

The Honour Roll Clasp and Fuhrer's Commendation Certificate

By Jamie Cross

These two awards go hand in hand, and entitlement to the certificate meant that you (later) automatically received the Honour Roll Clasp.

It has been estimated that the clasp was only issued approximately 4,500 times to members of the German Army and Waffen SS and as such, that these clasps are scarcer than the award of the Knight's Cross or the Iron Cross. Even fewer of these certificates were issued and it is rare to find them, as the clasp replaced the need for this award.

A misconception about the Honour Roll Clasp is that it is an infill to the Iron Cross or was used as a bridge between the Iron Cross 1st class and the Knight's Cross (this gap was in fact filled by the German Cross in Gold). The truth of the matter, though, is that the Honour Roll Clasp is in fact a visible sign of the Fuhrer's Roll of Honour for the German Army, and the names of the soldiers were recorded on a list for heroic deeds in battle, sometimes day by day, and at other times week by week (similar to the UK's mention in dispatches). To start with, only a listing of names was issued to the individual; only later was a visible 'clasp' given.

Shown here is such a listing from 19 September 1943; notice Erich Gust's name.

The original roll was started in July 1941 and each soldier whose heroic deeds were recorded was entered into this list. Later, a citation was issued – the Fuhrer's



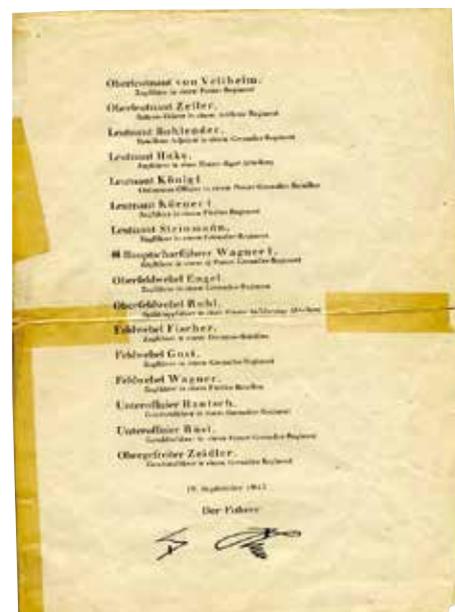
This shows both styles of clasp

commendation certificate – as well as the original listing of between 2 and 30 or so individuals on a document with the date of the award. This original listing continued, but the commendation certificate was replaced with the Honour Roll Clasp certificate. The

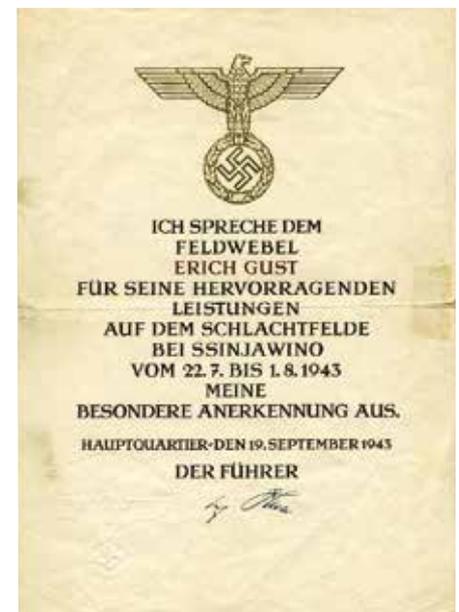
Fuhrer's commendation certificate had a gold-blocked eagle holding a swastika to the top, and the soldier's name in red ink, with the remainder printed in black ink and finally the Fuhrer's signature (a facsimile) in blue ink to the base. On the left is an embossed eagle and



Roll of Honour for Heroic Deeds Part 1



Honour Roll Heroic Deeds List Part two with Erich Gust's name



Scan of the Fuhrer's Commendation Certificate to Erich Gust

swastika within a wreath. This document is about A4 size.

The document below translates roughly as 'I express my special appreciation to Feldwebel Erich Gust for his outstanding achievements on the battlefield near Ssinjawino from 22.7 to 1.8.1943 Headquarters given 10th September 1943 The Leader Adolf Hitler'.

The document shown was presented to Erich Gust, who survived the war and was also awarded the following decorations: Iron Cross 1st and 2nd class, Russian Front medal, DRL Sports Badge in Bronze, Silver Infantry Assault Badge, and the Close Combat Clasp in Bronze, Silver and Gold. He was also recommended for the German Cross in Gold, but the war ended before it was approved (as shown on his personal record of 1957).

On 30 January 1944, Hitler announced that a visible token was needed and these small clasps were then instituted and awarded to all holders of the Honour Citations.

The army clasp is of two-piece construction

with a solid swastika soldered within a hollow stamped wreath. Each one is hand finished and as such minor differences will be noted.

The award is heavily fire gilded and has four round wire pins soldered to the reverse to affix it to the Iron Cross 1939 ribbon, (though it was not part of the Iron Cross series of awards). The fact that to qualify you had to hold both the 1st and 2nd class Iron Crosses and that the award was worn on the Iron Cross 2nd Class Ribbon, means that most people link it into the Iron Cross series of awards). The clasp is small in size, measuring approximately 26.5mm high by 24.5mm wide, and each clasp was made by the firm of Klein. Notice that Erich's clasp is sewn to a 2/3rd size piece of ribbon as all the pins are broken off the clasp. This often happened with this clasp as the prongs got snagged and broken off through wear and use.

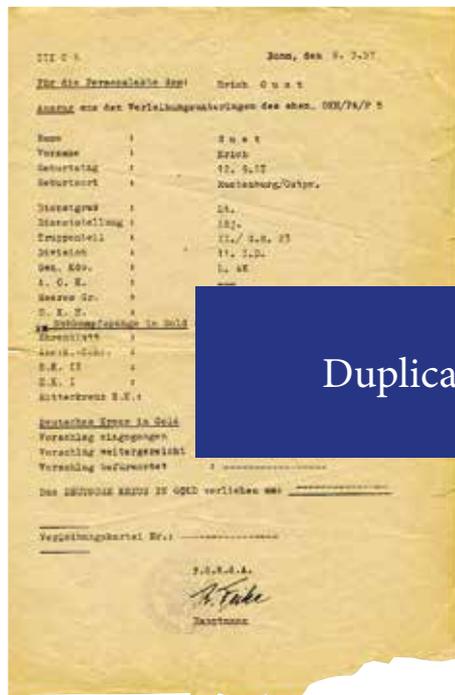
Due to the scarcity of awards and the size and fittings used, this is one of the Third Reich's hardest awards to acquire, especially a traceable example like Erich Gust's, which we have shown here.



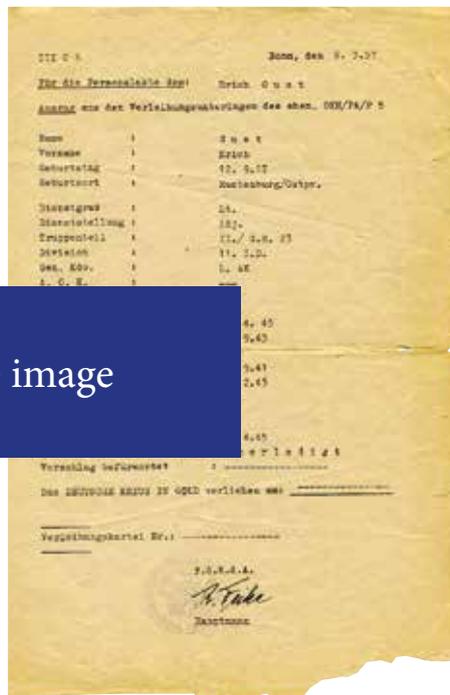
Pair of clasps



Picture of Erich Gust wearing awards



1957 Confirmation of awards to Erich Gust



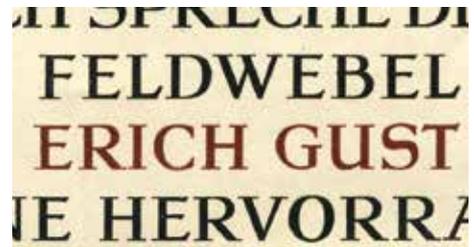
The Honour Roll of Heroic Deeds 1st part



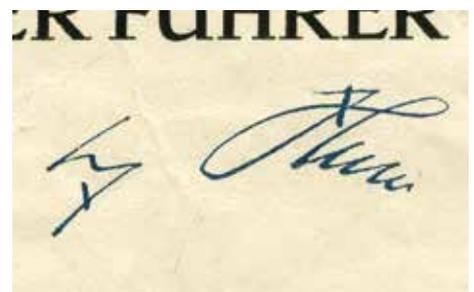
Close up of the Gold-Blocked Eagle



Erich Gust Honour Roll Clasp



Close up of Erich Gust's name



Close up of the Hitler signature