

The powerful true story behind the classic Australian song 'I Was Only Nineteen'

The Jungle Dark

STEVE STREVENS

This is the story of Frank 'Frankie' Hunt and other soldiers of 3 Platoon, A Company, 6 Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment who were the inspiration behind the Redgum song that became an anthem for the Vietnam War.

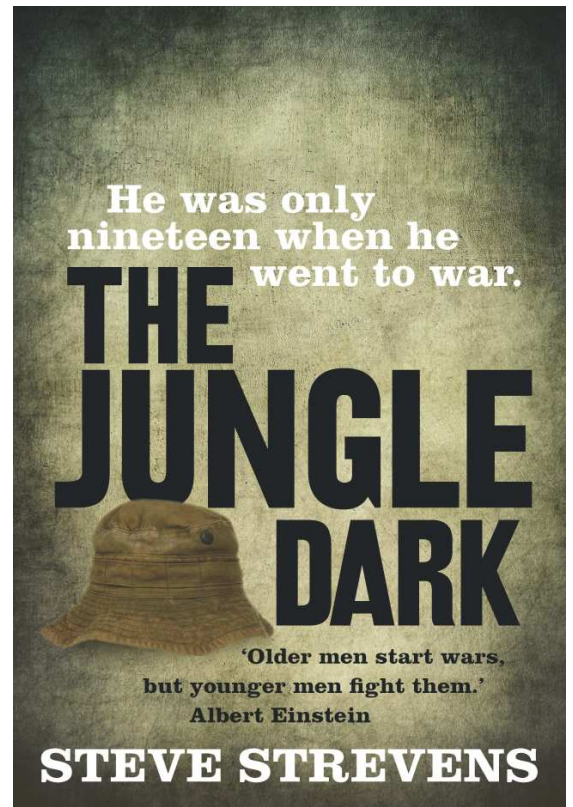
On 21 July 1969, as Neil Armstrong was walking on the moon and the rumble of American B-52s was overhead, these soldiers were in the Vietnamese scrub – weighed down by heavy packs, biting insects and the sapping humidity.

When their skipper, Platoon Commander Lieutenant Peter Hines, stepped on an M16 Jumping Jack mine, the lives of these men changed forever.

The Jungle Dark is the story of Frankie's life and he and his mates' memories, their reflections, and their pain.

Frankie was to become synonymous with the battles that most who served in this conflict, against a misunderstood and underestimated enemy, would fight long after the sounds of war fell silent.

Using first-hand accounts, *The Jungle Dark* is both a fascinating Australian yarn and enthralling military history.



"And can you tell me, doctor, why I still can't get to sleep?
And night time's just a jungle dark and a barking M16?
And what's this rash that comes and goes, can you tell me what it means?
God help me, I was only nineteen."

Steve Strevens joined the Navy two weeks after his 16th birthday. He served in Vietnam, Malay and Borneo and then became a freelance writer. He was a regular contributor to *The Age* and has been published in many major newspapers and magazines, both here and overseas. He is a multi-award-winning journalist and has edited two regional newspapers. Steve's eight books include *Slow River* and the critically acclaimed biography of *Collingwood AFL legend Bob Rose*.

He lives on the far south coast of NSW with his partner and their two ageing, loveable, but quite mad, dogs.

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