

The Absence of Low Roller Fairleads in *Titanic's* Forward Well Deck

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Introduction

Recently several members of the *Titanic* community have published their contentions that there are low roller fairleads in *Titanic's* forward well deck aft of the electric cargo winches. The primary publication made the case for this arrangement on *Olympic* then made the claim that **“Based on the evidence presented however, one can comfortably assume that *Titanic* did have these rollers as well.”** The purpose of this article is to present evidence to challenge that claim and to prove that there were in fact ***no*** low roller fairleads in *Titanic's* forward well deck. The names of those who hold the position that *Titanic* had low roller fairleads in her forward well deck will not be mentioned in this article. Neither will a case be made for or against the presence of low roller fairleads in the forward well deck of *Olympic* at any time in her career.

Analysis

Early plans of *Olympic* have been presented which show the presence of low roller fairleads in the forward well deck of *Olympic*, located aft of the electric cargo winches. Figure 1 shows a pair of representative low roller fairleads prior to installation aboard another ship.



Figure 1

Low roller fairleads

It is not the purpose of this article to determine whether these plans accurately portray the presence of low roller fairleads aboard *Olympic* at the time she went into service in June 1911. The contention from previously mentioned members of the *Titanic* community is that she *did* and that by extension they would have been included as equipment aboard *Titanic*. Before September 1, 1985 that may have been a reasonable position. However, after the discovery of the wreck of *Titanic* there have been numerous expeditions which have taken hours of film footage and thousands of photos of the wreck. It is my contention that rather than rely on what *could* have been installed aboard *Titanic* that it is more reasonable to look at the area involved and see whether the photo evidence supports the presence of this equipment or if it actually supports the absence of this equipment. In the following section, the evidence from the wreck will be examined.

The Evidence

Figure 2 shows the location (in red) of the low rollers as indicated on the *Olympic* plan.

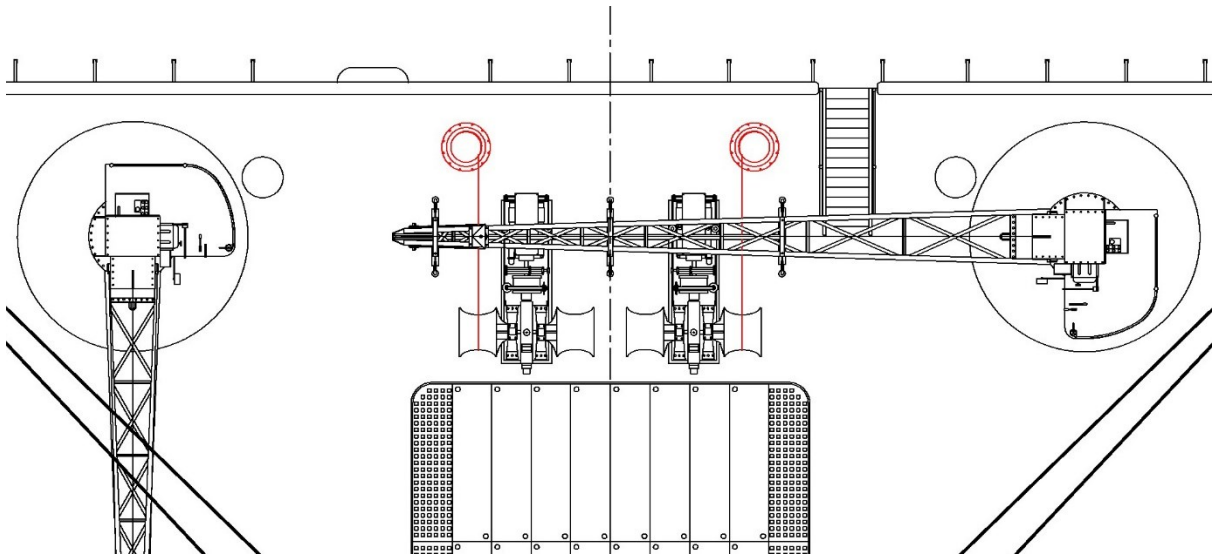


Figure 2

Location of low rollers on *Olympic* plan

On the *Titanic* wreck the crane jibs have been displaced from their original stowed positions on crutches. Figure 3 shows an overhead view of the area of the jib crutches and where one would expect to see the low roller fairleads if they were present.

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Figure 3

Overhead view showing area of crane jibs and jib crutches

Figures 4 and 5 are composite images which show the area where one would expect to see the low roller fairleads on the wreck on both the starboard and port sides. So that the images are as large as possible, the composite images will be displayed each to its own page.

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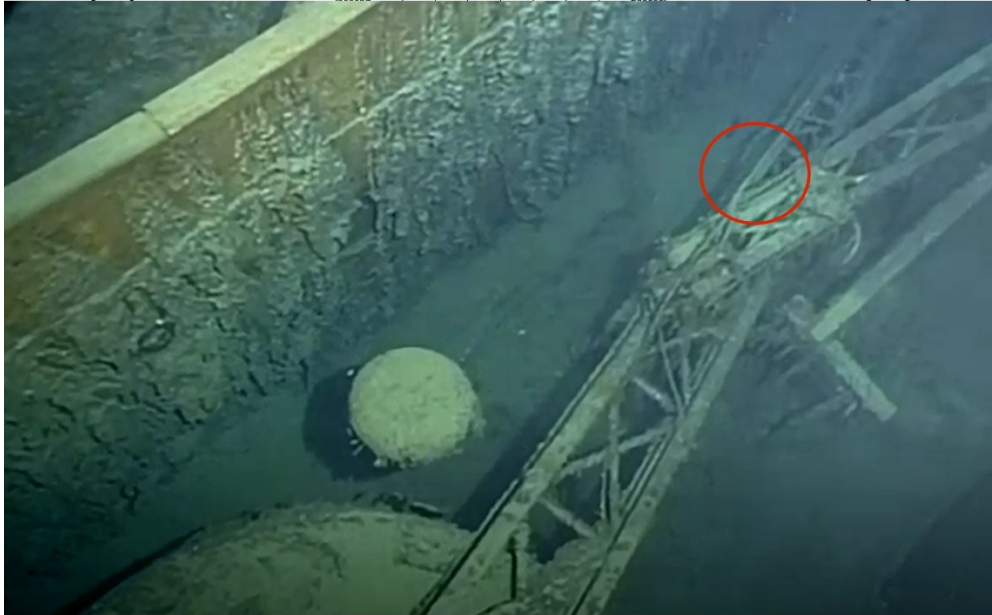
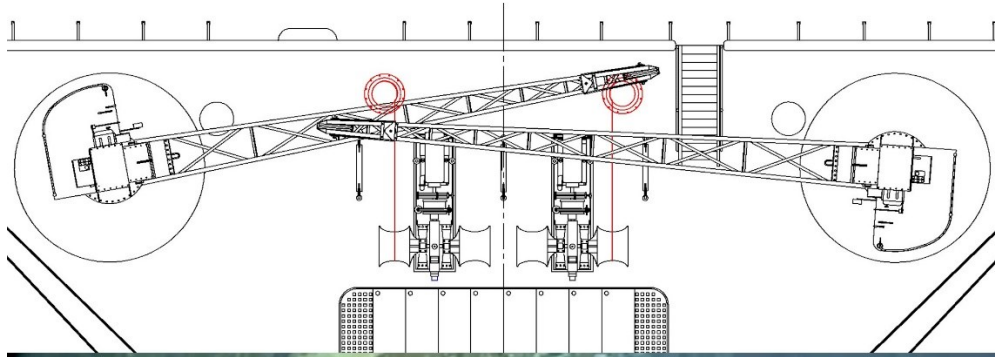


Figure 4

Starboard side showing location where low roller would be expected

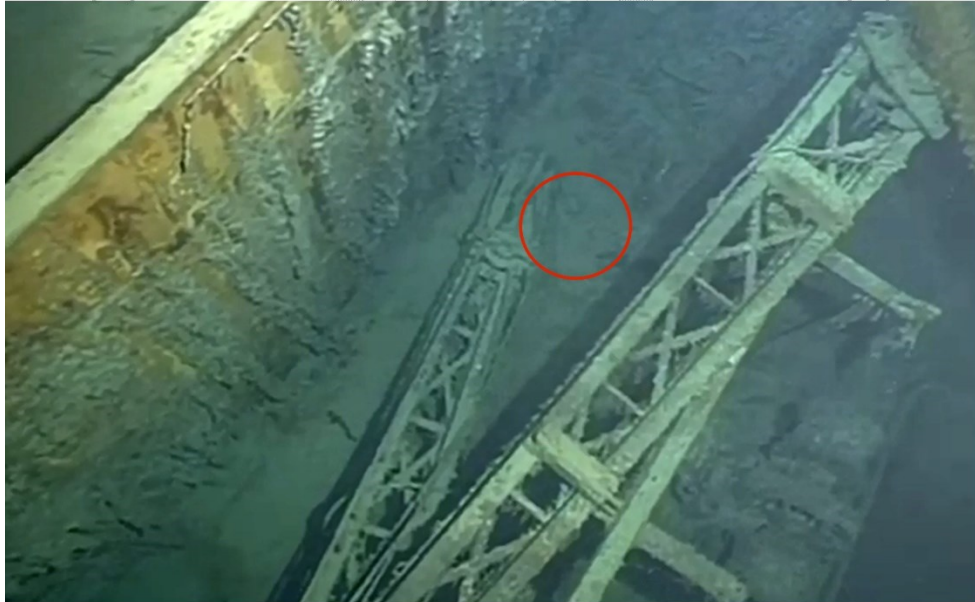
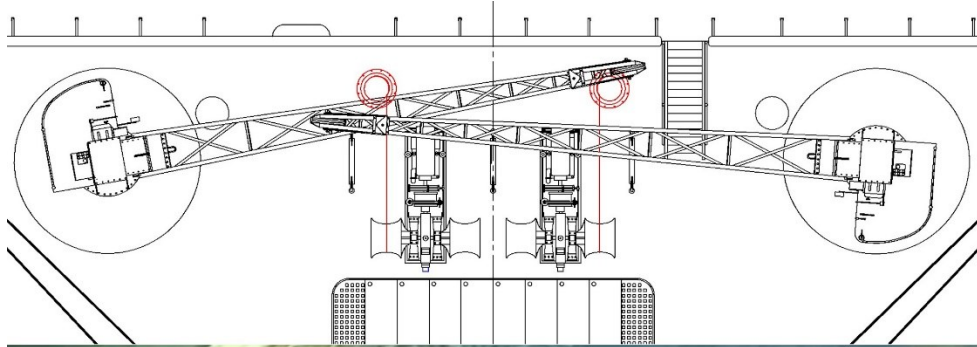


Figure 5

Port side showing location where low roller would be expected

These preceding photos demonstrate the *absence* of low roller fairleads in *Titanic's* forward well deck where the *Olympic* plan indicated.

Objections

There are two proposed objections which have been put forward to explain why we do not see any low roller fairleads in *Titanic's* forward well deck.

1. The force of the ship hitting the bottom dislodged both of the fairleads.
 - A. These fairleads were riveted through the steel deck. If there were a force capable of completely dislodging them, we would see much greater damage in this area. We see bollards and fairleads in the well deck which are completely intact and in place. This objection is not plausible.
2. The buildup of silt and debris has buried the fairleads.
 - A. To cover the low roller fairleads would require an accumulation of silt approximately at least 18 inches deep. There isn't anywhere near this accumulation in the area of the proposed fairleads. In examining other structures in the area, we can easily see that there is not a silt buildup this deep in this area. If there were then one would have to explain why we don't see such a buildup in areas near this area. This objection is not plausible.

Conclusion

By using *Titanic* wreck photos, it has been proven that there are **no** low roller fairleads in *Titanic's* forward well deck. This article has not been written to score points or to further some internecine conflict within the Titanic community. My endeavor has solely been to find evidence for the truth.