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TO: National Executive Committee
Past National Commanders
Department Commanders and Adjutants
All DAV Employees and Retirees

FROM: J. Marc Burgess, National Adjutant

DATE: September 20, 2022

SUBJECT: Death of Past National Headquarters Executive Director Richard E. Patterson

DAV is mourning the loss of Richard E. Patterson, past DAV National Headquarters executive director who died on September 19 at his home in Fairhope, Alabama. He was 74.

The combat-disabled Vietnam veteran and DAV life member was a proud native of Boston. He enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1965 and was sent to Vietnam in 1967 as a medic with the 173rd Airborne Brigade. Later that same year, he suffered severe gunshot and shrapnel wounds in a battle against North Vietnamese Army forces near Dak To.

Patterson joined DAV as a member immediately after he was medically retired in 1968, with the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star with "V" device. He joined the DAV's professional staff as a national service officer in Boston in 1972 and in 1975 became supervisor of the DAV's Providence, R.I., office. In 1978, he was transferred to the DAV's national appeals staff in Washington, D.C., where he represented veterans and their families at the Board of Veterans Appeals. He supervised the appeals staff from 1981 to 1988, when he was promoted to associate national service director at DAV Washington Headquarters.

In 1994, Patterson was named executive director at DAV National Headquarters, then located in Cold Spring, Kentucky. He was a steady and dedicated leader who helped guide the organization through a period of transition, unprecedented membership and financial growth. With oversight of DAV's fundraising, membership, voluntary services, communications, human relations and administrative assets, he was a disciplined and diligent proponent of smart growth balanced with financial stability.

Patterson's leadership was critical to the post-9/11 transformation of DAV, as it worked to welcome home a new generation of disabled veterans while continuing to meet the needs of veterans of previous generations.

He retired from DAV in 2010 after 38 years of service to America's ill and injured veterans and their families. But even in retirement he remained a trusted advisor and served as the Audit Committee Chair for the DAV National Service Foundation and the DAV Charitable Service Trust.

Please see the attached memorandum regarding the death of Past National Headquarters Executive Director Richard E. Patterson.

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