

James Cameron's deepsea voyage splashes into theaters

August 6 2014, by Mariano Andrade

Two years after completing the first one-person voyage to the deepest part of the ocean, Hollywood director James Cameron's 3D underwater plunge is set to splash into theaters Friday.

"Deepsea Challenge" chronicles Cameron's submarine descent into the western Pacific's Mariana Trench, a barren underwater moonscape where "squid worms" and other creatures flit past the window on the record-breaking odyssey.

The "Titanic" and "Avatar" director said Monday at a screening at the American Museum of Natural History in New York that he has been "continuously inspired by the oceans," since a boy.

"I'm a curious monkey and I need to go and see by myself," he told some 1,000 fans, many of them children, who came to see the film at the museum's LeFrak Theater.

The seven-mile (11-kilometer) voyage to the Challenger Deep valley of the Mariana Trench, which lies southwest of Guam, was the first manned expedition in more than half a century and the culmination of more than seven years of planning.

The March 2012 journey took two hours and 36 minutes, according to the mission organized with National Geographic.

It was carried out in a submarine christened the "Deepsea Challenger,"

which was equipped with 3D cameras and powerful lights to illuminate the sunless depths.

The Mariana Trench, a crescent-shaped scar in the Earth's crust, measures more than 1,500 miles (2,550 kilometers) long and 43 miles (69 kilometers) wide on average.

'Like the moon'

It's "unbelievable, it's like the moon," Cameron said in the film upon seeing the Challenger Deep's desolate seascape.

Cramped in the 26-meter (eight-foot) submarine's cockpit, the Canadian filmmaker filmed and collected biological and geological specimens on the ocean floor, 68 of which have never been seen before.

The specimens were just a tiny array from a few meters of terrain that Cameron said was "the size of North America" stretching across the [ocean floor](#).

The film, which lasts 90 minutes and was made in collaboration with National Geographic, hits mainstream US theaters Friday, having made its rounds at various film festivals.

Cameron is the first person to have made a solo dive to the Pacific Ocean trench, traveling in a submarine he designed and built in Sydney, Australia.

The director, who has gone on a multitude of dives, including 12 while filming "Titanic," said he wants to return to the Mariana Trench, but would like to do it with "new technology" to get more out of the expedition.

"There's so much to see," he said.

The last dive of any kind to the area was made by a two-man team in a relatively brief expedition in 1960, during which American Don Walsh and Jacques Piccard of Switzerland were unable to see anything due to mud.

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