In early 1918 the Battalion fought many tough battles across the bomb-scarred wilderness of the Front. During one of these later fights, near Villers-Brestonnais on 17–18 July, Borella was leading his platoon forward against German opposition including a German machinegun which was firing at the advancing Australians through the Australians’ own artillery barrage.

His later Victoria Cross citation read:

For most conspicuous bravery in action. This Sergeant in the attack on the German trenches near Brestonnais on 25th July 1918, was moving on the second occasion outnumbered and with his revolver, and captured the gun. He then led his squad in driving the enemy from the trench and clearing it. For conspicuous gallantry, determination and personal bravery in action, this officer is recommended for the Victoria Cross.

Borella returned to Australia and was discharged on 22 February 1919. He received a soldier settlement block at Hensleigh Park, near Hamilton in the Western District of Victoria where he returned to his former life as a farmer.

Borella married Elsie Love in 1928 and they had four sons. In 1939 he officially changed his name to Chalmers-Borella and it was under this name that the outbreak of World War II he was appointed to the 12th Australian Garrison Battalion as a lieutenant. He served into his mid-sixties with the Prisoner of War Group, Rushworth; and then with the 51st Garrison Company being promoted to temporary Captain.

After demobilisation, Borella became an officer of the Commonwealth Department of Supply and Shipping as an Inspector of Dangerous Cargoes. He retired in 1954, and went to live in North Albury, NSW. Albert Borella died on 7 February 1968 aged 86, and is buried at the Presbyterian Cemetery in Albury, New South Wales.

The reality of Borella’s Territory life was that it did not bring him much luck. Borella came here with hopes of pioneering agriculture on the Daly River. Despite herculean efforts and using all his life savings up to that point, he ended up destitute, summoned, nearly thrown in jail and having to go into personal debt to enlist.

Despite Borella’s many achievements and eventful life, his extraordinary physical courage and capacity, he is recalled by those who knew him as a quietly-spoken, modest man.

In acknowledgement of Albert Borella’s time in the Territory, we are proud to claim him as one of our own.

Perhaps some stories do not belong to a single place or time, but in this year of the Centenary of the Anzacs, it is fitting that we acknowledge Albert Borella as a true Territorian.

In 1915, Albert Borella journeyed through 1,000 kilometres of the Northern Territory Outback from Tennant Creek to Darwin to enlist 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. Albert Borella was one of the many who went to fight for their nation.

From 20 February to 3 March 2015, The Borella Ride will symbolically retraces Albert Borella’s footsteps along the Stuart Highway in commemoration of the Anzac Centenary.

By commemorating Albert Borella through The Borella Ride, we can reflect on the broader story of Northern Territory development and the significant contribution made by Australians to the First World War. The Borella Ride is the Northern Territory Government’s flagship Anzac Centenary activity, supported by the Australian Government.

Be an extra for The Borella Ride!

We are looking for volunteers to be part of the final ceremony of The Borella Ride at Stokes Hill Wharf, Darwin on Tuesday, 3 March 2015.

Volunteers of all ages are welcome to be part of this once in a lifetime activity to mark 100 years since World War I.

Extras will be dressed in 1915 costumes and will help to provide a backdrop to Borella’s arrival into the wharf.

Volunteers will need to be available on the following days:

Costume fitting – Sunday, 15 February 2015 – From 2pm
Dress rehearsal – Sunday, 1 March 2015 – 2pm
Performance – Tuesday, 3 March 2015 – 3.30pm to 7pm
To find out more and to register go to www.theborellaride.com.au