

# Call of the Waaagh!

By Andy Clark

The Cracktoof Desert burned. Bullet-riddled wrecks lay strewn as though by Gork's own hand – wagons and speedsters were upturned on their roofs or tangled together in compacted masses where roaring Ork drivers had slammed headlong into one another. Black smoke belched as their fuel reserves and ammunition stores blazed. Rounds exploded amidst the mangled metal with sharp cracks. Around them, also aflame, dozens of crude oil derricks added their own columns of smoke to the black haze that overshadowed the carnage.

Even all those fumes combined couldn't block out the madness in the sky. High above him, Thragrot saw weirdly coloured streamers of energy coiling and writhing where once there had been only the grey-green skies of Grug's World. The Deathskull Nob imagined that he could see leering faces amidst the squirming lights. Yet this wasn't Gork and Mork looking down upon their lads and enjoying the show. Oh no, this was something Thragrot didn't understand. Something unnatural that he wanted no part of.

His train of thought was interrupted by a solid blow to the back of his horned helmet. The Nob turned with a snarl, lips skinning back from his jutting tusks, to see Big Morg scowling down at him.

'Yooz gunna stare at da sky all day, zog-wit, or yooz gunna get stuck in wiv da rest of us?' grunted Big Morg.

Thragrot realised that bullets were whizzing across the battlefield, and that Goffboss Blackfang's Boyz must be attacking the Deathskull lines again. Several Deff Dreads led the way, their massive armoured limbs clanking and hissing as they hosed wrecks, derricks and Deathskulls alike with rounds.

Around Thragrot, mobs of blue-daubed Deathskulls Boyz and looted wagons were levelling their bulky guns and letting fly into the approaching enemy warband. Searing green beams of energy leapt out, blowing apart a hulking black Battlewagon. Hails of rokkits and shot spewed from the deffguns of Ratchit's Lootas, making Goffs dance like loons as their bodies were torn to bits. Even Thragrot's own mob had opened up, howling with glee as their massive kombi-shootas spewed bullets and fiery blasts in the general direction of the foe. The din was rapidly becoming tremendous.

*How'd I miss all dat?*

But Thragrot knew how. Ever since the skies had gone wrong it had been risky looking at them for too long. Some of the lads had gone completely peculiar after staring skywards; Big Boss Snagrack's warband had a lot more Madboyz amongst its ranks than it had done before, that much was for sure.

And it wasn't just Madboyz whose numbers were on the rise, Thragrot thought with a shudder. Even as Blackfang's Goffs came howling in-between the burning wrecks for yet another attack, so there came a familiar hooting and gibbering from the rear of the Deathskull lines.

'Zog me, da boss has let 'iz Weirdboyz out again,' shouted Grazbag Ded-eye, over the war cries of the charging Goffs and the cacophony of exuberant gunfire being generated by their own lads.

Thragrot thumbed his kustom shoota's dakka-switch, then squeezed his extra triggers and sent a trio of fist-sized rokkits roaring toward the enemy. He grinned with simple joy as he saw two of the warheads plough into the lead Deff Dread, ripping one of its stubby legs off in a spray of oil and sparks. Bellowing tinnily, the Deff Dread went over and lay on its face, its enraged pilot releasing muffled roars as he flailed his remaining limbs in fury.

Tearing himself away from the sight, Thragrot at last looked back to where a mob of burly Minderz were herding Big Boss Snagrack's pet Weirdboyz towards the fray. Some burgeoning wit amongst the warband had dubbed this herd of pitiful freaks 'Da Odd Skwad', and the name had stuck. Now, Da Odd Skwad were being shoved towards the front lines, bells and warning clangers jangling from where they hung on collars, shackles, crude cloaks and odd caps. Lurid green witch-lights were dancing about the Weirdboyz' heads and leaping between their fingers, while glowing emerald ectoplasm bubbled between their lips or wept from their eyes, nostrils and ears.

'Good fight, innit?' said Big Morg. 'Lotsa Waaagh!'

'Just 'ope dey don't come too near us,' said Thragrot, who could already feel a headache building between his eyes, and pains shooting like fire through his limbs.

Yet closer the Weirdboyz came, and closer still, their Minderz snatching away the copper staves that allowed the luckless Oddboyz to earth the Waaagh! power seething through them.

'Dey'z gunna bust sum brainz, any minute now,' said Grazbag Ded-eye, but what he might have thought about the situation Thragrot never found out. Just at that moment a massive Goff choppa seemed to sprout from Grazbag's skull, and the Nob keeled over in a spray of gore.

'WAAAGH!' came the howling war cry of the Goffs. Black-clad Orks began spilling over the wreck of Nazmog's Speeda Skwadron and crashing into hand-to-hand combat with the Deathskulls. Thragrot felt exhilaration surge through him, dropping his shoota and wrenching the paired choppas from his back as the mass of bellowing greenskins bore down upon him.

A revving blade came at his face, but Thragrot blocked it with his choppa blades before kicking its wielder in the gut, then lopping his surprised-looking head off with a swift downswing. The next blow came from a huge axe, swung by an equally huge Goff Skarboy, but Thragrot was ready and smashed the weapon aside before headbutting his opponent right between the eyes.

As that Ork reeled back, another Goff raised his slugga at point-blank range and pulled the trigger.

Click.

Empty.

'Lucky blue paint,' spat Thragrot, before raising his choppas to hack the Goff apart, but before he could land a blow there came a massed howl. An awful feeling of pressure filled Thragrot's skull and a sudden flare of green lightning sparked, as though some lunatic had fired orbital lasers into the fight.

'Zog me, Da Odd Skwad!' yelled Thragrot, who had momentarily forgotten the Weirboys amidst the carnage. The next moment there came a mighty boom, and a shock wave of green energy caused blood to burst from Thragrot's nose and hurled him, the surviving Deathskull Nobz and all their Goff opponents through the air.

Wrecked vehicles spun and bounced, crashing end over end away from whatever Weirboy related catastrophe had occurred. Thragrot narrowly missed being crushed under the remains of a cartwheeling Goff Deff Dread that sailed over his head, its pilot emitting metallic grunts and curses.

Then Thragrot hit a protruding lump of metal that arrested his flight hard enough to jar several of his favourite fangs loose.

Blinking in bewilderment, disinterested for the moment in the Goff lads who sprawled and smouldered around him, Thragrot looked back towards where the Weirdboyz had apparently exploded. Surely, he thought, he would see nothing but a massive, glowing green crater.

To his amazement, the Nob instead saw shimmering green figures whirling and moving in the air. His eyes widened in wonder as he saw ethereal green figures clambering onto spaceships made from a million scavenged wrecks. He watched as the figures, surely Orks from their build and all their killy gubbinz, flew through space and into the swirling maw of a big... swirly... thing!

At that point, the vision lost Thragrot for a moment, but regained his attention when he saw those same Orks – many, many more than he could count – spilling off their scrap-ships and into the biggest fight he'd ever seen. It was incredible. It was inspiring. It was so much more than Thragrot had imagined life could hold.

And then, as the vision dissipated, there was Big Boss Snagrack pulling himself up onto a wrecked Battlewagon. He clutched Goffboss Blackfang's severed head in the blades of his power klaw and bellowed at the top of his lungs.

'Dis fight iz over! Gork an' Mork got bigger work fer us dan kickin' each uvvers' teef in! Dis is it ladz, it's time fer da Waaagh!'

'Waaagh! Snagrack!'

A few Deathskulls yelled it first, then a whole lot more, then, seeing the way the wind blew, the Goffs joined in too.

'Waaagh! Snagrack!'

'Waaagh! Snagrack!'

Thragrot bellowed along with them, and as he did so he realised that nothing had ever felt so right in his brief and brutal life than this.

Things were about to get interesting, he thought.