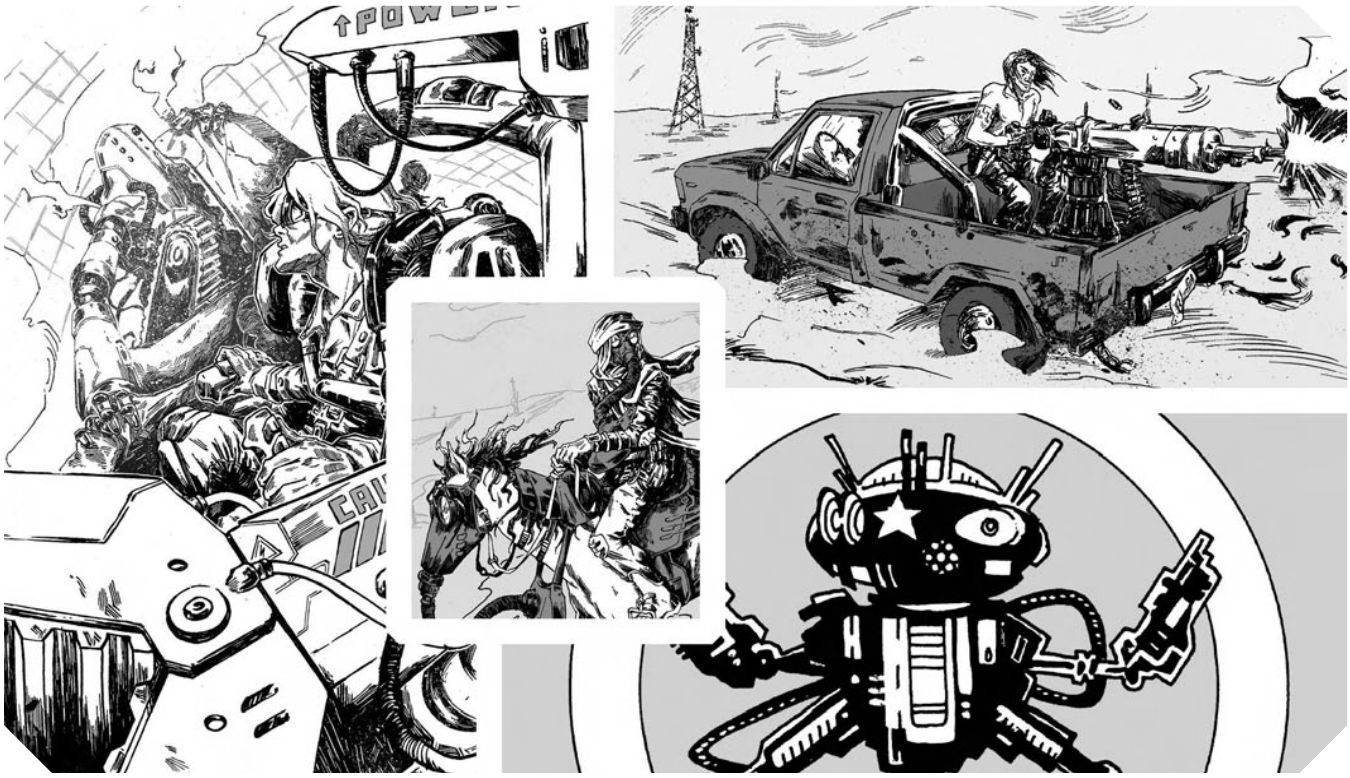
GURPS® Fourth Edition

REIGN OF STEEL™

WILL TO LIVE™



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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, including this book, are available on our website – see above.

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.

Additional Material: Phil Masters

Special Thanks: John Nowak, Jasper Merendino, and Sarah Rodgers (from Panama)

Playtesters: Rick Ciulla, John Dallman, Peter Dell'Orto, Leonardo Holschuh, and Phil Masters

Introduction

GURPS Reign of Steel: Will to Live updates the setting from the original ***GURPS Reign of Steel,*** translating its robots, humans, and technology into ***GURPS*** *Fourth Edition.* It is not a stand-alone volume; the original ***Reign of Steel*** is necessary to understand this setting, the background that led to the world's current situation, and what may happen next.

Will to Live gives every robot from ***Reign of Steel*** its own template, along with details on its built-in equipment and the manner in which it is usually deployed. These robots are ready for the GM to use as enemies – or for the players to use as PCs.

Of course, the humans *fighting* these machines deserve more detail as well! The suggested character types from the original ***Reign of Steel*** have been expanded into lenses for faster creation of PCs or NPCs. Players will appreciate the advice on tactics and gear choices – and the new martial-arts styles – that can make robot-fighting a bit more survivable for mere fleshy humans.

Will to Live also discusses the equipment used by *both* sides of this conflict, from high-tech toys to salvaged junk. This includes details about what gear is available in each part of the world, who's using it, and how it can be abused in the fight against the AIs.

Titles

Throughout this supplement, ***Reign of Steel*** is used to refer to either the setting as a whole, or to the Third Edition book, ***GURPS Reign of Steel.*** For contrast, this supplement is referred to as simply ***Will to Live.***

How to Use This Book

If you're new to ***Reign of Steel,*** or need a refresher, here's how you should approach these two books.

Players should read the beginning of ***Reign of Steel*** – specifically, Chapter 1 for an overview of the universe and Chapter 2 for a detailed description of the world. The background information in ***Reign of Steel*** (pp. 51-62) is also useful, but the character creation details are superseded by the information in ***Will to Live*** (Chapter 2 for character generation and Chapter 4 for equipment).

The GM will want to be familiar with everything the players are and more. He should thus start by reading the above, then move on to Chapter 3 of ***Will to Live*** for details on the robots found in the setting. After that, he can use the non-rules material in Chapters 5-7 of ***Reign of Steel*** to start planning adventures and a campaign.

Recommended *GURPS* Books

Will to Live requires the ***GURPS Basic Set*** and ***GURPS Ultra-Tech,*** both for Fourth Edition, and ***GURPS Reign of Steel,*** a Third Edition sourcebook. The original ***Reign of Steel*** is necessary for this book to make sense as anything other than a catalog of specialized robot designs, and ***Ultra-Tech*** is essential for details of both humans' and robots' equipment.

Readers will also find ***GURPS High-Tech*** and ***GURPS Low-Tech*** useful for campaigns focused on scattered groups that live off salvaged and improvised gear. For cinematic campaigns, ***GURPS Gun Fu*** and the ***GURPS Action*** series are both well-suited to the ***Reign of Steel*** setting. ***GURPS Horror*** can provide advice for setting the right tone.

Publication History

This is the first edition of ***GURPS Reign of Steel: Will to Live.*** It updates material from ***GURPS Reign of Steel*** and ***GURPS Robots,*** both by David Pulver. The SAS Robot Fighting style and notes on anti-robot combat tactics were derived from the *Pyramid* article "Robot Fighting," by Phil Masters.

About the Authors

Roger Burton West is a British computer system administrator. Born in the last millennium, he studied economics, which has turned out to be more useful for writing gaming material than for gaining formal employment. This is his first ***GURPS*** book. He is almost certainly not a time-traveling infiltrator robot, but is nonetheless proud of having done his small part to bring about the rise of the AIs. He lives in an obscure hamlet over the horizon from London, with too many computers and a 4,000-gallon potable water reserve at the bottom of the garden. His gaming website is at **tekeli.li.**

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Mechrider

10 points

Since useful robots have much higher point values than most PCs, the mechrider's mount (usually a Hovercat, p. 31, or Robotruck, pp. 34-35) is purchased as a Patron. Some mechriders are also guerrilla fighters (p. 10).

Advantages: Absolute Direction [5]; Combat Reflexes [15]; *and* Patron (Robot mount; 15 or less) [45].

Disadvantages: Social Stigma (Outlaw; see p. 8) [-15]. ● Another -50 points chosen from among Code of Honor (Pirate's) [-5], Curious [-5*], Enemy (Local Overseer; Hunter) [-30†], Overconfidence [-5*], or Sense of Duty (Nomad pack) [-10].

Skills: Driving (Heavy Wheeled *or* Hovercraft) (A) DX [2] *and* Mechanic (Robotics) (A) IQ [2]. ● Another 6 points chosen from among Climbing (A) DX-1 [1], Computer Operation (E) IQ [1], Computer Programming (H) IQ-1 [2], Electronics Operation (Communications *or* Sensors) (A) IQ-1 [1], Expert Skill (Robotics; see p. 8) (H) IQ-1 [2], Gunner (any) (E) DX [1], Guns (any) (E) DX+1 [2], Housekeeping (E) IQ+2 [4], Knife (E) DX [1], Lasso (A) DX [2], Leatherworking (E) DX [1], Navigation (Land) (A) IQ+3‡ [2], Packing (A) IQ+1 [4], Stealth (A) DX-1 [1], or raising lens skills.

* Multiplied for self-control number; see p. B120.
† Modified for frequency of appearance; see p. B36.
‡ Includes +3 for Absolute Direction.

Nomad

11 points

The nomad's defining characteristic is mobility, by vehicle or on horseback. They are loyal to their own, but some are as dangerous as marauders (p. 11) when dealing with outsiders.

Secondary Characteristics: Per +2 [10].

Advantages: Absolute Direction [5].

Disadvantages: Social Stigma (Outlaw; see p. 8) [-15]. ● Another -10 points chosen from among Code of Honor (Pirate's) [-5], Sense of Duty (Nomad pack) [-10], or Stubbornness [-5].

Skills: Navigation (Land) (A) IQ+2* [1]. ● *Two* of Animal Handling (any) (A) IQ+1 [4], Driving (any) (A) DX+1 [4], or Riding (any) (A) DX+1 [4], or choose one at +1 skill. ● Another 12 points chosen from among the previous skills or Bow (A) DX-1 [1], Climbing (A) DX-1 [1], Crossbow (E) DX [1], Guns (any) (E) DX [1], Housekeeping (E) IQ+1 [2], Knife (E) DX+1 [2], Lasso (A) DX+1 [4], Leatherworking (E) DX+1 [2], Mechanic (any) (A) IQ+1 [4], Packing (A) IQ [2], Stealth (A) DX [2], Survival (local terrain) (A) Per+1 [4], Teamster (A) IQ [2], Veterinary (H) IQ [4], or raising lens skills.

* Includes +3 for Absolute Direction.

Postman

10 points

Contacts represent people the postman knows from his usual mail run; they may have any skill, effective skill level, availability, or reliability.

Advantages: Absolute Direction [5]; Higher Purpose (Deliver the Mail) [5]; Reputation +2 (Reliable carrier; All humans; All the time) [6]; *and* Resistant to Sickness (+3) [5]. ● 5 points spent on Contacts [varies].

Disadvantages: Fanaticism ("The mail must get through") [-15] *and* Social Stigma (Outlaw; see p. 8) [-15].

Skills: Public Speaking (A) IQ [2]. ● *Either* Driving (any) *or* Riding (any), both (A) DX [2]. ● Another 10 points chosen from among Climbing (A) DX-1 [1], Diplomacy (H) IQ [4], Escape (H) DX [4], Fast-Talk (A) IQ [2], Guns (Pistol) (E) DX+1 [2], Holdout (A) IQ+1 [4], Knife (E) DX+1 [2], Mechanic (any vehicle) (A) IQ [2], Navigation (Land) (A) IQ+3* [2], Packing (A) IQ+1 [4], Stealth (A) DX [2], or raising lens skills.

* Includes +3 for Absolute Direction.

Preacher/Missionary

10 points

The preacher can be anything from a traveling holy man to a fanatical robot-worshiper.

Advantages: Allies (21-50 followers; Built on 25%; 9 or less) [10]; Charisma 1 [5]; Clerical Investment [5]; *and* Reputation +3 (Holy man; Followers; All the time) [5].

Disadvantages: Social Stigma (Outlaw; see p. 8) [-15]. ● Another -20 points chosen from among Delusion ("I am the chosen one who will lead humanity to God") [-10], Disciplines of Faith (Asceticism) [-15], Fanaticism [-15], Intolerance (All non-followers) [-10], No Sense of Humor [-10], Pacifism [Varies], Reputation -2 (Fanatic; Non-followers; All the time) [-5], or Sense of Duty (Coreligionists) [-10].

Skills: Religious Ritual (own) (H) IQ-1 [2]; Leadership (A) IQ+2* [4]; Performance (A) IQ [2]; *and* Theology (own) (H) IQ-1 [2]. ● Another 10 points chosen from among Acting (A) IQ [2], Body Language (A) Per [2], Detect Lies (H) Per [4], Diplomacy (H) IQ [4], Fast-Talk (A) IQ+1 [4], First Aid (E) IQ [1], Propaganda (A) IQ-1 [1], Public Speaking (A) IQ+1* [2], Teaching (A) IQ [2], or raising lens skills.

* Includes +1 for Charisma.

Variants

Petbot: Delete Drug Injector, Monowire Claws, and Teeth, and replace the realistic rat-hair with cuddly fur in a variety of colors. Popular among rich children in the Washington Protectorate, particularly since real animals don't do well in the polluted air. It also makes a convenient surveillance device. *-129 points*

RNU-03 Changeling

***Reign of Steel,* p. 80; -21 points**

Sometimes nicknamed the "baby bomb," this android appears to be an infant child. Changelings have mostly been used as part of Zaire's terror attacks in Zone Washington and London. They also sometimes work as partners of Redjacks (below) or Liliths (p. 32). Changelings attack by injecting poison. When in danger of capture or close to an important target, they explode. Changelings are used by Zones Zaire and Moscow.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 9 [-20]; IQ 6 [-80]; HT 10 [0].
Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 6 [0]; Per 10 [20]; FP N/A [0]; Basic Speed 4.75 [0]; Basic Move 4 [0]; SM -2.
Advantages: Drug Injector (p. 20) [10]; Enhanced Move 1 (Ground; Speed 8) [20]; Nonvolitional Unit (p. 24) [36]; Reduced Consumption 2 [4].
Perks: Accessory (Self-Destruct Charge, p. 19, 6d×6 [2d] cr ex) [1].
Disadvantages: Maintenance (Electronics Repair *and* Mechanic; One Person; Monthly) [-2]; Restricted Diet (Power Cells) [-10].
Quirks: Realistic Flesh [-1].
Skills: Brawling (E) DX [1]-9.

RAU-04 Hovercat

***Reign of Steel,* p. 80; 633 points**

This robot hovercraft has a rectangular body atop an air cushion and a small sensor-studded head mounted forward on its body, like a beast's. A long radio antenna protrudes from its back like a tail. It can extend a pair of retractable whisker-like manipulator tentacles when necessary.

These swift bots regularly accompany exterminator squads to provide high-speed, up-to-the-minute reconnaissance, or guide Robotruck (pp. 34-35) convoys through guerrilla-infested areas. When a robot or installation has been disabled, a Hovercat will often be dispatched to the scene, where it uses its SQUID to interrogate the knocked-out bot's memory to try to find out what really happened. Often they act as an AI's or Overseer's (p. 25) troubleshooters.

If captured by humans who can subvert its programming, the Hovercat makes a convenient mount.

Attributes: ST 28 [162]*; DX 10 [0]; IQ 9 [-20]; HT 14 [40].
Secondary Characteristics: Damage 3d-1/5d+1; BL 157 lbs.; HP 28 [0]; Will 9 [0]; Per 11 [10]; FP N/A [0]; Basic Speed 6.00 [0]; Basic Move 0 [0]; Air Move 12 [0]; SM +1.
Advantages: Absolute Direction [5]; Autonomous Unit (p. 24) [79]; Damage Resistance 15 (Can't Wear Armor, -40%; Laminate, p. 18, +10%) [53]; Detect All Electromagnetic Radiation (Analyzing, +100%; see pp. 18-19) [60]; Discriminatory Smell (Profiling, +50%) [23]; Doesn't Eat or Drink [10]; Enhanced Move 4 (Air; Speed 192) [80]; Flight (Low Ceiling, 5-foot, -25%) [30]; High Manual Dexterity 2 [10]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Infravision [10]; Mind Probe (Cybernetic Only, -50%) [10]; Nictitating Membrane 7 [7]; Payload 5 [5]; Scanning Sense (Ladar; Targeting Only, -40%) [12]; Sealed [15]; Telecommunication (Infrared Communication; Burst, 10×, +30%; Video, +40%) [17]; Telecommunication (Radio; add Increased Range, ×5, +20%) [2].
Perks: Accessories (IFF Transponder, p. 19; Self-Destruct Charge, 6d×19 [2d] cr ex; Spotlight); Penetrating Voice. [4]
Disadvantages: Maintenance (Electronics Repair *and* Mechanic; One Person; Weekly) [-5]; No Legs (Aerial) [0].
Features: Both arms are Extra Flexible but Weak (1/4 ST).
Skills: Computer Programming (H) IQ-2 [1]-7; Electronics Operation (Communications) (A) IQ-1 [1]-8; Mechanic (Robotics) (A) IQ-1 [1]-8; *and* Navigation (Land) (A) IQ+2 [1]-11†.

* Includes -10% from Size.
† Includes +3 from Absolute Direction.

The 600 series had rubber skin. We spotted them easy, but these are new. They look human . . . sweat, bad breath, everything. Very hard to spot.

– Kyle Reese, in ***The Terminator***

RAU-05 Redjack

***Reign of Steel,* p. 81; 535 points**

These androids look like adult human males. Redjacks infiltrate guerrilla groups to locate human bases, then summon other combat robots or assassinate vital targets such as resistance leaders. Zaire also uses Redjacks for terrorist attacks on Zones Washington and London, while Moscow places them within its info-commando forces to monitor its human operatives. A few special-purpose "doppelgänger" variants of the Redjack have been built, with their features, size, and weight adjusted to duplicate individual humans.

The Redjack can be distinguished from a human by puncturing its skin, and requiring strangers to draw blood has as a result become common among better-informed communities.

The Redjack is in limited production in every Zone save London, Luna, Mexico City, and Orbital. Denver, Moscow, Vancouver, and Zaire are believed to rely heavily on these androids.

Attributes: ST 24 [140]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 9 [-20]; HT 11 [10].
Secondary Characteristics: Damage 2d+1/4d+2; BL 115 lbs.; HP 24 [0]; Will 9 [0]; Per 11 [10]; FP N/A [0]; Basic Speed 5.25 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0].

Other human groups, such as the HLA in Zone Denver and the wild humans in Zone Caracas, are similarly too small to construct new hardware of their own on any significant scale, making do with small caches of stored equipment. Very rarely, they can manage new production on a small scale; e.g., via a reprogrammed robotic production line (***Ultra-Tech,*** p. 90). Those who grew up before the Final War may remember their TL9 skills; a few of the survivors have even been in a position to acquire a practical knowledge of TL9 weaponry or even TL10 robot mechanics. If ***GURPS Power-Ups 2: Perks*** is available, the Cutting-Edge Training perk is appropriate here.

The GM should choose a default campaign TL based on the home setting of the campaign (typically TL10 for robots, TL8 for humans in Zone London, or TL9 for humans elsewhere), and use High TL and Low TL (pp. B22-23) as appropriate for people from other backgrounds.

Technological Progression and Technology Paths

Given the sophistication of AI development, with the first XoT 7000 released in 2026, ***Reign of Steel*** is a setting with accelerated technological progression (***Ultra-Tech,*** p. 8). However, while the robots are developing technologies of interest to themselves, the collapse of human civilization has meant that other areas of technology (e.g. housing, entertainment, and medicine) have stagnated. If humans were to ever win the war against the robots, the adoption of their new technology would likely lead to very rapid improvements in living standards . . . assuming the ecosystem held together long enough.

Gadget Control

The principal means of restricting equipment in a ***Reign of Steel*** campaign is simply not to make it available. At best, free humans are scavenging on the fringes of a TL9 society, and at worst, they're living purely on what they can make for themselves. In the Washington Protectorate, many potentially useful TL9-10 items are illegal, and will therefore not be generally available to civilians. Obtaining a weapon capable of damaging armored robots may be an adventure in itself. In other places, advanced technology simply does not exist to be purchased; the few remaining items are in the hands of survivors who want to hold on to them!

Buying Equipment

Black markets (***Ultra-Tech,*** p. 13) certainly exist in the Washington Protectorate, though the universal use of electronic money (rather than untraceable cash) promotes barter rather than straightforward purchasing. The prevalent bureaucracy means that many items which are technically legal will also be sold at a higher price in black markets; they may cost more, but there's no waiting list and your transaction doesn't get recorded on the government computers. There are persistent rumors that some black markets are deliberately operated by the government, as a means of lubricating the system (and spotting potential troublemakers).

Wear and Care

In a realistic campaign, rules for maintaining and repairing gadgets (***Ultra-Tech,*** pp. 14-15) are of vital importance. Anyone operating outside a technological base – in practice, anyone not in Zone Washington, Moscow, or London – will have only his own maintenance resources to rely on.

Integrating and Modifying Equipment

While human society was progressing toward convenient connection and integration of equipment, the robots do not see this as a priority: a unit is manufactured with the equipment it needs. If other equipment is needed, it is not recalled and re-equipped; a different robot is sent to do the job. *Plug-In Gadgets* (***Ultra-Tech,*** p. 15) are not available.

Core Technologies

Power supplies, computer systems, and robots are all highly visible presences in ***Reign of Steel;*** consistent presentation will make the world feel more realistic.

Scavenging From Robots

While a robot's built-in weapon or sensor has all the capabilities of the equivalent human device *when used by the robot,* it will not have a convenient grip, display, or human-interchangeable ammunition or power supplies. Indeed, many of the components may be spread around the body of the robot rather than being integrated in a single casing. Thus, while equipment may be salvaged from a destroyed robot, making such devices suitable for human use can be a difficult task.

To salvage parts, first identify the robot's equipment; this requires a successful roll against Expert Skill (Robotics) (p. 8) or Mechanic (Robotics). Extracting all the components of a single device requires four hours of work and a successful Mechanic (Robotics) roll at -2. After that, the device must be reassembled, which requires a successful roll against the relevant repair skill for the device – usually Armoury (Small Arms), or some type of Electronics Repair or Mechanic. This reassembly requires a supply of spare parts (e.g., the displays and controls for which the robot had no use) and about eight hours of work. If no casing is available, it will have to be designed (six hours of work and an Engineer roll) and built (another six hours and a Machinist roll). *Time Spent* (p. B346) may be used to speed up any stage of the process.

A critical success on the reassembly roll produces a fully functional item. Normal success produces one that is substandard: a sensor may have shorter range, a weapon may be less accurate, or any other items may be less reliable. Normal failure wastes the time but allows another attempt at no penalty. A critical failure breaks the components.

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Your worship is your furnaces,
Which, like old idols, lost obscenes,
Have molten bowels; your vision is
Machines for making more machines.

– Gordon Bottomley,
To Ironfounders and Others

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