

As Marc Burgess takes the reins as National Adjutant, some of those most familiar with him caution members not to expect drastic changes.

When Art Wilson, a legend among DAV leaders, announced his retirement from the post this spring, National Commander Larry A. Polzin's selection and appointment of Burgess was met with unanimous approval by the National Executive Committee. According to the Commander, he expects an equally warm greeting from members, to whom Burgess' style of leadership is a known quantity.

"To be honest, it was really one of the easier decisions I've made as National Commander," said Polzin. "Marc is the right person at the right time to build on the foundation that Art and leaders throughout DAV have established over these many years."

Unlike the appointment of Wilson in 1994, which came at a time when the organization's finances and structure were in turmoil, today's DAV is on solid footing. Featuring the most robust service initiative in the veterans community, DAV boasts some 270 of the best-trained National Service Officers in the nation and nearly 2,000 Department and Chapter Service Officers.

The grassroots work of members, volunteers and service officers has ensured a steady membership in the organization, while other member-based groups are declining. Under his direct purview as National Headquarters

Executive Director, Burgess ensured DAV's finances remained on track, even as the nation's economy and other charitable institutions suffered under the recession.

"I wouldn't expect any breakneck turns or sudden surprises," said Fred Bristol, retired Assistant National Adjutant and former National Headquarters Executive Director. "Marc is a careful and methodical leader. He's not going to rush the gradual changes that Art Wilson initiated or make any rash decisions."

The evolution to a "New Century of Service and Advocacy" that Wilson called for at our 90th anniversary will continue. Gains being made in the development of corporate partnerships and outreach will move forward.

The implementation of technological solutions to enhance our mission remains under way. But DAV's core values, key voices and culture will be as valued by Burgess as they were by his predecessors, Bristol said.

"A lot of people are wary of change, but Marc has a great reputation, and I would say people know what he is about and respect him," said Bristol. "I've been around DAV and worked with its senior leaders since 1952, and I can honestly say that I feel the organization and its members are going to look back on this occasion as an overwhelmingly positive, historic moment in the years ahead."