

Grand Slam

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GRAND SLAM. The codename used by U.S. Army Sergeant James Barney. Since he was a child growing up in Wisconsin, Grand Slam loved to read comic books and was a fan of science fiction. Soft-spoken and calm, Grand Slam was fascinated with science and technology and studied to become an electronics engineer. Once he joined the army he became interested in much of the advanced military technology that was being developed. He entered Special Weapons School (graduating top of his class) and Advanced Technology School. While taking part in artillery training exercises, Grand Slam was given the task of using a mortar to fire on targets a specific distance away, but the sergeant in charge forced he and his fellow trainees to do so without the use of calculators or electronics of any kind. This worried many of the other soldiers, but Grand Slam simply used a map, compass, and other more traditional tools, did the math on his own and managed to score a direct hit. Observing the exercise was Colonel Clayton "Hawk" Abernathy. Grand Slam expected to be commended by Hawk, but was instead scolded for not double-checking his calculations before firing. Despite that unexpected reaction, Hawk later assigned Grand Slam to the newly-forming G.I. Joe team.

Once on the team, Grand Slam became an expert with the "HAL" Heavy Artillery Laser and the "JUMP" jet pack. He played a major role in many of the Joes' most important early missions, including the rescue of Dr. Adele Burkhart from Cobra. Months later, after a battle in Washington, DC, Cobra agent Major Bludd was on the run from the Joes and being pursued by Grand Slam and Stalker on the RAM motorcycle. Bludd hijacked a bus full of civilians to make his escape. To stop him, Grand Slam told Stalker to take control of the RAM as Grand Slam climbed onto the moving bus. He swung down from the bus's roof, kicking through the glass window and knocked Bludd to the ground. After the ensuing fight, Grand Slam walked away without a scratch while Major Bludd ended up in the hospital.

After the re-dedication of G.I. Joe headquarters, aka "The Pit", Grand Slam and many of the other original Joes were taken off active duty. Even so, Grand Slam continued to occasionally participate in missions with the team, and he began to be involved in research and development for the Joe team's high-tech weapons and vehicles. After one such weapons testing missions in the desert, the group of Joes joined a convoy being led by Hawk and were attacked by Cobra agents. Later, the Joe team was on the losing side of the Cobra Island civil war. A group of corrupt generals in the Pentagon denied having any knowledge of the debacle and announced the Joes had gone rogue. When many members of the team were unrightfully arrested, several other Joes including Grand Slam went underground. He and the other Joes who had escaped arrest organized a mission to rescue Hawk and General Hollingsworth when they were arrested for acting without orders and entering the civil war. During the rescue, Hawk and Hollingsworth were cleared of all charges and the corrupt generals responsible were exposed. Later, Grand Slam was assigned to training and choosing potential members of the Joe team. On a training mission with three new Joes -- Budo, Repeater and Lightfoot -- Grand Slam was seriously wounded. Fortunately, the new Joes completed the mission and Grand Slam recovered soon afterward. Grand Slam's subsequent missions for the team mostly included training and research & development, but he stayed with G.I. Joe until it was disbanded in 1994.

Grand Slam was later called back to join the reinstated Joe team in its battle against the forces of a revived Serpenter on Cobra Island and remained with the team in the wake of that battle. He was one of the Joes assigned to Blackwater Prison to guard prisoners Scrap-Iron and Major Bludd when the mercenary known as Wraith staged a jailbreak and freed the Cobra agents. Some time later, during a battle against Cobra, Hawk was shot in the back by Cobra Commander and paralyzed. In Hawk's absence, the Jugglers began to take control of the team to reign in it, if not disband it altogether. Eventually, the team's roster was cut down to only a dozen Joes including Grand Slam. That small team defended the new Pit against Cobra's attack, but Grand Slam and most of those Joes were quickly reassigned to other units. After the remaining Joes stopped a plot by Cobra to unleash the weapon known as the Tempest, and defeated a new threat, the Red Shadows, the military again disbanded the team. One year later, the Joe team was reformed with a smaller roster of active members. Grand Slam, like most former Joes, is a reserve member of the new team. He fought in Kazakhstan during the conflict known as World War III.

(GI 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 11, 17, 19, 59, 82, 130; GIv2 24, 26, 32, 36, 37, 39; GI:D 1-3; AE 32; Figures: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)