



Top: HMS Hereward with twin 4.7 inch gun in 'B' position and angled bridge front. Above: HMS Hunter was more typical of the 'H' class general appearance. Note the red funnel bands.

## 'H' CLASS DESTROYERS

BY ALLAN GWINNELL

MANY articles have been written describing in detail the construction of standard ship kits and several interesting conversions have been described. Probably the most rewarding kit on the market today is the Airfix *Hotspur*. Not only is it one of the cheapest, with very accurate detail, but well over 50 destroyers can be produced from this kit, some of them being described in the August, 1964, issue.

*Hotspur* was one of eight similar ships completed only a couple of years before the outbreak of World War 2. With their leader *Hardy* they constituted the pre-war 2nd (Med) Destroyer Flotilla:

<i>Hardy</i>	<i>Hunter</i>	H 35
<i>Hereward</i>	<i>Havock</i>	H 43
<i>Hotspur</i>	<i>Hostile</i>	H 55
<i>Hasty</i>	<i>Hyperion</i>	H 97
<i>Hero</i>		H 99

It should be pointed out that the 'H' pennant numbers shown were taken from a block allocation between H 00 and H 99 which embraced, in the main, destroyers built in the 1930s, the 'H' having no other signification than this. *Hardy* was allocated H 87 but, in common with other pre-war leaders, the pennants were not painted up.

Any modeller wishing to produce the complete Flotilla will need to acquire nine *Hotspur* kits and one Airfix *Cossack*. An interesting and representative Division could be constructed from four *Hotspurs* and one *Cossack* model.

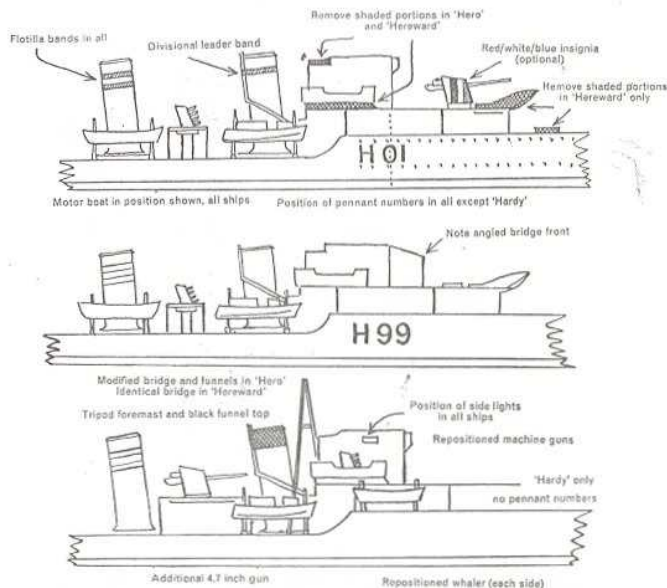
Three additions and one re-positioning are necessary to provide the extra finishing touches to the *Hotspur* kits.

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All ships need a galley chimney running from the starboard side of the after end of the forward superstructure to the starboard side of the forefunnel and thence up the rear edge of the funnel. The chimneys can be produced in seconds from the prop shafts—which will not be needed in their proper functions. A bandstand, 2 mm high, should be cut from paper or thin card and cemented round each searchlight platform—a similar strip should be cemented to the edges of the multiple machine gun platforms in all except *Hardy*. These preparations can be made before assembly. One further preparation is to amend the Airfix assembly instructions so that, when the stage is reached, the motor boat is cemented to starboard of the forefunnel (using its own davits) and the whaler so displaced moves back to occupy the motor boat's former position—starboard of the after funnel. (However, refer to instructions regarding *Hardy* as her whalers occupied a different position.)

### Detail Variations

*Hereward* and *Hero* both had angled bridge fronts and lower bridge wings. *Hero* had shortened funnels. For a time *Hereward* had her two forward 4.7 inch guns combined in a twin mounting in 'B' position. The two ships set aside to represent these two should have 1 mm removed from the lower bridge projection at the after end of the forward superstructure to allow the bridge and wings to sit at the required lower height. The slightly curved edges at the top rear of the



Sketches above give all necessary details for making the complete 'H' class from Airfix *Hotspur* kits.

bridge sides (correct for the remainder of the class) should be filed into a distinct step for *Hereward* and *Hero*.

The flash screen at the forward end of the forward superstructure should be removed completely for *Hereward*. Put aside a twin mounting from *Cossack* for *Hereward's* 'B' gun. Remove the 'A' gun fairing on the forecastle deck and plug the hole with a portion of the mounting pin.

The angled bridge fronts should be cut from card using the bridge of *Cossack* as a template. The modified bridges should now be assembled. Remove 3 mm from the base of the funnel halves for *Hero*. When ready to assemble, these shortened funnels will cement in place quite securely even though devoid of their pegs.

*Hardy* needs three variations. The tripod foremast legs from *Cossack* should be put aside to form *Hardy's* tripod foremast. One of the displaced 4.7 inch guns from *Hereward* needs to be mounted between *Hardy's* funnels (and her machine guns resited on the bridge wings) and her whalers need to be repositioned on the forecastle deck. The only preparations needed at this stage are those necessary for the additional gun. An oblong box of card should be constructed to cement over the machine gun platform projection. This box should fully occupy the position between the funnels and should be 4 mm high. The 4.7 inch gun should be cemented on to this gun house just aft of the centre spot between the funnels.

The rightful home for a ship is the

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sea and it is with this in mind that the suggestion is made that all the Flotilla should be constructed so that the illusion is easily created. The removal of the lower portion of the hull halves is simple, quick and effective. An indian ink line should be ruled 1½ mm below the engraved water line, a starting notch on this line made at the appropriate end and the cut then made using a fine tooth saw. Let the saw blade do the work, do not force it. Any irregularities in the cut can be quickly smoothed out with emery paper.

### Painting and Assembly

Five colours are needed:

**Med Fleet Grey:** A very light grey indeed. A 2 to 1 mixture of Humbrol 40 and 22 is just about right (light grey and white).

**Dark Green:** for majority of decks. Humbrol 30, or Airfix M3.

**Matt Black:** for waterlines, funnel tops, leader's top in *Hardy* and lower portions of foremasts.

**Red:** for Flotilla funnel bands and, mixed 2 to 1 with matt black, for fore-castle and after decks.

No other paints are needed. Appli-

cation of the colours is as follows:

**Med Fleet Grey:** All except those surfaces defined as 'upper facing'.

**Dark Green:** All upper facing surfaces except fore-castle and stern decks, torpedo tubes and gun shield roofs.

**Dark Red:** Fore-castle deck from bows to a line level with after end of bollards. Stern deck from after end of after superstructure to stern.

**Matt Black:** Waterlines, funnel tops and foremasts (including tripod-legs in *Hardy*) from beneath lower yardarm to base. Also inside of funnel halves before assembly.

**Funnel bands:** All ships—two red bands on after funnel, 1 mm thick, 1 mm apart, top band 2 mm from funnel top. Two ships should be selected as Divisional leaders—these should carry one red 1 mm band 2 mm from top of forefunnel. *Hardy* needs leader's black top to forefunnel to a depth of 3 mm.

A final touch of authenticity. As the Flotilla served in the Mediterranean during the Spanish Civil War, each ship can carry 'neutrality' British national markings. These were equal bands of red, white and blue (red fore-

most) on 'B' gunshields. This, however, is optional as these colours were not carried throughout the full period of their Mediterranean service.

Cement anchors to hull halves then paint all parts individually. When grey, green and red painting is completed add the black water lines while the hull halves are still uncemented. Then pennant numbers to the hull sides. A far neater finish is possible this way. Add funnel bands before funnels are cemented in place for the same reason. Black funnel tops and lower foremasts; complete assembly—bearing in mind the twin 'B' mounting in *Hereward*—and finish with stern pennant numbers and navigation side lights.

Reposition whalers beneath *Hardy's* bridge wings—use the whalers' davits shorn of their base pegs and apply a touch of cement to the superstructure to secure the davits. Reposition *Hardy's* machine guns on bridge wings and cement tripod foremast legs in place.

**NB:** 2nd Flotilla boats were light grey overall, gun barrels were light grey and so were all mainmasts.

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