

# The Pogues, And The Band Played Waltzing Mat

(Eric Bogle)

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  
How 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 chased 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  
We buried ours and the Turks buried theirs  
Then we started all over again

Now those that were left, well we tried to survive  
In a mad world of blood, death and fire  
And for ten weary weeks I kept myself alive  
But around me the corpses piled higher  
Then a big Turkish shell knocked me arse over tit  
And when I woke up in my hospital bed  
And saw what it had done, I wished I was dead  
Never knew there were worse things than dying  
For no more I'll go waltzing Matilda  
All around the green bush 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, 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 into Circular Quay  
I looked at the place where my 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  
Then turned all their faces away

And now every April I sit on my porch  
And I watch the parade pass before me  
And I watch my old comrades, how proudly they march  
Reliving old dreams of past glory  
And the old men march slowly, all bent, stiff and sore  
The forgotten heroes from a forgotten war  
And the young people ask, "What are they marching for?"  
And I ask myself the same question  
And the band plays Waltzing Matilda  
And the old men 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 you pass the Billabong  
Who'll go a waltzing Matilda with me?