

And They Carved His Name in Stone

My name (left) is now on the pavers (left) at the Vietnam War Memorial in Adelaide (right) and the Vietnam War Museum at the Port Pirie RSL (centre). Thanks dad for organising those. Whilst I am no hero and obviously have very strong anti war feelings now, I am humbly proud that I did contribute. I also get very emotional when people say thank you at Anzac Day marches. However war has had its effects through PTSD (as is still happening with current veterans) and I have often found myself **Comfortably Numb** in the withdrawal that goes with that.



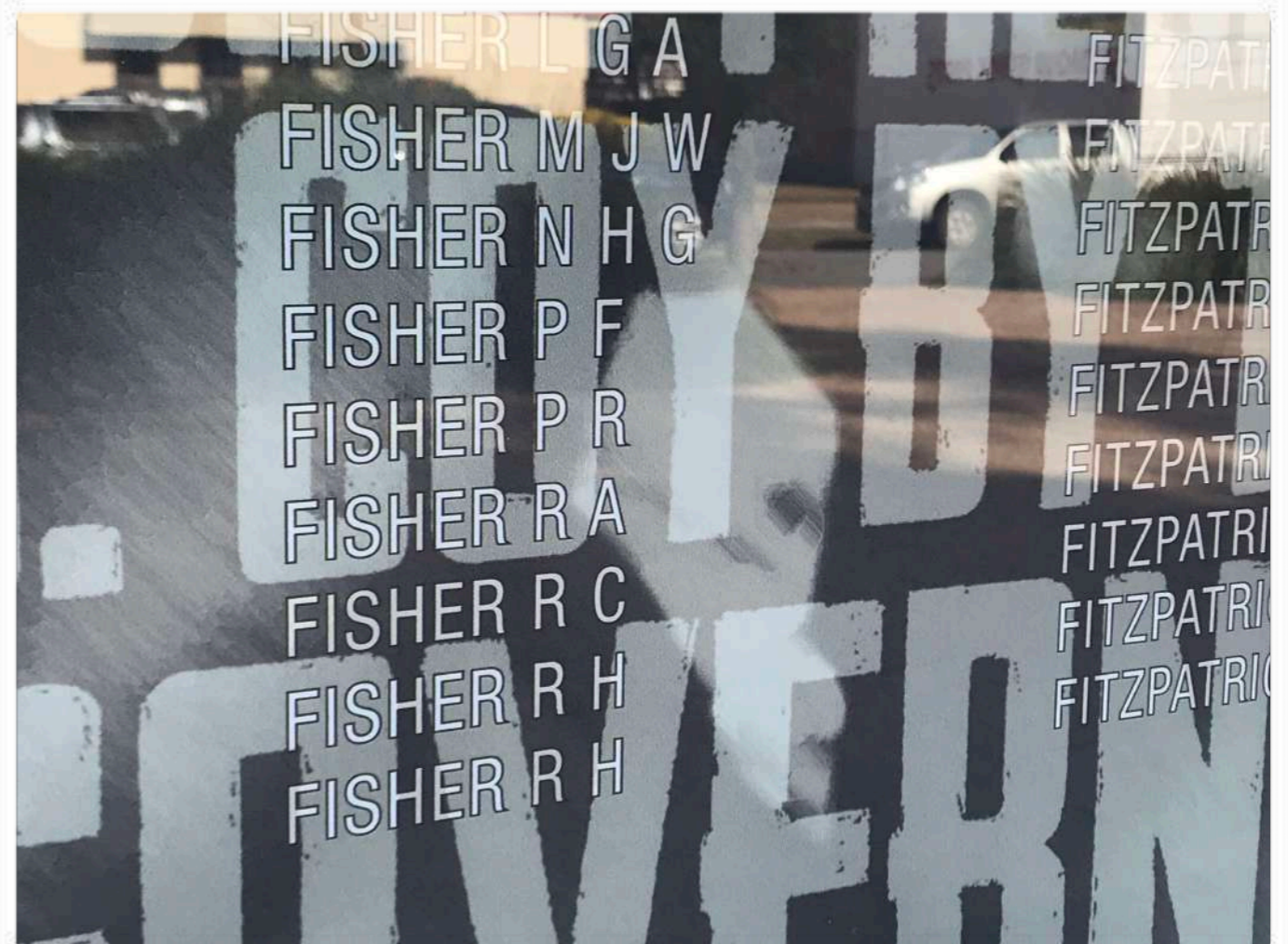
Pink Floyd - *Comfortably Numb*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FrOQC-zEog>

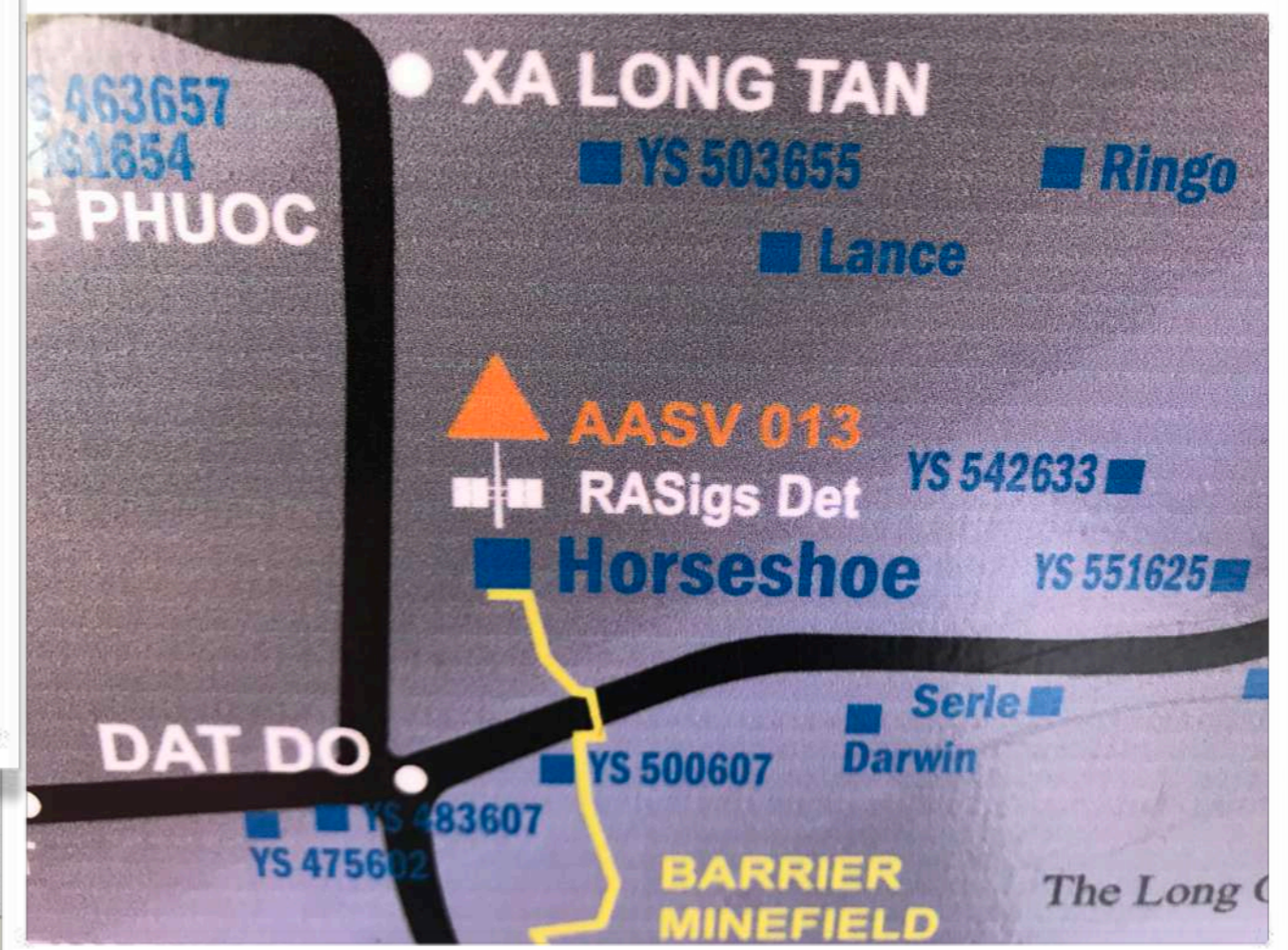




My name, along with every other Vietnam Veteran (and Tracker Dog) is on the Commemorative wall in Seymour, Victoria. That memorial is a fabulous tribute and thanks to its creators.



It is also interesting/coincidental that on the display maps at that memorial the Signals Corps locations are denoted by a white symbol of the Deployment Troop shelters' aerials (see below at the Horseshoe location).



BirdSpotting

Bev Sweeney

Once a week
binoculars in hand
he slips into the forest,
strangler figs
with roots like walls,
ferns, orchids, looping vines,
beneath a leaf-flecked sky
the birds are busy.

He was trained for this,
peripheral vision catches
the stirring of a wing,
ears wired for the softest call,
he can stand still as the air,
skin prickling,
tuned, waiting.

Vietnam.

In single file
they tread through silence
thick as the jungle—
mud, leeches, footrot.
The enemy plant bamboo spikes,
grenades, fade back
into green shadows.
Bird song or metal?
A whisper or just the wind?

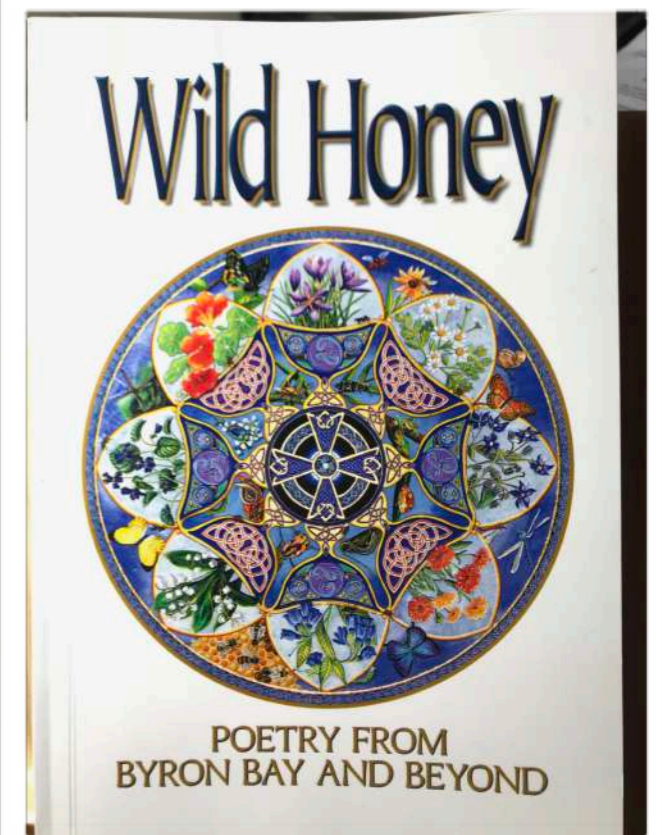
I was also the inspiration for this poem by Bev Sweeney. Bird watching is a keen hobby (therapy?) of mine, often turning PTSD's hyper-alertness and as Bev alludes, a few old Army skills, towards something fun.

Once a week
he sits in the counsellor's room.
Exhale, she says. Count to seven.
You are here now safe.

One morning
deep in the forest
light falls into a gully
and he spots his prize—
the Regent Bowerbird
black as the darkest memory
golden as a promise.

As the sun saunters towards noon
stillness holds man and bird
and peace settles
like a crown
on his weary head.

The book Wild Honey in which it is printed is published by Dangerously Poetic Press, 2012.



Thank you to everyone, particularly my family, who has stood by me and helped me. I especially thank Jan who has often been beside me during the horrible nightmares and other awful moments, Love You.

To conclude you may like to watch this oh so true adaptation of I Was Only Nineteen on YouTube. It portrays the nightmares, intrusive memories and flashbacks of war's aftermath. The sort of things that are still happening to the young Veterans of our recent "wars of choice" - food for thought.

Adaptation of I Was Only Nineteen

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1gmgwx77osw>

CREDITS

In the Preface I have credited the Australian War Memorial www.awm.gov.au and Denis Hare's Pronto Website for photos <http://pronto.au104.org> ; also his ebook *Pronto in South Vietnam 1962-1972* which can be accessed from the same site; and photos from his 104 Sig Sqn website <http://www.au104.com> . There is also a reference to Avery, B; *We Too Were Anzacs*, Slouch Hat Publications, 2004. I have also used information from my letters that my Mother had kept.

The ownership/source of any photos that are not mine has been acknowledged by the following **initials/symbols** on the photos.

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