Claude Potter

….. played only one First Grade game with Wests in 1917. He did play a number of Reserve Grade games with the Club during that year and was recorded playing Reserve Grade in 1919.

A search of past newspapers did not reveal any other rugby league or rugby union player with the name of Potter that might have been the person that played for Wests.

So, who was Claude Potter? There was a junior rugby league player living at Penrith, NSW by the name of Eugene Claude Vaughan Potter, born in 1899 at Penrith. Eugene Potter was known by the name of Claude Potter and all newspaper articles from the time referred to him as C. Potter or Claude Potter.

If the Wests player was Claude Potter, then he had a rapid path to Wests First Grade team. He would have been just on 18 years of age when he was selected. The age of the player raises some concern as to whether this is the right person, but it needs to be remembered that during the period of the First World War unusual things happened at times.

By 1917 many young men had volunteered to serve in the military forces and so there was a shortage of players in all sports. In fact, many sporting competitions were cancelled during the war years.

While there is a record of Claude Potter being selected for the Penrith Waratahs at the start of the 1917 season, there is no indication that the team played in any matches that year or whether there was a competition. Unfortunately, the reporting of sport during the war period was not comprehensive, particularly for local sport, as news items relating to war events took priority.

Claude would have been too young to have enlisted at the start of the First World War, and given that he was a railway worker, it is likely that he would have been exempted from service anyway.

Claude Potter did enlist for service with the AIF in the Second World War. He was posted to the 208 Australian Light Aid Detachment, which provided support services for the maintenance and repair of mechanised equipment. He was medically discharged in December 1943.

Claude Potter lived all of his life in the Penrith district but died in the Concord Repat hospital in May 1953. His memorial is at the Penrith General Cemetery, Kingswood, NSW, Catholic Monumental Section-Row D-01.