

Biography of Hugh Dowding – British Air Chief Marshal

Considered the man most responsible for Great Britain's victory in the 1940 Battle of Britain during World War II, Air Chief Marshal Lord Hugh Dowding (April 24, 1882 to February 15, 1970), commander of the Royal Air Force fighter squadron, was a devout Spiritualist and the author of *Many Mansions* and *Lychgate*, both books dealing with psychic phenomena and survival evidence.

“For several reasons the Church is not helpful to laymen in forming their opinions on the subject of individual survival,” Dowding wrote in *Many Mansions*. “The Church anchored its ship sixteen hundred years ago, and the capstan has rusted up. It shirks the issue, and will not openly examine and pronounce upon the mass of evidence which exists on the subject of the future life.” (Dowding/Mansions, 9)

Dowding wrote that he was amazed that the evidence coming to us from the spirit world had been forgotten so quickly after initially being welcomed. “I think that possibly the basic reason for this is the apparent insipidity of the messages, taken as a whole – the lack of incident and exciting action,” he wrote. (Dowding/Mansion, 43)

Dowding defined a Spiritualist (in the widest sense) as “a person who believes in the existence of discarnate spirits, and in their power of manifesting themselves to human beings by means of apparitions, physical phenomena or intelligible communication.”

After being informed that her husband, Jack Maxwell Whiting, was missing in action and presumed dead in 1944, during World War II, Muriel Whiting wrote a letter to Lord Dowding to request his assistance in determining the status of her husband. It was that letter that put Hugh Dowding and Muriel in contact with each other, leading to their marriage. Some time after their marriage, Muriel asked her husband why he had contacted her directly and invited her out to lunch when he was so busy and there were so many others seeking help from him. Lord Dowding, who had been investigating mediums, explained that he had visited a medium and that Max came through to him, identifying himself. “I wish you would take my wife out to lunch,” Max told him. “You will like her.” (Lady Dowding, 91) – *Michael E. Tynn*

Primary References:

Dowding, Lord, *Many Mansions*, Rider and Co., London, 1943

Dowding, Lord, *Lychgate*, Rider and Co., London, 1945

Dowding, Lady, *The Psychic Life of Muriel The Lady Dowding*, The Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, IL, 1981