

Teachers' Notes (Primary)
by Robyn Sheahan-Bright

I was Only Nineteen

John Schumann

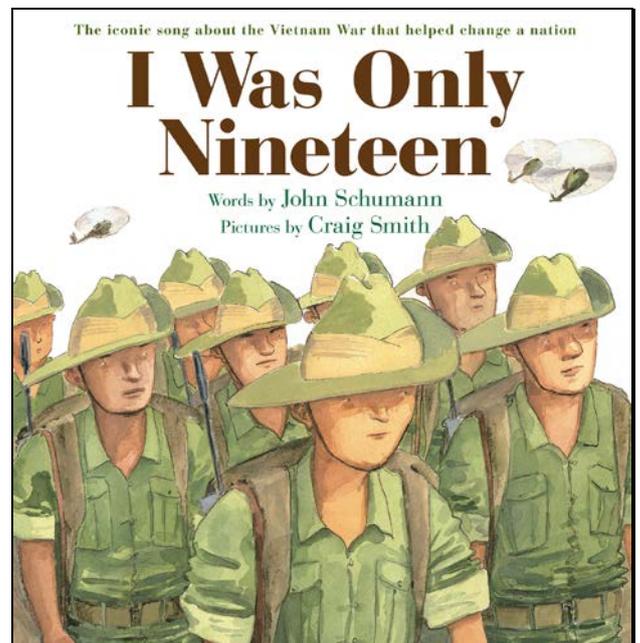
Illustrated by Craig Smith

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Recommended for ages 6-12

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INTRODUCTION

STORY SUMMARY

John Schumann's song 'I was only nineteen' is a 'national anthem' to the Australian veterans who fought in Vietnam. It has become one of Australia's best-loved and best-known songs, and it honours the memory of those who fought and those who died in that brutal war. Its message has resonance not just for Australians but for any country involved in any war.

In this new picture book treatment of the song, Craig Smith has sensitively illustrated the text in order to introduce it to a new generation of readers and listeners.

Wars seem to be inflicted on each generation, and unless we remind each generation of the pain and suffering they cause, there may continue to be such armed conflicts. So this book will invite a new generation of readers to consider the impact of war, and to reflect on the consequences for both the opposing military forces and for civilians either living in the war zone, or waiting patiently at home for their loved ones to return. It offers a powerful message with universal meaning.

THEMES

There are several key ideas or themes which flow through this work:

- Vietnam War
- Anti-War Protest
- Australian History
- Vietnamese Culture and History
- Returned Soldiers/Veterans

These themes could be considered in conjunction with the following school curriculum areas.

CURRICULUM TOPICS

1. Study of history, society and environment
2. English language and literacy
3. Visual literacy
4. Creative arts
5. Learning technologies
6. Mathematics

The notes which follow are designed to be used largely in lower to upper primary classrooms, although some activities might be useful for secondary students. Teachers should be able to adapt them to suit the demands of their particular curriculum.

STUDY OF HISTORY, SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT

VIETNAM WAR

The origins of the war can be said to have stemmed from an ideological conflict: The North (supported by Russia and China) was led by a Communist government and opposed by the South (supported by the USA and Australia). But the war wasn't simply about opposing political ideals. It was also about an independence movement driven by centuries of foreign occupation, most recently by the French.

- **Activity:** Research the various forms of foreign occupation in Vietnam, and how the war was related to that. Read about the western fear of Communism in Asia and how it contributed to Australia's involvement. Were there other reasons for the conflict?
- **Discussion Point:** From the arrival of the first Australian troops in 1962, almost 60,000 Australians including ground troop, air force and navy personnel, served in Vietnam. 521 died and over 3,000 were injured. Research the role played by Australian troops in the Vietnam War. Debate the pros and cons of Australia's involvement in the war. Use resources such as the following to inform your discussion:

'Australia's Involvement in the Vietnam War – Fact Sheet 117' National Archives of Australia <<http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/fact-sheets/fs117.aspx>> o

'Australia and the Vietnam War' <<http://vietnam-war.commemoration.gov.au/>>

- **Discussion Point:** This is the first time Redgum's anthem-like song has been published as a picture book. The 1983 song was a #1 hit; it later made the APRA's Top 25 Australian Songs of All Time list. The song is credited as one of the first acknowledgments of the Vietnam veteran's plight, especially regarding post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) which afflicted many of our returned soldiers. Research PTSD further.

In addition, it was identified by Scottish-American music author, June Skinner Sawyer, as one of the 100 songs that changed the world. Finally, a verse from "I was only nineteen" is inscribed on the Vietnam War Memorial in our nation's capital.

- **Discussion Point:** Many soldiers received a hostile reception when they returned home as the tide of public support for the conflict had gradually turned. Did you know that Australia's Vietnam vets weren't given a welcome home parade until 1987? A concert in the Domain, Sydney followed, at which this song was played live, with veteran Frankie Hunt on stage. Why did it take so long for Australia to acknowledge the efforts and losses of these soldiers?
- **Activity:** The ANZAC centenary commemorations <http://www.anzacentenary.gov.au> planned in 2014-2018 will renew demand for books about Australian soldiers for younger readers. How are you preparing as a class/school/ community to celebrate this anniversary? Plan a program of events with relevance and personal significance for your school community. Involve members of students' families who were involved in the Vietnam War as soldiers, Vietnamese civilians, expatriates living in Vietnam etc. Involve those who were/are involved in other wars as well.
- **Activity:** See 'List of Songs About the Vietnam War' <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_songs_about_the_Vietnam_War>. Listen to some of them with your students.
- **Activity:** Normie Rowe is an Australian singer who was drafted to Vietnam in 1968. His album *Missing in Action* (2007) is a tribute to his and his fellow soldiers' experiences. Research his life and how his service affected him professionally and personally.
- **Activity:** Since writing this song, John Schumann has spent a large part of his career paying tribute to the experiences of these service people, and his political and social activism has been a lifelong journey for him. See his new album 'Behind the Lines' <http://www.schumann.com.au/john/newst.html>. Read about its origins, and then read some

of the lyrics to the songs on this album and discuss them. [See also **Creative Arts** and **About the Writers** below.]

- **Activity:** What were some of the landmark encounters in which Australians fought during the war? For example, during the battle at Nui Dat, eighteen Australians died and twenty-four were wounded. Research this battle by reading articles such as 'Battle of Long Tan' <http://vietnam-war.commemoration.gov.au/combat/battle-of-long-tan.php>.

Students might also be shown the interview with entertainer Little Pattie in Vietnam. 'Battle of Long Tan: The Battle video footage' [Interview with 'Little Pattie' Thompson by Greg Swanborough for 'The Sharp End']

<<http://vietnam-war.commemoration.gov.au/combat/long-tan-battle-vid-f10648.php>>.

- **Discussion Point:** Read 'Quotations from The Wall of Words at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Canberra, Australia' <<http://www.vvaa.org.au/quotes.htm>>. These quotations give an insight into the feelings and concerns of those who fought in this war. Read memoirs such as Heard, Barry *Well Done, Those Men: Memoirs of a Vietnam Veteran* (Scribe Publications, 2012) and discuss.

- **Activity:** The weapons and dangerous chemicals used in the war caused illness and terrible deformity in soldiers and/or their offspring. Landmines also have devastating effects.

Read and discuss 'The Origin of Landmines'

<<http://members.iinet.net.au/~pictim/mines/history/history.html>>

and visit 'List of Toxic Chemicals Used in South Vietnam'

<<http://www.vvaa.org.au/chemical.htm>> Research the effects of both.

- **Activity:** Medical personnel in wars also suffer from PTSD. Use resources such as: Biedermann, Narelle *Tears on My Pillow: Australian Nurses in Vietnam* (Random House, 2004) to research the role that doctors, nurses and paramedics played in this conflict.
- **Activity:** Journalists, reporters and photographers also played a role in the war. Use resources such as:
Lunn, Hugh *Vietnam A Reporter's War* (UQP, 1985) or
Bowden, Tim *One Crowded Hour: Neil Davis Combat Cameraman (1934-1985)* (HarperCollins Classics, 2013).
- **Activity:** Children are affected during and after war. Read some personal stories such as:
Hoag, Carina *Boat People: Personal Stories from the Vietnamese Exodus 1975-1996* (Fremantle Press, 2011);
Huynh, Kim *Where the Sea Takes Us: A Vietnamese–Australian Story* (Harper Perennial, 2007).
Research using non-fiction resources such as: 'Children in War' Unicef
<<http://www.unicef.org/sowc96/ciwcont.htm>> or
'War Child International Network' <http://www.warchild.org/>.
- **Activity:** Study a range of poetry of the Vietnam War. [See **English Language and Literacy** below.]
- **Activity:** Read and research the war using resources such as:
Davidson, Leon *Red Haze: Australians and New Zealanders in Vietnam* (Black Dog Books, 2006);
McHugh, Siobhán *Minefields and Miniskirts: Australian Women and Vietnam War* (Doubleday, 1993, Lothian, 2005);
Rintoul, Stuart *Ashes of Vietnam: Australian Voices* (William Heinemann, 1987);
Willoughby, Douglas *The Vietnam War: 20th Century Perspectives* (Heinemann Library, 2001).

[See also **Language and Literacy** below.] [See also **Blackline Master 2.**]

ANTI-WAR PROTEST

The Vietnam War aroused widespread anger in Australia. Many felt that Australia should not have been involved in it, and such feelings created the greatest scale of social and political protest since the conscription referendums of WWI. The Moratorium movement called for a cessation of conscription and of Australia's involvement with the Vietnam War. Huge rallies were organized and attended by not only those who were generally politically active, but by many other people whose feelings about the war being an unjust one, drove them to protest.

- **Activity:** Come up with a slogan which reflects the sentiments expressed by the anti-war protest movement at the time. Design a poster to accompany the slogan.
- **Discussion Point:** What is 'conscientious objection'? Discuss the power of peaceful protest.
- **Discussion Point:** Discuss the Moratorium movement in relation to Mark Wilson's *Vietnam Diary* (Hachette, 2012) in which two brothers find themselves on opposite sides of the debate, one going to war, and the other protesting against it.
- **Discussion Point:** Conscription has been used at various points in Australia's history to enlist soldiers against their will, and has always been controversial. See: 'Conscription' <http://www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/conscription/>. How might you have responded had you been conscripted? How might your family react?
- **Discussion Point:** Vietnam veterans were notoriously reluctant to discuss their war experiences with anyone else but another Vietnam veteran. Why do you think this was?

AUSTRALIAN HISTORY

- **Activity:** Wars have been a constant feature in Australia's history. Read about the various conflicts in which we have been involved, and the social and economic impacts of them.
- **Activity:** The Vietnam war took place in a time of great social upheaval in Australia. Movements such as feminism were changing the social landscape, and soldiers returned home to a very different society. Study the era using resources such as:
'Images of the 1960s Australia' Google
<http://images.google.com.au/images?sourceid=navclient&hl=en-GB&rlz=1T4GGLF_en-GBAU221AU221&q=images+of+the+1960s+Australia&um=1&ie=UTF-8&sa=X&oi=image_result_group&resnum=1&ct=title> or
'Social and cultural features of the 1960s' Skwirk Interactive Schooling
http://www.skwirk.com/p-t_s-14_u-189_t-507/social-and-cultural-features-of-the-1960s/nsw/history/australia-s-social-and-cultural-history-in-the-post-war-period.
- **Discussion Point:** 'And the Anzac legends didn't mention mud and blood and tears.' This is a significant statement, as there are *now* so many non-fictional and fictional accounts of just these aspects of World War One. Why do our national mythmakers find it so difficult to encompass such realities within our national legends? Why did it take so long for these aspects of WWI to be officially acknowledged? Immediately after the war, many people would have been aware of them, but perhaps felt it was not helpful to talk about them. At what point does collective memory become 'history'? Is it fair for younger generations to say 'Why weren't we told?'

VIETNAMESE HISTORY AND CULTURE

- **Activity:** Research the history of Vietnam using resources such as:
McLeod, Mark and Nguyen, Thi Dieu *Culture and Customs of Vietnam* (Culture and Customs of Asia Series) (Greenwood, 2008);
Murray, Stuart *Vietnam War* (Eyewitness Books Series) (DK Publishing, 2005).

- **Activity:** Many Vietnamese people died, and many suffered during and after the war. Research the civilian casualty figures as well as the death toll amongst soldiers. What other hardships or illnesses did they suffer? Research the plight of children born to Vietnamese women and overseas veterans, many of whom were left destitute and despised by their fellow countrymen and women, after the fathers returned home. Research using resources such as:

Dugan, Michael *Vietnam War* (Macmillan Education, 2000);

Ham, Paul *Vietnam: The Australian War* (HarperCollins, 2007);

Hillman, Robert *The Vietnam War* (Echidna Books, 2001);

Davies, Bruce *Vietnam: the Complete Story of the Australian War* (Allen & Unwin, 2012);

Daynes, Katie *The Vietnam War* (Usborne Young Reading: Series Three) (Usborne Books, 2008).

- **Activity:** After the war, some Vietnamese left their country and travelled to other countries, including Australia. Research the stories of these so-called 'boat people'. Read first person accounts such as:

Do, Anh and Suzanne *The Little Refugee* (Allen & Unwin, 2012).

Research using resources such as:

Warren, Andrea *Escape from Saigon: How a Vietnam War Orphan Became an American Boy* (Square Fish, 2008);

Lewins, Frank and Ly, Judith *The First Wave: The Settlement of Australia's First Vietnamese Refugees* (Allen & Unwin, 1985);

'A True Story' Boatpeople.org <http://www.boatpeople.org/a_true_story.htm> or

Archives of Vietnamese Boat People' Vietka
<http://www.vietka.com/Vietnamese_Boat_People/>

- **Activity:** Research the food of Vietnam and have a Vietnamese feast!
Read Pauline Nguyen's *Secrets of the Red Lantern: Stories and Vietnamese Recipes from the Heart* (Murdoch Books, 2007) or watch some episodes of celebrity chef *Luke Nguyen's Vietnam* <http://www.sbs.com.au/food/program/luke-nguyens-vietnam>.
- **Activity:** Watch some footage of Vietnamese cultural ceremonies on *YouTube*.
- **Activity:** Invite students to study Vietnamese culture and deliver an address about it.

RETURNED SOLDIERS/VETERANS

- **Activity:** There are various organisations devoted to the needs of returned soldiers. Visit their websites to find out more about their activities and the experiences of some of their members. E.g. Returned & Services League of Australia <<http://www.rsl.org.au/>> and Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia <<http://www.vvaa.org.au/>>
- **Discussion Point:** Has Australia done enough to recognise the achievements and suffering of these servicemen?
- **Discussion Point:** Based on the research you've done on the effects of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (see above) how well do you feel that veterans of the Vietnam War have been compensated for it.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

- 1) The **evocative language** used in the song on which this book is based, is concise and starkly resonant, e.g. *'God help me, I was only nineteen.'* This tightly written text is also often very suggestive of unspoken meaning, e.g. *'Asian orange sunset'* is a seemingly pretty description but when one realises it describes the dropping of potentially fatal and deforming chemicals (known as Agent Orange), it is not so pretty. And it also relates to the fact that the narrator has a 'rash which comes and goes', and which may also stem from exposure to Agent Orange.

Discussion Point: This sentence is quite a complex one: *'A four-week operation, when each step could mean your last one on two legs: it was a war within yourself.'* Discuss its meaning.

Activity: Choose a line in the song which is particularly powerful for you. Describe why.

- 2) The **song is a past tense account of events** which affected a young man and which still haunt the present. So when he says *'And can you tell me, doctor, why I still can't get to sleep?'* it is a surprise for some to see an old man being examined by a female, Asian doctor. The illustrator, Craig Smith, is obviously using **irony** here.

- 3) **Discussion Point:** How difficult must it be for men to grow old when they feel cheated of their youths?

- 4) **Activity: Compare this picture book to other picture books or graphic novels** such as:

Gary Crew and Steven Woolman's *Tagged* (Lothian, 1999);

Anh Do and Suzanne Do's *The Little Refugee* (Allen & Unwin, 2012);

Will Eisner's *Last Day in Vietnam: A Memory* (Dark Horse, 2000);

Julian Hanshaw's *The Art of Pho* (Jonathan Cape, 2010);

Kubert, Joe Dong Xoai Kubert's *Vietnam 1965* (Vertigo, 2011);

Don Lomax's *Vietnam Journal: A Graphic Novel* (IBooks, 2003) [First in a series.];

G.B. Tran's *Vietnamerica: A Family's Journey* (Villard, 2011);

Dwight Zimmerman, Chuck Horner, and Wayne Vansant's *The Vietnam War: A Graphic History* (Hill & Wang, 2009).

- 5) **Activity:** Older Students might **read some young adult fiction** on this theme:

Bauer, Michael Gerard *The Running Man* (Scholastic, 2004);

Caswell, Brian and Phu An Chiem, David *Only the Heart* (UQP, 1997);

Hyde, Michael *Hey Joe* (Vulgar Press, 2003);

Johnson, Denis *Tree of Smoke* (Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2007);

Lynch, Chris *Vietnam 1: I Pledge Allegiance* (Scholastic, 2011);

Lynch, Chris *Vietnam 2: Sharpshooter* (Scholastic, 2012);

Lynch, Chris *Vietnam 3: Free-Fire Zone* (Scholastic, 2012);

Marchetta, Melina *The Piper's Son* (Penguin, 2010);

Myers, Walter Dean *Fallen Angels* (Scholastic, 1988);

Rushby, Pam *When the Hipchicks Went to War* (Hachette, 2009).

- 6) **Activity:** Read some **war poetry** together:

'Bruce Dawe – Anti-War Poet' National Film & Sound Archive

<http://dl.nfsa.gov.au/module/1195/>

'Contact Front! Australian Poetry of the Vietnam War' ABC
<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/poetica/2012-04-21/3908526>

'Poems' Australian War Memorial
<<http://www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/customs/poems.asp>>

Vietnam War Poetry Lachlan Irvine
<<http://lachlanirvine.tripod.com/poetry/id1.html> Write a war poem.>

Homecoming: Images of Vietnam Collected by Jean Williams and edited by Jill Morris,
(Homecoming Publications, 1991)

- 7) **Activity: Comprehension activities** might include asking students what date this line refers to: 'Frankie kicked a mine the day that mankind kicked the moon.'
- 8) **Alliteration:** the phrase '... The passing-out parade at Puckapunyal...' is an example of alliteration, a common device used in songs and poetry. Students could brainstorm their own alliterative phrases to describe the activities at school.

Students could also explain the idiomatic language used, such as: 'tinnies' and 'dust-off'. Why do you think the soldiers referred to a medical evacuation by helicopter as a 'dust-off'? (In more recent conflicts the term 'dust-off' has been replaced with the term 'casi-vac'.)
- 9) The **Conclusion** of a story is important in cementing its themes. **Discussion Point:** What do the concluding words and images of this book suggest? [See also **Visual Literacy** below.]

VISUAL LITERACY

- 1) **Craig Smith's images are resonant with feeling, and have emotional impact.** E.g. The images are relatively realistic until a change on the page which reads: '... then a God almighty roar. Frankie kicked a mine the day that mankind kicked the moon. God help me, he was going home in June.' There is an 'abstraction' to the image symbolic of the horror being described.

Activity: Examine each double page frame and brainstorm the feelings conveyed in each one.
- 2) **Activity:** Examine and identify the **Medium** used in this book.
- 3) **Activity:** Invite students to interpret the meaning behind this text in their own visual images. Have them **paint an impressionistic image of the war**. Students can then display them as an exhibition.
- 4) Each of Craig Smith's images contain **intertextual references**. E.g. The female doctor who treats the aging veteran is a Vietnamese or Asian woman—a reminder of the immigration to Australia since the war.

Activity: Examine the picture carefully in order to discover other such sub-textual messages.
- 5) **Colours** used are largely muted except for the present day scenes, the scene when Frankie is shot, and the scene when they are on rec. leave.

Activity: Discuss the use of colour in this text and how different colours can effect mood.
- 6) **Design encompasses every aspect of a picture book's construction**, and includes the front and back cover images, the endpapers, a dedication page, a title page, 16 double page spreads, and a final imprint or publication details page. The juxtaposition of images and words on each page contributes to meaning in this and in other books.

Question: The **front endpaper** depicts the elderly veteran at home with a grandson. This domestic scene with the elderly man is a surprise to the reader in counterpoint to the text which is written in the voice of a younger man. The **back endpaper** has the veteran marching (presumably on Anzac Day) with his grandson beside him. Again, the boy represents youth in a sea of elderly faces. Discuss the significance of including the grandchild in these two images.

Activity: Examine the **front and back covers**. What meaning do you make from the images? Look at the expressions on the young soldier's faces on the front cover. What feelings do they denote? What does the picture on the back suggest about the veterans marching?

Activity: The **blurb** on the back cover is part of this message. Write your own blurb for the book as well.

- 7) **Discussion Point:** The **final image** in the book offers a summary of the themes. In this last image, we see the grandad (former soldier) and grandson and older kid behind on a skateboard (future soldiers?). It reminds you of how those 'kids' in the 1960s were sent off to war and how now we seemingly closet kids, but also prepare some of them for a different war as virtual mercenaries paid big dollars to go at aged 18-25 to war zones.
- 8) **Study the work of Craig Smith** by comparing this to several of his previous works. See: <http://craigsmithillustration.com/>.

CREATIVE ARTS

This text might encourage students to explore it through other forms of creative arts.

SONGWRITING

Activity: Study the work of John Schumann and the influence his songwriting has had on our society. Read Professor Brian Matthews' tribute to him which explains this eloquently: <http://www.schumann.com.au/john/matthews.html>.

Activity: Invite students to **write their own song lyrics** about the Vietnam War. Listen to other war songs such as 'Khe Sanh' (1978) written by Don Walker and sung by Jimmy Barnes and Cold Chisel, or 'Smiley' (1969) written by Johnnie Young (1969) and sung by Ronnie Burns, or 'War or Hands of Time' (1966) written by Mick Bower and sung by The Masters' Apprentices.

Activity: Listen to John Schumann's version of 'Khe Sahn' (on the album 'Behind the Lines') which refers to the Battle of Long Tan in the 1st line rather than Khe Sahn. John knew that Australians were not at Khe Sahn – that was the siege of an American firebase way to the north of where Australians operated in Vietnam.

Students could try taking a well-known song and changing the lyrics to suit a particular purpose, for example, a tribute to someone on their birthday, a song about their grandmother....

MUSIC

Activity: Compose some music to go with the lyrics.

DRAMA

Activity: Create a play scene depicting the emotions and opinions expressed in this song. A stage set might be created by members of the class, using digital images of actual war photographs. Choose relevant **music** to accompany your script.

FILM

Activity: Secondary students might **study the film** titled *The Sapphires* (2012, Directed by Wayne Blair and written by Tony Briggs and Keith Thompson) which is a light-hearted movie tracing the experiences of a group of female Aboriginal performers who entertained the troops in Vietnam, based on a true story. Students might also watch other war films, although teachers should monitor their suitability as some are very disturbing, and might be suitable only for very mature secondary students. See list at: 'Films: Vietnam War' <<http://alphahistory.com/historynow/?p=136>>.

LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

This book might be used as a tool for investigations on the Internet.

Activity: Explore **website links to related topics** such as:

'Australia and the Vietnam War' Ryebuck Media and ANZAC Day Commemoration Committee of Queensland

<http://www.anzacday.org.au/education/activities/viet_war/images/vietnam_war.pdf>

'Remembrance Day' Australian Government

<<http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/remembrance/>>

'South East Asian Conflicts Diaries' Australian War Memorial

<<http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/records/awm95/>>

'Vietnam: The Soldier's Experience' Anzac Day Commemoration Committee

<http://www.anzacday.org.au/education/activities/viet_experience/default.html>

'Vietnam War' Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vietnam_War>

'Educational, Entertainment, and Research Material Relevant to the Study of the Vietnam War'
Vietnamwar.net

< www.vietnamwar.net >

MATHEMATICS

Students will find many objects, and people to count in this book.

Question: How many soldiers are depicted in the opening page?

Question: How many people are watching them parade by?

Question: How many helicopters appear in the book?

CONCLUSION

This is an iconic song which is long overdue for this sort of visual exploration. It is a powerful reminder of the effects of war, and with Craig Smith's visual images added to the text, the message is even more resonant and approachable for students.

ABOUT THE WRITER AND ILLUSTRATOR

JOHN SCHUMANN

John Schumann is best known for his leadership of legendary Australian folk-rock band Redgum, and his Vietnam War anthem, 'I was only Nineteen' changed the way our nation thinks about how we treat our war veterans. Described by rock historian Glenn A Baker as 'one of the finest songwriters this country has produced', in 27 years in Australian music, as a member of Redgum and as a solo artist, John has received almost every award the Australian music industry has to offer. He has recorded nine albums and, with Redgum, toured the UK, Europe and Ireland where his songs are still played. His songs have been paid the ultimate compliment by becoming the property of the people and country they were written about. His lyrics are read in schools and universities across Australia. From 1998-2001, John's passion for social justice and the environment led him into mainstream politics. In the 1998 federal election he took the Minister for Foreign Affairs 'down to the wire' in the seat of Mayo, reducing Mr Downer's blue ribbon margin from 16% to 1.7%. John campaigned for only three weeks. The count took twelve days. He lives in Adelaide with his family where he runs a strategic communications company. Visit his website for further information:

<http://www.schumann.com.au/john>.

CRAIG SMITH

Craig Smith grew up in the Adelaide Hills, later studying graphic design at the South Australian School of Art, graduating in 1976. He worked at a variety of jobs – including undercoating the Sydney Harbour Bridge – while slowly building a career as an illustrator. He has done the illustrations for over 370 picture books, junior novels and educational readers. His titles include *Whistle Up the Chimney* (winner of the NSW Premier's Literary Award), *Dreadful David*, *Sister Madge's Book of Nuns* and *Billy the Punk*. Other notable titles include Duncan Ball's *Emily Eyefinger* series, Paul Jennings' *The Cabbage Patch* series, Phil Kettle's *Toocool* series and Rachel Flynn's *I Hate Fridays* series. The humour and pathos of home and school life, and a fondness for unusual perspectives are features of his work. The recurring themes of his work are about an Australian childhood. A childhood lived in an Australian landscape – usually a suburb!

He is passionate about children learning to think with real curiosity, with humour, with imagination and with empathy. His books in recent years have seen a return to real painting and a turning away from rendering, or 'painting', on computer. His work has also been invigorated by visiting schools around Australia. He lives in Melbourne, but loves getting out of it. When not drawing – or waiting for paint to dry – he loves gardening. Visit his website for further information:

<http://www.craigsmithillustration.com>.

ROBYN SHEAHAN-BRIGHT

Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright operates justified text writing and publishing consultancy services, and publishes regularly on children's literature, Australian fiction, and publishing history. She was inaugural director of and is a Life Member of the Queensland Writers Centre, and was co-founder of Jam Roll Press. Her publications include *Paper Empires: A History of the Book in Australia (1946-2005)* (2006) co-edited with Craig Munro and *Hot Iron Corrugated Sky: 100 Years of Queensland Writing* (2002) co-edited with Stuart Glover. In 2012 she was recipient of the CBCA Nan Chauncy Award for Outstanding Services to Children's Literature.

BLM 1 DRAWING ACTIVITY

Complete this image of a soldier doing combat training. Create a dramatic scene above and below him which makes sense of this image. Add a caption as if it is something the soldier is thinking.



BLM 2 QUIZ

QUESTIONS

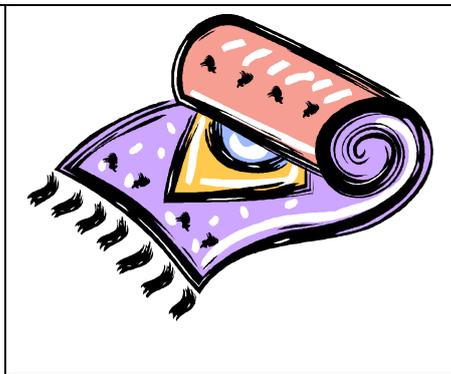
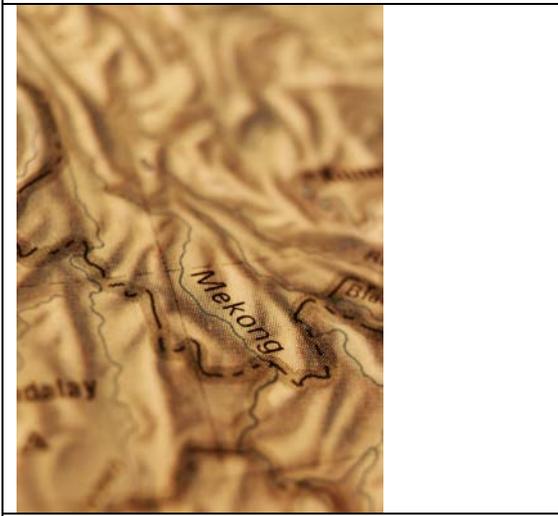
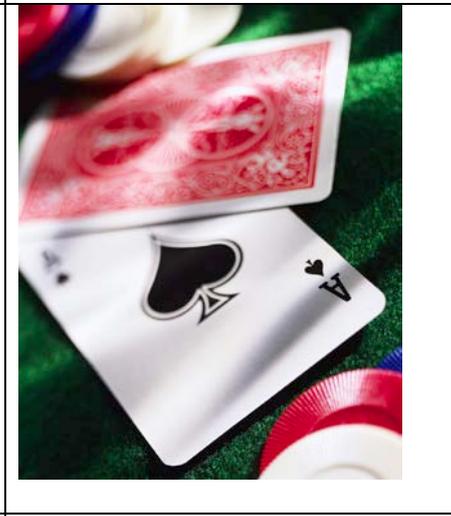
1. In which state is Puckapunyal located?
2. Which other training camps did the narrator go to before leaving for his overseas tour?
3. What does SLR stand for, and who used it?
4. What is a Chinook?
5. What other word is used to describe a Chinook in this text?
6. What was an M16, and who used it?
7. What does 'rec leave' stand for?
8. Where is Vung Tau?
9. What is morphine?
10. The narrator writes 'I caught some pieces in my back...' What is the word generally used for such 'pieces'?

ANSWERS: 1. Victoria. 2. Canungra and Shoalwater. 3. A Self-Loading Rifle used by Australian troops. 4. A type of combat helicopter. 5. Chopper. 6. A Rifle, Caliber 5.56 mm, M16, is the United States military select-fire adaptation of the AR-15 rifle. 7. Recreation (Recreational) Leave. 8. Vũng Tàu is a seaside city of Bà Rịa–Vũng Tàu Province in Southern Vietnam, and is the capital of the province. 9. A powerful opiate analgesic drug used to alleviate severe pain. 10. Shrapnel (fragments from an exploded artillery shell, mine or bomb).

[Note: See also glossary of other terms at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_Was_Only_Nineteen>]

BLM 3 IMAGES IN TEXT

Images of each of these things appear in the book. Try and find them, some more than once. Write the name beneath them as well.

		
1.	2.	3.
		
4.	5.	6.
		
7.	8.	9.

ANSWERS: 1. Chinook (Helicopter). 2. Carpet .3. Rifle . 4. Map 5. Cards. 6. Boots. 7. Tent. 8. Guitar. 9. Medal.