

= Egmont Prinz zur Lippe @-@ Weißenfeld =

Egmont Prinz zur Lippe @-@ Weißenfeld ( 14 July 1918 ? 12 March 1944 ) was a Luftwaffe night fighter flying ace of royal descent during World War II . A flying ace or fighter ace is a military aviator credited with shooting down five or more enemy aircraft during aerial combat . Prinz zur Lippe @-@ Weißenfeld was credited with 51 aerial victories , all of them claimed in nocturnal combat missions .

Prinz zur Lippe @-@ Weißenfeld was born on 14 July 1918 in Salzburg , Austria and joined the infantry of the Austrian Bundesheer in 1936 . He transferred to the emerging Luftwaffe , initially serving as a reconnaissance pilot in the Zerstörergeschwader 76 ( ZG 76 ) , before he transferred to the night fighter force . He claimed his first aerial victory on the night of 16 to 17 November 1940 . By the end of March , he had accumulated 21 aerial victories for which he was awarded the Knight 's Cross of the Iron Cross ( Ritterkreuz des Eisernen Kreuzes ) on 16 April 1942 . He received the Knight 's Cross of the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves ( Ritterkreuz des Eisernen Kreuzes mit Eichenlaub ) on 2 August 1943 , for 45 aerial victories . He was promoted to Major and tasked with leading Nachtjagdgeschwader 5 ( NJG 5 ) in January 1944 , before he and his crew were killed in a flight accident on 12 March 1944 .

= = Personal life = =

Egmont Prinz zur Lippe @-@ Weißenfeld was born on 14 July 1918 in Salzburg , Austria as a member of a cadet branch of the ruling House of Lippe . His father was Prince Alfred of Lippe @-@ Weißenfeld and his mother was born Countess Anna von Goëß . Egmont was the only son of four children . His sisters Carola , Sophie and Dora were all younger than Egmont . The family lived in an old castle in Upper Austria called Alt Wartenburg . At birth he had a remote chance of succeeding to the throne of the Principality of Lippe , a small state within the German Empire . However , only months after his birth , Germany became a republic and all the German royal houses were forced to abdicate .

Prinz zur Lippe @-@ Weißenfeld in his younger years was very enthusiastic about the mountains and wildlife . From his fourteenth year he participated in hunting . At the same time he was also very much interested in music and sports and discovered his love for flying at the Gaisberg near Salzburg . Here he attended the glider flying school of the Austrian Aëro Club . He attended a basic flying course with the second air regiment in Graz and Wiener Neustadt even before he joined the military service .

Prinz zur Lippe @-@ Weißenfeld never married or had children . In January 1941 he became acquainted with Hannelore Ide , nicknamed Idelein . She was a secretary for a Luftgau . The two shared a close relationship and spent as much time together as the war permitted , listening to music and sailing on the IJsselmeer until his death in 1944 .

= = Military service = =

Prinz zur Lippe @-@ Weißenfeld joined the Austrian Bundesheer in 1936 at the age of 18 , initially serving in the infantry . In the aftermaths of the 1938 Anschluss , the incorporation of Austria into Greater Germany by Nazi Germany , he transferred to the German Luftwaffe and was promoted to Leutnant in 1939 . He had earned his Luftwaffe Pilots Badge on 5 October 1938 and underwent further training at Fürstenfeldbruck , Schleißheim and Vienna @-@ Aspern . His Luftwaffe career started with the II . Gruppe ( 2nd group ) of the Zerstörergeschwader 76 ( ZG 76 ) before he was transferred to the night fighter wing Nachtjagdgeschwader 1 ( NJG 1 ) on 4 August 1940 . The unit was based at Gütersloh where he familiarised himself with the methods of the night fighters .

By the summer of 1940 , the first night fighters were transferred to Leeuwarden in the Netherlands . Prinz zur Lippe @-@ Weißenfeld was one of the pilots included in this small detachment . As early as 20 October 1940 , he had taken over command of an independent night fighter commando at Schiphol and later at Bergen . On his first encounter with the Royal Air Force ( RAF ) bomber , in the night of 16 to 17 November 1940 , he claimed a Vickers Wellington bomber from No. 115 Squadron

RAF shot down at 0205 hours . His second victory was claimed on the night of 15 January 1941 , when he shot down an Armstrong Whitworth Whitley N1521 of the Linton @-@ on @-@ Ouse based No. 58 Squadron RAF over the northern Netherlands , near the Dutch coast in the Zwanenwater at a nature reserve at Callantsoog . He was wounded in action on 13 March 1941 , while flying Bf 110 D @-@ 2 ( W.Nr. 3376 ? factory number ) of the 4 . / NJG1 with his radio operator Josef Renette when he made an emergency landing at Bergen after their aircraft was hit by the defence fire , wounding them both . Shortly after midnight on 10 April 1941 , Prinz zur Lippe @-@ Weißenfeld claimed a No. 12 Squadron RAF Wellington over the IJsselmeer , raising NJG 1 's victory score to 100 . This achievement was celebrated at the Amstel Hotel in Amsterdam with General Josef Kammhuber , Wolfgang Falck , Werner Streib , Helmut Lent and others attending . On 30 June 1941 while flying Bf 110 C @-@ 4 ( W.Nr. 3273 ) on a practice intercept mission over Noord Holland , he collided with Bf 110 C @-@ 7 ( W.Nr. 2075 ) piloted by Leutnant Rudolf Schoenert of the 4 . / NJG 1 and crashed near Bergen aan Zee . On 19 June 1941 he earned his first of four references in the daily Wehrmachtbericht , a daily radio report made by the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht ( High Command of the Armed Forces ) regarding the military situation on all fronts . By July 1941 his number of aerial victory claims stood at 10 . Promoted to Oberleutnant he became Staffelkapitän of the 5th Staffel of Nachtjagdgeschwader 2 ( NJG 2 ) on 15 November 1941 . By the end of 1941 he had claimed a total of 15 aerial victories .

He was awarded the German Cross in Gold ( Deutsches Kreuz in Gold ) on 25 January 1942 and the Knight 's Cross of the Iron Cross ( Ritterkreuz des Eisernen Kreuzes ) on 16 April 1942 after he had shot down 4 RAF bombers in the night of 26 to 27 March 1942 , his score standing at 21 aerial victories . This feat earned him his third reference in the Wehrmachtbericht on 27 March 1942 . In July 1942 he was one of the leading German night fighter aces with 37 aerial victories .

Promoted to Hauptmann , Prinz zur Lippe @-@ Weißenfeld was made Gruppenkommandeur of the I. Gruppe ( 1st group ) of Nachtjagdgeschwader 3 on 1 October 1942 , where he claimed 3 further aerial victories . He was transferred again , taking command of the III . Gruppe ( 3rd group ) of NJG 1 on 31 May 1943 . One month later he claimed his 45th aerial victory for which he was awarded the Knight 's Cross of the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves ( Ritterkreuz des Eisernen Kreuzes mit Eichenlaub ) on 2 August 1943 .

After a one @-@ month hospital stay , Prinz zur Lippe @-@ Weißenfeld was promoted to Major and made Geschwaderkommodore of Nachtjagdgeschwader 5 ( NJG 5 ) on 20 February 1944 . He and his crew , Oberfeldwebel Josef Renette and Unteroffizier Kurt Röber , were killed in a flying accident on 12 March 1944 on a routine flight from Parchim to Athies @-@ sous @-@ Laon . Above Belgium , they seem to have encountered a bad weather zone with low clouds and a dense snowstorm and it was assumed that the aircraft hit the high Ardennes ground after being forced to fly lower because of ice forming on the wings . The exact circumstances of this flight may never be known , the Bf 110 G @-@ 4 C9 + CD ( Werknummer 720 010 ? factory number ) crashed into the Ardennes mountains near St. Hubert where the completely burned @-@ out wreck was found the following day . The funeral service was held in the city church of Linz on 15 March 1944 . Prinz Egmont zur Lippe @-@ Weißenfeld and Prinz Heinrich zu Sayn @-@ Wittgenstein are buried side by side at Ysselsteyn in the Netherlands .

= = Awards = =

Front Flying Clasp of the Luftwaffe in Gold

Iron Cross ( 1939 )

2nd Class ( 17 December 1940 )

1st Class ( 17 January 1941 )

Wound Badge in Black

German Cross in Gold on 25 January 1942 as Oberleutnant in the 5 . / NJG 2

Knight 's Cross of the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves

Knight 's Cross on 16 April 1942 as Oberleutnant and Staffelkapitän of the 5 . / NJG 2

263rd Oak Leaves on 2 August 1943 as Hauptmann and Gruppenkommandeur of the III . / NJG 1

Mentioned four times in the Wehrmachtbericht

= = = Wehrmachtbericht references = = =