**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO COMMEMORATE THE TWENTY‑FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRING OF TWO MISSILES FROM AN IRAQI JET ON THE USS *STARK*, WHICH TOOK THE LIVES OF THIRTY‑SEVEN SAILORS IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY.

Whereas, on May 17, 1987, during the Iran‑Iraq War, an Iraqi jet aircraft fired missiles at the USS *Stark*, a *Perry* class American guided missile frigate, resulting in the deaths of thirty‑seven United States Navy personnel and twenty‑one other casualties; and

Whereas, under the command of Captain Glenn R. Brindel, the USS *Stark* was sailing off the Saudi Arabian coast near the Iran‑Iraq War exclusion boundary, the area of sea off Iran and Iraq, as part of the Middle East Task Force; and

Whereas, flying 5,000 feet above the water at 550 miles per hour, the Iraqis attacked with a French‑built Dassault Mirage F1 armed with 1,500 pound Exocet missiles; and

Whereas, when an AWACS plane on patrol nearby, with an American and Saudi Arabian crew, detected the incoming Iraqi jet and informed the *Stark* 200 miles out, Captain Brindel sent a message for the plane to identify itself; and

Whereas, neither that request nor his second one received a reply, and the Iraqi aircraft locked its Cyrano‑IV fire‑control radar onto the ship and fired the first missile from twenty‑two miles away and a second one at fifteen miles; and

Whereas, the jet banked left and began to withdraw, but not until seconds before the first hit, did the Americans realize they were under fire due to the failure of the *Stark*’s search radar and ESM systems to detect the incoming missiles; and

Whereas, the first Exocet struck ten feet above the sea on the port side hull near the bridge, and although it failed to detonate, rocket fuel ignited and caused a large fire that spread throughout the post office, the store room, and the combat operations center; and

Whereas, the second Exocet struck the port side as well and exploded, leaving a ten‑by‑fifteen‑foot hole in the frigate’s side; electronics for the *Stark*’s Standard missile defense went out, and Captain Brindel did not order his men to return fire; and

Whereas, the AWACS plane, still in the area just after witnessing the attack, radioed a nearby Saudi airbase to send aircraft for an interception, but the ground controllers did not have the authority to order a sortie, so the Iraqi jet escaped unharmed; and

Whereas, twenty‑nine sailors were killed in the explosion and fire, eight died later of wounds, and twenty‑one others were wounded. Two Americans of the thirty‑seven were lost at sea; and

Whereas, for the next twenty‑four hours, the Americans fought the fire, and Captain Brindel ordered the starboard side flooded in order to keep the hole on the port side above water, thus enabling the frigate to stay afloat; and

Whereas, the USS *Waddell*, also in the area, answered the distress call sent out by the *Stark* after the first missile hit and provided an escort for the *Stark* as she slowly made her way to Bahrain; and

Whereas, the incident became the first successful anti‑ship missile attack on a United States Navy warship. The Iraqi government later apologized for the attack. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, commemorate the twenty‑fifth anniversary of the firing of two missiles from an Iraqi jet on the USS *Stark*, which took the lives of thirty‑seven sailors in the United States Navy.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Luther James Padgett, who served on the USS *Stark* during the Iraqi attack and survived, and to his son, Jackson Padgett.

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