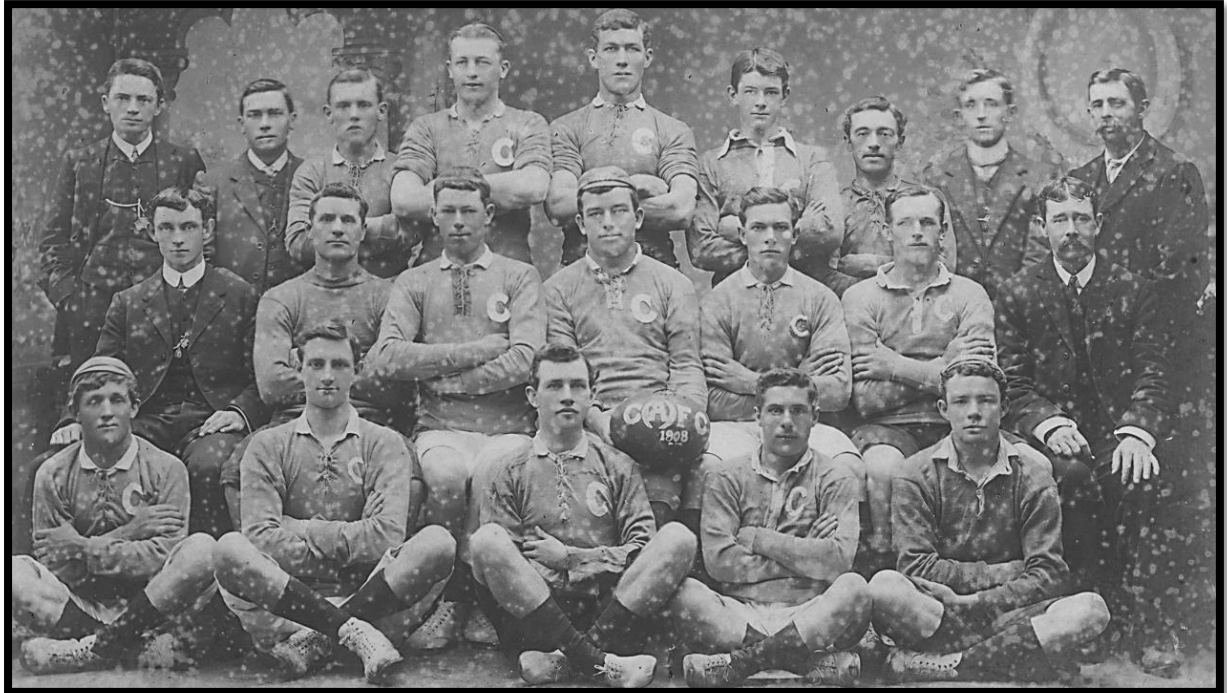


## Westley Easterbrook

.... remained with the Central Newcastle Rugby Union Club in 1909 but at the end of that season his father was transferred to Wallsend in the western suburbs of Newcastle. The family at that time was living at Plattsburg. Due to the applicable residential qualification rules of the time, Westley transferred to the North Newcastle Rugby Union Club and played there during the 1910 season.



### Central Newcastle 'A' Second Grade District Rugby Union Team 1908

#### Winners of Union Medals (Second Grade) Season 1908

**Back Row:** W Howie Hon Sec, W Hunter, H Milton, C Perkins, J Weatherburn, W Easterbrook, L Bishop, L Beckett, Unknown  
**Centre and Front Rows:** Unknown

A further transfer saw the Easterbrook family move to the Sydney suburb of Granville in 1911 where Westley switched codes to play rugby league. He showed talent as a rugby league player early on and played locally with the Parramatta District Club and the Granville Shamrocks. At that time these Clubs played in the Sydney Third Grade competition. Westley also played in Wests President's Cup team in 1911.

In 1912 Westley was graded with Wests and made an immediate impact. He played four First Grade games for Wests in 1912 and a total of twenty six First Grade and two City Cup matches between 1912 and 1914. He also represented Metropolis in 1913 and City against Country in 1914.

Like many men of his era Westley signed up to serve in the First World War. The family was totally committed to making their contribution and the three eldest boys went and did their duty. The youngest boy, Eric was too young to sign up but his father promised him that if he turned sixteen and the war was still going, he would give Eric permission to enlist.

In a news article written in 1940, Eric's mother confirmed that she would not stand in his way as she did "not want any cowards." Fortunately or unfortunately for Eric the war ended before he turned sixteen.

Prior to the First World War, Westley Easterbrook served in the 4th and 3rd Regiments of the Parramatta Lancers. Westley joined the 1st Light Horse Regiment and arrived at Gallipoli in May 1915 where he rose to the rank of Squadron Sergeant Major. He was withdrawn to Egypt via Lemnos at the end of 1915 and was then transferred to France in March 1916 where he was again promoted to Battery Sergeant Major.

During 1916 Westley was in and out of hospital with a number of conditions including Mediterranean Fever, Balanitis and Bronchial Pneumonia but also saw action with the 2nd Divisional Ammunition Column which brought artillery ammunition from stores to the front line.

During 1917 and part of 1918 Westley spent time at No.1, 3 and 4 Command Depots in England before returning to France in May 1918 to rejoin the 2nd Divisional Ammunition Column. Westley Easterbrook returned to Australia in November 1918.

Arguably Westley Easterbrook lost the best years of his rugby league career due to the outbreak of war. However on his return he once again pulled on the Wests jersey and played on until 1923. In his second stint with Wests he played another twenty nine First grade, four Reserve Grade and eight City Cup matches. It is likely that Westley played more lower grade games but these were not regularly recorded before 1920.

One of the highlights for Westley on his return from the war would have been his selection in a Combined AIF team that took on Country in July 1919. This match was part of the peace celebrations arranged by the NSW Rugby League and also celebrated the return of post war representative rugby league.

Westley played alongside other Wests player in the AIF team including Viv and Roy Farnsworth, Jack Redmond and Tedda Brooks. The battle hardened AIF men proved too strong for the Country players on that day.



**Front:** AIF, **2nd Row:** NSW Country, **3rd Row:** NSW Officials, **4th Row:** New Zealand, **5th Row:** Queensland, **Back** NSW  
**Note:** Wests players, V Farnsworth, R Farnsworth, W Easterbrook, J Redmond, and E Brooks were in the AIF team.

Westley Easterbrook enlisted again on 25 May 1940 for service in the Second World War. he gave his birth date as 23 February 1905, some fourteen years younger than he was. He also failed to declare that he served in the First World War on the enlistment form.

The upper enlistment age in 1939 was 35 but raised in 1940 to 40 years of age. Westley Easterbrook was clearly too old to enlist but he was from a family that had a strong commitment to the Armed

Services and no doubt saw it as his duty to serve. Westley served as a Warrant Officer in the 2/1st Medical Regiment and was there for the duration of the war. He was discharged in January 1946.

Westley was a Superintendent of the Parramatta Division of the St Johns Ambulance and a Grand Master of the Granville M.U.I.O.O.F.

Westley Easterbrook died at Queenscliff, NSW in July 1981.



Memorial window at St Marks Anglican Church Granville commemorating the service of Westley Easterbrook and his brothers in World War 1.



St Marks Church Granville  
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