

# Born On The Fourth Of July

Tom Paxton

As a schoolboy I played with a plastic grenade  
It was grey and with caps it was loaded  
In the dirt we would cry and dramatically die  
As it flew through the air and exploded

As a young man my dream was to be a marine  
My flag was worth all I could bring it  
The country was young. When the anthem was sung  
It gave me the goosebumps to sing it

I was born on the fourth of July  
No one more loyal than I  
When my country said so I was ready to go  
And I wish I'd been left there to die

When I landed in Nam I was with Uncle Sam  
I was fighting for God and my mother  
And I knew what to do when my first tour was through  
I signed up and went back for another

But it all tumbled down when we ambushed the town  
In the night how the metal was flying  
We blew it to hell. Really did our job well,  
But just women and kids did the dying

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In the damn DMZ it all ended for me  
The fighting broke out and we scattered  
One shot hit my heel, the last thing I feel  
The next hit my spine and it shattered

In my hospital bed I could hear what was said  
And the word will stay with me forever  
With my whole life ahead, my body was dead  
And the word they were using was never

Now I wheel myself down to the crossroads of town  
To see the young girls and their lovers  
And my mind is afire, it's alive with desire  
Christ, I'd barely begun, now it's over

In my wheelchair for life, my mechanical wife  
I'm supposed to be cheerful and stoic  
I'm your old tried-and-true, Yankee Doodle to you  
Clean-cut, paralysed and heroic