

Belcher Bits BL-22: Poseidon C3 SLBM 1/72

Background

Announced in 1965 and fielded in 1971, the Poseidon C3 was developed as an improved SLBM, offering greater throw weight as well as the ability to carry multiple RVs, independently targeted. Furthermore, this missile although 20" larger in diameter than the Polaris could be installed in existing SLBM submarines (although substantial rework of the missile tubes and fire control was required).

The range of the UGM-73A Poseidon C3 was no greater than the Polaris A3 at 2500 miles, but offered greater accuracy. The capability to carry up to 14 MIRVs greatly enhanced the striking power of the US SLBM fleet. In 1992, the START 1 treaty came in to effect and all Poseidon and Trident C4 subs were withdrawn from service.

Assembly

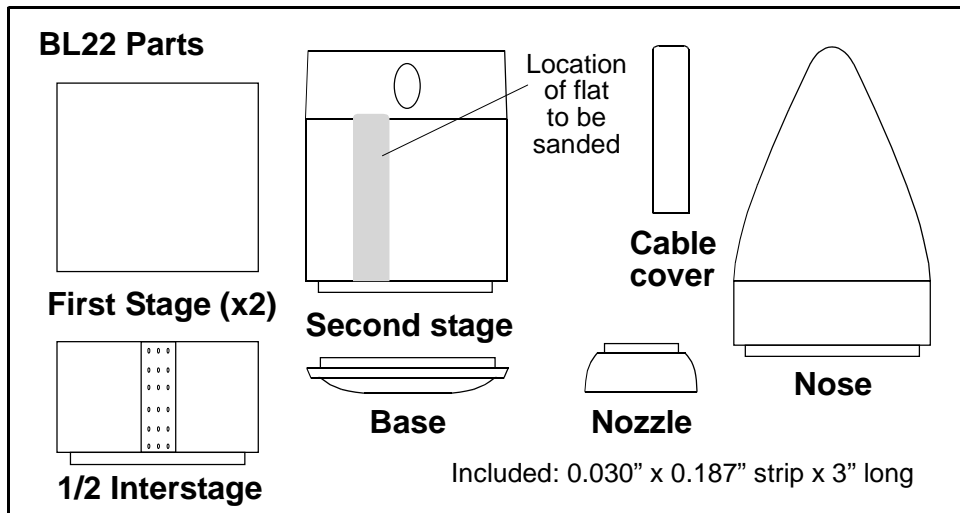
Like all resin kits, remove the parts from their bases / sprues and wash thoroughly to remove any release agents. The first stage halves have flat faces, while the rest are raised on cylindrical standoffs which are designed to fit inside the ends of the pieces below, so clean those ends up carefully and test fit everything.

The assembly sequence may seem a bit odd, involving some assembly after painting, but there is method in the madness. It is much easier to paint the GRP exteriors of the first and second stage motors before gluing on the cable fairings.

Match up the flat ends of the first stage halves and glue together; use a V-block if you have one, or against a straight edge on a flat surface. Fill the seam. On a flat surface, place some sandpaper down and sand a small flat about 3/16" wide along the length of the first stage. Do the same for the second stage, but line up this flat with the left edge of one of the elliptical hatches at the top of this piece. These flats are where the cable fairings will go after painting.

Glue the interstage part to the top of the first stage assembly, lining up the cable fairing with the flat you just made. Glue the second stage part on top of that, again lining flat with cable fairing on the interstage. Glue on the nose section. On the bottom of the first stage, glue on the base by lining up the cables with the flat. Finally, glue the nozzle into the recess in the base.

Prime and get ready to paint the missile.



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Initial Painting

Nose and interstage are painted aluminum, while the engine base is white. Paint these and mask off. The first and second stages are some form of filament-wound FRP (not your garage-style fibreglass!) These sections of the missile are not painted, only those metal sections of the missile being painted aluminum for corrosion protection.

Painting the FRP sections to represent the filament wound fibres is a lot of work but really makes the model stand out when finished. I painted the tubes RAF Dark Earth, then roughly drybrushed a Desert Sand yellow around the tubes. Then a number of coats of Tamiya Transparent Orange to sort of blend everything together. Remove all the masking, and on to final assembly.

Final Assembly and Final Painting

Cut the supplied strip to 2.09" long. Sand lightly so the long edges on one face are slightly rounded. Paint this strip aluminum, as well as the resin cable cover. Using white glue, attach these covers in line with the raised cable cover on the interstage part, sitting on the flats which you made earlier. If you have any excess glue squeeze out, use a damp cotton swab to remove.

The accumulator and valve around the nozzle are aluminum, while some of the wiring around the base is red or silver. Nozzle is white.

References

1. Various internet searches for photos and info
2. American Missiles by B. Nicklas, Frontline Books, 2012
3. US Guided Missiles by Bill Yenne, Crecy Publishing, 2012
4. Photos of example at Air and Space Museum, Udvar-Hazy.

