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Wreath laying ceremony over *Booya* site

A World War II serviceman has come to Darwin to lay a wreath over the *Booya* shipwreck site.

Northern Territory Heritage Officer David Steinberg said it was an emotional ceremony for the ex-serviceman who served on the *Booya*, previously named the *Argosy Lemal* at the age of 18.

"The *Argosy Lemal*, which was built in 1917, functioned as a radio communications vessel during World War II and Evan George, along with a crew of 12 others, served under the US Small Ships Section," Mr Steinberg said.

"Following WWII the *Argosy Lemal* did varying work and underwent several name changes prior to becoming the *Booya* in 1971."

The *Booya* went down in Cyclone Tracy in 1974 and is significant for its natural and cultural values.

The site is also symbolic as a place where several people lost their lives in tragic circumstances, with the *Booya*'s location unknown until its discovery in Darwin Harbour on 22 October 2003.

The *Booya* shipwreck was declared a heritage place under the *Heritage Conservation Act* on 15 June 2005 with a 150m exclusion zone existing around the site declared under the *Darwin Port Corporation Act*.

The Interim Management Plan allows for increased public access to the *Booya* in the form of controlled and non-destructive recreational diving.

Mr Steinberg said the Heritage Office took Evan, along with his daughter Kristine out to the *Booya* site to lay his wreath.

"Evan has fond memories of his time on the *Argosy Lemal* and came to Darwin to lay a wreath in memory of his comrades, but also for those that lost their lives when the *Booya* went missing after Cyclone Tracy," Mr Steinberg said.

For further information go to
<http://www.nt.gov.au/nreta/heritage/maritime/shipwrecks/>

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Media Note – For more information contact David Steinberg on 8924 4141

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