

Stark Memorial Service Today

**By Retired Capt.
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Mayport Council Navy League

The 20th annual memorial service for USS Stark (FFG 31) will be held at Naval Station Mayport's Memorial Park at 10:30 a.m. today (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 firefighting 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.