What is at the Bottom of the Ocean?

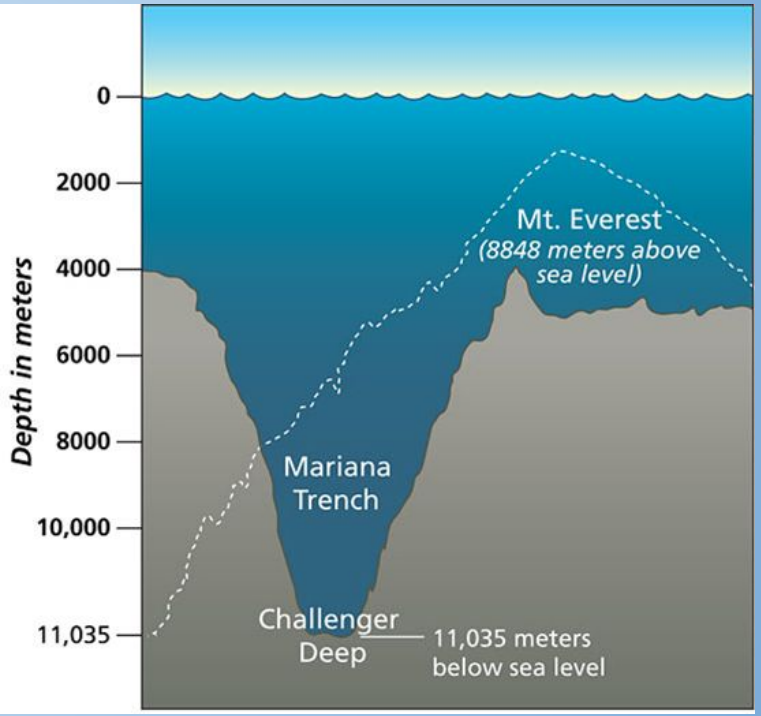
Ocean

Introduction

Thousands of people have climbed Mount Everest, and a handful of people have walked on the moon. But up until 2019, only 3 people had reached the deepest part of the ocean. This part of the ocean is called The Challenger Deep - the deepest point known on Earth.

Challenger Deep

At the depth of 11,035 metres below sea level, this deepest part of the ocean is so deep that you could fit all of Mount Everest inside of it and you'd still have room for another mountain on top of that. So what would you find if you could go to the very bottom of the ocean, the bottom of Challenger Deep?



Depth of Challenger Deep

What was the problem in reaching the Challenger Deep?

We know that there's a lot of water in the Challenger Deep. We might not notice the weight of water when we swim, but it is actually heavy. In fact, at the bottom of the Challenger Deep, there's so much water above you that any person that tried to go down there instantly would be crushed, even in a submarine.

Who would be brave enough to take that risk?

The Preparation

On January 23, 1960, Jacques Piccard and Don Walsh made history when they made a five-hour, 6.78 mile journey to the world’s deepest known point. Piccard built the Trieste, a super-submarine with the help of his father. It was designed with 5-inch thick steel walls to resist immense pressures.

Piccard and his Father build the Trieste

The Journey

Piccard and Walsh wondered if their submarine was strong enough. They knew what they had to do. Slowly, they descended into the deep ocean. They wondered what they would find. Would there be fish or plants? Maybe other animals. They knew that whatever they found, it would be an amazing discovery. A discovery which would spark many more explorations.

Piccard and Walsh in the Submarine

What Piccard and Walsh found down there was nothing like they expected. There were strange animals that no one had ever seen before. They entered a zone in the ocean, called the Midnight Zone. When they reached the Midnight Zone, they saw lights flashing in the water. What creature could have made those lights? Was it even a creature? Yes, it was an animal! There in the depths of the ocean, was a vampire squid and a strange type of jellyfish!

Vampire Squid

Jellyfish

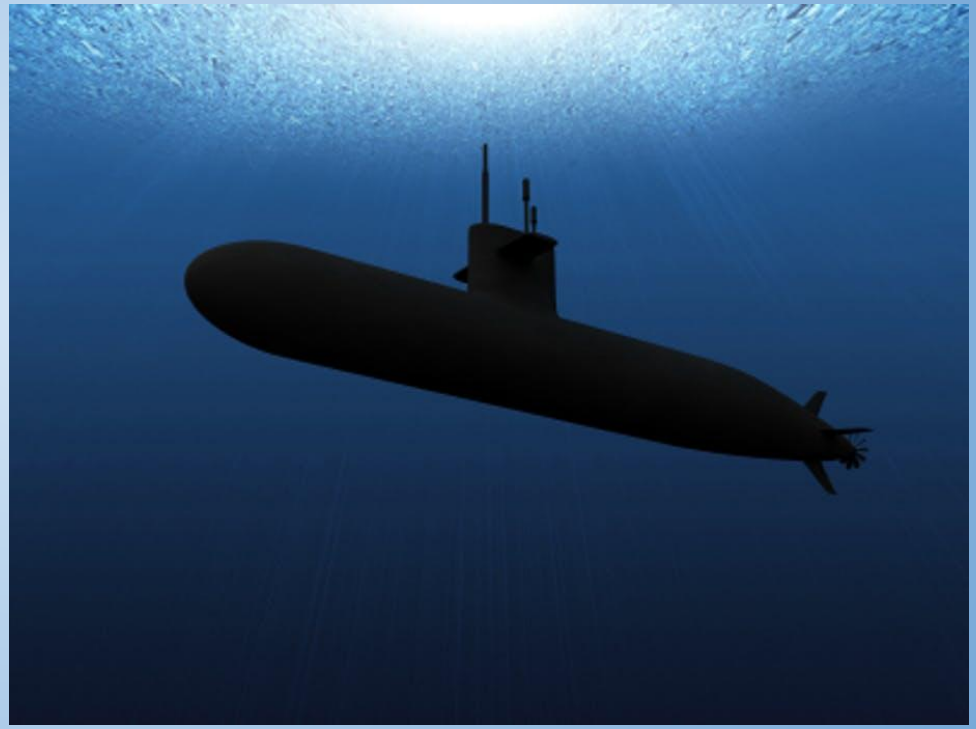
As they descended further down, they noticed that the window was cracking because of the weight of the water. Would it be safe for them to keep going? Both of them knew they couldn't stop now when they were so close. They kept on going until they reached the bottom of Challenger Deep. When Piccard and Walsh reached the bottom, they looked out the window. At first, they saw nothing but sand. Then, after a while, they saw creatures moving along the floor. Some of these creatures were, amphipods, holothurians (small sea cucumbers) and more! They rushed to the surface to tell the world about their findings.

Holothurians (Small Sea Cucumbers)

Amphipod

Conclusion

The first journey to Challenger Deep made by Jacques Piccard and Don Walsh, made humans more curious than ever. We started leading more expeditions to Challenger Deep. Now, we know a little bit more about Challenger Deep than when it was first explored. But we still don’t know enough. In the future, as technology grows, we will be able to explore the ocean further.



Submarine

Thanks For Listening/Reading!

References

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