

**SPECIAL
7AM
EDITION**

Herald Sun

27 AUSSIES KILLED IN MISSILE ATTACK



295 DEAD

**Malaysia Airlines flight
MH17 blasted from sky
over Ukraine war zone**

**Surface-to-air
rocket brought
jet down**

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27 AUSSIES ON

Passport found in plane wreckage

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AND ALEX WHITE

TWENTY seven Australians were among the 295 people killed when a Malaysian airliner flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur crashed in Ukraine in the early hours of this morning after reportedly being shot down by rebels.

The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade earlier admitted it had grave concerns that a number of Australians may have been on board. It was later confirmed by airline authorities that 27 Australians were on the flight.

At least one Australian passport was reported to have been found among the wreckage.

If you hold concerns for the welfare of family members, you should call DFAT's 24-hour Consular Emergency Centre on 1300 555 135.

The plane went down 40km from the Russian border in a fire ball followed by a cloud of thick black smoke after 1.20am (Victorian time).

The Boeing 777 departed Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam on Thursday and was carrying 280 passengers and 15 crew.

Malaysian Airlines confirmed it lost contact with the plane three hours later, at 1am Victorian time.

Ukraine's Interior Minister Anton Gerashchenko was quoted as saying the plane had been shot down by a ground-to-air missile.

Footage shows bodies strewn across the crash site with their belongings also scattered on the paddock over a wreckage site stretching 16km.

The plane appeared to have broken up before impact.

Body parts and the belongings of passengers — were scattered over a wide area.

Families of loved ones gathered at airports across the globe awaiting to hear any information, but it is understood there are no survivors.

Media photos confirmed 22 bodies in the wreckage.

The US have confirmed 23 citizens on the plane while up to 10 UK citizens are expected to be onboard.

The passenger list has not yet been released, but France's foreign minister said four French nationals were on the



Akmar Binti Mohd Noor, 67, whose sister was onboard Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 from Amsterdam, cries outside the family holding area at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport. Relatives were also given support in Amsterdam (below).



plane. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko called the downing an act of terrorism and called for an international investigation into the crash.

Early reports say the plane was hit by a Buk Missile — a family of weapons which is self-propelled, medium-range surface-to-air missile systems. They fire up to an altitude of 22,000 metres. NATO often refers to them as Grizzlys and the US Department of Defence calls them SA-17s.

The village of Grabovo close to the wreckage, is under the control of the separatists and the area has seen severe fighting between the two sides in recent days.

Oleg Tsarev, one of the

leaders of the breakaway Donetsk People's Republic, said the rebels did not shoot down the plane.

"We don't have weapons that can take down a plane from that altitude," he said, minutes after news of the crash broke.

But there are reports that rebels did have an anti-aircraft military station and the Russian state media even congratulated the rebels on their new Russian-made BUK missile launchers seized from a Ukrainian air force base.

"The Donetsk resistance fighters have captured an anti-aircraft military station," the Kremlin's main television network Vesti announced.

Since then there has been

regular downings of Ukrainian aircraft, including an AN-26 military transport plane shot down on Monday. Its four crew members were taken hostage after they ejected from the aircraft, rebels later confirmed.

A raft of global airlines, including Air France, Turkish Airlines and Lufthansa, swiftly responded to the disaster by saying they would avoid airspace over eastern Ukraine.

The plane's black box has reportedly been recovered from the wreckage by Pro-Russian separatists in Eastern Ukraine, according to Interfax.

Malaysia's Prime Minister, Najib Razak, reacted on Twitter saying: "I am shocked by reports that an MH plane

crashed. We are launching an immediate investigation."

Malaysia Airlines confirmed it received notification from Ukrainian ATC that it had lost contact with flight MH17, approximately 50km from the Russia-Ukraine border.

"Flight MH17 operated on a Boeing 777 departed Amsterdam at 12.15pm (Amsterdam local time) and was estimated to arrive at Kuala Lumpur International Airport at 6.10am (Malaysia local time) the next day," the statement said.

US President Barack Obama said his first priority was to determine if any American civilians were on board the doomed flight.

"It looks like might be a terrible tragedy," he said.

"The United States will offer any assistance we can to help determine what happened, and why."

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko said his country's army did not shoot down any airborne targets and those behind the catastrophe would be caught.

"It is not an incident, not a catastrophe, but a terrorist act," Poroshenko's press secretary Svatoslav Tsegolko said. The Ukrainian government and the pro-Russia separatists it is fighting in the region denied shooting down a plane. The plane disappeared from radar when flying at 10,000 metres.

THERE IS NO CARS GUIDE IN THIS SPECIAL EDITION OF THE HERALD SUN

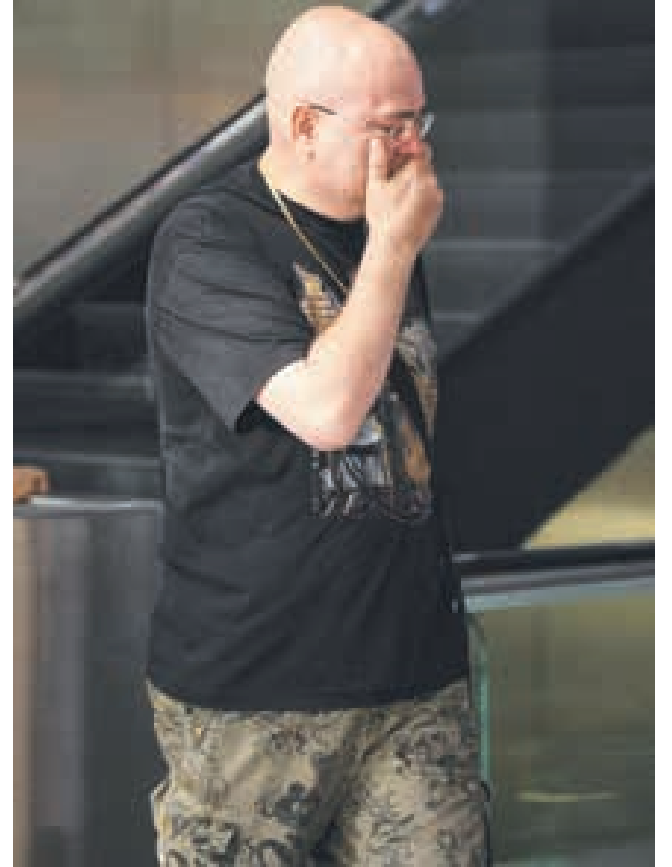
DEATH FLIGHT





THE HORROR





Wreckage of the doomed flight Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 was strewn over a 16km radius near the Ukraine-Russia border, as relatives in Amsterdam (above) reacted to the tragic news and Ukrainians laid flowers outside the Dutch embassy in Kiev (bottom).



AND TRAGEDY

