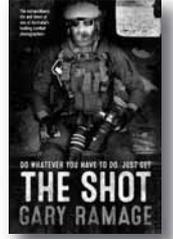


BOOK REVIEW:

The shot

by Gary Ramage with Mark Abernethy

HarperCollins Publishers: Sydney; 2016; 304 pp.; ISBN 9781460751350 (paperback); RRP \$32.99



Gary Ramage began his working life as an infantry soldier and has since become one of Australia's best known war photographers. He has photographed soldiers in action in Somalia, Bougainville, Bosnia, Kosovo, East Timor, Iraq and Afghanistan. *The Shot* is a biography of his life and achievements to date.

In *The Shot* Ramage explains how he became a professional photographer through the Army and then how he has maintained his links to the military by photographing service people around the world. He has been embedded with troops: lived, eaten and slept alongside them. Through good times and bad times, through rocket attacks, firefights and funerals, from photographing mass graves in Kosovo to being in East Timor when Special Air Service troops were ambushed, from sleeping under the stars on patrol with Aussie soldiers in Afghanistan to helping out with CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) on a wounded soldier on a medevac chopper, he has been there and documented it. Ramage's commitment to documenting the experiences of soldiers in conflict zones as an 'embed' is not about backing the war effort, but about making sure that those who are sent to kill or be killed are not consigned to oblivion.

The Shot is written in the first person and it is a funny, dramatic and at times powerfully poignant account of a man discovering his calling and learning his craft; and meeting challenges with ingenuity, courage, compassion and a touch of swagger. Risk comes with the territory and it takes special grit to be a war photographer. Ramage's skill seems to be in being at the right place at the right time in order to get 'the shot'.

Ramage is currently News Corp Australia's chief photographer at Parliament House in Canberra. He won the prestigious Nikon Walkley Award in 2012 for his images of the war in Afghanistan and the Nikon Walkley Photo of the Year last year. Mark Abernethy, the ghost-writer, is a journalist, novelist and speechwriter currently with *The Australian Financial Review*.

The Shot includes numerous black and white photos and 16 pages of colour photos. There is a short epilogue and a list of Ramage's awards, but no index.

In all, *The Shot* is an easy read with many good stories that will appeal to both a general audience as well as those interested in the media and in ways to record military history.

Marcus Fielding