And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda

The Skids

When I was a young man I carried a pack
And lived the free life of a rover
From the Murray's green banks to the dusty outback
I waltzed my Matilda all over

Then in 1915, the country said, "Son,
It's no time for roving, there's work to be done"
And they gave me a tin hat and 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 sailed off for Gallipoli

Oh well I remember that terrible day
When our blood stained the sand and the water
And how in that hell that they called Souvla Bay
We were butchered like lambs at the slaughter

Johnny Turk he was waiting
He primed himself well
Showered us with bullets and rained us with shells
And in ten minutes flat he'd blown us to hell
Nearly blew us right back to Australia

And the band played Waltzing Matilda
As we stopped to bury the slain
We buried ours and the Turks buried theirs
Then we started all over again

They collected the cripples, 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 Souvla

And when our ship pulled into Circular Quay
And I looked at the place where me legs used to be
I 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 there and stared
And then turned 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
Reliving old dreams and past glory
But the old men march slowly, their bones stiff and sore
Tired old men from the tired old war
And the young people ask what are they marching for
And I ask meself the same question

But the band played Waltzing Matilda
And the old men they answer the call

But year by year those old men disappear
Soon no-one will march there at all

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