

PYRAMID[®]

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ALTERNATE GURPS[®]

ALTERNATE SPACESHIPS

by David L. Pulver

A NEW TAKE ON GRAPPLING

by Ken Clary

EXTREME DAMAGE

by David L. Pulver

**TEN TWEAKS TO
CUSTOMIZE COMBAT**

by T Bone

**WHEN WE WERE
VERY SMALL**

by Mark Gellis

ARMOR REVISITED

by Douglas H. Cole

A DECK OF DICE

by Steven Marsh

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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Never interrupt someone doing what
you said couldn't be done.

– Amelia Earhart

IN THIS ISSUE

Watch out: The cutting edge of **GURPS** is *sharp*! This month is dedicated to novel notions and major manipulations for the greatest generic universal roleplaying system of all time!

Docking first is *Alternate Spaceships*, a look at significant modifications to the **GURPS Spaceships** system – written by that series' mastermind, David L. Pulver. Harness the power of core tweaks, new systems, variant design features, and more.

A New Take on Grappling offers a radical revision that seeks to unify and expand the grappling system from the **Basic Set** and **GURPS Martial Arts**. For those times when only hands-on heroics will suffice, give these rules a try!

Watch your step! *When We Were Very Small* provides a little tweak to the core rules that permit better gradation and variation on the smaller side of the **GURPS** scale. It includes advice for playing animals and others of undersized stature, plus size and strength guidelines for over 100 tiny troublemakers.

Who can forget David Pulver's monthly *Eidetic Memory* offering? Not us! This month he looks at *Extreme Damage*, an examination of the higher end of the scale. If you wanted to see how one of the principle architects of the **GURPS Fourth Edition** can shake up fundamental assumptions of size, HP, explosions, and more, look no further!

Longtime **GURPS** tinkerer T Bone offers *Ten Tweaks to Customize Combat*, a bunch of bite-sized mods that can bring a new spark to combat.

Who needs six-siders? *A Deck of Dice* offers a radical revision of a beloved basic concept – and what possibilities it opens. Deal with it!

For those who are looking for more variability and options on the defensive side, *Armor Revisited* describes a number of new possibilities. Stay safe!

Pyramid Editor Steven Marsh uses this month's *Random Thought Table* to suggest methods for introducing new rules and tweaks without wrecking the world, while *Odds and Ends* features the usual goodies we couldn't fit elsewhere – including a groovy **GURPS** installment of *Murphy's Rules*.

Don't settle for great. With this month's **GURPS**, you'll unleash new ideas and possibilities to take your game further!

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.)

Dark Blue: **GURPS** Features

Purple: Systemless Features

Green: Distinguished Columnists

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FROM THE EDITOR

THAT WAS THE TWEAK THAT WAS

Not too long ago, there was a meme floating around that informed the world, “You’re playing *Monopoly* wrong!” (The premise was that many – perhaps most – people fail to auction properties when they aren’t purchased by someone landing on them. I was pleased to note that I *had* been playing correctly, on those rare occasions when I played *Monopoly*.)

The undercurrent of the anecdote was that, by not playing with all the rules, you’re not playing the game right. For a game like *Monopoly*, that makes sense.

However, that’s *impossible* with a game like *GURPS*. To me, the beauty of *GURPS* has always been in its modular nature. Many of those pieces are inherently contradictory; using a batch of rules to make combat more *and* less deadly at the same time would be . . . odd. However, this makes it conceivable to tailor *GURPS* to be exactly the kind of game you want: a cinematic romp, a realistic simulation, a quick-play

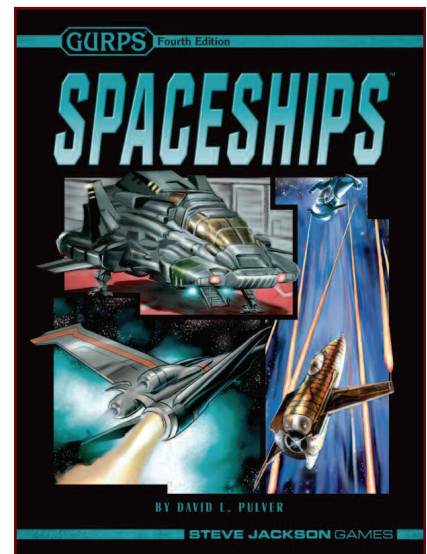
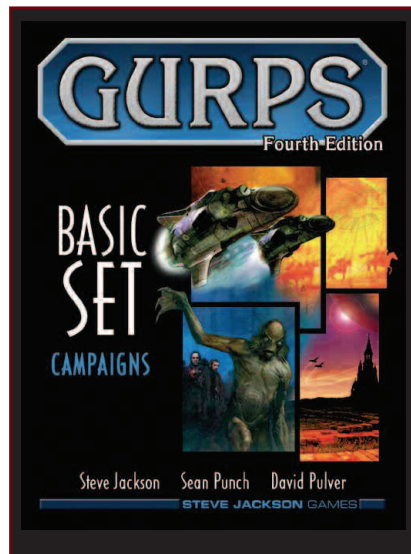
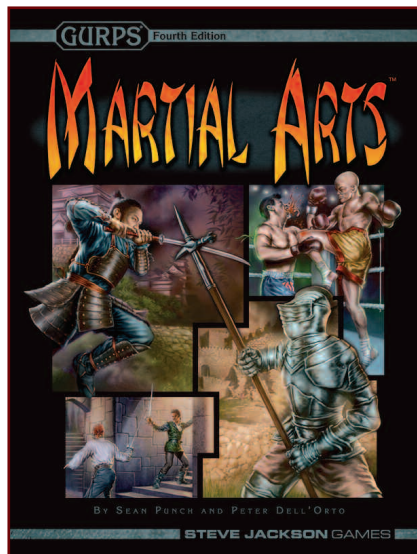
system, etc. The fact that *Tactical Shooting* exists in the same ecosphere as *Ultra-Lite* makes me giggle.

This issue, then, is dedicated to the inveterate tinkerers. We look at some of the core assumptions of the game (and some subsystems), and we see how we can shake them up. Some of the tweaks are minor (some trivially so), while others are complete overhauls.

Even if you use none of these ideas as-is, hopefully they inspire you to pop the hood, roll up your sleeves, get your hands dirty, and see how you can make *GURPS* what you want it to be. That’s what it’s for!

WRITE HERE, WRITE NOW

Speaking of getting your hands dirty, why not dip the quill in the virtual ink and send us a note? We’re open for public discussion online at forums.sjgames.com, and the tippy-top secret ultra-private mailbox to reach us virtually is at pyramid@sjgames.com. We love to hear from you!



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Basement: A vertical design building may optionally have an extensive underground level. Designate one or more of the lower story systems as basements. Basement systems cost an extra \$1,000 per ton of building mass to cover excavation costs over and above their normal system costs, but are hidden from view and cannot be targeted directly. However, they're automatically buried if the rest of the building is disabled, and destroyed if the rest of the building is destroyed.

Armor: A building requires a minimum of one Armor system per section, representing its structural composition.

Control Room: A control room is not required, but if installed, it can represent a computer room or command center. Since the building does not need as sophisticated controls and can omit gyros or attitude thrusters, *halve* the Control Room cost. Each control station removed saves only \$25K.

Engine Room, Workspaces: In a building, these are often referred to as a maintenance rooms or spaces.

Engines, Etc: A building shouldn't have any system or feature related to mobility or propulsion. It has HP but no ST, and lacks Hnd, SR, or Move statistics.

Enhanced, Multipurpose, and Tactical Comm/Sensor Arrays: Sensor and directional comm ranges will be limited by the horizon. In a vertical-design (p. 9) building, these arrays (and Control Rooms) should be placed on the upper section to ensure a long line of sight.

Weapons: In a vertical design, fixed mounts must be given a facing. This may be either right, left, back, front; upper level mounts may also face top, aiming upward. They can only hit targets within a 60° arc from that facing. Turrets installed in lower or middle sections must be assigned one of these facings (excluding top), but may swivel to hit targets within a 120° arc. Turrets in an upper section are assumed to be roof-mounted and have a 360° arc of fire. Missiles in spinal batteries or in fixed mounts in upper stories may be noted as facing upward (allowing vertical launch). Weapons can't go in basement systems unless either the entire building is underground (in which case top-facing fixed mount or any turret weapons can be installed in upper level section of the basement), or unless they're a third of a spinal battery or a ghost particle beam.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David L. Pulver is a freelance writer and game designer based in Victoria, British Columbia. He is the co-author of the *GURPS Basic Set Fourth Edition*, and author of *Transhuman Space*, *GURPS Mass Combat*, *GURPS Spaceships*, and numerous other gaming products. For additional details about the author, see his *Eidetic Memory* column (pp. 24-25).

Medusa-Class Guided Missile Cruiser (TL8)

This is an example of how to use the *Spaceships* system with these options to build watercraft. The *Medusa* class is a wet-navy, guided-missile cruiser, equipped with a phased-array radar, guns, and multiple vertical-launch missile and torpedo tubes. The hangar is designed to carry a pair of helicopters and their weaponry.

Front Hull System

- [1] Steel Armor (total dDR 7).
- [2] Major Battery (turret with 12cm rapid fire gun).*
- [3] Secondary Battery (six fixed 32cm torpedo tube launchers; 200 tons cargo).*
- [4] Tertiary Battery (30 fixed 28cm launchers).*
- [5] Control Room (C5 computers, comm/sensor 7, 10 control stations).*
- [6] Fuel Tank (500 tons hydrocarbon fuel).

Central Hull System

- [1] Steel Armor (dDR 7).
- [2] Tactical Comm/Sensor Array (comm/sensor 9).*
- [3-4] Fuel Tanks (1,000 tons of hydrocarbon fuel).
- [5-6] Gas Turbine Engines (provides four Power Points).*

Central Hull System

- [core] Habitat (3 ops centers, 10 sickbay, 20 cabins, 24 bunkrooms, 18 tons cargo).*

Rear Hull System

- [1] Steel Armor (dDR 7).
- [2] Tertiary Battery (30 fixed 28cm launchers).*
- [3] Tertiary Battery (29 fixed 28cm launchers; one turret with very rapid fire 3.5cm gun).*
- [4] Hangar (300 tons capacity; helicopters and small boats).*
- [5-6!] Screw Propellers.*
- [core] Habitat (50 bunkrooms, 25 cabins, establishment, seven offices, 18 tons cargo).*

*10 workspaces per system.

It has the Lacks Automation†, Nautical hull†, and NBC Filters Only (p. 8) features. The vessel's typical complement consists of 10 bridge crew, 30 ops station crew and gunners, 150 technicians and service personnel, and a variable number of flight crew.

† See *GURPS Spaceships 7: Divergent and Paranormal Technology*.

TL	Name	dST/HP	Hnd/SR	HT	Move	LWt.	Load	SM	Occ	dDR	Cost
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SEAMANSHIP/TL8

8	Medusa-class	150	-2/5	13	2/21	10,000	574.6	+10	386AS	7	\$448M
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- Because anthropomorphic animals can usually speak normally, Cannot Speak [-15] disappears. If everyone in the world is an anthropomorphic animal, most adventurers will lose any Social Stigma they have; if it is a “cartoon world” that anthropomorphic animals share with humans (who are often unaware that animals are sapient, have hands, etc.), they might still have Social Stigma to represent how humans treat them.

- Anthropomorphic birds and bats are often able to use their wingtips as hands, although it is generally unclear why this actually works. (Bird- and bat-like demons from fantasy and horror stories often have this feature, too.) Anthropomorphic fish seem able to do the same things with their fins; the explanation for this would probably make an actual biologist’s head explode. Anthropomorphic snakes do not have any limbs, of course, but they are often remarkably adept at using their mouths and tails as hands. This sometimes involves Bad Grip, but not always.

MANY CREATURES, GREAT AND SMALL

The following table is provided as a quick reference for the GM and players who are considering small animals (and very small beings from fantasy) as characters.

Of course, lengths and weights are approximations; many species, particularly snakes, vary widely. In addition, in many cases, the SM is based on the length of the creature’s body, not the total length including the tail. This is because the tail of many animals is so thin compared to the rest of the creature, that including the total of its length would distort the calculation of the Size Modifier. In addition, turtles are assumed to be one SM larger than their length would suggest, due to their

Sometimes we hear of the capture of a pixy, and of its being consigned to a place of security whence it would be imagined impossible for it to escape; but the little prisoner generally contrives to regain its liberty, either through its custodian relaxing his vigilance, or in some totally inexplicable and miraculous manner.

– William Crossing,
*Tales of the
Dartmoor Pixies*

rounded bodies; this is backed up by how heavy they are compared to other creatures with similar lengths. This is also true for some fish and amphibians. As for snakes, it has been assumed (based on examples in the *Basic Set*) that, because of their serpentine build, the Size Modifier of a snake is two less than what would be suggested by its length. An 8’ snake will be SM -1, not SM +1; a two-foot snake will be SM -5, not SM -3.

The inclusion of a few creatures may be seen as “optimistic.” The boundary of ST 0.5, if employing the standard formula for calculating ST, is about 0.25 ounces. Most hummingbirds weigh less than this, and technically should not even have ST 0.5. However, hummingbirds are unusually strong for their size, and thus might qualify for ST 0.5 for this reason. In any event, the GM should feel free to eliminate any creature from the list with a weight below 0.25 ounces, require an Unusual Background for it to have ST 0.5, or handle it in any other manner he considers reasonable.

Small Creature Table

Creature	Typical Weight	Typical Length/SM	Typical ST
Humanoids			
Leprechaun	8 lbs.	24”/-3	4
Living Doll	1 lb.	12”/-5	2
Living Toy	2 oz.	7”/-6	1
Flower Fairy	0.25 oz.	3”/-8	0.5
Mammals			
Armadillo	17 lbs.	36”/-2	5
Badger	18 lbs.	28”/-2	5
Big Brown Bat	0.5 oz.	5”/-7	0.5
Blackbird	2 oz.	8”/-6	1
Bobcat	20 lbs.	36”/-2	5
Cat	10 lbs.	20”/-3	4
Chihuahua	5 lbs.	18”/-4	3
Eastern Chipmunk	3 oz.	6”/-6	1
Eastern Mole	2.5 oz.	6”/-6	1
Ferret	2.5 lbs.	20”/-3	2.5
Flying Fox (Fruit Bat)	2 lbs.	12”/-5	2.5
Gray Squirrel	1.5 lbs.	12”/-5	2
Green Monkey	8 lbs.	24”/-3	4
Hamster	4 oz.	6”/-6	1
Hedgehog	1.5 lbs.	10”/-5	2
Kangaroo Rat	3 oz.	6”/-6	1
Little Brown Bat	0.25 oz.	3”/-8	0.5
Meerkat	1.5 lbs.	12”/-5	2
Mink	2 lbs.	22”/-3	2.5
Mongoose	3 lbs.	16”/-4	2.5
Mouse	0.75 oz.	3”/-8	0.5
Opossum	10 lbs.	24”/-3	4
Otter	25 lbs.	36”/-2	5
Pekingese	10 lbs.	18”/-4	4
Porcupine	20 lbs.	24”/-3	5
Rabbit	3.5 lbs.	16”/-4	3
Raccoon	15 lbs.	24”/-3	4.5
Rat	10 oz.	10”/-5	1.5
Red Fox	15 lbs.	36”/-2	4.5
Red Squirrel	10 oz.	8”/-6	1.5
Scottish Terrier	20 lbs.	24”/-3	5

ABOUT *GURPS*

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of *GURPS* players. Our address is SJ Games, P.O. Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! We can also be reached by e-mail: info@sjgames.com. Resources include:

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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 resources that interest you! Go to each book’s web page and look for the “Bibliography” link.

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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