

Speech of H.E. Stefan Krawielicki, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany
to New Zealand, on the Award Ceremony of

The Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany for Mr Boyd Klap

in the Residence of the German Ambassador on 25th of November 2021

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.

Dear Boyd,

dear members of the family and dear friends of Boyd,
ladies and gentlemen.

Good evening, goedenavond dames en heren, und guten Abend.

It is a great honor and profound personal pleasure for both Isabelle and me to welcome you all to the residence of the German Ambassador in Wellington.

Tonight we are coming together for a very special occasion: Boyd Klap has been awarded the Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany. It is for this extraordinary occasion that Isabelle and I extend a heartfelt welcome to you, dear Boyd, our friend and tonight's guest of honor.

You have chosen the guests:

First of all, members of your whanau – “a win-win-family” as you put it in the last sentence of your autobiography; as well as many friends – “The Boyd Fan Club” if I may say; and Véronique who, via the “French connection”, introduced us to you shortly after our arrival in Aotearoa New Zealand 2 ½ years ago.

Since then we met many times, and we have become friends. And it wasn't long before I gained an understanding for the great work you are doing in this country for the Anne Frank exhibition. I also came to appreciate the personal relationship with you as well as the Dutch-German friendship that you stand for.

And we look up to you as a role model. A role model for your energy; for your inspiration; for your sense of humor; for always making new friends and new contacts; for your dynamism and impressive mental and physical health you still have at the age of 94. You were skiing until your 90th birthday. You were tramping and you are still walking a lot – walking and working. I would be glad if I could enjoy the same degree of physical and mental fitness and of social activities at the age of 75 or 80.

Boyd simply is a – phenomenon!

Speaking about Boyd could now turn into a long speech. Therefore I would just like to refer to two books.

First, Boyd's autobiography "Between two Countries". Let me mention only some of the most important stages.

It had all a beginning on the 14th of January 1927 when Boudewijn Klap, now Boyd Klap, was born in the Netherlands, in Deventer, where you grew up. During the dark times of German Nazi occupation of the Netherlands you became, at the age of only 17, a courageous courier transporting information about German troop movements. Later, during your army service in the Dutch East Indies – Indonesia – , you married Ria, by proxy and then in a church ceremony in the Netherlands in 1950, followed by 57 years of living and travelling together with Ria, founding a family and having your three children Arthur, Victor and Jacqueline. Arthur and Jacqueline, together with their spouses, are here tonight as well as some of your 6 grandchildren. We would have loved to also welcome some of your 12 grand-grandchildren.

In the early 50's you arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand where you had a very successful professional career, becoming the "grand old man of the New Zealand insurance business", welcomed in the homes of prime ministers and ambassadors. You also worked and lived 12 years in Australia, and in 1982 you made your home again here in Wellington where you retired.

But retirement wasn't your cup of tea. And it is at this point that I would like to refer to the second book, a book of supreme importance and the prime reason behind the Order of Merit to be awarded tonight. It is of course the diary of Anne Frank 1942-1944, a timeless document.

Since 2009, you invested your time and boundless energy, and all your personal qualities I have just mentioned, for the Anne Frank exhibition, created by the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, to be set up, to be sponsored and to travel around Aotearoa New Zealand.

Initially the exhibition was planned to stay only three months. But Boyd, you are a force of nature, a man of action, a great networker, an empathetic and true relationship builder, an unstoppable visionary, pretty good in fundraising, and with a calendar that sometimes seems busier than that of an Ambassador.

This is why the success of this exhibition exceeded all expectations.

This is why this exhibition was touring the country for three years.

And *this is why* it now continues to do so in a new version, altogether for 11 years already.

11 years – instead of three months!

You also managed to bring the exhibition to Australia where it can still be seen.

In 2019, Anne Frank's diary was translated into Te Reo. This is another great project you realized, as well as the Anne Frank park memorial inaugurated in June this year.

Perhaps you, Boyd, and some of our guests will remember what Jeremy Smith said, former Board Chair of the Holocaust Centre, on the occasion of the reception held in your honor at Parliament this August. Taking stock of your projects and enthusiasm, Jeremy said: “I can’t wait to see what’s next”.

So for next year, the Anne Frank exhibition is already fully booked and will be seen in Timaru, Rotorua and Gisborne – because you know the people! – and finally in November/December in the New Zealand Parliament. Without knowing what’s next, 2022 will then be the end of your involvement in the Anne Frank exhibition.

In doing this you supported, and are still supporting, in Aotearoa, together with the Holocaust Centre of New Zealand, Anne Frank’s timelessly important strong message. It is a message against antisemitism, intolerance, discrimination, prejudice, racism, hate speech, bullying and exclusion of all forms. In Aotearoa this exhibition, and its message, reached 100.000s of people including 25.000 students in the past three years alone.

We need current and future generations to understand history. Having exhibitions like this is a way we can show respect and honor the past, ensure that we never forget, learn for the future and hope to help prevent crimes against humanity and atrocities such as the Holocaust from happening ever again.

Tonight, Germany would like to acknowledge the unwavering support of Boyd Klap in favor of *commemoration and education* which is so important for us. What you have achieved, dear Boyd, for the Anne Frank exhibition in New Zealand, and for the message that Anne Frank and her diary stand for, is the reason for the decision of the President of the Federal Republic of Germany to award to you the Cross of the Order of Merit.

It is my honor and great pleasure to now officially award to Boyd Klap the Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany, Document and Insignia.