

# And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda

John Williamson

When I was a young man I carried a pack  
I lived the free life of a rover  
From the Murray's green basin till the dusty outback  
I waltzed my matilda right over Then in nineteen fifteen, the country said son  
There's no time for roamin' there's work to be done  
And 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 the ship pulled away from the quay  
And amidst all the cheers, the flag waving and tears  
We set off for Gallipoli How well I remember that terrible day  
When our 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 Turkey was waiting, he primed himself well  
Showered us with bullets and he rained us with shells  
And in five minutes flat, well he blew us to hell  
He nearly blew us right back to Australia And 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 So those who were left just tried to survive  
In a mad world of blood and fire  
And for ten weary weeks I kept myself alive  
As the corpses around me piled higher Then a big Turkish shell knocked me arse over head  
And when I awoke in the hospital bed  
I saw what it had done and I wished I was dead  
Then I knew there were worse things than dying And I'll go no more Waltzing Matilda  
All through the green bush far and free  
Coz to hunt and tent peg  
A man needs both legs  
No more waltzing matilda for me They collected the crippled, the wounded, the maimed  
Shipped us all back to Australia  
The legless, the armless, the blind and insane  
The brave wounded heroes of Suvla Bay And as our ship pulled into Circular Quay  
I looked at the place where my legs used to be  
And I thanked Christ there was nobody waiting for me  
To mourn and to grieve and to pity And the band played Waltzing Matilda  
As they carried us down the gangway  
Nobody cheered, they just stood and stared  
Then turned all their faces away And now every April I sit on the porch  
As I watch the parade pass before me

I see my old comrades, how proudly they march  
Reviving old dreams and past gloriesBut the old men march slowly, bones stiff and sore  
Tired old men from a tired old war  
And the young people ask 'what are they marching for'  
And I ask myself the same questionAnd the band played Waltzing Matilda  
As the old men still answer the call  
Year after year more old men disappear  
Soon none of them will march there at all

Songwriters  
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