

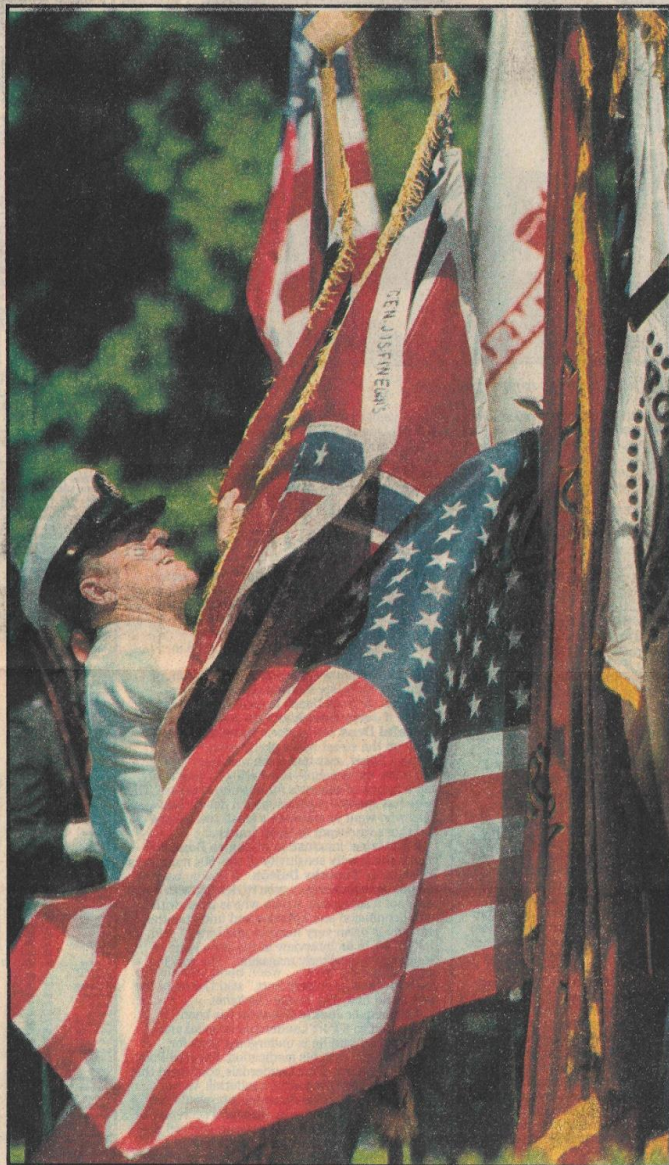
The Florida Times-Union

JACKSONVILLE JOURNAL

JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA **MEMORIAL DAY** MAY 25, 1987

B

Raising the flag for the fallen



Master Chief Charles Seymour of the All Armed Forces Color Guard puts a flag in its stand during the Massing of Colors ceremony at the Jacksonville Memorial Day Observance in Evergreen

Cemetery on Main Street yesterday. Guest speaker Mayor Jake Godbold made an angry statement during the observance about the Iraqi attack on the USS Stark. Stories, Page A-5 and B-1.

Families hold Stark's last goodbye dear

By Laura Griffin
Staff writer

It was a dreary day when the USS Stark shipped out of Mayport in February. Looking back, families who watched the ship leave port remember thick, dark clouds serving as the gray frigate's backdrop.

Marian Dunlap never will forget the day. As she held her 20-year-old son, Jimmy, close to her for the last time, she didn't want to let go.

"I knew the day he went that I'd never see him again," she said. "I just had a feeling."

James Scott Dunlap was not much of a talker at such emotional times as this, his mother said. He was a "character" and he just did what he had to do.

So he hugged his mother, shook his father's hand and turned toward the Stark, waving as he hurried up the ship's ramp in the rain.

Mrs. Dunlap, brand new camera in hand, documented his departure. "I took pictures of him getting on board, standing on the ship and of

the ship leaving the port — all the way till I couldn't see it anymore. And the pictures turned out so clear," she said. "I'm glad. They're something I can hold on to now."

Dunlap was among the 37 men killed aboard the guided-missile frigate when it was attacked by Iraqi missiles on May 17. The Iraqi government has apologized for the attack and maintains that it was an accident.

For the families of the men lost in the fiery blast, it was an accident that unnecessarily ripped their husbands, sons and fathers from their lives with no more than a moment's warning.

It leaves for them the question: Why? But it leaves no real answers. President Reagan told families at a memorial service Friday that they died as heroes, ready to fight for peace.

"Peace is at stake here, and so, too, is our own nation's security."

(See LAST, Page A-14)

Last goodbye more than a memory for families

(From Page A-1)

Were a hostile power ever to dominate this strategic region and its resources, it would become a choke-point for freedom — that of our allies and our own," he said.

"And that's why we maintain a naval presence there. Our aim is to prevent, not to provoke, wider conflict, to save the many lives that further conflict would cost us."

"The fallen sailors of the USS Stark understood their obligations — they knew the importance of their job."

Dunlap's hometown is Osceola Mills, Pa., but he was stationed at Mayport Naval Station for almost a year before he shipped out on the Stark. His two best friends, Martin Supple and Richard Weaver, also were assigned to the Stark and were killed with him in their berths that night.

"They were always doing things together," Mrs. Dunlap recalled. "[Richard's] wife called me and told me, 'Where one is, all three are.' I think she's right."

While on the ship cruising the Persian Gulf, the crew made stops and was given leave to visit beaches and to sightsee in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, where the crew was stationed.

On Mother's Day, although the ship was at sea, the Navy allowed many of the crew to call home from

the ship.

Sailors stood in long lines waiting to get through to the United States. When the phone rang in Osceola Mills, Mrs. Dunlap was taken aback.

"Happy Mother's Day!" Jimmy sang out through the line.

"I can't believe it," Mrs. Dunlap said, unaware it would be their last conversation.

Across the country, 19-year-old Brian Clinefelter's mother in Barstow, Calif., also got a call that day. Her son — described as "laid-back" and "into football and wrestling" — was having a good time in the Middle East.

"He never said he was scared," she said. "He had been going to the beach and doing some things and having fun."

No one would have believed it, if told that a few weeks later, that Reagan would be heralding the Clinefelters at a memorial service for Clinefelter and 36 of his crew mates.

Throughout the ordeal, Reagan later told a crowd of mourners at the service, Clinefelter's father — a Navy man himself — helped get information to other families.

But back on the day Clinefelter left home for the Middle East, he was just another fun-loving kid who liked sitting in the sun at the beach.

On Mother's Day in Jacksonville, Patricia Caouette of Massachusetts, who was taking care of her sick

mother, received no phone call from the ship. But she did get a basket of flowers from her son, Mark, a seaman aboard the Stark.

"I was so surprised," she said. "My husband took a picture of them and I sent one [photo] to Mark and got plastic on the other one so I'll have it the rest of my life to look at."

Mark Robert Caouette, 26, had been an honor student at Assumption College in Massachusetts, where he received a liberal arts degree in art. He was a cartoonist and was always doodling, his mother said. Once in the Navy, his cartoons were of Navy life.

He had been in the Navy two years, enlisting after getting fed up with the job market in the Northeast.

"He was tired of slicing meat in the back of a deli," his mother said. "Once he got in the Navy, he said he might like to pursue it as a career. Of course, that ended last Sunday and there's not much to say about that."

Many men were shot down in the prime of their Navy careers when the two Iraqi missiles tore through the sailor's sleeping quarters.

For Gregory Tweedy of Mayport, 16 years of service ended in a matter of seconds.

The fire-control technician left behind a wife and a 14-year-old son. His wife, Marilyn, said being in the service for so long they had come

to accept the lifestyle and the risks. "He had called Saturday [May 16] before they left," she said. "He was in real good spirits because we had passed the halfway point [of the tour]. It is hard. But waiting for then is part of it when you're in the Navy."

The waiting is the reason for the Navy saying, "There's no tougher job in the Navy than being a Navy wife," Mrs. Tweedy said.

In peacetime, it's simply lonely, wives agree. In wartime, it's nerve-racking because they don't know what to expect, but are prepared for the worst.

So, not only were the wives not expecting any danger for the Stark, but many also were unprepared and left devastated when they heard the news that the ship had been hit by the missiles.

For the next two days, they waited in fear. For many, their fear turned to anguish, pain and emptiness.

The wives of Martin Supple and Richard Weaver waited together in Arlington for word. When it finally came, they learned that they — both in their 20s — were widows.

Supple and his wife had been married two years. They were very much in love and it was the first time they were separated.

Supple, described by his wife, Karen, as funny, kind, patient and "a wonderful husband," called her

the Saturday before the Stark ventured back into the Persian Gulf on May 16.

They both yearned for the Middle East tour to be over.

"He was lonely. ... He said how much he loved me and how he couldn't wait to get home," she said. "He said he knew what it meant now for someone's arms to ache [for someone]."

Her memories of Supple are all Karen has to hold on to now. She always will remember the last time she saw him, standing in the rain with friends, waving goodbye.

The mother of Supple's friend Jimmy Dunlap, Marian Dunlap, has remembered that day time and time again.

The grayness surrounding it will always be captured in the dozens of pictures she took.

And when she recalls the day she knew she would never see her son again, she remembers the faces of Karen Supple and Lori Weaver, the wives of her son's best friends.

"It felt funny when his ship left," Mrs. Dunlap said. "And we were there with Karen and Lori and Lori's hair was in ringlets from the rain and they were crying so hard. I looked around and there were so many little babies and children around. For them, it's worse than for our son, really."

Inside a car away from the tearful crowd, Susan Ryals embraced her

25-year-old husband, Earl, in a private goodbye.

She was worried. He had been in the Navy the year and a half they had been married. She had seen very little of him and wanted him safe so they could start a family when he returned.

The thought of life without him was more than she could bear. She held on tight to those last few moments together.

"When I looked at him walking away, I got this feeling like I hope nothing happened to him," she recalled last week. "What would I do if he never came back? He said, 'Well, I gotta go. Don't worry, nobody's going to shoot at us.'"

The ship prepared to leave. A few minutes more and they would be gone. Nineteen-year-old Kenneth Dale Janusik Jr. watched his buddies leave their wives and children. Then he gave his mother a big hug.

"You know, Mom, I'm glad I'm single, because I don't think I could take it," he told Pat Janusik before he boarded the ship.

"He was always thinking of others," his father said two days before the memorial service last week.

Half a year — that's all they were supposed to be gone. Not really that long in the scheme of things, but, as wives attest, it seems like forever.

For 37, it was. They were loved. They are remembered. They will be missed.