



-Photo by MC2 Salton Cebe

Naval Station Mayport Command Master Chief Bob White and Stark memorial coordinator Lt. Cmdr. Brian Boone talk with key personnel about last minute logistics of the USS Stark memorial ceremony scheduled for today (May 17) at the Memorial Park. This is the 25th anniversary of the attack on Stark in which 37 crewmembers lost their lives.

Mayport Remembers Fallen Stark Crew

From Staff

A ceremony of remembrance will mark the 25th anniversary of the attack on USS Stark (FFG 31) that cost 37 Sailors their lives.

Each year, NS Mayport hosts a memorial ceremony on May 17 at Mayport's Memorial Park. The ceremony will be at 10 a.m. and guest speaker for this year's event is Rear Adm. David M. Thomas Jr., Commander, Naval Surface Force Atlantic.

On May 17, 1987, while on patrol in the Arabian Gulf, 37

Traffic on Moale Avenue and Main Street will be temporarily re-routed from 9:50-11:30 a.m., along with the enforcement of quiet hours during that time in respect of the ceremony.

Sailors died when two Iraqi missiles struck USS Stark. Despite the severe damage inflicted, the heroic efforts of Stark's crew saved the ship. Stark was decommissioned at Mayport in 1999. In order to preserve the tradition once the ship was retired, the Naval Order of the United States,

North Florida Commandery, assumed sponsorship for the memorial service.

Several members of the 1987 crew of Stark will attend the service. The service will feature accounts of some of the events that occurred following

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the attack, both aboard ship and here in Mayport, from crew and volunteers who worked to provide information and support services to the families of crew members.

Mayport's Memorial Park was established Aug. 1, 1987, with the dedication of the Stark monument.

Thomas, a native of Norfolk, graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1981 and is a distinguished graduate of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces.

Assignments at sea included USS Shreveport (LPD 12) as main propulsion assistant and navigator; engineer officer in USS Estocin (FFG 15) and USS Willamette (AO 180); flag lieutenant to commander, 2nd Fleet; executive officer in USS Leyte Gulf (CG 55); command of USS Ross (DDG 71); and command of Destroyer Squadron 26.

Ashore, Thomas served in the Surface Warfare Junior Officer Assignment

Branch of the Bureau of Naval Personnel; in the Personnel Plans and Policy Division of the Joint Staff; as flag secretary to commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet; on the staff of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations as executive officer to the director of the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review and executive assistant to the director of Operations, Plans, and Policy (N3/N5); and as chief of staff to commander, 2nd Fleet.

Upon selection for flag officer, Thomas has served as the deputy chief of staff for Global Force Management and Joint Operations on the staff of commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command; and commander, Joint Task Force, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; commander, Carrier Strike Group Two; and his current assignment as commander, Naval Surface Force Atlantic.