

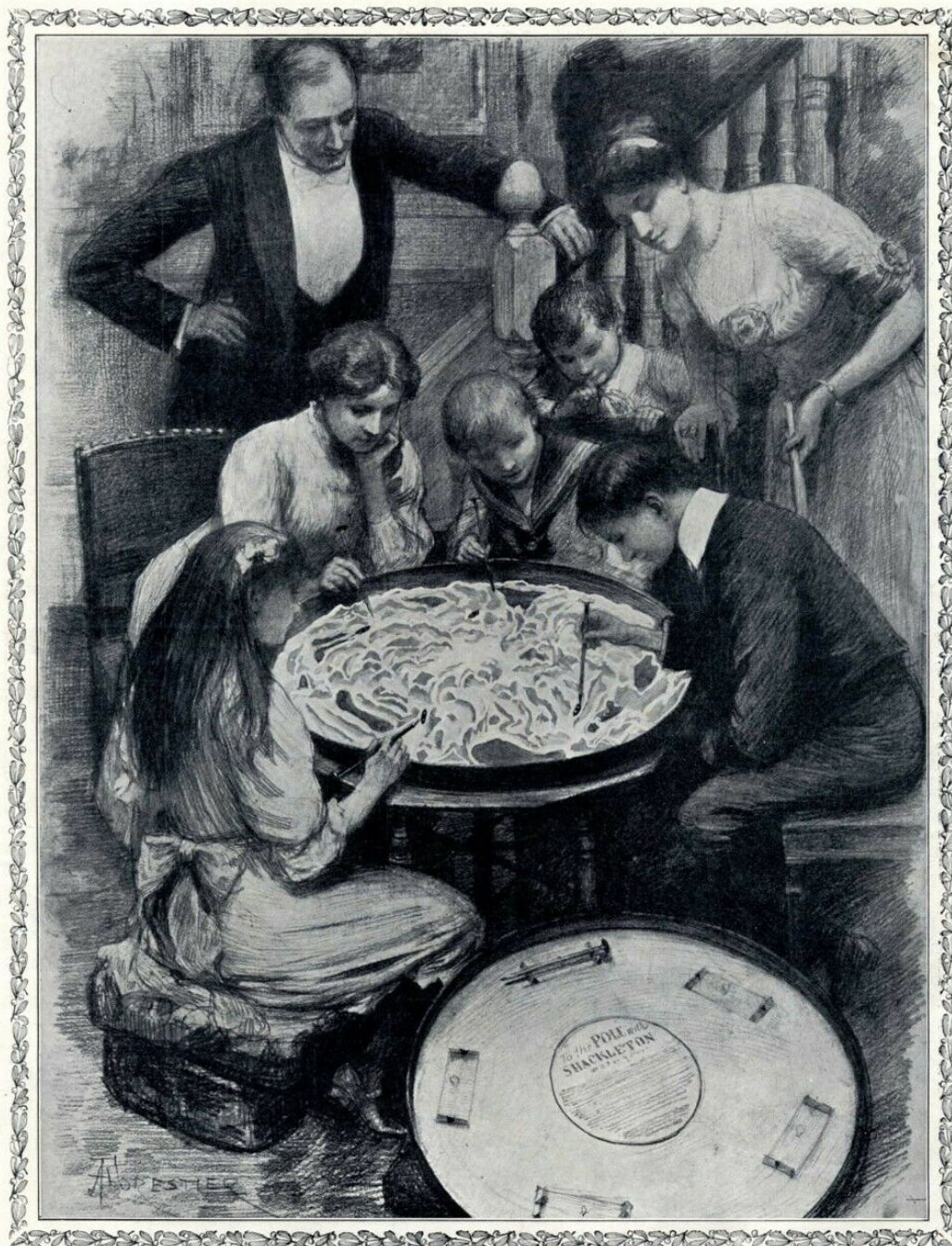
# **Inspired by the Heroes:**

**Curated by Peter Spielmann**

The exploits of polar explorers like Scott, Shackleton, Amundsen, Mawson and Byrd inspired polar exploitation by board game manufacturers at the beginning of the Heroic Era, and again during its centennial. Made of light cardboard and paper and meant for hard play, these Antarctic board games seldom survived and are little known today.

## ANTARCTIC EXPLORATION AT HOME: "TO THE POLE WITH SHACKLETON."

DRAWN BY OUR SPECIAL ARTIST, A. FORESTIER.



RACING SLEIGHS TO THE SOUTH POLE WITH PENCILS IN PLACE OF DOGS AND "DR. COOK" AS ASSISTANT:  
PLAYING A NEW CHRISTMAS GAME.

This ingenious game, suggested by Sir Ernest Shackleton's famous attempt to reach the South Pole, is described as follows: "The game is a race to the Pole and back, the Pole being in the centre of the glacier. Each player chooses whom he will represent and takes a pencil accordingly. . . . The sleigh is to be drawn along with the point of the pencil, which is a magnet. . . . The sleigh must be kept to the path. When a player is stopped by an invisible obstruction (which counteracts the pencil-magnet) he must wait his turn and then borrow the assistance of the pencil representing Dr. Cook, and with this pencil draw back his sleigh one inch only in the direction from which he came, afterwards resuming his journey with his own pencil."

For the details of the game, as well as for those of "Fantasio," we are indebted to Messrs. Hamley's, of Regent Street.

The *Illustrated London News* featured **To the Pole with Shackleton** for the Christmas 1910 season, capitalizing on Shackleton-mania following his knighthood for the *Nimrod* expedition and the publication of *The Heart of the Antarctic* the previous winter. Hamley's of London marketed the game, in which players use magnet-tipped wands to guide their sledges around a white paper-mache landscape furrowed with "sastrugi" toward the South Pole at the center of the circular board. Some pathways were dead ends; a player could retrieve the sledge only with the help of a wand with a reverse-polarity magnet, labelled "Dr. Cook" – presumably for the American explorer Dr. Frederick Cook, who had claimed to have reached the North Pole in 1909.

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Public fascination with the South Pole peaked in 1910-1911 as Robert F. Scott's *Terra Nova* expedition seemed poised to bag the prize, but a race suddenly unfolded with Roald Amundsen's arrival in the *Fram*. Germany had Wilhelm Filchner leading the exploration ship *Deutschland*, on research around the peninsula, and a surprising new contender for the Pole arrived on the scene: The Japanese Antarctic Expedition led by Nobu Shirase.

The 1910-1912 Shirase expedition was the obvious inspiration for the popular children's magazine *Nihon Shonen* (*Japan Boy*) to publish a special New Year's 1911 supplement named **Nankyoku Tanken Hikoki Sugoroku** (Antarctic Expedition – Airplane Board Game). When released, game designer Akashi Sekish would have been unaware of Norway's entry into the race, or Amundsen's 1911 triumph and Scott's tragedy in 1912, or of Shirase's more limited success exploring King Edward VII Land, which had thwarted Scott and Shackleton. Shirase named it the Yamato Snow Plain.

**Nankyoku Tanken Hikoki Sugoroku** has detachable airplane tokens on the left margin that allow players to compete in Japanese, German, French or American expeditions – no Britain or Norway. Players start in the corners of the board representing Tokyo, Berlin, Paris and New York, and roll dice to advance spaces. As in the “Shackleton” game, they work their way inward in a spiral that ends at the South Pole. Along the way, they advance through scenes illustrating their voyage (the Parthenon, the Great Wall of China, the Pyramids, the Washington Monument, whales, kangaroos, seascapes, penguins – and hazards that stall the player, like mechanical breakdowns, vultures attaching the plane, crevasses, or crashes. In the center of the board is Antarctica, decorated in resplendent Japanese imperial red and gold.

Sugoroku board games were popular in Japan from the late 13<sup>th</sup> century onward, and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century often adopted themes from current events, sports, and pop culture.

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The illustrations on the board may indicate the lack of accurate information about Antarctica, such as the polar bear near South America, Eskimos spear-fishing, and a walrus sitting on the continent, or are simply a jest, like the ice cream and hot dog stands.

National Game Co. of Ballarat issued traditional board games, such as “Snakes and Ladders,” and others that used topical themes such as Antarctica, World War I, the Boer War, cycling and motoring, updating the design for new generations of players.

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Parker Brothers joined Richard E. Byrd's media marketing machine in 1933 with **Admiral Byrd's South Pole Game: Little America**. On the colorful box cover, Byrd is calling out "Hello America" in one of his phenomenally popular radio broadcasts back to New York City.

A ski-equipped airplane, Byrd's ship, sledge dogs and penguins feature on the box cover and on the playing board. Antarctica is squeezed into a strangely rectangular shape on the board, while still retaining the main coastal features:

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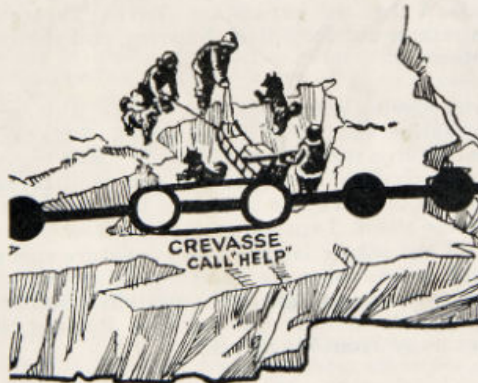
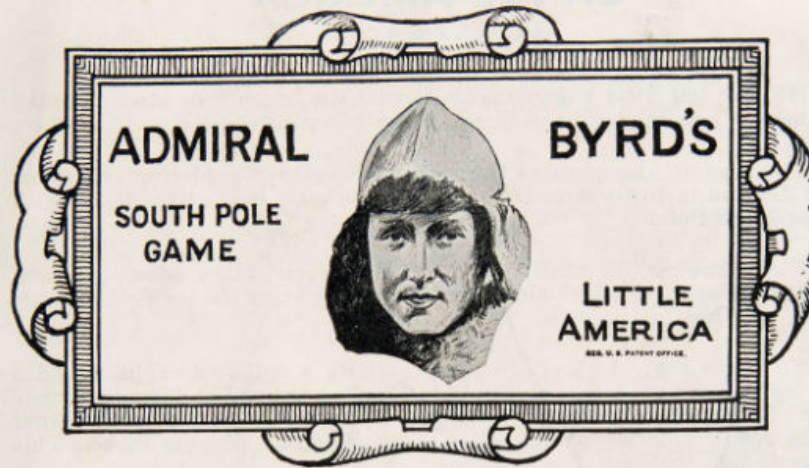


Players take turns using four die-cut cardboard illustrated radio microphone spinners with wooden handles and connected string "wires," which have a wooden peg to insert into the peg-holed expedition pathway that wends from New Zealand through icebergs to Little America, and then around the coast until arriving at the South Pole.



Along the way, the player can be lost in a blizzard or fall down a crevasse.

## DIRECTIONS FOR PLAYING



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PARKER BROTHERS, Inc. · Salem, Mass. - New York - London

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Curators at the Byrd Polar and Climate Research Center at Ohio State University say the game sold 14,230 copies in 1934, paying Byrd royalties of .025 per game. Sales trickled out; by 1940, only 510 games were sold. Parker Brothers discontinued production of the game in 1946.

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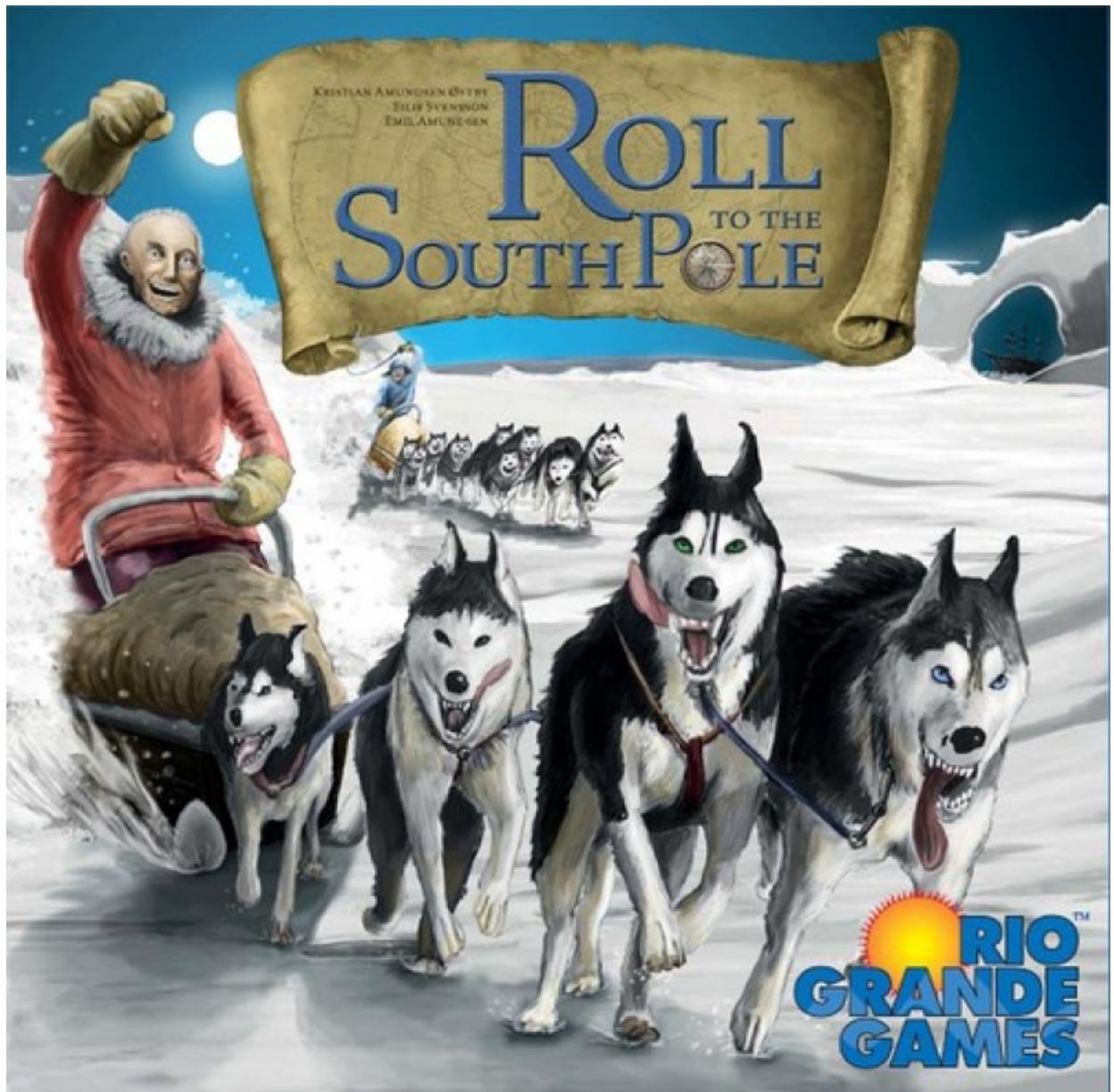




Not to miss out on a craze, Milton Bradley released the card game **Famous Fliers and Their Flights** in 1937. The cards list the aviators' biggest feats. A player calls out a card he/she does not hold, and demands it from another player. The goal is to assemble a "book" of fliers and feats.

\*\*\*\*\*





Honoring the centennial of the race to the South Pole, Rio Grande Games published **Roll to the South Pole**. Released in 2012, the game multiplies the influence of chance and luck by using not one, but 15 dice to choose players' moves. Five Heroic Age explorers race to the pole, though their identities are unclear. From the illustrations, they appear to be Scott, Shackleton, Amundsen, Charcot and Filchner.

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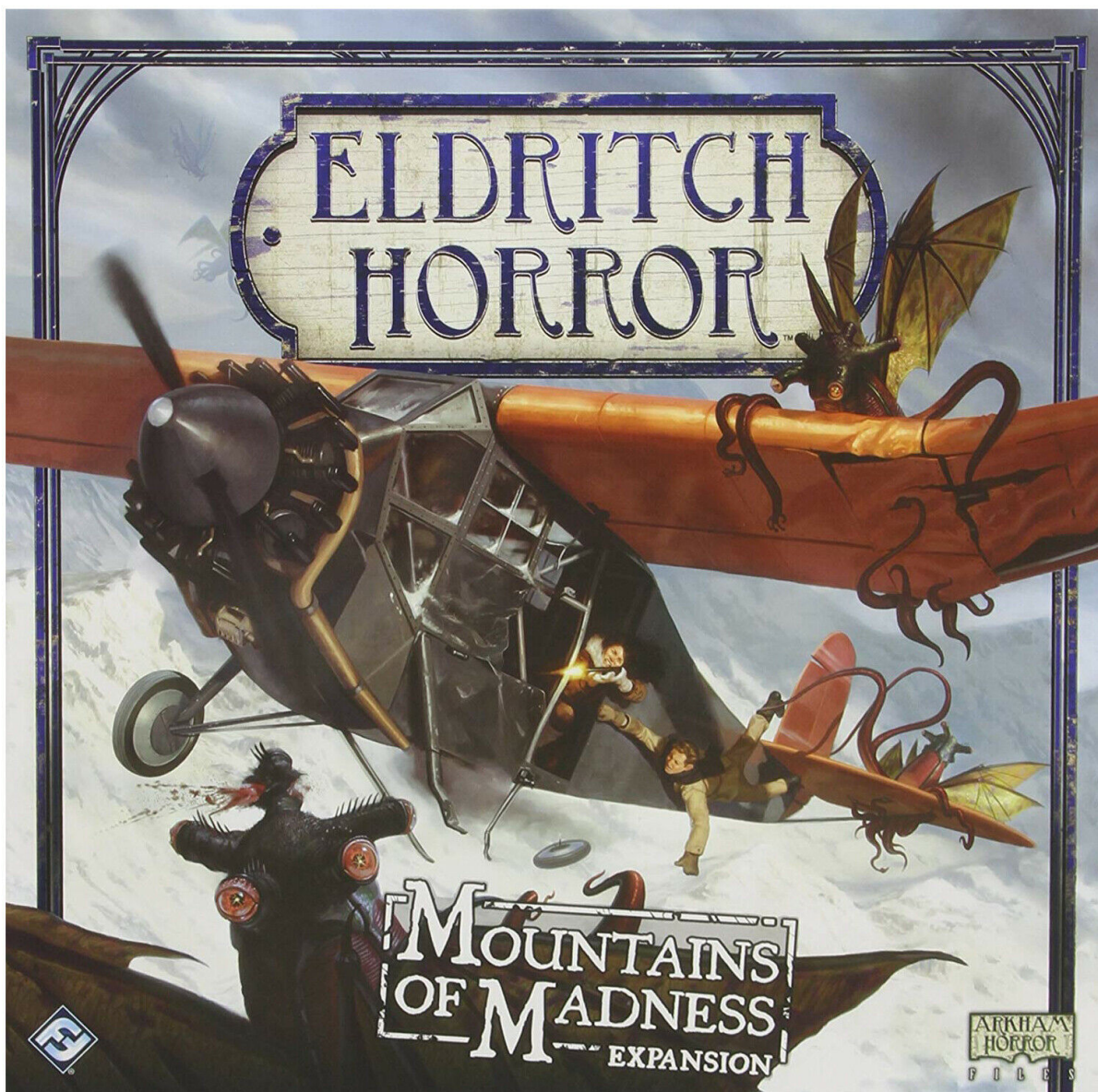
Asylum Games published a similar title in 2013, **1911 – Amundsen vs. Scott**. Two players deal cards to advance toward the pole, cause the opponent to lose his way, or open up special effects. If the deck runs out, both players are lost in Antarctica. Dice tosses add weather randomness; a variation allows food-depot laying before the final polar push.

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## Lovecraft's Mountains of Madness

As a boy, H.P. Lovecraft was fascinated by polar exploration. As an adult he merged the horror of his Cthulhu mythology with science fiction and the then-new reports of Richard E. Byrd's Antarctic flights in the novella **The Mountains of Madness**. In turn, the Lovecraftian mythos spawned a series of board games and add-ons:





# ELDRITCH HORROR

## MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS

### EXPANSION

*Something Ancient Stirs!*

Long before the human race emerged, the elder things have existed. Now, in 1926, their long slumber is disturbed. Their dark influence creeps outward, dominating the minds of humans towards a mysterious purpose. A few brave investigators have caught wind of the impending catastrophe and head to Antarctica to find the source. They alone can stop the coming doom, or go mad in the attempt.

This expansion introduces the Antarctica side board; a harsh new locale, riddled with strange mysteries and hidden dangers. Eight new investigators are prepared to unveil the truth behind the strange happenings in the world, accompanied by new allies including Professor William Dyer. To aid in their mission, investigators can undertake personal tasks to gain powerful rewards. They will find a plethora of useful items, magic spells, hideous conditions, and terrifying encounters awaiting them at the Mountains of Madness.

#### GAME CONTENTS

- 1 Game Board • 1 Rulebook • 8 Investigator Sheets
- 2 Ancient One Sheets • 26 Mythos Cards
- 48 Location Encounter Cards • 6 Expedition Encounter Cards
- 6 Other World Encounter Cards • 14 Mystery Cards • 12 Adventure Cards
- 24 Special Encounter Cards • 8 Artifact Cards • 16 Asset Cards
- 6 Prelude Cards • 16 Spell Cards • 42 Unique Asset Cards
- 4 Round Overview Cards • 22 Monster Tokens • 6 Chase Tokens
- 8 Focus Tokens • 6 Gate Tokens • 1 Adventure Token
- 1 Mystery Token • 8 Plastic Stands

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FANTASY FLIGHT GAMES

The Mountains of Madness EH03  
ISBN: 978-1-61661-977-0

9 781616 619770

The **Mountains of Madness** expansion pack requires the core game **Eldritch Horror** from Fantasy Flight Games as a base. A doomed Miskatonic University expedition is ravaged by sinister and inhuman creatures in this one to eight-player game.

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Vol.  
IV

# AGE of CTHULHU

Horrors from Yuggoth



By Adrian M. Pommier

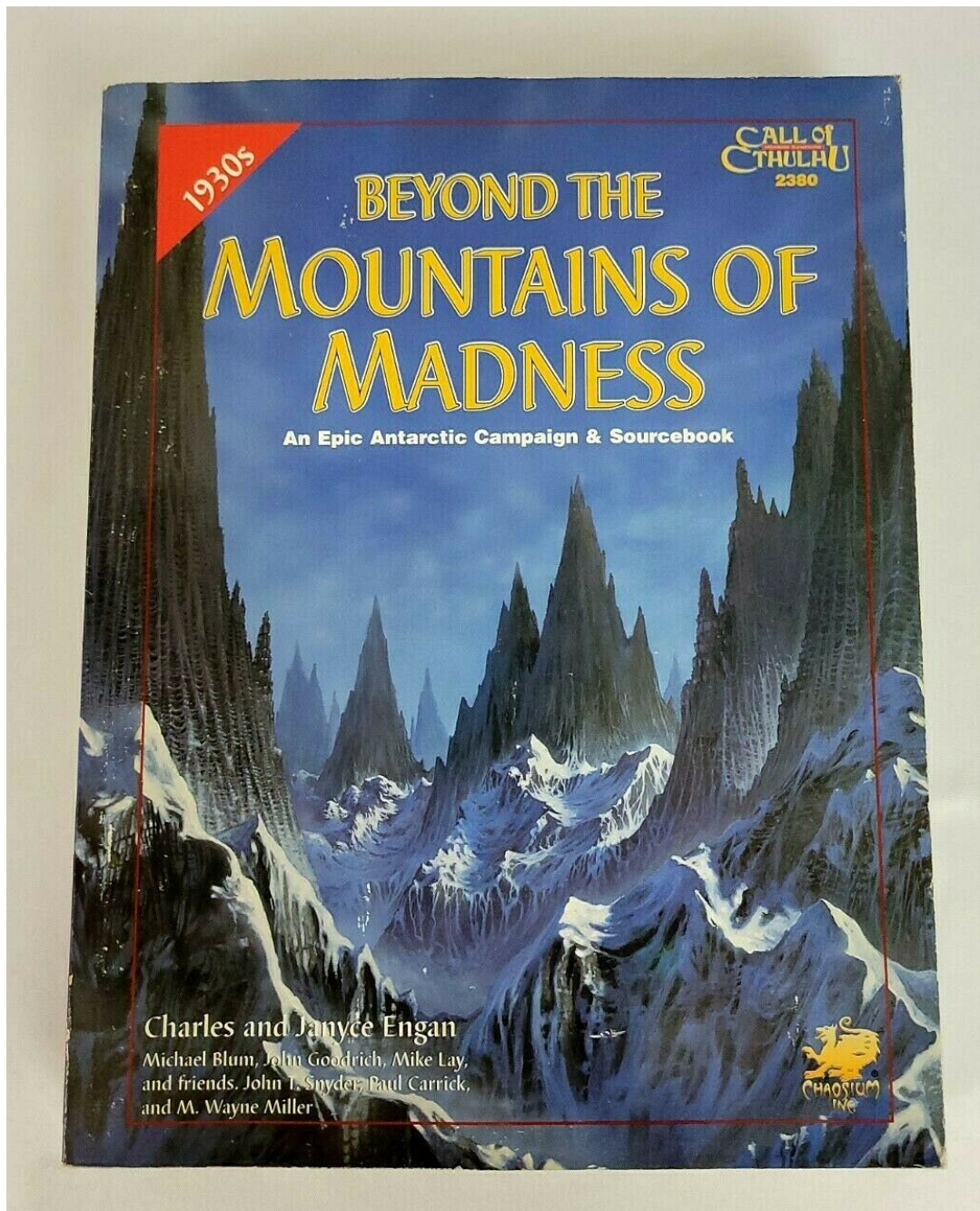


Goodman Games released **Horrors from Yuggoth** in its competing **Age of Cthulhu** line of board games, with an intriguing Arctic plot line:

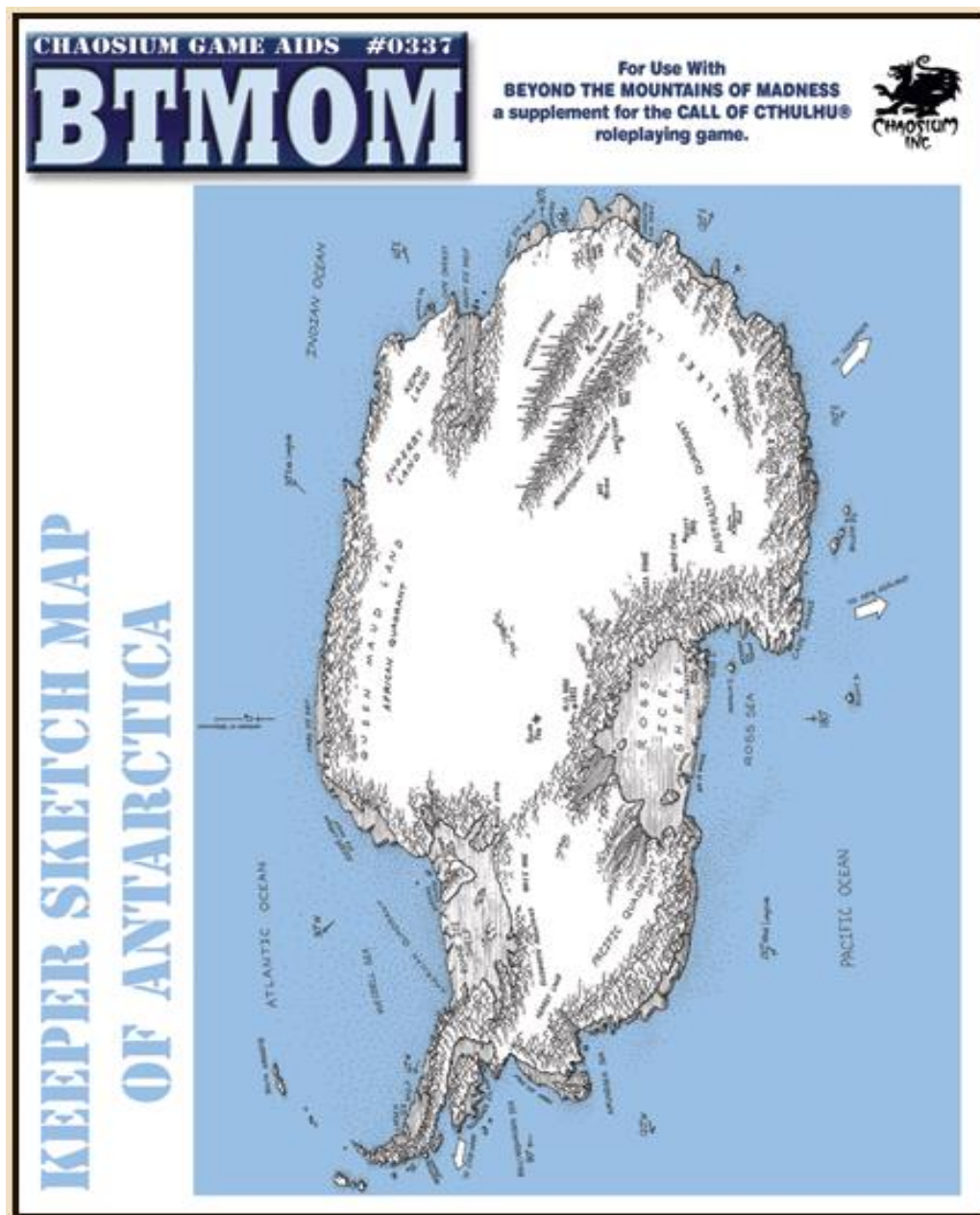
“History tells us that General Umberto Nobile and Roald Amundsen overflew the North Pole in 1926, making the first trans-polar flight from Europe to America. In 1928, Nobile went back in the Italia, which crashed on the ice north of Svalbard, Norway. An international rescue mission was launched to find him and his aeronauts. Your characters are part of this mission and the State Department wants you to rescue the survivors before the Russian expedition gets them! But soon this humanitarian mission becomes embroiled in international tensions, mysterious disappearances, and the cold arcano-science of Yuggoth.”

\*\*\*\*\*





Chaosium promised an “epic Antarctic campaign” in **Beyond The Mountains Of Madness**, released in 1999. They also released a supplemental pack:



This add-on is “a massive book including considerable source material on the Frozen Continent, the equipment of the time, and even expedition planning” that lets players cut out maps, tokens, and other handouts, sparing the manual that came with the original game.

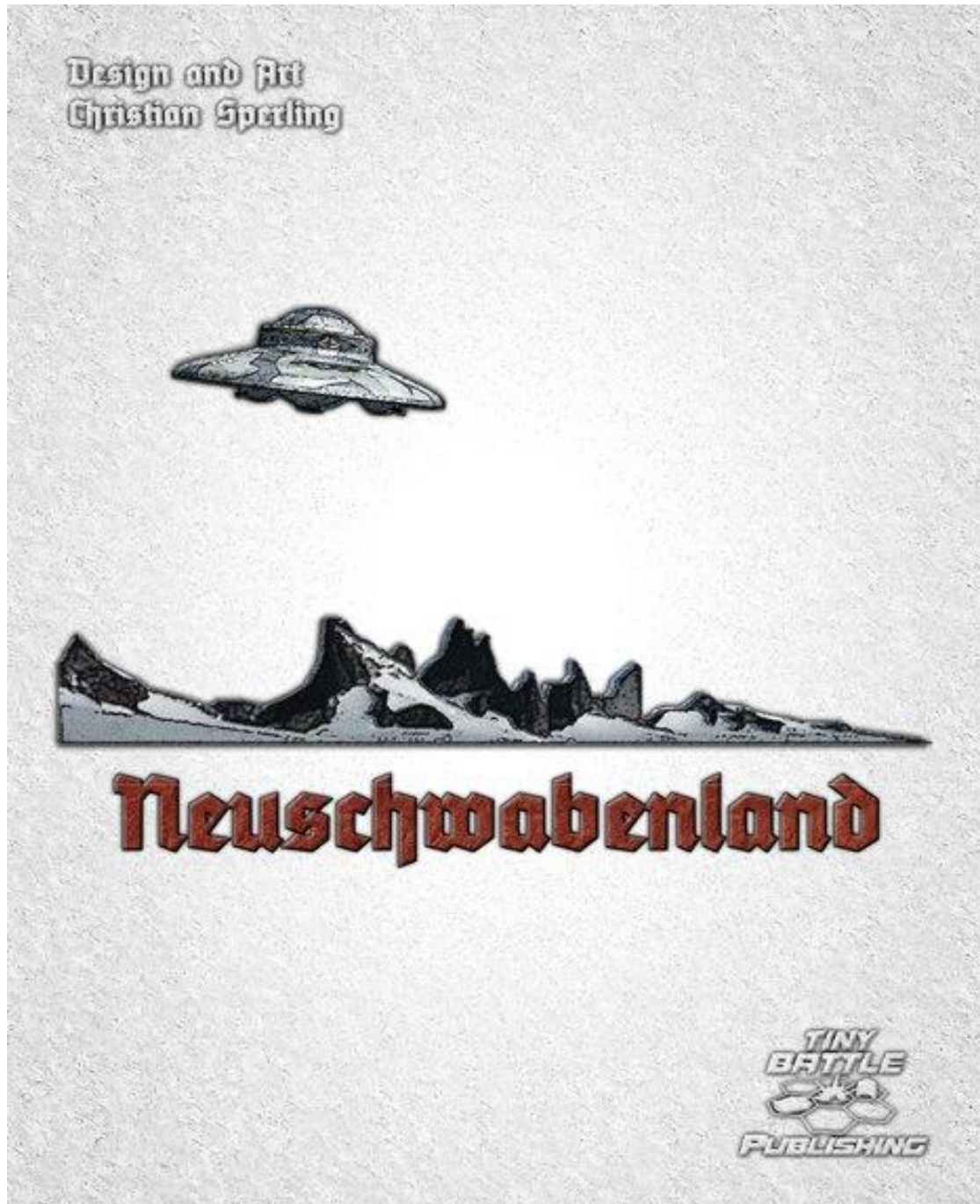
“Rather than cutting-up your soft- or hard-cover copy of **Beyond the Mountains of Madness**, have your way with this book, instead. A little care, a straight edge, a

steady hand, and a sharp blade will separate spine glue from the pages to result in nifty handouts. Cut apart the cover pieces as you see fit (there are four Dock Passes).”

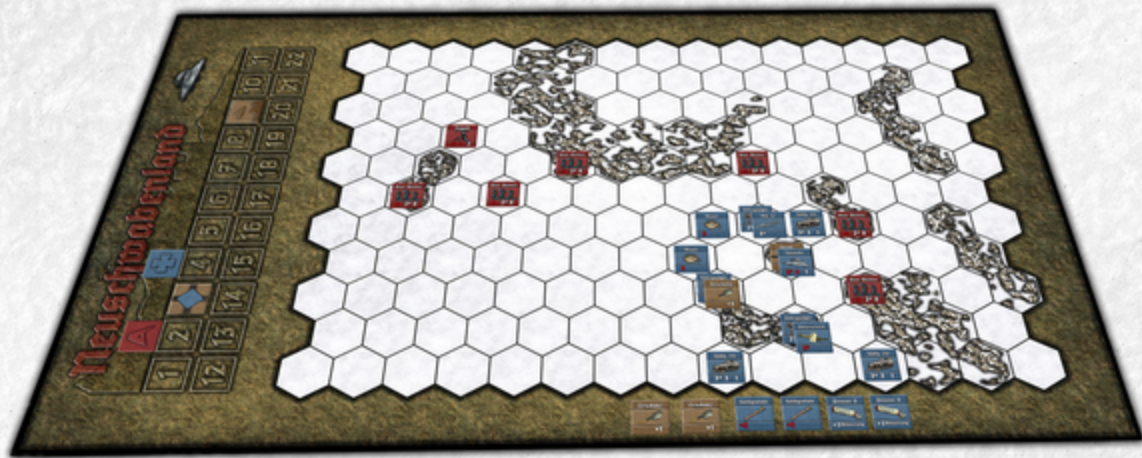
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## Nazis vs. Aliens!



# Neuschwabenland



Christian Sperling's Tiny Battle company produced **Neuschwabenland**, a tactical sci-fi game that seems to reflect elements of **Risk**. “German Gebirgsjager troops are specially-trained to survive and thrive in sub-zero temperatures, but nothing could prepare them for the burrowing, acid-spitting Alien Worms, or their two-story tall Tripods! The outnumbered and desperate forces of Nazi Germany's Antarctic colony have an arsenal of grenades, mines, MG-42s and ice-ready SdKfz 251s at their disposal, as well as their secret weapon: the Haunebu, an experimental flying saucer. But will all that be enough to triumph over the endless Alien horde?”

\*\*\*\*\*





Inspired by John Carpenter’s 1982 cult classic film, **The Thing—Infection at Outpost 31** promises to recreate the terror and suspense in a “social deduction and hidden traitor” board game. Maker USAopoloy said in 2017: “The game has been designed to be as authentically cinematic as possible, ensuring that the players will experience the paranoia and tension that makes the film so great.” You can play as a human or a Thing. The package includes game board, Thing meter, room tracker, 12 player markers, 2 flame thrower chips, 2 dynamite chips, 18 fire chips, 18 room markers, First Player chip, 12 character pieces. For four to eight players.



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**Who Goes There?** is a similar board game for 3-6 players, released in 2018 by Certifiable Studios. “You must build, trade, and upgrade to prepare yourself for the Antarctic Terrain, rabid dog attacks, crazed most importantly, the alien entity that is now loose in the camp.” The game is named for the original John W. Campbell Jr. novella, “Who Goes There?” which was the basis for the John Carpenter film “The Thing.” Presumably this meant that the makers did not have to pay license fees to the filmmakers of “The Thing.”

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Captain Park's



# IMAGINARY POLAR EXPEDITION

A Cheapass Game for 3-7 Players

In 1898 Captain Park made an historic expedition to the Antarctic. He returned with strange artifacts, tales of high adventure, and memories of heroes lost in the ice.

So he says.

Fact is, the old liar never set foot outside London, and his "artifacts" came from a little antique shop in Stepney which he frequently visited in disguise.

You are tempted to expose the old liar, but you'd rather have a few expeditions of your own. You'll spend a few months keeping your head low, and return with tales of high adventure.

If your friends don't do it first.

You Need: One pawn and several counters for each player, two more pawns, and a way to keep score.



**Captain Park's Imaginary Polar Expedition** from Cheapass Games in 2002 goes way beyond the Cook/Peary North Pole controversy: "In 1898 Captain Park made an historic expedition to the Antarctic. He returned with strange artifacts, tales of high adventure, and memories of heroes lost in the ice. So he says. Fact is, the old liar never set foot outside London, and his 'artifacts' came from a little antique shop in Stepney which he frequently visited in disguise."

In this scavenger-hunt board game, a map of London shows all the best places to find artifacts, photographs, anecdotes, and whatever else you need to prove you've been exploring. "Once you've got some goodies, and you've been hiding long enough, you'll return to the Gentlemen's Club to brag about your adventure." The best scavenger wins.

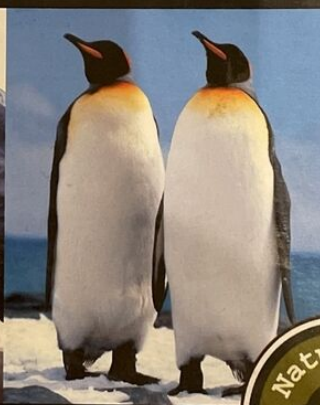
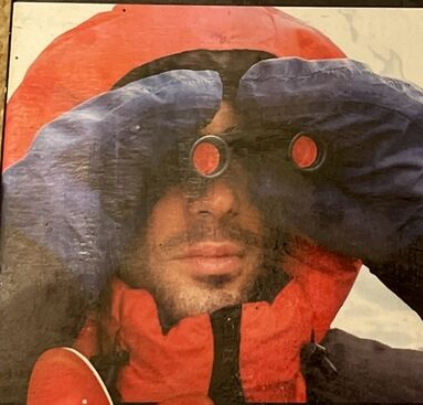
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# Mission Antarctic

BLAZE THE TRAIL  
ON A MYTHICAL EXPEDITION!



Earth Friendly  
since 1996



Ages 7  
to 77



Bioviva's **Mission Antarctic** board game sends you on a journey to trace the trail of the Jonas expedition, which vanished in Antarctica 20 years ago after finding signs of an ancient civilization. In seven places, you have to answer “nature trivia” questions about polar regions to advance. Unfortunately for Antarctic purists, the entire saga of the Jonah mission is only revealed if you play all three Bioviva games.



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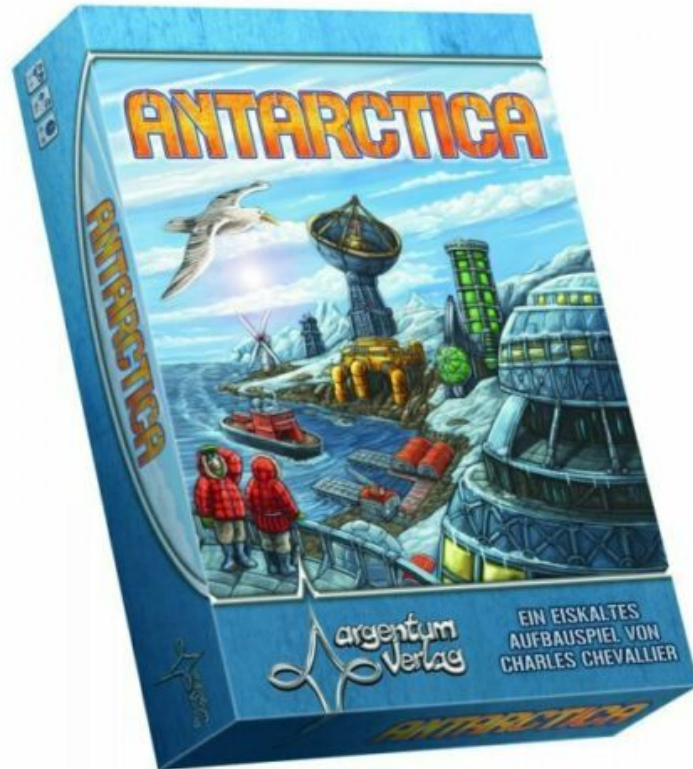




**Antarctic Fatale** is a sealed-room detective board game for one to six players. Designer iDventure says it is “made up as a realistic criminal case and requires investigations similar to those carried out by the criminal investigation department in real life.” An Antarctic base chief has been murdered, and a man has been accused and condemned to death. Is he really guilty? Can he be exonerated before his execution?

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**Antarctica** from Argentum Verlag is a German strategy/world building board game that seems reminiscent of the classic **Risk**. Released in 2015, it allows two or more players to build research bases and deploy scientists, who are a cover for resource mining activities. The winner is determined by dominance in territory, research, prestige buildings and resources.



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For the kids, there is **Hey, That's My Fish!** from Fantasy Flight Games, released in 2003. Two to four players control penguins hungry for their next meal on a bustling but shrinking Antarctic ice floe. The 64 hexagons of the iceberg make it changeable for replay. “Can you waddle your way to dinner? Secure the best fishing ground with “Hey, That's My Fish!”

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## The Age of Video Games



**Near Death** wins honors for the fundamental realism of its concept: You win by not freezing to death. Your plane crash-lands in midwinter darkness at an abandoned research station, and you have to collect fuel and equipment to restore heat and power, and repair a Sno-Cat to escape alive. There are no monsters, shotguns, or explosions – just relentless cold between each building at the station. Released in 2016 by a small design team at Orthogonal Games, with elegantly simple visual effects. Solo player only.

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Twenty years after John Carpenter's film **The Thing** was released, it had achieved cult status and inspired a video game that includes a cameo appearance by Carpenter as Dr. Faraday. Computer Artworks and Universal Interactive released it in 2002 under the Black Label games imprint and Komani.

It is set as a first-person shooter game, an alien-hunting sequel to Carpenter's film, and is endorsed by him as canonical. At the end the helicopter pilot R.J. Macready rescues the player. **The Thing** sold over a million units worldwide and a sequel was planned, but it was canceled when Computer Artworks went into receivership in 2003. Wikipedia details are at:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Thing\\_\(video\\_game\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Thing_(video_game))

\*\*\*\*\*



In the early days of video, you could walk around with a portable video game in your pocket like Gakken's **Antarctic Story**. This item was a spinoff of Koreyoshi Kuhara's 1983 massive hit film **Antarctica** about Taro and Jiro, two Siberian husky sledge dogs abandoned after the 1958 Japanese Antarctic expedition and their rescue a year later.

\*\*\*\*\*



In **Antarctic Adventure**, Konami adapted a standard ColecoVision console racing game in 1984 to the concept of a penguin scooting around 10 stations near the South Pole. At each station, the penguin raises a flag and salutes. Along the way, it must avoid the jaws of hungry seals and evade crevasses or open water. Earn points by eating any fish that jumps out of the water or collecting green flags left by previous expeditioners.





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**Happy Feet Two** was not only a phenomenally successful 2011 Warner Bros. film, but also a spin-off video game that could have been titled “Dancing with the Penguins.” Facing climatic extinction, the penguins must build a coalition with other penguins, which involves winning them over with dance-offs of penguin-esque hip-hop, samba, meringue, salsa, and funk. New breeds of penguins add abilities to solve puzzles, stun enemies, and progress through the Antarctic environment. Los Angeles-based band Ozomatli performs all of the music in the game.

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**Doraemon: Nobita's Great Adventure in the Antarctic** is a 2017 video game for Nintendo 3DS based on the 37th installment of the *Doraemon* feature films directed and written by Atsushi Takahashi.

Doraemon and his friends can't deal with the summer heat and head for Antarctica, where they build an amusement park using a secret gadget that makes ice crystals. Then they discover a mysterious ring in the ice that is over 100,000 years old.

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