

## ROYAL SCOUTS -3-

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### BELGIUM AND LUXEMBURG



Koning Albert van België, Koningin Elizabeth en hunne beide zonen, de prinsen Leopold (troesopvolger) en Karel, samen met waarnemen tijdens de uitreiking van decoraties door Koning George V van Engeland aan militairen, die zich op het slagveld onderscheiden hebben.  
In het midden van de groep staan twee hoedsofficieren, behorende tot den staf van den Belgischen Koning.

Before World War One broke out in August 1914, the staff of the German Imperial Army had designed a plan aimed to defeat France by quickly occupying Paris. At the same time intending to take the French Channel Ports, preventing the Brits from landing their troops on the French shores. This plan (which was more successful during World War Two (1939-1945)) meant that the neutrality of Belgium had to be violated. Without second thoughts the Imperial German Armies were ordered to march into Luxemburg and Belgium. Though the small Belgian Army resisted, the Germans advanced rather quickly and occupied most of Belgium. That was until a lockkeeper, in charge of the locks of the River IJzer in the extreme south west of Belgium, opened the North Sea locks and flooded the IJzer valley. The German army got stuck in the mud and never got across the river. Meaning that a small part of Belgium was not occupied. In this region the remainders of the Belgium Army and its Royalty found refuge and stuck it out until in November 1918 the war ended with an Allied victory and the occupied part of Belgium was liberated.

The picture on the top left shows King Albert I (1875-[**1909-1934**]) who was also the Commander in Chief of the Belgium forces keeping the Germans at bay at the IJzer front, his wife Queen Elizabeth,(1878-1965) two high ranking army officers, Crown Prince Leopold in army uniform and Prince Karel/Charles in an undeniable Scout uniform. The photo on the right, found later, shows Crown Prince Leopold (1901-1983) Prince Karel/Charles (1903-1983) and their sister Princes Marie-Jose.



*Cub Scout Boudewijn*

King Albert I was killed during a rock climbing exercise in 1934 and as King Leopold III the Crown Prince took over. [**1934-1951**] -1983). He may never have been a Scout but he took a great interest in the movement. For his sons Boudewijn/Bauduin (1930 – 1993) and Albert (1934-today) a special Scout group was founded, as was a special Guide Company set up for this daughter the Princess Josephine-Charlotte. The official languages being Dutch, French and German and Belgium Scouting also being divided along religious lines, the men attracted to lead this group came from all the Belgium Scout Associations as did the Guiders. The boys and girls were collected from the nation's all sections and classes. The Scout meetings were held in a hut in the Royal Park belonging to the Palace of Leaken, to the north of Brussels.

On May 1940 during World War two (1939-1945) the Armies of Nazi-Germany once more violated Belgium's neutrality. Despite brave resistance the Belgium Army was no match to the motorized Germans and Belgium had to end the unequal struggle and had to surrender. Whereas the Netherlands, this time also attacked, got an SS administration, Belgium got a German army one, which was more lenient. Whereas the SS in the Netherlands banned, disbanded and persecuted all Scouting and Guiding activities from April 1941 onwards, the Belgium Scouts and Guides were more or less left alone. Yet during the course of the war, at the insistence of the Flemish and Walloon Nazis, collaborating with the Germans, certain limitations were imposed on the Scouts and Guides in early April 1943. The wearing of uniforms in public was no longer permitted. This having been done a high ranking German Staff officer hastened to visit King Leopold, who as a Prisoner of War, had been interned in his Royal Palace. The King was informed that this banning order did not involve the Royal Scout Group and Guide Company. The King did not agree and said that as this ban was put on all Scouts and Guides, it would also have to be applicable to his sons, daughter and their friends.

The problem was that in those days Prince Bauduin/Boudewijn had just left the Cub Scouts and joined the Troop. End 1943 he was ready to make the Scout Promise. He asked his father to permit them to wear uniform that day, but the King refused his permission. His son protested and in the end the King gave in and decreed that during the ceremony and during it alone, uniform could be worn again.

Having made the Scout promise Prince Bauduin/Boudewijn was allotted the Scouting name "De Trouwe Eland" (The Loyal Elk).



On June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1944 (D-Day) the Liberation of Western Europe began when the Allied Forces landed on the beaches of Normandy/France. A day later King Leopold III - a Prisoner of War - was removed from his Palace and taken to South Germany. His family joined him. When the war was over, as a result of the complicated King's issue, an immediate return to liberated Belgium was not possible. Leopold's brother, the very popular Prince Karel/Charles, who had gone "underground" and had managed to stay out of German hands, acted as a Regent. The problems were solved in 1951 when King Leopold abdicated and was succeeded by his son Boudewijn/Bauduin, 21 years old. His Scouting life was over but he remained interested and still visited many camps, rallies and meetings. When he mounted the throne the youth of the port of Ostend presented him with a seagoing yacht. He baptized it "DE ELAND" (THE ELK). This puzzled many but

those insiders who were familiar with his Scouting name.

King Boudewijn ruled 42 years and died -unexpectedly - in 1963 - during his holidays in Spain. When his funeral procession moved through Brussels hundreds of the Scouts and Guides lined the streets and near the Cathedral in an impressive, dignified and correct way said their goodbyes.



### LUXEMBURG.

Grand Duke Jan of Luxemburg (1921-[1964-2000]) had been a Scout all his life and was chosen to be the Chief Scout of the Federation of Luxemburg Scouting Associations.

In 1953 he married Princess Josephine-Charlotte (1927-2005) King Boudewijn/Bauduin's sister. She had been a Brownie, a Guide and a Leader in Belgium and after her marriage she was chosen to be the Chief Guide of Luxemburg.

← As a Belgium Girl Guide.

As the Luxemburg Chief Guide. →

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*In 1987 I began working up the notes, (taken since 1945) on Scouting and Guiding in Eastern and Central Europe where the Movements had been banned and persecuted by either the communist or the nazi regimes. I also went to London to do research in the Scout Association's excellent Archives and to the National Scout Archives in Leuven/Louvain in Belgium This led to the writing of the study: THE FORGOTTEN MOVEMENTS which, after the collapse of the communist regimes, the World Bureaux WOSM and WAGGGS issued to all the national International Commissioners as background information. As Historical Consultant to WOSM I got involved in the revival of Scouting in the former Communist countries. Combining that new developments with the details published in "THE FOGOTTEN MOVEMENTS", I later wrote the books THE UNDAUNTED parts 1 and 2. published by WOSM. During my many visits to the NSA in Leuven/Louvain in Belgium I had many fruitful conversations with my good friend - the late - René Walgraven. Once I happened to mention that I had seen a photo of the Belgium Royal Family, during World War One, showing one of the Princes in Scout Uniform. René said that I had to be mistaken as none of the King Albert I's sons had ever been in Scouting. I wondered where I had seen the photo. Many years later in our attic I recovered the bound 1914-1918 volumes of the Dutch illustrated weekly DE PRINS (THE PRINCE), to which my grandparents had subscribed. Browsing in a 1916 weekly I found the photo of the Royal Family on the beach as shown above. Regretfully my friend Rene had passed away but I showed it to his successor Peter Vandeloock who was also very surprised. But a little later he discovered another picture of the three Royal kids apparently taken the very same day. (Photo above)*