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The Cincinnati Post

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Ship's death toll rises to 37

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon today raised to 37 the death toll in Sunday's attack on the USS Stark as U.S. naval forces patrolled the Persian Gulf under a heightened state of alert.

The number had been 28. Cmdr. Robert Prucha, a Pentagon spokesman, said today that the remains of 22 victims had been positively identified while 15 sailors were missing and presumed dead. The number of injured remained at 21.

Prucha could not say whether the 15 missing were lost overboard or still in the wreckage. "It could be a little bit of both," he said. "We don't have any information right now."

The Pentagon said Monday that most of the sailors who died had been trapped by intense fire in one compartment.

As a result of the Iraqi missile attack, President Reagan on Monday upgraded the alert status and warned both Iran and Iraq their jets will be shot down if they threaten other U.S. ships.

Reagan's response was coupled with a demand that Iraqi president Saddam Hussein's government immediately explain, apologize and compensate the victims' families and the U.S. Navy.

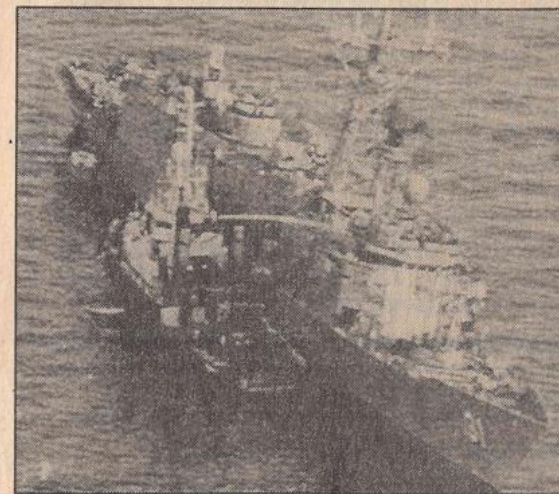
Hussein, in a letter to Reagan delivered to the State Department on Monday, expressed "deepest regret over the painful incident." Presidential spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said: "We feel it does represent an apology. It does not address the matter of compensation."

The White House and Pentagon said the attack, in which one or two missiles were fired, was inadvertent and unexplained. The Pentagon said the ship had at least a minute's warning of the attack by an Iraqi warplane, but did not try to shoot

Please see SHIP, 4A

3A / Friends, relatives in Ohio await information.

3A / Ship had means to deflect attack.



The crippled USS Stark
Being assisted by salvage tug