

BIOGRAPHY

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS GRAND DUKE JEAN OF LUXEMBOURG

Jean, Grand Duke of Luxembourg, Prince of Nassau, descendant on his mother's side, Grand Duchess Charlotte, of Adolphe of Nassau, Emperor of the West, and on his father's side, Prince Félix of Luxembourg, Prince of Bourbon-Parma, of Louis IX and Louis XIV, Kings of France, born at Colmar-Berg on 5 January 1921.

War and years in exile

On 6 October 1942, Prince Félix and the Hereditary Grand Duke left Canada for Great Britain to join the British Army. On the advice of King George VI, Prince Jean joined the Irish Guards. His first few months of training led the Prince to Caterham and Pirbright, and he completed his education at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, based at the Mons barracks in Aldershot, having obtained the rank of second lieutenant (28 July 1943). On the same day, he addressed the people of Luxembourg via BBC radio.

In August 1943, the Prince regained the Guards' training battalion at Lingfield. During this time, he served as a guard at Buckingham Palace. He remembers well his mother and sisters' 'visit' while on duty, having to remain motionless the whole time. In February 1944, he joined the 3rd battalion of the Irish Guards at the Guards Armoured Division based at Malton, Yorkshire. This is where the battalion received training for the Normandy landings on D-Day. On 3 March 1944, Prince Jean was promoted to the rank of lieutenant. At the end of April of the same year, the battalion was redeployed to Eastbourne in the utmost secrecy.

On 11 June 1944, Prince Jean landed in Normandy as member of a reinforcement unit, arriving before the 3rd battalion which landed near to Arromanches on 23 June. Subsequently, he served on the military staff of the 32nd brigade of the Guards Armoured Division in Normandy, taking part in the Battle for Caen (Operation Goodwood). Having suffered major losses, the Guards Armoured Division was placed under the orders of the 30th Corps and received the order to advance to the Belgian border. On 25 August (the day of the Paris Liberation), they crossed the Seine near Vernon and were at the Somme by 29 August. Liberating Arras and Douai on the way, they reached Brussels on the evening of 3 September. The following day, the Division took part in the military ceremonies before the monument to the Unknown Soldier and at the Town Hall, continuing on to the East.

At Leopoldsborg on 7 September, Prince Jean received the order to join his father, Prince Félix with the American Fifth Armoured Division. On 10 September 1944, he returned to Luxembourg, crossing the border at Rodange, at the same place where the Grand Duchess had had to leave the country on 10 May 1940. After spending a few days in the now liberated Luxembourg, Prince Jean regained his unit, which had been involved in Operation Market Garden (Arnhem) since 17 September. During the Battle of the Bulge, the Guards Armoured Division was stationed between Tienen and Namur so as to block the German route towards Antwerp. On 11 February 1945, the 32nd brigade was involved in the Reichswald attacks (south of Nijmegen) on the Siegfried line.

Once the German resistance had been broken in the region, the Guards Armoured Division began moving towards Bremen and Hamburg. At the beginning of April 1945, Prince Jean received the order to return to Luxembourg, where the arrival of Grand Duchess Charlotte was expected. On 14 April 1945, he was in the country to greet his mother and an overjoyed population.

Now Captain, he was detached to the allied military mission in Luxembourg, following the surrender of Germany. Dispatched to Berlin, he became particularly concerned about the deported Luxembourg nationals and the question of their repatriation. He was promoted to Colonel of the Regiment of the Irish Guards on 21 August 1984 and on 17 March 1995 was made Honorary General of the British Army.

Marriage to Princess Joséphine-Charlotte of Belgium

On 9 April 1953, HRH Prince Jean married HRH Princess Joséphine-Charlotte of Belgium at Luxembourg Cathedral. The Hereditary Grand Duke and Hereditary Grand Duchess started a family at the Château de

Betzdorf and it was here that Princess Marie-Astrid, Prince Henri, Prince Jean, Princess Margaretha and Prince Guillaume were born.

Reign of Grand Duke Jean

On 26 April 1961, Grand Duchess Charlotte, making use of her constitutional right, made the Hereditary Grand Duke her Lieutenant Représentant.

On 12 November 1964, Grand Duchess Charlotte signed her act of abdication and Jean, the Hereditary Grand Duke, became the eighth Luxembourg sovereign since the founding of the Grand Duchy in 1815.

The reign of Grand Duke Jean is one of the most prosperous ever known by the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. Even though the events which marked his reign are considered somewhat less notable than those that took place during the reign of his mother, Grand Duchess Charlotte, they have still contributed to the blossoming of political, economic and social life in Luxembourg, as well as unprecedented stability for the country.

Most notably, Grand Duke Jean and Grand Duchess Joséphine-Charlotte affirmed the dynasty's fundamental contribution to the unity and stability of the country. On 4 March 1998, Grand Duke Jean made his son Henri Lieutenant Représentant, following the example of his mother, Grand Duchess Charlotte, who had done the same in 1961.

On 7 October 2000, Grand Duke Jean ended his reign, stepping down in favour of his son, Grand Duke Henri.