



Biographical note on His Royal Highness Grand Duke Jean of Luxembourg

His Royal Highness Grand Duke Jean of Luxembourg, son of Grand Duchess Charlotte of Luxembourg and Prince Félix of Bourbon-Parma, was born at Berg Castle on 5 January 1921.

On 5 January 1939, the crown prince came of age and from then on, as heir presumptive to the crown of the Grand Duchy, he assumed the title of Hereditary Grand Duke of Luxembourg.

He became Grand Duke of Luxembourg on 12 November 1964. After 36 years of reign, he abdicated in favour of his eldest son, Hereditary Grand Duke Henri, on 7 October 2000.

Grand Duke Jean passed away on 23 April 2019.

Early life and education

Grand Duke Jean pursued his primary and secondary education in Luxembourg before completing his studies at Ampleforth College (Yorkshire) in the United Kingdom.

Upon the invasion of German troops on 10 May 1940, he left Luxembourg with the grand-ducal family, which sought exile first in France and Portugal, then in the United States of America, Canada and the United Kingdom. In Quebec, Grand Duke Jean attended law and political science classes at Laval University.

His Royal Highness was conferred an honorary doctorate by the University of Strasbourg (22 November 1957), Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, (6 May 1979) and Laval University in Quebec (29 May 2007).

Military career

On 29 November 1942, Grand Duke Jean joined the British Army as a volunteer in the regiment of the Irish Guards. He underwent military training at the Royal Military College Sandhurst, where he was appointed second lieutenant of the Irish Guards on 28 July 1943 and promoted to the rank of lieutenant on 3 March 1944.

On 21 August 1984, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II appointed His Royal Highness the Grand Duke colonel of the regiment of the Irish Guards and on 17 March 1995 she made him an honorary general of the British Army.

On 11 June 1944, Grand Duke Jean landed near Bayeux. He served on the staff of the 32nd brigade of the Guards Armoured Division in Normandy. He took part in the Battle for Caen and entered Brussels on 3 September. On 10 September 1944, with the first Allied troops that liberated the country, Grand Duke Jean crossed the Luxembourg border alongside his father, Prince Félix. He rejoined his unit on 13 September and was involved in the operations around Arnhem as well as the fighting of the Battle of the Bulge. In late January 1945, he took part in the capture of the Reichswald northwest of Wesel. He continued the campaign alongside the Allied forces in Germany until the end of hostilities.



Lieutenant representative since 28 April 1961, he succeeded his mother, Grand Duchess Charlotte, as Grand Duke of Luxembourg on 12 November 1964. He was appointed general of the Luxembourg army the same day.

The recipient of a great number of Luxembourg and foreign honorary distinctions, Grand Duke Jean was also awarded the following military decorations:

- croix de Guerre with palm (Luxembourg);
- Silver Star Medal (United States);
- croix de Guerre (France);
- croix de Guerre 1940 with palm (Belgium);
- Oorlogsherinneringskruis (Netherlands);
- 1939-1945 Star (United Kingdom);
- France and Germany Star (United Kingdom);
- Defence Medal (United Kingdom);
- War Medal 1939-1945 (United Kingdom);
- croix de la Résistance (Luxembourg);
- Médaille militaire (Luxembourg).

Furthermore, he was a member of the Council of State from 1951 to 1961.

Honorary functions

Throughout his lifetime, Grand Duke Jean exercised the following duties and functions:

- honorary president of the Œuvre des pupilles de la nation (Orphans of the Nation Charity);
- chief scout of the Luxembourg Boy Scouts Association;
- honorary president of the Comité olympique et sportif luxembourgeois (Luxembourg Olympic and Sports Committee);
- member and, from 1998 onwards, honorary dean of the Comité international olympique (International Olympic Committee);
- honorary president of the Anciens Combattants (Military Veterans);
- honorary president of the Union des mouvements de Résistance luxembourgeois (Union of Luxembourg Resistance Movements).

Family

On 9 April 1953, the Hereditary Grand Duke married Her Royal Highness Princess Joséphine-Charlotte of Belgium, who died in January 2005.

To their union five children were born:

- Princess Marie-Astrid, born on 17 February 1954;
- Prince Henri, born on 16 April 1955 (the reigning Grand Duke);
- Prince Jean, born on 15 May 1957;
- Princess Margaretha, born on 15 May 1957;
- Prince Guillaume, born on 1 May 1963.

Interests

Grand Duke Jean had a strong affinity with nature and was particularly interested in environmental issues as well as the protection of flora and fauna. He enjoyed sports and engaged in fencing, skiing, water skiing, swimming, hunting and fishing. Other areas of interest included photography and music.