

TWILIGHT SECTOR

SPACE PERA¹⁰

THE STARFARER'S GAZETTE

**Issue Number 2,
Twilight Volume**

LIFE ON EDGE

Fringer Settlement Closeup

Retrotech Reviews

Special Features:

Snub Weapons

Retrotech Vehicles

Average Joes:

the Edge Settler



Martin J. Dougherty

TRAVELLER

Compatible Product

TWILIGHT SECTOR

Starfarer's Gazette #2

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A Linguistic Note

Sharp eyed American readers will note that in some places the main text mentions 'Armour' and 'Tyres' while some of our British readers will notice that the sidebars contain 'armor' and 'rumor.' This was a deliberate choice based on practical considerations as well as a desire to maintain and heighten the flavor of the in-character Gazette writing style (who apparently use, or at least translates into, British English).

GALACTIC NEWS SERVICE WIREFEED

Friday, September 2, 1991 (received 3:22 UTC. Earth)
Mauryan Empire (GNS):

GNS

The diplomatic standoff between the Terran Union and the Mauryan Empire continues as Myron George, CEO of Apollo AeroSpace, continues to be held by the Mauryans. He has now been indicted for espionage and crimes against the state by the Mauryan high court. The Terran Union has now placed three Dreadnoughts (the *Pacific*, the *Chile* and the *Australia*) at Anroy in response to the Mauryans placement of two Dreadnoughts and the Oster Republics placement of two of their Dreadnoughts within six parsecs of Anroy.

The Grand Yogi Reverend Stratmore Van, a Shenzhou roving ambassador continues to shuttle between the three parties trying to reach a diplomatic solution.

Monday, October 10, 1991 (received 19:43 UTC. Earth)
Revolution/APR (GNS):

GNS

The 74th quadrennial Congress of the Communist People's Party was rocked today by denunciations of several key potential successors of Party Chairman Li Po.

The Congress was convened two years early to coincide with the Chairman's 200th birthday celebration. However those good feelings have been shattered by the denunciations of Vladimir Volstock and Sergi Li by a coalition of junior party apparatchiks primarily from the APR's intelligence agencies.

The well timed assault has appeared to gain traction within the Congress as several lesser Chairman Candidates have apparently latched onto the movement. It is unclear at this time if Volstock or Li will be able to weather this denunciation.

Thursday, November 10, 1991 (received 11:56 UTC. Earth)
Revolution/APR (GNS):

GNS

Chairman Li Po has recessed this contentious 74th Peoples Party Congress with no resolution as to a successor and with the two primary candidates at the beginning of the Congress, Vladimir Volstock and Sergi Li, still holding onto their party positions. The Chairman set October 10th, 1993 as the date the 74th congress would reconvene.



The only clear result is the Peoples Communist Party is more fractured than at any time in the history of the APR and tensions are high as the Congress lined up in support of the two primary candidates and the so called rebel faction of junior party officials who attempted the political assassinations of Volstock and Li. There have already been reports of rioting and military confrontation between various factions throughout the Republic. Without strong leadership from Chairman Po, these are only likely to escalate.

**Tuesday, December 27, 2991 (received 01:16 UTC. Earth)
Kaifeng/Shenzhou (GNS):**



Black smoke from the Prime Yogi's residence in Perchan City today announced the passing of Prime Guru Mati Chowdhury.

The controversial leader who oversaw the Shenzhou Hegemony's entry into the Mutant War surprisingly on the side of the Expansionist States was beloved in the Hegemony but reviled in the Terran Union and the Orion Confederation. Her decision to enter the war on the side of the Expansionist States was viewed by the Terrans and the Orions as a personal betrayal. Both governments believed that the move was a cynical attempt to try and wrest the Terra/Sol system away from the Orions since so many Shenzhou adherents believed that world to be their mythic "divine land".

Manish Gowda and Lu Duc Phat are considered to be the main candidates to succeed her as the Prime Guru.



EDITORIAL ON THE EDGE

Let's file that one under 'seemed like a good idea at the time.'

RSS Avenger is currently in the Edge star system, right on the fringe of explored space. Getting here required passing through a bunch of perfectly interesting systems we could have stopped off at instead, then a long and tedious deep-space transit to reach the Edge system. Worst of all, the captain is eying that great unknown out there and asking about course plots to investigate whatever shiny thing has caught his attention most recently. We're not keen on that idea.

We? Ah yes. For those who don't know, we are the crew of Research Star Ship (RSS) *Avenger*. Well, the crew plus assorted hangers-on, ne'er-do-wells and friends of the captain who seem to have come aboard and never left. Our mission is to investigate and report at first hand on, well, pretty much everything we encounter. We're also expected to try out a range of exciting, useful, and just plain dumb gadgets we've been sent, to document new species, and to generally create a definitive guide to everything and everyone, everywhere.

Standard disclaimer about the gear we test out and the reports that go with it: Not all of the devices we're given work as well as advertised, and we tend to call it as we see it, even if it's not pretty. Note that the crew of *RSS Avenger* cannot be held responsible for the use, misuse, loss, accidental discharge or unexplained by-product of using the items we review. Nor for your own irresponsibility, though that surely cannot exceed ours.

Starfarer's Gazette

With that in mind, let's proceed with Starfarer's Gazette #2. This time around we have a truly in-depth look at the contents of the Edge system, reviews of some weaponry you'd be well advised to take with you if you visit, and a wild tale we overheard in a bar. The reliable content level of these items varies considerably, but not predictably... It's more fun that way...

This issue of Starfarer's Gazette contains the following sections:

- **Ports of Call** – places we've been and things we've seen
- **Slices of Life** – tales we've heard... often several times, all from people who swear it happened to them
- **People, Places and Things** – features about this and that
- **Stuff and Nonsense** – equipment, weaponry and stuff-in-general that we've been sent to review

Okay, please extinguish all smoking materials and fasten your seat belt; here we go....

Captain out

So what is it that I've got here?

In General: Most of the Starfarer's Gazette is laid out like an intermittantly-published style magazine for the cutting edge 30th Century audience of Terra/Sol's *Twilight Sector Setting*. The stories are told in their own words, their own way, while the sidebars and referee notes are written in much more subdued language in a font just like this to help you tell the difference between in-character and out-of-character material.

The material has also been designed specifically to be available for use in any Traveller game. So whether you're a fan of Twilight Sector, or looking for some ideas for your Traveller Campaign, lean close and lend me your ear... or other appropriate sensory appendage. As the inestimable (and anonymous) crew of the *Avenger* have said in their own way: this book is intended to be a hodgepodge of background material, rife with ideas and ready to spice up your games. As is always the case, feel free to fold spindle and mutilate (after purchase) any of the ideas found herein and have a great time.

Our Current Issue: The second issue of *Starfarer's Gazette* delves into the world of Edge. In the context of the other settings, Edge could be any backwater world of middle-tech. In the setting of the Twilight Sector, Edge is a particular type of world: a fringe settlement. The frontier has been artificially held for some time as a result both of the Mutant War and the treaties signed in the aftermath of that conflict. As a result, there are a wide variety of these small "fringer" settlements and unofficial colonies scattered just outside of Terra/Sol.

On the main map of the Sector in the *Twilight Sector Setting Book*, an area was set aside for player development of these kinds of worlds and while Edge is not in that area (it lies in the Crescent sector, located to the left of the Twilight Sector) it is nonetheless a good example of the kind of relatively well-developed fringer settlement that might be found there. So even if you decide not to use Edge in your campaigns, you can use this material as a guide and fill in those sections of the official Twilight Sector map that are designated for your use as a Referee. **Remember:** at Terra/Sol, the campaign is the thing!

PORTS OF CALL:

*There are a lot of interesting places out there, and the **Avenger** is vigilant about visiting the most useful, noteworthy or just plain fascinating of the bunch. Well, that and we generally get chased out of a lot of the less-interesting places.*

The following is a fringer world that we'd heard about from a tramp ship skipper. None of us thought that the place could be anywhere near as bad as he claimed it was, so we decided to check it out.

Shows what we know...



THE EDGE SYSTEM

The imaginatively-named Edge system lies right on the, yes... edge... of well-explored space. It was settled a fair while ago by a scattering of underfunded colony missions that never received any real support and thus never grew into a viable technological society. A combination of distance, apathy and the lack of anything really useful on Edge resulted in the colonies being forgotten about, other than as an obscure dot on the starmap. The occasional ship does come through, but this is rare enough to be big news on Edge itself.

The system contains a G5 star named Neider, orbited by two rocky planets and two gas giant worlds, plus a fairly large concentration of asteroids at the Trojan points of the gas giants' orbits. The innermost world is pegged on our starmaps as 'Neider I', following the convention that worlds are known by their orbital location and the name of their primary (star) unless inhabited or claimed.

Neider I is an airless rockball of a world sufficiently close to its primary that surface temperatures are extremely high. It is tidally locked, with a hot side and a cold side. There is no official record of either face ever being properly explored, and we didn't bother either. Who knows what riches await discovery there? We don't, because we headed straight for Neider II, better known as Edge. Edge has drinking establishments, Neider I does not. Do the math.

Neider III is a medium-sized gas giant with a pretty good ring system and a collection of moons. Most are typical rockballs but one seems

to have enough atmospheric gas to be given the grant title of an atmosphere. You can't breathe it of course (well, you can but you'll die; it's mostly methane) but our instruments claimed that you could extract useful gases from it. We landed briefly, stuck a flag in the ground (okay, it was a tea towel on a pole, but the intent was there) and named the world Fibble. Recognition by the astronavigation authorities is still pending on that one.

There are several 'empty orbits' between Neider III and Neider IV, which is an insignificant little (as these things go) gas giant with a huddle of equally trivial rockballs masquerading as moons. Chances are nobody has ever even been there, and we weren't inspired to be the first. There are also fairly extensive asteroid clusters at the Trojan points of the gas giants' orbits. Oh good, more rocks. We didn't visit.

EDGE

Our starmap said Edge was habitable. Lies, lies, lies! It's *survivable*, we guess, but nobody would actually want to live there. It's a dismal, wet, mid-sized planet with a breathable but damp and smelly atmosphere. Which is, by the way, prone to dump vast quantities of rain or hail on unsuspecting starfarers at frequent intervals.

Storms are also common, and can be quite destructive. And this was in the 'most habitable' area of the planet. Yeek.

According to the pack of lies that is our astronav database, about 15% of the surface of Edge is land, with the implication that there is plenty of habitable terrain. This is not true; much of this so-called 'land' is in fact swamp, marsh, flood plain or river delta, or else prone to flooding after one of the frequent storms. Most of the rest is uninhabitable for other reasons, usually because it is composed of post-volcanic badlands or near-vertical mountains which may or may not contain active volcanoes. There are also a number of earthquake zones.

***...even with
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However, planets are big, and even with all this damp crappiness going on, there are still a large amount of places that people could dwell if they really wanted to. These locations were targeted by a

number of well-intentioned and determined settlement missions, which landed in widely separated areas. With no follow-up or support missions, the result was a number of very small colonial 'nations' and an even larger number of independent settlements each going its own way and trying to survive. Some of these proto-nations died out entirely and most collapsed back to a scattered frontier existence, with handfuls of people dispersed over a wide area and maintaining only the most tenuous of contact.

Dryburgh has a stagnant society with no rapid changes to face, and can afford to wallow in inertia most of the time.

Today the world population is estimated at about 82,000, with only three of the 'nations' having a population of over ten thousand and something resembling an industrial base. Only these have access to air transport (and very little of it even then) and other relatively high-tech items. The remainder of the population dwell in small enclaves of a few hundred to a couple of thousand and make do with a rugged and basic frontier-style technological base.

We landed on the largest continent – that is, the biggest collection of swamps and mountains – on Edge. The locals call this chilly, wet and thoroughly dismal land mass Kimber. It is home to two of the three main 'nations', both of which are located in the so-called temperate region at the southern end of the continent. To the north is a pretty badass mountain range which protects the region from the 'really bad' (we shudder to imagine) weather encountered on the other side. Apparently people live there, mainly in a region known as the **Northeast Frontier***. We felt sorry for them, but we didn't go experience the crappiness of their existence for ourselves.

The town where we landed called itself Dryburgh, which is probably apt when compared to the rest of the region. Dryburgh is essentially a city-state, home to about 17,000 people in the town and its surrounding region. It is not a pretty place, being designed to withstand storms rather than to attract tourists, but inside the homes of the residents it is cheery enough. The locals like bright colours and 'busy' patterns, probably as a reaction to the utter drabness of their world.

*We at Terra/Sol Games will not specify anything further about conditions in Kimber's Northeastern Frontier, leaving any details (and the accuracy of the *Avenger* crew's statements) to individual Referees who can tailor this region to their own campaigns.



The political system in Dryburgh is not untypical of small frontier societies. There are several democratic-sounding offices such as 'president' and 'minister for agriculture' but no signs of a democratic process. Instead, it seems that a suitable candidate is installed by a combination of self-appointment and popular acclaim, and holds the post until they step down or some setback causes loud enough demands for a change of leadership. In practice this means that the leaders of Dryburgh's society have mostly held their posts for a long time and are a mix of talented, competent experts and well-connected or popular individuals – usually a bit of both.

Decision-making is rather informal, but there are few big decisions to be made anyway. Dryburgh has a stagnant society with no rapid changes to face, and can afford to wallow in inertia most of the time. Indeed, it is difficult to do much else given the lack of resources and people to wield them.

There is no military as such in Dryburgh, but several 'sheriffs' exist (again, often by self-appointment) who handle law enforcement, such as it is, and lead armed parties to chase off or kill dangerous creatures from the immediate vicinity of the town. Smaller communities have a similar system but less firepower.

Law is, predictably, loose. It is also not written down in most cases, with a common body of what amount to social values rather than laws instilled into most citizens from birth. Dryburgh has a jail for holding people who break these pseudo-laws that 'everyone knows about' (we tried the cells out a couple of times, proving that maybe

...every now and then a bunch of people get together and make something happen. The locals can be very industrious when they need to.

not everyone knows all the local laws), and in many cases serious criminals are exiled. This is not much short of a death sentence, given the general hostility of the outback and the lack of other places to go, but the locals maintain that the criminal is given a fair chance. In many cases exile is for a fixed term, and some exiles have actually lived long enough to come home.

There is a little industry, but with such a small population the emphasis is on subsistence rather than large-scale production. Workshops fix machinery and vehicles on a craftsman basis, with no two jobs exactly alike. Technology is pretty stable too, since there is no possibility of complex technological research. True, sometimes someone comes

up with something new through tinkering, but it's more likely to be a clever new way to use existing tech than a huge leap forward.

Bigger projects are occasionally planned. That tends to be as far as they go, but every now and then a bunch of people get together and make something happen. The locals can be very industrious when they need to. They've managed to build a very decent drainage and flood-defence system, which is probably just as well. There are also a couple of ongoing projects that have been in the works for years. Because of the storms and constant rain, EM broadcasts are spotty to maintain. Dryburgh has a small hardline network that is in the process of being slowly spread out to the surrounding settlements. This is a laborious process given local conditions. The "Vine", or local internet on Edge, is

Surfing the Edge:

Satellite internet coverage on Edge is spotty due to local weather conditions. If the conditions are more than a light rain, reduce Internet-based *Computer* checks by a -2 DM (i.e. using the system to crunch data found online but analyzed offline is unaffected, using it to log into the Wycombi portal is at a -2). In a section of the planet which has a hardline setup, like Dryburgh and some of the surrounding communities, the weather condition DM does not apply to any local websites or other internet-based *Computer* checks.

The local tech level is capable of producing simple computer technology, which has pathetic processing power when compared to the offworld computers that are often sent to Edge in odd lots on tramp ships headed into the system. Software produced locally can surpass TL-7 as long as high TL computers are used to compile them.

much more vibrant and stable in and around Dryburgh than it is on the rest of the planet thanks to this local hardline network.

The other project is a bit less ambitious, but larger in scale. The locals at Dryburgh use fairly typical electrically powered trucks and ground cars in town and around the immediate area, but transport to other communities, notably the largish town of Pale River to the west, is problematical. Attempts to improve communications are focussed on constructing an embankment with a road on the top all the way to Pale River. This is a pretty big undertaking for a part-time workforce, and thus far the only progress has been to raise the existing road above some of the wettest parts of the route. Even this modest success has made a difference to road communications on Edge.

We took a drive out along this road, for reasons that seemed good at the time. In the area immediately surrounding Dryburgh things are relatively civilised, with little ranches and farms scattered across the relatively well drained land. There are even a couple of smaller towns on high ground. Pretty soon, and without much warning, we found ourselves in the outback. That was a whole different ball game.

The outback between Dryburgh and Pale River is less wild and soggy than in other areas, but it was bad enough. It's a bit like the entire world was painted in four colours – greeny-grey, greyish-green, dreary, and depressing. Marshy areas are common, and some are pretty extensive. Thankfully, there weren't all that many insects in these regions; they probably found somewhere less grim to live. All the same, a foray off the road to test out the camping gear or to collect interesting rocks is not a good idea in this region. The swamps are treacherous. Well, actually that's not fair... there's no actual treachery there. The swamps are just plain deadly and it's not their fault that they look almost exactly the same as 'dry' land.

Vegetation is pretty much what we expected. It's coarse and low-lying, as if it just can't be bothered to stand up. Everything has thorns; stems tend to be extremely flexible and resilient. This makes hacking planty obstructions away very difficult, and the damn stuff simply does not want to be pushed aside. Some of the plants grow real fast too, which can make an area impassable again just weeks after it has been cleared.

We spotted some wildlife while we were out and about, ranging from big grazing beasts with thick enough hides to simply plod through the thorny mess to a strange creature that dwells in dryer, rocky upland areas. This beast is known locally as a **Joke**, and it's not hard to see why. They smell truly appalling, taste worse no matter how you cook

them or what with, and they are possibly the most inventively stupid creature found outside the command deck of *RSS Avenger*.

...(Jokes) are possibly the most inventively stupid creature found outside the command deck of RSS Avenger.

Sadly for the locals, the Joke is also the most useful beast of burden that Edge has produced, which means that they get used as transport or farm animals by people

who don't have access to the infrastructure needed to maintain and support vehicles. Joke-wranglers sometimes take trade caravans around the outlying settlements, an impressively difficult undertaking even without the propensity of the beasts to hurl themselves into the nearest swamp or get stuck in a thorn patch.

The rivers and swamps are full of life, and most of it would like to eat anyone foolish enough to enter the water. There are various small swimming creatures, which are not much of a threat but might nibble your toes, but the real hazard is a long-necked creature that can reach an alarmingly long way out of the water to tear off vegetation, grab small animals or bite the radio antenna off a truck. These river-monsters seem entirely happy to eat whatever comes within reach. It's not always possible to tell if a nearby pool is deep enough to conceal one, which can be interesting to say the least.

The real animal threat on Edge is the **Springer**. We're told these are uncommon on the 'civilised' side of the mountains, but they have begun to filter through the high passes during the recent string of unusually dry summers (we don't want to see this place when it's

not 'unusually dry') and are now breeding on 'this' side of the barrier. Judging by the ones we encountered, that's going to be a problem.

Springers are about the size of a large dog, usually, with long back legs that let them, well, spring for want of a better word. They can jump several metres and use this ability to bring down prey. Their front limbs are a bit feeble but they have a mandible that can allegedly bite through a man's arm. We didn't test that for ourselves, though we did discover that a 5mm assault rifle is entirely adequate for dealing with these creatures providing there's not too many. They hunt cooperatively, and we're told they are willing to ambush lone humans or even small groups. This planet sucks.

Our trip to Pale River was far longer and more depressing than we thought, and also much harder work. And this was on the main trade route between the planet's two largest 'nations'. The rest of the outback is much worse, apparently. That might explain why there's so little contact between the settlements, and why most of the planet is entirely unexplored even today.

A cursory survey with our ship's instruments indicated a fairly average abundance of mineral resources, and a few sites that might merit investigation as high-yield mines. However, exploiting such a remote system is always a problem; transport costs eat into the profits from any extraction operation, so somewhere like Edge might be simply too expensive to mine. That has not, apparently, stopped someone from trying. Our survey showed a few areas that seemed to have artificial structures, albeit very overgrown ones, and also what looked like a couple of abandoned colony sites. With so much crappy outback and such a small planetary population, an expedition might be completely missed.

There are rumours that exploration or scientific parties have visited the world, poking around in the outback where nobody goes. Of course, there are also rumours of mountains of gold and a paradise region where the ground is dry and the wildlife doesn't try to eat you. We didn't investigate.

By the time we reached Pale River we were thoroughly sick of Edge. A cursory look at the town suggested it was quite similar to Dryburgh, at which point we called in the shuttle and left. Our impression of Edge is that it's a place where you *could* live and even make a decent life for yourself, but you'd not *want* to given the choice. There are resources to be had, and perhaps the rumours of exploration parties are true. Edge is a vast wilderness that could contain almost anything... but probably doesn't.

And we're not volunteering to go looking.





The image of the fringer is distorted, such as this one from a popular entertainment program.

Fringer (noun): One who lives on the fringes of settled space; on a planet which has not yet been okayed for settlement. Legally speaking, fringers, especially those born in fringer settlements, do not have a true nation to call "home" and are thus considered as less than vagabonds by many interstellar governments. When the planets they live on are opened for development, some fringers are invited to stay, while others are forced out. A lot depends on the politics of the situation and that depends on the natural bounty of the planet...

SLICES OF LIFE

*One thing that Spacers love to do more than anything else is trade stories. Not just their own, but those of friends and enemies and shipmates long gone. A Spacer's friend isn't just a well-worn vacc suit or trusty sidearm, it's the stories they keep locked up in their heads that keep them company on long voyages into the void. These are more than just the makings of folklore, they are the basis of an entirely unique form of literature, the Spacer's **Slice of Life**.*

These are just a few tales we've heard... often several times, all from people who swear it happened to them.

In any case, they make good stories.

OUTBACK EXILE ***"My Year in the Mountains"***

Yeah, I did it. I stole the only performance motorcycle in town and tried to jump Casey's Gully. It seemed like a good idea at the time.

Sheriff Mitchell scraped me up off the ground and took me to the clinic, and after I healed up they put me in front of a tribunal. Fixed trial? Well, yes. The owner of the bike, the guy whose store I robbed, and some woman who was trying for a permanent job as some kind of chief judge. They found me guilty before I got in the room, and I got a year's exile. Not just for the bike thing; there was some other stuff too. Lots of other stuff.

Well, I foxed them, didn't I? I went and survived.

They took me out to the foothills of the Osogom mountains and turned me loose with a pack of stuff and a knife to my name. Not even a Joke to carry stuff for me, no gun, no idea what to do next, and no way back for a year. Chances are they expected me to try to come straight back in; probably had folks watching out for me in the outer settlements. Well, I didn't see the point so I went outward instead. Up into the mountains, where it's a bit drier.

'Course, there's not much to eat up there and you can get killed in all kinds of ways, but I had nothing to lose so I kept climbing. Ended up on a high plateau where it only rains most of the time. There were herds of wild Jokes up there, tame as you like. Did you know they're quite graceful and sure-footed in the wild? It's like they get stupid when you try to domesticate them. Maybe being around humans makes them dumb or something. Seems to happen to people, too.

So, I hunted wild Joke with a spear I made, and nearly starved. I wasn't a good hunter, but it's just as well maybe – they taste like old socks. Anyhow, I wandered further up into the mountains and found a high pass. I'd heard tell that there were ways across, but I wasn't looking for one, not really. Just wandering about with no idea what I was doing. But once I'd found it I just had to take a look.

So I got across the mountains and down the other side. It's not much different there, just wetter if you can imagine that. I ended up heading down the far side looking for a meal and shelter. As I got into the foothills there was a particularly bad storm, and I had to look for high ground in case of a flood. Well, sure enough half the hillside washed away, and I crawled under what I thought was a mass of Screwleaf bushes – you know, the ones with twisted leaves and massive thorns. I was pretty desperate at that point.

I was a bit surprised to find that there was a hut under the bushes. They climb up boulders and cover them, so I guess a metal hut's not much of a challenge. Unusual thing to find out there on a hilltop in the middle of nowhere, but I wasn't complaining. I had a poke around and found that the place even still had power from a fuel cell. The door was jammed but once I got it shut I was pretty snug. Heat, light, dryness... what a find!

Turns out someone had set up some kind of base there. It'd probably been abandoned for a good while, maybe five or six years, to judge from the bush coverage. Some kind of prefabricated hut, four-rooms plus a bathroom – well, shower room – and an entry hall that was half full of Screwleaf growth. I eventually got that cleared out and cut myself a tunnel through the bushes for access.

The place was set up for maybe four people to live in; two bunk rooms, a sort of kitchen-living area type place and a room that looked like a workshop or a lab. There was a whole lot of some kind of ration blocks and the water recycling still worked.

I also found a lot of scientific stuff that I didn't understand, including computers that used a language I've never seen before. Probably some kind of code. There were also a couple of guns, which I understood perfectly.

What I didn't find, not right away, was any sign of the occupants.

Once the rain eased up a bit

I started looking for them. I think that's how I got through the days –

trying to figure out what had happened to the people who set up that shelter. It gave me something to do with my time. I lived for three seasons in that hut, all on my own in the wilderness. I hunted whatever I could get so that I wouldn't have to eat the rations – they were pretty dreadful – and spent my days searching the hills for the previous owners of my hut.

I found some instruments, but no people. One set looked like a weather monitoring station, right up on a high hilltop. Nearly killed myself getting back down, but I don't think that's what happened to the scientists or whatever they were. The other instruments I found

***...I hunted wild
Joke ...and nearly
starved. I wasn't
a good hunter,
but it's just as well
maybe – they taste
like old socks.***



I sense... danger

were near a river bank, with probes in the soil and cables running to some sort of device in the water. That's when I saw my first Springer.

I was watching out for nasties in the water, and I just plain forgot that something from the land might try to munch on me. First I knew, something hit me in the back and sent me flying face-first into a tree. That's what saved me; I bounced one way and the Springer on my back went the other. I was carrying the guns I'd found; I dropped the shotgun but I managed to get the revolver out. The critter was up on its feet before I'd got to my knees, but fortunately I went for the gun before I tried to stand. It hit me square in the chest and bowled me over, kinda wrapped its back legs around me and grabbed my jacket front with its little stubby front legs and tried to bite my face. I stuck the revolver where its ear would be if it was, you know, some kind of face-biting person.

I'm still a bit deaf in my right ear, but I blew that critter's head right off with a single shot. Which was just as well, since it brought its family. I emptied the revolver as they closed in, and somehow managed to dive to the shotgun. By the time I was finished there were four more dead ones, plus Mr. Headless to make five. Then I ran all the way back to my hut, barricaded the door and stayed inside for nearly a week.

In the end, I started having to go out again, but I was a bit cautious after that. I did some more exploring and found a few interesting things. Springers lay eggs, and there was a whole lot of smashed shells buried in a little pit behind my hut. What looked like Springer remains too, like someone was studying them. Chances are that didn't work out all that well for the people in my hut.

I stayed there until I figured my exile time must be up, and tried to get back across the mountains. That turned out to be a bit of a problem but eventually I made it back to an outpost. Turns out my time had been up for a couple of weeks when I set out on the trip back; it was three months more before I got home.

And genius that I am, I told my story. Which meant that I was suddenly an expert on Springers and the only guy who could explain how they were getting across the mountains when they never did before. So now I'm the Chief Springer Ranger or whatever you want to call it. I'm in charge of hunting them down before they can breed up their numbers, and of trying to figure out everything about the beasties. And that in turn means endlessly yomping around in the wilderness risking sudden death by critter or quicksand.

Seriously, I was better off in my little hut. At least I could stay indoors when I felt like it.



REMITTANCE MAN

A Parable about Bad Timing

I find the sound of the rain outside oddly soothing. One of those long, slow soaks as opposed to the torrents they get this time of

year in Southern Kimber. I once read that one of the ancient people's of Earth had fifty different names for snow, each one describing a distinctive type. I think I can manage at least half that for rain.

Which means I've been here too damned long.

Jenilee smiles at me as she eases her way behind the bar. As she sees my face though, she heads straight in my direction, a look of concern in her eyes. I have a sudden urge to run. Instead, as she closes in on me, I cast my gaze around the bar. It's a cozy place, with industrial plastic walls and that hodgepodge of furniture so common to fringer décor. The closest person to me is Benny, and as usual this time of the mid-morning, he is well and pickled. A few other regulars are here as well, though they have clustered on the other side of the bar and are playing a cardgame introduced by a Spacer last month.

"Problems Vee?" Jenilee asks.

I shrug, my voice a bit lower volume than usual as Benny smacks his lips. I'm not sure what to say... what I can say. Making myself sound as conversational as possible, I tell her: "The *Shenandoah* came in this morning."

My relationship with Jenilee was one that could be best summed up as 'bad timing' for the most part. One of us was ready when the other one wasn't; it was an on-again-off-again affair littered with disasters and sudden reversals. We'd made a lot of headway over the last month and a half, and were looking to be on an even keel. Until now.

"Why the long face?" she smiles, although I see the fear bloom slowly behind her eyes. Bad timing strikes again. "You didn't get any vodka this time to share?"

My brother Constantine always sent the vodka, his personal contribution to my exile. At first I thought it was a joke, but I've since taken it as a kindness. Like other remitees on Edge, I live off of the cargo family sends my way. As long as I stay away. I keep up a lavish lifestyle by local standards through trading offworld goods they cannot produce locally. And unlike some, my remittances arrived like clockwork.

I slide the packet of legal paperwork onto the bartop, some of which is actually printed on paper. Jenilee stares down at it, sees the name "Hartwell Legal Service" across the top. She stops.

"No vodka," I manage to croak. I can't say it. "Nothing other than this."

She stares at the legal paperwork for a moment, then back up at me. She's fringer born, but far from stupid. Far from the caricature of a fringer I had grown up hearing about, laughed at. Plus she knows me. Jenilee knows if the shipment had been cut off, I would be angry. She knows if there had been a delay I might complain. I see her make the calculations in her head.

"I'm so sorry Vee," she says after a moment. "Your father?"

I nod. Not trusting much beyond that.

She bites her lip, her own voice trembling slightly now. "He was a good man Vee. Good to a lot of us here, and he loved you."

Her grey-brown hand slid over mine. To anyone else, that might seem stupid. Moronic even. I was an exile, and my father paid me to stay away. To stay on the fringes far from him and the rest of my family.

But it was more complicated than that. A year after my arrival, Edge was struck with Eckland's syndrome. It had moved fast, and killed a lot of locals. As soon as he got word, my father had commissioned the *Shenandoah* to bring a cargo hold full of medicines and humanitarian supplies as well as a number of doctors willing to help. He'd saved a lot of lives, including Jenilee's son Charlie.

My father was a good man. That made my exile all the harder. I had gone to war too young, and come back a mess. I lashed out. It was an all-too common tale, and I'd heard it again and again. Survivor's guilt in some cases, or the strain of having done what some of us had to do in the war to get home. We drove at those who loved us, isolating ourselves in a spiral of self-loathing and self-punishment. Things came to a head and my father gave me a choice: the ice-moon of Absolute Zero where I could make my own fortune as a crystal diver, or what passes for the genteel life on Edge as a full-blown remittance man. I knew what the perils of ice-diving were from the war, and I chose Edge.

As I hold Jenilee's hand she looks at me, hesitantly opening her mouth. "You headed back then?" she asks me. I hear her voice catch.

***I was an exile,
and my father
paid me to stay
away. To stay on
the fringes far
from him and the
rest of my family.***

Starfarer's Gazette

Home. I turn the word over in my head. Edge has been good for me, a place where I'd started to heal. But it wasn't home. Deep down I was a city-dweller, a caveman in the steel canyons of the arcologies on Terra/Sol. But something else nagged at me. The confusion. The sense of being alone even when surrounded by teeming crowds. Maybe especially then. The overwhelmed feeling. I wanted to go home and I feared going home at the same time.

I stare down at the packet. The lawyers had sent a return ticket to Terra/Sol, a berth on the *Shenandoah* had already been reserved. But the packet also has a good deal of spending script, more than enough for the plan that forms in my mind.

"Vee?" she asks tentatively.

Bad timing rears its ugly head again.

To hell with that.

"Only if you and the kids come with me." I say. As she bursts into tears I know that the answer doesn't matter. I'll be with her and the boys whether it is here on Edge or back on Terra/Sol. Father would have understood why I cannot be there and would want me to be happy. Constantine might take it poorly. He might not like the woman I plan on bringing with me either... If she'll stop crying and agree. Or not.

Either way though, I'll help my brother understand. It's just a matter of timing. And from now on my timing will be all good.



The Remittance Culture

Edge is one of the fringer settlements where a good deal of the local economy is derived from transfers from offworld, aka remittances. On Terra/Sol, this often takes the form of goods rather than outright cash (the goods are better than outright cash for trade). For more information, see pages 61-62.

The character described here, Everett Duprés III, or "Vee" as he prefers, is just one of the remittes on Edge. In fact, he is a classic 'remittance man'. As a veteran coming back from the war, life on crowded Terra/Sol exacerbated adjustment issues and his family sent him away to help him heal. But other types of remittes are possible, just a few examples include:

- ✦ Lovers deemed inappropriate who have been bought off by wealthy families and can collect as long as they stay away.
- ✦ Younger sons or daughters of wealthy families being "stashed" after a scandal.
- ✦ Mutant children of otherwise baseline families being "hidden" in the fringes.
- ✦ A hush-money payoff, either from active blackmail or the prospect of it.
- ✦ Someone who wants to make a go of it on the fringe and has family or friends that support them. The old army friend of an Industrialist for example.

PEOPLE, PLACES AND THINGS

In our travels we've come across all manner of organisations, curiosities, personalities and anomalies. Here we present a small selection of the things we've learned along the way about people, places and things that might be of interest to our fellow Starfarers. We hope, as always, that they are of some assistance to you... so you survive longer and keep buying our magazine.

*Of course we on the Avenger cannot actually **recommend** any of these things. We just call them as we see them.*



BARSLICH AUTOMOTIVE

Barslich is a small vehicle manufacturer that specialises in wheeled offroad vehicles and has a new offshoot in the ground effect vehicle market. The firm prefers to be known for its paramilitary and exploration range, but they also make 'pretend offroaders' for rich city folk who feel they need a 9-seat exploration wagon to drive to the office. This segment of the market provides about 75% of Barslich's income, embarrassing as it may be.

Barslich's pretend-offroad vehicles are actually a bit better than similar offerings from many rivals, in that they do not immediately break when climbing a kerb or crossing a grassy picnic area. In fact, Barslich is one of the better makes in terms of actual offroad performance. However, it is important to distinguish between a vehicle designed to climb over obstacles in the outback and one intended to look like it might be able to. Trying to use one of Barslich's urban-offroaders as transport in the outback is an endeavour doomed to failure.

However, the true-offroad range is fairly decent. Barslich Automotive produce a very serviceable range of six-wheel-drive offroad trucks and four-wheel-drive utility vehicles. They are best known, however, for their 'dune buggy' type vehicles, which range from a very small one-seater 'fun buggy' to serious paramilitary or exploration vehicles.

The 'Fast Attack Vehicle' concept fell into disrepute some years ago, but there is a trend towards renewed interest after several high-profile mercenary units began using FAVs for the patrol, strike and convoy escort roles. Armed with a machinegun or a grenade launcher on a pintle mount, a 2-seat buggy can, in theory, provide fast-moving firepower wherever it is needed. Experience in the field has shown that this is not always as easy as it sounds, but overall the concept seems to be working.

Some merc outfits use Barslich FAVs as missile platforms, launching anti-armour or anti-aircraft missiles from a fast-moving vehicle that makes a small target even when it is not obscured by terrain. This, too, has been modestly successful, and military sales of Barslich vehicles are increasing at a very respectable rate.

This trend has been accompanied by an aggressive marketing campaign and a strategic alliance with Freedom WeaponSys, which provides many of the armament systems for Barslich's off-the-shelf paramilitary vehicle range. The wisdom of this move is debatable; Freedom has a dubious record when it comes to sales. Its weaponry has turned up in the hands of many revolutionaries and insurgent groups. However, in the short term the move seems to have made both firms a lot of money.

The Ground Effect line of vehicles is a more recent development, based on the acquisition of a small GEV plant from a former competitor.

Since many of the worlds where Barslich sells their products are medium to low-technology, these designs are intended to be simple, rugged, and capable of being fixed (or at least with replaceable parts) at a tech level found on backwaters and fringe settlements. They are simple designs which are easy to work on for maintenance and have few frills. These have proven to be very lucrative in trade to fringer settlements and places like Dorlass, where the local tech level is more than a match for service needs.

***Trying to use
one of Barslich's
urban-offroaders
as transport in
the outback is
an endeavour
doomed to failure.***



Wheeled Vehicles in the 30th Century

While gravplate tech allows for aircars, which will be plentiful due to their utility and speed, these are still not the most efficient vehicles. Thus the ground-car will remain a part of the scramble of 30th century transport tech.

But the 30th century groundcar bears only a passing resemblance to its 21st century forebear. To begin with, most of these vehicles have autopilot systems and can hook into local grids (where available) increasing ease of use and efficiency. There are many inhabitants of the 30th century who own a groundcar and only have a passing familiarity with the operation of the vehicle. Power sources have changed with TL 10 Superconductor technology. The only thing that has not changed radically would in fact be the interior, and even this would have significant changes with memory plastic bits shaping into various convenience items (cup holders, pillows and so forth).

EXPLORATION INCORPORATED

EXPLORATION, INC

Exploration, Inc is a small company with offices on a handful of worlds. It undertakes a variety of exploration and survey tasks on behalf of its clients, ranging from mapping through mineral surveys to search-and rescue. Personnel are also available as guides or advisors for private expeditions.

Personnel are usually recruited through a low-key advertising programme or by word of mouth. It is rare for untrained individuals or college graduates to be hired; more often prospective personnel have considerable experience as field scientists, military personnel or specialists in their own field. Colonists from 'backwoods' areas are sometimes recruited however, as they usually have extensive experience of the sort of conditions they might encounter in their new line of work, even if they lack formal training.

Exploration, Inc offers a training service for anyone willing to pay the fairly reasonable fee. The usual clients are engineers, surveyors or scientists expecting to work in remote areas or under difficult conditions, but large-scale programmes have also been set up to train prospective colonists. This seems to be a growing business, suggesting that a new wave of expansion or colonisation is being planned by a private organisation.

This theory is borne out by the fact that several Exploration, Inc parties have been hired to undertake mapping and survey operations. The firm is discreet and does not reveal the details of its contracts, but the length of time that certain well-respected members of the Exploration, Inc staff have been out of circulation suggests that they have visited very remote worlds or possibly undertaken a very long-term project, perhaps as part of a training contract.

Exploration, Inc also undertakes its own survey and exploration missions, usually selling the data gained on the open market. It has an extensive pay-for-access database and also sells 'blind surveys'. These are the results of detailed investigations of a set area, usually a 100km square region of a planet, moon or asteroid. They include details of mineral resources and other economic prospects and are offered for sale, as the name suggests, 'blind'. The client gets the survey for a small fee. It might contain the key to riches, or it might not.

For an additional fee the client can ask who else has bought this data, and/or request that it be taken off the market. Critics have suggested that Exploration, Inc is not only selling data on worthless areas in many cases, but actually sells it several times over. The firm counters by pointing out that the surveys are undertaken at its own expense, which is incurred whether or not something useful is found, and that the cost of finding out that a region is not very economically useful from a third-party survey is rather lower than the price of sending an expedition.



Survey 6415-421265WQ/45QEF:

Location: Edge (Neider II), **Planetary Coordinates:** 34°21'29" S 18°28'19" E.

Executive Summary: Neider II is famous in the Twilight Sector, at least among those who know of its very existence, for the water inundated terrain. But this site (45 QEF) is in the mountainous region on a continent known to the locals as Iceland. Befitting its elevation and latitude (*file 45 QEF-a, Terrain Report*), the area is well known for bitterly cold temperatures, which was one of the factors which forced the first settlement here (The Strauss-Leinier Expedition and later Strauss-Leinier Colony) to fold up in 2987 (*file 45 QEF-b, Area History*). But their loss is your gain, as the area is also laced with relatively rich deposits of rare earth metals and precious gemstones (*file 45 QEF-c, Mineral Report*).

The presence of the abandoned colony site actually provides any expedition to the area with a base or shelter, as many of the local structures were simply left in place when the colony folded up. A few squatters may be found there, although two pass-overs did not reveal any sustained activity (*file 45 QEF-h, Aerial Recon Report*). Likewise, any sustained mining activity can be significantly enhanced by the ore processing facility that was left behind. While most of the industrial machinery in this facility was stripped out by the colonists when they left the area, the very site structure and in-place components (rail lines, large sifting beds and storage tanks) will make renovation 25-35% less expensive than building a new facility altogether.

Cautionary Note: On perusal of the local lifeforms (*file 45 QEF-k, Local Flora and Fauna*), please take special note of the *Vautchka Bird*, a semisauriod-analogue that performs a raptor/predator role on the planet. These pests, while individually easy to exterminate, can become tiresome over time to expeditions and should be taken seriously as potential threats.



ALEX KEIN

Alex Kein is an explorer-for-hire. He usually, but not always, works on contract through Exploration, Inc. He can, however, be hired privately. A fairly unassuming individual, Kein has an excellent track record as both an instructor and a field operative.

Kein is able to cope with most environments but is most closely associated with rugged, mountainous terrain. He has climbed many notable peaks and was the first person to reach the summit of Mount Ailer on the airless moon Woldak by climbing. Others have landed directly to the summit, but Alex Kein was the first to ascend in a specially made space suit.

Kein is an inveterate adventurer and does not like to be idle. As a result he often becomes involved in almost childish stunts between contracts. He climbs trees like an eight-year-old and will sometimes leave a building via an upstairs window just for fun – and much to the consternation of passers-by in the street.

These foibles aside, Kein is an expert in his field, able to advise on a range of subjects. Although he is an outdoorsman rather than a researcher or engineer, he has accompanied so many archaeological or scientific expeditions that he can handle many complex instruments, and knows a wide range of specialist techniques. He does not mind helping out with research, surveying or scientific tasks, especially if the subject seems interesting or he gets along well with the team he is accompanying. However, those that try to treat Alex Kein as a research assistant or extra pair of unskilled hands usually receive a blunt reminder about his capabilities and what he was actually hired to do.

This trait has cause Alex Kein to fall out with a number of eminent scientists and explorers, and there is now a significant list of people he will not work with (or who will not work with him). This is of no real consequence to Kein providing the matter is left to lie, but he is intolerant of any suggestion that problems on an expedition might be his fault. Kein is currently involved in a long war of words with Dr Erich Magunnen. This takes the form of articles and counter-articles published in the exploration and scientific journals that both write for.

The Kein/Magunnen dispute began over a decade ago during an expedition to some frontier area that neither will name for client-confidentiality reasons. It seems that the team was sent to follow up a good lead that should have led to new plant-based pharmaceuticals. Magunnen insists that Kein all but sabotaged the expedition by being uncooperative, while Kein alleges that Magunnen was taking excessive risks with the safety of his field personnel, and that his data was useless anyway due to sloppy technique among the scientists. Magunnen counters that Kein is a machete-happy yokel who is not qualified to comment on scientific technique... and the debate rages on. Many readers avidly await the next issue of *Field Team Monthly* to read the latest instalment in a saga that shows no signs of ending any time soon.

When not battling with equally eminent figures in the specialist press, Kein is available to train or lead all manner of expeditions. He tends to be selective about the jobs he takes, favouring 'something interesting' over financial considerations. In between interesting commissions he takes training jobs, but although most experts of his age tend to settle into a training role Kein seems to genuinely prefer to get out into the field and will take a training contract only to pass the time until someone comes along with an intriguing destination.



STR:6 DEX: 9 (+) END: 12 (+2) INT: 9 (+1) EDU: 13 (+2) SOC: 6

Skills: Advocate 0, Athletics (Coordination) 2, Art (Writing) 1, Carouse 1, Comms 0, Computers 0, Drive 0, Flyer (Grav) 2, Gun Combat (Slug Rifle) 2, Instruction 2, Leadership 1, Life Sciences (Biology) 1, Mechanic 0, Melee 0, Navigation 1, Pilot (Shuttlecraft) 1, Physical Science (Chemistry) 1, Recon 3, Seafarer (Subs) 1, Sensors 1, Social Science (Archeology) 2, Space Science (Planetology) 1, Stealth 1, Survival 5, Vacc-Suit 2, Zero-G 1

Implants: "Survival Package" Bionics (reduces required intake of air/water/food, +2 DM vs. Poisons/Toxins/Diseases; see **Techbook: Twilight Sector Cybernetics** coming soon)

Equipment: Standard Survival gear as appropriate to environment, Generally carries a Gauss Sniper Rifle (Recoil 0, Damage: 5d6). Kein owns a Ship's Boat and has 12 shares for his eventual use for a "big ticket" purchase (See TSPS, pg. 14).

Note: Kein is a 10-Term character, made using **Tinker, Spacer, Psion, Spy** rules. Bio-Age is 28.

People, Places & Things Adventure Seeds:

/// **Barslich Auto** is looking for a few good photo opportunities to butch up one of their "urban outback" vehicles, the Zulu 9500. Unfortunately this particular model is utter crap, moreso even than their other pretend off-road offerings. The PCs might be hired as security or as principles to an adventure documentary which Barslich wants to produce making their product look good. Given the fact that this is a fiasco from the very beginning, the Zulu 9500 isn't a particularly good urban car much less offroad vehicle, the venture quickly becomes a deadly farce as a rival company seeks to make the whole thing about just how unsafe this vehicle is (which happens to be true).

/// The sample survey for **Exploration, Inc.** is a good start for an adventure idea or mini-campaign. What it leaves out though or exaggerates can be a good idea-generator for the Referee. Just a few samples include:

- ✦ *What if the remains of the Strauss-Leinier Settlement are occupied by a small host of local characters?* A mix of wildcat miners and stubborn hermits, who have decided to stick it out and will resent someone else "poaching" on their turf (legally the site is up for grabs and the whole world is outside of interstellar law anyway). If there were criminals on the lam from the interstellars and hiding out here among these rugged remnants of a once-thriving settlement, this could easily become *Yojimbo/Fist Full of Dollars*.
- ✦ *What if the site was over/undersold?* The mineral value here may or may not be a dud. Given the nearby presence of Terra/Sol and Netherell, there was a lot of Precursor activity in the Sector. Maybe an artifact lies out there?
- ✦ *What if the Vautchka 'bird' turns out to be a far more serious predator?* This creature, found on the Continent of Iceland and surrounding islands almost exclusively, is more than a pest. A flock of them can strip a man to bare flesh in seconds. If they are drawn to/excited by electrical fields it could make the settlement very difficult long-term to sustain. They could very well be the reason why the Strauss-Leinier Settlement decided to leave *en masse*.

/// **Alex Kein** could be met in a wide variety of roles. A professional advisor/trainer for example, or the advisor/trainer of their rivals on a dig or expedition. Given his personality, he could also be met in any one of a number of strange locations "blowing off steam" which could make him an ally, victim or enemy for a player or group of players.

The Kein/Magunnen dispute might also be a gold mine for Referees. The professional rivalry has reached a fever pitch, who knows if one (or both) of them make a serious attempt to eliminate the other. The history of the dispute might come in handy with any use of this adventure seed, so Referees might want to think about the nature of that conflict (an honest mistake gone bad, a serious mistake on one part that has escalated, etc.) Even if the players are not interested, remember this is the focus of these two men for some time. And the public aspect of this conflict is just the tip of that particular dramatic iceberg, a whole lot more should be below the surface motivating them. If the Referee wants to "leapfrog" or use "flashbacks" the players might have even been witnesses to the original event, giving them a unique insight into the problem and helping in some way to seal the rift in the here-and-now.

STUFF AND NONSENSE

Somewhere in the bowels of RSS Avenger there is an auxiliary cargo bay. Its floor is strewn with a variety of items and objects sent to us by manufacturers in the hope that they, out of all the companies that have tried, will somehow manage to convince us that their stuff is worth the effort of getting the package, box or crate open. In keeping with our mission to review and report, we go in there from time to time and grab whatever's nearest the door. The gravitics in the bay are a bit dodgy, so stuff gets flung about from time to time. The resulting random selection of objects then accompanies us planetside and when there's time, we play with stuff and try to break it. This is called a 'comprehensive product review service' in case you're interested.



Barslich Automotive 'FGV-4'
Open-Frame Ground Vehicle

Type: Small Vehicle, 2-seat.

Cost: Cr2,700.

TL: 10

Armour: 4
(6 with inserts)

The FGV-4 (Fast Ground Vehicle, 4 Wheels; imaginative huh?) is basically a four-wheel-drive chassis with big balloon tyres and a pair of seats up front and a cargo area in back, with an electric fuel-cell system powering motors in each of four wheels. A lightweight tubular frame acts as a roll cage and attachment point for equipment... and the white knuckles of the crew.

There are many 'dune buggies' of this sort on the market, but Barslich have tried to expand their potential market by building in a number of paramilitary features. The FGV-4 has an excessively good suspension for its weight, allowing it to carry additional equipment across very rough terrain. Its tyres are filled with self-sealing gel and give enough buoyancy that the vehicle can cross calm water, albeit semi-submerged with the crew's butts in the water.

The FGV-4 has the usual basic lights and controls, plus seats for two and room for a fair bit of equipment in the back, or an extra crewmember standing up and clinging on to the frame. There is also a mounting post for a light support weapon such as a belt-fed grenade launcher or a machinegun. The post can also carry a wide array of military or civilian instrumentation, making the vehicle popular with explorers, surveyors and field science teams.

The FGV-4 is pretty robust. We smashed it into a variety of objects (sometimes deliberately) and rolled it a bunch of times. We also carried out a 'gunfire test' with an assortment of weaponry. What we found was that the vehicle's frame doesn't offer all that much

protection to the crew but there is a reasonable chance that rounds meant for the crew might hit the frame, seat backs or solid parts of the chassis. These will stop or deflect small arms bullets reasonably well, and the vehicle's components are fairly resistant to damage.

For additional protection, plastic inserts are available for the sides and front. These include skirts to cover part of the tyres and a bullet-resistant windshield. Protection is somewhat improved, but the vehicle becomes a bit claustrophobic despite the open top. It's hard to avoid banging elbows into the inserts every time you try to do anything, including steering, so the inserts may not be a great idea.

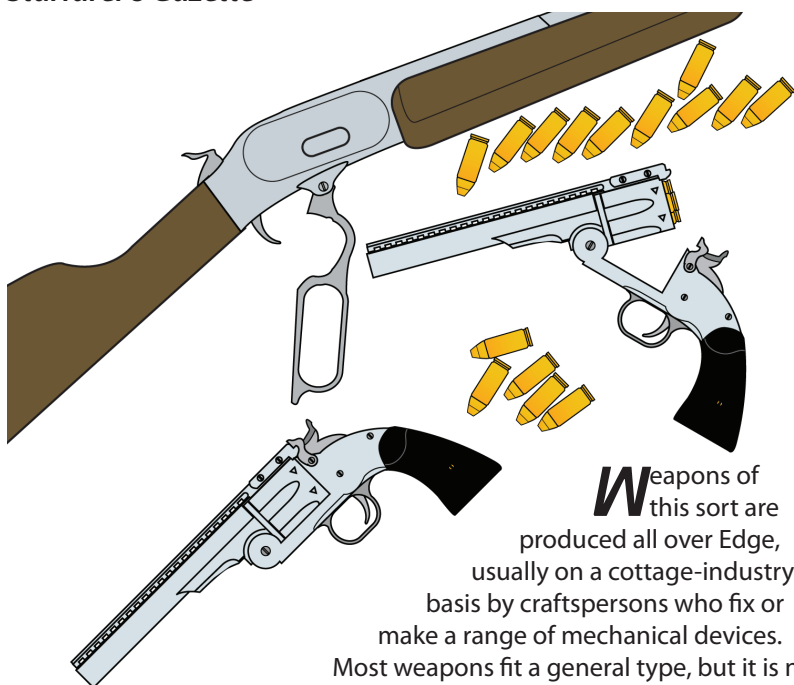
Flat out on a road, this buggy can top 145kph. This can be increased to over 170kph with some alterations to the power delivery systems (basically, we ripped out the safety governor) but it's not an especially good idea. The powerplant drains very fast at high speed and the motors need a lot of careful maintenance to avoid a really spectacular failure. Incidentally, the tyre gel is flammable. It takes a lot to get it going... say a really spectacular failure in the overheated motor next to it. You get the picture. Oh, and the vehicle is unstable to the point of being totally uncontrollable at anything over 150kph. But apart from that, high speed is a great idea.

***The FGV-4 is pretty
robust. We smashed
it into a variety of
objects ...***

Offroad performance is pretty decent, at about 38kph on rough ground and more on flat grassland. Hill climbing (and flight distance off the top of small ridges) is also pretty good. In crawl mode (super low gear) the FGV-4 can climb a frighteningly steep slope and can cross a thirty-degree side slope with ease. It has a self-rescue winch with a rocket to assist deployment for those times when the driver gets a bit too ambitious or when a damp hollow turns out to be a full-on swamp. With quicksand. Don't ask.

Overall: Not the cheapest of buggies, but it's a quality offering. Good off the road, robust, and with more carrying capacity than most similar vehicles. The FGV-4 is not sold as a fun-buggy (though it is great fun, especially once you tear out the safety governors), but as a high-performance working vehicle for explorers and the like. It's also been adopted as a Fast Attack Vehicle by various security forces and militias. With a light support weapon aboard it's a reasonably competent combatant, so long as you don't actually want to hit anything when firing on the move. That's a bit much to ask from a vehicle that was built to bounce.





Weapons of this sort are produced all over Edge, usually on a cottage-industry basis by craftspersons who fix or make a range of mechanical devices.

Most weapons fit a general type, but it is not uncommon to encounter significant variations in barrel length and quality of decoration. What rarely differs is lethality – these weapons are pretty crude but they hit real hard and they're reliable under almost any circumstances.

Bush Pistol/Carbines

Cost	TL	Mass
Cr 100/175	5	1.5/3 kg
Recoil	Auto	Capacity
2/1	No	6/12

Reloading time:

3 minor action

Ammunition:

14mm Shot or Ball

Damage:

3d6-1 (shot) or 3d6 (ball)

The locals on Edge mostly use a 14mm cartridge and favour carbines in the same calibre rather than carrying two different types of ammunition. They refer to their weapons as 'bush pistols' and 'bush carbines', and generally handle them

well. However, where possible those who expect to use weaponry on a frequent bases try to obtain more conventional hardware.

The revolvers we tried were all very long-barreled models; most were in the 25 to 35cm range. All were single-action, needing to be thumbcocked after every shot. This may have been a regional foible, but we got the impression that it's much the same everywhere. The long barrel somewhat compensates for the lack of accuracy inherent

in a relatively low-tech weapon, but all the same the handguns had a very short accurate range. That's fine; most shooters can't hit anything with a pistol beyond a few metres anyway.

Bush revolvers are fed through a loading gate behind the cylinder, with the weapon at half-cock to allow the cylinder to revolve. We did indeed have one go off at half-cock. The recoil from such a large cartridge is impressive, and also produces a very impressive flare of flame from the muzzle when firing at night. When the weapon goes off whilst jammed between your knees, well... let's just say that it was an unforgettable experience.

The carbines we tried out used the same cartridge, fed from a six-round internal tube magazine under the barrel. This is loaded though a gate, with rounds chambered manually. The mechanism varies from one maker to another. Some favour bolt-action, some use a lever that doubles as a trigger guard. Pump-action carbines are less common but are sometimes encountered. What they have in common is an extremely robust action that is very hard to break and easy to fix even under field conditions. The same comment applies to the revolvers.

Both weapons are serviceable and fairly easy to use despite their considerable recoil. Maintenance is extremely simple, and cleaning is easy. That's just as well, as the local propellant causes excessive fouling. Compared to higher TL weapons, these guns have a short range but hit hard at close quarters. There are even a variety of locally produced multipurpose rounds for these weapons. Many locals carry their weapon with a shot cartridge rather than ball as the first to be fired, mainly to deal with small but nasty critters. Shot cartridges have an even shorter range than ball, but the spread of shot is sometimes worth the tradeoff. Performance at close range is pretty similar between both rounds.

Overall: These are big, manly guns that made us feel good about ourselves. We liked the commonality of ammunition between carbine and pistol, and we all learned to respect their robust nature. We all agreed that we'd rather trust our lives to something a little more advanced, though.



Offworld Loads:

The listed damage is from a Bush Pistol or Carbine of local manufacture. If using offworld loads, using the most advanced 30th century materials, the damage increases to a 3d6+3 and 1 point of armor is ignored. Most of the weapons made on Edge are still designed to handle the increased pressure of these offworld hotloads because they are so plentiful by way of trade.



Colonial Essentials

Colonial Essentials Inc. 'Bush Buddy' Individual Field Kit

Type: Equipment package, cheesy

Cost: Cr175.

TL: 8.

Mass: 3.5kg

Colonial Essentials Incorporated (CEI) produce a fascinating array of things that they want gullible tourists to think they need for trips outside of town. Most of this stuff is just about serviceable for a picnic in the park but would cause the average frontier colonist to die laughing. However, some of their gear is actually quite good. It's overpriced though, and covered with logos that would be pretty cheesy in their own right even if they didn't identify the user as a clueless noob who's never been further into the outback than the garden fence.

The 'Bush Buddy' pack supposedly contains everything an explorer absolutely must have for a trip into the outback. The gear is useable and of decent quality, and we have to admit that it does constitute a decent basic outfit of bush gear. But there is no way you're going to convince us that all those tassels and fringes are necessary.

For your 175 credits you get a pair of reasonably good waterproof hiking boots and a set of gaiters that attach to the top of the boots. These are a bit uncomfortable but they're tough and will protect the lower leg from small animal bites, thorns and the like, and from damp conditions. They don't keep out water if you leap into a stream however, and they won't stop a knife. Yes, we tried.

There is also a sleeveless windproof jerkin with many pockets, plus a tan Pseudohide 'frontier jacket', complete with tassels along the sleeves and across the shoulder blades, plus a matching wide-brimmed hat. Both are tough and reasonably weatherproof, and for a mere 25 credits more you can get them 'pre-weathered' for that rugged outdoorsperson look. Yeah, right. You don't get trousers or a shirt in this pack, but CEI do sell a nice range of tasseled tan pseudohide trousers and lumberjack shirts at a merely outrageous price.

The rest of the kit fits in the jerkin pockets or on a broad waist belt which has a single diagonal shoulder strap for additional support.

From this hangs an unfeasibly large machete (which we found performs similarly to the standard Blade for all its awesome size), a water bottle with filters and a clever little dispenser for water purification tablets, and a large pouch for other items.

CEI seem to think that it is permanently dark in the outback. The front of the belt's supporting strap has loops for no less than 26 small chemical lightsticks. These are pretty decent and provide about 5 hours of good light and maybe 90 minutes more of increasing dimness. There is also a pendant that can hold a lightstick around your neck, enabling you to ruin your night vision and fall over stuff more effectively. More bizarrely, there are also holders on the hat (the brim creates a shadow so you still can't see where you're putting your feet) and on the boots (so you can see the ground for nearly a whole metre in any direction). Fortunately, there is also a generator flashlight which is charged up by squeezing it repeatedly. This can be switched between a narrow beam and a dim beacon, and has a backup battery good for a few hours.

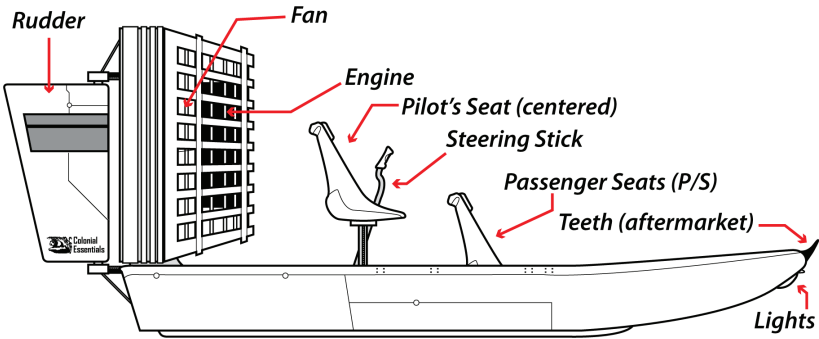
Within the pouch is a poncho/tarpaulin type object which serves as a reasonable groundsheet for a picnic or barely adequate rain protection if worn. There is also a fire-starting kit which assumes that the user is a total incompetent. Rather than the usual basic tools that can be used for years, this kit contains four twin-tube chemical firestarters which self-ignite when the tubes are twisted together. Apparently they're perfectly safe until you want to use them.

There is also a large supply of candy... officially it's 'two days of highly nutritious iron rations', but this stuff is not really iron rations as such. The food bars are nutritious enough, but they're also so tasty that they tend to be devoured within the first hour of a field trip. In fact, CEI really should get out of the exploration market and just make luxury chocolates. You can buy refills for the kit's disposables, but you can't just get the food bars. As a result we have a huge pile of spare firestarters and light sticks, but no food bars.

Overall: The Bush Buddy Individual Field Kit actually does have a bunch of stuff you might need, and the kit as a whole falls within the "useable" category. But expect sniggers. Lots of sniggers.

***CEI seem to
think that it is
permanently
dark in the
outback.***





CEI Windspirit Airboat
Open-framed Wet GEV

Skill	TL	Speed
Drive (GEV)	6	96/145 kph
Agility	Hull	Structure
-1	2	3
Arm.	Capacity	Cost
2	1+2	Cr 10,000

We never planned on actually going out into the swamps. No roads and fewer taverns. But one of the locals with the less-than-masculine name of “Prinny” managed to lure Jack the Intern out for a ride at night in the swamp in a CEI Windspirit that someone had conveniently left unattended on a Pale River dock. Ever laconic, Jack reported it was ‘fun’, ‘loud’, and ‘scary’ which are

three things we don’t see any problems going together. So three of us decided to go out the next night and steal the same boat to see if we got similar responses with more verbs and nouns (so as to write down). The theft itself went flawless, the ride afterward... less so.

Airboat technology is over a thousand years old and yet has changed relatively little in the time since it was invented. These vehicles are used in fens and other marshy water-inundated areas where a submerged propeller would be problematic. Generally only found in backwaters with less-than-mainstream technology capacity, airboats are nevertheless adequately adapted to their chosen environment.

Despite being referred to as a GEV and piloting very similarly to other GEVs we have used in the past, airboats do not rely so much on ground effect as a ‘skid’ effect. They can be used on any flat area where they can slide over the surface (water and ice).The column of air generated by the fan is directed backward, propelling the vehicle over water, or a sufficiently watery surface, at speeds that seem far more impressive than they really are. The CEI model’s seats were relatively comfortable and came with four-point seatbelts for the pilot and two-point seatbelts for the two low-slung passenger seats. We of course refused to use them on principle.

Vehicle control, what there was of it, come from the 'steering stick' on the left side of the pilot's centrally located high seat. A graduated lever trigger is used for the vehicle's fan, like a dead-man's switch. The height of the pilot's seat is to provide them with more visibility, which would have been far more of an advantage in daytime than at night. Our pilot reported that wearing some form of eye protection was not optional, as the intake of the fans led to every small gnat-analogue in the general vicinity flying into him at high speed. The passengers reported the same effect, but with much less volume. The noise is also considerable, consider earplugs or other hearing protection as well.

Fine control of the vessel was somewhat less than desirable, although this could have been due to the alcohol and the darkness, we are not entirely sure. One interesting thing about these vehicles which we found out too late is that they lack any form of braking technology. They also cannot go in reverse. Apparently this lack-of-brakes/reverse is standard with the vehicle and when we asked the locals about it all we got were funny looks.

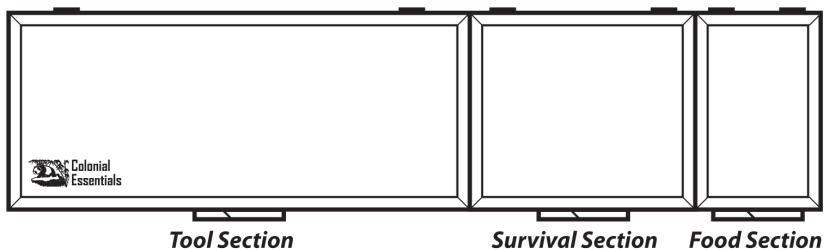
There is a small area in front of the passenger seats that can be loaded with a small amount of cargo (about 3m³ laying flat), another 3m³ can be stowed immediately behind the pilot on the bottom of the boat. We have been told that there are larger versions of these vessels that can handle more passengers and more cargo but have far less control. This is hard to picture, we will believe that when we see it.

A set of anemic lights are included in the Windspirit, but they are entirely inadequate to the needs of the pilot, and in our excursion they were quickly covered in grime and muck. An interesting aftermarket addition to the Windspirit we 'borrowed' was a set of metal teeth designed to clip any thorny plants (of which Edge has a great variety) if they snag on the vessel as it passes through thickets. We also discovered these teeth increase ramming damage considerably.

Overall: We can report it was indeed fun. And loud. And very scary. Not in that order however.

After a short but exhilarating jaunt, we nearly capsized (apparently steering can only be performed while the fanblades are generating thrust) and the pilot flew out of the boat a respectable distance away. After fishing him out (he owed both of us money), we decided to come back to the docks at a normal (high) rate of speed. *That* was when we discovered the lack of braking technology, and this time all of us flew out of the boat (unfortunately on dry-ish land, which hurt). The lack of 'getway' in turn led to a night in the local gaol and a rather significant repair bill for the local docks. Fun. Loud. Scary.





Colonial Essentials Inc. 'Truck Buddy' Vehicular Field Kit

Type: Equipment package, vehicular, cheesy

Cost: Cr9,000.

TL: 8.

Mass: 18kg

We're not entirely sure whether this is supposed to be a survival kit, picnic set or something in between; the designers probably didn't either. It's designed to be carried in any vehicle and – we think – cover the interstellar law requirement for a survival package as well as providing a range of useful camping equipment.

The kit comes in an impressively compact hard plastic box, which has three compartments. One is large and contains most of the items that will see frequent use, while the other two are smaller. Of these, one contains the survival-kit type stuff and the other is for food and other essentials.

The 'food' box comes packed with goodies. CEI claim to produce 'nutritious iron rations' but in reality their stuff has about half the food value and ten times the taste of real survival food. Some of the ration bars are a bit odd, with flavours like Chilli Cheeseburger and Vegetarian Caesar Salad. Textures vary as well, ranging from a soft cake block to a crunchy, nutty type bar, which tends to shatter when bitten. There's something rather odd about a beef and mustard flavour cake bar but it tastes okay.

Also in the food box is a small electric stove with an ingenious set of pots that can be used to cook totally inadequate amounts of stew or other foodstuffs. Providing you're not in a hurry, or actually hungry, the stove is entirely useable. It has an internal battery but is normally powered using a lead from a larger power cell in the box. This in turn can be kept charged by plugging it into a vehicle power supply.

The survival kit is a bit basic, to say the least. It contains a small medical box that would be better suited to the bathroom wall than the wild outback, a hatchet, two of the bluntest survival knives ever made, a box of 24 twist-to-burn firestarters, about a million chemical

lightsticks (120 actually), a squeeze-to-charge flashlight and a water purification kit. The latter is a bit superfluous given that the box not only does the same job but, if power is available, chills it.

We discovered – quite a while after opening the kit – that the box has a false bottom which contains several cells for storing water. It is filled up through a concealed (we missed it for quite a while) foldout funnel and runs in through a set of pretty good filters. Gunk is removed through a tray in the very bottom of the box, and fresh water is dispensed from a fold-out tap located on – for some reason – the back corner. It is pumped out (rather vigorously) if the power cell is charged. If there is no power or you like exercise you can fold a little hand pump out of the opposite back corner and work for your drink.

The main box seems to be aimed at the typical one-kit-per-4 people setup favoured by firms that make actually useful outback gear. That's a bit harsh, but only a little; the stuff in this kit is useable but on the whole not very good. There are four pretty decent silver rain poncho/blankets, four warmish and slightly windproof sleeveless jerkins, four entirely serviceable respirators and goggles to go with them, eight waterproof (ish) sheets and a bunch of poles that can be used to make a tent/windbreak/shelter/pile of poles depending on what is needed and the skill of the users.

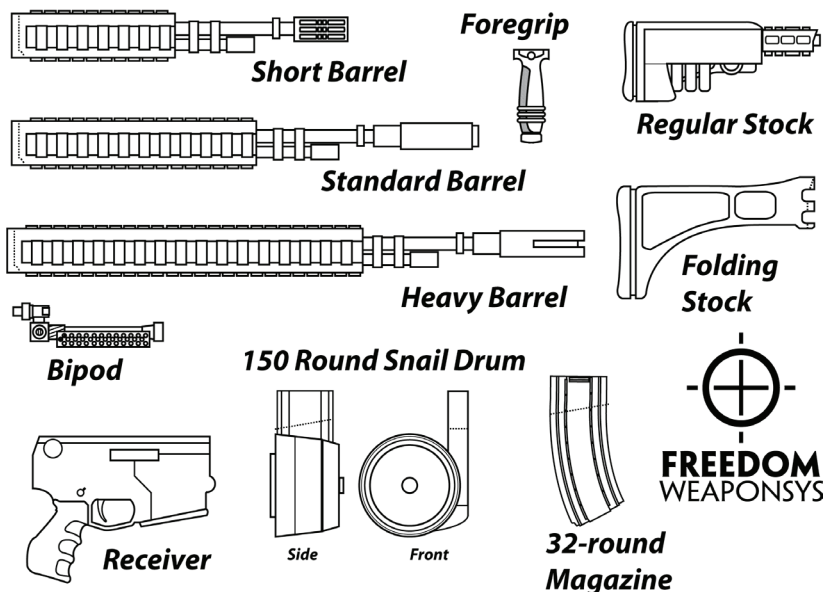
The box also contains a basic toolkit with adjustable spanners, screwdrivers, hammers, a chisel, saws and the like. The tools are entirely serviceable, as is a rather peculiar foldout pole/ladder device that was included for some reason. There is also a vast amount of cord/rope that can be used for climbing, and an assortment of hand-coverings including thick gardening and thin plastic surgical-type gloves, plus waterproof over-mittens. There may be some logic to this sudden obsession with gloves, but we couldn't figure it out. More usefully, there are also four handheld fire extinguishers.

Repacking everything once you've had anything out of the box can be a problem as there is little spare space. Our kit ended up buried under a pile of stuff we just couldn't get back in the box, but if you can get everything back in, it doesn't take up much room.

Overall: We're still not sure what to make of this one. It contains some useful stuff and some semi-junk. Perhaps the best feature is the fact that if you dump out the food side of the box and turn the water chiller right up, it'll keep a considerable number of beers ice cold until the power runs out. What could be more important to wilderness survival than that



Starfarer's Gazette



Freedom Weapon System

Cost	TL	Mass
Cr 1,200	6	3-6 kg
Recoil	Auto	Capacity
0-1	4	32/150

Reloading time:

1 minor action.

Ammunition:

5.5x57mm

Damage:

3d6 (ignore 1 pt of armour)

Freedom WeaponSys is well known for its basic, no-frills firearms and liberal sales policy. Alongside their more standard gear they also offer this rather interesting mid-tech modular personal weapon system, which is based on their popular MG55 light machinegun and R54 assault rifle. Many parts are common with those weapons, making maintenance simple and, just as important, cheap.

The kit is based around a 5mm fully-automatic receiver. This is of standard

layout, with the magazine well located in front of the trigger guard and a fairly typical pistol grip. The weapon has a rather basic selector which functions like an on/off switch; the weapon can either fire full-automatic or not at all. There is an insert in the kit that converts the rifle to semi-automatic should the user want to fit it. Most people do not.

The magazine well can take a 32-round 'rifle' magazine (8 are supplied) or a 150-round 'support' magazine (you get four. That's 600 rounds of mayhem. And it's heavy so you'll want to get rid of some

of it ASAP). Either magazine can be used with any set of accessories, unless a grenade launcher is fitted. The support magazine is too large to permit this; it blocks part of the space needed for the launcher.

The receiver can take any self-contained sighting system and has a reasonable set of iron sights. A very rugged 4x scope and an optical reflex sight are both supplied. The latter is an effective aid to point-and shoot combat at fairly short range and, with some skill, can be used for a sort of pseudo-sniping at surprisingly long ranges.

The kit contains three barrels: short, standard and heavy. The short barrel is intended for urban combat, vehicle crew use and so forth. It reduces the accuracy of ranged fire somewhat... well, quite a lot actually. It also causes the muzzle to climb rapidly under autofire. The heavy barrel is intended either for machinegun mode or with the semi-auto insert to create a mediocre sniping rifle.

All barrels can take one accessory. This can be a Freedom WeaponSys grenade launcher, but sadly one is not included in the kit. A bayonet, bipod and vertical assault foregrip are all supplied. Swapping between them is extremely awkward due to the nature of the fittings, which are designed to take a range of accessories and thus are both large and complex. Many users fit one accessory to each barrel and swap the whole front end of the weapon, which takes about three minutes rather than the fifteen required to change accessories without detaching the barrel.

The back end of the weapon is also configurable. A full stock and a skeletonised folding stock are both provided, or it can be left off entirely. We found the full stock to be very useable and robust enough to bash things with, whereas the folding stock is a bit flimsy and causes the weapon to wriggle around alarmingly under autofire.

Slugthrowers in the 30th Century:

The Freedom Weapon System is an example of throwback technology, but not without reason. While laser and gauss technology have become more than competitive to slugthrowers in the 30th century weapons market, there is still a place for the venerable slugthrower. Especially on the fringes, where the technology is well-understood and reproducible with local resources.

While the FWS uses cased rounds (the casings are made from high-impact plastics rather than brass, although some locals still produce brass cartridges), there are also a great deal of caseless, binary, and electrically fired slugthrowers on the market. While these are incompatible with fixed-metal cartridges, they operate with more-or-less identical in-game mechanics. Caseless ammunition today is more prevalent than cased ammunition, but has heat and 'grime' issues.

Trying out the obvious configurations, we used a heavy barrel and full stock to create a pretty poor sniping weapon or a decent light support weapon. However, the barrel is prone to overheat under autofire. This is normal with mid-tech support weapons; most come

***It just begs to be fired
from the hip as you
leap out of a vehicle
or kick a door in...***

with one or more spare barrels and quick-change fittings. This weapon does not, limiting its utility in the support role.

As an assault rifle with medium barrel, folding stock and bayonet we found the FWS

entirely usable. Nothing special, but certainly a decent tool. However, the bayonet sometimes gets in the way. Removing it is a long job, as noted above, so you either fit it or you don't. It can't be used as a knife when dismounted, by the way, because of the great block of fittings associated with it.

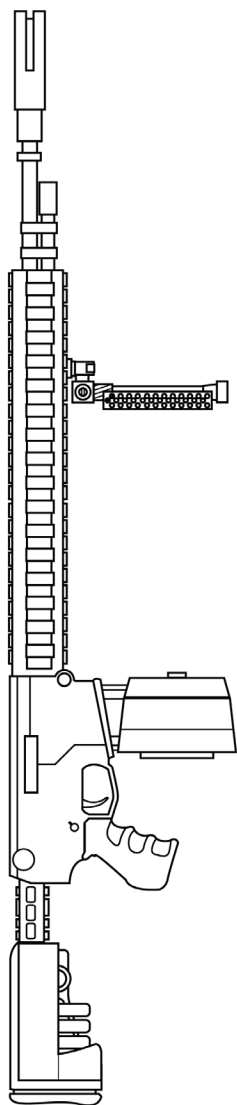
The short barrel and vertical foregrip, used with a folding stock or, better, without a stock at all, creates a light and handy assault carbine. It just begs to be fired from the hip as you leap out of a vehicle or kick a door in. A word to the wise though... trying to leap from a vehicle and kick a door in at the same time is not a good plan. With a 32-round magazine the weapon is very handy and manouvable in close combat. With the 150-round box it's... not. Firepower is awesome, but you can utterly ruin the barrel in the course of a single firefight. Freedom offers replacements at a reasonable price, but you have to buy them in multiples to be worth the shipping cost.

Freedom also offer a 'platoon kit' built around this modular weapon system. It contains enough parts to put together three heavy-barrel support weapons, three heavy-barrel semi-automatic scoped marksman's rifles, twenty assault barrel/full stock assault rifles and ten short barrel/foregrip/folding stock carbines. You also get 200 32-round magazines and 10 150-round magazines plus 20,000 rounds of ammunition. It costs 25,000 credits, which seems like a bargain to us. If Freedom WeaponSys send us one we'll let you know whether it is or not.

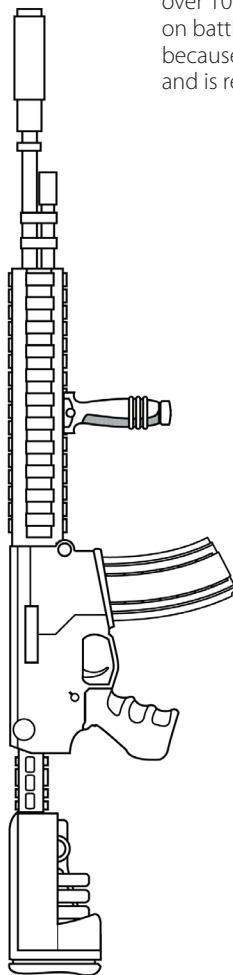
Overall: Basically, this is an assault rifle for people who don't know exactly what they want. It's fun to play around with the configurations, but really it's only good value if you need the flexibility.



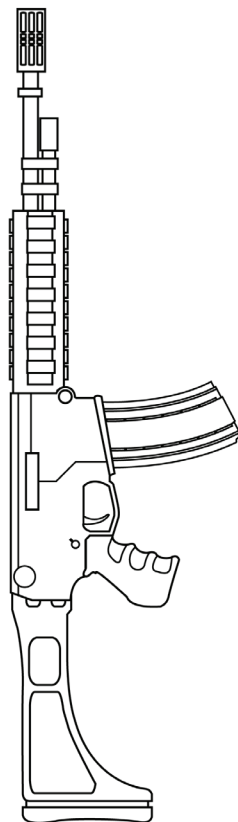
Twilight Volume, No.2



1200mm
"Machinegun"



900mm
"Assault Rifle"

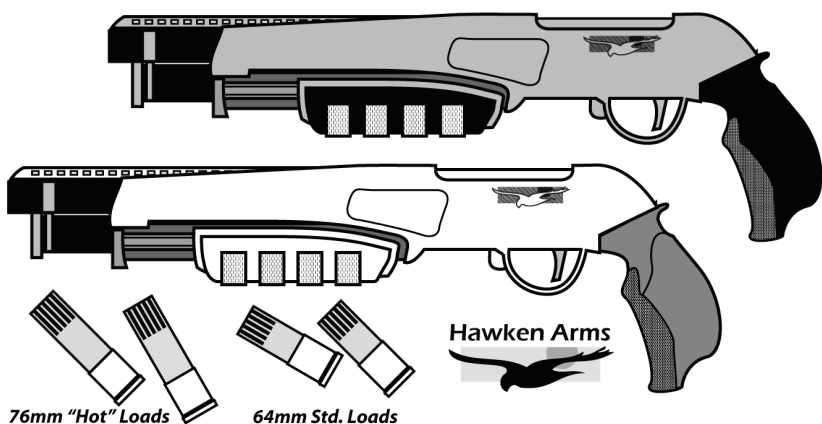


755mm
"Carbine"



The venerable and reliable **5.5x57mm round**, shown here to scale, both as a full round and brass-only. While the basic technology is over 1000 years old it is still used on battlefields in the 30th century because of one simple fact: it works, and is remarkably efficient.

The **Machinegun configuration** shown uses the Heavy Barrel, Front Mounted Bipod, Snail Drum and full stock. The **Assault Rifle Configuration** shown uses the Standard Barrel, Foregrip, 32-round magazine and full stock. The **Carbine configuration** shown uses the Short Barrel, 32-round magazine and folding stock. All configurations above can mount a scope. The underbarrel bayonet is not shown.



Hawken Armaments IDW

Cost	TL	Mass
Cr 120	8	2.3 kg
Recoil	Auto	Capacity
2	No	3+1

Reloading time:

2 minor actions

Ammunition:

Standard Shotgun (Hotloads)

Damage:

4d6 (see sidebar, pg.49)

Hawken is a small company specializing in the self-defence and personal security end of the market. The firm manufactures some of its own gear and outsources the rest, acting as a marketing brand for several small manufacturers. Standards are reasonably high for the budget end of the marketplace, and Hawken gear is generally well respected.

The IDW ('Installation Defence Weapon') is a short, stockless, pistol-grip shotgun with a stubby

barrel. The underbarrel magazine holds three rounds, plus one in the chamber if the user desires. These weapons are designed to be held in a wall bracket on the bridge of a starship, in an airlock or a security office, clipped under a desk... maybe in the door of your personal vehicle... in short, anywhere that there might be a sudden need for an easily manoeuvred but deadly close-quarters weapon.

The IDW is basic but entirely serviceable. The pump action is robust and works fine even in vacuum. Lubrication is vacuum-proof too, and since most propellants contain oxygen, any available shotshells will do. The action is very tolerant of mud and grit (not that you get much of that in space) and will also handle slightly irregular ammunition such as our gunnery officer's hand-loaded 76mm shells. There are

extremely 'hot' loads which might strain a less robust weapon, but Hawken's IDW handled them without exploding or otherwise malfunctioning.

The weapon can be bought 'as is' for 120 credits. For that, you get the gun and nothing else. That's fine if you plan to clip it into a bracket (10 credits each from Hawken, or much less if you visit a hardware store and buy some of your own) or leave it in a drawer. Alternatively, you can buy four guns (just the guns, no ammunition or accessories) and four brackets for 400 credits, or a slightly more comprehensive pack.

The IDW pack costs Cr150. For that you get the gun, 50 shells, a basic cleaning kit, a shoulder sling and a belt rig. This has holders for a couple of dozen shells and also an attachment point for the weapon so that it doesn't swing about quite as much when it's slung. The shotgun is secured by a breakaway device that actually works quite well – it holds when you want it to and releases when you need the weapon.

Finally, Hawken also offers a low-powered training/non-lethal shell filled with small plastic beads that sting like hell. There are those that question the wisdom of using training rounds in a standard weapon like this, since you can't tell what is in the chamber and thus the possibility of accidents is... not inconsiderable. There are those who will tell you that good safety procedures will eliminate this possibility. We're not sure either way; we just now know that it is possible to miss repeatedly with a shotgun whilst having a firefight in an airlock... and that the training ammunition does not make the gun itself safe when used as a club.



Overall: A nice little weapon, but very much a 'grab gun' rather

Alternative Shotgun Ammunition:

Breaching Round: Made with a specially-designed frangible load, these rounds are designed to strike hard and not rebound in tight corners. They spread out the impact and have excellent anti-armor penetration (ignore up to 10 points of armor), but only do damage when fired at near-contact ranges. Cost: 50 Cr.

Dragon's Breath: A zirconium-based pyrotechnic round, it produces a gout of flame that projects out up to 8m. Flame damage is 2d6. Cost: 150 Cr.

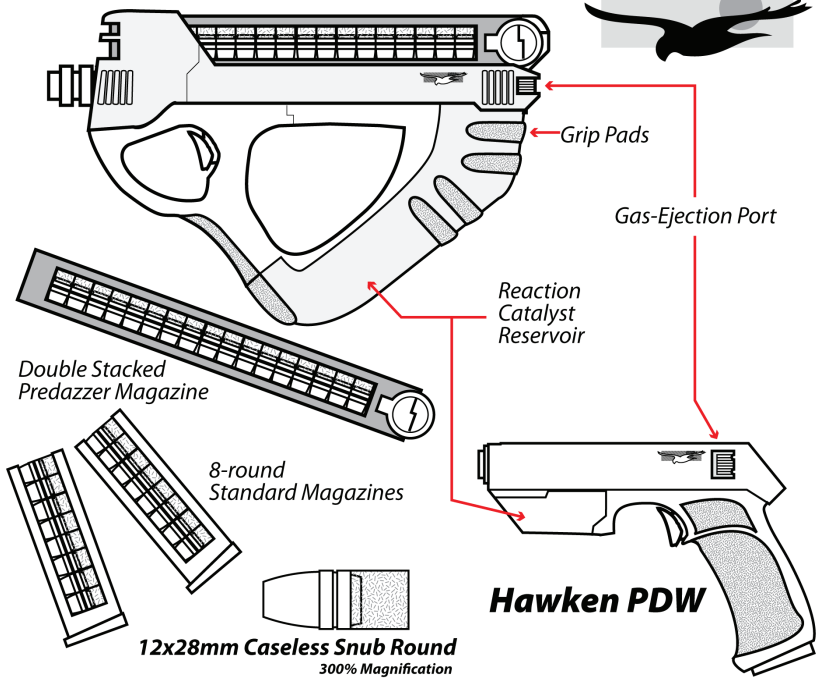
Flechettes: The interior is packed with a bundle of fin-stabilized darts which are designed to shred light armor. Reduce damage to 3d6+3 and reduce armor values of those struck by 4, spread bonus still applies. Cost: 50 Cr.

Less-Lethals: The use of advanced materials designed to convey impact without penetration turns the shotgun into a stunning weapon (see *SFGz #1*, pg. 63 for rules). Damage is d6 L, 2d6 S. Cost: 20 Cr.

Sabot-Slugs: The use of a frangible casing allows for a smaller better penetrating round. Damage is 3d6+1, but it Ignores 8 points of armor. Cost: 40 Cr.

Hawken PAW

Hawken Arms



Hawken Armaments 'PAW'

Cost	TL	Mass
Cr 400	8	1.2 kg
Recoil	Auto	Capacity
-1	6	34

Reloading time:

1 minor action

Ammunition:

Snub Standard Pistol

Damage:

2d6+2 (ball); 3d6 (HE); 3d6-2 (ignores 3 points of armour) (HEAP)

pistols and use an external slide, the PAW has an internal bolt and no external moving parts. However, it is apparently designed to be fired one-handed. There is no foregrip although there is a grip on the lower

Hawken's 'PAW' (or Personal Assault Weapon) is built around the standard low-recoil/large calibre 'snub pistol' round used by shipboard security personnel. As such, it is an effective low-gravity weapon but this is not its primary role. Instead, Hawken has created a range of weapons designed to take advantage of the specialist ammunition types manufactured for snub weapons.

The PAW lies right on the borderline between an assault pistol (a handgun designed or adapted for autofire) and a true submachinegun. Where most assault pistols are obviously

portion of the front edge, which seemed counter intuitive to us. A two-handed pistol-shooting stance works well enough, with both hands on the grip. Since there is no slide, you can alternatively put your hand over the top of the weapon, but this is awkward until you get used to it.

The PAW is fed from a custom Predazzer-style magazine (vertical stacked rounds are turned and dropped into place) that slots into a holder on the top of the weapon. It is pushed forward into place, which suggests to us that the designers expected shooters to use the hand-on-top steadying position. However, this weapon really works best in a one-handed spray-and-pray mode.

Recoil is low with all ammunition types, making autofire surprisingly controllable. This is just as well, as the PAW has a very high rate of fire. Performance of the standard ball round is as expected, i.e. pretty disappointing compared to a standard handgun in a similar calibre. However, once we loaded up with high explosive, things began to happen. As in, explosions, property damage and the occasional small fire. The HEAP (High Explosive Armour-Piercing) round is equally destructive, and also penetrates well so you can blow stuff up on the other side of a fence. The onboard Reservoir holds enough catalyst for 70-ish magazines.

Overall: Yeah, okay, this one works. It'll punch through a light flak jacket and turn the occupant into soup. Should you ever have to deal with a group of lightly armoured assailants, a PAW might not be a bad choice. And one-handed autofire with explosive ammunition is something everyone should experience. Ideally from a safe distance.



Snub Ammunition Varieties:

All Hawken Snub weapons use the same type of ammunition, 11x28.5mm caseless. Those with asterisks can only be fired up to medium range (~50m) due to their lighter payloads:

Ball Round: A standard aerodynamic 11mm slug. *Cost: 10 Cr. Damage: 2d6+2*

HE Round: Explodes on impact. Poor versus well armored targets (double all rigid armor values, non-rigid armor values as normal). *Cost: 100 Cr. Damage: 3d6*

AP Round: Designed to penetrate armor, using a discarding sabot and penetrating "core". Ignores 4 points of armor. *Cost: 30 Cr. Damage: 2d6*

HEAP Round: A slightly larger sabot designed to explode in the target. Ignores 3 points of armor then explodes for 3d6-2 damage. *Cost: 150 Cr. Damage: 3d6-2*

Tranq. Round*: The round uses a spike to deliver chemical dose. The spike ignores 5 points of armor, does d6 damage (½ fades after 10 minutes). The hit must do a least 1 point of damage to administer the dose. *Cost: 20 Cr. Damage: d6*

Gas Round*: The nose converts to gaseous state, similar to propellant, on impact; treat as a gas attack for a single target. *Cost: 40 Cr. (tranq./tear); 120 Cr. (poison).*

Stunner Round*: The round contains a contact-stunner only good against non-rigid, non-insulated armor (which it ignores). *Cost: 100 Cr. Damage: d6+2 S*

For further information about Snub weapons, see Pg. 75

Hawken Armaments 'PDW'

Cost	TL	Mass
Cr 160	8	0.6 kg
Recoil	Auto	Capacity
0	No	15

Reloading time:

1 minor action

Ammunition:

Snub Standard Pistol

Damage:

2d6+2 (ball); 3d6 (HE); 3d6-2 (ignores 3 points of armour) (HEAP)

Hawken's 'PDW' (or Personal Defence Weapon) uses the standard low-recoil 'snub pistol' round, but like some other Hawken offerings it is not intended for low-g combat. It works well enough in space, but it is basically a small self-defence pistol that takes advantage of the snub pistol's specialist ammunition.

The PDW looks and functions like a conventional semi-automatic pistol in most ways. It has a no hammer and no sights or other protrusions to snag on clothing. The only safety device is the somewhat heavy double-action trigger pull. This makes shooting a fairly deliberate

act. There is little chance of accidental discharge – if you pull the trigger then this weapon believes that it is within its rights to believe that you want to shoot, and will act accordingly.

With no sights and a heavy double action, the PDW is not a target weapon, but then it does not pretend to be one. It is a self-defence tool intended for use at very close range, and within those limits it functions well. Ammunition performance is pretty much the same as the PAW, above.

...the PDW is not a target weapon, but then it does not pretend to be one

The PDW comes in a nice box with three magazines and 45 rounds of ball ammunition, plus a holster which can be fitted to any belt or within most other clothing. Alternatively, you can buy a pair of PDWs with nice chequer-pattern grips and a double shoulder rig, plus

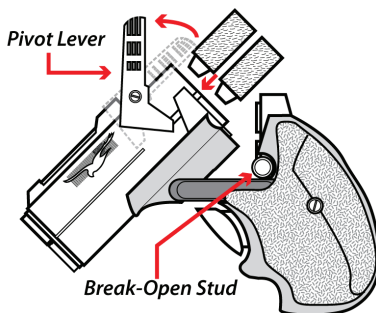
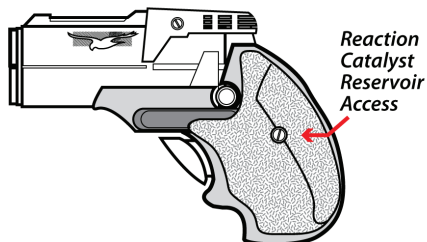
a total of six magazines and 90 rounds of ball ammunition, for Cr300. It's a nice little gift set that might be suitable for your aunt's birthday.

Overall: The PDW is small and easy to carry, and can be brought into action quickly without snagging on your clothing. It makes a very convincing noise and can be used to dispose of bad guys. We found the trigger pull tiring during extended testing, but for a desperate adrenaline-fuelled firefight that's not much of an issue. The ball round lacks stopping power but the HE or HEAP, if you can get them, are more than sufficient.

illustration on page 50, lower right corner of the image.



Hawken PEW



Hawken's 'PEW' (or Personal Emergency Weapon) also uses the 11x28.5mm caseless. It is simply a double-barrelled derringer type weapon chambered for a big round, enabling you to cause someone to suffer a personal emergency. There is no safety device as such, just a firing pin disconnecter that prevents the weapon discharging unless the trigger is pulled. The double-action trigger is every bit as heavy as on Hawken's other self-defence weapons, but that is probably a good thing in this case. The first pull uses the top, second bottom, both barrels cannot be fired at once.

Reloading uses a tip-down break-open action, whereby the barrel is swung down on a pivot for the breach to be re-loaded with new caseless snub rounds. Not that it should matter – if things are dire enough that you have deployed a derringer and you need to reload, chances are your troubles will soon be over.

One rather nice feature is that the improbably short barrel has a chromed ring around it, making it seem larger. You can't actually see the chambered round by looking down the barrel, but the combination of large calibre and short barrel make it look like you have a railway tunnel pointed at you.

Overall: This is a surprisingly intimidating weapon for all its small size, which means that you might not have to fire it after all. If you do, then its explosive or HEAP round will stop most assailants cold – though you will almost certainly need a change of clothes afterwards. Most of those who use the derringer opt for the High-Pressure catalyst in order to maximize the weapon's close-in value (avoiding damage reduction).

Hawken Armaments 'PDW'

Cost	TL	Mass
Cr 100	8	0.1 kg
Recoil	Auto	Capacity
0	No	2

Reloading time:

2 minor actions (1 per round)

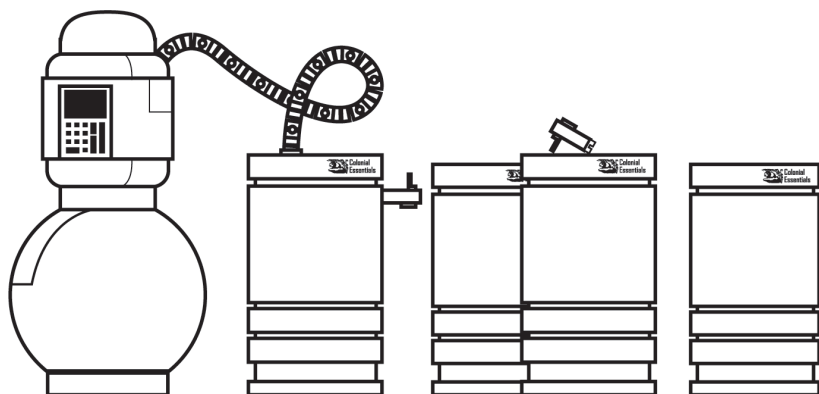
Ammunition:

Snub Standard Pistol

Damage:

2d6+2 (ball); 3d6 (HE); 3d6-2 (ignores 3 points of armour)
(HEAP)





Colonial Essentials Inc. 'Still Buddy' Field Distilling Unit

Type: Field still/boozemaker

Cost: Cr750.

TL: 8.

Mass: 14kg

The Still Buddy claims to be an electrically powered purification unit for use in the field. Well, you can use it for that, or you can make booze in it. It's

basically an electrically powered heater unit

with an evaporator/condenser and a series of switchable containers, allowing re-distillation or takeoff of the early part of a run. The unit has a decent internal battery, good

for a couple of days of operation, or can run on external power.

Depending on what you need, the Still Buddy can be used to extract moisture from any water-bearing material – plant leaves or even wet sand works fine – or to distill clean water from whatever murky filth is available. This could be vital to a field expedition, and many small communities in the outback use similar devices to provide fresh water. However, water is not the only thing that can be distilled with this device,

It is possible to distill or purify a range of other fluids, such as fuel oils, to remove impurities. This makes the water taste funny (at best) however, so it is best to use a spare set of internal pipes or at least thoroughly flush the system a few dozen times. Best of all, the Still Buddy can be used to distil spirits for medical, fuel or recreational use. What you get out depends very much on what you put in, and the maturation process tends to be a bit short in the field. The resulting booze is a bit rough, but entirely drinkable. In fact, the more you drink, the more acceptable it becomes.

Overall: It's compact, portable, and it works. The logos on the outside are a bit embarrassing and the system is more than a bit power-hungry, but overall this is a decent piece of kit that gets the job done.



END NOTES

This concludes our foray out to the very edge of civilisation... no pun intended. We've been given instructions to swing back into Twilight Sector on a survey mission, but the captain will probably ignore them. He's got that look that suggests he wants to head off into the great unknown and make heroic discoveries. We're hoping that means more exploration of Crescent Sector, because the big dark is awful close and there's probably no good restaurants out there.

So if we go off the net for a while, you know where we'll be. Out there... somewhere.

RSS Avenger, signing off.



Edge, while a garden planet (Class I world), is technically not a garden spot.

EDGE GAZETTEER

Overview:

Edge is a cold, volcanic, wet world. There is a dearth of dry land on which to settle, the greatest amount of such space being in the mountainous uplands. These areas are extremely rugged and difficult to settle. They are also often in close proximity to the planets many volcanoes.

The planets temperatures can be difficult as well. Average winter temperature in the world's largest city Dryburgh, situated in the planet's temperate belt is -14 degrees Celsius and only increases to approximately 14 degrees Celsius in the Summer. More equatorial settlements like Durbin and Harningsford fare better temperature wise but must deal with even worse insect problems in the summer months when mosquito-type insects make life beyond protective netting almost unbearable.

Roughly Eighty-five percent of the planet's surface is water (84.8%), but that percentage is a bit misleading. Most of what is called dry land is actually swamps, fens or other water-inundated landforms. On Edge if it isn't impassable mountainous terrain or covered in ice it is probably a swamp, marsh, fen, or bog.

The other defining feature of Edge is it's volcanic activity. The southern hemisphere is ringed by a line of plate boundary volcanoes nicknamed the Fire Snake. Most of these are under the ocean's surface but a few do find their way above the waves on small volcanic islands. Additionally a fair number of volcanoes exist in the planets mountainous uplands and clusters of seamount volcanoes exist under the planets northern oceans. With so many volcanoes earthquakes are of course a problem as well as volcanic ash from large eruptions of terrestrial volcanoes. Much of this volcanic activity is attributed to Edge's too close and too large moon.

Population:

Despite the natural obstacles of this world, 82,000 hardy souls call Edge home. Mostly they are frontier types who find living in modern society either oppressive or boring. These people tend to seek out new and difficult challenges away from government or corporate interference and living on Edge meets both those requirements exceptionally well.

What About the Northeastern Frontier?

As a reminder of the not on Page 10, all mention of the Northeastern Frontier (see pg. 10) has been left off of the timeline and the rest of the material writeup. This is deliberate, so as to allow individual Refs to create an area on the planet which is both uniquely their own and still mentioned in the basic writeup.

Likewise, there is very little (outside of the Explorer's Inc. report) "official" material on Iceland, Hinnon and Rosoko. The difference is that while we *probably* will not get back and do much about these in future products, we may. The Northeastern Frontier is, and will remain, all yours to clarify and populate.

Timeline for Edge:

2866: Initial surveys are made by the Scout Service, which notes both the prime landing zones and the surface conditions on the planet. The world is labelled as a Class I, moderate-low resource world with "challenging" surface conditions.

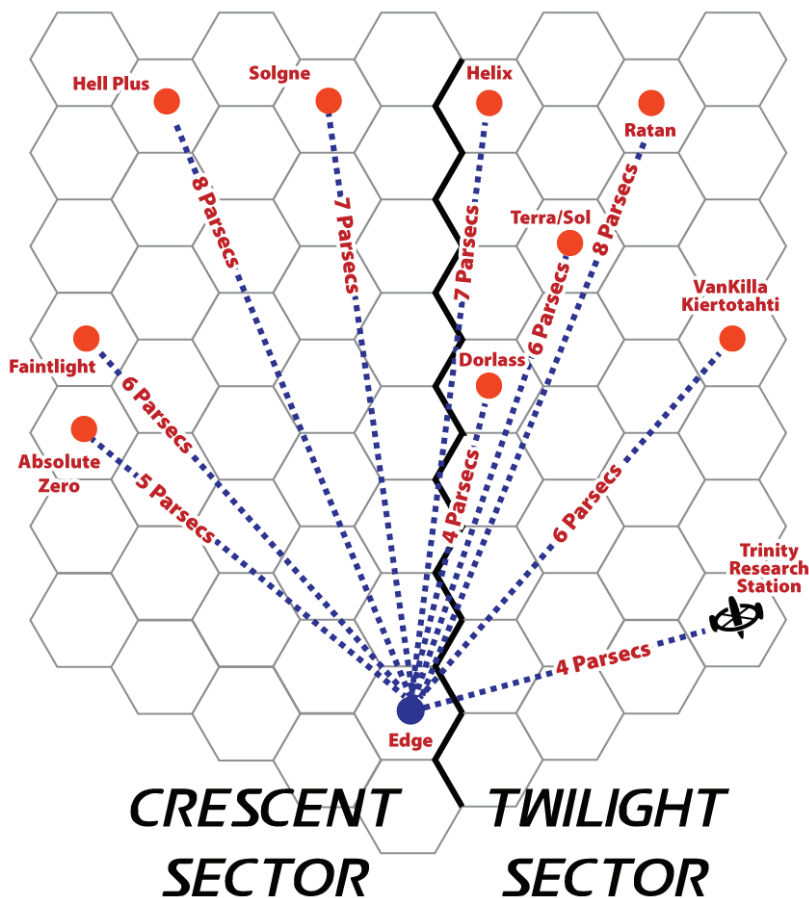
2867: The Colonial Administration Bureau designates the system as a low-priority for colonization efforts. This was a conscious decision to maximize colonization efforts ongoing on Terra/Sol, and to a lesser extent Dorlass.

2869: Jenni Rosokovitch, a professional pioneer (she had started three other colonies prior to this point, two of which on fringe worlds, and participated in literally a dozen more 'startups'), decides to gather colonists from a variety of worlds in the Sector, including (ironically enough) Terra/Sol itself. The "Transformation" Event (a sharp upward spike in mutations) in 2856 spooked a number of Terra/Sol's colonists, and by this point

Edge colonists are mostly baseline human stock but a few natural mutants, some arrive as settlers and some born every year from the colonist population (especially those colonists who originally came from Terra/Sol). On Kimber and Cold, seeing a mutant (Sim or natural) is not an entirely uncommon sight; When you are fighting for survival it's hard to care if the guy lending you a hand is a mutant or not. On Scottia however, being a mutant is a death sentence. There have been two major pogroms against mutants, one in 2882 (the *Great Purge*) and another in 2968 (the *Anti-Secularist Purge*). There, mutant babies and children (for those who develop abnormal appearances later in life) are swiftly and routinely euthanized.

The most populous settlement on Edge is Dryburgh, with about 17,000 people calling it home. That works out to about 1 in 5 people on Edge. Dryburgh is also home to the planets Class-D public starport, Dryburgh Field, which amounts to little more than a tower and collection of landing pads (a good portion of which is actually for local air traffic). There are 6 other "major" settlements on the planet, 'major' for Edge being defined as having a population of over 1,700. These are spread out around the planet, some of which collected together into simple nations such as the Freelanders Union (clustered around Harningsford) and the Scottian Alliance (on the continent of Scottia). Dryburgh is part of the Thornhill Movement, which isn't in any true "nation" at all (it was part

SYSTEMS SURROUNDING EDGE



Getting there

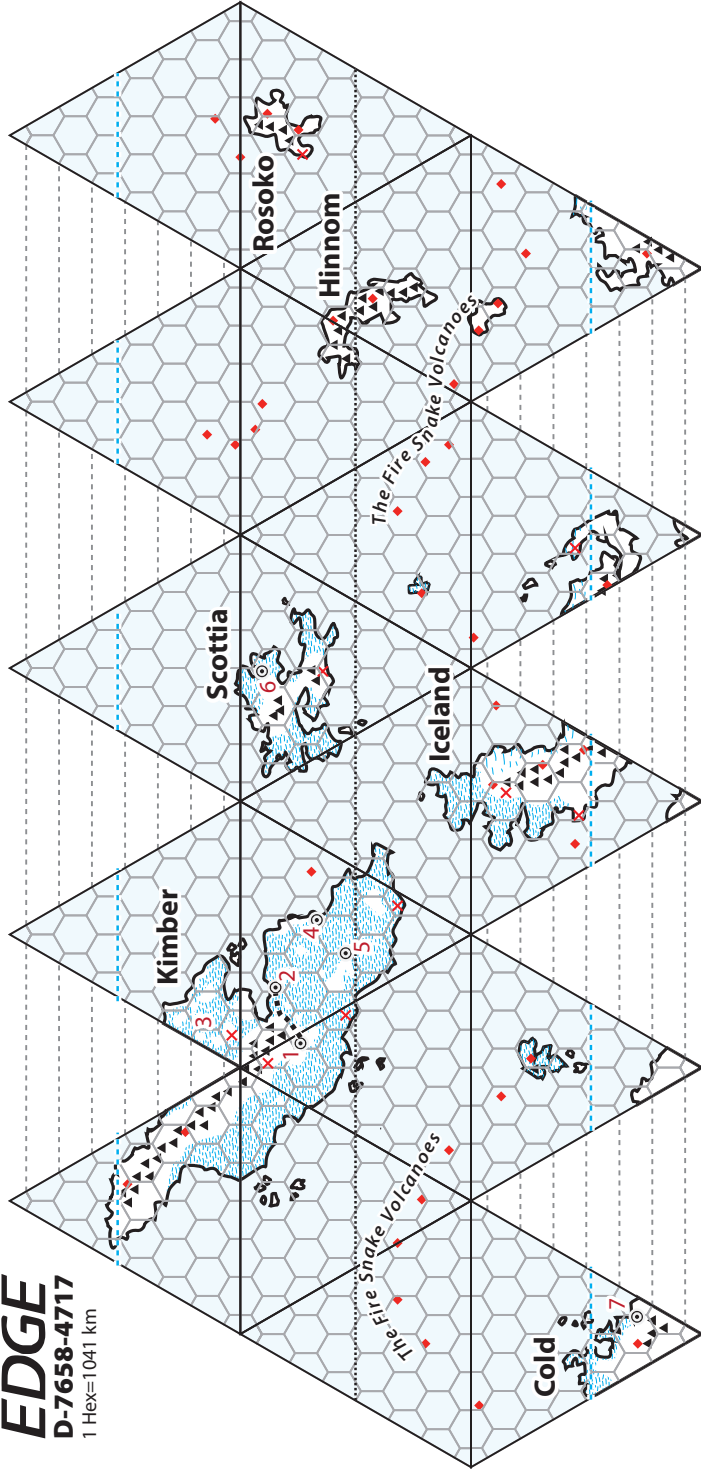
Edge is relatively distant from the more established worlds of the Sector. For a (Jump-2) SLD-2 vessel in the Twilight Sector setting, this can mean a 3-week travel time frame from Terra/Sol. This is what really makes the world less frequently visited, not the local conditions (in many ways, Dorlass is more hostile to human life). Of course, Referees are free to add other worlds that might be closer to Edge, which makes for an easier time justifying going there.

Of course, the remoteness of the planet is also one of its defining characteristics. There are a lot of locals who like living outside of the well-travelled spacelanes, and dread the day when the Confederation starts opening the world up to real colonization efforts.

EDGE

D-7658-4717

1 Hex=1041 km



 **Innundated** (swamp, fen, bog, etc)  **Volcano Chain**  **Mountain Chain**  **Failed Settlement**  **Ice Line**

1: Dryburgh **2:** Pale River Town **3:** Northeast Frontier **4:** Darbin **5:** Harningsford **6:** Stormtown **7:** Ice Home

of the Thornhill Movement which has long since ceased acting in any governing capacity). The Wycombi Mining Consortium has a small private spaceport which is better in some respects than Dryburgh Field, but smaller and open only to Mining Consortium vessels or those specifically invited to land by the company.

There are a few failed colonies, some of which — like the former holdings of Falsteen Exports — simply dropped out due to a lack of long-term interest in the Fringe. Other failed settlements suffered from local diseases, depredations from natural disasters (like the volcanic eruptions on Himmon that destroyed a sizable community there), or the settlers themselves simply got fed up with living in the “boonies” and made for better places to live.

Economics:

Edge is largely a barter based economy. Among natives electronic currency has only a little value. With very few off world buying opportunities trade is largely measured by the world's most important commodity...rice! Most items are valued by how many bushels (approximately 45 pounds) of rice it is worth. For an idea of what this value is in a currency based economy, on the commodity trading exchange on Terra/Sol in most years a bushel of rice averages selling for about 5.55 cr. a bushel.

Rice is the driving force of the economy being the staple food as well as the primary commodity. A strain of rice, R334E was developed by Smith Brother's Seed Company specifically for Edge. This strain is adapted to the planet and is a super grain, being an almost complete nutritional source for humans. The strain has gone native and now grows naturally on much of the Kimber and Scottia continents.

Remittances from the settlers families account for a quarter of the planets GDP. These payments

there was little or no information on why it had begun. It turned out that a virus had changed the parents involved, which meant leaving the planet was a useless effort. The panic over Transformation on Terra/Sol fuels those desperate to get off the planet, even for a place like Edge.

2872: The Rosokovitch Expedition lands on Kimber and selects a primary site for colonization (modern Dryburgh). It is followed quickly by three “waves” of colonizers that Rosokovitch had previously established later in that year. The first was the *Thornhill Collective*, which settled in Dryburgh. While essentially a utopian commune, the Collective included a large population of industrialists. The second was the *Scottian Alliance*, a religious group from Terra/Sol which landed on the continent of Scottia. The third effort was a resource corporation named *Falsteen Exports* which spread out over Kimber's southern region.

2873: The Scottian Alliance leader, Kai Tolovak, is killed by one of his own advisors, Zenia King, who rises to the position of Supreme Father (although she styles herself Supreme Mother). Tolovak had promised the Scottian Alliance colonists that

Timeline cont'd

they would be safe from the 'depredations of mutant birth' by moving to a new world. Because of the nature of the virus involved with the Transformation (it affected the parents), His predictions did not come about. Previous to his assassination, Tolovak turned on King: labelling her an 'Apostate' because her newborn daughter was born a mutant. This change in power creates what the Scottian Alliance refers to as the *long schism* as Pro-Tolovak and Pro-King elements clash in a series of low-level terrorist acts over the next 95 years.

2875: Smith Brother's Seed Company of Terra/Sol introduces the R334E rice-strain on Edge. The "Super rice" is grown in Pale River Commune initially, but is quickly caught on by all of the other major colonies on Edge (either through honest trade or industrial espionage).

2876: Rosokovitch pushes the fringe even further, beginning new colonies deeper in unknown space. She never returns to Edge, and later correspondence from other pioneers indicated that she considered the colonization effort here a failure.

2879: The Thornhill Collective begins to fracture internally, spawning a variety of satellite communes

or transfers from off-planet to Edge make life on the fringe possible. Remittances seldom take the form of hard currency, although that sometimes happens. Most often they take the form of hard-to-obtain equipment and resources. For example a metal smith might receive most of his raw materials from his brother back on Absolute Zero, or a farmer might receive tractor spares from his Uncle back on Terra/Sol. Superconducting batteries are a popular form of remittance goods, as are "skids" (gravplate tech that can be fitted on non-Grav vehicles in order to lighten their weight), and medicines. Guns are also a common remittance, but ammo is always a problem so most often these are guns for which local ammo reloading is possible. The listed tech-level of the planet, TL 7, only represents local manufacture (most of which is actually TL 6).

An unusual source of off planet revenue for Edge comes from Currie Pharmaceuticals. Due to the lack of laws on Edge governing drug trials they conduct most of their research work on Edge. The citizens of Edge don't really mind, feeling that those who participate do so of their own free will and know the risks they are taking. Most of the trials are conducted in Dryburgh but other settlements are used for trials from time to time. The drug trials are overseen by Currie's offices on *The Mistress of Orion*.

While most of the planet is based on a largely agrarian economy there is a going mining concern on the southern continent simply named cold. Legend has it that when the original settler leader was discussing the planetary survey with the scout who conducted it he asked; "What's this continent here", indicating the polar continent. The scout simply replied "cold".

High quality uranium was found in good quantity here and the Wycombi Mining Consortium

was organized to exploit it in 2921. The main settlement on Cold Ice Home with a population around 1,700. Due to the extreme environment here it is probably the most technologically advanced settlement on the planet. In fact, the Wycombi infirmary is often the last resort of critically ill settlers. They still cannot handle longevity treatments here, although they can take the samples needed and send them offworld for preparation if necessary.

Transport

See “**Vehicles on Edge**”, page 69-73.

Communications:

Settlements on Edge are connected via short wave radio but there is no over-the-air regular broadcasts of either news or entertainment programming planet-wide or even continent-wide due to the constant bad weather. Inside of subregions, there are a handful of local broadcasters who brave the elements, but only sizable communities have decent hardline cable setups and therefore there are only pockets of steady broadcasting around the planet.

There are a network of communications satellites over the planet to provide for a local internet, known on Edge by the locals as the Vine. The reception is sometimes spotty however, again due to weather conditions, which has resulted in a somewhat pathetic local 'net. The Vine offers what passes for planetwide news and entertainment.

Contact with the rest of the Known Galaxy comes via a quarterly visit from a Currie Pharmaceuticals Starship. Beyond its research payload it usually brings many remittance packages and other technological goodies for the planet's population. There is also a bi-annual visit from a Smith Brother's Seed charter to deliver that season's R334E seed rice contracts.

(beginning with Pale River Town, which quickly separates itself from Dryburgh). This will happen periodically through the history of the Thornhill Collective, to the point where this “proto-nation” all but ceases to exist as any kind of meaningful body (it is sometimes referred to as the “Thornhill Un-collective” and more charitably as the “Thornhill Movement” by modern scholarship in the colony. Yes, don't make that face, they have scholars).

2882: The first mutant pogrom of the Scottish Alliance kills off all of the mutants in that portion of the world, including the 9-year old daughter of Zenia King, who is killed by her own mother in an incident that touches the violence off. The other colonies of Edge, thoroughly disgusted, turn away from Scottia which then isolates itself.

2884-2940: A variety of small settlements spring up on the planet, fifteen or twenty colonization efforts (depending on how one counts two-wave and three-wave colonies from the same group) spring up around Edge, many of which die out within a generation or two leaving much of the Outback littered with the remains of failed colony sites and threadbare settlements of 20-150 people.

Starfarer's Gazette

Timeline cont'd

2888: The Mutant War begins. While it rarely touches Edge directly, indirectly the Mutant War shapes the next 120 years of development on Edge. First and foremost, the frontiers are artificially stagnated and all formal colonization efforts are suspended. This is supported by both wartime policy (new colony efforts draw critical resources, new colonies are targets for easy takeovers) and then by peace treaty negotiations (new colonies might entice raiding on either side and threaten to de-stabilize the fragile peace).

Bottom line: the Mutant War keeps Edge a fringe world for far longer than it otherwise would have been able to do.

2898: The *Freelander's Union*, a fourth colonial effort, begins to take shape on Edge. The original settlers may or may not have been deserters from the Mutant War and their families (in fact, most know that they were, this is an 'open secret' among the natives) fleeing to the fringe worlds. The Union establishes itself with a handful of independent homesteads and one major town (Harningsford) at the mouth of the Chargill River where a natural ford allowed easier crossing. Harningsford (aka 'the Ford') has become known

Other than these ships any given settlement on Edge is lucky to see one or two tramp freighters a year. The larger settlements, like Dryburgh, receive as many as one every month and have some limited facilities for the vessels to land.

Flora and Fauna:

For game statistics, See Sidebar pg. 78

Joke

Are herbivores ranging from 200 to 275 kg. They have roughly wildebeest shaped bodies but with longer giraffe like necks connected to a hornless horse like head. They have been described as 'creatively stupid' by Edge settlers but they are the best option for both meat production and working animals that the planet has to offer. Numerous sub-species are present throughout the planet including a zebra stripped version native to the upland plains of Scottia.

Springers

Springers are generally wolf sized or slightly larger (40 to 60 kg). They have long hind legs which let them leap up to 10 meters at a time and are the source for their name. They are aggressive and fearless pack hunters with powerful mandibles capable of killing a human or smaller sized creature in a single bite. Their forelimbs are capped by wicked looking claws but are surprisingly not that effective as a weapon due to their limited range of motion. Close contact with them though is not recommended.

Liopleuro

Named for an ancient earth seagoing dinosaur, these long necked swamp natives are large reaching up to 800 kg and 18 feet in length. With only fins they spend little time out of the water but they are able to traverse some dry ground and do pull themselves out onto dry areas to sun themselves occasionally. They are ambush predators and show no compunction in attacking an unwary human.

Lemmings

These small 1 to 3 kg sized creatures are akin to walking birds and their long insulating covering is very feather like and colorful during breeding season. They occupy the same ecological niche as mice or rats on Old Earth. They have always swarmed at times with groups numbering in the millions. However with the introduction of R334E this has become a yearly occurrence. Harvesting this bounty is a traditional way for settlers to put aside provisions for the winter.

EDGE SETTLERS

Edge is a special case being so far from what is called civilization on the edge of the Known Galaxy. It takes a special kind of person to even contemplate settling on this planet let alone being able to survive its many difficulties. The Edge Settler career is designed to create someone who reflects the uniqueness of the planet.

Edge is a world which knows of modern technology but for the most part can neither afford nor hope to maintain it. That's not to say that the odd grav vehicle or robot doesn't show up occasionally, after all most of the settlers have family or friends back in civilization, remittances from those friends and family accounting for a full quarter of the planets GDP. It's just that when an Edge native requests something it's more likely to be something that can do them some good for longer than a season or two which leaves high maintenance, modern technology out for the most part. A portable hydrogen fuel cell power generator is a far more useful item than say a grav truck which would be very difficult to acquire spares for and finding the technical expertise to fix the thing is a whole other hurdle.

Edge natives tend to be able to operate in this world that uses an abundance of native or low tech options to accomplish tasks. It's just as

since then as a shady and standoffish place on Edge, where no one discusses their past.

2901: Darbin is set up as a major trading center by a coalition of four Trade Houses who have major contracts with the Confederation military and want the rice from Edge. For the next few decades, Darbin becomes the center of Edge's offworld trading.

2921: The *Icehome Colony* (and settlement) is established by the Wycombi Mining Consortium in order to mine the high-grade Uranium discovered on the aptly named continent of Cold. Wycombi skirts the ban on colonization by funding the Icehome colony as part of an "outreach" program, essentially masquerading as aid to underdeveloped communities. Technically, Icehome is an independent community, but there is no doubt that the Wycombi Consortium pulls all of the strings there and has done so since the beginning of the settlement. (Icehome is also the highest tech location on the planet, roughly TL8-9 and capable of providing minimal maintenance for TL 12).

2927: The heir-apparent of Supreme Mother Jenni King, her pre-Transformation non-mutant son Harold, is



important to know how to wrangle a Joke or sail a boat as it is to know how to drive a ground car.

Meet Some Edge Settlers

Bartland Hiegonbottom Age: 42, Rank 4

STR	DEX	END	INT	EDU	SOC
9 (+1)	12 (+2)	8	9 (+1)	6	11 (+1)

Skills: Animals (Training) 1, Broker 1, Carouse 0, Comms 0, Gun Combat (Slug rifle) 3, Drive (GEV) 2, Flyer (Fixed-Wing) 1, Life Science (Edge Lifeforms) 1, Mechanic 1, Melee (Unarmed) 1, Navigation 1, Recon 3, Survival (Edge) 3, Trade (Construction) 1, Trade (Joke Wrangling) 2

Equipment: Homestead, Jokes, Bush Carbine

Bart is a farmer and community leader and self appointed "Sheriff". A crack shot, he is also an expert on Jokes, the local domesticated animals. He makes his living raising and selling these animals. Bart is a no nonsense kind of guy and very provincial, looking suspiciously on outsiders. Buy him a drink and talk about Jokes though and you're likely to end up on his good side.

Princepheles (Prinny) Cottswold Age: 28, Rank 1

STR	DEX	END	INT	EDU	SOC
8	9 (+1)	6	11 (+1)	6	5 (-1)

Skills: Animals (Farming) 1, Carouse 2, Comms 0, Deception 1, Drive (GEV) 2, Gun Combat (Slug Pistol) 1, Mechanic 1, Navigation 0, Recon 0, Survival (Edge) 1, Trade (Joke Wrangler) 1

Equipment: Airboat, Bush Pistol, Moonshine

Prinny is a young local who can't seem to keep himself out of trouble. His dad abandoned the family when he was very young, heading back to "civilized space" according to local gossip. He still lives in his mother's now dilapidated homestead. Prinny is lazy and crazy, just ask any of the locals. But he's the closest thing to a good time this little burg has to offer. A carouser at heart (a rare skill on Edge), Prinny knows how to have a good time.

Timeline cont'd

killed by pro-Tolovak forces in the interior of Scottia. This intensifies the conflict between the two sides of the schism sharply over the next few decades.

2934: The "Tradetown" of Durbin is abandoned by the Taligan Trade House, one of the major providers, after pressure from the Confederacy following the Bilateral; Treaty and the no-colonization provisions in that treaty.

2936: Falsteen's colony effort collapses, leaving behind a number of refineries and ghost towns along the coastline of southern Kimber. Not driven by offworld requirements for profit, some of the locals and some of the Falsteen employees who decided to stay on Edge have re-inhabited the most productive of their fields and continue to provide oil resources to the planet. This is the first "reverse colonization" on Edge, which loses almost 15,000 inhabitants at this time.

2945: The local industrial capabilities of that vast majority of Edge are reduced to TL 6-7 with the collapse of the final fabrication facility on Dryburgh, the withdrawal of the Trade Houses from Darbin, and the loss of the Falsteen colony. From this point on, there are only a handful of inhabitants who own starships (since the

Starfarer's Gazette

Timeline cont'd

maintenance facilities can no longer provide them with more than basic services).

2965: The Supreme Mother of the Scottian Alliance, assassin-turned-dictator Zenia King, dies a few years after the pledge drive among the faithful to pay for her trip offworld to get her 16th (16.4 Mcr) longevity treatment fails. The Scottian Alliance undergoes a new wave of secularism under the Free Scottian Movement.

2968: The pro-Tolovak and pro-King (now both deceased) mend their schism in order to combat the growing secular movement on Scottia. This drives the Secular Movement entirely underground within 5 months as the Scottian secular community Red Cliff along the coasts of the southern portion of the colony is burnt down by the Scottian 'military'. Many Scottian refugees flee to other Edge colonies.

2987: Second major "Reverse Colonization" of Edge, which loses some 5,000 colonists when a charter is hired by the *Fire Snake Coalition* (a group of colonists who pool their resources to get offworld to a better opportunity elsewhere).

2988: A major epidemic hits Edge, particularly across Kimber. Eventually, medicines from Terra/Sol arrive in large amounts, but not before several thousand die.

2991: Current Date

From Joke tipping, mud jumping in souped-up trucks to the best home brews, Prinny can hook you up! He can also lead you to about anywhere in these parts if you can just drag him out of bed and sober him up.

Beatrice Brienwold Age: 60, Rank 6

STR	DEX	END	INT	EDU	SOC
6	9 (+1)	12 (+2)	11 (+1)	9 (+1)	10 (+1)

Skills: Animals (Veterinary) 2, Computer 2, Broker 2, Comms 0, Diplomat 1, Drive (GEV) 1, Gun Combat (Slug rifle) 1, Jack-of-all-Trades 1, Life Science (Herbal Medicine) 3, Navigation 1, Notice 2, Life Science (Edge Lifeforms) 2, Survival (Edge) 2, Trade (Pharmaceuticals) 2, Trade (Cooking) 2.

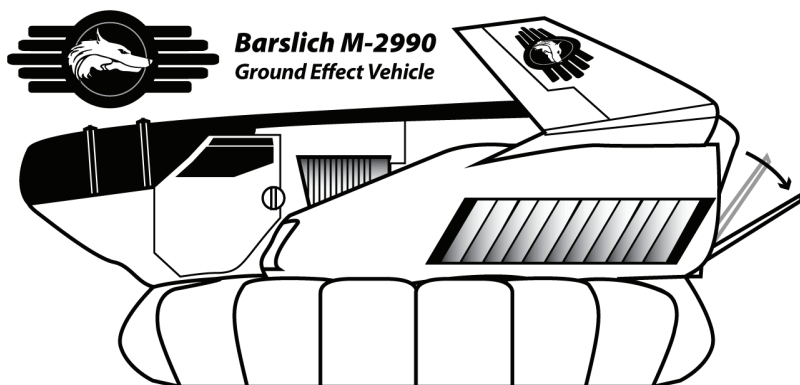
Beatrice is a motherly type having already raised a brood of eight children herself. She lost her husband and the love of her life in the epidemic of '88. Instead of feeling sorry for herself, "Mother Bea" has turned her motherly attentions to her extended family and their friends.

Known and loved throughout the settlement, Beatrice has become an expert in Edge Herbal Medicine and often the community comes to her with their medical needs. Rumor has it that Beatrice is from a wealthy family back in civilized space. She followed her love to this god-forsaken planet and stayed.

Beatrice has taken several trips off planet over the decades she has lived here, but has always returned. While offworld, Beatrice definitely underwent longevity therapy, as she is a very young looking 60-year old ('Mother Bea' easily looks to be in her early 30s, and is even more striking now than when she was in her 20s).

Sharp-eyed types will notice the characters listed here are generated using the Tinker, Spacer, Psion, Spy character generation system which is standard in Twilight Sector.





One of the GEV's commonly shipped to Edge is the Barslich M-2990, a basic but very solid model.

VEHICLES ON EDGE:

When it comes to local manufacture, this mostly TL6-7 world produces a number of electric and internal combustion vehicles in mass production. There is a pair of plants making them in Dryburgh, and another in Harringsford, with small shops producing 'kit pieces' scattered all over the planet. Stormtown, on Scottia, had a small plant producing vehicles until about a decade ago when it went offline. With limited trade to the other colonies and even more limited trade offworld, the inhabitants of Scottia are 'making due' with what they have on hand.

Icehome has the largest number of vehicles per inhabitant on the planet, and they tend to be sturdy TL 9 varieties of GEV and wheeled vehicles, many incorporating hybrid "skid" technology, but they are all produced offworld (many on Dorlass, where Wycombi has several factories producing a wide variety of goods) and shipped to Edge by the Wycombi Mining Consortium. Since most are made for the local needs of Cold, there is a tiny amount of trade between colonies for these vehicles. Top Wycombi brass and security have grav vehicles here as well, both because of the mountainous terrain in which the mining is found and for the prestige of their positions.

While TL 9-10 gravplate technology is beyond the capability of most (non-Wycombi) local manufacture and even support, there are a small number of other gravplate-based vehicles on Edge. Most tend to be found in and around major population centers, with a handful being brought in from offworld each year (it is a commonly requested trade item) and one or two worldwide going out of service for lack of repairs or misadventure. That makes the grav vehicle population rise unsteadily, but well behind the human population of the colony.

In-Town Vehicles:

Inside of most settled areas, in the stilt towns like Pale River Town and Harringsford as well as Dryburgh, wheeled vehicles are quite commonplace. They use less energy and are fast. Most of these wheeled vehicles run on electricity drawn from local power grids (which themselves include nuclear, wind, and solar panel farms). Batteries are expensive, and without superconductor technology tend to be the heaviest and most expensive part of the vehicles. Offworld vehicle batteries are a common trade item.

There are a few performance bikes, cars (and fanboats in the Outback) which use internal combustion engines fueled by petrochemicals from the coast of Kimber. In town, gasoline powered bikes are especially popular among the youth (even when they do not belong to them, see page 18). While some offworlders wrinkle

their noses, locals have long since given in to the atavistic thrill of high-speed petrochemical motors.

Among 'townies' (a term used with much amusement by those who have been offworld), fanboats have taken on a negative image.

Outback Vehicles:

Outside of the cities on the (largely) inundated land, there tend to be little or no roads. In the early days of the colonization effort under Rosokovitch, there was some effort to keep communities tied together via roads, but this proved to be a waste. The water soaked land, lack of coordinated planning by the largest settlement (Dryburgh) and common practice of using GEVs and locally-produced fanboats in the Outback conspired to end the practice. The longest stretch on the planet of roads is between Dryburgh and Pale River Town, but even this is more than half underwater at times. Thus wheeled

vehicles drop off sharply outside of the communities.

For the replacement of the wheeled vehicle in the outback, one of the natural features of Edge works in the favor of the colonists: flatness. Vegetation on edge tends to lay flat, and with water inundation being so commonplace, there isn't a lot of elevation changes that need to be taken into account until one gets to the mountains. Ground effect vehicles and fanboats have taken root here with a vengeance.

Fanboats, made with flat bottoms and large fan-propellers to provide forward motion, glide over the swampy regions with ease. They tend to be less common in the mixed regions, where inundation is relatively light and there are dry or vegetation covered patches. High-end fanboats use offworld “skid” technology (grav-reduction rather than full grav flight capability) to lighten the vehicle. Vehicles so-equipped can and do sometimes find themselves able to skim over these surfaces as well, but they are not commonplace (*saying this, more “skids” are used with Edge’s fanboats than any other vehicle type though and they are often brought in on each trade vessel coming to the planet). Among ‘townies’ (a term used with much amusement by those who have been offworld), fanboats have taken on a negative image. An oft-used satirical depiction of Outback settlers feature fanboats being used in reckless stunts for the amusement of the audience.

When possible, those who travel the Outback use a GEV or Ground Effect Vehicle. These vehicles create a column of air on which the vehicle rides using ground-pointing fans. The air column makes a cushion on which the vehicle then glides over the surface (and given the flat character of Edge, this is especially practical). While very energy-intensive, GEVs are nonetheless robust and fully able to traverse both dry and inundated land, and can even be used on some of the lower portions of the mountainous areas before the grade becomes too steep. While the fanboat is semi-reviled by the ‘city-dwellers,’ the GEV is highly sought after by all Edge inhabitants, and comprise nearly a third of the local vehicle manufacture.

The lowest of the lowtech methods of travel is the Joke-pack. Edge’s only real beast-of-burden (most inhabitants claim the burden is on them rather than the animal) is a unruly, stupid creature but it is adapted to the conditions on the planet no matter it’s lack of intelligence and grace. Jokes teams pull a fair amount of cargo (especially if paired with skid tech to lighten dragpack loads) through the dense terrain, can feed off local plants and require minimal long-term care. Overall, they are less useful than horses on worlds where those creatures have been exported, but better than some pack animals (like Earth’s alpaca). Of course, unlike a terran-offshoot horse, the Joke can navigate the swamps/ Joke Wrangling is considered a skilled trade on Edge*.

*In terms of game mechanics, this is the *Trade (Joke Wrangler)* skill, which allows the individual to lead Jokes through hazardous terrain, get them to work despite the fact they really don’t want to do so (which is pretty commonplace), and take rudimentary care of them (proper feed, water, and knowing when to rest them).

Air:

While some in the Core think of TL 6 as too primitive to achieve flight, this is entirely untrue. Likewise, some naysayers would claim that the skies of Edge are too rough for TL6-7 aircraft. While true that the conditions on Edge do not *favor* fixed wing or rotary wing flight, this is a far cry from claiming that such is not *possible*. In fact, while the average airspace on any given spot on Edge is only “clear” 1 out of 9 days, the conditions are *acceptable* for fixed wing and rotary wing

Accidents are unfortunately all-too common, which is why those who fly these (air)craft are known as “crash pilots” or “Crashers” by the locals.

flight roughly 5 out of 9 days (depending on the seasons and latitude, this can shift 1 or 2 days in either direction). Grav flyers can ignore most weather conditions up to a full-blown hurricane or the most dangerous of squalls, but Grav flyers are beyond the capability of local manufacture to produce. All gravlift vehicles must come from offworld and they are therefore relatively rare.

Fixed wing craft are nonetheless common in the outback as a means of keeping the population connected and as a fast means of transportation. Even if they cannot be used as often or as safely as locals would like, they still can be used. About half of the communities larger than 20 people have at least a single fixed-wing craft available to them. Sometimes these aircraft are in private hands, sometimes

they are owned by the local government and specifically used for emergencies.

Rotary-wing craft are slightly less commonplace, but still can be found even in some of the smaller communities because of their usefulness. Accidents are unfortunately all-too common, which is why those who fly these craft are known as “crash pilots” or “Crashers” by the locals (as in: “Talk to Jones about checking that out by air, he’s the Crasher around here”).

Fossil Fuels are commonly used for these craft. Offworld batteries (superconductor et al) would provide adequate power for the weight instead (better in many ways), but cannot be locally produced.

Retrofitting the craft when one of these batteries becomes available is a job that most Outback technicians can perform.

Chart: The Vehicles of Edge

Vehicle:	Skill:	Agil.	Speed	Seats	Arm	H	S	Cost:
Fanboat	Drive (GEV)	-1	96 kph	1+2	2	2	3	10,000 Cr
GEV Standard	Drive (GEV)	+0	90 kph	1+5	4	3	3	15,000 Cr
GEV Hauler	Drive (GEV)	+0	90 kph	2+40	2	28	28	350,000 Cr
GEV Coupé	Drive (GEV)	+1	150 kph	1+3	4	2	3	40,000 Cr
Bush Plane	Flyer (Fixed)	+1	250 kph	1+5	2	10	10	70,000 Cr
Cargo Plane	Flyer (Fixed)	+1	450 kph	1+12	2	21	22	700,000 Cr
Flying Boat	Flyer (Fixed)	+1	300 kph	1+20	2	24	24	800,000 Cr
Helicopter	Flyer (Rotor)	+1	350 kph	1+6	2	6	6	250,000 Cr
Sm. Submersible	Seafare (sub)	-1	45 kph	1+2	2	2	2	25,000 Cr
Lg Submersible	Seafarer (Sub)	-2	30 kph	1+10	4	17	18	450,000 Cr
Utility Boat	Seafarer (Sea)	-2	35 kph	1+10+	1	5	5	35,000 Cr

Agil= Agility, **Seats** = #Driver/Pilot + #passengers, **Arm** = Armor, **H**= Hull, **S**= Structure

Open Water:

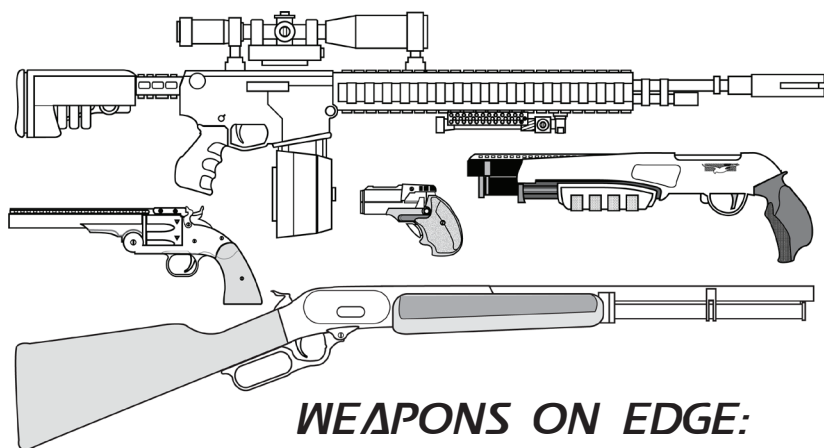
Sailing ships have found a limited prominence on Edge, which tends to have a significant amount of wind by comparison with other worlds. Most sailing vessels have backup electric or internal combustion motors, and a handful use offworld tech. But even with this, boats and sailing are not especially commonplace on Edge, as the seas can be quite treacherous and a good deal of the local marine life have developed a taste for bipedal fare. Likewise, swimming is a survival skill, not a past-time.

About ten to fifteen years ago, submersibles became very popular. They are able to duck under most inclement weather and are generally capable of fending off seaborne predators. Cargo capacity was their largest issue. The fad is beginning to fade however, though submarines can still be found in the local markets.



Retrofitting:

Contrary to popular belief, a superconductor special (retrofitting local technology for the use of offworld vehicle batteries) does not make the vessel faster. In fact, these sometimes are slower because of the constant discharge rate of the battery. More often, the vessel is able to operate longer, although this too is not always the case (the shift in vehicle range is commonly -10% to +40% or (d6-2)x10%, Referees may adjust this further based on the size of the battery used). The real difference is that the retrofitted vehicle doesn't have to use fossil fuels, and can "recharge" from a wider variety of sources, even solar (which admittedly is hampered by weather). It is *flexibility* that is the real advantage: the ability to 'refuel' from a much broader variety of options.



WEAPONS ON EDGE:

As benefits a TL 6-7 world (outside of Ice Home), weapons on Edge tend to favor the slugthrower variety. While gauss weapons are possible (especially if superconductor batteries are brought from offworld), they tend to be very unreliable under local conditions. Even if highly sealed, moisture, mud and local fungus make these weapon systems problematic. Laser technology is also capable at the outer edges of the Tech Level of local manufacture, but has the same problems with conditions for reliability. Plus the commonplace rains (which reduce range sharply) and foggy/misty conditions (some of which itself flammable) make lasers less than apropos. This is not to say that either of these weapons cannot be found here, just that locals tend to avoid them.

Slugthrowers, while not immune to being fouled, can be cleared often in the field or in a worst-case scenario over the course of an hour to half-hour of dedicated effort. Weapons which have simpler actions, revolvers, lever and pump actions, et al. predominate. In many cases, local artisans have painstakingly researched and re-used the technology of pre-Long Pause Earth. This does not mean that they have not adapted in some cases from later centuries developments (hot-loads produced by better gunpowder than was available in the early-mid 20th century) or local innovation (pressed-vegetation casings have proven to be very reliable for example).

Interestingly, while beyond local manufacturing capability to make, sonic stunners are especially useful on Edge. The moderately high atmospheric pressure and general dampness of the air give these weapons a 10-20% boost in range. Other types of stunners (Gravitic, Electro-laser and Magnetic) are virtually unknown here.

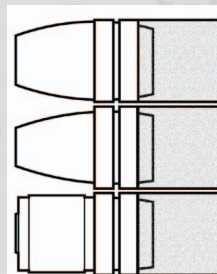


Referee Note: Twilight Sector Snub Weapons

In the **Twilight Sector setting**, Snub weapons are a hybrid of caseless and binary propellant slugthrower technology. Because the weapons operate somewhat differently from normal firearms, they are classified in their own specialization sub-group ("Snub"). The *Gun Combat/ Snub* skill specialization however also includes gyrojet/accelerator-weapons and other rocket-type non-heavy weaponry of a similar form (such as magrail guns). The specialization covers both pistols and SMGs/Carbines (since there are no snub rifles). Due to the unique launching system, the Snub weapon can be used with a wider variety of payloads than most conventional slugthrowers (including gas, chemicals, high explosives and so forth). A "standard" Snub round is 10mm to 12mm. *A list of alternative Snub rounds can be found on Page 51.*

In a snub round, the rear of the bullet is encased in a block of material that is normally inert. This casing material however reacts to a catalyst (stored separately in the weapon and used in lieu of a firing pin) which rapidly shifts the casing into an energetic gas trapped in the small space of the firing chamber. Gas expansion then propels the round out of the barrel, not fully consuming the casing until it is well-free of the weapon, giving the round a rocket-like trajectory. Because of this, the rounds only move at 150m/sec as the bullet leaves the muzzle, this is the base recoil felt by the shooter. Within a few meters however, the bullet is moving at the full rated 350-450m/sec (depending on specific round).

Note that at point-blank range, the round is not fully "up to speed"; reduce damage taken by 2 points and any armor piercing qualities of the weapon/round should be reduced by half. Because of the manner in which the gases are vented there is no "bang" portion when firing a snub; instead the round has an audible 'thump,' thus giving this class of weapons their other widely used nickname: *Thumpers*.



11x28.5mm Standard
Snub Pistol Round

A variant **high-pressure catalyst** can significantly increase the conversion speed of the caseless block for more of a "hot load". Since almost the entire caseless portion of the round is converted inside of the barrel with this type of catalyst, there is no damage reduction for point blank targets. Most shooters do not bother, since the difference in round performance is actually very slight (*In Game terms: +1 damage, 1 additional point of armor penetration (even if there is none normally), but Recoil goes up by 1 as well*).

The amount of catalyst required to set off a round is minimal. The industry-standard is that the catalyst reservoir needs to be refilled for every fifty magazines fired (give or take a few magazines). Of course some weapons hold more, some less. If they do so, this is noted in their description. The cost of the catalyst compound is about Cr125/1,000 rounds. The catalyst can also be produced in a lab with a routine *Physical Science/Chemistry* test (the materials required cost still costs about one-third of the 'consumer' price above when mixing it up in small amounts i.e. not in huge vats). Making high-pressure catalyst incurs a -2 DM penalty but costs roughly the same.

ADVENTURE OUTLINE: RICE WARS

Note: *This adventure works best with off planet player characters.*

On Edge rice is big business, approximately 200 million credits a year big business. Almost since the planet was settled the seed rice as well as the rice export business has been dominated by one company:

Smith Brothers Seed, based on Terra/Sol and Headquartered on the *Mistress of Orion*. That is till now.

A new company — **King Seed** — is now trying to break into the edge market. They have developed their own strain of super rice to compete with R334E. However they've been finding it difficult to make inroads into the market because local farmers are loyal to Smith Brothers and that company also maintains the offworld contacts for the bi-annual "Rice Uplift". King Seeds however have come up with a plan to break the Smith Brothers strangle hold on the Edge rice trade.

The plan involves that old staple: 'dirty tricks'. King Seed operatives have devised a plan to loose literally hundreds of thousands of lemming chicks on the Smith Brothers seed rice fields, destroying the year's seed rice and forcing the local farmers to turn to King for replacement seed. They have the critters stashed away in a secret swamp 'facility' (a shack with a rather large wharf attached) several miles outside of town (whatever town you choose to set this adventure in).

Part I: The players uncover information that King Brothers has a secret facility where they're figuring out how they can ruin Smith Brother's seed crop. They would most likely discover this information from someone in King's employ or it could even be third hand. Someone who heard it from someone in King's employ.

Maybe the person the players heard the rumor from got drunk and are blabbing just a little or they are a drunk whistle blower who feels badly about the underhanded plan. The players should probably need *Carouse* or *Streetwise* to uncover this initial information and what they come up with is something vague like the aforementioned "King is trying to ruin the Smith Brothers seed corp" and "The facility is about 5 clicks north of town".

Also a time element should be introduced in the form of "they're plan is coming off tomorrow night". If they fail to uncover this information via their skill rolls they should uncover it anyway via overhearing the information or some other method of the referee's devising.

Their failure should just make the job a little harder. Perhaps the King Seed person sees the players listening a little too closely to his conversation. However it occurs, word that they may have been found out should get back to the King Seed facility and the result should be they have an extra person or two on duty at the 'facility'.

Note: *This isn't necessarily a shoot'em up adventure (although some opportunity for some good shoot'em scenes exists). Although the players will discover information on possible King Seed mischief they don't have proof. If they go making wild accusations they'll be laughed at. Or if they try and barge into the King facility, the King Personnel will have heard them coming and simply moved the lemmings. If they go in guns blazing they'll be wanted criminals! No what is called for here is a little old fashioned sneaking around: They've got to get the goods on King Seed.*

Part II: The players will need a guide to track down the King Seed Facility and with the time constraints they'll need to leave soon. Night would be best to cover their approach. A perfect guide candidate is Prinny Cottswold from the "Meet Some Edge Settlers" section. Trouble is he's been on a two day bender and they need to sober him up. Modern conveniences like Alconull™ and such drugs aren't readily available on Edge so they'll need to use the old fashioned way, coffee, stimulants and walking it off to get Prinny in good enough shape to pilot his airboat and guide them through the swamp so the players can start searching.

Part III: Prinny still isn't in very good condition to drive or search for that matter and Airboats are tricky things. Prinny is still kind of drunk so he might put a couple of the players in the drink or turn over the boat. Don't worry if he does the water is only waist deep at the worst so the players will just have to turn the boat back over. These are rugged little boats. The problem though could take the form of a Liopleuro. A lovely little creature (see flora and fauna section) with no compunction about adding human to the menu.

Finding the facility should involve a good grid search pattern and the use of *Investigation, Navigation, Notice* or *Survival* skill. A liberal interpretation of *Recon* (most likely at only half the characters rated skill) could also be used if needed.

Part IV: Upon finding the facility the players will need to infiltrate it (hopefully without Prinny crashing into the wharf and sending the thousand crates or so of Lemming chicks crashing into the swamp (from where they would proceed to wreck havoc on the King Seed crops!)).

Starfarer's Gazette

Evidence of the King Seed shenanigans could consist of hacking the computer in the shack, pictures of the crates of Lemming chicks or even recordings of the guys in the shack plotting to release the chicks. That of course could best be accomplished if the King Seed personnel aren't alerted to the player's presence.

Useful skills might include; *Stealth*, *Recon* or even *Deception*.

Part V: A final complication is the pack of Springers that although rare around here have been drawn to the smell of thousands of Lemming chicks. They are more than willing to add some semi-hairless monkeys to the dinner menu if the opportunity presents itself.

Rewards for the successful uncovering of the Kind Seed plot are left to the referee.

The Wildlife of Edge:

Joke (Grazer)

STR	DEX	END	INT	Instinct	Pack
12 (+2)	6	10 (+1)	0 (-3)	4 (-1)	6

Skills: Athletics (Co-Coordination) 1, Recon 0, Stealth 0, Survival 1

Natural Attacks/Defenses: Bite (1d6), Thick Hide (2)

Other: As a beast of burden Jokes can carry 20 to 40 kilograms (not great) but can pull around 1,000 kilograms.

Springer (Pouncer)

STR	DEX	END	INT	Instinct	Pack
10 (+1)	20 (+3)	12 (+2)	1 (-2)	12 (+2)	6

Skills: Athletics (Co-Coordination) 2, Recon 2, Stealth 2, Survival 2

Natural Attacks/Defenses: Jaws/Teeth (2d6+2), Thick Hide (3)

Lemmings (Intermittent)

STR	DEX	END	INT	Instinct	Pack
1 (-2)	2 (-2)	1 (-2)	0 (-3)	0 (-3)	30+

Skills: Athletics (Co-Coordination) 1, Recon 0, Stealth 0, Survival 0

Natural Attacks/Defenses: Jaws/Teeth (d3-2, min. 0), No armor.

Liopleuro (Hunter)

STR	DEX	END	INT	Instinct	Pack
20 (+3)	7	16 (+3)	1 (-2)	9 (+1)	0

Skills: Athletics (Co-Coordination) 1, Recon 1, Stealth 2, Survival 2

Natural Attacks/Defenses: Bite (3d6, ignores 4 AP), Thick Scales (5)

AVERAGE JOES

Average Joes are people who inhabit the Twilight Sector Campaign Setting. These are the people you meet in the starport bar, at the Cozy Cottage™ or just walking down the street. These are the people you have to save from imminent danger or deal with to get your ship registered.

This Average Joes segment looks at the Edge Settler, one of those plucky types that have managed to latch on to this backwater fringe and make it into a home.



*I've been an Outbacker all my life. I lived once in town.
Couldn't stand the crowds. Out here, it's just me and
the land.*

And admittedly, a whole lot of mud.

— Willemina Ford, Outback Guide

EDGE SETTLER

Survival 5+ Advancement 7+

Outbacker: This is the settler that makes frequent forays into the wilds.

Remittee: This settler is frequently sent money or goods from offworld.

Townie: The settler that tends to stay closer to Edge's populated areas.

Skills & Training

Roll	Personal Development	Colony Skills	Training (Edu 7+)
1	+1 STR	Seafarer	Survival (Edge)*
2	+1 END	Trade	+1 End
3	+1 DEX	LS: Herbal Medicine*	+1 Int
4	Carouse or Gambler	Mechanic	Navigation
5	Melee Combat	Broker	Animals
6	Gun Combat	Animals	Mechanic
Roll	Outbaker	Remittee	Townie
1	Survival (Edge)*	Advocate	Mechanic
2	LS: Native Life*	Vehicle	Vehicle
3	Mechanic or Medic	Computer	Animals or Trade
4	Recon	Trade	Survival (Edge)*
5	Gun Combat	Broker	LS: Herbal Medicine*
6	Navigation	Gun Combat or Recon	Gun Combat or Recon

* New Skills/Specializations found in this book.

Ranks

Rank	Rank Title	Skill/Benefit
0	Colonist	
1		Vehicle
2	Settler	
3		Trade
4	Trailblazer	
5		Jack of All Trades
6	Leader	+1 Soc

Mustering Out Benefits

Roll	Cash	Other Benefits
1	500 cr	Homestead
2	1,000 cr	Boat
3	1,500 cr	Local Vehicle
4	2,000 cr	Local Weapon
5	2,500 cr	Joke
6	5,000 cr	Any Weapon
7	10,000 cr	Offworld Vehicle

EDGE SETTLER MISHAPS

Roll

- 1** *Exile:* The Character is exiled from the colony for a period of time due to violating a colony law. Punishment is exile for a period of time. Make a survival roll to gain Survival (Edge). At any rate you lose one point from your Social Standing Characteristic.
- 2** *Natural Disaster:* Edge is a harsh planet. Your local area suffers a major natural disaster. It could be an earthquake, hurricane or flooding. In any event the disaster takes all your time and attention and you receive no skill roll/choice for this term.
- 3** *Hard Winter:* Again, Edge is a harsh planet. You suffer through one of her extremely harsh winters. You have to go into debt to secure the resources necessary to survive. The Character starts the game with a 2,500 credit debt.
- 4** *Stranded:* During a foray into the bush you become stranded for an extended period of time. You either lose one roll on the Mustering Out (other) Benefits table or lose 1 point from your Strength Characteristic.
- 5** *Disease:* One of Edges rapidly mutating bugs takes a turn for the worse and you are subjected to its worst affects. After spending several months recovering you lose 1 point from your Endurance Characteristic.
- 6** *Outside Disaster:* A pirate raid, political dispute or similar occurrence causes a lot of destruction in the Characters area. You lose a roll on the Mustering Out Benefits table.

EDGE EVENT

Roll

- 2** *Resource Discovery:* The Character is part of the discovery of a useful Resource. Receive an extra roll on the Mustering Out Cash Benefits Table.
- 3** *Find a Mentor:* An experienced Settler takes the Character under their wing teaching them the ropes of survival on Edge. Gain a Settler ally and, if they do not have it already, *Survival (Edge)* 1.
- 4** *Political Upheaval:* Even in a backwater like Edge people vie for political power. The Character finds themselves in the middle of such a political upheaval. They are forced to arbitrate the situation and gain a level in the *Diplomat* skill.
- 5** *Natural Disaster:* Natural disasters strike Edge with alarming frequency. The Character is forced to participate in relief efforts during one such event and gains a level of *Survival (Edge)*.
- 6** *Advanced Training:* Your settlement determines they have a need for an expert in an obscure (for Edge) skill. The Character is selected to sent for off world training. You gain one level in a skill not listed on the Skills and Training chart.
- 7** *Package From Home:* The Character receives a remittance from family or friends back in "civilization". The Character has 2,500 credits to spend on any one piece of equipment.

- 8** *Bumper Crop:* Sometimes good things happen on Edge and a bumper crop leads the way as one of the best. It provides the Character with a financial windfall. Gain an extra roll on the Mustering Out Benefits Chart.
- 9** *Quarantine:* A disease outbreak in your settlement forces the Character to help treat those afflicted. The Character gains a level in the *Herbal Medicine* skill.
- 10** *Springer Attack:* The Character is thrust into a position of leadership fending off a Springer attack or some other threat. The Character gains a level in the *Leadership* skill.
- 11** *Necessity is the Mother of Invention:* On Edge you learn to make do with what you have and sometimes you figure out how to make what you have do what you need. Consult with your Referee and decide what contraption you have invented.
- 12** *Off World Visitors:* Edge receives a visit from a political or corporate off World figure. During the visit the Character meets and befriends this Individual. Gain an off world ally.

NEW SKILL SPECIALTIES

Life Science (Edge Herbal Medicine)

This specialization is used to find natural medicines on Edge and use them for a plethora of human ailments. Success with this skill will either begin the healing process or aid and speed up healing/recovery at the adjudication of your referee.

Life Science (Native Edge Lifeforms)

Similar to Exobiology and Ecology, but with a deeper focus. This skill's area of focus is on the biology/botany of life forms native to Edge only.

Survival (Edge)

This skill is treated the same as the standard Survival skill. Since Edge has a tendency to focus on an individual (and is so unforgiving), those learning this skill on Edge operate at one skill level higher than their rating shows. This is only applicable when using the skill on Edge. If someone with this skill is trying to use it on another planet, the Referee decides whether or not to allow them to use it based on whether a similar condition exists on edge (deserts for example would not be a suitable environment, but open water or jungle would), when used off world, do not count the skill as being one level higher even in similar conditions, and in some cases (like the desert mentioned above) feel free to apply a -2 DM.

Tinker, Spacer, Psion Spy Character Generation:

Use the Settler Career with the following Extended Basic Training Package:

Animal (Farming) or Animals (Training) 1, Carouse or Computers 0, Comms 0, Drive or Seafarer 1, Mechanic 0, Recon 0, Life Science (Edge Lifeforms) 1, Survival (Edge) 1, Trade (Joke Wrangler) or Trade (Construction) 1

Other than this, the character is developed using the Settler career as-is. The Ref may allow the character to make a Life Events roll on the Event chart here instead.

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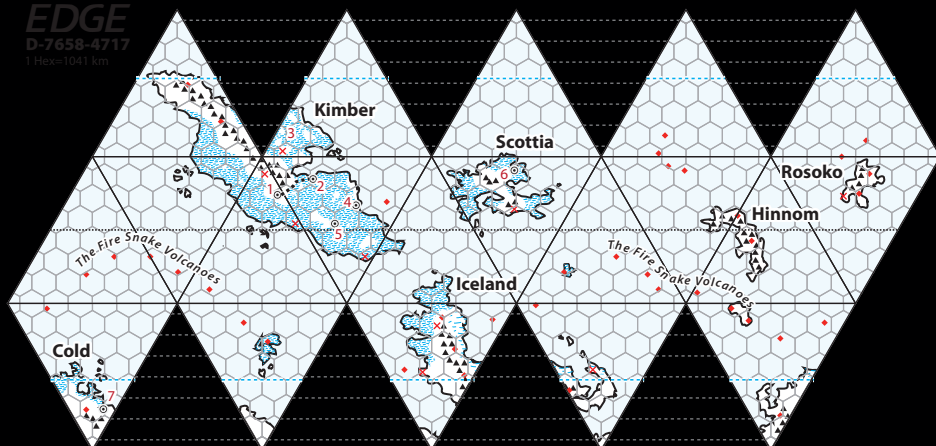
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STARFARER'S GAZETTE #2

EDGE
D-7658-4717
1 Hex=1041 km



So what is it that I've got here?

The *Starfarer's Gazette* is an intermittently-published style magazine for the cutting edge 30th Century audience in Terra/Sol's *Twilight Sector Setting*. Nonetheless, this material has been designed specifically to be open and available for **any Traveller game**.

This issue of the Gazette looks at the fringer world of **Edge**, an unpleasant little backwater well off of the frontier. For the Twilight Sector Setting, this world is a sample of the kinds of planets that exist along these remote regions. For other settings, it is another world that has taken the long slow slide to barbarism.



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