

Mayport Honors USS Stark

From Staff

A ceremony of remembrance will be held at Mayport's Memorial Park on Tuesday, May 17 to honor the Sailors who were killed aboard the guided-missile frigate USS Stark (FFG 31) 24 years ago.

On May 17, 1987, while on patrol in the Arabian Gulf, 37 Sailors died when two Iraqi missiles struck USS Stark. Despite the severe damage inflicted, the heroic efforts of Stark's crew saved the ship. Stark was decommissioned at Mayport in 1999. In order to preserve the tradition once the ship was retired, the Naval Order of the United States, North Florida Commandery, assumed sponsorship for the memorial service.

Several members of the 1987 crew of Stark will attend the service. The service will feature accounts of some of the events that occurred following the attack, both aboard ship and here in Mayport, from crew and volunteers who worked to provide information and

support services to the families of crew members.

David Brangaccio, a Stark crewmember, will serve as guest speaker for the observance.

Brangaccio is a native of Easton, Connecticut. He graduated from The Citadel in May 1984 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration and was commissioned as an officer in the Navy Reserve.

He reported aboard USS Stark (FFG-31) in April 1985 as Ordnance Officer after attending standard pipeline schools. While aboard Stark, he participated in Great Lakes Cruise '85 and conducted various operations throughout the western Atlantic before deploying to the Persian Gulf aboard STARK as its Main Propulsion Assistant.

Brangaccio was on board Stark in May of 1987 when the ship was struck by two Iraqi air-to-surface missiles. Subsequent to the missile attack, he led a repair team responsible for

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dewatering efforts over large areas of the ship.

Brangaccio left active service in September 1987 and joined the Reserve Component in 1991. He served in various leadership capacities over a 20 year reserve career, including tours as Commanding

Officer, NR AOE-4 Detrit DET 204, assignment to Readiness Command Region Southeast as Assistant Mobilization Officer, and as Executive Officer of SIMA, Mayport DET 308, Harbor Defense Command 206 and NR US EUCOM DET 208.

He most recently

served as the Plans and Training Officer for Maritime Expeditionary Security Squadron Ten before retiring as a member of Voluntary Training Unit 7474G aboard NAS Jacksonville. In his civilian career, he worked in the fraud prevention unit of major credit card compa-

ny, served as the internal auditor for a division on CSX, and is currently an Operations Director with the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. He works in downtown Jacksonville at the Jacksonville Branch of the bank.

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