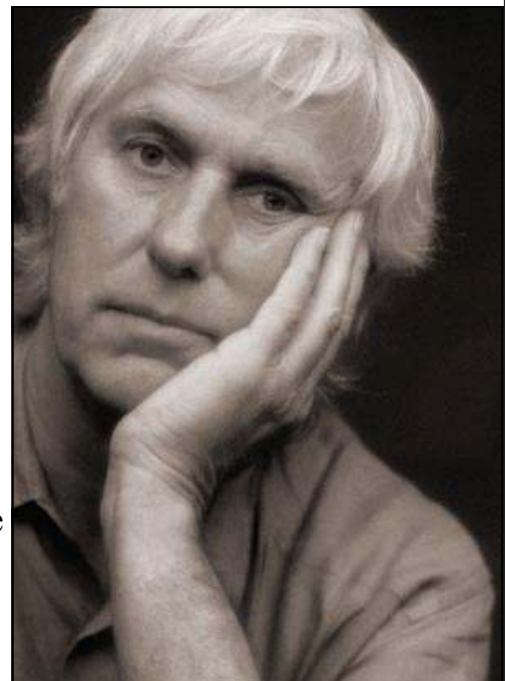


SEEN IT!!). Like Steen, O'Neil didn't know what to make of the film and its script. He too thought it was going to be a load of old rubbish kids film, and, once again like Steen, he signed his material away to Kurtz.

If anyone out there can help with more information on what material O'Neill took for both films, it would be greatly appreciated...

DOUGLAS KIRKLAND

Born in 1934 in Toronto, Canada, Douglas Kirkland, at 24, was an in house photographer for the highly popular LOOK magazine, partaking in numerous reportage assignments. It would be in 1961, however, that he would hit the big time in he world of photography, presumably in part due to the help and enthusiasm of Bert Ives, the acclaimed photographer that Kirkland had once been an assistant too, with a stunning photo shoot of the immortal Screen Goddess Marilyn Monroe-it would be this series of photos that would become internationally recognized and would launch Kirkland's name into new areas of photography for years to come, including portraiture in both politics, fashion, cinema and television. In 1968, he too would be involved in work relating to 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY (the majority of it we believe commissioned to appear in worldwide magazines for publicity features). From this, Kirkland would go on to STAR WARS in 1976-how he got involved in the production we don't know (his involvement on the film has



only recently come to reproduction of one of in the MAKING OF 2007). All we know is posed colour and black Carrie Fisher in Leia, presumably for magazines, as the actress the only members of the some fashionable links that could be used for what with Carrie being film/musical star Debbie Eddie Fisher. We don't he may have done on the Carrie's shoot, or more shoots of the main more info for the future, if anyone out there can please get in touch.



One of several recently unearthed colour and black and white images taken of Princess Leia, as photographed by Douglas Kirkland.

light with the his Fisher/Leia images STAR WARS book in that he had taken and white pictures of character as Princess publicity purposes in was probably one of US main cast who had to modern Hollywood publicity purposes, the daughter of famous Reynolds and singer know what other work film, if any beyond whether he did any cast. If we can get any we'll let you know. Or help with info,

RICHARD EDLUND

With the continual need for promotional images for STAR WARS, and its stunningly original new array of spaceships, weapons and creatures, it was necessary for specially composited images of the various ILM models to be created for distribution to the world's media, as well as the hundreds of numerous toy/merchandisers desperately needing reference images for their products. Enter legendary ILM technician Richard Edlund, himself a keen photographer and a master of model composition work. On STAR WARS, Edlund would bring numerous iconic images to life in photographic form, including a classic shot of the Imperial Star Destroyer chasing the tiny rebel Blockade Runner and the equally famous Luke's X-wing fighting Vader's TIE fighter over the DEATH STAR image specially composed for the cover of AMERICAN CINEMATOGRAPHER magazine in 1977.





Additionally, to add atmosphere and action to the model composites, STAR WARS pre-production artist/conceptualist, Ralph McQuarrie, would often add his sparkle to the images, doing re-touching work on to both colour and black and white images and adding laser bolts or space jet exhausts to X-wings and TIE fighters, improving the look of the laserswords (on on-set live action/posed



Above top: a specially composed image by Richard Edlund of Luke's X-wing chasing Darth Vader's TIE fighter for the cover of AMERICAN CINEMATOGRAPHER in 1977. Above left: an ILM space dogfight composition with lasers added on by Ralph McQuarrie. Above right: a Star Destroyer chases a Blockade Runner (engine exhaust also added by McQuarrie). Top right: three X-wing fighters in space, again with engine exhaust added to the images by McQuarrie's airbrush.



photography) – and even adding new eyes to a posed two shot of Han Solo and Chewbacca!! McQuarrie would also help hide imperfections or filming problems that had been photographed-for example helping to cover the more than apparent wheels of Luke's Landspeeder during location filming photography and airbrushing out any problems with the way sets may have looked when photographed.

Another specially composed effects shot photo that was popular in it's day-the Millennium Falcon leaving Tatooine (though it's planetary composition looks different to that of the final film).



Above: an X-wing flies over the DEATH STAR surface in this specially created shot. Opposite left; another special image used for posters.



Mark Hamill, in a photo taken in 1977, after his car crash, showing him in his X-wing fighter garb, shot by Bob Seidemann for a series of poster/ reference photos.

1977/1978

BOB SEIDEMANN

In mid to late 1977, with STAR WARS success exploding across the globe, the demand for extra photographic material for merchandising and other promotional uses had become heightened, with more action orientated images of the main cast being required for use beyond the normal scene by scene film images being supplied by FOX/LUCASFILM. With a large poster contract deal done, it is decided to shoot more material of the main cast, who had then just come to agreement with LUCASFILM for their likenesses to be used

in merchandise, for these upcoming new products (once again, LUCASFILM would have the rights to the images and would hold on to them as future costume reference pics in case the returning characters retained their distinctive costumes and look from the first film for future STAR WARS sequels).

Recommended to Lucas and Kurtz, Bob Seidemann, a rising talent in the photography world with the distinction at that time of having photographed many of the world's well known bands and music stars of the seventies for the acclaimed ROLLING STONE magazine, of which Lucas himself was a regular reader, is commissioned to take the photographs for the new poster/

Opposite right: Princess Leia takes deadly aim. Watch out she's a crack shot!! Opposite middle: Harrison Ford sports a shorter hair cut for the new pics. Far right: a car crash face altered Mark Hamill happily poses for Bob Seidemann costumes/test reference images, some of which will be used on merchandise campaigns over the next thirty years.



pin-ups, which, like David Steen's posed work, has become legendary in its own right (appearing in countless publications like the ART OF STAR WARS, and gracing other magazine covers all around the world).

The film's main cast over-night superstars, the shoot (it is unknown, Seidemann are taken of have been that the actors separately and on separate these late 1977 photo appearances have particular, is noticeably surgery work undertaken crash earlier that year, and whilst Harrison Ford no hair from the first film and main three, only Carrie as Princess Leia, who is "space buns" hair style. lightsaber props used in during or after the STAR WARS, Mark shoots holds a specially apparently also appears in the STAR WARS HOLIDAY SPECIAL in 1978 but has never appeared anywhere else since (would that also end up being stolen? If not, do LUCASFLM have it or is it private hands?)

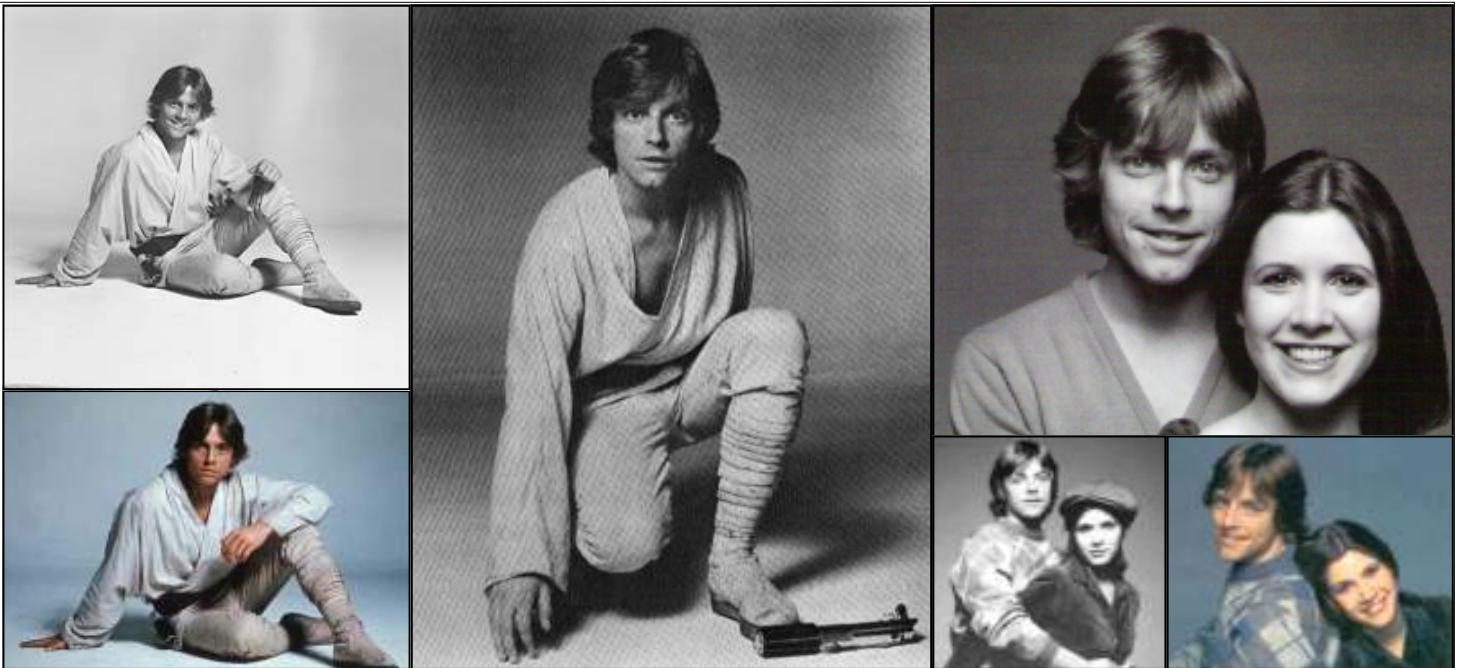


Above: To celebrate its first anniversary at US cinemas in 1978 Seidemann would also shoot this inspired anniversary poster with KENNER action figures around a cake. Below: a selection of other Seidemann costume reference images taken for the film in 1977.

(Hamill, Ford, Fisher), now return to play the characters for however, if any shots by the cast together-it may well were photographed in costumes days in the schedule too). In shoots, some of the actor's changed. Mark Hamill's face, in different due to the plastic on his features from his car his hair is darker and longer, longer has his distinctive long has since had it cut short. Of the Fisher is unaffected in her pics now back to wearing her famous Intriguingly, as many of the the film had been stolen either completion of photography on Hamill, for one of the photo made lightsaber prop that

From storage, the costumes of the Tusken Raiders, Jawas, and an Imperial Stormtrooper are additionally photographed, and unknown models inhabit the costumes for the shoot. Of the other supporting cast, C-3PO is also photographed (we assume with Anthony Daniels in the costume), alongside and separate to the inert Artoo Detoo (and its robot three leg prop). The mighty Chewbacca is also added to the "goodies" list chosen for new photography, though the costume's mask and mohair suit has noticeably deteriorated since its 1976 filming (we assume Peter Mayhew played the character for this session as well?). Finally, the legendary Darth Vader is captured on film, the actor inhabiting the suit being Kermit Eller, who had been bringing the





A selection of unknown Mark Hamill photo shoots taken in 1976/77 (far left top and bottom possibly by Terry O'Neill or David Steen)

costume of the Dark Lord to life in marketing and promotional campaigns throughout 1977 for both STAR WARS and into 1980 for EMPIRE.

With the success of the poster images, Seidemann would go onto create the classic photo cover celebrating the US 1st anniversary of STAR WARS-the classic images of the KENNER action figures encircling a STAR WARS logo birthday cake.

THE UNKNOWN MARK HAMILL SHOOT: 1976-1978

With the film on release, Mark Hamill, as well as doing the poster shoots for LUCASFILM, would also wear various character costumes for other publicity photograph purposes-namely for magazine's that were interviewing him in the light of his success as Luke Skywalker. In mid to late 1977/early 1978, his face was appearing in all kinds of teen and young women's magazines. Some special shoots were taken of him that we cannot identify (which were definitely taken after STAR WARS because his facial features are different to the way he looked in 1976-again, after his nose/plastic surgery operation). Some shots show him with longer, darker hair with a prop lightsaber. I'm assuming that all of these were photographed in liaison with LUCASFILM but they don't seem to have appeared very often until the last few years.

Again, if anyone has any more info as to who took these and when exactly, it would be much appreciated.

IF ANYONE ELSE OUT THERE HAS FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE PHOTO SHOTS OF THE STAR WARS FILMS, PLEASE GET IN TOUCH... THANK YOU!!

With thanks to Ian Trussler and Chris Baker for selected images.