

Equipment Guide

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The Review:

Reviewed By Gordon Feiner

The Upside:

The Equipment Guide is a collection of Hero System Equipment from multiple genres all in one book for easy reference. It includes information from Fantasy Hero, Ultimate Martial Artist, Dark Champions, and Star Hero. All of which are usually Heroic Genres, there are no Super-Equipment items listed.

This book was also released after the Fifth Edition Revised Rules came out, as such it takes the opportunity to update page references and some of the write-ups to take advantage of the Revised Rules. None of the changes are drastic, but they are helpful.

Chapter One - Fantasy Equipment. This is reprinted material from Fantasy Hero. It not only reprints the Weapons and Armor Tables but covers creating both items in Hero System Terms. There are rules for creating Fine and Poor quality versions of each, and descriptions of all the types of weapons and armor. The Poisons section from this part of Fantasy Hero was moved to be included in Chapter Four.

Chapter Two - Martial Arts Equipment. This section reprints the Weapons and Armor from The Ultimate Martial Artist. It provides the descriptions of many Martial and uniquely Asian weapons, as well as the Quick Reference Tables.

Chapter Three - Modern Weapons. This collects all of the Guns, Grenades, Hand Weapons and other assorted devices from Dark Champions. It also includes the Firearms Accessories from the same reference.

But this chapter also includes the books only new material - Weapons Of Mass Destruction. WMDs goes over Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical weapons. Each one covers usually delivery methods and provides write-ups for various forms. Biological Weapons has the Bubonic Plague and Inhalation Anthrax in Hero System terms. Chemical Weapons goes into Incapacitating Agents and Lethal Agents. Incapacitating Agents covers two kinds of tear gas, sneezing powder, vomiting gases, and psychological incapacitating agents. Lethal Agents covers asphyxiant,s blistering agents (Mustard Gas is the example write-up), nerve gases, and toxins (Botulin Gas is the example write-up). Nuclear Weapons covers only one actual weapon, a One Megaton Nuclear Bomb, which is usually enough to kill whatever you need. This breaks down the effects of a Nuclear Explosion into Eight distinct effects; Immediate Radiation, Flash, Thermal Blast, Electromagnetic Pulse, Blast Wave, Negative Pressure, Fires, and Fallout (Nuclear Winter, Lingering Radiation, etc. . .). The first seven effects have defined Hero Terms based on information from actual tests, and a good dose of Making It Work In A Game. It

comes with a handy table that adds all the various effects up to a rather impressive 6,120 Active Point Power (962 Real Points). But, as it says at the start, if you're going to drop a bomb, really have it do what you need it to. The last part covers the after effects of fallout, going into some ideas for large scale fallout.

Poisons are also covered, gathering material from both Dark Champions and Fantasy Hero and adding a bit of new information on dealing with, creating, and using Poisons in a game. It provides examples of eighteen real world poisons and three fantasy poisons.

Chapter Four - Modern Equipment. This chapter is also from Dark Champions, it covers acquiring equipment, levels of equipment (street, standard, military, advanced), and in game effects and consequences - if any part of the book could have been rewritten from a universal multi-genre point of view this is it. It also provides the non-weapon equipment from Dark Champions; Defenses, Sensory Equipment, and the Miscellaneous Equipment (costumed vigilante gadgets, underwater equipment, security devices, and spy gadgets).

Chapter Five - Science Fiction Equipment. This chapter covers futuristic equipment, reprinted from Star Hero. It covers Weapons, Armor, Computers, Robots, Biotech, Nanotech, Power supplies (real world, useful for Dark Champions games should you need them, and futuristic), Teleportation devices, future medical devices, future sensory equipment, and various tools (including the ever important Towel).

Overall this is a big book of stuff for your characters to load up on and trek off into adventure with. It's organized by Genre instead of by function. This is actually useful, you won't have your laser rifles getting in the way of information about swords for your Fantasy Campaign.

The Downside:

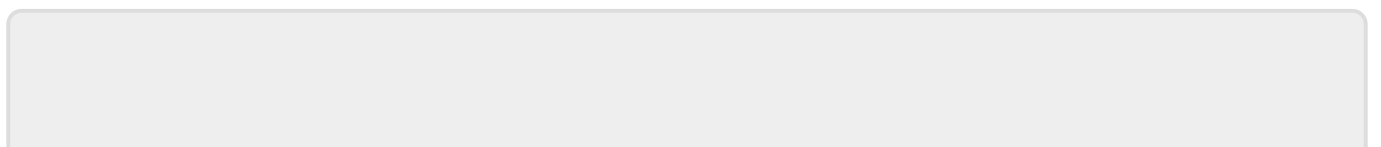
What this collection really needed was a giant unified Quick Reference Table of all the equipment from every chapter at the back. Or at least create Quick Reference Tables for those books that didn't originally have them, like Star Hero's Weapons and Equipment. A bit of standardizing of the write-ups would also have helped presentation of the book, though things are still easy to find.

Other than that, you'll either want a comprehensive reference from the many Genre's that Hero is capable of, or you don't.

The Otherside:

If you switch genres or play in cross-genre games this is an invaluable resource for Heroic Games. Superheroes would do better to pick up Gadgets And Gear. Personally I like having all (or almost all, Pulp Hero came out after this book so early firearms aren't here), the equipment in one small resource. Especially since the Genre Books they draw from are all large books, and if I only need to equip my characters mid game this saves space and time.

This book will prove useful once you're in the middle of the game and just need the facts on that weapon, armor or other device. I recommend it for any group running Heroic Level Campaigns.



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