

SUZUYA 鈴谷

JAPAN HEAVY CRUISER

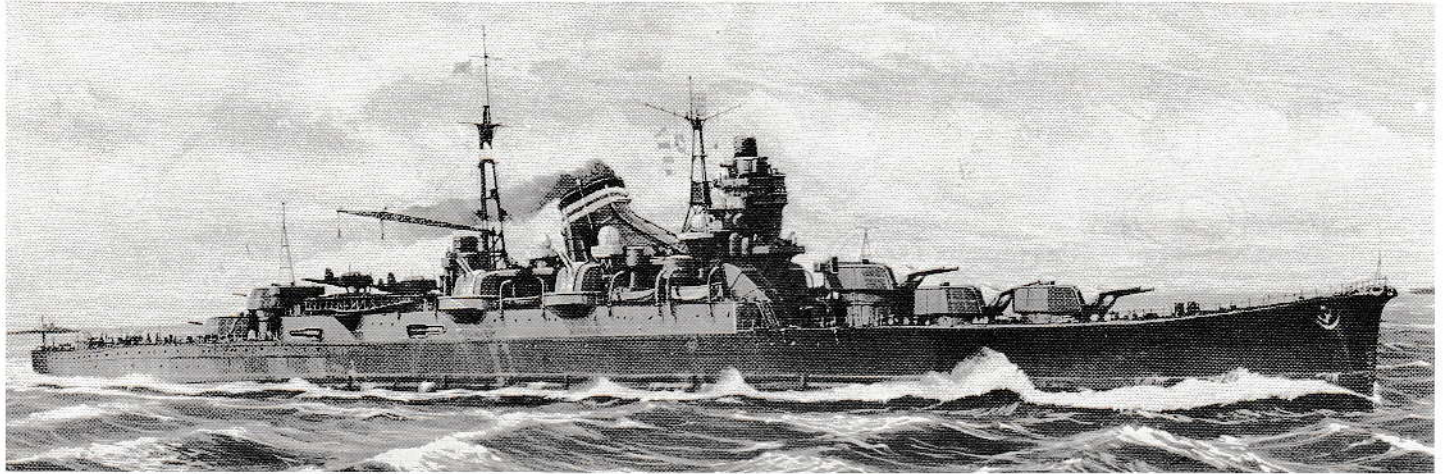


Illustration by Kihachiro Ueda

WATER LINE SERIES

Since the start of the Showa era (1926), Japan had tried to reinforce its naval force by adding series of heavy cruisers. By the latter half of 1932, its Navy boasted a squadron of these heavy cruisers, numbering twelve in all, of which the first series built were those of the Furutake type and the last, the Takao series. However, under the terms of the London Naval Reduction Treaty concluded in 1930, Japan was not allowed to have heavy cruisers armed with 20 cm guns any more. Under the circumstances, the Japanese Navy planned to build large-scale light cruisers instead to make up for lack of heavy ones. According to its plan, a light cruiser of this type would be armed with fifteen 15.5 cm guns and credited with a displacement in the range of 8,500 tons. It was clear from these specifications that the Navy aimed at a light cruiser well comparable and equal in actual performance to any heavy cruiser of a 10,000-ton class. And this was a light cruiser of the Mogami type that appeared later. (The cruisers of this type included the Mogami, the Mikuma, the Suzuya and the Kumano.) Special features of a Mogami-type light cruiser besides already stated above were the following:

① A light cruiser of this type was armed with the maximum armaments possible as allowed by the terms of the London Treaty. Firstly, it was equipped with fifteen main guns and twelve torpedo-tubes. In case of main guns, double gun turrets so far were replaced with triple gun turrets and torpedo-tubes, too,

were a series of triple tubes. Employment of triple form not only increased number of arms mounted but the offensive power as well. Also, its 12.7 cm AA guns numbered eight. Thus, in points of torpedo and anti-air armaments, too, a new cruiser was more powerful than a heavy cruiser of a 10,000-ton class.

② Bridge was arranged in a compact form. Since bridge of a heavy cruiser of the Takao type (the Takao series includes the Takao, the Atago, the Maya, and the Chokai) was obviously too big, the Kure Naval Dockyard assigned to the task of building a new ship tried hard to design a more compact bridge. The dockyard built a wooden bridge model to actual size and scrutinized the model in every way and under all tests. Thanks to this strenuous effort, the bridge completed was endowed not only with desired compactness but also the most practical construction ever produced for the Japanese Navy.

③ Full consideration was taken to minimize the enemy shell effect. As a result, shell-proof performance was much more improved than that of a Takao-type heavy cruiser. Underwater defence performance was greatly increased while horizontal defence was also improved with adoption of a concentrated defence system.

④ To attain a high speed reaching up to 37 knots, an engine with the same horse-power as that of the battleship, "Yamato", was equipped. Horse-power of the latter's engine was the largest the world had ever known up to then. (The Mogami, the first one built of this light cruiser series was completed in 1935 but found defective in its design at the first official test running. Hull was reinforced and further measures were taken to effect much better stability. As a result, its standard displacement was increased and speed attained was below expectation.)

⑤ All efforts were made to reduce the ship's weight. Through-

going measures employed for the purpose were apparent all over the ship including hull, engine, and armaments. To cite some examples, electric welding was extensively used while high tension special steels (the so-called, "DS steels") credited with superior performance were used for all the armour materials.

⑥ Various improvements were made to better living conditions. Firstly, ventilation system was much improved and designed anew to serve as a clearing duct for permeating poisoned gas as well. Secondly, sailors' hammocks customary in the Japanese warships up to that time, were replaced with beds made of steelpipes after the model of the U.S. Navy. And lastly, use of timbers in the ship were held down to a minimum while wooden furnitures were replaced with steel-plate ones to improve the ship's fire-proof performance.

The Suzuya was constructed as the third ship of the Mogami series. But while still under construction, the London Treaty was lost its validity and the Suzuya was remodelled immediately after completion. The remodelled Suzuya was mounted with ten 20 cm double guns replacing the former fifteen 15.5 cm triple guns and began its new life as a heavy cruiser.

At the outbreak of the Pacific war, the Suzuya participated in the capture operation of the Malay peninsula. It also took part in the famous Midway Sea Battle together with three others of its type — the Mogami, the Mikuma and the Kumano. It was active in the Sea Battle off the Mariana. In the Leyte Gulf Sea Battle, it fought with other warships of the Kurita Fleet as one of the latter's heavy cruiser squadron. However, during the Sea Battle off the Samar island on October 25, 1944, it caught a big fire and severely damaged under an air raid by the attack planes that took off from a U.S. escort carrier. The Suzuya, then, was torpedoed and sunk by a friendly destroyer.

PAINTING

Hulls of the Japanese warships had been consistently painted in the same deep grey with a slight blue-tinge for a long period extending from the end of 1903 when the colour was formally adopted for the purpose in anticipation of the Russo-Japanese War to the termination of the 2nd World War. The colour was called, "wartime painting colour" and is roughly the same as that of the present-day warships of the Japan Sea Self-Defence Force. However, there was one exception to this rule of painting, as aircraft-carriers were painted in light green in the late period of the latter war. Also, camouflage painting in dark grey alternately in light and shade was sometimes employed. The bottom portion of hull below the waterline was painted in maroon, a brownish crimson colour. Decks of destroyers and light cruiser were

covered with iron-plates painted in the same colour as that of hull. But decks of heavy cruisers were covered in three different ways: Some with iron-plates while others either linoleumed or boarded. In the latter two cases, decks were left unpainted. Decks of the battleships and flight decks of most carriers, too, were covered with board and not painted.

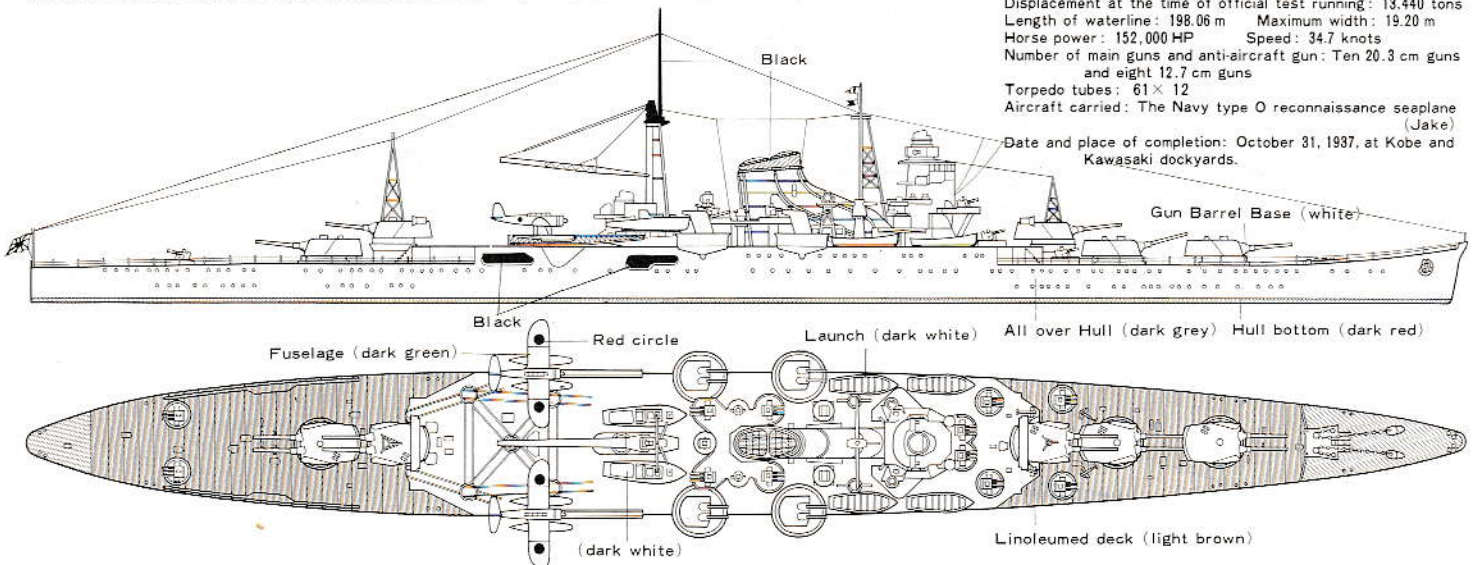
Going into details, it should be added that the funnel top was done in black while both sections of the tripod mast, too, in black in the same width, one rising 9 meter above the same level as that of the top-most of the funnel and the other descending below onto the level with the lower edge of the blackened portion of the funnel. As for the Imperial crest of the chrysanthemum, gun base and canvas cover of cutters, the first had better be

painted in gold colour, while the latter two, in white. At the stern, it used to be seen a brass-plate on which the name of the warships was clearly written in the Japanese cursive characters. However, this name-plate was painted out in the same colour as that of hull during the wartime. In case you want the name-plate as it was in peace-time, be sure not to have its letters start from right and not from left as in the English language. Lastly, all warships of the Japanese combined fleet had their tops and foremasts painted in white for sometime after the outbreak of the Pacific war to identify them

Essential Specifications

Standard displacement: 12,200 tons
 Displacement at the time of official test running: 13,440 tons
 Length of waterline: 198.06 m Maximum width: 19.20 m
 Horse power: 152,000 HP Speed: 34.7 knots
 Number of main guns and anti-aircraft gun: Ten 20.3 cm guns and eight 12.7 cm guns
 Torpedo tubes: 61 × 12
 Aircraft carried: The Navy type O reconnaissance seaplane (Jake)

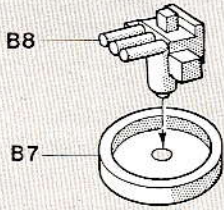
Date and place of completion: October 31, 1937, at Kobe and Kawasaki dockyards.



Above is the Name-plate to be used in the construction work as shown in Fig. 9.

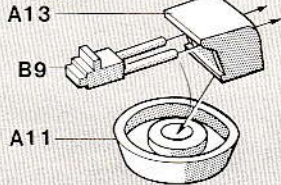
1 Construction of Triple Machine Gun

In all, six MGS of this type will have to be constructed.



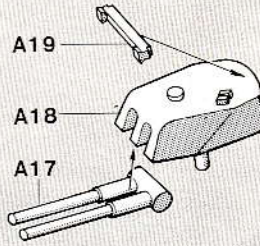
2 Construction of Anti-Aircraft Gun

In all, four AA Guns will have to be constructed.
 ★ See the underside of Parts, A11, well and glue Parts, A13 and B9, onto its surface. In so doing, remember the following: The completed four AA Guns will consist of two pairs, one with Parts, A13 and B9, facing in one direction and the other, in the opposite direction.



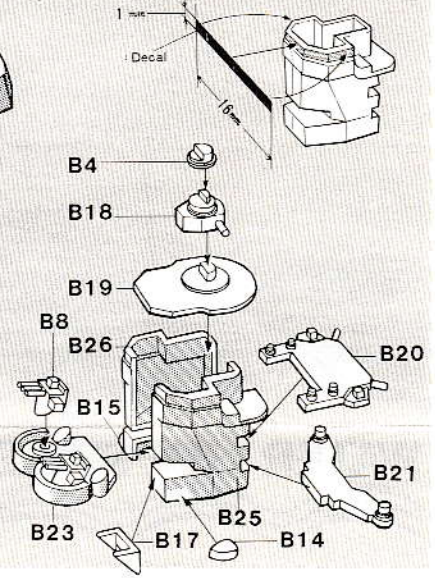
3 Construction of Main Gun

In all, five Main Guns will have to be constructed, of which two will be fixed with Parts, A19, while other three, without the latter.

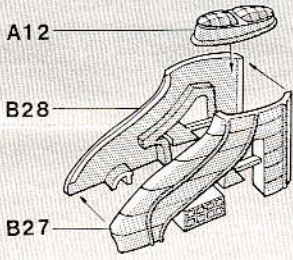


4 Construction of Bridge

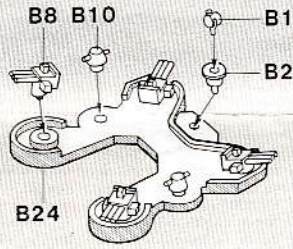
Start your construction work with gluing together of Parts, B25 and B26. Cut Sticker with the ground paper to measure as specified in the figure immediately below to paste it onto the shaded portion of Bridge.



5 Construction of Funnel

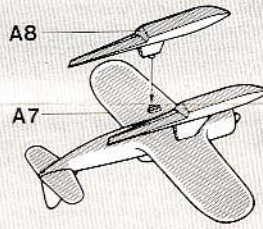


6 Fixing of Triple MG onto MG Turret



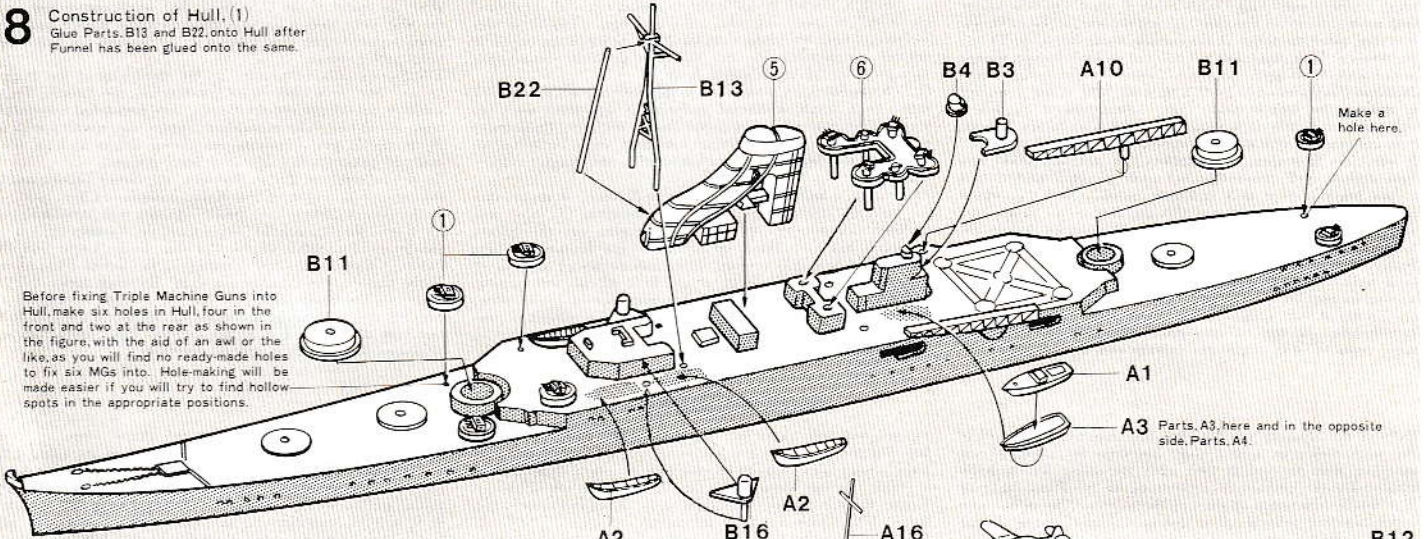
7 Construction of Aircraft

Parts, A5, A6, and A9, are not essential.



8 Construction of Hull. (1)

Glue Parts, B13 and B22, onto Hull after Funnel has been glued onto the same.



9 Construction of Hull. (2)

Glue Upper and Lower Hull portions together firmly with the aid of Scotch tapes.

★ Paste Name-plate cut off the ground paper onto the ground plate as shown in the figure right below.

