



**STORIES
FROM
THE SEA**

EXPLORATION OBJECTS



WILLIAM BLIGH'S EQUIPMENT FOR MEASURING FOOD AND WATER

Date made

1789

Object ref.

ZBA2071; ZBA
2073ZBA2703

Credit

National Maritime
Museum, Greenwich,
London

Description

These three objects tell a remarkable tale of survival. Lieutenant William Bligh (1754–1817) and 18 companions were thrown off Bligh's ship *Bounty* by mutineers in the South Seas, and left in a small boat with little to eat or drink. These objects were used to make sure every man got a fair share of food and water on their hazardous 3900-mile journey to safety.

The bowl is made from a smoothed and hollowed coconut shell, signed and dated 'W Bligh/April 1789'. There is also an inscription in ink saying, 'The cup I eat my miserable allowance out of.' This cup was used by Bligh to eat his ration out of during the boat voyage of about 3,900 miles.

The plain horn beaker was inscribed in ink by Bligh: 'Allowance of water 3 times a day'. It was used to measure rations during the voyage.

The pistol bullet is engraved: 'This bullet 1/25th of a lb was the allowance of bread which supported 18 men for 48 days served to each person 3 times a day.' Bligh used the bullet as a weight to measure the ration during the voyage.

Questions

Do you think that it was important that every man got the same amount of food? Why?

Tell the story of the mutiny from a mutineer's point of view.



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