

Carl Bialek, Jr.

Born: April 30, 1915

Hometown: New Hackensack, NY

Class: 1939 - USMMCC Cadet Officer
1938 - New York MMA

Service: USN

Position / Rank: Ensign

Date / Place of death: November 2, 1941 / Near Krisuvik, Iceland

Date / Place of burial: November 2, 1941 / Near Krisuvik, Iceland

Age: 26



After graduating from New York Merchant Marine Academy, Carl Bialek sailed as a Cadet Officer (Engineer) aboard the SS American Traveler until early 1939. Crew lists on file in New York, NY indicate that he signed on aboard the passenger ship SS Manhattan as a Junior Licensed Engineer on April 28, 1939 at New York, NY. The last crew list entry for him on the SS Manhattan was upon the ship's arrival in New York on November 15, 1939. He subsequently applied for and received his commission as Ensign, U.S. Naval Reserve and was ordered to active duty. He completed naval aviation training on April 25, 1941 and was assigned to fly seaplanes.



PBM-1 "Mariner"

Ensign Carl Bialek was a crew member (either co-pilot or navigator) of a Navy Martin PBM-1 "Mariner" (Serial #1248) seaplane that crashed into a mountainside while returning to its base in Keflavik, Iceland, on November 2, 1941. The aircraft was assigned to Patrol Squadron Seventy Four (VP-74), an element of the pre-World War II "Neutrality Patrol" in the North Atlantic. During the two weeks preceding the crash the USS Kearny (DD 432) had been torpedoed and the USS Reuben James (DD 245) sunk by U-Boats while on Neutrality Patrol.

According to the crash report,

“The plane crashed as a result of insufficient and unreliable aids to navigation under instrument flying conditions. The pilot maintained his course on the assumption that it was a safe course based on the radio-direction finder bearing on Reyjtjanes Point, which bearing was incorrect.”

Ensign Carl Bialek, Ensign Carl M. Thornquist, USNR, Second Lieutenant William P. Robinson, USA and all nine enlisted crewmen on board were killed in the crash.

Carl Bialek, the son of Carl Bialek and Bertha Bialek, grew up on the family poultry farm near Wappinger's Falls in Dutchess County, NY. The couple had a daughter Martha, Carl's older sister, who worked as a bookkeeper.