

# **‘So Much to Remember About the Significance of Our War’**

## **A VFW Post member in Missouri spearheaded the state’s first Operation Desert Storm commemoration ceremony to honor those who fought alongside him**

Mar 26, 2025

When members of VFW Post 1828 and their families gathered at the Veterans Memorial in West Plains, Missouri, to commemorate the 33rd anniversary of the end of Operation Desert Storm last year, it marked an historic first for the “Show-Me State” Post.

Led by Gulf War veteran and Post 1828 Junior Vice Commander David Scott Buennemeyer, the ceremony on Feb. 28, 2024, honored the poignant stories of two pilots from his unit who were killed in action. It also included the recitation of the names of 10 Missourians who made the ultimate sacrifice.

“I feel our war is the modern forgotten war, much like the Korean War,” said Buennemeyer, a retired Air Force master sergeant who led a ground combat unit during Desert Storm. “It is a story that I believe has been eclipsed by the Iraq and Afghanistan era, but there is so much to remember about the significance of our war.”

Buennemeyer, who served during the Gulf War with Echo Flight of the 50th Security Police Group out of Hahn Air Base in Germany, decided to organize Missouri’s first Desert Storm ceremony following his arrival to the state in 2022.

A former District 9 commander for the VFW Department of Illinois, Buennemeyer participated for nearly a decade in the state’s annual Desert Storm Remembrance ceremony, which takes place each February at the Illinois State Capitol Rotunda in Springfield to commemorate its 17 service members killed in combat.

“I was involved with state political leaders and state veterans’ affairs leaders at every

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ceremony for over eight years,” said Buennemeyer, a former member of VFW Post 5506 in Marseilles, Illinois. “I also held annual Post and District-level Desert Storm ceremonies at the Middle East Conflicts Wall Memorial in Marseilles, the only memorial built while the wars were being fought.”

Buennemeyer believes the inaugural ceremony last year, which was concluded with a rendition of Taps by Post 1828 Commander Dan Brown, also provided others in the state with a model for how Posts and towns can honor and celebrate their Gulf War veterans.

Buennemeyer intended to host a second annual ceremony at the Veterans Memorial in West Plains this Feb. 28. As of the completion of this article in January, his goal was to expand public coverage and invite state VFW leadership, congressmen and senators.

“I want my new state to know and honor the sacrifice of its citizens and to hold annual remembrance ceremonies,” Buennemeyer said. “We can never forget each and every person who paid the ultimate price. We need to read their names out loud and remember them.”

*This article is featured in the 2025 March/April issue of [VFW magazine](#), and was written by [Ismael Rodriguez Jr.](#), associate editor for VFW magazine.*