



irregular

Wininter Issue 2023 magazine

40K Xmas Mission D&D Scenario

Call of Cthulhu Solo Frostgrave

Plus Interviews, Reviews, and much, much more



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<https://pixabay.com/users/alanfrijns-16705522/>

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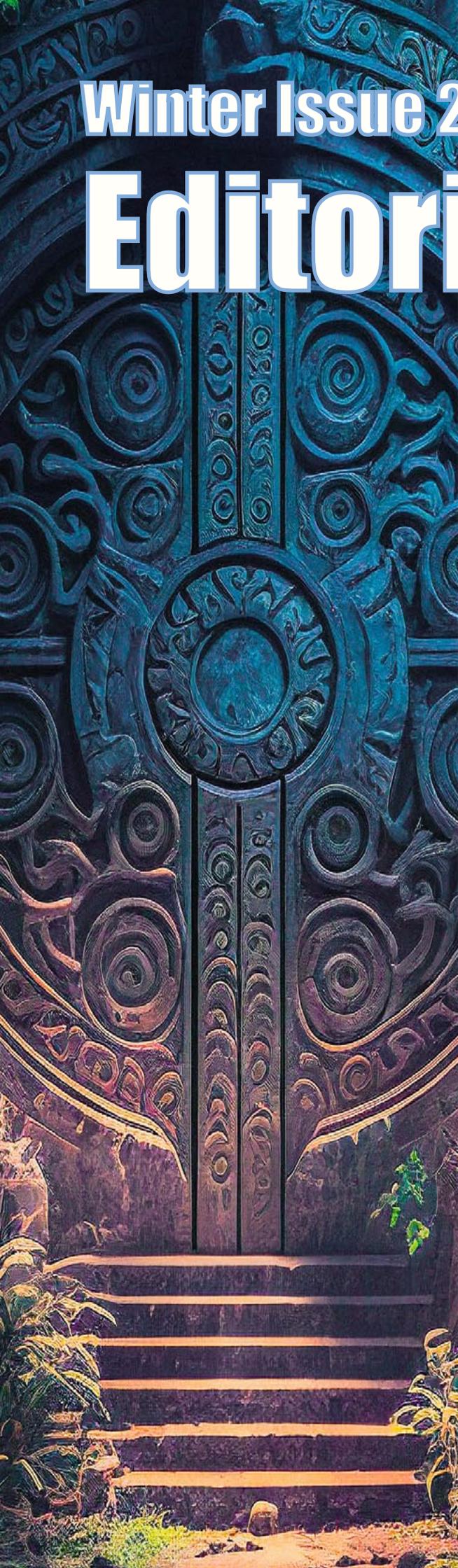
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Winter Issue 2023

Editorial

Jason Hubbard

Welcome back to another issue of Irregular Magazine.

Welcome back folks, as many will have realised we didn't release an Autumn issue this year and the reason was due to me being out of the country in China.

So with that in mind this is a bumper winter/Christmas issue. There are plenty of Winter and Yuletide themed articles, We even have an Xmas themed 40K mission. We've also going to be uploading some Christmas themed videos to our YouTube channel.

This year has seen the release of Epic though it's now called Legion Imperialis which has renewed an interest in small scale Sci-Fi wargaming. Then very recently Mantic Games announced they're diving into small scale sci-fi with Warpath, and then they announced the return of a popular game The Walking Dead, yep that's right folks the Walking Dead game is returning in 2024.

It's been another rough year, but fortunately there's been plenty of hobby goodies released in the last 12 months to keep us happy and busy. So the festive season is upon us and that means for many of us a break, which means hobby time, gaming, building and painting. Hopefully most of you will have received some new shiny goodies from under the tree.

Well that's all folks.....see you next time, and stay safe.

Jason



Christmas Quest



GAME® Spreads the Cheer this Christmas, Offering Festive Fun and Prizes with Free Web Browser Game Christmas Quest!

Christmas Comes Early as You Look After Your Elf and Try to Bag Some GAME® Reward Points
 GAME®, the UK's largest entertainment retailer, announced today a slice of festive fun for all gamers, with Christmas Quest, a free to play web game that's guaranteed to spread Holiday cheer, and bag some lucky gamers a Santa's sack full of GAME Reward points!

From December 1st, through to December 24th, gamers can head to christmasquest.co.uk, where they will need to practise a little Elf care as they work to help Santa's helper navigate an isometric world full of enchantment, snow, and an overload of festive cheer!



Reindeers, polar bears, and beavers (Christmas beavers mind) will stand before you, as you work against the clock to collect as many gifts as you can, avoiding the holes in the ice and the penguins (Christmas penguins mind), racking up those points in the hope of making your way onto the daily leader board. Secure 500 points or more to be submitted to the leader board, or even set up your own leader board to challenge your friends and family! Each day, the leader board will refresh, Santa checks who's naughty or nice, and the top ten winners will each be awarded with £10 in GAME Reward points! It's the gift that keeps on giving, as you battle to see how many times you can make it into the top ten.

If you're not already a GAME Reward customer, then it's easy to sign up for free at: <https://www.game.co.uk/reward/> so, don't wait for Santa to dole out the gifts, get yourself in the Christmas spirit and start playing from December 1st!

Commenting on Christmas Quest, Nick Arran, Managing Director for GAME said, "Not content with offering some of the best gaming, toy and collectible exclusives this Holiday season, we're beside ourElves with joy by offering a fun, festive, freebie and one which can earn gamers an early present in the run up to the big day! Christmas Quest is designed to put a smile on your face and maybe even GAME Reward points in your account, so we look forward to seeing some serious high scores in the month ahead,"

Play Christmas Quest for free from December 1st at: www.christmasquest.co.uk

Pressure RPG



THE UNIVERSE IS A DANGEROUS PLACE...

Pressure is a rules-light, story-focused game of facing the darkness at the heart of humanity's existence - both on Earth and among the stars.

An entirely standalone game, Pressure also develops and expands upon the mechanics and setting introduced in Those Dark Places.



Clean up after the corporations as highly skilled agents of Special Operations Squads: investigate organised crime, neutralise rogue weapons research, negotiate with rebel leaders, and hunt down whatever that black-budget excavation team 'awoke' out in the Procyon sector...

Pressure is available now in the UK and will be available in January in the US.

TANK MUSEUM RAISES 20K IN 24 HOURS



£20k in 24hrs as Museum Supporters Rally
The Tank Museum has achieved £20k fundraising target in 24 hours following a staggering response from online supporters in an appeal to restore a quirky prototype.

Work can now begin to bring the British FV4005 back to running condition in time for The Museum's flagship armour event, TANKFEST, in June 2024.

Chris van Schaardenburgh, The Museum's Head of Collections said, "We are incredibly grateful for this contribution from our supporters at a time when we appreciate that finances are difficult for everyone.

"This project in partnership with World of Tanks and A W Hewes will now commence to conserve and restore the turret, reunite it with a correct Centurion Mark 3 hull, and remake the gun cradle and other fittings unique to this unusual vehicle."

Developed in the 1940's the FV4005 prototype boasts the largest ever gun fitted to a tank and was developed by The British Army as a response to the threat of Soviet Union's heavy tanks like the IS-3.

The project was cancelled in the 1950's and was long forgotten until it appeared in the World of Tanks video game and developed a cult following with gamers and tank enthusiasts.

The Tank Museum will continue to offer a limited number of £50 supporter packages which include the opportunity for supporters to add their name on the turret of the FV4005, as well as a Q&A with the restoration team.

Find out more <https://tankmuseum.org/support-us/fv4005-fundraiser>

ABOUT THE TANK MUSEUM

The Tank Museum at Bovington in Dorset brings the story of tanks and tank crews to life.

THE TANK MUSEUM | Bovington | Dorset | BH20 6JG | tankmuseum.org | Registered charity no: 1102661
explore the Museum's seven large halls, you come face to face with tanks and hear incredible true stories from the last century.



FULL SPECTRUM DOMINANCE

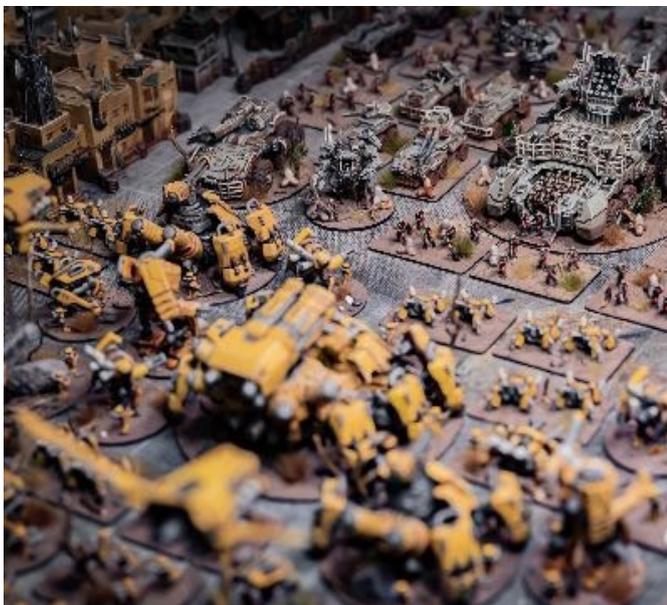


The OnTabletop 2022 Choice Award-Winning War-game Joins ViaModiphius Line Up With Core Book Retail Release.

Full Spectrum Dominance (FSD) is a miniature war-game for epic small-scale sci-fi miniatures created by Giacomo "Jack" Pantalone, known online as The Lazy Forger since 2009, and Federico "Feo" Valsecchi from Feo's Miniwords. Both authors are veterans in the miniatures and wargaming design worlds, and together wrote Round of Fire, currently an Electrum seller on Wargame Vault.

Modiphius will be launching an updated retail edition of the Full Spectrum Dominance rules as well as two packs of unit cards covering both current factions, The Enlisted and The Tech, plus two completely new factions, The Conglomerate and The Union.

The retail edition includes new material, such as a set of narrative scenarios, solo rules, a campaign system with advancements and area of control, plus lots of beautiful photos and comes with a free PDF and sample set of STL miniatures.



Miniatures and Scale

FSD allows players to use miniatures at any scale from 3mm to 15mm and over, so players don't need the official range; they can use anything they have available. Vehicles and mechs are handled individually, and infantry troops move in small teams, either as grouped figures or multi-based stands. You can fit two armies and a full battlefield on a coffee table, as little as 2 x 3 feet, moving platoons and tank groups with the same ease you would do in a skirmish game!



FSD gained attention through a superbly detailed range of beautiful, ready-to-print 3D miniatures designed by the team. This translates roughly to 1:300 - 1:250, and humans are about 8mm to the top of their heads. Originally designed for 6-8mm miniatures, due to the exceptional level of detail, the community have been printing 15mm scale versions and above with great success.

The range also comes with a huge selection of terrain to suit all needs to the same level of incredible detail, such as rusting refineries, outposts, shanty towns and colony buildings. All the miniatures and terrain are



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heads. Originally designed for 6-8mm miniatures, due to the exceptional level of detail, the community have been printing 15mm scale versions and above with great success.

The range also comes with a huge selection of terrain to suit all needs to the same level of incredible detail, such as rusting refineries, outposts, shanty towns and

colony buildings. All the miniatures and terrain are pre-supported and ready for printing.

How is it played?

The FSD rules are based around a dice-based activation engine utilising unit cards on which dice are placed to power different effects. This ensures that, at any moment, all players are involved in the game! Players must balance their resources and choose every action carefully while minimizing the downtimes with reactions and triggers. Will you use your Activation Dice to get your infantry moving, send in the armour, attack with giant weapons, or artillery support?

It's up to you to choose what to unleash each turn! The combat system uses different dice types and numbers to effectively represent a wide range of weapons and targets, and the damage for each Unit is easily tracked at the bottom of each card, keeping it simple but adding to the storytelling of each battle.

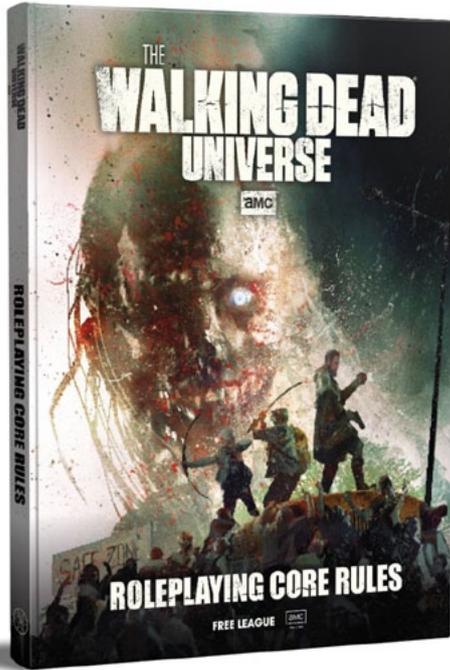
FSD is set in a not-too-distant future, where humanity is scattered between several worlds in a handful of nearby star systems without faster-than-light travel. The Enlisted - a militaristic government fights for hegemony against The Tech - a force of sentient robotic machines, while The Conglomerate - mercenary troops - defend the interests of the megacorporations.

Meanwhile, hidden from the battlefield, the Union - workers of the mega-factories have now unionized and are reclaiming their land.

Modiphius will soon launch the retail edition of the FSD Rules and unit cards along with web store-only bundles



The Walking Dead Universe Roleplaying Game Out Now



Explore an unforgiving, post-apocalyptic world, where you must learn to survive. Together.

Today, Free League Publishing released the highly anticipated The Walking Dead Universe Roleplaying Game.

Find out more about The Walking Dead Universe RPG here.



In The Walking Dead Universe RPG, you will play as people struggling to survive in a hostile world. Exceptional challenges can appear from anywhere – from the lack of essential supplies, from conflicts brewing within the group, from hidden construction flaws in your safe haven, or from approaching walkers hungering for your flesh.

In The Walking Dead Universe RPG, the player characters must not only hone their physical skills, but deeply explore who they truly are – what drives them to go on, what they consider worth fighting for, and what they're capable of doing, in the best and worst of times.



There are two ways to play the game – Campaign Mode and Survival Mode:

- In Campaign Mode, it is your goals and choices, and the result of your group efforts, that create the storyline.

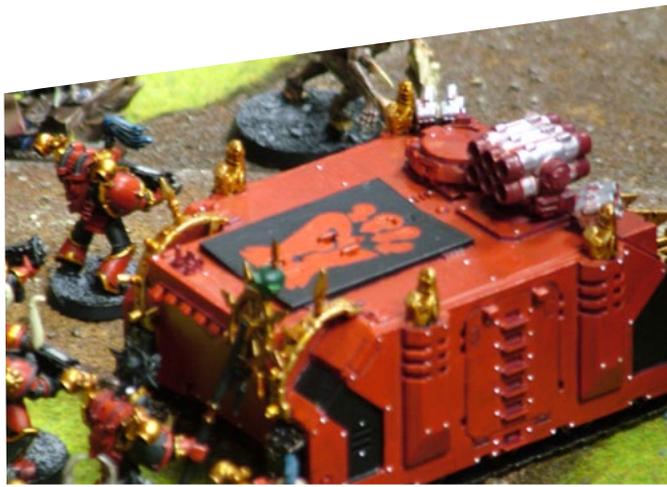
- In Survival Mode, you are faced with a dangerous situation that needs to be handled immediately. Survival Mode scenarios often feature locations and characters from the TV series..

Expect the stress and stakes to be high. The rules of The Walking Dead Universe RPG are based on the acclaimed Year Zero Engine, used in Free League's award-winning games such as the ALIEN RPG, Blade Runner RPG, Tales From the Loop RPG, Mutant: Year Zero and Forbidden Lands, but uniquely tailored for The Walking Dead Universe.



The 40K Battle for the North Pole

Jason Hubbard



Setting

In the grim darkness of the 41st millennium, the North Pole is no longer a place of festive joy. The warring factions of Warhammer 40,000 have set their sights on this once-hallowed ground, and the battle for control of Santa's Workshop has begun.

Objective

Two rival factions, each led by a powerful commander, are determined to seize Santa's Workshop. The faction that gains control of the workshop and captures Santa Claus will secure the ultimate prize of the season.

Rules and Guidelines

Faction Selection: Players divide into two factions, each led by a commander who represents a powerful Warhammer 40,000 army. Choose armies with thematic elements that match the dark, dystopian atmosphere of the 41st millennium.

Terrain Map: Create a winter-themed battlefield, complete with snow-covered ruins, workshops, and the iconic Santa's Workshop building in the center. You can use various Warhammer 40,000 terrain kits or create custom pieces to represent the North Pole.

Santa Claus: Santa Claus is a unique character who resides in Santa's Workshop. Create stats for Santa Claus as a formidable, albeit non-combatant, figure in the game. He may have special abilities, such as "Festive Cheer" that affects morale, or "Jolly Escape" that allows him to flee if threatened.

Objectives:

Santa's Workshop: The central objective is Santa's Workshop. Controlling this building grants a significant advantage, possibly a resource boost, unique reinforcements, or access to hidden objectives.





Santa Claus: Capturing Santa Claus is the ultimate goal. Once Santa is captured by one faction, that faction wins the game. To capture Santa, a unit must enter Santa's Workshop, roll to capture him, and successfully remove him from the battlefield.

Special Rules:

Naughty and Nice List: Santa's Workshop contains the Naughty and Nice List, which can be used as a morale-boosting or demoralizing tool for units in its vicinity.

Reindeer Guards: Create stats for Santa's reindeer as formidable defenders of the workshop. They can engage enemy units and serve as an additional layer of protection for Santa.

Santa's Gifts: To add a thematic element, include special "gift" cards or abilities that Santa can bestow on units under his control. These gifts could provide various in-game bonuses, such as enhanced combat abilities or temporary invulnerability.

Conclusion

"The Battle for the North Pole" Warhammer 40,000 scenario combines the grim and dark elements of the 41st millennium with the whimsy of a holiday-themed setting. Players can immerse themselves in a unique and festive gaming experience as they wage war over Santa's Workshop and seek to capture the jolly old man himself. Run this scenario for your Warhammer 40,000 gaming group during the holiday season and watch as the dark future clashes with the spirit of Christmas in an unforgettable battle.



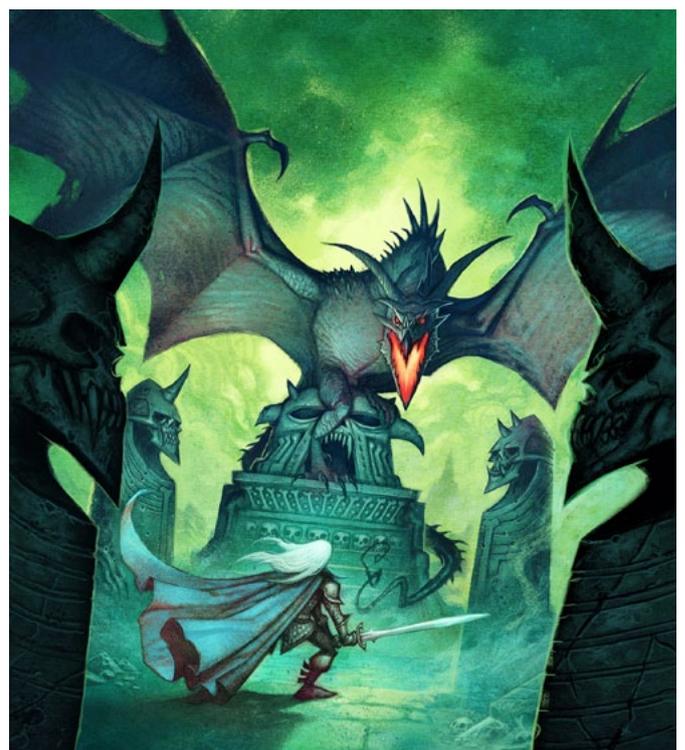


DragonBane Role Playing Game

In the oldest times, the world was ruled by dragons and demons. They were the primordial forces through which the world and its primeval matter was formed. They were opposing principles that made the world complete. Law and order versus chaos and madness. Dragons versus demons.

Dragonbane is a classic fantasy tabletop roleplaying game full of magic, mystery, and adventure.

It is designed from the ground up to facilitate fast and furious play, with very little prep time and adventures that are a breeze to run. Dragonbane is a game with room for laughs at the table, while still offering brutal challenges for the adventurers.



This boxed core set includes:

- Rulebook with fast and effective D20-based game rules for character creation, skills, combat, magic, and travel
- Adventures book with eleven complete adventures, to be played separately or tied together in the epic Secret of the Dragon Emperor campaign.



- The booklet Alone in Deepfall Breach letting you play Dragonbane solo, without the need for a Gamemaster.
- Huge full-color map of the Misty Vale adventure setting
- Illustrated playing cards for combat initiative, improvised weapons, adventures, and treasure.
- Ten transparent polyhedral dice, including two D20s with a custom design.
- Five pre-generated characters to play.
- Five blank character sheets
- Cardboard standees representing various characters and monsters.
- Double-sided battle mat



Originally DragonBane was called Dragon and Demons, first published in 1982 and over the years there have been several editions published in Sweden until we have Dragonbane.

Essentially, it's a d20 based rule system, and it manages to sit between an old school rpg and a more modern system, which means it'll appeal to both old and new gamers.

It has the feel of an old-style game, making use of a skilled based system where you roll a D20. If you roll under or equal to your skill rank then you succeed, over that score and it's a failure. It's a simple and easy game to learn, so anyone new to the game can pick it up quite quickly.



Any skill you use during a session, you mark it on your character sheet and at the end of the adventure you roll a D20, if you roll over your rank then it advances by 1. This is a great way to develop your character. So, when your rank is low there is a higher likelihood of increasing your skill quite quickly and will become harder to advance the better you become.

Which makes sense as you when you learn a new skill in real life it's easy to pick and get good at a skill, but it become harder to master the said skill.



Characters can prepare a few spells based on their intelligence, or they can learn new spells from books or grimoires. All spells have particular requirements that includes things like a word, gesture or ingredients.

There are basically three forms of magic that's introduced in this starter set, and it does state that there may be further forms or schools added in the future. Spells are either categorized under one of the three forms or just as general magic, which are available to all magic users.

The three forms are as follow.

Elementalism (wind, water, earth and fire)

Animism (Nature, spirits or gods)

Mentalism (these affect the mind or your body through mental focus)



The bestiary section has a good range of monsters that includes demons and dragons, which are very important to the setting, along with creatures such as spiders, trolls and ghosts. When in combat monsters roll on a chart that determines their attack/s.



The starter set doesn't much on the background, most of the setting fluff is spent explaining how the different species interact with one another and the monsters fit within the setting. The main theme in the background is about how dragons and demons are primordial power, with demons being chaotic and order is represented by order. Misty Vale is a set of locations which are surrounded by mountains and is mostly described within the adventure material.



Anyone who's played fantasy RPGs will feel at home with the game play and mechanics of this game. The races and classes are great fun to play, and make for an interesting game, especially the Mallard, a duck race, yeah, you can play a talking, walking duck. The game is pretty straight forward to play, and at times really fun and silly. Whilst easy to learn isn't easy to play, monsters will give you a real hard slap.

The solo adventure is a great way to learn and grasp the rules for anyone wanting to GM the game. For the rest of the adventures a party of players will be needed. They're a great way to kick off a campaign in the setting and allow players to get to grip with the game. For me this has been one of the more interesting and definitely fun games I've played this year. If you're looking for a fantasy RPG that's different to D&D 5e then this is the one I'd recommend trying.

Allied Tanks at El Alamein 1942

Author: William E. Hiestand
Publisher: Osprey Publishing

Review by Jason Hubbard

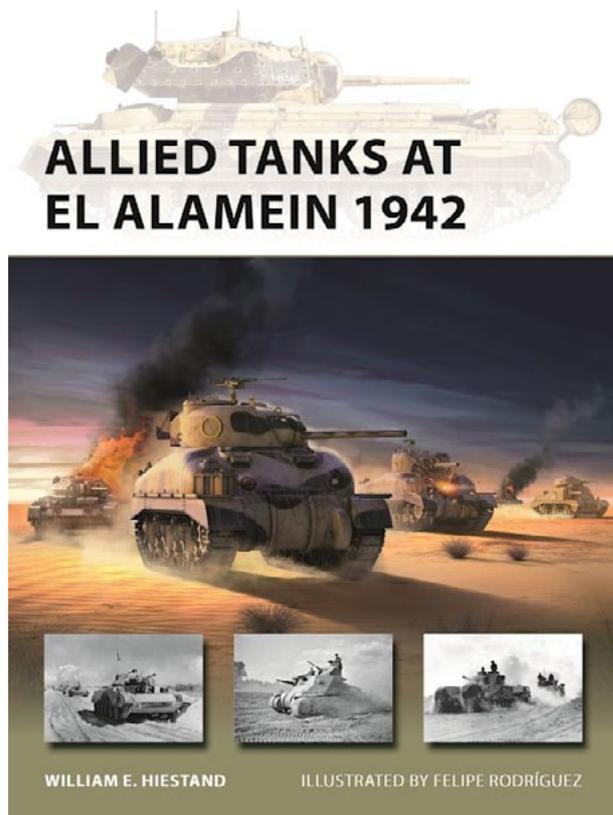
Examines Eighth Army's 1,000-strong tank force - rebuilt, reorganized, and equipped with brand-new Sherman and Churchill tanks - that secured victory at the Second Battle of El Alamein.

When Eighth Army retired into the defensive line at El Alamein on 30 June 1942, it was tired, dispirited and had lost almost all its tanks during a string of defeats at Gazala, Tobruk and Mersa Matruh. After savage defensive fighting at First Alamein, the reinforced Desert Rats defeated Rommel's last offensive in a tank-to-tank clash at Alam Halfa in September. The next month, a completely rebuilt and reorganized Eighth Army, equipped with over 1,000 tanks including the American M4 Sherman, launched the offensive that would finally drive Rommel out of Africa.

Montgomery shaped the Eighth Army according to his own military ideas, and on 23 October was able to attack the Axis defenses with the largest force of armoured divisions in its history, with the 1st, 8th and 10th united in a new 'corps de chasse' intended to defeat the Afrika Korps at its own game, and the 7th and two infantry support tank brigades assigned to support the XXX and XIII Corps. With the exception of the A9, 10 and 13 cruisers of 1940-41, as the offensive began, the Eighth Army contained every type of tank employed during the North Africa campaign.

Using detailed illustrations of the tanks involved with an analysis of the tactics employed for battle, this is a focused examination of the tank forces that won the Second Battle of El Alamein - the most famous British Army victory of World War II, and one of the turning points of the war. This title from Osprey discusses the tanks used by the Allies during the key battle of the North African campaign, El Alamein in 1942.

The British and their commonwealth allies face the might of Rommel's Afrika Korps, a conflict in which tanks on both sides fought in the heat of the desert sands. The British had been at the fore front of tank innovation during World War One, but by the outset of the second world war Germany had become more advanced in tank development.



During the Desert campaign the British were out gunned by the Afrika Korps, only the intervention of the Americans and a huge influx of US made tanks would give the British the edge.

The book offers a great selection of photographs from the period along with illustrations and diagrams of the tanks utilised by the Allies. This is a great book for any wargamer looking for information on the North Africa campaign especially those intending to build an Allied army.



Bolt Action: Chinese Army

The Chinese Nationalist Army, also known as the Kuomintang or KMT, played a pivotal role in World War II, defending China against Japanese aggression and later clashing with Communist forces during the Chinese Civil War.

Building a Chinese Nationalist army in Bolt Action allows you to command these brave troops as they fought against both external and internal threats.



Infantry

Chinese Infantry Squad: These soldiers form the backbone of your army. Armed with rifles, submachine guns, and light machine guns, they can hold the line and engage the enemy at various ranges.

Chinese Guerrilla Fighters: These irregular troops are adept at hit-and-run tactics, ambushing enemies from concealed positions and causing disruption in the enemy's ranks.

Artillery

81mm Mortar Team: Mortar teams provide indirect fire support, raining down shells on enemy positions. Their versatility makes them valuable for suppressing the opposition.

37mm AT Gun: These anti-tank guns can effectively deal with enemy armoured vehicles and tanks, providing crucial anti-armour capabilities.

Tanks and Vehicles

T-26 Tank: The Chinese Nationalist Army made use of a variety of tanks, including the Soviet T-26. These tanks are mobile and well-suited for anti-infantry roles.

Jeep with MMG: These vehicles provide mobile fire-power, allowing you to quickly reposition your machine gun teams to support your infantry.



Support

Chinese Engineers: Engineer units are skilled in construction and demolition, making them essential for fortifying positions and removing obstacles.

Medic Team: Medics provide invaluable support, increasing the chances of your wounded troops returning to the fight.



National Characteristics

Tenacious Defence: The Chinese Nationalist Army was known for its stubborn defence. Your troops receive bonuses when holding objectives or defensive positions.

Partisan Tactics: Embracing guerrilla warfare, your forces excel at ambushes and hit-and-run tactics. This allows you to disrupt enemy movements and capitalize on surprise attacks.

Painting and Modelling

Painting a Chinese Nationalist army for Bolt Action offers a rich and varied canvas.



Uniforms featured khaki, green, and grey colours, often adorned with patches or markings specific to different units. Paying attention to historical insignia and symbols will add authenticity to your miniatures.

Conclusion

As you build and lead a Chinese Nationalist army in Bolt Action, you'll be able to recreate the struggles and resilience of these troops during World War II and the Chinese Civil War. Their unique tactics and tenacity make them an engaging and challenging force to command on the tabletop battlefield. Whether you're a historical gaming enthusiast or simply seeking a new and intriguing army, the Chinese Nationalist Army in Bolt Action offers a rewarding wargaming experience.



Battle for the Island Kingdom

Author: Don Hollway

Publisher: Osprey Publishing

Review by Jason Hubbard

A rich history of the years leading up to 1066 when Vikings, Anglo-Saxons and Normans vied for the English crown. A tale of loyalty, treason and military might.

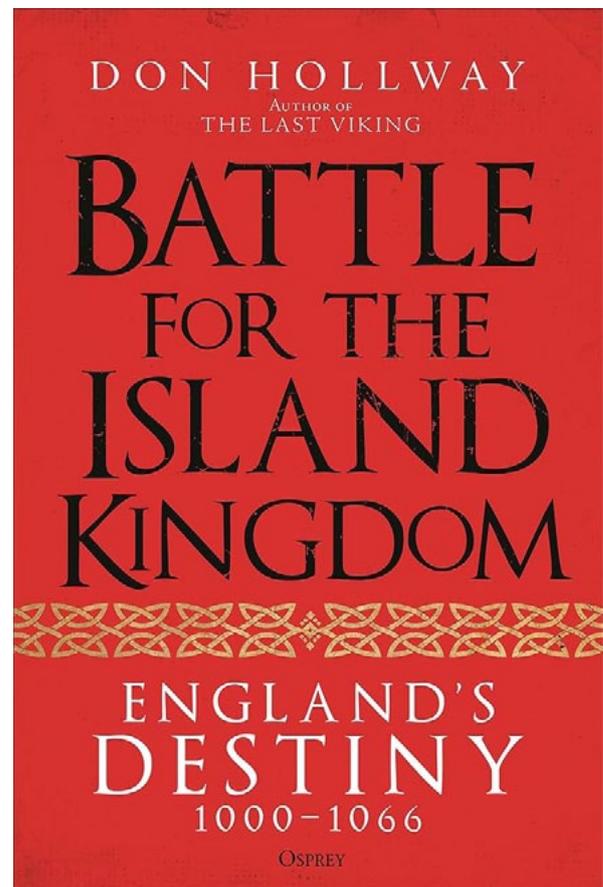
In a saga reminiscent of Game of Thrones and The Last Kingdom, Battle for the Island Kingdom reveals the life-and-death struggle for power which changed the course of history. The six decades leading up to 1066 were defined by bloody wars and intrigues, in which three peoples vied for supremacy over the island kingdom. In this epic retelling, Don Hollway (The Last Viking) recounts the clashes of Vikings, Anglo-Saxons and Normans, their warlords and their conniving queens.

It begins with the Viking Cnut the Great, forging three nations into his North Sea Empire while his Saxon wife Aelfgifu rules in his stead and schemes for England's throne. Her archenemy is Emma of Normandy, widow of Saxon king Aethelred, claiming Cnut's realm in exchange for her hand in marriage. Their sons become rivals, pawns in their mothers' wars until they can secure their own destinies. And always in the shadows is Godwin of Wessex, playing all sides to become the power behind the throne until his son Harold emerges as king of all of England.

But Harold's brother Tostig turns traitor, abandons the Anglo-Saxons and joins the army of the last great Viking, Harald Hardrada, where together they meet their fate at the battle of Stamford Bridge. And all this time watching from across the water is William, the Bastard, fighting to secure his own Norman dukedom, but with an eye on the English crown.

This book is the story of a struggle for power and rule of Britain between the Saxons, Normans and the Vikings. The author pulls on research from a plethora of sources and the latest in archaeological material, along with info from the Icelandic sagas.

Don covers a 70-year period which featured years of peace that were speckled with periods of violence.



It was a period where England was the prize for some very ambitious individuals, through conflict and political intrigue they clamoured for the riches of the Island. The author manages to paint an exciting read that drives through all the most dull and dry academic accounts.

This was a great read, that threw a lot of light on an exciting period in British history and a must read for any wargamer considering recreating 1066 and all that. It provides a great deal of background information on the years preceding the Invasions of Normans and Vikings in 1066.



Magical Weapons with stats for BECMI D&D and 5e

BECMI D&D

Sword of Flame

This longsword is imbued with magical fire that deals an additional 1d6 fire damage on a successful hit. Once per day, the wielder can call upon the sword to burst into flames, dealing an additional 2d6 fire damage to all targets in a 10-foot radius.

Stats:

- Weapon Type: Longsword
- Damage: 1d8 + 1d6 (fire)
- Special Abilities: Burst of Flames (1/day)
- Cost: 5,000 gold pieces

Bow of Lightning

This magical longbow is charged with lightning that crackles along the bowstring. Arrows fired from the bow deal an additional 1d6 lightning damage on a successful hit. Once per day, the wielder can call upon the bow to unleash a bolt of lightning that deals an additional 3d6 lightning damage to a single target.



Stats:

- Weapon Type: Longbow
- Damage: 1d8 + 1d6 (lightning)
- Special Abilities: Lightning Bolt (1/day)
- Cost: 7,500 gold pieces

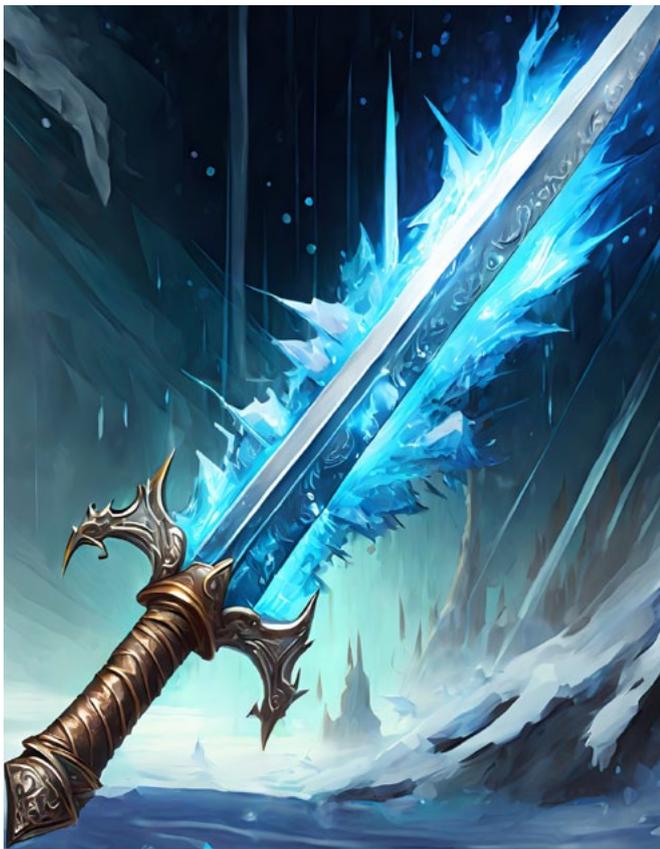
5e

Frostbrand

This magical longsword is imbued with the power of ice. It deals an additional 1d6 cold damage on a successful hit. Once per day, the wielder can call upon the sword to create a burst of cold that deals an additional 2d6 cold damage to all targets in a 10-foot radius.

Stats:

- Weapon Type: Longsword
- Damage: 1d8 + 1d6 (cold)
- Special Abilities: Burst of Cold (1/day)
- Cost: 5,000 gold pieces

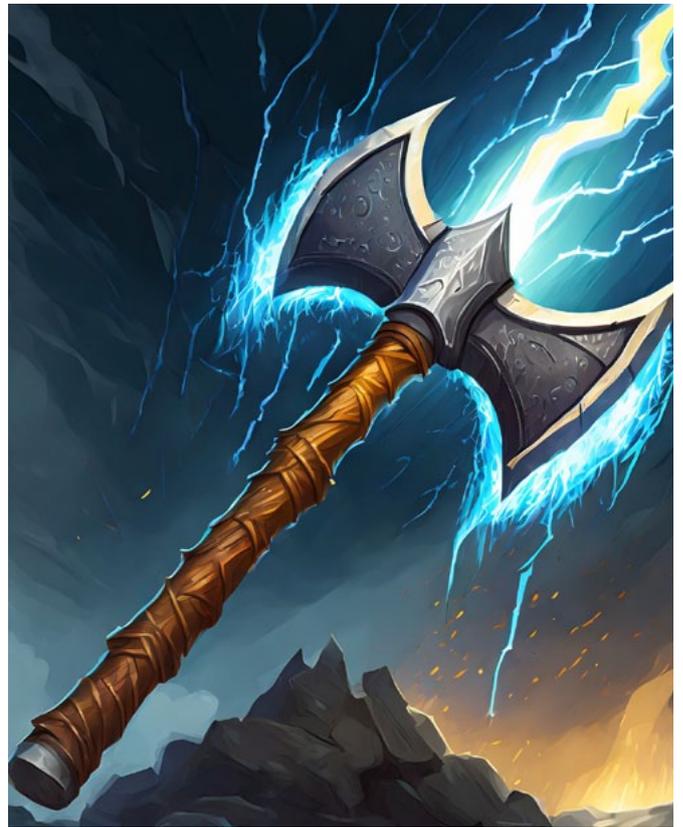


Thunderstrike

This magical great axe is charged with the power of thunder. It deals an additional 1d6 thunder damage on a successful hit. Once per day, the wielder can call upon the axe to create a blast of thunder that deals an additional 3d6 thunder damage to a single target.

Stats:

- Weapon Type: Great axe
- Damage: 1d12 + 1d6 (thunder)
- Special Abilities: Thunder Blast (1/day)
- Cost: 7,500 gold pieces



These magical weapons can add an exciting and powerful element to any campaign, giving players the ability to take on tougher challenges and enemies. The stats can be adjusted based on the power level of the campaign and the preferences of the DM.





The Carolers of R'lyeh

Madness in Mistletoe Town



System: Call of Cthulhu (7th Edition)

Introduction:

In the quiet and picturesque town of Mistletoe, the holiday season is in full swing. Streets are adorned with colorful lights, and the joyful melodies of carolers fill the air. However, beneath this facade of merriment lies a deep and sinister secret. The Carolers of R'lyeh, a mysterious group, have arrived to spread madness and chaos. Players take on the roles of investigators who must uncover the truth behind this malevolent caroling troupe and prevent them from unleashing an ancient horror upon the world.

Setting:

The scenario is set in Mistletoe, a small town nestled in the New England countryside. The time frame is a few days before Christmas, and the town is blanketed in snow.

Synopsis:

The investigators, drawn together by peculiar dreams and rumors of strange carolers, find themselves in Mistletoe. As they delve deeper into the town's secrets, they discover that the Carolers of R'lyeh are not ordinary performers but worshipers of a cosmic entity, intent on summoning a horrifying presence from the depths of the sea.



Act 3: Confrontation

- On Christmas Eve, the investigators infiltrate the carolers' secret performance.
- As the carolers sing their unholy hymns, a portal begins to open, releasing a foul stench and eerie lights.
- The investigators must interrupt the ritual, preventing the entity's arrival.
- A tense confrontation ensues as the carolers reveal their monstrous forms and resist the investigators' efforts.

Act 1: Ominous Prelude

- The investigators arrive in Mistletoe, each with their own reason for being there.
- They encounter strange carolers in the town square, singing haunting songs that stir unsettling feelings.
- Witnesses recount bizarre incidents involving people going mad after hearing the carolers' songs.
- The investigators receive an invitation to the annual Christmas Eve concert, hosted by the Carolers of R'lyeh.



Conclusion

The investigators' actions will determine the outcome. If they succeed, they close the portal and save Mistletoe from the impending madness. However, they may still have to deal with the surviving Carolers of R'lyeh who seek vengeance. Failure means that "Yuletide's Descent" arrives, and the investigators must confront a terrifying cosmic horror that threatens not only Mistletoe but the entire world.

Act 2: Uncovering the Truth

- Investigation leads the group to a hidden chamber beneath the local church, filled with cryptic symbols and ancient tomes.
- They learn that the carolers aim to summon an entity known as "Yuletide's Descent" on Christmas Eve, which will bring madness and chaos to the world.
- The investigators must decipher cryptic carols and riddles to find the ritual's location and purpose.

"The Carolers of R'lyeh: Madness in Mistletoe Town" is a chilling Call of Cthulhu scenario that combines the warmth of the holiday season with the dread of Lovecraftian horror. It challenges players to unravel the mystery and face the cosmic horrors lurking beneath the town's festive surface.

Afghan wheels and tracks

UK and US vehicles

Author: Craig Allen

Publisher: KeyPublishing

Review by Jason Hubbard

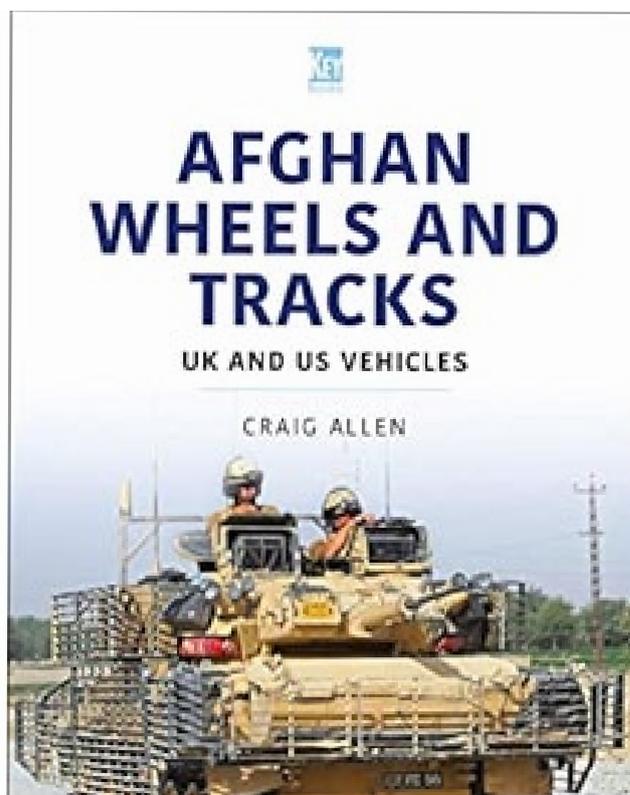
Afghanistan was primarily an infantryman's war, with Western troops confronting the Taliban in the fields and ditches of Helmand. Nevertheless, the conflict spawned a whole new generation of specialist mine-proof vehicles to counter the threat of roadside bombs and IEDs.

Based on earlier African designs from the bush wars in Rhodesia and southern Africa, these Protected Patrol Vehicles (PPVs), such as the Mastiff and Foxhound, were produced in response to Urgent Operational Requirements from the British military.

US forces, meanwhile, fielded a whole host of new types developed under the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) programme to equip both the US Army and Marine Corps. Along with these new models, several older vehicles saw a new lease of life, such as the veteran Scimitar Combat Vehicle Reconnaissance (Tracked). With over 190 images, many types are included, such as PPVs, Tactical Support Vehicles, specialist, armoured, light and logistic vehicles, which are vital to any military operation.

This book also looks at the chaotic withdrawal in Afghanistan, right up to the point that Western forces departed the country. The author also identifies the vehicles which were unsuited for the conflict and were taken out of service as a result.

The book is a soft cover with 96 pages, the UK is covered in the first 60 pages and the remaining 30 plus are dedicated to the US. The book is well illustrated throughout with some great images of the vehicles, this will be a great resource for both wargamers and modellers.



Each vehicle in the book comes with background information on the design and the subsequent use by the military, each one also has a table listing the basic specifications. On top of that each vehicle has a range of photographs.

This is a great slim book packed with plenty of information and reference images that any wargamer looking to recreate modern conflicts will find of great use.



The Winter Solstice Feast

Dungeons & Dragons 5th Edition

Jason Hubbard



Setting

The adventure takes place in the remote village of Frostwood, nestled deep in the snowy mountains. It's the eve of the Winter Solstice, and the villagers are eagerly preparing for their annual celebration.

Plot

The players find themselves passing through Frostwood as they travel on their own quests. The village's warm lights and inviting atmosphere draw them in, and they soon learn that Frostwood's Winter Solstice Feast is in jeopardy. The village relies on the feast not only for sustenance but also to ensure the return of the sun in the harsh winter months.

Rules and Guidelines

Character Level This scenario is suitable for characters of levels 3-5.

Village Map: Prepare a simple map of Frostwood, including the village square, decorated homes, a towering Solstice Tree, and the Great Hall where the feast is held.



NPCs

Mayor Thistlebrook: The mayor of Frostwood, Mayor Thistlebrook, seeks the players' help to ensure the feast's success. He provides information on the festival's traditions and the village's reliance on it.

Baker Bella: A skilled baker, Bella needs assistance gathering ingredients for the famous Winter Solstice Cake.

Master Toymaker Gideon: Gideon requires help in repairing a broken mechanical reindeer toy.

Elderly Storyteller Elara: Elara knows of a legendary Winter Solstice tale that may hold clues to the village's predicament.



Feast Preparations

The players must assist with various preparations for the feast, such as gathering firewood, decorating the Solstice Tree, and setting up the banquet tables. Each task involves a skill check, with success contributing to the village's festive atmosphere.

Mystery Unfolds

Players gradually learn that a mischievous fey creature named Puck has taken offense at the villagers' traditions and is planning to disrupt the feast. Mayor Thistlebrook reveals that Puck must be appeased through a series of challenges representing the spirit of Winter Solstice. These challenges include solving riddles, snowball fights, and ice skating.

Puck's Challenge

The final challenge is a game of wits against Puck himself, who can take on various forms, making it difficult to determine his true identity. Puck will only be satisfied if the players can make him laugh or outsmart him in some way.

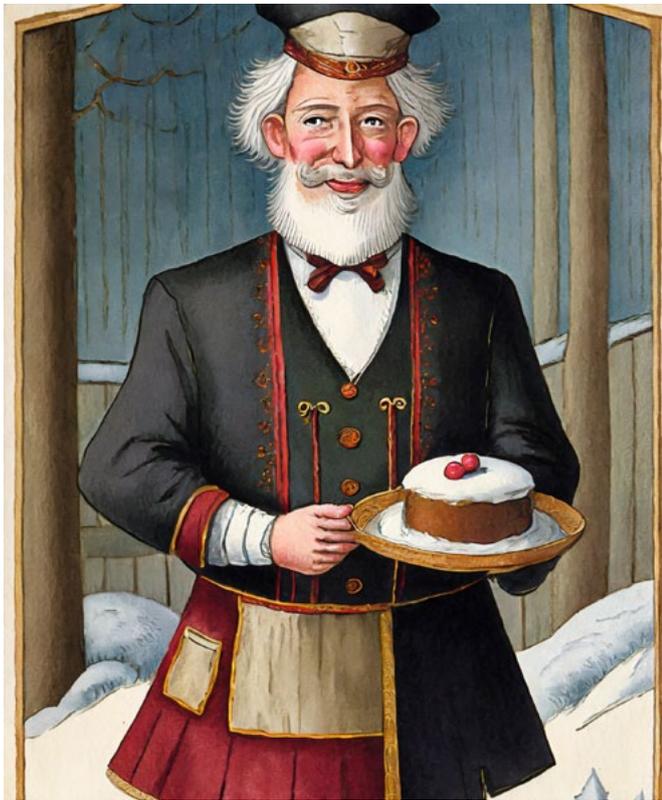


Reward

Upon completing the challenges and appeasing Puck, the feast proceeds as planned, and the sun's return is celebrated with music, dance, and laughter. As a token of gratitude, the villagers gift the players with unique Winter Solstice-themed items, such as enchanted snow globes or a blessing of warmth.

Conclusion

"The Winter Solstice Feast" is a heartwarming D&D scenario that combines festive traditions with elements of fantasy and magic. It allows players to immerse themselves in a holiday-themed adventure filled with challenges, puzzles, and memorable interactions with the villagers of Frostwood. Celebrate the spirit of the season by running this scenario for your D&D group and spreading joy and warmth in the world of tabletop role-playing. Happy Winter Solstice and happy gaming!



Baker Bella (Halfling):
Class: Commoner (Non-combatant)
Armor Class: 11 (No armour)
Hit Points: 6 (2d6 - 2)
Speed: 25 feet
Skills: Cooking Tools +4
Languages: Common, Halfling
Challenge: 0 (10 XP)

Master Toymaker Gideon (Gnome)
Class: Commoner (Non-combatant)
Armor Class: 12 (No armour)
Hit Points: 8 (2d8)
Speed: 25 feet
Skills: Tinker's Tools +3
Languages: Common, Gnomish
Challenge: 0 (10 XP)

Here are some statistics for the key NPCs in the "The Winter Solstice Feast" scenario for Dungeons & Dragons 5th Edition

Mayor Thistlebrook (Human)
Class: Commoner (Non-combatant)
Armor Class: 10 (No armour)
Hit Points: 4 (1d8 - 1)
Speed: 30 feet
Skills: Persuasion +2
Languages: Common
Challenge: 0 (10 XP)



Elderly Storyteller Elara (Elf)
Class: Commoner (Non-combatant)
Armor Class: 11 (No armour)
Hit Points: 6 (2d6 - 2)
Speed: 30 feet
Skills: History +2
Languages: Common, Elvish
Challenge: 0 (10 XP)

These NPCs are not intended for combat encounters but rather for role-playing interactions and assistance with the preparations for the Winter Solstice Feast.

Feel free to modify their statistics or abilities based on your campaign's needs and the level of challenge you want to provide for your players.



Yuletide on the Battlefield

Historical Christmas Battles

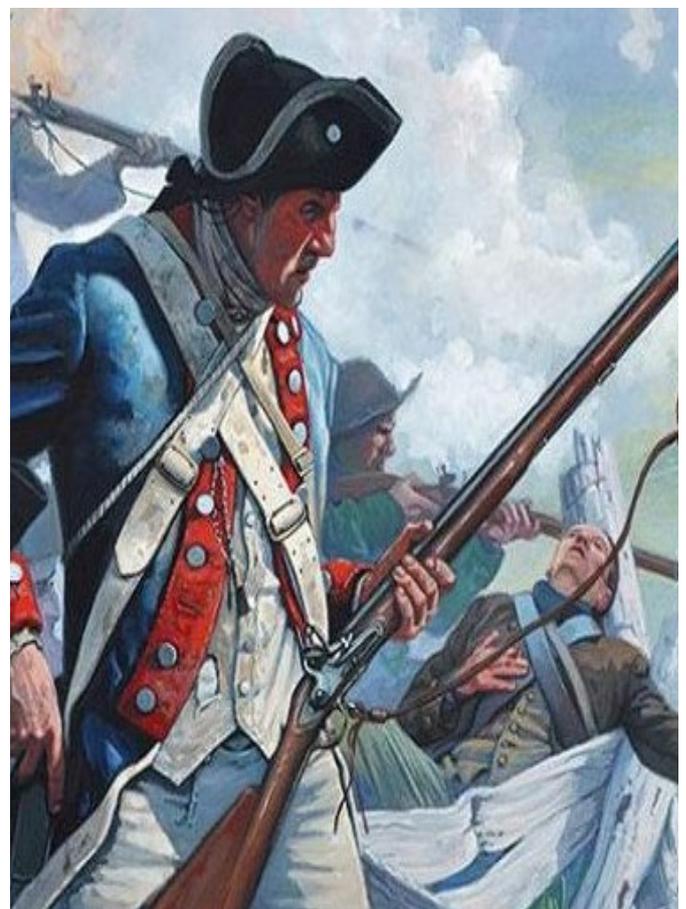
Christmas, a time of peace and goodwill, has seen its share of conflicts throughout history. While the holiday season often inspires sentiments of harmony and unity, the reality is that battles and skirmishes have sometimes occurred even during this festive time. In this article, we delve into some notable Christmas battles from different eras, reminding us that the human spirit's complexity is exemplified by the juxtaposition of war and celebration during the holiday season.

Battle of Trenton (1776)

Setting: American Revolutionary War.

Date: December 26, 1776.

Description: George Washington's Continental Army, facing a series of defeats, staged a daring and successful attack on Hessian forces in Trenton, New Jersey. The attack, which took place the day after Christmas, was a turning point in the war and boosted American morale.





Battle of Lake Tchad (1900)

Setting: Chadian-Sudanese War (part of the wider Mahdist War).

Date: December 22, 1900.

Description: On Christmas Day, French forces clashed with Sudanese warriors led by Rabih az-Zubayr at Fort Lamy, present-day N'Djamena, Chad. The French ultimately won, marking the beginning of the end for Rabih's forces in Chad.

Battle of Hong Kong (1941)

Setting: World War II, Pacific Theatre

Date: December 25, 1941, to December 26, 1941.

Description: Japanese forces attacked British and Canadian defenders in Hong Kong on Christmas Day. The battle ended with the surrender of British and Canadian troops on December 25, 1941, in what became a significant early Japanese victory in the Pacific.



Battle of Bastogne (1944)

Setting: World War II, Western Front (Battle of the Bulge).

Date: December 22, 1944, to December 27, 1944.

Description: During one of the coldest European winters on record, American troops, including the famous 101st Airborne Division, defended the town of Bastogne in Belgium against a German offensive. Despite being encircled and enduring harsh weather conditions, the American forces held out, ultimately contributing to the Allied victory in the Battle of the Bulge.

Soviet-Afghan War (1979-1989)

Setting: Soviet-Afghan War.

Date: December 25, 1979.

Description: On Christmas Day in 1979, Soviet forces invaded Afghanistan, launching a conflict that would last nearly a decade. The invasion marked a significant turning point in the Cold War and had lasting repercussions for the region.

While these battles remind us of the juxtaposition of conflict and celebration during Christmas, they also highlight the resilience and determination of those who faced adversity during the holiday season. As we remember these historical events, let us also reflect on the enduring human spirit, which seeks to find hope and light even in the darkest of times, striving for peace on Earth, goodwill toward all.

The Texas Revolution 1835-36

Texian Volunteer Vs Mexican Soldier

Author: Ron Field

Publisher: Osprey Publishing

Review by Jason Hubbard

Fully illustrated with specially commissioned artwork and mapping plus carefully chosen archive illustrations, many in colour, this lively study investigates the Mexican soldiers and Texian volunteers who fought one another in three key battles during the Texas Revolution.

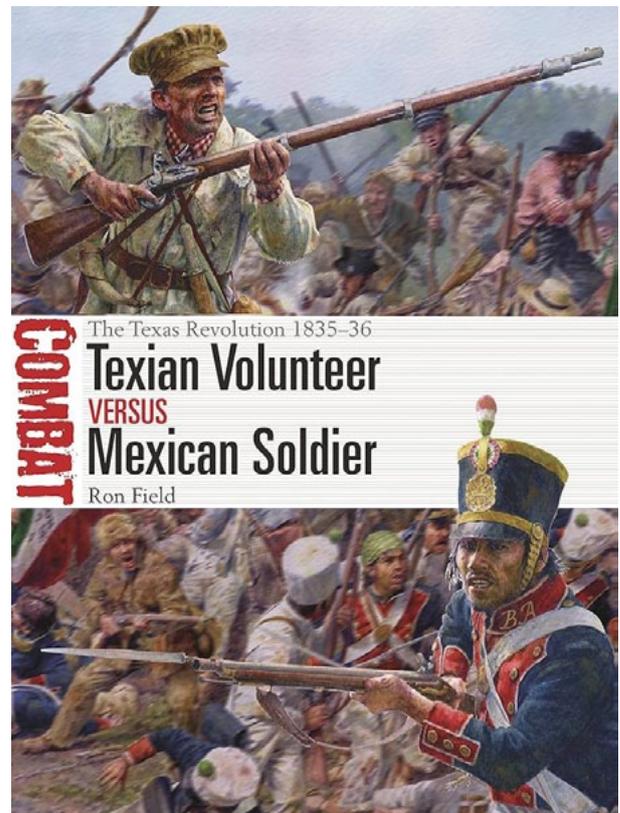
Following unrest throughout Mexico, in 1835 a revolt began in Texas among the Anglophone and Tejano-speaking settlers, known as Texians. Having retreated after their defeat at Bexar in December 1835, Mexican troops were ordered to re-occupy Texas in early 1836. In this volume, US military history expert Ron Field explores in detail three key battles that ensued. From February 23, Mexican forces besieged the Texian forces at the Alamo at San Antonio de Bexar; in the subsequent battle on March 6, almost all of the Texian defenders were killed. On March 19, forces en route to join the main Texian army were surrounded by Mexican troops at Coleto Creek.

Following their surrender, about 340 Texian prisoners were shot by Mexican soldiers in what became known as the Goliad Massacre. On April 21, a Texian force launched a surprise attack on a larger Mexican army near the San Jacinto River, the decisive Texian victory that resulted is the third battle to be investigated in this study.

Featuring full-colour artwork and maps and drawing upon the latest research, this book investigates the fighting men of both sides at the Alamo, Coleto Creek, and the San Jacinto River, casting light on the doctrine, tactics, weaponry, and combat record of the Texian and Mexican combatants who clashed in the first weeks of the emerging Republic of Texas.

The author takes a good look at this conflict using the facts and not the numerous legends that surround this war and some of it's more illustrious characters that took part. Which gives this read a much more honest and far more interesting look.

This war should have a been a for gone conclusion for the Mexican army, who were better trained, better manpower, a more sophisticated logistical support and overall were believed to be a much better military force.



Fighting against them was an enthusiastic volunteer force from Texas.

The author focuses on three main battles the Texans were involved in at the Alamo, a battle mired in legend and mystery, Goliad and San Jacinto. He even provides an order of battle for each which will be useful for wargamers. These are all illustrated with maps and period artwork.

I liked this book especially because outside the Alamo and the various movies about the battle, which is really more mythical than fact. This particular volume provided the factual information I didn't know. I'd highly recommend any wargamer who's looking to recreate this campaign picking up this book.

Deep Gnomes *(BECMI)*

by Jason Hubbard

Deep Gnomes, also known as svirfneblin, are a subterranean race of gnomes who dwell deep in the earth.

They are smaller and sturdier than their surface-dwelling cousins, with skin tones ranging from dark brown to gray. Deep Gnomes are often distrustful of outsiders and keep to themselves, but some are known to venture out into the world to seek adventure.

Deep Gnomes have the following ability score adjustments:

Ability Score Increase: Your Dexterity score increases by 2 and your Constitution score increases by 1.

Darkvision: Accustomed to life underground, you have superior vision in dark and dim conditions.



You can see in dim light within 120 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

Stonecunning: Whenever you make an Intelligence (History) check related to the origin of stonework, you are considered proficient in the History skill and add double your proficiency bonus to the check, instead of your normal proficiency bonus.

Gnome Cunning: You have advantage on all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.

Invisibility once per day: You can use the invisibility spell once per day.

Languages: You can speak, read, and write Common, Gnomish, and Undercommon.

Deep Gnomes, also known as svirfneblin, are a subterranean race of gnomes who dwell deep in the earth.



Unlike their surface-dwelling cousins, Deep Gnomes are a reclusive and secretive people who are rarely seen outside their underground homes. They are a hardy and resourceful people who have adapted to life in the darkness, where they have developed unique abilities that allow them to navigate the treacherous caverns and tunnels of the Underdark.

Deep Gnomes are smaller and sturdier than their surface-dwelling cousins, with skin tones ranging from dark brown to gray. They are known for their exceptional eyesight, which allows them to see in the darkness of the Underdark, and their ability to blend into their surroundings, which makes them difficult to spot. Deep Gnomes are often distrustful of outsiders and keep to themselves, but some are known to venture out into the world to seek adventure or to trade with other races.

Deep Gnomes have a strong sense of community and are fiercely loyal to their own kind. They live in small, tightly knit communities, often clustered around underground hot springs or geysers that provide warmth and fresh water. These communities are ruled by a council of elders, who make decisions for the group as a whole. Deep Gnomes are skilled artisans and craftsmen, and are known for their metalworking, gem cutting, and stonemasonry. They are also skilled at trapmaking and use their knowledge of the terrain and their environment to set deadly traps for intruders.

Deep Gnomes are a cautious and pragmatic people who understand the dangers of the Underdark. They are always prepared for the worst and have developed a number of unique abilities that help them survive in this dangerous environment. These abilities include their exceptional eyesight, their ability to blend into their surroundings, and their knowledge of the terrain and the creatures that dwell within it.



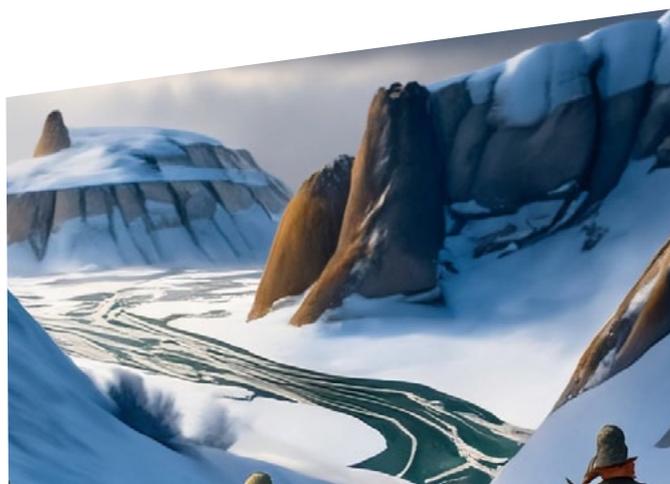
In the BECM version of Dungeons & Dragons, Deep Gnomes can be any class available to gnomes. These classes include:

1. Cleric: A Deep Gnome cleric might worship a deity associated with the earth or the Underdark, such as Moradin or Laduguer.
2. Fighter: Deep Gnomes make skilled fighters, using their small size and agility to their advantage.
3. Thief: Deep Gnomes are adept at moving through the shadows and using their environment to their advantage, making them natural thieves.
4. Magic-User: Deep Gnomes have a natural affinity for magic, and many become wizards or sorcerers. They often specialize in spells that allow them to navigate the underground environment, such as darkvision and stone shape.
5. Dwarf: Some Deep Gnomes choose to follow the path of the dwarf and become skilled in underground fighting and mining.
6. Bard: Deep Gnomes have a rich oral tradition, and some become bards to preserve their people's history and culture.

In other versions of Dungeons & Dragons, Deep Gnomes may have additional class options, such as the Deep Gnome subrace in the 5th edition, which allows for the Rogue and Warlock classes.

BATTLING THE ELEMENTS

Jason Hubbard



Lion Rampant, the historical wargame published by Osprey Publishing, allows players to reenact epic battles from various historical periods. While the game offers a wide range of scenarios, there's something uniquely captivating about winter-themed battles that test both strategy and endurance. In this article, we'll explore some of the winter scenarios available for Lion Rampant, where the icy terrain and cold winds become formidable adversaries.

Frozen Skirmish on the Eastern Front

This scenario transports players to the harsh winters of World War II on the Eastern Front. Two opposing forces clash in a desperate skirmish amid the snow-covered fields and frozen rivers. The deep snowdrifts impede movement, and the biting cold threatens the morale of troops. Victory depends on not only outmanoeuvring the enemy but also adapting to the unforgiving winter landscape.

Winter Siege of Frostburg Castle

Set in a fictional medieval world, "Frostburg Castle" presents a classic siege scenario with a winter twist. The defenders are holed up in a formidable fortress

atop a snow-covered mountain, while the attackers must navigate narrow mountain passes and treacherous slopes to breach the castle walls. The combination of siege tactics, harsh winter conditions, and varied terrain makes this scenario a multifaceted challenge.



Blizzard Ambush in the Viking Fjords

This scenario takes players to the icy fjords of the Viking Age. Amidst the frozen waters and snow-covered cliffs, Viking warbands engage in a fierce ambush battle. The unpredictable blizzard conditions add an element of chaos, obscuring vision and creating a dynamic and suspenseful battlefield.

The Battle of Frosty Heights

"Frosty Heights" presents a mountainous winter battlefield where rival warbands compete for control of a strategic pass. The treacherous slopes and deep snowdrifts create a challenging terrain that tests the skill and resourcefulness of commanders. Victory hinges on adapting to the changing landscape and outwitting the enemy amidst the winter chill.



Snowbound Skirmish at the Frozen River

In this skirmish scenario, players find themselves on opposing sides of a partially frozen river. The ice, though treacherous, offers a potential avenue for attack or retreat. Troops must carefully traverse the frozen river, wary of weak ice and hidden hazards. This scenario adds a dynamic element to winter warfare, as players must not only contend with enemy forces but also with the unpredictable nature of a partially frozen river.



The Winter Battle of Glacial Pass

"Glacial Pass" plunges players into the heart of a surprise winter attack scenario. Amid the howling winds and whiteout conditions, rival warbands must navigate a treacherous mountain pass while fending off attacks from hidden adversaries. This scenario showcases the harsh realities of winter warfare and the need for adaptability and strategy.

Winter-themed scenarios in Lion Rampant provide wargamers with a unique and challenging experience. They test not only tactical prowess but also the ability to navigate and adapt to the unforgiving winter elements. Whether you're recreating historical battles or crafting your own snowy narratives, these scenarios offer a thrilling and immersive winter wargaming experience that will keep you engaged and on your toes in the frozen landscapes of history and imagination.

Anglo Saxon Kings & Warlords AD 400-700

Author: Raffaele D'Amato & Stephen Pollington
Publisher: Osprey Publishing

Review by Jason Hubbard

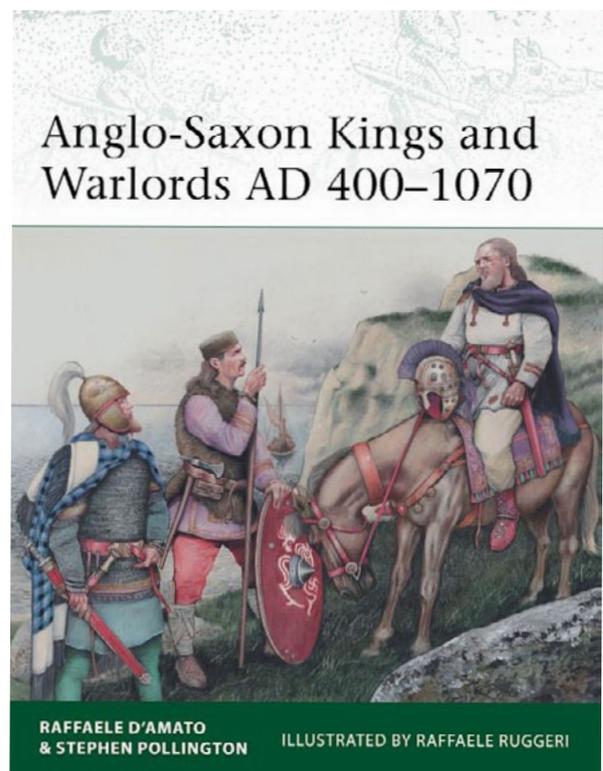
Richly illustrated, this title describes Anglo-Saxon monarchs, warlords and their warriors and households in Anglo-Saxon Britain, from the first post-Roman mercenaries to the Norman Conquest.

In a country fragmented by Roman withdrawal during the 5th century AD, the employment of Germanic mercenaries by local rulers in Anglo-Saxon Britain was commonplace. These mercenaries became settlers, forcing Romano-British communities into Wales and the West Country. Against a background of spreading Christianity, the struggles of rival British and Anglo-Saxon kingdoms were exploited by the Vikings, but eventually contained by the Anglo-Saxon king, Alfred of Wessex. His descendants unified the country during the 10th century; however, subsequent weak rule saw its 25-year incorporation into a Danish empire before it finally fell to the Norman invasion of 1066.

Scholars of the early Church have long known that the term 'Dark Ages' for the 5th to 11th centuries in Britain refers only to a lack of written sources and gives a false impression of material culture. The Anglo-Saxon warrior elite were equipped with magnificent armour, influenced by the cultures of the late Romans, the Scandinavian Vendel people, the Frankish Merovingians, Carolingians and Ottonians, and also the Vikings.

In this volume, co-authors Raffaele D'Amato and Stephen Pollington access their extended knowledge to paint a vivid picture of the kings and warlords of the time with the aid of colour illustrations, rare photos and the latest archaeological research. The authors present a highly detailed and concise picture of the period and the ruling elite.

They've made excellent use of the archaeological evidence and written sources from the period.



Though they don't stray far from the current academic interpretation.

This will make a useful resource for any wargamer who currently or is considering this period of history for a campaign. It's well illustrated throughout with some excellent artwork, as well as photographs of surviving artefacts. This would definitely be an excellent resource for Saga players, especially building a campaign around one of the Saxon elites.

At the end of the book the authors also touch on 4 major battles of the period. These will be of great interest to wargamers looking for a battle to re-create. As always with Osprey books they're well written and nicely illustrated throughout, they make perfect introductions to a period, campaign or army. Which make them ideal resource book for historical wargamers.

The Search for the Star of Yule

Solo Frostgrave Scenario

by Jason Hubbard

In the mystical city of Felstad, where the ruins are ever-shrouded in a thick blanket of snow, a legend has emerged. It is said that hidden within the frozen catacombs lies the fabled Star of Yule, a powerful artifact said to bring warmth and joy to the hearts of those who possess it. As a solo wizard, you embark on a perilous journey to uncover the Star of Yule, all while the city is enveloped in a magical Christmas enchantment.

Scenario Setup

Objective

Your goal is to locate the Star of Yule within the ruins of Felstad and make it back to your starting position while fending off any opposition.



Warband

You control a single wizard of your choosing. Use the standard rules for creating a wizard, selecting spells, and equipping equipment as per the core Frostgrave rulebook.

Opposition

The ruins of Felstad are inhabited by various creatures drawn to the magic of the Star of Yule. Determine the opposition by rolling a d20 at the beginning of each turn:

- 1-5: No opposition.
- 6-10: A group of 1d6 animated snowmen appear.
- 11-15: 1d4 ice imps emerge from the shadows.
- 16-18: A mighty Winter Troll confronts you.
- 19-20: An ancient Ice Wym, awakened by the presence of the Star of Yule, guards the heart of the ruins.



Game Setup

1. **Create the city layout:** Lay out a 3x3 grid of terrain tiles, representing the frozen ruins of Felstad. Place an additional terrain piece at the center to represent the heart of the ruins, where the Star of Yule is rumored to be.
2. **Starting Position:** Place your wizard at the edge of the game board, equidistant from two sides.
3. **Treasure:** Place a treasure token at the center of the board, representing the Star of Yule.

Game Rules

1. **Movement:** Use the standard Frostgrave movement rules.
2. **Spells:** Your wizard may use any spells they have chosen during the game. However, they may not choose spells that allow them to leave the board or bypass obstacles.
3. **Opposition Activation:** If you roll for opposition, move the creatures as per the core Frostgrave rules. They will prioritize attacking your wizard but may also fight each other if they encounter one another.
4. **Retrieving the Star of Yule:** To retrieve the Star of Yule, your wizard must end their activation adjacent to the treasure token. They can then pick it up.
5. **Returning:** After picking up the Star of Yule, your wizard must return to their starting position to escape the ruins. The game ends when your wizard successfully returns to their starting position with the Star of Yule in their possession.

Victory Conditions

If your wizard successfully retrieves the Star of Yule and returns to their starting position, you win the scenario.

If your wizard is taken out of action, you lose the scenario.

Scenario Special Rules

Christmas Magic: During this scenario, all wizards can cast the "Frosty Enchantment" spell once per turn without counting it against their normal spell limit. This spell creates a protective shield of frost that grants +1 Armor for that turn.

Festive Cheer: Roll a d20 at the start of each of your activations. On a roll of 1-5, your wizard's spirits are lifted by the Christmas magic, and they gain +1 to their Will and Fight stats for that turn. On a roll of 6-20, no special effect occurs.

Prepare your wizard for a magical journey through the snowy streets of Felstad in search of the elusive Star of Yule. As you face off against animated snowmen, ice imps, and legendary creatures, may your Frostgrave adventure be filled with the spirit of Christmas and a dash of wintery enchantment. Good luck!



The Reconquest of Burma 1944–45

Author: Robert Lyman

Publisher: Osprey Publishing

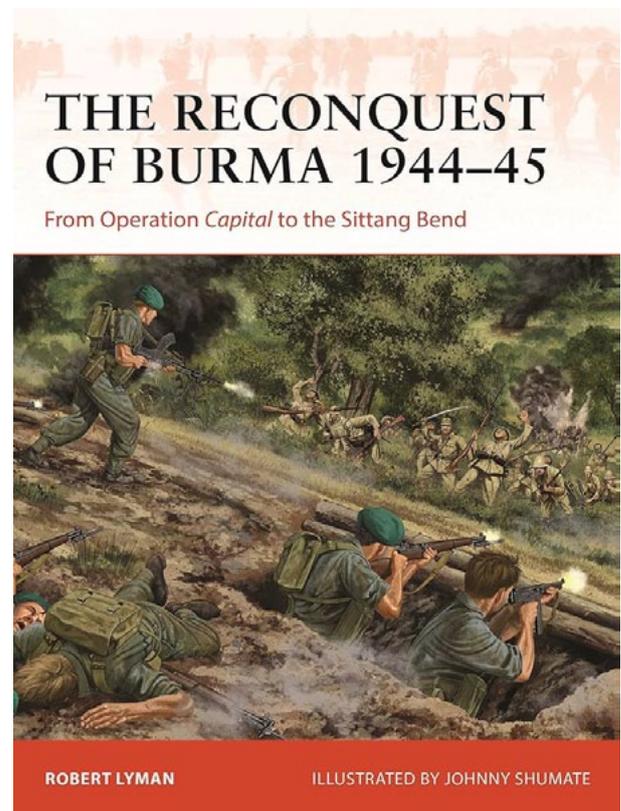
Review by Jason Hubbard

A fascinating exploration of the dramatic battles and Allied operations to wrest back control of Burma (Myanmar) from the Japanese.

The Allied reconquest of Burma was not part of Allied Grand Strategy in 1944 and 1945. It happened despite it – in particular, because of the dramatic failure of the Japanese invasion of India (Operation U-Go), which ended ignominiously for the Japanese Empire in August 1944. The reconquest was one of the longest campaigns of World War II. It comprised 11 distinct battles and offensives that were part of the overall continuum of operations that resulted in the Allied victory.

Written by a foremost expert on the British Army in World War II, this superbly illustrated work details the Allied operations to retake Burma from Japanese control. Accounts of Operation Capital, the capture of Meiktila and Mandalay, the Allied advance in the Arakan, the race for Rangoon, Operation Dracula, the Battle of the Sittang Bend and Japanese breakout operations across the Pegu Yomas are supported by easy-to-follow 2D maps and 3D diagrams. Among the events brought to life in vivid battle scene artworks are an SOE-led ambush in Operation Character, and the famous Defence of Hill 170 in the Arakan.

This is an excellent book on the topic of the Burma Campaign, the author provides a concise and easy to read volume. The book starts after the defeat of the Japanese at Imphal 1944. The main narrative of the book looks at future Field Marshall Bill Slim, who with a good plan to take the fight into Japanese occupied Burma.



The Burmese offensive was considered controversial by many, it was unsure if the British had the manpower and logistical support to carry the fight into Burma and beat an entrenched Japanese army. The allies took several risks during the course of the campaign, and made the most of ground forces, as well as air and sea power.

All of this is covered in the book and superbly illustrated with period photographs and illustrations, on top of that the maps are a great addition, and resource for any war-gamers looking to re-create this campaign.

Ottoman Armies 1820-1914

Author: Gabriele Esposito

Publisher: Osprey Publishing

Review by Jason Hubbard

This book describes and illustrates the armies of the embattled Ottoman Turkish Empire involved in 19th-century wars during the Empire's long spiral of decline.

During the so called 'long 19th century', between the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 and the outbreak of World War I in 1914, the difficulties faced by the Ottoman Turkish Empire were a recurrent factor in international geopolitics. Against a background of Russian–Ottoman rivalry, France and Britain supported the Empire during the Crimean War (1854–56), but not in the Russo–Turkish War (1877–78).

Portraying the uniforms, arms and appearance of Ottoman troops during this period, this book traces the history of the Ottoman Empire throughout this period, when no fewer than ten wars of regional insurgency and foreign expansion against the Empire were fought in territories in south-eastern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa.

Using rare photos and illustrations from Turkish, Balkan and other sources, author, Gabriele Esposito details the history of the multi-ethnic Ottoman armies periodic attempts to modernize which enabled them to win some victories at a tactical level. But the Empire – 'the sick man of Europe' – lacked a coherent strategy or sufficient resources, and failed attempts to crush regional uprisings and to defend borders, saw the steady loss of territories. Due to misgovernment and economic failure, unrest finally boiled over in 1908–09, reducing the sultan's court to a largely ceremonial role, and installing a military government by the 'Young Turks' led by the general Enver Pasha.

This book is a vivid description of the organization, operations, uniforms and equipment of one of the most active and varied armies of the 'long 19th century' and paints a detailed picture of the Ottoman Empire's struggle to maintain control of its territories.

The author has done a good job of researching subject matter and provides excellent insight into the military of the Ottoman Empire, the military reforms and reorganisation.

Men-at-Arms

OSPREY
PUBLISHING

Ottoman Armies 1820–1914



Gabriele Esposito • Illustrated by Giuseppe Rava

The empire was made up from numerous ethnicities which made researching this book a challenge, but the author had done a good job of delivering this.

As usual with all Osprey books they're well illustrated with a mixture of illustrations, period photographs. This is a great introduction for both historians and especially wargamers looking to build an Ottoman army from this period in history.

A Land of Ancient Dynasties and Cultural Flourish

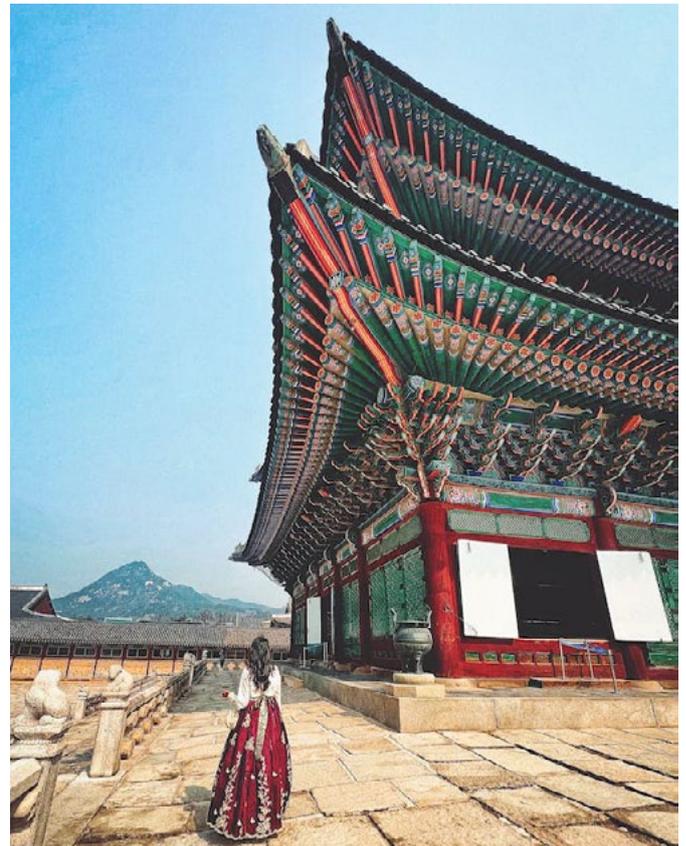
The Three Kingdoms Period in Korea



The Three Kingdoms Period in Korea, spanning from the first century BCE to the seventh century CE, was a transformative era that laid the foundations for the Korean nation and culture. During this time, three distinct kingdoms, Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla, emerged on the Korean Peninsula. Their interactions, rivalries, and achievements shaped Korean history, leaving an indelible mark on the nation's identity and heritage. In this article, we delve into the Three Kingdoms Period and explore its historical significance.

The Birth of the Three Kingdoms

Goguryeo: Founded in the 1st century BCE, Goguryeo was the northernmost of the three kingdoms, with its capital situated in what is now North Korea. It expanded its territory into Manchuria and was known for its martial prowess and fortifications.



Baekje Established in the 18 BCE, Baekje was situated in the southwestern part of the Korean Peninsula. Known for its vibrant culture and close ties to China and Japan, it played a pivotal role in the exchange of art, religion, and technology.

Silla: Founded in 57 BCE, Silla occupied the southeastern region of the peninsula. It is renowned for its unique political structure, the hwarang (flowering knights), and its eventual unification of the peninsula.



Achievements and Contributions

The Three Kingdoms Period was a time of remarkable cultural and technological progress.

Buddhism: The introduction of Buddhism from China and India had a profound impact on Korean culture, shaping architecture, art, and spirituality. Many ancient temples and statues from this period still exist today.

Hwarang: Silla's hwarang, or "flowering knights," were an elite group of young men trained in the arts of war, ethics, and culture. They played a pivotal role in Silla's eventual unification of the Korean Peninsula.

Metalwork and Art: The Three Kingdoms are celebrated for their exquisite metalwork, including gold crowns and jewellery. Their art, including pottery and murals, reflected a fusion of indigenous styles and foreign influences.



Interactions and Conflicts

The Three Kingdoms engaged in frequent interactions, including trade, diplomacy, and conflict. These interactions helped disseminate Buddhism, which played a central role in Korean culture and spirituality.

Battle of Hwangsanbeol (AD 551): Goguryeo and Baekje formed a military alliance to attack Silla, resulting in the Battle of Hwangsanbeol. However, Silla emerged victorious, maintaining its independence.

Goguryeo-Sui Wars (AD 598-614): Goguryeo faced off against the powerful Sui Dynasty of China in a series of wars. Despite immense pressure, Goguryeo successfully defended its territory and maintained its sovereignty.



Legacy

The legacy of the Three Kingdoms Period is deeply ingrained in Korean culture and identity. It laid the foundation for the subsequent dynasties, such as the Goryeo and Joseon, and influenced Korean traditions, language, and spirituality.

In modern South Korea, the Three Kingdoms Period remains a source of pride and fascination. Historical sites, artifacts, and festivals dedicated to this era continue to attract both locals and international visitors. The period's enduring legacy underscores its importance in shaping the Korean nation and the vibrant culture that continues to thrive today.

Operation Pedestal 1942: The Battle for Malta's Lifeline

Author: Angus Konstam

Publisher: Osprey Publishing

Review by Jason Hubbard

A fascinating story of a key turning point in the War in the Mediterranean, as the island of Malta was thrown a vital lifeline.

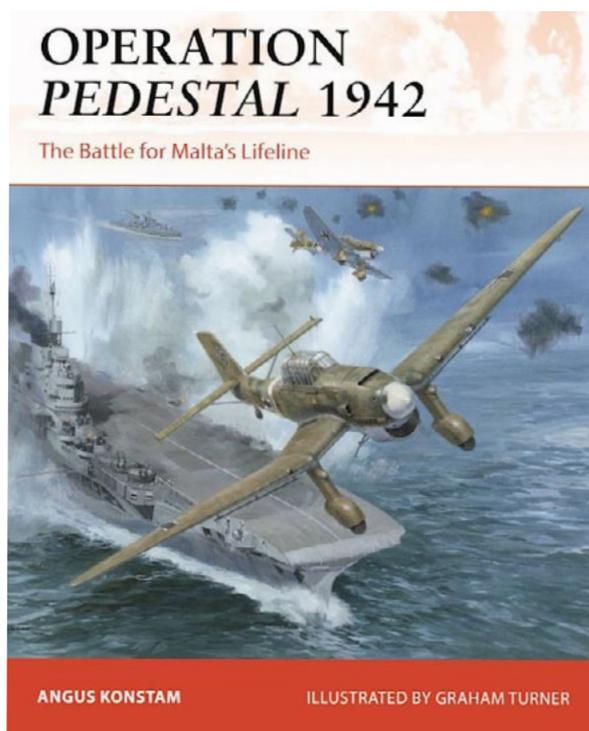
Since 1940, the island of Malta had been a thorn in the Axis' side. It sat astride the direct sea route between Italy and its North African colonies, and from 1941 the Royal Navy had used the island as a base for its attacks on Axis convoys.

The island, though, relied on convoys to survive, and from early 1941 these came under increasingly heavy air and submarine attack. As the situation became critical in 1942, the decision was made to send through a heavily protected convoy, carrying fuel and supplies, in an effort to save the island. This mission was codenamed Operation Pedestal.

This fascinating work describes how, after leaving Britain on 2 August 1942, the convoy was repeatedly pummeled by Axis air and submarine attacks as it ground its way towards Malta, with most of the merchant ships sunk during the passage, along with an aircraft carrier and two cruisers. It also explores how despite this grim toll, the sacrifice was worth it.

The specially commissioned illustrations in this work cover the progress of the convoy step by step, the submarine and surface naval actions during Pedestal's voyage, the Stuka attack on the carrier *Indomitable* and the air attacks against the convoy, and the broader strategic situation in the Western Mediterranean. The result is a unique visual exploration of one of the most famous episodes of the war in this theatre.

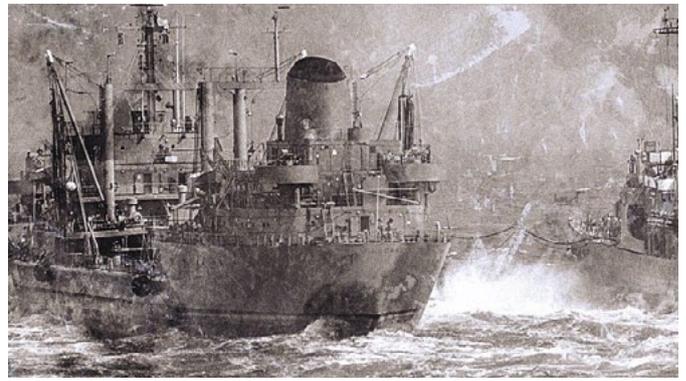
Malta became a vital battle in the war against Germany and was under siege from both German and Italian military.



It became crucial to protecting the allied convoys from attack into the Mediterranean. Malta was close to starving and Operation Pedestal was the allied effort to relieve the siege and provide much need supplies to the island.

The author does a great job of describing the operation in great detail, and is a must read for anyone interested in the history of World War two. The book covers all the important aspects of this operation, it's also well illustrated throughout with photographs, maps and excellent illustrations.

I would highly recommend any wargamer interested in the second world war picking up a copy, as a Malta campaign could be a great idea for *Cruel Seas* or any other naval combat game.



Cold Waters, Icy Seas

Winter Naval Battles for Wargaming

While naval warfare often conjures images of tropical waters and sun-soaked decks, the reality of history is that battles took place in all types of conditions, including the frigid and icy waters of winter. In this article, we explore the unique challenges and strategic opportunities that winter naval battles offer for wargaming enthusiasts.

Setting the Stage

Winter Ice and Frozen Seas

Winter naval battles are characterized by the freezing temperatures that create icy conditions on the water. Frozen seas and ice floes present unique obstacles for ships, impacting movement, visibility, and tactics.

Historical Context

Many historical naval battles have occurred during winter, particularly in regions where cold climates are prevalent, such as the Baltic Sea, the North Atlantic, and the Eastern Front of World War II.

Unique Challenges

Winter naval battles introduce a set of challenges distinct from those of warmer waters. These challenges include dealing with ice, managing cold-related equipment failures, and sustaining crew morale in harsh conditions.

Key Winter Naval Battles in History

Battle of Copenhagen (1801)

In the midst of the Napoleonic Wars, the Battle of Copenhagen took place in winter-like conditions in the Baltic Sea. British forces, led by Admiral Horatio Nelson, faced the Danish-Norwegian fleet in icy waters. The battle showcased the difficulty of naval warfare in winter and the need for adaptable tactics.



Battle of the Atlantic (1939-1945)

The Battle of the Atlantic during World War II saw Allied convoys navigating the cold waters of the North Atlantic, facing the threat of German U-boats. Harsh winter conditions compounded the challenges of this protracted naval campaign.



Siege of Leningrad (1941-1944)

During the Eastern Front of World War II, the German and Soviet navies operated in the icy conditions of the Baltic Sea. The Siege of Leningrad, surrounded by German forces on land, also included naval engagements on the frozen waters of Lake Ladoga.

Unique Aspects of Winter Naval Wargaming

Ice as an Obstacle

Ice fields and floes can impede movement and restrict access to certain areas of the battlefield. Players must navigate carefully and consider the thickness and stability of the ice.

Cold Weather Effects

Extreme cold can affect the performance of naval equipment and weapons. Players may need to manage the freezing of equipment or even the freezing of crew members.

Limited Visibility

Winter conditions often result in reduced visibility due to snow, fog, and ice. This adds an element of uncertainty and surprise to engagements.

Morale Challenges

Crew morale can be significantly impacted by the harshness of winter conditions. Managing the psychological state of your naval forces becomes a critical aspect of gameplay.

Conclusion

Winter naval battles for wargaming offer a unique and challenging experience for enthusiasts. These battles not only test strategic thinking and tactical skills but also introduce elements of environmental hardship and equipment maintenance. Whether you're recreating historical conflicts or designing fictional scenarios, winter naval wargaming provides an opportunity to explore the complexities of warfare in cold waters, where adaptability and resourcefulness are key to victory. So, set sail into the icy seas and embrace the frozen challenges of winter naval wargaming!





Romans in the Frost

The Challenges of Winter Warfare



The image of the Roman legions often conjures thoughts of sun-soaked Mediterranean campaigns and epic battles under a scorching sun. However, the might of Rome was tested not only in favourable conditions but also in the harsh realities of winter. In this article, we explore the challenges and triumphs of Roman battles in winter, shedding light on their impressive adaptability and determination.

Caesar's Winter Campaign in Gaul (58-50 BCE)

Setting: Julius Caesar's conquest of Gaul.

Description: Caesar's campaigns in Gaul extended into the harsh Gallic winters. During these months, the Roman legions faced frigid temperatures and often struggled with shortages of supplies. Despite these challenges, Caesar's legions showcased their resilience and adaptability by constructing fortified winter camps and continuing to engage Gallic tribes in battle, including the famous Battle of Gergovia in 52 BCE.

Crossing the Rhine in Winter (55 BCE)

Setting: Julius Caesar's early campaigns in Gaul.

Description: In one of his audacious feats, Caesar led his legions in crossing the icy Rhine River during the winter of 55 BCE.



The crossing, while daring, demonstrated the Roman soldiers' ability to adapt to challenging winter conditions and maintain their effectiveness in the face of adversity.

The Battle of Carrhae (53 BCE)

Setting: Roman Parthian War.

Description: The disastrous Battle of Carrhae, fought between the Roman Republic and the Parthian Empire, took place in the blistering heat of summer. However, the aftermath of the battle saw Roman survivors enduring a brutal winter retreat. The retreat, marked by freezing temperatures and dwindling supplies, is a sombre reminder of the challenges Roman armies faced in harsh winter conditions.

The Marcomannic Wars (166-180 CE)

Setting: The Roman Empire's campaigns against Germanic and Sarmatian tribes.

Description: The Marcomannic Wars tested the Roman legions' mettle in the bitterly cold winters of central Europe. Emperor Marcus Aurelius and his legions faced the daunting task of subduing Germanic tribes during winters marked by heavy snowfall. The Romans demonstrated their adaptability by building winter camps and managing to secure victories despite the challenging conditions.

Battle of Pharsalus (48 BCE)

Setting: Roman Civil War.

Description The decisive Battle of Pharsalus, fought during the Roman Civil War between Julius Caesar and Pompey the Great, took place in Thessaly, Greece. While not in the heart of winter, the battle occurred in late summer, and its aftermath saw Roman forces enduring the onset of winter. It was a reminder of the logistical challenges faced by armies when transitioning from summer campaigns to winter quarters.



Roman battles in winter illustrate the adaptability, determination, and resourcefulness of the Roman legions. While the Romans are often associated with the sun-drenched landscapes of the Mediterranean, they were equally capable of facing the harsh realities of winter warfare. These battles serve as a testament to the enduring strength and adaptability of Rome's legions in the face of adverse weather conditions and formidable adversaries.



Japanese infantryman vs Us Marine Rifleman

Author: Gregg Adams

Publisher: Osprey Publishing

Review by Jason Hubbard

Featuring evocative artwork plates and carefully selected photographs, this book assesses the US Marines and Japanese troops who contested the islands of Tarawa, Roi-Namur, and Eniwetok during 1943–44.

On November 20, 1943, amphibious vehicles carrying Marines of the 2d Marine Division reached the shores of Betio Island in the Tarawa Atoll, defended by a determined Japanese garrison that would fight to the last man. This began a test by combat of over two decades of US studies, analyses, and planning for capturing and defending naval bases in Micronesia. The Tarawa assault was followed in February 1944 by the rapid capture of the Kwajalein and Eniwetok atolls in the Marshall Islands.

In these battles US Marines fought a mix of Imperial Japanese Navy and Imperial Japanese Army ground units. All but a handful of the defenders, whether they were organized ground combat troops or infantry improvised from aviators and service troops, were determined to die for the emperor while killing as many of the enemy as possible.

In this study, Gregg Adams shows how the US Marine Corps and US Navy drew upon these pivotal actions to improve their tactics, organization, and equipment for the next round of amphibious operations. He also explains how their Japanese opponents – realizing that isolated island garrisons were doomed to destruction or isolation if the Imperial Japanese Navy could not defeat the US Navy at sea – moved from seeking to repel an invasion to one inflicting maximum American casualties through prolonged defensive fighting.

The book covers the US invasion of the Pacific atolls Tarawa, Roi-Mamur, and Eniwetok which were stepping stones on the way to Japan and Tokyo.



The Japanese were cut off from the homeland and reinforcements, their mission was to slow the US advance and kill as many American soldiers as possible. The Japanese soldiers did manage to achieve this to some degree, they made it difficult for the US. Each island had to be hard fought for, and it cost the Americans a lot of lives. The American military was still getting to grips with island hopping, which meant the Japanese had advantage, as well as being well dug in with excellent defensive positions. However, the US use and integration of all arms helped them to success over a tenacious and battle-hardened opponent.

The book is exceptionally well researched and superbly written, with plenty of photographs, maps and illustrations throughout. This would make a great resource for anyone planning on re-creating this campaign on the table-top, or for those looking to build and paint either a Japanese or American force.

A Roman Holiday

Christmas-Themed Gangs of Rome Skirmish Wargame Scenarios



Gangs of Rome, set in the ancient city during the height of the Roman Empire, typically focuses on gritty skirmishes, political intrigue, and ruthless underworld activities. But what if the spirit of Christmas found its way to the dark alleyways and marketplaces of Rome? In this article, we'll explore creative and festive Christmas-themed Gangs of Rome skirmish scenarios that meld history, tradition, and the holiday season.

Festival of Saturnalia

Setting: The Forum Romanum, decorated with festive lights and holiday decorations.

Objective The rival gangs have temporarily set aside their differences to partake in the ancient Roman festival of Saturnalia. Players must compete in various festive challenges, including chariot races, gladiatorial contests, and even a Saturnalian feast cook-off. Victory in these events earns your gang Saturnalian tokens, and the gang with the most tokens at the end of the scenario wins.

Special Rules: During Saturnalia, fighting is discouraged, and characters cannot be killed. Instead, they are temporarily "disarmed" and must wait a turn before rejoining the festivities.

The Feast of Feasts

Setting: A lavish Roman villa adorned with holiday decorations, including a grand feast table.



Objective: The players' gangs have been invited to the extravagant Feast of Feasts hosted by a wealthy patron. However, tensions run high as a valuable gift, the Golden Figurine of Fortuna, has gone missing. Gangs must search for clues, question guests, and uncover the thief. The gang that retrieves the figurine or identifies the culprit wins.

Special Rules: Characters can use their abilities to investigate, question, and influence guests. Successful persuasion checks may reveal hidden information.



The Night Before Saturnalia

Setting: A dark and snowy Roman alleyway, with flickering torchlight and occasional carollers.

Objective: On the night before Saturnalia, rival gangs cross paths while trying to steal presents from one another. The goal is to steal as many gifts as possible while avoiding guards and traps. The gang with the most stolen presents at the end of the scenario wins.

Special Rules: Use a set of hidden tokens to represent presents. Characters must pickpocket or defeat guards to obtain presents. Some presents may contain surprises, like festive weapons or traps.

The Blessing of Sol Invictus

Setting: A Roman temple dedicated to Sol Invictus, adorned with holiday ornaments.

Objective: Gangs vie for the blessing of Sol Invictus, the unconquered sun god, by completing a series of challenges within the temple. Challenges include solving riddles, navigating a labyrinth, and enduring tests of courage. The gang that earns the most blessings from Sol Invictus wins.



Special Rules: Characters' attributes may be temporarily enhanced or diminished by the blessings or curses of Sol Invictus.



Saturnalia Street Brawl

Setting: A snowy Roman street lined with market stalls, festive decorations, and spectators.

Objective: Gangs engage in a friendly street brawl, with the goal of pushing their opponents out of the designated area. The last gang standing inside the area wins. Characters can also earn points by performing impressive feats of strength or acrobatics.

Special Rules: The snowy terrain affects movement, and characters can attempt to use the holiday decorations to their advantage in the brawl.





Festive Adventures Christmas-Themed RPG Scenario ideas for the Holiday Season

The holiday season is a time for gathering with friends and family, and what better way to celebrate than by embarking on Christmas-themed RPG scenarios that bring the magic of the season to your tabletop role-playing adventures? Whether you're running a session of Dungeons & Dragons, Pathfinder, or any other RPG system, these scenarios will add a touch of holiday cheer to your games. In this article, we'll explore some creative and memorable Christmas-themed RPG scenarios for you to enjoy during the holiday season.



The Winter Solstice Feast - Dungeons & Dragons

In this heartwarming D&D adventure, the players are tasked with helping a remote village prepare for their annual Winter Solstice Feast. As they assist the villagers with decorations, cooking, and gift-giving, they uncover a plot by a mischievous fey creature who threatens to disrupt the celebration. The players must navigate through wintry challenges, solve puzzles, and eventually confront the fey troublemaker in a heartwarming finale.

Santa's Sleigh Heist - Shadowrun

Set in the cyberpunk world of Shadowrun, players take on the roles of skilled runners hired by a mysterious benefactor. Their mission: to infiltrate a heavily guarded corporate facility and liberate Santa Claus, who has been imprisoned for smuggling contraband toys. This scenario combines high-tech gadgets with a heartwarming rescue mission, making it a memorable blend of cyberpunk and Christmas magic.

A Nightmare Before Christmas - Call of Cthulhu

In this Call of Cthulhu adventure, the players find themselves in a quaint New England town that's slowly transforming into a nightmare as Christmas

approaches. Unearthly phenomena, eerie carollers, and strange happenings plague the town. The players must investigate the eldritch forces at work, racing against time to prevent the summoning of a malevolent Yuletide entity.



The Quest for the Missing Reindeer - Pathfinder

In this Pathfinder scenario, the players are recruited by a worried Santa Claus to find his missing reindeer, who have been kidnapped by mischievous goblins. The players embark on a whimsical journey through enchanted forests, toy workshops, and gingerbread villages, encountering holiday-themed challenges and puzzles along the way.



Krampus's Lair" - Savage Worlds

Players enter the world of Savage Worlds to confront the dark counterpart of Santa Claus: Krampus. The children of a small village have disappeared, and rumors suggest Krampus is to blame. The players must venture into Krampus's eerie lair in a wintry, other-worldly dimension to rescue the children and thwart Krampus's sinister plans.



The Christmas Chronicles - FATE Core

In this FATE Core scenario, the players are ordinary people who accidentally stumble into Santa's workshop on Christmas Eve. When they witness Santa's sleigh crash-land due to sabotage by a rogue elf, they must help Santa repair his sleigh, retrieve the stolen Naughty and Nice lists, and ensure that Christmas goes off without a hitch.

Christmas-themed RPG scenarios add a delightful and heartwarming twist to your tabletop role-playing adventures during the holiday season. These scenarios offer opportunities for laughter, mystery, and the magic of the season while allowing players to create cherished memories. So gather your RPG group, prepare your characters, and embark on these festive journeys that will make your holidays even more memorable. Merry Role-Playing Christmas!



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