

## Kitty Hawk Light Carrier

Flushed with its success during the Dilgar war, the Earth Alliance began to rapidly expand its sphere of influence. The numbers and sizes of the others races encountered during the war and the overall aggressiveness of several them left many within Earthforce feeling that the postwar fleet sizes should, if anything, be increased to protect the borders. However, Earthgov saw things a bit differently. They saw the rapid growth that followed, not in terms of cost to protect but in terms of cost to maintain and govern. Coupled with the massive debts incurred during the wartime expansion, Earthgov wasted little time in slashing Earthforce's budget while expanding its duties to patrol the expanding territories.

In terms of greatest bang for the buck, the simplest and most cost affective option would be fighters. The new Nova class Starfury was the equal to nearly every other race's fighters and was relatively cheap and easy to build in large numbers when compared to starships. Unfortunately, the Starfury was not atmospheric capable and thus could not be based on those planets which did not have an orbital station in place. The current generation of starships that carried their own fighters were deemed to valuable and to limited in numbers to waste on planetary patrol and no smaller vessels capable of carrying a useful number of fighters was available. Obviously, a new design was called for.

With a limited design budget, engineers quickly settled on the battle-tested hull of the Olympus Corvette as the best available option. Not only could the hull provide sufficient room for fighters, the Olympus had recently undergone a complete overall from the base Alpha version to the new Delta version. The new light carrier, now designated the Kitty Hawk class utilized the Delta's new electronics, engines and upgraded armor. The weapons suite retained the Delta's new pulse cannons and interceptors while dropping the railguns and missile racks in order to create the necessary room for a squadron of Starfuries.

The resulting light carrier was intended to act both as a fighter transport for the main fleet and also serve as base for a small garrison force of fighters for systems within Earth Alliance space. By filling basic garrison and defense roles, the Kitty Hawk would free up the larger warships for actions on the expanding borders of Earth space. Some within Earthgov even began to consider the new carrier as a cheap replacement for the older Orestes Monitors, which were proving to be very expensive to maintain. Nearly all of Earthgov loved the Kitty Hawks cheapness and ease of maintenance, which resulted in further budget reduction options. The men and women who served aboard the Kitty Hawks hated the ships. Though far quicker than an Orestes, in terms of transit times, the living arrangements were, if anything, even more cramped and spartan than the older Orestes. Earthforce Admiralty disliked that Kitty Hawk's limited endurance and need for constant resupply necessitated by its fighter compliment. The resulting struggle with Earthgov resulted in to few Kitty Hawks being constructed, in the eyes of many Earthgov Senators, and to many in the eyes of most Earthforce Admirals.

The Earth-Minbari war was the ultimate arbiter. While the Kitty Hawks served well during the war they simply were to light to stand up to a Minbari fleet and the Nial fighters made quick work of their squadrons. After the war, Earthforce shifted its focus back toward heavier warships. As a result, most of the fleet's funding went into building additional capitol ships and into the new Omega Destroyers. Production of the Kitty Hawk was thus halted due to lack of funds though there is some consideration of restarting the conversion process, assuming the Olympus line is restarted. A handful of Kitty Hawks, survivors of the Minbari war, are still in service.

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## Designer Notes

The basic idea and history of the Kitty Hawk Light Carrier is that of Leonard Farnsworth. I have simply updated the design and provided the SCS creation services. The Kittyhawk is based on the Delta version of the Olympus Corvette with the railguns and missile racks removed in order to increase the hangar from 2 to 14, thus providing space for 12 fighters. Removing the two railguns meant a +12 power reserve assuming the current reactor was not reduced in size. I initially thought the reactor should be reduced but Leonard recommended the power be hard wired into the sensors and engine. In compromise, I have reduced the reactor but increased the engine free thrust to 10. Note that no increase in the rear thruster was made. The result is a reasonably nimble (for an Earth Ship) vessel.

Also, I finally managed to complete a 3-View image of the Olympus that I like. The original Agents of Gaming version was squat for my taste, especially when compared to their very excellent miniature.

