



MEDIA RELEASE

Titanic Discovery Turns 40: Dr. Robert Ballard Reflects on Now Declassified Historic Moment With New Exhibition

Ocean Exploration Trust launches a new traveling exhibition, revealing the untold story of the discovery of the wreck for the very first time.

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For media inquiries or to request an interview with Dr. Robert Ballard: press@oet.org

(New London, CT – August 26, 2025) — September 1 marks the 40th anniversary of one of the most famous underwater discoveries of the 20th century— locating the RMS *Titanic*, lost beneath the North Atlantic for over seven decades. Led by renowned oceanographer Dr. Robert Ballard, the joint American-French expedition revealed the long-lost wreck, capturing the world's imagination and opening a new chapter in deep-sea exploration.

To commemorate the anniversary, Ballard and Ocean Exploration Trust are thrilled to announce the premiere of a new traveling exhibition, "[Finding Titanic: The Secret Mission](#)," to connect new audiences with this story and more from the depths. Developed by renowned exhibition producer Flying Fish and supported by NOAA Ocean Exploration and the Office of Naval Research, the exhibition makes its debut in Illinois at the [Peoria Riverfront Museum on September 26](#) before embarking on an extensive international tour.

"After 40 years of silence, I now have the opportunity to tell the true story of our discovery of the RMS *Titanic* from 1985!" says **Dr. Robert Ballard**.

Using pioneering deep-sea technology designed by Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Ballard and his team aboard the research vessel *Knorr* located the *Titanic* more than 12,000 feet below the ocean's surface. The discovery marked a milestone in oceanographic science, igniting decades of research, conservation, and storytelling.

But the story behind the original discovery has only recently been told in full. In 1985, Ballard was tasked with a top-secret Navy mission to locate two lost nuclear submarines. To keep the assignment hidden, he needed a cover story, so he said he was searching for the RMS *Titanic*. The twist? He found it.

"Working with Dr. Ballard and Ocean Exploration Trust to bring this story to the surface has been a real privilege," said **Jay Brown, Principal & Managing Director of Flying Fish**. "This isn't just about a shipwreck, it's about a hidden mission, a narrow window, and an outcome no one expected. The *Titanic* was never supposed to be found. That it was makes this story all the more remarkable."

Ballard returned to the *Titanic* in 1986 and 2004 to lead further exploration expeditions, advancing technologies for the deep and building international interest in the deep sea. Today, Ballard is President of [Ocean Exploration Trust](#) (OET), a non-profit dedicated to rapidly advancing exploration of unknown parts of the ocean and inspiring youth with the excitement of discovery through at-sea, livestreaming, and social media programs.



"The *Titanic* is one of many stories that capture the imagination and remind us of how much remains unknown beneath the ocean's surface," said **Allison Fundis, OET's Chief Operating Officer**. "At Ocean Exploration Trust, our goal is to ensure these discoveries inspire young people to see themselves as future scientists, engineers, and storytellers --- and to recognize the ocean as a place full of possibility for their careers and curiosity."

About the Ocean Exploration Trust

The Ocean Exploration Trust was founded in 2007 by Dr. Robert Ballard to explore the ocean, seeking out multi-disciplinary discoveries while pushing the boundaries of STEAM education and technological innovation. Our international program is launched from aboard the Exploration Vessel (E/V) *Nautilus*, offering live exploration to participants on shore and the public via live video, audio, and data feeds. [Learn more about Ocean Exploration Trust.](#)

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About the Titanic Discovery

On September 1, 1985, the wreck of the *RMS Titanic* was discovered about 12,500 feet (3,800 meters) beneath the surface of the North Atlantic by an international team led by the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI) and the French oceanographic institution, IFREMER. The ship sank on April 15, 1912, after colliding with an iceberg. The expedition, led by Dr. Robert Ballard—then head of WHOI's Deep Submergence Lab—used innovative technology and search techniques that helped spawn a new era in deep-sea exploration and discovery.

About Flying Fish

At Flying Fish, we believe exhibitions can do more. As a leading producer of traveling exhibitions for over a decade, we partner with world-class museums and science centers to create extraordinary, impactful experiences. Our exhibitions have welcomed over 12 million visitors worldwide, exploring science, history, culture, and beyond. We're committed to making exceptional, authentic content accessible to communities everywhere, while generating sustainable revenue for our partners. Whether creating something new or adapting existing content for an international tour, Flying Fish isn't just a service provider—we are a creative partner and industry ally, committed to expanding our clients' reach and impact.

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