

ALEXANDER - VON HUMBOLDT



Information



Languages

Alexander von Humboldt on his travels

Volcanism

Alexander von Humboldt's travels also took him to the Pacific Sea, along whose edge the "Pacific Ring of Fire" runs. The "ring of fire" is a series of several volcanoes. This chain of volcanoes is very active. Outbreaks keep happening. Humboldt climbed several volcanoes, including a 3715m high mountain, which he also climbed into. On his way into the volcano's caldera (cauldron-shaped depression at the top), the soles of his shoes were corroded by sulfur fumes. Nevertheless, he admired the beauty of the volcano's interior.

As Humboldt was on his way home to Germany, he was sailing along the volcanoes in the Pacific when one of them suddenly erupted. He described the experience as "magical and a miracle of nature."

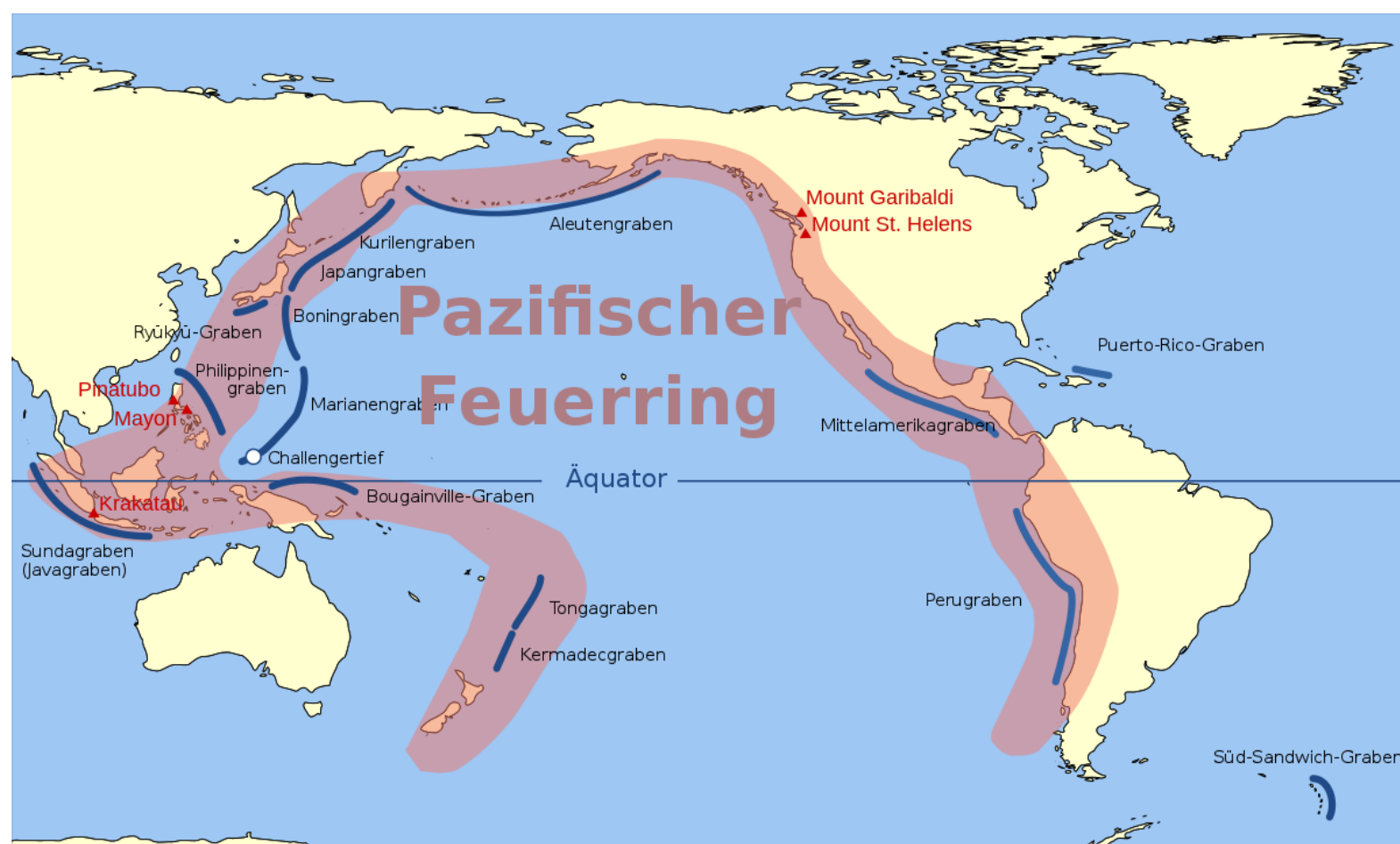


Fig.: Location of the Pacific Ring of Fire
(Source: [Ginger](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pacific_Ring_of_Fire-de.svg), https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pacific_Ring_of_Fire-de.svg)



Fig.: Caldera of a volcano



Fig.: erupting volcano
(Source: [Matthew Landry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Arenallong.jpg), <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Arenallong.jpg>)

Humboldt's network

In order to share his discoveries with others and expand his own knowledge, Alexander von Humboldt created a global research network in which more than 2,700 scientists were involved. He wrote at least one letter every day and a total of more than 30,000 letters throughout his life. Not only unknown people were represented in the network, but also friends and acquaintances such as Samuel Thomas Soemmerring (German anatomist and physiologist) or Karl Ludwig Willdenow (botanist and close friend of Humboldt; shared an interest in natural science and plants with him and research trips). Alexander used the network primarily because it was one of the few independent means of communication that was suitable for longer distances. However, letters could take a long time to send or never arrive as they were often transported by ship.

Humanities and cultural studies, anatomy, physiology, botany, natural sciences, astronomy and mathematics were represented within the network. Alexander himself stood for natural science, astronomy and cartography. He was a mountaineer and scout who traveled the world and wanted to discover the natural wonders of the world.



Fig.: Humboldt's seal