



0. ICE WARNINGS IGNORED - Story Preface

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Titanic's sister ship, the *Olympic*, also had a Marconi wireless system. This image depicts how it appeared at about the time of *Titanic's* maiden voyage. The *Olympic* was at sea, on the evening of April 14, 1912, but it was farther away from *Titanic* than other ships. Image online, [Ulster Folk and Transport Museum](#).

On the evening of April 14th, *Titanic's* wireless operators [Jack Phillips](#) and [Harold Bride](#) had received ice warnings from ships in the area. Some of the messages had been given to the bridge.

One warning, from the *Mesaba*, came in at 9:40 p.m. (ship's time). It was not marked "MSG" (short for Masters' Service Gram) which would have required Captain Smith to see it and sign off on it. It is likely Smith never saw the message:

To Titanic

Ice report in lat 42.n to 41.25n Long 49w to long 50.30w saw much heavy pack ice and great number large icebergs also field ice. Weather good clear

The *Titanic*, traveling at 22.5 knots, was heading straight for the ice field.

Within range of the Cape Race station (they were about 400 miles away when the ship struck the iceberg), Phillips was trying to send hundreds of backlogged passenger messages (called Marconigrams). Cyril Evans, the Marconi operator on a nearby ship (the *Californian*), was also trying to send messages.

In 1912, the Marconi system was still in its infancy. Evan's signals were interfering with Phillips' ability to send his messages. Using curt (but common) language, the *Titanic* operator told the *Californian* operator to stop transmitting even as Evans sent *Titanic* an ice warning:

Shut up. Shut up. I am busy. I am working Cape Race.

Fatally, Evans turned off his wireless and went to bed. His ship, stopped for the night due to ice, was less than an hour away from *Titanic*.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/ICE-WARNINGS-IGNORED-Fatal-Voyage-The-Titanic>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

Questions 2 Ponder

Does Technology Always Need a Human Component to Work Best?

On the evening of April 14, 1912, Jack Phillips—who was aboard the *Titanic* as the ship's senior radio operator—was "working Cape Race." He was sending hundreds of backlogged passenger messages to that land-based Marconi station. The *Titanic*, which had a 500-mile limitation on its wireless transmissions/receptions, was within 400 miles of Cape Race.

Phillips—who was able to escape the sinking vessel—died of exposure before he could be rescued from the cold waters of the Atlantic.

What role, if any, did these facts play in the fatal events which took place aboard *Titanic* later that night?

Do you fault Cyril Evans, the wireless operator onboard the *Californian*, for turning-off his wireless and going to bed on the evening of April 14, 1912? Why, or why not?

Media Stream



Jack Phillips

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

PD

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Jack-Phillips>

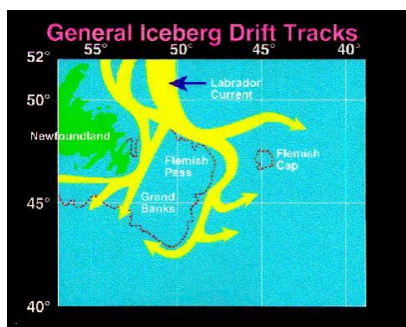


Harold Bride

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Harold-Bride>



General Iceberg Drift Tracks

Image online, courtesy the Abel Danger website.

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