

STAR WARS
THE ORIGINAL TRILOGY LIGHTSABER GUIDEBOOK

**WRITTEN AND DESIGNED BY
SETH M. SHERWOOD**

All photographs and images are copyright of their owners.
For credit additions please send a PM via The RPF to “Seth S”

Not intended for sale or reprint.

Free to share and distribute electronically.

COVER RENDER BY: ROY GILSING

**CURRENT BIBLE VERSION:
2.0
MARCH 2017**

(see changelog on last page for revisions)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, while I am credited with “writing” this document, it must be said that I am the originator of NONE of the information in this bible. I have done zero research outside of tracking down the ranch saber texture tape. I am merely recapitulating all known lightsaber info into one place for easy reference. All of the details, measurements, parts identification, and more, is due to the diligent and never-ending work of the members of the RPF.

I’ve culled from countless threads where pieces have been discovered, measured, investigated, and replicated by a wide variety of members. Their hard work is what is being presented here. While I am reticent to give names, because I’ll no doubt forget somebody important, there are a few people who do stand out for having done hours upon hours of real investigation and research and were willing to talk with me to fill in gaps— James Kenobi 1138, thd9791, veektohr, PoopaPapaPalps, Kurtyboy, Halliwax, teecrooz, and Serenity.

Most of all-- a special thanks to Chaim / Sym-Cha. A true lightsaber archivist, his collection of images provide immeasurable insight. Any image in this bible that is not a screencap very likely came from his collection. And as he pointed out, I should thank Lucasfilm, and George Lucas himself for all of this.

Much of the information here is thanks to the work being done by Roy Gilsing (wannawanga.com) and Roman Gomez (romanprops.com) to faithfully recreate hard to locate parts and saber components. That process is intrinsically tied to investigating the origin of the sabers, as well as determining how to recreate them.

Though it hasn’t been updated since the web ran on anything other than HTML and duct tape, partsofsw.com was, and remains, the starting point for so many saber collectors/builders out there. Much of the core information we

know comes from there even if much of it is now out of date. That site essentially did what this guide does— cull all the available information into one place... but Chris Trevas and Chris Reiff had to do it by slogging through AOL threads, Geocities pages and incredibly low res images.

Also, saving me a lot of time, the graflexbank.com by Brage Borgsø has recently gathered as much info on the Graflex sabers as possible, and much of his work is presented here.

In an attempt to be thorough while eliminating speculation, unless noted otherwise, all images seen are from screen grabs, promotional material, or verified photos of the actual props. All photos are credited to their owners. It’s the internet, photos get passed around, if your image is used here and you get no credit, please let me know.

Finally, while I strive for this to be accurate, some things are still a mystery. Much of this information relies on evidence-based educated guess-work. From time to time, discoveries are made and what is considered confirmed often turns out not to be.

Please keep that in mind as you read.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	2	Luke Skywalker's Jedi Lightsaber	40
Introduction	4	Return of the Jedi - Hero (V2)	41
The Skywalker Lightsaber	5	Return of the Jedi - Stunt (Shared Stunt/V3)	43
A New Hope - Hero	7	Return of the Jedi - Stunt (Yuma / R2)	44
A New Hope - Stunt	9	Return of the Jedi - Close-Up ("Hero") (ISYHCANL, Cave Build)	45
Holiday Special - Hero	10	Revenge of the Sith	46
Empire Strikes Back - Hero (Bespin / Hoth)	11	Reference Gallery	47
Empire Strikes Back - Hero (Dagobah)	13	APPENDIX	
Empire Strikes Back - Stunt	14	Real world parts	52
Empire Strikes Back - Stunt (Severed Hand)	15	Clamp card guide	53
Empire Strikes Back - The Ranch Saber	16	Conclusion and Version Changelog	54
Empire Strikes Back - Kurtz Sabers	17		
The Force Awakens - Hero (Rey / Finn)	18		
The Force Awakens - Hero (Maz Box)	19		
The Force Awakens - Stunts	20		
The Force Awakens - Display Variants { Launch Bay, V.D. }	22		
Darth Vader's Lightsaber	23		
A New Hope - Hero (Silver Bars)	24		
A New Hope - Hero (Black Bars)	25		
A New Hope - Stunt	26		
A New Hope - Promotional Kobold	27		
Empire Strikes Back - Hero	28		
Empire Strikes Back - Stunt	30		
Return of the Jedi - Hero	31		
Return of the Jedi - Stunt (MOM)	32		
Return of the Jedi - Stunt (MPP)	33		
Return of the Jedi - Stunt (Severed Hand)	34		
Return of the Jedi - Kurtz Saber	35		
Return of the Jedi - Promotional Variants { Barbican I Bunny }	36		
Obi-Wan Kenobi's Lightsaber	37		
A New Hope - Hero	38		
A New Hope - Stunts	39		



INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this guide is to identify all the known lightsaber props whose designs stem from the original trilogy, explain their reason for being, reveal their origin, and delve into their individual parts and construction for your own reproduction purposes.

Narratively speaking, the OT presents only FOUR actual lightsabers: The Skywalker lightsaber, Darth Vader's lightsaber, Obi-Wan Kenobi's lightsaber, and Luke Skywalker's Jedi lightsaber.

Between those four in-story lightsabers, there are over 40 individual variants. How does that happen? Because different props serve different needs. A “hero” or “belt-hanger” saber is one meant for the camera to pick up the details of. Stunt sabers are exactly that— designed for the duels, for being thrown, for being on a stunt performer's belt when he takes a fall or does a jump. There are also “gag” props, which are sabers made to service practical on-set, in-camera effects.

There are two important details to always consider when examining props. First, on set, the goal is always to be fast and cheap. A prop enthusiast will spend top dollar and put in hours of work to make a lovingly recreated piece, but on an actual production, things are often banged together with whatever is available. These minor fixes were never intended to be seen— during the time of the OT they had no idea that us common folk would one day be able to pause a film in HD to look for details.

Second, everything is made in multiples. Props break, they get misplaced, they might be needed in two different locations, they might get taken by some angry producer and sold later at auction for \$240k. The point is— every single prop has a twin, if not a triplet or quintuplet. Add this to rule one, and you have twins that are fraternal, not identical. Props

meant to be replicas for the same usage may have their own minor differences. Whenever one of these shows up somewhere, it throws the prop community into chaos trying to place where it may have been used. There are even some instances of props being made AFTER production has ended for promotional usage.

Finally, I specify “original trilogy” lightsabers. The prequel trilogy lightsabers don't have a very confusing lineage. They were designed and built in-house from scratch. There is no scavenger hunt needed for real-world parts. Similarly, the sequel trilogy (Graflex aside) seems to be headed down the same road of in-house fabrication as evidenced by some unused designs and Kylo Ren's saber. The days of using photo gear and military scrap are sadly gone.

But thankfully, like Star Wars itself, the OT lightsabers are timeless...





THE SKYWALKER LIGHTSABER

The first lightsaber prop created for production was also the first to appear onscreen and captivate countless fans. There's no question that the Skywalker lightsaber is one of the most iconic props in cinema.

Often referred to as The Graflex (named for the real world item it was based on), this lightsaber is the one that most frequently captures the imagination while driving eBay auctions into the stratosphere.

THE SKYWALKER LIGHTSABER

A NEW HOPE - HERO (aka *The Graflex / Luke ANH*)

This is the one that started it all. Created by Roger Christian, prop master and set decorator for ANH, this is the lightsaber given to Luke by Obi-Wan, having once belonged to his father.

Christian has gone on record saying that they struggled to find a lightsaber handle that felt unique and other-worldly. The simple cylindrical designs by Ralph McQuarrie didn't feel right. Lucas was ultimately pleased when he was presented with what became the onscreen hero.

The Graflex is a vintage camera flash, a 3 cell unit, meant to be mounted on the side of a 4x5 view camera. They can be identified easily by their unique shape and stamp on the bottom either listing their patent number as 2310165, or branded as created by the Folmer Graflex company. With the endcap in ANH obscured, it is unknown which model is used. The glass eye lamp shape suggests a Folmer.

Other standard features of the flash that remained as part of the prop include:

- A red trigger button on the back side
- The “bunny ear” bulb holder
- A power slide switch
- The “glass eye” preview lamp on the front side
- The “beer tab” bracket that is pinned to the back to keep the button from falling off when unscrewed

Parts added to complete the prop include:

- A generic d-ring to the bottom (likely with a single rivet)

- A magnification bubble strip from a Texas Instrument Extracta 19 or 20 LED calculator, slid into the central clamp

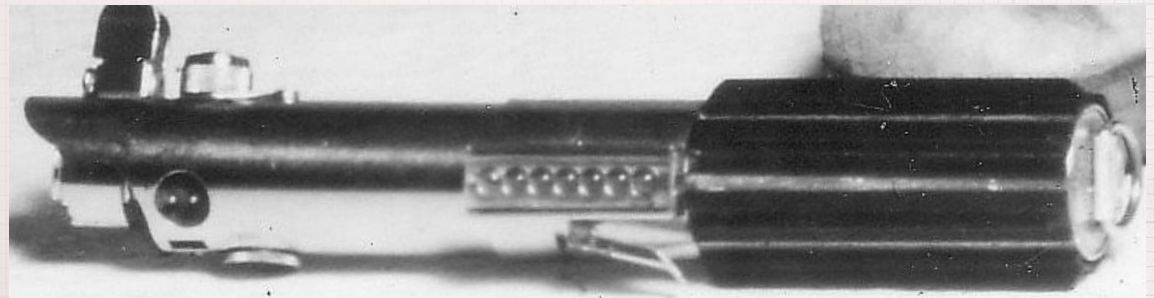
- Seven “t-track” strips used for a grip, 3 5/8” long, with their ends tapered at a 30 degree angle

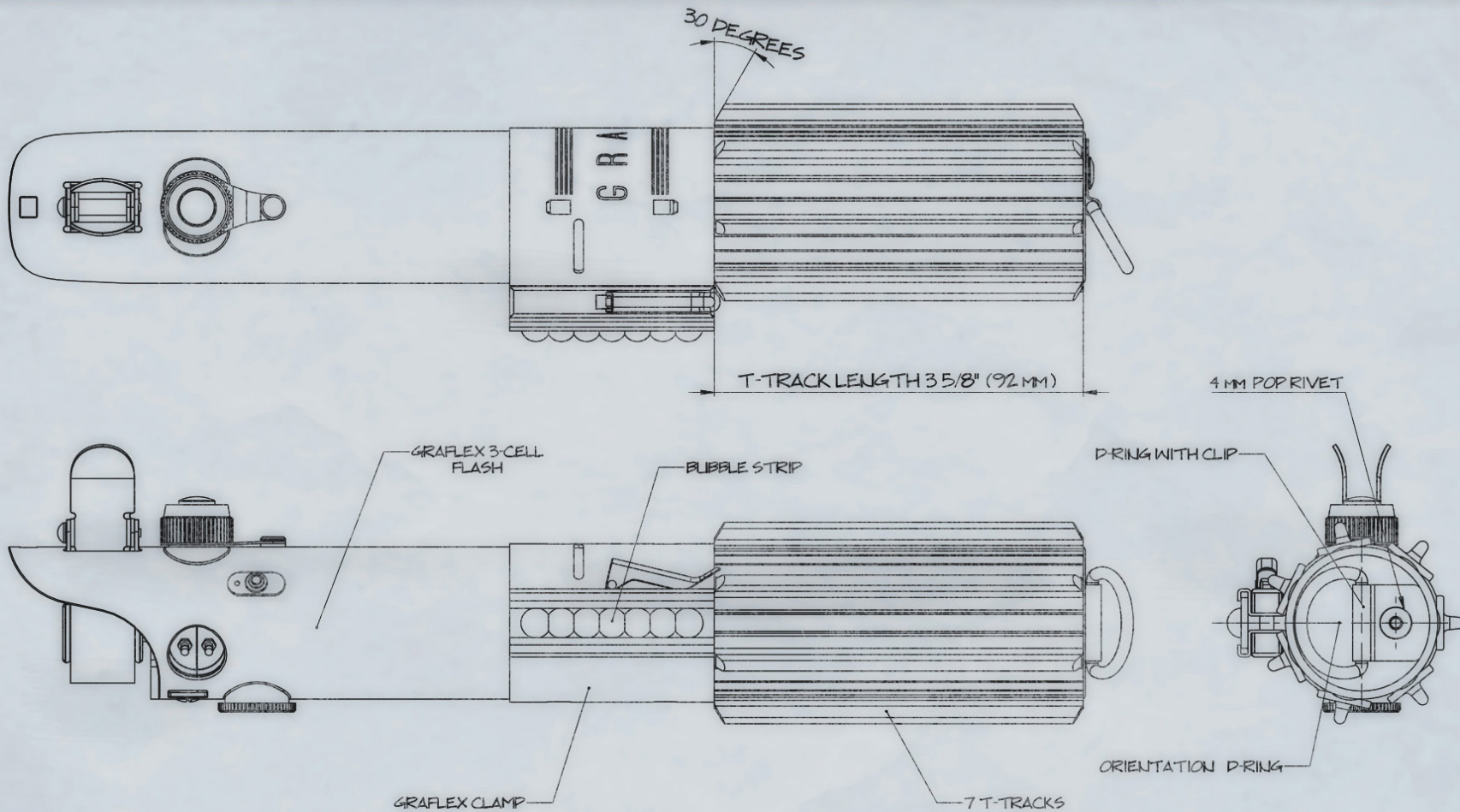
The origin of the t-track is not known, and it appears on multiple sabers in the saga. Christian has been inconsistent in naming the source. Most everyone agrees at this point that the track itself was a guide runner for either sliding cabinet doors or windows. Christian has also said they are window draft excluders. The profile and height of the t-fin is also debated as it seems to change through various appearances. The t-track has been said to be hard plastic, rubber, and metal depending on the source.

- It is possible that chrome tape was used to cover the entire clamp band.

NOTE: When aiming for screen accuracy, be aware that while the build parts are consistent throughout all ANH scenes, the clamp tends to change orientation between scenes shot in the UK, scenes shot in the U.S., and promotional photo-shoots. Promo shots have the clamp at three o'clock.

The most common seen orientation onscreen is with the clamp at the nine o'clock position when looking down the saber from the bottom, bunny ears set at twelve.





20 CENTURY FOX LTD.						PROD. N°
THE STAR WARS						E76/1
SET LUKE ANH LIGHTSABER						SET. N°
DETAILS						SCALE
						1:1
DRAWN	Carps	Metal	Xy	Conct	X	DRG. N°
DATE	Paint	SFX				542
	Plaster					

THE SKYWALKER LIGHTSABER

A NEW HOPE - STUNT *(aka Luke/Vader Shared Stunt)*

Many different effects were tried to get the iconic glowing blade of a lightsaber. For the filming of ANH the effect was initially going to be practical. This would be achieved by the dueling rod being coated in reflective movie screen material, and set into a small motor that would spin the rod. With the right application of light, this made the rod seem as though it was filled with flickering light.

Building a rig with this in mind, a simple tube was cut in the rough shape of a Graflex with the motor assembly inside. It was given a button, glass eye, grips, and a clamp to resemble the Graflex, but no bunny ears. The motor was powered by an external battery and in some scenes, notably when Luke first ignites it, the cables to the battery can be seen in his sleeve. This would power a solid central core to rotate inside the hilt. The blades were then mounted inside this core.

NOTE: This stunt unit played double duty, serving also as Vader's stunt saber after a quick paint-job. It is sometimes referred to as the "Luke/Vader Shared Stunt." It is also seen, sans motor, in behind the scenes images for both ESB and ROTJ as a rehearsal saber.



THE SKYWALKER LIGHTSABER HOLIDAY SPECIAL - HERO

Bonus content! While not technically in canon, or even good taste, the Holiday Special is thing that we can all agree exists. Included here because it's part of the bigger prop story, this lightsaber is based on a Graflite, the predominant model of flash made by Graflex into the 60s (where as the original was used in the 30's and 40s).

It employs t-track for a grip, but the remainder of the parts are unknown. The important part of the story here, is that this illustrates why props tend to change, and why specifically this lightsaber has different incarnations.

ANH was in a lot of ways a one-off. The studio expected it to fail, and the budget was actually fairly small for a picture of it scope. Much of the props used for the movie came from prop houses and had to be returned. Luke's lightsaber was stripped of its parts and returned as a camera flash to the rental house.

The Lucasfilm archives, and the idea of them retaining their own materials, did not happen until the production of Raiders of the Lost Ark and Empire Strikes Back. This is why the Holiday Special production had to recreate some of the props— and this is also why no other props or later images of the ANH saber have ever come to light. They simply no longer exist.



THE SKYWALKER LIGHTSABER

EMPIRE STRIKES BACK - HERO (Hoth / Bespin) | (aka Luke ESB)

Thankfully, the production team for Empire Strikes Back tried a little harder than the Holiday Special. Looking to recreate Luke's lightsaber, they returned to the well and used the same parts, with some minor variations. Some changes seem to be geared toward idealizing the prop to look less like an Earth-object, while others were made for pragmatic reasons.

Like the original, the basis of this saber is the Graflex camera flash. Thanks to the close-up in the Wampa cave, we know at least some of the models used were stamped as "The Folmer Graflex Corp" and not the patented number type. (Folmer Graflex changed their name to Graflex Inc. in 1946. Models made after this date carry the patent number).

Other notable changes to this model:

- The glass eye has been replaced by a second button
- The bubblestrip has been replaced by a trimmed strip of a PCB edge connector from a circuit board suspected to be a HP-44 Bus Type with thin silver traces and wide gold leads; the gold leads pointing toward the clamp lever
- The "beer tab" has been removed
- A 1/2" strip of mylar/chrome tape surrounds the clamp, covering the Graflex logo.
- A belt-hanger assembly that is made from a bracket off a smaller camera flash known as a Kobold to a D-Ring; the assembly is attached to the bottom using two rivets.
- Six "t-track" grips, and the ends are NOT angled.
- A small screw in the clamps slot MAY be on some versions-- this is actually an original feature of the Graflex

The method of the grips attachment is still an ongoing debate. Until the 90s, the only images available of the lightsaber were publicity stills. Art books, visual dictionaries and the like did not exist.

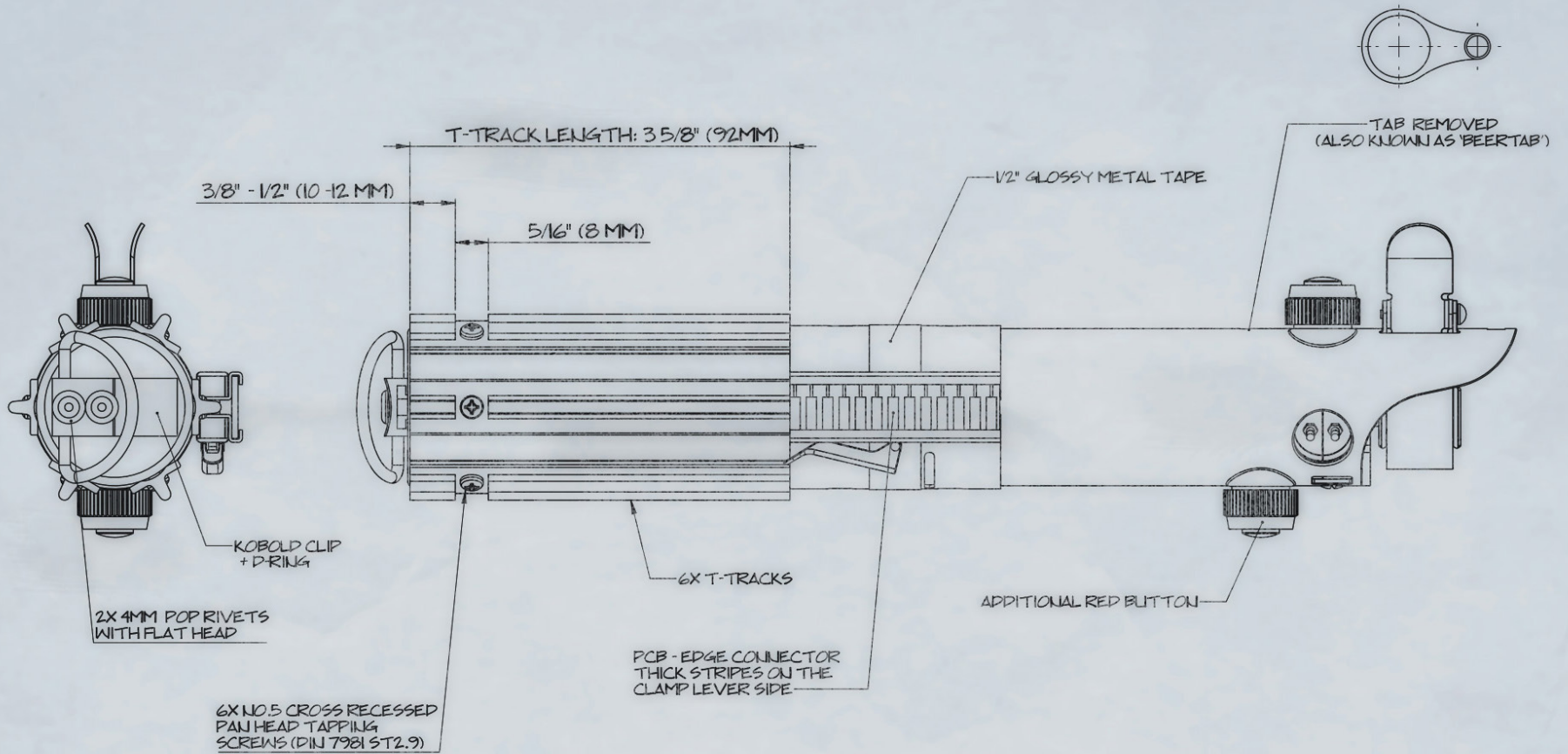
The first attempts to truly offer up a decent look of the saber came from Shane Johnson's SW Tech Journal (1993). Using archive images he drew his blueprint and used rivets in the grip design. This seemed logical given that one of the few things clear onscreen is that the kobold d-ring assembly uses rivets. The first Visual Dictionary in 1998 followed his lead, and so, then too did the first wave of official replicas, all of them using rivets.

But then Star Wars finally came to DVD and HD and Blue Ray. It appeared to many that screws were actually used, not rivets. This is contested. Even those that agree they are screws debate their finish color and size. Ultimately there is not enough evidence onscreen to be conclusive as both black and silver details are visible, but not clear.

The popular theory is that in the cold of the Hoth scenes, the adhesive for the t-track gave way and the grips would not stay on. To quickly solve this problem, they were more permanently bolted/screwed/riveted down, because again, they didn't think anyone would ever see such a detail. It seems likely that silver items were used, and at some point in production they were painted or replaced with black ones, or possible oxidized due to the shifts in environment.

NOTE: Some images of this saber show smaller screws at the top of each grip. These may or may not be present in every onscreen usage of the hero, they are very hard to see. They were more likely added after production.





		PROD. N°			E76/1
		SET. N°			
LUKE ESB LIGHTSABER					SCALE
					1:1
DRAWN	Carps	Metal	Xx	Conct	X
DATE	Paint	SFX			
25-79	Plaster				
					DRG. N°
					543

THE SKYWALKER LIGHTSABER EMPIRE STRIKES BACK - HERO (*Dagobah*)

Regardless of how many heroes may have existed, it is clear that once Luke reaches Dagobah the saber is noticeably different. Perhaps it is prop failure due to the change in location, or environment, or simply a mistake on the part of the propmaster.

If the Dagobah scenes were shot last, it could be a hero used earlier in the film. If it wasn't, they are likely different. Again— there are always multiples, so it is hard to know for sure.

While mostly the same as the Bespin/Hoth versions, here are the minor differences of the Dagobah saber:

- The original hole for the red button is empty, (the second red button remains in the lamp socket)
- The PCB edge card has been flipped, with the thinner silver traces now pointing to the lever
- Many claim to smaller screws on top of the grips are now more obviously present

NOTE: Many theorize that this is the same prop as the "Ranch Saber" (see page 16). If that is true, there may be an additional feature of a small brass flathead screw drilled through, and pinning down the clamp lever.



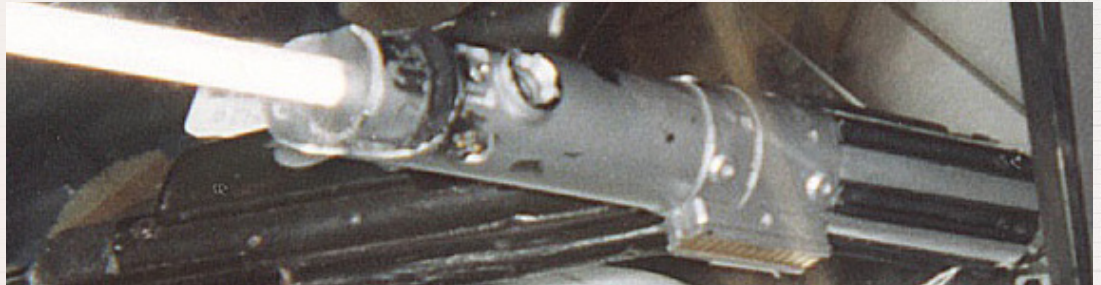
THE SKYWALKER LIGHTSABER EMPIRE STRIKES BACK - STUNTS (*Duel*)

When ANH was in post, the lightsaber effect we have come to know was added via roto-scoping. Given that this only needed the guide of the dueling rod, the on-set use of the motorized spinning blade gag was dropped. Given that the guts of a Graflex are easily removed, this meant that they could be adapted for stunt work.

With most of the details left intact, and allen head screws used to mount the “blade” internally, there were likely multiple versions made given that these were smacked around. A few have been indentified individually.

Details that can be made out: one in use on Dagobah, with bunny ears intact; another with a black mid-band; one on Bespin missing the ears, also with a black clamp band; and one on Bespin with a Graflex clamp.

Yet another stunt appears to be a resin cast with clamp band rivets holding the blade into place.



THE SKYWALKER LIGHTSABER EMPIRE STRIKES BACK - STUNT (*Severed Hand*)

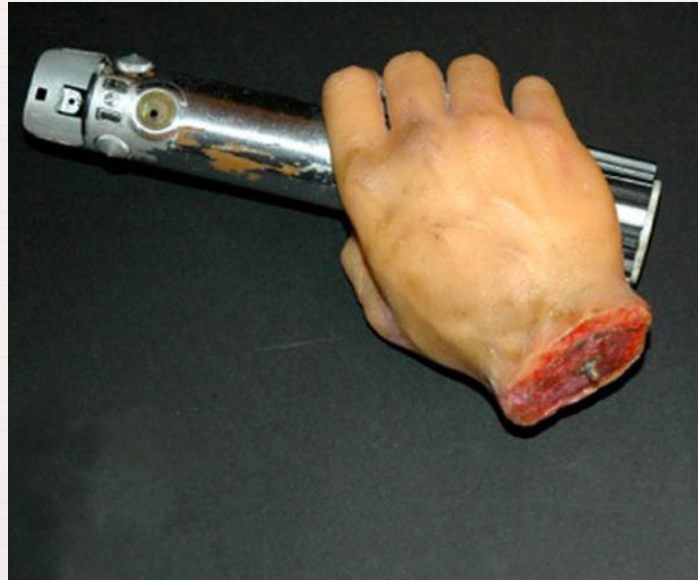
Rigged specifically for when Luke loses his hand, this is a Graflex upper body mounted on a Kobold flash with its knurling machined away, which is then mounted inside a fake hand. Given there was a fall and squibs involved, these were most likely made from spare parts in the shop. The Bunny ears, second button (or lamp), d-ring assembly, and clamp are all absent.

Other parts include:

- Intact Beer tab
- Knurled cone knobs in the ports
- Faux red button that is potentially the red lens from a Kobold flash
- What looks to be seven un-notched grips, unless the spacing is off.

NOTE: The 7 grips on the Kobold lower half might indicate that this piece is left over from the ANH production. Given that the shooting props were mostly returned and restored, this would have to be something used either before or after filming ANH.

There is a unique Vader saber (see page 27) used in a promo image that appears to be made from a Kobold as well. Maybe these are the same item... or maybe it was just in the bottom of a box of junk and thrown together. It's anyone's guess.



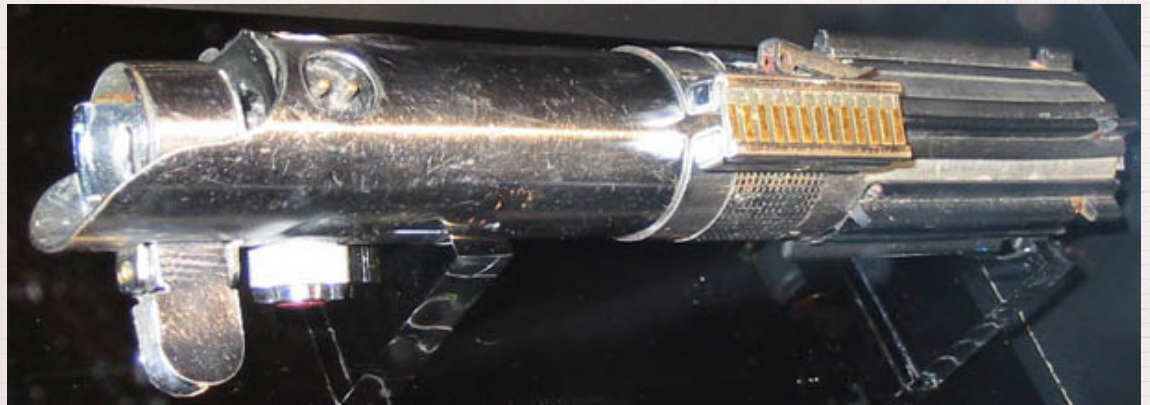
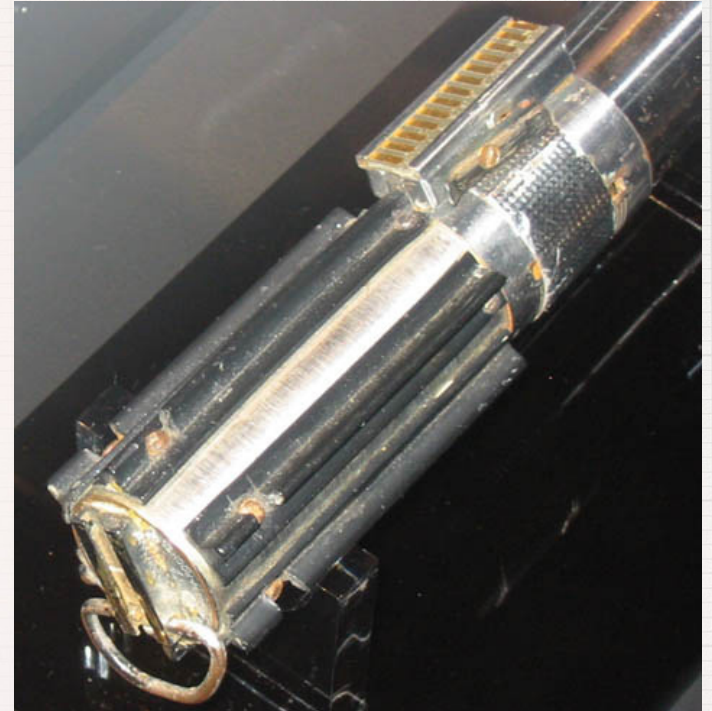
THE SKYWALKER LIGHTSABER EMPIRE STRIKES BACK - THE RANCH SABER

This saber is on display at Skywalker ranch and billed as one of the heroes from ESB. However it showcases some differences from what is seen onscreen:

- Both large and small screws on the grips
- A red button in its original position
- Lamp socket is left empty
- A brass screw pins down the clamp lever
- The clamp is surrounded by a 1” strip of reflective textured fishing lure tape
- The Kobold D-ring assembly is upside down, and mounted with brass screws instead of rivets.

This could be a hero from ESB that was later modified for display or it could be an unused prop from the shop, hard to say— but the amount of rust covering it leads most to assume this is the Dagobah hero, damaged by all the moisture then refurbished for display.

NOTE: This saber served as the inspiration for the “skinny flex,” the lightsaber used by Anakin in Revenge of the Sith. (see page 46)



THE SKYWALKER LIGHTSABER EMPIRE STRIKES BACK - KURTZ GRAFLEX SABERS

Having shown up in a couple auctions, ANH and ESB producer Gary Kurtz has parted with some lightsabers from his personal collection. While billed as being used in the film, there is no way to verify they were seen onscreen, especially given the fact that it seems grips were added FOR the auctions, and the arrangement of parts tend to be mishmash of the ESB and ANH versions. (An ANH style upper, but an ESB style lower half).

It is generally assumed that while these sabers may have been with the prop department for production, they were likely used for spare parts (one of them was missing its buttons) and not actually converted to full sabers or used for filming.



LETTER OF AUTHENTICITY

This is to confirm that the Luke Skywalker lightsabre you have purchased is from my film archive. The piece was preserved as I have always tried to keep a small selection of production pieces and paperwork from each film I have produced, including Star Wars and The Empire Strikes Back.

Now the archive is being catalogued and inventoried so that it can be properly preserved for future generations, and it has become apparent that there are several items which I have duplicates of. It is one of these pieces that you have obtained.

I have no hesitation in authenticating that this is an original prop from my personal archive.

Signed:

Gary Kurtz

THE SKYWALKER LIGHTSABER

THE FORCE AWAKENS - HERO (Rey / Finn) / (aka Snow Saber or simply TFA)

While the sequel trilogy seems to be headed down a similar road as the PT in terms of scratch building sabers, the key story point involving the Skywalker lightsaber was thankfully driven home by using actual Graflexes. The end result turns out to be a hybrid of details from the ANH and ESB versions combined into one.

Like the ANH version most of the standard Graflex features remain:

- The red trigger button on the back side
- The “bunny ear” bulb holder
- The power slide switch
- The “beer tab” bracket that is pinned to the back and keeps the button from falling off when unscrewed

The lower half however resembles the ESB hero:

- The clamp is in the 3 o'clock position
- The Graflex logo is hidden, this time by a thin metal card that covers the entire clamp while replicating the engraved lines and punched holes
- The Kobold / D-ring assembly is mounted with two rivets on the bottom; the Kobold is scratch made, not a vintage, as evidenced by the lack of extra holes

And some items are new or modified:

- The “glass eye” has had its knurling sanded down to smooth brass

- The clamp card is semi-transparent and has a unique design emulating a PCB card
- Between the d-ring assembly and endcap, a featureless cover hides the Graflex copyright information
- Six T-track grips

The grips, and how they are affixed, continues to be a debate. (see next page)



THE SKYWALKER LIGHTSABER THE FORCE AWAKENS - HERO (*Maz Box*)

The TFA T-tracks were scratch-made by production, but it is unclear if they are rubber, injected ABS plastic, or 3D printed. Most agree that the predominant notion that rivets were used for the grips in ESB inspired the TFA prop shop, and so they in turn used 3mm rivets to attach their grips.

This is contested by some, who say hex head or Torx screws are being used instead. Most screenshots lean toward rivets, though some “snow saber” shots present something that looks more bulbous.

The hero sabers are nearly identical save for the grips.

The “Rey” (previous page) has grips that start at the base of the saber and stop short of the clamp.

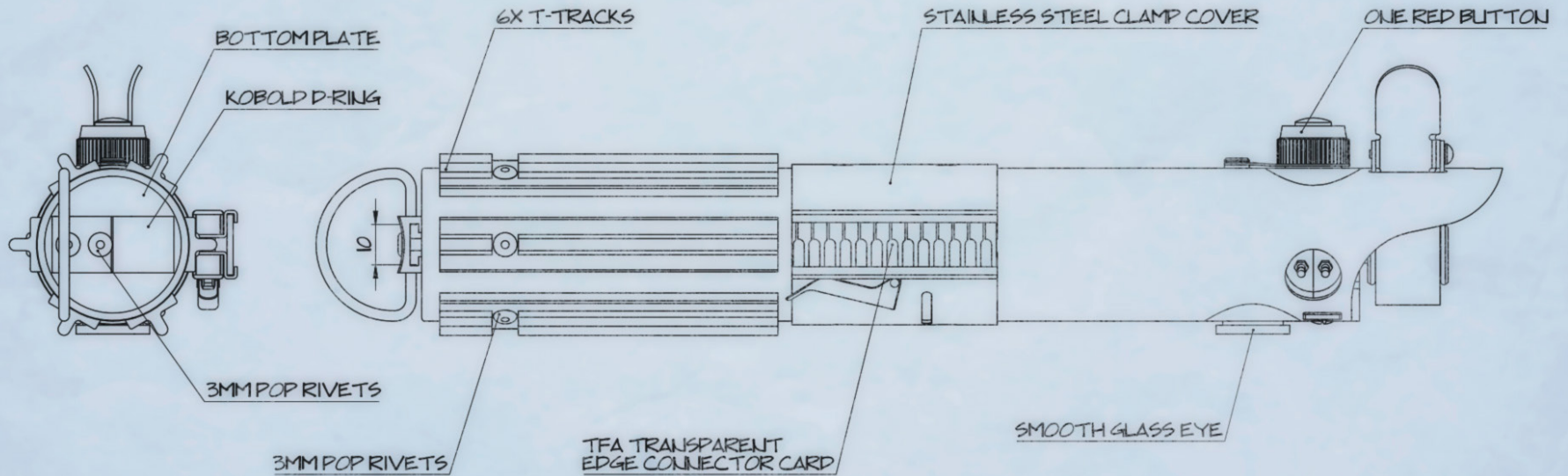
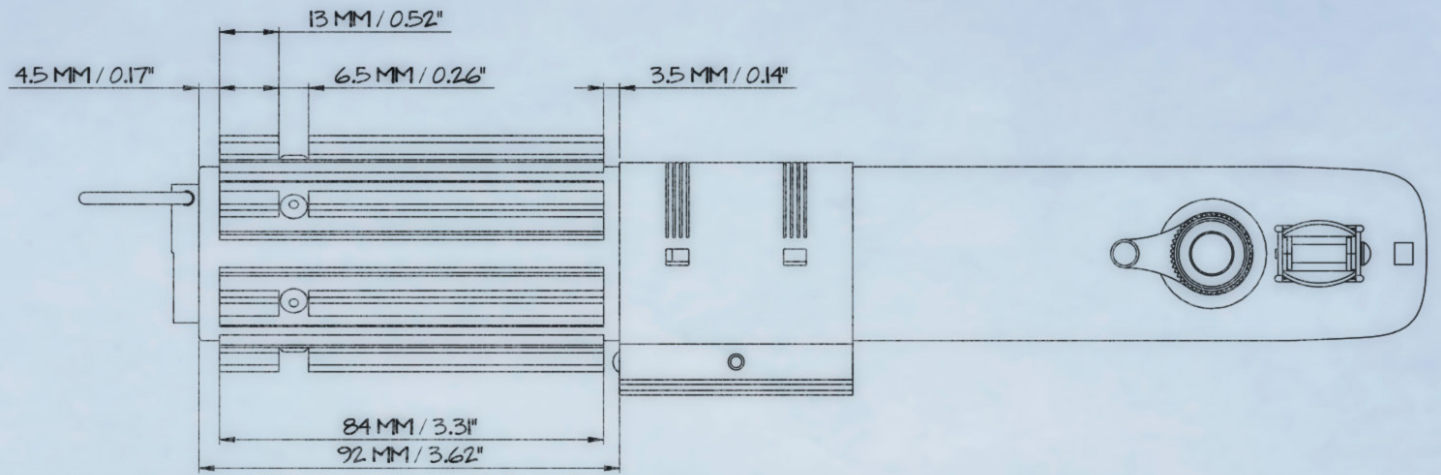
The other main hero is known as the “Maz Box” saber, which has its grips starting just below the clamp, and stopping short of the base of the saber.

The grips themselves have the notches cut to slightly different sizes between the two heroes. While in the box, most other details are obscured, but it is safe to assume they are the same as the other versions.

Grip measurements for the Rey / Finn are 88mm long, the notch being 7.4mm and starting 13mm up from the bottom. The top of the grips are 3.5 mm from the clamp.

For the Maz Box version, the grips are 84mm, with a notch size of 6.5mm, again starting 13mm up from the bottom. The grips start at the clamp, and stop 5mm short of the base of the saber.





THE SKYWALKER LIGHTSABER THE FORCE AWAKENS - STUNTS

There were two models of stunt saber used in TFA, and very little about them has come to light. These stunt sabers mark the first time that an official production has employed technology developed by lightsaber enthusiasts.

From the start, the plan was to create dueling sabers that lit up, and cast light— as the electronic saber community knows is now commonplace.

Version one appears to be made out of a Graflex with the addition of the LED blade. There was likely more than one made because PROPS. This one can be spotted onscreen a few times when the angle favors an antenna on the base of the hilt for transmitting XML data for motion tracking. The grips on these are shorter, like the Maz box variant.

Version two was a simple tube housing the same electronics package with a padded fabric covering that was detailed to resemble the Graflex. Daisy Ridley, John Boyega, and Adam Driver have all gone on record saying that the sabers are actually very difficult to duel with. These “soft” stunt sabers may have been added later in production as the actors began to complain. This one can be spotted in a few shots as well by looking for an extra thick clamp section.

While the soft versions were used for much of the duels in wide shots, it's safe to assume they did not have the detail needed for close ups and medium shots.



THE SKYWALKER LIGHTSABER

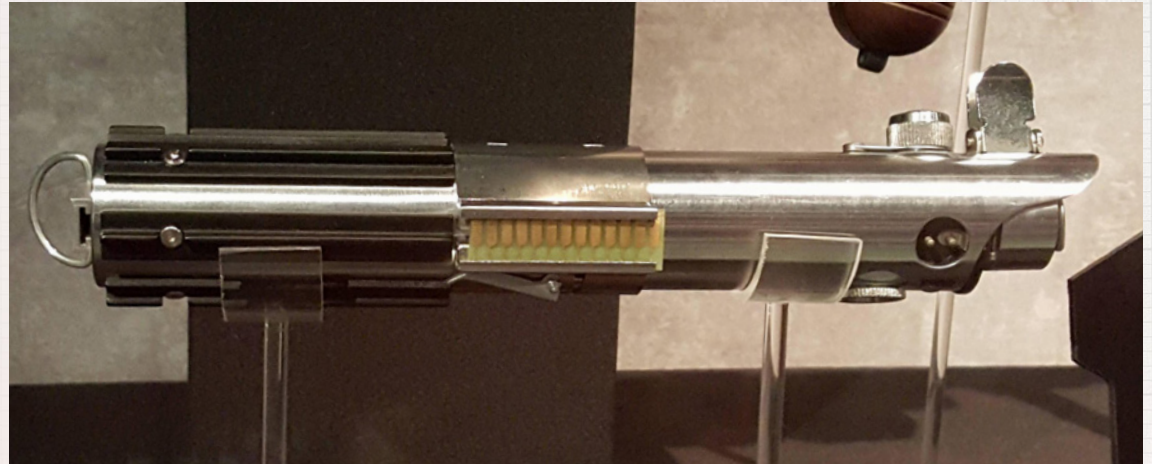
THE FORCE AWAKENS - DISPLAY VARIANTS | (Launch Bay, Visual Dictionary)

Much of the confusion surrounding the details of the TFA Graflex came from the fact that the prop department made versions specifically for promotional usage. And while they should match in details, they do not.

The Visual Dictionary, early promotional displays, and Disney parks were given lightsabers to show off, and each of them have small minor changes in detail such as the knurling remaining on the glass eye... and as expected, the grips, and what is used to attach them.

Seeing these versions led to assumptions about the actual props since they came from the same source. Given the lack of knurling on the glass eye on most of these variations, it's probably safe to assume these are not representative of what is onscreen.

Star Wars has a long history of replicas and scratch-builds being used in promotional tours and museums and billed as "the real thing." So don't be fooled!



DARTH VADER'S LIGHTSABER

Almost as iconic as the Skywalker saber, and an even more rare (and more expensive) score to find in the real world, Vader's lightsaber has the most confusing lineage given how many of its variations have been seen by the public.

This is what happens when the icon of your franchise can be anywhere you can rent a tall dude and put him in a suit. Vader's popularity, and the fact he could appear without needing to hire an original actor, made him the most useful fixture for events, collections, and museum tours. And you don't get that suit without a saber...



DARTH VADER'S LIGHTSABER

A NEW HOPE - HERO (aka Vader ANH Silver Sidebars)

Created by Roger Christian, Darth Vader's lightsaber was developed by following the logic of the Graflex. If one camera flash had the perfect look— then why wouldn't another? The black and chrome look of the MPP flashgun must have seemed like a perfect fit on first sight.

The MPP, which was actually a British knock-off of the much more ubiquitous Heiland Synchronar, underwent a nearly identical transformation as the Graflex.

Several of the standard MPP features remain:

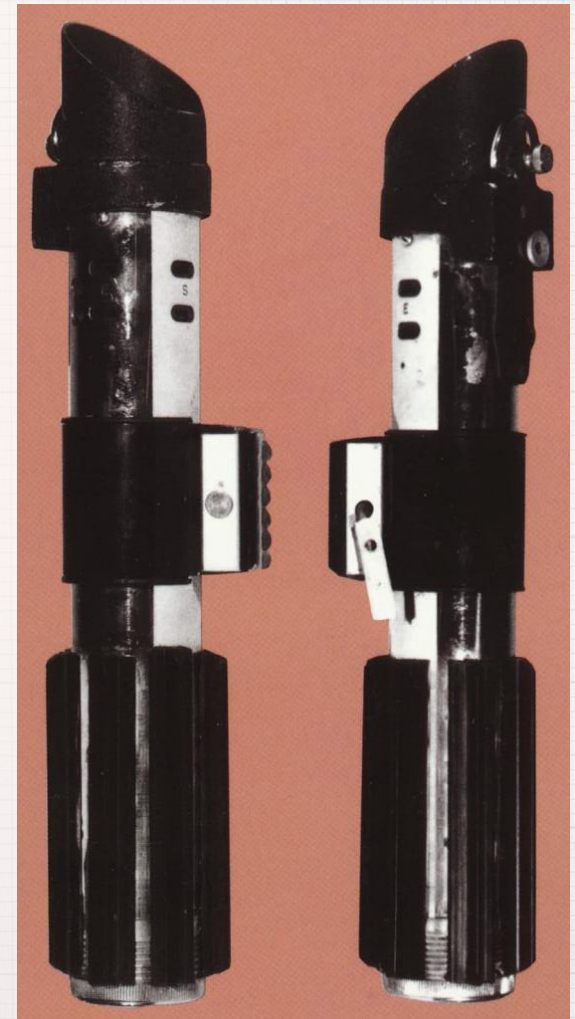
- The angled “shroud” headpiece
- The shroud's lock-down knob
- The clamp, always in the six o'clock position, with silver sidebars
- The bulb-release and flash button assembly

Details that were added:

- A d-ring to the shroud
- An Exactra bubblestrip, shaved to five and a half bubbles
- Seven T-track grips, identical in size and trim angle to what was used on the Graflex

ANH has TWO hero sabers. They are virtually identical save for the clamp section. They are referred to as either “**black sidebars**” or “**silver sidebars**,” referring to the color of the sides of their individual clamp boxes.

On the “Silver Sidebars” version the clamp lever seems to have been broken and is repaired using a nail to jam the lever into place. Looking at the saber, from base to shroud, with the bulb release assembly at twelve o'clock, the clamp box is at six, and the lever at nine. This version is most easily seen in Vader's introduction on the Tantive IV.



DARTH VADER'S LIGHTSABER

A NEW HOPE - HERO (aka Vader ANH Black Bars)

The clamp lever on the "Black Sidebars" version is undamaged, is at the three o'clock side (opposite of the silver bars) and is generally seen with a twisted angle to it.

Instead of calculator bubbles, there is a calculator PCB card with number LEDs attached. These were not likely discovered in an Exactra calculator while scavenging bubbles for the other sabers. It's also possible they were under the bubbles, which were lost.

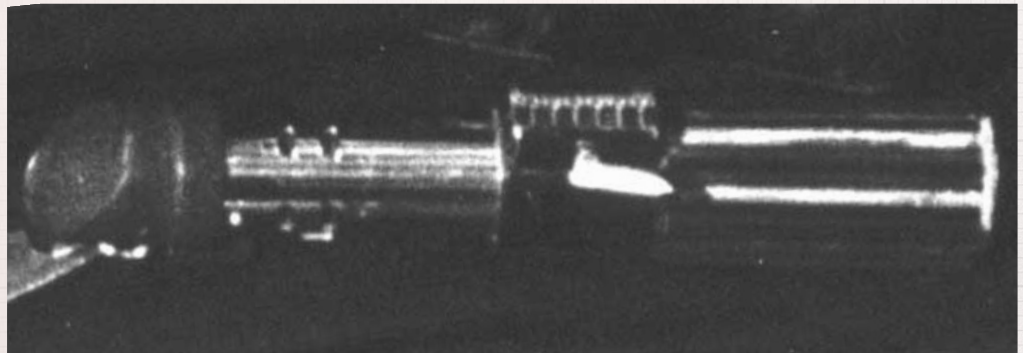
The clamp itself on this version is seated lower on the body, closer to the grips. This version is best spotted in Leia's interrogation scene.

NOTE: MPPs have a large predominate plate with their logo between the shroud and clamp. These plates were removed on every MPP used throughout the saga.

To the dismay of collectors, unlike the Graflex which changed its very slightly over the course of decades, the MPP was frequently updated as new models came out. Details that tend to vary:

- The threading of the endcap
- The finish of the shroud
- The knurling on the shroud lock-knob
- The angle of the clamp sidebars
- The amount of "steps" on the shroud
- The size of the ports

Despite this, save for the clamps, these details are actually consistent with the onscreen props in each movie!



DARTH VADER'S LIGHTSABER

A NEW HOPE - STUNT *(aka Luke/Vader Shared Stunt)*

As mentioned in the last section, Darth Vader's stunt saber was the same one used by Luke: a simple tube cut in the rough shape of a Graflex with the blade motor assembly inside. It was given a button, glass eye, and clamp to resemble the Graflex, but no bunny ears.

For Vader's turn, a quick and simple alteration was made—the tip was painted black. In some shots, an additional square block detail has been slipped onto the stunt to make it better resemble the MPP shroud.



DARTH VADER'S LIGHTSABER PROMOTIONAL KOBOLD

This odd looking saber for a Japanese promotional image is actually an airbrushed addition, painted over a smaller Kobold flash. The Kobolds were used as droid callers in the saga, and had their brackets removed to be used in D-ring assemblies for the Graflex.

This image, taken after ANH was shot, adds evidence to the fact that the ANH props were restored and returned, leaving them to have to improvise. It's my personal theory that being tweaked for this shoot, the Kobold likely would have been given seven grips, as the ANH sabers were. To me, that makes it a likely candidate as the lower half of hand-gag Graflex stunt on page 15.

No proof of course...



DARTH VADER'S LIGHTSABER EMPIRE STRIKES BACK - HERO (*aka Vader ESB*)

The ESB hero version of Darth Vader's saber is the one of the best documented screen-used sabers. Between the discovery of the actual prop in the wild in the last few years, its acquisition by the PropShop, there's many images available.

Like ANH, the hero was based on the MPP flash unit, again retaining the shroud, bulb release, and clamp.

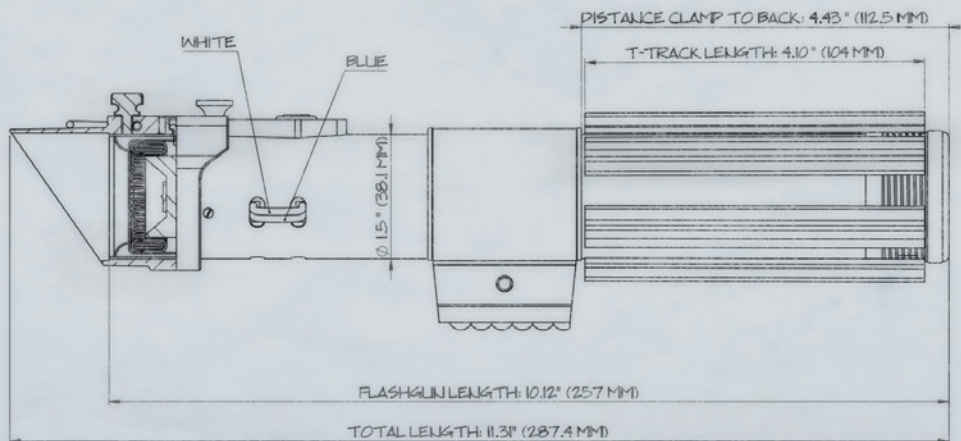
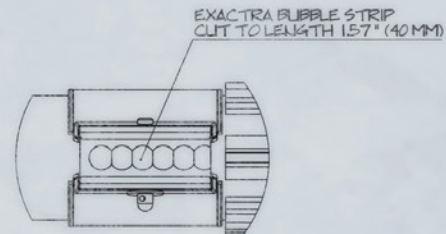
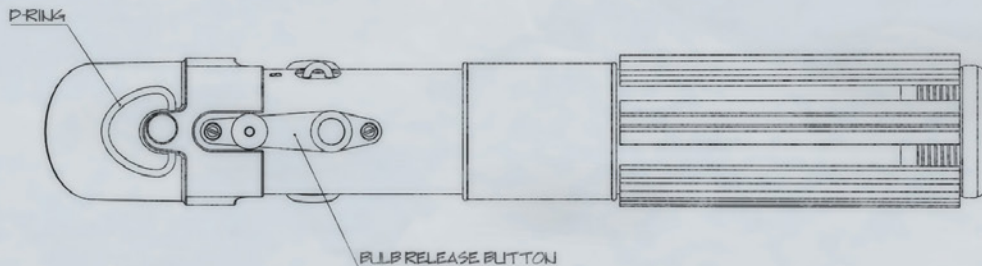
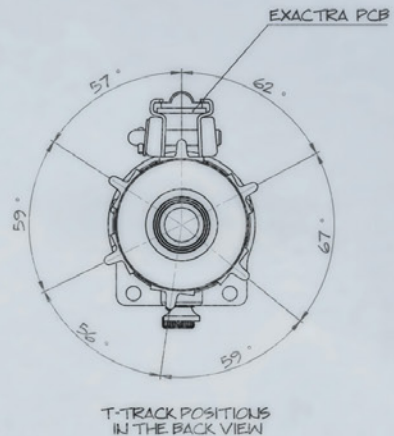
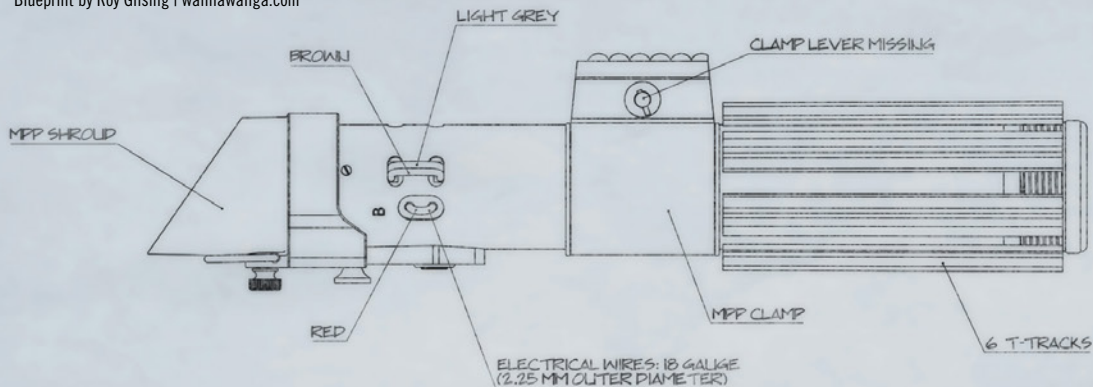
Notable changes include:

- Exactra Calculator bubbles with an Exactra calculator PCB, (blue or green with copper leads) glued underneath
- The d-ring, added as before
- 18 gauge wires added to the side ports
- black sidebars, angled to match the shape of the clamp
- The clamp lever is missing, though its post and washer remain, holding the clamp together
- Six non-angled grips that run from clamp end all the way to the base

NOTE: As it exists today, the grips have the same 2mm screws as seen on the Dagobah/Ranch Graflex. Here, they are at the top and bottom, on opposing corners. These were not present during filming.

As for the varying MPP details, here is what can be seen on this prop: 3 engraved lines on endcap, larger "B" port, flat screws on bulb release, no extra steps on the shroud, the shroud itself is thick-walled steel, and the interior clamp walls are narrow and angled in.





312

20 CENTURY FOX LTD.				PROD. N°
THE STAR WARS				E76/1
SET DARTH VADER ESB LIGHTSABER				SET. N°
DETAILS MPP FLASHGUN BASED				SCALE
				1:1
DRAWN	Carps	Metal	Const	DRG. N°
DATE	Paint	SFX		32
23-2-79	Plaster			

DARTH VADER'S LIGHTSABER EMPIRE STRIKES BACK - STUNT

Like the Graflex stunt, knowing that the internal motor rig was no longer needed, the stunt sabers for Vader were built by mounting the dueling rod directly into an MPP.

While Vader's hand blocks much of the detail, it is likely similar to the Graflex in that most of the detail is there with some additional protection for the user's hands.



DARTH VADER'S LIGHTSABER RETURN OF THE JEDI - HERO

ROTJ is where things get confusing. I'm presenting what's most widely accepted, but it is contested by some. The first problem is, onscreen, Vader is either not wearing a lightsaber, or, the way he is shot never fully reveals it. There is no clear "belt hanger" that is ever visible onscreen.

There is rumor that there are promo images that clearly show the ESB hero being used as the belt-hanger, but google has failed in tracking any such image down. That theoretical image, plus the fact that when the ESB hero in the last entry was found in the wild, it was part of a ROTJ oriented display, has lead most to assuming that despite never seeing it, the belt-hanger was the same prop, unaltered, that was used in ESB.



DARTH VADER'S LIGHTSABER RETURN OF THE JEDI - STUNT (aka MOM or "Hero")

The Vader lightsaber most commonly associated with ROTJ is the "MOM" saber. That stands for "Magic of Myth" which is the name of a museum tour, and subsequent book, of a Star Wars prop and wardrobe collection. The same saber was also seen in the Lucasfilm Archive book that was put out in the 90s. With that level of exposure, this saber became incorrectly referred to as the HERO Vader saber, or simply, the 'Vader ROTJ.'

Long story short, many people have said that toward the end of ROTJ's production, props began to wander off. People thought that SW was over and wanted a piece. When the resurgence of Star Wars hit in the 90s, this saber was one of the few left in the Lucasfilm prop archives.

It became the basis for toys and video games moving forward, as recently as Battlefront using it as their model. Near as I can tell though, this saber is actually only seen twice in the film. It is the saber that Vader throws at Luke, and the dueling stunt being used in the fight in the shots that lead up to Vader's hand being cut off.

The parts used to create this saber are still being investigated, though some are known:

- The body is a Graflex, sans all external details, and buffed or chromed to resemble the finish of the MPP
- Like the ANH stunt, the tip has been painted black
- In place of the bulb release assembly there is a double ball catch 50mm cupboard door latch
- Seven angled 3 5/8" T-tracks serve as a grip, glued, no rivets or screws to argue about; these grips may be recycled from an ANH prop

Parts that are still a mystery:

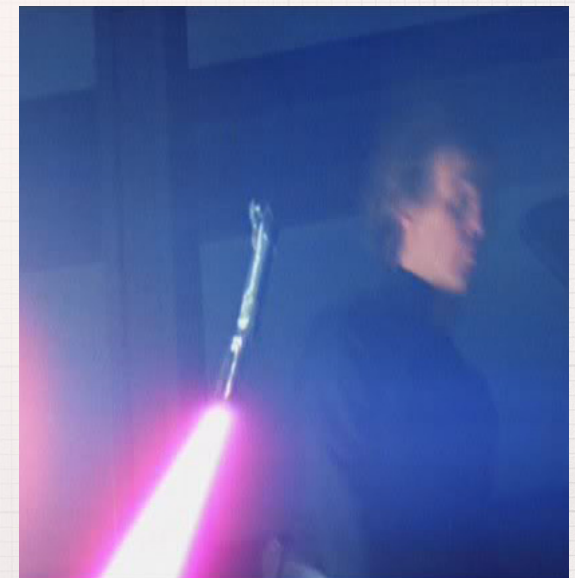
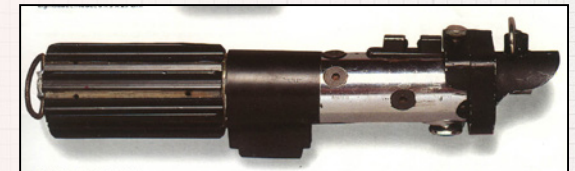
- A drum style D-Ring mounted in the bunny ear slot
- What is possibly a tire valve in the lamp socket
- The "clamp" box is a complete unknown
- The shroud could be a variant Hieland or MPP shroud, but is more likely a found piece, or something machined for the saber, much like the ANH stunt made use of

Three key details point to the fact that this is a recycled stunt saber used by Luke in ESB:

- The ESB Graflex Kobold D-ring assembly is still on the bottom
- Several 1/2" Allen head cap screws are drilled into the body in exactly the same places seen in photos of Luke's stunt sabers
- Holes peeking out from under the grips potentially line up with where ESB grip mounts would have gone.

NOTE: In the scene it is thrown, the wrong end is roscoped. The dueling rod is seen as cut in the display images, it is not known if the throwing shot was done after the duel and they cut the blade off for it, or if it was switched out for some reason.

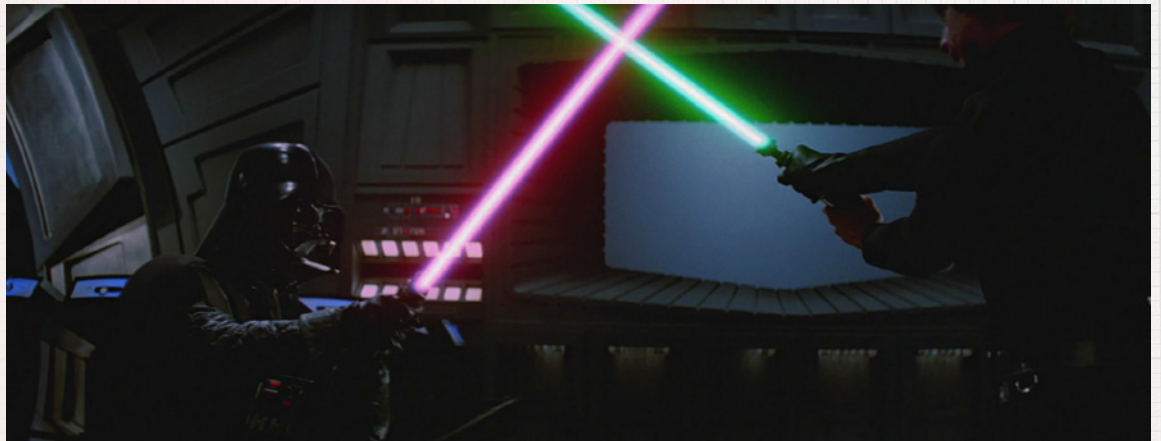
Recently found BTS footage of the ROTJ duel show that in some shots, Mark Hamill's stunt double held this particular saber in-hand.



DARTH VADER'S LIGHTSABER RETURN OF THE JEDI - STUNT (MPP)

For most of the duel it is very hard to make out any detail, but in the early portions of the fight, the thicker, angled end and lock knob of an MPP shroud is unmistakable.

Most assume that this is simply the re-use of the same stunt used for ESB (seen on page 30)



DARTH VADER'S LIGHTSABER RETURN OF THE JEDI - STUNT (*Severed Hand*)

The most clearly seen Vader saber in ROTJ was a one-off that wasn't even made by the prop department. Vader's hand being severed was considered a practical make-up effect since it involved recreating a living thing. The gag was the responsibility of Stuart Freeborn, chief make-up FX artist who did all the prosthetics for the film.

He crafted multiple original sabers given that he had no idea how many takes it would get to nail the shot, and the fact the sabers could be easily damaged if Mark Hamill missed and hit the prop with his dueling rod. While he based the look of his sabers on the MPP, he built them with whatever scraps he had in his shop or possible other left over stunt sabers in the prop shop. As such, they don't look correct when compared to the hero props of the other films— but they were never intended to, (again, no one figured we'd be able to pause in HD some day).

A few of Freeborn's sabers have gone up for auction over the years created some confusion as to their origin. The one that made the final cut can be identified by the small round greeble on the back of the shroud.



DARTH VADER'S LIGHTABER RETURN OF THE JEDI - KURTZ SABER

Like his Graflex sabers, Gary Kurtz auctioned off a Vader saber from his collection. We know his Graflexes that sold were never used onscreen and were gifted from the prop department, so they same is likely true here.

Additionally, Kurtz was not a part of ROTJ, so while it is possible this one was a one-off or stand-in of some sort from ESB, it was billed as from being from ROTJ.

The most likely scenario is that it was built post ROTJ along with several other post-movie variants (as it closely resembles them, see next page) and made its way to Kurtz somehow. The most likely theory, is that Kurtz asked Don Bies to deck out his Graflexes for auction, and at the same time he bought, or was given, one of the Bies Vader builds, (see next page).

Either way, it never appears onscreen.



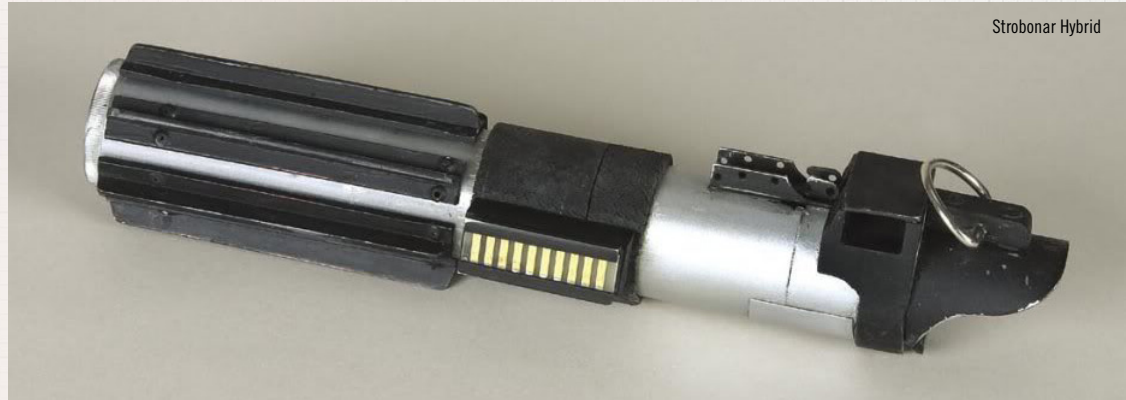
DARTH VADER'S LIGHTSABER RETURN OF THE JEDI - PROMOTIONAL VARIANTS

Propmaster, and Star Wars collector, Don Bies was hired by Lucasfilm to restore, and rebuild props in the mid 90s when the resurgence in Star Wars kicked in. He was tasked to work with ILM to recreate props that had gone missing or were destroyed. As noted, Darth Vader was frequently used in official promotional events, sometimes in multiple locations at the same time. And again, a lot of Vader's sabers went errant toward the end of production, so recreating them for promo purposes fell to Bies.

Like Freebourn, he worked with what was available based on what images Lucasfilm could offer up. The details are approximated with scrap parts. One model makes use of a Heiland strobonar, others are complete scratch builds. There are two that stand out above the others.

First, the "Barbican" saber (named after the museum that housed it). It is frequently mistaken for a hero saber as it makes use of an MPP clamp and ESB style PCB clamp card. Like the Ranch Saber, this variant was chosen as the basis for Vader's saber in *Revenge of the Sith*. (see page 46)

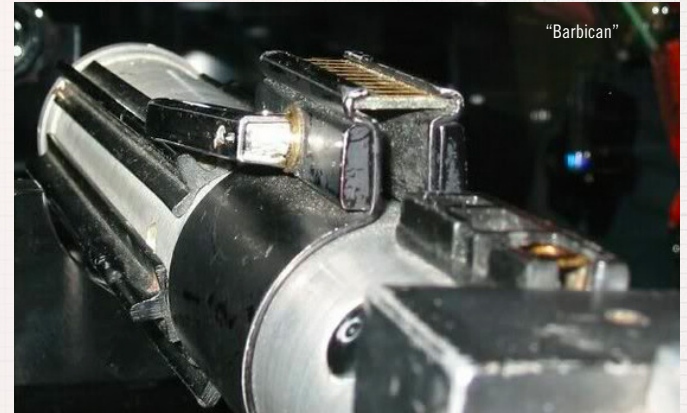
Second, the "Bunny" saber. In a 90s era Superbowl commercial, the Energizer Bunny faced off against Darth Vader, only for the Sith Lord's saber to die out as its generic batteries failed. Also crafted by Bies, it was built on the body of a Maglite to provide Vader with an endcap he could unscrew to inspect the batteries. At the end of the commercial, Vader drops and kicks the saber—which was done via a resin stunt cast. One such resin cast was recently found and copied for a run on *The RPF*.



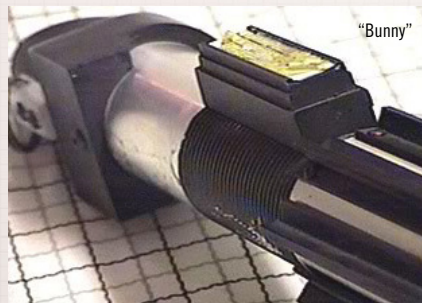
Strobolar Hybrid



"Bunny"



"Barbican"



"Bunny"



"Barbican"



Obi-wan Kenobi's Lightsaber

Where Luke and Vader's sabers turned to vintage photo gear, Obi-wan Kenobi's weapon was the result of having just the right junk at hand. Roger Christian has said that a lot of the production design, on Tatooine especially, came from the acquisition of airline and military scrap. At the time, it was very cheap and they bought it in bulk.

Jet engines were taken apart to build blasters, droids, snub fighters and through some sheer luck, it would seem that a handful of parts with similar diameter came together perfectly to form what was for a long time, the most mysterious saber of the saga.

OBI-WAN KENOBI'S LIGHTSABER

A NEW HOPE - HERO

With only a handful of images and diagrams to work from, the exact construction of Obi-Wan's saber was a mystery until 2005. Created from an assortment of scrap, and disassembled and recycled after ANH was done shooting, it was near impossible to get any new or closer looks at the prop outside of the occasion BTS image popping up from a crew member's personal collection.

A few parts were obvious— such as the Graflex clamp, or faucet knob pommel (though the exact make and model took time to pin down). Popular theories from the early speculation days included machine gun and motorcycle parts. Slowly the image became clear.

Other Star Wars props that used parts from the same source lead to discoveries. For example, IG-88's head was known to be part of an old jet engine— when said engine was found and disassembled by a fan, somebody recognized Obi-Wan's emitter amongst the pieces.

Today, all parts have finally been identified. Some of them are common, others are incredibly rare. Thankfully for fans, reproduction parts crafted from originals have led to recreations that are at least 95-98% accurate.

The parts, from top to bottom:

- The “Emitter” is a balance pipe from a Rolls Royce Derwent 8/9 jet engine, essentially part of a fuel pressure regulation system. The emitter is more specifically the “female” segment the assembly
- The “Grenade” section is titularly named for the central grip, a 1916 No. 3 WWI Mk1 British Rifle Rod grenade; essentially a very crude and early RPG weapon

- A Graflex clamp and Exactra bubblestrip, virtually identical to the set-up used on the Graflex
- Two transistors (exact type unknown) backed with washers are mounted into the side of the the clamp, at the nine o'clock position to the clamp box's twelve
- The “booster” or “gear” section is the business end of a Browning ANM2 (.303 Mk II) fighter plane machine gun. Specifically, the section between the barrel and the flash suppressor
- The “pommel” is a chromed British sink knob, (aka a “handwheel” in UK vernacular), a “Starlight” model made by Armitage Shanks
- A d-ring in a drilled hole in the pommel cube that lay on the opposite side as the transistors
- Though not seen clearly, recycled parts have indicated chrome tape was used to cover the clamp band

Given the similar diameter of the parts, and the fact most of them are open through the center, it is assumed that a simple rod with nuts was used to hold it together. Most reproductions make use of an inner core inside the clamp, the original likely did something similar.

It is unknown how many heroes were made, but there are a few noted differences in their appearances. On Tattooine, the endcap of the pommel may be missing and the grenade is possibly flipped. Some appear to have a “cone” inside the emitter, while others appear black inside. Another minor variant— the “Chronicles” saber, named for the book it appeared in, shows the saber with very minimal differences, namely, a missing washer from the top most transistor, a few extra set screws, and small cotter pins between the clamp and booster.

Damage and weathering on the Chronicle saber matches that of the onscreen hero, so the general assumption is that the original parts were re-assembled for the photos with the slight alterations.

Chrome tape was applied, then worn down, over the clamp band, making it possible that both the hero and the Graflex used tape on their bands in ANH.

NOTE: Like the Ranch saber and the Barbican Vader saber, this design inspired Obi-Wan's saber in Revenge of the Sith. (see page 46)



OBI-WAN KENOBI'S LIGHTSABER

A NEW HOPE - STUNTS (aka Shared Stunts)

Like the Luke/Vader shared stunt, the dueling saber for ANH was scratch built to better facilitate the motorized practical effect. A wooden replica was made of the hero, which was then cast. Seam lines indicate the pommel was made in sections to avoid the need for milling from scratch.

Either way, the end result was a metal stunt saber what held the shape of the hero, but had none of the surface details. The booster was smooth, for example. The neck was painted to match the brass of the hero "windvane" section, while the grenade was matte black to better block off the light used for the early saber effect. A graflex clamp was added to complete the look.

There are at least two known stunt versions, discernible by the fact that one has a clamp lever that was replaced with a longer version, the origin of which is still unknown. The clamp sidebar opposite the clamp looks to have broken, leaving only the actual block nut. This model was marginally more exact in its construction, with fewer uneven spaces between the "grenade rings" than its brother.

These stunt sabers actually have a lineage that takes them through the entire saga. After serving Obi-Wan in ANH, they were stripped of their motors and wires. They were on-set and part of the shop during the filming of ESB. BTS images clearly show them being used in rehearsal by Dvid Prowse and Mark Hamill.

Irving Kershner was also armed with one to help direct and block scenes so he wouldn't need to take one that was dedicated to an actor or stunt performer.

One even makes an appearance, with the dueling rod attached, as a Rebel's "tool" in the background of Echo Base.

Both would be pressed into service for ROTJ as well for Luke, hence the "shared stunt" nickname.

NOTE: A third stunt Obi-Wan saber was used in his death scene. Clearly not the hero due to the lack of detail, (and best seen in BTS videos), it is unclear if this was special to the vanishing gag, or if it was one of the normal stunts with the motor assembly and wires removed.



V2 Shared stunt (see page 41)



V2 Shared stunt (see page 41)



LUKE'S JEDI LIGHTSABER

While only seen in Return of the Jedi, the lineage of Luke's second saber is the most rich and storied behind the scenes, with ties to the production of each of the OT films.

Onscreen, it was different from what we'd seen before—in color, sound, and action. While the prop itself had been around since ANH, at the time it drew attention to itself for being very different.

Much like Darth Vader's lightsaber in Return of the Jedi, this saber has a wide variety of variants and what is considered the "hero" is actually only used in one shot.

LUKE SKYWALKER'S JEDI LIGHTSABER RETURN OF THE JEDI - HERO (aka the V2)

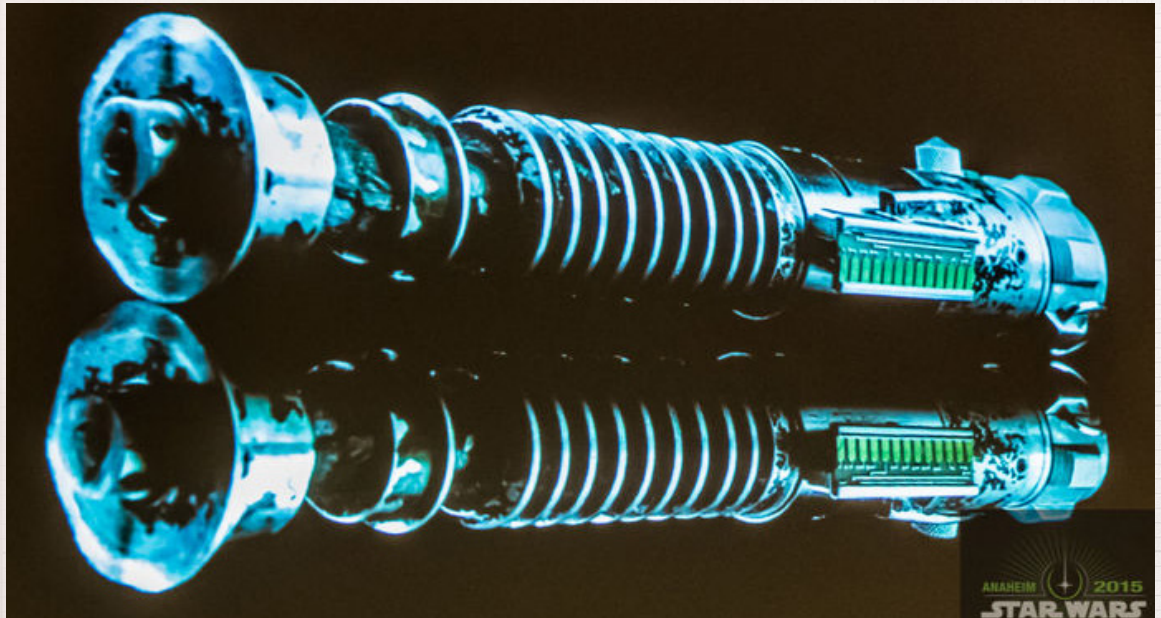
While not officially recognized as the hero lightsaber for Luke, this saber is what is used as the belt-hanger for the entire film, as well as several dedicated close up shots.

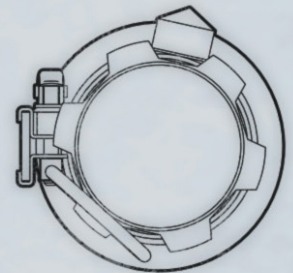
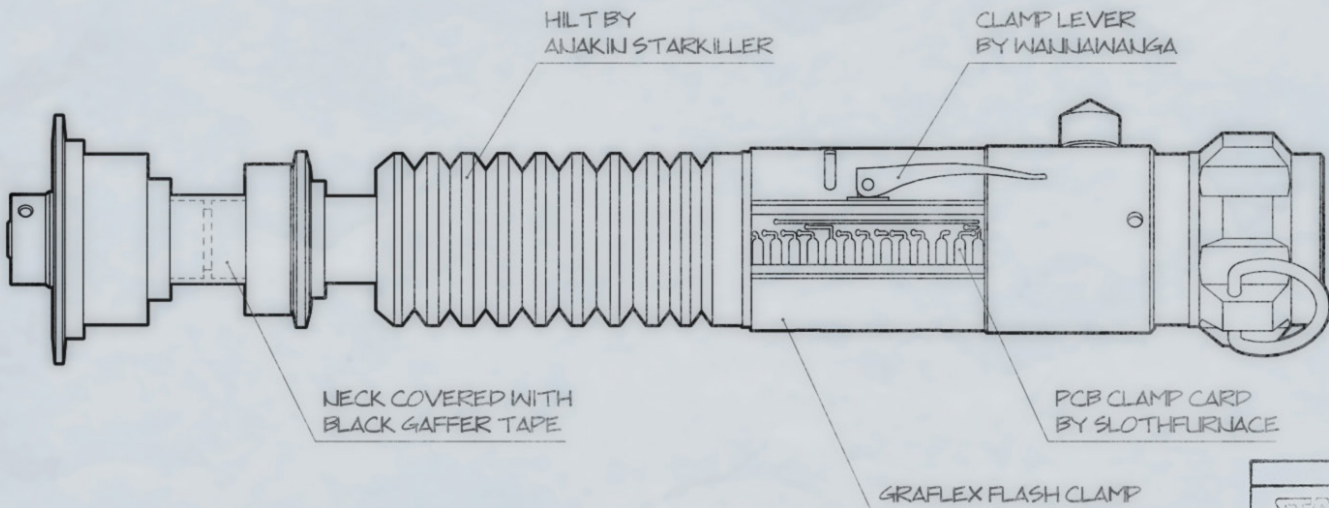
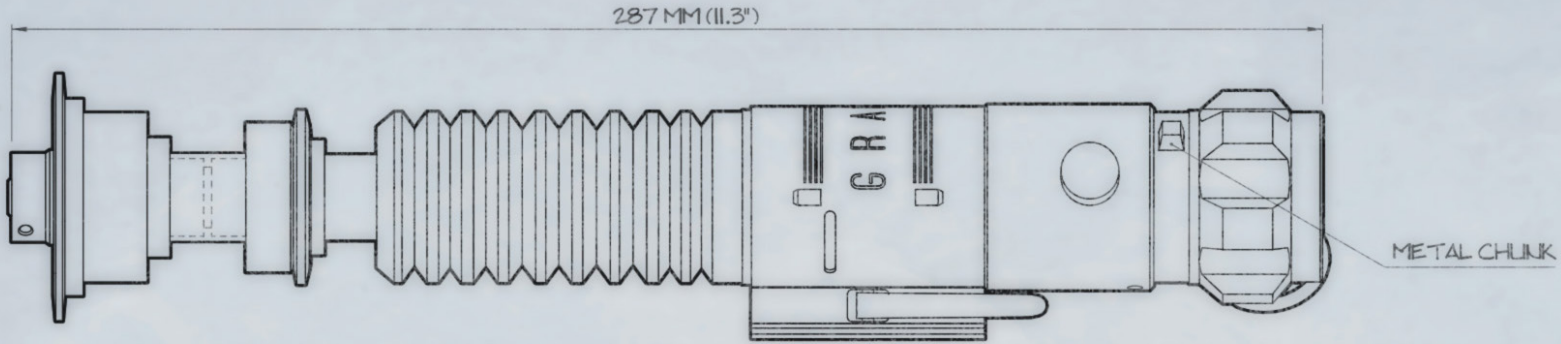
The V2 is actually the same physical prop as one of the Obi-Wan stunt sabers, specifically, the one with the over-sized clamp lever. The paint was removed (roughly, giving it a weathered appearance), and small details were added to give it more character:

- The Graflex clamp, with the long lever and missing sidebar
- A PCB edgcard of unknown origin
- A unidentified "mystery chunk" of metal screwed into the port that was initially meant for the practical motor wires in ANH
- A cone-shaped knurled retainer nut from a Michell Transcriptor turntable
- A D-ring on a pommel cube, which may or may not have been part of the prop in ANH

Initially, as a stunt prop, the entire emitter spun with the dueling rod, that feature was eliminated here with a few small set screws into the body, and a piece of black gaffer tape around the neck.

Despite not being the official hero, this saber can be clearly seen multiple times: when Luke catches his saber on the skiff, when The Emperor takes it, then again when it sits next to him on the throne, when Luke lifts it into frame for ignition as he is about to cut down the speeder bike, and pretty much any decent medium shot where it hangs on Luke's belt.





©1981 CHAPTER III PRODUCTIONS LTD.

STAR WARS		"JEDI"		CARPS	✓✓
				PLAST	✓
				PAINT	✓
				METAL	✓
SET		PROD. NO.		PIGGS	
		EST. NO.		SCAPES	
DETAIL		ISS. NO.		SPIN	✓
LUKE V2 LIGHTSABER		DESIGNER		GRASSER	✓
DISC NO.	SCALE	DATE	DESIGNER	PROD. DESIGNER	✓
134	1/1	26/01/81		D.S.	
				COMPANY	

LUKE SKYWALKER'S JEDI LIGHTSABER

RETURN OF THE JEDI - STUNT (aka Shared Stunt or the V3)

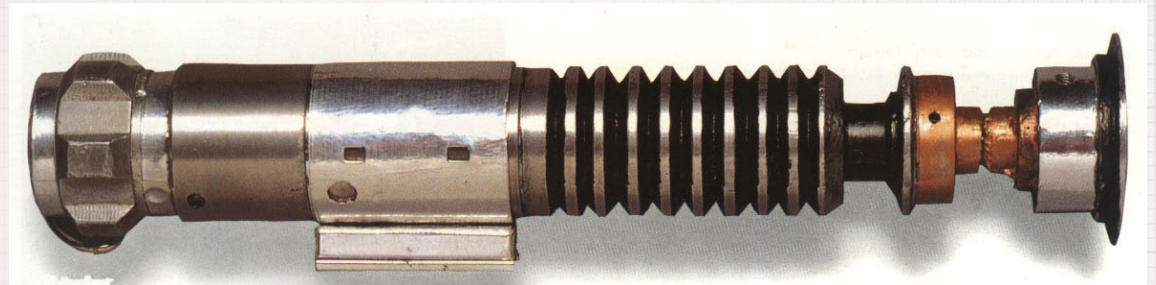
Obi-Wan's second stunt saber served the same purpose for Luke in ROTJ— it was used in his duel with Darth Vader as an actual dueling stunt saber. Like the V2, it was refurbished, but was completely repainted, most noticeably with the intense copper colored neck.

This saber was the more roughly made of the two Obi-Wan stunts, as evidenced by the additional uneven rings on the grenade section. It's unique features include:

- A Graflex clamp with stock lever; foil tape surrounds the clamp; there are three circular holes on either side of the clamp, and on the opposite of the box and a large skuff in the foil; the clamp itself is upside down compared to the hero Obi-Wan or Graflex-based sabers
- A clamp card has even metallic and matte sections; the exact colors seem to vary due to lighting, aging of the prop, and possible refurbishing. The matte sections are generally seen as either black, or blue, the metallic as gold or copper.

NOTE: It is unclear why the two primary sabers for the movie look so different. Normally this is likely the cause of different propmasters working at different locations. It is likely that the V2's hero status may not have been intentional.

The V3 is the prop that went on a trip to space aboard the Space Shuttle.



LUKE SKYWALKER'S JEDI LIGHTSABER RETURN OF THE JEDI - STUNT (aka Yuma)

For the sail barge sequence, Luke was supplied with a different stunt saber, nicknamed The Yuma, (named for the desert location.) Multiple versions of the Yuma were scratch built to match the basic design of the V2 and V3.

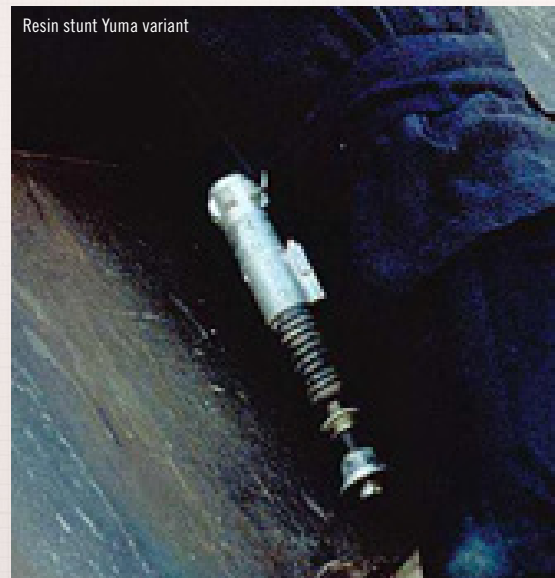
It has the following details:

- Copper paint on the neck, likely to match the worn bronze paint on the V2 from its days as an Obi-Wan stunt
- A triangular shaped D-ring
- A simple control box emulating the Graflex clamp, attached with two screws; no clamp card or lever is present
- The metal rod blade is shorter than other stunts sabers

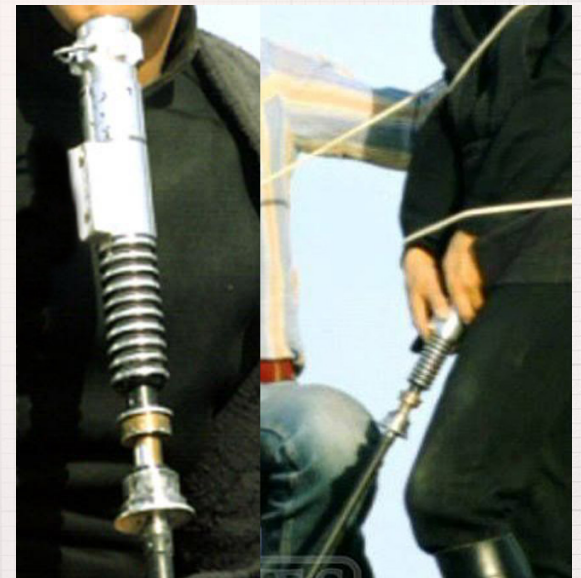
The Yuma stunt is held by Mark Hamill in the iconic ROTJ promo image of Luke on the sail barge.

Yet another stunt was used in one shot of the sail barge sequence. When Luke jumps aboard the barge the saber is tucked into his belt. Stills of this shot show that while the saber resembles the Yuma, the paint is different. The neck is black, not copper, and the grenade section looks to be worn down in a way that suggests (along with a slightly off kilter emitter) that this may be a resin copy. A dummy control box with a faux lever and the triangle D-ring are also present on this variant.

It is unknown if these resin stunts were developed for ROTJ or ANH, they are included here as they were stand-in for the Yuma. Resin copies of the Yuma have been spotted in archive videos and in exhibition displays. A modified resin copy was used as the "R2 Stunt," for the sequence in which R2 fires the weapon to Luke.



Resin stunt Yuma variant



LUKE SKYWALKER'S JEDI LIGHTSABER

RETURN OF THE JEDI - CLOSE UP (aka ISYHCANL, Cave Build, Luke ROTJ, and/or "Hero")

"I See You Have Constructed A New Lightsaber" are the lines spoken by Vader when we see our one and only shot of this variant: the close up of the saber in Vader's hands.

It has been confirmed by copies of call sheets and set photos that this scene was actually a pick up— shot back in California after principal photograph had wrapped using a stand-in Vader. Not the scene mind you— just the insert shot of Vader's hands on the saber.

Given that this was an ultra close up, somebody decided that if this indeed was a NEW lightsaber, then that usual worn Star Wars look wouldn't do. Most assume one of the Yuma stunt sabers was cleaned up and repainted for this close up.

Like the Yuma, it followed the more even shape of the V2, and emulated the color scheme of the V3— only now it was presented sans any weathering. The control box was also scratch made— a simple featureless box with a blue PCB card similar to the V3, but with more bars.

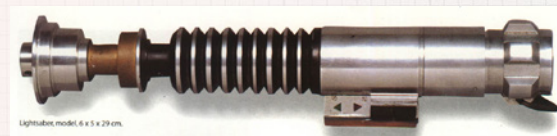
Like the Darth Vader MOM stunt, this version was the one chosen to "officially" represent Luke's lightsaber, appeared in the Archives book (where the button detail was first seen) and was subsequently used as the basis for resin copies given to exhibitions, and as the model for most toys and official replicas.

One final variant of Luke's saber is known as the "cave build." In a scene cut from the film, and only revealed with the Blue Ray release of the OT, Luke is seen finishing construction of his lightsaber. This saber appears identical to the ISYHCANL save for the fact that the activation box is designed to slide open between rails and reveal the inner workings, flashy lights included.

Group mind agrees they are likely the same saber, one modified into the other depending on when the cave scene was shot, (its background is a poor bluescreen job, implying it was done in a studio, not the desert.)

Finally, this saber served as the inspiration for Luke's lightsaber that was made, but ultimately not used and/or seen in *The Force Awakens*. Glimpsed only in BTS footage, this saber replicates the hero with the added detail of an Obi-Wan style emitter.

It is very possible this saber will be used in Episode 8.



REVENGE OF THE SITH

The third movie of the prequel saga was tasked with bridging the two trilogies in as many ways as possible. One such connection was to show the lightsabers in possession of Anakin/Vader and Obi-Wan in ANH as they were 20 years previous.

While narratively the same as the sabers seen in Episode 4, like in the OT, the props were significantly different from their previous appearances.

With the frenetic style of the lightsaber duels in the prequels in mind, these props were built much skinnier than their OT counterparts. Given that all other sabers for the PT were made from scratch by production, these were no exception. Real world parts were NOT used in their construction, though the original sabers at least served as inspiration for their looks... sort of...

Anakin Skywalker's Lightsaber (aka the skinnyflex)

For some odd reason, the Ranch Saber (see page 16) served as the inspiration for the the lightsaber used by Anakin as opposed to the ANH or ESB versions.

In addition to the skinnier design, the clamp card was an original design, a d-ring was absent with a covertec wheel being used as the belt attachment device (located on the hilt), the button color was more metallic and gold, and the glass eye was replaced with a similarly colored recessed button.

A few alternate designs with a flipped clamp have been spotted in some scenes. This saber also obviously inspired its own stunt versions, and show/convention builds for touring and viewing.

Darth Vader's Lightsaber

Like the Ranch Saber, this variant was inexplicably not based on any hero from the OT, but from the "Barbican" saber (see page 36). While only seen in ROTS promotional materials, like the "skinny flex" it was a narrow and idealized, the Barbican's greebles now original parts with no real world origin. It had a covertec knob, and an original patterned clamp card.

Obi-Wan Kenobi's Lightsaber

While actually based on the ANH hero, Obi-Wan's saber follows the same design cues as the other two-- an original designed clamp card, idealized greeblies, and a much skinnier, design.



REFERENCE GALLERY



A wooden buck and the cast it may have birthed, likely early steps in the creation of the Shared Stunt sabers.



The Vader MOM Stunt and the V3 in action



The "R2 Bump," one of the few shots to clearly show the Luke ESB Bespin/Hoth hero



The ANH Shared Stunt in ESB rehearsal



RPF founder Brandon Alinger reunites Mark Hamill with the V2 after 34 years apart



Shooting the ISYHCANL insert shot



Vader inspires Al Williamson to screw up. (This is a funny joke. I swear.)



A rebel extra uses a Shared Stunt as some sort of tool



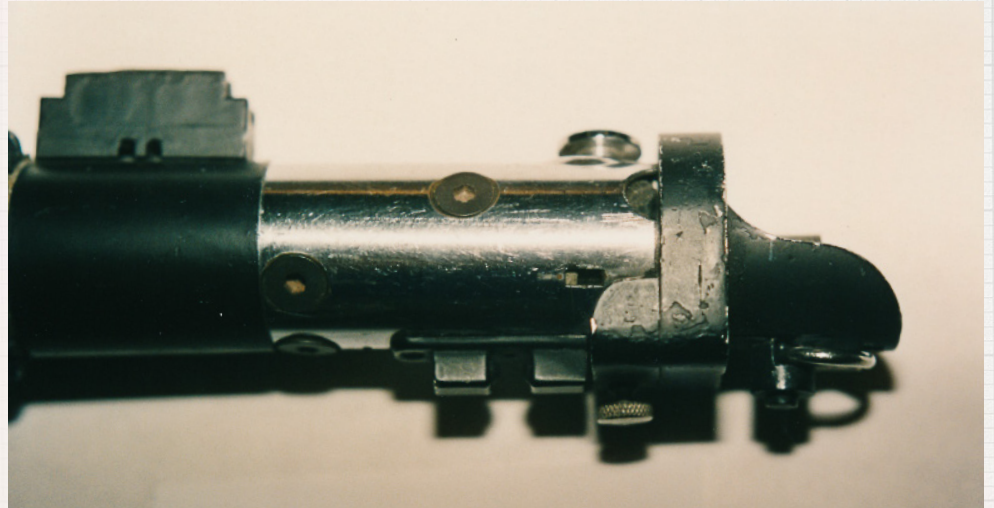
Kirschner using a Shared Stunt to choreograph and block the ESB duel



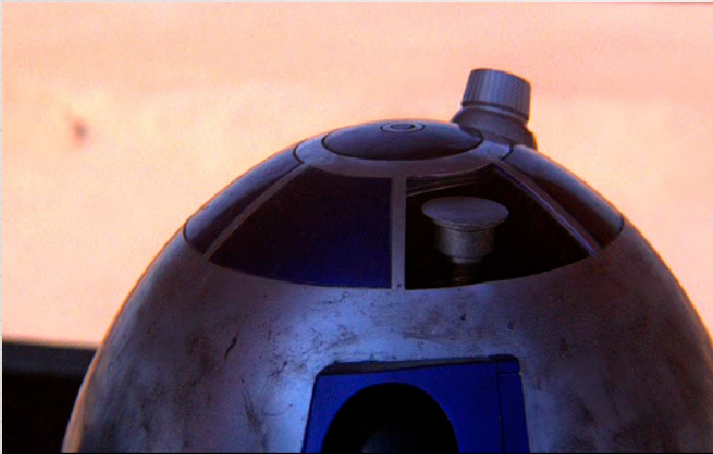
Roger Christian revisits his creations



This image suggests that the ANH may be a Folmer due to the glass eye shape



The glory-stealing, still mysteriously-made MOM stunt



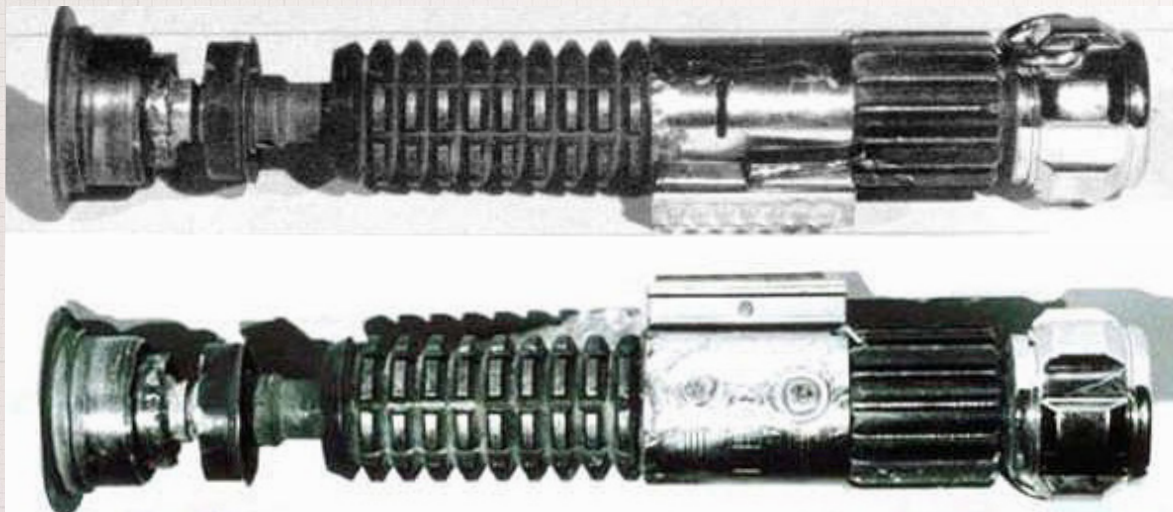
R2D2 and a Yuma inspired resin stunt



Bob Anderson rehearsing with a Shared Stunt



A resin copy of the ISYHCANL for MOM



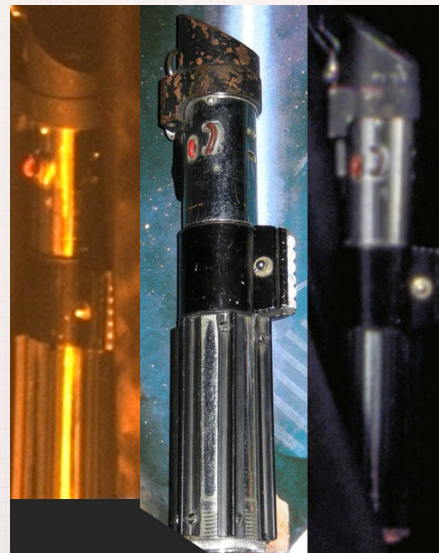
One of the few close-ups of the ANH Obi-Wan hero, from the Star Wars Chronicles Magazine



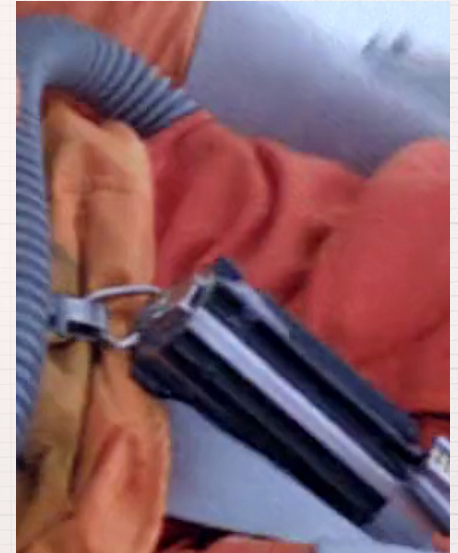
Source of many parts-- the Kobold flash.



ESB rehersal. Hamill with an ESB stunt, Prowse with a Shared Stunt



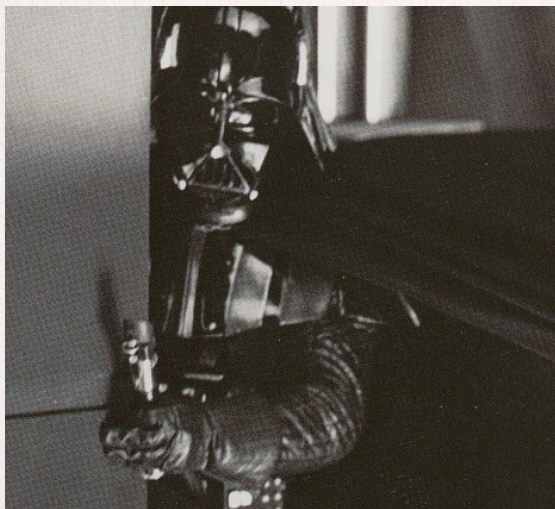
Screenshot confirmation of the Vader ESB Hero



Rivets or screws!?! FIGHT!!!!



Minutes later, a Shared Stunt got a HUGE promotion.



The Darth Vader ESB hero.



The Vader stunt/"hero" right before it is swapped for the hand-severed stunt saber.

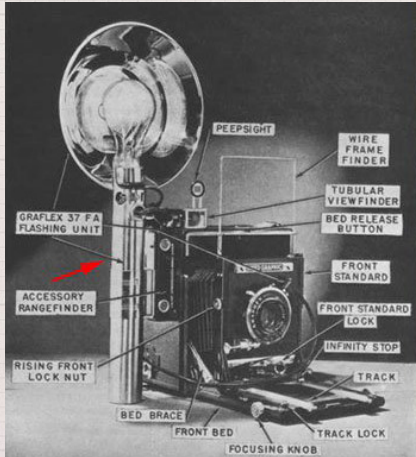


From the TFA trailer, our first reveal of the fact that the Graflex was returning... and that it was different... again...



Daisy Ridley grips one of the TFA stunt sabers with the soft fabric cover made to resemble the Graflex.

APPENDIX -- REAL WORLD PART SOURCES



The Graflex in its first life...



...and the MPP in its.



Was Obi-Wan HOT or COLD?



Obi-Wan's emitter and IG-88's head hiding inside an old jet engine, which demonstrates how random, and lucky the design of this lightsaber was to come together so perfectly for the film.



The Exactra 19 and 20. Bubbles!



Rifle Rod Grenade. Not a sketchy weapon *at all*. Yeesh!



When T-Track is discovered in the wild, it will go here!



Obi-Wan's "booster/gear" at home on an aircraft machine gun

APPENDIX -- GUIDE TO CLAMP CARDS

While nearly impossible to make out on screen, several ESB era lightsabers make use of the edge connector of a circuit board in their clamps, the part of a PCB that slots onto the motherboard.

Many say it's an HP-44 Bus Type circuit board, but that has never been 100% confirmed. PCBs are frequently similar and come from a variety of sources. When cards that seem to match what was used for the films are found, other details can be discerned. But, for every part that matches, there are variations.

The most common elements are:

- A board that is pale/yellowish; the standard greyish green is more common of course
- THICK gold bands, sometimes rounded, sometimes rectangular in shape
- Thin traces that extend from the bands
- The bands are generally gold/copper, and the traces are tin. Depending on wear and tear, the tin may look either gold or silver

While not much can be confirmed via films, there are other bits of evidence:

- The Ranch Saber has squared bands, thin silver traces; this appears to match promo material of Luke in his Beshpin gear, making it the most popular choice for ESB builds
- An archive image of a Graflex (which I read a reference of, but haven't actually seen) supposedly has thick gold traces

- The Vader Barbican variant has thin traces, save for one at the end, which is thick-- confirming that either is possibly used (see page 36)

Essentially it is Schrodinger's clamp card-- any choice could be correct because there's no way to know it is not. The real world part is varied enough that it could go any different direction.

Several other sabers use PCBs with different origins:

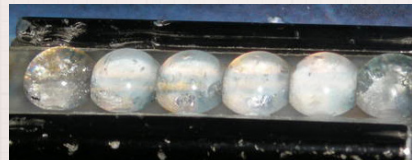
- Vader's ANH/V2 PCB is from an Exactra calculator, exact model unknown, though even within the chosen 19/20 models there have been a variety of boards discovered
- Vader's ESB/ROTJ hero (and possibly the silver bars ANH) also uses an Exactra PCB, blue and gold, under the bubbles
- Luke's V2's PCB remains a mystery
- The production team for TFA made theirs from scratch based on what you see when you google "HP-44 PCB"

The Exactra boards vary in color and design and the bubbles themselves vary in translucence and "window" size making it hard to exactly determine what was used onscreen.

Vader ANH/ V2
"Black Bars"



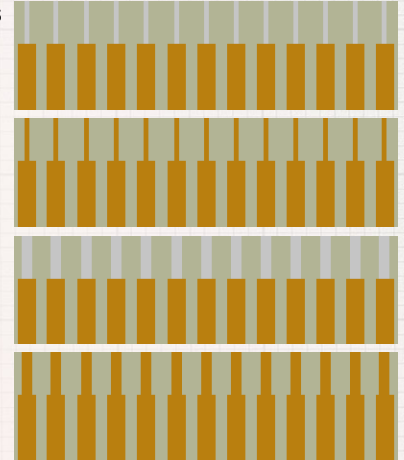
Vader ESB/ROTJ
HERO



ESB / Ranch Saber



ESB Variants



ROTJ / ISYHCANL



ROTJ / V3



ROTJ / V2



TFA



CONCLUSION

Information fluctuates. Facts change when new evidence arrives. Just as this was being finished, new images of the V2 showed up in a video.

As of now, the beginning of 2017, this is the most up to date assembly of data on the lightsabers of the Original Trilogy.

But parts still remain a mystery— what kind of transistors were those on the Obi-Wan hero? What is the control box on the Vader MOM?

Is it possible that in some cases, propmasters actually managed to make indistinguishable copies and will we learn that there were a dozen hero sabers in ESB and we just didn't know it?

Who knows! As new info reaches the community, I'll do my best to keep this guide updated

Thanks for reading!
Seth Sherwood

CHANGELOG

All future revisions and archived versions of this bible will be noted here.

Version .5: January 2017

- Beta copy

Version 1: January 2017

- typos and grammatical errors revised
- additional V2 images added
- shared stunt / V3 information revised
- Luke ROTJ "hero" Archives image added

Version 2: February 2017

- typos and grammatical errors revised
- V2 and V3 info updated and revised
- PCB card details updated and revised
- Obi-Wan hero page updated and revised
- DV ESB Hero page updated and revised
- Luke ESB stunt page updated and revised
- new gallery images added
- dedicated Revenge of the Sith page added