The song was written by navy veteran Joe McDonald. McDonald was involved in protests for black civil rights and against the Vietnam War. He formed a band called Country Joe and the Fish, which recorded “I-Feel-Like-I’m-Fixin’-to-Die-Rag” in October 1965. The satirical song, while never a commercial success, became a powerful anthem of the anti-war movement.

Well, come on all of you big strong men,
Uncle Sam needs your help again.
He’s got himself in a terrible jam
Way down wonder in Vietnam.
So put down your books and pick up a gun,
We’re gonna have a whole lotta fun.

(CHORUS)
And it’s one, two, three.
What are we fighting for?
Don’t ask me, I don’t give a damn.
Next stop is Vietnam;
And it’s five, six, seven.
Open up the pearly gates.
Well there ain’t no time to wonder why.
Whooppeet we’re all gonna die.

Now come on Wall Street don’t go slow,
Why man this war is a go-go,
There’s plenty good money to be made,
Supplying the Army with the tools of the trade.
Just hope and pray that if they drop the bomb,
They drop it on the Viet Cong.

Now come on generals, let’s move fast,
Your big chance has come at last,
Gotta go out and get those reeks —
The only good commie is the one that’s dead.
You know that peace can only be won
When we’ve blown ’em all to kingdom come.

Now come on mothers throughout the land,
Pack your boys off to Vietnam,
Come on fathers, don’t hesitate,
Send your sons off before it’s too late.
You can be the first one on your block
To have your boy come home in a box.
"Ballad of the Green Berets"

Creator: Robin Moore and Barry Sadler
Date: 1966
Source type: Song

Introduction: In the 1950s and early 1960s, the U.S. army sent Special Forces (known informally as "Green Berets") to train the South Vietnamese army. Staff Sergeant Barry Sadler wrote this song with another songwriter while Sadler was recovering from a leg wound suffered in Vietnam. The song, performed by Sadler, was immensely popular when it was released in 1966, becoming a number one hit on the Billboard Charts.

Fighting soldiers from the sky
Fearless men who jump and die
Men who mean just what they say

The brave men of the Green Beret

(Chorus)
Silver wings upon their chest
These are men, America's best
One hundred men will test today
But only three will win the Green Beret

Trained to live off nature's land
Trained in combat hand to hand,
Men who fight by night and day
Courage take from the Green Beret

Back at home a young wife waits
Her Green Beret has met his fate.
He has died for those oppressed
Leaving her his last request

Put silver wings on my son's chest
Make him one of America's best
He'll be a man they'll test one day
Have him win the Green Beret