



# ROCKET Report

Douglas Kirk

## Public Missiles Exports Model Rocket Technology for British Navy Film

Imagine, if you will, a model rocket that stands nine feet tall, measures six inches in diameter and roars into the atmosphere with a single 54mm motor or a cluster of 38mm giants.

The folks at Public Missiles have always been into models like this, rockets that come amazingly close to the real thing in their look, feel and performance. Public Missiles calls this rocket the Ultimate Endeavor with good reason. For the amateur turned almost scientist, this rocket defines the ultimate in upscale, high power rocketry.

It is their upscale reputation that earned Public Missiles the telephone call from the Special Effects Filming Group of the BBC, seeking missiles for a motion picture that would demonstrate the readiness of the British Royal Navy. The film is to be displayed in a British museum and will focus on the Navy's preparedness against terrorist gunboats.

Public Missiles put together an arsenal of models that included 30 "enemy" missiles, 10 Sea Wolf missiles and seven full-scale Harpoon missiles. The Harpoons were so massive that they flew on M motors with I-size outboard motors. Fashioned from fiberglass, a special nose cone had to be made for the Harpoon rockets, and the Sea Wolf entailed a rapid prototyping system unique to the industry. The result was a collection of highly detailed missiles that could be used in the production of the film for the Royal Navy.

The rockets were ultimately used to simulate intercepts, and one model was even equipped with radio controlled fins and a propane exhaust system to allow dramatic closeups. A blue screen system

was used to film the most detailed of these rockets, so that special effects could add a background to show an ocean passing beneath it.

Several of the missiles were fired along guy wires in a collision course with each other to simulate intercepts. The whole project took just 27 days after negotiations ended.

Public Missiles Frank Uroda and Gerald Kolb got their start in the film business when they produced a replica of the early Robert Goddard liquid propellant rocket used in the George Lucas television series, *Young Indiana Jones*.

Public Missiles jumped into the international limelight when they produced the "bad guy" rocket that was featured in *Star Trek Generations*. Their Doomsday Missile had 10 minutes of screen time, and their names are listed in the film's closing credits.

When the British Navy project came around, Uroda looked it over and considered the extremely short time fuse that had been placed on completion. "I knew I could do it," he said, "but I knew it wasn't going to be easy." With the help of his colleagues, the missiles were delivered on schedule, complete with custom made shipping crates and instructions for getting the rockets off the ground. **HM**

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*Your questions or comments are welcome.*