



Launceston Examiner
Saturday 25/07/2009

Page: 35
Section: General News
Region: Launceston TAS, AU
Circulation: 33488
Type: Regional
Size: 80.54 sq.cms.



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Handbook bares the facts about soldiers

LOOKING FORWARD LOOKING BACK: Customs And Traditions Of The Australian Army
By Christopher Jobson
(Big Sky Publishing, \$35 hardcover)

THOSE plaited gold cords worn over the shoulder by senior Australian Army officers on ceremonial occasions are called aiguillette and were originally pieces of cord used for tying up bundles of fodder by cavalymen.

I only know this by reading this new publication which covers a whole range of conventions and traditions adopted by our army over the last century or so.

It's an unusual book, almost a learner's

manual for wannabe soldiers, but one that will also undoubtedly appeal to the military buff and serving troops, but also anyone interested just how the army works. It covers everything from military ranks, badges, insignia, medals and how things like the aiguillette, the lanyard, the slouch hat, the Last Post, reveille and beating retreat developed.

Jobson, a former regimental sergeant-major and a professional soldier for more than 30 years, has produced a highly readable handbook to the Australian army, past and present.

Also pleasing is the print quality — sharp photographs and diagrams on beautiful, top-quality, high-gloss stock.

— JOHN CAPLES