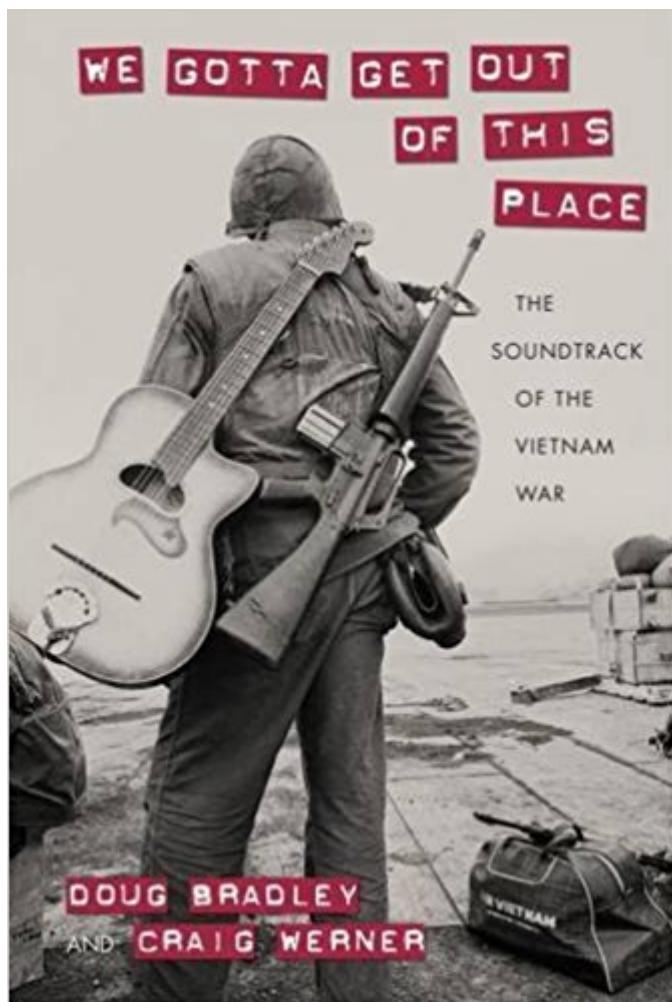


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We Gotta Get Out Of This Place: The Soundtrack Of The Vietnam War (Culture, Politics, And The Cold War)



Synopsis

For a Kentucky rifleman who spent his tour trudging through Vietnam's Central Highlands, it was Nancy Sinatra's "These Boots Are Made for Walkin'." For a "tunnel rat" who blew smoke into the Viet Cong's underground tunnels, it was Jimi Hendrix's "Purple Haze." For a black marine distraught over the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., it was Aretha Franklin's "Chain of Fools." And for countless other Vietnam vets, it was "I Feel Like I'm Fixin' to Die," "Who'll Stop the Rain," or the song that gives this book its title. In *We Gotta Get Out of This Place*, Doug Bradley and Craig Werner place popular music at the heart of the American experience in Vietnam. They explore how and why U.S. troops turned to music as a way of connecting to each other and the World back home and of coping with the complexities of the war they had been sent to fight. They also demonstrate that music was important for every group of Vietnam veterans—black and white, Latino and Native American, men and women, officers and "grunts"—whose personal reflections drive the book's narrative. Many of the voices are those of ordinary soldiers, airmen, seamen, and marines. But there are also "solo" pieces by veterans whose writings have shaped our understanding of the war—Karl Marlantes, Alfredo Vea, Yusef Komunyakaa, Bill Ehrhart, Arthur Flowers—as well as songwriters and performers whose music influenced soldiers' lives, including Eric Burdon, James Brown, Bruce Springsteen, Country Joe McDonald, and John Fogerty. Together their testimony taps into memories—individual and cultural—that capture a central if often overlooked component of the American war in Vietnam.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I don't know what the music of the Iraq war was and is, but I hope there is some and lots of it. What an important moving book this is. The authors listened to and gave voice to so many Viet Nam vets and were able to describe what it was really like being in that war. The music supported the soldiers and divided them. It gave them comfort and strength and joy and helped them survive day to day. Doug Bradley, the co-author, is a vet and has a solo piece in the book. The solo pieces of many soldiers provide a long missing place for them to tell the story of their real experience in the hooch and on the battlefield. One solo piece is by Bobby Muller, who founded Vietnam Vets of America. He describes how Bruce Springsteen sought him out in 1980 and through a concert and his music helped pave the way for Viet Nam vets to step up and publicly support each other. "Around the stage were guys in wheelchairs, gurneys. Man, getting those guys next to the stage was a big deal. Bruce starts off by telling the audience that 'we're here for the men and the women that fought the Vietnam war.' He talks about how Vietnam turned this whole country into that dark street and unless we're able to walk down those dark alleys and look into the eyes of the men and women that are down there, we're never gonna be able to get home. Then he introduces me! And I remember the point I wanted to drive home.

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