

# North Head 1/1200<sup>th</sup> South American Ironclads

## By Rob Morgan

As soon as I saw a note on these intriguing new additions to the old 1/1200<sup>th</sup> scale in an issue of “Battlefleet,” the Naval Wargames Society journal, I sent for samples. It’s many years since the plea for useful ironclad-era warships began to ring out, but good ranges of pre-Dreadnought warships are still rare, sad to say, and what’s around tends to cost much more than an ACW warship.

I don’t regard the North Head models I’ve seen as “beauties,” good quality resin certainly; but expensive for resin. I’d have to admit there’s a decent level of detail on the models, and, as collector’s standard models to add to a 1/1200<sup>th</sup> collection lacking in early ironclad warships, yes, these do have a place if super-detailed and well painted. There’s a significant omission of course, and one which I thought might not have been left out given the price of say, the North Head model of *Huascar*, the Peruvian ironclad: It’s the rigging. Sail suites, masts and rigging “make” early ironclad models, no doubt about it, and the presence of two rather basic wire masts, one with a small “fighting top” on *Huascar* merely hints at what might have been expected. Hull detail is excellent, overall modelling detail, especially above decks, is just 5 out of 10, sadly, while hull warping is present, though minimal, in two of the five models I’ve seen. In the modern 1/1200<sup>th</sup> *Sa’ar* Israeli Fast Attack Craft sample, for instance, a warp of <1mm along the hull.

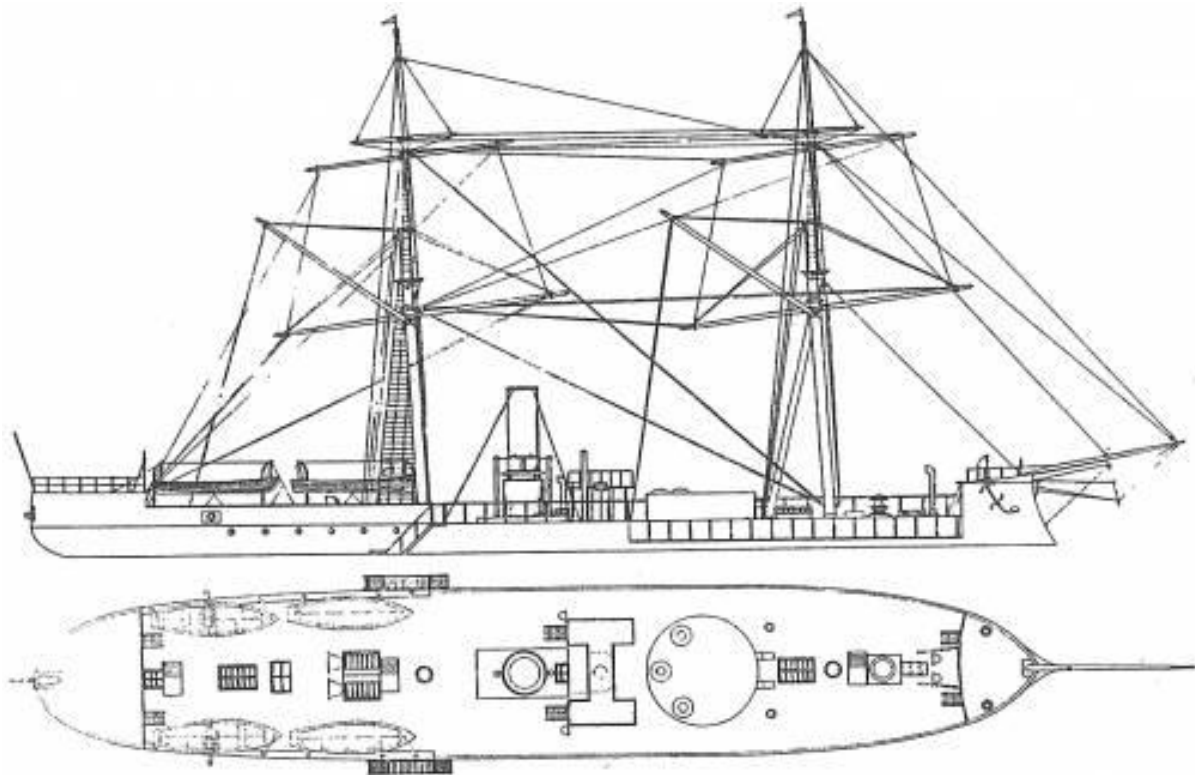


Figure 1 The *Huascar* (1866)

It isn't that I don't see the value of the North Head Ironclad models for a collection, but rather they are very, very expensive as wargames vessels. These are far from sturdy as resins, and require a decent base, and if properly rigged, which surely they must be, then they will become even more delicate to handle on the table top.

**Figure 2 The Huascar**



What fails to sell these models to me is the cost of fighting a wargame. I suspect the range will expand, as it must to provide a complete wargames series, and not merely a number of unusual 19<sup>th</sup> century ironclads. Taking the *Huascar* and *Independencia* as a starting point, then the Peru-Chile- Bolivia War will require these two plus the two monitors (which are of course already available in 1/1200<sup>th</sup> scale and a high standard of production quality from several well-known producers ) for Peru at the outset of

the conflict. For Chile, the two ironclads *Cochrane* and *Blanco* as well as the sloops *Esmerelda* and *Covadonga*, a total expenditure of almost \$100 US, a little more if *HMS Shah* is included for experimental purposes. The range will, I suspect, expand to include the *O'Higgins*, *Loa* and *Mathias C*, as well as provide some smaller support craft, early TB's, etc. Very expensive for naval wargaming purposes. To return to my earlier criticism, they are delicate models and require detailing above the decks. I also notice the remarkable absence of ship's boats from some of the mouldings.

Compare these with, say, Tumbling Dice's 1/2400<sup>th</sup> range of South American warships of the late 1800s. I acquired all of the necessary warships -- ironclads, lighter vessels and auxiliaries required -- in metal, all highly detailed, well-rigged and sea-based fit for wargames service for under £20, say \$24 US. That's value. My North Head *Huascar*, *Independencia* and *Brasil* (the latter's the best by far, incidentally) will wait for time to be detailed, rigged and mounted. Good collector's models, unusual in the scale, but for wargamers less valuable.

Do take a look at the site, if only to compare prices.

[www.nhminiatures.com](http://www.nhminiatures.com)

Do remember the company's based in New Zealand, and response time may be a little slower than you're used to.