

African Cowl Ventilators on the Roof of *Titanic's* Officers' Quarters?

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Introduction

Recently the group *Titanic Honor and Glory* has released a set of general arrangement plans for *Titanic*. Included on these plans are a number of items which they term "extrapolations". These are structures whose presence on *Titanic* is speculative. Evidence taken from *Olympic* and *Britannic* has been used to speculate that similar items on these ships may have been found on *Titanic*. One of the inclusions in these "extrapolations" is a pair of 6-inch African cowl vents on the roof of the officers' quarters just outboard of the first funnel (p&s). This brief article will examine whether there is evidence to support the presence of these cowl ventilators on *Titanic*.

Photo Evidence

The photo evidence from *Olympic* which is used to support the speculation that these African cowl vents were included on *Titanic* shown in Figure 1. It is unknown exactly when these cowl vents were added to *Olympic* but they weren't a part of her original equipment.

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Figure 1

6-inch African cowl vent on *Olympic*

Plan Evidence

Figure 2 shows a segment from an *Olympic* ventilation plan from 1920. The 6-inch African cowls are shown located port and starboard between frames 62 and 63. This location does not appear to match exactly with the *Olympic* photo in Figure 1. In the photo the cowl appears to be further aft. I would estimate it go be between frames 60-61. For our purposes, either location is acceptable.

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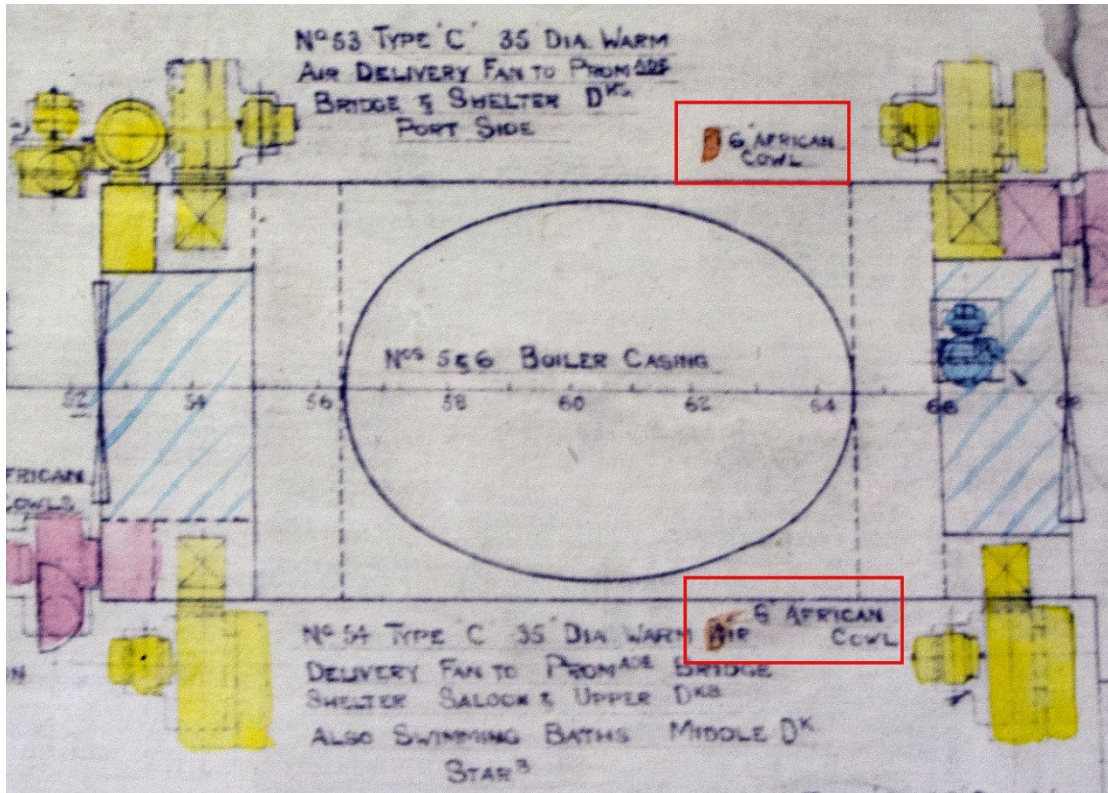


Figure 2

Olympic 1920 ventilation plan showing African cowls (outlined in red)

Analysis

To make their case, *Titanic Honor and Glory* used an aft quarter view photo of *Titanic* taken by Beken of Cowes. If the starboard African cowl was visible, it has a relatively small window in which it might be seen in this photo. This photo is shown in Figure 3 with three vertical sight lines. The one on the left is from the landmarks of the outboard davit face between boats #5 and #7 running vertically through the 35-inch ventilator on the starboard aft aspect of the first funnel. The two vertical sight lines to the right of the first one are the boundaries of the window within which an African cowl might be seen.

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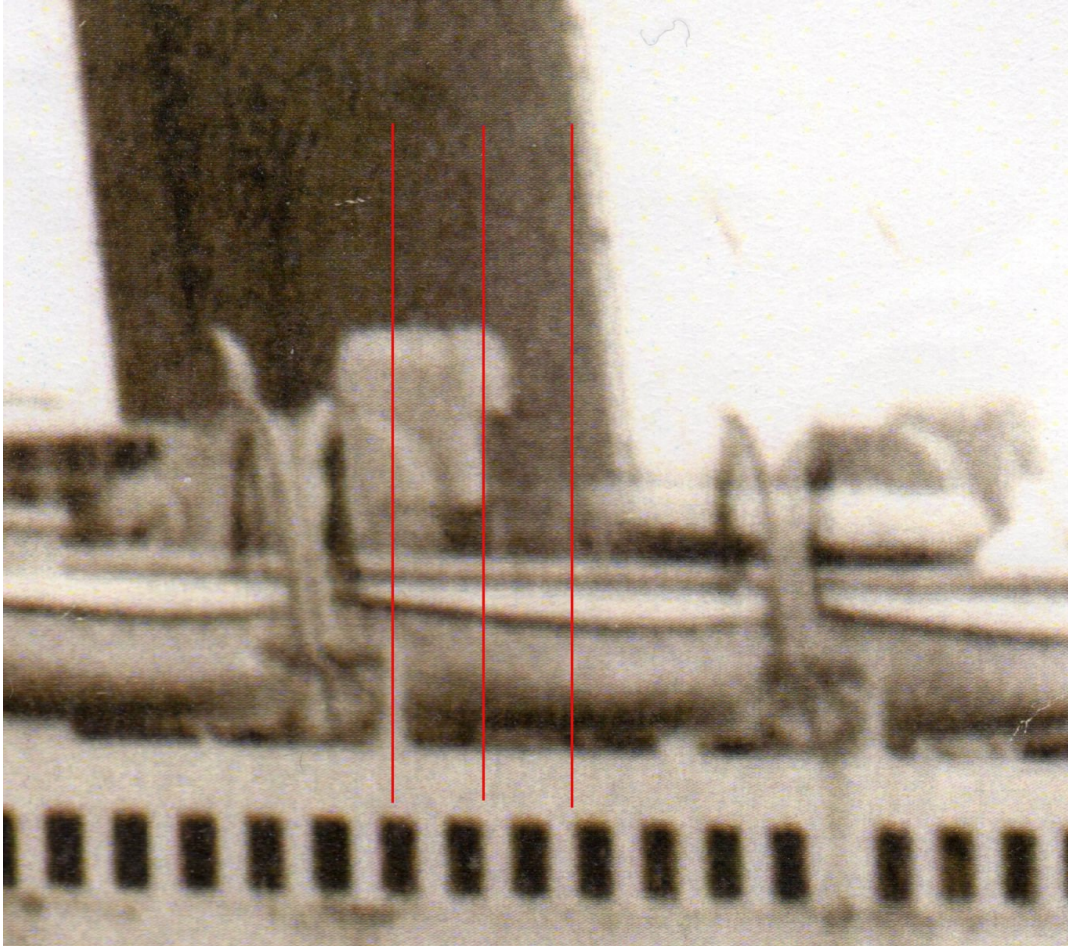


Figure 3

Titanic photo showing vertical sight lines used in this analysis

The same sight lines shown in Figure 3 are shown in Figure 4. If the African cowl is present on *Titanic* where it is shown on the *Olympic* ventilator plan then it would be located on the drawing where the red cowl is located. If it were located where the starboard African cowl appears to be located in Figure 1 then it would be located where the blue cowl is located between frames 60 and 61. With the sight lines in the *Titanic* photo shown in Figure 3 there is only one possible location for the starboard African cowl. That location is shown on the drawing in Figure 4 located between frames 58 and 59. No such cowl appears in Figure 3. All ventilators, whether electric fan or natural draft, were painted white on *Titanic*. If a white painted African cowl were present in Figure 3 it would contrast with the buff funnel. The conclusion is that this *Titanic* photo can't be used to prove or even suggest the presence of an African cowl on *Titanic*'s starboard officers' quarters roof.

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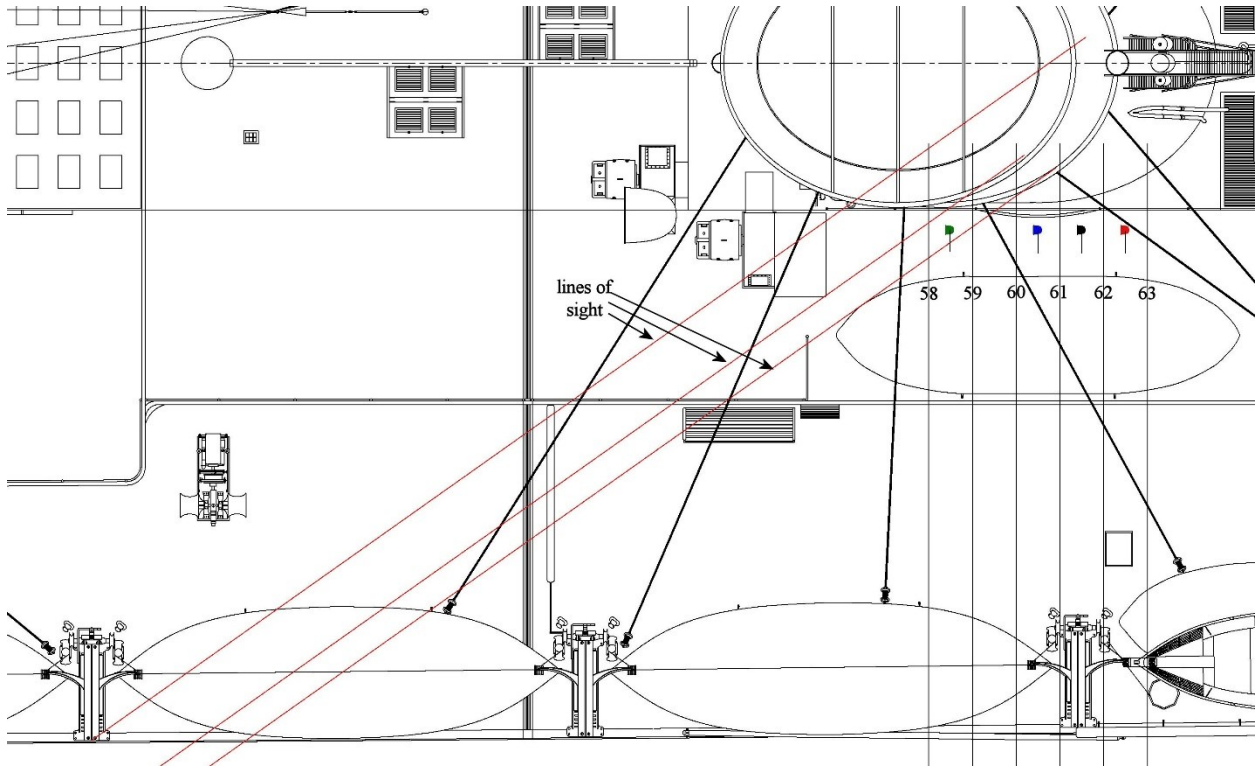


Figure 4

Plan view drawing of *Titanic* showing possible locations of African cowl

Wreck Evidence

I hesitate somewhat to include this section because it is based on wreck photos that I was privileged to be able to view on the condition that I not share them publicly. These wreck photos are of the areas immediately outboard the port and starboard sides of the boiler casing where funnel #1 was previously located. If there had been an African cowl in these areas, there would be a hole where the ventilator pipe pierced the steel deck. After examining both sides carefully, there was no opening for a ventilation pipe found. Some have pointed to a circular shape in the photos thinking it was a hole through the deck for a ventilator pipe from one of the proposed African cowls. Figure 5 shows this circular object. It is not a hole. It is a circular disc lying on the steel deck.

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Figure 5

Circular disc previously thought to be a hole through the deck for a ventilator pipe

Summary

The Titanic Honor and Glory group has suggested the presence of two African cowl ventilators on the roof of *Titanic's* officers' quarters outboard of the first funnel (p & S). The suggested possible presence of these ventilators rests primarily on circumstantial evidence from post-disaster *Olympic* and the *Britannic* specification book. Along with this circumstantial evidence, a Titanic photo (shown in Figure 3) is shown apparently to offer direct evidence from *Titanic*. However, analysis of this photo and *Olympic* evidence shows that even if a starboard African cowl did exist on *Titanic*, it would not be visible in this photo.

High quality wreck photos have shown conclusively that there is no evidence of a hole through the deck for a ventilator on either port or starboard sides of the boiler casing under where funnel #1 was located.

