

0. A DISINTEGRATING VESSEL - Story Preface

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This image, taken by a crew member of RMS *Carpathia* - *Titanic* survivors' rescue ship - depicts both an iceberg and a very large area of ice in the vicinity of *Titanic*'s wreck site. The description for this image, by the Library of Congress (where it is maintained), provides more details: "View from S.S. *CARPATIA* of iceberg which sank the *Titanic*." Although the photo makes it appear that the ship is approaching a shoreline, this location is actually hundreds of miles from shore. It is the ice, on the water's surface, which looks like a coastline. Online, courtesy Library of Congress.

Thanks to the efforts of Dr. Robert Ballard and his associates, *Titanic* was located in 1985 at a depth of more than 12,000 feet.

The first indication of the wreck's discovery was an image of one of the ship's boilers which came into view on September 1, 1985. Since then, diving expeditions to the wreckage have provided answers to many technical questions.

Lay people, who would otherwise have no opportunity to view what is at the bottom of the sea, have also been able to marvel at what's left of the once-magnificent ship. Captain Smith's cabin, the port-side propeller and part of the debris field are 2½ miles underwater, but we can see them today because of remote camera exploration.

The most significant questions, of course, cannot be answered by examining wreckage and artifacts. Why the ship was traveling at "excessive speed," into a known area of ice, is something historians and people will ponder for years to come.

As a result of so many lost lives, however, rules and regulations were changed. Ships, for example, now require both sufficient lifeboats and practice drills.

People have talked about raising the great ship. Parts of her have already been brought to the surface. But as she lies on the bottom of the sea, she continues to deteriorate.

Located in an area of the North Atlantic where mariners continue to see icebergs, dive crews can only operate at the site for a few months each year. Their ability to retrieve artifacts is therefore very restricted.

Some folks, like Dr. Ballard, think that's just fine.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/A-DISINTEGRATING-VESSEL-Fatal-Voyage-The-Titanic>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/A-DISINTEGRATING-VESSEL-Fatal-Voyage-The-Titanic>

Questions 2 Ponder

Why Was Titanic Steaming Full-Speed Ahead in Iceberg Alley?

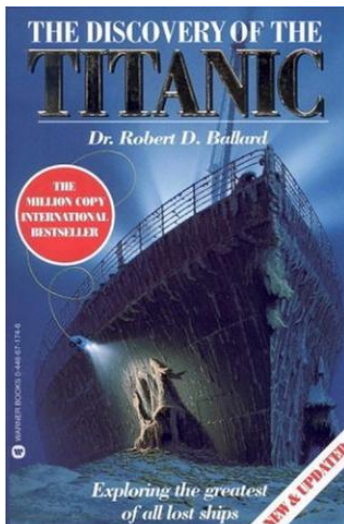
Describe the picture, at the top of chapter 16, which shows the general area of *Titanic's* wreck site.

Under what circumstances do you think a ship, like *Titanic*, should have been moving at "full speed ahead" in light of the ice conditions in the vicinity of *Titanic's* accident?

Without access to a picture, like the one which *Carpathia's* crew member took in the vicinity of *Titanic's* wreck site, how would anyone know the actual condition of the sea at, or about, the time of *Titanic's* iceberg-strike?

Between eyewitness testimony and a picture, like the one taken by *Carpathia's* crew member, which is more reliable? Explain your answer.

Media Stream



The Discovery of the Titanic - by Dr. Robert D. Ballard

Image online, courtesy the amazon.com website.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/The-Discovery-of-the-Titanic-by-Dr.-Robert-D.-Ballard>