

Boney was a Warrior

1. Boney was a warrior
- **Way-hey, yah!**
A warrior, a terrier
- **John France-Wah**
2. Boney fought the Rooshians -
- **Way-hey, yah!**
And Boney fought the Prooshians
- **John France-Wah**
3. Boney marched to Moscow
- **Way-hey, yah!**
Lost his army in the snow
- **John France-Wah**
4. Moscow was a-blazing then!
- **Way-hey, yah!**
(So) he marched his army back again
- **John France-Wah**
5. We licked him in Trafalgar bay -
- **Way-hey, yah!**
Carried his main topmast away
- **John France-Wah**
6. 'Twas on the plains of Waterloo -
- **Way-hey, yah!**
He met the beggar that pulled him through
- **John France-Wah**
7. Boney went a-cruisin' -
- **Way-hey, yah!**
Aboard the Billy Ruffian
- **John France-Wah**
8. Boney went to Saint Hélène
- **Way-hey, yah!**
And he'll never come back again
- **John France-Wah**
9. Boney was a warrior -
- **Way-hey, yah!**
A warrior, a terrier.
- **John France-Wah**

Halyard shanty
This version sung by Steeleye Span.



Meissonier, Jean Louis Ernest_Meissonier, **Napoleon in the campaign of France, 1814**
From *A History of the Nineteenth Century Year by Year*, Edwin Emerson Jr., 1900
via commons.wikimedia.org.

Boney was a Warrior

Notes:

Halyard shanty, sung quite quickly.
Could also be used as a sheet or short-haul shanty.

When used at halyards there would be two pulls on each chorus line; for short-hauls or foresheets there would be only one, this coming on the final syllable.

It could have been taken from the French shanty, Jean François de Nantes., a comic shanty (see below) but **Hugill** believes that more likely the reverse occurred.

Versions have been reported by:

i) **Terry**, Richard Runciman, *The Shanty Book Part I:*

Sailor Shanties (Curwen Edition 6308)

ii) **Hugill**, Stan, (1969), *Shanties and Sailors Songs*

iii) **Short**, John, collected by Sharp, Cecil Sharp noted: "Mr. Short sang 'Bonny' not 'Boney', which is the more usual pronunciation; while his rendering of 'John' was something between the French 'Jean' and the English 'John'."

Notes on the words

John France-Wah - how they sang Jean François
Billy Ruffian - Bellerophon, which took Napoleon as a prisoner to St Helena



Stojanow, Piotr. Napoleon's retreat from Moscow

The **tune** for Boney was taken from a French shanty, *Jean-François de Nantes*:

1. C'est Jean-François de Nantes - oué, oué, oué Gabier de la Fringante - oh mes boués	9. Montre et chaîne s'envolent Mais in prend la vérole
2. Débarque en fin de compagne Fier comme un roi d'Espagne	10 En revenant de Flandres Il attrape des chancre
3. En vrac dedans sa bourse Il a vingt mois de course	11. On lui coupera son membre Tout droit au ras du ventre
4. Une montre une chaîne Valant une baleine	12. A l'hôpital de Nantes Jean-François se lamente
5. Branie-bas chez son hôtesse Bitte et bosse et largesses	13. Et les draps de sa couche Déchire avec sa bouche
6. La plus belle servante L'emmène dans sa soupente	14. Il ferait de la peine Même à son capitaine
7. Il bouline la donzelle Et navigue sur mer belle	15. Pauvre Jean-François de Nantes Gabier sur la Fringante.
8. En vidant la bouteille Tout son or appareille	Notes: Words cribbed online from Chansons de Marins .