



THIRD SUPPLEMENT
TO
The London Gazette

Of TUESDAY, the 26th of FEBRUARY, 1946

Published by Authority

Registered as a newspaper

FRIDAY, 1 MARCH, 1946

Air Ministry, 1st March, 1946.

The KING has been graciously pleased to confer the VICTORIA CROSS on the under-mentioned officer in recognition of most conspicuous bravery:—

Squadron Leader Leonard Henry TRENT, D.F.C. (N.Z.2481), Royal New Zealand Air Force, No. 487 (R.N.Z.A.F.) Squadron.

On the 3rd May, 1943, Squadron Leader Trent was detailed to lead a formation of Ventura aircraft in a daylight attack on the power station at Amsterdam. This operation was intended to encourage the Dutch workmen in their resistance to enemy pressure. The target was known to be heavily defended. The importance of bombing it, regardless of enemy fighters or anti-aircraft fire, was strongly impressed on the air crews taking part in the operation. Before taking off, Squadron Leader Trent told the deputy leader that he was going over the target, whatever happened.

2. All went well until the 11 Venturas and their fighter escort were nearing the Dutch coast. Then one bomber was hit and had to turn back. Suddenly large numbers of enemy fighters appeared. Our escorting fighters were hotly engaged and lost touch with the bombing force. The Venturas closed up for mutual protection and commenced their run up to the target. Unfortunately, the fighters detailed to support them over the target had reached the area too early and had been recalled.

3. Soon the bombers were attacked. They were at the mercy of 15 to 20 Messerschmitts which dived on them incessantly. Within four minutes six Venturas were destroyed. Squadron Leader Trent continued on his course with the 3 remaining aircraft.

4. In a short time 2 more Venturas went down in flames. Heedless of the murderous attacks and of the heavy anti-aircraft fire which was now encountered, Squadron Leader Trent completed an accurate bombing run and even shot down a Messerschmitt at point-blank range. Dropping his bombs in the target area, he turned away. The aircraft following him was shot down on reaching the target. Immediately afterwards his own aircraft was hit, went into a spin and broke up. Squadron Leader Trent and his navigator were thrown clear and became prisoners of war. The other two members of the crew perished.

5. On this, his 24th sortie, Squadron Leader Trent showed outstanding leadership. Such was the trust placed in this gallant officer that the other pilots followed him unwaveringly. His cool, unflinching courage and devotion to duty in the face of overwhelming odds rank with the finest examples of these virtues.