

entrance to the homestead would be long gone, so we had very little to help us find the right place.



LITTLE HAS CHANGED IN 19 YEARS.

me, and I could hardly believe it. All traces of set dressing, of course, were gone, but the rim where Luke stood to watch the sunset was there as if the Lars

My clues could only point me in the general direction—out here, there was really almost nothing to act as a landmark. Finally I located a man named Hedhi who claimed that he worked on the production in 1976, and he said he could take me to the right spot. I was dubious of this individual, but not a single other soul had any idea what I was talking about, and I knew that to go hunting on my own would be pointless. At least he did not demand ten thousand all in advance.



FILMING IN THE CANYON.

We set out, and passed the oasis of Nefta to reach open territory. This was the road to Algeria, and there would be no other trace of human presence for a hundred miles. I felt sure that the man I had hired was putting us on, and that we didn't have a chance. We turned off the road and drove out onto the Chott itself. After some considerable distance, our guide Hedhi said simply "there," and pointed. I saw nothing out on the salt flat...but maybe a smudge or a low mound.... Ryan followed me with the camera and step by step I drew closer to this impossible find. I might as well have been on the moon, out here in this desolation, and indeed I felt as if I had come that far to make this landing. The crater rings lay before

## AN INTERVIEW WITH STAR WARS PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR ROBERT WATTS

*Star Wars* Production Supervisor Robert Watts was on location in Canada producing the film *Alive* when he received a letter from an eager young David West Reynolds who wanted to go to Tatooine. Watts was so impressed by the man's curiosity that he actually called him from the remote location in Canada to give Reynolds general directions to the location sites.

Watts and *Star Wars* production designer, the late John Barry, never imagined that an archaeologist would be looking for their location sites some twenty years after their painstaking search for the perfect terrain suitable for use as Tatooine.

"I love the fact that he went back," says Watts. "I think it's great. It shows great dedication."

Watts says when scouting for *Star Wars* they looked at several places in North Africa. Tunisia was chosen over Morocco because its native architecture was closer to what George Lucas had in mind for Tatooine. Tunisia had presented some filming problems, including a freak vicious rainstorm that stranded two vehicles in the mud of the salt flats and temporarily shut down filming.



The *Star Wars* crew filming in Tunisia in 1976.

When the filming was finished the "*Star Wars* company left enough artifacts in Tunisia to puzzle future archaeologists, including a few trucks and giant prop bones," according to Lucas biographer Dale Pollock in his 1983 book *Skywalking*. "I thought we'd cleared it all away but obviously an odd bit or piece got left behind," says Watts. "It's amazing that no one had picked them over. Then again, down in that part of the world they are probably not massive *Star Wars* fans."

Watts, who worked on all six *Star Wars* and *Indiana Jones* films as well as producing films like *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* and *On Deadly Ground*, has just formed his own production company with partner Steve Staples entitled North Tower Films. He remembers his crucial contributions to the *Star Wars* Trilogy fondly.

"The most important thing about *Star Wars* is that it is still there. The whole thing seems to have an eternal life. Which is great because there are constantly new generations of people growing up with them that weren't even born when they first came out."

