

VIDEO INCLUDED

# United States and United Kingdom Join to Protect the Wreck of the Titanic



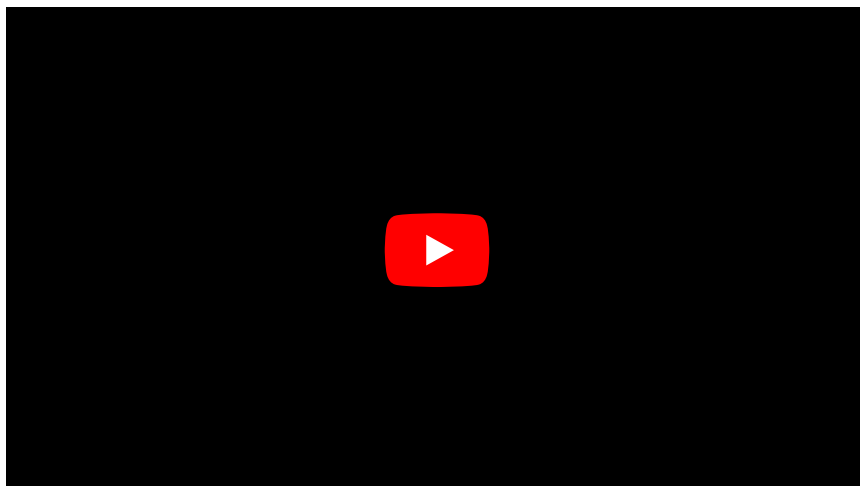
The United States deposited its acceptance of the Agreement Concerning the Shipwrecked Vessel Royal Mail Ship (RMS) *Titanic* with the United Kingdom, thus bringing into force this agreement. The British passenger liner sank in the North Atlantic Ocean on 14 April 1912, after hitting an iceberg. Of the estimated 2,224 passengers on board, more than 1,500 died, making the sinking one of modern history's deadliest peacetime commercial marine disasters. Following the discovery of the site of the *RMS Titanic* wreck in 1985, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and France negotiated the Agreement to protect the integrity of the wreck site from unregulated salvage and other activities.

## International Maritime Memorial

The Agreement obligates each Party to enact common measures to regulate the actions of persons and vessels under its jurisdiction, regarding activities related to the wreck. Furthermore, the Agreement reinforces the United States' collaborative efforts with the United Kingdom and others to preserve the wreck site as an international maritime memorial to the men, women, and children who perished aboard the ship. The RMS *Titanic* is of major national and international historical, cultural, and scientific significance and merits appropriate protection.

## Pride of the White Star Line

The *Titanic* was one of the largest and most luxurious vessels of its time. At nearly 900 feet in length and displacing 52,000 tons, it was the pride of the White Star Line. On the evening of 14 April 1912, the ship collided with an iceberg and sank a few hours later, taking more than 1,500 passengers and crew to the icy depths of the Atlantic Ocean. The approximate depth where the RMS *Titanic* came to rest is 12,000 feet.



For decades, the wreck's precise location was unknown until it was discovered in 1985 by a joint US-French expedition led by Dr. Robert Ballard of Woods Hole Institute and Jean-Louis Michel of the French Research Institute for Exploration of the Sea. Recognizing the importance of the wreck and the need to ensure the vessel would not be subject to looting and unregulated salvage operations, the United

States Congress adopted the [RMS Titanic Maritime Memorial Act](#).

## NOAA Missions to the Wreck Site

NOAA, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, has a long history with the *Titanic*. Since the site was discovered in 1985, [NOAA's Office of Ocean Exploration and Research](#) has conducted two expeditions. The first of these missions was [conducted in June 2003](#). This expedition consisted of an 11-day research cruise to the wreck site. Working with foreign partners, including Canada, the goal for this joint venture was to assess the wreck site in its current condition and provide an opportunity to conduct scientific observations for ongoing research. A subsequent [NOAA expedition in 2004](#) was conducted to study the ship's rapid deterioration.

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