

The Band Played Waltzing Matilda

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“Some 559,000 Allied personnel were committed during the whole campaign, of whom 420,000 were British and Empire troops, 50,000 Australians and 9,000 New Zealanders and 80,000 French. The Allies had over 250,000 casualties, of whom over 58,000 died, including 12,000 French and 11,000 Australian and New Zealand troops. Approximately 196,000 were wounded or sick, including 25,000 from Australia and New Zealand. Just over 11,000 Allied troops have known graves on the Gallipoli peninsula. Casualties to Ottoman forces with some Germans, numbered in excess of 300,000 and over 87,000 died. There are few known Ottoman graves on the peninsula, but like the Allies, several memorials commemorate the missing. Footnote: these figures are approximate, but based on the evidence to date.”
Gallipoli Association, January 2015.

G C G Em
When I was a young man I carried me pack
G D G
And I lived the free life of a rover
G C G Em
From the Murray's green basin to the dusty Outback
G D G
I waltzed my Matilda all over
D C G
Then in nineteen-fifteen me country said, “Son
D C G
It's time you stopped rambling there's work to be done”
G C G Em
So they gave me a tin hat, and they gave me a gun
G D G
And they marched me away to the war
G C G Em
And the band played Waltzing Matilda
G C D
When the ship pulled away from the quay
C Am G Em
And amidst all the tears, flag-waving and cheers
G D G
We sailed off for Gallipoli
G C G Em
And how well I remember that terrible day
G D G
When our blood stained the sand and the water
G C G Em
And how in that hell that they call Suvla Bay
G D G
We were butchered like lambs at the slaughter
D C G
Johnny Turk he was ready, he'd primed himself well
D C G
He rained us with bullets, and he showered us with shells
G C G Em
And in five minutes flat he'd blown us all to hell
G D G
Nearly blew us back home to Australia

G C G
And the band played Waltzing Matilda
G C D
When we stopped to bury our slain
C Am G Em
We buried ours, and the Turks buried theirs
G D G
Then we started all over again

G C G Em
And those that were left, well, we tried to survive
G D G
In that mad world of blood, death and fire
G C G Em
And for ten weary weeks I kept myself alive
G D G
While around me the corpses piled higher
D C G
Then a big Turkish shell knocked me arse over head
D C G
And when I awoke in me hospital bed
G C G Em
And saw what it had done, well, I wished I was dead
G D G
Never knew there was worse things than dying

G C G
So no more I'll go Waltzing Matilda
G C D
All around the green bush far and near
C Am G Em
To hump tent and pegs a man needs both legs
G D G
No more Waltzing Matilda for me

G C G Em
So they gathered the wounded, the crippled, the maimed
G D G
And they shipped us back home to Australia
G C G Em
The armless, the legless, the blind, the insane
G D G
Those proud wounded heroes of Suvla
D C G
And when the ship pulled into Circular Quay
D C G
I looked at the place where me legs used to be
G C G Em
And thanked Christ there was no one there waiting for me
G D G
To grieve and to mourn and to pity

G C G
And the band played Waltzing Matilda
G C D
When they carried us down the gangway
C Am G Em
But nobody cheered, they just stood there and stared
G D G
Then they turned all their faces away

G C G Em
So now every April I sit on my porch
G D G
And I watch the parade pass before me
G C G Em
I see my old comrades how proudly they march
G D G
Renewing old dreams of past glory
D C G
And the old men march slowly, all bones stiff and sore
D C G
They're tired old heroes from a forgotten war
G C G Em
And the young people ask, "What are they marching for?"
G D G
And I ask myself the same question

G C G
And the band plays Waltzing Matilda
G C D
And the old men still answer the call
C Am G Em
But year after year their numbers are fewer
G D G
Someday no one will march there at all

G C
Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda
G D
Who'll come a-Waltzing Matilda with me?
G D Em C
And their ghosts may be heard as they march by the Billabong
G D G
Who'll come a-Waltzing Matilda with me?