

Snakes in the Jungle, Special Operations in War & Business, Jim Truscott, Zeus Publications, Gold Coast, 2015

Reviewed by Mark Ryan

I have known Jim Truscott since our days at the Royal Military College in the 1970s and I have also had the experience of working with him in the business sector. His autobiography deals with his early life in Brisbane, his time in the Army including his varied and interesting postings in conventional units and his diverse and interesting experiences in less conventional units, such as the SASR. The book also looks at his transition from the Army into business and outlines his approaches and philosophy to succeeding in the 'corporate jungle.' Primarily the book though, is centred around his first passion; climbing. As is apparent throughout the book, he looks at life as a challenge to be met and ultimately conquered, be it the SAS selection course, another mountain or making money in business. All these are viewed as challenges to be confronted and overcome.

He managed to enter RMC in third class (under the old four year system) an event previously unheard of, and then he survived the rigours of the Corps tribal system, the professional military training process and the academic process to graduate. This initiated a military career with many twists and turns that are very well illustrated in the book and which the more conventional soldiers amongst us would look on with both a tinge of jealousy and awe. His trail through life that he outlines so well in this book is one of determination to succeed and regular clashes with those who perhaps have not been able to share his views on how things should be done. On reading the book it is obvious that he was never a going to be an easy fit in the conventional military world and as the book describes so well, it was only the frequent and ever more challenging mountain climbing adventures that kept him and the Army from mutual destruction. The description in the book as accredited to a senior Army Officer who labelled him as the "Feral Major" is in itself illuminating. Personally I think that the Army is much richer for having had 'characters' such as Jim Truscott in the ranks.

I have had the pleasure of working with him at various stages in his business career over the last 15 years or so, and it was fascinating to see the philosophies and strategies that he offers up in this book are put into practice and how these have been successful. He has had an outspoken strategy to dealing with inherent 'bastardry' of the business world, which would be very familiar to anyone with a Special Forces background, and he makes this strategy clear in the book. His approach to his second career as he outlines in the book it is no less rigorous than his approach to his first career. I highly recommend this book to those who are seeking to look at a life that as moved along the path 'less travelled.'