

American Legation

Cairo, Egypt

July 14, 1945

Dear Frank,

Please, before you turn
this page, pause, and say
a prayer

John Duffy is dead, killed
on the 5th. of May in a plane crash.
That's all I know. My letters have
not been getting through to me. I
presume it was England.

In less than one year of
Joe Dussani, two of our intimate
group have passed on. We would
never have anticipated what has
happened.

It is a blow to his friends, though
we are hardened to evidences of suffering.
The blow to his parents it is presumptive
and for me to mention. For himself,
I think that he was fortunate; a man
can never expect to be more than a
hero. And he is one who can never
grow old.

Can we lighten grief with
words? Let me try. Here are a few
ideas it is good to express about him.
We are friends, and as a friend

we miss him; however, is it clear to each one of us as men, that we regret, in him, the parting of a fine man? I know Duff's habits were irregular, and were ridiculed; I know his intellectual attainments have been thought meager. But Duff had strength of will; the possessor of sexual impulses above normal, he kept his purity - I am convinced of it - until the last moment; even in the absence of his family, in crowded cities, amid relaxed vigilance, invited by magnets upon every sense to commit sin. He was pure six months ago when I spoke to him; he is pure now.

Such his will power, with a mind averse to study & discipline, we know, he used to attend college at night, while he was at work during the day. I said he could not keep that up, but he did it. When war came, John got into the air corps, and we all said,

He can't keep that up! But he did it!
He did nothing that was expected of him;
he did all that was required of him; and
that practice has lifted him to be a hero.
I am sure his blood is this day a
rose, upon England's land, taught by
his body and spirit, & assume the
faintest aspect, according to its sub-
stance, before God's eye and nose.

Duff had enthusiasms too.
He had a passion with everything. Duff
loved sports; others loved them too;
but he alone loved them passionately. You
can define a great character, because it
is the best in perfecting that thing it
admires. A baseball player, like Lew
Therig, for example, who has a passion
for his game, and is its champion; that
man is great. You can win through an
idea of perfection, and to a valid philosophy,
by way of small items in human interest,
as by "dignified" occupations; only you have
to love them much. An insectologist saw
Parodie undra mantis. That is what I
mean; I am trying to explain it to
you; that John Duff, in his manner,

did have a little of greatness in
him. He was ever active, not at all
indifferent, and his will, the force
he could command, was ever as full
of dignity and honesty as his intellect
permitted. If Duff could have seized
upon a high thought, people would
have known him.

I knew him. He was the
best & made friends with me - had
a devil of a time at it. I was quite
revived at first, but he was patient.
One year at St. Michaels, you may
recall it, I was persecuted; (those
who engaged in it little suspect that
I suffered then more than ever before
or since, and still bear the marks.)
Duff never mentioned it, never
flickered in his attitude, nor was less
faithful in soliciting my bondage
or gratifying my vanity. I need
not tell you that I have never lost
anything so precious; and this is the
first "tragedy" & happens to me. For his
sake, for prayers that you will give &

him, if you are deeply affected,
I hope it is so too with you.

If he be dead, then death is
conquered. If his lids be sealed, it
is upon the heaven mantled there.
Arise, and go forth and meet him;
for life is a prison to him who can
see beyond its walls.

Your friend,
John Callan

I have sent a copy of this letter to
Eugene Zumbach. I thought that
I should be the first to tell you about
this, if you are not already in-
formed of it. Keep fleggin'

John F. Callan, Esquire
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