

Corsairs

The ancestors of the Corsairs that had set adrift from the crippled Hispania made planet fall on Crete shortly after the other Houses arrived in the Sirius Sector. Scratching out a living, the Corsairs managed a bleak existence for four centuries. Eventually they developed a strong self-identity, isolated from the rest of the Houses.

In 450 AS, that insular world changed. An exploratory expedition headed by Franz Schulman -- financed by Daumann and the Rheinland government -- stumbled into the system while mapping the far reaches of the Walker Nebula.

The local inhabitants, sensing a historic opportunity, attacked the landing party en masse, killing all save Schulman, whom they took hostage to gain control of the mother ship Schiller in orbit above the planet. No one is entirely sure who first nicknamed them the "Corsairs," recalling the ancient pirate clans of the Mediterranean, but the name came into popular use among the Houses sometime around 500 AS. The Corsairs began attacking unprotected outposts and ships, plundering whatever supplies and equipment they could lay their hands on, before escaping through one of their secret Jump Holes.

The systematic expansion of the Houses into the Omega Border Worlds further fuelled the Corsair movement, dramatically increasing the quantity and variety of accessible goods. The final chapter began in the sixth century AS, when an enterprising, well-armed Liberty freelancer named Jim Bown made his way to Omicron Gamma. He brought various Consumer Goods to trade, but the Corsairs could offer little but Artifacts. A year later, he returned.

Those trinkets were all the rage with the elite of Manhattan. He saw a great business opportunity if they could set up a viable trade route to Liberty. The Corsairs were on their way. They grew rapidly in size and sophistication as they built up the Artifact trade. The primary smuggling route goes north to Sigma-19, where Artifacts are traded with the Hogosha onboard the Hawaii.

They have also opened up a route into Rheinland via the Yanagi Junker base in Sigma-13. In the west, the Corsairs invaded Bretonia in order to reach the Junker Trafalgar base in New London. The Bounty Hunters Guild has taken advantage of several Freeports in the Edge Worlds to attack the Corsairs home system.

So far, they have been more of nuisance than a real threat, but the presence of Zoner-controlled bases so close to Omicron Gamma has provoked intense debate among the Elders of Crete regarding the future of nearby Independent bases.

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