

# Founder of the Five Deeps Expedition Launches New 2020 Voyage



Through collaboration between investor and explorer Victor Vescovo, Triton Submarines and EYOS Expeditions, the 2020 Caladan Oceanic expeditions will yet again visit never-before-seen ocean depths and famed historic sites. A first of its kind two-person research submersible, designed and manufactured by Triton specifically for extreme deep-sea exploration endeavours, will bring its stories of the voyage to the world in near real-time between February and July of 2020.

The vessel, the Deep Submergence Vehicle (DSV) *Limiting Factor*, is the first commercially certified full-ocean-depth submersible. It will be transported and deployed into the ocean depths by the Deep Submergence Support Vessel (DSSV) *Pressure Drop*, a former US Navy ship specially retrofitted for the expedition. Vescovo will pilot the

submersible on almost all of its dives.

"Following up on the success of our mission last year to dive to the bottom of all five of the world's oceans, we look forward to diving two seas and two oceans in the recently enhanced *Limiting Factor* on a new series of 'first' manned dives," Vescovo said from Toulon, France, where he had just completed the first phase of the voyage.

## Five Phases of the Mission

- The mission will include five phases:
- Phase I: "La Minerve" (West Mediterranean)
- Phase II: The Calypso Deep (East Mediterranean)
- Phase III: The Red Sea
- Phase IV: Indian Ocean/Nekton Expedition
- Phase V: The "Ring of Fire" Expedition

### Phase I: "La Minerve"

After completing sea trials off the coast of Spain on 31 January, the Caladan Oceanic team sailed to the southern coast of France where on February 1-2 they twice dived on the tragic wreck of the French submarine, *Minerve*. Caladan worked closely with French authorities and the family of its crew to organize the expedition. On the first dive, Vescovo was accompanied by retired French Rear Admiral Jean-Louis Barbier, a submarine expert who conducted a detailed investigation of the wreck to gather new evidence on what might have caused the vessel's unexpected sinking in 1968.

Herve Fauve, the son of the submarine's Captain, accompanied Vescovo on the second dive when a memorial plaque was placed on the remains of the sunken vessel at a depth of over 2,250 metres. This was the first manned visit to the site since the *Minerve*'s sinking in 1968, which was only discovered last summer. Vescovo later said: "It was very moving to be with the son of the *Minerve*'s Captain, at the actual wreck, and to pay our respects to the brave sailors who gave their lives in the defence of France. As a former naval officer myself, I was very honoured to partner with our French allies to do this."

### Phase II: The Calypso Deep

From France, the expedition will sail to Kalamata, Greece and attempt to dive to the deepest point in the Mediterranean Sea, the Calypso Deep. To the surprise of the Caladan team, a thorough review of historical records indicates that no submarine has ever visited the actual bottom of the Mediterranean Sea at approximately 5,627 metres (17,280 feet), so this could be the "first descent" of this particular deep. Caladan will be conducting the dive in conjunction with the government of Greece and the scientific organization, Explorations de Monaco.

### Phase III: The Red Sea

After its dives in the Mediterranean, the ship and crew will head through the Suez Canal and into the Red Sea. In cooperation with the Saudi Arabian scientific community at the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), Caladan hopes to make multiple dives in the little-explored Red Sea and make a manned dive – for the first time - to its deepest point: the Suakin Trough. The expedition

expects to conduct its operations during mid-February in and around Thuwal, Saudi Arabia.

## Phase IV: Indian Ocean and the Nekton Expedition

In the Indian Ocean, Caladan will partner with the Nekton Organization for a series of extensive scientific dives in the Seychelles and Maldives as part of their “First Descent” programme. For more details on this month-long expedition, see: [www.nektonmission.org](http://www.nektonmission.org). Following these dives, the Caladan team will proceed to Singapore for refuelling and provisioning.

## Phase V: The “Ring of Fire” Expedition

The “Ring of Fire” is a common name given to the geologically active area that borders the roughly circular Pacific tectonic plate. It is, overall, the most active plate in the world and causes many volcanoes, earthquakes, and tsunamis. The Caladan team will conduct several dive series around the western portion of the Ring of Fire in the Pacific Ocean, starting with attempts to dive multiple World War II-era wreck sites, including the suspected USS *Johnston*, wrecks from the 1944 Typhoon Cobra off the Philippine islands, and the USS *Indianapolis*. These would be the first manned dives to all these wrecks and would help commemorate the 75th anniversary of the end of the War in the Pacific in World War II.

If confirmed, the dive on the suspected wreck of the USS *Johnston* off Samar island could be the deepest manned wreck dive in history, if completed. The *Johnston* and *Indianapolis* were located in 2017 and 2019, respectively, by Paul Allen’s research vessel *Petrel* and a team led by Robert Kraft of Vulcan Inc..

The team will then proceed to the Yap and Palau trenches for almost two weeks to conduct extensive scientific investigations with multiple deep-sea lander deployments.

## First Dive by a Woman to the Bottom of the Ocean

The *Limiting Factor* will then return to the deepest point in the ocean, the Challenger Deep in the Mariana Trench, for up to eight scientific and survey dives to all three “pools” that constitute the Deep. The team hopes they will be able to execute the first dive by a woman to the bottom of the ocean, with US astronaut and former NOAA Director Dr. Kathy Sullivan. Later in this dive series, Vescovo plans to descend to the same location that the *Trieste* visited in 1960 during the first descent into the Challenger Deep. In commemoration of the 60th anniversary of that dive, Vescovo intends to make the journey with Kelly Walsh, the son of the *Trieste*’s captain, Dr. Don Walsh.

The expedition will conclude with a further two weeks of dives along the north-south “spine” of the Mariana Trench, with a goal to execute first descents of numerous deeps and canyons that have never before had manned visitation. The team hopes to observe volcanic vents, identify new species, and conduct extensive mapping of the US Exclusive Economic Zone at the request of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA). All mapping done by the expedition will also be contributed to the Nippon Foundation-GEBCO Seabed 2030 Project. The expedition is expected to conclude on or about 20 July in Guam.

[www.caladanoceanic.com](http://www.caladanoceanic.com)

## About Caladan Oceanic

Caladan Oceanic is a not-for-profit private company dedicated to the advancement of undersea technology and supporting expeditions to increase the understanding of, and support, the productive sustainment of the oceans. Founder Victor Vescovo has long had a passion for exploration and has summited the highest peak on all seven of the world’s continents, including Mt. Everest, and skied at least 100 kilometres to both the North and South Poles. With the completion of the Five Deeps Expedition in August 2019, Vescovo became the first person in history to have been to the top of all the world’s continents, both poles, and the bottom of all its oceans. He will be awarded the Explorer’s Club Medal in March 2020.

## About Triton Submarines

Triton Submarines of Sebastian, Florida, is the most experienced civil submarine producer in the world today – and the only contemporary manufacturer of acrylic- pressure-hull-equipped personal submarines to deliver multiple classed and certified vessels capable of diving to 3,300 feet (1,000 metres). Triton Submarines senior staff have over 350 years of combined experience with more than 80 different submersibles, and their operations team have together logged over 25,000 dives. Triton clients also enjoy superlative after-sales service and technical support from a company dedicated to their total satisfaction.

## About EYOS Expeditions

EYOS Expeditions has been designing complex and challenging expeditions for private vessels since 2008. Drawing on the decades of experience of the company’s co-founders, the EYOS team have delivered over 1,200 safe and successful expeditions to some of the most remote destinations on Earth. EYOS Expeditions holds several “world firsts” and routinely takes clients to destinations rarely or never before visited. EYOS Expeditions and sister company Expedition Voyager Consultants have worked behind the scenes on many of the industry’s groundbreaking itineraries and have a long history of delivering once-in-a-lifetime experiences for clients, while maintaining the highest standards of safety, professionalism and environmental stewardship. EYOS Expeditions is today regarded as the industry leader for planning and operating remote expeditions using submersibles.