

## **This project would make Brando smile**

The Bounty of movie fame in Maine for repairs DENNIS HOEY Staff Writer

The HMS Bounty has weathered violent squalls, collisions at sea and several ownership changes during its 46-year sailing career, but those were nothing like the crisis that filmmakers created in 1960, when MGM studio officials threatened to torch the ship. Lead actor Marlon Brando reportedly threatened to walk away from the making of the movie "Mutiny on the Bounty" unless he was assured that the vessel would not be set on fire - an action scene that had been written into the script. Brando saved the ship and today, thousands of nautical miles later, the 180-foot-long, three-masted Bounty rests comfortably on a marine railway in Boothbay Harbor, getting repairs that shipyard workers say could take at least a year.

"The Bounty was supposed to have been burned after 1960. It wasn't supposed to be around for more than a couple of years," said Robert C. Foster III, a spokesman for the **Boothbay Harbor Shipyard**. "Brando fell in love with the ship and went on a sit-down strike. The reason the ship is here today is because of Brando."

The Bounty arrived in Boothbay Harbor in early April for an overhaul. Its owners, the HMS Bounty Organization LLC of New York, will spend about \$1.5 million to refurbish the ship's front stem and topside decking - the wooden planks above the water line. **Boothbay Harbor Shipyard** repaired the vessel's bottom decking in 2002.

Most of the white oak planking will be cut in Tennessee and brought to Maine. The planks will be fastened in place the old-fashioned way, with wooden dowels known as trunnels. "The wood for this project doesn't sit on a shelf somewhere. It's growing in a forest in Tennessee," said Joe Jackimovicz, who is yard manager for **Boothbay Harbor Shipyard**.

While the Bounty will put a lot of skilled craftsmen to work, the shipyard is working on another major project. It received a \$1.7 million contract to build the Discovery, a 50-foot replica ship, for the Jamestown settlement in Virginia.

"We've got 10 men working on the Discovery, but we could use six more," said Pete Johnson of Waldoboro, the Discovery's lead shipwright.

The Bounty's history dates to 1787, when the original was commissioned to sail to Tahiti to collect sapling breadfruit trees and take them to the West Indies. Owners of British plantations needed a cheap source of food for their workers. Lt. William Bligh was chosen to lead the mission.

After spending five months in Tahiti, the crew set sail, but the voyage was interrupted when acting Lt. Fletcher Christian started a mutiny.

The Bounty replica ship was built in 1960 at a shipyard in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia. It sailed to Tahiti for the filming of the epic movie "Mutiny on the Bounty."

Ted Turner bought the rights to the movie in 1986, but didn't realize that the Bounty came with the acquisition, Foster said. Turner donated the Bounty in 1993 to the Tall Ship Bounty Foundation.

In 2001, the foundation sold the Bounty to its current owners, who use it to teach square-rigged sailing and seamanship to volunteer crews.

Last year, the Bounty was used in the filming of the sequel to the movie "Pirates of the Caribbean."

Deckhands John "Shing" Fredericks and Monet Davis are welding on one side of the ship. Unlike in ports where curiosity seekers and tourists ask the crew a lot of questions, the people who stop to view the Bounty don't pepper them with questions. Fredericks said that's because Boothbay Harbor is a shipbuilding town, filled with knowledgeable seamen.

The workers are braced for the onslaught of summer tourists, but shipyard officials say it's unlikely that public tours will be permitted, because of liability issues. Fredericks and Davis said they look forward to the Bounty's next voyage, which could take them around the world.

Margaret Ramsey, executive director of the HMS Bounty Organization LLC, said the organization plans to retrace the voyage of the 18th-century Bounty. If Ramsey can find a corporate partner to help fund the venture, the trip could happen in late 2008. The voyage probably would cost \$2 million and take at least a year, she said. In the meantime, Ramsey said, the ship is in good hands because **Boothbay Harbor Shipyard's** pool of skilled labor is one of the best around.

"We knew exactly what we were getting, based on the fine quality of work they did in 2002," Ramsey said.