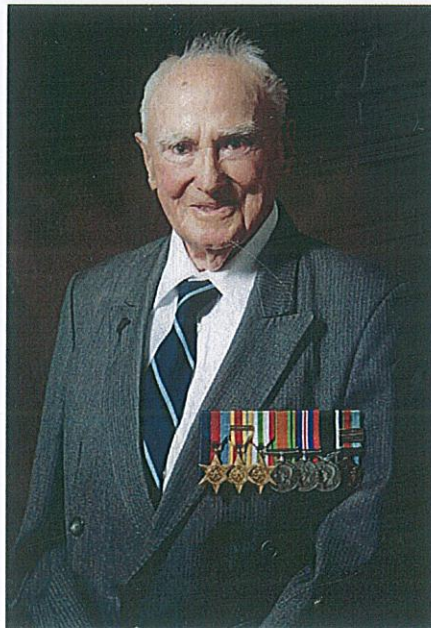


HE TANGATA WHAKAHIRAHIRA - A GRAND GENTLEMAN

By WO1 Isaac Davis

In the Conche article of September 2013, I put together on paper what was the life and times of Watt Nelson (Watty) McEwan, Signaller and Author. This article pays tribute not only to one who served his country, family and friends but how someone can have an immense influence on you in such a short space of time. I met Watty early in 2013 in my search for a Class Patron for the RNZSigs Enhanced Corps Training. I travelled to Auckland as at the time Watty was also having Chemotherapy at the ripe age of 94 so I didn't know what to expect. I was overwhelmed by this charismatic, spirited and well spoken gentleman who welcomed me with open arms after having just walked down from his room on the 3rd floor. In that short time I could sense my visit was a breath of fresh air and I also had the pleasure of meeting Watty's lovely wife Gwen, who had prepared morning tea for my visit. As we discussed the connection between the Howick RSA and 5 Signals Sqn, who had the Freedom of the Borough in the early 1990's Gwen commented on how pleased she was to work out in the kitchen during those Anzac days and today brought back memories! Watty had made a promise that he would attend the Graduation ceremony at the end of the year, unfortunately and unbeknown to me Gwen passed away a few months later and when I did make contact he was not well. I didn't keep in touch as much as I should have but remember the other publication Watty really enjoyed was the "Soldiers Five" as it kept him up to date with the changes in the Army. I also sent him a copy of the Enhanced Corps Training Class Photo which his son told me proudly sat in his lounge. To those reading this I challenge you to go out and visit our retired service men and women as you never know what stories may unfold.



"The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honourable, to be compassionate, to have it to make some difference that you have lived and lived well"

Ralph Waldo Emerson