



# Russian Convoy Club of New Zealand

**Newsletter**  
**March/April 2020**

Dear shipmates, families and friends

## Government responds to Veterans' Advisory Board

Minister for Veterans Ron Mark (right) has announced the Coalition Government's initial response to work completed by the independent statutory body, the Veterans' Advisory Board.



The Board was asked to look at who should be considered a veteran and how their service should be recognised.

The Veterans' Advisory Board has recommended that all who have served should be considered veterans, and should receive services and support, on the basis of need, if they have been injured or made ill by their service in the armed forces, irrespective of where that service took place.

The Board also recommended a Covenant, or Kawenata, be established between service people and the Government and the people of New Zealand.

Such a Covenant or Kawenata would formalise an undertaking that those who serve, and their families, should not be disadvantaged by service, and that special provision be made for those who have sacrificed the most.

"Prominent examples of a Covenant in overseas jurisdictions are the Armed Forces Covenant in the United Kingdom, and the Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant, and I believe they have demonstrated significant benefit for veterans and their families" said Ron Mark.

"Cabinet has agreed that the Veterans' Advisory Board undertake a national conversation with New Zealanders about the possibility of establishing such a Kawenata here.

"The Veterans' Advisory Board will be reporting back to me on their findings by 31 July 2020, and I encourage all those interested in this topic to engage with the Veterans' Advisory Board as they seek the views of the community.

"Early next year I expect to make a further announcement on policy and legislative improvements to the veterans' support system, alongside a summary of progress made on responding to all 64 recommendations of Professor Paterson's report," says Ron Mark.

*Are the recommendations of the Veterans' Advisory Board now Government policy?*

The Board's role is to provide independent advice to the Minister. The recommendations that have been made in the report do not represent Government policy; and the costings prepared by the

Board to illustrate the scenarios they have detailed are rough order of magnitude figures only.

*What is the Covenant that is being proposed?*

The Board has recommended establishing a covenant to formalise the relationship between those who have served and the Government and people of New Zealand. The details, including form and function, of such a covenant has not been developed, and the Board will be seeking New Zealanders views on the matter through a national conversation.

*What is a national conversation?*

The term refers to seeking the views of New Zealanders about a topic; in this case it is proposed the Board examines how New Zealanders view the possibility of recognising those who have served through establishing a Covenant.

*How long will it be until the results of the national conversation are made available?*

The Veterans' Advisory Board will report back to the Minister of Veterans by 31 July 2020.

*Has a Covenant been pursued elsewhere in the world?*

Yes. Prominent examples are the Armed Forces Covenant in the United Kingdom, and the Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant.

*Does the Government intend to change the definition of veteran in the legislation?*

Officials have been directed to establish exactly what a definition change would mean and, if it were to go ahead, how it could be managed, including a demographic analysis and actuarial costing of the sorts of scenarios for veteran recognition.



*Branding of the United Kingdom's Armed Forces Covenant*

## Membership

A warm welcome goes to Steve Christensen to our Associate Membership. Steve's father Colin (HMS Zealous) together with his mum Christine were regular attendees at our meetings until Colin passed away in 2007.

## Obituary

We are saddened to hear of the passing of:

Mary Basset-Burr	23 December 2019	
Stan Douglas	24 February 2020	HMS Javelin

## RCCNZ pre-Christmas gathering at Otaki

The pre-Christmas meeting of the club was held on 21 November 2019 and was hosted once again by Rear Admiral David Ledson and Barbara at their Otaki home.

Around 19 people attended and very much enjoyed a beautifully prepared lunch by Barbara on a sunny Otaki day.

On display was the well-made cabinet containing the three awards pertaining to the Russian convoys (pictured below). The medals etc were donated by a member and the cabinet is a gift from the Executive Committee of the Lower Hutt Memorial Returned and Services Association. It is hoped that this will form the centrepiece of a small display of Convoy memorabilia in a corner of the Anzac Lounge.



In addition to club members, guests included H.E. the Russian Ambassador, Commander Ian Andrew RNZN, Norm and Heather Rosser (LHM RSA) and Claire Clark (NZMNA).

As it was your President's birthday he was reluctantly cajoled into cutting the Christmas cake which was delicious! Our thanks go to David and Barbara for allowing us the run of their home and gardens.



9 March 2020  
SS Otaki wreath laying  
Otaki College 11:45am

26 March 2020  
RCCNZ Meeting  
Lower Hutt RSA

25 April 2020  
ANZAC Day

9 May 2020  
Wreath laying  
Wellington Waterfront

June 2020  
Russia National Day  
(details to be advised)

27 August 2020  
RCCNZ Meeting  
Lower Hutt RSA

3 September 2020  
Merchant Navy Day

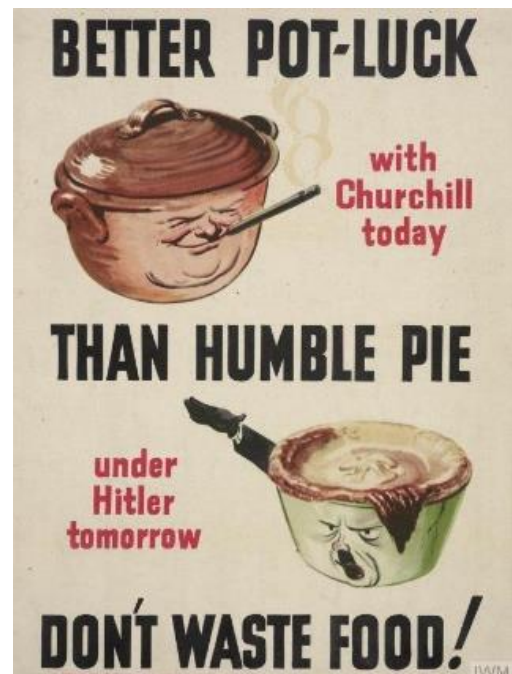
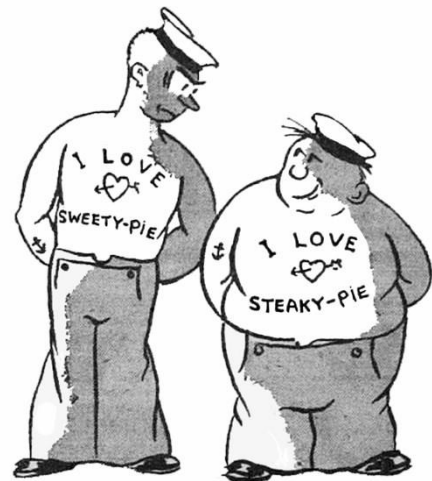
26 November 2020  
RCCNZ Christmas Meeting  
Otaki

Other dates will be advised when they come to hand

## Membership Subscriptions

Members are reminded that subs are due in March for the 2020-21 year. Invoices will be posted in due course and will include an invitation for those who wish to make a donation in lieu of, or in addition to, the sub.

Our treasurer advises that several members forgot to send their sub for the present year so early payment will be appreciated. Please ensure that cheques and/or bank drafts are identified with your name/subs reference number.



Up Spirits!



Derek Whitwam  
President  
Russian Convoy Club of New Zealand  
(04) 971 4636 E-mail: [atired.92@gmail.com](mailto:atired.92@gmail.com)  
Web: [www.russianconvoyclub.org.nz](http://www.russianconvoyclub.org.nz)