PYRAMID

PIRATES AND SWASHBUCKLERS

SWORDS AGAINST EVIL
by Sean Punch

SCURVY-DOG SORCERY
by Jason "PK" Levine

SAILING THE OPEN SKIES
by Christopher R. Rice

THE SPANISH PRISONER
by David L. Pulver

THE QANAT PIRATES OF OLD THAN
by Matt Riggsby

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

CONTENTS

Article Colors

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

Pale Blue: In This Issue
Brown: In Every Issue (humor, editorial, etc.)
Green: Columnist
Dark Blue: GURPS Features
Purple: Systemless Features

COVER ART
Don Maitz

INTERIOR ART
Matt Riggsby

IN THIS ISSUE

Are your timbers insufficiently shivered? Do your hatches need more battening? Is there a stained glass window just *begging* to be smashed through so you can save the day? This month's *Pyramid* is here to help, swinging from a rope with cutlass in hand, with a treasure chest full of pirate-and-swashbuckling action!

We start to buckle our swashes by first testing our *Swords Against Evil!* Sean Punch – captain of the *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* line – provides four Age of Sail-themed possibilities that reimagine the swashbuckler template from *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 1: Adventurers.* You'll also get dozens of new customization suggestions, plus suggested power-ups for each one. A table of fancy weapons will help you pick just the right one.

Sometimes a "C" in spellcasting class is okay . . . especially when you're studying the arrr-cane! When magic-minded pirates want to cast spells, they turn to *Scurvy-Dog Sorcery.* This new magical style from Jason "PK" Levine – seadog behind *GURPS Thaumatology: Ritual Path Magic* – creates a fast path to mystical rites suitable for plundering on the high seas. Learn about the history of this art, its spell lists, and four new secret spells.

The Spanish Prisoner must be saved, and your English heroes are just the ones to do it! In this month's Eidetic Memory, David L. Pulver – the helmsman who guided souls to *GURPS Banestorm: Abydos* – provides an adventure outline for a group of buccaneers in the Caribbean, including brief *GURPS* stats for eight key players . . . and plenty of room for swordplay!

Water-borne thievery can even exist underground, as *The Qanat Pirates of Old Than* prove. Get the history, legends, and adventure seeds straight from one of the city's frequent visitors, Matt Riggsby, whose tales of riches from *GURPS Hot Spots: Renaissance Florence* have driven lesser men mad. This campaign setting includes descriptions, *GURPS* stats, and deck plans of qanat barges, plus a map of the city's underground waterways.

If your heroes are seasick, take away the water and try *Sailing the Open Skies.* With this optional expansion for *GURPS Spaceships,* you'll create vessels suitable for travel among the clouds. Pore over design notes, new and revised features and switches, and *Spaceships* stats for five airships. You'll also get tips for utilizing the Signature Gear advantage with beloved vehicles.

Finally, we sail into port with Random Thought Table, which ties up the issue with a look at pirate morality – and what to do about it. Whether you're privateering, dungeoneering, buccaneering, or commandeering, this shipshape *Pyramid* is a treasure trove of loot!

FROM THE EDITOR

A DASH OF PIRACY

It's an unusual thought, but "pirates" and "swashbuckling" are kissing cousins of another gaming element: horror.

Horror isn't a genre by itself. If you told someone you were running a "horror" campaign, they wouldn't know what you meant: 1920s Lovecraftian dread? Modern splatter? Edwardian spooky cobblestones? Fantastic monstrosities? Urban horror? (Admittedly, this situation is somewhat different in the movie world, where there's a default assumption of "modern day" tied with the "horror" genre . . . but the gaming world is unfettered by such default assumptions.)
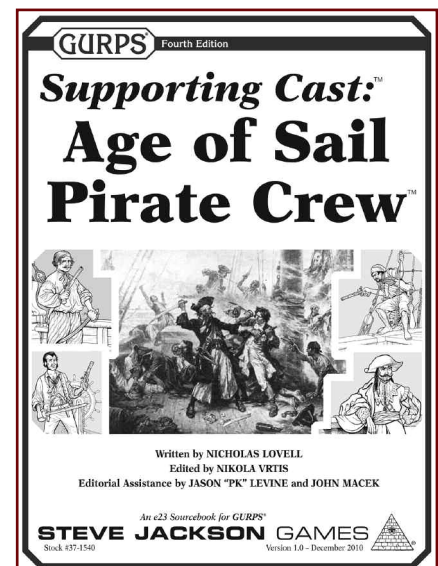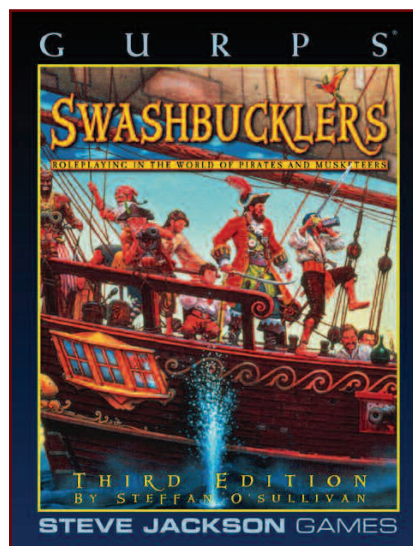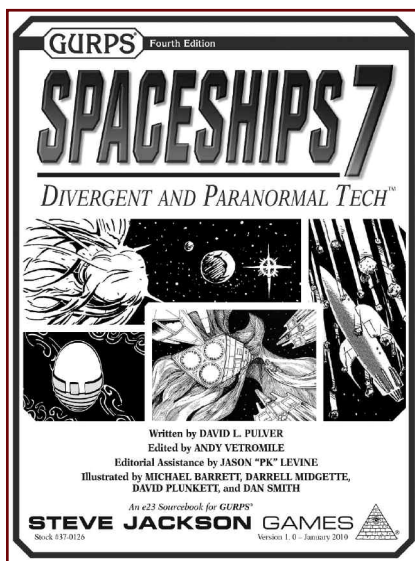
Similar to horror, "piracy" and "swashbuckling" are exceptionally versatile as far as themes. While it's not quite as addable to any genre as horror, it's still a highly adaptable idea: fantasy pirates, dungeon-dwelling pirates, skyship-sailing pirates, and more . . . including, yes, horror-tinged pirates.

(Even trying to think of unworkable counterexamples merely leads to intriguing ideas like "cyberpunk pirates" or *GURPS Swashbuckling Bunnies & Burrows* . . .) This issue of *Pyramid* explores some of the possibilities of adding the privateering impulse to different kinds of gaming, as well as giving some new ideas for swinging on a rope into new situations.

Almost regardless of the era, genre, or setting, "pirates suddenly burst in and excitement ensues" is at least as viable an adventure idea as when Robert Lewis Stevenson first popularized it in *Treasure Island*.

WRITE HERE, WRITE NOW

Did this issue prepare your boarding parties for plundering? Or is there something about it that should've stayed in dock? Let us know how were doing privately at **pyramid@sjgames.com**, or join the boisterous scallywags at **forums.sjgames.com**.

I can promise him a twentieth-share of the raid's booty if he agrees to come with us to show us the way and save us a lot of lives.

"So how about this, lads? If you bring Rat-Eared Jack within a month's time, or have him show his secret route, I'll give you each a hat full of silver, and if you've got the guts, command of the raiders. *That* will earn you a full captain's share each of the Spanish silver, good for a year of wenching and drinking. What do you say, me hearties? Will you find me the man who'll let us tweak the Spaniard's tails?"

PORT ROYAL

Port Royal is the capital of Jamaica, currently held by the English under a governor sympathetic to buccaneers. It's five day's sail away, and the PCs shouldn't have any trouble getting there, thanks to fair winds.

Port Royal! Its waterside bristles with wharves, while sail lofts, carpentry stalls, grog shops, and brothels are bunched together on the narrow streets. Piles of Spanish loot are sold openly in the marketplaces, and rowdy groups of drunken buccaneers roam the streets, letting off pistol shots and drinking rum by the barrel.

A few hours asking around on the streets and grog shops after Rat-Eared Jack will lead them to the Fish and Anchor, a notorious dive. The tavern is a one-story building. The common room has a chandelier and two heavy wooden tables; next to each fellow is a mug of beer. Carpets are scattered on the floor, and an oil lamp is on each table.

Several crewmen are drinking in the tavern, including at least four other pirates. The GM may ask for some Carousing rolls to gather information. It become quickly apparent that Jack is well-known, but opinion on him is sharply divided.

"Argh, Rat-Eared Jack?" says an old pirate with one arm. "We served together on the *Witch of the Indies*. He was a brave shipmate – cool as ice, a dead shot with a swivel gun, never gave up. Always had something up his sleeve."

A big man with an Irish accent remarks: "Up his sleeve, aye, like a second deck of cards! That scurvy dog was the foulest cheat ever! He cheated me out of my entire share, so he did. Were I to see him again, he'd not be walking home alive, I'm thinking!"

Drunken Pirates

Here are the offenders. Only stats relevant to tavern interactions are listed.

Bartholomew Hawk, the One-Handed Buccaneer

Jack's ex-shipmate, with a hook for a hand, Hawk'll try to make use of heights, jumping onto a table. If the fight gets nasty, he has a cutlass (1d-1 imp or 1d+2 cut). He's not afraid to use his hook (see *One Hand,* p. B147) as a weapon.

ST 12; **DX** 12; **IQ** 10; **HT** 12.
Damage 1d-1/1d+2; BL 29 lbs.; HP 12; Will 12; Per 12; FP 12.
Basic Speed 6.00; Basic Move 6; Dodge 9; Parry 10.
6'; 170 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Attractive; Code of Honor (Pirate's); English (Native); One Hand (Hook).
Skills: Brawling-12; Jumping-13; Shortsword-14.

Lucien de Maricourt, the Exiled Huguenot Swordsman

Hotheaded, handsome, and French, he's a swashbuckler equally good with his feet, a cloak, or a thrown mug. He disliked Jack. If things get bloody, he uses a rapier (1d-1 imp).

ST 10; **DX** 12; **IQ** 11; **HT** 12.
Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 12; Will 12; Per 12; FP 12.
Basic Speed 6.00; Basic Move 6; Dodge 9; Parry 10.
5'7"; 170 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Appearance (Handsome); Bad Temper (12); English (Accented); French (Native).
Skills: Acrobatics-12; Brawling-14; Cloak-12; Rapier-13; Throwing-11. *Techniques:* Kicking-14.

Darcy Roberts, the Impoverished Colonial Gentleman

Another Jack shipmate, Roberts once was a rich planter, but he lost it all after partners cheated him. If it gets nasty, he'll pull a flintlock pistol (2d-1 pi+) or a cutlass (1d-1 imp or 1d+1 cut).

ST 11; **DX** 11; **IQ** 10; **HT** 12.
Damage 1d-1/1d+1; BL 24 lbs.; HP 11; Will 11; Per 11; FP 12.
Basic Speed 5.75; Basic Move 5; Dodge 8; Parry 10.
5'11'; weight 165 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Code of Honor (Gentleman's); English (Native); Spanish (Accented); Status 2.
Skills: Brawling-13; Guns (Pistol)-12; Savoir-Faire (High Society)-12; Shortsword-14.

Donal O'Connor, the Irish Pirate

Driven to sea by the depredations of ruthless English landlords, his big frame, mane of fiery hair, and Gaelic accent stand out. He relies on strength, using punches (1d-1 cr) or flipping tables. If desperate, he'd usually draw a sword, except he lost his broadsword dicing with Rat-Eared Jack, so he'll pick up a fireplace poker or break off a chair leg to use as a light club.

ST 14; **DX** 12; **IQ** 10; **HT** 12.
Damage BL 39 lbs.; BL 39 lbs.; HP 14; Will 12; Per 10; FP 12.
Basic Speed 6.00; Basic Move 6; Dodge 9; Parry 10.
6'2"; 205 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Attractive; Code of Honor (Pirate's); English (Accented); Intolerance (English gentry).
Skills: Brawling-13; Broadsword-14; Throwing-12.

Than Qanat Barges Table

Boating/TL (Unpowered)

TL	Vehicle	ST/HP	Hnd/SR	HT	Move	LWt.	Load	SM	Occ.	DR	Range	Cost	Loc.	Draft	Notes
3	Standard Barge	47†	0/1	12c	0.05/5	4	3.2	+5	14+2	2	F	$8K	O	1.5	[1]
3	Light Barge	30†	0/1	12c	0.05/5	1	0.8	+3	3+1	2	F	$2K	O	1	[2]
3	Qanat Platform	19†	+1/0	12c	1/5	0.25	0.2	+0	1	2	F	$100	O	1	

Notes

[1] 42' long, 6' wide, typically drawn by an ox, a large horse, or a pair of smaller animals.

[2] 21' long, 3' wide, typically drawn by a donkey or other light draft animal.

Many covered barges are floating commercial establishments, mostly mobile taverns. Though they have a certain novelty appeal, they have an unsavory reputation, since they're a great place to meet people (or eavesdrop) anonymously in the dark. Some people, enamored of the cool tunnels and not minding the darkness so much, have converted barges into homes. The barge is divided into sections for sleeping, cooking, storage, and so on.

A covered barge costs 15% more than a standard barge of the same size. Lwt. remains the same, but the added weight of the boat reduces Load by 5%. One *also* equipped with the furniture and other accessories it needs to serve as a business or residence costs 25% more and has 8% less Load.

War Barge

Inevitably, violence takes place in the tunnels, and the authorities of Than have to take steps. Barges are sometimes adapted to the peculiar conditions of fighting in the tunnels. They are equipped with armored plates fore, aft, or both, to protect the occupants from missile fire (especially thrown weapons); the top and sides of barges are rarely armored, since those angles are almost never exposed to attack. The plates are about 4' high; fighters can crouch behind them for full cover, or stand up to fight from behind partial cover. They provide DR 6 for protected locations.

Adding an armor plate to one end increases Cost by 5% and reduces Load by 2%; double these to protect both ends. Draft animals may still pull the barge with a rope, or they may push the barge using a rigid pole attached to their harnesses. This does not change the barge's cost, but it is clumsy. It halves acceleration and top speed.

Sample Barge Deck Plans

The plans on pp. 26-28 illustrate some common barge uses.

1. A standard barge used primarily for cargo. It has benches fore and aft for the boatmen, but otherwise the deck is bare.

2. A standard-sized covered barge adapted for use as a home. Curtains cover the doorways, and thin dividers define four chambers, two of which have hammocks slung in them. Cooking is done over a portable brazier. Small areas for boatmen fore and aft are outside of the covered area.

3. A standard-sized covered barge adapted for use as a tavern. There are several lightweight stools, a pair of tables, and a fixed counter for customers. The proprietor has a small stove, a cabinet for ingredients and serving vessels, and space for a stack of wine jugs.

4. A light barge. Though set up for passengers, the benches can be removed to load freight.

Qanat Pirates

Though the precise number of qanat pirates active at any given moment is unlikely to exceed 50, their escapades loom large in the folklore and political concerns of Than.

Like many criminals, qanat pirates are mostly part-time. They may carry out raids and live off the proceeds until they run out and raid again, or they may work at a legitimate occupation but resort to piracy to supplement their income. The pirates are loosely organized into small gangs, usually with shifting membership (see *A Brief History of the Thieves' Guild* in *Pyramid #3/47: The Rogue's Life* for ideas on how small groups of criminals organize themselves). Their typical method of operation is to find a target with a relatively valuable cargo, eject its crew, and get the cargo to a safe hiding place as quickly as possible, relying on fences to turn any loot they can't use themselves into money.

Pirates almost always attack lone barges rather than the longer trains sometimes organized by larger shippers, since the criminals usually lack the manpower to successfully take on much more. Set-piece ambushes usually happen around intersections, where the pirates can find a convenient corner to hide behind, attacking their target barge during the difficult process of turning. However, they may also use barges themselves, leaping from their barge to their quarry as they pass in opposite directions down a tunnel. Since most are out for loot rather than blood, pirates are usually happy to simply terrify a target's crew into fleeing or give them a quick beating and toss them over the side. However, the profession does attract more than its fare share of people enamored of violence for its own sake, so there's a significant minority of pure and simple killers.

Once the target barge has been secured, the pirates drag it as fast as they can to a place where they can unload the loot. This is remarkably easy, since the region has any number of grottos and even extensive cave networks. Some were sealed off during the construction of the qanat network and reopened by pirates. Some didn't quite intersect the qanat network but were opened by a little bit of new digging. Some were never sealed off to begin with because they didn't interfere with the flow of water or barges.

Pirates take advantages of these side passages to get the loot off the boat and, if at all possible, get it far from pursuers. Small niches are usually disguised with wood or canvas covers painted to resemble rock, often with sand and small rocks glued on. Entrances to bigger warrens may be sealed up by authorities, but reopened by defiant pirates. Large cave complexes are always said to hold pirate dens, though most of the time, difficult-to-find chambers are used to hold loot temporarily, not as long-term storage, let alone a residence.

Front Hull	System
[3]	Sails (0.01G acceleration in atmosphere; water surface movement 1/5; automated).
[4]	Solar Panel Array (one magical Power Point).
[5, 6, core]	Habitat (magical life support; one luxury cabin, two cabins, briefing room, office).

Central Hull	System
[1]	Etherwood Armor (dDR 1).
[2]	Passenger Seats (magical life support; 12 seats).
[3]	Oars (magic-powered; switchable automation; water surface movement 1/3)*.
[4]	Secondary Battery (6 hidden fixed mounts with 8cm guns; 2 tons cargo).
[5]	Maneuver Enhancement (+1 Handling in air or water; anachronistic).

Central Hull	System
[6, core]	Habitat (magical life support; one bunkroom, one craft shop (Carpentry), one sickbay).

Rear Hull	System
[1]	Etherwood Armor (dDR 1).
[2]	Engine Room (one workspace).
[3]	Rotary Reactionless Engine (magic-powered; 0.1G acceleration).
[4-5]	Cargo Hold (10 tons capacity).
[6]	External Clamp.

* Can be used manually (requiring 12 rowers) or mechanically (requiring one Power Point).

The ship has aerial sails, nautical lines, and a top deck. The usual crew is a captain (who is typically a mage) and a single navigator/gunner.

TL	Spacecraft	dST/HP	Hnd/SR	HT	Move	LWt.	Load	SM	Occ	dDR	Range	Cost
PILOTING/TL4 (HIGH-PERFORMANCE SPACECRAFT)												
3+1^	*Cloudclipper*	30	+2/4	14	1/100	100	13	+6	10A	1	–	$2.316M

On a water surface, water speed is 1/5 for sails or 1/4 for oars, and Hnd/SR is +1/4.

Only a handful of shipwrights understood the mechanics of ambient-light sails, radian draws, and diapson crystals well enough to build the vessels that could utilize them.

–Terry Brooks,
Ilse Witch

Sand Flea-Class LSA Mecha (TL3+2^)

Land, Sea, and Air (LSA) mecha are highly versatile craft capable of combat in nearly any environment, though they are not limited to military. Their sturdy frame is perfect for explorers, rescue workers, or even technicians.

The *Sand Flea* is a sleek craft, incorporating a compact elemental furnace (p. 31) to power it. Two ducted fans can be shifted between surface and underwater propulsion. On land, its multiple clockwork-driven legs provide swift travel, even in rough terrain. A favorite tactic of pilots is to fly above a target, bring all of its legs together, and then *drop* atop the victim, spearing it with its legs.

This design is built using a 30-ton (SM +5) unstreamlined hull, and is 30' tall.

Front Hull	System
[1-2]	Orichalcum Armor (total dDR 8).
[3]	Reconfigurable System (Maw, powerful, 4d cutting or corrosion dDamage (41d-1 damage), to Major Battery, fixed mount 10MJ magic-powered sonic disruptor).
[4-5!]	Reconfigurable System (Screw Propellers, magic-powered, see statistics, to Helicopter Rotors, magic-powered, total 100 mph).
[6]	Maneuver Enhancement (+1 Handling in air, on land, or in water; anachronistic).
[core]	Efficient Compact Elemental Furnace Power Plant (four magical Power Points).*

Central Hull	System
[1-2]	Orichalcum Armor (total dDR 8).
[3-4]	Robot Arms (clawed).
[5]	Reconfigurable System (Submarine Ballast Tank to Maneuver Enhancement, +1 Handling in air or on land and anachronistic).
[6]	Reconfigurable System (Striking Tail, 2d+1 crushing dDamage (23d damage), to Major Battery, fixed mount on tail, 3MJ magic-powered Heat Beam).
[core]	Control Room (magical; one control station, no computer, emergency ejection).

Rear Hull	System
[1-2]	Orichalcum Armor (total dDR 8).
[3-6!]	Robot Legs (magic powered; Move 10/40;† taloned).

* Volatile system. See *Pyramid #3/40: Vehicles* (p. 7) for more details.

† Only one Power Point needed for all legs.

The ship has biomorphics, making it vaguely resemble a crustacean. Typical crew is a single pilot.

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 email: **info@sjgames.com**. Resources include:

New supplements and adventures. *GURPS* continues to grow – see what's new at **gurps.sjgames.com**.

Warehouse 23. Our online store offers *GURPS* adventures, play aids, and support in PDF form . . . digital copies of our books, plus exclusive material available only on Warehouse 23! Just head over to **warehouse23.com**.

Internet. Visit us on the World Wide Web at **sjgames.com** for errata, updates, Q&A, and much more. To discuss *GURPS* with our staff and your fellow gamers, visit our forums at **forums.sjgames.com**. The *Pyramid* web page is **pyramid.sjgames.com**.

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.