

For the Loved Ones of Those Who Served & Died

T★A★I★P★S[®]

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MAGAZINE



*Transforming
Experience into
Advocacy*

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Freedom for All

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TAPS Magazine is dedicated to America's fallen heroes and their survivors. The magazine is written by and distributed quarterly to surviving families, friends and caregiving professionals. We hope you find inspiration, comfort, support, resources and a sense of belonging within these pages.

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★ **About TAPS Magazine** ★

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) is a national nonprofit 501 (c) (3) Veterans Service Organization that publishes TAPS Magazine in furtherance of its mission to support survivors whose loved one served and died.



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TAPS®

Comfort and Support Since 1994

TAPS offers help, hope, and healing to all those grieving the death of a loved one serving in the Armed Forces of America.

TAPS is here for you 24 hours a day/7 days a week

Thanks to the support of our donors, 2015 was a year filled with healing and hope for the families of America's fallen heroes. TAPS achieved amazing milestones throughout the year in providing help to our family of survivors.

- ★ ANSWERED over 15,000 calls to the 24/7 National Military Survivor Helpline;
- ★ PROVIDED much-needed casework assistance in over 1,300 urgent crises;
- ★ HOSTED 20 Retreats with 500 survivors participating;
- ★ WELCOMED over 2,000 adult participants to 11 Military Survivor Seminars;
- ★ MATCHED 800 military mentors with over 800 children at 15 National and Regional Good Grief Camps and Campouts;
- ★ HONORED 2,300 loved ones through teams4taps sporting events;
- ★ CONNECTED 1,300 survivors with counseling support;
- ★ SHARED 1,100 community resource reports with survivors; and
- ★ SAVED survivors over \$30 million in funding and education benefits through scholarship and VA referrals. This means that 750 surviving children of our nation's fallen received a fully funded college education.

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Share Your TAPS Story



TAPS Family Gave Me Hope in Darkest Hours

When I first came to TAPS I was hopeless. I was desperate to find just one person like me. Never did I think I would find a whole new family just like me. They have been there for me in my deepest, darkest hours and extended their hands to pull me up off my knees. My new TAPS family carried me at times when I could not walk on my own. The bonds that have been created here are lifelong, in my opinion!

Peggy Scallorn, Tennessee
Surviving mother of
Airman First Class Cody Scallorn

Education Services Make Degree Possible

Thanks to TAPS Education Services, I was able to go back to school using the Fry Scholarship instead of using Chapter 35 benefits and going into debt to get my graduate degree. They helped me navigate the scholarship process with my school. Now, my education is paid along with a monthly stipend that helps out so much. I could not pursue this degree without TAPS!

Barclay Murphy, South Carolina
Surviving spouse of
Major Edward Murphy

How Do I Spell Relief? T-A-P-S

What a relief that TAPS found me and reached out to me in those early days when I was so overwhelmed. What a relief that the people who called and the package I received showed me how much they cared. What a relief it was when I attended my first TAPS Seminar and found love, acceptance and understanding. Bonnie Carroll was the facilitator in my group, and she shed so much light and wisdom on this grief journey. What a relief to know that if I am having a really hard time, it's okay to call TAPS. What a relief to know I have this wonderful family.

Diane Homm, Colorado
Surviving mother of
Sergeant Caleb Medley

Tough Circumstances Cultivate Love and Joy

TAPS brought me into a community of surviving adult children who all experienced the death of a parent and were left to figure out "growing up" while adjusting to our new normal. My fellow survivors comforted me through many transitions, and I've been overjoyed to follow them through their own. My TAPS family shows me the immense love and joy that can grow out of the toughest of circumstances. Our unique

experiences brought us into a family where we're all working together to write the next chapter, in spite of the differences in our storylines. It brings me so much joy to know that I receive and give support to survivors as we grow and live to honor our loved ones.

Brittany Johnstone, Colorado
Surviving daughter of
Major Robert Olson

TAPS Saved My Life

I know that without the support of TAPS I would not be here today. I was at one of the darkest times of my life after my brother was killed in action in 2006, and I was feeling so alone. TAPS stepped in and helped save my life, as well as my marriage, when my husband and I went to our first siblings retreat in Las Vegas. I also know that TAPS is there when I need you. It helps me to know that TAPS is always a phone call away, and TAPS understands that I won't just get over it already.

Bethaney Kassin, Oregon
Surviving sibling of
Sergeant Robert P. Kassin

If you have a question or comment,
please write to editor@taps.org.

We've Got You Covered

Dear TAPS Family,

Winter can be a harsh, bleak expanse of empty days and introspection. We understand that, as another season slowly unfolds, we often consider how to face another spring without our loved ones. That's why we pledge to be with you all the time and everywhere. For more than 22 years, TAPS has stood ready to embrace you in a moment of need - whenever it may come.

TAPS is not a resource for only one season or for one late-night helpline call. We'll never stop being there for those moments, but we want you to know that - whether it be an especially hard grief day or a spectacularly ordinary "new normal" day, we're still in this together.

You're not alone. That's our message. We incorporate that mindset into everything we plan for you. Our care for you is purposeful: opportunities to meet other survivors who share your experience, connections to benefits that relieve the worry of funding a higher education, Peer Mentors who walk beside you as you navigate grief. We want you to join us in celebrating when you receive your careful birthday message, to feel the respectful humility with which we select Good Grief Camp Mentors that match a child's needs, and to consider expeditions and wellness challenges that spur you to try the extraordinary. This edition of the *TAPS Magazine* is no exception.

We invite you to celebrate the accomplishment of Bonnie Carroll, our treasured friend and inspiration. Receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom was not an individual honor, but a recognition for the entire TAPS family that we each have the ability to break through the icy waters of grief and find the freedom to move toward hope and healing.

Our commitment to be with you is not limited to your emotional experience but also extends to your physical location and time. Where will you be for Memorial Day? Perhaps you will pause with your fellow Americans at a hometown parade to remember the love and sacrifice of those we lost. We hope you will join us in Virginia for the 22nd National Military Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp. We have new and exciting ways for you to connect with each other during this weekend of honor, including through our new TAPS NMSS mobile app. Over the next two months, all the information you need to make this the best seminar ever will be right at your fingertips.

But, TAPS is not just on the East Coast. We are with you in locations across the country. Whether you're cheering with teams4taps or running with Team TAPS, we've got you covered mile after mile. Our 2016 event list offers something for everyone no matter how long you've been a part of the TAPS family. Meet us for intimate retreats, quiet moments around a summer campfire, and stay through the year for seminars, mentoring and support from the foremost experts on grief and bereavement. Find ways to be involved where you are as you turn these pages.

We are your TAPS family
and we love you,

Bevin Landrum
TAPS Magazine Editor

For more information about TAPS
visit www.taps.org/events



Walking in the Shadow of a Hero

By Bevin Landrum, *TAPS Magazine* Editor

Unexpected Loss

Thanksgiving 2005 was a quiet family affair. Capt. Tom Hanrahan and his wife, Kim, stayed home in their quarters on Fort Polk to celebrate a simple Thanksgiving. Tom had just come out of Joint Readiness Training Center predeployment training the day before. They decided that with a toddler and a newborn, traveling to Texas just wasn't going to happen that year.

Instead, Tom's sister and her family joined them, along with their two dogs. Even with two dogs, two cats, four kids and four adults in their small post quarters, it turned out to be a wonderful time with family. Kim and her sister-in-law made the basic Thanksgiving staples. They tried to cut the recipes down from Texas-size so they weren't eating turkey tetrazzini for weeks. It was a scene celebrated by many young military families that year. Kim had no inkling that Tom would be gone in a matter of days.

On Nov. 30, 2005, Tom passed away from injuries sustained in a motorcycle accident on his way home from work. Doctors discovered he had an undiagnosed condition, which caused the accident. Nothing could have stopped it. Kim was 29, Grace was 2 and Sam was 9 months old.

Faith and Friends

Kim leaned on her closest friends in the early days after losing Tom. "My friends didn't just bring food, they came over and sang with me," she said. "We all had served on a worship team together and we sang happy songs and smiled. We sang sad, heavy songs and wept. They brought groceries, did my laundry and cleaned my house. I will never forget the selfless ways



Sam and Grace will attend their first Good Grief Camp in May.

in which they put themselves near to me, physically and emotionally."

She also turned to her faith. Many at her home church in Temple, Texas, prayed for her. She knew their prayers were strong as she had participated in many church prayer lists for military members stationed around the world, including one Capt. Roland Keller during his deployment to Afghanistan in 2004. His brother-in-law was the pastor at Covenant Lutheran.

That Next Step

Days, weeks and months turned into the first year. All the while, Kim knew that Tom would want her to remarry and take that next step – for her own happiness and so Grace and Sam would have a dad in the house. Her first efforts at "putting herself out there" weren't very successful. The dating market for a stay-at-home mom surrounded by married friends is not that great. And Kim was resolved that if and when she found the right man – he would also be in the military.

Kim remembered that her pastor's brother-in-law was in the Army. "I figured I could

have at least one date in 2007," she said, flashing back to the time she asked her pastor to pass along her number to Roland. They were email pen pals for five months before they ever met or had that first date. In fact, the date was a trip to the zoo with Grace and Sam when Roland was home on mid-tour leave with the 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment Wolfhounds.

Focus on the Good Memories

Roland never felt that sense of having to tread lightly when it came to his budding relationship with Kim and the kids. Early on, Tom's parents had encouraged Kim to move forward when the time was right. The kids were young and didn't have the memories to compare Roland to their dad. However, Roland also never failed to include Tom in the conversation. Roland says he felt that it was important to not let Tom's loss cast a shadow over their future, but instead he wanted Tom's memory to always be a happy part of life.

The Family Blessing

Over time, Kim realized that you can't be in love with someone who is gone, but you can hold their memory dear and cherish the love you had with them. Having been initially hurt by her in-laws' encouragement to move on, she began to accept that they had given her a huge gift with their blessing.

She and Roland continued to date long distance through his redeployment in October 2007 and his assignments at Schofield Barracks, Redstone Arsenal and Joint-Base Lewis McChord. Kim and the kids lived near Fort Hood the entire time they dated. While long-distance relationships aren't easy, this provided

space for the couple to begin forming a relationship and for them to slowly integrate Roland into the kids' lives.

Take it Slowly

Easing into his relationship with Sam and Grace came at a gradual pace while Roland and Kim dated. They included the kids in many parts of their courtship. Roland had to decide very early on that he was committed to the whole family, not just Kim. He never felt he was competing with Tom, only challenged to be the father figure Tom would have wanted for his kids.

Close Connections

Four years after Tom's death, Roland proposed to Kim on Thanksgiving 2009. They married in March 2010, and Tom's parents kept Sam and Grace while the newlyweds went on a honeymoon. This gesture from Deana and Richard set the tone for their close relationship to this day. Kim's and Roland's parents still live in Texas. Trips back to the Lone Star state include visits with three sets of grandparents because Roland's parents don't believe in stepfamily and have embraced Kim and the kids as their own.

Focus on the Positives

In the six years since their marriage, the Kellers have gone through further tribulations, including two miscarriages and cancer. But these stresses are always measured against the backdrop of the larger loss that Kim, Sam and Grace first faced. In a way, it makes them all more focused on the positives of life rather than the losses and trials they have faced.

Kim and Roland don't enforce any specific traditions on Sam and Grace to honor their father. They tried a balloon release in 2010, but it ended in tears for the kids. Instead of focusing on things that might force Sam and Grace to relive the sadness, they like to focus on the memory of who



Kim enjoys a quiet moment while Roland rounds up all the kids for dinner.

Tom was. Kim asked friends and family to share remembrances of Tom for his 40th birthday in 2015. She says these are the memories she and Roland will recount to Sam and Grace over the years.

What's In a Name?

Kim looks forward to her kids' experience this year at Good Grief Camp. She thinks that at 13 and 11 they are just now entering the stage where they are old enough to process their grief and understand the possibility of what they lost. Roland doesn't ever try to compete with the elusive "what might have been." In fact, the only difference in their names (Daddy and Daddy Tom) is if they are being discussed in the same conversation. Otherwise, Sam and Grace's relationship with Roland is an open acknowledgment of the presence of two fathers in their lives. One who was there to "see them born" and another to "see them grown."

Life Goes On

Kim and Roland's family has expanded twice with the addition of Sarah in 2011 and Anna in 2012. The younger kids are

not quite old enough to understand, but watching them all play around the table with Roland and a picture of Tom in the background reveals a blended family founded on love and legacy.

They have discovered that the best way to move forward and honor the memory of a fallen loved one is to remember them. Don't hide away the memories in the shadow of loss. Celebrate the stories that cherish your hero's life. Incorporate them into the highlights of your life.

Debt of Honor

Roland pretty much nailed it in 2014 at his promotion ceremony to lieutenant colonel. With Kim, Grace, Sam, Sarah and Anna gathered with other friends and family, he made remarks in the Hall of Heroes at the Pentagon. He thanked all the requisite people and then closed with this, "Every day when I get up and look in the mirror, I ask myself if I am living a life that honors Tom. It's my job to make good on a debt of honor to Kim, Sam and Grace. I love my wife and all my kids, and I know he is watching over us."



About the Author

Bevin has a master's degree in public relations, is an avid sports fan, cook and Southern hostess. She is the surviving daughter of a World War II veteran and writes to honor him and all those who served.

GRIEF IS POWERFUL

6 LESSONS LEARNED

By Sherry Amatenstein, LCSW

My parents survived the Holocaust, so I was raised by people who had been wrenched through horror and loss. Mom spent ages 14 to 17 in a work camp, and came home to find her mother and two sisters were dead. Dad was imprisoned at Auschwitz and Dachau. Despite the pain poised just beneath the surface, my parents were role models for how to wrest joy and meaning from tragedy.

Now, as a therapist, when I see the fortitude of my patients in dealing with catastrophic events I am reminded of the self-discovery that takes place once a person accepts he or she can't undo a tragedy – but the person can relate to it in a new, healthier way. Here are six positive things that can emerge from grief:

1. KNOWING YOU'VE ALREADY SURVIVED THE WORST PART

For a decade, the main role for one of my patients, Carrie, (all patients' names are changed) was as caretaker to her dying husband.

Over the years, she'd given Tom her all – including a kidney. Despite this gift of love, the desperately ill man, who also endured cancer, congestive heart failure and multiple strokes, was eventually moved to a nursing home. Carrie sobbed in my office many times: "I know Tom wants to give up, but I can't let him go. If he dies, there is nothing left for me. I might as well be buried, too."

After his death, her grief was titanic. And yet, three weeks after the burial, she admitted, "I miss him with every breath I take, but there is also relief. When the phone rings, my heart doesn't leap to my throat. I don't need to worry something terrible happened. It already has."

Within six months, Carrie was experiencing a renaissance. Her life, which had been dependent solely on her husband's wavering physical state, suddenly took flight. She traveled abroad with her teenage daughter, joined a book club and started job-hunting. "Life is different than I imagined it would be on my wedding day," she told me. "Things obviously haven't turned out the way I wished, but there are new dreams I am pursuing."

2. REALIZING YOUR OWN RESILIENCE

One of the worst days of my life occurred over Labor Day weekend when I was 17. My uncle, also a Holocaust survivor, had been hit by a car and died on the operating table. Initially, I feared my mother would not recover.

For a solid year, she wore black and forswore any entertainment. Mom was changed. But her spirit proved resilient. After many terrible months, laughter

THE BEST COPING TOOL IS TO SIT WITH THE PAIN.

returned to our house. She said to me once, "So many things have happened that could have ended me, that I thought would end me – but I'm too stubborn to let this take me down."

3. YOUR PRIORITIES CHANGE – FOR THE BETTER

Stacey's priorities shifted after her loss. She began therapy two weeks after her husband died of a brain embolism. Session after session, she kept repeating: "What were we waiting for? There were so many trips we wanted to take but kept telling ourselves even weekend getaways needed to wait until we felt more financially secure." Boxes of tissues were emptied as Stacey mourned lost chances: "Dan and I were so focused on working like demons for the future that we rarely sat on our porch to watch the sunset together."

After much inner work, Stacey has stopped beating herself up for what she views as mistakes. "There will always be regrets, but instead of drowning in them, I want to use the energy to push me forward."

This translates to a determination to never again devalue the importance of being in her life versus waiting for it to begin on some far-off day. Stacey is taking watercolor classes and makes sure to get out of the city once a month to enjoy nature. "Dan and I loved being outdoors, so whenever I'm taking a hike or savoring a sunset, I feel him with me."

4. BITTERNESS ONLY MAKES THINGS WORSE

If anyone had a right to stew in bitterness and fury, it was my father. Dad watched his parents and little sister march to the gas chambers at Auschwitz. Yet the man who raised me was the most gentle and forgiving person I've ever met. My father once noticed a confused elderly man wandering crowded streets, brought him home and then tracked down the man's grateful daughter. Whenever a friend of mine visited, if a parent wasn't

picking her up, my dad drove the girl home. My father sold household goods and clothing, and if a customer couldn't immediately pay for the merchandise, Dad issued an IOU on the spot. He told me, "Being kind, no matter what other people are like, helps me feel good about myself."

Over a two-year period, I interviewed 66 Holocaust survivors in their homes as part of Steven Spielberg's USC Shoah Foundation: The Institute for Visual History and Education. The happiest survivors had been able to release – to some degree, at least – dark feelings toward their torturers. One interviewee told me, "It doesn't mean I forget or totally forgive. But, for my own well-being, I don't carry inside the injustice of what was done to me."

5. YOU CAN'T OUTFRAN YOUR GRIEF

Within six months after the death of his wife, Lenny had taken a trip to Europe, run his first half marathon and accepted a demanding promotion at work.

He came to therapy after "totally losing it" during a meditation class at a corporate retreat. Lenny admitted, "It was the first time since Pam's heart attack that I was still for 10 minutes, other than sleeping, and everything inside me collapsed."

Trauma demands acknowledgement and respect.

Lenny had literally crossed the ocean and worn out several pairs of running shoes to escape his grief, but he could not maintain that grueling pace forever. When he finally succumbed to a moment of reflection, the sorrow could no longer be denied. Lenny was convinced the grief, once

unleashed, would be never-ending. But no emotion lasts forever – not the joyous ones you ache to hold onto, nor the darkness. Wait long enough, and the inner scenery will change.

Now that he's stopped running, Lenny finds his life is on an even keel. "It's such a relief to be able to feel sad when I need to and know that afterward I'll be able to meet a friend for dinner and have some genuine laughs."

6. LETTING GO OF PETTY GRIEVANCES

Kara came to therapy after her estranged best friend died. She collapsed on my couch and wept, "I hadn't talked to Sue for nine months before she passed. Sometimes she was so self-absorbed. But I never mentioned it. My solution was to stop taking her calls."

Kara assumed one day she'd reunite with her friend. Then it became too late. Kara said, "Sue never told me she was diagnosed with cancer. Then her husband left a message with details for her funeral." Kara's grief was twofold. Not only had she lost someone she loved, but she'd lost valuable time the two could have shared.

What has given Kara solace is becoming deeply involved in the lives of Sue's children. "I take them shopping, they tell me their secrets and I give them advice. I won't abandon them."

It isn't possible to overcome or fix things after a loss. You won't revert to being the person you were before the tragedy. But that is not a bad thing. Knowing that everything is tenuous and the only thing over which you have control is your own reactions is a gift. It offers an opportunity to create a richer, meaningful life.



About the Author

Sherry Amatenstein is a staff therapist at Washington Square Institute and Long Island Consultation Center, runs relationship seminars around the country and works in person and on the phone with singles and couples.

Re-envisioning Our Resolutions: Grief Requires Grace

By Kelly Griffith

Surviving sister of Maj. Samuel Griffith

This year, I'm going to run more. I'm going to be more decisive. I'm going to take more risks and find new ways to honor both my hero and myself. A fresh start can be great, can't it? It's a clean slate with the opportunity to make new resolutions. We vow to ourselves that we're going to be "on it" this time. But by mid January, we may have slipped into the same habits we had before. Before February even rolls around, we are kicking ourselves while we're down. "I could have..." "I should have..."

Grief and Military Culture

Coming from a military family culture where we "walk it off" and "rub some dirt on it," we don't always allow ourselves time to move forward with gentleness and take baby steps toward our goal of finding reconciliation and healing. We've been told to suck it up and that failure is not an option. When change happens, we are supposed to adapt quickly and efficiently.

Having Grace in Grief

My first New Year without my brother, less than a month after his death, I stubbornly decided I was finished grieving. I was going to be fine. I resolved to learn to knit prayer shawls for other families experiencing loss and to "get over" my own grief. So, I taught myself to knit, using online videos and the most complicated pattern I could find.

That night, I learned the importance of showing myself some grace. Instead of crying alone at my kitchen table, I could have reached out for help from someone who had already been

through the horrible experience of grieving – or someone who knew how to knit, at the very least. I also learned it was okay to take a break when I got frustrated and go back to it later. I didn't have to finish the shawl in one night. I could take a break from my grief. Grief isn't a sprint. It's a marathon.

Many weeks later, I finished a beautiful shawl that eventually gave comfort to a dear friend after the sudden passing of her dad. It wasn't perfect, but it was just what she needed. As my friend faced finding her own new normal without her dad, she found strength in knowing someone else understood great loss and cared for her. I found healing in being there for her and sharing the grief journey with someone newer to walking this path.

It's springtime. The first days, weeks and months of the year have passed and, likely with them, our resolutions for a better us in the new year. Maybe you're kicking yourself for not getting over your loss like I was, but you don't have to be so hard on yourself. Give yourself permission to go slowly. How beautiful it would be for our loved ones to see us making those strides and growing through gentleness and grace.

The Goal of Finding Grace

So, let's re-envision our resolutions. This year, may we resolve to have some grace with ourselves. May we understand that maybe this won't be the best year of our lives, but there is growth to be found, there are new learning opportunities to challenge us and moments of peace that will allow us to take a break from the hard work of grief. May we resolve to share this journey with others. May we lean on others during the tough days, calling the TAPS Helpline or finding peace in being with surviving families at a Care Group. May we lend an ear and a heart for others when needed, becoming a Peer Mentor or encouraging someone through the TAPS Online Community.

My resolution this year, for myself and Sam, is to grow. Maybe it's one step today. Maybe it's a few steps back next week. Maybe it's a leap forward next month. When we fall, we know our TAPS family is there to catch us, and we know we can move forward gently and be stronger for it. Here's to a 2016 of hope and healing.



About the Author

Kelly Griffith is the surviving sister of Marine Corps Major Samuel Griffith, who was killed in action in Afghanistan on Dec. 14, 2011. Her degree in journalism and the impact of her older brother's life and service enable Kelly to fulfill her goal of sharing the compassion and care of TAPS through her writing.

**Some days,
it's difficult to
get out of bed,
let alone to be
more decisive
and find ways to
honor our heroes.**

**Grief reshuffles what our
resolutions should be and what's
worth working for on our journey.**

Here is an interesting grief twist on some top tips to strive for throughout 2016.

- 1. I will lose the weight** of expecting others to know how I feel and what I need. Instead, I will give voice to my journey and own my healing fully so that I may heal.
- 2. I will stop smoking** society's expectations that it's time to get over it and move on. Instead, I will be kind to myself and trust I know when it's time to take the next step.
- 3. I will not spend energy** on being angry and resentful of people and things I have no ability to control. Instead, I will spend my energy with people and activities that support my healing journey.
- 4. I will save my energy** by letting go of being worried about what other people think of me and my grief. Instead, I will speak my truth authentically and transparently so that others may be empowered by my courage.
- 5. I will let go** of behaviors or thought patterns that keep me stuck and unable to heal. Instead, I will trust and tap into my own inner wisdom that reflects my divine healing powers.

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Top Resolutions for the Grieving

By Paula Stephens,
Certified Wellness Coach

In 2010 I lost 150 pounds – true story. I lost 150 pounds that came from the deepest folds of my heart and radiated out into every fiber of my mind, body and spirit. What's left of that weight sits in an urn on the table in my living room. My son Brandon.

After that weight loss, losing that "last 5 pounds" or making New Year's resolutions based on vanity began to seem silly. Would I really be happier 5 pounds lighter, if my butt was tighter, my belly flatter or my arms more sculpted? Happier – no. More body satisfaction – probably. Overall quality of life satisfaction – probably not. Would I feel more love and belonging in my relationships – no. But, I would be smokin' hot!

For the record, there is nothing wrong with these resolutions as long as you are clear on what you get for your efforts.

HOW ARE *Pain* AND *Love* Connected?

By Franklin Cook, MA, CPC



As I sat with the other panelists in the opening session of my fourth TAPS National Military Suicide Survivor Seminar, and looked out at the sea of faces of those who had lost a loved one to suicide, I related strongly to the cumulative pain in the room. I often speak about addictive behaviors as a way to numb pain, so I understand the idea that we wish we could escape from the pain of our grief.

In that moment, instead of previewing the sessions I was to present, I felt led to share something philosophical about grief.

The pain you feel when you are in grief is intricately connected to – and intimately tangled up with – the love you felt, and still feel, for the person who died.

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN PAIN AND LOVE is real.

Whenever I am with bereaved people in a purposeful way, I feel their pain. I see it clearly, right there in front of me. I told the audience that I saw and felt everyone's pain filling the room.

Then, as I continued to look out at everyone in the crowd, I said that I also saw, and was deeply moved by, the abundance of love that was present in the room. That love made me aware of the presence of our dear ones who died. I believe the love and pain we feel are directly and profoundly connected. When people die, our immense love for them is often the source of our pain.

PAIN IS A natural phenomenon.

Tina Marie Buschke's memorial tattoo for her son Sgt. Joshua Adam Throckmorton, killed in action July 05, 2011. Tina's tattoo image of Joshua's last written words to her is a reminder of how the pain of her loss is entwined with love for her son.



About the Author

Franklin Cook, Boston, Mass., is a consultant, speaker and trainer in suicide prevention and postvention (responding in suicide's aftermath). He has worked in peer-led suicide grief support since 1999, and delivers care via telephone through his Personal Grief Coaching service. His father died by suicide in 1978.

Understanding this causal connection affirms that pain following the loss of a loved one is a *natural phenomenon*. As odd as this may seem, it is true that just as a fever is a healthy response to an infection in the body, the pain of grief is a healthy response to the death of a beloved person.

Even though you might feel broken or crazy or hopeless in the midst of your pain, if you can later reflect on how normal these feelings are, then you can be reassured that nothing is wrong with you.

IT IS okay TO RESPOND TO THE pain you feel IN ANY WAY THAT DOES NOT HARM YOU OR OTHERS.

This realization can empower you to give yourself permission to express the pain of the loss: to cry when you are sad, to pound the table when you are angry, to speak of your despair when you are distraught, to declare that you cannot live without your loved one when you yearn for him or her, to withdraw when you cannot be with people, to ask to be comforted when you are overwhelmed.

There is nothing wrong with relating to your pain in your own way. Everyone is different in how they express their emotions, unburden themselves and say what's on their mind. These behaviors may be difficult for you, and they may not be understood or supported by some people you encounter, but they are legitimate ways to mourn the dead. It is absolutely okay for you to respond to the pain you feel in any way that does not harm you or others.

THE pain of grief PROVIDES FUEL FOR PROFOUNDLY heartfelt discoveries.

The connection between your love for the person who died and the pain you feel in your grief can also be a window to finding meaning in your loss. In fact, because finding meaning in the wake of a loved one's death is not purely an intellectual task, the pain of grief can provide the "fuel" for profoundly heartfelt discoveries.

If your pain comes from the inability to physically embrace your loved one, then being close to loved ones may become precious to you in a newly profound way. If your pain is sparked by feeling your family will never again be the same, then you may search deeply for what matters to you about your family role. If your pain is prompted by losing the future you would have had with your loved one, you may gain a fresh perspective on finding composure and calm in an ever-changing world. When pain is tied to an overwhelming sense of feeling bereaved without your loved one, then you may see who you truly are in a different way than ever before.

These examples of finding meaning might oversimplify a difficult and complicated matter, but the point is that losing a loved one breaks your heart, and grief breaks your heart open. The pain of grief, as dark and terrible as it can be, can also open you up to seeing life in a new light.

continued...

**THE THING THAT IS “WRONG”
IS THAT YOUR LOVED ONE DIED,
AND THE PAIN YOU FEEL
AS A RESULT OF THAT AWFUL
REALITY IS ENTIRELY VALID.**

**Expressing or giving voice
TO YOUR PAIN WITHOUT
HARMING YOURSELF OR
OTHERS IS ONE OF THE
essential challenges
OF GRIEVING.**

This requires that you be supported in finding safe ways to express natural yet intense emotions instead of stuffing them inside of you. You also need safe places to privately “let it all out” without interruption. Lastly, you need people with whom you feel safe saying what you truly feel and need to say without being misunderstood or judged.

Everyone is different in how they express their emotions, unburden themselves, and say what is on their minds. There is nothing wrong with relating to your pain in your own way; some people are more outwardly expressive while others experience grief privately. Just because you aren't a talkative person doesn't mean you're stuffing your feelings. Grief expression may happen through stubbornly completing a strenuous task. Saying what is on your mind may show through your actions instead of words.

The pain of grief can be terrible, and there is no sure way to stop pain from unfolding in real time. Finding safe ways to process your pain helps you see beyond it even as you are in its grip. Reflecting on the connection between your pain and your love for the person who died helps you uncover meaning in your life that comes directly from the relationship you had – and still have – with your loved one.



**QUESTIONS THAT MIGHT HELP
YOU DEAL WITH YOUR PAIN:**

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can you come to view your pain not merely as cruel, senseless or unfair, but also as a legitimate outcome of your loss? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can you allow your pain to lead you to a deep sense of connection with your lost loved one and uncover meaning beyond the awful tragedy that occurred? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can you find healthy ways to step back from your pain and to bear the weight of your pain instead of fighting against it? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can you see ways that you are escaping from your pain or numbing your pain that are unhealthy or that have become an addiction? |

Summer Good Grief Camp Opportunities

MAKE SUMMER PLANS NOW

This summer, TAPS has space for more than 80 surviving children from around the country to gather in California and North Carolina for two Good Grief Campouts and an inaugural teen hiking adventure in the Cumberland area of Maryland and Pennsylvania.

Away from the familiarity of daily life, and without the distractions of electronics, connections center around shared experiences, special memories, and the need to embrace both self and loss. Good Grief Campouts combine emotionally challenging themes with natural outdoor activities to create the perfect backdrop for rituals that honor and remember loved ones.

Over the course of the three- or four-day campouts, each camper is paired with a mentor. This continuing connection with the military helps children honor the life and memories of the military member they loved and lost. Volunteer mentors offer security and acceptance by simply being there for the children. Many mentors keep in contact with their buddy long after the Good Grief Campout ends as they continue to care for and nurture the child during their grief and healing.

INAUGURAL TEEN HIKING ADVENTURE

The summer culminates with the first ever joint TAPS and Outward Bound Appalachian Trail teen hiking adventure. Teens ages 14-17 will consider the challenges

of the grief journey while conquering the landscape of one of America's most famous hiking trails. Space is limited for this event, so parents please complete the application as soon as possible to secure a spot for your teen.

FAMILY HEALING AT CAMPOUTS

There are also two opportunities for families to participate in TAPS Family Campouts in Washington and Tennessee. These unique events will bring 100 parents or guardians and children together for healing activities and shared fun. As families make new memories in the great outdoors, they also discover creative and interesting ways to explore emotions, relationships, and changed family dynamics.

Working individually with peers and together as the family unit, campers use their time to strengthen family bonds and challenge themselves in new ways. Last year, one young survivor said, "I found somewhere safe to let out my feelings."

When survivors leave a TAPS Family Campout, they feel more comfortable planning things they want to do in a life without their hero. They feel empowered to look to a future that honors the person they lost by making room for love, grief and hope.

Registration is currently open for all these events. Please visit www.taps.org/events for details.



CAMPOUT SCHEDULE

JUNE

★ Mid-Atlantic

Good Grief Campout

June 12-16 • Columbia, NC

★ IslandWood

Family Campout

June 23-26 • Bainbridge Island, WA

JULY

★ Southern California

Good Grief Campout

July 24-27 • San Diego, CA

AUGUST

★ Tennessee

Family Campout

August 1-4 • Bolivar, TN

★ Appalachian Trail

Teen Adventure

August 13-19 • MD & PA

What Last Year's Campers Had to Say...

"It's a camp where you can remember and meet people who feel the same."

"My favorite experience was just small moments with everyone."

"I am still working through 'being myself' and what this looks like. This weekend helped me define that a little more."



Transforming Experience Into Advocacy

By Kim Ruocco, MSW, and Emily Muñoz



There was a moment at last year's National Military Suicide Survivor Seminar when I looked around at a room filled with people I trust and respect – many of whom feel like family – and felt a rush of contentment. But then, in the midst of the overwhelming gratitude for the richness of my life, a terrible thought struck me. I realized that if not for the death of my husband, John, I would not know any of them.

In that stunning moment of clarity, I started to think of other positive changes. With John's death, our world fell apart. The home we had built together was painfully, irrevocably changed. We were best friends, together for 23 years, and loving parents to two young children. No part of that covenant seemed intact. His death left a path of destruction and self-doubt, of desperate searching for answers and of feeling excommunicated from everything that we knew.

Yet, where once we were only trying to find our way in the aftermath, there has been, and continues to be, rebuilding and remodeling. Great things have happened in our lives, beautiful moments and unexpected blessings. In a way, John's death brought us startlingly fulfilling gifts – my relationship with God changed; my boys and I became closer; my fight with my own guilt brought me to a new place of self-awareness.

There have also been deeply fulfilling changes in my career. While the foundation of my professional life as a clinical social worker would not have been possible without John's support and the inspiration he provided in life, the opportunity to dramatically change the conversation on military suicide would not have been possible without the particular circumstances of John's death.

In my early grief, I looked outward for answers. I asked questions, read books, saw therapists, tried different churches and met with mediums and psychics. I became a gatherer of healing knowledge. I was feeding an inward need to make sense of John's death for myself and my boys. As I gradually became able to ground myself in even the smallest comforts and remembered certainties, I realized that my own search might be able to help other families who, like me, needed to make sense of it all.

And so we developed the TAPS Suicide Postvention Program to help other survivors grieving suicide loss. The positive effects of our work as a community and as an organization are undeniable. We have been able to raise awareness and influence policy at both the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs, serve on suicide

prevention task forces and work closely with each service branch. We are expanding work with the National Guard, developing suicide prevention toolkits, and finding new and better ways to change the way other organizations view the scope of this epidemic.

We're making a difference on a large scale and on a personal one. Because my healing started by creating relationships with other survivors, we started comprehensive peer-based programs to alleviate disenfranchised grief. We provide safe spaces where survivors of suicide loss can come together and grieve, places where zebra stripes are the norm rather than the exception. We show surviving families that they can consider the possibility of hope.

The understanding that started at the Suicide Survivor Seminar, that John's death has transformed me, my life, my family and my work, became even more

real this past winter when I was selected as the American Association of Suicidology Loss Survivor of the Year. The award cites TAPS work in postvention, trauma response and suicide prevention, but it also mentions my own post-traumatic growth and change. This award underscores my deepest commitments to raising awareness, advocating tirelessly and using peer support to learn how to cope with the unique grief following suicide.

I am humbled and proud to receive this award because it's an important part of my story. We're in this together, so it's an important part of your story. Most staggering to me, however, is that it's also an important part of John's story. The way John lived and loved is transforming his own life-ending despair into a legacy of persistent hope.

To learn more about the AAS conference visit bit.ly/TAPSAAS.



The AAS Loss Survivor of the Year Award has been given since 1995 to acknowledge the ways in which survivors of suicide loss transform the trauma of their loss into suicide prevention efforts and/or survivor support. It is intended to recognize significant accomplishments of an individual's involvement with suicide prevention, intervention and/or postvention advocacy or activism that embodies the mission of AAS.



Take Time to Remember

By Robert Longley

Where will you remember?

*Those who came before
Somewhere on vacation
Or maybe just next door*

When will you remember?

*Those who fought and died
And what about their families
And all the tears they cried*

Try to take a moment and think

*Would you heed the call?
Would you join the heroes?
That were destined to fall*

Such is the price of freedom

*Masked as the cost of war
So take time to remember
So they will live forevermore*



Freedom for All

By Bonnie Carroll, TAPS President & Founder

On Nov. 24, 2015, I accepted the Presidential Medal of Freedom on behalf of my family.

I come from a family that understands that freedom is a privilege that must be protected, and that love is the deepest blessing. My family's legacy of courage and commitment to the greater good showed me that, while it is often difficult, service elevates us to extraordinary lives. We live these same family values every day at TAPS.

You understand because this is your family, too.

We all know that freedom is a national treasure, but it is also a TAPS family value of the highest order. If you've been to a TAPS event, you can feel it — the

opportunity to unburden yourself, to be who you are, to take off the mask. As a part of our TAPS family, you have the freedom to share openly, to listen, to give and accept support. Our family not only understands, but honors, the freedom to grieve, to remember and to rebuild. When your changed life overwhelms you, your TAPS family is there to walk beside you with love and care.

My late husband, Brig. Gen. Tom Carroll, and I met while trying to save a family. The commitment to figure out a way — any way — to rescue three grey whales trapped under the ice in Alaska led to several important joint operations. Most memorable, politically, was the joint military operation between the U.S. and Soviet Union, in the midst of the Cold War. Most important for our family,

however, was the forging of a personal alliance, the love that grew between Tom and me.

During the whale rescue that brought us together, we had one goal: movement. Instead of remaining trapped and cut off from everything that could sustain them, the whales needed to *move*. We needed to help them break through the ice so that they could continue a journey to open water. In the end, freedom prevailed. They were saved by communication and connection. And as we helped save a whale family, we created our own.

Years later, after Tom was killed in a National Guard plane crash, I found that in order to continue to live out a love that wasn't finished, in order to save my family, I needed, again, to create one.

I needed to continue my journey. But to do so, I needed that same communication and connection.

Grief tries to make us smaller, to keep us from moving, to restrict our freedom to believe in what matters. In my darkest, most isolated moments, I needed people who believed that our love, and Tom's life, *mattered*. Just as we believed the whales were important, for reasons maybe even beyond what we knew at the time, I needed to feel seen, heard, *understood*. And so TAPS was born, from a visceral understanding that feeling trapped, alone and emotionally confined is *not the end of the journey*.

In addition to great love and a compelling sense of service, Tom and I shared the bond of having had to learn, too early, how to balance grief, love and pride. We both lost military parents as teenagers. My mother, who had been a pilot in the Women's Army Air Corps in WWII, died from a sudden illness when I was 17. Tom's father, the first Adjutant General of Alaska, was tragically killed in a National Guard C-123 crash in Alaska when Tom was just 15, leaving his mom to raise four boys alone. We both understood the risks of service, but we also accepted these and dedicated ourselves to the powerful call to live lives of purpose. In so doing, we embraced the same hopes we all do, that we can do right by those we love, and that we can make them proud.



And Tom and I knew what you all know, that with great risk comes great reward. It is an ever-present knowledge that the greater good will mean at least some measure of personal sacrifice. And so we pray, we hope, we turn the possibilities over and over and over in our minds, trying to prepare for how we will handle life's challenges, whether they be missed holidays or the last full measure.

But then the worst happens and we must live without those who sacrificed their freedom for ours. With each salute, our resolve is strengthened. With each snap of the flag in the wind, we feel the gift of freedom in our soul, and we embrace our part in preserving its legacy. We are the ones who see that shadow, but turn instead to the light of lives well lived and love dearly remembered.

As a TAPS family, we show people that when they think there are no more options, there is hope. Together, we encourage cooperation. We share the journeys and bear the burdens. Together, we remember lives magnificently lived rather than allowing a single moment at death to define our heroes. They are more than their last breath. They are beautiful, amazing, fantastic individuals who will live forever in the hearts of all those who love them. And so, they are truly immortal.

We are the ones who understand the relationship between freedom and family.

On Nov. 24, 2015, I accepted the Presidential Medal of Freedom on behalf of you, because you are my family, and because you, and the heroes you love, *matter*.





Alternative Therapies Open Door to Healing at Good Grief Camps

By Jonathan Kirkendall, MA, LPC
Youth Programs Manager

And there I was. I stepped into a world that I knew little about. My heart was pounding, and I was running late for the 2 p.m. training I had been told to attend, but not only could I not find the room, I was also told that the woman running the training was at Fort Myer.

I was not new to working with children going through rough times. I was the senior supervisor of the American Red Cross Emergency Family Shelter in Manhattan, a facility that housed 250 moms and more than 500 children, all fleeing fires, condemned buildings or domestic violence situations. Before that, I worked with homeless children, helping them identify points of stability while they were being shifted from shelter to shelter, school district to school district.

It was May 2006. I was a civilian, a mental health professional, and I was standing in the lobby of the DoubleTree Hotel in Arlington, Va., feeling lost.

I called my sister-in-law, an Army wife with both her husband (my brother) and son (my nephew) serving in Iraq. "I'm here at the hotel waiting for this training to begin, but no one's here!" She laughed. "Welcome to the military world! Hurry up... and wait." I waited, and it paid off.

But I had never stepped into a room full of children, each dealing with a very direct experience of grief.

A few weeks before, I heard a radio interview with Bonnie Carroll talking about a program called TAPS. With a brother and a nephew serving in Iraq, I was intrigued. I was struggling to find a concrete way to support the troops – especially since the troops were my family. As a mental health professional with experience working with children, I looked up the organization and sent off an email with my resume. Soon, I received a response: Would I consider being a group leader for 11-year-old children?

When the therapist called out an emotion, each child, with a scarf, would move to the music – acting out anger, joy or sadness.

And when I did, it changed my life.

Before long, the Good Grief Camp director arrived, and I started my first training as a group leader for TAPS Good Grief Camps.

Since that first day, I have learned the importance of play during a time of loss. I have learned that healing can come in the most mundane moments. And, as I have watched our military mentors work with the Good Grief Camp children, I have learned about the primary role that loving relationships play in the healing process.

So I kept coming back and now 10 years later joined the TAPS staff. I cannot express how happy I am to serve in the capacity of Youth Programs Manager.



About the Author

The son of missionaries, Jonathan grew up in Beirut, Tehran and Bangalore. A graduate of Wake Forest University and Narapo University's Masters in Counseling Psychology, he has over 20 years experience in working with children, teens and adults, and, outside of TAPS, manages a small private practice in D.C.

What do I love about my job? It comes down to two things. First, the extraordinary people I get to call co-workers. We have an experienced team with a busy year ahead of us: monthly regional Seminars from Hawaii to New England, two national Seminars, and a summer full of camps.

Second: Kids! I get to play tag, read great books, go on walks, ride horses and play with therapy dogs. I get to do all of this to create an opportunity for children to befriend their experience of loss, to learn they are not alone and to understand that this country honors their heroes.

At Good Grief Camps, we use a myriad of tools to help children express themselves. Unlike adults, they do not have the capacity to conceptualize, intellectualize and talk through their grief. They approach their thoughts and emotions through imagination, play and activity.

Children can express themselves through bibliotherapy.

Bibliotherapy is a fancy word for using books for healing. When children read, or are read to, they identify with the characters in the story. As that character begins to grow and have insights within the story, that begins to happen for the youth who are reading or listening to the stories. One of my favorite times at Good Grief Camp is when the children gather around, and I get to read a story. Some of my favorite stories are "The Rhino Who Swallowed a Storm," "The Invisible String" and "Rabbityness."

My favorite resource for good books is the website booksthathealkids.blogspot.com, which is dedicated to children and teen books that inspire healing. Any of their recommended books are worth pulling up a cozy chair, grabbing your child(ren) and spending some time in the healing pages of books.

Movement dance therapy can help the healing process.

Children love to move. They love music. They love pretend games. Combine the three, and you have a very powerful way for getting them to express how they are feeling. For several years now, TAPS has invited trained movement dance therapists to volunteer their time at our National Seminar. A few years ago, a group of dance therapists arrived at a Good Grief Camp with a bag full of scarves. As the music started, the children were encouraged to each take a scarf. It was amazing to see. The room was transformed into a stage full of sound, color, movement and emotion.

Equine therapy creates a space of peace and healing.

The ancient Greeks were the first to write about the therapeutic value of horses. Equine therapy is remarkable. The bond between humans and horses is undeniable and deep. Horses are highly intuitive and interactive. They can bring about feelings of peace and create a sense bonding between horse and companion. In that space, healing occurs.

Children at a recent Good Grief Camp experienced the liberation of interacting with horses during a special session. Typical challenges fell away as our youngest survivors touched, rode and interacted with horses. Alternative choices such as equine therapy give our Good Grief Campers the freedom to work with their story of loss and help them recognize the release that occurs when we can lean into our challenges and do not simply avoid them.



Memorial Day:

A National Debt, A Personal Price

By Emily Muñoz, Strategy & Communications Senior Advisor

Memorial Day was a first step toward national unity in a deeply divided country. With origins in the aftermath of the Civil War, it was designated for the purpose of “strewing with flowers, or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village and hamlet churchyard in the land.” Following this proclamation, on May 30, 1868, Gen. James Garfield made a speech at Arlington National Cemetery, and 5,000 participants decorated the graves of the 20,000 Union and Confederate soldiers buried there. The vibrant hues of spring flowers adorning gravesites served

to remind a still-healing country that collective peace requires personal sacrifice.

In 1971, the collective American story resulted in a shared national day of mourning, when Memorial Day was declared a national holiday, ensuring both a three-day weekend and a place in the public conscious.

Still, amid the happy noise of picnics and the chatter of consumerism that seem to accompany any federal holiday, the somber truth is unavoidable. More than 1 million men and



women have given their lives for our country. For TAPS families, this tugs at our hearts even more personally. We know that some of them are ours.

As surviving families, even as we experience deep individual grief, we know we are part of this larger American legacy of grief and loss. But how does Memorial Day change for us when the holiday becomes personal?

Military families have always marked Memorial Day with gratitude and gravitas, as is customary when the experiences of loss are an inescapable reality. Yet, for the rest of the country there is no mental parade of names and faces, no catalogue of near misses, and little deeply personalized understanding of the imperative to make their sacrifice matter. Most do not serve on the front lines of hardship tours, forward basing or dangerous training missions. Most enjoy the comfort that someone else stands in constant vigilance over our national freedom.



As surviving families, even as we experience deep individual grief, we know we are part of this larger American legacy of grief and loss.

In many ways, the past 15 years of armed conflict have once again brought the harsh costs of the national defense home on a larger scale. However, in World War II, 12 percent of the population served in the military. Today, that number is less than half of one percent. If the burden is not universal, shouldn't the remembrance at least be?

If you're with us at the National Military Survivor Seminar over Memorial Day weekend, you know that we are able to observe it together, wrapped in love, pride and a sense of reverence. We're able to insulate ourselves from all but the very hardest truth of the day. Instead of using the day to mark the beginning of summer, we pass the day as intended. We visit the graves of our loved ones, remember great love and rededicate ourselves to living lives that honor them every day.

Led by the same grief, remembrance and love, members of our TAPS family all across the nation do the same. We are still part of the communities that raised the everyday heroes who distinguished themselves through their service and sacrifice. While the military community's charge is to "never forget," the American public's charge is to try to know. This gives us the unique opportunity to tell our stories – to provide a personal

imperative to savor summer days, to be present with loved ones and to live lives worthy of great sacrifice.

We who have experienced this aching loss do not ask that there be sadness or that people forego the backyard barbecues. We know there is honor in celebrating - with as much joy as possible - the freedoms that some have purchased and defended with their lives.

For us, Memorial Day is every day. The loss that is recognized for a moment by our fellow citizens on the last Monday in May is ours to bear, with pain and pride, forever.

Since your loss, how has Memorial Day changed for you? How do you share with those around you on this national holiday to help make your hero and all the fallen heroes personal to our nation? TAPS invites you to share your thoughts on this topic in our "Your #TAPSfam Understands" Facebook event page.



I'VE BEEN EVERY

teams4TAPS on the road with the NBA

By Bevin Landrum, *TAPS Magazine* Editor

Military families are frequently called to live far from home. Whether they are stationed overseas or just across the country, servicemembers and their families look for ways to maintain close connections to those they love and miss. Walk in any commissary, exchange or food court on a military installation and you're liable to see a dozen different team jerseys. No matter the team or sport, if it's in your home state or conference, it is an instant conversation starter. Even huge rivalries can forge unlikely friendships.

These small ways of connecting with what is happening back home take on even larger significance after the loss of the military member in service to our country. The grieving survivors join a team for which no one wants to be selected. Even in their loss, they look for solace and comfort in the shared sports memories that remind them of their hero and create a lifeline to remembrance and honor.

While undercover with the New Jersey State Police, Bob Delaney knew what it was like to feel disconnected from all he loved. He learned that sacrifice is a way of life—one lived out through daily personal actions. Bob completed his mission to help take down a large mafia ring, but not without some serious operational stress. Over the years, this stress popped up in ugly ways with mood swings, irrational thoughts and uncharacteristic behaviors. It spurred him to learn as much as he could about the post-traumatic stress he was experiencing, and he eventually authored two books about his journey.

When he met Gen. Martin Dempsey more than a dozen years ago, it opened the door for Bob to speak with troops around the United States, Iraq, Afghanistan, Europe and Asia about post-traumatic stress and, more importantly, his journey toward hope. He later met Bonnie Carroll and spoke before TAPS families at the National Military Survivor Seminar in 2013. After meeting bereaved widows and parents and seeing children who would never know their mom or dad, he knew there was much yet to be done to help these families find hope and healing.

As word of Bob's work spread through the NBA, referees offered to help TAPS survivors share their stories. In a country where less than one percent *serve*, the referees felt it was important for TAPS families to connect with the NBA teams their heroes loved and be VIPs at games.

What started as a personal mission grew into a ground swell of support for TAPS families from coast-to-coast in towns and

locations where our survivors live. Today, the teams4taps NBA Hoops for Troops relationship involves all 30 NBA teams, the referees, trainers and fans. TAPS is grateful for a heartfelt invitation to bring survivors onto courts to celebrate the teams they cheered with their fallen heroes. The connection TAPS families now have with the NBA opens the door for survivors to create new memories from resilient bonds of love.

When Delaney sees TAPS families at NBA events, he is keenly aware that we live in the land of the free because of the brave. By promoting awareness of the TAPS family, which comes with an entry price so high that most cannot fathom, the NBA helps open the hearts and minds of everyone attending games around the country.

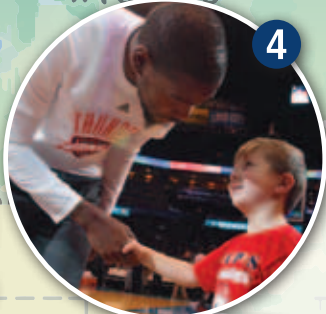
Oakland, CA



1



2



4

Phoenix, AZ



3

WHERE, MAN



One game at a time, fans, players, trainers and referees are learning that it doesn't matter what jersey you sport or even if you can shoot a hoop. What really matters is that America makes good on a national debt of honor by embracing those who have lost so much.

1 California

The NBA referees host TAPS families at games all over the country. On this night, Golden State Warriors player Stephen Curry took time to meet members of the Buoniconi family.

2 Arizona

The Phoenix Suns welcomed TAPS families to a clinic and game as part of the NBA Hoops for Troops program.

3 Texas

The San Antonio Spurs honored a fallen hero on the Jumbotron and welcomed the surviving family onto the court and into the locker room for a meet and greet.

4 Oklahoma

The NBA referees help to make sure that Oklahoma City Thunder's Kevin Durant welcomed Gunner from TAPS to the court.

5 Minnesota

The head NBA trainer for the Timberwolves coordinated with the team's community relations staff for a very special night of honors for TAPS. Families and their loved ones were recognized and the team made a donation to TAPS.

6 Michigan

The Detroit Pistons hosted TAPS for Anthem Buddies and Ball Kids. TAPS sat courtside for the pregame warmups.

7 New York

Bob Delaney, NBA Vice President, Referee Development and Performance, took TAPS to the Brooklyn Nets. He and NBRA Board Member James Capers created a pretty cool night for Brian.

8 DC

Bonnie Carroll coins NBA referee Scott Foster at a Washington Wizards game for his contributions to TAPS families.

9 Georgia

The Atlanta Hawks made it back-to-back fun for TAPS with friendly competition and a clinic for TAPS families. Tim Hardaway helped coach the winning team, and the next night TAPS enjoyed the game against the Pelicans.

Spotlight on Service

★ Emily Hoey ★

Volunteers are an important part of the TAPS family.

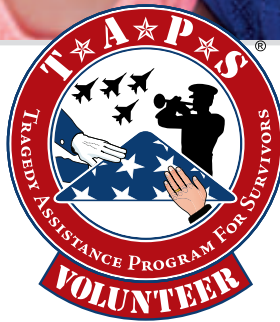
We are grateful for the time they donate in support of our mission. Volunteers, we salute you!

Our TAPS family knows that we travel this road together – through the best times and the worst. As we move toward hope, talking and sharing with fellow travelers on grief’s winding path brings added value to our journeys.

The ancient Greek philosopher Plato described what we know today as mentorship, a personal relationship between two people — one with relatively more experience, greater knowledge or particular expertise, and the other with an open mind for new perspectives and insight. Mentorship, however, is not easy, and for many it requires a certain calling.

For TAPS Peer Mentor Emily Hoey, surviving wife of Army Capt. John Tinsley, the calling to serve others came with a feeling of gratitude. The benefits she derived from TAPS programs compelled her to give back. Emily remembers the moment she registered online to receive the quarterly *TAPS Magazine*, and even her first phone call. “I received a phone call from Betsy Coffin, and she was great helping me out!” Emily said. “She helped me find a counselor and set me up with a Peer Mentor.”

At the time, Emily had moved from Fort Bragg, N.C., to Cincinnati, Ohio, to be closer to family. But the move resulted in feelings of isolation. It was six months after John’s death that she signed up for her first TAPS event. Desperate to meet and connect with other women in her shoes, when she saw the Alaska Widows Retreat being offered in March 2010,



Thank you, Emily Hoey!

Emily said, “I knew I had to go.”

Emily loved “being surrounded by so many other women who understood how I felt and what I was going through,” and shortly after she signed up to attend the 16th National Military Survivor Seminar.

For Emily, finding support and new tools to navigate her grief journey was critical through those early years of grief.

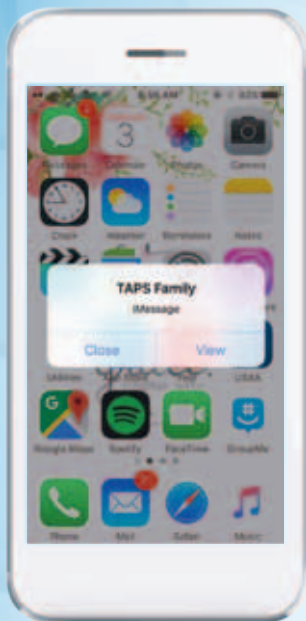
The resources offered at the National Seminar allowed her to do just that. In another safe environment, Emily was able to build upon existing friendships from the Alaska Widows Retreat. She also met and connected with other survivors, some who had been walking the grief journey for less time, and some who were more seasoned survivors.

It was through these experiences that Emily felt the need to give back. “I felt so strongly, and still do, about widows

not walking this path alone, that I knew it was my turn to help out,” she said. In 2013, Emily attended the Fort Benning Survivor Seminar in Georgia where she took the Peer Mentor training, and she was matched with her first survivor shortly after. She has been a Peer Mentor for more than two and a half years.

There are aspects of mentoring that are easy and some that provide a challenge. Emily believes that challenges are not always a bad thing; being challenged is a part of growth, and you cannot have one without the other. Some days are challenges where she is still navigating the grief in her own life. “You’re reminded of that pain again or that experience, and it can bring up a lot of old emotions,” Emily said. “It can be challenging emotionally, and it hurts because you don’t want someone to feel what you felt. It can be heartbreaking knowing that I am speaking to someone who’s been through that.”

Get Texts From Your TAPS Family



For questions or concerns, please email textsupport@taps.org.

TAPS is expanding our mobile messaging capabilities with an exciting new program that allows us to text care group reminders, event invitations, deadlines and more to mobile phones in the U.S.

Want to sign up? Survivors text TAPS to 95577 or supporters text SUPPORT-TAPS to 95577. All TAPS text messages will come from the short code 95577.

Some of you may already receive personal text messages from our Survivor Care Team or other staff with whom you have a relationship. The easiest way to tell the difference is their messages come from a personal cell phone and ours come from the TAPS short code 95577. Whether you opt-in to our official mass messaging or not, they will continue to reach out to

you one-on-one with care and support. Nothing will change!

You never have to worry that TAPS will spam you or be intrusive. We will not send more than one message a day or six messages a month and sincerely hope this makes it easier for everyone with a mobile phone to stay in touch with TAPS.

As with any text messaging platform, normal rates apply through your carrier, and we ask that you opt-in to let us know you want to receive SMS/text messages from TAPS. You can read the full disclosure at www.taps.org/terms/#SMS.

Ready to sign up? All you have to do is text TAPS or SUPPORTTAPS to 95577. The first messages go out live in March.

In spite of the challenges, Emily believes that when she is helping her mentee, that survivor is also helping her. “There are lots of sympathetic ears out there, but when you are speaking to someone who has been through those circumstances, there is another bond, and it makes a huge difference,” she said. For Emily, the best part of being a TAPS Peer Mentor is knowing that she tries to make her mentee’s day a little brighter, and she is able to give an ear or shoulder to a survivor when she needs to talk.

“It is my hope and best intention that I can be of some help or service to these women,” Emily said. “The least I can do is to let them know they are not alone. I am always here and willing to listen.”

Plato understood the significance of mentoring. He felt the power of reciprocal relationships, of listening to and learning from one another. A shared journey, a quest for understanding or healing, is a truly

bonding experience. While no grief journey is smooth and easy, the experience of a peer mentor can help lighten the load on some of the most rugged, difficult stretches. Peer mentors like Emily help because they know the terrain. With strength and experience gained from their own travels and their own mentors, they reach out to provide comfort and companionship.



Create Your Own Finish Line

Local Race Events Commemorate the Fallen

By Carol Bazemore, Team TAPS Coordinator

Team TAPS has been leading runners along race courses from Washington, D.C., to Anchorage, Alaska, for 15 years, building charity partner relationships with established races to create awareness of the TAPS mission and honor our fallen heroes. In addition, Team TAPS is focused on helping survivors create their own endurance activities that honor their loved ones in their hometowns.

Rocky's Run for Freedom 5K

TAPS families use endurance challenge events to highlight the physical activities that once inspired their fallen heroes. One of these highly successful events is the Rocky's Run for Freedom 5K. This Memorial Day race in Miamisburg, Ohio, honors Cpl. Paul "Rocky" Zanolwick II and others who sacrificed their lives for our country. With the help of family,

friends and the community, the Rocky's Run for Freedom 5K, created in 2013 by Rocky's sister, Nicole, raised \$12,000 in 2015 for charities, including TAPS.

Nicole's organizational footprint evolved from relying on the help of a few volunteers to leveraging the efforts of her brother's childhood friends and his parents in a committee-style framework. Her drive to be a living legacy for Rocky opened the door to working with a variety of supporters. Volunteers, friends and co-workers have brought different ideas and perspectives that have helped distribute the workload of planning and have benefitted the event.

"A race has many moving parts or pieces of a puzzle," said Rocky's dad, Paul, who finds that he must take off from work the final two weeks before the race to handle

all the last-minute details and setup for the event. Paul shared some tips for other surviving families wanting to create a TAPS endurance event to honor a loved one:

- Define the event's purpose.
- Create goals.
- Get plenty of help from trusted folks who share your goals.
- Beware of people or groups who may try to use your event for their own agenda.
- Have fun! If it is not fun and exciting, it will be a difficult road.
- Remember why you are putting on this event – to honor and remember your hero.

Runners gather prior to the start of the 2015 Rocky's Run for Freedom 5K. Photo provided by the Zanolwick family.



Paul said organizing an event is healing for survivors on many different levels. The family stays busy and identifies a goal on their grief journey.

"It honors Rocky to do an event like this, and yet, there is an emotional impact to doing it that is unavoidable," Paul said. "It's like being on a long, high roller coaster with lots of progressively larger rises and falls on the way to the top. I have even asked myself why we do it. But, then I really know the answer. It is to honor and remember our son."

Nicole agrees that it is an emotional experience. "When the run is over and the weekend comes to an end, everyone heads back to their homes, and the reality is that it is just my parents and me again," Nicole said. "You go from this high of being around the Marines, hearing the stories and being around our great community that watched my brother grow up. It takes a toll on you."

But ultimately, Nicole says the run is healing. The investment pays off for Nicole when her brother's Marine friends come to town to spend the weekend with them. Since the race's inception, different Marines from Rocky's battalion have participated. "We enjoy being able to hear stories about my brother and the guys," Nicole said. "Some of them are hilarious stories showcasing Rocky's lively personality and spirit. From spending time with them and getting to know them, I have been able to see a little bit of my brother in each of them."

"I get to be closer to my brother again and bring others closer to him as well, which helps make sure he is never forgotten."

Andrew Sipple Memorial Day Swim Event

In Cary, N.C., family members and the community gather at the local pool for the Andrew Sipple Memorial Day Swim Event: Laps for TAPS. The event continues the legacy of Spc. Andrew Sipple

while raising money to care for the families of fallen heroes. Andrew and his three siblings were active members of the neighborhood swim team. Now, the swim team and community join together to honor Andrew through a lap swim fundraiser and community breakfast for donations.

The community welcomes the event as part of their Memorial Day commemoration. For many in Cary, the inaugural event was the first time they did something meaningful for Memorial Day. Laps for TAPS touches many hearts as families swim together and remember loved ones they have lost.

The lion's share of the event organization is done by a network of friends and supporters. The organizers advise to start small and keep it simple. Consult with surviving family members and make sure to always gain their approval when planning, especially for communications, fliers and photographs used to promote the event. For this event, two people oversee all aspects of the event and rely on others for specific tasking. As the event evolves, the generosity of local businesses is overwhelmingly supportive.

"We are so grateful for the many kindnesses and generous donations given freely by our friends and neighbors," Andrew's parents said, while reflecting on the event. "It is heartwarming to know that Andrew is not forgotten and that he has inspired our community to come together to support TAPS."

The local pool is a special place, full of memories, for the Sipple family. "The neighborhood pool was a source of so much fun for our family," the Sipples said. "Our earlier summers at the pool were filled with lots of swim practices and meets, picnic dinners, parties, pizza and swim games, accompanied with much love and laughter. It is hard to balance these wonderful memories with the reality of a world without Andrew and the realization of the many, many families that are also on unimaginably difficult journeys."

Team TAPS welcomes the growth of hometown endurance events that honor our fallen heroes from coast to coast. We appreciate the dedication and kindness of the hundreds who race with us while raising community awareness for TAPS. The spirit of camaraderie and the passionate legacy of an endurance event honoring your loved one in your local community enhances the healing journey for all.

Are you inspired to create your own event? If so, we stand by to coach you along the way as you run, walk, swim, bike or hike your community's tribute for fallen heroes. For specific guidelines and general recommendations to get started, contact Team TAPS at teamtaps@taps.org. To learn more about the two events mentioned visit their websites.

Rocky's Run for Freedom 5K:
www.facebook.com/RockysRunForFreedom

Laps for TAPS: www.lapsfortaps.com



2016 Programs Schedule

APRIL

- ★ **Louisiana Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp**
April 1–3 • Baton Rouge, LA
- ★ **California Whitewater Rafting Expedition**
April 13–17 • Sacramento, CA
- ★ **Florida Parents Retreat**
April 27–May 1 • Destin, FL

MAY

- ★ **Florida Siblings Retreat**
May 4–8 • Destin, FL
- ★ **Smoky Mountains Multi-Sport Expedition**
May 4–8 • Smoky Mountains, TN
- ★ **Inner Warrior: Ragnar Relay**
May 12–14 • Cape Cod, MA
- ★ **National Military Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp**
May 26–30 • Arlington, VA

JUNE

- ★ **Inner Warrior: Intro to Running Camp**
June 10–12 • TBD North Carolina
- ★ **Mount Shasta Climbing Expedition**
June 10–12 • Mount Shasta, CA
- ★ **Mid-Atlantic Good Grief Campout**
June 12–16 • Columbia, NC
- ★ **Atlanta Widows Retreat**
June 14–18 • Atlanta, GA
- ★ **IslandWood Family Campout**
June 23–26 • Bainbridge Island, WA

JULY

- ★ **Southern California Adult Children Retreat**
July 20–24 • Orange County, CA
- ★ **Grand Teton Kayaking Expedition**
July 22–26 • Grand Teton National Park, WY
- ★ **Southern California Good Grief Campout**
July 24–27 • San Diego, CA
- ★ **Fort Hood Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp**
July 28–30 • Fort Hood, TX

AUGUST

- ★ **Victory Ranch Tennessee Family Campout**
August 1–4 • Bolivar, TN
- ★ **Montana Widows and Sisters Retreat**
August 3–7 • Montana
- ★ **Atlanta Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp**
August 12–14 • Atlanta, GA
- ★ **Teen Appalachian Trail Hiking Expedition**
August 13–19 • Appalachian Trail
- ★ **Alaska Parents and Siblings Retreats**
August 18–22 • Anchorage, AK

SEPTEMBER

- ★ **Machu Picchu Expedition**
September 1–9 • Machu Picchu, Peru
- ★ **Northern California Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp**
September 9–11 • Sacramento, CA
- ★ **Montana Retreat for Men**
September 14–18 • Montana
- ★ **Arizona Empowerment Retreat for Women**
September 18–23 • Sedona, AZ
- ★ **National Military Suicide Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp**
September 30–October 3 • St. Pete Beach, FL

OCTOBER

- ★ **Hawaii Empowerment Retreat for Women**
October 8–15 • Hawaii
- ★ **Dude Ranch All Population Retreat**
October 16–21 • TBD
- ★ **Nepal Trekking Expedition**
Mount Everest, Nepal

NOVEMBER

- ★ **Charleston Moms Retreat**
November 16–21 • Charleston, SC
- ★ **UK All Populations Gathering**
November 9–14 • London, England
- ★ **Baltimore Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp**
November 18–20 • Baltimore, MD

DECEMBER

- ★ **New England Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp**
December 2–4 • Connecticut



Where Will You Be on Memorial Day?

By Jennifer McCollum-Allen, Seminars Manager



Turning the pages of our calendars to a new year reveals a host of days to fill with activities, appointments and events. But one day in the year marks a moment that binds us together as a family: Memorial Day.

Sacred Time

Annually, TAPS hosts the National Military Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp over Memorial Day weekend. This year is no exception. It is a sacred time where we gather as family to share the journey. We connect with old friends and make new ones. We reflect on the lives of our loved ones and the legacy we carry on in their honor. We open our hearts to the strength we thought we could never muster and the common language only those who have walked this path can share.

Guiding Principles

If you choose to join us this year, you'll experience this year's theme of "Open Arms, Open Hearts, Sacred Spaces." Even if you aren't able to make the trip to our nation's capital, you can move through the weekend with us, choosing to focus each day on a different guiding principle.

Saturday is full of workshops, sharing groups, off-site activities and opportunities to engage with peers and professionals in a relaxed environment. This is a day to pause and reflect on our collective and individual journeys. Our triumphs, joys, sorrows and the lives we come to honor create a framework for healing and hope.

Sunday, we turn our focus toward inspiration. There is inspiration undiscovered, often already present but just enough below the surface that it remains hidden from plain sight. TAPS invites you to find inspiration within yourself and from

each other. Take time to engage with those around you to learn from them and grow in ways we once wondered if possible. When we truly see each other, it gives us the motivation to continue navigating stormy seas.

Good Grief Camp, for young survivors ages 4 through 18, has been a model for children's grief and healing for more than two decades. Each child is paired with a military mentor, spending two and a half days together in a fun and engaging way that corresponds to each age group's development. The connections each young survivor makes with his or her mentor is not only a memorable and growing experience between each pair, but is often a lasting relationship. Our mentors create a foundation of understanding and honor the children's loved ones as they help them find hope over the years.

On Memorial Day, we honor each other and our loved ones. Survivors have the opportunity to attend the National Memorial Day Ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery as honored guests or to participate in the nationally televised Memorial Day Parade. Together with our TAPS family, we experience a collective respect and honor for our fallen heroes that is captured reverently against the backdrop of our nation's capital.

We Remember with You

Whether you decide to attend your neighborhood Memorial Day barbecue or spend this day reflecting in solitude, please know that your entire TAPS family pauses and remembers with you. We hope you consider making the trip to Arlington, Va., to join us for this special weekend of remembrance.

Connect. Reflect. Inspire.

Find strength in your TAPS family, knowing you are not alone as we celebrate the lives of those we loved and lost.

*** Please visit www.taps.org/National for more information. ***

14 DAYS TO OXYGENATING, RECHARGING, AND FUELING YOUR BODY & BRAIN

By Belisa Vranich, Ph.D. • Reviewed by Lalaine Estella, Community-Based Care Coordinator

If you can control your breath, you can control your life.

It's a lofty statement, but one that author Belisa Vranich attempts to prove in her book, "Breathe: 14 Days to Oxygenating, Recharging, and Fueling Your Body & Brain". The book is an easy-to-read, practical guide to the simplest of physiological functions: breathing.

Learning how to breathe properly brings fresh oxygen into the body, nourishing organs from the inside out, bringing a wealth of benefits to overall health.

"If you really want 'wellness,' you need to go back to basics and make sure the foundation of your health – your breathing – is good," Vranich writes.

"Breath work" increasingly is used as a way to calm the mind, improve relaxation and strengthen the body. Learning to do it properly, with intention and focus, is a self-care exercise that can bring comfort and ease into our lives.

If you've ever watched babies sleep, you've probably noticed their slow, deep inhalations and exhalations. Their little, round bellies rise and fall with each breath. As adults, Vranich says, we forget this full abdominal expansion and breathe with our chest and upper body. Up to 30 percent of "stale air" remains in our system.

As a result, we are plagued with numerous common health problems: stress, anxiety, sleeplessness, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, digestive issues, obesity, back pain, and cognitive or emotional problems.

Changing the way you breathe will lower stress levels within minutes, faster than a Valium, a double shot of scotch or a good massage.

Trauma and grief can exacerbate these issues.

Proper breathing, Vranich claims, is a silver bullet. Her book provides exercises that, she suggests, will be a breath of fresh air.

For fourteen days, I experimented with relearning to breathe. While I am in general good health, I suffer from occasional back pain. Mild oxygen deprivation is a contributing factor to back pain, according to a study mentioned in the book. So I was curious to see how improving my breathing technique could alleviate some of my back pain.

The book asks that you start by taking baseline measurements of your inhale and exhale circumference (your chest), how long you can hold your breath, resting heart rate and how many breaths you take per minute. You're also asked to rate your stress and pain levels, and how well you sleep.

I read the 100-page book at the beginning of my experiment. I expected one exercise per day, which would be the best way to present the exercises and navigate the two-week program. However, the book shows the exercises, then leaves it up to the reader to create his or her own schedule (there's space in the back of the book to plan your own exercise regimen). There's also the option to just open the book each day to a new exercise.

The breathing exercises required counting a number of breaths, and some of them asked that you place one hand on your chest and the other on your belly while breathing. This became awkward while trying to hold the book and relax enough to breathe normally,



something the author could easily fix with the addition of a video tutorial.

At the end of the two weeks, I didn't notice any significant changes from my baseline, but I did feel "lighter" and more aware of my breathing throughout the day. Being aware of my breathing made me more aware of my posture, which helped ease my back pain a little. So I can't say for sure if it was increased oxygen to my cells and organs that made me feel better, or if it was just better posture while sitting at my desk. Perhaps it was both.

Vranich, who holds a doctorate in psychology, offers a compelling case for all of us to work on our breathing. Her work is backed by a growing body of research that extols the virtues of deep breathing to positively affect mental and physical health.

Concentrating on breath is also a simple way to quiet the mind. Focusing on my breath for just minutes a day sometimes did more than physical exercise alone to calm me and provide a sense of control over my daily actions and reactions.

If you are interested in rebooting your health, a simple and effective way to start is to take a few minutes a day to catch your breath.

DynCorp

Since 2001, DynCorp International has lost 84 teammates while supporting our nation's foreign policy objectives. The sacrifice of these contractors is not widely known nor heralded except by their families and friends. Our nation asked their loved ones to go to war serving beside our military. Their families deserve our respect and embrace.

In recognition of this reality, DynCorp and TAPS signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) in 2014 to provide support to the families of their fallen personnel. TAPS has similar MOAs with all but one branch of the U.S. military, but this partnership is the first such arrangement TAPS established with a private company. The agreement formalized the long-standing and enduring relationship between the families and leadership of DynCorp and TAPS.

TAPS works hand-in-hand with DynCorp's Employee Assistance Program to provide surviving family members of their fallen employees comfort and care. We welcome them into a family who understands their losses while also connecting them to the comprehensive services and programs that TAPS has been providing to other survivors for 22 years.

"Every morning when I walk into work, I look at the names of those we have lost on our memorial wall and am reminded of our commitment to the well-being of our employees and their families" said Lou Von Thaeer, DynCorp chief executive officer. "Our partnership with TAPS helps

We are honored to have a partnership with DynCorp that allows TAPS to provide bereavement care and support to the families of their employees who die while serving and supporting our nation's security.

us honor that commitment when it matters most, we are incredibly appreciative of the partnership."

DynCorp also participates as a major sponsor to the TAPS Honor Guard Gala each year. Executives from their company serve on the Gala committee and encourage their business colleagues to join them in supporting TAPS. Beyond the Gala, DynCorp and its employees have participated in a variety of fundraising activities to benefit TAPS.

Since 2010, DynCorp has supported TAPS through its "Red Shirt Friday" program; employees wear red shirts each

Friday to show support of our servicemen and women. As part of the "Red Shirt Friday" initiative, DynCorp sells red polos and t-shirts embroidered with the words: "Support the troops – Red Shirt Fridays," in its company store. For each shirt sold, DynCorp donates \$10 to TAPS, selling roughly 6,500 shirts and raising nearly \$65,000 for TAPS.

The DI Stars formed a Team TAPS race group in memory of their fallen colleagues, wearing shirts with photos of each DynCorp team member who lost their life while serving in the last five years.

"I have seen the great work the people of DynCorp do in support of our military in very challenging and dangerous environments. When a Blackhawk goes down, it does not distinguish between soldier and contractor" said Bonnie Carroll, TAPS president and founder. "We are honored to have a partnership with DynCorp that allows TAPS to provide bereavement care and support to the families of their employees who die while serving and supporting our nation's security."

DynCorp staff wear red shirts on Friday to show support for the Armed Forces.



Bonnie met with the DynCorp manager on a recent trip to Afghanistan.



Thank You to Our Donors & Sponsors

We are grateful to the Friends of TAPS whose event sponsorships, grants, memorial tributes, and personal gifts allow us to fulfill our mission of comforting and supporting the loved ones of those who served and died.

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WHERE WILL YOU BE FOR MEMORIAL DAY?

There will be cookouts, parades and family gatherings across America on Memorial Day. We know you have a choice of what to do. TAPS wants to welcome you with open arms and hearts to a place where we speak the common language only those who have walked this path can share.

JOIN YOUR TAPS FAMILY

Connect ★ *Reflect* ★ *Inspire*

AT THE

22ND NATIONAL MILITARY SURVIVOR SEMINAR
AND
GOOD GRIEF CAMP

MAY 26–30, 2016 ★ ARLINGTON, VA