

The Hood in Colour

THE IMAGES ON THESE PAGES are stills from two colour films shot by the Hood's Chief Engineer, Cdr (E) R.T. Grogan, who joined the ship on 5th May 1939 and perished with her two years later. The footage, which was shot with a 16-mm cine-camera, dates from the summer of 1939 to the autumn of 1940 and reveals the ship from the time of her full-power trials in June or July 1939, through the early months of the war and finally to the period following her Mediterranean interlude in the summer of 1940. The intended result, a film titled *The War from the Hood* with soundtrack, has yet to come to light but the surviving footage provides a remarkable visual record of the ship as she entered the concluding phase in her life. Robert Terence Grogan was born in Kent in c.1901 and presumably entered Dartmouth around the outbreak of the First World War. A brilliant engineer with a reputation for breakneck driving at Brooklands, Grogan was appointed to Hood having been Senior Engineer in the new cruiser *Sheffield*. But Grogan's main shipboard hobby was film-making and sound recording. The latter not only allowed him to record the King's radio broadcast while the rest of the wardroom slept off Christmas lunch in December 1940, but also to install a device beneath the log of the forward control platform to catch engine-room gossip

from Lt (E) Louis Le Bailly.¹

The first showing of Grogan's uncut work appears to have been to a wardroom audience in October 1939. This material seems mainly to have been of the ship running full-power trials that summer (nos. 5–12) but no doubt included footage of the *Spearfish* episode the previous month (see p. 190) when Grogan is recorded as having been on deck with his camera. The shots of the flag deck (nos. 15–17) probably also date from this period. Grogan was in action again in mid December when Hood escorted the first Canadian troop convoy of the war into Greenock with *Resolution*, *Repulse* and *Warspite* in company (no. 21). The appearance of either *Georges Leygues* or *Montcalm* in one of the sequences suggests he was also filming during the patrol conducted with the French navy at the end of November. By early 1940 Grogan's work had been given sanction by the Admiralty and was being broadcast by British Gaumont News, though usually in black and white. Years later, Rear-Admiral Peter La Niece, a midshipman aboard in the first months of 1940, recalled standing beside Grogan as he shot some of the footage that has become the stock of countless war documentaries:

The Engineer Commander was a movie camera buff and his reputation was such that he had

been issued with an official camera by the Admiralty. I was standing right beside him when he took the very sequence which found its way into the archives and which still reappears time and again in documentaries on television; whenever I see this clip of capital ships ploughing through heavy seas I am always reminded of these patrols.²

Grogan's camera appears again during the Hood's Mediterranean interlude, first at Gibraltar (no. 22) and then apparently during one of her sorties into the western basin. The last identifiable footage is of the ship at Rosyth in the autumn of 1940 (no. 23). Reports of further wardroom screenings in October 1940 indicate that Grogan had shot footage of Hood and *Ark Royal* under Italian aerial bombardment in July or August but this ordeal is not among the frames captured here.³ Perhaps in some forgotten loft or packing case lies a canister of film and its synchronized radiogram entitled *The War from the Hood* waiting to add a further dash of colour to her last years. Let us hope so.

¹ Iago, *Letters* (Greenock, 25 December 1940), and Vice-Admiral Sir Louis Le Bailly, letter to the author, 1 February 2004.

² La Niece, *Not a Nine to Five Job*, p. 29.

³ Iago, *Letters* (Scapa Flow, 10 October & 1 November 1940).



1 Hood glides past the camera on her way out of Portsmouth to run trials off the Isle of Wight in the summer of 1939. Men are fallen in by divisions on the forecastle, boat deck, quarterdeck and atop both 'B' and 'X' turret. Note the bluish-grey hue of AP507A (Home Fleet dark grey) in which she has just been painted.



2 The Hood's Marine detachment fallen in beside 'X' turret as the ship warps away from the jetty at Portsmouth in the summer of 1939. The band marches on the quarterdeck. *Repulse* lies astern.



3 An Admiralty tug helps the Hood out of Portsmouth in the summer of 1939. Starboard No. 3 5.5in gun is visible on the right.



4 Hood seen from her port quarter in a still from the same sequence as the first image. The Marine detachment is still fallen in on the quarterdeck.

5 *Hood's* forecastle wreathed in spray as she reaches her best speed in the summer of 1939. This sequence was filmed from the starboard side of the Compass platform overlooking the 30ft rangefinder atop the main director.

6 The same view seen from the Admiral's bridge. The conning tower rises on the left while 'Squeak', the starboard 0.5-inch machine-gun mounting, sits under a tarpaulin on the right.

7 & 8 The funnels seen from the port side of the Admiral's bridge during the *Hood's* full-power trial in June 1939. In the second image excess steam can be seen roaring out of the safety valves. Note the struts supporting the funnels and the 44in searchlight on the right.

9 The after funnel and the spotting top seen during full-power trials in June 1939. Note the white base of the foretopmast abaft the aloft director.

10 Waves begin to lap onto the quarterdeck during the *Hood's* full-power trial in June 1939. An awning stanchion and an electric winch lie between 'X' and 'Y' turrets.

11 The quarterdeck during the *Hood's* full-power trial in June 1939. An awning stanchion has been struck in the foreground while the base of an ammunition davit lies beyond.

12 Water boils under *Hood's* stern during a full-power trial in June 1939. This foreshortened view of the quarterdeck seems have been taken from the port side of 'X' turret.

13 Parties of men being told off for work on the forecastle in the summer of 1939. Most have gas masks slung over their shoulders in canvas bags. This view was shot from the starboard side of the flag deck.

14 Men clamber into one of the *Hood's* 25ft fast motor boats in a heavy swell, c.1939. Though shaded by the ship's side, the red corticene decking is just discernible on the left of the image.

15-18 Boy signalmen at work on the starboard side of the flag deck, c.1939. Flags are being selected from the lockers and bent to the halyards before hoisting. The refit of February-June 1939 extended both flag decks and enclosed their after ends with new lockers, seen in nos. 15-17. Another addition of the February-June refit is visible in no. 17 in the shape of Starboard No.1 twin 4in mounting. The boys are carrying gas masks.

19 'X' turret trained to starboard, c.1939-40. The muzzles are protected from the weather by canvas covers.

20 The port side of the quarterdeck with 'X' and 'Y' turrets trained to starboard. A man can be seen emerging from the access hatch behind the rangefinder of 'Y' turret.

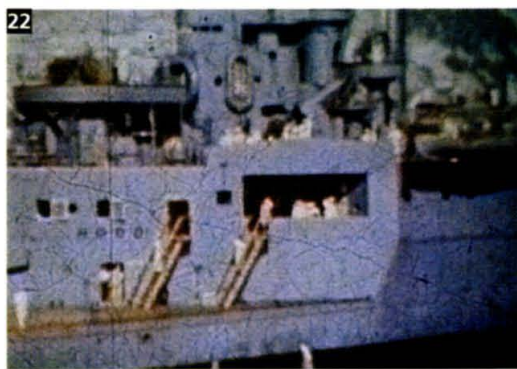
21 *Hood's* quarterdeck awash in enormous seas during the escorting of the first Canadian troop convoy into Greenock, December 1939. *Resolution* astern. A still from this sequence was produced aboard for sale as a postcard.

22 The *Hood* seen at Gibraltar in the summer of 1940. Men can be seen lining the Commander's lobby in their tropical rig. The lighter shade of paint discernible in this image suggests that the *Hood* may have received her final shade of AP507B (Home Fleet medium grey) earlier than previously thought. Note the wooden ladders on the aft screen and the grey floats and boats.

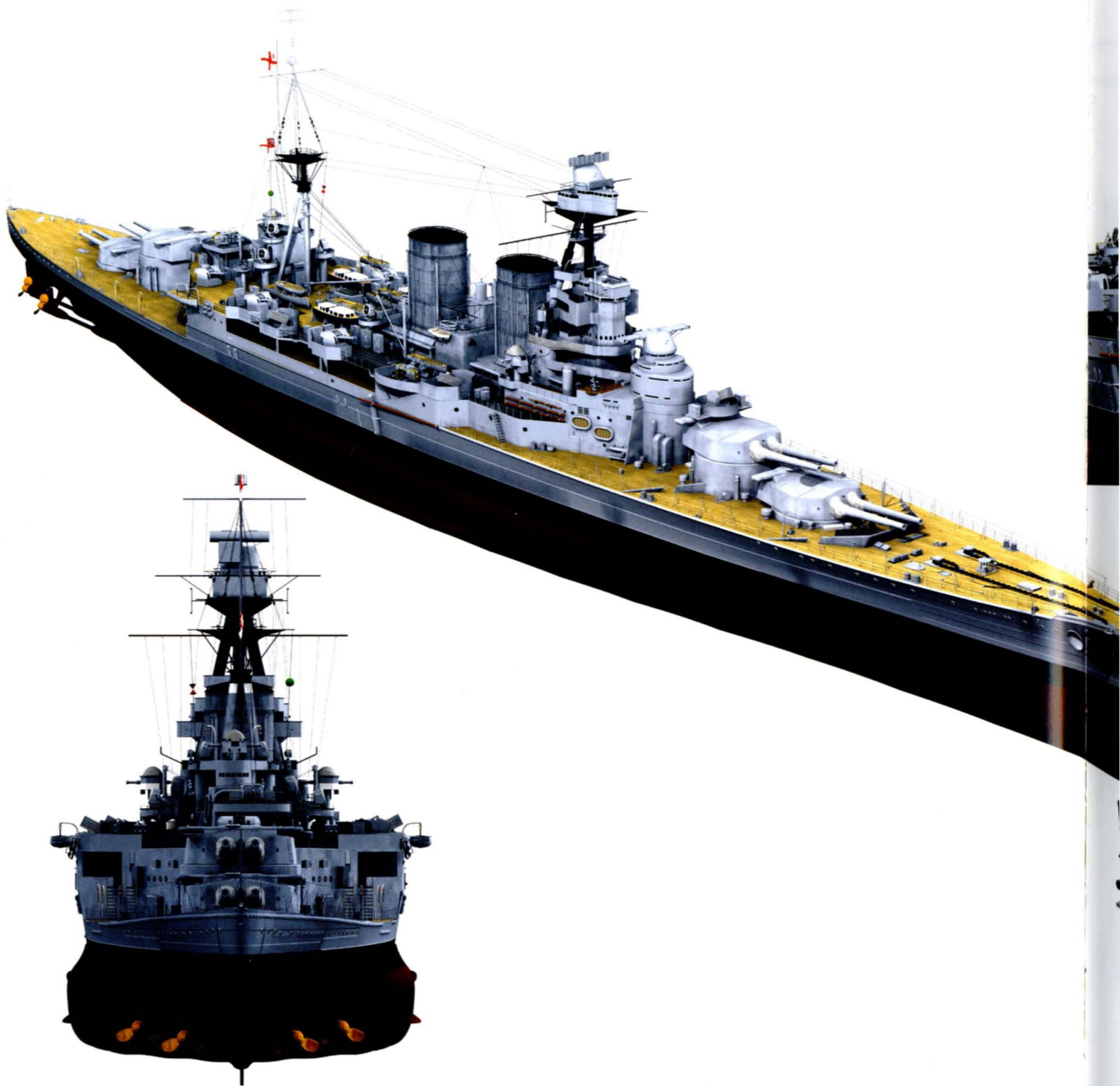
23 Dawn at Rosyth in the autumn of 1940. The view is from the quarterdeck looking forward. Port and Starboard No. 3 twin 4in mountings can be made out on either side of 'Y' turret. The Forth Bridge is in the background.

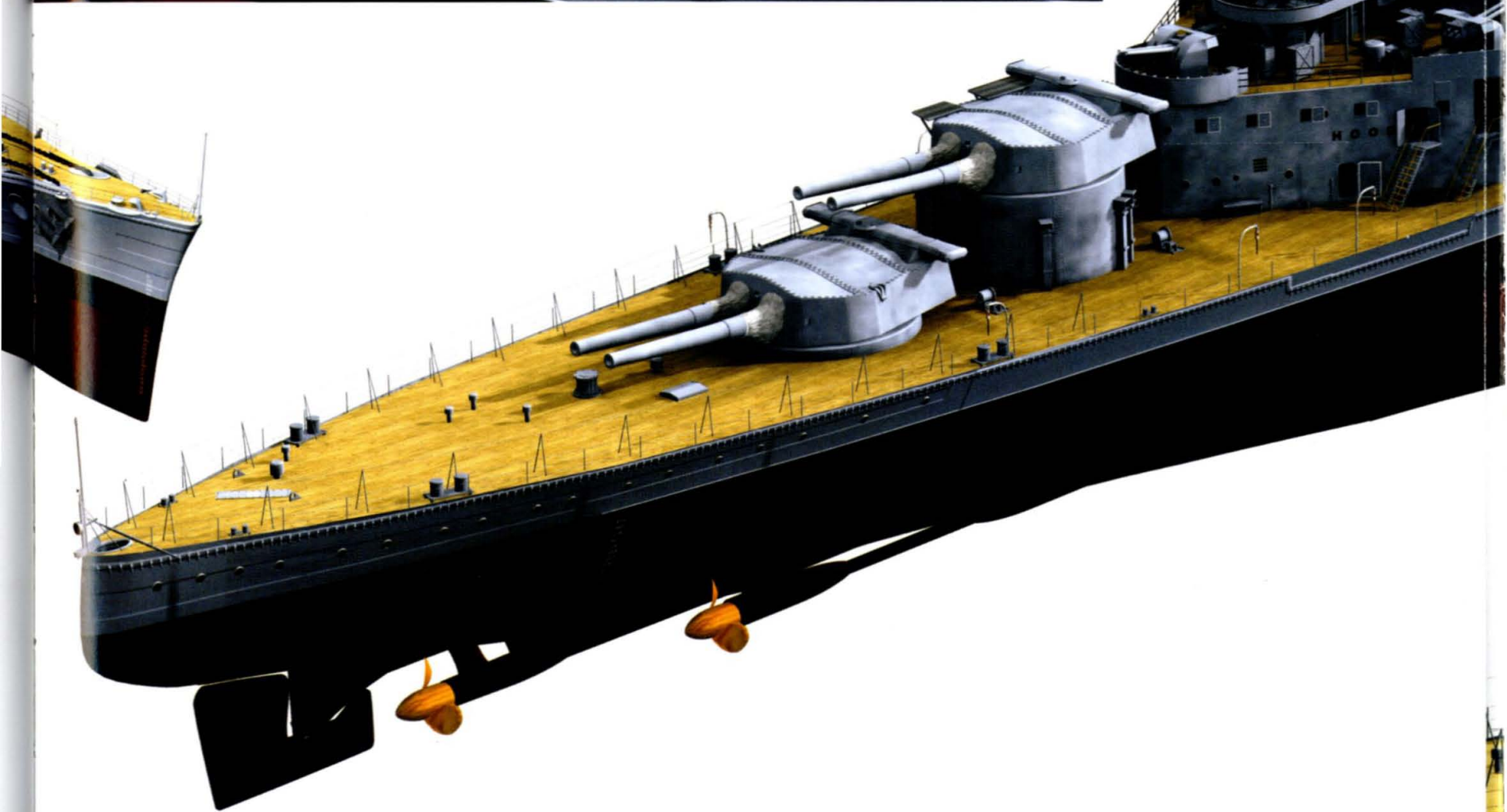
24 Sunset as the Atlantic breaks over *Hood's* decks during the winter of 1939-40.

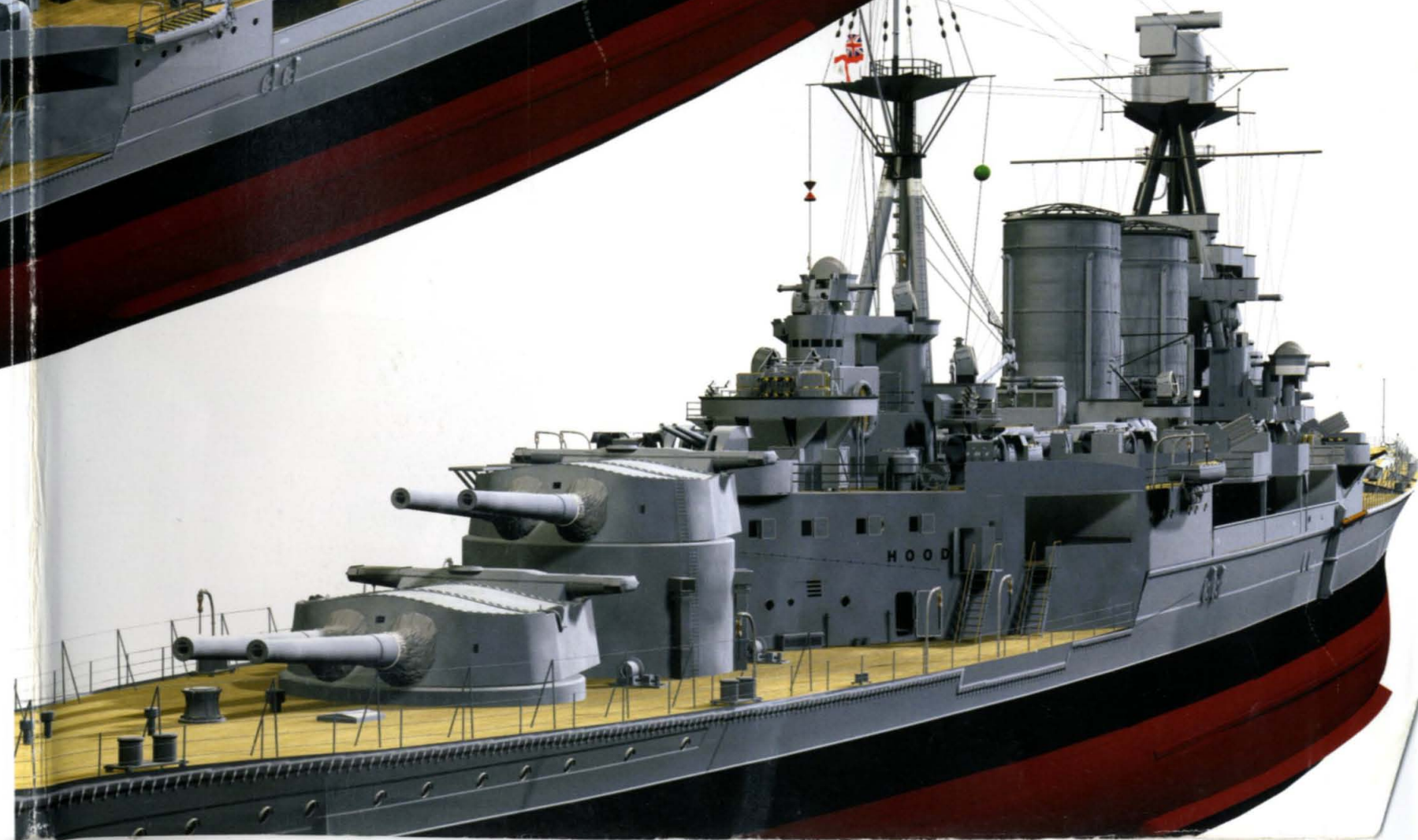
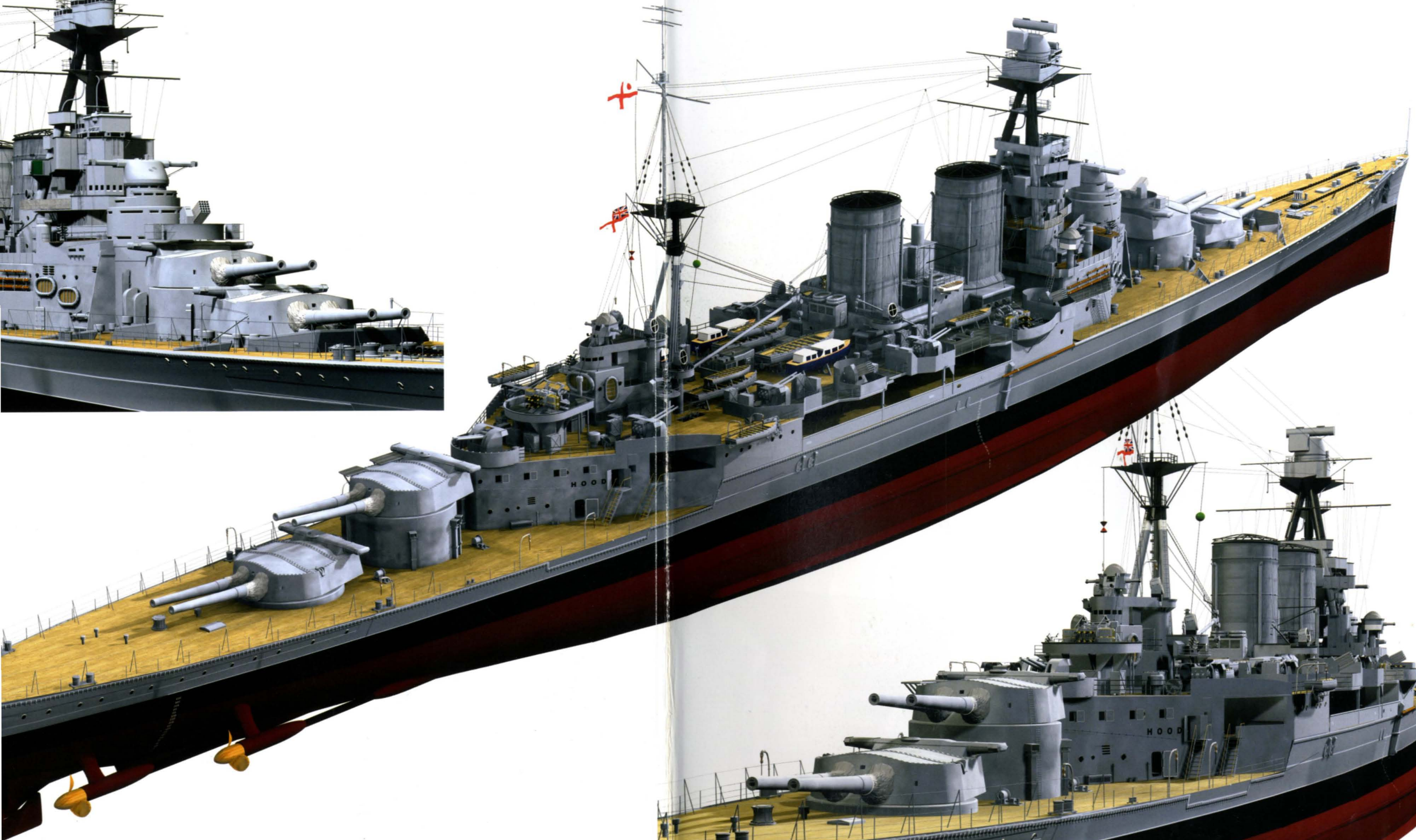




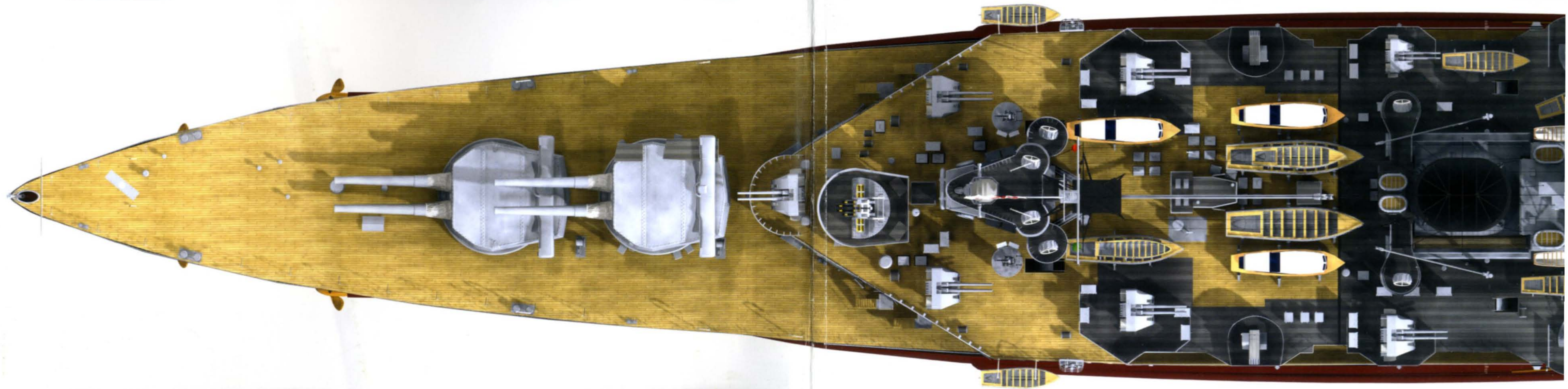
HMS *Hood*, May 1941

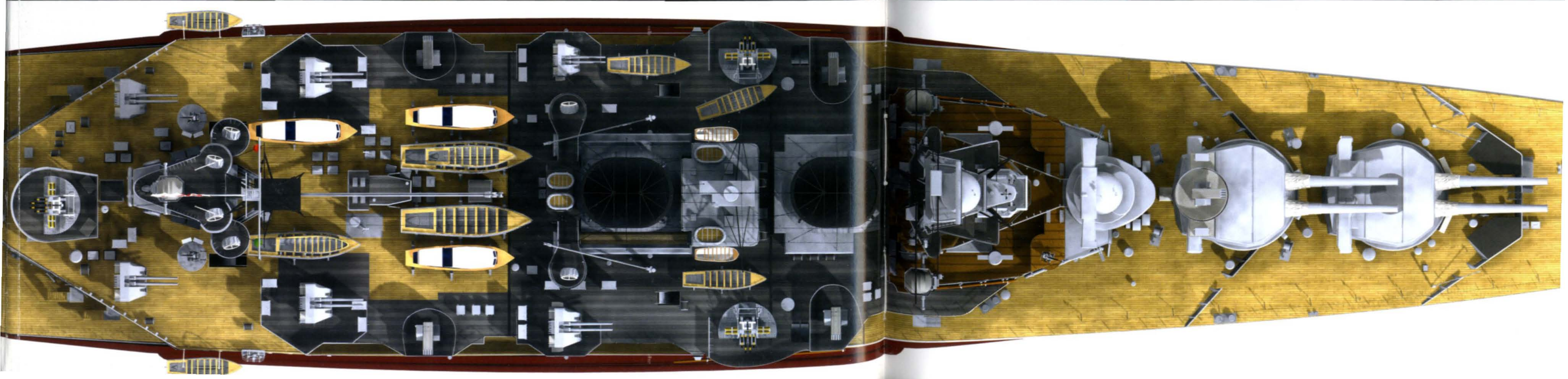


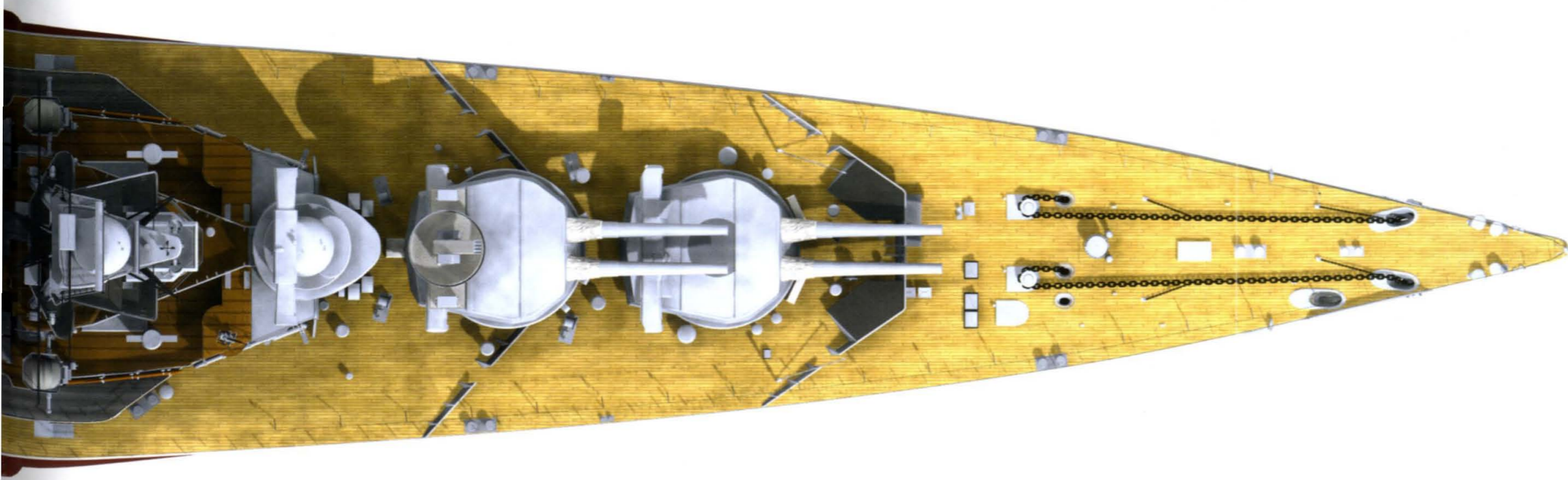
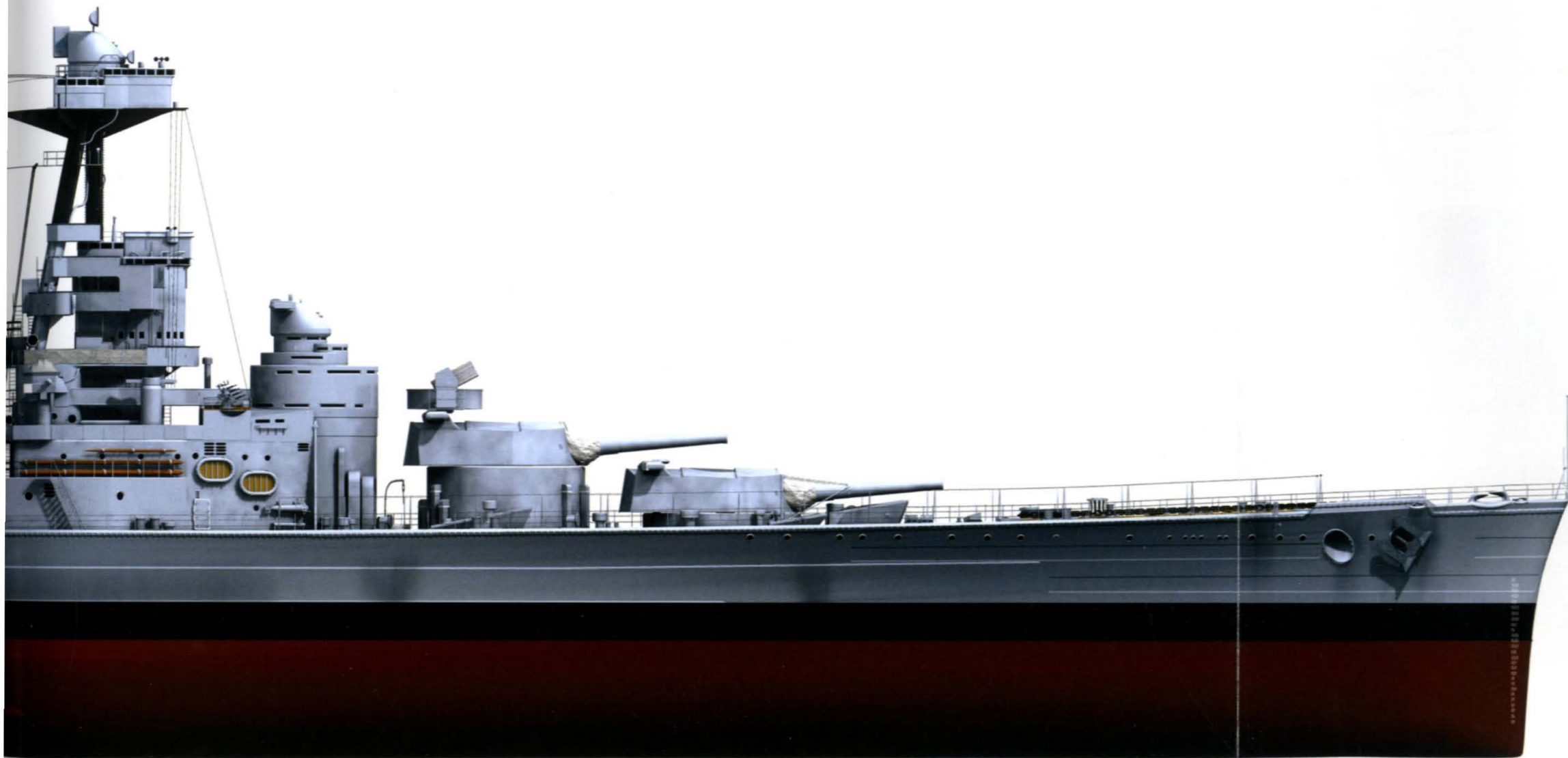


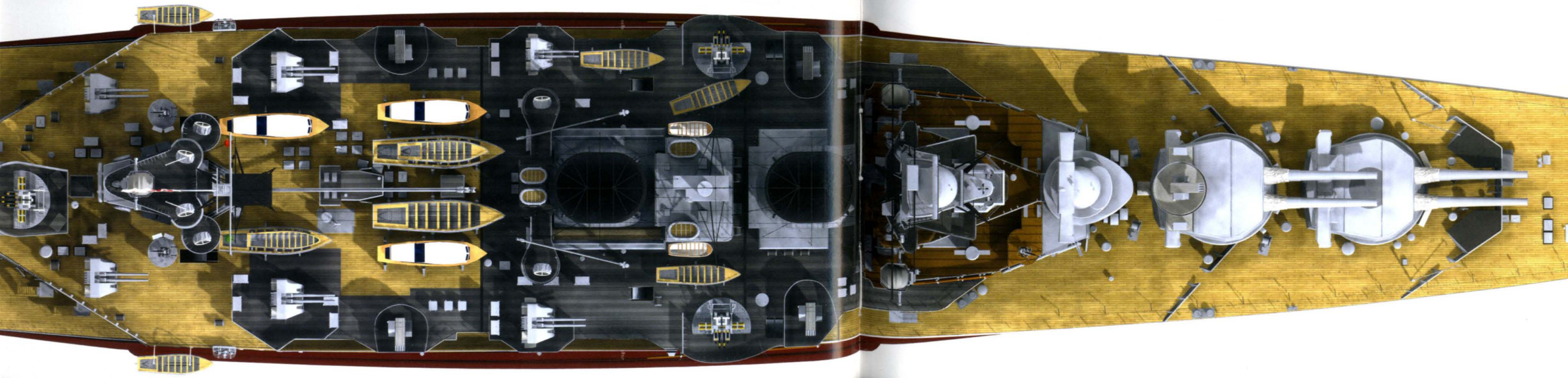
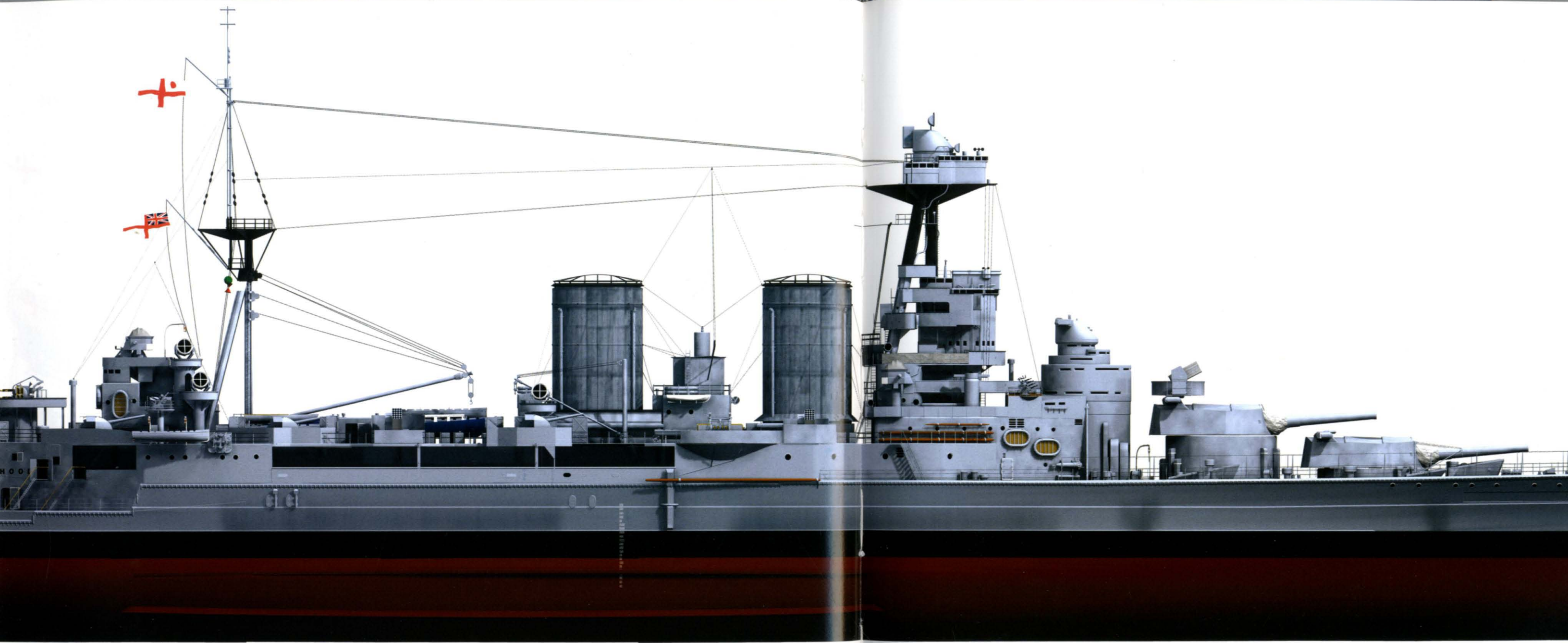


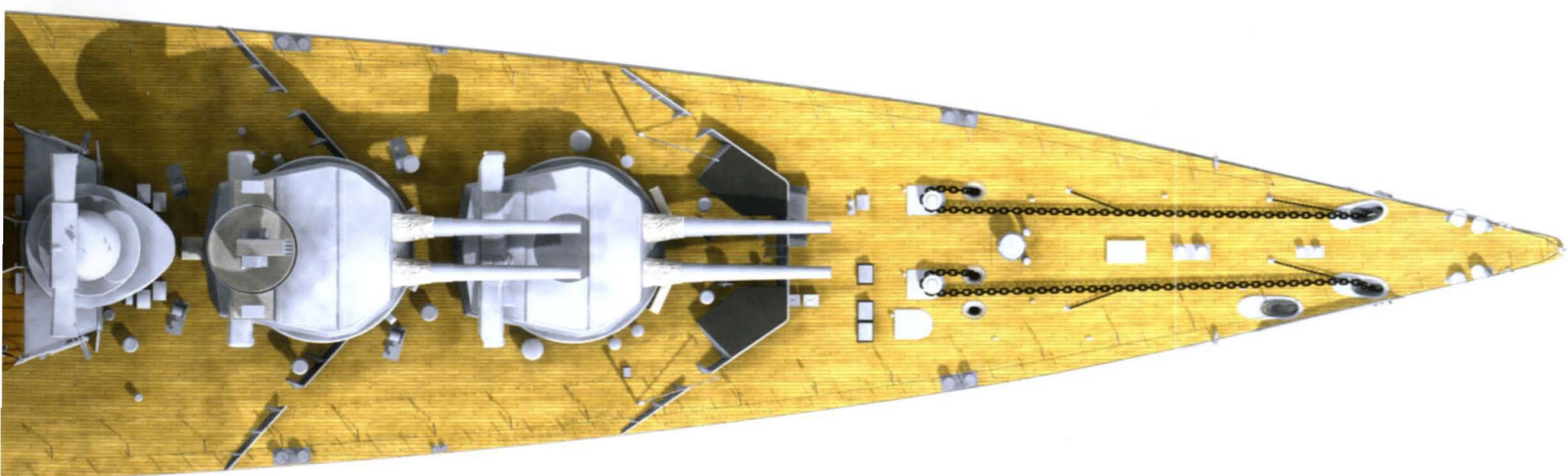
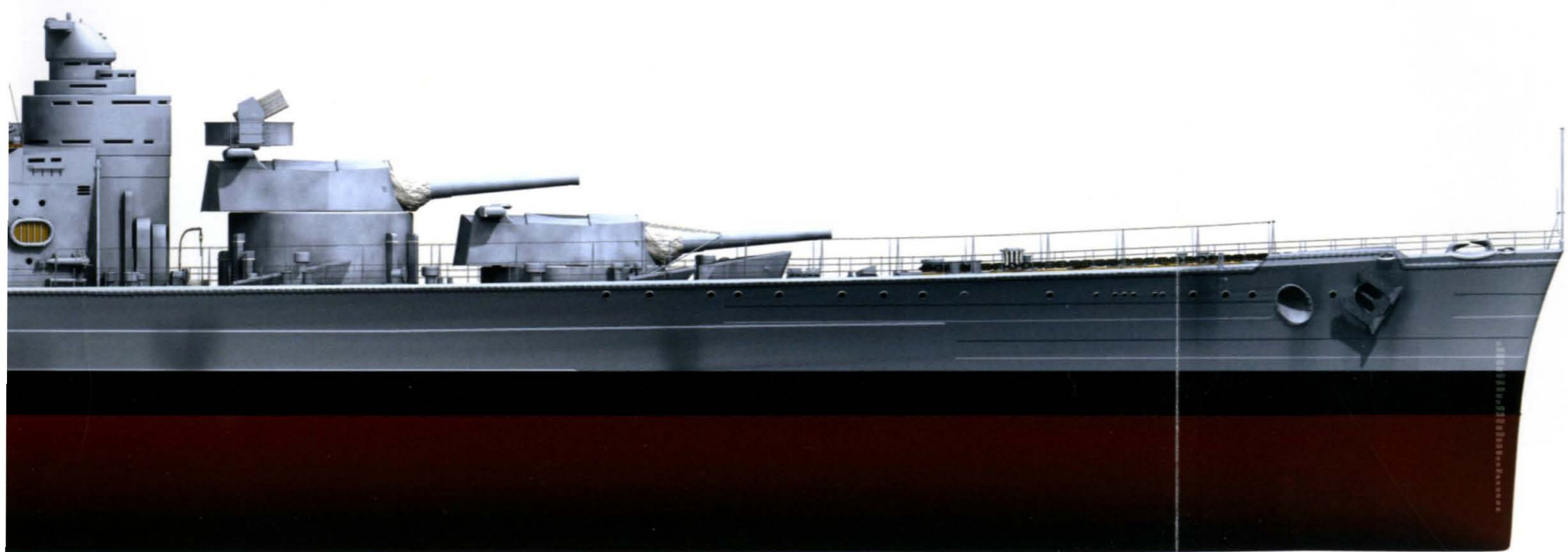
HMS Hood, May 1941





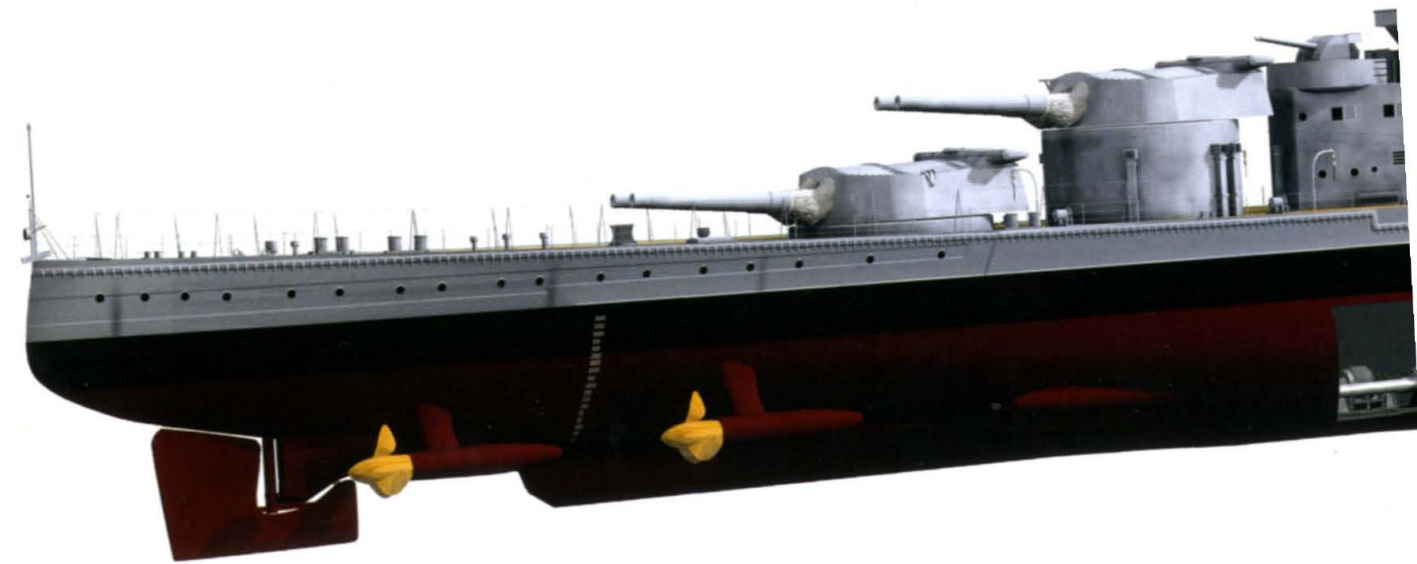


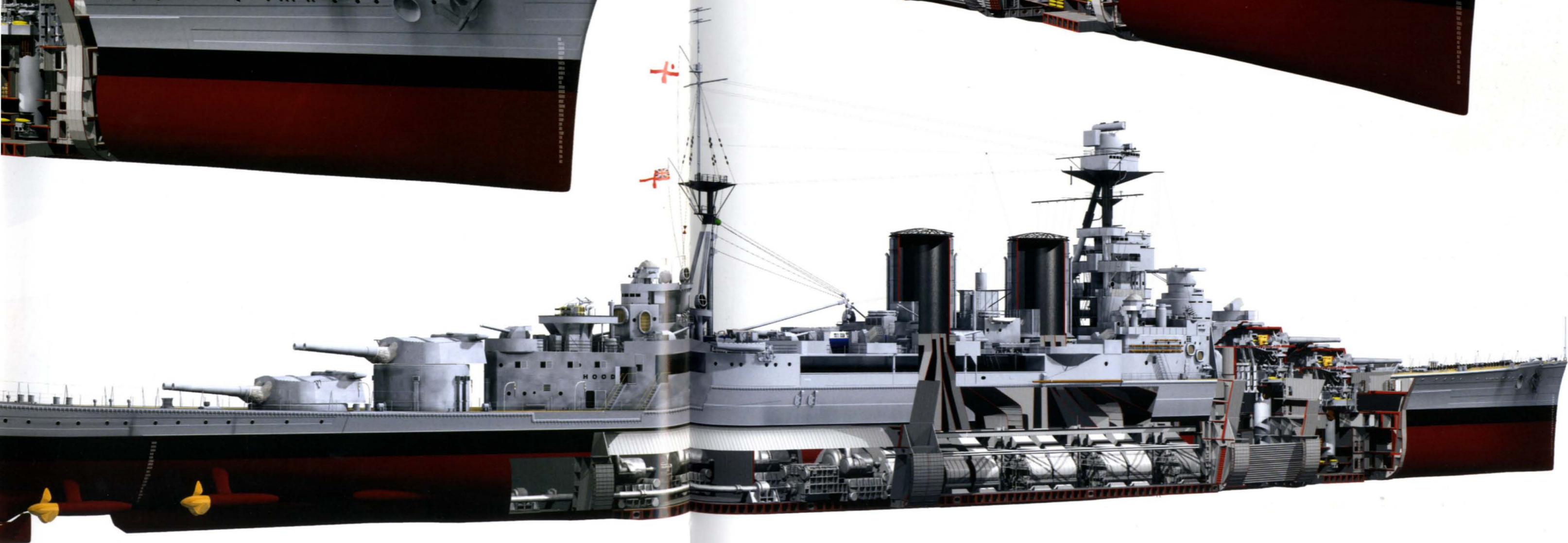




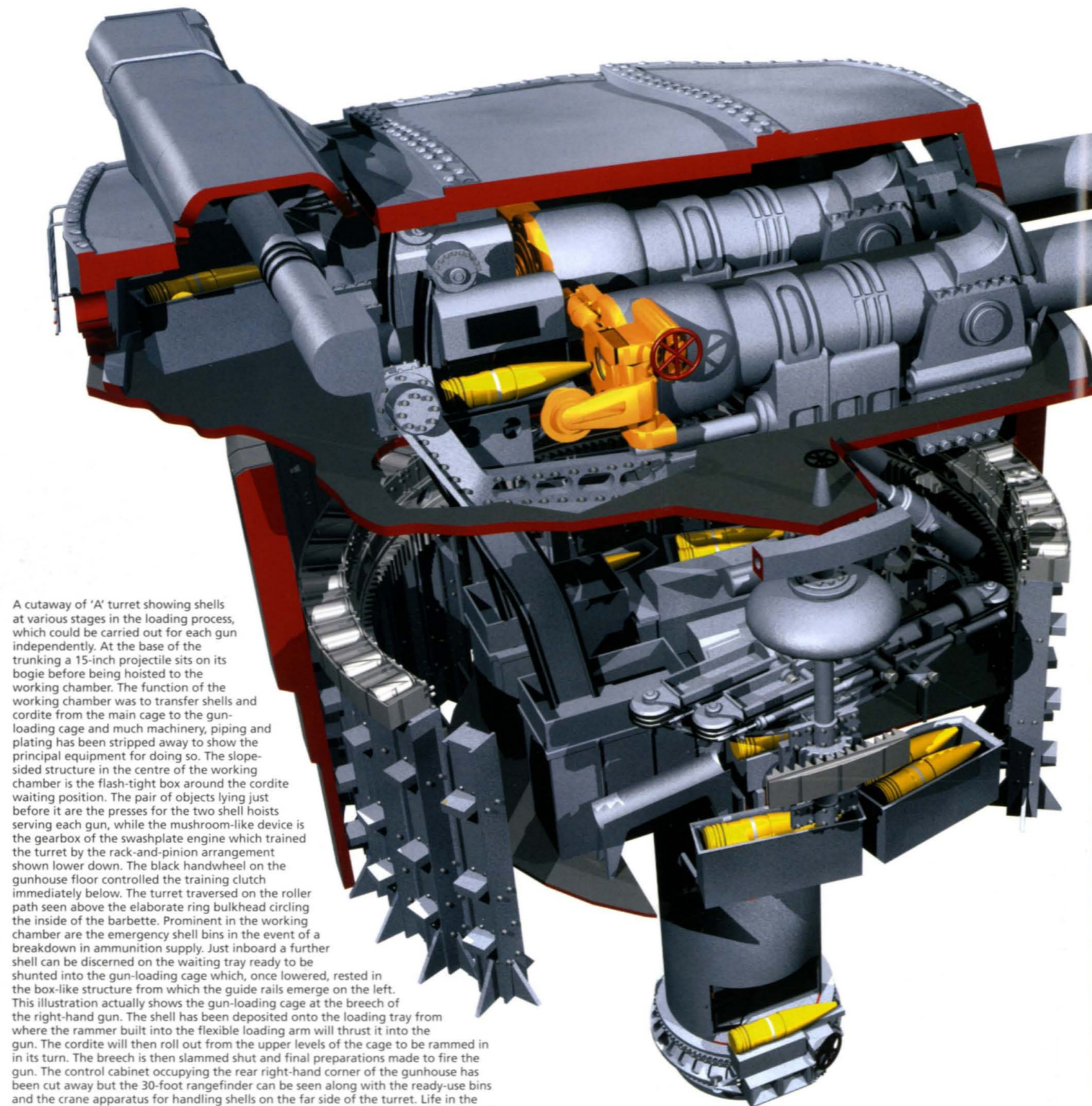
Internal arrangements, HMS Hood, May 1941

The images on these pages provide internal views of the Hood's turbine and boiler spaces together with sections of 'A' and 'B' turrets which can be seen in greater detail on the following spread. Beneath the funnels are 'Y', 'X' and 'B' Boiler Rooms along with part of 'A' Boiler Room under the bridge structure. Above them are the uptakes carrying smoke and gas into the funnels, and on the seaward side the 19-inch pipes transferring steam to the engine spaces. The three engine rooms dominated in each case by the turbine sets driving the propeller shafts. The two outer shafts were driven by a pair of turbines in the Forward Engine Room, the middle room containing the inner the port unit and the after room the inner starboard. The shafting of the starboard outer propeller can be seen extending over 250 feet from the Forward Engine Room to the shaft bracket on the hull. The thrust block of this shaft lies abreast the bulkhead separating the forward from the middle engine rooms, with smaller Plummer blocks punctuating it further aft. These views also show key elements of the Hood's hull construction, including the double bottom, a bulge section abreast 'X' turret, the round-down of 2-inch plating visible over the engine rooms, one of the longitudinal strength girders seen over the boiler rooms, and finally the sealed crushing tubes filling the buoyancy space in the ship's bulges, shown here between 'A' Boiler Room and 'B' turret.

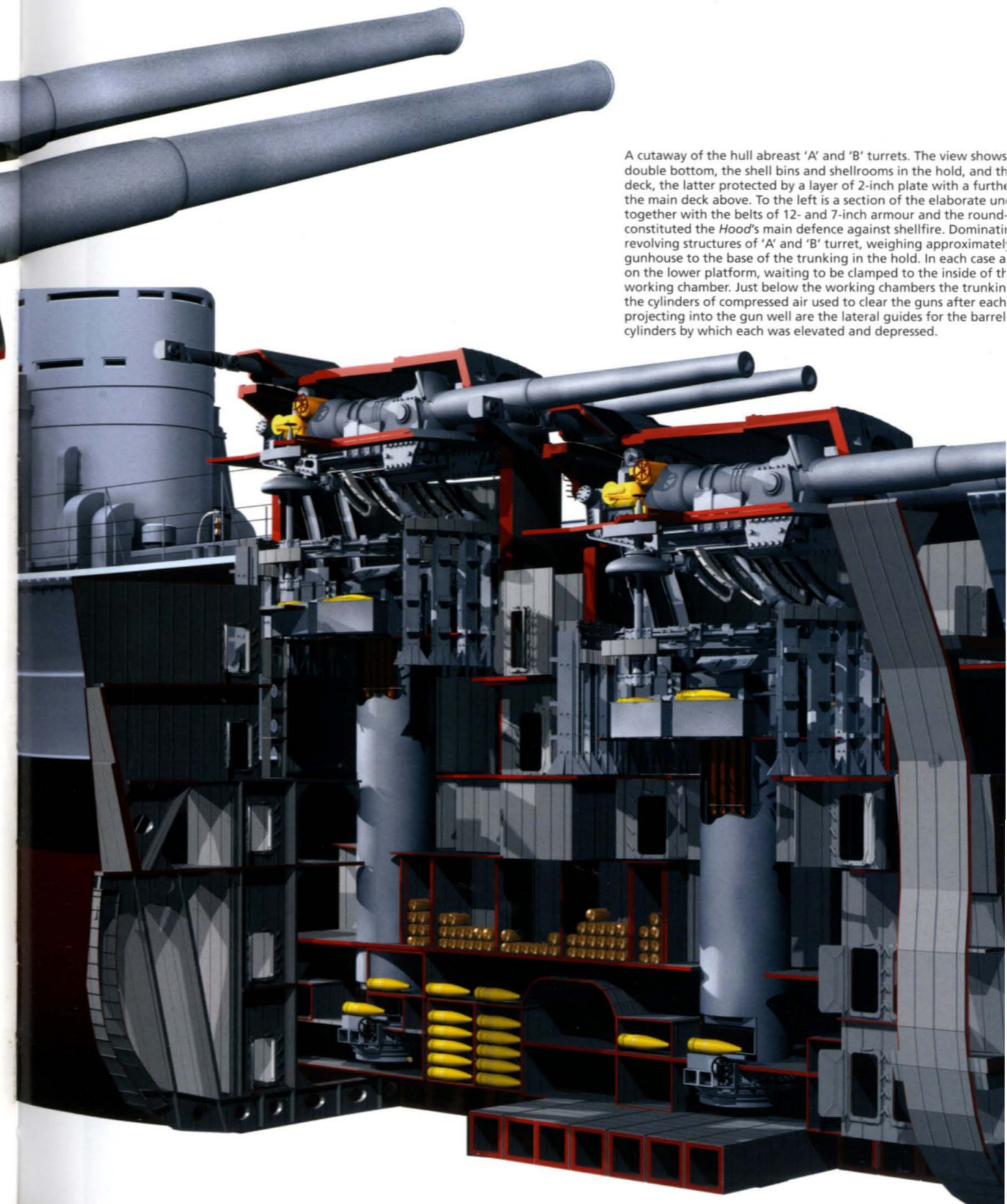




The 15-inch Mk II turret and its loading system

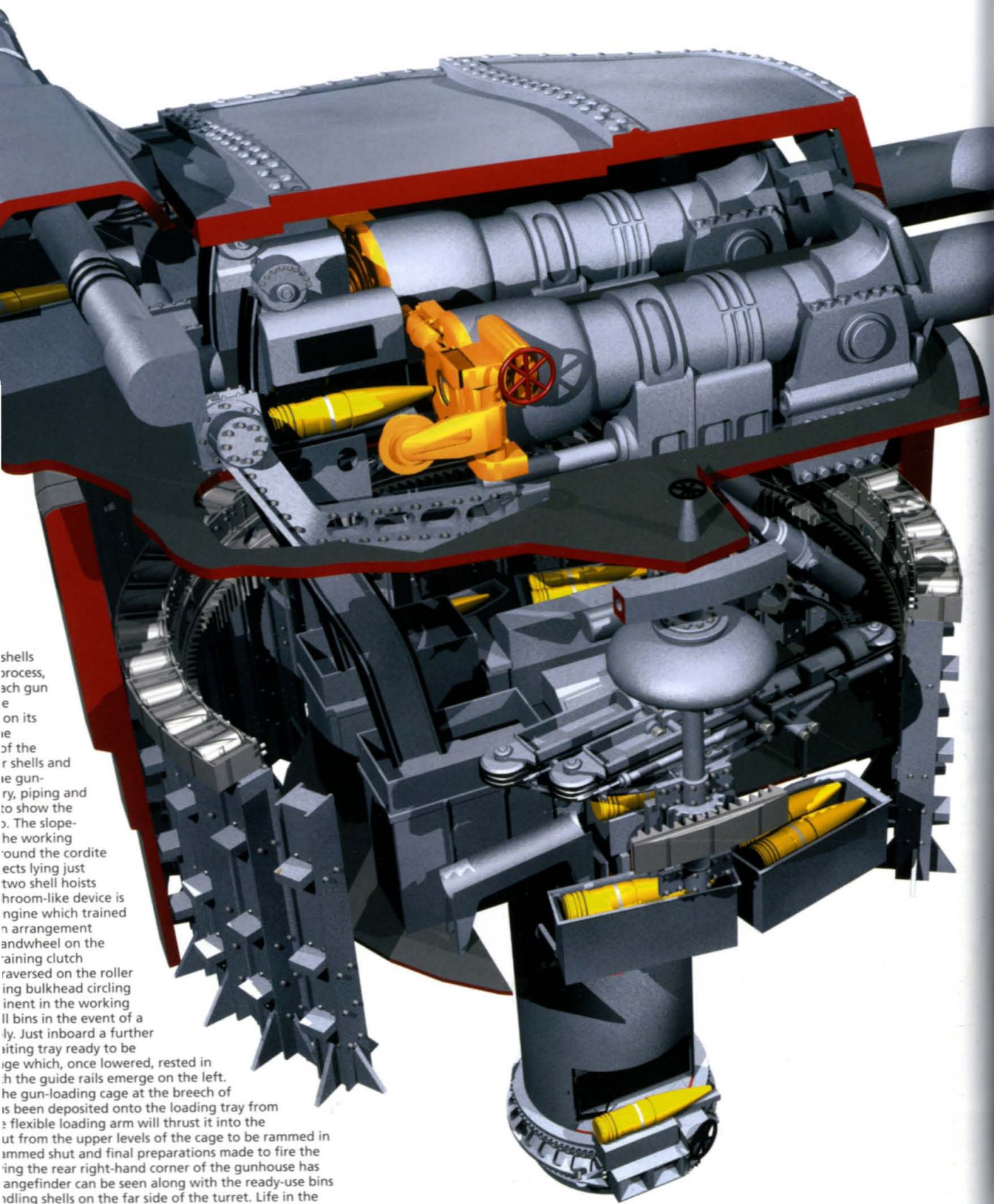


A cutaway of 'A' turret showing shells at various stages in the loading process, which could be carried out for each gun independently. At the base of the trunking a 15-inch projectile sits on its bogie before being hoisted to the working chamber. The function of the working chamber was to transfer shells and cordite from the main cage to the gun-loading cage and much machinery, piping and plating has been stripped away to show the principal equipment for doing so. The sloped structure in the centre of the working chamber is the flash-tight box around the cordite waiting position. The pair of objects lying just before it are the presses for the two shell hoists serving each gun, while the mushroom-like device is the gearbox of the swashplate engine which trained the turret by the rack-and-pinion arrangement shown lower down. The black handwheel on the gunhouse floor controlled the training clutch immediately below. The turret traversed on the roller path seen above the elaborate ring bulkhead circling the inside of the barbette. Prominent in the working chamber are the emergency shell bins in the event of a breakdown in ammunition supply. Just inboard a further shell can be discerned on the waiting tray ready to be shunted into the gun-loading cage which, once lowered, rested in the box-like structure from which the guide rails emerge on the left. This illustration actually shows the gun-loading cage at the breech of the right-hand gun. The shell has been deposited onto the loading tray from where the rammer built into the flexible loading arm will thrust it into the gun. The cordite will then roll out from the upper levels of the cage to be rammed in its turn. The breech is then slammed shut and final preparations made to fire the gun. The control cabinet occupying the rear right-hand corner of the gunhouse has been cut away but the 30-foot rangefinder can be seen along with the ready-use bins and the crane apparatus for handling shells on the far side of the turret. Life in the gunhouse was characterised by dim light, violent concussions of heavy machinery and the smell of oil and particularly cordite which entered the turret with each firing.

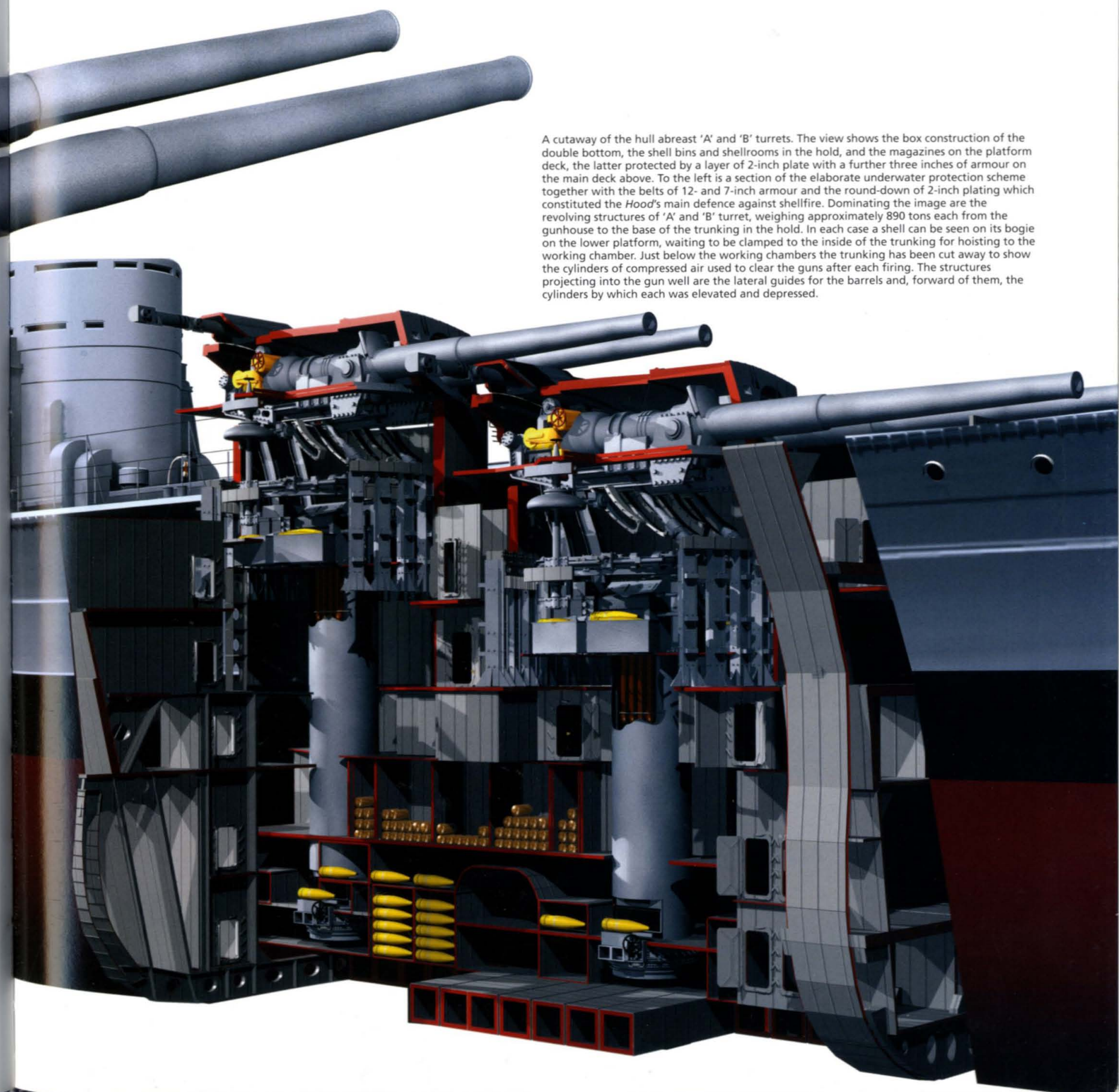


A cutaway of the hull abreast 'A' and 'B' turrets. The view shows the double bottom, the shell bins and shellrooms in the hold, and the main deck above. To the left is a section of the elaborate structure which constituted the *Hood's* main defence against shellfire. Dominating the view are the revolving structures of 'A' and 'B' turret, weighing approximately 1,000 tons each. The gunhouse to the base of the trunking in the hold. In each case a shell is on the lower platform, waiting to be clamped to the inside of the working chamber. Just below the working chambers the trunking the cylinders of compressed air used to clear the guns after each firing projecting into the gun well are the lateral guides for the barrel cylinders by which each was elevated and depressed.

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A cutaway of the hull abreast 'A' and 'B' turrets. The view shows the box construction of the double bottom, the shell bins and shellrooms in the hold, and the magazines on the platform deck, the latter protected by a layer of 2-inch plate with a further three inches of armour on the main deck above. To the left is a section of the elaborate underwater protection scheme together with the belts of 12- and 7-inch armour and the round-down of 2-inch plating which constituted the *Hood's* main defence against shellfire. Dominating the image are the revolving structures of 'A' and 'B' turret, weighing approximately 890 tons each from the gunhouse to the base of the trunking in the hold. In each case a shell can be seen on its bogie on the lower platform, waiting to be clamped to the inside of the trunking for hoisting to the working chamber. Just below the working chambers the trunking has been cut away to show the cylinders of compressed air used to clear the guns after each firing. The structures projecting into the gun well are the lateral guides for the barrels and, forward of them, the cylinders by which each was elevated and depressed.