

Lutjens Class destroyers

Detailing the Airfix kit of the *Rommel*
by **Paul E. Beaver**

IN SEPTEMBER 1964 an order was placed with the Bath Iron Works Co by the Federal German Navy (FGN) for three guided missile destroyers (DDGs) to be of a similar design to the United States Navy (USN) *Charles F. Adams* DDGs; at a cost of \$US44m. Units of this latter class are in service with the USN (23) and also with the Royal Australian Navy (three). Federal German Naval Ships (FGNS) *Lutjens*, *Molders* and *Rommel* have become the major surface units in the FGN and are specially modified to fulfil the enclosed sea-area role envisaged by the FGN as a commitment to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO); for example, different sensors are fitted to give the German domestic industries employment in the order. The Airfix 1:600 scale kit gives the modeller the chance to model all three units in the class — not just FGNS *Rommel* (D187). The kit is detailed below:

Name	Pen No	Launched	Completed	Remarks
<i>Lutjens</i>	D185	11.08.67	12.03.69	USN DDG 28 Major refit 1976/77
<i>Molders</i>	D186	13.04.68	12.09.69	USN DDG 29 Major refit 1975/76
<i>Rommel</i>	D187	01.02.69	24.04.70	USN DDG 30 Major refit 1974/75

Armament

The main armament consists of two single-mount Mk 42 127 mm dual-purpose gun mountings, one forward and one aft; these are backed up by the ASROC anti-submarine (AS) mounting amidships and two triple AS torpedo tubes abeam of the bridge. Aft is the single Tartar surface-to-air missile (SAM) mounting (the USN DDGs have a twin mounting).

Sensors

On the after funnel is situated the SPS52 three-dimensional radar reflector for air search; while for air surveillance there is an SPS50 set on the mainmast. Warning against the surface threat is provided by SPS10 and SPS37 sets on the foremast, and when this threat has been identified, a GFCS68 gun armament director and radar on the bridge top will guide the Mk 42 mountings on to the target, although the latter do have local control facilities. Should the target need the ASROC guided weapons system (GWS) the AS sensors would be invoked; similarly in the event of an air threat the Tartar SAM would be utilised in conjunction with the two SPG51 scanners aft of the second funnel. The triple torpedo tubes have local control.

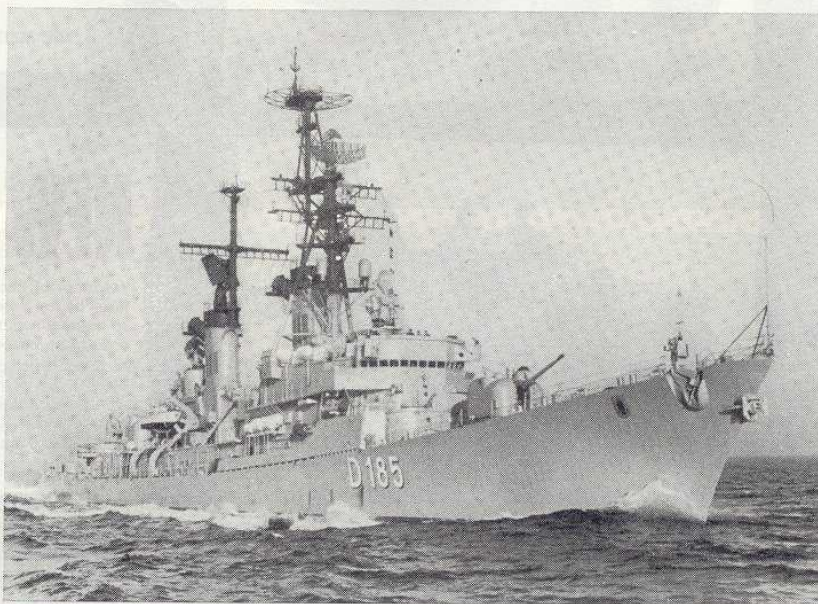
Numerous early warning (EW) and electronic countermeasures (ECM) sensors are

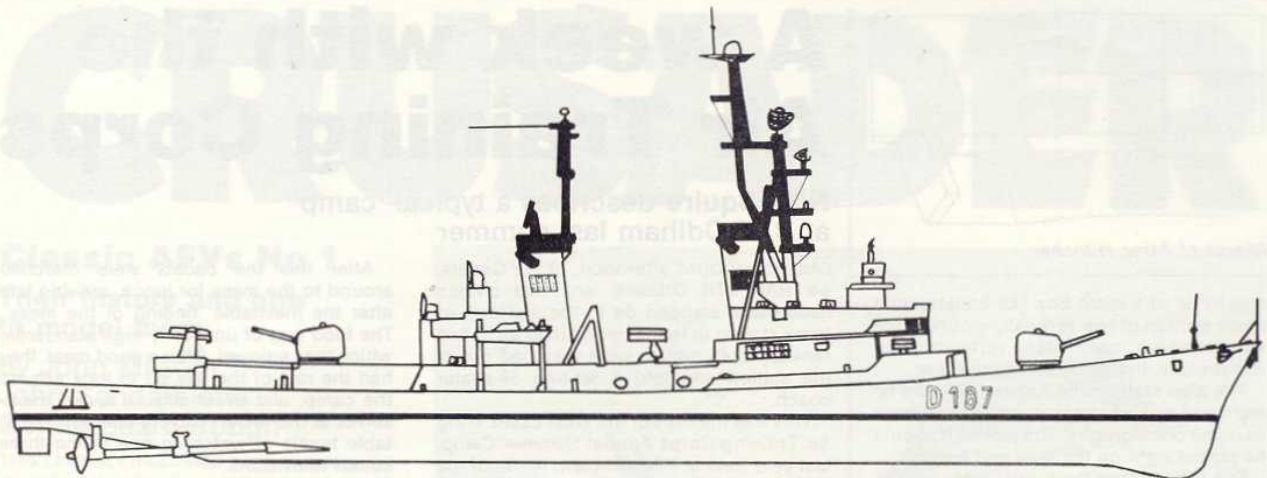
carried, but naturally information on these is very scanty; similarly data regarding the hull mounted sensors, such as sonar.

Certain corrections

Over the last few years we have come to expect high standards from Airfix in all their products and this of course also applies to their warships; it is good to see that the *Rommel* kit is generally accurate

Name ship of class, the FGNS *Lutjens*, D185.





and has a good appearance when completed; however, there are several 'above decks' corrections and details which can make the kit an even better representation of the real thing.

First, although the box artwork (see front cover of this issue) shows the standard life-raft canisters positioned on the superstructure sides, they are not represented in the kit. They can either be 'borrowed' from the other modern warship kits or produced from stretched sprue; they should be positioned as shown on the box lid around the bridge area and one either side of the after superstructure just aft of the ship's boats.

Working one's way up the foremast, one comes across various modifications to the aerials and radar scanners. The various EW 'bumps and bulges' seem to be good reproductions except that the lower starboard one is slightly tapered as compared to the port dome. On the next level is another EW dome (possibly a sea skimmer detector), and on a level higher is the SPS10 surface warning set which should be a centrally pivoting open lattice concave reflector and not as moulded in the kit. Still higher is the SPS37 air surveil-

lance radar which is a concave open mesh reflector, similar to the SPS10, and not as moulded in the kit. On the highest level is another EW dome and this rests on a platform which should be of an open lattice construction with a solid centre.

Now on to the mainmast; this can be constructed as per the kit with the exception of the following small points. The horizontal bar should have small 'knobs' on the lower edges (these are best reproduced by small amounts of cement), also the mast should be braced against the front of the after funnel and a D/F loop with two horizontal aerials (of the SPS50 air search radar) pointing to the ship's quarters should be fitted to the very top.

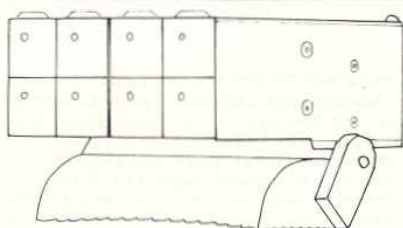
The 3-D air surveillance radar situated on the after funnel is perfect except that the reflector should have small perpendicular edge pieces.

The ASROC AS launcher amidships

Top of page Side view of the FGNS Rommel circa 1970. **Right** Foremast detail showing sensors. **Below** Another view of FGNS Lutjens. Note life raft canisters, mast details and Asroc launcher.



warships/adventure



Sketch of Asroc launcher.

should be of a more box-like construction (each section of two vertically mounted Mk 46 torpedoes can track vertically and horizontally, independent of the other).

The after staff on the foredeck should be reshaped as a whip aerial with a solid base as in the photographs. The jackstaff should be placed right on the bow and braced.

The exhausts on the funnel sides should be slanted aft and at 40° to the vertical.

The anchor arrangement on all the ships is that there is one anchor right on the bow and one on the starboard side of the bow.

Both gun mountings have various aerials which should be modelled from the photographs.

Notes

The Penant Numbers are in three positions and are white with a black outline, including the stern one.

The navigation lamps at either side of the bridge are red (port) and green (starboard).

Colour schemes for the Lutjens Class

Mid-grey (shade darker than RN) Hull, superstructure, funnels, turrets, Tartar launcher, triple torpedo tubes, ASROC launcher, GFCS68, SPG51 radars, EW domes, anchors, bollards, fairleads, capstans, staffs.

Slate grey All decking and superstructure tops.

Dark grey After funnel grilles, SPS10 and SPS37 radars.

Black Boot topping (thinner than RN warships), funnel caps, forward funnel grilles, mainmast, upper part of foremast, gun muzzles, SPS52 radar, bridge windows, Tartar missiles, port sighting pod of Mk 42 gun mountings.

White Life rafts, ship's boats above waterline, chains.

Dark blue Ship's boats under waterline (can easily differ from time to time).

Dark red Anti-fouling under waterline.

Bronze Propellers.

NB Ship's crests are painted on either side of the bow astern of the anchors — no details.

References

Federal German Naval Photographs, *Jane's Fighting Ships, 1970-71, 1974-75*, and *Jane's Weapons Systems, 1972-73*.

Acknowledgement

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Dimensions 134.1 x 14.3 x 6.1 metres.
Displacement 3,370/4,500 tonnes.
Speed Up to 36 knots.
Complement 340 officers and men.