



An Eulogy for the Common Man

Captain Tom Moore (1920-2021)

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In the midst of a global crisis, we are bombarded with numbers. 100,000 UK coronavirus deaths, over 150 million cases worldwide, and countless millions of lives changed forever. Amongst these frightening figures, one has never felt so small. One illness, one year, one death...each has become worryingly insignificant. But Sir Captain Tom Moore's life was the opposite. He taught us the staggering power of one.

In early March last year, the ninety-nine-year-old gentleman made a humble pledge. He would walk 100 laps of his garden, to raise £1000 pounds for NHS charities. The final figure was much, much greater. He raised an astonishing £33 million pounds – despite needing a frame to walk. However, he made another, even more valuable contribution. He taught us that every individual can make a difference. As the world awoke to his selfless dedication, awards poured in for Captain Tom. From an honorary colonel role, to a quarter of a million 100th birthday cards, to a knighthood – he saw more appreciation in his 99th year than in all those before it. And yet, Captain Tom's aim was never fame and fortune. He took his first few steps with one humble aspiration. To help an NHS that had helped him.

Whenever asked about his feelings, his tone was always the same: simply satisfied that he could help others. When the royal family honoured his hundredth birthday, he did not seem proud of their celebrity status. No, he was just happy to be with "such good people." And now, he is gone. And all over the world, there is a deep sense of loss. But there is also a deep appreciation. We appreciate that our generation had the privilege of witnessing such a selfless, powerful, and incredibly kind act.

Personally, I was struck by the injustice of Captain Tom's life being ended by the same disease he saved so many others from. But Captain Tom's death was not the only tragedy we have suffered this past year. No, he was unique in that he rose above the statistics, to restore our respect for the unknown individual.

He believed that no one was too old, too disabled, too individual to make a change.

He believed that the responsibility to act lay with every one of us.

He believed that this way, we could heal our wounded world.

Captain Tom was not alone in his determination to do good. Dabirul Islam Choudhury OBE, a 100-year-old gentleman from St Albans, similarly walked 100 laps of his garden to raise over £420,000. If this was not astounding enough, he did this in April to May 2020 – during the religious fast of Ramadan. He is just one example of the countless people taking the world's problems into their own hands. Mr Choudhury's son, Atique, mentioned in an interview with the Independent that,

"Where we are from in Bangladesh, we don't get much recognition for the work that we do, so this is for all the people who contributed towards my dad's success and all the victims of COVID-19."

As a young person, it is easy to be disheartened by the diseases wracking our world. But there was nothing more uplifting – more inspiring – than Captain Tom's and Mr Choudhury's amazing stories. And knowing that I, just as they did, can help heal the world in my own way, is a message that will last long after the pandemic is gone.

(Aria designed the cover picture of this edition)