



A Google map, overlaid with details, depicts the area over which Malayasian Airlines Flight MH17 was flying when it fell to Earth on July 17, 2014. The map also locates the approximate area of the plane's debris field. Image online via BBC. Click on it for a closer view.

A <u>field of sunflowers</u> is in full bloom as a plane passes overhead. It is early afternoon, on 17 July 2014, and a Ukrainian farmer is working nearby.

Suddenly, he hears an unusual sound:

I was herding my cows and heard a buzzing noise. I lay on the ground and thinking only that it would not hit me and my cows. Then I looked and saw that something turns sharply and two big wings were flying. Bang. And something explodes. It came from eastern side, from the side of Sokholikha mountain.

The sound attracting the farmer's attention comes from a Boeing 777, flying—as Malaysian Airlines Flight MH17—<u>along Airway L980</u>.

Aboard the plane are 298 people plus, among other cargo, some dogs and pigeons. Fresh-cut flowers, too, according to the manifest, are onboard the flight as it heads from <u>Amsterdam to Kuala Lampur</u>.

Around 80 children are en route to various final destinations. Scientists, specializing in AIDS research, are flying-out to an international conference in Melbourne, Australia. Later, their colleagues will say these people—including <u>Professor Joep Lange</u>, sitting in <u>seat 3C</u>—are among the world's best thinkers on how to treat, and hopefully cure, the dreaded disease.

On the ground, investigators believe, is a group of currently unknown individuals manning a surface-to-air (SAM) weapons system. It is sophisticated equipment, capable of downing an aircraft flying at 10,000 meters (33,000 feet).

For whatever reason, a missile is apparently launched.

Perhaps the senders misread their intended target. Perhaps they do not realize that innocent people, including infants, are on board. Perhaps they think the plane is an AN-26, belonging to the Ukrainian military and carrying military supplies. (Pro-separatist rebels <u>shot-down</u> such a plane days before.) It's difficult, however, to determine the plane's colors when it's more than six miles in the air.

Or ... maybe the missile-launchers don't care who's on the plane. This is, they might argue, a war zone ... isn't it? Maybe they believe their "cause" is more important than a respectful regard for human life.

The missile, believed to be shot from a Soviet-era <u>Buk missile system</u>, meets its intended target. Likely <u>detonated by a proximity fuse</u>, it sends the plane—and its travelers—on a catastrophic course of <u>destruction</u>.

While no one accepts responsibility, the Ukraine government releases audio clips claimed to be <u>intercepted</u> <u>discussions between pro-Russian separatists</u>. Sorrow over the loss of people seems to be a missing ingredient of conversation as these individuals piece-together what has happened.

Because the <u>plane's attack</u> occurs at such a high altitude, its debris covers many miles. No one survives.

On the ground, people not involved in the attack are stunned to learn that a plane broke-apart in the air, near the Petropavlovskaya mines. Those responsible realize the strike was not military when they see the first casualty fall to the ground. It is the body of a civilian. A woman.

Vsevolod Petrovsky, in the neighborhood of the crash site, visits the scene. He tells the world what he sees:

- The plane broke up in the air, and the parts and human bodies are lying within a three-kilometre area.
- I got out of the car and immediately saw the ... body of a woman, covered by some leaves.

• There were many bodies without clothes around. Probably, their clothing was torn away after the loss of pressurization. Horrible.

• I go further and see a hill made of the cockpit parts. The area is lit. The pilot's body is in this seat, with seat belt fastened, he is dressed in his clothes.

• Among the plane parts there were many parcels. Letters tied with a rope, books, old vinyl records, somebody's shoes.

• Children's caps with the Dutch national flag colours. Amazingly, almost all of these things are not destroyed.

How was it that observers can see such things, after the plane crashed to the ground? What about the fires we see in crash-scene photos?

There was no fire in this part of the plane. The fire was in the back part which is lying not far from <u>Grabovo</u> [Hrabove] <u>village</u>.

One victim, falling such a long distance, breaks a hole in the roof of a private home's summer terrace. Another stuns a homeowner, Irina Tipunova (age 65) who is confused about what to do next:

There was a howling noise and everything started to rattle. Then objects started falling out of the sky. And then I heard a roar and she landed in the kitchen.

Once the perpetrators realize the target is a civilian plane, <u>filled with travelers</u> uninvolved with separatist desires, no one accepts responsibility for the deed. Meanwhile ... family members travel to Ukraine to retrieve the bodies of their <u>loved ones</u>.

Some of their suitcases and belongings will be unretrievable, however. Looters have seen to that.

<u>The "Black Boxes"</u>—two separate flight recorders—contain flight data and flight-deck communications. If independent specialists have access to them, they may be able to determine what happened to the plane and the people.

Meanwhile ... as crash victims, <u>marked with small white flags</u>, lie untended in the wheat and sunflower fields, unhelpful finger-pointing continues. Armed pro-Russian separatists decide when (and how) the <u>remains will be</u> <u>removed</u> and who gets <u>access to the crash site</u> (directing where they may, or <u>may not</u>, go).

When many of the crash victims finally leave Torez train station, aboard refrigerated cars which sometimes experience power outages, they <u>travel to Kharkiv</u> (Ukraine's second-largest city). From there, they will make their way home, first via a flight to Eindhoven aboard either a Dutch C130 Hercules or an Australian Boeing C-17 (in which they will be properly cared-for), then to a facility in <u>Hilversum</u> (where they will be identified).

The <u>first transports arrive</u> in Eindhoven on a Dutch national day of mourning (July 23). It is the first time the country has declared such an event since Queen Wilhelmina died in 1962. People dressed in white—the symbol of hope—line the streets of Amsterdam (in a silent march in memory of the victims) while many others stand in silent tribute as a convoy of hearses makes the trip to Hilversum.

Applying the Law on International Crimes, the Netherlands has opened an investigation into the disaster. The prosecutorial inquiry is based, among other things, on the intentional downing of an airliner. Of the 298 people on Flight MH17, 196 were Dutch nationals. The trial of <u>four suspects</u> will begin on the 9th of March, 2020, before the District Court of The Hague.

In Moscow, Russians feeling great sorrow over the loss of so many people leave flowers, toys, candles, paintings and <u>handwritten notes</u> outside the Dutch embassy. Many of them say:

Forgive us.

Credits:

Graphic online via the BBC.

The quotes from Irina Tipunova and postings by Vsevolod Petrovsky, about his visit to the crash scene, reported in the International Business Times.

Information used in this story (and its hosted links) obtained from various news sources including, principally, De Volkskrant (a Dutch-language newspaper), the BBC, ITN, RT (formerly Russia Today), DNM (Digital News Media), IBN (International Business News), Ukraine-government sources and the New York Times.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at: <u>http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Flight-MH17-Attack-and-Loss</u>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Flight-MH17-Attack-and-Loss

Media Stream



<u>Flight MH17 - Sunflower Fields</u> Image online via Digital Media News. View this asset at: <u>http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Flight-MH17-Sunflower-Fields</u>



<u>Flight MH17 - Airway L980</u> Image online via Eurocontrol and the FAA. PD View this asset at: <u>http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Flight-MH17-Airway-L980</u>



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Flight MH17 - Dr. Joep Lange

Dr. Joep Lange, a world-renowned scientist with a specialty in AIDS research, was on board Flight MH17 when it crashed in Ukraine on July 17, 2014.

Employed at the University of Amsterdam, Dr. Lange was en route to an AIDS Conference in Melbourne, Australia, when his plane was likely struck by a surface-to-air missile. The following is <u>his bio</u>, at the University of Amsterdam's website:

Joep Lange is Professor of Medicine, Head of the Department of Global Health, at the Academic Medical Center (AMC), University of Amsterdam, Executive Scientific Director of the Amsterdam Institute for Global Health and Development (AIGHD), Chair of the Steering Committee AIGHD. Joep Lange has been involved in HIV research and treatment since 1983. He has been the architect and principal investigator of several pivotal trials on antiretroviral therapy and on the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV in both the developed and developing world. In addition to various positions at the AMC, he was Chief of Clinical Research and Drug Development at the Global Programme on AIDS of the World Health Organization in Geneva from 1992 to 1995. From 2002–2004 he was President of the International AIDS Society. He serves or has served on numerous advisory boards for both private and public sector organisations, including the Strategic and Technical Advisory Committee of the WHO HIV Department, the External Advisory Committee of the US HIV Vaccine Trials Network and the International Advisory Board of the Institute for Global Health of Imperial College. He also serves as the Chairman of the PharmAccess Foundation (which he founded) and as Scientific Advisor to the Board of the Health Insurance Fund Foundation, which pioneers mechanisms of sustainable financing of health care in resource-poor settings. *He is a member of the Supervisory Board of KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation.*

Joep Lange founded and is Editor-in-Chief of the Journal Antiviral Therapy and has served on several other editorial boards of scientific journals. He has published more than 350 papers in peer-reviewed journals and has guided more than 30 PhD students.

In 2007 he was awarded the Eijkman medal for his achievements in Tropical Medicine and International Health.

On the day he boarded Malaysian Airlines Flight MH17, Dr. Lange was 59 years old. A year after his death, the University of Amsterdam announced that <u>a new institute</u>, bearing Dr. Lange's name, was established in his honor.

Image online via University of Amsterdam's Institute for Global Health and Development. View this asset at: <u>http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Flight-MH17-Dr.-Joep-Lange</u>



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Flight MH17 - Attack on Plane

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Flight MH17 - Locals Walk the Crash Site

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Flight MH17 - White Flags for the Victims

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<u>Flight MH17 - Train Transport of Bodies to Kharkiv</u> Image online via The Guardian. View this asset at: <u>http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Flight-MH17-Train-Transport-of-Bodies-to-Kharkiv</u>

<u>Flight MH17 - "Forgive Us If You Can"</u> Image online via Nikita Batalov. View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Flight-MH17-Forgive-Us-If-You-Can-0

<u>Flight MH17 - Attack and Loss</u> View this asset at: <u>http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Flight-MH17-Attack-and-Loss-Illustration-</u>

<u>Flight MH17 - Rebels Down AN-26 Plane</u> Video clip, described above, online via YouTube. View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Flight-MH17-Rebels-Down-AN-26-Plane



Flight MH17 - Video of Explosion and Falling Debris Video clip, recorded 17 July 2014, placed online via PainkillerBOH's channel at YouTube. View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Flight-MH17-Video-of-Explosion-and-Falling-Debris0



Flight MH17 - Refrigerated Rail Cars

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Flight MH17 - Victims Return to The Netherlands

On the day the Dutch people observe a national day of mourning—the first in the country since Queen Wilhelmina died in 1962—some of Flight MH17's victims return to The Netherlands. Around 1,000 family members and friends join Holland's King and Queen at Eindhoven airport to greet the military transports as they arrive on Wednesday, 23 July 2014. Separate hearses for each coffin travel to Hilversum where the remains will be identified.

The Telegraph captured this video of the day's events. It is online via *The Telegraph's* Channel at YouTube where it has this description:

Published on Jul 23, 2014

Two military aircraft carrying the bodies of some of the victims of the Malaysia Airlines crash left eastern Ukraine bringing some consolation to grieving relatives who still must wait for positive identifications and answers about who caused the disaster.

The Dutch government declared a day of national mourning as the country prepared for the arrival of the first bodies in the afternoon. The crash killed all 298 people -- most of them Dutch citizens -- aboard Malaysia Airlines flight.

Two military transport planes, one Dutch and one Australian, departed at midday, heading for Eindhoven air base, to be met by Dutch King Willem-Alexander, Queen Maxima, Prime Minister Mark Rutte and hundreds of relatives.

For days, Dutch police officers have been visiting the bereaved across the Netherlands -- home to 193 of the dead -- seeking information about distinguishing features and collecting DNA samples for use in identifying the remains.

That process will start at a military barracks in the Dutch town of Hilversum, after the first planes carrying remains arrive in the Netherlands on a national day of mourning.

Meanwhile, people continued to pay their respects to the victims of the crash at a memorial at Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport.

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