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Harbour Trust launches all new Defence of Sydney tour at North Head Sanctuary, Manly

The Harbour Trust has launched the new *Defence of Sydney Tour* at North Head Sanctuary which features entry into the recently restored and previously inaccessible North Fort Plotting Room. The tour also takes in 200 metres of underground tunnels and tells the story of North Fort as a former army base that once protected Sydney Harbour.

The Plotting Room, once shrouded in secrecy and concealed more than eight metres underground, was used as part of the seaward defences of Sydney and controlled the engagement of enemy ships. The Plotting Room has now been seamlessly restored by the Harbour Trust Restoration Volunteer Team more than 70 years since its doors closed.

Access to this crucial part of the defence of Sydney history has been made possible thanks to the dedication of the Harbour Trust Volunteer Restoration team, who spent an estimated 1,200 hours restoring the room to its former glory.

The team coordinated the removal of the rotted insulation and ceiling whilst also creating a new plotting table to original specifications. They restored the Battery and Fortress Plotting Rooms to their former glory, the bunker located 33 steps below ground presenting a challenge for the team during restoration.

As well as the North Fort Plotting Room the skilled restoration team supported the Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company in restoring a 4 Pounder Cannon, originally used in the defence of the early settlement of Port Jackson. Over the course of 18 months, the team restored the cannon's barrel, crafted new timber for the carriage and created new iron rods, brackets, pins and bolts. Now restored, the cannon will be permanently mounted at the School of Artillery, Puckapunyal in recognition of the years the School was located at North Head, Middle Head and South Head over the last century.

Peter Lawrence, North Head Restoration Volunteer, expressed his passion for restoration.

“As a member of the Volunteer Restoration Team, it's a privilege to be able to assist in keeping the military history of Sydney alive. It's exciting to play a role in the historical interpretation of North Head,” he said.

The Defence of Sydney Tour, led by the Harbour Trust volunteer guides is an opportunity to walk in the footsteps of the men and women who served at North Fort at Manly's North Head, during WWII.

Mary Darwell, Executive Director of the Harbour Trust, said the Harbour Trust is thrilled to be able to welcome back the community and continue to showcase the history Harbour Trust sites.

Harbour Trust



“The restoration volunteers have generously provided hours of support to return the North Fort Plotting Room and Port Jackson 4 Pounder Cannon to their former glory and we are excited to be able to now share this with our community,” said Ms Darwell.

The Defence of Sydney Tour is another in a line of fascinating and intriguing tours already being run by the Harbour Trust.

Tours have re-commenced at other Harbour Trust sites including Cockatoo Island and Georges Heights at Middle Head. The Defence of Sydney Tour at North Fort as well as the Gunners and Tunnels tour at Georges Heights are facilitated by the Harbour Trust volunteer tour guide network.

[Find out more about our tours by visiting the Harbour Trust website. Bookings essential.](#)

Photo opportunity: Peter Lawrence, Harbour Trust Restoration Volunteer on site providing media access only to the North Fort Plotting Room.

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MEDIA ENQUIRIES: Please contact Rebecca Hage at the Harbour Trust on (02) 8969 2143 or 0438 852 465 Rebecca.Hage@harbourtrust.gov.au