

VIVID IMAGINATIONS

(a simplified set of rules for creating wargames based in the weird and wonderful times of both the Victorian-esque and Pulp era)



Introduction

In 2002 Kurt Hummitzsch and Robert Murch gave the gaming world Rugged Adventures; an enchanting set of *free* skirmish style rules (with a heavy role playing feel to them) for playing Pulp era wargaming. A few supplements later and an introductory article from Bob Murch himself (originally written for Wargames Illustrated) introduced even more gamers to the wonderful semi imaginary and alternative world of Pulp fiction. Even Victorian and Steampunk gamers were soon cottoning onto the fact these rules were a little different, not quite the norm, and started flooding to the cause; especially because the rules complemented the overall genre vividly brought to life by Bob's growing myriad of superb 28mm wargame figures <http://www.pulpfigures.com/main.php>, which covered a range of miniatures diverse enough to allow gamers to play just about any style of Pulp adventures the avid collector might chose to re-create on his or her own table top.

But these rules, excellent as they are in their original state, don't *q-u-i-t-e* do what I need them to do in my personal solo games. So, a few years ago *with kind permission from Bob Murch*, ago I went about altering, simplifying, and sometimes extrapolating the official rules until I had a system which still incorporated most the neat and unique ideas contained within Rugged Adventures, but I altered things just enough to work better *for me* and my simple mind; which needs fast, snap decision results (practically from memory without having to look at the rules book every few minutes) allowing me to get on with enjoying the game without things bogging down too much during play. I also needed the rules to allow for Victorian Colonial, Steampunk, adventures as well as Pulp; and now the rules works equally well for both types of game set up. This alternative set of Rugged Adventures rules (which I have called Vivid Imaginations) is now presented to you here in Table Top Titans and is *free* for anyone to enjoy. However, I emphasise once more, the bulk of this work belongs to Kurt Hummitzsch and Robert Murch; without whom these rules would never have existed.

I also urge anyone interested in this style of play to look into collecting at least a few of Bob Murch's Pulp Figures; they really are utterly delightful. Pretty much my entire personal Pulp collection is made up of these wonderful and superbly detailed miniatures. Many of these pieces are also (I find) ideal for using in Victorian and Steampunk games.

PRELIMINARY CORE RULES

These basic rules will allow you to start gaming in a pseudo Victorian and Pulp Era. The core rules focus primarily on combat mechanics, as conflict is a driving factor in this type of action story. A **Vivid Imaginations** adventure is much more than a wargame though. Players are expected to act in character and contribute to the story development.

What is necessary to play games using these rules?

Most important, you will need a game master or GM. The GM will design the scenario and assign the goals and restrictions of each player. The GM will also have the last word in rule interpretation and may modify die rolls to suit a specific situation. Remember, the most critical part of **Vivid Imaginations** is the **STORY**. All other aspects take a back seat. It is the job of the GM to govern the story as it unfolds.

If the game is being played as a solo affair (i.e. the player controls the heroes as well as determining the actions and responses of the bad guys) then he or she takes on the dual role of both player *and* GM.

Player main characters usually enter play with a group of followers or sidekicks (or if playing the bad guys... these are sometimes called thugs or henchmen). Heroes may act alone *there is nothing wrong with a player side comprising only of heroes* or may start a game with just one or two followers. Some games might call for an entire unit of armed Police, Soldiers, or Special Agents to back our heroes to the hilt... these are usually led by an Officer, NCO, or similar equivalent rank... in effect, a side kick.

5 to 10 figures are an ideal size for a regular unit; 10 to 15 *or more* for larger native contingents and other irregular groups. Military officers are followed by soldiers. Gang Leaders are followed by assorted thugs. Archaeologists are followed by simpering grad students and local labourers.

Numerous other miniature 'extras' can be used in the game but they must be managed, to some extent, by the GM. You will need a playing surface. This tabletop area might be a large, highly detailed landscape with buildings, jungle, hills, mountains and waterways or it might be an interior layout of a seedy bar, roughly drawn with crayon on blank sheets of paper. Get as involved as much as your time and budget will allow. Finally, you need a tape measure or two, and quite a few ten sided dice (D10). The game uses D10's to resolve combat and morale. Die rolls of 1 are good and a die roll of 0 (i.e. 10) means bad news.

Figure Scale

Scale is 1:1. Each miniature represents one individual/vehicle or non-player.

Figure Classes

There are three figure classes in these rules: **Player Characters**, **Combatants** and **Non-Combatants**. Inventive gamers may add Special Figure classes that will include monsters and the occasional killer robot.

The primary Class is the **Player Characters** or **PC's**. PC's represents *you* the player(s) on the gaming table.

Combatants are units of soldiers, native warriors, gang members or rioting civilians. Units of combatants must be lead by a command figure such as a military officer or NCO, tribal chief, head of the local gang or the hothead civilian who probably started the riot in the first place. These leader figures may or may not be PC's.

Non-Combatants comprise all those unarmed bystanders wishing no part in the danger or action. Examples might be villagers, missionaries and government bureaucrats. Non-Combatants are useful plot devises for adventures. The players may have to rescue them from an evil villain or help them to reach the ship ahead of an oncoming lava flow. They can also be sources of information, supplies or loot. In the role-playing aspect of the game Non-Combatants will be played by the GM.

Designing the Scenario

This is the critical part of the GM's job. When creating the setting in which the players will act, the GM must present a rough plot around which the action will evolve. Keep it simple but clever. Start by describing the situation in a Log-Line:

Curse of the Jade Buddha: A motley assortment of archaeologists, soldiers and treasure hunters vie with Sinister Dr. Koo and Chinese locals over the whereabouts of a legendary Jade Buddha. Is it hidden somewhere in the seedy port of China Station or lost deep within the steaming bamboo jungle?

Of course it must be fleshed out from here but don't get over complicated. This is a framework. It is up to the players to inject the details. Establish the setting, determine the characters and assign their respective motivations. The scenario might be a straight up battle or a role-play intensive mystery. Solo gaming is also an acceptable alternative style of play.

Remember that the hallmarks of Victorian and pulp fiction are **atmosphere, character and action.**

Turn sequence

Initiative: at the beginning of each turn, both sides throw a 10 sided die: the side with the highest score may move and shoot first, and the loser gets to go second. Hand to Hand Combat is semi simultaneous (the side whose turn it is fights first, then survivors fight back) and is initiated at the *end* of the turn after movement and shooting... i.e. there are in effect potentially two Hand-to-Hand phases in every full game turn; each conducted at the end of each side's turn: *Remember to check morale after every Hand-to-Hand Combat.*

Movement & Shooting:

Each player may move any of their own figures capable of being moved up to their full movement allowance. The initiative turn winner's side moves and shoots first (then initiates any Hand-to-Hand attacks), then the other side gets to do the same. Units capable of moving and shooting may do so. Moving and shooting may be conducted by the owning player in any order he or she chooses to use his or her models.

Hand-to-Hand Combat Phase: All friendly figures in base contact with enemy figures may fight hand-to-hand combat.

Player Characters

Each PC needs to be created prior to the game. A PC must be assigned **Luck**, and might possibly be assigned one to three **Character Traits**.

Luck: Luck is mostly used to determine if a PC can lower a wound table result. It is useful in other circumstances but these are governed by the GM. Luck is only available to PC type figures. When creating their PC, the player rolls a D10 on the following chart to determine the PC's luck. The Luck number is usually permanent unless the GM decides to make an exception.

Die Roll Luck (D10)

1 Why Me? / Luck 3

2,3,4 A Bit Unlucky / Luck 4

4,5,6,7 Fairly Average / Luck 5

8,9 Above Average / Luck 7

10 Born Lucky / Luck 8

When a PC must roll on the 'Wound Table' they may be able to reduce the affects of the wound by making a luck roll. The player rolls a D10. If the die roll is less than or equal to their 'Luck' number on the 'Wound Table' the result is reduced to the next lowest level. For example: if a killed result is rolled and the PC makes his Luck roll the killed result becomes a wounded result. Sometimes luck can be used in other circumstances determined by the GM. An example might be a PC who wants to risk leaping over a treacherous crevasse. The GM can have the PC roll their luck to see if they make it or not.

Character Traits:

Some PC's have special traits they may use *or be forced to use if a negative trait* during a game. When it comes to creating your personality types... before your campaign game actually kicks off; if a PC rolls a 1 or a 0 (on a D10 roll): that character will possess one to three traits.

Each player successfully gaining trait(s) rolls a D6. This will determine the number of character traits a PC may have: *a roll of 1 or 2 means the PC has 1 trait, 3 or 4 means the PC has 2 traits, 5 or 6 means 3*. If a PC only has 1 trait he or she may choose either a negative or positive Character Trait. PC's who have two Character Traits will have a negative trait if (on a separate D6) a 6 is rolled. PC's who have a third trait will have a negative trait if (on a separate D6) a 5 or 6 is rolled. Character Traits are permanent once assigned. Certain Character Traits apply specifically to PC's from certain regions or of specific nationalities. The Character Trait description will indicate who may use those specific traits otherwise a PC may choose any trait. Some character traits and how they are used are listed below. I strongly encourage you to create your own, provided they keep within the 'Victorian and Pulp' spirit. But the GM always has the final say.

(Optional): Before starting play... typically a campaign game, a player may choose one of his PC's to be a main character (oneself, or game outer ego). This main character is then automatically assigned 3 traits: though determine using the normal random procedure whether the second and third trait will be a positive negative. In addition, a main character may choose one side-kick with 1 to 3 traits; determine randomly *per normal* the exact number of traits and whether these positive are or negative,

Positive Character Traits

Ambidextrous: The PC may fire two pistols in one turn or fight a hand-to-hand combat with two weapons. Two dice will be allowed each combat (as long as it's with weapons which can be used one-handed). The 'To Hit' roll remains the same.

Sixth Sense: The PC has an uncanny ability to sense trouble. When the PC figure moves into detection range of an unseen enemy or hazard, such as a trap, the player rolls a D10. If the die roll is less than or equal to their luck they will be told by the GM that, "*you have a bad feeling about this*". They will not be told specific locations or details. Detection range is 10" regardless of terrain.

Sure Shot: This PC has deadly aim with a specific weapon. The figure's basic 'To Hit' number for shooting is 6. This skill usually applies to rifles or pistols but works for bows or throwing knives also.

Excellent Weapon Master: (H-to-H weapon only) The PC is particularly good at hand-to-hand combat when using their weapon of choice. This figure will add +2 to their base 'To Hit' number in hand-to-hand combat.

Strong Like An Ox: This PC is particularly robust. The PC treats the first wounded or killed result (that turn) as abstract damage, and ignores the result. A second "Wound" or "Killed" result counts as a normal hit.

Inspired Leadership: The PC is truly admired by their followers for their charisma and bravery. Any unit directly under the command of the PC never flee the field due to a casualty loss morale check.

Charmed Life: Only available to Far Eastern PC's. The PC has more luck than others ordinarily do. This trait permits the PC to re-roll any failed luck rolls. The result of the second luck roll must be used.

Ancient Training: Only available to Far Eastern PC's. Think 'Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon'. The PC has received training in ancient arts and may fly short distances or run up walls. The PC may use these special moves 4 times during a game in place of normal movement. They may fly from ground to a rooftop or visa-versa. A flying figure may only make hand-to-hand attacks but may *not* shoot while flying.

Martial Arts: Usually only available to Far Eastern PC's. This trait gives the PC an improved hand-to-hand combat base rating of **8**.

Medical Training: Turns a wounded figure back into a fully fit figure. Turns a Killed PC into a wounded figure (usually, but this trait must be applied within 3 turns of death). A PC bought back to life by someone with medical training may attempt to recover fully (see further on in the rules); but not on the same turn the medical training was administered.

Negative Character Traits

Remember that negative Character Traits can often be more fun to play than positive Character Traits.

Blind Eye: The PC is blind in one eye. You must specify right or left. A 'blind eye' PC may only see straight ahead and up to 45 degrees to the side of their good eye. A 'blind eye' PC can't spot or shoot at any figures currently on their blind side.

Extremely Arrogant: This trait only applies to western PC's. The PC feels that all natives or foreigners are inferior. Native troops will receive no benefit from any Positive Character Trait this PC possesses.

Near Sighted: A nearsighted PC must wear their glasses or a monocle at all times. They may never have a trait rating above 6.

Clumsy: The PC is prone to bad cases of the shakes during tense situations. They must pass a luck test before shooting at an enemy single figure or unit, or before fighting in hand-to-hand combat. If the luck test fails they have dropped their weapon, stand frozen on the spot, etc and may not shoot or fight back during that turn. The PC may still be shot at and attacked in hand-to-hand combat.

Impetuous: The PC prefers closing with cold steel to shooting from a distance. Any turn in which the PC is within movement distance of an enemy unit they must check their luck. If the check is passed the PC will act as the player wishes.

If the test is failed the PC must charge the nearest enemy. If the PC is a commander he/she will take their unit with them in the charge. If they are commanded by another figure (the character is an NCO and has a superior officer for example) they will obey their commander. If they are not currently under the command of a superior officer (he/she may not be with the unit or is currently out of sight) then the PC must check for the impetuous charge.

Terrain Effects

Open, Crops: Open areas have light or no vegetation. Open areas do not affect movement or visibility. Mature crops provide concealment but do not affect movement. Visibility is 4".

Forest, Jungle: Foot units move at their normal rate through forest. Visibility in a forest is 16". Jungle cuts movement by ½ and visibility is 8". Forest or jungle provides light cover.

Rivers, Streams and Swamp: Streams can usually be crossed at ½ of the figure's movement rate. Rivers are normally too wide to cross but can be crossed at a ford if one exists. Units crossing at a ford move at ½ their normal move rate. Swamps can vary and crossing them is the prerogative of the GM. Avoiding quicksand or black mambas might require a Luck Roll.

Roads and Trails: Roads and trails pass through and over any type of terrain and figures move as if it were open ground. Units on a road do not benefit from any cover.

Cover Provided by Built Up Areas: When in towns, villages and other settlements visibility is line of sight. Figures may see up to a building but not through it. Huts provide concealment

but do not provide cover from shooting. Buildings made from mud or clay bricks provide light cover. Buildings built from logs, fieldstone or kiln fired bricks provide medium cover. Fortifications are deliberately stronger than civilian buildings and provide hard cover.

Hills: The GM will govern movement penalties depending on the grade of the hill. Default is ½. Line of sight can also be affected by the presence of a hill.

Movement

Western Male 6"

Armoured (Impervious Suit, Kreighosen Clockwork War Pants etc) 4"

Pigmies, Western Female 4"

Native 8"

Pack Horses, Camels 6"

Slow Animals (Mules, Oxen, Elephants) 4"

Horses, Fast Animals (Lions, Tigers, etc) 10"

Ranged Combat

Ranged combat occurs when a unit fires at an opposing unit. The target must be within range. Combatant may move then shoot, or shoot then move... or may move part of their turn allowance, shoot a weapon, and then continue moving the rest of their movement allowance.

Weapon Ranges

Small Arms Weapon Class / Short Long Range

Pistols, Bows 4" 12"

Bolt Action Rifle 6" 14"

Shotgun (2 Dice) 4" 10"

Jezzail, Musket 6" 12"

Thrown Spears 6" NA

Small Arms Machine Gun Type Weapons (3 dice) 6" 12"

High Powered Rifle (3 Dice) 6" 18"

Heavy Machine Gun, Maxim Gun – or Death Ray (4 dice) 10" 20"

Shooting

The firing unit must have line of sight to the target. Most weapons roll only one D10. (e.g. A unit of ten rifle armed figures throw 10 D10 for hits). Each weapon has a **Base Hit Number** of 4 or less. A PC with the *sure shot* character trait has a base hit number of 6. The base hit number is modified according to the Shooting Modifiers Table.

Shooting Modifiers

Target is within short range +2

Shooter is stationary +2

Target is in soft cover -1 (jungle undergrowth, hedge, behind a tree, etc)

Target is in medium cover -2 (behind a stone wall, barricade, etc)

Target is in Hard cover -3 (inside a building)

In addition: firing at an Impervious Suit, Kreighosen Clockwork War Pants receive -1

Each D10 that rolls less than or equal to the modified hit number will score a hit. The GM may decide to make Players roll dice to determine randomly which figures within the target unit are hit. PC's may always pick their targets for themselves. Any figures that are hit must roll for results on the 'Wound Table'.

Jezzail/Musket Firing Restrictions

Due to the process required to load a musket, figures with these weapons shoot only if they remained stationary that turn, but do not receive a stationary bonus while taking their shot.

Heavy Machine Guns (Maxim or Lewis types)

Due to their high rate of fire machine guns roll 4 D10 for hits. Machine guns usually require a crew of at least 2 figures. One figure fires the gun while the other loads ammo. If a machine gun is being fired by a single figure it only rolls 2 D10. It takes one turn after moving with a maxim type machine gun to prepare the position and ammunition before it may be fired. A Lewis type machine gun is fed ammunition by a round canister that is mounted on the top of the gun. A Lewis gun will always roll 4 D10. A Lewis gun must spend one turn reloading for every three turns of firing and may not fire during the reloading turn. The crew must remain stationary to change the ammunition canister. If loaded, a Lewis gun may be fired in a turn during which the gun crew moved.

Machine Gun Type Weapons

These weapons can be carried by a single figure. They roll 3 D10 per figure. For simplicity players do not have to worry about reloading these weapons; therefore they may fire every turn and are treated as a regular small arms weapon for moving purposes.

(All) Machine Gun Following Fire

Follow on fire for machine guns means that once a target has been picked (and hit) the next `to hit` die must be placed on a target within 4" of the first, and so on with the next `to hit` roll etc. GM discretion may be called for.

Hand-to-Hand Combat

Hand-to-hand combat occurs when enemy figures are in base contact. Non-combatants and groups armed with improvised weapons (table legs, farm tools, broken bottles etc.) normally will not advance to engage properly armed figures.

Resolving Hand-to-Hand Combat

Hand-to-hand combat is resolved in a manner similar to ranged combats. Each figure in base contact with an enemy rolls one D10. Figures have a base hit number shown in the 'Hand-to-Hand Combat Chart'. This base number can be modified according to the 'Hand-to-Hand Combat Modifiers' chart.

Hand-to-Hand Combat Chart Weapon Base Hit Number (D10)

Figure trained in Martial Arts.

8

Traditionally armed Native, Soldier with bayonet

Trained Swordsman, Experienced Street fighter. Impervious Suit, Kreighosen Clockwork War Pants.

7

Figure armed with firearm without bayonet, Native with firearm, Peasant with club, axe etc.

6

figures with improvised weapons, non-military personnel and all others who have limited knowledge of fighting

4

Hand-to-Hand Combat Modifiers

Opponent is behind a low wall or barricade -3

Opponent is defending a doorway -2

Opponent is on higher platform/up-stairs -1

Opponent is an Impervious Suit or Kreighosen Clockwork War Pants -1

A modified hit number can never be less than 1. For each D10 roll that is less than or equal to the final hit number one enemy figure receives a hit. The GM may make Players roll randomly to determine which figures receive the hits. PC`s may pick which figures they attack. Figures who are hit must roll on the ‘Wound Table’ to determine results.

A PC led unit will generally act in a manner responsive to the leadership displayed by the PC. This may be good or bad for the player depending upon how the GM views his leadership. The boys may fight to the death for a particularly inspiring leader or they may surrender early just to be rid of the slob in command.

Combat Results For Shooting and Hand-to-Hand

Each figure that receives a hit during combat must roll a D10 and check the ‘Wound Table’ to determine the result. Figures hit more than once must take the worst result.

Wound Table

D6 Die roll Results

1 No effect

2,3,4 Figure wounded

5,6 Figure killed

Wound Table Modifiers

+1 if shot by shotgun

+1 if fighting in hand-to-hand combat

-1 if hit figure used shield in hand-to-hand combat, is an Impervious Suit,
or Kreighosen Clockwork War Pants

Wound Table Results:

No effect. The figure may continue to act as the player wishes.

Figure wounded. The figure may not move independently, shoot or fight. The figure must be helped by another figure if they wish to move. Wounded figures may be taken prisoner or attacked by an enemy figure in base contact. A wounded figure that is wounded a second time is killed. Only PC`s may be wounded. Others count this result as “killed.”

Once per turn (at the *end of that* player`s turn), a wounded PC may roll a D6. If the result of that roll is a 6, the wounded PC returns to fighting fitness and the wound is forgotten.

Figure is killed. The figure is dead. Consult the ‘Cliff-hanger’ rule if the figure is a PC.

Morale

The morale point is a number that is used to check a figure or unit's state of mind. Figures must check morale if they were shot at or after hand-to-hand combat. The base morale points are listed below.

Troop Type Base Morale Value*

Trained Soldiers, Fanatics 10

Native Warriors, Untrained Militias 8

Villagers, Civilians 6

**These are only guidelines and may be modified as the GM sees fit.*

The base morale point of a figure or unit can be modified by circumstances. The morale modifiers are listed in the following chart.

Morale Condition Modifier

Adjacent to enemy figure having been engaged in hand-to-hand combat this turn -1

Each friendly figure within 2`` killed this turn -1

No leader/ PC present -1

Seeing another friendly figure within 2`` run this turn -1

Led by inspired leader +1

To check morale, apply any applicable modifiers to the tester's base morale point. Roll a D10. If the resulting number is less than or equal to the modified morale value, the tester may carry on unaffected. If the die roll is greater than the modified morale value, the tester fails the morale check and must suffer the appropriate consequences.

Failing morale from shooting

If a figure fails another morale check caused by shooting, that figure must retreat a full move away from the enemy (use GM's discretion when in doubt). Figures retreating in this way can move, shoot or hand-to-hand normally next turn.

Failing Morale after Hand-to-Hand combat

After hand-to-hand combat, figures must check morale. Any figure failing a morale check routs. A routing figure moves *immediately* a full movement away from the enemy (use GM's discretion when in doubt) and is not permitted to make any ranged attacks or defend itself in hand-to-hand combat. At the beginning of each successive turn roll a D6: if the roll is 1 to 5 (1 to 4 for PC's) the figure continues moving away from the enemy. If the roll is a 6 (5 or 6 for a PC) the figure stops running and may continue to fight as normal.

A figure retreating or routing off the table is removed from play.

Specialist Units and Individual models *such as a Maxim Gun, or a lone Impervious Suit* never checks morale.

Optional Rule: *When the bad guys suffers over 50% figure loss. The whole side must retire from the game; this can either be played out (if time permits) or the game ends immediately and is classed as an automatic win for the good guys.*

Optional Rule: *Good guy (hero) PC's never need check morale. However, bad guys do, and must retire from play with their men if their unit suffers the 50% casualty rule.*

Optional Rule: *Instead of having figures rout when failing their morale, the GM may decide that routed figures become disrupted or broken. Such figures have a token placed under their bases. They do not run away (unless safer cover lies less than a single move distance away) but cannot make ranged attacks or defend themselves in hand-to-hand combat. Determine rally attempts each successive turn, as normal.*

The Cliff-Hanger Rule

If a PC is killed during a game there is a chance that, through some incredible miracle, they may have cheated death in spite of what all the other players witnessed. At the end of a game, a player whose PC's died may invoke the 'Cliff-Hanger' rule. If the GM decides to allow it, the player is allowed to make one last Luck Roll. If the final Luck Roll is passed, the PC has indeed survived and is available for the next game.

The Cliff-Hanger rule can also be applied to non-combat or non-lethal situations, such as:

(Victorian) *"Climbing to safety in a conveniently placed tree before the charging Lion reaches its next meal"* *"Remembering just enough Native tongue to persuade the tribal chief to postpone boiling their guests over the flames of the huge cooking pot"* *"Making it safely across the ancient and rickety rope bridge - just before the ropes break"*.

(Pulp) *"breaking free of the chains and managing to leap to safety just before the giant saw cuts the hero in half"* *"jumping from the car just before it plunges over the cliff"* *Winning at cards when under cover in the Gangster Bosses gambling den"* *"Flirting with and winning the heart of a swell dame"*

Also, use this rule to tie up all the loose ends in an ongoing campaign story line.

© 2011, Stephen A Gilbert.

Pulp Tools of the Trade

The pulps were brimming with gizmos and gadgets. Some devices were designed to aid the hero and facilitate their daring escapes or otherwise thwart the evil villain's plan. Other devices were inventions by the villains themselves-usually something pretty nasty that no self-respecting hero would ever dream of using themselves. This list is a compilation of gizmo and devices we believe are typical of the genre. It is by no means complete but we hope these examples can guide Rugged Adventures scenario designers to invent their own fantastic gizmos for use by and against the forces of evil. Keep in mind also that these are only suggestions and the GM should modify the equipment to suit the plot-line of the game.

Heroic Devices & Inventions

It should be noted that many of these devices, the apex of fantastic inventiveness within classic Victorian literature and the pulp magazines, are now devices we have with us as reality in the modern world. Please forget the actual known properties of items such as bullet proof vests and scuba gear in favour of the fantastic and imaginative uses to which the Great Pulp Heroes put them to.

Silk Grappling Line: This is a compact but strong rope made of super-silk. It has a small, folding barb grappling hook attached to it. The line can reach up to three stories and will allow a PC to scale walls.

It takes one turn of movement to scale a 2 story building with this line. Shorter obstacles will require the GM to decide how much movement is needed. Any excess movement can be used to move past the obstacle or on the roof of a building. The grapple once removed and folded up, conveniently fits into a pocket.

Vials of Acid: Although these might sound like a recipe for disaster, characters in the pulps could use their acid vials to eat through metal bars, jail cell locks or rope that was used to bind hands and feet. Many a pulp hero carried at least one acid vial which was always handy when the hero found himself in a tight spot.

Anaesthetic Gas Grenades: These grenades are glass balls that break when thrown or are stepped on. Anaesthetic gas grenades have a 4' burst radius. Any figure inside of the radius must roll 3 or less on a D10 to successfully hold their breath, otherwise they are knocked unconscious. Figures that successfully hold their breath must move out of the burst radius of the gas grenade and cannot move or shoot during their next turn.

Unconscious figures may not do anything until they waken. The strength of the anaesthetic gas and the number of turns it produces unconsciousness should be determined prior to the game by the GM.

Unconscious figures may be captured if they can be carried or dragged by another figure or loaded into a vehicle. Unconscious figures should not be killed-it just isn't done.

Smoke Bomb: These grenades create a greasy thick smoke that blocks all lines of sight through it. The smoke cloud has a 5' radius and lasts for 2 turns. It may last less time if there is a strong wind. The smoke bomb is a handy technique for an emergency exit from a tight spot. The smoke is non-toxic and does not cause damage.

Mercy Bullets: These non-lethal bullets contain a powerful anaesthetic that is absorbed through the skin when the bullet hits a body and disintegrates. Mercy bullets have no penetration. It is assumed that the anaesthetic is also absorbed through clothing. Mercy bullets can't hit figures in vehicles unless there are open windows or the GM decides otherwise. Figures hit by mercy bullets roll on the Wounds Table but add +2. Non-PC figures killed or wounded are considered knocked unconscious and may not be used for the remainder of the game.

Of course they will awake a few hours later, bruised by the mercy bullets but otherwise unharmed. PC's rendered unconscious by mercy bullets roll a D10 every turn thereafter and regain consciousness on a roll of 3 or less.

Rapid Fire Machine Pistol: This weapon is a highly advanced miniature sub-machinegun with an exceptionally high rate of fire. It has the same range as a pistol. The rapid fire machine pistol may fire on full automatic: 4 dice per turn with a base hit number of 3, or single shot: 1 die per turn with base hit number of 5. Certain moralistic heroes have adapted this otherwise deadly weapon to fire mercy bullets. The GM will determine if there are ammunition limitations.

Anaesthetic Thimble: Designed to fit on the end of a finger, the anaesthetic thimble uses a tranquilizing drug that is injected into the victim during hand-to-hand combat. A non- PC figure hit by a PC who is using anaesthetic thimbles adds +3 to their Wounds Table die roll. Killed figures are considered unconscious for the remainder of the game.

A PC who is tranquilized by this device rolls a D10 every turn thereafter and regains consciousness on a roll of 3 or less. The thimble may only be used 3 times during a game before it runs out of anaesthetic.

Resuscitating Drug: This compound will cancel the effect of a knock-out anaesthetic. The unconscious figure will wake up during the turn the resuscitating drug is administered on any result of a D10 roll except 10. Only PC's with medical skills should be equipped with Resuscitating Drugs. A D6 can be used to determine the number of doses available.

Flash Grenades: Flash grenades are used to stun all enemy within the grenade's blast radius. The flash grenade is thrown at the beginning of the Shooting Phase. The resulting flash temporarily blinds anyone who has not shielded their eyes in anticipation of the detonation. It is assumed that the figure tossing the grenade and their immediate unit of followers have been warned in advance. Flash grenades will cause all enemy figures within 8" of the grenade impact point to become stunned and unable to move or shoot for the remainder of the turn. The effect of a flash grenade will only last for that turn.

Underwater Breather: This apparatus is a self contained, compressed air supply. It has an air hose and mouth piece attached to it. The figure using it is assumed to have the compressed air tank with them and can access this emergency air-supply when needed. As well as being useful when used under water it can also be used to negate the effects of certain types of poison gas.

A breathing apparatus will have enough air to last for 4 turns. Larger breathing apparatus may be available and the GM should determine how many turns of air they contain.

Rocket Propelled Zip Wire: To outward appearances it is an ordinary fountain pen set. In reality this device is a miniature rocket connected to an ultra thin and strong spool of wire. The hero equipped with this device can use it to make a speedy decent from a high cliff or building by firing the line to another location of a lesser height and then zipping down the wire. The PC must be stationary during the movement phase to shoot their zip wire. The wire has a 14" range. They may fire the line and then "zip down the wire" in the same turn. The figure finishes the turn at the bottom location where the zip wire was shot. The figure may not move any farther that turn. The PC may still shoot or take part in hand-to-hand combat after using a zip wire. A luck roll is required to ensure successful deployment of the zip wire. If the luck roll is unsuccessful the zip wire has missed the target and can't be used. The PC who misses with his zip wire may use up to ½ of any other type of movement rate the player chooses.

Bullet Proof Vests: Usually concealed beneath clothing, these vests are designed to stop bullets and most cutting types of weapons. A nasty bruise will often result but the wearer's life will be spared. If a figure wearing a bullet proof vest is hit in any type of combat roll a D10. If the die roll is 6 or less the vest took the hit. Any killed or wounded results become misses. If the die roll is 7 or more the vest was missed so all Wounds Table die rolls apply normally.

Lock Pick Set: These handy tools are not only used by the criminal element but come in handy for getting into secret evil lairs and getting out of not so secret jail cells. It will take at least one turn to pick a lock. Often, a luck roll will be the requirement unless the figure is a skilled locksmith. A PC who is picking a lock may not move during the turn he or she is thus engaged.

Whips: Whips may be used as a weapon during the hand-to-hand combat phase. The basic hit number is 6. A whip has a range of 3" and may be used against an enemy. As well, whips may be used by PC's to grab an object, knock a weapon from an enemy's grasp or snare an overhead structure to swing over a gap. To swing, the GM must rule that a suitable chandelier, tree branch, beam or the like, is available. To snare the overhead structure the player must roll a successful hit with the whip and then pass their luck roll to guarantee a hold. Up to two figures may swing over a gap up to 6" wide. The action requires the whole of the movement phase and assumes that the whip can be retracted.

The Universal Multi-Tool: This type of device is often a standby for the faithful and inventive sidekick. It is a wonder of complex gadgetry which encompasses nearly all of the contents of a well equipped tool chest in a single compact and miniaturized device. At a critical moment of the plot, the Multi-Tool is whipped out with a dramatic flourish whereupon it is used to undue bolts of any size, cut important wires (the red one or the blue?), or otherwise perform miracles with machinery or electrical equipment. The Multi-Tool is most often used to facilitate impossible escapes.

The figure equipped with this type of device receives a +4 to their luck roll when attempting a GM approved, appropriate task. Please note that the other members of the Universal Multi-Tool equipped figure's group should scoff at the device at the beginning of the game, with phrases like; "*That crazy thing'll never work!*"

Implements of Evil

Pulp villains can also draw from an arsenal of bizarre and innovative devices. The main difference between these inventions and those used by heroes is, of course, the deadly and destructive nature of most of the articles listed below. Please note also that these tend to be small weapons, useful only in battles against limited groups of opponents and not the world threatening weapons of mass destruction that are often the plot device Alfred Hitchcock called 'a muggufin', - an object of enormous but irrelevant power that drives the plot of the story. Please avoid giant death rays capable of destroying whole fleets of battleships, unless they are missing a critical component which by being absent from the device, renders it useless. These omnipotent weapons can drive a game plot but should never over-run it.

Poison Gas: A nasty invention like poison gas is used by villains. It may be coloured but will always appear as a fog. Due to its weight it will remain close to the ground and settles downward from higher doors and walls. Poison gas lasts for 3 turns unless the GM decides otherwise. Figures caught in a poison gas cloud must roll 7 or more to hold their breath successfully. They must then move as quickly as possible away from the gas until they are no longer within the cloud or it has dispersed. Figures that fail to hold their breath are affected by the poison gas. They must roll on the Wounds Table and add +3 during the first turn, +2 during the second turn and +1 during the third turn that the gas is in play. Gassed figures that receive wounded results on the Wounds Table are considered killed. Poison gas is dispensed from bombs, artillery shells, gas grenades and compressed air cylinders.

Acid Vapour: Attacks are resolved the same as for poison gas except that the result is a dramatic and horrible dissolution of the victim. The affected figures are dissolved leaving only a contorted skeleton to warn those who come after them.

Madness Mist: This is similar to poison gas except that the victim suffers not death but a violent madness wherein they will charge and attack their nearest friends or enemies in an uncontrolled frenzy. The effects of madness mist last for 2 turns. All fighting is hand-to hand (biting and clawing) and no morale tests are taken. When the madness has passed on turn 3, the figure must recover for a turn.

Hair Pins of Death: Often a weapon used by a Femme Fatale, these appear to be normal hair pins at first glance but in reality are sharp steel stilettos. They are used as daggers in hand-to-hand combat. The first turn they are employed, the user should get a +2 Hand-to-Hand Combat Chart modifier for surprise. Use the Wound Table to determine the result. These hair pins may be treated with poison or knock out drops as well.

The Death Ray: This device is usually a large apparatus composed of steel and glass, often as big as an automobile. Able to project its beam of energy over miles, the Death Ray will melt metal and ignite flammable materials. As mentioned above, such a device is often too powerful for use in a game. If a functioning death ray is present on the table, we recommend that it requires a D10 roll to determine its 'power-up' time.

The GM will have to determine the radius of the effect area and the number of hit dice it does. A Death Ray has a base hit number of 6. Due to the destructive nature of the beam, non-PC's suffer a +3 on the Wounds Table. PC's role normally on the Wounds Table. A Death Ray has no range limitation on the table but does require a direct line of sight so remember heroes, stay behind that hill.

The Mind Transference Machine: By using this device, which resembles a pair of barber chairs and some fancy electrical do-hickys, a villainous scientist can swap minds between two different people. It takes two turns to complete a brain transfer. Roll a D10 and a result of 6 or less indicates a successful transfer. After the transfer, the figures must assume reverse roles and characteristics. This device offers some interesting possibilities, such as the villain taking the guise of General 'Bullwhip' Curtis to gain access to the Pentagon planning room!

Knockout Drops: Sometimes known as a Mickey Finn, these potent drops are added to the food or drink of the intended victim. This is a preferred tactic when the villain needs to kidnap a character without resorting to a noisy scuffle. Knockout Drops are effective immediately, the victim having only time enough to slur the words, "*why you dirty...*" The duration of unconsciousness depends upon the GM's requirements. 2 turns is usually enough time to pack the victim into a car and get away with them. If the victim is a PC, there is a chance they might have 'got wise' and avoided the Mickey Finn by pouring their drink into the nearest potted plant. This should be determined by a luck role. Heroes often fake unconsciousness to get inside of a villain's hideout. Antidotes: An antidote is a cure for poison. Pulp villains will have an antidote for their poison so they can mock or manipulate their victim.

Dr. Koo gazed at Costigan, "*Over the last week, you have been given a slow poison in your food. The antidote has been added to your drink. Reveal the secret code or I will withhold the antidote and you will suffer a most slow and painful death.*" Or "*Your daughter has been given a dose of very toxic venom. In 3 hours she will die unless she is given this antidote.*" The Crimson Scorpion held up a small vial allowing the clear liquid within to glint in the candle light. "*If you carry out my instructions she will be given the antidote. If not, her death will be on your head not mine!*" Of course, a hero with medical knowledge can make an antidote for the poison if they can get a sample of it.

Sometimes it is even prudent to take an antidote in advance when setting off to confront certain evil fiends who are known to employ poisons. Antidotes act quickly (in the pulps) and their effect is almost instantaneous.

Voodoo Zombie Dust: A mystical powder known only to the highest Voodoo priests of Haiti the swamplands of Louisiana, or any semi-mythical lands the GM has created. Zombie Dust is rumoured to enable the user to raise the dead and enslave them for evil purposes. The evil user of Zombie Dust must find a suitably fresh corpse, preferably one only a few hours dead and it must be physically intact, i.e.; no missing parts. Successful re-animation requires a roll of 6 or more on a D10. The dust requires 1 turn to take effect. The zombie requires a direct, simple command from its master who must keep within 12" of the zombie to maintain control and keep it moving. A zombie out of control range will stop moving and stand passively with a blank expression. Zombies always shamle- use combat speed as they are slow. They may not use firearms (effectively) but machetes and clubs are suitable weapons. (Pulp zombies do not eat brains!) Zombies can fight in hand-to-hand combat and are destroyed when wounded or killed in the regular way.

The main advantage of commanding a zombie or a zombie unit lays in unquestioning obedience to their master. Zombies do not take morale tests. The effect of the dust is temporary, 2-6 days. Eventually the Zombie will return to being an ordinary corpse. It is rumoured that Zombie Dust is a remnant of an ancient Egyptian recipe used for reviving mummies. If this were true, one might apply these guidelines to a game set in the Nile Valley

