

Laertes Police Corvette

The Laertes and Tethys classes both began life as direct outgrowths of the newly formed Earth Alliance government's wish to develop and outfit its own military force in lieu of existing national forces. As a result of this mandate, several new classes of military spacecraft were requested under a competitive bid process to outfit this new Earthforce. In most cases, these requests would result in only a single bidding organization as a result of the incredible complexity inherent in large space going vessels. However, in one case, the medium combat vessel proposal, two corporations tendered competing designs.

The original RFP issued by Earthforce was deliberately left open to varied interpretations. In response, the two designs looked to solve different problems. The Tethys design basis was that of a light fleet element to be included in the line of battle while the Laertes design was aimed at fleet support where it would secure lines of communication, provide convoy escort duty and chase the occasional raider. While both supported similarly sized weapon suites, the Laertes offered simpler and cheaper construction by virtue of a reduced thruster suite. A reduction justified by its support roll design.

The resulting competition quickly devolved into justifications of mission design with each corporation submitting cost effectiveness analyses that were aimed at justifying their design philosophy. Surprisingly, Earthforce officials came to the conclusion that both competing ideas had merit. As a result both designs were issued production contracts. The lion's share of military production contracts naturally went to the Tethys entry, but a significant number of Laertes were ordered by the government itself to support a myriad of duties including Space Guard, customs, anti-raider, etc.

Originally fielded with a all Blast Cannon weapons package (Y2130), the subsequent Laertes-Beta (Y2154) would see its Medium Blast Cannons replaced by the more advanced Medium Plasma Cannons. The move garnered a number of complaints from the military whose Tethys were forced to retain their Medium Blast Cannons due to military budget constraints imposed by the same government that was currently upgrading the Laertes from the Alpha to the Beta.

Earthforce subsequently would play a key roll in delaying the upgrade of the Laertes to the Gamma version by initially denying access to the new Interceptor/Eweb technology. While politicians and admirals butted heads, design engineers working on the Laertes took advantage of the added time to replace the original Lt Blast Cannons with Standard Particle Beams instead of the originally projected Lt. Particle Beams. What was not rectified (do to the added cost of using the newer and more expensive Standard Particle Beams) was the thruster suite that was by now considered by most to be completely out-classed by similarly sized vessels. This handicap would not be rectified until Y2198 with the Delta version, though even those improvement still lagged the latest Tethys variants.

Following its update to the Delta series, a new class of Laertes would appear, dedicated to a completely new range of missions. By virtue of its atmospheric capability, Generals within the Earth Alliance ground forces chose the Laertes to act as a stop gap heavy assault lander while a dedicated design was developed and constructed. Converted to its new roll, the Laertes-Epsilon was capable of putting troops and equipment on the ground in rapid order. Considered a successful variant, these units were quickly supplemented by the dedicated Condor Assault Ships in Y2209.

Both the Gamma and Delta series Laertes would see limited action during the Dilgar War, generally relegated to patrol and escort duties behind the primary lines of advance as well as anti-piracy against the opportunistic Raiders. Those few encounters with the Dilgar Imperial Navy proved once and for all that the Laertes was now woefully obsolete. The Epsilon series of assault landers would see much heavier action with many expended in perilous assaults on Dilgar holdings.

At the conclusion of the war, Earth Alliance politicians wasted little time in slashing military budgets, resulting in wholesale retirement of the oldest and most over-used fleet units. As a means of generating revenue, many Laertes hulls were stripped and sold to corporations, independent operators and even a few League nations looking for any vessel to help hold off the onslaught of Raiders and others opportunists following the war. A surprising number were simply stripped and left to rust in far away systems to distant to bother with their return.

Practically overnight, the Laertes class ceased to exist as a numerous Earthforce unit. Equally quickly it would reappear in the hands of Raiders and Independent governments throughout space guaranteeing its time in space was not yet complete.

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