



Mutiny, no Bounty

The harsh reality of repeating Captain William Bligh's brilliant feat, of crossing the Pacific Ocean in an open boat, strikes down the crew after one day of training

After four years of planning it all came down to one Sunday afternoon in February for the reality to hit home. Some 4000nm across the Pacific in an open boat, from Tonga to Timor in the oar strokes of William Bligh following the mutiny on the HMS *Bounty* 221 years earlier.

No charts, toilet paper, torches... with only enough water for two weeks and only 400 grams of food a day for the 48 days of the voyage... that is all we get.

In February, four strangers met for the first time to prepare. This was our second and last

training weekend before we sail in Tonga. (Daily blogs are at www.taliskerbountyboat.com).

TRAINING DAY

February 20: Pete Stier from the US, Dave Wilkinson from Hong Kong and Mike Perham from the UK make up the crew. They were responsible for total boat preparation for the dress rehearsal weekend. Pete had picked up a leadership roll for that task and was going like a trooper, but we still departed a little late.

At the boat ramp, as we were rigging *Talisker Bounty Boat* and all the food was loaded onboard, I declared (as I had warned the day before) that no one was to eat anymore food... we would be on Bligh-voyage rations. Basically, a starvation diet!

Dave quickly scoffed something back at the car and Mike and Pete swallowed something, too. Pete had not eaten breakfast that morning, so was off to a bad start.

With 240lt of water onboard to give us extra weight (we normally only carry 110lt) simulating a full load of gear, we set off for

the morning in light winds, very low in the water — about 35cm of freeboard! We set the parachute anchor, checked sail settings, visited some friends on Scotland Island and then sailed up onto a classic beach in Pittwater, not for lunch (no lunch today — but Mike got confused and scoffed an apple!) but to rig our spray dodger. This will give us some cover from the sun, wind and waves. Bligh rigged his sails as lee cloths and covers.

As the sun was setting on our first night onboard at anchor, all were issued with one 55g ship's lifeboat biscuit for dinner. There were a few complaints, but lots of laughs about how good a hamburger would be, and

CORDON BLURT

Breakfast was another 55g ship's biscuit, followed by a shared 110g tin of lambs' tongues... as if we had just killed a bird. Bligh and crew killed and ate a bird every day, and biscuit-and-tongue is what we will eat every day.

Mike and I were in our element, but Dave thought it was cat food — not happy. And Pete, after trying to eat some said: "That was disgusting" and suggested he may not in the future.

So we're off for the morning row heading up Sydney's Pittwater, with a runabout and 30hp outboard in support. I took off in that to pick up a friend Alex, while the others

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more, and there was no limit to the water.

Pete and I took the 8pm to midnight watch and Dave and Mike hit the boards. Our bed is just a board across the seats in the centre of the boat. For the two on watch in the cockpit, one can sleep in the bilge and the other sits and steers. But the captain's orders were for one person on watch to be awake at all times.

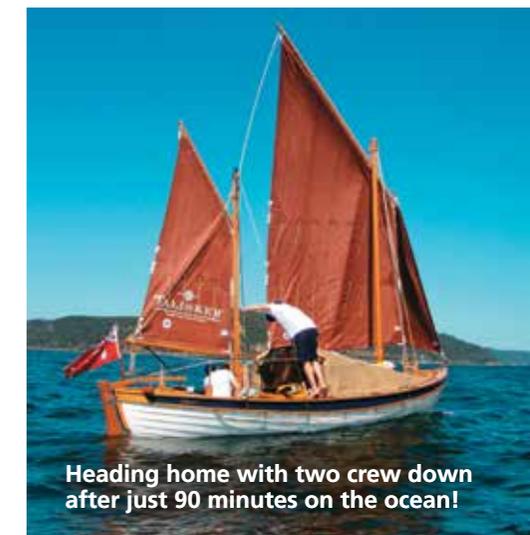
At midnight, Pete and I got the boards and Mike and Dave the cockpit. At 0200 hours I heard Dave snoring. No surprise, except he was supposed to be on watch! At 0400 Pete and I took over and just before dawn at 0600 I woke the other two, to their bitter disappointment.

rowed. Returning 20 minutes later, I picked up *Bounty Boat* and towed them out into the ocean about 40 minutes away.

With little food or sleep and a bit of exertion, I knew the crew would be under pressure, which was what I was trying to achieve. Without me on the boat, they all had to think and do things for themselves and when outside in the swells it was going to be fun.

ON THE CANVAS

I was giving instructions on things for them to do while filming and taking photographs. It was not too much work for the crew of *Bounty Boat*, but I could see people fading



Heading home with two crew down after just 90 minutes on the ocean!

fast. Things were happening very slowly. Then Pete was gone and Dave was not well.

After 90 minutes of ocean sailing, we had to call it a day. I climbed back onboard *Bounty Boat*. Pete had crashed out on the boards, exhausted, nauseous and possibly hypoglycaemic, shaking and hyperventilating. Dave was very lethargic and feeling quite seasick (and not impressed with me), and Mike was just hungry but happy.

At 1130, just 26 hours after officially going onto half *Bounty Boat* rations, we all started eating food again. We took a tow back to the boat ramp.

REALITY LESSON

It then became clear to all the crew that I had succeeded in the most important part of the training — to show that each of us will be affected differently by the privations ahead, and that lack of food and energy effects the way we think, make decisions and use our emotions. It took me just 26 hours to deprive them of food, and get a result. I think (hope?) that they can see it was the intention and I know they will be stronger for it.

At the boat ramp, Dave went shopping with our full endorsement, returning with sweet drinks (only water on *Bounty Boat*), sandwiches and chocolates. We were all smiles.

We pack *Bounty Boat* into the container in six days, but there may be more days lacking in sleep as the to-do list is huge.

After this training weekend we are now a stronger and wiser crew. I am very happy and will sail with them anywhere. Watch this space.

Opposite: Testing *Bounty Boat*. When's tongue and biscuit time?

Left: Fitting the dodger... the frame is the oars.

