



FINDING TITANIC: THE SECRET MISSION

EXHIBITION PROSPECTUS



NAUTILUSLIVE.ORG
OCEAN EXPLORATION TRUST



FLYING FISH

An underwater scene showing a shipwreck, likely the Titanic, illuminated by a bright light source. A yellow arc is drawn across the scene, connecting the shipwreck to the text on the right.

FINDING TITANIC

THE SECRET MISSION

THE BIG IDEA

The secret mission to document two Cold War nuclear submarines under the guise of searching for the *Titanic* helped Ballard locate the ship, highlighting the intersection of espionage, technology, and exploration.

Through his development of cutting-edge technology, knowledge of the ocean, and his unique way of thinking, Ballard solved mysteries of the deep and set a precedent for future discoveries.

THEMES



Image courtesy of National Geographic Society's Special Collections

UNCOVERING HISTORY

The true story behind the *Titanic*'s discovery is far more complex—and far less known—than most realize. For decades after the ship sank, numerous efforts were made to locate the wreck and piece together its untold story.

While Dr. Robert Ballard ultimately succeeded, the details of his mission remained hidden from the public. Only years later did the truth emerge: the search for the *Titanic* was a cover for a classified operation to document two Cold War-era submarines.

This exhibition reveals the whole story for the first time.

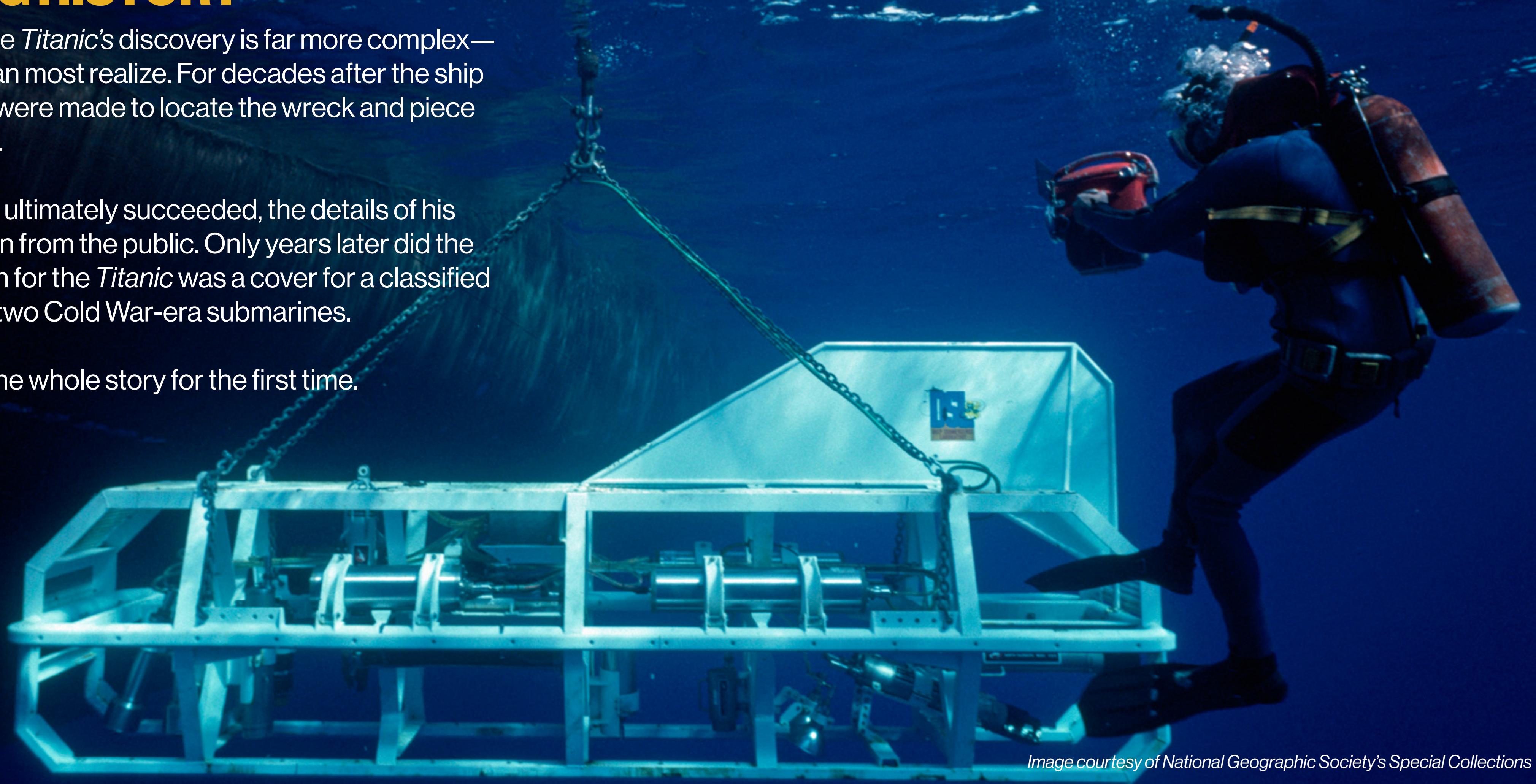
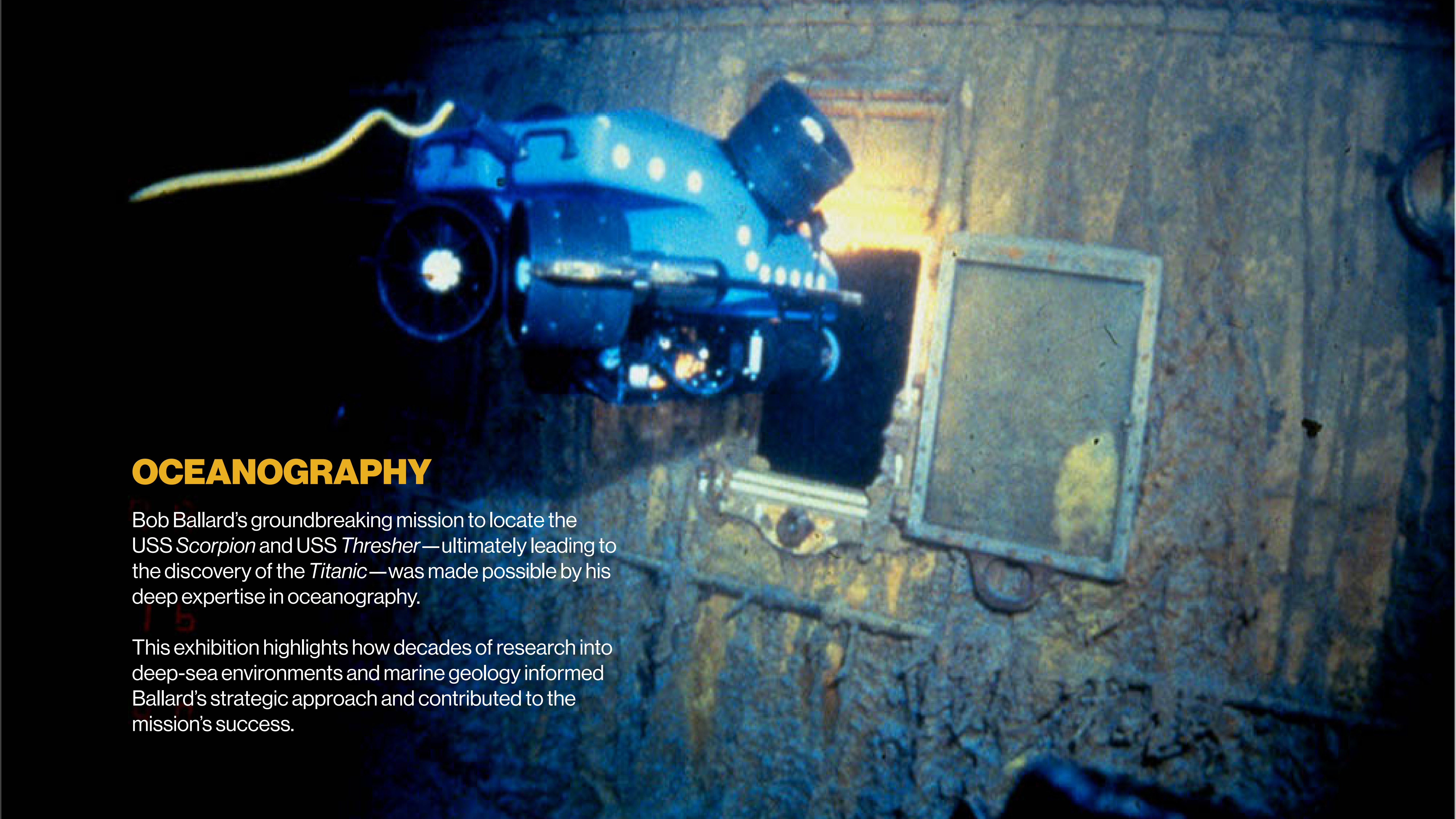


Image courtesy of National Geographic Society's Special Collections

A blue remotely operated vehicle (ROV) is positioned on a dark, rocky seabed. A long, yellow cable extends from the top left towards the ROV. A bright light emanates from the ROV, illuminating a rectangular metal box on the seabed. The ROV has a large circular propeller and various sensors and cameras mounted on its front. The seabed is covered in dark, jagged rocks and debris.

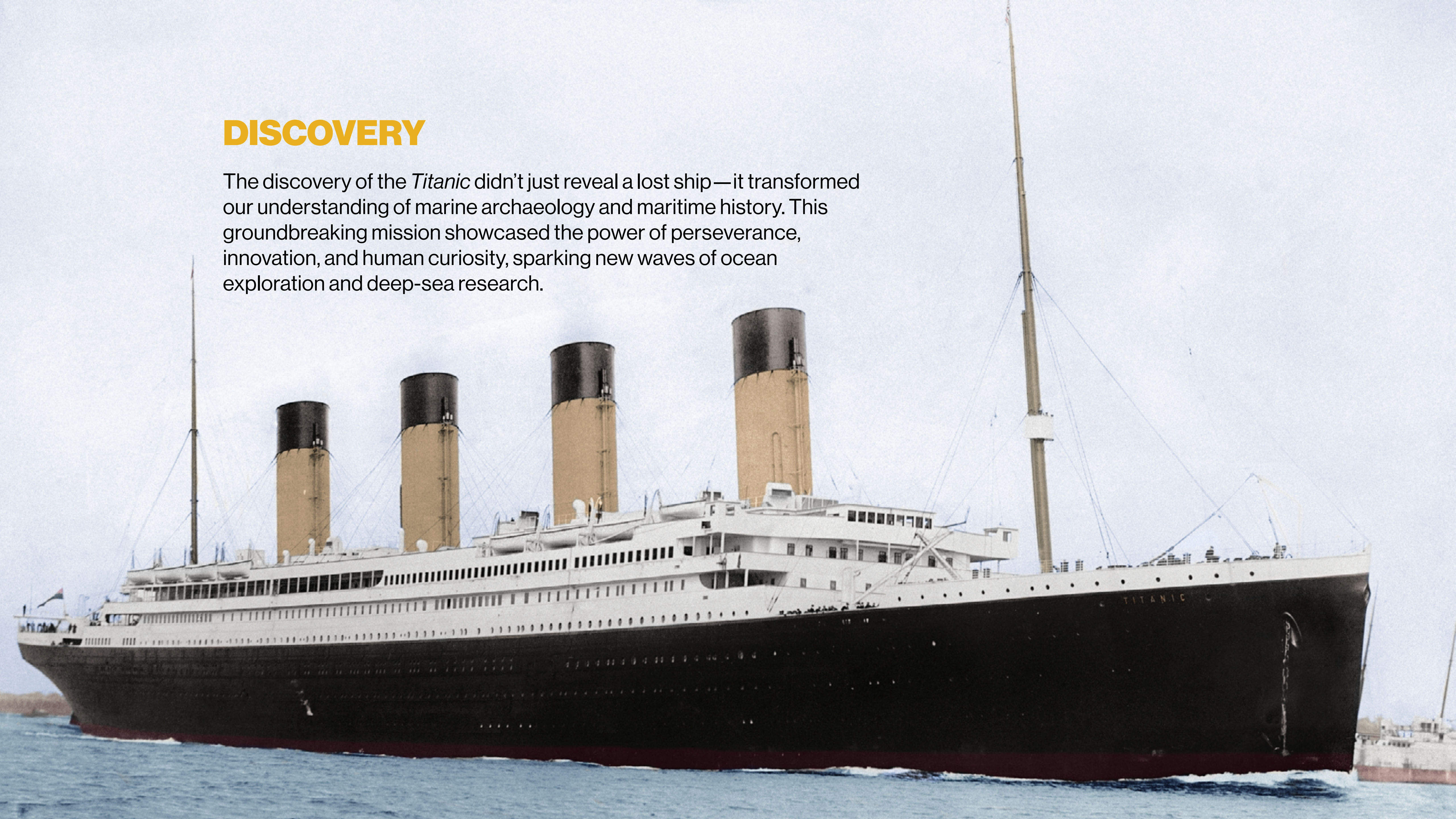
OCEANOGRAPHY

Bob Ballard's groundbreaking mission to locate the USS *Scorpion* and USS *Thresher*—ultimately leading to the discovery of the *Titanic*—was made possible by his deep expertise in oceanography.

This exhibition highlights how decades of research into deep-sea environments and marine geology informed Ballard's strategic approach and contributed to the mission's success.

DISCOVERY

The discovery of the *Titanic* didn't just reveal a lost ship—it transformed our understanding of marine archaeology and maritime history. This groundbreaking mission showcased the power of perseverance, innovation, and human curiosity, sparking new waves of ocean exploration and deep-sea research.



A portrait of James Cameron, smiling and looking slightly to the left. He is wearing a dark suit jacket over a black t-shirt. The background is a large, dark, industrial-looking space, possibly a museum or exhibition hall. A large banner in the background reads "TITANIC WAS BUILT".

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

The story of the secret mission highlights how Ballard and his team overcame numerous obstacles during their exploration, discovering the Titanic, which is an even more impressive achievement. These challenges ranged from extreme time constraints to ocean conditions and limited technology. Moreover, Ballard attributes his dyslexia, a previous challenge in his early education, to his unique ability to visualize information differently, which ultimately led to the mission's success.

TECHNOLOGY

During the mission, many technological advancements that Ballard helped develop were used and proved invaluable in deep-sea exploration. Equipped with innovative tools like sonar mapping and remotely operated vehicles, Ballard utilized cutting-edge technology to navigate and catalog the ocean's depths. The discovery of Titanic's wreckage showcased the connection between technology and exploration.

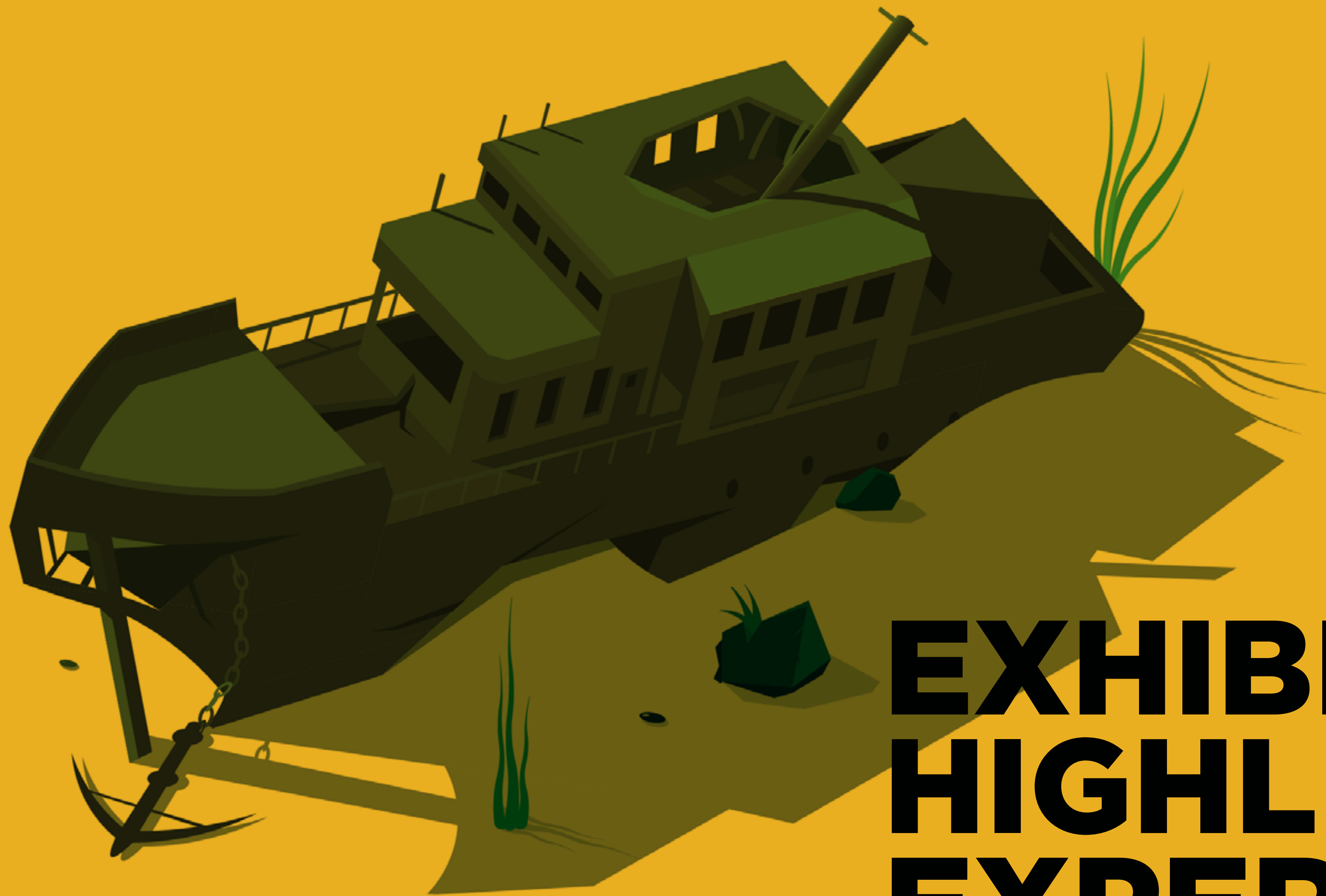




INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION

Ballard's goal for the mission was not only about discovery but also about inspiring future generations. His continued dedication to sharing his discoveries through educational programs and documentaries aims to inspire the next generation of oceanographer and explorers, fostering a legacy that encourages learning and exploration.

Image courtesy of National Geographic Society's Special Collections



EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS & EXPERIENCES

INTRODUCTION: MISSION BRIEFING

Visitors are briefed on the secret mission that Ballard embarked on to document two Cold War submarines they will follow throughout the exhibition. This section serves as an orientation to the historical background information that visitors will need to understand the events of the secret mission. They will first be introduced to a few critical moments of the Cold War history, focusing on Nuclear Submarines to provide context for the mission.

Visitors will be introduced to Dr. Ballard as the mission leader and learn about his background to understand why he was involved in the mission. Next, they will also learn about the story of how searching for the Titanic wreckage was used to cover Ballard's tracks. At the same time, he traveled the Atlantic Ocean and documented the submarine wreck sites. From its construction and ill-fated maiden voyage, a basic history of the Titanic will help visitors understand what we know about the missing ship.



DOCUMENTING THE SUBMARINES

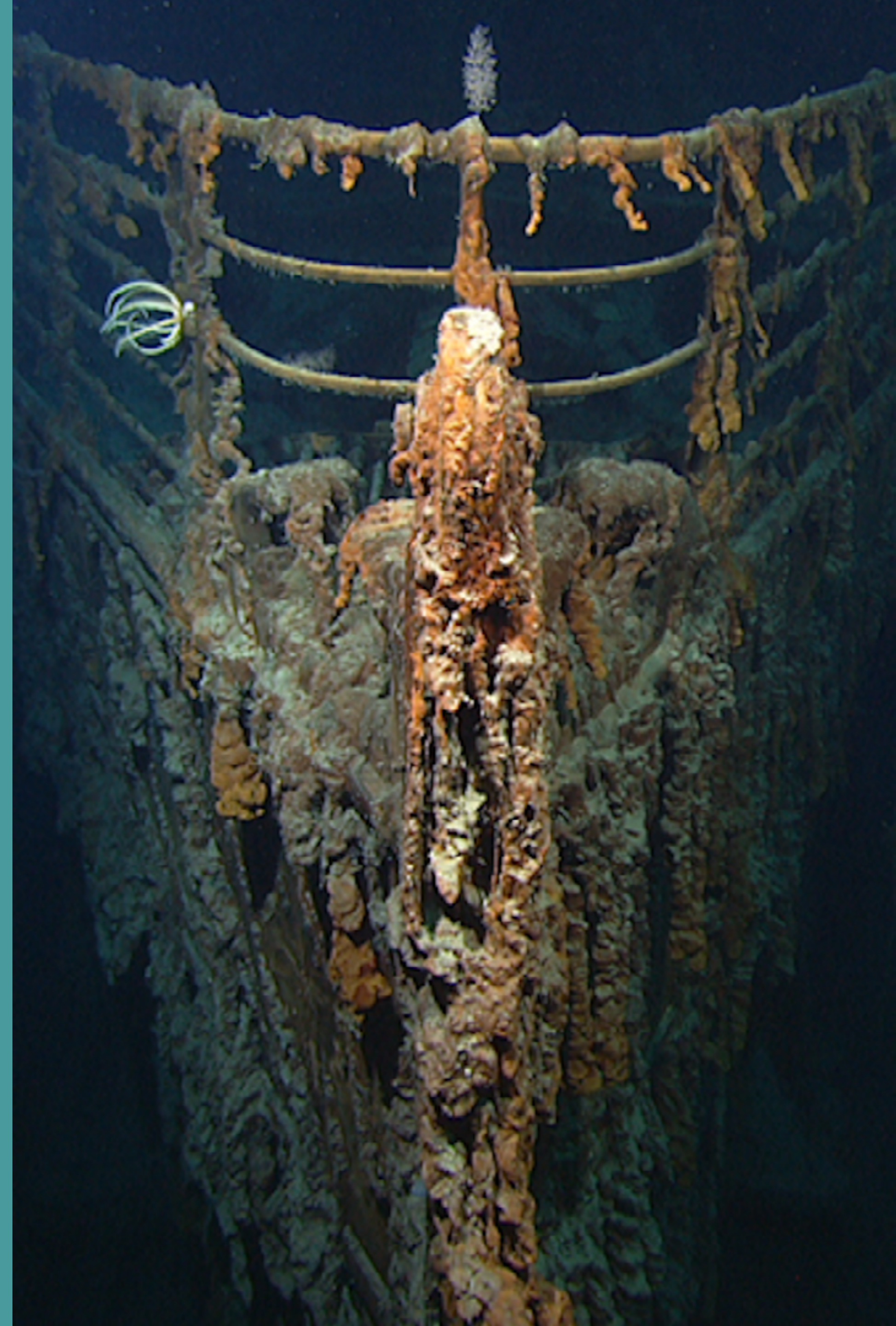
Next, visitors will experience the tension Ballard faced to quickly and covertly document the USS Scorpion submarine. Ballard faced a short time to complete the documentation. A separate French team searched for the Titanic during the first leg of that trip while Ballard tested AMUVS in the Gulf of Mexico. Ballard's methods and technologies used to conduct the documentation and their relevance to the Titanic search will also be explored. Now, declassified information on the submarine documentation will give visitors a unique look into Ballard's work.



FINDING *TITANIC*

The mission continues, with the final few days allotted for locating the Titanic ticking by. Visitors will see how Ballard used his understanding of the ocean and lessons learned from the USS Scorpion documentation to search for the Titanic's debris field. The exciting moment of discovery and Ballard's personal experience will help visitors understand the historic moment.

Wrapping up the mission, visitors will learn how the secret events were covered through Ballard's press tour. In the highlight of the exhibition, visitors will be immersed in footage from Ballard's return expedition to the Titanic, where he explored the wreckage from the manned submersible Alvin and the ship's interior with JJ.



CONCLUSION: THE FUTURE OF EXPLORATION

Following the Secret Mission and Titanic's discovery, Ballard continued his passion for discovering other lost wreck sites worldwide. Visitors will learn about other expeditions of the Ocean Exploration Trust and E/V Nautilus and Ballard's hope for inspiring the next generation of explorers.





ABOUT FLYING FISH

At Flying Fish, we believe exhibitions can do more. As a leading producer of touring exhibitions for more than a decade, we partner with world-class museums and science centers to create extraordinary, high-impact 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.

For Museums. By Museums.

ABOUT NAUTILUS LIVE

Ocean Exploration Trust (OET) and the Nautilus Exploration Program aim to explore the ocean, seeking out new discoveries in the fields of geology, biology, maritime history, archaeology, and chemistry while pushing the boundaries of education, outreach, and technological innovation. Our expeditions center on scientific exploration of the seafloor, collaborating with the broader research community to identify priority regions and phenomena, and sharing our expeditions with explorers around the world via live telepresence. .



SPECS

SPACE REQUIRED:

5,000 sq. ft. scalable +/- 1500 sq. ft

PRODUCTION TIME:

Ten (10) working days for installation;
seven (7) for deinstallation

TARGET AUDIENCE:

Individual adults or couples who usually have higher education and above-average household income

FREIGHT:

Two (2) 53 ft. trailers +
one (1) climate-controlled trailer
(estimated)

TOUR AVAILABILITY:

Fall 2025

LANGUAGES:

American English & Latin American Spanish

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