

MEN OF METAL

Technoarcheologist Daedalusus is on a quest for knowledge. Assisted by Imperial Robot UR-025, he enters the fortress in this new quest to discover how the Spindle Drones that defend the Blackstone Fortress work. But deadlier foes await him in the darkness ...



Spindle Drones are one of the many mysteries of the Blackstone Fortress. Universally hostile to all who enter the ancient structure, their purpose appears to be cleansing the ancient structure of foreign matter – from debris to living beings. What makes them even more interesting to those of an investigative nature is the impossibility of removing a Spindle Drone from the fortress itself. If a Spindle Drone's wreckage is left where it falls, it is absorbed by the tessellating floors and walls of the Blackstone Fortress. Similarly, if a damaged drone is picked up, the maglev chambers that allow the explorers to travel within the Blackstone Fortress are rendered inert while the drone's remains are within, making further travel impossible.

When he arrived at Precipice, Daedalusus, one of the galaxy's foremost experts on Blackstone Fortresses, was determined to discover the drones' secrets. There were few volunteers for his proposed expedition into the fortress – only UR-025 agreed to accompany him, stating that the proposed expedition fell within the parameters of its data-gathering subroutines. Daedalusus was both intrigued and suspicious. UR-025 was clearly a valuable ally in combat, but its claim of being an autonomous Imperial Robot demanded further investigation. This investigation could be undertaken as the pair delved deep into the fortress, and so bringing UR-025 along would be efficient in more ways than one.

ASCENSION!

The Guardian Drones used in this quest can be found in the Blackstone Fortress: Ascension boxed set – an expansion for the main game. This set contains two of these deadly adversaries, plus all the associated cards and rules. Ascension also includes two new game modes that will test your survival skills in this thrilling narrative conclusion to the Blackstone Fortress saga!



As for UR-025, it knows that any amount of time spent in the company of a member of the Cult Mechanicus carries great risk. Nonetheless, it has deemed this mission worthwhile, weighed as it is against discovering a way to communicate with the Spindle Drones, or even the fortress itself. Furthermore, should the situation turn, the Man of Iron knows any potentially lethal confrontation with the magos would be deeply in its favour.

In this quest, which takes place before the events of Ascension, Daedalusus and UR-025 will venture deep into the Blackstone Fortress in an attempt to discover the true nature of Spindle Drones and their provenance. Each explorer has their own reasons for doing so, and neither suspects the other or knows anything regarding their true motives ...

This quest allows players to play through a specific narrative – a story of Daedalusus and UR-025 exploring the fortress, each searching for their own answers, unbeknownst to the other. This limits the choice of explorers to just these two, which in turn limits the number of players to three – two to control each explorer, and one potential hostile player.

STARTING THE QUEST TO CAPTURE A SPINDLE DRONE

The quest to capture a Spindle Drone is a standalone quest that can be attempted by 1 to 3 players if the explorers have completed the quest for the hidden vault and are not currently on another quest, such as the quest for the Black Shrines. Before starting the expedition, the explorers can choose to undertake the quest to capture a Spindle Drone. If they do so, follow the rules presented here to set up an expedition for this quest. Once the explorers have started this quest, they may not start another until it has been completed. The quest to capture a Spindle Drone uses some new rules and some existing rules from those presented for the quest for the hidden vault on pages 12-13 of the *Blackstone Fortress: Rules* booklet. Use the existing rules for New Expeditions, along with the following new rules. You will also need a copy of the Escalation expansion and the Ascension expansion for Blackstone Fortress to be able to play this quest.

SETTING UP THE EXPEDITION FOR THE QUEST TO CAPTURE A SPINDLE DRONE

During Step 2, Daedalus and UR-025 must be picked to take on this quest. No other explorers or retinue characters can be picked.

During Step 3, do not create a deck of exploration cards as normal. Instead, the explorers will be taking part in

a set series of combats and challenges unique to this quest. These combats and challenges comprise a single expedition. If they fail, they will need to start this quest again as a fresh expedition.

Each combat or challenge is resolved in the same way as an exploration round, following the rules on page 11 of the *Blackstone Fortress: Rules* booklet with the following additions.

In the exploration step, the leader reads aloud the text in italics at the start of the next stage of the expedition, and then the players resolve the challenge or combat as appropriate following the rules on page 11 of the *Blackstone Fortress: Rules* booklet.

In the leader step, the explorers can exchange with each other (or give away) discovery cards, resource cards and/or stronghold artefact cards.

MEN OF METAL EVENT TABLES

When called upon to make an event roll during this quest, use the following table. Note that result 11-14 changes depending on which part of the quest the explorers are on.

MEN OF METAL EVENT TABLE	
RESULT	EVENT
1	Spindle Menace: The leader picks one Spindle Drone that is on the battlefield. That Spindle Drone takes an Advance action.
2-3	Unfulfilled Destiny: Do not make a destiny roll at the start of the next turn.
4-6	Not Dead Yet: The leader must pick one hostile that was slain during the combat and has not returned to the battlefield, and then deploy them as close to an explorer as possible.
7-10	Changing Conditions: Draw an encounter card. If the card has a twist, it applies for the rest of the combat. If not, there is no effect.
11-14	Drone Abduction - Escape Chamber: The leader replaces the portal furthest from any explorers with a maglev transport escape chamber. If more than one portal is equally far from the explorers, the leader can pick which one to replace. If this event has already been rolled, or if an explorer has used a Summon action, there is no effect. Tracking the Signal, The Signal's Source - Ambush!: If there are no slain Awakened Spindle Drones, there is no effect. If there is at least one slain Awakened Spindle Drone, then the leader picks one of them. That Awakened Spindle Drone is deployed as reinforcements from the portal nearest to Daedalus.
15-17	Skittish Scuttler: The leader picks one Spindle Drone that is on the battlefield. That Spindle Drone takes a Fall Back action. If there are no Spindle Drones, or only Awakened Spindle Drones on the battlefield, there is no effect.
18-19	Heroic Effort: The leader picks an explorer that is out of action. Deploy the explorer in the same hex as another explorer or as close to another explorer as possible, and then make a vitality roll for them. If no explorers are out of action, the leader picks an explorer. Make a vitality roll for that explorer.
20	Data Gathering: The leader picks an explorer. That explorer can make one Move (1+) action – this does not cost an activation dice.

STAGE 1: COMBAT

DRONE ABDUCTION

The two explorers venture into an area that has a strong Spindle Drone presence. When the pair find their quarries, they discover that the drones are on high alert, having just finished dealing with a different band of foolish interlopers.

Set up the combat map as shown.

VICTORY

If all explorers are out of action, or if all of the explorers that are not out of action are in the maglev transport escape chamber in the event phase, the combat ends. If UR-025 and Daedalusus are in the maglev transport escape chamber and inspired, they have succeeded in this part of the quest and can continue to stage 2. Otherwise the expedition is failed and the explorers must restart this quest.

COMBAT RULES

Sterilisation Protocols: The threat level for Spindle Drones in this combat starts at 3. Treat all reinforcement rolls made for hostile groups during this combat as having rolled a 1 – do not roll the dice.

Pretence of Obedience: When UR-025 would inspire, if he has line of sight to Daedalusus, he does not.

Warning Subroutines: When Daedalusus would gain an inspiration point, if he does not have line of sight to UR-025, he does not.

HOSTILE GROUPS

1 1 Spindle Drone

2 1 Spindle Drone

3 1 Spindle Drone

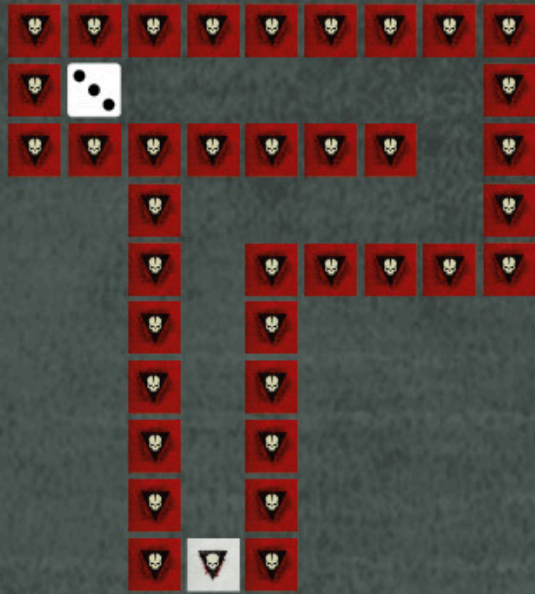
4 1 Spindle Drone



STAGE 2: CHALLENGE

DRONE DISSECTION

As UR-025 stands sentinel, Daedalusus begins a technological dissection of a nearby Spindle Drone. This process is extremely difficult and requires great delicacy, as the magos tries to isolate what he believes to be a signal emanating from the construct before it is subsumed by the fortress itself.



Arrange a series of grievous wound counters, a wound counter and a single activation dice on a flat surface as shown in the diagram. This is the dissection tracker.

The leader then picks one player. That player must move that activation dice along the dissection tracker so that it touches the wound counter at the end. No player can touch the activation dice once it is placed. It can only be pushed along using the line of sight checker (which cannot be bent or broken).

VICTORY

If the activation dice touches a grievous wound counter, or a grievous wound counter is moved for any reason, the explorers have failed – replace all Spindle Drones in the next combat with Awakened Spindle Drones. If the activation dice touches the wound counter at the end of the track without touching any grievous wound counters, the dissection is at least partly successful, and there is no penalty. In either case, the explorers then continue to stage 3.

STAGE 3: COMBAT

TRACKING THE SIGNAL

Satisfied with his findings, Daedalusus moves on, tracking the signal he believes will lead him to a location that will unveil the Spindle Drones' secrets. Before long, the pair reach a forking path, one length of which appears to contain a few drones standing sentinel over a control device. The other route is barred by a glowing blackstone shard. The Technoarchaeologist postulates that activating the device will shut the shard down, granting access to a further chamber beyond. Even as he announces this theory, the Spindle Drones notice the interlopers ...

Set up the combat map as shown over the page. Set up Daedalusus and UR-025 in the hex marked D and U.

HOSTILE GROUPS

1 2 Spindle Drones*

2 2 Spindle Drones*

3 1 Guardian Drone

*If the previous challenge – Drone Dissection – was failed, these are Awakened Spindle Drones instead. All rules specific to this combat that apply to Spindle Drones apply to Awakened Spindle Drones instead.

VICTORY

If all explorers are out of action, or if all of the explorers that are not out of action are in the maglev transport escape chamber in the event phase, the combat ends. If UR-025 and Daedalusus are in the maglev transport escape chamber, they have succeeded in this part of the quest and can continue to stage 4. Otherwise the explorers have failed and they must restart this quest or start another quest.

COMBAT RULES

Hostile Groups: The two Spindle Drones that are set up next to discovery marker 1 are hostile group 1. The other Spindle Drones are hostile group 2.

Endless Swarm: Halve all reinforcement rolls made for hostile groups during this combat (rounding up).

Control Panels: When a discovery marker is removed from the board, the obstructed hex or hexes that are marked with the matching discovery marker on the combat map are also removed from the board.

Watchful Sentry: Until discovery marker 4 is removed from the board, do not make behaviour rolls for the Guardian Drone. Instead, it takes the 'Hold' action when it activates. After discovery marker 4 is removed from the battlefield, make behaviour rolls for it as normal.

One Exit: The Summon (4+) action cannot be made by explorers during this combat.



STAGE 4: CHALLENGE

FLEEING THE SWARM

As the Guardian Drone falls it emits a piercing whine, a high-pitched version of the Spindle Drones' alert tone. Daedalus and UR-025 have no time to investigate the downed construct as a vast swarm of Spindle Drones scuttle from a nearby corridor, their weapons flashing. Heavily outnumbered, the explorers beat a desperate retreat. Daedalus moves as quickly as his bionic enhancements will allow him to, while UR-025 steps in to provide covering fire when the magos appears to be in danger. While the Man of Iron has no intention of sacrificing itself, UR-025 is aware that if it wishes to glean any information from this expedition at all, the Technoarchaeologist's skill and knowledge will be vital.

Make one agility roll for Daedalus. If the roll is failed, Daedalus suffers 1 wound. When Daedalus suffers that wound, UR-025's player can choose for UR-025 to make a weapon action as if the target was visible and adjacent to it. If the weapon action is successful, Daedalus does not suffer the wound. If the weapon action is failed, UR-025 suffers the wound instead. Continue to make agility rolls and any subsequent weapon actions until Daedalus has successfully made 3 agility rolls.

If either explorer is taken out of action, the explorers have failed and cannot make a vitality roll in the next recovery step. In either case, the explorers then continue to stage 5.

STAGE 5: COMBAT

THE SIGNAL'S SOURCE

The explorers finally escape the Spindle Drone swarm, though not without cost. Led by the strange signal, they find themselves in a large chamber. Here, Spindle Drones are extruded from a glowing panel, and then swiftly absorbed by the fortress to be transported to parts unknown. Could this be where the constructs are formed? Or is it possible that the fortress has subsumed an entire race to serve it? The answers to such questions may lie within arm's reach, but as the pair draw closer, the familiar whine of approaching Spindle Drones once again assaults their aural receptors. Worse still, these drones are moving with a noticeably more aggressive gait, and the heavy tread of Guardian Drones is audible in the distance. The explorers' questions must go unanswered for now, as there are surely few places in the fortress as well defended as this chamber. Sabotage and then escape are the only option, and one that must be pursued with utmost urgency.

Set up the combat map as shown

Set up Daedalusus and UR-025 in the hexes marked D and U.

VICTORY

If all explorers are out of action, or if all of the explorers that are not out of action are in the maglev transport escape chamber in the event phase, the combat ends. If all of the explorers that are not out of action are in the maglev transport escape chamber, and both Drone Extruders are destroyed, they have succeeded in this part of the quest and completed the quest. Otherwise the explorers have failed and they must restart this quest or start another quest.

COMBAT RULES

Drone Extruders: Each Drone Extruder is a portal that is marked with a red outline. When an explorer is adjacent to a Drone Extruder they can make a Disrupt (5+) action. When this action is taken, place a wound counter on the Drone Extruder. When a Drone Extruder has 4 wound counters on it, it is removed from the battlefield.

One Exit: The Summon (4+) action cannot be made by explorers during this combat.

Drone Factory: While there are one or more Drone Extruders on the battlefield, treat all reinforcement rolls made for hostile groups during this combat as having rolled a 1 – do not roll the dice.

HOSTILE GROUPS

-  2 Awakened Spindle Drones (A)
-  2 Awakened Spindle Drones (A)
-  1 Guardian Drones (G)
-  1 Guardian Drones (G)

