



ALDEN P. ANDERS
Aviation Radioman Petty Officer 3rd Class (ARM3),
U.S. Navy Reserve

PERSONAL INFORMATION: ARM3 Alden P. Anders, service number 8599212, entered military service on 2 December 1943 from Des Moines, Iowa. He served aboard a PB4Y-1 in the Patrol Bombing Squadron ONE HUNDRED ELEVEN (VPB-111) in the Pacific Theater during World War II. On 16 June 1945, ARM3 Anders and ten other crew members of PB4Y-1 Bureau Number (BuNo) 38913 were lost during a patrol mission in the Makassar Straits, Netherlands East Indies (modern-day Indonesia). Ten sets of remains believed to include those of the BuNo 38913 crew were recovered after the War, but only one set was identified (ENS Stretcher). For his service, ARM3 Anders received the Air Medal with two Gold Stars and the Purple Heart. He is memorialized on the Tablets of the Missing at Manila American Cemetery in Manila, Philippines.¹ Details of ARM3 Anders' loss were documented in his Individual Deceased Personnel File (IDPF) and in the VPB-111's unit history.²

Crew of PB4Y-1, Bureau Number 38913, on 16 June 1945				
Name	Rank	Service Number	Crew Position	Status
Bass, Louis T., Jr.	LTJG	O-240715	Pilot	KIA-BNR*
Dernberger, William L.	LTJG	O-278082	Unknown	KIA-BNR
Stretcher, Philip C.	ENS	O-378816	Unknown	KIA
Anders, Alden P.	ARM3	8599212	Unknown	KIA-BNR
Graham, Robert H.	ARM1	6506879	Unknown	KIA-BNR
Kivitt, Ray P.	ARM3	7113286	Unknown	KIA-BNR
Mitchell, Roger W.	AMM3	8897569	Unknown	KIA-BNR
Philpott, Henry V.	AMM1	2875379	Unknown	KIA-BNR
Pringle, George W.	AOM3	8575327	Unknown	KIA-BNR
Regiac, Joseph	ARM3	7207917	Unknown	KIA-BNR
Whitener, William A.	ARM3	05571576	Unknown	KIA-BNR

* Killed in Action - Body Not Recovered

CIRCUMSTANCES OF LOSS On 16 June 1945, PB4Y-1 (BUNO 38913) with a crew of 11 departed U.S. Army Air Field, Palawan, P.I. for a patrol mission over the Makassar Straits. Aircraft from the VPB-111 squadron were tasked with conducting long-range reconnaissance. During the month of June 1945, most patrol flights to the Makassar Straits were extended to maximum distance and served as interdiction flights. When Lieutenant Junior Grade (LTJG) Bass and his crew failed to return to base on 16 June 1945, they were listed as missing in action.

¹ World War II Honor Roll listing for Alden P. Anders, Aviation Radioman Third Class, 8599212, American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC), <https://www.abmc.gov/node/496223#WM28fiLzU4>.

² Individual Deceased Personnel File for ARM3 Alden P. Anders, service number 8599212, Record Group 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, MD; National Archives (NARA), Record Group 38. Accessed via www.fold3.com "VPB-111, War Diary, 6/1-30/45," pp. 3-5 and 9-10, accessed 18 December 2012.

On 17 June 1945, three special searches of the general loss area produced no evidence of the aircraft or crew.³

SEARCH AND RECOVERY: Message traffic dated 15 October 1945 detailing the results of a Makassar investigation into downed airmen referenced a USN B-24 aircraft (equivalent of the PB4Y-1) shot down over Makassar Harbor on 16 June 1945. It states that five (5) crewmembers and a flight jacket for ENS Stretcher washed up on break water and were buried, four (4) additional individuals were washed onto the mainland and buried in an unknown location by indigenous personnel, one (1) unknown was buried in the Makassar cemetery on 19 June 1945, and one (1) "Blond Slender Survivor" was reportedly taken to the "Gestapo" (likely the Kempeitai) and his fate was unknown.⁴ This message makes no specific reference as to who buried the crewmembers, but it is implied that all were recovered by indigenous personnel. No additional references could be located relative to these findings.

After the war, the American Graves Registration Service (AGRS) recovered the remains (date unknown) of ENS Stretcher and six (6) additional unknown individuals initially interred at the Makassar Christian Cemetery and had them reinterred at the United States Military Cemetery, Barrackpore, Bengal, India. The six unknowns were listed as Barrackpore X-157, X-165, X-166, X-168, X-170, and X-171. The AGRS report states that based on information obtained by their search and recovery party, the remains are associated with the crew of a B-25 aircraft and requested that all aircraft crash files be searched for a possible correlation.⁵ No records detailing their interment at the Makassar Christian Cemetery could be located. It should be noted that the place of death recorded for ENS Stretcher and the unknown remains is POW Camp Makassar.⁶ Ensign Stretcher was reportedly identified by a marker over his grave at the Makassar Christian Cemetery and a notation was made on his report of interment in Barrackpore that no skull or mandible was present for dental charting.⁷ Based on this information, a circumstantial identification of ENS Stretcher based on the presence of his flight jacket is presumed. In 1947, those associated unknowns with dental evidence present (X-157, X-168, and X-170) were referred to the Dental Professional Division, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Navy Department, for comparison with the dental records of the BuNo 38913 crew. No definitive identifications could be made.⁸ On November 22, 1949, the remaining 10 crewmembers remains were declared non-recoverable after all applicable unknown leads had

³ National Archives (NARA), Record Group 38. Accessed via www.fold3.com "VPB-111, War Diary, 6/1-30/45," pp. 3-5 and 9-10, accessed 18 December 2012.

⁴ Message to General Headquarters, U.S. Army Forces, Pacific Adjunct General's Office, Radio and Cable Center, Message, 15 October 1945, IDPF for ARM3 Anders.

⁵ "Transmittal of Report of Reinterment" 16 November 1946, IDPF for LTJG Bass. It should be noted that the B-25 designator was incorrect as BuNo 38913 was a PB4Y.

⁶ Report of Interment (WD QMC Form 1042), 12 November 1946, IDPF for ENS Stretcher; QMC Forms 1044 in files of X-157, X-165, X-166, X-168A-D, X-170, and X-171.

⁷ Report of Interment (WD QMC Form 1042), 12 November 1946, IDPF for ENS Stretcher.

⁸ Memorandum to "Commanding Officer, American Graves Registration Service, India-Burma Zone," 7 April 1947, IDPF for LTJG Bass.

been investigated with negative results.⁹ The unknown remains subsequently designated as Barrackpore X-157, X-165, X-166, X-168A, X-168B, X-168C, X-168D, X-170, and X-171 were permanently interred at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, Honolulu, Hawaii.¹⁰

* Between March and April 2016, a Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) Research and Investigation Team (RIT) visited Makassar, South Sulawesi Province, Sulawesi Island, Indonesia. This team's focus was the investigation of nine aircraft losses in and around Makassar Harbor, including ARM3 Anders' PB4Y-1. While in Makassar, the team met with an "arkeolog bawah air Indonesia" (Indonesian underwater archaeologist) who supplied the DPAA team with a description and coordinates of what may be a WWII bomber, which crashed between the islands of Samalona and Lae Lae in the vicinity of Makassar Harbor. However, no information on possible burials of US personnel were obtained and records for the wartime Makassar Christian Cemetery are non-existent.

DPAA is aware of six B-24s/PB4Y-1s that crashed in and around the Makassar Harbor, in addition to another four U.S. aircraft (three P-38s and one PBY-5) that were also lost in the same area.

NEXT STEPS: This case will be evaluated for Disinterment to exhume and test the unknown remains originally thought to be the crewmembers of this aircraft (X-157, X-165, X-166, X-168A, X-168B, X-168C, X-168D, X-170, and X-171). DPAA must have 60% of the Family Reference Samples (FRS) on file for missing individuals associated with a Case before the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness will consider a disinterment request. In the case of these unknown remains, six (6) of ten (10) FRSs are required to process the request. As of March 2017, DPAA was in possession of one (1) of the FRSs required: the maternal FRS for ARM3 Alders.

March 2017
PEG/TCK

⁹ Memoranda to "Bureau of Naval Personnel," 22 November 1949, IDPFs for LTJG Bass, LTJG Dernberger, ARM3 Anders, ARM1 Graham, ARM3 Kivitt, AMM3 Mitchell, AMM1 Philpott, AOM3 Pringle, ARM3 Regiac, and ARM3 Whitener.

¹⁰ Disinterment Directive (WD QMC Form 1194), in files of X-157, X-165, X-166, X-168A-D, X-170, and X-171; QMC Forms 1044 in files of X-157, X-165, X-166, X-168A-D, X-170, and X-171. During the processing of the X-168 casket, it was discovered that it contained the remains of four individuals. These remains were separated and re-designated as X-168A-D.

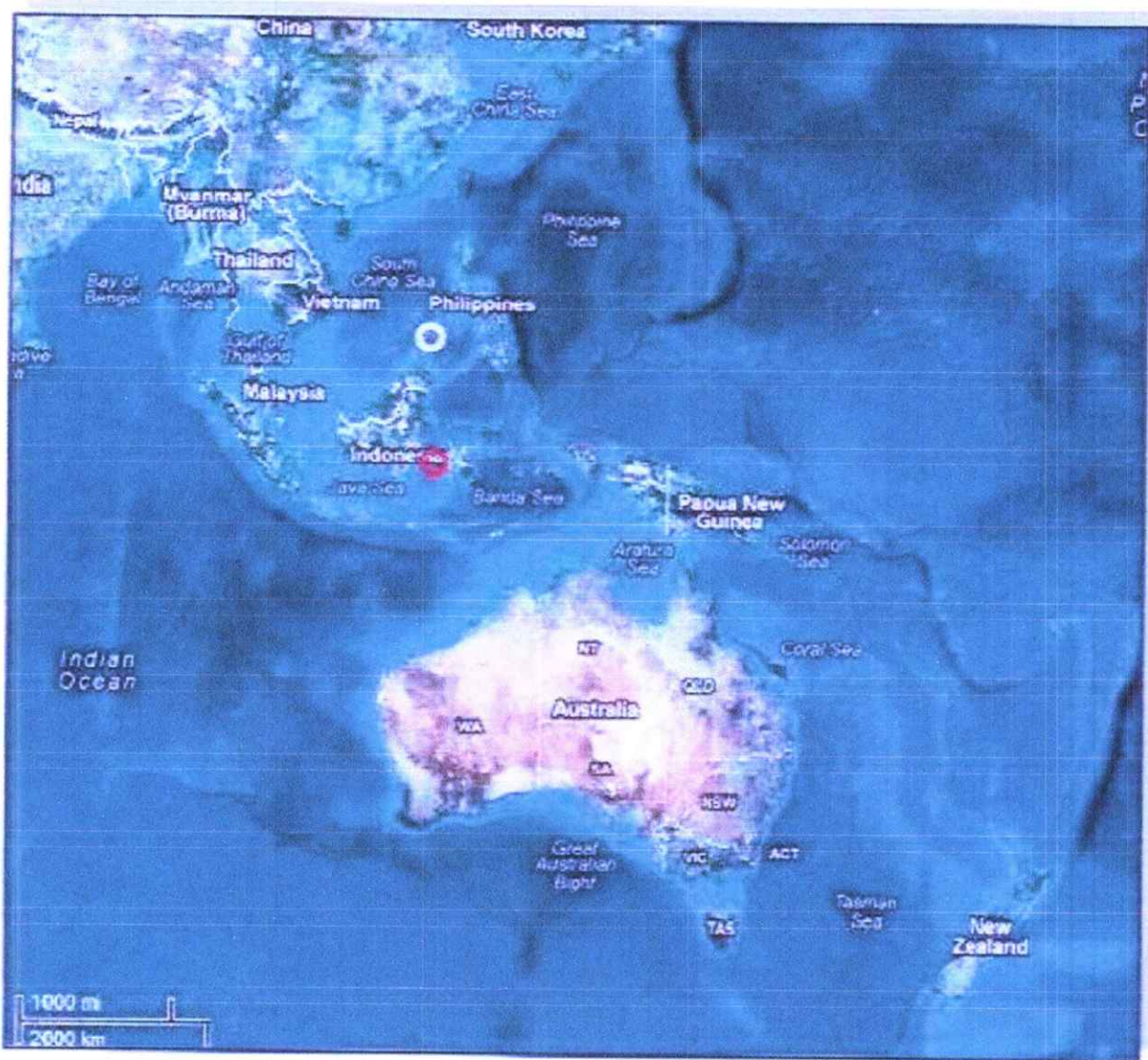


Figure 1. Satellite imagery of the Pacific, showing key locations related to ARM3 Anders' loss. His PB4Y-1 left Palawan Island (yellow) on 16 June 1945 for patrol in the Makassar Strait (red), Netherlands East Indies (modern-day Indonesia).