

Letters From Men Killed In The War

Extracts from Lord Dowding's Book "Many Mansions"

Starting on page 29. Most of the messages are contained in the book "The Triumph of Life Eternal" by Colonel Gascoigne, but some are published here for the first time.

From a sailor, the son of an old friend.

I was in an oil tanker and we were all drowned when she was hit. It was very quick and I did not suffer any pain but tremendous surprise at finding myself possessed of the most wonderful strength and able to heave away all kinds of wreckage. I was making my way through the debris when I realised that we were moving through deep water. It was so still that it was just like a dream. I remember feeling it was quite easy to move and there was no difficulty in breathing (if we were breathing), but now I come to think of it, it was a different sort of breath. Anyhow I got free and so did some of my friends and we moved away without quite knowing what we were doing. We found a stranger had joined us, his clothes were quite dry and he walked through the water without it seeming to touch him. I noticed this and after a time I said something to him about it.

It all seemed so queer, and as we walked I saw that we were going towards what looked like a sunrise, the best I've ever seen, and I turned to look back over the way we had come, and the stranger put his hand on my shoulder and said "Not yet, you must go on out of the Valley of the Shadow of Death and then you can return if you want to." I said "Oh, I don't care" and I went on in a dazed sort of way until we came to a kind of garden, but it wasn't enclosed. It was on the hillside with lots and lots of flowers; oh, they were lovely! By this time I had realised that we were not walking in the water any more and I felt so tired and sleepy, and my feet refused to go any further. The stranger suggested that we should rest so I sat down on the grass and was soon asleep.

You cannot imagine my astonishment on waking to find myself in a strange place, and I couldn't at first remember how I got there; but it came back after a time and I found some of the others and they let me piece it together with their help. But all the time the stranger stayed with us, and he listened and said nothing, so at last I asked him where he came from, and why he'd brought us here, and he said: "Oh, I'm just a seaman like you, but I've been ashore for some time now so I thought I might be able to help you. Then, very slowly, we all knew that we were what we used to call "dead," but it was so different that I couldn't believe it.

It's grand, just GRAND! I wish my Mother could know about it. We are in a far better land than the one we left, and it's all O.K. I'd love her to see it. Dad came to me soon after I realised this and we had a great time together. It seems queer to call him Dad, he's younger than I am now, at least he looks it. We are to have a job together soon, but I am not to be in a hurry.

From a New Zealander.

Can I try? (to write) I do not find it difficult but what is the use of trying? You do not know my people, they are far away and would never understand. I am one of the Colonial troops and my name is Simson. I came from New Zealand. I guess some of the lads have had their fill of fighting, but that was what we came for, and I am glad I came. I know it wasn't much use in the ordinary way, but we showed our loyalty to Britain, and that's the spirit that will prevail in the end. I was one of the casualties in Greece. I feel I should go home now, but I can't leave my mates. I could go as swiftly as a thought, and return equally quickly, but time doesn't matter now, and if I let go the contact with our lads I may find it difficult to pick up again. I feel we can do something here now, and if that's so, let's go on doing it.

I am rather vague as to who is "alive" and who is "dead," they all look much alike, but the "dead" are far more active and don't get tired. I should never go back alive. But my parents would never understand how much more alive I am now, so it's no use my trying to tell them.

I am going straight on with my job, under my own officer, and with many of my pals; we work for the rest, especially when they are asleep. Sometimes we raid the enemies "dead" battalion, fighting with our thought weapons! It's a grand game. There are so few things we can't do now. One of the strangest things is that we all feel happy. I wasn't one of the naturally happy ones on Earth. I worried and fidgeted and found time lagged more than most people. But here there is a sort of care-free feeling, and no time to lag, so I can't work up any regret over leaving my body. I stay right here. Our boys are happy, too, all of them, and the others are having such a rough time that it's up to us to stay by them.

Question. "Can we help you? Do you need our help?"

Well, yes, we do. It's ever such a help to do this, it kind of gives me more pep to get into close touch with my pals. It would be much better if you could have a talk with more of us. You give us confidence. So often we cannot see the result of our work, but now I can feel and see your reactions, and it makes real work, like I expect it does for you. Something to show for it. Thank you ever so much. I think that's all for now. Good night.

Gunner Simson.

From a Norwegian.

Thanky, I feel rather strange doing this, but it goes quite easily. I am Not English, nor even British, I am a Norwegian. I have lived in England for many years and I find your language as easy as mine own.

I was shot by the Germans in Trondheim. I was a little shopkeeper; they shoot. I do not love the Germans. I never shall, but I am held up here by my hatred. I find that I cannot throw it off. I still feel so angry for their acts of unprovoked cruelty, and I am consumed with my passionate anger, and cannot get free. I beg of you to help me. Your Father, he bring me to you to make a close link with him. He tell me that we must forgive the Nazis, and they do not know what they do; that they are like sleep-walkers, and until I forgive them I cannot get free to pass from this plane so near the Earth on to other planes.

Here all that happens with you is known and felt in a greater form and we go on feeling more and more animosity against the Germans race, and when they join us in the astral body we feel far more antagonism than we felt during our Earth life. It is awful, this anger that we cannot shake it off. Give me serenity and let me seep. I want sleep and forget them. I might be fairer in my judgement and come to forgive.

I see why Christ quickly forgave everyone before He left the Earth Body. I see the reason and the need, and with the help of your Father and this contact that you have given me, I shall escape.

J. Amussen.

A Highlander taken prisoner in Crete.

Yes, I was in Crete. I'm a Highlander. I was in the Marines and I stayed on in Crete among those who couldn't be taken off. It was one of the worst moments when I saw the ships and know it was hopeless for us to hope for any escape. I got hit in the shoulder, and there was nothing for it but to give in and let them take me prisoner. I was put on to a stretcher and taken to hospital, but they did nothing for me except to give me a bed to lie on, and my wound got septic and very painful. I got delirious, I suppose, and they questioned me, but I don't think they did anything for me, perhaps they couldn't. I don't know. Anyway, after ages and ages of suffering I seemed to pass into a timeless sleep, and when I woke up there was no pain and I was out of doors so I thought I had escaped and I wandered about glad to be free, but I couldn't make sense of it all. I seemed unable to walk properly, I couldn't keep on the ground, and though I didn't fall it was extremely difficult to move along, and then the whole place would grow misty. I would see places and people one moment and the next I saw something quite different. I thought I was delirious again. Now I know that I was

seeing two planes at once, and I hadn't learnt to manage my spirit body, it all worried me a lot and I got quite hopeless. People would come up to help me, and just as we were beginning to understand each other I would see the outline of Crete, and be overcome by the desire to hide away from the Germans. It was a sort of torture, and then at last they got through to me and I was able to sleep- the real sleep of death -the putting off of one life and the taking on of another. I don't know much about it, but this life seems so natural that I was anxious to try and write through you so as to test my power on the physical plane before going back to help those who have suffered like I did. I know we can and I don't want to waste time. It's grand finding that nothing has been wasted. I have all the faculties now that I longed to have on Earth. Oh, it's simply grand.

Goodnight.

Two letters from a Polish pilot who spent his last leave with us.

Yes. I am shot down and out. I have survived many flights but not this one. I am wounded, I cannot control the aircraft, it was my leg, you feel the pain, I could not move the controls and I fall, I cannot leave the aircraft, I fall quite consciously. I get up without any pain, I see my observer and gunner, he is hurt too but not so much. The Germans come to find us, they do not see me, I run and hide, but they not look for me, my friend they take away. I wander about. I feel well and cannot think how I came to crash the aircraft. My leg is healed. I wander about. I go to the French peasants and ask for help, but they do not see me and I begin to wonder. I am neither hungry nor thirsty, nor particularly tired. I begin to see things changing. I see colours everywhere; it is sunset or sunrise and it looks as if the colours were reflected in the earth as well as in the sky. I lay and watched the colour take form, it was like a cinema when one picture fades out and another takes its place. I was astounded, I do not know where I am. I ask, I pray, I forget that I have no faith in religion, I pray for help and it comes to me. Someone looking very strange, and yet quite like ourselves, come to me. He tells me not to mind the change it is best for all and that I shall be happy in this land. I am very confused. I think I am taken prisoner, then he explains that there are no prisons or prisoners and I feel free again. He took me away and he told me to sleep. He touched my eyes and I sleep at once. When I wake he is still there and I am on Earth again in the occupied territory with Germans all round. I have come back to my body. I find it difficult to leave it.

I see no colours, but my new friend is there too, and he talks to me, but I can't see him well. They are doing something to my body. I am miserable so my friend tells me to think very hard of some place outside the war so I think very hard of the last time I see family life with you at H ---, I see you all quite easily, and I wake you and you feel me near and you talk to me. I ask you to let me stay and just sit quietly in your house far from the battle until I can go on, and you say "Yes," so I stay. Now I begin to feel sleepy again. I am between the worlds. Help me to throw of this one and to go on. I want to go on- I want to go on - I think I can, please help me.

S.Z.

Several days later.

Thank you, yes I am well, I do not yet feel ready to leave your home for very long at a time, but I go for a short time, but it is food to come back to you all. I have strange feelings when you sit in the same chair in which I sit, I am close and yet not close at all.

I am going now sometimes to Poland, but I dare not stay. I have no strength yet to help them and they need this power so badly. I see my old friends, some dying and some dead, but I can do nothing, I am tired, and feel too ill to reach them. We must help soon, but at present we are too weak.

Your Father, or someone like, he comes with me and we try to help but I am nearly useless, I want to help but I am like a child, I cannot. Also I never had any faith, nothing to expect on dying and I am lost; I

know nothing. All the things I made fun of come back to me. I was a bad man. I neglected many things, my prayers and my church, but I do not know if that mattered. I have no creed, and now I find that extinction being impossible I have to suffer a sort of conscious extinction, knowing and feeling and yet being empty of strength.

What you expect here, that you find; you build your awakening, it is just as you imagined, at least that is what they told me. I expected nothing, so nothing came. But now I am pulling out of the difficult doldrums and am beginning to feel my strength. Thank you for helping.

S. Z.

A letter from a tank officer.

Thank you, I am alive after all. I thought extinction was the only thing that could follow such an inferno. We seemed to go down on all sides, British and German alike, tanks and guns and planes. I had the feeling that we were being exterminated by the machines of our own creation, they seemed so much stronger and more vindictive than the humans inside them. I believe it's the battle of the machines, they are in charge and we are the slaves of some evil genius through whom they have been created. I feel the influence of evil so strongly. I longed to get away and lie in the clean sand and forget the horrors of man's inferno of which we did not seem to be in charge.

I prayed for help when we stuck in the sand and fire broke out, and prayed with all my soul and I know we couldn't escape, but prayer seemed to strengthen me and I felt that nothing really mattered so desperately, excepting the feeling of evil, and that had receded; I could not name it or explain it in words. I seemed to meet us from the sand and hang all around the tank battle. I felt sick and miserable, and then it passed off and I found myself standing outside the tank talking to my Colonel. He seemed unconscious of the bullets that were raining down on us. I ran for shelter but he called me and told me not to bother. He was looking as young as a subaltern and as though he was enjoying the battle. He took me by the shoulder and said "Don't you see, Kit, we are dead, and yet far more alive than they are, and we can go on fighting, hampering the enemy, throwing dust in his eyes, putting ideas into our leaders and playing an invisible hand."

I saw that he was serious but I thought he was mad. I said "Yes, Sir, but I'm so tired I don't think I can move any further." He left me and I don't know what happened, but I woke up here with only one idea - to go back to the battle and find him - he wasn't mad, but I was stupid.

Your Father has let me write through you so as to give me the strength from the physical plane to grapple with the unseen world. I'm off now, thanks a lot.

February 4th 1942.

Here are two people who would like to write.

Yes, I am very glad to have this chance. I always thought it might be so, but until I was picked off by a Jap sniper, I was never certain.

I fell face-downwards in the swampy mud of the jungle, and I lay unconscious for some time in a sort of nightmare, my body was trying to reassert itself, and my spirit to get free. Never think that when people seem unconscious that they really are so, at least I wasn't. It was a time of conscious paralysis, I have it, and when something snapped and I was free I was awfully relieved.

I got back to our fellows and I soon realised what had happened when they didn't see me; but I was so interested in finding myself unchanged that I hadn't time to think of anything else. I wanted to tell them not to fear death and all that, but I couldn't. After a time I began to see the Jap dead, they were helping their own fellows, and the living Japs could sometimes see and hear them, and they used all the information given, and

this made me feel that we should be able to do the same. I tried awfully hard, but I couldn't warn or suggest anything which could be accepted by the brains of our fellows, so I wandered off wondering what to do next.

I didn't exactly want to leave them to it, but there didn't seem to be any alternative, so I did. I wandered off into the forest, and for a time forgot all about the war, and all that my friends were going through because I was fascinated by the life that I saw all around me. I know the jungle well, I have lived in it alone for months on end, and I came back to it seeking rest and peace after the turmoil of war, and I found all I sought and more, much more.

I suddenly found that I was seeing things that had been hidden from me during the whole of my physical life. I cannot describe the beauty of the life around me. The jungle is always rich in colour, sound and beauty of trees and flowers but now behind every thing that I knew so well lurked a hidden meaning, and some beautiful ray or sound seemed to permeate the very texture of the jungle life.

I can't explain. I was superbly happy, and entirely myself, but that self had grown in comprehension, and in power to experience contentment and bliss.

Then a voice came to my ears, and gradually I sensed a beautiful shining figure that said to me: "Here you see the land of pure content but you have left behind a land of passionate unrest. Do you not wish to help others to find the key to this place of joy?"

I was so overcome at never having thought of any one else for ages that I must have blushed like a schoolboy, but the Shining One didn't seem to notice. So I stammered that I really hadn't grasped my whereabouts yet, and could he help me? He said: "No, you found the way, and the rest you must discover for yourself, but others may not be so fortunate and need helping."

I didn't want to turn my back on this glorious place, but the Shining One promised to come with me and not leave me. He explained that I could always return just by recalling this place vividly and wishing myself here, and now equally you and I must see ourselves in the battle zone.

I did most regretfully, and away we seemed to pass, or rather there was no passing, one surrounding faded out and another took shape. The jungle moved or dissolved and its place was taken by another sort of jungle full of men shouting orders and screaming in pain. I felt unable to bear it at first, but the Shining One said: "Come and stand by this man, he is about to pass over to our side." A second later and a bullet had ripped through his stomach and he lay groaning at our feet. The Shining One bent down and touched his head and eyes and instantly the groaning ceased and I saw his spirit leave his tortured body, and looking dazed and pale joined us both in the deep foliage of the jungle. Before I know what had happened we were back in the wonderful jungle; it was a delicious experience.

The man who had joined us was one of our own men. A dull, quite looking fellow. I hardly knew him. He took no interest in games and was always reading. Now he brightened up suddenly upon catching sight of me, and said: "Hello, Sir, I didn't think you'd be here. I thought I'd seen you killed some days ago." I said: "yes, and I saw you killed some minutes ago." The Shining One looked at me and I knew I shouldn't have broken the news so swiftly. But Burrows didn't seem to mind. "Oh, well, I've copped it have I? Well, I don't care, it's awful fighting here and not much chance of getting out," was all he said. But "What's it like here?" he continued.

I told him it was splendid, and that he had nothing to fear, and we walked about through the jungle clearing while the Shining One explained things to us. Soon we had both recovered from the shock and he took us back to the firing line to fetch more of our people and introduce them to this life. That is where we are now, and I wanted to get further and learn how to impress my thoughts upon the men in charge. I'm grateful to you for my first lesson; it doesn't seem to have gone too badly, but I'm tired now and I'll wish myself back in my jungle home of refreshment. I see there are no separate places, all are moods within ourselves, just like what we were taught as children. "The Kingdom of God is within you." Good night.

A message from Libya.

O.K. I am glad, I've wanted to thank you for some time but I couldn't make you hear.

We came abroad in the Spring. I was one of the Snodbury lot. I'll give you my name soon but you likely don't remember me. We was all split up and I got sent to Egypt. It was a show! I never thought as to how I could have lived through it. You know what I mean. I didn't think that dying was like this. I thought it was all over and finished; and sometimes we seemed to go through such a gruelling I didn't see as how we could stand any more, and then, all of a sudden, it ceased and I was feeling upright as a trivet. A moment before I'd been dead beat and hot; oh, hot and thirsty with the most awful headache. The noise of battle fairly shattered me to bits, but then all of a sudden I was cool and fit and fresh as a daisy, and perky as could be, just looking on and hearing the noise, but not feeling shattered by it. I couldn't believe I was a "gonner." I saw my body just holed all over, and yet I couldn't believe it. I think I tried to pull it away from the gun, but there were others on top and beside me all in a heap. We'd got a direct hit all right.

The rest weren't there, that seemed queer to me, none of them, until I saw the officer. He come up to me and I pointed to where his body lay. He gave a kind of gasp and said: "Oh, well, I suppose that's that It's a queer world, Johnson, and I suppose we'd best carry on." I says: "Yes, Sir, but wot does we do now?" "Load the gun of course, you blighter," ses he, just as he used to. I went to obey, but strong as I felt I could not move the shells. They weren't so heavy as all that, but I could not get hold of them; they was slippery. It seemed as though there was a sort of fish scale between my fingers and the shells. I couldn't hold it. I tells the officer and he come to help, cursing proper he was by this time, and the two of us had a go, but would she budge? Not an inch. It seemed silly like; there was us two great hefty fellows trying all we knew to lift one small ack-ack shell and we just couldn't do it. At last I broke down and laughed. "Well," I ses, "did you ever hear of two dead blokes firing a gun?" "Yes, I did," ses he, all angry now and red in the face, "and, wot's more, we are going to do it. We are fit enough, aren't we? Come on." So I heaved to again, thinking he'd gone crazy but that it was better to humour him. So we tried again, and now I begun to see things - not the efforts that we was making with our hands, if you follow me, but the Captain, he seemed to be sending out power some way, he was that determined, and I saw him as you might imagine a Call Up Station of the wireless (if you could see one) and the answer came not through his fingers but through himself.

Lots of shadowy people came round us and worked with us, and the gun wasn't exactly in action, but something was being fired from her. Plane after plane came over, and suddenly lost speed then turned for home or crashed, I was mystified, I couldn't recollect anything like this: there seemed to be no noise, the discharge was silent, but the repercussion was distinctly felt by all of us, and that seemed to give us fresh impetus for the next. Just then I saw Jock coming towards us. He'd stopped a packet too, but he hadn't been with us before. He recognised me and the Captain and saluted and stood ready for duty. The Captain was too busy to notice him and Jock was always one for arguing, so I shut him up with "Just you wait and see, Son, we're learning new operational tactics, us three gonners from the old batch, so come along and learn and don't interrupt whatever you do." So I stayed close to Jock and made him watch the Captain.

The Captain was a grand fellow, not a doubt. he seemed to drive his way through with all his determination against it all, and when I made a move, he looked up that sharp, and said: "you sit quite and think - for God's sake think with all the guts you've got in you, that's wot you must do now. We've got our brains and our determination and if we three hold together we'll pull it off and keep the air protection for our chaps. Don't you see the men who are helping us?" and then I looked and there was Sandy, who got snipped on Thursday, standing waist-high in water, making strange movements with his arms. I looked at his eyes, and they were Sandy's, but different, so clear like stars, he seemed inspired, if one could say so --

I don't think I can finish the story today. May I stop now and come again? I've loved telling it to you. You see it's my first real adventure. Thank you.

Johnson.

Continuation from O.K.

O.K. I'm all right. I'd like ever so much to finish what I was saying. Well, as I said, Sandy looked inspired, I can't think of another word, and all at once he seemed to be leading us and not so much the officer who was following his orders most carefully, and as the shadowy people became clearer, I seemed to lose touch with the live people, and the dead ones seemed more real. Then the Jerries attacked and took the gun and we weren't touched. He came through us without seeing or hearing us, though we could see and hear him and feel the perspiry sense of his nearness. I loathed the smell all of a sudden, though it was familiar enough, it almost made me sick, and I saw Sandy and the Officer had moved away. So I pulled Jock up and said: "Don't let's lose sight of those two or we're lost." Jock agreed, but when I got to my feet I found I couldn't stay on the ground; it was most comical and so difficult to move on. I was kind of floating and so was Jock. I said: "Let's hold hands and keep each other down," but instead we seemed to buoy each other up. Oh, we did have a time catching up with Sandy and the Captain, but they didn't notice us, someone else had joined them. He wasn't in uniform and I wondered for a minute how a civilian could have got there; he looked like an Arab, and then when he turned and looked at me, I felt - I felt as though he was re-making me all over again. I knelt down and murmured "Christ" with all the reverence of a child. "No, not Christ, but a messenger from Him," said the man I was kneeling before, and "He wants you" that was what he said, He wanted me. "Whatever for?" I gasped out, and I looked up to see where the others were, but I could see nothing but a blinding Light. It seemed to fill my head and burn through something that was keeping me there, and then a voice spoke again, something like this: "By your Sacrifice you have attained to the Crown of Fortitude" -and then I remember no more.

That was the last I saw of Earth. I'd like some of the chaps to know how we pass on. It's a most wonderful thing.

I'm tired now and can't finish. Thank you. Johnson.

List of the Books Mentioned in Many Mansions

Spirit Teachings	W. Stainton Moses
The Eternal Question by	Allen Clarke
Private Dowding, with notes	W.T.P.
The Triumph of Life Eternal	J.Dinsdale
The Scripts of Cleophas	Geraldine Cummings
Do the Dead Live?	Paul Heuze
After Letters (Letters from Julia)	W.T. Stead
Letters from the Other Side	Henry Thibault
Life Beyond the Veil	Revd. G. Vale Owen
Letters from a living Dead Man	Elsa Baker
Raymond	
Through the Mists	R.J. Leys
The Life Elysian	R.J. Leys
Letters from Lancelot	R.M.T.

To finish this text I would like to include some words from Page 100 of the book which I was reading when I was told that the gentleman who first invited me to a Spiritualist meeting many years ago had died. I had been involved at that time with the re-build of a Compton Theatre Organ in the Abbey Hall, Abingdon, and he asked me to play for a meeting held there on Good Friday, May, 1977. His death was not unexpected as he had been unwell for some time. These words seemed appropriate.

"Look forward to death as something infinitely to be desired when your life's work is done, and do not mourn or pity those who die before you, but think of them as fortunate. If you loved them here, keep on loving them and hold them in your heart till you meet them again."

I hope you find these extracts interesting and the information will be useful to you.