



# The Legend of Phanta Claws

*Light-hearted house rules and background for using a new festive type of Hired Gun in games of Necromunda.*

**By Michael Duxbury**

*Abror "Hammerfist" Flintor laughed as he tore his chainsword across the chest of his opponent. The pathetic attempt of the Delaques to break through into the Goliath encampment was almost disappointing- he'd been looking forward to a good scrap. Yet still they carried on fighting, as though they honestly believed that they could best Flintor and his men. Just as Flintor was preparing to charge the remaining Delaques and finish them himself, he heard a bestial snarl and turned to see a monster of immense proportions leaping towards him, claws outstretched.*

*Thinking quickly, Flintor raised his chainsword just in time, shielding the talons from tearing into his face. The mutant fell to the ground but rose again in an instant, blocking the chainsword Flintor swung towards him with supernatural ease. The monster's counter attack was swift and ferocious, forcing Flintor back as he desperately tried to defend himself. The creature's talons ripped across Flintor's leg, causing him to yell out in pain, and knocking him off balance. He fell, leaving the mutant towered over him, preparing to deliver the killer blow. In a last ditch attempt to save himself, Flintor rammed his chainsword past the mutant's claws and straight into its exposed belly. His feelings of elation quickly turned to despair, as the mutant glanced down at the chainsword forced into its abdomen before flinging it away effortlessly. Before Flintor could react, the fiend's claws plunged into his neck, and he felt his life force ebbing away. As the monster stood triumphant, Flintor got his first proper look at his killer, resplendent in its red cloak with white cuffs and with a bobbly hat adorning its brow. Surely it couldn't be... it couldn't be...*

*"Ho. Ho. Ho."*

*With a feral snarl, the Phanta Claws wrenched its claws out of the gang leader's neck. With the death of their leader, the Goliaths faltered and ran, leaving their encampment unguarded. The Phanta Claws smiled a murderous smile as it thought of the material rewards and human prey that lay in the valley beyond.*

*Phanta Claws was coming to town...*

Every winter season, men, women and children alike, come together to celebrate the Necromundian festival of Fistmas. From the nobles dwelling in the highest peaks of the Spire, to the Underhivers struggling to survive down in the Hive's depths, people gather to sing festive songs, give each other gifts, and generally have a good time. Despite all this good will, to this day there remains a sinister Fistmas legend which makes all who hear it scoff or tremble in fear – the legend of Phanta Claws.

The origins of this myth lie in the depths of history, and the tale of Fistmas itself. 10,000 years ago, in a time when the Emperor walked freely amongst his people, there was great strife on Necromunda, for the planet had been overrun by Orks. Fortunately for the people of Necromunda, the Ork Waaagh! was opposed on the great Ash Wastes by a vast force of the Imperial Fists Legion of Space Marines. According to historical accounts, Rogal Dorn himself, Primarch of the Imperial Fists, was present that day. Under Dorn's formidable command, the Ork forces were routed and forced to flee from Necromunda, where the Space Marine Fleet was able to intercept them and destroy them utterly. In commemoration of the brave actions of Dorn and his Marines on that day, the festival of Imperial Fistmas (later abbreviated to Fistmas) was born.

According to some (highly questionable) accounts, at the height of the battle, a small army of mutants arrived upon the Ash Wastes and immediately attacked the Imperial Fist line. Whilst the lethal volleys of bolter fire claimed the lives of most of the heretics, there was one which the Imperial Fists were unable to fell. The fiend was a being of monstrous proportions, and like a phantom it stalked through the corpses heaped upon the battlefield. When it reached the Fists' line its rending claws sliced straight through power armour, and many of the Emperor's finest were felled that day. Eventually the monster made its way to Rogal Dorn himself. The devil-being moved like quicksilver, but

Dorn was a Primarch, an embodiment of the Emperor's will, and none could stand before him that day. In the end the mutant was vanquished, and Dorn was victorious.

Dorn raised his blade to slay the blasphemous creature, but as he did so he thought of the people of Necromunda who had had their homes and livelihood destroyed by the Ork invasion. If they were to rebuild their world they would need hope and a time to look forward to. As such, Dorn allowed the monster to live- but its survival came at a price. From that day forth the mutant and all its offspring would be forced to gather together materials, fashion them into gifts and distribute them freely to all those



who had been good for the last year, on the Eve of Fistmas. The twisted monstrosity was named Phanta Claws, and it is still called the same today.

Although the tale makes a good children's story, extensive research by respectable scholars indicates that Phanta Claws' existence is nothing more than fabrication. For a start, the battle in question took place in the time of the Great Crusade 10 millennia ago- the idea that a being and it's offspring could survive for such a length of time is sheer folly. Nevertheless, rumours downhive still persist, claiming that the Phanta Claws still stalk the depths of the Underhive to this day.

According to the rambling testimony of gangers, Phanta Claws' take great pleasure in carrying out the quest Dorn set them, by tearing apart lone traders and stealing all their material wealth so that their stunted mutant servants can use them to create gifts for Fistmas Eve. Apparently their fear of Dorn's wrath should he return is such that they carry out his command still. As such, there are times when they need to venture out of the shadows to gather the resources they need to manufacture Fistmas presents. In these circumstances, Phanta Claws' may approach wealthy gang leaders and offer their lethal services in return for materials and enough money to purchase more. Few gang leaders have the courage to refuse.

There are a multitude of gangers who claim to have fought alongside and against monsters that match a Phanta Claws' description- huge monstrosities were rending talons suited for ripping apart human flesh. Large enough to stride through a hail of bolter fire, and quick enough to reach enemy gangers and rip their throats out, they are said to be some of the most brutal and vicious killers to stalk the Underhive. Naturally all such claims are to be treated as signs of madness- no sane man could honestly claim to believe in the existence of Phanta Claws...

RECRUITING PHANTA CLAWS

If a player wants to hire a Phanta Claws he must pay the standard hire fee which is 40 credits. Although there are in reality many Phanta Claws' (the descendants of the original which duelled Rogal Dorn aeons ago), they are few in number and rarely make contact with underhivers in anything other than a hostile manner. As such, a gang may only have one Phanta Claws. The profile and skills for the Phanta Claws is worked out after it is hired. Redemptionists, Enforcers and Spyrers may never hire a Phanta Claws- such a being would be anathema to them.

For purposes of calculating the gang rating a Phanta Claws has a value of 200 (ie, his hire fee of 40x5).



PHANTA CLAWS PROFILE

A Phanta Claws is likely to have special skills as well as superior characteristic values. This is worked out after the Phanta Claws is recruited. The basic characteristic profile is given below, which is the base level for characteristic values. In addition to this the Phanta Claws will have a number of 'advances' as explained below.

| Profile | M | WS | BS | S | T | W | I | A | Ld |
|---------|---|----|----|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| Phanta  | 6 | 4  | 0  | 4 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 8  |

In addition to its enhanced profile a Phanta Claws has three further 'advances' which are either additional bonuses on his profile or skills. Roll a D6 three times and consult the chart below, noting down the increases and skills as you go along. A Phanta Claws may not improve any characteristic by more than +2, nor may he increase his wounds or his attacks beyond 3. If a further increase is rolled re-roll the result. Similarly, if you roll the same skill twice re-roll to get another.

Phanta Claws Advance Chart

|     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | +1 Weapon Skill                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 2   | +1 Initiative                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 3   | Roll a further D6:<br>1-3 +1 Strength<br>4-6 +1 Attack                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 4   | Roll a further D6:<br>1-3 +1 Toughness<br>4-6 +1 Wound                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 5-6 | Roll a further D6:<br>1-3 Berserk Charge (Ferocity)<br>4-5 Leap (Agility)<br>6 Roll a further D6:<br>1 Sneak Up (Stealth skill)<br>2 Hurl Opponent (Muscle skill)<br>3 True Grit (Ferocity skill)<br>4 Step Aside (Combat skill)<br>5 Nerves of Steel (Ferocity skill)<br>6 Sprint (Agility skill) |

SPECIAL RULES

Phanta Claws' are psychotic murderous monstrosities. As such they have the unique special rules shown below.

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 all Phanta Claws have the Ferocity skill Killer Reputation.

Monstrosity

Phanta Claws' are barely sane monsters used to hunting alone in the wastes with only their stunted craftsman followers for company. The presence of other allies means little to them, and the vicinity of such a beast is hardly reassuring to those fighting alongside them. The normal maximum characteristics tables do not apply to Phanta Claws', allowing them to have a maximum Strength of 6 for example. 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. A Phanta Claws never takes a Leadership test for having a friend going down or out of action within 2", but may never use the Leadership of a Gang Leader within 6". A Phanta Claws never counts as a friend for purposes of nearby gangers attempting to avoid pinning, and will never be part of a challenge for Leadership if his own Leadership exceeds the Gang Leader's.

Note that models within 2" of a Phanta Claws which goes down or out of action DO have to take a Leadership test- the sight of such a monster being forced to hit the deck by the enemy is far from encouraging!

#### **Rending 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 -6(!).

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

#### **Phanta Claws' Grotto**

If a gang successfully manages to kill or capture a Phanta Claws, it will be able to raid its fabled grotto, safe in the knowledge that there will be no-one other than the Phanta Claws midget followers to oppose them! The gangers will search the wastes for the beast's former lair, and steal a bag of Fistmas gifts before escaping as quickly as possible- who knows what other creatures could be lurking in the shadows...

If a Phanta Claws is taken out of action and rolls Dead or Captured on the Serious Injuries table after the battle, then the gang's opponent in the last game may immediately make a roll on the table below. Any items gained are free- add them to your roster as though it was an item which you had purchased normally.

#### **D6**

1

#### **Present**

*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 member of your gang 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.

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#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

I live in Gloucester in the UK, and collect a Cawdor gang for Necromunda, though I intend to use my rules to get my own gang based on the Warhammer Empire Militia models in the near future. I also collect Eldar and Lost and the Damned for 40K, Goblins in Warhammer, and a Thorian Warband in Inquisitor. I go on the Games Workshop Main and Specialist Games Forums from time to time, where I use the name Sabbad.

Michael is preparing to make a Phanta Claws model using a Strigoi Vampire from Warhammer and a bobbly hat made out of Green Stuff!