

Lord Dowding's Return

A departed British war hero who believed in life after death is still doing his best to prove it.

by J. J. Snyder

In the summer of 1940, the British Royal Air Force Fighter Command won the Battle of Britain. Fighting overwhelming odds, they saved their country from Nazi domination by defeating the German Luftwaffe in a series of hard-fought air engagements over the threatened island.

The head of Fighter Command during those desperate times was Air Chief Marshal Hugh Dowding, a long-time pilot and brilliant air combat strategist. One of Britain's earliest airmen, Dowding began flying in 1913 and had been wounded on a combat mission during World War I.

That spring, Dowding had faced down Winston Churchill and, after a heated argument, persuaded the prime minister not to send the few remaining fighter aircraft of the RAF to France in what would have been a fruitless attempt to reinforce the British Expeditionary Force. Even though Dowding's strategy eventually led to England's victory in the Battle of Britain, Churchill still held bitter feelings toward him. Soon after the Nazi air blitz faltered, the prime minister, with the help of Dowding's detractors, saw to it that the Air Chief Marshal was removed from his post.

Dowding was disappointed that political animosity had removed any further opportunity of serving his country, but he bore Churchill and the others no ill will. In retirement, he turned to exploring and writing on a subject that had long been of interest to him.

This less-known but highly meaningful aspect of Dowding's life was his dedication



to communicating with the dead. He was especially drawn to making contact with "his boys" — RAF pilots and air crew who had made the supreme sacrifice for king and country.

Dowding's two books, *Many Mansions* and *Lycheate*, which present hard evidence for the continuity of all life, are classics of survival literature. During and after the war, he traveled throughout the country, speaking about his many contacts with those in the astral realms. In these appearances, he offered what he considered irrefutable proof of existence beyond the physical life.

Dowding cautioned his audiences not to accept his evidence solely on the basis of his fame. He told them instead to employ their own reason and intellect when examining the possibility of life beyond physical death. He thought that any rational, unbiased person would come to see the truth on the strength of the verifiable facts.

In 1970, after a long and distinguished mortal life, Lord Dowding departed for the etheric world he knew so well. Since his passing, he has communicated several times with the physical level he left behind. His most recent contact, on September 15, 1996, is perhaps the most compelling.

An Anniversary Appearance

The date is important, for it marked the culmination of the 1940 Nazi air assault against Britain. It was on this day that the

forces of Fighter Command were stretched to their thinnest. September 15 — Battle of Britain Day — is celebrated throughout the United Kingdom. It is surely no coincidence that Dowding chose to appear on that date 56 years later at a session conducted by the Noah's Ark Society.

The NAS is a British organization dedicated to promoting and developing physical mediumship as a means of proving the survival of personality beyond death. To this end the Society has sponsored numerous events to initiate and verify communication between the physical and etheric planes. Lord Dowding's materialization at the NAS seminar at Cardiff, Wales, was one of the best documented in the history of these events. Dowding made his appearance through Colin Fry, a gifted psychic medium. Although the proceedings were held in total darkness (a condition mediums feel is more conducive to materializations than a lighted room), Dowding reportedly was seen, touched, and spoken to by many people.

Although hearing voices and making visual contact with inhabitants of etheric regions are rather common, full physical materialization, during which mortals are able to touch and feel the etherians, is relatively rare. Even so, it has been studied extensively and verified by a number of respected scientists, including Sir William Crookes, Professor Charles Richet, and Sir John Logie Baird. Modern researchers are also conducting experiments to learn more about this phenomenon.

Reports submitted by scientists who have investigated these events indicate that full materialization is usually accomplished through a specially talented medium — one who can enable the finer subatomic structure and higher frequencies of the discarnates to coalesce into the coarser vibrations of this mortal plane. When this occurs, the etherian becomes visible and may be touched and communicated with by those present. Spontaneous materializations — occurring with no medium present — have also been recorded, usually involving people who were close to each other on the physical plane.

At his own request, Colin Fry was securely tied and strapped to his chair, which was located in a cabinet constructed of black cloth. Tying and strapping the medium is a common practice in materialization experiments, which can be open to charges of fraud and deceit, especially when conducted in total darkness. Binding the medium tightly and noting and photographing the position and type of knots and straps before and after the session provide evidence that the medium has not moved while the lights are out.

A recording of the session was made by the NAS. At the beginning, Dowding can be heard uttering the words "jolly nice" a number of times. Although he was in his late eighties when he transitioned, his voice has the timbre of a middle-aged man.

Lord Dowding Appears

After touching several of the participants, Dowding tapped and rattled the two microphones placed on either side of the

medium. Then, in an imitation of Lord Haw Haw, the notorious English traitor whose propaganda broadcasts were transmitted to Britain during the war, he repeated "Germany calling, Germany calling" several times. These were the opening words of Haw Haw's broadcasts.

Those in the audience were unaware that the personality which had just materialized was Lord Dowding. He at first declined to reveal his identity. Urged to make himself known, he finally stated, "Probably some of you know of me... Dowding." He continued shaking hands.

When told that he might write a message on a piece of paper that had been placed on the floor, he declared that the last time he wrote on the floor was at the age of three, when he drew pictures of birds in flight. Then, seeming to express regret for his part in a horrible war, he said that "to learn to soar in the skies, to be free like a bird, is an honorable thing. But the only things that birds drop on us don't blow people to pieces...and that is my shame."

Dowding was then questioned as to whether those who caused him to be removed from his post, many of whom are now presumably discarnate, had become aware of what they had done.

"They probably are," he said, "but it doesn't make a damn bit of difference now. Offended sensibilities are in the end only bloody arrogance. If you can behave better toward those who are at fault, it makes you a better person, doesn't it? Above all else have honor. If you behave honorably toward other people, it really doesn't matter how they behave toward you."

He continued moving through the

crowd, touching those present and shaking hands. He recognized one woman and noted that he had spoken with her many times before.

Having known Dowding during the war, the woman confirmed the apparition's identity. She said that he displayed his keen sense of humor, of which she had firsthand knowledge.

Even one drop of blood or one life lost to our side is no victory — just awful, hideous defeat."

Her statement is important, since only those who were close to Dowding are aware of this facet of his personality. Although his public image was that of a stiff, correct military officer — his RAF nickname was "Stuffy" — his friends knew and appreciated his quick, dry wit. Upon parting with the lady, Dowding kissed her hand, a sound clearly audible to the gathering.

In his closing words, Dowding once again voiced deep regret for the tragedy

of the Second World War.

"Don't look to past victories," he said. "Pain, suffering, and unnecessary bloodshed, even one drop of blood or one life lost to our side is no victory — just awful, hideous defeat. I'm sorry I couldn't touch you all, but I hope that I can touch you with my heart."

In answer to a "God bless you" from a member of the audience, he replied, "No, God bless *you*, my friends. You are the ones still in the battle. I would have rather played a more valuable role in a more honorable game." He then said goodbye and left.

One of the many present who shook hands with Lord Dowding was NAS committee member Geoff Hughes, who noted that the etheric Air Marshal shook his hand "quite hard". Dowding also walked behind the back row and patted people on the shoulder as he passed.

The large number of witnesses who observed this remarkable event, and the similarity of their accounts of what occurred, as well as the audio recording, seem to make it one of the most convincing materializations on record. It is hoped that Lord Dowding will see fit to return to this mortal level and perhaps allow himself to be photographed by infrared camera and videotape, which should be compatible with the total-darkness requirement for materialization. If this happens, and the tapes and photos match witnesses' testimony, it will be a telling refutation of those who deny the continuity of life. ■

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Ancient Trees Return from Extinction

by Verda Kline

A ranger hiking in a nearly inaccessible part of Australia's Wollemi National Park came across a grove of knobby-barked pines thought to be prevalent when dinosaurs roamed the Earth. The 39 trees, protected from forest fires in a damp gorge, are now listed among the world's rarest plants. There are plans to propagate and sell the trees around the world.

Another tree, The Dawn Redwood, was thought to be extinct until 1948, when it was discovered growing in a remote

valley in China's Szechuan Province. Saplings were sold worldwide.

Sentry Ginkgo did die out, but is now available in a cultivar developed by a New Jersey nursery. It is used in Chinese temple gardens. Though once known only as a tree, it is now quite popular and was recently named "Tree of the Year" by readers of *City Tree*, a publication of the Municipal Arborists.