

Pirates of the Deep

Overview

Pirates, raiders, privateers, and other groups of similar repute have ravaged the denizens of the Inner Sphere and beyond as long as humans have been in space. Over the centuries their home bases have moved outward from Terra or inward to it depending on the power emanating from that system and the rest of the Inner Sphere. During the Star League as an example, much of the territory we now consider to be a void was under Star League control and the pirates were forced to base in what we now call the Outer Rim to stay outside the reach of the Star League Defense Forces.

The fall of the Star League brought about the end of anti-piracy maneuvers in any significant number, and caused the loss of hundreds, possibly thousands, of systems within and without the Inner Sphere. As the border worlds the pirates raided began to fail, the pirates moved in on the Successor States and their Old Periphery neighbors, taking new bases on such well-known worlds as Antallos, Oberon VI, Star's End, Circinus, Tortuga, and dozens of other worlds nearer to the remaining pickings. Some worlds became the bases of major pirate legions, while others never outgrew the chaos of their own origins.

But one thing became clear. Wherever the pirates lived, the worlds around them whether controlled by a Successor State or a Periphery realm could count on nothing to keep them safe. They struck where defenses were weak, and there were simply not enough defenders to be strong everywhere. The arrival of the Clans destroyed or subdued the most powerful pirate realms, bringing a new form of occupation to the worlds of the Inner Sphere. But with them destroyed and the Successor States moving all their forces to deal with the new enemy, other worlds became the centers of raiding and piracy continued to flourish, sometimes even against the Clans themselves.

The Jihad, like the FedCom Civil War, Clan Invasion, and Succession Wars before it, once again proved a time that allowed the pirates, raiders, privateers, and similar organizations to pick their targets. Military units fled the Inner Sphere rather than be bled to death in the fratricidal wars and while some formed new and peaceful colonies, or formed up with existing worlds to protect them, others fell to piracy and raiding.

Clans Wolf and Jade Falcon moved their forces out of what is now known as The Barrens during the Jihad to deal with more important enemies, and pirates and fleeing military personnel and units did what they always do when central control fails. They moved in like roaches. Other pirate realms and worlds have grown powerful as well over time, but The Barrens are what any good (or bad depending on your point of view) pirate measures him or herself up against.

The Barrens

A collection of over a score of worlds, The Barrens is the single largest collection of pirates in the Human Sphere. Scores of different bands have been known to live in it, holding parts of systems or more than one system in the bigger bands' cases. Often failed bands come to The Barrens to seek replacements or to be gobbled up into other bands before going out on raids again. There are few stable pirate bands in The Barrens.

The most powerful of the pirate bands in The Barrens is the Valkyrate. Led by Susie "One-Eye" Morgraine-Ryan, she rules from Oberon VI and is as sadistic as both her parents combined. She commands an *Aegis*-class battleship reportedly stolen from the Ghost Bears during the Invasion named the *Pirates' Wrath* that she has used over the years to solidify her power. Supported by numerous DropShips armed with capital weapons, and possibly small WarShips captured from other nations if the rumors are true, the Valkyrate fleet is the most powerful pirate fleet assembled since the days of the Star League. Only the Clans and ComStar have the drive or resources to wipe out the Valkyrate, and Oberon VI has been occupied numerous times since the Jihad, but they have never been able to destroy the Valkyries who just fade away and base out of other systems while they wait for the occupiers to tire of the situation and return home.

The many other pirate bands that shelter in the Barrens include Susie's two children. One female and one male, she named them after her parents and has watched them with pride as they have competed to outdo the other and earn her favor. Based out of Gotterdammerung and Butte Hold, like her parents, they have shown themselves to be even more blood thirsty and sadistic than Susie herself. Though many have flatly stated that such is impossible this historian can state with complete honesty and knowledge that it is. Clan elementals for example can give either one of them weeks of entertainment "thanks" to the genetic engineering that makes them stronger and resilient to otherwise mortal wounds. By the end, the elementals are rarely thanking their engineering though.

Chainelane Isles

A collection of warring states in an area of space 100 light-years across, the Chainelane Isles have often been compared to a miniature Inner Sphere. The states have been embroiled in a centuries-long war for supremacy that has become enflamed further since the Jihad. Many warriors fleeing from the Inner Sphere stopped in the Isles to carve out their own piece of power and someone has been selling them and the other factions BattleMechs and spaceships for use in their war, making the Isles unsafe for ships to travel through without escort. Every inhabited system and many uninhabited ones in the Isles have permanent AeroSpace and DropShip jump point garrisons now that attack and board any ships traveling through. Because of this, ComStar and the Sea Foxes run WarShip-escorted convoys through the Isles (and The Barrens) at regular intervals.

Tortuga Dominions

The most powerful pirate realm on the rimward side of the Inner Sphere, this collection of systems has had a colorful history. Controlled by pirates that ravaged the Federated Suns and the Taurian Concordat for most of its history, the Federation brought them

down in 3042 and captured their leader, Paula “Lady Death” Trevaline. The coming of the Clans brought a new military unit into the Dominions. The Federated Commonwealth had betrayed Fuchida’s Fusiliers and they moved to Tortuga before lashing out at their previous employer. They named themselves the Tortuga Fusiliers and maintained their control of the Dominions until 3065 when the “Lady Death” returned to take control.

Protector Jeffrey Calderon of the Taurian Concordat had sent a large contingent of troops into the Pirates’ Haven and forced her out, but she did what any smart pirate did. She moved to greener pastures and exaggerated about her “victories” against the Federation and the Concordat. The commander of the Fusiliers lived long enough to find out the truth, but no longer than that. The “Lady Death” took over the Raider’s Roost and Tortuga Prime and never looked back. Now commanded by her daughter, Samantha Trevaline, the new Queen of the Damned has taken a great amount of pleasure from causing as much pain as possible to the governments and worlds within striking range. More than once the Taurians have tried to wipe them out, but she simply fades into the background of the stars and comes back when the Taurians inevitably lose interest and return to their own affairs.

Rim Territories

Formed by Hopper Morrison of the Circinus Federation’s Black Warriors after he found two companies of Star League BattleMechs before the Clan Invasion, his death before the Jihad almost destroyed the Extractors. The fighting between the pirates whom each thought they could do a better job culled many from the group though and those that remained were the nastiest, vilest, and most conniving members of the Extractors. In the end, those who survived placed command of the Extractors on a bet. Each of them bet they could assemble a more powerful band than the others and agreed to follow whoever beat their bet.

As the Jihad raged, they began to recruit fleeing warriors into their bands and reached out to nearby systems, bleeding them white as they worked to build up their individual bands. When the Jihad began to fade away they returned to The Rack and began to show each other what they had done in their time. What followed was a month of lying, cheating, raping, and negotiations as different bands considered merging with other bands to make them the most powerful band and the winners of the bet. The man who won that competition of final negotiations was loudly acclaimed to be the most underhanded and conniving individual in a group of people that had learned how to lie, cheat, and kill on their daddy’s knees.

The newly crowned King Roger “Midnight” Stroud puts a new meaning to the term Jolly Roger, though the recipients of his “charms” are rarely as jolly as he is. Possibly Morrison’s best underling before his death, Stroud seems to have learned everything he needed to and more from the previous king, and has brought the Extractors to new heights in their quest for power, riches, and all kinds of booty. Controlling a number of worlds that were once a part of the Lyran Commonwealth, the Extractors plunder the

former Lyran systems around them on a regular basis, taking advantage of the lack of Lyran forces in the area. Sometimes they even raid the Lyran Commonwealth itself, but prefer to raid less dangerous targets.

New Circinus

Formed by Black Warriors fleeing the Marian conquest of the Circinus Federation in the early 3060s, the world of New Circinus in the Outer Rim has become the best pirate base in its region of the Outer Sphere. Primarily targeting the Marian Hegemony but not above raiding the Lyran Commonwealth, Free Worlds League, or Magistracy of Canopus, the Black Warriors continue to be a thorn in the side of all civilized nations.

Dark Hold

Originally formed by Capellan and St. Ives deserters, the Shen-sè Tian (literally “dark days”) has raided the Magistracy of Canopus, Fronc Federation, and Taurian Concordat since before the Jihad. Their home base is situated somewhere in the Outer Rim but it moves often enough that the Trinity Alliance has never been able to track it down.

Rezak’s Hole

The Clan Snow Raven nearly destroyed the Band of the Damned before the Jihad when they captured Rezak’s Hole. It was the Jihad that saved Vance Rezak from defeat and destitution, much like wars help many pirates. The Snow Ravens simply passed Antallos by when they moved to support the Alliance and gave Rezak the time he needed to rebuild his band. Raiding the shattering Draconis Combine for all it was worth, he made the Band of the Damned a pirate band to be feared again and has continued to take advantage of any group of individuals he can find. The only nation he refuses to raid is the Raven Alliance, a policy he made after a raid of their shipping in 3073 resulted in the capture of Antallos and the destruction of his estates there. The Alliance have left Rezak alone since then, content to let them strip the Draconis Combine bare.

Astrokaszy

Partially controlled by the Free Worlds’ League’s Rim Collection, the sectors of this planet that are still independent are havens of piracy and worse. Resembling a horror novelist’s rendition of Arabian Nights, this is a dark world with darker traditions and defenders. Many Rim Collection soldiers have been found dead or worse on the streets of this world and raiders from its “free” regions are seen in the Marian Hegemony, Free Worlds League, and Magistracy of Canopus.