

Attack on the Stark

Kin of Ohioans on Stark await word

No details known on fate of 7 sailors

Associated Press

Friends and relatives of Ohio sailors on board the USS Stark were getting pieces of information from the Navy but still were waiting today for definite word about the fate of their loved ones.

Matthew William Limbert, 23, of Dayton, was reported uninjured in Sunday's attack, a family friend said Monday night.

Judy Stephens of Pemberton in Shelby County said government officials said the name of her 23-year-old son, Lee, appeared neither on a list of those who were known to be safe or those known dead.

The Pentagon told the family of Michael Nelson, 23, of Columbus, that Michael's name was not on the list of those killed. There was no word Monday night on whether he was injured. Michael's wife, Tracy, gave birth to a girl early Monday morning in Florida.

"He was so anxious about the baby being born. This is his first," said Michael's mother, Maria Nelson. She said Michael telephoned her and her husband Saturday from Bahrain.

Michael's family members lit candles in the front yard of their home while awaiting more information.

The three sailors were among at least seven Ohioans reported by their families to be aboard the Stark, which was hit by an Iraqi missile Sunday night. The Pentagon said 28 sailors were dead and 21 injured in the deadliest attack on a ship in the 7-year-old Iran-Iraq war.

The other Ohioans were Kevin Cummings, 22, of Sandusky; David Foisy, 23, of Lorain; Derrick L. Catley, 20, of Youngstown; and John Kareski, 20, of Akron.



The Associated Press

Relatives of USS Stark crew member Michael Nelson hold candles as they await word. They are,

from the left, his sister Stella Williamson, a friend, Amy Decatur, and Williamson's daughter, Maria, 4.

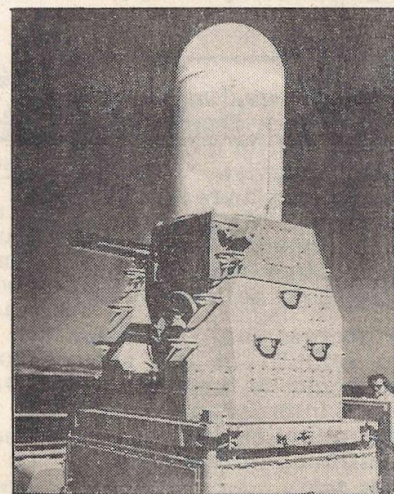
Ship had time, warning, weapons to defend itself

Scripps Howard News Service

WASHINGTON — The USS Stark had the time, warning and weapons to deflect a nighttime Iraqi missile attack that left at least 37 of its crewmen dead but failed to make use of them, according to Vice Adm. Henry Mustin, deputy chief of naval operations for plans, policy and operations. He said Monday he did not know why the systems weren't used.

Air Force Lt. Gen. Richard Burpee, director of operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the Stark had no reason to fear attack, as it was in international waters well south of the Iran-Iraq war zone. He termed the attack "an inadvertent happenstance."

The 200-man frigate carried a sophisticated warning system and four different systems that should have brought down the missile.



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