



## ROBERT BALLARD

Best known for his 1985 discovery of the RMS *Titanic*, [Dr. Robert Ballard](#) has succeeded in tracking down numerous other significant shipwrecks, including the German battleship *Bismarck*, the lost fleet of Guadalcanal, the U.S. aircraft carrier *Yorktown* (sunk in the World War II Battle of Midway), and John F. Kennedy's boat, *PT-109*.

While those discoveries have captured the imagination of the public, Dr. Ballard believes his most important discoveries were of hydrothermal vents and "black smokers" in the Galapagos Rift and East Pacific Rise in 1977 and 1979, along with their exotic life forms living off the energy of the Earth through a process now called chemosynthesis. A pioneer in the development of deep-sea submersibles and remotely operated vehicle (ROV) systems, Dr. Ballard has taken part in more than 155 deep-sea expeditions throughout his career.

In 2008, Dr. Ballard founded the Ocean Exploration Trust and acquired the Exploration Vessel (E/V) *Nautilus*, which continues to explore the world's oceans with the Nautilus Corps of Exploration. In addition, Dr. Ballard is a National Geographic Society Explorer-at-Large and a Commissioner on the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy. He is also a Senior Scientist Emeritus in the Department of Applied Ocean Physics and Engineering at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.

Dr. Ballard was born June 30, 1942, in Wichita, KS but moved to California at a very young age and grew up exploring the shore in San Diego. Dr. Ballard has a Ph.D. in marine geology and geophysics from the University of Rhode Island. He spent 30 years at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, where he helped develop telecommunications technology to create "tele-presence" for his JASON Project, which allows scientists, educators, and students to participate from afar on undersea explorations around the globe. In 2001, he returned to the Graduate School of Oceanography at the University of Rhode Island where he is presently a tenured Professor of Oceanography and Director of the Center for Ocean Exploration.

Dr. Ballard has 22 honorary degrees and six military awards. He was also a Commander in the U.S. Naval Reserve, serving in the Navy from 1967 to 1997. He received the National Geographic Society's prestigious Hubbard Medal in 1996 for "extraordinary accomplishments in coaxing secrets from the world's oceans and engaging students in the wonder of science," and was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2014.

His discoveries also include sunken remains of ships along ancient trade routes in the Mediterranean Sea; two ancient Phoenician ships off Israel, the oldest shipwrecks ever found in deep water; and four 1,500-year-old wooden ships, one almost perfectly preserved in the Black Sea. Dr. Ballard's ongoing Black Sea project seeks evidence of a great flood that may have struck the region thousands of years ago.

Dr. Ballard has published numerous books, scientific papers, and a dozen articles in National Geographic magazine. He has also been featured in several National Geographic television programs, including the record-breaking "Secrets of the *Titanic*," a 5-part mini-series, "Alien Deep with Bob Ballard," and in 2019, "Expedition Amelia." His 1997 best-selling book, *Lost Liners*, tells the story of the great transatlantic liners through memorable wrecks he has visited. Dr. Ballard was also a special advisor on Steven Spielberg's futuristic *Sea Quest*, DSV television show.

An explorer, discoverer, and historian, Dr. Ballard's fascinating journeys can teach us a great deal about our past, and they have encouraged others to take tremendous strides in the survey of the undiscovered mysteries of the deep sea.