



CBS NEWS April 14, 2017, 6:54 AM

Explorers plan descent to the Titanic before it's too late

One hundred and five years ago Friday night, [the Titanic](#) struck an iceberg in the Atlantic on its maiden voyage. Hours later, the so-called “unsinkable” ship descended to the bottom of the ocean and more than 1,500 people died. It took scientists more than 70 years to find the wreckage and now explorers are preparing to return for the first time in more than a decade and before the wreck disappears forever.

The Titanic’s fateful voyage inspired more than a dozen films and a new generation of explorers, like Stockton Rush, reports CBS News correspondent Chip Reid.

“More people have been to space than have been to see the Titanic,” said Rush, founder of private submersible company [OceanGate](#).

The [wreck](#) was discovered in 1985 and since then, fewer than 200 people have crossed over its bow or glided past its promenade decks. Rush plans to raise that number.



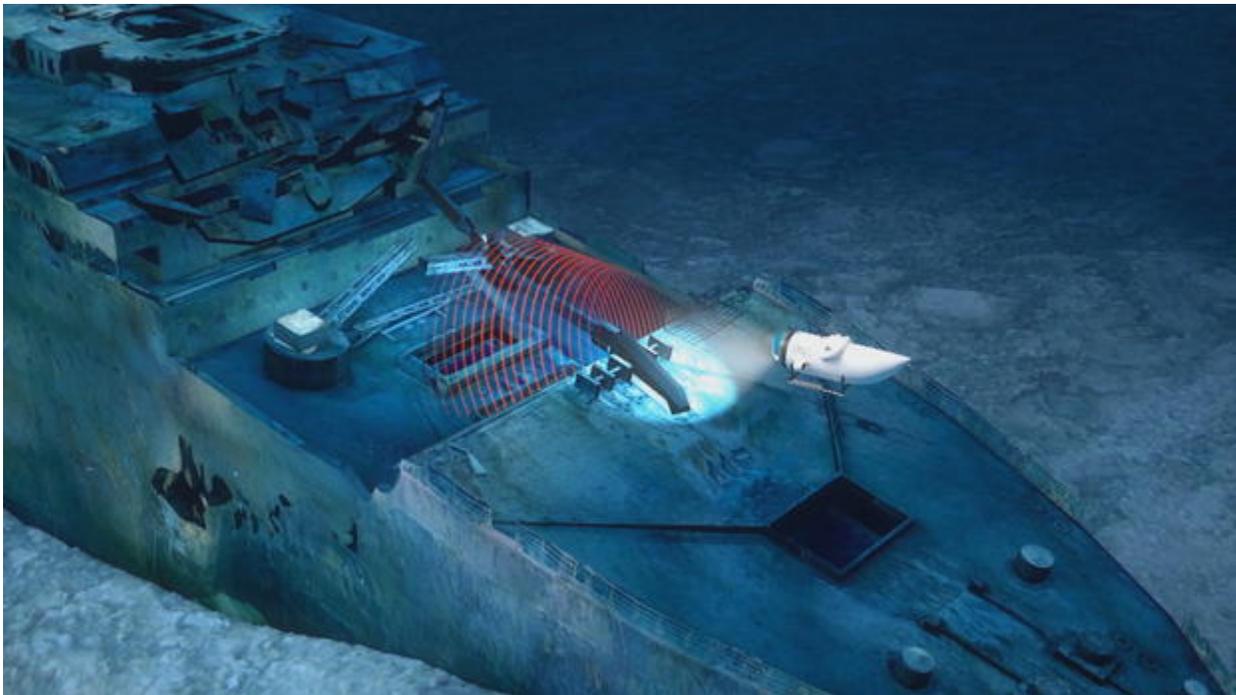
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Starting in May 2018, Rush will begin a series of yearly expeditions to the Titanic -- the first time anyone will have been to the site in more than a decade.

The five-person submersible that will be used is still under construction at a New Jersey factory. When complete, the Cyclops 2 will be able to dive 13,000 feet.

It'll be one of just five submersibles on the planet capable of reaching the Titanic, and the only one that's privately owned.

One of its goals is to generate a 3-D model of the wreck, a UNESCO Underwater Heritage site, before it's too late.



“I’ve heard some researchers say that the Titanic will melt away and be gone in the next 20 years,” Rush said.

To make the most of the expeditions, OceanGate will take researchers and explorers down to the wreck for a fee -- but seats don’t come cheap.

“They’re going to pay \$105,129,” Rush said. He explained that it’s the “inflation-adjusted price of a first class ticket on the Titanic in 1912.”

Despite the price, all 54 seats for the 2018 trips have already sold out.

Renata Rojas, a banker by trade and explorer at heart, has one of those seats.

“Ever since I’ve had a job, I have been saving to go to Titanic,” Rojas said.

As for the moment she first sets eyes on it she said, “I’ll probably cry the entire time. I get emotional.”

Rojas isn’t afraid to go more than two miles below the waves and Rush said that’s with good reason.

“By the time we’re done testing it, I believe it’s pretty much invulnerable,” Rush said.

When reminded by Reid that’s what people said about the Titanic, Rush responded, “That’s right. But I will go on all the first dives and probably every third dive. So I’ll put my money where my mouth is.”

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