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Explorer Team Completes First-Ever Full Ascent of Mauna Kea

Victor Vescovo and Dr. Clifford Kaponu achieve the greatest earthbound vertical ascent in history

DALLAS (February 23, 2021) – For the first time ever, Mauna Kea has been ascended from bottom to top. Explorer Victor Vescovo and renowned native Hawaiian marine biologist Dr. Clifford Kaponu reached the summit of Mauna Kea, starting at the underwater base of the mountain, and in one continuous effort, ascending to the summit using only natural buoyancy and human power. In all, the team completed 9,323 meters, or 30,587 feet, of vertical ascent.

“To be able to scale Mauna Kea from its submarine base to its earth-and-sky summit was one of the most rewarding and physically demanding adventures I’ve set out on,” said Victor Vescovo, who has climbed Mount Everest and achieved the Explorers Grand Slam. “It’s fascinating to see the shifting terrain and ecosystems on a singular peak and was a really unique experience.”

Mauna Kea is technically the tallest mountain in the world (as opposed to Mount Everest at 8,849 meters, or 29,032 feet). Although it only rises 4,207 meters (13,802 feet) from sea level to summit, its base extends 5,000-5,600 meters (16,404-18,372 feet) below the water. A volcano, Mauna Kea’s base slopes continuously downward into the sea, significantly flattening out at approximately 5,000 meters (16,404 feet) below the surface of the ocean off the coasts of the Big Island of Hawaii, near the city of Hilo. It is believed that no person has ever before completed a full ascent from its underwater base to its peak.

On February 1, 2021, Vescovo and Kaponu used Triton Submarines’ deep-submergence vehicle *Limiting Factor* to descend to 5,116 meters where they observed the base of Mauna Kea and, as in previous days, conducted scientific experiments to determine the nature of freshwater runoff from the island. After surfacing at approximately 1 p.m., the duo transferred to a three-person canoe with another Hawaiian local, Chad Cabral, and rowed 27 miles from the dive location through the open ocean to the shore of Hilo, Hawaii. The next morning, Vescovo and Kaponu used bicycles to travel 60 kilometers (37 miles) by road and ascend 2,743 meters (9,000 feet) to the Onizuka Visitor Center located on Mauna Kea. The following day, February 3, they hiked 10 kilometers (six miles) to the snow-and-ice capped summit of the volcano.

The climb to the actual summit of Mauna Kea was conducted in accordance with local customs and was overseen by local Hawaiian elder Tom “Pohaku” Stone of Hilo, Hawaii.

The entire effort was filmed as part of a forthcoming documentary entitled “Discover Our Oceans,” produced by Pathway Productions.

Upcoming expeditions this spring by Vescovo and his team will include potential, multiple dives to Challenger Deep, as well as the first-ever manned dives to the bottom of the Philippine Trench and a search for ultra-deep World War II shipwrecks off the coast of Samar Island, Philippines.

For more information about this groundbreaking achievement, and to learn more about the past exploits of the Caladan Oceanic team, visit [CaladanOceanic.com](https://www.caladan.com).

About Caladan Oceanic

Caladan Oceanic is a private company dedicated to advancing undersea technology and supporting expeditions to increase the understanding of the oceans. Founder Victor Vescovo, a former Commander in the U.S. Navy, has long had a passion for exploration and has summited the highest peak on all seven of the world's continents, including Mount Everest, and has also skied at least 100 kilometers to 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, reached both poles, and descended 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, at 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) and to full ocean depth (11,000 meters). Triton Submarines senior staff members have over 350 combined years of experience with more than 80 different submersibles, and their operations team has together logged over 25,000 dives. Triton clients 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 cofounders, 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 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.