

At heart, Marc Burgess said he identifies with his experiences as a National Service Officer and member as much as he does with his service as a senior executive of a national institution. After joining DAV while still in the Navy pending a medical discharge, he applied to become an NSO the day he visited the Philadelphia National Service Office to ask about membership recruiting. The prospect of advocating directly for veterans drew him to DAV from employment with the Department of Veterans Affairs early in his professional life.

“Since I began as an NSO, it’s been easy to describe the difference between DAV and other patriotic organizations, because we’re so clearly focused on service,” Burgess said. “People who are active in the organization either benefited from our free assistance or are drawn to us because they want to make a direct impact in the lives of our nation’s heroes. That’s our culture—that’s who we are.”

Burgess is known for his work ethic and focus on DAV’s mission. “He is also known for his humility,” said Rick Patterson, retired National Headquarters Executive Director.

“You’re not going to see any pretense [in Burgess]. There’s no big ego there; he puts DAV first. He’s going to hear you out. Then he’ll get all the information and feedback that is available before he makes a decision,” said Patterson. “He’s reasoned in his approach, and he’s focused on impact. If you’re interested in doing the right thing for DAV and for veterans, you’re going to find a friend in Marc.”

“He’s open to new ideas, but he understands the importance of DAV’s reputation,” said Richard Marbes, past National Commander and Chairman of the DAV Charitable Service Trust. “He does his homework. He understands that DAV is both a fraternity and a business. Based on the way he handles business, I know Marc is going to make a lot of friends among our fraternal leaders and DAV’s rank and file.”

According to retired National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson, who recommended the appointment to National Commander Larry A. Polzin, Burgess will keep DAV at the forefront in terms of its mission.

“Marc is his own person, so if there’s any perception that he’ll be starting in my shadow, it won’t last for long. He leads by example. He’s going to make different decisions, but ultimately he’s going to find consensus among our members and earn the respect and admiration of the people DAV serves,” said Wilson.

“With Marc Burgess, what you see is exactly what you get. He’s a very thoughtful person. In time, he’s going to make a very positive mark on the organization. He recognizes and respects the hard work of volunteers. He brings people together and inspires them,” Wilson said. “DAV members are going to enjoy their interactions with Marc, and DAV is going to be a better organization through his participatory management style.”