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The Search for Self-Reliance: Australian Defence Since Vietnam

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ses neither the atrocities committed against civilians by U.S. soldiers under his care nor their emotions concerning individual responsibility for their conduct in combat. There are also minor structural problems, stemming both from a disjointed style mixing moving prose and clinical stiffness, and from a repetition of quotes.

Shay rightly emphasizes the importance of trustworthy leadership and relevant training. He concludes with a few recommendations to help prevent combat PTSD: protecting unit cohesion, valuing "griefwork," control of "berserking," respecting the enemy as human, and more readily acknowledging psychiatric casualties. Shay writes, "I have written this book because I believe we should care about how soldiers are trained, equipped, led and welcomed home when they return from war."

America has yet to find its Homer as the Achaeans did; nonetheless, this creative and compassionate work is a worthwhile addition to the literature of combat and the narrative of the American trauma in Vietnam.

WILLIAM M. CALHOUN
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Cheeseman, Graeme. *The Search for Self-Reliance: Australian Defence Since Vietnam*. Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1993. 255pp. \$A 24.99

Since the early 1970s the constant theme, heard with increasing loudness, in Australian defense policy formulation has been the drive to achieve "self-reliance." Faced with the possibility of having to defend Australia unilaterally,

Australian defense planners have been forced to square this enormous military requirement with limited resources. Despite the obvious pitfalls inherent in such a planning dilemma, there has been, with few exceptions, little criticism of the basic tenets of the policy of self-reliance.

One exception is Graeme Cheeseman of the Australian Defence Force Academy. Cheeseman argues that while the basic concept of self-reliance in Australian defense is achievable, the means chosen by recent Labor governments have been seriously flawed. To justify this contention, Cheeseman mercilessly exposes and critiques the problems of the Australian Defence Force (ADF). His bottom line is that Canberra spends too much for the defense capabilities produced. Cheeseman is of the school that believes that the Australian government's policies are predicated upon the U.S. security commitment—a foundation that in his opinion is neither reliable nor conceptually supportive of self-reliance.

In brief, Cheeseman argues that several steps are required for Canberra truly to achieve self-reliance: reducing the planned task-to-asset ratio of the ADF, increasing the ADF's capability to deal with real threats while maintaining a residual capacity for more remote contingencies, matching the ADF's structures and capabilities to existing and projected resources, and reducing the current overreliance on the United States for crucial supplies and services. To achieve this ambitious objective, Cheeseman advocates a policy that would tie Australia's security capabilities to the defense of the

country, and that with a lower level of technology than at present.

I personally disagree with Cheeseman's thesis and, indeed, have been doing so for some years. For instance, I feel he misunderstands the defense relationship with the United States and the value Washington places upon its alliance with Australia. Moreover, the defense policy Cheeseman would have Canberra adopt would leave it ill prepared for military operations outside Australia's immediate region—activities that successful Australian governments have traditionally been very keen to undertake.

However, Cheeseman is a careful scholar and analyst of Australian defense policy, and while his recommendations do not seem to have much support in the defense bureaucracy, ADF, or even the analytical community, some of his arguments are valid. For example, his contention is dead-on that the objective of self-reliance is undercut by the refusal of the defense bureaucracy and successive governments to acquire sufficient combat service support capabilities. In addition, his assessment that the Labor government has given the defense forces much more in the way of missions than of resources to achieve them is also accurate.

Moreover, as a critical analysis of the evolution of Australian defense policy and strategic thinking since 1972, the book has important value to readers of this journal. Consequently, notwithstanding the problems I have with Cheeseman's thesis, he has written a strong critique of recent Australian

defense policy. As such, this book should not be dismissed.

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Booth, T. Michael and Spencer, Duncan. *Paratrooper: The Life and Times of General James Gavin*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994. 494pp. \$27.50

James Gavin was one of the most colorful and effective troop leaders among the American generals who served in the European theater during World War II. In January 1946, at the age of thirty-eight, Major General Gavin led the New York City victory parade at the head of his 82nd Airborne Division. Thereafter he had a most interesting career in and out of the Army, but the high point of his life, as described in this nicely written biography, had been the thirty-month period that ended with the victory parade. In many respects, notwithstanding, it is the later period of Gavin's life that might be most instructive to those serving in the military today.

Born in 1907 and graduating from West Point in 1929, he had an undistinguished junior-officer career, and an unhappy marriage, but he achieved a great deal of personal development that was to pay dividends later. In the summer of 1941, while serving as a tactical officer at West Point, Captain Gavin volunteered for parachute training, which was just getting under way in the U.S. Army. He was highly motivated and effective in this new and exciting milieu. By mid-1942 he was a full colonel, commanding the 505th