# New footage reveals critical failures in Titan submersible’s 2019 test dive before Titanic disaster



Dramatic new footage has emerged from a test dive of the Titan submersible, which tragically imploded during a dive to the Titanic wreck in June 2023, claiming the lives of five individuals including prominent adventurer Hamish Harding and the father-son duo Shahzada and Suleman Dawood. The chief executive of OceanGate Expeditions, Stockton Rush, and renowned French deep-sea expert Paul-Henri Nargeolet were also among the deceased.

The harrowing footage is featured in a forthcoming documentary entitled "Implosion: The Titanic Sub Disaster," set to air on BBC Two. This gripping narrative reveals that the Titan's fateful test in April 2019 malfunctioned in alarming fashion, with crew members reporting a noise comparable to a gunshot emanating from the submersible's hull. During the dive, which marked one of the initial assessments of Titan's innovative carbon fibre structure, the lights on the exterior abruptly extinguished, and a battery failure compromised the sub’s vertical thrust.

Karl Stanley, a submersibles expert who was on board that day, recounted how they were perilously close to catastrophic failure, stating, “I did not even come close to appreciating the real danger.” Given that the Titan was designed for profound dives—its first such expedition following a series of shallow tests—the experience raised immediate alarm bells among the crew. The depth reached during that dive was perilously close to that of the Titanic wreck itself, with Stanley noting that they were "within a few percentage points of implosion."

These revelations resonate strongly with testimony presented during a recent U.S. Coast Guard investigatory panel, which scrutinised OceanGate's operations. Many witnesses highlighted a troubling culture of profit over safety, suggesting that management often sidelined serious concerns regarding the Titan's structural integrity and the choice of materials in its construction. The use of carbon fibre, while innovative, drew specific scrutiny, with experts warning of its susceptibility to fatigue failure. Concerns were amplified when it was revealed that other missions had experienced significant disruptions, including a thruster malfunction during a 2021 dive.

As the Titan's final voyage approached, communication with the submersible was abruptly lost approximately one hour and 45 minutes into its descent. What followed was a massive search and rescue operation, which captivated the public's imagination and garnered international news coverage. Debris from the wreckage, identified near the Titanic's location, indicated a catastrophic loss of the pressure chamber. The U.S. Navy had detected potential implosion signals shortly after the Titan’s last transmission, underscoring the tragedy's unfolding from the very early moments of the doomed expedition.

In an emotional segment captured on film, Wendy Rush, Stockton’s wife, is seen attempting to contact the crew as she monitored their descent from a support vessel. Her reaction to a sudden noise—initially dismissed as a minor incident—was later contextualised as potentially linked to the moment the Titan imploded. Investigators have surmised that the timing of messages indicating operational normality may have been delayed by the sound of the catastrophic failure.

Looking back on the harrowing events, many questions remain unanswered. OceanGate has since ceased operations amid ongoing investigations into the terrible accident, which serve as a sobering reminder of the inherent dangers associated with deep-sea exploration. As the deep-sea exploration community continues to grapple with the implications of this disaster, there is a renewed emphasis on adhering to stringent safety standards and rigorous testing protocols.

The deep-sea expedition landscape is further complicated by contrasting perceptions of risk and reward, as articulated during the investigatory hearings. While many view the drive for exploration as a noble pursuit, there is a clear and present danger that must be acknowledged and addressed—both for those who dare to explore the depths of the ocean and for the companies that facilitate these adventures.

As the documentary airs, it will delve into the emotional narratives surrounding the victims and the ongoing quest to understand how such a tragedy could occur, inviting the public to reflect on not only the allure of exploration but also the essential importance of accountability in technological endeavours designed to push the boundaries of human experience.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14739917/Titan-sub-plunged-darkness-bottom-ocean-Titanic.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[5]](https://time.com/6288253/titanic-tourist-missing/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14739917/Titan-sub-plunged-darkness-bottom-ocean-Titanic.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://apnews.com/article/ce07039ec4abf4e83ba38bf13a40829f), [[2]](https://apnews.com/article/f991bd49eb1f49b303477bfcab8923f1)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14739917/Titan-sub-plunged-darkness-bottom-ocean-Titanic.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.axios.com/2023/06/22/titanic-tourist-submarine-missing-north-atlantic-air-supply), [[6]](https://apnews.com/article/25a496d4e80c51009d43b8e220bb92d7)
* Paragraph 4 – [[2]](https://apnews.com/article/f991bd49eb1f49b303477bfcab8923f1), [[3]](https://apnews.com/article/ce07039ec4abf4e83ba38bf13a40829f)
* Paragraph 5 – [[5]](https://time.com/6288253/titanic-tourist-missing/), [[6]](https://apnews.com/article/25a496d4e80c51009d43b8e220bb92d7)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14739917/Titan-sub-plunged-darkness-bottom-ocean-Titanic.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://apnews.com/article/ce07039ec4abf4e83ba38bf13a40829f)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14739917/Titan-sub-plunged-darkness-bottom-ocean-Titanic.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://apnews.com/article/f991bd49eb1f49b303477bfcab8923f1> - An Associated Press article discusses contrasting testimonies presented to the U.S. Coast Guard panel investigating the Titan submersible's implosion. Some witnesses describe OceanGate's mission as driven by reckless profit motives, while others highlight a spirit of exploration. Concerns include the use of carbon fiber for the sub's hull, which experts testified is susceptible to fatigue failure. Testimony also revealed that the crew of the support vessel felt a shudder at the time of the implosion but did not communicate it, which could have altered the rescue efforts. Former employee Matthew McCoy testified that OceanGate planned to avoid U.S. regulatory oversight, and there were issues with past dive instability and cracking sounds. The panel closed with condolences and pledged to make recommendations for future safety changes.
3. <https://apnews.com/article/ce07039ec4abf4e83ba38bf13a40829f> - An Associated Press article reports on a U.S. Coast Guard investigatory panel examining OceanGate's operations following the Titan submersible's implosion. Former mission specialist Fred Hagen testified that a 2021 mission was aborted due to a thruster malfunction, rendering the submersible unable to navigate. The investigation has revealed recurring issues and a prioritization of profit over safety, with OceanGate experiencing engineering disagreements and ignoring safety concerns raised by employees. The Titan's final dive sent out messages indicating everything was fine before it imploded, resulting in the death of all five onboard. OceanGate, which has suspended operations, is cooperating with ongoing investigations. The hearings have highlighted the potentially unsafe practices and inadequate accreditation of the Titan.
4. <https://www.axios.com/2023/06/22/titanic-tourist-submarine-missing-north-atlantic-air-supply> - An Axios article reports that OceanGate Expeditions announced the presumed death of the pilot and four passengers aboard the Titan submersible, which disappeared during a tourist expedition to the Titanic site. The U.S. Navy detected possible signs of the Titan imploding soon after its disappearance. Debris from the vessel, discovered by a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) near the Titanic, indicated a "catastrophic loss" of the pressure chamber, according to U.S. Coast Guard officials. Among the deceased was Stockton Rush, CEO of OceanGate Expeditions. The families of the victims were promptly informed following the discovery. The White House expressed condolences to the families and gratitude to the search teams.
5. <https://time.com/6288253/titanic-tourist-missing/> - A Time article reports that the search for the missing Titan sub has concluded with officials announcing a "catastrophic implosion," resulting in the presumed death of all five passengers. The U.S. Coast Guard discovered debris consistent with the sub's implosion near the Titanic wreck, which matched the location of the Titan's last communication. The exact time of the incident remains undetermined. OceanGate Expeditions, the company operating the Titan, released a statement acknowledging the loss and highlighting the passengers' adventurous spirit. The victims included British adventurer Hamish Harding, French submersible pilot Paul-Henri Nargeolet, British-Pakistani businessman Shahzada Dawood and his son Suleman, and OceanGate's CEO Stockton Rush. The tourists were on an expedition to see the Titanic wreck, a site visited by fewer than 250 people since its discovery in 1985.
6. <https://apnews.com/article/25a496d4e80c51009d43b8e220bb92d7> - An Associated Press article marks the anniversary of the Titan submersible implosion, noting that a year after the tragedy, many questions remain unresolved. The U.S. Coast Guard's high-level investigation into the incident, focusing on the Titan's unconventional design and lack of standard checks, is still ongoing. The results are expected to be discussed in a public hearing in a few months. OceanGate, the company that owned the Titan, has since ceased operations. The victims, including OceanGate co-founder Stockton Rush, Pakistani family members Shahzada and Suleman Dawood, British adventurer Hamish Harding, and Titanic expert Paul-Henri Nargeolet, are remembered this anniversary. Despite the tragedy, the deep-sea exploration community continues to pursue missions, with planned expeditions to the Titanic and a commitment to thorough testing and safety standards. The incident has reinforced the importance of adhering to industry practices to ensure the safety of future explorations.