



The Fight Before Fistmas

It is that time of the year again, Phanta Claws is back! This time he arrives in a light-hearted scenario (with poetry).

By Michael Duxbury

*Twas the fight before Fistmas,
For the great Van Saar house.
No ganger was stirring,
Not even "The Mouse."*

*The juves were unconscious,
The gangers were dead,
And the beastly old Phanta Claws,
Stuck blades in their head.*

*The gangers had walked,
Into his sly trap,
And now they lay down,
For an aeon long nap.*

*The fighters had fled,
But they were too slow.
They had not spotted,
That which lay below.*

*More rapid than eagles,
He slew those that came,
And as he tore them apart,
He called them by name.*

*"Die Modan! Die Crendell!
Die Sardon and Tricksen!
Die Big-Bones! Die Mudelm!
Die Hectus and Kit-sen!*

*To the dark of the tunnels,
To the base of the wall,
Run away! Run away!
Run away all!"*

*His claws dripped with blood,
And on his head sat,
An oddly disturbing,
Red and white hat.*

*His smile was murderous,
Yet filled with mad glee,
And all those who saw him,
Turned tail to flee.*

*Once all foes were beaten,
He tore them apart,
And admired his work,
As though it were art.*

*And I heard him exclaim,
As he stalked out of sight,
"Happy Fistmas to all!
And to all a good night!"*

Welcome, one and all, to this bonus festive Necromunda article. This piece continues directly on from last year's Phanta Claws article in Fanatic Online Magazine 44, which allowed players to ally with the fierce monstrosity. The scenario below presents players with a far more difficult proposition - taking on Phanta Claws themselves, whilst dealing with opposition from rival gangers!

Things got a lot more dangerous in the Underhive this season...

SCENARIO: THE FIGHT BEFORE FISTMAS

According to the legends of the Underhive, Fistmas Eve is the time at which Phanta Claws emerges from his grotto to fulfil the task set by Rogal Dorn millennia ago - distribute Fistmas gifts for those who have been good that year, and punish those who have not. Although few believe this childish tale, some find the myths intriguing enough to investigate. After all, if there is a Phanta Claws, then imagine what rewards could be stolen from his gift sacks if he was bested.

This scenario represents the mischief carried out by two gangs intent on mugging Phanta Claws and stealing his presents. As the two groups of rivals approach, Phanta Claws abandons his stash, leaving the gangs to fight amongst themselves to determine who will inherit the treasures. Little do the gangers know that Phanta Claws has no intention of deserting his riches, and has merely lured them into a trap...

NIGHT

As this scenario takes place on the night of Fistmas Eve, it is recommended that players use the rules for Pitch Black conditions as detailed in the Blind Fighting rules (available at www.specialist-games.com/necromunda/articles.asp). Other treacherous conditions can be rolled for as normal, if players wish.



TERRAIN

Each player takes it in turn to place a piece of terrain, either a ruined building structure or a connecting walkway. It is suggested that terrain is set up within an area of 4' x 4' or slightly smaller so that the gangs start off a reasonable distance apart.

After all other terrain has been placed, an objective marker is positioned in the direct centre of the board at ground level. This represents Phanta Claws' stash of treasure. A few sacks piled together will suffice to represent this - ambitious modellers may consider creating and using a fully fledged sleigh!

GANGS

After all terrain has been placed, each player rolls a dice. The lowest scorer chooses which table edge he wishes to set up on, and places all of his gang fighters within 8" of that edge. His opponent then sets up within 8" of the opposite table edge.

Neither gang may use the special deployment rules for Vents or Tunnels during this scenario - the gangers need to be on the surface to follow Phanta Claws' movements.

STARTING THE GAME

Both players roll a D6. The highest scoring player takes the first turn.

PICKING UP FISTMAS PRESENTS

The ultimate objective of both sides is to pilfer whatever they can from Phanta Claws' hoard of presents. Any model can claim a single Present Counter by moving into base contact with the central objective marker, at which point his movement will immediately end regardless of how far the ganger has already moved. No fighter may carry more than one Present Counter, but doing so does not restrict his ability to move or fight in any way.

Fighters who go out of action drop Present Counters where they happen to be at the time. Remove the model, but place a counter in its place. These counters can be picked up by other fighters in the same way as collecting presents from the central objective (as detailed above). Models can transfer Present Counters to other models in base-to-base contact during the shooting phase, but neither model may shoot that turn.

If a fighter takes an enemy out of action in hand to hand combat he automatically captures any Present Counters the model is carrying.

PHANTA CLAWS' TRAP

As the fight breaks out, Phanta Claws will sneak forward into an opportune position. However, once the moment is right, he will reveal his position and punish the interlopers for their impudence!

At the start of each player's turn other than the first, the player whose turn it is rolls two D6. The player may then choose any one of the dice rolls. If the number displayed is LESS than the number of game turns that have currently been played, then Phanta Claws has arrived! The player whose turn it is may place Phanta Claws anywhere within 12" of the central objective marker, in cover if possible.

MOVING PHANTA CLAWS

In the turn immediately following his arrival, before the other player is offered a chance to take his turn, Phanta Claws will take his first turn. Phanta Claws will then continue to take his turn at this stage (ie. immediately following the turn of the player who deployed him) for the rest of the game. As Phanta Claws' movement is defined by a series of strict criteria, a third player is not needed to control him, and he can be moved by either player.

Phanta Claws' movement and follow up actions following close combat are determined by the criteria below. He will always act according to the highest condition first, progressing to the lower stages only if acting according to the above criteria is impossible. Note that as a creature of darkness, Phanta Claws will not test to see if he tumbles if the Blind Fighting rules are being used - he automatically counts as rolling a 3-6 on the Blind Fighting table.

- During Phanta Claws' Movement Phase, he will move as quickly as possible towards the closest model visible of either side carrying a Present Counter, charging if possible.
- If no characters with Present Counters are visible or present, but a dropped Present Counter is in line of sight (ie. one left behind by a fighter taken out of action whilst carrying it), then Phanta Claws will move towards it as quickly as possible, charging any models lying directly in his line of movement, and picking up the Present Counter if he can.
- If no Present Counters are visible (other than those positioned within the central objective), then Phanta Claws will move as quickly as possible towards the closest visible fighter of either side, charging if possible.
- If no other models are visible, Phanta Claws will move as quickly as possible towards the central objective marker, charging any models lying directly in his line of movement.
- If Phanta Claws begins his movement in base contact with the central objective marker, and none of the above criteria apply, he will remain there until one of the above criteria is met.

Phanta Claws will continue to move in this manner, and fight anyone he is engaged in combat with, until one side Bottle's Out or he is taken out of action. Phanta Claws will never Bottle Out himself!

ENDING THE GAME

The fight will continue until one side decides enough is enough and abandons the field. If a gang fails a Bottle roll, or one player volunteers to bottle out, the game ends immediately. The gang that bottles out loses and the other gang automatically wins.

If Phanta Claws is taken out of action by the end of the game, then the winning side will gain all Present Counters carried by him, any loose Present Counters on the board, and a single additional Present Counter, to go with whatever Present Counters they have already accumulated. If Phanta Claws has not been taken out of action, then each player will only gain what Present Counters were carried by their gang when the game ended. If Phanta Claws is still Down at the end of the game, don't forget to see if he is taken out of action after the game ends.

EXPERIENCE

Fighters who take part in The Fight Before Fistmas earn experience points as noted below.

+ **D6 Survives.** If a fighter survives the battle then D6 points are earned. Even fighters who are wounded and taken out of action receive experience for taking part.

+ **5 Per Wounding Hit.** A fighter earns 5 points for each wounding hit he inflicts during the battle. Make a note on the gang roster every time the fighter scores a hit and wounds his target. Although it is possible to inflict several wounds from one shot using some weapons, only 5 points are earned when this happens not 5 points per wound.

+ **2 Per Present Counter.** If a fighter is carrying a Present Counter at the end of the game he receives + 2 points.

+ **10 Phanta Claws Bonus.** If a fighter successfully inflicts a wound on Phanta Claws that immediately results in him being taken out of action, then he will receive + 10 points. If a character takes Phanta Claws down, and Phanta Claws is then taken out of action during the Recovery Phase or after the battle ends, then he will be eligible for this bonus also.

+ **10 Winning Gang Leader.** The gang leader of the winning side earns an extra 10 Experience points.

SPECIAL

After the game is over, each player can determine what presents he has managed to swipe from Phanta Claws' stash. For each Present Counter held by the gang at the end of the game, they may roll once on the table below to see what they have won. Remember that the winning side will earn more presents if Phanta Claws has been taken out of action, as stated in the Ending the Game section above.

D6 Present

- 1 A Woolly Jumper.** Unfortunately this has no in-game effect on your gang – unless you wish to model it onto your gang leader!
- 2 Explosive Crackers.** Outwardly these resemble ordinary Fistmas Crackers, but they are in fact packed with explosive charge! These use the rules for frag grenades, and can be given to any one of your gangers.
- 3 Ornament.** You have managed to steal a potentially valuable decorative ornament. However, there's no accounting for taste so it may be nothing more than an ugly scrap of metal. Counts as a Mung vase.
- 4 Money.** Now we're talking! Add D6x10 credits to your stash immediately.
- 5 Dog.** You have managed to steal a Cyber Mastiff. The Cyber Mastiff uses all the rules for Cyber Mastiffs included in Enforcer gangs, except that one gang member of your choice counts as the handler in all respects, and it has a value of 75 for purposes of determining gang rating. See Fanatic Magazine 1 or the Necromunda website for Enforcer rules - if this is not available for whatever reason, re-roll on this chart.
- 6 Surprise!** You have earned some random rare item. Roll on the Rare Trade chart immediately – add whatever you find to your gang roster for free.

PHANTA CLAWS STATLINE

The beast known to the Underhive Gangers as Phanta Claws is a vicious and murderous monstrosity, and uses the profile marked below.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael Duxbury is a frequent tabletop wargamer, regularly engaging in games of Necromunda, Mordheim, Inquisitor and the Battle of Five Armies, as well as all three of Games Workshop's Core Games. In Necromunda he uses a Cawdor gang, often supported by a Phanta Claws Hired Gun. This is his forth Fanatic Article.

Michael would like to thank the late Clement Clarke Moore (whose poem The Night Before Christmas served as the inspiration behind this article), Andrew Stickland (author of the Blind Fighting rules) and Andrew Woolhead, Kit Stevens and Stephen Duxbury (who helped with photography) for their assistance in creating this article.

Profile M WS BS S T W I A Ld

Phanta	6	6	0	4	4	2	5	2	8
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SPECIAL RULES

Killer Reputation. No grown man would ever admit to believing in Phanta Claws – which makes actually witnessing one and its murderous rampage all the more chilling. As such Phanta Claws has the Ferocity skill Killer Reputation.

Monstrosity. Phanta Claws' are barely sane monsters used to hunting alone in the wastes with only their stunted craftsmen followers for company. A Phanta Claws always counts as having a friend within 2", regardless of whether this is the case or not. This means it can always test to avoid being pinned in place.

Rendering Claws. Phanta Claws' have huge raking talons which can rip through the thickest armour. A Phanta Claws counts as being armed with a knife at all times, except that it has an armour save modifier of -6(!).

They are not used to using any kind of technology however, so they may never use any other weapons or equipment.

Designers Note: *Astute players will notice differences between the Phanta Claws profile above, and the rules for Phanta Claws' employed as Hired Guns in other gangs. This has been done for the sake of simplicity, and to better suit the demands of this particular mission. Players wishing to employ Phanta Claws' in their own gangs should use the rules as presented in the Legend of Phanta Claws article in Fanatic Online Magazine 44.*