After cruising over the Smithsonian and dipping a salute to the White House, Hindenburg departed for Lakehurst, New Jersey. In 1936 and 1937, Hindenburg regularly carried passengers and mail between Europe and the Americas. The airship, using highly flammable hydrogen for lift instead of helium, burst into flames as it attempted mooring at Lakehurst. Thirty-five perished in the scorching disaster. A small percent of the mail survived. Courtesy Archives of the Luftschiffbau Zeppelin Company, Germany

Cover: Hindenburg courtesy National Archives; Titanic courtesy National Museums Northern Ireland
FIRE & ICE:
HINDENBURG
AND TITANIC

Cheryl R. Ganz and Daniel Piazza
with M.T. Sheahan

Exhibition Dates
March 22, 2012, to January 6, 2014

Smithsonian National Postal Museum
Washington, D.C.
2012
In the National Postal Museum's tradition of outstanding exhibits, *Fire & Ice: Hindenburg and Titanic* offers new ways to understand history. In 2012 we commemorate two great ships and their tragic ends. The exhibit reminds us that both *Hindenburg* and *Titanic* exemplified state-of-the-art technology and speed and that both ultimately revealed technology's shortcomings, culminating in tremendous loss of life and disillusionment. It also reminds us that both carried mail and that their postal clerks sacrificed dearly trying to protect it. Thanks to popular media, images of *Hindenburg*, *Titanic*, and their passengers remain vivid, which makes this exhibit and its many original artifacts especially spell-binding.

As NPM's director, I am proud of NPM's record of making the finest of philately and postal history accessible to the public. Your support makes this possible. I am also pleased to announce that your support has guaranteed the opening of the William H. Gross Stamp Gallery in 2013.

The William H. Gross Stamp Gallery, which will be the largest and finest postage stamp museum gallery in the world, has been a dream project made possible by the dedication and generosity of so many, especially William H. Gross. The Smithsonian staff, NPM staff, Council of Philatelists, USPS officials, donors, and so many others have worked steadily with me to fulfill the dream. The gallery's spacious halls will house the museum's finest examples of stamps and mail and allow NPM to continue presenting rich, knowledgeable, and visually exciting exhibits.

Thank you for your ongoing support for the galleries and for exhibits that instruct and delight all of us.

Sincerely,

Allen R. Kane
Director

The first two lines of Robert Frost's poem *Fire and Ice* inspired the exhibition's title. They are appropriate in view of the natural elements that caused the catastrophes and that so many lives ended because of them.

*Some say the world will end in fire,*
*Some say in ice.*
*From what I've tasted of desire*
*I hold with those who favor fire.*
*But if it had to perish twice,*
*I think I know enough of hate*
*To say that for destruction ice*
*Is also great*
*And would suffice.*

In the National Postal Museum's tradition of outstanding exhibits, *Fire & Ice: Hindenburg and Titanic* offers new ways to understand history. In 2012 we commemorate two great ships and their tragic ends. The exhibit reminds us that both *Hindenburg* and *Titanic* exemplified state-of-the-art technology and speed and that both ultimately revealed technology's shortcomings, culminating in tremendous loss of life and disillusionment. It also reminds us that both carried mail and that their postal clerks sacrificed dearly trying to protect it. Thanks to popular media, images of *Hindenburg*, *Titanic*, and their passengers remain vivid, which makes this exhibit and its many original artifacts especially spell-binding.

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## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>20th Century Icons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Technologically Advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Life Onboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Mail Ships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Travel Routes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Fire! The <em>Hindenburg</em> Disaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Ice! The <em>Titanic</em> Disaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Survivors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Acknowledgements and Bibliography</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As the largest, fastest, and most glamorous ships of their eras, Hindenburg and Titanic shared many similarities. The human tragedy associated with each stunned the world...a shock that affects people to this day. Both offered travelers elegant accommodations, and both provided postal services. In each era, the public trusted modern technology to provide safety and speed. And as anniversaries of the disasters are marked in 2012—seventy-five years since Hindenburg burned and a century since Titanic sank—many questions remain unanswered.

The Zeppelin Company of Friedrichshafen, Germany, completed the 804-foot-long LZ-129 Hindenburg in 1936. Financed in part by the Nazi regime, the rigid airship, designed to use non-flammable helium for lift, confirmed Germany’s technological prowess as Adolf Hitler prepared for war. The U.S. refused to sell helium to the Zeppelin Company, which instead used highly flammable hydrogen for Hindenburg’s lift. On May 6, 1937, carrying ninety-seven passengers and crew, Hindenburg burst into flames at Lakehurst, New Jersey. The disaster destroyed the ship in thirty-four seconds, ending the magnificent era of lighter-than-air commercial travel.

Between 1909 and 1911, Harland & Wolff, Belfast, Ireland, built the massive, 882-foot-long Titanic for Britain’s White Star Line, owned by American J. P. Morgan. On April 10, 1912, the lavish Titanic left Southampton, England, on its maiden voyage. Bound for New York, the ship hit an iceberg in the North Atlantic late night April 14. It sank in less than three hours. Of its 2,229 passengers and crew, only 712 survived, predominantly women and children.

After nearly a century, images of Hindenburg and Titanic still haunt viewers worldwide. Published accounts, photographs, radio broadcasts, and movies have transformed the catastrophes into two of the 20th century’s most horrific disasters. Both tragedies capture the universality of terror in the face of death, prompting the question, “What would I have done?” They also underscore technology’s shortcomings during eras that beatified science and progress.

Popular media has recreated the Hindenburg and Titanic disasters in books, movies, and television programs, searing them indelibly into a collective memory. Toys, games, models, and other memorabilia repeatedly revitalize the compelling stories for each new generation.
Newsboy Ned Parfett sells his papers in front of the White Star Line's London offices, April 16, 1912.
Huge by any comparison, *Hindenburg* and *Titanic* inspired a sense of safety with their superior technology. White Star Line did little to discourage the public’s perception of the ship as unsinkable. *Titanic’s* double bottom, sixteen supposedly watertight compartments, and luxurious amenities such as a heated swimming pool and electricity made it the most scientifically advanced vessel of its time.

During the 1930s, some inter-continental travelers preferred the relatively speedy giant zeppelins to travel by ship. *Hindenburg’s* lighter-than-air technology raised predictions that airships would replace ocean liners altogether. As nations worldwide struggled through the Great Depression, *Hindenburg’s* ultra-modern design and amenities inspired faith in science and a prosperous future.

*Hindenburg* salvaged girder relic, 1937. Duralumin rings and girders formed a framework to hold the gas cells. The holes in the girders reduced the ship’s weight. *Hindenburg* used hydrogen for lift because the U.S. government banned exportation of its helium reserves. *Courtesy Navy Lakehurst Historical Society*

*Titanic* picture postcard, 1912. Relatively few photographs exist of *Titanic*. Most images purporting to be the ship actually picture her slightly older, nearly identical sister, *Olympic*. The message side of this postcard is shown on page 23. *Courtesy Dr. Edward and Joanne Dauer*
Hindenburg’s construction spanned five years, 1931–1936. At Friedrichshafen, Germany, workers stretched fabric, later doped, over its duralumin framework. Courtesy anonymous

Two three-story-high engines turned Titanic’s side propellers at up to seventy-five revolutions per minute. | Courtesy Library of Congress
## COMPARISON CHART

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LZ-129 HINDENBURG</th>
<th>RMS TITANIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length</strong></td>
<td>804 ft.</td>
<td>882 ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Width/Diameter</strong></td>
<td>135 ft.</td>
<td>92 ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weight</strong></td>
<td>242 tons (lift gross)</td>
<td>53,310 tons displaced, when fully laden (46,329 gross registered tonnage)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speed</strong></td>
<td>Cruising speed: 76 mph</td>
<td>Maximum speed: 24 mph (21 knots)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost to build ship</strong></td>
<td>$2,600,000</td>
<td>$10,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length of a transatlantic trip</strong></td>
<td>2 to 2 1/2 days</td>
<td>6 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of trips taken before disaster</strong></td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cause of disaster</strong></td>
<td>Prevailing theory is that a spark ignited loose hydrogen</td>
<td>Hit an iceberg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amount of time disaster took</strong></td>
<td>34 seconds</td>
<td>2 1/2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost of tickets</strong></td>
<td>$400 in 1936, $450 in 1937</td>
<td>Max. first class, parlor suite: approx. $4350, Min. first class, cabin: approx. $150, Second class: approx. $65–70, Third class: approx. $35–45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of people aboard</strong></td>
<td>97</td>
<td>2,229**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of crew members</strong></td>
<td>61</td>
<td>912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of first-class passengers</strong></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of second-class passengers</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of third-class/steerage passengers</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of passenger casualties</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of crew casualties</strong></td>
<td>22, plus 1 ground crew member</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of total survivors</strong></td>
<td>62</td>
<td>712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of postal clerks</strong></td>
<td>1 (plus backup and radio officers)</td>
<td>5—all 5 were killed in the disaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pieces of mail carried</strong></td>
<td>17,000+, in 8 sacks (1 dropped over Cologne)</td>
<td>7 million+ pieces of mail, in 3,364 sacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pieces of mail salvaged</strong></td>
<td>360 (176 were unburned)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Numbers have been rounded. **Exact figures for Titanic are not known. These are estimates.*
Hindenburg’s passengers, primarily business professionals and occasionally their families, enjoyed lavish onboard service and comforts. A large lounge, sumptuous meals and superb German wines, promenade decks, a pressurized smoking room, and a writing room... all contributed to an exceptional experience. The ship’s streamlined décor underscored Germany’s resurrection after World War I.

For some, a voyage on Titanic offered opulence comparable to that of the finest hotels. Upper-class passengers enjoyed gourmet meals and aged liquors, a swimming pool and gym, and many other comforts. Those traveling in steerage, however—primarily immigrants hoping for better lives in America—enjoyed no such luxuries. Nonetheless, passage included food, mattresses made sleeping more comfortable, and the tiny cabins boasted electric lights and running water.

Hindenburg menu, 1936. Each lavish lunch and dinner had a specially printed menu. The Xlth Olympic Games Berlin, 1936, flight luncheon featured clam soup, beef in Madeira sauce, cauliflower, peas, potatoes, and salad. Diners then enjoyed an ice cream bombe, hot chocolate, coffee or tea, and cake. | Courtesy anonymous

Olympic dinner menu, 1911. Dinners in the first-class dining saloon of a White Star liner usually consisted of eleven courses. One first-class menu survives from Titanic’s last night, and about half of the dishes were the same as shown here.
Hindenburg’s passenger quarters featured observation windows on both the port and starboard sides that opened for fresh air and taking photographs. *Courtesy anonymous*

The casual Café Parisien offered Titanic’s first-class diners an ocean view, something unique for a British liner. *Courtesy National Museums Northern Ireland*
**LIFE ONBOARD**

Fred Wright letter, December 1911. Written onboard Olympic, Fred Wright’s letter to his sister mentions Captain Edward J. Smith, the hymns sung in the Sunday church service, and Wright’s interactions with passengers.

*Hindenburg* sixth North America flight card, 1936. German boxer Max Schmeling and movie actor Douglas Fairbanks, both passengers, signed this card for Captain Albert Sammt. In 1937, Sammt survived the *Hindenburg* disaster by jumping from the gondola and climbing through the burning wreckage crashing down around him.
Both Hindenburg and Titanic underwrote expenses by carrying mail. Hindenburg was the largest flying post office ever. It provided the first regularly scheduled, entirely by air post service between Europe and North America.

Titanic was the largest floating post office of its day and bore its official status in its name, RMS Titanic—Royal Mail Ship Titanic. Travelers on both ships enjoyed onboard postal service.

Hindenburg’s Reading and Writing Room offered books, newspapers, a typewriter, and a mail slot on the side of the bookshelf. | Courtesy anonymous


Hindenburg Olympic Games flight card, 1936. A passenger aboard Hindenburg wrote this card, postmarked August 1, 1936, while en route to Berlin for the Olympic Games opening ceremony. Bearing the Olympic Games rings on its hull, the gigantic ship flew over Olympic Stadium before dropping twenty bags of mail by parachute at the Berlin airport. | Courtesy anonymous
Frankfurt postal staff postmarked the mail, sorting and bundling it by type of service and destination. | Courtesy Archives of the Luftschiffbau Zeppelin Company, Germany

Mail to be flown by Hindenburg often arrived at the Frankfurt post office inside another envelope with instructions for mailing. | Courtesy Archives of the Luftschiffbau Zeppelin Company, Germany

On its final flight, Hindenburg carried over 17,000 pieces of mail, which raised revenue that helped cover operating costs. | Courtesy Archives of the Luftschiffbau Zeppelin Company, Germany
At least 360 of the 17,609 pieces of mail carried by Hindenburg on its fatal flight survived the disaster, much of it charred. Some of Titanic’s mail may survive at the bottom of the North Atlantic; other paper artifacts have been successfully recovered from the wreck. While Hindenburg’s crew had no time to save mail, Titanic’s mail crew, comprised of both American and British clerks, struggled heroically to save what they could of the 3,364 mailbags while water surged into the mailroom. The North Atlantic claimed the bags and the lives of all the clerks.

Hindenburg was a sub-post office of the Frankfurt post office. Located across from the radio room, it operated only during flight. Postmaster Max Zabel changed the date stamp daily to postmark mail from passengers and crew with the special onboard marking. Bruce MacPherson, Illustrator

Hindenburg first North America flight cover, 1936. Captain Ernst Lehmann, who died from the 1937 disaster, and Commander Hugo Eckener autographed this envelope to James A. Farley, postmaster general of the United States. Lehmann sent the greeting using Graf Zeppelin stationery rather than the Hindenburg stationery available for purchase.

Hindenburg first North America flight cover, 1936. Stamp collectors could post mail at the TIPEX postage stamp show in New York City for the first return trip of Hindenburg. Commander Hugo Eckener attended the exhibition.

Hindenburg first North America flight card, 1936. Passenger Lord Donegall, a journalist, traveled on the maiden voyage of Queen Mary to the United States and returned via Hindenburg. Courtesy anonymous.

Hindenburg third North America flight card, 1936.
Oscar Scott Woody’s letter of assignment, 1912. These orders directed American sea post clerk Oscar Scott Woody to travel to Europe and return “in the sea post office on the SS Titanic, sailing from Southampton on April 10th.” Sea post clerks earned about $1,000 a year, considered a small fortune by the standards of the time.

Below: Oscar Scott Woody’s set of post room keys, 1912. The largest key was probably for the registered mail bags aboard Titanic; the smaller keys were likely for desks or cabinets in the post office room. These postal keys and chain were recovered from Woody’s body.
Following the route posted in the lounge, passenger Peter Belin (see pages 26–27) recorded Hindenburg’s final flight on his map each day. All log books burned, but Belin’s map, folded in his valise, miraculously survived. | Courtesy Harry Lammot Belin and Susan Lenhard Belin
On her only voyage, Titanic traveled the “Great Circle Route” used by most North Atlantic steamships. Since the disaster, ships follow a more southern route from January to July, when icebergs are common, and the International Ice Patrol monitors ice in the shipping lanes.
At 6:25 p.m. EST on May 6, 1937, while approaching Lakehurst Naval Station’s mooring mast between storms, Hindenburg burst into flames. Within thirty-four seconds, fire consumed the entire airship. Passengers and crew members jumped from the burning airship, some falling to their deaths. Thirty-five of the ninety-seven men and women onboard, plus one member of the ground crew, died. The disaster ended transatlantic commercial travel in lighter-than-air vessels. Debates continue regarding the cause of the spark that ignited the hydrogen and outer covering.

*Hindenburg* final flight Cologne drop card, 1937. Departing Germany for the last time, *Hindenburg* dropped mail bags at Cologne. The mail had been held from the cancelled May Day flight to Berlin, as indicated by the red-boxed marking on the mail.

Customs inspectors examined two kinds of *Hindenburg* salvaged mail: burnt mail and unburnt, uncancelled mail. *Courtesy anonymous*

*Hindenburg* salvaged serving bowl, 1937. *Hindenburg*’s logo, luxuriously etched into the silver, contrasts with the burnt edges, unexpectedly illustrating the triumph and tragedy of the zeppelin’s brief time as North America’s first regularly scheduled air service. *Courtesy Henry Applegate*

*Hindenburg* salvaged postmark device, 1937. Crew member Rudolf Sauter salvaged this postmark device from the wreckage. The red wooden handle, rubber stamp lettering, and movable date type burned. *Courtesy anonymous*
Moments after Hindenburg’s bow lines dropped, eyewitnesses saw a red glow ahead of the upper tail fin, and then the ship burst into flames. | Courtesy National Air and Space Museum

A blaze of hydrogen raged within Hindenburg, destroying the ship in thirty-four seconds. The rapidly disintegrating airship crashed to earth tail first. | Courtesy National Air and Space Museum
At 11:40 p.m. ship’s time—9:50 p.m. in New York—on the
night of April 14, 1912, Titanic struck an iceberg in the
North Atlantic. The ice buckled hull plates and popped
rivets along 300 feet of the vessel’s starboard side, breaching
six of her watertight compartments. Emotions onboard
staggered from disbelief, to resistance, and finally to panic
as passengers and crew comprehended their ship’s
unimaginable fate. In the radio room, frantic operators sent
distress signals. With too few lifeboats, only 712 of the
2,229 people aboard Titanic lived to see sunrise on April 15.

A passenger aboard RMS Carpathia photographed this iceberg near
Titanic’s wreck site. | Courtesy Library of Congress

Carpathia laden with Titanic’s survivors and lifeboats. | Courtesy
Library of Congress

Harold Bride, Titanic’s surviving wireless operator, being carried
off Carpathia with sprained and frostbitten feet. | Courtesy Library
of Congress

Sea Post Clerk John Starr March’s Pocket Watch, 1912. This watch was
found on the body of John Starr March, an American sea post clerk on
Titanic. It probably stopped when the ship sank in the Atlantic.
Twenty-two Titanic passengers huddled in Lifeboat D, the last to leave the sinking ship. Courtesy National Archives

Postal officials salvaged only about 160 burned pieces of mail out of more than 17,000 pieces that had been onboard. Below: Hindenburg disaster cover, 1937. Salvaged from the wreckage, the U.S. Post Office Department enclosed the fragile, charred remains of this cover in a glassine envelope, officially sealing it before delivery to the addressee. Courtesy John Hotchner
Titanic postcard, 1912. Signed “Love, Ugly” by an unknown passenger, this card addressed to “Miss Gwen” was postmarked aboard Titanic and sent ashore with the mail, probably at Queenstown, Ireland, the ship's last port of call before heading westbound across the Atlantic. The picture side of this postcard is shown on page 6. Courtesy Dr. Edward and Joanne Dauer

Telegram receipt from Carpathia, 1912. First-class passenger Charles Stengel of Newark, New Jersey, sent his children a telegram from Carpathia to say that he and his wife were safe. The ship’s wireless operators transmitted only brief passenger messages, angering reporters seeking information. | Courtesy Brian, Maria, and Alexander Green
Hindenburg disaster cover, 1937. Passenger Hermann Doehner posted this envelope onboard, addressed to himself. In Germany on business, he was returning home to Mexico City with his wife and three children. He and his daughter died in the disaster. *Courtesy Dr. Edward and Joanne Dauer*

Hindenburg disaster card, 1937. A New York paquebot mark cancelled 176 salvaged unburned pieces of mail four days after the disaster. Having been stored in a protective, sealed container while awaiting postal service on the return flight, this uncalled mail survived intact. *Courtesy anonymous*
Titanic cover, 1912. First-class passenger George E. Graham, a Canadian returning from a European buying trip for Eaton’s department store, addressed this folded letter on Titanic stationery. Destined for Berlin, the envelope was postmarked on the ship and sent ashore with the mail, probably at Cherbourg, France. The morgue ship Mackay-Bennett recovered Graham’s body.

Titanic facing slip, 1912. Found on Oscar Scott Woody’s body nine days after Titanic’s sinking, this facing slip bears one of the clearest surviving strikes of the ship’s onboard postmark (“Transatlantic Post Office 7”). Clerks placed facing slips on bundles of mail to indicate their destination.
Returning from his studies in Paris, Peter Belin (1913–1982) was the only resident of Washington, D.C., aboard Hindenburg’s final flight. Standing at the windows during the approach, he grabbed a post as the floor tilted and other passengers fell. With crew members, Belin rushed to the windows, but the window shut and jammed. Frantic, he broke the celluloid pane and jumped. His horrified parents watched the disaster, believing their son could not survive. His distinctive whistle brought them together in the midst of chaos. Belin later served in the navy, retiring as a captain.

What was in Belin's pockets when he jumped? An envelope and a roll of film. Having settled his tab with the chief steward, he had pocketed an envelope with receipts for onboard purchases, including postage stamps, beverages, and a telegram. Although his Leica camera was destroyed in the crash, Belin had removed the last roll of film and dropped it in his pocket. As a result, some of the last photographs taken from Hindenburg are seen here for the first time.
What items packed in Belin’s valise survived the inferno? H. Rauber, the landing agent for American Zeppelin Transport, Inc., and Hamburg-American Line, contacted Belin to return his salvaged possessions and ask him to identify his property from among unclaimed possessions. Fortunately, the inscribed pocket watch that Belin lost from his waistcoat pocket during his escape was found still operational the next day in the wreckage. Although no intact baggage survived, charred remnants from his valise included his French identification card, leather wallet with documents, receipts and mail from his stay in Paris, checkbook, nine S.S. Hanse baggage claim checks for shipped luggage, one telegram envelope, and the map he used to mark the flight’s route (see page 16). To survive the catastrophe, these paper items must have been packed tightly together and perhaps even doused with ballast water.
Noted American artist Francis ("Frank") D. Millet died on Titanic. The Millet Family Papers at the Smithsonian Archives of American Art contain three folders of letters addressed to Lily Millet (his widow) and Laurence Millet (his son) in the days after the sinking. As the largest intact archive of Titanic condolence letters, they offer insights into how the disaster was perceived and communicated by high society in England and America. They also show the changing etiquette of bereavement in the Edwardian era. Although intimate personal letters such as notes of sympathy were expected to be handwritten, the rising popularity of typewriters and telegrams is evident.

"I went to New York to meet the Carpathia in the desperate hope that dear Frank might after all be one of those rescued from the Titanic."
Left: William A. Coffin condolence letter, 1912. Details of the disaster spread quickly in upper-class circles. Titanic survivors J. Bruce Ismay and Colonel Archibald Gracie as well as victims John Jacob Astor IV and James Clinch Smith were all members of New York’s elite, all male Union Club.

“He knew that his mind would be occupied with rescuing others rather than with saving himself.”

Right: Algernon S. Frissell condolence letter, 1912. By highlighting (or inventing) instances in which men willingly gave their lives so that women and children might live, the popular press extolled the bravery and chivalry of Titanic’s male passengers, especially those in first class.

“Col. Archibald Gracie told me of seeing Millet on the deck. Gracie and Clinch Smith made a leap . . . Gracie did not see Smith nor Millet after that.”

Left: Mackay-Bennett, a transatlantic telegraph cable-laying ship, retrieved 190 bodies, including that of Frank Millet, from the Titanic wreck site and transported them to Halifax, Nova Scotia, where families waited to identify and bury their relatives. Courtesy Library of Congress

All condolence letters courtesy Millet Family Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution
CAPTAIN HEINRICH BAUER (1902–1979) Bauer, a young Hindenburg captain, controlled the water ballast during the final approach. He tried to level the flaming ship to soften its landing. At the instant the landing wheel bounced, he jumped from the gondola’s port side window and ran to a place of safety. He suffered minor burns but returned to rescue passengers. After the disaster, Bauer worked in aviation and automobile industries.

“In the gondola there was an oppressive calm; some crewmen were groaning, others fell to the floor and everyone attempted to hold onto something as the pitch became steeper.”
SECOND OFFICER CHARLES HERBERT LIGHTOLLER (1874-1952) Lightoller supervised the launch of Titanic’s port side lifeboats. After the vessel sank, he clung to an overturned lifeboat until rescued. As Titanic’s senior surviving officer, he gave crucial testimony at the British and American inquiries. Lightoller commanded three Royal Navy ships during World War I, but the White Star Line never promoted him to captain because of his association with the Titanic disaster.

“I never allowed my thoughts to dwell on ... those ghastly moments.”
PASSENGER NELSON MORRIS (1891–1955) Armour meat packing executive Nelson Morris and business associate Burtis J. Dolan, both from the Chicago area, had watched lightning from the starboard passenger lounge before Hindenburg’s stern dropped sharply. The friends jumped from the flaming ship into a fiery tangle of girders. Morris survived, but Dolan became fatally trapped in the wreck. He secured financial support for Dolan’s family.

“The most remarkable thing that I know in my life, I took metal rods an inch thick in my hands and I broke them. They broke like paper.”
FIRST CLASS PASSENGER MARGARET TOBIN BROWN (1867–1932) A Colorado mining fortune transformed Margaret Brown from the child of impoverished Irish immigrants into a Denver socialite. Saved in Lifeboat 6, she raised $10,000 for Titanic’s destitute third-class passengers even before Carpathia docked in New York. She ran unsuccessfully for the U.S. Senate in 1914 as a suffragist, and was awarded the French Légion d’honneur for her relief work after World War I.

“Completely absorbed in my reading I gave little thought to the crash that struck at my window overhead and threw me to the floor . . . thinking nothing serious had occurred, the book was again picked up.”
**CABIN BOY WERNER FRANZ (1922– )** When the flaming *Hindenburg* sharply tilted, water from a ruptured ballast miraculously drenched fourteen-year-old cabin boy Werner Franz. Soaked and briefly protected from the flames, he kicked open a supply hatch and jumped. The gondola’s bounce provided the seconds he needed to escape the conflagration virtually unharmed. Franz spent his life after World War II working with precision instruments.

*Hindenburg* Crew Survivors, Lakehurst Naval Air Station, May 11th, 1937. Left to Right: Max Henneberg (steward); Fritz Deeg (steward); Max Zabel (navigator and postmaster); Jonny Dörflein (mechanic); Severin Klein (steward); Eduard Boetius (navigator); Egon Schweikardt (radio operator); Xaver Maier (chief cook); Werner Franz (cabin boy); Rudolf Sauter (chief engineer); Wilhelm Balla (steward); Eugen Nunnenmacher (steward); Albert Stöffler (pastry chef); Wilhelm Steeb (apprentice mechanic); Heinrich Kubis (chief steward); Captain Heinrich Bauer (watch officer); Kurt Bauer (elevatorman); Eugen Schäuble (engineering officer); Helmut Lau (helmsman); Alfred Grözinger (cook); German Zettel (lead mechanic).

“*When the next Zeppelin is ready, may I fly again with her?*”
The toddler Navratil brothers were placed in *Titanic*’s last lifeboat and arrived in New York as “Louis and Lolo, the *Titanic* orphans.” When their mother spotted their photograph in a French newspaper, it was learned that they had been kidnapped by their father and were traveling under assumed names. From 1992 until his death, Michel (left) was *Titanic*’s last male survivor.

“There were vast differences of people’s wealth on the ship, and I realized later that if we hadn’t been in second class, we’d have died.”

Michel Navratil

*Courtesy Library of Congress*
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Cheryl R. Ganz and Daniel Piazza, Curators
Titanic leaves Belfast, Ireland, for her sea trials, April 2, 1912. | Courtesy National Museums Northern Ireland
Growing out of an extraordinary $10 million philanthropic commitment, the National Postal Museum has embarked on an $18 million renovation and expansion project. The cornerstone of this undertaking is the William H. Gross Stamp Gallery, which will triple exhibition space, increase attendance, provide the museum with street level presence on Massachusetts Avenue, and create an exceptional new space for renowned exhibits.

The William H. Gross Stamp Gallery will feature seven exhibition galleries, a welcome center, and an Education Mezzanine. Through the authoritative display of stamps, mail, and related objects, and supported by the National Postal Museum’s online research tool Arago™, the galleries will provide a dynamic visitor experience and allow the museum to offer innovative and exciting educational opportunities.

If you would like to learn about the giving opportunities associated with the William H. Gross Stamp Gallery, please contact Amy Borntrager, Director of Development, at 202-633-5063, or visit the museum’s website at www.postalmuseum.si.edu/StampGallery/Support.html to make a donation.

The National Postal Museum is devoted to presenting the colorful and engaging history of the nation’s mail service and showcasing one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of stamps and philatelic material in the world. It is located at 2 Massachusetts Avenue N.E., Washington, D.C., next to Union Station. The museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (closed Dec. 25). For more information about the Smithsonian, call 202-633-1000 or visit the museum website at www.postalmuseum.si.edu.