

Kind act turns to horror for Russians

Staff Reporters Aug. 26/7/93

AN ACT of hospitality and kindness turned into a nightmare for 140 Russian seamen among the congregation at Kenilworth last night.

Many were seated in the area targetted by the attacker, to the right of the main door.

At least three of the dead were Russian while they also made up a large proportion of injured.

St James church regularly invited sailors to Sunday night services, ferrying them by bus. After the attack the bus waited outside to take survivors back to their ships. Po-

lice inside the church were checking names to establish who was missing.

Mr Dawie Ackermann, 47, whose wife Marita was killed in the attack, said the ministry to the Russians had begun two years ago when men were brought to Cape Town after being stranded on Antarctic pack-ice.

"Tonight, because of the gale, there were many Russians in port. Marita (his wife) was sitting in the front row with them.

"Normally I sit with her, but tonight I saw one of our old Russian friends across the way and went to sit with him."