

# Waycross sailor rescued after 8 hours in gulf

By Terry Dickson  
Staff writer

WAYCROSS, Ga. — There is a swimming pool in Tom Porter's back yard, one that his son Tim seldom used.

But, fortunately, Navy Seaman Tim Porter can swim.

The 19-year-old sailor spent about eight hours, by his father's estimate, in the Persian Gulf after he fell through a hole blasted in the side of the USS Stark on Sunday by two Iraqi-fired missiles.

Porter said he and his wife, Shirley, received a call from their son about 5:45 p.m. Monday. He was calling from Bahrain.

The call came "after a long, long day," Porter said. "We were ready for it, but we had given up on receiving it."

Porter said he was so overcome at finally hearing his son's voice that he could barely speak, choking on tears.

Tim Porter said he could not talk long because others were waiting in a long line to call home, Porter said.

Porter said he discerned from the brief conversation that his son had been sleep-

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# Sailor saved after 8-hour swim in gulf

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ing when the ship was struck and that he fell through the hole in the hull into the water.

He was pulled from the water after daylight Monday, Porter said. Because the ship was attacked about 10 p.m. Sunday Persian Gulf time (2 p.m. EDT), his son probably spent about eight hours in the water, he said.

Porter said he doubts his son was wearing any type of life preserver, because he was asleep when the attack occurred.

Looking toward the backyard pool, Porter said, "We bought this house with the pool for him, and he didn't swim in it more than a couple of times, much less clean it."

The large brick home is a short distance from Southwood School, where Tim was graduated two years ago.

The largest photograph on a wall covered with family pictures is an 11-by-14-inch color photo of Tim, who is in the second year of a four-year Navy hitch.

Porter, who works with the National Weather Service in Waycross, said the incident has not made him question U.S. foreign policy or other things he has no power over.

"We're just blessed. We don't know why Tim made it and some of the others didn't," Porter said.

He and his wife always had understood their son would be in danger during cruises near Libya and in the Persian Gulf, and they were sure Tim felt the same anxiety, but none of them voiced it.

"It's something Tim will carry with him all his life. There's a young man who has experienced more horror in a very short time than I ever have," Porter said.

Another Waycross sailor on the ship when it was attacked, Petty Officer 2nd Class Johnny Plowden Jr., 25, was not harmed. He is the son of Jessie Mae Plowden.

Other Georgia families were not as lucky.

Yesterday, the Pentagon listed Dexter Dwayne Grissett, 19, a radioman-seaman's apprentice from Macon, and Petty Officer 3rd Class Charles Thomas Moller, 27, of Columbus among those killed.

Other Georgians got happier news, but some were still awaiting word on their relatives. Six Georgians, including Porter and Plowden, were known to have survived, but the status of two others was unknown yesterday.

The family of Petty Officer 1st Class Richard L. Dove of Columbus said they had been unable to learn whether he was injured. Dove is the son of Dorothy Dove of Columbus.

And Erma Moss of Moultrie, the mother of radioman Al E. Moss, received a 1:30 a.m. call yesterday and was told her son was not among the injured.

This report contains material from The Associated Press.