

## **DARLENE DIEBLER ROSE**

Darlene Diebler Rose was a pioneering missionary in southwest Pacific Ocean countries for more than five decades, and a Japanese prisoner of war during World War II.

Darlene Mae Diebler Rose (nee McIntosh) was born on May 10, 1917. While preparing for missionary service with the Christian and Missionary Alliance, she attended a Young People's Rally in Boone, Iowa in 1936 where she met Rev. C. Russell Diebler. On August 18, 1937, they were married with the intent of serving together on the mission field.

### **Significant Contribution to Christianity in the United States**

In 1938, while Darlene studied at Nyack Missionary Training Institute in New York and Russell worked on home assignment, the Dieblers accepted an appointment to serve in the jungles of New Guinea.

Landing in Batavia, Java on their first anniversary, the couple began their missionary service teaching at the Bible School at the mission headquarters in Celebes, now Sulawesi, one of the largest islands in modern-day Indonesia.

The Dieblers were the first people to bring the gospel to the Kapaukus people in the remote area of the Wissel Lakes region of Irian Jaya, Indonesia. In 1940, Darlene became the first American woman to enter the Baliem Valley of New Guinea. Together with her husband, she served in the region until 1942 when they were forced to leave the mission outpost due to safety concerns related to rising tensions during World War II between the Japanese and Westerners.

Returning to the mission headquarters, the Dieblers worked at the Bible School for a few months before being separated and imprisoned by Japanese forces. Darlene was taken to the notorious Japanese prison camp at Kampili until September 1945, enduring horrific living conditions that included disease, starvation and forced labor. Russell died of dysentery in August 1943, in the Pare Pare internment camp for men.

Freed at the end of the war by Allied Forces, Darlene returned to the United States to recover from the physical and emotional toil of her experiences. Despite the persecution she endured, Darlene wanted to return to the people of New Guinea. She met Jerry Rose, who was in missionary training, and they married in 1948. In 1949, they went to Papua New Guinea. Their family grew to include two sons, Bruce and Brian.

The Roses were instrumental in leading hundreds of people to the Lord and discipling them. They established several indigenous churches, as well as provided for the practical needs of the people.

After thirty years serving in New Guinea, Jerry and Darlene relocated to the Australian outback and continued their work. The Roses retired to the United States in the 1990s.

After her retirement, Darlene became a popular speaker and author inspiring men and women with her story.

Darlene wrote a memoir about her experience in New Guinea during World War II entitled, *Evidence Not Seen: A Woman's Miraculous Faith in the Jungles of World War II*.

Darlene died February 24, 2004.

### **References and Resources**

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--Lisa M. Samra

This article appeared as “Rose, Darlene Diebler” in *The Encyclopedia of Christianity in the United States*, edited by George Thomas Kurian and Mark A. Lamport. Rowman & Littlefield, 2016, pp. 1988-1989.