

REVIEW OF HALLMARK MINIATURES 1:6000 SCALE FIGUREHEAD SHIP MINIATURES

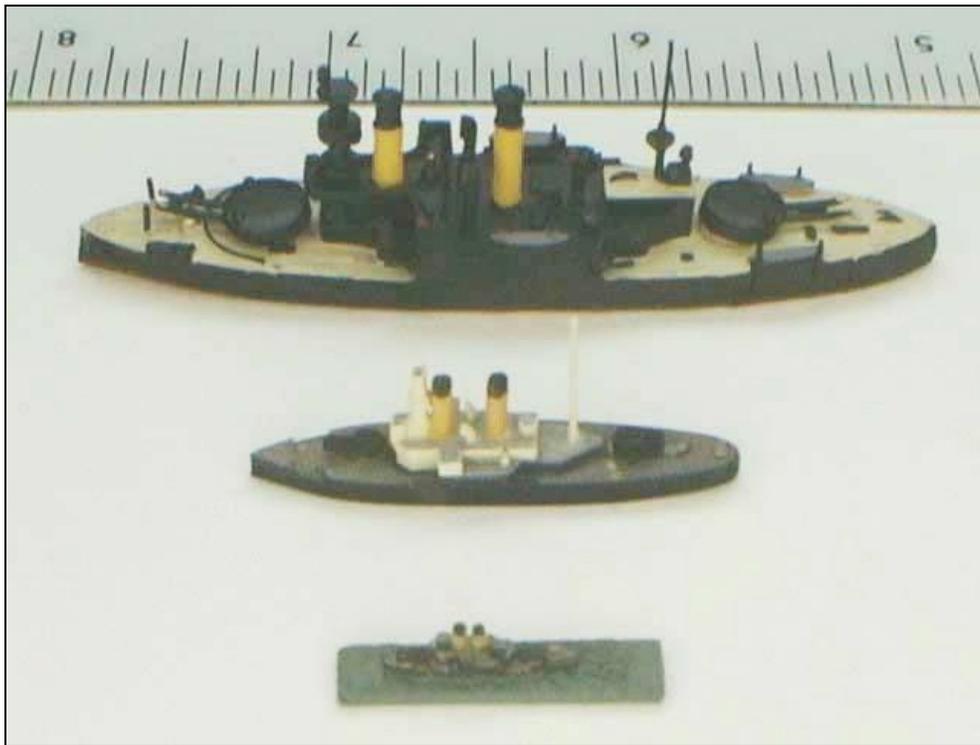
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Perhaps the biggest problem facing naval miniatures wargamers is a source for miniatures. Not that it is terribly difficult to obtain the models but, regardless of your preferred scale, it's always been very difficult to obtain a complete selection of combatants even if you limit your collection to a specific period or country. The core reasons for this are the interaction of two basic principles:

1. The larger the scale (assuming a corresponding increase in detail), the more expensive the model, the fewer units sold by the manufacturer.
2. Sculpting a mold for a small or single-unit class (Agincourt, Blucher, Iowa of 1897, etc.) costs just as much as a mold for multi-unit classes (Queen Elizabeth, Konig, Maryland, etc.).

Understanding this, we should all applaud the manufacturers like GHQ, C-in-C, Navwar, Viking Forge and others for catering to our needs. Thanks to their efforts, we can purchase a model of SMS Blucher even though she was a single ship class, participated in a single (albeit historic) naval action and had an active service of less than 5 years.



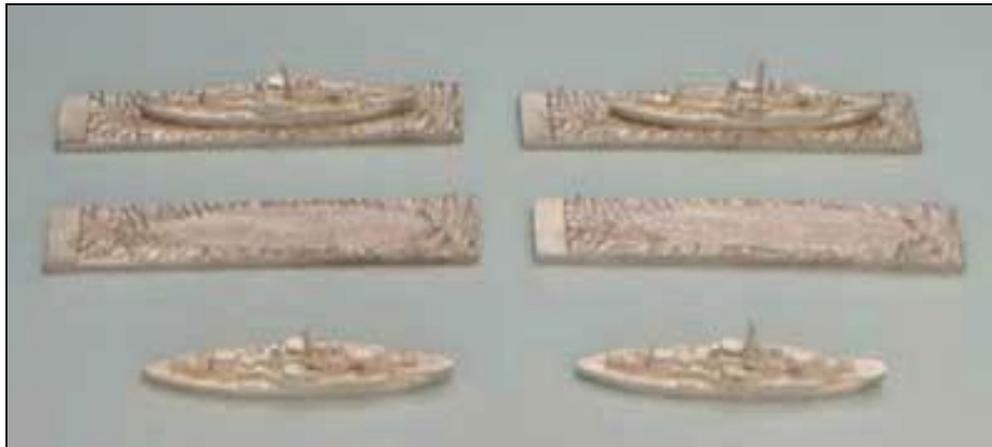
Comparison of Russian CD Battleship SENYAVIN in 1200 scale (Mercator), 2400 scale (Viking Forge), 6000 scale (Hallmark).

Still, the desire to have a complete class of each ship from all classes and types of a particular period remains a problem. Re-fighting historic battles is great fun, but in order to ponder and examine the many

possibilities of war at sea, an inexpensive yet complete line of warship models has remained beyond the reach of most naval wargamers.

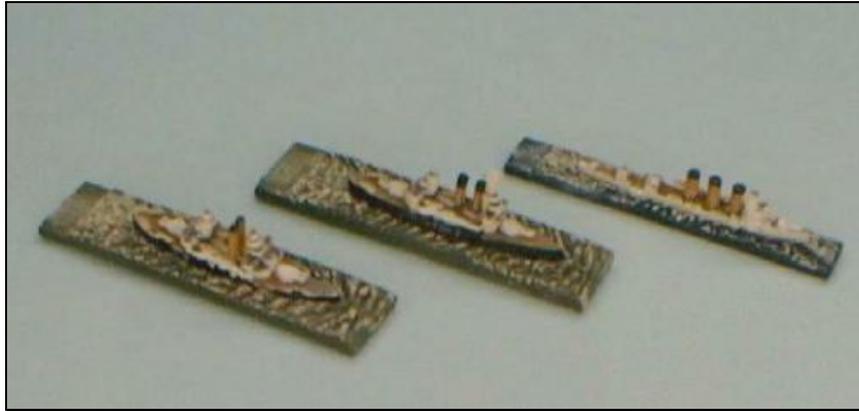
A few months ago, I was introduced to the Figurehead (1:6000 scale) line of miniatures produced by Hallmark Miniatures. Having started my naval wargaming avocation over 25 years ago with 1:1200 and 1:1250 miniatures (Alnavco, Navis, Neptune, Mercator), and having made the transition to 1:2400/1:3000 (C-IN-C, GHQ, Viking Forge and Navwar) without incident, I was quite skeptical that anyone could manufacture a miniature in 1:6000 that would accurately depict the difference between say, a British London and a Queen Class pre-dreadnought battleship (let alone the fact that they claim to manufacture different models of the various destroyer classes of the same period). To put this into perspective, the battleships in question would, in this scale, be approximately 8/10" in length!

I placed a sample order for some pre-dreadnought battleships with a reputable distributor of the Figurehead ships and was pleasantly surprised by what I received. I must admit that my skepticism, although arguably well founded, was without merit. Hallmark has somehow managed to capture some of the more subtle design characteristics of a particular class and magnify these in such a manner so as to produce a model that is truly a separate and distinct representation of the class.



French COURBET Class Battleships (1F21) out of the pack

The concept of "bases" attached to my warship miniatures was also somewhat foreign to me. Yes, I do have bases on my 2000-scale sailing ships, but then I don't know of anyone whom I can trust to move a full-sail rigged ship in that scale without bending or breaking something! Again, there's a more practical reason for this, which I discovered immediately when trying to move a formation of Frauenlob Class cruisers without the bases attached. No matter how light your touch, small your fingers or steady your hand, there simply isn't enough weight in a model of that scale to allow smooth movement on a game table unless the ship is mounted on a base. Consequently, I was forced by sheer practicality to mount my painted ships on bases. To their credit, Hallmark molded the bases to conform to the individual model and, in addition to providing some realistic molding to account for the ship's wake, attached a flat portion at the stern which can be used for decals or other means of identifying a particular ship. For purists, this portion of the base can easily be detached allowing a more aesthetically pleasing portrayal of the ship in battle line. Personally, this turned out to be a most interesting outlet for my imagination which, based heavily on lithographs and paintings of the period, allowed me to portray British and German ships of the Victorian era (in black/white/buff livery) on a grey-green sea.



British BB MAJESTIC, BB QUEEN, Russian CL OLEG

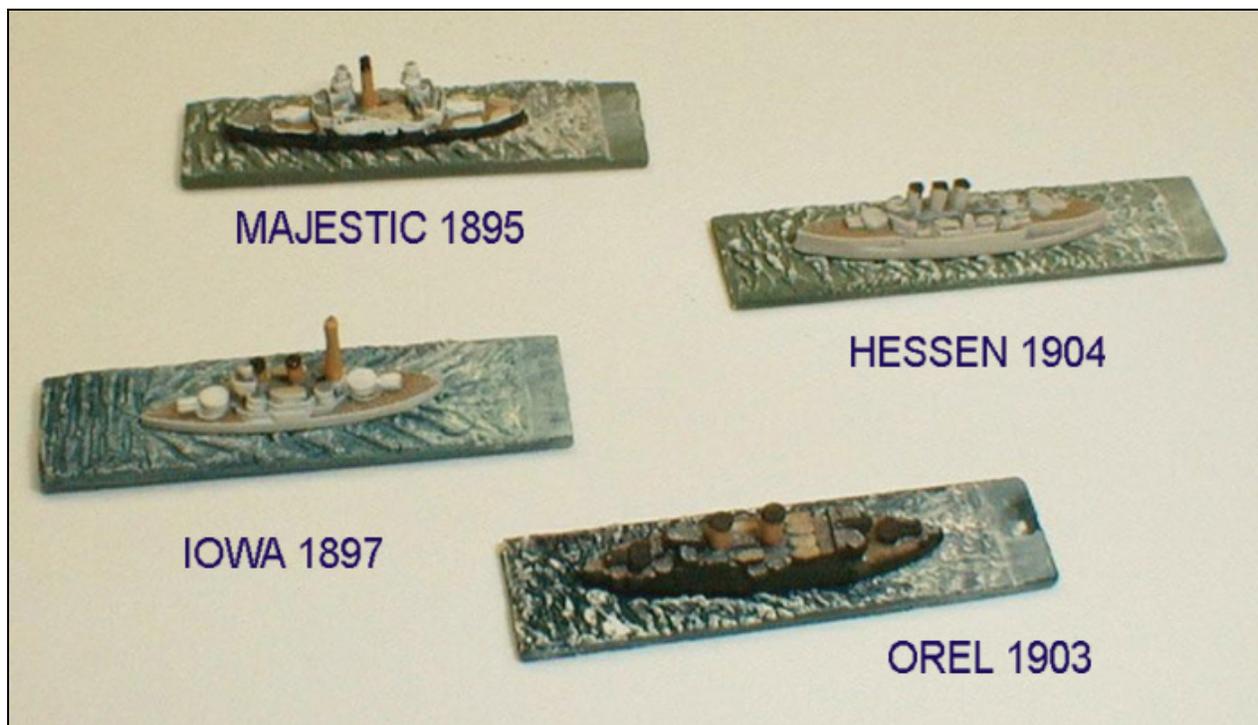
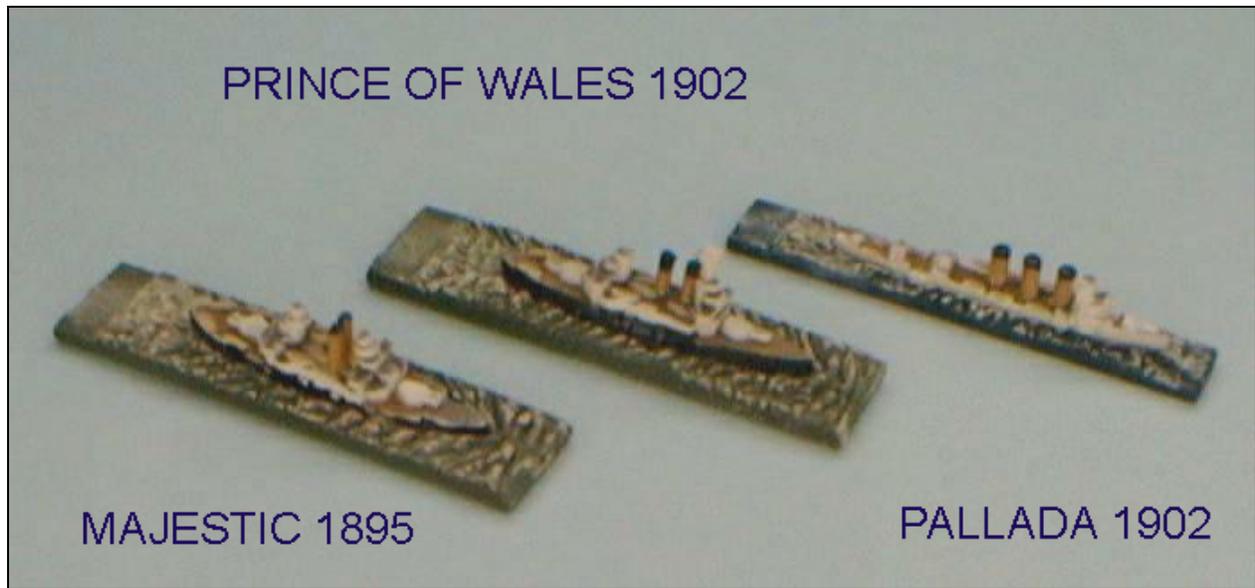
Packaging is another area in which Hallmark has made the most of common-sense and provided the gamer with cost-effective solutions to the "one-ship class" problem. Although Navwar probably originated the idea, Hallmark has taken the next logical step for this particular scale. For example, most classes of cruisers to battleships comprised of 5 ships or less are most often packaged so that one can obtain the entire class in a single pack; a big help when collecting a large battle-fleet (Konig, Kaiser, Kleber, Courbet, Iron Duke, King George V, etc.). The one- and two-ship classes are often combined with other classes so that purchasing single (or multiple) packs will provide the full complement of ships for a particular range of classes for that period. For example, pack 1U10 will provide the US pre-dreadnought battleships Iowa (one in class), Kearsarge (2 in class) and Indiana (3 in class) in a single purchase. Another nice touch is that a small sheet of ship data is included with each pack.

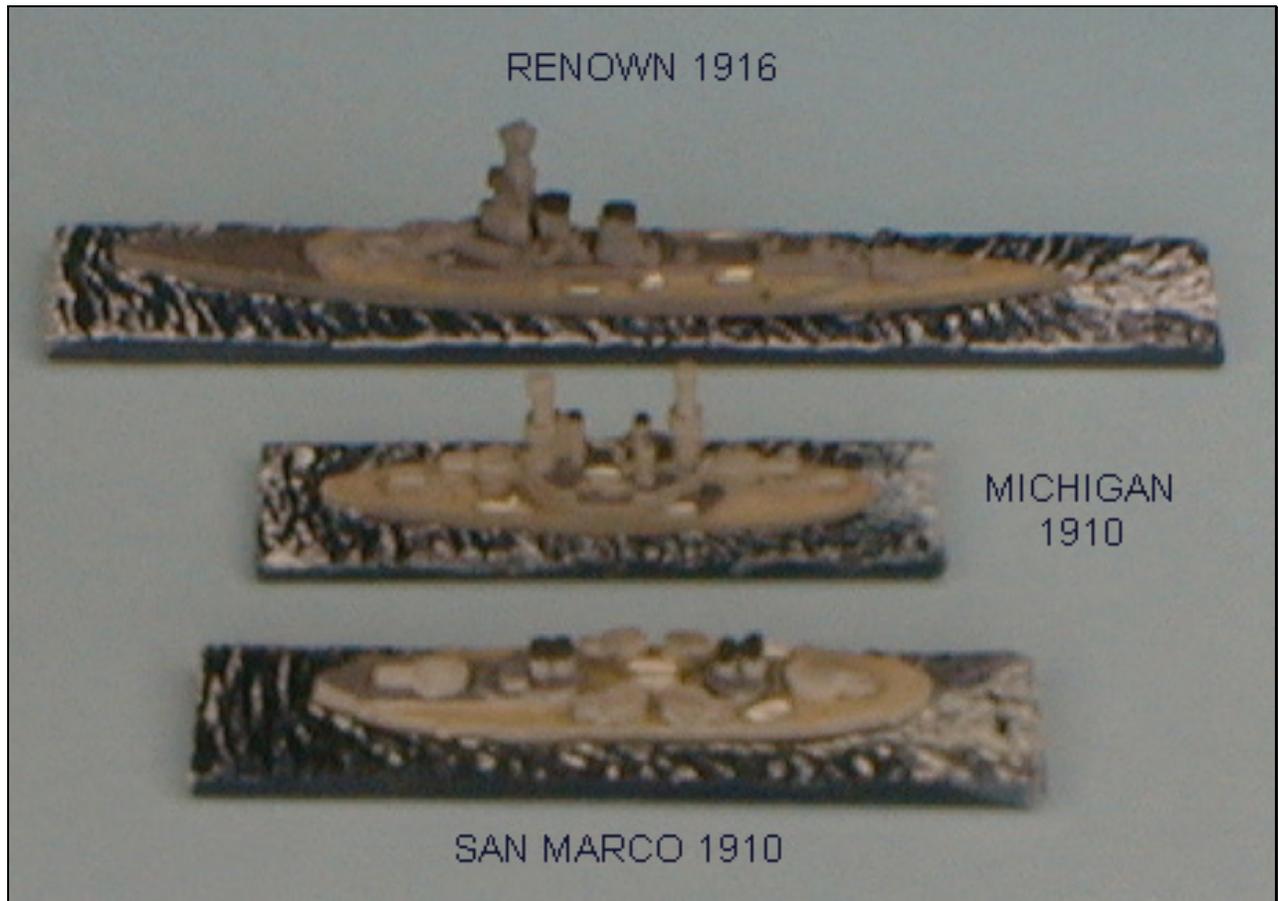
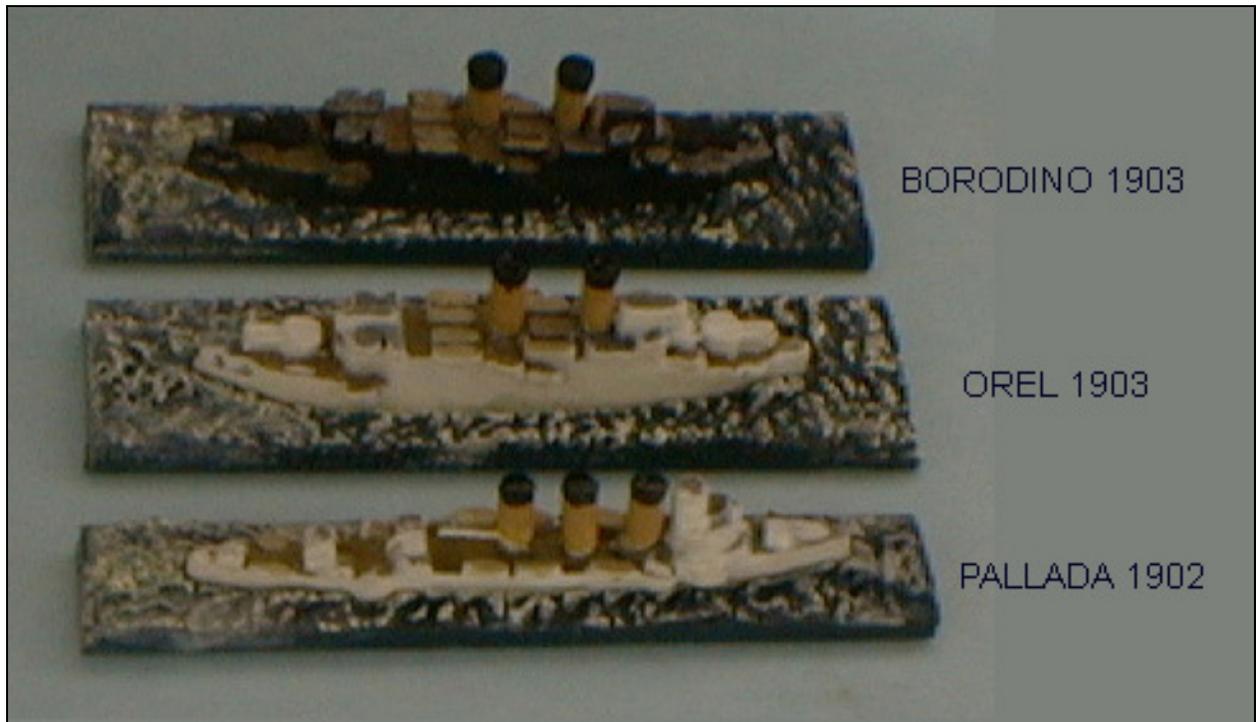
With few exceptions the castings are both sharp and clean. Less than 20% of the models I received require cleaning of sprue or flash which is remarkable considering the scale. Aside from the standard bottom-filing of bases (both ship and base attachment), there is little preparation required to make the casting ready for priming and painting.

Painting, however, is another matter entirely. The airbrushing techniques I have employed when painting larger scales still work just as well, but any detail work (i.e. funnel caps, lifeboats, gun barrels, etc.) is next to impossible without some source of magnification. Another problem is that fingers often prove to be an inadequate means of holding a model during the detailing process and most of the really small models (destroyers and small cruisers) are cast to their bases, presenting some additional challenges in painting the hull.

Bottom line is that you will need to establish some alternatives to your normal methods of painting if you are interested in accurate depictions of a particular ship, but given the pricing and selection, you really can't go wrong purchasing a large fleet in this scale.

PHOTOGRAPHS

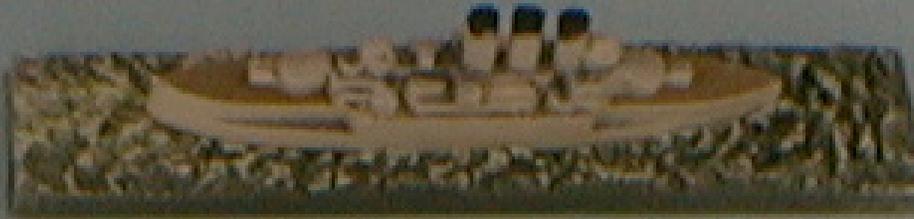




FLORIDA 1911



HESSEN 1904



MAJESTIC 1895

