

'Unprecedented': Dallas businessman completes deepest ocean dive by any human in history

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In this photo provided by Atlantic Productions for Discovery Channel, Victor Vescovo emerges from his submersible 'Limiting Factor' after a successful dive to the deepest known point in the Mariana Trench, April 28, 2019. Vescovo, a businessman and amateur pilot, has also traversed the highest peaks of mountains, including Mount Everest. (Tamara Stubbs/Atlantic Productions for Discovery Channel via AP)

Dallas businessman Victor Vescovo became the deepest diving human in history when his Five Deeps Expedition reached the bottom of the Pacific Ocean's Challenger Deep on April 28.

Vescovo, who has been on a years-long journey to reach the deepest points in each of the planet's five oceans, spent more than four hours in the basin of the Mariana Trench, the deepest known point in the ocean.

"We have indeed built and perfected a submersible that can easily and reliably take two people to the bottom of the any point on earth, even the Challenger Deep," Vescovo told The Dallas Morning News, "This will allow for an

unprecedented level of access for scientists and others to explore the ocean, increase our understanding of it, and hopefully make life better and richer in the future."

The last time a human visited the Challenger Deep was Canadian filmmaker James Cameron, who reached a depth of 35,756 feet in his submersible in 2012. Now, 53-year-old Vescovo has reached 35,853 feet, according to the expedition.

Vescovo's team, The Five Deeps Expedition, completed a total of four dives to the Challenger Deep and one additional dive at another point in the deep sea trench. While at the deepest depths known to humans, the expedition team surveyed and mapped the region with state-of-the-art sonar technology as well as collected scientific samples for future study.

The team was able to identify and record at least three new species of marine animal while in the depths of the Challenger Deep's virtually unexplored hadal zone, according to the expedition.

"This submarine and its mother ship, along with its extraordinarily talented expedition team, took marine technology to an unprecedented new level by diving—rapidly and repeatedly—into the deepest, harshest area of the ocean," Vescovo said.

Having climbed the highest peak on every continent, skied to both poles and now the deepest point of four of the five oceans, Vescovo is in a league of his own. His team's final mission is the Arctic Ocean.

The expedition's submersible, with the Texas flag proudly displayed on its exterior, is named The Limiting Factor. It's the world's deepest diving currently operational submarine. The crew's

missions in the Mariana Trench lasted 11-12 hours on average each dive, and the same Texas flag Vescovo carried to the peak of Mt. Everest was also on board for at least one of the dives.

The Five Deeps Expedition is being filmed by Atlantic Productions for a documentary series due to air on Discovery Channel later in 2019.

"These were dives so deep that only two had been done in the last 59 years. We remarked among ourselves that we could have dived daily if we had more technicians aboard and that the sub, ironically, was not the 'limiting factor,' " Vescovo said.

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