

Commandant William Henry Callan Esq. MBE

04/02/1904 to 06/04/1985

Height – 5ft 10ins (1,78m)

Eyes – Hazel

Hair - Brown

Born at 3 Chantilly Terrace Torpoint, County of Devon and Cornwall, registered in the District of St. Germans, baptised in the Parish of Antony. He was 2nd or 3rd youngest in a family of 13.

Father – William David Callan b 1875 in Essex Plaistow, gunner in the Royal Navy, who died in 1920 of complications due to injuries received in the First World War naval battle of Jutland. At the time of his death he was Chief Gunner on HMS Ark Royal and is buried in plot 71 in the Capuccini Naval Graveyard on the island of Malta.

Mother – Eliza Jane Callan nee Mitchell b 1877 in Truro in Cornwall.

Torpoint is in Cornwall on the river Tamar, opposite Plymouth and the Royal Naval dockyard of Devonport, where his father was based.

William Henry spent most of his life in the Military, except for a short stint as a civilian between 1955 and 1962.

04/02/1918 – Enlisted in Portsmouth in the Royal Regiment of Artillery as an apprentice gunnery artificer. Served in the UK with the Royal Horse and Royal Field artillery.

02/03/1925 – Royal Artillery as a First Class Warrant Officer.

17/12/1928 – Transferred to the Royal Army Ordnance Corps serving in the UK.

18/01/1935 – Posted to Singapore to install coastal defences. The guns installed were 15 inch guns and were useless against the Japanese as they were Naval guns and only had armour piercing shells as a sea invasion was expected. The Japanese invaded across the swampy causeway so although the guns were turned around, the armour piercing shells did not explode in the swampy ground.

09/04/1937 – Posted back to the UK.

13/04/1939 – Posted to the Union of South Africa to the Coastal Artillery to install coastal defences. All the old 9inch gun batteries in Simonstown, Llandudno, Green Point, Robben Island, P.E., E.L. and Durban were installed by him.

- 15/12/1941 – Transferred to the South African Defence Force.
1944 – Divorced from Violet Jenny Allaker
- 16/11/1945 – Married Vera Maud Fruin.
- 30/04/1946 – Demobbed from the SA Army at the end of the war.
- 01/05/1946 – Re-enlisted in the South African army with the rank of Captain.
- 13/06/1946 – Awarded a military MBE by King George VI signed by Queen Mary.
- 12/07/1949 – Michael John Callan born in 1 Military Hospital, Roberts Heights, Pretoria.
- 14/05/1953 – David Barry Callan born in Fish Hoek nursing home, Kommetjie Road, Fish Hoek.
- 31/12/1954 – Left the army with the rank of Major to start his own Automotive Engineering business with a good friend in Woodstock Cape Town.
- 31/07/1955 – Friend absconds with the money and the business is liquidated.
- 01/09/1955 – Joined Globe Engineering in Cape Town Docks as a Fitter.
- 17/09/1955 – Joined Irvin and Johnson Fishing as a Foreman Fitter.
- 07/03/1960 – Joined Champion Retreaders as a tyre rep.
- 24/09/1962 – Rejoined the Defence Force with the rank of Commandant and was seconded to the South African Navy as Senior Staff Officer Safety Code, responsible for industrial safety in all Naval dockyards and workshops.
- 31/01/1980 – Retired.
- 06/04/1985 – Died of heart failure.