



Tom Kruse MBE 1999



Tom Kruse 1953

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Tom Kruse bust for Alice Springs Hall of Fame**

The fifth of five bronze busts of 96 year old Birdsville Track mailman E.G. (Tom) Kruse MBE will be unveiled by Ted Egan AO at 2.00 pm on Sunday (August 29<sup>th</sup>) at the National Road Transport (NRT) Hall of Fame in Alice Springs.

Tom Kruse will fly from Adelaide to participate in the ceremony. The unveiling ceremony will be one of the highlights of the 2010 Reunion Public Open Day at the National Road Transport Hall of Fame. Reunion details can be found at [www.roadtransporthall.com](http://www.roadtransporthall.com)

The five bronze busts of legendary outback mailman Tom Kruse MBE have been produced by highly regarded Robe (South Australia) based sculptor Ms Patricia Moseley.

Birdsville, Marree, the National Motor Museum (NMM) at Birdwood in the Adelaide Hills and Tom's hometown Waterloo in the Mid North of South Australia are the locations of the first four life-sized bronze busts. His Excellency Governor-General Michael Jeffrey unveiled the first bust at the National Motor Museum in March 2008.

The NMM is the permanent home of the 1936 Leyland Badger which featured in the classic 1954 Australian docudrama *The Back of Beyond*. Tom Kruse was inducted into the NRT Hall of Fame in Alice Springs in 2000.

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. Much more was raised than our original target and as a result, we are delighted to produce the fifth bust for the NRT Hall of Fame,” bust Appeal Co-coordinator Ian Doyle said.

The project attracted significant support from a number of organisations including the CMV Foundation, the RFDS, the Birdsville Hotel, Pilatus Australia, the National Motor Museum, the National Road Transport Hall of Fame, Corrugated Air Productions and numerous private donors.

“The NRT Hall of Fame believes this is an important project which recognises the significant contribution made by Tom, his trucks and all the Birdsville Track mailmen to outback Australia. This will be the first of a number of busts of significant contributors to the Australia’s road transport history for the Hall of Fame,” CEO Liz Martin OAM said.

Tom’s 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) and the NRT Hall of Fame as part of ***The Back of Beyond Collection***.

“Tom’s travelling OK at the moment and the organising committee is keen to have him participate in unveiling the bust at Alice Springs. We are absolutely delighted Ted Egan AO has agreed to unveil the bust with Tom,” Ian Doyle said.

***The Back of Beyond*** introduced Tom Kruse, Henry Butler and the 1936 Leyland Badger and Blitz mail trucks to a generation of Australians. Most never forgot the extraordinary images of the men and the battered trucks 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.

### **More information:**

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Pandie Pandie Station 1986

Birdsville Track 1999

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