

AIRFIX AFLOAT

How to convert 1:600th scale kits into waterline models

FOR centuries, model shipwrights around the world have traditionally expressed their love for things nautical by creating replicas of complete ships, from the base of the keel to the top of the mizzen-mast. These miniature works of art can be seen in museums in any civilised country and are almost always displayed safely ensconced in oversized glass cases that keep them secure from the inevitable probing of curious spectators.

In more recent times, the advent of the plastic kit phenomenon continued this tradition by designing models for public consumption with essentially the same concept in mind. Almost all plastic ship models have been issued with the complete hull included integral with the superstructure and containing some variety of suitable support structure to ensure that the finished model could be appropriately displayed. One cannot avoid the image of the meticulously detailed and rigged sailing vessel as an almost essential element to the decor of a properly appointed lounge in a private home. It surely must be the single most valid rationale for modern plastic kit manufacturers for perpetuating this tried and true technique.

HMS Hood completed as a waterline model.

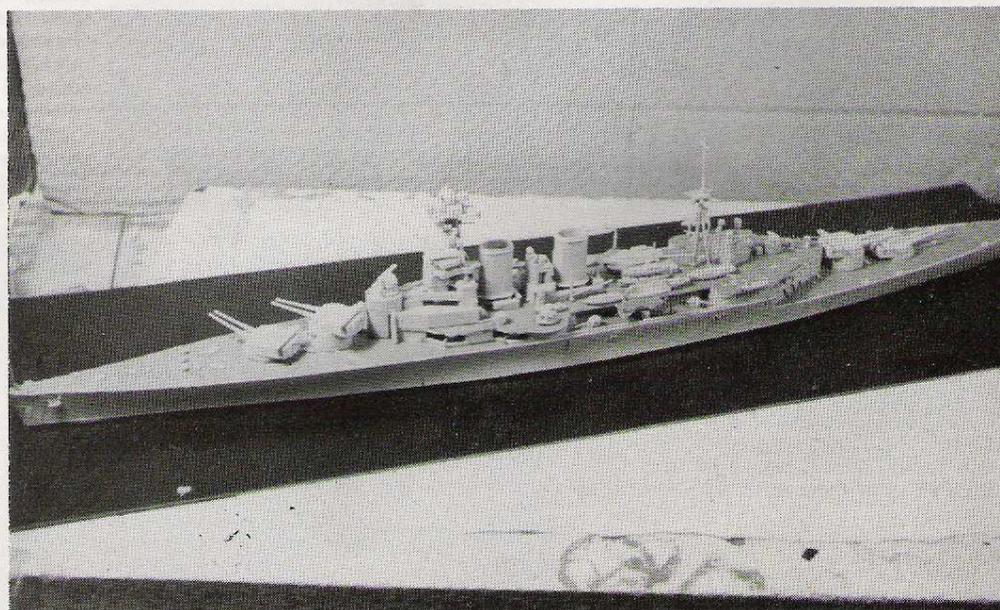
The German battle cruiser Scharnhorst with the bottom of the hull removed.

of banding together four separate firms to undertake the monumental task of marketing a complete collection of all the ships in the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) of World War 2 were eventually agreed to. Perhaps even more impressive, they actually succeeded in achieving that goal.

WATERLINE SHIPS

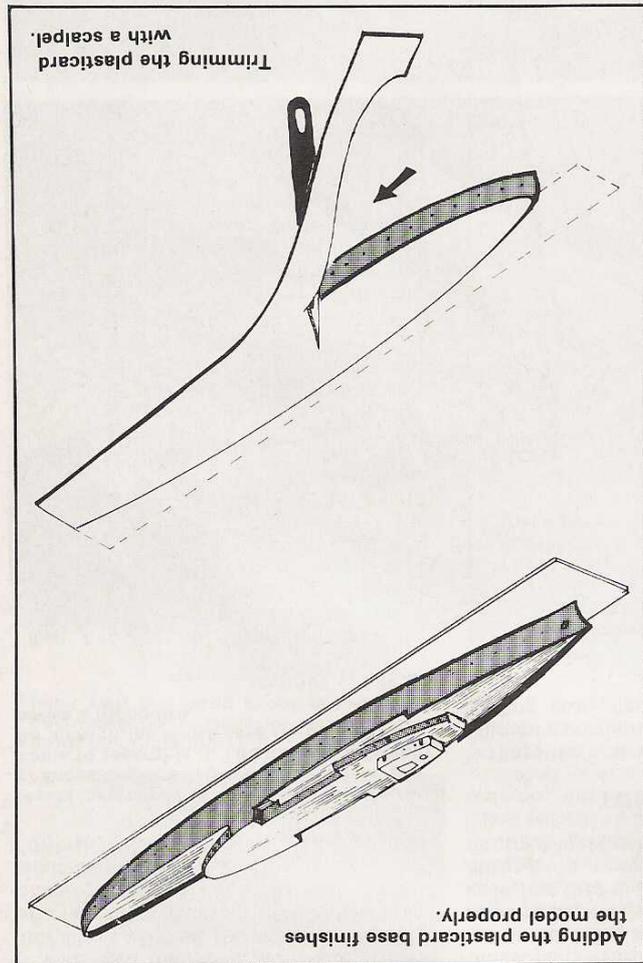
They eventually settled on a constant scale of 1:700th. This probably had something to do with the fact that in the USA during World War 2, the US Navy used a scale of 1:720

for ship identification models. Revell and Italeri have also continued this tradition with the inclusion of ship kits to this scale in their ranges of models. My guess is that the Japanese used this fact in their overall marketing strategy but 'metricised' it to 1:700th. The other significant feature of this project was that they were to produce this range of kits as 'waterline' models. Most of us landlubber modellers will never have an opportunity to see a full-sized warship under construction or in a drydock. Therefore, the image, of any given ship, contem-



more than once to achieve a deeper cut which is fairly consistent along the entire length of the hull. The next step is extremely simple. All it needs is for you to grip the top and bottom parts of the hull half on both sides of the score line with each hand and slowly apply the necessary force to break the plastic. The qualities of the plastic itself aid this process and it is much easier to achieve than it may at first seem.

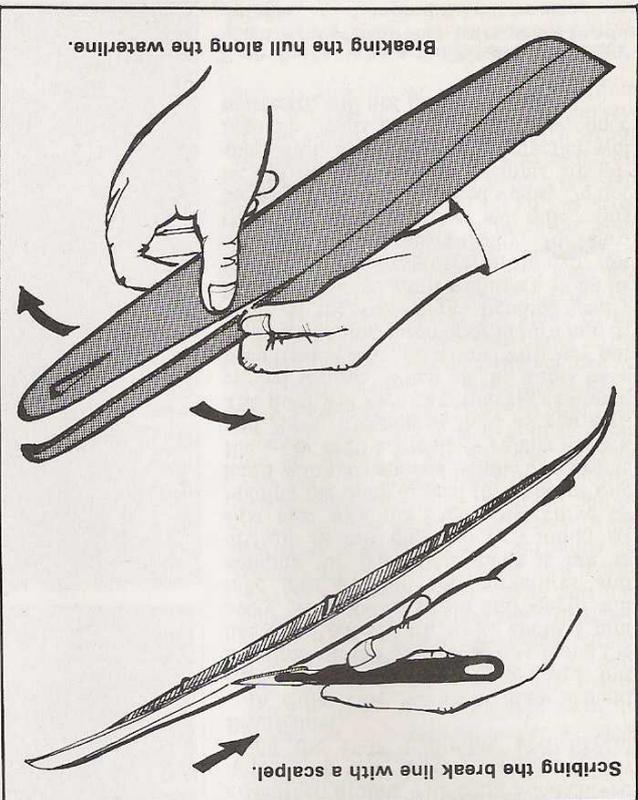
Repeat this chore for the other hull half and you are almost there. You may now glue the two hull halves together with whichever deck sections that are necessary to give this assembly some structural strength but do check the instructions for the correct sequence of operations at this time. Once this assembly has completely dried, it will now be possible to rub the base of the hull's waterline down on a marine architect's, J. W. Patterson



first step in converting your ship into a waterline model should be undertaken before construction begins. All one has to do is exercise a tiny bit of care and you can achieve instant good results. Select a sharp craft knife, such as a scalpel with a new blade installed, and slowly run it down the line which you deem to be appropriate for the waterline of one hull half. You may have some reservations about your own talent to accomplish this task, so if that is the case, you may choose to make this incision just below exactly where you decide the waterline should be. Final adjustments can then be made by rubbing the hull down on a sheet of Wet'n'Dry paper. Run the knife down this line and save you the trouble of masking and

ANOTHER OPTION

sheet of Wet'n'Dry paper.



The Airfix series of ship kits were into two parts is a 'score line'. The nature of polystyrene plastic lends itself well to this type of conversion procedure in that all it requires for a clean break to separate

THE KINDEST CUT

the ideal ship kit would have been issued with a break at the stern in order that the consumer just how simple it is to convert the diorama, this article will point out include our Airfix ship model in a moment of sea power or merely to illustrate impressions of the development of us who wish to show off our shelves as decorative pieces. For those of us who wish to display on mantles and kept producing ship kits that more traditional lines of thought full hulled variety and are therefore western world kept plodding along the pressive. They are, of course, of the kits themselves are still quite immature and resource permits and the re-releasing portions of this series as ships. At the present time, Airfix are merchant vessels as well as war-



HMS Hood with the plasticard base added.

made to a constant scale of 1:600th porary or historic, resides in our minds eye as existing only from the surface of the sea upwards.

This is reason enough for kits to be made as waterline models and surely this fact did not escape the clever minds of those responsible for the remarkable IJN series of kits themselves are still quite im-

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nautical efforts on glass shelves to il-

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ment of sea power or merely to in-

clude our Airfix ship model in a

diorama, this article will point out

just how simple it is to convert the

Airfix range into a waterline collec-

tion.

take his creation into his bath with

him, but that choice would perhaps

be better covered by a medical jour-

nal.

AIRFIX 1:600th SCALE SHIPS

The nature of polystyrene plastic

lends itself well to this type of con-

version procedure in that all it re-

quires for a clean break to separate

into two parts is a 'score line'. The