

## Margaret Jane Fortescue 1879 - 1918

**Mary Jane FORTESCUE/ Margaret Jane Fortescue** was born on 23 July 1878 in Keewatin, Northwest Territories, Canada, the youngest daughter of Joseph and Sarah Jane Fortescue,. In the Canada 1880 census return she is shown as Mary Jane, but all other references are to Margaret Jane. She died on 27 June 1918 when the Hospital Ship H.M.H.S.Llandoverly Castle was torpedoed and sunk by a German submarine. She was the grand-daughter of **Matthew and Margaret FORTESCUE** of Dawlish.



In memory of Nursing Sister  
MARGARET JANE FORTESCUE  
who died on June 27, 1918.

Regiment: Canadian Army Medical Corps

Unit: Llandoverly Castle (Hospital Ship)

Burial Information: Cemetery: HALIFAX MEMORIAL, Nova Scotia, Canada

Grave Reference: Panel 2.

Location: The HALIFAX MEMORIAL in Nova Scotia's capital, erected in Point Pleasant Park, is one of the few tangible reminders of the men who died at sea.

This Memorial was erected by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and was

unveiled in November 1967 with naval ceremony by H.P. MacKeen, Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia, in the presence of R. Teillet, then Minister of Veterans Affairs. The monument is a great granite Cross of Sacrifice over 12 metres high, clearly visible to all ships approaching Halifax. The cross is mounted on a large podium bearing 23 bronze panels upon which are inscribed the names of over 3,000 Canadian men and women who were buried at sea. Twenty-four ships were lost by the Royal Canadian Navy in the Second World War and nearly 2,000 members of the RCN lost their lives. The dedicatory inscription, in French and English, reads as follows:

1914 1939

1918 1945

IN THE HONOUR OF THE MEN AND WOMEN  
OF THE NAVY ARMY AND MERCHANT NAVY OF CANADA  
WHOSE NAMES ARE INSCRIBED HERE  
THEIR GRAVES ARE UNKNOWN  
BUT THEIR MEMORY SHALL ENDURE.

On June 19, 2003, the Government of Canada designated September 3rd of each year as a day to acknowledge the contribution of Merchant Navy Veterans.

#### ***From De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour 1914- 1924***

**FORTESCUE, MARGARET JANE**, Nursing Sister, Canadian Army Medical Corps, Youngest daughter of the late Joseph Fortescue, Chief Factor, Hudsons Bay Company, by his wife, Sarah Jane, daughter of the late Rev. Mason, D.D., of Northumberland; and granddaughter of the late Matthew Fortescue, County Court Judge, of Totnes, Devon; b. Hudson's Bay, Canada, 1879; educ. Dawlish, co. Devon; was trained as a Nurse at Montreal General Hospital; volunteered for foreign service, and joined the Canadian Red Cross In 1915; served with the Expeditionary Force in France and Flanders from 18 May, 1915, being posted to various hospitals and casualty clearing stations there; Was posted to H.M. Hospital Ship Llandovery Castle 5 June, 1918, and was lost when that ship was torpedoed and sunk in the Irish Sea on the 27th of the same month.

The Director of Medical Service, London, wrote: ". . . Sister Fortescue was untiring in her efforts to do everything humanly possible for the sick and wounded under her care," and a former patient, a private in the Canadian Army; "Little Mother" (the name bestowed upon her by the patients whom she nursed) earned the V.C. as much as any man in the Army. .... .. Four years' untiring labour and fearless devotion, often caring for the wounded and dying in sound of guns and while bombs crashed through the hospital roof; through cold and heat, by days and dreary nights of ceaseless care, Nursing Sister Fortescue was ever brave and unafraid, knowing nothing else save the doing of her duty, no matter what the cost. We who received her tender ministrations have the proud and reverent memory of a good woman." **She was mentioned in Despatches** (London Gazette, 28 May, 1918) for gallant and distinguished services, and devotion to duty, at No. 3 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station; *unmarried*

Margaret Ann Fortescue is commemorated on a white marble heart-shaped tablet on the grave of her grand father, Matthew Fortescue, in St Gregory's Churchyard, Dawlish.

To  
**MARGARET JANE**  
YOUNGEST DAUGHTER OF  
**JOSEPH FORTESCUE,**  
WHO WITH THIRTEEN OTHER  
NURSES LOST HER LIFE OFF  
THE IRISH COAST,  
JUNE 27<sup>TH</sup> 1918,  
WHEN THE CANADIAN  
HOSPITAL SHIP  
**LLANDOVERY CASTLE**  
WAS TORPEDOED

### **HER PARENTS**

**FATHER - Joseph FORTESCUE** was the eldest son of Matthew and Margaret Fortescue, and was born in Greenwich, Kent born on 16 October 1833. He was christened on 2 December 1833.

Joseph is shown on the 1851 census as living with his parents in the home of Mary Fortescue, a widow aged 83, at 28 Regent Square, Grays Inn Lane. His father, Matthew, was shown as a Barrister (in Practice). By that time his father had married again to Maria J Bowyear.(see later entry)

Joseph then moved to Canada and married **Sarah Jane Mason**, eldest daughter of William and Sarah Mason. They were married at York Factory, Northwest Territories, Canada on 14 September, 1864

### **Children:**

Matthew (1866- ) married Pendentia Angela Butler of Ireland in 1890;

Annie Maud Marie (1867- ) married Angus McKay of Prince Albert, Sask in 1889

She is shown as staying with her grandfather at Oak Park House, East Cliff, Dawlish in the 1881 census and as a scholar, presumably at *The Misses Parrott's, High Class Ladies School, 8 West Cliff, Dawlish (Kelly's Directory 1878)*

Caroline Elizabeth (1869-1871;

Hugh ( 1870-1870) (infant death);

Frances Eleanor (1871- 1928 ); see below

Gertrude Edith May (1873- );

Charles Le Geyt (1878- 1936); see below

**Margaret Jane (1878-1918 );**

John Percival (1879 - );

twins George Godfrey (1886- 1916)

and Joseph Edward Barrington (1886-1898)

**Frances Eleanor FORTESCUE** was born on 16 December 1871 in Norway House, Manitoba, Canada. In 1900 she was a Canadian Nursing Sister in Capetown, South Africa. She died on 15 December 1928 in Saskatoon Sanitarium, Saskatchewan, Canada.

Spouse: [William McKay TRAILL](#). Frances Eleanor FORTESCUE and William McKay TRAILL were married on 15 December 1909 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

**Charles Le Geyt FORTESCUE, Professor** was born about 1878 in Keewatin, Northwest Territories, Canada. Hudson Bay Factory where the Hayes River enters Hudson Bay. He immigrated in 1901 to USA. He appeared in the census on 11 April 1930 in Pittsburgh, USA. Charles died on 4 December 1936 in Pittsburgh, USA.

Charles LeGeyt Fortescue, was the first electrical engineering graduate of Queen's University. After graduation Fortescue joined Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company at East Pittsburgh and attained universal fame for his contributions to the engineering principles and analysis of power transmission and distribution systems. He made his way, eventually, to MIT where he became a very well known and respected professor. The Charles LeGeyt Fortescue Scholarship was established in 1939 at MIT as a memorial to Charles LeGeyt in recognition of his valuable contributions to the field of electrical engineering.

Spouse: [Louise Cameron WALTER](#). They were married about 1905. Children were: [Jane Faithful FORTESCUE](#).

The family appeared in the census in 1880 in York Factory, Northwest Territories, Canada, although Anne Maud Marie was then staying in Dawlish. The whole family were described as English and their religion as Church of England.

#### **Census 1880 Canada**

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Joseph Fortescue           | Married Male 48, born England, occupation Chief Factor  |
| Sarah Jane Fortescue       | Married Female 36, born Keewatin North West Territories |
| Frances Eleanor Fortescue  | F 10, Keewatin NWT                                      |
| Gertrude E Mary Fortescue  | F 8, Keewatin NWT                                       |
| Charles Legeyt Fortescue   | M 5, Keewatin NWT                                       |
| <b>Mary Jane Fortescue</b> | <b>F 3, Keewatin NWT</b>                                |
| John Perival Fortescue     | M 1, Keewatin NWT                                       |

Joseph died on 13 June 1899, and was shown as living at Edgehill, Kingston, Ontario, Canada (England & Wales, National Probate Calendar) leaving his effects to Sarah Jane and Edward Handley Smythe esquire.

*Factory was owned by Hudson Bay Comp. and was involved in fur trading. It is about 525 miles north east of Winnipeg on Hudson Bay. There are no roads going in, one has to fly in.*

*York's population grew with each passing year, soon outstripping the resources needed to sustain it. A sprawling complex spanning eleven acres, its immense size made it very difficult to fuel: the demand for firewood far exceeded the supply. By 1880 it took a labour force of some forty to sixty men and women to transport firewood from cutting sites to*

wood yards. Food shortages were also becoming an issue. Declining goose, caribou and rabbit populations affected food supplies. The imbalance in the local ecosystem became glaringly obvious. In 1873 York Factory's role as the headquarters and supply depot for the Northern Department officially ended. Chief Factor Joseph Fortescue, who was in charge of York Factory from 1872 to 1884, terminated the York Factory brigades and operations were reduced.

The Fortescues, from York Factory records

*Joseph Fortescue, born St Pancras, London. 16 October 1833. (This shows birth in St Pancras which is at variance with other records, but he lived with his father in St Pancras parish at the time of the 1851 English census.)*

*Entered into service 1 April 1852. Died 15 June 1899.. Place not listed.*

*1852-1854 Apprentice clerk Moose Factory*

*1854-1860 Clerk Ft Garry ( Now part of Winnipeg)*

*1861-1866 Clerk Norway House and York Factory*

*1867-1869 and 1870-1872 Chief trader Norway House and York Factory*

*1869-1870 Furlough*

*1872-1879 Factor York Factory*

*1879-1884 Chief Factor York Factory*

*1884-1885 Furlough*

*1885-1892 Posted to Isle a la Crosse (Saskatchewan, I think) and Moose Factory*

*1892 Retired*

**HER GRANDFATHER**

**Matthew FORTESCUE** was born on 18 May 1805 in Clifton, Somerset. He trained as a Barrister and was married twice. His first marriage to Margaret Eleanor LeGuyt ended with her death in Greenwich Hospital where she was buried on 8 May 1838, age 31. He married again, to Maria Jane Bowyer in 1849. He died at Dawlish, 27 March 1883.

**Spouse 1: [Margaret Eleanor LE GEYT. \(1809-1838\)](#)**

Children were:

[Margaret Ann FORTESCUE](#), (1832 - 1900)

[Joseph FORTESCUE](#), (1833 - 1899)

[Elizabeth FORTESCUE](#), (1835 - 1907 )

[Mary FORTESCUE](#), (1836- 1881 )

[Matthew FORTESCUE](#). (1838 - 1912)

**Spouse 2: [Maria Jane BOWYEAR of Hereford \(1809- 1884\)](#)**

Maria Jane BOWYEAR of Hereford and Matthew FORTESCUE were married in December 1849 in Sevenoaks, Kent. They obtained a marriage license on 14 December 1849.

Children were:

[Frances Maria Caroline FORTESCUE](#). (1854 - 1933 )

Matthew Fortescue moved to Berry Pomeroy, Devon before the 1861 census and by 1878 he was living at "Oak Park House", East Cliff, Dawlish, and his occupation is shown as J.P. and County Court Judge. By 1881 his family of wife, four daughters and two sons had reduced to three unmarried daughters living at home and visiting grand-daughter.

**Census of 1881**, living in Oak Park House, East Cliff, Dawlish, Devon, were:

Matthew FORTESCUE      Head, Married, Male 75, born Clifton, Somerset, England  
   J.P. & Judge Of County Courts

Maria Jane FORTESCUE      Wife, Married Female 72, born Gilwyn, Hereford, England  
   Judges Wife

Margaret Ann FORTESCUE      Daughter, Unmarried Female, 48, born Greenwich, Kent,  
   Judges Daughter

Elizabeth FORTESCUE      Daughter, Unmarried Female, 45 Greenwich, Kent,  
   Judges Daughter

Mary FORTESCUE      Daughter, Unmarried Female, 44, Greenwich, Kent,  
   Judges Daughter

Frances Maria Caroline      Daughter Unmarried Female, 26, St Pancras, Middlesex,  
   Judges Daughter

Annie Maud Mary Caroline      Grand-daughter Female, 13, Canada  
   Grand Daughter      Scholar

Matthew junior had moved from home and in early 1883 married Emily Jane Johnson in Chichester, Sussex. By 1911 they were living at The Grange, Ipplepen, Nr Newton Abbot with three servants. Matthew died in late 1912, and in time his widow moved to Summerdale, Ipplepen where she died 19 January 1928. It is not known if there were children of the marriage.

After the death of Matthew senior at Dawlish, 27 March 1883, his widow Maria Jane Fortescue left Dawlish to live at 'Berry Pomeroy', Boscombe, Bournemouth but died on 22 July 1884 at Harbledown Rectory, near Canterbury, Kent.

The eldest daughter, Margaret Ann Fortescue, was born on 29 July 1832 in Greenwich, Kent, as were many of the first generation of the family. She was christened on 28 August 1832. After her father's death in 1883 she moved to 1 Church House, Dawlish with her sister Elizabeth (*Kelly's Directory 1889*). Later their address is shown as 6 Plantation Terrace (*Kelly's Directory 1895*). Margaret Ann died in Dawlish on 1 November 1901, unmarried, leaving her effects of £492.13s.8d to her sister Elizabeth.

### **1891 Census**

**Margaret Jane Fortescue** had arrived from Canada and was shown on the census as "Daisy Fortescue", pupil, 12 years old, at Miss Susan Parrott's Ladies' School, 8 Westcliff, Dawlish. Her aunt, Margaret Ann was the head of a small household of four (two being servants) and shown with "own means", and was presumably acting as guardian to her Canadian neice.

Elizabeth, also a spinster, survived her sister by seven years, dying at Penwarne, Plantation Terrace, Dawlish on 26 January 1907, age 72, leaving her effects to her elder brother Matthew and to her step-sister Frances Maria Caroline Fortescue, spinster.

Mary remained unmarried and died late in 1881 (Oct-Dec) aged 44.

Frances Maria Caroline Fortescue died a spinster at Stonecote, Lower Salvington, Worthing on 1 April 1933 with probate granted to Messrs Hoare, Trustees.

Sources: Ancestry.co.uk for census, BMD and Probate records  
www.fortescue.org  
rememberingfirstworldwarnurses.blogspot.com  
Various Directories for Dawlish (Public Library, Local History)  
Dawlish St Gregory's Churchyard

