

THE USS STARK

Gone but not forgotten

Twenty years ago on this date, a terrible mistake was made.

The Iran-Iraq war was in its seventh year, and an Iraqi pilot spotted what he thought was an enemy ship.

It was, unfortunately, the Mayport-based USS Stark — which was on a routine patrol in the Persian Gulf.

Two missiles were fired.

The second, according to the on-line History News Network, “exploded, creating a 3,500-degree fireball that turned most of the 37 American victims of the attack into ash.”

Senseless. Tragic.

But that sometimes happens in a

war zone.

As President Reagan promptly told the American people, according to his online presidential library, “The hazards to our men and women in uniform in the defense of freedom can never be understated.”

“The officers and crew of the USS Stark,” he added, “deserve our highest admiration and appreciation.”

They did then. And they do now. Those who die in an act of war are heroes — regardless whether they fall victim to combat with the enemy, friendly fire or, in this case, mistaken identity.

Gone? Yes.

Forgotten? Never.

A VERSE FOR TODAY

Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him. — Ecclesiastes 8:6