

USS Stark Was Attacked 20 Years Ago **Mayport Remembers Stark Crew**

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It has been 20 years since the attack of USS Stark (FFG 31) while on patrol in the southern Persian Gulf. Thirty-seven crewmembers of the Mayport-based ship died in the attack. On May 17, they will be remembered again.

The 20th annual memorial service for USS Stark will be held at Naval Station Mayport's Memorial Park at 10:30 a.m. on May 17.

On May 17, 1987, 37 USS Stark Sailors were killed when two missiles struck the ship without warning after 9 p.m., while the ship was on patrol in the southern Persian Gulf. One missile exploded, causing tremendous damage and immediate fires in the forward part of the ship. Fuel from the second missile intensified the fires, and the crew fought the inferno through the night and the next day. Aided by equipment and fire fighting teams from other

Navy ships, the crew succeeded in saving the ship, but the cost was heavy.

Restored and returned to service in 1988, Stark won two Battle 'E' awards as best ship in the squadron. After the ship was decommissioned in 1999, the Naval Order of the United States and Naval Station Mayport partnered to preserve the observance of this tragic incident that wrought so much misery for the crew members and their families.

The service will feature accounts of some of the events that occurred following the attack, both aboard the ship and here in Mayport, from crew and volunteers and staff who worked to provide information and support services to the families of crew members.

Following the service, there will be a reception hosted by the Naval Order of the United States and the Mayport Council Navy League at the CPO Club.

Several members of the

1987 crew of Stark will attend the service and are planning to hold a reunion in Mayport during the weekend. The following link provides further information: http://groups.msn.com/ussstark/_homepage.msnw?pgmarket=en-us.

Former crew and family members seeking information about the service are encouraged to contact starkmemorial@earthlink.net for further information.