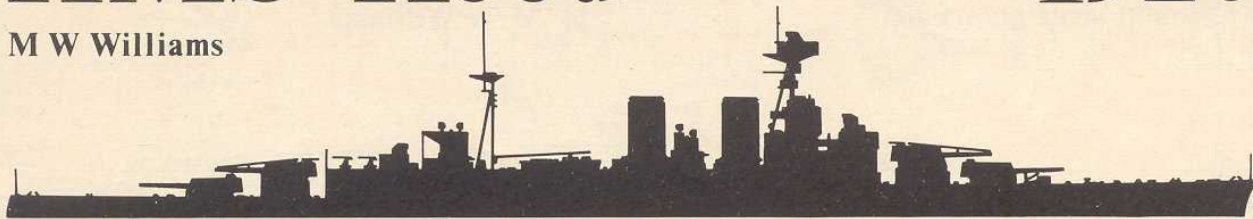


HMS Hood

1920

M W Williams



M W Williams demonstrates an easy 1:600 scale conversion

Introduction

Every naval enthusiast knows of the 'Mighty Hood', and her long service in the Royal Navy; she was the largest, longest and the most powerful of the fleet's battlecruisers and one of the greatest capital ships to equip any navy, and due to the various inter-war naval limitation treaties, (implemented just after the Hood's completion, limiting the size of future ships), she retained these distinctions throughout most of her long career.

She had a very active history, one which has been well recorded and covered in great detail in numerous books, magazines and profiles on her. If you would like to read about her history and construction, the best biographical reference, in my opinion, is Ernle Bradford's *The Mighty Hood*, which covers her career in a very informative and readable style, with Maurice Northcott's *Hood design and construction* providing a good technical background to this particular subject.

With all this coverage of her history already well documented, this article and others to follow in the coming year, will deal with the Hood's life from a different aspect. They will concentrate on the Hood's changing appearance, at different times in her career. The Hood was never subjected to a large reconstruction like the one the five 'Queen Elizabeth' class battleships had in the late 1920s, or the even greater modernisation carried out to three of them in the late 1930s and early 1940s. The Hood retained throughout her life the same majestic superstructure, twin funnel arrangement on a long low sleek hull and what changes there were did not detract from this basic design. There was only the addition and removal of fittings and equipment, around this set layout during these years, and it is on these details that these articles will concentrate for a reasonably easy conversion of the Airfix 1:600 Hood.

A number of models already exist of the Hood, the Tamiya 1:700, Heller 1:400, Airfix 1:1200 and the Italaerei 1:720. The model I have chosen as the base for my project is certainly the oldest on the market, and perhaps lacking in some of the finer detail expected these days, but all in all she is still an accurate representation of the Hood of the early 1930s, and with a certain amount of scratch building and detailing described in these articles, a very pleasing HMS Hood of the period can be built.

The Conversion

The object of this conversion is to add detail to the existing models and to supply information on new scratch built items, through a set of full-size drawings, to finally alter the Hood into her 1920 appearance.

Since I believe that in conversion articles one picture is worth a hundred words, these drawings will form the main part of outlining the work necessary in this conversion, with the text describing and clarifying the individual assembly sequence as laid out in the Airfix instruction sheet, in what I hope is finally an easy-to-follow format.

Over the years I have gathered together quite a spares box of 1:600 Airfix parts, through conversions, breakages etc. I can't expect someone tackling this conversion to have the same reserve of spares that I used for this project, so where I

have used an Airfix spare part, I will illustrate the part as a scratch-built item, to enable the conversion to be carried out as cheaply and conveniently as possible.

Assembly stage 1, deals with the four 15 inch gunhouses (turrets) and guns. Each of these units is an individual, differing in minor details from its companions, and for those not familiar with the arrangement of the armament, A is the foremost gunhouse, with B in the superimposed superfiring position above it. X is the aft superimposed unit with Y below it on the quarter deck. A has the rear tips of its rangefinder cut away, B has the forward flying off platform fitted and the rear of its gunhouse is cut down at the corners. X has the aft flying off platform, while Y is the only one to be constructed as intended, using filler to build up the light grey blast bags at the bases of the guns. This completes the section.

Assembly stage 2, is a very intricate conversion section, which if one looks at the drawings can be clearly seen, involving as it does a lot of rebuilding using 40 thou plastic card, in the enclosed forecastle deck (parts 3, 5 and 6), and the shelter deck (part 17) areas. One point to note here is that the covered forecastle deck was planked and should be painted before the shelter deck is positioned. (I found that some filing was required before it finally sat properly). The second armament of six 5.5 inch guns mounted amidships should be placed with 5 degrees of training off the bows, their normal stowage position, while the other four mountings forward, have 0 degrees training. When the modified shelter deck is positioned, some extra detail can be added to the forecastle deck area. This involves the two new bollards just forward of the rear 5.5 inch guns, with four vents and eight deck supports under the deck overhang, and finishing off the screens by adding some portholes and doors, (all shown in my artwork,) which will finally give this area that business like appearance expected in ship models these days.

The overall look of the model will be greatly enhanced by the addition of ventilators around the raised barbettes and conning tower (assembly stage 4) and providing overhanging tops to the numerous shelter deck engine room and boiler room vents, that are just moulded solid on the existing model.

The addition of four new scratch-built ladders, replacing those removed earlier, will be illustrated along with all the other items just mentioned, in the set of plans that show the before and after forecastle deck, including an elevation view of the new screens, with the modified shelter deck plan and separate ventilator top layout, completing this section.

Assembly stage 3, showing as it does the propellers, shafts and rudders, is the only section untouched by alterations in this conversion.

Assembly stages 4 and 5, deal with the bridge structure. I have grouped them together into one section, to approach this assembly as a complete unit in a lower level to spotting top detailed description, of the work involved.

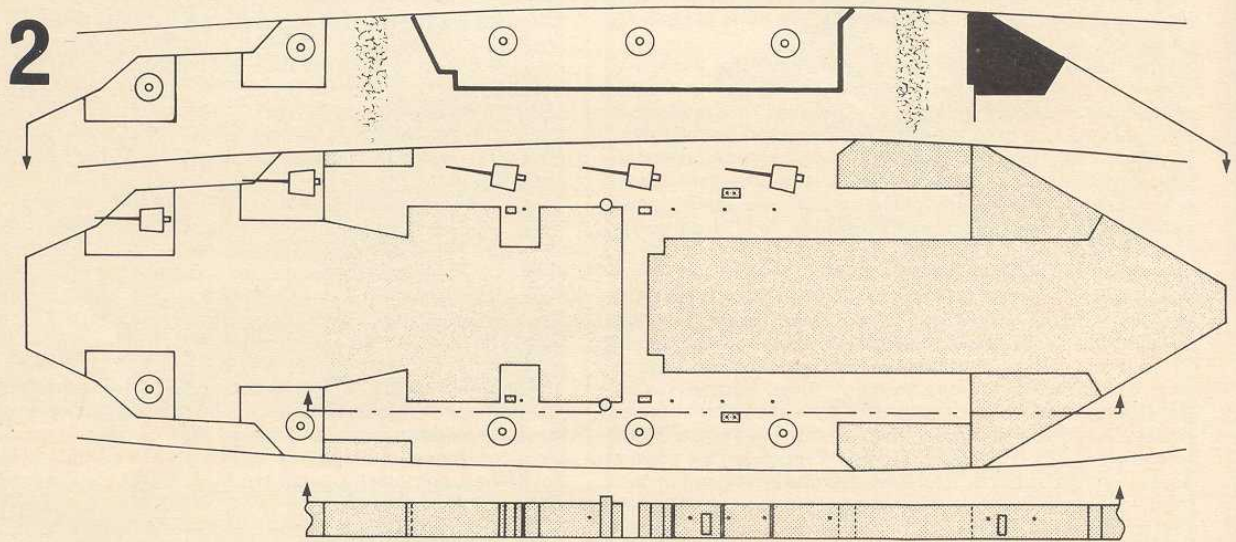
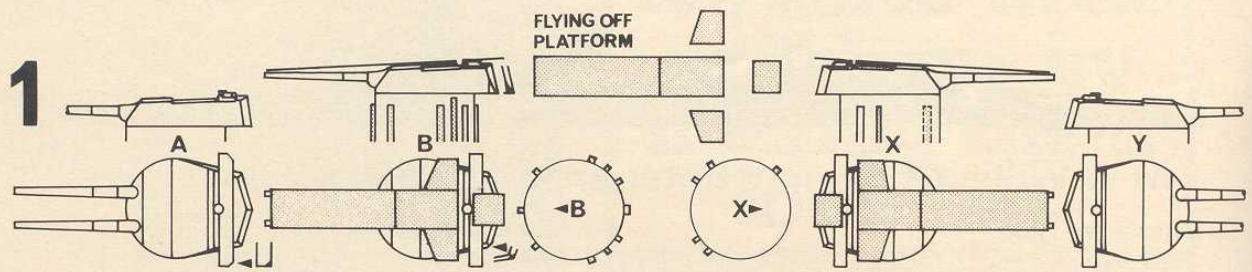
I will start with the Admiral's single platform (parts 89,90 and 91), which has two ventilators (1), and four 3 pounder Hotchkiss saluting guns (2), and an indication of the navigation lights is given by painting the small scratch parts (3), red for port and green for starboard.

The conning tower platform just has a vent (13), and the

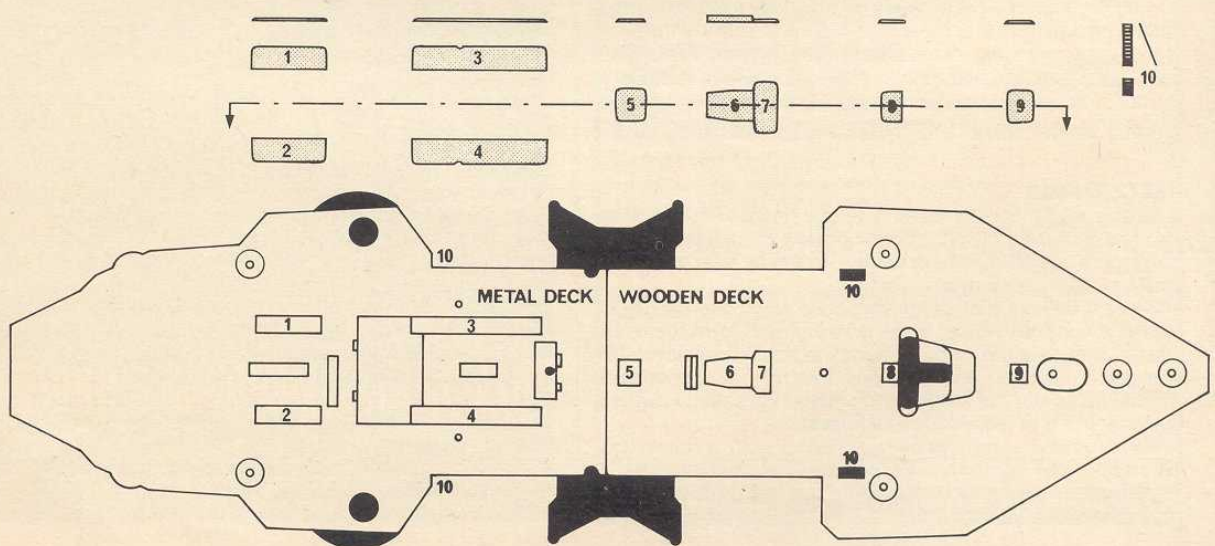
HMS Hood 1920

A 1-600 scale conversion

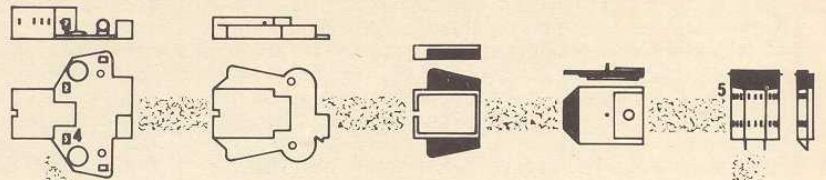
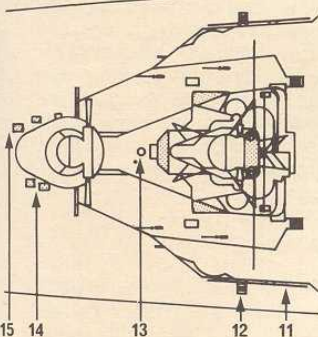
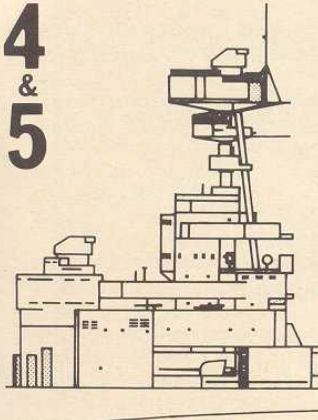
by M W Williams



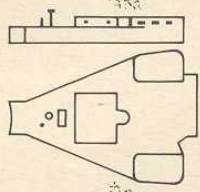
SCRATCH BUILT ITEMS
 AREAS TO BE REMOVED



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&
5



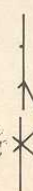
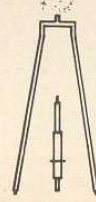
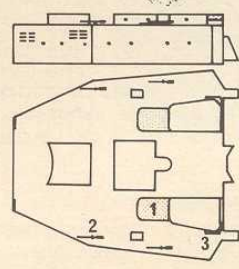
SEE THE TEXT FOR A DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE BRIDGE



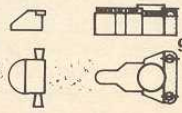
ACTUAL GRILL



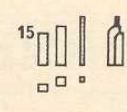
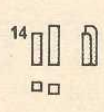
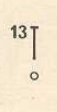
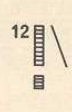
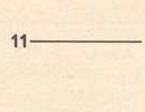
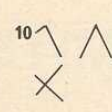
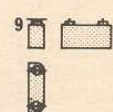
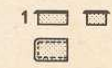
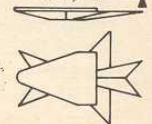
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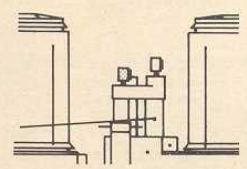
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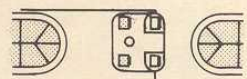
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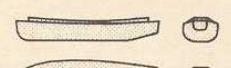
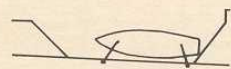
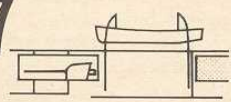
BOOM STOWED



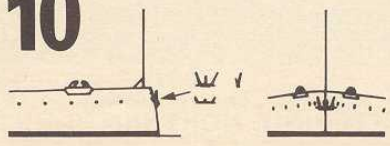
BOOM EXTENDED



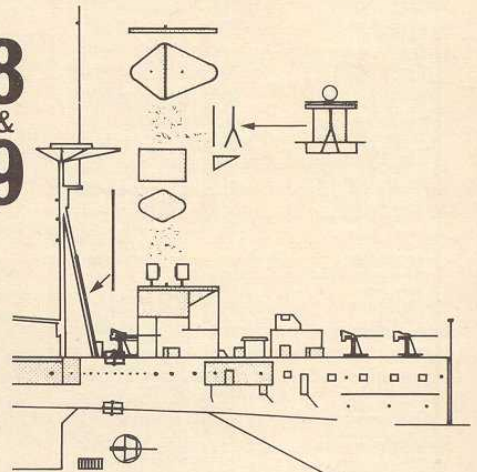
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&
9



EXHAUST

NIGHT LIFEBOUY

painting of a trio of prominent observation slits, on the submarine look-out position. Two additional 43 inch signalling searchlights (4), are required on the Admiral's bridge part 98.

The forebridge parts 99, 100, 101 and 102, require the removal of surplus material, (it should be emphasised that here, and in similar work throughout this conversion, great care and a sharp scalpel, should be employed so as not to mark or over cut the retained section), with new part (5), blanking off the cut down model part 102.

The 36 inch searchlight platform is untouched, but the torpedo look-out platform part 107, needs its wings removed, and the positioning of the two range clocks (7); instead there is a platform extension (6), with a new yard (8), at the rear.

The spotting top base, part 109, has to be cut back, to accommodate the added 9 foot range finders (9), to the secondary and main armament spotting position part 110. After the 15 foot director and foremast have been fitted, add the mast supports (10).

For the funnel grill I constructed a simplified version, just to represent the location of a grill on the model, but I have included a plan of the actual grill for those wishing to construct the complete frame. That only leaves some minor detailing of the surrounding bridge base, starting with a pair of booms (11), ladders (12), and a representation of the port and starboard side vents around the conning tower base (14) and (15), to finally complete the bridge area.

Assembly stage 6; this platform requires the addition of two 36 inch searchlights and two radio D/F booms. They can be either modelled in the stowed or extended position.

Assembly stage 7, is basically just a rearrangement of the ships boats, parts 72, 73, 74, 75, 76 and 77. The 32 foot cutters and davits are all moved forward to occupy the space vacated by the removal of the multiple Pom Pom, abreast the forward funnel, parts 55 and 56 are replaced by scratch-built stack of two boats, a 42 foot launch with a 36 foot pinnacle resting in the launch. Parts 48 and 49 are omitted and parts 80 and 83 from assembly stage 9 take their place.

Assembly stage 8; the upper portion of the after control

position, requires to be almost completely scratch-built, as shown.

Assembly stage 9; for the aft shelter deck, omit parts 52, 58, 78, 81 and 82, and fill in the old locating holes. Minor points to note here are that the after control position part 71 is moved to the forward end of its base; the mainmast support part 85, has a diesel exhaust attached to its port side leg; two night life buoys are scratch-built and fitted at the ship's side; a vent is placed at the extreme end of the shelter deck; two booms are placed just below the row of openings below the deck, and finally the addition of five prominent new lockers around the base of the torpedo control position completes this section.

Assembly stage 10, only requires the addition of a stern anchor, to be fitted to the hawse pipe moulded at the stern of the Airfix hood.

Assembly stage 11, HMS *Hood* at this time was virtually brand new and her finish should reflect this immaculate peace time appearance. She was painted overall in light grey and I used Humbrol authentic colour HN1, with the planked areas of the forecastle, rear shelter and quarter decks, deck bleached teak HN4. The metallised decks of the bridge and forward shelter decks are dark grey HN2, with black HN6 for the funnel top and grill, and the waterline boot topping, with the submerged hull overall hull red HN5, finishing off the main painting. The minor items such as the ships boats, searchlights and deck fittings are dealt with in the usual way, with the two flying off platforms MC24 natural wood, completing this section and the model.

Conclusion

Future articles will deal with the *Hood* as she was in the early 1930s with a temporary aircraft and catapult installation, then followed by her final appearance in May 1941 in her battle with the Bismark in the Denmark Strait, with an investigation into her proposed 1942-45 extensive modernisation. This will conclude this series on what was undeniably one of the Royal Navy's most famous and well remembered capital ships.