A US navy destroyer sunk during World War II has been found nearly 7,000 meters (23,000 feet) below sea level off the Philippines, making it the world's deepest shipwreck ever located, an American exploration team said.

The USS Samuel B Roberts went down during a battle off the central island of Samar on October 25, 1944 as US forces fought to liberate the Philippines—then a US colony—from Japanese occupation.

A crewed submersible filmed, photographed and surveyed the battered hull of the "Sammy B" during a series of dives over eight days this month, Texas-based undersea technology company Caladan Oceanic said.

Images showed the ship's three-tube torpedo launcher and gun mount.

"Resting at 6,895 meters, it is now the deepest shipwreck ever located and surveyed," tweeted Caladan Oceanic founder Victor Vescovo, who piloted the submersible.

"This small ship took on the finest of the Japanese Navy, fighting them to the end," he said.

According to US Navy records, Sammy B's crew "floated for nearly three days awaiting rescue, with many survivors perishing from wounds and shark attacks". Of the 224 crew, 89 died.

The battle was part of the larger Battle of Leyte, which saw intense fighting over several days between US and Japanese forces.
Sammy B was one of four US ships sunk in the October 25 engagement.

The USS Johnston, which at nearly 6,500 meters was previously the world's deepest shipwreck identified, was reached by Vescovo's team in 2021.

In the latest search, the team also looked for the USS Gambier Bay at more than 7,000 meters below sea level, but was unable to locate it.

It did not search for the USS Hoel due to the lack of reliable data showing where it may have gone down.

The wreck of the Titanic lies in about 4,000 meters of water.

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