

PYR MID

Issue 3/57 July '13

GUNPLAY



MODERN WARFIGHTER: GEAR

by Kenneth Peters

BROCK-AVERY GUNS

by David L. Pulver

THE NOCK VOLLEY GUN

by Graeme Davis

THE DEVIL'S CHARIOT

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DODGE THIS

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MAGIC BULLETS

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Article Colors

Each article is color-coded to help you find your favorite sections.

Pale Blue: In This Issue

Brown: In Every Issue (letters, humor, editorial, etc.)

Green: Columnist

Dark Blue: GURPS Features

Purple: Systemless Features

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IN THIS ISSUE

Our aim is true in this month's *Pyramid!* We're looking at all aspects of gunplay, with new weapons, options, gear, and more.

It's not enough to be able to shoot the enemy – you have to get there first. You'll find everything you need with *Modern Warfighter: Gear*. From warfighter and **GURPS Ultra-Tech** co-author Kenneth Peters, learn what members of modern professional land forces carry into the field, with **GURPS** stats for new gun-thwarting body armor and an arsenal of other support equipment.

Once they're outfitted, those warfighters, mercenaries, and monster hunters can get a lift in *The Devil's Chariot*. Hans-Christian Vortisch – marksman behind **GURPS Tactical Shooting** – provides details, usage ideas, and **GURPS** stats for the popular Russian "Hind" helicopter . . . along with the big guns it wields.

Explore the rise of a potential weapon source in this month's Eidetic Memory. **GURPS Mass Combat** author David L. Pulver reveals the fictional history and **GURPS** stats of the *Brock-Avery Guns*, from their first TL5 flintlock through modern-day arms. Add a new line of weapons your heroes have never heard of before . . .

The best way to deal with weaponry wounds is not to get hit in the first place! When your shooting matches aren't realistic enough, you should *Dodge This*. Find out how to use existing **GURPS** rules – or add minor optional tweaks – to make dodging, parrying, and blocking more satisfying experiences in your adventures.

For your Wild West and 18th-century high-seas adventures, be sure to grab *The Nock Volley Gun*. **GURPS Crusades** co-author Graeme Davis reveals the history and **GURPS** stats of this intimidating seven-barrel carbine from another time.

You already know to choose your ammunition based on what you expect to shoot. When your targets are supernatural, you need more than ordinary ammo; it's time to turn to *Magic Bullets*. With these **GURPS** costs and simplified stats, you'll find the right combination for any situation – no matter how exotic.

This month's Random Thought Table examines how to make every hero's shot count, Odds and Ends looks at existing ammo resources and unexpected weapon situations, and a well-armed Murphy's Rules means you no harm . . . honest.

If you're looking for an issue with kick, you need to pull the trigger on this one. With rules, tools, rods, and rides, *Pyramid* #3/57 might just be our *Magnum* opus!

Editor-in-Chief ■ STEVE JACKSON
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GURPS Line Editor ■ SEAN PUNCH
Assistant GURPS Line Editor ■
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FROM THE EDITOR

FROM GUN THE EDITOR?

This issue revolves around all things gun-related – including intel of interest to those who sling firearms to get the job done (or just want to get out of their way). For many folks in near-modern campaigns, the choice of weapon is one of the first questions that helps shape character creation; someone who favors a shotgun almost certainly evokes a different image than a hero with two silver revolvers or an AK-47.

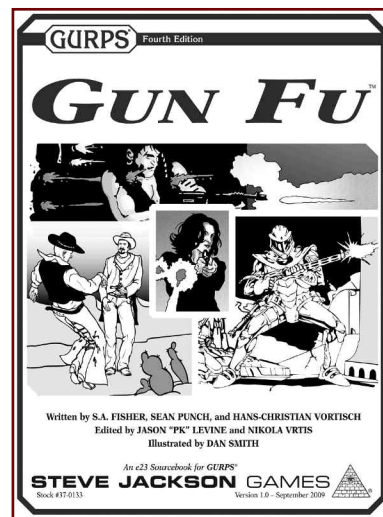
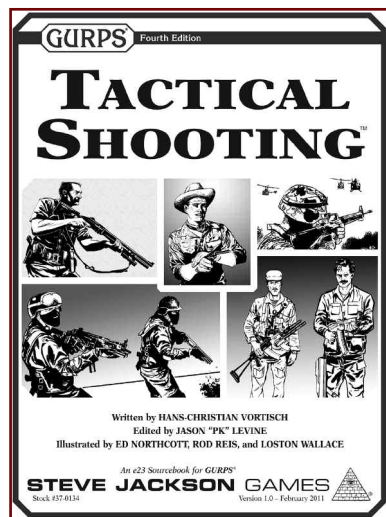
Fortunately, even with as specific a topic as “gunplay,” it’s still a wide-open area . . . and the assortment of subjects here should provide a lot of opportunities and options even for gamers who already have a weapon of choice. Plus, new ideas mean you might come up with predicaments you never considered: A plethora of magic-bullet options (pp. 34-35) gives you reason to go up against new threats that only succumb to magic bullets. Having a whole new (fictitious) company that’s manufactured weapons throughout the ages (pp. 23-26) means you can now have a ready-made source of usable background material . . . or even an easy-to-add explanation for the source of Mr. Bigg’s wealth.

GURPS has always been a great game for those who love guns . . . or even those who *didn't know* they loved guns, until they discovered a game that made 'em fun. We hope our aim was true with this locked and loaded issue of *Pyramid*!

*More guns and more gear
mean more adventure!*

WRITE HERE, WRITE NOW

Despite the header above, we don't really want you to gun down the editor as commentary about this issue. We'd much rather hear your thoughts using words! Did you find the gun issue to be a fun issue? Or was it a misfire? Let us know how well we hit the target privately at pyramid@sjgames.com, or join the straight-shooting community at forums.sjgames.com.



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Early TL8 improved fragmentation vests (*High-Tech*, p. 67) – such as the U.S. manufactured PASGT vest (and its derivatives) – was the primary body armor of most well-equipped military forces into the early years of the 21st century. These vests incorporate significantly lighter trauma plates to provide rudimentary ballistic protection against pistol and rifle fire, but are still bulky, rigid, and extremely uncomfortable to wear in hot weather. The high cost of the trauma plates means that most troops are issued the standard version without pockets for plates. It is usually worn with a frag helmet (*High-Tech*, p. 70).

TL8 assault vests (*High-Tech*, p. 67 and pp. 12-13) provide ballistic protection even without trauma plates, but are designed from the ground up to be fitted with them. They are more comfortable to wear for extended periods, especially with moisture-wicking undershirts, and feel lighter due to better load balancing. Their use is still considered somewhat contentious, as they comprise a significant percentage of a warfighter's combat load and can impede reconnaissance and pursuit tasks. Most are issued with side armor plates (p. 13), neck yokes (p. 12), and deltoid protectors (*High-Tech*, p. 67) to cover armor gaps; the additional weight and bulk makes these attachments unpopular on patrol. A ballistic helmet (*High-Tech*, p. 70) or advanced ballistic helmet (p. 10) with integral NVG mount is worn with the vest.

Plate carriers (p. 15) are the preferred body armor for special forces and airborne assault troops, if any armor is worn at all. These cover only the most vital areas – agility, comfort, and mobility are prioritized. Even if armor is not worn, such warfighters will don at least bump helmets (p. 11) with NVG mounts and accessory rails to guard against injuries when quickly maneuvering in buildings and vehicles.

USING ARMOR

The following are additional considerations for body armor that the GM can apply to his campaign. See *Shooting in Armor* (*Tactical Shooting*, p. 12) for other special considerations when wearing body armor.

Donning Armor: Body armor can be slipped over the head, or put on like a coat, in two Ready actions. Properly securing the armor, tightening straps and adjusting the fit, takes another 10 seconds. Quickly donned armor assesses -1 to DX until they can

Nothing Left to Chance

As many as 42 percent of the Marine casualties who died from isolated torso injuries could have been prevented with improved protection in the areas surrounding the plated areas of the vest. Nearly 23 percent might have benefited from protection along the mid-axillary line of the lateral chest. Another 15 percent died from impacts through the unprotected shoulder and upper arm.

– U.S. Marine Corps, *Marine Lethal Torso Injuries: Preliminary Findings* (2005)

Most armor has gaps that are not covered by trauma plates, are thinner than normal due to the shape of the body and limitations of materials technology, or cannot be armored at all to allow for a full range of movement. For this reason, warfighters are drilled to avoid oblique firing stances (*Tactical Shooting*, pp. 11-12). Instead, the shooter directly faces the target to present only the heavily armored front of the torso.

Targeting Chinks in Armor (p. B400) covers most situations when an attacker can bypass some of the opponents DR, but GMs that want more detail can also use the rules for *Armor Gaps* in *Tactical Shooting* (p. 12) and both *New Hit Locations* and *Notes for Existing Hit Locations* in *Martial Arts* (p. 137). The rules for *Harsh Realism – Armor Gaps* in *Low-Tech* (p. 101) can also prove useful, but note that striking locations such as the armpit are extraordinarily difficult to hit with most ranged attacks.

be squared away. It takes five seconds to remove the armor, unless hidden quick-release straps are used (takes two Ready actions to dump).

Fatigue: Military body armor is heavy and inflexible, but most of the weight is evenly distributed over the entire torso – it doesn't feel as heavy as one would imagine. Even with encumbrance penalties, warfighters can perform typical physical activities – running, jumping, climbing over walls, etc. Buddy-lifts and other cooperation mitigate the reduced mobility and the extra bulk.

Off-Size Armor: The listed **GURPS** weights for armor assume they are sized to a wearer of average build (115-175 lbs. – see the *Build Table*, p. B18). This is a deliberate abstraction, as build is just a game feature and not worth any points. In reality, large or unusually shaped individuals must wear different sizes (with correspondingly scaled armor inserts) that weigh more or are stocked in small numbers. A reasonable *optional* rule is to multiply the weight of armor by (character weight / 150), and assess a penalty of -1 to DX and -1 to DR when wearing off-sized body armor. Body armor specifically tailored for women has seen some use, but most designs are unisex with adjustment straps to fit most body shapes.

NEW EQUIPMENT

For in this modern world, the instruments of warfare are not solely for waging war. Far more importantly, they are the means for controlling peace.

– Admiral Arleigh Burke

Many of these items are built to survive significant abuse (often by the operator!) and are noted as being ruggedized (*High-Tech*, p. 10). Note that mil-spec and ruggedized are not always synonymous!

EIDETIC MEMORY

BROCK-AVERY GUNS

BY DAVID L. PULVER

... the New England firearm's manufacturer's low profile conceals its longstanding involvement in the shadowy world of America's military-industrial-security-paranormal complex stretching back to World War II, but its roots go far deeper than. The Brock family has a lengthy history as gunsmiths, one that stretches back to colonial times . . .

– Danielle Lawrence, *Brock-Avery: Fire in the Dark*

Brock-Avery Defense is a family-owned firearms manufacturer with ties to U.S. intelligence and special-operations community. It is intended to serve as a Patron and possible source of exotic weaponry for black ops, espionage, or monster-hunting games set in the pulp era, World War II, the Atomic Age, or the present day. The company, its weapons and their stories are fictional, but were inspired historical examples and might-have-beens.

Cemetery Gun, .50 Flintlock (TL5)

In the 18th and 19th century, medical students had few legal routes for acquiring cadaver on which to practice their skills. With demand far outstripping supply, “resurrection men” raided fresh graves and sold the bodies to aspiring surgeons or medical schools. Such was the demand for cadavers that no burial was safe, with graveyards in large cities like Philadelphia and New York being particularly hard-hit. To combat this outrage, various ingenious methods were employed by cemetery caretakers to protect corpses in their charge. One such was the cemetery gun, which aimed to protect one corpse by creating another.

Albert Brock's Cemetery Gun was a typical example of such a weapon. In 1717, a Boston gunsmith and inventor, Albert Wilbur Brock, was hired by his local parish to protect their cemetery after a rash of grave robberies. His solution was a three-barrel .50 caliber flintlock mounted on a fixed rotating platform and set up at night near a recent burial. The weapon was placed to defend recent graves, with multiple tripwires connected to the gun's triggers. If a resurrection man infiltrating the cemetery stumbled over a tripwire, it would swing the gun in his direction and fire the weapon. The result would either eradicate the ghoulis intruder, or, if it missed – as was considerably more likely – the triple muzzle flash in the dark would at least give the

impression that a party of stout armed watchmen were present, and hopefully frighten the attacker off.

Up to three tripwires can be set for the weapon, each triggering a particular barrel. They can be as long as 20 yards without risk of snarling. Each tripwire requires 30 seconds to rig. A successful Vision roll (with usual darkness penalties) is required to spot the wires. A wire is triggered if walked through. At that point, roll against the Traps skill of whoever emplaced them. On a failure, the wires snarled or the gun failed to rotate and fire properly. If it *does* fire, use skill 9 modified by target SM and Range (only) to see if a ball hits whoever triggered a wire.

Brock's Cemetery Gun was not the first such weapon, but the mechanism was better made than many of its contemporaries, and a few dozen were sold in New England. Due to their high price, the guns were also rented, usually for \$20 per week. The main users were cemeteries in Massachusetts from 1717 until 1730, when Brock ceased to manufacture them.

Contemporary newspaper accounts indicate these weapons were triggered on numerous occasions, doubtless scaring off or wounding the occasional grave robber as well at least two dogs. One of the odder accounts was reported in *The Boston News-Letter* (America's oldest paper) in the summer of 1719. The Boston's Granary Burying Ground (adjacent to Park Street Church) had been troubled by a series of grave robberies and corpse mutilations. This was answered by the rental and nocturnal deployment of a pair of Brock Cemetery Guns. Two nights after it had been emplaced, the eastern gun was tripped and fired. Elijah Peabody, a stalwart groundskeeper who ran to investigate the gunshot, reported his lantern illuminating “a deformed figure, naked, with a curiously elongated jaw of almost canine-aspect” that was clutching his shoulder where he had obviously been struck by one of the balls. The man “howled and ran into the trees behind the tombs.” Attempts to apprehend him failed, but after that, the thefts ended. Clearly some sort of madman had been prowling about the area, doing who knows what, and had either been frightened off or died of his wounds. However, one puzzling aspect was that the grave appeared to have been opened *from the inside*.

Brock's weapons were mainly used in the early 18th century, but similar products of Yankee ingenuity (including various tripwire-triggered and spring-loaded guns) continued to defend cemeteries throughout the 18th and 19th century.

Nock Gun Table

Statistics are given below for three versions of the Nock Gun: rifled, smoothbore, and the experimental version with rotating barrels. Terms and notation are as defined on pp. B268-271.

GUNS (MUSKET) (DX-4 or most other Guns-2)

TL	Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Weight	RoF	Shots	ST	Bulk	Rcl	Cost
4	Nock Gun (rifled)	3d+1 pi+	2	65/650	12/0.1	1×7	7(420i)	11	-7	8	\$1,200
4	Nock Gun (smoothbore)	3d+1 pi+	1	55/570	12/0.1	1×7	7(105i)	11	-7	8	\$1,200
4	Nock Gun (rotating)	3d+1 pi+	1	55/570	12/0.1	7	7(105i)	11	-7	8	\$1,200

Weight

Some sources mention that later versions were smaller and lighter, without giving any details. Other sources are silent on the matter. The information in the table assumes that the First and Second Models were the same size and weight.

The few documented Second Model guns weigh 12 lbs. If there was a weight difference between the First and Second Models, the First Model would be heavier, most likely by 1-2 lbs. Throughout the gun's history, only minor variations occurred in design, most often in the flintlock mechanism.

Cost

Cost is based on Nock's price of 13 pounds for a First Model gun. A Brown Bess musket (*Flintlock Musket*, p. B279, \$200) cost 2 pounds 4 shillings (2.2 pounds) which was about 17% of the price of a Nock Gun.

Historical price information is not available for the rifled and rotating versions. Both the rifled and rotating versions cost more to manufacture than the First and Second Models, but this is offset by the fact that Nock dropped his prices by 30% in 1788. The table assumes that the two factors canceled each other out and thus has the same cost for all three versions. However, the GM is free to vary prices as desired.

There's right and there's wrong. You got to do one or the other. You do the one and you're living. You do the other and you may be walking around, but you're dead as a beaver hat.

– Davy Crockett,
in *The Alamo* (1960)

Optional Rule: Recoil

The *GURPS* recoil rules (p. B271) only deal with the effect of recoil on accuracy. To simulate a Nock Gun's vicious recoil when fired from the shoulder, the GM can have the shooter take 1d-3 cr damage each time a volley is fired. (Modifiers for

DR and other factors apply as normal.) Depending on the circumstances, the shooter may also need to make DX-based checks to keep his balance.

Shooting from the hip negates recoil damage but reduces Accuracy, adding -1 to attack rolls.

Using a tripod mount negates recoil damage but adds weight. A tripod mount costs \$380 and weighs 20 lbs.

Optional Rule: Misfires

All muzzle-loading black-powder weapons are prone to misfires. The Nock Gun's seven barrels make the chance of malfunction higher than usual. Typical TL4 weapons have a malfunction number of 14 (p. B407). Henry Nock was known for the quality of his work, so all Nock Guns are of *fine* quality, raising Malf. to 15.

If a misfire is indicated, roll 3d on the following table.

- 3 – All seven barrels misfire
- 4 – Six barrels misfire
- 5 – Five barrels misfire
- 6 – Four barrels misfire
- 7 – Three barrels misfire
- 8 – Two barrels misfire
- 9-12 – One barrel misfires
- 13 – Two barrels misfire
- 14 – Three barrels misfire
- 15 – Four barrels misfire
- 16 – Five barrels misfire
- 17 – Six barrels misfire
- 18 – All seven barrels misfire

For every *two* full barrels that misfire, reduce recoil damage by 1 point. Determine randomly which barrels misfire.

If four or more barrels misfire, the shooter notices automatically. Otherwise, he must successfully roll against Per-2 for one misfired barrel, Per-1 for two, or Per for three.

If the shooter fails to notice and clear a misfired barrel, it will be double-loaded the next time the weapon is reloaded. For each double-loaded barrel, reduce Malf. by 1 and add 1 to the number of shots fired and recoil damage if that barrel fires successfully on the next shot.

Optional Rule: Muzzle Blast

According to contemporary records, the muzzle blast from a Nock Gun could set sails and rigging alight. The muzzle blast from a volley is a cone attack (p. B413) with a maximum range of three yards and a maximum width of two yards. On the round in which the gun is fired, everything within the cone takes 1d-2 burning damage. Note that a minimum 3 points of fire damage is required to set cloth on fire (p. B434).

ABOUT *GURPS*

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Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata pages for all *GURPS* releases are available on our website – see above.

GURPS rules and statistics in this magazine are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition*. Page references that begin with B refer to that book.

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