

Long-lost WWII Wreck Discovered off Australia



An expedition team on the R/V 'Petrel', an underwater research and exploration vessel commissioned by philanthropist and Microsoft co-founder Paul G. Allen, has discovered the shipwreck of the USS 'Lexington', a US aircraft carrier that was sunk during World War Two. The remains of the vessel were located at a depth of about 3km in the Coral Sea, 800km off the east coast of Australia, on 4 March 2018.

Images from the seabed captured by the 'Petrel' show details of the ship, including its nameplate and guns, as well as some of its remarkably well-preserved aircraft.

The *Lexington* was one of the first US aircraft carriers ever built, and became known as 'Lady Lex'. The ship was lost in the Battle of the Coral Sea, which lasted from 4-8 May 1942 and is widely regarded as a pivotal moment in halting Japan's advance in the Pacific during the Second World War. The *Lexington* suffered heavy damage by the Japanese during fighting, which cost more than 200 crew members their lives. Following an explosion causing uncontrollable fires on board, the decision was taken to abandon ship and sink the *Lexington*, but not before more than 2,500 other crewmen were rescued.

Vulcan

The 250-foot R/V *Petrel* is operated by Paul Allen's firm Vulcan. Retrofitted with state-of-the-art subsea equipment, it is capable of diving to depths of 6km and is focused on locating historically significant shipwrecks and exploring underwater ecosystems. In 2017, Vulcan discovered the wreck of the USS *Indianapolis*, which sank in July 1945, and the USS *Ward*. The company has also found other vessels including a Japanese warship, the *Musashi*, and the Italian WWII destroyer *Artigliere*. Robert Kraft, who works with Paul Allen as director of subsea operations at Vulcan to determine what missions to pursue, said that locating the *Lexington* was the culmination of around six months of planning. The ship will not be retrieved because the US Navy considers it to be a war grave.

[Watch this video to see more.](#)