KEEPING OUR PROMISE TO AMERICA'S VETERANS

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

FROM: Barry A. Jesinoski, National Adjutant

DATE: Oct. 16, 2026

SUBJECT: Death of Billy E. Kirby

It is with deep regret that I inform you of the passing of Billy E. Kirby, past national commander of DAV. He died Oct. 15, 2026, at the age of 105.

Billy, a service-connected disabled Army veteran of World War II, dedicated his life to serving his fellow veterans. He was a native of Osage, Texas, and joined the Army in 1940.

While serving in Italy in 1944, he was seriously wounded by a gunshot to his right shoulder during the Battle of Rapido River. He almost lost his arm and underwent nearly two years of extensive rehabilitation in Army hospitals before being medically discharged in 1946.

A life member of Chapter 8 in Wilson, North Carolina, Billy continued his service to others, working as a benefits advocate and congressional liaison. He was elected as DAV's national commander in 1988.

While working on Capitol Hill in the 1960s, Billy helped advocate for the establishment of the then-Veterans Administration's long-term care and nursing home programs, expanding access to care for countless veterans.

Perhaps Billy's legacy is best captured in his own words, inscribed at the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial in Washington, D.C.:

"I shall recall with humility those who were stronger and braver than me. And I shall recall—with celebration and joy—our nation's heritage of selfless sacrifice and commitment to the common good."

Billy lived those words. When I last visited him at his home a couple of years ago, his leadership, advocacy and unwavering commitment to those who served was still going strong. He helped shape DAV and veterans' care as we know it today and was committed to ensuring the advances we'd made were protected and built upon. His dedication to our mission and the veterans we serve will never be forgotten.

Please keep his family in your thoughts during this difficult time.

A visitation will be held at 11 a.m. on Oct. 23 at L. Harold Poole Funeral Service & Crematory at 944 Old Knight Road, Knightdale, NC 27545 with the funeral service starting at noon. May he rest in peace.



Barry A. Jesinoski
National Adjutant

BAJ:rl