

## George Paterson

..... started his football career playing rugby union with the St Andrews Institute Club at Ashfield before joining Western Suburbs Rugby League Club in 1910. He played for three seasons while also taking on a number of administrative positions with the Club.

He was one of two Wests Delegates to the NSW Rugby League from 1910 and was elected as a Vice President of the League in 1912. In 1916, he was President of Wests before enlisting for the First World War at the end of that year.

George Paterson enlisted with the AIF in November 1916 and was posted initially to the 19th Battalion and then subsequently to the 30th Battalion. He embarked in Sydney in May 1917, a month after his brother Malcolm had been killed in France. He landed in England in July and after undertaking training in England, he embarked for France in November 1917.

During the spring of 1918, the 30th Battalion had a relatively quiet time as it was used as a reserve force as part of the Australian 5th Division. When the allies took the offensive again by mid-year, the 30th was involved in an attack at Morlancourt in July and then was heavily engaged when it led the 5th Division's advance down the Morcourt Valley during the Battle of Amiens on 8 and 9 of August. The 30th's last major involvement was when, in conjunction with other allied Divisions, it attacked the Hindenburg Line across the top of the St. Quentin Canal at the end of September.

George Paterson survived his time in the battlefield without serious injury. He remained in France until May 1919 and arrived back in Australia in August 1919.

On 9 April 1917, as a prequel to the First Battle of Bullecourt, George Paterson's brother Lieutenant Malcolm Paterson was killed at the town of Hermies, France. He died six days before Frank Frost (Wests #22) also in the town of Hermies.

In Malcolm Paterson's obituary it was noted that; "before leaving for the Front, he took an active part in football with the Western Suburbs Rugby League Football Club." No record has been found of Malcolm Paterson's involvement at Wests. He may have had an administrative role or perhaps there was some confusion with George Paterson's more public involvement at the Club.

In 1929, George Paterson was the President of the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Clubs of NSW and chaired the second annual conference held at Lakemba NSW. He was recorded as saying that; "Lakemba formed one of the first comfort funds and was absolutely the first place in which a home for returned soldiers was built by voluntary labour." He was referring to what was the Lakemba RSL and at that time it had seating for up to 650 people with plans to expand.

George Paterson represented the Lakemba Presbyterian Men's League in a debating competition final in 1933. In that year, George Paterson was elected as the Pensions Officer for the Returned Services League.

In 1938 a story was written in Smith's Weekly about George Paterson, titled "Digger who has made good." The story reads as follows;

*"On discharge from the AIF he entered the firm of A G Kidson and Co, iron and steel indent merchants, as their NSW manager, and remained there until 1924, when he sought fresh fields. He joined Argent Manufacturing Co. whose staff at that time numbered twenty four. Today, under George's guidance it has grown to one hundred and seventy five. The firm deals in the manufacture and printing of cardboard*

*boxes, even the designing and printing of the various colored pictures being completed on the premises.*

*Yearly output approximates seven million boxes and this Digger box maker is contemplating further additions to his plant. George has recently added cigarette paper packing machines, and many well-known brands are produced by him.*

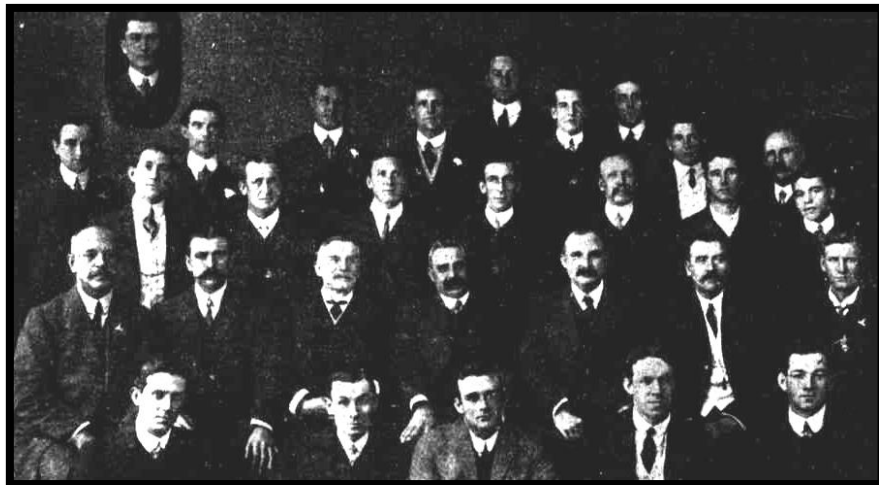
*This former sergeant of the 30th Battalion, is still a Digger to the backbone, both in private and business life. A strict policy of his firm is - Preference to Diggers, sons and daughters of Diggers, and then civilian orphans, and retention in employment when they are 21.*

*George is a life member of the Australian Legion of Ex-Service Clubs and was one of the foundation members. He has held every office in the organisation. For the past five years he has been Legion Pensions Officer, and during that period his voluntary efforts on behalf of the Diggers have resulted in their collecting of many thousands of pounds by way of increased pensions."*

George Paterson enlisted again during the Second World War but his military record has not been accessed. Given his age and experience it was most likely that he was engaged in Home Depot activities.

In 1948 George Paterson had the honour of leading the Anzac Day parade at the Sydney Cenotaph. He placed a simple laurel wreath with a bunch of rosemary on behalf of the Australian Legion of Ex-Services Clubs. He also pronounced the Anzac Dedication. With him was the first honorary secretary, Mr E. A. Rushworth, and the first honorary treasurer, Mr J. S. Davidson. George Paterson was the first President of the Legion and all three men were present at the very first Dawn Service held in 1927.

George Watson Paterson lived all of his life in the Western Suburbs and died at the Repatriation General Hospital at Concord, NSW in 1966.



NSW Rugby League General Committee 1911

Back Row L to R: WJ Chaseling (Newtown), H Odber (inset NS), WP Finegan (Referees), A C Welch (Northern), WA Cann (SS), E R Larkin (Secretary), G W Paterson (WS), S G Ball (SS), E J Mead (WS), WJ Ellis (Newtown)  
Third Row L to R: A Stuart (Annandale), G Brennan (Balmain), C J B White (Hunter), J E Blue (NS), A McNamara (Glebe), H P S Kelly (ES), C J Upton (Glebe),  
Second Row L to R: E Hooper (VP), T C Roy (VP), J J Smith (President), Hon F Flowers (Patron), C H Ford (Chair of Executive), P W Dunne (VP), J Edwards (VP)  
Front Row L to R: W Lennon (Annandale), J Quinlan (E S), J R Moffatt (Hon Solicitor), H R Miller (Hon Treasurer), R R Craig Balmain