

THE EXOCET MISSILE



Specifications:

Designed to be air-launched against naval surface targets

Length: 15.5 feet (approx)

Diameter: 14 inches

Wing span: 3.3 feet (approx)

Weight: 1,441 pounds

Warhead: 363 pounds

Propulsion: 2-stage solid rocket motor

Range: 31-43 miles, depending on launch aircraft's height and speed

Flight speed: High subsonic (Mach 0.93)

Guidance: Inertial and active radar homing

Source: Jane's Weapons Systems 1986-87

THE COMMANDER

Associated Press

The commander of the USS Stark began his 22-year Navy career in Vietnam, gained his first command in 1973 and served for more than three years as an instructor at the Naval Academy.

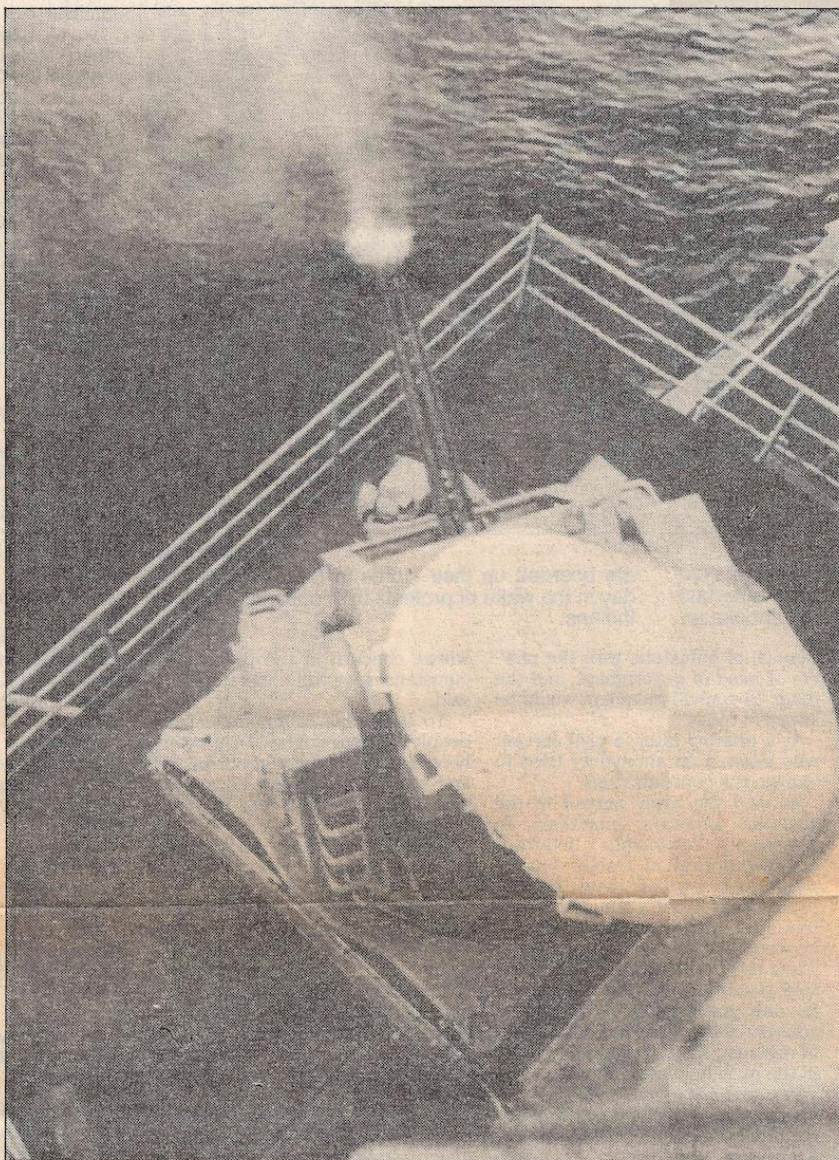
Cmdr. Glenn R. Brindel, 43, has commanded the Stark since June 1984. The Pittsburgh native lives in Norfolk, Va., with his wife, Donna, and their son, Jason.

Brindel's status after the Persian Gulf attack was not known. A man who answered the phone at the Brindel's home in Norfolk said Mrs. Brindel hadn't heard from her husband since the incident and didn't wish to comment.

After graduating from Penn State University, Brindel was commissioned into the Navy in 1965. He served as a weapons officer on the USS Garrett County as part of Operation Game Warden in Vietnam from October 1965 to March 1967.

Among his many honors have been the Meritorious Service Medal, the Bronze Star and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry.

His first command was the USS Chehalis in 1973, before he moved on to an instructor's post at the Naval Academy from 1975 to 1978. He served two years each on the staff of the director for the Research, Development, Test and Evaluation Office of the Chief of Naval Operations and as project manager at the Naval Sea Systems Command.



Missile defense not used

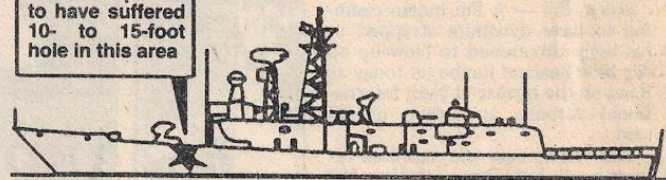
A Vulcan-Phalanx weapons system fires in this file photograph. The USS Stark is equipped with the Phalanx, but did not fire a round at the two incoming Exocet missiles Sunday. One of the Exocets, fired from an Iraqi plane, hit the left side of the Stark. The Phalanx is

capable of firing 3,000 rounds per minute and is designed as a shipboard defense against missiles like the Exocet. Operators aboard the ship target missiles with the Phalanx and fire, trying to blow up the missile before it reaches the ship.

— Associated Press

THE SHIP

Vessel reported to have suffered 10- to 15-foot hole in this area



Frigate's assignment: Protect others in fleet

By Francis X. Donnelly

Staff writer

When the Mayport-based USS Stark was launched on May 30, 1980, it was designed to protect other vessels.

But an Iraqi aircraft attack Sunday that killed 28 Stark crew members in the Persian Gulf did not involve a ship being aided by the guided-missile frigate. The attack was aimed directly at the Stark.

"Anything can happen in that part of the world," said Dan McDonnell, general manager of the Seattle-based Todd Pacific Shipyards Corp., which built the ship. "Nobody is immune to that kind of thing."

McDonnell described the \$200 million frigate as a versatile World War II-type ship with modern equipment.

It was designed to protect itself and other ships from submarines, surface ships and aircraft, McDonnell said.

The ship is equipped with forward missile launchers, a 76mm gun and a Phalanx weapon system that includes a radar-directed, rapid-fire Gatling gun used to shoot down enemy missiles.

"It's a very effective small ship," McDonnell said from his office in Seattle. "It basically protects ships that can't protect themselves."

It took Todd Pacific Shipyards three years to build the 445-foot, 3,585-ton ship — one of 51 Oliver Hazard Perry-class frigates built for the Navy. The USS Oliver Hazard Perry — the first of them — was

launched in September 1976.

"We put a lot of sweat into it," said Steve Stanford, a spokesman for Todd Pacific. "This was one of our babies. But we're especially worried about the people who were hurt."

Once completed, the Stark was commissioned in Seattle in October 1982. It was recommissioned at Mayport three months later for the relatives of crew members.

A full crew on the ship, including the helicopter detachment, would be 210 men, according to Jane's Fighting Ships.

The Stark also is equipped with two triple torpedo tubes and carries two antisubmarine warfare helicopters and crews.

The helicopter detachment assigned to the Stark is from the Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron Light 32 in Norfolk, Va.

Powered by twin gas turbine engines, the 40,000-horsepower ship could move at up to 30 knots.

The frigate is named for Adm. Harold R. Stark, who commanded the USS West Virginia and several other ships before World War II. Stark, who died in 1972, commanded Navy forces in Europe in 1942.

McDonnell, who attended the ship's commissioning in Seattle five years ago, said the ceremony was touching — especially in light of yesterday's attack.

"Some of the people who were on the ship then were probably on it now," he said. "I got to know some of them over the years. I can only wonder how they're doing."