

# And The Band Played Waltzing Matilda

John McDermott

Now when I was a young man and I carried my pack  
and I lived the free life of the rover  
From the Murray's green basin to the dusty out back  
I waltzed my Matilda all over.  
Then in 1915 my country said "Son  
It's time to stop rambling, 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 ships pulled away from the quay  
And amid all the tears, flag waving and cheers  
We sailed off to Galipolli  
And how I remember that terrible day  
How our blood stained the sand and the water  
And how in that hell that they called Suvla Bay  
We were butchered like lambs to the slaughter.  
Johnnie Turk was ready, oh he primed himself well  
He rained us with bullets and he showered us with shell  
And in five minutes flat we were all blown to hell  
nearly blew us all back home to Australia.  
But the band played Waltzing Matilda  
as we stuck to bury our slain  
We burned ours and the Turks buried theirs  
and we started all over again  
Those who were living just tried to survive  
In a mad world of blood death and fire  
And for ten weary weeks, I kept myself alive  
While around me the corpses piled higher  
Then a big Turkish shell knocked me arse over head  
And when I awoke in my hospital bed  
And saw what it had done and I wished I was dead  
Never knew there were worse things than dying  
For no more I'll go Waltzing Matilda  
All round the green bush far and near  
For to hump tent and pegs a man needs both legs  
No more Waltzing Matilda for me.  
They collected the crippled, 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 in to Circular Key  
And I looked at the place where my legs used to be

I thanked Christ there was no one there 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 there and stared  
And turned all their faces away  
So now every April, I sit on my porch  
And I watch the parade pass before me  
And I see my old comrades, how proudly they march  
Renewing their dreams of past glory  
I see the old men all tired, stiff and sore  
The weary old heroes of a forgotten war  
And the young people ask "What are they marching for?"  
And I ask myself the same question  
And the band played Waltzing Matilda  
And the old men still answer the call  
But year after year, the numbers get fewer  
Some day none 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 the billabong  
Who'll come a waltzing Matilda with me.

Lyrics provided by <https://www.omusic.in/>