

Steel Hands

The **Steel Hands** are a pro-UNSC faction operating on Vandros-7, primarily based in **Kongsdal** on the eastern archipelago. Formed by loyalist scrappers and former workers, the Steel Hands serve as a counterforce to the Iron Star Union's insurrectionist activities. Backed by the UNSC, they focus on maintaining order, safeguarding key infrastructure, and supporting UEG authority in the region.

Origins

The Steel Hands originated from the *Vandros Salvage Workers' Union* (VSWU), the same labor organization that the Iron Star Union once belonged to. However, when the UEG dissolved the union in **2529** in favor of more direct control over Vandros-7's resources, a faction within the VSWU chose loyalty to the UEG and UNSC over resistance. Led by pragmatic foremen and technical experts, this group established the Steel Hands, pledging to assist the UNSC in countering the rise of insurrectionist movements on the planet.

The name "Steel Hands" reflects their background in salvage and scrapping, symbolizing their commitment to rebuilding and protecting the structures of order and society in the face of growing unrest.

Ideology

The Steel Hands hold a firm belief in the necessity of cooperation with the UEG and UNSC, seeing them as the only hope for humanity's survival amidst the ongoing Human-Covenant War. They view the Iron Star Union's resistance as reckless and shortsighted, risking the stability of Vandros-7 and potentially drawing unwanted attention from the Covenant.

The faction emphasizes principles of order, duty, and collective security. They argue that only through unity with the UEG can the people of Vandros-7 protect their way of life and ensure their safety in the face of external threats. The Steel Hands promote the idea of shared sacrifice for the greater good, willingly taking on the role of enforcers to maintain peace and support the war effort.

Structure and Organization

The Steel Hands are organized into small, well-coordinated units that operate primarily out of their headquarters in **Kongsdal**. The faction is structured similarly to a civilian defense force, with a clear hierarchy led by a council of foremen and overseers. This council coordinates with UNSC representatives to set strategic objectives, allocate resources, and manage local security efforts.

Base of Operations: Kongsdal

Kongsdal, located on the eastern archipelago, serves as the Steel Hands' primary base of operations. The town features a mix of industrial facilities, workshops, and supply depots that support the faction's activities. The Steel Hands have fortified Kongsdal, setting up checkpoints and patrol routes to secure the town against potential Union incursions.

From Kongsdal, the Steel Hands monitor maritime routes and coordinate with the UNSC to maintain a strategic presence in the eastern region. The town's shipyards are crucial for repairing and outfitting vessels, allowing the faction to deploy naval patrols and secure shipping lanes against Union smuggling and sabotage efforts.

Operations and Activities

The Steel Hands conduct various operations aimed at supporting UEG authority and countering the Iron Star Union's influence. Their activities include:

- **Infrastructure Security:** The faction prioritizes the defense of key infrastructure, including power plants, mines, and transport routes. They work closely with the UEG to ensure the steady flow of resources and prevent sabotage by insurrectionists.
- **Patrols and Reconnaissance:** From their base in Kongsdal, the Steel Hands deploy patrols to monitor coastal waters, shipping lanes, and land routes. Their naval units help intercept smuggling operations and prevent the Union from moving freely between the archipelago's islands.
- **Intelligence Gathering:** The Steel Hands actively gather intelligence on the Union's movements, identifying potential threats and providing this information to UNSC forces. They maintain a network of informants and use their deep knowledge of the archipelago's terrain to stay one step ahead of the Union.

Relationship with the UNSC

The Steel Hands are closely aligned with the UNSC, receiving logistical support, weapons, and equipment to bolster their efforts against the insurrectionists. In return, they act as the UNSC's eyes and ears on the ground, maintaining control over key areas and providing a local force capable of rapid response to emerging threats.

This partnership has allowed the Steel Hands to maintain a technological edge over the Iron Star Union, particularly in electronic warfare and communications. However, it has also made them a target for Union propaganda, which paints them as puppets of the UEG and traitors to the working-class populace of Vandro-7.

Local Sentiment

The Steel Hands' relationship with the local population is mixed. In Kongsdal and the surrounding eastern archipelago, where the faction has invested in maintaining public services and infrastructure, they are seen by many as protectors and stabilizers. Residents who benefit from the faction's security measures and economic activities generally support their efforts, viewing them as a bulwark against the chaos brought by the Union.

However, in other parts of Vandros-7, the Steel Hands are viewed with suspicion and resentment. Union sympathizers criticize them as enforcers of UEG exploitation, complicit in the imposition of taxes and regulations that burden smaller communities. This divide has made the faction's task of securing peace and order all the more complex, as they must navigate local grievances while upholding their pro-UEG stance.

Current Status and Objectives

The Steel Hands are currently focused on expanding their control over the eastern archipelago and containing the spread of Union influence. Their base in Kongsdal serves as a launching point for counterinsurgency operations, logistical support, and coordination with UNSC forces.

Their short-term objectives include securing the shipping lanes near Kongsdal, fortifying key infrastructure, and preventing Union attempts to disrupt economic activities in the eastern region. In the long term, the Steel Hands aim to restore UEG control over Vandros-7 and re-establish a sense of normalcy for its inhabitants. This involves not just military actions but also efforts to win over the local populace, promoting the idea that cooperation with the UEG and UNSC is vital for the planet's survival in the face of the larger Covenant threat.

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