

The Average Lifeboat

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Titanic Research

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Updated!

"THERE are three kinds of lies: lies, damn lies, and statistics."

- Mark Twain, *Autobiography*

But there are also, when dealing with statistics, some damning truths to be found, should one wish to find them. Never more so than with the RMS *Titanic*.

The Inquiry report expressed the survival rates as percentages of the total of various categories aboard the

They were "all in the same boat" in that respect. Such was the overall impression conveyed by the context.

But if they had reduced matters to that "one boat" - to the statistically average lifeboat - then a clearer and very different picture would have emerged. One that is closer to the extant photographs of sparsely-filled boats approaching *Carpathia*.

THERE were 712

Eighteen lifeboats reached the

The total number of survivors (712), divided by the total number of lifeboats to reach the (18), shows that the

[Of course there is no such thing as half a person, but the division of 712 by 18 is almost exact at 39.55 recurring.]

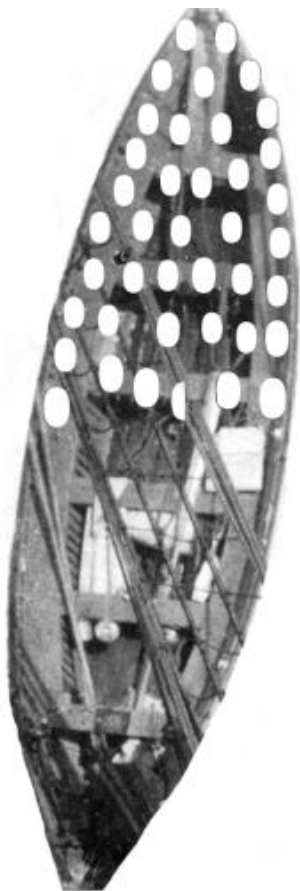


Fig 1. The Average

Lifeboat

Now imagine you are a passenger on the

This is an actual photo of a boat (one of the smaller 'emergency' cutters, either #1 or #2). It has been stripped out of an image of its being overhauled onto

So you are asked to imagine that here is a

Those with more, and those with less, are evened out. All

While one or two of

So, as you look down from the

They had more than

Two hours, as against fourteen minutes for the *Empress of Ireland* and eighteen minutes for the *Lusitania*

There are other factors at play in the survival numbers for these 1914 and 1915 sinkings (higher water temperature in both cases, daylight for the , boats lowered in the night for

The

It is no good to blame early passenger reluctance. The Officers and command of the

This means the average lifeboat contains crew, male passengers, women passengers and

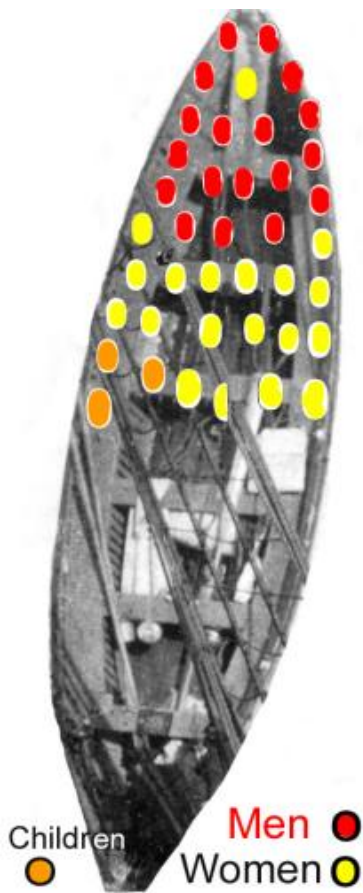


Fig 2. Gender balance of the Average Lifeboat

Look down from the

Nearly half the average

Yet adding all crew to male passengers (in other words treating the stewardess as a 'crewman') gives this near-total male bloc a clear

Thus, "of the 712 persons saved only 652 can have left the

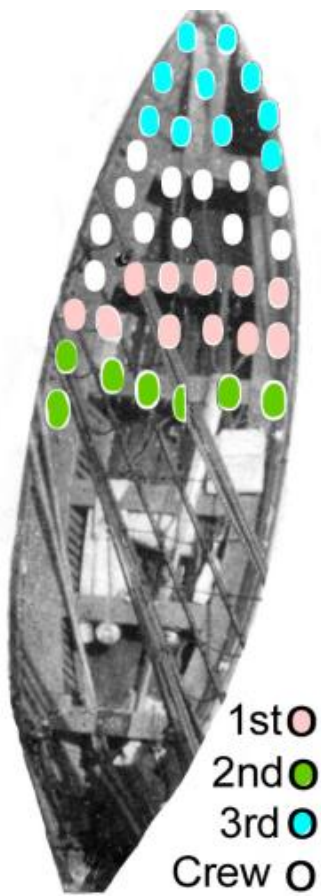


Fig. 3 Class composition of the Average Lifeboat

Only nine steerage made it into the average boat before it left the

But how could they not know, particularly with the last few boats?

Turn to the Third Class. Steerage made up 35.66pc of the 's complement (or more than one-in-three aboard ship), but claimed only a quarter of the lifeboat spaces by the time the average vessel reached

Actually, the steerage obtained a smaller share still of the occupied places in the average boat

[The crew made up 40pc of those aboard , and received 30pc of the lifeboat spaces. Not bad going for those theoretically entitled to nothing, although they might practically expect around 10pc.]

Second class, on the other hand, made up only 14pc of those on board

First class made up 15pc of the souls aboard the

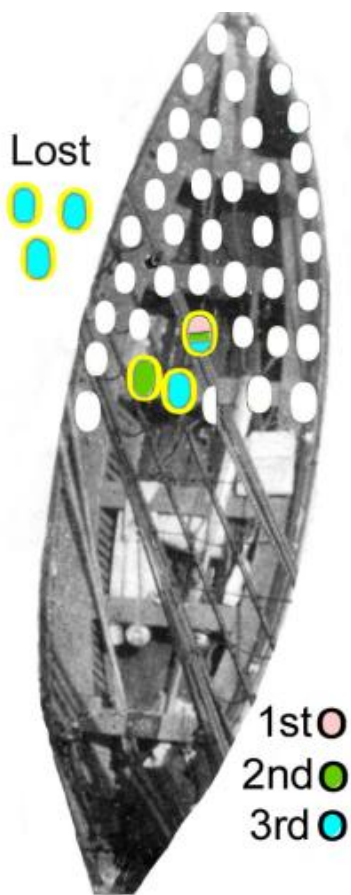


Fig 4. Children Lost and Saved

Looking over the side of the

Not one of them should have lost their short lives. The command had over two hours to save the women and children, and what woman would not have put her child first, passed the little one up over the heads of adults if necessary?

Only 27 steerage children lived, out of 79 aboard. That's barely more than one in three (34pc).

So,

Do you still think the

The Average Lifeboat	
12 crew (30.3pc)	
7 male passengers (17.7pc)	[Three first class, one second class, three steerage]

17.5 women (44.3pc)	[Eight first class, four and a half second class, five steerage]
3 children (7.7pc)	[one second class, one steerage, one mixed]
Total	
	(39.55 x 18 boats successfully launched = 712)

For further corrections to 1912 official Inquiry figures, please see the **ET Research** article *Statistics of a Disaster*

Senan Molony's latest book "**Lusitania: An Irish Tragedy**" is now available.

Courtesy of Senan Molony

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