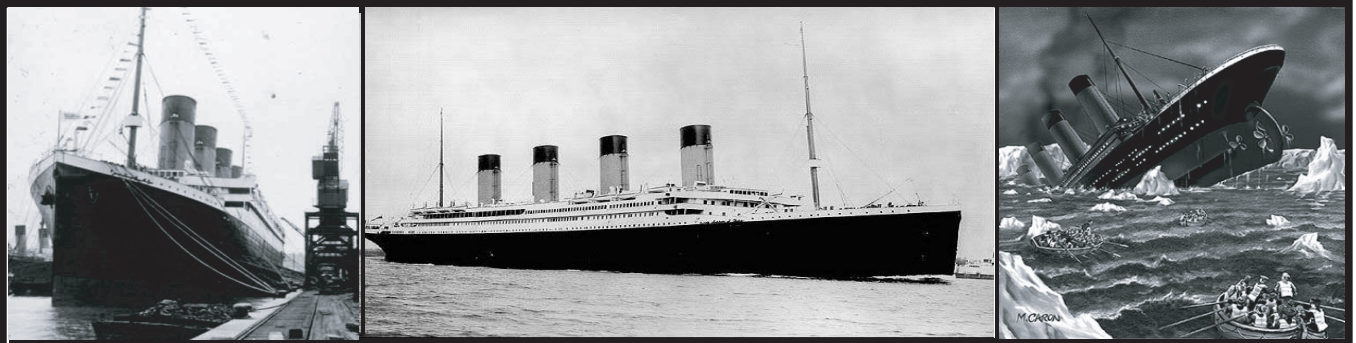


The Sinking of the Titanic

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The largest passenger steamship in the world at the time, the Olympic-class Royal Mail Ship RMS Titanic was owned by the White Star Line and constructed at the Harland and Wolff Shipyard in Belfast, Ireland, UK. The Titanic set sail on its maiden voyage for New York City on April 10, 1912. On the fourth day of its journey, April 14, 1912, the Titanic struck an iceberg and sank two hours and forty minutes later. The sinking resulted in the deaths of more than 1,500 people, ranking it as one of the worst peacetime maritime disasters in history, and by far the most famous.

The ship did not sail into the iceberg head-on but rather suffered a glancing blow in a maneuver trying to avoid it. Further the iceberg did not open her plates like a can opener but rather tore them apart in the riveted joints. The Titanic was designed to survive a head-on collision that would flood the first four of her water tight compartments or a collision from another ship that would ram her in the middle and flood a maximum of two compartments; however, this long opening in the hull was not foreseen.

The high casualty rate resulting from the sinking was due in part to the fact that, although complying with the regulations of the time, the ship carried lifeboats for only 1,178 people. A disproportionate number of men died due to the "women and children first" protocol that was enforced by the ship's crew. This procedure meant that many boats were only half filled. Since the sea was calm, it would have been safe to fill all boats to capacity and thereby rescuing an additional 500 persons.

The Titanic used some of the most advanced technology available at the time and was popularly believed to be "unsinkable". It came as a great shock to many people that despite the advanced technology and experienced crew, the Titanic still sank with such a great loss of life. The media frenzy about Titanic's famous victims, the legends about what happened on board the ship, the resulting changes to maritime law, and the discovery of the wreck in 1985 have made Titanic persistently famous in the years since.

When is Code Minimum Not Enough:

Alexander Carlisle, Harland and Wolf's general manager and chairman of the managing directors suggested that Titanic use a new, larger type of lifeboat crane which could give the ship the potential to carry 48 lifeboats; this would have provided enough seats for everyone on board. However, the White Star Line decreed that only 20 lifeboats would be carried, which could accommodate only 52% of the people on board. At the time, the Board of Trade's regulations state that British vessels over 10,000 tons must carry 16 lifeboats with a capacity of 5,500 cubic feet, plus enough capacity in rafts and floats for 75% (or 50% in case of a vessel with watertight bulkheads) of that in the lifeboats. Therefore the White Star Line actually provided more lifeboat accommodation than was legally required. The regulations made no extra provision for later ships because they had not been changed since 1894, when the largest passenger ship under construction was only 13,000 tons, and because of the expected difficulty in getting away a greater number than 16 boats in any emergency.

Pressler Forensics, Inc.
Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing & Piping Experts
18702 North Creek Parkway, Suite 213
Bothell, WA 98011

Phone (425) 485-3002
Fax (425) 485-8114
www.PresslerEng.com