

Colonel General Hans Grüber

Member of the Brotherhood of the Radiance
Vice Commander of 1st Glantrian Army Division

AC 1014

By Michael Berry

“That’s a very nice dress Princess. It would be a shame to ruin it.”

I. Appearance

Hans is a striking figure standing 6’2” tall and with closely cropped sandy blond hair that is starting to go white at the temples. Like many Aalbanese he has some of the unique Alphantia physical traits. He has blue almond shaped eyes and has a round nose typical of many Alphantians yet has the firm square jaw and height so typical of Hattians.

While not overly muscled, his well-tailored uniforms leave no doubt of his strong lean physique. Grüber as he has worn one all his adult life, is always in uniform even on the rare occasion duty requires that he attend a high society function. When he does attend functions or events, he wears his formal dress uniform otherwise he is always seen wearing his standard grey battle uniform which is as well tailored as his black dress uniform. Not surprising as a member of the Grand Army for all his adult life Hans has never worn jewelry outside of a few rings and a single necklace with a pendent. However, it is widely suspected they are magical items as they are not particularly ornate and only the pendent has a jewel, a few ruby, as its centerpiece.

II. Personality & Quirks

As befitting his high rank in the Glantrian Army and having served throughout the ranks since he was an adult Grüber is very straightforward and to the point and wastes few words. He is aware he is one of the, if not THE preeminent commanding Generals in the Glantrian Army and he never fails to live up to the expectations others have of him as a tough battle hardened soldier. It is only with his wife and children that Hans will show any kind of real emotion but even with friends or long time comrades he maintains his air of calm unflappability as well as the aloofness his soldiers expect from their commander even in heat of battle. While strict and a firm disciplinarian he feels a great deal of affection for his soldiers, but he will not allow himself to show it as he understands well that his orders will lead to some of them dying. Hans is a strong believer in honor and duty and will lay his life down if necessary for his country and for his soldiers if the situation demanded him to join the front lines and fight, not just command.

After nearly 40 years in uniform Hans has served or worked with fellow soldiers from all over Glantri and has no particular bias or dislike against any particular races in Glantri even having a deep respect for the Ethengarian population of Glantri and recognizing the tough spot they are in with the suspicions and distrust they are likely to never get past no matter how many years go by or how many times they prove themselves as loyal on the battlefield.

III. History & Background

Hans was born in AC 962 as the first child of Jürgen and Friede Grüber in the small farming village of Halfweg in the eastern half of the Principality of Aalban. His parents owned a small farm where they grew staple crops like cabbage and potatoes. Though far from prosperous the farm produced excellent yields and they were able to sell their excess crop to local merchants who then would take the crop to market in the larger towns of Aalban. As his parents worked the fields from before sunrise to sunset Hans spent much of his early childhood in the care of his maternal grandfather Sebulon, who regaled young Hans with his tales of the years he spent in the Glantrian Army, even serving for a year as an aide to Prince Johann von Drachenfels. As both of Hans's parents were mundaners it was a great surprise to them when their son went to the village Temple of Rad at age 5 for his mandatory magical testing and they were informed that Hans tested very highly for latent magical ability. Even if they could have afforded the cost of tuition, and they could not, Hans's parents both were loathe to the idea of sending their little 5 year old son off to some school. In addition, they had counted on their children helping with the farm so Hans like the vast majority of non-privileged children in Glantri got a basic (free) education at the local Temple of Rad during the winter months and worked the rest of the year assisting his parents and doing chores on the family farm during the productive spring, summer and fall months.

While Hans's parents tried to save money for the education of their son, a crop blight AC 971 wiped out much of their harvest and their savings along with it. However, when Hans was 13 years old his village got a new resident when a wizard picked Halfweg as a place to settle down after years of being on the road adventuring. The wizard, being well travelled, volunteered during the winter to teach a class in geography during the winter classes at the Temple of Rad for the children of the village. He quickly learned from the Local Shepherd of Rad that one of his students had substantial magical talent who had not had any magical training. After being impressed with Hans' intelligence and liking his quiet and serious personality, when the spring came the wizard decided to make Hans's parents an offer. He said that if they would allow Hans to come into the village and stay with him and allow him to further his education and begin to teach him magic, he would provide help, 3 bodies, to help with the Grüber's work around the farm. After several days of indecision, they were swayed by both the Head Shepherd of the Temple and the mayor of Halfweg who spoke highly of the character of the wizard. Though hesitant to let their oldest son leave, they eventually realized this was a big chance for Hans to move up the ladder and agreed and sent off Hans one Thaumont morning to live with the wizard. The next day the wizard fulfilled his promise to the Grüber's, and 3 bodies arrived to help with the manual labor around the farm, 3 literal bodies, 3 skeletons dressed in tunics, trousers with big floppy hats who worked without need of rest or feeding and at night simply laid prone in the fields until the next day when commanded to begin work again. The Grüber's were aghast at first but soon came to see the benefits of the deal didn't just extend to their son.

As promised the wizard took young Hans under his wing and started a more rigorous academic education, advancing beyond basic math and introducing him to biology and alchemy as well as starting him into the very basics of magic use. Hans took to his lessons and mastered all the concepts he was being taught and when he turned 15, a year short of adulthood in Glantri, he began in earnest his training to become a magic user. His test results by the Shepherds proved to be accurate and Hans did possess a strong affinity and talent for magic. He mastered the complex and difficult lessons of his master and after nearly a year of intensive training he learned to cast his first spell, Detect Magic. Now 16 years old and legally an adult in Glantri, Hans was faced with the decision of what to do; to continue to serve as an apprentice to the wizard, return to the family farm, or to seek his own life. His indecision was quickly resolved when not long after his birthday a recruiter arrived in the village seeking those who

wished to live a life of excitement, to get out of their home villages see the world of Glantri and join the Grand Army of Glantri and serve under the new Prince of Aalban Prince Morgaithe. Remembering his grandfather's tales of battle and glory young Hans decided to enlist, much to the anger of his parents and disappointment of his master but Hans would not be dissuaded so he signed his papers enlisting into Morgaithe's Division in AC 978 and told to report to the divisional headquarters in Leenz by the end of the month.

Once Hans arrived in Leenz at the headquarters of the division he met with the staff officer in charge of personnel looked over the scrollwork the recruiter had sent with Hans. Not only was his status of Arcaner, and youthful age was noted, but included were two glowing letters of reference. One from the Lead Shepherd of the Temple of Rad in Halfweg, the future Supreme Shepherd of Rad herself Ekaterina Andreyevna Zhigulenko, and the other from his master. Both noted his superior intelligence, ability to quickly grasp difficult lessons as well as his talent with magic. Hans was given two options; he could enlist for 2 year term and with his excellent educational background serve as a scribe for the division headquarters here in Leenz OR he could enlist for 7 year term and would be sent to the Fuhrburg Military Academy for the two year basic mage cavalry training program. If he graduated, he would be assigned to the magical banner of Prince Morgaithe's division which was currently based at Fortress d'Ylourgne in western Glantri. Hans immediately and without second thought signed up for the 7 year enlistment term and was given orders to report to Fuhrburg Military Academy where he would be enrolled in the next starting basic training class. He only had to wait a month, which he spent in the kitchens peeling potatoes before the next class started. He was enrolled with 15 other young first level magic users.

The two year basic training program for new Arcaners was meant to weed out as much as educate and in addition to academic studies, military education, and magical studies the 'boots' as they were called were immersed in the culture of discipline and working as a unit not as individuals. Within 6 months five of his classmates were dismissed for lacking the discipline or collective team mindset that Fuhrburg demanded and what made the Aalbanese division the best division in the Grand Army of Glantri. His days were broken into 2 halves. The mornings were spent learning advanced academics such as geometry, alchemy, and magical engineering. A strong academic grounding in basic military tactics, as well as military history was also taught to the boots. The 2nd half of the students days was spent with magical instructors who not only taught them magic but also the military applications of the tactical use of magic spells in combat. Hans made several good friends in his class and excelled in both his academic and magical studies and when his class graduated boot camp only 6 of the original 15 who started the class graduated with Hans. Hans graduated at the top of his class which earned a very excited Hans a month's home leave before joining the 1st Banner at Fortress d'Ylourgne and beginning his 5 year enlistment term.

Upon arriving at Fortress d'Ylourgne in AC 980 Hans, now 18 years old and a 3rd level spellcaster, was assigned to the 4th Platoon of the 1st Banner (IV/I). At that time the 1st and 2nd Banners of Morgaithe's Division were based there and though Prince Morgaithe was officially the Viceroy of Fortress d'Ylourgne, he was usually in Glantri City attending his duties at the Council of Princes so his son and heir, the 35 year old Jaggar von Drachenfels held the actual day to day command here at d'Ylourgne. Hans had his first meeting with Jaggar upon arriving as Jaggar made it a point to welcome all new recruits to Banners based at the Fortress. Hans immediately showed himself as quality recruit during drills and was quickly noted one to watch by his Platoon Sergeant as well as by his Banner Captain. Part of Hans's excitement was due to where he was being assigned. Due to the still very frontier nature of western Glantri and the large numbers of humanoids known to live in the mountains of western Glantri there was probably no

more dangerous posting in Glantri than being assigned to Fortress d'Ylourgne. However, it did not take long for the youthful notions of battlefield glory and honor to crash head on into reality when on only his 3rd day at d'Ylourgne when the 2nd Platoon of the 1st Banner along with the supporting 4th Platoon of the 2nd Banner returned from a scheduled 5 day patrol of the Black Mountains north of Nouvelle Averoigne. Strapped across the back of 3 horses were the bodies of bannermen who fell during an otherwise successful ambush of a large group of Orcs. One of the bodies was Hans's best friend from his Fuhrburg Academy class, Inge Bohme, who arrived the month before and was just on her first patrol as a Bannerman. The next several years passed quickly as Hans became known as one of the most reliable and capable bannerman in his squad and was promoted by his Banner Captain to squad leader in AC 982 after Grüber's Squad Leader was badly wounded on a patrol against the increasingly active Orcs. The next year the Orcs, consolidated into a large horde by the great chieftain K'Ungh and came out of the mountains and invaded the sparsely populated upper Loir River valley and threatened Noevelle Averoigne.

At the first reports of a massed Orc incursion into the heavily wooded valley Prince Morgaithe arrived at d'Ylourgne and took command of the fortress and the 1st and 2nd Banners and Princess Rebeque d'Ambreville of Noevelle Averoigne ordered militias through her principality to mobilize. The Warden of the Marches, Prince Alfonso de Belcadiz ordered Morgaithe and the mobilized Averoigne reserves to hold d'Ylourgne and the south bank of the Loire River until reinforcements from the divisions of Prince Jherok Virayana III and Prince Vanserie Vlaardoen could arrive from Glantri City. Prince Morgaithe ignored the order and decided to crush the humanoids himself confidently believing his two Banners could handle a mere raid by a horde of Orcs. Little did he know, due to the heavily forested valley, that the Prince was taking his 300 Bannermen against nearly 10,000 Orcs. Prince Morgaithe left a skeleton force behind at d'Ylourgne under command of his son Jaggar and took the two banners, including Hans's squad, north into the valley and met the Orcs northeast of the Viscounty of Malinbois. The resulting battle was a disaster as the small force of Prince Morgaithe was overwhelmed in the claustrophobic heavy forests that did not allow the Glantrians to ascertain the scope of the forces they were against nor allow their greater firepower and tactics to overcome the sheer weight of the numbers K'Ungh could throw at the Bannermen. The battle soon turned chaotic, and Hans and his Platoon were cut off from the main body of troops and only after a full day of brutal fighting were able to retreat to Malinbois. Hans showed exemplary leadership as he took command of cut off group after the Platoon Sergeant of the 2nd Banner leading them was killed. Once the two banners reassembled it was learned that Prince Morgaithe was killed in action when his isolated group composed of several platoons of III/I and I/II were overrun with only a few survivors making it back to the relative safety of Malinbois. Morgaithe's son Jaggar arrived in Malinbois and ordered the remainder of the troops to retreat to d'Ylourgne. Once reassembled Hans was promoted to Platoon Leader of III/I and the butchers bill was calculated. Out of the 300 Bannermen Prince Morgaithe led northward 2/3rds became casualties with 73 KIA, 108 WIA, and 24 MIA.

The humanoid invasion was later defeated by the reinforcements led by Prince Alfonso, driven back into the mountains with the Orc chieftain killed. However, a similar disaster unfolded in the Broken Lands several months after Prince Morgaithe's death, that demanded Prince Alfonso's attention and the reserve forces of Glantri when Prince Celedrin's Elven division was ambushed, and Prince Celedrin also was killed. The planned campaign to eradicate the Orcs from the mountains was cancelled and Prince Jaggar's division spent the remainder of the year replacing and training replacements its losses. The push to clean out the Black Mountains of the humanoids gained renewed emphasis with the arrival of a large wave of Averoignians through the portal that returned Etienne d'Ambreville and his family in AC 983. As many of the new Averoignian settlers moved into the previously sparsely settled forests of the

upper Loir River valley discussions at the Council of Princes revolved around a campaign to eliminate a future threat to the Averoignian lands and stoke further settlement of western Glantri. The following year after Jaggar's Division was fully manned and trained and assisted by a reserve division of volunteers from Aalban sworn to avenge their fallen Prince the force of some 3000 Aalbanese troops launched a campaign intended to clear every last Orc and humanoid from the southern Black Mountains. What followed was three years of pure butchery more than a military campaign as Hans's unit and many others followed explicit order to kill any humanoid they came across. A year into the campaign found Hans at the end of his original five year term of enlistment. He was summoned to a meeting with his Banner Captain and Prince Jaggar and was told that the two of them saw great potential in Grüber and he was informed that his Banner Captain planned to retire at the end of the campaign, and both agreed that Grüber was the best candidate of the four Platoon Sergeants to be promoted if he decided to reenlist. Hans did reenlist for another 5 year term and in AC 984 when Prince Jaggar declared the campaign over and humanoids eradicated in the Black Mountains, his Banner Captain retired, and Hans was promoted to Banner Captain and became an officer in the Grand Army of Glantri.

As Fortress d'Ylourgne had become far quieter with little action Grüber received orders from Prince Jaggar to report to Glantri City for detached duty and attend the Great School of Magic where, at the von Drachenfels's families expense, he would receive advanced magical and academic training. Grüber earned excellent marks in his classes and mastered his advanced magical studies and graduated as a wizard in AC 990. During his years at the Great School, Hans got to know Prince Jaggar well and spent many a evening at the von Drachenfels manor in the city with the Prince. While Hans had no interest in dragons and politely declined an invitation to join a secret craft of dracologists the two bonded over their love of military history and discussed the fine points of the campaign against the humanoids and the works of the famed Hattian military theorist Joachim Kirschner. Soon after Grüber graduated Prince Alphonso of Belcadiz died and Prince Jaggar became the new Warden of the Marches, largely on the strength of his efficient and well executed campaign against the western humanoids. With it came a change of postings as Prince Jaggar also became the new Viceroy of Nordling, with Prince Innocenti di Malapietra taking over as Viceroy of d'Ylourgne. Hans and his 1st Banner were transferred to Fort Nordling, much closer to their homes in Aalban. The posting was relatively quiet, and Hans had plenty of time to invest into his studies and he continued to rise quickly in power as a wizard. Hans continued to serve as the Banner Captain of the 1st Banner until AC 996 when Prince Jaggar promoted Hans from Banner Captain to the rank of Colonel to serve as deputy divisional commander, responsible for leading the division, and in command of Fort Nordling, when Prince Jaggar was not directly in command often while in Glantri City. The same year Grüber married the daughter of the commanding general of the Fuhrburg Military Academy, Ursula Wechsler, and within a year they welcomed their first child, a daughter into the world.

Hans continued as deputy commander for Jaggar's division until AC 1005 when Alpathia declared war upon Glantri. When Glantri expanded its Grand Army to 60 divisions after war was declared, it established 8 field armies and Grüber was selected by Prince Jaggar, the Warden of the Marches and Supreme Commander of Grand Army of Glantri, to command the 6th Army which was composed of the 1st (formerly Jaggar's Division) and the newly formed 14th, 20th, 29th, 34th, 39th, 46th, and 55th Reserve Divisions. The 6th Army was assigned to Army Group North under overall command of Prince Morphail and based at Fort Nordling as a reserve force for the 1st and 2nd Armies which were based at Fort Tchernovodsk. Training of Grüber's new divisions continued through the summer and fall of 1005 when events to the south gave Grüber's army their first taste of combat experience.

After conquering the Sind earlier in the year, the Master of Hule turned loose his armies on Darokin in the winter of 1005 and crushed Darokinian forces in the west and soon laid siege to Darokin City. Diplomatic envoys dispatched from Darokin to Glantri asking for assistance provided the Glantrian High Command an opportunity to give some of the newly raised forces some valuable combat training. The Glantrian 6th Army was thought to be the obvious choice to be sent to Darokin and rapidly moved south through the Southern Hills, bypassing the humanoid infested Broken Lands, into Darokin where it was grouped with Elven forces from Alfheim. In the spring of AC 1006 the allies of Darokin launched a counterattack against the forces of the Master and broke the Hulean siege of the battle of Darokin City. The 6th Army and Grüber received great accolades for their part in the battle and were the toast of all Darokin. The 6th Army helped push back the forces of the Master out of Darokin in bitter fighting and with the Darokinian 3rd Army helped retake the city of Akesoli. By the summer of 1006 the 6th Army and its commander returned to Glantri and back to Fort Nordling covered in glory. Hans was promoted after returning from Darokin and was assigned to the Citadel in Glantri City as an aide to Prince Jaggar.

Soon after returning to Glantri Hans started receiving strange visions seemingly from Rad himself speaking to the great mortal danger Glantri faced and gave him clues that allowed him to discover the Radiance. Rad explained to Hans that the Radiance was normally restricted to nobles with conditions attached to its use based on their noble rank, the threat however to Glantri was so dire that Rad was suspending that condition for selected wizards and Grüber was one of the first Rad had chosen. He placed several conditions on Hans and his use of the Radiance; first he was to keep the fact he was not a noble and free to use the Radiance anywhere in Glantri a secret, secondly he was never to share the secret or powers he was chosen by Rad to learn and use and finally, until he was further instructed all of his Radiance related activities were to be dedicated to discovering how to use the Radiance to best defend Glantri. Several months later when Grüber first appeared before the Brotherhood of the Radiance as a new member, he took the codename Snape and set himself to learning as much about the Radiance and its military applications as quickly as he could. Snape was later joined by other military minded new members, again specially recruited by Rad outside the nobility, who joined Snape in his research which by this time had centered on developing weapons using the Radiance that would combat a direct assault by Alphatia. This research culminated in the completion of the M.S.-Flak-Zwilling upon the top of the Warden's Tower on the Citadel in early AC 1009. This impressive weapon was a twin barreled Meteor Swam but was constructed with a large crystal that when infused with the Radiance gave the weapon a greatly enhanced range of nearly a quarter of a mile. The weapon was considered a center piece of the defenses of Glantri City against aerial attacks from the Air Wizards of Alphatia.

The weapon played a prominent part of the defense of the city when it was attacked by hundreds of Alphatian wizards who appeared over the city later in AC 1009 in retaliation to the destruction of the Alphatian capital of Sundsvall. Coordination being impossible as was with wizards teleporting to Glantri City from all over Alphatia the wizards first appeared high over the city and did not attack immediately but waiting for all their number to arrive. Grüber was on duty at the Citadel and immediately rushed to the roof and activated the M.S.-Flak-Zwilling and ordered the weapon into action and targeted the wizards over the city, who believed they were well out of range of any spells or missile weapons. Under Grüber's command the weapon targeted assembled groups of Alphatian wizards and decimated the surprised wizards and dispersing them to avoid the devastating long ranged weapon. The attack soon became a disorganized assault upon the city that rapidly evolved to duels between Alphatian and Glantrian wizards by the time the attack ended Grüber's weapon killed over 20 wizards.

With the end of the war and Glantri's victory over Alphatia the Council of Princes decided to reorganize and reform the Army of Glantri. Grüber was selected to be the Vice Commander of his former division,

once called Jaggar's division but now renamed the Glantrian 1st Mobile Assault Division (Heavy). Prince Innocenti became his immediate commander as Prince Jaggar assumed the new permanent Council Charge of Warden of the Marches. Prince Innocenti left day to day command of the division to Grüber who made use of the free hand given him, and encouraged by Prince Jaggar, Hans completed the transformation of the division from the previous generic organization of a single mage banner and 3 warrior banner to a more flexible combined force division.

However, when Prince Innocenti was killed at the beginning of AC 1014 the command of Grüber's division passed the Princess of Blackhill Dolores Hillsbury-Aendyr. Dolores was a very different commander than Innocenti and inserted herself often into the day to day activities of the division such as discipline and training. Though Hans had grown accustomed to having command he was willing to let the Princess assert the authority she had but he came to disagree with the methods of the Princess and two rapidly grew to dislike each other. Hans knew enough than to try to undercut or try to have the powerful Princess removed, realizing he was stuck with her he attempted to seek a transfer but was convinced by Prince Jaggar to not transfer. Attempts by Princess Dolores to use her influence over Jaggar have General Grüber removed were rebuffed as even Dolores's particular charms and talents were not even enough to sway Jaggar against his friend and trusted general. The two have settled into a mutual hatred bound by the reality that each are stuck with each other.

IV. Web of Intrigue

With the notable exception of Princess Dolores, Grüber maintains excellent relations with all his commanders in the Glantrian High Command and is highly respected by the Council of Princes and nobility. Hans is an active member of the Brotherhood of the Radiance and was notable, as Brother Snape, for breaking the news to the Brotherhood that Rad had drafted non nobles into the Brotherhood due to the extraneities of the Great War.

What Hans is not aware of is there are some elements of the Brotherhood that not only are NOT pleased that non-nobles but are quite savvy in puzzle solving and due to his fame and notoriety his otherwise secret identity has been guessed by the very dangerous Angus McGregor grandson of the Prince of Klantyre. Angus's focus right now is defeating and replacing his grandfather and becoming the next Prince of Klantyre but if he is successful Grüber is likely to become the unwanted and very dangerous focus of Angus McGregor.

Hans best friend continues to be his wife Ursula who followed him to Glantri City and run their large home close to the North Fort in the outer part of Glantri City. Hans and Ursula have 3 children but unfortunately none of them were born with the ability to use magic but all three followed their father into the Grand Army. His oldest daughter is an officer and serves on Hans's staff while his 2 sons serve in the 1st Banner of his division.

V. Statistics & Style of Magic

Statistics: 28th Level Magic User, Member of the Brotherhood of the Radiance
Str 12, Int 17, Wis 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Cha 18; AL - Lawful

Languages: Hattian, Alphatian, Thyatian (common), Flaemish, Elf

Weapon Proficiencies: Staff (master), dagger (skilled), wrestling (skilled)

Skills: Alternative Magics (I), Magical Engineering (I+1), Alchemy (I), Military Tactics (I+2), Military History (I), Leadership (Cha), Artillery (I), Danger Sense (W), Griffon Riding (D)

Hans has extensive combat experience, both as a commander and a combatant and has multiple potent magic items giving him defensive bonuses and advantage in combat like quickness and regeneration. As a high ranking commander Grüber is well aware of his command responsibility and will only engage in combat in the most desperate of situations which due to his outstanding tactical abilities has not happened in many years. Hans knows all combat related spells, considered rare or better, below level 8 and knows most of the basic through uncommon combat spells of 8th and 9th level. He owns a Staff of Power that he crafted years ago but only carries it when at war and in the field.

"If Jaggar had half the talent as that general of his has ..."

(Princess Carnelia to her generals after Jaggar narrowly edged her for the position as Warden of the Marches)