

FORGOTTEN HERO OF BUNKER VALENTIN

The Harry Callan Story

Michèle Callan

978-1848893016

€14.99 / £12.99

320 pp

198 x 128 mm • PB

March 2017

Category: Biography/History

B&W photos

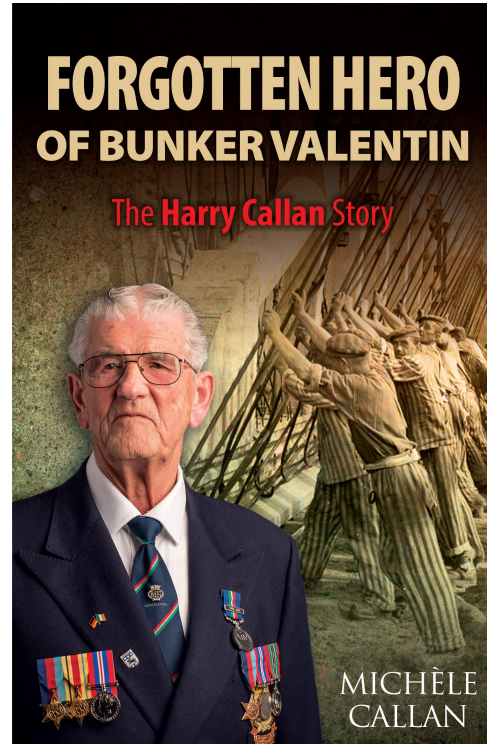
THE BOOK

In 1943, thirty-two Irish POWs refused a Gestapo request to work for Germany. They were sent to a labour camp, where they were starved, beaten and forced to dig the foundations for a Nazi super-structure codenamed Bunker Valentin – an immense U-boat factory. Thousands of the camp's prisoners perished, including five of the Irishmen; bodies fell into the foundations and were never recovered. The surviving Irishmen were saved by the goodwill of decent Germans.

Among them was Harry Callan, a Catholic boy from Derry who went to sea at sixteen as a British Merchant Navy seaman. His ship had been captured by a German raider two years before he ended up at the labour camp. Harry was unable to speak about the brutality he experienced for decades after he was liberated. When he finally began to tell his story, his family were shocked by what they heard.

In his eighties, Harry agreed to revisit the site of his incarceration. He found local historians had no evidence of the Irish prisoners: they had disappeared from official records. Determined to give his comrades recognition, he began working to preserve their memory.

This is the gripping story of Harry's capture, resistance and liberation. But above all, it is the final chapter in his quest to honour the forgotten heroes of Bunker Valentin.

**THE AUTHOR**

Michèle Callan lives in County Dublin and is Harry Callan's daughter-in-law and carer. Together they attend Second World War commemoration ceremonies in Ireland and Germany. They annually visit the German graves of the five Irishmen who died while constructing Bunker Valentin.

SALES POINTS

- Only eyewitness account of this story, told by the last survivor of 'Hitler's Irish Slaves'
- Searingly honest chronicle of the trauma of war and healing of reconciliation
- RTÉ Doc on One about Harry Callan had 600,000 listeners & won the 2015 New York Festivals World's Best Radio Program
- Readership: World War II, biography, military history, adventure, Irish interest
- PR: Launch by Commodore of Irish Navy and media campaign assisted by author