

Over the last 12 days The Borella Ride has retraced the remarkable 1,000 kilometre journey made by Albert Borella VC in 1915 to enlist in World War I. The Territory's only Victoria Cross recipient, Albert Borella left the Tennant Creek area and walked, rode horseback and travelled by mail cart and train to reach Darwin six weeks later.

Richard Borella, grandson of Albert Borella, and his companions, Charlie Cloos and Tim George, began their journey in Tennant Creek on 20 February with a ceremony held to mark the commencement of their trek.

It was a rare opportunity for Tennant Creek to see Albert Borella's Victoria Cross arriving at the ceremony and be put on display for the community. Keith Payne VC OAM was also present, wearing his own Victoria Cross, and spoke to the crowd about the qualities of the prestigious award and how tremendous journeys begin with a simple decision.

In an emotional speech, Rowan Borella, Albert Borella's son, told the community how amazed his father would have been at all the attention and fuss. The family knew Albert Borella as a modest and calm man, who didn't speak much of his great achievements.

After departing Tennant Creek, The Borella Ride has visited many communities, including Banka Banka, Renner Springs, Elliott, Dunmarra, Daly Waters, Larrimah, Mataranka and Katherine. Today is the final day of The Borella Ride, and the team will travel from Pine Creek to Darwin by train, with a stop in Adelaide River.

By commemorating Albert Borella and his journey, the Australian community can honour and remember not only him, but all Australian servicemen and women who have been involved in armed conflict over the last 100 years.

The Borella Ride is the Northern Territory's flagship Anzac Centenary activity, supported by the Commonwealth Government through the Anzac Centenary Public Fund and the Northern Territory Government.

THE JOURNEY



Richard Borella and his horse Bushranger make their way up the Stuart Highway



Albert Borella
THE BORELLA RIDE

On the Road

Travelling 1,000 kilometres from Tennant Creek to Darwin has its challenges and while some are the same as what Albert Borella would have experienced in 1915, others are new.

The challenges of weather, environment and distance are the same. The heat is constant, the road seemingly never ending and sitting on a horse or walking for long periods of time is still as uncomfortable now as it would be 100 years ago. It would have been worse for the Territory's foremost soldier as The Borella Ride team are allowed some comforts, and have a full support team of camp cooks, operations staff and St John Ambulance officers to help.

Modern challenges mainly come in the form of traffic on the Stuart Highway, particularly road trains. The Borella Ride travels with a traffic management convoy, which alerts the team to oncoming traffic and ensures the travellers and their horses are prepared. The Borella Ride horse team were in training for many months in preparation for encounters with fast, noisy vehicles.



A road train passes The Borella Ride on the Stuart Highway

Albert Borella would have spent much of the journey on his own, but on occasion other people travelling the same track toward Darwin may have joined him. On The Borella Ride, Richard Borella is accompanied by two accomplished horsemen, Charlie Cloos and Tim George. Tim is a Senior Constable for the NT Mounted Police Force.

Following and offering support for every step Richard takes are his parents Rowan and Mary Borella. Rowan is the sole surviving son of Albert Borella VC, and a couple of times during the journey he has joined Richard for a short time on foot or on horseback, to learn for himself the difficulties his father encountered.

Both Richard and Rowan find it remarkable that their ancestor endured so much just to volunteer to join the war effort.

THE BORELLA RIDE

100 YEARS OF ANZAC | 20TH FEBRUARY - 3RD MARCH 2015

In 1915, Albert Borella journeyed through 1000 Kilometres of the Northern Territory's Outback from Tennant Creek to Darwin to join up to fight in World War I. He fought at Gallipoli, and the Western Front, was wounded, commissioned on the battlefield, and was awarded the Victoria Cross, the highest honour for valour in combat.



Students from Elliott School farewell The Borella Ride as the team continue their journey

In the Community

As The Borella Ride arrives in each community, it brings with it the opportunity for particularly the younger generation to catch a glimpse of history and life 100 years ago. Albert Borella's story is shared during evening stops and community barbeques and the highlight for participants, especially Rowan and Mary Borella, is to meet and talk with local school children.

The Albert Borella Travelling Display tells the story of the Territory's foremost soldier and what life would have been like for him in 1915. Artefacts from the period add an interactive element to the Display, with Dr Tom Lewis, Lead Historian, on hand to explain to students and adults the interesting history around the items.



Children in Katherine view the commemorative board containing Albert Borella's replica medals

At several stops, The Borella Ride has presented a framed descriptive board, with a set of Albert Borella's replica medals, to the community to commemorate the journey and ensure the legacy of Albert Borella remains.

The Final Farewell

Albert Borella's journey to enlist didn't end in Darwin. Arriving in the area in 1915, he found the government wasn't taking volunteers from the Territory at the time. So Borella needed to find a way to Townsville, Queensland where he could sign up. With the help of Walter Bell, Borella was able to secure passage on the steamship *SS Aldenham*.

The last glimpse Albert Borella had of the Northern Territory was on 8 March 1915 as he sailed from the Darwin wharf.

He would go on to fight in Gallipoli and the Western Front, and in Villers-Bretonneux in July 1918 his bravery and valour on the field of battle earned him the Victoria Cross, the highest military honour.

As The Borella Ride arrives in Darwin today, the public are invited to walk with Richard Borella and his companions as they make their way from The Esplanade to Stokes Hill Wharf, where the final ceremony will be held.

All members of the community are invited to witness in the ceremony, which begins at 5.30pm.

The Legend of Albert Borella VC MM

Retracing the 1,000 kilometre journey Albert Borella made to reach Darwin and walking in his footsteps has revealed much about his character to the participants of The Borella Ride, and his family. It has provided insight into the endurance, determination and strength that Albert Borella must have had to complete the journey, and to also voluntarily sail into an unknown future that was the Great War.

Albert Borella's journey to enlist offers a different view of the ANZAC story. It shows us the sense of duty and the determination of many to sign up and defend their country. It is a characteristic shared by our service men and women today, who also volunteer their lives for Australia.



Rowan Borella joins his son Richard Borella during his trek to Darwin



Rowan, son of Albert Borella, and wife Mary show Albert Borella's Victoria Cross to students from Tennant Creek Primary School.



What's on Today

Pine Creek Departure

10:50am - 11:00am

Mango Farm Crossing

Farewell The Borella Ride as it departs Pine Creek by train at the Mango Farm Crossing.

Adelaide River Arrival and Departure

12:20pm - 1:20pm

Stuart Hwy near Adelaide River Railway Museum

Meet The Borella Ride team during their stop in Adelaide River before they depart at 1.20pm for Darwin.

Walk with the Borella Ride

4:00pm - 5:30pm - The Esplanade to Stokes Hill Wharf, Darwin

Join the final leg of The Borella Ride!

Muster point: Bicentennial Park, opposite Daly Street roundabout

Sign on time - 3.30pm - 4pm

Departure time - 4.15pm

The Borella Ride will travel down Bicentennial Park, via The Esplanade passing Parliament House and Government House onto Hughes Avenue and Kitchener Drive, and then proceeding to Stokes Hill Wharf for the final ceremony of The Borella Ride.

This is a free activity, open to people of all ages. For more information and to register visit www.theborellaride.com.au

The Final Farewell

5:00pm - 7:00pm - Stokes Hill Wharf

The final ceremony of The Borella Ride will be held at Stokes Hill Wharf from 5.30pm to recreate Borella's departure from Darwin to Townsville where he was able to enlist. The ceremony will mark the arrival of The Borella Ride into Darwin and commemorate Albert Borella's journey from the Northern Territory to become a recipient of the prestigious Victoria Cross and one of Australia's military heroes.

Changed Traffic Conditions for The Borella Ride

From 4.30pm to 5.15pm there will be rolling road closures on The Esplanade from Herbert Street, passing Parliament House, Government House - Hughes Ave and Kitchener Drive.

There is no parking on Stokes Hill Wharf from 2pm to 8.30pm.

Free parking is available at the Convention Centre Underground Car Park from 5pm.

What's on this Week

The Qualities of the Victoria Cross

Wednesday 04 March, 2015

5:15pm - 6:00pm

Northern Territory Library, Parliament House

Dr Tom Lewis, Lead Historian for The Borella Ride will be speaking with the Borella Family, Keith Payne VC OAM and Doug and Kaye Baird, the parents of Corporal Cameron Baird VC MG who is the most recent recipient of The Victoria Cross.

Unveiling of The Borella Ride Plaque

Thursday 05 March 2015

10:00am

Borella Park, Jingili

For more information contact City of Darwin

Dedication to Albert Borella VC MM

Friday 06 March 2015

11:00am

Darwin Cenotaph

For more information contact Darwin RSL

WALKING



Tennant Creek - Renner Springs

HORSEBACK



Renner Springs - Katherine

MAIL CART



Katherine - Pine Creek

TRAIN



Pine Creek - Darwin

20TH FEBRUARY - 3RD MARCH 2015



THE SPIRIT LIVES
2014 - 2018



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