

For Referees Only

SPINWARD MARCHES

*Adventure 2
Range War*

TRAVELLER

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TRAVELLER²⁰
Science-Fiction Adventure in the Far Future

**ADVENTURE 2
RANGE WAR**

A SUPPLEMENT FOR TRAVELLER

**BASED ON THE AWARD-WINNING TRAVELLER GAME
SYSTEM AND UNIVERSE BY MARC MILLER**

Avenger Enterprises publishes game materials for the Traveller Role-Playing Game. Avenger adventures and supplements set in the Official Traveller Universe (OTU) and are therefore compatible with all versions of the game. For Referee convenience, most Avenger products contain game stats for T20 (Traveller for the d20 system) and Classic Traveller.

Adventure 2: Range War is set in the Spinward Marches of Official Traveller Universe, in the period just after the end of the Fifth Frontier War. As such it is compatible with either the official Hard Times – Collapse – Recovery – New Era timeline or an alternate wherein the assassination of Emperor Strephon does not occur.

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INTRODUCTION

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

Range War is a Traveller adventure from Avenger Enterprises. It is the first Avenger adventure to be written after our deal with ComStar media, and thus the first new material from Avenger for quite a while.

This adventure series represents the culmination of a long-cherished ambition; to return to the Spinward Marches and find out where the story might have gone if more LBBs ('Little Black Books') had been published. It may be that there are huge story arcs waiting to be discovered as the product line develops. We're not saying at this point - you'll have to wait and see. What we can reveal is that there will be more Golden Age Traveller adventures to follow, and some of them will deal with the colonization of Steel. What the characters do here may affect events elsewhere, and in ways that they might not expect.

Range War is the second adventure in the Steel Project storyline. It follows on from the events of Call of the Wild but can be run as a standalone adventure. All necessary data is provided in the Referee and Players' Information sections.

STANDARDS AND ASSUMPTIONS

In order to play this adventure you will need one or another of the Traveller rules sets. Stats are included for T20 and for Classic Traveller (CT), though other rules sets can be used with a minimum of work. We assume that the adventure will take place in a game setting that looks and feels a lot like the Spinward Marches of the Official Traveller Universe (OTU), and that the normal Traveller conventions (one-week Jumps, no FTL communications and so forth) apply. If your game universe varies significantly, some tweaking may be necessary.

You will also need some dice as appropriate to your chosen rules set (normal 6-sided dice for CT and a variety of dice for T20). Pens, pencils and paper are useful, plus maybe something to drink and munchies of some kind. Avenger Enterprises recommends corned beef & potato pie to pacify ravenous players, but tastes vary...

Dates: All dates correspond to the standard Imperial calendar. The start date of this adventure is 054-1111 (i.e. the 54th day of the 1111th year since the founding of the Third Imperium). Time will follow normally once the adventure begins. If a different date is required, for example to fit the adventure into an existing campaign, then the start date can be altered with little or no disruption to the adventure.

Place: The adventure takes place on Steel (0709 655000 0 G), a world situated in the Sword Worlds subsector of the Spinward Marches.

Theme: The adventure deals with the early stages of a colonization effort. A suitable site has been found for a starport and work has commenced on creating both a port and a viable community to support it. However, the creation of a civilization on Steel is hampered by threats from within and without. The players will probably succeed through a mix of political ability and judicious gunplay, though other approaches are entirely possible.

CHARACTERS

This adventure can be played (and completed successfully) by almost any group of adventurers if they are able to think creatively and maximize their strengths. There are no encounters or challenges in this adventure aimed at any specific type of character. Different characters will use different approaches and may struggle in some circumstances, but adventuring is not about having the right weapons, skills or equipment to meet a challenge; it is about meeting what the universe throws at you with what you have and finding a way to win – or at least survive.

Having said that, certain characters are better suited to this adventure than others. Any number of adventurers (or even a lone pioneer) can tackle this challenge, but a band of 3-6 adventurers works best. Useful skills include the ability to drive and repair ground vehicles, operate and maintain sensor equipment, and to survive in a wilderness environment. Adventurers usually find a use for weapons or other combat skills, which may make medical skills useful too. Some adventuring groups may even find it useful to be able to interact with their fellow sophonts in ways not involving gunfire or unarmed combat.

EQUIPMENT

If the characters from Call of the Wild still have their all-terrain vehicle (ATV), then they can continue to use it. If not they will be provided with one during the adventure. Whatever other equipment the characters have will depend on what they brought with them. If additional equipment is desired, it can be purchased before the adventure begins or obtained from the base camp store (at inflated prices) during the adventure. The Referee should determine what is or is not available in the Startown stores, bearing in mind that this is small settlement on a frontier world with little demand for exotic or expensive items. Heavy military equipment is not available at any price.

THE ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLE

The characters have use of a standard 8-wheeled All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) which will serve as their transport and accommodation in the field. They will be assigned bunk space base when they are not out on a mission, although they are of course able to pay for somewhere less basic to live in during their downtime.

The ATV does not belong to the characters and must be returned in working order at the end of the commission. A certain amount of wear on the ATV is acceptable (they are meant to be abused in the field and can take a lot of bashing without any real ill effects). Repairs can be carried out by the crew using spares bought from the base camp stores, or by others at base camp for a fee. Spares and repairs can be deducted from the characters' pay or bonuses.

The ATV assigned to the characters is a TL-14 Ling Standard Products (LSP) Workhorse; a fairly standard and well-respected model. This particular example is by no means new and shows signs of several years in the field, but it is well maintained and in any case is designed to take punishment and like it. Powered by a small fusion powerplant, the ATV has more or less unlimited range since it needs refueling only every couple of years. It can cruise on flat terrain or roads at about 50kph and can cross virtually any terrain, albeit more slowly.

The ATV is fully pressurized, though it does not need this feature on Steel, and can traverse calm water using waterjet propulsion. It has cramped bunk space for 8 plus a galley that doubles as a work area for the crew. This particular model has power takeoffs for field equipment and carries a range of tools for the use of pioneers in the field.

The ATV contains the following equipment:

ATV Sensor Package

The ATV's sensors include powerful lights, infrared cameras and a basic ground-mapping radar unit normally used for navigation but useful in creating a limited surface map of an area. The vehicle also has an inertial locator and a long-range radio.

Other ATV Equipment

Racks aboard the ATV contain the following:

- 1 Shotgun plus 50 rounds of standard ammunition
- 1 Carbine plus 3 20-round magazines
- 8 Cold Light Lanterns
- 2 Metal Detectors
- Basic ATV-repair tool kit
- Shovels, spades and picks for digging
- 1 Electric chainsaw for vegetation clearance. Batteries are good for about 1 hour of hard work, then require recharging from the ATV powerplant. This takes about 2 hours.

Medical Kit, Vehicle

A standard TL-C field medical kit containing broad-spectrum antibiotics, anti-venom agents and more basic items such as splints, bandages and wound cleaning tools. These can be used to perform emergency surgery, but they are very limited.

Survival Kit, Vehicle

The ATV carries two kits. Both have been recently restocked.

Each kit contains:

- 1 Survival Rifle, plus 50 rounds shot and 50 ball. Treat as Carbine.
- 1 Hatchet
- 1 Field Medical Kit
- 4 Personal Survival Kit (in addition to those in the vehicle kit)
- 4 Sets/Emergency Cold Weather Clothing
- 4 Combination Masks plus extra filters
- Field Rations for 60 person-days (15 days for 4 people)
- 4 Bulk water storage containers with filters
- 1 Water Purification Kit
- 2 2-Person Pressure Tent

Personal Equipment

Anyone expecting to work in the outback will need certain basic equipment. This can be purchased as a standard package known as a 'bush kit'. Most people also carry a personal survival kit.

Basic 'Bush Kit':

- Boots
- 3 Sets of tough coveralls
- Sleeveless 'field jerkin' with several pockets
- Over-jacket or parka for cold conditions
- 'Thorn-proof' gloves
- Bush hat
- Sunglasses
- Filter Mask (not necessary but sometimes useful)
- Small backpack
- Blade (for use as a machete)
- Sample collection kit (bottles, jars, and small tools e.g. tweezers)
- Cold light flashlight (i.e. chemical rather than electrically powered)

Survival Kit, Personal

- Small knife
- Fire-starting equipment
- Blanket/poncho
- 4 days' preserved rations
- Water bottle
- Compass
- Light cord or string
- Mirror
- Water purification tablets
- Survival manual

The characters may in addition have their own equipment and weapons.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION

The following information is provided for the use of the Referee, who should decide how much of it is freely available to the characters, and also how distorted any information they may discover should be. Note that what is presented here is not the whole story in many cases, and is open to a certain amount of interpretation.

THE IMPERIUM IN 1111

The Third Imperium is 1111 years old. It has weathered civil war, frontier conflict and some rather serious internal crises but remains as strong and stable as ever; at least on the surface. There is no reason to suppose that any of the many problems facing the Imperium and her Emperor, Strophon, are serious enough to merit extreme measures, let alone that they might threaten the peace and stability of the Imperium.

The Fifth Frontier War, fought against a coalition of Vargr, Sword Worlders and Zhodani (and led by the latter) has been recently brought to a successful conclusion. The early stages of the war did not go well for the Imperial forces, mainly due to poor leadership and strategy among senior Imperial admirals. That changed when Duke Norris dramatically took charge of the situation, purging the upper echelons of the Imperial command structure ruthlessly. Some critics have suggested that Norris abused the power given to him by an Imperial Warrant; others say that this is exactly why the Emperor trusted Norris with the Warrant in the first place.

Today, the ripples caused by the war are beginning to subside. The political situation in the region is a little turbulent due to disaffection in some quarters. The sacked admirals and their political supporters and allies are up in arms about the way they were simply sidelined – heroic victor or not, there are many who feel that Norris has over-reached himself and needs to be cut down to size. The implications of Norris' dramatic assumption of personal command may be more far-reaching than anticipated. Already there are rumors that nobles in far corners of the Imperium are seeking to make their own powerplays, though most are proceeding cautiously while they wait to see what the Emperor has to say about the situation.

Reserve naval and ground forces units are already entering the Marches to make good losses incurred in the war, and a new round of shipbuilding has been approved to bring the reserve strength back up to establishment levels. The numbers of warships lost, while large, are a drop in the ocean compared to the might of the Imperial fleets. The war has not significantly reduced the ability of the Imperium to defend its territory.

THE SPINWARD MARCHES

The Spinward Marches Sector has relatively little significance in Imperial affairs, except that it is the Imperial border with the Zhodani Consulate and also with certain Vargr states.

Lying fully 44 weeks' transit from Capital by Express Boat (a little less by Jump-6 courier, but not much), and separated from the Imperial core by the upper claw of the Great Rift, the region is considered to be a fairly unimportant backwater that serves as a convenient buffer against the Zhodani. However, the Spinward Marches were also the origin of Admiral Olav Hault-Plankwell's bid to become Emperor. The last thing Emperor Strophon wants is another Civil War, so the government of the Marches must be strong... but not too strong.

It will be some time before matters return to normal in the Marches. The naval bases and orbital defenses are being rebuilt and the battle squadrons replaced, but losses to minor warships will take longer to make good. In the interim, the Navy is doing all it can to maintain order on the spaceways but the inevitable upsurge in piracy, smuggling and general lawlessness has the remaining naval assets overtaxed. Some of the slack is being taken up with mercenary and even Scout Service vessels, but things are unsettled at best.

The war has also cause massive economic disruption even in areas where no fighting took place. Local defensive forces are gradually standing down while merchant ships return to their routes from wherever service as naval auxiliaries may have taken them. There are new opportunities for the taking in this shaken-up environment, and dangers to match.

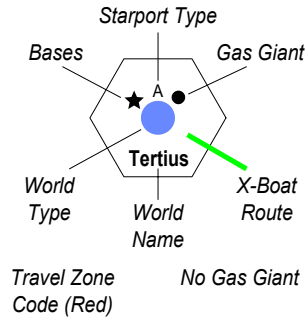
The most troubled regions lie of course along the Imperial-Zhodani border, where tensions still run high. The Sword Worlds subsector is also unstable at present. The defeat of the Sword Worlders has resulted in Imperial occupation forces being based on some worlds, while others have been absorbed into a grouping now known as the Border Worlds. This group includes some former Sword Worlds and also the former Reserve Worlds of Steel, Mithril, Bronze and Iron. There are big plans for this area, which will in time provide a link to Imperial territory in Five Sisters subsector. However, it is early days yet.

SWORD WORLDS SUBSECTOR

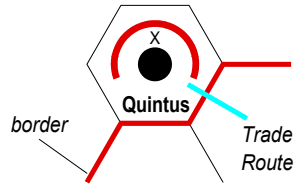
Sword Worlds subsector lies on the Imperial border, though there are some allied worlds and states, and a small enclave of Imperial territory, beyond. To Spinward is Darrian subsector, home to the Daryens. The Daryen civilization is a remnant of its former glory; relics of TL-G are found on the Daryen homeworld though the useable technology of the Daryen Confederation is lower.

To Spinward-Rimward lies a small enclave of Imperial territory in Five Sisters subsector, which includes two interdicted Droyne worlds, Andor and Candory. To Rimward lies District 268; non-Imperial territory for the time being. Trailing-Rimward is Glisten subsector; an important outpost on the Imperial border. Rimward of that is the so-called Outrim Void and the Great Rift.

MAP LEGEND



Travel Zone Code (Red) No Gas Giant



WORLD CHARACTERISTICS

- No Water Present
- Water Present
- Asteroid Belt

BASES

- ★ Imperial Naval Base
- ▲ Imperial Scout Base
- △ Imperial Way Station
- Military Base
- X Exile Camp

TRAVEL ZONES

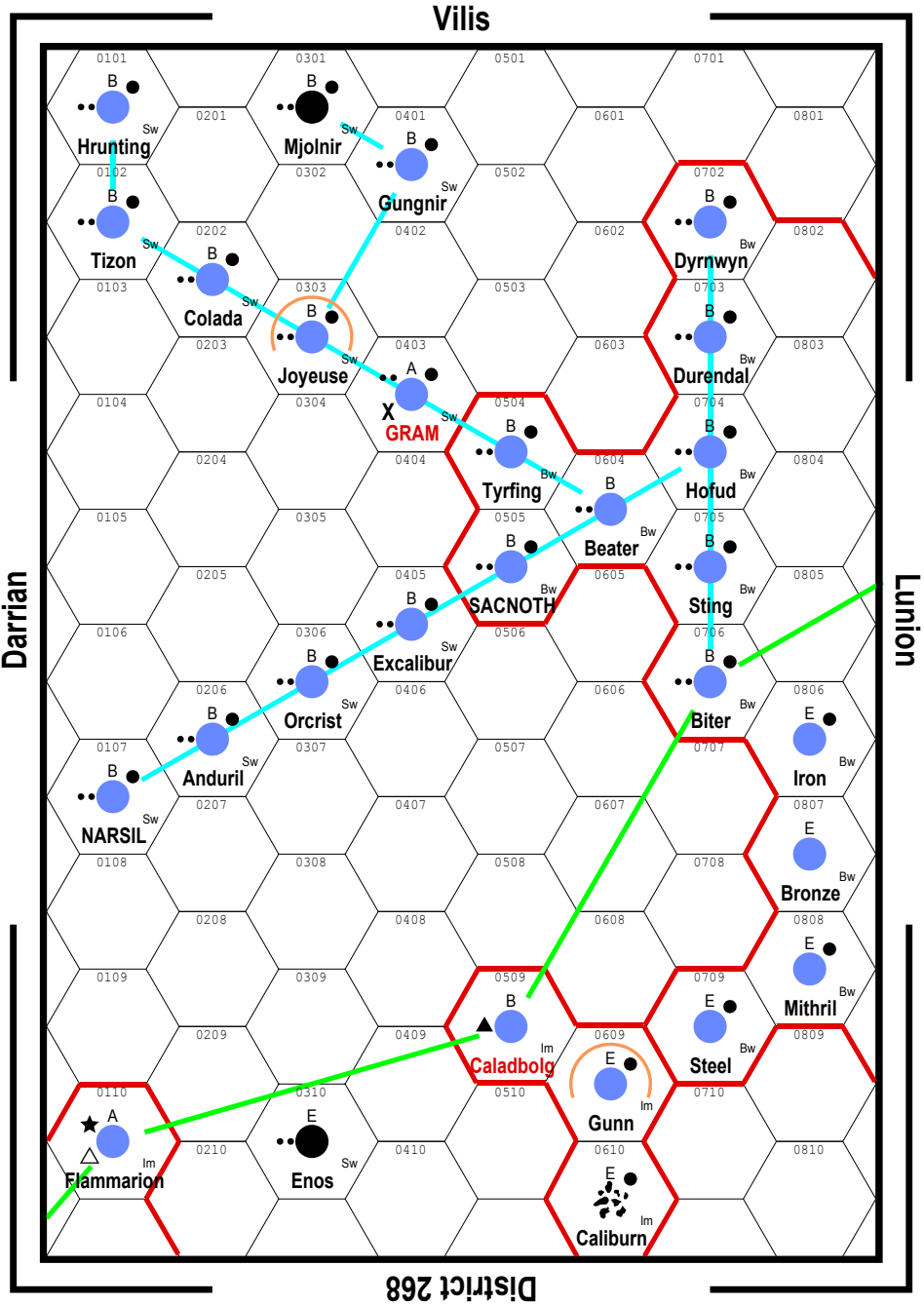
- Amber Zone
- Red Zone

POPULATION

- Secundus under one billion
- PRIMUS over one billion

World names in red are subsector capitals

A	B	C	D
E	F	G	H
I	J	K	L
M	N	O	P



Sword Worlds Subsector

(subsector J of Spinward Marches sector)

To Trailing of Sword Worlds subsector is Imperial territory all the way back to Corridor Sector and ultimately to the Imperial core. Coreward and Spinward are the remnants of the Sword Worlds (the political entity as distinct from the subsector of the same name), then a belt of Imperial territory bordering the Zhodani Consulate.

Until fairly recently, Imperial influence in the Sword Worlds subsector was minor. Most of the subsector lay outside the Imperial border, in the territory of the Sword Worlds. Imperial vessels would pass through Biter and Caladbolg on the way to Five Sisters, but the overall Imperial presence was minor. The Fifth Frontier War changed all that.

Today, the rump of the Sword Worlds remains under partial Imperial occupation whilst many worlds (including the Metal Worlds) have been annexed into an Imperial client state known as the Border Worlds. Some former Sword Worlds came willingly, some not. The Metal Worlds, being uninhabited reserve worlds, are not subject to internal security problems in the same way that, say, Sting or Beater are. They thus have no Imperial garrison and are patrolled only intermittently by the overstretched Imperial Navy.

The Sword Worlds were settled long ago by (mainly European) settlers from Terra. A strong empathy with the Germanic traditions of honesty, courage and 'manliness' resulted in a chauvinistic but well-intentioned society that prized strength over stability; the Sword Worlds have been united at times and at one another's throats at others. Although prone to brawling among themselves, the Sword Worlders have always been willing to stand together against outsiders, and so for centuries have been a powerful force in the Marches; sufficiently so that the subsector is named for them.

The Sword Worlders have fought against the Imperium as part of several 'Outworld coalitions' as the popular media likes to call them. This time, they and their allies have been soundly defeated and several Sword Worlds are now under Imperial occupation. Imperial plans to ensure that the Sword Worlders do not become a threat once more include the incorporation of some former Sword Worlds, along with the Reserve Worlds, also called the Metal Worlds, into the Imperium.

The creation of this 'Border Worlds' group will do more than create a buffer zone against the Sword Worlders. The Metal Worlds (Steel, Mithril, Bronze and Iron) lie on the Spinward Main, a huge chain of worlds connected by Jump-1 routes, that snakes through most of the sector. Expanding the starports of the Metal Worlds will effectively open up the way for Jump-1 trade into District 268 and on into Glisten and Five Sisters subsectors. The latter two are or contain Imperial territory; District 268 is not as yet an Imperial subsector.

It seems likely that the expansion of the Metal Worlds is the opening gambit of a plan to increase Imperial influence in District 268. Annexation will no doubt follow in due course. There are various potential occupiers for the Metal Worlds including corporate bodies, Sword Worlders seeking a new home and a range of political and religious groups from across the sector. Who gets to settle on the various worlds depends on many factors but in all cases the colonies will need to be viable, and that means that their resources must be surveyed and catalogued before any colonists are sent.

PARTIAL UWP OF SWORD WORLDS SUBSECTOR

0506-0810

UWP DATA

World	UPP	Zone	Bases	Codes	PBG	Stellar
0509	Caladbolg	B365776-A	S	Ri Ind	710	F7 V M0 D M4 D
0609	Gunn	E344110-8A		Ni	602	M3 V
0610	Caliburn	E000514-A		Ast	924	M2 V
0706	Biter	B354623-A	B	Ag Ni	301	G7V M1D
0709	Steel	E655000-0			324	M8 III
0806	Iron	E529000-0			714	F0 V
0807	Bronze	E201000-0		Ic Va Ba	510	M3 V
0808	Mithril	E568000-0			301	F4 D

WORLD OVERVIEWS

Caladbolg is an important Imperial world in the region. It is an Xboat link and has a small Scout Service base to serve the communications link into Five Sisters subsector. Naval vessels transiting to Spinward usually pass through the system, which has been Imperial territory for many decades.

Gunn is currently Amber Zoned by the Scout Service on account of health risks linked with its tainted atmosphere.

Caliburn is populated mainly by scattered Belter populations mining its extensive asteroid and planetoid belts. It is de facto Imperial territory but has little importance and is rarely visited by outsiders.

Biter is one of the Sword Worlds co-opted into the Border Worlds. Long the site of an Imperial trade mission, Biter is the most pro-Imperial of the Border Worlds and relatively untroubled by unrest.

Steel is probably the best of the Metal Worlds in terms of human habitability, though its thin atmosphere results in more extreme temperatures than might be desired.

Iron actually looks like iron from orbit. Its dull gray oceans of half-frozen water are broken by small mountainous land masses. The atmosphere is too thin to breathe unaided but the possibility of mineral wealth may still draw colonists.

Bronze is a vacuum world with just enough water locked up in ice caps to make it borderline habitable. It is probably the least desirable of the Metal Worlds.

Mithril is a chilly but habitable world largely covered by either oceans or snow. A few years ago a party of adventurers claimed to have found indications that Aslan or other sentients once lived on Mithril. Proof has never been forthcoming.

STEEL – AN IMPERIAL RESERVE WORLD

Steel (0709 D655262-7) is the site of this adventure. Although it has been cursorily surveyed by both the Sword Worlders and the Imperial Interstellar Scout Service, much of the planet remains an unexplored wilderness. Similarly, the remainder of the star system is charted but not thoroughly explored. The occasional Belter ship passes through or picks over moons or planetoids in the outsystem, but otherwise commercial traffic is uncommon.

The Sword Worlds maintained a small rudimentary starport (Class E) and a token presence on the world. This force was removed by a company of Imperial Marines in 1109 after a token 30-minute resistance 'for the honor of the Sword Worlds'. The old Sword Worlder installation was abandoned and remains disused.

The official UWP of Steel has changed in the past few months. It is now listed as having a permanent population numbering in the hundreds. Government type is 6 (captive/Colony) since the world is under the jurisdiction of the Imperial Colonial Office (ICO), which administers it in trust until it can be handed over to a proper world government. That day is drawing closer with the creation of the first permanent settlement on the planet, but beyond the immediate area Steel is more or less ungoverned. The various prospecting and survey groups licensed to operate on the world have their own rules and will enforce them within the confines of their base camps or wherever their personnel may be. Additionally, visits are made by Ministry of Justice (IMOJ) personnel. Some of the larger groups have an IMOJ marshal assigned to their camp, but coverage is patchy at best.

A central starport is under construction at present. This installation has been designated a D class port, though until the facilities are completed and on-line it only barely qualifies for this label. Most of the explorers' base camps have a cleared and marked landing area equivalent to a Class E starport. In wilder areas setting down a starship is more risky – what looks like a good site from the air may be swampy, prone to subsidence or plagued by all manner of other hazards. One reason for the planetary survey of Steel is to determine good locations for facilities and cities.

CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Steel has a thin atmosphere and is a little drier than Terra, but is quite habitable by humans. Daytime temperatures tend to be a little high for comfort and the nights very cold, but storms are relatively mild and precipitation is fairly light. Characters are able to breathe unaided, though until they become fully acclimatized (a matter of weeks) they will tire quickly if they exert themselves. Sound does not carry well in the thin atmosphere and most characters will find the world's reddish daylight a bit too bright. The stars are very clear at night however. Steel has two small moons, imaginatively named Alpha and Beta. Neither is large enough to shed much light nor to affect the world's bodies of water to any great extent.

Steel is quite active from a geo-physics point of view, with earthquakes and the occasional volcano as the result of a fair amount of tectonic plate activity. The landscape is quite spectacular in places, with massive mountains unsoftened by weathering and in many cases uncovered with snow. Badlands and rocky areas are not uncommon, with windshadow deserts covering much of the interior of some land masses. Forests cover some areas, especially along the major watercourses, but there are no vast jungles or rainforests on Steel.

Steel has a roughly 22-hour day and surface gravity of 0.85g. This is close enough to norms that only a little time is needed to become sufficiently accustomed to local conditions that

work is not unduly affected. However, over a long period the differences between Steel's conditions and wherever the characters were last will lead to some slight problems including tiredness and irritability. This becomes a problem after about 1-2 weeks. After spending another 7-8 weeks on planet, characters will become well adjusted to local conditions – possibly just in time to move on and suffer the discomfort of adjustment all over again.

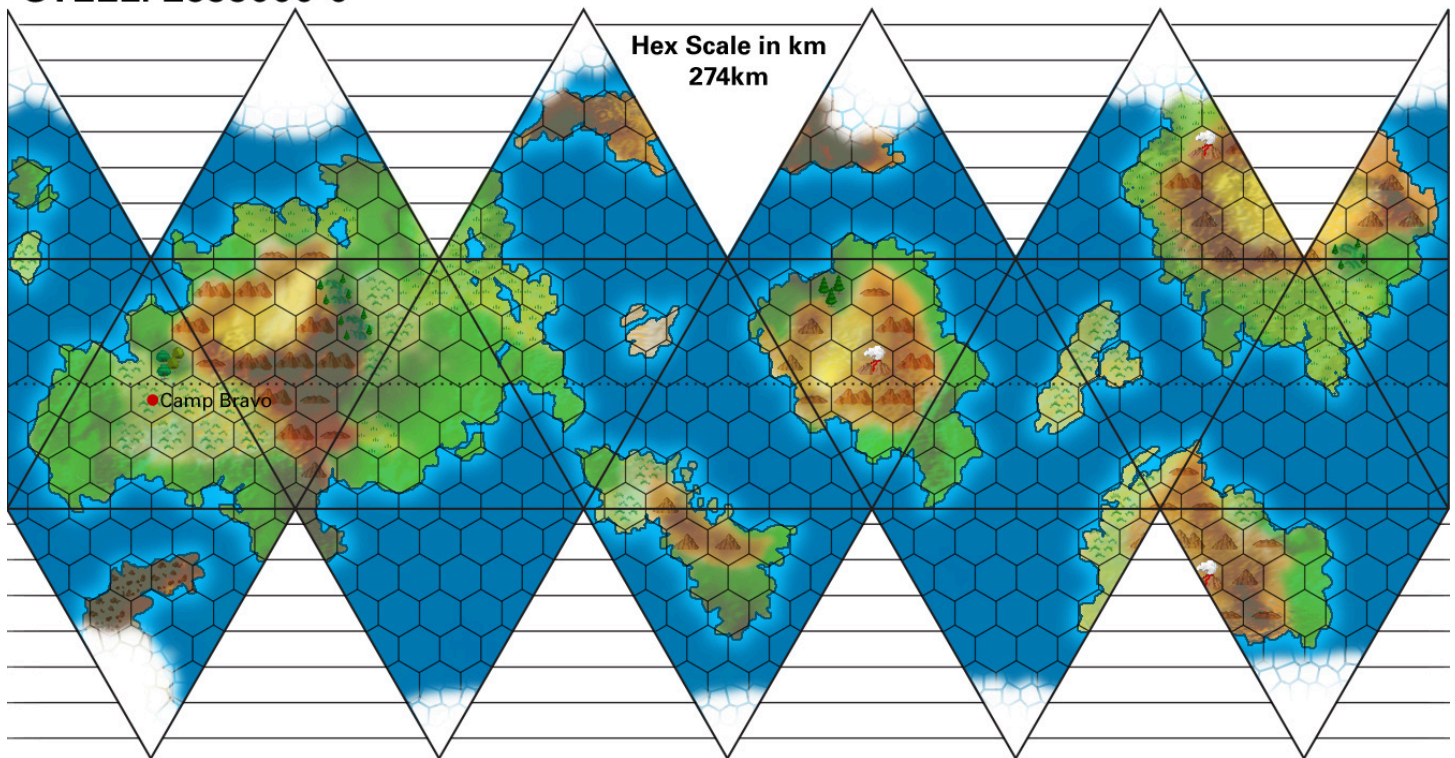
WILDLIFE

Steel is home to a variety of indigenous and imported wildlife. For some reason Terran rabbits have flourished since their introduction at some point in the past, perhaps because the main indigenous predator, a Collie-sized beast named Korzan's Pseudo-Mammalian Pouncer but known universally as Korzan's Critter (or just 'Critter') finds them almost inedible for some reason.

The Kian, a flightless bird big enough for a human to ride, has also been introduced to Steel at some point in the past. Herds of Kian are maintained by some optimistic steaders trying to stake an early claim to prime territories and as transport by some of the survey teams. Wild Kian provide food for the world's apex predator, a savage horse-sized quadruped named with the romantic name of the Highland Terror. Highland Terrors also prey on the Great Caski, a long-necked grazer that wanders the wilderness in small family groups, following the seasonal grazing.

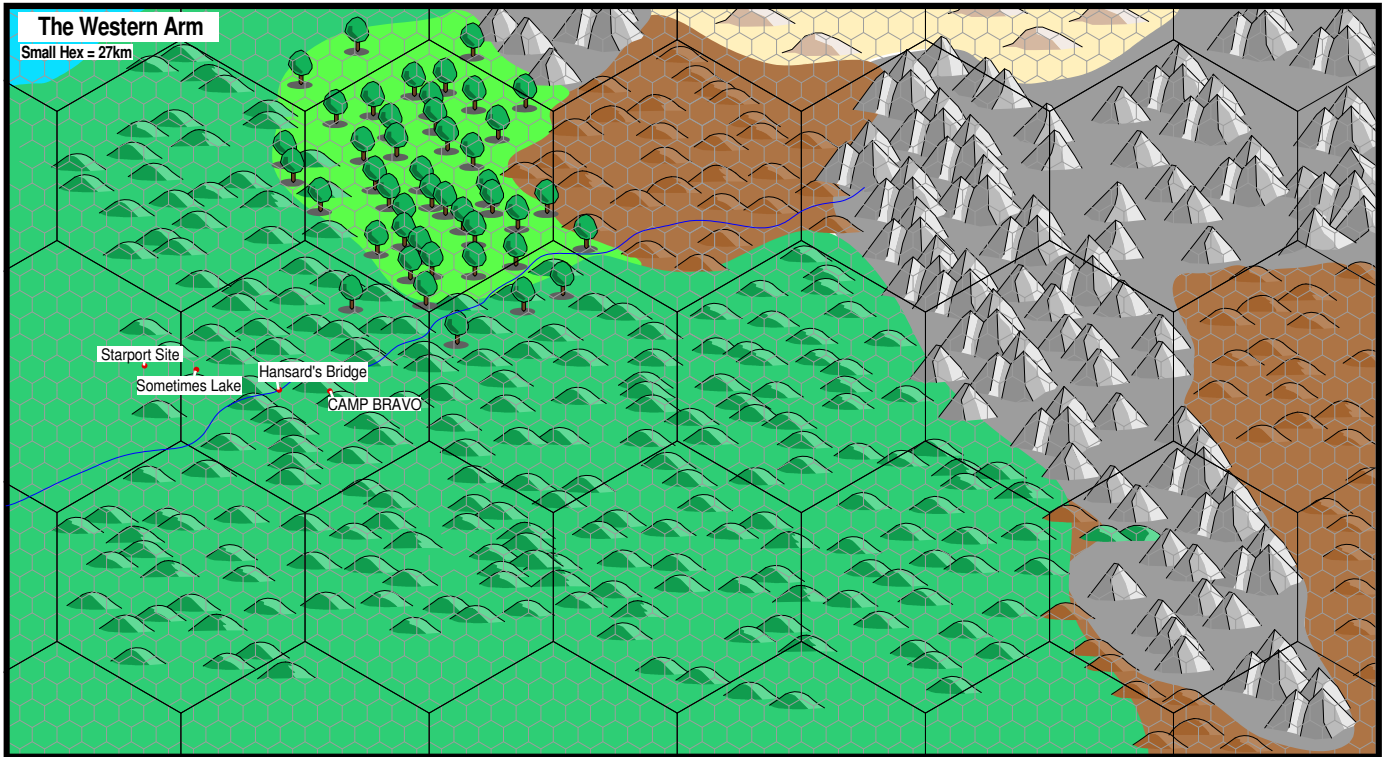
MAP OF STEEL

STEEL: E655000-0



		Mountains		Grassy Hills
		Low Mountains		Deciduous Forest
		Rocky Hills		Coniferous Forest
		Volcano		Forested Hills
		Badlands		Rocks at Sea
		Desert		Arctic Waste

MAP OF THE WESTERN ARM



	Mountains		Grassy Hills
	Low Mountains		Deciduous Forest
	Rocky Hills		Coniferous Forest
	Volcano		Forested Hills
	Badlands		Rocks at Sea
	Desert		Arctic Waste

The main continent of Steel is divided into three main regions. The Central Desert is exactly that; a large inland region with little water and therefore inhospitable to life. The fertile Southeastern region is known as the Breadbasket, somewhat optimistically, by the survey teams assigned there. The Western Arm of the continent, bounded by the ocean on one side and the Snowless Mountains on the other, is virtually a separate land mass. This was the site of the original Sword Worlder installation, though it lies on a wild seacoast far from the current settlements.

The Western Arm has been surveyed from orbit, albeit cursorily, and has been explored from the ground to some extent. The regions close to the base camps are relatively 'tame', with established roads (in the form of dirt tracks driven over by many ATVs) and outlying steads or temporary camps. Further out, only the most obvious features are even

noted on the charts. The ongoing mission of the pioneers is to remedy this situation; surveys and exploration missions will continue for many months yet.

PEOPLE ON STEEL

There are probably upwards of 3,000 people on Steel, though its official population is listed as a few hundred. Most of the 'population' is human, with Vargr as the most significant minority. The largest settlement on Steel, home to all of the permanent residents, is SteelPort, the under-construction Starport, and its associated town. SteelPort will eventually be the capital and trade center for the planet, though for the moment it resembles a large construction site.

The other, non-permanent, communities on Steel are the base camps of the various surveying/exploration operations. Few of these number over 100 people, with none over 250. This includes the permanent personnel of the camp plus the actual surveyors, explorers and prospectors who operate out of the camp.

Each camp is different, though the overall theme tends to be the same. Each camp needs an open area for vessels to land, a relatively flat area for buildings and such like, and a water source. Most base camps are comprised of prefabricated buildings and situated near a feature such as a major watercourse or a potential mineral resource.

Away from the camps, some enterprising groups have set up small Kian ranches or farming communities in the hope that when the world is opened up their claims will be recognized or at least bought out for a good price. Not all of these groups are properly licensed, but most are friendly enough with the base camp personnel; many rely on the base camps for supplies and offworld communication. Most of these communities use small offroad jeeps and Kian for transport. ATVs are uncommon and grav vehicles rarer still due to their price.

Most of the base camps are gradually growing as more explorers arrive and a range of secondary industries spring up. There is money to be made without ever leaving the camp region. Merchants, shopkeepers and technicians are now being followed by doctors, lawyers and even accountants as the communities become large enough to require such specialists. Accommodation for the new arrivals pushes the camp outwards, which in turn needs new infrastructure to support it. There is little in the way of permanent structures as yet but the day is coming when the most successful base camps become small towns and – hopefully – Steel will be on its way to becoming an inhabited member world of the Imperium.

There is another group of people on Steel, whose presence is not universally known. They are a group of refugee Sword Worlders who came to Steel illegally due to troubles at home. They have a hidden community in the mountains and keep to themselves. About 3 months ago they were discovered by a party of explorers (see Adventure 1: Call of the Wild) and a standoff resulted. Before anything could be resolved an Air/Raft belonging to Imperial pioneers came under attack by persons unknown. The Sword Worlders assisted the explorers in rescuing their comrades from what appeared to be a well-armed group of starfarers. Afterward they pledged peace and friendship to the Imperials, and asked only to be left alone.

The Imperials who know about the Sword Worlder squatters have mixed feelings about them. They seem to have kept their word and remain in the mountains, but there are rumors of incidents between settlers and the squatters, who insist that they had nothing to do with whatever has happened. Relations, such as they are, are strained. It seems inevitable that in time Imperials will intrude into territory the Sword Worlders feel that they must defend. The result will be a range war followed by intervention by the Imperial armed forces. The Sword Worlders cannot hope to survive such a fight, but they are proud and have nowhere else to go. A tragedy is waiting to unfold.

LAW AND ORDER ON STEEL

The official law level on Steel is 2. This applies wherever it can be enforced, which generally means close to the base camps and SteelPort. Elsewhere there is effectively no law enforcement unless a Marshal or Deputy is called to deal

with something. Wherever there are people, they tend to come to a consensus of what is acceptable conduct and what is not. Enforcement is generally a matter of chasing off wrongdoers, though fights are not uncommon. Shootings and suchlike will be investigated, but where a group has acted to protect its members or their property and the persistence of the offender has escalated the issue this is generally treated as self-defence.

A general set of rules for getting along with one another does exist, though it rarely gets written down or enunciated out loud.

- Secure your own stuff and don't put temptation in anyone's path.
- Don't steal or damage other people's stuff.
- Respect territorial claims and hospitality.
- Don't bother anyone who wants to be left alone.
- Fair fights are okay so long as nobody gets seriously hurt.
- A handgun or blade is a necessary survival tool. Rifles and shotguns are also often required to drive off local critters. Thus everyone who works outside town is used to seeing others carrying weapons. However, it's not polite to carry large weapons in a settlement, and steadiers will often request that guns be left in a vehicle or in their doorknob rack. Guns don't scare the folks of Steel, but the conduct of someone holding a weapon is a different matter. Irresponsible or aggressive weapons handling might get you shot.
- Travellers outside the settlements are expected to help out anyone in need; it could be their turn next.
- If you get into trouble more than about 200km from the camp, you're likely on your own.
- If you're a danger to yourself and others you'll be run off by any group you join up with.

These are not so much laws as minimal social requirements to get along. They tend to be more or less the same everywhere.

HABITATION IN THE PAST

There are hints within this adventure that Steel was inhabited in the past, at least 500 years ago and probably longer ago than that. Players who recall the classic adventure Mission on Mithril may tie this information into the discovery that Aslan-style bas-reliefs were once discovered on Mithril, just a parsec away. This is something of an anomaly, since the Aslan are 'known' not to have penetrated this far until quite recently. For now, the hints of habitation will remain just that; hints. A future adventure in this series will deal with their true meaning.

REFEREE'S NOTES

Some of the more remote communities and independent prospectors are essentially squatters with no right to be on Steel. While many of them are quite happy to interact with the legitimate explorers, not all of them are so friendly. Some fear being run off their 'claims' and will defend them with force if necessary – or even if it is not necessary, in some cases.

There are also a number of quite illegitimate groups on Steel. These include adventurers following the usual wild rumors of Ancients artifacts, lost cities and other lucrative if half-baked schemes. Again, not all of these people are unfriendly, but their interests may clash with those of others. The combat armor-equipped starfarers who attacked the pioneers' air/raft a few months ago are definitely not friendly. Nothing has been seen of them since.

GETTING AROUND

The characters may travel a lot in the course of this adventure. Driving overland in an ATV is hard work despite the best instruments and automated assistance, and there is always a chance for mishap along the way. The hexes on the Western Arm map are 30km across. Cruising at an average speed of 30kph is entirely possible in flat terrain, so in theory an ATV crew should be able to cover about 8 hexes in a day of driving, assuming the odd halt to rest or investigate something and no movement at night.

The actual rate of movement depends on several factors including the terrain, weather and how hard the crew want to push their vehicle. The chances of an event or mishap also vary depending upon circumstances.

Normal Travel: The nominal speed of the ATV is, as already noted, one hex per hour. At this speed the focus is on covering ground; the crew are unlikely to notice much but the most obvious features. Chances of an event are normal (see below).

Pushing Hard: Maintaining a high average speed and approaching obstacles with little reconnaissance or forethought is risky but allows the ATV to proceed 25% faster; i.e. 1 ¼ hexes per hour. Chances of a mishap are higher.

Reckless Driving: In an emergency, or just for fun, it is possible to charge blindly across the landscape with total abandon, relying on adrenaline and reflexes to deal with anything that gets in the way. This is 50% faster than normal travel (1 ½ hours per hex) but incurs significant risks.

Proceeding Cautiously: Moving more slowly reduces the chance of a mishap and increases the chances of spotting something interesting along the way. Speed is effectively halved (base 2 hours per hex).

Exploring: Moving very slowly and weaving about to investigate anything that looks like it might be interesting from the ATV, and sometimes dismounting to take a closer look, reduces movement speed to ¼ of normal (base 4 hours per hex). Moving this way greatly reduces the chance of a mishap whilst increasing the chances of spotting something interesting along the way.

Driving at Night: Other than making it hard to get any sleep in the ATV's bunks (which rapidly leads to a crotchety and disharmonious crew!), driving at night also increases the chance of a mishap. Speed is reduced to ¾ of base if a full set of instruments is available. If using lights alone, speed is reduced to ¼ of base. Driving at night without lights is... inadvisable. A crash is certain at some point. It is just a question of when, and what will be hit.

Terrain plays an important part in determining movement speed and mishap chance:

Plains: The grasslands and semi-desert of Steel are broken by the odd dry watercourse and low hill, but otherwise fairly easy to navigate at speed. Rolling ground can conceal the odd feature of interest or hazards, but for the most part plains can be crossed at speed without hazard.

Broken Terrain: The rocky badlands and low hills of Steel are tough going; speed is reduced to ¼ of base. Mishaps and events are more common, but there is the possibility of a find that will make exploration worthwhile.

Mountains: Mountains are hard work even for an ATV; speed is reduced to 1/8 of base (i.e. 8 hours per hex). Even using a known pass is tricky; the ATV will need to struggle over obstacles and occasionally backtrack. Mishaps are quite likely.

Seacoast or Lake: Should the characters feel the need to go to the beach, sea and lake coasts turn out to be easy to navigate and are treated as plains.

Open Water: The ATV can cross a calm lake or even a fairly wide river without undue delay or hazard. Attempting to sail to distant lands is a different matter. Speed in open water is reduced to 1/16 of base (16 hours per hex). Mishaps are likely in open sea; less so in a lake.

HUMAN FACTORS

It is quite tiring to drive an ATV, and in monotonous terrain mistakes become frighteningly common. Drivers should be changed every 2 hours, and should not drive more than 6 hours in every 22. Ideally, the crew should dismount and walk around a little every 3-4 hours or so. Players who roleplay this (for example, playing a game of Frisbee or swimming in a small lake) should be cut a little slack by the Referee in the event of a mishap – they will be less tired, stressed and burned-out than the dour team that just steps out for the regulation 15 minute rest every 4 hours.

For every hour past 2 that a driver remains at the controls, he suffers a penalty to all rolls to deal with a mishap. Also, for every hour past 6 in the last 22 that the character has been driving, a penalty is incurred. In CT, a DM of -1 is applied to ATV skill rolls for each penalty incurred. In T20, the modifier is -2 per penalty.

REGION TYPES

In addition to terrain type, there are three broad regions (as distinct from terrain types) to travel through. How far from civilization the characters are will affect both the likelihood of mishap and the nature of their experiences.

Developed regions are those areas within 3 hexes (90km) of Base Camp Bravo or SteelPort. These areas are familiar to most people working out of the settlement and are traveled quite a lot. Most of the hazards and features are documented and discussed in the camp's bars, so there is no chance of a random mishap or event in this area. Characters passing through the developed region may travel on well-established tracks. They will pass Kian herds, vehicles going out or coming in, prospecting camps and even the odd farmstead. A few of the people working in the region may be grouchy, but open hostility is very unlikely.

Explored regions are those out to 12 hexes (360km) from the base camp or port. These areas have seen some traffic and ground exploration. Mishap and event chances are reduced. Few people will be sighted. These will mainly be explorers or prospectors either in transit or working a claim. There is virtually no law enforcement beyond the developed region, so people are cautious with strangers. Hostile encounters are unlikely, however.

Wilderness regions lie beyond 12 hexes from a major settlement. These have been mapped from orbit and possibly visited by explorers once or twice, but remain largely unknown. Almost anything could be found there.

SEARCHING AN AREA

The characters may want to make a detailed search of an area, for example to locate the source of a curious sensor reading. To do so, it will be necessary to dismount from the ATV and conduct a search on foot, using whatever instruments are appropriate. Finding what the characters are looking for or producing a detailed map of an area will require appropriate skill rolls. The Referee should adjudicate according to the circumstances. Characters chasing down a magnetic sensor reading with instruments will obviously require different skill rolls to those trying to spot signs of human habitation with the naked eye. Skill rolls can be attempted once per hour.

WEATHER

The weather on Steel is fairly monotonous. Days are a bit too warm, nights are a bit too cold. Storms and other violent weather patterns are uncommon. To determine the weather each day, the Referee should roll 2d6 and consult the Weather Change Chart, below.

Roll	Result
2	Rain squall
3-4	One category colder/wetter
5-8	No change
9-11	One category warmer/drier
12	Dust storm

WEATHER CATEGORIES

From wettest to driest, the following weather categories apply:

Rain Squall
Rain
Threatening
Overcast
Clear
Bright
Hot
Dusty
Dust Storm

Note that the table is skewed towards dry, warmish weather. The first day of the characters' mission will be Clear, and dust is more likely than rain as they proceed. However, surprises do happen.

Rain Squalls are uncommon but quite unpleasant. Rain falls during the day and hail at night, and it comes down in abundance. Mishaps are much more likely for a team trying to move or work in a squall. Rain squalls are usually short; on a 1d6 roll of 1-4, the following day the weather improves to Threatening. On a 5, it rains the next day. On a 6, the squall continues for another day. Temperatures remain unpleasantly low during a squall.

Rain is usually fairly light and causes few major problems. Rain is sometimes interspersed with brief displays of lightning, but this is uncommon. Long periods of rain might cause flooding or soil subsidence.

Threatening weather is cloudy, windy and fairly cold. It tends to make animals peevish but has no effect on characters.

Overcast days tend to be pleasantly cool; nights are marginally warmer than usual.

Clear days are common since Steel is dry with a thin atmosphere. The days tend to be very hot and nights very cold, with a lot of gusty, thin wind at dawn and dusk.

Bright days are unusually cloudless, without even wisps in the sky. There is no real effect on adventurers.

Hot days are unpleasantly warm; even the nights are milder. Surface water dries up fast in a thin atmosphere so conditions can become harsh for wildlife.

Dusty days are the result of a lack of rain or a period of hot weather. Movement can be seen at long distances due to dust plumes, and filter masks are a wise precaution to avoid long-term health problems.

Dust Storms make driving hazardous and working outside the ATV quite dangerous. Visibility is dramatically cut and large amounts of dust tend to be deposited by the wind. This can change the landscape quite a lot and pose a real hazard to unprotected characters. Dust storms can last for a few days but are usually over in a matter of hours; on a 1d6 roll of 1-5, the following day the weather improves to Dusty. On a 6, the storm continues for another day. Temperatures remain unpleasantly high during a dust storm.

MISHAPS AND EVENTS

While outside the developed area, there is a chance every 4 hours that something will happen to make the journey more interesting or less simple. Mishaps are potentially dangerous or adverse situations arising from what the characters are doing. Events are both good and bad and less dependent on what the characters do.

MISHAPS

The base chance for a mishap is 12 or more on 2d6, subject to the following modifiers:

Developed Area:	No chance of event or mishap
Explored Area:	-
Wilderness:	+1
Dusty or Rain:	+1
Rain Squall:	+2
Dust Storm:	+3
Driving at Night	+1
Pushing Hard	+1
Reckless Driving:	+1
Broken Terrain	+1
Mountains:	+2
Open Sea:	+1
Tired Driver	+1 per hour beyond 2 at the controls, to maximum +4
Overtaxed Driver	+1 per 2 hours beyond 6 driven in same day, no maximum

Exactly what kind of mishap takes place is determined by a 1d6 roll.

Roll Mishap

- 1 Hidden Obstacle
- 2 ATV Malfunction
- 3 Animal Encounter
- 4 Blocked Passage
- 5 Ground Subsidence
- 6 Navigational Error

Hidden Obstacle: A previously unseen obstacle suddenly makes itself apparent. This will be appropriate to the terrain. For example in plains it might be a hidden gully; in mountains a rockfall, in sea terrain it could be an area of jagged shallows that could snag the ATV's balloon tires. The obstacle can be avoided by quick driver action. CT: Roll 8+, DMs ATV skill. T20: Make a DC15 Drive check. Note that penalties for tired drivers and other adverse conditions may apply. If the obstacle is struck, the ATV is unlikely to be seriously damaged but the crew will be badly shaken up. CT: each crewmember must throw 9+ or take 1D damage. T20: Make a DC15 Reflex save or take 2d6 Stamina damage. On a truly catastrophic roll, the ATV may become stuck or damaged, or both. Subsequent events are up to the Referee.

ATV Malfunction: Horrible noises emanate from some part of the ATV. If the characters choose to stop and deal with the problem, the Referee should determine a non-fatal malfunction. This can be repaired with suitable Mechanical or JoT skill rolls, attempted once per hour. If the crew push on, roll 1d6 every hour: on a 1, the problem goes away on its own. On a 2-4, grinding noises and smoke alarm the crew but nothing worse occurs. On 5-6 the ATV grinds to a stop and requires major repairs. This can be attempted in the field but each attempt takes 1 whole day.

Animal Encounter: None of the animals of Steel pose any real threat to an ATV. However, characters on foot may be attacked by a pack of hungry Critters or a Highland Terror. Alternatively, a particularly dumb Kian or Grazer might bolt into the ATV's path, requiring a control roll to avoid a great deal of mess. Some characters might be amused by running over the nest of some helpless local beast; others would be quite upset. Details are up to the Referee.

Blocked Passage: The characters find their way blocked by some obstacle, be it a fast current at sea, a crevasse or a blind canyon. They will have to backtrack and re-enter the hex, effectively losing twice whatever time it takes to cross this hex.

Ground Subsidence: Dusty conditions have resulted in dangerously weak topsoil, which is noticed only after the ATV is in the middle of a subsided area. The ATV will have to be carefully 'tickled' across. CT: Roll 10+, DMs ATV skill. T20: Make a DC20 Drive check. Failure indicates that the ATV has become stuck. Extricateing it is a long process. Roll 2D6 every hour. On 10+ the ATV is free and may continue. It is still in the middle of the hazardous area, of course, and requires another drive roll to get out.

Navigational Error: Having become quite lost, the characters emerge from the hex in a random location. Roll 1d6, counting round hex sides from the top (north) side for their heading. This may take them into new hazards.

EVENTS

Events are not necessarily beneficial, but most are at worst interesting. Every time the characters enter a hex, the Referee should secretly roll 2d6. On a roll of 11-12, an event has occurred. Modify this roll by +1 if the characters are using exploring movement.

Determine the nature of the event by rolling 2d6. Note that some events can only happen once. If a repeat is rolled, treat as No Event.

Roll	Event
2	Settlement*
3	ATV Wreck*
4	Standing Stones
5	Good Site
6	Fellow Explorers
7	ATV Tracks
8	Craters
9	Earthquake
10	Ruins*
11	Magnetic Anomaly
12	Chasm*

Settlement: This event can only be encountered once. The foundations of a very old settlement are just barely visible, having been uncovered by recent wind scouring. Investigation suggests that the settlement was a village of some 2-300 people dating back at least 500 years. The builders were low-tech (TL2 or lower) humanoids of about average human size, but little else can be discerned.

ATV Wreck: This event can only be encountered once. A wrecked ATV is spotted, part-concealed in a small gully. Inspection shows that it has been attacked with some kind of explosive anti-vehicle weapon such as a light anti-armor missile. There are pockmarks where smallarms fire struck the vehicle. The wreck has been completely stripped and there is no sign of bodies. The attack looks like it took place several months or even years ago. There are no reports of any such attacks or missing explorer parties. Detailed investigation will eventually locate three human bodies buried nearby. They have been killed in gun combat and wear typical bush clothing. All ID has been removed. The ATV is a standard Imperial design.

Standing Stones: An observant character realizes that a cluster of nearby rocks seems out of place. A closer look suggests that they have been deliberately arranged in an irregular but somehow 'right-feeling' pattern. Some of the stones have apparently been shaped with low-tech tools,

but into irregular curves rather than straight lines. There is no lettering or any sort of decipherable image.

Good Site: A wide, flat area with some surface water suggests itself as a decent spot for a farmstead or a small community, or else instrument readings indicate a small but workable vein of mineral resources. In either case, a bonus of Cr500-1000 could be negotiated for a cursory survey of the area.

Fellow Explorers: An ATV, or a small party on Kian-back, is sighted. They are fellow explorers or prospectors out of Camp Bravo and, once initial mistrust is allayed, would be glad to swap news and rumors. Some teams are out for weeks at a time, so human contact is a prized commodity.

ATV Tracks: The tracks of an ATV are sighted, no more than a few days old. They cross the characters' path at an angle. If followed, they may (50% chance) eventually peter out. If not, the characters will be able to catch up with a party of fellow explorers (see above), who may wonder why they are being followed.

Craters: The terrain ahead is pocked with craters from a meteorite shower. Some are very large (hundreds of meters in diameter). Crossing the cratered area is only mildly hazardous, and a survey will suggest that small quantities of precious materials could be mined from the meteorite remnants.

Earthquake: The ground begins to shake in one of Steel's many earthquakes. Roll 1d6: on a 1-3, the 'quake is mild and poses no real hazard to the characters. On a result of 4-5 it is quite violent and should be treated as a Hidden Obstacle mishap. On a 6 it is a real buster, flinging people around in the ATV and threatening to overturn it. Characters may avoid injury by grabbing something slid in time: CT: each crewmember must throw 9+ or take 2D damage. T20: Make a DC15 Reflex save or take 3d6 Stamina damage. The ATV is also threatened. To avoid damage, the driver will need to take prompt action. CT: Roll 10+, DMs ATV skill. T20: Make a DC20 Drive check. Failure indicates that an ATV Malfunction mishap must be immediately applied.

Ruins: This event can only be encountered once. The team comes upon the ruins of some kind of ruined structure. It was originally an octagonal building with two storeys above ground and one below, with a minimal lighting system powered by solar cells and not much else in the way of amenities. The top floor has completely collapsed into rubble and there is little left above waist height of the middle storey. The underground segment is more or less intact (if the rubble is cleared to access it), but contains little more than water storage tanks and some decayed shipping crates that once held emergency rations and other supplies. It seems likely that the building was never fully completed.

Characters may recall hearing rumors of a chain of 'octagon shelters' built to assist stranded starfarers, but why one was built on Sword Worlder territory is a mystery.

Magnetic Anomaly: Some of the team's instruments begin to misbehave. Investigation reveals that there is a reasonable deposit of ferrous metal ore close to the surface. If the characters choose to map the deposit and take some core samples (in effect, conducting a cursory survey), they can sell the data for Cr10,000 or perhaps a little more. Alternatively, they might decide to come back and do some more detailed prospecting after staking a claim. If so, a proven workable lode would fetch a higher buyout price from one of the mining outfits.

Chasm: This event can only be encountered once. The characters' path is blocked by a deep chasm in the ground. Its mouth is just a few dozen meters across (too far for the ATV to jump!) and it is probably not visible from orbit. Driving around will take a few hours. If the characters are daredevils (or have some climbing gear available) it would be possible to descend into the depths.

The chasm is quite deep – 10 to 40 meters in places – and receives only a little sunlight. An underground river flows in at one end and spills through a series of waterfalls and hidden lakes. Not only is the place wildly dramatic in terms of natural wonder, it also holds other secrets. Fungi not seen aboveground grow on the damp walls; some of them may have pharmaceutical properties. Also, there is the possibility of locating a gem bed or other treasure if the characters look hard and long enough.

A number of caves lead off the chasm, some of them underwater. Exploration would be a lengthy process.

STEELPORT

SteelPort is at present little more than a construction site. The port itself has all the essentials of a Type D port: a fusion reactor to give power, a small communications bunker and control tower, fuel storage tanks and a hardened landing area. What will eventually be the customs, commercial, reception and accommodation area for the port is at present a skeleton structure being built by a few dozen workers and robots who are housed in a shanty town of prefabricated huts just off the landing area.

The location of Steel, so close to the Sword Worlds, has prompted the Imperial Colonial Office to supply defenses for the port. These take the form of a dual beam laser turret and two dual missile turrets salvaged from a damaged Navy ship and fitted into permanent armored mounts around the landing area. The missile racks are fed from underground magazines but each turret has only 6 missiles available even though the magazine could store many more. The lasers are fully functional but after firing must recharge their ready capacitors from the port reactor. This dims or even

extinguishes the lights across the port and in town. There is no backup power supply.

The town has been laid out on a grid pattern, starting just outside where the port extrality line will eventually be. Only a few buildings are complete, most notably the modest 'town hall' that houses what passes for a world government. Most of the inhabitants are living in and working out of prefabricated huts that receive power via underground cables from the starport reactor. Huts have been turned into shops, bars and guest-houses and the few hundred inhabitants are already making a home for themselves, but there is a long way to go yet.

SteelPort has a reasonable selection of businesses. These range from repair workshops to coffee houses, and include cheerful if primitive bars and restaurants. The town is powered by a fusion reactor and contains a great deal of high-tech equipment imported to set up the colony. However, the sustainable Tech Level of the town is only 7. There are several rough-and-ready local engineering firms turning out serviceable low-tech gear for the explorers and ranchers to use.

Perhaps a third of the 550 or so adult inhabitants of the town own a firearm of some kind. In the outback, with predators and perhaps rivals to deal with, virtually everyone carries some kind of weapon but here in the cradle of civilization there is less need. Most weapons are simple mid-tech handguns, shotguns and carbines kept in a box at home 'just in case'. Frontiersmen are easily distinguished by their habit of being armed at all times.

There is relatively little crime in SteelPort at present, despite the low law level. Offenders are fined or locked up for a couple of weeks in the case of minor offences and deported as quickly as possible for repeat or more serious crimes. There has been one murder in the month since the first colonists arrived. The perpetrator was tried and executed by shooting within days. This, coupled with a clearly stated policy on the part of the handful of law enforcers that any form of resistance to arrest is grounds for lethal force, works well as a deterrent. Whether the Ministry of Justice approves of such trigger-happy methods is an open question. For the lone deputy trying to detain a violent offender, it is the only real option.

ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNMENT

SteelPort is run by an advisory council which answers to the Planetary Governor. The council consists of six individuals:

- Joachim Mischen; City Engineer
- Lieutenant Geoffrey Saalin, IN; Naval Liaison to the government
- Marshal Dawn Satley, Ministry of Justice; Chief of Security
- Dr Ted Ingalls, Chief Medical Advisor

- Jahiney Mar-Trexca; head of the SteelPort Residents' Association
- Administrator Sauulii Orshinaki, Imperial Colonial Office; Deputy Governor and Personnel Officer

Each member of the council is responsible for one facet of the colony's day-to-day running and overall development. Each has a staff of 2-3 clerks plus any additional personnel they lead as part of other duties. In time the administration will grow as colonists arrive. The expectation is that most of the new colonists will arrive in batches of 1000 as facilities for them are completed. Once the capital population reaches 5,000 or so, a proportion of the new colonists will then move on to other seeder settlements.

The administrators do not yet know who the colonists will be, but it is likely that they will come from Colonial Office recruiting and training centers and arrive with useful skills, ready to slot into the developing colony. In addition, there will be some private colonists; families and individuals who have obtained permission to come to Steel and start a new life. These are likely to be wild cards and will have to be fitted in wherever seems most suitable.

STEELPORT WORKFORCE

The Colonial Office has provided SteelPort with the core of an administration and enough people to set up its key industries. They are overstretched and undermanned, but more or less able to cope until the colony grows and additional personnel come in. Most of the residents of the port are colonists trained by the Imperial Colonial Office (ICO). Most are multiskilled and can fill in at jobs other than their own at need. Most have a job of their own but there is a pool of professional labor who make good money by being available to make up numbers on work crews or other jobs as they are needed.

Administration: About 30 people are employed in colonial administration, as staff and aides to the leaders, and so forth. The administration is not overstaffed, since SteelPort is now the central authority for all claims registered by prospectors on planet as well as being a central court, supply base and records office for the entire planet. All the same, work goes in cycles. Sometimes the administrators are desperately busy, other times they lounge around in one of the town's improvised coffee shops waiting for something to happen.

Military: The port is defended by a Naval Detachment comprising nine ratings and two petty officers who answer to Lt Saalin. They provide security at the port and, more importantly perhaps, maintain and operate the port's weapon systems as well as the unarmed utility/rescue cutter that is the port's only vessel. The security detachment have access to autopistols and Advanced Combat Rifles plus Cloth body armor.

Police/Security: The Ministry of Justice Marshal and her three deputies represent the only law and order in town. They are unofficially assisted by various roughnecks and citizens who recognize that it is in their interest to keep a lid on any troubles the town may have. In truth, there are few laws in SteelPort so the MOJ personnel spend most of their time separating drunken construction workers who feel the need to fight, and just being around to deter serious offences like murder.

Port Authority: The Port Authority employs a handful of technicians who double as customs inspectors. They answer to Lt Saalin, who is acting Port Director as well as everything else he does.

Medical and Emergency Services: SteelPort has half a dozen doctors, dentists and senior medical personnel plus about twice as many nursing staff. This is far more than is necessary for the port, but as the colonists come in they will have their hands full. The port's medics have begun running a 'flying doctor' service using Air/Rafts and the port cutter. Most of the pioneer camps have their own medical staff but the ranchers often have to make do with first aid. Emergency services are rudimentary. Firefighting and rescue is handled by a squad of volunteers supported by emergency robots stored at the Town Hall. There are 4 such robots, equipped for firefighting, heavy cutting and lifting, and searching for survivors in a collapsed building. Each robot is the size of a family ground car and can be ridden by several firefighters, if somewhat precariously.

Construction: Most of the residents of SteelPort are here to build the town. Somewhat more than 200 men and women, along with associated vehicles and robots, are currently working on various projects around town. Some have come as part of a ICO build-and-stay program, but most are professional construction workers on contracts running to 2-3 years. Most have family with them.

Power Systems, Maintenance and Technical Services: SteelPort has about 30 technicians and other workers who keep the waste management, data net and other systems running.

Private Citizens: There are about 250 adult private citizens, plus dependents, living in town. Some are part of the floating labor pool. Others run shops or businesses such as bars, vehicle repair workshops and accountancy or legal services. These people came to Steel to make it a home and even though they live in prefab huts while their accommodation is being built, they are proud of their new home and, for the most part, determined to make the colony work.

Others: There are always transients in town. Explorers, pioneers and roughnecks working in the outback come into town to stock up or take a rest before heading out again. Occasionally (about once every 3-4 weeks at present) there may be a starship crew in port.

BASE CAMP BRAVO

The nearest explorer base to SteelPort is Base Camp Bravo. Indeed, it was a team from Bravo that located and surveyed the site for the port. Bravo is located on the banks of a small watercourse, now grandly named Hawking's River after Rob Hawking, the surveyor who chose the site. Camp Bravo has a population of about 50 permanent residents. The camp lies well away from the coast in an area of uplands that was chosen more for the chances of a mineral strike than its suitability as a city location. Much of the surrounding land is still largely unexplored, though some small steads have begun to spring up within 20-30km of the camp.

A rough track (the locals call it a 'road' but this is a rather grand title for what is really just a commonly-used ATV route through the bush) runs from Camp Bravo to SteelPort. A couple of enterprising steaders have claimed land along the track, hoping to profit from the move when and if the track becomes a major highway. At present the track is little used but as trade into the port picks up and the colonists arrive it is likely that much of the early settlement of Steel will be along the Bravo-SteelPort Road.

The permanent staff at Camp Bravo are mainly freelancers on retainer to ICO. A skeleton administrative staff deals with claims and records, while an elderly ex-Navy doctor deals with medical (and dental) emergencies. Most of the population are either technicians who make a living maintaining the explorers' vehicles and equipment or the long-suffering families of the people who have come here to work.

About 100 more people are supported by the camp in nearby farmsteads work as mobile surveyors, explorers and prospectors operating out of Camp Bravo. Many of the latter come in for a few days to rest up, register their findings and blow off some steam in the camp's ersatz bars, then head on out again for another mission. At any given time there may be 10-20 of these transients in the camp. The accommodation they use is basic (mainly bunks in prefabricated dormitories) but it is a great improvement on bedrolls, doss-bags and even ATV bunks.

The Camp Director is Pavel Freve, an ex-frontiersman seeing out his final years before retirement on an ICO salary. Freve is not particularly active, in that he tends not to venture much beyond the camp, but he is a mine of common-sense advice for those who have won his friendship. Freve has under his 'command' two administrative assistants, a technician to maintain and operate the communications and power-generation gear, and a doctor. At present the camp has two IMOJ marshals assigned to it as peacekeepers. There is at present little for them to do except cordially loathe one another for reasons they do not feel the need to explain. There is little actual crime or violence in the camp, for the very good reason that it is easy to find the perpetrator in such a small community, and frontier justice tends to be rather rough.

The camp has few rules and even fewer laws. Carrying a weapon bigger than a sidearm or blade is considered bad form and suspicious, and wandering around in heavy body armor with automatic weapons is socially unacceptable. If necessary, a posse of residents could be gathered to deal with armed troublemakers. Stealing, gratuitous violence and such like are dealt with by the marshals, but the occasional (fair) fistfight is overlooked if there is no permanent harm done. Similar rules exist in the developed area near the camp. Elsewhere on the planet there is little law enforcement, though the disappearance of a prospecting party and subsequent takeover of their claim would be investigated and if necessary the Ministry of Justice or crew from a passing Navy ship brought to bear.

The camp has two general dealers, one of whom stocks a range of standard handguns, shotguns and carbines, and an ATV repair/maintenance business run by two Vargr brothers who make far more money fixing ATVs than most people do operating one. There are also three 'recreational establishments', all of which serve passable food and bottled beverages, screen whatever entertainment vids they can get and rent out bunk space to visitors.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

Some weeks ago, at the same time as the Sword Worlders were discovered, an Air/Raft belonging to explorers operating out of Base Camp Bravo was attacked in the mountains near the Sword Worlder village. The attackers boarded a pinnace after the fight and departed the area. Not long afterward, work began on the new Starport and the planetary governor arrived. One of his first actions was to send patrols into the mountains to try to find out what the mysterious attackers were doing there.

Managing to avoid contact with the Sword Worlders for the most part, the patrols eventually stumbled over a cache of weapons and starship components located in a cave near the attack site. The cache contained naval missiles and components from three Naval Auxiliaries lost during the Fifth Frontier War. By all appearances the attackers, whoever they were, had stashed as much of the cargo and most valuable components of the ships as they could to be picked up later. By chance they had picked a location close to where the Sword Worlders – who also wanted to hide something, in this case themselves – would later build their homes.

Hurriedly diverting as many vehicles as possible, the governor sent a handful of naval personnel, Ministry of Justice deputies and some volunteers to the mountains and removed as much of the stash as possible. This included Jump drive components and several nuclear missiles. The stash is currently located in a missile magazine at the starport. The Governor decided to send for help on the first ship through. He does not want to be in custody of someone else's stolen nuclear weapons any longer than necessary.

However, it is already too late. The next ship into Steel is the Far Trader Unicorn. Emerging from Jump, she is attacked by a corsair vessel which sustains damage to its Jump drive in the ensuing fight. The damage is repairable with the right spares, and there are plenty of those in the stash on Steel. The crew send their pinnace back to the stash site, only to find it plundered. Trapped in the system, they need to find their spares before a Naval ship comes through. At first it seems that the Sword Worlders must have stolen the cache. Once that proves untrue, the corsairs turn on the Imperial settlers, realizing that they have plundered their spares repository.

The corsairs decide to attack the port. Sending in an armed party aboard their pinnace their ship remains in a fire-support position. The pinnace is engaged by the portside defenses and sheers off. The corsair also flees. Unknown to the port authority personnel, the pinnace was crippled and makes a crash landing some distance from the port. Its crew make off overland, taking whatever they need from the steeds along the way.

Meanwhile, the characters are contracted by the planetary governor to survey some possible sites for settlements outside SteelPort. Their work brings them into contact with a work crew constructing a bridge in the outback. Traveling together, the two groups encounter a burned-out stead and shortly afterward, a party of Sword Worlders who swear that they are not responsible for the carnage. They say that their village has also been attacked and that they saw a spacecraft come down in this area.

Proceeding to Camp Bravo, the characters arrive in time to witness but not intervene as it is attacked by an unknown starship which lands heavily armored ground troops. The camp is largely devastated, but the raiders seem to be looking for something as well as just causing mayhem. By the time the characters reach the wrecked camp, the raiders have made off with several ATVs and other vehicles.

Not long after, the leader of the Sword Worlders swallows his pride and asks the Imperials for assistance. His village is in ruins and he has many wounded. He asks to be allowed to bring his people to the port. While the governor prevaricates, he brings them anyway. Friction begins to grow between the Imperials and the refugees. The war is very recent and there is little reason to like one another.

The reason for the ATV theft becomes apparent. Unable to approach the port in their corsair, the raiders plan to make an assault overland in the captured vehicles. They are heavily-armed enough that they might succeed. If they can take the port they can repair their ship and be on their way – after pillaging the place thoroughly.

The Governor decides to fight as best he can. If he can slow the raiders enough, perhaps a Navy patrol might come through. It might even prove possible to defeat them. An offer by the Sword Worlders to assist is rudely rebuffed. They are kept under guard as the colonists prepare to repel the assault on their half-built settlement.

As the attack begins, the Sword Worlders produce weapons from a hidden stash and join the fighting anyway, intent on defeating the raiders who devastated their village. The attack is beaten off, but a standoff then begins between the desperate and heavily-armed Sword Worlders and the Imperial settlers. The Swordies fear that they will be deported back to the Sword Worlds – a death sentence for many of them. They have nothing left to lose.

A solution must be found – and fast.

LIBRARY DATA

The following information represents the truth about the subject so far as it is known. Some aspects of the information may not be 100% correct, just as some of what is known and taught in the colleges of 21st-Century Earth may turn out to be untrue or subject to misinterpretation, over-generalization or other sources of unintentional inaccuracy.

In other words, what follows is merely an overview of the subject. Closer examination may yield some surprises, but the truth will not be too different from the information presented here. It is up to the Referee to decide how much of this information is commonly available, and how subject to distortion and/or propaganda the generally-known version might be.

PLANETARY ARMED FORCES IN THE IMPERIUM

The standard charter of membership of the Imperium grants member worlds the right to provide or their own defence as they see fit. There are some restrictions, but on the whole a world can maintain whatever forces it can afford and can obtain equipment for, and organize them according to whatever system seems most appropriate. Many worlds choose to follow the Imperial Army model in terms of organization and equipment; others use very different systems. Volunteer militia, conscript armies, mercenary forces and some quite exotic systems exist.

In the case of new colonies, the Imperium has a responsibility to provide a defense force until the world can organize its own. The fact that many planetary militaries and even starfaring forces are set up before the world makes the transition from colony to member world may be the origin of the practice of referring to the fleets of member worlds as 'Colonial Fleets'. Whatever the truth of the matter, one indicator that a world is ready to become a member in its own right is the possession of a suitable planetary defense force.

PIRACY, PRIVATEERING AND PLANETARY RAIDERS

There are many ways to make a profit from taking what others have. When these activities involve starships or spacecraft they are normally lumped together under the term 'piracy'. The conventional image has a boatload of jolly buccaneers swooping down on a merchant ship, disabling her with a few well-placed shots before boarding and taking whatever booty is to be found.

Occasionally, this is what actually happens, but in fact piracy is far more complex than this. Some 'pirates' are more correctly 'privateers' operating under an agreement with a world or state government. Privateers are normally allowed to keep their profits and receive some support in return for damaging the commerce of a rival. The Imperium does not

recognize privateering as legitimate and treats privateers as pirates. It also savagely punishes worlds and organizations supporting privateers. On the other hand, it does permit commerce-raiding in an interworld dispute or properly-declared Trade War. Some non-Imperial states actively encourage privateering, which inevitably leads to friction.

There are few career pirates in the Imperium; live ones, anyway. However, it is possible with some planning and luck, to make several profitable strikes in an area before slipping away. The smart pirates vary their methods, sometimes using inside men to stage a hijacking, sometimes luring the prey with a false distress signal and sometimes just lurking on a trade route awaiting a suitable victim to pass by.

The big prize for pirates is a multi-million-credit starship. However, it is not always possible to escape with the prize. Lack of fuel, combat damage and computer security can make it impossible for a prize crew to get the ship out of the attack zone before the authorities show up. Selling an entire ship can present some problems, though there are places where it is possible. Ships are often broken up and sold for spares on the black market, which can be very profitable. Occasionally a customs boarding will locate a pirated component aboard an otherwise legitimate vessel, resulting in a world of trouble for the owner. However, the attraction of cheap spares is considerable for those operating on tight margins.

The majority of successful pirate attacks result in theft of the cargo and whatever components of the ship can be quickly stripped, plus any passengers or crew that can be ransomed. Some pirates kill everyone aboard the ships they attack to reduce the number of witnesses. Others work on the principle a captain is more likely to heave to and surrender his cargo if he thinks the pirates will let his crew and passengers live. This reduces the chance of ship damage in combat and personnel casualties in a boarding action.

There is one other factor at play here as well. Piracy carries a death sentence in the Imperium, but this can be commuted in some cases. A pirate who does not kill his victims might have a chance of clemency, especially if he can cut a deal with the authorities. One who massacres crews will be shot or spaced for sure.

One common, but surprisingly little-known pirate activity is planetary raiding. A starship loaded with well-equipped ground fighters descends upon an isolated community and takes whatever is available. Frontier ports and colonies make good targets since they tend to have quantities of high-tech equipment for the taking without the fighting capability of a developed world. Occasionally planetary raiders are referred to as 'Space Vikings' for some unknown reason, but the label is not universal. Other names include 'Raiders', 'Grabbers' and of course simply Pirates. Those that raid low-tech settlements and isolated villages usually earn the epithet 'Poultry Thieves', a label both contemptuous and fearful.

The Imperial Navy and Ministry of Justice actively hunt down all manner of pirates, and even poultry thieves usually receive the death penalty. While there is no such thing as a typical pirate band, most groups will try their hand at a range of activities over time. A big score, such as the taking of an intact starship, might be followed by a period posing as legitimate mercenaries. Between contracts the group might indulge in poultry-raiding for lack of anything better, then try to hijack a big freighter and transfer her cargo in deep space. This is what separates successful pirates from dead ones; the ability to stay flexible and to move on when it is time.

political groupings. A few charismatic leaders are working hard for peace while others gather loyal heroes for dramatic gestures such as raids into the Imperium. Some, seeking to escape the bloodbath they see as inevitable, have resorted to other methods. The group which is trying to settle on Steel is one such, but it may be that they are jumping from the airlock in a torn suit...

SWORD WORLDERS

Each of the Sword Worlds has a somewhat different culture and outlook, but in general their overriding cultural virtues are personal integrity, honesty and courage. On the down side the Sword Worlders are chauvinistic, argumentative and frequently too busy fighting among themselves to get anything done. Their history has been a rollercoaster of rising empires and civil wars, of shifting power balances and daring coups. At their height the Sword Worlders controlled 27 systems. Currently less than 1/3 of those worlds remain full members of the Sword Worlds Confederation, the currently dominant force in intra-Sword World politics.

Although unity and cohesive action are problematical for the Sword Worlders, there has always been a strong sense of 'family' among the various worlds. In much the same way as a family might rally to help out its no-good cousins against outsiders, internal feuds are often put aside to deal with external threats. The sudden re-emergence of these feuds has hamstrung several otherwise successful endeavors.

Sword Worlder 'family loyalty' has been badly strained by the acceptance by some Sword Worlders of Imperial occupation and incorporation into the Border Worlds. Those that remain 'free' often maintain that those under occupation are not fighting hard enough to try to throw off the Imperial yoke. This causes further friction and division, especially since blood vengeance is not uncommon among the Sword Worlders – collaborators can expect short shrift if their worlds become free once again.

The Sword Worlders under occupation are in a cleft stick. If they resist, the Imperials can swat them easily. If they do not at least look like they are putting up a fight, their cousins may turn on them. There is a segment of the population that, for one reason or another, has become loyal to the Border Worlds rather than the Sword Worlds. Whether they have acted for their own profit or for the good of their people, these individuals know that they will never be forgiven by their 'free' brethren; the Border Worlds must remain an Imperial protectorate or a very final fate will befall.

All this has driven deep cracks through the traditional loyalties of the Sword Worlders. In some cases this has led to feuds and vengeance attacks; in others the entrenchment of new

PLAYERS' INFORMATION

The following information is freely available to the characters.

THE STEEL PROJECT

The exploration of Steel is part of a larger scheme to develop all four of the Metal Worlds. The segment of this plan that takes place on Steel is, unsurprisingly, known as the Steel Project. The project is administered by the Imperial Colonial Office (ICO), though the execution of its various components is licensed out to firms and freelancers across a range of industries. The Scout Service (IIS) has some involvement, too.

Ultimately, ICO intends to settle the world and create a functional government to which it will hand over power. That government will have a number of ready-made relationships with the corporations and small companies that have invested in the world. This should allow the world's economy to be viable more or less from the start, making it an asset to the Imperium rather than an expensive colony.

There has been some criticism of the Steel Project, in that the new world government will be beholden to large corporations and therefore may not be as fair as might be hoped. The Steel Project is very complex, with a great many agencies and commercial groups involved at all levels. Some conflicts of interest are inevitable. Imperial law and the mediation service offered by the Imperial Diplomatic and Bureaucratic Corps will hopefully be able to resolve and/or limit such corporate control of the world's government. All the same, ICO will have to tread carefully.

One reason for wanting a viable economy quickly is Steel's proximity to the Sword Worlds and District 268. Imperial expansion has always been more about economics than military power, and the best way to spread Imperial influence is through strong economies close to the target region. Since worlds are responsible for their own defense, a good economy will be a vital asset in making Steel a bastion against future Sword Worlder resurgence. It may be that the need to develop the Metal Worlds quickly and effectively has blinkered the authorities and may lead to some bad decisions taken in haste.

Only time will tell if the Steel Project is to be a success. For now, there is work to be done and opportunities for freelancers. For those with wit and enterprise the Steel Project offers a chance to make a killing before the bubble bursts.

PIONEER TEAMS

There are some fairly large-scale projects ongoing on Steel, but most of the initial exploration and survey work is being carried out by small freelance pioneer teams. These teams

are generally composed of 2-6 multiskilled individuals operating out of an ATV. Some teams spend several weeks at a time in the field.

Many pioneer teams are generalists who carry out whatever commissions they are offered. Others are specialists who only work in a fairly narrow field. Such teams include:

- Prospectors
- Surveyors
- Scientists (e.g. zoologists, planetologists and biochemists)
- Field engineers (building bridges and roads, for example)
- Backup teams (e.g. ATV mechanics, medical support and rescue squads)

Frontier work can be hazardous, so most personnel have a gun or blade somewhere nearby for self-defense, and will be skilled in various areas including survival, medical and mechanical – just in case things go wrong.

STEADERS

The various small groups that have headed out into the outback to set up a business of some kind are universally known as Steaders. Some are farmers, more are ranchers hoping to make a profit from herding Kian or other beasts. Some steads are involved in other businesses. These include small-scale mining with teams of robotic workers or acting as frontier hostleries for pioneers operating far from a base camp. Some steads are part guest house, part ATV repair garage and part ranch. A few are simply 'there', losing money for the time being but hopefully the basis of a territorial claim when the world is more developed. Some of these land-grabbers will grow rich, they hope, when new settlements are founded around their steads. Which ones will be successful is a matter of luck and good judgment in picking a site that will be desirable later in the project.

RESCUE AND BACKUP

There is no formal rescue service on Steel at present. Emergencies are dealt with on a voluntary basis by whoever is best qualified – or more often, by whoever is available. Near to the base camp, it is a simple matter to put together a rescue party. Farther out, distress signals might not even be picked up. There are a handful of survey and communications-relay satellites in orbit, but coverage is patchy. Rescue, if it comes at all, will most likely arrive in the form of another team of explorers. These good Samaritans may not be any better equipped than the people they are trying to assist, but the sort of rugged individuals who work the frontiers can usually figure out a way to deal with most problems.

If a distressed group is really lucky, there might be a military or Scout Service ship in orbit. Such vessels are in a position to render a range of assistance at need, and usually have the equipment to do it. If there is no ship in orbit, the only

chance for a quick rescue is an air/raft from base camp. The only other hope is an ATV slowly toiling its way out to bring aid.

In short, there's not much backup. No wonder pioneers learn to be self-reliant.

ADVENTURE 2: RANGE WAR

SETUP

If the characters have already played Call of the Wild then they will not only already be on Steel but will probably still be on contract to the Imperial Colonial Office (ICO). If things went well, the characters may even be local heroes and friends of some of the people involved in this adventure.

For a new group, or to add characters to an existing adventurer band, it will not be difficult to find a reason to be on Steel. The foundation of a Starport and associated town is bringing in a range of individuals from roughnecks, blue-collar workers and security personnel to high-level managers and medical experts. A character or group may have traveled to Steel speculatively to seek work or may already have a contract. If so, the characters will most likely have been hired by the Imperial Colonial Office (ICO) but may be on the payroll of a major corporation or other organization.

As an alternative, they may be freelancers following their fortune. In many cases, the Colonial Office grants licenses to freelance explorers and colonists to develop an area or to stake a claim to a mineral site, knowing that most will find nothing or fail to make a go of their venture. The money saved in terms of outfitting and paying explorers is generally far more than the price of buying out a claim once the world is ready to be opened up for exploitation.

In either case, the characters begin their adventure at SteelPort. They have just arrived today. If this adventure is a follow-on to Call of the Wild, they will have possibly visited the site before but have been busy working elsewhere. New arrivals will have come in a couple of weeks ago through one of the base camps and just completed a survey or other job that terminates close to SteelPort.

A GOOD AND WORTHY ENDEAVOR

The adventure begins as the characters' ATV rolls into SteelPort. The port (or rather, port-to-be) is in chaos as usual. There has not been a starship in for over a week, which is entirely normal. However, the last ship that came through, the Subsidized Merchant River City, delivered a large amount of supplies. Shipping containers are still stacked around the landing area. The warehouses that will one day hold such cargoes are not yet built.

Among the cargo that was delivered was some new machinery and building supplies, allowing work to go ahead on certain long-delayed projects. Among them is a bridge over a ravine. Once completed, the bridge will allow vehicles to travel directly between Base Camp Bravo and SteelPort. At present a detour of many kilometers is necessary to cross Hansard's River. The bridge is one more small step towards civilization on Steel.

SteelPort is only two months old, but there is an air of excitement about the place as new buildings go up and people begin to move from the prefabs to actual homes. Everything is covered in brownish-gray dust due to the hot weather, enhancing the frontier-town image of the settlement. Most people wear tough coveralls and boots, plus usually a hat to keep the sun out of their eyes, but here and there can be seen are signs of the future. The families of workers dress in standard Imperial fashions. Lawn grass, planted with imported seeds, is beginning to poke its first shoots through the carefully-watered gardens of the new houses and in the park at SteelPort Square. A Naval or Port Authority uniform can occasionally be glimpsed in a bar or coffee shop, or running an errand for the governor. There are even uniformed Ministry of Justice deputies on the streets.

Two days ago, SteelPort's first real commercial establishment, a bar/restaurant named the Extrality Tavern, received its power feed from the starport reactor. Its doors open tonight for the first time, and everybody in town is likely to be there for the Grand Opening party. Other businesses are under construction; soon there will be actual shops and coffee houses along the main strip instead of made-do establishments operating out of prefab base units.

The characters have a little time to settle down and find somewhere to stay before sundown. They could sleep in the ATV if they wish, but it is cramped and more than a bit smelly after days or weeks in the field. An actual bed, even in a prefab hut, is vastly preferable to an ATV bunk. Add in the prospect of real food rather than preserved rations, someone to talk to other than the rest of the characters, and SteelPort starts to look like an oasis of civilization. Heck, there might even be decent beer!

Around town, the characters find the locals to be much as expected: busy but friendly. There is little chance to chat but a casual word with any stranger will result in an invitation to meet up for a drink at the big party tonight. Town officials are all very busy today; there will be time to seek work in the morning. For now, washing the (real or metaphorical) trail dust from feet and throats is a priority.

CIVILIZATION COMES TO STEELPORT

A little after sundown, people start drifting into the square and the strip. Tables are dragged into the street. Some roughnecks haul a set of battleship-grade speakers out of the Extrality Tavern and run heavy-duty cables to them. Everyone is dressed up. This means anything from frontiersmen wearing their least worn coveralls to suits and party dresses, long packed away, and even the odd dress uniform on retired and serving military personnel. Food and drink starts flowing freely. It's second-class fare for the most part; sandwiches and prettied-up preserved rations, but nobody seems to care.

Shortly thereafter the proprietor of the Extrality Tavern, a tubby Vargr named Luarghaz, climbs on a table and waves his arms for quiet. As the chatter subsides the entire senior administration of the colony – all seven of them including the governor – cluster around the entrance to the bar. The governor looks faintly embarrassed, holding a giant pair of shears in one hand.

“Civilization,” says the governor loudly, “Is many things to many people. To some it is art and learning. We have a school of sorts and a couple of road signs. It'll have to do for now. To others it is great works of engineering and science. We came here aboard starships and our homes are powered by a fusion reactor. To some it is starports and interstellar commerce. Well, we came here to build a starport. When I was in the Navy I knew a lot of people who defined civilization as anywhere you could get a drink without being shot at...”

The governor spreads his hands to encompass the town, incidentally making the chief medical officer scramble out of the way of the shears. He goes on, “To me, those things are just the trappings of civilization. True civilization is people who live together, work together, and treat each other decently. That's what we have here. So, on this day as we officially open the first private business in SteelPort, let us not forget that we came here not to build infrastructure and facilities – we came to create a civilization. So long as we continue to respect one another and to work together to make a better future, Steel is and will always be a civilized planet.”

Cheers erupt as the governor snips the ribbon across the doorway. Luarghaz jumps down from his table to lead the administrative party inside and serve the first civilized drinks on Steel. There is nowhere near enough room to fit everyone in the Extrality Tavern, but there are other (prefab) bars and an impressive array of bottles and barrels piled on tables around town. Music blares from the speakers outside the tavern while some of the construction workers have set up a stage at the far end of the strip. A live band begins playing, competing with the tavern's speakers to be heard. The entire population of the town is partying in the streets. It is exuberant almost to the point of riot, but generally good-natured.

The characters have a chance to meet people and talk, or whatever else they wish to do. Those that want to seek information can do so; there are certain facts that are likely to come out if they talk to enough people.

THE GOVERNOR AND OTHER ADMINISTRATORS

It will be difficult to get close enough to speak to the governor and senior staff of the colony. They only stay for a short while before retiring to the governor's house. There are people they know around them the whole time. Strangers will be given strong hints that there will be a better time for whatever they want.

THE PORT STAFF

Few of the port staff are at the party. A couple of the naval ratings and some of the technicians are here, but the rest are on duty up at the port buildings. They have no reason to be letting partygoers into the port area and will turn away anyone trying to get in. The usual unobtrusive security is in force, in the form of a couple of techs watching the port's video monitors and a ready squad near the arms locker just in case. Nobody expects trouble. There are no unusual precautions being taken, but neither has security been relaxed for the party.

CURRENT EVENTS

Everyone is having a good time. It will be hard to have a conversation at all, let alone turn one to the subjects of rumors and information. However, characters with good interpersonal skills may be able to wring some facts out of the locals:

- Other than the ICO transports that brought in the equipment, personnel and supplies to build the port, there have so far been three ships into SteelPort. Only the most recent, River City had a proper pad to land on. The other two were both Far Traders assigned to bring in supplies for the project. To date, there has not been a private ship into the port. The first one that arrives will be a great event for the town. There have been some ships into the base camps elsewhere in the past few months, of course. Once there's a central port that will largely stop.
- The Imperial Navy destroyer Gaillard passed through the system about 3 weeks ago. She sent a boat down with some officers to pay respects to the governor, but did not grant shore leave. There may not be another patrol through for weeks.
- There was a commerce raiding attack of sorts about 2 months ago. Some kind of big corsair made a weapons pass at an ICO freighter then sheered off and jumped out. Nothing serious has happened since, but the current thinking is that there is a bunch of die-hard Sword Worlders trying to stir up trouble in the region.
- Every project is short-handed, and the governor has taken to interfering in schedules. Just a few days ago he commandeered a whole lot of trucks and sent some volunteers off with his naval detachment and some customs guys. They were gone quite a while and sneaked back in at night. Nobody's talking about what they were doing but then nobody is supposed to know that the port has naval weapons turrets emplaced around it – even though you can see them. Common theory is that the governor's squad were doing 'secret navy stuff', probably positioning sensors or even remote weapons stations.
- There's a representative supposed to be arriving pretty soon from whatever group is sending the next batch of colonists. ICO wants the place to look nice with a green park and tidy housing for when they arrive. The colony

administrators would really prefer critical amenities like the hospital, school and such to be finished first, which is going to lead to some friction when the ICO boys arrive.

- According to popular scuttlebutt, one of the base camps is challenging the right of SteelPort to call itself world capital in the courts. Even though ICO runs the project and this was their decision, there's a chance that the plug might get pulled if they're successful. If Camp Sternmetal gets the capital status instead (for all kinds of reasons but mainly because it was the first permanent settlement) then Sternmetal Horizons will be able to pretty much form their own world government and run the planet. ICO doesn't want that but the Megacorps have a lot of money to spend on lawyers.

BUILDING A WORLD

Once the party and its aftermath are over, work begins anew. As new arrivals the characters may be at a loose end. That suits the governor, who needs a group to complete some odd jobs for him. There are always things that need doing and never enough people to get the big jobs done, let alone the minor stuff that keeps society going. If the characters are agreeable, there is a budget of Cr350 per week available to pay each of them to be odd-job people. They are more or less free to make additional money how they like; say by conducting surveys or prospecting, so long as they can make themselves available within a reasonable time frame to get the governor's odd jobs done. Right now there is a backlog but once it's cleared the characters will likely be collecting pay for doing nothing most of the time, and will be free to pursue whatever else they feel like doing.

There are three jobs that the governor wants doing. He can provide an ATV if the team do not have one:

JOB 1: TECHNICAL

One of the steeds about 60km down the Camp Bravo road has been suffering intermittent radio failures and has now gone completely off the air. The steader, Brann Hoylby, has been having trouble with his antenna for a while, so that is the likely cause. If the characters can pass by, make sure everything is all right and hopefully fix up the antenna, it will save diverting a technical crew from one of the larger projects.

JOB 2: DELIVERY

Somewhat further down the Camp Bravo road, situated about 30km off it in a sheltered area created by a range of low hills, is the tiny community of Sometimes Lake (named for the nearby lake that sometimes actually has water in it). The 30 or so folks that have set up their homes there have been requesting delivery of a cargo that arrived for them on the last ship. Again, if the characters can drop it off on their way it will save a lot of trouble.

The Sometimes Lake folks are ranchers who herd a mix of imported Kian and a herd of indigenous beasts called Great Caski. They have a pretty decent herd despite troubles with local carnivores. Their cargo is small enough to fit in an ATV's cargo bay. It contains a couple of very powerful rifles (for dealing with Highland Terrors) plus ammunition for these and the lesser weapons used by the ranchers. On top of this there are medical supplies for humans and Kian, and a quantity of top-quality frozen semen that will help improve the quality of the herd. The cargo is an important one for the people of Sometimes Lake and perhaps for Steel's livestock industry.

JOB 3: WORK CREW

The crew at the Hansard's River bridge project are in need of a few items and a specialist. The characters are asked to deliver them, and her.

The specialist is an engineer named Eneeri Waitstone, a 24-year-old graduate of the University of Rhylanor and the colony's top demolitions expert. The cargo is of course a set of demolitions charges, which are quite safe unless armed. Eneeri has several projects at the bridge, most of which involve producing rubble for a roadbed on the bridge approaches.

If the characters accept the job they will be on the SteelPort-Bravo road when events begin to unfold. If not, they will hear about what is going on and will probably be unable to avoid involvement anyway.

ON THE BRAVO ROAD

Near SteelPort, the road to Camp Bravo actually resembles a planned highway to some extent. It is a straight-ish track through the dry and packed earth, with rough areas smoothed out a little by filling in craters with rubble. Further down the 'road', i.e. beyond Brann Hoylby's stead, there is little more than a few sets of wheel ruts to follow, though here and there a gully or watercourse has been bridged and marked with a radio beacon to aid navigation.

Eneeri cheerfully points out some of the filled-in craters and tells the characters "yup, that's more of my rubble". She has been blowing up boulders since she arrived on Steel. It was fun at first but now she's beginning to wish for a more technical job to get her teeth into. Other than this the journey to Hoylby's stead is uneventful. This area sees a fair bit of ATV traffic and is considered to be 'tame'. Even the wildlife is fairly scarce, though odd herds of Kian can be seen near some of the steads in the distance.

HOYLBSTEAD

Brann Hoylby and his family live in a typical Steel stead. Single-storey buildings form two sides of a rough square, with a sturdy fence of wire forming the other two sides. The fence is secured at the far corner to a large prefab shed that

Brann uses to store feed for his animals and spares for his vehicles. The antenna is located atop this shed.

Three adults live at the stead. Brann himself is about 60, a retired Scout (technically he's 'attached to the Detached Duty Office' but he has been thus for 15 years; reactivation is rather unlikely at this point. Brann's partner Alicia is also a retired Scout aged about 55. Living with them is a young Vargr named Arthur (many Vargr in human-dominated space have human names, just as some humans in Vargr regions adopt traditional Vargr names). Arthur is a college friend of Brann's eldest daughter. Stuck for a job, he joined the Hoylbys on Steel as a ranch hand a few months ago and rather likes it here. Such is the nature of life on Steel that folks in town refer to Arthur as 'the Hoylby lad' and forget he's not actually related to Brann and Alicia. It is entirely possible that Arthur will inherit the ranch in due course.

The Hoylbys are typical of ranchers on Steel; hospitable but not stupid, hard-working but cheerful. They have a small herd of Kian and some vegetable crops, and make a modest living from their land. They will welcome visitors – especially those who've come to help them out – but do not take kindly to folks who take liberties such as stomping about in body armor with automatic weapons, or who shoot up the local wildlife for no reason. Such borderline lunatics are best got rid of as quickly as possible.

Anyone with a decent Communications or Electronics skill can fix the antenna. It is a fairly intricate job, made more complicated by the fact that Brann has already repaired it twice in a typically 'it'll work for now' manner. Lacking time to do a proper job he jury-rigged it, and each time the fault reappeared things got a little worse. It will take a couple of characters a solid day's work to dismantle the whole thing and repair it properly. This is the sort of thing that the odd-job squad was hired for. They actually have time to do this kind of work, while those with a business to run simply do not.

The Hoylbys are good company and will feed the characters well (i.e. stuff them silly), offering to find places to sleep in the house if the characters are at all sociable. The evening is spent over beers, some kind of homebrewed rotgut that Arthur makes out of vegetable produce, and talk of local events and wider universe.

In the morning the travellers head onward in the direction of Sometimes Lake. They will have to leave the road at some point and head cross-country. Sometimes Lake does not receive enough traffic to have even a track leading to it, though the transit is fairly easy through open country. Most if the few visitors to the settlement stay on the road until they reach Always River, then turn south along its banks. This is not the most efficient route, but it ensures that the travellers do not get lost.

SOMETIMES LAKE

Sometimes Lake is a bowl-shaped depression in the ground with a fair amount of mud and rather less water in it. At rainy times it feeds several local watercourses. The rest of the time it is the only reliable source of water for some distance. The community of Sometimes Lake consists of a cluster of one-storey prefab buildings along the banks of the main watercourse feeding into the lake. Inevitably, this creek has been named the Always River, though sometimes it dwindles to a tiny trickle.

Sometimes Lake is home to about 20 people, most of whom are farmers or ranchers. The community has one of the largest Kian and Caski herds on the planet, and Kian-mounted herdspeople can be spotted in the distance. The presence of reliable water and large herds of edible animals draws predators to the region with considerable frequency, so the locals are well armed and usually armed with powerful rifles. Their armament is more aimed at bringing down powerful beasts like the Highland Terror than men. There are more elephant rifles in Sometimes Lake than handguns.

The Sometimes Lakers are less friendly than the Hoylbys. Their lives are harder, mainly because they have such big herds and therefore more work to do than they can manage. That combined with a constant threat from large aggressive animals has worn down the Lakers somewhat. At heart they are good people but they tend to be touchy and bad-tempered, especially with offworld idiots who point out 'obvious' solutions to their problems. The Lakers do not make friends easily but are willing to give respect where it is due.

The characters' mission at Sometimes Lake is a simple delivery. The grumpy Lakers are quite willing to let the travellers go on their way without even an invite to dinner, unless the characters go out of their way to be helpful, in which case the Lakers will take a (slight) liking to them and offer hospitality.

A SIDE TRIP

As the travellers leave Sometimes Lake, en route for the Hansard bridge, they pick up an urgent radio signal. It is coming from the south somewhere – triangulation is not possible with just one radio set. The signal is brief. It is coming from an ATV radio set and is badly distorted for some reason. Through the static, words can be made out:

"Prospecting crew Ravellian calling anyone. We're lost, our ATV is damaged and we have injured team members. Anyone out there? We're somewhere south of the Bravo Road, maybe a hundred, hundred-fifty clicks. Our vehicle is on its last legs and we're short of rations. We need a rescue... (the signal is lost in static for a while) ... somebody come find us, okay?" Whoever is on the other end of the signal is trying to sound flippant, but there is a note of desperation in her voice.

MAKING CONTACT

Contacting the other ATV is difficult. It is possible that someone else might have picked up the signal, but by no means certain. This should be obvious from the difficulty of getting through. Eventually it will be possible to establish contact for a few minutes. During that time, the radio operator on the other end can give the characters some information.

- Her name is Parveena Orwell. She is a member of a 4-person prospecting team operating out of Camp Bravo.
- The team is led by Jim Ravellian, but Jim is seriously hurt. The other two, a vargr named Khoureng and a human by the name of Catharine Weller, are both less seriously injured ('walking wounded').
- The injuries occurred in an ATV accident. The vehicle rolled over while on a hillside, mangling its antennae and external sensors. The drive system is badly damaged too, and is on the verge of giving out.
- The ATV rolled because it was charged by some kind of very large local creature. Parveena thinks it might have been a particularly large Highland Terror, though nothing that big has been sighted by anyone else.
- The ATV's navigation equipment is offline and probably destroyed. Parveena and her colleagues have been driving for what they think might be 50-100km, roughly north, hoping to intersect the road or find a settlement. They are thoroughly lost now, very tired, and in serious trouble.

During the conversation, contact is lost. It is resumed for a brief moment, to a backdrop of a horrendous screeching sound. Parveena comes back on the air for a moment saying, "That's the drive train going. We're stuck. I'll try to get us going again, but..." contact is again lost and cannot be regained.

SEARCHING FOR THE PROSPECTORS

The travellers are under no legal obligation to help others out, but the 'frontier code' that most people on worlds like Steel follow requires them to do what they can for fellow travellers in distress. If the characters are not inclined to help, Eneeri will try to persuade them. Her mission can wait a day or two, but those folks out there sound like they need help right now.

If the characters decide to search for the prospectors, anyone with Communications or Mathematics skills can calculate a rough bearing for the transmissions, though distance cannot be determined. A rough guess from the signal strength and things said by Parveena suggests perhaps 50-150km (2-5 hexes) roughly south or southwest of the travellers' current position.

The travellers will need to proceed fairly carefully through each map hex since they are searching for a relatively small target in a huge area of wilderness. If they miss the prospectors' ATV they may sight its tracks but otherwise they could end

up wandering about the outback for days without success. The prospectors' radio is currently unusable due to antenna damage. The crew are working to fix it and will eventually be able to send and receive short-range transmissions. Once the travellers reach the right map hex they should be able to contact Parveena and her people once again.

The Referee should determine a suitable position for the lost ATV on or one hex to the side of the transmission bearing, 3-5 hexes from the characters' current position. As the characters make their search the Referee should determine encounters as normal for an outback expedition.

RECONTACT!

Finally, as the travellers near their objective, radio contact is re-established. Parveena comes back on the air sounding desperate.

"Things are real bad here," she says. "We're stuck at the bottom of a dry watercourse. Jim's critical. We think he's got internal injuries... we don't have the expertise or the gear to treat him here. And I think we spotted that... thing... that tipped us over. It's followed us. Get here as quick as you can but be careful."

It will take a while to find the damaged ATV. When the characters arrive they are confronted with the sight of a huge Highland Terror, much larger than anything previously reported, poking at a crippled ATV with its snout and snarling. It darts a short distance away when the travellers come in sight, cocking its head as it considers the new situation.

The ATV is in a terrible state. Most of its external tools and sensors have been ripped off when it rolled down the hillside, and the cockpit screen is badly cracked. Some of the huge balloon tires have been ripped, probably by the Terror. Someone can be seen in the ATV cockpit, waving frantically.

The characters will have to deal with the Terror somehow. The obvious expedient of jumping out and shooting at it will of course enrage it, and it is a very dangerous beast. On the flat it could not overbalance an ATV, but it is capable of bashing through a windshield sooner or later. Running it down is an option, but will not do the ATV any good – treat the Terror as a vehicle for collision damage.

The Terror can be temporarily frightened off by clever means perhaps involving fire or loud noises. It could perhaps be lured into range of a booby-trap set by Eneeri and blown to pieces. The Referee should allow creative players to succeed, though there is always the possibility that the Terror will follow their ATV back to civilization. Whatever the characters decide to do, they need to get at the other ATV without being eaten.

THE RESCUE

The wrecked ATV is just that – wrecked. Its drive train is twisted, making even towing it virtually impossible. The only viable option is to transfer the crew to the working vehicle (and perhaps scavenging some spares if the travellers' ATV was damaged in the fight) and head for the nearest settlement, which is most likely Sometimes Lake.

Jim needs medical attention urgently, and the other crewmembers are also hurt. Only Parveena is reasonably intact, mainly because she was strapped into her seat when the vehicle rolled. She is desperately tired though, and not much of an asset once someone to hand over the crisis to has been found. A few hours' sleep and a good meal will revive her somewhat, and fairly soon she will once again be a tough frontiersperson. For now, however, she is a bit of a wreck.

RETURNING

Returning to Sometimes Lake will of course require traversing the wilderness, and the Referee should determine encounters normally along the way. The casualties can be dropped off at Sometimes Lake, which has a doctor and a decent medical center. Jim should be transferred to SteelPort as soon as he is out of danger, but if he can be conveyed to Sometimes Lake alive, he will stay that way.

The Lakers are quite concerned about the possibility of some kind of uber-Terror wandering around the countryside, and want to know everything about it. There is some talk of an expedition to the south sometime to study these predators and determine if they pose a threat to the people of the region and their herds. Others just want to saddle up and eliminate the problem. Both are projects for the future; manpower cannot be spared right now.

Once the prospectors are conveyed to Sometimes Lake, the characters are free to go about their mission.

THE HANSARD BRIDGE

After finding and pushing on down the Bravo Road – which at times disappears entirely, at others consisting of a set of wheel ruts and not much else – the travellers eventually reach Hansard's River and the bridge over it. The work crew is already there, putting the finishing touches to the bridge itself.

The crew is a dozen or so humans and vargr under the leadership of Bill Reymand, a tall, 40-something engineer with graying dark hair and pale blue eyes. Bill has worked frontier projects like this one for more than fifteen years, and runs his team efficiently. The workers are a mix of qualified engineers, apprentices and roughnecks who can handle a range of tasks. They have three ATVs with them, one of which is a frontier-construction model with a dozer blade, an 'A' frame for lifting and a range of tools for various applications.

The crew are armed with blades, carbines, shotguns and a few handguns. None of them is a warrior but everyone understands the need to be able to drive off hungry beasties or the odd robber.

Once Eneeri and her explosives arrive, the crew will be able to begin blasting rubble to create a bed for the approach road. There is a plan to eventually have a proper surface but for now gravel and rubble will have to do. This is important since ATVs rip up the countryside as they pass. On the plains this is not a problem. If a region gets too muddy or rutted, the next vehicle can just drive around or parallel. On the approaches to a bridge, this is not possible. It would be a shame for the greatest engineering work on Steel to be unsuitable because the approach became a quagmire.

The bridge is pretty impressive; a steel-alloy and concrete construction with (as yet) no guardrails. It is wide enough for an ATV in comfort, but crossing is still a nervous job for most drivers – Hansard’s River is at this point at the bottom of a 20-meter gorge. The bridge is about 100m long. It is supported in the center by piles driven into the riverbed. In order to protect the supports from the effects of the occasional flash flood, there is a plan to drop part of the gorge back upstream, creating a natural weir and protecting the bridge. Eneeri is looking forward to this project, as it involves a large amount of explosives and a satisfying level of destruction.

However, just after the characters reach the bridge, outside events intervene.

INTERVENTION FROM ABOVE

The emergency channel on every radio on this side of the planet picks up the penetrating tone of a GK (distress) signal. After a moment the beacon resolves itself into an audio-only transmission.

“GK, GK, this is Free Trader Unicorn. We are under attack. Our position is Steel Orbit, coordinates on sub-band. Hostile vessel is a large merchant ship, possibly a Type R. We are taking hits... any ship, please respond.”

The voice fades out for a while, replaced by static. It comes through again after a few minutes. “This is Unicorn. The hostile is closing. We’ve lost main drive. Any ship, please respond... Hostile appears to be damaged... we’re...”

The transmission cuts off, and the reason is horribly apparent. Even in daylight, the explosion of Unicorn’s powerplant, fuel or cargo (only a full investigation will reveal which) is visible from the ground. A stunned silence descends on the work crew. Unicorn would have been the first independent ship into SteelPort, a hallmark of civilization and progress. Now she is a cloud of debris and her attacker is somewhere overhead.

STEELPORT RAID

The question of what will happen next is answered abruptly as a sizable ship (bigger than a type R) enters the atmosphere of Steel. It can just be seen as it passes overhead, heading for the port. A pinnacle is dropped and comes in fast, opening out its wings as it screams low overhead. Meanwhile, the parent ship opens fire on a ground target. The obvious conclusion is that SteelPort is under attack, and any attempt to contact the port will confirm this.

Referee: Unless the characters are still in SteelPort at the time of the raid, they will not witness it first-hand. In fact there is not that much to it, and little for anyone not directly involved to do. The key events are:

- The raider ship fires a warning shot near the port and demands immediate surrender.
- The pinnacle comes in fast to land a ground assault force. The plan is to reclaim the stash of spares recently taken by the port governor’s people.
- SteelPort refuses to surrender and opens fire with its ground-based weapons, hitting the raider ship which immediately retires to avoid more damage (it was already hit by a lucky shot from Unicorn.)
- The pinnacle breaks off its assault run, but not before a brace of missiles from the port detonate close to it, causing crippling damage.
- As the raider climbs back into orbit and moves out of range of the port, the pinnacle tries to regain altitude, fails, and looks for a site to put down.
- The raiders quickly throw together a plan – the pinnacle will land at the nearest large community and see if repairs are possible. If not, perhaps an alternative can be found.
- The pinnacle and its assault team land at Base Camp Bravo, which is unprepared for an attack. After a short and brutal fight the raiders are masters of the camp and begin searching for spares.
- The assault team quickly discover that they cannot repair their pinnacle at Camp Bravo. Their parent vessel cannot enter atmosphere and cannot Jump out of the system due to combat damage to its drives.
- Stuck between a rock and a hard place, the assault team resolves to take SteelPort in a ground assault using vehicles stolen from Camp Bravo. They will use the port cutter to convey spares up to their ship and/or fix up the pinnacle with equipment from the port. This allows them to reach their ship and make it Jump-capable once more.
- The raiders are desperate. Unable to leave the system, they will be run down by the first Navy ship that comes through.

A FATEFUL MEETING

Not long after the attack, an offroad truck is spotted heading along the Bravo Road towards the bridge. It is going towards SteelPort. As it approaches, it slows. It can be seen to contain

a group of armed men, who are grimy and more than a little ragged. The truck stops a short distance from the bridge and some of the men remain close to its cover, holding rifles nervously. A lone man walks forward empty-handed, his only weapon a handgun in a belt holster.

A solidly-built man, normally clean-shaven but for his impressive moustache, the newcomer wears a flak jacket over typical frontiersman-type clothing. He calls out in a thick Sword Worlder accent, "Hallo the bridge! We want to cross – we are not hostile!"

There is a possibility for a tragedy here, for the newcomers are not inclined to trust Imperials and have witnessed the attack (and been the victim of a similar one a few days before). They genuinely are not hostile, and do not want a confrontation. If the characters have previously played Call of the Wild, they will recognize this newcomer as Olav Gungnirsson (or if Olav was killed, as one of his lieutenants).

Olav will explain the situation readily enough. A few days ago his people were attacked by a large group of heavily-armed raiders, who tore through the Sword Worlders' hidden village and left it in ruins. They seemed to be looking for something, and were extremely persistent even through the Sword Worlders put up a good fight.

The raiders eventually withdrew, but the Swordies' village is a ruin. They have over two hundred dead and as many wounded among their population of about 2400, and their power supply is destroyed. They have no supplies, few vehicles, and no home. Their bold attempt to build a new life in the uplands of Steel has failed, and they are dying for lack of medical supplies and food.

Olav and his team are one of several out foraging among the Imperial steads. Olav stresses that they are not raiding or stealing; they are requesting, buying and in some cases begging for whatever help the steaders and prospectors can offer. Some have been surprisingly generous, others have fired on the Sword Worlders, which is only to be expected.

Olav adds that a party has been sent to SteelPort to personally request help from the Imperial settlers. He is going there himself once he has obtained whatever supplies he can, intending to throw his people on the mercy of their former enemies. It is obvious that Olav's pride is at war with his need to do what he can for his people. He is deeply upset by what has happened and at the failure of his leadership. Sword Worlder men are very proud of their self-reliance, and asking for aid comes hard.

All Olav wants now is to pass over the bridge and head for SteelPort. He does think he saw the raider pinnace heading for Camp Bravo, and suspects that they are going to attack it. The raiders are almost certainly the same people who destroyed his village, and he would very much like to turn around and head back to fight them, but he has more pressing

concerns such as requesting aid from the administrators in SteelPort. That mission will decide whether his people survive, and is too important to postpone.

Olav adds that whatever the outcome of his mission, his people are already gathering what they can salvage from the village. They have few vehicles, so most of them are going to have to march overland, but there is no alternative. Whatever the governor says in response to his plea, over two thousand people are marching out of the mountains in the direction of SteelPort. Most will not survive the march without help, but the longer they postpone the move, the harder it will be.

Olav and his people are in a desperate situation, and he will not forget anyone who offers him help. He will bear a grudge to his dying day against anyone who hinders him.

STATE OF EMERGENCY

If the characters push on down the road, heading for Camp Bravo, they start to encounter frightened steaders who tell of raiding parties scouring the countryside for vehicles. At first it sounds like the Sword Worlders, but it gradually becomes apparent that Camp Bravo has been attacked and overrun by the raiders. Some of the personnel got out and are headed up the Bravo Road in vehicles or on Kian-back. Steaders on the road have been raided for ATVs and other heavy vehicles. It is obvious that the raiders need a fleet of ATVs for something. ATVs are lightly armored and heavily built, and have doubled as military vehicles on several worlds. It is likely that the raiders wish to use them as such.

Word comes from the governor at SteelPort that there is something at the port the raiders want, and that he expects an attack in the imminent future. The attack will almost certainly come overland, and preparations are underway to repel it. However, the defenders need time and certainly are not in a position to send out forces to engage the enemy in the field. The governor therefore issues the following instructions:

- Steaders should evacuate their settlements and make their way to SteelPort or disperse in the countryside and hide.
- All field personnel should similarly disperse and hide.
- The Hansard Bridge should be rigged for demolition. It will be kept open as long as possible for evacuees to escape, and its demolition will buy time for personnel to reach SteelPort as the raiders detour around. Defence of the bridge should not be attempted.
- All possible assistance will be offered to settlers seeking the sanctuary of SteelPort.

There is no mention of the Sword Worlders or their plight.

THE EVACUATION

Dispersal is easy for the prospectors and surveyors. For those with fixed assets like steads and herds, the desire to stay put and hope it all passes by, or to fight for their holdings, is strong. Many will indeed be untouched as the raiders pass by, others will suffer tragedy as their local defence associations put up a brief and futile fight.

Many settlers do however heed the warning, grabbing what they can and heading up the road to SteelPort. There is no flood of refugees, just a handful of parties riding Kian or aboard offroad trucks, heading for safety as quickly as possible. Meanwhile, Bill and his construction crew are deeply unhappy about blowing up the bridge they have gone to so much trouble to construct. They can be talked round eventually – after all, it is just a thing and there are lives, including those of the construction crew, at stake. Many of the engineers actually want to be persuaded but feel the need to argue for pride's sake.

Eneeri could use some help rigging the bridge for demolition, and there is plenty for other characters to do. Many of the refugees could use some help with their vehicles, or need to be persuaded not to stop once they are 'safe' across the bridge. Some of the engineering team want to dig trenches to fight from in case the bridge cannot be blown. Others want to be elsewhere and will hitch a ride out of the area with anyone who is willing to let them aboard a vehicle.

Digging in may or may not be a bad idea. If there is any hint that the bridge can or will be held, some of the more belligerent or indignant refugees will insist on joining in the defence. Most of these people are totally unsuited to the role and are likely to either flee at the first sign of danger or else will hang around behind the combat zone talking tough about how 'we' (i.e., someone else) should 'do something' about the attackers. Digging in will likely get more people killed than simply blowing the bridge and retreating.

Whatever the characters do, they do not have long before a number of ATVs and trucks is spotted rushing up the road in the direction of the bridge. It might be a horde of refugees, but this is not likely. As the vehicles approach, heavily-armed personnel in combat armor can be seen aboard them. The raiders will slow a little on the bridge approaches, especially if they can see people on or near it, and do not hesitate to open fire on anyone in the open.

As the raiders appear, Eneeri is just finishing up the demolition circuit. She has rushed the work and is fairly sure it will drop the main support, but not certain. Likewise, she is reasonably sure the charges will actually blow, but the circuit has not been tested. With bullets hissing past, the time for debate is over.

Then, of course, things get complicated.

THE BATTLE OF HANSARD BRIDGE

The demo circuit is more or less ready. Eneeri just needs a few more moments. However, the raiders are closing fast and about to play their trump card. Up the valley, hidden in the steep gorge, comes a captured air/raft. The defenders are unlikely to spot it before it rises out of the gorge just fifty meters away and begins to skim low over the ground towards the defenders.

The 'raft is crewed by four of the raiders – three troopers equipped with Advanced Combat Rifles and a support gunner with a 20mm Light Assault Gun. A fifth raider acts as pilot and will not take part in combat. The 'raft crew plan to use their vehicle to outflank the defenders, shooting from it rather than dismounting. However, if they spot the demo circuit they will get as close as they can and jump out to prevent the bridge from being blown.

There are a total of 37 raiders in four ATVs and five offroad trucks headed for the bridge (i.e. roughly 4 raiders to a vehicle). Four are leaders equipped with combat armor. The remainder have either Cloth or Flak armor and are equipped with a range of weapons including assault rifles, light machine guns, submachineguns and a couple of LAGs. The raiders are not a military force but are quite experienced enough to know about fire and maneuver. Some of the vehicles will halt and their crews dismount about 100m from the bridge while the others advance right up to it and try to rush across. The first vehicles are 10 combat rounds from reaching the bridge when the action opens.

If the bridge is blown, the air/raft will withdraw. There is no benefit to be gained fighting for a useless bridgehead. The raiders might shoot up the defenders out of spite, but they will quickly conclude that they need to find another route to their objective and will go looking for it. The defenders will thus be safe shortly after the bridge is blown. Any raiders caught on the SteelPort side when it does blow will break off the fight and head into the outback hoping to join up with their comrades later. They will not pointlessly prolong a fight.

Eneeri or any character with Demolitions skill can complete the demo circuit. Roll 1D (1d6) for how many rounds elapse before an attempt can be made. The circuit is completed on a DC15 T/Demolitions skill check (CT: Throw 9+, DM Demo skill). Electronics skill can be substituted, in which case the DC increases to DC20 (CT: throw 11+, DM Electronics skill). If the attempt is failed, throw 1D (1d6) for how many rounds of work are needed before another attempt can be made.

The first raider vehicle reaches the bridge on round 10, and is crossing on round 11. Another vehicle will begin to cross every 4 rounds thereafter.

Round	Event
10	First Vehicle reaches bridge
11	First Vehicle crossing bridge
12	First Vehicle reaches defenders' side
13	No vehicles on bridge
14	Second Vehicle reaches bridge
15	Second Vehicle crossing bridge
16	Second Vehicle reaches defenders' side
17	No vehicles on bridge
18	Third Vehicle reaches bridge

And so forth.

Any vehicle that reaches the far bank will halt after a round (i.e. the first on round 13) and troops will dismount to attack the defenders. If the bridge is blown while more than half the raiders are still on the far bank, they will break off as above and withdraw, hoping to meet up. If more than half the raiders get across, they will head for SteelPort and leave their comrades to find a new route. In either case they will shoot up the defenders pretty thoroughly, though anyone who hides or runs off and stops fighting will be ignored. The raiders have other matters to deal with.

If the raiders get more than half their people across the river, they will be between the travellers and SteelPort. However, a determined party can still get there first. The raiders will be slowed by refugees they encounter on the road (and will slaughter them in passing), and will eventually become embroiled in a firefight as some steaders try to protect their holdings. By paralleling the road and driving recklessly, the characters can get ahead of the raiders and reach SteelPort in time for the defence.

Note: Sometimes Lake is far enough off the road that the raiders are likely to pass by without spotting the settlement. Chances are the Lakers will be unmolested. If the raiders do find the settlement, the Lakers will put up a fight but stand no real chance.

If the characters managed to blow the Hansard Bridge in time, the raiders will lose half a day finding a crossing point but will all arrive at SteelPort together. If most of them got across, they will be just 30 minutes behind the travellers as they reach the port.

FIGHTING FOR A FUTURE

SteelPort was never designed to resist a ground assault. The prefab buildings are solid enough to keep out the east wind, but not a hail of bullets. The locals are hurriedly but inexpertly digging trenches to resist the attack when the travellers arrive. The town's engineers and naval detachment are trying to set up a decent defense and to ensure adequate stocks of ammunition and medical supplies are available. The townsfolk are mostly looking for cover, though some have come out to fight in defense of their homes.

Olav and his party have reached the town, along with a couple of other groups of well-armed Sword Worlders. However, the governor has ordered them to hand over all weapons but their sidearms and confined them to the administration buildings for the duration of the crisis. Olav has offered the services of his warband to defend the settlement, in exchange for help for his people, but the governor is too busy to take what amounts to a political policy decision and refused to consider the offer at present. Olav and his men are fuming, frustrated and more than a little scared. Some of their weapons have been distributed among untrained colonists. The rest are locked in an armory in the admin buildings.

AT THE CHARGE

Long before the defenders are properly ready, the raiders arrive. They are not interested in capturing the town but need to gain control of the starport complex. If they can disable the turrets from there, reinforcements can land from their parent vessel and they will have achieved their goals. It should not then be hard to rout the defenders. Pillaging the town is just a bonus; what the raiders need is access to their stash of spares, which are located in a port bunker.

Thus the raiders come in hard and fast, planning to roll right through the defensive perimeter (such as it is) by a combination of speed and firepower. The defenders have nothing that can seriously harm an ATV, so this will work well enough. After that, the raiders will have to dismount to assault the port admin complex. It is defended by the naval detachment, a few civilian volunteers and, probably, the travellers.

Some of the raiders will be assigned to chase off townsfolk harassing their rear. The rest split into small squads, some laying down a hail of suppressing fire as their comrades work closer to the admin buildings. It is obvious that they intend to make an assault and, ominously, they have made no attempt to parlay or offer surrender terms. It may not have occurred to them that the defenders might surrender to raiders – terrible things usually happen to those who do.

THE FIRST ASSAULT

The raiders' first assault is somewhat confused, with many of their personnel still arriving while others are distracted by harassing fire in their rear. As soon as more than a handful of casualties are taken, the attackers go to ground or pull back to their positions around the complex. During this time, Olav and his men break out of the conference room they were locked in and grab the first people they think might listen to them. This will likely be the travellers.

Olav gets straight to the point. Some of his men have smashed their way into the armory and obtained weapons, or taken them from wounded defenders. He has a dozen experienced fighters under his command, and the defenders need help. Like it or not, they are about to get it. The raiders recently shot up Olav's home and killed a lot of the people he

is responsible for protecting. Even if the governor refuses to help him afterwards, no true man could sit out such a fight, Olav says. As the second and final assault begins, Olav's men join the defence of SteelPort.

SWORD AND SUNBURST

The raiders launch their main assault. They have good body armor, heavy weapons and desperation on their side. The defenders have a half-decent position but are outnumbered. There is no love lost between Imperial Navy personnel and Imperial colonists and the Swordies, but they have a common enemy. While some defenders are at first distracted and dismayed by the sudden arrival of Olav and his troops, the fact that there are bullets incoming and Olav is firing back at the raiders is at least somewhat reassuring.

As the raiders shoot their way into the complex, they are opposed by an unlikely alliance of Sword Worlder warriors and starmen who serve under the Imperial sunburst banner.

THE DEFENSE OF STEELPORT

This action should be chaotic and confused, with little quarter given in the bitter fighting. Hand-to-hand struggles in doorways, grenades thrown into conference rooms, and deadly close-range firefights in the corridors of the complex should make this one fight the travellers never forget. The Referee can let it go on as long as he wants, until even the fighting fools among the characters are exhausted and desperate. There is no need to keep track of everything that is going on – the travellers' attention will be fully focused on what is right in front of them. The overall situation is so chaotic that nobody really knows who is winning until the dust settles.

Eventually, the raiders will be ejected from the complex and fall back to their vehicles, making off into the outback. They will have to be hunted down sooner or later, and will probably cause a great deal of damage in the meantime. Their ship is trapped in-system and will eventually be run down by a naval patrol when one comes through. In the meantime, the exhausted defenders slump down and rest for a while, until it becomes apparent that the threat really has receded. Then another problem raises its head. During the chaos or maybe just afterward, some of Olav's men have quietly taken control of the complex's critical control room. There was no violence; they just moved in until they outnumbered and outgunned the Imperial defenders.

And the governor is there with them...

A DEFINING MOMENT

The port and the governor are now in the hands of Olav and his surviving warriors. They are holed up in a good position and have access to the port's critical systems. Lt Geoffrey Saalin, the Imperial Navy liaison and de facto security chief

for the entire planet, is appalled. He begins making plans to assault the Swordies' position and rescue the governor, but grudgingly agrees to listen to what they have to say. He will ask the travellers to accompany him, as they seem to get along with Olav's people well enough.

Olav's men are treating the governor and the control room staff as guests rather than prisoners. Indeed, astute travellers may notice that some of the Imperial personnel in the control room have retained their sidearms. Allowing a captured enemy to retain his weapon is a custom among Sword Worlders who wish to show honor and respect to their enemies, but there may be more to this. Olav addresses the Imperials. What he has to say is a little surprising.

"We have fought together and won, yet we are not allies. I control a vital place and have your leader with me, yet I am not your enemy. In short, our position is ambiguous. I see two possible resolutions. If you decide we are the enemy, then such we are. Yet I will not fight you. I will surrender my men to you and we will most likely be deported to our old homes in the Sword Worlds where we face a grim fate.

If instead you decide that we are allies, I will salute you as my commander.

We have seen today that Steel needs a military force to defend it. I can provide that force. My men will place themselves under your orders as a mercenary unit on contract to the government of Steel. In lieu of payment we ask that you send help to my people in the mountains and give them homes here, accepting them as citizens of Steel and thereby of the Third Imperium with all rights pertaining.

This decision requires a certain courage to make. You will be arming former enemies and giving them a place among you. Can you trust us? How can you know? All I can offer you is my word, and our actions here today. Give us a home and we will fight for you. If you take the easy road we will surrender without a fight and go meekly to our fate, I promise you. There is no danger to you in refusing my offer, and perhaps some in accepting.

I commend our fate to your courage, sir."

Olav's speech is typical of the man – phrasing an offer of alliance as a challenge. The Imperials are not entirely impressed about that. On the other hand, a force of experienced fighters is needed right now, and Olav commands one. After a long, long silence, the governor offers his hand to Olav. The two leaders shake hands, then Olav turns to Lieutenant Saalin and offers an approximation of an Imperial salute. Saalin returns it grudgingly.

AFTERMATH

There is much to do in the next few hours and days. The raiders will need to be chased down and Imperial refugees escorted to safety. There are two thousand Sword Worlders making painful progress through the mountains en route for SteelPort. The port has been damaged in the fighting, the bridge at Hansard's River has been blown up and Camp Bravo has been sacked. There may be a giant Highland Terror wandering about the countryside too. The Sword Worlder refugees will need to be integrated into the general population. They outnumber the existing populace of SteelPort, so accommodation is likely to be a problem even if social issues do not cause chaos. There are plenty of minor crises to be defused or dealt with.

And after all of that, the work of building a world can continue. Steel is supposed to be receiving drafts of colonists sometime soon, and before that can happen the Imperial Colonial Office needs to be convinced that SteelPort is a fit capital for the world and is ready to receive settlers. If the residents are brawling or shooting one another in the streets, that is unlikely to happen.

The travellers are on retainer to the governor as odd-job people, and there are likely to be some very odd jobs for them to do in the next few weeks.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following characters and animals may be encountered in the course of this adventure. Some of the states below are specific to a particular person; others are general stats that can be used to represent any group of similar type that may be met by the characters.

CREATURES

Korzan's Pseudo-Mammalian Pouncer ('Korzan's Critter')
Critters can be encountered in any terrain. They are roughly the size of a moderately large dog, with rangy bodies and long, muscular legs. Camouflaged by their brownish-green fur, they hunt by creeping close to the prey or lying in wait near a water source, then spring. Critters can jump a surprisingly long way and hit hard, bowling their target over or smashing it to the ground where it can be finished with teeth and claws. Although a family group of 3-8 adults is capable of taking down a human, only the most desperate Critters would try. They have learned to avoid human habitation.

Having pounced, the Critter can run fast but not far. Its gait is rapid but almost comical, and endurance is very limited. Occasionally a group will bring down a Kian by having one or more of their number pounce and cling to the bird, gaining time for others to fling themselves at it. Such bids are unsuccessful more often than not, though larger groups have recently been observed that can pull off this stunt with less effort.

T20: Korzan's Critter – Small (12kg) Carnivore/Pouncer; St/Lb 15/14 (2d10+4); Init +2; To Attack if surprise; To Flee if surprised; Spd 12m (8 squares), jump 6m (4 squares); AC 16 (+2 dex, +1 size, +3 natural armor); AR 3; Atks two claws +5 melee (1d4+1), bite +3 melee (1d6); SA pounce; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 3, Wis 8, Cha 8, Edu --, Soc --.

Skills & Feats: Hide +5, Move Silently +10, Survival +6. Multiattack, Stealthy.

Special Abilities: Pounce – If a Korzan's Critter charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including two additional rake attacks (resolve as claw attacks).

CT: Korzan's Critter – 12kg Pouncer; Hits 9/9; Armor mesh; Wounds 5 (as claws); A0 F0 S4.

KIAN

The Kian is a large, flightless bird encountered throughout Charted Space. It is used as a riding animal on a great many worlds. While weaker than a horse it has the advantage of being more agile, making it better able to cope with forests and other restricted terrain. Kians can be encountered wild on Steel, having been introduced long ago. Those brought in by hopeful ranchers (the ones that did not just round up some local birds) are a little bigger and stronger than the indigenous type as a result of generations of domestic

breeding. They are otherwise indistinguishable and can interbreed freely.

T20: Kian – Large (400kg) Herbivore/Grazer; St/Lb 33/16 (6d4+18); Init -1; To Attack 7+; To Flee 14+; Spd 15m (10 squares); AC 8 (-1 dex, -1 size); AR 0; Atks beak +2 melee (1d8+3); SV Fort +8, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 8, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 4, Edu --, Soc --.
Skills & Feats: Listen +2, Spot +2, Survival +9. Alertness, Endurance, Weapon Focus (beak).

CT: Kian – 400kg Grazer; Hits 20/10; Armor none-1; Wounds 16 (as teeth-1); A4 F9 S5.

HIGHLAND TERRORS

Until humans arrived, the Highland Terror was the apex predator on Steel and afraid of nothing. Today, it has learned to fear and hate humans, and seems to view them as a threat to be eliminated rather than a rival to be avoided. Terrors know enough to stay away from vehicles and buildings, but will sneak up on and attack lone humans or small groups if the chance presents itself.

Like much of Steel's wildlife, the Terror is brownish-gray in color, with wicked fangs and claws. A powerful beast the size of a horse, it generally hunts alone – males and females are equally deadly. A mated pair will produce a handful of young every 2-3 years. If young are present the female will hunt close to their lair while the male ranges more widely. Anyone approaching the lair will be warned off with an impressive array of growling and 'ballooning', where the Terror stalks about as if it were hunting the intruder. This is usually sufficient to drive off rivals, but the noise will also bring the mate hurrying back, hopefully behind the distracted intruders. Several explorers have lost their lives this way.

The so-called 'Giant Terror' is currently thought to be simply a huge example of the known species. Until further investigation can be undertaken, little is known about this dangerous creature.

T20: Highland Terrors – Large (400kg) Omnivore/Hunter; St/Lb 39/16 (6d6+18); Init +1; To Attack 5+; To Flee 7+; Spd 9m (6 squares); AC 13 (+1 dex, -1 size, +3 natural armor); AR 3; Atks two claws +5 melee (1d8+3), bite +2 melee (2d6+1); SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +1; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 4, Wis 9, Cha 7, Edu --, Soc --.
Skills & Feats: Intimidate +4, Listen +1, Spot +1, Survival +4. Alertness, Multiattack, Weapon Focus (claw).

CT: Highland Terrors – 400kg Hunter; Hits 19/5; Armor mesh; Wounds 9 (as teeth); A6 F8 S2.

GREAT CASKI

Looking a lot like a furry miniature apatosaurus, the Great Caski is only a little larger than a horse but has been jokingly dubbed 'wanabee megafauna' by Steel's explorers. Caski

wander about in small family groups nibbling vegetation and generally causing little harm to anyone. They do not move quickly, and shy away from noises and unexplained movements. They can bite, butt or give a nasty tail slap to predators, but in truth they only pose a danger to humans who cannot walk away quickly enough, are incapable of making a noise, and are mistaken for a tasty piece of vegetation. If there were a prize for 'most harmless beast in Charted Space', the Great Caski would be a strong contender. Even the most avid hunters will only take one for food; they offer no sport whatsoever.

T20: Great Caski – Large (600kg) Herbivore/Grazer; St/Lb 45/18 (8d4+27); Init -1; To Attack 11+; To Flee 8+; Spd 3m (2 squares); AC 8 (-1 dex, -1 size, +6 natural armor); AR 6; Atks bite +3 melee (1d8+4), slam +1 melee (1d6+2), tail slap +1 melee (2d6+6); SV Fort +9, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 18, Dex 8, Con 17, Int 1, Wis 6, Cha 4, Edu --, Soc --.
Skills & Feats: Listen +11, Spot +1. Alertness, Multiattack, Toughness.

CT: Great Caski – 600kg Grazer; Hits 24/11; Armor cloth; Wounds 8 (as teeth); F8 A8 S1.

PERSONALITIES

THE GOVERNOR

The newly-appointed Governor of Steel is Commander Isaaq Finn, Imperial Navy (Retired). Governor Finn is an active man in his late 50s who completed a tour in the Imperial Navy years ago and retired to become First Officer on a small merchant ship. At the outbreak of war he volunteered for service and served as the first officer of a destroyer, then the commander of an escort. His elevation to full Commander was part of a severance package from the navy which included a recommendation for the job of colonial governor of Steel.

The Governor has a lot to do, and is rarely seen outside the Town Hall. He does not have many visitors there, and normally allows his deputy to deal with those seeking an appointment to see him. The 'Governor's Residence' just outside of town is actually a fairly modest house with what might some day be considered 'grounds' or 'gardens' but at present is just a fenced-off area of bare earth. The Governor occasionally receives friends at the house but otherwise keeps to himself. He is unmarried and has no close family that anyone knows of.

T20: COMMANDER ISAAK FINN, PLANETARY GOVERNOR

(Navy 7/Merchant 2) TL15 Medium Human
Stamina 18, Lifeblood 8; Init +0; Speed 9m (6 squares);
Armor Class: 14 (+4 flak jacket), Armor Rating: 4
Str 7, Dex 11, Con 8, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 12, Edu 14, Soc 13

SV Fort +3; Ref +2; Will +7;

ATTACKS:

Weapon	Hit	Damage	Range	Crit	ROF	Rnds
Auto-pistol	+3	1d12	72	x2	1	15
Carbine	+3	1d10	45	x2	1	20
Fist	+3	1d3	-	x2	-	-

Skills: Gather Information +13, Leader +15, Liaison +15, Pilot +14, P/Administration +12, T/Astrogation +14, T/Communication +14, T/Computer +14, T/Sensors +14.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light, vac suit), Weapon Proficiency (laser, marksman), Vessel (grav, starships), Barter, Carousing, Command Presence, Connections (merchants), Narrow Escape, Natural Born Leader, Ship's Tactics, Skill Focus (Liaison), Trader, Zero-G/Low Gravity Adaptation, Zero-G Combat.

Equipment: flak jacket, auto-pisto, carbine, personal communicator.

CT: Commander Isaak Finn, Planetary Governor 575A99 Human age 56 9.5 terms
Admin-2, Carousing-2, Computer-2, Communication-1, Grav-2, Leader-2, Liaison-3, Navigation-2, Pilot-2, Ship Tactics-1, Vacc-0, Rifle-0, Laser-0

JOACHIM MISCHEN; CITY ENGINEER

Joachim is a rather intense and energetic man of about 35. A civil engineer, he is responsible for ensuring that the port has power and water, and for the construction of homes and amenities. Joachim is generally overworked, which suits him fine. He likes to be busy and talks about little but his work. He has few friends as a result, though he is well-respected in town and in his field.

T20: JOACHIM MISCHEN

(Professional 6) TL12 Medium Human

Stamina 24, Lifeblood 12; Init +1; Speed 9m (6 squares);
Armor Class: 15 (+1 dex, +4 flak jacket), Armor Rating: 4
Str 8, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 14, Edu 16, Soc 10

SV Fort +3; Ref +3; Will +5;

ATTACKS:

Weapon	Hit	Damage	Range	Crit	ROF	Rnds
Auto-pistol	+2	1d12	72	x2	1	15
Carbine	+2	1d10	45	x2	1	20
Fist	+2	1d3	-	x2	-	-

Skills: Combat Engineering +6, Driving +3, Demolitions +5, K/Engineering Methods +11, Liaison +11, P/Administration +9, P/Civil Engineering +9, Pilot +5, T/Communications +7, T/Electronics +12, T/Mechanical +12, T/Computer +8, Trader +7.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light, vac suit), Vehicle (grav, wheeled), Weapon Proficiency (marksman), Gearhead, Jury Rig, Professional Specialty (P/Civil Engineer), Research (K/Engineering Methods), Trustworthy.

Equipment: flak jacket, auto-pisto, carbine, personal communicator.

CT: Joachim Mischen 5989B7 Human age 35 4 terms
Admin-1, Combat Engineering-1, Computer-1, Demolitions-1, Electronics-2, Mechanical-2, Liaison-1, Communications-0, Grav-0, Trader-0, Wheeled-0

LIEUTENANT GEOFFREY SAALIN, IN; NAVAL LIAISON TO THE GOVERNMENT

Geoffrey is a serving naval officer on secondment from the Navy. As a holder of a reserve commission, he transferred to the navy from a merchant ship for 'hostilities only' during the Fifth Frontier War and loved it. At the end of the war he wanted to 'go career' but with the Navy shedding reserve officers by the bucketload, competition was fierce. The liaison job on Steel was a means to an end for Geoffrey – by taking it he stayed in the navy and made the transfer to a full commission. At 32, he has time to get where he wants to be, which is in fighting ships like the small escorts he served aboard during the war. He knows this all depends on doing a good job here on Steel, but also on applying for a transfer back to starships at the right time, with the right recommendations. He tends to spend a little too much time worrying about the repercussions of any given decision for his career, but he is a good and steady officer determined to do a good job.

T20: LIEUTENANT GEOFFREY SAALIN

(Navy 6) TL15 Medium Human

Stamina 24, Lifeblood 13; Init +2; Speed 9m (6 squares);
Armor Class: 18 (+2 dex, +6 cloth), Armor Rating: 6
Str 10, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 8, Edu 12, Soc 12

SV Fort +3; Ref +4; Will +5;

ATTACKS:

Weapon	Hit	Damage	Range	Crit	ROF	Rnds
Auto-pistol	+5	1d12	72	x2	1	15
Carbine	+5	1d10	45	x2	1	20
Fist	+6	1d4+1	-	x2	-	-

Skills: Drive +8, Forward Observer +12, Gunnery +9, Liaison +8, Pilot +12, P/Administration +9, Survival +4, T/Computer +10, T/Communications +10, T/Engineering +6, T/Medical +5, T/Sensors +10.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light, vac suit), Vessel (wheeled, ship's boat, starship), Weapon Proficiency (laser, marksman, ship's weapons), Brawling, Heavy Metal, Ship's Tactics.

Equipment: cloth armor, auto-pistol, carbine, personal communicator.

CT: Lieutenant Geoffrey Saalin 799B88 Human age 32 3.5 terms

Admin-1, Brawling-1, Communications-1, Computer-1, Forward Observer-1, Gunnery-1, Liaison-1, Pilot-1, Pistol-0, Rifle-0

MARSHAL DAWN SATLEY, MINISTRY OF JUSTICE; CHIEF OF SECURITY

Marshal Satley and her small squad of deputies are the only law from SteelPort to Camp Bravo. They have established a good working relationship with the locals and the naval detachment, to the point where any deputy can expect help from nearby roughnecks and frontiersmen if he or she gets into trouble. The marshal herself is a little stern and socializes little, but she is efficient and well-respected in town.

T20: MARSHAL DAWN SATLEY

(Professional 3/Mercenary 3) TL12 Medium Human
Stamina 18, Lifeblood 8; Init +6 (+2 dex, +4 feat); Speed 9m (6 squares);
Armor Class: 18 (+2 dex, +6 cloth), Armor Rating: 6
Str 10, Dex 15, Con 8, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 12, Edu 11, Soc 10
SV Fort +3; Ref +4; Will +6;

ATTACKS:

Weapon	Hit	Damage	Range	Crit	ROF	Rnds
Auto-pistol	+6	1d12	72	x2	1	15
Carbine	+5	1d10	45	x2	1	20
Shotgun	+5	3d6/2d6/1d6	3	x2	1	10
Fist	+6	1d4+1	-	x2	-	-

Skills: Driving +11, Gambling +7, Liaison +7, P/Administration +8, P/Security Chief +8, Pilot +8, Spot +5, Survival +4, T/Communications +9, T/Computer +9, T/Medical +3, T/Sensor Ops+9

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light, medium, vac suit), Vessel (grav, wheeled), Weapon Proficiency (combat rifleman, marksman), Brawling, Carousing, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Professional Specialty (P/Security Chief), Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (auto-pistol).
Equipment: cloth armor, auto-pisto, carbine, shotgun, personal communicator.

CT: Marshal Dawn Satley, Ministry Of Justice 7A5977 Human age 30 3 terms
Carousing-1, Combat Rifleman-1, Computer-1, Communications-1, Gambling-1, Grav-1, Wheeled-1, Brawling-0, Shotgun-0, Vacc-0

DR TED INGALLS, CHIEF MEDICAL ADVISOR

Ted Ingalls thought that he was at the end of his career. Aged 63, he came to Steel to semi-retire and ended up in charge of the world's medical services when the previous chief was headhunted away by a corporate recruiter. In his day Ted was an excellent surgeon and held a series of posts in teaching hospitals, experience he has put to good use here on Steel. He had expected to collect a salary for doing little and spend his days agitating for a golf course and other critical amenities to be built. Instead he leads an efficient medical team, and teaches medicine to a small class of colonists and frontiersmen who either want to join the world's expanding medical service or feel the need for some first-aid skills. Ted has never been happier. He dearly loves Steel and cannot imagine working anywhere else.

T20: DR TED INGALLS

(Professional 6/Academic 4) TL12 Medium Human
Stamina 16, Lifeblood 9; Init +1; Speed 9m (6 squares);
Armor Class: 11 (+1 dex), Armor Rating: 0
Str 5, Dex 12, Con 9, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 10, Edu 18, Soc 10
SV Fort +2; Ref +5; Will +8;

ATTACKS:

Weapon	Hit	Damage	Range	Crit	ROF	Rnds
Auto-pistol	+3	1d12	72	x2	1	15
Fist	+3	1d3	-	x2	-	-

Skills: Appraise +5, Decipher Script +7, E/Singing +11, Gather Information +7, K/Medicine +16, Liaison +9, P/Administration +5, P/Instructor +13, Spot +5, T/Computer +16, T/Electronics +11, T/Mechanical +12, T/Medical +18, Trader +7.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Vessel (grav), Weapon Proficiency (marksman), Carousing, Medical Specialization (Surgery), Mental Discipline, Professional Specialty (T/Medical), Research (K/Medicine), Skill Focus (T/Medical), Surgery, Trustworthy, Xeno-Medicine (Vargr).

Equipment: auto-pisto, medical kit, surgical kit personal communicator, hand computer.

CT: Dr Ted Ingalls, Chief Medical Advisor 3869C7 Human age 63 11 terms
Admin-1, Carousing-2, Computer-3, Electronics-2, Mechanical-3, Instruction-3, Medical-5, Trader-2, Pistol-0

JAHINEY MAR-TREXCA; HEAD OF THE STEELPORT RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Jahiney is married to a construction worker. She is a full-time mother to four kids but also finds time to represent her neighbors to the government. She tends to be rather forthright about things she doesn't like. For example, the idea of planning lawns when there are no permanent houses in SteelPort strikes her as insane, and she denounces it at

every chance. The fact that the people funding the colony want the grass planted, and have actually paid for it, matters not at all.

T20: JAHINEY MAR-TREXCA

(Professional 5) TL12 Medium Human
 Stamina 20, Lifeblood 13; Init +1; Speed 9m (6 squares);
 Armor Class: 15 (+1 dex, +4 flak), Armor Rating: 4
 Str 13, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 11, Edu 12, Soc 11
 SV Fort +2; Ref +2; Will +5;

ATTACKS:

Weapon	Hit	Damage	Range	Crit	ROF	Rnds
Auto-pistol	+2	1d12	72	x2	1	15
Carbine	+2	1d10	45	x2	1	20
Fist	+2	1d3	-	x2	-	-

Skills: Barter +2, Climb +7, C/Cooking +8, Driving +9, Liaison +8, P/Administration +11, Survival +9, Swim +7, T/Computer +1, Trader +4.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Vessel (grav, wheeled), Weapon Proficiency (marksman), Athletic, Carousing, Connections (Government), Professional Specialty (P/Administration), Skill Focus (P/Administration).

Equipment: flak jacket, auto-pistol (kept in the house under lock and key), carbine (kept in the house under lock and key), personal communicator.

CT: Jahiney Mar-Trexca 999787 Human age 30 3 terms
 Admin-1, Carousing-1, Liaison-1, Steward-1, Survival-1, Wheeled-1, Computer-0, Pistol-0, Rifle-0

ADMINISTRATOR SAUULII ORSHINAKI, IMPERIAL COLONIAL OFFICE; DEPUTY GOVERNOR AND PERSONNEL OFFICER

Sauulii hates Steel. He is a young executive just out of college, and a frontier project seemed like a good prospect for early promotion. Sure enough, he is technically second only to the planetary governor whereas in the corporate jungles of, say, Trin or Mora he would have been many years climbing the ladder to the same salary and less responsibility. When he leaves Steel he will have jumped over many other, less shrewd, executives. But meantime he has to live here, and that does not suit him at all.

Sauulii stays within the port complex as much as possible, and never ventures beyond the town if he can possibly help it. Despite this he is good friends with Ted, and accepted by the colonists as he does a good job on their behalf.

T20: ADMINISTRATOR SAUULII ORSHINAKI

(Professional 3) TL12 Medium Human
 Stamina 12, Lifeblood 12; Init +0; Speed 9m (6 squares);
 Armor Class: 14 (+4 flak), Armor Rating: 4
 Str 12, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 9, Edu 12, Soc 11
 SV Fort +2; Ref +1; Will +5;

ATTACKS:

Weapon	Hit	Damage	Range	Crit	ROF	Rnds
Auto-pistol	+0	1d12	72	x2	1	15
Fist	+0	1d3	-	x2	-	-

Skills: Driving +6, K/Interstellar Law +8, Leader +7, Liaison +7, P/Administration +12, Recruiting +4, Sense Motive +6, T/Computer +7.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Vessel (grav, wheeled), Weapon Proficiency (marksman), Legal Eagle, Professional Specialty (P/Administration), Skill Focus (P/Administration), Trustworthy.

Equipment: flak jacket, auto-pistol, personal communicator.

CT: Administrator Sauulii Orshinaki, Imperial Colonial Office 878987 Human age 22 1 term
 Admin-2, Legal-1, Computer-0, Liaison-0, Wheeled-0

ENEERI WAITSTONE

Eneeri is a young engineering graduate with slightly too much enthusiasm for the explosives she works with. She has operated in the outback on various worlds but is no frontiersman – normally she just ignores the environment and assumes that her guides or employers will keep her safe. So far this attitude has worked well enough, but here on Steel she may be asking for trouble.

T20: ENEERI WAITSTONE

(Professional 5) TL12 Medium Human
 Stamina 15, Lifeblood 11; Init +2; Speed 9m (6 squares);
 Armor Class: 16 (+2 dex, +4 flak), Armor Rating: 4
 Str 9, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 12, Edu 13, Soc 12
 SV Fort +1; Ref +3; Will +4;

ATTACKS:

Weapon	Hit	Damage	Range	Crit	ROF	Rnds
Auto-pistol	+3	1d12	72	x2	1	15
Carbine	+3	1d10	45	x2	1	20
Fist	+3	1d3	-	x2	-	-

Skills: C/Chemical +10, Demolitions +12 (+14 with kit), Driving +10, Liaison +9, K/Chemistry +9, K/Engineering Methods +9, P/Civil Engineer +8, T/Electronics +11, T/Mechanical +11, T/Computer +11.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Vessel (grav, wheeled), Weapon Proficiency (marksman), Carousing, Gearhead, Hobby (Demolitions), Professional Specialty (P/Civil Engineer), Skill Focus (Demolitions).

Equipment: flak jacket, auto-pistol, carbine, personal communicator, masterwork demolitions kit.

CT: Eneeri Waitstone 697998 Human age 26 2 terms
Computer-1, Demolitions-2, Electronics-1, Mechanical-1, Pistol-0, Rifle-0, Wheeled-0

OLAV GUNGNIRSSON

At 23, Olav is very young to be a leader among the Sword Worlders. He has earned the right in the most dramatic fashion possible however, but a combination of good, imaginative leadership and reckless courage. His followers know that he will risk anything to protect them. He is, however, rather prone to risk-taking and dramatic gestures, and will stake all on a throw of the dice where a more cautious approach is just as likely to succeed.

Like his immediate followers, Olav was raised in an environment where skill at arms is valued and so has been trained in the use of many weapons. He is also (like most men from the Sword Worlds) over-protective of women and somewhat patronizing towards them.

T20: OLAV GUNGNIRSSON

(Army 4) TL12 Medium Human

Stamina 24, Lifeblood 14; Init +3; Speed 6m (4 squares);

Armor Class: 19 (+3 dex, +6 cloth), Armor Rating: 6

Str 13, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 14, Edu 10, Soc 10

SV Fort +3; Ref +5; Will +1;

ATTACKS:

Weapon	Hit	Damage	Range	Crit	ROF	Rnds
Rifle	+6	1d12	72	x2	1	10
Auto-pistol	+6	1d10	30	x2	1	15
Fist	+7	1d4+2	-	x2	-	-

Skills: Combat Engineering +8, Driving +10, Leader +13, Recruiting +7, T/Communications +3, T/Electronics +3, T/Mechanical +4, T/Sensors +4.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light, medium, vac suit), Brawling, Command Presence, Natural Born Leader, Vessel (wheeled), Weapon Proficiency (combat rifleman, marksman).

Equipment: cloth armor, rifle, auto-pistol, personal communicator.

CT: Olav Gungnirsson 9B9877 Human age 23 1.25 terms
Brawling-1, Leader-1, Recruiting-1, Rifle-1, Wheeled-1, Combat Engineering-0, Communication-0, Electronics-0, Mechanical-0, Sensor Ops-0

GENERAL CHARACTERS

EXPLORERS, SURVEYORS AND PROSPECTORS

Most of the inhabitants of Steel are frontiersmen (frontierspersons just sounds too clunky!) with good survival skills and a rough-and-ready knowledge of their field. A few are university-educated experts, but most have learned their trade in the field. No frontiersman worth his salt will go outside a building without a blade of some kind – there are too many situations where not having one means serious injury or death. Similarly, most have a sidearm, shotgun or carbine available in case of animal attack, claim-jumpers or whatever hazards may crop up.

EXPERIENCED FRONTIERSMAN

Parveena Orwell and Jim Ravellian (when he is not incapacitated) are typical Experienced Frontiersmen. These stats can be used for the leaders of most groups working in the outback.

T20: EXPERIENCED FRONTIERSMAN

(Professional 6) TL12 Medium Human

Stamina 27, Lifeblood 13; Init +1; Speed 9m (6 squares);

Armor Class: 15 (+1 dex, +4 flak jacket), Armor Rating: 4

Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 10, Edu 10, Soc 8

SV Fort +3; Ref +3; Will +4;

ATTACKS:

Weapon	Hit	Damage	Range	Crit	ROF	Rnds
Auto-pistol	+2	1d12	72	x2	1	15
Carbine	+2	1d10	45	x2	1	20
Shotgun	+2	3d6/2d6/ 1d6	3	x2	1	10
Fist	+2	1d3	-	x2	-	-

Skills: Appraising +9, Driving +10, (C/appropriate or P/appropriate*) +8, K/Hobby +9, Survival +8, T/Electronics +9, T/Mechanical +9, Trader +9.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Dodge, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Professional Specialty (C/appropriate or P/appropriate*), Toughness, Weapon (marksman), Vessel (wheeled).

Equipment: flak jacket, auto-pistol or carbine or shotgun, personal communicator.

CT: Experienced Frontiersman 798775 Human age 34 4 terms

Electronics-1, Mechanical-1, Survival-1, Wheeled-2, (appropriate)*-2, Rifle-0, Shotgun-0

Note: (*) denotes some skill appropriate to the frontiersman's profession.

INEXPERIENCED FRONTIERSMAN

Khoureng and Catharine Weller from Parveena's group are typical Inexperienced Frontiersmen. These stats can be used for most characters encountered in the outback.

T20: INEXPERIENCED FRONTIERSMAN

(Professional 3) TL12 Medium Human
Stamina 9, Lifeblood 12; Init +1; Speed 9m (6 squares);
Armor Class: 15 (+1 dex, +4 flak jacket), Armor Rating: 4
Str 10, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 10, Edu 10, Soc 8
SV Fort +2; Ref +2; Will +2;

ATTACKS:

Weapon	Hit	Damage	Range	Crit	ROF	Rnds
Auto-pistol	+1	1d12	72	x2	1	15
Carbine	+1	1d10	30	x2	1	20
Shotgun	+1	3 d 6 / 2 d 6 / 1d6	3	x2	1	10
Fist	+1	1d3	-	x2	-	-

Skills: Appraising +6, Driving +7, (C/appropriate or P/appropriate*) +5, K/Hobby +6, Survival +5, T/Electronics +6, T/Mechanical +6, Trader +6.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Professional Specialty (C/appropriate or P/appropriate*), Vessel (wheeled), Weapon Proficiency (marksman).

Equipment: flak jacket, auto-pistol or carbine or shotgun, personal communicator.

CT: Inexperienced Frontiersman 788775 Human age 26 2 terms

Electronics-1, Mechanical-1, Survival-1, Wheeled-1, (appropriate)*-1, Pistol-0 or Rifle-0 or Shotgun-0

Note: (*) denotes some skill appropriate to the frontiersman's profession.

TOWNSFOLK AND RANCHERS

Less self-reliant and skilled at survival in the field, but still belonging to a tough breed capable of coping far from the comforts of civilization, the townsfolk and ranchers of Steel are less likely to be habitually armed, but every stead has a gun or two for emergencies. Skill with weapons tends not to be so important, but even the 'softest' townsfolk will know which end of a carbine is dangerous.

T20: TOWNSMAN

(Professional 3) TL10 Medium Human
Stamina 9, Lifeblood 10; Init +0; Speed 9m (6 squares);
Armor Class: 10, Armor Rating: 0
Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10, Edu 10, Soc 10
SV Fort +1; Ref +1; Will +3;

ATTACKS:

Weapon	Hit	Damage	Range	Crit	ROF	Rnds
Auto-pistol	-4	1d12	72	x2	1	15
Carbine	-4	1d10	45	x2	1	20
Shotgun	-4	3d6/2d6/1d6	3	x2	1	10
Fist	+0	1d3	-	x2	-	-

Skills: Appraising +6, Driving +6, (C/appropriate or P/appropriate*) +9, K/Hobby +6, Survival +6, T/Electronics +6, T/Mechanical +6, Trader +6.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Athletic, Barter, Endurance, Professional Specialty (C/appropriate or P/appropriate*), Skill Focus (C/appropriate or P/appropriate*), Vessel (wheeled).
Equipment: auto-pistol or carbine or shotgun, personal communicator.

CT: Townsman 777777 Human age 26 2 terms
Survival-1, Wheeled-1, (appropriate)*-2, Electronics-0, Mechanical-0, Rifle-0 or Shotgun-0 or Pistol-0.

Note: (*) denotes some skill appropriate to the townsman's profession.

BILL REYMAND AND HIS ENGINEERS

Bill and the engineering team are used to working in the outback or frontiers of many worlds. They are cautious and experienced, and able to deal with most of the things that crop up while building structures far from civilization. They are not qualified to deal with planetary raiders though...

T20: EXPERIENCED ENGINEER

(Professional 3) TL12 Medium Human
Stamina 9, Lifeblood 10; Init +0; Speed 9m (6 squares);
Armor Class: 10, Armor Rating: 0
Str 10, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 10, Edu 12, Soc 10
SV Fort +1; Ref +1; Will +3;

ATTACKS:

Weapon	Hit	Damage	Range	Crit	ROF	Rnds
Auto-pistol	+0	1d12	72	x2	1	15
Carbine	+0	1d10	45	x2	1	20
Shotgun	+0	3d6/2d6/ 1d6	3	x2	1	10
Fist	+0	1d3	-	x2	-	-

Skills: Driving +6, K/Hobby +7, P/Civil Engineer +10, Survival +6, T/Electronics +7, T/Mechanical +7, Trader +6.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Athletic, Barter, Endurance, Professional Specialty (P/Civil Engineer), Skill Focus (P/Civil Engineer), Vessel (wheeled), Weapon (marksman).

Equipment: auto-pistol or carbine or shotgun, personal communicator.

CT: Experienced Engineer 777787 Human age 26 2 terms Electronics-1, Mechanical-1, Survival-1, Wheeled-1, Pistol-0, Rifle-0, Shotgun-0, Trader-0

SWORD WORLDER SETTLERS

The average Sword Worlder settler is about equivalent to an Inexperienced Frontiersman. These are not hardy pioneers in many cases, but people who have left their homes on civilized worlds and are learning to live in the wilderness the hard way. Like the Imperials on Steel they have weapons (mainly hunting rifles and shotguns) available but no real combat experience.

T20: SWORD WORLDER SETTLER

(Professional 3) TL12 Medium Human

Stamina 12, Lifeblood 12; Init +1; Speed 9m (6 squares); Armor Class: 15 (+1 dex, +4 flak jacket), Armor Rating: 4 Str 10, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 10, Edu 10, Soc 8

SV Fort +2; Ref +2; Will +2;

ATTACKS:

Weapon	Hit	Damage	Range	Crit	ROF	Rnds
Auto-pistol	+1	1d12	72	x2	1	15
Carbine	+1	1d10	45	x2	1	20
Shotgun	+1	3d6/2d6/ 1d6	3	x2	1	10
Fist	+1	1d3	-	x2	-	-

Skills: Appraising +6, Driving +7, (C/appropriate or P/appropriate*) +5, K/Hobby +6, Survival +5, T/Electronics +6, T/Mechanical +6, Trader +6.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Point Blank Shot, Professional Specialty (C/appropriate or P/appropriate*), Trapping, Vessel (wheeled), Weapon Proficiency (marksman).

Equipment: flak jacket, auto-pistol or carbine or shotgun,

personal communicator.

CT: Sword Worlder Settler 788775 Human age 26 2 terms Electronics-1, Mechanical-1, Survival-1, Wheeled-1, (appropriate)*-1, Pistol-0 or Rifle-0 or Shotgun-0

Note: (*) denotes some skill appropriate to the Sword Worlder settler's profession.

OLAV'S WARBAND

Olav has created a 'warband' of the toughest and most skilled fighters among his people and armed them with the best weapons he can get; assault rifles, SMGs and the odd ACR for the most part. Olav's band has a few vehicles available and acts as a response force to deal with serious threats. This means rescuing people from rockfalls or diving into the half-frozen lake to save fishermen more often than shooting at something, but shared danger has created a bond among the men (there are no women in the warband).

The warband are the heroes of their community. They have put their lives on the line again and again for their people and they deserve the respect they are given. Each one is known by name to all the settlers, and it is not uncommon to hear 'it's all right now, Arnulf is here' or 'Here's Tomas and Karl, we're saved!' as one or two of them reach a group of people in trouble. The increasing faith of the settlers in the superhuman abilities of their protectors drives them to ever-greater efforts and has resulted in a few too many heroic deaths attempting the impossible instead of making a plan or waiting for help.

T20: OLAV'S WARBAND

(Mercenary 6) TL10 Medium Human

Stamina 33, Lifeblood 11; Init +5; Speed 9m (6 squares); Armor Class: 17 (+1 dex, +6 cloth), Armor Rating: 6 Str 12, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 8, Edu 10, Soc 10

SV Fort +5; Ref +5; Will +1;

ATTACKS:

Weapon	Hit	Damage	Range	Crit	ROF	Rnds
Assault rifle	+7/+2	1d12+1	45	x2	1/4	30
SMG	+7/+2	1d10	45	x2	1	20
ACR	+7/+2	1d12+2	72	x2	1/4	15
Fist	+8/+3	1d4+2	-	x2	-	-

Skills: Driving +10, Hide +6, Move Silently +5, Spot +4, T/ appropriate* +4.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light, medium, vac suit), Evasion, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Point Blank Shot, Toughness, Vessel (wheeled), Weapon Proficiency (combat rifleman, marksman).

Equipment: cloth armor, assault rifle or SMG or ACR, personal communicator.

CT: Olav's Warband 897777 Human age 30 3 terms
Combat Rifleman-2, Wheeled-2, (appropriate)*-1, Vacc-0

Note: (*) denotes some technical skill appropriate to the person's role in the warband, such Communications, Electronics and so forth.

Raiders

The raiders are not a military force as such but have gained a lot of combat experience in sacking numerous planetary installations or starships. They are armed with assault rifles, ACRs and similar weapons, much like the Sword Worlders, but they also have military-style Cloth armor and helmets. A couple have Combat Armor. Support gunners are armed with either light machineguns or 20mm Light Assault Guns.

RAIDER TROOPER

T20: RAIDER TROOPER

(Marine 3/Mercenary 3) TL14 Medium Human
Stamina 30, Lifeblood 10; Init +5; Speed 6m (3 squares);
Armor Class: 17 (+1 dex, +6 cloth armor), Armor Rating: 6
Str 12, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 8, Edu 10, Soc 10
SV Fort +6; Ref +5; Will +2;

ATTACKS:

Weapon	Hit	Damage	Range	Crit	ROF	Rnds
Assault rifle	+7/+2	1d12+1	45	x2	1/4	30
SMG	+7/+2	1d10	45	x2	1	20
ACR	+7/+2	1d12+2	72	x2	1/4	15
Cutlass	+8/+3	1d8+1	-	18/x2	-	-
Fist	+8/+3	1d4+2	-	x2	-	-

Skills: Demolitions +7, Forward Observer +6, Hide +4, Move Silently +4, Pilot +10

Feats: Armor (light, medium, vac suit), Brawling, Dodge, Evasion, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Sneak Attack, Vehicle (grav), Weapon Focus (cutlass), Weapon Proficiency (combat rifleman, marksman, swordsman).

Equipment: cloth armor, assault rifle or SMG or ACR, cutlass, personal communicator.

CT: Raider Trooper 897777 Human age 30 3 terms
Brawling-2, Blade-1, Combat Rifleman-2, Forward Observer-1, Wheeled-1, Vacc-0

RAIDER SUPPORT GUNNER

T20: RADIER SUPPORT GUNNER

(Marine 3/Mercenary 3) TL14 Medium Human
Stamina 36, Lifeblood 12; Init +5; Speed 6m (3 squares);
Armor Class: 17 (+1 dex, +6 cloth armor), Armor Rating: 6
Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 8, Edu 10, Soc 10
SV Fort +7; Ref +5; Will +2;

ATTACKS:

Weapon	Hit	Damage	Range	Crit	ROF	Rnds
LAG	+7/+2	2d10	96	x2	1	40
ACR	+7/+2	1d12+2	72	x2	1/4	15
Cutlass	+8/+3	1d8+1	-	18/x2	-	-
Fist	+8/+3	1d4+2	-	x2	-	-

Skills: Demolitions +7, Gunnery +5, Hide +4, Move Silently +4, Pilot +10.

Feats: Armor (light, medium, vac suit), Brawling, Evasion, Heavy Metal, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Vehicle (grav), Weapon Focus (cutlass), Weapon Proficiency (combat rifleman, heavy weapons, marksman, swordsman).

Equipment: cloth armor, LAG, ACR, cutlass, personal communicator.

CT: Radier Support Gunner 798777 Human age 30 3 terms
Brawling-2, Blade-1, Combat Rifleman-2, Gunnery-1, Wheeled-1, Vacc-0

RAIDER LEADER IN COMBAT ARMOR

T20: RAIDER LEADER IN COMBAT ARMOR

(Marine 6/Mercenary 3) TL14 Medium Human
Stamina 66, Lifeblood 15; Init +7; Speed 6m (3 squares);
Armor Class: 21 (+3 dex, +8 combat armor), Armor Rating: 8
Str 13, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 10, Edu 11, Soc 12
SV Fort +12; Ref +8; Will +3;

ATTACKS:

Weapon	Hit	Damage	Range	Crit	ROF	Rnds
ACR	+12/+7	1d12+2	72	x2	1/4	15
Cutlass	+13/+8	1d8+1	-	18/x2	-	-
Fist	+13/+8	1d4+2	-	x2	-	-

Skills: Demolitions +9, Hide +5, Leader +12, Move Silently +4, Pilot +12.

Feats: Armor (light, medium, vac suit), Brawling, Dodge, Evasion, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Second Wind, Toughness, Vehicle (grav), Weapon Focus (cutlass), Weapon Proficiency (combat rifleman, marksman, swordsman).

Equipment: combat armor-14, ACR, cutlass, personal communicator.

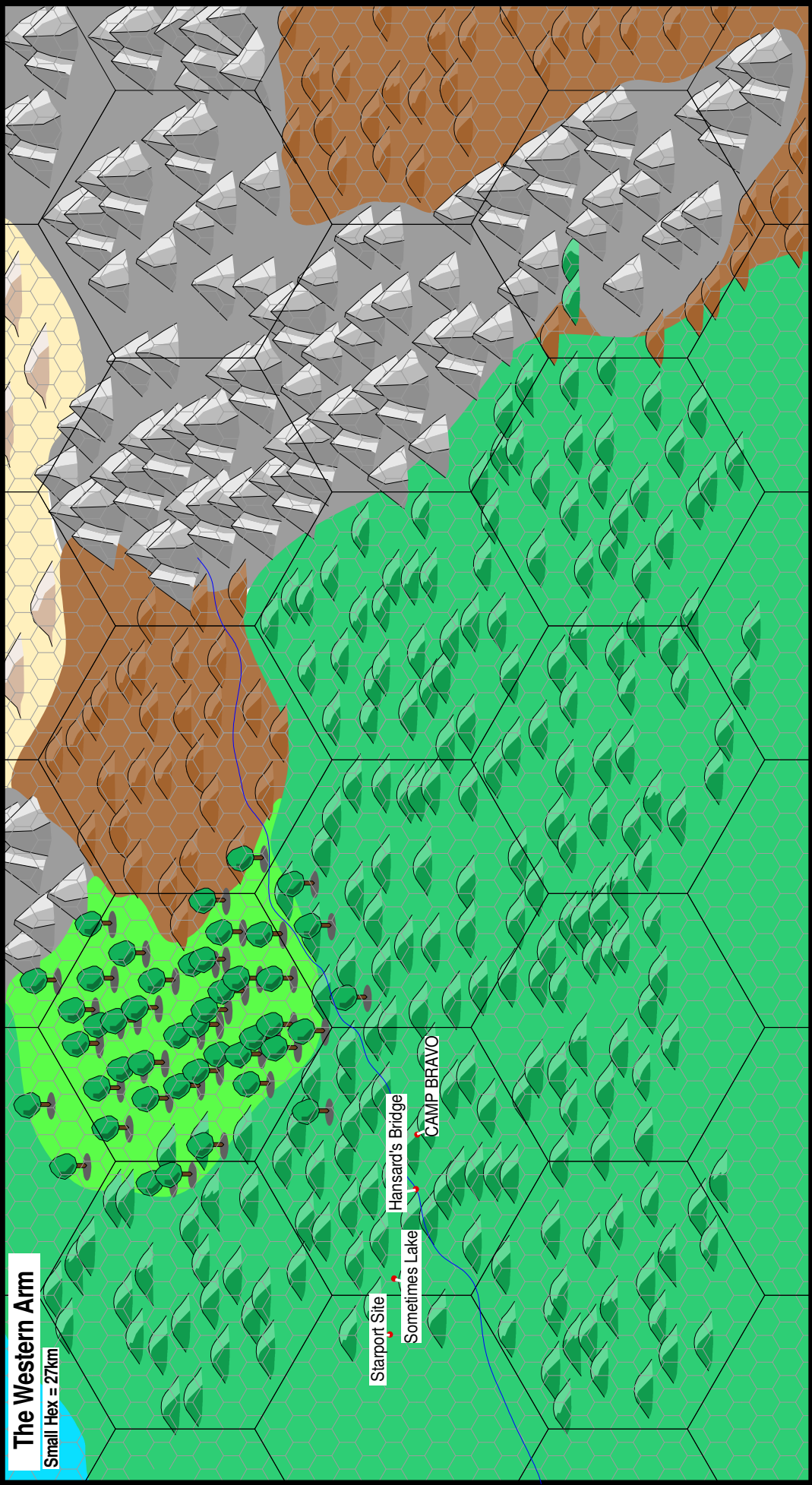
CT: Raider Leader In Combat Armor 9B9778 Human age 38 5 terms

Blade-2, Brawling-2, Combat Rifleman-2, Demolitions-1, Grav-2, Leader-2

FINAL NOTES

Range War advances the storyline of the Steel Project a little. The first stage of the project is almost complete; colonists will begin to arrive very soon and Steel will gradually cease to be a wilderness. There is a lot to do in taming this world, however, and the road ahead may not be easy. There is plenty for a resourceful adventurer group to do in the meantime; surveys, rescues, follow-up investigations of interesting sites passed by during the adventure.

Future adventures will expand upon the situation on Steel as the first colonists begin to arrive and mysteries are unraveled. For now, as always, 'the Referee should determine the flow of subsequent events'.



The Western Arm

Small Hex = 27km

Starpout Site

Sometimes Lake

Hansard's Bridge

CAMP BRAVO

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