

The Rolling of the First Stone

The Nebula War – beginning with the Coup at Asphodel Station – began in unspectacular fashion. Various forces, either woken from their slumber by external threat, stirred up by plotting, injected into the volume of space by their leaders, or merely plunged into action by simply being attacked, began to mobilize their limited resources, work out what they would need to respond to the changes of events, and act.

But these actions were like the fall of the first pebbles down a mountain that are a precursor to the avalanche.

No faction entered this phase with true mastery of a coherent stretch of the Reach, and battlelines were neither traditional, nor contiguous.

This early war did not resemble battlelines of divisions and battleforces clashing over one megalithic objective.

Instead it was more reminiscent of smaller armies fighting over a series of islands, amphibious forces crossing narrow straights and fighting over anchorage sites, fishery fleets and water springs. In these battles armies sometimes clashed that were not even fighting over the same objectives.

The two major factions of the Nebula War, the Loyalists and Warmaster, each held certain advantages in this early war period, as did the more powerful of the unaligned, and the forces sought to bolster these strengths or reinforce the weaknesses.

The Conduct of the War (Rules section)

To simulate this period of the war we need to split the armies into their major and minor factions. The major factions, assuming a certain level of Command and Control co-ordination, receive factional benefits, while the minor factions will also have the opportunity to receive bonuses.

The system used is very similar to the Control Point dynamic that we used at Parnassus. I.e. a battle is fought and the winner is awarded a Control Point. If a faction (or independent army) has an advantage at that Control Point, their entire faction receives a special rule/bonus.

Where this system differs is that the Control Points are not necessarily tied to a single location, but rather to a strategic aim of the army.

The bonuses for control of these strategic objectives may change or increase – so if a particular army decides they have a singular aim and begins to pile up a multi-point advantage in a particular area this may result in game effects.

Some missions will fit easily into a particular category – for example a direct attack on Asphodel Station is clearly Goal 1. Others may be strategically themed, while there is always an option simple to declare a battle and fight a mission out of the book.

These missions are somewhat metaphorical and should be seen as more of a reputation than the possession of a location – though this may apply. Eg. An assault on the ‘Heart of the Nebula’ does not automatically assume the mission is a direct assault on Asphodel Station (though it might). Instead it might be an attack on another location within the Graven Reach, and its destruction would seriously weaken the faction who physically hold the Station. This allows missions to be wide ranging and agreed by the players.

Goal 1 – The Heart of the Nebula.

Asphodel station is truly the key to the Graven Reach. This space station/moonbase contains fleet maintenance facilities, manufacturies, warehouseing, munitions and weapons stores as well as the largest single population hub of the entire Nebula. This population provided the raw materials for hordes of forced soldiers, called penal legion but just as often a random tithe and fitted with discipline collars. These barely trained rabble were then fed into the grinder of the pitiless war.

The player in control of this objective may either field a 15 man squad of penal legion troops (this unit is free) or may nominate a single unit in their army (written down before the battle) – when this unit is destroyed it may return to the field on subsequent turn on a roll of a 5+. This may never be re-rolled or modified.

Goal 2 – The Whispering in the Void.

Information is power. All sides in the Reach maintained astropaths, spies, comms relays and fast picket ships to try to gain advantage in the roiling war.

Maintaining knowledge of enemy dispositions, strength and strategy is often the single most crucial factor in victory or defeat.

The faction that has control of this objective may either add +1 to its Initiative rolls at the battle start, or may put D6-3 units into outflanking reserve (to a minimum of 1). These units must roll to come on the field as described in the narrative section.

Goal 3 – The Soul of Mankind

The hearts and minds of people are fickle, and the population of the Graven Reach were more downtrodden than most. The loyalty of a populous can come by rallying around a successful leader, propaganda, fear of repercussions, or even, for some poor deluded fools, the hope of a brighter future.

But where the methods of achieving dominance of a population may differ, it is a powerful tool in causing disruption to an enemies plans and aiding your own. From a lack of enthusiasm slowing down delivery, through to civil disobedience and acts of active sabotage, all these things restrict your enemies ability to focus force on a single objective.

The force with dominance at this objective may add +1 VP to their resolution in any mission that uses VPs.

Goal 4 – All is Dust

All mortals die. This is inevitable. And in war that fate draws nearer. But you may kill your enemy before they kill you, and in this bleak region this ephemeral victory must suffice. Personal grudges and the reputation of your finest fighters is the focus of many warriors in the Graven Reach.

The controlling faction of this objective gains an additional victory point for each enemy character killed in battle by your warlord (this VP is in addition to any VPs already included in the mission, so if 'Slay the Warlord' is in).

Goal 5 – The Carrion

Some agendas in the war are not revealed. The Death Guard entered the region with a mission of their own. Other forces may choose to fight to gain knowledge of this plan, or the Death Guard may fight for other objectives.

The controller of this goal may pick a single objective marker in the enemies deployment zone (or, if there are none used, place one) and only they may score this objective during the game. This objective may never be shared within your faction – it applies only to the possessors' army.

Goal 6 – No Gods, No Masters

Independence and the accumulation of power is its own end. If eventually they are forced to give up their independence then the more power they can accumulate the better negotiating position they will be in when that time comes. And in the meantime freedom is sweet nectar to pursue your own agendas.

Many warriors fight better for a cause closer and more tangible to their immediate wellbeing.

The faction with this control point is able to re-roll all morale checks while not in their enemies deployment zone.

Initial Dispositions

At the start of phase 1 there are a number of Control Points already in play, some with Factions, others with individual armies.

The Alliance of Unification

The First and Last, The Dune Lions, the 16th Company of the Angelic Host begin with a CP at *The whispering in the Void*.

The Warmaster's Hunt

Ma'Ta's Militia and The Severed begin with a CP at *The Heart of the Nebula*.

Independents

The Neikea begin with a CP at *All is Dust*.

Magos Tyrell begins with a CP at *No Gods, No Masters*.

Durer's Fist begins with a CP on *The Carrion*

The vengeance of the Twelfth currently has no CPs but when working with other forces for a battle may use their CP advantage.

