

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

By Paige Gnnan

Editor

On May 17, 1987, the United States people and Naval Station Mayport suffered one of the darkest days of the decade after 37 Sailors aboard USS Stark (FFG 31) were killed in an unprovoked attack on the ship by Iraq.

More than 200 people gathered at Naval Station Mayport's Memorial Park last Thursday to remember and commemorate the 20th anniversary of the attack.

Dozens of former crewmembers and their families reunited with active duty Sailors and guests to fulfill the promise made by the base 20 years prior to "never forget."

Coordinated by the Naval Order of the United States, the Mayport Council Navy League and NS Mayport, the memorial service included tributes by surviving crewmembers and family members of fallen Sailors.

Crewmembers spoke about the heroism shown that day and how the incident strengthened the bonds of shipmates.

The ship was struck the evening of May 17 by two missiles while it was on patrol in the southern Persian Gulf. According to retired Capt. Pete Wynkoop, "one missile exploded, causing tremendous damage and immediate fires in the forward part of the ship. Fuel from the second missile intensified



-Photos by MC1 Toiete Jackson
Commanding Officer, Naval Station Mayport, Capt. Charles P. King welcomes former USS Stark crewmembers, their families and guests to the USS Stark (FFG 31) 20-year anniversary memorial.

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." The ship was able to limp back into port in Bahrain for

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Former USS Stark (FFG 31) crewmember, Bernard Martin, performs the tolling of the bell, in memory of his fallen shipmates who lost their lives 20 years ago, during the USS Stark memorial ceremony. Martin was a crewmember 1984-1987. The guided missile frigate USS Stark (FFG 31) was on routine patrol in the Arabian Gulf May 17, 1987, when two Iraqi missiles struck the ship, killing 37 Sailors. Despite the severe damage inflicted, the heroic efforts of the Stark's crew saved the ship and was later decommissioned in 1999.



Former USS Stark (FFG 31) crewmember Tim Martineau read the names of the fallen Sailors during tolling of the bell at the USS Stark 20-year anniversary memorial ceremony.