

Fixed and Removable Railing Sections Around *Titanic's* Forecastle Deck

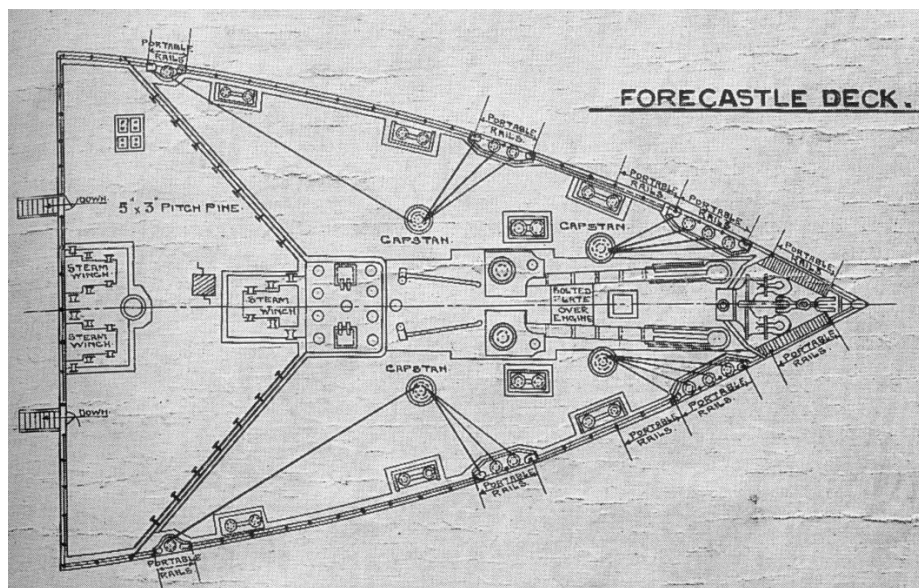
By Bob Read, D.M.D.

Introduction

The railings around *Titanic's* forecastle deck are complex in their set-up. I'm not sure if I have ever seen them modeled accurately other than on a digital model. For conventional models it would probably require a custom made photo-etched railing set to model the railings accurately. I know of no commercially available photo-etch railings sets which are accurate. This article will describe the forecastle railing set-up for *Titanic*. Drawings will be primarily used because there aren't many photos which show the railing details in sufficient resolution.

Removable Railing Sections

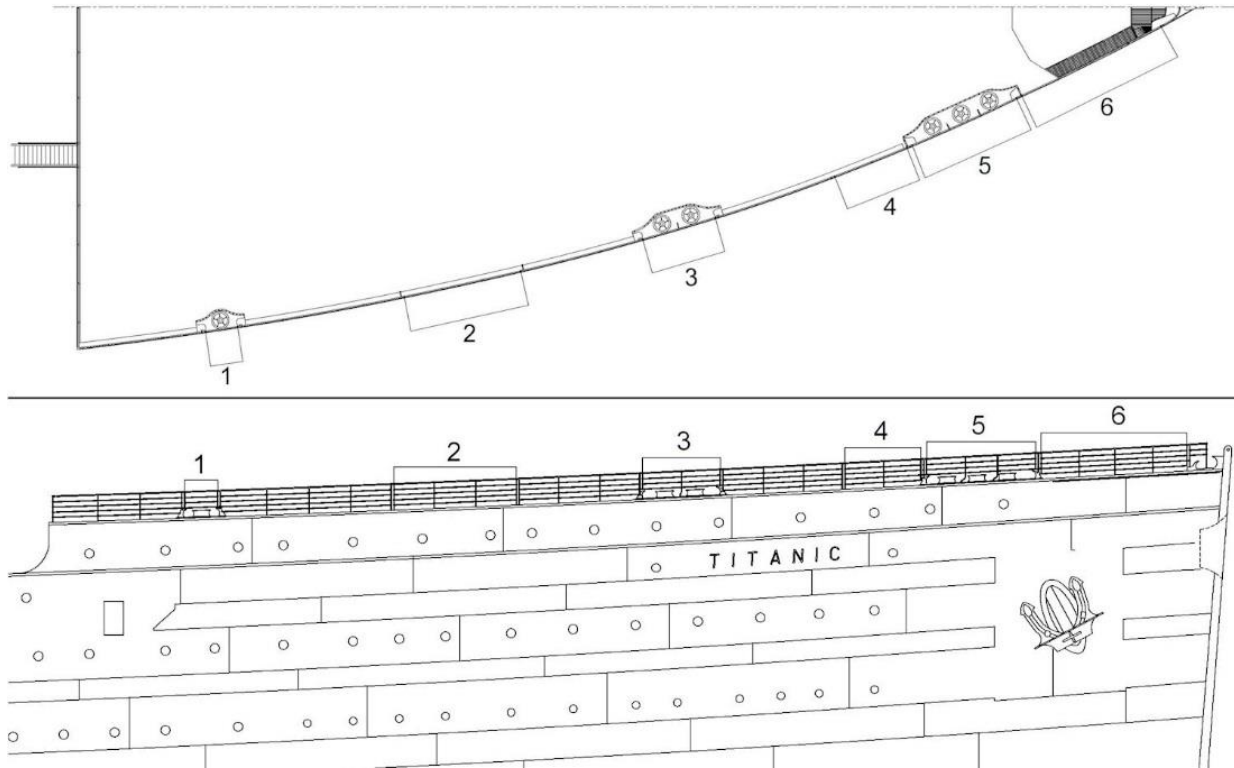
Titanic's forecastle deck used 5 bar railings. In order to be able to accommodate the working arrangements of the forecastle, a number of removable railing sections were employed. In Figure 1 a general arrangement for Olympic shows five removable railing sections per side. On the plan these sections were called "portable railings". The term "removable" will be used in this article because "portable" implies that the railing section could be used elsewhere.



Olympic G/A plan showing removable railing sections

Figure 1

On both *Titanic* and *Olympic* there were actually six removable railing sections per side. Figure 2 shows the starboard side of *Titanic's* forecastle with removable railing sections numbered.

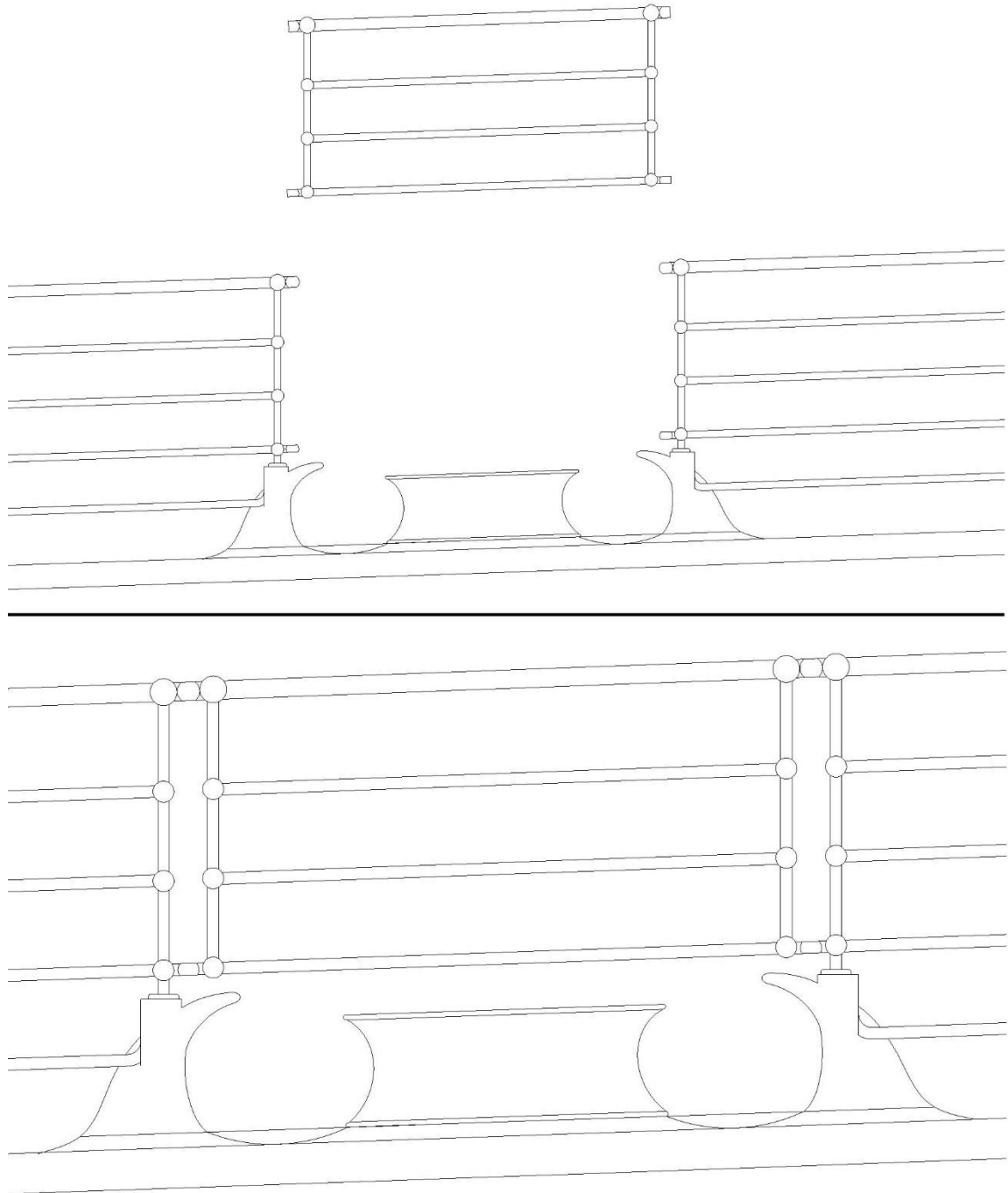


Removable railing sections of *Titanic's* starboard forecastle

Figure 2

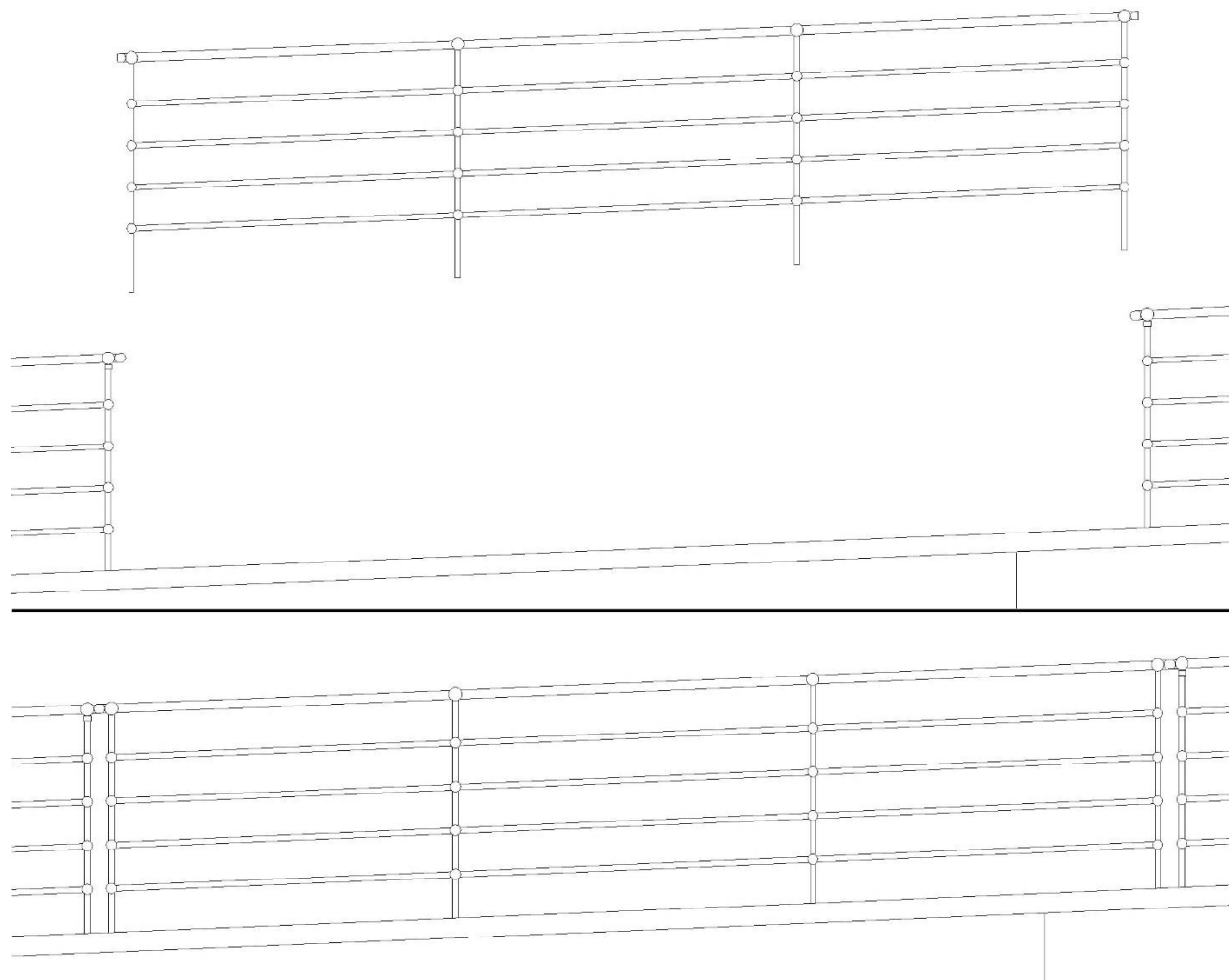
Each of these removable sections will be shown in Figures 3-8.

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Removable railing section #1

Figure 3

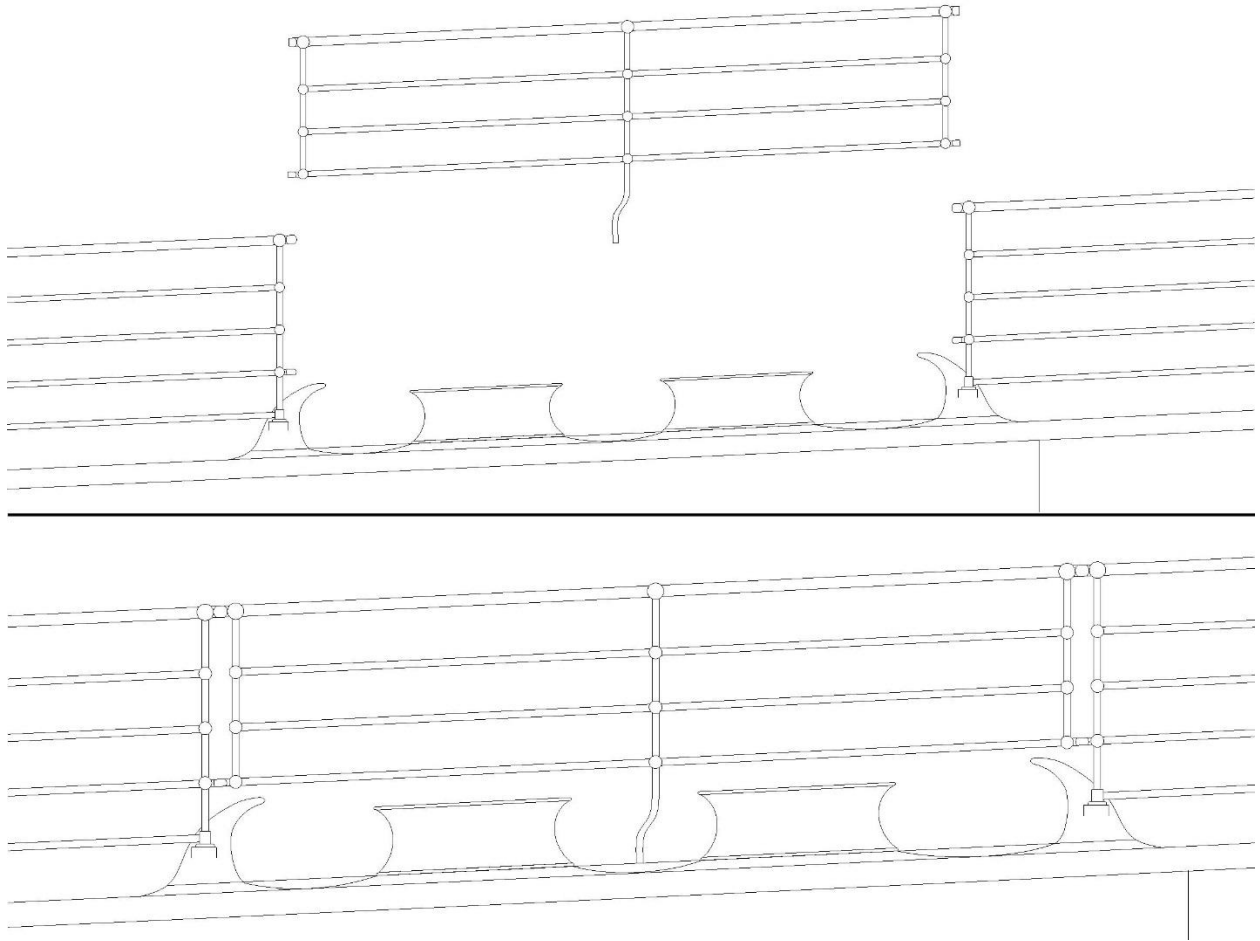


Removable railing section #2

Figure 4

This section is somewhat different in set up. Its purpose is to provide a clear path to cargo hatch #1 when the section is removed. To provide extra stability, the end stanchions of the fixed sections forward and aft of the removable section have diagonal braces to the forecastle deck.

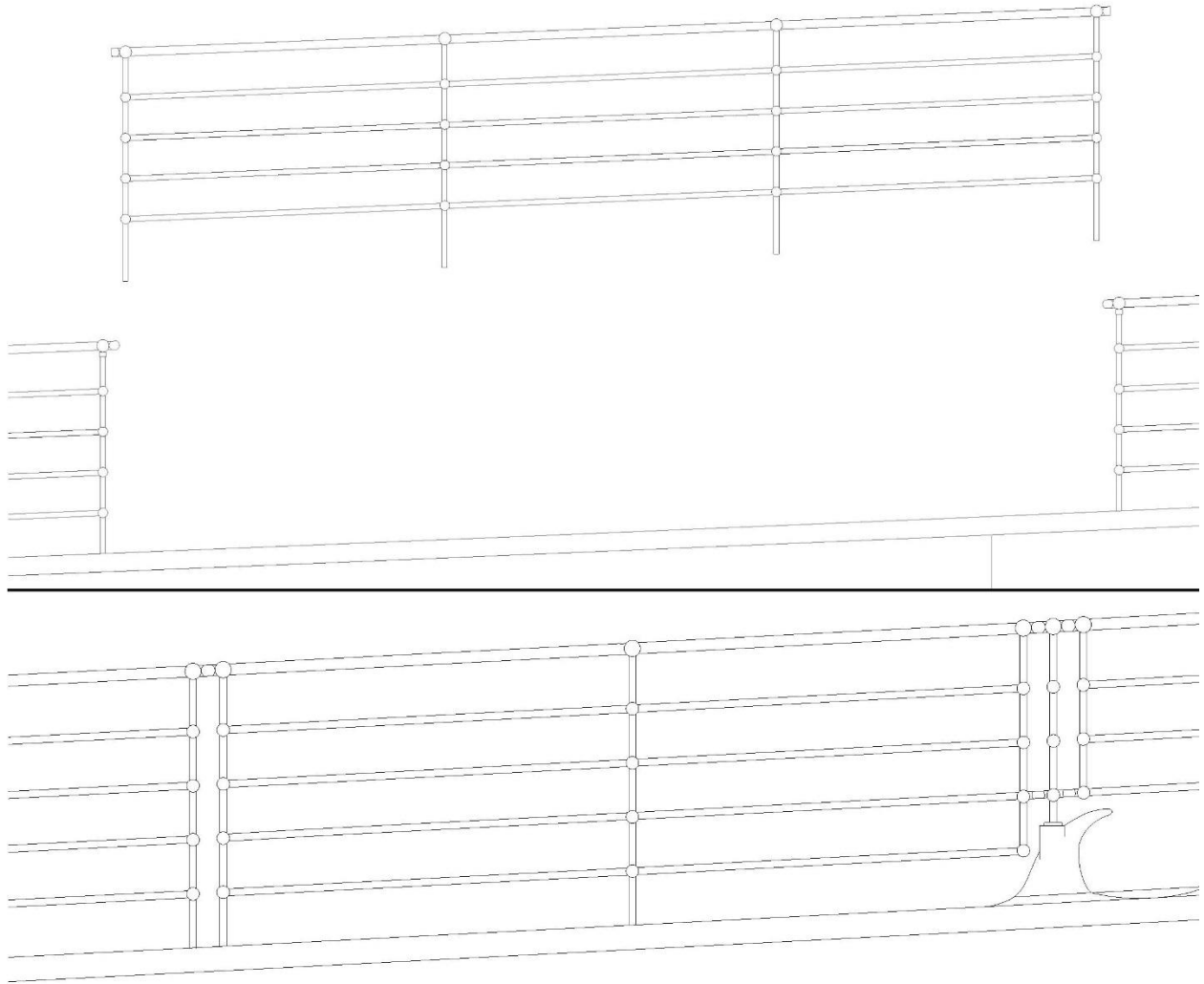
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Removable railing section #3

Figure 5

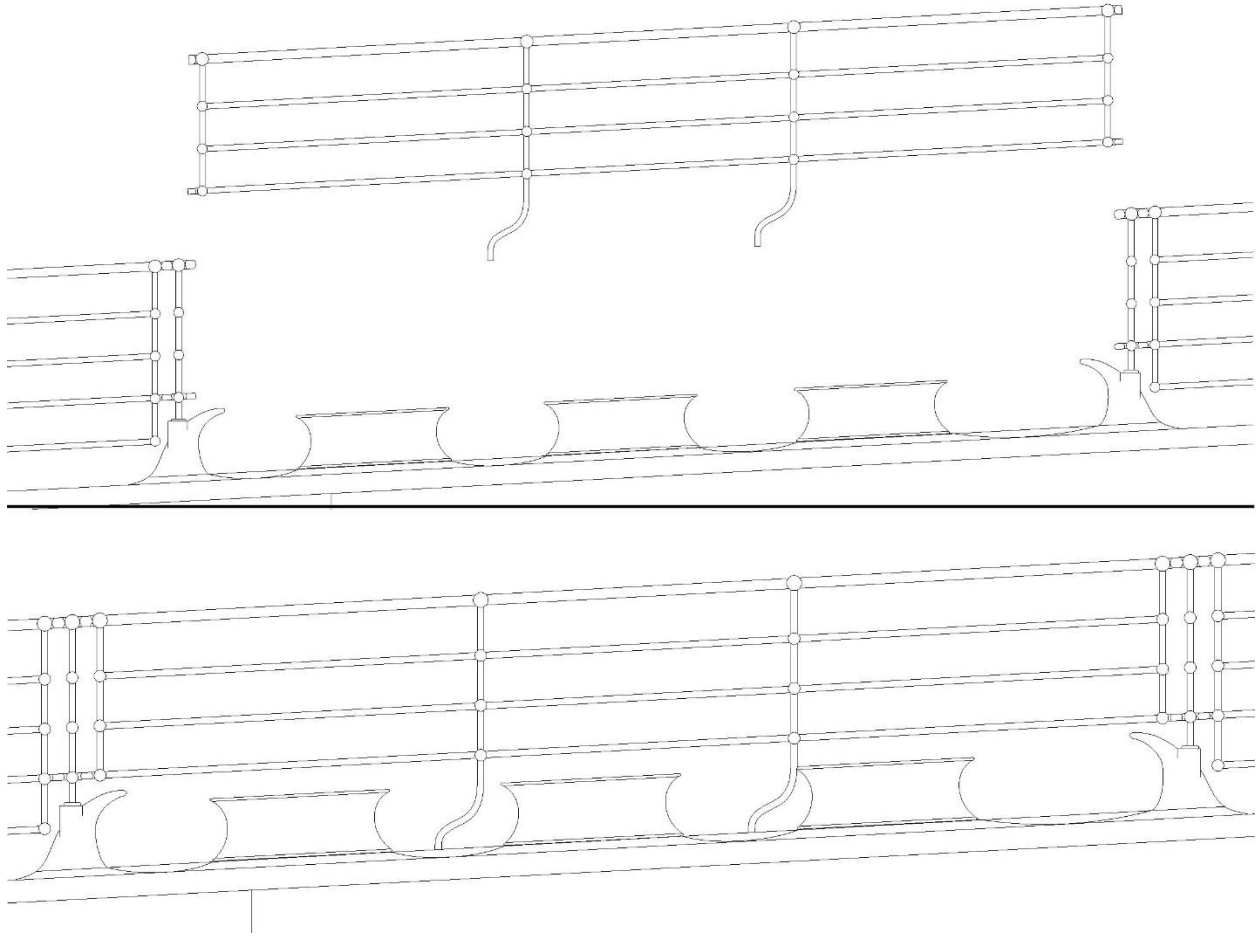
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Removable railing section #4

Figure 6

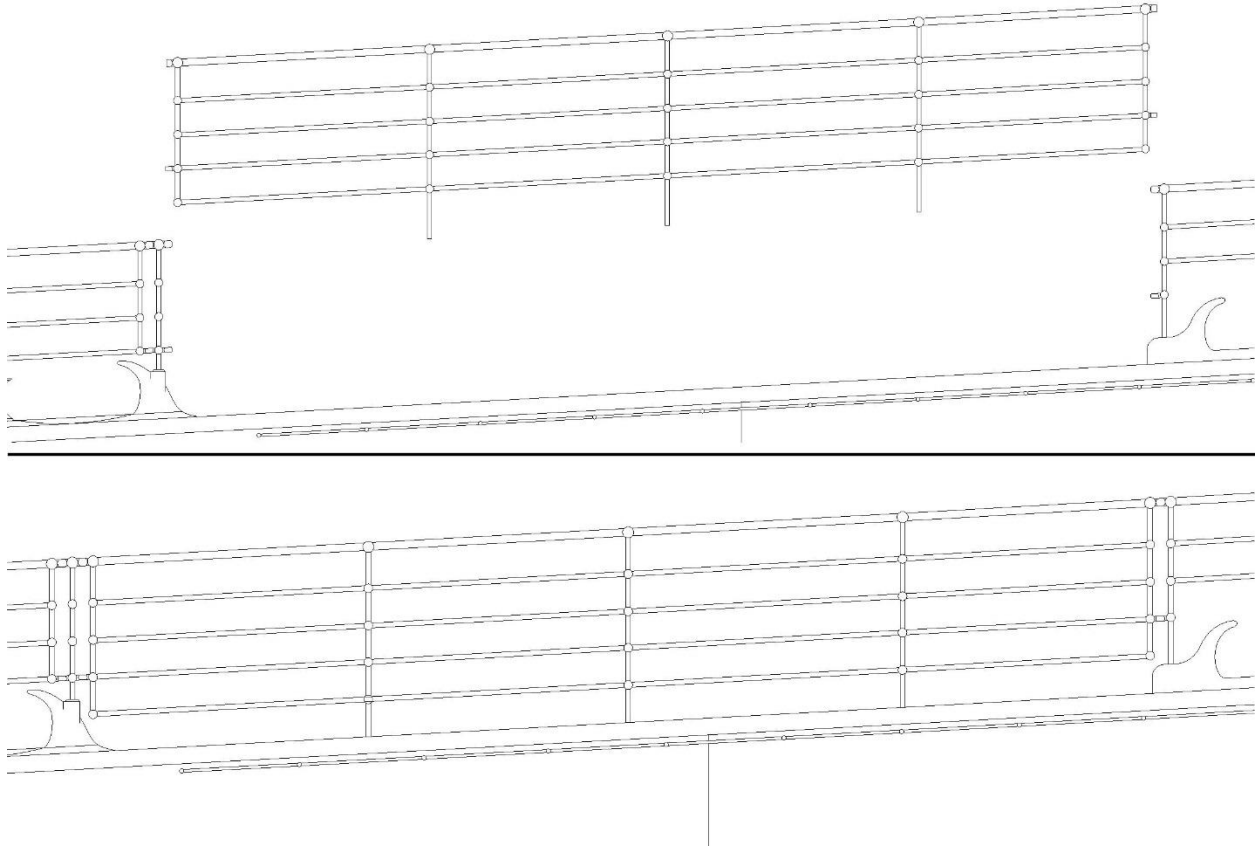
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Removable railing section #5

Figure 7

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Removable railing section #6

Figure 8

Connections

One of the most difficult aspects of the examination of the removable railing sections was trying to determine how the connections were made on the removable railing sections. Figure 9 shows a photo which came the closest to showing the configuration of the joint between the removable and fixed railing sections. This is a wreck photo of Titanic's bow railings. The right image has the connection lug colored red.

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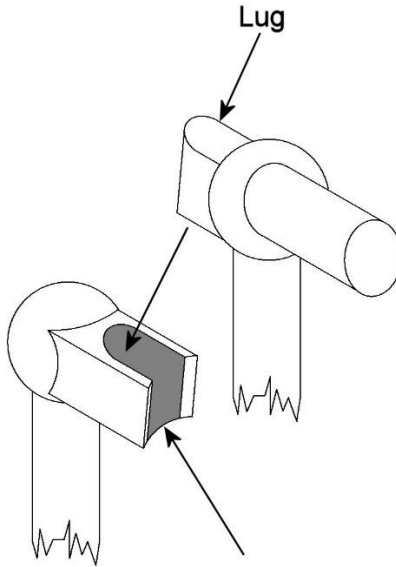


Removable railing connection

Figure 9

Figure 10 is a drawing illustrating what I believe we see in Figure 9 at the connection.

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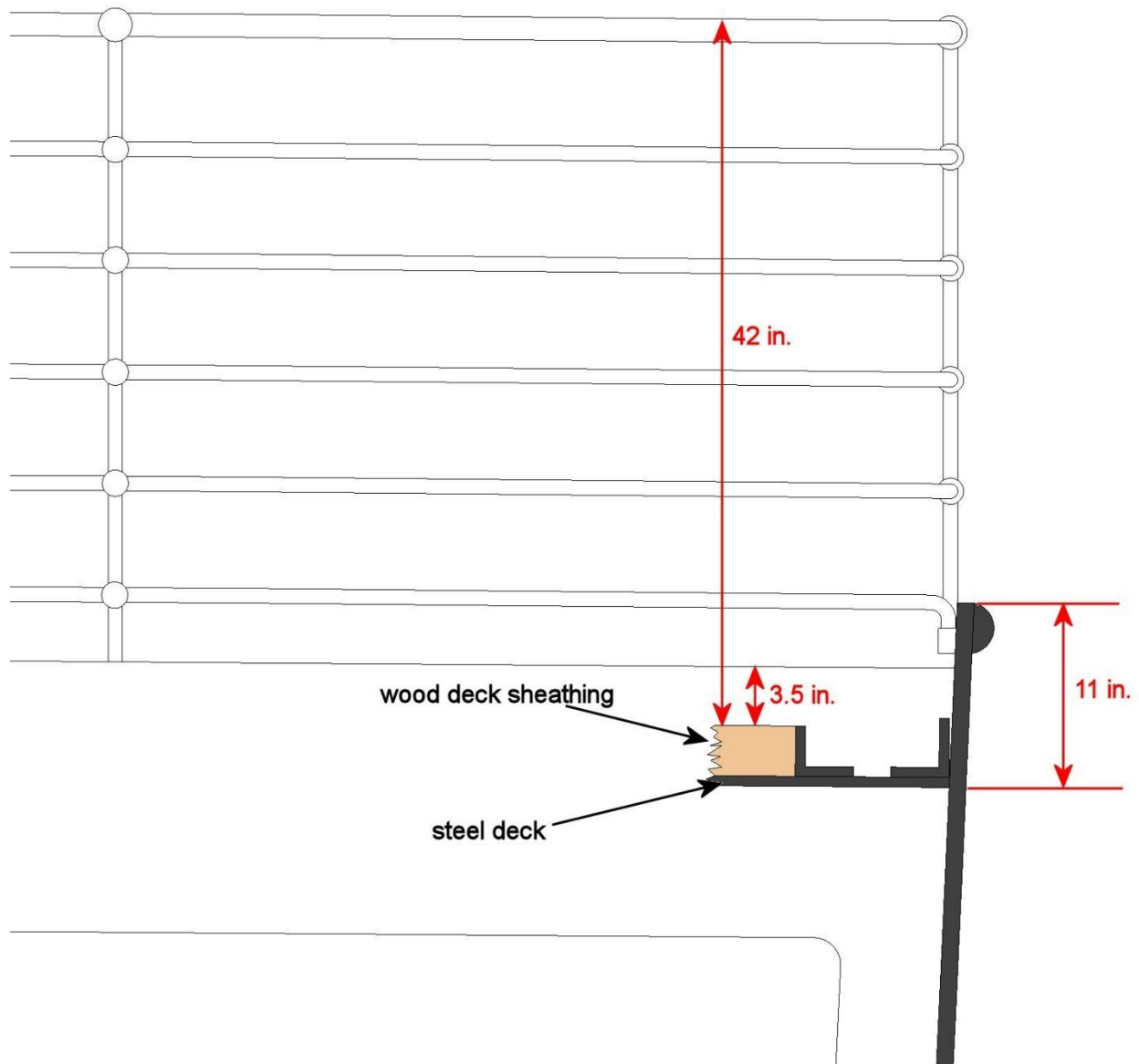
Removable railing connection

Figure 10

Aft Forecastle Railings

The aft railings of the forecastle require some special explanation. Around the port and starboard sides of the forecastle the shell plating stood roughly 7-1/2 inches above the wood deck sheathing. The top rail of the railings there was like all other railings in that it stood 42 in. above the surface of the wood deck sheathing. Figure 11 shows the starboard corner of the aft railings.

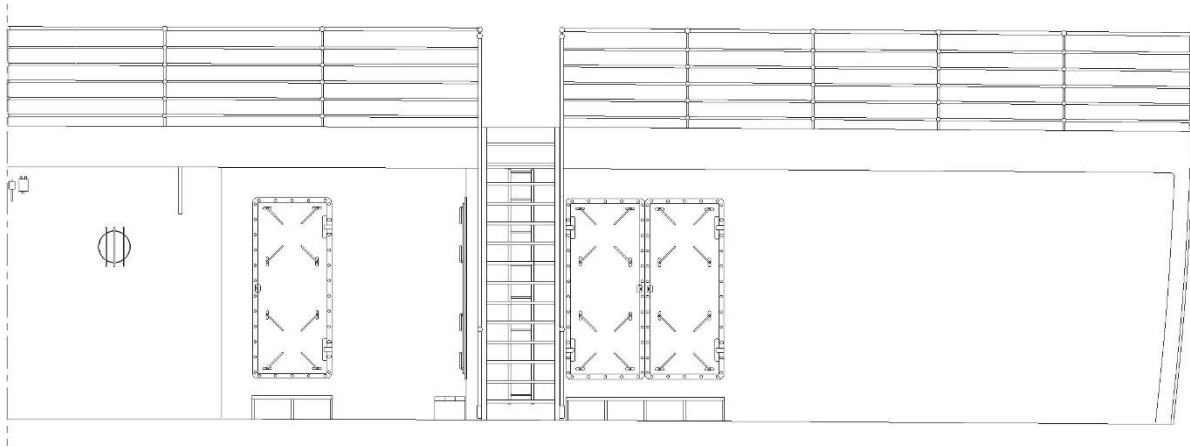
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Aft railing details

Figure 11

One obvious difference of the aft forecastle railings is that they are six bar rather than five bar. The reason that an additional lower railing was necessary was because the plating only stood roughly 3-1/2 inches above the wood deck sheathing. This was just enough to provide an attachment for the palm at the bottom of the railing stanchions which was riveted to the plating. The top bar of the railing still stood the standard 42 inches above the wood deck sheathing. Figure 12 shows the entire extent of the starboard railing along the aft aspect of the forecastle.



Starboard extent of aft forecastle railings

Figure 12

Conclusion

This article has explained the fixed and removable sections of the forecastle railings on *Titanic*. While a conventional model probably couldn't duplicate functioning removable railing sections, it would be much more accurate that commercially available railing sets if the removable sections were in place with the proper connection points. It wouldn't be easy but this article is written to show what the correct configuration is.