

And The Band Played Waltzing Matilda

Slim Dusty

When I was a young man an' carried a pack
I lived the free life of the rover.
From the Murray's green banks to the dusty outback,
I waltzed my matilda all over.
Then in 1915, the country said, "Son,
No time for roamin', there's work to be done."
And they gave me a tin hat, they gave me a gun,
And they sent me away to the war.

And the band played "Waltzing Matilda,"
As our ship pulled away from the quay,
And amidst all the cheers, the flag waving, and tears,
We sailed off to Gallipoli.

How well I remember that terrible day,
When our blood stained the sand and the water;
And how in that hell that they call Suvla Bay
We were butchered like lambs at the slaughter.
Johnny Turk, he was waitin', he primed himself well;
Showered us with bullets, and he rained us with shell
And in ten seconds flat, he'd blown us to hell,
Nea'ly blew us right back to Australia.

And the band played "Waltzing Matilda,"
When we stopped to bury the slain,
We buried our men, the Turks buried theirs,
Then we started all over again.

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They collected the crippled, the wounded, and maimed,
And they shipped us back home to Australia.
The armless, the legless, the blind, and insane,
All the brave wounded heroes of Suvla.
And when our ship pulled into Circular Quay,
I looked at the place where my legs used to be,
I thanked Christ there was nobody waiting for me,
To grieve and 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,
And then they turned their faces away.

And 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,
Reliving old dreams of past glory,
But the old men march slowly, their bones stiff and
sore,
Tired old men from a tired old war;
And the young people ask, "What are they marching for?"
I ask meself the same question.

But the band plays "Waltzing Matilda,"
And the old men they answer the call,
But year after year, the old men disappear

Soon, no one will march there at all.

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[Whistling of refrain]

* The traditional version has this extra verse and refrains

*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 dying.

For I'll go no more "Waltzing Matilda,"
All around the green bush far and free --
To hump tents and pegs, a man needs both legs,
No more "Waltzing Matilda" for me.

**Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda
Who'll come a Waltzing Matilda with me
And their ghosts may be heard as they march by the
billabong
So who'll come a waltzing Matilda with me.