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PART TWO OF TWO - PART ONE FOR IDENT IS 221222Z MAY 97
NAVNEWS 21/97
MSGID/GENADMIN/CHINFO WASHINGTON/22/MAY//
SUBJ/NAVY NEWS SERVICE//
RMKS/NAVNEWS - 22 MAY 97//
NNS2113. USS GRAPPLE DEPLOYS TO MEDITERRANEAN SEA

NORFOLK (NNS) -- USS GRAPPLE (ARS 53) DEPARTED NAVAL AMPHIBIOUS BASE LITTLE CREEK, VA., MAY 15 FOR A SIX-MONTH DEPLOYMENT TO THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA.

THE 90-MEMBER RECOVERY AND SALVAGE SHIP WILL RELIEVE USNS POWHATAN AS THE NAVY'S RECOVERY AND SALVAGE SHIP IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.

GRAPPLE WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN THE RECOVERY OF WRECKAGE FROM TWA FLIGHT 800 AFTER IT CRASHED OFF THE COAST OF LONG ISLAND, N.Y., LAST JULY.

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NNS2114. USS STARK MEMORIAL SERVICE HONORS FALLEN SHIPMATES

MAYPORT, FLA. (NNS) -- A CEREMONY OF REMEMBRANCE TO HONOR SAILORS KILLED ABOARD USS STARK (FFG 31) TEN YEARS AGO WILL BE HELD MAY 16 AT MAYPORT, FLA.'S, MEMORIAL PARK.

WHILE ON PATROL IN THE PERSIAN GULF MAY 17, 1987, 37 SAILORS DIED WHEN THE GUIDED-MISSILE FRIGATE WAS STRUCK BY TWO IRAQI MISSILES. DESPITE THE SEVERE DAMAGE INFLICTED ON THE SHIP, THE HEROIC EFFORTS OF STARK'S CREW SAVED THE SHIP. STARK IS CURRENTLY DEPLOYED TO SOUTHERN EUROPE.

MAYPORT'S MEMORIAL PARK WAS ESTABLISHED AUG. 1, 1987, WITH THE DEDICATION OF THE STARK MONUMENT. JUST A FEW STEPS AWAY ANOTHER MONUMENT CARRIES THE NAMES OF 23 SAILORS FROM USS SARATOGA (CV 60) WHO LOST THEIR LIVES IN A 1990 BOAT ACCIDENT IN HAIFA, ISRAEL.

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NNS2115. RESERVE AIR SQUADRON PARTICIPATES IN LIVE-FIRE EXERCISE

NAVAL AIR STATION WHIDBEY ISLAND, WASH. -- NAVAL RESERVISTS FROM PATROL SQUADRON (VP) 69 FLEW TWO P-3 AIRCRAFT FROM NAVAL AIR STATION WHIDBEY ISLAND, WASH., TO NAS BARBERS POINT, HAWAII, TO

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TAKE PART IN COMBINED TASK FORCE-12 SINKEX.

THE EXERCISE, OFF THE COAST OF KAUAI, CALLED FOR PARTICIPATING UNITS TO FIRE MISSILES AND DROP BOMBS ON A DECOMMISSIONED NAVY DESTROYER, THE EX-USS EDWARDS (DD 950).

PILOT LCDR MIKE SHEEDY, CO-PILOT LCDR MIKE STINSON AND TACTICAL COORDINATOR LCDR JOE ENGMAN FIRED A LIVE AIR-TO-SURFACE HARPOON MISSILE THAT SCORED A PERFECT BULL'S EYE HIT TO THE CENTER HULL.

SINKEX ALSO INVOLVED HELO DETACHMENTS, ACTIVE-DUTY SQUADRONS VP-1, 4 AND 47, AND A FOUR-SHIP CANADIAN TASK GROUP.

-USN-

NNS2116. NAVY ENDS TWA FLIGHT 800 RECOVERY OPERATIONS
BY JOC DAVE FLIESEN, NAVSEA PUBLIC AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON -- U.S. NAVY SALVAGE AND DIVING OPERATIONS IN SUPPORT OF THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD'S RECOVERY OF TWA FLIGHT 800 CONCLUDED AT 1 P.M. (EDT) ON MAY 18, ENDING ONE OF THE NAVY'S MOST EXTENSIVE IN-WATER RECOVERY OPERATIONS. NAVY AT-SEA RECOVERY OPERATIONS HAD BEEN ONGOING SINCE THE AIRCRAFT CRASHED OFF LONG ISLAND ON THE EVENING OF JULY 17, 1996, RESULTING IN THE DEATHS OF 230 PASSENGERS AND CREW MEMBERS.

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THE NAVY'S SUPERVISOR OF SALVAGE AND DIVING (SUPSALV) ASSISTED THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION AND SAFETY BOARD (NTSB) AND FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION IN MANY FACETS OF THE COMPLEX INVESTIGATION INTO THE CAUSE OF THE TRAGEDY. IN THE FIRST DAYS FOLLOWING THE CRASH, THE NAVY DEPLOYED SHIPS AND CONTRACTED VESSELS TO CONDUCT A DETAILED SURVEY OF THE AREA TO LOCATE AND MAP THE DEBRIS FIELD.

MORE THAN 250 NAVY DIVERS FROM 20 SEPARATE COMMANDS, JOINED BY THEIR COUNTERPARTS FROM NUMEROUS LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES, WORKED TIRELESSLY AROUND THE CLOCK TO RECOVER THE REMAINS OF VICTIMS AND WRECKAGE. NAVY RECOVERY OPERATIONS WERE DIRECTED BY RADM EDWARD KRISTENSEN, COMMANDER, LOGISTICS GROUP TWO.

REMAINS OF 216 OF THE 230 VICTIMS WERE RECOVERED, WITH 111 VICTIMS RECOVERED FROM THE OCEAN FLOOR. MORE THAN 95 PERCENT OF THE AIRCRAFT WAS ULTIMATELY RECOVERED AND DELIVERED TO THE NTSB AND FBI FOR ANALYSIS AND RECONSTRUCTION IN A HANGAR ON LONG ISLAND. DIVING OPERATIONS INCLUDED 4,344 MANNED DIVES TO A DEPTH OF 120 FEET BEFORE THEIR CONCLUSION IN EARLY NOVEMBER 1996.

THE TRAWLING PHASE OF THE WRECKAGE RECOVERY, USING FOUR CONTRACTED SCALLOP TRAWLERS, LASTED THROUGHOUT THE WINTER, ENDING

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IN LATE APRIL. UPON COMPLETION OF THE TRAWLING PHASE, THE NAVY OPERATED ONE OF ITS MINI-ROVS (REMOTELY OPERATED VEHICLES) FROM A CONTRACTED SHIP TO VERIFY THAT NO APPRECIABLE AMOUNT OF AIRCRAFT