Born On The Fourth Of July

Tom Paxton

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C Em F G    (2x)
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      C                            Em
As a schoolboy I played with a plastic grenade
        F          G          C
It was grey and with caps it was loaded
        F                  C        Am
In the dirt we would cry and dramatically die
        F          G          C
As it flew through the air and exploded
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       E                      Am
As a young man my dream was to be a marine
    F                         G
My flag was worth all I could bring it
     C                            Em
The country was young. When the anthem was sung
     F         G          C
It gave me the goosebumps to sing it
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       F                      C
I was born on the fourth of July
F                    G
No one more loyal than I
         C                        Em
When my country said so I was ready to go
       F         G          C
And I wish I'd been left there to die
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Em F G
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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

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

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