



Tom Kruse MBE 1999



Tom Kruse 1953

MEDIA RELEASE

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Tom Kruse bust to be unveiled by Governor-General

The first of three bronze busts of outback mailman E. G. (Tom) Kruse MBE will be unveiled on Sunday (30.03) at 12 noon by His Excellency Major General Michael Jeffery, AC, CVO, MC, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia at the National Motor Museum (NMM) at Birdwood in the Adelaide Hills.

The three bronze busts of legendary outback mailman Tom Kruse have been produced by highly regarded Robe based sculptor Ms Patricia Moseley.

Birdsville, Marree and the NMM are the locations for the life-sized bronze busts. The Marree bust will be unveiled on June 7th and the Birdsville bust on September 5th.

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

"We are delighted His Excellency has agreed to unveil the bust with Tom and Valma Kruse on Sunday. The bust will add to the significant interest show by thousands of visitors who come to the NMM, primarily to see the Leyland Badger," Director of the NMM Kym Hulme said.

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 target was \$12,000.00. Significantly more was raised and as a result, a fourth bust has been proposed for Tom's hometown of Waterloo in the mid north," bust Appeal Co-ordinator Ian Doyle said.

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

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

Tom Kruse celebrates his 94th 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's travelling OK at the moment and the organising committee was keen to have both Tom and wife Valma participate with the Governor-General in unveiling the bust at Birdwood. Tom first met Major General Michael Jeffery in May 2006 when the Governor-General travelled to Birdsville and points north during the Year of the Outback," Ian Doyle said.

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 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.

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A DVD copy of Last Mail from Birdsville will be available to TV crews on Sunday at the NMM



Pandie Pandie Station 1986

Birdsville Track 1999