

Looking Forward Looking Back by Christopher Jobson

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“Looking Forward Looking Back” by Christopher Jobson, Vietnam veteran, professional soldier who rose through the ranks to become the Regimental Sergeant-Major (RSM) Ceremony and Protocol. Jobson has the credentials to bring this book to life when he examines the Customs and Traditions of the Australian Army.

Jobson gives an introduction to each of the chapters and then explains each topic, like the history of the iconic Slouch Hat, the puggaree and chin strap. In 1885 *‘Colonel Tom Price had his soldiers turn up the right-hand side of the hat so that his troops, could “look the inspecting officer in the eye” when they marched past on ceremonial parades. In time, the sides changed with the brim being turned up on the left to assist in small arms drill.*

Battle honours are emblazoned on the Colours with names of where the unit has served on active duty. Jobson explains why the *‘Colours are a symbol of the spirit of the regiment, for on them are borne the battle honours and badges granted to the regiment in commemoration of the gallant deeds performed from the time it was raised’*. The sight of the unit Colours whether cased at Headquarters or on parade stirs a feeling of pride with serving soldiers. An emotional feeling of pride and honour can well up inside you and watery eyes are normally associated in seeing the Colours on parade by ex-soldiers. It is also a time for reflection of mates past and present.

ANZAC Day, as we know it today was first held in Sydney’s Martin Place in 1928. Jobson tells the history of ANZAC Day and how it spread throughout Australia. His writing style and layout is easy to understand. *‘Looking Forward Looking Back’* would be a fantastic source of material for teachers and students for projects leading up to ANZAC Day or studying Australian History..

Jobson offers the reader an insight to Customs, Traditions and History of the Australian Army at their finger tips. *‘Looking Forward Looking Back’* is a beautifully presented book which has a “whow” factor with it’s stand out hard cover of ‘Rising Sun badge and poppies’. I was totally engrossed the first time I opened the book and started reading the contents. Jobson has produced a book that every soldier, ex soldier, future soldiers and military historians “should have” in their library.

Reviewed by Gordon Traill