

RMS Titanic: The Funerals, Memorials and Legacy of the
Lost Passengers and Her Crew

Titanic, a word that conveys a history and numerous amounts of thoughts, ideas. The American Heritage Dictionary, Fourth Edition defines titanic as, “of enormous scope, power, or influence.”¹ The origin of the word titanic actually begins with the great liner *RMS Titanic*. Her stature, size and overall legacy ingrain itself in the human psyche. Her tragic loss with some 1,500 people aboard is consistently mentioned, written, or debated in both the scientific and common communities. Over the years since her sinking, a plethora of books, movies, theories, myths and legends enter into conversations. Of all the knowledge, facts, figures in print, not one focuses on the funerals, memorials and the continuing legacy of her passengers and crew. In order to understand the full nature of the tragedy and the resulting legacy, one must always review the history regarding *RMS Titanic*; her design, building and maiden voyage.

The Birth of a Legend

The story of White Star Line’s great ship starts not in 1911, but in 1898. It is in this year that Morgan Robertson wrote a book called *The Wreck of the Titan*.² Robertson’s book describes a passenger ship called *Titan*, labeling the ship “unsinkable.” This fictional ship sails from England to New York with a number of famous and rich passengers. *Titan* is sunk by an iceberg, and due to a lack of lifeboats, numerous passengers are lost.³ Within fourteen years, Robertson’s fictional tale would become reality. 1907 begins the legacy of the White Star Line’s enormous ships. At a London dinner party, J. Bruce Ismay, president of White Star Lines and Lord William Pirrie,

¹ <http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=titanic>

² Ballard, p. 10

³ Ballard, p. 10

Chairman of Harland & Wolff shipbuilders, discuss plans for three ships.⁴ Their names are *Olympic*, *Titanic* and *Britannic*⁵. These three ships indeed lived up to their epithet, “floating palaces.” On average, all three are 882 feet long, 92 feet wide, and 60 feet from the keel. Each ship’s interior would be individual, but surpass any other competitor in comfort and style. Like Jurassic Park’s owner John Hammond, White Star Line, “spared no expense,”⁶ in order to create a lavish group of liners.

March 31, 1909 *Titanic*, with hull number 390904, is born. It is this hull number that starts the plethora of rumors of the *Titanic*’s doom. Seen by a member of the draughting department looking in the mirror, or a yard worker glimpsing the number in a puddle, the hull number spelled out, ‘NO POPE.’⁷ Almost immediately, construction halts. Construction resumes after the pious, Catholic employees are reassured by Harland & Wolff managers. Work proceeds at an impressive rate. So rapidly did construction resume, that another set of rumors spread through out Belfast, Ireland. Stories of workers trapped inside the hull, tapping on the metal plating, trying to secure a rescue.⁸ This rumor, though did not stop construction, and on May 31, 1911, *Titanic* left the construction slip with no official christening ceremony. Again, the rumor mill spreads this fact that the ship is never christened dooms *Titanic* to a watery grave. What the public did not know is White Star Line never christened their ships, following a long-standing, company tradition.⁹

⁴ Ballard, p. 10

⁵ Although no account of a name for the third ship is recorded, common White Star names and numerous references name Britannic as the third ship.

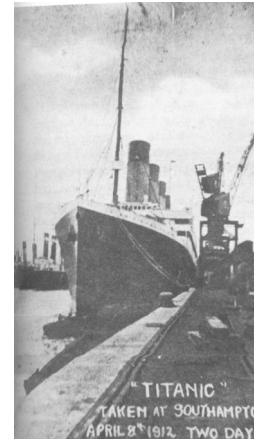
⁶ *Jurassic Park*, Universal Productions, 1990

⁷ Eaton and Hass, p. 56

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid, p. 59

After completing her sea trials, *RMS Titanic* slipped into the White Star Southampton Docks at Berth 44 on April 4th. With her bow facing toward the entrance of the River Test, to give a more impressive look, and help with a noon, low tide departure, *Titanic* began her provision loading for her maiden voyage.¹⁰ The provisioning lasted until April 9. During this time the remainder of the crew signed their ‘Certificates of Discharge’ in order to receive their assigned posts.¹¹ Several members of *Titanic*’s crew list are actually employed from third-party businesses. The *à la carte* restaurant, located on B Deck, is staffed from two of Luigi Gatti’s restaurants, the Adelphi and the Strand of London.¹² The eight members of *Titanic*’s band are provided by Messrs Black, a firm of musical directors that supply orchestras for the major liners.¹³ With her crew and provisions on board, the ‘Millionaire’s Special’ awaited the arrival of her passengers.



Titanic’s passenger list contained the famous, well- to- do of First Class. Col. John J. Astor and his wife of seven months, Madeleine Astor; Isidor Straus, co-owner of Macy’s Department Store of New York, with his wife Ida; Col. Archibald Grace, returning to America after completing research on the War of 1812. These passengers would be augmented in Cherbourg by: Benjamin Guggenheim, the American mining magnate; Sir Cosmo and Lady Duff-Gordon; Mrs. James Joseph Brown, known as

¹⁰ Eaton and Hass, p.66

¹¹ Ibid, p.72

¹² Ibid, p.71

¹³ Ibid, p.71

‘Molly’ by her friends.¹⁴ After completing one more stop at Queenstown, Ireland, *RMS Titanic* set sail for her first and final voyage.

April 14, 1912, *Titanic* raced toward her destination. In the crow’s nest, Fredrick Fleet and Reginald Lee maintained warmth by swinging their arms. With twenty minutes left on their watch, the men tried to remain alert for icebergs, while thinking of their warm bunks below. Within minutes, Fleet leaned forward to gaze ahead intently. His hand immediately reached for the lanyard on the ships bell. After ringing the bell three times, Fleet telephoned the bridge.¹⁵

“Iceberg right ahead!”

“Thank you” is the response.

Fleet and Lee maintained a death grip on the crow’s nest as the black burg closed in on the bow.

First-officer William Murdoch, after receiving the news from Sixth-officer James Moody, ordered quartermaster Robert Hichens to spin the wheel ‘hard-a-starboard’.¹⁶ Subsequently Murdoch ordered *Titanic*’s engines to stop and full speed astern. As he gave the orders, Murdoch pulled the lever that electronically closed the fifteen water tight doors.¹⁷ To Fleet and Lee it seemed that a collision with the iceberg would be avoided.¹⁸ Murdoch, using the experience of twenty years at sea, maneuvered the ship in order to avoid a head on collision. Unfortunately, the iceberg struck a mortal blow to the mighty ship.

¹⁴ Eaton and Hass, p. 80 & 87

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 15

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 16

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 17

¹⁸ Ibid

Within minutes, Ismay and the ship's builder, Thomas Andrews were summoned to the bridge. Both men were told of the situation, Thomas Andrews was asked to give an evaluation of their situation. Andrew's made a rough estimate, and calculated that the ship had approximately one to two hours until she would sink. With this information, Captain Smith to ordered, "Uncover and prepare the lifeboats." At the same time Mr. Boxhall, after calculating the position of Titanic, ran to the wireless shed, and ask the operator to send a C. Q. D. distress message.¹⁹ The first to assemble, and the first to enter the lifeboats, are the first class passengers. Mr. Astor reassured his wife that they will be reunited. On the opposite side of the ship, Ida Straus refused to leave her husband. Benjamin Guggenheim, dressed as if going to a formal engagement, stated, "If we are to die, we will die as gentlemen." He was last seen in the first-class smoking room, patiently awaiting the end.

In the beginning of the evacuation, many of the lifeboats carried less than half of their designed capacity. As the night continued, and *Titanic* kept inching closer to the water, a wide-spread panic developed among the passengers. In order to keep the moral, and calm of the passengers, Wallace Hartley and his band played music. With modern, upbeat tunes, the passengers began to settle, and the evacuation proceeded smoothly. Finally, at 0220 (ship's time), *Titanic* slipped into the depths, first breaking in half, and then submerging. On the stern, as it entered the water, were over 1,500 passengers and crew.

¹⁹ Eaton and Haas, p. 18

And the World Mourned

The disaster of the *Titanic* cast a great sorrow on the peoples of the United States and England. The absence of bodies for burial modified the type of services the public could attend, and the services became the platform for reform, reflection, and the final connection between the survivors and the dead. In New York, the entire city's secular community held services. At sea, the *Mackay-Bennett* held continual services, while recovering bodies, committing most of the unidentified back to the sea.²⁰ The picture²¹ below was published in every newspaper, carried by the parishioners to the memorial services, and became the common symbol for the people, most notably the men, who died on the *Titanic*. The caption reads, "Where Manhood Perished Not."



Of the numerous services held almost immediately after the disaster, most sermons revolved around comforting the dead, others instilled a sense of lessons to be learned, while a select few looked to find a scapegoat to the disaster. Dr. L. Mason Clark of the First Presbyterian Church used his sermon to bring comfort to the masses assembled.

"Human nature cannot forever stand such an intensity of strain.

The incredible has happened once more. Once more the

'impossible' has become the dreadful reality... Lo, all our power

of yesterday is one with Nineveh and Tyre. Lord God of Hosts, be

with us yet lest we forget."²²

²⁰ Eaton and Haas, p. 99

²¹ New York Herald, April 21, 1912

²² Brooklyn Daily Eagle, April 22, 1912

Dr. Clark uses this phrase wisely. His intention is to retain the legacy of the lost souls aboard the *Titanic*. This excerpt is adapted from Psalm 12:7, “You, O LORD, will protect us; you will guard us from this generation forever.”²³ It is with Dr. Clark, and most other pastors like him, that *Titanic* lives on, as a memorial, to this day.

By sharp contrast, Dr. Charles Parkhurst, of the Madison Square Presbyterian Church, used the pulpit to compare the *Titanic* to the current social attitude. In one instance he delivers:

“The picture that has hung before my eyes ever since last Tuesday morning has been the that of the victims staring meaningless at the gilded furnishings of this sunken palace of the sea... and there was no need for it. It is just so much sacrifice laid upon the alter of the dollar.”²⁴

Dr. Parkhurst’s sermon, as well as many other sermons like his, still enter the topics of research papers devoted to the *Titanic*. Though it is unclear why many researchers use his sermon as a basis for fueling any debate, Dr. Parkhurst did have one goal in mind when he preached his sermon. The public needed a scapegoat, and Parkhurst would provide one in the subsequent sermons he delivered. With the *Mackay-Bennett* returning from the Atlantic, the time for verbal memorials transferred to the funerals of those whose bodies have been recovered, and returned to the families.

²³ New Oxford Annotated Bible, Third Ed., p. 785 HB

²⁴ Brooklyn Daily Eagle, April 22, 1912

The Dead Return for Proper Burial

As the *Mackay-Bennett* steamed to Halifax, after almost three weeks at the wreck site, she carried a logbook containing 306 entries.²⁵ The picture²⁶ on the right shows the recovery of one of the bodies. Of these entries, 116 bodies mentioned were buried at sea.²⁷ The returning bodies were treated



differently due to social class status, or ship class. Steerage and Second Class passengers, stored in the hold filled with ice, were wrapped in canvas bags. The first class passengers were embalmed, placed in coffins, and stored on the deck of the ship. After six weeks of searching by other ships, the final count of the recovered bodies was 330.²⁸ Almost immediately, family of the dead poured into Halifax to recover the bodies. The first body to be identified and returned to the family, is body number 124, J.J. Astor. The bodies were sent to the Mayflower Curling Rink, turned into a temporary morgue.²⁹ After two weeks, bodies not identified, or based on family instructions, were interred in one of three cemeteries- Fairview (non-secular), Baron de Hirsh for Jews, and Mount Olivet for those of the Catholic faith.³⁰ Mistakes did occur. Rabbi Jacob Walter decided that ten bodies designated for the interment at Fairview Cemetery actually belonged in the Baron de Hirsh Cemetery.³¹ White Star and the local authorities became aware of the unauthorized

²⁵ Eaton and Haas, p. 100

²⁶ Garrison, p. 206 (Note: This picture has no counterpart)

²⁷ Eaton and Haas, p. 100

²⁸ http://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/victims/graves_disposition.shtml

²⁹ Eaton and Haas, p. 101

³⁰ Ibid, p. 103

³¹ Ibid

transfer, and halted the Rabbi's effort. Further investigation revealed that four of the bodies were Catholic, the rest were buried as per family instructions.³²

May 3rd marks the day when the burials began. Fairview dug long trenches overlooking Fairview Cove, hidden from the public's direct view.³³ At Mount Olivet and Baron de Hirsh, similar instructions were given, but all graves were individual, and not a trench.³⁴



When one looks for the obituaries of the *Titanic*'s lost, there are very few to be found. In fact, the only obituaries related to the *Titanic* is of the survivors, passing on after decades of living peaceful lives. One noted obituary was written on December 15, 1912.

“Haunted by his memories of the wreck of the *Titanic* and never completely recovered from the shock of his experiences in that disaster, Col. Archibald Gracie, U.S.A. (Ret) , died yesterday morning in his apartment at the Hotel St. Louis...”³⁵

His obituary, unlike other obituaries, never refers to where his is to be buried, and where the services are held. In fact, the lack of obituaries, or the obituaries written like Col. Gracie, reflect the seclusion and privacy that the families requested. The families did not want the reporters, and especially tomb raiders to desecrate the bodies for relics. This is also why most memorials, tombs, or graves of the victims are hidden from the public.

³² Eaton and Haas, p. 103

³³ Ibid (Picture at Right depicts Fairview Cemetery)

The one exception to this tradition is the funerals of Wallace Hartley, *Titanic's* bandmaster, and that of an Unidentified Child #4.

Titanic's bandmaster, Wallace Hartley, was buried on May 17, 1912 in the town of Colne, and admits a throng of 30,000 mourners. His funeral is the only recorded service to receive a large number of people in attendance. Hartley's parents, his two sisters, Lizzie and Helen, attended. In the little Bethel Methodist Church, his old schoolmates, musicians that played in concerts with Hartley, remained in the gallery.³⁶ Their attendance helped support the belief that the local music community mourned with him. Instead, when the 30,000 mourners attended the procession from the surrounding countryside, the family realized how important to the country, especially the survivors, Hartley was. As the services ended, choir girls, dressed in black, filled the church with the hymn, "Nearer, My God, to Thee."³⁷ As the service attendees filed out of the church, a procession assembled outside with seven bands positioned themselves at different intervals along the half mile long route.³⁸ When the procession reached the gravesite, buglers sounded "taps" over the body, as the casket entered the grave. Another tradition broken is the placement of the memorial. Instead of most individual memorials to the *Titanic* being hidden, or tucked away, from public view, Hartley's memorial is located on the main road into Colne. A bust of Hartley, placed on top of a marble pillar, is

³⁴ Eaton and Haas, p. 103

³⁵ New York Times, December 15, 1912 (<http://80-hn.umi.com.ezproxy.library.arizona.edu/pqdweb?Did=000000100562458&Fmt=10&Deli=1&Mtd=1&Idx=13&Sid=5&RQT=309>)

³⁶ New York Times, May 18, 1912

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ Ibid

accompanied by angelic bodies; thus symbolizing his ascension to heaven, joining the *choir invisible*.³⁹ A small bronze plaque reads:

“Wallace Hartley Bandmaster of the *RMS Titanic* who
perished in the foundering of that vessel April 15, 1912
Erected by voluntary contributions to commemorate the
heroism of a native of this town.”



As the family stated, when the memorial was placed, “This is to remind the people of Colne of the hero the town produced.”⁴⁰

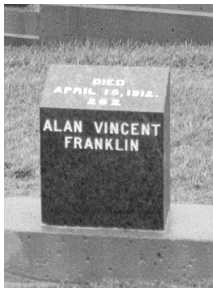
The second funeral service regards the funeral of Unknown Child #4. It was not as large as Wallace Hartley’s, but the emotions, circumstances, and the final identification in November, 2002 regarding the funeral service are of great importance to the *Titanic* community. Unidentified Child #4 captured the heart of Halifax, the captain and crew of the *Mackay-Bennett*, and White Star Lines.⁴¹ The body of a little boy, unclaimed, was laid to rest on May 4, 1912. Under the circumstances, many of the citizens offered to sponsor a funeral for the youth. White Star and provincial authorities could not decide on who should claim sponsorship. The captain of *Mackay-Bennett*, Captain F.H. Lardner, asked for permission for him and his crew to lay the boy to rest, and furnish all the necessary arrangements. White Star immediately granted the *Mackay-Bennett*’s crew to inter the child at Fairview Cemetery.

St. George’s Anglican Church was filled with mourners and flowers. After the service, the small, white casket was carried from the church by six of the ship’s crew. Unknown Child #4 was laid to rest overlooking Fairview Cove, among the other graves

³⁹ <http://www.rmstitanic.co.uk/> (Titanic Memorials page)

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ Eaton and Haas, p. 103



in the *Titanic* section. The picture on the left illustrates the typical, black marble, grave marker marking the final resting place of *Titanic*'s victims.⁴² On the right is the unique, black marble obelisk marking the remains of the Unknown Child, who touched the hearts

of the town of Halifax, and the crew of the *Mackay-Bennett*. On the stone are etched these words:

*Erected to the Memory of an Unknown Child Whose Remains
Were Recovered after the Disaster of the Titanic, April 15,
1912*⁴³



This story does have a happy ending. Ninety years later, in November, 2002, scientists from the Lakehead University in Ontario, Canada, using D.N.A. from the remains identified the boy as belonging to a Finnish family. The boy's name is Eino Viljami Panula, 13 months old at the time of the sinking. His body, along with his four brothers and mother, are located within feet of each other.⁴⁴

Erecting Memorials to the Individuals...

A disaster as epic as the *Titanic*'s would not be complete without the numerous monuments, memorials, and sacred spaces that commemorate an individual person or the entire disaster, as a whole. Of the memorable edifices sanctified for the remembrance of individuals are: Wallace Hartley's marble pillar (mentioned above), Captain E.J. Smith's bronze statue, and Wireless Operator John Phillip's park.

Captain Edward John Smith, captain of the *Titanic*, died on the *Titanic* when she entered the water on the night of April 15, 1912. His body was never recovered from the

⁴² <http://www.rmstitanic.co.uk/> (Grave of the Unknown Child)

⁴³ Eaton and Haas, p. 104

⁴⁴ <http://www.rmstitanic.co.uk/> (Grave of the Unknown Child)

disaster site. To commemorate the actions of the “Millionaire’s Captain”, on July 29, 1914, a bronze statue was unveiled in Beacon Park, not in his hometown due to lack of space for the monument. The monument depicts Smith, in his customary pose, looking to the west, as if braving the elements, just as he did on April 15, 1912. On a bronze plaque reads the inscription:

COMMANDER EDWARD JOHN SMITH, RD, RNR. BORN
JANUARY 27 1850 DIED APRIL 15 1912 BEQUEATHING TO
HIS COUNTRYMEN THE MEMORY AND EXAMPLE OF A
GREAT HEART A BRAVE LIFE AND A HEROIC DEATH
“BE BRITISH”⁴⁵

The time when the memorial was erected was six days before war would erupt between England and Germany. If Captain Smith survived the *Titanic* disaster, he would no doubt serve in the merchant marine, transporting troops as he did during the Boer War. Instead, he bravely surrendered himself to the sea, a shining example of sacrifice to save the lives of others.



John George Phillips, senior wireless operator, received the largest tribute of any *Titanic* memorial. After the news of Phillips’ death reached his family, tributes flooded the local post office. The family used this money to build a monument to their heroic son, who, “Remained at his post to the very end.” Instead of a pillar, statue, or ordinary plaque, Phillips’ memorial is 80 sq. ft. Located in his home town of Surrey, the Phillips’

⁴⁵ <http://www.rmstitanic.co.uk/> (Titanic Memorials) (including the picture)

memorial consists of a cloister, wild flower gardens, plain oak pillars denoting his rural roots, and a stone with an inscription is centered in the far wall. The location, which includes a walk along the River Wye, is where John Phillips enjoyed spending his time after school.

On the second anniversary of the sinking, hundreds of people came from the surrounding country side to witness the commemoration. The High Sheriff of Surrey spoke only two lines. “Tonight a mother mourns the loss, of her fair boy so brave. For her bonny lad lies sleeping, out in a sailors[sic] grave.”⁴⁶ Unable to finish the tribute, he ended with, “I have done all that is required of me,” referring to a statement young John Phillips said many years ago. After the dedication, the crowd entered the cloister, and read the following:



This cloister is built in memory of John George Phillips, a native of this town, chief telegraphist of the ill fated S.S. Titanic. He died at his post when the vessel foundered in mid Atlantic on the 15th day of April 1912.

...and the Fallen of Disaster

The memorials dedicated to the dead of the *Titanic* moved to new locations, or have sustained the test of time. Of the four listed here, two are in new locations, and the one, the Engineer’s Memorial, retains its location in a public garden in Southampton.

⁴⁶ <http://www.nautical-papers.com/onwatch/phillips/phillips.html>



The Lighthouse Tower on the Seaman's Institute is dedicated to the 1,500 men and women who perished in the great liner's sinking. On the left is what the Seaman's institute looked like in 1913, with the memorial Lighthouse on the roof. The one year anniversary of the *Titanic* disaster opened with the dedication of this tower. Over 200 people attended, including family and friends of the victims.⁴⁷ Atop the lighthouse is a time ball. The time ball, hoisted to the top, then dropped to the base each noon, signified the departure time of *Titanic* and signaled the correct noon hour. Bishop David Greer delivered the dedication oration:

“The service that brings us together is of great significance. We commemorate the exhibition of some of the finest and noblest elements of human nature... It is meant to perpetuate not only the human values on that occasion lost, but the human values on that occasion found, which were then revealed.”⁴⁸

Today, the building from which the lighthouse and time ball once rested is no longer standing. Only the lighthouse tower is still visible at the South Street Seaport Museum in New York. The picture on the right shows the light tower in the museum's square.

The engineers of the *Titanic* stood by their posts, checking steam pressure, and generating electrical power in order for the wireless operators to send the distress signal. These men perished as sea water inundated the boiler rooms



⁴⁷ New York Times, April 16, 1913

⁴⁸ New York Times, April 16, 1913

and engineering sections of the ship. It is to the officers the monument in Southampton, *Titanic's* only port of call, stands. The dedication ceremony, attended by 10,000 to 100,000 people, showed the true indication of the loss felt by the city.⁴⁹ Sir Archibald Denny, president of the Institute of Marine Engineers, dedicated the memorial by reading:

“By the manner of their deaths [the engineers] carried out one of the finest traditions of our race. They must have known that no pumping could do no more than delay the final catastrophe, yet they stuck pluckily to their duty. Driven back from boiler-room to boiler-room, fighting for every inch of draught to give time for the launching of the boats, not one of those brave officers was saved.”⁵⁰



When the dedication finished, the Last Post, similar to “taps” played. The monument depicts on two bronze relieves the work of maritime engineers, with an angel, open-armed standing between the two relieves. The sculpture used this form to illustrate the heroism of the engineers, and the angel leading them to heaven. The inscription on the base of the monument depicts:

GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN THAN THIS. THAT A MAN LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS.’

‘TO THE MEMORY OF THE ENGINEER OFFICERS OF THE R.M.S. TITANIC, WHO SHOWED THEIR HIGH CONCEPTION OF DUTY AND THEIR HEROISM BY REMAINING AT THEIR POSTS 15TH APRIL 1912.’

‘ERECTED BY THEIR FELLOW ENGINEERS AND FRIENDS ON 22ND APRIL 1914. ⁵¹

⁴⁹ <http://www.rmstitanic.co.uk/> (Titanic Memorials)

⁵⁰ The London Times, April 23, 1914

⁵¹ <http://www.rmstitanic.co.uk/> (Titanic Memorials) (including picture)

The final monument is the Women's Titanic Memorial. Originally located at Rock Creek Park, in Washington D.C. on May 26, 1931, the memorial was dismantled in 1966, and restored near Haines Point and Fort McNair.⁵² The statue is of a partially clad male, in a Christ-like pose. With outstretched arms, the male figure seems to depict the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross. The delay of construction and dedication is due to several leases in the buildings occupying the proposed site ran out, and a sea wall was constructed. The attendees at the dedication ceremony included: President and Mrs. Hoover, monument designer Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney, and Massachusetts Representative Robert Luce. During the ceremony, many speakers referred to the monument as, "a representation of men's chivalry during the tragic event."⁵³

Finally, the true monument of the *Titanic* is the ship itself, 2.5 miles beneath the surface of the ocean. Since 1986, over 50 dives in submersibles have left their mark. After each dive season, a plaque is left on the ship. The first plaque, placed by Dr. Robert Ballard, is located on the stern of the ship. It is the only, fitting tribute to the fallen because of the location of the plaque. Most of the bronze markers are located at the bow or the wheelhouse, to commemorate the officers and men of the *Titanic*. Ballard's tribute is located at the stern. As Ballard notes,

"I originally thought of putting the plaque on the more nobly preserved bow. But those who died on the *Titanic* had gathered on the stern as the ship tilted bow first. The stern had been their final haven."⁵⁴

The plaque reads

⁵² Ibid

⁵³ New York Times, May 27, 1931

⁵⁴ Ballard, p. 233

91 Years On and we're Still Talking About It⁵⁵

The above statement is very true. How many times did the word *Titanic* enter a conversation, then the events of April 15, 1912 stream and flood the room? Thanks to film maker James Cameron, writer Walter Lord, and the oceanographer Dr. Robert Ballard, *RMS Titanic* is constantly merchandised, studied, and written that the public can never forget the ship, the lives, and the circumstances surrounding the White Star Liner. Add to this list numerous films, books, artifact recovery expeditions, web sites, and the list could go on.

Walter Lord revitalized the memory of the sinking with his book, *A Night to Remember*. He recounts the scenarios, events and the final moments that lead to *Titanic*'s plunge into the ocean. Later, in 1956, 20th Century Fox released a film of the same name. For a long time, Lord's book and the film was considered the undisputed source depicting the night to remember. With websites like <http://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/> and <http://www.rmstitanic.co.uk/>, the facts can now be debated in real-time.

Titanic fever regenerated itself when in 1985, Dr. Robert Ballard discovered the wreck of the *Titanic*, and in 1986, returned with the submersible *Alvin* to study the wreck up close. In the year following Ballard's exploration of the *Titanic*, several court cases, including a United States Senate proposal, tried to halt any salvage operations, instilling the fact the wreck is also a grave site. These measures failed, and from July 22 to September 11, 1987, the Institute Français de Recherché pour l'Exploitation des Mers (IFREMER) along with the newly formed Titanic Ventures, Inc. began salvage

⁵⁵ <http://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/>

operations.⁵⁶ Later, Titanic Ventures, Inc. changed their name to *RMS Titanic*, Inc. To date, visitors can view some of the over 1,500 artifacts in Southampton, England.

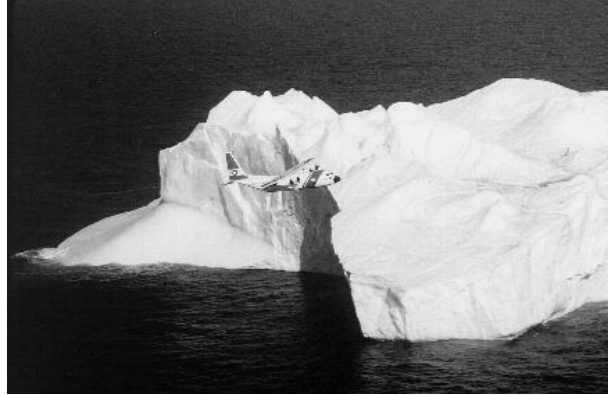
James Cameron used the spirit of the ship as the backdrop for his December 1997 film, *Titanic*. His film reanimated the waning interest in the mighty ship. Undeterred in his efforts to preserve the interest, Cameron, an avid *Titanic* enthusiast, executed an actual visit to the site, to photograph the remote areas of the interior of the ship. Using the latest in IMAX 3-D technology, Cameron, along with Bill Paxton and a group of historians and scientists, descended two-and-a-half miles to the wreck, filming spaces never before seen. This latest effort in promoting *Titanic* interest is now available to view at any IMAX theater.

The final aspect of *Titanic*'s legacy is not in the films, books or in photographs of the wreck. The real legacy is in the stories of her survivors, the relatives who maintain their memory, the institution spawned from the disaster, and the countless enthusiasts, like the author, willing to tell the story of this once magnificent ship. With all the survivors now passed on, the story of that fateful night of April 15th is carried on in the oral tradition by the sons and daughters of the survivors.

In the institution directly related to the *Titanic* disaster is the International Ice Patrol. A division of the United States Coast Guard, the International Ice Patrol's mission statement, "monitor iceberg danger near the Grand Banks of Newfoundland and provide the limits of all known ice to the maritime community," directly relates to the reason, and history, of its founding. In tribute to the founding of the Patrol, on every April 15th, a lone

⁵⁶ <http://www.rmstitanic.co.uk/> (Salvaging Titanic)

HC-130 Hercules flies to the position of 41°43'35"N 49°56'54"W⁵⁷ (location of the Stern Section), and drops a wreath with a banner saying, "Always Lost, Never Forgotten."



The tragedy surrounding the *Titanic* is immense. The memorials regarding the sinking are no less formidable, elaborate or worshipful. Like the lighthouse, the Phillips' memorial or in Washington DC, the recorded funerals are no less poignant. The elaborate funeral to emphasize the heroics of Wallace Hartley, or the intimate funeral of the Unknown Child, fail to demonstrate the full effect the *Titanic* disaster left in the human mind. Because of such a tragedy, ocean liners use more southerly routes, the International Ice Patrol continue their search for icebergs, web sites display a plethora of information, and movies still play out the never ending saga that is *Titanic*. In a few decades, the hull of the great ship will be corroded down to only an outline. With time and ocean currents, the impact point will be swept away. Even after these events occur, the entire world will remember that April 15th morning, and mourn for the lost souls.

⁵⁷ Eaton and Haas, p. 180

“Fair Winds and Following Seas”

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