Starships D6 / Earth Alliance Skylark 700



SKYLARK 700 TRANSPORT

Craft: Skylark Model 700 Series Transport
Type: Light freighter
Scale: Starfighter
Dimensions:
-Length: 35.4m
Skill: Space transports: Skylark 700
Crew: 3
-Skeleton: 1/+10
-Emergency Evac: 40/3 days
Crew Skill: Astrogation 3D+1, Sensors 2D, Space transports 3D
Passengers: 10
Cargo Capacity: 600 metric tons
Consumables: 1 month
Cost: 280,000 (new), 130,000 (used)
Hyperspace Jump Engine: No
Nav Computer: Yes
Maneuverability: 1D+2
Speed:
-Space: 4
-Atmosphere: N/A
Hull: 5D
Shields: N/A
Sensors:
-Passive: 15/0D
-Scan: 25/1D
-Search: 35/2D
-Focus: 2/2D+2

AUXILIARY CRAFT: N/A

WEAPONS: N/A

GAME NOTES:

-ROTATING SECTIONS: If the rotating sections take damage, roll 1D. On 1 they stop rotating, the ship loses gravity, and the crew have to operate in zero-g with all the penalties that apply. Damage to rotating sections may also cause the crew to be thrown about (roll 1D, 1-2 causes this). If so, the crew must roll Dex against Difficult Difficulty. Failure incurs 4D damage. Ships built with

rotating sections in Earth Alliance/Earthforce ships have less speed (between -1 and -2) and maneuverability (between -1 and -1D) to than if they were built without them (with their crews operating in zero-g).

-GRAVITY: This class of ship has no artificial gravity, but uses rotating sections for gravity simulation. Parts of the ship operate in zero-g. The crew may operate in zero-g. If they use the available straps, belts, handholds and other appartus to stay seated or positioned correctly, they can operate with no penalties. Otherwise, they incur all the penalties for operating in zero-g.

DESCRIPTION:

The Skylark Model 700 was another variant from what had been started since the release of the Model 500s, each model being a slight variant of a core design philosophy. In the 700's case, it kept the basic design of the engines from the 600 in order to maintain a degree of speed similar to the 500, while adding extra hull armor plating that was responsible for reducing its speed and maneuverability in the first place.

The Skylark 500 had become a great success and was widely used even after all the year that had gone by after its inception, and showed no signs of going away any time soon. Its abundant sales are probably the reason why therewere so many left after the Earth-Minbari War, despite the Minbari being able to outpace and eliminate them at almsot every encounter (500s were also the reason many refugees survived such encounters, though they could only carry a few compared to other transports).

SDC sought to carry on this success, especially in the wake of the war. They needed a model that was desired for sales in a post war environment. This led to the 700. Conceived during the last year of the war, Earth Alliance simply couldn't buy any more ships as the human race was losing a war for its very survival. Afterwards, even though an armored transport ship had war purposes, the idea was in even greater demand when the human race began to recooperate from the conflict. With the idea of the Babylon Project becoming popular after the war, the concept of an armored transport became ideal for ferrying dignitaries and other important figures through space for diplomatic duties and building human-alien relations for the the Babylon Project and other endeavors.

The Skylark Model 700 Series maintains the basics of the older 600, such as the larger engines, but has added hull plating for better defense. This results in a trade of speed and maneuverability. Some focus groups thought this would detract from the success of sales, but these cconcerns were redirected to build concern for damage caused by collisions with debris and other similar concepts, a problem that was of much concern after the Earth-Minbari War (many worlds and transfer points for travel were clogged with the wreckage of earth ships destroyed during the war, and ships that traveled through these areas later were damaged from such incidents).

And so, in 2249, the Model 700 was released for sale and successfully bought up by Earth Alliance, many commercial businesses needing new ships to replenish their losses from the war, and other buyers both private and public.

General

The Skylark series was a common type of commercial transport craft seen used by Earth Alliance and commercial space transportation businesses. Compared to most other human made space

transports, each kind of craft had traits that set them apart from the rest: Asimov liners had rotational gravity and relative luxury quarters for their passengers; TA series had a good mix of cargo and passenger space in different sizes, but no gravity; Achilles series were good at moving large amounts of bulk freight, but were slower than the rest and had no passenger space; Skylarks, while smaller than most and having less passenger and cargo space, were the fastest human made space transports around!

While other types of trasports and freighters had a basic design that had not changed much in the hundred years that humanity had been in space, the Skylark was made with ingenuity and innovation in mind. Many Skylark models are made along specific design parameters, yet most maintain a degree of modular compartment adaptability. In truth, many models of Skylark are simply the same basic design with different module types added onto the hull to make a ship that fills a different purpose or role in the spacecraft market. This also makes the Skylark popular among civilians who enjoy owning their own ships and tinkering to make them more unique. The skylark would even make a popular ship to be used by raiders, an alternative besides the common use of "Raider" fighters and their battlewagon base ships, if they ever get their hands on one.

Most space transports are often the victim of raider attacks, being heavily damaged or destroyed after raiders take their cargos. However, victims of raider attacks are usually other ship types (Asimov, TA, Achilles, etc). Skylarks are often just fast and maneuverable enough, if not more so, to outrun a raider attack. This is another trait that makes the Skylark very popular with among all kinds of passengers.

Many officials in distant parts of human controlled space often make requistions of some kind that require something or someone to be transported to a distant part of space. These requests are often fullfilled by a Skylark transport of some kind (i.e. Babylon 5 The Lost Tales). For this reasons, Skylarks are often called courier ships, as well as being called trasports or light freighters.

History

Skylark Design Corp was a group collaborative spaceship design engineers who came together to build better spaceships to help humanity reach the stars after discovering (or being discovered by) the Centauri and gaining jumpgate technology. While coming into the game late when designs and models of spacecraft already existed, SDC had ideas of their own to enter the still-growing starship market. These engineers came together to consider what made the other designs of spacecraft popular, trying to decide what their own design would need to stand apart, yet how to make it feasible and affordable for commercial use. The result was the first Skylark transport, the Model 100. It was smaller and lighter than most other ships used by the growing Earth Alliance at the time, but it did have one unique feature that made it important for establishing humanity's presence in space: speed.

After gaining enough funding and sponsorship to kick off the development of the Skylark, SDC went to work. When the Model 100 was fully developed, it took the space market by storm. Earth Alliance immediately purchased many for official government use, while commercial businesses wanted the deisgn for their own profits. However, the Skylark design was owned by the sponsor groups that funded the Skylark Design Corp, and the Corp itsef was a group of individuals that needed to make such a deal to get the project off the ground in the first place. While SDC saw some profit from their work, it was nothing compared to what the sponsors were raking in. Later models of Skylark were all owned by the sponser commercial group, a small company at first that grew in profit and influence due to the Skylark's uniqueness.

At some point in time, the SDC group grew tired of being held back by their sponsors. In short, the engineers took the basic design specs up to the Model 300 and left the company just before they were to reveal the plans for the Model 400. The 400 was later seen released by several other companies, each variant being just different enough to put any lawsuits through hurdles and hurdles of red tape.

After a long and tiresome legal dispute between the original sponsor, the other companies and SDC, an agreement was made. SDC put themselves in better positions to have more control over future Skylark development, and gain better profits in the process. They had more control over who got future Skylark designs, as anyone with previous design specs had trouble improving the designs yet keeping it affordable for commercial sales. All of this eventually led to the development of the Skylark Model 500, released for sale in the year 2240. As of 2240 and onwards, Skylarks would be produced by multiple development companies, with SDC having some control of the sales as well, with Earth Alliance always being a big customer.

After these events, Earth Alliance and Earthforce would come to SDC for help developing some future projects. As SDC was technically a free agent, they could advise and consult when asked (and when profit was involed). Rumor has it the SDC was onboard as a high-value consultant on improving old Earth Alliance/Earthforce ship engines and developing new ones, and may have had a hand in such designs made by Mitchel-Hyundye such as the SA-23 Starfury itself.

Design Notes

For all the civilian spacecraft seen in babylon 5, this one is arguably my favorite. Also, more than any of the other spaceship types, this was the only one I remember seeing several variants of through the series and the other expansions to the B5 franchise. After a while, as I thought about writing up B5 ships, this ship stuck in my mind as the Babylon 5 equivelant to the Star Wars YT series or other such Corellian designs, as the YTs always tend to come to mind when one thinks of a Star Wars "light freighter".

I also liked the idea of making the verious types of civilian ships in B5 stand out for some kind of easily noticeable trait, as mentioned above. If GMs/players play in a Babylon 5 setting and decide to get their own ship, they'd have many options to choose from depending on what their purposes are. In that regard, Skylarks would be at the top of the list for me, next to getting some kind of long range capital ship.

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