

Ask Cannonball

Last Updated Sunday, 28 June 2009

pi - rat [pahy-ruht]

–noun 1.a person who robs or commits illegal violence at sea or on the shores of the sea. 2.a ship used by such persons. 3.any plunderer, predator, etc.:
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My name is CANNONBALL and I'm as scurvy as they come. I sail the seven galaxies in search of booty and treasure... yeah, you heard me. But, when I'm not looting and pillaging, I like to relax by surfing the spacenet for images of Transmetal 2 Blackarachnia with the removable torso plate and answering your questions via email. If you have any questions you'd like answered then by all means let 'em rip ! Just don't tell The Allspark I'm stealing their bandwidth for my own ego and your amusement.

June 28, 2009. Cycle 37, Megacycle 118, Decacycle 238 (still a Sunday by both Cybertronian and Earth reckonin', oddly 'nough)

Got s'more questions from ye puny Terrans, and I've come out of hidin' (donnae ask from where!) te answer 'em! Thanks to akatsukikid1305 (why cannae these Humans go by more normal names like Terrorstrike or Flamestalkerimus Prime?):

- 1: How did you earn your name "Cannonball"?Thas' a story for th' ages, lad. It may surprise ye t'learn, but Cannonball is not my true designation (and Primezooks, I en't tellin' ye THA' bit o' information!). Nae, yours truly is actually th' TENTH mech t'bear the name Cannonball, and ye'd be surprised how many sheets on the multiversal stack the name's been passed through! Aye, Cannonball the First was a bit player in what ye may remember as the "Hearts Of Steel" universe, where Cybertronians had a hand in the history of Earth long before the adventures in the Primax-84-normal universe that you fleshlings saw on your primitive television boxes those 25 Earth years ago. Ach, indeed-- Cannonball the First appeared on Earth during its 18th century, and saw kindred spirits in characters like William Teach and Ann Bonny. With his textform communique of mark in hand, he took on the form of the most fear-inspiring pirate vessels ever to sail the Terran seas, and with that, the name Cannonball!

- 2: What kind of model is your ship?It depends on which part of the multiverse ye catch me in, of course! When I visit the Aurex Cluster, I have an old compatriot named Tidal Wave who ferries me 'round the stars in his very own alt-form! I'm also known to ride around in the burnt out and refitted hulk of the intergalactic monstrosity known as Devil-Z! Occasionally, a right blighter of a mech called Astrotrain does me shippin' and receivin' while I keep to my devices on Cybertron. Most o' the time, ye can catch me on my rig, the Star Arrow.

- 3: Got any turbo-lasers on it? Rail Cannons? Lad, that would be tellin'!

- 4: If 'ya got any energrog, would'ja spare some 'ta let me have a taste? Mebbe we could have a bit of fun later...Nae. Seriously, lad, the way I became Cannonball the Tenth was thus: Overloaded on energrog, Cannonball the Ninth lay passed out in his stateroom. I have a modular laser cannon for me left hand. Ye do the math. I keep dry, lad.

Today, the 19th of September by your pitiful Earth reckoning, be "International Talk Like A Pirate Day", an observance no doubt originated due to my rampant popularity among the hipsters of your world. Today, instead of answerin' questions from the unwashed, cretinous masses, I shall ruminate on what it is to be a pirate in a world such as this. The only way I know how to do that is... in the form of a classic Sea Chanty! Sing along if ye like; I've shamelessly plundered the tune from "The Major General's Song" from those landlubbers Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta "The Pirates of Penzance." (Which is a pedestrian, although accessible, if not completely inaccurate, depiction of life on the high seas.) Enjoy!

(Just a moment while I take a draught of energrog.)

(Let me clear my vocoder 'afore I begin.)

(Complete silence, if you please.)

(Thank you.)

(Without further ado...)

THE PIRATE UPPER ECHELON SONG I am the brand new model of the pirate upper echelon, I've information Autobot, and Maximal, Decepticon, I know the route to Iacon; I've dueled the greatest generals, From Alpha Prime to Zeta Max, in order alphabetical; I'm very well acquainted, too, with Polyhex arithmetic, I know what's meant by breem and vorn; how long it takes to reformat And change your shell from back to forth, a monkey-truck or cyber-bat, A transformation in all things from that to this and this to that. I'm very good at telling lies, dissembling the truthful facts For bending truths with wink and nudge I'm told that I have quite the knack. In short, in matters Autobot and Maximal, Decepticon, I am the brand new model of the pirate upper echelon. I know our mythic history, of Primus and the grand Allspark; I followed Optimus and crew as they set out aboard the Ark Crashed on a mudball known as Earth and slept away the centuries, A jet, a tank, a car, or bus: as form I've chosen none of these; When Megatron and Prime did duel atop the Terran watershed Sincerely did I hope that one of them would lose his bloomin' head Then I could take my place atop the Cybertronic cataract So long as my dear ship and crew deigned not to shoot me in the back! Then I could burn my name upon the soaring arching Kaon walls And say that near and far all 'bot will know my name is Cannonball In short, in matters Autobot and Maximal, Decepticon, I am the brand new model of the pirate upper echelon. Get set to meet my pirate crew: They're talkative and quite profound! There's Tidal Wave and Thunderblast, but not least puny swab Short Round. Rapacious lust for Energon; that blessed prize at Sandokan, Which guides my spark and tills my oar; 'twas them that robbed me of my hand! When I tell you that Shockwave was a doddering and useless clod When I know more of tactics than a proto in a stasis pod— In short, I say this pirate lifestyle really truly suits me fine— You'll say the greatest Cannonball must be the dreaded Number Nine. For my privateering knowledge, though I'm furious and full of scorn, Has only been brought down to the first day of the last decavorn; But still, in matters Autobot and Maximal, Decepticon, I am the brand new model of the pirate upper echelon.

All hands on deck, ye swabs! It's been a slow week on the high seas, so I've had the time to answer more of your piddlin' little missives. I'll just ignore the massive pounding in my head... I'm not intoxicated or anything, but I am tryin' out that new Headmaster technology, and the little sea-slug I'm Binary Bonded to won't stop playing old Metallica records. It's made me a might... irritable. Ah, well, on to the questions.

Q: What the heck is up with the Quintessons? Why the 5 face version & the squid-like one head?

Well, lad, you've got to remember: some of us Cybertronians are meant for different tasks. Take me f'r example. I'm built to whollop the everlovin' grease outta pipsqueaks like YOU WHO ASK ME STUPID QUESTIONS!

Sorry, lad. Had a bit too much Paradron Port this afternoon with me lunch. It's like this: the squiddies are lesser Quintessons... jes' like how Autobots are inferior to Decepticons.

Q: Why did they need Allitrons & Sharkticons alike?

Well, why do I need Battle Ravages and Scrapmetals for my Terrorcon pens? What's good for the goose-a-tron may not be good for the ganderbot, if you catch my meaning.

Q: And did they really create the Transformers?

Ah, lad, that's just a hard drive's tale to scare protoforms. Everyone knows the Transformers evolved from a naturally occurring assortment of gears and pulleys.

Q: Also, what is the usual course of treatment for robo-scurvy?

Bah! Robo-scurvy builds character! Why, if it weren't for my bout with the malady in my early days, Cannonball the Eighth would've never thought I had the ball bearings to take on the name! That, and I was secretly hoarding orange energon chips in my foot locker... next question!

Q: So what's your opinion on the new Transformers movie?

Michael Bay knows what a good pirate likes: explosions, mayhem, and did ye see the booty on that Mikaela wench?

Q: Do you like the new look of the 'bots? Dislike it?

The gnarled faces remind me of this one deckhand I used to have... Queequantum, I think his name was. Ugly sot, for what it's worth.

Q: And what be the deal, exactly, with Pirates and Ninjas? And who would win, ye or Sixshot™ (Sixshot™ is a trademark of Cybertronian Ninja Consultants®)? And what about that Pirahnacon bilgerat?

Sixshot and I arm wrestled once. Aye... I ripped his arm out of its socket and beat him about the head and face with it. He went home bawling like the little girl he is! I still have that arm, I think.

I used to play croquet with the Seacons, actually. Snaptrap's a dirty cheating sod, Nautilator whines too much, Overbite's got atrocious table manners, and Seawing spits when he talks. Pirahnacon, on the other hand, is one classy 300-foot tall bot with the upper body strength to crumple me into a wee little metallic cube.

Q: Who's in your crew?

If ye think I'm about t'say Tidal Wave and Short Round, ye're... absolutely right, actually. I've never been very original with my recruiting.

Q: What would you do if your were marooned on a deserted planet with nothing but a string, a paperclip and a bottle of grog?

Butterfly or snailshell paperclip? What kind of grog? Starfury's Stout or Redshift Reserve? That makes a difference, ye know. Depending on the energon content of the grog, I might be able to pull a MacGyver on the whole thing and create some sort of interdimensional transit conduit so that I may be able to transcend time and space and return to my ship.

Or I could just drink the grog, get hammered, and forget I'm on a desert island. I could make a nifty slingshot from the paperclip and string... I guess.

Q: Who kicks more #!\$, you or Red Alert? Remind me... who stole whose body?

Q: Who would you consider the Guybrush Threepwood of the Transformers universe?

Bumbling... unsophisticated... bad with the femmebots... why, it's G1 Megatron, hands down. Never have I seen such a worthless wreck being unduly catapulted to such heights of notoriety while the real Decepticon personalities get shoved to the back of the history trax, never to receive a single footnote despite all their grand efforts and... I'm rambling again, aren't I?

Well, lads and lasses, that's all the time old Cannonball has to answer yer piddlin' little concerns. Keep writin' those Primus-be-damned emails and I'll try to answer to the best of my abilities.

Now sod off. I need a nap and an aspirin... and maybe some knockout gas for my little "upstairs neighbor".

Q: Have you ever made use of cannons that fired actual cannonballs?

A: You know, I had to look this up. Apparently my name actually means something! I had no idea. I guess the answer would have to be "Not really". Although I've never used anything quite as crude as actual cannonballs, I have catapulted the heads of my fallen foes back over to enemy vessels to ah... get my point across in the past.

Q: Who be yer favorite Cybertronian wench to be spending ye time with?

Al Well, there was this one wench I knew who was near and dear to my heart. She had optics of crimson, I think, and her alt mode was one that got my fuel pump in overdrive. But.. I forget her name.

Q: If a robot loses a limb, say a hand or leg… couldn’t he just have another identical limb attached?

A: Aye, if there are parts available. Sometimes you just gotta make do. But you gotta remember, that extra hand you have lying around had to come from somewhere.. or someone.

Q: How come Vector Prime never updates his page anymore?

Well, you see. Vector Prime hasn't been around lately because we had to take him to a nice farm. He's got plenty of room to run around and play and there's other robots for him to play with. No, really, he's dead.

Q: You are supposed to be a pirate but you don't talk like a pirate. Why is that?

A: Actually, I talk EXACTLY like a pirate. Its just that I don't type the way I talk. Honestly, who does that? If it makes you happy, I'll close this week's segment out with some pirate talk..

Arrrr.. and that be all the time we have fer this week, kur! But keep yer questions comin' or you'll be walkin the plank, matey!

So apparently the shtick is that I get messages sent to me in bottles of booze from all you kids out there. Now this might sound good in theory, but in reality it glitches me off just a little because that means YOU are sucking down my alcoholic sustenance and all I get out of the deal is a damp piece of paper.

Anyway, the mailbag is kind of light this week because we're just getting started, but I'll entertain you as best I have with what I have to work with.

Q: If CYBERTRON doesn't have any water, how where do you sail?

A: See, this is what I'm talking about. What kind of question is that? I'm a SPACE pirate who flies a SPACE pirate ship. I don't sail on a literal sea. But for the record, water on CYBERTRON isn't as legendary as you might think.

Q: Energon stout, or energon pale ale?

A: Stout? Ale? A pirate's drink is none other than Scraplet Grog! Ales and Stouts are made for lesser 'bots.

Q: How do you believe fembots should be treated?

A: I prefer to treat them to a bottle of grog, dinner with the captain and an evening in the captain's quarters exchanging bodily surges. Of course the last time that happened I had a nasty case of barnacles on my drive shaft that didn't clear up for a megacycle.

Q: Is it harder having a peg arm then a peg leg?

A: Only when surfing the 'net.

