

Courtesy English Translation of article, which appeared in Luxemburger Wort, Luxembourg's largest newspaper on 19 September 2008:

Military Man, Visionary, and Pioneer

Forward Thinker of the Astra Satellite Concept 85 years old

US General Harold R. Johnson will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery

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From the United States, during the vacation time, and thus with a small delay, we have learned of the death of B/General (USAF Ret.) Harold R. Johnson who was a friend of Luxembourg's in many ways.

Surrounded by his family, Harold R. Johnson died a few days after his 85th birthday, Friday 29 August at the Johns Hopkins University Sidney Kimmel Clinic in Baltimore, Maryland of a recently diagnosed acute myeloid leukemia.

For more than half a century, the person born on 25 August 1923 in the small farm town of Graettinger Iowa, developed a rich activity (life) as career military man, private business man, and entrepreneur. His biography reads very much like the personification of the "American Dream".

As a 15-year old during the Depression, he helped his mother, who in the meantime had moved to Banning California, by working at a peach farm and with part-time jobs. Graduating high school in 1941, he worked as a technician at Consolidated Aircraft Company helping supply Great Britain with patrol planes and tactical bombers. General Johnson entered the U.S. Army Air Corps on June 4, 1942 as an Aviation Cadet and received flight training that included both qualification courses for pilot and combat bombardier.

From 1942 – 1944, with the 91st. Bombardment Group of the 8th Air Force,

he participated in no less than 29 combat missions against Nazi Germany. These missions included the famous “Battle of Bremen” which war annals credit with breaking the back of the Luftwaffe, along with attacks against Bremen, Wilhelmshaven, and Hamburg as well as the in January 1944 “Big Week” operations of 650 raids against Kiel and other targets in Germany. He was also part of many bombing raids on Berlin. General Johnson also took part in the Vietnam War and in the Korean War.

His military career, ending in 1970, brought him after war’s end to many places where he served in a variety of functions and received many high decorations, in particular for his work as a communications expert in setting the milestones for the United States space and satellite communications programs. In 1965 he was called to the White House by US President Lyndon B. Johnson to work as Assistant Director Telecommunications Management. Specific responsibilities included national policy in the communications satellite field, teleprocessing and telecommunications systems, radio spectrum policy formulation, and planning for the application of advanced technology in the field of national telecommunications in the time frame through 1980 as well as being one of the principal authors of the “Public Broadcasting Act” of 1967.

In his last two years from 1968 – 1970, before retiring from the United States Air Force, he served in Honolulu, Hawaii as Commanding General Air Force Communications in the Pacific Theater, on the General Staff of Admiral John McCain Sr., the father of the present Republican presidential candidate.

After his transition to the private sector, Johnny Johnson made a name for himself as a pioneer in the telecommunications industry and as a successful Hi-Tech Executive by such well-known companies as Fairchild Corporation, Western Union Telegraph Company and American Satellite. In 1999 he founded his own technologies strategy consulting company.

International Experience and Expertise in the service of Luxembourg:

The always dynamic, future-oriented, and visionary ex-military man also gained large fame and international recognition for his entrepreneurial and venture capital activities in the United States and in other countries (among them, Israel and France). He also recognized early on the important role that Silicon Valley would play in the high-tech and satellite fields and, later on, as Honorary Consul of Luxembourg for Silicon Valley, introduced then Crown Prince Henri to this world.

General Johnson became a friend of Luxembourg's almost 3 decades ago via his daughter, Candace (wife of long-time Luxembourg Ambassador Adrien Meisch). He played a deciding role in helping create the SES/Astra satellite television concept, which later became a unique success story for Luxembourg. In 1983 the telecommunications policy specialist wrote the first franchise document for Prime Minister Pierre Werner for Luxembourg's first-ever satellite system, SES Astra.

The now deceased visited Luxembourg one last time on 05 November 2007 to attend the ceremony in the Prime Minister's office when the Prime Minister bestowed the Commander of the Luxembourg Legion of Honor to his daughter, Candace Johnson for her own pioneering work and long-year promotion of SES Astra.

Harold R. Johnson, about who the renowned "Washington Post" newspaper dedicated a long article in these last days, will be buried on 10 November right before Veteran's Day with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery.

The Luxemburger Wort extends its deepest Christian sympathy to the survivors of the deceased pioneer, above all to his wife, Maria Baci, the four children, Mark, Steven, Candace, and Marcia, the 6 grand children and the 2 great-grandchildren.