



Notes for this review:

For the general background of the Kongo class, please see the review of the Kajika Kongo. This kit uses many of the same components as the Kajika kits of Kongo, Hiei, and Haruna; the differences between the kits are noted under each section and summarized at the end of the review. All the photos in this review are of the Kirishima kit.

Background – Home built Battlecruiser:

The technology transfer stipulated as part of the contract signed with Vickers to build the *Kongo* was very successful for Japanese industry. In March 1912, with *Kongo* yet to be launched, the private yard of Mitsubishi Nagasaki began construction of the *Kirishima*, the fourth and last of the *Kongo* class battlecruisers. The ship was named for an active volcano in southern Kyushu.

Launched on Dec 1, 1913 and accepted into service April 19, 1915, the same day as her sister *Haruna*, her total construction time was 37 months which matched that of *Haruna*. This was only 5 months longer than the construction time of *Kongo* at the vastly more experienced and equipped Vickers yard.

All of the 14" guns were imported complete from Vickers. The plates for the main side armour belt were produced in Japan; the rest of the armour plate was imported from Vickers. She was fitted with 36 Yarrow type large tube boilers; her engines were Parsons turbines built by Mitsubishi. *Kirishima* and

Haruna were almost identical twins; both were equipped with the rounded main gun turrets which along with the raised fore funnel clearly distinguished them from *Kongo*.

Kirishima spent World War One mainly in port and on patrols off China and Korea. It is a great pity that she was not lent to the Royal Navy which offered to lease all four *Kongo*'s as she would likely have seen action at the Battle of Jutland, one of the great 'what ifs' of naval history.

Kirishima was modernized twice: from January 1927 to April 1930 and from November 1934 to June 1936. She emerged with a radically different profile with only two funnels, a massive forward pagoda, more armour, new boilers and engines which upped her speed to 30 knots, and a stern lengthened by 25 feet. All the improvements made her a valuable fleet unit capable of providing close escort to the aircraft carrier fleet.

Until committed to the Guadalcanal shore bombardments that led to her demise, *Kirishima* operated exclusively as part of the Japanese Carrier Striking Force that rampaged across the Pacific at the beginning of the Pacific War. At Pearl Harbour, Rabaul, Port Darwin, south of Java, and on the Indian Ocean raid, *Kirishima* screened the carriers from surface and air attack. Her one surface operation was against the *USS Edsall*, an old four stack destroyer that inadvertently stumbled across the Carrier Striking Force on March 1, 1942 while attempting to escape from Java. *Kirishima* and her sister *Hiei* did not cover themselves in glory as they fired over 200 14" rounds at the diminutive ship in broad daylight without scoring a hit. *Edsall* was brought to a standstill by carrier dive bombers and then despatched by the cruisers *Tone* and *Chikuma*.

She continued with the carriers at the Battles of Midway, Eastern Solomons, and Santa Cruz. At Midway her crew could only look on as all four Japanese carriers succumbed to US dive bomber attacks; she later returned their survivors to Japan.

On the night of November 13, 1942 *Kirishima* and *Hiei* were part of a large surface force sent to bombard US held Henderson Field on Guadalcanal. They were intercepted by a defending US force of cruisers and destroyers and the resulting battle quickly disintegrated into a confusing melee fought at extremely close range. At battle's end, *Hiei* was crippled with damage to her steering gear; *Kirishima* had only received one 8" shell hit while mauling cruiser *San Francisco*. Attempts by *Kirishima* to tow her sister ship clear failed and *Hiei* was scuttled in the early evening, having undergone heavy air attacks all day which inflicted more damage.

Two nights later on November 15, *Kirishima* was at the centre of another bombardment force sent to pound Henderson Field into submission. This time her opponents were the US battleships *South Dakota* and *Washington* and their four escorting destroyers. *Kirishima* was able to inflict superstructure damage to *South Dakota* and her escorts sank three of the four US destroyers. The *Washington* was undetected by the Japanese until she opened fire on *Kirishima*. Hit at point blank range by at least nine 16" shells and possibly by as many as twenty, *Kirishima* was badly damaged. Both forward turrets were destroyed and the after pair were jammed. Flooding occurred below decks due to hits below the waterline, the steering gear room flooded, the rudders were jammed, and fires raged in the

superstructure. *Kirishima* was left to circle helplessly until the engine rooms flooded and the ship was abandoned, capsizing rapidly to port and sinking at 3:23 AM.

Her wreck was discovered by Robert Ballard in 1992, lying upside down with the tip of the stern broken off and the forward part of the ship completely destroyed. It is likely that a magazine explosion occurred after she was lying on the bottom due to the implosion of a magazine compartment. An excellent analysis of the damage and sinking can be found here:

http://www.navweaps.com/index_lundgren/Kirishima_Damage_Analysis.pdf

The Kit:

In 1/700 scale, this features *Kirishima* as built and how she appeared from 1915 to 1920. This is **not** a simple re-packaging of the *Kongo*, *Hiei*, or *Haruna* kits; it accurately reflects the differences between *Kirishima* and the other three ships.

Packaging:

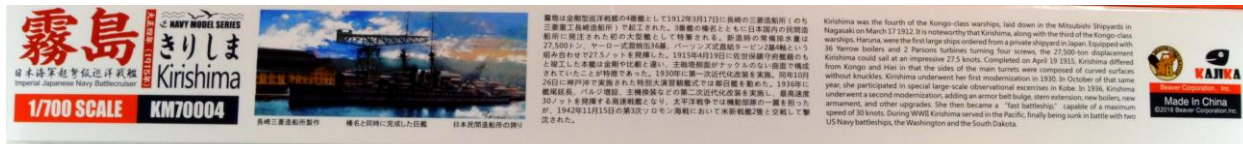
The kit comes in a well-constructed box featuring a painting of *Kirishima* alongside a jetty, possibly in the final stages of fitting out.

The sides of the box contain a condensed ship's history and pictures of the *Hiei* and *Haruna* kits.

The kit comprises 375 parts on seven sprues with all parts moulded in medium grey and individually sealed in plastic bags. The hull, waterline plate, forecastle deck, quarterdeck, and bridge parts are single pieces not attached to any sprue. There is no photo-etch.

Kongo's masts are on their own sprue and are in a small box; those for *Kirishima* are on the new sprue 'X' that was developed for the *Hiei* kit.





----- Box Art -----



----- Contents of box -----

Hull:

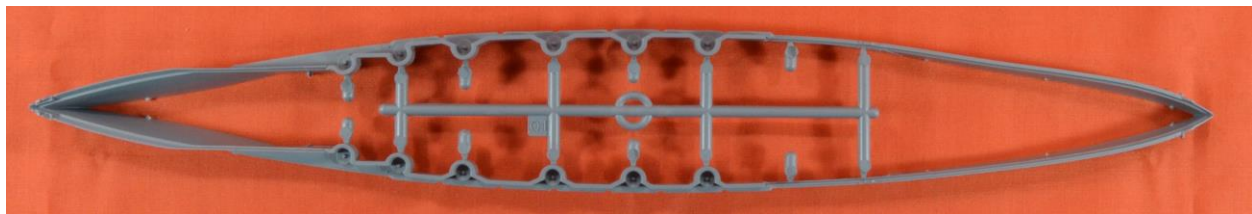
The starboard and port hull sides are in one piece and scale out just four feet short of the actual length of 705 feet. There is just a waterline plate – no lower hull is included.

The hull is loaded with exquisite detail: the many doors have hinges, the portholes have ‘eyebrows’, the armour belt amidships is well defined, there is clearly defined hull plating running fore and aft, the secondary casemates are crisply moulded, and there is a torpedo net shelf. Raised lugs run along the length of the hull for attaching the torpedo net booms.

Kirishima’s hull is the same as the one used for Hiei and Haruna. Kongo’s hull has ladder rungs just aft of the anchors; these are not present on the Kirishima hull. At the stern, Kirishima has more portholes, while Kongo has doors for square ports which are not on Kirishima. Kongo’s waterline plate is molded in red, Kirishima’s in grey.



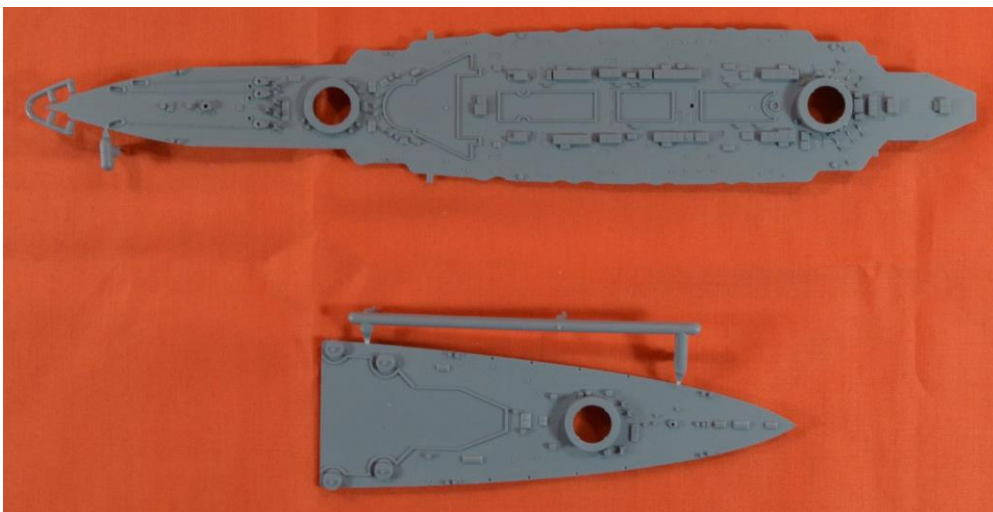
----- Hull and waterline plate -----



----- Hull from above -----

Decks:

The main decks are in two pieces. The forecastle deck has bulkheads already attached where it overlaps the quarterdeck and the level of detail is quite amazing. Individual deck planks, anchor chains, cable reels, ready-use ammo lockers, coaling ports, bollards, capstans, and boat chocks are all present in very precise detail. The fit between the two pieces is extremely precise; the bulkheads feature portholes and doors.



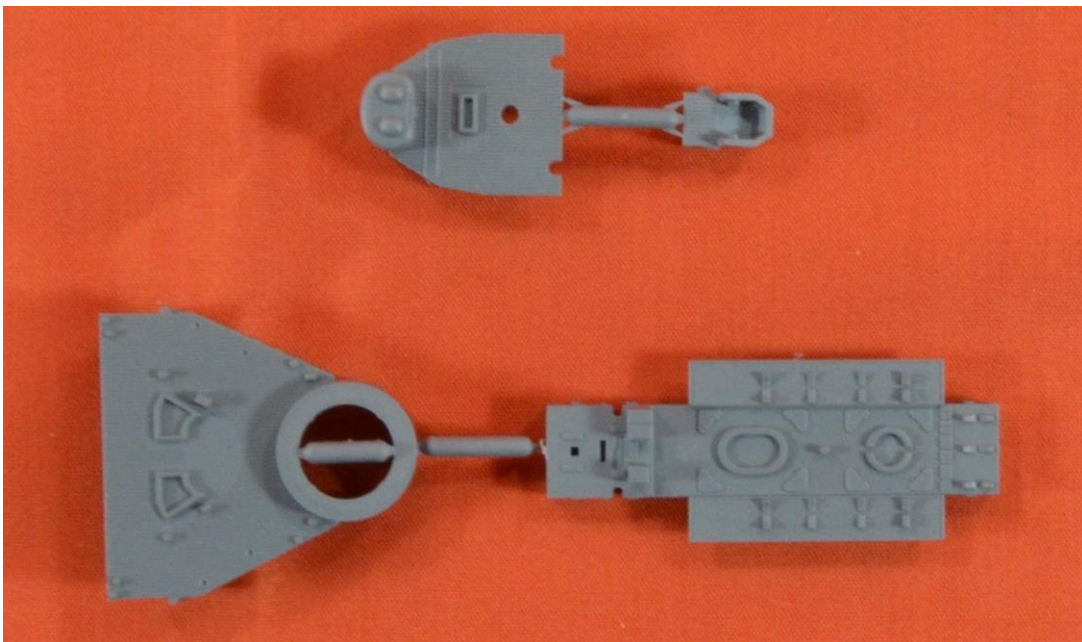
----- Forecastle deck (above) and quarterdeck (below) -----

Superstructure:

Like most World War I era ships, there is minimal superstructure: bridge, amidships boat deck and funnel casings. The bridge is made up from seven pieces, the boat deck has twelve supports to be fitted underneath, and the after funnel casing consists of two pieces.

All of these parts are detailed on every face: hatches with hinges, portholes with 'eyebrows', boat chocks, bollards, deck planks, and slots or raised edges for fitting other pieces.

The bridge has a different searchlight layout than Hiei and Haruna and has solid lower bulkheads. In comparison to Kongo, the navigation bridge is atop the conning tower, the searchlight platform extends aft to the foremast, and the boat deck is not as wide.



----- Bridge pieces and boat deck -----

Weapons:

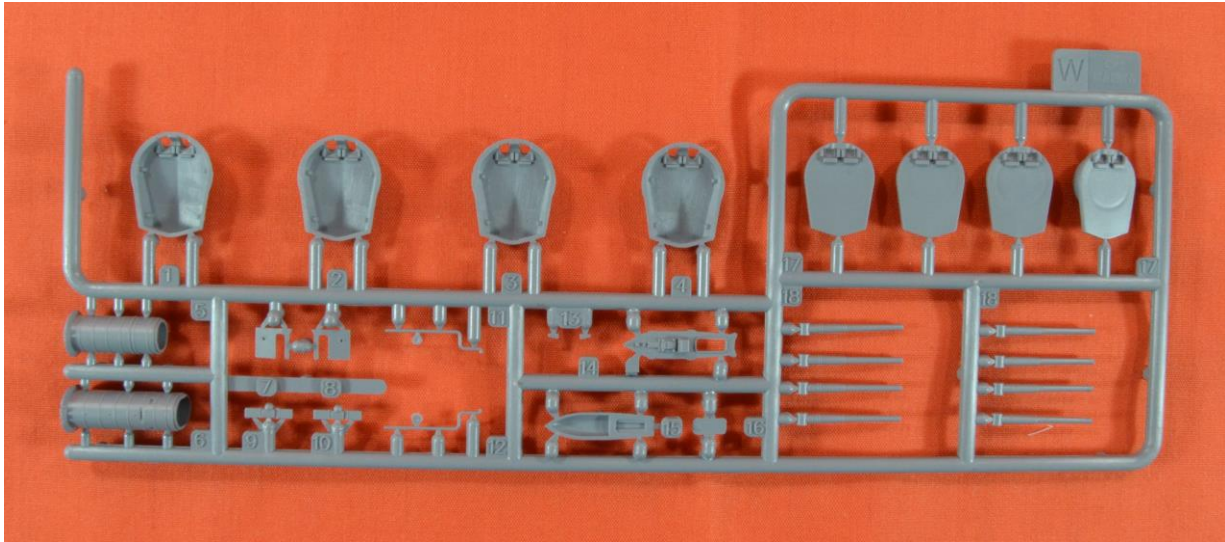
Kirishima was fitted with 8-14"/45, 16-6"/50, and 4-3" guns when first completed. All these weapons are present in the kit.

The main 14" turrets are in two pieces and have separate barrels. The super-firing turrets have separate rangefinders; the lower turrets have no rangefinders. The rangefinder on No.2 turret is smaller than the one on turret No. 3; turret No.2 and its rangefinder are on a separate sprue. All of the turrets feature raised armour plates, rivet detail, and ladders between the gun barrels. The gun barrels themselves are tapered, have a thicker section towards the breech and are hollowed out at the muzzle.

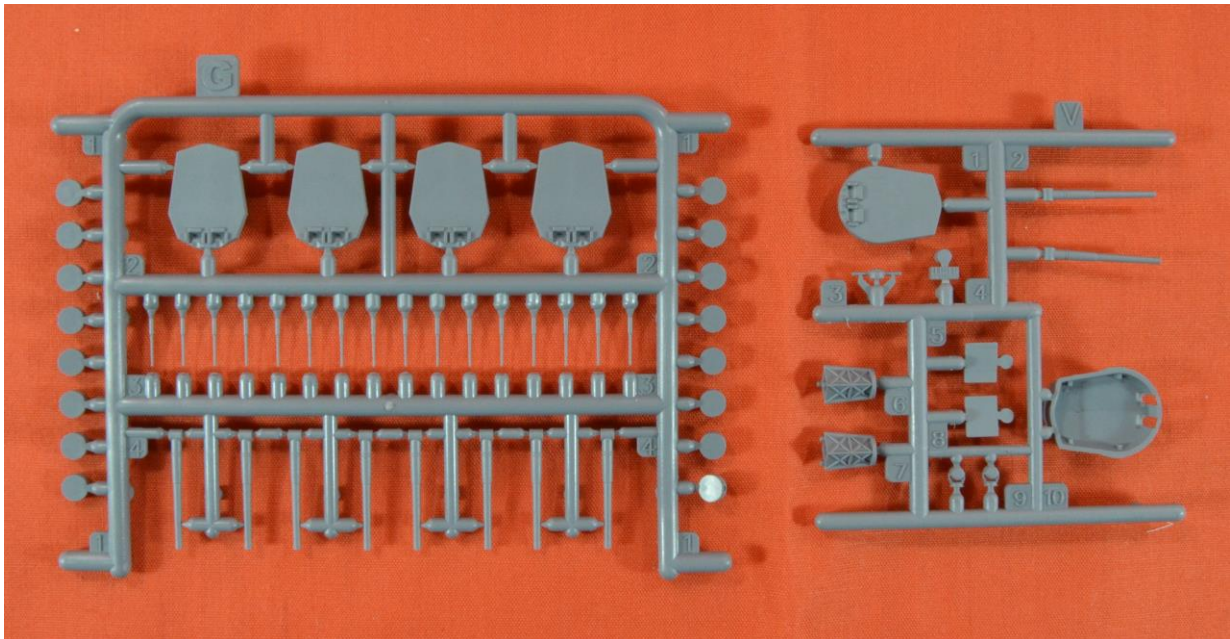
The 6" guns are in two pieces, a casemate mounting with detailed sighting ports, and separate barrels. The barrels are remarkably thin and have a very fine taper, equal to the best of the machined gun barrels commercially available.

The 3" guns feature plenty of raised detail.

The 14" turrets are same as those supplied for Haruna, gently rounded at the front and sides while those for Kongo and Hiei are angular. The positioning of the 3" guns on the forecastle deck matches that for Hiei and Haruna, those for Kongo are fitted in different positions.



----- New rounded 14" gun turrets with barrels -----

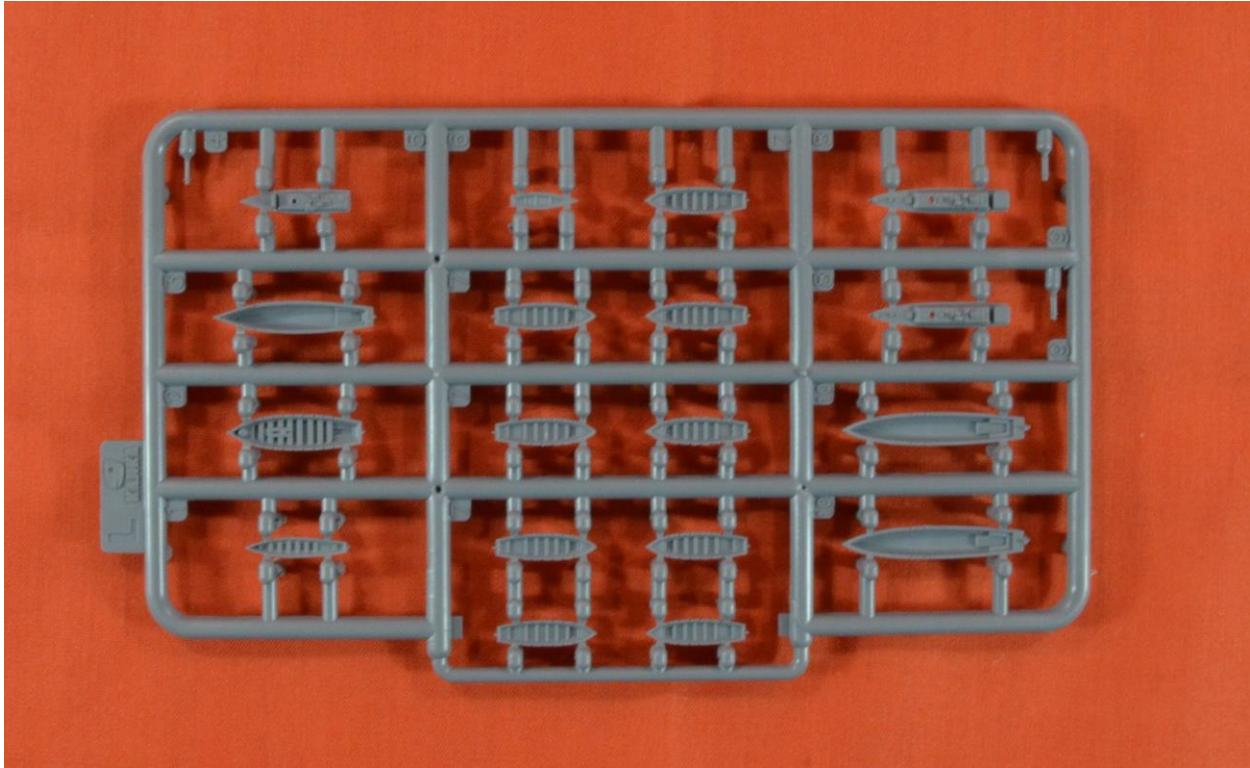


----- 6" gun turrets and barrels, unused turret bottoms, and the new sprue for Turret No. 2-----

Boats:

There are twelve open boats and three steam launches, each one featuring very precise deck planks. The open boats have cut-outs for the oars and the steam launches have detailed skylights, deck fittings, and separate funnels.

The boat layout is the same as Haruna's.



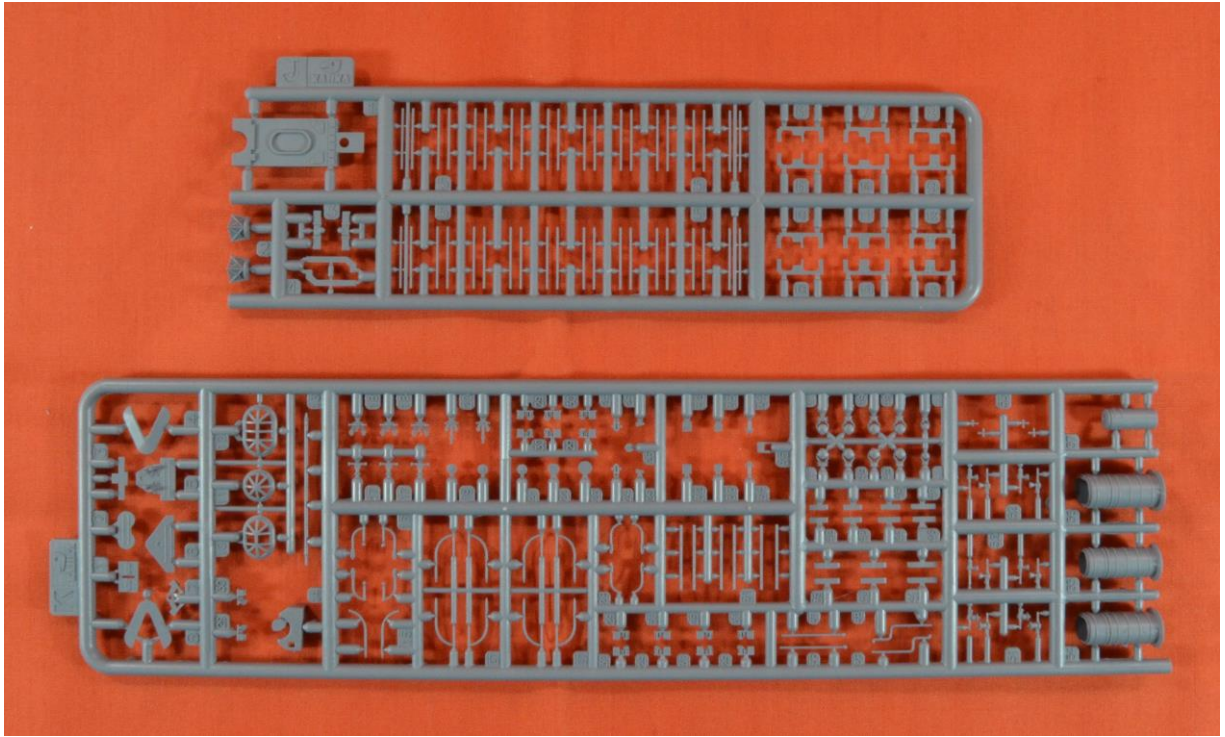
----- Boats -----

Fittings:

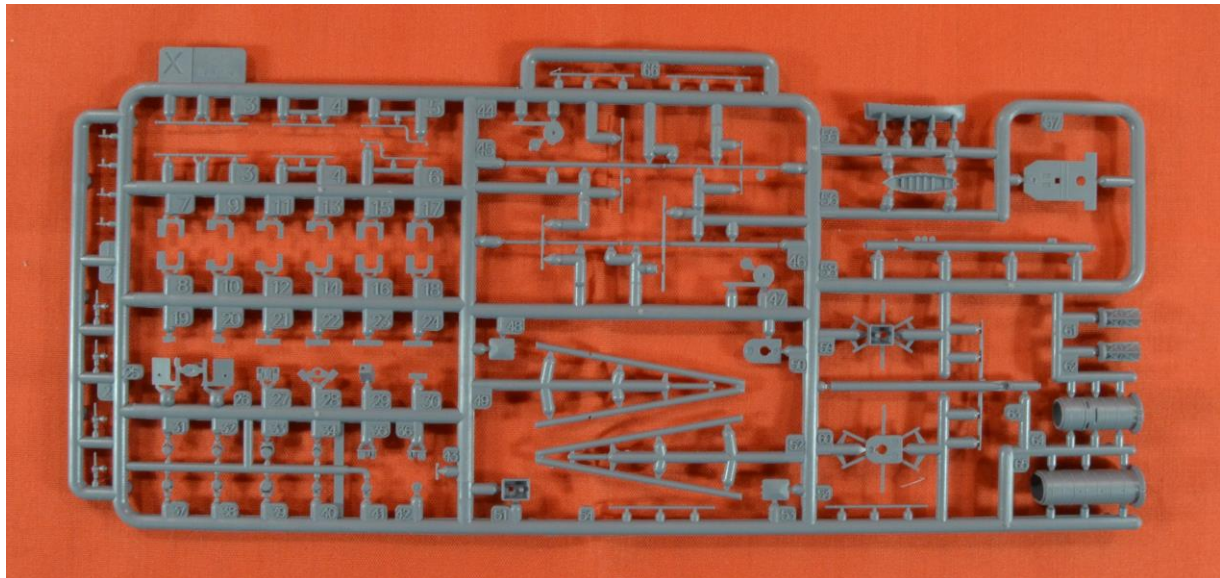
There are many smaller fittings, every piece of which is incredibly detailed. The many winches have detailed motors and components, the anchors have raised detail, range finders have caps on the ends, steam pipes have rings, the davits are extremely thin, searchlights have defined lenses, and the torpedo net booms have rings around them. There are two searchlight platforms with very well executed lattice work, despite being solid instead of hollow. There are even two gash chutes and a stern walk.

The masts and tripod supports are extremely thin and well detailed. The foremast has finely detailed rungs and the mainmast has attachment points for the boom of the boat crane. The yards are already fitted to the topmasts. Each mast has a starfish and control position made up of separate parts. There are also two additional open boats and no less than seven funnels counting the two found with the 14" gun turrets; the instructions make it very clear which three are to be used. The funnels are hollow single pieces with engraved hand rails, separate caps with open grillwork, and separate steam pipes.

In common with Hiei and Haruna, the fore-funnel is higher and positioned further aft than the one fitted to Kongo. The forward two funnels are the same as those fitted to Hiei with the external steam pipes fitted to the middle funnel. The searchlight platforms are larger than those fitted to Hiei and Haruna.



----- Funnels and fittings -----



----- Masts, funnels, and additional fittings -----

Decals:

The decals consist of two Japanese naval jacks.



----- *Weight and Decals* -----

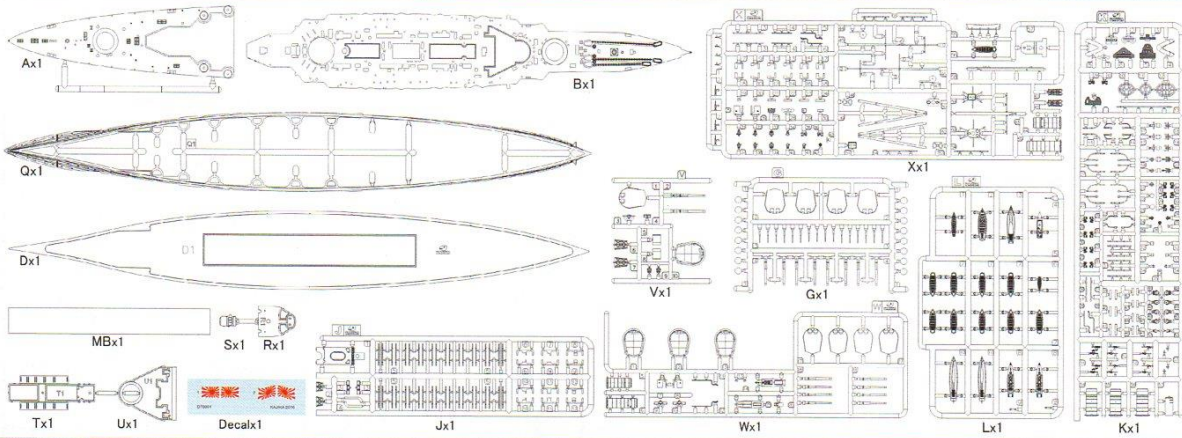
Instructions:

The instructions come on a single large, double-sided full-colour page. They are very clear and comprehensive and feature a drawing showing all the included sprues. There are eleven assembly steps with sub-assemblies and exploded drawings as required. Some colour coding is used to assist with the placement of smaller parts; this eliminates a lot of guess work.

霧島 きりしま

Kirishima

大正四年 (1915年)
日本海軍超弩級巡洋戦艦
Imperial Japanese Navy Battlecruiser

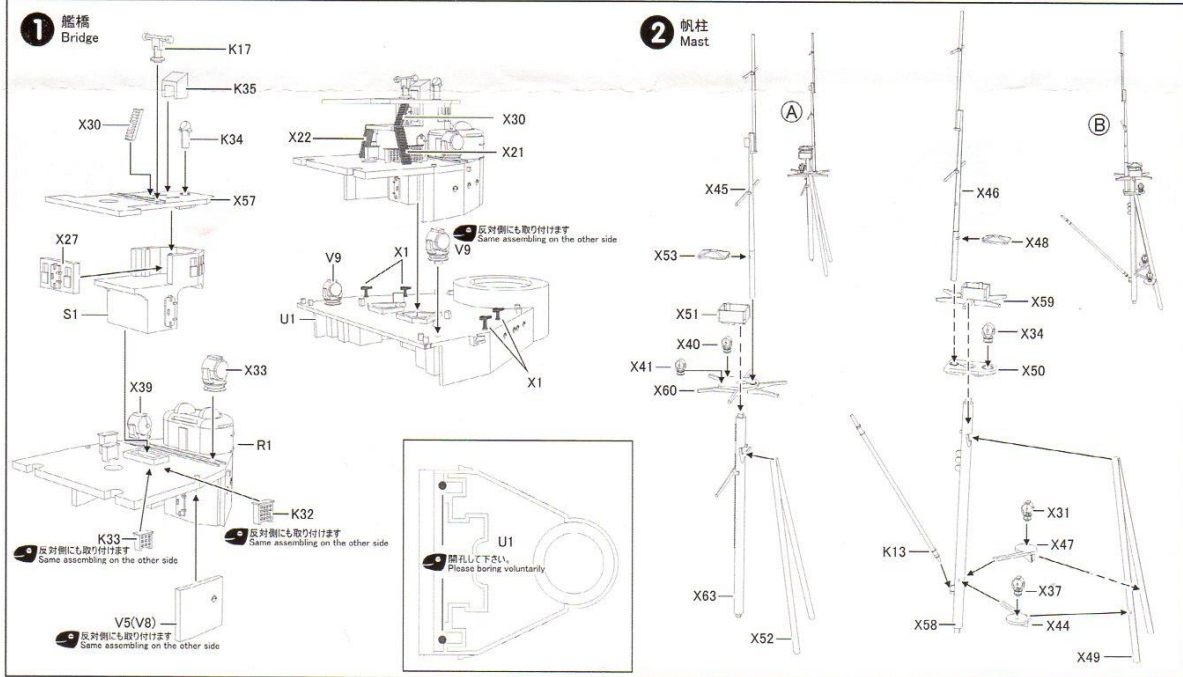


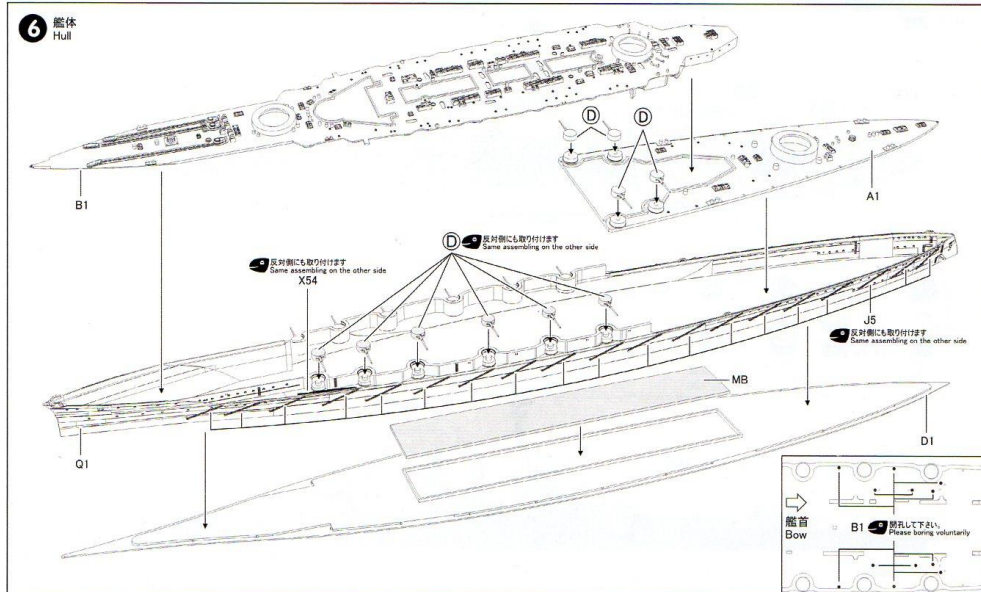
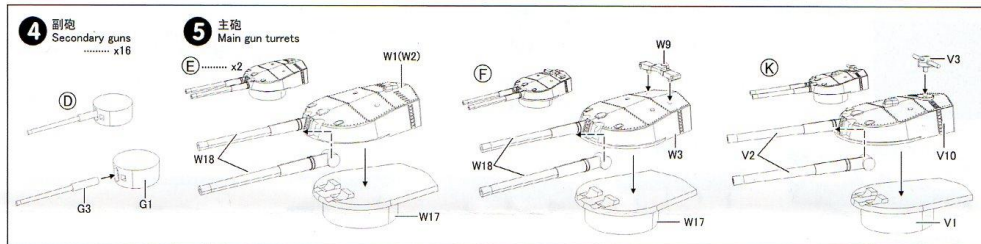
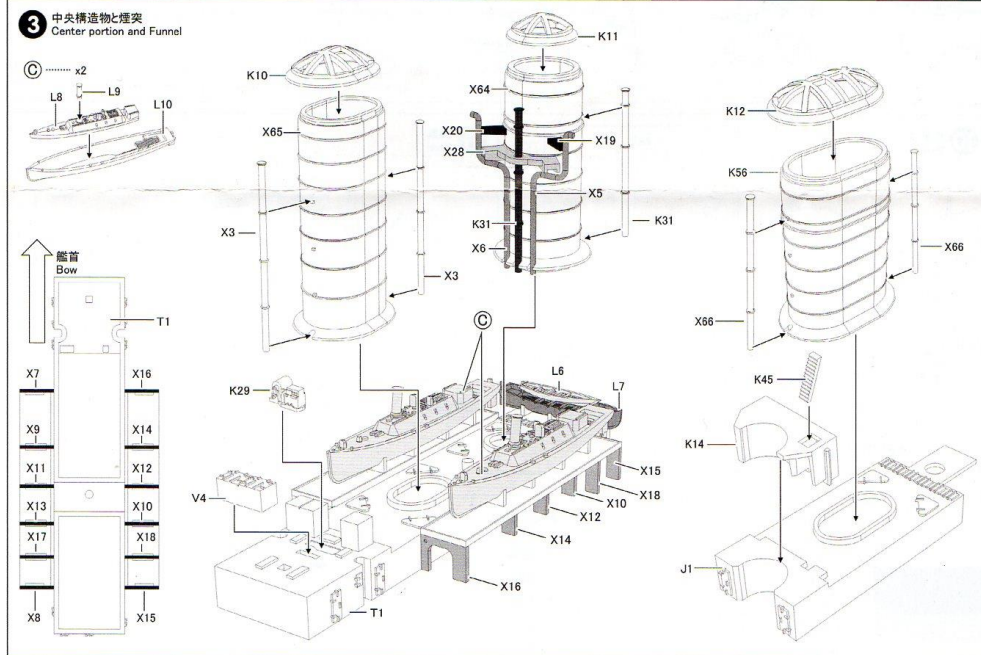
NAVY MODEL SERIES

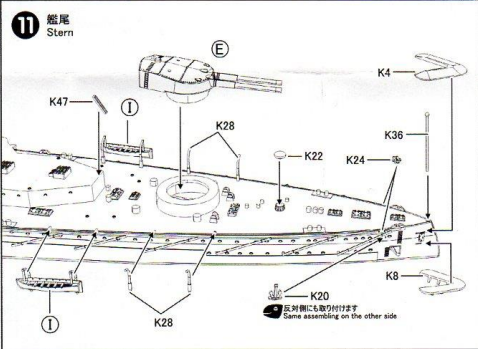
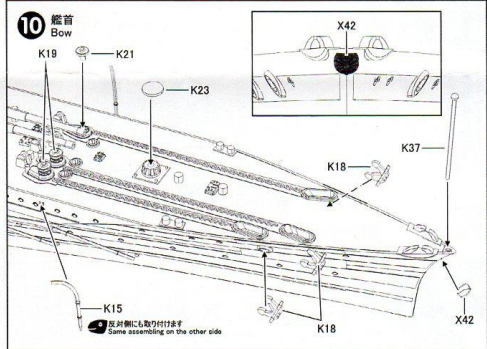
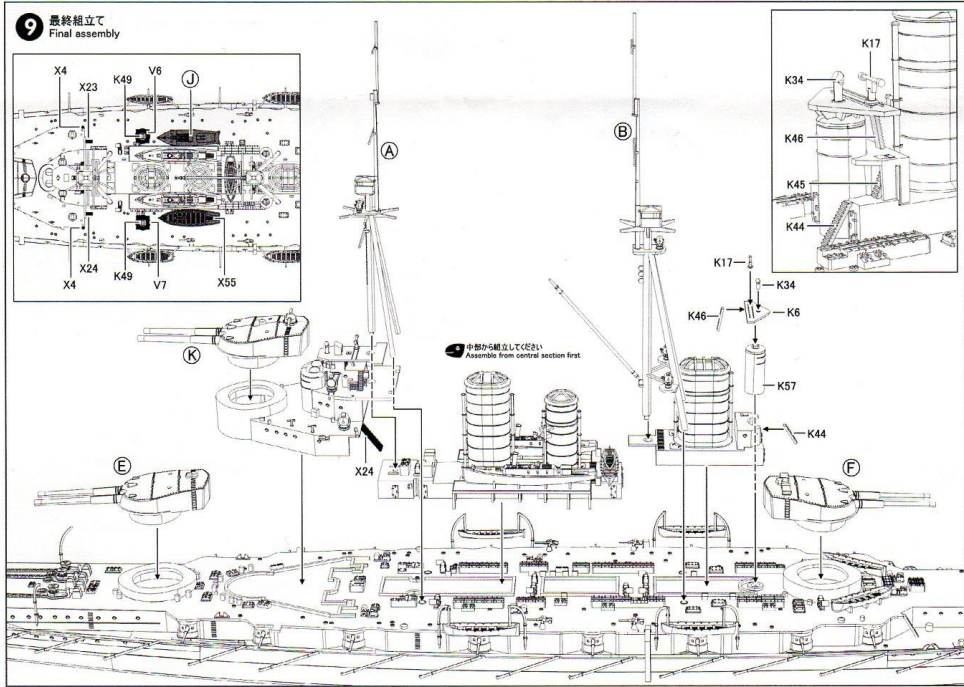
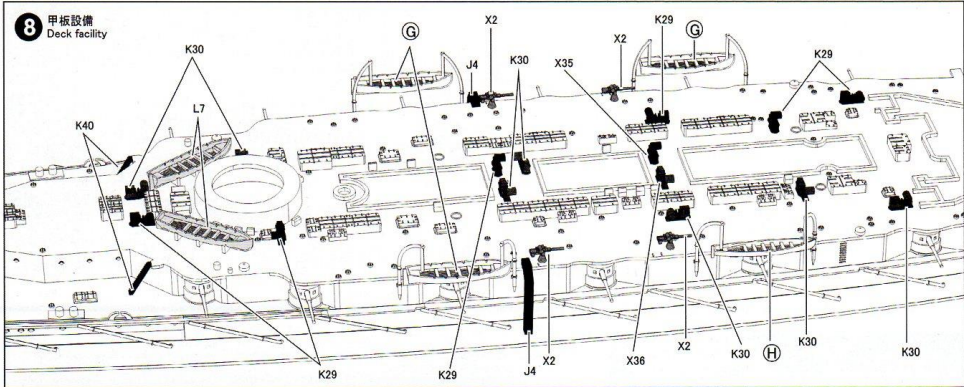
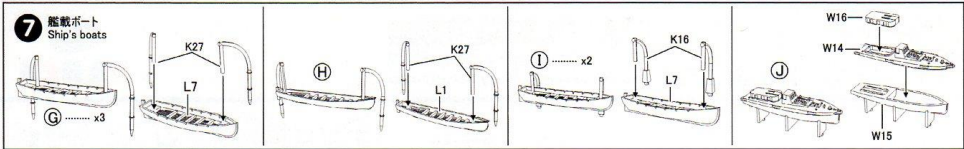
1/700 SCALE
KM 70004

警告!
1. 部品は小さなものやとがったものがあります。注意して扱い、キットの組立以外には使用しないでください。
2. キットの内容はパッケージと異なる部分がございます。
3. 本製品は玩具ではありません。特に小さなお子様のいる家庭では十分ご注意ください。対象年齢12歳以上。

WARNING!
1. Includes small parts. Not for children under 6 years of age.
2. Products may differ from illustrations.
3. This product is not a toy. Suited for adults and those over 12 years of age.







Colour scheme:

There is a full-colour diagram of the overall dark grey scheme worn by *Kirishima* with references to the Mr. Hobby and Tamiya paint ranges.

	Color	色	Mr.Hobby	Tamiya
	Flat White	フラットホワイト	H 11 62	XF-2
	Hull Red	ハルレッド	H 17 29	XF-9
	Red Brown	レッドブラウン	H 47 41	XF-64
	Gold Leaf	ゴールドリーフ	H 9 9	X-12
	Wooden Tan	ウッドタン	H 27 44	XF-78
	Chrome Silver	クロムシルバー	H 8 8	X-11
	Dim Grey	暗い灰色	H 83 32	XF-53.2 XF-63.1
	Flat black	フラットブラック	H 12 33	XF-1
	Steel	スチール	H 18 28	X-10

塗装とデカールの指示
 デカールの使用方法:
 1.マークをはさみなどで切り取ります。
 2.切り取ったマークをぬるま湯に10秒ほどひたします。
 3.マークは台紙ごと貼りたい位置に移動して、マーク部分のみをスライドさせて下さい。
 4.柔らかい布などでマークをおさえて気泡や水分をとってください。

PAINTING & MARKING GUIDE
 Decal Application:
 1.Cut the pictures from sheet as needed.
 2.Dip the pictures in warm water for about 10 seconds.
 3.Hold the picture backing sheet edge and gently slide the picture onto the model.
 4.Please move the picture to the proper position on model.
 5.Please gently press picture down with a soft cloth until excess water's out and no air bubbles.

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KAJIKKA

KM 70004 Imperial Japanese Navy Battlecruiser Kirishima

----- Colour scheme -----

Overall Impression:

This is a superb kit that accurately captures *Kirishima* as she first appeared upon completion. Modellers can now build any of the *Kongo* class as they looked when they first entered service; a very happy state of affairs that was unimaginable even a few years ago.

Kajika has taken great care to identify the subtle differences in the four ships and make the required changes to their moulds and instructions. The detailing on every part is extremely fine and precise. There are only a few small parts and most modellers will have no trouble with assembly. The build will be very straightforward, each step is well laid out and there are no complex superstructures, multiple anti-aircraft guns, or aircraft to assemble.

The technical level of manufacturing is quite amazing with an outstanding level of detailing. There is absolutely no flash on any of the pieces, no ejection pin markings, and none of those lines that result when two mould halves are used to make a single component. The plastic is quite durable; it stands up to very rough handling without any breakage.

This kit will build into a nice replica right out of the box. The only things that could be added to the kit would be a railing for the stern walk and a rolled up torpedo net for the net shelf, both very minor additions.

Summary of differences from Kongo:

Kongo's hull has ladder rungs just aft of the anchors and square ports at the stern; Kirishima's hull has neither of those features. Kirishima's navigation bridge is atop the conning tower, the searchlight platform extends aft to the foremast, and the boat deck is not as wide. Kirishima's 14" turrets are gently rounded at the front and sides, Kongo's are angular. The positioning of the 3" guns on the forecastle deck and the boat layout is different. The fore-funnel is taller and positioned further aft than the one fitted to Kongo.

Summary of differences from Hiei:

Hiei's hull, funnels, and positioning of the 3" guns are the same as the Kirishima. The Kirishima's boat layout is slightly different, the bottom bulkheads on the bridge are solid, and the searchlight platforms are larger. Kirishima's 14" turrets are gently rounded at the front and sides while those for Hiei are angular.

Summary of differences from Haruna:

Haruna's hull, main gun turrets, funnel placement, boat layout, and positioning of the 3" guns are the same as the Kirishima; Kirishima's searchlight platforms are larger. Kirishima's bottom bridge bulkheads are solid, and the searchlights on the bridge are in different positions than on Haruna; Kirishima's rangefinder atop Turret No.2 is smaller than Haruna's. Kirishima's middle funnel has external steam pipes, those pipes are on the fore funnel on Haruna.

This is a highly recommended kit and will make an excellent addition to any collection. It will make an interesting comparison when placed alongside kits of her World War One contemporaries, *Derfflinger*, *Lion*, or *Tiger*. The changes made to the ship between her first commissioning and her Second World

War appearance will be quite evident when placing this kit alongside one of *Kirishima* after reconstruction.

Well done to Kajika for producing this kit of the fourth *Kongo* to such an incredible level of detail.

References:

- *The Battlecruisers of the Kongo Class* by Hans Lengerer Warship 2012 Conway 2012
- *Battleships of World War I* by Antony Preston. Galahad Books 1972
- *IJN Kongo Battleship 1912-1944 - Profile Warship 12* by Masataka Chihaya and Yasuo Abe. Profile Publications 1971
- *IJN Kongo Class Battleships* by Steve Wiper Classic Warships Publishing 2001
- *Japanese Battleships 1897-1945* by RA Burt. Seaforth Publishing 2015

Review kit courtesy of Flyhawk Models