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**TO:** Department and Chapter Commanders and Adjutants

**FROM:** Barry A. Jesinoski, National Adjutant

**DATE:** June 4, 2026

**SUBJECT:** Increased Membership Distribution

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In accordance with Article 11, Section 11.10 of the National Bylaws, I am pleased to announce that DAV's Board of Directors approved a measure at our May meeting to restore membership distribution rates to Departments and Chapters to the maximum levels permitted under our Constitution and Bylaws. Effective July 1, 2026, membership distribution rates will increase as follows:

- **Department distribution: from \$2.25 to \$2.50 per member**
- **Chapter distribution: from \$2.75 to \$3.50 per member**

There will be no increase to the reduced distribution rate to the National Organization.

While this decision has been under consideration for some time, we continue to carefully evaluate the financial position and long-term obligations of the Life Membership Fund. Our Board has taken a thoughtful approach to this issue, and it was important to make this information known as soon as possible so you can plan for upcoming changes to your department or chapter budgets beginning with the 2026/2027 membership year.

As most of you know, the Life Membership Fund, which is separate from our national organization's General Fund was designed to be self-sustaining to permit payments to National, Departments, and Chapters indefinitely from the life-member payments made over time. Unfortunately, the fund was depleted beyond its long-term viability back in the late 90s and first decade of the new century due both to long-term securities market challenges as well as DAV leaving life-member fees too low for too long to remain financially stable. This adjustment increases distribution levels that were previously reduced when resources were redirected to maintain the health and long-term stability of the Life Membership Fund. From 2004 through 2010, DAV invested \$4 million annually from our General Fund into the Life Membership Fund to strengthen its long-term sustainability. In 2021, membership distributions from the fund were reduced to support its future viability. As we've successfully strengthened the financial position of the Life Membership Fund, Department and Chapter distributions were increased in 2024 and again in 2025.

This maximum increase reflects our continued commitment to strengthening Departments and Chapters, particularly during these challenging economic times, and ensuring our member leaders have the resources necessary to support veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors in communities across the country.

DAV's bylaws provide that distributions may be made for national, department and chapter operations through the Life Membership Fund. The Board remains committed to maximizing distribution rates whenever financially responsible while maintaining the long-term health of the fund and protecting DAV's ability to serve future generations of veterans and their families.

The Board also recognizes that this increase alone is not a long-term solution. Continued membership growth depends on the combined efforts of the national organization, Departments and Chapters. Our investments from National Headquarters in direct mail, marketing, communications and member engagement generate well over 80% of new DAV memberships. However, Departments and Chapters must remain engaged and active in recruiting efforts for us to have continued strength. Simply put, despite the incredible work of a relatively small number of very engaged member leaders around the country who are recruiting ten or even many more members per year, we need far more members recruiting members— even just one—and a much greater sustained effort on behalf of our Departments and Chapters in order to ensure the long-term health of the Life Membership Fund and continued payments from it. We will also soon be recommending a \$25.00 increase to the cost of a life membership, which needs to happen approximately every three years in order for the Life Membership Fund to remain actuarially sound.

Our Departments and Chapters remain at the heart of DAV's mission. Your leadership, advocacy and service in communities across the country are essential to our success as an organization. We hope this increase provides additional support and flexibility as you continue carrying out that important work on behalf of the veterans we serve.

Thank you for your continued leadership, service and commitment to DAV and our mission.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barry A. Jesinoski". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "B" and "J".

Barry A. Jesinoski  
National Adjutant

BAJ:rl