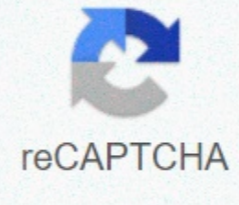




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I was only 19

Mick Storen was 19 when he joined the Australian Army to serve in Vietnam. Mick: If people were asking me what it was like, I'd tell them. I'd tell them it was hard work. In our squad, we ended up with six men killed and about 35 injured. And when you've suffered a lot of sacrifices, you're in a position experiencing that. John Schumann was a university student who played and wrote songs for a left wing folk/rock band. John: There was always a big part of me that bled for the soldiers. I have never been one of those who wished victory for the NVA and Viet Cong. I mean, I didn't really care. I just wanted these Australian boys to come home. Fate, and Mick Storey's sister Denise, would bring the two men together. John became Mick's brother-in-law. Mick: He always wanted to do a song about Vietnam and I could give him some information. So I said, 'All right. That's fair enough. If appropriate, as long as it's a good song. John: I had to get inside my skin, I had to look outside my eyes, I had to feel it, I had to understand it, I had to feel it, I had to live and breathe it somehow, visibly. Mick: Just got me going, we had a couple of e-mails etc, got me talking for over a couple of hours and he recorded basically my story through the army and my experience in Vietnam. Mick's story and John's song writing produced a song I was only nineteen. Mick: He goes away and comes back about three months later and says, 'I've got this song'. Anyway, when he sang it, the hairs on his neck... I couldn't respond to him. And then someone shouted contact! Front! And the guy behind me swore. We connected there for hours, with the god of almighty roar. Frankie kicked a mine the day humanity kicked the moon. God help me, he went home in June. Mick: But the thing was, he had encapsulated in this song experience that, it wasn't just mine, it was something every other Vietnam veteran could really understand. The song became the number one national hit and national anthem for Vietnam veterans. Mick decided to stay in the background. John: As the song became wildly famous, everyone wanted to write a story about it. I really wanted Mick to step out. Wouldn't. He absolutely didn't want to. And I didn't understand why. Now I do. Mick: I backed away from the song. For me it was too personal, too... Identify. I was only nineteen remains an iconic song, not only for Vietnam veterans but currently serving as a member of the Australian Defence Force. John: We respond best to stories. We've always told our stories from when we got off the ship. And I was only nineteen was the story; it was a moment I get it. Mick: It's really poetry, really. It was something I could be proud of, but at the same time sad. I was only nineteen I was only 19 Single from Redgum from the album Caught Act A-side I was only 19 B-side Yarralumla Wine Released March 1983 Recorded February 1983 Genre Australian folk Length 4:19 Label Epic, CBS Songwriter(s) John Schumann Producer(s) Trevor Lucas Redgum singles chronology Caught in the Act (1982) I Was Only 19 (1983) ASIO (1983) Only 19, I Was Only 19 or A Walk in the Light Green is the most familiar song by the Australian folk group Redgum. [1] The song was released in March 1983 as a single that hit number one on the national Kent Music Report Singles Chart for two weeks. [2] It was also recorded on redgum's live album Caught in the Act (Epic Records) released in June. [3], which remained in the top 40 Kent Music Report Albums Chart for four months. [2] Royalties for the song go to the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia. [4] This is the Australasian Performing Right Association Top 30 Australian Songs of All Time. [5] [6] The song is a first-person account of a typical Australian soldier's experience in the Vietnam War, from training at a military academy in Australia to firsthand exposure to military operations and combat, and finally his return home disillusioned and suffering from both PTSD and, that's the implicit, damaging effects of Agent Orange. [7] [8] Redgum's lead singer-guitarist, John Schumann, wrote the song based on experiences he heard from veterans, not particularly Mick Storen (his brother-in-law) and Frankie Hunt. [1] [4] Schumann said that much came from the details provided by my friend and brother-in-law Mick Storen, who was courageous and trusting enough to share his story with me. [9] [10] For the live version, Schumann explained the title, Walk in bright green, as referring to operational patrols in areas marked light green on topographical maps, where dark green indicated dense jungle, lots of cover and several land mines and light green listed thinly forested areas, a small cover and a high probability of landmines. In January 2018, as part of Triple M's Oztest 100, the 'most Australian' song of all time, I was just 19 was ranked number 20. [11] The Influence of Australian Vietnam Veterans' Welcome Home Parade was held in Sydney on 3 October 1987 [12] and followed by a concert in Domain where Redgum's Schumann played his song with veteran Frank Hunt on stage. [13] From this parade, the yearning for a war memorial in memory of Vietnam veterans has grown into fruition with the dedication of the monument in October 1992. [13] The Australian Vietnam Force National Monument was erected at Anzac Parade, Canberra in 1992 and contains a Wall of Words: The Blade B, a northern or right-hand stitch, is decorated with a series of 33 citations set in stainless steel font. [14] Among the quotes is: Then someone called contact and the guy behind me swore, and we hooked up there for hours, then a god-almighty roar. Frankie kicked the mine on the day kicked out the moon. God help me, he went home in June. [15] A normal language explanation of each quote was included, courtesy of the late Brigadier Alf Garland: This is a quote from the song 'I was only 19' by the Australian singing group Red Gum [sic]. It concerns the fight against a fire that lasted several hours when the explosion occurred. Frankie, one of the soldiers kicked (tripped) mines. The song died on the same day that the U.S. put humans on the moon for the first time. Frankie was due to return home to Australia after completing his tour in June that year. [15] [16] [17] On the occasion of Tân's 40th commemoration, the concert took place in Vũng Tàu, where Schumann (and the Vagabond Crew) sang I was only 19. He also introduced Long Tân Storen as the source for the song. [18] For the SBS TV special Vietnam Sisters (2005), director Polly Watkins chose Redgum and John Schumann's song 'Only Nineteen' during the Welcome Home Parade in 1987 because it is an integral part of one of the sisters' stories. [19] Frank Hunt gives an overview of his Vietnamese experiences, entitled I Was Only Nineteen, in Gina Lennox's book Forged by War (August 2006). [20] After Schumann received letters of request from active troops in Afghanistan and East Timor, he applied for permission to visit troops but received no response. [21] A reporter published an article about the situation, and the authorities gave permission for Schumann to tour east Timor in December 2009 and entertain Australian and New Zealand soldiers. [22] [23] He played for Australian troops in Afghanistan between September and October 2011. [24] In 2015, Lee Kernaghan recorded a song for his album Spirit of the Anzacs. In the same year, the song was added to the Sounds of Australia register at the National Archives of Film and Sound (NFSA). [25] Texts dictionary Texts contain words, terms and place names, especially to Australia and Vietnam: ANZAC: Australian and New Zealand soldiers who fought in world wars. Originally Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. Canungra. Jungle Combat Training Centre near Canungra, Queensland. Channel Seven: Australian Television Network. Chinook: Military helicopter. Contact!: Military term indicating a meeting with the enemy. It will also include the contact direction of either the contact on the left, the contact on the right, the contact at the front, or the contact at the back. Dustoff: Accident evacuation by helicopter. Greens: Jungle Green Work Dress, a field of uniforms worn by the Australian Army between the early 1960s and 1989. Grand Hotel: Hotel in Vung Tau, which has been rebuilt for use by the army. Light green: The section on the map that featured supposedly more dangerous areas for soldiers to patrol because there were few thick leaves and the area that is more likely to be mined. Nui Dat: A village in Bà Rịa South Vietnam and the main base 1. Puckapunyal: A former Army enlisted soldier recruitment training centre in Victoria. Shoalwater: Military exercise area in Queensland. 6th Battalion: (aka 6RAR) Australian Army Battalion, whose D Company was involved in the Battle of Long Tan during a tour three years earlier. Slouch Hat: Tour head-dress for the Australian Army. SLR: Standard 7.62mm semiautomatic rifle issued by the Australian Infantry during the Vietnam War. Tinnies: Cans of beer. Townsville: City in Queensland, home of the Australian Army's 3rd Brigade & RAAF Base Townsville. Even at the time of boarding for troops shipping to Vietnam from all over Australia because it was the largest port in northern Australia. VB: Victoria Bitter (beer). It was also used as a reference to his comrades in arms aka the Venerable Brothers. eg: We made our tents home in the U.K. with pin-ups on the lockers, and an Asian orange sunset over the scrub. (A reference to defoliant, Agent Orange uses prolifically in Vietnam). Vũng Tàu: Coastal city in South Vietnam, which was 1.83 Peakposition Australia (Kent Music Report) [27] 13 Certifications Region Certification certified units/sales Australia (ARIA) [28] 3× Platinum 210 000 sales+streaming figures based on certification alone Covers When the song was first released, Rick Melbourne, breakfast radio announcer, produced a parody version of the song, including the lyrics God help me, she told me she was sixteen. Australian country singer John Williamson recorded a live version as Only 19 and released it on his 1984 vinyl LP, The Smell of Gumleaves (rereleased in 1996 as a CD called Home Among the Gum Trees). [29] The producer of the song and album, Trevor Lucas, showed off his version as a member of his British band Fairport Convention at the Cropredy festival in 1985. [30] On the last forward show, Gina Riley, in character as Eleanor LaGore, played a swing version of the song. The song was covered by the Australian Army Band The Lancer Band in 2015 in the lead up to ANZAC Day. The cover received positive widespread attention in the media. [1] It differed from most covers as it was done by soldiers and sung by a female soldier. The 2005 hip hop version of the song (titled I Was Only 19) was produced by Herd, voted in #18's 2005 Triple J Hottest 100 playlist. [1] This song also plays a symbolic role in the 2006 World War II book Of Max Brooks. [31] Playlist I was only 19 (Walk in bright green) (John Schumann) [1] - 4:19 Wine (Michael Atkinson) [32] - 2:33 Personnel Single Version I was only 19 (March 1983) - 4:19 Only Schumann and McDonald of Redgum played on this track [33] John Schumann - vocals, guitar Hugh McDonald - violin, vocals Brian Czempinski - drums (later became a member of Redgum) Trevor Lucas - backing vocals, producer Peter Coughlin - bass guitar Caught in the Act live version, I was only 19 (Walk in the Light Green) (1983) - 5:57 Schumann presents the song and explains the phrase 'A Walk in the Light Green' which gives as its name. Recorded at The Rose, Shamrock and Thistle (aka Three Weeds Hotel) [34] in Rozelle, New South Wales: [30] Michael Atkinson – guitar, mandolin, piano, vocals Hugh McDonald – violin, vocals John Schumann – vocals, guitar Verity Truman – flute, tin whistle, vocals Trevor Lucas – producer Jim Barton – engineer 2013 re-release John Schumann released the song as an acoustic single on iTunes in memory of 30 years since the original release of the song. The single was a version recorded for the 2008 Vagabond Crew album Behind The Lines. [35] See also 19 (song) References ^ and b c d I was only 19 in the APRA search engine. Australasian Performing Right Association (APRA). October 30, 2008. ^ a b Kent, David (1993). Australian Chart Book 1970-1992. St Ives, NSW: Australian Chart Book Ltd ISBN 0-646-11917-6. NOTE: Used for Australian singles and album charts from 1974 to the ARIA they created their own charts in mid-1988. 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