

**St. Paul's Churchyard,  
Landkey, Devon, England**

**War Grave**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**5018 PRIVATE**

**S. J. GRATTON**

**22ND BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**14TH DECEMBER, 1916 Age 33**

## Sydney James GRATTON

Sydney James Gratton was born at Landkey, Devon, England to parents William Henry & Thirza Eliza Gratton (nee Shapland). His birth was registered in the March quarter, 1883 in the registration district of Barnstaple, Devon, England. Sydney James Gratton was baptised on 28th October, 1886 at Swimbridge, Devon, England along with his siblings Thirza Eliza Gratton & Elizabeth Alice Gratton.

The 1891 England Census recorded Sidney Gratton as an 8 year old, Scholar, living with his family at Dennington Rd, Swimbridge, Devon, England in a 4 roomed dwelling. His parents were listed as William Gratton (Agricultural Labourer, aged 35, born North Molton, Devon) & Thirza Gratton (aged 36, born Kings Nympton, Devon). Sydney was one of seven children listed on this Census – William Gratton (Agricultural Labourer, aged 17, born Glamorgan, S. Wales), George Gratton (Agricultural Labourer, aged 13, born Bishops Tawton, Devon), Thomas Gratton (Scholar, aged 11, born Bishops Tawton, Devon), then Sydney, Alice Gratton (Scholar, aged 5, born Swimbridge, Devon), Lilly Gratton (age 4, born Swimbridge, Devon) & Walter Gratton (aged 1, born Swimbridge, Devon).

The 1901 England Census recorded Sydney J. Gratton as an 18 year old Carter on a Farm, along with his sister Thirza E. Gratton (Servant, aged 19) working & living at Sangaton, Chittlehampton, Devon with their employer - Herbert E. Jones (Farmer, aged 30) his wife Martha Jones (aged 34) & their daughter Lilian A. Jones (aged 8 months).

The 1911 England Census recorded Sidney Gratton as a 27 year old, single, Horseman, living & working as a servant with his employer – John Pengelly Jones (Farmer, aged 32) & his wife Ellen Jones (aged 33) at Winsom Farm, Chittlehampton, Devon. Also listed on the Census for this household – Annie Passmore – Visitor (aged 40) & 3 other servants – Louisa Tucker (Domestic, aged 17), Walter Cove (Cowboy, aged 14) & Thomas Murch (Horseman, aged 19).

According to information provided by his widow for the Roll of Honour – Sydney Gratton came to Australia in 1910. Mrs Gratton also stated that Sydney Gratton had served with Light Horse Royal North Devon Hussars at Barnstaple.

The 1913 & 1914 Australian Electoral Rolls for the division of Corangamite, subdivision of Beaufort, Victoria recorded Sydney James Gratton, Carter, of Beaufort.

The 1916 & 1917 Australian Electoral Rolls for the division of Corangamite, subdivision of Beaufort, Victoria recorded Sydney James Gratton, Labourer, & his wife Lavinia Matilda Jones Gratton, Home Duties, of Beaufort.

The 1918 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Corangamite, subdivision of Beaufort, Victoria recorded Sydney James Gratton, Groom, & his wife Lavinia Matilda Jones Gratton, Home Duties, of Beaufort.

Sydney James Gratton married Lavinia Matilda Baker on 29th January, 1916 in Victoria. A birth was registered on the district of Beaufort, Victoria in 1916 for Harriett Lavinia Ethel Gratton, daughter of Sydney & Lavinia Gratton.

Sydney James Gratton was a 33 year old, married, Groom from Beaufort, Victoria when he enlisted on 14th February, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Church of England & his next of kin was listed as his wife – Mrs Lavinia Matilda Jones Gratton, Beaufort, Victoria. Sydney Gratton recorded on his Attestation Papers that he had served 3 years with Territorials & had been discharged. His Attestation Papers were signed on 22nd February, 1916 & another set on 14th February, 1916 & he had stated his next-of-kin as “(Parents) W. H Gratton, Landkey, Barnstaple, Devon, England”. He also stated that he was single. This was altered in red pen to show Wife – “Gratton, Lavinia, Beaufort, Victoria”.

Private Sydney James Gratton was posted to Seymour on 17th March, 1916 for recruit training. He was transferred to 18th Reinforcements on 28th March, 1916 then transferred to No. 2 Company on 14th April, 1916. Private Gratton was transferred to 13th Reinforcements of 22nd Battalion at Broadmeadows, Victoria on 27th April, 1916.

Private Sydney James Gratton, Service number 5018, embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Ayrshire* (A33) on 3rd July, 1916 with the 6th Infantry Brigade, 22nd Infantry Battalion, 13th Reinforcements & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 2nd September, 1916.

Reinforcements were only given basic training in Australia. Training was completed in training units in England. Some of these were located in the Salisbury Plain & surrounding areas in the county of Wiltshire.

Private Sydney James Gratton was taken on strength of 6th Training Battalion on 3rd September, 1916.

Private Sydney James Gratton was admitted to Fargo Military Hospital on 17th October, 1916 with Scabies (date of discharge not recorded).

Private Sydney James Gratton was admitted to Fargo Military Hospital on 12th December, 1916. His condition was listed as dangerously & seriously ill.

## **22nd Battalion**

The 22nd Battalion AIF was formed on 26 March 1915 at Broadmeadows Camp in Victoria. The battalion became part of the 6th Brigade of the 2nd Division....

*(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)*

Private Sydney James Gratton died at 8.30 pm on 14th December, 1916 at Military Hospital, Fargo, Larkhill, Wiltshire, England from Asthma.

A death for Sidney J. Gratton, aged 33, was registered in the December quarter, 1916 in the district of Amesbury, Wiltshire, England.

Private Sydney James Gratton was buried on 19th December, 1916 in St. Paul's Churchyard, Landkey, Devon, England – west of Church & has a Private Headstone. His death is still acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Newspaper item – North Devon Journal, England – 28 December, 1916:

### **LANDKEY**

*Great sympathy is felt for Mr and Mrs T. Gratton in that, yet another of their sons, Pte Sidney Gratton, of the Australian Imperial Forces, has died in the service of his country, succumbing to illness in hospital at Salisbury. This makes three brother who have laid down their lives for the great cause. The funeral took place in the Parish Churchyard, Landkey. The coffin, covered with the Union Jack, was followed by Mr and Mrs T. Gratton (parents), Pte F. Gratton and Pte W. Gratton (brothers), Mrs Gould, Mrs Lake and Miss Gratton (sisters), Mr and Mrs G. Gratton (uncle and aunt), and a large attendance of the general public. The funeral cortege was met at the entrance of the Churchyard by the Rev. T. B. Panther (Vicar), who conducted the last sad rites in a most impressive manner. The service was choral, psalm 39 being sung to Felton, and hymn 499 "On the Ressurrection morning," was also sung. A funeral march was able rendered by the organists Mr W. Taylor.*

Base Records wrote to Officer in Charge, Military Hospital, Fargo, England on 2nd February, 1917 regarding the late No. 5018 Private S. J. Gratton, 22nd Battalion, A.I.F.: *"Information has been received from your hospital that the body of the above deceased soldier was removed to his relatives residence at Barnstaple. As the name of the relatives and their full address were omitted in your report, could this office be advised of same, at your earliest convenience please."*

Base Records wrote to W. Gratton Esq., Landkey, Newland near Barnstaple on 28th March, 1917 with the following: *"Information has been received from the Military Hospital Fargo, that the Body of the late No. 5018 Pte Gratton S. J. 22nd Battalion A.I.F. was sent to your residence for interment. I would esteem it a favour, if you would supple this office as to the following particulars, Grave Site, Grave Site No, Cemetery, and date of Burial, for records purposes in this office."*

A War Pension was granted to Lavinia Matilda Jones Gratton, Neil St., Beaufort, widow of the late Private Sydney James Gratton, in the sum of £2 per fortnight from 19th February, 1917. A pension was also granted to Harriett E. L. Gratton, daughter of Lavinia & Private Sydney Gratton, in the sum of £1 per fortnight from 19th February, 1917.

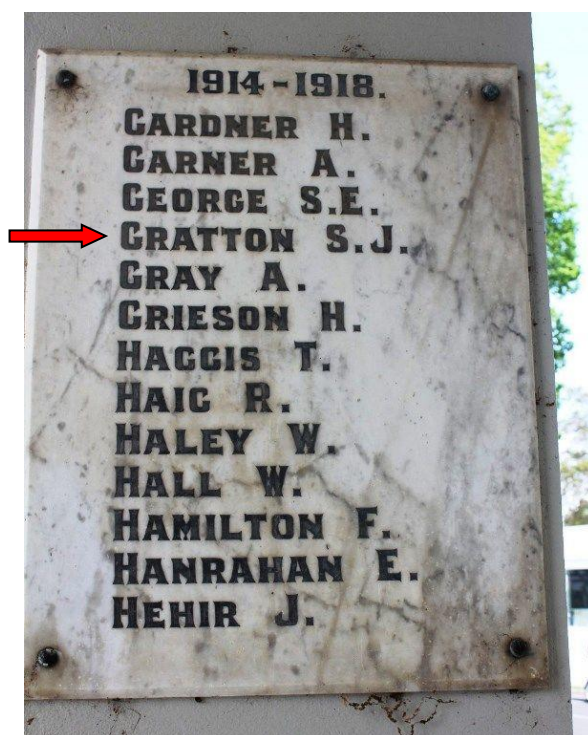
Private Sydney James Gratton was entitled to British War Medal only as he had not entered a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Gratton's widow – Mrs L. Gratton, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll & Plaque sent May, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Sydney James Gratton – service number 5018, aged 33, of 22nd Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of William Henry & Thirza Gratton of Landkey Newland, Barnstable, Devon; husband of Lavinia M. J, Gratton, of Albert St., Beaufort, Victoria, Australia. His brothers Alfred Frank, Thomas John & William Lewis Gratton also fell.

S. J. Gratton is remembered Beaufort War Memorial, located in Ripon Beaufort RSL Memorial Garden, Havelock Street, Beaufort, Victoria.



**Beaufort War Memorial** (Photo above from *AWM Places of Pride*; below from *Monument Australia*)





S. J. Gratton is remembered on the Ripon Shire Roll of Honour, located in Beaufort Town Hall, Lawrence & Willoby Streets, Beaufort, Victoria.



Ripon Shire Roll of Honour (Photo from AWM Places of Pride – Arthur Garland)



S. J. Gratton was remembered on the Ripon Shire Avenue of Honour, starting on Western Highway at Racecourse Road, Beaufort, Victoria. There were originally 500 elm trees planted on either side of the highway after WW1. They have since been replaced with poplars starting at Racecourse Road in Beaufort & finishing at Trawalla Bridge,

The individual plaques are no longer located at the trees, instead they have been fixed to a wall near the War Memorial.

Newspaper item – Riponshire Advocate, Victoria – 17 August, 1918:

**RIPONSHIRE SOLDIERS' AVENUE OF HONOR**

**TREE-PLANTING DAY**

*Saturday was a red-letter day in the history of Beaufort and district, being the occasion of the planting of the Riponshire Soldiers' Avenue of Honor. The avenue, which consists of 500 deciduous trees, situated on the main Beaufort-Ballarat road.*

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*Appended is the list of soldiers and nurses for whom trees were planted (the four nurses' trees being at the Beaufort end of the avenue, and the soldiers following in alphabetical order):-*

.....

*S. J. Gratton (dead)*

.....



**Ripon Shire Avenue of Honour** (Photos from Monument Australia – Sandra Brown)



Private S. J. Gratton is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 96.



*Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia*

S. J. Gratton is remembered on the Landkey War Memorial, located at Blakes Hill Road & junction of Manor Road, Landkey, Devon, England. Three of his brothers are also listed – W. L. Gratton, T. J. Gratton & A. F. Gratton.



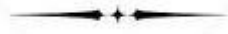




**Landkey War Memorial** (Photos from War Memorials Online – Mike Pickard)

(40 pages of Private Sydney James Gratton's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

*Information obtained from the CWGC, Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll) & National Archives*



## **Newspaper Notices**

### **RECRUITING CAMPAIGN**

#### **RIPON SHIRE RECRUITS**

BEAUFORT, Saturday

Appended are the names of the Ripon Shire recruits who offered themselves for final medical examinations at Ararat last Saturday -.....S. J. Gratton.....

*(The Ballarat Courier, Victoria – 31 January, 1916)*

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### **BEAUFORT**

#### **A SOLDIER'S DEATH**

Private S. J. Gratton, of Beaufort, died from asthma in England on the 14th inst., the official notification having been received at Beaufort. Private Gratton emigrated from England to Australia and worked in Beaufort district for some years prior to enlisting as a member of the township's first unit. He leaves a widow and one child.

*(The Ballarat Star, Victoria – 21 December, 1916)*



## **Died of Sickness**

BEAUFORT – Private S. J. Gratton, of Beaufort, died of Asthma in England on 14th inst. Deceased worked in Beaufort district for some years prior to enlisting as a member of the township's first unit. He leaves a widow and one child.

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 26 December, 1916)

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## **CASUALTIES IN FRANCE**

Official news has been received in Beaufort that Private S. J. Gratton died from asthma in England on December 14. Private Gratton came out to Australia from England a few years ago, and up to the time of enlistment was employed in the Beaufort district. He left a widow and one child.

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 27 December, 1916)

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## **FOR THE EMPIRE**

In the 257th and 258th casualty lists the sad news that Private S. J. Gratton, of Beaufort, has died of illness is confirmed. We made fuller reference to his death in our last issue.

(*Riponshire Advocate*, Victoria – 30 December, 1916)

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## **THE 257th CASUALTY LIST**

The Victorian names are:

### **DIED OF OTHER CAUSES**

Private S. J. Gratton, Beaufort

(*The Mildura Cultivator*, Victoria - 30 December, 1916)

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## **MEMORIAL SERVICE**

One of the saddest and most impressive events in the history of Beaufort took place on Wednesday afternoon, when an open-air memorial service was held at the local band rotunda in Neill-street for the 25 brave soldiers of the district who have fallen....

### **FALLEN HEROES OF BEAUFORT DISTRICT**

.....

Pte S. J. GRATTON, Beaufort

....

(*Riponshire Advocate*, Victoria – 11 August, 1917)

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## Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission cares for cemeteries and memorials in 23,000 locations, in 153 countries. In all 1.7 million men and women from the Commonwealth forces from WWI and WWII have been honoured and commemorated in perpetuity.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission, as part of its mandate, is responsible for commemorating all Commonwealth war dead individually and equally. To this end, the war dead are commemorated by name on a headstone, at an identified site of a burial, or on a memorial. War dead are commemorated uniformly and equally, irrespective of military or civil rank, race or creed.

Not all service personnel have a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. In some instances the relative chose to have their own memorial/headstone placed on the deceased's grave. These private headstones are not maintained by the CWGC as they have no jurisdiction to maintain them.

Private Sydney James Gratton has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission & is also remembered on his parents' private Headstone.

## **St. Paul's Churchyard, Landkey, Devon, England**

St. Paul's Churchyard, Landkey, Devon contains 2 Commonwealth War Graves – one from World War 1 & one from World War 2.



**St. Paul's Churchyard, Landkey** (Photo from *Find a Grave* – Devon Church Crawler)



Photo of Private S. J. Gratton's Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone in St. Paul's Churchyard, Landkey, Devon, England.



*(Photo from Find a Grave – Kevin B)*



Photo of Private Sydney James Gratton's shared Private Headstone in St. Paul's Churchyard, Landkey, Devon, England.



*(Photo courtesy of Kevin Cameron)*

*In*  
*Loving Memory*  
*Of*  
**WILLIAM HENRY GRATTON**

*Died Oct 6th 1928*

*Aged 73*

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*Also Our Sons*

**WILLIAM, THOMAS**

**SYDNEY And ALFRED**

*Killed In The Great War*

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*Reunited*

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*Also of Thirza*

*Wife And Mother Of The Above*

*Died*

*August 17th 1930*

*Aged 76*