'Pain, sadness, headshaking'

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Reagan orders Navy to fire at threatening jets

By TERENCE HUNT
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Reagan expressed concern and anger Monday over the Iraqi missile strike that killed 28 American sailors aboard the guided missile frigate Stark.

The president ordered U.S. ships on heightened alert in the Persian Gulf and gave them authority to fire at threatening warplanes.

Part of a U.S. naval task force in the gulf, the Stark was hit Sunday by one — possibly two — French-made Exocet missiles while on routine patrol about 85 miles northeast of Bahrain.

The missile ripped through the ship's aluminum hull, tearing a 10- to 15-foot hole in its port side. Of the 28 sailors killed, 25 were trapped by intense fire in one compartment; 21 others were injured.

"We expect an apology and compensation for the men who died in this tragic incident," a White House statement said. "We also seek compensation for the ship."

A letter from Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to Reagan was delivered to the State Department, expressing "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."

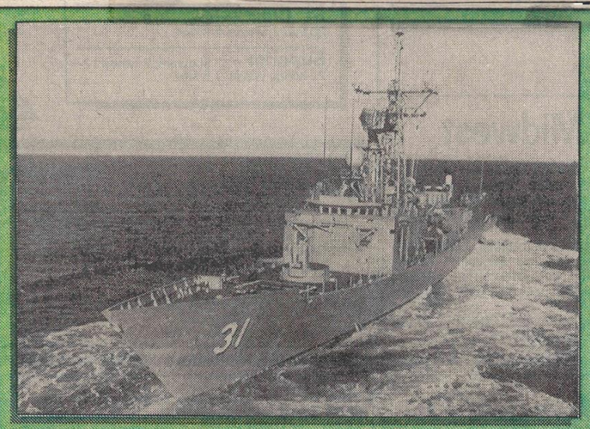
It was the first attack on an American warship in the nearly 7-year-old Iran-Iraq war. Iraqi Ambassador Nizar Hamdoon called it an inadvertent error.

"I think it happens in every air force in the world, in every army in the world, that mistakes do happen," Hamdoon said in an interview on Cable News Network. "We have expressed our condolences."

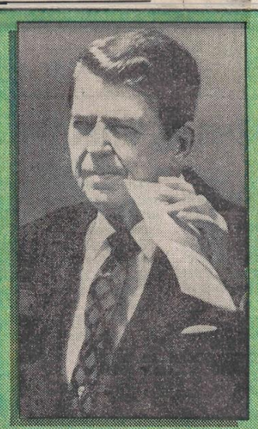
"We don't know why this occurred," said Air Force Lt. Gen. Richard Burpee, director of operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

"As we speak, the captain is trying to save his ship," said Vice Adm. Henry Mustin, deputy chief of naval operations. He said fires were still breaking out on the ship 24 hours after the night attack.

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■ **At sea:** Under tow and listing in the Persian Gulf, the USS Stark — above in a file photo — is en route to Bahrain. Iraqi missile left 28 crewmen dead, 21 missing and a huge hole in the Stark's left side. The attack was the deadliest single strike in the tanker war between Iran and Iraq in the 600-mile-long Persian Gulf. Before the Stark was hit, the largest death toll was 10 sailors killed in an Iranian attack Oct. 17, 1986, on the Panamanian-registered tanker Five Brooks.



■ **In Washington:** President Reagan expressed "concern and anger" Monday over the Iraqi missile strike and put U.S. ships on heightened alert in the Persian Gulf.



■ **At home:** John P. and Mary A. Haley of Saginaw, whose son John was aboard the frigate, are among Michigan families awaiting word. Joe Watson of Ferndale has been reported killed. The Haleys and families of Terry Quick of Fenton Township and Marshall Hayes of Benton Harbor have heard nothing on the fate of their relatives. At least three other Michigan sailors were reported on board: Steve Irwin of Troy, Charles Allen of Hazel Park and Wayne Fox of Southgate.

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Lansing State Journal

Michigan seaman among casualties on USS Stark



Watson

By C.A. CHIEN
Lansing State Journal

A day of anxious waiting turned to grieving Monday night for Don and Joan Valentine of East Lansing.

The Valentines said they were notified about 11:15 p.m. by Navy officials that their son-in-law, Electronics Technican Joseph P. Watson, 25, of Ferndale, was killed aboard the USS Stark. The Navy ship had been hit by a missile launched by an Iraqi warplane in the Persian Gulf.

"It was frustrating, not knowing," said a tearful Joan Valentine, who moved to 1408 Somerset Close in August after living in St. Johns. Watson's widow, the former Kristin Valentine, 24, is a 1981 St. Johns High School and 1985 Michigan State University graduate who met her husband at MSU three years ago. They were married almost two years ago.

"I'm angry about the uselessness of this tragedy," said Valentine, 45, a state social services official. "What a senseless waste of lives. What are we doing there? Who are we protecting?"

Don Valentine, 49, a St. Johns High School history and music teacher, remembered his son-in-law as "wonderful young man, full of life."

"He was nice person you wanted to be with," he said.

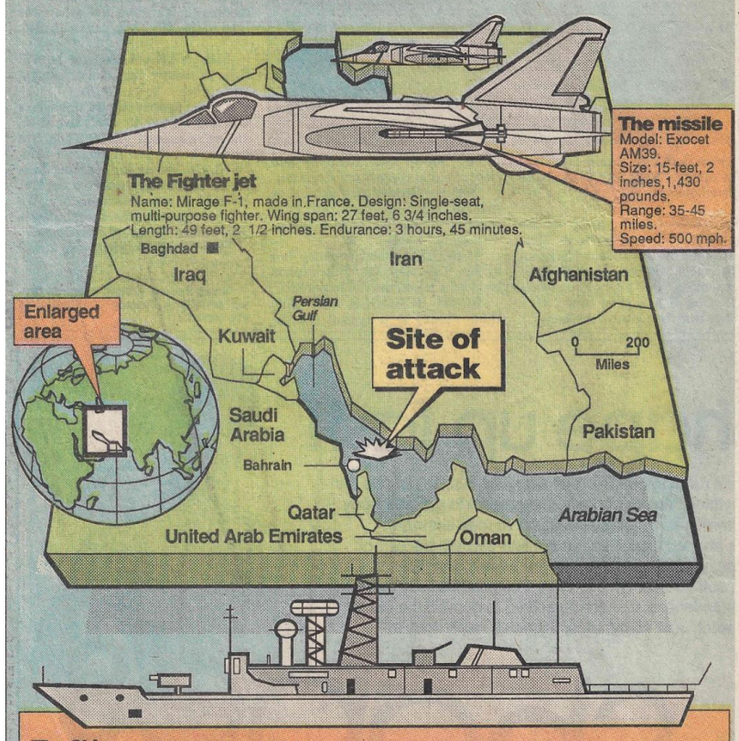
Don Valentine said the last time he was able to reach his daughter was 7:30 a.m.

"She sounded very much in control," he said. "I was impressed she was so calm after all that waiting."

He added the attack on the Stark

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Attack on the USS Stark



The Ship

Role: USS Stark is among several U.S. warships patrolling Persian Gulf. Equipped with missile detection gear, defensive devices. Crew: About 200. Length: 445 feet. Displacement: 3,585 tons, fully loaded. Damage: A hole more than 10 feet wide in the left forward superstructure.

Families From 1A

was a discussion topic in his history class Monday.

"The students had a number of levels of understandings," he said. "Some said, 'Let's bomb them.' I told them that would only leave more people dead."

The Valentines expect to join their daughter in Jacksonville, Fla., the Stark's home port, today or Wednesday. "Her sister has been staying with her, so at least she's not alone," Joan Valentine said.

At least six other Michigan families with sons aboard the warship had heard nothing after the fate of their relatives by late Monday night.

But the family Seaman Third Class David Peterson of Durand received good news. Pamela Peterson said her son telephoned from Italy, saying he had left the ship about a half-hour before the attack that left at least 28 sailors dead.

The families of Electronics Technician Third Class Kelly Quick of Genesee County's Fenton Township near Flint, Petty Officer First Class Marshall Hayes of Benton Harbor and John Thomas Haley of Saginaw, whose 20th birthday was Monday, said they hadn't heard anything about their relatives.

At least three other Michigan sailors were reported on board: Steve Irwin, 22, of Troy; Charles Allen, 23, of Hazel Park; and Wayne Fox, 23, of Southgate.

The families had been trying to contact the State and Defense departments and work through the Michigan congressional delegation to get information about their relatives. But there was little information.

"After 18 hours (it's) very frustrating," said Quick's father, Bob Quick Monday afternoon. "I can't get anybody on the phone."

The Pentagon said an Iraqi warplane fired a French-made missile at the ship, with a crew of about 200, late Sunday night, which was Sunday afternoon in Michigan.

Kelly Quick, a 1984 graduate of Linden High School, had enlisted in the Navy in December of his senior year, and went on active duty the following year, said his father.

"He liked the Navy and he was bound and determined to join," said Bob Quick.

"I'm scared," said Haley's 41-year-old father, John Haley, a Navy enlistee during the Vietnam War era. "The biggest fear is the fear of the unknown. We don't know much, just what we see on the news."

John Haley said his son, a gas-turbine technician, had described in the past how foreign warplanes had locked their weapon systems on the frigate.

'I know the danger of being on a ship. When something happens, there's nothing you can do. But it's so remote," said the elder Haley.

Mildred Hayes, wife of Marshall Hayes, 28, said she and her family are waiting by the phone and trying to be positive.

"We're just praying that he's not one of them (the casualties)," she said. "I don't want to see anybody's husband on the ship die, but I certainly don't want to see mine die."

U.S. Sen. Donald Riegle, D-Mich, said, "The worst part of it is that it could have been prevented and should have been prevented. That ship was not properly escorted and it did not have the protective ships around it that you would expect it to have in a hostile area."

U.S. Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., said, "I have urged the State Department to seek reparations for the loss of American lives resulting from the Iraqi missile attack upon the U.S. Navy frigate the Stark.

"Nothing could compensate the families of those killed aboard the Stark for their tragic loss, but seeking reparations is the least our government can do for them," Levin said.

Pamela Peterson said that her son, David, "didn't even know that (the Stark) had been hit" before arriving in Sicily. Peterson, a clerk, may have to return to the ship during salvage operations, his mother said.

Peterson has a wife and two daughters in Jacksonville.

"We feel very fortunate that our son is alive and we've been on needles and pins all night," said Daniel Peterson, about his son, David.

"We feel for the other parents and we are very upset about the incident. We don't think that should be happening."

The Associated Press contributed to this report.