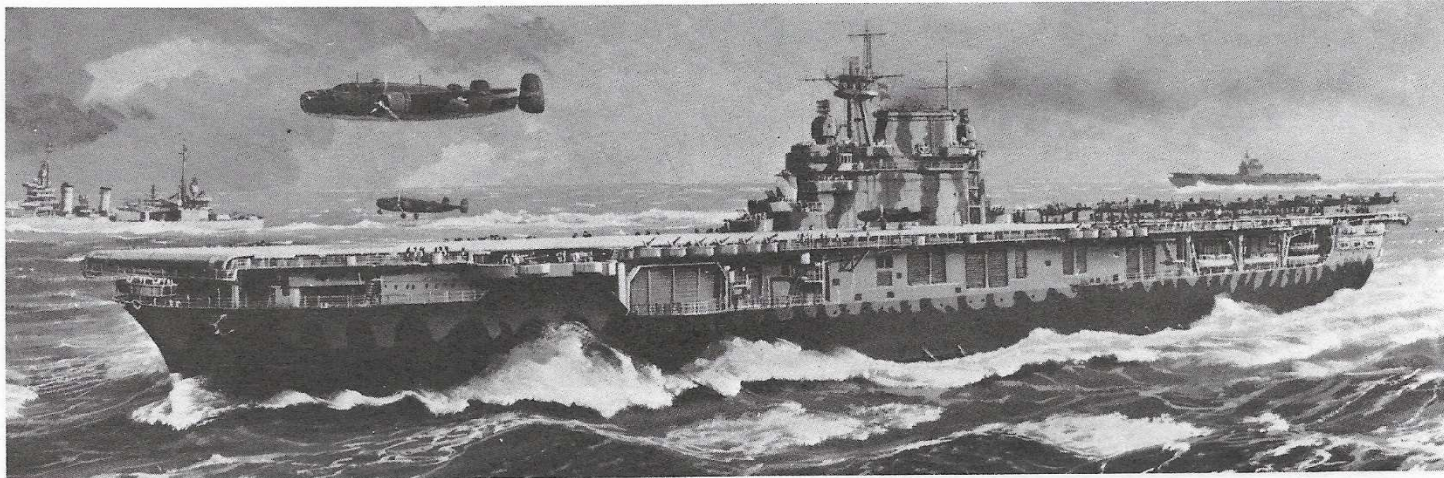


# HORNET

U.S. AIRCRAFT CARRIER

ITEM 77510



Illustrated by Kihachiro Ueda

## WATER LINE SERIES

### 《Aircraft Carrier USS Hornet (CV-8)》

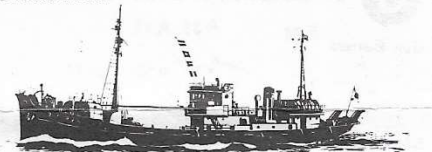
The date was April 18, 1942. Japan, which had achieved an impressive string of victories against the Allies in the Pacific, suddenly found itself under attack. As the eerie sound of air raid sirens filled the air, twin-engined bombers flew low over Tokyo, attacked their targets, and then disappeared into the western sky. The Japanese military soon realized that these were U.S. Army Air Force North American B-25 Mitchell medium bombers, but were at a loss as to where they had launched their attack from. After all, the B-25 was a land-based bomber that was not supposed to be capable of operating from aircraft carriers and there were also no American land bases from which it could reach Japan with its 2,100km range. When President Franklin D. Roosevelt announced this morale-boosting attack on Japan to the press, he famously stated that the aircraft had taken off from "Shangri-La," the mythical utopian valley described in British author James Hilton's novel *Lost Horizon*. In honor of this episode, the nineteenth Essex-class aircraft carrier built during WWII was christened as the USS *Shangri-La*. Thus the origin of this famous air raid remained a closely-guarded secret even in the United States. However, the mysterious base from which these B-25s took off was of course not a fictional valley, but the aircraft carrier *Hornet*.

USS *Hornet* (CV-8) was the U.S. Navy's eighth aircraft carrier and the third ship of the Yorktown-

class which was built under naval treaty limitations. These treaty-imposed restrictions had already lifted when construction on the *Hornet* began in 1939, but the fact that the Yorktown-class proved to be an excellent design coupled with the urgent need to finish the ship quickly led to the decision to base the *Hornet* on the existing Yorktown design rather than a completely new one, albeit with a number of improvements. Like her earlier sister ships, the USS *Yorktown* and USS *Enterprise*, *Hornet* was built at the Newport News Shipbuilding Company in Virginia, where she was completed in October 1941. The *Hornet's* hull was the same length as the previous Yorktown-class ships, but her flight deck was lengthened to 246.73m and her displacement was increased by 100 tons to about 20,000 tons. With such large hulls and spacious flight decks, the Yorktown-class offered impressive advantages in terms of efficiently conducting flight operations and aircraft carrying capacity. In fact, the *Hornet* could carry about 80-85 aircraft, which compared favorably to the Japanese Navy's larger Shokaku-class aircraft carriers. Her steam turbine propulsion system produced 120,000kW and enabled a top speed of 34 knots, which was slightly inferior to the Japanese Navy aircraft carrier *Hiryu*. *Hornet* also featured excellent protection against torpedoes despite being a carrier, although her anti-aircraft armament of only eight 5-inch (12.7cm) guns was a point of weakness.

At the outbreak of the war in the Pacific, *Hornet* was assigned to the U.S. Navy's Atlantic Fleet but she was soon transferred to bolster the Pacific Fleet's strength. On April 2, 1942, she embarked Lieutenant Colonel James Doolittle, his specially-trained group of Army Air Force airmen, and their sixteen B-25 bombers and set sail from San Francisco. *Hornet* and her accompanying ships rendezvoused with the *Enterprise's* group, which had sailed from Hawaii, on April 13th and the resulting two-carrier Task Force 16 then steamed toward Japan to launch a daring air raid. The original plan called for the B-25s to take off from the *Hornet* at a point about 640km from Tokyo and conduct their bombing attacks under the cover of darkness, but this plan was compromised due to unexpected early contact with Japanese patrol vessels. On April 18th, a Douglas SBD Dauntless bomber on scouting duty spotted a Japanese patrol vessel at 5:58AM. A similar vessel about 20km away from the U.S. Ships was sighted at 7:38AM while another, this time only 11km away, was sighted at 7:45AM. This last patrol vessel, the No.23 *Nitto Maru*, was sunk by gunfire from the light cruiser USS *Nashville* and air

23rd Nitto Maru



attack by aircraft from the *Enterprise*, but not before she had transmitted a warning message back to Japan. This incident caused the mission schedule to be drastically pushed forward. At 8:20AM, 320km further away from Japan than originally planned, Doolittle led the force of sixteen B-25s off from the *Hornet's* flight deck and they went on to successfully carry out their famous attack against various targets in Tokyo, Nagoya, and other Japanese cities.

The next major naval action in which the *Hornet* participated was the pivotal Battle of Midway on June 6, 1942. Her torpedo bomber squadron (VT-8), which consisted of fifteen Douglas TBD Devastator bombers, valiantly attacked the Japanese aircraft carriers but the slow, unescorted bombers were annihilated by intercepting Zero fighters. SBD Dauntlesses from her dive bomber squadron (VB-8) were part of the second attack wave and dropped bombs against the Japanese heavy cruisers *Tone* and *Chikuma*. In August 1942, *Hornet* relieved *Enterprise* in the South Pacific and provided cover for Allied forces which had landed at Guadalcanal before participating in what would become her final engagement, the Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands, on October 26th. During this battle, bombs from her SBD Dauntless dive bombers hit the Japanese heavy cruiser *Chikuma* and the aircraft carrier *Shokaku*, which left the latter so severely damaged that it was put out of action for the next nine months. However, *Hornet* herself was then subjected to fierce attacks by torpedo and dive bombers from the aircraft carriers *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku*, and was hit by two torpedoes, three bombs, and two Japanese dive bombers that crashed into her flight deck. Although she was placed under tow by the cruiser USS *Northampton* in an effort to save her, a subsequent attack by more Japanese torpedo bombers registered another hit and inevitably the order was given to abandon ship and scuttle her. Despite sustaining numerous hits by shells and torpedoes from U.S. destroyers, *Hornet* remained afloat as the U.S. fleet was forced to withdraw. Late that night, Japanese destroyers *Akigumo* and *Makigumo* finally sank her with torpedoes to bring an end to the *Hornet's* brief but historic 372-day combat career.

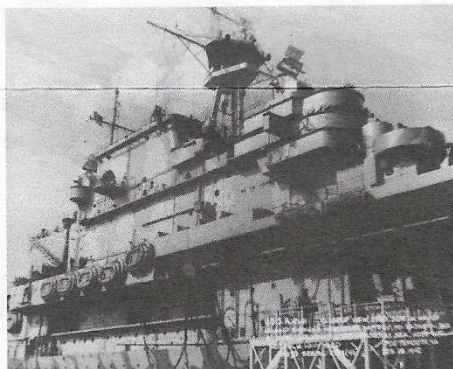
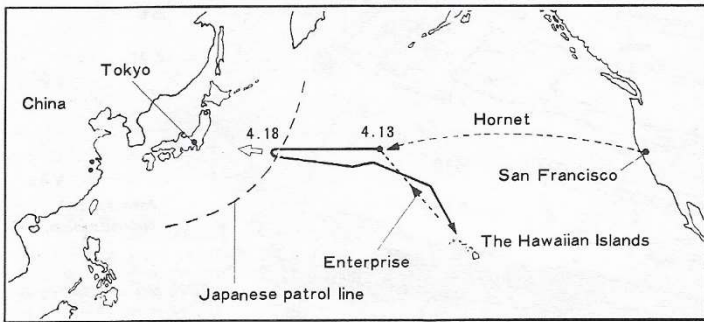


Photo from the National Archives, Washington D.C.



《The U.S. Task Force's Course of Attack》

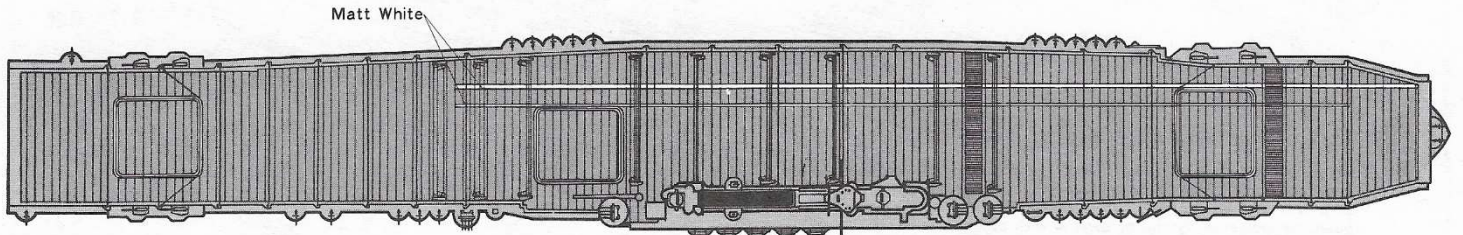
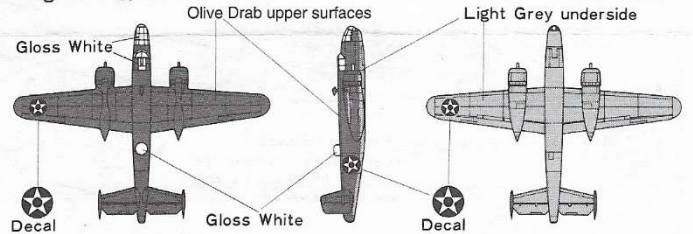
The Hornet did not sail alone on this famous mission, but was part of Task Force 16. The first group of this force departed from San Francisco and consisted of the Hornet; cruisers USS Northampton and USS Salt Lake City; destroyers USS Balch, USS Benham, USS Ellet, and USS Fanning; and the oiler USS Sabine. They rendezvoused with a second group from Pearl Harbor which consisted of the Enterprise; cruisers USS Nashville and USS Vincennes; destroyers USS Grayson, USS Gwin, USS Meredith, and USS Monssen; and the oiler USS Cimarron. This Task Force proceeded to a point 960km from Tokyo, at which the sixteen B-25s were launched, before withdrawing eastward at full speed. The B-25s hit targets in Tokyo, Yokohama, Nagoya, and Kobe before heading to China, but only one was able to land safely. The other fifteen aircraft either crash landed, ditched in the sea, or their crews were forced to bail out, with the crews of two aircraft captured by Japanese forces.

《North American B-25 Mitchell (Tokyo Raid)》

The B-25 Mitchell was the most successful of the twin-engine bombers produced by the U.S. and about 11,000 were built for use by various Allied air forces. Due to the extreme distances involved in the Doolittle Raid, the sixteen B-25s used were specially modified. Additional fuel tanks were installed in the bomb bay, tail gun position, and fuselage crawlway. Furthermore, ten five-gallon fuel cans (190 liters total) were placed in the rear of the fuselage and used to replenish the fuel tank in the tail gun position. These modified B-25s therefore had a total fuel capacity of 4,330 liters, 640 more than standard.

The deleted 50-caliber machine guns in the tail were replaced by wooden dummy barrels as a trick to deter any Japanese fighters which the bombers may encounter. In order to minimize the chances of the Japanese military detecting the attack, the radio was removed to prevent any communications which may be intercepted. Finally, the secret Norden bombsight was replaced by a simple sight so that this advanced system would not fall into Japanese hands.

Painting of B-25

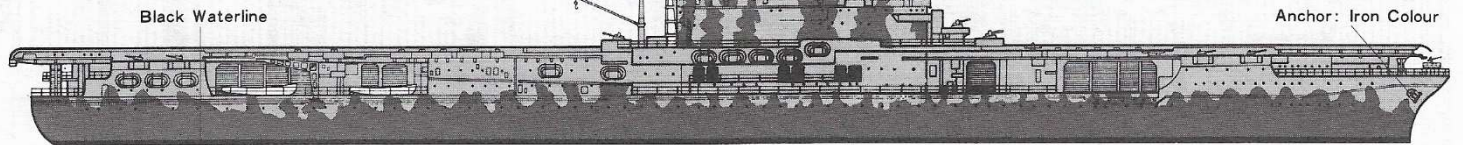


- Dark Grey
- Deck colour
- Light Grey

Funnel: Matt Black

Main Specification of Hornet

Standard displacement: 19,800 tons Beam: 83 feet  
 Overall length: 809.5 feet Height: 55 feet to flight deck Waterline length: 761 feet  
 Aircraft: 85 to 100  
 Armament(1942): 8-5 inch 38 cal. A.A. (single mounts)  
 16-1.1 inch M.G. A.A. (4 quad mounts)  
 23-20mm M.G. (single mounts)  
 Date of completion: Oct. 20, 1941  
 Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Co.,

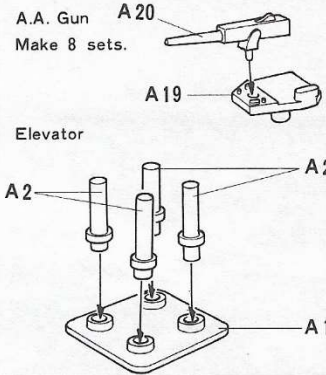


# HORNET ホーネット

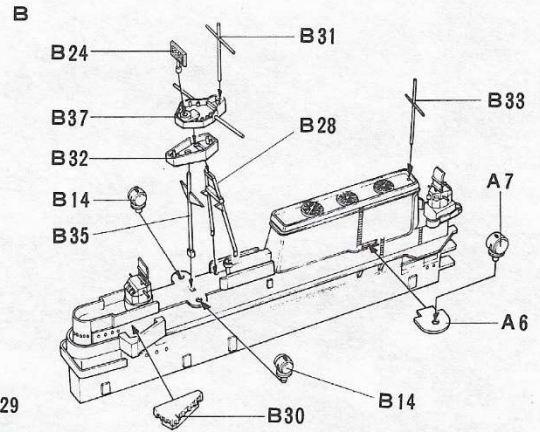
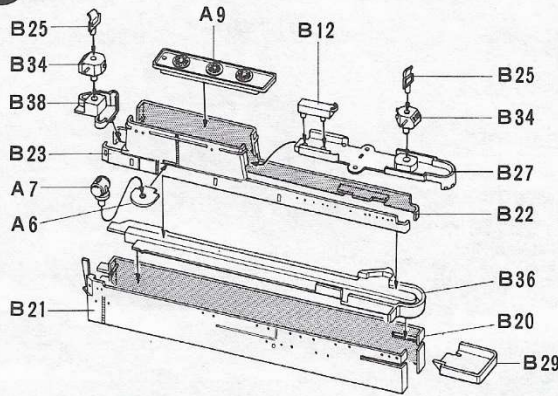
(Please read this before commencing assembly)  
 ★Do not break parts away from sprue, but cut off carefully with a pair of pliers. ★Apply cement to both parts to be joined. ★Use a pair of tweezers in assembling small parts.



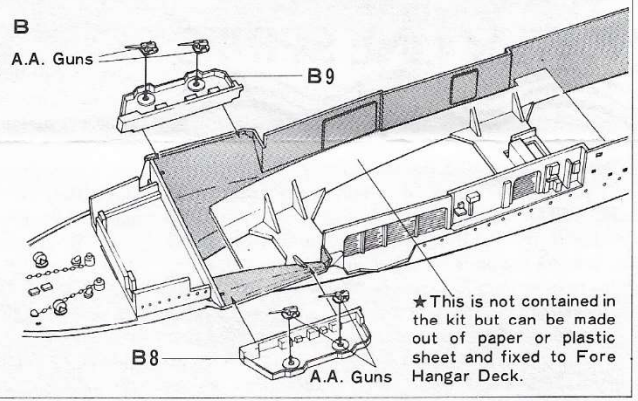
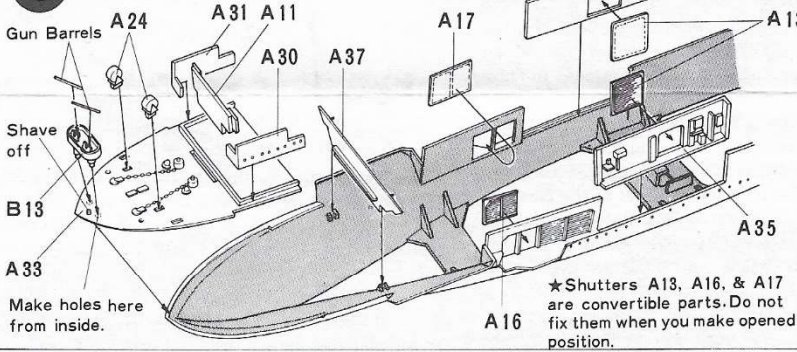
## 1 Construction of A.A. Guns & Elevator



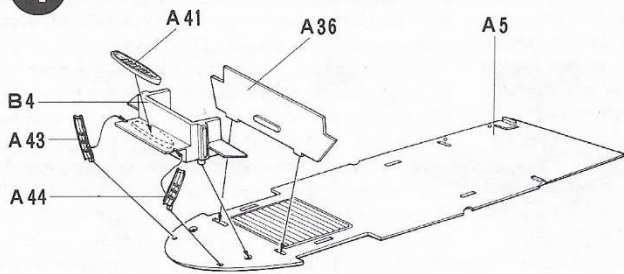
## 2 Construction of Bridge A



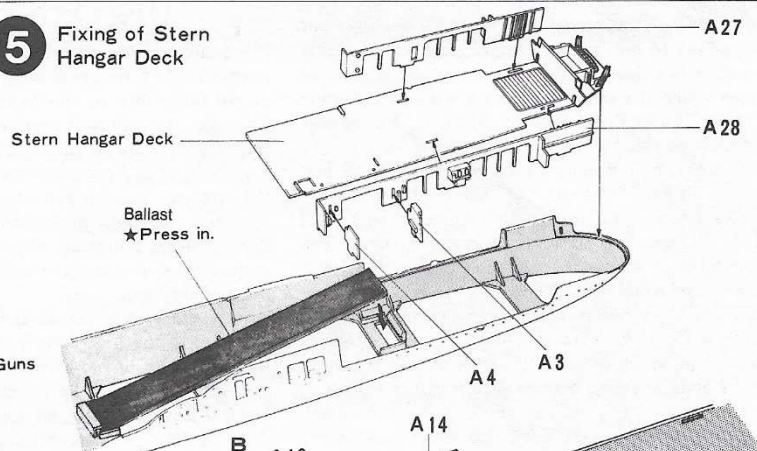
## 3 Construction of Bows A



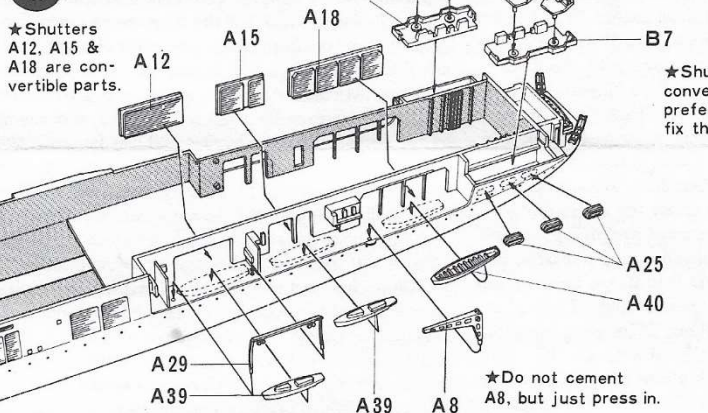
## 4 Construction of Stern Hangar Deck



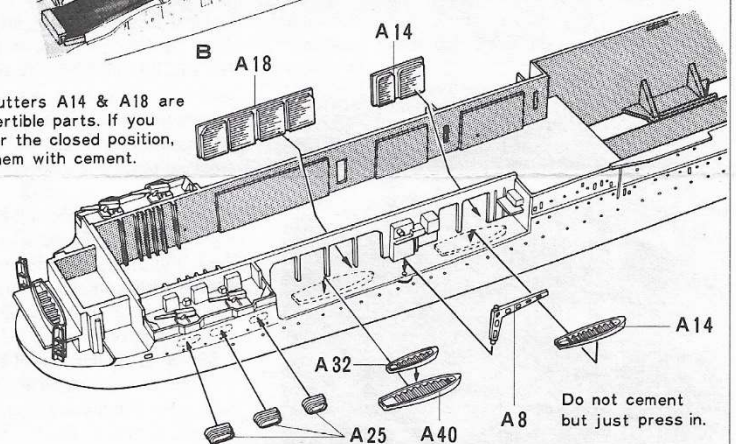
## 5 Fixing of Stern Hangar Deck

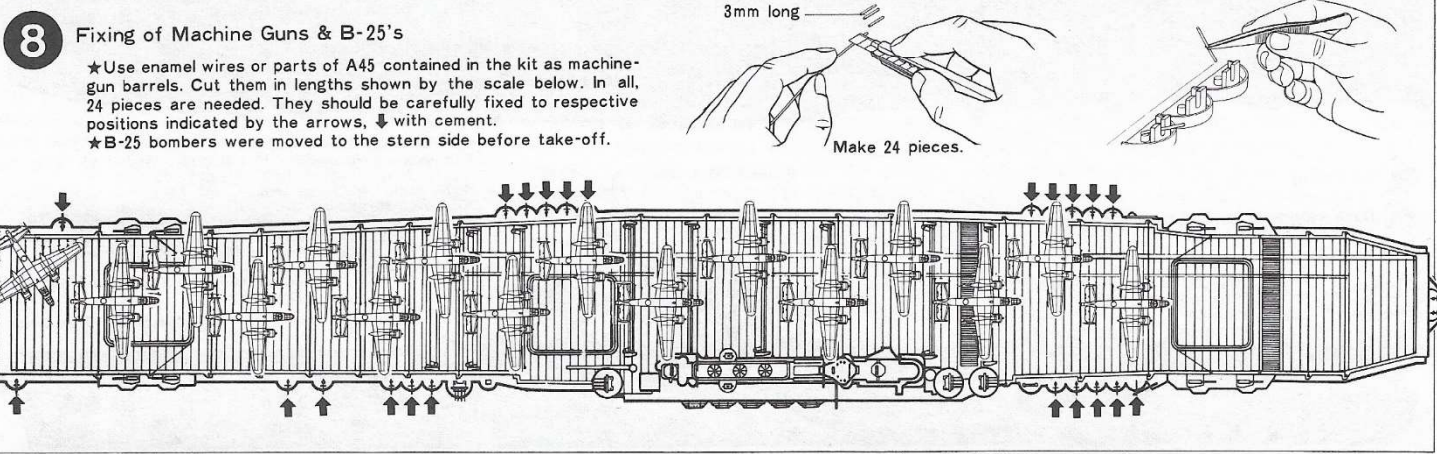
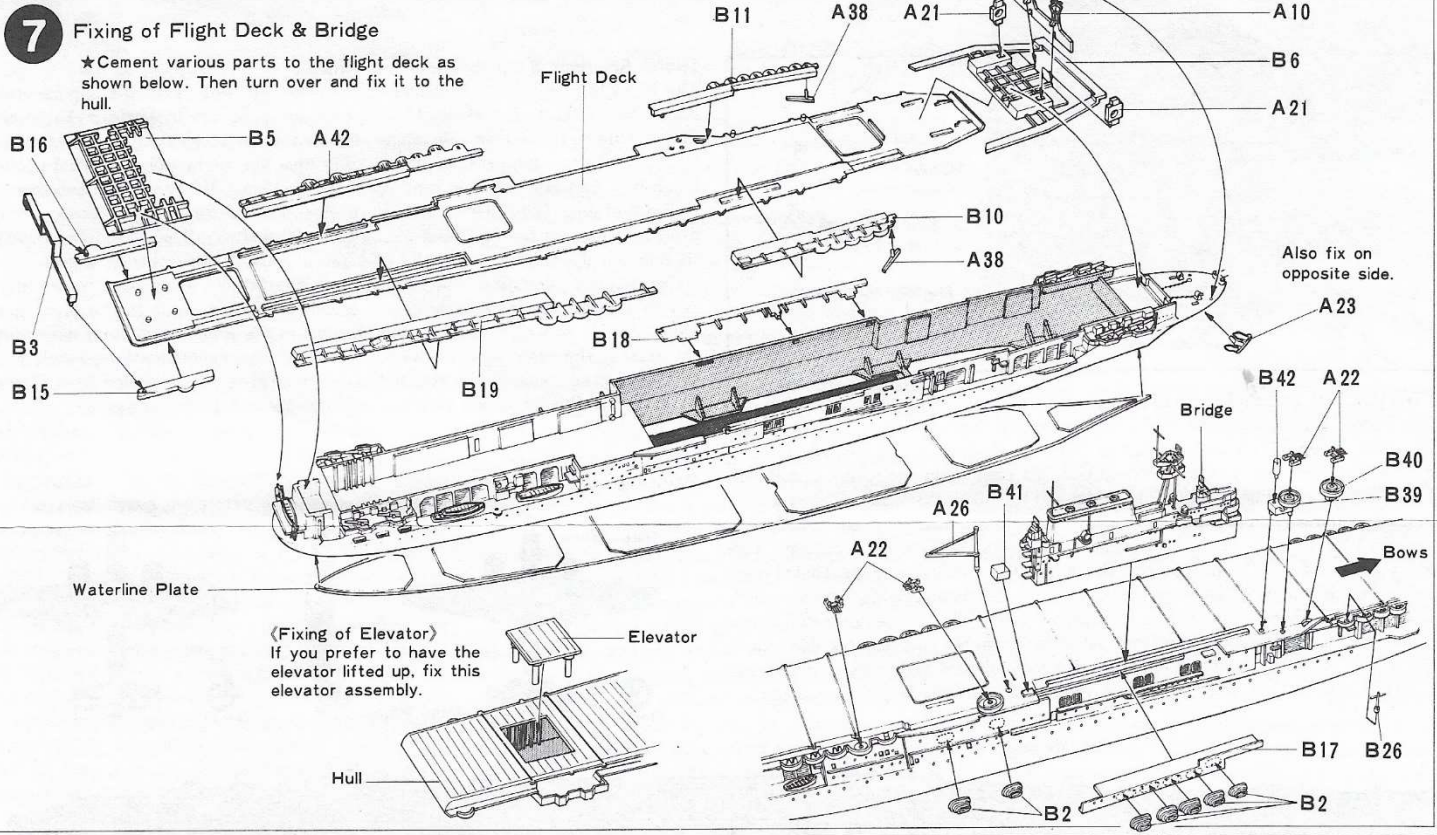


## 6 Construction of Stern A



★Shutters A14 & A18 are convertible parts. If you prefer the closed position, fix them with cement.





SCALE: Use when you cut wire for M.G. gun barrel.