

Reader points out historical distortion in "Titanic"

20 May 1998

Dear Sir,

At risk of stirring up about 50 feet of mud, I have to say that the most serious failing of Cameron's work is the roughshod way in which he ignored advisers to portray members of the crew as being corrupt or careless about human life. This is NOT acceptable, in view of the hurt it has caused to relatives of those crew.

My own viewpoint on this is as a citizen of Dalbeattie, hometown to Lieutenant William McMaster Murdoch, Royal Naval Reserve, the First Officer of the 'Titanic.' This officer, regarded as outstanding by his contemporaries, was placed in an impossible position by his Captain ordering 'Titanic' to sail on a dangerous course and at too high a speed. William Murdoch did his utmost to save the liner when collision was imminent, but the iceberg when spotted was far too near for him to steer clear of her at her high speed. Following the collision, William Murdoch took action to save lives and in fact 55% of those saved were aboard those lifeboats of which he supervised the loading and lowering. His death occurred when he was swept off the boat-deck near the bridge, whilst trying to launch Collapsible A. This was witnessed by surviving officers and passengers.

Cameron -- against the advice of Don Lynch -- portrayed Murdoch as a man who took a bribe to allow a scoundrel to board a lifeboat, then had him using a gun to shoot others and to kill himself.

The recent visit of Scott Neeson of 20th Century Fox did go part-way to an apology, but the disgraceful portrayal of William Murdoch is being spread throughout the world.

I have been running the Murdoch of the 'Titanic' site for the past four months, and invite constructive comment from visitors. You may wish to inspect it at :- <http://www.dalbeattie.com/titanic/index.htm>

Yours sincerely,

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