

## Launching The Lifeboats

Captain Smith gave the order to begin loading the Titanic's lifeboats at 12:25am. Traditional rule of the sea was that women and children go first. First Officer Murdoch, who was in charge of loading lifeboats on the starboard side (odd numbers), followed the rule of women and children first. Second Officer Lightoller, in charge of the port side (even numbers), was more strict, insisting on women and children only.

The first lifeboat lowered at 12:45am was No.7, only filled with 19 people although it could carry 65. Movie star Dorothy Gibson and two honeymoon couples were among them. At first most passengers did not believe Titanic was really sinking. It seemed much nicer to stay on board a warm and bright ship, so many of the early lifeboats were launched half empty. Some Officers were also concerned the boats might buckle if they were filled to capacity.

As it was about 60 feet (18 metres), from the boat deck down to the water, and because few of the crewmembers were experienced with lifeboats, some of the boats were lowered unevenly, causing them to tilt as one end descended much faster than the other. Passengers were terrified that they would be tossed out of the lifeboat into the ocean.

During the evacuation of the ship many acts of heroism took place. Ida Straus, wife of Isidor Straus, owner of Macy's department store, was about to enter lifeboat No.8 but then refused to leave her husband. Turning to him she said, "*We have been living together for many years. Where you go, I go.*" Sadly both perished. Alfred Rush, who had just turned 16, was offered a chance to go into a lifeboat with Frank Goldsmith and his mother. He refused stating firmly, "No. I am staying here with the men." He died later that night.

The last lifeboat to be launched was collapsible 'D' at 2:05am with 40 occupants (each collapsible lifeboat had the capacity of 47 people). At

2:20am collapsible boats 'A' and 'B' were floated off the ship half swamped as swimmers scrambled aboard.

Time Launched	Lifeboat No.	Total No. of Occupants (and Actual Capacity)
12:45am	7	19 (65)
12:55am	5	41 (65)
12:55am	6	28 (65)
1:00am	3	32 (65)
1:10am	1	12 (40)
1:10am	8	28 (65)
1:20am	10	55 (65)
1:25am	14	60 (65)
1:25am	16	50 (65)
1:30am	9	56 (65)
1:30am	12	40 (65)
1:35am	11	70 (65)
1:40am	13	64 (65)
1:40am	15	70 (65)
1:45am	2	25 (40)
1:50am	4	40 (65)
2:00am	C	42 (47)
2:05am	D	40 (47)
2:20am	A	13 (47)
2:20am	B	30 (47)

