

# THE AIR PIRATES

This is a short adventure hook for the Morrow Project rpg, and is pegged to my larger **Morrow Project Travel Guide**. It takes place in west-central [Michigan](#) and is intended to be a stop-along-the-way for teams traveling through the area. Any team operating in central [Michigan](#) can be a part of this adventure, just get them to the area some way.

Basically, the team will run across a band of Ballooner air pirates who are looking for something in the area, and killing anyone in the way. This can either lead to nothing more than a short firefight, or an extended campaign.

This work is LOOSELY based on the 1989 book *Pirate Strike* by David Robbins. No offense is intended and please, dear God, keep the lawyers from Leisure Books Incorporated off me!

## THE AIR PIRATES

The air pirates are actually Ballooners, a rogue crew that's much more violent and independent than most other Ballooner crews. They are known as the "Skull and Bones", a hereditary legacy of ship-borne pirates from centuries before, flying a flag that is black with a red skeleton. They are based in the Vancouver, BC area, in a fortress in a secluded valley. The Skull and Bones scour the airlines for merchandise that's bartered and sold at markets across the region, including the major Ballooner center at Riverton, [Wyoming](#). Sometimes they just scavenge ruins, but most of the time they take from someone else.

Despite being pirates, they are kind of a democratic society. They elect their leader, and vote on every major decision, and have Articles that all must follow. Every man is entitled to an equal share of the loot. Anyone who steals from another pirate is removed and anyone who kills another pirate is tied to the corpse and tossed overboard. Grievances are brought before the Captain, and if the matter is of consequence to the entire crew, they vote and decide together. Every pirate must swear over a Bible to abide by the rules and Articles of the Skull and Bones.

They don't build their own airships, they just take from other Ballooners. They recently heard of the *Toronto* and must have it. They have arrived in the [Michigan](#) a small hot-air balloon, which is now hidden in a forest area south of the town of Sherman.

## THE PIRATE CREW

**Red Beard:** The Captain of the air pirates. A muscular man wearing a loose-fitting white shirt and baggy black trousers, he has strikingly red beard, hair and mustache. Carries a Smith and Wesson Model 13 revolver, tucked into his belt. His family has been in the pirate business for generations. His father and his grandfather were both pirate Captains, and highly respected by their crews. He has a son and two daughters back in their home base camp.

**Big Eyes and Elephant Ears:** Mutant twin brothers, due to a quirk of radioactive or chemical contamination in their mother while she was pregnant with them. Each is 6'5" tall and has shoulder-length black hair and huge muscles. Each wears relatively clean brown trousers and moccasins, and no shirt or hat. Elephant Ears has ears as large as his head, larger if you count the 4-inch lobes. He can hear a pin drop at 20 yards. Big Eyes has huge bug-like eyes, three inches in diameter and deep blue. He can see in the dark as well as a normal person can in the day. They both carry black compound crossbows with quivers full of bolts.

**The rest of the crew:** Other than Red Beard and the two mutants, there are eight other pirates here. They are unkempt and grungy, their appearance matching their attire. Their clothes are shabby and torn, an odd assortment of ill-fitting shirts and pants. Most have oily, ratty hair and grimy skin. They carry a variety of rifles, shotguns, revolvers and pistols. Every man also carries a knife or a sword in a sheath on his person. They are named as follows...

**Fiddler Jack:** A thin weasely man who wears a red shirt and plaid slacks. Carries a Marlin .30-30 caliber rifle.

**Zack the Black:** A black man.

**Aberni:** A tall man with a golden earring in his left ear who wears a woman's pink blouse.

**Other pirates:** Condent, Skyrme, Teach, Dauphin, and Vane, all random thugs.

## SHERMAN, MICHIGAN

A small town in Wexford County, south of the ruins of Traverse City. Still a picturesque village, nestled in rolling hills of maple and pine forests along the fast-flowing Manistee River, presenting an image of tranquility and natural splendor. The houses and structures are in remarkable condition for a post-war community, reflecting the pride the residents have in their village. About 90 people live here now, many of them old timers. There are about 20 young women, counting married ones, and nearly all the younger men are fishermen and hunters. There are seven large families in town plus some individuals. The family names are the Roberts, Howells, Wallins, Baumans, Abbots, Parberrys, and Roes. They have a few rifles for hunting, but no one is really trained in combat tactics.

**Ostman's Trading Post:** Sherman's main trading establishment. A two-storey log building along the Manistee River bank. The Post has a corral for horses and a dock for canoes and boats. It's owned and run by William Ostman. He and his wife live upstairs with the store below. Usually full of no-account old men who sit around and swap stories and gossip around an old wood stove. Ostman has a hand-crank record player and an old shortwave radio. He has been trying to get the radio running for years, even traded once for a rusty generator.

**Red Hawk:** An Amerind shaman, the last in a long line of shamans. 84-years old with long silver hair and a quick mind and active body. Said to commune with the Sasquatches in the area, even sharing their dens on occasion. He knows this area like the back of his hand, and can lead you anywhere, even in the dark.

**Beck:** An old miner from Traverse County, usually found at Ostman's playing checkers. Beck has a lot of knowledge about the local area and the people.

**Dangerous fauna of the area:** There are bears and wolves in the area, and they sometimes attack lone travelers. There are also rumors of mutant humanoids, perhaps Sasquatches. They are said to live in caves and holes down by the Manistee River and feeding streams. They are fond of eating carrion and they will store a dead deer in their den until they have eaten it down to the bone. Their rancid body smell can be detected for miles on windy days.

## THE BLIMP

Based at a small cabin about two miles from Sherman is a pre-war blimp named the *Toronto*. The *Toronto* was formerly a Canadian Lightship A-50, build by the American Blimp Company in [Oregon](#) in 1988. It's 123-feet long and converted to hot air by the retrofitting of a pair of heating burners. Owned and operated by the Smith family, who uses her to ferry a few people and high-value freight to the various Shipman enclaves in the state and back. They have owned the blimp for eight years, before that it belonged to a Balloonier from New York state who landed here in a storm and died of a snake bite.

Pete Smith is a smart man with a very lucrative business. His wife June is a slim woman in her late 30s wearing a plaid shirt and brown slacks. They have two kids, a 16-year old boy named Jim, and 14-year old Tess, a pretty teenage girl with curly brown hair who wears a yellow jacket and faded jeans. Pete and his family have taken meticulous care of the *Toronto* since they came into possession of it, applying paint and new stitching liberally and making repairs whenever necessary. Though patched and caulked in dozens of spots, the blimp remains in excellent condition. Pete likes his beer, and always has four cases of beer aboard. They have one rifle, and Jim is the best shot of them all.

## PLAY OF THE GAME:

What should happen is that the team arrives in the area just as the pirates are about to raid Sherman. They are going to force the townspeople to tell them where the *Toronto* is, or kill them all. Actually, they will probably kill them anyway.

If the team does nothing, someone in the town will tell the pirates where they can find the blimp and they will be able to steal it fairly easily, if it's on the ground. They will then send half the crew back to their own balloon and then take both of them back west.

If the team intervenes, they can possibly gain a way to travel great distances in the air. Pete Smith will be most thankful to them for saving his blimp and will be willing to take the team on a free trip.

Anyway, thanks for reading, hope it helps.