



# History and Heritage



**The Territory's history of ancient and enduring Aboriginal culture, intrepid explorers, courageous pioneering women and men, and wartime battles is unlike any other across Australia. From the Top End to the Red Centre the stories of the people who have shaped the Territory underpin our distinctive sense of place and unique identity.**

The legendary journeys of John McDouall Stuart, one of Australia's most intrepid explorers, led the first successful expedition to traverse the Australian mainland from south to north. This journey saw the epic construction of the Overland Telegraph Line in the 1870s, described as 'Australia's greatest engineering feat of the nineteenth century' and the first direct communication between Australia and Britain. The stories of pastoralists and the Gold Rush days of Pine Creek attest to the fact that the Territory has narrative that embodies the pioneering spirit. From driving routes, heritage sites and museums, there are many opportunities to relive the footsteps of the early explorers and pioneers.

The Territory has played a significant role in the ongoing journey of reconciliation with Aboriginal peoples in Australia. The 'Wave Hill walk-off', where Gurindji Aboriginal stockmen demanded fair wages for their work is one of the most symbolic historical events for Aboriginal peoples, which led to the birth of Aboriginal land rights.

For military heritage, the Top End is unparalleled being Australia's only location of major battle during World War II. Darwin felt the full force of the war with air raids by aircraft of the Imperial Japanese Navy in 1942, wreaking destruction on the city.

## Anniversary Key Dates

- **Bombing of Darwin – 19 February**
- **ANZAC Day – 25 April**
- **Wave Hill Walk Off - 23 August / Gurindji land handback – 16 August**
- **Overland Telegraph Line; joining of the wires – 22 August**



## Aspirations

- Showcase the Northern Territory as a significant Australian destination for World War II military history.
- Share the unique stories of Territory pioneers through engaging experiences, products and itineraries.

## Goals

- Raise awareness of the Territory's unique World War II history to domestic and international markets to drive increased visitation.
- Develop enhanced military, history and heritage product and experiences in the Territory that can be promoted year round.
- Grow commemorative military and/or history events to attract visitors to the Territory.
- Promote the Territory's heritage and history along self-drive itineraries in alignment with the Tourism NT Drive strategy.
- Integrate key history and heritage product and experiences into the **education**, **drive** and **cruise** sectors.

## Strengths

- Drive experiences within the Northern Territory offer unique journeys for holiday visitors to self-drive or fly to popular destinations and hire a car or campervan to explore the surrounding areas. Heritage sites and stories along these drives add to the visitor experience including Adelaide River War Cemetery, Telegraph Stations and the Battery Hill Mining Centre.
- Darwin's critical role in the defence of Australia during World War II, together with staging sites along the Stuart Highway and the provision of camp and medical services in Alice Springs are significant aspects of the Northern Territory's military history. This brings the NT military experiences to the forefront from the remainder of Australia.
- Portrayal of the lives of the Territory's pioneering men and women create journeys of learning. *Myilly Point Precinct* is home to four heritage listed homes; the Aboriginal and mission story of the *Hermannsburg Cultural Precinct*; and the innovation behind the Road Transport Hall of Fame are key points of interest within the founding history of the Territory.

## What are we doing and how to get involved?

- Tourism NT and Mat McLachlan Battlefield Tours (MMBT) led a film production showcasing the Top End's military attractions and experiences. The film will be aired to thousands of history fans on Mat McLachlan's podcast and the Living History Channel, bringing awareness to our important military history.
- The **Heritage Link Attraction Pass** was established to showcase four Top End History and Heritage operators. The pass includes access to must see attractions with a valued discount for consumers and is sold through relevant distribution channels. Further package and pass developments will continue to grow this sector's popularity. Contact [distribution.tourismnt@nt.gov.au](mailto:distribution.tourismnt@nt.gov.au) to express interest in future package developments.
- Military, heritage and history content is featured across our consumer website **northernterritory.com** on various regional pages, in the NT Drive guide, itineraries and articles. To feature your attraction or tour across the consumer website, be sure to have an up-to-date ATDW listing. Log in or register for an ATDW listing [here](#).
- Military and heritage attractions are profiled through **NT Learning Adventures** and highlighted in relevant itineraries. Further product and experiences that aligns with education tourism groups would increase opportunities to engage with this sector. Contact [education.tourismnt@nt.gov.au](mailto:education.tourismnt@nt.gov.au) for more information.
- Tourism NT maintains strong relationships with relevant stakeholders in the sector such as the NT Heritage Council and National Trust NT.
- Tourism NT's public relations and media team work closely with Australian and international media in gaining coverage for NT product and destinations. All new product / experience updates can be forwarded to [media.tourismnt@nt.gov.au](mailto:media.tourismnt@nt.gov.au)

To discuss opportunities and ideas around developing the NT's history and heritage visitor experiences contact the Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade.

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