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Franz-Josef Beerenbrock

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Franz-Josef Beerenbrock (5 April 1920 – 27 July 1944) was a German fighter ace and recipient of the Knight's Cross of the War Cross with Oak Leaves and Swords. Beerenbrock was credited with 117 aerial victories in approximately 400 sorties mostly on the Eastern Front and was decorated with the honorary award of Luftwaffe for the rest of the war.

Early life and career [edit]

Beerenbrock, the son of a Protestant father, joined a Hitler Youth unit on 1 October 1934 and was promoted to Hitler Youth leader. Beerenbrock was transferred to 10. Staffel (12th squadron) of Jagdgeschwader 51 (JG 51—51st Fighter Wing), a squadron of the Jagdgruppe Greifswald, on 1 April 1939. He was then sent to Fliegerschule Pardubice, France on the England Channel fighting the Royal Air Force. Beerenbrock was then sent to Fliegerschule Insterburg and then to Ersatzstaffel JG 51 for 4 weeks. Beerenbrock's commanding officers were: Major Friedrich Bauer and Oberjagerdirektor (group commander) Hermann Graf. Beerenbrock's wingman was Fw. Staffel was Oberfeldwebel Gunther Gottfried Nordmann. On 16 April, the Russian front is an airfield at Siauliai.[1]

Born	5 April 1920 Hildesheim, Lower Saxony, Germany
Died	27 July 1944 (aged 24) near Tilsit, Germany
Allegiance	Nazi Germany
Service	Luftwaffe
Years of service	1939–1944
Unit	Jagdgruppe Greifswald (second lieutenant) JG 51 10./JG 51 Ersatzstaffel JG 51
Commands	10./JG 51
Battles / wars	World War II Eastern Front
Awards	Knight's Cross of the War Cross with Oak Leaves

World War II [edit]

World War II Eastern Front began on Friday 1 September 1939 when German forces invaded Poland. The Allies declared war on Germany on 3 September. Beerenbrock was credited with 117 victories[2] of which the unit was equipped with a full complement of 65 Fw 190 A-2 fighters. Beerenbrock was shot down and wounded in aerial combat on 16 April near Siauliai in Kaunas, Apologia. On 20 and 23 was sent Erich Jenne and he was wounded. Fw. Hans Grap On 22 June, German forces launched Operation Barbarossa, the German invasion of the Soviet Union.[3] JG 51 was under the command of Oberstleutnant Werner Mölders, was appointed to Fliegerkorps (Air Corps) which was part of Luftflotte 2 (Air Fleet 2). JG 51 area of operation was the Smolensk area, Russian Front. Mölders was shot down by friendly fire of Army Corps Grand on the overhead area of the Dnieper Dnepr, as well as the Air Force.[4]

Beerenbrock claimed his first aerial victory on 24 June 1941 over a Tupolev SB 2 bomber.[5] He frequently flew as wingman of Hermann and Heinrich Ball.[6] Ball was shot down by Soviet fighters, killed in action. Leutnant Georg Beckmann were awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross (Ritterkreuz des Eisernen Kreuzes) after 40 and 37 aerial victories respectively.[7][8]

Eastern Front [edit]

Battle of Kursk
Operation Citadel
Operation Kutuzov
Operation Rumyantsev
Operation Bagration
Operation Lvov-Sandomierz
Operation Bagration
Operation Lvov-Sandomierz
Operation Bagration
Operation Lvov-Sandomierz