AT THE GATES OF DOOM

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The year is unkown. Scholars cannot be sure of the exact date, since so much knowledge has been lost. Humanity is fractured. Where once, the legends say, there was a shining empire, a united humanity living in a utopian cosmos, there is now only ashes, and blood. Or perhaps this golden dream never existed- perhaps it is only the inventions of desperate minds.

From the ruins of uncountable civilisations, new powers emerge. Barbarians, warlords, politicians, and prophets all rise to lead their followers to brutal war, all claiming that planets ruled by a million rulers before, are rightfully theirs. From the secretive, godlike Alliance, to the mad worshippers of the Anti-technology league, humans are more varied in appearance and culture than ever before. Worse still, are the mutants and evolutions formed during the Great Closing: orcs, monsters, and worse.

The history of this strange world is hard to trace, but it is known that in ancient times, when Earth was still the main home of the human race, explorers discovered strange caverns, deep beneath the surface of Mars. Before long, vast underground chambers were revealed- definitive existence of alien life! But better still, was the discovery of the first gate. Gates are giant structures found all over the galaxy, portals linking one point in space to another, forming a network that is the only known way to cross the unimaginable lengths of the galaxy.

Humans quickly explored this network, spreading all over the galaxy, settling on all the habitable planets they found. Within the space of just a few hundred years, humanity had spread to a million planets, using the mysterious gates to fuel rapid expansion and innovation. For many millennia, all was well.

Then came the Great Closing. For no apparent reason, all the gates in the galaxy one day stopped working. For thousands of years, people had been able to easily travel from one world to another, trade, share ideas, and send messages. But one day, all that stopped. Planets were cut off from communications, supplies, and all contact. Those planets that were settled early, close to Mars, with stable sources of food and materials, managed to stay at a certain level of technology, but for planets further away, that were more reliant on trade for their economies, disaster was imminent.

Entire societies collapsed overnight, and countless billions perished. On most worlds, with nothing to sustain the people's luxurious lifestyles, society quickly degraded. Over the years, as those with the knowledge of science slowly died out, and machines began to decay, people became more primitive, forming tribes or kingdoms, worshipping idols, or even the now dead gates.

For some planets, so great was the fall, that exposure to hazardous materials, and the passing of time, made the inhabitants evolve, becoming something more (or in many cases less) than human. Some planets became entirely feudal and primitive, while others managed to relearn some of their lost knowledge. Only a tiny handful held onto a few scraps of the knowledge they once possessed.

Then, after a million years of isolation, a miracle (or as some at the time described it, a curse) happened. Slowly, one by one, the gates flickered back to life. For the first time in many years, the disparate parts of humanity were reunited. But the peace of the past was dead. The newly united remnants went to war, each barbarian king deciding that they should be the ones to rule the galaxy. This was the bloodiest, most brutal period of humanity's history.

Slowly, over the centuries, alliances began to form, larger empires were established, that survived for longer. And the cycle continued, until the powers that now rule the galaxy were formed. In the old sector, the region of space first explored by humanity all those years ago, the Alliance was formed- a coalition of planets who had retained much knowledge and advanced technology during the Great Closing. Further to the galactic centre, formed civilisations with advanced weaponry, but primitive societies- planets that had managed to hang on to advanced technology, or take it from others, but had no way to understand it.

In what is the middle sector, empires such as the UNF or the ATL developed- lacking in both societal and technological development, but with enough population and faith to sustain incredibly bloody wars, these empires are ruled by dictators, corrupt priests and mega-corporations. But for all this 'civilisation' the majority of the galaxy is still ruled only by chaos. Marauding orcs, scavengers and barbarians fight over the largest area, known as the wild sector, as well as periodically attacking every other faction.

Worse still, are the entities known as 'demons'. Since the reopening of the gates, not everyone who passes through a gate comes through to the other side, and sometimes, something else comes through instead. Demons are strange creatures- flesh and blood like humans, and possessing a cunning intelligence, but bestial in nature, and with no apparent origin. When a demon incursion happens on a planet, societies quickly fall if not prepared. Demons appear attracted to the gates, staying near them, but slaughtering anything within sight. After a few weeks of holding the area, they will often start to simply fight each other, until the incursion simply wipes itself out. Why or how these creatures come, or even what they are is not known, but they are the scourge of all mortal beings.

Core rules:

Army building:
To build an army, first agree with your opponents what power level your armies will be at. 50 is enough for a small game, 100 gives you a decent size army. Then pick a faction, and pick units for your army, from the list of units your army has access to. Each unit will have a power level, and the total power level of the army should be less than or equal to the agreed limit. Some units also have options on their data card (which also contains their rules), and these need to be picked before the game.

Setup:
Before the game, set up a decent amount of terrain on the board, so that there is plenty of cover, but not so much that it completely obstructs view. Then the two sides roll off, and whoever wins gets to choose which deployment zone they want to use. Then the other player can pick the order in which players place down a unit in their deployment zones. Deployment zones should be an area big enough to fit the army, at one edge of the board. Players take turns to deploy their units. Once all units are deployed, the game begins.

Flow of the game:
The game is divided into 4 turns. In each of these turns, every unit is activated once, but the order in which they activate is decided randomly. For every unit in play, write their name on a small piece of paper, and put all of these into a bag. Mix it up, and then randomly pick one out to determine which unit is activated. Once a unit is picked, remove their paper, and only replace it once the turn ends. The turn ends once all units are activated. If a unit is destroyed, their paper is removed from use. After the fourth turn has ended, the player with the highest remaining power wins.

Activation:
When a unit is activated, it can do one of four things: run, charge, shoot,or overwatch.

If the unit runs, it can move by up to double its speed. All units have a speed of 6", but fast units have a speed of 9", and slow units have a speed of 4". Very fast units have a speed of 12".

If the unit charges, it may move by up to double its speed +D3", but at least one model from the unit must be able to move into base to base contact with at least one enemy model. Then any models in base to base contact can make melee attacks, after which the unit that was charged can attack back in the same way. If a charging units manages to destroy the unit it charged, it may move again by up to half its movement, or charge by the same amount +D3". This is called consolidation.

If the unit shoots, it may first move by up to its speed, and then perform a ranged attack, against an enemy unit that it can see, within range.

If the unit overwatches, it may move by up to its speed, and then a marker should be placed next to it. During any subsequent activation, the unit may shoot at any point, removing the marker once it has done so. So for example, if an enemy unit activates, and moves within range of an overwatching unit, before that unit can shoot, or attack in melee, the overwatching unit can shoot at it. Once the marker is removed, the unit cannot do this again in the same turn.

Attacking:
Both ranged and melee attacks work in the same way, and use the unit's skill. MS (melee skill) is used for attacks made in base to base contact, while RS (ranged skill) is used for ranged attacks. All units have weapons, which have an A (attacks) value. If a model has no weapons, it is considered to have 1 attack in melee. This does not apply to units with the vehicle rule. Roll this many dice times by the number of models attacking with it. Any that are equal to the unit's skill are hits. The defending unit then rolls that number of dice, and any equal to their D (defence) value are saved. The rest cause damage, each one decreasing a model's health by 1 (if a model's health falls to 0, it is dead). You must also subtract the weapon's AP (armour penetration) from the defence roll. In some cases, it is possible for a unit to fight in melee multiple times in the same turn. This is fine, but every time the unit fights after the first, their MS is worsened by 1 (e.g. 3+ becomes 4+). This of course resets once the turn ends.

Pins:
Pins are tokens that represent when a unit is under fire. A unit receives a pin every time it is picked as the target for another unit, as well as every time an attack hits. When a unit takes damage, you may choose for up to half the damage (rounding up) to instead be taken as pins. For every pin a unit has, it gets -1 to attack rolls, and -1" speed. Whenever a unit is activated, you may remove one of its pins for free, and at the end of each round, you must roll a D6 for every unit in your army. If the result is equal to the unit's nerve value, you may remove D6 pins from the unit. If it isn't, the unit takes D6 pins if it took damage this turn.

Terrain rules
For every piece of terrain on the board, pick at least one of the following characteristics:
  • Cover- models gain -1 to ranged attacks against units inside. A unit is 'inside' if over half the models in the unit are on the terrain.
  • Difficult- every inch of movement over this counts as 2.
  • Dangerous- models that move over this terrain take 1 hit.
  • Unstable- if a model rolls a 1 on a ranged attack either in this terrain, or against a unit in it, the terrain becomes

dangerous to models in it, and models within 3" for the rest of the game.

Special Rules:
- Deadly(x)- takes away x health instead of 1. This can carry over to other models if the model is killed with excess deadly.
- Hero- cannot be shot at unless closest enemy unit (unless 6 or higher health), and friendly units within 6" can use this model's nerve value instead of their own. This model may join another friendly unit, activating as though they were a unit member, if it has only 2 or less higher health than the unit.
- Ambush- doesn't have to be deployed at beginning of game, can instead be deployed anywhere on the table as its movement on any turn when activated.
- Scary(x)- enemy units within 6" get -x to morale checks.
- Impact(x)- scores x automatic hits when charging.
- Energy shield(x+)- when a ranged hit is scored against this model, roll a die. On an x+, it misses.
- Perception filter- enemy models gain -1 to all attack rolls against models with this rule.
- Transport(x)- up to x models, with up to 2 health (and heroes with up to 3 health) may start the game in this one. The unit inside cannot be activated until this one has, and when they do, they disembark, moving normally as though any point on the transport was their starting position. If a transport is destroyed while there are models inside it, every model inside takes 1 hit with 1 AP, and the survivors are then placed down where the transport was, pinned.
- Fly- This model may ignore all terrain when moving.
- Vehicle- if this model dies, on a 4+ it explodes, and every unit within 12" takes xD3 hit, where x is the amount of health the vehicle initially had. You can choose to have it automatically explode.
- Stealth- ranged attacks gain -1 to hit rolls against this model
- Surprise- this model may deploy as though it had ambush, but must do so within 3" of a board edge.
- Fire- when a unit is hit by this weapon, it must make a nerve check immediately, with -1 to the roll.

Scenarios

This section contains optional rules for adding interesting elements to your battles, as well as different objectives for players to achieve (than just killing the enemy). Pick any number of the sections below to use for your battle, and pick any number of the details from each section. You can even pick these randomly, by rolling dice. You can pick a reason the armies are fighting, different ways to win, and fun quirks. You could even pick different victory conditions for different players. If you choose to use any victory conditions, ignore the normal way to win the game. Instead, the player with the most victory points at the end is the winner.

Narrative:
1. Storage Facility- The battlefield is the site of an important storage facility. The armies are battling to take control and gain access to supplies.
2. Spiritual value- The battlefield is of religious or cultural value to the armies, so all want to control it.
3. Revenge- At least one of the armies has recently been grievously dishonoured by the other, and this is a battle to get revenge, and regain pride.
4. Ambush- This battle is a surprise attack by one of the forces, perhaps to quickly eliminate a specific unit, or as part of a larger guerilla war.
5. Military base- The battlefield is an important strategic location, perhaps a fort, or a missile launching station, securing the location is crucial to controlling the planet, or winning the wider war.
6. Exploration- both armies have arrived at a newly discovered site, both looking to investigate it, and take any treasures it may hold.

Victory Conditions:
1. Slaughter- gain 1 victory point for every 5 power's worth of units you destroy.
2. Assassination- each player picks one hero in their army. If that hero is killed, the other player gains 5 victory points.
3. Communications- pick 3 or more points on the battlefield to be comms towers. If a unit manages to be in base contact with it, without any enemies also in contact, and remaining there for one of their activations not doing anything, gain 5 victory points.
4. Secure ground- pick 3 or more pieces of terrain on the battlefield. At the end of every round, gain 2 victory points if you have at least one model on such a terrain piece, but your opponents do not.
5. Protect territory- gain 1 victory point at the end of every round if there are no enemy models in your deployment zone.
6. Retrieval- place down a marker for an important object. If a model moves into base contact with the object, it can pick it up, and the object remains with them until the end of the

game, or until the model is destroyed. If it is destroyed, the object is placed down where the model used to be, and can be picked up again. Pinned, and fleeing models cannot hold or pick up the object, dropping it if they have it. If at the end of the game a model in your army is holding the object, gain 10 victory points.

Twist:
1. Treasures- pick 3 or more pieces of terrain. The first time a model moves into each piece of terrain, they gain a random relic.
2. Low gravity- all models gain +3" movement, and +6" range to their ranged weapons.
3. High gravity- all models gain -3" movement, and -6" range to their ranged weapons.
4. Toxic/no atmosphere- every time a model takes damage, it takes an additional 2 damage (but excess doesn't carry over to other models).
5. Darkness/fog- all models gain -1 to hit rolls, and units cannot shoot at or charge units over 15" away.
6. Limited ammunition- a unit may only make ranged attacks twice in the whole game. After they have shot twice (normally this means activating twice), they can only make melee attacks.

Optional Rules

The Fate Deck

The fate deck adds a bit more strategy and interest to your games. To use this, you will need a set of fate cards (included at the end of this document). You could have one copy of every card, or print out multiple sets. Put all the cards into a deck, and shuffle them. At the start of the game, each player draws four random cards. These cards can each be used once in the game, and their effect, and when to use them is described on the card. If you wanted to, you could change this system, perhaps drawing less or more cards, or saying you can replace cards you have used at the end of a round.

Relics of Battle

Up to 10% of your army's power cost may go towards giving some of your heroes relics. A hero can be given any number of relics, but only one weapon. You can only include a single copy of each relic in your army.

Relics:

- Vortex grenade [5 power]- single use. Instead of attacking, the hero may throw the grenade D6" in any direction. Place down a 4" diameter circle centred on the point. Every model touched by it takes a hit with 3 AP, and deadly(3). At the start of every subsequent round, the circle moves D6" in the direction of a player's choice, alternating the player, starting with the player who threw it.
- Antimatter cannon [5 power]- weapon. 18" range, D6 attacks, hits cause automatic damage (no saves allowed)
- Ion Rifle [5 power]- weapon. 25", D3+3 attacks, 3 AP.
- Bionic eye [5 power]- +2 to all hit rolls.
- Jetpack [5 power]- gain 12" movement, and *fly.*
- Force field [10 power]- this model, and any units within 3", gain *energy shield(4+).*

Lucky Re-roll any one die you roll.	**Insane Bravery** Use this when you fail a nerve check. You automatically pass.	FATE CARD	FATE CARD
Burst of Speed Use this when one of your units is moving. That unit may move an extra 6".	**Last Breath** Use this when one of your models dies without having attacked in that turn yet. Before removing it, it may attack.	FATE CARD	FATE CARD
Lucky Shot Use this before you roll a ranged attack. One ranged attack hits automatically.	**Relentless Barrage** Use this when you have just made ranged attacks. The unit that made those attacks can immediately attack again, with -1 to hit.	FATE CARD	FATE CARD
Furious Blow Use this when an enemy unit is about to make saves against one of your units in melee. Those attacks get +2 AP.	**Sacrifice** Use this when one of your units has been destroyed in melee, and the enemy is about to consolidate. You may move all of your units in consolidation range by their movement.	FATE CARD	FATE CARD
Dive for Cover Use this when one of your units is being attacked at range. The attacking unit gets -1 to hit.	**Suicidal Charge** Use this when one of your units is charging, and is targetted by overwatching units. Only remove casualties from overwatch once the unit has finished activating.	FATE CARD	FATE CARD

Repair Use this at any point. One *vehicle* unit regains D3 lost health.	Burst of Energy Use this when one of your units is about to fight in melee for the second time in the turn. That unit does not get any debuffs to their attacks.	FATE CARD	FATE CARD
Scouting Use this at the start of a round, before any units have activated. One unit in your army can move by up to its movement, as long as it doesn't end up within 3" of an enemy unit.	Battlefield Promotion Use this when one of your heroes dies. One model from a unit within 1" gains the dead hero's special rules.	FATE CARD	FATE CARD
Strike and Fade Use this when one of your units has just finished making ranged attacks. That unit may immediately move by up to its movement.	Weakened Use this when one of your units has just done damage to an enemy unit. If any of your units target that same enemy unit this round, they gain +1 AP.	FATE CARD	FATE CARD
Ready Use this before one of your overwatching units attacks. That unit may first move by up to its movement.	Rally Use this when one of your units is fleeing. That unit stops fleeing, and is not pinned either, as if they had succeeded the nerve check against pinned in the same turn.	FATE CARD	FATE CARD
Last one Standing Use this when one of your units has been reduced to a single model remaining. Until the end of its next activation, that model gains 2x as many attacks, and an extra 2 health	Advanced Warning Use this when an enemy ambushing unit deploys on the board. One of your units may immediately shoot at it, with -1 to hit, or if the unit is overwatching, with +1.	FATE CARD	FATE CARD