



Tom Kruse MBE 1999



Tom Kruse 1953

MEDIA RELEASE

September 21, 2007

Tom Kruse Bronze Bust Appeal

Two bronze busts of legendary outback mailman Tom Kruse will be produced by highly regarded South Australian sculptor Patricia Moseley. If sufficient funds are raised, a third bust will be located in the Marree Rural Transaction Centre at Marree.

The yet to be opened Visitor Information Centre at Birdsville and the National Motor Museum at Birdwood in the Adelaide Hills (the home of the 1936 **Back of Beyond** Leyland Badger) will be the locations for the two life sized Tom Kruse bronze busts.

The Badger Restoration Group, headed by Neil Weidenbach and Corrugated Air Productions, headed by Executive Producer Ian Doyle, have undertaken to raise the funds needed to complete the Tom Kruse Busts Project.

The organising committee's target is to raise \$12,000 over the next three months. The project has already attracted support from a number of organisations including the RFDS, the Diamantina Shire Council and the Australian Outback Development Consortium (AODC).

"We believe this is an important project which recognises the significant contribution made by Tom to outback Australia," AODC Chairman Bruce Campbell AM MBE said.

Tom Kruse celebrated his 93rd birthday on August 28th this year. His mail run re-enactment in his fully restored 1936 Leyland Badger was the subject of an evocative, colourful and emotional documentary **Last Mail from Birdsville - the Story of Tom Kruse** produced by Corrugated Air Productions in 1999. It's now available on DVD as part of **The Back of Beyond Collection** from the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

"Tom is travelling well at the moment and the organising committee is keen to have both Tom and his wife Valma participate in unveiling the busts. We are approaching Governor General Major General Michael Jeffery AC CVO MC to officiate when the project has been completed," Appeal Co Coordinator Ian Doyle said.

The 1954 Australian film classic **The Back of Beyond** introduced Tom Kruse and his 1936 Leyland Badger mail truck to a generation of Australians. Most never forgot the

extraordinary images of the man and his battered truck doing battle each fortnight with the sand and isolation along the Birdsville Track - outback Australia's toughest mail run.

The 500-kilometre track runs from Marree in northern South Australia to Birdsville in southwest Queensland. Tom Kruse starred as himself, delivering mail, fuel and supplies to the isolated families along this world famous track. Shot in black and white, ***The Back of Beyond*** remains one of the most critically acclaimed and awarded films ever made in Australia.

Last Mail from Birdsville - the Story of Tom Kruse traces the recovery of the badly deteriorated Leyland Badger from the desert near Birdsville in 1986, its painstaking three-year restoration from 1996 and the final mail run re-enactment down the Birdsville Track in 1999. Behind the wheel again after almost 40 years, Tom carried over 7000 letters from well-wishers around the world. More than 120 other vehicles, including a Model T Ford, joined the convoy following the last mail run re-enactment.

"Tom Kruse is a dogged, tough giant of a man who was awarded an MBE by Queen Elizabeth in 1955 for services to the people of the outback. We recognise far too few of our heroes. These two bronze busts will celebrate the life of one of this country's living legends," Appeal Co Coordinator Ian Doyle said.

You can make contact with Tom by writing him a message at the ***Last Mail from Birdsville*** website www.lastmailfrombirdsville.com The site includes details of Tom's life, the restoration of the Leyland Badger, the launch of the documentary as well as many other interesting stories about the making of ***The Back of Beyond, Last Mail from Birdsville*** and the people of the Birdsville Track.

You are invited to support the Tom Kruse Bust Appeal. Significant supporters will be recognised publicly and permanently with the busts. Cheques and money orders in favour of ***The Tom Kruse Bust Appeal*** can be sent to The Tom Kruse Bust Appeal, PO Box 2503 KENT TOWN SA 5071 or electronically transferred to BankSA Norwood Branch BSB # 105 010 Account # 0107 971 240.

The cast being used to produce the bronze busts by sculptor Patricia Moseley can be viewed in the foyer of BankSA at 97 King William Street in Adelaide.

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Birdsville Track 1999