



Matilda



AND THE BAND PLAYED WALTZING MATILDA



When I was a young man I carried my pack
 And I lived the free life of a rover
 From the Murrays green basin to the dusty outback
 I waltzed my Matilda all over
 Then in nineteen fifteen my country said Son
 It's time to stop rambling 'cause there's work to be done
 So they gave me a tin hat and they gave me a gun
 And they sent me away to the war
 And the band played Waltzing Matilda
 As we sailed away from the quay
 And amidst all the tears and the shouts and the cheers
 We sailed off to Gallipoli

How well I remember that terrible day
 How the blood stained the sand and the water
 And how in that hell that they called Suvla Bay
 We were butchered like lambs at the slaughter
 Johnny Turk he was ready, he primed himself well
 He chased us with bullets, he rained us with shells
 And in five minutes flat he'd blown us all to hell
 Nearly blew us right back to Australia
 But the band played Waltzing Matilda
 As we stopped to bury our slain
 We buried ours and the Turks buried theirs
 Then we started all over again

Now those that were left, well we tried to survive
 In a mad world of blood, death and fire
 And for ten weary weeks I kept myself alive
 But around me the corpses piled higher
 Then a big Turkish shell knocked me arse over tit
 And when I woke up in my hospital bed
 And saw what it had done, I wished I was dead
 Never knew there were worse things than dying
 For no more I'll go waltzing Matilda
 All around the green bush far and near
 For to hump tent and pegs, a man needs two legs
 No more waltzing Matilda for me

So they collected the cripples, the wounded, the maimed
 And they shipped us back home to Australia
 The armless, the legless, the blind, the insane
 Those proud wounded heroes of Suvla
 And as our ship pulled into Circular Quay
 I looked at the place where my legs used to be
 And thank Christ there was nobody waiting for me
 To grieve and to mourn and to pity
 And the band played Waltzing Matilda
 As they carried us down the gangway
 But nobody cheered, they just stood and stared
 Then turned all their faces away

And now every April I sit on my porch
 And I watch the parade pass before me
 And I watch my old comrades, how proudly they march
 Reliving old dreams of past glory
 And the old men march slowly, all bent, stiff and sore
 The forgotten heroes from a forgotten war
 And the young people ask, "What are they marching for?"
 And I ask myself the same question
 And the band plays Waltzing Matilda
 And the old men answer to the call
 But year after year their numbers get fewer
 Some day no one will march there at all

Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda
 Who'll come a waltzing Matilda with me
 And their ghosts may be heard as you pass the Billabong
 Who'll come-a-waltzing Matilda with me?

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Note: An interesting page, titled " " has linked to this page. If you're interested in the conditions that soldiers endured at Suvla, Gallipoli, and various battlefields throughout France, I highly recommend this site. It is a collection of Letters From The Front from a Newfoundland soldier serving during World War I.

Note II: If you're curious about the original song, *Waltzing Matilda*, the original lyrics can be found