

1. THE JOB

Despite the prolific use of SWAT in our modern times, specialized police squads have not always been as well-equipped and well-organized as they are today. From the days of Elliot Ness' *Untouchables* to the counter-terrorist forces of today's hostage rescue teams, SWAT has evolved into a highly structured, well-trained, and elite organization.

The Evolution of SWAT

The earliest special police squads were often little more than aggressive and independent officers that banded together to deal with increasingly dangerous threats using whatever methods they could find.

Strongarm and Gunman Squads

In the latter part of the 19th Century, in an effort to deal with increasing crime, New York City formed officers into small groups called "strongarm squads." These squads, armed only with billyclubs, were tasked with anti-crime and crime suppression activities, and received special training in teamwork and tactics.

By the 1920s, law enforcement agencies faced a new threat – organized crime. Prohibition-era gangsters carried dangerous weapons (including the ubiquitous "Tommy Gun"), and billyclub-wielding cops were no longer sufficient.

In 1925, the New York Police Department formed the Emergency Services Unit (ESU). Part of the ESU included the elite Firearms Battalion (FB) – colloquially called the "machine-gun squad" or "gunman squad" – a specialized group of officers armed with handguns, shotguns, rifles, and submachine-guns. The FB patrolled NYC in green trucks, targeting gangs and gang-related crimes. They became the Mobile Security Unit (MSU) in the late 1940s, and formed the Stakeout Squad in the 60s. The Stakeout Squad received automatic weapons and counter-terrorist training in the 1970s, and the entire MSU was reintegrated into ESU in the 1980s. Today, New York's ESU is responsible for all of NYC's SWAT operations (see *Emergency Services Unit*, p. 00).

The National Guard

Throughout the turbulent 1960s, police agencies around the world were facing civil unrest and the growing threat of terrorism. Some countries used military force when

available. Others formed national paramilitary police units. The U.S. relied on the National Guard.

In especially dangerous or uncontrolled situations, local law enforcement commanders had to decide whether to request support from the Guard – a decision similar to the ones made by today’s police before calling in SWAT. Unfortunately, Guardsmen – though trained to protect the country in times of war – were relatively unskilled in police tactics, often resulting in less-than-ideal incident resolutions.

LAPD TAKES THE LEAD

In 1967, the Los Angeles Police Department began adopting military tactics and equipment to deal with this new urban warfare. Officers with military experience and a detachment of local Marines trained and advised the department, developing a doctrine for applying military tactics and weapons to civil situations. By the end of the year, LAPD had formed D-Platoon, a third Metro division.

D-Platoon

LAPD’s Daryl Gates suggested that D-Platoon be given an easily recognizable name. At that time, SWAT was to stand for *Special Weapons Attack Team* – a name that was rejected by his superiors. Gates and D-Platoon soon modified the name, and the first SWAT team – *Special Weapons and Tactics* – was born.

Originally formed primarily as a counter-sniper unit, SWAT was soon called upon to deal with hostage rescues, barricaded suspects, and more (see *Duties*, p. 00). The first full-scale operation occurred in 1969 against the Black Panthers.

The Black Panthers

When a pair of Black Panthers (a well-armed black rights lobby) threatened to kill a police officer in December 1969, arrest warrants were issued. The Panthers occupied a heavily fortified building on South Central Avenue, and they were known to be well armed and willing to kill. SWAT was tasked with delivering the warrants, and deployed forty officers at a nearby building on December 8 at 5:00 a.m. When the team attempted to serve the warrants, the Panthers opened fire with a score of weapons, including a dozen rifles, five shotguns, and even a Thompson submachine gun. Three SWAT members were hit and extracted, and a gun battle ensued that lasted for hours. The SWAT team tried to requisition an M79 grenade launcher to breach the fortified building, but before the weapon arrived – after a half-day siege – the Black Panthers surrendered and LAPD SWAT had its first of many victories.

The Symbionese Liberation Army

In May 1974, the team faced one of the most famous SWAT incidents in U.S. history. The Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA) was a paramilitary group responsible for numerous robberies and murders (including one using a cyanide-tipped bullet), as well as the kidnapping of heiress Patty Hearst who was eventually converted to their cause.

LAPD deployed over a hundred patrolmen and twenty-five SWAT officers, then used a bullhorn to demand that the SLA surrender. They fired tear gas into the house, and were rewarded with machine-gun fire from a .30-06 Browning BAR (p. HT118). The subsequent gun battle lasted for nearly an hour, until the front of the building erupted into flame. The entire building was involved in less than a minute, but EMS personnel and firefighters could not respond, because the SLA continued firing automatic weapons even as the building burned to the ground. In only ten minutes, the firing had stopped and the building collapsed. There were no survivors.

THE PROLIFERATION OF SWAT

Police departments around the US soon began to develop special teams like Los Angeles SWAT. Many used D-Platoon's organization and doctrine as a basis for forming their own teams; some even cross-trained with LAPD and initially adopted their operating procedures wholesale.

Today, literally thousands of tactical teams exist worldwide. They use different names (see box, p. 00), and specific tactics may vary, but their mission remains the same – the application of specialized equipment and tactics to resolve unusually dangerous criminal incidents.

Organization

Team structure and organization varies widely. SWAT personnel are drawn from the ranks of the police department and must meet rigid selection criteria and psychological testing. A posting to the SWAT team is highly sought after, and there are far more applicants than openings (see *Officer Selection Guidelines*, p. 00).

SWAT teams are typically organized on a pyramid-style structure with a single commander at the top (usually a captain). The SWAT commander generally responds with his team and often acts as incident commander (p. 00). Beneath the primary SWAT commander are one or more teams, each directed by a team leader (a lieutenant). The team leader may command one or two teams, each of which is broken

down further into two-man elements (p. 00). The exact number of men on a team, and the number of individual teams, varies widely.

METROPOLITAN SWAT

Large metropolitan areas, especially those with heavy gang influences, often have a dedicated, full-time SWAT team (e.g., Dallas, Los Angeles, San Jose, Miami, New York). The teams are still relatively small (LAPD SWAT maintains less than 70 full-time officers, many other cities have half that).

Most departments allow – or require – that the officer’s tactical gear be with him at all times in order to speed response time. Some departments allow their officers to carry extra tactical gear, which can be shared with other SWAT officers as needed. Although he may carry a sidearm, most of SWAT’s heavy firepower is kept under lock and key (e.g., a shotgun locked between the seats, an MP5 and body armor locked in the trunk).

Full-time metropolitan SWAT teams get plenty of work. Most will engage in operations on at least a weekly basis; LAPD SWAT receives a callout almost daily. See pp. 00-00 for some sample metropolitan SWAT teams.

SMALL TOWN SWAT

The majority of SWAT teams in the United States function in small or average sized towns. In most cases, a full-time team is neither necessary nor practical. Therefore, most teams are composed of regular patrol officers that have received special training; they perform their regular duties until a SWAT call up (see *Between Missions*, p. 00).

Part-time SWAT officers are usually on 24-hour call, and carry a cell phone, radio, or pager. In most departments, a SWAT officer is considered on-call unless special arrangements are made (e.g., for trips out of state, hospital stays, etc).

A typical small-town team might have a dozen officers commanded by a Captain. Such a team might comprise two entry teams of four men each, a pair of sniper/observer teams, and a negotiator or two.

Small town SWAT teams will generally be called up infrequently, with weeks or even months passing between callouts.

Training and Equipment

Due to budget limitations, smaller police departments often cannot afford the latest and greatest in equipment, meaning SWAT officers will often be using solid, but less-

than-cutting-edge gear. SWAT sometimes receives costly gear at the expense of the rest of the department, which may engender some hard feelings in non-SWAT officers.

Part-time SWAT teams train regularly; the actual schedule and type of training varies widely from department to department. Some receive little more than a day or two a month at the shooting range, while others train weekly in a kill house (p. 00) or cross-train with other, larger teams (e.g., California teams may be able to spend a week cross-training with LAPD's SWAT, using their facilities). See also *Training*, p. 00.

FEDERAL SWAT

The U.S. government has a number of federal tactical teams, which operate in a similar manner to municipal SWAT. But federal teams differ in both the scope of their missions and in their jurisdiction. Federal teams are generally larger than local teams, but because they cover a much wider territory, they cannot always bring a large number of officers to bear. Still, deliberate actions (p. 00) may involve hundred of SWAT officers, if enough time is available.

In addition, local SWAT officers generally leave the investigations to detectives in the appropriate division (e.g., robbery/homicide), whereas federal agents may be able to run their own investigations, thereby expanding the scope of the SWAT campaign to include detailed investigations punctuated by fast action and deadly combat.

Sample federal tactical teams include the ATF Special Response Team (p. 00), the FBI Hostage Rescue Team (p. 00), the U.S. Border Patrol Tactical Unit and REACT teams, the U.S. Department of Energy Special Reaction Teams, the U.S. Marshals Service Special Operations Group (p. 00), and even the U.S. Mint Police Special Response Team and the National Park Service Special Events Team!

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PRIVATE SWAT

Specially trained teams of security personnel are a staple of modern fiction, and are especially appropriate for a **GURPS Cyberpunk** crossover campaign (p. 00).

Corporations with sufficient clout may maintain a SWAT-like team whose assignments can range from corporate security and counter-intelligence to industrial espionage and assassination. Private security companies may provide teams-for-hire that respond to civilian incidents or compete with other police teams in an odd mix of cops versus corporations (e.g., the movie *Robocop*).

Private teams would be free from the constraints of modern-day police regulations, but might still be called upon to answer to the authorities for their actions.

Detailed coverage of private and corporate SWAT teams is beyond the scope of this book, but GMs should especially refer to Chapters 2 and 4 for suggestions on tactics and equipment. ***GURPS Modern Firepower*** and ***GURPS Special Ops*** can also provide fodder for such a campaign.

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JURISDICTION

SWAT teams may be called upon to cover a very large geographic area. If a county team is available, they may be able to cover nearby rural areas. In other cases, the town's SWAT team will have jurisdiction of 10,000 square miles or more!

Small SWAT teams may be able to call in support from nearby teams in the event of an especially difficult or messy tactical operation (e.g., maritime takedowns, large paramilitary operations, extended sieges). Usually such an arrangement is worked out ahead of time, to minimize response time from the assisting team.

Generally speaking, however, SWAT operations are undertaken by the team whose agency is executing the mission, regardless of the physical location of the incident. For example, a search warrant for a suburban home that is issued by the county sheriff's department will generally be served by the county's tactical team. A warrant issued by the metropolitan police department – on the same house – will be served by the city team.

GMs should keep in mind that a SWAT commander is often willing to let someone else do dangerous assaults, thereby keeping his team safe.

Training

The U.S. Justice Department recommends that tactical teams spend 25% of their time training. Most full-time teams spend closer to 30-40%; part-time teams usually spend less. Foreign teams fall in approximately the same range.

Weapons handling, CQB tactics, and movement drills take up most of that time, with daily, weekly, or monthly drills, usually depending on the department's size and budget. Other training, such as climbing and rappelling, is done more infrequently.

Specialized training may be available, allowing SWAT officers to learn hostage negotiation, triage, sniping and observation, etc (see *Specialized Training*, p. 00).

CQB Houses

One of the most famous tools in SWAT training is the CQB house (often called a “kill house”). The size and style of construction varies widely. Many are made from plywood and feature paper targets (pictures of suspects and hostages) stapled into place. For live-fire exercises, stacks of discarded tires are often used to form thick walls (called a “tire house”), or steel and Kevlar may be sandwiched between wooden walls. Some kill houses include a catwalk superstructure, allowing training officers to oversee simulated combat sessions; pre-mounted video cameras are often used as well. Kill house training can be done with paintball guns, dye marker ammunition, or live ammo.

GMs can make good use of a CQB house (and training in general) by running one or more adventures centered on such training. This will help players to get accustomed to SWAT tactics, and can provide plenty of opportunities for roleplay.

Most SWAT teams – especially part-time teams – do not have their own CQB house, but usually make arrangements to share training facilities of larger, nearby teams.

Duties

Until the 1970s, police departments were, for the most part, reactive units, waiting until a crime had been committed before dealing with it. SWAT, however, is both proactive and reactive, dealing not only with crimes in progress, but working on anti-crime operations, actively looking for trouble before trouble finds them.

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COPS, NOT SOLDIERS

Despite their unusual tactics and equipment, SWAT officers are law enforcement personnel, not soldiers. They follow strict guidelines that dictate when and how to apply force of any kind, but especially deadly force. They are under the same restrictions as “regular” cops, and the GM should not hesitate to dole out appropriate in-game discipline for characters that insist on pushing the limits.

The goal of any SWAT operation is peaceful resolution whenever possible. Crisis situations should end in the arrest – not the death – of any suspects, making SWAT operations especially difficult for the individual officer. He must identify threats, order compliance, and attempt to resolve the situation (see *Game Mechanics for Room Clearing*, p. 00), without resorting to deadly force unless absolutely necessary.

See **GURPS Cops** for detailed information on proper police procedure.

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Emergency Action

Emergency actions include responding to bank robberies, barricaded suspects, hostage situations, and the like. In emergency actions, SWAT begins the incident as a reactionary force. However, when an emergency action persists – such as during a drawn-out hostage situation – SWAT may have sufficient time to plan and even rehearse, giving them the edge in the subsequent assault, and allowing them to act proactively and not reactively.

Some emergency actions provide almost no leeway for SWAT to prepare, and all SWAT officers must be ready to act on a moment’s notice. During the 1997 North Hollywood Shootout, for example, three SWAT officers entered the Bank of America dressed in nothing more than street clothes, ballistic vests, and helmets.

Deliberate Action

A deliberate action is proactive; it is an action that SWAT has time to plan and execute on its own timetable. Deliberate actions can be rehearsed, blueprints acquired, and sites can be surveilled for days or weeks. At times, however, a deliberate action

must be undertaken quickly (e.g., to take down a criminal while he is at a certain location).

The most common deliberate action is high-risk warrant service.

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JACKSONVILLE HIJACKING

On October 4, 1971, two men hijacked an airliner en route from Nashville, Tennessee, and ordered it flown to the Bahamas. The plane did not have enough fuel to reach the Bahamas, and was allowed to land in Jacksonville, Florida to refuel. FBI agents were dispatched to the Jacksonville airport. The pilot requested a fuel truck, stating that the hijackers had guns and twelve pounds of plastic explosives, but the FBI agent in charge refused. After only minutes of negotiation – through the pilot, no less – he radioed the plane with this ultimatum: “The decision will be no fuel for that aircraft.” He added, “Passengers, if you are listening, the only alternative is to depart the aircraft.”

The copilot was sent out by the hijackers to negotiate for fuel. He told the FBI that he believed the hijackers were violent, and might force the fuel-starved plane to fly to the Bahamas anyway. The agent in charge dismissed the copilot’s comments out of hand. One of the hijackers himself left the plane to negotiate, but was immediately arrested. He was not even interrogated.

After only fifteen minutes on the ground, the plane was surrounded by FBI agents who tried to shoot out the plane’s tires. The agent in charge himself fired several rounds at the tires, and then ordered his agents to fire on the plane’s engines. Several gunshots rang out inside the plane, and when the agents finally entered the aircraft, they found the pilot and a passenger shot to death, and the hijacker dead of a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head.

Downs v. United States of America

Brent Downs, the murdered pilot’s widow, sued the FBI for negligence and was awarded \$270,000. The FBI paid \$60,000 in damages for shooting up an engine.

The court also warned that law enforcement personnel are “required to exercise the highest degree of care commensurate with all the facts within

[their] knowledge.” They also ruled that such care must be exercised “in order to insure that undue loss of life does not occur.” The court thus created a legal precedent involving the use of force, and established guidelines for use in crisis situations (see *Crisis Resolution*, p. 00).

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HIGH-RISK WARRANT SERVICE

SWAT teams spend about 90% of their time serving high-risk warrants. In the past, warrant service could be done with a knock and a badge. Today, officers may be gunned down by automatic weapon fire before they reach the door.

In most cases, SWAT is only tasked with securing the site and any suspects. Once the building is safe (see *Deliberate Clearing*, p 00), specialists can search the site, gather evidence, and so forth.

High-risk warrant service is usually planned well in advance. Suspects are described in detail, the location is closely monitored and photographed ahead of time, and operational details are very complete. But sometimes a warrant is issued quickly and a suspect must be taken down with little advanced notice, necessitating quick deployment with less-than-optimal planning.

Warrant service may need additional, specialized personnel (e.g., a female officer to search female suspects, a child services representative, an animal handler for aggressive pets, etc). Like other “trailers” (p. 00), such personnel are generally not allowed on the premises until SWAT has declared the area safe.

There are various types of warrants, but to the average tactical team, paper – the colloquial name for a warrant – is paper. Regardless of the type of warrant, it is SWAT’s job is to secure the building and any occupants, then leave the cleanup work to someone else.

GURPS Cops, pp. C93-94, has additional information on warrant service.

No-Knock Warrants

Warrant service almost always requires that the serving officer knock or ring the doorbell and identify himself before entering (called “knock and announce”). No-knock warrants allow the SWAT team to enter the site without any prior announcement, reducing the chances that suspects will flee or successfully dispose of

evidence. As with all warrants, a no-knock can only be procured through a judge. Sufficient probable cause must be established to show that a sudden, surprise entry is required to prevent the loss of evidence or flight of a suspect.

True no-knock warrants are extremely rare; most warrant service requires knock-and-announce. Most federal teams are under more stringent restrictions and must not only “knock and announce,” but allow sufficient time for an occupant of the house to move from the furthest point in the house and answer the door!

HOSTAGE RESCUE

Statistically, the highest percentage of casualties in a hostage situation occurs during entry, making a SWAT assault the last resort in such circumstances. The site must first be secured, and a skilled negotiator should begin work. Assault planning should begin immediately, in the event such an action is necessary.

Hostage rescues are dangerous missions for everyone involved. The primary goal of a hostage rescue mission must be to ensure the safety of the hostages first and the officers second. The safety of the hostage-taker should be taken into account, but it is the lowest priority of the mission.

Despite Hollywood’s portrayal of hostage situations, SWAT teams and hostage negotiators do not trade themselves (or anyone else) for another hostage, nor will they allow a hostage to return to captivity once released.

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GOOD GUYS, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

Shortly after 1:30 pm, on April 4, 1991, four young Asian men invaded the Good Guys Electronics Store in Sacramento, California, and took forty people hostage. Patrol officers secured the building and called in the Sacramento County Sheriff’s Department’s Special Enforcement Detail (SED). Negotiations revealed a SWAT team’s nightmare – the suspects had no grievances to settle, no loved ones to negotiate with, no serious demands. They were simply looking for fame and an adrenaline rush.

The gunmen’s demands varied widely every time they spoke to SED. They wanted \$4 million in cash, then a helicopter big enough to carry all 40 hostages, then 1,000-year-old ginseng root. One of them even wanted to fly to Southeast

Asia to fight the Viet Cong. Eventually they demanded bulletproof vests, which SED began trading for hostages.

As negotiations progressed, seven SED officers crept into a nearby fabric store and down a maintenance corridor that connected to the back of Good Guys. The team drilled a tiny hole in a dividing wall and inserted a pinhole camera (p. CO00). They removed ceiling panels, climbed over the wall, and dropped unnoticed into the Good Guys' storeroom where they waited patiently for a "go order."

The suspects shot two hostages in the legs, sending them out to talk to the media as a "message to the press." The incident commander gave the snipers orders to take any shot of opportunity (p. 00), and the assault team was to follow up immediately. When one of the suspects opened the front door, a SED sniper fired. In a quirk of fate, the gunman let the door fall shut at that precise moment, and the sniper bullet struck the metal frame instead of the suspect. After an initial moment of shock, the gunman turned to the line of hostages and opened fire with his shotgun.

The entry team stormed the showroom. Snipers and patrol officers in the front of the store withheld fire for fear of hitting hostages or SWAT members, while the gunmen continued to walk back and forth, firing at the hostages. The SED team spotted the shotgun-wielding suspect and exchanged fire – the suspect's shot went wide; the SED team killed him. A second suspect, unaware of the SED team's presence, ran directly into their hail of bullets and was killed. They moved to engage the last two suspects, and shot them both as well.

The entire assault lasted only seconds, and left three suspects dead and one critically wounded. Three hostages had been killed by the gunmen; eleven were wounded.

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DIGNITARY PROTECTION

SWAT is sometimes assigned to protect foreign VIPs, key witnesses in court cases, high-profile criminals during transit, and so forth. The officers may be uniformed or undercover, depending on the message the team wants to send any would-be threats.

Coverage must be provided at the start and finish of any vehicular routes, and snipers may be stationed along the route as well. The ground team may also travel in a convoy with the dignitary. Typical coverage sites include airports, courthouses, embassies, and residences.

Presidential protection is usually provided by the Secret Service, but local SWAT teams may assist.

BARRICADED SUSPECTS

Barricaded suspects are suspects that refuse to leave their premises, usually after a warrant of some kind has been issued. What may begin as a high-risk warrant service can quickly become a barricaded suspect situation if the serving team (or officer) encounters gunfire, physical barricades, armed resistance, and so forth (see also *Tactical Retreat*, p. 00).

The best method for dealing with a barricaded suspect is to establish negotiations and wait him out. As in the case of hostage situations, the earliest parts of the incident are the most volatile, making time one of the SWAT team's most valuable tools. Other arsenals in the waiting game include the removal of utilities from the suspect's house, blaring loud music non-stop, launching tear gas into the house, and so forth.

Unfortunately, budgetary constraints often demand a more rapid resolution to the problem, forcing the entry team to action sooner than may be prudent. An assault *should* be called only as a last resort, and only when it is clear that other, nonlethal means are ineffective. Practically speaking, however, a negotiator might only be given 30-60 minutes to talk down a suspect before the entry team makes their move.

Breakouts

No matter how long SWAT has been waiting, the dynamics of the situation change when the suspect attempts to flee.

The incident commander must make certain that a tight perimeter is set up around an incident, and that there are sufficient officers on the inner perimeter (p. 00) to defend against an attempted breakout by a barricaded suspect. More than one entry team has been caught by surprise as they moved quietly toward a building, only to have the front door open and a suspect charge out.

“Suicide by Cop”

Emotionally disturbed suspects may attempt what is commonly called “suicide by cop.” This can occur during almost any police incident, regardless of the responding

officer or team. Barricaded suspects will often fire shots from within their home to attract attention, then once they are surrounded, burst out the front door firing or brandishing their weapon, hoping to be killed by the surrounding officers.

HIJACKINGS AND MOBILE THREATS

Vehicle assaults (p. 00) form a small, but important part of SWAT operations. Generally, a lone hijacker can be neutralized with tear gas or a sniper shot, but occasionally hostage situations develop aboard vehicles ranging from passenger cars to jumbo jets. The situation is treated much like any hostage rescue (p. 00), but the incident site must be strictly contained to prevent the target and hostages from going mobile. Planes may be refused fuel, roads can be blocked, tires shot out.

Vehicles delivered as part of a hostage negotiation may be altered ahead of time, making a subsequent rescue easier and safer. The engine may have a radio-controlled kill-switch, small explosives can be placed near the tires, etc. Even simply smashing a tail-light may aid in identifying and tracking the vehicle later, should a pursuit ensue.

More information on vehicular takedowns appears on p. 00.

BETWEEN-MISSIONS

Part-time SWAT officers will generally be busy with day-to-day police duties when not on an active SWAT mission. GMs running a **GURPS Cops** campaign, with part-time SWAT PCs, should have no trouble keeping the players busy between SWAT missions (see p. 00 and p. C128 for suggestions on running such a campaign).

But even full-time team members may go several days without a call-out.

Crime Suppression

SWAT officers may be assigned to work “anti-crime” or “tactical patrol” missions between callouts. They may monitor known criminals, question informants, stake out buildings, or just ride along with patrol officers to lend extra support. Such operations are almost always carried out in pairs, with “buddy teams” (p. 00) working together both in crime suppression and as a two-man assault team during SWAT callouts.

Undercover Work

Prior to deliberate actions (p. 00), SWAT officers may be tasked with surveillance of proposed assault sites. Usually a pair of men in plainclothes and an unmarked car will drive by, photographing the building from all angles, or monitor the site from a distance (see *Stakeouts*, p. C100).

Officers may also work undercover during dignitary protection duty (p. 00).

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SWAT BY ANY OTHER NAME

Special police teams around the world use a variety of monikers, most of them acronyms. Though such teams are collectively called “SWAT” teams in *GURPS SWAT*, a staggering number of team names is available.

Most revolve around acronyms built on words like Special, Emergency, Crisis, Tactical, Tactics, Response, Rescue, Team, Squad, Group, Unit, and the like. GMs can research actual team names for specific cities, or make up an acronym that sounds authentic by mixing and matching such terms.

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Teams Around the World

Variations in team size, structure, composition, budget, equipment preference, and training levels make it impossible to provide a rigid set of rules that would cover every SWAT team in the country. And the sheer number of SWAT teams in the United States alone prohibits a detailed look at each one. What follows is a sampling of teams from across the U.S. The GM may drop the details wholesale into his campaign, or use the information as a broad guideline to fleshing out a metropolitan SWAT team of his own design.

Weapon choices represent a cross-section of the teams’ most commonly used firearms as of 2003, but the lists are neither exclusive nor complete. Weapons not found in this book are described in *GURPS Cops*, *GURPS High-Tech*, *GURPS Modern Firepower*, or *GURPS Special Ops*. A consolidated table of weapon statistics appears on p. 00.

TEAMS IN THE U.S.

Three large, full-time teams are detailed below. A small, part-time team is included as well, and can be used as-is or as a template for creating a similar team.

Los Angeles, California – Special Weapons and Tactics

The Los Angeles Police Department is generally considered to be the originator of

2. SWAT OPERATIONS

Tactical teams go through many steps before bursting through the doors, guns blazing. Snipers are put in place, assault plans are laid, negotiators establish rapport – all this and more is detailed in this chapter. For information on *types* of SWAT missions, see pp. 00-00. Tactical assault guidelines appear in Chapter 3.

Preparations

Preparing for an assault can take on many forms. For deliberate actions (p. 00), when the team has plenty of time to train, plans may be available, techniques can be rehearsed, and a mock-up may even be constructed (p. 00). Intelligence can be gathered ahead of time, and the team leader can request follow-up information as needed.

But many operations occur suddenly and with little preparation. In emergency actions, the first 30 minutes are the most dangerous, since the suspect is the most anxious and ready to act. Statistically, the longer an incident lasts, the more likely it is to end peacefully.

Initial responders – usually regular police – should try to slow things down until the SWAT team and a negotiator arrives. In the meantime, the first step in any crisis situation is containment.

PERIMETERS

Whether an incident is planned weeks ahead of time or occurs spontaneously, law enforcement personnel must establish a perimeter around the site. More than one perimeter is usually established, but the goal is always the same: keep suspects in and bystanders out.

Patrol officers may establish an initial perimeter if they are first on the scene, but eventually much of the job will be turned over to SWAT personnel when they arrive.

Containment

Safely capturing a suspect – especially if he has taken hostages – becomes *much* more difficult if he becomes mobile. Not only is taking down a vehicle more difficult and dangerous, but there is a chance the target may elude police and escape altogether.

Therefore, containing the scene is an early priority. In a deliberate action (p. 00), a containment perimeter may be established ahead of time if it can be done quietly and without notice. In a high-traffic neighborhood, where local street thugs can use cell phones to warn their friends, the containment perimeter may be established at the same time the entry team deploys – suddenly and with little warning – minimizing the risk of the targets bolting before the team arrives.

During emergency actions (p. 00), the initial perimeter is usually established by the initially responding police officers. They should be replaced or assisted by SWAT personnel as soon as possible, especially if the suspect is actively firing weapons or otherwise endangering the lives of those in the vicinity.

Inner Perimeter

The inner perimeter (IP) is the first line of containment. Inner perimeter officers are tasked with observing the suspect and incident site, and reporting the information to the Command Post. They are also the first line of defense should the suspect break out by attempting to flee, enter a vehicle, or simply rush toward the police in a “suicide by cop” attempt (p. 00). IP officers may be called upon to deploy tear gas or smoke, or to lay down cover or diversionary fire during the entry team’s approach. They must also contain the scene even after the incident is resolved, in order to preserve the site for crime scene technicians.

Inner perimeter duty can be dangerous, necessitating a high level of training and skill. SWAT officers will man the IP whenever possible; some teams have a special “perimeter team” made up of SWAT officers for this sole purpose. The team will usually be armed with rifles (instead of pistols or submachine guns), due to the distances usually involved in firing at an incident site.

The inner perimeter should be close enough to the incident site for the site to be visible, and yet far enough away to provide cover or concealment for those guarding it. Officers may take cover in doorways, behind retaining walls, behind trees, or even in nearby buildings. Knowing what caliber weapon the suspect is using will help in determining how much cover – and how much distance – is needed to provide safety for the IP officers. Nevertheless, the IP must be close enough to the incident site for the officers to visually monitor the situation. They should be able to see all exits from the building, including windows.

The IP is usually the site of last cover and concealment (LCC; see p. 00), and is often the final staging area for the SWAT entry team. Officers guarding the IP do not

act as entry personnel; they must continue to contain the site while the entry team assaults the building.

Perimeter officers must be fully briefed, and must know the position of friendly personnel so as to set up effective fields of fire without endangering fellow officers. Like the entry team, they should be briefed with the suspect's psych profile (p. 00), and advised of all details of the operation (including hostages, suspect armament, etc). They must always practice good radio discipline, and listen closely for any changes in information. Likewise, they must immediately report any changes they themselves witness.

Until they're relieved or ordered to do so, no IP personnel should leave their position. Once the entry team is inside, IP personnel should be prohibited from firing their weapons into the site unless absolutely necessary (e.g., an officer or hostage's life is visibly in danger).

Any of the templates and specializations found in Chapter 3 can be used to represent SWAT officers assigned to the inner perimeter. In smaller police departments, with limited SWAT resources, regular officers (p. C45) may be assigned to IP duty.

Outer Perimeter

A secondary ring, called the outer perimeter (OP) is formed at a much greater distance from the incident site. This second containment ring is usually manned by patrol officers, rather than SWAT personnel, even in large police departments.

Personnel on the OP are tasked with keeping anyone from entering the area – this includes curiosity seekers, reporters and cameramen, distraught relatives, and even non-essential emergency workers (e.g., EMTs, firemen, rescue workers, forensics investigators, etc). Under no circumstances should an OP officer allow anyone beyond his post without permission from the incident commander.

In addition, OP personnel function as a backup perimeter for the incident, providing a wider ring of containment in case someone slips through the IP.

The area between the inner and outer perimeters should be used exclusively by incident personnel. The command post (p. 00) is usually set up there, as is the entry team's staging area.

((START BOX))

CRISIS RESOLUTION

SWAT teams follow specific guidelines when dealing with emergency situations, especially those involving hostages. Before the entry team is called in for a takedown, the incident commander (p. 00) should try every non-lethal resolution technique at his disposal, unless someone's life is in imminent danger. A set of guidelines was established in the *Downs v. United States* court case in 1974 (see box, p. 00). Those guidelines can be distilled down to the following basic steps:

1. Contain the suspect and negotiate surrender.
2. *Demand* that the suspect surrender.
3. Use tear gas (or other non-lethal weapons) to force the suspect to surrender.
4. Use snipers to neutralize the suspect.
5. Order a SWAT assault.

An incident commander should start with Step 1 and work his way toward higher levels of force, escalating only when initial steps fail. Only when there is imminent threat of death or serious injury to a civilian or officer, can a commander (or individual officer) skip the preliminary steps and proceed directly to Step 4 or 5.

Use of deadly force in Step 4 is usually limited to cases where lives are threatened. Steps 4 and 5 are often undertaken simultaneously, with the snipers supporting (or signaling) a dynamic entry.

((END BOX))

THE COMMAND POST

One of the first steps in taking control of an incident is to set up a command post (CP). This may be a commandeered room in a nearby building or an entire mobile command post dedicated to the SWAT unit (e.g., a remodeled motor home, truck, van, or trailer).

The CP is where most of the incident decisions are made. The incident commander (see below) mans the CP and makes strategic decisions regarding snipers, assault teams, negotiation tactics, and so forth. Command post personnel are responsible for logistics of the operation, and must secure SWAT equipment, food, bathroom facilities, items demanded by a hostage-taker, etc.

The media (and public in general) should be kept clear of the post in order to keep them from divulging important information that could easily be picked up by the suspect (see *The Media*, p. 00).

Location

If the police department does not have a mobile command post, a suitable location must be chosen. Nearby buildings can be used, but in a rural setting a makeshift CP may be established outdoors. The CP should be close enough to the action that the incident commander (and others) can personally inspect the situation and stay in contact with on-site officers, but far enough away to provide a measure of safety for the CP occupants. The CP will generally be established between the inner and outer perimeters (p. 00), and close to the SWAT team's staging area (CP personnel and SWAT personnel should be able to communicate face-to-face without a dangerous or lengthy transit).

The post should be available to authorized personnel only. Media representatives, distraught relatives, suspect accomplices, and others, may try to gain access, but they should only be allowed entry with the incident commander's permission, sometimes necessitating basic operational security in and around the CP (usually handled by one or more patrol officers).

Incident Command

Critical police situations require both tactical and strategic decisions. While the assault team may be responsible for split-second tactical choices, overall guidance of a SWAT incident is handled by a ranking police officer (such as a Captain). The incident commander (IC) must get an overview of the situation, and choose additional personnel and/or equipment as needed. He will assemble a staff of assistants and advisors, including the SWAT team leader, a hostage negotiator, a public relations officer, emergency medical or fire representatives, and any other necessary personnel. He may delegate mundane tasks (such as arranging for food, water, and toilet facilities), but should make the important decisions himself. He must also know when

to call in additional – more powerful – forces such as state or federal police or military units.

Tactical Command

Prior to entry, tactical decisions are made by the incident commander, usually in conjunction with the SWAT team leader and/or SWAT officers. This includes choices regarding entry points, entry style, use of gas or flash-bangs, sniper support, etc.

Once a SWAT entry is actually underway, however, tactical command must necessarily shift to the entry team leader. Split-second decisions (about use of force, room clearing, additional gas or flash-bang grenades, changes from stealth to dynamic posture, etc) must be made on the fly, and become the responsibility of the team leader (see *Element Leader*, p. 00).

Even during entry, however, command-level decisions (e.g., giving a go-order for snipers) must still be made by the incident commander, unless he has specifically delegated such authority to the team leader.

Support Staff

Support staff may include public relations officers, communications personnel, psychologists, logistics coordinators, etc. The size of the staff will vary with both the size of the police department and the magnitude of the operation. In smaller police departments, support staff may be called upon to do more than one job at a time. Support staff may be composed of both police officers and civilians.

Command Post Equipment

Administrative equipment should be available to keep information organized and make resolution of an incident easier. The CP will usually have wall space dedicated to whiteboards, blackboards, and/or bulletin boards to keep up-to-date information handy for everyone.

Computers, printers, photocopiers, scanners, telephones, radios, and similar electronic equipment are common. Likewise, dedicated phone lines and a computer link to the police mainframe and Internet are usually established.

Gathering Intelligence

The success or failure of a SWAT operation can hinge directly on the intelligence available to both hostage negotiator and entry team. Information must be gathered on suspects, hostages, the location (both inside and outside the incident site), and more.

Information must be up-to-date and accurate, and must be passed quickly to team members that need it.

Intel may be gathered from many different sources, but should immediately be forwarded to an information specialist (or specialists) to be collated and refined. Its relevance must be determined, and then the information must be passed on to SWAT officers, snipers, and negotiators as needed. For example, the fact that a hostage-taker likes a certain type of food will be of little help to an assaulter, but the team's negotiator may find the info useful.

Officers on the scene should be briefed with basic information about the incident as soon as possible. Such information should include an overview of the situation, indicating the general premise of the incident (e.g., a bank robbery, a barricaded suspect, etc), how many suspects and/or hostages are involved, who they are, who the leader is, a list of demands, and a profile sheet for every person involved.

Profile Sheets

Most police departments use some kind of standardized form for listing suspect information. SWAT teams will have a similar form for hostages as well (the two forms should be printed on two different colored sheets of paper to make them easier to identify). GMs may wish to create such a form using a simple word processing program, leaving blank areas to be filled in by hand (either by the GM functioning as an NPC, or by the players as they gather info). The form should include space for relevant information, and ample room at the bottom for the negotiator (or others) to add notes as the incident progresses.

The GM should create the sheet to his satisfaction, but general suggestions follow.

Suspect Profile Sheet – Name, sex, age, race, hair, eyes, height, weight, clothing, existence of weapons and/or body armor, current residence, employment (type and current employer), education, medical condition and history, psychiatric history, prescription or non-prescription drug use, alcohol or drug abuse history, criminal record, propensity toward violence, military or police experience (especially expertise with weapons or knowledge of explosives and booby-traps), marital status (the form should note the date of the suspect's divorce, if any), family members, close friends and associates, affiliation with gangs or extremist groups, relevance of today's date (if any), hobbies and interests.

For hostage profiles, additional information may include the circumstances under which the hostage was taken, whether the hostage was taken randomly or was

specifically targeted, relationship to the suspect (if any), and the relationship of the hostage to any other hostage members.

First Officers on the Scene

In emergency actions, much of the basic information can be gathered from the first responders to an incident (usually police, but occasionally firemen or paramedics). The first officer on a scene should be debriefed as soon as possible to determine the overall situation, and questioned thoroughly in order to glean additional details. He can often provide physical descriptions of suspects and hostages, types of weapons involved, and an impression of the suspect's demeanor.

Observation Teams

Once a perimeter has been established and the incident is contained, snipers and observers become an invaluable source of information. They can provide information on suspect and hostage location, physical activities, physical descriptions, and more. Some may even be able to relay entire conversations if they are adept at lip-reading.

Observation teams report to the command post, allowing the incident commander to gather and filter information. The sniper should also connect with the entry team in order to provide immediate information as they breach the perimeter.

Questioning Hostages

Hostages are in a unique position to provide information about a suspect or a situation. They are, however, often confused and frightened, and prone to making erroneous statements. The hostage negotiator may attempt to talk to one or more hostages during negotiations, and may be able to coax bits of information from them via telephone.

Hostages released from captivity should be isolated and debriefed. They should be checked by medical personnel for injury and overall health and psychological trauma, but such an exam may be conducted before, during, or after the SWAT debrief.

Hostages can provide information such as suspect number, description, position, mental state, plans, and overheard conversations. They can also describe weaponry, explosives, body armor, and barricaded or booby-trapped entries. The information may not be 100% accurate, but even general information (e.g., "they had big army-looking guns" or "they stacked furniture against the front door") can be extremely valuable.

THE INCIDENT SITE

Incident locations must be carefully surveyed. A sketch of the interior of a building

3. CQB TACTICS

The tactics in this chapter – though written with SWAT teams in mind – can be applied to military special ops teams, WWII commandos, or even bug-hunting space marines. The GM may modify the procedures to better fit his genre and play style.

The Assault

When negotiation fails and snipers have no clear shot, it is up to the men and women of the entry teams to resolve the situation. Assaulting a site is the single most dangerous part of a crisis situation – 80% of all hostage and police casualties occur during entry.

THE THREE ELEMENTS OF ASSAULT

The success of every assault hinges on three primary elements: surprise, shock, and overwhelming, violent action.

Surprise

Surprised defenders are slow defenders. They may often be surprised into inactivity (see *Shock*, below), or at the very least unprepared and out of position. Negotiators may even be able to lure a suspect into an especially vulnerable position (such as near a window) or away from innocent hostages. They may also help the entry team gain surprise by continuing to talk to the suspect even as entry begins.

Care must be taken that the element of surprise is not lost too early in an assault. A covert entry (p. 00) may allow the team to move into position to launch the attack swiftly and suddenly (often called “stealth to contact” entry). If surprise is lost prematurely, the defenders may have time to gather their wits, kill hostages, detonate explosives, or at the very least put up a tenacious defense.

In order to achieve surprise, assaults may include multiple teams and snipers striking from multiple angles. A single countdown, with each team assigned to perform a specific action at some point in the countdown, can facilitate a smooth entry and improve the chances of surprising the enemy. For example, one sniper may be assigned to fire through plate glass to shatter it when the countdown reaches “four” while a second sniper fires at the suspect on “three.” On “two,” the assault team

throws in a flash-bang, on “one” door demolitions are blown, and on “zero” multiple teams swarm the site.

Each team may also be assigned a “ready number” (usually high in the count). The team will verify their readiness when their number is called, to confirm that everyone is in position and prepared for the assault.

Shock

An enemy in shock acts poorly. His responses are often slowed, his actions confused. A shocked enemy poses far less threat to an incoming assault team than one in complete control of his senses.

Mental shock may be brought on by surprise (p. B122). Teams can achieve shock through speed and sudden action. An assault team bursting into a room unexpectedly, or a sniper suddenly taking off your buddy’s head, will force a stun roll as per p. B122. Even the black, faceless look of most special ops teams is calculated to create fear in an unprepared enemy.

Physical shock can be brought on by injury (p. B99), and nonlethal weapons like flash-bangs (pp. 00 and C69).

Violence of Action

Assault teams must have the capability of dealing out sufficient deadly force to neutralize an enemy. Whether they actually do so or not is irrelevant, but the targets must believe that the incoming SWAT team can win through sheer force. A single, plainclothes ATF agent bursting into the hideout of a white supremacy group is sure to be met with mocking laughter followed by gunfire; forty black-clad, heavily armed SRT agents may give the defenders pause.

Though the PCs will rarely number more than a single team, the GM should keep in mind that several SWAT teams may be called upon to assault a single location simultaneously. He may choose to allow the players to control more than one character, or simply play the other teams as NPCs. In the latter case, the PCs will be assigned a particular objective (e.g., a specific floor, part of an airplane, a back entry, an out-building), while the NPC team(s) assault elsewhere. GMs should keep the players informed of the ongoing action (and increase the suspension of disbelief) by including radio traffic or situation reports throughout the PC team’s action.

Occasionally, the PCs can be called on to back up overpowered NPCs or assist them in a protracted firefight.

PREPARATIONS AND STACKING

The first few moments of a SWAT assault can be the most dangerous. As with all SWAT operations, the entry team follows a set of guidelines in preparing for, and entering, any structure.

Team Familiarity. Teams generally practice together on a regular basis in order to learn the subtle nuances of each member's movements, actions, reactions, voice, and so on. Teams that train or perform together for 100+ hours receive a +1 bonus to Gesture and Body Language rolls directed toward other members.

Last Cover and Concealment

The team will generally begin their assault as close to the suspect as safely possible. They need to be safe from enemy fire, and away from prying eyes (to preserve the element of surprise; see p. 00). A general staging area may be assigned, but the entry team will have a secondary, closer position to begin the actual assault.

This secondary position, often called the point of last cover and concealment (LCC), may be along a protected alley, around the corner of a nearby building, or in the lobby of an apartment building. Whatever the case, the LCC *must* be safe from enemy line-of-sight.

The last cover and concealment sites will generally be established during the briefing; SWAT team members may be involved in selecting the locations. Individual departments may give the LCC an alternate name, such as a stack-up point, launch point, rally point, form up point, or final assault position. These positions are generally used for both safe entry and hostage egress.

Stacking

As the assault team prepares to enter a site, they must first “stack up” – that is, line up and prepare to move in as a team. Teams will always stack before beginning an assault. They may also stack up several times as they move deeper into a building. During a covert entry, the team should stack at every opening. Stacking always precedes mirroring, deploying grenades, or using a ram or other entry gear.

Stacking methods vary from one department to a next, and can fluctuate based on a number of factors (e.g., number of men in the team, direction the door opens, whether a door is open or not, which side the doorknob is on, intervening walls).

Once surprise is lost, the team will most likely begin a dynamic assault (p. 00), and stacking may not always be possible. Even during a dynamic entry, however, officers

who simply kick down doors or come crashing through windows without waiting for the rest of the team will inevitably end up reprimanded, fired, wounded, or dead.

Stacking may be done in a single line, along one side of an opening (called a single stack), or in two groups – one on each side of the opening. Various entry techniques call for various stacking methods; likewise, terrain may dictate stack methods and entry techniques (see *Entering and Clearing*, p. 00).

Stacked teams will often remain in silent contact, with each officer laying his off-hand on the shoulder of the officer ahead of him.

Two-Man Elements – “Buddy Teams”

This is the fundamental building block of every SWAT operations. SWAT officers almost never operate alone, especially during hostile operations. Buddy teams learn to walk together, move together, breathe together. A single gesture from one to the other – or even a change in body stance – is often enough to convey an entire idea.

Characters that have trained and operated as a two-man team for 100 or more hours receive a +1 to Gesture or Body Language rolls they make toward one another (in addition to the +1 generated by team familiarity – p. 00 – for a total of +2 to one another).

One man usually acts as point man or scout (p. 00), and takes the lead in checking doors and mirroring (p. 00). Because he may often have to sling or holster his weapon to use other equipment (e.g., mirrors, optic wands), his partner – the second man in the element – must cover him at all times.

During movement, the scout will take the lead, his partner will cover any open sides and/or the rear. Movement as a team is generally done with the covering (rear) man resting his off hand on his partner’s shoulder. A nod of the point man’s head means, “I’m ready to go;” a reciprocal squeeze of the shoulder returns the sentiment. When the covering man lifts his hand from his partner, it is generally to steady his weapon, a gesture that in itself warns his partner that he is readying for action.

During room entry, the point man often engages the threat of his choice; his partner reacts, covering the other portion of the room automatically (see *Room Clearing*, p. 00).

Four-Man Teams

Four-man teams will usually comprise a pair of two-man elements, enabling the team to be split when necessary to cover disparate areas or entry points. A single acts

as scout and is responsible for mirroring and so forth (see *Scouts and Point Men*, p. 00). As in a two-man element, his partner should cover him during such actions.

The third man in the team is usually charged with covering side openings and doorways, and covering any second floors and balconies while entering a room. He is often also called on to dispense grenades and may act as a scout if the team splits into two pairs (and so should carry a mirror, at least).

The team's fourth man doubles as the team's rear-guard (p. 00), and as partner to the third man in the team, covering him as need be.

Four-man teams are very common in Europe.

Five-Man Teams

A five-man team is commonly used by many SWAT agencies in the US. It is structured almost exactly like a four-man team (above), with the additional man (who takes position in the middle of the stack) acting as team leader (p. 00).

The team may single stack, or split into a group of two- and three-man stacks as need be. If the team is split, the element leader will accompany one pair of the other; he should never function alone.

Six or More

Large teams are usually made up of smaller teams working in consort. For example, a pair of four-man teams may be called on to stack along a retaining wall prior to entry, effectively creating an eight-man team. As always, only a single member will act as scout. Others will be assigned areas of responsibility (p. 00) and be given specific duties (e.g., covering openings, setting or disarming explosives, throwing grenades, etc.).

((START BOX))

SNAKING AND SWARMING

Team movement is generally done in one of two ways:

Snaking. The team forms a single stack and moves single file, with one man following directly behind another. Snaking is best used in narrow areas (hallways), when covering open ground quickly, or when booby-traps may be

present. Snake movement is preferred during a covert entry, as it minimizes the visual profile of the team.

Swarming. Swarming can only be used in areas with sufficient room. Each man moves laterally as well as forward, spreading the team out into a loose skirmish formation, enabling the team to move as a large group. Swarm entry is preferred during a dynamic entry, especially when team members must infiltrate a building quickly. Swarming reduces the likelihood of a suspect taking out the entire team with explosives or automatic weapons, increases the team's ability to bring massive fire into a single location when necessary, and increases forward visibility for each man. Though it may appear uncoordinated and random, swarm movement and entry must be practiced time and again until it is second nature to the team. As always, whenever possible, every man will have a specific area of responsibility (p. 00) – one clear of friendly targets despite the swarming movement.

((END BOX))

ENTRY STYLE

Entry style can be dictated by a number of factors, including terrain, visibility, the presence of hostages, concealment and cover, and suspect disposition. Choosing an entry method falls to the incident commander, but that decision may be delegated to the SWAT team commander himself.

During the assault, a number of entry styles may come into play. For example, the team may choose to move into position quietly, using a covert entry, then “go dynamic” when they encounter the suspects (“stealth to contact”). Changes in the team's posture are usually called for by the element leader.

((START BOX))

THE FATAL FUNNEL

One of the most dangerous moments of an entry occurs when the first officer steps through a doorway. For a single moment, the point man stands exposed

4. THE OFFICERS

No matter how big the gun, how modern the gear, how elite the training, it is the men and women behind the badge that make or break SWAT operations.

Women in SWAT

In the early 1980s the first female SWAT officers began appearing, mostly on hostage negotiation and crisis teams. Twenty years later, female SWAT members are still extremely rare, comprising less than 0.5% of the tactical officers in the U.S.

Statistically, most female police officers fail SWAT testing during physical training, especially when it comes to upper body strength tests. Women who make it into SWAT must be even more determined and relentless than men, but it can be done.

All SWAT positions are highly sought after, and women may be ostracized even when they prove themselves capable. Treatment by their peers can vary from respect to derision, depending on the team (and the GM). Even on teams that readily accept women, most tactical gear is designed for men, making it difficult to find uniforms, web gear, and body armor to fit a woman with a small frame.

In ***GURPS***, female characters can be created using the same template as men (p. 00), but GMs and players alike should bear in mind the difficulties and differences mentioned above.

OFFICER SELECTION GUIDELINES

SWAT selection guidelines are strict and testing is rigorous. Although specific guidelines vary from team to team, certain universal principals govern officer selection for almost every team.

Occupational Skills

Though it may seem counterintuitive, an officer's skill levels – though important – are often not as important as his other, more innate abilities. Skills can be taught – intelligence and willingness to work as part of a team cannot. Nevertheless, most SWAT selection procedures include extensive skill testing, including marksmanship. The *primary skills* listed in the template on p. 00 can be used as a guideline when determining character skill levels.

Physical Fitness

SWAT officers undergo regular physical training and testing. PCs should either take Fit or Very Fit, as per the template on p. 00.

Teamwork

The ability to function as part of a team is a one of the primary requirements for acceptance onto a tactical team. SWAT operations hinge on successful teamwork, and lone wolf agents and rogue operatives have no place in a realistic ***GURPS SWAT*** campaign.

SWAT officers become closer than family members, and must trust one another implicitly; their very lives depend on it. One man cannot defend himself from every direction, but a pair of men, back-to-back, may do so. Each man on a team must know that his fellow officers are reliable, and that they will be where they are supposed to be, when they are supposed to be. The actions of a single man can result in the death of an entire team (see also *Areas of Responsibilities*, p. 00).

Just as real-life SWAT is a team game, so too a ***GURPS SWAT*** campaign must emphasize teamwork and camaraderie. Unruly players seeking personal glory and cinematic heroics should be rewarded with the most likely real-life result of such actions – usually death.

Willingness

Almost without exception, SWAT teams are made up solely of volunteers. There is never a shortage of such volunteers, however; the waiting list for most teams is usually dozens (if not hundreds) of times greater than the number of open slots.

Intelligence

SWAT officers must be able to think on their feet at all times, and mental acuity often carries more weight in selecting team members than simple skill levels. The template on p. 00 includes IQ 12; rarely will a full-time SWAT officer be found with IQ less than 11.

Team Member Duties

The scene is familiar to anyone with a television: black-armored men bursting through doors, weapon at the ready, as they assault a building, airplane, or warehouse. Although the assault team should be the last resort in a real-life SWAT operation, it is the core of ***GURPS SWAT***.

SPECIAL TEAMS

SWAT entry personnel are often assisted, not only by command staff, but also by various special teams. Officers for these teams are may be drawn from within the SWAT cadre itself, from standard patrol officers, or in some cases – such as in hostage negotiation or emergency services – qualified civilians may be included as well.

Arrest Teams

At times, SWAT teams may be followed up by a group of officers tasked with arresting suspects. SWAT will neutralize the suspects (e.g., handcuff and search them), but the actual arrests may be made by follow-up officers.

Alternately, a single member of the SWAT entry team may be designated as a *finder* whose job is to locate, identify, and arrest a particular suspect. This is especially important when an arrest warrant has been issued for a particular individual who may be holed up with several others. The officer assigned to this role may be any member of the team.

Trailers

Once SWAT has secured an area, follow-up personnel may be called in to arrest suspects, perform first aid, search rooms, disarm explosives, and so forth. Such personnel are sometimes referred to as *trailers*, because they trail the SWAT team as they progress through a site.

Trailers may be called on even during an assault if they're needed, or may be called in after the entire site is secure. In either case, it is the SWAT entry team's responsibility to make certain the area is safe before trailers are requested. Trailers should *never* be asked to move through an area that has not been searched and declared safe by the SWAT team.

Sample trailers include medical personnel, animal handlers, female officers, interpreters, and so forth.

TEAM LEADERS

Every SWAT team, regardless of size, must have a commander or leader. Teams are often referred to as elements, and the team commander is sometimes called an element leader. The leader of a full-sized entry team is generally a sergeant or lieutenant, and is often the most experienced member of the team. His job, however, is not only to act as an assaulter, but to make command decisions during an entry.

The team leader must maintain tactical awareness, and therefore will rarely be in the front or back of the team. His job is to command as much as it is to assault.

SCOUTS AND POINT MEN

The point man (or “scout”) usually enters the room as low as possible, allowing his partner to enter directly after him and fire over him if necessary. He is usually armed with a one-handed weapon (or a light SMG at best) allowing him to remain armed while mirroring or carrying a shield. A small weapon (with a low SS) also allows him to increase the speed with which he can bring his weapon to bear when he enters a room.

When moving in a large stack, the point man sometimes acts as “shield man,” carrying some form of ballistic shield during entry (see *Tactical use of Shields*, p. 00).

Mirroring

Scouts are usually tasked with mirroring rooms using either an actual mirror on an extendable handle (p. 00), or with a fiber optic camera of some kind (p. 00). The “mirror” is slipped under doors, around corners, through ceiling panels, or through tiny holes drilled for just that purpose, and can provide the team with a pre-entry look at the layout of the room and any potential threats. Doing so, regardless of the actual mechanism, is called “mirroring the room.”

Entry

When working as part of a two-man element, the scout is usually the first man through the door. As part of a larger team, he may double as a “key man” whose task is to open the door to allow the entry team into the room. In this case, he is often one of the last members of the team through, since entry is accomplished much more quickly when the “key man” opens the door, and the rest of the team immediately enters. While the team is entering, the “key man” can then ready his weapon and follow them in at the end of the stack. In these instances, to keep two-man teams together, the scout may open the door while his partner deploys a flash-bang. Once the grenade is deployed, the thrower can then ready his weapon as well, entering at the end of the stack with his partner.

For more details on room entry and clearing techniques, see Chapter 3.

ENTRY AND COVER MEN

Assaulters – a generic term for entry personnel – make up the bulk of a SWAT entry team. They’re rarely first through the door, and almost never last. Each man is

tasked with covering a particular AoR (p. 00), including hallways, doorways, stairwells, and other openings. When entering a room with a balcony, at least one man should be tasked with covering that area for threats.

Any man can be assigned to act as a “cover man,” whose job is to provide cover for his partner (or the team) while they are otherwise occupied. The most common example occurs when an unarmed team member is mirroring a room; his partner must provide cover for him at all times, in case a threat suddenly presents.

The template on p. 00 can be used as-is for a basic SWAT entry man.

BREACHERS

Breaching may be done by the point man, a dedicated “key man,” a breaching team (p. 00), or the rear guard (below). Regardless of who is chosen, door breachers are usually one of the last to enter the room. Dedicated breachers should be strong enough to use a ram effectively, and skilled in Architecture to enable them to judge door and doorframe strength (see *Breaching*, p. 00).

Breachers often carry a shotgun with frangible rounds (p. 00) to aid in fast door entry.

REAR GUARDS

The last man on an entry team is often called the “rear guard.” His job is to watch the team’s back, walking backward at times to make certain no threats sneak up from that direction. Rear guards are often also assigned to act as breachers, and may be armed with a shotgun for that purpose, or carry and use the team’s ram.

Rear guards are often stronger than the average entry team member, and are sometimes tasked with carrying extra equipment (such as spare ammo, grenades, or special equipment).

SNIPERS

SWAT teams may have dedicated snipers, or use entry personnel in that role after cross-training them. Officers on the inner perimeter (p. 00) often double as short-range snipers as well.

Players looking to create a sniper character should be warned in advance that although the sniper can be an integral part of any operation, it’s likely his role in the session may be limited to lots of Vision rolls followed by on a single combat die roll or two. The role of the sniper is often best played by a well fleshed-out NPC, letting

the players get into the thick of the assault by being members of the entry team instead.

Skills, Advantages, and Disadvantages

Tactical teams comprise a wide variety of individuals, but certain traits are more valuable than others. Likewise, there are some aspects to personality and background that inhibit – or prohibit – an officer’s ability to function on a SWAT team.

Required Advantages

SWAT officers should almost always be Fit (or Very Fit), and have Combat Reflexes (members may use earned skill points to purchase Combat Reflexes after they are allowed on the team). As with all police officers, they will also have Legal Enforcement Powers and at least one Rank in the police department.

Desirable Advantages

Especially appropriate Advantages for tactical team members include Code of Honor, Common Sense, Composed, Cool, Fearless, High Pain Threshold, Honesty, Sense of Duty, Strong Will, and Toughness.

Required Disadvantages

All entry personnel must take Extremely Hazardous Duty.

Acceptable Disadvantages

The GM should allow the use of most **GURPS** disadvantages, with the exception of those mentioned below as prohibited. As always, it is up to the GM to decide whether or not any given disadvantage will disrupt game play, or would simply not be allowed based on his campaign and the team’s makeup.

Prohibited Disadvantages

The following list of disadvantages should be prohibited in most **GURPS SWAT** campaigns. The list is not, however, exhaustive. Any time, in the GM’s opinion, a particular disadvantage would be prohibited by the team’s superiors, or if a disadvantage is disruptive to the game, he should prohibit it. Selection to a team almost always requires an exemplary service record; a history of poor conduct will almost always exclude a character from being accepted in SWAT.

Suggested prohibitions include illegal Addictions, Berserk, Bloodlust, Combat Paralysis, Cowardice, Gullibility, Illiteracy, Laziness, Megalomania, Pacifism, Paranoia, certain types of Phobia (e.g., Loud Noises), Primitive, Pyromania, Sadism, Split Personality, and most physical disadvantages (e.g., Crippled Leg, Epilepsy, One Eye, etc).

Skills

Architecture. This skill can be used during assault planning, to determine interior wall locations, estimate room sizes and types, and so forth. Breachers will use this skill to determine explosive placement and ram use (see *Breaching*, p. 00, and p. B59).

Body Language. This skill can be used by an officer to determine the potential threat level of a suspect, or to predict his next move (see *Room Clearing*, p. 00, and p. CI00). It also allows an officer to accurately predict which direction his partner is going to move or fire when first entering a room.

Gesture. Teams may communicate silently using simple, pre-determined gestures (e.g., simple sentiments like stop, go, look, etc). Anything beyond that requires the use of the Gesture skill (p. B55).

Intimidation. Entry teams use this skill when shouting compliance to force a suspect to surrender during an encounter (see *Room Clearing*, p. 00, and p. B246).

Templates

The SWAT Officer template found below is a slightly modified version of the template found in **GURPS Cops** on p. C50. While the old template can be used, the version here takes into account some of the new information found in **GURPS SWAT**.

Part Time versus Full Time

In many ways, a SWAT officer is a SWAT officer, whether he works at the job full time or doubles as a patrolman. Full time SWAT teams generally receive more training and field experience, however, which means a part-time officer may have slightly lower skill levels in SWAT-specific skills and higher skills in other aspects of police work.

Therefore, GMs may wish to impose some restrictions on part-time SWAT officers, limiting their starting skill levels in Body Language, Climbing, Demolitions, Gesture, Intimidation, Guns (Light Auto), Stealth, Tactics (Counter-Terrorism), and Throwing to no more than 1 or 2 points in each skill.

In return, part-time SWAT officers, that double as patrol cops, may have more Contacts, and higher skill levels in Area Knowledge, Criminology, Law Enforcement, Tonfa, and vehicle/transportation skills. GMs and players should work together to establish a realistic background for the character, and adjust his skills accordingly. As always, the GM has the final say.

SWAT OFFICER TEMPLATE

115 POINTS

The following represents a basic template for a realistic SWAT officer. With -5 in Quirks, this template represents a basic 110-point character (in keeping with the point cost originally set in *GURPS Cops*).

Attributes: ST 11 [10]; DX 12 [20]; IQ 12 [20]; HT 12 [20]

Advantages: Combat Reflexes [15]; Fit [5]; Legal Enforcement Powers [5]; Police Rank 1 [5/level]; plus a total of 15 points chosen from Acute Senses [2/level], Alertness [5/level], Combat Reflexes [15], Composed [5], Contacts [Varies], Cool [1], Fearlessness [2/level], High Pain Threshold [10], Strong Will [4/level], Very Fit [15], or additional Attributes.

Disadvantages: Extremely Hazardous Duty [-20]; and a total of -20 points chosen from Addiction (Tobacco) [-5], Bad Sight (Correctible) [-10], Bad Temper [-10], Bully [-10], Callous [-6], Chummy [-5], Honesty [-10], Intolerance [-5 to -10], Nightmares [-5], Obsession (Promotion, staying on team) [-5], Overconfidence [-10], Sense of Duty (team or innocent civilians) [-5 or -10], Stubbornness [-5], or Workaholic [-5]. Rookie characters may also choose Post Combat Shakes [-5] if they have made an effort to hide it in the past (they will need to buy this off soon, however, or risk being removed from the team).

Primary Skills: Armoury (Small arms) (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11; Body Language (M/H) IQ [4]-12; Brawling (P/E) DX+1 [2]-13; Camouflage (M/E) IQ-1 [1/2]-11; Climbing (P/A) DX [2]-12; Criminology (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11; Demolitions (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11; First Aid (M/E) IQ-1 [1/2]-11; Guns (Light Auto) (P/E) DX+2 [2]-15; Guns (Pistol) (P/E) DX+2 [2]-15; Guns (Rifle) (P/E) DX+1 [1]-14; Guns (Shotgun) (P/E) DX+1 [1]-14; Intimidation (M/A) IQ [2]-12; Jumping (P/E) DX-1 [1/2]-11; Law (M/H) (Criminal law and procedure) IQ-1 [1]-7/13; Law Enforcement (M/A) IQ+1 [1]-13; Stealth (P/A) DX+1 [4]-13; Tactics (Counter-Terrorism) (M/H) IQ [4]-12; Throwing (P/H) DX [4]-12; Writing (M/A) IQ-2 [1/2]-10.

Secondary Skills: Area Knowledge (City) (M/E) IQ [1]-12; Electronics Operation (Communications) (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11; Gesture (M/E) IQ [1]-12; Psychology (M/H) IQ-2 [2]-11; Running (P/A; HT) HT [2]-10; Wrestling (P/A) DX [2]-12.

Background Skills: A total of 3 points chosen from Detect Lies, Diplomacy, Driving (Automobile), Driving (Tracked Vehicle), Fast-Draw (Pistol), Fast-Draw (Magazine), Judo, Karate, Languages (Any), or Speed-Load (Magazine).

Customization Notes: Elite SWAT officers may be built using 125 points, with experienced veterans reaching 150-point levels. The extra points should be spent mostly on skills and specializations (to reflect training and experience), not on attributes or advantages (see *GURPS Special Ops*, p. 00 for some additional suggestions).

Required Positional Specialization

Because SWAT team members often excel at certain duties (either through training or natural ability), each SWAT officer *must* choose a specialty from the following list. The listed point cost is already included in the basic SWAT template.

Only one specialization may be chosen during character creation. Team members may be assigned new duties during a campaign, however, and pick up additional skills in other position specializations using skill points.

These specializations are designed for use with this template, and so supercede those found in *GURPS Cops*. See also *Specialized Training*, p. 00.

Element Leader (p. 00): Administration (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11; Leadership (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-13; Tactics (Counter-Terrorism)(M/H) IQ+1 [+4]-13; 1 additional point in any *Background Skill*.

Assaulter (p. 00): Throwing (P/H) DX+1 [+4]-14; plus 6 points increasing any *Basic*, *Secondary*, or *Background Skills* in the basic template.

Rear Guard / Breacher (p. 00): Architecture (M/A) IQ [2]-12; Demolitions (M/A) IQ+1 [+3]-13; Explosives Ordnance Disposal (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-11; Guns (Shotgun) (P/E) DX+2 [+1]-15; Shield (P/E) DX+1 [2]-13.

Scout / Point Man (p. 00): Electronic Operation (Sensors) (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11; Lockpicking (M/A) IQ+1 [2]-13; Shield (P/E) DX+1 [2]-13; Stealth (P/A) DX+2 [+4]-14; Traps (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11.

OPTIONAL CROSS-TRAINING

Many departments cross-train their members – regardless of their position and

5. THE GEAR

A key element in tactical police operations involves the use of special weapons and equipment. GMs and players will find plenty of gear in this chapter, and in *GURPS Cops* (pp. C60-75), *GURPS Covert Ops*, *GURPS High-Tech*, *GURPS Modern Firepower* and *GURPS Special Ops* (pp. SO102-127).

Personal Equipment

While many teams give some measure of leeway to individual officers regarding equipment choice, most SWAT teams provide a basic set of gear to their members. Individual team preferences vary, and the GM can either research specific details on a given team, or simply come up with a set of guidelines for a fictional team. Smaller teams will work from a smaller budget; large teams may have access to cutting edge equipment (see box).

((START BOX))

A WORD ABOUT BUDGETS

The lion's share of SWAT teams in the US are small, part-time teams with very limited budgets. Such teams are forced to maximize their budget allowances, often making do with less-than-cutting-edge equipment in order to fully arm and equip a team, rather than spending large sums of money on one or two pieces of high-tech equipment. The GM (and players) should keep this in mind when requisitioning equipment. It's far easier to equip a dozen men with basic body armor (p. 00), MP5s (p. 00), and Beretta 92s (p. 00) than put together a squad of elite warrior packing P90s (p. MF00), night vision goggles (p. SO00), and encrypted wideband radios (p. CO00).

Only the largest SWAT teams will have access to the best equipment, and the GM *must* enforce that rule in order to run a realistic SWAT campaign. Private security teams (p. 00) may be well-equipped or go begging for gear, depending on their employer.

((END BOX))

ARMOR

Ballistic Shields. Shields come in a variety of sizes, including lightweight riot shields (PD 1, DR 4, \$70, 5.5 lbs); standard 2½' entry shields (PD 2, DR 12, \$270, 15 lbs); heavy-duty entry shields (PD 2, DR 40, \$400, 60 lbs), and massive multi-part rolling shields (PD 4, DR 90, \$1,000, 500 lbs). Each shield has a clear ballistic window allowing the officer to see ahead of him (at Vision-2, and with no peripheral vision).

Body Armor. Details on body armor for law enforcement personnel appears on p. C61; see also pp. B211, HT104, and SO103.

BREACHING TOOLS

Breaching Hooks. A pair of large steel hooks (about four feet long) that can be quickly attached to fences, barred windows, screen doors, etc. The two hooks are attached to one another by a four-foot length of cable, which is then attached (via a heavy rope, chain, or cable) to the bumper of a vehicle, allowing the bars to be pulled off in seconds. An IQ or Architecture roll is needed to properly place the hooks; failure results in a partial success, necessitating a second attempt. \$100, 50 lbs.

Chainsaw. A gas-powered chain saw may be used to cut through doors, walls, barricades, and so forth. It does 4d cutting per turn, with a Reach of 1 and requires a minimum ST of 12. It runs for two hours on a half-gallon of gas. \$150, 14.4 lbs.

Glass Punch. A small, spring-loaded punch used to shatter a car's side window. The wielder simply pushes the tip of the punch against the corner of the window, and on a ST-3 roll the window shatters. It only weighs a few ounces (it is about the size of a pen) and costs \$5. Some teams have mounted glass punches near the muzzle of their assault weapons (see *Vehicle Takedowns*, p. 00).

Go-Bar. A multipurpose entry tool used by almost every SWAT team in the world. The tool is a modified pry-bay with a two-prong fork on one end, and an angled pry head on the other and comes in various sizes and configurations. Almost all are insulated and spark-resistant, and available in several colors and sizes. Commonly called a Hallagan tool or hooligan tool. See p. C73 for game stats.

Rams. These specially designed rams are little more than large, heavy cylinders with one or two handles welded on. Many are home made. The ram can be used by one or two people, depending on its size. Details are available on p. C73 and CO00.

Sledge Ram. A massive, two-handed sledge is available for door breaching; it can be swung from the safety of cover (by standing to one side of the door). It does Swing+(1d+2) damage, weighs 30 lbs, and costs \$350.

Sledgehammers. During a dynamic entry (p. 00), assault teams may use a number of entry tools, including the ubiquitous ram (above). But every team has a variety of sledges available, ranging from small two-pound mauls to a large, two-handed hammer used to smash hinges, locks, and even door frames. They do Swing+2 crushing damage (or Swing+3 for two-handed mauls) and weigh from 2-20 lbs. Cost ranges from \$25 to \$150.

COMMUNICATIONS AND SURVEILLANCE EQUIPMENT

Contact Microphone. Small, sensitive microphone that can be applied to the outside of a window (usually in a corner) using special contact tape. Negligible weight, \$700.

Crisis Phone. A portable telephone specially designed to be used in crisis negotiation, especially where telephone lines are not readily available (e.g., in a vehicle or an isolated outbuilding). The phone is sturdier than a normal phone, and comes in a clearly-labeled flexible case or in a solid box with a clear window so the phone is readily visible. A 1,000-foot cable connects the phone to a small electronic box that can in turn connect to speakers, headphones, recording devices, telephone lines, etc. The phone and case weighs 5 lbs; the spool of cable 20 lbs. Entire cost is \$5,000.

Laser Microphone. Detects vibrations off windows with a successful Electronics Operation (Sensors) skill roll. Range 1,000 yards. 12 lbs, \$1,200.

Probe Microphone. Also called a “push-through mic” or “spike mic,” this rigid surveillance mic is 18” long and less than 1/4” in diameter. It has a 1/16” steel tip so it can be shoved through light walls and remains nearly invisible from inside the room (Vision-8 to spot). Can be shoved through light (sheet-rock) interior walls with a successful ST roll; a drill is required to penetrate wood or stone. 1 lb, \$1,000.

Tube Microphone. Can be slipped under doors, through keyholes, or through a crack in a wall. Similar to a probe mic (p. 00), but requires an existing opening for use. 1 lb, \$400.

ENTRY TEAM GEAR

Earplugs. Most entry personnel wear a radio earpiece in one ear and use an earplug in the other. Earplugs cut down on the noise of weapons fire, explosions, flash-bangs, and so forth. In game terms, the use of an earplug gives a -1 to all Hearing rolls, but adds +3 to resist the effects of flash-bangs and other loud noises. Negligible weight; \$2.

Fiber Optics. A variety of fiber optic devices have begun to replace mirrors during entry and assault. Slim fiber optic cable can be attached to cameras, recorders, view screens, transmitters and more. Vision rolls through fiber optics are made at -2. A typical “SWAT Camera,” complete with fiber viewing wand, fisheye lens, and display console weighs 2 lbs, and costs \$450.

Gas Masks. Teams occasionally deploy with gas masks (or protective masks; p. SO105), especially when using tear gas or entering a potentially hazardous building where dangerous gases may be present (like a meth lab). **GURPS High-Tech**, p. HT93, covers gas masks and their use.

Mirrors. In the past, every entry team carried a small mirror on an extendible, often flexible handle, for looking around corners and into rooms before entry. Many teams continue this practice today, as a tactical mirror is cheap and readily available; other teams use fiber optics (p. 00) instead. The process of checking a room is generally called “mirroring” regardless of what type of “mirror” is used (see p. 00). 1 lb, \$20.

Night Vision Goggles. Most civilian SWAT teams do not use night vision goggles, but as technology increases, this may change. **Special Ops** (p. SO110) has stats for night vision goggles.

GRENADES AND EXPLOSIVES

Ballistic Blanket. A heavy bomb suppression blanket that can be draped over suspected explosive devices as a stopgap measure until they can be properly dealt with by an EOD team. The blanket is flexible but stiff, and usually lined with grommets. It can also be thrown over doors or windows, or wrapped around a hostage during evacuation. Provides DR 25. At 3¥4, the blanket weighs 30 lbs; 4¥6 foot version weighs 45 lbs. Both sizes are commercially available for around \$1,000.

Flash-bang Grenade. See **GURPS Cops**, p. C69 or **Special Ops**, p. SO118.

Pellet Grenades. Special non-lethal grenades are available that discharges 100+ small rubber pellets throughout the blast radius (15 yards) to incapacitate suspects. The .32-.45 caliber pellets do little actual damage (1d-3; DR counts double), but they

hurt (impact is not only painful, but leaves welts, bruises, and causes swelling). Any damage taken from such an attack is *tripled* for purposes of shock damage (p. B00); High Pain Threshold negates the shock effects as normal.

Tear Gas Grenade. See **GURPS Cops**, p. C69-70 or **Special Ops**, p. SO118.

((START BOX))

THE DANGERS OF A FLASH-BANG

Despite their almost casual use, flash-bang grenades (pp. C69, SO118) are Class III explosives and must be handled carefully. Though the damage from the explosion is limited, they are capable of doing 1d damage to anyone or anything in close proximity (1 yard), and are notorious fire-starters.

Any time a flash-bang is deployed within 1 yard of flammable material (e.g., carpeting, upholstery, curtains), it will ignite a small fire on a second die roll of 15+.

Most such fires will burn themselves out or simply smolder (such as in carpeting), but some may need fire suppression, especially if given time to spread. Especially flammable material (e.g., curtains, loose papers, bedspreads) will ignite on a 14+.

Tear gas grenades (pp. C69-70, SO118) may also start fires when they explode, but only on a subsequent roll of 17 or 18.

((END BOX))

Breaching Charges. Door breaching charges may be designed in advance to speed deployment. They may consist of det cord (below) mounted on a frame that can quickly be attached to a door, or they may be enclosed in a large 3¥5 foot enclosed frame (about four inches thick) with pre-mounted adhesive that allows it to be slapped against a door in seconds and detonated seconds later. The explosion does 6d damage to the door; fragments may fly outward, for 1d-2 damage to anyone within 3 yards. Both types can be mounted with a successful Architecture, IQ, or Demolitions roll; a

Demolitions roll is required to attach detonators and actually use the charge. A typical door-breaching charge weighs 20 lbs, and costs \$350.

Caulk Explosive. Caulk explosives (i.e., demolition explosive slurry, or DEXS) come prepackaged in tubes or syringes designed to apply a 3/8" bead or string of explosives to critical points (e.g., hinges, locks, deadbolts). The explosive is detonated using blasting caps (p. SO111) or det cord (below), and does 1d damage to each location. A caulk kit containing enough explosive for a single door (five applications) weighs a pound and costs \$125. Components are packed separately for safety and must be assembled in the field, prior to use (requires a successful Demolitions roll and 5-Success minutes, minimum one minute).

Detonating Cord (Det Cord). This fast burning 1/4" diameter explosive cord burns almost instantly (some 4,000 feet per second) and does 1d-2 damage per foot. It can be wrapped around objects (doing double damage), or attached to doors and frames to aid entry. It is detonated using a blasting cap (p. SO111); a single Demolitions roll covers application of both the cord and cap. A 30' length weighs about a pound and costs \$50.

Tactical Blast Strip. A thin strip designed to be slipped under a door and detonated as a distraction device. Known under various brand names (e.g., *Thunderstrip*), this stun munition is about a foot long and four inches wide, but only about 1/10" thick, allowing it to slip easily under most doors. The explosion is less powerful than a normal flash-bang, but can be deployed without opening the door. Use standard flash-bang rules (p. C69), but with a limited (3-yard) radius, and a HT-2 roll instead. 1 lb, \$200.

Firearms

SWAT teams use a variety of weapons, many of which already appear in other **GURPS** books. The information that follows provides a detailed look at some of the more common SWAT weapons in use today; the table on p. 00 is more comprehensive, and includes game stats for weapons found in other books.

PISTOLS

Smith & Wesson Model 60 Chief's Special Stainless, 9×29mmR (.38 Special), USA, 1965 (Holdout +1): While this double-action pocket revolver is mainly intended for

detectives and supervisors, it is popular with SWAT officers as a backup gun. It has a “snubnose” 2-inch barrel.

Smith & Wesson Model 5906, 9×19mm Parabellum, USA, 1989 (Holdout -1): A member of the third-generation S&W pistols, the stainless steel double-action only Model 5906 caters to those departments requiring a medium-priced high-capacity 9×19mm gun. The otherwise identical Model 5926 has a decocking lever; the Model 5946 can also fire single-action. Late production “tactical” samples (from 2000) have an integral underbarrel rail for lights and targeting lasers. The Models 4006, 4026, and 4046 (1990) are similar, but chambered for the .40 S&W round; Dam 2d+, Shots 11+1.

Glock 22, 10×21mm (.40 S&W), Austria, 1991 (Holdout -1): The Glock is the single most popular handgun in American law enforcement today, due to low cost, low weight, and safe handling. The Glock 22 is, therefore, in common use by many SWAT teams. Late production samples (from 1999) have an integral underbarrel rail for lights and targeting lasers. Other departments prefer the Glock 17 in 9×19mm (Dam 2d+2, Shots 17+1, p. HT109) or Glock 21 in .45 ACP (Dam 2d+, Shots 13+1). The very small Glock 26 in 9×19mm (Dam 2d+1, Wt 1.6, Shots 10+1, Holdout +1) and Glock 27 in .40 S&W (Dam 2d-1+, Wt 1.7, Shots 9+1, Holdout +1) are popular backup weapons (p. MF20).

SIG-Sauer P232, 9×17mm (.380 ACP), Germany, 1997 (Holdout +1): A popular backup weapon of high-quality. Its small size makes it an excellent secondary or tertiary weapon, but its small caliber makes it less effective than other SWAT weapons.

Kimber Custom II, 11.43×23mm (.45 ACP), USA, 2002 (Holdout -1): This is a customized version of the Colt Government (pp. C63, HT108). It was adopted by the LAPD SWAT in 2002, with every officer receiving two; one mounts a Sure-Fire tactical light (p. MF12) under the barrel.

SHOTGUNS

Ithaca Model 37, 18.5×76mmR (12-gauge), USA, 1937 (Holdout -6): This venerable pump-action shotgun is still used by many agencies.

SGT Tactical Response Model 90102, 18.5×76mmR (12-gauge), USA, 1991 (Holdout -6): Scattergun Technologies produce a range of customized shotguns by modifying off-the-shelf Remington weapons. This model adopted by the FBI is based

on the Model 870 pump-action shotgun (pp. C64, HT112), and fires both normal 2.75" shells and the longer 3" Magnum loads (Dam 4d+2). It has a tactical light under the muzzle and a spare rounds holder on the left side of the receiver for six shells.

SUBMACHINE GUNS

H&K MP5A5N, 9×19mm Parabellum, Germany, 1985 (Holdout -4): The MP5-series of submachine guns (pp. C64, HT116, MF29, and SO117) is the single most common weapon in use with SWAT teams worldwide. The MP5A5N with retractable stock originally developed for the Navy SEALs is popular with American SWAT teams; the MP5A4N is the same weapon with a fixed stock (Wt 7.2, Holdout -5). Other common versions of the more than 120 configurations available include the MP5A3 (1971, same stats) and the semiautomatic MP5SFA3 (1989, RoF 3~); the ATF uses the MP5A5 with a trigger offering only single shots and 2-round limited bursts. The MP5/10A3 (1991) in 10×25mm Auto is rather scarce, but standard issue for the FBI SWAT teams (Dam 3d+, Wt 7.8, ST 11, Rcl -2). It allows single shots, 2-round limited bursts, and full automatic.

FN P90TR, 5.7×28mm, Belgium, 1999 (Holdout -4): This is the latest version of the innovative P90 personal defense weapon (p. HT116). Extremely compact and handy, it combines a bullpup configuration with a top-mounted magazine and superior ergonomics. The P90TR lacks the integral collimating sight of the standard version, instead featuring three accessory rails to mount a scope or collimating sight, tactical light, and targeting laser of the user's choice. It is in use with a growing number of American and foreign SWAT teams. It fires a semi-armor-piercing round with superior penetration, dividing DR by 1.25.

RIFLES

Steyr-Mannlicher SSG 69, 7.62×51mm NATO, Austria, 1969 (Holdout -7): A bolt-action sniper rifle with a detachable 5-round magazine and 6× scope.

H&K HK33SG1, 5.56×45mm NATO, Germany, 1971 (Holdout -6): An accurized marksman's rifle, with bipod, 1.5-6× variable scope and cheekrest. British weapons are usually semiautomatic only.

H&K HK53A5N, 5.56×45mm NATO, Germany, 1985 (Holdout -4): A very short carbine with retractable stock, popular with some SWAT and military units (p. SO114). The ATF uses the HK53A5 with a trigger offering only single shots and 2-round limited bursts.

Robar SR-60, 7.62×51mm NATO, USA, 1986 (Holdout -7): A commercial bolt-action rifle built on the Remington Model 700 action (pp. C64, CO00, SO116). It has a bipod and 10× scope.

SIG-Sauer SSG2000, 7.62×51mm NATO, Germany, 1989 (Holdout -7): A bolt-action sniper rifle designed for law enforcement, featuring a bipod and 1.5-6× variable scope.

Colt M4A1, 5.56×45mm NATO, USA, 1995 (Holdout -5): The U.S. military carbine (pp. MF26, SO116) – and several commercial equivalents – has become extremely widespread with American SWAT. It has a retractable stock and integral accessory rail on the receiver. Some teams use semiautomatic variants (RoF 3~).

H&K G36K, 5.56×45mm NATO, Germany, 1996 (Holdout -5): The carbine version of the German service rifle (p. MF25) is becoming popular with SWAT units. It has a folding stock and either a twin optic incorporating a collimator (p. 00) and 3× scope (p. 00) or an accessory rail to mount other optics. British units prefer the semiautomatic G36KSF variant (RoF 3~).

GRENADE LAUNCHERS

Enfield ARWEN 37, 37×112mmRB, Great Britain, 1984 (Holdout -6): The Anti-Riot Weapon, ENfield (ARWEN) is a grenade launcher firing less-than-lethal munitions. It has a 5-round open cylinder revolving action, foregrip and adjustable stock. The weapon is loaded from a loading gate, but the spent cases are automatically ejected. In addition to the plastic baton in the table, there are a tear gas munition (6-yard radius, effects as per p. B132), a smoke round (6-yard radius) and a barricade penetrator, which can penetrate an auto windshield or 0.5-inch plywood, and then release a cloud of tear gas (Dam 1d++, 5-yard radius). For all rounds, a safety distance of 20 yards is advisable to minimize casualties, and hits to the head should be avoided. Production switched to Canada in 2001.

<i>Pistols</i>											
	<i>Weapon</i>	<i>Mag</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>Acc</i>	<i>1/2D</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Wt.</i>	<i>AWt.</i>	<i>RoF</i>	<i>Shots</i>
<i>ST</i>	<i>Rcl</i>	<i>Hold</i>	<i>Cost</i>								
	Kimber Custom II, .45 ACP			Ver.	2d+	10	3	175	1,700	2.8	0.4
3~	7+1	10	-2	-1	\$1,020						
	SIG-Sauer P232, .380 ACP			2d	10	1	125	1,500	1.25	0.2	3~
7+1	8	-1	+1	\$500							
	Glock 22, .40 S&W		Crit.	2d+	10	3	150	1,900	2.1	0.7	3~
15+1	10	-1	-1	\$640							
	S&W Model 5906, 9×19mm			Crit.	2d+2	10	3	150	1,850	2.9	0.6
3~	15+1	9	-1	-1	\$850						

Revolvers

	Weapon	Malf	Damage	SS	Acc	1/2D	Max	Wt.	AWt.	RoF	Shots
ST	Rcl	Hold	Cost								
	S&W Model 60, .38 Special			Crit.	1d+2	10	1	120	1,250	1.5	0.2
3~	6	9	-2	+1	\$550						

Shotguns

	Weapon	Malf	Damage	SS	Acc	1/2D	Max	Wt.	AWt.	RoF	Shots
ST	Rcl	Hold	Cost								
	Ithaca M-37, 12g			Crit.	4d	11	5	25	150	6.8	2~
5+1	13	-3	-6	\$350							
	SGT Tactical Response, 12g			Crit.	4d	11	6	25	150	9.3	0.85
2~	5+1	13	-3	-6	\$895						

Rifles

	Weapon	Malf	Damage	SS	Acc	1/2D	Max	Wt.	AWt.	RoF	Shots
ST	Rcl	Hold	Cost								
	Colt M4A1, 5.56¥45mm			Crit.	4d+2	11	9	500	3,200	7.25	15*
30+1	9	-1	-5	\$900							
	H&K G36K, 5.56¥45mm			Crit.	4d+2	10	9+1	500	3,200	8.3	12*
30+1	9	-1	-4	\$1,200							
	H&K HK33SG1, 5.56¥45mm			Crit.	5d	15	12+2	800	3,500	11	1.2
12*	25+1	9B	-1	-6	\$2,500						
	H&K HK53A5N, 5.56¥45mm			Crit.	4d	10	8	300	2,500	7.8	1.2
11*	25+1	9	-1	-4	\$1,350						
	Robar SR-60, 7.62¥51mm			Crit.	7d	15	12+3	1,200	4,200	14.8	0.3
4+1	11B	-2	-7	\$1,850							
	SIG-Sauer SSG2000, 7.62¥51mm			Crit.	7d	15	12+2	1,200	4,200	14.5	0.4
2	4+1	11B	-2	-7	\$2,850						1/
	Steyr SSG 69, 7.62¥51mm			Crit.	7d	15	12+2	1,200	4,200	9.7	0.4
5+1	11	-2	-7	\$2,500							

Submachine Guns

	Weapon	Malf	Damage	SS	Acc	1/2D	Max	Wt.	AWt.	RoF	Shots
ST	Rcl	Hold	Cost								
	H&K MP5A5N, 9¥19mm			Crit.	3d-1	10	8	160	1,900	7.5	13*
30+1	10	-1	-4	\$1,300							
	FN P90TR, 5.7¥28mm			Crit.	3d(1.25)	10	8	220	1,900	6.9	15*
50+1	9	-1/2	-4	\$1,250							

Grenade Launchers

	Weapon	Malf	Damage	SS	Acc	1/2D	Max	Wt.	AWt.	RoF	Shots
ST	Rcl	Hold	Cost								
	Enfield ARWEN 37, 37¥112mmRB			Crit.	1d-1(0.5)++		14	5	50	110	8.4
1.6	3~	5	10	-2	-6	\$1,200					

Vehicles

SWAT teams use many different deployment vehicles, ranging from police cruisers to the workhorse “SWAT Van.” The trend across the US, however, is away from large clumsy trucks and vans, and toward a faster, more readily available deployment vehicle such as the Chevrolet Suburban (below). Equipment trucks may be used to haul gear to incident sites, but individual officers deploy in patrol cars, unmarked cars, and the like, far more often than in an actual SWAT van.

Helicopters can be used for deployment, and GMs looking for a commonly used chopper good for “skid surfing” can use the MD500 (see *GURPS Vehicles Lite*, p. VL61).

A patrol cruiser appears on p. C75.

CHEVROLET SUBURBAN K 2500

This is a 5-7 seat SUV of the type used by various government agencies, EMT units, firefighters, and utility companies. It is large, uses lots of gas, and is capable of crossing most off-road terrain at a good clip. It has two roomy bucket seats in the front with a large console between them, a middle bench seat capable of holding three people and a rear seat capable of holding more. The rear seat can be removed, giving the total rear deck a 150cf cargo capacity, which is perfect for carrying a pair of stretchers and two paramedics.

Equipment can be stored in lockboxes in the back and mounted on racks along the sides. A typical load will include enough personal gear for a four or five-man team (including body armor and assault weapons), and other common gear (e.g., a ram, breaching hooks, first aid supplies, tactical radios, and the like).

Subassemblies: Body +4, 4 off-road wheels.

Powertrain: 175-kW standard gasoline engine (DR5, HP50; burns 7 gallons per hour) that powers the 170-kW wheeled AWD drivetrain (DR5, HP 24) and recharges battery. Two 2,000 kW battery (DR5, HP 1); 40-gallon standard fuel tank (DR3, HP20, Fire 11).

Occupancy: 1 RCS, 1RPS, 3CPS. An extra bench seat can be installed for 3 more passengers, or cargo space in back can squeeze in up to seven cramped passengers.

Armor: PD3, DR5 standard metal. PD4, DR75 open-frame “Bumper and Brush Guard” for BoF, a PD4, DR15 “Skid Plate” for BoU, and a PD4, DR15 open-frame “Roof Rack” for BoT for the 175sf top deck (ladder to top deck on rear of truck).

Equipment

Body: Medium-range (30-mile) receive-only stereo, Sound System, Cellphone, medium-range (30-mile) CB Radio, medium-range (30-mile) two-way radio, burglar alarm, GPS. Eight 1/4 searchlights (2 kW, set for a combined 4yd. radius at 100 yards) on “Brush Guard”. Winch (ST25) on open-mount on front bumper (can pull 5,000 lbs.+).

Statistics

Dim.: 15'¥7'¥7' *Payload:* 1 ton *LWt.:* 4.8 tons

Volume: 480 cf *Maint.:* 100 hours *Cost:* \$51,894

HT 12. *HPs* 200 *Body,* 47 each *Wheel.*

gSpeed: 105 *gAccel:* 5 *gDecel* 15 *gMR:* 0.75 *gSR:* 5

Off-road speed 34 mph. Can climb a 2.5 ft obstacle.

Design Notes

Surface areas are body 400, wheels 125. Surface is light, cheap materials. The vehicle has four doors, a removable sunroof between front seats, drop-down tailgate with electric sliding glass, electric locks, power windows, front and rear air-conditioning, headlights, seat belts, automatic transmission, top deck for 175sf storage. One or two full-size spare tires can be carried (one on the front bumper, one on a swinging rear bumper mount). Also includes Improved Suspension and Brakes, waterproof, tow hitch in rear, 2 tow pins in front, snow tires.

CADILLAC-GAGE V-150

The Cadillac-Gage V-100 wheeled APC was adopted by the military in 1963 as the XM706 for convoy escort in Vietnam, and was later used for air base defense. Decades later, many of these vehicles were given to law enforcement agencies through the Military Assistance to Law Enforcement Program.

The V-150 corrected the main defects of the last of the V-100s (on which it was based), using a diesel engine to reduce fire risk and axles from the 5-ton M54-series truck to replace the V-100s' 2 1/2-ton truck axles that proved prone to breakage from engine torque.

The vehicle described below represents a typical SWAT police vehicle, having been lightly refurbished and given updated electronics systems (such as a GPS and police radio). Many are fitted with an emergency services light bar (p. VEL27, \$50, 0

pounds, neg. power) and some have an emergency ladder for rescues under fire (p. VEL27, \$100, 60 pounds, 3cf carried externally).

SWAT teams like the vehicle for its ballistic protection, fast entry/exit, and negligible acquisition cost. It is typically not used as a general deployment vehicle, but may be called out for special missions.

The vehicle has no NBC capability. This example is fitted with large top doors, two-part doors on each side and the rear, a hatch in the rear; hatches are included above the driver and co-driver. The lower part of the two-part side doors folds down to form a step. All of the passenger seats fold upward under spring tension when unoccupied.

The driver uses a conventional steering wheel and five-speed manual transmission (-3 unfamiliarity penalty, VEL39). Characters use Driving (Heavy Wheeled) or Driving (Automobile)-2. Note that visibility is poor (-2) from driver and co-driver stations.

The V-150 uses 5.29 gallons of fuel per hour; a full load of fuel costs \$96.

Subassemblies: Body +4, four off-road wheels.

Powertrain: 151kW all-wheel-drive, 151kW Standard Diesel, two 4,320kWs batteries, 80-gallon diesel fuel tank (Fire 9).

Occupancy: 2 NCS, 9 PS Body

Armor: All PD5/DR45 except Top Front of Body, which has PD6/DR60 due to sloping.

Wheels have PD2/DR3.

Equipment

Body: Bilge pump, GPS, military hitch, military pin, medium-range (30-mile) two-way radio, winch (24,000-lb. tow), run-flat tires (p. CO00).

Statistics

Dim: 19'¥7'¥7' **Payload:** 1.79 tons **Lwt.:** 9.73 tons

Volume: 600cf **Maint.:** 66 hours **Cost:** \$91,120

HT12. HPs: 1500 Body, 225 each Wheel.

gSpeed: 63 **gAccel:** 3 **gDecel:** 10 **gMR:** 0.5 **gSR:** 4

Off-road speed 16 mph

Design Notes

Body is 600cf with 30-degree slope on all surfaces except Top Front, which has 60 deg. Wheels are 120cf. Structure is Heavy and Waterproof, armor is Standard metal.

Mechanical controls. There are 67cf free in the Body because this variant has no turret. Dry weight is 15,875 pounds, wet weight is 16,355 pounds. Note that this vehicle is superior in many respects to the LAV-25 on p. VEL63, but has slightly less armor and no weapons or turret fitted.

6. ADVENTURES AND CAMPAIGNS

SWAT operations are tailor-made for roleplayers looking for fast-paced, high-combat adventures, but **GURPS SWAT** can easily be adapted to many styles and genres.

SWAT Campaigns

Running a successful **SWAT** campaign means more than simply stringing together a series of hostage incidents and barricaded suspects. While such a campaign may hold the attention of gamers for a period of time, it can easily degenerate into a routine of “ram the door, flash-bang the room, takedown the bad guys.”

Instead, GMs are encouraged to use the suggestions found in **GURPS Cops** to create a living, breathing campaign that includes sessions of character-based roleplay interspersed with exciting SWAT operations.

Gritty Realism

Real-life SWAT operations are a far cry from most cinematic portrayals. They are often confusing and difficult, and always fraught with danger. **GURPS SWAT** has been written with realistic campaigning in mind, and GMs are encouraged to maintain a believable level of realism, even if they have run highly cinematic adventures in the past.

In a realistic campaign, operations will go bad, characters will make mistakes, people will be wounded and killed. The entry team may use the latest technology and have the best training, but even a prostitute with a stolen .38 can bring a bad end to a good cop.

GMs should not force such occurrences, but by closely following the **GURPS** combat rules and refusing to fudge dice rolls just to let the players win, the PCs will often find themselves in deep trouble.

PCs in a realistic campaign should be 100 to 125-point characters.

Cinematic Heroism

To recreate the Hollywood's bigger-than-life SWAT heroes, characters should be built on higher point levels (150-200 is suggested). The GM may also wish to give the players an edge by using the cinematic rules found on pp. 00-00. The *flesh wound* rule on p. 00 is especially appropriate for keeping the PCs alive when the bullets start flying.

CROSSOVER CAMPAIGNS

Specially trained law enforcers can show up in almost any genre, including ***GURPS Cliffhangers*** (think Elliot Ness and his Untouchables), ***GURPS Fantasy*** (elite guardsmen assigned to eliminate bandit hideouts or monster lairs), and even ***GURPS Technomancer*** (see *Special Weapons and Thaumaturgy* info on pp. T82 and T83).

Certain genres are especially suited for a modern-day (or near-future) ***SWAT*** crossover campaign.

Black Ops

The PCs in this kind of crossover may be elite operatives that must face-off against a mundane SWAT team, or SWAT officers stumbling into a conspiracy. Alternately, some of the ***SWAT*** rules – especially those in Chapter 3 – can be modified and applied to a “normal” ***Black Ops*** campaign.

Cops

GMs are *strongly* encouraged to use ***GURPS SWAT*** in conjunction with ***GURPS Cops*** to create a believable, ongoing law enforcement campaign. Most real-life SWAT officers are patrol officers during most of their shift, and get called in for SWAT incidents on an occasional basis. Such a campaign provides both players and GM with more variety than a straight ***SWAT*** campaign.

A linked set of adventures should include some basic police duties, opportunities for investigation, and one or two SWAT call-outs based on the ongoing adventure threat. The *Cops Campaign Plan* on p. C128 is an excellent start for laying out campaign guidelines; the GM should also include information on the SWAT team organization, procedures, guidelines, training schedules, weapon availability, and so forth (see the sample teams on pp. 00-00 for some examples of basic team outlines).

Covert Ops

Much of the equipment in ***Covert Ops*** can be used as-is for a well-equipped SWAT team. while the more esoteric gear can lend an edge of high technology and espionage