



MYRKWYRM



Class: Explorer

Shipwright: Sjálfseign Shipyards in the Sjálfseign Republic on Wolf's Lament

Function: Pirate sloop

Cost: 80,000 fb

Here we consider one of the ships used by the Vuldrok: the Myrkwurm explorer. It is most widely used by independent raiders and those without the support of a warlord or wealthy thane.

Myrkwurm captains tend to fly directly at their prey — sometimes even ramming them — and then board with their marines, often joining the boarding parties themselves (leaving the pilot and engineer on board). Most Myrkwurms carry no conventional weapons, instead relying on a grapple gun to take their prey. Some Vuldrok believe that young captains should learn to board the hard way before relying on weaponry.

Myrkwurms are also often found as part of pirate fleets, such as when independent thanes join together in plundering expeditions or a lesser thane captain accompanies their warlord's armada. A number of these ships are sent out in all directions looking for booty, and they either seize it themselves (if it's easy pickings and small enough to fit into their limited cargo hold) and bring it back to a central Possum hauler for storage (see the separate chapter on that ship), or they scout out bigger prey and call in other ships from the fleet to lead the attack.

Legendry

- *Death's Blessing:* The bloody last stand of *Death's Blessing* is known throughout the Known Worlds. She began her career raiding the Caliphate worlds during King Froljir's wars and was handed down from captain to captain until her last voyage under Nadja the Night Queen in 4839. She had spent years crippling interstellar shipping in the Leminkainen system when the Hawkwood destroyer *Plantagenet* intercepted her run for the jumpgate. Captain Nadja rammed the greater ship and boarded it with her smaller crew, fighting against superior numbers of Hawkwood marines for hours until her death. The *Death's Blessing* was eventually bartered back to the Vuldrok in return for captured Hawkwood vessels.
- *Sokn's Wrath:* One ship rose three times, phoenix-like, from destruction, earning its reputation for being protected by the Vuldrok gods or spirits. Originally piloted by Captain Enitan Abara in the 46th century, *Sokn's Wrath* rammed the Church ship *Mantius*, formerly a war vessel but now used to ferry tithings to Holy Terra. She took its great wealth and escaped, leaving behind a slaughtered crew

save for two cooks who had hidden in the cramped air vents. The Church placed a bounty upon her. Thought destroyed by the Hazat *Tyr*-style raider *Campeón* in 4603, she reappeared again in 4797 in the Ravenna system, commanded by Captain Abara. This time she rammed the *Dragonfly*-style troopship *Theodora*, taking Baron Alston Hawkwood's prized possessions, including his risqué collection of Li Halan erotic statues, created during that house's years of decadence. The ship was again thought destroyed by a Hawkwood defense force in 4803, only to reappear in 4997 off Hargard, raiding Known Worlds and Ramakrishna shipping, commanded once again by Captain Abara.

Many ships are afraid to pursue her, believing that her captain and crew are undead, cursed to commit piracy until the end of time. Another rumor says that Captain Abara suffers the wrath of the Marassa, twin deities who guard the borders of all things, including, it is whispered, time. An Imperial naval captain has suggested instead that every captain who commands *Sokn's Wrath* or commissions a new ship in her name is honorarily named Captain Enitan Abara in some strange barbaric rite of passage to maintain the legend of the undying captain and ship.

- *Wendigo:* Perhaps the most feared Myrkwurm is *Wendigo*, whose long history of piracy began with King Froljir's invasions, when *Wendigo* rammed and boarded the Ramakrishna warship *Kalvari* and then plundered the Masseri's *Imperatore*. She next attacked innumerable merchant ships as far afield as the Li Halan worlds. Legends among the Charioteers say that each new *Wendigo* captain takes a drink of the vision-producing *na'tigeet* fungus and so discovers where their enemies are weakest. Her successes are not against the Known Worlds alone; she has often partaken in fraternal warfare among the savage Vuldrok nations. Her current commander, Captain Hiamovi, preys upon Hargard and Hawkwood shipping, although the recent Imperial presence has thwarted a number of her attacks.

Ownership

Some researchers in our Society believe that Myrkwurms were once widely produced on the core Vuldrok worlds but are now solely built and maintained in the Sjálfseign Republic. Despite the unknown engineering techniques that power these ships, we are forced to admit that their economy and sophisticated design methodology lead many to marvel at the old-fashioned pride in craftsmanship — a virtue that the unsophisticated hordes of Vuldrok possess over us and for which we must admit to a degree of envy.