

After Action Report: Save the King! / Kill the King! (StarGrunt II)

Report prepared by Glenn M. Goffin of Tactics-0

28 May 2006 at Kublacon

8 June 2006

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I. Summary

The King of Gram's shuttle ("Gram Alfa") crashed in the town of Wardshaven, on Gram. A Gram Army infantry platoon was ordered to find and secure the King. A Sacnoth Tharagavverug covert ops platoon, aided by local anti-royalists of the GFDM faction, attempted to find and kill the King, and get possession of his body. GFDM operatives killed the King, but his retainers got his body onto an army transport and off table. Tabulation of victory conditions showed that the fight was a draw. The game ran 7 turns and about 6.5 hours.

Referee and scenario writer: Glenn M. Goffin of Tactics-0

Gram players: Dean and Tony

Sacnoth player: Aron

II. Background

Gram, under King Albrecht VIII, led the Sword Worlds Confederation to join the Consulate of Zhodane in the Fifth Frontier War against the Third Imperium. The Imperium defeated the Zhodani and Sword Worlds forces in the areas nearest the Sword Worlds, and Imperial forces were on their way to begin an occupation of the Sword Worlds and extraction of reparations.

Sacnoth decided to take over the Confederation, recreate the Sacnoth Dominate, and sell out Gram and its closest allies to the Imperium. Some of Albrecht's barons lured him out of the capital to the Wardshaven area, where a local air defense battery controlled by a Sacnoth Tharagavverug team would destroy his shuttle. A loyal Gram Army platoon had been alerted to the plot, and destroyed the forces holding the air defense battery, but not before the Sacnoth forces shot down the King.

Wardshaven police secured the crash site, and some civilians, some of whom were GFDM operatives, moved to investigate it. Meanwhile, the Gram Army platoon and another Sacnoth team headed for the crash site to find the King and save or kill him, respectively.

III. Forces (see Figure 00b, Gram_briefing.pdf, Sacnoth_briefing.pdf)

Gram:

Gram Army: Platoon HQ, Support Squad, 3 rifle squads of 7 (Red, White, Blue Squads), 2 gCarriers (A, B)

Wardshaven PD: 2 squads of 4 (Beat, Detectives)

SWNS Fafnir: moving into position to provide ortillery; available turn 3

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Sacnoth:

Sacnoth Tharagavverug: Platoon HQ, Support Squad, Scout Squad, 2 rifle squads of 5 in battle dress (*i.e.*, light, slow, power armor) (Squads A and B)

Civilians: 4 squads of 2 (A, B, C, D). B and C were actually GFDM, and A and D were innocent civilians

SSS Queen of Elfland: merchant ship moving into position to provide laser support and ship's boat for extraction

IV. Opening situation

North is the long table edge to the left in Figure 01 and to the right in Figure 02. Figures 00a, 00c, and 00d give some other perspectives as setup was finalized.

The area of Wardshaven where the Gram Alfa crashed was dominated by the large Privo Building, a shoe factory. South of the Privo Building was a large lawn, and beyond that, some ancient stone monuments backed by light woods that formed a natural park. East of the lawn was the small Hangol Building. Farther east and north was a swamp surrounding an old sewer access and treatment facility. West of the Privo lawn was the mid-sized Lunch Buffet Building. To the southwest was a wooden storage shed. Low scrub and rock formations formed the western area.

Gram Alfa had come down between the ancient stone monuments and the woods. It was generating a lot of black smoke from the stern area, but no external flames. Figures 01, 02. The King and his cousin, Baron Tromsø, were hidden in the Privo Building. A booby trap was at the south or main door of the Privo Building. At one side of the forward area of the shuttle was a booby trap; on the other was a dummy. Gram Alfa's pilot and co-pilot were hiding in the Hangol Building. The King's retainers appeared on the Gram order of battle, but in fact were not present in the scenario (much to the Gram side's consternation late in the game).

The WPD set up on the east and west sides of the lawn. A pair of civilians was near each corner of the table. Gram put one gCarrier into Box 1 of the Inbound Chart, and all other forces into Box 3. Sacnoth Support Squad was deployed hidden in some scrub at the south side of the table. Remaining Sacnoth forces were in the Loiter Box of the Inbound Chart.

V. First stages: Looking for the King and Inconclusive Engagements

The civilians all moved toward the crash site (as required). GFDM B (still apparently innocent civilians) checked out the Lunch Buffet Building, finding nothing inside. WPD Beat moved to block them from getting past the building. Figure 03.

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GFDM C (still apparently innocent civilians) went to the Hangol Building. Figures 03, 05. They spotted the Gram Alfa flight crew and engaged in inconclusive direct fire combat. The flight crew eventually ran into the Privo Building.

Civilian D disarmed the booby trap in the door of the Privo Building, but did not venture inside, apparently uncurious about what the booby trap might be protecting. Figure 03.

Civilian A moved from the storage shed into the woods behind Gram Alfa.

Sacnoth Scout Squad entered from center of the west side. (That fixed the entry sides for any units not entering in high mode; Gram would enter from the east, Sacnoth from the west.) Scout Squad moved east into some scrub, and later continued eastward into a ruined building. Figure 04.

gCarrier B entered the area in high mode, attempting to land near the Lunch Buffet Building. The hidden Sacnoth missile battery got a lock and launched a missile, forcing the gcarrier to attempt to break the lock. It succeeded, but had to abort its landing and ended up hovering in the southwest corner, rather than landing as intended between the Lunch Buffet Building and Gram Alfa. Figure 07. The missile battery was now exposed.

WPD Detectives moved away from the Privo Building, toward the Sacnoth missile launcher. Figure 07. They likewise declined to check inside the Privo Building.

Civilian D moved up to and entered Gram Alfa, revealing the dummy and disarming the booby trap. They found no one inside, and immediately set about ripping out upholstery to make bags, and stuffing them with the shuttle's electronics, the King's booze, and whatever wasn't screwed in too tight to steal. Figures 06, 07. They would remain there, stripping Gram Alfa for some four turns, until a firefight right outside caused them to flee off the table, trailing bits of loot all the way to the south table edge. Figures 13, 16. Everyone concluded that Civilian D was a pair of Traveller PCs.

gCarrier B dropped out of its hover and landed in the southwest corner. Red Squad dismounted, detaching two men to act as driver and gunner. gCarrier B later used the gcarrier's small remote turret laser to engage, without much result, the Sacnoth Scouts and the Support Squad.

White Squad entered from the northern part of the east table edge. See Figure 07, which was probably taken just after the beginning of Turn 3.

VI. Mid-game: The King is Found and the Battle Joined

Gram Red Squad remained in the open beside gCarrier B. They and the Sacnoth Scout Squad engaged in direct fire combat, suppressing Red Squad and causing a few casualties.

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Red Squad kept the Scouts and B Squad occupied far from the main action for some time, although it took nearly 100% casualties over several turns. Figures 14, 15.

Sacnoth HQ Squad entered near the northwest corner and hunkered down behind a rock outcropping. Figure 07.

B Squad entered from a position more to the south and took cover in some scrub. B Squad would remain there for some time as a reserve engaged in desultory direct fire with Red Squad, before eventually engaging in a series of close assaults that would take it all the way to the east table edge.

Sacnoth A Squad, realizing that the King must be in the Privo Building, rushed forward from between B and HQ Squads, and entered the Privo Building by the west door.

Gram gCarrier A dropped Blue Squad on the roof of the Privo Building. Blue Squad ran down into the Privo Building, engaging and suppressing Sacnoth A Squad. Meanwhile, the gcarrier, still carrying HQ Squad, dropped to the lawn in front of the Privo Building. Figures 11, 12.

Sacnoth A Squad spotted the King, but was unable to reach him, being suppressed by Blue Squad. Figure 12.

Sacnoth HQ had line of sight to gCarrier A, and, getting through Gram's jamming attempts, called for the Queen of Elfland's lasers. The laser battery eventually disabled and suppressed the gcarrier and set fire to the corner and interior of the Privo Building. The fire on the outside went out by itself, but the interior fire spread along the east wall. Gram HQ bailed out the gcarrier. Figure 14.

gCarrier B went into high mode and moved to the northeast corner, south of the swamp and sewer, where no Sacnoth unit had line of sight on it, and where it could extract the King. Figure 13.

A side battle had developed over the remote missile launcher on the south side of the area. WPD Detectives moved toward it, but were engaged by GFDM C. The Sacnoth Support Squad, GFDM C, and Detectives had a series of close assault and direct fire combats in and around that patch of scrub. Detectives were able to destroy the missile launcher and kill two of the Sacnoth Support Squad, leaving the squad leader, who eventually picked up the tiny mortar. The GFDM team and Detectives engaged in close assaults that resulted in the deaths of all of the detectives. Figure 08.

The Detectives' destruction of the missile launcher cleared the way for gCarrier A to enter the area and drop troops on the roof of the Privo Building, and for gCarrier B to move to the northeast corner in high mode.

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WPD Beat moved into the Lunch Buffet Building. A Sacnoth unit, either B Squad of the Scouts, attacked with direct fire, wounding an officer. Civilian A fled south at about this time.

Meanwhile, GFDM B ran around the corner of the Lunch Buffet Building and into the fire in the front of the Privo Building. They fired on the King, taking him down. The fire spread to engulf the area where the King had fallen, killing him.

Sacnoth B Squad close assaulted WPD Beat, who ran away, out onto the lawn. Eventually, the Sacnoth squad caught up and was able to close assault, easily defeating the police. Two of the police were merely stunned, but rather than close assault them again, the Sacnoth squad moved toward the Privo Building. The policemen got up and fired on GFDM B, dropping them both. They were left to die in the flames.

A furious battle raged in the Privo Building even after the King's death. Gram White Squad rushed into the Privo Building by the north door. The Gram squads desperately engaged in as much direct fire as possible to keep the Sacnoth power armor suppressed and unable to close assault. Figures 9, 12, 13, 17.

VII. Endgame: The Race East

The surviving Gram Alfa crewperson and Baron Tromsø organized into a squad and grabbed the King's and the Gram Alfa pilot's bodies.

Sacnoth Scouts moved up to the Gram Alfa and observed for the Support Squad, which dropped a mortar round into the main entrance of the Privo Building. See Figures 18, 19.

WPD Beat ran to engage the mortar. GFDM C close assaulted and killed all three of the police. Figure 20 shows WPD Beat on its way to the mortar. GFDM C was responsible for the deaths of 6 out of 8 police officers who fell that day, thus settling old scores from years of low-level conflict. One police officer survived, as a stabilized casualty in the Lunch Buffet Building. The other was killed by B Squad just outside the Lunch Buffet Building.

GFDM C then declared a close assault on Gram HQ, which had bailed out of its gCarrier and was in position to fire on the Sacnoth mortar or on B Squad. For the first time, GFDM C failed its close assault morale check. While GFDM C would gladly take on the police at 1 to 2 odds, the regular army was a different story.

Gram forces kept the two Sacnoth rifle squads suppressed and unable to close assault while the Baron and the copilot rushed out of the Privo Building through the flames, carrying the bodies of the King and the wounded pilot. Figure 19.

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Sacnoth B Squad eventually cleared its suppressions and tried to close assault, but Baron Tromsø's squad withdrew. B Squad tried again, and Baron Tromsø withdrew again around the corner of the Privo Building.

Support Squad dropped a mortar round directly on the Baron and co-pilot – with no effect. The King's fat but armored belly must have absorbed the force of the explosion.

Figure 20. Note that the three survivors of Blue Squad have exited the Privo Building and moved to the Hangol Building. The two police are about to receive GFDM C's close assault.

B Squad kept charging the Baron, who kept withdrawing. Eventually, the Baron and copilot ran into gCarrier B with the bodies they were carrying. B Squad close assaulted the Baron, the copilot, and the two men of Red Squad.

The Baron and copilot were killed in the close assault, but the Red Squad soldiers stood back up. Figure 21.

B Squad was still outside the gcarrier, so the Red Squad detachment lifted off and exited the table in high mode, taking the King's body with them.

VIII. Result: A Draw

The sides had the following victory points. See Victory Points Table in Gram.doc or Sacnoth.doc.

The King is dead: 8 points for Sacnoth.

The dead King is with a friendly unit and off the table: 5 points for Gram.

The difference was 3 points. Any difference of less than 4 was a draw.

IX. A Little Analysis

Gram could have crammed all but one soldier into its two vehicles and gotten them on table in high mode on Turn 1 or in ground-skimming mode in Turn 2. Sacnoth, knowing that Gram would not have the bulk of its troops on the table until Turn 3, could have brought its entire force onto the table immediately. That might have given Sacnoth a decisive advantage.

It was odd that neither side looked into the biggest building immediately.

Sacnoth had fewer troops than Gram, but they were better armed and equipped (except for EW, where Gram had the advantage). Gram, unable to engage Sacnoth in close assault, effectively slowed them down with suppressive fire.

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Gram never called for ortillery (which would have cost it victory points). The three-turn delay for ortillery meant that it would not reach the table until Turn 6, probably making it less than useful.

The battle was closely fought right to the last activation. It could have gone either way.