

The Pogues

"And The Band Played Waltzing Matilda"

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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
When 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 showered 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
And we buried ours and the Turks buried theirs
Then it started all over again

Now those who were living did their best to survive
In that mad world of blood, death and fire
And for seven long weeks I kept myself alive
While the corpses around me piled higher
Then a big Turkish shell knocked me arse over head
And when I woke up in my hospital bed
And saw what it had done, Christ I wished I was dead
Never knew there were worse things than dying
And no more I'll go waltzing Matilda
To the green bushes so 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 and
maimed
And they shipped us back home to Australia
The legless, the armless, the blind and insane
Those proud wounded heroes of Suvla
And as our ship pulled into Circular Quay
I looked at the place where me 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
And they turned all their faces away

And now every April I sit on my porch
And I watch the parade pass before me
I see my old comrades, how proudly they march
Reliving their dreams of past glory
I see the old men, all twisted and torn
The forgotten heroes of a forgotten war
And the young people ask me, "What are they
marching for?"
And I ask myself the same question
And the band plays Waltzing Matilda
And the old men still 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 go a-waltzing Matilda with me?
And their ghosts may be heard as they march beside
the billabong
Who'll go a waltzing Matilda with me?

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