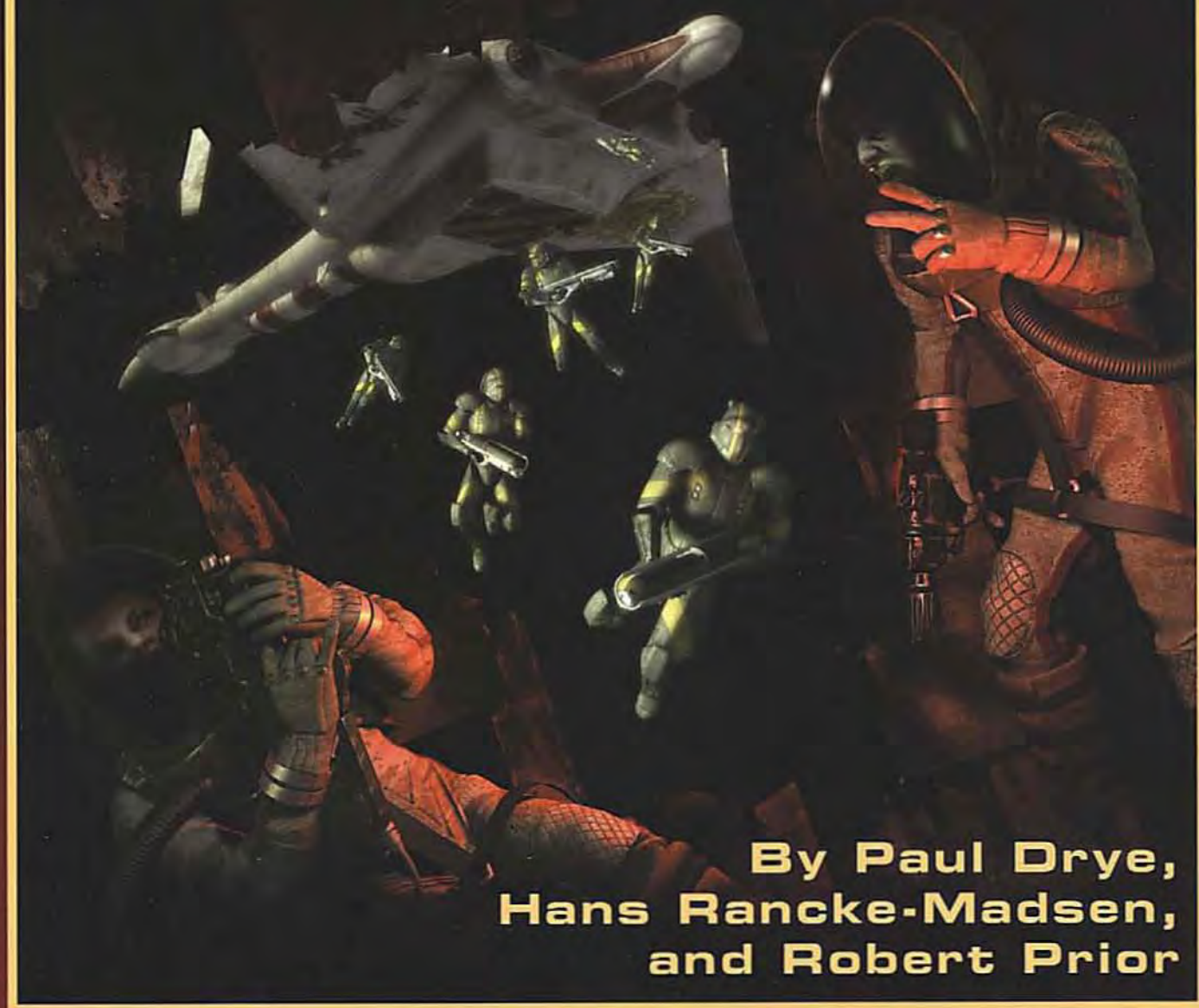


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# SWORD WORLDS™



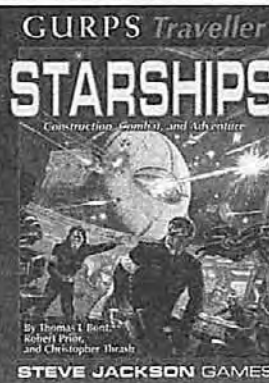
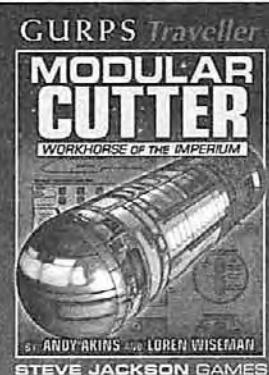
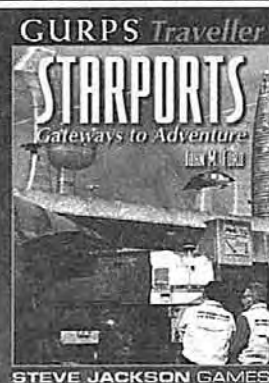
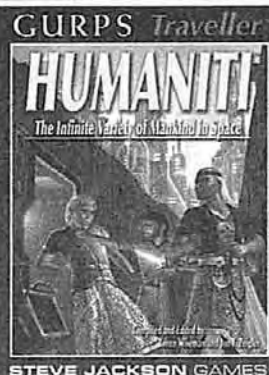
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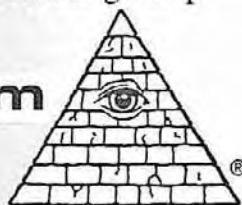
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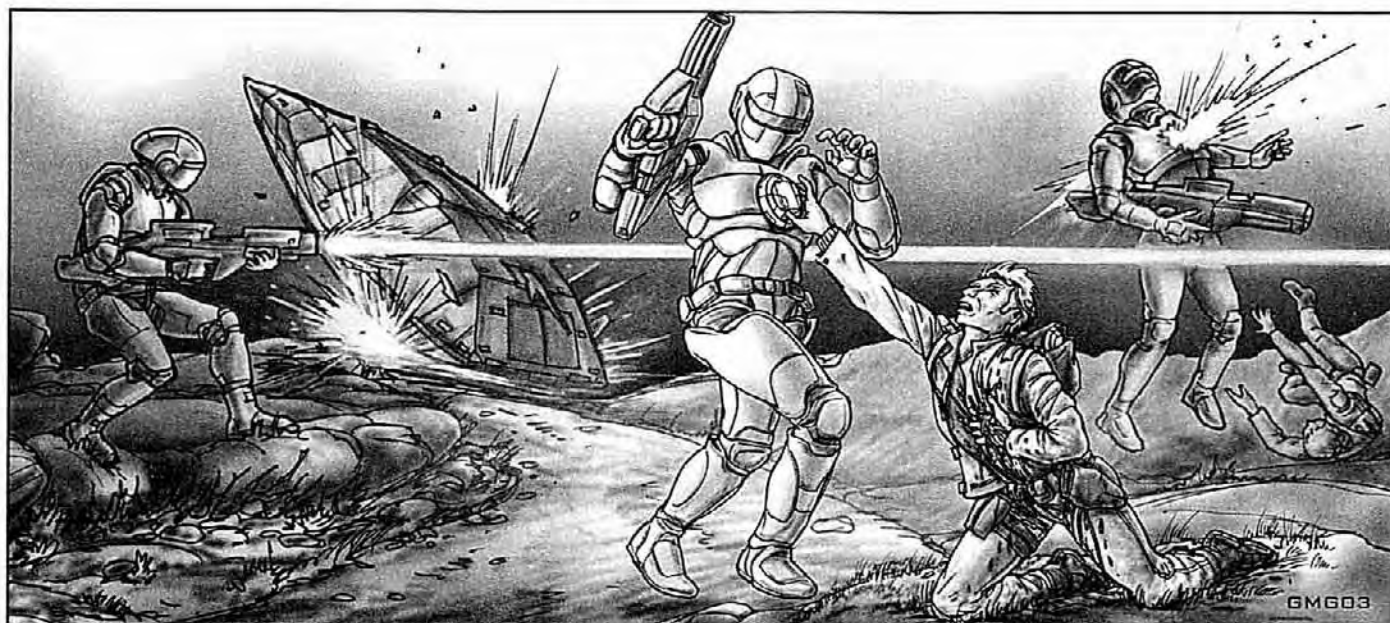
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## SWORD WORLDS<sup>™</sup>



By PAUL DRYE, HANS RANCKE-MADSEN,  
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*Based on the award-winning Traveller  
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# Introduction

*I had to walk from the mustering-out point at Arneffell . . . Three days for 50 miles, after taking less time than that to come in from the 100-diameter limit on the transport ship. It was nearing sunset on the third day when I finally turned onto the beaten path that led to my estate. The long lines of stately poplars on either side were gone, some cut down, some burned, and some blasted to flinders. The house looked almost as bad: the west wing had been reduced to ashes, and the Great Hall looked like it had been used for mortar practice.*

*But Ilja was in what was left of the east wing, and had fixed up two intact rooms as a small apartment. She'd even juryrigged a set of pipes to draw some running water from the stream. We spent that night in celebration of being together again after all we'd been through.*

*The next morning I retrieved the few remaining hand tools from the shed in our former gardens and set to work. Some of the fallen trees I'd passed looked like they'd make good support beams for a new Great Hall.*

A decade ago, the Sword Worlders were decisively defeated in the Fifth Frontier War. Besieged on two fronts by more-advanced navies and armies, their worlds have taken a beating from which they still haven't recovered. Half their planets have been sheared away entirely, annexed to the Imperium or added to a newly formed "Border Worlds" buffer state. The Sword Worlders are famously stoic and conservative, but this has been too much even for them.

Since the end of the war the Confederation has been in an uproar. Thousands of plans have been put forward to reconstruct, move on, and prevent anything like that from ever happening again. Some of the plans are good, some are not, and many are the products of crackpots – the difficulty is in telling them apart. For now, the Confederation is in the control of those who want to maintain the peace, while maneuvering toward the eventual return of the Border Worlds. Reconquest has never been explicitly ruled out, but this is more a way to pacify other factions than a realistic policy.

Meanwhile, the Imperium is working hard to make the Border Worlds a shining example of what happens when a state cooperates with them instead of opposing them. There are plenty of Imperial client states, but few have the importance of this one. Peace in an entire sector may depend on this strategy working.

The rulers of the Border Worlds, on the other hand, have different ideas. Though they rely on the Imperium to maintain their independence from the Sword Worlds Confederation, they envision a very different future for themselves. If all goes well, they will navigate a route between their dangerous neighbors, and become a power unto themselves. They plan to absorb the Sword Worlds and not the other way around.

The fighting may be over, but the Fifth Frontier War still continues.





## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

When Paul Drye was 12 years old, his parents took him on a long plane trip. To give him something to do in-flight, they took him to a "game store" beforehand and let him buy any one item off the shelf. In the dusty corner labeled "roleplaying," he reached up and pulled down . . . *Champions, the Superhero Roleplaying Game*. Fortunately his brother had cut the same deal with his parents and he picked *Traveller*. This is all your fault, Stephen.

Robert Prior has played *Traveller* since it was first published. He has written for the Canadian Space Agency, Digest Group Publications, Heliograph, and Steve Jackson Games, including more *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society* articles than any other mortal. When not dreaming about the future he nurtures it, one mind at a time.

Hans Rancke-Madsen was born in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1956. On Christmas Eve in 1976 he got a small white box with the intriguing words *Dungeons & Dragons* on it. He visited England the next summer and for many summers thereafter, making friends among the roleplayers there. One day one of them gave him a small black box with the word *Traveller* on it . . . He regrets not having contributed to *JTAS* back then and is busy trying to make up for it today.



## ABOUT THE LINE EDITORS

Loren Wiseman was one of the founding partners of GDW, Inc., original publishers of *Traveller*, and spent more than 20 years there as a game designer, developer, typesetter, and editor. After GDW closed, Loren freelanced for a time, and then came to SJ Games, where he is a Senior Editor and *Traveller* expert-in-residence.

Jon F. Zeigler has been a science fiction fan since the cradle (literally). He and his wife and two children live in Maryland, where he works as a computer security consultant. He has written several past books for *GURPS* and *GURPS Traveller*, and currently serves as the *GURPS Traveller* Line Editor for Steve Jackson Games.

## JOURNAL OF THE TRAVELLERS' AID SOCIETY

The long-running *Traveller* magazine is now online at [jtas.sjgames.com](http://jtas.sjgames.com). It supports all versions of *Traveller* with news, articles, discussion areas, and reviews. Subscriptions are \$20 per two years, for 52 biweekly updates and full access to archives.

The *Traveller News Service* is updated weekly, chronicling the life and times of the Imperium, and is viewable free at [www.sjgames.com/gurps/traveller/news.html](http://www.sjgames.com/gurps/traveller/news.html). The SJ Games *Traveller* links page ([www.sjgames.com/gurps/traveller/links.html](http://www.sjgames.com/gurps/traveller/links.html)) links to the *Traveller* Web Ring, which includes most of the major *Traveller*-oriented websites. For information on subscribing to the *Traveller* mailing list, go to [tml.travellercentral.com](http://tml.travellercentral.com).

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*Pyramid* ([www.sjgames.com/pyramid/](http://www.sjgames.com/pyramid/)). Our online magazine includes new *GURPS* rules and articles. It also covers *Dungeons and Dragons*, *Traveller*, *World of Darkness*, *Call of Cthulhu*, and many more top games – and other Steve Jackson Games releases like *In Nomine*, *Illuminati*, *Car Wars*, *Toon*, *Ogre Miniatures*, and more. *Pyramid* subscribers also have access to playtest files online!

*New supplements and adventures.* *GURPS* continues to grow, and we'll be happy to let you know what's new. For a current catalog, send us a legal-sized or 9"x12" SASE – please use two stamps! – or just visit [www.warehouse23.com](http://www.warehouse23.com).

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*GURPSnet.* This e-mail list hosts much of the online discussion of *GURPS*. To join, point your web browser to [www.sjgames.com/mailman/listinfo/gurpsnet-1/](http://www.sjgames.com/mailman/listinfo/gurpsnet-1/).

The *GURPS Traveller: Sword Worlds* web page is at [www.sjgames.com/gurps/traveller/swordworlds/](http://www.sjgames.com/gurps/traveller/swordworlds/).

## Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the *GURPS Basic Set* – e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*. Page references that begin with CI indicate *GURPS Compendium I*. Other references are GT for *GURPS Traveller*, S for *GURPS Space*, T:FI for *GURPS Traveller: First In*, T:FT for *GURPS Traveller: Far Trader*, T:GF for *GURPS Traveller: Ground Forces*, T:H for *GURPS Traveller: Humanity*, T:RF for *GURPS Traveller: Rim of Fire*, T:S for *GURPS Traveller: Starships*, and T:SM for *GURPS Traveller: Star Mercs*. The abbreviation for this book is T:SW. For a full list of abbreviations, see p. CI181 or the updated web list at [www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html](http://www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html).

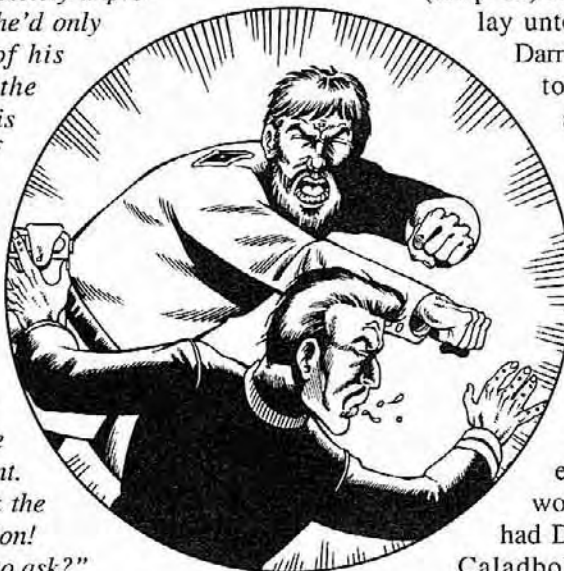
## CHAPTER ONE

# History

*"I assure you, Doctor, it was completely unprovoked. All I did was point out that if he'd only bother to read up on the history of his benighted people he'd realize that the present-day Sword Worlds' society is very far from being a faithful copy of the society their Firstcomers developed and that any justification for their Neolithic attitude toward women that may have existed back then is nonexistent nowadays. And the barbarian struck me! With his fist! Can you believe it? Though in retrospect it is no more than I should have expected. This world is no place for a man of sensitivity and refinement. First thing tomorrow I'm going to ask the ambassador for a transfer back to Lunion!"*

*"What do you mean, I won't have to ask?"*

*— Former Third Secretary Leslie van der Bloeme of the Imperial Diplomatic Corps*



(see p. 52) all evidence indicates that the region lay untouched until around -1370. The Darrians from the neighboring subsector then began exploring space around them out to a radius of 20 parsecs (see pp. T:H 30-49). This region of space included all the worlds that are now Sword Worlds.

The Darrians did not establish any permanent settlements outside their own stellar cluster, but from -1270 to -924 they did set up scientific research outposts and resource-extraction operations on various worlds. Sword Worlds which once had Darrian outposts include Anduril, Caladbolg, Colada, Excalibur, Gram, Gungnir, Hofud, Joyeuse, Sting, and Tizon. In

Apart from visits by the Ancients and Darrians, the history of the Sword Worlds subsector is the history of its people. The subsector was empty when the first Sword Worlders arrived, and they colonized nearly every habitable world in it. A few of the subsector's worlds have since joined the Imperium, but the rest have always been Sword Worlds.

## THE ANCIENTS

No evidence has been found of indigenous sophonts on any Sword World prior to the Ancient era. There is, however, considerable evidence of large-scale Ancient activity. The region has a high proportion of terrestrial worlds, with the exact number depending on how one defines "terrestrial." Somewhere between 15 and 20 worlds in the subsector could conceivably be inhabited by low-technology Humans. Further, the majority of these show no signs of life in geological strata predating the Ancient period. The Ancients evidently engaged in terraforming on the grandest scale, leaving behind a disproportionate number of worlds useable by Humans.

## THE DARRIANS

Despite the great amount of work the Ancients did in the area, they did not leave any sophonts on any of the worlds. Except for one recent discovery on Excalibur's third moon

### WHAT WAS THE POINT?

As with almost everything else the Ancients did, there is heated controversy regarding their activity in the Sword Worlds. It is unclear why the Ancients chose to terraform so many worlds so close together, then transfer no Humans or other sophonts to them. Some scholars believe that the Sword Worlds were terraformed as holding pens for Humans taken from Terra. This theory claims that these early Human groups were then distributed to the worlds where minor Human races are found.

Detractors of this theory maintain that moving groups of Humans from Terra to the Spinward Marches and back again as far as Spica would be a hopelessly roundabout way to go about it, even for the Ancients. They also point out that no archaeological evidence of prehistoric Humans has ever been discovered on any of the subsector's planets. Proponents explain this away by assuming that the "native Sword Worlder" groups were pretechnological and very small in population.

Another theory is that the Sword Worlds cluster is simply the "laboratory" where the Ancients tested their terraforming techniques. They cite Excalibur, Gunn, and Tyrning as proof that the techniques were not perfected at the time they were terraformed. Others argue that many worlds terraformed by the Ancients elsewhere in Charted Space are just as imperfect.



some cases, traces of more than one ancient Darrian facility have been found in the same system.

When Daryen's sun flared in -924, it devastated the Darrian civilization and most records of the outposts' locations were lost (see p. T:H35). In the ensuing chaos a few outposts were evacuated, but most were left to fend for themselves. None survived, although a pharmaceutical gathering station on Gungnir hung on for nearly 100 years before the last children of the original personnel died out. By -800 the Sword Worlds were once more empty of intelligent life.

## EXILES FROM TERRA

In the late fifth century pre-Imperial, the Old Earth Union was embroiled in a war on two fronts. The Union had engaged in a foreign venture in the Near Boötes Cluster (see p. T:RF53) and a civil war had just started between its Loyalist and Reformer factions. In -420 the Loyalist *Sword*-class troop transport *Gram* left Terra carrying 40,000 troops, part of an invasion force. The troops were an odd mixture of units: the 8th Scandinavian Army Corps, a colonial regiment from Agidda, and various specialist units, including a mobile field surgery, an engineer regiment, and three German *Jäger* battalions. The expedition's target was Chernozem (Solomani Rim 1836).

Loyalist capital ships pounded the planet's defenses into the ground. The troop transports were moving in to unload when a Reformer relief fleet jumped in and caught the invaders deep in the gravity well. Hopelessly outnumbered, the invaders tried to escape by jumping from within the jump limit, but most of them misjumped and were scattered or destroyed. Only the *Gram* and six destroyers and escorts jumped true. On the way back to Terra they met a courier ship and learned that the Loyalists had lost the civil war; everyone in the Chernozem Expeditionary Force had been branded as war criminals. Eluding the pursuing squadrons, they fled to spinward, as that appeared to be where enemy patrols were weakest. On the way they picked up several more Loyalist ships, including the light cruiser *Robert the Bruce*.

## THE GRAM COUNCIL

The refugees now faced the problem of what to do next. With their government gone, the chain of command was shaky, and a rift between the army and navy contingents threatened the group. After some discussion the senior officers concluded that they were no longer a military expedition but an impromptu colonial venture. A council of navy captains and top army officers, the Gram Council, took charge. The Council resolved to find a suitable planet and settle down there. They also decided to keep the troops in low berths until the new home was reached.

The flotilla roamed the Magyar sector for months looking for a new home. In the end the Council concluded that, limited though interstellar traffic was at the time, eventually the Reformer-led Union would hear about their new colony and hunt them down. Instead, they elected to leave the Rule of Man's region completely.

## MITHRIL

Mithril had prehistoric populations of both Aslan and Darrians. An unknown group of Aslan settled the world some time prior to -905; these Aslan were responsible for the Aslan Chasm (p. 73). The crew and passengers of a misjumped Darrian rescue ship arrived in -905. The Aslan group died out around 25 years later for causes unknown; the Darrians hung on until around -760 before they likewise died out, again for no known reason. See *Crystallice*, p. 72, for why the two settlements failed and how this could be critical for the people on Mithril today.

## THE FAOHEIRLYU CONTRACT

On Wu, the capital of one of the Magyar pocket empires, they made contact with an envoy of the *Faoheirlyu*, a small Aslan clan situated on the trailing edge of Hierate space. The *Faoheirlyu* were vassals of the *Wahtoi*, who in turn were vassals of the *Aroaye'i*. The latter were at that time engaged in a clan war with the rival *Khaotyarl* clan. With the *Wahtoi* busy helping the *Aroaye'i*, and thus unable to support their own vassals, a small independent clan, the *Roihtyo*, had seized the opportunity to encroach upon *Faoheirlyu* holdings. The Gram Council, seeing the situation, hired their escorts out as mercenaries, in exchange for passage out of Human-dominated space.

The *Gram* itself was not involved in the fighting. As the *Faoheirlyu* had little need of extra ground troops and could not afford to feed so many, the soldiers were left in low berth while the escorts fought small skirmishes. In the meantime the Council tried to prepare for the upcoming exodus. The troops were woke in slow rotation and offered the opportunity to stay behind. Fewer than 200 did so. In addition, merchant ships were chartered to return to Terra and secretly contact expedition members' families and invite them along. These recruits were of all ages and occupations, although the Council did show a bias towards healthy young women.

The Council also bought equipment useful for establishing a new colony, as well as an old Aslan colony transport with room for 10,000 in low berths. Fortunately, the escorts captured enough *Roihtyo* ships to pay for all this.

## THE LONG VOYAGE

The escorts succeeded in warding off the *Roihtyo* until the *Aroaye'i* made peace with the *Khaotyarl* and the *Wahtoi* could again aid the *Faoheirlyu*. By helping vassals at a time when the clan itself could not, the Terran exiles had imposed a debt of honor on the *Wahtoi*. As a reward they were offered land in fief to the *Wahtoi*. But the Council had already seen enough of the Aslan way of life to know that it would not suit them. Instead, they asked for free passage to the other side of the Aslan Hierate.

Getting a fleet of barbarians across several hundred clan territories required several years of work to figure out the logistic and diplomatic obstacles. With the help of the *Aroaye'i*, the problem was solved.

## CAMPAIGN SEED: BATTLESTAR GRAM

The journey through the Aslan Hierate is a great subject for an epic campaign. For instance, the players can take the roles of the captain and officers of the *Kestrel*, a 5,000-ton destroyer escort that the Gram Council uses to scout the route ahead. Such a campaign is especially suited to troupe play; players can alternate between *Kestrel* crew, members of its small Marine detachment, and representatives in the Gram Council. This allows for a wide variety of adventures, depending on the characters being played at the moment: starship combat, hostage-rescue missions, diplomatic parleys, trade negotiations, and so on.

In mid -404 the *Gram* and her escorts began their epic journey across the Aslan Hierate. Diplomatic delays often forced them to stay in the same system for months, and on many occasions they had to fight off raids by uncooperative clans. The crossing of the Great Rift alone took almost a year. By late -401, though, they arrived at the coreward edge of the transrift Hierate, which at the time lay on the border between the Riftspan Reaches and Trojan Reach sectors.

## THE FINAL DESTINATION

Fully aware of the Aslan attitude toward real estate, the Gram Council decided not to settle too close to the Hierate. The flotilla made its way well up into the Spinward Marches sector before searching for a new home world. Several likely worlds were found, but none seemed quite ideal; the hunt continued until a decision was forced upon the Council.

In late -400, while jumping to Spinward Marches 1223, the crew and passengers of the *Gram* experienced severe jump sickness, indicating a malfunction in the jump drive. The *Gram* remained in the system while its engineers attempted repairs. In the meantime, the escort ships surveyed the system's main planet and visited the neighboring systems. The main planet proved to be a Terran-prime world with a thriving ecosystem compatible with terrestrial life. The atmosphere was dense but breathable, and although most of its supercontinent's interior was desert, the coastlands and islands provided ample living space.

In the end, they decided that the risk of jumping again was not worth it. On Day 127, Year -399, the Council colonized the world, named Gram after the ship. The sun was named Sigurd and its companion star Sigmund, after the heroes who had wielded the sword Gram in German myth.

## THE EARLY DAYS

The Council found the post-Maghiz Darrians during the initial survey, but decided against any contact with them (see p. T:H36). However, they did realize that it might be a long time before the industry to construct new starships could be built on Gram. Anything might happen in the meantime:

some Darrians might achieve star travel or some other colonial expedition could show up. The Council decided to preempt the worlds between Gram and Kunonik (Cunnonic), the closest world with surviving Darrians, while it still had functioning starships at its disposal. Small colonies were established on Joyeuse, Colada, Tizon, and Hrunting using the escort ships.

The Council then declared that the ships and all the equipment carried community property, and that a strong centralized economy was necessary to develop Gram. Lip service was paid to democracy and civil liberties, but in practice Gram became a tight, repressive oligarchy. Perhaps to justify the hardships or perhaps because they genuinely believed in what they preached, the leaders developed a straightforward ideology. Its basic tenet was the importance of colonizing the surrounding worlds and growing into a strong interstellar power capable of protecting the Sword Worlder way of life against all comers.

## GROWTH AND CHANGE

In -387, the Council decided to limit the use of the escorts to training and one yearly visit to the four colonies. Even so, the ships had to be mothballed one by one as irreplaceable parts wore out. In the meantime the population of Gram grew rapidly due to the skewed demographics of the original settlers, who were mostly between the ages of 20 and 40.

Gram's culture was shaped by its military outlook and the lopsided sex ratio of the settlers. The navy element and some of the specialist army units had a male-to-female ratio of close to 1:1, but these people mostly settled the four secondary worlds. The bulk of the army troops, and hence the majority of settlers on Gram, had a male-to-female ratio of 4:1, though the 2:3 ratio of the 10,000 civilians helped a bit. The Council therefore allowed women to exempt themselves from dangerous jobs; this is the origin of the male-dominated society that has since evolved on the Sword Worlds (see p. 107). However, despite great social pressure to do so, a sizable percentage of the women refused to use the exemption, thereby establishing the easy acceptance of females in "male" jobs that is also a part of Sword Worlder culture. A lot of the gender distinctions that is found in the present-day Sword Worlds did *not* exist in the early days. There were no "male" and "female" jobs, only dangerous jobs that women need not take and safe jobs that anyone might do. Men served as babysitters, nurses, and kindergarten teachers, and women served as judges and administrators.

The common language of the first generation was the Anglic of the Old Earth Union armed forces. But almost 80% of the original settlers spoke *Sagamaal*, a variant of Icelandic (see p. 107). As a result, Anglic disappeared in less than a generation, replaced by a mixture of *Sagamaal*, other Nordic tongues, Germanic, and the Vilani of the Agiddan troops.

## THE WAHTOI PIPELINE

Soon after the first settlement, the cruiser *Robert the Bruce* was sent back through Aslan space in an attempt to contact families left behind, and if possible to bring some of



them back to Gram. The cruiser disappeared on its return journey from Terra and its fate is unknown, but it did reach Terra first. With the help of the Wahtoi a tenuous connection was maintained for almost two centuries, and a few small ships actually made the trip from Terra. The connection was broken sometime around -200, when the Faoheirlyu rebelled against the Wahtoi and the honor-debt obligation ceased to apply.

One of the largest groups of Terran newcomers to come through the Wahtoi "pipeline" arrived in -321, settling on Caladbolg. The expedition knew of the pipeline through a Dane whose grandfather had been one of the Firstcomers, but it was mostly composed of Anglic speakers. Though many Sword Worlders subsequently moved to Caladbolg, the world never fitted comfortably into the Sword Worlder culture.

## POPULATION GROWTH

The pattern of population growth among high-technology societies in the *Traveller* universe does not resemble the one we know from Earth's history.

Instead of having as many children as nature allows and scrambling to find the means to support them, high-technology societies are able to limit the number of children to as many as they feel they can support. Exactly where that number lies is, of course, very much a matter of opinion and ideology. Thus there are worlds where the population has grown as quickly as possible into the billions. But on most worlds population growth has been much slower, and is often limited by the growth of local wealth. For a world with a stagnating economy this can mean a stable or even falling population.

One of the most common patterns in the *Traveller* universe involves more or less rapid growth to a population level somewhere between 50 and 500 million, followed by a deliberate policy of population stability. Such a policy does not always cause a complete stop to population growth, but it can easily lead to growth rates of only a few percent per century.

## GETTING BACK INTO SPACE

By -300 Gram had a population of over 400,000 and the four colonies had about 30,000 among them. Driven by their ideology, the Grams diverted considerable resources into their space program. Within two years, they began refitting the old escorts and embarked on a program of colonizing the remaining worlds in the region. Eight years later they built their first new jump-capable ship, the *Genfoedsel* ("Rebirth"). For most of a generation Gram sent much of its population increase off to settle Durendal, Dyrnwyn, Excalibur, Hofud, Sacnoth, and Tyrfin. Strangely enough, Beater (at that time called Galatine) did not receive any permanent settlers, though a fuel station was constructed in the system and several surveys of the planet were made. It is generally believed that the Gram leadership was reserving the world

for its personal use, but no explanation has ever been found in the records.

## ALIEN CONTACTS

In -292 the Zhodani contacted Gram and began trading with the Sword Worlders. The contact was tenuous and the trade never amounted to much. This was partly because of the distance between Gram and the closest Zhodani world, and partly because the Grams feared that the Zhodani might overwhelm their culture with too much contact.

In -265 an exploration ship from the Darrian world of Mire came to Tizon. At that time Gram had a population of 600,000, the four "First Colonies" had 200,000 among them, and the six "New Colonies" had 400,000, of which the lion's share had gone to Sacnoth. Mire alone outnumbered all of them put together, and as with the Zhodani the Sword Worlders feared that too much contact might overwhelm them. Consequently they did not encourage trade or any other interaction. However, the knowledge that a rival interstellar power was emerging in the neighboring subsector did cause Gram to divert resources from the settlement program to build some military ships.

## SACNOTH TAKES THE LEAD

The period from -265 to -232 was a time of consolidation. Gram's economy was suffering under the government's tight central control and from disruption caused by *Umbaetur*, a political movement demanding greater freedom. No new colonies were created, but emigration from Gram to the most pleasant of the other settled worlds continued apace. This was especially true for Sacnoth, which grew strong while Gram stagnated. In -232, when Sacnoth built its first starship, the total population of the Sword Worlds was 2,400,000, of which Gram had 800,000 and Sacnoth 500,000.

A new wave of colonization took place in the last three decades of the century. Narsil, Anduril, Orcrist, Sting, Biter, and Beater were all settled from Sacnoth in this period. These names were not legendary or mythical; all were taken from the works of a popular prestarflight Terran writer, whose works had been carried on the *Gram* and had by then achieved legendary status on the Sword Worlds.

Three more planets were settled in the period from -200 to -186. Morglay (Gungnir) and Haulteclere (Mjolnir) in the Sword Worlds subsector and Isenfang (Margsi) in the Vilis subsector were all settled from Gram.

## THE SACNOTH DOMINATE

From -232 to -187 Sacnoth's economy grew by leaps and bounds, overtaking Gram and establishing Sacnoth as the region's leading power. This was followed by a two-year conflict, in which Sacnoth defeated Gram and emerged as the head of the Sacnoth Dominate, the first interstellar government of the Sword Worlds.

## CAMPAIGNING IN THE SACNOTH DOMINATE

The most significant factor to consider when campaigning in the Sacnoth Dominate is that populations are small; the total for all Sword Worlds put together is less than 10,000,000, with about half of that concentrated on just two worlds: Gram (2,500,000) and Sacnoth (2,200,000). The other 5,000,000 are spread out across a score of other planets. That makes for navies so small that a GM can keep track of every ship. Also, any PC is going to be able to affect the big picture much more readily than in settings where populations are in the billions.

The other side of the coin is that starships are few and far between. Privately owned starships are very rare; most belong to governments and corporations. If they have a ship at all, PCs should begin the game with it on loan from a patron. If they eventually get a ship of their own, it will make them both famous and powerful.

### *Soldiers and Spies*

The main source of conflict in the Sacnoth Dominate is the cold war between Gram and Sacnoth. An espionage or special-ops campaign, with the heroes being valiant Gram freedom fighters or heroic Sacnoth antiterrorist soldiers, is very fitting. Another option is a naval campaign, with the cold war heating up.

As with all campaigns set in historical periods, fictional or no, there's the possibility that players may know more than their characters. Experienced *Traveller* players may have heard of the Tyrfinning Incident, the clash between Gram and Sacnoth ships in orbit around Tyrfinning that touched off the War of the First Rebellion in -104.

That's not necessarily a problem. Many people in this time believe that a war is imminent and inevitable. This history also leaves the exact date of the Tyrfinning Incident

unstated. And a GM can always start the campaign a few years earlier and spring the Tyrfinning Incident on his players ahead of time.

### *World Tamers*

Other campaign possibilities are scout or pioneer campaigns, or a post-Collapse campaign. The Sacnoth Dominate sponsored a number of new settlements in the latter half of the century. Either start the campaign some decades before -104, and run a normal First Founder campaign, or start the campaign in -104 with a colony getting cut off from support and left to fend for itself. Such colonies are too small to be bothered by the combatants, but they are completely on their own. Suitable colony worlds include Lyusing (Asgard), Tanoose (Garda-Vilis), Dainslaf (Saurus), Igliim (Steel), and Dragvendel (Tenalphi).

### *Artifact Hunters*

The artifacts of the pre-Maghiz Darrians are extremely durable, and some have survived to this day. The Old Darrians had exploration bases all around this region of space. Some of these bases have been found, but others remain hidden. Such a base could yield vast treasure in the form of advanced technology. Most equipment will be exploratory gear rather than military equipment, but much of it could be adapted to serve other needs.

A very dangerous way to get such artifacts is by raiding Darrian worlds. All Sword Worlds have a policy of leaving the Darrians, who outnumber the Sword Worlders by 50 to one, strictly alone. Still, the Sword Worlders are an individualistic lot and some private expeditions have gone ahead anyway.





The Dominate established formal diplomatic relations with the Darrians in -164, but the Sword Worlds remained aloof and there was no significant trade.

From -149 onward survey expeditions were sent to selected worlds in the Tanoose (Vilis), Ginnungagap (Lanth), Sepireld (Lunion), Pilgrim (District 268), and Diadem (Glis-ten) subsectors. Colonies and outposts were established on a number of worlds, including Bowman, Caliburn, Dainslaf (Saurus), Dragvendel (Tenalphi), Eriksen (Tarsus), Hoding (Dawnworld), Igliim (Steel), Lyusing (Asgard), Skofnung (Gunn), and Tanoose (Garda-Vilis).

## THE WAR OF THE FIRST REBELLION

In -104 tensions between Sacnoth and Gram escalated into the War of the First Rebellion. As a result, the Sacnoth Dominate broke up in -102 into the Gram Confederation, the Sacnoth Confederacy, and the Hofud Assembly. At first, the conflict was between the Confederation and the Confederacy, with the Assembly attempting to stay neutral. Eventually, however, all three states' member planets began jockeying for position, forming and dissolving new alliances almost from month to month.



Warfare continued, with occasional cease-fires, until it ground to a halt in -88. The period that followed became known as the Fimbulwinter, named after a three-year-long winter "with no summers in between" described in Norse mythology. All shipbuilding capability in the Sword Worlds had been destroyed, and except for a tenuous contact maintained by a few carefully preserved starships, all interaction among them ceased for many years.

## THE FIVE STATES

By -11, Gram had recovered enough to once again build starships. Other worlds were almost as far along, and over the next decades five interstellar states arose among the Sword Worlds: the Gram Alliance, the Sacnoth Dominion, the Double Monarchy of Narsil and Anduril, the Tizonian League, and the Trailing Assembly (headed by Sting).

By the beginning of the Imperial era, the combined population of the Sword Worlds had reached almost 200 million. Consequently, the Five States had become less concerned with keeping the rest of the universe at arm's length. In 53, the Imperial scout cruiser *Erik the Red* made contact with the Sword Worlds. At first the closest Imperial worlds were too far away for trade to be a major factor, but as Imperial influence in the Deneb sector grew, trade also expanded. Sharurshid established the first regular trade route to Biter in 73.

This trade had substantial benefits for some worlds; a jump-3 luxury-goods route garnered Dyrnwyn enough wealth to take over the leadership of the Trailing Assembly. In the same period, Colada also became the prime mover of the Tizonian League.

## SWORD WORLDS CHRONOLOGY, PART I

-420	Chernozem Expeditionary Force, including the transport <i>Gram</i> , leaves Terra.
-399	Settlement of Gram.
-396	Joyeuse, Colada, Tizon, and Hrunting settled.
-387	Escort ships limited to training and yearly visit to four colonies.
-298	Gram achieves jump industry.
-294 to -265	Tyrfing, Sacnoth, Hofud, Durendal, Dyrnwyn, and Excalibur settled from Gram.
-292	Zhodani traders visit Gram.
-275	Mire (Darrians) rediscovers jump drive.
-271 to -238	Interstellar trade and communication among the Darrian colonies reestablished.
-265	Exploration ship from Mire visits Tizon.
-238	Darrian Community formed.
-232	Sacnoth builds its first starship.
-232 to -200	Narsil, Anduril, Orcrist, Sting, Biter, and Beater settled from Sacnoth.
-200 to -186	Morglay (Gungnir), Haulteclere (Mjolnir), and Isenfang (Margesi) settled from Gram.
-186	First interstellar government among Sword Worlds, the Sacnoth Dominate.
ca. -165	Trade between Zhodani and the Sword Worlds increases.
-164	Formal diplomatic relationship between Dominate and Darrians established.
-149 to -104	Sacnoth Dominate explores selected systems up to 10 parsecs away.
-120	Tanoose (Garda-Vilis) settled from Gram.
-105	Steel settled from Caladbolg.
-104	Tyrfing Incident touches off the War of the First Rebellion.
-104 to -88	War of the First Rebellion.
-102	Sacnoth Dominate breaks up as a result of the War of the First Rebellion. It fractures into the Gram Confederation, the Sacnoth Confederacy, and the Hofud Assembly. These governments rapidly disintegrate, beginning a period of disorganized infighting, with no clear dominant government.
-88	Warfare grinds to a halt with no formal peace settlements.
-80	Complete breakdown of interstellar government among the Sword Worlds.

## CAMPAIGNING IN THE FIVE STATES

Some of the ideas set forth for campaigning in the Sacnoth Dominate (see p. 10) are still applicable to the Five States. The biggest difference is the larger population and the added complication of having *five* major governments. But the main tension is still between Gram and Sacnoth, since the three other states combined are less powerful than either.

There are more civilian ships around in this period, but free traders are still very rare. Individuals with a starship will be known by name to other shipmasters. PCs can also be visitors – explorers, scientists, trade pioneers, etc. – from the Imperium, the Zhodani Consulate, or the Darrian community.

## THE TRIPLE DOMINION

Tensions between Sacnoth and Gram increased until, once again in 98, war broke out. After five years of unrelenting conflict, both sides were exhausted. The three lesser interstellar states, examined the situation and conspired to overthrow the existing order. A secret meeting took place on the island of Elder on Anduril, in which Colada, Dyrnwyn, and the Double Monarchy agreed to divide the Sword Worlds among them.

## CAMPAIGNING IN THE TRIPLE DOMINION

There is little outright warfare in the Triple Dominion, as the three Dominion partners have negotiated away their internal differences. When combined they are much stronger than any of their close neighbors, except for the peaceful Darrians.

### *Mercenaries*

The exceptions to the general peace are the balkanized worlds of Gram and Sacnoth. Scarcely a year goes by without at least one war somewhere on each. This is a fertile setting for mercenary campaigns.

### *Spies*

Colada, Dyrnwyn, and the Double Monarchy do not fight openly, but they are engaged in a secret war of espionage and skullduggery. From competing for trade with the Darrians, the Imperium, and the Zhodani to industrial espionage and outright sabotage, the three powers stop at nothing so long as plausible deniability can be maintained.

### *Merchants and Smugglers*

Trade has grown enough for private merchant ships to become common. Any sort of merchant campaign can be run in the Dominion, but with the added danger of getting involved in the aforementioned secret war.

## GRAM AND SACNOTH BALKANIZED

The conspirators supported, and in some cases created, numerous insurrectionist groups on Gram and Sacnoth and encouraged them to split up control of those two worlds. By 104 the two former superpowers were thoroughly balkanized, and the three remaining powers moved to impose a peace that ensured they would remain so. With the Treaty of Magnusstad, the Triple Dominion was established and the legitimacy of the *de facto* countries on Gram and Sacnoth was confirmed. The splinter states were denied the right to maintain armed space vessels; the Triple Dominion, which assumed the obligation to defend the two worlds against outside aggressors, confiscated Gram and Sacnoth's few remaining military ships.

## THE DIVISION OF THE SPOILS

The Trailing Assembly had been an alliance of the five worlds Dyrnwyn, Durendal, Hofud, Sting, and Biter, with the capital on Sting. By 92 Dyrnwyn had overtaken the other worlds in power and assumed the leadership of the Assembly. Backed by Colada and the Double Monarchy, Dyrnwyn now forced a government "reform" that left it firmly in control of the other Assembly members. Tyrting and Beater, formerly part of the Sacnoth Dominion, likewise came under Dyrnwyn's control. However, two former Assembly protectorates, Igliim (Steel) and Dragvendel (Tenalphi), became independent, mostly because Dyrnwyn didn't consider them worth the trouble to govern.

Colada had been the second most powerful member of the Tizonian League, but toward the end of the previous century Tizon had suffered a massive recession, while Colada had experienced an unprecedented economic boom. Backed by Dyrnwyn and the Double Monarchy, Colada now forced changes in how the League was run. Tizon, Hrunting, and Isenfang (Margesi) continued to enjoy full internal autonomy, but Colada took full charge of foreign relations and defense. In addition, Colada took over Haulteclair (Mjolnir), Joyeuse, and Morglay (Gungnir) as colonies.

In material terms the Double Monarchy gained the least – only two worlds, Orcrist and Excalibur. Its primary gain was relief from the threat posed by Sacnoth.

## A PRECARIOUS BALANCE

The politics of the Triple Dominion were characterized by two main concerns: the struggle for advantage among the three dominant powers, and their determination that neither Gram nor Sacnoth should ever be reunited. Each of the three supported different nations on Gram and Sacnoth and secretly worked to maintain a cold war on both worlds. Beyond that, each of the three allies constantly tried to increase its own power, preferably at the expense of the two others. The specter of Gram and Sacnoth reunified was ever present, however, and made it paramount that the alliance be maintained at all costs.



## SWORD WORLDS CHRONOLOGY, PART II

-11	Gram builds its first new starship since the war. Some interstellar government restored to the Sword Worlds.	142	Imperial Minister Plenipotentiary visits Dyrnwyn, Anduril, and Colada.
-8	Sacnoth builds its first new starship since war.	143	Imperial Minister Plenipotentiary arrives at Mire.
31	Tizonian League formed. Capital at Tizon.	147	Formal relations established between Imperium and Triple Dominion.
39	Trailing Assembly formed. Capital at Sting.	148	Formal relations established between Imperium and Mire.
44	Double Monarchy of Narsil and Anduril established, with capitals on both worlds.	148	Darrian Confederation formally established. Cunnonic refuses to join due to economic ties to Tizon.
53	Imperial scouts contact Sword Worlds.	212	A vicious civil war breaks out on Colada. Dyrnwyn and the Double Monarchy support different sides, rendering the Triple Dominion powerless to intervene.
73	Sharurshid establishes first regular trade route to Sword Worlds.	216	Coladan civil war goes nuclear.
90	Dyrnwyn assumes leadership of the Trailing Assembly.	217	Dyrnwyn and the Double Monarchy fight over dividing Colada's former possessions. Triple Dominion breaks up. Resumption of small, squabbling governments.
92	Colada assumes leadership of the Tizonian League.		
98-104	Gram-Sacnoth War. Gram and Sacnoth exhaust each other in the war. Both planets are balkanized by the other interstellar states.		
104	Triple Dominion of Colada, Anduril, and Dyrnwyn established. Consists of all Sword Worlds settled at the time although Tizon worlds (Tizon, Cunnonic, Hrunting) are semi-autonomous. Peace imposed on Gram and Sacnoth.		

### THE IMPERIUM RETURNS

Until 147, all contact with the Imperium was informal. During the Gram-Sacnoth War the Imperium attempted to mediate in order to protect its trade with the various Sword World and Darrian systems. The haughty Sword Worlders took offense, breaking off both diplomatic relations and trade. As a result, contact with the Darrians was likewise broken.

In 142 an Imperial diplomatic mission visited Dyrnwyn, Anduril, and Colada and negotiated a formal treaty, then continued to the Darrian worlds and did the same there. The

Imperium exchanged ambassadors with Anduril, Colada, and Dyrnwyn in 147. The next year, the Imperium and Darrians did likewise.

### THE END OF THE TRIPLE DOMINION

In 212, a vicious civil war broke out on Colada. Dyrnwyn and the Double Monarchy supported different sides, rendering Dominion forces powerless to intervene. Four years later, the war deteriorated into a nuclear exchange, and devastation reigned. Colada had been one of the most important Sword Worlds, with a population approaching 100 million. Overnight, it was transformed into a fourth-rate power with an estimated population of less than 1,000,000.

Dyrnwyn and the Double Monarchy then had a falling out over the division of Colada's former possessions, and in 217 the subsector again collapsed into squabbling states. Sting seceded from Dyrnwyn and took Biter and Steel along. Freed from the restrictions of the Treaty of Magnusstad, four nations on Gram and six on Sacnoth began building warships.

### THE SQUABBLING STATES

The period from 217 to 604 is known as the Squabbling States Era. For almost 400 years, the Sword Worlds were divided among a variety of states that formed, grew, split up, merged, conquered, and were conquered by other states in a bewildering maelstrom of political activity.

*In my opinion, the first Imperial reports regarding contact with the Sword Worlds region boil down to a single sentence: "These people will be trouble."*

*— Sir Blenheim  
hault-M'bo,  
first Imperial  
Ambassador to Anduril*

## THE TIZON EMPIRE

After the Coladan nuclear war, the Coladan Navy was stranded without an industrial base to support it. Grand Admiral Svein Danjalsson hit on a solution that would prevent the dissolution of his command: he brought the fleet to Tizon and took control, ousting Tizon's *hertugin* and endowing his captains with lands and titles. Tizon had been a sleepy backwater for over a century. After its takeover by the Coladan fleet it instantly became one of the major powers.

Svein the Great, as he became known, astutely did not use his fleet to conquer, but to protect. Rather than antagonize the other Sword Worlds, he instead used his military vessels to expand Tizon's role in the troubled trading lanes of the subsector. Whereas before, ships from other worlds carried the output of Tizon's mines, from 217 onwards goods traveled in native hulls. Within a mere 20 years, Tizonian vessels were carrying as much cargo as any other Sword World's fleet. By 300, they were carrying as much as any other two.

This peaceful policy was followed until 281 when Estrid, granddaughter of Svein I, died in a traffic accident and her son, the 18-year-old Danjal II, embarked on a program of expansion. After assuming control of Colada, Hrunting, Isenfang (Margesi), and Cunnonic he proclaimed himself Emperor of the Tizon. In 285 he attacked Morglay (Gungnir) and conquered it the next year; Haulteclair (Mjolnir) followed in 287. The next year the empire's expansion was halted when Joyeuse, Tyrting, Beater, Orcrist, Excalibur, and all the spacefaring nations on Gram and Sacnoth formed a defense league called the United Jarldoms. The Empire backed away and settled down to digest its conquests.

## GRAM AND SACNOTH REUNIFIED

Neither Gram nor Sacnoth had forgotten their past glories. On both worlds, parties in favor of unification had grown stronger. Finally, in 364, Sacnoth's nations united to form a strong federation. Spurred on by this example, Gram followed by forming the Gram Republic in 371. The two

### EARLY RIVALRIES

It was the Sword Worlds' misfortune that the Triple Dominion broke up just as the Imperium began to move into the Marches in earnest, because this meant that new markets for all sorts of goods arose as Imperial colonies proliferated and grew. The Sword Worlds and the Darrians were rivals for these lucrative opportunities, and the Sword Worlds as a group had by then overtaken the Darrian worlds in raw industrial capacity. But they were also divided and prone to political instability, whereas the Darrians were stable and dependable. The result was that Sword World companies lost out to Darrian companies whenever long-term business arrangements were involved. Over the years this generated a considerable amount of ill will toward the Darrians and, to a lesser extent, the Imperium.

## EMPEROR WORSHIP

One factor in Tizon's success was a more stable culture than most Sword Worlds have. With a few notable exceptions, the Tizonians avoided the civil wars that plagued other worlds, and the majority of citizens could concentrate on mining, business, and culture, safe in the knowledge that their Navy would protect them.

This stability was not natural, however. The rulers of Tizon – particularly after a switch to rule by an absolute *kejsare*, or Emperor, in the 420s – worked to impose uniformity of opinion. The plan backfired at first, leading to the secession of the Aesir Alliance and the low point for Tizon between 468 and 508. But dogged persistence eventually turned the tide, and led the Tizonians to their greatest heights in the sixth century.

A key plank in this program was the imposition of Emperor-worship as a state religion. There were 14 Tizonian Emperors, and Tizonians were strongly encouraged to treat each as a demigod.

worlds immediately tried to acquire interstellar possessions and soon came into conflict with each other. Their rivalry made cooperation within the United Jarldoms impossible; the Jarldoms were dissolved in 388. Joyeuse became a protectorate of the Gram Republic while Tyrting became a protectorate of Sacnoth. In turn, Hofud assumed control of Beater while Excalibur assumed control of Orcrist.

In 391 the Tizon Empire invaded Joyeuse, hoping to present Gram with a *fait accompli*. Gram acted faster than Tizon had anticipated, declared war on the Empire, invaded Haulteclair (Mjolnir) and Colada, and sent a relief force to Joyeuse. Three years later, the Tizon Empire sued for peace. Colada, Haulteclair (Mjolnir), and Joyeuse became member states of the Gram Republic as part of the peace settlement. Morglay (Gungnir) took the opportunity to secede from the Empire and became a client state of Gram.

## THE BITER ATROCITIES

In 383 Hofud attacked and conquered Sting; its *Hertugin*, Marianne, escaped to Biter and set up a government in exile. Hofud then invaded Biter, in 419, touching off a bitter guerrilla war that dragged on for almost two decades. Hofud resorted to a drastic solution in 435: they attempted to depopulate Biter. Biters were herded into "relocation camps" and deported at gunpoint to other worlds under Hofud's control. This was the start of the *Spredning* (Scattering), which created the *Luffarnir* ethnic group that is on many Sword Worlds (see p. 92). The remaining populace scattered and hid in the wilderness.

Two years later it was discovered that Hofud had deliberately built transport ships with passenger holds and loading ports designed to open into empty space. Using these ships, they had killed off four out of five shiploads of Biter transporees. They trusted that as people left Biter and arrived at other worlds, no one would keep count and realize the losses.



Shortly thereafter, extremists on Biter assassinated Jarl Birger, the eldest son of Johan II of Hofud. Johan responded by ordering the use of biological agents to destroy the great forests where the resistance fighters hid. Over the next 18 months untold tons of chemical and biological products were employed on Biter, disrupting the ecology and causing many deaths due from side effects. This event became known as the *Saltsaar* ("Salt Sowing").

These atrocities aroused the ire of Hofud's neighbors. With the quiet approval of Sacnoth and Gram, one of the few times in Sword Worlder history where Gram and Sacnoth were on the same side, the Dyrnwyn Compact conquered Hofud. Gram got Beater, while the Dyrnwyn Compact got Hofud, Sting, and Biter. Steel was allowed to remain independent and even to claim control of the other Metal Worlds.

## CULTURE CLASH

In 585, the leaders of a group of Aslan *ihatei* entered the Darrian Confederation and offered their clans' services in return for land rights on several worlds. Since then Aslan units have been a vital part of the Darrian military establishment, and are rightly regarded by Sword Worlders as worthy opponents.

Many alternate-history writers have speculated what would have happened if the Aslan had come to the Sword Worlds instead. What is not well known is that those Aslan actually *did* visit Narsil going to the Darrians. The Aslan and the Double Monarchy could not reach an agreement, however. Narsil was already growing crowded, while various groups on Anduril did not like the idea of adding yet another faction to their politics. But the deal-breaker was the Aslan's refusal to consider embracing the Sword Worlder lifestyle. The Aslan and the Sword Worlders were equally chauvinistic and could find no common ground. A year later, the Aslan were with the Darrians, and the history of the region changed forever.

## AESIRISM

During the early 400s, a modernized version of Scandinavian mythology burst upon the Sword Worlds. Staunchly opposed to the Tizonian practice of Emperor worship (see p. 14), it was both a religion and a political statement to its adherents. Though suppressed within the Empire itself, Aesirism soon spread to other worlds; both inside and outside Tizon's sphere of control it soon became an important political force.

In 468, coordinated revolutions on Hrunting, Isenfang (Margesi), Haulteclair (Mjolnir), and Morglay (Gungnir) brought those four worlds under the control of their people, who had converted to Aesirism *en masse* during the previous 50 years. The worlds were renamed Mistelten, Gridarvol, Mjolnir, and Gungnir respectively, after nonsword weapons from Scandinavian mythology. Their citizens devoted themselves to living according to the principles of Aesirism. It was a direct challenge to one of the Tizonian Empire's founding

principles, and eventually led to the longest and grimmest struggle in the Sword Worlds' history.

The four worlds banded together as the Aesir Alliance, and fended off the Tizon Empire for more than 100 years. In 575, however, Hrunting fell to Tizon. The rest of the Alliance was conquered over the next three years. The Empire changed the world names back, and for the following two decades, the Tizonians strove to reintegrate them into the empire. These efforts ran fairly smoothly on Hrunting and Isenfang but were horribly botched on Haulteclair and Morglay.

In 604 the Second Dominate broke up the Tizon Empire for good, and Aesirism sprang back to life on the four former Alliance worlds. Freed from the need to conform in the face of the Empire, the people of the Aesir Alliance worlds never reembraced their religion with their former fervor, but it has spread to other worlds.

## A SEED OF TROUBLE

In 470 the Imperium admitted many worlds in the Arden (Vilis) subsector, including Vilis and Garda-Vilis, creating the County of Arden in the process. The Sword Worlders, who regarded the entire subsector as belonging to them, took offense, but none had the strength to oppose the measure. This was later cited as the chief reason the Sword Worlds later joined the Outworld Coalition (see p. 17).

## THE BIRTH OF CONFEDERALISM

Sword Worlder disunity, epitomized for many people in the Biter Atrocities, gave birth to a political movement supporting unified Sword World governance. In 444 Leonard Torstensson published *Fraender* ("Kinsmen"), a political tract setting forth the principles that every Sword World should be independent within the framework of a confederation for mutual protection. Confederalist parties soon arose on every Sword World, but for a long time they had little success. The brutal conquest of the Aesir Alliance by the Tizon Empire from 575 to 578 gave them new strength, however, and by 592 Confederalist sympathy was at an all-time high throughout the Sword Worlds.

## THE SECOND DOMINATE

In 592 the Sword Worlds were still divided among several states – the Double Monarchy, the Dyrnwyn Compact, the Gram Republic, Sacnoth, the Kingdom of Sting, and the Tizon Empire. Many Sword Worlders saw the First Frontier War as a golden opportunity to regain worlds in the Arden (Vilis) and Lunion subsectors that were "occupied" by the Imperium – an opportunity that was being squandered because the various governments could not cooperate. In 592 the five navies (Sacnoth and the Double Monarchy had one joint navy) took the matter into their own hands and set up a confederation governed by a junta of seven admirals, though at first they did not formally dissolve the individual states.

## SWORD WORLDS CHRONOLOGY, PART III

238	Sting invades Biter.	439	The Dyrnwyn Compact (quietly backed by Gram and Sacnoth) attacks and conquers Hofud. Gram gets Beater; the Dyrnwyn Compact gets Hofud, Sting, and Biter. The Metal Worlds are allowed to remain independent.
238	Dyrnwyn Compact signed among Dyrnwyn, Durendal, and Hofud.		
240	Svavasorm (Vilis) settled from Morglay (Gungnir).		
259	Niels of Sting lays claim to Steel, Bronze, Iron, Mithril, Silver (Wardn), Gold (Olympia), and Electrum (Smoug).	444	Leonard Torstensson, a political philosopher, publishes <i>Fraender</i> , the touchstone of the Confederatism movement.
263	Sting-Steel War ends with Steel forced to remove its outposts on Bronze, Iron, Mithril, Silver, Gold, and Electrum.	459	Double Monarchy attempts to assert historical claim to Excalibur and Orcrist. Excalibur turns to Gram for protection. Compromise gives Orcrist to Double Monarchy and makes Excalibur a protectorate of Gram.
281	Tizon begins expansion. Assumes control of Colada, Hrunting, Isenfang (Margesi), and Cunnonic.	468	Revolutions on Hrunting, Isenfang (Margesi), Haulteclair (Mjolnir), and Morglay (Gungnir) puts Aesirian fundamentalists in power. Aesir Alliance formed.
283	Tizon Empire proclaimed.		
284	Tizon Empire takes over Haulteclair (Mjolnir).		
286	Tizon Empire takes over Morglay (Gungnir). Oluf Vilis becomes dictator of Svavasorm, declares independence from Morglay (Gungnir), changes name of world to Vilis.	470	Much of Vilis Subsector absorbed by Imperium.
		477	Enos settled.
288	United Jarldoms formed by Joyeuse, Tyrting, Beater, Orcrist, Excalibur, and all spacefaring nations on Gram and Sacnoth as a defense against the Tizon Empire.	482	Joyeuse and Colada granted independence from Gram.
		489	Darrians demonstrate the Star Trigger.
290	Tanoose taken over by Vilis and renamed Garda-Vilis.	Early 500s	Outworld Coalition of Zhodani and various Vargr states formed.
331	Morglay (Gungnir) becomes independent of the Tizon Empire.	6th Century	Confederalism grows in strength on all Sword Worlds.
335	Hofud leaves Dyrnwyn Compact.	505	Upon the death of Ingrid of Joyeuse, Gram annexes Joyeuse and Colada again.
364	Federated States of Sacnoth formed, unifying Sacnoth.	537	Sacnoth Alliance formed between Double Monarchy and Sacnoth.
371	Gram Republic formed, unifying Gram.	537	Torben I of Joyeuse reunites the world after a civil war.
383	Hofud conquers Sting. <i>Hertugin</i> Marianne escapes to Biter. Wardn, Olympia, and Smoug become independent. Steel claims Bronze, Iron, and Mithril.	555	Caladbolg, Caliburn, and Gunn join the Imperium.
386	Steel allies with Biter.	560	Excalibur and Beater repudiate ties to Gram and join the Sacnoth Alliance.
388	United Jarldoms dissolved. Tyrting becomes protectorate of Sacnoth. Hofud assumes control of Beater. Excalibur assumes control of Orcrist.	572	Kingdom of Sting (Sting and Biter) leaves the Dyrnwyn Compact.
		575-578	War between the Tizon Empire and the Aesir Alliance ends with the overthrow of the Aesir governments and the forcible inclusion of all four Alliance worlds into the Empire.
391	Tizon Empire invades Joyeuse. Gram declares war on Empire, invades Haulteclair (Mjolnir) and Colada.	578-604	Post-war integration of former Aesir Alliance worlds into the Tizon Empire runs smoothly on Hrunting and Isenfang (Margesi), but fails on Haulteclair (Mjolnir) and Morglay (Gungnir).
393	Tizon Empire sues for peace. Colada, Haulteclair (Mjolnir), and Joyeuse become member states of the Gram Republic.	579	Asteroid swarm spotted heading for Steel. Calculations show that the most populated part of Steel will be hit. Sting organizes evacuation of Steel.
400	Imperial border touches Sword Worlds border.		
Early 400s	Aesirism, a religion based on Old Nordic mythology, grows on the coreward Sword Worlds.	580	Asteroids hit Steel. Dust lowers temperatures on Steel drastically. Sting lays claim to all Metal Worlds.
419	Hofud attacks and conquers Biter.		
435	Hofud commits the Biter Atrocities, almost depopulating Biter.	585	Aslan <i>ihatei</i> offer to fight for Darrians in exchange for land.



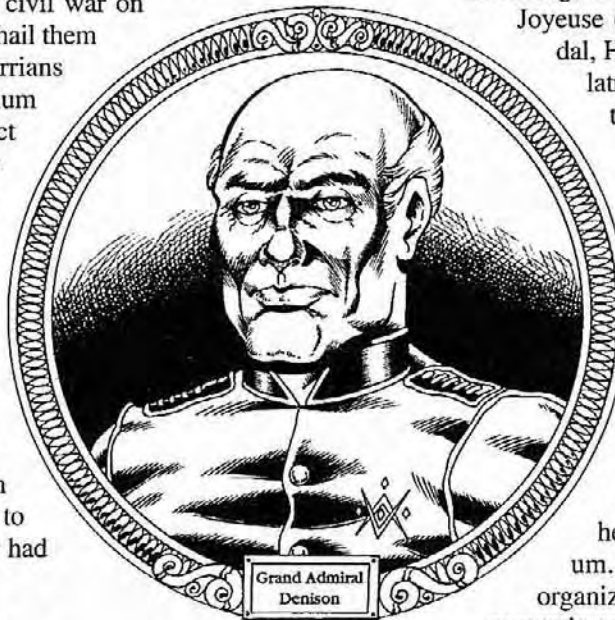
## THE LAST WARRIOR

Grand Admiral Denisov's raids were a constant thorn in the side of the Imperium, and it is a measure of his tactical greatness that he could avoid capture for as long as he did. Tracking him down is a long-term goal worthy of game play, as the players match their wits with the one of the wildest Sword Worlders in history.

Alternatively, players with a taste for tragedy can take the parts of Sword Worlders in Denisov's fleet. History records that his forces eventually surrendered, but Denisov himself disappeared; an unknown number of associates may have gone with him. The events leading up to the Battle of the Bowman Belt, and (unknown to the Imperium) what happened afterwards, are rich ground for campaigns about carving little victories out of big defeats (see p. 18).

Once in charge of policy, the junta did not, after all, dare attack the Imperium. Instead they invaded the Entropic Worlds, taking advantage of a civil war on Entrope that made the losing side hail them as liberators. As a result, the Darrians allied themselves with the Imperium in 595. The long-standing conflict between the Darrians and the Sword Worlds can be traced to these events.

The Imperial-Darrian alliance pressured the Sword Worlds from two sides, but the Imperium could not spare many ships to what was for it a secondary front. The conflict dragged on and by 604 all parties were ready to make peace; even the Darrians were too war-weary to continue, despite the fact that they had not regained their lost worlds.



## THE TIZONIAN WAR

With the war over, the naval junta voted to create a confederation of individual worlds to replace the original setup, under which the six states still functioned as independent interstellar governments. Accordingly they turned over government to a protoconfederation called the Second Dominate. Although ostensibly a reestablished Sacnoth Dominate (lending legitimacy to its claim of authority over all Sword Worlds), the political structure was far looser, with Gram, Narsil, and Sacnoth all having veto power over Dominate policy. The Tizonian Navy refused to go along with this plan and elected to support the Tizon Empire. The four other navies immediately moved to subdue it. Despite the disparity in force the Empire fought doggedly and held out for three years before capitulating.

Most of the Sword Worlds joined peacefully and became full members at once, but Tizon was incorporated

as conquered territory. Of the Tizon Empire's former possessions, Haulteclair and Morglay celebrated their freedom by changing their names back to Mjolnir and Gungnir respectively, while Hrunting and Isenfang (Margesi) kept their old names, as did Cunnonic.

## THE SECOND FRONTIER WAR

In 615 the Second Dominate joined a new Outworld Coalition as it took advantage of the Imperial Civil War to renew hostilities. The goal was to regain control of all Sword Worlds in the Vilis subsector. The war went well at first, and the Sword Worlders managed to occupy several of the target worlds, including Vilis, which at the time was the Imperial subsector capital. Eventually, however, things went disastrously wrong. Although the Imperium's Grand Admiral Arbellatra Alkhalikoi could barely manage to keep the Zhodani at bay, her subordinate in charge of the Sword World front, High Admiral Zaitkov, went through the Dominate fleets like a hot knife through butter. In 620 Imperial fleets routed the Dominate forces and occupied Isenfang (Margesi), Hrunting, Mjolnir, Gungnir, Tizon, Colada,

Joyeuse (see p. T:SM20), Dyrnwyn, Duren-dal, Hofud, and Biter. At this point Arbellatra negotiated a separate peace with the Zhodani and took her fleet to the Imperial core, where she ended the Civil War.

Abandoned by its Zhodani allies, the Dominate sued for peace. Admiral Denisov, the Commander-in-Chief of Narsil's fleet, refused to surrender and made a hopeless last stand at Narsil. His fleet was destroyed; he fled with a handful of ships to establish a secret base in the Bowman system, from which he kept up raids against the Imperium. These raids were little more than organized piracy, but the episode forms a romantic and powerful part of Sword Worlder military tradition to this day. For nearly seven years Denisov raided almost at will, outwitting – and, on three occasions, outfighting – the Imperial forces.

## THE ENTROPIC WARS

The population of Entrope was over one billion in 788 and grew to over 10 billion by 1110, the most recent point at which it has changed hands. Neither the Darrians nor the Sword Worlds have ever had the strength to conquer it in the face of united opposition. But Entrope has been a deeply fractured society ever since a civil war in 587. In each instance where Entrope has been invaded, most of the "invading" has been performed by native Entropians, with either the Darrians or the Sword Worlds merely tipping the scales.

## POLITICS ARE AN EXTENSION OF WAR

For a unique campaign, set the adventurers loose during the Constitutional Crisis. While it never devolved into a full-blown shooting war, only the greatest of efforts kept it from doing so. Meanwhile, political backstabbing, back room deal-making, and even outright blackmail and assassination were tools of the various factions.

The Constitutional Crisis was a situation with so many powers involved that it is impossible to solve with a single well-placed spot of violence. For players interested in murky plots and political infighting, the late 10th century is the place to be.

In 628 Denisov was defeated by Vice-Admiral Koenig in a battle at Mertactor and traced to Bowman. Koenig destroyed Denisov's base and accepted the surrender of his remaining forces. The last shot in the Second Frontier War had been fired. Denisov himself was presumed lost in battle; he was never heard from again, and his fate remains unknown.

In the meantime, Imperial negotiators left behind by Arbellatra were unable to make the stubborn Sword Worlders give up the Entropic Worlds, despite the fact that Imperial forces occupied half of their own worlds. The Imperials gave up, accepted the status quo, and ended their occupation.

## THE GRAM COALITION

During the last half of the seventh century, the Second Dominate became increasingly centralized, with more and more functions judged "essential to the commonwealth." At

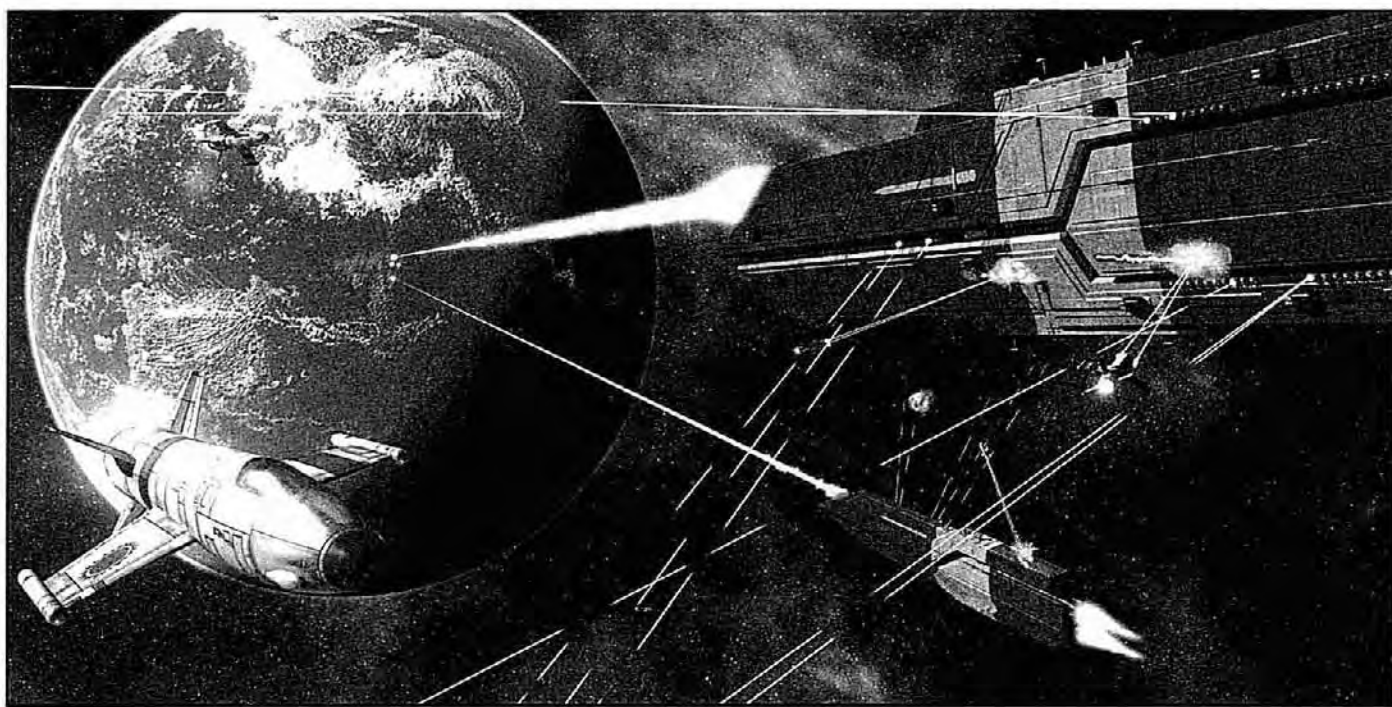
the same time the Sacnoth planetary government became a mere adjunct of the Dominate government. In 698, the Dominate government tried to override a joint Gram-Narsil veto concerning an interworld trade directive. Gram then headed a coalition consisting of Anduril, Colada, Durendal, Joyeuse, Narsil, Tizon, and Tyrfin in overthrowing of the Dominate.

## THE TRILATERAL ALLIANCE

The Gram Coalition ruled until 788, when a short war with the Darrian Confederation – one that took Imperials, Zhodani, and Sword Worlders alike by surprise – resulted in the loss of Entrope, Winston, and Anselhome. Public outrage at the mishandling of the war caused the subsequent fall of the Gram government, which was succeeded by an uneasy alliance of Narsil, Sacnoth, and Durendal known as the Trilateral Alliance. None of the three partners in the Alliance felt up to retaking the lost worlds or trusted the others enough to embark on a joint venture.

## THE SWORD WORLDS CONFEDERATION

The Trilateral Alliance broke up in 848, due in large part to the inherent weakness of its organization. A short interregnum of independent worlds and small clusters of two or three worlds followed. Of the worlds in the Alliance, Isenfang (Margesi) petitioned the Imperium for status as a client state in 849 and did not join the Sword World state to come. In 852 Gram reasserted its influence – helped substantially, rumor has it, by Zhodani money and advisors – and persuaded the Sword Worlds to form the current Sword Worlds Confederation. As a sop to anti-Gram feelings, the capital was placed on Joyeuse. This government has remained in power since.





## CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS

In 978 the seemingly inevitable process of centralization of power had once again led to a situation where the central government interfered in many aspects of the member worlds' internal affairs. The government kept in power by favoring Gram, Narsil, and their closest trade partners over Sacnoth and the trailing Sword Worlds. Nevertheless, many individuals even on the favored worlds opposed this development. When Sacnoth tried to secede and take Tyrfin, Beater, Dyrnwyn, Durendal, Hofud, Sting, and Biter along with it, the central government dared not prevent them.

The crisis lasted for three years until popular movements on Gram and Narsil forced the governments of both to resign. A constitutional convention rewrote the Confederation Charter to emphasize the autonomy of member worlds. The new Gram government also managed to get the Confederation capital moved to Gram, by offering to build an entirely new city to house the delegates and the bureaucrats.

## THE THIRD FRONTIER WAR

The Constitutional Crisis had prevented the Sword Worlds from rejoining the Outworld Coalition at the start of the Third Frontier War, and they wisely decided not to get involved after the Crisis was resolved. They did take advantage of the Imperium's preoccupation to prop up an unpopular government on Isenfang (Margesi) and persuaded them to join the Confederation in 983.

## THE VIKING "REVIVAL"

Toward the end of the 10th century, conditions among the workers on the three big industrial powerhouses of Gram, Narsil, and Sacnoth were becoming intolerable. At the same time the upper class throughout the Confederation was hit by one scandal after another, much to the disgust of the solid middle class. A reform movement arose among the middle class on Gram and swept across the Confederation. A key plank of the movement's platform was a return to the values of an earlier time. These values were concocted from a romanticized version of the early days on Gram, along with an even more romanticized version of the Viking Age on Old Terra. Women were again brought home from the businesses and factories and returned to traditional "womanly" pursuits.

## THE FOURTH FRONTIER WAR

In 1082 the Fourth Frontier War broke out and the Sword Worlder forces were united under Confederation control. In 1084 they invaded and captured Anselhome, Entrope, and Winston. The Darrians counterattacked, but succeeded only in capturing Cunnonic in return. Peace was signed between the Imperium and the Zhodani later that year and imposed haphazardly on the Darrians and the Sword Worlds.

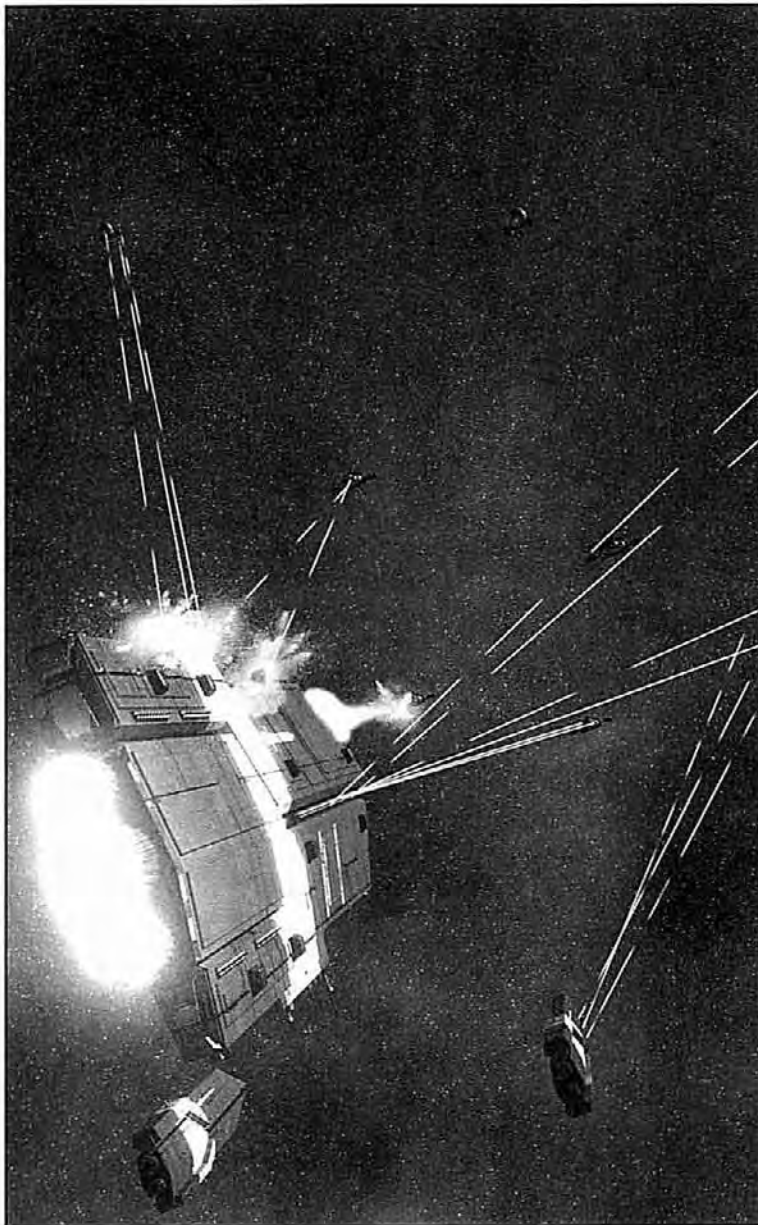
In 1098, the nations of Joyeuse fell out among themselves, rendering the world government worthless; the resulting conflict was the Joyeuse Civil War. The Confederation government blockaded the world in order to allow local forces to settle the question free from outside influences, and the fighting continued until 1119.

## SWORD WORLDS CHRONOLOGY, PART IV

589	First Frontier War begins. Darrians are neutral.
592	First Sword Worlds Confederation formed.
593	Sword Worlds invade Entropic Worlds.
595	Darrian Confederation allies with Imperium.
604	Sacnoth Dominate reestablished as the Second Dominate.
620	End of Second Frontier War.
620-21	Hrunting, Tizon, Colada, Isenfang (Margesi), Mjolnir, Joyeuse, Gungnir, Dyrnwyn, Durendal, Hofud, and Biter temporarily occupied by the Imperium.
621	Admiral Denisov, Commander-in-Chief of Narsil's fleet, refuses to accept surrender and makes a hopeless last stand at Narsil. He then flees with a handful of ships and establishes secret base in Bowman system.
625	Imperial occupation ended.
628	Denisov defeated by Vice-Admiral Koenig in battle off Mertactor and traced to Bowman; Koenig destroys Denisov's base and leaves a small squadron to garrison the system.
698	Second Dominate overthrown by Gram Coalition.
788	War between Darrians and Sword Worlds. Darrians retake Entropic Worlds. Gram Coalition falls, is replaced by Trilateral Alliance of Narsil, Sacnoth and Durendal.
848	Trilateral Alliance breaks up. Interstellar anarchy returns.
849	Isenfang (Margesi) petitions the Imperium for status as client state.
852	Current Sword World government formed with its capital at Joyeuse.
978	Constitutional crisis in Sword Worlds Confederation splits the Coalition in two.
979	Third Frontier War begins.
981	Constitutional crisis resolved; Gram seizes control of Sword Worlds Confederation. Capital moved to Gram.
983	Unpopular government on Isenfang (Margesi) propped up by Sword Worlds Confederation. Isenfang joins the Confederation.
1044	Life-support systems of Mjolnir's only city fail disastrously; 84% of population, over 2.5 million, dies.
1082	Fourth Frontier War begins.
1084	Sword Worlds retake Entropic Worlds but lose Cunnonic, Margesi, and Tavonni.
1098	Joyeuse Civil War begins.

## THE FIFTH FRONTIER WAR

War again erupted between the Imperium and the Out-world Coalition in 1107. The Sword Worlds Confederation created four fleets for the war: the Narsil Fleet, the Joyeuse Fleet, the Gram Fleet, and the Sacnoth Fleet. Each was named for the world primarily responsible for raising and supporting it, although the Joyeuse Fleet was actually the joint responsibility of Joyeuse, Tizon, Colada, and Hrunting.



### *The Narsil Fleet*

The Narsil Fleet remained on station at the spinward border of the Sword Worlds, facing the Darrians. The latter played a waiting game, content to fend off the Narsil Fleet and keep it occupied, tying down almost half the total strength of the Sword Worlds. Late in the war, in early 1110, they struck against the three Entropic worlds and recaptured them. The armistice went into effect before the Sword Worlds could retake them.

### *The Joyeuse Fleet*

The Joyeuse Fleet pushed out of Joyeuse toward Vilis, but was never able to make any progress against the Imperial 23rd Fleet. It was pushed back and reduced to holding the Sword Worlds border after 180-1109.

### *The Sacnoth Fleet*

The Sacnoth Fleet remained content to patrol the rimward border of the Sword Worlds and did not go on the offensive. This allowed the Imperial 214th Fleet to move forward from Glisten, fortifying and consolidating worlds one by one under the Imperial banner, until in mid-1109 it stood off the rimward border of the Sword Worlds. On 285-1109, the 214th struck, taking Steel, Mithril, Bronze, and Iron in a quick operation lasting less than 60 days. After a short rest, the 214th continued its attack and destroyed the Sacnoth Fleet in a pitched battle at Sting on 016-1110.

### *The Gram Fleet*

The Gram Fleet attacked into the Lanth subsector and reached as far as Lanth and D'Ganzio. Here it was opposed by the Corridor Fleet and stalemated until the end of 1108, when the Corridor Fleet was transferred to Regina subsector and replaced by the newly formed 100th Fleet. (Strangely, all through the latter half of the war the Traveller News Service referred to the 100th Fleet as the 193rd, despite the fact that the 193rd was where it had been since the start of the war, defending the Jewell subsector.)

The subsequent campaign on and around Lanth saw some of the fiercest fighting of the war, as well as an unintentional "comedy of errors." The 100th Fleet forced the Gram Fleet out of the Lanth system on 41-1109, just as Lanth's defenses were about to collapse before the Sword Worlder assault. However, the Imperial commander was then deceived into jumping to Tavonni on 80-1109, leaving Lanth virtually unguarded. The Gram Fleet returned to Lanth with reinforcements on 82-1109 and established a bridgehead on the planet. In turn, the Sword Worlds forces were inexplicably caught off guard when the 100th returned on 94-1109.

The Gram Fleet suffered severe losses trying to protect its ground forces. It was forced to retreat on 96-1109, leaving behind all its troops. Despite the hopelessness of their position the abandoned Sword Worlder soldiers refused to surrender and had to be defeated one small unit at a time. When they could hold out no longer, the last survivors scattered and tried to survive in the wilderness. It took until 241-1109 to track down the last band.

Meanwhile, the Gram Fleet had retreated out of the Lanth subsector entirely by 211-1109. In late 1109 it was attacked by the 213th Fleet from Lunion and forced back to Gram; the Imperial forces were then able to the trailing portions of the Sword Worlds.



## Armistice

In early 1110 the Imperium and the Zhodani Consulate declared an armistice. Although the Sword Worlds did not officially subscribe to this armistice, they refrained from further sorties and the Imperium likewise refrained from further advances. The Sword Worlds were invited to send delegates to a peace conference on Quar, and on 360-1110 they signed the peace treaty along with the other belligerents.

## THE POSTWAR ERA

By the end of the hostilities, the Imperial 213th and 214th fleets occupied Beater, Biter, Bronze, Durendal, Dyrnwyn, Hofud, Iron, Mithril, Steel, and Sting. For various reasons, not the least of which was the anger felt over the fact that the Sword Worlds had attacked Lanth with no prior declaration of war, the Imperium chose not to return the occupied worlds to the Confederation. Long and complicated negotiations eventually led to the establishment, in late 1111, of the Border Worlds Confederation. The new polity was organized as an Imperial client state, consisting of the 10 worlds mentioned above plus Sacnoth, which chose to turn its back on the Sword Worlds Confederation and become the biggest fish in a new pond, and Tyrfin, which was sufficiently under Sacnoth's influence to follow in its wake. Sting was chosen as the seat of the Border Worlds' government.

Excalibur's government started to slip, then crumbled. The world broke into all-out civil war in 1113. Dozens of warlords fought each other, and periods of relative peace alternated with periods of fierce fighting. In early 1118, the civil war burned itself out. With everybody tired of the fighting, one of the warlords, Reyf Huld, gathered the support of several neighboring warlords, intimidated several more warlords, and overawed the rest, until he ended up as the popular dictator of the whole world. One of his first acts was to apply for admission to the Border Worlds; the application was granted in late 1118.

A group of Imperials from Lunion illegally settled Steel in 1115; the resulting high-level diplomatic controversy ended in 1118 with the Imperium buying all four Metal Worlds from the Border Worlds for a staggering amount of money. The four worlds were put under the administration of the Imperial Colonial Office for the Sword Worlds subsector. Biter also petitioned for full membership in the Imperium in that same year. Emperor Strephon granted the petition in 1118 and Biter was admitted as of 181-1119.

In 1116, the Border Worlds Authority grew so exasperated with the obstructions it met from Sting's civil service that it moved to another world. After some wrangling, Beater was chosen as the new capital of the Border Worlds. Sting followed up this event by *seceding* from the Border Worlds; it then applied to the Imperium for full membership. The petition is still being processed at Capital. In the meantime, the Border Office has granted Sting status as a client state in its own right.

Finally, in 1119 the nations on Joyeuse agreed to reestablish the world government. In a remarkably short time the planetary bureaucracy started working as if the last 21 years of fighting and unrest had never occurred.

## THE FIFTH FRONTIER WAR

179-1107	Zhodani battle fleet appears at Ruie.
186-1107	Zhodani ambassadors deliver declaration of war to Imperial authorities on Regina and Jewell.
190-1107	The Sword Worlds Confederation attacks Lanth without declaring war first.
204-1107	Imperium announces presumed state of war with Sword Worlds.
206-1107	Detached Imperial Scouts called up.
210-1107	Federation of Arden declares for the Zhodani.
168-1108	Sword Worlds troops invade Saurus.
080-1109	100th Fleet jumps to Tavonni to intercept rumored Sword Worlds buildup.
082-1109	Sword Worlds forces appear at Lanth and immediately begin landing troops.
094-1109	The 100th Fleet returns from Tavonni and catches Sword Worlds forces by surprise, inflicting severe losses on them.
096-1109	News of the 100th's victory dispatched. Mopping up of the Sword Worlds forces on Lanth continues.
211-1109	Gram Fleet entirely forced out of Lanth subsector.
241-1109	Mop-up of Sword Worlds forces on Lanth declared officially completed.
285-1109	The 214th Fleet launches attack on Steel, Mithril, Bronze, and Iron.
356-1109	213th Fleet launches attack on the Gram Fleet from Lunion.
004-1110	Arden abandons neutrality and allies with Imperium.
016-1110	The 214th Fleet destroys the Sacnoth Fleet at Sting.
043-1110	Darrians retake the Entropic Worlds.
099-1110	Armistice between Imperium and Consulate declared, effective 120-1110. Sword Worlds tacitly comply.
360-1110	Peace treaty signed on Quar ends the war as of 001-1111.

*Note:* There may be some discrepancies between dates in other records and the dates here; other timelines did not take communication lag into account. For instance, the date above states that the Zhodani appeared at Ruie is 186-1107. But there is also a TNS newsbrief datelined Regina 186-1107 that announces the Zhodani arrival at Ruie. This means that the Zhodani must have arrived there a minimum of 6 days earlier – and that only if the ship that brought the news to Regina happened to make a 6-day jump.

## CHAPTER TWO

# Worlds

*Over the centuries, the meaning of the term "Sword Worlds" has changed many times. Not the least of these reasons are the many wars and territorial exchanges which have swept over the subsector and adjacent areas. Even worlds as solidly Imperial as Vilis were once under Sword Worlds control. Over time, this has developed into several touchy diplomatic issues, and you can get a feel for a Sword Worlder's political views based on what he considers to be "The Sword Worlds."*

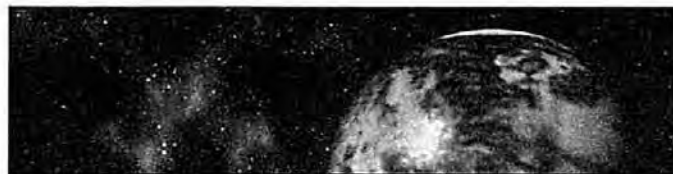
*The most common definition, for now, is that the core of the Sword Worlds consists of the current Sword Worlds Confederation, plus the Border Worlds. While in the presence of Sword Worlders, travelers are advised to avoid discussing the status of the Metal Worlds, the Entropic Worlds, and others. (See attachment TASA-1100416 for further details and a comprehensive list with explanations.)*

*— Travellers' Aid Society advisory*

## THE SWORD WORLDS CONFEDERATION

The Confederation is the most successful and long-lived state the Sword Worlds subsector has seen in a millennium.

Even after the Fifth Frontier War, it controls more worlds than most other, earlier governments in the region. It is not to be underestimated, even in its current dire straits.

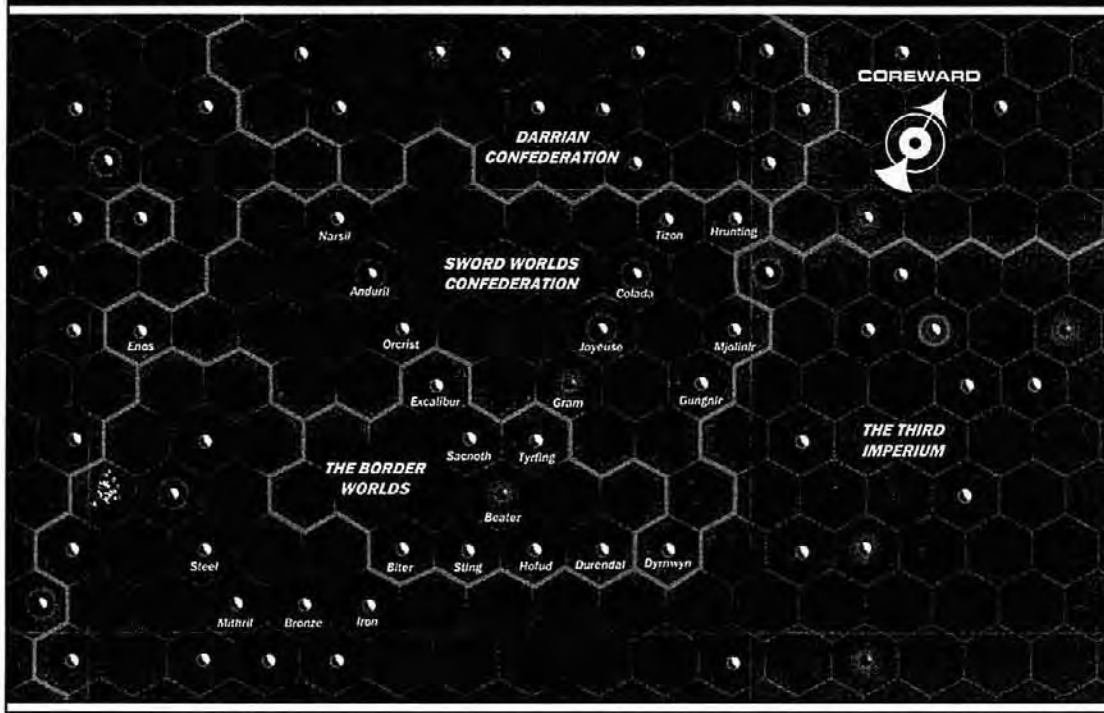


## THE CONFEDERATION POLITICAL STRUCTURE

In the Sword Worlds, the prewar structure dating from the end of the Constitutional Crisis is still in place. The Confederation's government is divided into areas of control called chancelleries, and leaders are called chancellors. There are Chancellors of Justice, Defense, Finance, Trade, Internal Relations, and External Relations. The "prime minister" is called the Chancellor of the Confederation (*Foerbundskansleren*). Each world has a representative at the Confederation Council (with the title of ambassador), and issues are resolved by a majority vote. However, Gram, Nar-

sil, and Tizon have vetoes over any decision, and a unanimous vote of the ambassadors from smaller worlds counts as a veto as well. In practice, this meant that most items are left to the worlds themselves, but since the end of the war Gram and Narsil have worked out their differences in an effort to reform the Confederation. The Council is still often deadlocked, but careful wooing of Tizon and the removal of many smaller planets to the Border Worlds is slowly turning the remaining Sword Worlds into a Gram-Narsil co-dominion.

## SWORD WORLDS AREA MAP





# WORLD DATA TABLES

The two-column table for each section of the Sword Worlds contains the basic data for each world.

**Hex:** Identification number of the hex the world occupies on the sector map.

**Name:** The world's official name.

**Zone:** The "travel zone" designation currently published for the world by the Travellers' Aid Society. A Green Zone world is safe to visit. An Amber Zone is moderately hazardous, and visitors should exercise caution (see p. GT19). A Red Zone is extremely dangerous and usually off-limits to travel (see p. GT56).

**Starport:** The starport classification (see p. GT64). This can range from 0 (no starport at all) to V (largest and busiest starport). Every world in the Sword Worlds and Border Worlds Confederations maintains its own naval force; those bases are not indicated in the world tables.

**Diameter:** The diameter of the world in miles.

**Gravity:** The surface gravity of the world in standard gravities.

**Atmosphere:** Description of the world's atmosphere. *None* indicates no atmosphere at all. Oxygen-nitrogen atmospheres are listed as *Trace*, *Very Thin*, *Thin*, *Standard*, *Dense*, or *Very Dense*. Usually only *Thin*, *Standard*, or *Dense* atmospheres are breathable by Humans. A (T) indicates that the atmosphere is "tainted," including contaminants or a mix of gases which Humans cannot easily breathe. Tainted atmospheres may be "polluted" as defined in *GURPS Space* (see p. S157), or they may simply lack enough oxygen to support Human life. *Exotic* atmospheres contain no oxygen and are actually poisonous to Human life. (For more details, see pp. S156-157.)

**Hydrographic Percentage:** The percentage of the world's surface covered by its hydrosphere. On most worlds, the hydrosphere is water oceans, which may be frozen on cold worlds. Worlds with exotic atmospheres may have hydrospheres composed of more unusual substances.

**Climate:** The overall climate of the world. The climate category can be interpreted in terms of average surface temperature (see p. S157).

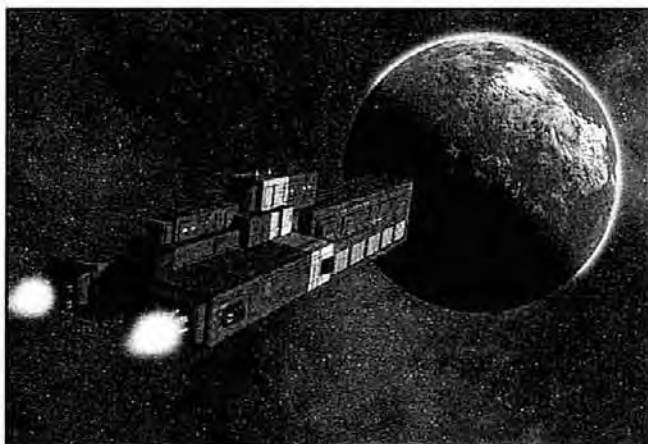
**Population:** Total world population.

**Government Type:** The overall classification of the world's society (see pp. S168 and GT123). *AthDem* indicates an Athenian democracy, *Bureau* indicates a bureaucracy, *Dictator* indicates a dictatorship, *Oligarch* indicates an oligarchy, *RepDem* indicates a representative democracy, and *Techno* indicates a technocracy. *Captive* indicates a world which does not have self-government, but is ruled from somewhere else (see the corresponding world description for details). *Multiple* indicates a balkanized world with no unified administration. Instead, it is owned by multiple societies, which may each have a different form of government.

**Control Rating:** The Control Rating prevalent on the world.

**Tech Level:** The Tech Level prevalent on the world – or in the world's largest or strongest society, if there is more than one.

**World Trade Number:** The World Trade Number for the world, computed using the rules from *GURPS Traveller: Far Trader* (see pp. T:FT11-12).



## Navigation Data Tables

The one-column "navigation data" table for each section of the Sword Worlds gives astrographic data, describing the other contents of each world's star system. These figures are useful in developing secondary worlds, or for using the detailed rules in *Far Trader* or *GURPS Traveller: First In*.

**Hex:** Identification number of the hex the world occupies on the sector map.

**Name:** The world's official name.

**Primary:** The spectral classification and name of the world's primary star (see *GURPS Space* or *First In* for more details).

**Companions:** The spectral classifications and names of any companion stars in the star system.

**Gas Giants:** The number of gas-giant planets in the star system. If any gas giants are present, some starships will be able to perform "wilderness refueling" by skimming the atmosphere of one.

**Planetoid Belts:** The number of planetoid belts in the star system.

**Orbit:** The radius of the main world's orbit around its primary star in astronomical units, or AU (see p. S146). An asterisk (\*) indicates that the main world is actually a moon of another planet, probably a gas giant. In this case, the figure given is the radius of that planet's orbit around the primary star.

**Moons:** The number of moons orbiting the main world. For the purposes of this table, a *large moon* is at least 100 miles in diameter and may be thousands of miles in diameter. A *small moon* is no more than 50 miles in diameter and may be only a few miles across.

# SWORD WORLDS CONFEDERATION WORLDS

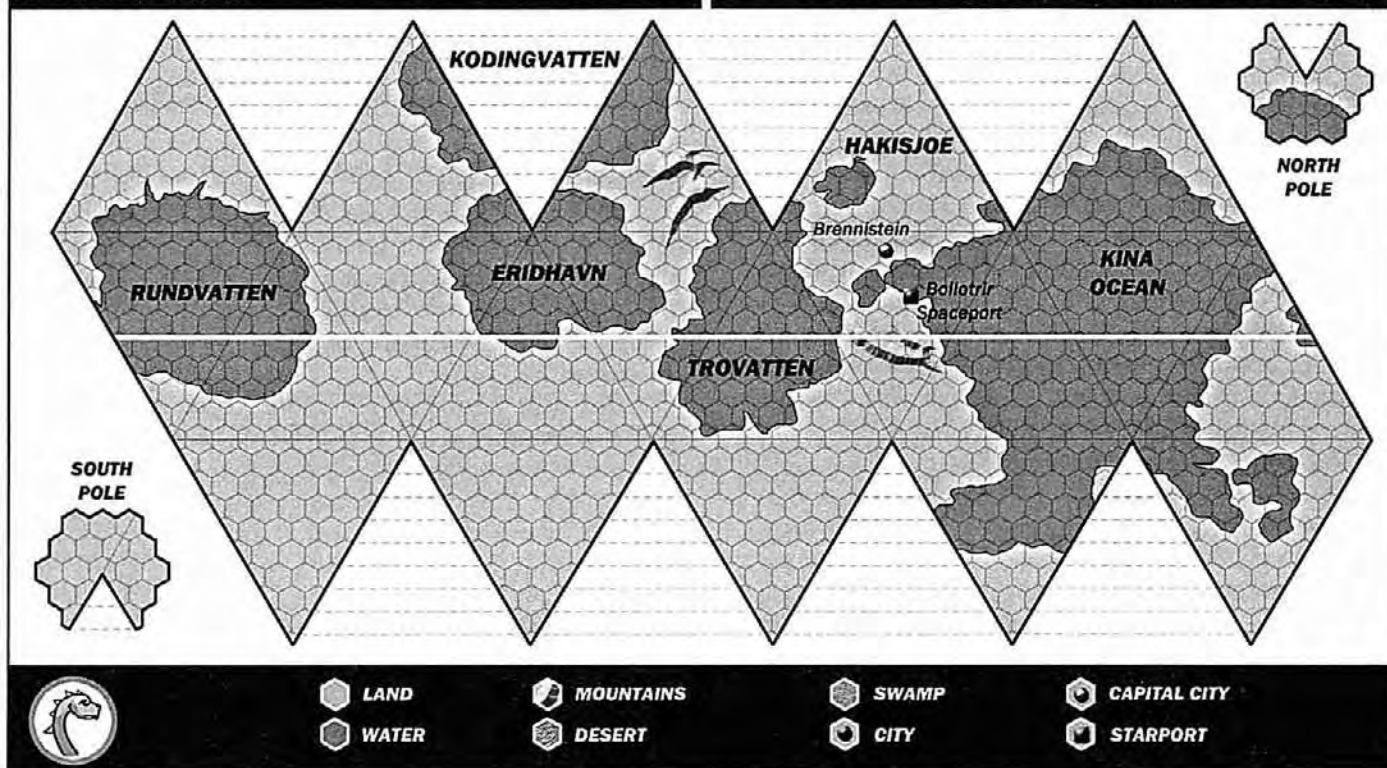
Hex	Name	Zone	Starport	Diameter	Gravity	Atmosphere	Hydro%	Climate
0921	Hrunting	Green	IV	4,200	0.51	Standard	30%	Normal
0922	Tizon	Green	IV	3,000	0.51	Dense	61%	Cold
0927	Narsil	Green	IV	4,800	0.27	Standard (T)	38%	Normal
1022	Colada	Amber	IV	3,200	0.41	Standard	40%	Normal
1026	Anduril	Amber	V	9,500	1.52	Dense	49%	Normal
1121	Mjolnir	Green	IV	4,900	0.53	Very Thin	0%	Tropical
1123	Joyeuse	Amber	IV	4,000	0.51	Standard	44%	Cool
1126	Orcrist	Green	IV	8,000	1.04	Exotic	62%	Normal
1130	Enos	Green	I	2,000	0.72	Thin	0%	Very Hot
1221	Gungnir	Green	IV	3,900	0.49	Thin (T)	40%	Normal
1223	Gram	Green	V	7,900	1.09	Dense (T)	55%	Normal
1522	Dyrnwyn	Green	IV	9,600	1.20	Thin	76%	Very Cold

WORLD NAME:

**HRUNTING**

GRID/SECTOR:

**0921 SPINWARD MARCHES**



## SWORD WORLDS CONFEDERATION NAVIGATIONAL DATA

Hex	Name	Primary	Companions	GG	PB	Orbit	Moons
0921	Hrunting	M2 V (Beowulf)	-	3	1	0.10	-
0922	Tizon	K2 IV (El Cid)	M3 V (Bucar)	3	2	2.0	2 small
0927	Narsil	M0 II (Isildur)	M6 V (Elendil)	4	2	95.0	-
1022	Colada	K2 V (Rodrigo)	M8 V (Bivar)	1	1	0.73	1 small
1026	Anduril	F2 V (Aragorn)	-	2	2	3.95	2 large
1121	Mjolnir	A5 V (Oliver)	D (Closamont)	2	2	6.90*	-
1123	Joyeuse	M3 V (Karl)	M9 V (Gallas)	1	0	0.06	-
1126	Orcrist	K7 V (Thorin)	D (Thranduil)	1	0	0.32*	-
1130	Enos	M1 V (Kaleshi)	-	0	1	0.13	-
1221	Gungnir	G3 IV (Bevis)	M4 V (Josian)	2	3	2.15	2 small
1223	Gram	F2 V (Sigurd)	M2 V (Sigmund)	3	0	4.00	1 small
1522	Dyrnwyn	K4 V (Rhydderch)	M8 V (Gwydion)	1	0	0.50	-



Population	Gov Type	CR	TL	WTN
32 million	RepDem	3	9	4.5
370 million	Bureau	3	9	5.0
27 billion	Techno	5	9	5.5
2.4 million	Bureau	2	9	4.0
220 million	Techno	2	9	5.0
520,000	RepDem	2	9	4.0
41 million	Bureau	5	9	4.5
42 million	Oligarch	2	9	4.5
750,000	Bureau	6	5	3.0
47 million	Multiple	2	8	4.0
6.8 billion	Techno	5	9	5.5
220 million	Corporate	1	9	3.5

*The dust storms of Hrunting have a primitive beauty, but, like many such things, are best viewed from the safety of orbit.*

*– Merchant on the Frontier, Captain Lamat Kubayashi*

## 0921 HRUNTING

Hrunting is the gateway between the Sword Worlds Confederation and the Entropic Worlds, the latter being possessions lost during the Fifth Frontier War. It is also the last Sword World for travelers heading into the unincorporated worlds of the Querion subsector and the wide-open spaces of the Foreven sector. As a result, the planet sees many refugees coming in and more mysterious people leaving.

### *The Planet*

Hrunting is a young world, approximately two billion years old, and in a 3:2 orbital resonance with its primary, Beowulf. The day/night cycle is 44 days long. Beowulf is similarly young, and like many young red dwarfs flares every now and then. These flares occur every few decades and only increase the incoming light by 50% for a few hours – annoying, but not a real problem. However, the geological record shows that Beowulf “superflares” every 10,000 to 15,000 years, and did so not long before the *Gram* came to Sword Worlder space.

The superflare started evaporating the planet’s oceans, and the vapor began escaping the planet’s low gravity. The flares stopped before the seas were entirely gone, and the remaining water in the air condensed over the next century into substantial rainstorms that leached minerals out of Hrunting’s soils. These were deposited in huge, salty, chemical-encrusted flats which surround the shrunken oceans.

### *Life on Hrunting*

The capital and starport are at Brennistein, a city of 1.2 million people on the coast of the Kina Sea. All settlements are near the coasts, where the chemical crust from the receding oceans can be removed to reveal usable soil underneath. The lack of water, and constant erosion caused by the absence of plant life in the interior, have turned the continental centers into acrid dusty deserts where few ever go. Dust storms blowing from the interior to the “clean” regions of the coast are major events, as farmers need to remove the crunchy chemical grains from their plants and soil before they can do any damage.

Other than the seat of government, Hrunting has only a dozen cities, all with populations of less than 500,000. These act merely as depots for their hinterlands, seaports through which bulk agricultural goods, ores, and industrial chemicals can be shipped elsewhere. Most people live in the rural regions around the cities.

The hinterlands themselves have little in the way of infrastructure and Hrunting’s seas do not all connect to one another, so water transport is often inconvenient. The Hrunting substitute is grav vehicles, owned and operated by Luitegard Befordran, a corporation with a monopoly on heavy transport. Outlying farms and mines have rough landing areas where the transports can land, pick up cargo, and move it to the nearest city. Larger cities’ gravports are used when something needs to move by air to a city that can’t be reached by water.

In all, this system works well, though there is always grumbling about the necessary payments to the “LB.” In the last few years, however, organized crime has been slowly taking over the trade routes, and corruption and violence are becoming problems.

### *The People of Hrunting*

The Hruntings are generally rural, living bucolic agricultural lives in small settlements where the land has been cleared of salt. They all have a “live-and-let-live” policy toward strangers, though people in the same town pressure one another toward certain social norms, which vary from place to place. Only the socially well placed or wealthy can get away with notably eccentric behavior, and even they are isolated in their communities.

Off world, the people of Hrunting have a reputation for level-headedness – and for lacking imagination or accepting people’s differences. Many other Sword Worlds have Hrunting restaurants and social clubs that cater to the Hrunting homesick. A well-to-do Hrunting living in the wider Confederation gladly accepts fellow natives, even complete strangers, into his home, offering them hospitality in return for simply “acting the right way.”

## Government

Hrunting is run by an oligarchic democracy, with suffrage for landowners whose property exceeds a certain value – about 5% of the population, running about four men for every woman.

In theory, anyone eligible to vote may be elected to the *Folketing* ("Parliament"), but in practice most candidates are from the noble class. The nobles look out for themselves – but in any case, Parliament members are not paid for their services, so it is hard for commoners to support themselves while serving. The people don't mind this barrier – they acknowledge that the nobles are trained from birth for ruling, and believe they are better qualified than the average man on the street.

## The Stone Trees

Multicellular life on Hrunting is relatively new, having arisen about 100 million years ago. By chance, photosynthesizing creatures haven't yet evolved to live on land, so most of Hrunting's biosphere is in the oceans.

Hrunting's highly chemical shores are home to one new breed of life that has come out of the water in the last few million years. The *stone trees* are neither stone nor trees, but rather a mollusk-like order of animals that has invaded the land. They live by exploiting the complex sulfur compounds of the planet's slowly growing beaches.

Superficially, a typical stone tree species resembles a warped tree or bush, but the outside observer is seeing a calcium-based shell. Inside lives a soft-bodied animal, which wears the "bark" as a protective skin. "Leaves" top the

## THE EXILES

Hrunting was almost untouched by the Darrian and Imperial offensives during the Fifth Frontier War, so war resentment among the people is low. As a result, the world has become the home of last resort for a variety of unpopular people from elsewhere in the Sword and Border Worlds: war criminals, profiteers, military men unlucky enough to lose major battles, and the like. Some live quite openly, while others are more secretive; the difference largely depends on how much some hostile party would like to get their hands on each individual exile. Hrunting's ruling nobles take a "there but for the grace of God" attitude toward the exiles, and are cool toward requests for extradition. Unfortunately, this has created job opportunities for mercenaries to kidnap these exiles and return them to someone's idea of justice. The other major exile-related service industry is moving exiles even further into hiding, via Dekalb and points to spinward.

branches, but don't provide any food directly, as they do for terrestrial trees. Instead they are dark gray or black shells, designed to heat up in the sun and generate a large difference in temperature between the top of the stone tree and its "roots" in the cool ground. Using the heat gradient, the stone tree then breaks down the sulfur compounds left behind by the receding sea, and from this gains the nutrients to live.

Stone trees vary greatly. Some are helpful; there is the scrubby *pebbletop*, that when properly prepared to remove its sulfurous compounds, supplies delicate meat to Humans, and the *barreltree*, with its throat-quenching caches of water. Others are dangerous, such as the *snake's spire*, with its poisonous spines and flesh.

## Brennistein

Brennistein is the capital city of Hrunting, and home to about 1.2 million people. It is one of the oldest settlements in Sword Worlder space, and so has many historical buildings. Archaeological finds are made virtually any time someone digs up a piece of the city, and the City Council is very strict about making sure its ancient heritage is preserved. The people of Brennistein are equally proud of that heritage, but desperate business owners – who might have a building site held up for years while a discovery is cataloged – have been known to hide discoveries for fear of financial ruin.

The city is divided roughly into three parts. Nordhavn is the oldest part of the city, extending from the sheltered bay – the city's original reason for its location, several miles along the banks of the Vridasig River. Nordhavn is a maze of tiny streets, many still cobblestoned, another aspect of the city's love of its past, and the area by the docks is poor and rough.

Most of Brennistein's new development is south of the river, in Slatland. Here the streets are open and friendlier to modern road and grav vehicles. Most of the city's middle and upper classes live here.

## WHAT ARE THE SWORD WORLDS?

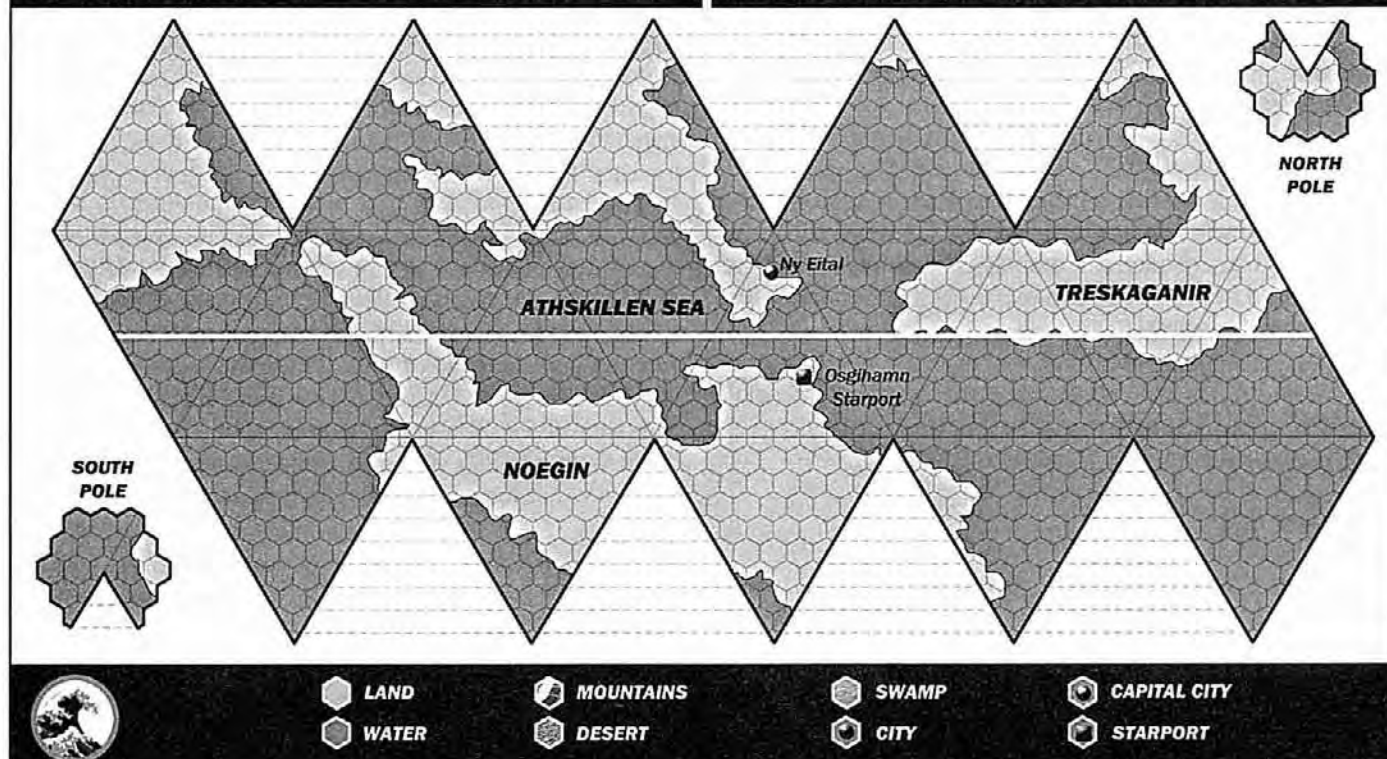
"The Sword Worlds" has two common meanings: "The Sword Worlds Confederation" and "some, but not necessarily all, worlds which have been colonized by Sword Worlders, or were under the political control of any other Sword Worlder state at any time in the past."

The former definition isn't a point of contention for most, but there are numerous versions of the latter one. A Sword Worlder might define "The Sword Worlds" as including any or all of the following:

- The Sword Worlds Confederation
- The Border Worlds
- The Metal Worlds
- Several worlds under Imperial control and Imperial client states (Biter, Caladbolg, Caliburn, Flammarion, Garda-Vilis/Tanoose, Gunn, Margesi, Olympia, Smoug, Sting, Tavonni, Tenalphi, Vilis, and Wardn)
- Several worlds under Darrian control (the Entropic Worlds, Cunnonic)

Problems arise because every state and political interest in the region has an opinion on which of these claims are legitimate and which go too far.





The third part of the city is Tunn Halvø, a peninsula that sweeps around from the north and guards the entry to the bay. A bridge crosses to it from the main body of the city, and the tip of the peninsula is home to the upper echelons of Brennstein's society, both the hereditary nobility and those with old money.

## 0922 TIZON

Tizon has long been one of the most important of the Sword Worlds. By the year 590 it had used its high-quality navy to build an empire big enough to make it a power almost comparable to Gram or Sacnoth. The defeat of the Tizon Empire was a major step toward the unification of the subsector, but that war and the end of the Empire is also a romantic lost cause in some minds. Today the Tizonian Navy continues its tradition of producing top-flight officers and crewmen – including a surplus that goes to one of the main trading fleets in the subsector.

### The Planet

Tizon's primary is an evolving K2 IV star, which has become considerably brighter in the last 100 million years. Tizon was once uninhabitable, a Mars-like ball of rock that was well outside the system's habitable zone; it only warmed as the primary brightened.

Tizon was also the subject of a terraforming experiment performed by the pre-Maghiz Darrians, abandoned in the aftermath of that disaster. There were considerable quantities of water available both on the planet and in nearby space (the next planet out being a small gas giant), and these were brought sunward. It was easy to set microbes to work

terraforming the planet's atmosphere; the Darrians wrought so well that the process continued even after their supervision was removed. By the time the Sword Worlders arrived on the scene, Tizon had a very basic environment and a simple but robust ecosphere of small plants and insects. The planet was (and is) very rich in metals, so the Sword Worlders were quick to colonize the newborn world. Terraforming continues to this day, but on a much smaller scale; only maintenance has been needed since the 400s. Interestingly, because of the *Maghiz*, Tizon supports the last remaining populations of some Darrian species, now extinct on their homeworld because of the disaster (see p. T:H36).

One factor helping terraform Tizon is the planet's near-perpetual cloud cover. If only the typical 35% of the surface were shaded by clouds, Tizon's climate would be very hot, and only the poles would be habitable. However, all the extra solar energy has instead turned to evaporating water, to the point that as little as 10 percent of the world is exposed to the direct light. From space, Tizon is a brilliant white, while down on the ground the average settlement sees the sun less than one day a week. Rain is nearly constant.

The planet has two continents, the larger one (Treskaganir) covering most of the northern hemisphere, and a smaller one (Noegen) taking up half of the south.

### History

Tizon's main claim to fame is as the capital world of the Tizon Empire. Established in 281, the Empire's fortunes waxed and waned, but it was always bolstered by its huge trade fleet. Even during its weakest days, when it consisted only of Tizon and Cunnonic, it was stronger than population alone suggested.

Naval prowess, both military and commercial, propelled Tizon to prosperity unseen before in the Sword Worlds. Even now, 800 years later, Tizonian shipping still carries a disproportionately large amount of trade and is outstripped in absolute volume only by the merchant fleets based on high-population Sword Worlds.

### *The Tizonian War*

Toward the end of the sixth century Imperial, the Tizonians reignited their desultory war against the Aesir Alliance, and by 578 had conquered it entirely. The newly ascendant Tizonians had reached their greatest height. Unfortunately for them, it would soon end.

## **THE ATHENS OF THE SWORD WORLDS**

Even before the Tizonian War, Tizon had more than its fair share of preeminent thinkers and artists. In the war's aftermath, this trend became even more pronounced as the Tizonians turned their energy away from running an empire to trade, science, and art. Over time, Tizonians have become as arrogant about their cultural superiority *vis-à-vis* the other Sword Worlds as they once were about their military superiority.

However, this time they have a point. Many of the most prestigious educational institutions in Sword Worlder space are here, from private primary schools to art academies to postgraduate centers, and many wealthy or upper-class people from all but the most populous Sword Worlds send their children to Tizon. Any school elsewhere that aspires to greatness needs at least a few Tizonians on staff. As a result, the Sword Worlds, with the exceptions of Gram, Narsil, and Sacnoth, are colored by Tizonian thought in many fields of higher endeavor. In a way, Tizon has conquered the Sword Worlds after all.

In 593 the so-called Confederalist Revolt united the then-current Sword Worlder states in an uneasy alliance run by a junta of admirals (see pp. 15-17). Eight years later the Tizonian Navy left the junta over the question of breaking up the states into individual worlds. The other navies joined forces and moved on the Tizon Empire to bring it back into the fold.

Badly outnumbered, the Tizonians held on for a surprisingly long time – three years of grinding war that saw continually outmassed Tizonian squadrons outfighting their opponents time and again. In addition, the usual jockeying for position between Gram and Sacnoth did help a great deal, Confederalism or no. As the Tizonians continued to hang on, however, Gram and Sacnoth buried the hatchet, at least for long enough to finish the war. The worlds of the Empire were annexed to the naval military state, and then passed on to the civilian Second Dominate that followed (see p. 15).

### *Life on Tizon*

Tizon's climate is chilly, so the population is concentrated near the equator, particularly around the Athskilinn Sea, a large inland sea that separates central Treskaginnir from Noeglen. The capital city is Ny Eital, on Treskaginnir, where it approaches the southern continent at the sea's west end. The starport, however, is on the southern side of the straits, so travelers headed to the capital have a boat journey or flight ahead of them.

With a population of nearly 400 million, it's difficult to make sweeping generalizations about how or where a given Tizonian might live; forests, hills, and plains, have all been turned into homes as the colony expanded. The temperate zone around the equator is heavily populated, so there are large cities in a wide variety of environments, with highways and other major infrastructure joining them. North and south of the 30th parallels, the cold climate restricts settlement to the mines that were Tizon's original reason for existence.

### *The People of Tizon*

The Tizonians are very commercially oriented, generally believing that the best occupation for the average citizen is whatever generates the most money. As a result, the entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well on the planet, and anyone who succeeds in business can rocket to the upper echelons of society, no matter how low his origins. The military is geared entirely toward protecting Tizonian commercial interests; despite a worrying recent trend back toward the expansionist attitudes of the Empire's glory days, the devastating defeats of the Fifth Frontier War have refocused the minds of Tizon's brass on more mundane tasks.

Once a Tizonian makes his fortune, patronage of science and art is the next expected step, though many are content to keep their money to themselves. However, generous patrons are admired, and the most admired are those who use their money to retire and contribute their knowledge to the world.

Tizonians are very urban, as the planet's near constant rain and depressing cloud cover makes them fonder of inside than outdoors. The typical Tizonian is more likely to read a poem about the driving rains and mists than he is to actually go and take a look for himself.

## **THE 15TH EMPEROR**

Some Tizonians still worship the emperors of the Tizon Empire (see p. 14), but this is far less prevalent than it was when that state was a going concern. Instead, the ancient Emperors now serve the function of "saints," beings to whom a quick prayer might be made if a little divine intervention is needed.

However an offshoot of this worship is the tiny, radical "15th Emperor" sect, whose members believes its namesake will come back to Tizon in a time of trouble. If his worshipers are sufficiently pious, the Empire will be restored and a new golden age will begin. The "XVK" has become a problem in the last few years, as many believe that the Sword Worlds' current difficulties are the troubles that will bring forth their new ruler.



Tizonians are also very interested in conversation and debate; the larger cities have a glittering salon culture, revolving around the homes of noted hosts, or favorite commercial establishments such as coffee houses or pubs. The planetary information net is particularly well developed too, and caters to those not lucky enough to live where they can get their company face-to-face, or for those whose interests are too esoteric to draw a crowd in even the largest cities.

As a result, the Tizonians are the most open-minded of Sword Worlders, with an active interest in diversity. They also have the most socially fluid. Unlike other Sword Worlders, they don't have much difficulty in dropping a traditional practice if they think another way is better.

## The Government

After the Tizonian War, Tizon was under military occupation for more than a decade. In order to prevent an absolute Emperor from rising again, a large, bureaucratic government was developed by the occupying powers, and slowly filled with Tizonians as the occupiers withdrew. By the time the occupation was over, at least 100,000 Tizonians worked in civil service and had a vested interest in making sure that real power was never concentrated in one set of hands again.

The exact nature of the bureaucracy has fluctuated in the centuries since then, but since the end of the Constitutional Crisis of 979, Tizon has had democratically elected heads of each of the various departments, and the bureaucrats have been responsive to the desires of their elected bosses.

## 0927 NARSIL

Narsil is the most populated planet in the Sword Worlds subsector, and an industrial powerhouse with few peers in the entire Spinward Marches. Only its relatively primitive technology holds it back.

Narsil is also a gateway world to Darrian space. Some Darrian traffic moves along the jump-1 route through Tizon, but most of the trade with Mire and Daryen goes through Narsil or Anduril.

## The Planet

Narsil is an unusual planet, orbiting a rare M0 II giant star. Isildur was once a typical F7 V main sequence star, but about 1,500,000 years ago it started fusing helium in its core. The star then expanded far into its inner system and became much more luminous.

Any rocky planets Isildur once had are incinerated or nearly molten, but many of the icy bodies in the outer system have melted in the new sunlight. Until this time, Narsil was

merely a frozen ball of gas, water, and rock, in an eccentric orbit that took it between 80 and 120 AU from the star. Suddenly, Narsil was in Isildur's new habitable zone. The surface around the equator melted, creating a central ocean that has been slowly growing ever since with Isildur's increasing heat.

After receiving its new quota of heat, Narsil vented ammonia, methane, nitrogen, and carbon monoxide for several hundred thousand years. Ammonia and methane escaped due to the planet's low gravity, while the remaining gases formed a toxic atmosphere.

The Ancients entered the scene 300,000 years ago, and for their own reasons decided to terraform what was still an unappetizing chunk of ice and rock. Oxygen was broken loose from some of the carbon monoxide and combined with

the rest, giving the planet a large percentage of atmospheric carbon dioxide and a huge greenhouse effect. Phytoplankton introduced into the

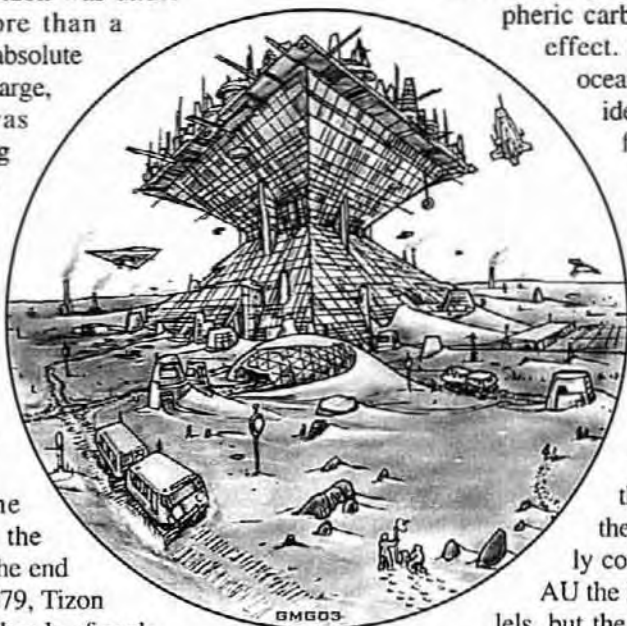
ocean gradually reduced the carbon dioxide and created free oxygen. After that, fish, seabirds, and larger animals were added — many of them Terran species, such as sea lions and polar bears. By the time the Ancients disappeared, Narsil was a terrestrial world, its percentage of oxygen lower than usual (12%), but still quite habitable at lower elevations.

In 1120, the planet is 88 AU from its primary, and the planet's "land" is actually oversized ice caps that start at 35° north and south from the equator. Narsil actually has a slightly cool climate; if it were constantly at 88 AU the ice caps would be near the 60th parallels, but the planet is normally in deeper regions

of space and there is never time for the ice to melt. Unfortunately, the oceans are nearly 100 miles deep, covering any rocky surfaces in the temperate regions. There are a few experimental floating cities, but Narsil's population lives almost entirely on the ice caps in less hospitable latitudes.

## History

Narsil was first settled in -204, when an Anduril-based company set up a settlement. Hunting and gathering was the major occupation at first, based around the exportation of Terran-derived lifeforms left over from the terraforming process. *Gram's* hurried escape from rimward had left several troublesome gaps in the plants and animals the early Sword Worlds had brought with them, and the establishment of stable ecologies on several worlds was nearly impossible. Narsil offered a solution to this, and started growing quickly as it exported plants and animals no one had seen in centuries. The settlement prospered under the Sacnoth Dominate and got its own *hertug* and governor general in -142. It was left alone during the War of the First Rebellion and its aftermath, and had a population of 4,500,000 at the beginning of the Imperial era.



In 44 Narsil united with Anduril to become the Double Monarchy, remaining so until 604 (see p. 83). The association benefited Narsil so much that it soon overtook Anduril in population and industry and eventually grew to equal Gram and Sacnoth in power.

As the planet continued to expand – for several centuries, it had the greatest population growth of any Sword World – industry took over as the main economic activity. The authorities had been landing large meteorites from the planetoid belts on Narsil to use as soil-creation feedstock, as agriculture was otherwise impossible on the icecaps. That cycle was gradually expanded to feed the planet's factories with metals. One factor helping keep costs down was the lack of concern for environmental regulations. Narsil's atmosphere was already nearly tainted by the carbon monoxide and ammonia that continued to vent from within the planet, so no one minded very much if new industries contributed to it. By 800, Narsil was the preeminent industrial world in the subsector, and the air was definitely ruined by industrial production. The industrialists had bought themselves into the nobility, however, and things continued unchanged.

### *Fixing Narsil*

By the early 1100s, the government has decided that the environmental degradation must end. As leaders of privately held, inherited corporations, they looked ahead to their great-grandchildren's time and saw that their companies would be in bad shape if the whole planet went under. Rather than let the situation continue, they embarked on an ambitious program to move industry into orbit and the system's two planetoid belts.

Unfortunately, not long after they started, the Fifth Frontier War began. Narsil was so rich and well established that its planetary defenses made it impervious to all but a major fleet action, and none of those ever occurred. The new industry off-planet was far less protected, though, and about 30% of the Narsil system's industrial capacity was wiped out by Darrian raids. The planet was plunged into a deep depression.

When the war ended, the government made the fateful decision to continue with the program of building industry in space. The old industry on the planet had gradually been dismantled as the space industry came on line, so they were going to have to rebuild one place or another anyway. Rebuilding away from Narsil seemed like the best option.

With the depression and the disruption of interplanetary trade in the immediate aftermath of the war, though, there was very little capital available. All this new building had to be paid for in some way. The corporations were no longer sitting on much liquid assets so huge loans were needed. To ease the process, they hit on the strategy of deliberate inflationary policies – short-term loans were arranged with the central bank, which lacked the authority to set an independent policy, then repaid later with currency that had eroded in value. It was, in effect, a way of paying for industrial expansion at far less than the actual cost to the government. By 1114, annual planetary inflation was running at over 400%.

Unfortunately someone always has to pay, and in this case it was Narsil's common people, who were on fixed incomes

and saw their standard of living get worse week after week. Though the government tried to pitch the erosion as a necessary step to save Narsil from its environmental problems, the people saw that the real effect was a huge new tax, as they had to pay more and more to the companies which make up the state. Unrest broke out all over the world, and has only been getting worse over time.

The situation might have remained under control if it weren't for Markus Nokkvisson Drusse, a radical politician using the mob's feelings to advance his own ambitions. With demands for nationalizing the ruling corporations and an end to the expensive building in space, he has built a considerable power bloc with which he is threatening the government. Accommodation has been impossible – Drusse really believes that he is doing the right thing. In a panic, the government has changed policy and has been hanging on through uncharacteristically harsh repression while it tries to rein in the inflation. Economists have estimated that if the government can hang on for five more years, the situation will stabilize, but it is becoming clear that it doesn't have that kind of time.

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*Narsil, I am reliably informed,  
is inhabited by people so  
contrary that they have black  
snow and white coal.*

*– Anton Wilson Peale*

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### *Life on Narsil*

Narsil is an odd place, with towering ice cliffs marking the boundary between the berg-infested equatorial ocean and the icy "land" that covers the rest of the surface. Everyone stays away from the edges, which are eroding as the planet swings along its long orbit toward Isildur, and settlements stay north and south of the 50th parallels. The planet's nearly normal atmosphere was once its most terrestrial feature, but it is no longer breathable without aid. In the last century, the biosphere has deteriorated, with mass extinctions feared soon.

The northern hemisphere holds most of the population, but no part of the ice caps is free of Human occupation. The only difference between the two hemispheres is best seen from orbit at night, where the city lights of the north blend with one another extensively, while those in the south are separated by the thin, bright lines of the enclosed roads joining them.

Cities are largely enclosed as well due to the cold conditions that reign everywhere people live – another reason the atmospheric taint has been allowed to accumulate for so long. Only starports, airfields, and farms/soil manufactories are out in the open.

### *The People of Narsil*

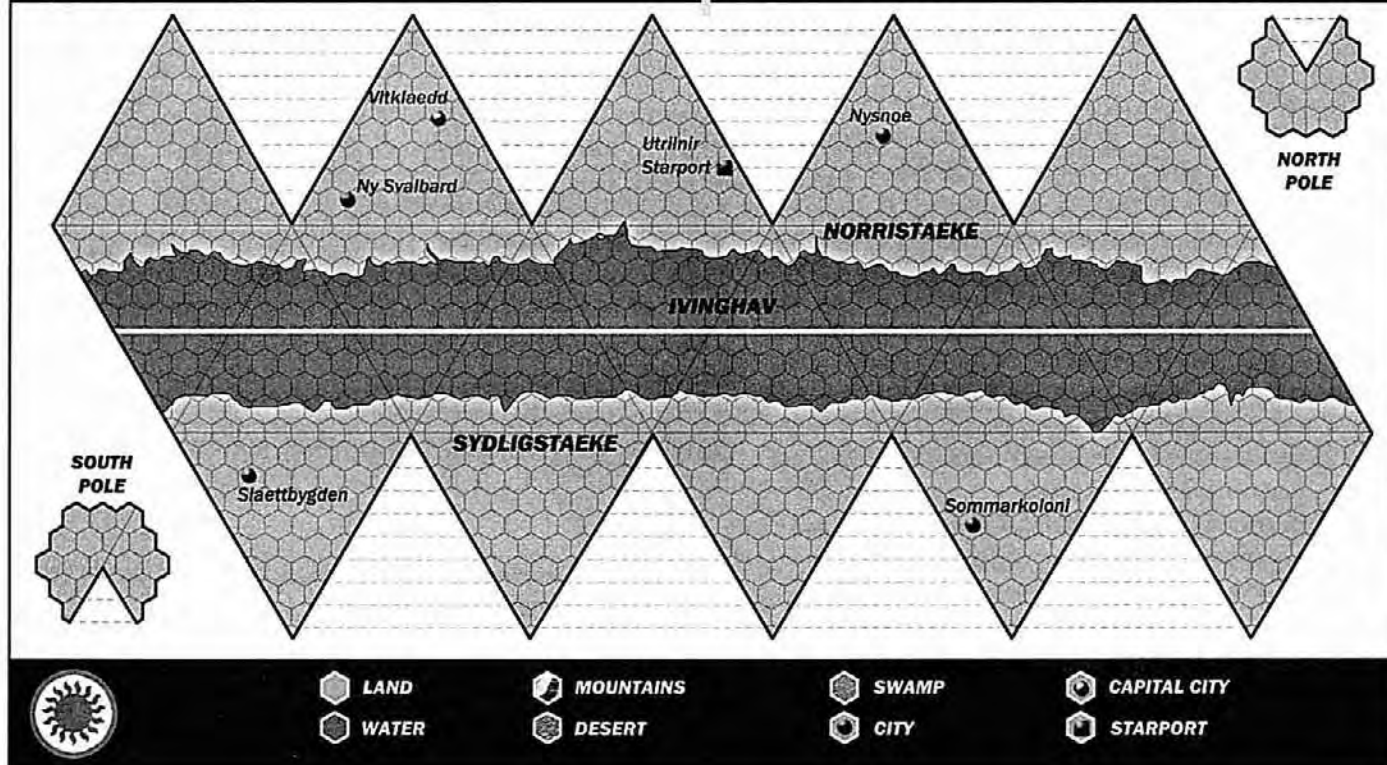
The Narsils are, by reputation, the most shortsighted of Sword Worlders. Whether this is actually so, or just a reflection of their inability to resist their corporate masters, is a matter of some debate. The test will be to see what happens if the



WORLD NAME:

**NARSIL**

GRID/SECTOR:

**0927 SPINWARD MARCHES**

current government falls. Some argue that the Narsils' violent reaction to the short-term inflationary pain needed to end the planet's ecological crisis is sufficient evidence to answer the question.

The people are also very conscious of hierarchy and deferential to those in higher positions. This is partly because of the fairly tight laws governing living in the enclosed cities of the planet, but also because of the culture of the large corporations that employ so many people. In recent years, this tendency toward deference has been declining, giving way to rebellion.

### *The Government*

Narsil is ruled by a conglomerate of major business interests, 31 theoretically independent companies so interlocked through stock swaps and joint ventures that they usually act in concert for their mutual protection.

Nearly 70% of the planet's working population works for one of the combines. The system is largely meritocratic, with employees promoted by their level of ability, and the true leadership approximately consisting of the best the Narsil has to offer. The highest positions are occupied by the families owning the corporations, but day-to-day governance is performed by talented people.

### *The Rebels*

Narsil's Drussian rebels are adamant that the corporate state must end and be replaced with a neutral representative body that will balance the interests of the people with those of the corporations. Some go further and suggest that the corporations shouldn't be represented at all.

The only thing keeping Narsil from full-blown revolution is the rebels' lack of organization. While Drusse has articulated their demands, he doesn't actually control the majority of the rebellious groups. He is working to forge a common front, and if he succeeds, Narsil will probably fall apart.

### *Nysnoe*

One of Narsil's major cities, Nysnoe is home to more than 50 million people, and typical of the planet's larger cities. It sits on a large open plain of ice on the planet's north polar ice cap, and is made of eight gigantic arcologies – imaginatively named “Arcologie En” to “Arcologie Atte” – and adjoining domed “suburbs.” All are completely enclosed to ward off the worst of the cold. The domes are insulated with translucent aerogel that lets some light through but keeps the heat from radiating or conducting away.

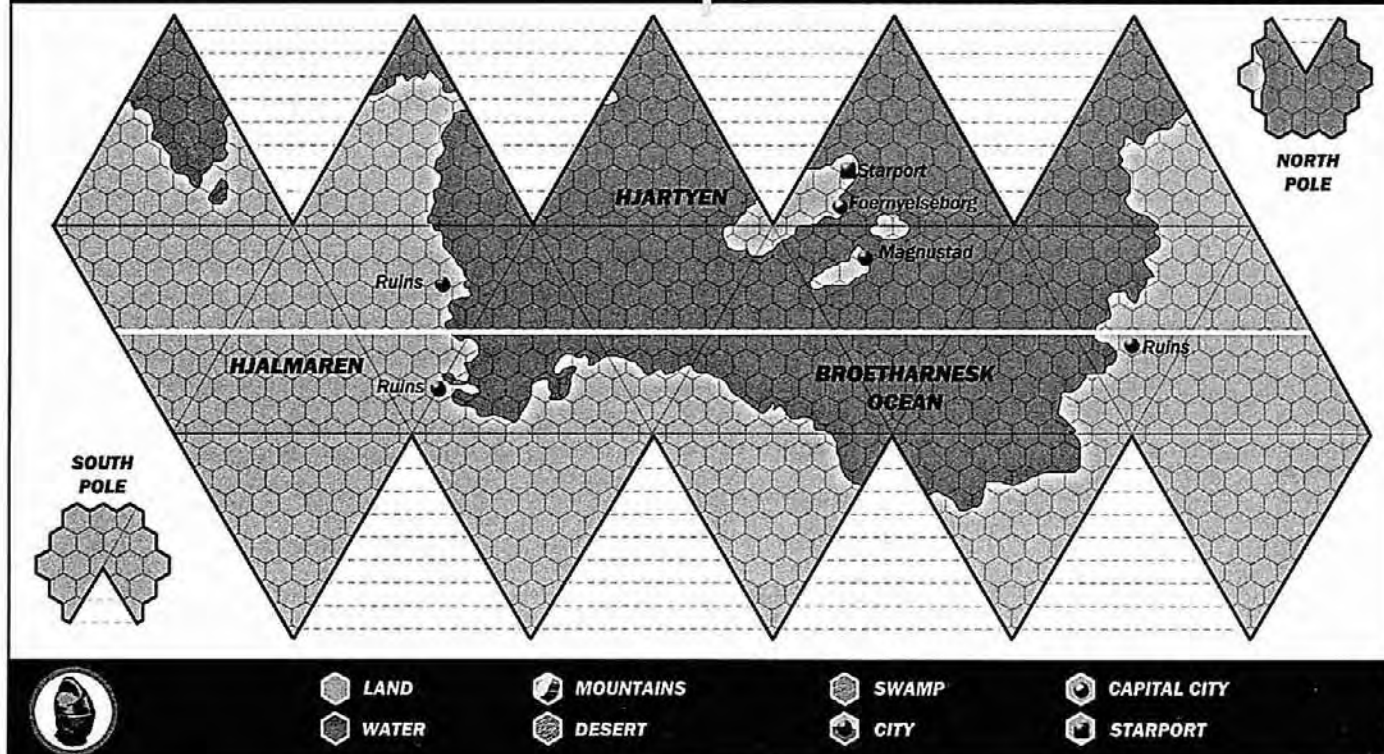
The majority of the population lives in the arcologies, which are essentially enormous apartment buildings, alternating levels of housing with shops and workplaces so that a person can live his entire life in one building. The richest people live on the outside layer of the building, where natural light is available through windows; the interior is lit by a mixture of artificial lighting and fiber optic lines that conduct external light into the interior.

Domes are used for a variety of activities that can't be performed within the confines of the arcologies. Large factories, water treatment, farming, large recreational areas, and so on are put here; as is typical for Narsil, the factory and sewer domes vent out into the open environment, turning the ice various shades of gray and black for miles around.

WORLD NAME:

**COLADA**

GRID/SECTOR:

**1022 SPINWARD MARCHES**

## 1022 COLADA (AMBER ZONE)

Colada was once one of the most important worlds in the Sword Worlds subsector. Then, 900 years ago, a suicidal nuclear war smashed the planet back into the Dark Ages. Only in the last few centuries has it started to recover, in no small part due to its famous and skillful mercenaries.

### History

In the first century Imperial, Colada was an equal partner with Dyrnwyn and Anduril in the Triple Dominion. But in 212, a vicious Coladan civil war, the Vetur War, broke out. It eventually deteriorated into a nuclear exchange. Only the rural and thinly inhabited continent Hjartyen was spared. From being one of the most important Sword Worlds, with a population approaching 100 million, Colada was knocked down. As its former allies squabbled over what to do, the subsector collapsed into tiny states again and Colada was left to its own devices for nearly a century.

It did not do well. Several hundred weapons had been set off, destroying the planet's infrastructure. Fallout contaminated most of the best agricultural land and caused considerable genetic damage in the remaining population. Without any medical services, and with no resources to clean up the poisoned environment, it would be another 300 years before the population began to grow again. To this day, Coladans have a higher rate of cancers and birth defects than anyone else in the Sword Worlds.

Only in the last 200 years has the planet truly begun to recover; in 1100, the background radiation level in the atmosphere finally dropped to pre-war levels. However, an Amber

Zone is still in place for the planet due to local hotspots and some soil poisoning by heavy metals. The land closest to the former centers of civilization remains moderately radioactive, so the Coladans rebuilt elsewhere.

### The Planet

Colada is small, but sufficiently dense that it can hold enough atmosphere to be comfortable for Humans. One small asteroidal moon, Minaya, was captured from the system's planetoid belt; it circles 25,500 miles from Colada. Heavily cratered, rich in carbon and water ice, Minaya has made an ideal location for the Coladan Space Brigade's main base.

The planet itself is roughly divided in two: the supercontinent of Hjalmarén, which covers most of the southern hemisphere and a chunk of the northern, and the world-girdling Broetharnesk Ocean. The only other notable feature is the small continent Hjartyen, in the middle of the ocean.

In Colada's early days the east and west coasts of the ocean were inhabited, but the planet's nuclear war emptied both regions. Now all of the population lives on Hjartyen and its adjoining islands.

Foernyelseborg ("Renewal City") is the capital and largest city, with some 300,000 people. It is an important water port on the east coast of the subcontinent. The starport is some distance to the north, also on the coast.

### Life on Colada

Most Coladans live a rural, agricultural lifestyle. There are cities besides Foernyelseborg, but they are much smaller and dedicated to supporting their surrounding regions. Unfortunately, the prejudice against Coladan foodstuffs is strong,



even though the radioactivity on Hjartyn dropped below dangerous levels centuries ago. What produce is sold goes off-planet for processing, and the dreaded word "Coladan" is often not on the label. Some other trade is in industrial- and jewelry-quality diamonds from the old, eroded center of Hjalmarnen. These too are mostly shipped off world – although Tindragata, a neighborhood in the regional city of Graenheim, is noted for its low-volume, high-quality gem work.

Coladans pay lip service to the Sword World ideal of female conduct, but a planetary truism is that "there are no safe jobs on Colada." This is because Colada can't afford to have half its potential workforce kept at home. With more than 2% of its total population under arms at all times, Colada's home industry is permanently laboring under conditions like those suffered by a nation at war. Consequently women participate in Coladan industrial and service sectors to a much greater degree than on other Sword Worlds.

### *The Champion's Guard*

Colada's main claim to fame, and its major economic crutch, is its superb mercenary force. The Champion's Guard – the total armed force of the world – is available for rent, either in pieces or in whole, to anyone willing to pay. While the world is too underpopulated to arm more than 50,000 men, their quality is unsurpassed; former *Hertugnir* of Colada liked to brag that they could outfight any other unit of their size and level of technological development.

#### **THE GADOLINE SIEGE**

All is not well with the Guard, however. It was part of the ground forces committed to the invasion of Lanth (see p. 20) during the late war. When the Gram Fleet was forced away from Lanth, some 15,000 Guards were trapped on the surface at the Sword Worlder bridgehead on the Gadoline Peninsula. Only 4,000 were left alive at the end of hostilities, and a great deal of equipment was lost.

The Guard is retrenching, and has had to cut back on some of its mercenary activity while it does so. As mercenary tickets make up a big part of the planetary economy, this is causing more problems.

These *Hertugnir* started lavishing resources on the military in the late 780s, after a series of embarrassing battle losses to the Darrians stung their pride. At first this was a sink for funds and Colada's economy went into a downturn, but in the early 800s *Hertug* Renholt III hit upon the plan of hiring out his shiny new army for cash. Since then the Guard has intervened in nearly 50 rebellions, dynastic squabbles, counterinsurgencies, and brushfire wars – in short, anywhere someone feels like shooting at someone else. Money has been pouring in, more than enough to cover costs. At first meeting with uneven success, the endless practice and bountiful money for equipment have turned the Guard into crack troops with an unshakeable *esprit de corps*. It's been more than 100 years

since they've lost anything like a fair fight, and the Imperium learned that they had to *overwhelm* the Guard with numbers and technology during the Fourth and Fifth Frontier Wars.

Unfortunately for the *Hertugnir*, the Coladan military got tired of supporting a line of monarchs that was getting more deranged and spendthrift every generation. At the end of the Fourth Frontier War they overthrew their master and set up Colada to benefit themselves. The Quartermaster Regiment soon expanded into a bureaucracy that ran Colada on a day-to-day basis, while the Guard's top officers became the overall rulers and policy-setters.

The changeover has gone remarkably smoothly: around 40% of the male population of Colada has spent some time in the Guard, and the rest embrace a romantic image of their military as the best fighters in the universe. Also helping is the way the Coladan military is spending the accumulated capital confiscated from the *Hertug* – rebuilding the world to the benefit of everyone. The clearing of the atmosphere and land of radioactive material has accelerated under the military rulers, and infrastructure is being built at a record rate. The planetary population has also increased by about 50% since the takeover. The culmination of this trend is a new shipyard, which will be complete in early 1121. When completed, Colada will have only the third Class V starport in the Sword Worlds Confederation, and will benefit from the increase in shipbuilding trade.

### *Government*

The Guard is now divided into two parts, the Base Branch and the Field Branch. Essentially the Field Branch handles the tasks always handled by the Guard, while the Base Branch handles the government functions that would be left to the civilian administration on another world. A recruit begins in the Field Branch and stays there until his fighting days are over, after which he can either retire or transfer to the Base Branch. Base Branch officers have the same sort of relationship to Field Branch officers that staff officers have to line officers. Field Branch personnel may be seconded to the Base Branch for temporary duty, and in an emergency Base Branch personnel can be seconded to the Field Branch, but mostly being transferred to the Base Branch is a one-way career move.

The Guard is a unified service. Colada's system defenses and its small squadron of starships constitute a brigade of the Guard. There are no Marines, just Guards trained for shipboard duties. Transfers between the Space Brigade and the other brigades are rare, but not unknown.

Each aspect of civilian life that would ordinarily have a ministry – Trade, Justice, Finance, Foreign Relations, Transportation, Labor, and so on – has its own department, which is considered a brigade regardless of its size, and is run by a Base Major General or a Base Lieutenant General. All general officers in the Base Branch are members of the Policy Board, which is chaired by a Base General, the equivalent of a prime minister. Usually there is only one Base General, but if a Field General wanted to transfer to the Base Branch before the current Base General is ready to retire, he becomes deputy chairman until the old General retires.



## Foernyelseborg

The capital city of Colada, Foernyelseborg is unusual for a Sword Worlder city in that there is no accommodation for gravitic vehicles. The city was founded not long after the Coladan nuclear war, and grew to its present size in the long period when Colada was economically and technologically depressed. Though grav cars are becoming more and more common, the city still has streets designed for wheeled vehicles, and they are still in use.

The city itself is similarly a throwback. It is very low to the ground, built primarily of old-fashioned steel frames and stone facings. Few buildings except those in the very center of the city are more than five stories tall. On the other hand, this gives Foernyelseborg a character that fits well with Sword Worlder admiration for the traditional, which explains why "upgrades" to the city have been slow in coming. The architecture is reminiscent of Terra's European styles about 150 years before the Solomani invented jump drive, and the local dark gray slate and sandstone used to construct the buildings gives the whole city a sober feel that matches the buttoned-down military culture of Colada.

Foernyelseborg is sometimes called "The City of Rain" because of its climate. A warm equatorial ocean current runs into an arctic one just off the coast, and produces rain in more than half the days of the year.

The center of the city is surrounded by the Huvudgata, a large circular street about a mile in diameter that separates the downtown core from the rest of Foernyelseborg. The traffic on it is constant, and learning how to get onto it from a side street, then back off later, is a skill that takes years to master.

To the north of the city is Stoedel Base, a large facility dedicated to training new recruits to the Champion's Guard in the basics of military life. Once basic training is completed, infantry and aerospace units are shipped elsewhere, but advanced training for space and shore-assault platoons continues here.

## 1026 ANDURIL (AMBER ZONE)

Anduril is a world where, despite their common Sword Worlder culture, the people have always perceived themselves as belonging to many different groups, depending on who their ancestors were when the planet was first colonized. It has thrashed back and forth between unification and balkanization numerous times since it was first settled. Under the stresses following the Fifth Frontier War, Anduril looks like it might be coming apart once more.

### History

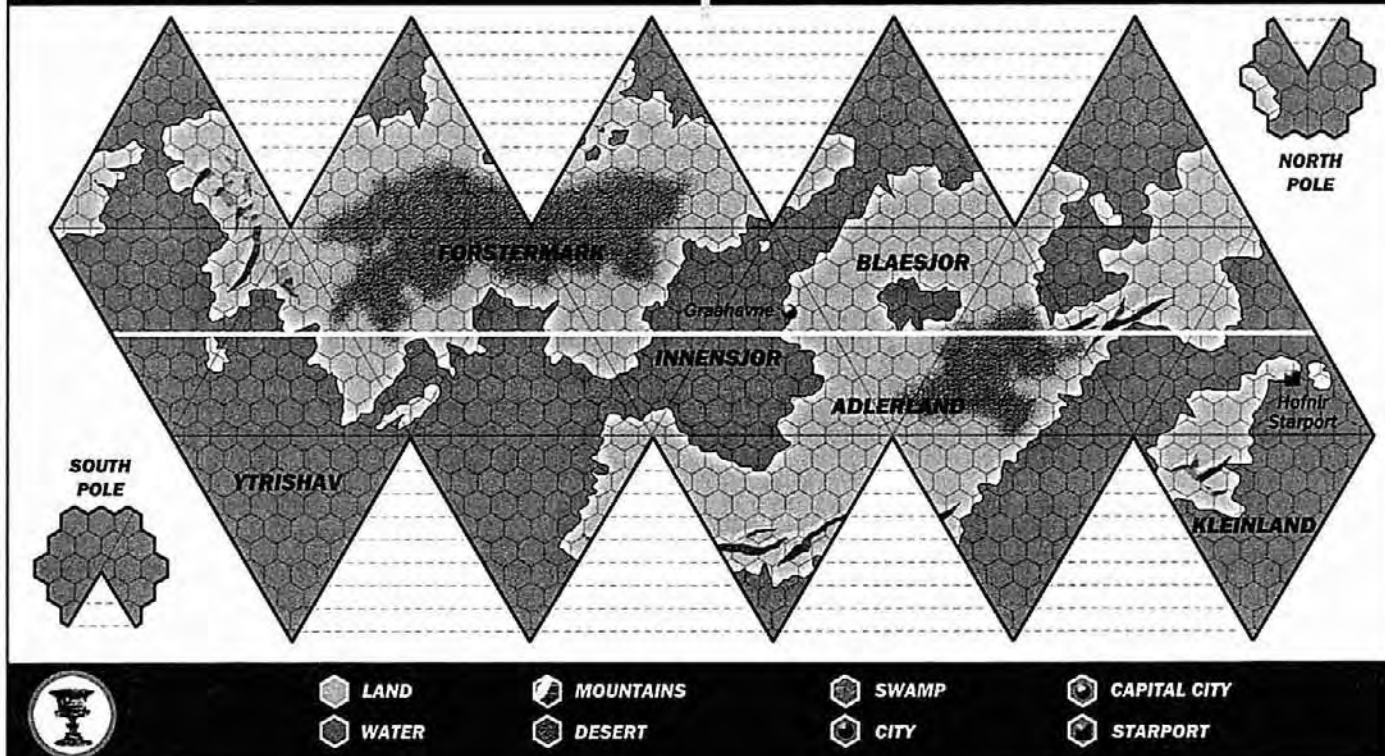
Anduril was first settled in the late -200s, as one of a wave of Sword World colonies founded after Sacnoth was able to build jump-capable ships (see p. 55). Unfortunately, it became the target for a number of private colonization projects financed by various ethnic groups who felt badly treated on Gram and Sacnoth (See *Unit*, p. 106). Instead of joining the main settlement at Graahavne, these colonists each selected a different part of the planet to settle. These settlers



WORLD NAME:

**ANDURIL**

GRID/SECTOR:

**1026 SPINWARD MARCHES**

thought of themselves as Navies, Surgies, Geenies, and so on, rather than citizens of Anduril.

The scattered countries were forcibly united under the Sacnoth Dominate. Eventually a tenuous planetary culture developed, especially after the planet became part of the Double Monarchy and the different groups could think of themselves as provinces of a unit larger than Anduril itself. However, the tendency toward balkanization has flared up at various times. During the centuries between the Second and Third Frontier Wars, Anduril was again divided into multiple states.

In the early 1000s, the planet was finally reunited as multiple international coordinating agencies, designed to offer services as diverse as collective defense and postal services, gradually coalesced. The resulting conglomeration stumbled into being a planetary government.

### *The Planet*

Anduril is a large world with a dense atmosphere and orbits an energetic star. Under most circumstances this would produce severe weather, and here the situation is particularly bad; the planet has a substantial axial tilt (53°), which puts large portions of the planet under perpetual day or night twice a year. During these seasons ("Hvassirok" and "Kuldirok") winds in excess of 150 miles per hour sweep across the planet, destroying almost anything that offers a surface to beat against.

The planet has two large continents and one large ocean, with a smaller sea, the Innesjor, separating the two landmasses. Most settlement are around this sea. The starport is on the subcontinent of Kleinland, with launches going east across the ocean from there.

With the winds and wind-driven waves, erosion is a major factor on Anduril. The tortured, sandblasted natural sculptures of the continental interiors are famous throughout the Sword Worlds. In recent years, sculptor Una Thorasdottir Heiberg has become renowned for her artistically interpreted renditions of various formations, and her works sell for many thousands of credits throughout the Spinward Marches.

### *Life on Anduril*

Despite the planet's axial tilt, Anduril is quite terrestrial and people live comfortably . . . about 80% of the time. A visitor to the planet notices only that buildings are rather low to the ground and are wide rather than tall, if size is needed. Further, when seen from the correct angle, they are either built with a distinct prow, or have an independent, curving, triangular pair of walls built nearby. All the prows in a town point in the same direction, which is the direction from which the winds come during the times of greatest axial tilt. Andurils gladly explain this if asked, and then cheerfully add stories of particularly harrowing storms and the effects they had on those who were caught outside.

Less obvious is that each town, settlement, and isolated farmstead has a storm shelter, which is used for the long stretches of days when the winds are particularly bad. Buildings are battened down, then the citizenry head for the shelters until things blow over. In large cities, some major buildings – power plants, sewage and water distribution sites, and so on – are hardened, and tunnels run beneath them. These tunnels have evolved into extensive underground malls that contain housing and shops. As a result, some Andurils don't bother to come to the surface even when they can.

## The People of Anduril

The citizens of Anduril are among the richest of all Sword Worlders, and this shows in their education, clothing, and all-around confidence. The average citizen is cheerful, proud of the way he handles adversity through planning and creativity, possibly a little too patriotic and xenophobic. However, despite the planet's flaws, the man on the street (or under it) has never *really* had things bad, not since the planet was united in his great-great-grandfather's time. It remains to be seen how the Andurils would react to true adversity.

## Government

Anduril's soldiers and navy personnel are inferior by Sword Worlder standards, and the military is smaller than expected given the planet's population and wealth. The Andurils truly shine in politics, a field that interests a great deal of the population.

The Coordinating Bureau of Anduril has never been a strong government; it came about for lack of better options in the first decade of the previous century. It has always been subordinated to local authorities in a confusing series of treaties and alliances; various regions and cities remain nearly independent. The Bureau tends to stumble along from crisis to crisis, accumulating roles haphazardly while missing some important ones because an opportunity never arises to wrest them away from the planet's constituent parts. For example, there is no universal Anduril currency.

There has always been the sense that the Bureau was operating under the grudging tolerance of Anduril's people, and now – even though the planet got off very lightly during the last Frontier War – many people want it gone. Several

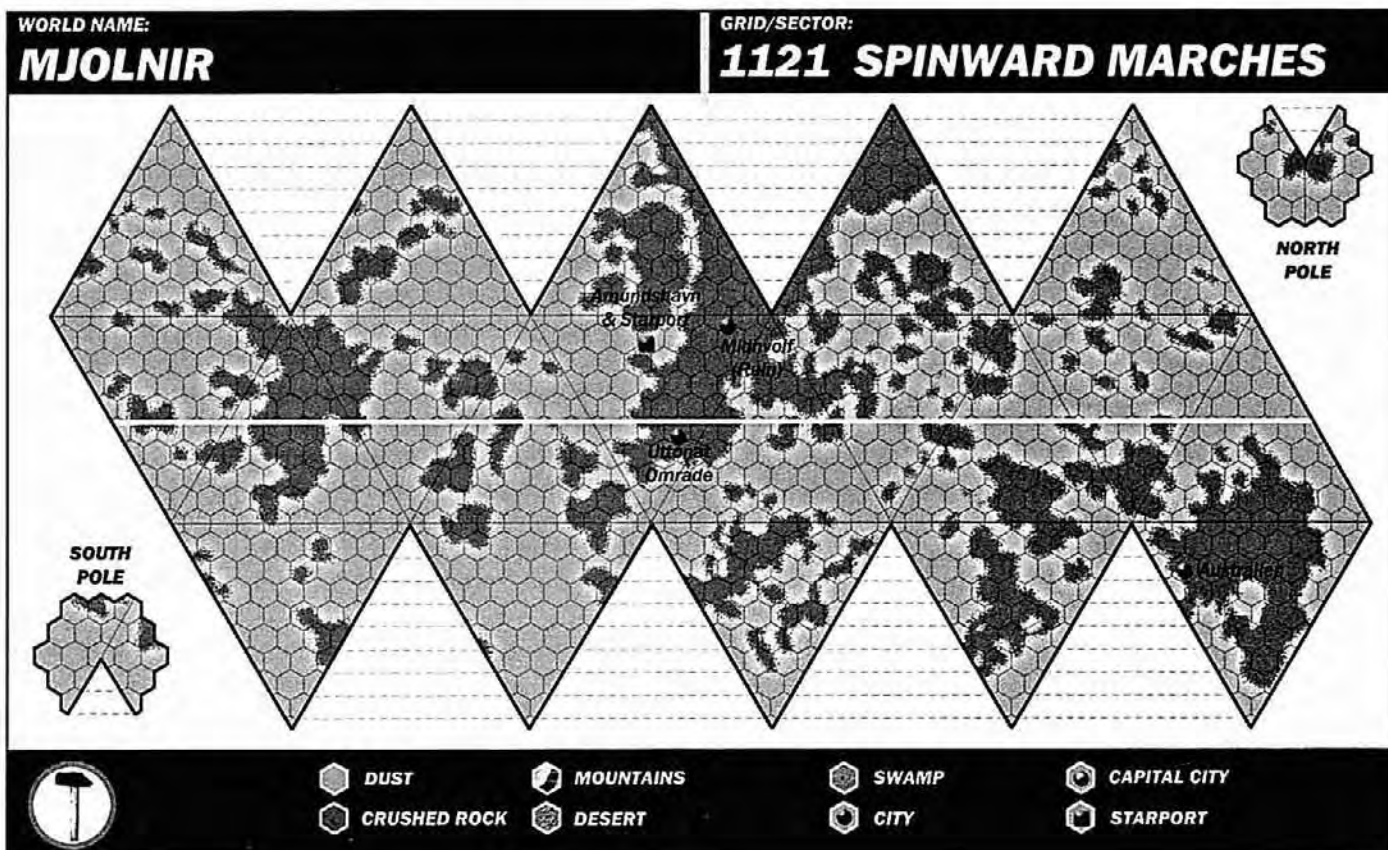
rebellions have broken out across the planet, all driven by the local nationalistic feelings always bubbling beneath the surface of Anduril's politics. Some aim to break one portion of the world or another out of the planetary government, while others look to reform it. On Anduril, though, "reform" is invariably a code word for rearranging things so that one ethnic group can rule the others.

## 1121 MJOLNIR

One of the subsector's least-terrestrial main worlds, Mjolnir has always been overlooked and underpopulated. Early Sword Worlder settlers would jump over it in favor of Vilis or Garda-Vilis, and after those worlds were absorbed by the Imperium it was reduced to being a backwater on a border that interested only military men. A few hundred thousand people live here now, primarily involved in the one industry that brings any ships to the planet.

## History

Mjolnir, then called Haulteclair, was surveyed in the early days of Sword Worlds colonization, and promptly ignored for 100 years as unpromising. Even when the first settlers came from Gram, it was primarily used as a stepping stone on the way to more pleasant worlds to coreward. For centuries, the population was under 20,000, dedicated entirely to serving transit traffic. Many visitors noted the gunk mixed in with the planet's regolith here and there, and touted it as a source of future revenues, but until a technique for getting it free from its rocky substrate was developed in the 450s, no one could figure out how to use it.





When the "oil pools" were opened up, however, the planet entered a new period of prosperity, growing to support more than a million citizens over the next few decades.

It was during this time that Aesirism took hold on Haulteclair, and when the Aesir Alliance broke loose from the Tizon Empire, Haulteclair – now named Mjolnir – was one of its members.

For a century life was good on Mjolnir, as the oil pools were recognized as a key strategic resource. Big industrial planets like Gram and Narsil had a vested interest in keeping it out of Tizonian control. Unfortunately, Tizon grew in strength, and the planet was reconquered just before the Tizonian War.

When that conflict ended with the defeat of the Empire, Mjolnir was free again as part of the larger Second Dominate, but also economically depressed. Its people were surprisingly divided after losing their long-time common enemy and the weak governments that "ruled" for the next century left Mjolnir one of the poorest in the Sword Worlds.

In 727, the company Rikarolja Furetag struck back against an attempted nationalization, and inaugurated a corporate state. For another two centuries, life on Mjolnir revolved ever more around the oil-mining company's interests, and the population grew to nearly 3,000,000 as the industry grew ever larger. The planet became wealthy during this time, and the period is remembered as the Golden Age of Mjolnir, but as with all things, the good times came to an end. The Company fell apart under increasing corruption and pressure from revolutionaries.

Unfortunately for the average citizen, the planet was the oil-pool industry and vice versa. No government could afford to let the industry out of its control, or it repeated the original corporate coup. The new government claimed the oil pools in the name of the people, and then essentially carried on the worst of Rikarolja Furetag policy as well as adding its own nasty layer of ideology.

What finally broke the cycle was the planet itself, which had a major earthquake just over 75 years ago.

## *The Planet*

Mjolnir is a small, rocky body with a very thin atmosphere, similar to Mars. Unlike Mars, however, it has a veneer of life that supplies a bit of oxygen to the air.

The planet differs from many similar worlds by possessing vast dust seas. The key fact is that it orbits between two planetoid belts – or rather, it is the moon of a large rocky primary, Niflheim, which orbits between them. The system is young, the belts dense, and Mjolnir's puny atmosphere gives almost no protection from incoming space junk. As a result, the surface has been repeatedly pounded by meteorites, which have had the double effect of keeping the planet's life simple and bacteria-like, and of turning the upper crust into a layer of crushed rock up to a half-mile thick. About half of the surface consists of a mixture of rocks and small pebbles, while the remainder is fine dust.

In a few places, old volcanoes poke above the smashed surface, and the starport is on one of these. Elsewhere, the surface is too unstable to build on, and in the rocky areas,

digging down is too dangerous. But on some days the dust storms let up and allow a traveler to see. He is then treated to the sight of the starport's enclosed train going to the one place where people can live in relative safety: under the dust seas in enclosed, domed settlements.

## *The Great Earthquake*

Under the dust, Mjolnir has many small towns and even individual settlements joined by tubeways. At the center of this network is the ghost city of Midhvolf, the former capital of Mjolnir. This settlement once held 400,000 people, and was far larger than any present-day city on Mjolnir. However, at 0314 hours on 126-1044, a strong earthquake jolted Midhvolf and the dome failed catastrophically. In many places the dust simply fell in and crushed the city; elsewhere, open spaces remained but rapidly filled with dust. Within a few minutes, virtually the entire population of the city was dead, crushed or suffocated.



The totalitarian nature of Mjolnir's government then made things worse. Many essential services for the remainder of the planet were controlled from the capital. Electricity, information, and water supplies were cut off, and food imports through Midhvolf's starport ended. In the six weeks that it took for relief efforts to reestablish basic services, another 2,000,000 people died in outlying areas. Mjolnir's population was reduced by nearly 85%.

In the 75 years since, Mjolnir's society has grown in new directions as a response to the disaster. The centralized government is gone, killed in Midhvolf, and replaced with a decentralized democracy. No more large cities have been built, and each town is now as self-sufficient as possible. Midhvolf has never been rebuilt or even dug out, and no one goes there; it sits like a dead spider at the center of a web of tubeways now connecting the remaining towns. Even the starport has been moved, 40 miles west to Armundshaven, a small city of about 10,000 people.

## *The Oil Pools*

Mjolnir's economy is still based on mining the oil pools dotted around the landscape. When one of the single-celled organisms living in the dust seas dies, its decomposing body turns into a bead of complex silicone sludge. In most places the dust is too thick and extensive to concentrate it, but where the local geology produces pond-sized basins under the surface, the basins fill up with the material, producing a tarry mixture of organics and crushed stone.

The locals call this substance "oil." While it is only vaguely related to petroleum, being based around silicone rather than carbon chains, it has many similar industrial and pharmaceutical uses. Natural silicones are extremely rare, so the substance is Mjolnir's major export, particularly to Gungnir, Tizon, Joyeuse, Gram, and Narsil. Efforts to cultivate the oil-producing life forms elsewhere have proven futile or uneconomic.

The best oil pools are about 100 feet across and 15 to 20 feet deep. Two tubes are sunk into the depths of the pool, and then air from the atmosphere is heated and injected down one tube. This loosens the oil from the dust and lets it be extracted through the second tube into large, waiting containers. All the oil within a 10-foot radius of the extraction machinery is harvested within a few hours, and then the extractor is moved to another spot nearby. When about 90% of the oil in the pool is removed, the rest is left in place as a "starter" that will regrow and refill the pool over the next decade.

Since the downfall of the last centralized government and its attached corporation, medium-sized companies dominate the oil business on Mjolnir, but the small-scale nature of the best pools means that even a single worker and extractor can make a living. This is doubly true since differing proportions of different single-celled life forms in pools can produce oil high in particularly lucrative chemicals. Many stories circulate of jealously hidden "Midas basins" that make their owners rich.

## Armundshaven

Mjolnir's starport is near the city of Armundshaven. Though not the largest city on the planet, Armundshaven is home to 10,000 people and the planet's commercial center.

The city is entirely under the dust of Mjolnir's pounded surface. A dome at the top level is the site for both entry and exit tubeways to other cities and the starport on the surface. Though once a residential area, the dome is now home to Armundshaven's commercial sector. Along with businesses concerned with off-planet and intercity trade, most of the city's shops are here.

Three more levels below, burrowed into the rock, make up the rest of the city. The uppermost "Old Level" was devoted to housing during Mjolnir's years under totalitarian rule, and is cramped and unpleasant. The whole population of the city could live here if necessary, but only the poor do so; the rest of the level has been converted to warehouse and storage space.

The next level is the "New Level," constructed since the Great Earthquake. It is a maze of tunnels and open passages like the level above it, but they are wider, bigger, and brighter. Ventilation is better, and there are a few small parks (none more than 50 square yards) adding some greenery. Off-worlders still get the distinct feel of living in an industrial town – which Armundshaven is, given the whole planet's reliance on the mining of oil pools.

Below the New Level is the newly built "Green Level," which was finished in 1115. It is a large, open space with a

## NIFLHEIM

*Is there something stronger than a Red Zone? Put one on Niflheim.*

– Gerrit Edgarsson Lillesoe, biologist

Mjolnir is a moon, but unlike most inhabited moons its primary is not a gas giant. Instead, Mjolnir is the smaller partner of a double planet; Niflheim is the other world. Niflheim is one of the largest terrestrial planets known, just less than 11,000 miles in diameter and with a surface gravity of 1.69 Gs. Its atmosphere is breathable, but Niflheim is large enough to hold onto helium and the pressure at the surface is 1.5 standard atmospheres. Still, Niflheim should be easy to visit – yet no one has been to the surface and lived for more than a few hours. Even robotic probes rarely last a day.

The problem is Niflheim's biosphere, which is astonishingly fierce. Study has been difficult, but as far as can be told it consists of a few hundred species of tiny lifeforms. Whether they are natural creatures or artificial nanomachines is impossible to tell, since they are collectively capable of breaking down anything not of their own type. While the atmosphere is technically a dense oxygen-nitrogen mix, in practice the biosphere makes Niflheim's air "insidious," as everything is attacked and broken down to make more creatures. Given some time to work, Niflheim's life will defeat any environmental protection. Some suggest that the biosphere may be the remnants of a pre-Maghiz Darrian biotechnology experiment gone wrong, while others suggest the Ancients. In both cases this is nothing more than speculation.

Most work on Niflheim is done from orbit, where surveillance satellites with centimeter resolution watch the biosphere go about its business. When not disintegrating some easy prey from off world, the local lifeforms live in a steady state, working collectively to build what looks like fungoid "grass" and "trees." The purpose of this activity is unknown, though blobby nanocollective "animals" wander from plant to plant, apparently tending to them in some manner. The biosphere is very resistant to natural disasters, shrugging off storms and floods without any noticeable difficulty. Even a volcanic eruption is only a minor problem, as the nanolife seems able to fight back against advancing lava and superheated gas, only slowly giving ground and growing back as soon as its opponent has cooled. At times like this, the bare surface of Niflheim is exposed for a short while, and scientists believe they have detected a chemically inert fluorine-based crust covering the ground and preventing the lifeforms from converting the whole planet. This may be evidence that Niflheim was artificially altered.

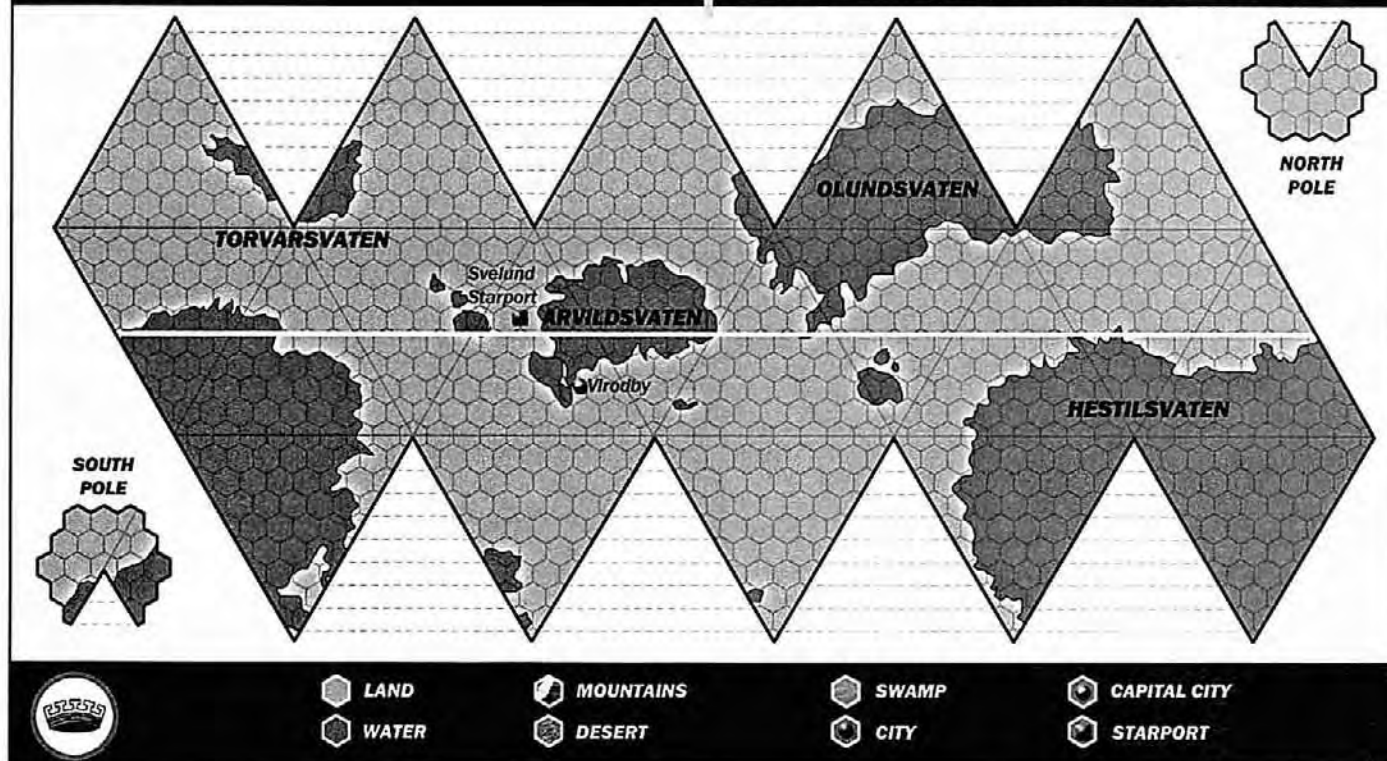
The Confederation government and Mjolnir's local authorities are very worried about what would happen should some of Niflheim's life escape to another world. In the past, expeditions have landed and been destroyed, but as soon as it became apparent why, all travel to Niflheim was banned by Mjolnir's government. Now only authorized scientific expeditions land probes. Nothing is ever allowed to return from the surface.



WORLD NAME:

**JOYEUSE**

GRID/SECTOR:

**1123 SPINWARD MARCHES**

minimum of support pillars. The richest people in Armundshaven live here, in units built into the circumference of the open space, but the Green Level is primarily an exercise of the city's newfound wealth. Most of it is a park, with an artificial river running through it; the river ends in a small marshy pond at the east end. The design supplements Armundshaven's water and air recycling, but the intent is mainly to give the citizenry someplace to go that isn't basalt gray.

## 1123 JOYEUSE (AMBER ZONE)

One parsec from Gram, Joyeuse remains a frontier world due to dry conditions and the difficulty of growing enough food to support even its small population.

### *The Planet*

Joyeuse is a dry world in a 3:2 resonance orbit with its close primary. The air is cold, and much moisture precipitates during the long nights. The hydrographic percentage is low and Joyeuse's salty oceans are slowly evaporating. At best the land is plains dotted with woody shrub and grass analogs, and this gradually becomes desert and badland in many places.

Joyeuse's year is a scant 12 days long, which in combination with the planet's slow rotation means that it goes through a very hot "daysummer" of constant sun and a freezing "nightwinter" of constant darkness. Each is 12 days, 8 hours long. Fortunately, this is quick enough that the nightwinters never get impossibly cold (about -50° Fahrenheit), and warm winds from the sunlit side help heat things a bit.

### *Life on Joyeuse*

While the planetary economy is largely agricultural, there is very little farming; the majority of Joyeuse's citizens are ranchers. The reason is Broedsaed Mange, a wide variety of local fungal plagues that hit virtually every known flowering plant to one extent or another. What agriculture there is relies on an uninspiring variety of mushrooms and some fruits and vegetables grown in hydroponic greenhouses. "Farmers" run vast stations devoted to animal husbandry, mostly cattle and sheep, which are allowed to roam freely, living off the resistant native vegetation. The planet's Amber Zone relates to strict regulations involving the import and export of foodstuffs. The people of Joyeuse don't want susceptible plants brought to their world, and they also control what leaves in order to prevent outbreaks on other worlds; the Mange is less virulent away from its homeworld, but still a major pest when it does escape.

As a result, Joyeuse is a world of widely separated small towns, formed where the corners of the gigantic ranches butt up against one another and the farmers build their homes for company and mutual aid. Cities are small; the largest of them is Tholasborg, with barely 250,000 people.

Water is the major concern, as the planet's salty oceans are small and unsuitable for irrigation. The best rivers and lakes have long since been claimed, but hopeful farmers still set up on seasonal streams and small aquifers, looking to squeeze a few drops from the land. Joyeuse has a fairly high Control Rating to keep the worst of the "water fights" under control, but out in the wilderness serious assaults and murders drip in at the rate of one a day or more, all over the issue of who can let their livestock drink where.

During the long daysummers, the livestock are set loose to graze. As day comes to an end, a process that takes upward of 48 hours, the herds are gathered up and brought to heated pens near the farmhouses. When the sun rises and nightwinter ends, the herds are let loose again.

## The People of Joyeuse

Isolated as they are, the people of Joyeuse are self-reliant and mistrusting of strangers. Within the small circle of families that live in the station corner towns, however, they are interested and socialist – everyone chips in to help everyone else as needed, knowing that they'll get help in return later. A cultural lack of tolerance for freeloading keeps this from getting out of hand. For outsiders, a large amount of effort is needed to break into one of these circles; it helps immensely if you are a relative, no matter how distant.

With the exception of a paranoid need to assure their water supplies against all comers, the people are averse to

violence. They get enough of danger from the day-to-day operations of the ranches, which are often more than 50 square miles in area. The ranches are difficult to patrol, especially when rounding up the herds before nightwinter. More than one rancher has been rendered helpless, far from any possible aid; those who survive the experience, and the families of those who don't, have gained a certain reverence for life in the face of a wilderness that doesn't care about them.



As with any culture, there are those who don't follow the rules, but Joyeuse's society is good at pushing out the lazy and the violent. Part of the problem with water rights on the fringes of civilization is that those who've been pushed out claim them. Investigating the crimes that take place in the "back beyond" is complicated by the fact that virtually no one who lives out there is a worthwhile person by any standard.

## Government

Like many Sword Worlds, Joyeuse has a *hertug*, currently Eystein II. However, as is often the case in the modern era, the *hertug* has little power, and mostly runs the military and dictates foreign policy. The real power on Joyeuse is the Agricultural Board, set up centuries ago to deal with the Mange and now involved in all aspects of farming life. As the majority of citizens are farmers, the Board wields considerable influence.

To be fair, the Board does its primary purpose well – outbreaks of Mange are eliminated quickly, and the planet's exports are so well managed that other worlds don't give a second thought to allowing Joyeuse's agricultural goods to land. On the other hand, like any bureaucracy the Board has slowly grown and concerned itself with more and more minutiae until it has become as much an aggravation as a help. Yet another difficulty for strangers moving around the countryside is the automatic assumption that they are undercover agents for the Board, enforcing one unpopular regulation or another.

## The Eightmouths

The primary sea life of Joyeuse is the *attemunni*, or "eightmouths," an order of animals that corresponds to Ter-ran whales, sharks, and large fishes. A few types (like the *svarning*) have adapted to the air.

The *attemunni* are generally very long and snake-like, with a small head trailed by a tubular body that is as much as 50 times longer than the animal is wide. On the head is the distinguishing characteristic of all the species: a set of eight multipurpose tentacles with a mouth at the end of each. Some of the larger species (which may be up to 150 feet long) fuse the tentacles into a multi-yard wide parachute, which is used to filter plankton equivalents from the water; smaller, faster species might tip the tentacles with claws that rend their prey.

No species of eightmouth is palatable to Humans, so the inhabitants of Joyeuse regard them as pests.

## ATTEMUNNI

### Svarning

<b>ST:</b> 1	<b>Speed/Dodge:</b> 6/8	<b>Size:</b> <1
<b>DX:</b> 15	<b>PD/DR:</b> 0/0	<b>Weight:</b> <1 lb.
<b>IQ:</b> 3	<b>Damage:</b> 1d-4 cut*	<b>Habitat:</b> D, P
<b>HT:</b> 15/1	<b>Reach:</b> C	

An aerial creature, the *svarning* is a blood drinker by nature. Attacking in groups of 6 to 12, the "vampires" have four mouth-tentacles adapted to act as wings, configured like those of a dragonfly, while the remaining four have hooks for both hanging onto prey and injecting a Type C poison. After disabling all opposition, a *svarning* will fix itself to a victim for several turns of feeding (-1 HT per *svarning* per turn) before moving on.

*Svarnings* are extremely agile while in the air, as their body extends well past the point of their wings, and is flattened to act as a long rudder. With a flick of its tail, a vampire can change direction instantaneously. If forced to the ground, its movement is reduced to 1.

### Auma

<b>ST:</b> 15	<b>Speed/Dodge:</b> 8/8	<b>Size:</b> 10
<b>DX:</b> 15	<b>PD/DR:</b> 1/0	<b>Weight:</b> 300 lbs.
<b>IQ:</b> 3	<b>Damage:</b> 1d cut	<b>Habitat:</b> SW
<b>HT:</b> 10/15	<b>Reach:</b> 2	

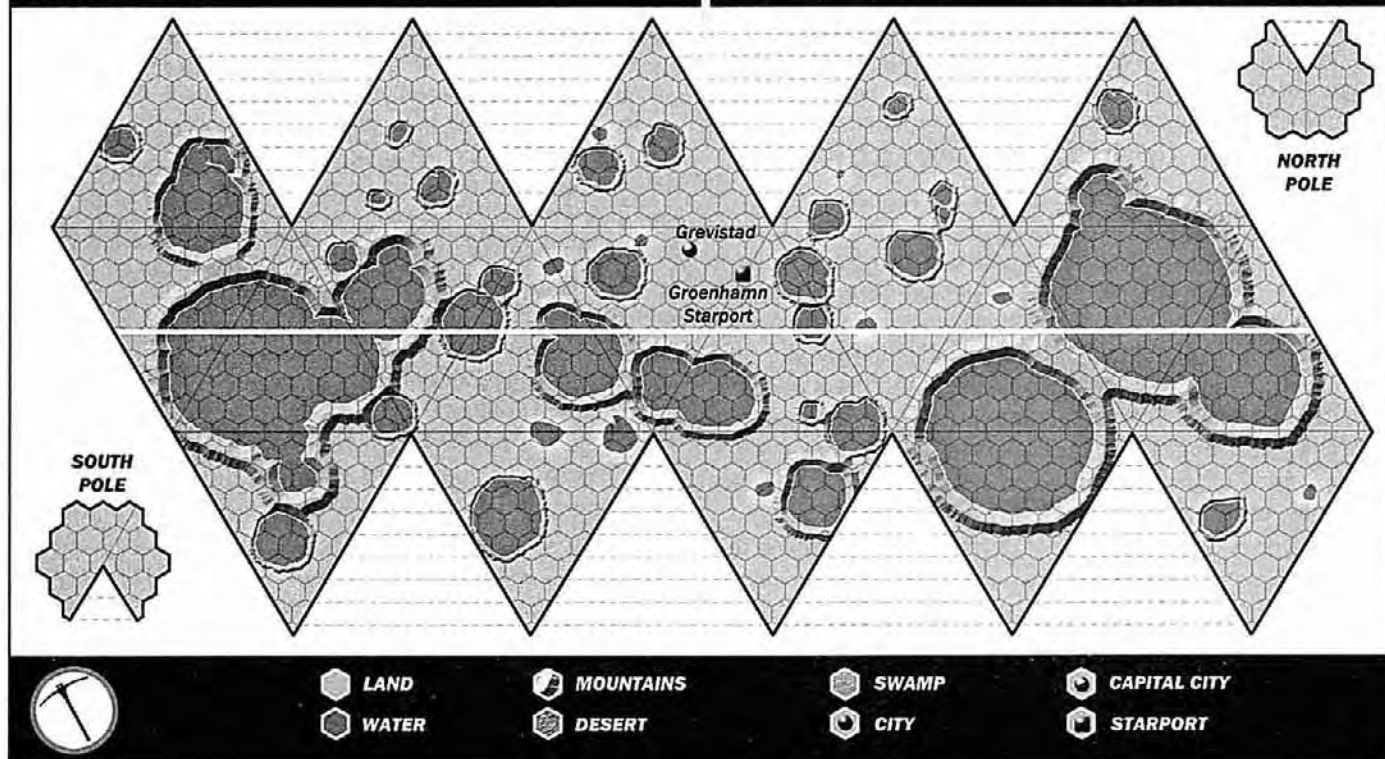
Among the largest *attemunni* are the *auma*, or "sea serpents." The biggest species are more than 30 feet long. They don't bulk up very much, however, being long and eel-shaped. All are predators, feeding on fish-like distant relatives, grabbing them with their eight articulated mouths. Along with their general body shape, the nickname comes from their habit of sticking about 10 feet of their body up out of the water like a long neck, surveying the ocean around them for prey.



WORLD NAME:

**ORCRIST**

GRID/SECTOR:

**1126 SPINWARD MARCHES**

### Thoslinn Base

Thoslinn is the next planet out from Joyeuse, an airless world about 2,000 miles in diameter. It is the home of the largest, most heavily fortified military base in the Confederation. Founded in the early days of the Sacnoth Dominate, it has lost its strategic importance and been turned to other purposes. The present-day Thoslinn Base is both the marshaling yard for Joyeuse's medium-sized navy and the primary peacetime Confederation Navy facility.

If there is no fighting going on, the Confederation Navy is stripped to the bone as its planetary auxiliaries go home. Still, a core remains based out of Joyeuse, existing to act as a cadre when the next war breaks out. More than ships, though, Joyeuse exists for personnel reasons – the Thoslinn War College is here, and takes in all sorts in its eternal quest to help make the wartime Navy and its widely varying levies a single fighting unit. Many worlds send their officers to Thoslinn Base for training, as the War College spends a large portion of its budget on getting the best teachers to work for it. As well as raising the standards of planetary fleet commanders, the training helps level differences in tactical thought among the different planetary navies, and introduces the young officers to their counterparts from other planets – invaluable connections when a war breaks out.

Thoslinn Base is located in and around the Harkvild Massif, one of the planet's largest mountains. For many years the base was entirely built into the mountain, but as internecine conflict in the Sword Worlds decreased, it has spread out into the surrounding plain. While security is still a concern, the enemies the Confederation now confronts are equipped with meson weapons that make digging in pointless.

### 1126 ORCRIST

Unlike most of the other Sword Worlds, Orcrest is decidedly not terrestrial. In turn, more than anywhere else Sword Worlders live, the people are fanatical about looking out for each other. This attitude doesn't extend to off-worlders, unfortunately, who will be cheerfully fleeced for everything they've got if the outsider offers the chance.

### History

Orcrest was named in -208, when Sacnoth established a mining settlement, but it didn't actually get a permanent population until 217, when 18,000 miners from the Double Monarchy were left to their own devices there in the aftermath of the breakdown of the Triple Dominion. Control of the settlement fell to the charismatic leader of the company police, who set up a governing junta composed of himself and his watch commanders. The colony faced many of the same conditions as the original Gram colony, with relatively few women and almost no children to form the next generation. Contact with neighboring worlds did alleviate the associated social problems. By 250 the colony had weathered the crisis and diversified into a fully rounded society of some 90,000 people.

In 288 Orcrest joined the United Jarldoms and the junta appointed a jarl with purely ceremonial duties. For the next century Orcrest paid its taxes and left defense to its partners. This proved a mistake; the Jarldoms were dissolved in 388 and Excalibur blithely "assumed the burden" of defending Orcrest. The two worlds were about the same size and potential strength, but Excalibur had a small squadron of warships and Orcrest didn't.

In 459 the Double Monarchy tried to assert a historical claim to Excalibur and Orcrist. Excalibur turned to Gram for protection and, after a short war, a compromise was reached which gave Orcrist to the Double Monarchy and made Excalibur a protectorate of Gram. Orcrist remained a colony of the Double Monarchy until the establishment of the Second Dominion and again became a colony of Narsil under the Trilateral Alliance. As a result Orcrists are ardent confederalists.

## *The Planet*

Orcrist is the sole large moon of the brown dwarf Dvergur, which in turn is the only “planet” of the Orcrist system. As the system formed, the gravitational interaction between the main star and its companion gradually drove Dvergur inward, sweeping the system free of other protoplanets, while the elliptical orbit of the outer star disrupted the cometary belt. Dragged along, Orcrist was bombarded with an astonishing amount of material, to the point that the entire surface is a jumble of badlands nearly unequaled in all the Imperium.

Dvergur is large enough that Orcrist is tidally locked to it, which gives it an unusual “day.” It spins once per orbit around Dvergur (41 hours, 31 minutes), and so the primary star appears to circle Orcrist in that time too.

### **GETTING AROUND**

During the Fifth Frontier War, Orcrist’s navigational satellites were destroyed, making the already risky business of traveling through the planet’s chaotic terrain all but impossible. Travelers are advised to stick to the marked roads until such time as the system can be rebuilt. Even with navigational aid, there are many valleys and rills that can shadow those in distress; decrepit vehicles and the mummified remnants of their crews are occasionally found.

## *The People of Orcrist*

Orcrists are devoted to each other, and completely mercenary about any off-worlders. People are expected to look after themselves competently, but past that Orcrists chip in for each other; given the planet’s unforgiving nature, it would be difficult for anyone to live here otherwise. Settlements cluster together at locations where resources, usually metal ores, warrant it. Individual buildings are inhabited by extended family units, and are built up or torn down over the years as needed. Each building is a minibase of its own, sealed off from the oxygen-free atmosphere outside, and “growing” its own oxygen using plants that thrive in the high carbon dioxide content.

## *The Orcrist Soil Manufacturing Project*

Orcrist is one of the few suitable worlds in the area that was not terraformed by the Ancients – some think it was used as a control for comparison with the others, but this is pure speculation. Making the planet more livable has always been a dream for Orcrists, but it’s proven more difficult than they

had hoped. Two large-scale terraforming projects have failed, the latter just 50 years ago when the Orcrist Corporation went bankrupt after being able to do no more than establish some hardy algae.

In 1098, the Orcrist Soil Manufacturing Project began. Terraforming has traditionally been the domain of large companies, but Jarl Alvir Jallingsson of the Innbild family began evangelizing for small-scale individual efforts that could naturally scale up to a big project. The Project caught the imagination of Orcrist’s citizens, and most are at least interested in helping it along.

The Project’s beauty is that there’s next to no required investment – individuals simply introduce organics when and where they can, and let natural selection take its course. For example, a pound of soil from someone’s garden might be mixed in where that person notices the algae doing well on a small patch of crushed dust. Nine times out of ten, it won’t work, but with hundreds of small attempts going on each week, there are always some successes. Rather than going to the expense of computing the best places to work, every place is tried. Similarly, the Project hopes to establish a basic ecology of bacteria and simple plants entirely by random means – if it works, that’s the ecology. This flies in the face of standard terraforming theory and its complex webs of natural and engineered lifeforms, but it also happens to be many times cheaper.

The other key point of the Project is communication. All Project members are encouraged to keep notes and take photos. These are posted to a worldwide discussion network. When something works, people all across Orcrist can try to duplicate and improve it. When a particular species thrives, whether native or introduced, its seeds or spores can be shared around the globe. And when a given approach proves unsuccessful enough times, people quit trying it.

Ultimately, it’s going to take centuries to determine if the Project is going to work, and it’s not clear that grassroots enthusiasm for it will last that long. After two expensive failures, however, the people of Orcrist are willing to give it a try.

## *Government*

Orcrist is ruled by its aristocracy, with the unusual twist that there is no hereditary paramount position. The Council of Nobles is essentially an oligarchic parliament composed of those aristocrats who care to show up – in other words, it is self-selected by nobles who care about running the planet. A “prime minister” only emerges through ongoing political maneuvering among the nobles. The position doesn’t exist in any formal sense, as it is entirely about who can pull together the votes for his agenda. This means informal governments last for a few years as one person or another manages to forge a faction of common interests. Whoever directs this faction is the “ruler,” but he has no inherent power because of it.

As of 1120, the government has for years been oscillating back and forth between the visionary Jarl Alvir and his opponent, the Greve Einar Vertsson of the Gisles. Jarl Alvir has the advantage of greater wealth and social position, as well as being the man who started the Orcrist Soil Manufacturing Project. Unfortunately, he’s not much of a ruler, being uninterested in the gritty problems of planetary government



in favor of "bigger things." Greve Einar, on the other hand, is far more the pragmatist, with a head for politics that lets him take power quite often. Between the two of them, they have headed the ruling faction for nearly 20 years. The Jarl tends to do well at first but then runs things into the ground, after which the Greve takes over and cleans up the mess. The two hate each other with a passion for interfering in the other's grand designs for Orcrist.

## 1130 ENOS

An outlier in the Sword Worlds, both in terms of physical location and culture, Enos has become even more isolated from the rest of the Confederation since the end of the War. More than any place else outside the Border Worlds, the planet is feeling the Imperium take informal control.

### History

Enos was settled in 477 by a misjumped refugee ship. The castaways were found in 484 but elected to stay rather than pay everything they owed for transportation to Caladbolg, where they would have had to start over again as penniless beggars.

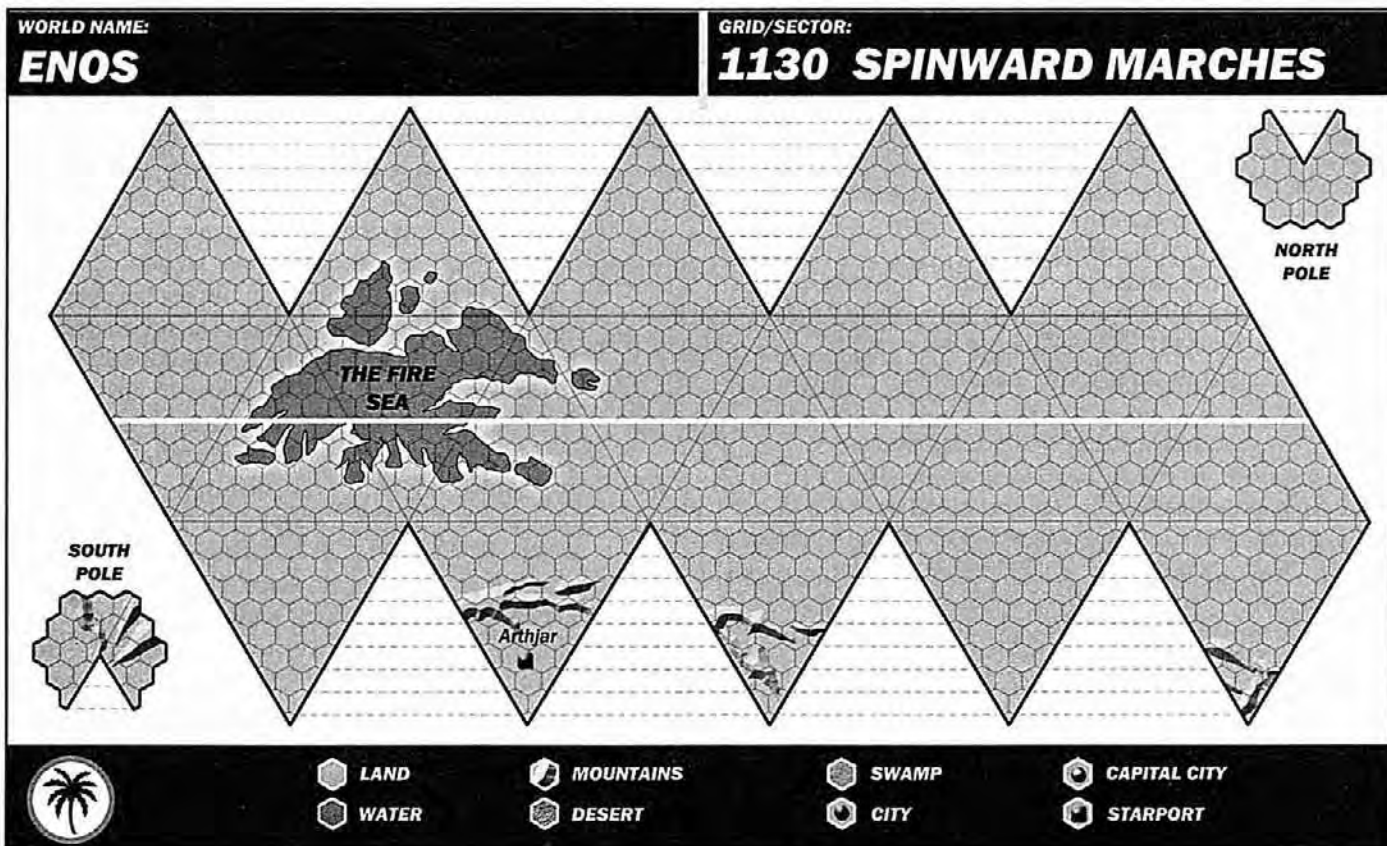
At first Enos' position four parsecs from the main cluster of Sword Worlds kept its trade marginal, but after Caladbolg, Caliburn, and Gunn joined the Imperium in 555, Enos became a stopover for Sword Worlder trade with District 268 and the Trojan Reach sector, bringing in a small trickle of trade and contact with the rest of the universe. The major events of the last 600 years have washed right over the planet's head, as its distant position and low technology have kept it from being of any strategic interest to anyone.

After the Third Frontier War a secret, heavily defended, deep-space refueling station was built halfway between Orcrist and Enos (see *Bryn Avgrunn Base*, p. 78) as a jumping off-point for striking at Imperial installations at Caladbolg. The station was eventually found and destroyed during the Fifth Frontier War. Today the Confederation government is rebuilding the station, though with commercial hegemony in mind. Given Enos' marginal nature, there is little profit, but a new station and a stop at Enos will make it easier to get from the shrunken Confederation to District 268.

The rededication of the station to this function is a countermove to the growth of Imperial influence on Enos. In the last few years the planet has come increasingly under the sway of Ling-Standard Products, which handles the planet's off world trade in petrochemicals and derivatives, and Hortalez et Cie, which provides the investment pushing Enos through the Industrial Revolution.

### The Planet

Enos is essentially a cannonball. While the planet was forming it was much larger, but at some point a massive impact blasted away its crust and mantle. The impact was so great that most of the silicate material was rocketed off at greater than escape velocity and spiraled into the primary star, but a scant amount of silicate remained and collapsed back onto the planet to make a thin stony layer. Enos is 95% metal core, with a rocky crust only about 10 miles thick. The core is rich in siderophile elements, including gold, palladium, rhodium, platinum, iridium, rhenium, and osmium. Only the difficulty of digging down to get it has kept Enos from becoming a miner's paradise, and several megacorporations are now thinking about making the effort.



On the surface, the most unusual feature of the planet is the Fire Sea, an equatorial region about four hundred kilometers across that contains some of the largest and most accessible petrochemical deposits ever encountered. They exist close to the surface, and earthquakes regularly break the rock caps above them and allow the oil and natural gas to seep to the surface. In places the sand on the Fire Sea is black and thick with tar, and the atmosphere is foul with sulfurous compounds coming to the surface with the natural gas. The planet's relentlessly dry atmosphere allows static charges to build up in the air, eventually to be let loose during dust storms. These lightning-like strikes start smoldering fires in the tar, which are then covered by the storms. An area can look perfectly normal until the moment that the fire bursts to the surface, in a conflagration that may take weeks to burn out. If a natural gas leak is nearby, the outbreak can be explosive, and represents a major hazard to travelers.

With the hazard comes opportunity, though, and much of Enos' recent development has been fueled by megacorporate interest in mining the Fire Sea. And once the Fire Sea is exploited, the money will be there for deep mines to go after Enos' metallic riches.

### Life on Enos

Civilization, such as it is, is clustered around the south pole, site of the largest deposits of subterranean water. The starport is one of the few in Sword Worlder space that is near the capital city, as long-distance transportation is a problem. There are only a few ships a year in any case. The towns have long been sleepy, but clanking, primitive internal-combustion driven cars are beginning to appear, driven by the rich through the countryside. A small cadre of biplanes – TL6 to allow some local repair, but still imported from off world – are used to tie together the widely separated oases.

For the numerous peasantry, local conditions have driven the Enosians to redevelop the type of culture common to primitive Human cultures living in hot, dry climates almost everywhere. Most people are farmers, living in the oases and tending plots irrigated by underground water. Local species resistant to salt and other chemicals leached by the watering are the staples, and most oases have a small town in the center.

Those who make a living from trade drive caravans of miniphants from oasis to oasis. Trade is in luxuries, as most oases are self-sufficient in the basics of life. On Enos, life is very basic.

### The People of Enos

For a monarchy, Enos is surprisingly egalitarian. Communities are so small that there is not enough space or wealth for anyone to rise much above the rest. Each oasis has a hereditary headman, but he is no better or worse off than the people who live around him. Oases are then organized into clans. The smallest clans will control only one oasis, while major clans like the Slengr or the Arrheboe may cover 30 or more, and control over 10,000 people. There are more than 200 clans in all.

Water is the chief obsession of an Enosian, and strict rules surround any source of it. Enosian social rituals, politics, and even language have all been warped by the need to make sure that water is secure. Water is freely available, if asked for, but if taken without permission, the person gains the permanent enmity of the locals.

The Enosians have avoided isolation in their oases by strictly enforcing exogamy, or marriage outside the local community. As a result, marriages are arranged for political or economic reasons, and the caravans' second great purpose is to transfer brides-to-be to new homes.

### Government

Enos is a monarchy, technically absolute but running on bureaucratic inertia whenever there is a weak king. This was the case under the last king, Odinkar VI, and it has been even more the case for the last 12 years since he died and was succeeded by his daughter Ros. Unfortunately, she was only four years old when he died, and a regency has been in place since. The first regent was her mother, but she too died, under mysterious circumstances. A power struggle ensued, and a distant cousin of Queen Ros, Hamund Nafnisen Risegeer, came out on top. He has been running things for the last nine years.

Now, as Ros approaches her majority, a crisis has erupted. She has disappeared from the public eye, injured in a riding accident – or so the regent says. Whether this is true or not, rumors fly that something else is going on. Why the regent would do something as rash as making a grab for the throne at this point, rather than keeping Ros on as a figurehead, is unclear. If that is what he has done, he has miscalculated. Queen Ros is very popular, since she has never had to make an unpopular decision herself and her cousin has taken the blame for most of the government's failing. Many Enosians have invested all of their future hopes in her reign. Her sudden disappearance has people feeling resentful, even if the planet's tightly controlled society has prevented them from rising up in rebellion against the (possible) usurper.

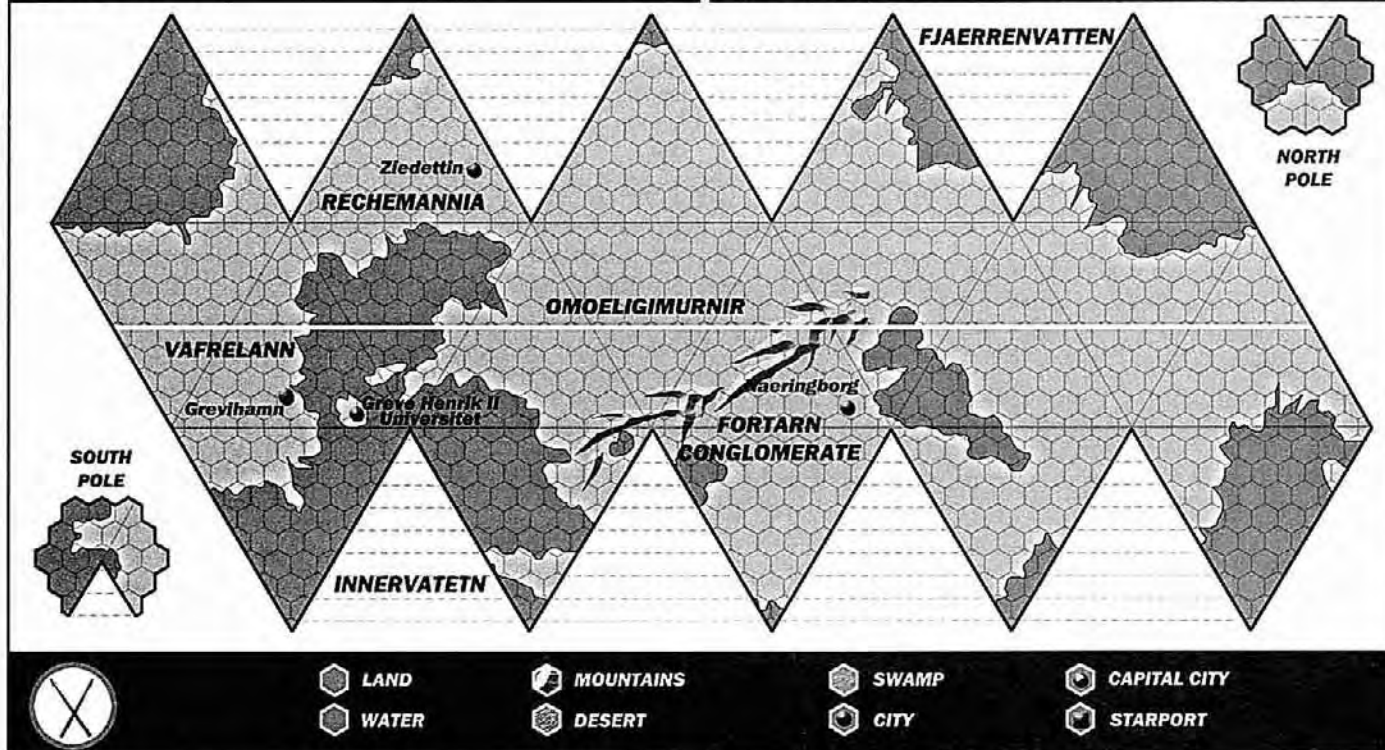




WORLD NAME:

**GUNGNIR**

GRID/SECTOR:

**1221 SPINWARD MARCHES**

## 1221 GUNGNIR

Divided into a bewildering array of states by biology, Gungnir is the Sword Worlds in miniature. There's always a war of some sort going on, and recent upsets have turned the heat up on planetary tensions.

### *The Planet*

Gungnir is a small planet, and its surface is divided into correspondingly few continental plates. The largest one circles the equator of the planet like a girdle, and became "locked up" early on as small Gungnir cooled. This has prevented the oceanic plates at each pole from mixing.

### *Life on Gungnir*

With two separated oceans, life evolved twice on Gungnir, once at its south pole, using Earth-like left-handed amino acids, and once at the north, using the opposite type. The world is over four billion years old, but for much of this time Gungnir was entirely iced over, and the two oceans developed their own multicellular life around thermal vents. When its star, Bevis, finally grew luminous enough to melt the ice, both oceans underwent an analog of Terra's Cambrian explosion, invading the land in short order.

Since then the two types have stayed more or less in balance. Competition between the two ways is muted because each type rapidly evolved proteins that caused severe allergic or even poisonous reactions to the other. They now leave each other alone in a blended ecology.

For Humans colonizing Gungnir, the problem was learning to avoid the more alien type of life; the "right-handed" life forms cause swelling when eaten or even touched. Over time, the colonists have cleared the alien life from the

civilized areas, but 80% of the planet's surface is still mixed. In these areas, visitors wear filter masks and biosuits to avoid problems.

### *The People of Gungnir*

The planet's ecologically enforced balkanization makes Gungnir the most culturally diverse planet in the subsector; some argue it is as diverse as the rest of the Sword Worlds combined. Certainly it is impossible to pin down any common thread that runs through every Gungnir's life. For example, most citizens strive hard to push back the alien half of the ecology, but a few look for ways to accommodate. Many states are laissez-faire, but Vafrelann is a totalitarian dictatorship that keeps its people locked in by a wide swath of untamed wilderness around it.

### SEARCHING FOR CONNECTIONS

One odd social ritual that has sprung up on Gungnir is the mutual search for connections that two strangers always go through when they first meet. Beginning with family members and slowly expanding through friends and other acquaintances, the two try to find a link between them, no matter how tenuous, before carrying on with their conversation. It sometimes comes down to something as obscure as "My third cousin Lars worked in the same factory as your father's best friend," but it's considered a disappointment if no link can be found. The remainder of their relationship will be cooled by such a misfortune.

## The Fortarn Conglomerate

Based out of Dyrnwyn (p. 49), the Fortarn Conglomerate is the government of that world. In 1107, it took over the large, but bankrupt, state of Egilsland, and its growing influence has been worrying the Gungnir's remaining states ever since. No one doubts that if the opportunity were to arise, Fortarn would happily extend its reach into any other part of Gungnir that it can.

### Government

From the earliest days of colonization, settlers would strike out into the wilderness, clear some land of its alien life, then proceed to live on their own resources. Large stretches of unpopulated poisonous biosphere separated the enclaves. Under these conditions, Gungnir naturally fractured into many tiny states, called *fristatnir*.

### CHIPPING IN

Gungnir is a world where a group of adventurers can really make a difference. A GM can plausibly run a mercenary campaign in which the opposing armies are no larger than dozens and a half-dozen skilled soldiers can be a major factor. Or he can run a court intrigue where it is manageable to list every inhabitant of the palace, down to the six palace guards and the two footmen, with names and descriptions.

Over time many of these grew together, and today Gungnir is divided into hundreds of political units of varying sizes. The largest are multimillion-citizen polities like the Fortarn Conglomerate, Valfrelann, or the Kingdom of Rechemannia, while the smallest are tiny *fristatnir* containing no more than a few villages. The system is feudal, with all of the smaller units allied into larger groups or under the protection of a larger country.

### Omoeligimurnir

Gungnir has a chain of mountains with several of the tallest peaks in the subsector, the *Omoeligimurnir* ("Impossible Walls"). Discounting a few mountains on nonterrestrial and barely terrestrial planets such as Mjøltnir, the largest mountain in the Sword Worlds is here: Odin's Tooth (*Odinistand*). Rising 81,665 feet from sea level, it attracts mountain climbers for parsecs around, eager to be the first to get to the top. Gungnir's atmosphere is already thin at the ground, so oxygen supply is a problem from the very beginning. The summit has been reached from above by grav vehicle, but never on foot. A few hopeful expeditions leave each year; often one or more of them suffer deaths or don't come back at all.

### Ziedettin

Ziedettin is the capital of the Kingdom of Rechemannia, one of Gungnir's larger *fristatnir*. It is smaller than several cities on the southern coast of that country, but is a newly constructed center intended to open far northern

Rechemannia to development. Located at 56 degrees north, it is a cold place, but this is balanced by the local life being scarce – it's not as difficult to clear out the right-handed life forms as it is elsewhere.

North of the city, civilization thins out very fast, and in that way Ziedettin is on the frontier (though it is near the center of the country's geographic extent). There is some development taking place, and a few small towns have sprung up to exploit local resources.

To the south, the city connects to the big cities of the coast, but generally the trip is a quiet one; for now, Ziedettin is a city that consists entirely of government workers and the shops that serve them. There is little reason to go to Ziedettin unless one needs something from the government.

Visitors find the city curiously quiet. Land was cheap and the city deliberately overbuilt in anticipation of a flood of new residents. While there are half a million people in the city, it was designed to house twice that. Buses and subways are half empty, parks are deserted, and the streets are dotted with just the occasional pedestrian during the hours when government offices are open.

Most of the city is monumental in nature, including a 200-foot statue of *Hertug* Simeon I, the founder of Rechemannia. The statue stands at the center of the city where its broad, radial avenues converge, and is a convenient landmark for many blocks in every direction.

## 1223 GRAM

Gram is the first Sword World of them all, the mother world from which every other Sword World sprang. This gives the average citizen of Gram a sense of importance that colors his dealings with other Sword Worlders. They may think that they're just as good as him, but he knows better.

### History

Gram's history is one long list of betrayals and triumphs against "the traitors," the Sword Worlder populations which broke away from Gram's authority in centuries past. First Sacnoth rebelled against Gram and formed the Sacnoth Dominate. Then Gram led a counterrevolt against Sacnoth, only to be betrayed by its associates. Two centuries later it was finally ready to teach Sacnoth a well-deserved lesson, only to be betrayed by the worlds that went on to form the Triple Dominion.

The planet finally recovered its "rightful place" with the creation of the Gram Alliance, and even managed to beat off a coup by Sacnoth during the Constitutional Crisis of 979. The secession of Sacnoth to join the Border Worlds is seen as yet another betrayal, however; only the suicidal nature of another war with the Imperium keep Gram's wrath in check.

### The Planet

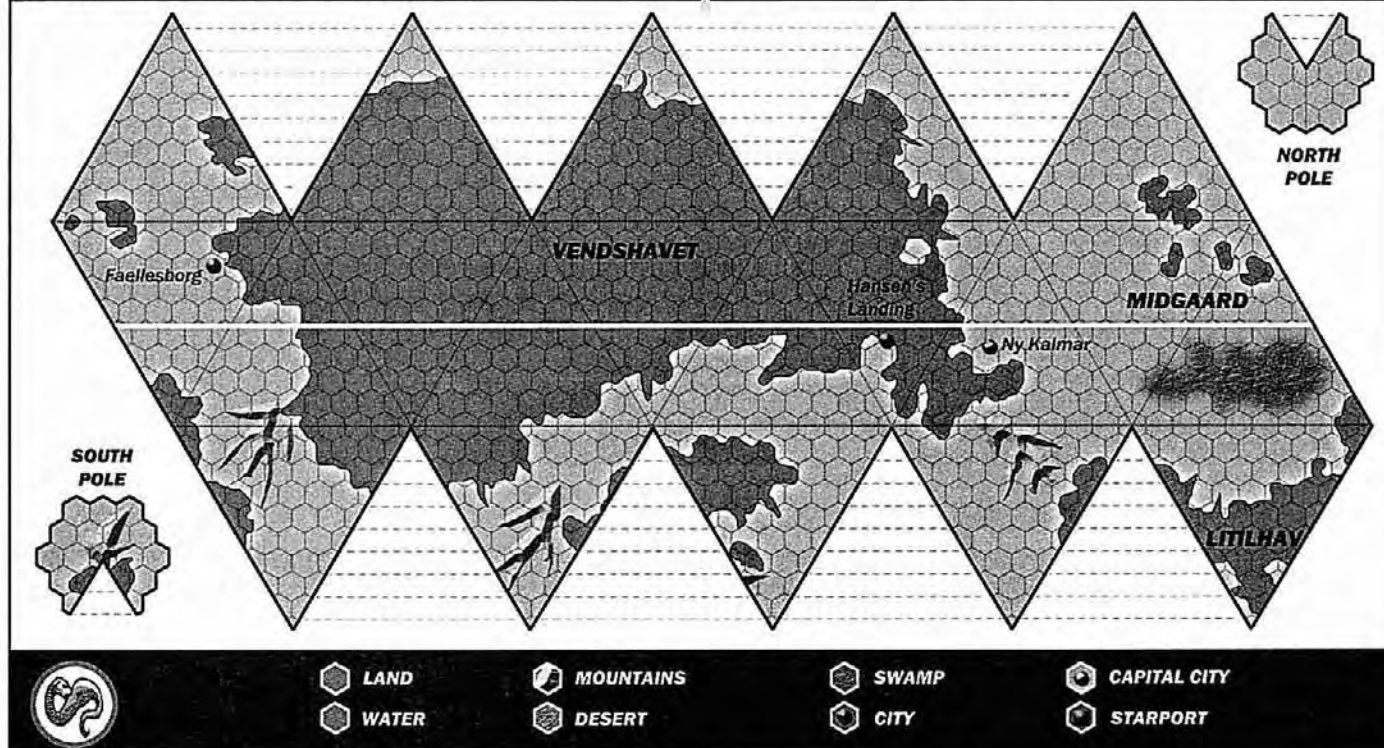
Gram is a very good analog of Terra, being just a few miles larger in diameter and only slightly denser. It is notable only in that its surface is divided almost exactly between one large ocean (*Vendshavet*) and one supercontinent (*Midgaard*). Only a few scattered Mediterranean-sized seas spoil the symmetry. The existence of the smaller seas is important to



WORLD NAME:

**GRAM**

GRID/SECTOR:

**1223 SPINWARD MARCHES**

Gram's habitability, however, as they are arranged in such a way that very few parts of the planet are far from a source of moisture. Gram has large deserts, as it is drier than Terra, but because of the large sea and smaller interior seas, much of it remains habitable. This is one reason why the world is one of the most heavily populated in Sword Worlder space.

The only odd effect caused by the single enormous ocean is the recurrence of large monsoons driven by a stable coriolis cell in its southeast section. As this is, for economic reasons, the most densely populated area of Gram, the south-western coasts are a curious mix of huge cities and rainforest jungle. The jungles have been slowly tamed over the last 1,400 years, but Gram's capital city of Ny Kalmar is still renowned for its glorious vegetation.

Besides Ny Kalmar, the most important city on the planet is probably Faellesborg. Though home to less than a million people, Faellesborg is the capital of the Sword Worlds Confederation – a new city barely 150 years old, constructed specifically for this purpose.

### *Life on Gram*

Though he resides on the most important world in the Confederation, the average Gram lives less like the stereotypical Sword Worlde than any other, except for the people of Narsil. The ideal life for a Sword Worlde – living a manly life on a freehold somewhere, as a yeoman farmer or petty noble – is beyond nearly everyone on the planet. Most work in industry and services, but the psychological gap between their ideal and reality makes Grams the most likely Sword Worlders to travel; elsewhere they can experience "the good life" for a while before returning to their daily existences. Tourists from Gram are a significant portion of Joyeuse's,

Gungnir's, and Colada's economies, and on any world in the Confederation a stranger is often a Gram.

### *The People of Gram*

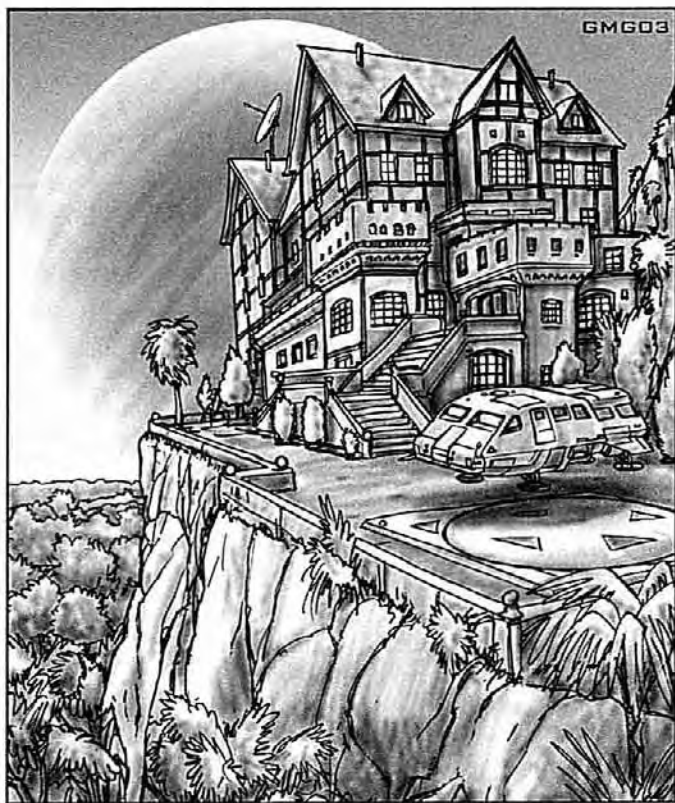
So much of Sword Worlde politics and news is generated by Gram's aristocracy that it's easy to forget that over 99% of the population is not noble. Despite living on a world that is the head of a state steadfastly opposed to the Imperium, the average citizen of Gram has more in common with Imperials living on a high-population world than he does with other Sword Worlders. While it was once possible for the people of Gram to live in small villages and engage in the sort of personal give and take that is the cornerstone of Sword Worlde culture elsewhere, its cities have grown so large that this is only possible in the most rural locations. A few cities have experimented with housing people in the same large building where they work, thus making a pseudovillage within its walls, but this is not common. The life of a middle-class Gram is as mysterious to his neighbors as it would be if he lived in an arcology on Mora or Deneb.

Unfortunately this means that the social contracts which make life safe elsewhere in the Sword Worlds have broken down on Gram. On Joyeuse, for example, it would be unthinkable for a man not to know how to use a rifle. But on Gram, rifles are banned. On Tizon, peer pressure does most of the work of keeping day-to-day order. On Gram, large police forces are required, and even so the planet suffers from up to five times the violent crime rate of any other world in the Confederation except Narsil, which has similar problems. Citizens of other Sword Worlds view Gram with a mixture of horror and fascination: "It's a nice place to visit, but . . . actually, it's not even a nice place to visit."

## The Government

An elaborate aristocracy runs Gram. On the top level are the *Storhertug* and the royal family. The monarch of Gram no longer has any political power, but he is one of the 20 richest men on Gram, he commands the allegiance of a large number of *friherrenir* through his industrial holdings, and he holds the loyalty of a large number of other nobles by tradition.

Below the royals are the territorial nobles, the *hoiadelnir*. These are divided into 38 *jarlenir* and about 400 *grevenir*. Each holds a title that is associated with a region on Gram or somewhere in the Gram system. The oldest titles dates back to the hereditary governors of the Sacnoth Dominate, though most are more recent creations. The *storhertug* has the power to create new *grevenir* and to elevate a *greve* to *jarl*, but in practice he needs the approval of a majority of the existing nobles to do so.



Like the *storhertug*, the *hoiadelnir* have little real power over their respective territories. Their social position derives from their titles, but their wealth and power come from their holdings as *baronir*.

Below the *grevenir* are the *baronir*, or *adelnir* ("middle nobility"), as they are also known. These are the owners of Gram's major industrial infrastructure – the steel mills and shipyards, the mines and factories. There are about 9,000 of them and they run Gram. This doesn't mean that the *baronir* own all industry on Gram, only the 14,000 largest companies; some *baronir* own more than one company.

A baron can run his own business without shame if he is of that bent, provided he is good at it, but most of them go into politics or the military. They also dominate the upper echelons of the Confederation government.

The top industrial managers are drawn from the lowest level of the aristocracy, the *friherrenir* or *lavadelnir* (lower nobility). The company owners appoint them to the positions, and in theory only sheer ability is considered when such appointments are made. It is, however, a common practice to appoint a younger relative of a retiring manager to his post, though not necessarily the eldest son. Many *friherre*-families have served the same baron for generations.

There is no formal investiture of rank for *baronir* and *friherrenir*. A company owner becomes a baron when his company becomes powerful enough that the other *baronir* begin to consider him an equal, and an ordinary company manager becomes a *friherre* if a baron appoints him to manage one of his companies. (It is rare, but not unheard of, for a baron to appoint a gifted non-noble as manager.) The reverse does not necessarily apply. A baron who lost his company would remain one and so would his descendants, for as long as they retained enough wealth to keep up a decent appearance. Likewise a *friherre* family would need several generations in which no member held a managerial position before it lost its status, again provided it retained sufficient wealth.

Nobles are addressed as "Hr." (pronounced "herr") or "Fru" (if female) followed by the title: "Hr. Jarl," "Fru Grevin," "Fru Baronin," "Hr. Friherre." If this could apply to more than one person, the use of the title with the first name is acceptable. For example, "Jarl Bjorn" would be used instead of "Hr. Jarl" if there is more than one jarl present.

## Ny Kalmar

Ny Kalmar is the planetary capital of Gram, and one of the most important cities in the Sword Worlds Confederation. The capital of the Confederation itself is not here, but that's barely noticeable as Ny Kalmar goes about the business of being the beating heart of Gram.

Ny Kalmar is situated on the southeast coast of the hemisphere-spanning ocean Vendshavet. It faces south onto the Solsund, a wide strait that opens into the sea. Due west, 1,300 miles across the water, is Hansen's Landing, the primary starport of the planet – the contrails of total conversion rockets on their way to orbit can often be seen high overhead from the city.

The city has 21 million citizens, a figure that has remained steady for more than 100 years due to the spread of gravitic propulsion; many people now live well outside the city and commute over 100 miles to work. Grav cars are parked on roofs, inside parking garages designed to blend in with the building and prevent Ny Kalmar from looking like a gigantic parking lot to aerial observers.

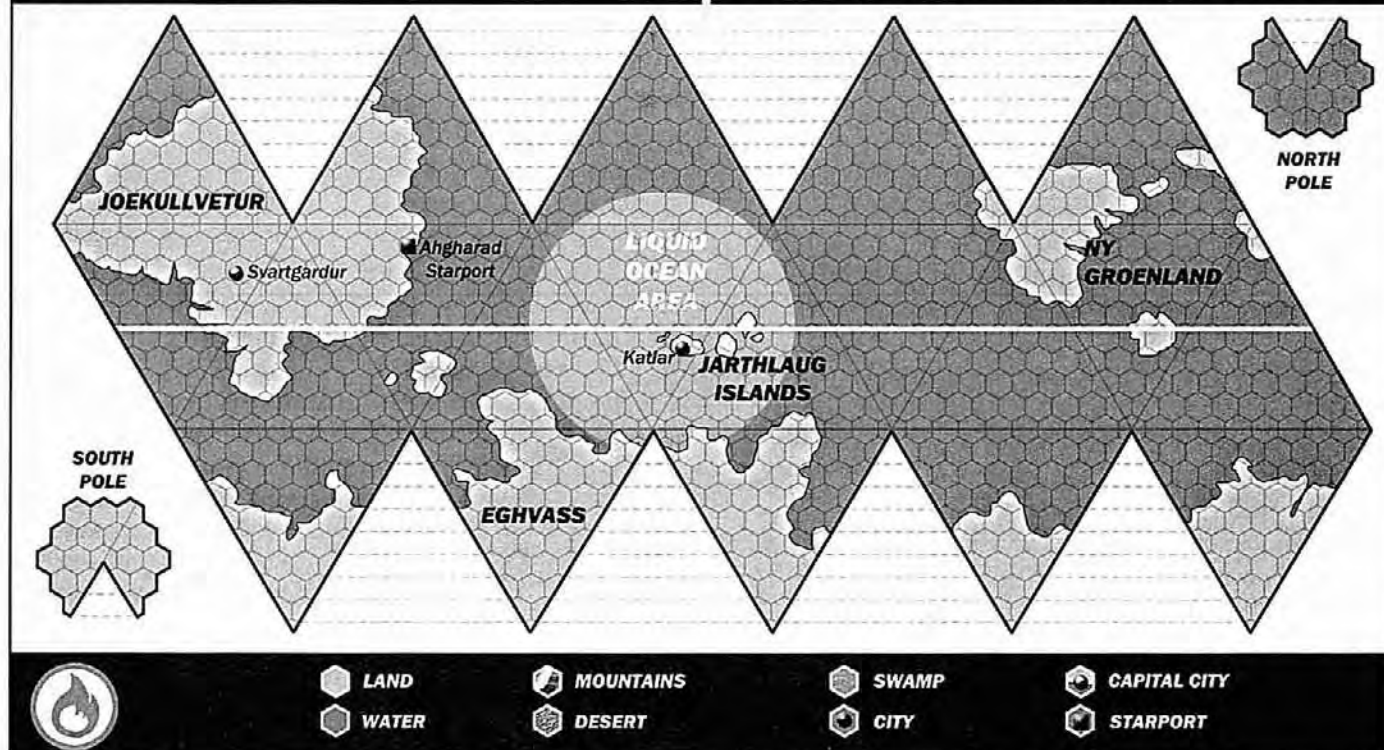
The city is triangular in shape, filling a wide, fan-shaped gorge carved by the Etir River – the original reason for the city's foundation more than 1,500 years ago. The river no longer reaches the sea, having been tapped for power and water so extensively that it is entirely drained over its course through the city; now it enters the sea through sewers and conduits after being used by the city. The Hoetfallnir ("High Falls") still cascade into the gorge in the far north of the city; the neighborhood around it is Ny Kalmar's most prestigious. There are even a few mansions built into the cliffs.



WORLD NAME:

**DYRNWYN**

GRID/SECTOR:

**1522 SPINWARD MARCHES**

The Aelvata is a wide boulevard that runs from the falls to the shoreline, dividing the city in two. In its center median is a long line of huge European ash trees, imported as seedlings from Terra – a nod to Aesirism, which considers the ash tree sacred. Nice neighborhoods and shops line the Aelvata, getting progressively more expensive as one heads north. Elsewhere the local plants are encouraged, and many buildings in Ny Kalmar are covered in a riot of green.

The dock area to the west of the Aelvata is the only run-down area of the city. Hansen's Landing has a small startown, but good transportation between the starport and Ny Kalmar has turned "Torrdocka" into the area where most starship crews spend time if their ship is on the ground for a few days. Since it is also the poorest neighborhood in the city, the mixture can be explosive. The local police division is overworked and possesses a reputation for beating first and asking questions later.

## 1522 DYRNWYN

Dyrnwyn is the one Sword World that has benefited the most from the Fifth Frontier War. Long ruled by the Fortarn Conglomerate, a corporation hamstrung by Sword Worlder distrust of "big business," Dyrnwyn was forced to move slowly as it expanded off world. In 1107 it gained a large chunk of real estate on Gungnir. After the war ended, the Sword Worlds Confederation was unhappy about having a Border World control a state in the Sword Worlds, so Dyrnwyn was returned as a *quid pro quo* for the defection of Excalibur.

Part of the deal was that the Conglomerate would be released from many of its earlier legal constraints. Since then, the corporation has been growing explosively, and some in the

Confederation are wondering if they've allowed an enemy to walk right through their gates.

### The Planet

The Dyrnwyn system is about seven billion years old. In that time the planet has become tidally locked to its primary, despite sitting on the very edge of the system's habitable zone.

The near side of the planet is mostly ocean, and thanks to the constant daylight has an Earth-normal climate at the "hot pole." A circle of liquid water extends out from the center for 3,500 miles in every direction, getting colder until one reaches the ice that encloses the rest of Dyrnwyn. There are a few islands in the ocean circle, and these are the best real estate on the planet.

Dyrnwyn's far side is typical of a tidally locked planet. Atmospheric circulation carries hot air to the far side at high altitudes, and cool winds blow back. Ocean currents are more complex, but also bring some heat. The average temperature at the cold pole is -60° Fahrenheit.

Dyrnwyn is very large and, unlike most planets its age, still has a molten core. This produces a typical terrestrial magnetic field. In combination with the dark side and one other unusual fact, it gives Dyrnwyn its major claim to fame. The planet is large enough to hold a small amount of helium gas in its atmosphere, produced by radioactive decay in the crust, and this ends up in the ionosphere where it interacts with the cosmic and solar radiation trapped by Dyrnwyn's magnetic field. On the far side, Dyrnwyn has some of the most extensive and beautiful auroral displays in the sector, bright red due to the helium ions.

## BORDER WORLDS CONFEDERATION WORLDS

Hex	Name	Zone	Starport	Diameter	Gravity	Atmosphere	Hydro%	Climate
1225	Excalibur	Green	IV	3,000	0.54	Very Thin(T)	36%	Cool
1324	Tyrfin	Green	IV	6,100	0.77	Very Thin	72%	Normal
1325	Sacnoth	Green	V	7,200	0.98	Standard(T)	50%	Normal
1424	Beater	Green	IV	5,900	0.58	Dense	52%	Tropical
1523	Durendal	Green	V	5,700	0.56	Dense	74%	Normal
1524	Hofud	Green	IV	6,100	0.75	Standard	62%	Normal
1525	Sting	Green	IV	6,100	0.75	Thin(T)	52%	Normal

### Life on Dyrnwyn

Most Dyrnwyns live in the twilight zone between the hot and cold sides of the planet. Continents poke up above the ice in many locations, and enclosed cities dot them where they do.

Within the ocean circle, there are 12 million people inhabiting the various islands found there; more moderate temperatures than in the twilight band balance the annoyance of perpetual daylight. A good chunk of Dyrnwyn's power is generated here too, on square-mile-sized solar power plants that float on the surface of the ocean. Most of the rest of the planet's power needs are met by wind farms, taking advantage of the perpetual cold gales blowing from the far side.

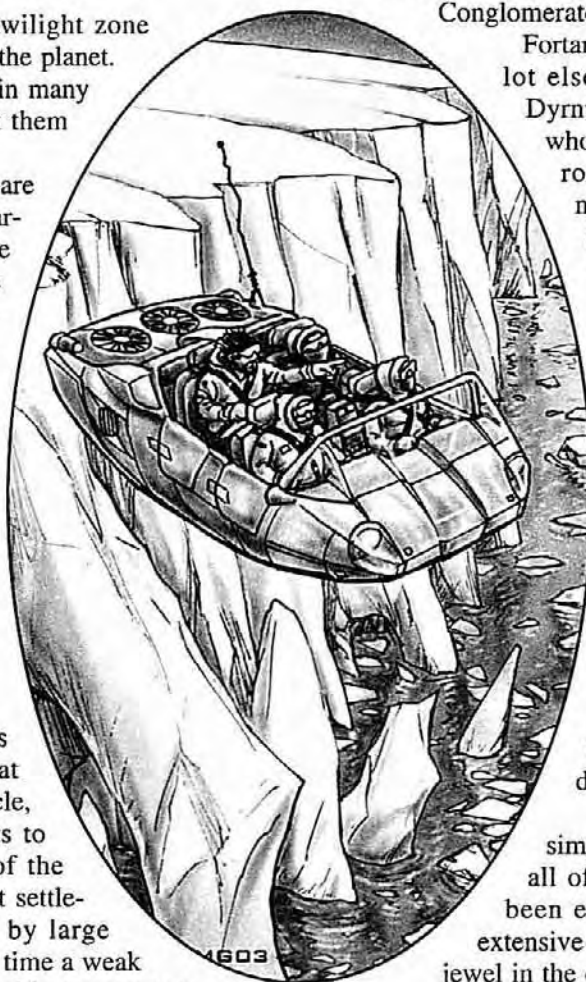
### The Government

Any exploitation of Dyrnwyn's natural resources, except for what little is available in the ocean circle, requires large capital investments to deal with the harsh conditions of the planet. Even from the days of first settlement, Dyrnwyn was dominated by large industrial conglomerates, and over time a weak bureaucratic government wasn't able to prevent them from coalescing to produce a corporate oligarchy,

then finally a single-company monopoly – the Fortarn Conglomerate.

Fortarn is interested in Fortarn and not a lot else. There are no free services on Dyrnwyn: police are security personnel who must be paid for answering a call; roads are built only when Fortarn needs them, or when a large group of people chips in to finance one. In certain areas this works well, as those who use a service are those who pay for it; someone who doesn't need it isn't taxed to support it, as he would be almost anywhere else. Unfortunately in some areas, notably environmental protection and medical care, Fortarn cares only to the extent that there's money to be made. The elderly and infirm need to be supported by their families or charitable organizations, and if the Conglomerate decides that your back yard would be a great place for a toxic waste dump, there's no recourse.

After a century of little growth simply because they already controlled all of Dyrnwyn, the Conglomerate has been expanding off-planet. It now has extensive interests on nearby worlds, and the jewel in the crown is their buyout of the former nation of Egilsland on Gungnir. Fortarn was that country's largest creditor by far, and when Egilsland went



## BORDER WORLDS CONFEDERATION NAVIGATIONAL DATA

Hex	Name	Primary	Companions	GG	PB	Orbit	Moons
1225	Excalibur	K5 V (Artur)	–	2	0	0.30	3 small
1324	Tyrfin	M2 V (Angantyr)	–	1	0	0.08	–
1325	Sacnoth	F9 V (Leothric)	D (Tharagavverug)	1	0	1.80	2 large
1424	Beater	K4 V (Gawaine)	–	0	1	0.65	1 small
1523	Durendal	M1 V (Roland)	–	4	1	0.23	–
1524	Hofud	G6 V (Freyr)	D (Skirnir)	1	0	0.70	–
1525	Sting	M0V (Bilbo)	–	2	0	0.14	–



Population	Gov Type	CR	TL	WTN
47 million	Dictator	2	9	4.5
77 million	Oligarch	2	9	4.5
8.3 billion	Techno	2	10	5.5
6.2 million	Bureau	2	9	4.0
72 million	Oligarch	2	9	3.0
580 million	Techno	1	9	4.0
75 million	Bureau	3	9	5.0

bankrupt in 1107, Fortarn landed troops to "ensure that its assets were secure." It is unlikely that Egilsland will ever again be free through peaceful means, as it represents several million people and a swath of land far more pleasant than any on Dyrnwyn. In 1118, the CEO and Board of Directors of Fortarn even relocated their headquarters to Egilsland's largest city, Vaagar.

### The People of Dyrnwyn

The Dyrnwyns reflect their government: very *laissez-faire* and independent. On many worlds with Dyrnwyn's population and climactic disadvantages, there would be a large underclass and constant unrest. The Dyrnwyns use typically Sword Worlder "love of community" to cover the gaps left by their corporate masters, and are fond of bragging that Dyrnwyn has no taxes. They normally don't think very much about the fact that this is because they get no services either. Another topic they don't ponder is what happens to people who do manage to fall through the cracks of Dyrnwyn's society; in a typically Human response, they can't imagine such a thing happening to *them*.

## THE BORDER WORLDS

*Frontiers are the razor's edge on which hang suspended the issue of war or peace and the life of nations.*

— Lord Curzon (1859-1925 A.D.)

The Border Worlds are new and unstable. After 300 years of all the important Sword Worlds being under one government, the Imperium chose at the end of the Fifth Frontier War to revive the old divisions and split off several planets as a counterbalance to the Confederation. Whether or not this was a wise move remains to be seen; the last 10 years have seen things in the Border Worlds get worse rather than better... not that the Confederation is a hub of stability these days either.

## THE BORDER WORLDS POLITICAL STRUCTURE

At first sight the government of the Border Worlds, the Border Worlds Authority, is not so different from that of the Confederation it left (see p. 22). Its constitution was copied from that of the Sword Worlds, with the names of various

## BERRNT ESKILSSON

### MULI 120 POINTS

Human (Sword Worlder). Age 60; 5' 7", 180 lbs. White skin, gray hair with a little black, blue eyes.

Central Administrator Berrnt Eskilsson Muli is the current head of the Border Worlds Authority, and has been since shortly after the end of the Fifth Frontier War. A native of Sacnoth, he is the primary owner and CEO of Isborg, a food conglomerate that was one of the largest corporations in the Confederation. When the war ended, he caught the attention of the occupying authorities and positioned himself as a local aristocrat likely to rule in the Imperium's interest. Unfortunately, he's not a very talented man; he inherited Isborg, and despite some business skills, he doesn't show the genius of his great-great-grandfather Steig, the man who made Isborg great.

Still, the Central Administrator has gained the confidence of the Imperial authorities. Since then he has used his position to increase the role of business and the military in Border Worlds life. He honestly believes that what's good for big business is good for his nation, but his ham-handed repealing of much of the Confederation's social legislation, and nationalizations of large companies that weren't willing to go along with him, have left him increasingly reliant on Sacnoth's military and Imperial aid.

ST 9 [-10]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 12 [20]; HT 10 [0].

Speed 5.00; Move 5.

Dodge 5.

**Advantages:** Filthy Rich [50]; Patron (Imperial Colonial Office, available on a 6 or less) [15]; Status 6 (Border Worlds Central Administrator) [25]\*.

\* One level of Status free from Filthy Rich.

**Disadvantages:** Reputation -2 (As a "traitor"; among citizens of the Sword Worlds Confederation, 10 or less) [-2].

**Quirks:** Believes "what's good for Isborg is good for the Border Worlds;" Fawns over powerful Imperials; Hates being criticized; Stubborn; Vain about his ancestors. [-5]

**Skills:** Acting-14 [6]; Administration-14 [6]; Area Knowledge (Border Worlds)-13 [2]; Area Knowledge (Sword Worlds Confederation)-12 [1]; Diplomacy-12 [2]; Fast Talk-12 [2]; Piloting (High-performance aircraft)-10 [2]; Politics-12 [2]; Savoir-Faire-15 [2]\*.

\* Default of IQ+2 due to high Status.

**Languages:** Galanglic-12 [2], Sagamaal-12 (native) [0].

institutions changed and a few paragraphs tweaked. In practice, however, the Imperial Colonial Office appoints advisors to BWA chief administrators, the equivalent of chancellors; a chief administrator who knows what's good for him heeds the advice he is given.

Individual Border Worlds likewise have Imperial advisors, though their number and authority vary with local conditions. One aspect of the new situation that all Border Worlds approve of is that they have rid themselves of the Gram aristocrats who once dominated them. However, Sacnoths outnumber all other Border Worlders combined, so the danger is that the new state would merely be substituting aristocrats. Unfortunately for Sacnoth, the Imperium does not want to see the Border Worlds turn into the Sacnoth Empire, so for the moment Sacnoth has to share in the government of the Border Worlds Confederation on a roughly equal basis with Durendal, Excalibur, Hofud, and Tyrning.

Sacnoth puts up with this because the Imperium has struck a deal with the large corporations and business inter-

ests of Sacnoth. In return for preferential trade arrangements, the industrialists use their influence to keep the Sacnoth government quiescent.

## 1225 EXCALIBUR

Even before the Fifth Frontier War, Excalibur's unpopular government had been teetering. In 1113, full-fledged civil war broke out, a conflict that has only just ended with the charismatic Reyf Huld in control of the planet, with his change in allegiance from the Sword Worlds Confederation to the Border Worlds. The shape Excalibur will take depends very much on the new rulership – and while Huld is seen as an honorable and popular man, no one knows how things will eventually turn out.

### *History*

In 1107, the estates of Baron Randulf Huld were confiscated after his trial and execution for treason. Swearing revenge against the noble oligarchs who had brought about his father's downfall, Reyf Huld escaped to the thinly populated wilderness of the Ixiblad. There he started fomenting revolution.

Fortunately for him, the corrupt oligarchs were highly unpopular, and he soon gathered a group of talented lieutenants and the popular support of the region's inhabitants. As his strength grew, he gained the surreptitious help of the Border Worlds.

For the next six years, "Baron Reyf" (his title was formally stripped with his father's death) played hide-and-seek with Excalibur's government. Noble forces took his stronghold twice, but each time he and his men escaped with minimal damage. These escapades, as well as Huld's popular touch, kept him and his rebellion alive in the minds of Excalibur's citizens. The government's repressive measures against him and his sympathizers became less and less effective, then finally counterproductive. Central control over the planet eroded, and warlords and bandits started springing up everywhere. Over a stunning three months in 1113, the oligarchy collapsed.

Unfortunately, Huld wasn't powerful enough to take over much of the planet. Other, less-popular warlords pressed claims, and there was the matter of the oligarchs who had fled off world continuing to act as the legal government. Baron Reyf set about consolidating his control.

By 1118 he had eliminated some of the competition, enough that he could engineer a masterstroke that ended any possibility of the old government's return. In return for recognition by the Border Worlds of his faction as Excalibur's sole planetary government, Excalibur bolted from the Sword Worlds Confederation.

### *Life on Excalibur*

Now that the civil war is finally over, Excalibur is having trouble returning to normal life. Violence has been a part of everyone's life for six years, and quite a few people have forgotten how to do anything but fight. Many warlords are trying to retain their own criminal empires as they did under the oligarchy. The new government is badly overstretched trying to clamp down on them, but has taken the position that

## LOST FOR ALL THESE YEARS

The moon of Bedwyr has ruins clearly not of Ancient manufacture, as they are relatively crude in nature (see p. 54). While the product of a space-traveling civilization, the base is only TL9. There are, however, very occasional signs of much more advanced technology.

The story behind the base is an unusual one. In -17,710, Droyne archaeologists on Andor stumbled across an automated Ancient ship, which trapped them and took them to Bedwyr over a series of jumps. The moon was a command center for the terraforming projects in the Sword Worlds, now traveling in deep space for unknown reasons.

The underground complex into which the ship entered (which has not yet been discovered by Humans) was airless except for the reception room. The captured Droyne could not reset the ship's navigation program to take them home, but rapidly figured out the local teleportation grid. With it, they could reach the surface where, with the help of some Ancient autofabs, they were able to construct a Droyne-style TL9 moon base. Curiously (and to the frustration of the researchers now examining it) the newly built base had no exits to the surface, as there was quite simply no place the Droyne would want to go other than back through the teleportation grid to the underground complex. Using the grid, they could reenter the Ancient facility in the center of the moon, and get what they needed that way.

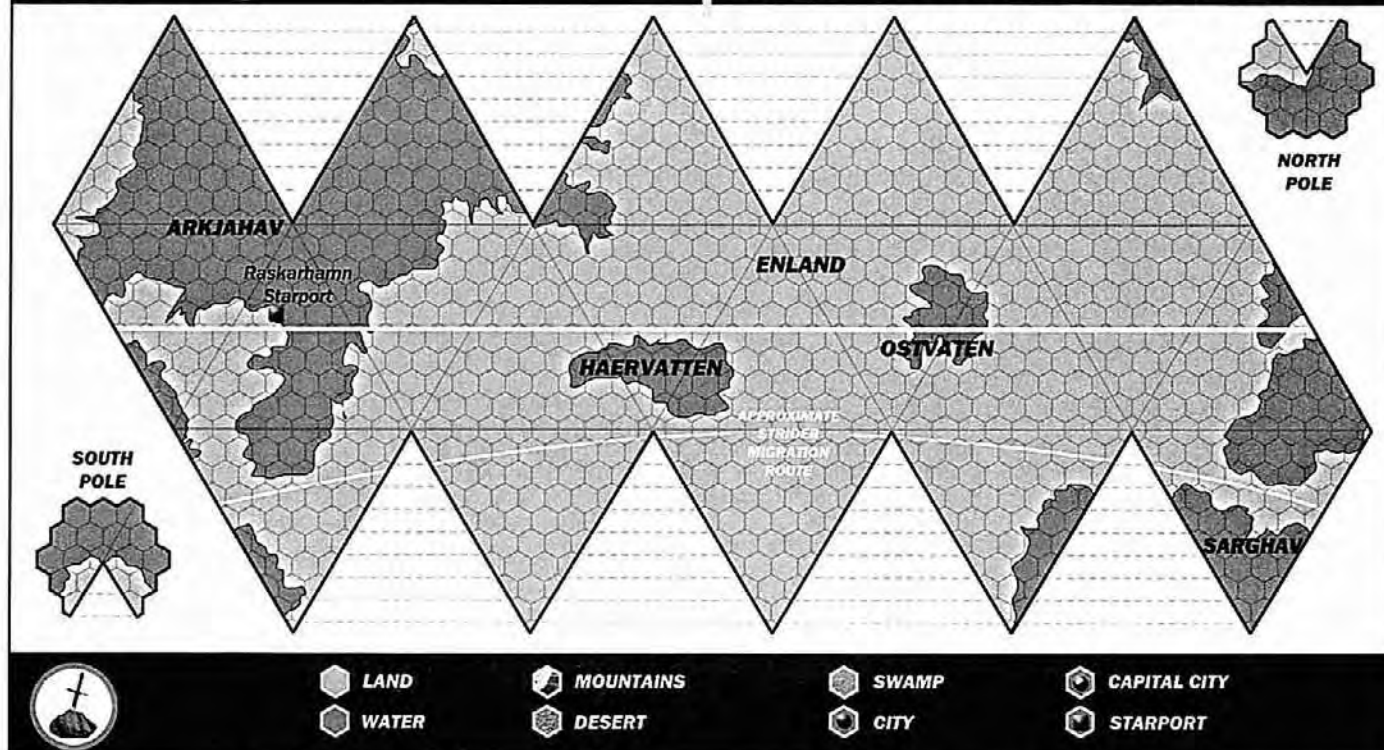
Over a period of nine years, the Droyne – who were, after all, trained archaeologists specializing in the Ancients – managed to reprogram the ship to take them back to Andor, at which time they stripped the facility clean and returned home. All that is left is the empty husk of the Ancient command center, and a slowly deteriorating, 20,000-year-old TL9 Droyne base. Bedwyr eventually entered the Excalibur system, one of the most poorly terraformed worlds in the region, and used its remaining navigational computers and engines to take orbit around the planet. It is now apparently waiting for orders that will never come.



WORLD NAME:

**EXCALIBUR**

GRID/SECTOR:

**1225 SPINWARD MARCHES**

getting one bunch of bandits at a time is better than nothing at all. It looks like it will be decades before some areas are under control again, but it won't be for lack of effort.

As a result, Excalibur can be divided in two parts: those that are safe again (the major cities, their hinterlands, and a few strategically or economically important region) and those under the control of the warlords. Some of these warlords are powerful enough to tax their areas' inhabitants; most live by hit-and-run in nominally government-controlled areas. Refugees from unsafe areas are a problem, not only because of the strain they cause in the safe areas, but because if homes and farms are abandoned long enough they will eventually revert to wilderness. Large parts of Excalibur are already empty because of the civil war, and things are getting worse rather than better.

### *The Government*

Since winning the war, Reyf Huld and his lieutenants have set themselves up as the new government. Huld controls the planet, but his men are competent and he trusts them to help rule and reform. Unfortunately, as tough as the civil war was, things are even harder now. Huld's men are revolutionaries, not bureaucrats. They find they have to rely on more of the old government structure than they would have liked, but so far Huld has been able to keep everyone in line through his popularity with the masses. The remaining loyalists of the old government understand this, and Huld has made it through several assassination attempts. His companions have been trying to beef up security, but are limited by Huld's rule that nothing can limit his access to the people, nor their access to him.

Still, they are making progress. After decades of corruption and venality, living standards in the government-held

areas are slowly rising, and a few industries are starting to get back on to their feet.

### *The Striders*

Excalibur is resonantly locked with its primary, Artur, rotating three times every two orbits. At higher latitudes this has the boundary between light and dark moving at a bit less than running pace, and as it happens the planet has a solid strip of land circling the southern hemisphere between 40° and 60° South. Because of these conditions, some lifeforms on the planet have avoided the usual route of hibernating during the long nights, and instead follow the sun for their whole lives.

With a very thin atmosphere flying is out of the question, despite the low gravity, so these animals instead walk everywhere they go. Long and spindly like giraffes or giant ostriches, the "striders" rarely stop for any length of time. They can put on bursts of speed if something has slowed them down and the sun starts to get ahead of them.

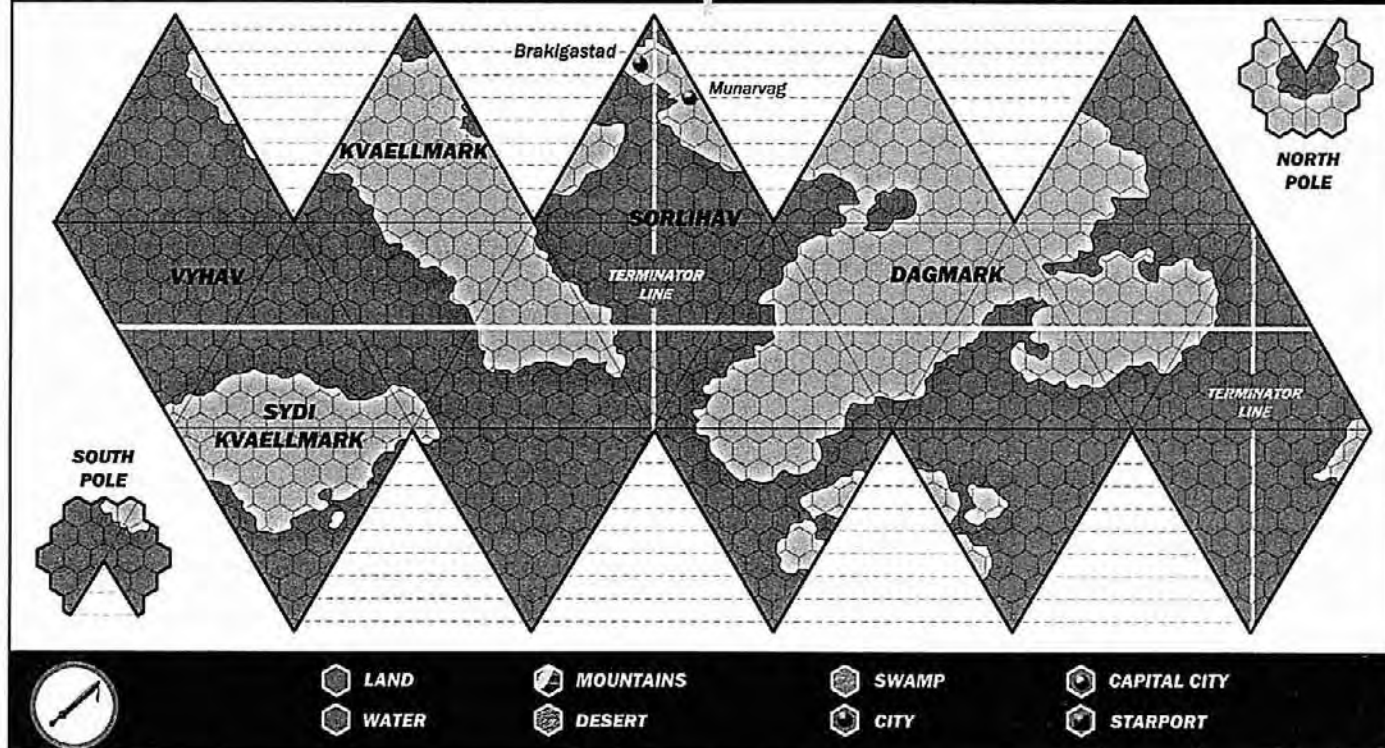
There are actually two groups of striders, the ones in the "dusk" zone running away from the sun as it rises, and the others 180° around the planet following it while it sets. The two groups are composed of the same group of animal species. All are egg-laying, and leave their eggs in the soil to hatch when the sun comes back. This may or may not have them hatching in the same zone as where they were laid.

Plants on Excalibur need to grow and breed quickly. Though a few are sufficiently hardy to make it through the blazingly hot days, the nights kill everything. As a result, plants grow, bloom, and die in the short time when conditions are just right. This rapid flowering gives herbivorous striders lush vegetation to eat despite the desolation in front of and behind them.

WORLD NAME:

**TYRFING**

GRID/SECTOR:

**1324 SPINWARD MARCHES**

### The Moon Base

Alien ruins were recently discovered on Bedwyr, the third moon of Excalibur (see p. 52). The ruins, and even the moon itself, are difficult to explain. Bedwyr appears to

be an interloper, probably from elsewhere in the system, though the nature of the event that brought it to Excalibur and the tricky maneuver that would have been needed to put it into its new orbit are unknown.

The base itself is old, though various dating methods suggest it is no more than 20,000 years old. It is not Human in origin, but clearly not of Ancient manufacture due to its relatively recent date. Investigations have just begun under the auspices of the IISS, but tight secrecy surrounds the entire project (see p. 54).

## MAKING A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION

Life around Tyrfiging's starport has become vastly more interesting, as a slapdash city, Brakigastad, has grown up around the Border Worlds' main point of entry. While ships thunder up and down from orbit, every conceivable shady practice is going on somewhere in the new startown. Bored crewmen, stuck on the planet during the lengthy, bureaucratic delays, have fueled Brakigastad's rise with their cash. A large detachment of the Imperial Army, the last major Imperial ground force in the Border Worlds, doesn't help matters.

The rest of the planet is far less exciting, and in fact the citizens are generally appalled by the face they've started showing to the wider universe. On the other hand, the government loves the influx of business for the taxes and hard currency it brings; Tyrfiging is one of the few Sword or Border Worlds better off now than it was before the war. While much of this money is being used to line the pockets of the ruling oligarchy, highways into the rural regions are being built and subsidies are being given to the planet's many farmers. The average Tyrfiging might complain sanctimoniously about Brakigastad, but it never quite stops him from taking the money.

## 1324 TYRFING

Suddenly shifted from the center of the Sword Worlds Confederation to the edge of the Border Worlds, the people of Tyrfiging are trying hard to hang on to the secure, conservative existence they had before the war. This is complicated by a vast increase in merchant traffic in the last few years, which is bringing the rest of the universe here despite Tyrfiging misgivings.

### The Planet

Tyrfiging is a classic tidally locked world. A hot side perpetually faces the sun, a cold side barely avoids permanent freezing, and a reasonably comfortable band in between gets a parody of night and day due to the planet's libration as it orbits its primary, Alberich. Circulation in the planet's extensive seas keeps the cold side from freezing over entirely, and the thin atmosphere whistles along at high altitudes in excess of 200 miles per hour between hot side and cold, carrying more heat still. On the surface, a chilly wind constantly blows in from the dark, but the atmosphere is thin enough to prevent it from being much of a problem in the twilight band.



## Life on Tyrfing

Tyrfing has been in upheaval the last few years, as it was officially designated one of the two points of entry for ships coming to the Border Worlds from the Sword Worlds (see *Checkpoints*, p. 79). Despite rampant smuggling and a sharp drop in the total number of ships passing from one state to the other, Tyrfing itself still sees three times the traffic that it did before the Fifth Frontier War. Before it was often circumvented in favor of the much more important Hofud, but traders headed there now have to pass through this world first.

Now the starport is the busiest and most crowded in Sword Worlder space. It's not so much the total volume of tonnage coming through (other worlds like Gram and Narsil are far busier in total) so much as the new tonnage divided by the space that's available; berths are at a premium, especially as inspections take so long, and the quality of the personnel has plummeted as new hires are brought on with inappropriate haste. At least two fatal crashes have been caused by the deteriorating conditions, and the port authorities have probably covered up the cause of others.

## The People of Tyrfing

The Tyrfings are largely rural; apart from the new star-town, the only city with more than 200,000 people is the capital at Munarvag. Despite the very thin atmosphere, most people live on farms, domed over and seeded with fast-growing plants that can withstand the continual daylight when that edge of the planet librates toward the sun.

Tyrfings are extremely conservative, and many practice an austere form of Aesirism that concentrates on Frey as the god of fertility and crops. In classic Aesirism, each person is responsible for his religious duties, and while *godarnir* have taken over most of these functions elsewhere, the Tyrfings still follow the old ways, and are well-educated in their religion. If there is such a thing as Aesirian fundamentalism, it's found on Tyrfing.

As a result, the Tyrfings are far less trusting and hospitable than other Sword Worlders. Those characteristics do exist in them, but it takes much longer to win them over, and flamboyant or thoughtless behavior will harden them against a stranger.

## The Government

A class of hereditary nobles – the *jarl* class – numbers some 15,000, and rules the planet. Everyone else is *carl* (“yeoman”) class, and has no say in the government except through any informal pressure they can place on the *jarlnir*.

In the past, this pressure was considerable as the number of *jarlnir* and the moderate poverty of the planet kept individuals of that class from getting too far ahead of the *carlnir*. With the passing of the checkpoint laws, however, they are getting richer. This is particularly true of Jarl Aki IV Skirrs-son of Sandigdomaen, the owner of the land on which the starport was built. He has rapidly become the richest man on the planet, and both the *jarlnir* and *carlnir* are beginning to worry that he may use his good fortune in a push to become King of Tyrfing.

## 1325 SACNOTH

Sacnoth is the most critical of the Border Worlds, the most populous by far and with an economy larger than the other six Border Worlds put together. Only Gram and Narsil are its match in the entire subsector.

## History

Sacnoth was settled from Gram in -294, when a small cabal inside Gram's space-development agency used the program to escape the oppressive government that controlled the planet at the time. Six worlds had been selected for settlement, but the cabal manipulated events to ensure that Sacnoth would be the destination of friends, relatives, and like-minded individuals, as well as the lion's share of supplies and equipment. Sacnoth consequently did much better than any of the other worlds, which in turn attracted more settlers, and eventually led to Sacnoth overtaking Gram in power and establishing the Sacnoth Dominate.

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*Gram and Sacnoth like to think of themselves as the big brothers, but a family needs a stern father to keep the big brothers from bullying the little brothers.*

– Leonard Torstensson,  
*Fraendenir*, 444

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During the Fimbulwinter, Sacnoth's central government had problems asserting itself against the remoter parts of the world, a trend that continued during the Five States era. Colada, Dyrnwyn, and the Double Monarchy used these internal tensions to balkanize Sacnoth in 104.

## The Planet

Sacnoth is a world much like Terra, and equally diverse – perhaps even more so, as Humaniti has had less time to work on Sacnoth's rough edges. The planet has three continents, all of which are joined by isthmuses.

The largest continent is Eisufer, which covers the north pole and a third of the planet south past the equator to the 30th parallel. Holding a similar position on the opposite side of the world, but half the size, is Arathrion. The third continent, Erl, runs around a third of the planet between 40° and 60° South latitude.

## The Starport

Before the war most civilian starships used by Sword Worlders were built on Gram, but Sacnoth has always had naval shipyards to build its warships. Since the Border Worlds were formed, the Border Worlds have mostly had to rely on the Imperium as a source of new ships. However, Sacnoth's civilian spaceship yards have begun building starships, and they were recently reclassified as Type V.

## Life on Sacnoth

The lake region of Eri, around the large inland sea of Hameer, is the most heavily populated part of the planet. The planetary capital, Foerstaberg, is here, while the starport is on the Halsband Islands to the west.

Even outside the lake region, Sacnoth is heavily developed, with large cities and arcologies dotting the landscape, and huge industrial farms feed most of the planet's nearly seven billion people.

In all, Sacnoth buzzes with activity. It is not only a political powerhouse, it is one of the most economically important worlds in the sector, and has by far and away the largest shipyards in the Border Worlds. Citizens of Sacnoth are *busy* all the time, by the standards of other Sword Worlders.

## The Atmospheric Taint

Sacnoth's great mystery is its "atmospheric taint." No one is even sure that the planet *has* one, but there are signs.

The lifespans of Sacnoths are noticeably shorter than those of other Sword Worlders. Anyone who has lived on Sacnoth for more than a decade in total starts making aging rolls five years earlier than normal (see p. B83), with the later breakpoints also advanced by five years.

Why this happens is unknown, but an environmental cause is suspected. People of Sacnoth descent who live on other worlds are not affected, and those from other worlds who live here are. Over the last 1,200 years, countless studies have been made of the phenomenon, but no explanation has ever been found. Whatever it is, it must be complex, for no one cause would have resisted analysis for so long. The Imperial Scout Service has chosen to call it a taint so as to

best fit within its planetary coding system, but there is not even any evidence that the atmosphere is responsible.

## The People of Sacnoth

Sacnoths are, along with Grams, the "great people" of the Sword Worlds. Unlike the Grams, they haven't been constantly disappointed in their ambitions, and haven't the fine-honed paranoia of their counterparts. The Constitutional Crisis of 979 shook their confidence a little, after Gram grasped leadership of the Sword Worlds Confederation more firmly, but this was viewed with far more equanimity than the Grams could ever muster. This lack of a burning need to win at all costs is what is now causing the government problems for having joined the Border Worlds willingly.

## The Government

A technocratic government rules the planet by controlling the infrastructure – both physical, like airports and highways, and more abstract, like currency and postal services. In practice, this has allowed the real power to settle onto the rich, particularly the big business interests of the Border Worlds' biggest economy.

The Imperium picked up on this when they decided to set up the Border Worlds, and managed to strike a deal with the conglomerates that split Sacnoth away from the Confederation in return for a wide variety of trading rights in the new client state.

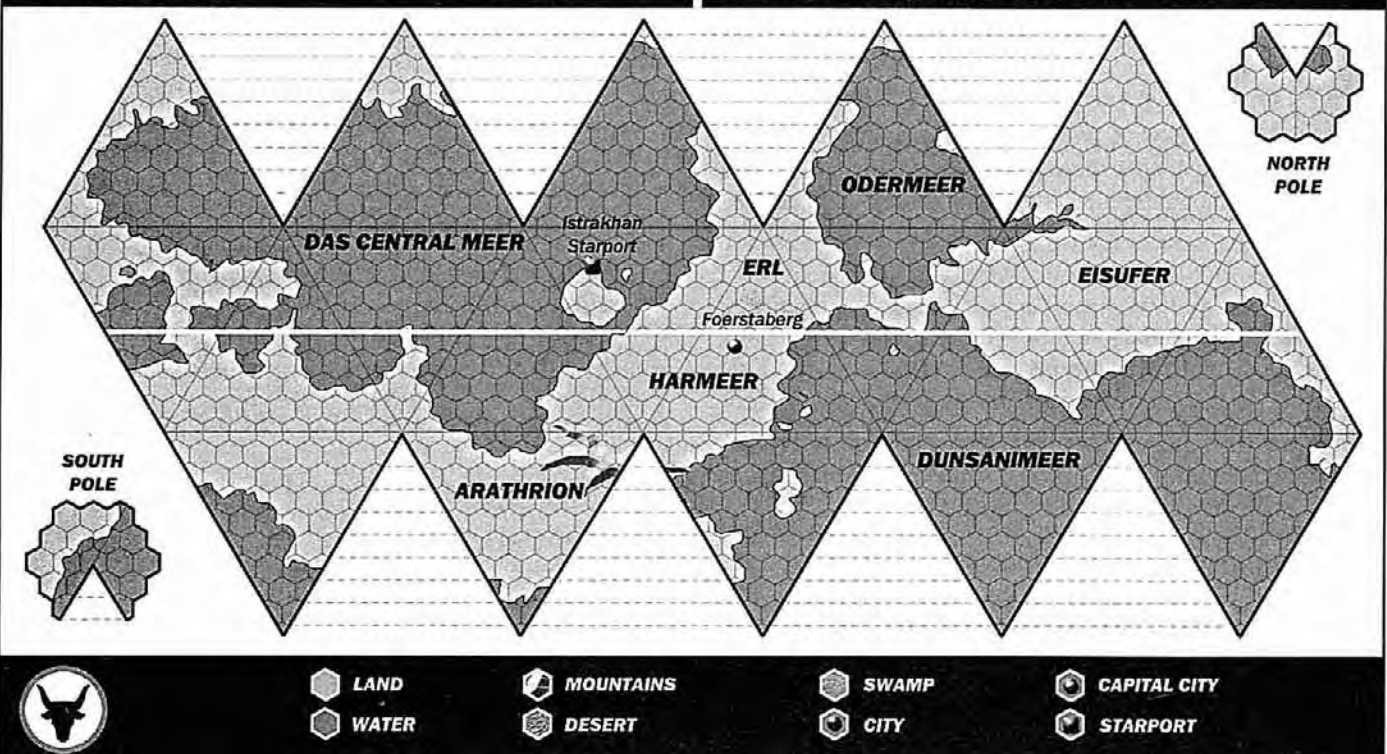
Unfortunately for them, most people on Sacnoth don't agree with putting Sacnoth's interests ahead of the Confederation's as a whole. At first very vocal, the majority were gradually put down after the BWA brought Sacnoth's military

WORLD NAME:

**SACNOTH**

GRID/SECTOR:

**1325 SPINWARD MARCHES**

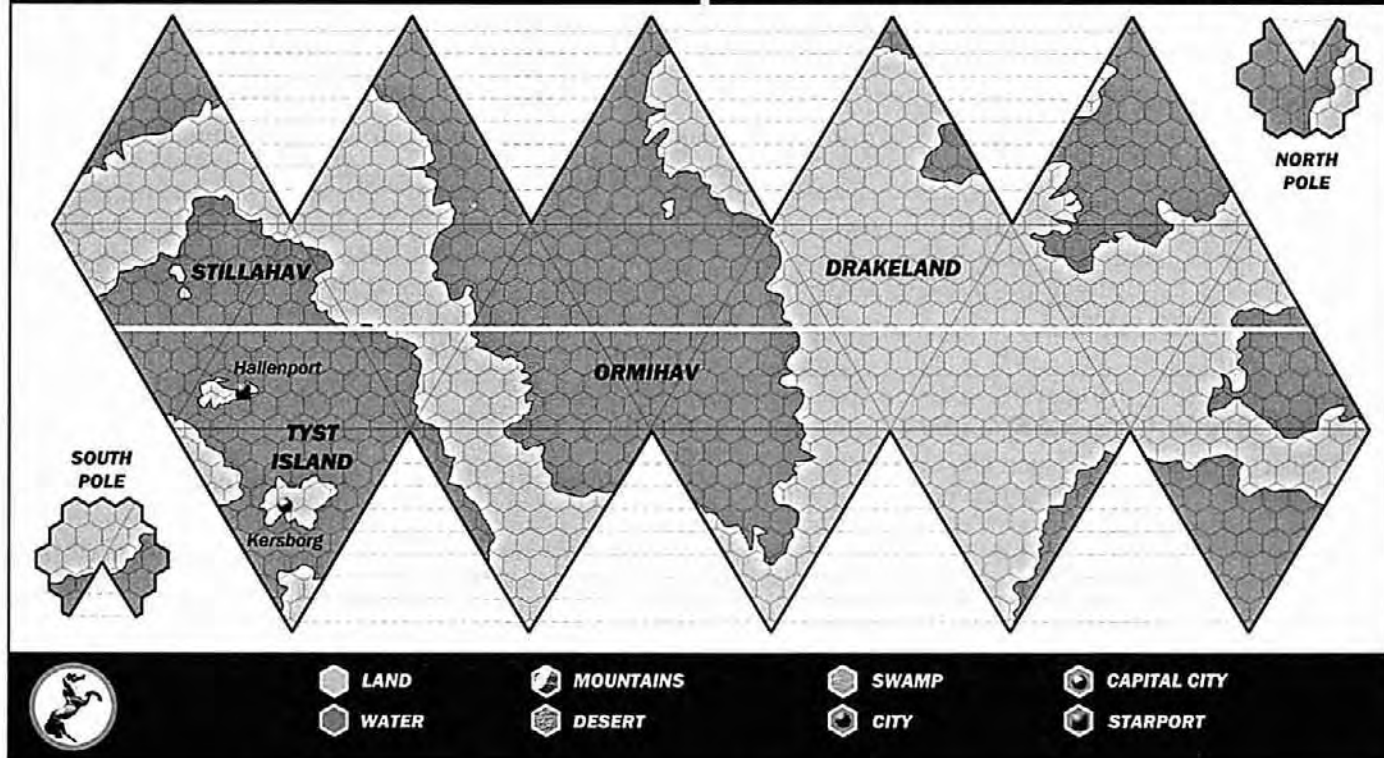




WORLD NAME:

**BEATER**

GRID/SECTOR:

**1424 SPINWARD MARCHES**

into the government, paying them off with larger budgets and getting repression of the anti-BWA factions as a whole. In the last five years, it has become clear that the government is ruling through naked power. This runs counter to the Imperium's original desires, but they've placed their bets on the current government, and can't see a way to back away in favor of another option.



## 1424 BEATER

Beater is the capital of the new Border Worlds, despite being of very little importance even within the rump state. It was, in fact, picked precisely for this reason; Sacnoth is the logical capital, but the Imperium needs to keep that high-population world from dominating its neighbors.

## The Planet

Beater is in a megafaunal stage. Low gravity, high temperatures, lots of oxygen, and no seasons have encouraged the growth of life beyond what is typical. Many planets have periods like this in their histories – Beater just happens to be in one now.

The unusual thing about Beater's life forms is their tendency to straddle the line between what most people would consider "plant" and "animal." Even sessile "plants" like the *hjastringtra* can defend themselves with extensible thorns when irritated, while obvious "animals" like the *aksturen* can store up solar energy for bursts of speed.

## Life on Beater

Before it became the capital, Beater was noted for its agricultural produce and its safaris; the world's hunting is renowned for parsecs around, and many rich Sword Worlders with a taste for adventure have one of Beater's impressive life-forms stuffed and mounted somewhere around the mansion.

The Confederation government is run out of Kersborg, a sober city of about 1,000,000 people built around a large hydroelectric dam that powers most of the planet. There's been considerable construction in the last few years, as government buildings go up fast in the city center. The new *Folkshing* hall opened in mid-1118, and is widely considered a concrete monstrosity. The native citizens of the city think this of *every* building put up by the new government, and are recoiling from the influx of thousands of government functionaries. Meanwhile the newcomers, particularly those from Sacnoth, aren't all that pleased to be relocated to "Kysrborg" ("Cow Town") either.

## The Government

Beater no longer has a planetary government, the old one having been transferred *en masse* to the Border Worlds Authority as part of the "Capital Administration Department." As the total number of Confederation employees is over 250,000, and Beater's former government bureaucrats numbered about 10,000, the natives no longer even have much of a voice in their own department. Beater does have a *hertug*, currently Sveidi III, and he does have some effect on the Branch's policy. Still, if things continue the way they have been going, Beater's administration is not far away from being divided between Imperial advisors and bureaucrats from other worlds.

### HUNTING ON BEATER

What do the big game hunters aim for when they go to Beater? The same things they do everywhere else: the big and the fierce.

#### Bullvar

ST: 60      Speed/Dodge: 7/7      Size: 25  
DX: 14      PD/DR: 2/2      Weight: 20,000 lbs.  
IQ: 4      Damage: 2d+1 cr      Habitat: F, J  
HT: 15/50      Reach: C

The *bullvar* is the largest land species on the planet, and one of the largest in the sector. Shaped vaguely like an ankylosaur on thick, 30-foot tall legs, or like a tree with an oval canopy and four trunks, it sways along, feeding on the upper foliage of forests. Its 15-foot long (and wide) body is lightly sprinkled with armored plates and spikes, and the entire upper surface is colored green by its photosynthesizing cells.

While normally quite placid and slow, when provoked a *bullvar* can run in excess of 50 miles an hour for short bursts, and will run *toward* a target to trample it as often as the creature will run away.

#### Skurgar

ST: 10      Speed/Dodge: 10/8      Size: 11  
DEX: 15      PD/DR: 1/0      Weight: 100 lbs.  
IQ: 6      Damage: 1d-2 cut      Habitat: D, F, P  
HT: 10      Reach: C

These odd creatures are the "wolves" of Beater. During the day, a pack of 10 to 20 *skurgar* will hunker down and quietly photosynthesize, unless disturbed. When night comes, they hunt.

Resembling a cross between a rat and a pig, *skurgars* have black, hairless skin to absorb sunlight and long, tooth-filled snouts. Their sense of smell is exceptional, allowing them to track prey in conditions that are pitch black to a Human. They are also disturbingly smart, about the same intelligence as a Terran baboon.

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*The only problem with hunting bullvars is that they can take several days to stop moving after you kill them.*

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## 1523 DURENDAL

Durendal is a world in political upheaval, as events following the Fifth Frontier War have led its government to bind the planet tightly to Sacnoth. The situation hasn't devolved into violence thanks to the skillful work of *Hertug* Vithar, who is outmaneuvering the old guard at every turn, and seems likely to turn the planet into an popular absolutist monarchy in a few more years.

### The Planet

Like many worlds in the area, Durendal was terraformed by the Ancients. Unlike the others, it was a living world beforehand, with an oxygen atmosphere and multicellular life. All that kept it from being completely terrestrial was its tidal lock to its primary, Roland, and even that was temporarily broken about 300,000 years ago.

Just how the Ancients did it isn't quite clear, but it probably has something to do with lines of extremely dense material that were found deep within the crust after the planet was colonized. So buried that they are visible only with densitometers, they are certainly artificial, running either due north-south or parallel to the planet's lines of latitude and forming a grid enveloping the planet. The network is inactive now, as Durendal has again fallen into the tidal lock.

Even so, Roland is so close to Durendal that the planet had immense tides for the 230,000 years it wasn't locked, tides in the water and even on the land. The planet was warped severely until it returned to its natural state, and the surface is dotted with many more volcanoes than are found on other similar worlds. Over much of the planet huge fields of lava – in excess of 1,000,000 square miles – once flooded the surface, and have since been covered by a thin layer of soil. The planet undoubtedly had a tainted atmosphere for some time, but with the return of the tidal lock about 70,000 years ago, the air returned to normal.

### Life on Durendal

Durendal is one of the most terrestrial planets in the sub-sector. Away from the volcanic mountain ranges, portions of the planet are very pleasant, and the Durendals have settled into the sort of yeoman farming that is the ideal for many Sword Worlders. The thin soil needs careful maintenance, but the volcanic ash of the previous millennia makes good feedstock for fertilizer, and Durendal's farms are quite productive.

### The Government

Durendal's government prior to the Fifth Frontier War was oligarchic, with a large nobility representing the landed interests of the planet and ruled over by a king. However, the last native *hertug* of Durendal, Sigurd IV, was killed during



the War, and several of his heirs took refuge in the Confederation when the planet was occupied by the Imperium.

The potential heir who showed the most willingness to accommodate the invaders was Vithar VII of Sacnoth. On that world he was king, but the position had long since lapsed into irrelevance. With Imperial backing, he claimed the throne of Durendal and its much greater real power. In return he used his moral authority to maneuver Sacnoth out of the Confederation and into the Border Worlds. This accomplished, he renounced the throne of Sacnoth in favor of his second son and moved to his new possession as Vithar I. The eldest is now his heir here, and the former royal house of Sacnoth is aiming to become a permanent feature in the political landscape of a new, Imperial-friendly Durendal.

As a result, the government is divided into two main factions. The Old Guard is the native nobility of the planet, who are less than pleased with their new king, unknown to them up to this point. The King's Men, however, are composed of those of the old nobility who see opportunity in the new regime, as well as trusted cronies of King Vithar from his days on Sacnoth. One of these is Huldar Manisson Klein, former chief of security for the King and now head of the new secret police. He's is a highly competent man – as is, surprisingly, the King. Despite the grumbling of the Old Guard, the new king has been making inroads into the entrenched nobility, turning their functions over to his loyalists.

## DRUE AND VESKE

Life on Durendal has taken a step sometimes seen on worlds with high-density atmospheres – a “plankton/predator” lifestyle, on most worlds confined to the oceans, exists in the air.

The smaller, prey creatures are called *drue*, and live in vast clouds over columns of rising air. While there are many different species of *drue*, most are built on the same pattern. Rarely more than an sixteenth of an inch in diameter, much of their body consists of a tiny, grape-like sac that inflates with hydrogen cracked from water through photosynthesis. While not enough to get the *drue* airborne by themselves, the sacs make *drue* so light the slightest breath of wind will pick them up and carry them long distances. There are so many *drue* in the air that they give the planet's atmosphere a slightly greenish cast when seen from the space, though they are too few to cause difficulty for Human breathing.

Preying on the *drue* are the *veske*, which have evolved from their smaller brethren. While varied, *veske* are balloon-like animals between six inches and six feet in diameter, and they feed upon the *drue* either by filtering them directly from the air, or by waving or trailing sticky tentacles. Many are fliers, but some have adapted to life on the ground, particularly in places where the prevailing wind blows against a cliff on which they can anchor.

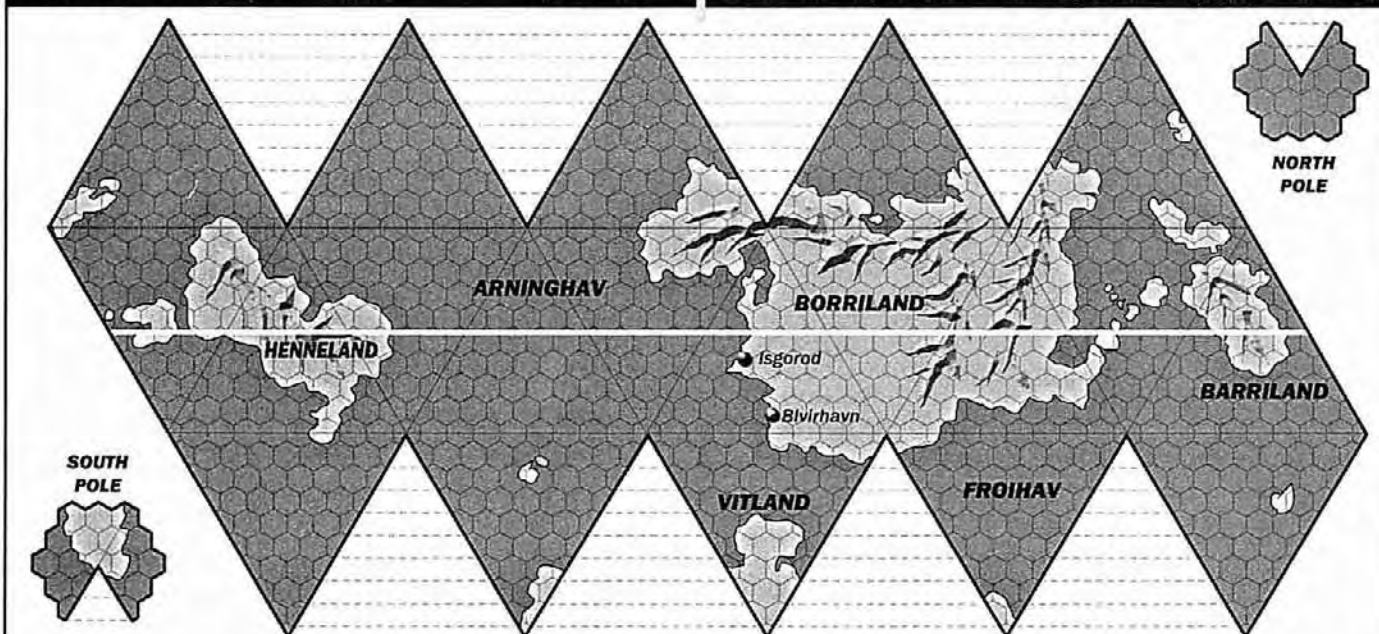
True predation has not yet evolved on Durendal, so the *veske* are helpless if attacked. This has become a problem since Humans came to the world, bringing with them a variety of livestock. Feral birds, cats, and dogs have been causing severe problems for the planet's native life. To a *veske*, even a cow is a fearsome foe.

WORLD NAME:

**DURENDAL**

GRID/SECTOR:

**1523 SPINWARD MARCHES**



LAND  
WATER

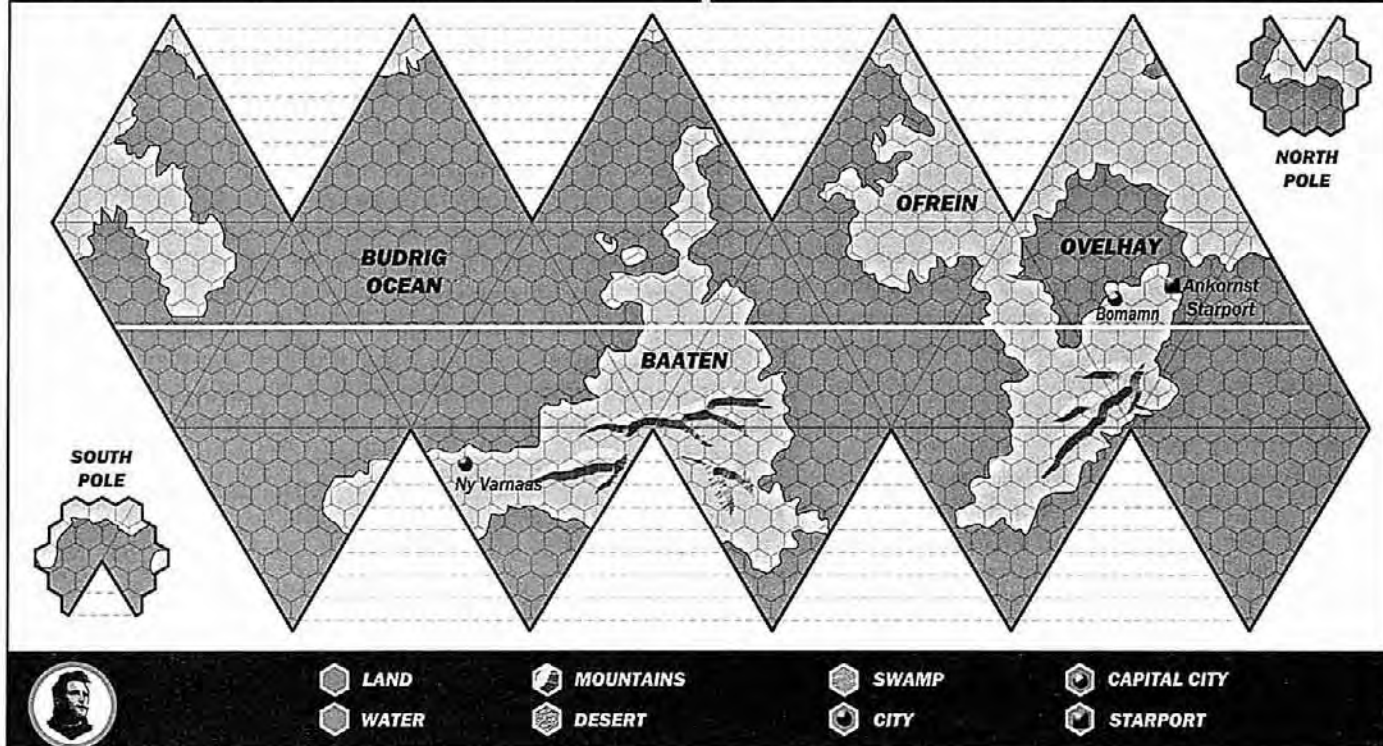
MOUNTAINS  
DESERT

SWAMP  
CITY

CAPITAL CITY  
STARPORT

WORLD NAME:  
**HOFUD**

GRID/SECTOR:  
**1524 SPINWARD MARCHES**



## The People of Durendal

Part of the reason the King has been able to secure his rule is that the average person has long been at the mercy of his local lord. Most lords do a decent, or at least indifferent, job, but some don't – and these are the ones that are remembered. The Durendals are not uneducated peasants; they know history and hear what goes on in the wider universe around them. With the accession of the new king, the yeomanry and the lower classes now see a chance for positive change and are backing absolute rule for the popular Vithar I. As a result, the Durendals are gaining confidence daily.

## 1524 Hofud

*No one likes armed missionaries.*

– Maximilien Robespierre (1758-1794,  
Solomani Reckoning)

Hofud is the flashpoint for the Border Worlds, perhaps even for the whole Sword Worlder way of life. The Hofud People's Alliance is an anti-Imperial, antinobility, pro-independence movement that has been moving from strength to strength over the last 10 years. They move through the wilderness and rural areas of the planet with impunity, leaving the official world government with nothing under their complete control where they cannot stand a soldier. Using abandoned Zhodani equipment, their guerrillas win a victory against the local peacekeepers, then fade back into the woods before striking again at another unexpected location. Intelligence suggests that they are concentrating heavy equipment from around the planet in order to take on the government in a final battle, bringing all of Hofud under their control. Some

suggest that the Zhodani are still, somehow, supplying the HPA, with the goal of destabilizing the Border Worlds.

A win by the Alliance would certainly do that, as their cohesive ideology of reform and opposition to the Imperium that has been taken up by at least a few people in both the Imperial-run area and the Sword Worlds Confederation itself. Both governments are looking on with concern, as neither can afford another complication on top of what they already have; a planet trying to export revolution would definitely qualify as a complication. So far the Imperium has refrained from crushing the Alliance on behalf of the Border Worlds Authority, for fear that doing so might spark even worse trouble elsewhere. What will happen when the last city of Hofud falls makes a lot of people nervous.

## The Planet

Most people on Hofud live on the larger of the two continents, Ofrein, particularly around the Ovelhav, a large inland sea in the temperate latitudes of the northern hemisphere. The capital is here, and the best agricultural land on the planet is to the west.

The smaller continent, Baaten, is far less populated, with only 60 million people to Ofrein's 520 million. Baaten is where the HPA is strongest, and its large, thinly populated western peninsula is a no-go zone for the BWA or Imperial loyalists.

## Life on Hofud

Hofud is one of the most heavily populated Sword Worlds, and has been for many centuries. Ofrein is urbanized and well-organized, virtually manicured in many places.



Baaten only started to grow in the last 200 years, and even now only has about 10 people per square mile. For years it has been the "wild west" of Hofud, the place where people went to start a new life. On the east coast are cities approaching those on Ofrein in size and sophistication, but as one moves west the population thins out and the rest of the continent is very rural. In the far west, the land is nearly untouched. The small city of Ny Vanaas, an industrial center working the mines of the Blaebergnir mountains, is the sole urban center in that region. Ny Vanaas has been occupied by the HPA for several months, and is currently serving as the "Provisional Capital of the Republic of Hofud."

### *IISS Data Revision*

Previous listings of Hofud's population put it in the hundreds of thousands. This is probably due to an error in Imperial Interstellar Scout Service records. A world rarely exerts Hofud's level of historical influence with such a low population.

### *The People of Hofud*

The people of Hofud's cities can be divided into two camps: those who are trying to cut and run, getting off the planet at any cost until things settle down, and those in an advanced state of denial. The second group is far larger than the first.

Whether they acknowledge it or not, though, those who are staying are in full "Last Days of the Empire" mode, swinging through ever-more manic rounds of parties and

celebrations. It seems that, subconsciously, they know that things could get very bad, very soon. Any discussion about the HPA is considered to be extremely rude.

Away from the cities, the population has adopted the time-honored strategy for dealing with rebels who roam the countryside and the government armies that soon follow. They are paranoid and close-mouthed to the extreme, supplying both sides at gunpoint as needed while hiding as much of their food and valuables as they can. This approach only goes so far, though, and after a decade of civil war the situation in the countryside is getting desperate. It's difficult for anyone to plan too far ahead, if only because no one even knows who will be in charge in six months.

### *The Government*

Hofud's legitimate government is self-sustaining. A nebulous organization, simply called "The Government," is staffed by means of nepotism and cronyism, and remains the central power. It leases out functions such as peacekeeping and garbage collection to bidders from the private sector. At times this works well, but makes coordination across agencies difficult – there is no entrenched bureaucracy to smooth the transition if a function transfers from one corporation to another.

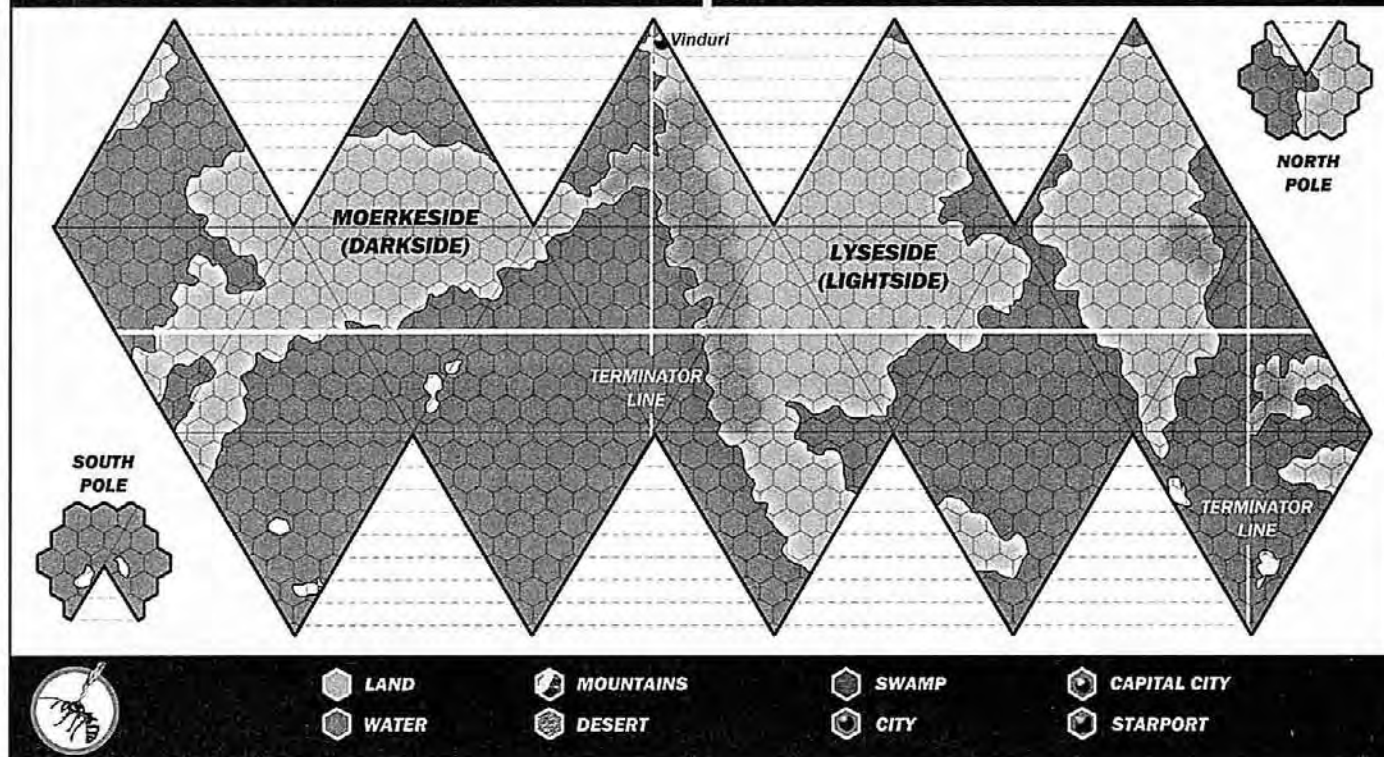
A particular difficulty in the current situation is that the cost of the peacekeeping bid is soaring, as candidate corporations either raise their prices considerably in view of the fighting going on, or drop out of contention entirely for fear of losing their shirts. The current holder of the peacekeeping contract, a firm named Vaerlsfreden, is understaffed, underfunded, and nearly incompetent.



WORLD NAME:

**STING**

GRID/SECTOR:

**1525 SPINWARD MARCHES**

The rival "government," the HPA, is radically democratic. Within the area they control in western Baaten, they have set up informal councils in villages and towns, to keep them informed of what is going on. When the war is over, they promise universal suffrage and a reform of the governmental system along democratic lines. In the meantime, they are demonstrating their devotion to "the people" by setting up free schools and building some rudimentary infrastructure in the poorest regions on the planet.

## 1525 STING

Conquered twice during the Hofud Wars, Sting's native rulers were replaced by ones from Dyrnwyn. While much of the planetary population knuckled under to a new bureaucratic government, a fraction stayed nearly independent, living in the miasmic forests between the poles.

### *The Planet*

Sting is an old world, long since tidally locked to its primary. In the last 200 million years or so its core has cooled and its continents have ground to a halt. With no new land being formed, erosion is gradually smoothing the planet flat. The tallest mountains are merely rounded hills, and the oceans are filling with sediment; mud rules over much of the planet.

Much of the planet's twilight zone is covered with plant life adapted to the endless winds moving from the cold side to the hot. The jungles that live off the eroded sediment have an incredibly thick canopy, which keeps the area under it relatively calm, but also difficult to explore. Flat as it is, the land drains poorly. Except in the far north and south the

land is stinking, poisonous swamp. Humans find it impossible to breathe the atmosphere without becoming ill, and stay at the frozen poles. If they do come down under the canopy and manage to resist the odor, it's just a matter of time before they run into some miasma that's downright poisonous and die.

### *Life on Sting*

The majority of the planet's population lives in underground cities at the north and south poles. As Sting is tidally locked, the arctic and antarctic are aren't as cold as they would otherwise be, but at the cost of high-speed winds carrying some warmth from the substellar point. Even with the thin atmosphere, it's wise to keep buildings strong and squat, then dig down. Ships landing at Vinduri Starport need to pay close attention to radar maps transmitted from local traffic control, watching for wind shears that have destroyed many craft in the last seconds of their journeys.

Once down, travelers find themselves in pedestrian paradises. Each city consists of multiple levels joined by huge passenger elevators, and most levels are small enough to walk across in less than a half an hour. Larger levels (either farms and parks, or "downtown" business districts) are equipped with rapid transit slidewalks. In fact, there are almost no vehicles at all, as Stings have a cultural aversion to noxious fumes — they're associated with the swampy forests that cover much of the planet. Internal-combustion engines are banned outright, and hydrogen fuel cells run the few maintenance and emergency vehicles. Intercity travel uses electrified rail lines, which are unusual only for the wind-diverting walls that cover one side of the track: on Sting, the wind comes from the same direction eternally.



## The Myrfolk

Sting was once the capital of an extensive, if underpopulated, Kingdom of Sting, covering eight worlds in the rimward-trailing corner of the subsector. When Sting was conquered by Hofud, which was in turn absorbed by Dyrnwyn, the original population of the planet lost its sovereignty, and the nobility was replaced by loyal imports from Dyrnwyn.

Some people, a few million Humans known as the *myrfolk*, chose to avoid subjugation and adapted to the lowland. Primitive, they are looked down upon by the pole-dwellers, who ignore them except at trading posts on the forest edges. The *myrfolk*, in turn, see themselves as the true inheritors of the Kingdom of Sting. Frequent punitive expeditions from the highlands extract taxes – tribute, really – from the swamp-dwellers, but otherwise the *myrfolk* live their own lives.

### THE OLD PALACES

With millions of square miles of terrain that one goes over rather than through, parts of Sting are completely unexplored. Several aborted attempts at colonizing parts of the planet have left ruins here and there. More than a few ships crashed during the wars that ran through nearby space. There are also persistent rumors of rich enclaves of pre-Hofud War nobility of Sting, hiding out in the wilderness and killing anyone who uncovers them.

The *myrfolk* call all of these remnants *fornslottnir*, “Old Palaces,” but waste no time on them unless an off worlder pays them to do so. Anyone looking to find a particular site is advised to make the payment: more than one off-world expedition has met with grief.

In contrast to the cold, austere cities of the poles, the *myrfolk* settlements, called *bakke*, are primitive and small. Each is perched on one of the planet’s remaining hills, above the worst of the forest gases. Over time the population carefully “farms” the hilltop’s flora to weed out the ones that are most poisonous. The older a *bakke*, the cleaner the air.

The same winds that affect the polar settlements keep the *myrfolk* from clear-cutting the trees on their hilltops; they’re needed as a woody barrier to the more destructive gales. This means that agriculture on a large scale isn’t possible, even on hills that are large enough to contain proper fields. The land is needed for windbreaks. Instead, the *myrfolk* scatter small plots of food plants in the lowlands surrounding a *bakke*, in a half-agricultural, half-gatherer lifestyle. The inhabitants of a *bakke* then become intimately familiar with the land around their town, as they learn how to go from plot to plot safely. It also ties them to their particular town, unless they engage in a trade that doesn’t involve any farming; it’s just too time-consuming to learn the ins and outs of the landscape around a new town.

## The Ruling Authority

When Sting was conquered, it was for several decades under the direct control of Dyrnwyn. Over time, however, the Occupation Authority evolved into the Ruling Authority, which was independent of Dyrnwyn in all but name. So long as the taxes came in, Sting was ignored. The Ruling Authority was good at making sure that happened. The Dyrnwyn-imposed nobility was gradually marginalized, distracted by high stipends from their bureaucracy and rendered impotent as the Authority ran the day-to-day business. By the time Sting was incorporated into the larger Second Dominate, the Authority had become the paramount ruler of the planet; Dyrnwyn was nearly irrelevant, and in fact Sting had become the capital of an autonomous region policing Biter and the Metal Worlds.

As larger states came and went, the Authority has proven masterful at absorbing and corrupting agents of the higher-level governments. The Second Dominate, the Gram Coalition, the Trilateral Alliance, and even the Sword Worlds Confederation all found it more profitable to let Sting’s long-running bureaucratic government carry on than let reformers sweep it away.

Under the Border Worlds, the Authority has been up to its old tricks, luring Imperial “advisors” into knocking themselves senseless against the wall of Sting’s interlocking agencies. “The Swamp,” as Imperials have come to call it in mocking reference to the rest of the planet, has so far proven impervious to all but the lightest veneer of oversight.

### Imperial Annexation

The most successful tactic employed by the Ruling Authority has been to tie up the two higher governments in a power play of breathtaking cynicism: in 1118, Sting’s government petitioned the BWA to leave the Border Worlds and join the Imperium.

In doing so, the Stings found the weak point in the Imperium’s plan for the region and are exploiting it to maintain their independence. The Imperium doesn’t want Sting to leave the Border Worlds; this will cause their attempts at making the state a model of Imperial/Sword World cooperation look false. Yet it has also been reducing tensions with other states in the Marches by emphasizing that the individual Border Worlds are free to do as they please. The Imperium is stuck with a choice in which it loses either way it jumps.



Ultimately, the Imperium has been left with stalling in the hopes that something better will come along as events develop. It’s been over two years since the petition was made, and Sting has been made a separate client state, autonomous from the Border Worlds but still technically a part of them. Today, neither state has full power over Sting – and that is exactly as the Ruling Authority likes it.

## IMPERIAL WORLDS

Hex	Name	Zone	Starport	Diameter	Gravity	Atmosphere	Hydro%	Climate
1526	Biter	Green	IV	2,800	0.57	Thin	41%	Normal
1529	Steel	Green	I	6,100	0.81	Thin	47%	Hot
1626	Iron	Green	I	5,000	0.66	Very Thin(T)	94%	Hot
1627	Bronze	Red	I	1,900	0.14	None	11%	Frozen
1628	Mithril	Green	I	5,000	0.53	Standard	83%	Cold

## IMPERIAL WORLDS

Since the end of the Fifth Frontier War, the Imperium has annexed five planets formerly belonging to the Sword Worlds. Four of these were the uninhabited Metal Worlds, but one other joined willingly in the aftermath of the War.

### 1526 BITER

Biter is one of the most tragic worlds in the Spinward Marches. Once a thriving planet with more than 20 million citizens, it was depopulated and its ecology thoroughly disrupted after a war with Hofud from 419 to 439.

#### History

Biter's history is intimately tied into those of Hofud and Sting. In 383 Hofud had attacked and conquered Sting. *Hertugin* Marianne escaped to Biter and set up a government in exile. Hofud then invaded Biter, in 419, touching off a bitter guerrilla war that lasted for almost 20 years. Hofud then resorted to its infamous solution in 435, the first of the Biter Atrocities, the *Spredning* ("Scattering"): millions were deported to other worlds or killed outright (see p. 98).

Following the assassination of Jarl Birger, the eldest son of Johan II of Hofud, vast quantities of chemical and biological weapons were used – the second Biter Atrocity, known as the *Saltsaar* ("Salt-Sowing").

When the neighboring states finally stepped in and stopped Hofud, Biter's ecology was thoroughly disrupted and many of the survivors were suffering from the chemicals' side effects, including genetic abnormalities. With the planet's industry and infrastructure destroyed, it took over two centuries to repair the environment and even longer to weed out the genetic damage. The population hovered around the 1,000,000 mark until about 1000, when it slowly began climbing.

After the Fifth Frontier War, Biter became part of the Border Worlds, but in 1115 it petitioned for admission to the Imperium. After two years of deliberation and negotiation among the Border Worlds, the Sword Worlds, and the Imperials, an adjunct to the final peace treaty was signed. With it, it was decided that Biter would be taken into the Imperium, but that immigration would be opened for *Luffarnir* from all Sword Worlds and Border Worlds who wished to return to their homeworld. The two confederations, in turn, got a place

## IMPERIAL NAVIGATIONAL DATA

Hex	Name	Primary	Companions	GG	PB	Orbit	Moons
1526	Biter	G7 V (Thorin)	D (Gondolin)	1	0	0.84	—
1529	Steel	M8 III (Daaluusinnagi)	—	4	2	66.0	—
1626	Iron	F0 V (CN4335686)	—	4	1	2.40	1 large
1627	Bronze	M3 V (CN4335687)	—	0	1	0.17	—
1628	Mithril	F4 V (Goolanzoon)	—	1	0	4.10	2 small





Population	Gov Type	CR	TL	WTN
2,300,000	AthDem	1	9	4.0
4,300	Captive	1	8	2.0
None	None	0	0	0.5
None	None	0	0	0.5
2,400	Captive	2	10	2.0

to dump a generally destitute population at a time when budgets were tight. The Emperor ratified the accord in 1118 and Biter received its Imperial membership in 1119. Since then, more than 400,000 of the wanderers have come back, and they make up a significant minority of the planet's population.

## The Planet

Biter is too small to be a terrestrial world, but is; it is another world terraformed by the Ancients 300,000 years ago. Biter is slowly losing its air and water, but not so quickly as to be noticeable. It still has a thin atmosphere and several large, land-locked seas.

The interior of the continents is largely plains, fading into desert depending on the amount of rain in any given area. Within 100 miles of any major source of water, however, Biter is covered by an astonishing range of tree and plant species imported from worlds all over charted space. Scientists have catalogued 43 different planets' lifeforms, in most cases finding multiple species from each world.

This makes the areas near water riotously complex forests, and all of the cities still inhabited are in these areas – the plains were more badly damaged during the *Saltsaar*, and free food was more readily available for gathering in the forests following the disaster.

## Life on Biter

Biter is simultaneously sad and uplifting for many people. Every person on the planet is aware of the Biter Atrocities, and for centuries the Biterers were furious with Hofud for what they had suffered. In the last 200 years, however, Biter has been under the influence of Vilfred Santesson, a pacifistic religious figure who preached patience and forgiveness to the people before passing away in 988 – many people attribute Biter's ultimate recovery from the Hofud Wars to his work.

People live in small neighborhoods fixed up out of the old, destroyed cities of Biter. Within the neighborhoods things are neatly organized and bucolic, with the plants and animals of the surrounding forests allowed to reclaim the upper floors of buildings. Cities on Biter are as much gardens as urban centers.

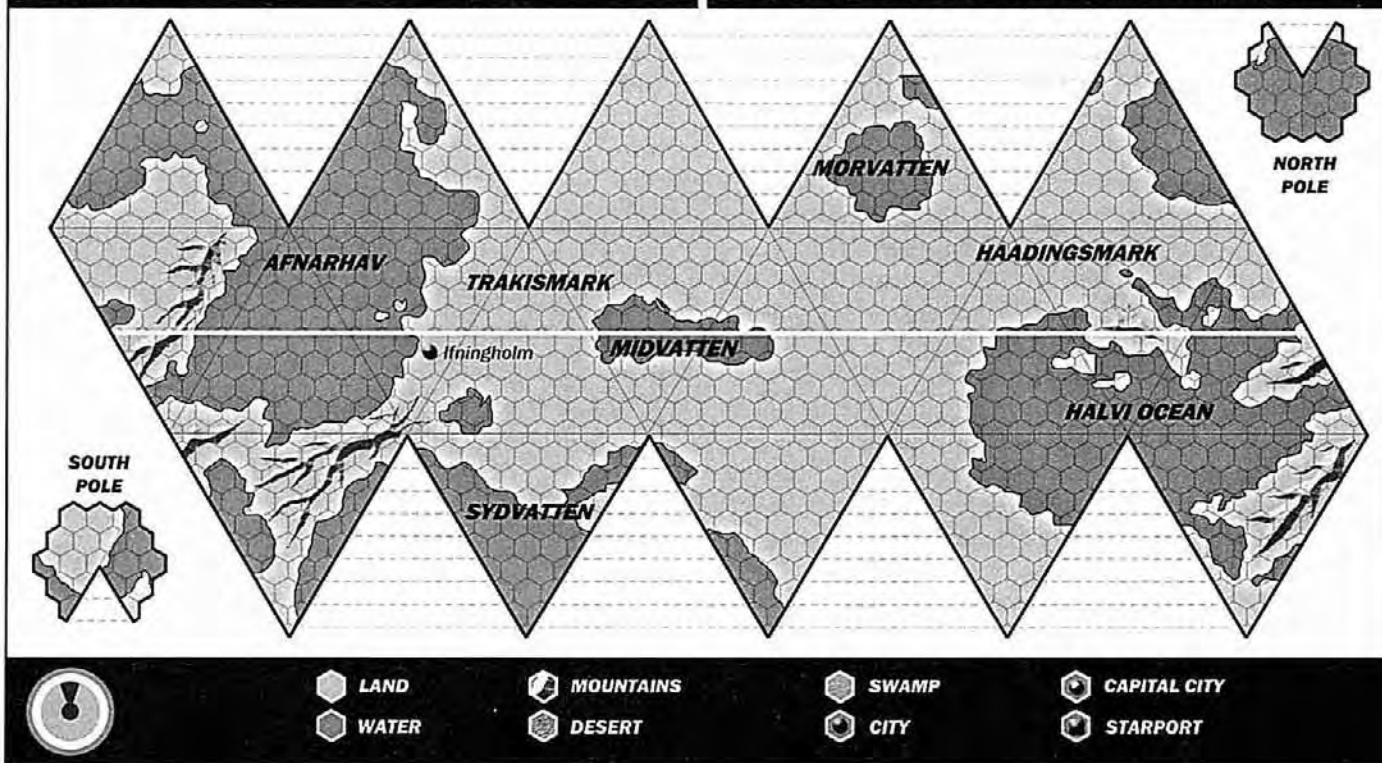
Outside the inhabited zones, the cities have been left alone as a reminder of what happened. There are about 30 in all, each holding 10,000 to 30,000 people – the rest of the planet's population is rural farmers and herders. 70% to 90% of each city remains in ruins. Biterers and visitors are encouraged to visit the ghosts of the dead when time permits, and in the last century the largest contingent of off-worlders has been from Hofud. The Biterers are, with a few backsliding exceptions, glad that their former enemies are finally grappling with what they did.

WORLD NAME:

**BITER**

GRID/SECTOR:

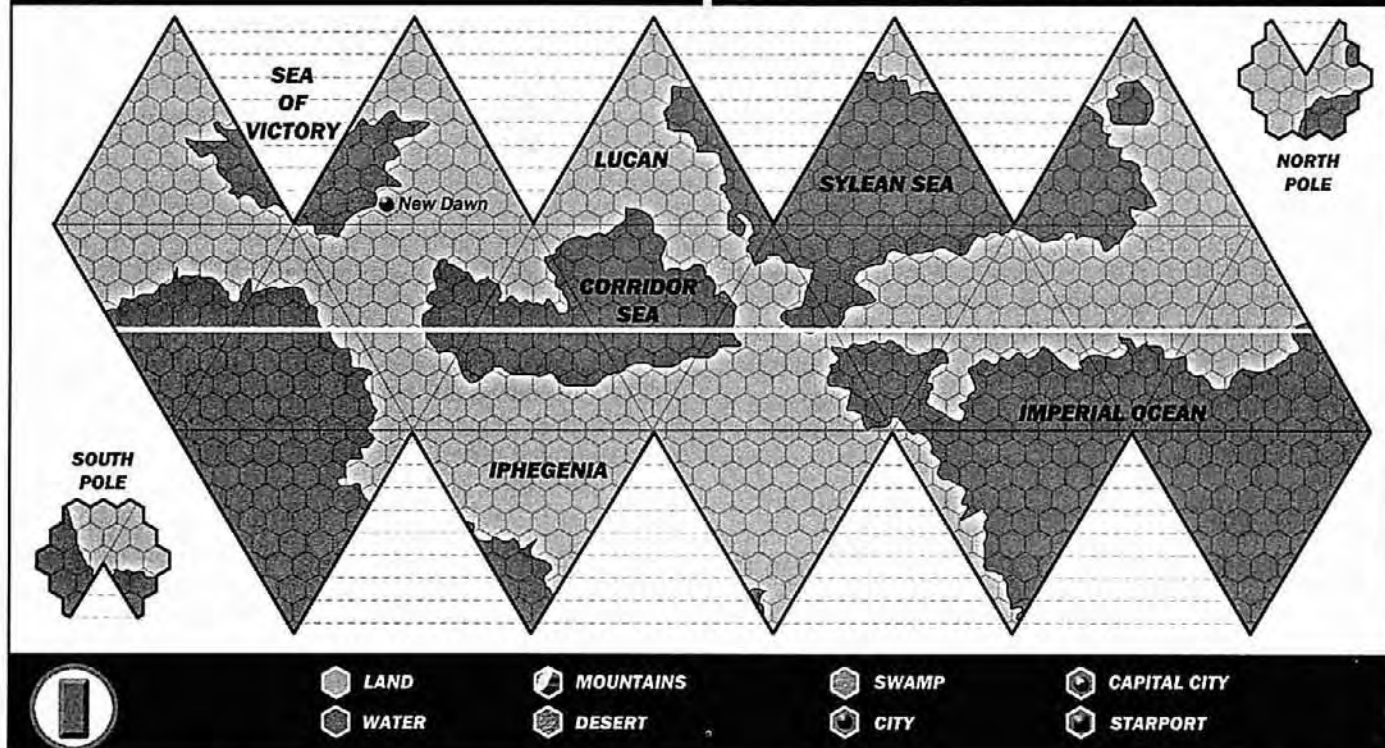
**1526 SPINWARD MARCHES**



WORLD NAME:

**STEEL**

GRID/SECTOR:

**1529 SPINWARD MARCHES**

## The People of Biter

In many situations, a sudden influx of immigrants would produce tremendous tension, but the Biters who were lucky enough to remain on the planet after the Hofud Wars have always regretted the loss of "their people" to other worlds, and felt sympathy for their plight. Since the treaty, the government of the planet has been able to convince the people that this is an unparalleled opportunity to remove Biter from the position of irrelevancy it has occupied since the beginning of the fifth century.

It has been 700 years since the *Luffarnir* left Biter, and in that time they have evolved their own culture, but the "original" Biters are trying hard to find common ground with their long-lost brethren. It helps that Biter is close to the Imperial border, and has long been exposed to societies other than the baseline Sword Worlds culture. Native Biters tend to be tolerant anyway, and perceive the *Luffarnir* as people more like them than not. Combine this with Vilfred Santesson's teachings and Biter has as good a chance of success as any world.

The main difficulty is that Biter's tiny infrastructure and government have been stretched to the limit by the newcomers. The *Luffarnir* are, by and large, very poor and badly educated, unable to contribute much to Biter until they are retrained. Under the strain, Biter has had to suspend even basic social programs, a very unpopular move. For now the native Biters continue to support government policy, but if things don't turn around soon patience may wear thin. The Imperium has been surreptitiously diverting funds from the Ministry of Colonization's programs in the Metal Worlds to support Biter's economy, in the hopes of getting past the crisis and have a successful Biter serving as a model of Imperial rule over former Sword Worlder planets.

Biters are the sole mainstream Sword Worlders that don't honor martial prowess. The pacifist teachings of Vilfred Santesson have seen to that, and it's possibly because of these leanings that Biter was comfortable with leaving the Confederation and the Sword Worlds behind, and joining the Imperium.

## The Government

The urban populations of Biter are organized into groups of a few thousand, based on old city blocks, that solve the majority of their problems in mass public meetings guided by the most respected members of the group. Decisions are made only slowly and through consensus, but Biter has been stable and prosperous for centuries, so few quick decisions need to be made.

The same organization prevails in the countryside, though there the groups are smaller, and meetings less frequent due to distance.

Putting pressure on all this are the *Luffarnir* who, as always, are distorting the shape of Biter's ways just by their mere presence. The Biter democracy voted them in, and now is struggling to deal with them.

## 1529 STEEL

Steel has long been the most attractive of the Metal Worlds. Recent occupation of the planet by unauthorized Imperial colonists presented the various states in the area with a *fait accompli*. While no one, including the Imperial nobility on the spot, is very happy with the situation, the squatters have entrenched themselves, gained support from certain key people, and look set to stay for the long haul.



## History

A private company from Caladbolg settled Steel in -105. The new world was named Igliim, which means "steel" in Vilani, after a sword belonging to a legendary Vilani hero. A year later the War of the Second Rebellion broke out and three years later Caladbolg got involved in the conflict. The colony on Igliim found itself abandoned to its own devices and slowly but surely began to lose its technological base. It barely survived the Fimbulwinter.

During the Five States era Igliim remained independent, but poor, with just enough interstellar contact to alleviate the worst problems of an isolated settlement. In 104 Igliim became part of the Double Monarchy's sphere of interest and its name was officially changed to Steel. With Monarchy traders beginning to take a greater interest in Steel, the world began a program of technological bootstrapping in order to improve the quality of its trade goods and overall purchasing power.

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*Civilization exists by geologic consent,  
subject to change without notice.*

*– Will Durant (1885-1981 Solomani  
Reckoning)*

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Technological bootstrapping is a difficult process that fails more often than it succeeds, but Steel beat the odds and by 217 had reached TL9. When the collapse of the Triple Dominion caused a reduction of trade with the Monarchy, Steel purchased second-hand ships from Imperial worlds and sought new markets away from the other Sword Worlds.

In 256 Steel began a program of exploration and settlement of nearby worlds that would eventually lead to its downfall. Bronze, Iron, Mithril, Silver (Wardn), Gold

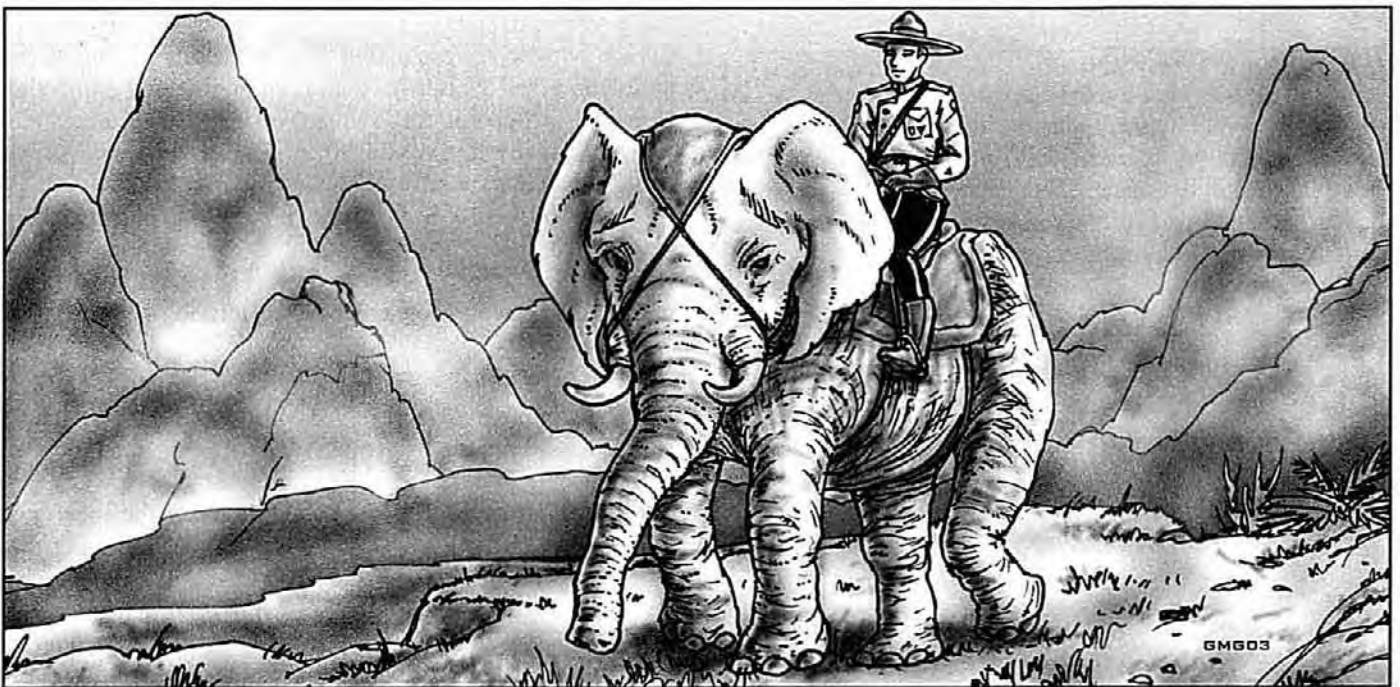
(Olympia), and Electrum (Smoug) were surveyed and small research settlements were established on them all to determine the best ways to develop them.

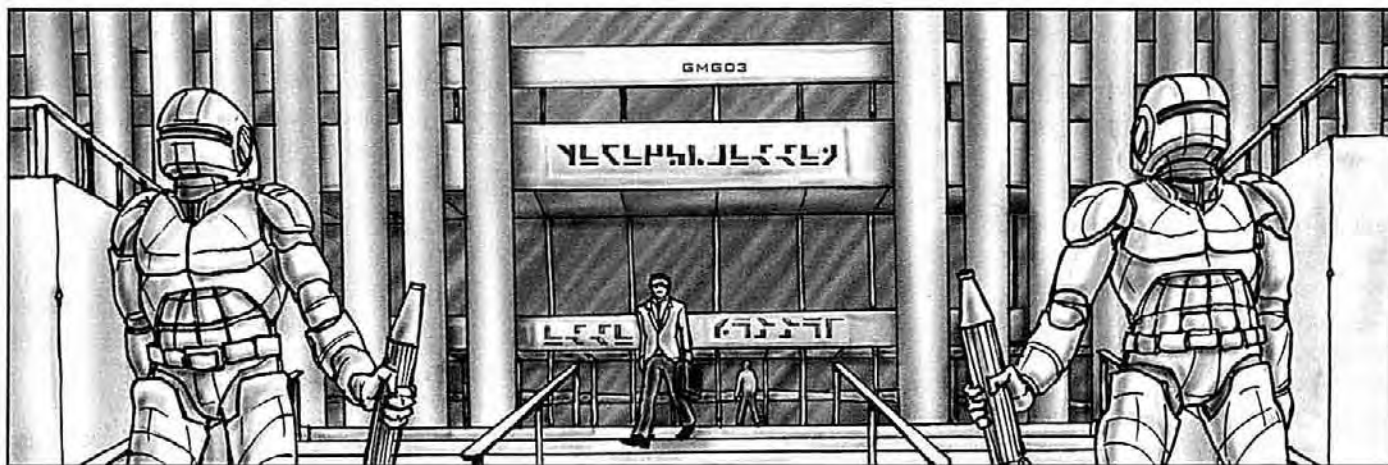
The effrontery of this single world with a population of no more than five million laying claim to six other worlds, and naming them after metals and not swords, enraged Hertug Niels of Sting. He responded by sending out expeditions of his own to the same worlds and laying claim to them. He also dug up a specious claim to Steel itself, based on a family connection with the Coronal of Caladbolg back in the previous century. A short war in 263 ended with Steel forced to remove its outposts. Niels did not attempt to invade Steel, but he did not abandon his claim either.

In 383, Hofud invaded Sting. Niels' daughter Marianne escaped to Biter and set up a government in exile. In return ceding Marianne persuaded Steel to ally itself with Biter against Hofud. In spite of this, Steel stood by and did nothing when Hofud finally invaded Biter in 419.

## The Broadside

Steel kept a low profile for the next 150 years, maintaining its claim to the other Metal Worlds, but not attempting to actually exploit or settle them. But in 579 a large cluster of asteroids was spotted heading straight for Steel. Calculations showed that the most heavily settled area on Steel would be hit the hardest, but lesser strikes would hit the rest of the planet. Ivar III of Sting immediately offered to help the people of Steel evacuate their world and put himself in charge of the rescue operation. A massive campaign on the other Sword Worlds provided additional funds, but Sting shouldered the lion's share of the expenses. Most of the evacuees were transported to Caladbolg as the closest practical destination; Mithril was rejected on the grounds that it would be impossible to keep people alive there. Hertug Erik of Steel and many members of the upper class were taken to Sting.





There was not nearly enough time to get everybody off the world. In early 580 the meteors struck, killing a quarter of the remaining population outright. The dust thrown in the air lowered the temperatures drastically, ruining harvests for decades to come. Many more died in the confusion and panic that followed the strike. Meanwhile, Sting kept the evacuation going. In 581 Ivar III announced that Steel was empty of Human life and that in gratitude for the rescue of his people, Erik of Steel had renounced his claim to Steel and the three other Metal Worlds in favor of Ivar.

Ivar planned to resettle Steel with people loyal to himself once the temperatures returned to normal. In the meantime Sting's navy patrolled the Steel system and Sting's army held occasional training maneuvers on Steel. Before Ivar could carry out his plan, however, the Constitutionalist Revolt of 589 and the subsequent establishment of the Second Dominate intervened. Under the new regime, no Sword World was permitted to maintain control over another Sword World; the four empty Metal Worlds were taken over by the Confederation and held in trust for future development. For various reasons that development never came, and Steel lay empty for 500 years.

### *Imperial Occupation*

From 1110 to 1111 the Steel system was occupied by elements of the 346th Cruiser Squadron, and many of the personnel had opportunity to visit Steel for recreational purposes. Returning to Lunion in late 1111, demobilized spacers and marines spread the tale of this perfectly splendid Earth-prime world just lying there, uninhabited and unguarded. Over the next couple of years an unknown number of prospectors and

would-be homesteaders slipped onto Steel. The Border Worlds protested, but many Imperials had a hard time accepting that "those Sword World loser scum" had any right to protest anything done by any "true-blooded Imperial."

In 1114 a group of utopians calling themselves the Bringers of the New Dawn conspired with the Count of Tenalphi to organize a colony venture. In 1115, 3,000 New Dawners set up shop on Steel. The Border Worlds first protested and asked the Imperium to remove the trespassers, but to no avail. In early 1118 they sent a task force to evict the colony, but the commander hesitated to use force against Imperial citizens, giving the colony leaders time to send a cry for help to the Count of Tenalphi. The Count in turn prevailed upon the local Lunion Navy port admiral to send a small task force.

Presented with this *fait accompli*, the Duke of Lunion decided to solve the problem by annexing Steel, taking the three other Metal Worlds along for good measure. Archduke Norris was reputedly extremely annoyed, but nevertheless chose to support his vassal's action. He appeased the enraged Border Worlds by offering an unknown but staggering sum of money to buy all four Metal Worlds outright. Rumor has it that a substantial part of this sum will be paid by the Duke of Lunion with no corresponding benefits accruing to him. Certainly the Metal Worlds have all been put under the Imperial Colonial Office for the Sword Worlds subsector, which answers directly to the Ministry of Colonization, and is not under the duke's vassal, the Countess of Caladbolg.

As of 001-1120 the New Dawn colony had a population of 4,300, but it is estimated that at least as many other Imperials are living elsewhere on Steel in small, hidden or unnoticed enclaves. More colonists are arriving weekly.

### **WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN**

In an alternate universe, where Emperor Strephon died and Norris had to worry about fighting the Zhodani once more, Steel would have taken a different course. Without backing from the Corridor Fleet, the Archduke would have chosen to appease the Border Worlds and let them expel the illegal settlers. In such a universe the Metal Worlds would have remained part of the Border Worlds, at least for a while longer.

### *The Planet*

Steel's primary is an evolved M8 III star, Daaluusinnagi, which has only recently (relatively speaking) entered the luminous red-giant phase. Steel itself exists only by chance; during the early days of the system, one of the local gas giants slowly spiraled in toward the primary, flinging the inner system's planets out into interstellar space. Steel was the exception, as a "lucky shot" saw it pass sufficiently close to one of the other gas giants in the system that it ended up in a distant and eccentric orbit.



## PESTS OF NEW DAWN

The newly founded Imperial colony had the misfortune to be set in a region with a species that is truly a nuisance. The shell-crab has a taste for electrical insulation, which causes problems for the colony, and for ships unfortunate enough to be infested while on the ground.

### Shell-Crab

ST: 6    Speed/Dodge: 8/7    Size: 2  
DX: 14    PD/DR: 2/3#    Weight: 80-90 lbs.  
IQ: 3    Damage: 1d-31 cut    Habitat: FW, F  
HT: 15/8    Reach: C

Shell-crabs resemble large lobsters, with an average length of three feet. They are edible, even quite tasty, and the colonists of Steel are looking to wipe them out and make a profit at the same time. However, they are not defenseless, and in a few cases have even caused problems on ships halfway to other worlds.

Biting is the shell-crab's only mode of attack, and it only bites if cornered. Its "pinchers" can't be used offensively, and are limited to feeding and helping locomotion.

Steel's lower gravity makes the shell-crab's relatively high speed possible – on Steel, they weigh 20% less than listed above – regardless of its heavy armor. Armor on the animal's underside is only DR1 PD1.

When Daaluusinnagi left the main sequence, Steel was heated sufficiently to become a young terrestrial world. Given time, it might have developed its own oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere, but the primary star will only be in this phase for few million years – not enough time for the evolution of a terrestrial ecology. Once again, though, the Ancients intervened and made Steel a much more hospitable place to live.

Still, life around Daaluusinnagi can be interesting. The star is a Mira-class variable, meaning that it pulsates and changes luminosity on a regular cycle. In Daaluusinnagi's case the period is 396 days and it varies from 5,000 to 7,000 solar luminosities. Though Steel's year, in the technical sense of "time to complete one orbit," is hundreds of years long, the planet's temperature runs through pseudoseasons from Torrid to Cool temperatures along with the primary's pulsations (see p. T:FI75).

### Life on Steel

Steel is a frontier society. Its population is spread across the planet in many small enclaves with minimal contact between them. It has no manufacturing capability of its own yet, unless the workshops of the New Dawn colony are counted, so equipment is hard to come by and can sometimes mean the difference life and death. Visitors should not expect to buy anything from the locals, and a spare toolbox can be more valuable than mere money. Equipment is also very diverse; the New Dawn colony is TL10. Other settlers

have brought supplies ranging from TL7 to TL12, while visiting Imperial officials and military personnel carry TL12 equipment.

### The People of Steel

Despite there being fewer than 10,000 of them, the people of Steel are a remarkably varied lot. Like a lot of new colonies, the settlement has attracted many who don't fit in elsewhere – the Bringers of the New Dawn are only the most notable. There are sober, respectable colonists, but Steel also has more hermits, scabrous prospectors, religious stylites, grifters, and all-around bad apples than any world so underpopulated should have to bear.

### Government

The government of Steel, such as it is, exists mainly to prevent the planet's new citizens from killing one another. It doesn't even do a good job of that. Answerable to the Imperial Ministry of Colonization, the local governor is Renay Quintela, a put-upon bureaucrat who is suffering from noble displeasure from several directions. The Archduke, the Duke of Lunion, and the Countess of Caladbolg are all dissatisfied with the mere existence of Steel in one way or another.

As a result, Quintela is chronically underfunded, and has a staff of exactly six peace officers to police the entire world. She has to do all the paperwork herself, and is falling ever further behind. On a good day, she can almost see the things she needed to have done by the end of 1119.

In reality, Steel makes do with extralegal law – informal arrangements by the colonists themselves to settle disputes. This isn't quite as primitive as it sounds, as your average Imperial has a vague notion of how the law works, if only from the holovids. The problem is that there are literally dozens of overlapping jurisdictions and "law codes" that are so contradictory and ambiguous, even assuming they're written down, that violence is always bubbling up.

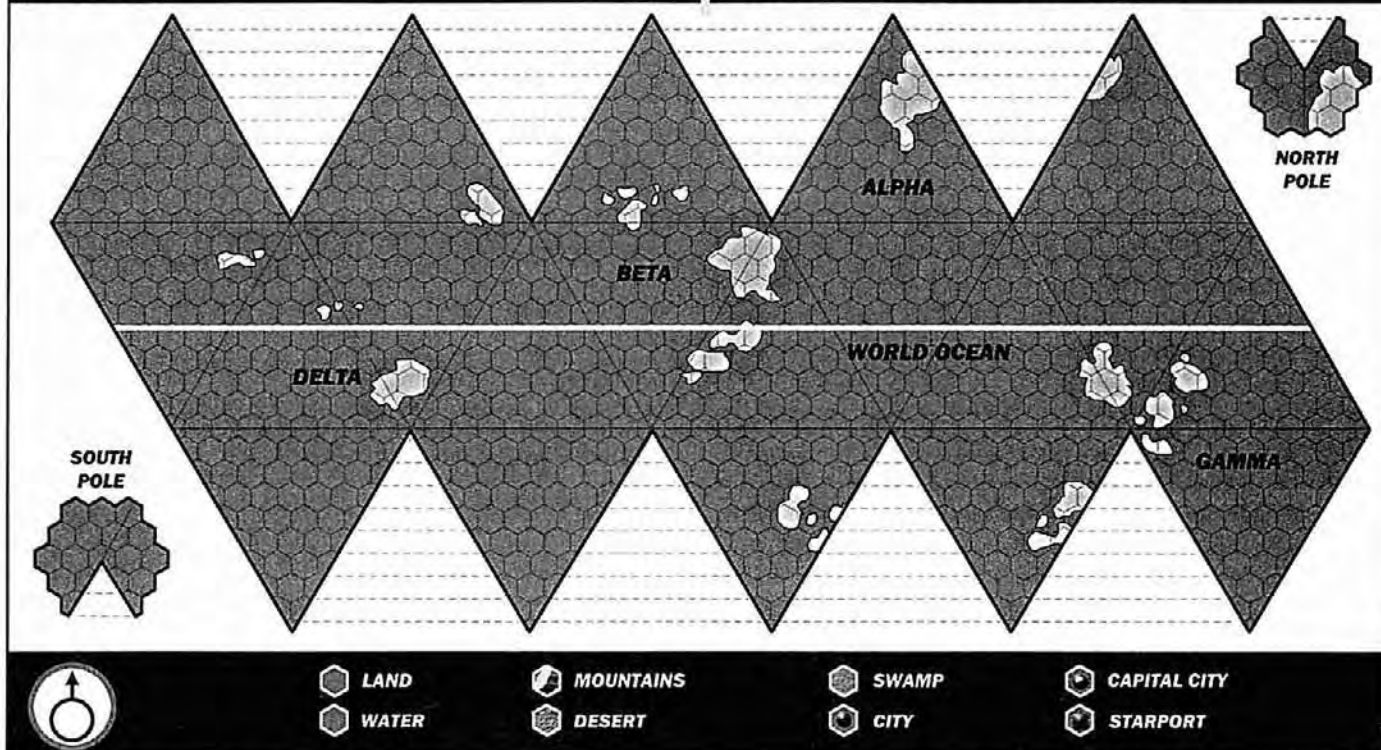
## THE MARUNI

Whenever a place is evacuated, you often have a few stubborn souls who refuse to go along. According to persistent rumors, some people were not evacuated in 579 and their descendants are said to survive to this very day. Everybody on Steel knows someone who knows someone who has met these so-called *Maruni*. Apart from that the stories differ widely. Apparently some *Maruni* live contented pastoral lives in a paradisiacal valley hidden deep in the mountains. Others spend their time stalking lone men in the wilderness and killing them for their equipment, displaying uncanny, perhaps psionic, powers in doing so. Others have built a hyper-advanced community in a cavern deep below the ground from where they rescue lost travelers, entertain them for a few days, and then deposit them a few miles from a surface settlement.

WORLD NAME:

**IRON**

GRID/SECTOR:

**1626 SPINWARD MARCHES**

## 1626 IRON

Annexed to the Imperium along with the rest of the Metal Worlds, Iron is an uninhabited, desolate place. While its three siblings are being developed in fits and starts, Iron looks like it will remain uninhabited for the foreseeable future.

### History

Iron was ignored for the early part of Sword World history. It didn't even get a name until 256, when Steel laid claim to it, Bronze, Mithril, Silver (Wardn), Gold (Olympia), and Electrum (Smoug). The minor power never got around to exploiting its claim, and ultimately lost it. When the Broadside hit Steel in 580, Sting took over the Metal Worlds, but also never got around to settling or even mining the planet (see p. 67). When the Second Dominate dissolved the Kingdom of Sting in 604, it declared the Metal Worlds to be resources held in trust by the Dominate with a view to future development, a position also taken by its successors. None of them ever got around to doing any developing either, but they did maintain rudimentary starports along with port wardens to establish sovereignty.

In 1111 the Imperium invaded and occupied 10 of the Sword Worlds, including Iron, actually stationing a squad of marines in its starport. The following year, the marines were replaced by a small team of Scouts tasked with maintaining the starport and performing a new survey of the world in the hope that some use could be found for it.

### The Planet

The Iron system is very young, and Iron itself is only about a billion years old. Extremely basic life has evolved and

added a fraction of a percentage point of oxygen to the atmosphere, but it will be another billion years or so until it is remotely breathable by Humans. There is as much sulfur dioxide in the air from volcanic outgassing as there is oxygen.

If any part of the planet is interesting, it's the oceans. They are hot and, under the local atmospheric pressure (0.38 atmospheres), the equatorial seas are not far from the boiling point. At high noon during summer, visible steam rises from the oceans in a 10-degree band around the planet's middle.

Iron's life hasn't reached the predator/prey stage of evolutionary development yet, so from orbit it resembles a very thin soup broth: cloudy and slowly turning over in brownish plumes of microscopic cells. The smell on the coastlines reinforces the analogy.

Iron is so generally unappetizing that the Ministry of Colonization is at a loss with what to do with it. Steel and Mithril are inhabitable by unprotected Humans, and Bronze at least has points of interest for asteroid miners. Iron is just ... there.

### Life on Iron

People who visit Iron bring their own life. On average this means rotating parties of Scouts performing a cursory survey of the planet, but never lingering very long and generally sticking to business. There is a basic starport, but it serves only the Scouts and a few jump-1 ships passing to and from Biter.

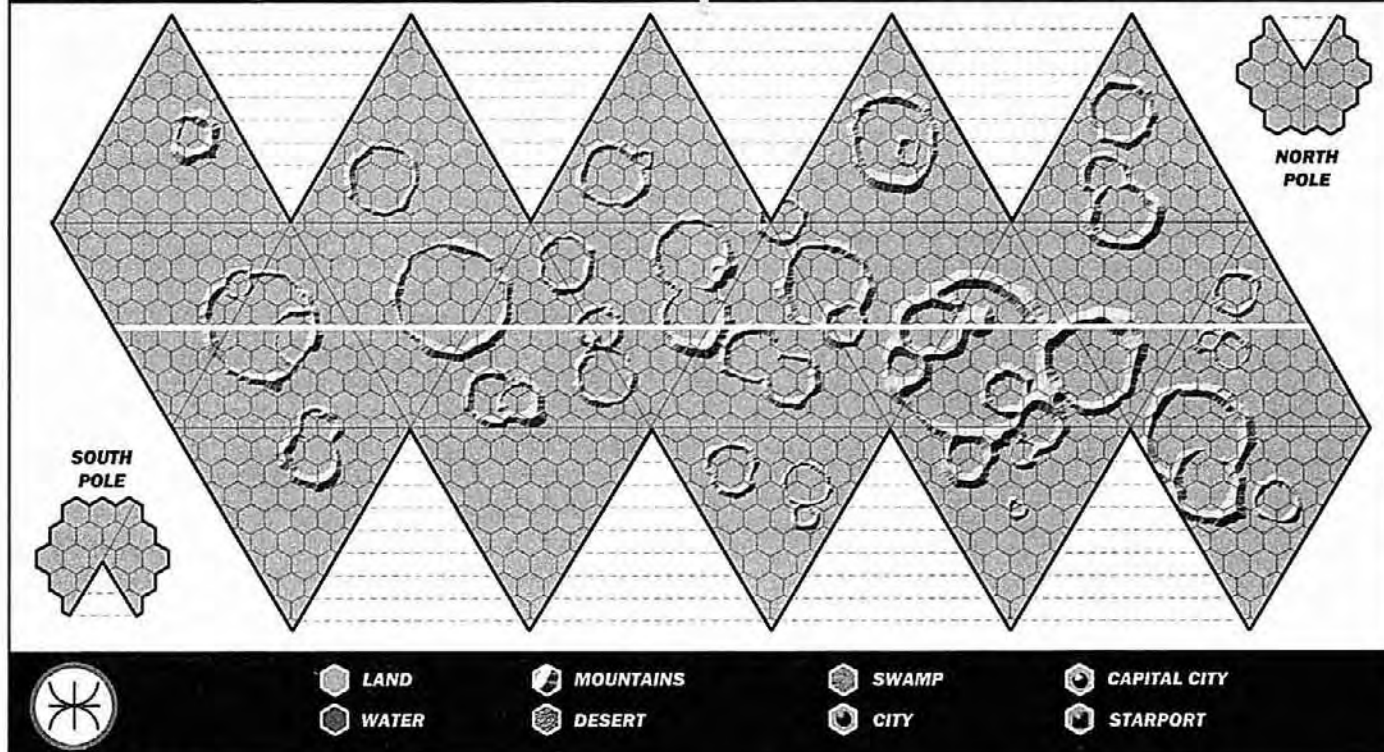
With no government, people are free to come and go as they please, though technically citizens of the Sword Worlds Confederation are banned from the surface. However, since a naval vessel might pass through once every couple of months, in practice even a token effort at concealment permits Sword Worlders to visit if they wish.



WORLD NAME:

**BRONZE**

GRID/SECTOR:

**1627 SPINWARD MARCHES**

## 1627 BRONZE

Airless and uninhabited, Bronze is the site of an experiment by the Imperial Ministry of Colonization. Unable to think of any way to jumpstart its development, the Ministry has decided to rely on free enterprise. Very soon, the planet will be opened to a land grab. What happens after that is anyone's guess.

### History

Bronze is not an attractive planet, a tiny vacuum world with only small icecaps to provide any of the basic resources to colonists. As such it was nearly unexplored even before it was reserved for future development.

With its annexation to the Imperium, however, the sector and domain authorities have been searching for a way to put it to use as part of the plan to keep the Sword Worlds from ever taking it back. On 160-1120, Duchess Delphine of Mora announced that the planet was being temporarily interdicted, to be lifted on 70-1121. The 270-day period is to be used by any interested corporations to develop plans exploiting the planet, with claims on areas up to 9,600 square miles being accepted at Wardn in the Lunion subsector beginning on 077-1121. Claims will be registered by the Ministry of Colonization for the token price of Cr500 per square mile. For now the planet may be observed only from orbit, but the land rush will soon begin.

### The Planet

Bronze is a tiny world, little more than a jumped-up planetoid orbiting by itself outside the habitable zone of its primary. It is large enough to have differentiated through its

own heat, and has a small but now-frozen core of nickel iron surrounded by a crust composed of rock.

Deep fissures run around the planet, probably cracks left over from its contraction as it cooled. Some of these are extremely deep, and have never been explored in even the most cursory fashion. Naturally, Humans don't like the unexplored to be boring, and the former Sword Worlder landlords developed several interesting stories about just what might be down there. None are substantiated in any way.

More interesting for practical minds are the mascons, or concentrations of dense materials, that dot the surface. The system's planetoid belt is in the next orbit out, and at least a few members of that group have smashed into Bronze at one point or another. Several of these have been high-quality chunks of nickel-iron mixed with valuable metals, so Bronze has a variety of ready-made mines sitting right on the surface.

### Government

There is currently no one living on Bronze. The last of the IISS survey team left on 098-1120, and the planet will remain uninhabited until the interdiction is lifted. Bronze is under the authority of the Imperial Ministry of Colonization, and is interdicted by the *Fiery*-class cruisers *Svarog* and *Tohil*, trading off on one-month tours of duty. At the moment there is no government on the planet itself, though the branch office of the Ministry of Colonization is putting a team together on Lunion. It is expected that the first governor will be Silas Ondrick, a junior member of Duchess Delphine of Mora's staff who has been assembling the team.

## 1628 MITHRIL

Very cold, but in places habitable, Mithril has a surprisingly long, if still poorly understood, history. Now that people are finally starting to live here permanently, its secrets will start to unfold.

### History

Like the other Metal Worlds, Mithril was uninhabited for centuries, set aside for future development by a variety of Sword World governments. It too was occupied by the Imperium during the Fifth Frontier War, and annexed afterwards.

### CRYSTALLICE

The Mithrilese colony is threatened by a completely unsuspected problem: crystallice, tiny biting "insects" that are a bane of treks through the wilderness, causing painful swellings for anyone unlucky enough to stumble across them.

Crystallice are not animals at all, but rather an unusual life form best dubbed a "Mithrilese megavirus." While they are autonomous creatures and seem like animals, in the sense that they have recognizable organs and body parts, they reproduce in a way more akin to viruses than anything else. When one bites, they not only suck blood for food, they also inject a "reproducer." The swelling and sharp pain produced by a bite is a side effect of a Human's immune response to the reproducer.

In Mithrilese animals, the reproducer overwrites the DNA of cells near the injection site, forcing the corrupted cells to generate more reproducers, which spread through the body and corrupt more cells in turn. Eventually, the entire creature is compromised and dies. At this point, the rewritten DNA follows its second set of instructions: wait for the right conditions to form the next stage of the crystallice's life cycle, one type of "plant" in an ephemeral glade. The ephemeral eventually grows and blooms, becoming a factory for more crystallice during its brief existence, and the cycle begins again.

Mithrilese life has evolved appropriate defenses against this insidious attack, only succumbing when sick or injured. Humans and other off world species have not, but the vast differences between off world life's DNA and Mithrilese DNA keeps reproducers from spreading through a Human's body. Instead, the reproducers usually end up overwriting useless "intron" DNA and have no effect. Occasionally though, one hits an important gene; each bite from a crystallice runs the risk of inducing a cancer later in life.

Having non-Mithrilese DNA can only defend for a while, though. There are *trillions* of crystallice in every generation, with countless strains developing each year and pecking away at the interlopers. By sheer chance, within a few hundred years one is almost bound to hit on a combination which lets the reproducers spread. While this is still not enough to allow for the complex transformation into an ephemeral seed to occur, it does allow the overwritten sections of DNA to spread to the infected host's reproductive cells. At this point the population will collapse, as no more children are born.

Normally, most colonial ventures take a close look at the local ecology on a newly opened planets, watching for anything that could adversely affect Humans. In the hurry to get Mithril built up before hostilities break out again, this hasn't happened – there just hasn't been the time and resources.

Mithril was the second Metal World selected by the Imperium for colonization. The first personnel were placed in 1119. After a year of preparation, the first permanent colonists landed in early 1120.

### The Planet

Mithril is a terrestrial world, orbiting a powerful F4 V star. Unfortunately, Mithril orbits at a distance that gives it a low average surface temperature despite the heat of its primary. The ice caps are extensive, and even the equatorial lands have a climate like that of northern Scandinavia on Terra. Only the planet's 2,486-day year (2,109.5 Mithrilese days of 28 hours, 17 minutes each) allows for a long enough growing season to support plant life. The local biosphere has adapted, and "ephemeral glades" containing a wide variety of plant and pseudoinsect species will grow and die over the course of a day or two when conditions are right.

While Mithril is cold and inhospitable on average, in a few places enough warming factors come together to allow taiga-like climates. At the western end of the continent Lindmark is the largest of these areas, about 80,000 square miles on the mountainous coasts of the Astafjord Gulf (a small sea, despite the name). Just a few degrees north of the equator and sheltered between two mountain ranges, the area is quite livable. For a third of the year – from Tenmonth to Twentymonth – the ground is clear of snow, and the length of the planet's year has let Mithril's ephemeral plant life evolve a permanent lifestyle. Within the warmer area, the larger plants live for years and can convincingly impersonate coniferous trees. When the time came to pick a colony site, Astafjord was the obvious choice.

### Life on Mithril

Mithril's colonists are being recruited from developed worlds in the adjacent the Lunion subsector, notably Adabicc, Persephone, and Lunion itself. A percentage of the population is from elsewhere in Lunion further afield, brought in for specialized skills. One aspect of Mithril's demographics is the complete lack of non-Imperial citizens; with the goal being to build a bulwark against the Sword Worlds, only Imperials may live on the world for more than 90 days consecutively. Sword Worlders are banned from visiting at all.

The day-to-day routine on Mithril is similar to that on any new, underpopulated world. A quarter of the inhabitants are engaged in full-time farming, supporting the remainder as they do their work. This is a large ratio of farmers for a modern world, but since the



colony is presently too small to reap the benefits of economies of scale, it is necessary. Mithril's climate doesn't help either: despite genetic technology and many domesticated plant species to work with, the cold weather barely allows agriculture. Much farming has been moved into greenhouses on the edge of Bryor, the planet's only town.

Fortunately the local biosphere is Human-compatible, and fishing employs about 10% of the population on three large industrialized vessels, the *Queen of the Fjord*, the *Athene Bryor*, and the *Mother Carey*. As well as harvesting the sea, these ships are also used for surveying and researching Mithril's oceans.

On land, another 10% of the colonists are working full time for the Ministry of Colonization, either as actual employees or as contractors surveying and evaluating the land. Many other colonists take part-time or limited-term contracts from the Ministry as well. While the entire planet has been mapped from low orbit, the level of detail is too low for many purposes. Much work remains to be done on the surface.

The last major job, and the one that takes the time of half the planet's people, is working on the colony's infrastructure. Building construction, roadwork, land clearance, and many other things are being done on a grand scale, with the goal of supporting 50,000 immigrants by mid-1124. Most of these efforts are run by private enterprises, which turn a profit from the new colonists as well as receiving concessions to some of the colony's resource rights.

### The People of Mithril

The Mithrilese haven't had time to develop their own distinctive culture, but certain threads can be picked out.

They are motivated people, and many are well educated. The colonists have also rapidly developed a "golden rule" policy when it comes to helping others. On a world as cold and uncivilized as Mithril, danger can strike at any time; the colonists back each other up when it does.

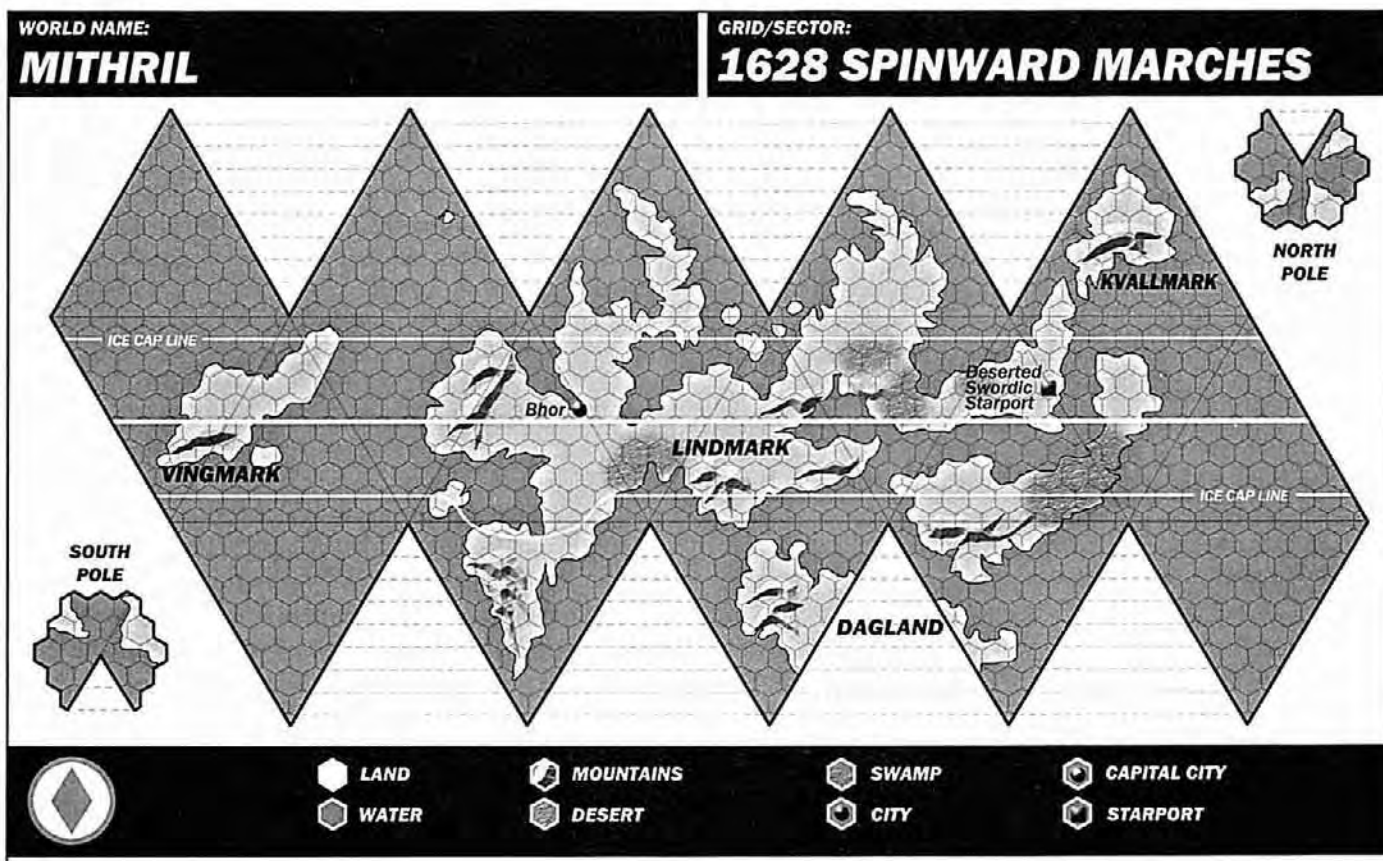
### Government

Mithril has a bureaucratic government, run directly by the Imperial Colonial Office. The man on the ground is the Planetary Administrator, Tsega Kayakono, who works from a small office in Bryor. He answers to distant superiors up the line on Lunion, but they are weeks away and will only step in if they perceive gross incompetence.

### The Aslan Chasm

There are hints of prior habitation on Mithril. More than a decade ago a cursory survey of the planet by the crew of the IISS ship *Central Axis* discovered a few long-abandoned roads of unknown origin. More extraordinary, however, is the so-called "Aslan Chasm," a remarkable artifact more than five kilometers long and 1,500 meters deep, carved for reasons also unknown. Mithril was uninhabited when it was found, but the images carved on the walls revealed that the chasm was of Aslan manufacture.

This is of considerable interest to scholars specializing in the history of that species, as the Aslan didn't cross the Great Rift to rimward until 1,000 years before the founding of the Imperium. Since the chasm is no less than 1,800 years old, it is the earliest known sign of the Aslan in the Spinward Marches.



# Library Data

*Before you trade in the Sword Worlds, you want to learn as much about them as you can. Trust me. You really want to do this.*

*– Tenara Sanjuanita, captain of the free trader Azoyar*

This chapter contains a number of library data entries and essays describing various aspects of life in the Sword Worlds. They are written from the point of view of people living in the *Traveller* universe, and may not be entirely correct. The information in the boxes, however, is meant for the GM and is accurate.

**Aesirism:** A modernized version of Scandinavian mythology that arose on the Sword Worlds in the early 400s.

Aesirism is a nature religion. A shrine will be built in a hollow in the land, wild and natural in appearance, at the center of which is a large ash tree or natural spring. Even in the largest cities, Aesirians join together to purchase a small dip in the land and rehabilitate it to near-wilderness. The shrine is run by one or more *godar*, priests who are paid to maintain the shrine and perform services.

The ancient gods are worshiped in the hollow, each representing an ideal to which an Aesirian should aspire. For example, Balder is an example of chivalry, Heimdall of watchfulness, Odin of statesmanship, Thor of courage, and Tyr of martial virtue. The main female deities are Frigg (wisdom), Freya (love), and Saga (history). Services are few, and in fact attendance in the shrine is not mandatory – attempting to live by the religion’s ideals is sufficient. This makes it difficult to pin down the number of Aesirians in the Sword Worlds, but active worshipers number about 40% of the population on the worlds of the former Aesir Alliance, 15 to 20% within the remainder of the Tizon Empire’s worlds and Sacnoth, and about 5% elsewhere in the Sword Worlds Confederation and the Border Worlds. However, a disproportionate number of the upper classes on Gram, Narsil, and Sacnoth are Aesirians. Practicing members aside, the attitudes and moral precepts of Aesirism color the lives of many more people throughout Sword Worlder space.

The rise of Aesirism sparked a general interest in the Sword Worlders’ Scandinavian ancestors, and many practices from the so-called “Viking” era have been updated and brought into modern-day Sword Worlder culture.

**Aesir Alliance (468 to 578):** An interstellar state composed of Gridarvol (Hrunting), Gungnir, Mistelten (Marge-si) and Mjøltnir. It was formed in 468, when coordinated revolutions put Aesirian fundamentalists in power on all four worlds. It was dissolved in 578 when the Tizon Empire conquered it.

**Aki (Spinward Marches 2035):** An Imperial world in the Glisten subsector. It was originally settled in -138 by the crew and passengers of the misjumped Gram passenger liner *Rolf Krake*, and named after the sword of the Vilani warrior-king Golosh. The castaways lost most of their technology but survived and grew to a population of roughly 60,000 by 56, when they were found by the Imperial scout cruiser *Giirkha Girgi*. From 200 to 400 a number of immigrants from the Imperium settled on the world and mingled with the indigenous population. In 392 Aki joined the Imperium along with Callia, Glisten, New Rome, and Overnale.

**Altikrigarnir:** An organization for former Sword Worlder and Darrian Aslan soldiers, which acts as an informal liaison between the Confederation and the Darrians.

Though they are invariably on different sides, the Sword Worlder military and the Aslan units of the Darrian armed forces have a profound respect for one another. Once active combat is over, they are far more inclined to let bygones be bygones than hold grudges, no matter what the “upper management” might think. Altikrigarnir (“Old Soldiers,” and in Trokh, *Htautiseh*) provides hospitality and guidance to Darrian Aslan military veterans visiting the Sword Worlds, and vice versa.

When war breaks out between the two states, the Altikrigarnir cordially closes its doors for the duration, reopening once peace has returned. It usually loses a few members when this happens, as some people *do* hold grudges, but the organization inevitably starts to grow again after a few years have passed.

**Anselhome (Spinward Marches 0820):** A small planet in the Entropic Cluster, which has been traded back and forth between the Darrian Confederation and the Sword Worlds for more than 600 years. Since the end of the Fifth Frontier War, it has been under the control of the Darrian Confederation.

Anselhome is an airless rock, of economic interest because it is rich in various metal ores. The planet is also home to highly unusual vacuum-resistant lifeforms, which live in deep cracks on the surface and depend on the chemicals given off in volcanic outgassing.

**Arkadia (Spinward Marches 1217):** An Imperial world in the Vilis subsector. It was originally settled in 198 by Sword Worlders from Colada and named Aroundight. It fared poorly during the Squabbling States Era (see p. 13) and regressed to TL4. In 304 a group of utopians from the Imperium took over the world and renamed it Arkadia. In 470 it was granted protected status by the Imperium along with 728-907, Calit, Choleosti, Digitis, Edinina, Frenzie, Garda-Vilis, Mirriam, Stellatio, and Vilis. This was followed by full Imperial membership in 576.



**Arkadia Freikorps:** A mercenary unit specializing in internal security and counterinsurgency operations. It is organized as a single lift infantry battalion with two attached military police companies, all armed to a TL10 standard. It was originally assembled in the Vilis subsector in the 1070s. Since 1110 it has been commanded by Major Ultan Ganaare, formerly an officer in the planetary army of Vilis.

Since 1100, the Freikorps has been embroiled in one controversy after another. During the Garda-Vilis insurgencies of 1103 and 1105, the unit was accused of atrocities against the civilian population – charges were later dropped in an Imperial court. The battalion was called into Imperial service in 1107 and served throughout the Fifth Frontier War, often coming into conflict with local Imperial officers. While it was engaged in ground fighting on Hofud late in the war, its commander was arrested for high treason, tried by an Imperial tribunal, and shot. The Freikorps might well have disbanded at that point, but Major Ganaare took command and held it together mainly by force of will. Imperial officials concluded that the unit as a whole was not guilty of treason, and permitted it to continue operating, although it was removed from the front lines.

## THE EARLY IMPERIUM IN THE MARCHES

The statement that Asgard was interdicted in 53 is true, but misleading. The Imperium did not have the means – or, arguably, the right – to enforce such an interdiction at the time. However, the practice of imposing interdictions was much less formal in the Imperium's early days than it is today. The Imperial services were suffused with a sense of purpose and an overwhelming arrogance stemming from the Imperium's size and its perceived mission to push back the Long Night. Nor did they need to get approval from a member of the Imperial family at that time. The Scouts really had no business interdicting worlds far beyond the Imperium's borders, but that didn't stop them. And although this particular interdiction was rather ineffective, the various Sword Worlder states of the time did not, for various reasons, want to interfere with life on Asgard anyway. By the time they might have wanted to do so, the Imperium had a much stronger presence in the Marches and *did* have the means to enforce the interdiction.

After the conclusion of hostilities, the unit remained in the Sword Worlds, recruiting new personnel and seeking tickets outside Imperial space. Since 1112 it has successfully taken on a number of security assignments, in particular for the Border Worlds Authority and the planetary government of Sacnoth. It remains equipped at a TL10 standard, and must often arrange for the import of weapons and replacement parts.

Today the Arkadia Freikorps is a mixed unit, composed of about 70% Imperial citizens and 30% Sword Worlders, while all of the senior officers are still of Imperial origin.

Although the Freikorps' troops are competent and well trained, the unit has acquired a reputation for unnecessary brutality toward civilians. Naturally, the battalion's Imperial origins are part of the problem, but even Sword Worlder recruits have contributed. Due to the distaste with which most Sword Worlders regard mercenary service, many local recruits have been outlaws or former war deserters; such personnel are not known for their diplomacy when dealing with civilians.

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*Yes, we have a reputation for brutality, but this is primarily due to the unit's recruiting pool. When all you can get are criminals and ne'er-do-wells, you can have discipline problems.*

*– Major Ganaare,  
Arkadia Freikorps*

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**Asgard (Spinward Marches 1419):** An Imperial world in the Vilis subsector. Originally settled by Sword Worlders from Gram in -125, the settlers regressed technologically during the Fimbulwinter, and the whole world was placed under interdiction by the Scouts in 53 to protect its developing culture. Asgard was formally annexed by the Imperium in 470. It is still under interdict today.

**Astron Project:** A private project to finance the settlement of new Sword Worlder colonies to preserve the Sword Worlder way of life. The target region of space is the Astron sector, four sectors to spinward of the Trojan Reach sector, well away from the Imperium, the Consulate, and the Aslan Hierate. The colonists will rely on distance to insulate them from unwanted interference, but plan to maintain an "immigration corridor" to the Sword Worlds indefinitely.

The project's planners have used the Imperial Grand Survey data for the Astron sector to select a cluster of four terrestrial worlds as the Project's target. After the journey there, they will be surveyed in detail, and one selected as a new home. (See *100 Parsecs*, pp. 136-142.)

**Badges:** In the early days of the Sword Worlds, Gram adopted the Red Worm, derived from the unit patch of the 8th Scandinavian Army Corps, as a planetary symbol. Sacnoth later adopted the Black Bull. Since then, all the other Sword Worlds have developed badges to represent themselves.

A planetary badge is circular and usually two-colored, a light color for the interior of the badge on which the symbol is placed, and a fringe of some darker color. For example, the badge of Tizon is the Irresistible Wave, a dark blue cresting wave on a white background, with a dark blue fringe.

Badges are used in a variety of situations. Sword Worlder badges will appear anywhere a flag might be used in another culture. For example, the front lawn of Confederation House on Gram has poles bearing the member worlds' badges about two-thirds of the way up. A military ship from the Sword Worlds always displays the badge of its homeworld, and many civilian ships do the same.

# SIR DUNCAN QUESADA

130 POINTS

Human (Solomani). Age 43; 5'11", 165 lbs. Pale white skin, dark brown hair going silver, brown eyes, neatly trimmed beard and mustache, lame right leg.

Duncan Quesada was born to an upper-class family on Rhyllanor. Although no one in his family tree had earned so much as a knighthood for four generations, he was distantly descended from the Dukes of Rhyllanor – enough blue blood to give him an advantage when applying to the Imperial Naval Academy. After graduation, he served as a naval officer for 20 years, rising to the rank of captain. Most of his career was spent on the spinward border of the Imperium, seeing action in the Five Sisters subsector before serving with distinction on the Sword Worlds front during the Fifth Frontier War. By the end of the war, he had overcome much of his bigotry toward the Sword Worlders; he respected them as adversaries, and saw much to admire in their culture.



The high point of Quesada's career actually came after the war was officially over. In 1113 he was the commanding officer of the destroyer escort *Iskanderun* when it was ambushed by a small flotilla of mixed Sword Worlder and Vargr corsairs in the Thanber system. Although the *Iskanderun* suffered a direct hit on the bridge and Quesada himself was badly wounded, he defeated the corsairs and ensured his crew's safety before succumbing to his injuries. When he left the hospital three months later, he discovered that he had been awarded the Imperium's highest commendation – the Starburst for Extreme Heroism. A knighthood soon followed, crowning his naval career.

After retiring from the service in 1115, Sir Duncan settled on Sacnoth. Respecting Sword Worlder culture even while remaining an Imperial patriot, he hoped to help reconcile the Sword Worlds to their new situation. He began to practice law, a profession he had studied while still in the Navy; he specializes in representing Sword Worlder citizens before the Border Office and the new Border Worlds Authority. He also acts as a private mediator, helping to smooth over a variety of disputes in the occupied region. This effort soon involved Sir Duncan in all manner of intrigues in the Border Worlds and beyond. Today he is a "one-man fire brigade" in the highest Imperial tradition,

tirelessly traveling around the subsector to stop potential crises before they happen.

Sir Duncan is a uniquely controversial figure. To Imperials he is a military hero, but he is also viewed with suspicion because of his open Sword Worlder sympathies. Meanwhile, some citizens resent him as a representative of the hated Imperium, while others treat him with grudging respect for his efforts on their behalf. Sir Duncan often figures in news reports and editorials in the Border Worlds, and there have already been two (rather ineffective) attempts on his life. In any case, both sides may soon have even more reason to be concerned about his loyalties; he has recently been much in the company of Marta Haakonsdottir Heiberg, the very eligible daughter of a pro-Imperial minister in the Sacnoth government.

Sir Duncan is an invaluable contact for anyone operating in the Border Worlds region. He is even more likely to serve as the instigator of an adventure. He is constantly being approached with problems that he simply has no time to address himself; if he can find trustworthy agents he will gladly pass along such work to them.

ST 9 [-10]; DX 11 [10]; IQ 13 [30]; HT 12 [20].

Speed 5.75; Move 5.

Dodge 5.

**Advantages:** Comfortable [10]; Courtesy Rank 6 (Retired Imperial Navy captain) [6]; Reputation +4 (Decorated military hero; Imperials, 10 or less) [20]; Status 2 (Knight) [10]; Voice [10].

**Disadvantages:** Enemy (Unknown, formidable individual, 9 or less) [-15]; Honesty [-10]; Lameness (Crippled leg) [-15]; Sense of Duty (Clients) [-5]; Workaholic [-5].

**Quirks:** Beer connoisseur; Passionate about individual rights; Proselytizing member of the Church of the Stellar Divinity; Uses an expensive walking stick; Wears his Imperial Navy uniform in public as much as possible. [-5]

**Skills:** Administration-13 [2]; Astrology-13 [2]; Computer Operation-14 [2]; Detect Lies-12 [2]; Diplomacy-14 [6]; Electronics Operation (Communications)-13 [2]; Electronics Operation (Sensors)-13 [2]; Fast-Talk-13 [2]; Guns (Pistol)-15\* [4]; Free Fall-11 [2]; Freight Handling-12 [1]; Intelligence Analysis-12 [2]; Interrogation-14 [4]; Law-16 [10]; Leadership-14 [4]; Piloting (Spacecraft)-12 [4]; Politics-14 [4]; Research-15 [6]; Savoir-Faire (Military)-13 [1]; Shipbuilding (Starship)-12 [1]; Shipmaster-13 [2]; Streetwise-13 [2]; Tactics (Space)-14 [6]; Vacc Suit-13 [2]; Writing-12 [1].

\* Includes +2 for IQ.

**Languages:** Darrian-11 [1/2]; Galanglic (native)-13 [0]; Gvagh-11 [1/2]; Sagamaal-13 [2].



**Balisarda:** An alternate name for Sacnoth. Balisarda was the sword of the legendary Old Terran hero Rogero.

Gram and the first Four Colonies were all named after swords from history, myth, and legend. When the survey commander named Sacnoth after a sword from literary fiction, it was deemed inappropriate and caused considerable controversy on Gram. The Gram oligarchs renamed Sacnoth Balisarda, and the other worlds settled during this period were all named in accordance with the original principle.

The Sacnoth settlers never accepted the name change, and when their colony became strong enough to assert its independence, the name was officially changed back. It was characteristic of Sacnoth resentment over the issue that the six worlds settled from Sacnoth between -232 and -200 all were given names from the literary works of another Old Terran author, whose writings remained extremely popular among the early Sword Worlders.

**Beer:** One area where the stereotype and the reality of the Sword Worlders cross is in their legendary production of high-quality beer. Where other worlds make wine, coffee, or any of a variety of other things a luxury agricultural export, several Sword Worlds are famous "behind the claw" for their lagers, ales, and stouts. Sword Worlders consider beer the sole alcoholic drink fit for man, with the marginal exception of whiskey, and an attempt to order anything else in any bar outside a starport produces, at best, funny looks.

For traders, the most sought after and expensive Sword Worlder beers are Gungnir's Lambic Reds, so named for their color and unusual method of brewing. No yeast is added; instead natural airborne flora perform the fermentation. The variety of Gungnir's beers is as diverse and unusual as the planet's political situation, and some beers are only available in batches numbering in the hundreds of bottles. In the Sword Worlds, the equivalent of a wine connoisseur is an aficionado of Lambic Reds; a trader with the right cargo at the right time is in line to make a small fortune.

Less prestigious, but more readily available, are Tizon's *weizenolnir*, or wheat beers. A number of large brewing corporations produce them, and the exact techniques used are closely guarded industrial secrets. Most Sword Worlders, if given a choice, would choose a Tizonian *weizenol* as long as no one would know they lacked the sophisticated palate for a Lambic Red.

The most common type of beer is Isborg's ales. Isborg is a large food conglomerate based on Sacnoth, which produces half a dozen different light beers at rock-bottom prices. Before the Fifth Frontier War, Isborg sold the majority of beer in the subsector; sales are off dramatically in the Sword Worlds Confederation since Isborg's CEO became Chief Administrator of the Border Worlds (see p. 51). Now most patriotic Sword Worlders deny ever drinking Isborg beers, and will loudly proclaim that they have been "filtered through the trunks of sick miniphants."

**Bionics:** Like Imperials, Sword Worlders have a distaste for cybernetic limbs. In the case of Sword Worlders, this distaste even extends down to simple prosthetic limbs, as the source of their unhappiness is different.

Sword Worlder males are required to be so self-sufficient and responsible that the sight of a man with a bionic arm or eye is disturbing; they do not like to be reminded that such a thing could happen to them. Even though most prosthetics are needed because of war wounds, men find it difficult to honor the sacrifice made. They go through the motions, but fight pity all the way.

The user of a prosthetic suffers a similar self-directed psychological reaction. Most descend into bitterness and anger; what usually follows is an obsessive desire to save up the large sum of money necessary for regrowth of the limb.

**Biter Atrocities:** See *Saltsaar*, p. 97, and *Spredning*, p. 98.

**Black Bull:** The symbol of Sacnoth. It was adopted in -198 in defiance of Gram, whose symbol is the Red Worm, or *lindorm*. According to legend, the *lindorm* can only be defeated by a bull raised on a special diet of milk and nuts.

**Border Office:** A government agency set up by the Domain of Deneb in late 1118 to administer the Imperial involvement with the Border Worlds, replacing the Border Worlds Commission. The Border Office administers the Imperial funds allocated to help the Border Worlds, and also acts in an advisory capacity to the Border Worlds Authority and its individual member worlds.

The current head of the Border Office is Marquis Silas Vandyne. He is the originator of the current Imperial policy in the Border Worlds. He intends to interfere as little as possible, and is trying to build up the client state as a sterling example of what happens when one cooperates with the Imperium instead of fighting it.

**Border Worlds Authority:** The current government of the Border Worlds Confederation. See p. 51.

**Border Worlds Commission:** An ad hoc committee set up in late 1110 by Duke Norris under the authority of Imperial Warrant #1106/11 to handle all aspects of Imperial relationships with the Border Worlds. It was chaired by Sector Admiral Goolanzoon but included members from all Imperial services as well as various civilians. It controlled the individual Border Worlds in the immediate aftermath of the war, was responsible for negotiating the Lunion Accords and created the Intervention Force and the Peacekeeping Force. In 1118 the commission was replaced by the Border Office.



**Border Worlds Confederation:** See p. 51.

**Bryn Avgrunn Base:** A stopover base in orbit around Kolsvart, a small, sunless gas giant in interstellar space at Spinward Marches 1128.

The Narsil discovered Kolsvart in 883 and kept its existence secret. Kolsvart could be useful for one of two purposes: making it cheaper for civilian traffic to get to and from Enos, or as a secret jump-off point for attacks at Caladbolg which would cut the Imperium's lines of communication during times of war.

## TURF WARS

The Imperial presence in the Sword Worlds subsector is a hodgepodge of rival organizations with conflicting agendas. Traditionally a subsector's internal affairs are firmly in the hands of its highest Imperial noble, which in this case would be the Countess of Caladbolg. Various Imperial organizations might meddle in a few select cases, such as the Scouts interdicting a primitive world or the Ministry of Colonization targeting a world for immigration, but they lack the funds to interfere much. Things are not that simple here . . .

The Border Office deals with the worlds in the Border Worlds Confederation and has no interest in seeing any of them return to the Sword Worlds Confederation or join the Imperium. It also tries to extend its sway over the Imperial worlds in the subsector which, at the moment, are either under the Countess of Caladbolg or, in the case of the Metal Worlds, under the Colonial Office. The Colonial Office, for its part, would dearly love to add the functions of the Border Office to its own and spends a lot of energy trying to expand its mandate, as well as fending off attempts by the Border Office to counterattack.

Meanwhile the Countess of Caladbolg was quite upset when the Metal Worlds were not put under her administration, and has an interest in seeing the Colonial Office fail. For that matter, she would not be unhappy if the Border Office failed as well.

The latter of these two functions was preferred until the Fifth Frontier War, when the Imperium discovered the base and destroyed it. The new Bryn Avgrunn Base was begun in 1119, and is concentrated entirely on making it easier for passing ships to find and exploit Kolsvart as a refueling stop. Small refueling ships staged from the base harvest gas and bring it back home to be refined for those ships that can't use unrefined hydrogen.

As of 1120, the base is only partially complete, with work not due to be finished until 1122 at the earliest. Large sections of the station are still exposed to vacuum and uninhabited. When finished the station will make it cheaper to jump between Enos and the Confederation, so the government hopes that trade will increase and foster closer ties between the two.

**Caladbolg (Spinward Marches 1329):** An Imperial world in the Sword Worlds subsector. It was originally settled by Anglic-speaking emigrants from Terra in -321. It was a subject of the Sacnoth Dominate but became independent in -102. It managed to stay independent during the Five States Era, the Triple Dominion, and the Squabbling States Era. In 555 it joined the Imperium together with Caliburn and Gunn.

Caladbolg is the seat of the highest Imperial noble in the Sword Worlds subsector, the Countess of Caladbolg, who is a vassal of the Duke of Lunion.

**Calendar:** All Sword Worlds have their own calendars, suited to their individual day and year lengths, but when dealing with one another they use the calendar that was employed in the Old Earth Union when the Ancestors left the region, the Revised Gregorian Calendar (p. 95). Those Sword Worlds that have joined the Imperium are required by their membership treaties to use the Imperial Calendar, but get around this by labeling the Revised Gregorian a local calendar.

**Caliburn (Spinward Marches 1430):** An Imperial asteroid belt in the Sword Worlds subsector. It was never settled in any formal sense. A Sacnoth-based company began exploiting it in -133, but the system had no permanent settlers until some 600 belters were stranded there by the War of the First Rebellion and grew, after a desperate struggle for survival, to a population of 2,500 by the end of the Fimbulwinter.

For most of their early history, the inhabitants of the Caliburn belt were too scattered and independent to be governed by any central authority, but in 539 they joined together to form the Caliburn Cooperative, which was set up as a company, and empowered to perform a limited number of government functions. The system joined the Imperium in 555 together with Caladbolg and Gunn.

**"Call of Duty:"** A famous play by the Narsil playwright Eske Kirk. It deals with the events aboard the orbital fortress *Kaskelotten* on 285-622, when the system defenses were ordered to fire on any ship that followed Admiral Denisov (p. 17) in his refusal to accept the government's surrender to the Imperials.

**Chaperons Blancs:** Before the Fifth Frontier War, this merchant line was based on Joyeuse and operated a small web of trade routes between Darrian and Lunion. The war ruined the line's revenues at a time when unwise management had already disrupted its financial health. Amid a series of financial scandals, the line went bankrupt in 1114.

During the bankruptcy proceedings, Chaperons Blancs assets were transferred to a variety of new owners. Frendi Marshikin purchased a number of its ships and port facilities, and is now using them in an effort to expand its operations into Imperial space.

Meanwhile, a number of Chaperons Blancs ships have apparently fallen into private hands. Some of the line's former captains bought their own ships at bargain prices, and are now operating as free traders. Rumor has it that as many as three armed Chaperons Blancs merchants vanished *before* the declaration of bankruptcy, and may now be operating as corsairs as far to coreward as the Querion subsector.

See also *Frendi Marshikin*, pp. 84-85.



**Checkpoints:** In 1116, the Border Worlds Authority passed a law that all ships coming into their space from a planet in the Sword Worlds Confederation had to go to Tyrfin or Sacnoth first and submit to inspection. The intent was to cut off much of the trade through what was formerly the center of the Confederation, reinforcing the identity of the Border Worlds and preventing it from remaining dependent on what the Authority saw as the greatest threat to their new state.

At first the Confederation did not care *too* much. Most traffic between its two halves went by jump-2 ships through Excalibur and jump-3 ships through either Excalibur or Orcrist. But when Excalibur joined the Border Worlds in 1118 the Sacnoth checkpoint was moved to Excalibur. This imposed a huge inconvenience on Confederation trade. The jump-3 traffic that didn't already go through Orcrist could shift to doing so, but the jump-2 traffic had to start carrying extra fuel (and cut down cargo space) and make deep space jumps, while traffic to Sacnoth was forced to jump short and add a stopover at Excalibur to the trip. The Confederation immediately lodged a protest with the Border Worlds Authority and the Border Office and demanded that traffic moving through Excalibur en route for another Confederation world be allowed to do so without having to go through inspection. So far the BWA has refused to budge. Meanwhile jump-2 traffic is being squeezed out of the market and the question is fast becoming moot as jump-3 ships pick up the slack.

Theoretically, a ship from the Sword Worlds Confederation undergoes an inspection in a specially bonded portion of the starports on Tyrfin or Excalibur, where it receives an official pass to be presented on demand on any other Border World.

## WHAT'S IT *REALLY* FOR?

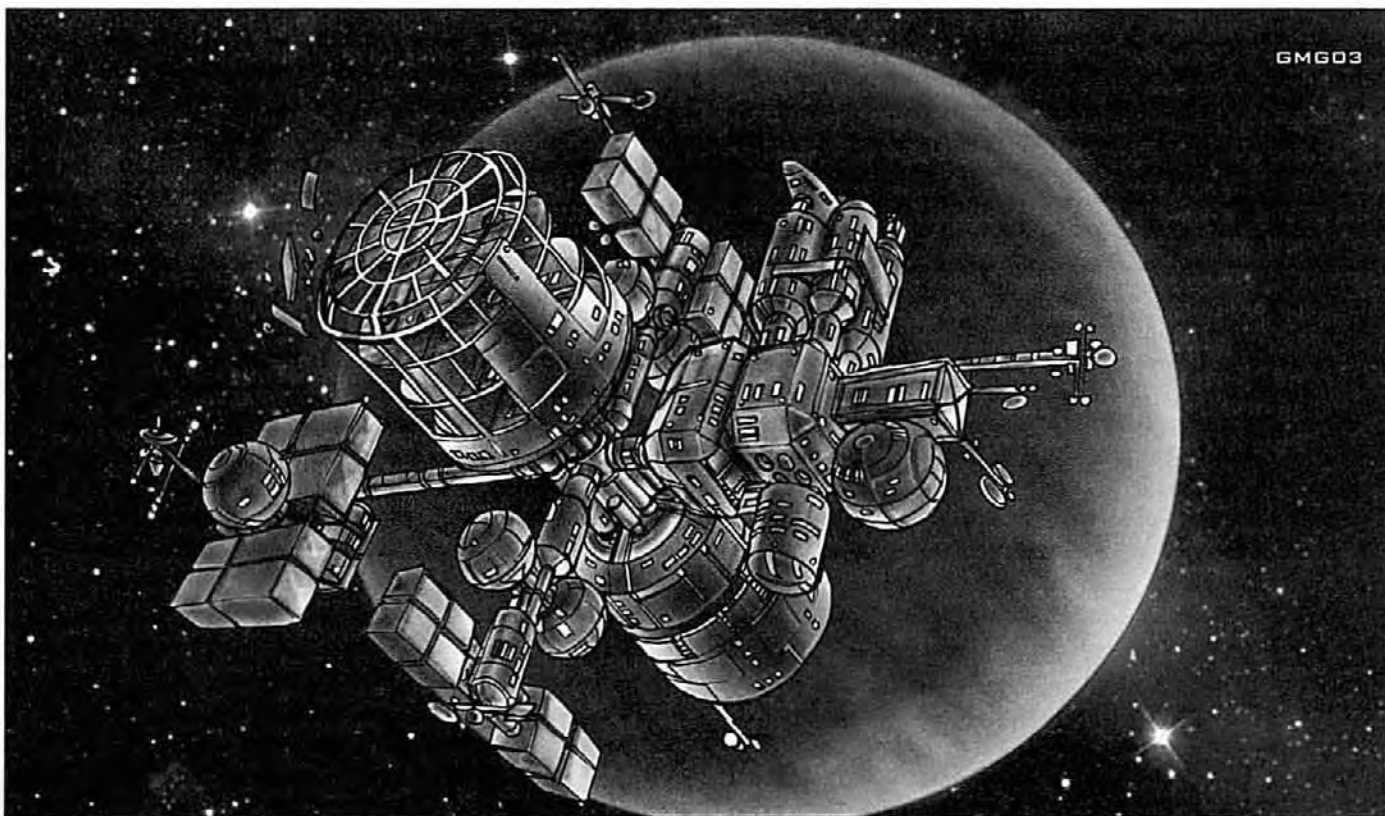
Bryn Avgrunn Base has been a source of diplomatic friction between the Imperium and the Confederation since rebuilding started. The Imperium remembers that the last base at Kolsvart was used as a marshaling point for Confederation naval elements aimed at Caladbolg, and it doesn't trust the Swordies now.

The Confederation, on the other hand, is sufficiently interested in avoiding another war that the new base is in fact demilitarized. If the current government can figure out a way to do it without causing a loss of face at home, they will allow Imperial inspectors on board to prove it. Unfortunately, this is difficult.

Part of the Imperium's distrust stems from the economic uselessness of the base. Enos is a backwater in every way, and the cost of building and running the station can't possibly be justified by the increase in trade. Enos simply hasn't got that much to offer.

The real reason Bryn Avgrunn is being rebuilt is political. Enos is quickly coming under the sway of Imperial megacorporations exploiting the oil and gas in that planet's Fire Sea (see p. 44). The Confederation government is worried that Enos will eventually be absorbed by its much larger neighbor. The base is a way of asserting Sword Worlder control over the planet by expanding the Confederation's reach in that direction.

A Sword Worlder patrol cruiser is due to be transferred to Enos in the middle of next year. It will "patrol" the route from Enos to Orcrist through Bryn Avgrunn Base, showing the flag.



# THORFINN BURKHARDSSON AAGARD

95 POINTS

Human (Sword Worlder). Age 39; 6', 150 lbs. White freckled skin, brown hair, and gray eyes.

Thorfinn Burkhardsson is the *Landgreve* of Botehausen on Narsil, a minor noble holding on that planet. But he styles himself the *Hertug* of the Entropic Worlds.

When the Confederation briefly held the Entropic Worlds a few decades ago, several long-defunct noble titles – left over from the last time Entrope was part of the Confederation – suddenly became active again. One of these was the title of *Hertug* of Entrope, which had devolved through a series of genealogic accidents onto Burkhard Rudolfsson Aagard, *Landgreve* Botehausen. Entrope was lost again within 25 years, and Burkhard has since died, but his son still holds out the hope that the worlds will be recovered and he will regain the title. To bolster his claim he has married the theoretical queen of Winston, and obtained the oath of fealty of the man who could be Jarl of Anselhome – now a bank clerk in Brennistein, on Hrunting.

Thorfinn is a tall man, weakly built, with an air of dissolution about him. He has long brown hair, a long moustache, and a taste for foppish expensive clothes. He is the eldest son of a Narsil midlevel noble and has the associated skills; on Narsil, the noble families control the large corporations which run the world, and Thorfinn spent his twenties running a minor industrial concern of his father's.

His attitude has been spoiled by the period in which he was the heir apparent to an entire world, which began when he was three years old and ran until he was just less than 30. He is petulant and angry that his "birthright" has been taken away, and gets extremely upset when someone mocks his pretensions. On Narsil he is known as one of the most conservative nobles, as well as the one who advocates the harshest treatment of that planet's rebels. He's already lost one set of lands, and he won't lose another one to "the rabble."

Unfortunately, all this means that he lives above his income, and Botehausen is starting to get run down. It's mortgaged to the hilt, creditors are hovering, and Thorfinn is constantly looking for ways to keep the money flowing "just long enough" for him to regain his crown.

But even when the Entropic Worlds joined the Confederation in 1084, the old noble titles had little value beyond a certain social cachet, since the leaders of Entrope had no intention of relinquishing control. Even estates originally lost in 788 were not returned when Entrope rejoined the Sword Worlds; the cases dragged out in court for 24 years with no end in sight when the worlds were again lost in 1110. So in the unlikely event that the Entropic Worlds became Sword Worlds once more, Thorfinn of Entrope would still not regain what he is working so hard to get. Mentioning this is another way to make him extremely upset.



ST 9 [-10]; DX 11 [10]; IQ 13 [30]; HT 9 [-10].

Speed 5; Move 5.

Dodge 5; Parry 8 (Rapier).

**Advantages:** Ally Group (Retainers, 9 or less) [20]; Extra Hit Points +1 [5]; Single-Minded [5]; Status 3 (Baron) [10]; Wealthy [20].

**Disadvantages:** Extravagance [-10]; Hidebound [-5]; Megalomania [-10]; Reputation -4 (Ultraconservative noble; amid Narsil rebels, 10 or less) [-3]; Stubbornness [-5].

**Quirks:** Always wears expensive clothes with the badge of Entrope on them; Hates Darrian officials; Refers to himself in the third person; Swears "on his patrimony." [-4]

**Skills:** Accounting-12 [2]; Administration-15 [6]; Area Knowledge (Entropic Worlds)-12 [1/2]; Area Knowledge (Narsil)-14 [2]; Armory (Hand weapons)-11 [1/2]; Carousing-9 [2]; Computer Operation-13 [1]; Diplomacy-12 [2]; Driving (Hovercraft)-9 [1/2]; Economics-11 [1]; Electronics Operation (Communications)-11 [1/2]; Fencing-12 [4]; Finance-11 [1]; Gunner (Guided Missiles)-11\* [1/2]; Guns (Pistol)-13\* [1]; Heraldry-13 [2]; History-12 [2]; Law-14 [6]; Leadership-12 [1]; Piloting (Contragrav)-9 [1/2]; Politics-14 [4]; Research-14 [4]; Savoir-Faire-14 [2]; Skiing-10 [2]; Speed Reading-12 [1]; Tactics-10 [1/2]; Writing-12 [1].

\* Includes +2 for IQ.

**Languages:** Darrian-11 [1/2]; Galanglic-12 [1]; Saga-maal (native)-13 [0].



In practice, however, the BWA uses the inspections as an opportunity to harass Confederation traffic, and bribery is needed before a pass will be issued. As might be expected, Sword Worlders circumvent the checkpoints whenever possible. Out-of-the-way landing pads are maintained by the local Border Worlder authorities on planets that are less than happy that they have been cut off, such as Durendal and Beater. Officially, trade has dropped almost 90% because of the checkpoints, but counting the new black markets, the figure is closer to 50%.

**Chernozem (Solomani Rim 1836):** A world in the Solomani Rim, which the ancestors of the Sword Worlders had tried to capture just before they were forced to flee the Old Earth Union.

The Sword Worlders have never forgotten Chernozem. A few troops, several companies of the 146th Marine Regiment, made it to the surface and had to be abandoned. That act never sat well with the lower ranks, and the memory of it never faded even after the Sword Worlds were settled.

As it happens, the troops in the bridgehead were forced to surrender not long after. When the war ended many settled in an isolated region on Chernozem where they had been interned; their descendants are a still-detectable ethnic group on that planet. Sword Worlders consider these "Svedsky" (as they are called) a "lost tribe" of their own people.

Even the planet is of interest to Sword Worlders. After travel across multiple sectors became safer with the expansion of the Third Imperium, a movement grew to "finish the job" – follow the orders the original Sword Worlders had been forced to disobey, and land on Chernozem. For centuries, a small stream of people has made its way from the Spinward Marches to the Solomani Rim specifically to prove to their great-great-great-to-the-*n*th grandparents that they had not failed in their duty. It may have taken 1,600 years, and they had to found an interstellar state to do it, but the 8th Scandinavian Army Corps and their auxiliaries *would* set foot on Chernozem.

**Clothing:** Most Imperials can tell that a person is from the Sword Worlds just by looking at him. It's generally assumed this is because of the stereotypical "Scandinavian" appearance of the Confederation's citizens, but in reality many Imperials have a similar appearance.

The tip-off, whether the Imperial realizes it or not, is often the Sword Worlder's clothing. In the Imperium there are a wide variety of civilian fashions, but Sword World clothes are much closer to military uniforms. Active service people wear their uniforms at all times, even while on leave. Since large portions of the population on most worlds are in the military, any crowd is going to be sprinkled with people in military garb.

Uniforms are also far more common in situations where civilian dress would be appropriate in the Imperium. Customs inspectors, many bureaucrats, people working on government-sponsored construction sites – all have particular uniforms and wear them while on the job.

Even civilian dress is colored by military fashions. While clearly civilian in nature, they often have little touches that suggest a uniform. Boots are worn far more often than shoes, for example. A veteran – and almost every male in the

Sword Worlds has been in the local militia, if nothing else – wears his campaign ribbons, or sports a ring on his right hand indicating the unit with which he served.

Women, on the other hand, wear exaggeratedly old-fashioned "feminine" outfits unless they have chosen to follow a male occupation, in which case they wear male garb. Full-length dresses are common, as are hats. Particularly rich or upper-class women go out of their way to wear clothes that are mildly impractical or clearly take some time to get on – both are intended to show off the fact that the woman has servants.

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*The ultimate in female fashion in the Sword Worlds is designed to show that the wearer has hours of free time and hordes of servants. Most women end up looking like they can't decide whether they want to wear a wedding cake or a cuckoo clock, and have gone for a combination of both, with the addition of a few hundred fake flowers.*

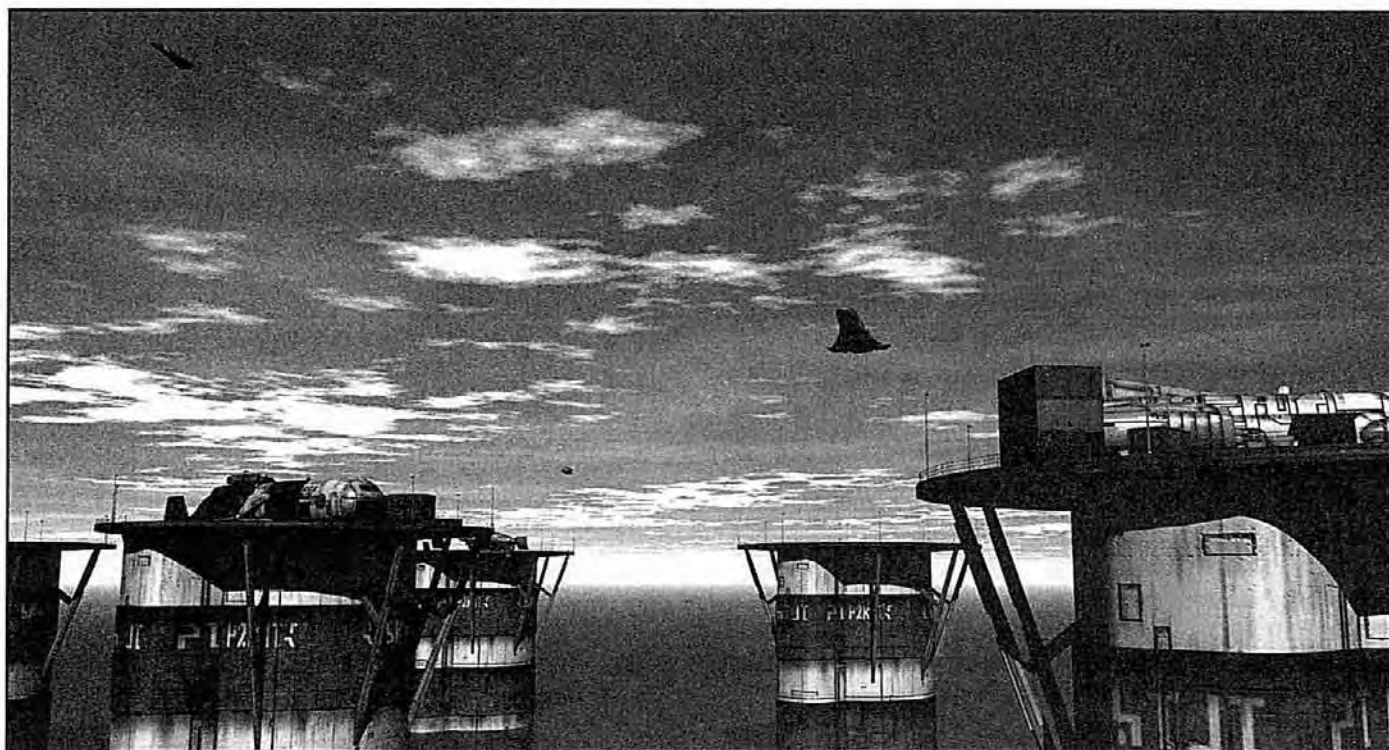
*– Anton Wilson Peale*

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**Confederalism:** A political movement advocating that the Sword Worlds be united in a confederation dedicated to allowing each world to govern itself in peace with no outside interference. Early signs of the ideas can be traced back to before the Fimbulwinter, but the movement got its real start following the Biter Atrocities in 435. In 444 Leonard Torstensson published *Fraender* ("Kinsmen"), a political tract setting forth the principles that every Sword World should be independent within the framework of a confederation for mutual protection. Confederalist parties soon arose on every Sword World, but for a long time they had little success. The brutal conquest of the Aesir Alliance by the Tizon Empire in 575-578 gave them new strength, however, and in 592 confederalist sympathizers in the navies of all six then-current interstellar states staged a coup, taking over control of all five navies (Sacnoth and the Double Monarchy had a joint navy) and proclaiming a united Sword Worlds Confederation dedicated to confederalist principles.

**Confederation House:** The seat of the Confederation government, located on Gram in Faellesborg ("Together Castle"), a new metropolis built to house the Confederation government – and, not incidentally, pacify the other Sword Worlds by moving the capital away from the traditional seat of Gram's government.



Confederation House was built in 984-985 after Gram became the capital of the Confederation. It was designed to reflect the varied nature of the Sword Worlds, using materials from all inhabited planets under the Confederation's control. The front lawn is decorated with 50-foot poles supporting the badges of all member worlds, and each of these is placed in front of a frieze on the building's facade showing a scene from that planet. Despite recent losses in the Fourth and Fifth Frontier Wars, the badges and friezes are present for any world that was part of the Confederation in 984, and at any point thereafter. This includes the Border Worlds, the Entropic Worlds, Cunnonic, Margesi, and Tavonni. This is also a point of contention with all of those planets' current governments.

**Confederation Police:** A small but elite law-enforcement organization, under the aegis of the Sword Worlds Confederation's Chancellery of Justice. The CP can be called in to help local police on the member worlds in particularly or multiple-jurisdiction cases.

No Sword Worlder likes the idea of foreigners muscling in and throwing their weight about. But they like even less the idea of criminals escaping their just deserts simply by moving to another world. Consequently the member worlds grudgingly allow Confederation Police officers to arrest fugitives from other worlds on their soil, provided the CP keeps local police informed of their actions throughout.

**Corporations:** One of the points on which a typical Sword Worlder distinguishes himself from an Imperial is the lack of megacorporate influence in his life. Sword Worlders see the Imperial megacorporations as the "power behind the throne" in their gigantic neighbor; a number of books, ranging from the paranoid to the thoughtful, have been written about this subject.

As a result, companies that extend across more than one planet are quite rare in Sword Worlder space. Among the

exceptions are the Fortarn Conglomerate of Gungnir (see p. 46), Gramstaatsbedrif (see p. 86), and Isborg, the food consortium whose CEO has become the Border Worlds' Central Administrator (see p. 51). Except for those specializing in transportation or information distribution, a company spread over an entire planet is abnormally large.

Most companies are family owned, or simple partnerships. Incorporation is possible, but Sword Worlder distaste for the concept of placing responsibility in a nonexistent person makes the process difficult and not particularly fruitful. The exception to this rule is in the Border Worlds, which has loosened its laws and become much more business-oriented since its creation. Not many years have passed since this started, but with the shifting legal regime and the Imperial megacorporations beginning to move in, the Border Worlds are rapidly diverging from the Confederation.

**Court in Exile:** For 200 years, between the Entropic War and the Third Frontier War, the planets Anselhome, Winston, and Entrope were members of the Sword Worlds Confederation. For the next 300 years, the Darrians held them, but the titles for the fiefs on each planet still floated around the Sword Worlder aristocracy.

This would have remained a historical curiosity, except that for a brief period between the Fourth and Fifth Frontier Wars the Entropic Worlds once again became part of the Confederation. Nearly forgotten titles were dusted off and several families, major and minor, suddenly gained a new measure of influence.

As quickly as they ascended, they crashed again with the Darrian reconquest in 1110. Thorfinn Burkhardsson Aagard is now the unofficial leader of the 20 or so nobles who continue to press their claims to the Entropic Worlds (see p. 80). Many have dropped out of this quixotic venture, but some (particularly Thorfinn himself) have enough resources to make nuisances of themselves.



**Cunnonic (Spinward Marches 0822):** A world in the Darrian Confederation, which was under Sword Worlder control for nearly 1,000 years before being lost in the Fourth Frontier War.

Cunnonic was settled by Darrians about -1000. When the *Maghiz* hit it was one of the least-affected Darrian worlds, but still lost contact with the universe at large due to its inability to maintain its industrial base.

In the early second century, Cunnonic was influenced by the growing Triple Dominion, and became economically tied to Tizon. When the Darrian Confederation was established in 148, Cunnonic did not join. Instead it became part of the ebb and flow of Sword Worlder politics. A few Sword Worlders even immigrated to the planet, though today 90% of the population is of Darrian descent.

The planet was regained by the Darrians in 1084, as part of the settlement that saw the Sword Worlds receive the Entropic Worlds instead.

Cunnonic is a balkanized world with five democracies ruling the entire planet. It is quite terrestrial, but very active tectonically.

**Currencies:** Almost every world and nation in the Sword Worlds has its own currency. Over the centuries a variety of methods have developed to handle them.

All Class III or better starports, and many large cities, are home to businesses specializing in changing money. At the least, they handle all Sword Worlder and Border Worlder currencies, as well as Imperial credits. Better establishments also handle Darrian currency, money from the Federation of Arden, Zhodani Consulate scrip, and the various currencies of the more populated worlds in District 268. The usual fee for this service is about 1.5% of the value of the money being changed. Most major banks also perform this service, though the fee is higher.

Those who do not wish to change their money will find that several currencies are widely accepted. Imperial credits are good everywhere, but the shops only accept them at about 95% of their true value. The Gram *krone* and the Narsil *nymark* are usually accepted at a similar charge. The *krone* is usually worth 0.5 Imperial credits, while there are about 12 *nymark* to the Imperial credit; exact values vary over time. In the Border Worlds, only Imperial credits and the Sacnoth *mark* – which are generally roughly equal in value – are commonly accepted.

Most other Sword Worlder and Border Worlder currencies are pegged at known exchange rates to the major currencies, so it is sometimes possible to convince a creditor to take payment in them. Exactly what sort of penalty the payer will have to take remains up to the individual creditor, however, and currencies from the minor worlds must be converted at a moneychanger if used away from their place of issue.

**Darrian Confederation:** An interstellar state situated just spinward of the Sword Worlds, in the Darrian and Querion subsectors. It is a long-standing ally of the Imperium and an equally long-standing adversary of the Sword Worlds Confederation.

See *GURPS Traveller: Humaniti* for more information (pp. T:H 35-50).

**Dawnworld (Spinward Marches 1531):** An empty world in the District 268 subsector. Dawnworld is a bit drier than Terra and the atmosphere is somewhat denser, but apart from that it is one of the most Earthlike worlds in the Marches. It is so pleasant that in -982 the Darrians, who did not usually plant colonies that far away from their homeworld, colonized it.

The Darrians named the world Dand Daryene, or “New Home.” Within a generation it was discovered that some unidentified aspect of the planet, presumably biological in nature, caused sterility in all male infants. The settlement was accordingly abandoned in -941. The Darrians left a group of scientists to discover the cause, but they were cut off in the *Maghiz* and all knowledge of the settlement and the base was lost.

The Sacnoth Dominate named the world Hoding and established a colony there in -154. They too discovered the problem and abandoned the world again in -118. The Dominate planned to send scientists to study the problem, but the War of the First Rebellion intervened.

Dawnworld was settled again in 288, under that name, by a group of utopians from the Imperium who were oblivious of the previous failures and who had to abandon it in 321. In 481 a group of Vargr exiles from Gvurrdon found the empty world and settled there, likewise unaware of the reason why it was empty. In 506 a team of researchers finally put together all the facts and the Vargr were resettled on Spirelle (Spinward Marches 1927).

It is most likely that whatever causes the problem will not affect nonterrestrial beings, but the risk that it might kept anyone from taking the chance while there were still alternate worlds to settle. After the Imperium declared the subsector an Imperial district in 610, Dawnworld came under its protection. The world was then declared off limits to any settlers, regardless of species, until the problem has been identified and solved. Visits to the world do not appear to cause any damage, so it has not been interdicted.

The situation is further complicated by Sword Worlder claims to the planet. From 600 to 1100 several attempts have been made by both Sword Worlder and Imperial scientists to solve the mystery, but they have all ended in failure, most likely because they were all terminated prematurely due to political pressure.

**Double Monarchy (44 to 604):** A former interstellar state consisting of Anduril and Narsil, formed in 44 when Magnus II of Anduril succeeded to the throne of his father-in-law, Oluf the Wise of Narsil. The two worlds kept their separate legislative assemblies but cooperated in many areas, including a postal union, linked currencies, common trade, defense, and foreign policy. Dual citizenship was granted to all citizens of both worlds. Anduril was the senior world to begin with, but over time Narsil grew stronger and more populous and assumed the premier position. The union remained strong throughout the Five States Era, the Triple Dominion, and the Squabbling States Era until finally dissolving amicably in 604 with the establishment of the Second Dominate. The two worlds have remained firm allies up to the present day.

**Dragvendel:** The former name for Tenalphi (Spinward Marches 1826).

**Dyrnwyn Compact (238 to 604):** A former interstellar state consisting of Dyrnwyn and Durendal plus, at various times, Biter, Hofud, and Sting. It was formed as an alliance of equal partners between Dyrnwyn, Durendal, and Hofud. Over the years the Compact Council took more and more functions from the member systems. At the same time Dyrnwyn gained greater and greater influence over Durendal until Hofud eventually saw itself outvoted on practically every issue. In 335 Hofud left the Compact. Dyrnwyn came very close to going to war to preserve the Compact, but calmer heads prevailed.

In 435 the news of Hofud's treatment of conquered Biter aroused the indignation of all the other Sword Worlds and four years later the Compact attacked and conquered Hofud. With it came control of Biter and Sting. Hofud was ruled as a dependency and did not get any representation in the Compact Council. As the restored Kingdom of Sting, Sting and Biter was considered one member state, leaving it outvoted by Dyrnwyn, which by then controlled Durendal and its votes completely.

Over the next century Sting became increasingly unhappy with its position in the Compact and for a while war appeared inevitable. Fortunately confederalist ideas gained enough strength on Dyrnwyn to cause a change in attitude. In 572 Sting left the Compact peacefully, taking Biter along.

With the establishment of the Second Dominate in 604, Dyrnwyn was compelled to relinquish its grip on Durendal and Hofud and the Compact was peacefully dissolved.

**Entrope (Spinward Marches 0720):** A heavily populated planet that has been part of the Sword Worlds on and off since 593. As of the end of the Fifth Frontier War, it is a member of the Darrian Confederation.

Entrope's infrastructure was heavily damaged during the fighting, and its starport was destroyed. There is still an active resistance, which has prevented much rebuilding, but most Entropians support the Darrian occupation.

**Entropic Worlds:** The collective name for the planets Entrope, Winston, and Anselhome, which have been conquered and reconquered by the Sword Worlds and the Darrian Confederation over the last 500 years.

**Federated States of Sacnoth (364 to 532):** A union of all of Sacnoth's nations formed in 364. The balance between the national governments and the federal government was tilted towards the nations until the middle of the 5th century, when the federal government slowly began to gain the upper hand. In 532 a worldwide plebiscite adopted a new constitution that turned the nations into regions under the world government. At the same time the "Federated States of" was dropped from the name of the state.

**Fimbulwinter:** (Sagamaal: *Fimbulvinter*.) The period between the end of the War of the First Rebellion in -88 and the reestablishment of interstellar contact among the Sword Worlds in -11. It is named after a three-year winter with no summers from Norse mythology.

The latter half of the war had been characterized by the extensive use of massive kinetic-kill missiles. From -92 onward the use of such weapons escalated in a spiral of

retaliatory attacks aimed at the ecological balance of enemy worlds rather than military targets. As a result, when the war wound down due to lack of resources and the destruction of shipbuilding capability everywhere, the local climate around the main cities on most Sword Worlds had been thoroughly disturbed. Every major settlement was experiencing lowered temperatures and harsh weather due to massive amounts of water and dust in the atmosphere. The resulting natural catastrophes and attendant agricultural problems caused great anxieties and impeded postwar recovery. Despite all efforts interstellar contact between the Sword Worlds almost completely stopped for a time.

Although it is popularly thought that all interstellar contact ceased during the Fimbulwinter, this is not quite true. Interstellar trade did halt, but some of the worlds managed to keep a few minor warships in commission most of the time. However, no new ships were built anywhere until -11.

## THE MEMORY OF DARKNESS

The Fimbulwinter had a profound effect on Sword Worlder psychology. Despite the efforts to ruin the ecology of enemy worlds, only areas near the major settlements were really affected. Planetary climates righted themselves in a few years – or, at worst, a few decades – but most Sword Worlders today believe that the problems lasted for the whole period. The deaths resulting from the missiles and the secondary and tertiary effects, both real and imagined, created a loathing for such climate-affecting weapons that has remained in the Sword Worlder consciousness down to this day. No Sword Worlder admiral would dream of using kinetic-kill missiles against planetary targets, and any who did would be executed by his government, provided it survived the wrath of its own citizens long enough to do so.

**Four Worlds:** A widespread term for the four Sword Worlds of Colada, Hrunting, Joyeuse and Tizon. They are also known as the First Colonies. The name refers to their common heritage as the four worlds colonized shortly after the Founders arrived at Gram, using escort ships to keep in touch. The colonization project was a favorite of the navy element among the Founders, and the makeup of the colonies was heavily weighted toward navy personnel. Also, the small size of the populations necessitated a more balanced gender mix than on Gram. Consequently the cultures that developed on the First Colonies differed from the one that developed on Gram. Historically the Four Worlds have often sided with each other in political matters, especially after the formation of the Sword Worlds Confederation.

**Frendi Marshikin:** This merchant line, whose name translates from *te-Zapet*, the primary Darrian language, as "Interworld Express" – is one of the few Darrian lines to trade openly in Sword Worlder space. With corporate headquarters on Daryen, it runs cargo across the two-parsec gap between Spume and Narsil, and up the jump-1 main as far as Gram.





For over 200 years, Frendi Marshikin's leadership has taken a strictly neutral position in transborder politics. As a result, it is usually regarded as trustworthy by Sword Worlde governments, at least in peacetime. Transborder trade resumed soon after the end of the Fifth Frontier War, and after a few lean years Frendi Marshikin was once again prosperous.

Frendi Marshikin continues to run its old route into the Sword Worlds, even though that route currently traverses Border Worlds territory. Its ships are very careful to observe the Checkpoint Law (see p. 79). In 1117 the Border Worlds Authority began to harass Frendi Marshikin ships at the checkpoints, insisting on thorough inspections and turning back several ships for improper documentation. This came to a halt the next year, after the Darrian ambassador on Mora lodged a protest directly with Archduke Norris' office. Today the BWA is careful to treat Darrian shipping with the same courtesy it extends to Imperial ships.

Frendi Marshikin is currently engaged in expanding its trade network into Imperial space, picking up trade routes once worked by Chaperons Blancs (see p. 78).

**Frid og Fremgang Partiren:** Out of the ashes of defeat, *Frid og Fremgang Partiren*, or "The Peace and Progress Party," formed. A coalition of radical democratic parties, the Party's ambitious goals are to produce a more coherent state encompassing the Sword Worlds, enfranchise the bulk of the population (including women on worlds where they don't have the vote), reposition the Sword Worlds as a neutral state rather than one allied with the Zhodani Consulate, and encourage trade with the Imperium and the Darrian Confederation.

With such a radical agenda, Frid og Fremgang is ineffective in elections on worlds that are democratic, and pathetic in gaining formal power on worlds that aren't. However, its populist tendencies have fired the imaginations of large, disenfranchised blocs on several worlds, and is coloring the policies of several governments wishing to avoid rioting and large-scale civil insurrection. The Party is strongest on Hrunt-ing, Narsil, and Anduril, and is making inroads on Gram and Orcrist.

Each world has its own branch of the Party, but overall strategy is planned by a council representing the groups that

originally formed the coalition. Major figures in the council include the current party president, Jon "Nonni" Hafthorsson Auth, and the head of the Women's Wing, Ingunn Justinasdottir Hos. Justinasdottir is by far and away the most influential female politician in the Sword Worlds, so she is widely reviled throughout the Confederation. Still, no one can deny her genius for political organization. Certainly enough Sword Worlde women agree with her message to give her a large (if informal) constituency.

One oddity about Frid og Fremgang is its emphasis on its nonrevolutionary origins. The majority of its constituent parties are holdovers from the democratic periods that have occurred on most of the Sword Worlds at some point in the chaotic past. Each emphasizes that it is merely seeking a return to rights usurped by the current governments. This is possibly part of a rather cynical appeal to the conservative side of the Sword Worlde personality. In any case, democratic parties founded on revolutionary principles make up only a small and neglected part of the movement.

**Fridrottaevlan:** A festival of sports, open to all Sword Worlde, it runs once every four years in the manner of many major sporting competitions stretching back to the days of old Terra.

The *Fridrottaevlan* was originally started in the early days of Sword Worlds colonization, as a way of encouraging the best and brightest of the colony worlds to meet one another and develop a sense of Sword Worlde solidarity. They were held on Gram, and covered most of the typical track-and-field events as well as various skiing sports and shooting.

When the Fimbulwinter descended, the *Fridrottaevlan* was one of the casualties, and it did not restart until the year 41. When it did, however, it was with the memory of the Fimbulwinter in mind, and the new *Fridrottaevlanir* rapidly became a symbol of Sword Worlde resurgence. Since then, no matter what the political situation, the games have continued, and most Sword Worlde would be horrified if things got so bad they had to be stopped again; that would be seen as a sign that the Confederation had returned to the low point of the first century pre-Imperial.

The modern festivals are held on a different world each time. The 1121 games are to be held on Anduril.

**Funerals:** The death of an important citizen is a major event in Sword Worlder culture. Tradition states that everyone dies at home – each man or woman is an extension of his or her household – and the body will be returned to the house if at all possible. Irrecoverable corpses are represented using an empty bier.

Funerals are always held at night, and a party of six carries the bier of the deceased from his home to a crematorium. Six others carry torches and surround the pallbearers on their journey. Once there, these 12 guard the body in one room, while the grieving family and invited guests are led through funeral rites in another. Some time before dawn the body is cremated, and the funeral service ends with the 12 joining the larger party at daybreak. The ashes are then buried, and a funeral stone inscribed with the notable events of the deceased's life is raised above the location.

**Galatine:** The original name for Beater. Contrary to later tales, Galatine and not Excalibur was the sword Arthur drew from the stone and entrusted to Sir Gawaine as a badge of office.

## IN OR OUT?

The *Fridrottaevlan* is open to all Sword Worlders, and so who attends is a matter of some political import (see p. 85). The Border Worlds government is not happy with its citizens going to the festival, but allowed delegations from their worlds during the 1113 and 1117 games. Whether or not they will do so in 1121 is still not certain.

Even touchier are the former Sword Worlds such as Margesi and Garda-Vilis. While their athletes are eager to compete, there is pressure from the governments not to attend, as to do so would be a tacit acceptance of the Sword Worlder claims on those worlds. Vilis bans its citizens from participating.

**Garda-Vilis (Spinward Marches 1118):** An Imperial world in the Vilis subsector. It was settled in -121 by Sword Worlders from the Sacnoth Dominate and named Danuuz after the sword of the Vilani hero Mashdiikhe, a name that eventually became Tanoose. The settlement failed some time during the Fimbulwinter for reasons unknown and was left completely empty during the Five States Era and the Triple Dominion. In 290 it was taken over by Vilis and renamed Garda-Vilis (New Vilis). It has remained a colony of Vilis since then.

**Gram Alliance (-3 to 104):** A now-defunct interstellar state consisting of Gram, Haulteclair (Mjolnir), Joyeuse, and Morglay (Gungnir). It was formed in -3 between Gram and Joyeuse, and within a few years the other two worlds joined. The Alliance dissolved in 104, when Gram was balkanized and the three other worlds were taken over by Colada.

**Gram Confederation (-102 to -98):** A short-lived successor state to the first Sacnoth Dominate, consisting of Gram, Colada, Haulteclair (Mjolnir), Hruntling, Isenfang (Margesi), Joyeuse, Morglay (Gungnir), and Tizon. It was founded in -102 after the defeat of the Sacnoth Dominate in

the Battle of Excalibur. Continued warfare with the Sacnoth Confederacy exhausted the Confederation and it broke up in -98 when Tizon, Colada, Hruntling, and Isenfang seceded and formed a defensive league against Gram.

**Gram Hegemony:** A term used by Gram nationalists to denote the period from -399 to -186 or, in some extreme cases, from -399 to the present. The theory is that Gram was the sovereign ruler of all Sword Worlds settled during that time (Colada, Durendal, Dyrnwyn, Excalibur, Hofud, Hruntling, Joyeuse, Sacnoth, Tizon, and Tyrting) and consequently has a historic claim to sovereignty over all these worlds and, by extension, any worlds subsequently settled from any of them. Most constitutional scholars do not agree with this notion.

**Gramihandelsbanken:** By far the largest investment bank in the Sword Worlds, the "Gram Merchant Bank" has avoided the usual Sword Worlder anticorporate attitudes by not appearing to be in charge anywhere: it merely *owns* all or part of a wide array of assets throughout the subsector.

Prior to the Fifth Frontier War, the bank was extremely well run, and the upper management has continued proving its mettle in the years since. The most difficult problem has been keeping the Border Worlds from nationalizing the bank's holdings in that new state. The BWA's Central Administrator Muli is extremely unhappy that one of the largest companies in the Border Worlds is based in the Sword Worlds Confederation.

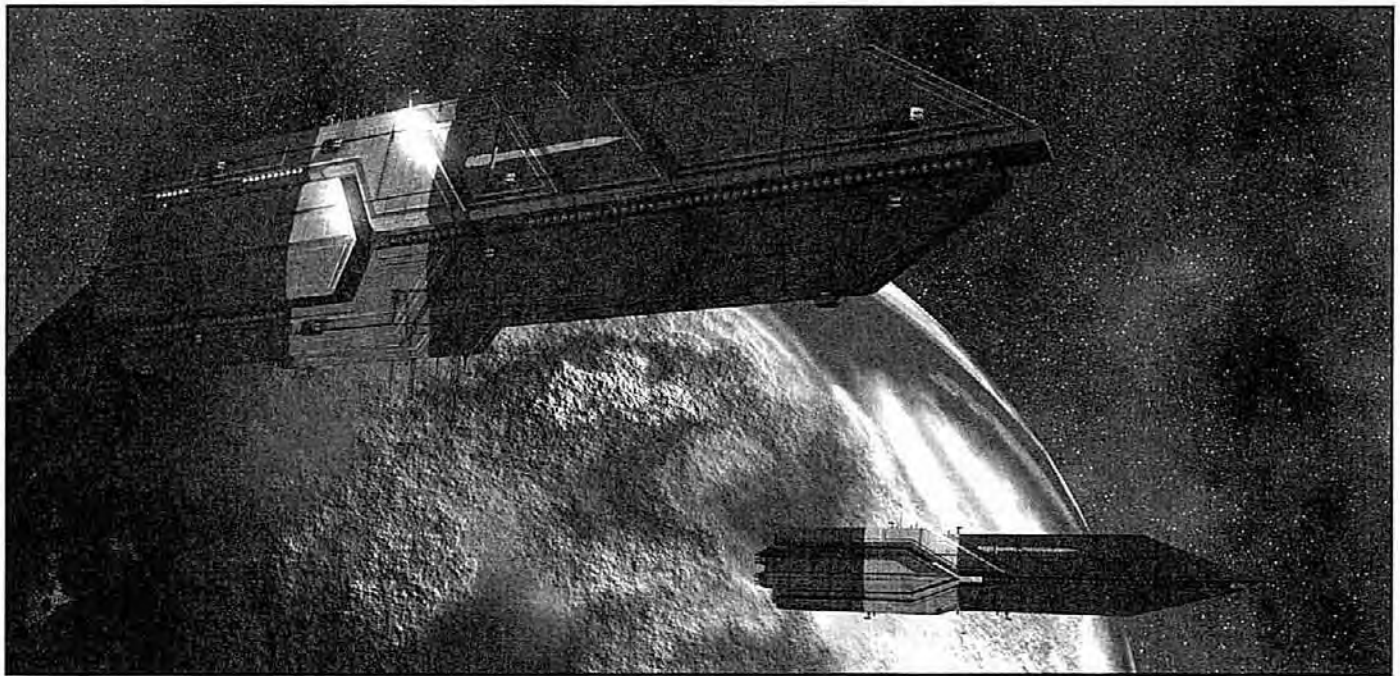
For the last decade, the *Gramihandelsbank* has been fighting a rearguard action against the Administrator, selling or stripping its holdings when it can, or tying up the Border Worlds' attacks with ream after ream of legal challenges. Matters are coming to a head now, with a hard core representing about 5% of the bank's value – still many billions of credits – coming under increasing pressure. After years of negotiation, the Bank has convinced the Sword Worlder government that leaving many of these assets in the Border Worlds' hands is a bad idea: they're mostly heavy industry and high-tech fabrication plants that would give the Border Worlds' treasury a significant boost if nationalized. A covert campaign has been authorized to destroy what is left as surreptitiously as possible, with the Sword Worlds offering some compensation in return.

**Gram Republic (371 to 422):** A union of Gram's nations formed in 371 in response to the unification of Sacnoth. In 393 the Republic admitted Colada, Haulteclair (Morglay), and Joyeuse as full member states. The Republic lasted until 422 when *Storhertugin* Estrid led a coup that restored the powers of the Gram monarchy.

**Gramstaatsbedrijf:** A merchant line established by the government of Gram just after the Third Frontier War. Backed by state subsidies, managed by canny *adelnir* entrepreneurs, the line soon became the largest in the Sword Worlds. To this day it dominates large-scale transport in the subsector, providing cargo shipping, passenger service, and messenger express to every world in the Sword Worlds Confederation.

Among the fiercely independent Sword Worlders, a state-backed enterprise is not necessarily at an advantage. Before the Fifth Frontier War, Gramstaatsbedrijf traditionally





succeeded in the market because of its efficiency and ease of use. Despite local loyalties, it was usually easier to ship or travel via Gramstaatsbedrif than with any lesser line. The line also made a great deal of its revenue from government contracts for mail and military shipping.

All of this changed drastically and for the worse in the course of the war. Today, Gramstaatsbedrif continues to operate in both the Confederation and the Border Worlds. Unfortunately, now that Gram no longer has any influence in the Border Worlds Confederation, half its government contracts have been lost. Meanwhile, its ships get a great deal of hostile attention from the BWA at the checkpoints. The inconvenience of trade with worlds in Border Worlds space has cut deeply into Gramstaatsbedrif's profit margin, making its postwar recovery difficult. Although the company continues to put up a bold face for the Gram public, its leaders fear that bankruptcy within a few years is inevitable.

**Gramutlandshaer:** In 965, the government of Gram established the *Gramutlandshaer* – roughly, the “Foreign Army of Gram.” This was a brigade-sized unit of lift infantry, armed to a TL10 standard and intended for use whenever the planetary government felt a need to intervene elsewhere in the Sword Worlds. Although Gram's planetary army supplied all of the brigade's officers, rank-and-file soldiers were recruited elsewhere. Anyone not already a citizen of Gram could volunteer for the *Utlandshaer*, swearing an oath of loyalty to the unit but *not* to the government of Gram or the Sword Worlds Confederation. The pay was good, and the unit asked no questions about a recruit's former life. After eight years of service the recruit could apply for Gram citizenship; such applications were never turned down except in cases of misconduct in battle. The idea worked, and the *Utlandshaer* soon proved a valuable asset in Gram's foreign policy.

The *Gramutlandshaer* still exists today, having seen action in the last three Frontier Wars, and dozens of lesser engagements. The regiment always serves as a unit, and has a very good reputation for cohesion, cunning tactics, and raw

courage. Although it is sometimes resented as a tool of Gram aggression, other Sword Worlders do not consider it a “mercenary” unit to be held in contempt (see *Mercenaries*, p. 92).

## YOU SAY POTATO . . .

Historical truth isn't always truth. Conventional history states that the Sacnoth Dominate was the first interstellar government in the Sword Worlds subsector. This is very debatable. While Gram did not exercise sovereignty over the four First Colonies between -396 and -298, and arguably only exercised a “strong moral influence” on them after -298, it certainly did run the colonies from -294 to -265, until internal problems forced it to loosen its grip. However, the political legitimacy of the Sword Worlds Confederation rests on the claims of the Second Dominate, which in turn rests on the claims of the Sacnoth Dominate. Consequently, the Confederation leadership did not like the idea that Sacnoth had established the Dominate by rebelling against Gram and usurping the rule of all the other Sword Worlds.

*Utlandshaer* composition varies over time. Most new recruits come from the other Sword Worlds. Historically about 30% have come from the Imperium or from various independent Human worlds. Very few Human recruits have ever come from the Darrian Confederation, although there are usually a few Darrian Aslan in the regiment. Even an occasional Vargr recruit turns up from time to time. The regiment has never accepted a Droyne volunteer, but then no Droyne volunteers have ever presented themselves. The official language of the *Utlandshaer* is Sagamaal, but all of its officers speak Galanglic as a “common tongue” to help new recruits over the linguistic hurdle.

**Greve:** A noble title common in the Sword Worlds, originally the Scandinavian word for an earl or count. It was reintroduced by the Sacnoth Dominate as the term for the hereditary governor of a portion of a planet who, with a governor appointed by the Dominate, shared the rule of the district. With the fall of the Dominate it gained a variety of meanings, depending on the political evolution of the Dominate's successor states.

**Greve Henrik II Universitet:** The oldest continually operating university in the Sword Worlds and one of the oldest in the entire Spinward Marches. Greve Henrik II Universitet (GH-II-U, for short) was founded on Gungnir in -181, and was named for the then-Colonial Minister in the Gram government. In the sector, only a few Darrian institutes of higher education have longer pedigrees.

One factor in the Universitet's longevity is its success in riding the endless waves of Gungnir's political chaos. In times of peace it has been able to impose its viewpoint on the upper classes by educating their children, while in war it has always positioned itself as a small, neutral party through which sides can communicate. Even in the rare periods when the planet was unified, it has maintained an impressive list of privileges.

## USING THE GRAMUTLANDSHAER

The *Utlandshaer* serves as an easy way to introduce characters to a long-term campaign centered on the Sword Worlds. Adventurers of almost any race can join the regiment – although the GM may want players to decide why their PCs want to “join the Foreign Legion.”

*Utlandshaer* troops will participate in a number of military actions, learning Sagamaal and the details of Sword Worlds society as they go. If they survive long enough with a good record, they will have the opportunity to gain citizenship on one of the subsector's most influential worlds. Full integration into Sword Worlder society will remain a challenge, but then *Traveller* adventurers are rarely at home anywhere . . .

For much of the last 1,300 years, including the present day, the Universitet has directly ruled its own small state, beholden to no one and guaranteed by multiple larger powers. The Chancellor, presently Hjalmar Vignirsson Thyregod, is an independent monarch on Gungnir, with a moral authority that outweighs his temporal power.

GH-II-U is not one of the great universities in Human space, but it is one of the most prestigious institutions in the Sword Worlds. It specializes in medicine and the humanities, and its graduates make up a disproportionate amount of the Confederation's diplomatic corps.

**Gridarvol:** The name for Margesi from 468 to 578. Gridarvol was a staff lent to Thor by Grid the Giantess on one occasion when he did not have his hammer Mjolnir with him. See also *Isefjarg*, p. 89.

**Hertug:** Feminine, *hertugin*; plural, *hertugnir*. A noble title common in the Sword Worlds, originally the Scandinavian term for a duke. It was reintroduced by the Sacnoth Dominate for the hereditary governor of an entire planet who, with a governor-general appointed by the Dominate, shared the rule of the planet. During the Fimbulwinter many *hertugnir* became hereditary authority figures with monarchical status, so the title is sometimes translated into Galanglic as “King.”

**Hofud Alliance (-102 to -97):** A short-lived successor state to the Sacnoth Dominate, consisting of Hofud, Dyrnwyn, Durendal, Sting, Biter, and Steel. It was founded in -102 after the defeat of the Sacnoth Dominate in the Battle of Excalibur. Originally the Alliance concentrated on staying out of the conflict between the Gram Confederation and the Sacnoth Confederacy, but in -97 internal tensions erupted in a three-way struggle between Dyrnwyn and Durendal, Hofud, and Sting and Biter, and the state fell apart.

**Hofud, Kingdom of (383 to 439):** (Sagamaal: *Hertugrikaren Hofud*.) A former interstellar state consisting originally of Hofud and Sting, with Biter added later. It was formed in 383 when Hofud conquered Sting. In 419 Hofud followed up by invading Biter. Resistance from the Biters caused Hofud to commit numerous atrocities on the civilian population of Biter (see *Spredning*, p. 98 and *Saltsaar*, p. 97), and in 439 the Dyrnwyn Compact responded by attacking and conquering Hofud, reducing that world to a dependency and putting an end to the kingdom.

**Holidays:** Isolated from the Imperium, and with a very different heritage, the Sword Worlders do not celebrate the same holidays as Imperials. For example, no one is the least bit interested in celebrating the Emperor's Birthday.

Founding Day, May 5th, is the most important holiday in the Sword Worlds and Border Worlds. On that day in -399 shuttle pilot Commander Flemming Hansen was the first Founder to set foot on Gram. This Imperial year, Founding Day falls on 022-1120 (May 5, 5640).

The other holiday common to all Sword Worlds is Sanktans, June 23rd. The day is a normal business day, but at night people gather around huge bonfires, sing patriotic songs, and listen to patriotic speeches – which, by tradition, eschew party politics. Where true bonfires are too expensive or otherwise a problem, holographic substitutes are used. As the high point of the evening, effigies are burned on the bonfires. The subject of the effigy differs from world to world. On Gram it is the local noble or other authority figure, regardless of how liked or disliked he is. On Sacnoth it is whatever politician is most unpopular at the time. On Biter and every *Luffar* bonfire anywhere it is Johan II, the Hofud *hertug* who authorized the Biter Atrocities. On Narsil multiple effigies are thrown on the bonfire and bets are made on which one will last the longest. At midnight fireworks are set off, after which the elders retire while the young dance until dawn. This Imperial year, Sanktans falls on 071-1120 (June 23, 5640).

Two more holidays observed throughout the Confederation stem from Aesirism. “Solstice” is observed on December 21st, even though this is not the actual winter solstice on any Sword World except by chance. March 8th, the day the Tizon



Empire formally surrendered to the Second Dominate and Aesirians regained the freedom to worship as they wanted, is celebrated as "Paeon Day." This Imperial year, Solstice falls on 252-1120 (December 21, 5640) and Paeon Day falls on 329-1120 (March 8, 5641).

**Holmgang:** A martial sport played in Sword Worlder space, resembling a cross between boxing and sumo.

A 5' x 5' square cloth is placed on a grass or sand surface, and two combatants stand on it. They then begin hand-to-hand combat; grappling is not allowed and combatants must stay above the belt, so most moves are punches or pushes. A referee enforces the rules, but at the elite level it is unusual for this third party to interfere more than a few times per match. Good players know the rules well enough to regulate themselves.

If one player forces the other to step even one foot off the cloth, a point is scored. Three points wins the bout. Both feet out of the ring is an instant loss, equivalent to a knockout in boxing, and willingly doing so is the usual way for one player to "throw in the towel." Strategy usually involves working the tricky grass or sand under the rapidly bunching cloth, and using legs to literally try and yank the rug out from under a staggered opponent. Masters of the sport state that "footwork is more important than fistwork."

Holmgang is adapted from Viking culture, though radically changed. The original *holmgang* was a form of trial by combat, and used swords instead of punches.

**Igliim:** Vilani for "Steel," this is the name of a sword belonging to the legendary Vilani hero Daaluusinnagi the Defender, and the original name given to the planet Steel.

**Intervention Force:** An Imperial naval rapid response force designed to intervene anywhere in the Border Worlds should the Border Office deem it necessary. The First Lunion Accord (1111) gave the Imperium several rights in the Border Worlds, the most extreme of which is that of naval intervention. In theory they can use this right at will, but in practice they are very circumspect about it: to date, they have never used it for the actual application of force, and training maneuvers within Border Worlds space are always conducted as joint exercises with one or more of the local planetary fleets.

However, should push come to shove, the Imperium keeps one of the battle squadrons of the 43rd Fleet – the 501st, 643rd, or 667th – on standby to intervene within 24 hours notice. This duty rotates between the three battle squadrons every four months.

Should things truly escalate, there is no treaty-imposed upper limit to the number of ships the Imperium can devote to intervention should it wish to do so. However, Imperial planners believe that if anything more than a full battle squadron is needed, another war will have broken out and it will become a matter for the Sector Admiralty to deal with.

See also the *Peacekeeping Force*.

**Isenfang:** The name for Margesi from -186 to 468, 578 to 908, and again from 983 to 1087. *Isenfang* is a sword from Viking mythology. See also *Gridarvol*, p. 88.

**Jarl:** A noble title, originally a Viking Scandinavian catchall title for powerful noblemen who weren't independent kings. It was adopted by the petty kings (*grevenir*) of Sacnoth and Gram in the second and third centuries to

indicate independent status. The term was also adopted by the rulers of Joyeuse, Tyrfin, Beater, Excalibur, and Orcrist when the United Jarldoms was founded in 298. In times of trouble, many Sword Worlder *grevenir* have upgraded themselves to *jarlenir*.

**Joyeuse, Kingdom of (482 to 505):** (Sagamaal: *Hertugrikaren Joyeuse*.) A former interstellar state consisting of Joyeuse and Colada. It was created in 482 by Martin of Gram for his twin sister Ingrid. Joyeuse was the important part of the kingdom; Colada was added to make Joyeuse an interstellar state. Although nominally independent, the kingdom supported Gram in all important matters. When Ingrid died without issue in 505, Gram annexed Joyeuse and Colada again.

**Kenningsboken:** A book of spiritual wisdom popular throughout the Sword Worlds and beyond. It is very old, dating back as far as the fourth century pre-Imperial, and its authorship is unknown. Much of the book is in the form of short verses or *kenningnir*, which are often cryptic or paradoxical in nature. Studying these mental riddles is held to be good for both mind and soul.

Much of the *Kenningsboken* deals with domestic concerns, such as farming, household management, and childrearing. As a result, most Sword Worlders regard it as a "women's book," speaking more to the feminine spiritual sense. Men will read and quote from it, but they tend to stick to only a few sections, and serious study is left to their wives and daughters.

About 860 a Zhodani noble, stationed on Gram as a diplomatic liaison, acquired a copy of the *Kenningsboken*. He took the time to study it in detail, even learning the archaic form of Sagamaal in which it is written. He later published his findings in the local media, observing that the book's complex metaphors concealed information relevant to the psionic disciplines! He concluded that the book could easily be used as a course of meditation conducive to the development of psionic powers.

This "discovery" provoked surprisingly little controversy – it seemed that many Sword Worlders already suspected as much, even if they never spoke of their suspicions in public. If the book *was* designed to serve as an aid to psionic development, it might indicate that the Sword Worlders had at least some psionic awareness long before their first contact with the Zhodani.

**King's Ride:** A popular chess-like game with roots stretching as far back as prestellar Terra. It is based on the ancient game of Tablut, but lifts a few rules from chess to make it more challenging. Played on a 9 x 9 board, the object of the white player is to move his King, which starts in the center of the board, off the board entirely, escaping capture. The black player must prevent this by placing four pieces around the King in order to capture him.

The popularity of the game has grown over the last few centuries, and is currently in full bloom. Regional tournaments abound, and planetary champions from every world with a Sword Worlder history meet every two years to play for the Grand Championship. The current Grand Master is Marteinn Edvardsson Heim of Anduril, who has won the competition three times in a row.

# HENDRIK THORFINSSON VALDEMAR

180 POINTS

Human (Sword Worlder). Age 40; 6', 170 lbs. Tanned white skin, brown hair, blue eyes.

At home on Anduril, Hendrik Thorfinsson Valdemar is a typical academic. He's the kind of teacher first-year university students hope they'll get – mild-mannered, witty, and good at making complex subjects understandable. With reading glasses perched on his nose and a book always close at hand, he seems most at home in a library or an office. Only his deeply tanned and weathered skin gives away his real history.



In fact, Valdemar has had a very full life. He ran away from home to fight in the civil wars on Joyeuse when he was still a teenager, then served in the Anduril armed forces during the Fifth Frontier War. Only after the war ended did he enter on his true vocation – archaeological research, preferably in the field. In the last decade he has been sighted as far away as Regina and the Five Sisters subsector, leading digging expeditions, turning up at scientific conferences, and venturing into the criminal world to search out rare artifacts.

Since 1115 Valdemar has been associated with Kultuhistorisk Forbund on Anduril (see p. 92), serving as full professor in the University of Nyborg while supporting the Forbund's archaeological efforts. In fact, he is a prime mover in the Forbund's true purpose – to recover technologically advanced artifacts from earlier civilizations. The Anduril government hopes to use such artifacts to kick-start new local industries, pulling the economy out of its

slump and improving the overall Sword Worlds technological base. Naturally, the government regards this effort as a gamble and is not relying on it to save the day. Still, if the Forbund actually recovers something worthwhile, the benefits could be significant.

Valdemar is specifically interested in Ancient artifacts and pre-Maghiz Darrian technology, although he also spends time on various premodern Human cultures found on worlds across the Spinward Marches. He will gladly go deep into the Darrian Confederation or the Imperium to ferret out worthwhile finds. Naturally, these activities are very much against the law, but so far he has avoided detection.

Valdemar does not operate alone; he has fellow adventurers within the Forbund, and will sometimes work with trusted outsiders. He could be encountered almost anywhere in the Spinward Marches, although he usually operates within a dozen parsecs of Anduril. He can draw on substantial financial resources if he needs to hire or bribe someone.

ST 11 [10]; DX 13 [30]; IQ 13 [30]; HT 11 [10].

Speed 6.00; Move 6.

Dodge 7.

**Advantages:** Alertness +1 [5]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Courtesy Rank 1 (Sergeant) [1]; Fit [5]; Patron (Kultuhistorisk Forbund; lends equipment, 9 or less) [15]; Status 1 [5]; Strong Will +1 [4]; Toughness (DR 1) [10].

**Disadvantages:** Intolerance (Imperials) [-5]; Overconfidence [-10]; Phobia (Insects, severe) [-20].

**Quirks:** Drinks heavily when discouraged; Hates political maneuvering; Likes "roughing it" in the field; Proud; Wears reading glasses when doing research, but doesn't really need them. [-5]

**Skills:** Administration-13 [2]; Archaeology-17 [12]; Armoury (Small arms)-13 [2]; Brawling-15 [4]; Camouflage-13 [1]; Climbing-13 [2]; Computer Operation-13 [1]; Driving (Ground car)-13 [2]; Electronics Operation (Communications)-12 [1]; Electronics Operation (Sensors)-14 [4]; Fast-Talk-13 [2]; First Aid-13 [1]; Guns (Light automatic)-16\* [2]; Guns (Pistols)-17\* [2]; Hiking-10 [1]; History-14 [6]; Leadership-13 [2]; Literature-13 [4]; Orienteering-13 [2]; Research-14 [4]; Riding (Miniphoenix)-12 [1]; Savoir-Faire (Military)-14 [2]; Scrounging-14 [2]; Stealth-12 [1]; Streetwise-13 [2]; Survival (Desert)-14 [4]; Swimming-13 [1]; Teaching-14 [4]; Writing-12 [1].

\* Includes +2 for IQ.

**Languages:** Darrian-13 [2]; Galanglic-13 [2]; Oynprith (Droyne)-10 [1/2]; Sagamaal (native)-13 [0]; Zhodani-11 [1/2].



# ARDIN ENLISSON HELMGAARD

35 POINTS

Human (Sword Worlder). Age 43; 6' 2", 175 lbs. Pale white skin, light blond hair going silver, hazel eyes, bushy beard and moustache.

A simple yeoman farmer, Ardin Enlissson Helmgaard is a stereotypical Sword Worlder, as Sword Worlders see themselves. While he may seem inconsequential on his own, there are more than a billion others like him throughout the Sword Worlds. Together they are the backbone of Sword Worlder civilization.

Helmgaard is a tall, rangy man with sandy hair and bright blue eyes. His laconic, almost taciturn nature, coupled with his self-confidence, gives Imperials the mistaken impression that he is arrogant. Fortunately for him, he meets few Imperials.

Ardin Enlissson Helmgaard grew up in the small thorp of Ravenscrag. Between exploring the still-unsettled local countryside, school, and working on his father's farm, he had an idyllic childhood. Like all able-bodied young men he joined the militia after school, seeing the wider world for the first time. After demobilization Helmgaard returned home, married his childhood sweetheart, and settled down to help his father with the farm.

While working on the farm, Ardin took extensive courses and seminars over the datanet. Such distance learning is common on the Sword Worlds: even residents of isolated thorps can learn necessary skills. Isolated does not mean backwards! While he has no formal qualifications beyond school, Helmgaard is as well educated as a university-trained agronomist. Indeed, he *is* university trained: Sword Worlders care less for degrees and certificates than Imperials, relying on deeds and reputations.

He took over the farm from his father 10 years ago. The elder Helmgaard still helps out, especially during harvest, but he leaves day-to-day operations and decisions to his son.

Ardin and his wife Liana have three children: two girls, aged 8 and 6, and a son aged 3. His family is Helmgaard's pride and joy; he is happiest playing with his children or listening to Liana tell them a bedtime story. Like most Sword Worlds men he is fiercely protective – Liana may tend the hearthfire, but Ardin guards it.

He spends most of his time working on his farm; a farmer's work is never finished, and like most Sword Worlders Helmgaard is a conscientious worker.

Most local men serve in the Ravenscrag Rangers, the district's militia, and Helmgaard is no exception. While they may not have the hard edge of a battle-toughened unit, they train in deadly earnest; if they are ever needed, they will be fighting for their hearthfires. What the

Ravenscrag Rangers lack in technology they make up for in local knowledge and sheer bloody-minded determination.

Anyone traveling in the backcountry will meet Ardin Enlissson Helmgaard, or someone very like him. Under ordinary circumstances he will be working on his farm, or doing business in town where he lives. If the militia has been called out, then he will be armed and ready to fight.

**ST** 11 [10]; **DX** 10 [0]; **IQ** 10 [0]; **HT** 11 [10].

Speed 5.25; Move 5.

Dodge 5.

**Advantages:** Common Sense [10]; Courtesy Rank 0 (*Menig*) [0]; Fit [5]; Toughness DR 1 [10].

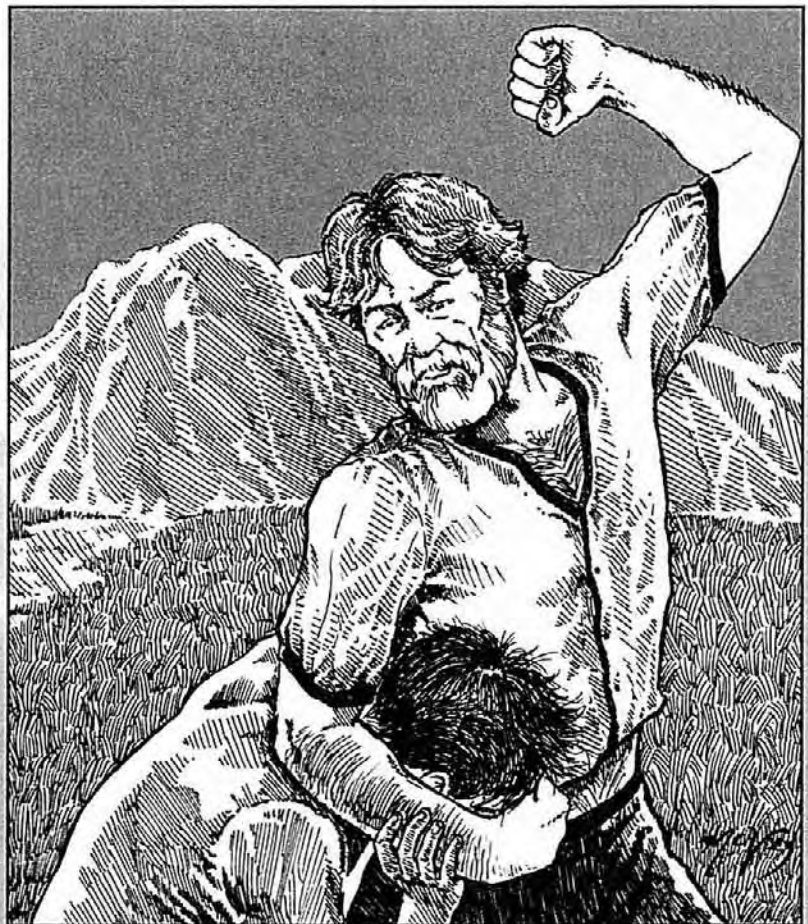
**Disadvantages:** Charitable [-15]; Duty (Militia training or activation, 6 or less) [-2]; Honesty [-10].

**Quirks:** Never refuses a beer when the sun's down; Spits for good luck if someone mentions drought or crop failure; Stops walking while thinking. [-3]

**Skills:** Agronomy-12 [6]; Camouflage-10 [1]; Guns (Light automatic)-12\* [2]; Distilling-9 [1]; Driving (Tractor)-11 [4]; Mechanic (Gasoline Engine)-10 [2]; Meteorology (Weather Sense)-10 [2]; Orienteering-9 [1]; Savoir-Faire (Military)-10 [1].

\* Includes +1 for IQ.

**Languages:** Sagamaal-10 (native) [0].



**Kjede og Galge:** (Galanglic: "chains and gallows.") Many Sword Worlds restrict capital punishment and instead substitute menial servitude, with the rights of the prisoner suspended for the duration of the sentence. Even the right to life is forfeited, and the master assigned to the prisoner may order his charge into a situation where he risks death. Many under *kjede og galge* are given to the military for drudge-work, and many are glad to get an assignment where they might die. Succeeding at the right task is one of the few things that can restore a prisoner's honor, which is generally considered lost even after the sentence has ended.

**Kulturhistoriskt Forbund:** (Galanglic, "Foundation for [the Preservation of] Cultural History.") This society is a relatively new scientific organization, founded in 1099 by the University of Nyborg on Anduril with the quiet support of the planetary government. Kulturhistoriskt Forbund is a simple scientific organization. It sponsors historical research, field studies in anthropology and archaeology, and educational programs. Government funding gives it unusual resources for an organization of its size and age, and enables it to award generous grants each year. The Forbund continues to operate under government protection, despite increasing social unrest on Anduril.

**Luffar:** (Plural: *Luffarnir*.) A member of a poorly regarded ethnic group found in segregated neighborhoods on many Sword Worlds. Originally forcibly removed from Biter during *Spredning* (the first of the Biter Atrocities) to a life of servitude in Hofud's empire, these enslaved Biters were not returned to their homeworld when Hofud was later defeated. They eventually spread across Sword Worlder space, making up a permanent underclass on most worlds they reached. Poor and uneducated, they have often turned to crime as a last resort, further alienating them from the other inhabitants of the Sword Worlds.

Over time they came to have pride in their outcast status, reliving the glory days of their resistance to the Hofud and their survival despite the fate the universe handed them. Hofuds came to understand that they weren't safe in the clan-nish neighborhoods where the *Luffarnir* lived.

Since the transfer of Biter to the Imperium at the end of the Fifth Frontier War, the *Luffarnir* are being encouraged to return to their homeworld. While tens of thousands are making their way there, in excess of 10 million still live throughout the Border Worlds and the Sword Worlds. It's been 700 years since the *Spredning*; many of them can't imagine living anywhere except the planet they're on.

**Union Accords:** The treaty between the original Border Worlds and the Imperium, and its follow-ups, which among other results led to the formation of the Border Worlds, the annexation of the Metal Worlds to the Imperium, and the creation of the Imperial Border Office, the Peace-keeping Force, and the Intervention Force.

**Maashdikhe:** A legendary Vilani hero, the protagonist of a set of folktales. When his village is threatened by a demon, he procures a magic sword, Danuuz, and defeats the demon.

**Maghiz Project:** A classified military research project, funded by the Sword Worlds Confederation for the purpose of studying the effects of the *Maghiz* on Sword Worlder

systems, particularly the Narsil and Anduril systems (see p. T:H36). Ever since the Sword Worlders became aware of the nature of the *Maghiz* and the Star Trigger, Confederation military scientists have maintained a presence in those two systems. Ice cores from the outer moons, radioactive studies of dead plants and animals from the period, *anything* that could offer some insight into the nature of the *Maghiz* has been studied. Although the project is supposedly classified, it has been in place so long that its existence is an open secret. So far there appear to have been no results, and neither Darrian nor Imperial scientists are worried that there ever will be.

**Margesi (Spinward Marches 1020):** An Imperial world in the Vilis subsector, originally settled by Sword Worlders from Gram in -186, who named it Isenfang. Margesi became an Imperial client state in 849, but was annexed by the Sword Worlds Confederation in 983. The Imperium liberated the planet during the Fourth Frontier War and Margesi was granted full Imperial membership in 1087.

**Marsile and Bramimonde:** Twin small gas giants in the Durendal system, orbiting one another every 18 days. They are in a rogue orbit, which is highly elliptical and takes the two planets from 11 AU at their most distant to less than four at their closest approach. In the light of the system's reddish sun, the planets shine like two coals, especially at closest approach, and they are nicknamed "the Saracen's Eyes." Some of Durendal's farmers consider it bad luck to do anything outdoors when the Eyes are watching them.

**Mercenaries:** Although the Sword Worlds are full of men, and a few women, with military experience, there is no tradition of mercenary warfare in the Sword Worlds. Local law recognizes the rights of mercenaries, and there is an equivalent of the Imperial rule regarding repatriation bonds. Still, actual mercenary units are rare and do not take on many of the roles they do within Imperial space.

The primary reason for this is social. Sword Worlders admire a man who will fight for his lord, his country, his ideals, or in his own defense. A man who will only fight for *pay* is regarded as morally bankrupt, hardly a man at all. Such a man may well change allegiances if someone offers him more money, so how can he be trusted? As a result, many Sword Worlders serve in standing armed forces or in local militias, but very few are willing to serve as mercenaries.

As always in the Sword Worlds, there are exceptions. For example, there is always a market for well-trained cadre. A number of small "consulting" units make their living by helping to organize and train local militia forces throughout the Sword Worlds. Such units rarely see combat, although they are usually well prepared for it if an emergency suddenly arises.

Meanwhile, factions in open warfare are almost always willing to call on "allies" who have no real reason for involvement in the conflict. This trend often causes Sword Worlder states to commit standing military units to battle in exchange for financial or political concessions. The Coladan Champion's Guard (see p. 33) is the most obvious example of this, but other states have often "loaned out" military power on similar terms. Paradoxically, these "loans" do not necessarily arouse Sword Worlder contempt. Even when



money is changing hands at the government-to-government level, the individual soldiers are regarded as fighting for acceptable reasons and are not considered mercenaries.

Individual Sword Worlders may make their own decisions about which cause is worth supporting on the battlefield. For centuries, there has been a tradition of young men running away from home to join the army of an embattled state somewhere else in the subsector. So long as they don't find themselves serving an enemy of their own lord or country, this is regarded with amused tolerance. These adventurous soldiers are not considered mercenaries either.

Finally, most Sword Worlder governments are at least somewhat unstable; every state may one day find itself without enough loyal troops to hold down a rebellious populace. Governments in these situations sometimes hire outside military forces to suppress unrest. A few large mercenary units, organized for counterinsurgency or military-police work, turn a profit in Sword Worlder space. Such units often have a high proportion of non-Sword Worlder personnel, and may even be based outside the Sword Worlds entirely. They are regarded as mercenaries by Sword Worlders, and are almost universally despised.

### THE TYPICAL MINIPHANT

*"Forget bringing your truck. We have something better. It moves through the roughest country, it lives off the land, it follows directions, it can think for itself.*

*"Besides, in thousands of years no one has ever managed to breed trucks."*

*— Frans Sveinson, miniphant herder*

ST: 100	Speed/Dodge: 7/5	Size: 7
DX: 12	PD/DR: 1/2	Weight: 3,500 lbs.
IQ: 7	Damage: 2d cr	
HT: 15/30	Reach: 1	

The above statistics are for the typical miniphant. Note that although miniphants have an IQ of 7, they are not sentient — they have the Presentient disadvantage (p. CI103).

**Metal Worlds:** A group of four worlds in the Sword Worlds subsector named for metals: Steel, Iron, Bronze, and Mithril. They had been set aside by the Sword Worlds Confederation "for future development," but became part of the Border Worlds Confederation in 1111 and were sold to the Imperium in 1119. Now the Imperium is deliberately colonizing them with an eye toward keeping them out of Sword Worlder hands forever; the colonization of Steel was begun by claim-jumpers in 1115, and Mithril saw its first inhabitants in early 1120.

Three Imperial worlds in the Lunion subsector, Olympia, Smoug, and Wardn, originally belonged to the group. They were then called Gold, Electrum, and Silver, respectively, but have not been considered Metal Worlds for centuries.

**Militia:** In the Sword Worlds, with the exception of the most densely populated worlds, every male is expected to report for militia training at the age of 21 standard years. Those who are physically incapable of serving are turned away, but the exemption is very limited; only a severe disability qualifies.

Militia trainees spend three months learning the basics of being a modern infantryman, then two weeks each year thereafter for at least another decade. Militia laws vary from world to world, but militia service usually ends at age 35 to 45. Older individuals are only called up in extreme emergencies.

The intent of the militia system is to expose all males to military life, so that complete mobilization can be achieved if necessary during time of war. To date, this has only happened at times when a planet is being invaded.

Militias are usually run by older military men who have retired from active service for one reason or another. As well as offering up their skills, they act as scouts for military talent and try to persuade promising young men to sign up for more formal military duty.

**Miniphants (*Microelephas* var.):** A genus derived from the Terran Indian elephant (*Elephas indicus*), genetically engineered for smaller size, about 6'10" at the shoulder, and greater intelligence. During the Rule of Man the original species, *Microelephas pristinus*, was carried to many worlds in the sectors around Terra to serve as an intelligent and flexible draft animal. A number of varieties developed over the centuries; by historical accident, one of them, the Wuan miniphant (*Microelephas wuensis*), became the most common mount and draft animal in the Sword Worlds subsector.

The *Gram* left the Old Earth Union in a great hurry, and it was by no means a colony ship. When the decision was made to head into the great beyond, what equipment and supplies as seemed useful were bought, but time constraints affected many decisions. The expedition's planners knew that draft animals would be helpful in the early days of colonization, but horses were not available for sale anywhere the *Gram* traveled. On Wu, the only animals available were miniphants. Making the best of it, the *Gram's* crew bought a standard colony package — pregnant females in cold storage and fertilized ova.

Although the Sword Worlds acquired other draft and riding animals after they reopened contact with the civilized galaxy, miniphants have never quite faded out of use. On thinly populated worlds they are common draft animals, about as common as horses. They are still favored by those who spend much time in the wilderness — park rangers, explorers, safari enthusiasts, and the like. While superseded by ATVs in many cases, they possess certain advantages (and exotic associations) that keep them common in many places.

**Neubayern (Reft 1822):** A planet in the Old Islands subsector of the Reft sector. Neubayern shares a certain cultural affinity with the Sword Worlds, as it was colonized by German-derived Europeans and grew its own society in isolation from the Imperium.

Unfortunately, that isolation was so complete that the Sword Worlds Confederation has always shown more interest towards Neubayern than existed in the opposite direction. After contact, a Confederation diplomatic station was set up on Neubayern in the hopes of gaining an alliance, but nothing ever came of it despite increasingly hectoring overtures leading up to the Fifth Frontier War. The Neubayerns have rejected all these attempts.

The other connection between Neubayern and the Sword Worlds stems from the Constitutional Crisis of 979. For several years after its resolution, high-ranking losers in that conflict – embittered, but rich – lived in the Imperium and hoped to benefit from a Sword Worlder loss in the Third Frontier War. When that prospect failed to materialize, quite a few of the *émigrés* left Imperial space entirely, and settled on the newly recontacted Neubayern. In the past 100 years, Neubayern has received fresh waves of displaced Sword Worlder nobility whenever someone loses a war, the latest being a large one after the creation of the Border Worlds. In total, there are over 10,000 Sword Worlders living on Neubayern, frittering away their time and money in each others' company and making no effort to integrate themselves into the new world that surrounds them.

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*I tell you this: if a herd of  
'phants finds a herd of  
horses in their field, the  
horses **need** to be faster.*  
– Thomas Klint,  
miniphant breeder

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**New Frontier Trading Partners:** A limited corporation based on Excalibur, engaged in trade among the independent systems in the Fessor, Reidan, and Urnian subsectors in the Foreven sector. The company employs some 180 freighters in the 1,000- to 5,000-ton range plus another 20 smaller ships. To protect its trade routes, the company also employs a small fleet of paramilitary starships, chiefly 10 *Broadsword*-class mercenary cruisers.

**Odeniren:** (Galanglic: "The Sword Points.") An extremist terrorist group with fanatical faith in the destiny of the Sword Worlds. They take the fact that the *Gram* developed engine trouble in the middle of a large cluster of terrestrial worlds as proof that a higher power was guiding the Founders and believe that the same power is still guiding them toward a higher destiny.

The recent setbacks, and the many historical setbacks, are blamed on failure of the general population to follow the Sword Worlder way of life to the letter. Odeniren has been known to attack targets on the Sword Worlds as well as in

Darrian or Imperial space; the group is outlawed in both the Border Worlds and Sword Worlds Confederations.

**Odin Borsson Alfader (-161 to -80):** One of the most colorful characters in Sword Worlder history. He was originally named Thomas Ulrikssen Klint, and was one of Gram's richest men. Upon the death of his father in -127 he legally changed his name and financed the settlement of Lyusing (Spinward Marches 1519), where he changed its name to Asgard and set up an aristocracy patterned on the old Nordic gods. He himself took on the role of Odin, the all-powerful king of the gods – translated to Galanglic, his assumed name is "Odin Allfather." At the outbreak of the War of the First Rebellion he packed his private yacht with supplies and flew to Asgard, where he ended his days.

**Ormen hin Lange:** Danish for "The Long Worm," *Ormen hin Lange* is a 500,000-ton battleship, flagship of the Gram Navy. It is named after the longship of Olaf Trygvesson, a Scandinavian king of the Viking era. The name is traditionally given to the first ship of the Gram Navy's most powerful class produced. The present ship is the 14th to hold the name, and was commissioned in 1094.

Since 628 the Gram Navy has actually had *two* ships named *Ormen hin Lange*. The second one is the eighth ship commissioned with the name. It was flown by the famous captain Hallur Reynirsson, victor in a battle against three-to-one odds in the Second Frontier War – one of the Sword Worlds' few victories in that ill-fated conflict. In honor of his victory, the eighth *Ormen hin Lange* was placed in orbit opposite Old Gram Station and has been preserved as a museum ship ever since. Despite not having been used for almost 500 years, the ship is still technically in active service; it is always commanded by the Grand Admiral and is the only case where a Sword Worlder admiral commands a ship directly. The assignment is entirely symbolic, and the Admiral usually stays in the Admiralty office in Ny Kalmar.

Sister ships of the Long Worm are traditionally named after historic ships associated with Scandinavian kings, such as *Dannebrog*, *Trefoldigheden*, and *Vasa*.

**Peacekeeping Force:** An Imperial military rapid-response force designed to intervene anywhere in the Border Worlds should the Border Office deem it necessary. The First Lunion Accord (1111) led to the creation of several new Imperial organizations devoted to enforcing the terms of the treaty. The Peacekeeping Force was one of these, and consists of an unknown number of Imperial Marines and their support units. It has the right to intervene, at the discretion of the Border Office, on any planet in the Border Worlds. In original drafts of the treaty, this right was to extend to all Sword Worlds, but the Confederation acquiesced to the creation of the Border Worlds in return for circumscribing the Peacekeeping Force's area of operations.

The Peacekeeping Force is entirely organized for ground operations. Should a situation escalate to the point that substantial space assets are required, the Intervention Force comes into play (see p. 89).

**Piracy:** When the Vargr portion of the Outworld Coalition collapsed in 1109, some Vargr units remained in the Spinward Marches, either in Imperial territory or continuing to fight alongside the Sword Worlds. Once the war was



entirely over, the Imperial Navy managed to push out the renegades, mostly into the Vargr Extents. However, a few escaped to spinward, where they joined up with their brethren in Sword Worlder space. Many of the combined units took a look at the decimated Sword Worlder planetary fleets and decided that they had come across a perfect location for some hunting.

Vargr pirate bands still operate on the fringes of Sword Worlder space. Over the last decade, combat against the recovering Sword Worlder navies and attrition have cut their numbers. However, they remain a problem in less-populated systems throughout the subsector.

**Princes of the Metal Worlds:** Titles borne by those in line for the throne of Sting. The heir is "Prince of Steel," the second in line is the "Prince of Electrum," the third is "Prince of Mithril," and so on for Iron, Gold, Silver, and Bronze.

**Psionics:** The Sword Worlds are culturally and socially independent of the Imperium, despite recent reverses. They did not take part in the Psionics Suppressions and have never forbidden the practice of psionics. On the other hand, psionics have never been an integral part of Sword Worlder culture.

Sword Worlder moral values do not allow for easy acceptance of psionics. Strange abilities that can work in secret, override personal courage, and rob a man of privacy or free will are regarded with horror by all right-thinking Sword Worlders. As a result, people with psionic talents must exercise great discretion within Sword Worlder society. They may not find themselves pursued by the law as in the Imperium, but they will meet with considerable social disapproval and ostracism.

This public prejudice against psionic talents has been a major factor limiting Zhodani influence over Sword Worlds society. Although the Sword Worlds have often formed alliances of convenience with the Zhodani, there has never been easy trust between the two societies.

The Sword Worlder view of psionics has one unusual feature. Sword Worlds *men* are very wary of psionic talents, and a male who possesses them will be very reluctant to admit to it. In general, psionics are regarded as a tool that no "real man" would lower himself to use.

On the other hand, *women* with the "second sight" are legendary in Sword Worlder history, especially in times of crisis or hardship. Many of the tales about such "wise women" may refer to real manifestations of the telepathic or clairvoyant aspects of psionics. To this day, most Sword Worlders regard women as more "spiritual" than men, in tune with whatever supernatural forces exist in the universe. It is therefore not considered quite so unnatural for a woman to study psionics. Of course, the public attitude about such practices still requires women to be discreet about the use of psionic disciplines.

Before the Fifth Frontier War, a psionics institute operated openly on Sacnoth. Despite public distaste for the institute, it did a great deal of useful scientific work. It may have come closer than any organization outside the Zhodani Consulate to building a sound empirical foundation for the study of psionic phenomena. Rumor has it that the institute worked with the Sacnoth government to train covert operatives.

The fate of the Sacnoth Institute is unknown. Its facilities were almost completely destroyed in 1109 by an explosion believed to be the result of an Imperial covert operation, and none of its publicly known staff have been seen since. In any case, the new Border Worlds Confederation has followed the Imperial lead in legally suppressing psionics; if any of the institute's members are still at large, they are doubtless running for their lives.

**Red Worm:** The symbol of Gram, derived from the crest of the 8th Scandinavian Army Corps. The *lindorm* is a mythical monster that lies on a bed of gold and can only be killed by a bull raised on a special diet of milk and nuts. However, one story tells of how Regnar Lodbrog ("Rainar Hairybreeches") killed one while wearing a protective suit that gave him his name.

See *Sons of Regnar*, p. 98, and *Black Bull*, p. 77.

**Regiment:** A farming region on Tarsus/District 268. The area was settled in 625 by the members of the Tizonian 3rd Lift Regiment and their families. The 3rd Lift had been part of the force occupying Vilis during the Second Frontier War (see p. 17). When the Imperium moved to regain control of that world, the regiment fought a delaying action so ferocious that the Imperium considered it criminal. When the Imperium subsequently invaded a number of Sword Worlds and Tizon was next in line, the regiment elected to flee with their families. They went to the Tarsus system where they pretended to be a deactivated mercenary regiment from far away and obtained permission to settle an empty part of Tarsus. The Regimentals (as they were called) kept their secret for over a generation, by which time the Imperium had lost interest in pursuing the matter.

**Reikistjarnahalle:** "The Hall of Planets" is the reception hall of the former palace of the Emperors of Tizon. Now open to the public, the hall is famous for its beautiful three-dimensional renditions of the planets under the control of the Tizon Empire when it was commissioned. Up to eight feet in diameter (all the models are to the same scale), the six globes are of near-photographic quality, which is all the more exceptional considering that they were made by hand from gemstones and alloys of cunningly mixed precious metals. Each is suspended in the hall on an antigravity platform, and those seeking an audience with the Tizonian Emperor had to walk past all of them before kneeling at the throne.

The models were commissioned by Erik IV of Tizon in 581 and executed by Tomas Groenvald. They took nearly four years to complete. Groenvald is considered one of the greatest artists in Sword Worlder history, and the Reikistjarnahalle is his crowning achievement. Popular legend has it that Erik prevented him from doing any more work after the Hall, but this is an exaggeration: Groenvald died of natural causes a few months after his great project was completed.

**Revised Gregorian Calendar:** The calendar used by the Solomani Confederation and a large number of worlds settled from the Old Earth Union after -536 (3985 A.D.), including the Sword Worlds. It is identical to the original Gregorian calendar that it replaced, except that -522 (4000 A.D.) is a leap year. According to this calendar, 001-1120 is equivalent to April 14, 5640 A.D.

## SPEAKING SAGAMAAL

In the 1000+ years since the founding of the Sword Worlds, Sagamaal has simplified considerably from the highly inflected language first spoken on Gram. The following is a sample list of words and modifiers.

### Modifiers

en- : "A," used as a prefix for the word to which it relates. *Enman* = "a man."

-en: "The," used as a suffix for the word to which it relates. *Manen* = "the man."

-i: Indicated that a noun is being used as an adjective. *Blodi* = "bloody."

kin-: A general negator, used in situations where un-, dis-, anti- or im- would be used in Galanglic. Also used to mean "not," or "no," though it is a separate word instead of a prefix in this case. *Kin Roekning* = "No Smoking."

-nir: Makes a noun plural. *Mannir* = "Men."

-s: Indicates the possessive. *Holgers* = "Holger's."

**Robert the Bruce:** A 20,000-ton *Rob Roy*-class cruiser, which accompanied the *Gram* on its epic journey through the Aslan Hierate. In -388 it was sent back to Terra in an attempt to establish contact with the families that the Founders had been forced to leave behind. It disappeared on the return journey, and has since become the subject of the Sword Worlder version of the legend of the Wandering Free Trader. In this version the ship is trying to return to Gram, but like the Free Trader is doomed to wander the stars forever. It is said that the *Bruce* will appear in a star system shortly before some horrible disaster is due.

**Sacnoth Confederacy (-102 to -99):** A short-lived successor state to the Sacnoth Dominate, consisting of Sacnoth, Tizon, Narsil, Anduril, Orcrist, Excalibur, Tyrfin, Caladbolg, and Beater. It was founded in -102 after the defeat of the Sacnoth Dominate in the Battle of Excalibur. Continued warfare with the Gram Confederation exhausted the Confederacy and it broke up in -99 when Tizon, Narsil, Anduril, and Excalibur jointly refused to further contribute to the war effort.

**Sacnoth Dominate (-187 to -102):** A former interstellar state consisting of all the Sword Worlds. See p. 9.

**Sacnoth Dominion (-2 to 104):** A former interstellar state centered on Sacnoth, which claimed to be the lawful successor to the Sacnoth Dominate. However, its hegemony during this period was restricted to three other systems: Beater, Excalibur and Orcrist. The Dominion was dissolved in 104 when Sacnoth was balkanized.

**Sacnoth, Federated States of:** See *Federated States of Sacnoth*, p. 84.

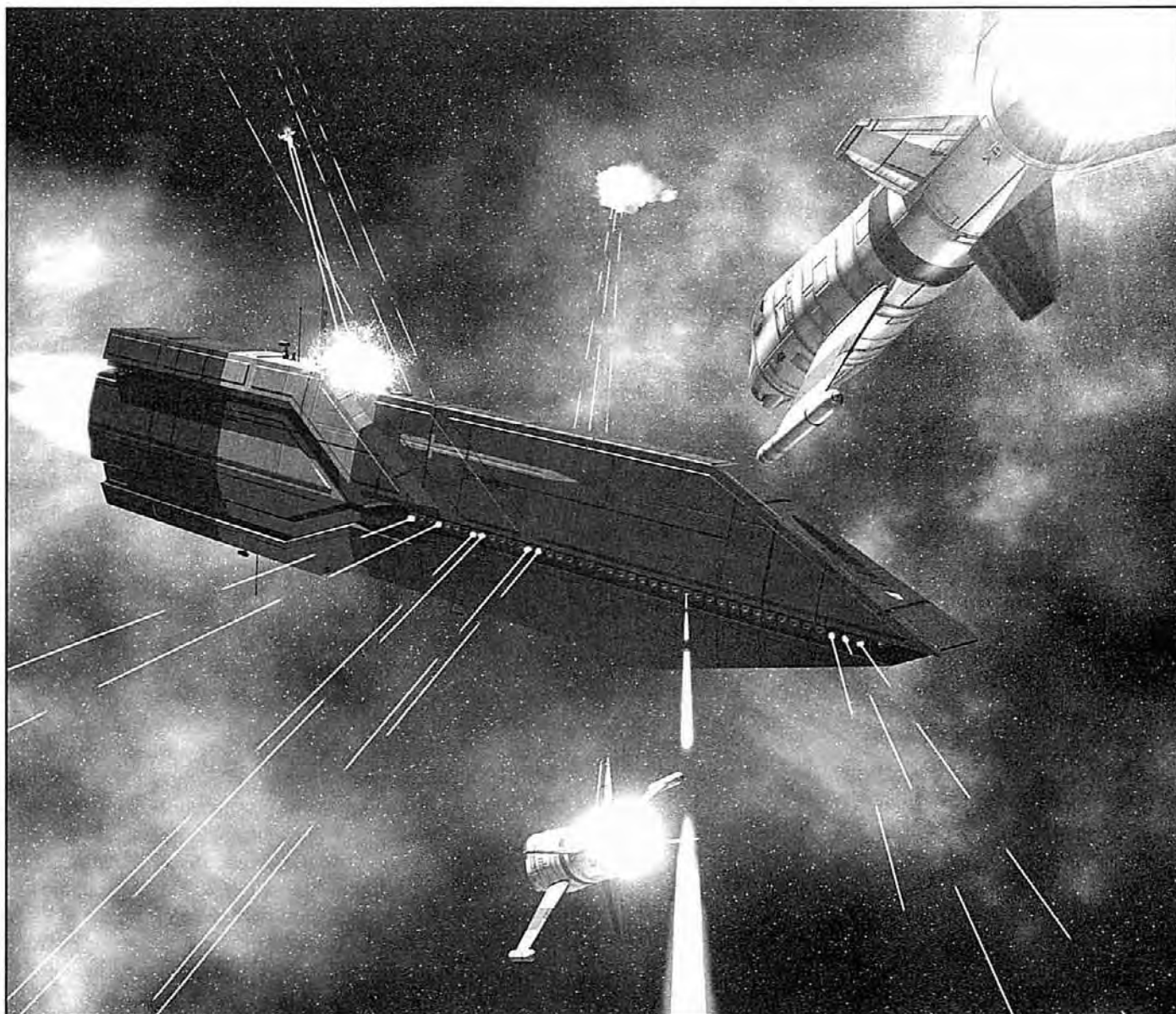
**Sagamaal:** There are two meanings for this word. The first is the original common language of the Sword Worlds dating to the first colony on Gram, and the second is the language spoken by Sword Worlders in the modern day. The two are related to one another, but considerable differences have developed between the two in the 1,500 years between them.

The original language, usually called "Old Sagamaal," was a reconstructed language intended to be much like Viking-age Icelandic – the language of the sagas, hence the name. In the 10th century pre-Imperial, the Cultural Roots Revival affected many Terran-derived cultures. Sagamaal was reconstructed at this time, developing many new words for post-Viking technologies and concepts, and was taught to most Scandinavians. Among the mixed nationalities of the original Sword World colonists, Sagamaal was the single language

## A SAGAMAAL-GALANGLIC DICTIONARY

<i>Alt:</i> Old	<i>Fjarr:</i> Far	<i>Land:</i> Land.	<i>Ost:</i> East	<i>Svaerdverdeniren:</i>
<i>Alv:</i> River	<i>Fjernt:</i> Far away	<i>Lille:</i> Little	<i>Planet:</i> Planet	The Sword
<i>Atte:</i> Eight	<i>Forbund:</i> Association	<i>Ljus:</i> Light	<i>Plante:</i> Plant	Worlds
<i>Avbryt:</i> Break up		<i>Luft:</i> Air	<i>Reikistjarna:</i> Planet	<i>Syd:</i> South
<i>Bedrif:</i> Enterprise, accomplishment	<i>Fraende:</i> Kinsman	<i>Mana:</i> Many	<i>Roed:</i> Red	<i>Thing:</i> Legislative body
<i>Berg:</i> Mountain	<i>Furetag:</i> Company, enterprise	<i>Mark:</i> Field	<i>Rumhamn:</i> Starport	<i>Tiu:</i> Ten
<i>Bistand:</i> Help	<i>Fyra:</i> Four	<i>Mat:</i> Food	<i>Seks:</i> Six	<i>Traed:</i> Tree
<i>Bistar:</i> To help	<i>Gaard:</i> Farm	<i>Metal:</i> Metal	<i>Sju:</i> Seven	<i>Trae:</i> Wood (material)
<i>Blae:</i> Blue	<i>Groen:</i> Green	<i>Naera:</i> Near	<i>Skov:</i> Forest, Wood	<i>Tre:</i> Three
<i>Bok:</i> Book	<i>Haen:</i> Hand	<i>Namn:</i> Name	<i>Sol:</i> Sun	<i>Tve:</i> Two
<i>Borg:</i> City	<i>Herre:</i> Gentleman, Master	<i>Nat:</i> Night	<i>Spring:</i> Jump	<i>Upp:</i> Up
<i>By:</i> City		<i>Ned:</i> Down	<i>Staat:</i> State	<i>Vaen:</i> Friend
<i>Dag:</i> Day	<i>Hr. (pronounced "herr"):</i> Mr.	<i>Ni:</i> Yes	<i>Stjarn:</i> Star	<i>Vaext:</i> Plant
<i>Djur:</i> Animal		<i>Niu:</i> Nine	<i>Stor:</i> Big	<i>Vatten:</i> Water
<i>En:</i> One	<i>Hus:</i> House	<i>Norr:</i> North	<i>Svart:</i> Black	<i>Vest:</i> West
<i>Faa:</i> Few	<i>Huvud:</i> Head	<i>Nul:</i> Zero	<i>Svaerdbo:</i> Sword Worlder	<i>Vit:</i> White
<i>Farkost:</i> Ship	<i>Kort:</i> Short	<i>Ny:</i> New		
<i>Fem:</i> Five	<i>Kvaell:</i> Night	<i>Oega:</i> Eye		
		<i>Oel:</i> Beer		





spoken by the most people – and although it was truly native to none of them, it quickly became a *lingua franca*.

Sagamaal as spoken in the year 1120 has changed almost beyond recognition. More than 60% of the vocabulary is different, with words borrowed from the other native languages of the colonists – particularly Swedish, Danish, German, and Anglic – and there are even a few words for basic concepts borrowed from Vilani. The colonists from Agidda had the hardest time learning a nontonal, terrestrial language, and so the other colonists learned a few simple Vilani words to help them out. Over time, some of these words infiltrated Sagamaal, and within a few centuries they had become the “proper” words to use. For example, the Sagamaal words for “yes” and “no” (*ni* and *kin*, respectively) are derived from Vilani.

For similar reasons, the grammar of modern Sagamaal is much simpler than that of the original language.

**Saltsaar:** (Galanglic, “Salt Sowing.”) The second Biter Atrocity. Shortly after the first atrocity, the *Spredning*, extremists on Biter assassinated Jarl Birger, the eldest son of Johan II of Hofud. John then ordered the use of biological agents to destroy the great forests where the

resistance fighters of Biter hid. Over the next 18 months tons of chemical and biological products were used on Biter, disrupting the ecology and causing many deaths due from side effects. After this second atrocity, the Dyrnwyn Compact rose up and conquered Hofud.

**Sandstrod, Sjoe Karolinsdottir:** Prior to the end of the Fifth Frontier War, Sjoe was the Sword Worlds’ most famous singer, and a popular actress. As an unknown teenager on Durendal, she objected strongly to the creation of the Border Worlds, and nurtured her feelings as she entered show business and became a star. She skirted closer and closer to openly displaying her opinion as time went on, and upon the 1118 release of her song “Invaendning” – “Objection,” and also perilously close to the Sagamaal word for “Invader” – she was indicted for sedition by the BWA.

She had expected this reaction, though, and had dropped out of sight a week beforehand, entering the Border Worlds Resistance. She still records protest songs, the possession or distribution of which is now illegal, but which pass from hand to hand among the citizens.

## SJOE KAROLINSDOTTIR

### SANDSTROD

120 POINTS

Human (Sword Worlder). Age 24; 5' 8", 110 lbs. Pale white skin, red hair, and blue eyes.

Sjoe Karolinsdottir Sandstroed is an important figure in the native resistance to the Border Worlds government and the Imperium. As well as being a propagandist of considerable skill, thanks to her musical and acting abilities, she has turned into a decent fighter, competent with laser weapons and hand-to-hand fighting. She also knows how to handle a rifle, after many long nights protecting her family's herds in her youth.

Her major disadvantage is that her appearance and voice are well known. Her acting skills come in handy here, as she can change her appearance more readily than most people, but she is still recognized fairly often. Fortunately, she is very popular with the Sword Worldeers, and this buys her time to move on, one step ahead of the authorities.

Sjoe is motivated by a bottomless desire to see the Sword Worlds Confederation reunited and independent of the Imperium. The Confederation government isn't entirely happy about her successes so far, as they worry about the possibility of another war with the Imperium if she is *too* fortunate. However, she represents an easily deniable asset in the struggle against the Border Worlds, and they make no effort to track her down when she goes to ground in the Confederation.

ST 9 [-10]; DX 12 [20]; IQ 14 [45]; HT 10 [0].

Speed 5.50; Move 5.

Dodge 5.

**Advantages:** Ally Group (Border Worlds Resistance cell; 9 or less) [10]; Attractive [5]; Musical Ability +2 [2]; Patron (Border Worlds Resistance; powerful, 12 or less) [30]; Voice [10].

**Disadvantages:** Enemy (Border Worlds Authority; 6 or less) [-20]; Impulsiveness [-10].

**Quirks:** Always relates things to one of her movies; Arrogant; Hums new songs to herself constantly; Thinks most other Durendals are hicks. [-4]

**Skills:** Area Knowledge (Border Worlds)-13 [2]; Area Knowledge (Sword Worlds)-12 [1]; Beam Weapons-16\* [4]; Black Powder Weapons-17\* [8]; Boxing-12 [2]; Computer Operation-15 [1]; Disguise-13 [1]; Holdout-14 [2]; Musical Instrument (Acoustic Guitar)-17\*\* [4]; Performance-16† [8]; Singing-17‡ [8].

\* Includes +2 for IQ.

\*\* Includes +2 for Musical Ability.

† Includes +2 for Voice.

‡ Includes +2 for Musical Ability and +2 for Voice.

**Languages:** Galanglic-13 [1]; Sagamaal-14 (native) [0].

**Second Dominate (604 to 698):** A former interstellar state created in 604, when the Navy junta that had controlled the Sword Worlds since 593 turned over power to a civilian government with its capital on Sacnoth (see p. 55).

Although the Second Dominate was based on confederalist ideals, it was also based on the political theory that sovereignty was vested in the Dominate and autonomy granted to the member worlds only to whatever degree ensured that other concerns, such as defense and common welfare, did not suffer from it. Over the years the Dominate government attempted, little by little, to take back important parts of that

autonomy. This enraged member worlds to such a degree that Gram was able to unite many of them against the Dominate, leading them in the War of the Second Rebellion. This conflict overthrew the Dominate in 698 and replaced it with the Gram Coalition.

**Sigli Balkar:** A corporation that, until recently, has been concerned with building non-jump-capable ships – pinnaces, assault shuttles, etc. – for the Coladan military. It has just been selected to help run the new shipyards being built on that world, and it is rapidly gearing up to build and maintain starships.

The company is desperate for skilled personnel, and its agents are scouring the Confederation looking for people who know their thumbs from their fingers and don't mind moving to Colada. As the planet has an undeserved but strong reputation for being dangerous due to radioactivity, this is difficult. Sigli Balkar may soon try hiring a cadre of engineers, on a six-month contract, to train local employees.

**Sons of Regnar:** A grass-roots organization opposed to the way the Gram aristocracy dominates the Sword Worlds Confederation. It functions as an "old boys' network" to counteract the old boys' network of the Gram aristocrats. Its symbol is the head of a spear, like the one the legendary Regnar Lodbrog used to slay the *lindorm* (see p. 95).

**Spredning:** (Sagamaal, "Scattering.") The first of the Biter Atrocities. Under the auspices of their *hertug*, Johan II, the Hofuds forcibly deported millions of people from Biter to other worlds. Many were killed in the process and the rest put to work in forced labor camps. See *Luffar*, p. 92.

**Starports:** Unlike the Imperium, Sword Worldeer starports are rarely associated with cities. Many Sword Worldeer ships are built at early TL9, which means that thrusters are inadequate to get off the surface of a world and into orbit. This increases the importance of highports, as many ships never land, instead using interface craft to get their cargo down to the surface.

However, those interface craft and the regular ships that do land need a different kind of facility on the ground. In the absence of useful thrusters, most of these ships use total conversion rockets (see p. T:S39), which are considerably harder on their surroundings than more advanced propulsion.

A typical Sword Worldeer starport is 10 to 30 miles away from a city, often not even the planetary capital. It is connected to the settlement by a railway, which carries passengers and cargo between the two.

The support facilities for the port – customs, storage, traffic control, and the like – are about the same as would be



found in the Imperium, but are set further back from the launch pads. Some of the pads are for typical thruster-borne ships, but others are very different.

Pads for total conversion rockets are made of heavy concrete, and are surrounded by berms of dirt and grass; these cut out the worst of the liftoff noise, and protect the rest of the facility in case of an explosion. Within the berms are a sound-suppression water system. This is an ancient but reliable technology, which pumps water in and around the pad during the first 10 seconds or so of a launch, protecting the pad and surrounding equipment from the enormous acoustical energy of the liftoff. Deep holes in the pad, lined with temperature-resistant materials, keep the flame of the rocket from rebounding and damaging the ship.

With that much energy coming out of one end, whenever possible the early stages of a ship's flight are routed over open water, so many Sword Worlder starports are located on coasts.

**Steel Band (386 to 419):** A short-lived interstellar alliance between Steel and Biter in 386 based on their mutual fear of Hofud. When Hofud attacked Biter in 419, Steel did not come to Biter's aid after all, and the Band was dissolved.

**Steel, Kingdom of (256 to 581):** Former interstellar state, formed in 256 when Steel laid claim to the worlds Bronze, Electrum (Smoug), Gold (Olympia), Iron, Mithril, and Silver (Wardn). After a short war with Sting in 263, Steel was forced to remove its outposts, but did not abandon its claims. Hofud conquered Sting in 383, and Olympia, Smoug, and Wardn applied to the Imperium for protection. These three worlds eventually became Imperial member worlds, while Steel later reasserted its claim to Bronze, Iron, and Mithril. In 580 a catastrophic meteor strike forced the population of Steel to evacuate their world. The next year, *Hertug* Erik of Steel renounced his claim to Steel and the three remaining Metal Worlds in favor of Ivar of Sting.

**Stellar Geography:** The inhabitants of any region of space often name the clusters and rifts surrounding them. The Sword Worlders are no different, and several of their names have entered wider use – notably “the Metal Worlds” and “the Entropic Worlds.” Several other names are also commonly in local use.

The string of worlds from Gram through Tizon, then looping around to Gungnir, is known as *Haestskoel* (“The Horse-shoe”). The worlds from Gram through Tyrting and Sacnoth then on to Narsil form *Fjarren Benen* (“The Far Leg”). From Beater through Dyrnwyn is the *Dyrnwynspore* (“The Dyrnwyn Spur”). Finally, the worlds from Sting through the Metal Worlds and on into Imperial space as far as Smoug, Caladbolg, and Dawnworld are known as *Vilse Markniren*. As this last means “The Lost Territories” – a name even more true now that the Metal Worlds have been annexed to the Imperium – its use by the Confederation government is an issue of contention; what is lost might be regained, after all. Within the Imperium-friendly Border Worlds, the government consciously calls these the “Rim Stars” (*Falsstjarnir*) instead.

**Sting, Kingdom of (238 to 604):** (Sagamaal: *Hertugrikaren Sting*.) A former interstellar state centered on Sting, established in 238 when Sting invaded Biter. In 259 the kingdom expanded enormously in territory, though not in power, when it planted small outposts on Bronze, Iron, Mithril,

Wardn, Olympia, and Smoug to counteract territorial claims made by Steel. The kingdom laid formal claim to these six worlds as well as Steel, going so far as to create princely titles for them all; these were given to younger members of Sting's royal family (see *Princes of the Metal Worlds*, p. 95).

In 383 Hofud invaded Sting but was prevented by Sacnoth diplomatic pressure from continuing on to Biter. Wardn, Olympia, and Smoug applied to the Imperium for protection and were lost to the Sword Worlds forever. *Hertugin* Marianne escaped to Biter, from which she – and, later, her son Ivar – directed Sting's resistance movement. In 419 Hofud finally invaded Biter and forced Ivar to renounce his claim to Sting and Biter.

In 439 the Dyrnwyn Compact attacked and conquered Hofud. Ivar was released from prison and restored to the throne of Sting. The kingdom was enrolled in the Dyrnwyn Compact and given full internal autonomy within the framework of the Compact.

## THE ROYAL TREASURE OF STING

When *Hertugin* Marianne escaped from Sting, she brought along a large collection of jewelry, art, and other precious objects. This treasure was hidden somewhere on Biter. Her son Ivar always maintained that his mother did not tell him where it was hidden. Even after Ivar was restored to the throne of Sting, he said the same thing. Sting's royal treasure has been a favorite bait of con artists ever since. But it is a fact that none of the identifiable pieces of the collection have ever surfaced. Somewhere on Biter is a huge treasure stashed away, just waiting for someone to find it.

Over the next century Sting chafed under the restrictions imposed by the Compact, and in 572 the Kingdom was allowed to leave the Compact peacefully. Like the other interstellar states, the Kingdom broke into its individual worlds in 604.

**Suthri:** The predominant news service in the Confederation; the name translates baldly from Sagamaal as “Information.” While the Traveller News Service is available in Sword Worlds Confederation space, it is widely considered an Imperial propaganda engine, especially in times of war. Following the Third Frontier War, a number of smaller Sword Worlder news agencies banded together to form Suthri, and rapidly gained market share. As well as supporting their own web of correspondents, they are licensed to filter through the raw TNS data feeds, repackaging items they consider to be of interest to their clientele.

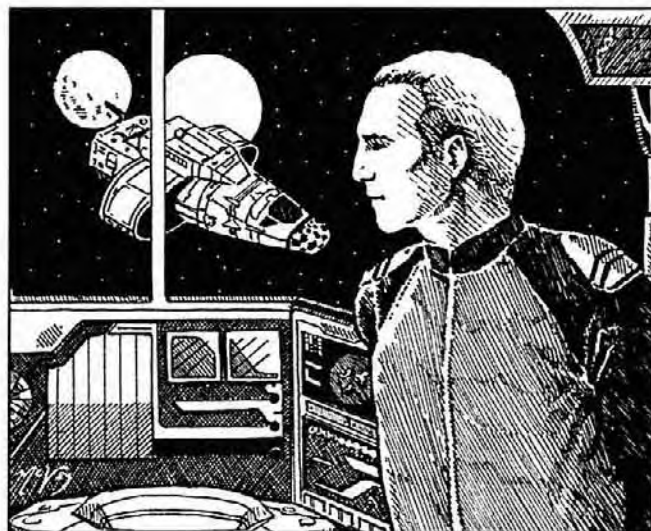
A recent blow has been the banning of Suthri in the Border Worlds – ironically, on the grounds that it is a Confederation propaganda engine. Within the Border Worlds, Suthri has been replaced by an organization called *Brun Nyhemir* (“Border News”). Its efforts are met with amusement among readers and viewers in the Sword Worlds.

# OLAFUR MAGNUSSON

260 POINTS

Human (Sword Worlder). Age 57; 5'6", 140 lbs. Tanned skin, silver-blond hair, gray eyes, always extremely neat.

Today, Olafur Magnusson is a prosperous, hardworking free-trader captain, with the accent and manner of a lifelong Imperial citizen. Few people realize that he was born and bred in the Sword Worlds. Even fewer know that he came from the humblest of backgrounds: a *Luffar* slum on Sacnoth. Only his name gives a clue – Sword Worlder in origin, but without a true family name because he simply does not know from what family he might be descended.



Magnusson was born in abject poverty, and was orphaned at the age of two standard years. Although a distant kinsman took him in for a time, he was effectively living on the streets from early childhood. By some miracle, this upbringing failed to ruin his mind; he grew up very strong-willed and insatiably curious. By the time he reached puberty, he had never attended even a day of formal schooling – yet he had acquired a rather extensive,

if unorganized, education simply by reading every piece of printed material he could lay hands on. This habit continues to the present day: in any free moment, Captain Magnusson will read technical manuals, newspapers, high literature, academic journals, trashy novels, or, if nothing else is available, last year's spatball scores.

As Magnusson approached adulthood, he took to haunting the Sacnoth starport, taking odd jobs and learning everything he could about starships and the men who operated them. His lucky break came in 1089, when he was hired by an Imperial free trader captain as a crewman apprentice. A few years later, he was hired by Captain Yudi Laragii to serve as the third officer aboard the newly independent free trader *Talisman*.

Magnusson has spent over 20 years aboard the *Talisman* as junior officer, first mate, business partner, and now Captain-owner. He was Captain Laragii's right-hand man during most of the ship's epic adventures, and in the end Laragii was very willing to name him her heir. Today he has a considerable reputation among the merchants of the Spinward Marches.

During his career, Magnusson has unconsciously shed almost every sign of his Sword Worlder origins. He speaks Galanglic with a perfect Mora accent; a linguistic trace of his origins appears only when he is very angry or under stress. He exhibits the flawless manners of an upper-class Imperial citizen, a fact which has done much to bring business to his ship over the years. His recent move back to Sword Worlder space is primarily in search of business opportunities, not out of any conscious desire to return to his roots. Still, in the back of his mind he remains aware of his *Luffar* origins, and is likely to be reminded of them more frequently as his ship operates out of the Biter spaceport. Whether this will cause him to become involved in the complex politics of the region remains to be seen.

**Svavasorm:** The original name for *Vilis* (Spinward Marches 1119), changed in 286.

**Sword Worlds Confederation:** See p. 22.

***Talisman*:** The operation of a free-trading starship is potentially a very profitable venture – but the crushing burden of a ship's loan payments often turns a lucrative enterprise into a very marginal one. Very few free traders ever become "free and clear." One such ship – a legend among the tramp merchants of the Spinward Marches – is the *Talisman*.

The *Talisman* is a *Beowulf*-class free trader, originally built at the Lunion yards in 1073. It was originally owned by the sector-wide transport line Al Morai, and assigned to work along the Spinward Main between Lunion and Mora.

In 1097 ownership was partially transferred to Captain Yudi Laragii as part of a profit-sharing scheme. She soon moved the ship's field of operation to the Sword Worlder border, registering the ship at its new homeport on Biter. Soon

she was making runs between Lunion and Darrian space, crossing Sword Worlder territory on a regular basis.

Laragii proved both lucky and talented, making a consistent profit on her regular routes while pulling off several legendary feats of speculative trading. Her luck soared with the outbreak of the Fifth Frontier War. For two years she undertook the risky business of smuggling goods through the war zone, never being caught and making a handsome profit. She was able to pay off the ship's loan in full in 1109, four years early.

After this coup, Captain Laragii took the *Talisman* out of the war zone and concentrated on trade in Imperial space. She retired in 1113, retaining ownership of the *Talisman* but promoting her partner Olafur Magnusson (see above and p. 101) to the captaincy. When Laragii died in 1119, Magnusson inherited title to the ship. He has recently returned to the Sword Worlds subsector, hoping to repeat earlier successes. Whether the ship can continue to thrive given the unsettled condition of the region remains to be seen.



## OLAFUR MAGNUSSON (CONTINUED)

Over the years, a number of rumors have circulated about the *Talisman* and Captain Magnusson. Some observers find that the ship's luck has been a little too much for belief. In particular, those who are aware of Captain Laragii's smuggling activities in 1107 and 1108 find it incredible that the *Talisman* was never caught by patrols or attacked by privateers on either side. Some have quietly speculated that the *Talisman* was actually in the service of Imperial or Sword Worlder intelligence agencies. Magnusson's recent move back to Sword Worlder space has lent new credence to this theory. Naturally, Magnusson refuses to answer any questions on the subject; his crewmen are similarly close-mouthed.

Adventurers may encounter Captain Magnusson and the *Talisman* anywhere in the Sword Worlds subsector. They will find the Captain and his crew to be outwardly uninterested in politics or intrigue, although Magnusson hears about *everything* sooner or later, and may serve as a valuable contact. If Magnusson has difficulty operating in the current chaotic situation, he may well hire freelancers to help him overcome obstacles. With the *Talisman* free of debt, Magnusson has much greater financial resources than most free trader captains, and can afford to hire extraordinary assistance.

**ST** 7 [-20]; **DX** 12 [20]; **IQ** 14 [45]; **HT** 12 [20].

Speed 6.00; Move 6.

Dodge 6; Parry 6 (Knife).

**Advantages:** Ally Group (*Talisman's* crew; 9 or less) [10]; Contacts (Business, skill 21, 9 or less, somewhat reliable) [4], Filthy Rich [50]; Luck [15];

Merchant Rank 5 (Free Trader Captain) [15]; Multimillionaire [25]; Reputation +2 (Canny and talented merchant; free traders, 10 or less) [5]; Status 2 [0]\*, Strong Will +2 [8].

\* Free from Filthy Rich and Multimillionaire.

**Disadvantages:** Intolerance (Military) [-5]; Miserliness [-10]; Secret (*Luffar* origins) [-5]; Workaholic [-5].

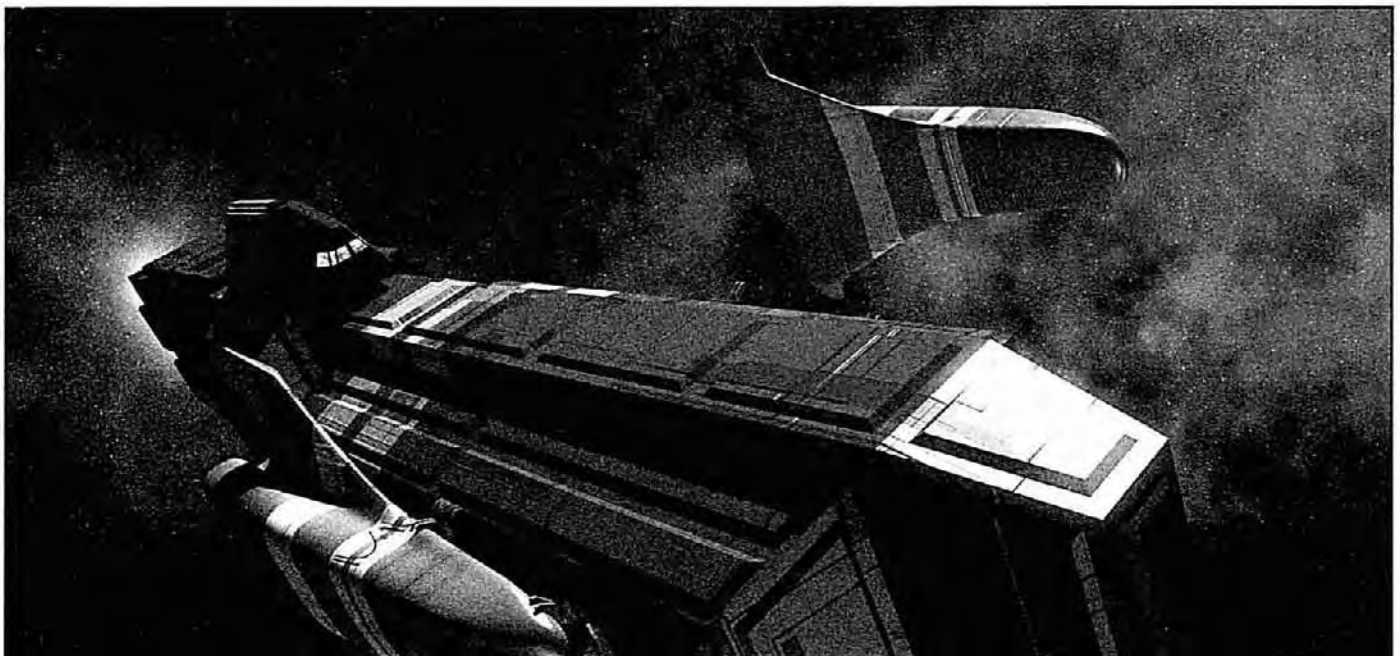
**Quirks:** Constant reader; Neat freak; Refuses to discuss his past; Sensitive about lack of formal education; Speaks with Sword Worlder accent when under stress. [-5]

**Skills:** Accounting-14 [4]; Administration-15 [6]; Area Knowledge (Spinward Main)-15 [2]; Astrogation-15 [6]; Brawling-14 [4]; Computer Operation-14 [1]; Diplomacy-13 [2]; Economics-14 [4]; Electronics Operation (Communications)-13 [1]; Electronics Operation (Sensors)-13 [1]; Electronics Operation (Security Systems)-13 [1]; Fast-Talk-15 [4]; Forgery-13 [2]; Free Fall-12 [2]; Freight Handling-15 [4]; Gambling-14 [2]; Guns (Pistol)-15\* [2]; History-13 [2]; Knife-14 [4]; Law-13 [2]; Leadership-14 [2]; Mechanic (Jump Drive)-14 [2]; Mechanic (Maneuver Drive)-13 [1]; Mechanic (Power Plant)-13 [1]; Merchant-18 [10]; Piloting (Spacecraft)-13 [8]; Politics-13 [1]; Savoir-Faire-16 [0]\*\*; Scrounging-14 [2]; Shipbuilding (Starship)-13 [1]; Shipmaster-14 [2]; Streetwise-14 [2]; Tactics (Space)-13 [2]; Vacc Suit-12 [1].

\* Includes +2 for IQ.

\*\* Free from Filthy Rich.

**Languages:** Galanglic-14 [2]; Sagamaal (native)-14 [0].

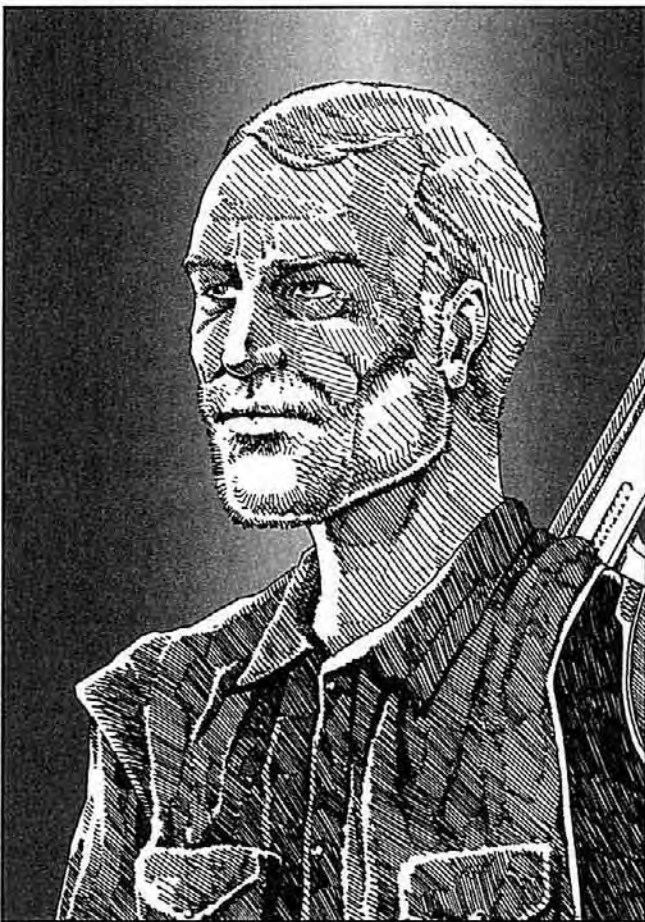


# HR. GREVE LARS RASMUSSEN 195 POINTS

Human (Sword Worlder). Age 62; 6'1", 170 lbs. White skin, silver-white hair, gray eyes, beard and mustache, usually wears paramilitary uniform.

Lars Rasmussen was born to an aristocratic family on Joyeuse in 1058. He had a successful 20-year career in the army of his home country, spending most of that time in command of regular infantry and special-forces units. He saw a great deal of action, fighting in two declared wars and several more informal combat actions. While he remained devoted to his own small state, he also gained a fanatical loyalty to Sword Worlder civilization as a whole. He became incredibly frustrated with the volatility of local politics, believing that the Sword Worlds has a great destiny that only the disunity of their people can prevent.

After retiring, Rasmussen returned to his ancestral estates and began to build Tyrs Haand Consultants (see p. 104). The corporation was formally established in 1097, and has been Rasmussen's personal obsession ever since.



Today, Rasmussen is over 60 years old but shows no signs of slowing down. To his employees he is simply *Hr. Oberst*, a man to be respected and admired, but not loved. He still travels all over the Sword Worlds to keep an eye on his company's performance, and is not above taking to the field to supervise a tough training exercise. His tactical

sense is still sharp, too. In 1118 he was visiting a company battalion on Gungnir when it was ambushed by local insurgents. Despite being outnumbered almost three to one, Rasmussen took command and drove off the attackers without losing more than a handful of men.

Rasmussen is extremely conservative in his political views, although he does not permit those to affect company policy. Tyrs Haand is about building *effective* government – if such a government needs to be politically liberal because of the opinions of the local populace, Rasmussen will not object. Of course, he is often approached by his aristocratic colleagues for personal advice, and he will freely deliver his opinions in such cases. Although he has never sought high political office for himself, he is very influential on Joyeuse and in the Sword Worlds Confederation as a whole.

Rasmussen makes a good Contact or Patron for military-oriented adventurers. Almost anyone pursuing a military career in the Sword Worlds will have at least heard of him and his corporation.

ST 9 [-10]; DX 10 [10]; IQ 14 [45]; HT 11 [10].

Speed 5.25; Move 5.

Dodge 5; Parry 4 (Knife).

**Advantages:** Courtesy Rank 6 (*Oberst*) [6]; Reputation +2 (Talented military and business leader; Sword Worldeers, 10 or less) [5]; Status 4 [15]\*; Strong Will +1 [4]; Very Wealthy [30].

\* One level of Status free from Very Wealthy.

**Disadvantages:** Fanaticism (Sword Worlds) [-15]; Honesty [-10]; Workaholic [-5].

**Quirks:** Careful to maintain his old military skills; Pedantic; Political ultraconservative; Strict disciplinarian. [-4]

**Skills:** Accounting-12 [1]; Administration-15 [4]; Armoury (Vehicular weaponry)-14 [2]; Bard-14 [2]; Brawling-12 [4]; Camouflage-14 [1]; Climbing-10 [2]; Computer Operation-14 [1]; Demolition-13 [1]; Detect Lies-12 [1]; Diplomacy-14 [4]; Electronics Operation (Communications)-13 [1]; Electronics Operation (Sensors)-13 [1]; Fast-Talk-15 [4]; First Aid-14 [1]; Forward Observer-14 [4]; Gunner (Gauss cannon)-13\* [4]; Guns (Light automatic)-14\* [4]; Guns (Pistol)-15\* [8]; History-13 [2]; Hiking-10 [1]; Knife-10 [1]; Law-14 [4]; Leadership-15 [4]; Mechanic (Heavy electric motor)-14 [2]; Merchant-13 [1]; NBC Warfare-14 [2]; Orienteering-14 [2]; Politics-15 [4]; Savoir-Faire (Military)-17\*\* [2]; Stealth-10 [2]; Survival (Desert)-14 [2]; Survival (Plains)-14 [2]; Strategy (Land warfare)-16 [8]; Tactics-16 [8]; Teaching-17 [8]; Tracking-14 [2].

\* Includes +2 for IQ.

\*\* From default of IQ+2 due to high Status.

**Languages:** Galanglic-14 [2]; Sagamaal (native)-14 [0].



Although the *Talisman* is now almost 50 years old, it has always been thoroughly maintained and is believed to be in very good condition. The ship is well known among interstellar merchants, throughout the Sword Worlds subsector and far beyond. Market watchers often track its movements, in search of clues to new opportunities; Imperial officers and nobles have deigned to travel in its staterooms; would-be adventurers eagerly seek out its crew in order to buy drinks and listen to tales.

**Tanoose:** The original name of the world Garda-Vilis. It is a corruption of Danuuz, the name of the enchanted sword of the legendary Vilani folk hero Mashdiikhe (see p. 86).

**Tarsus (Spinward Marches 1138):** An independent world in the District 268 subsector. It was originally settled between 450 and 462; the first settlers were 19,125 exiles from Fornice/Mora. The venture was well organized and the colony avoided any significant technological regression. The population grew slowly but steadily over the years, supplemented from time to time by immigrants from other worlds. Among them were the members of the Tizonian 3rd Lift Regiment and their families, who came to Tarsus in 625 fleeing war-crime accusations, and settled in an empty region. Their descendants have since been integrated into the mainstream of Tarsan society (see *Regiment*, p. 95).

In 1110, a group of primitive Humans were discovered living deep in the Tangle Wald, an inaccessible forest far from the main Tarsan settlements. These turned out to be the descendents of a Sacnoth Dominate outpost that was

abandoned in -104 due to the confusion caused by the War of the First Rebellion, and presumed to have died out. The Forest People, as they are called, were declared wards of the Tarsan government in 1113.

**Tenalphi (Spinward Marches 1826):** An Imperial world in the Lunion subsector. It was settled in -126 by Sword Worlders from the Sacnoth Dominate and named Dragvandel. It was isolated during the War of the First Rebellion and lost much of its infrastructure and technology during the Fimbulwinter. In 39 the Trailing Assembly established a small penal colony on Dragvandel and began dumping political dissidents there.

The world declared its independence in conjunction with the establishment of the Triple Dominion in 104, and was allowed to get away with this because Dyrnwyn regarded it as worthless. During the second century, immigrants from both the Imperium and the Sword Worlds settled on Dragvandel and lived in relative harmony. However, during the third century, territorial disagreements caused friction between various settlements; border disputes occasionally escalated into violence. In 338 a constitutional convention was held and a world government formed. At the same time the name of the world was changed to Tenalphi. The world petitioned to join the Imperium in 369 and became a member in 379.

**Tizon Empire (281 to 604):** A former interstellar state consisting of Tizon and a varying number of colonies. See p. 14.



**Tizonian 3rd Lift Regiment:** See *Regiment*, p. 95.

**Tizonian League (31 to 281):** A former interstellar state consisting of Tizon, Hrunting, Colada, and Isenfang (Marge-si). It was formed in 31 as a trade and defense alliance chiefly aimed against Gram. Each world had complete internal autonomy, while a council determined intersystem and foreign relations and defense matters. Theoretically each world had an equal say and a veto as all decisions had to be unanimous; in practice Hrunting and Isenfang were extremely reluctant to offend either of their two big partners and tried not to take sides against either.

In 104 Colada forced through a government reform that put all power into its hands. After Colada's civil war, Tizon assumed control of the League. Although the League was not formally dissolved until the proclamation of the Tizon Empire in 281, for practical purposes it ceased to have any function in 104.

**Trailing Assembly (39 to 104):** A former interstellar state consisting of Biter, Dyrnwyn, Durendal, Hofud and Sting, with two more worlds, Dragvendel (Tenalphi) and Steel as protectorates. The Assembly was dissolved in 104 when Dyrnwyn assumed control of Biter, Durendal, Hofud, and Sting.

**Travel Zones:** The Travellers' Aid Society's approach to travel ratings for the Sword Worlds is a little confusing. It has awarded a blanket amber zone rating to the entire Confederation and all the Border Worlds due to the high risk of encountering individuals with anti-Imperial feelings; but they also award specific amber zone ratings to nations, worlds, and systems with presents other reasons for caution, resulting in some worlds being "more amber" than others.

**Tree Shark:** In the main body of the Imperium, it's something of a running joke that every second animal "behind the claw" seems to be named a "tree-something." In Sword Worlder space this joke has been turned back on its original perpetrators, with the invention of the completely mythical Tree Shark.

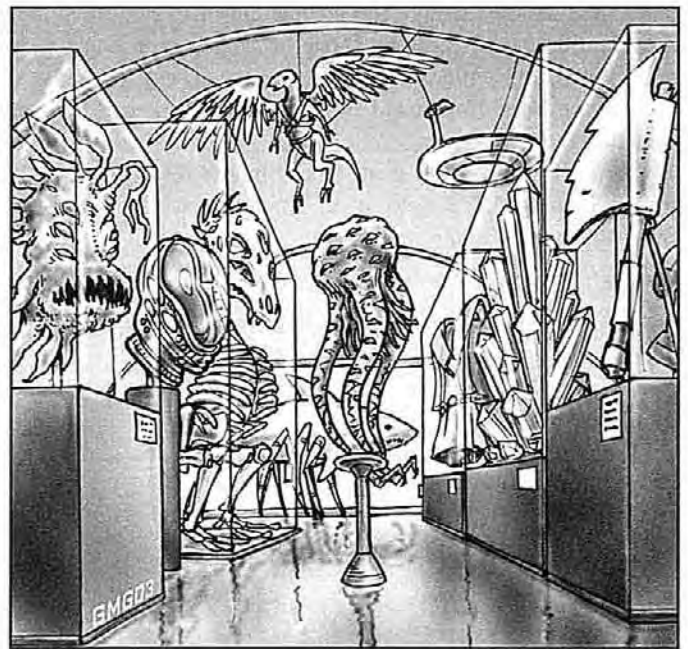
It's unclear who came up with the idea, or when, but now the citizens of the Sword Worlds are all in on it; they delight in regaling visitors with tales of the ferocious Tree Shark. While details vary, it is native to whatever world the tale-teller is on, usually in a region not far from his present location. The point of the joke is to string along the tourist, gradually getting more and more outlandish until it becomes obvious that legs are being pulled. ("My brother Nils was bitten by one just the other day. The doctor says he might have to amputate. Shame it bit him on the head.") The reaction of the victim then colors local attitudes to him. Laugh good-naturedly at being fooled or, even better, start playing along halfway through and you're "all right." Take offense and you're clearly one of those annoying Imperials with whom no one wants to associate.

**Tyrfin Incident:** A clash between naval vessels of Gram and Sacnoth in orbit above Tyrfin which resulted in the War of the First Rebellion. As a result, the Sacnoth Dominate dissolved into several separate states and conflict between them continued into the next century.

**Tyrk Collection:** An immense collection of flora and fauna from 57 worlds in the Darrian, District 268, Five

Sisters, Glisten, Lanth, Lunion, Querion, Sword Worlds, and Vilis subsectors. It was gathered in the period from -125 to -104 by ships financed by the Gram billionaire, philanthropist, and patriot Greve Abdul Mehmedsson Tyrk. The collection is housed in the Tyrk Museum of Natural History in Ny Kalmar. Only about 3% of the collection is on display. The rest is stored in vast vaults underneath the museum. Due to financial constraints a sizable part of the collection has never been properly examined and cataloged. (See below.)

**Tyrk Squadron:** A group of seven starships employed by Greve Abdul Tyrk to collect biological specimens for his collection. The ships were civilian versions of a military design employed by the Gram System Defense Force. At the outbreak of the War of the First Rebellion, Tyrk donated all his ships to the Gram Navy where they were refitted with weapons and loaded with fighters; they made a much-needed addition to Gram's fighting strength.



**Tyrs Haand Consultants:** This corporation, based on Joyeuse, combines what in the Imperium would normally be two separate functions: military cadre services and civilian consulting. In general, Tyrs Haand is in the law-and-order business. It exists to train local governments – and, ultimately, the Sword Worlder populace – in the business of creating and defending a stable society.

As of 1120, Tyrs Haand has 2,500 employees. About two-thirds of these are uniformed paramilitary personnel, organized into a light mechanized-infantry regiment. The whole regiment almost never operates together. Instead, battalion and company-sized detachments are hired out to provide military cadre. The most likely customer for this service is a local government or militia organization, which hopes to get sophisticated training for its junior commissioned officers and rank-and-file soldiers. The military cadre rarely sees actual combat, although its customers are sometimes involved in brushfire wars even during training. In such cases, the cadre is very able to defend itself.



# RAGNHILD ARVASDOTTIR BERGMAN

250 POINTS

Human (Sword Worlder). Age 30; 5'10", 145 lbs. White skin, blonde hair, gray eyes, always stylishly dressed.

Ragnhild Arvasdottir Bergman came from a middle-class family on Sacnoth. At puberty she began to exhibit signs of uncanny ability. She could tell what others were thinking before they spoke, people tended to do what she wanted even against their own better judgment, and when she became angry those around her often suffered from fatigue and headaches. Her mother's family had a long history of women with the "second sight," so Bergman's parents soon reached the logical conclusion. When she was 14, they arranged for her to finish her education at Sacnoth's psionics institute (p. 95).

Bergman proved to be one of the best students the institute had ever trained. She was extremely intelligent, strong-willed, and possessed unusual telepathic talents. This potential soon brought her to the attention of officials within the Sacnoth government's secret service. By 18 she had agreed to secretly work for the Sacnoth government, accepting training in espionage.



Unfortunately, before Bergman could go into the field as a trained operative, the Fifth Frontier War came to Sacnoth. The psionics institute was destroyed in 1109; later in the same year the government's covert psionics program collapsed. Desperate to save what remained of the institute, an official gathered the last six young female students and fled with them to Narsil.

On Narsil, the students and their mentor decided to carry on the fight. They began to search out new talent, hoping eventually to set up a new psionics institute. Meanwhile they formed the *Valkyrlar*, using psionic talents to gather intelligence and carry out assassinations against the Imperial enemy. Ever since, they have operated entirely without government sponsorship – indeed, if their existence ever became widely known, they might be in danger even from their fellow Sword Worlders.

Ragnhild has been working as lead assassin for the *Valkyrlar* since 1112. She is a good shot with a handgun, but she normally relies on her Mental Stab, often

temporarily boosted by psi drugs, to cause sudden death, apparently by natural causes. Her usual method is to mingle with potential targets in social situations, choosing an opportune moment to strike when she can most easily escape without a trace. Her Telecontrol ability can be indispensable, both to set up an assassination and to cover her tracks.

Ragnhild is very reclusive by nature, and prefers to be away from other people. Her colleagues are beginning to be concerned for her sanity – the life she has lived since the end of the war may have made it impossible for her to have normal social relationships. While she is working on an assignment, she behaves like a social butterfly and simulates positive emotions, but this is purely a matter of acting and iron self-control.

Ragnhild has occasionally hired freelancers; this usually requires that she deceive them about the real nature of their mission. Should any outsider gain her trust (an almost impossible undertaking) she might serve as a valuable conduit to the Sword Worlder underground, or to the remnants of Sacnoth's psionics institute. In most cases, Ragnhild will be encountered as an adversary.

ST 10 [0]; DX 12 [20]; IQ 15 [60]; HT 12 [20].

Speed 6.00; Move 6.

Dodge 7.

**Advantages:** Charisma +2 [10]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Fashion Sense [5]; Patron (*Valkyrlar*; small group, lends equipment, unusual powers, 9 or less) [25]; Strong Will +1 [4]; Telepathy 10 [50]; Unusual Background (Formal psionic training) [15]; Unusual Background (Special psionic skills) [5]; Voice [10].

**Disadvantages:** Intolerance (Imperials) [-5]; Reclusive [-10]; Secret (*Valkyrlar* member) [-30].

**Quirks:** Cautious; Extremely careful about her personal appearance; Trusts almost no one. [-3]

**Skills:** Acting-15 [2]; Area Knowledge (Sword Worlds)-14 [1/2]; Bard-16\* [1]; Computer Operation-14 [1/2]; Dancing-12 [2]; Diplomacy-15\* [1]; Disguise-15 [2]; Electronics Operation (Sensors)-14 [1]; Electronics Operation (Security Systems)-15 [2]; Fast-Talk-15 [2]; Forgery-15 [4]; Guns (Pistol)-15\*\* [2]; Holdout-15 [2]; Intelligence Analysis-14 [2]; Life Detection-14 [2]; Mental Blow-15 [4]; Mental Stab-15 [4]; Mind Shield-14 [2]; Piloting (Grav vehicles)-12 [1]; Research-14 [1]; Savoir-Faire-16\* [1/2]; Sex Appeal-14\* [2]; Shadowing-14 [1]; Stealth-14 [4]; Telecontrol-14 [2]; Telereceive-15 [4]; Telesend-15 [4].

\* Includes +2 for Voice.

\*\* Includes +2 for IQ.

**Languages:** Darrian-13 [1/2]; Galanglic-15 [2]; Saga-maal (native)-15 [0]; Zhodani-14 [1].

Tyrs Haand also retains over 300 civilian consultants, experts in fields such as disaster relief, law-enforcement techniques, law, political theory, or public relations. These civilian consultants are also hired out to local governments around the Sword Worlds. While the men in uniform train soldiers and militiamen, the civilian consultants advise government and law-enforcement officials. The two sides of the corporation often cooperate, and in fact many of the uniformed personnel have experience in security or military police work.

Tyrs Haand was founded in 1097, just before the most recent outbreak of civil war on Joyeuse. Business was good throughout the next few years and well into the Fifth Frontier War, as social chaos created many customers for the corporation's services. By 1112 Tyrs Haand reached its current size, having recruited a great many recently out-of-work soldiers, and its detachments were routinely operating on several worlds at once. Today it is one of the largest "mercenary" units operating in the Sword Worlds, and possibly the most reputable.

**Unit:** An ethnic subdivision of the early Sword Worlder settlers. In the early days of the settlement of Gram, the former 8th Corps members tended to dominate political and cultural life, and former members of the other army and the navy would stick together to counteract this (see p. 34). The effect was much like members of an ethnic group sticking together in a new country; members of the same unit hung out together and helped each other. "Navies" tended to marry Navies, "Geenies" (from the Engineer Regiment) to marry Geenies, "Surgies" (from the Mobile Field Surgery) to marry Surgies, and so on. Small symbols were worn to indicate membership of a unit, and in some cases distinctive apparel and customs even evolved.

After the Sword Worlders began colonizing other worlds, this clannishness diminished but never quite disappeared. For instance, a disproportionate number of *Jaegers* were among the first settlers of Sacnoth, and when Anduril was settled from Sacnoth, different units joined together to finance separate expeditions. Throughout the days of the Sacnoth Dominate many Sword Worlders thought of themselves as belonging to this or that unit, but during the *Fimbulwinter* the units lost whatever significance they had had on most worlds. The exception is Anduril, where the units were more segregated than elsewhere and actually fell to fighting each other.

**Valkyrjar:** The *Valkyrjar* are a rumored anti-Imperial terrorist organization, operating throughout the Sword Worlds subsector and especially within the Border Worlds. The name apparently refers to the Valkyries of ancient Norse myth: death goddesses and daughters of Odin, who visited battlefields in order to choose worthy warriors for Valhalla. If the rumors are true, the present-day *Valkyrjar* "choose the slain" by assassinating Imperial officers and prominent Border Worlds collaborators.

No official source has confirmed the existence of the *Valkyrjar*. Independent observers *have* noticed an unusual string of deaths among plausible targets in the Border Worlds region: Imperial military officers and corporate agents, BWA officials, and publishers of pro-Imperial media. This series of

mysterious accidents may have begun as early as 1112, with the sudden death of Colonel Armin Sharama of the Imperial Marines – often called the "Butcher of Excalibur" for his brutal suppression of a riot during the initial Imperial occupation of that world. Conspiracy theorists have ascribed as many as 12 deaths to the *Valkyrjar*. All of them have been sudden, some of them have involved no sign of obvious violence, and none of them have led to the successful arrest of the perpetrators.

**Vargr:** Despite being allied with the Sword Worlders in the Outworld Coalition, and sometimes being employed as mercenaries during the subsector's more turbulent periods, there are surprisingly few Vargr living in the region. Perhaps 1% of the population is Vargr on the most densely populated worlds, largely concentrated in urban areas. Only a handful of individuals live on frontier worlds such as Gungnir and Mjolnir. Small worlds usually have none at all.

In most cases this is because Vargr simply don't fit in. As well as being visibly different, their reputation for not maintaining the status quo runs directly against Sword Worlder ideas about stability and community. This is not to say that there is specific prejudice against Vargr, but each individual has to prove his worth before being given the benefit of the doubt. A "small-town" Vargr in the Sword Worlds is almost invariably a specialist with skills that town simply can't do without, who has also visibly given his loyalty to the local leader.

**Vilis (Spinward Marches 1119):** An Imperial world in the Vilis subsector. It was originally settled in 240 by Sword Worlders from Morglay (Gungnir), who named it Svavasorm.

Svavasorm became a textbook example of how fast a colony can grow when it receives plenty of support and immigrants from the mother world and everything goes just right. In 46 years the world had gone from an initial population of 30,000 to over 3,000,000. When Morglay was conquered by the Tizon Empire in 286, Chief Administrator Oluf Bentsson Vilis assumed control of Svavasorm, declared independence, and changed the name of the world to Vilis. In 290, he invaded Tanoose and renamed it Garda-Vilis.

Vilis became a client state of the Imperium in 470 and a full member in 552.

**War of the First Rebellion:** A war between Sacnoth and its former subject worlds, led by Gram, that gradually turned into a confused free-for-all. Beginning in -104, the war finally ended in -88 with the economies of all parties ruined to such a degree that there was a complete breakdown in interstellar trade and communications lasting from -80 to -11 (see *Fimbulwinter*, p. 84).

**War of the Second Rebellion:** A short war in 698, wherein a coalition of worlds led by Gram rebelled against the Second Dominion.

**Winston (Spinward Marches 0620):** A planet in the Entropic Cluster. Along with Anselhome and Entrope, Winston was lost to the Darrian Confederation after the Fifth Frontier War. The planet is currently divided between supporters of the Darrians and supporters of the Sword Worlds Confederation, but the occupation has put the Darrian sympathizers firmly on top of Winston's political food chain.



# Characters and Equipment

*Kine dies, kin dies,  
You yourself will die.  
One thing I know that never dies:  
The judgment of dead men's deeds.*  
– Hávamál (The High One's Lay) Stanza 76,  
author unknown

## PLAYING SWORD WORLDERS

The average Imperial citizen views Sword Worlders as touchy, dour, humorless, and squabbling. Prejudice against "Swordies" is strong in the Spinward Marches in 1120, particularly since they were among the aggressors in the Fifth Frontier War. Since the war, however, peaceful contact has taught some Imperials the larger truths behind the stereotypes.

As descendants of Solomani colonists, the Sword Worlders have no unusual physical features. Their culture, however, is sufficiently different from the Imperial norm to warrant explanation.

## GENDER DISTINCTIONS

Sword Worlde culture demands different traits from different sexes. Males are expected to be active and aggressive, while females are compelled to be passive and accepting. The origins of this cultural trend lie back in the early days of Sword Worlde civilization; it has varied in influence over the years, but the resulting psychological traits are still very strong today.

Men – and those women who choose not to follow traditional roles – take all the risks and make all the important decisions. Sword Worlders view risk and decision as two sides of the same coin: responsibility. Authority – accepting responsibility for a course of action – grows from sharing the risks of that action. Leadership is usually exercised from the front lines – not only in military fields, but in all walks of life. A CEO invests his life savings in the company he runs; an engineer accompanies the pilot on the first manned test flight; an architect lives in a building he designed.

It is a mistake, however, to equate risk acceptance with passive courage. A male Sword Worlde has no reservations about working to reduce the danger inherent in his duties. A police squad storming a room wears body armor; a military commander maintains a reserve. This is good sense, not cowardice. Cowardice is accepting a task and then shirking it in order to avoid the associated risks.

Passive courage, or the fatalistic endurance of whatever life brings, is a female virtue, not a male one. Sword Worlde men are courageous, willing to endure pain, hardship, and death for a goal that they have accepted. Sword Worlde women are better able to withstand unknown, unavoidable, and random dangers. This has served the Sword Worlds well. In times of war, men are ready to serve – yet if the war is lost, or the veneer of civilization wears away from Sword Worlde soldiers as the conflict grinds on, women pick up the pieces. They play a critical role in returning the Sword Worlds to normalcy.

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*"Queen Ros has suffered a severe horse-riding accident, and is now at Hardenberg Castle . . . she will be withdrawing from public life."*

– Hamund Nafnisen Riseger,  
Regent of Enosa

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Traditional women are expected to remain in the background, looking after household and family. They stay at home and in the local community, places protected by men. While not restricted to housekeeping and childrearing, the jobs "suitable" for women are limited to teaching, gardening, working in small shops owned by a male relative, and similar risk-free occupations.

Women who wish to eschew this role may do so. They can enter male careers, where they are expected to adopt male attitudes and mannerisms. Although there is no formal barrier to advancement, it is unusual for women to be in the upper ranks of any organization. In addition, Sword Worlde society does not accommodate working mothers, so any woman who wants children must sooner or later give up her career and revert to a traditional role. There is a lot of social pressure to have a family – a remnant of the early emphasis on colonization – and many organizations see little point in training and promoting women who will "retire" sooner than their male counterparts.

Throughout Sword Worlde history, however, women have used many stratagems to circumvent the constraints placed upon them, such as turning over childrearing to a cowife or to an unmarried female relative. Most of these methods cost money, so it is no coincidence that many women in "male" pursuits come from the upper classes.

## GENDER AND THE SWORDIES

*Men are the winds: full of energy, moving in fits and gusts. Women are the sea: deep, moving in slow currents. Our society is a ship . . . Without wind to fill its sails, a ship goes nowhere, but without the sea, a ship has no purpose.*

Unlike Imperial culture, which has virtually eliminated gender roles, the Sword Worlds still differentiate between men and women in society. To many outsiders this looks like oppression: women are relegated to *kinder* and kitchen. This is a profound misunderstanding of Sword Worlder culture.

Sword Worlder society is built around the household – the hearthfire. Semimystical in its significance, the hearthfire is a very real thing: even the meanest apartment has a small hearth where the goodwife tends the hearthfire, always keeping it burning. Men willingly tolerate discomfort and danger, secure in the knowledge that their hearthfires – and their families – are safe. The hearthfire is the only witness to the strongest oaths, those between man and wife, and the secure refuge where a man can admit his doubts and fears – and listen to wise counsel. The hearthfire is home, family, and honor.

The hearthfire, or rather the woman who tends it, is the voice of reason. A man may be bold and daring, given to heedless promises, but he has a “safety net.” Aric may declare he’ll raft down the Brandi River at flood, but if his wife reminds him of what will happen to his children if he’s killed he has a face-saving reason for canceling the trip. No true Sword Worlder man needlessly neglects his responsibilities to his hearthfire; likewise, no true Sword Worlder woman intervenes except in truly important matters, and even then only in private.

The functions of tending the hearthfire and providing counsel extend beyond the household. Sword Worlder women form informal social networks, in contrast to men’s more formal organizations, exchanging information and guiding their menfolk. A man listens to his wife; a man who does not is scorned.

This setup has implications beyond the Sword Worlds. For example, Sword Worlder diplomatic affairs are very formal, with none of the “back channel” communication expected by Imperial diplomats. Women conduct the informal communication; while the ambassadors are negotiating, their wives are chatting at social functions.

## PRIDE

Sword Worlders are frequently characterized as proud. This is true on two levels. First, a Sword Worlder takes pride in his ancestors, who colonized a subsector with virtually no resources. Second, a Sword Worlder takes pride in his accomplishments.

## FORMALITY

Sword Worlder society is more formal than its Imperial counterpart, although not nearly as formal as that of the Aslan Hierate. There are definite rules governing behavior. As responsibility is such a large part of Sword Worlder culture, many of these rules deal with claiming, granting, and accepting responsibility and authority. While an experienced Sword Worlder knows that outsiders won’t follow these rules, they are so deeply ingrained that he still reacts

to violations as rudeness. Inexperienced Sword Worlders usually assume that rudeness is a deliberate slight – which it would be, from a fellow Sword Worlder.

Paradoxically, formal rules make Sword Worlders much more relaxed among themselves; everyone knows how to behave and what a particular action means. Members of an informal society that lacks clearly articulated rules are forever guessing. Sword Worlders aren’t.

This relaxation becomes obvious when Sword Worlders are in their home communities. Families often remain in the same neighborhood for generations and socialize with their neighbors. A *Thingman* may live beside an old school friend who became a janitor; both men can relax together and remain friends – social rules may limit the subjects of their conversations, but no rules prohibit their friendship. Sword Worlders do not understand the Imperial notion that socializing with poorer people is somehow “beneath” the wealthy.

## MILITARISM

Sword Worlder society is viewed as, and often is, militaristic. For example, defense of the community is the duty of every Sword Worlder male, and membership in regional self-defense units is almost universal. Most men also enlist in the regular armed forces before moving on to their adult occupations.

Yet the “militaristic” label applies even to civilian organizations. The original colonists were in various military units; in the transition to a civil society, various aspects of that culture crossed over. Personal responsibility is a part of the Sword World psyche, and Sword Worlders feel uncomfortable when there is no clear chain of command. While “responsibility” in the Imperium frequently means “accepting the blame” without having any

actual control, in the Sword Worlds the responsible person *must* have the authority. Sword Worlder managers thus tend to be more autocratic, with clearer responsibilities and obligations than their Imperial counterparts, but they also accept blame for failures as well as claim credit for successes.

## REPUTATION

The combination of responsibility and “love of community” produces Sword Worlder “touchiness.” Reputation amongst peers is paramount, and a Sword Worlder will do whatever it takes to maintain and enhance his reputation. Many Sword Worlders like to believe that their courage is an intrinsic quality that other Human cultures don’t have. In reality, most Sword Worlders act the way they do out of fear how they would be treated if they acted in a disreputable manner. In many ways, this is an extension of a military



training technique, where fear of looking bad in front of "buddies" is a major motivating factor. In the Sword Worlds, the buddies are everyone within a few miles of one's home, and the reputation applies to nonmilitary matters as well as combat behavior.

This system works as well as it does because Sword Worlder society centers on small communities. The strong desire to stay in the neighborhood where one grew up makes skipping out doubly difficult. Newcomers to a community are under intense social scrutiny from their neighbors. In Sword Worlder legend, the vilest villains are not Vargr corsairs or Imperial jackboots, but fallen Sword Worlders who have escaped their responsibilities by going rogue and heading for District 268 or the Foreven sector.

This obsession with reputation manifests itself in other ways, too. Sword Worlder media is far tamer than the Imperium's, due to very strict libel laws. A long-lived "gossip rag" is impossible, and real stories about reputation-affecting actions are double- and triple-checked before being printed. Besides legal ramifications, most Sword Worlder legal systems consider slander or libel a mitigating circumstance in cases of assault or murder. And the *code duello* is banned on many worlds, but lesser sentences are still imposed in such instances.

The occupation of "stand-up comic" is also virtually unknown.

## SWORD WORLDS CHARACTERS

Sword Worlds characters can be created with or the streamlined template system found in *GURPS Traveller*. Most Sword Worlder characters are Humans of Solomani origin, and have no specific racial template. Due to the culture, however, certain traits work differently in the Sword Worlds than within the Imperium.

### GENDER ROLES

Because of the strong gender distinctions within Sword Worlder society, players choosing *female* characters should consider carefully whether they wish to play a *traditional* or

*nontraditional* female. Nontraditional females – who deliberately take on male roles and responsibilities – are accepted within Sword Worlder culture and have considerable freedom. Traditional females find their freedom to adventure much more circumscribed – although taking on such a role-playing challenge may be to the taste of some players.

## CRIME IN THE SWORD WORLDS

Like any human society, the Sword Worlds have a criminal element. While psychopathic murderers care little about their reputation, most criminals are concerned about their standing in the underworld. A criminal's reputation among his peers is as important as an honest citizen's standing in his community. The "lone wolf" criminal is rare; organized crime is more prevalent. Sword Worlder criminal societies are similar to other Sword Worlder organizations: they have clear hierarchies and definite chains of command. They also usually have codes of honor – bank robbers, for example, will be proud that they don't hurt bystanders.

A typical Sword Worlder criminal has a positive Reputation among his peers, a negative one with the authorities, and a Code of Honor. A Trademark is also common. Some gangs even have addresses and datanet listings!

### NAMES

With a few exceptions – Enos, particularly, and some subcultures on other planets – Sword Worlder names borrow the old Scandinavian tradition of using patronymics or matronymics. Anyone of Sword Worlder culture has a special given name. This name is formed by taking either the father's (patronymic) or the mother's (matronymic) name and appending either -sen or -son, in the case of a son, or -datter or -dottir, in the case of a daughter. The family name comes after this. Thus "Ingrid Rolfsdottir Ravn" is Ingrid, daughter of Rolf, of the family Ravn.

The choice of which parent the name is taken from depends on various social factors. Children of polyandrous families tend to use matronymics, while those of polygamous families use patronymics. Children of monogamous families may use either, although there is a tendency for males to use patronymics and females to use matronymics.

In most informal cases – for example, when introducing a friend or signing a letter – the family name is dropped. However, the family name is always included in formal situations, like ID cards or contracts. The ultimate social accolade granted is to omit the family name at all times, implying that while there may be many named (for instance) Leonard Torstensson, the only one that can be meant if no family is specified is the author of *Fraendnir*.

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*While in keeping with the general philosophy of the Authenticist Movement, the form that the Viking Revival Movement has taken in the Sword Worlds is viewed with mild disgust by most of our Imperial members.*

*– Leonard hault-Characu  
A History of the  
Authenticist Movement*

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## COMMON NAMES

Roughly 80% of Sword Worlder space's family names are derived from the Scandinavian languages of ancient Terra. The remaining 20% come from every other Terran language, particularly German and Anglic, plus a few from Vilani. For most of Sword Worlder history personal names were divided in the same proportions, but every since the "Viking Revival" (p. 19) over 90% of given names have been Scandinavian in origin, generally Viking-era Scandinavian. In addition, some non-Scandinavian names have been warped entirely out of shape to match Sagamaal spelling rules.

There are hundreds of names commonly in use, but here is a list of examples:

### Male Personal Names

Arnfinn, Arva, Audfinnar, Benesing, Bragi, Dominikus, Eneri, Eyvald, Frans, Gaetir, Gagni, Gram, Haakon, Halli, Hallvard, Harek, Hasvir, Hauk, Hjalti, Hofun, Hrein, Hroald, Ingjald, Kaerir, Karl, Kristoffer, Magnus, Margad, Mark, Olaf, Olrik, Osferth, Peder, Ragnar, Rorik, Sali, Sigefred, Sokni, Steffan, Styrr, Svein, Thialfi, Thjostolf, Thorfinn, Thormod, Thorstein, Tobias, Valbrand, Valdemar, Vebjorn.

### Female Personal Names

Alma, Aud, Bera, Borghild, Dagne, Emilia, Eva, Fastvi, Freydis, Frida, Helge, Hidegunar, Hrefna, Hulda, Hungerd, Ikush, Ilma, Ingolv, Ingrid, Isgerd, Jaddvor, Katla, Kirsten, Lea, Lisbet, Lucia, Luta, Maera, Marina, Marta, Nanna, Ota, Ragnelf, Rea, Regina, Rosa, Sharik, Sigvor, Sigyn, Solvor, Steinvor, Susanna, Svala, Thorvi, Tullia, Ulfhild, Ulrika, Una, Valgerd, Vesta.

### Family Names

Alfar, Arge, Arrheboe, Aska, Awair, Bogedal, Clahn, Colding, Dahl, Damsgaard, Eberlein, Grimlot, Hatun, Heiberg, Hjalmar, Hos, Karlseffni, Kisi, Kruhl, Lander, Licht, Long, Raaby, Rath, Reuter, Rieper, Roesdahl, Schroeter, Sellevold, Sharudkarin, Sigar, Skarki, Slengr, Slodi, Sokki, Spilli, Staer, Staki, Steincke, Stif, Strikr, Svanar, Svarni, Thornom, Thumli, Toefting, Valar, Vestar, Werlauff, Witzke.

## ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

The following advantages and disadvantages are either especially appropriate for Sword Worlder characters or work differently in Sword Worlder society.

### Common Advantages

The following advantages are especially appropriate for Sword Worlder characters: Collected, Imperturbable, Jack-of-All-Trades, and Strong Will.

### Common Disadvantages

The following disadvantages are very appropriate for Sword Worlder characters: Code of Honor, Honesty, Intolerance (Outsiders), Overconfidence, Proud, Sense of Duty, and Truthful.

Traditional female characters will frequently have Shyness, since they are protected and not encouraged to mix with strangers. Composed and Indecisive are also appropriate for traditional female characters, as they are expected to be passive and accepting.

### Uncommon Advantages and Disadvantages

Few Sword Worlder characters, especially males or non-traditional females, should have Nosy, Talkative, or Easy to Read. Sword Worlder society values a taciturn nature; excessive display of feelings or curiosity is an Odious Personal Habit.

### Cowardice

see p. B32

A male or nontraditional female who has Cowardice must automatically take either a 10-point Secret or a negative Reputation as well. Courage is a quintessential male trait, and those lacking it face severe discrimination.

### Military Rank

see p. B22

Each of the Sword Worlds' armed services uses a slightly different system of ranks. Indeed, the rank structure is likely to change from world to world and even region to region, as local forces assert their independence by varying their organization. The following tables give typical rank structures for the Army, Navy, and Confederation Patrol.

## SWORD WORLDER

### ARMY RANKS

Rank	Position
8	<i>Generalloejtnant</i> (Lieutenant General), <i>General</i> (General), <i>Marshal</i> (Senior officer of an entire planetary force)
7	<i>Brigadegeneral</i> (Brigadier General), <i>Generalmajor</i> (Major General)
6	<i>Oberst</i> (Colonel)
5	<i>Oberstloejtnant</i> (Lieutenant Colonel)
4	<i>Kaptajn</i> (Captain), <i>Major</i> (Major)
3	<i>Kadet</i> (Officer Candidate), <i>Loejtnant</i> (Lieutenant), <i>Premierloejtnant</i> (First Lieutenant)
2	<i>Seniorsergent</i> , <i>Chefsergent</i> (Senior NCO)
1	<i>Sergent</i> (Squad or platoon NCO)
0	<i>Rekrut</i> (Recruit), <i>Menig</i> (Ordinary soldier), <i>Korporal</i> (Corporal)

Typical army ranks within the Sword Worlds are from Danish, as the original army contingent was largely composed of the 8th Scandinavian Army Corps. They therefore retain distinct spelling and pronunciation in modern-day Sagamaal.



## SWORD WORLDER

### NAVY RANKS

Rank	Position
8	<i>Admiral</i> (Admiral), <i>Generaladmiral</i> (Admiral in command of an entire planetary navy), <i>Grossadmiral</i> (Grand Admiral of the entire combined Sword Worlds navy)
7	<i>Kontreadmiral</i> (Rear Admiral), <i>Vizeadmiral</i> (Vice Admiral)
6	<i>Kapiten im Raum</i> (Captain), <i>Komodore</i> (Commodore)
5	<i>Korvettenkapiten</i> (Lieutenant Commander), <i>Fregattenkapiten</i> (Commander)
4	<i>Kapitensleutnant</i> (Lieutenant)
3	<i>Faehnrich im Raum</i> (Officer Cadet), <i>Leutnant im Raum</i> (Ensign), <i>Oberleutnant</i> (Sublieutenant)
2	<i>Oberbootsmann</i> , <i>Hauptbootsmann</i> , <i>Stabsbootsmann</i> (Chief Petty Officers)
1	<i>Maat</i> , <i>Obermaat</i> , <i>Bootsmann</i> (Petty Officers)
0	<i>Matrose</i> (Apprentice), <i>Obermatrose</i> (Ordinary Spacehand), <i>Gefreiter</i> (Able Spacehand)

## SWORD WORLDS

### CONFEDERATION PATROL RANKS

Rank	Position
7	<i>Oberst</i> (Colonel), <i>General</i> (General, senior commander of the entire Patrol)
6	<i>Kapiten</i> (Captain), <i>Oberstleutnant</i> (Lieutenant Colonel)
5	<i>Overleutnant</i> (Senior Lieutenant)
4	<i>Overhode</i> (Overseer), <i>Leutnant</i> (Lieutenant)
3	<i>Konstabel</i> (Constable)
2	<i>Seniorsergent</i> , <i>Chefsergent</i> (Senior NCO)
1	<i>Sergent</i> (NCO)
0	<i>Kadet</i> (Ordinary Patrolman), <i>Korporal</i> (Corporal)

The Confederation Patrol uses ranks differently than the typical Sword Worldeer army or navy. Some of its rank titles are drawn from the German roots of Sagamaal, others from its Scandinavian roots. Meanwhile, some of the ranks use a title similar to one that would carry much less responsibility in the military. The difference is due to the Patrol's origins as police rather than as a military organization.

Finally, the rank of *Overhode* is an addition specific to the Patrol, originally referring to the senior *Konstabel* in an informal team. It has since become a distinct rank title on its own, and is "pushing" the titles of *Leutnant* and above to higher levels of responsibility.

In the Sword Worlds, military or Patrol personnel in active service receive a free level of Status for every three levels of Military Rank purchased, rounded to the nearest Status level. Retired personnel with Courtesy Rank do not get free Status.

*Reputation* see p. B17

A Sword Worldeer's reputation is more important than his life. In the relatively static society of the Sword Worlds, where families live in the same neighborhood for generations, a person's reputation affects not just him, but his descendants. A good reputation is therefore something to be guarded, as it is part of any children's inheritances.

Sword Worldeers judge each other not by official qualifications and licenses, but by what the community thinks – in other words, what everyone else is saying. If Egil makes a bad landing on his first independent flight, it doesn't matter that he scored at the top of his class in piloting school – everyone knows he's a lousy pilot, and he will have a hard time finding a job. Even childhood deeds matter: the boy who cheated in school will have a dishonest reputation as an adult and a hard time gaining a position of trust.



Typical Sword Worldeer navy rank titles are descended from German, with a few changes in spelling and pronunciation over the centuries. The first Sword World to have a true starfaring navy of its own was Sacnoth, which was originally settled by German-speaking members of the *Jaeger* unit (see p. 55). Sword Worldeer navy officers are very careful to cling to their distinctive titles, even those that are similar to army titles – for example, the navy title "Kapiten" is pronounced differently from the army title "Kaptajn," and naval officers tend to emphasize the difference in mixed company.

Sword Worlder characters should make liberal use of Reputations. New characters usually have at least one Reputation reflecting their family's standing or their own prior activities. Whenever characters do something in public, they may acquire a new Reputation. The GM generally should not charge points for this; it is part of the adventure's rewards and just the natural consequence of the adventurers' behavior. In most cases these Reputations will be minor ones, known only to a few people, but with time and reinforcement they will grow. Note that "doing the right thing" is expected in the Sword Worlds. Pulling a child from a burning building will not get a person much of a positive Reputation – after all, anyone else would have done the same thing!

**0-point Reputations:** Not all Reputations have a significant effect on the game. The GM should permit Sword Worlder characters to take trivial Reputations, good or bad. These are effectively a 0-point feature – traits that given groups know, but which don't matter much.

**Example:** Sven Olafsson missed the winning pass in his college rugby game. Almost no one holds it against him, but his classmates won't let him forget it, either! Poor Sven can expect to hear "Hey, Sven, don't drop it this time!" every time he's handed a beer for the rest of his life. He has the following disadvantage: Reputation -1 (Dropped winning pass; old classmates, 10 or less) [0].

## Social Stigma

see p. B27

Traditional females have a Social Stigma (Second-class citizen) worth -10 points. Sword Worlders do not actually treat traditional women *poorly*, but they are certainly not treated as full members of male society. A poor reaction roll does not result in hostility, but in being ignored or patronized: "Don't worry your pretty little head about that. Just sit quietly until I'm finished working and I'll take you home." This Social Stigma only applies to a woman with traditional dress or mannerisms outside her own community; within her community, if she is doing appropriate tasks, a woman faces no stigma.

Nontraditional women earn more respect as individuals, but are still not as well regarded as men. This is reflected by a Social Stigma (Minority group) worth -5 points. As with all minority groups, they get a +1 Reaction from fellow members. Nontraditional females are also limited in terms of career advancement; they rarely earn higher than Military Rank 4, and are similarly restricted in organizations that offer Administrative Rank. A female character taking such a high rank should also have a 10-point Unusual Background, a positive Reputation, or both, at the GM's discretion.

Remember that, as a mandatory disadvantage in a Sword Worlder campaign, a female character's Social Stigma does not count toward the 40-point limit for disadvantages.

The Sword Worlds have a number of other minority groups, notably the *Luffarnir* (p. 92). These also carry a Social Stigma (Minority group) worth -5 points.

## Status

see p. B18

Status within Sword Worlder society works according to the following table. Note that some senior military officers

carry higher levels of Status than they would get from their Military Rank (see p. 110); these officers must pay for the difference.

## SWORD WORLDER STATUS

Status	Description or Title
7	<i>Storhertug</i> (Planetary Grand Duke or High King), <i>Erkehertug</i> (planetary Archduke or "Archking")
6	<i>Hertug</i> (Planetary Duke or King), <i>Grossadmiral</i> , Ambassador
5	<i>Jarl</i> , <i>Generaladmiral</i> , <i>Marshal</i> , Minister
4	<i>Greve</i> , <i>Admiral</i> , <i>General</i>
3	<i>Baron</i> , military general officer, starport manager, Consul
2	<i>Freiherre</i> , military field-grade officer, starship captain, diplomatic attaché, upper management, senior academic
1	Well-regarded citizens (military junior-grade officer, starship officer, free trader captain, diplomatic secretary, middle management, younger academic)
0	Ordinary citizens (soldier, starship crew, free trader officer, technician, skilled laborer, journalist)
-1	Lower class (unskilled laborer, free trader crew, bounty hunter)
-2	Social outcasts (mercenary soldier, refugee, space bum, outlaw)

## SKILLS

The following skills are supplements to those in the *GURPS Traveller*.

### Advertising/TL (Mental/Average) Defaults to IQ-5, Psychology-4

This is the skill of indirect persuasion through the media. Successful advertising can inform the target audience or even alter its perceptions; results require time and exposure. Advertising works on groups, not individuals. The GM should set the effective Will of the target group based on its size, composition, and innate resistance to the desired outcome, then use the *Influence Rolls* (p. B93) rule to determine the outcome. This skill can also be used to create and disseminate propaganda, and for psychological warfare.

### Law Enforcement (Mental/Average) Defaults to IQ-5

This professional skill includes all basic law-enforcement procedures, whether following radio protocol, properly making arrests, protecting a crime scene, or remembering jurisdictional boundaries.

This skill requires specialization by department or agency (see p. B43). It defaults to other agencies at -1 to -5 or more. A successful default roll, for example, would enable a Patrol officer to smoothly work with law enforcers from another world.



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*Personally I have the greatest respect for Private Thorsen. Anyone who will teleport into an Impie bunker and kill an entire gun crew is man enough in my book. But you just can't promote someone like that; the real soldiers won't follow him.*

*– Captain Eivin Lund, Army of Gram Promotion Board*

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This skill should be used in situations that are part of an officer's normal job but that are not covered by more specialized skills like Criminology, Interrogation, and Photography. It also covers routine use of common skills such as Electronics Operation (Communications) to use a radio properly.

## CAREERS AND CHARACTER TEMPLATES

Sword Worlder characters can use most of the standard career templates from *GURPS Traveller*. Sword Worlders will not be Barbarians, and characters with skills exceeding TL10 must purchase the High Technology advantage, but all else remains unchanged.

## THE CONFEDERATION PATROL

The Sword Worlds Confederation Patrol Service is often likened to a militarized version of the Imperial Scouts, but this is misleading. The Patrol acts as an interplanetary police and customs service within the Confederation, enforcing trade restrictions between Confederation and outside worlds, adjudicating minor disputes, and suppressing piracy.

### Organization

Like Sword Worlder society, the Patrol is strongly hierarchical. There are definite differences between officers and enlisted men. The ideal officer is adaptable, capable of turning his hand to nearly anything; the model enlisted man is expert at his job, but not necessarily skilled outside it. Unlike most military organizations,

which have specialist branches, the Patrol is a single organization – specialties are a matter of experience and qualification rather than hierarchy.

This tradition encourages officers to “get their hands dirty” alongside their men – after all, a *capable* officer can do anything his men can. If the visiting ambassador's quarters must be cleaned and repaired in 20 minutes, for example, the young *Konstabel* in charge of the repair detail may be the one cleaning the fresher, while trained enlisted Patrolmen repair the lighting panels and 3D viewer.

### Functions

The Patrol has three main duties: patrol, police, and port. Officers, especially younger ones, are assigned a wide selection of duties, both to train them in a variety of situations and to evaluate their suitability for command. Enlisted men may be shuffled around a bit at first, but usually concentrate on one of the three functions.

While most people think of the patrol duty first, it is port duty that requires the most men. A Sword Worlder starport is not extraterrestrial, unlike its Imperial counterparts. Although it is run by the Confederation, it is built and owned by the planet it serves. This arrangement can lead to some interesting legal friction, and Patrol officers assigned to port duty require good interpersonal skills, as well as legal knowledge.

## SWORD WORLDER DECORATIONS

Sword Worlders award two types of military decoration: ribbons and rings. Ribbons are sewn to the uniform, and indicate a soldier's service record. A veteran of the Lanth campaign, for example, wears a Lanth ribbon. By tradition, service ribbons are only granted for significant campaigns in a declared war – small skirmishes and police actions don't count.

Rings are awarded for acts of exceptional bravery, above and beyond what's expected of a soldier. As Sword Worlders are expected to be brave, stoic, smart, and determined, a ring indicates a truly exceptional act! While a ring-bearer is universally honored, cynical soldiers will avoid him – ring-winners have a reputation for reckless bravery and are dangerous people to be near in a fight! A ring will have a short *kenning* describing the action that won it, inscribed on the inside of it.

Unlike the Imperium, the Sword Worlds have no wound badge. Wounds are part of a soldier's life, born with stoicism and unworthy of comment.

Military decorations carry positive Reputations. Ribbons are generally worth no more than +1, or +2 if there are many of them. A ring is normally worth +2 or +3. The total combined bonus for all honors should never exceed +4. These Reputations affects a large class: all Sword Worlders, plus some foreign military or diplomats. Ribbons provide the bonus on 10 or less, or 7 or less, depending on how often the bearer wears his uniform and how well his face is remembered when he does not. It is reasonable for a ring to provide its bonus all the time; not only is it usual to wear the ring whenever it is safe – i.e. not while operating heavy machinery! – but there are few enough ring-bearers that many Sword Worlders know them all by name.

Patrol duty is about what everyone thinks, but reality is very different from the holodramas. The bulk of the Patrol's duties are long, boring cruises along assigned routes, inspecting routine shipping, and enforcing customs regulations. Genuine piracy is usually rare, though the recent destruction of many ships during the Fifth Frontier War has attracted corsairs to the subsector. Although planetary navies are better equipped to fight pirates, several nasty incidents related to interworld trade disputes have led the Confederation Council to assign the neutral Patrol to that task, rather than more partisan planetary forces. A Patrol ship in hot pursuit has the authority to require assistance from planetary forces, but this is rarely used.

The most-unseen duty of the Patrol is policing. Individual worlds have their own police forces – sometimes more than one – but the Patrol has jurisdiction over interplanetary crimes. In most cases, it functions more as an information clearinghouse than a field force, collating and analyzing information supplied by planetary forces and recommending actions. When it does take action, the Patrol usually collaborates with a planetary force; it simply doesn't have the manpower to duplicate planetary organizations.

Senior Patrol officers also act as neutral adjudicators in minor disputes between worlds. This is only asked of Patrol officers with outstanding reputations for fairness.

The Confederation Patrol Service career is available only to citizens of the Sword Worlds Confederation. The Imperium disbanded the Patrol Service in the Border Worlds after the Fifth Frontier War, replacing it with a System Patrol for each Border World. System Patrols do more policing and no espionage.

Many Border Worlders elected to remain in the Patrol rather than return home after the War, placing their allegiance to the Sword Worlds Confederation ahead of their allegiance to their homeworld. Others, who passed Imperial scrutiny, were allowed to join the new System Patrols, usually at the same or higher rank. Cynics are fond of saying that there is a double agent for every patriotic volunteer.

## Patrol Enlisted Man 90 points

From starry-eyed youngsters to grizzled veterans, the enlisted Patrolman is the Patrol. Smart officers know this; stupid officers don't last. This template represents a *retired* enlisted Patrolman, ready to pursue a life of adventure.

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0]; DX 12 [20]; IQ 12 [20]; HT 11 [10].

**Advantages:** A total of 30 points selected from 3D Spatial Sense [10]; Acceleration Tolerance [10]; Charisma [5/level]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Collected [5]; Courtesy Rank 0-2 [1/level]; G-Experience [10]; Imperturbable [10]; Improved G-Tolerance [10]; Reputation [Varies]; Strong Will [4/level].

**Disadvantages:** A total of -20 points selected from Chummy or Gregarious [-5 or -10]; Code of Honor [-5]; Duty (Reactivation; 6 or less) [-2] or (9 or less) [-5]; Fanaticism (Patriotism) [-15]; Honesty [-10];

Intolerance (Outsiders) [-5]; Overconfidence [-10]; Sense of Duty (Confederation) [-10]; Truthfulness [-5].

**Primary Skills:** Savoir-Faire (Military) (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-13; and one of the following options:

**Clerk:** Administration (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-13; Speed-Reading (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11; Writing (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11; plus a total of 12 points in Typing (P/E), Savoir-Faire (Servant) (M/E), Politics (M/A), Research (M/A), Accounting (M/H), or Law (M/H).

**Engineer:** Electronics (M/H) IQ [4]-12; Engineer (Vehicles) (M/H) IQ [4]-12; Shipbuilding (Starship) (M/A) IQ [2]-12; plus two of Mechanic (J-Drive), Mechanic (M-Drive), or Mechanic (Power Reactor), each (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-13.

## THE FOURTH DUTY

The Patrol has a fourth function: spying. Its officers need trustworthy information to adjudicate disputes fairly, and the Confederation Council needs advance warning of possible conflicts between members in order to head off the trouble. More important, the Confederation needs information on the Imperium and the Darrians: fleet strengths, military plans, diplomatic maneuvers, and so on.

Officially, information gathering and intelligence is a function of the Data Coordination Office of the Patrol, a minor part of the enforcement branch. Unknown to most, the office does more than coordinate different information sources; it maintains a network of agents and informers to gather information on the Confederation's enemies, both internal and external.

**Enforcer:** Area Knowledge (Assigned region) (M/E) IQ+2 [4]-14; Brawling (P/E) DX [1]-12; Guns (any) (P/E) DX [1]-14\*; Law Enforcement (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14; plus a total of 6 points in Stealth (P/A); Interrogation, Intimidation, Shadowing, or Streetwise, all (M/A); or Detect Lies (M/H).

**Gunner:** Armory (any) (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14; Gunner (any shipmounted) (P/A) DX+2 [8]-16\*; and another Gunner (any shipmounted) (P/A) DX+1 [4]-15\*.

**Helmsman:** Area Knowledge (Subsector) (M/E) IQ+2 [4]-14; Astrogation (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14; and Piloting (Spacecraft) (P/A) DX+2 [8]-14.

**Radioman:** Electronics Operation (Communicators) (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14 and Traffic Analysis (M/H) IQ+1 [6]-13; plus an additional 4 points assigned to these two skills.

**Sensor Ops:** Cartography (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-13; Electronics Operation (Sensors) (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-13; and SIGINT Collection/Jamming (M/H) IQ [4]-12; plus an additional 6 points assigned to these three skills.

**Sergeant:** Administration (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14 or Tactics (Space) (M/H) IQ+1 [6]-13; plus Leadership (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-13. Also pick a total of 8 points in any combination of primary skills from another *single* category. Requires Courtesy Rank 1+.

\* Includes +2 for IQ.

**Secondary Skills:** Computer Operation (M/E) IQ [1]-12; Free Fall (P/A) DX [2]-12; Guns (any) (P/E) DX [1]-14\*; and Vacc Suit (M/A) IQ [2]-12.

\* Includes +2 for IQ.



**Background Skills:** A total of 4 points in Brawling (P/E); Carousing (P/A(HT)); Shortsword (P/A); Area Knowledge, Computer Operation, or Scrounging, all (M/E); Administration or Heraldry (Military insignia or Ship markings), both (M/A).

**Customization Notes:** Other primary specialties are possible, and a few Patrolmen – mostly *sergents* – are as well rounded as officers.

## Patrol Officer 100 points

From the freshest *Konstabel* to the most respected *Oberst*, Patrol officers are a true band of brothers. Theirs is a lonely duty, served far from home and family. But someone must guard the hearthfires. This template describes a retired Patrol officer.

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0]; DX 12 [20]; IQ 13 [30]; HT 11 [10].

**Advantages:** A total of 20 points selected from 3D Spatial Sense [10]; Acceleration Tolerance [10]; Charisma [5/level]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Collected [5]; Courtesy Rank 3+ [1/level]; G-Experience [10]; Imperturbable [10]; Improved G-Tolerance [10]; Reputation (Decorated) [Varies]; Status 1 [5]; Strong Will [4/level]; Voice [10].

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*The advantages to being a retired Patrol Officer are few, but one stands out from the rest: Everybody thinks you have more connections than you really do, and you end up getting a lot more respect . . . and fear . . . than would otherwise be the case.*

– Linden Gundesman,  
Confederation Patrol (retired)

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**Disadvantages:** A total of -20 points selected from Chumny [-5]; Code of Honor [-5]; Duty (Reactivation; 6 or less) [-2] or (9 or less) [-5]; Fanaticism (Patriotism) [-15]; Honesty [-10]; Intolerance (Outsiders) [-5]; Jealousy [-10]; Odious Personal Habit (“By the book” or “When I was in the Service . . .”) [-5]; Overconfidence [-10]; Sense of Duty (Confederation) [-10]; Stubbornness [-5]; and Workaholic [-5].

**Primary Skills:** Leadership (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-14; Savoir-Faire (Military) (M/E) IQ [1]-13; and one of the following options:

**Ship Command:** Astrogration (M/A) IQ [2]-13; Piloting (Spacecraft) (P/A) DX+2 [8]-14; and Tactics (Space) (M/H) IQ [4]-13.

**Systems:** Cartography (M/A) IQ [2]-13; Electronics Operation (Communications) (M/A) IQ [2]-13; Electronics Operation (Sensors) (M/A) IQ [2]-13; Intelligence

Analysis (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-12; SIGINT Collection/Jamming (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-12; Traffic Analysis (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-12; plus an additional 2 points in one of these skills.

**Enforcement:** Criminology (M/A) IQ [2]-12; Law Enforcement (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-15; and a total of 6 points in Forensics (M/H), Law (M/H), and Streetwise (Star-town) (M/A).

**Port Administration:** Administration (M/A) IQ+2 [+5]-15; one of Accounting, Law or Diplomacy (M/H) IQ+2 [6]-15; plus three of the following: Accounting, Diplomacy, Electronics (Communications), Engineering, and Law, each (M/H) IQ-2 [1]-11.

**Secondary Skills:** Administration (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-12; Computer Operation (M/E) IQ-1 [1/2]-12; Free Fall (P/A) DX [2]-12; Guns (any) (P/E) DX-1 [1/2]-13\*; Vacc Suit (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-12; plus a total of 10 points in skills from the other options, with at least 1 point from each option.

\* Includes +2 for IQ.

**Background Skills:** A total of 6 points in Shortsword (P/A); Area Knowledge (M/E); Heraldry (Military insignia or Ship markings) or Politics, both (M/A); Psychology or Strategy (Space), both (M/H).

**Customization Notes:** Patrol officers are expected to be versatile. Almost any skill may be purchased, as long as it can be explained as part of the character's background.

## Patrol Agent

Use the Undercover Agent template from *GURPS Traveller* (p. GT99).

## THE CONFEDERATION ARMY

*“Giants fall when the mountains dance.”*

– Motto of the 2nd Lindenscarp  
Artillery Regiment

The Confederation does not maintain a unified army. Instead, member worlds maintain their own military forces, which are deployed under centralized control during wartime. Even in peacetime, the Confederation maintains a full *Kriegsstab*, or “war staff,” which continually monitors and tunes plans, logistics, and deployment schedules, as well as conducting annual all-world exercises.

## Organization

Despite numerous joint exercises, during wartime the Confederation High Command prefers to deploy larger units from a single world, rather than creating forces from several worlds. Militarily, units from the same world share more training and have an *esprit de corps* lacking in mixed organizations. Incidents of friendly fire can be handled by a military tribunal, rather than creating diplomatic incidents that stress the Confederation when unity is most required.

Also unlike the Imperium, none of the Sword Worlds maintain a separate Marine Corps. Instead, shipboard duty is a specialization, just like artillery or armor.

Although each Sword World maintains its own military forces, with its own organizations and equipment, all follow the same general procedures. This is partly to make cooperation easier, but mostly because they all spring from the same source. Ground units are geographically based: men recruited together will serve together. While this has the advantage of creating instant camaraderie, severe losses can ruin a district for a generation. If a district can raise more than one unit, they are frequently deployed apart to minimize the risk of a district losing all its young men.

These local units keep their own names, and are fiercely proud of their military honors. The oldest units can trace their origins back to their planet's original settlement, and even more recent units were formed around a core of veterans who brought with them their former outfits' traditions. Insulting a soldier's unit is a quick way to start a brawl or feud – officers encourage inter-unit competitions as a means of channeling any disagreements into harmless activities.

## Doctrine

If the Imperial Army is a mailed fist, the Sword Worlder armies are bare-knuckle brawlers.

The Sword Worlder armies have evolved to fight two very different kinds of war. First, they have fought each other in the fratricidal troubles that have characterized Sword Worlder history. Second, they have taken on the technological might of the Imperium and held out against overwhelming odds.

Sword Worlders see their armies as defensive in nature. A given army protects its world from aggression, whether from other Sword Worlders or from the Imperium and its lackeys. If "protection" sometimes means preemptive strikes and occupations, this doesn't change the Sword Worlder viewpoint: the army protects them from outside threats.

Home defense when facing other Sword Worlds is relatively straightforward. The worlds are very close technologically and share a common culture. Accordingly, internecine wars tend toward maneuver, with a few culminating battles around strategic targets, frequently the capital city. Damage to civilians and property is kept to a minimum as long as the civilians keep out of the conflict. After all, from the attacker's perspective these are future citizens – while from the defenders', these are what he is defending!

Fighting against the Imperium is another matter. Against this foe the Sword Worlds are outmatched both technologically and logistically. They make up for these shortcomings with brute force and determination.

Sword Worlder armies are heavily equipped with artillery and the doctrine to use it effectively. Artillery units know that they are kings of the battlefield; they also know that their lifespan will be short, as Imperial counterbattery fire and space-based artillery strikes strive to destroy them. Accordingly, they are designed to deliver the greatest possible volume of fire before they are destroyed. They make heavy use of light and disposable multiple-rocket launchers.

Sword Worlders are also renowned as masters of defense. Knowing they are outmatched technologically, they dig in every chance they get, using camouflage and traps to equalize the odds. When possible, they fortify cities, forcing

the Imperium to dig them out house by house rather than rely on orbital bombardment.

Sword Worlder tanks are not expected to take on Imperial tanks – the difference in technology is just too great. Instead, tanks are intended for fast strikes at rear areas: they are swift, with sufficient armor and armament to destroy Imperial light tanks and support vehicles. Imperial armor, especially the dreaded *Intrepid*, is opposed by tank destroyers – turretless vehicles mounting heavy guns and employing "shoot and scoot" tactics from prepared positions.

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*The highest casualty rates against the Sword Worlders occur during urban fighting. Unable to destroy the opposing forces by bombardment due to the necessity of minimizing collateral damage, Imperial forces have to dig the enemy out house-to-house. Even after the defeat of the enemy soldiers has been achieved, casualties continue to be inflicted during the mopping up phase by stay-behinds and booby-traps.*

*– Colonel Guuni Marli-Harrow  
Imperial Marines (retired)*

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## Sword Worlder Army Characters

Players can use the templates from *GURPS Traveller* or *GURPS Traveller: Ground Forces* to create characters from a Sword Worlder army. The Sword Worlds do not have a separate Marine Corps. Instead, the army handles the assault and special operations missions of the Imperial Marines, while shipboard security duties are handled by naval security troops.

The following is a lens specifically for Sword Worlder military characters, which can be added on to most existing military templates. Because this is a lens, the skill points may need to be adjusted a bit to get an optimized character.

### *Kriegsstaab* +20 points

You serve your world while serving the whole Confederation. Whether you are a loyalist who believes in the Confederation, a pragmatist who understands that a strong Confederation protects your world, or simply a soldier following orders, you now serve on the *Kriegsstaab*.

**Requirements:** Military Rank 4 or higher and a clean record (no negative Reputation among superiors).

**Advantages:** A total of 10 points selected from Collected [5]; Contacts (Business, military, and/or political) [Varies]; higher Military Rank [5/level]; Patron (Senior officer) [Varies]; Reputation (Skilled officer; fellow officers, 10 or less) [3/level].

**Disadvantages:** A total of -10 points selected from Incurious [-5]; Delusion ("*Kriegsstaab* is superior") [-5 to -15]; Odious Personal Habit (Affected manner) [-5]; Overconfidence [-10]; Proud [-1]; Sense of Duty (Homeworld or Confederation) [-5 to -15].



**Primary Skills:** 8 points in one of the following: Administration (M/A); Accounting (M/H); Advertising (M/A); Diplomacy (M/H); Economics (M/H); History (M/H); Leadership (M/A); Politics (M/A); or Strategy (Ground or Space) (M/H).

**Secondary Skills:** 4 points each in two different primary skills; 2 points in Savoir-Faire (Military) (M/E); and 2 points in Writing (M/A).

**Background Skills:** A total of 4 points in Carousing (P/A(HT)); Heraldry (Military insignia or ship markings) (M/A); Research (M/A); or Tactics (Ground or Space) (M/H); or any primary or secondary skill.

## FEMALE CHARACTER TEMPLATE

Under normal conditions, traditional women rarely choose a life of adventure. However, the dislocations of the Fifth Frontier War have forced some women into the wider world.

### *Goodwife* 25 points

You had a nice quiet life: shopping, housekeeping, looking after the children, and maybe some gardening or painting. Nothing heroic, mind you – if you'd wanted to be a hero, you'd have chosen a career, not a family. The recent troubles changed all that. With your husband (or father, or brother, or all three) dead, you have been thrown out, forced to use your own resources for the first time in your life.

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 10 [0].

**Advantages:** A total of 35 points selected from Ally (Family member) [Varies]; Claim to Hospitality (From family) [Varies]; Collected [5]; Common Sense [10]; Composed [5]; Empathy [15]; Fashion Sense [5]; Intuition [15]; and Musical Ability [1/level].

**Disadvantages:** Social Stigma -2 [-10] and a total of 30 points selected from Dependents (Children) [Varies]; Gullibility [-10]; Hidebound [-5]; Honesty [-10]; Indecisive [-10]; Intolerance (Outsiders) [-5]; Jealousy [-10]; Sense of Duty (Family) [-10]; Shyness [-5 to -15]; Truthfulness [-5]; Uneducated [-5]; and Weak Will [-8/level].

**Primary Skills:** Area Knowledge (Neighborhood) (M/E) IQ+2 [4]-12; Cooking (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-11; Professional Skill: Childcare (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-11; Professional Skill: Housekeeping (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-11.

**Secondary Skills:** A total of 10 points in Driving (P/A); Beverage-Making, First Aid, Gardening, Gesture, or Savoir-Faire (M/E); Teaching (M/A); Body Language or Detect Lies (M/H); or any primary skill.

**Background Skills:** A total of 6 points in Singing (P/E(HT)); Swimming (P/E); Dancing or Riding (any) (P/A); Flower Arranging or Weaving (M/E); Dyeing or Pottery (M/A); Artist or Musical Instrument (M/H); or any primary or secondary skill.

**Customization Notes:** This template is adaptable – virtually anything, in particular Appearance and Wealth, may be added. A character taking a “male” skill, such as Guns, should also take an Unusual Background.

## EQUIPMENT

Sword Worlders are Human, and can use all Imperial equipment without penalty. Imperials can likewise use Sword Worlder equipment. Of course, being able to use each other's equipment doesn't mean that the equipment can work *together*. There are different standards, interfaces, power levels, calibers, and so on, so Sword Worlder equipment cannot use Imperial accessories, parts, or supplies without modification, and vice versa.

The differences between Imperial and Sword Worlder equipment go beyond different standards. Sword Worlders see themselves as bold pioneers, and even civilian equipment is ruggedly designed – as rugged as military gear. To Imperials, this gives the Sword Worlds a militaristic “feel.” To Sword Worlders, Imperial equipment looks flimsy.

The other noticeable difference between Sword Worlder and Imperial equipment is in the former's capacity to be repaired by a single man with a toolbox. In keeping with their frontiersman self-image, Sword Worlder men take pride in maintaining and repairing their own possessions. Equipment is designed with this in mind: standard fittings, easy access, and comprehensive owner's manuals are the norm.

Each Sword World builds its own models of vehicles and weapons, but all follow the same templates for many parts. Mechanics have a knack for jury-rigging in any case, so these similarities are thoroughly exploited in the field.

Equipment manufactured on different Sword Worlds is usually compatible. Although each member world maintains its own military forces, which are deployed together as units, the Kriegsstaab takes great care to ensure that, as much as possible, equipment designed and manufactured on one world can use parts and supplies made on another. Thus, Tizon and Hrunting may field different grav tanks, but they use the same bolts, couplings, fittings, and so on. In typical Sword Worlder fashion, manufacture of standard equipment and supplies takes place at countless small shops and mini-factories. This may be less efficient than a few larger plants, but it spreads the economic benefits more evenly, and also makes Sword Worlder logistics remarkably hard to disrupt: even worlds under occupation can keep manufacturing military equipment in small basement workshops.

## PERSONAL WEAPONS

All TL9 or TL10 equipment found in other *GURPS Traveller* books is available in the Sword Worlds, subject to legal restrictions. While Sword Worlder equipment has a different design philosophy, its performance is the same as the equivalent Imperial gear. Some of the personal weapons common in the Sword Worlds are listed here.

## PERSONAL WEAPON TABLE

### Rifles

Name	Type	Damage	SS	Acc	1/2D	Max	Wt	aWt	RoF	Shots	ST	Rcl	Cost
Riddare ACR			12						12*	20	11	-2	Cr1,930
with Solid	Cr.	7d	10	13	780	4,100	9.8	-	0.81				
with APS	Cr.	9d (2)	10	14	1,170	6,150	9.6	-	0.61				
Knekt BCR			12						12*	20	11	-2	Cr730
with Solid	Cr.	7d	10	13	780	4,100	9.8	-	0.81				
with APS	Cr.	9d(2)	10	14	1,170	6,150	9.6	-	0.61				
50mm RAM-HEAT	Exp.	6d+6 (10)	12	10	500	600	-	1	1/6	-	-	-	Cr15

Wt is weight with a magazine, but without a RAM grenade.

### Tac Missiles

Weapon	MalF	Guidance	Damage	Max	Spd	End	Wt	RoF	Shots	Cost
Wotan ATGM	Crit	IIRH/20	6d+40 (10)	4,800	800	6	40	1NR	1	Cr7,037

### Riddare ("Knight") 7.7mmCL ACR (TL9)

The Knight is the standard Advanced Combat Rifle in many Sword Worlds forces. The ACR comes with gyro-stabilization, HUD, laser sights, and a large RAM grenade launcher.

### Knekt ("Squire") 7.7mmCL BCR (TL9)

The Squire is a Basic Combat Rifle for support troops and militia. It retains the basic frame of the Knight and the RAM grenade launcher, but it lacks the advanced electronics.

### 50mm RAM-HEAT Grenade (TL9)

Since they face neighbors with advanced battledress, the Sword Worlds issue many of these anti-armor grenades.

### Wotan ATGM (TL9)

This disposable launcher fires an infrared-homing missile. The troops can take cover immediately after the launch.

## MINES

The Sword Worlde military makes heavy use of mines as an adjunct to its doctrine of finding a defensible position and digging in.

### Naeve ("Fist") Anti-Armor Mine (TL9)

This antipersonnel mine is useful against battledress troops. Pressure triggered, Exp. 6d+10 (10), 1 lb., Cr40.

### Hammarslag ("Hammer Blow") Anti-Vehicle Mine (TL9)

This mine is primarily used against light tanks and APCs. Wire-command triggered, Exp. 6d+100 (10), 132 lb., Cr4340.

### Valkyrie Nuclear Demolition Charge (TL9)

The Valkyrie has been standard issue for many command and engineering units during and since the Fifth Frontier

War. Fiber-optic wire trigger with radio backup, 6d+4,000,000, 8.9 lbs., \$18,418.

### Ragnarok Nuclear Demolition Charge (TL9)

This one-megaton bomb is a last-ditch weapon. Political considerations have prevented its use within the Sword Worlds, although it was used on Lanth during the Fifth Frontier War. Smart trigger with radio backup, 6d+4,000,000,000, 65 lbs., \$34,880.

## VEHICLES

As with personal equipment, Sword Worlde vehicles differ from Imperial equipment in design philosophy. Sword Worlde civilian vehicles use heavier frames than Imperial vehicles, with simple components designed to be maintained more easily under field conditions.

Sword Worlds vehicles are generally civilian versions of military designs, built on the same chassis and using the same parts. (Think of contemporary Americans driving nothing but Jeeps and Humvees.) This doesn't mean that adventurers can buy a street-legal grav tank, without weapons! It *does* mean that their grav van will be built to the same specifications as a grav APC. It may lack the armor, and consequently not have as many grav modules or as big a power plant, but the chassis is the same. So is the engine compartment, and a competent mechanic with the right tools could install a larger power plant, additional grav modules, and some *appliqué* armor to create a respectable APC in a few hours. Many Sword Worlders possess the skills and equipment to do these conversions.

## GROUND VEHICLES FOR GVDS

Although the Grav Vehicle Design System in *GURPS Traveller: Ground Forces* is intended for creating grav vehicles, with some additions it can handle the wheeled and tracked vehicles that are still common in Sword Worlde space.





## Motive Subassembly

After selecting the body and body options, multiply hull volume by 0.6 (for a tracked subassembly) or 0.2 (for a wheeled subassembly). Using the table for turrets, select the subassembly closest in volume to that result. Rather than using the listed cost, multiply the surface area of the motive subassembly by KCr0.42 (wheeled) or KCr0.35 (tracked).

Wheeled and tracked motive subassemblies may not have components installed in them, nor may they be sloped or streamlined. They do not take space away from the body like turrets do.

A single subassembly represents all the vehicle's tracks or wheels. Divide the subassembly's hit points by the number of wheels or tracks. For wheeled vehicles, each tire (see below) has a number of hit points equal to the wheel's hit points. Ground vehicles under these rules have four or six wheels or two or more tracks.

In *GURPS Vehicles* terms, wheeled subassemblies are assumed to be off-road wheels. They have the improved suspension, improved brakes, all-wheel steering, and smart-wheels. The wheeled drivetrain is an all-wheel drive.

## Drivetrain

Any ground vehicle intended to move under its own power needs a drivetrain, to transfer power from the engine to wheels or tracks. A trailer does not require a drivetrain, just a wheeled or tracked motive subassembly. A drivetrain replaces the thruster modules required by a grav vehicle.

A wheeled drivetrain weighs 60 pounds, plus 3 pounds per kW of rated power. A tracked drivetrain of the same kW rating weighs twice as much. Cost for either type of drivetrain is (KCr0.02 × weight in pounds). Volume in VSP equals weight divided by 250; round fractions up to the nearest 0.1 VSP.

## Ground Performance

Ground vehicles calculate performance differently than grav vehicles, as follows.

**Acceleration (gAccel):** Multiply the vehicle's drivetrain kW rating by 2,000. Divide this by the vehicle's loaded weight. Take the square root of the result and multiply by 0.8 to find gAccel.

**Top Speed:** Multiply gAccel by 18 for wheels and 13 for tracks.

**Deceleration (gDecel):** This is 20 mph/s for wheels and tracks.

**Maneuverability Rating (gMR):** For wheeled vehicles, this is 1.75 if 0.5 dtons or less, gMR 1.5 if 0.7 to 6 dtons, and gMR 1 if 7 dtons or larger. For tracked vehicles, gMR is 0.75 if 6 dtons or less, 0.5 if 7 dtons or larger.

**Stability Rating (gSR):** Wheeled vehicles have gSR 5 unless they are 0.3 dtons or smaller, then gSR is 4. Tracked vehicles 0.3 dtons or smaller have gMR 4. A body 0.5 to 1 dton is gMR 5 and 1.5 to 3 dtons is gMR 6. Larger tracked bodies are gMR 7.

**Ground Pressure:** Divide the motive subassembly by 33 (wheels) or 5 (tracks) to find contact area. Divide the

vehicle's loaded weight by the contact area to find ground pressure. The table indicates off-road speed.

## Ground Pressure Table

Ground Pressure	Description	Tracks	Wheels
150 or less	Extremely low	Full	4/5
151-900	Very low	4/5	2/3
901-1,800	Low	2/3	1/2
1,801-2,700	Moderate	1/2	1/3
2,701-7,500	High	1/3	1/4
7,501-15,000	Very high	1/4	1/6
15,001+	Extremely high	1/6	1/8

## USING GROUND VEHICLES

Ground vehicles operate differently than grav vehicles.

### Combat

Unlike grav vehicles, ground vehicles can be immobilized fairly easily. On the bright side, an immobilized ground vehicle doesn't crash to the ground!

Regardless of the DR of the wheeled subassembly, tires are only PD 2/DR 2. Tires are automatically hit, instead of the wheel, by attacks from below or the front. If the wheel is armored, its DR protects the tire from the side on a 1-4 on 1d.

If a track takes 10% or more of its hit points as damage in one attack, roll 1d; on a 1-2 that track becomes disabled and gSpeed drops to 0.

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*The Sword Worlders are unable to field large numbers of grav vehicles, but this does not mean that our forces can become complacent in their technological superiority.*

— Colonel Guuni Marli-Harrow  
Imperial Marines (retired)

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Every time a vehicle is hit, or encounters a hazard (such as a slick road) the operator must roll against his Driving skill. Apply the following situational modifiers:

Condition	Modifier
Wet road	-1
Ice or packed snow	-2
Oil slick	-2
Wheeled vehicle	-1

If the control roll fails, *subtract* the vehicle's Stability Rating (SR) from the amount by which the roll missed, and consult the following table. A critical failure is treated as missing by 10 or more!

Failure	Result
0 or less	Skid or Veer
1 or 2	Spinout
3 or 4	Roll
5 or more	Vault

## VEHICLE MODULES

Type of Module	TL	VSP	Wt.	KCr	Pow.
Cramped Seating	-	-4	-20	0	0
Cramped Exposed Seating	-	-2	-10	0	0
Ground Electronics (Civilian)	9	neg.	neg.	2.3	neg.
Ground Electronics (Military)	9	neg.	neg.	9.0	neg.
MHD Core	9	0.4	50	1	15
MHD Core	10+	0.4	50	1	40
MHD Power	9	0.2	25	0.5	25
MHD Power	10+	0.2	25	0.5	40
Mini AESA	9	0.1	23	7.5	-3.8
Mini AESA	10	0.1	23	7.5	-7.5
Mini AESA	11+	0.1	26	8.8	-17.5
Mini PESA	9	0.1	20	80	neg.
Mini PESA	10	0.1	20	80	neg.
Mini PESA	11+	0.1	25	100	neg.
Normal Seating	-	-2	-10	0	0
Normal Exposed Seating	-	-1	-5	0	0
RTG Core	9	1	250	12.5	+35
RTG Power	9	1	250	12.5	+50



**Skid or Veer:** If the vehicle turned or made a bend, it skids, otherwise it veers. A skid moves the vehicle 5' in the direction it was traveling *before* the turn or bend, and subtracts 10 mph from its speed. Tracked vehicles must make a HT+2 roll or shed a track. A veer changes the facing 30 degrees left or right (roll randomly); tracked vehicles must make a HT+1 roll or shed a track.

**Spinout:** All tires and wheels take 1d damage per 20 mph speed, rounded up. Tracked vehicles must make a HT-2 roll or shed a track. The vehicle travels in the direction it was traveling before the spin, but has a new random facing every turn. It decelerates 20 mph every turn. A control roll at -4 will end the spin and restore the original facing.

**Roll:** The vehicle turns 90° and rolls in the direction it was originally traveling. At the end of every rolling turn the body and subassemblies take 10d damage per ton of loaded weight. It decelerates 20 mph per turn, and cannot be controlled until it stops.

**Vault:** The vehicle leaps skyward, sails 1d vehicle lengths, crashes to the ground, skids 1d vehicle lengths, and stops. It takes (body HP × speed in mph)/200 dice damage.

## NEW VEHICLE MODULES

**Cramped/Normal Seating:** Not all seats are roomy enough for battledress, especially in lower-tech vehicles. Add one of these options to a crew or passenger module.

**Ground Electronics (Civilian):** An electronics package for civilian vehicles, it contains a small computer (Complexity 3), GPS, transponder, LLTV (magnification ×1), short range radio (100 mile range), four radars (1×0.5 miles, 3×0.1 miles, surface search, no targeting), and computerized controls.

**Ground Electronics (Military):** An electronics package for military vehicles, it contains a small computer (Complexity 3, hardened), military GPS, IFF, LLTV (magnification ×5), medium range radio (1000 mile range, scrambler), medium range

laser communicator (2000 mile range, scrambler), radar (4 × 5 miles), and computerized controls.

**MHD Core:** The core of a magnetohydrodynamic power plant. Fuel consumption is 2.7 at TL9, 6 at higher tech levels.

**MHD Power:** Extra power for a vehicle with an MHD Core already installed. Fuel consumption is 4.5 at TL9, 6 at higher tech levels.

**Mini AESA:** Like the Small and Large AESA modules in GVDS, but smaller. Range is 15 miles (Scan 18) at TL9, 30 miles (Scan 20) at TL10, and 70 miles (Scan 22) at TL11+.

**Mini PESA:** Like the Small and Large PESA modules in GVDS, but smaller. Range is 10 miles (Scan 17) at TL9, 20 miles (Scan 19) at TL10, and 50 miles (Scan 21) at TL11+.

**RTG Core:** The core parts of a radiothermal generator. a RTG is similar to an NPU, but produces less power for a longer period. The RTG functions for 14 years on internal fuel before requiring a complete replacement.

**RTG Power:** Extra power for a vehicle with a RTG Core already installed.

## NEW VEHICLE WEAPON MODULES

**100mm EMC:** A TL9 electromagnetic cannon firing depleted-uranium darts. It has higher penetration, but lower damage, than a plasma gun. Requires Gunner (Railgun) skill.

**200mm EMC:** A larger TL9 electromagnetic cannon. It does not come with a casemate. The arc of fire is only 15° to either side. Requires Gunner (Railgun) skill.

**200mm AutoRL:** A magazine-fed autoloading missile launcher designed for rapid sustained missile fire. Designed to fire the same missiles as the standard Imperial 200mm MRL (p. T:GF116).

**7.7mm Minigun:** A TL9 caseless minigun, as a cheaper alternative to the VRFGG. Requires Gunner (Machine Gun) skill.



## VEHICLE DESIGNS

The following vehicles are typical Sword Worlder designs.

### FRAKT CARGO TRUCK (TL9)

This is a medium cargo truck that can carry just over 1 dton of cargo. It is used in situations where *Vinlander* (p. 123) or *Milliphant* (p. 124) grav vehicles are considered "too fussy" by practical Sword Worlders. Many cities in the subsector are old enough that they still have roads, and they are often busy with *Fraktnir*. The *Frakt* is also a popular model in very rural areas.

**Subassemblies:** Body +5, 8 Wheels +3.

**Powertrain:** 315-kW MHD Turbine, 300-kW Wheeled Drivetrain, 8 Fuel Tanks.

**Fuel/End:** 264 gallons hydrogen and oxygen (Fire 13). Uses 56.7 gph.

**Occ:** 2 CS. **Cargo:** 114 Body.

<b>Armor</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>RL</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>U</b>
All:	3/5	3/5	3/5	3/5	3/5

#### Equipment

*Body:* Safety, 2 Winch, Ground Electronics (Civilian).

#### Statistics

**Size:** 18'x7'x6' **Payload:** 14.9 tons **Lwt:** 17.88 tons  
**Volume:** 1.8 dtons **Maint:** 60 hours **Price:** KCr 111.885

**HT:** 11 **HP:** 1500 [Body], 66 [Each Wheel]

**gSpeed:** 59 **gAccel:** 3 **gDecel:** 20 **gMR:** 1.5 **gSR:** 5  
 High Ground Pressure. 1/4 Off-Road Speed.

## WEAPON MODULES TABLE

Type of Module	TL	VSP	Weight	KCr	PPS
100mm EMC	9	28.8	7,200	990	114
20 rds. APFSDSDU	9	1	(507)	(72)	—
20 rds. 0.1 kt micronuke	9	1	(500)	(312)	—
20 rds. 10 kt nuke	9	1	(500)	(432)	—
200mm EMC	9	79.2	19,800	3,780	900
1 rd. APFSDSDU	9	0.4	(200)	(28.8)	—
1 rd. HE	9	0.4	(200)	(4.8)	—
1 rd. ICM	9	0.4	(200)	(24)	—
1 rd. 1 kt nuke	9	0.4	(200)	(22.8)	—
1 rd. 100 kt nuke	9	0.4	(200)	(28.8)	—
200mm AutoRL	9	2.4	600	10	—
7.7mm Minigun	9	0.128	32	2.52	neg.
1,000 rds. APS	9	0.039	(19.3)	(0.60)	—

#### Design Notes

Frames are heavy for 1.5 dton body and 0.3 dton wheeled subassembly. MHD plant is closed-cycle Core plus 12 Power.

### SKOELD WHEELED APC (TL9)

This is a medium cargo truck that serves as an APC/troop transport in noncritical roles, such as garrisons and internal security. It can also be modified to serve as a command post and medivac vehicle.

**Subassemblies:** Body +5, Turret +0, 8 Wheels +3.

**Powertrain:** 315-kW MHD Turbine, 300-kW Wheeled Drivetrain, 8 Fuel Tanks.

**Fuel/End:** 264 gallons hydrogen and oxygen (Fire 13). Uses 56.7 gph.

**Occ:** 2 CS, 12 RS. **Cargo:** 4 Body.

<b>Armor</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>RL</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>U</b>
<i>Body:</i>	4/40	4/40	4/40	4/40	4/40
<i>Turret:</i>	4/40	4/40	4/40	4/40	4/40
<i>Wheels:</i>	3/5	3/5	3/5	3/5	3/5

## VEHICULAR ARMAMENTS TABLE

Weapon Name	Type	Damage	SS	Acc	1/2D	Max	RoF	TL
100mm EMC								
w/APFSDSDU	Cr.	6d×100 (3)	30	20	11,000	27,000	1/5	9
w/0.1 kt micronuke	Exp.	6d×400,000	30	19	7,500	18,000	1/5	9
w/10 kt nuke	Exp.	6d×40,000,000	30	19	7,500	18,000	1/5	9
200mm EMC								
w/APFSDSDU	Cr.	6d×200 (3)	30	20	17,000	36,000	1/10	9
w/HE	Exp.	6d×375 [12d]	30	20	11,000	24,000	1/10	9
w/ICM	Spcl.	300 yd	30	20	11,000	24,000	1/10	9
w/1 kt nuke	Exp.	6d×4,000,000	30	19	11,000	24,000	1/5	9
w/100 kt nuke	Exp.	6d×400,000,000	30	19	11,000	24,000	1/5	9
7.7mm Minigun								
w/APS	Cr.	9d (2)	17	13	1,200	6,200	100*	9

### Weaponry

20mm ETC chaingun [Tur:F] (1,250 rounds) +0.

### Equipment

Body: Safety, 2 Winch, Mini-AESA, Mini-PESA, Searchlight, Ground Electronics (Military).

### Statistics

Size: 18'x7'x7' Payload: 2.37 tons Lwt: 8.04 tons  
Volume: 1.82 dtons Maint: 39 hours Price: KCr 262.015

HT: 11 HP: 1500 [Body], 66 [Each Wheel], 90 [Tur]

gSpeed: 88 gAccel: 4 gDecel: 20 gMR: 1.5 gSR: 5  
High Ground Pressure. 1/4 Off-Road Speed.

### Design Notes

Frames are heavy for 1.5 dton body, 0.3 dton wheeled subassembly and 0.02 dton turret. MHD plant is closed-cycle Core plus 12 Power.

*The Vittne command car is easily mistaken for a civilian vehicle, for the very good reason that it is a slight modification of the civilian Slaetland rangetruck. Sword Worlds forces take full advantage of the confusion, often mixing their convoys with civilian vehicles, especially during withdrawals and retrograde actions.*

*– Colonel Guuni Marli-Harrow  
Imperial Marines (retired)*

## SLAETLAND RANGE TRUCK (TL9)

This is a roomy 5-man civilian truck for use away from civilization. It has a useful enclosed cargo load and good performance. It also sees service in military support units.

**Subassemblies:** Body +4, 4 Wheels +2.

**Powertrain:** 140-kW MHD Turbine, 125-kW Wheeled Drivetrain, 3 Fuel Tanks.

**Fuel/End:** 99 gallons liquid hydrogen (Fire 13) or 66 gallons liquid hydrogen and 33 gallons liquid oxygen (Fire 13). 25.2 gph.

**Occ:** 1 CS, 4 RS. **Cargo:** 15.5 Body

Armor	F	RL	B	T	U
All:	3/5	3/5	3/5	3/5	3/5

### Equipment

Body: Safety, 2 Winch, Ground Electronics (Civilian).

### Statistics

Size: 12'x6'x5' Payload: 2.52 tons Lwt: 4.43 tons  
Volume: 0.85 dtons Maint: 89 hours Price: KCr 50.885

HT: 12 HP: 450 [Body], 47 [Each Wheel]

gSpeed: 76 gAccel: 4 gDecel: 20 gMR: 1.5 gSR: 5  
Moderate Ground Pressure. 1/3 Off-Road Speed.

### Design Notes

Frames are medium for 0.7 dton body and 0.15 dton wheeled subassembly. MHD plant is Core plus 5 Power.

## VITTNE COMMAND CAR (TL9)

Based on the range truck, the command car seats up to five staff members. It is generally only used by reserve or garrison units, as it is not well suited to the modern, deadly battlefield. By civilian standards, however, it is strongly built.

**Subassemblies:** 4 Wheels.

**Powertrain:** 140-kW MHD Turbine, 125-kW Wheeled Drivetrain, 5 Fuel Tanks.

**Fuel/End:** 165 gallons liquid hydrogen (Fire 13) or 110 gallons liquid hydrogen and 55 gallons liquid oxygen (Fire 13). 25.2 gph.

**Occ:** 6 CS. **Cargo:** 2.5 Body.

Armor	F	RL	B	T	U
Body:	4/20	4/20	4/20	4/20	4/20
Wheels:	3/5	3/5	3/5	3/5	3/5

### Equipment

Body: Safety, 2 Winch, 2 Ground Electronics (Military), Mini-AESA, Mini-PESA, Searchlight, 2 Discharger Packs (Hot Smoke).

### Statistics

Size: 12'x6'x5' Payload: 1.21 tons Lwt: 3.83 tons  
Volume: 0.85 dtons Maint: 42 hours Price: KCr 229.875

HT: 12 HP: 450 [Body], 47 [Each Wheel]

gSpeed: 82 gAccel: 4 gDecel: 20 gMR: 1.5 gSR: 5  
Moderate Ground Pressure. 1/3 Off-Road Speed.

### Design Notes

Frames are medium for 0.7 dton body and 0.15 dton wheeled subassembly. MHD plant is Core plus 5 Power. The vehicle has basic stealth and basic cloaking.

## TUSENFOT TRACKED ATV (TL9)

This large ATV is designed for extended operations in hostile environments with a crew of two and eight passengers – up to four more passengers can be carried if additional life support is added, or life support is not needed at all. At cruising speed, the vehicle has an impressive range of over 2,400 miles.



**Subassemblies:** Body +5, 2 Tracks +5, Turret +2.  
**Powertrain:** 1,140-kW MHD Turbine, 1000-kW Tracked Drivetrain, Light Energy Bank, 269 Fuel Tanks.  
**Fuel/End:** 8877 gallons liquid hydrogen (Fire 13) or 5918 gallons liquid hydrogen and 2959 gallons liquid oxygen (Fire 13). 205.2 gph.  
**Occ:** 2 CS [Body], 1 CS [Tur], 8 RS [Body].  
**Cargo:** 50 Body.

Armor	F	RL	B	T	U
Body:	4/20	4/20	4/20	4/20	4/20
Turret:	4/20	4/20	4/20	4/20	4/20
Tracks:	4/30	4/30	4/30	4/30	4/30

#### Weaponry

PD Laser/9 [Tur:F] (519 shots) +0.

*The civilian Vinlander cargo van is easily mistaken for the Skraaling APC and vice versa. Units should be alert to the possibility that a misidentification could lead to an attack on civilians.*

*— Colonel Guuni Marli-Harrow  
Imperial Marines (retired)*

#### Equipment

Body: Safety, 5 Winch, 4 Ground Electronics (Civilian), 2 Airlocks, 4 Bunks, 2 ESU, Workshop (Mechanic), Workshop (Electronics).

#### Statistics

Size: 35'×9'×10' Payload: 23.2 tons Lwt: 42.24 tons  
 Volume: 10.1 dtons Maint: 30 hours Price: KCr 442.57

HT: 10 HP: 2250 [Body], 750 [Each Track], 150 [Tur]

gSpeed: 70 gAccel: 4 gDecel: 20 gMR: 0.5 gSR: 7  
 High ground pressure. 1/3 Off-Road speed.

#### Design Notes

Frames are medium for 6 dton body, 4 dton tracked sub-assembly and 0.1 dton turret. MHD plant is closed-cycle Core plus 45 Power. The body and turret are sealed.

### HNAEFIR AIR/RAFT (TL9)

A simple design, the *Hnaefir* is more rugged than most civilian Imperial air/rafts. Two *Hnaefirs* can carry a squad and their equipment faster than the *Skraaling* APC, although with less protection and virtually no sensors.

The *Hnaefir* features heavy compartmentalization.

**Subassemblies:** Body +4.

**Powertrain:** 227.5 kW NPU, 1 Light CG, 2 Thrusters.

**Occ:** 2 RCS, 4 RS. **Cargo:** 11.7 Body.

Armor	F	RL	B	T	U
Body:	4/50	4/50	4/50	4/50	4/50

#### Equipment

Body: Basic Avionics.

#### Statistics

Size: 5'×7'×10' Payload: 1.2 tons Lwt: 3.8 tons  
 Volume: 0.7 dtons Maint: 48 hours Price: KCr174.7

HT: 12 HP: 900 [Body]

aSpeed: 630 aAccel: 8 aDecel: 12 aMR: 3 aSR: 4  
 CG lift 3.9 Gs.

#### Design Notes

Frame is heavy for 0.7-dton streamlined body. NPU plant is Core plus 1 Power.

### VINLANDER VAN (TL9)

A civilian version of the *Skraaling* APC, the *Vinlander* is a common sight in the Sword Worlds. Not only are many personal vehicles based on it, it can also be refitted as a small truck. Although it has a smaller power plant, less contragravity, and only basic avionics, the frame is the same as that of the *Skraaling*, which means that the engine compartment is the same size. Refitting a *Vinlander* with a *Skraaling*'s power and lift units is a simple task, as is adding a turret. Mounting *appliqué* armor is harder, but well within the capabilities of a collegium workshop.

The *Vinlander* Van features heavy compartmentalization and a sealed body.



**Subassemblies:** Body +4.

**Powertrain:** 352.5 kW NPU, 1 Light CG, 4 Thrusters.

**Occ:** 2 CS, 12 NS. **Cargo:** 13.7 Body.

Armor	F	RL	B	T	U
Body:	6/20	3/10	3/10	3/10	3/10

#### Equipment

Body: Basic Avionics, Safety.

#### Statistics

Size: 6'×8'×16' Payload: 2.1 tons Lwt: 5.8 tons  
 Volume: 1.5 dtons Maint: 36 hours Price: KCr 313.4

HT: 12 HP: 3,000 [Body]

aSpeed: 310 aAccel: 11 aDecel: 12 aMR: 3 aSR: 4  
 CG lift 2.6 Gs.

### Design Notes

Frame is extra-heavy for 1.5-dton sloped body. NPU plant is Core plus 2 Power.

### Roomy Variant

Replace the normal crew and passenger seats with roomy ones. This reduces passenger seats to 8, Body cargo becomes 21.7, Lwt. 5.6, Price: KCr 310.4

### Cargo Variant

Remove the passenger seats. Body cargo becomes 97.7, Lwt. 8.0, aAccel: 8, Price: KCr 304.4, CG lift 1.9 Gs.

## MILLIPHANT CARGO HAULER (TL9)

The *Milliphant* Cargo Hauler is a standard heavy cargo grav vehicle. Its boxy outline is a familiar sight on many Sword Worlds.

The *Milliphant* features a sealed body.

**Subassemblies:** Body +5.

**Powertrain:** 852.5 kW NPU, 2 Medium CG, 8 Thrusters.

**Occ:** 2 RCS. **Cargo:** 564.4 Body.

Armor	F	RL	B	T	U
Body:	3/5	3/5	3/5	3/5	3/5

### Equipment

Body: Basic Avionics, Extra Life Support, Safety.

### Statistics

Size: 15'x10'x20' Payload: 28.4 tons Lwt.: 33.8 tons  
Volume: 6 dtons Maint.: 26 hours Price: KCr577.1

HT: 12 HP: 4,500 [Body]

aSpeed: 255 aAccel: 4 aDecel: 10 aMR: 2.5 aSR: 5  
CG lift 2.4 Gs.

### Design Notes

Frame is heavy for 6-dton body. NPU plant is Core plus 6 Power.

## SKRAALING APC (TL9)

A typical Sword Worlds APC, the *Skraaling* isn't as roomy as Imperial vehicles, but it does the job. Lack of extended life support gives it an operational range of a day in hostile environments; this is not really a problem, given that Sword World forces almost always fight on hospitable worlds. Many variants have been produced, and troops in the field are notorious for adding their own improvements to their equipment, ranging from appliqué armor to captured Imperial fusion guns.

The *Skraaling* APC features heavy compartmentalization, sealed body, basic stealth, basic sound baffling, and basic emission cloaking.

**Subassemblies:** Body +4, Turret +0.

**Powertrain:** 727.5 kW NPU, 2 Light CG, 8 Thrusters.

**Occ:** 2 CS, 12 NS. Cargo: 4.8 Body, 0.5 Tur.

Armor	F	RL	B	T	U
Body:	6/1000	4/200	4/200	4/200	4/200
Turret:	4/500	4/200	4/200	4/200	

### Weaponry

20mm ETC Chaingun [Tur:F] (2,500 APS rounds) +2.

### Equipment

Body: Improved Avionics, Discharger Pack, Safety. Turret: Mini PESA.

### Statistics

Size: 6'x8'x16' Payload: 0.4 tons Lwt: 14.8 tons  
Volume: 1.5 dtons Maint: 21 Price: KCr 924.6

HT: 12 HP: 3,000 [Body], 180 [Tur]

aSpeed: 440 aAccel: 9 aDecel: 12 aMR: 3 aSR: 4  
CG lift 2.0 Gs.

### Design Notes

Frame is extra-heavy for 1.5-dton sloped body and 0.02-dton turret. NPU plant is Core plus 5 Power.

### Ambulance Variant

Replace 10 Passenger modules and Discharger module with 1 Diagnosis Table, 5 ESU, 6 Stretcher. Body Cargo becomes 0.8, Lwt. 14.7, Price MCr 1.0, aAccel 9, CG lift 2.0 Gs.

### Command Variant

Remove 1 Passenger module; upgrade to Advanced Avionics; upgrade to Small PESA; replace 20mm ETC Chaingun with 4mm VRFGG and Small AESA. Body Cargo becomes 3.8, Turret Cargo 0.7, Lwt. 15.7, Price MCr 1.8, aAccel 8, CG lift 1.9 Gs. There is a 1.7 kW shortfall, so the vehicle must slow down when using its AESA.

### Electronic Warfare Variant

As Command Variant, plus remove another Passenger module (10 remaining), add Jammer to Body, add 5 Power to NPU. Body Cargo becomes 3.8, Lwt. 16.5, Price MCr 2.2, aAccel 8, CG lift 1.8 Gs.

### Fire Direction Center Variant

Replace Passengers with 6 Crew (for 8 total), FDC. Body Cargo becomes 6.8, Lwt. 15.6, Price MCr1.2, aAccel 8, CG lift 1.9 Gs.

## KRALLE GRAV TANK (TL9)

The *Kralle* is a typical Sword World tank. It cannot take on heavy Imperial armor, but it is a serious threat for the grav AFVs in a typical Imperial Lift Infantry battalion.

The crew consists of a commander, a driver, and a gunner. The tank features a sealed body, basic stealth, basic emission cloaking and basic sound baffling.

**Subassemblies:** Body +4, top Turret +4.



**Powertrain:** 1.035-MW RTG, 2 Medium CG, 10 Thrusters.  
**Occ:** 3 RCS. **Cargo:** Body 4.

<b>Armor</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>RL</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>U</b>
<i>Body:</i>	6/3,600L	4/600L	4/600L	4/600L	4/600L
<i>Tur:</i>	6/3,600L	4/600L	4/600L	4/600L	

#### **Weaponry**

100mm EMC [Tur:F] (40 APFSDSDU rounds) +2.  
7.7mm Minigun [Tur:F] (5,000 APS rounds) +2.

#### **Equipment**

*Body:* Discharger Pack, Heavy Energy Bank, Improved Avionics, Safety. *Tur:* Small AESA, Small PESA.

#### **Statistics**

*Size:* 45'×12'×8'    *Payload:* 1 ton    *Lwt:* 39.8 tons  
*Volume:* 1.7 dtons    *Maint:* 9.8 hours    *Price:* MCr4.1

*HT:* 11    *HP:* 2,400 [Body], 1,800 [Tur]

*aSpeed:* 415    *aAccel:* 4    *aDecel:* 12    *aMR:* 3    *aSR:* 4  
CG Lift 2 Gs.

#### **Design Notes**

All frames are extra-heavy for 1-dton sloped body, 0.7-dton sloped turret. RTG is Core plus 20 Power.

## **SCRAMASAX GRAV TANK DESTROYER (TL9)**

The *Scramasax* was designed to defeat Imperial heavy armor from ambush positions. It can't stand up to Imperial heavy guns – but with luck, it can fire quickly and then be somewhere else before the Imperial heavy guns can respond.

The crew consists of a commander, a driver, a gunner, and a sensor operator. The tank destroyer features a sealed body, basic stealth, basic emission cloaking, and basic sound baffling.

**Subassemblies:** Body +5.

**Powertrain:** 3.235-MW RTG, 2 Extra-Heavy CG, 20 Thrusters.

**Occ:** 4 RCS. **Cargo:** Body 3.

<b>Armor</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>RL</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>U</b>
<i>Body:</i>	6/14,400	4/1,200	4/1,200	4/1,200	4/1,200

#### **Weaponry**

200mm EMC [Bod:F] (20 APFSDSDU, 10 HE rounds) +2.  
7.7mm Minigun [Bod:F] (5,000 APS rounds) +2.

#### **Equipment**

*Body:* Advanced Avionics, Discharger Pack, 4 Heavy Energy Banks, Safety, Small AESA, Small PESA.

#### **Statistics**

*Size:* 80'×12'×8'    *Payload:* 3.6 tons    *Lwt:* 160 tons  
*Volume:* 3 dtons    *Maint:* 7 hours    *Price:* MCr8.1

*HT:* 8    *HP:* 4,800 [Body]

*aSpeed:* 550    *aAccel:* 2    *aDecel:* 10    *aMR:* 2.5    *aSR:* 5  
CG Lift 3 Gs.

#### **Design Notes**

The frame is extra-heavy for 3-dton sloped body. RTG is Core plus 64 Power.

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*The Mjolnir artillery platform is a deadly example of rugged and carefully thought-out design. Handled with courage and skill, it is capable of inflicting severe casualties on our heaviest assault units, especially those whose leaders underestimate their enemy.*

*– Colonel Guuni Marli-Harrow  
Imperial Marines (retired)*

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## **MJOLNIR ARTILLERY PLATFORM (TL9)**

For mobile fire support, the Sword Worlds rely on the *Mjolnir*. Its massive rate of fire can overwhelm even TL12 point-defense systems, while its standard load of brilliant HEAT rounds can penetrate the top armor of an *Intrepid*, and totally devastate lighter vehicles.

The *Mjolnir* artillery platform features total compartmentalization, sealed body, basic stealth, and basic emission cloaking.

**Subassemblies:** Body +5, Turret +0.

**Powertrain:** 1.6 MW NPU, 1 Heavy CG, 16 Thrusters.

**Occ:** 5 RCS. **Cargo:** 2.0 Body, 1.2 Turret.

<b>Armor</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>RL</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>U</b>
<i>Body:</i>	4/200	4/200	4/200	4/200	4/200
<i>Tur:</i>	4/200	4/200	4/200	4/200	

#### **Weaponry**

4x200mm MRL [Bod:T] (360 Rockets) +2.  
4mm VRFGG [Tur:F] (24,000 APS rounds) +2.

#### **Equipment**

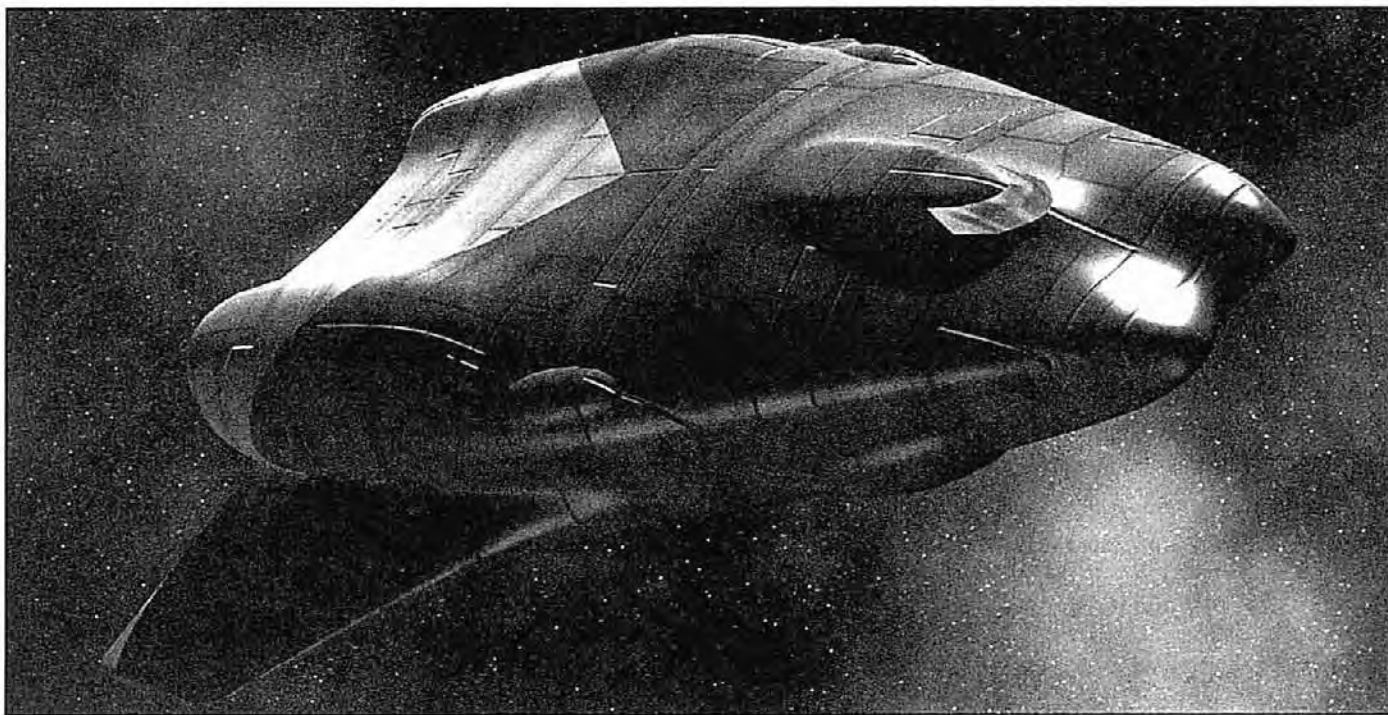
*Body:* Improved Avionics, Extra Life Support, Safety, 1 Small PESA. *Turret:* Small PESA.

#### **Statistics**

*Size:* 10'×10'×20'    *Payload:* 36.7 tons    *Lwt:* 64.8 tons  
*Volume:* 4 dtons    *Maint:* 15 hours    *Price:* MCr1.8

*HT:* 12    *HP:* 6,000 [Body], 180 [Tur]

*aSpeed:* 440    *aAccel:* 4    *aDecel:* 10    *aMR:* 2.5    *aSR:* 5  
CG lift 1.8 Gs.



### Design Notes

Frame is extra-heavy for 4-dton body and 0.02-dton turret. NPU plant is Core plus 12 Power.

### "Hammar" Variant

Replace MRLs with 16x200mm AutoRL; reduce ammunition to 340 x 200mm missiles. Body Cargo becomes 1.2, Lwt. 63.1, Price MCr2.5.

## STARSHIPS

Sword World ships more closely resemble ancient Terran Confederation ships than Imperial vessels, although they also show Aslan influence in their use of curves. Streamlined ships are elegant lifting bodies, like broad leaf-shaped spearheads; unstreamlined vessels are squat and blocky, with protected bridges and sensors on booms. Many craft still use total-conversion fusion rockets (p. T:S39), those that use reactionless thrusters are still laid out in the same manner. Most craft, especially military ones, have fewer amenities than Imperial designs: in the Sword Worlds, it's not just system defense boat crews that sleep 12 to a bunkroom!

### SCEAF-CLASS 100-TON YACHT (TL9)

The *Scaef*-class yacht, like many older Sword Worlds vessels, uses total conversion rockets, which give it better acceleration than reactionless thrusters. Its streamlining allows it to land anywhere with a runway or landing pad. While many Imperial captains sneer at the limited endurance of Sword Worlder rockets, the *Scaef* carries enough fuel for almost four days of continuous acceleration; tapping into the jump fuel allows for over 26 days of full acceleration.

Two luxury staterooms carry the wealthy owner and his guests in comfort, while a superbly appointed office allows

him to keep up with business while traveling. Guests can be entertained in a half-size hall, served by a fully equipped galley which allows the steward to prepare proper meals; many owners travel with a chef as well as a steward, to ensure exquisite dinners en route.

The crew quarters are cozy but comfortable, and their food comes from the same galley as the owner's.

Usual crew is a captain, two engineers, and steward. Any shortfall in maintenance requirements is made up when the ship is docked at a starport.

**Subassemblies:** VGSL Hull +8.

**Powertrain:** Small Engineering Module, 3 Jump Drive, 20 Rocket.

**Fuel:** 20 Jump Fuel Tank, 3 Hydrogen Fuel Tank.

**Occ:** 3 Staterooms, 2 Luxury Staterooms **Cargo:** 2 dtons

Armor	F	RL	B	T	U
All:	4/100	4/100	4/100	4/100	4/100

### Equipment

**Hull:** Liquid Crystal Skin; Electrified Surface; Compact Basic Bridge; Utility; Luxury Office; 0.5 Luxury Halls; Ship's Galley; Emergency Aid Station; Safe; 0.95-dton Vehicle Bay (for *Hnaefir* Air/Raft).

### Statistics

**Size:** 150'x240'x30' **Payload:** 16.8 stons **Lwt:** 270 stons  
**Volume:** 100 dtons **Maint.:** 29 mh/day **Price:** MCr36.7765

**HT:** 12 **HPs:** 15,000 [Hull]

**sAccel:** 2.1 G 281 GRds **Jump:** 2 **aSpeed:** 2,212 mph

### Design Notes

Damage Threshold 1,500 HPs, Aerodynamic Lift 824 stons.



# Campaigns

Eirik came by to visit today. He was brimming with enthusiasm about something, but he was polite and didn't talk business in front of Ilja and the children. He complimented Ilja on what she had done with the new gardens, played with Arnfinn and Helge for a while, and kept his conversation light throughout dinner. Only after Ilja had gone to the apartments with the children did he suggest that we walk out under the stars to talk business.

"That ship that came in a week ago," he said. "It's no tramp merchant. It's a colony venture. They're looking for more men, skilled in all the useful trades. They're going to set up a new world out in the wilderness to spinward."

A long way to spinward, it seemed. It would be a year's journey just to get there. I could see why it had caught his imagination. It was much like the journey our ancestors had made from distant Terra.

"I'm going with them," he told me.

I looked at him – capable hands, sharp eyes, an engineer's mind. Yes, he would do well on such a voyage. I nodded, didn't say anything, waited for what I knew was going to come next.

"You could come too," he finally said. "Bring Ilja and the children. Build a home out there where it will mean something."

"It means something here," I told him, smiling.

"Does it? Look up there," he growled, gesturing at the stars. "We're fenced in. Arrogant Imperials, spooky Zhodani, even the pesky *alfar* Darrians. They're on all sides. Nowhere remains for us to grow, nowhere remains for us to become what we were meant to become, unless we break out of the cage entirely. That's what it's about."

"For you, perhaps," I told him. "My place is here. Anyway, the cage door hasn't slammed shut yet."

He snorted. "It will, soon enough. A generation, a century, two? It doesn't matter. Fenris will someday slip his chain. Your descendants could be out striding the stars long after these worlds have all ground down to dust. Or worse, after they have turned into the homes of small folk, who cling to safety and never once look at the stars."

I slapped his shoulder in good cheer. "No doubt you're right. Still, most of us will never be able to go with you. Someone has to stay behind and defend our homes, even if the fight is doomed."

Eirik looked at me for a long moment, and then grinned. "All right."

We embraced, a hard embrace like brothers share, knowing we would never see each other again.

Then I went inside the new Hall to kiss my children goodnight.



The potential for adventures in a subsector's worth of planets is immense – keep in mind that most stories outside of science fiction get along just fine with only Earth and its historical periods! This chapter provides a foundation on which the GM can build his own adventures in the Sword Worlds, with details close at hand if the players ask for information about where they are or what their characters might know.

## CAMPAIGN TYPES

Most of the usual *Traveller* campaign themes – exploration, trade, military adventure – work well in the Sword Worlds. The differences in local culture will give certain adventures a distinctive flavor, however. This section discusses some of those differences, and offers several adventure seeds for each campaign theme.

### EXPLORATION CAMPAIGNS

For Sword Worlders, there isn't much grand-scale exploration left to do; all of the nearby planets have been observed thoroughly, from orbit if nothing else. Instead, exploring consists of ground surveys of particular areas on thinly populated worlds, where no one has yet gotten around to taking a good look at this subcontinent or that mountain range. Gungnir is a good place to visit, as its fractious political situation is always leading pioneers to strike off into the wilderness and start new states.

A variation on this idea is *reexploration*. Parts of the subsector have backslid, and there are many places where what was once known is now lost. The best examples of this are on Colada, Mjolnir, and Sting.

Imperials interested in exploration are even more restricted, as data from the Second Survey (p. GT65) provides them with the basics on any world for sectors around. The exception is the Metal Worlds, which were poorly covered by the Survey due to the Sword Worlds' hostility, and are only now being explored properly for the first time.

### EXPLORATION ADVENTURE SEEDS

#### *Make Money Fast*

The adventurers are approached by a small, rabbit-eyed man. He claims to be named Jon Jonsson – the Sagamaal equivalent of "John Smith" – and he wants to know if

they're interested in the Imperium's upcoming land grab on Bronze. If the group shows any interest, the man will continue, gradually steering the conversation around to the fact that everyone involved in it will be working from the Imperium's recent survey of the planet. However, he has access to something better.

When the Kingdom of Sting fell, documents pertaining to valuable ores, plants, and other resources in the Metal Worlds were removed to Hofud, where they were lost when the Dyrnwyn Compact conquered that planet. The man is a minor bureaucrat on Dyrnwyn, and accidentally came across the documents while doing some research on a land title case. Now he wants to sell them.

If the adventurers are Imperials, they will be able to get a leg up on the competition and stake out smaller portions of the planet that nevertheless contain materials of considerable value. Even if they can't work the claims themselves, they'll be able to sell them to those who can for a tidy profit, once what they have becomes better known.

If the group consists of Sword Worlders, they won't be eligible for the land grab, but may be able to set up a front group that is, or sell the documents themselves for more than they paid.

There always remains the possibility that the whole thing is a scam, either on the part of mysterious little man himself, or by someone who has deceived him.

#### *Nursemaids*

The adventurers, all of whom should be experienced outdoorsmen, have been hired by the Border Worlder government. The mission is to escort a team of surveyors and naturalists to an untouched part of Beater, and protect them against beasts and other dangers while they conduct a survey. If the area is suitable, a new community will be built there.

The survey is plagued by accidents. Equipment breaks down, supplies turn up spoiled, giant trees fall at inopportune moments, spare parts go missing, tempers fray. Is someone trying to prevent the survey? The guards must expose the saboteurs, if any, and fend off attacks from hungry or stampeding wildlife, all the while pinch-hitting for surveyors with broken bones and naturalists with raging fevers.

#### *In Search of . . .*

Sir Basil van der Lume, Imperial knight and amateur anthropologist, arrives on Steel scattering credit notes in all directions. He wants to hire guides and head into the wilderness searching for the *Maruni* (p. 69). Money is no object and he promises a hefty bonus if his expedition finds them





first. It appears that a rival of his, Sir Graham Quaite, is also going in search of the elusive indigenous peoples. Apparently Sir Graham has a guide who actually knows their whereabouts. Sir Basil is extremely anxious to scoop his rival.

The guides can string Sir Basil along for weeks searching for the nonexistent tribe. Or they can hire a group of drifters to pretend to be *Maruni*. This will require some knowledge of anthropology to pull off, but Sir Basil is just an amateur, so it might work.

Or the guides can await the arrival of Sir Graham and trail him into the wilderness. His guide, a wily con man named Dennis Povas, has prepared in advance a show for the eager nobleman. Members of a small remote settlement have been hired to set up a primitive village some miles from their hamlet, and play the part of savages when they get a signal from Povas.

For added complications, the two knights can be from Gram. Their current identities are fakes designed to let them travel freely on Steel.

### *Journey to the Center of the Globe*

Atri Istirsson Hald is an art historian on Tizon. He has been studying the *Reikistjarnahalle* (p. 95) on Tizon for the last year, in preparation for cleaning and restoration work which will begin in a few months. He was picked for the job due to his reputation for being very methodical, but apart from that he is not highly respected or well known, even within the insular world of Sword Worlder art. He resents this, and now he thinks he has found a way to make his mark.

Three months ago, while microscopically examining the Hall's globe of Colada, he noticed a small flaw at a location on one of the continents. Given the artist Tomas Groenvald's reputation for perfectionism, Hald was surprised to find any flaw; he investigated further and found that a tiny patch of radioactive material caused the blemish. This material was an isotope of the surrounding metal that would have been indistinguishable at the time of its placement, but it has become slightly different in appearance due to five centuries of radioactive decay. Examined in gamma-ray wavelengths, the spot is clearly the shape of a bull's-eye a few micrometers across.

Professor Hald then looked at the other globes the same way, and found a similar blemish on each, except for Tizon itself. There is no hint in the historical records of what these bull's-eyes could represent on the actual worlds, but he figures that whatever it is, it will make an incredible splash. He's keeping his discovery close to his chest while he investigates, but unfortunately all the real-world counterparts of the points marked out on the globes are inaccessible, dangerous, or both. After asking around discreetly, he has settled on the adventurers as the ones to help him get to where he needs to go and uncover the secret of the *Reikistjarnahalle*.

### *Not Lost, But Gone Before*

The disappearance of the Founders' ship *Robert the Bruce* is one of the enduring mysteries of the Sword Worlds. It's known that she started back to Terra, but sometime

during the trip back she might as well have evaporated. Clues as to what happened are scarce.

This has changed with the opening of Denuli (formerly 587-908) in District 268, and access to the Shriekers of that planet. A few artifacts bought from Shrieker nomads may be parts of *Robert the Bruce*.

The *Bruce* did indeed crash land in the Lost Sea area of the planet – naturally, the most inhospitable part of an already marginal world. Narrowing it down further than that is impossible without going to take a look, but a person or team that finds the wreck – or rather, the large pieces scattered over several kilometers – of one of the Sword Worlds' most historic ships will have instant access to fame and fortune.

See *Planetary Survey 2: Denuli* for more details on Denuli.

### *Into the Fire*

While crossing the Enosian Fire Sea – as part of another adventure, on contract from a megacorporation, or any other reason – the party's transport breaks through the surface into a deep and extensive cave complex.

The immediate problem will be to tend to the injured and rig up a way to see in the pitch-black caves. After this comes the need to escape, which generally means mapping the complex rather than getting back out the hole the party fell into.

During the escape, the major obstacle is all the petroleum making periodic tar pits, or even catching on fire in an enclosed space . . . Well, at least *light* won't be a problem any more. At some point, someone might realize that Enos hasn't got enough moisture for caves to be carved out by water; in fact, it looks like the walls are made of recently created volcanic rock – *very* recent.

## **MERCANTILE CAMPAIGNS**

The Sword Worlds would have been a very boring place for merchant adventures 15 years ago. Routes were set and dominated by large transport concerns, and suppliers had held steady for decades, if not centuries.

The Fifth Frontier War changed all that. Many shipping lines have gone out of business due to the wide-scale destruction, and a new and prickly border runs right down the middle of what was once a free trade zone. The opportunities for a single Sword Worlder merchant to advance are better than they've been in a very long time; sharp operators are needed to fill the gaps in more ways than one.

Conversely, Imperial merchants have an opportunity for a little carpetbagging in the Border Worlds too. The competition is much tougher, as Imperial megacorporations are moving into the virgin territory, and the Border Worlds Authority takes the interests of their own large corporations seriously. Things are in flux, though, which leaves openings for the law abiding.

Both Sword Worlders and Imperials who aren't so concerned with petty rules should also consider the smuggling possibilities engendered by the BWA's insistence that all trade between the Sword Worlds and Border Worlds go through designated checkpoints (p. 79).

## MERCANTILE ADVENTURE SEEDS

### *In Search of Bigger Arms*

At one time, merchant ships didn't need weapons in the Sword Worlds. It was assumed that the planetary navies would keep the space lanes safe. Now that those navies have been nearly wiped out, a merchant who wants to travel outside the most populated systems needs to refit his ship with some firepower.

Unfortunately, many worlds still have laws against armed civilian vessels, necessity or not. If nothing else, it's too easy for that kind of merchant to start preying on his competitors and compounding the problem the guns were meant to fix. Not only will the crew have to find weaponry and get the ship modified to mount it, they'll need to make it as unobtrusive as possible if they ever want to visit half the worlds in the subsector.

The best bet is a trip outside of the Sword Worlds altogether, particularly a trip into the unincorporated worlds to coreward and spinward of Hrunting, or else into District 268 to rimward.

### *John Henry Was a Truck-Driving Man*

Once every five years, the government of Hrunting allows competitors to run test cargoes of the world's goods in grav trucks, with monopolies over various regions handed out depending on who does best. The transport company Luitgard Befordran (p. 25) has had a monopoly on *all* regions for the last 80 years.

Now it's time for the monopolies to be renewed again, and for the first time in decades the "LB" has a competitor. Hakkandi Flutningur is a small trucking company confined to the city limits of Groenaelv, a small regional city. It wants to gain the monopoly for its region, and has applied to compete in next week's test runs.

Luitgard Befordran is not taking this lying down. Broken legs and an inability to explain how they happened have struck down two successive drivers for Hakkandi. A Hakkandi family member offers the job to the party; they will be allowed to ship their own goods to their destination *and* get paid for it instead of having to pay the LB's high rates – if they get the goods there within a difficult-but-not-impossible timeframe. It is understood that Hakkandi will ignore a little self-defense, though the authorities may take a different line.

### *Art Weighed In The Balances*

"Halberra" is the single-word name of one of Sacnoth's most famous artists; she's also a *very* annoying woman. Still, business is business, and the merchants have been contracted to get one of her expensive pieces, *The Tortured Sole Frozen in Eyes*, to the new Border Worlds *Folkthing* building. There, it is to be installed in the atrium.

At a gallery show the night before the ship leaves, Halberra is murdered. Under Sacnoth law, all her assets are frozen so that the murderer cannot possibly benefit from a financial arrangement changing due to her death – life

insurance, for example, or an inheritance. Unfortunately for the group, this also includes any assets transferred in the 72 hours prior to her death. *The Tortured Sole* is now frozen in red tape too.

With the clock running and late-delivery penalty clauses looming, the merchants need to turn into investigators, circumvent the slow-moving police, and determine who killed Halberra. This is complicated by the fact that she was so incredibly abrasive that it's difficult to find someone who *didn't* want to kill her.

## MILITARY CAMPAIGNS

The Fifth Frontier War may be over, but there is unrest all over the subsector. Hofud is in a full-blown civil war, where even the addition of an adventurer-led regiment will not turn the game into a boring exercise in mopping up. Smaller units are of use on Excalibur, as its civil war winds down, and Anduril, as that one heats up. A squad-sized group will have no difficulty at all finding employment, as both the Confederation and the Border Worlds are drowning in situations that could be solved by a half-dozen people willing to throw their weight around.

If the GM is looking to get players involved as Sword Worlder soldiers in part of a larger organization, Colada's Champion's Guard (p. 33) is an excellent starting point. A whole campaign could be built around the careers of a small group of troopers as they go from greenhorns to grognards. Tyrs Haand (p. 104) is another alternative, for troopers who prefer security assignments to pitched battles.

Imperial characters are more likely to be covert operatives on the Border Worlds than part of a formal military organization. Operatives good at using discretion to avoid stirring up more anti-Imperial feelings are in high demand.

Mercenary campaigns are also a definite possibility, though the GM should read *Mercenaries* (p. 92) to learn how Sword Worlders think about the subject.

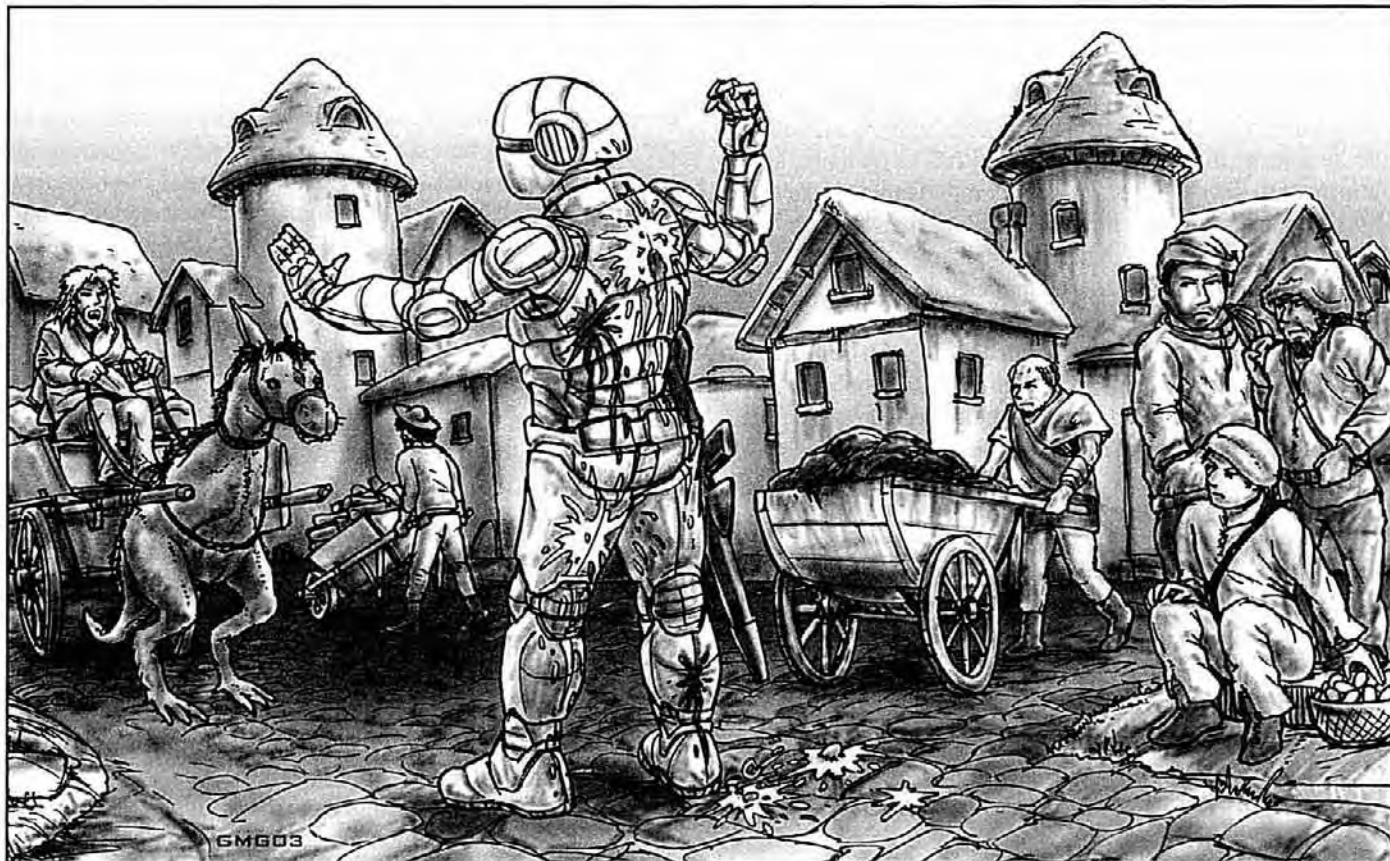
## MILITARY ADVENTURE SEEDS

### *Crying Wolf*

The military unit containing the characters is hired to help deal with a particularly troublesome group of Vargr pirates in the vicinity of one of the less-populated Confederation worlds. The world is so minor that it can't afford to take out the pirates with sheer military force. Instead, the local government wants the group to infiltrate the corsairs and break them up from within. They will be supplied with a salvaged Vargr corsair, and a commanding officer for the mission: a highly charismatic Sword Worlder Vargr named Zhoegae, who will attempt to win over enough of the corsairs that they will no longer be a threat.

The unit is to help Zhoegae, but not too much. Though he was born and raised in the Sword Worlds, the government hiring the mercenaries doesn't trust him completely. If it looks like their commander is going to take over the corsairs rather than break them up . . . well, they should know what to do.





Zhoegae, on the other hand, is not stupid and can figure out that his subordinates probably have this unofficial mission as well as the one he's leading.

### *Granny's Got a Gun*

Tarninghavn is a village (population 180) in the rural regions of Durendal. A complete backwater, it was of no interest to anyone other than its residents until three days ago. That was when the local tax collector was shaved bald, dipped in "animal byproducts," and driven out of town. Years of resentment against the Imperium and the new government have finally come to a head over a tiny matter – whether a local farmer's livestock was to be taxed at 13% or 16.5% – and the village is in open insurrection.

Unfortunately for the PCs, their unit was sent to Tarninghavn before it became clear how tiny the rebellion was, and they are tremendously over-powered to deal with what is going on. A few minutes after they arrived, they received new instructions to restore order, yet not cause any civilian casualties. The commanding officer emphasizes how very much the latter portion of this order applies.

In two days a negotiator from the BWA and a liaison from the Imperium will arrive on scene to try to talk the villagers down. Until then the unit has to make an omelet without breaking a single one of the irate, torch- and shotgun-wielding eggs.

### *Section P, Confederation Police*

The government of Anduril has asked the Confederation government for help in dealing with its insurgents. This is completely contrary to everything the Confederation stands

for, but there are those who have come to the belief that in these times the Confederation cannot afford to have yet another one of its members torn by civil war. Consequently, a new secret organization is being set up. Ostensibly an elite unit of the Confederation Police, it is in actuality a covert-operations group, charged with identifying and eliminating threats to the Confederation and its member worlds wherever they are found. The adventurers have been selected as the first field team. As such, they are in a position to define how the outfit is going to be run.

The first job is on Anduril, in a region called Kirugistan. The government and the local leaders have been trying to settle their differences peacefully, but every time it looks like they're about to succeed, some unknown partisan blows up a squad of soldiers or some soldiers fire on civilians. And the local commander claims he can't figure out which soldiers are doing it.

The agents are armed with a warrant for the arrest of a (fictitious) mass murderer from Gram. As neutrals from the Confederation they can hope that neither soldiers nor partisans will regard them as high-priority targets. They must identify and neutralize whoever it is that is keeping the conflict alive. Is it just one group or more than one? And are there any deeper motives for their actions? On the plus side, the agents have a limited amount of TL12 equipment procured at great cost from somewhere in the Imperium. Remember, if any of the agents are caught, the Chancellor will disavow any knowledge of their existence.

This adventure can be the start of an entire campaign with the agents sent on missions both inside and outside the Confederation.

## *The Story Is Everything*

The Hofud People's Alliance is making great gains on the continent of Baaten (see p. 60). Public interest in the HPA, both admiring and fearful, is at an all-time high, but there's not a lot of information available. The HPA has its own propaganda arm, but very little real news comes from it; likewise, Hofud's planetary authorities are working hard to keep only their views in the news channels.

Helgi Bolsdottir is a crack reporter for Suthri, the Sword Worlds' news agency. Her beat is the Border Worlds, supplementing the (from a Sword Worlder standpoint) essentially useless news that comes out of the client state. She is publicly tolerated by the BWA, but privately under pressure to toe their line. She doesn't care, and reports the news as she sees it.

Now Helgi and Hofud are about to meet. The rebellion is potentially the biggest story in the subsector since the end of the Fifth Frontier War, and the reporter is determined to go to Baaten, find the HPA's leadership, and get the truth. It's likely that the BWA will see this as her finally crossing the line and do anything it takes to prevent her; there's also the minor issue that she is going into a war zone after known fanatics, with only her belief that every revolutionary loves to talk to the press backing her up. She's perfectly aware of this, and is going to go ahead anyway, but she knows that some additional muscle is a wise precaution.

## *The Purloined General*

General Tostig Mikloffson Styrkar is not a fortunate man. During the Imperial invasion of Durendal he was in charge of a ground division that used a small tactical nuclear weapon on one Imperial beachhead, killing over 11,000 Imperial personnel, mostly from Caladbolg. After Styrkar defected to the Sword Worlds at the end of the War, the Border Worlds declared him a war criminal. It was then revealed that the younger brother of the Duchess of Caladbolg had been an officer in one of the destroyed Imperial units, and General Styrkar's name (among many others) was specifically included in the Lunion Accords as someone the Sword Worlds Confederation must turn over if captured.

With the surreptitious help of the Confederation, General Styrkar has stayed hidden on Hrunting, but now it appears the jig is up. The Imperium has supplied the Sword Worlds with accurate intelligence as to his location; the Sword Worlds knew where he was before, but they ignore this hint from the Imperium only at their own peril.

Still loath to turn him over for what they see as a legitimate act of defense, the Confederation has decided to get him out of the Sword Worlds entirely, while throwing the Imperium off his scent. They will send two platoons of the Confederation Patrol in to capture him. The general will die tragically, burned so badly by plasma fire that he is unidentifiable.

While the bad news is being passed on to the Imperium, the *real* General Styrkar will be leaving the scene along with one of the platoons as they head back to base. The General will be dressed in a sergeant's uniform; the Confederation is betting that no one will notice an extra NCO in all the excitement.

Once away from the spies the Imperium probably has around his now-ruined country house, a small group will accompany General Styrkar out of the Marches to the Foreven sector. There he will take up a position in the staff of the army of Raschev, a world that is rapidly upgrading its military after an intense and bizarre war some 15 years ago. Raschev needs officers with technological knowledge, and is willing to offer the General comfortable asylum.

## **POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS**

The Sword Worlds are changing, and the questions are "How much?" and "Who gets to decide on the changes?" Crafty adventurers can help answer both.

For Sword Worlders, the first decision to make is "reactionary or revolutionary?" Each player will have to decide where his character stands on reform. Does he think the Sword Worlds are fine as they are, in need of some tinkering, or ripe for revolution? Will he attempt to quash the unrest or turn some new idea into the *status quo*?

The next decision is "how big?" Adventurers can concentrate on something as small as one world – or even one country – once they've decided where they stand. Alternatively, the sweeping political stage of the entire Confederation or Border Worlds might beckon.

Sword Worlder characters have the most room to maneuver in making their decisions, but Imperials can get involved in political adventures too. The most obvious type is attempting to keep the lid on the Border Worlds, so that time eases its transition into an Imperial client state. A more daring possibility is to play a revolutionary from a planet within the Imperium itself. All guerrillas need safe areas to fall back upon when the government comes after them; now that the border has opened between the Imperium and the Border Worlds, they might have one for when the Marines drop by.

A third possibility is to play an extra-Imperial adventurer, from the Federation of Arden or an independent world in the District 268 subsector. Common cause against the Imperium might be a wise move for a government looking to stay independent.

Note also that there's a fine line between political and military campaigns; a combination of both can be quite effective.

## **POLITICAL ADVENTURE SEED**

### *The Hunt for Red August*

A highly placed functionary in the Fortarn Conglomerate (p. 46), a certain August "Red" Fagerskov, has disappeared. Just before he went missing he had been in contact with a Confederation official, offering to sell important information. Conglomerate security forces have placed a cordon around the starport and are scouring the country for traces of the official. The Confederation consul believes Fagerskov will head for one of the other starports and try to reach the Gungnir orbital starport, which is neutral territory. He selects a small group of consulate personnel and sends them out to track Fagerskov down and bring him back . . . *alive*.



The Conglomerate, Valfrelann, and Rechemannia each have a Class IV starport, but all three use the same space station as their orbital component. Class III starports also exist in 11 other states, but Fagerskov cannot be sure that he can get on a space shuttle from any of them without waiting for several days. That is even truer for the several hundred Class II and Class I starports in other states.

The large number of small countries into which Gungnir is divided will complicate the hunt. Each is a separate jurisdiction and many of them are hostile to each other. Not only must the hunters get a visa to visit South Tomsryd, they can't get a visa from North Tomsryd but have to make a detour through the neutral East Bentsryd. And, of course, each country has its own unique customs and offers its own opportunities to offend the locals...

## OTHER CAMPAIGNS

"Other" campaigns vary widely in nature, often because the players' characters have no other connection than "Five adventurers meet in a starport bar." This leads to wide mixtures of skills, so many adventures are ones that can be solved by *any* player characters regardless of what abilities they have to draw upon.

Using this disparity is possible, though. In the Sword Worlds, even a simple scenario presents one problem, which is linked to another, which is linked to another, and so on. Things can get so complicated due to competing interests that no one approach is going to resolve every issue. The ragtag bunch of fortune seekers, all very different, may be the only ones who can tease out every thread of the plot. If nothing else, this may help answer the eternal question "Why did freelancers get the job instead of the local authorities?"

## OTHER ADVENTURE SEEDS

### *Under the Saracen's Gaze*

The adventurers are passing through one of Durendal's more remote regions as night falls. Coming upon a village, they discover everything barred and closed, including even the local rest stop. If they investigate, they find that no citizen will open his front door. Persistent knocking elicits demands that the visitors go away, backed up by unconvincing threats of gunfire. Some time pounding on the door of the rest stop will eventually get the proprietor to let the party in.

What the weary travelers discover is that the townsfolk fear for their lives. Every 18 days, when the twin gas giants of Marsile and Bramimonde are at their greatest separation and stare down on Durendal, someone dies. It's happened three times straight now, and tonight is another opposition. Rumors of werewolves and worse are running rampant.

There are several possible solutions to the case, should the players choose to investigate. The murders could be the result of local bandits, possibly even desperate villagers, using the gas giants superstition as a cover. Alternatively, the murders may be serial killings, committed by a madman inspired by the Eyes. Another possibility is that a previously unknown, and much more capable, variety of Durendal's strange lifeforms hunts on these nights (see p. 59).

### *Don't Let the Bedbugs Bite*

Some time after Mithril was colonized, the colonists discovered that a local insect-like lifeform was responsible for a potentially lethal infection that could have destroyed the colony if it were not found. A treatment was developed and it is no longer a major issue. Or at least, it wasn't a major issue for a while.

Now an outbreak of the infection has occurred on Biter. While treatment is possible, Biter's government is already strained to the very limit of its finances; a collapse could follow if a widespread immunization campaign becomes necessary, or if the outbreak becomes generally known and cuts down on trips to the planet.

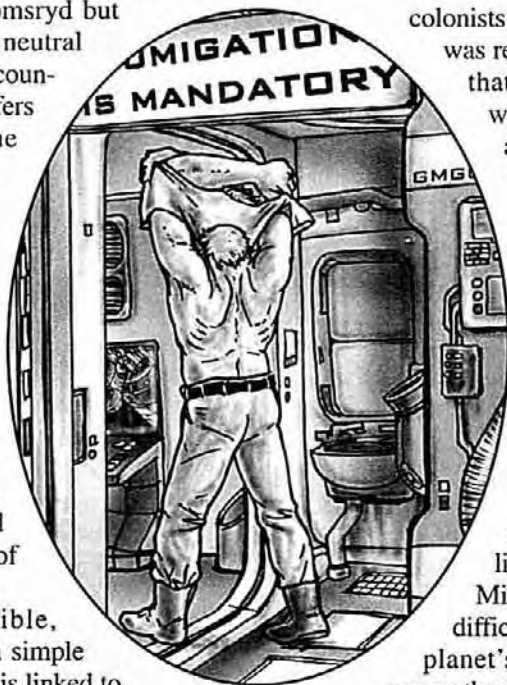
Worse, the reasons for the outbreak are mysterious. There are no signs of the lice-like creatures that spread the illness on Mithril (and their life cycle is so unusual, it's difficult to see how they could live outside that planet's ecosphere). Sickness is concentrated among the *Luffaren* immigrants, but this might just be the usual association of disease with poverty.

Someone has to get to the bottom of this, quickly and quietly.

### *Housecleaning*

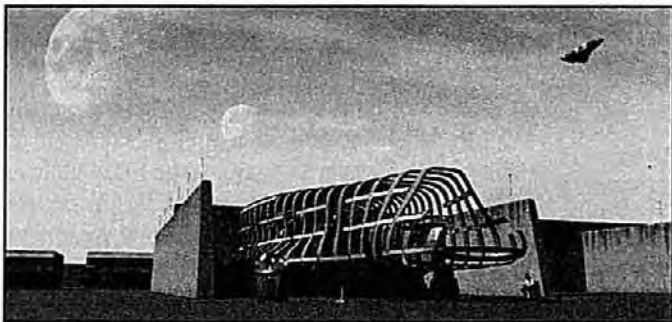
The party is employed by the Colonial Office to go to Biter and take over an emergency food relief program. Every week shiploads of food depart Lunion bound for Biter, but very little of it ever reaches the intended recipients. The new managers must figure out what is going wrong and how to fix it, which employees they can trust and how far, and which local officials are on the take and which are honest. The manager they replaced has a lot of useful information about the local conditions, but can he be persuaded to cooperate?

Of course, there is not just one thing wrong. Some of the crates arrive empty. Are they shipped that way from Lunion or is the freighter crew leaving part of the cargo in orbit and ferrying it down elsewhere on Biter? Some of the food disappears nightly from the warehouse. Can the culprits be identified and replaced? Will the new personnel be an improvement? A local police chief openly diverts some of the food. Can he be stopped or must his depredations be accepted as the price of doing business? Bandits attack food convoys. Can they be tracked down and eliminated? Can the local militia be trusted to help?



## A Walk in the Park, Then a Party

After a "business deal" goes sour, or any other event occurs that would put the adventurers on the wrong side of a criminal leader, the PCs are dropped off at a very inhospitable location and told to walk – good locations include the cold pole of Dyrnwyn, the swamps of Sting, and the deserts of Enos. Their adversary leaves them with a little equipment, but not enough to have any real chance of escape. One oddity is that one survival kit contains a dozen small diamonds – of very high quality, if anyone has the skills to check.



The castaways must determine how to get out of their gigantic death trap using what little gear they have and local resources. If and when they do so, there is one last obstacle: the criminal who abandoned them intended to use them as a red herring to cover for a major jewel theft. Their bodies were to be found – eventually – with the diamonds on them, but their capture alive works for him too. There's a lot of circumstantial evidence – again, arranged by their erstwhile murderer – that points to the group as the thieves. Still, live prisoners might point the finger at the real criminal, even with plausibility being a major problem, so their life expectancies are likely very short if they end up in custody.

## CAMPAIGN FRAMES

These are situations that, while not adventures in of themselves, provide the framework for a series of them. The first two stay mostly within the confines of the Sword Worlds subsector, with ample opportunity for diversion into other unrelated adventures as the group gradually heads toward their goal. The third is an epic arc that takes brave explorers to the very edge of Charted Space – and proves that "the Sword Worlds" are wherever Sword Worlders try to follow their way of life.

### WHERE'S EGON?

The adventurers are invited to call on Aksel Holm, the senior partner in the venerable law firm of Holm, Lundgren, Torelli, Holm, and Kvist. (Holm should have some reason to believe that the party is discreet and trustworthy, be it prior association, a mutual acquaintance, or a reputation for reticence.) Holm explains that he is a trustee of the estate of the late Friherre Gorm Bugge. The only son and heir, Egon Bugge, is an idle young *bon vivant* who loves to travel to foreign worlds and dislikes Gram's stifling social atmosphere.

In fact, it's been over a year since he has been back to Gram and the old lawyer is growing worried. There is nothing wrong so far as he can tell from reports, but he would like to be sure that the young Bugge has not been replaced by an impostor or fallen in with someone who is taking advantage of him.

Unfortunately this is not so simple to check. Egon Bugge rarely stays on the same world for more than a few weeks at a time. His financial needs are handled by having accounts with banks on every medium- and high-population Sword World. (At the GM's discretion there may also be accounts with banks on several major worlds outside the Sword Worlds, such as Daryen, Vilis, or Lunion.) When Bugge needs money he makes a withdrawal from a bank, the bank notifies the law firm, and the firm sends money to replenish the account.

### Joyeuse

About two months before the PCs became involved, young Bugge booked a ticket from Gungnir to Joyeuse. Upon arrival at the planet, the investigators find that he immediately scrambled off into the furthest and wildest parts of the planet, presumably in search of adventure.

Eventually they will be able to pin his location to Sinari Stroemning, a small city on the frontier of Joyeuse's colony area. Mentioning the name of the town to anyone else on the planet will produce a little flinch. The slightest attempt to find out about the town will reveal it to be the most lawless place on the planet . . . and that is saying something.

In Sinari Stroemning, the group is treated well or badly depending on how good they are at standing up for themselves, but they will start getting the run around if they ask about Bugge. A study of the available records, either before or after the expedition to the frontier, will show no sign of the young heir ever having left. If the PCs ask too many questions, eventually the local toughs will try to convince them to stop. Assuming they win the ensuing "discussion," the investigators will now have their hands on the first link in the chain of command for Sinari Stroemning. Following the chain will lead them through a succession of unsavory characters until they finally meet "Odvast," the informal and thoroughly criminal mayor of the town. Given sufficient incentive he will be able to demonstrate that Bugge left Joyeuse five weeks ago on a smuggler's ship that had landed on a nearby plain – destination unknown. He left of his own free will, however, and in fact enjoyed his experience among Joyeuse's outlaws so much that he left a gift of Cr50,000 with the mayor. Odvast will then arrange for the group to be led in circles, then violently dissuaded from returning, for fear that they are after the windfall.

### Narsil

The investigators head to Narsil, where Egon has been reported by an eyewitness. Upon arrival, there is little to go on, just the name of a high-class restaurant where he was seen. The management there is sympathetic, however, and will point the group to a club the staff recommended to young Bugge when he inquired about some fun. The club's bartender



remembers him, and in turn points them to a theater Egon was planning to attend the next day. This continues for a while, until Egon's name has been brought up all over town.

Then the trouble starts. There is a second "Egon Bugge," and with the exception of the original eyewitness report, all the leads the investigators have been tracing have been about him. This Egon Bugge is high up in the organization of Markus Nokkvisson Drusse (see p. 30), though this is not widely known. He is Drusse's "Head of Security," which is to say he is the sociopath who helps convince other rebels that joining up with Drusse would be good for their health . . . and that of their families . . . and their house pets . . .

And now he is curious as to why the adventurers are looking for him.

## *Tyrfing*

A fragment of an itinerary has turned up, and the investigators now have a shot at being in the same place at the same time as their quarry: Bugge will be on Tyrfing at a time that the group can match if they leave immediately. He will be leaving 12 hours later, but there will be that much overlap if all goes well.

Unfortunately, Tyrfing is a checkpoint for the Border Worlds (see p. 54), and the PCs will have to land their ship in a bonded portion of the planet's starport. There is a long waiting list for inspections – at least three days.

The question then becomes how to get out of the starport in time to try and get to Bugge before he leaves. Bribery of the port officials is possible, though difficult, as they *like* harassing Sword Worlde traffic.

Another, likelier, possibility is to consider the starport's surrounding city, Brakigastad (p. 54). It has a reputation for lawlessness. Members of the group will see obvious criminals strolling around the "bonded" area with impunity, and will be able to make contact easily. Folks from the local underground are always looking for a chance to make some money, so even though it will be impossible to get the searchers out of the starport physically, they just might be able to direct a search for their quarry from within their cage. The only major difficulty will be trying to get across that they mean no harm to Bugge and just want to talk to him. The locals will assume "talk," or any other way of phrasing it, is a euphemism; that's just the way of Brakigastad. They like "talking."

Mentioning that he's a rich heir might not be wise either.

## **THE PRINCESS AND THE P-SUIT**

While visiting the in-progress Bryn Avgrunn Base (p. 78) between the main body of the Confederation and the planet Enos, the PCs take a wrong turn in one of the depressurized sections of the station, ending up in a rather small service tube nowhere near where they, or pretty much anybody, intend to go. At this point, someone starts firing at them.

The sniper turns out to be a teenaged runaway, who has set up a makeshift shelter at the end of the service tube. She

claims to have been shooting at the group because she thought they were "someone else," a statement she is reluctant to expand. The first definite clue that something strange is going on is her gun, which is of the highest quality manufacture. Eventually the group will learn that the young runaway is Queen Ros of Enos, who has escaped the clutches of her elder cousin and regent. She stowed away on a ship that she thought would take her to another planet, but ended up stranded on the halfway station.

According to her, the regent was planning a coup, and she had to escape if she wanted to live, let alone organize a counter coup. Now stuck on the station, she is at her wit's end as to how to proceed. A check of the news services will show that Queen Ros is supposedly still on Enos, but has not been seen in months since suffering a "riding accident."

Should the adventurers choose to aid Queen Ros, they will need to go among a number of worlds to gather forces that will help. They may, not incidentally, discover that there is something more than just the takeover of a single backwater world at stake.

## *Fighting Fire With Fire*

Having joined forces with the young queen, the first order of business is getting some funds to start a rebellion – if the adventurers have not yet signed on, getting the funds may be her hook with them. Ros' plan on leaving Enos is to get in touch with some Sword Worlde corporations that would be interested in exploiting the Fire Sea; while she's not happy about the whole concept, she thinks it is better other Sword Worlders benefit than Imperials. She has heard that Narsil has many large corporations, and wants to grant some of its companies cheap licenses to exploit the planet's petrochemicals, then go back and invade.

It's a remarkably naïve plan.

If the group goes along with her, or at least takes her to some other world to talk to corporate officers, they will get exactly nowhere. Ros is not known to any person of note in any Sword Worlde corporation, and even if she were it's not likely that they'd cut a deal with her involving any money up front, with her cousin back home holding all the cards. Still, if the group tries they will get into a few waiting rooms before being turned away.

After several tries, someone will make an attempt on her life that will change her luck – if she survives. The attempt will come not long after the party lands on some world, and the Queen has been seen by at least a few people. Ros and her ragtag entourage will be walking through a large empty concourse when one of the few other people in the area pulls a gun and patently tries to assassinate her. Getting Ros to safety is the first priority, capturing or killing the assassin is secondary.

If they succeed in the second task, they will only have about a minute to interrogate the assassin or examine his body and note a few clues that indicate the assassin is not from Enos. He does not have the deep tan of an Enosian, he is using a gun of high-technology manufacture, and he is wearing thin body armor that would be difficult to buy anywhere in the Sword Worlds, let alone on Enos.

Whether the escorts succeed or not, the local constabulary will soon be on the scene. They will take the Queen and her defenders into custody, as well as the assassin, if he survives, until they can figure out what is going on. There will be one short interrogation, during which one of the new jailbirds will be able to explain his side of the story, but otherwise they will be put into a holding cell for several hours.

At that point they will be freed by an official of the Sword Worlds Confederation who indicates *very* unofficially that the government would like to see the Queen return to power. The Confederation itself will not help, but the adventurers are given a datacard, and a place and time to be if they want to get in touch with the Border Worlds Resistance – on Mjolnir.

### Anything You Can Do . . .

If the travelers journey to the meeting, they find themselves in Armundshaven on Mjolnir, in front of the decrepit tunnel that connects Armundshaven to the ruined city of Midhvolf, 40 miles to the east. The GM should time the meeting so that the group can get to Mjolnir even taking any necessary side trips into account – for example, if the group consists of traders and has to make a living along the way.

The time for the contact will come. Depending on how perceptive the adventurers are, they will either get the drop on, or be dropped upon by, Sjoë Karolinsdotir Sandstrod and some comrades (see p. 97). She will cover the group while one of her allies checks their *bona fides*. He will swipe the card and, after realizing it failed the test because he swiped it upside down, swipe it again and get a coded message from the Confederation government introducing the Queen and her allies. If the PCs get a chance to examine the introduction, they'll discover that it's worryingly well informed, containing more information about Ros, her situation, and them than they've divulged to anyone since they left Bryn Avgrunn Base.

At that point, the hunt begins. Mjolnir's local security force can be heard moving in, and Sandstrod will explain that, while the Confederation government may be supporting her covertly, Mjolnir's is a little less happy thanks to the methods she's been using to raise funds and buy weapons for her cause. Something about a dead crime lord . . . but there's not much time for talk.

What follows is a 40-mile chase through the pitch-black tunnel leading to Midhvolf. The group piles into a small tracked vehicle that peels off as soon as they are aboard. Unfortunately, whatever the local police are riding, it's faster, and the rebels and their new friends are going to have to

improvise ways to slow them down while bumping along at great speed themselves. If they can stay ahead for 30 minutes, they will be able to escape: there is an apparent blind alley that actually has an exit. Once through there, the police will lose track of them and turn back.

The rest of the journey to Midhvolf is quiet, until the car reaches Midhvolf itself. The city is not quite as dead as its reputation suggests; one small part has been cleared, and is supporting a few dozen members of the Border Worlds Resistance. Midhvolf is a safe house for when the Border Worlds get a little too hot.

### Making Friends and Influencing People

At some point Queen Ros will have to return to Enos; this won't be for some time as the group builds up some money and allies with the help of the queen. In the last days before she does so, it will be up to her rescuers to prepare her landing spot so that she won't be shot or arrested within a few hours of her arrival.

The PCs and the queen need to select an oasis town. While Ros is left in a safe location, the others need to talk to the local headman; Ros will be able to tell them who she thinks they can trust. After that, it's just a matter of convincing him, despite knowing no more about the touchy culture of the Enosians than Ros has been able to explain.

Over the next few days, with the help of the headman, the town will need to be closed up tight, so that news of the queen's arrival is kept quiet long enough for her to establish a position from which she can threaten her usurping cousin. It would make sense to get the word out to other loyal oases too, but this makes keeping the secret that much more difficult.

Eventually all will be set, and Ros can be brought back home. From now on it is a race against time: can the queen gather up enough support quickly enough to prevent the regent from capturing her, and overthrow him?



### 100 PARSECS

There is a growing feeling among Sword Worlders, especially in the Border Worlds, that their grand adventure has failed. In the 1,500 years since their ancestors came to the subsector, they've become surrounded by powerful states and now it's only a matter of time until it all comes to an end.

The Astron Project is a private effort to restart the Sword Worlds elsewhere, and save their way of life. The target region of space is the Astron sector, four sectors to spinward of the Trojan Reach sector, and well away from the



Imperium, the Zhodani Consulate, and the Aslan Hierate. The colonists will rely on distance to insulate them from unwanted interference, but plan to maintain an "immigration corridor" back to the Sword Worlds indefinitely. Over time, they hope to reproduce the original settlers' success in colonizing a subsector, then carry on from there rather than repeating thousand-year-old mistakes. One of these, in their opinion, was allowing technology to stagnate, so the planners have made the daring decision to rely upon Imperial technology, including ships, and do what they can to keep science moving forward in their new home.

Another goal has been to carefully select a region nearly as hospitable as the Sword Worlds turned out to be. Astron's people know they can't rely on being as lucky as their ancestors were when the original *Gram* broke down. They have used the Imperial Grand Survey data for the Astron sector to select a cluster of four close-together terrestrial worlds for settlement. After close-up examination, one world will be selected for the initial colony, and the others will be for future generations.

For years, the project remained in planning stages and funding was a major problem. Even so, nearly 10,000 people from all walks of life signed up to help in their free time; plans were developed to make this year-long jaunt into uncolonized space possible. In Sword Worlder space, clever advertising has generated a strong level of enthusiasm. For example, the planners have tried to make the target worlds more real by naming them – Sanglamore, Sauvagine, Chrysaor, and Huiting – and showing off the low resolution pictures taken during the Second Survey. Now, a mysterious but obviously very rich benefactor – person, corporation, or government, no one knows – has offered to fund the expedition.

The extent of the planning is left up to the GM depending on how soon he wants the action to begin. The more that has been done, the more quickly the expedition can head for the frontier. If time permits, however, there are adventure possibilities in the lead-up to the launch.

A full campaign should pass through the following stages.

## Preparation

For the adventurers, the major step will be getting ships. This will present a problem, as long-range colony ships are not common items. Despite the sudden flood of funding, the sort of money needed to design and build custom ships is not available. Instead, standard ships must be bought in the Imperium, and then taken to a technologically advanced world just outside the Imperium for refitting. Some of the necessary changes will be innocuous, but at least one requirement is the addition of heavy weaponry for protection during the long journey – and the Imperium won't allow military-grade hardware on civilian ships inside their borders.

As a result, this mission breaks down into three parts:

- *Purchase the ships needed.* Depending on the role of particular characters in the campaign, the decision may be left up to them, or they may have a shopping list. If going

the latter route, the suggested ships are an *Liken*-class scout ship (see p. T:S92) to blaze a trail, and a surplus military cruiser for protection – a *Pytheas* (see p. T:FI41) if possible, a *Fiery* (see p. T:S98) if not. The ships will be stripped of weapons per Imperial policy, but this can be fixed later.

The hardest part will be tracking something down to use as a colony ship. The Marches have been settled for hundreds of years, so there aren't many purpose-built colony transports left around; buying a new one is too costly in both money and time. Converting smaller freighters might work, but the refits are extensive and finding enough skilled crew will be difficult.

The best bet is probably a cargo lighter. Such ships are expensive, but not as much as the other options, and their modular structure will provide flexibility over time as the burgeoning colony needs different things from Sword Worlder space. See the box *She Isn't Pretty, But She'll Do the Job* for one way to introduce a lighter to the campaign, pp. 138-139.

There are a few places where the agents can go to find ships; the likeliest are Glisten and Lunion, but Iderati in the Five Sisters subsector is also a possibility – if you don't mind the omnipresent Imperial Navy in that system. There are used ships for sale in orbit around most worlds with Class V or IV starports, although the agents must look for ships built at TL10 or higher in order to meet the requirements of the mission.

- *Get the ships to Collace, in District 268.* Collace has been selected as the jump-off point for the first expedition, as the nearest world that is both outside the Imperium and in possession of a starport equipped for the necessary refits. Unfortunately, being outside any organized state cuts both ways. District 268 is a real frontier, and things are dangerous there. New ships with a minimum of armament are going to attract attention. There is the additional difficulty of the District's general attitude toward Sword Worlders: not friendly. Once the ships are at Collace, however, all is ready to go except for one thing . . .

- *Obtain weapons for the cruiser.* There are a variety of ways to approach this. First is the black market. This has its problems, as while most worlds in the subsector are outside the Imperium, most are also client states and won't actively antagonize their huge patron by allowing weapons sales. Getting them on the sly will be easier than it would be in the Imperium, but not simple.

Alternatively, the group may go searching in Sword Worlder space. There are numerous surplus pieces literally floating around in the battlefield wreckage of the subsector, particularly in the Border Worlds. However, all are guarded against looters.

Finally, the buyers may want to try the one state that would openly sell them weapons in defiance of anyone else: the Federation of Arden. The major problem with this idea is that it requires a long and circuitous journey to get back to Collace without reentering Imperial or Zhodani space. This is made even more difficult by the fact that the Imperium is likely not to care very much about exactly who owns what space if they get wind that a potentially hostile group is running heavy weapons near its border.

## SHE ISN'T PRETTY, BUT SHE'LL DO THE JOB

The ship shoppers get a tip that an old cargo lighter is up for auction on New Rome in the Glisten subsector. She is the *Ucella Enterprise* – if they purchase her, they will be able to rename her – a TL10 cargo lighter formerly used by Winsown Enterprises in the Ucella system of the Five Sisters subsector. She's very old, and at first glance not in the best of shape, which is scaring off a lot of buyers. However, a bit of research will show that Winsown has a reputation for keeping good maintenance on its ships. A courtesy inspection of the ship, which is allowed once a real interest in bidding is demonstrated, demonstrates to anyone with good engineering skills that she's not as bad as she looks.

The best part is that *Ucella Enterprise* might not be that expensive. A brand-new ship like her would cost over MCr1,000, but the reserve price is only MCr600 – within the budget, with enough left over for the remaining ships the Project will need.

Unfortunately, just as the inspectors are leaving they ship, they will hear that a second group is also interested; the sellers can be overheard talking in slightly awed tones about how lucky they are to have a second potential buyer appear within just 24 hours.

Some digging will show that the other bidder is an agent of the Duke of Lunion, who is making the best of the bad situation in the Metal Worlds (see *Imperial Occupation*, p. 68) by starting another colony on Steel. Characters with sufficient computer-related or social skills can ferret out that he is willing to go as high as MCr700 for the *Ucella Enterprise* – more than the Astron Project can spend.

The Sword Worlders will need to come up with a way to place an unopposed bid at the reserve price on auction day. They have 48 hours before the hammer comes down.

If the purchase is successful, after refits on Collace the Astron Project will have the following ships:

### UCELLA ENTERPRISE-CLASS 3,000-TON LASH TENDER (TL10)

This is a converted Ore LASH Tender used by Winsown Enterprises, a little-known trading company in the Five Sisters subsector. It was custom built and used for over 40 years to haul ore from the moon mines in the Ucella system. When the mines began to play out, it was scrapped and eventually sold.

It carries four colonist lighters for a total of 800 colonists in addition to one oiler lighter and a livestock lighter. It is capable of 1.2 G and jump-2 while fully loaded. For the return trip, the LASH Tender carries the oiler only – acceleration is increased to 3.5 G and jump displacement to jump-4.

To assist in evaluating potential landing sites, it is equipped an enhanced sensor system, astronomical instruments, and a planetary survey module.

Typical crew is 34 and consists of 5 Bridge Crew, 19 Engineers (also used to maintain the lighters while in transit), 2 Doctors, 9 Service Crew.

**Subassemblies:** USL Hull +11.

**Powertrain:** 2 Engineering, 557 Maneuver, 170 Jump Drive.

**Fuel:** 1,360 Jump Fuel Tank.

**Occ:** 34 Staterooms. **Cargo:** 520 dtons.

<b>Armor F</b>	<b>RL</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>U</b>	
<b>Hull:</b>	4/100	4/100	4/100	4/100	4/100

#### Equipment

**All:** 90 External Cradles (400-ton Livestock Lighter; 4 400-ton Colonist Lighters; 400-ton Colonist Oiler).

**Hull:** 11 Utility; Sickbay; Theater; Stage; 2 Gymnasiums; Basic Bridge; Enhanced Display; Advanced Communication Module; Enhanced Sensor System; Astronomical Instruments; Planetary Survey Module; 90-dton Spacedock (9 10-ton launches).

#### Statistics

**Size:** 367'x91.8'x45.9' **Payload:** 12,110 stons

**Lwt:** 18,557 stons

**Volume:** 3,000 dtons **Maint:** 145 mh/day

**Price:** MCr911

**HT:** 12 **HP:** 135,000 [Hull].

**sAccel:** 1.2 Gs/3.5 Gs empty **Jump:** See above.

### 400-TON COLONIST LIGHTER (TL10)

This is a converted ore lighter, with low berths for 200 colonists and cargo space for one dton per person.

Typical crew is seven and consists of 3 Bridge Crew, 3 Engineers, and a Doctor. These crewmen are taken from the colonists in cryosleep. While in transit, the LASH engineers are responsible for any routine maintenance. GMS may wish to reduce the amount of maintenance actually required to account for the substantially reduced operational status while in transit aboard the LASH Tender.

**Subassemblies:** VGSL Hull +9.

**Powertrain:** Engineering, 90 Maneuver, 2 Combination Contragravity Systems.

**Occ:** 50 Low Berths **Cargo:** 200 dtons.

<b>Armor F</b>	<b>RL</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>U</b>	
<b>Hull:</b>	4/100	4/100	4/100	4/100	4/100

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# SHE ISN'T PRETTY, BUT SHE'LL DO THE JOB (CONTINUED)

## Equipment

**Hull:** Sickbay; compact Basic Bridge.

## Statistics

**Size:** 186'x46.4'x23.2' **Payload:** 1,020 stons

**Lwt:** 1,601 stons

**Volume:** 400 dtons **Maint:** 28.4 mh/day

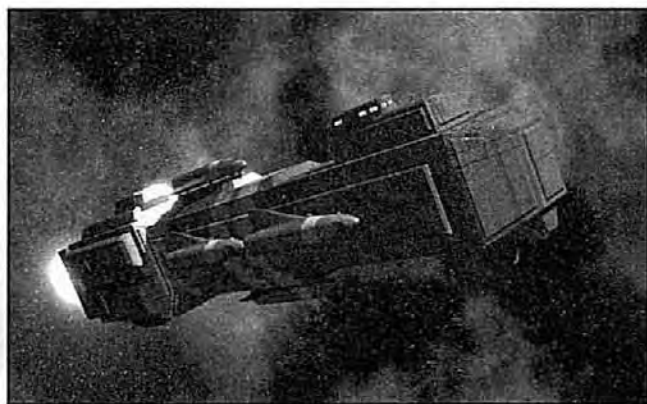
**Price:** MCr34.9

**HT:** 12 **HP:** 37,500 [Hull].

**sAccel:** 2.2 Gs/6.2 Gs empty **aSpeed:** 3,285 mph

## 400-TON LIVESTOCK LIGHTER (TL10)

This is a converted ore lighter. It is equipped with low berths for the colonists' livestock needs – 20 miniphants (18 females and two males), 10,000 fowl (geese, ducks, and chickens), 280 head of cattle, 1,400 pigs, 1,000 goats, and 20 dogs.



Typical crew is seven and consists of 3 Bridge Crew, 3 Engineers, and a Veterinarian. These crewmen are taken from the colonists in cryosleep. While in transit, the LASH Tender's engineers are responsible for any routine maintenance. GMs may wish to reduce the amount of maintenance actually required to account for the substantially reduced operational status while in transit aboard the LASH Tender.

**Subassemblies:** VGSL Hull +9.

**Powertrain:** Engineering, 90 Maneuver, 2 Combination Contragravity Systems.

**Occ:** 50 fowl low-berths (200 geese/ducks/chickens each), 20 miniphant low-berths (one miniphant each), 140 cow low-berths (two cows each), 70 pig low-berths (20 pigs each), 50 goat low-berths (20 goats each), dog low-berth (20 dogs each)

**Cargo:** 59.5 dtons.

<b>Armor F</b>	<b>RL</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>U</b>	
<b>Hull:</b>	4/100	4/100	4/100	4/100	4/100

## Equipment

**Hull:** Sickbay (converted for veterinary use); compact Basic Bridge.

## Statistics

**Size:** 186'x46.4'x23.2' **Payload:** 960 stons

**Lwt:** 2,102 stons

**Volume:** 400 dtons **Maint:** 47.2 mh/day

**Price:** MCr96.8

**HT:** 12 **HP:** 37,500 [Hull].

**sAccel:** 1.7 Gs/3.2 Gs empty **aSpeed:** 3,285 mph

## 400-TON COLONIST OILER (TL10)

This vessel is a converted ore lighter. The hasty conversion has resulted in stress cracks around the fuel tank; it is not recommended this ship exceed 1.5 G. It can refuel the LASH Tender in five runs as well as refine a load of fuel in just under 19 hours. It also has an integral electrolysis plant able to crack 1.67 dtons of water into 2.5 dtons of LH<sub>2</sub> and 1.25 dtons of LOX per hour.

Typical crew is 5 and consists of 3 Bridge Crew and 2 Engineers. These crewmen are drawn from the LASH Tender crew roster.

**Subassemblies:** VGSL Hull +9.

**Powertrain:** Engineering, 30 Maneuver, 2 Combination Contragravity Systems.

**Fuel:** 280 Jump Fuel Tank.

**Occ:** None. **Cargo:** 1 dton.

<b>Armor F</b>	<b>RL</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>U</b>	
<b>Hull:</b>	4/100	4/100	4/100	4/100	4/100

## Equipment

**Hull:** Compact Basic Bridge; 5 Fuel Electrolysis/Processor.

## Statistics

**Size:** 186'x46.4'x23.2' **Payload:** 5 stons

**Lwt:** 667 stons

**Volume:** 400 dtons **Maint:** 37.7 mh/day

**Price:** MCr61.8

**HT:** 12 **HP:** 37,500 [Hull].

**sAccel:** 1.8 Gs **aSpeed:** 1,895 mph

## Getting Through Inhabited Space

The first problems will start even before the first jump. Getting the expedition's crew in place is going to be difficult, as in the last few months the Border Worlds Authority will take an interest in the number of highly skilled people planning on leaving its little state. Central Administrator Muli will come to the conclusion that letting his citizens take part in the Project will be a propaganda disaster for him and his new order. Luckily, most of those needed will be out already, and others can be substituted from within the friendlier Sword Worlds Confederation. A few personnel will be critical, though, and smash-and-rescue missions may be needed. More subtle players may realize that the Imperium is probably more interested in giving the Border Worlds a safety valve, and get the master to lean on its client.

Once the expedition is ready to go, the best route is to dip down through District 268 to the Trojan Reach sector – avoiding Imperial and Darrian space – and from there move spinward to the Beyond sector. For the first couple of months, the expedition will be able to keep to space containing unincorporated worlds that won't present much of a threat. However, they soon reach the more heavily inhabited regions of Beyond and the Vanguard Reaches sector, where it may be necessary to negotiate passage. This is particularly true of the Vanguard Reaches, where multiple subsector-sized states exist; most of these are derived from Solomani colonies of the Long Night, but there is one rogue Aslan state, and a portion of the Zhodani Consulate pokes down into the spinward-coreward portion of the sector.

Adventures in this portion of the campaign are likely of the "First Contact" variety – not for the locals, but for the expedition personnel. They will be working with limited information on these distant cultures, and the situation will only get worse the further they get from home. The people they encounter can be useful allies and trading partners or dire threats, depending on how the Sword Worlders act.

### What You Can Take With You

The expedition has made it partway through the Beyond sector. It has spent two months in the Avalar Consulate – a state on the border of the Foreven sector, inhabited by Humans of mixed Zhodani/Solomani extraction. It is at a world called Hapad, preparing to leave the Avalars behind.

Unfortunately, this is not so easy.

The Avalars have long been a client of the Zhodani Consulate, but in the decade since the Fifth Frontier War they have been trying to steer a more independent course. The Hapad government has decided that a good way of doing this, without directly challenging the Consulate, will be to trouble citizens of the Zhodani's ally, the Sword Worlds.

The *Ucella Enterprise* has been refused permission to leave the system until such time as a number of fines and customs fees are paid. Hapad has a CR of 6, and the officials who inspected the colony ship upon arrival were going out of their way to find fault.

Any armed ships have been ordered to stand off away from Hapad itself, in orbit around a planetoid on the fringes of the system, containing a small military outpost and a

lanthanum-mining colony. If the Project has brought along any sort of firepower, these ships could blast the one patrol cruiser guarding them and make their escape, but the *Ucella Enterprise* is essentially a hostage in orbit around Hapad itself.

Fortunately for the Sword Worlds, all is not well on Hapad. Despite the strict laws and a ironclad bureaucracy, the planet does have a functioning democracy and the ruling party is in trouble in the coming elections. As part of their policy to move away from the Zhodani, the Avalars have been shifting military units coreward to that border, and piracy has flared up in a group of unincorporated worlds trailing Hapad.

There are several solutions:

- Fall in with the local opposition party, who are pro-Zhodani and will end the harassment if they can take over. While the *Ucella Enterprise* is stuck for now, the opposition have enough informal strength to help. They can get the expedition's cruiser cleared through customs; the ship can then pirate-hunt to spinward and win some votes.

- Pirates are raiding a distant mining colony; aiding this colony will give them the support of a Hapadi patrol cruiser, and they would only have to make it through one combat. The shock of a direct raid on the Hapad system will cause the current government to fall.

- Finally, the expedition could make common cause with the pirates instead, and arrange to help with a raid on Hapad itself. The *Ucella Enterprise* would be liberated during the raid, and the expedition free to leave in the confusion. Players choosing this course should be reminded that the plan is to keep a route open to the Sword Worlds, however, and using this plan will definitely burn bridges with Hapad.

## Getting Through Uninhabited Space

Once the expedition reaches the spinward border of the Vanguard Reaches sector, the population thins out very rapidly. The next sector is Fulani, with only a few inhabited worlds on its coreward edge. Astron is uninhabited by any known civilization. In both, the only real population is the occasional alien race inhabiting its homeworld. None are known to be spacefaring, so they can be contacted or avoided as the expedition sees fit.

Here adventures are going to have the universe itself as their opponent. At first the explorers may be glad of this, especially if the situation on Hapad got sticky, but gradually they will come to realize that some Human faces around represent a cushion of safety. Now the Astron Project is on its own, and will succeed or fail entirely based on what its members themselves do.

### The Gates of Mercy

In the spinward Fulani sector, the expedition's scout has come upon a world recently wracked by nuclear war. The native intelligent species – the Project is well away from other Humans by now – has plunged its planet into nuclear winter, destroying civilization in the northern hemisphere, and pushing it to the very brink in the south.



## NEW HOMES

There are four planets in the Armory Cluster that are "bare-skin" habitable; they have been named and targeted as possibilities for the first colony world.

### 0738 Sanglamore

*Diameter:* 8,200 miles. *Atmosphere:* Dense oxygen-nitrogen. *Surface Water:* 100%. *Climate:* Cold. *Population:* 0. *Government:* None. *Control Rating:* 0. *TL:* 0. *Planetoid Belts:* 2. *Gas Giants:* 1. *Star:* K2 V (Unnamed).

Sanglamore is a reasonably terrestrial world, with one major flaw: there's not much land. Actual living space isn't a problem, as 0.5% of the planet's surface is dry. This is still over a million square miles, so there is room for millions of people.

The real problem with too much water is that there is no break for hurricanes. When they form in the summer, they never spend much time over land, which is what eventually saps them of their energy. Instead they roar around the planet for months, making the tropics uninhabitable. Fortunately Sanglamore is a cold planet, so the situation is not as bad as it could be, but it is still an issue to keep in mind.

### 0836 Sauvagine

*Diameter:* 7,900 miles. *Atmosphere:* Dense oxygen-nitrogen. *Surface Water:* 91%. *Climate:* Very Cold. *Population:* 0. *Government:* None. *Control Rating:* 0. *TL:* 0. *Planetoid Belts:* 0. *Gas Giants:* 1. *Star:* F6 V (Unnamed), K8 V (Unnamed).

Sauvagine is the most mineral rich of all four planets. Its primary flaw is that it is very cold, and only the equator is readily habitable. There are also no planetoid belts, so space industry will be stunted.

On the other hand, the planet has the best mixture of land and water, with two continents and travel across the oceans between them likely to be easy. Sauvagine may be the easiest planet to live on in the very early days of the colony.

### 0937 Chrysaor

*Diameter:* 8,400 miles. *Atmosphere:* Dense oxygen-nitrogen. *Surface Water:* 89%. *Climate:* Normal. *Population:* 0. *Government:* None. *Control Rating:* 0. *TL:* 0. *Planetoid Belts:* 3. *Gas Giants:* 1. *Star:* G4 V (Unnamed).

Chrysaor is the most terrestrial planet in the Armory Cluster. It would be the clear choice except for one problem: an analysis of the planet's life shows that it is built around right-handed amino acids. No native life can offer nutrition to a Human or other Terran-compatible creature.

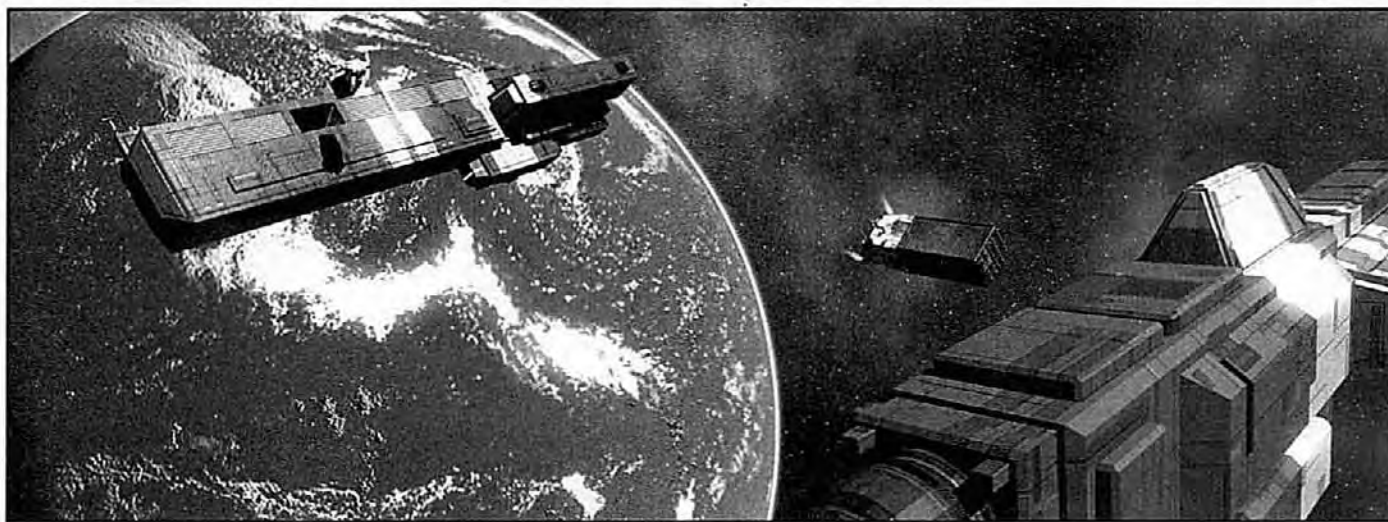
There is still room to maneuver here, however. The local life is not actually poisonous, the expedition did bring along food plants and animals, and the other four terrestrial worlds in the cluster will supply compatible life forms for import. While Chrysaor may be a disappointment, it's not a write-off either.

### 1036 Huiting

*Diameter:* 7,100 miles. *Atmosphere:* Dense oxygen-nitrogen. *Surface Water:* 39%. *Climate:* Hot. *Population:* 0. *Government:* None. *Control Rating:* 0. *TL:* 0. *Planetoid Belts:* 2. *Gas Giants:* 3. *Star:* G1 V (Unnamed), M3 V (Unnamed).

Huiting is hot and dry, but there are a number of country-sized areas available. Minerals are abundant, if not remarkably so, and the local life is compatible with Human biochemistry.

Like the other planets, though, Huiting isn't perfect. The main problem is that the system's secondary star occasionally disrupts the more distant of the two planetoid belts, which means that Huiting can expect to be struck by a good-sized rock every few hundred years. This could be a problem if something goes wrong and space travel is lost for a while: a meteorite could land on the heads of the colonists. Similarly, the planet's relatively small oceans don't interconnect, so if the contragravity industry doesn't start fairly quickly, long-range transport will be difficult.



The crew of the *Ucella Enterprise* has a very difficult decision to make. A follow-up examination is a good idea, but then what?

Should the Project step in and help? The aliens might be very aggressive; most species avoid nuclear wars. There's no telling how they will react to what might be their first ever contact with an alien race, and in the long term it might not be smart to set an aggressive species back on its feet – the Project is about long-term colonization as far away from any competitors as possible. On the other hand, getting in the race's good books would help keep a corridor open to the Marches, and give the expedition an ally a long way from home.

### *Surveying the Armory Cluster*

At this stage, the primary mission of the Astron Project is to fill in the sketchy data of the Imperial Second Survey and determine which of these would be the best world to colonize first (see p. 141). They will have to choose wisely, as it may be decades (or even generations) before the other worlds see their first permanent inhabitants.

### *Colonizing the Selected World*

Once a world has been selected, the colonists have their greatest task ahead of them: to turn the planet into a place where Humans can live on a full-time basis. Resources have to be found, dangers have to be catalogued, land surveyed, houses and infrastructure built, food sources secured, and so on. If the colonists are not putting in 16-hour days, they're missing something.

### *Who Are You?*

To begin with, the colonists are going to be too busy for politics. This will eventually change. Suspicious players have

probably wondered about the Project's patron since the beginning. Hundreds of megacredits have appeared out of nowhere – altruism on an unbelievable scale. Who's the benefactor, and what's in it for him (or them)?

## **ON THE EDGE**

A year after the colony starts up, the local ecology takes a serious downturn. Plants turn brown, then die; animals are sickly and dead carcasses are poisoning the local water supply.

It is up to the adventurers to find out why. Is the timing just coincidental, a natural occurrence? Or have the colonists brought something with them that is killing the native life?

There are any number of possibilities, but a likely one is that the colonists' livestock are at fault. Pigs, sheep, and especially goats are eating machines; if some of them have escaped and started breeding, they could have eradicated some rare but critical plant in the local area. The trick now is to wipe out the free-range animals, and then figure out what it was they destroyed.

One possibility is rich political extremists who share the ideal of starting the Sword Worlds again, but have a much nastier idea of what that really means. Alternatively, one of the threatened planetary governments – Narsil, or even the entire Border Worlds Authority – may want the Armory Cluster as a bolthole. In either case, there will be a showdown over the long-term direction of the Project. Just who in the group of colonists might actually be a conspirator or enemy? Enterprising GMs might even want to put a PC or two in on the plot.





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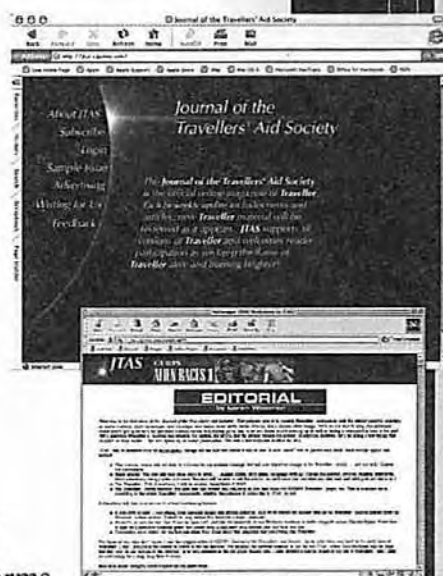
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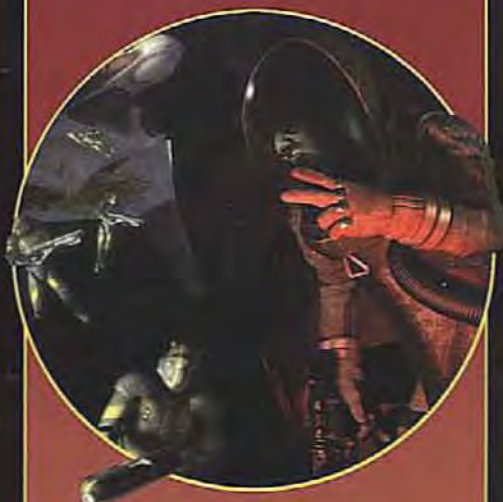
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