

Women

Angel of Summerdown



Read this article to learn about Pauline Page Whitney - The Angel of Summerdown.

During the First World War some soldiers received wounds that needed special treatment in order to heal or to recover from. To help them recover, special camps were created around the country.

Summerdown Camp was built near Eastbourne in the South Downs, and opened in 1915 to treat wounded soldiers. At its height Summerdown contained 3,500 wounded men who were known locally as 'Blueboys' because of the different uniforms they had to wear. It was important for wounded men from the camp to be easily recognisable when out in the town. Some wounds were not obvious at first glance and being a man who seemed fit and healthy and yet was not in army uniform could result in pressure being placed upon them by civilians to join the army. The handing out of [white feathers](#) by women to men suspected of being too cowardly to



join the army was humiliating at the time. Wearing a blue uniform let everyone know that the man was already in the army and had been wounded.

The treatment given to men at Summerdown included massage sessions to help speed up recovery. These sessions were performed by the Almeric Paget Massage Corps, who were organised by Pauline Page Whitney, wife of Almeric Paget. To begin with there were 50 women working in the Massage Corps. This number increased during the war and reached 2,000 during 1918. The group would be renamed as the Almeric Paget Military Massage Corps (also known as the A.P.M.M.C) in 1916.

Women in the Corps were easily distinguishable from women in the regular Nursing Service. They wore a simple uniform with the badge of the A.P.M.M.C on their left arm, and senior women wore red bars on the shoulders.

Before her marriage Pauline had been born and raised in the United States. With the formation of the A.P.M.M.C and the outbreak of the war, she became active in the organisation and was regularly seen at Summerdown Camp organising the women there. The wounded soldiers liked her and the masseuses so much that she was widely referred to as the 'Angel of Summerdown'.

Living in her house at Berkley Square in London, Pauline Paget kept her interest in the women of the A.P.M.M.C and the services they provided to wounded soldiers. However following three weeks of illness she died in November of 1916 and, as a result, never lived to see how important the organisation would become.



News of her death was published in the New York Times and a [monument](#) to her still exists in the grounds of [St Mary's Church in Hertfordshire](#).

Questions:

- 1) Who was the 'Angel of Summerdown'?
- 2) What role did women have in WW1 hospitals?
- 3) Why did wounded soldiers wear blue uniforms?
- 4) How many women were serving in the A.P.M.M.C. by the end of the war?



Images



Figure 1: Pauline Paget and nurses at Summerdown Camp





Figure 2: Pauline Paget at Summerdown Camp



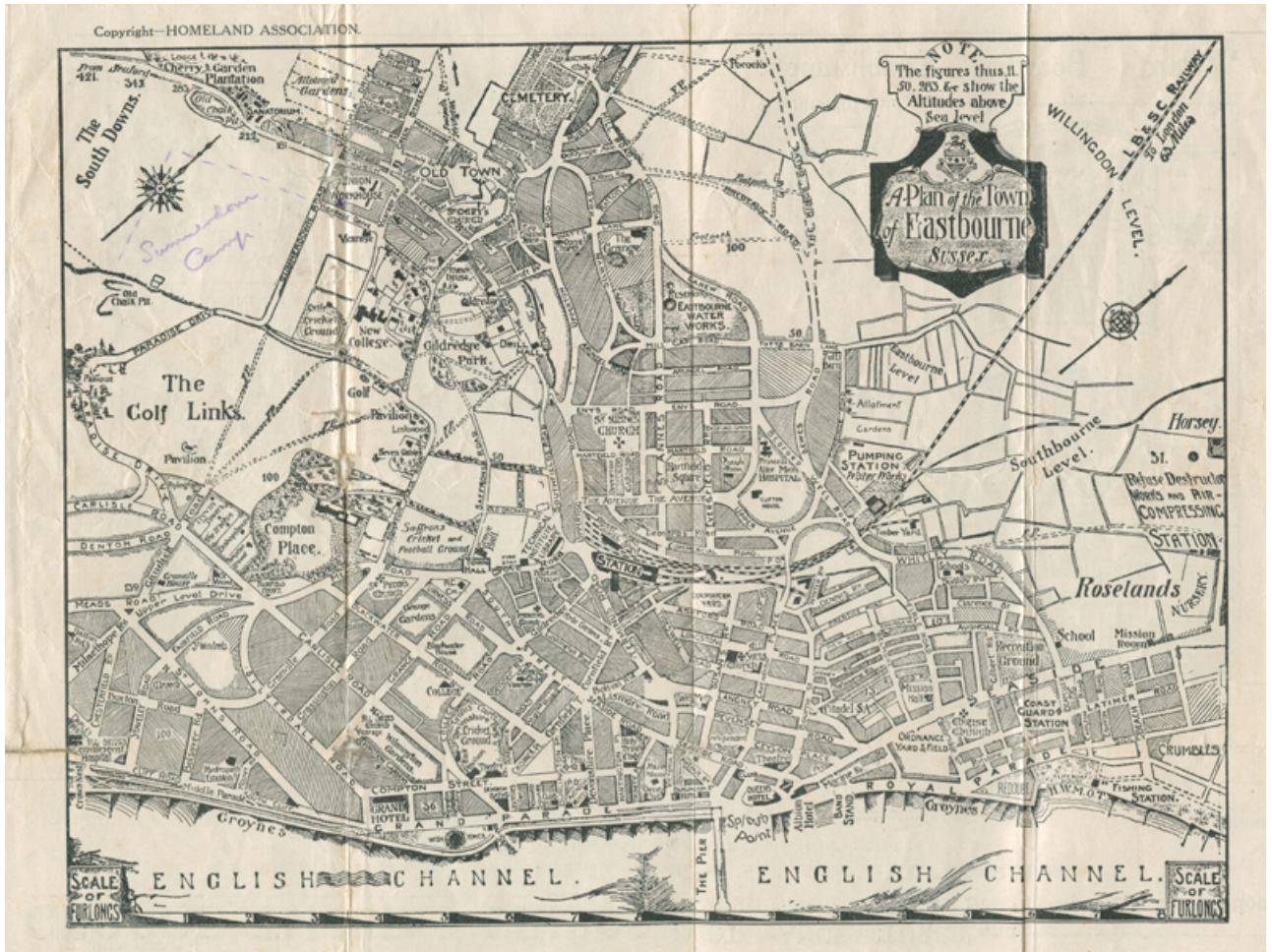


Figure 3: Map location of Summerdown Camp, Eastbourne





Figure 4: Summerdown Journal announcing Pauline Paget's death

