



CONSTANCE BROOKS

traveller



Constance Brooks lived before the Great War at 144 Clarendon Street, East Melbourne, part of Fitzroy Terrace, (*State Library of Victoria*)



‘Connie’, (*family collection*)



Constance Brooks’ husband, Charles Emil John Clerici, (*family collection*)

Born in 1888 in Williamstown Victoria, one of seven children of customs official Yates Brooks and his wife Emma; grew up in St Kilda and educated at home with a governess

Lived in East Melbourne from 1903 to 1913 with her widowed mother and siblings at 144 Clarendon Street, part of Fitzroy Terrace

Trained as a nurse at Melbourne and Bendigo Hospitals from 1913 to 1916

Joined the Australian Army Nursing Service on completing her training to fulfil her dream to travel

After nursing repatriated wounded troops in Melbourne, sent to serve in India; arrived in Bombay (now Mumbai) on 1 January 1917

Nursed at Rawalpindi on the North West Frontier at the foot of the Himalayas, and then at the Victoria War and Gerard Freeman Thomas Hospitals in Bombay

Experienced in treating troops with septic battle wounds, severe heat stroke, dysentery and paratyphoid

Served in intense heat and humidity on a hospital transport carrying sick and wounded troops and prisoners of war from German East Africa and Mesopotamia (Iraq)



Constance Brooks (right) relaxing with colleagues on active service, (*family collection*)



Constance Brooks’ silk cape, (*family collection*)



Constance Brooks (top right) on leave in Egypt c1917, (*family collection*)



Constance Brooks nursed in Rawalpindi on the remote North West Frontier of India (*AWM P00562.079*)

Travelled to Kashmir, Cape Town, Basra, and Egypt in the course of duty and while on leave

Met Major Charles Emil John Clerici (known as John) OBE CIE of the Royal Engineers at an officers club in Bombay

After marrying Clerici in Holy Name Cathedral, Bombay in 1919, moved to Baghdad where Clerici was setting up the postal service in the new British protectorate of Mesopotamia

Left for Australia in 1920 with their first child just before the anti-British uprising in Mesopotamia

After a period in Melbourne, returned to India in 1921 when Clerici was appointed to a senior position in the Indian Postal Service; mingled with and entertained leading British and Indian society for a decade

Resided in Melbourne with their three children from 1931, after Clerici retired

Resumed nursing to support her three children after her husband’s death in 1938 and the retrospective cessation of his pension

Died Beaumaris, Victoria in 1966, aged 78.



Constance Brooks, now Mrs Clerici, (front right) and her husband, CE John Clerici, (front left) in Basra 1919, (*family collection*)