



PAPAHĀNAUMOKUĀKEA  
Marine National Monument

DECEMBER 10, 2015

Contact: Toni Parras 808-282-9332; [toni.parras@noaa.gov](mailto:toni.parras@noaa.gov)

## Whaleships of the Past Meet in Modern Movie Event Hawaii's Remote Reefs connected to Hollywood Movie

Last night, Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument held a special screening event featuring their own "Lightning Strikes Twice" short documentary film and the Warner Bros. movie "In the Heart of the Sea" directed by Academy Award-winner Ron Howard and starring Chris Hemsworth. The event served to showcase the connection between the Hollywood movie and the remotest protected area on Earth.

Based on the book of the same name, the movie "**In the Heart of the Sea**" tells the story of the true events that inspired Herman Melville's novel "Moby-Dick." In 1820, the New England whaleship *Essex*, captained by George Pollard, Jr., was rammed and sunk by a sperm whale, leaving the crew adrift at sea for more than ninety days in three tiny life-boats. Pushed to their limits and facing storms, starvation, panic and despair, the survivors resorted to the unthinkable to stay alive. Captain Pollard is one of the few survivors that returned to Nantucket.

The book "In the Heart of the Sea," which is both a National Book Award winner and New York Times bestseller, was authored by Nathaniel Philbrick, who appears in PMNM's "Lightning Strikes Twice," along with Jeff Corwin, Animal Planet TV show host and Emmy Award-winner for "Ocean Mysteries."

The short documentary film "**Lightning Strikes Twice**" is the real-life sequel to "In the Heart of the Sea," telling the tale of what happened next. Captain Pollard was given command of another whaleship, the *Two Brothers*, and optimistically set sail for the Pacific once again, believing the old adage that "lightning never strikes in the same place twice." Unfortunately, in his case it did when, in the middle of the night on February 11, 1823, the *Two Brothers* struck a reef and came to rest in what is now Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

The wrecksite of the *Two Brothers* was discovered by NOAA maritime archaeologists in 2008, and positively identified after two and half years of research. "Lightning Strikes Twice," produced by NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries for PMNM, depicts the *Two Brothers*' saga and the research surrounding its discovery.

"Film is an incredibly powerful way to share stories of exploration and discovery in remote places like Papahānaumokuākea," said PMNM Maritime Archaeologist Dr. Kelly Keogh. "The movie 'Lightning Strikes Twice' has helped the story of the *Two Brothers* come alive to hundreds of viewers. And now, with the release of 'In the Heart of the Sea,' we will be able to reach many more people."

About 200 people attended last night's special event, which included an advanced screening of what is sure to be a Hollywood blockbuster, opening this weekend.

"We are grateful to Warner Bros. for the opportunity to make this special connection with their film," said Athline Clark, PMNM Superintendent for NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. "These two films are a reminder of the history of whaling in the Pacific, and its impacts upon the Hawaiian archipelago. These stories connect our past to our future and highlight the connection from one part of the world to another."

PMNM's short documentary film "Lightning Strikes Twice," which provides additional historical context to the story of the *Essex* tragedy, will be included as a special feature on the DVD release of Warner Bros.' "In the Heart of the Sea" in early 2016, and can also be viewed online at the link below.

"Watching the two films together is a great window into the maritime heritage of our region," said Keogh.

The Mokupāpapa Discovery Center in Hilo, Hawaii, has a small exhibit on whaling in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, and the Nantucket Whaling Museum has an exhibit with artifacts recovered from the *Two Brothers*. For more information, visit [www.papahanaumokuakea.gov/maritime/twobrothers.html](http://www.papahanaumokuakea.gov/maritime/twobrothers.html).

