



ST MARY'S CHAPTER NO. 26
P.O. BOX 496,
PATUXENT RIVER, MARYLAND 20670



Chapter #26, Chartered April 25, 1974



Monthly Newsletter of the
DAV St. Mary's Chapter #26

May/June 2026



DAV Chapter #26 Contact Telephone Number - 240-925-5439 (8am to 5pm)

Web Site: <https://www.davch26stmarysmd.com/>

FROM THE DESK OF THE COMMANDER



Greetings Comrades,

On behalf of the Commander:

The Commander extends his appreciation to all members and volunteers for their continued dedication and support of DAV Chapter 26. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to serving veterans, their families, and survivors in our community.

Respectfully,

Matt Langford
Commander,
DAV Chapter 26



Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for You are with me.



Fellow Chapter Members,

Chaplain's Corner:

Greetings Comrades, I have found prayer to be very enlighten and a source of motivation, knowledge and understanding that I may believe that God hears us when we pray. Take notice of the Scriptures written for our learning in (Mark 11:24) - *"Therefore I say unto you, what things soever you desire, when you believe that you receive them, and you shall have them."*, and (Jeremiah 33:3) - *"Call unto me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know."* Here we see all we have to do is reach-out to God and He will show us the manifestation of our prayers if we would just believe. Notice how many times the word "you" is mentioned in both Scriptures, which goes to show us that we have a part to do greater than just speaking when asking for God's support, we must believe in what we are praying.

PRAYER CALL: Please make time in your busy days to continue keeping each other lifted in prayer, as well as our Chapter Commander, Chapter Officers, and CSOs, also, our family members who we need to lift our voices up into heaven for comfort, healing, and guidance, Comrades like Bob Jones (will be coming home Wednesday 24 June 26), Mark Donovan, Wes Simpkins, Floyd Kitchen, Mike Bosak, Donny Larue and myself Reggie Harris. Always be willing to check on our fellow Veterans who are seeking our untiring and unwavering support. Help our CSO's to stay encourage to provide the best service to "**ALL**" Our fellow Veterans who need guidance to obtain their benefits. Try to make it a habit to contact another Comrade just to see how they are doing.

Remember if you or anyone you know or maybe one of your family members are willing to allow me to pray for a need, please do not hesitate to contact me at reggie.harris.dav@gmail.com. Stay connected with the Chapter, with the mission of the DAV and our mission being Veterans helping Veterans in mind. Once again, I encourage those you that have not attended the Monthly Chapter Meetings to let that be on your to-do list as a member, our next meeting is 9 July 2026 at 7:00 pm.

Sincerely,

Reggie Harris
Chaplain, DAV Chapter #26

Our Chapter sincerely appreciates your generous financial support. Your contributions make a meaningful difference, and we warmly encourage others to join in giving and help us continue serving our veterans and community. Thank you!

- Constance Frederick donated \$1,000.00
- Mark Donovan donated \$100.00

Thank You!!!

Installation Luncheon Celebration FY26-27

Please join us as we celebrate the installation of our newly elected Chapter Commander **Matt Langford** and honor our outgoing Commander **James Williams** for his dedicated service and leadership to DAV Chapter 26.

Date: Saturday, 11 July 2026

Time: 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. (1300–1600)

Location:

IAM Local Lodge 4 Union Hall
21795 Shangri-La Drive, Suite C
Lexington Park, MD 20653

To ensure we have adequate food and seating arrangements, we kindly ask all members planning to attend **RSVP no later than 7 July 2026**. Please include the number of guests who will accompany you.

The Chapter will be providing the meal; however, if you would like to bring a favorite side dish to share with fellow members and guests, you are more than welcome to do so.

We look forward to celebrating this special occasion together as we recognize the accomplishments of our outgoing Commander and welcome our new Chapter Commander for the coming year.

RSVP to: Maira Callis No Later Than 7 July 2026 at: macalex0077@gmail.com

DAV Members and their guests are welcome. To volunteer as a committee member reply to Maira Callis at: macalex0077@gmail.com

Respectfully,

Maira Callis
Historian
DAV Chapter 26
St. Mary's County, MD

RSVP now



VA Claims Process

DAV Initial VA Disability Claim Process Through Decision and Appeal Options

This process focuses on the journey from the veteran's first meeting with a DAV Certified Service Officer (CSO) through the VA's decision and the options available if the claim is denied.

Step 1: Initial Interview and Claim Evaluation

The DAV Certified Service Officer meets with the veteran to:

- Review military service history.
- Discuss medical conditions and symptoms.
- Determine whether the condition may be service connected.
- Review prior VA claims, if any.
- Explain the VA claims process and timelines.
- Establish representation through VA Form 21-22.

Goal: Identify every condition that may qualify for VA disability compensation and determine the strongest path to service connection.

Step 2: Evidence Gathering

The DAV assists the veteran in obtaining evidence necessary to support the claim.

Military Evidence

- DD Form 214
- Service Treatment Records (STRs)
- Personnel records
- Deployment records
- Awards and citations

Medical Evidence

- VA treatment records
- Private medical records
- Specialist evaluations
- Diagnostic tests and imaging

Supporting Statements

- Veteran's personal statement
- Buddy statements
- Family statements
- Employer statements

Goal: Establish the **three elements** generally needed for service connection:

1. A current diagnosed disability.
2. An in-service event, injury, illness, or exposure.
3. A medical nexus connecting the current disability to military service.

Step 3: Claim Preparation and Submission

The DAV prepares and reviews the claim package.

The Five Forms Every DAV Service Officer Should Know

1. **VA Form 21-22** – Appointment of Veterans Service Organization as Claimant's Representative.
2. **VA Form 21-526EZ** – Initial Disability Compensation Claim.
3. **VA Form 20-0995** – Supplemental Claim.
4. **VA Form 20-0996** – Higher-Level Review.
5. **VA Form 10182** – Board Appeal.

These forms represent the vast majority of disability claims and appeals that DAV Service Officers encounter while assisting veterans and their families.

Official VA Calculator

[VA Disability Ratings & Combined Rating Calculator](#)

This calculator allows veterans and Service Officers to enter multiple service-connected disabilities and see how the VA combines them using the VA's "Whole Person Theory," rather than simple addition. For example, two 50% ratings do not equal 100%; they combine to 75%, which rounds to 80%.

Official VA Combined Ratings Table (38 CFR § 4.25)

[VA Combined Ratings Table PDF](#)

This is the table VA raters use to combine disability percentages manually.

More to follow in next month's edition.

Sincerely,

Maira Callis
Historian
DAV Chapter 26

250th Navy Anniversary Celebration at the NAS Patuxent River, MD Commissary

Celebrating 250 Years of the United States Navy

On 8 May 2026, Naval Air Station Patuxent River hosted a special cake-cutting ceremony in celebration of the 250th Birthday of the United States Navy. While there were many distinguished guests, service members, veterans, and community supporters in attendance who are not pictured, this photo captures a moment of pride and partnership as we honored a remarkable milestone in our nation's history.

The United States Navy traces its origins to 13 October 1775, when the Continental Congress authorized the establishment of a naval force to defend the American colonies. For 250 years, Sailors have stood the watch, protected our nation's interests across the globe, safeguarded freedom of the seas, and answered the call whenever and wherever duty required. This anniversary serves as a reminder of the Navy's enduring legacy of honor, courage, commitment, and service to our nation.

Participating in the celebration were Captain Mark Zematis, Commanding Officer of Naval Air Station Patuxent River; Captain Robert Chandler, Executive Officer; Commissary Director Minerva Vargas; and Co-Director Kip Rauser. Representing DAV Chapter 26 were Kelly Major, Tom Thomas, Lou Dunn, Ralph Gough, and Reggie Harris.

DAV Chapter 26 is honored to partner with the NAS Patuxent River Commissary and installation leadership in supporting events that recognize our military heritage, honor those who serve, and strengthen the bond between veterans, active-duty service members, and the local community.

It is always a pleasure to support the Commissary and participate in these special occasions that celebrate the traditions, sacrifices, and achievements of our Armed Forces. Congratulations to the United States Navy on 250 years of faithful service to our nation.



Respectfully,

Maira Callis
Historian
DAV Chapter 26

Memorial Day

This is the wreath Chapter 26 displayed at the American Legion, Post 255, in Ridge on Memorial Day. Just a reminder each of the symbols on our logo has a meaning:

The American Flag, pointing down in a V shape, indicates V for veterans.

The symbols on each side of the flag represent the DAV will assist any member of all of our Armed Forces.

The American Flag pointing down to the POW/MIA flag indicates we will never forget them.

The two soldiers at the bottom of the symbol indicate the sorrow we feel for our fellow veterans who are no longer with us.

Respectfully,

Lou Dunn
Past Historian



DAV MD 82nd Ocean City State Convention & Swearing in of New State Officers

Congratulations to the members of DAV Chapter 26 who attended the 82nd Annual DAV Department of Maryland Convention held May 25–29, 2026, in Ocean City, Maryland, and successfully completed their Chapter Service Officer recertification training. Their continued commitment to education and advocacy ensures our veterans and their families receive the highest level of service and support.

A special congratulations to Past Chapter Commander James Williams for being recognized as the **Number One Recruiter in the State of Maryland**, an outstanding achievement that reflects his dedication to strengthening DAV membership and outreach to fellow veterans.



Attended the 82nd DAV State Convention from left to right: Kelly Major, Sheila Edwards, Ralph Gough, Matt Langford, and Reggie Harris



Past Chapter Commander James Williams received the Number one recruiter in the State of MD

Kelly Major sworn in by State 2nd Jr. Vice Commander Ralph Gough



2026 NAS Patuxent River Air Show Schedule & Performers

Official Air Show Schedule

- **Friday, June 19: Practice Show (For those with base access, and authorized attendees only) – Highly Recommended**
 - 9 a.m.: Gates and command static displays open
 - 11 a.m.: Practice show begins
 - 3:30 p.m.: Blue Angels performance
 - 4:30 p.m.: Practice Show ends
- **Saturday, June 20 and Sunday, June 21: Public Air Show**
 - 9 a.m.: Gates and static displays open to the public
 - 11 a.m.: Pax River Air Show begins
 - 3 p.m.: Blue Angels performance
 - 4:45 p.m.: Air Show ends

Blue Angels

The headline act of the air show, the Blue Angels are the U.S. Navy's premier flight demonstration team. Flying F/A-18 Super Hornets showcase precision formation flying, high-speed passes, and aerobatic maneuvers that demonstrate the professionalism and skill of Naval Aviation. Founded in 1946, the Blue Angels have inspired millions of Americans through their performances.

F-16 Viper Demo Team

Representing the U.S. Air Force, the F-16 Viper Demonstration Team highlights the remarkable speed, maneuverability, and combat capabilities of the F-16 Fighting Falcon. Their demonstration includes high-performance climbs, rolls, turns, and afterburner-powered passes.

B-25 Panchito

Owned and flown by Larry Kelley, "Panchito" is one of the nation's most famous flying World War II bombers. The aircraft honors the crews who flew B-25 Mitchell bombers during World War II and serve as a living tribute to the Greatest Generation.

Greg Colyer

Greg Colyer performs in "Ace Maker," a beautifully restored Lockheed T-33 Shooting Star jet trainer. His demonstration combines classic military jet performance with graceful aerobatics, showcasing one of America's first operational jet aircraft.

RJ Gritter

RJ Gritter is known for energetic and crowd-pleasing aerobatic routines featuring precision flying, rolls, loops, and low-level maneuvers that demonstrate exceptional piloting skill and aircraft control.

Mike Goulian

One of the most recognized names in airshow aerobatics, Mike Goulian is an award-winning pilot and former national aerobatic champion. His performances feature precision maneuvers, vertical climbs, snap rolls, and high-energy routines that consistently thrill audiences.

Class of '45

Pilots Scott Yoak and Jim Tobul present the "Class of '45" demonstration, honoring the generation that served during World War II. The performance typically features historic warbirds and commemorates the courage, sacrifice, and aviation heritage of those who fought for freedom during the war.

What Makes the Pax River Air Show Special?

The NAS Patuxent River Air Show is more than an aviation event, it showcases the mission of Naval Aviation, honors military heritage, and strengthens the connection between the Navy and the local community. In addition to the flying demonstrations, attendees can enjoy static aircraft displays, military exhibits, food vendors, and opportunities to meet aviators and aircrew.

For DAV Chapter 26 members and veterans, this year's show offers a unique opportunity to celebrate both the history and future of military aviation while witnessing some of the nation's finest military and civilian performers in action.

Join us for a memorable weekend celebrating naval aviation. For more details, visit the official [Pax River Air Show website](https://www.paxriverairshow.com/): <https://www.paxriverairshow.com/>

A **truly fascinating fact** about the Blue Angels is this:

They fly so precisely that the lead pilot actually cannot rely on instruments alone, he flies by “visual geometry” and trust, not numbers.

The formation lead (the “Boss”) doesn’t just fly the aircraft; he becomes a **human reference point for the entire team**. The other pilots are constantly making micro-adjustments based on *exact visual cues* like canopy alignment, wingtip spacing, and horizon angle, often correcting drift measured in **inches**, not feet.

What makes this remarkable is that at 400–700 mph, the human eye is effectively tracking aircraft in a constantly shifting 3D environment where:

- Wind turbulence changes second-to-second
- jet lag and G-forces affect perception
- there is no margin for delay or interpretation

So instead of flying like a traditional formation where everyone “follows instruments,” the Blue Angels operate more like a **single coordinated organism**, where each pilot is essentially part of a shared visual system.

Even more impressive: they intentionally *do not use head-up displays (HUDs) in formation flying* the way combat jets often do today, because the display can distract from the pure visual discipline required for their precision.

In short: 👉 The Blue Angels don’t just fly together; they literally **trust each other more than they trust the aircraft itself**.

R,
Maira Callis



Breaking Barriers at 400 MPH: Blue Angels Facts and Female Aviation Pioneers

As an Aviation Machinist mate myself I am proud of the following Blue Angels Women Accomplishments

Did you know Blue Angels Precision Flying Fact?

The U.S. Navy's Blue Angels are known for some of the most precise flying in the world. During their signature **Diamond 360** maneuver, four F/A-18 Super Hornets fly with as little as **18 inches of separation** between aircraft, about the width of a standard ruler. At speeds often exceeding **400 miles per hour**, the pilots maintain this incredibly tight formation using visual reference points on the lead aircraft and years of intensive training.



Women in the Blue Angels

Lt. Cmdr. Amanda Lee made history in 2022 when she became the **first woman selected as an F/A-18 demonstration pilot** for the Blue Angels. She flew as the #3 Left Wing and later the #4 Slot pilot in the famous Diamond Formation. However, she was **not the first female pilot on the Blue Angels team**. In 2015, **Marine Corps Capt. Katie Higgins Cook** became the **first female pilot assigned to the Blue Angels**, flying the team's C-130 transport aircraft, "Fat Albert."

As of 2026:

- **Amanda Lee** remains the only woman to have flown the Blue Angels' F/A-18 demonstration jets.
- Several other women have served as Blue Angels flight officers, event coordinators, and C-130 pilots. The Blue Angels report that **seven female flight officers** have served with the team since 2008.

As of the **2026 Blue Angels season**, the pilot of "**Fat Albert**", the Blue Angels' C-130J Super Hercules, is **Captain Olivia Bair, USMC**. She is a Marine Corps aviator assigned to the team after serving with a Marine aerial refueler transport squadron. She is also one of the few women ever selected to fly with the Blue Angels.

Why Does Fat Albert Perform Such a Steep Takeoff?

Many people call it a "vertical takeoff," but technically it is a **short-field tactical takeoff followed by an extremely steep climb**. The aircraft is not capable of a true vertical takeoff like a Harrier or F-35B.

The maneuver demonstrates what the Marine Corps' C-130J Super Hercules can do in combat situations:

- Operate from short or unimproved runways.
- Rapidly gain altitude to avoid threats.
- Showcase the aircraft's power-to-weight ratio and performance.
- Demonstrate the skills of Marine aviators and aircrew.

A Veteran-Friendly Newsletter Fact



Did You Know?

Before the Blue Angels take to the sky, the Marine Corps' **Fat Albert** often steals the show. Weighing more than **150,000 pounds**, the C-130J Super Hercules launches down the runway and climbs at an angle that appears almost vertical to spectators. While not a true vertical takeoff, the maneuver demonstrates the aircraft's ability to rapidly depart short airfields and deliver Marines, cargo, and supplies anywhere in the world. Today, Fat Albert is flown by an all-Marine crew and serves as the logistics backbone of the Blue Angels team.

Another "Wow" Fact



From 1975 to 2009, Fat Albert used **Jet-Assisted Takeoff (JATO) rockets**. Eight rockets mounted on the sides of the aircraft would fire during takeoff, pushing the massive C-130 skyward in a dramatic climb. The demonstration was discontinued when the military's supply of JATO rockets was exhausted. Many veterans still consider it one of the most impressive airshow demonstrations ever performed.

R,
Maira Callis

Chapter #26 Officer's

Chapter #26 2026-2027	Officer Name	Phone Number	E-mail Address
*Commander	Matt Langford	240-925-6285	ltaircraftsar@gmail.com
*Senior Vice Commander	Mike Jones	253-606-4408	shotgroup@hotmail.com
*1 st Junior Vice Cdr.	Kelly Major	240-818-1410	lorimaj1983@yahoo.com
*2 nd Junior Vice Cdr.	Tom Thomas	281-744-3924	Tomthom48@hotmail.com
*3 rd Junior Vice Cdr.	Reggie Harris	443-538-4138	redgeeknow@outlook.com
* Treasurer	Sheila Edwards	240-216-4013	sedinards101461@gmail.com
+ Chief of Staff	Vacant		
+Adjutant	Sheila Edwards	240-216-4013	sedinards101461@gmail.com
+Chaplain	Reggie Harris	443-538-4138	redgeeknow@outlook.com
*Judge Advocate	Ralph Gough	301-904-0582	regoughsr.151@gmail.com
+Sgt.-At-Arms	Greg Olson	240-538-4212	gpolson@verison.net
+Officer of the Day (OOD)	Bob Priddy	410-326-2228	Priddy425@comcast.net
+Public Information Officer	Maira Callis	240-577-4330	macalex0077@gmail.com
+LVAP Coordinator	Maira Callis	240-577-4330	macalex0077@gmail.com
+Lead Chapter Service Officer	Vacant		
+Chapter Service Officer	Sheila Edwards	240-216-4013	sedinards101461@gmail.com
+Chapter Service Officer	Kelly Major	240-818-1410	lorimaj1983@yahoo.com
+Chapter Service Officer	Maira Callis	240-577-4330	macalex0077@gmail.com
+Chapter Service Officer	Ralph Gough	301-904-0582	regoughsr.151@gmail.com
+Chapter Service Officer	Reggie Harris	443-538-4138	redgeeknow@outlook.com
+Chapter Service Officer	Matt Langford	240-925-6285	ltaircraftsar@gmail.com

*Elected +Appointed

Editors Notes

(Maira Callis, macalex0077@gmail.com)

National Crisis Hotline: New suicide and prevention line is 988.

St. Mary's County Crisis Support: St. Mary's also has a crisis help line. Visit the web site at smchd.org/crisis for information on local crisis support and mental health services as well as a variety of tips on talking with children, self-care and more.

VA claims services every Wednesday from 0930 to 1230

Our April & subsequent Chapter meetings will be held on the 2nd Thursday of the month.

- Executive Committee Meeting: 5:45 PM
- Chapter Membership Meeting: Starts at 7:00 PM - Location: Local Lodge 4 Machinists Union Hall

Forget-Me-Not money donated April 25, 2026: \$590.26

- Lou Dunn & Tom Thomas collected \$328.00
- Matt Langford & Kelly Major collected \$262.26

Veterans Day Parade 11 November 2026

- Kelly Major – Chairperson
- Lou Dun – Co Chair

Chapter Calendar

June 2026

06	-----	D-Day Anniversary	WWII Allied Invasion in Normandy, France
11	1745-1845	Executive Meeting	Union Hall
11	1900	General Meeting	Union Hall
14	-----	U.S. Army Birthday	U.S. Army Birthday Celebration
14	-----	Flag Day	Day to celebrate the adoption of the US Flag
19	-----	Juneteenth Day	Juneteenth Holiday
19-21	-----	NAS Pax River Air Show	Featuring the Blue Angels
21	-----	Father's Day	Father's Day Celebration
27	-----	National PTSD Awareness Day	PTSD Awareness Day



July 2026

04	-----	4 th of July	Holiday
09	1745-1845	Executive Meeting	Union Hall
09	1900	General Meeting	Union Hall
11	-----	Installation Luncheon	Chapter 26 Installation Luncheon Celebration
27	-----	Korean War Veterans Armistice Day	
30	-----	DAV National Convention	National Convention Orlando, FL



August 2026

04	-----	U.S. Coast Guard Birthday	U.S. Coast Guard Birthday
07	-----	Purple Heart Day	Purple Heart Day Observed
13	1745-1845	Executive Meeting	Union Hall
13	1900	General Meeting	Union Hall
29	-----	Marine Forces Reserve Birthday	



**THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS' ORGANIZATION IS CHARTERED TO
FULFILL OUR PROMISES TO THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVED.**





Disabled American Veterans
Assisting Those Who Served



Chapter 26



OUR FLAG DOES NOT FLY BECAUSE THE WIND MOVES IT.
IT FLIES WITH THE LAST BREATH OF EACH SOLDIER, SAILOR,
AIRMAN OR MARINE WHO DIED PROTECTING IT.

