

Explorers find WWII Navy ship, deepest wreck discovered

June 25 2022



In this Wednesday, June 22, 2022, image provided by Caladan Oceanic, the three-tube torpedo launcher that was part of the USS Samuel B. Roberts can be seen underwater off the Philippines in the Western Pacific Ocean. The U.S. Navy destroyer escort that engaged a superior Japanese fleet in the largest sea battle of World War II in the Philippines has become the deepest wreck to be discovered, according to explorers. Credit: Caladan Oceanic via AP

A U.S. Navy destroyer escort that engaged a superior Japanese fleet in

the largest sea battle of World War II in the Philippines has become the deepest wreck to be discovered, according to explorers.

The USS Samuel B. Roberts, popularly known as the "Sammy B," was identified on Wednesday broken into two pieces on a slope at a depth of 6,895 meters (22,620 feet).

That puts it 426 meters (1,400 feet) deeper than the USS Johnston, the previous deepest wreck discovered last year in the Philippine Sea also by American explorer Victor Vescovo, founder of Dallas-based Caladan Oceanic Expeditions. He announced the latest find together with U.K.-based EYOS Expeditions.

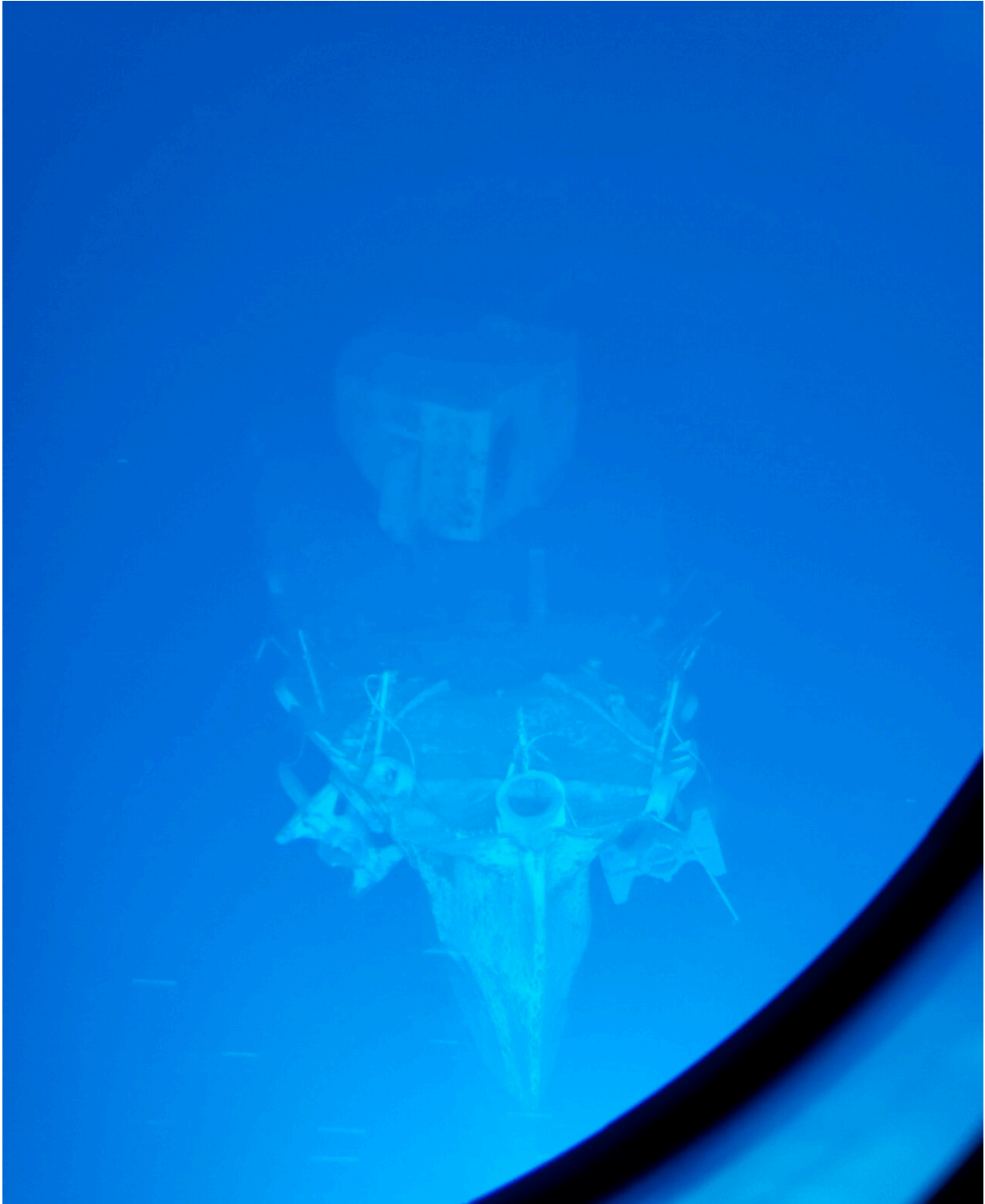
"It was an extraordinary honor to locate this incredibly famous ship, and by doing so have the chance to retell her story of heroism and duty to those who may not know of the ship and her crew's sacrifice," Vescovo, a former Navy commander, said in a statement.

The Sammy B. took part in the Battle off Samar, the final phase of the Battle of Leyte Gulf in October 1944, in which the Imperial Japanese Navy suffered its biggest loss of ships and failed to dislodge the U.S. forces from Leyte, which they invaded earlier as part of the liberation of the Philippines.



In this Wednesday, June 22, 2022, image provided by Caladan Oceanic, the pilot

house section of the USS Samuel B. Roberts can be seen underwater off the Philippines in the Western Pacific Ocean. The U.S. Navy destroyer escort that engaged a superior Japanese fleet in the largest sea battle of World War II in the Philippines has become the deepest wreck to be discovered, according to explorers. Credit: Caladan Oceanic via AP



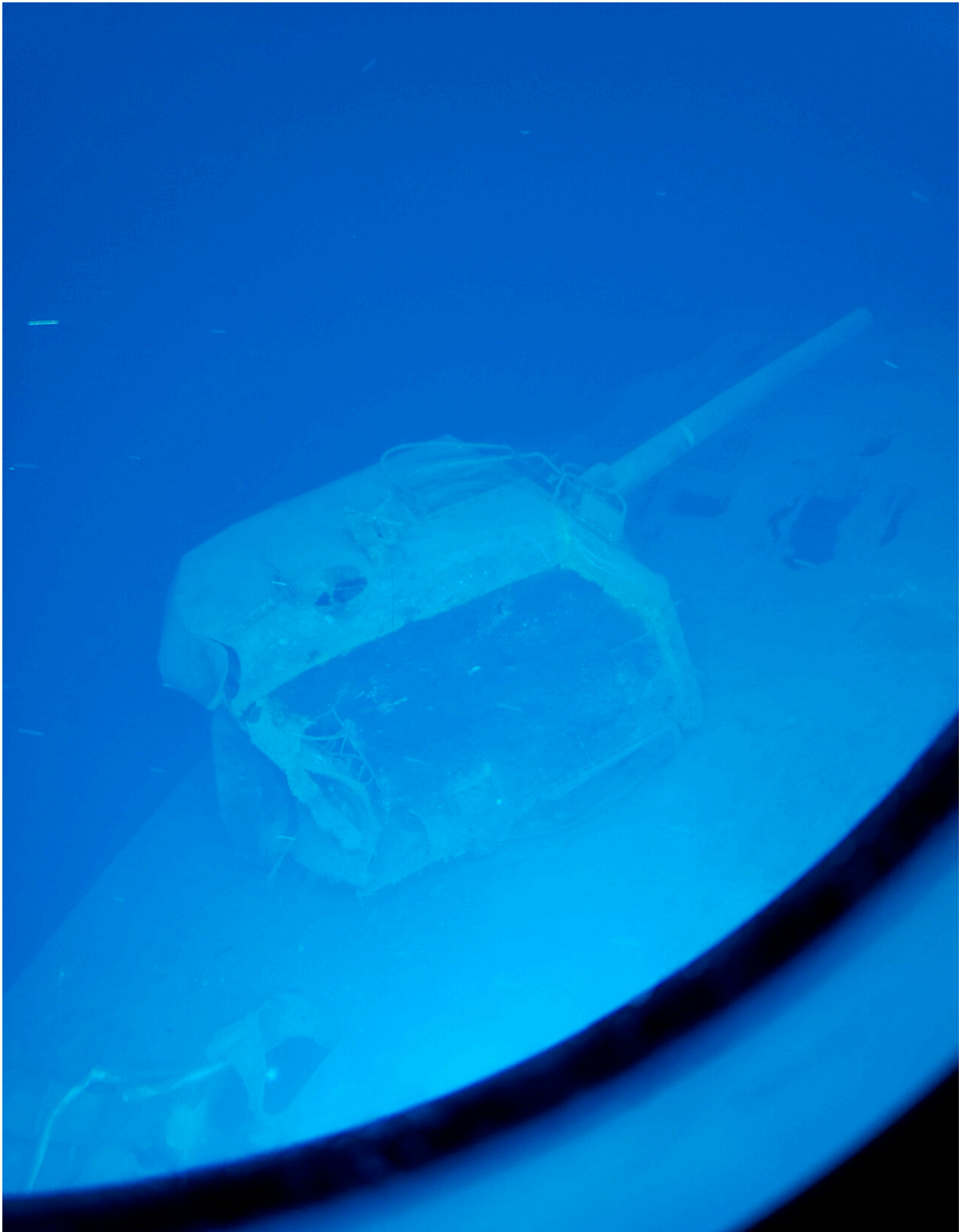
In this Wednesday, June 22, 2022, image provided by Caladan Oceanic, the frontal view of the USS Samuel B. Roberts can be seen underwater off the Philippines in the Western Pacific Ocean. The U.S. Navy destroyer escort that

engaged a superior Japanese fleet in the largest sea battle of World War II in the Philippines has become the deepest wreck to be discovered, according to explorers. Credit: Caladan Oceanic via AP

According to some records, the destroyer escort disabled a Japanese heavy cruiser with a torpedo and significantly damaged another while battling the group led by the command battleship Yamato. After having spent virtually all its ammunition, it was critically hit by the battleship Kongo and sank. Of a 224-man crew, 89 died and 120 were saved, including the captain, Lt. Cmdr. Robert W. Copeland.

According to Samuel J. Cox, a retired admiral and naval historian, Copeland stated there was "no higher honor" than to have led the men who displayed such incredible courage going into battle against overwhelming odds, from which survival could not be expected.

"This site is a hallowed war grave, and serves to remind all Americans of the great cost born by previous generations for the freedom we take for granted today," Cox said in a statement.



In this Wednesday, June 22, 2022, image provided by Caladan Oceanic, the aft

gun mount of the USS Samuel B. Roberts can be seen underwater off the Philippines in the Western Pacific Ocean. The U.S. Navy destroyer escort that engaged a superior Japanese fleet in the largest sea battle of World War II in the Philippines has become the deepest wreck to be discovered, according to explorers. Credit: Caladan Oceanic via AP

The explorers said that up until the discovery, the historical records of where the wreck lay were not very accurate. The search involved the use of the deepest side-scan sonar ever installed and operated on a submersible, well beyond the standard commercial limitations of 6,000 meters (19,685 feet), EYOS said.

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