

New memorial will honor Desert Storm, Shield veterans

By Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel Dailey,
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In August 1988, following a long war between Iran and Iraq, the United Nations was able to negotiate a ceasefire between the two countries.

But almost two years would go by without a peace treaty between the former adversaries.

Peace between Iran and Iraq seemed possible in July 1990, when their foreign ministers met in Geneva, Switzerland. However, just two weeks later, Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein accused neighboring Kuwait of stealing Iraq's oil.

Hussein began positioning his troops along the border of Kuwait, and on Aug. 2, 1990, ordered an invasion. Within 24 hours, Iraq's military occupied its southern neighbor and controlled nearly 30% of the world's oil supply.

Iraq's brutal leader then set his eyes on Saudi Arabia. Hussein's actions were condemned by the majority of the Arab League, and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, along with the government of Kuwait, now in exile, turned to the United States and other members of NATO for help.

On Jan. 17, 1991, the U.S. led coalition forces in the liberation of Kuwait, forming the largest military alliance since World War II. The Gulf War campaign became known as Operation Desert Storm.

Roughly 600,000 American troops were deployed, and nearly 400 gave their lives throughout the campaign.

National memorial

To this day, the U.S. lacks a national memorial dedicated to the courage and sacrifice of the service members who served during Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield.

The idea to change this came about some 20 years later from a group of Desert Storm veterans led by Scott



The memorial will be built at the southwest corner of Constitution Avenue and 23rd Street Northwest, near the Lincoln Memorial and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. (COURTESY PHOTO)

Stump, president and CEO of the National Desert Storm Memorial Association.

They made it their mission to forever honor those who fought in the Gulf War with a national memorial.

For several years, the National Desert Storm Memorial Association has relentlessly pursued its goal of breaking ground on the memorial in 2021 to coincide with the 30th anniversary of Operation Desert Storm.

In 2014, the House of Representatives voted unanimously to authorize construction of the memorial, and then-President Barack Obama signed the law authorizing it to be built in Washington, D.C.

Three years later, President Donald Trump signed a bill authorizing a memorial to be built near the National Mall, and in 2018, a site for the memorial was approved.

The site was dedicated on Feb. 26, 2019. The memorial will be built at the southwest corner of Constitution Avenue and 23rd Street Northwest, near the Lincoln Memorial and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

The National Desert Storm and Desert Shield Memorial is estimated to cost \$40 million.

The law stipulates that before

groundbreaking, 110% of the projected budget must be raised.

All efforts are to raise the funds exclusively by private sources, as the use of federal funds is prohibited.

As of June 30, the association has raised \$9.2 million of the \$40 million goal. In addition, the Kuwaiti government has pledged \$10 million to help build the memorial.

Stump is committed to seeing this through.

“Our team is honored and committed to ensuring that the National Desert Storm and Desert Shield Memorial will educate and inform millions of future visitors about this historic event while sharing its lasting legacies and honoring all who served, including those who made the ultimate supreme sacrifice,” he said.

For more information about the National Desert Storm Memorial Association and the memorial, please visit www.ndswm.org.

A recent podcast from the Association of the U.S Army discussed the memorial—click here to listen.

Retired Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel Dailey is AUSA's vice president for NCO and Soldier Programs and was the 15th sergeant major of the Army.