



Tom Kruse MBE 1999



Tom Kruse 1953

## MEDIA RELEASE

November 16, 2008

### Tom Kruse returns home to unveil Waterloo bust

More than 300 people attended the unveiling of the last of four bronze busts of 94 year old Birdsville Track mailman E.G. (Tom) Kruse MBE on Sunday November 16<sup>th</sup>. The function was held in the grounds of the house he was born in at Waterloo in the mid north of South Australia. The permanent home of the bust is the Waterloo Community Hall.

Family members Brenton and Roger Kruse joined Tom to unveil the Waterloo bust.

Highly regarded Robe based sculptor Ms Patricia Moseley produced the busts of legendary outback mailman Tom Kruse MBE.

The four life-sized bronze busts are located at Birdsville, Marree, the National Motor Museum (NMM) at Birdwood and Tom's hometown of Waterloo. The NMM bust was unveiled by His Excellency Governor General Michael Jeffrey on March 30<sup>th</sup>, the Marree bust on June 7<sup>th</sup> and the Birdsville bust on September 5<sup>th</sup>.

The NMM is the permanent home of the 1936 Leyland Badger which featured in the classic 1954 Australian docudrama *The Back of Beyond*.

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

"Our original target was three busts and \$15,000.00. Significantly more was raised and as a result, we've been able to produce this fourth bust for Waterloo," bust Appeal Co-Coordinator Ian Doyle said.

The project attracted significant support from a number of organisations including the CMV Foundation, the RFDS, the Waterloo Community, Corrugated Air Productions, Pilatus Australia and numerous private donors.

"The group believes this is an important project which recognises the significant contribution made by Tom and all the Birdsville Track mailmen to outback Australia," Ian Doyle said.

Tom Kruse celebrated his 94<sup>th</sup> birthday on August 28<sup>th</sup>. 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 a double DVD from the Royal Flying Doctor Service (ph 1800 813 318) as part of *The Back of Beyond Collection*.

"Tom's travelling OK at the moment and the organising committee is keen to have him and wife Valma participate in unveiling the busts. We are delighted Roger and Brenton Kruse are also able to be part of the unveiling at Waterloo," Ian Doyle said.

*The Back of Beyond* introduced Tom Kruse, Henry Butler and the 1936 Leyland Badger mail truck to a generation of Australians. Most never forgot the extraordinary images of the men and the battered truck doing battle each fortnight with the sand and isolation along the 500 kilometre Birdsville Track - outback Australia's toughest mail run. Shot in black and white, *The Back of Beyond* remains one of the most critically acclaimed and awarded films ever made in Australia.

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

Tom and members of the Kruse family and sculptor Patricia Moseley attended the Waterloo unveiling.

Waterloo is ten kilometres east of Manoora (north of Saddleworth) on the Tarlee to Burra road in the mid north of South Australia.

#### More information:

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Pandie Pandie Station 1986

Birdsville Track 1999

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