

# The Luckiest Woman<sup>1</sup>

By Mitchell Rocha

Depending on your perspective, Violet Jessop is either the luckiest or unluckiest woman who ever lived. As a stewardess and a nurse, she was aboard the ships Olympic when it collided with the Hawker, the Britannic when it struck a mine at sea, and the Titanic when it famously hit an iceberg.



Jessop was born in 1887 in Argentina which is in South America. She was the oldest daughter of Irish immigrants: William and Katherine Jessop. When Jessop was 16 years old, her father died due to complications from surgery and her family moved to England, where her mother started working as a stewardess. When her mother became ill, Jessop left school and, following in her mother's footsteps, applied to be a stewardess on ships. She started working as a stewardess in 1908.

In 1911, Jessop was on board the Olympic when it collided with the British warship Hawke. There were no fatalities and despite damage, the ship was able to make it back to port without sinking.

Jessop was also onboard the Titanic when it struck an iceberg in the North Atlantic in 1912. The Titanic sinking took the lives of 1,347 men and 103 women.

During World War I, Jessop served as a stewardess for the British Red Cross, and in 1916, she was on board the Britannic, a hospital ship, when it sank due to an unexplained explosion. During a major diving expedition on the wreck in 2016 it was determined that the ship had struck a deep sea mine. Britannic sank within 55 minutes, killing 30 out of the 1,066 people on board.

After the war, Jessop continued to work as a stewardess, and in 1950 she retired. Jessop, often called "Miss Unsinkable", died of congestive heart failure in 1971.

**Calculate how old Violet Jessop was every time she was at risk of dying.**

**How old was she when she retired and when she died? Enter your answers on the number line below.**

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<sup>1</sup> Suggested Grades: 3 – 4 Skills: Number and operations in base ten. Use place value understanding and properties of operations to perform multi-digit arithmetic. MA.4.4. Fluently add and subtract multi-digit who numbers using the standard algorithm.

