

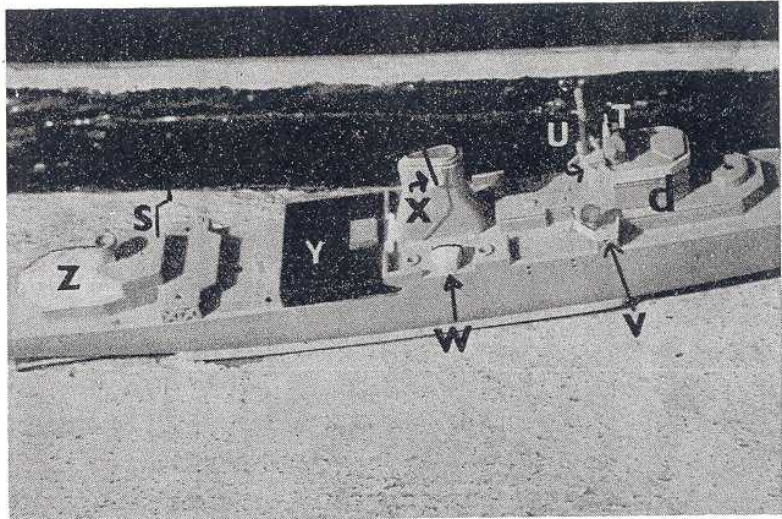
'Ajax' cruiser con

THOUGH the *Leander* class cruisers were not subjected to the drastic reconstructions of some other warships, all the ships in the class had the usual wartime alterations to improve their AA armament, add radar, and generally bring them up to date. Typical modifications were made to *Ajax* herself and to *Achilles*—now the Indian Navy ship *Delhi*—which are the subjects of this month's conversions.

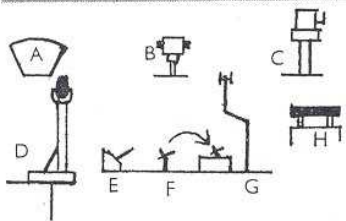
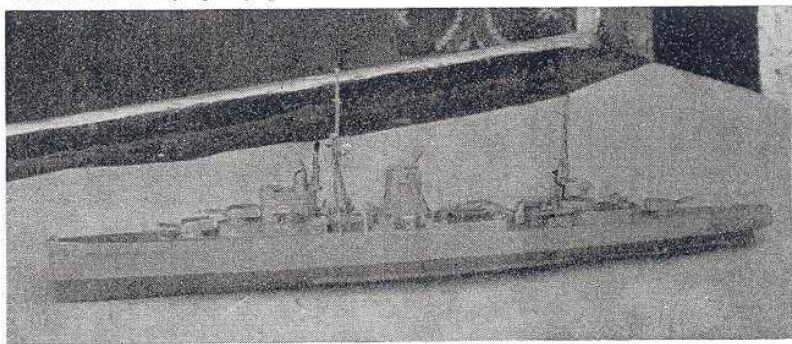
Briefly, I have chosen these two models from something like a dozen possible variations on the *Leander* class theme. All these vessels differed from each other in detail, and there would be no reason why the enthusiast shouldn't make up the whole class from the basic Airfix kit. All the necessary alterations for the two models shown here are given under the pictures. I have actually made *INS Delhi* rather than *Achilles* but, if you want *Achilles* in the 1944-45 period, just follow the instructions, fitting quadruple pom-poms instead of the twin Bofors mounts.

Achilles had a flying deck above the torpedo tubes, but the tubes were removed by the Indian Navy a few years back and the resulting space was plated over, giving a much longer line to the fo'c's'le. My model shows this, but for *Achilles* mount the tubes as usual and leave off the side plating. These points apart, *Delhi* has not altered much since World War 2. Even the search radar aerial on the tall pylon dates from 1944, and on the model is taken from a *Tiger* kit and mounted on a Sherman kit gun barrel (left over from a conversion) to a height of 12 mm. *Delhi* is now painted the usual light grey, but as *Achilles* in 1944 she was very light grey all over, with a rectangular blue panel reaching half way up the sides and stretching from the forward edge of A turret to the after edge of Y turret on each side.

For *Achilles* at the time of the River Plate action, look at the prototype picture. At this period she differed very little from *Ajax*, and in this condition she would make an excellent 'companion' model for anyone building up a 'River Plate' set. Main points of difference include the absence of a bulwark on the starboard side of the main deck abreast the catapult, the flying deck already mentioned, and the square cutaways forward of the torpedo tubes. In *HMS Ajax* these are angled.



Above: *Delhi* model under construction; study this picture in conjunction with the lettered key below. Z—Saw off X turret barrette. Cover X gun deck with thin card. Discard X turret. Y—Saw off the catapult mounting from the midship deckhouse. Then cover this whole structure with a flying deck 20 mm x 27 mm. For *Achilles* or *Delhi*, pre-1958, mount torpedo tubes and square-off fo'c's'le break. *Delhi*, post-1958, plate in sides. X—For *Achilles* mount searchlight platforms on funnel. For *Delhi* omit S/L platforms and plug locating slots. Add maintenance platforms, W/T aeriels, and steam pipes from fuse wire. W—Add deckhouse between 4 in guns each side. See drawings for shape. V—Add directors for 4 in guns in each lower bridge wing. Add bulwarks round platforms with paper strip. U—Add parabolic aerial to high pylon and mount this to overhang rear bridge on a scrap plastic platform. T—Add radar aerial to director control tower. S—Galley smokestack is distinctive on this ship. Fit as shown. D—Strips to represent deeper wind baffles in *Delhi*. **Below:** *INS Delhi* model. Twin Bofors mounts are sited on X gun deck and each side of flying deck. Also two single mounts are sited each side of bridge at B gun deck level. Note Carley life-raft positions and addition of tripod legs to mainmast (aft).



Key to drawings: A—Deck house between 4 in guns. Make depth 4 mm. B—High angle director for 4 in guns. C—Warning surface radar aerial for *Ajax*. D—Parabolic W/S radar aerial for *Achilles*/*Delhi*. E—Twin Bofors mount. Use *Tiger* life-raft pack or half of quad Bofors mount from *Nelson* kit. For *Delhi* only. F—Oerlikon 20 mm mounting. Can be represented by m/gs from kit with four barrels removed; or use squares of scrap plastic to represent covered weapon. G—Galley smokestack for *Achilles*/*Delhi*. J—Warning air radar aerial. Fit at each masthead. K—Later pattern W/A aerial for *Delhi*. All full size.

versions

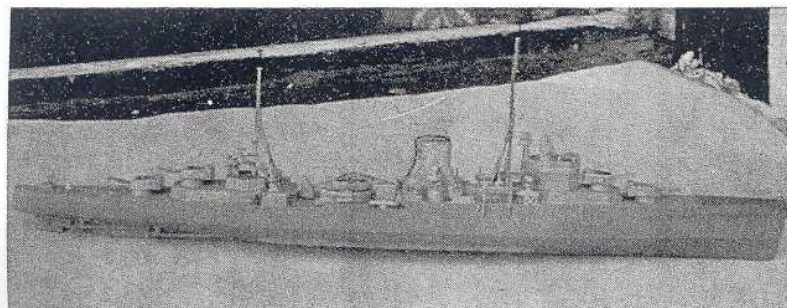
The rangefinders and searchlights are sited in the lower bridge wings, as in *Ajax*, but there is a high angle director abaft the main director. On the model, you could use one of the HA directors from the *Warspite* kit, or you could use one from *Tiger* with the radar aerial and vision blister removed.

Ajax, as she appeared in 1944, was much more cluttered than she appears in the Airfix kit. Points to watch, shown in the pictures, include the tripod legs added to the mast—taken from a *Suffolk* kit in this instance—the pom-poms on each side aft of the crane, and the boats stowed in the former catapult position. I took the quadruple pom-poms from *Cossack* kits, but if you don't have these available I suggest that you make up these mountings from scratch in balsa or scrap plastic. Use the *Cossack* mounting as a pattern.

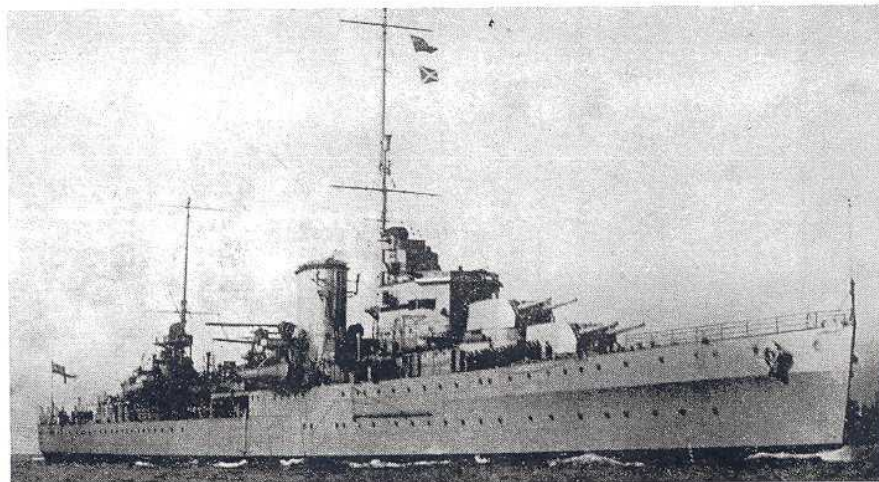
The Carley life-rafts on the sides and top of each turret were also distinctive in *Ajax*. I took these from a *Suffolk* kit, which is being converted for a future article. In fact, I would commend newcomers to warship modelling to buy one or two kits purely for cannibalisation. Models like *HMS Suffolk* are worth their weight in spare parts, if not in gold. One final point about *Ajax* is that she was finished in a dark grey hull with light grey upperworks. This was a standard pattern for Mediterranean Fleet ships at this period.

Photographs of *Leander* and *Orion* of this class appear in Ian Allan's book 'Warships of World War 2' which I commend to anyone interested in reading more about the 'Leander' class.

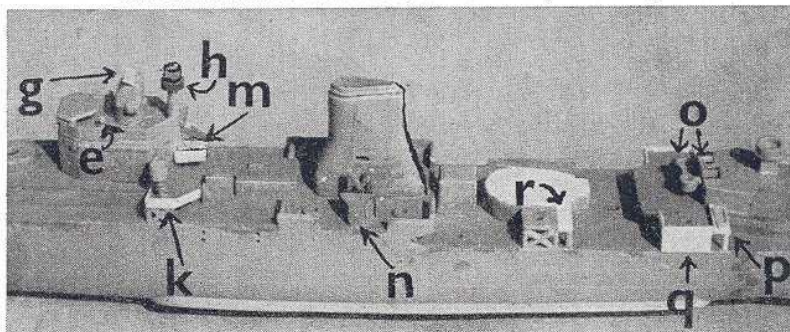
The *Ajax* conversion almost complete. Oerlikon AA mountings are fitted in the various platforms aft. Note the use of the spare part 69 from the *Delhi* conversion. Quadruple pom-poms are fitted in the wings of the after platform; two Oerlikons are mounted right aft inside a square gun position, also a feature of *Achilles* in 1944-45. Boat stowage differs from *Achilles*. Seaboats (58, 59) are turned in as supplied in kit. At sea they would be hanging out over ship's side; this can be done by reversing the davits if desired.



November, 1965



Above: *HMS Achilles* in 1939 still carried an aircraft and catapult. Note how the hull side differs from *Ajax* amidships. Some of the details in this picture—such as the booms and crow's-nest—can be incorporated in the Airfix model. (Photo: Real Photographs Ltd, Southport). Below: *Ajax* model under conversion to her wartime (1944) condition. Follow the letters for details. R—Saw off catapult mounting and cover midship deck house roof. Then extend port wing 2 mm aft. Q—Add bulwarks round wings of after platform, and cover girder supports. P—Add sloping Carley raft skids with girder supports, all from card or styrene sheet. O—Cut part 69 in half and cement as shown. N—Add deckhouse between 4 in mountings on each side. M—Add extra hut at this position. K—Build bulwarks round lower bridge platform and fit HA directors. H—Cut warning surface radar cover from Biro tube. Add a platform and mount on pylon. G—Add radar aerial to main director. E—Searchlights on bridge.



AIRCRAFT MARKINGS

PROFILE publications have stepped up their output of aircraft subjects to six each month. These interesting and informative booklets are of immeasurable value as a source of reference for markings and specification details.

Recent releases include: Fokker D VII, DH4, Boeing F4B-4, Macchi C202, Ju 88A, Super Sabre, Sopwith Camel, Wapiti, Gamecock, Battle, Curtiss P-40, SAAB J-29, Curtiss JN4, Fokker E III, Supermarine S4-6B, Bf 109E, Spitfire I and II, and FJ Fury.

Each booklet sells for 2s, and can be obtained at model shops, newsagents, or direct from the publishers at PO Box 26, 1A North Street, Leatherhead, Surrey.