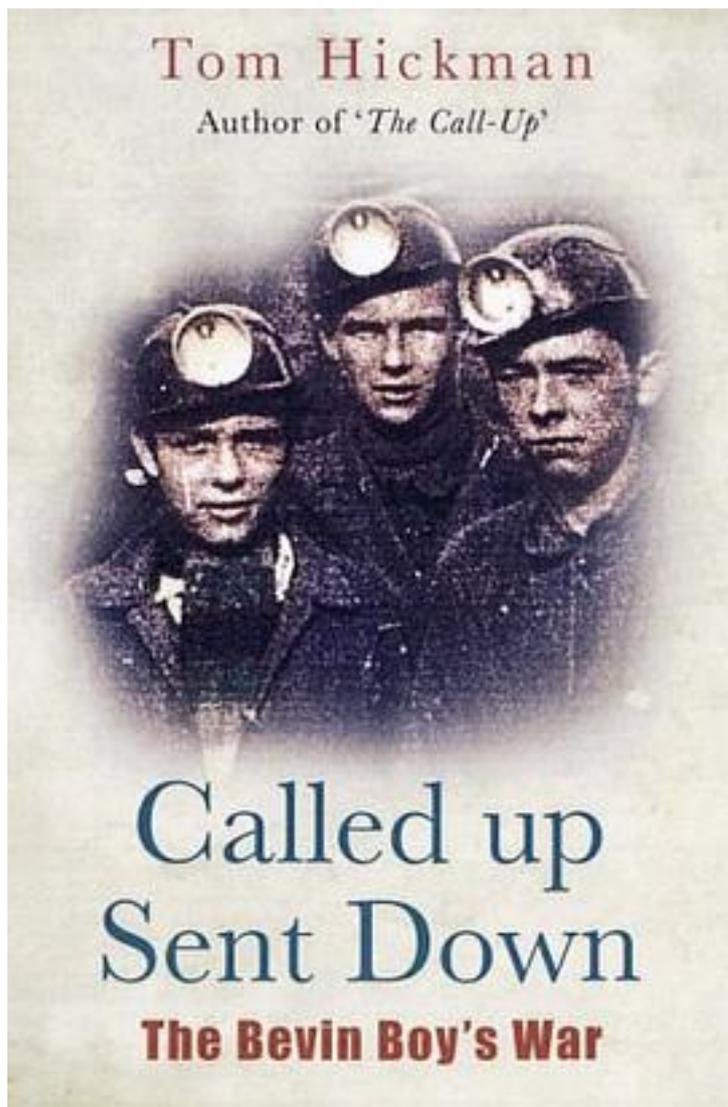


Called Up, Sent Down



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At the outbreak of war, the government short-sightedly allowed thousands of miners to enlist in the armed services. By 1943 the war effort was in danger of grinding to a halt because of a lack of coal. In answer, Ernest Bevin, the Minister of Labour, sought service volunteers - and compulsorily sent 20,000 18-year-olds, who'd expected to fight for their country, down the mines with them. Some were so angry that they preferred to go to prison. The majority went to do their best. But some were psychologically and others physically unsuited to such dangerous and arduous work. Many were injured; some died. "Called Up, Sent Down" paints a picture not just of the arduous life below ground but as the Bevin Boys found it in the tightly-knit mining communities, which in some cases welcomed them but in others treated them with hostility. "Called Up, Sent Down" is an enthralling oral and social history of an episode of the Second World War that has never been fully told.

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