

Alternative Fixed Positions for Lifeboats in *Titanic's* Boat Deck Passenger Promenade Areas

By Bob Read, D.M.D.

Introduction

This article will examine the alternate fixed positions for lifeboats in *Titanic's* Boat Deck second-class promenade area. The lifeboats in this area are lifeboats #9 through #16. The alternate positions will be described and illustrated with drawings.

Boat Deck Lifeboat Positions

Only the aft eight lifeboats within the second-class promenade area of the boat deck had inboard and outboard fixed positions. While there were four lifeboats in the forward group which were within the first-class boat deck promenade, these did not have a fixed outboard position alternative. It was likely that because the first-class area had a greater expanse of promenade area that it was thought unnecessary to create more space by having boats within this area have a fixed outboard alternate position.

The lifeboats within the second-class passenger promenade areas had two fixed positions which were 50 inches apart from inboard to outboard. The boats in this area had an inboard position where the outboard edge of the lifeboats was at the outboard extent of the Boat Deck. The lifeboats in this passenger area were moved to this inboard position during docking maneuvers so that there was a clear line of sight down the side of the ship from the bridge wings aft and from the docking bridge wings forward. When docking maneuvers were complete and the ship was in port, the boats would remain in the inboard positions. When docking maneuvers were completed and the ship was underway, the boats within the passenger promenade areas would be moved to their outboard position. At this position the boat keels would be nearly at the outboard edge of the Boat Deck. The purpose for moving the boats outboard while underway was to provide more promenade space for passengers within the passenger promenade areas.

[Go to next page](#)

The Procedures

At both inboard and outboard positions of the boats within the second -class promenade area of the Boat Deck, certain equipment associated with the boats had to be moved and fixed in pre-set positions. This equipment consisted of:

1. Gripes- These were the chain “tie-downs” which had a clamp over the gunwale on the inboard side of the boat and a deck attachment. The gripes had a quick-release “pelican hook” at the upper end so they could be cleared quickly.
2. Guard railings- Around the inboard and ends of the movable lifeboats there were three separate sets of guard rails. These guard railings prevented anyone, especially children, from climbing under or around the lifeboats and falling overboard. They would also prevent someone from being swept overboard during rough seas. The guard railings fit into sockets in the decks. There were sockets for the guard railings at both the inboard and outboard boat positions.
3. Chocks- The chocks were the wooden supports upon which the lifeboats sat. They had pins which fit into the deck sockets to hold them at pre-set positions whether inboard or outboard.

The Drawings

In Figure 1 we see the movable lifeboats in red within passenger promenade areas of the Boat Deck.

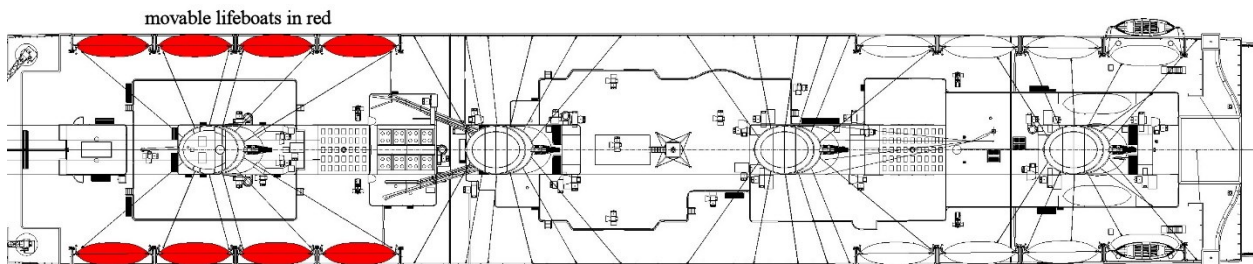


Figure 1

Lifeboats in passenger promenade areas of Boat Deck

Go to next page

In Figure 2 we see an inboard elevation of one of the movable lifeboats showing the chocks and gripes in red and the guard railings in blue.

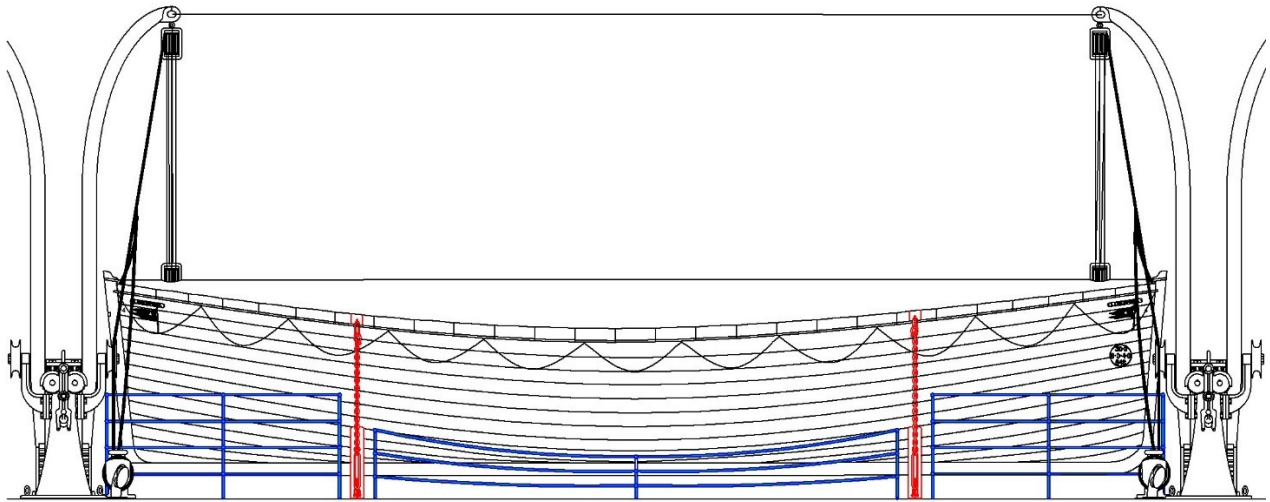


Figure 2

Inboard elevation of movable lifeboat

Figure 3 is a plan view of one of the movable lifeboats in the inboard fixed position. The boat is indicated with a dashed line at its upper, widest extent. The chocks and gripes are in red. The guard railings are in blue.

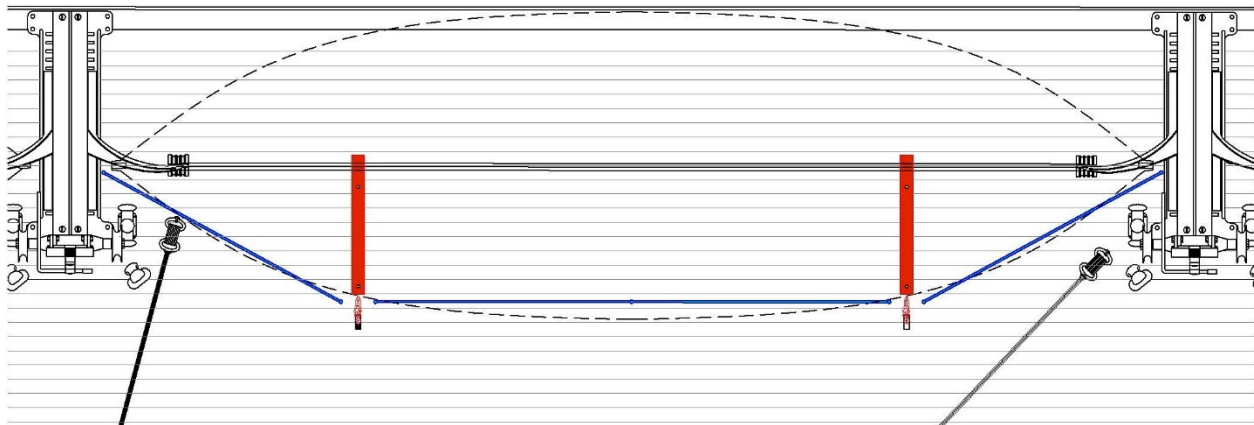


Figure 3

Plan view of movable lifeboat in inboard fixed position

Figure 4 is a plan view of one of the movable lifeboats in the outboard fixed position. The boat is indicated with a dashed line at its upper, widest extent. The chocks and gripes are in red. The guard railings are in blue.

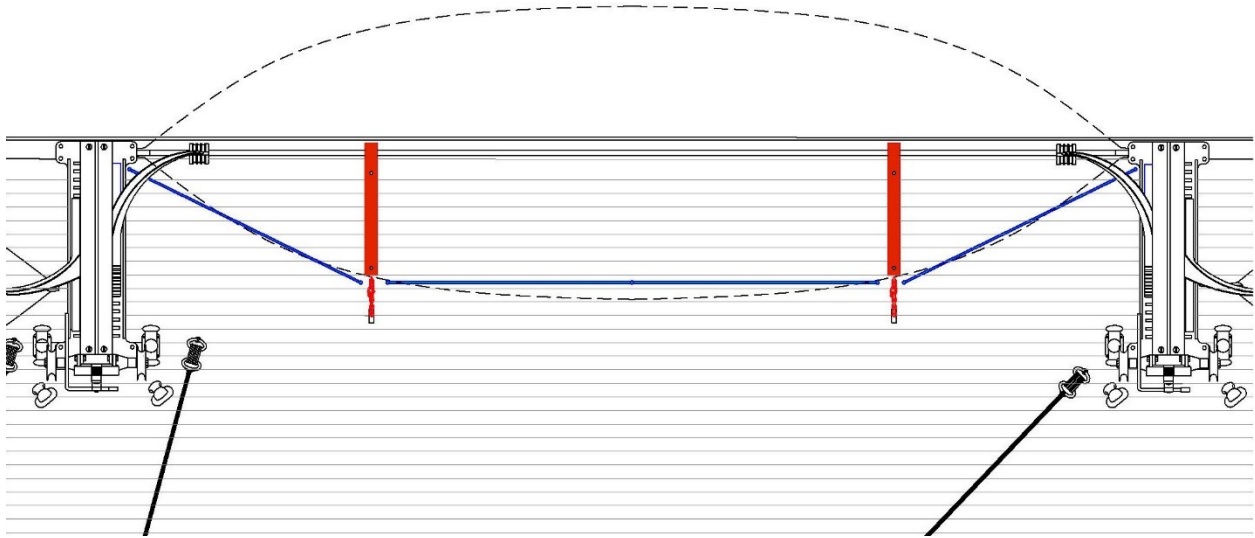


Figure 4

Plan view of movable lifeboat in outboard fixed position

Figure 5 is an end elevation of one of the movable lifeboats in the inboard fixed position. The gripes and chocks are in red and the guard railings are in blue.

Go to next page

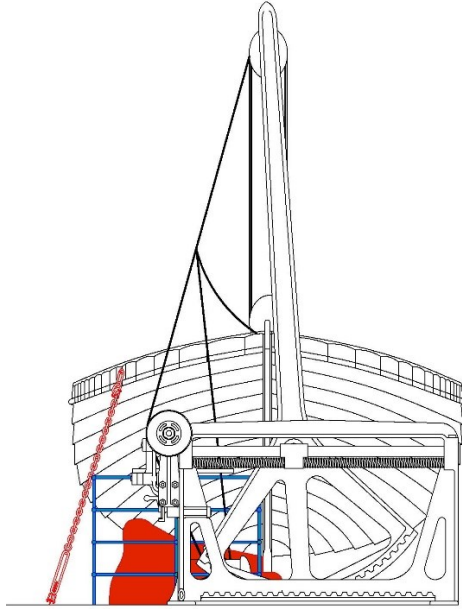


Figure 5

End elevation of movable lifeboat in inboard fixed position

Figure 6 is an end elevation of one of the movable lifeboats in the outboard fixed position. The gripes and chocks are in red and the guard railings are in blue.

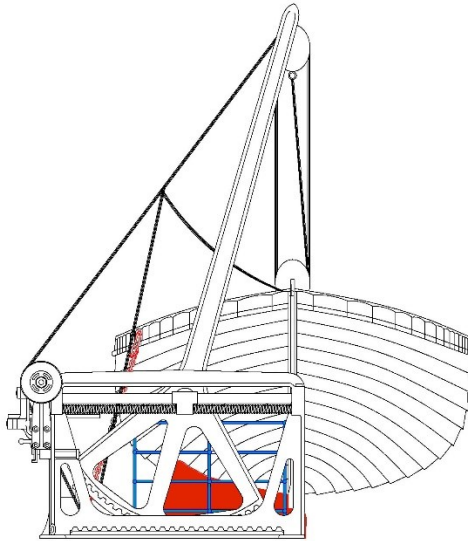


Figure 6

End elevation of movable lifeboat in outboard fixed position.

Figure 7 is a close-up photo of *Olympic's* deck showing inboard sockets for the fixed elements of the boat equipment.

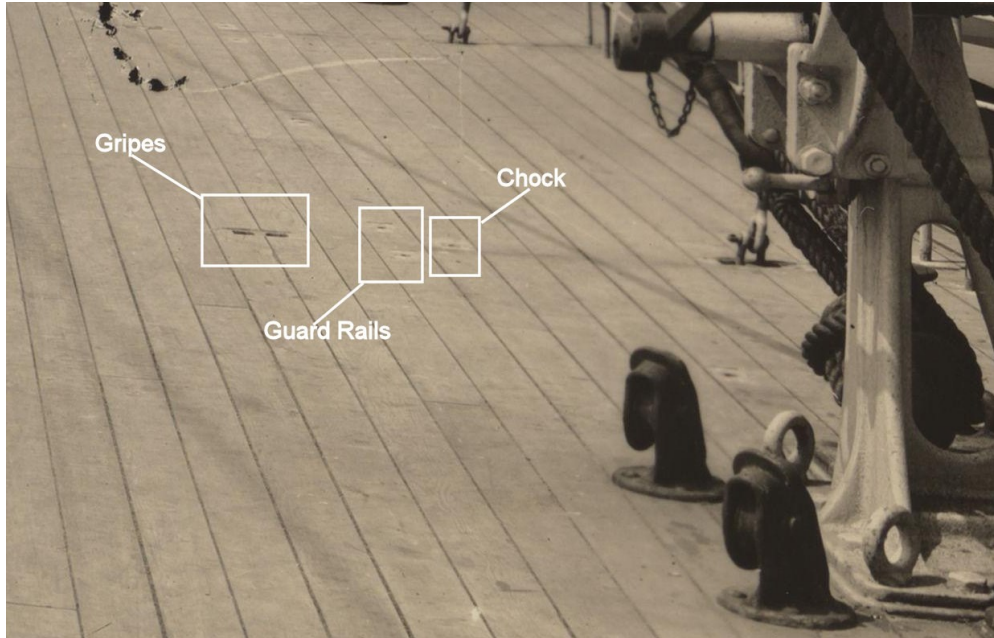


Figure 7

Olympic's deck showing sockets for movable lifeboat equipment

Conclusion

This article has shown the location of movable lifeboats in passenger promenade areas of the Boat Deck of *Titanic*. When and how the boats were moved to fixed pre-set locations has been described and illustrated in drawings.

