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About GURPS

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Pyramid (www.sjgames.com/pyramid). Our online magazine includes new **GURPS** rules and articles. It also covers the **d20** system, *Ars Magica*, *BESM*, *Call of Cthulhu*, and many more top games – and other Steve Jackson Games releases like *Illuminati*, *Car Wars*, *Transhuman Space*, and more. *Pyramid* subscribers also get opportunities to playtest new **GURPS** books!

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Bibliographies. Many of our books have extensive bibliographies, and we're putting them online – with links to let you buy the books that interest you! Go to the book's web page and look for the "Bibliography" link.

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the **GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition**. Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

INTRODUCTION

GURPS High-Tech covers the technology available from the late 18th century (TL5) to the present day and relatively near future (TL8). It's crammed with guns, explosives, entry tools, climbing kit, scuba gear, radios, vehicles, and everything else that a group of adventurers might need – whether they're exploring trackless wastes, pulling off a heist, or running a spy ring. Most of the items it describes are based on specific, historical devices . . . but the treatment is intentionally *generic*, making the equipment useful even in non-historical campaigns.

High-Tech doesn't simply list technical specs and game stats for the items it describes, though. It gives you everything you need to *use* them in play. There are notes on how to purchase equipment (legally and illegally), guidelines for building and modifying gear, and new firearms rules, techniques, and perks to support both ultra-realistic and cinematic gunplay.

Most important, *High-Tech* is a book for *heroes*: dangerous men and women on secret missions . . . intrepid explorers slashing a path through a sweltering jungle . . . iron-tough adventurers braving the steely knives of an arctic blizzard. It provides the finishing details that distinguish one mercenary or super-spy from another. Attributes, advantages, and skills may define the hero, but his possessions can be just as important. A "Mare's Leg" Winchester or a LeMat revolver instead of the predictable Colt Peacemaker can make an Old West gunslinger stand out from his peers!

Distinctive clothing, gear, and weapons can also help make an adventurer an instantly recognizable *icon* in the campaign world. Fiction is packed with examples of personality going hand-in-hand with possessions: Indiana Jones' fedora and bullwhip; Thomas Magnum's Hawaiian shirt and Ferrari 308; James Bond's tuxedo and Walther PPK. In each case, unique belongings support and complete the persona of a quirky and memorable protagonist.

Thus, *High-Tech* takes the view that an adventurers' kit should be a reflection of his background and character traits – a symbol of his upbringing, attitude, and personality – and not just a collection of game stats and bonuses. Colombo wears a grimy overcoat in balmy California; Sherlock Holmes has his deerstalker cap and drop-stem pipe (details added not by Doyle but by illustrators and actors later on). Such touches make it easier to visualize characters who live only in the players' imagination, and provide "hooks" that the GM can use throughout the campaign.

PUBLICATION HISTORY

This is the fourth edition of *GURPS High-Tech*. It replaces *GURPS High-Tech, Third Edition* (1998) – itself revised by David Pulver from earlier editions written by Michael Hurst – and *GURPS Modern Firepower* (2002). Inspirational *GURPS Third Edition* supplements include *GURPS Special Ops, Third Edition* (2002) and *GURPS*

Covert Ops (2003). *GURPS Old West, Second Edition* (2000), *GURPS Cops* (2001), and the entire *GURPS WWII* line (2001-present) were also influential. *Pyramid* articles adapted for this work include "Autocannon," "In Her Majesty's Service," "The Long Arm of the Law," and "Secret Weapons" – all by Hans-Christian Vortisch. Finally, *GURPS Ultra-Tech, Fourth Edition* (2007) and *GURPS Vehicle Design* (2007) were developed concurrently with *GURPS High-Tech*, and the authors exchanged ideas liberally.

The current volume is a new work, not a revision of any of the above – they served primarily as sources of concepts, references, and terminology, not text.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Shawn Fisher has a master's degree in education and is currently a technical writer with a major IT company. A former teacher and infantryman, he has over a decade of experience in private security and is a certified law-enforcement firearms and defensive-tactics instructor. His previous works include *GURPS WWII: Dogfaces* and *GURPS WWII: Hand of Steel*, and contributions to *GURPS Best of Pyramid 1*, *GURPS Who's Who 1*, and Amarillo Design Bureau's *GURPS Module Prime Alpha*. Shawn has been an avid gamer since the early 1980s, and devotes his spare time to camping and recreational shooting. He lives in Searcy, Arkansas with his wife, Jennifer, and their two daughters, Elizabeth and Rachel.

Mike Hurst served as an artilleryman in Viet Nam. He has also been a security officer (both uniformed and undercover); a tank commander in the Texas National Guard; and Captain of the Guard of the Barony of Bryn Gwlad. He is an NRA-certified firearms instructor and holds a Texas Reserve Police Officer certification. He possesses two dogs, an undetermined number of cats, and several thousand books, mostly history and science fiction. He has been a wargamer and miniatures gamer for more than 20 years, and shows no sign of reforming. On the other hand, his beloved wife, Brenda, who shoots ambidextrously, insists he had better quit playing and commence writing.

Hans-Christian "Grey Tiger" Vortisch, M.A., studied languages in Berlin and London, and is currently pursuing a law degree. He began writing for *GURPS* as a freelancer in 2001. He was author or co-author of *GURPS Covert Ops*, *GURPS Modern Firepower*, *GURPS Special Ops, Third Edition*, *GURPS WWII: Motor Pool*, and several *e23* publications on military topics. He wrote additional material for numerous other *GURPS* books; translated, edited, or contributed to several German *Call of Cthulhu* products; contributed to *d20 Modern Weapons Locker* and *d20 Mecha Military Vehicles*; and published many articles in American, British, and German gaming magazines. Hans has been an avid gamer since 1983. His non-gaming interests include science fiction, history, cinema, and punk rock. He lives in Berlin.

CHAPTER ONE

THE EQUIPMENT AGE

The clerk didn't look up from his paperwork as the trio approached, grunting under their heavy loads. As they placed armloads of gear on the table, he said, "Name. ID. Branch."

The big Inuit dressed in sealskin trousers and a heavy wool sweater stepped forward first. He cleared his throat and replied, "Nat Hunter. 098679-1898HL. Intervention. Special Operations."

"Inventory?" demanded the clerk.

Nat motioned at the pile of weapons. "Winchester Model 1876 carbine in .50-95, Super Redhawk Alaskan, two MK II fragmentation grenades, titanium combat folder."

The clerk looked up and slid a clipboard across the table, between two small mountains of expedition gear, electronics, and body armor. "Are any of you carrying personal weapons on this mission?"

Nat shook his head no and signed the form.

"Next."

The middle-aged man with the eye patch spoke up. "Morton Locke. 098679-1886HL. Penetration. Intelligence."

He wore traditional Inuit garb and a fur-trimmed parka, with a pistol belt slung low around his waist.

"And?" the clerk intoned, with more than a slight indication of impatience.

"Auto-Ordnance M1921 with drum, two Colt .38 Super Automatics."

"Next?"

The young blond man unslung his rifle from his shoulder and held it at port arms. "Airk Heimdall. 098679-1901HL. Penetration. Contact." Quickly, he added, "Model 70 in .458 with thermographic sight, cut-down Ithaca Model 37, Beretta 93R, tomahawk."

The clerk finished his paperwork and then motioned toward a set of double doors. "Through those doors; motor pool's on your right."

This chapter presents an overview of the technological timeline covered in **High-Tech**, along with some general rules regarding equipment use, availability, and pricing.



TIMELINE

The most pressing issue the GM must consider regarding equipment is simply “What’s available?” Below is a more detailed technological timeline than the one presented on pp. B511-512. For more on specific classes of technology, see the appropriate chapter(s).

TL5: THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

The Industrial Revolution (on historical Earth, roughly 1730 to 1880) coincides with the first successful steam engine. It becomes self-perpetuating by embracing curiosity-driven innovation and capitalist economics simultaneously, rewarding risk-taking and invention with wealth. Key developments include:

- *Agriculture*: Four-course crop rotation, seed drill.
- *Arms and Armor*: Barbed wire, breech-loading artillery, breech-loading rifle, ironclad warship, mechanical machine gun, nitroglycerine, revolver, rocket.
- *Information Technology*: Newspaper advertising, photography, public library, scientific journals, telegraph.
- *Machinery*: Cotton gin, interchangeable parts, powered loom, reaping machine.
- *Material Science*: Crucible steel, friction match, rubber.
- *Medicine and Health*: Anesthetic, antiseptic, canned foods, evaporated milk, hypodermic syringe, pasteurization, vaccination.
- *Power*: Battery, coal, steam engine.
- *Transportation*: Bicycle, hot-air balloon, macadam road, railroad, screw propeller, steamship, submarine.

TL6: THE MECHANIZED AGE

The Mechanized Age (historically, about 1880 to 1940) is the consequence of industrialization sinking its teeth into technologies that are more capital-intensive than labor-intensive and reaping great benefits from the resulting economies of scale. Goods of all types drop in price relative to wages as “modern” transportation and manufacturing techniques hit their stride. Important advances include:

- *Agriculture*: Herbicides, mechanized harvester, pesticides.
- *Arms and Armor*: Aircraft carrier, automatic weapons, battleship, high explosives, military aircraft, poison gas, tank.
- *Information Technology*: Color photography, fingerprint records, motion pictures, radio, sound recording, telephone.
- *Machinery*: Electric light, radar, sonar, vacuum tube.
- *Material Science*: Aluminum, Bakelite, Bessemer steel, synthetic fibers.

● *Medicine and Health*: Blood transfusion, electrocardiograph, inoculation, insulin, penicillin, refrigeration, sterilization, sulfa drugs.

- *Power*: Electric motor, hydroelectric power, internal combustion engine, secondary battery, steam turbine.
- *Transportation*: Airplane, automobile, high-speed road system, primitive helicopter, zeppelin.

TL7: THE NUCLEAR AGE

The Nuclear Age dawns with the successful harnessing of nuclear power (in the 1940s, on historical Earth). This occurs alongside such inventions as television, jet engines, and the transistor. The crowning achievement of TL7 technology is in many ways to make good on the promises of TL6. Significant innovations include:

- *Agriculture*: Chemical fertilizer, hybrid crops.
- *Arms and Armor*: Assault rifle, ballistic body armor, guided missile, military helicopter, military jet, nuclear weapons.
- *Information Technology*: Computer, high-speed press, television.
- *Machinery*: Integrated circuits, laser, transistor.
- *Material Science*: Composite materials, plastic, superconductors, titanium.
- *Medicine and Health*: Artificial heart, organ transplants.
- *Power*: Gas turbine, nuclear power, photovoltaic cell.
- *Transportation*: High-speed train, jet aircraft, spacecraft.

TL8: THE DIGITAL AGE

The Digital Age begins with the commercial success of personal computing – in around 1980, here on Earth. Definitive technologies include:

- *Agriculture*: Genetically engineered crops and pesticides.

Dirty Tech

High technology isn’t always manufactured from carbon fiber, packed with microchips, or glistening with chrome and style. Sometimes, a hero is desperate enough to try almost anything. What would MacGyver or the Professor do in a pinch? Can you fashion a battery on a deserted tropical island, or cobble together functional armor from the contents of the high school cafeteria? Maybe you can! This is “dirty tech.”

Throughout this book are *Dirty Tech* boxes that contain hasty solutions for hard-up heroes: homemade explosives, field-expedient firearms, jury-rigged electronics, etc. Been aching to use that languishing on your character sheet? Wondering why you bothered with that point in Armoury, Chemistry, Electronics Repair, or Machinist? Check out the *Dirty Tech* entries!