

AND THE BAND PLAYED WALTZING MATILDA - ERIC BOGLE

Now when I was a young man, I carried me pack
And I lived the free life of the rover
From the Murray's green basin to the dusty outback
Well, I waltzed my Matilda all over
Then in 1915, my country said "son
It's time you stopped rambling, there's work to be done"
So they gave me a tin hat, and they gave me a gun
And they marched 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 sailed off for Gallipoli

And how well I remember that terrible day
How our blood stained the sand and the water
And of how in that hell that they called Suvla Bay
We were butchered like lambs at the slaughter
Johnny Turk, he was waiting, he'd primed himself well
He showered us with bullets and he rained us with shell
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
When we stopped to bury our slain
We buried ours, and the Turks buried theirs
Then we started all over again

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

So they gathered the crippled, the wounded, the maimed
And they shipped us back home to Australia
The legless, the armless, the blind, the 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 thanked Christ there was nobody waiting for me
To grieve, to mourn, and to pity
But the band played Waltzing Matilda
As they carried us down the gangway
But nobody cheered, they just stood and stared
Then they turned all their faces away

And so now every April, I sit on me porch
And I watch the parades pass before me
And I see my old comrades, how proudly they march
Reviving old dreams of past glories
And the old men march slowly, old bones stiff and sore
They're tired old heroes from a forgotten war
And the young people ask, "what are they marching for?"
And I ask myself the same question
But the band plays Waltzing Matilda
And the old men still answer the call
But as year follows year, more old men disappear
Someday 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 they march by that billabong
Who'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me?