

Sandy Denny

"The Deserter"

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As I was a-walking along ratcliffe highway
A recruiting party came a-beating my way.
They enlisted me and treated me 'til I did not know
Unto the queen's barracks they forced me to go.

When first I deserted, I thought myself free
Until my cruel comrade informed against me.
I was quickly followed after and brought back with
speed,
I was handcuffed and guarded, heavy irons put on me.

Court martial, court martial, they held upon me
And the sentence passed upon me, three hundred and
three.
May the lord have mercy on them for their sad cruelty,
For now the queen's duty lies heavy on me.

When next I deserted, I thought myself free
Until my cruel sweetheart informed against me.
I was quickly followed after and brought back with
speed
I was handcuffed and guarded, heavy irons put on me.

Court martial, court martial then quickly was got
And the sentence passed upon me, that I was to be
shot.
May the lord have mercy on them for their sad cruelty,
For now the queen's duty lies heavy on me,

Then up rode prince albert in his carriage and six,
Saying, "where is that young man whose coffin is
fixed?
Set him free from his irons and let him go free,
For he'll make a good soldier for his queen and
country."

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