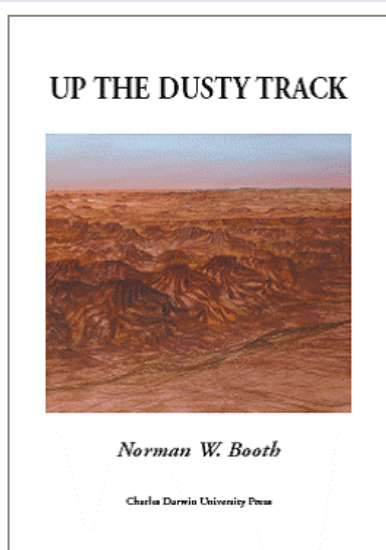


Charles Darwin University Press
proudly announces a reprint of

Up the Dusty Track

by Norman W. Booth



In February 1942, with the bombing of Darwin by the Japanese, Australians at last awoke to the peril that was menacing them. Alice Springs, a small town in Central Australia, was invaded by convoy drivers, who carried to the North materials of war from factories in the South. But the convoy trucks were wrecks, and there were no spare parts. Drivers, fitters and mechanics toiled day and night. Nerves frayed. Sometimes drivers, drugged with fatigue, fell asleep and overturned the trucks.

This novel tells the story of the grim challenging position in the early months of 1942, when Sergeant Sandy Duncan and his men drove their crazy trucks *Up the Dusty Track*. The story revolves around Sergeant Duncan, who is responsible for keeping the convoy running. He faces numerous difficulties, from the shortages of tyres and equipment, to dealing with the diverse individuals who form part of the platoon. Their exploits and the resolution of personal conflicts are a principal part of the story of Duncan's convoy.

This is an Australian war novel with a difference (WWII). There are no great fights. But there are daily battles against appalling conditions and equipment, in a race against time to carry troops and supplies to the North by the only route possible - overland, through harsh, sparsely populated territory. The war is seen through the eyes of various characters forming part of the convoy up the rapidly constructed track from Alice Springs to Larrimah. The characters are a hard-bitten lot. Their lives are punctuated by broken springs, leaking fuel tanks, and occasional fires, and are lived against a background of searing heat and blinding dust, but also of great beauty. Their conversation is of the difficulties they encounter in a day's work, the families they have left behind, the Aboriginal women, and the political and economic arrangements of a world that is far from sane.

"Let men tell me they have fought in other parts of the world - I will never bow my head in shame. I will look them in the eyes and tell them where I have been and what I have done."

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