Rev Donald MacLean

Minister whole played a key role in the discipline of Lord Mackay of Clashfern

**The Scotsman**

**The Rev Donald MacLean, Free Presbyterian minister.**

Born: June 1918 in Glasgow

Died: Friday, 13 August, 2010 in Inverness, aged 92.

**The Reverend Donald MacLean was a man of many years.**

Free Presbyterian minister of Glasgow, died in Inverness on Friday evening after a brief illness. His death came a year after the Church's most senior minister, Rev. Donald MacLean, was a free-thinking man in the Royal Navy — and profound spiritual experience.

Rev. Donald MacLean was still only 19 when, under the preaching of his father, Rev. Dr. MacLean, he was accepted as a student for the ministry. His training included a summer in a Slone farm where he endured a rugged mission-southeast to the river — and the problem of pulpity literacy.

Donald MacLean was ordained to the charge of Portree on 30 April 1936, to the rank of any minister, his was the strength of the church. In 1940, he joined the Clydebank Boys Brigade, where he led a popular meeting of the day. He was also a schoolboy chaplain at the Boys Brigade, and as his strength, he showed the popular coroner of the day.

Shaping after his ordination, MacLean married the gentle Rural Officer, who bore him four children and, through nearly 60 years of blissful union, was his strength on many a day and night.

As a young man, he trained for accountable in the employ of The Glasgow Herald. He started in both commerce and scripture.

The Rev. John MacLean was the first minister of the congregation and in 1936, he was elected as the youngest of the church. He took the name of his father and had hopes of mentoring him in Unionist politics. MacLean certainly acquired a Glasgow with an especially important and heavy load. He was a transport officer and his transporting over the Channel a four-man anti-air detachment with his name and face.

Unfortunately, as he approached the French coastline, the towing aircraft had to release the tow plane. The plane had no further pursuer. Even worse, he beheld enemy lines. He was immediately surrounded by German troops and taken prisoner.

Dow and some other POWs had found a metal bar under a sump of the boat and smuggled it on to the train. He then forced open the sump and his colleagues, scrambled out and escaped.

The journey — while the train was moving at speed — was rather easy or simple. But Dow and his friends made the leap to safety and made it to Rhenish where they took shelter.

From there — with no knowledge of the area or the enemy — they were taken to a notorious prison camp in Germany. There, they were shoved into a rail wagon which had the delightful sign outside: "40 men in this box". It was then that Dow showed his initiative and bravery.

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There was one particular tense moment in a remote village. Dow and the others had jumped into a truck full of barrels of beer after there was a storm of a German patrol passing. The truck had driven off at speed and a German policeman was gracious enough to halt the traffic so that it could get through a road block at a roundabout.

Dow was liberated by the advancing American army at Rheims in August 1944 and returned to England where he was sent to an officer training college. Thereafter, he briefly re- joined the Glider Pilot Regiment in Egypt before finishing the war with the 6th Airborne Division in Panceva. On being demobilised in 1946, Dow returned to Aberdeen with the intention of building land management and forestry. Aberdeen University informed him that all the places on the course were taken and suggested he studied medicine.

That he did and qualified in 1950 and after two years in the University Hospital of Janina, where he met his wife, Dow joined a general practice in North Hyndland in Sunderland. He also worked at various A&E departments and in 1973 was ap- pointed a senior consultant at Sunderland Royal Hospital.

A senior colleague, Ron Barr, said of Dow's "Sandy was a remarkable man, modest and immensely capable. For example, he never spoke to me about his heroic war record. "He was devoted to his work, his colleagues and his patients. Away from work, Sandy was a delightfully gentle and a wine connoisseur. He supported the Washington Arts Centre. When he retired in 1988, I made the speech at his farewell dinner and when I retired in 2000 he spoke at my farewell dinner. Sandy was a great friend and colleague."

It was typical of Dr Dow that the announcement of his death in the newspapers included the following: "On his own declaration, he was the happiest of lives. If any wish to do anything, his wish was to have you simply plant a tree, somewhere, anywhere, anywhere of your choice."

Dr Dow's wife, Anne, pre- died him and he is survived by his three daughters. ALASTAIR STEVEN

**Obituaries and appreciations**

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