**[Jib](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2545-jib/" \o "Go to Jib's profile)**

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,078 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Minneapolis, MN
* Interests:Piracy, stage combat, martial arts, reading, film, travel

([IP: 209.162.48.3](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=209.162.48.3)) ·

[Posted April 4, 2010](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16746-proper-name-for-the-cargo-openingcovering/&do=findComment&comment=382570) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16746-proper-name-for-the-cargo-openingcovering/&do=reportComment&comment=382570)

What is the opening and covering to cargo hold called? It often looks to be a grate or lattice of wood. I know these can be pulled up for access into the hold so that cargo can be lowered in on ropes. Curious about the historic name for these coverings.

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16746-proper-name-for-the-cargo-openingcovering/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16746-proper-name-for-the-cargo-openingcovering/&do=edit)

[**callenish gunner**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1944-callenish-gunner/)

* Scourge o' the 7 Seas
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,138 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Pennsylvania mountains north of Clarion
* Interests:The Callenish gunner has just hoved into view looking for safe anchorage in these waters... purveyor of bladed and flintlock weaponry also leather accessories ..........painter of portraits and period scenes by avocation I'm getting my armoury business underway and will be doing as many festivals as I can ...right now along the east coast or great lakes

([IP: 98.21.73.218](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=98.21.73.218)) · · 

[Posted April 4, 2010](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16746-proper-name-for-the-cargo-openingcovering/&do=findComment&comment=382574) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16746-proper-name-for-the-cargo-openingcovering/&do=reportComment&comment=382574)

**Hatch**

**Edited April 4, 2010 by callenish gunner**

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16746-proper-name-for-the-cargo-openingcovering/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16746-proper-name-for-the-cargo-openingcovering/&do=editComment&comment=382574)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16746-proper-name-for-the-cargo-openingcovering/#elControls_382574_menu)

[**Daniel**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/352-daniel/)

* Pyrate Captain
* 
* 
* Member
* 652 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:McLean, VA
* Interests:History, pirates, fiction, writing, writing historical fiction about pirates, jokes, games, law.

([IP: 69.154.109.23](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=69.154.109.23)) · · 

[Posted April 4, 2010](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16746-proper-name-for-the-cargo-openingcovering/&do=findComment&comment=382578) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16746-proper-name-for-the-cargo-openingcovering/&do=reportComment&comment=382578)

The hole is called the hatch, as Callenish said. The cover is called a grate or grating. Around the edges of the hatch are raised wooden projections called coamings; they help keep water from pouring into the hatch if waves break on the deck. In a storm, rain would fall through the grating if it were left uncovered, so you'd tie down a canvas tarpaulin called a batten over the hatch; whence the phrase "batten down the hatches."

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16746-proper-name-for-the-cargo-openingcovering/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16746-proper-name-for-the-cargo-openingcovering/&do=editComment&comment=382578)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16746-proper-name-for-the-cargo-openingcovering/#elControls_382578_menu)

[**Captain McCool**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/11102-captain-mccool/)

* Pyrate Captain
* 
* 
* Member
* 530 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Golden, Colorado
* Interests:Piracy, of course. Also, skiing, fencing, graphite/charcoal drawing, writing, ren-faires, etc.

([IP: 70.42.84.4](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=70.42.84.4)) · · 

[Posted April 4, 2010](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16746-proper-name-for-the-cargo-openingcovering/&do=findComment&comment=382579) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16746-proper-name-for-the-cargo-openingcovering/&do=reportComment&comment=382579)

I thought the "battens" were the wooden pieces used to wedge down the tarpaulin, rather than the tarpaulin itself.

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16746-proper-name-for-the-cargo-openingcovering/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16746-proper-name-for-the-cargo-openingcovering/&do=editComment&comment=382579)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16746-proper-name-for-the-cargo-openingcovering/#elControls_382579_menu)

[**Daniel**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/352-daniel/)

* Pyrate Captain
* 
* 
* Member
* 652 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:McLean, VA
* Interests:History, pirates, fiction, writing, writing historical fiction about pirates, jokes, games, law.

([IP: 69.154.109.23](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=69.154.109.23)) · · 

[Posted April 4, 2010](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16746-proper-name-for-the-cargo-openingcovering/&do=findComment&comment=382582) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16746-proper-name-for-the-cargo-openingcovering/&do=reportComment&comment=382582)

 On 4/4/2010 at 3:30 PM, Captain McCool said:

I thought the "battens" were the wooden pieces used to wedge down the tarpaulin, rather than the tarpaulin itself.

I was wrong. "The wooden hatch-covers, or gratings, were placed in position and tarpaulins stretched over them. These were made fast to the sides of the coamings by nailing on long laths, or 'battens.'" Harland, *Seamanship in the Age of Sail*, p. 211.

He has an interesting note about the gratings, too: "On the topic of hatch-covers, Liardet (104) complains that they are 'inviariably used for every dirty thing that is done, and when needed, are found unserviceable.'" One such use being to tie up sailors for flogging, presumably.