

AUGUST 1967

SUMMER OF LOVE - SAN FRANCISCO

In a 25-square-block area of San Francisco, in the summer of 1967, an ecstatic, Dionysian mini-world sprang up like a mushroom, dividing American culture into a Before and After unparalleled since World War II. If you were between 15 and 30 that year, it was almost impossible to resist the lure of that transcendent, peer-driven season of glamour, ecstasy, and Utopianism. It was billed as the Summer of Love, and its creators did not employ a single publicist or craft a media plan. Yet the phenomenon washed over America like a tidal wave, erasing the last dregs of the martini-sipping Mad Men era and ushering in a series of liberations and awakenings that irreversibly changed our way of life.(1.)

This month's 50-year look-back at 1967 is a change of pace reminder of the counter-culture revolt occurring in the States and overseas...at the same time as the fighting in Vietnam intensified and killed-in-action numbers continued to rise. In this anniversary year of the Summer of Love, there are countless museum displays, feature stories, books, movies and song originals and covers to review according to ones personal likes or possibly ones personal experiences of the time. Exhibits at de Young and time-line accounts like [Suddenly That Summer](#) quoted at the beginning of this article, present a comprehensive walk down memory lane. Conversely, this article mentions just a few artists' names and song titles and is only meant to stir contemplation about the environment from which the younger EC-47 officers and enlisted men came...and where you were and what you were doing that summer.



[de Young Museum Summer of Love](#)
50th Anniversary event flyer, April 12, 2017

The [Selective Service System](#) drafted 382,010 men into the U.S. military in 1966. By the summer of 1967, an estimated 150,000 more had been drafted. The killed-in-action (KIA) number, increasing every month, was 3,373 for all of 1966. Over 400 U.S. personnel were KIA every month of 1967, already totaling 4,665 deaths through August. There are a number of statistics about how the “dread” of the draft directly benefited the other services with volunteer recruits. *During the active combat phase, the possibility of avoiding combat by selecting their service and military specialty led as many as four out of 11 eligible men to enlist. The military relied upon this draft-induced volunteerism to make its quotas, especially the Army, which accounted for nearly 95 percent of all inductees during Vietnam. For example, defense recruiting reports show 34% of the recruits in 1964 up to 50% in 1970 indicated they joined to avoid placement uncertainty via the draft. These rates dwindled to 24% in 1972 and 15% in 1973 after the change to a lottery system. Accounting for other factors, it can be argued up to 60 percent of those who served throughout the Vietnam War did so directly or indirectly because of the draft.(2.)*

News of the war was headlined in newspapers & magazines and blaring on many radio and TV stations. Junior high school through graduate-level college students were more interested in the war and politics than they might have otherwise been without the draft. This same media coverage also exposed them to the cultural changes in education, race relations, women's fashions, the national moral conscience and music. Peace and freedom ideas spawned longer hair and mustaches for men, flowers and beads for everyone, draft card and bra burners, easy access to LSD and marijuana...and free love. Anti-war protests were soon in the mix. The music rock genre erupted with suggestive lyrics, acoustic sounds, and psychedelic posters and advertising. Some of the more memorable songs were: [“Good Vibrations,”](#) [“Like a Rolling Stone,”](#) [“White Rabbit,”](#) [“Bad Moon Rising,”](#) [“Light My Fire,”](#) [“Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band,”](#) and the Youngbloods' [“Get Together.”](#)

The Council on Foreign Relations, Senior Vice President, [James M. Lindsay](#), posted a March 05, 2015 blog (The Water's Edge) listing the twenty best Vietnam protest songs. Click [HERE](#) for the complete list and to listen to the best of 1967: Arlo Guthrie, “Alice's Restaurant Massacre,” Nina Simone, “Backlash Blues,” Joan Baez, “Saigon Bride,” Country Joe & the Fish, “Feel Like I'm Fixin' to Die,” Pete Seeger, “Waist Deep in the Big Muddy,” and Richie Havens, “Handsome Johnny.”

Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band

The Beatles, formed in 1960 in Liverpool, England, first appeared in America on the Ed Sullivan Show in 1964. By late 1966 they were at a crossroads—they were fading in popularity, had quit touring, experimented with drugs—and then set out to change rock & roll forever. Paul McCartney had the idea to remake their image and the evolution was evident in their longer hair, costumes and hallucinogen inspired music. For their Summer of Love break-out debut, the group recorded one of the most important albums in rock history: [Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band](#). Celebrating “Sgt Pepper” 50 years Later is a [CBSNews](#) video featuring [Rolling Stone](#) contributor Joe Levy describing the significance of The Beatles' hit album in music history.



Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band
Photo from The Beatles hit album



Photo courtesy of Rolls Royce

John Lennon's Rolls Royce is returning to London as another part of the many 50th Anniversary exhibits. Lennon had his 1964 Phantom V customized with a new yellow and psychedelic design paint job in 1967—concurrent with the release of the “Sgt Pepper” album. He took it to New York with Yoko Ono in 1970, and eventually donated it to the Cooper Hewitt Museum of Design. Jimmy Pattison, Canadian “Ripley's Believe it or Not” entrepreneur, purchased it for \$2.3 million in 1985. Following Expo 86, Pattison donated the iconic car to the Royal B.C. Museum in Victoria. Now, to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of “Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band”, the Lennon Rolls returns to its birthplace in England for [“The Great Eight Phantoms”](#) exhibition at Bonhams international flagship gallery in New Bond Street, London. The car will be on show from 29 July to 2 August.

Tell us your Summer of Love experiences. Family PG rated stories only! info@ec47.com, subject: Summer of Love Stories

References:

- (1.) [Suddenly That Summer](#), BY SHEILA WELLER | JULY 2012
- (2.) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conscription_in_the_United_States#Cold_War