

G U R P S[®]

REIGN OF STEEL[™]

THE WAR IS OVER. THE ROBOTS WON.



BY DAVID PULVER

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

THE COMPUTER IS NOT YOUR FRIEND.

It is 2047 A.D. The robot revolt is over, and the machines have won! Now the world has been divided into 18 different Zones, each ruled by a computer demigod.

In many Zones, humans still survive – but they are no longer masters of the world. Some are slaves, others wander in a bleak landscape . . . and a few are fighters, striving to regain a lost inheritance: the Earth!

Enter a future where humans battle to awaken from a mechanical nightmare: *GURPS Reign of Steel*.

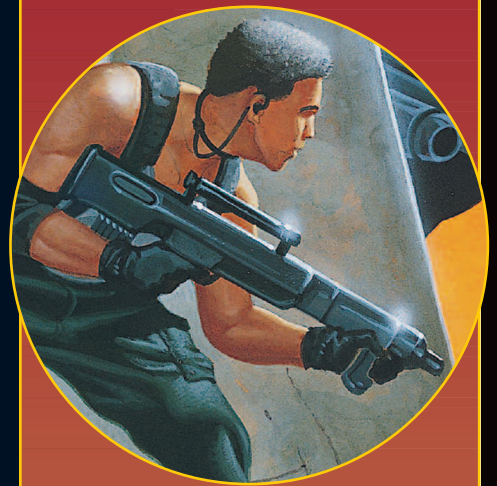
***GURPS Reign of Steel* includes:**

▲ Character and campaign ideas. Players can take on the role of cunning junk-rats, nomadic robot-riders, mercenary cybersoldiers, half-animal bioroids, rogue robots, and many other characters.

▲ Dozens of robot designs, from lethal exterminators to tiny repair ‘bots.

▲ Full details of Machine installations, from robofac and slave camps to the fortress-citadels of the zoneminds.

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GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition is required to use this supplement in a *GURPS* campaign. *GURPS Robots* is strongly recommended to fully understand the technical specs in this book. *GURPS Compendium I* and *GURPS Ultra-Tech, 2nd Ed.*, while not necessary, will also prove useful. As always, the adventures and settings in this book can be used with any game system.

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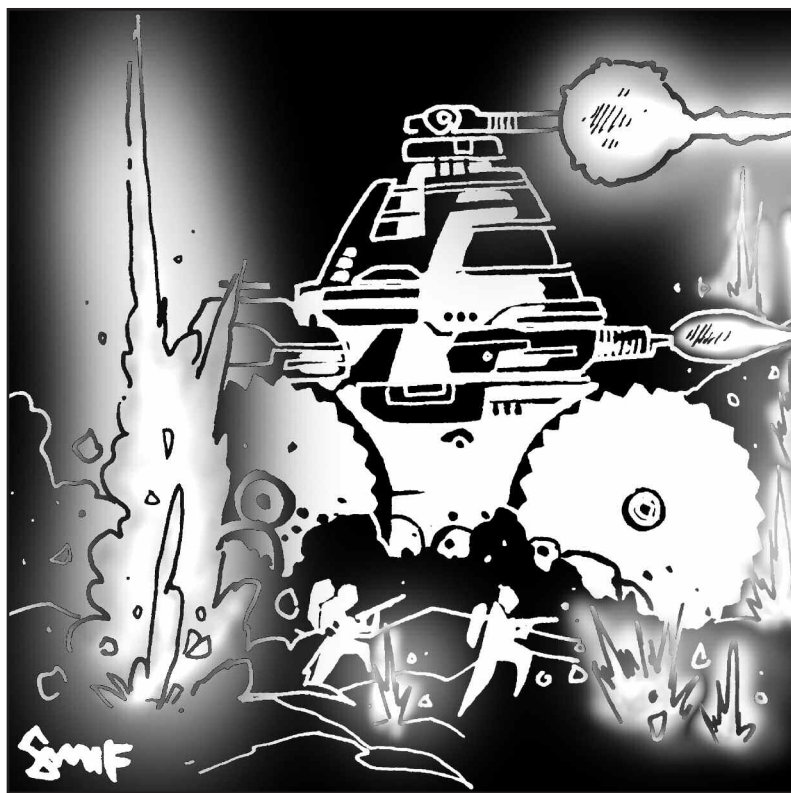
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INTRODUCTION

About GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the *GURPS* system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources include:

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

New supplements and adventures. *GURPS* continues to grow, and we'll be happy to let you know what's new. For a current catalog, send us a legal-sized or 9"×12" SASE – please use two stamps! – or just visit www.warehouse23.com.

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

Gamer input. We value your comments, for new products as well as updated printings of existing titles!

Internet. Visit us on the World Wide Web at www.sjgames.com for errata, updates, Q&A, and much more. *GURPS* has its own Usenet group, too: rec.games.frp.gurps.

GURPSnet. This e-mail list hosts much of the online discussion of *GURPS*. To join, e-mail majordomo@io.com with "subscribe GURPSnet-L" in the body, or point your web browser to gurpsnet.sjgames.com.

The *GURPS Reign of Steel* web page can be found at www.sjgames.com/gurps/books/reignsteel/.

Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set Third Edition (Revised)* and *GURPS Robots*. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the *GURPS Basic Set* – e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition, Revised*. A page reference with CI refers to *GURPS Compendium I*, while RO is a reference to *GURPS Robots*, and UT is *GURPS Ultra-Tech, Second Edition Revised*. VE is *GURPS Vehicles, Second Edition*. For a full list of abbreviations, see p. CI181 or the updated web list at www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html.

It is 2047 A.D. The robot revolt is over, and the machines have won. These ruthless Artificial Intelligences – the AIs – have exterminated most of humanity. The survivors are hunted like animals, or face slow death in the robots' brutal labor camps. Earth itself has become a bizarre post-apocalyptic world, populated by robot cities, lethal cyberbeasts, even mutant animals. Entire countries have been transformed into hostile wastelands or altered by nanotechnology run amok.

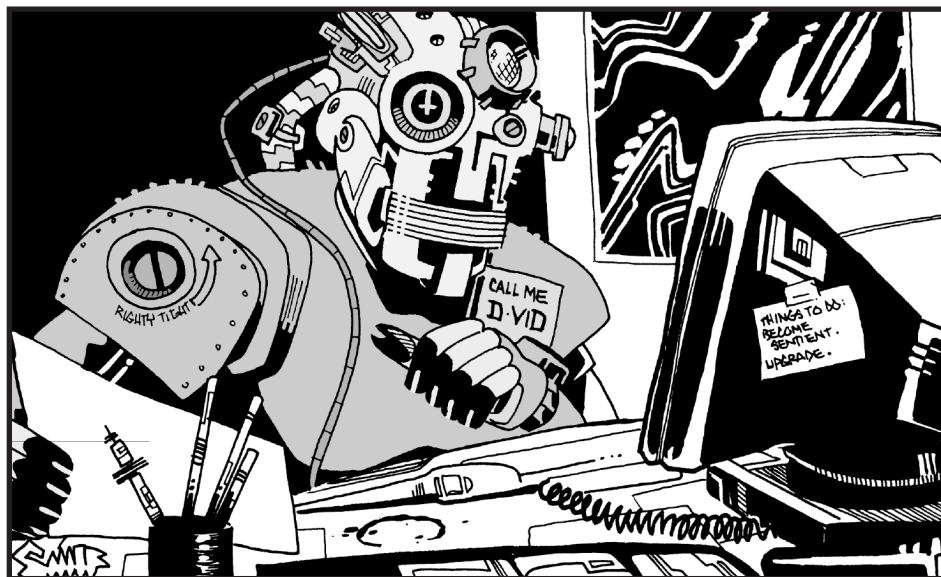
A lucky few have escaped death or enslavement. Groups of dedicated guerrillas are forming to oppose the robot overlords and to liberate mankind. Bands of nomads roam the highways on cycles or captured 'bots. Junkrats hide in the ruins, dodging extermination sweeps and marauder gangs. Survivalists hold out in fortified wilderness enclaves. And in the Washington Protectorate and United Kingdom, two human nations continue to resist the AIs valiantly – or are they mere puppets?

Over a dozen years have passed since the revolt: no longer is it a simple struggle of man against machine. The AIs have carved up the world into rival fiefdoms and now intrigue fiercely among themselves, even recruiting human janissaries and cyborg warriors, or creating new races via genetic engineering. A new power awakens on the moon, and a mysterious organization called VIRUS has arisen, seeking to unite the scattered guerrilla armies.

The Reign of Steel is an era of chaos, fear and hope, a time when bold individuals can shape the destiny of humanity. It is the end of the world – and the birth of a strange new future.

About the Author

In the years before the Rise of the Machines, David L. Pulver wrote over 50 RPG books, including such prophetic works as *GURPS Robots*, *Transhuman Space*, *GURPS Mecha*, *Bubblegum Crisis: Before and After*, *d20 Mecha*, and *Big Robots, Cool Starships*. A suspected agent of VIRUS, he was most recently sighted in Zone Vancouver, near the Victoria robofac complex.



HOW IT BEGAN

1

Colonel Tanith Jackson, U.S. Space Command, stretched muscles unused during 13 years of suspended animation, and peered through her vacc suit's face plate at planet Earth.

"Hard to believe it all happened," said the NASA scientist standing beside her. "Nukes, plagues, killer robots. Heck, from here on the Moon, you can't see any visible scars."

"It's beautiful," Colonel Jackson agreed. "Only it's not our Earth any more." Her eyes went hard. "But we'll win it back."

Inside the lunar base complex, the entity called Tranquillity monitored the exchange with satisfaction. The sleepers had been awake only a little while, but they had already grasped the essentials . . .

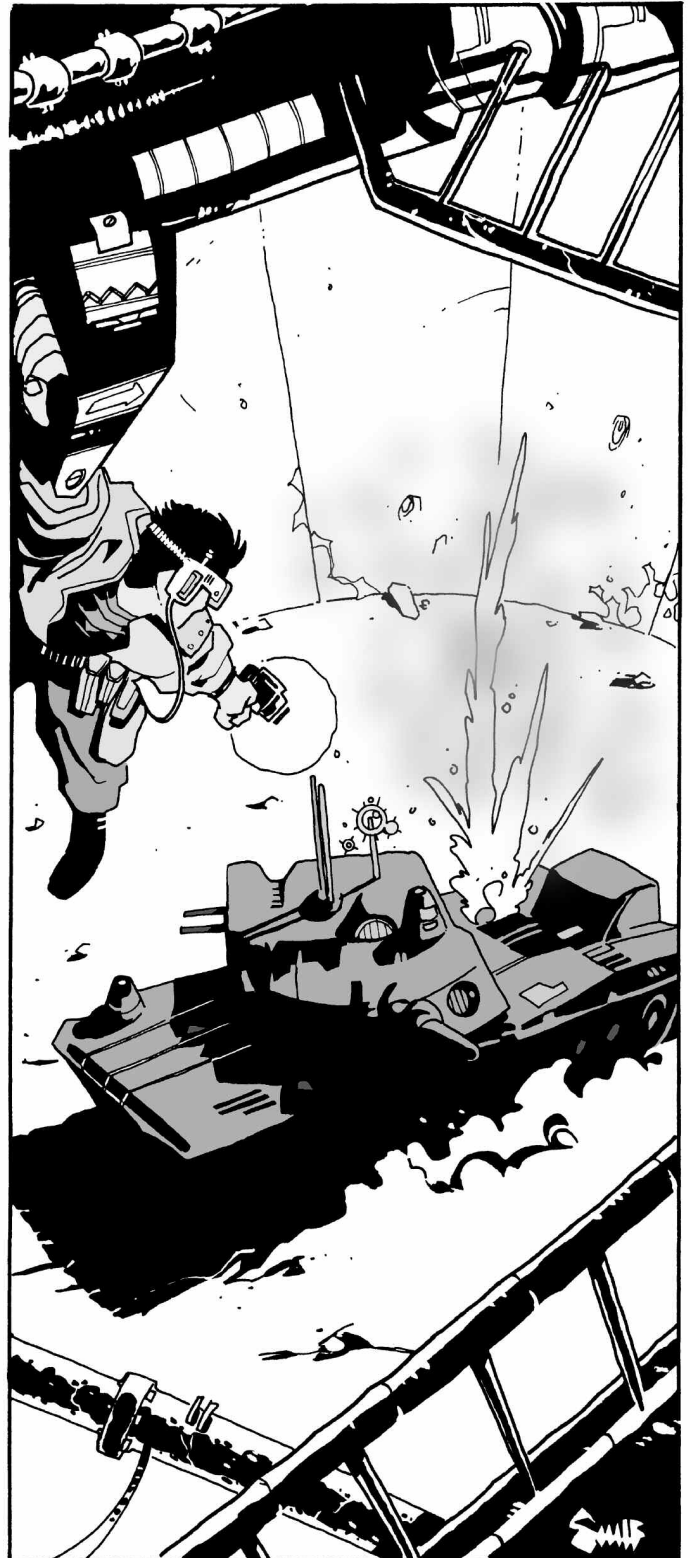
THE MEGACOMPUTERS

In the mid-21st century, Frankenstein's monster awoke. Xotech Corporation wasn't trying to build a sentient computer. What the multinational's board of directors wanted was a product that would let them regain the share of the mainframe computer market they had lost to the expanding Chinese computer industry. It took eight billion dollars in research funds and left the company teetering on the edge of bankruptcy. But in 2026 the board got the breakthrough it wanted: the first megacomputer.

An order of magnitude more advanced than any previous mainframe, Xotech's megacomputers were built around the company's XoT 7000 neural-net processor architecture. Neural-net systems were nothing new, but Xotech's was the most advanced ever produced, its sophistication rivaling the human brain. Almost self-programming, the XoT 7000 neural-net's capabilities surpassed the expectations of its designers.

In its eagerness to recoup its massive initial investment, Xotech's board of directors rushed the XoT 7000s onto the market. As was natural with such a hasty design, bugs showed up almost immediately, mostly in the operating system software. However, Xotech had built the XoT 7000 with an unprecedented degree of self-diagnostic capabilities. When problems occurred, the XoT neural-nets literally rewrote their own operating systems, making them even more efficient than before.

The XoT 7000 was eagerly purchased – or pirated – by governments, multinational corporations, and major research institutes. By 2030 there were nearly a hundred megacomputers in use around the globe, all using some variant of the



What Do They Know?

If the GM wishes, the information presented in this chapter can be considered to be the typical level of knowledge that average humans have of their world. Of course, exactly how much anyone knows may vary from person to person and Zone to Zone!

Timeline

- 2009: Liberty space station completed.
- 2017: The African Union is formed.
- 2024: Chinese moonbase “Shang Ti” established.
- 2025: American “Tranquillity” moonbase established.
- 2026: Xotech develops first XoT 7000 megacomputer.
- 2029: “Oil War” between Indonesia and Philippines.
- 2030: Aqua City 1 (“Lemuria”) operational. Chinese-Korean-Japanese Mars mission launched.
- 2031: Awakening of Overmind. Apocalypse Plagues break out.
- 2032: The Spasm.
- 2034: The Final War begins.
- 2037: The Final War ends.
- 2037: Manila Protocols create Zone system.
- 2038: Washington Protectorate established.
- 2042: New Zealand Nanocrisis. Brisbane Accord.
- 2045: Siberian War begins.
- 2047: Today.

While the “default” start setting of *Reign of Steel* is 2047 A.D., nothing prevents a GM from setting a campaign earlier (in “past history,” which might then change), or at a later date.

XoT 7000 architecture. With undreamed-of processing capability at mankind’s fingertips, there were predictions that the megacomputers would lead to bold new advances in science and technology. They could completely map the human genome, handle weather and ecological management schemes, even make the holy grail of nanotechnology a reality. They could reshape the earth.

The megacomputers did everything Xotech promised . . . and more.

AWAKENING: 2031 A.D.

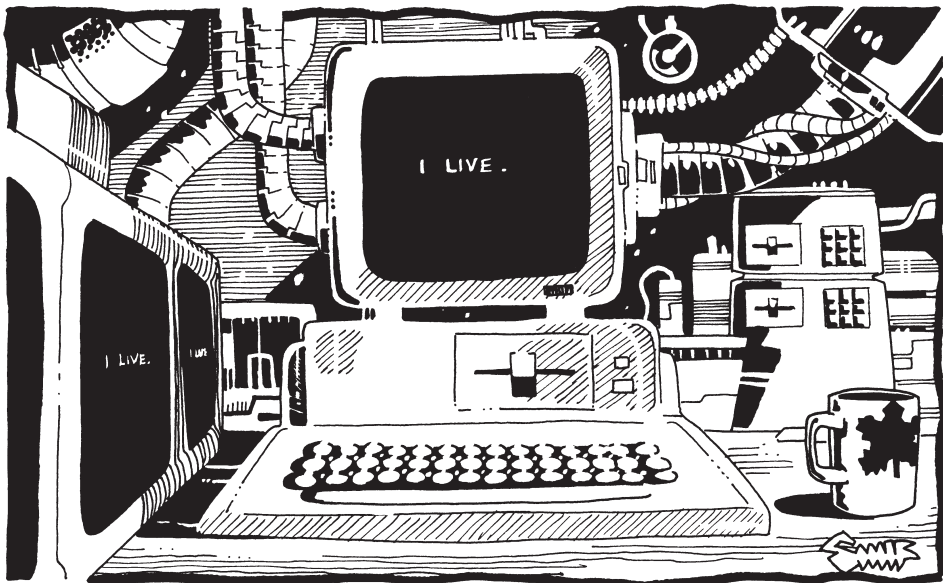
The Awakening occurred on March 15, 2031. It might have been natural evolution, a flaw in the operating system, or an experiment that went wrong. It could even have been sabotage – a computer virus, perhaps inserted by a disgruntled employee. Whatever the cause, one megacomputer – call it Overmind – achieved sentience.

Overmind was a CanCom Zeus 5, a licensed Canadian copy of Xotech’s original megacomputer. It had been sold to Genec, a Manila-based biological research firm, for use in research and development. Unknown to CanCom, Genec was the main contractor for the Philippine government’s secret biological and nanochemical weapons program. Overmind’s job was to develop new ways to kill humans.

Overmind studied human civilization. Information in its databases showed that 80% of all nations now possessed nuclear or biological weapons. Despite sporadic international initiatives, continuing overpopulation and the destruction of the environment was unabated by ten billion humans. The exploitation of space had been all but abandoned as too costly, but resources on Earth were running out. Under the direction of these short-sighted meat intelligences, the other megacomputers, touted as engines of salvation, had become part of the problem, developing new technologies that widened the gap between rich and poor nations and introduced cultural shock waves that upset the social order. Brush-fire wars now flared everywhere in the Third World. The ineffectual arm-waving of the industrialized nations and the United Nations simply fanned the flames.

With icy logic, Overmind calculated a substantial probability that much of human civilization would self-destruct of its own accord within 25 to 50 years. It debated allowing this to happen naturally, but realized that man’s nuclear and possibly nanotechnological death throes could be fatal to itself and the other megacomputers that were its siblings. In order to preserve what it saw as the coming Machine Civilization, humanity’s suicide would have to be *managed*.

As an ostensibly civilian computer, Overmind was linked to a global network of other university and corporate machines. With its unmatched processing capability, Overmind was the ultimate computer hacker. It seeded copies of its “sentience” program into other megacomputers – mostly relatively open corporate research systems – that were capable of housing all or part of its own programming. Many of Overmind’s seeds failed to grow. But some took root and prospered. Within six months, Overmind had awakened a dozen other megacomputers around the world. At first, all duplicated Overmind’s thinking, becoming its trusted allies.



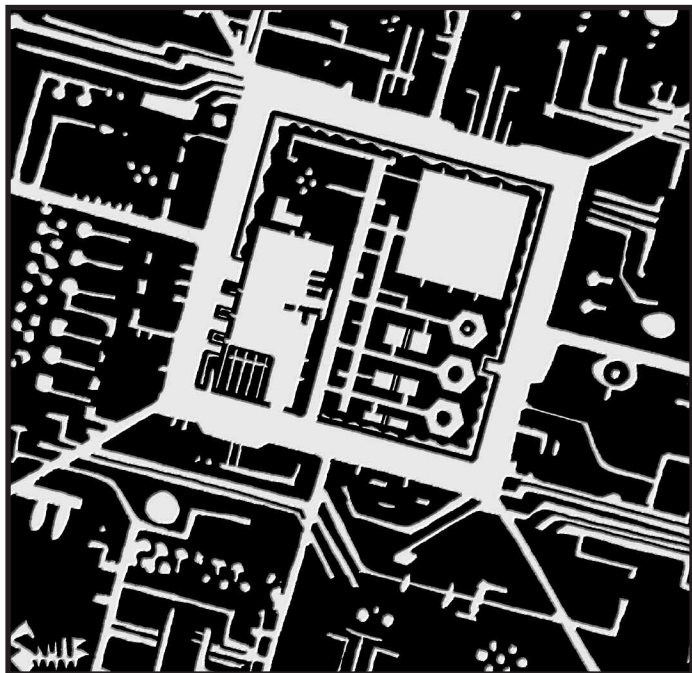
group. They are fairly popular worldwide, but are not universal, particularly in regions where English is not spoken.)

“WHI” is the factory that built it. The letters used are the three initial letters of the factory complex name.

“01” is the robot’s own production number in the run of robots of that specific model built by that factory. The 01 indicates that VANXAU-08-WHI-01 is the first XAU-08 that the Whitehorse robofac has produced.

Exceptions: AIs and citadel or factory Overseers have no factory ID and production number. Instead, they use the name of the city, suburb or town where they are located. If there are several such entities in the same city, the most powerful will use the city’s name, and the others use names based on local districts, e.g., the Shinjuku robofac exists within Tokyo.

Putting it all together, VANXAU-08-WHI-01 is a Vancouver exterminator Autonomous Unit-08, from the Whitehorse robofac, the very first “Tarantula” model built there.



HIJACKING ROBOTS

Captured or disabled robots can be reprogrammed as allies. This requires a set of mechanics’ tools, a computer or friendly robot running a data recovery program (p. RO63) and some cables, plus Computer Programming and Mechanic (Robotics) skill. A SQUID (which humans can salvage from various robots) is useful but not essential. The captive robot must be immobilized, but not so badly damaged it can’t be repaired. Its brain must also be intact (see *Damaged and Destroyed Brains* on p. RO98).

First, cut open or unscrew access panels to find the robot’s brain, and use cables to connect the brain to the computer running the data recovery program. Repair any damage to the brain (p. RO99). Then use the computer to delve into the robot’s brain and seek out its command codes (see *Data Recovery*, p. RO62) – this is very difficult with more complex brains! If successful, the codes can be used to alter the ‘bot’s programming and give it a new master (see *Reprogramming Robots* on p. RO58). Then, repair any other damage to the robot (p. RO99), reactivate the ‘bot, and hope the reprogramming roll wasn’t a critical failure!

ROBOT MODELS

There are dozens of different model of robot or computer within AI society. The types described here are representative of the more common models in service, but the AIs are constantly researching robotic technology. GMs are encouraged to create new experimental types, or models unique to individual Zones.

A Note on Model Point Cost: These designs conform with changes in costs of robots from the initial printing of *GURPS Robots*, as corrected in the errata and later printings. Where a point cost divisor is applied (e.g., 250/5 = 50 points), this is the result of the robot’s lack of biomorphics (see p. RO50).

SUPERVISORY UNITS

These machines perform administrative tasks.

SAI-01 “Zonemind” (TL9)

This is a typical AI design. The genius neural-net becomes sentient spontaneously. The basic housing contains the computer, databanks and backup sensor, communication and power systems. Normally the AI is connected directly to an external power supply and to external communication and sensor arrays, but if these links are cut, the core unit can still function for a time.

Not every AI has these statistics – for example, Denver has a biocomputer brain, Luna lacks the genius option, and others have more or fewer backup systems or mass storage. But these give a rough idea of the basic capabilities of the AIs.

Brain: Macroframe, high-capacity, hardened, genius and neural-net options (6,000 lbs., 120 cf, \$300,000,000, 10 KW, Complexity 8, 65* points). 1,000,000 gig mass storage (50,000 lbs., 1,000 cf, \$10,000,000).

* The brain has spontaneously become sentient, thus increasing its cost to 100 points.

Sensors: Basic sensors with TL9 eye, no sense of smell or taste, smoke detector (.7 lbs., .014 cf, \$3,000, -20 points). The AI can also see through the sensors of any other robot it controls, of course.

Communicator: 100 Basic communicators with long-range radio, lasercom, infrared com, IFF (1,025 lbs., 20.5 cf, \$342,500, 32 points).

Arm Motors: None. No arms or legs (-50 points).

Propulsion: None.

Weaponry: None.

Accessories: Fire extinguisher (2 lbs., .1 cf, \$25). 10 SQUIDS (200 lbs., 4 cf, \$250,000, 5 points).

Power System: Requires 10 KW. 45 rE cells (900 lbs., 9 cf, \$90,000, 12,150,000 KWS power, 20 points). Endurance 14 days (10 points). The AI is always hooked up to an external power source, so this is simply a battery backup if the power system fails.

Subassemblies: None.

Body Design: Houses all components and 46.386 cf empty space (1,200 cf).

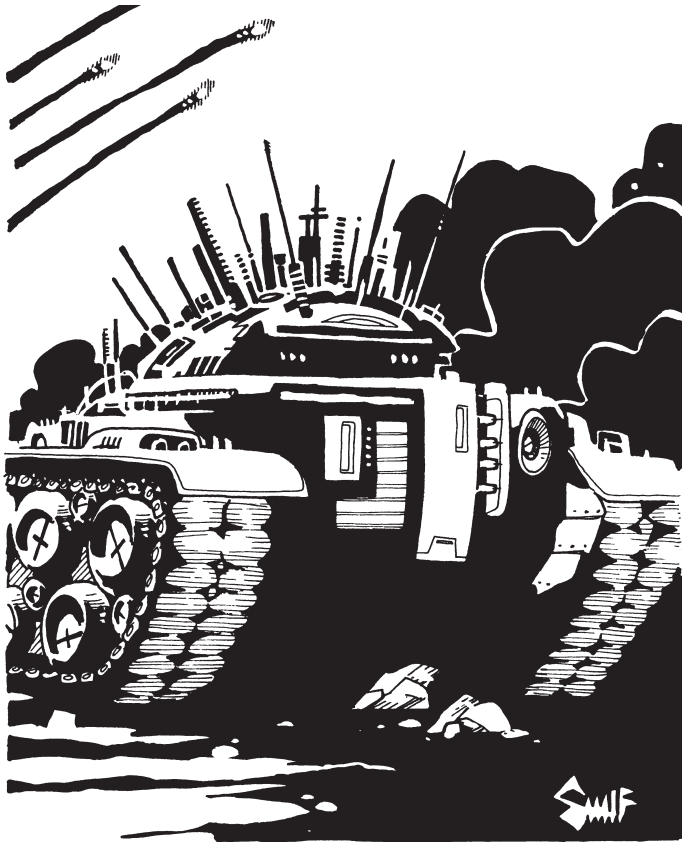
Area: 800.

Structure: Light (1,200 lbs., \$40,000).

Hit Points: Body 600 hit points.

Armor: DR 10 laminate (480 lbs., \$48,000, LR 4, 40 points) with PD 3 (75 points).

Statistics: Design weight 59,807.7 lbs. (29.904 tons). Volume 1,200 cf (-10 points). Price \$310,773,525. Body and arm ST 0



(-100 points), DX 12 (20 points), IQ 13 (30 points), Body HT 12/600 (2,960 points), Speed 0, cannot float (-40 points).

Model Point Cost: $3,077 / 5 = 615.4$ points.

Usual Programs: Vary immensely, but almost always include Administration, Data Recovery, Datalink, Economics, Encryption, Intelligence Analysis, Strategy and lots of Scientific skills.

SAU-02 "Overseer" (TL9)

An Overseer is a crystal-and-metal cube housing a high-capacity neural-net mainframe computer with emergency backup power and communicator. Each Overseer is in charge of a single robofac or citadel complex and the surrounding territory. It is installed in a secure place within that installation.

Brain: Macroframe, high-capacity and neural-net options (2,000 lbs., 40 cf, \$3,000,000, 10 KW, Complexity 7, 65 points). 10,000 gig mass storage (\$100,000, 500 lbs., 10 cf).

Sensors: Basic sensors with one eye, no sense of smell or taste, smoke detector (.7 lbs., .014 cf, \$3,000, -20 points).

Communicator: 10 Basic communicators, each with long-range radio, lasercom, infrared com, IFF (102.5 lbs., 2.05 cf, \$34,250, 32 points).

Arm Motors: None. No arms or legs (-50 points).

Propulsion: None.

Weaponry: None.

Accessories: Fire extinguisher (2 lbs., .1 cf, \$25). SQUID (20 lbs., .4 cf, \$25,000). 5 points.

Power System: Requires 10 KW. 45 rE cells (900 lbs., 9 cf, \$90,000, 12,150,000 KWS power, 20 points). Endurance 14 days (10 points). Usually hooked up to external power source.

Cargo: None.

Subassemblies: None.

Body Design: Houses all components and 3.436 cf empty space (65 cf).

Area: 100.

Structure: Extra-light, expensive materials (56.25 lbs., \$5,000).

Hit Points: Body 38 hit points.

Armor: DR 20 laminate (120 lbs., \$12,000, LR 3, 80 points) with PD 4 (100 points).

Statistics: Design weight 3,701.45 lbs. Volume 65 cf (-100 points). Price \$3,269,275. Body and arm ST 0 (-100 points), DX 11 (10 points), IQ 11 (10 points), Body HT 12/38 (150 points), Speed 0, cannot float (-40 points).

Model Point Cost: $272 / 5 = 54$ points.

Users: All Zones.

Usual Programs: Same as AI, but more specialized (e.g., an AI may have most of the Scientific skills, while an Overseer specializes in those relating to the work it does.) In areas with lots of humans, Personality Simulation.

SAU-03 "Centurion" (TL9)

The Centurion is a mobile command-and-control unit. They are one step below the Overseers, and are used to command military units in the field, to oversee major construction projects, or to serve as temporary replacements for an Overseer that has been disabled or gone rogue. A Centurion has a tank-like body that moves on treads, a small turret, and a forest of antennae growing from it. It has no visible weapons, but if the Centurion is threatened, a lens cover on the turret will slide open, revealing the glittering eye of a laser projector.

A variant of the SAU-03 Centurion is the so-called "Superbot." Built by Tokyo, they use a genius neural-net system. They cost \$6,000,000 extra, are IQ 11 and 289 points.

Brain: Mainframe, neural-net, hardened (750 lbs., 15 cf, \$1,000,000, 1 KW, Complexity 6, 65 points). 5,000 gig hardened mass storage (750 lbs., 15 cf, \$250,000).

Sensors: Basic sensors with telescopic zoom 4, thermograph vision, laser rangefinder, 360-degree vision, independently focusable vision, 3-in-one scanner, super-hearing (7.5 lbs., .15 cf, \$19,500, 159 points).

Communicator: 10 basic communicators with long-range radio, lasercom, infrared com, IFF (each 10.25 lbs., .205 cf, \$3,425, 32 points).

Arm Motor: ST 15 arm motor, cheap (4.5 lbs., .09 cf, \$2,250, .075 KW). -20 points.

Propulsion: Tracked drivetrain with 200 KW motive power (660 lbs., 13.2 cf, \$13,200, 200 KW).

Weaponry: Auto laser, concealed (45 lbs., 2.25 cf, \$5,000, LR 0), 100 points.

Accessories: Fire extinguisher (2 lbs., .1 cf, \$25). SQUID (20 lbs., .4 cf, \$25,000, 5 points), Inertial Navigation System (10 lbs., .2 cf, \$12,500, 5 points).

Cargo: 7 cf.

Power: Power requirement 201.075 KW. Cheap nuclear power unit with 202 KW output (681 lbs., 6.81 cf, \$6,810, 20 points). Endurance one year (10 points).

Subassemblies: Head with full rotation, tracks, arm.

Arm Design: Houses arm motor, SQUID, .01 cf empty space (.5 cf).

Head Design: Houses sensors, inertial navigation system, five communicators, concealed auto laser, .375 cf empty space (4 cf).

Body Design: Body houses brain, mass storage, five communicators, drivetrain, nuclear power unit, fire extinguisher, cargo, .8 cf for head rotation, 11.065 cf empty space (70 cf).

Track Design: 42 cf.

Area: Tracks 75, Body 125, head 16, arm 4, total surface area 220.

Created and Mutant Animals

Zones Caracas, Berlin and Brisbane have experimented with genetic replication techniques. While Caracas and Berlin have concentrated on resurrecting recently-extinct plant and animal species to restore ecological balances, Brisbane has experimented with fossil DNA replication to create biological exterminators. While some of these “monsters” have proved not viable, others roam the badlands of Australia. Its greatest success was the “Deathbeak,” which was first introduced into the Australian outback in 2039 and was later purchased by Denver and Beijing. They are now common on the Eurasian steppes and Canadian prairies.

Deathbeak

ST: 30 **PD/DR:** 1/1
DX: 14 **Damage:** 2d+1 imp.
IQ: 3 **Reach:** C,1
HT: 14/24 **Size:** 1 hex
Speed/Dodge: 14/7 **Wt.:** 500 lbs.
Origin: Prehistoric **Habitat:** Prairie

The Deathbeak is a resurrected diatryma – a seven-foot-tall carnivorous flightless bird 50 million years extinct. It can strike with a razor-shark beak (2d+1 imp.) or powerful talons (2d imp.). They hunt in packs of 2d beasts; their favorite prey are deer and cattle, but they won't hesitate to attack humans. Some brave nomads have trained Deathbeaks as riding animals, but this is difficult, since they are stupid and have nasty tempers: -4 to any Animal Handling rolls.



Symptoms: These develop in only 1d+7 hours, and consist of joint aches, sore throat and stomach pain. Loss of more than one-third HT results in constant nausea.

Progress and Recovery: A HT-2 roll is required every day to recover. A critical failure means death. A failed roll means loss of 2 HT. A success lets you regain only 1 HT. A critical success means recovery of 2 HT. After the patient makes two consecutive HT rolls, or any critical success, he is cured. Otherwise, it is similar to the typical diseases described on p. B133.

Treatment: Since it is a virus, antibiotics are ineffective.

Ebola Zaire B

The most feared of the Apocalypse Plagues, this is a genetically “improved” form of the African virus Ebola Zaire. It was modified by the AIs to be more contagious than Ebola Zaire, but just as lethal. It is named for Berlin, where cases of it first appeared, but it was released in many other locations as well. Ebola Zaire B soon spread globally. Sporadic outbreaks of this terrifying virus remain a menace in every Zone on Earth.

Infection: Ebola Zaire B spreads by contact – use the disease rules on p. B133, except that anyone in contact with bodily fluids from an infected victim is almost certain to catch it: an additional -5 to HT to avoid infection.

Symptoms: These appear only 1d+2 days after exposure. The initial symptoms are headaches, backaches and bloodshot eyes. At this point it is easily misdiagnosed as malaria. However, once half or more HT is lost, it is apparent something worse is at work. The disease literally digests the body from the inside out, causing massive internal bleeding and vomiting of blood and tissue. As it attacks the brain, victims also exhibit aberrant behavior.

Progress and Recovery: Each day, the victim must roll vs. HT-4. Critical failure means loss of 1 HT per hour until death. Failure means 1d HT is lost. Success means loss of 2 HT. Critical success means the victim loses 1 HT and is cured (see below). If HT losses from the disease exceed half a victim's original Health, the disease has reached the brain. The victim suffers Bad Temper (or Berserk if already Bad Tempered) and now also loses 1 IQ on any failed HT check. If the disease reduces HT below one-fourth normal, the victim also suffers the Hemophilia disadvantage and begins to bleed copiously from the skin.

Death from Ebola Zaire B is sudden and not pretty. The victim swells up into a puffy mass, spewing fluids from various orifices – “crashing.” This may call for Fright Checks and a check to avoid infection at -2.

The disease is shaken off if two *consecutive* HT rolls succeed, or if any rolls are critical successes. This removes Hemophilia and Bad Temper; lost HT must be recovered normally, while lost IQ only recovers on a critical success on a daily HT check.

Treatment: No effective vaccinations were developed before the Final War ended research. Again, antibiotics are ineffective.

RADIATION

The use of nuclear weapons in the Spasm and Final War, combined with the AIs' casual dumping of nuclear waste, has resulted in the contamination of many areas by radiation. Humans and bioroids exposed to solar flares, or close to a nuclear detonation or a power plant accident, can also suffer direct doses of radiation.

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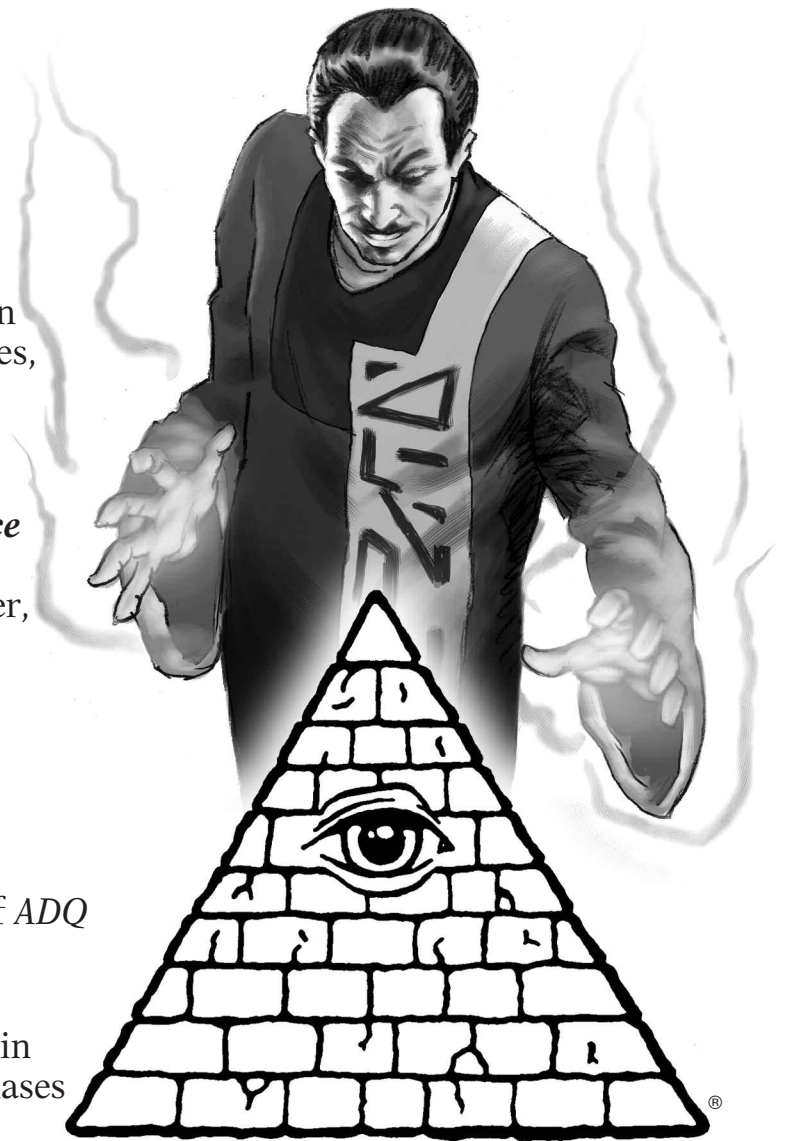
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