Starships D6 / Earthforce Starfury Packrat



STARFURY PACKRAT

Craft: SA-24H Mitchell-Hyundyne High Maneuver Starfury Packrat
Type: High maneuver superiority space fighter
Scale: Starfighter
Dimensions:
-Length: 8.61m
-Mass: 45.3 metric tons
Skill: Starfighter piloting: Starfury Packrat
Crew: 1
Crew Skill: Astrogation 3D+2, sensors 4D+2, starfighter piloting 5D, starship gunnery 3D+1
Passengers: N/A
Cargo Capacity: 10kg
Consumables: Up to 2 weeks
Cost: 135,000 (new), 68,000 (used)
Hyperspace Jump Engine: No
Nav Computer: Yes (+1D+2 Astrogation)
Maneuverability: 5D
Speed:
-Space: 8
-Atmosphere: N/A
Hull: 3D
Shields: N/A
Sensors:
-Passive: 20/1D
-Scan: 40/2D
-Search: 60/3D
-Focus:3/3D+1

WEAPONS:
2 Copeland JC44/B Pulse Discharge Cannons (fire-linked)
Location: Mounted in forward hull
Fire Arc: Front
Crew: 1 (pilot)
Skill: Starship gunnery
Scale: Starfighter
Fire Control: 2D
Range:
-Space: 1-3/12/24
-Atmosphere: N/A
Damage: 5D
Rate Of Fire: 1

DESCRIPTION:

As Earthforce pushed for the development of new space fighter designs for its military space forces, some of these projects would lead to the introduction of new standard models like the Starfury Thunderbolt and the Stealth Starfury. Through the years, the SA-23E Starfury would remain the standard Earthforce space fighter, and it still saw widespread use even after the introduction of the Thunderbolt. In the years after the Earth-Mimbari War, many prototypes and limited production models would be developed, among them the Starfury Lightning. After the Lightning's unsuccessful progress, some officials wanted to see a variant of Starfury that focused on improving its already impressive maneuverability.

This led to the creation of the Starfury Packrat High Maneuverability space fighter. The standard four Beigle-Bryant 9000A Particle Thrust Engines were replaced with a more recent test prototype engine setup. These increased both speed and maneuverability for an overall mobility improvement. For other improvements, the Packrat was given an improved sensor package with better range and computer components, as well as a more recent navigation system and updated nav data. As the fighter prototype was built to test the concept of high maneuverability, its hull was not made as strong as the standard Starfury, being just strong enough and purposely built to handle the stresses of the new prototype particle thrust engines. Even the cockpit seems to have been slapped together in a rush. It carries the standard dual Copeland JC44/B Pulse Discharge Cannons to help it stand up as a Starfury, but due to the rush hull design, these are modular. They can be easily removed to make room for installing other weapons and equipment. This wound up being one of the more positive attributes of the Packrat's design.

When officcials saw and approved of the Packrat's design, they wanted it to fill some nitch in the Earthforce military. As Earthgov's attitude was switching away from Earthforce rearmament and buildup and towards the Babylon Project, other projects like the Starfury Lightning had effectively been cut from the budget and nearly mothballed into obscurity. However, since the Packrat was relatively cheap to produce in larger numbers, and since it performed admirably, Earthforce officers and lobbyists were able to push for its introduction in the new Earthforce military budget. It would not serve as a Starfury replacement, but as a scout fighter. Its higher speed and maneuverability meant it was able to slip in and out of enemy territory quickly and quietly. Unlike the Stealth Starfury, it was still cheaper to build, and therefor more readily available to Earthforce officers who were in need of scouts and fighters for operations in need of a degree of stealth, as well as mobility. What the Packrat lacked in stealth or durability, it definitely made up for in mobility!

The other advantage of its light design was that since its weapons emplacement was modular, this was incorporated into its mass production design and modified to accomodate a wide range of modular attachments. From custom cheap missile racks and ordnance hardpoints, heavier or lighter pulse discharge cannons, a variety of mission-specific sensory and information gathering espionage packages, a radome module to perform as a kind of "AWACS" Starfury for advanced recon, and even various test modules to try new technologies and systems that could later be incorporated into standard Starfury designs. It even has a modular package for delivering Hyperspace homing beacons on the hulls of enemy ships for later tracking. Another form of module is a variant of the grappling claw that comes standard on the SA-23E Starfury.

While the Packrat usually does not have the more expensive stealth systems of the Stealth Starfury, it is often given to pilots with the skills, daring and courage (or foolishness) to pull off their missions, as they will often be put in danger in enemy territory. The Packrat's newer thrust engines also allow it a very wide degree of sensitivity to its maneuverability. It can turn much turn and maneuver much faster and stronger than any other model of Starfury out there. However, it can

also make the smaller, ever-so-slightest alterations to its position. These microthrusts allow the Packrat a very good degree of stealth when stationary or barely moving, especially when hiding in a field of space debris to confound sensors. This is something that even the Stealth Starfury cannot do.

The Packrat's hull was modified later on for storage of extra consumables and condensed oxygen canisters. With the addition of a long-term space suit with filtering and sanitation systems, a patient pilot can remain hidden for long range long term recon or espionage (or what have you) for as long as two weeks. Bring a deck of cards or a magazine to keep yourself from going stircrazy.

All in all, while the Starfury was often used as a general purpose space fighter, it hadd its limitations. Even the Thunderbolt had limitations as to how it performed in certain missions. Where these fighters lack in ability, the Packrat more than makes up for in versatility.

Variants

Some high ranking officers in Eatrthforce, when given the option of fielding Stealth Starfuries, often say "F--- PSI CORPS!", and instead modify Starfury Packrats with the matt black antisensor hull paint coating of the Stealth Starfuries, and install a module system specifically developed to mimic the functions of the Stealth Starfury's other expensive stealth systems but at a fraction of the price. This variant is often called the "Stealth Packrat" or "Anti Psi Corps Stealth Model", among many other derivitive nicknames that are often at Psi Corps' expense.

During the Psi Corps War, the Stealth Packrat variant was arguably the most useful tool in space warfare when Psi Corps was engaged in their Stealth Starfuries and as of then unknown motherships that they kept in Hyperspace, hidden from the public eye.

NOTE: The Psi Corp War was never able to be told by J. Michael Straczynski, but happened after Babylon 5 season five and right before A Call To Arms. Leta Alexander, Lenier and Michael Garabaldi took part in the war. Garabaldi finally had Bester's Neural Block removed by Leta and took part in the conflict against Bester, and Lita and Lenier were to have perished as casualties of the conflict.

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