

## **FLYING OFFICER KENNETH LIONEL TRENT DFC (1935-38)**

The following information is taken from the 1968 Register :-

He was born on 19 November 1922.

During WW2 he served in the Royal Air Force Voluntary Reserve, 625 Squadron. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross on 19 December 1944 "In October 1944, this Officer was pilot and captain of an aircraft detailed to attack Cologne. Early on the outward flight the rear gunner was involved in an accident and had to be taken to a rest position. A little later, the port outer engine became defective and propeller had to be feathered. In spite of these unsettling incidents, Flying Officer Trent went on to the target, which he attacked with precision. Whilst over the sea at low altitude on the return flight, a member of the crew observed a flashing light and Flying Officer Trent concluded that a dingy was adrift. He therefore flew over a merchantman in the vicinity and requested his wireless operator to transmit details of the position. Afterwards, three motor boats were approached and an effort was made to lead them to the scene. Despite the loss of power from one of the engines, Flying Officer Trent remained over the area for nearly half an hour doing everything possible to assist in the search. As a result, several members of aircraft crew adrift in a dingy were rescued. This officer displayed skill and determination throughout a notable sortie, whilst his devoted efforts to help comrades in distress set a very fine example."

The following obituary appeared in the Jersey Evening Post on 20 January 2018

### **Distinguished Second World War hero dies at the age of 95**

By Paula Thelwell

A SECOND World War bomber pilot who was decorated by King George VI and flew with the famous Dambusters Squadron has died at the age of 95.



Pilot Ken Trent received two Distinguished Flying Crosses for his bravery during the Second World War

Ken Trent moved to Jersey in 1968 after a successful business career. He passed away in the early hours of Thursday [18 January 2018] at Jersey Hospice with his family at his bedside.

Mr Trent joined the RAF in 1941 at the age of 18 and after flight training in Canada he became a Lancaster pilot with the rank of Flight Lieutenant when he was 21. In 1944, he flew the first of 54 missions over Europe – including 11 missions with 617 'Dambusters' Squadron after the raids on the Ruhr Valley dams.

Mr Trent was twice awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, first by the King, and on the second occasion by Sir Arthur 'Bomber' Harris, the head of Bomber Command.

He also met the inventor of the special bouncing bombs used to breach the dams, Barnes Wallis.

Mr Trent flew in the Normandy campaign in 1944, and in precision-bombing missions targeting submarine bases, and Hitler's mountain-top retreat at Berchtesgaden.

In 2016 he published his memoir, *Bomb Doors Open*, with the help of writer and BBC journalist Chris Stone.

"Just do it" was Ken's motto in life and he stuck to it right to the very end. In the last conversation I had with him he talked about his beloved Lancaster bomber, and how he reckoned he could still fly one today,' Mr Stone said.

'He was a man of great humanity, whose boisterous laugh and wicked sense of humour hid a deep humility and gratitude that he had survived where many of his comrades had not. I cannot express how privileged I am to have called him my friend.'

Despite his first RAF number being the rather ominous 133300, his only injury in the war was a cut above his eyes.

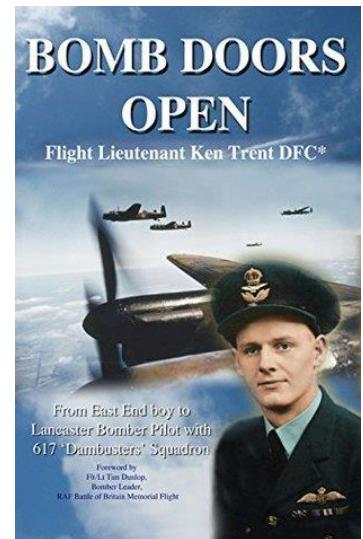
Recalling the incident in an interview with the JEP when his book was published, Mr Trent said: 'I was lucky a few times. Once a piece of flak came through my windscreen. It made a hell of a noise and I couldn't see because of the wind streaming in. Then the flight engineer said, "Are you all right skip?" and I didn't know what he meant until he said, "Look at your hands." He saw my face was running in blood and my hands were covered in it, but I didn't realise. Small bits of glass had hit me and there was a bigger piece above my left eye.'

Leaving the RAF after the war, Mr Trent established a successful network of shops which he sold in the 1960s. He moved to the Island as a wealthy immigrant and immersed himself in Island life, indulging his lifelong passion for sailing and joining the Royal Air Forces Association Jersey branch.

Branch member Peter Clarke said: 'We have lost a great friend and the Island has lost a local hero. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his widow, Ann, and his entire family.'

Mr Trent was bitten by the sailing bug as a young boy and went on to become twice overall champion of the East Anglian Offshore Racing Association Series in his yacht *Vae Victis*, which was designed by his friend Alan Buchanan, who also left the east coast of England and settled in Jersey. Mr Buchanan's son Richard, also a yachtsman, says Mr Trent as a wonderful man with a 'larger-than-life character'.

'Even in later life you would see him bombing around town on his mobility scooter. That was Ken, he certainly had his money's worth right up to the last minute – and that is the way he would have liked it.'



The following obituary appeared in the Daily Express on 22 January 2018

### **World War II hero who flew with the Dambusters Squadron dies aged 95**

**A BOMBER Command hero who flew with the Dambusters Squadron has died aged 95. Lancaster pilot Ken Trent flew 54 missions over Nazi-occupied Europe when crews were lucky to survive seven.**



He won the Distinguished Flying Cross twice, receiving one from King George VI and the second from the head of Bomber Command, Sir Arthur "Bomber" Harris.

Mr Trent joined the RAF in 1941 aged 18, underwent pilot training in Canada and became a Lancaster pilot aged 21.

He carried out raids in support of the Allied invasion of Europe and also attacked Hitler's holiday home in the Bavarian Alps, Berchtesgaden.

Eleven of his missions were with the elite 617 Squadron after its famous Dambusters raid in 1943.

Originally from the East End, Mr Trent moved to Jersey in 1968 after selling a successful chain of shops.

He died in Jersey Hospice with his family beside him.



BBC journalist Chris Stone, who co-wrote Mr Trent's Bomb Doors Open, said: "He was a man of great humanity, whose boisterous laugh and wicked sense of humour hid a deep humility and gratitude that he had survived where many of his comrades had not."

"I cannot express how privileged I am to have called him my friend."

Others described him as a "larger than life character" who used to "bomb round" in later life on his mobility scooter.

Daily Express readers raised more than £1million for the Bomber Command memorial opened by the Queen in London's Green Park in 2012, with another £500,000 donated by Daily Express proprietor Richard Desmond.



Mr Trent with Tim Dunlop in the cockpit of the Battle of Britain Memorial flight Lancaster bomber