I Was Only Nineteen
John Schumann (Redgum)

A C G D A G A

A C G
Mum and Dad and Denny saw the passing–out
D A
parade at Puckapunyal
G A
It was a long march from cadets
A C
The sixth battalion was the next to tour, and it was
G D
me who drew the card
A G A
We did Canungra, Shoalwater before we left

E D
And Townsville lined the footpaths as we marched
A
down to the quay
E D
This clipping from the paper shows us young and
A
strong and clean
F#m E D
And there's me in me slouch hat with me SLR and
A
greens
E D
God help me, I was only nineteen

A C G
From Vung Tau, riding Chinooks, to the dust at Nui
D
Dat
A G A
I'd been in and out of choppers now for months
A C G
But we made our tents a home, VB and pinups on
D
the lockers
A G A
And an asian orange sunset through the scrub

E D
And can you tell me, doctor, why I still can't get to
A
sleep?
E D
And night–time's just a jungle dark and a barking M
A
sixteen?
F#m E
And what's this rash that comes and goes, can you
D A
tell me what it means?
E D
God help me, I was only nineteen

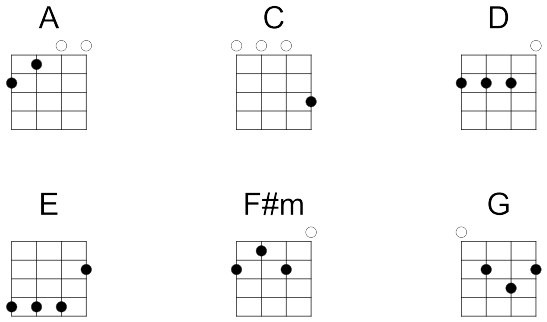
A four week operation when each step could mean
your last one on two legs
It was a war within yourself
But you wouldn't let your mates down til they had
you dusted off
So you closed your eyes and thought about
something else

Then someone yelled out "Contact!" and the bloke
behind me swore
We hooked in there for hours, then a god all mighty
roar

Frankie kicked a mine the day that mankind kicked
the moon
God help me, he was going home in June

A C G D
I can still see Frankie, drinking tinnies in the Grand
Hotel
A G A
On a thirty–six hour rec leave in Vung Tau
A C G
And I can still hear Frankie, lying screaming in the
D
jungle
A G A
Til the morphine came and killed the bloody row

E D
And the Anzac legends didn't mention mud and
A
blood and tears
E D
And the stories that my father told me never seemed
A
quite real
F#m E D
I caught some pieces in my back that I didn't even
A
feel
E D
God help me, I was only nineteen

E D
And can you tell me, doctor, why I still can't get to
A
isleep?
E D
And why the Channel Seven chopper chills me to
A
my feet?
F#m E
And what's this rash that comes and goes, can you
D A
tell me what it means?
E D
God help me, I was only nineteen

A C G D A G A