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Caladan Oceanic Revisits Challenger Deep in Month-Long Dive Series

Bringing the first woman to Challenger Deep and the son of its first explorer back to his father's dive site, Victor Vescovo's Limiting Factor makes six more dives to the deepest point in the ocean

DALLAS, TX (June 30, 2020) – Caladan Oceanic, led by explorer Victor Vescovo, along with partners EYOS Expeditions, Triton Submarines, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) achieves several historical accomplishments in the Challenger Deep, the deepest location in the Mariana Trench, and the world. Dive Series 1 and 2 of Caladan Oceanic's 2020 "Ring of Fire" expedition yielded several notable firsts and marks 10 total dives into the Challenger Deep for Triton 36,000/2 submersible (DSV *Limiting Factor*).

Dive Series I (June 6-14)

On June 6, Vescovo was joined by former NASA astronaut Dr. Kathy Sullivan, the first American woman to walk in space, in Triton's Deep Submergence Vehicle (DSV) *Limiting Factor*, a Triton 36,000/2, for a dive to Challenger Deep.

- The duo reached a calculated depth of 10,925 m/ 35,843 ft, setting a substantial new record for the deepest diving woman in world history.
- A three-time astronaut and holder of a Ph. D. in ocean geology, Sullivan is a major force in the advancement of STEM education and plans to use her experience to educate and inspire children to chase their dreams.
- After their successful dive, Sullivan and Vescovo were able to have a conversation with astronauts who were onboard the International Space Station.

"I know (Challenger Deep) as a bathymetric feature on a chart, a tectonic feature, and a seismic feature ... but that's all data-based understanding. To see it in person -- it makes all the difference in the world," Sullivan said. "No self-respecting marine biologist would be able to pass up an invitation!"

Victor Vescovo said, "We made some more history today... and then got to share the experience with kindred spirits in the ISS. It was a pleasure to have Kathy along both as an oceanographer during the dive, and then as an astronaut to talk to the ISS."

"I'm deeply grateful for Ms. Sullivan's passion and advocacy on behalf of the ocean and sincerely hope her story and this tremendous achievement will inspire other people to consider the ocean when making a career choice," said Patrick Lahey, President of Triton Submarines.

Two additional dives to Challenger Deep were taken with individuals of note:

- Vanessa O'Brien became the first dual citizen American/British woman, and the first woman, to climb both Mt. Everest to dive to Challenger Deep. Vescovo was the first man to do so.
- John Rost became the fourth American to dive Challenger Deep and the third person to climb Mt. Everest and dive to Challenger Deep. With Vescovo, he also remained at the

bottom of the Deep the longest time in history during a single dive, at 4 hours, 7 minutes.

Caladan Oceanic also partnered with NOAA to map over 200,000 square kilometers of never before seen, deep ocean terrain as part of a new public-private partnership to map in detail the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the United States, its territories, and those of its allies.

- The information will also be donated to GEBCO's Seabed 2030 initiative to build a map of the entire ocean floor over the next ten years. Utilizing a state-of-the-art technology, the team was able to capture more detailed sonar data and video footage of the bottom than any other expedition has been able to before.

Dive Series II (June 20-26)

To begin the second dive series, Victor Vescovo was joined by Kelly Walsh, son of Captain Don Walsh, who led the first expedition to the bottom of Challenger Deep in the bathyscape *Trieste* in 1960 with Swiss engineer Jacques Piccard. Reaching a maximum depth of 10,923 meters, the two explorers searched the same area where its predecessor craft touched down exactly 60 years ago.

"It was a hugely emotional journey for me," said Kelly Walsh explained. "I have been immersed in the story of Dad's dive since I was born-- people find it fascinating. It has taken 60 years but thanks to Victor Vescovo and EYOS Expeditions we have now taken this quantum leap forward in our ability to explore the deep ocean."

Vescovo commented about the dive: "It was really special to take Kelly down to the historic place where his Dad landed. The only disappointing thing about the dive was seeing pretty extensive human contamination, primarily from plastic or fiber-optic scientific tethers of scientific instruments. I was surprised that the majority of contamination I have now seen in the Challenger Deep after eight total dives there has come from the scientific community – not consumers or industry."

Following the dive with Kelly Walsh, Vescovo was joined by two additional individuals on dives to Challenger Deep.

- Research scientist, Dr. Ying-Tsong "Y.-T." Lin from Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI) became the first person from the Asian continent, and first native of Taiwan, to reach the depths of Challenger Deep, beating mainland China in a "race to the bottom."
- Caladan Oceanic client and private equity investor Jim Wigginton became the 13th human, and first former United States Marine, to ever reach the bottom of the Deep

In all, the team executed six manned dives and twenty-five lander deployments to the bottom of Challenger Deep in three weeks, while investigating the deep's Eastern, Central, and Western Pools. No previous expedition had visited all three areas before. The expedition also conducted extensive sonar mapping and survey missions across all three of the pools, setting new milestones in the exploration of the deep ocean:

- First comprehensive topographical survey of the Eastern Pool with nineteen lander deployments and four manned dives
- One dives and three lander drops in the Western Pool
- One dive and three lander drops in Central Pool

The team also deployed the first-ever 4K video camera capable of filming at full ocean depth. Clips from the dives to the bottom of the ocean will be made available on social media and Caladan Oceanic's webpage in coming days as the footage is processed.

Summing up all of the dives completed, Vescovo stated: "It has been common for people to say that 'more people have walked on the surface of the moon than have been to the bottom of the ocean.' Well, after all of our dives over the last year and the great technological leaps we have made, that is no longer the case."

One of the expedition's partners, OMEGA, also sent a watch down with the DSV Limiting Factor on each dive, setting a new record for a timepiece making repeated dives to the bottom of the Ocean. The OMEGA Seamaster Planet Ocean Ultra Deep Professional is now the only timepiece to ever descend to the Challenger Deep multiple times – now seven times total – and return in perfect working order. No other watch in history had previously been down more than once.

Over the course of upcoming weeks, the Caladan Oceanic team will travel to the northern arc of the Mariana Trench to conduct over additional 15 lander deployments in never-explored deeps and continue the extensive multibeam mapping of the area to support the goals of the General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (GEBCO) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Following this mission, the ship will continue mapping the deepest parts of the Japan, Kamchatka, and Aleutian Trenches in detail with the most advanced sonar ever to do so.

All releases, as well as footage and photos of each section of the mission will be available to view on CaladanOceanic.com. Follow us on Twitter @CaladanOceanic, Instagram @CaladanOceanic and Facebook @CaladanOceanic for ongoing updates.

About Caladan Oceanic

Caladan Oceanic is a private company dedicated to the advancement of undersea technology and supporting expeditions to increase the understanding of the oceans. Founder Victor Vescovo, a former Commander in the US Navy, 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 kilometers 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, to reach both poles, and to descend to the bottom of all its oceans. He also holds the record for the most dives to the bottom of Challenger Deep, the deepest point on the planet, a total of eight times. He was awarded the Explorer's Club Medal in March 2020.

About Triton Submarines, LLC

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 meters) as well as to full ocean depth (11,000 meters). Triton Submarines senior staff members 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 has 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 take 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.

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