

= Flight deck cruiser =

The flight @-@ deck cruiser was a proposed type of aircraft cruiser , warships combining features of aircraft carriers and light cruisers designed by the United States Navy during the period between World War I and World War II . Several designs were proposed for the type , but none were approved for construction . The final design was developed just before World War II , and the entry of the United States into the war saw the project come to an end .

= Background =

In the 1920s , following the signing of the Washington Naval Treaty , the United States Navy converted two incomplete battlecruisers into aircraft carriers , USS Lexington and USS Saratoga . These conversions proved to be extremely expensive , and designs were sought that would provide aircraft carrying capability for the fleet at a more reasonable cost . USS Ranger , America 's first purpose @-@ built aircraft carrier , was of a smaller , more economical design than the battlecruiser conversions , however the ship sacrificed the big @-@ gun scouting capability of the earlier ships . In an attempt to develop a ship capable of both carrying aircraft and engaging the enemy in the scouting role , the " flight @-@ deck cruiser " concept was developed , following a series of studies proposing the conversion of cruisers under construction into carriers , all of which were rejected . In addition to providing an economical method of providing additional aircraft for the fleet , the " flight @-@ deck cruiser " was seen to have an additional advantage ; it would be considered a cruiser under the terms of the Washington Treaty , not an aircraft carrier , and thus the Navy would not be restricted in the number of ships of the type that could be built .

= Designs =

Several designs were proposed for a ship carrying both aircraft and a gun armament equivalent to a light cruiser 's . One design , from 1930 , was described as " a Brooklyn @-@ class light cruiser forwards [and] one half of a Wasp @-@ class aircraft carrier aft " , and utilized an early version of the angled deck that would in the 1950s be adopted for use by fleet carriers . The vessel , 650 feet (200 m) in length , had a 350 @-@ foot (110 m) flight deck and hangar aft for twenty @-@ four aircraft , while forwards three triple 6 @-@ inch (152 mm) gun turrets were mounted , the standard armament for a light cruiser of the time . A secondary dual purpose armament of eight 5 @-@ inch (127 mm) guns was also projected to be carried for defense against enemy torpedo @-@ boats and aircraft .

In 1934 , another design for a flight @-@ deck cruiser was proposed , featuring twelve 6 in (152 mm) guns , mounted forwards and aft with a 200 @-@ foot (61 m) flight deck in between ; while a 1939 revival of the concept proposed two triple turrets , fore and aft , again with an amidships flight deck .

In December 1939 , a design for a much larger flight @-@ deck cruiser , displacing 12 @,@ 000 tons , was proposed , fitted with two catapults , a triple turret for 8 @-@ inch (203 mm) guns , and a 420 @-@ foot (130 m) flight deck ; by January 1940 the design had been shrunk to a flight deck 390 feet (120 m) in length and two triple 6 in (152 mm) guns for main armament .

= Abandonment =

Despite the continued designs and interest in the idea , no funding was ever appropriated for the construction of a flight @-@ deck cruiser ; in addition , evaluation of the design by the Naval War College determined that even a 12 @,@ 000 @-@ ton ship was too small for the concept 's intended characteristics to be effectively realized , and thus the ship would be ineffective in battle . In 1940 , the design was formally shelved , although provision was made for reconsideration of the concept at a future date . The entry of the United States into World War II following the bombing of Pearl Harbor , however , removed the primary justifications for the concept of a hybrid warship , as

naval limitations treaties were now moot and adequate funding was now available for the construction of more conventional ships . As a result , the flight deck cruiser concept was never revisited .

= = Similar ships = =

Although no flight @-@ deck cruisers were ever built by the U.S. Navy , the Soviet Union 's Kiev @-@ class aircraft carrier , developed in the 1970s , is remarkably similar to that of the original flight @-@ deck cruiser design , featuring an angled flight deck aft with anti @-@ ship missile launchers forwards . In addition , during the early 1980s , plans were proposed for the reactivation of the U.S. Navy 's Iowa @-@ class battleships that entailed the removal of each ship 's aft turret and the installation of a flight deck for operating V / STOL aircraft ; in the end a much more modest conversion , lacking the flight deck , was carried out .