



CEW Bean Prize Citation - 2007

Dr Craig Stockings

“The Torch and the Sword. A History of the Army Cadet Movement in
Australia, 1866-2004”

PhD Thesis, UNSW@ADFA, 2006.

Since the 1860s hundreds of thousands of young Australians have undergone military training in the Army Cadets. Many of Australia’s most famous officers, Blamey, Morshead, Allen, Stevens, Potts and Berryman amongst them, began their military careers in what was then called the ‘cadet corps’. From humble beginnings, when cadets trained often without weapons and without uniforms, the cadet movement has developed into a well-resourced and highly motivated organisation of some 17,000 members. Its professionalism, dedication and *esprit de corps* is highly prized by the Australian Army.

Craig Stockings’ PhD thesis charts the history of the Australian Cadet Movement from its origins in Victoria’s elite private schools, through the era of compulsory military training in the early twentieth century, past the interwar period and into the nervous conservatism that characterised the cold war. A study of enormous span, it considers the modern history of the cadet movement, charting its chequered fortunes through the troubled era of the 1960s and 70s and its reinvigoration in recent years. The thesis is meticulously researched, carefully argued and extremely well written. Its stated purpose is to ‘provide a general history of the army cadet movement from 1866 to 2004 by tracing the interactions between four fundamental forces that have stood as its foundation for almost 140 years’. In a well-informed and engaging analysis, Craig Stockings shows how military, educational, social and financial factors shaped the character and culture of the cadet movement. In the process, he demonstrates how changes to cadet training reflect changing social attitudes. The cadet movement now focuses on character development rather than imparting specific military skills: the rigid discipline of the nineteenth century drill hall has given way to adventure training that fosters qualities of leadership, self-reliance and self-esteem. This thesis fills a significant hiatus in Australian military history. It throws new light on an important and largely overlooked cultural institution. It is a worthy recipient of the CEW Bean Prize.