



Stark service honors fallen shipmates

From staff

A ceremony of remembrance will be held at Mayport's Memorial Park on May 17 at 10 a.m. to honor the Sailors who were killed aboard the guided-missile frigate USS Stark 13 years ago.

The guest speaker will be (retired) Capt. John Mitchell, USN. Mitchell was Commanding Officer, Naval Station Mayport at the time of the attack.

While on patrol in the Persian Gulf on May 17, 1987, 37 Sailors died when Stark was struck by two Iraqi missiles. Despite the severe damage inflicted on the ship, the heroic efforts of Stark's crew saved the ship.

Stark was decommissioned 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.

Mayport's Memorial Park was established Aug. 1, 1987, with the dedication of the Stark monument. Just a few steps away, the names of 23 USS Saratoga Sailors who gave their lives for their country during the Persian Gulf War are inscribed in a separate memorial.

In case of inclement weather, the service will be held at the Naval Station Mayport Chapel.