

1990s to effectively remove the legislative restrictions on its employment.

Dayton McCarthy's *The Once and Future Army* is a solid, truly analytical and optimistic appraisal of why the Australian Army should value its reserve component. The book should be compulsory reading for any officer before taking up sub-unit command in either the regular or reserve components of the Army. It is essential reading for any Australian who needs to form a view or make a decision on whether we need an Army Reserve. ♦

Dayton McCarthy, *The Once and Future Army: A History of the Citizen Military Forces 1947-1974*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2003, casebound and jacketed, 303pp, RRP \$55.00.



Howard's War

Alison Broinowski

Reviewed by Neil James

The Army's Command and Staff College (C&SC) was based at Fort Queenscliff in Victoria from 1946 until it merged with the new Joint Command and Staff College in Canberra in 2000. Fort Queenscliff's tertiary-level course was one of the best in the world and its Australian defence and strategic studies components were particularly well structured. Near the end of the course each year three academics or prominent commentators would be invited to provide their perspectives on Australia's future from the left, centre and right of the political spectrum respectively.

Alison Broinowski, a retired diplomat and sometime academic, occasionally presented the left-wing view when other champions of the Left, such as Professor Joe Camilleri, were unavailable. It is a tribute to the Australian Army that its intellectual and professional integrity enabled C&SC students to have such experiences. This could be contrasted quite distinctly with the pronounced lack of diversity or balance in many other Australian university courses—and in many books ostensibly on the subject of Australia's national security.

Books written before or just after the shooting

has ended are rarely good journalism, perceptive commentary or memorable history. Alison Broinowski's polemic, *Howard's War*, reinforces this rule although it is at least broadly consistent with the politely couched but dogmatic views she first espoused at Fort Queenscliff over a decade ago.

A few parts of the book make some attempt at academic-style rigour but this is almost invariably marred by the general tone of shrill and unleavened condemnation, and by its continual deployment of flawed assumptions with no attempt at objectivity or balance. If you hate John Howard, or indeed any right of centre Australian politician since World War II, you should relish this book for its subjectivity.

Howard's War is based on an underlying and not always unspoken assumption that the USA and especially its current government are always 'the baddies', and that Australia's alliance with the US is both completely wrong strategically and utterly immoral. Her book regurgitates most of the simplistic and tired old anti-American prejudices common in Australian undergraduate discourse since the early 1950s.

You really have to wonder whether Mrs Broinowski's views have matured since the days of the anti-Vietnam moratorium marches. This book offers no real alternative proposals for Australian national security policy. There are some ephemeral suggestions of appeasement and moral isolationism, especially in her views about accommodating terrorism by Islamic extremists rather than fighting it. Many would also quibble with her position that while Iraq is now free of its despotism this is no moral or other justification, secondary or otherwise, for Australian participation.

Other critics of John Howard's decision to join the 'Coalition of the Willing' over Iraq have mounted cogent and sustained arguments to support the general proposition. It can be done if an objective effort is made and this book is especially disappointing for the lack of effort and rigour applied. Her argument that Australia's alliance with the US makes us a target for Islamic terrorists is simply shallow. Others have made far better attempts and have avoided the whiff of moral cowardice when so doing.

Howard's War is the type of book read by only four groups of people. First, are reviewers who have to read it. Second, are close family members of the author. Third, are those who simply want their political prejudices massaged to climax. The final group are those who read such intellectual cowardice and tripe to keep their disgust fresh. ♦

Alison Broinowski, *Howard's War*, Scribe Publications, Carlton, 2003, soft cover, 144pp, RRP \$19.95.