

MIDDLE EASTERN MISSILE

Building Trumpeter's 1:35 SA-2 in Egyptian Colors

BY WES SHIRLEY
PHOTOS BY JOHN HECK

Like many modelers, I'm a student of history, and I find myself reading history more than normal because of my modeling. I first became interested in the SA-2 when I was doing research on a 1:32 scale F-105D, and I was fascinated at how the F-105's went from hunted to hunter of the SA-2.

During the early days of the Vietnam War, the United States Air Force had almost full autonomy over the skies of Vietnam. However, once the Soviet Union and China began arming the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) with advanced Surface-to-Air missile (SAM) systems, the U.S. domination of the skies was abruptly challenged. To deal with the new SAM threat, the U.S. Air Force decided to dedicate men and machines exclusively to the SAMs. Thus, a new breed of aviator and aircraft were born, the "Wild Weasels."

As this chapter in U.S. history was wrapping up, a new chapter was about to begin in the Middle East. One of the wars that intrigues me





Wes started with the good Trumpeter kit and added a bit of detailing and some skillfully-applied weathering to bring his SA-2 and its transporter to life.



If you opt to open the engine compartment, be prepared to fill a myriad of ejector pin marks. Wes tackled over 70 in building his model!

the most is the 1973 *Yom Kippur war* because it was a fight for survival against overwhelming odds. Throw in the largest armor battles since World War II and it makes for some great reading.

In the summer of 2005, I read the book *The Yom Kippur War* by Abraham Rabinovich.

In this book I found that, much as the SA-2 sent the U.S. a wake up call when it appeared in 1965 over Vietnam, Israel experienced the same hard lesson over the Sinai. Egyptian SA-2s inflicted unacceptable losses on precious aircraft and pilots, depriving the Israelis of much-needed air cover for their armor and troops.

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It was up to the ground-pounders to carry the day. In October 1973, tank battles raged on two fronts, with heroics on both sides. Israel pushed Egypt back and the Israelis crossed the Suez to roam again in the land they had roamed 4500 years earlier, only now the hunted had become the hunter.

According to Gen. Avraham Adan, "The two-brigade assault on the Tsach crossroad was launched at noon, but fire from the Egyptian position quickly took a toll." Adan stopped the attack and called for air support.

Informed that SAMs prevented air activity in the area, he sent two battalions on raids 12 miles into enemy territory to destroy three missile bases. The SAM bases adopted a new tactic to defend themselves. As the tanks approached, the antiaircraft missiles were lowered and fired in a flat trajectory at them. In the first such en-



We found it easy to improve the trailer by adding hydraulic and electrical lines from wire.

counter, the missiles overflowed the tanks and exploded miles to their rear. At another base, a missile struck within 10 yards of the command APC but did not cause any injuries. Fifteen minutes after the last SAM base was destroyed, Israeli Mirages appeared overhead and engaged a flight of MIGs that rose to meet them, shooting down six in the last light.

Though the SAMs were not successful in their anti-tank role, reading about these battles proved successful in motivating me to build the 1:35 Trumpeter SA-2 truck and transport, kit TR0204.

After opening the kit and getting out the instruction booklet, I thought, "Wow, this is going to be a project." But the kit turned out to be a real pleasure. The kit instructions are broken into three sections, one for each part of this kit: truck first, missile second, and the trailer last.

I found that starting with the missile was the best way to begin. Because of its relatively few parts and its impressive final result, it kept me motivated to move on to the trailer. The only snag with the SA-2 are the decals; make sure you gloss-coat your missile thoroughly because there are a large number of decals and this will help prevent silvering.

The trailer was next, and it went together easily. The only spot to watch is the kit photoetch for the rotation rail. This can be a bit tricky, but if you find a paint jar that is just a bit smaller in diameter, you can then tape one end of the photoetch to the paint jar and slowly press the photo-etch around it. This will prevent the photo-etch from bending badly. Then, super glue the brackets on while it

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Scuffs and scratches were added with gunmetal paint. Avoid shiny aluminum - military vehicles, especially Soviet trucks, are made of good old steel!



The rotation rail at the left in this photo is best bent by wrapping it around an appropriately-sized paint bottle.

While perhaps not the best anti-tank weapon, Wes' SA-2/transporter combination looks dangerous once parked on its display base.



The Eduard brass detail set helped Wes outfit the interior of the truck's cab.

Egyptian SA-2 SAM

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is still taped to the jar and let them dry. When you remove the photoetch it will be easier to mount to the trailer. Also, the trailer has plenty of missing electrical lines and hydraulic lines; by adding them with wire, you can add a lot of visual interest without a lot of effort.

Last is the truck. Trumpeter put a great deal of detail and effort into this with a full drive train that could be displayed in many different diorama situations. The truck can be a bit intimidating at first glance but it really is a very straightforward build. The only thing you should think about is how detailed you would like it to be; this is one that you can really dress up if you so choose.

If you build the truck's cab closed up and do not open the engine compartment, many of the injection marks are hidden. Even then, you will need to take care of some injection pin marks that are in plain sight: inside the front and rear fenders on the spare tire rack and in between the tool boxes. If you do decide to open the cab and engine compartment (which I highly recommend), you will want to fill all the pin marks



The missile has lots of stencilling, appropriately in Cyrillic. Using a good gloss coat is critical to getting all these small decals in place without silvering.

that will be exposed. A quick fix for providing detail in the cab is to purchase the Eduard photo etch, because this has new door panels in. The kit doors each have eight pin marks and they are right on the detail. You will still need to fill the two bottom marks, but the rest will be neatly covered by the new brass door skins.

As with the trailer, a couple of little tricks will add a lot of visual effect. I added fuel lines spark plug wires and electrical wires for the tail lights, all from copper wire painted the proper color. The truck has round rear-view mirrors, which are very convenient because you can punch some chrome confetti to make mirrors that look great.

If there were to be any caveats about this kit as a whole it would be that I filled over 70 injection pin marks. There are no pin marks on the missile that you have to worry about, but the truck and the trailer are going to need some attention if you wish to have a nice outcome. I became adept at

placing a small amount of Mr. Surfacer 500 over each mark; once it dried, the mark disappeared. I am now a pro with Mr. Surfacer, so I guess it was a fair trade.

Last but not least, you should have a bottle of Testors Model Masters Metallizer Gunmetal handy; this is what I use to get realistic paint chips on armor. It's easy to apply and gives you outstanding results.

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Overall, this kit is an enjoyable build. It is very different from aircraft or armor so it was a nice change of pace.

WES SHIRLEY

IPMS/USA #40791

Wes, the president of an automotive parts importer, lives in Santa Rosa, California with his wife Jennifer and his son Will. When he's not building 1:35 armor or 1:48 aircraft, Wes can be found working on 1:1 scale hot rods, or spending time in the outdoors fishing, hunting, diving, sailing or playing golf. Wes joined IPMS in 2000.