

For the Loved Ones of Those Who Served and Died

TAPS®

SPRING 2020 | MAGAZINE



WHAT'S INSIDE: LOVE NEVER DIES

FROM CAREGIVER TO SURVIVOR ★ NEW KIDS SECTION

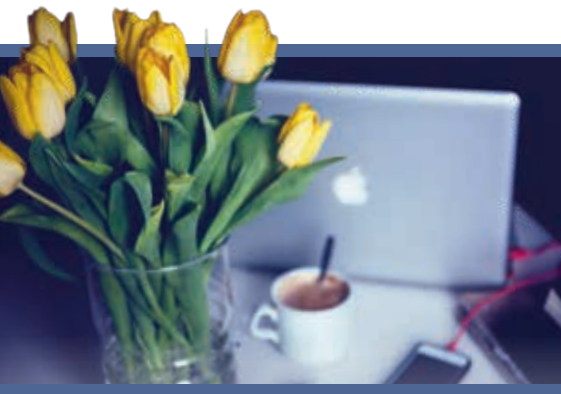
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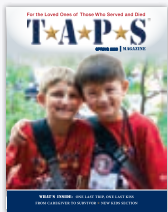
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- ★ Good Grief Camp for Children/Teens
 - ★ National Military Mentor Program
 - ★ Young Adult Program
 - ★ TAPS Online Community
 - ★ TAPS Magazine



ON THE COVER

*Talon and Raiden at a
TAPS Good Grief Camp.*

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FROM OUR FOUNDER

A HOME BUILT ON LOVE

To our TAPS families,

Welcome to the Spring edition of TAPS Magazine — our hug in your mailbox and a reminder that you are not alone on this journey. It is our hope you will be touched, inspired and encouraged by what you read.

At TAPS, we hold on tight to each other without judgment or direction. We accept you wherever you are at the moment, facing the sunshine and feeling the warmth or closing the drapes and pulling the covers up. In TAPS you have a family who just “gets it” and is here for you with patience and love. We encourage and support one another and take steps toward a future where we can find the sunshine again and bloom in our own special way while honoring and remembering our loved ones.

Love and support are ever-present. Our gift to you is the opportunity to connect with a TAPS peer mentor, someone who’s walked a similar journey and then received training to provide support and be there as a friend along the way. Be sure to check out our social media outlets (@TAPSorg) for online inspiration and to join conversations. Join us for our National Military Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp in Washington, D.C. over Memorial Day weekend. Call our TAPS National Military Survivor Helpline at 800-959-TAPS anytime day or night to talk to someone who understands and can help.

TAPS is a home built on love and understanding. It’s our home, and I’m so grateful you have found this community of support and care. Wherever you are and wherever you go, TAPS is always a safe place for you — to find support, reconnect with friends and offer your experience and compassion to others. We are so fortunate to have each other now, just as we are blessed to have known such extraordinary men and women as our loved ones.

With care,

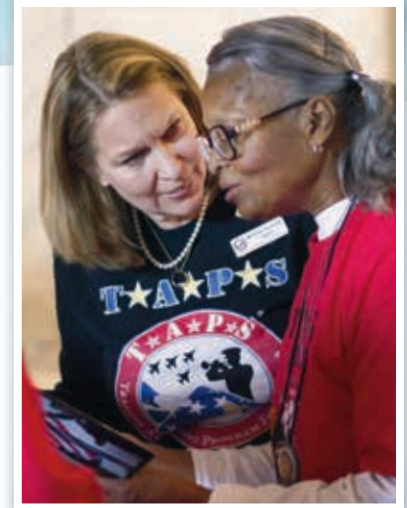


TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT TAPS

Mission of TAPS

The Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) is the national nonprofit organization providing compassionate care to all those grieving the death of a military loved one. We honor our heroes by caring for all those they loved and left behind. We do this through peer-based emotional support, grief and trauma resources, programming for adults and children across the country, casework assistance, connections to community-based care, and the National Military Survivor Helpline that is available 24/7. Services are provided at no cost to survivors by survivors, with love and care.



6,893

New Survivors
in 2019



19

Per Day Average of
New Survivors



54,000+

Volunteer Hours by
Military Mentors

Connect with Us!

SHARE YOUR STORY

Your stories can bring hope and healing to TAPS families. We invite you to share a story about your loved one or your grief journey. All submissions will be considered for TAPS Magazine, our blogs at taps.org, and other TAPS publications. We invite you to read our submission policy and submit your story at taps.org/shareyourstory.

JOIN OUR ONLINE COMMUNITY

Information on resources and programs are easily found at taps.org. You'll also find blogs, message boards and chats for connection to others. Learn more at taps.org/onlinecommunity. Also subscribe to our Saturday Morning Message (SMM), a weekly email written by and for survivors. Request the SMM via online@taps.org.

KEEP IN TOUCH

Share your thoughts or TAPS experience with us at editor@taps.org. (Content may be edited for publication). Also join us on social media:

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TAPS exceeds industry standards for financial accountability. We are proud to have received many of the top nonprofit charity ratings available.



- 1 YOUR LETTERS
Dear TAPS
- 2 HOPE & HEALING
Love Never Dies
- 4 SURVIVOR VOICE
From Caregiver to Survivor
- 6 CHILDREN'S GRIEF
How to Talk to Children About the Coronavirus
- 8 LIBRARY
Five Practical Tips to Reduce Anxiety, Calm Fear
- 9 HEALTH & WELLNESS
Winter is Giving Way to Spring
- 10 KLINGERS CORNER: FOR KIDS & PARENTS
Kind is the New Cool
- 12 NATIONAL SEMINAR
You Are Invited
- 14 STAFF SPOTLIGHT
Survivor Care Team
- 15 SURVIVOR JOURNEY
My TAPS Journey
- 16 COMPASSIONATE ADVICE
Healing Your Grieving Heart
- 18 VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT
2020 TAPS Senator Ted Stevens Leadership Award
- 19 MILITARY MENTOR SPOTLIGHT
2020 TAPS Military Mentor of the Year Award
- 20 RESOURCES & SUPPORT
We Are Here for You
- 22 BULLETIN
TAPS News
- 23 SUPPORT THE MISSION
The Power of You
- 24 LOVELIVESONMUSIC.COM
Love Lives On: The Album
- 27 HONOR & REMEMBRANCE
Honor the Legacy
- 28 TAPS FAMILY ALBUM
Your TAPS Family

Dear TAPS...

FROM A MOTHER

I have been a family member of TAPS since August 2016 when my son, a medically retired Army veteran, died by suicide. I felt that I was falling into complicated grief. I was so immersed in my pain and guilt that although I was still breathing, I wasn't really in this world. Every thought, every word, every action was about my dead child. I felt like if I moved on from the grief, it would be like he died again.

The compassionate people at TAPS got me through many a day and night of overwhelming grief. It took me three years to get to a more stable life, and TAPS was there for me every step of the way.

I always read the TAPS Magazine cover to cover, and when I read the letters to the editor, I realize that TAPS is there for so many people in so many ways, and everyone is filled with gratitude for the blessing of people who honor and remember our dead loved ones.

Reading the stories of other survivors pulled me out of that dead zone into the real world. I realized that I wasn't the only one who had lost someone who meant the world to them. They, too, suffered greatly, yet they wanted and needed to find a reason for living. Their stories helped me to understand that I didn't have to stay in despair; their love and memories showed that the people they lost still lived on in their hearts and would forever. This helped me pull myself out of my self-pity and live again so that I had love, compassion, and kindness to offer my living children, my neighbors, and strangers.

Thank you for listening. And, of course, my heartfelt thank you for sharing my journey of grief.

Joan Eaves

Mother of Sgt. 1st Class Michael Oliver Tucker
U.S. Army, Ret.

FROM A MILITARY MENTOR

TAPS does amazing work helping survivors, and I am proud to have served these children for the last five years. Indirectly, the work TAPS does also helps service members and veterans.

Before TAPS, I struggled with my own grief that, over the years, turned into depression, anxiety, anger, and loneliness. After I separated from the military, I felt like no one could understand me anymore, and I longed for the shared values and connections I had in the Navy and Army. I thought this was just one more pain, and I had to "suck it up." I thought I was weak, broken, un-repairable, and a lost cause destined to struggle through pain forever.

The first year I volunteered at TAPS, I impulsively signed up in March as a military mentor for TAPS Nationals. In the weeks leading up to the event, I almost backed out at least a dozen times. I felt like I would be the worst person to help a grieving child. Heck, I could barely hold my own life together. But I committed to TAPS, and I went through with it, convinced someone at TAPS would tell me, "Yeah...no."

But they didn't. As a result, that first TAPS experience changed my mind about myself, put me on a path of self-awareness and healing, and saved my life.

At the Good Grief Camp, I not only gained amazing mentees, I also gained words to describe my grief, the knowledge of how to deal with negative emotions, and an amazing support system of people who understand military-specific challenges. I met other service members and veterans who struggled with the same problems. But these people were special. For three days, we became a community with shared military values; a deep sense of empathy and patience; and a willingness to make ourselves vulnerable in order to help others in need.

I loved it so much, I came back five more times, and I tell my military and veteran friends about it. ★

Dayna Rowden

Military Mentor



SHARE YOUR TAPS EXPERIENCE AND GIVE HOPE AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO OTHERS.
EMAIL: EDITOR@TAPS.ORG

Love Never Dies

Anna Steg | Surviving Fiancée of Staff Sgt. Benjamin Scott Hines, U.S. Marine Corps

"You are not physically here to live your life, but I am and you are a part of me."

JOURNAL ENTRY:

SEPTEMBER 30, 2019

Mornings are always difficult. I usually wake up feeling well-rested, but then reality slowly starts to sink in. I roll over to cuddle you, but you are not there. I then look around the room and realize I am not in our townhouse. Instead, I find myself in a bedroom at my parents' house, packed with our belongings and many reminders of you. You are gone and this is my life now. I take a few deep breaths and avoid getting out of bed. Our pup starts whining and reminds me that, whether I like it or not, life is going to go on. You are not physically here to live your life, but I am and you are a part of me. I will always fight for you, be strong for you, and continue to carry on your legacy. As hard as mornings always are, I promise you I will get out of bed every day and live for the both of us.

My fiancé, Staff Sgt. Ben Hines was killed in action in April 2019 just one month before he was set to come home from Afghanistan.

Ben was my soulmate, my hero, and my forever. In addition to being my fiancé, he was also a son, a brother (he was one of seven siblings), a grandson, a battle buddy and a friend to many. He wanted to be a Marine since he was little and followed his dreams after high school, joining the Marine Corps Forces Reserve in 2006. He was caring, selfless and always put the needs of others above his own.

Ben had the ability to make everyone laugh and smile. His goal in life was to put a smile on everyone's face. Ben was the most patriotic man I know and would do anything to protect our country. He often wore a blue star-spangled blazer to social events to show his love for our country. It was his favorite blazer and I ended up wearing it to his funeral at Arlington National Cemetery.

THANKFUL FOR THE MEMORIES

One of my favorite memories was meeting Ben in Germany and Italy for his R&R during his last deployment. I loved traveling the world with him and we had planned on many more adventures in the future. Little did I know that the trip would be the last time I saw Ben.



JOURNAL ENTRY:

SEPTEMBER 16, 2019

One year ago today was the last time I saw Ben in person. Unbeknownst to us, we had our last hug and our last kiss. I remember standing in line at the airport, crying and not wanting to go home without him. I was having a really hard time leaving him there after the amazing week we had just spent together during his R&R. We had just finished up our trip of a lifetime to Germany & Italy and I am so thankful we had this one last trip together. I remember on my flight home thinking how lucky I was to have Ben as my life partner & travel buddy and looked forward to many more adventures to come.

I think the most challenging thing to deal with since losing Ben was the fact that we were only six months away from our wedding date. Ben and I had been together for almost four years and we decided this would be the perfect time for him to deploy, before starting our family. Not only am I grieving having lost my life partner but also the children we had anticipated having once he came home and we had officially become Mr. and Mrs. We had also planned on buying our first home this spring. Instead, I bought a townhouse on my own. It's definitely hard seeing everyone else hit these life milestones that were unfairly robbed from us, but I remind myself to keep fighting and being strong.

Many activities and people have helped me get through. Journaling has been one of my favorite ways to express my feelings during my grief journey. I also write and share stories about Ben and our love with friends and family.

Fitness is another way to escape and re-energize. Each workout helps lift my spirits, and I escape my reality without Ben. He always gives me the extra motivation I need to get through a tough workout.



I am also so thankful for my massive support system: family, friends, the Marines, his deployment buddies, military spouses, other fiancées/widows, co-workers, acquaintances and, of course, my TAPS family. These people have all been there for me in different ways – for venting, crying, checking in, hugs, and helping me carry on Ben's legacy.

STRENGTH I NEVER KNEW I HAD

Losing the love of my life has been the most heartbreaking and painful experience I've ever had to go through. It's changed me as a person and has exposed strength I never knew I had. When we love deeply, we grieve deeply. Losing Ben has put me on a journey toward recovery, growth, and hope for more love and happiness to come. Thanks to my amazing support system, I was able to survive this past year.

I've been going to monthly TAPS Care Group meetings and plan on attending my first TAPS National Military Survivor Seminar this spring. It's helpful to hear about others' journeys who are further along than I.

My heart is broken, but I find comfort in the fact that love never dies. I am a true believer in this. I know Ben will always be with me and wants the best for me. I keep living for the both of us. I truly think that Ben will hand-pick my next great love.

Our loved ones will be a part of us forever. Although they are no longer with us physically, they will always live in our hearts. We must continue to live. I find comfort in knowing I will be reunited with Ben again one day. That gives me hope. I know Ben will be right by my side in spirit. But most of all, I am so thankful that I got that one last kiss. ★

From Caregiver to Survivor

Finding New Purpose and Honoring Husband's Legacy

Coleen Bowman | Surviving Spouse of Sgt. Maj. Robert Bowman, U.S. Army Veteran



In June 2011 we got the devastating news. My husband, Rob, at the age of 42 was diagnosed with a very rare and aggressive form of cancer, cholangiocarcinoma (bile duct cancer). In a moment, our world was turned upside down. With three daughters at home, ranging from ages 8 to 16, we were faced with the biggest challenge of our lives.

Rob started his treatment, which was twice a week, and we tried to establish a “new normal.” I went from being an Army wife of a big, strong man who jumped out of airplanes for fun and led recon platoons into some of the bloodiest battlefields in Iraq, to a wife of a cancer patient who was unsure of what that even meant.

There was a stigma that came with Rob’s diagnosis. Our Army friends began to keep their distance, like we were the plague — the same way you start to create distance when you are about to PCS. It’s a matter of self-preservation, something I had done many times in the 18 years I had been an Army wife. Our lives now included chemo treatments, blood tests, shots (I learned to do this at home, to save a trip to the doctor). In January of 2012, I had to rush my husband to the ER as he began to spike a fever. The emotions of losing him were too much to handle. I just stood as strong as I could and prayed he would make it through, and he did. That time.

About one week after his diagnosis I gathered up the courage to “Google” his cancer. I was devastated. I realized we needed a miracle. That is the day I started grieving the imminent death of my husband, the man I had been married to for 18 years, the father of my daughters, Katie, Kellie and Cameron. My grief journey began 19 months before he died.

NUMBNESS, RELIEF, AND GUILT

On January 13, 2013, my husband passed away. He was 44 years old. At the moment of his death, I went numb. I was in absolute shock, and felt a wave of sadness wash over me, and then the next feeling I had was relief: relief that he was no longer suffering, relief that we could start trying to pick up the pieces of our lives. Then, I felt guilt for that relief. I thought, “My gosh, how can you be relieved? He is gone, my girls won’t have their Dad to walk them down the aisle on their wedding day.”

That guilt would not go away until years after his death. I had guilt for being the one who gave him his pain medication in the last hours of his life. I worried that I had given him too much, that maybe he would still be alive if I had kept him in the hospital, instead of at home where he chose to die.

After Rob died, I spent the first 6 – 8 months just going through the motions, looking for the new me. I had gone from an Army wife of a sergeant major to not even being someone’s wife. I had to find my way alone, and I had to completely rebuild my life. I was 21 years old when I married Rob,

and I was 41 when he died. That life was all I knew.

When the holidays came around each year, I had to let go of many traditions we had because they were too painful to continue. There were many tears and lack of understanding initially. We have held onto a few, but I needed to create a life for me and the girls that didn’t include Rob on a daily basis. He comes forward with us, but he is in his lane and we are in ours.

FINDING A NEW PURPOSE AND IDENTITY

We buried our hero on April 3, 2013, in Section 60 in Arlington National Cemetery. I clearly remember as we were flying back to the West Coast, I looked out the window of the airplane and saw Arlington. I knew at that moment I needed to go “home,” pack up the necessities that would be needed for a small apartment near Rob. I knew I wanted to honor him and the legacy he left behind, and I knew where that could be accomplished. We packed up about eight weeks after we buried him, headed to our nation’s capital

to “find my tribe” and find my purpose in his life and his death.

January 13, 2020, marked seven years since we lost Rob. Not a day goes by that I don’t think of him. After his death I had to search for my new identity. I began running every day. It was my therapy, even though I had never been a runner in the past. I had a new appreciation for my health and my strength. After 19 months of watching my big, strong, healthy husband wither away and lose all his strength, I did not take my healthy body for granted. Running was one of many ways I found to honor him. Telling Rob’s story and sharing his legacy have given me purpose. I am fortunate to have found the opportunity to work for TAPS to help other survivors with similar loss and raising awareness about the effects of toxic exposure. I have found my tribe, and I have found happiness again. I am able to love again and that is another way I honor Rob and the life we shared.

I am living my best life. I live with twice the drive, twice the adventure, and twice the love I had before. I live not only for myself, but for the life Rob would be living if he was still alive today. I honor Rob by living well. If I never allowed myself to be happy, I would be wasting what he lost. ★



PHOTOS COURTESY OF COLEEN BOWMAN



How to Talk to Children About the Coronavirus

Being Open and Honest Can Offer Reassurance

Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.

As the coronavirus spreads across North America and our daily lives are transformed, we all must be aware of the need for good mental-health care. Obviously, it's a stressful time. Families are confined to their homes. School is canceled. Many businesses are closed. Workers are being laid off en masse, causing financial distress. And then there is the illness itself, COVID-19. Will we or someone we

love become critically ill or even die? We are all naturally worried about the "what ifs" and "what nexts."

The youngest among us are not immune to all of this stress. They sense it in the adults around them, and they see it on social media and other sources of information. Their own day-to-day routines have been completely disrupted.

When it comes to painful, complex realities, it can be difficult to know how much we should share with children. Many people have an instinct to protect kids. But as someone who has worked with and advocated for grieving children for many decades, I've learned that what they really need is honesty combined with steadfast care.

HERE ARE A FEW FOUNDATIONAL DOS AND DON'TS.

FOLLOW THE CHILD'S LEAD

Pay attention to what the child seems curious or worried about. For younger children, these concerns may manifest through their play rather than directly. You don't need to volunteer a lot of information. Instead, invite them to ask questions. And try saying just a little at a time. Children are often satisfied with short answers and small "doses" of information. When they want to know more, they'll let you know, especially if you are someone who is always straight with them.

TALK OPENLY AND HONESTLY TO CHILDREN ABOUT WHAT IS HAPPENING

It's important to be honest with children about difficult circumstances. In fact, I often say that children can cope with what they know, but they can't cope with what they don't know. Be factual. Talk to them about social distancing and that it's necessary to keep people safe. Explain to them that it's mostly elderly people who are at risk of getting really sick or dying. If finances are an issue, it's good to talk to them about that too. If someone in your family has been affected by the virus, keep the child updated. And if your family finances are being stressed, as they are for so many people right now, try not to overburden your children with this challenge. It's OK to let them know about the need to curtail unnecessary spending, for example, but also keep in mind that financial issues are grown-up issues. We must be careful not to make children over-worry about this or feel responsible.

USE DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE

Use simple, concrete language when you talk to children about the pandemic. It's OK to use the words "coronavirus" and "pandemic," because children are hearing those terms, but you will need to explain them in ways that they will understand.

SHARE YOUR FEELINGS

As I said, we are all naturally worried about and disoriented over the pandemic. Circumstances are changing rapidly from day to day, and the future is unknown. Children who spend time with you will pick up on your anxiety, so it's essential to tell them what you're worried about. If you don't, they are likely to imagine even worse scenarios—or think that they are somehow to blame or at risk. And it's also important that you practice good self-care to manage any severe anxiety you yourself may be having. If your anxiety levels are too high, theirs will be, too.

UNDERSTAND MAGICAL THINKING

Young children are susceptible to what's called "magical thinking." They may believe that their thoughts and behaviors can cause bad things to happen. If they didn't want to talk to Grandma the last time they saw her, for example, and she gets sick, they may secretly believe they caused or contributed to her sickness. So be attuned to any feelings of guilt or shame the children in your care may be hiding, and explain clearly to them that none of this is their fault.

BE PATIENT, KIND, AND REASSURING

Most of all what children need is reassurance that they are being cared for and that their family and others they care about are safe.

Routines help children feel safe, so if their daily routine has been turned upside-down, it's important to create a new routine. Even if you're stuck at home, you can still have breakfast together at a certain time and follow a daily schedule. Keeping evening rituals consistent is also essential. And while all of this is going on, try extra hard to be patient and kind. I know it's extremely challenging to manage children patiently when school and activities are not there to help share the "it takes a village" burden, but keep in mind that your children will likely have strong memories of this strange interlude in their lives, as will you. You don't need

to be perfect. You just need to be caring, consistent, and honest.

It's also important to emphasize to children that lots and lots of grown-up doctors, scientists, and government workers across the world are working to solve the problem. It is our responsibility, not children's. We are working hard on treatments and vaccines as well as ways to help families who need help. We will get through this.

And I hope you will take advantage of any extra time you have during the quarantine to use for cuddles, hugs, and play. Physical closeness and care go a long way in helping children feel safe and loved. ★

*Dr. Alan D. Wolfelt is a noted author, educator, and grief counselor. He serves as Director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition in Fort Collins, Colorado, and is on the faculty at the University of Colorado Medical School's Department of Family Medicine. Among his many bestselling books are *Healing A Child's Grieving Heart* and *Finding the Words: How to Talk with Children and Teens about Death, Suicide, Homicide, Funerals, and Other End-of-Life Matters*. To order Dr. Wolfelt's books and for more information, visit www.centerforloss.com.*



Five Practical Tips to Reduce Anxiety, Calm Fear

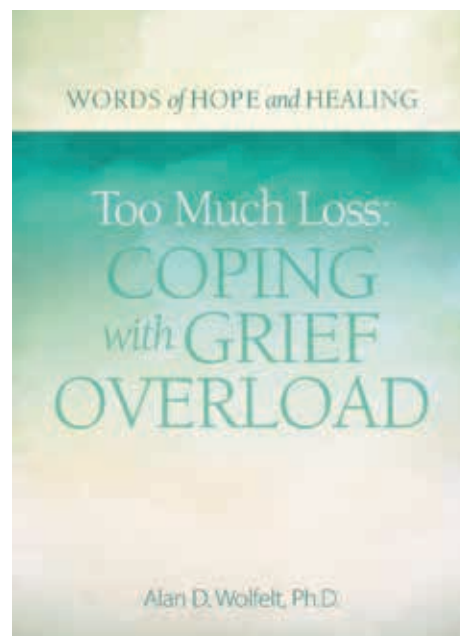
Loss naturally makes us fearful because it disrupts our feelings of stability. We were enjoying a relative sense of normalcy and calm, and then wham—the foundation of our lives cracked. Multiple losses can make it feel as if several devastating, one-on-top-of-the-other earthquakes have shattered our lives, leaving the entire foundation not just shaken but obliterated altogether.

In grief overload, it's normal to fear that something else bad will happen. After all, your life has established a pattern: this happened, then this happened, then this happened ... so something else is bound to happen next, your brain thinks. You might feel always on alert, waiting for the next bit of upsetting news or the next terrible phone call.

It's a good idea to talk to your primary-care provider about any anxiety and feelings of panic, especially if they're pervasive or disabling in any way. Therapy, holistic techniques, and medications, when indicated, can all help. Healing in grief can't begin until you're feeling safe, so it's important to address anxiety as soon as possible. ★

Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D., is a respected author and educator on the topics of companioning others and healing in grief. He serves as Director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition and is on the faculty at the University of Colorado Medical School's Department of Family Medicine. Dr. Wolfelt, a member of the TAPS Advisory Board, has written many best-selling books on healing in grief. Visit centerforloss.com to learn more about grief and loss and to order Dr. Wolfelt's books.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is an excerpt from Dr. Alan Wolfelt's book "Too Much Loss: Coping with Grief Overload." Although this book specifically addresses what happens when you experience multiple losses in a short period of time, these tips for dealing with fear and anxiety are useful for anyone experiencing these feelings.



WHEN YOU'RE FEELING VERY ANXIOUS OR PANICKED

Feelings of panic or strong anxiety take over our nervous systems. When this happens, our thoughts race. So do our heartbeats. Our breathing might get faster or labored. We might get clammy or sweaty. We might even feel like we're dying.

If you sometimes feel panicky, it's important to develop a toolkit of strategies that help you calm yourself quickly. Here are a few suggestions:

1 BREATHE DEEPLY

Take slow, deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth. Inhale to a count of four then exhale to a count of four.

2 USE YOUR TOUCHSTONE

Try carrying a small object that makes you feel grounded and safe, such as a special stone, keepsake, or amulet. When you're feeling panicked, hold it in your hand as you breathe deeply.

3 LIE DOWN AND RELAX YOUR MUSCLES

As you're breathing deeply, lie down and intentionally focus on moving through your body, relaxing your muscles one at a time.

4 REPEAT AN AFFIRMATION

Breathe deeply, but instead of counting as you breathe, try repeating an affirmation that comforts you. For example, as you inhale, you could think or say aloud, "I am here," and as you exhale, "I am safe."

5 GO FOR A WALK

If you're able to, try going for a short walk whenever your anxiety builds. The movement, change of environment, and fresh air will likely clear your heart and mind and restore you to yourself.

Winter is Giving Way to Spring

Let's Go Take a Walk in the Woods

Tony Paz | Director, TAPS Outdoor Engagement

On a very cold winter day not too long ago, I was out on a wooded trail only a few minutes from home. It was overcast and gray. The water falling from the sky couldn't quite make up its mind whether it was rain, drizzle, or simply a fine mist permeating everything. The wind decided to show up too, directing some of the moisture sideways onto my face.

Yet there I was, moving along at a brisk pace to maintain a high body temperature in this not-so-pleasant morning. I was thinking over what a German friend once told me in accented English a few months earlier, "Zhere ist no zuch ting as bad veather. Only bad clothing choicez, ja?"

Indeed, my choice of boots, socks, pants, long sleeve shirt, rain jacket, hat, and a pair of light wool gloves turned out to work well as

I remained mostly dry halfway into my two-hour "stroll" through the woods. I eventually removed my gloves since I was warming up while moving at such a quick pace.

I actually slowed down just a bit so as not to work up a sweat. Why was I doing this on such a cold day? I decided to opt for an activity that would help work off the cornucopia of food I'd been eating over the holidays and one that would also offer an opportunity to reflect.

With so much bustle all around us, I was particularly thankful that cold day to enjoy some quiet time. On a trail in the woods. Alone with the sounds and smells. I reflected on a variety of things, assessing past events, brainstorming new ideas, making lists.

In the end, my body rewarded my mind with renewed energy and a sense of

accomplishment. A walk outside is a relatively simple thing to do that offers so many benefits to the mind, body, and spirit.

Now that winter is giving way to spring, we'll have longer days, more temperate climate and many opportunities to be outside. If cold weather has discouraged you from getting outdoors, now is a good time to lighten the load of the "everyday" and go take a walk in the woods. ★

Tony Paz, who recently retired from the Army at the rank of colonel, is the director of Outdoor Engagement for TAPS. With others, he is working to expand programming that helps survivors experience the healing power of nature.



HEY TAPS KIDS!

WE HAVE A NEW SECTION JUST FOR YOU!

It is named for Klinger the caisson horse, a compassionate and gentle friend of TAPS. You will find stories from other kids in the TAPS family, fun activities, projects and more. In this issue learn about giving back and a special school project.



KIND IS THE NEW COOL.

Did you know that April is National Volunteer Month? Helping others is a beautiful way to serve your school or community and honor your loved one's service to our country. And here's the amazing thing about being kind to others - it makes you feel better and happier too!



Participate in a fun run to raise money for a good cause - like TAPS!



Help in a community clean-up.



Donate toys, books, and clothes to kids who need them.



Read to younger kids at your library.



Volunteer at community events.



Write a letter or draw a picture for one of your TAPS friends.



Have a carwash or lemonade stand and donate the money to charity.



Volunteer to help around your house. (Charity begins at home)

THROUGH GREAT GRIEF

COMES GREAT FAITH

Elizabeth Bainbridge | Surviving Daughter
of Army Maj. William J. Bainbridge IV

EDITOR'S NOTE: Elizabeth made a family coat of arms for history class at her school in Maryland. She based it on her life and also used the internet to research family crests for her last name. This is a section of the paper Elizabeth wrote to go with her coat of arms.

There are many parts to my Coat of Arms.

The color **BLUE** represents truth and loyalty, for the one thing my family cannot stand is lying.

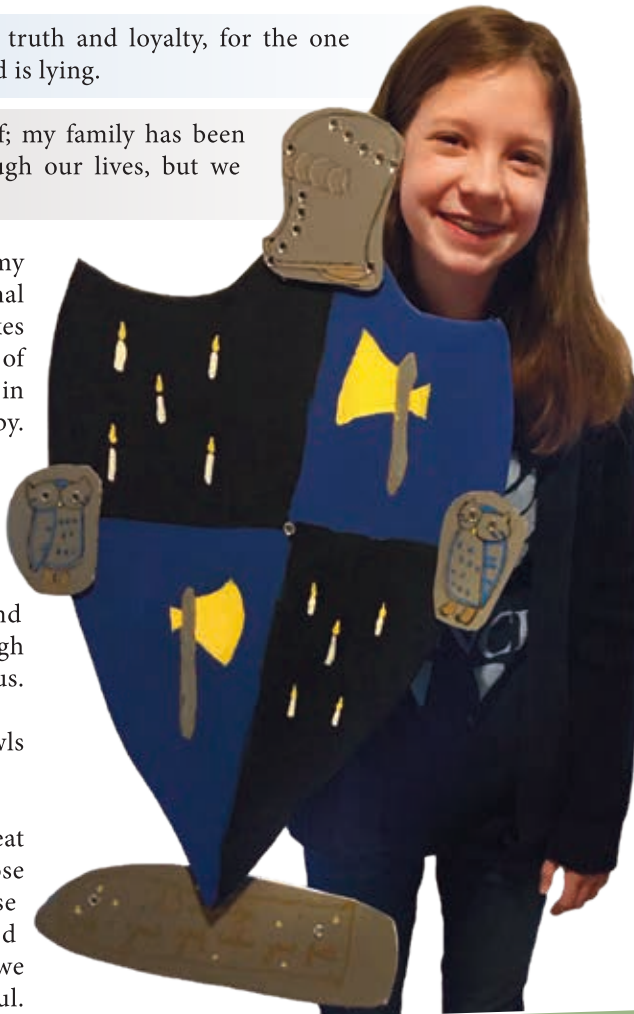
The **BLACK** represents grief; my family has been through a lot of grief through our lives, but we always are resilient.

I also added charges to my Coat of Arms. Our original Coat of Arms had battle axes on it which means execution of military duty. My father was in the military since I was a baby. Also, it represents his fight against cancer.

I added candles to our Coat of Arms because candles represent light, life, and spirituality and because God is light through darkness. He has a plan for us.

For my supporters I added owls for virtue, wit and wisdom.

Finally, my motto "With great grief comes great faith". I chose this as our motto because through all of our grief, God has led us through it, and we have come out more faithful.



ELIZABETH PROUDLY SHARING
HER FAMILY COAT OF ARMS

SHARE YOUR IDEAS!

We'd love to hear what you would like to see in Klinger's Corner. Send your ideas to editor@taps.org.

MAKE YOUR OWN!

SUPPLIES:

-  Poster board, foam board, or construction paper
-  Colored pencils, markers, crayons, or paint
-  Scissors
-  Tape or glue
-  Optional: Magazines or stickers

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1.** Draw and cut out the main part of your shield (In Elizabeth's, this is the part that is blue and black.)
- 2.** Divide your shield into four sections. Color in these sections with two or more different colors that mean something to you. (You can choose favorite colors of you or your hero or you can research the meaning of colors.)
- 3.** Design and cut out a helmet or crown and attach it to the top of your shield.
- 4.** Add pictures or symbols to your shield. (You can draw or paint these or you can cut images out of magazines or use stickers.)
- 5.** If you want additional features, you can add "supporters" to the side. Many coats of arms have animals as supporters.
- 6.** Add a "scroll" to the top or bottom with a motto or saying.

Have your parent take a picture of your coat of arms and send it to editor@taps.org. We may choose yours to share with others on TAPS social media.

NOTE TO PARENTS: By sharing your child's coat of arms, you are giving TAPS permission to feature it on our social media.

NATIONAL SEMINAR

You are cordially invited to attend



**NATIONAL MILITARY SURVIVOR SEMINAR
& GOOD GRIEF CAMP**

★ MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND ★

May 21 – 25, 2020

Arlington, Virginia





**JOIN YOUR TAPS FAMILY
OVER MEMORIAL DAY
WEEKEND. REGISTER AT
[TAPS.ORG/NATIONAL](https://taps.org/national)**

QUESTIONS?

Visit taps.org/national/2020/faq
or call 1-800-959-TAPS(8277).

REMEMBER THE LOVE, CELEBRATE THE LIFE, SHARE THE JOURNEY

If you are grieving the death of a military loved one, whether a family member, friend or fellow service member, you are invited and encouraged to attend the TAPS National Military Survivor Seminar. No matter where you are in your grief journey, you will find a supportive, caring atmosphere as you connect and share with other survivors.

PROGRAMMING

Whether your loss is recent or you are years out from your loss, you will find activities to meet you where you are in your grief journey.

ADULTS

A selection of carefully planned workshops, sharing groups and special events will allow you to come together with other survivors and hear from professionals in the field of grief and trauma. You'll have the opportunity to participate in activities that will offer time to reflect, learn coping skills, build a strong support network and honor your loved one.

YOUNG ADULTS

The TAPS Young Adults Program is for surviving children and siblings ages 18 to 25 and helps our graduating Good Grief Camp children transition into a program all their own.

Moving into adulthood is difficult enough, but when you add grief to the scenario, it becomes more challenging. This program takes that into consideration

when addressing five pillars of growth: Personal Development, Financial Stability, Communications, Career Development, and Service to Others. With practical life skills explored, the Young Adult Program strives to help each individual create a well-rounded life full of hope, healing, and growth. If you have any questions, please email youngadults@taps.org.

GOOD GRIEF CAMP FOR KIDS

The TAPS Good Grief Camp is a program for children who have lost a loved one who served in the Armed Forces. Good Grief Camp provides a safe space for military children to explore grief and embrace healing.

Throughout the weekend, children will share and learn coping skills through games, crafts and other activities in a fun and supportive environment. Each child is paired with either an active duty servicemember, veteran or legacy mentor who has graduated from Good Grief Camp, helping to remind the child that he or she is still a part of the military community.

Children and teens will find comfort in knowing there are other kids their age who

understand their loss, and will develop coping skills they can use once they leave Good Grief Camp and learn how America honors our fallen service members. For information on eligibility requirements, visit: taps.org/youthprograms/eligibility

CHILD CARE

Children under the age of four years old will be cared for and loved throughout the seminar by trained professional, licensed and insured caregivers. A designated suite will be assigned and set up with age-appropriate toys, games and arts and crafts. Infants, toddlers and preschoolers will have lunch on Saturday inside their room, along with healthy snacks all weekend. Individual schedules will be honored for each child, including nursing infants.

LOVE AND SUPPORT AWAITS

This special weekend is your time to connect, share and find the support you need to sustain you on your grief journey. You will be met with lots of hugs! We look forward to having you join us for this weekend of love, hope and healing. ★



FCA
FIAT CHRYSLER AUTOMOBILES
FOUNDATION

TAPS Survivor Care Team is supported by a generous grant from the FCA Foundation, the charitable arm of Fiat Chrysler Automobiles. As part of its longstanding commitment to our nation's veterans and their families, the FCA Foundation recognizes the critical support SCT provides for our military families as the frontline resource for all those grieving a military loss.

"The FCA Foundation's grant will help us to strengthen the services offered by our Survivor Care Team, especially to those bereaved military loved ones at their time of greatest need," said Audri Beugelsdijk, Vice President of Survivor Services at TAPS.

SURVIVOR CARE TEAM OFFERING HOPE FOR THE JOURNEY

COMPASSION **CARE** HOPE



29,111

Outreach
Calls Made



47,710

Emails/
Cards/Texts



5,187

Program
Connections



3,790

Hours
of Support

The compassion and care you find at TAPS often begins with a warm and welcoming call, text, or email – or all three. The person on the other end of those messages seems to just get it, to understand your heart is breaking, to know you are struggling to make sense of your loss.

The loving men and women who place those calls and send those messages are members of the TAPS Survivor Care Team. We do get it. We do understand. We do know. Like you, we have been through the unimaginable. Our loved ones served in our military – and they died, leaving us with grieving hearts and broken spirits.

We came to TAPS early in our grief and found a place, like you have, where we could

bare our souls without fear of judgment, where we could mourn our losses, share our memories, and honor our heroes.

As we healed and grew, we found a way to make meaning of our losses, to pay it forward, and to offer hope to all of you who unfortunately have joined our family of military survivors.

We are dedicated to providing compassionate personalized companionship. We are your initial line of support, here to tell you things will get better and to connect you to all that TAPS offers.

We are here to remind you that you're never alone. We won't give up on you. We help you in the way that best suits your needs: with comforting outreach calls, texts, and

emails, and providing a safe space to feel heard and understood.

We form the foundation for a long-term support system, helping connect you with a Peer Mentor, suggesting TAPS programs and resources that can help you, or making sure you find resources within your community.

We receive formal training on peer-based emotional support and traumatic grief so we have the tools to help you along the challenging and uncertain path of grief and loss.

We are adult children, fathers, mothers, siblings, spouses. We have lost our loved ones in combat, in on- and off-duty accidents, to suicide, and illness. We are TAPS. ★

MY TAPS JOURNEY

SURVIVOR VOICE

Amanda with her brother, Army Spc. Adam Klager



Amanda Klager

Surviving Sister of
Army Spc. Adam Klager

Surviving Girlfriend of
Army Sgt. 1st Class Hugh Brown

I am so grateful for TAPS and all the amazing people who have become a big part of my life and family since my brother Adam passed away. Deb Lucey, Director of Operations, Survivor Services, reached out to me. I was very hesitant. I knew there was nothing anyone could do that would bring him back.

Deb did not give up on me. She continued to reach out and check in on me. She told me she was a surviving sister herself. She told me she knew exactly what I was going through and she understood my pain. That was the first time since I lost my little brother I felt like I could relate to anyone.

She told me I wasn't alone. She told me there are other surviving sisters who understand and explained to me about the Peer Mentor program. She told me about TAPS Helpline and that there is someone always there for you.

The Helpline and the Peer Mentor program saved my life.

The late nights I would call and there was always someone there for me. Claire Hunter of the Peer Mentor team matched me with my Peer Mentor, Carly, who has been my best friend. She will stay on the phone as long as I need. She listens and is able to walk with me through this

journey of grief. All I needed was to be around people who understood my pain.

A year and a half after I lost Adam, I lost my boyfriend, Hugh Brown. I joined the online chats, where I met Melinda Kane, Kellie Hazlett, Carol Lane, Kim Suggs and Ashley Rao, the strongest women I know. They all are here for me. They have helped me get through really rough times. They each get me in different ways. They each have given me tools that have helped along this journey.

When Adam passed away, my father was really struggling and the only person he confided in was me. I turned to my amazing TAPS family. I had my dad join the men's online chat with Don Lipstein. Don called my dad and he has helped both of us in so many ways.

These amazing people are my family and I could never thank them enough. Each has helped me become the Peer Mentor I am today. I am able to give back and I do it in honor of my brother and boyfriend.

This amazing organization saved my life. I don't know where or who I would be if it wasn't for TAPS. ★

Healing Your Grieving Heart

Excerpt from book by Bonnie Carroll and Alan Wolfelt, Ph.D.

The TAPS family is always reaching our arms to you. Whether at seminars, retreats, or virtually through our online resources, we understand the need to have the support of an understanding community as we navigate the grief journey. We share our grief, our memories and our daily experiences to build strength and hope.

When we cannot be together physically, there are still ways to experience the love and take part in activities that can enrich and sustain us. We share with you a few ideas from the book "Healing Your Grieving Heart After A Military Death – 100 Practical Ideas for Families and Friends" written by TAPS Founder and President Bonnie Carroll and Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.

KEEP A JOURNAL

- ★ Consider jotting down your thoughts and feelings first thing when you wake up or each night before you go to sleep. Your journal entries can be as long or as short as you want.
- ★ Don't worry about what you're writing or how well you're writing it. Just write whatever comes into your mind. To get started, set a timer for five or ten minutes and write as much as you can without stopping.

TURN TO SOCIAL MEDIA

- ★ Social sites like Facebook and Twitter can be supportive gathering places for families after a military death.
- ★ On Facebook, you can create a memorial page for the person who died, or you can convert his or her existing Facebook to a memorial page. This then becomes a location for news of the death and other updates as well as a perpetual spot for mourners to gather, share memories and photos, and support one another.

- ★ But, a caution: If social media ever starts to feel more like a burden or a drain than an asset, step away from it for a while. You don't have to delete the accounts. You can simply ignore them for a time. They'll be there if and when you want to return.

ORGANIZE A MEMORY BOOK

- ★ Assembling a scrapbook that holds treasured photos and mementos of the person who died can be a very helpful activity.
- ★ You might consider including a birth certificate, schoolwork, newspaper clippings, locks of hair, old letters, military communications or commendations, the obituary – anything that helps tell the story of this unique and precious life.

BREATHE

- ★ When the demands of your grief – not to mention the demands of your daily life – feel overwhelming, stop what you're doing for a few minutes and just breathe.

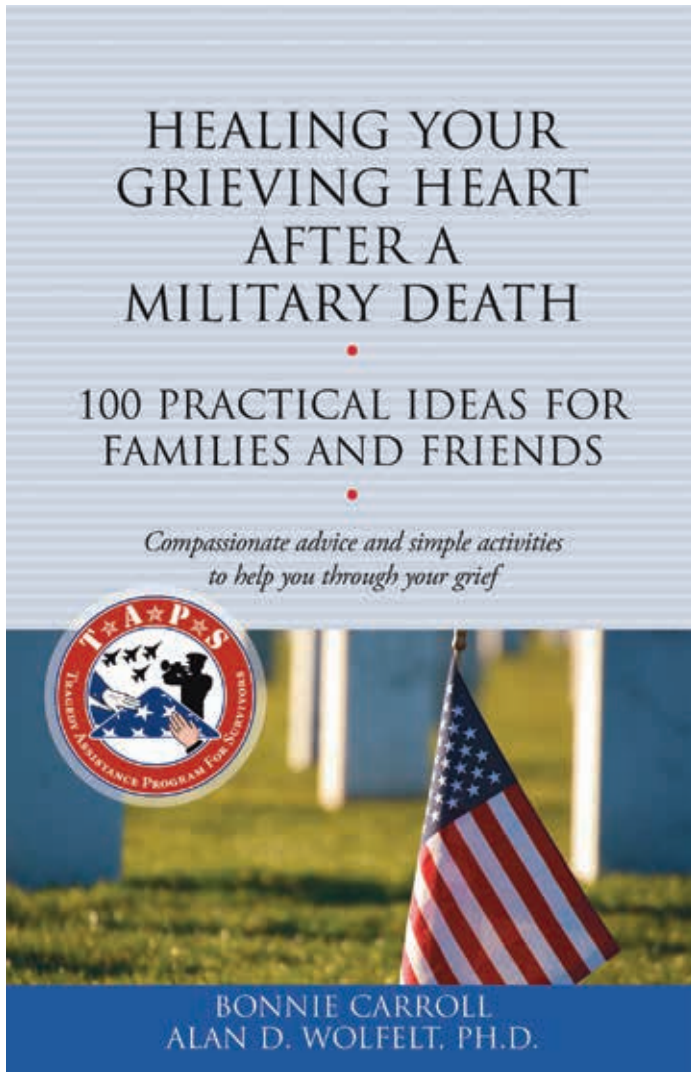
- ★ Breathing opens you up. Grief may have closed you down. The power of breath helps to fill your empty spaces. The old wisdom of "count to ten" is all about taking a breath to open up space for something else to happen.

- ★ Consciously breathe in and out; you can slow the world down and touch the edges of your true self.

WRITE A LETTER

- ★ Write a letter to the person who died telling her how you feel now that she's gone. Consider the following prompts:
- ★ What I miss the most about you is...
 - What's hardest for me now is...
 - What I'd like to ask you is...
 - I'm keeping my memories of you alive by...

- ★ Write a thank you note to helpers such as neighbors, funeral directors, medics, or other service members who tried to help or were close to the person who died, etc.



- ★ Your sanctuary, even if just a simple room or nook, can become a place dedicated exclusively to the needs of the soul. The death of a person you love requires “soul work.” Your creation of a sanctuary honors that reality.

FIND A GRIEF “BUDDY”

- ★ Find a grief “buddy” – someone who is mourning a similar military death, perhaps someone from your loved one’s unit, someone you can talk to, someone who also needs a companion in grief right now.
- ★ Make a pact with your grief buddy to call each other whenever one of you needs to talk. Promise to listen without judgment.

WATCH THE SUN RISE

- ★ Plan an early morning breakfast or walk in a location where you can see the sun rise. Hike to the top of a hill. Have coffee next to a lake.

KNOW THAT YOU ARE LOVED

- ★ As Jane Howard wisely observed, “Call it a clan, call it a network, call it a tribe, call it a family. Whatever you call it, whoever you are, you need one.” Yes, love from family, friends, and community gives life meaning and purpose. Look around for expressions of care and concern. These are people who love you and want to be an important part of your support system.

- ★ Feeling connected to people around you can be a great source of joy and a cause for celebration. When you reach out to others, and they to you, you remember you are loved even during days of darkness and grief. ★

“Healing Your Grieving Heart After a Military Death” is free to survivors. If you don't have a copy and would like one, email us at info@taps.org.

WAYS TO STAY CONNECTED TO YOUR TAPS FAMILY:

- ★ Participate in chats and groups in our Online Community (taps.org/onlinecommunity)
- ★ Follow us on social media
- ★ Stay in touch with your TAPS Peer Mentor

VISIT THE GREAT OUTDOORS

- ★ For many people it is restorative and energizing to spend time outside.
- ★ Go on a nature walk.
- ★ I (Alan) remember a recent time when I was feeling overwhelmed and I just went for a walk. I saw beautiful flowers. I saw leaves falling from the trees. I watched my Husky dogs leap with joy. I took long, deep breaths. I felt a sense of gratitude. After the walk, I felt renewed, changed.

CREATE A SANCTUARY

- ★ Create a sanctuary in your own home, a retreat that’s just for you. Furnish it with a comfy chair, reading materials, a journal, a music player. No TV or computer. Or you may want this to be a room dedicated to silence. As Thomas Moore has noted, “Silence allows many sounds to reach awareness that otherwise would be unheard.”
- ★ An outside “room” can be equally effective. Do you have a porch or patio where you can just “be?”

2020 TAPS SENATOR TED STEVENS LEADERSHIP AWARD

**PRESENTED TO
CAPT. NATHANIEL LEE,
U.S. AIR FORCE**



In 1997, Army Capt. Donald Lee and his co-pilot were killed in a training accident when their Apache helicopter crashed. Capt. Lee left behind a wife, Theresa, and two sons, Nathaniel, age 7, and Sam, age 5. They were stationed at Fort Hood in Texas.

Following Capt. Lee's death, Theresa moved with the boys to Northern California to be closer to her family. It was painful to say goodbye to friends, neighbors and the military family with which they had lived for many years.

It was in California that they learned about a place where they could connect with other families experiencing the loss of a loved one who served – the TAPS National Military Survivor Seminar. Nathaniel recalls, "In California, even though we had a loving family to support us, I avoided talking about my dad because nobody truly understood what our military life was all about. At the TAPS Good Grief Camp, for the first time, I was comfortable talking about my father – sharing his story, honoring his memory and expressing how his loss impacted me. TAPS gave me that freedom to laugh and cry."

Today, Nathaniel is a captain in the Air Force and is married with two children of his own. After 22 years, Nathaniel still thinks of his father every day. He volunteers as a Mentor for children who have also lost someone who served in the military. "Nathaniel is a wonderful role model for our TAPS kids. He combines empathy for their loss with service to his country. He truly understands how powerful the connection between mentor and mentee is as they try to find their new place in the world," says Bonnie Carroll, TAPS president and founder.

Nathaniel says that every time he volunteers at a TAPS program, he looks most forward to giving piggyback rides and receiving friendship bracelets and pipe cleaner tiaras. What he really means is that he looks forward to giving every TAPS kid a safe place to just be a kid.

TAPS is honored to present Capt. Nathaniel Lee, U.S. Air Force with the 2020 Senator Ted Stevens Leadership Award. The award is presented annually to a military survivor who has demonstrated outstanding leadership and service to other surviving military families. ★



"It does not matter how the person served, how they died or how you knew them. It just matters that they served, that they died and that you loved them — and you are a member of the TAPS family."

**Capt. Nathaniel Lee,
U.S. Air Force**

2020 TAPS MILITARY MENTOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

**PRESENTED TO
MASTER SGT.
MELISSA SIMPSON,
U.S. AIR FORCE**

The TAPS Military Mentor of the Year Award recognizes outstanding support for the children of America's fallen heroes.



"We don't get to choose tragedy, but we do get to choose healing and I am very proud to be part of the healing with TAPS." ~ Master Sgt. Melissa Simpson

Melissa Simpson entered the Air Force in 1999 when she was 18 years old.

As a master sergeant, Melissa now serves as the flight chief, Bioenvironmental Engineering Flight, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in New Jersey. She and her team direct 53 occupational and environmental health programs across the only tri-service Department of Defense installation, which services five wings, 88 mission partners, and 55,000 personnel. Melissa is married to Master Sergeant Brent Simpson, USAF (Ret), and they have two daughters, Madison and Lauren.

"When I came to TAPS in 2013, I was two years out from the loss of a military friend who died by suicide. Robin was the kind of guy that lit up the room. He was all about connections and making sure that people were taken care of," said Simpson. "I was able to connect his wife and two

girls to the TAPS Family where they have found hope, comfort and support."

As a Military Mentor, Simpson has shown compassion and understanding for her mentees and their families. She is also an inspiration and a leader to her fellow Mentors. ★

"Melissa Simpson is a ray of sunshine for all of our TAPS kids and personally to me. Between her dolphin noises and her infectious laugh, she is able to create a warm and inviting space for our kids, this is priceless for our families. Melissa finds connection with everyone she meets and is the most understanding and accepting person I know!"

*Megan Lopez,
National Program Director,
National Alliance for Grieving Children*



TAPS is honored to have Military Mentors like Melissa Simpson to support our military children. To learn more, visit TAPS.org/MilitaryMentor.

We Are Here for You!

TAPS Offers Immediate and Long-Term Emotional Help, Hope, and Healing to All Those Grieving the Death of a Military Loved One

THIS AT-A-GLANCE GUIDE OUTLINES SOME OF THE WAYS TAPS PROVIDES COMPASSIONATE CARE

National Military Survivor Helpline

Grief doesn't follow a schedule, and often some of the loneliest moments come at night, on weekends, holidays or even in the middle of a busy day. Our Helpline is answered live at all times — 24/7/365 — with comfort and care from peer professionals who ensure the caller has open access to all that TAPS provides, including casework, peer support, community-based resources, and more. Whether you need emotional support, connection to resources and information or if you want to speak to someone and share, the TAPS Helpline is here for you. Call **800-959-TAPS (8277)**.

Peer Mentor Network

Survivors helping survivors — that is the foundation of TAPS. Through our Peer Mentor network, you will have a supportive companion as you navigate the aftermath

of loss. Survivors who are at least 18 months out from their loss volunteer their time and receive training to be a supportive presence for new survivors — offering a listening ear and a source of encouragement to the newly bereaved. You can share with someone who has also experienced military loss and find strength and hope knowing you are not alone. Peer Mentors also lend support at TAPS events throughout the year. Find out more: taps.org/peermentors.

Casework Assistance

Managing paperwork and unexpected needs that may arise can add to the weight of grief and loss. Our casework team delivers compassionate assistance for all the needs a family may have, including access to pro bono legal assistance, emergency financial resources, information on state and federal benefits, and connections to private social services support. Find out more: taps.org/casework.

Education Support Services

Need guidance for post-secondary education scholarship and benefit information? Our education support coordinators can work with you to access resources and provide you with tools to help you step confidently toward your education goals. Find out more: taps.org/edu.

Connections to Grief Counseling and Local Support Groups

TAPS provides connection to free and unlimited grief counseling, trauma resources and local support groups. We can assist in finding the right grief counselor to help you develop coping skills, work through questions and navigate the myriad of emotions associated with grief and loss. We also rely on a large network of strong community partners to help locate support groups in your community. We perform careful research and compile resources that provide a source of support close to home. Find out more: taps.org/griefcounseling.



Suicide Loss Support

A death by suicide can leave behind a wake of emotions that complicate an already painful grieving process. Many of us ask, "Why did this happen?" We worry that our loved ones will be remembered for how they died instead of how they lived and served. Suicide loss survivors can be assured they have a safe space within TAPS to remember, honor and grieve their loved one. Special programming and resources, including the annual National Military Suicide Survivor Seminar, provide gentle, understanding support as we work through the emotions associated with this type of loss. As peers, we want you to know that you can and will survive this. You are not alone and we will be by your side, offering comfort, care and hope. Find out more: taps.org/suicidelos.

Connect Online

The TAPS Online Community offers the ability to connect you with other survivors from the comfort of home. Wherever you are within your grief you can find support, encouragement and learn how others are coping with loss. Video and text chat sessions, message boards, blogs, weekly communications and peer-based sharing groups give you a variety of ways to strengthen your support network. You can participate at your comfort level – actively share or just listen/read the input of others and know that you are not alone. Find out more: taps.org/onlinecommunity.

Youth Programs

Though their lives are marked by grief, young survivors at TAPS know their lives will also be marked by camaraderie, mentorship, emotional maturity, adventure and fun. Led by experts in the fields of child development, mental health and education, TAPS Youth Programs provide safe spaces for military children to explore grief and embrace healing, including Good Grief Camps, summer campouts, teen adventures and family retreats. Find out more: taps.org/youthprograms

Young Adult Programs

This dynamic program is for surviving children and siblings ages 18-25 and helps our graduating Good Grief Camp children transition into a program all their own. The Young Adult Program focuses on five pillars of growth: Personal Development, Financial Stability, Communication, Career Development and Service to Others. Each individual is given tools to create a well-rounded life full of hope, healing, and growth. Find out more: youngadults@taps.org.

Illness Loss Support

TAPS is leading the effort to ensure families whose loved one died from illness are recognized, cared for and aware of all benefits they are eligible to receive. TAPS is working to raise awareness about risks and effects of toxic exposure and help families navigate the benefits process after loss. We are pulling together relevant legislation, medical studies, expert testimony, literature, and reports to create a reference manual to

serve as a foundation for future advocacy. Find out more: Email info@taps.org.

TAPS Institute for Hope and Healing

The TAPS Institute for Hope and Healing serves as a resource and training center. Through webinars, webcasts, workshops and events, the Institute educates survivors of loss as well as professionals who work in the area death notification, funerals and grief and bereavement support. For military loss survivors and other survivors, the Institute provides programs that foster hope and healing, such as understanding suicide; understanding children's grief; practical tips for coping with grief; wellness workshops and creative ways to keep the memories of loved ones alive. For professionals, the Institute offers academic programming taught by experts in the field. For these professionally oriented programs, continuing education credits are available from a wide range of health and social service professional boards. Find out more: taps.org/institute.

Publications

TAPS has created several proprietary publications to serve the survivor community and offer valuable inspiration and information. A series of pocket-size guides, with input by subject matter experts, offer insight and information on available resources and services. These guides are provided at no cost to survivors. Other publications include the book *Healing Your Grieving Heart after a Military Death: 100 Practical Ideas for Families and Friends* by Bonnie Carroll and Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D., the children's book *Klinger: A Story of Honor and Hope* and *TAPS Magazine*. Find out more: taps.org/publications. ★

PHOTOS: TAPS ARCHIVES



TAPS NEWS

SUICIDE PREVENTION & POSTVENTION

In January, TAPS Suicide Prevention and Postvention hosted a highly impactful Home Base Intensive Clinical Program made possible by generous funding from Wounded Warrior Project. Thirteen suicide loss military spouses came to Boston to receive trauma care from Home Base clinicians with TAPS staff providing emotional and logistical support. The two weeks were filled with intense grief and trauma work, bonding activities, and opportunities for rest and relaxation.

Looking forward, TAPS will be providing familiar critical programming; Our National Military Suicide Survivor Seminar in October and at least three more ICP cohorts along with two new events focused on suicide loss survivors who are further along in their grief. One is a “suicidology summit,” where survivors can learn more about the science and research of the topic of suicide. The other is a “posttraumatic growth retreat,” giving survivors the opportunity to achieve deeper meaning from their loss. Finally, the team will be rolling out literature in the form of three manuals; one for survivors, another for organizations and professionals, and one for military units.

BECOME A TAPS PEER MENTOR



Connecting to others through TAPS provided you with strength and hope. You are now beyond the early days of grief and may wish to offer your time and heart to another and support TAPS programming. You can take this next step in your journey by training to become a TAPS Peer Mentor.

As a Peer Mentor, you will not only be a comforting presence to another, you can also play an integral role in supporting TAPS programming through Care Groups, TAPS Together and serving as a TAPS Ambassador.

You are ready to become a peer mentor if:

- ★ You're an adult survivor at least 18 months beyond the loss of your loved one
- ★ You feel ready to listen and provide comfort and gentle guidance to another

We would love to have you become a part of the circle of love that is TAPS. Find out more: taps.org/becomeapeermentor

TEAMS4TAPS

teams4taps works with sports teams, athletes and organizations across the country to bring joy to surviving military families and to honor the lives of their fallen heroes.

We are gearing up for exciting future sports engagements for TAPS families across the country and we want to hear your stories, particularly about baseball and golf.

Do you or your family have a special connection to the sport of baseball or a specific Major League Baseball team?

Do you or your family have a special connection to the sport of golf? Did your fallen hero play the game or have a favorite golfer?

We would be honored if you would share your stories with us and any related photos. Stories and photos can be emailed to teams4taps@taps.org. ★



PHOTOS: TAPS ARCHIVES

The Power of You

Ways You Can Support the Mission

VOLUNTEER

Volunteerism is at the very foundation of TAPS. Each year, more than 2,300 TAPS volunteers spend a combined total of 61,000 hours supporting survivors. Every program across the organization benefits from the selfless service of people like you who share our mission of caring for the families of America's fallen military heroes. Find out more: www.taps.org/volunteer

SHOP FOR TAPS

Donate to TAPS when you're making your next online purchase from Amazon. Visit smile.amazon.com and select the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors as your charity to support before making purchases. A percentage of the purchase of eligible items goes directly to TAPS programs. To find out about other retail sites and partners, visit: www.taps.org/support/shopfortaps

SEE WHAT'S
NEW
* IN THE *
TAPS
STORE!



SAVE 25%

ON ALL LAPIS JEWELRY WITH CODE
TAPSFAM25

SPONSOR A BACKPACK

TAPS hosts programs specifically for our youngest survivors. They include Good Grief Camps, Family Camps, Retreats, Campouts, Teen Adventures, Young Adults Experiences, and Legacy Mentor activities. At each program, the children and their Military Mentors are given a backpack to carry supplies. TAPS Kids use their packs to carry blankets for napping and snuggling, snacks, a notebook to draw in or jot down memories, and a photo of their lost loved one is always within reach. Find out more: www.shop.taps.org/collections/sponsor-a-kit

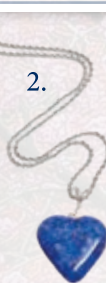


TAPS ONLINE STORE

taps.org/shop



1.



2.



3.



4.

1. Team TAPS Women's Race Shirt - \$34.99
(also available in Men's)
2. Lapis Heart Necklace - \$58.99
3. Market Basket Tote - \$19.99
4. Nine Line Strength Unisex Tee - \$24.99



love lives on

Nashville and TAPS Families
Come Together to
Create a Musical Tribute



TAPS FAMILIES IN NASHVILLE



LONESTAR



JOHN RICH



BILLY RAY CYRUS



VINCE GILL



PAM TILLIS



ALL-4-ONE

Compilation of 10 Original Songs Capture Love, Memories and Resilience of Military Survivors

I've seen first hand the commitment that the family makes when their loved one serves our country and sometimes make the ultimate sacrifice.

~ BILLY RAY CYRUS,
COUNTRY MUSIC SINGER,
SONGWRITER & ACTOR



JIMMY NICHOLS & BONNIE CARROLL

I think the lyrics of a song can penetrate people with a lot more influence than just speaking with someone... music is the ultimate denominator.

~ JOHN RICH,
COUNTRY MUSIC SINGER-SONGWRITER

In 2018, TAPS was approached by the founders of the Roots & American Society (RAMS) with an idea. They wanted to produce an album with all the proceeds benefiting TAPS.

What seemed like a far-reaching project is now a reality. "Love Lives On: The Album" will be released in May 22, 2020 to coincide with Memorial Day.

The album is a collaboration of ten TAPS families and Nashville songwriters. The families shared pages of information on their heroes then met with their songwriters in the summer of 2019. The result is a collection of deeply personal songs that honor all who have served and sacrificed.

The producers of the album are long-time TAPS supporters Frank Myers and Jimmy Nichols. Both have performed at the Colorado Celebrity Classic, an annual TAPS fundraiser held in Denver. Frank Myers has twelve number one hits and 20 top ten hits to his credit. Jimmy Nichols, a renowned keyboardist, has recorded with Carrie Underwood, Reba McEntire, Shakira and many others.

"Being involved with this is really important," said Frank Myers. "The album can, hopefully, take away a bit of the pain their families feel. We want them to get lost in the music."

"This is an organization I am passionate about," said Jimmy Nichols. "Without TAPS,

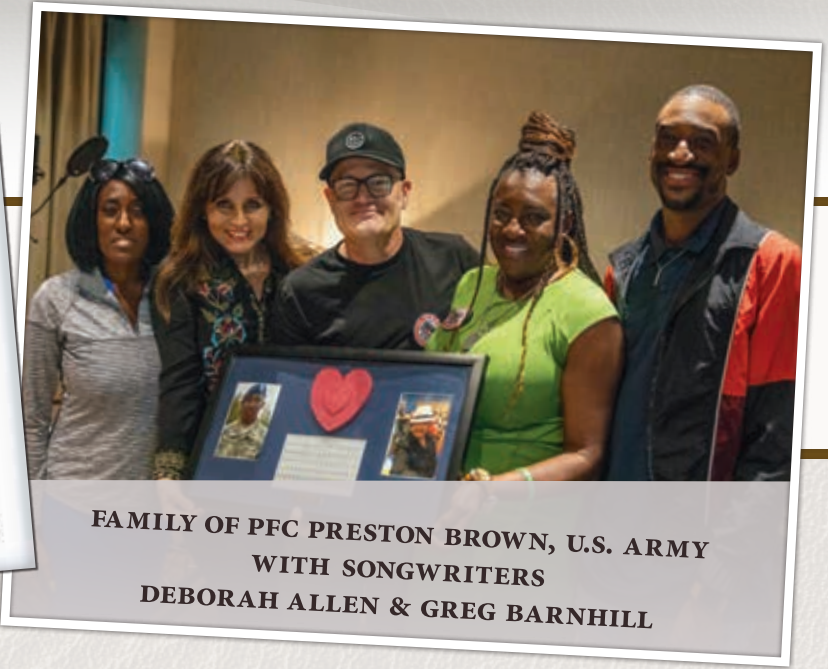
I don't know how some of these families would survive. TAPS steps in and says, we have to help." ★

The title track, Love Lives On, will be released on March 20, 2020.

The entire album will be released May 22, 2020. The album and songs will be available for download from all the usual channels. A limited number of CDs and vinyl copies will also be for sale. Merchandise will be sold at the TAPS Store in the coming months.

I felt like our songwriters were able to capture the essence of our son.

~ JAMES ISLAM,
SURVIVING FATHER OF PFC. JOSHUA ISLAM,
U.S. MARINE CORPS



**FAMILY OF PFC PRESTON BROWN, U.S. ARMY
WITH SONGWRITERS
DEBORAH ALLEN & GREG BARNHILL**

SOUND TRACKS

LOVE LIVES ON

Recorded by Lonestar, Vince Gill and Friends
Written by Bonnie Carroll, surviving spouse of
Army Brig. Gen Thomas C. Carroll,
with Richie McDonald,
Frank J. Myers and Jimmy Nichols

ISN'T IT AMAZING

Recorded by All-4-One
Written by Dawn Brinkley, surviving spouse of
Marine Corps Maj. Ian C. Brinkley,
with Billy Montana and Keni Thomas

PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW

Recorded by the Gatlin Brothers and Paul Overstreet
Written by Brian and Beth Martin, surviving
father and sister of Army Spec. Wyatt Joseph Martin,
with Larry Gatlin and Paul Overstreet

K-9 BROTHER

Recorded by Andy Griggs
Written by Tammie Ashley and Jordan Ashley,
surviving mother and brother of
Marine Corps Sgt. Joshua Ryan Ashley,
with Greg Friia and Wood Newton

CLIMB TO GLORY

Recorded by Billy Ray Cyrus, Eddy Raven,
Mark Plummer and Lee Roy Parnell
Written by Army Capt. John Rhoten in honor
of his battle buddies
with Brett Jones and Eddy Raven

NEW SET OF WINGS

Recorded by Pam Tillis
Written by Alison, Katherine and Caroline Banholzer,
surviving spouse and daughters of
Air Force Col. David D. Banholzer, with Rob Crosby,
Dean Sams and Pam Tillis

JOSHUA 1:9

Recorded by Dave Fenley
Written by James and Donna Islam, surviving parents
of Marine Corps PFC Joshua Islam,
with Phil O'Donnell and Buddy Owens

REBEL WINGS (SONG FOR NICK)

Recorded by John Rich
Written by Joe, Angel and Shannon Pansini,
surviving father and sisters of
Marine Corps Sgt. Nicholas Pansini,
with Danny Wells, Liz Hengber and Gary Baker

PRESS ON PRESTON

Recorded by Deborah Allen
Written by Stephanie Greene, Shandrea Houser
and Clarence Houser Jr., surviving mother
and siblings of Army PFC Preston A. Brown,
with Greg Barnhill and Deborah Allen

YOU CARRY ME TOO

Recorded by Angie Keilhauer
Written by Dr. Jay Choe, U.S. Navy,
surviving spouse of Navy Lt. Florence Bacong Choe,
with Marv Green, Angie Kielhauer and Wood Newton

PHOTOS FROM RECORDING SESSIONS BY SPROCKETHEADS AND DITTY TV

Support **THE MISSION,** Honor **THE LEGACY**

Add Your Loved One to Our Memorial Wall at Our National Headquarters

TAPS National Headquarters in Arlington, Virginia, is America's home to the families of our nation's fallen heroes. We honor America's legacy of service and sacrifice with our Hero Tribute Wall, which is proudly and permanently displayed at the entrance. Join the Headquarters Campaign to honor your military hero and help us raise funds to support the critical services TAPS provides across the country.



Remembrance: \$250

Remember your loved one with this 4" x 5" tile.



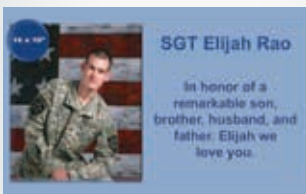
Tribute: \$500

Create a tribute to your loved one with 8" x 5" tile.



Salute: \$1,000

Salute your loved one with this 8" x 10" tile.



Honor: \$2,500

Honor your loved one with this 16" x 10" tile.

** Personalize these tiles with a picture and an inscription.*



**100% OF YOUR DONATION SUPPORTS
TAPS PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

VISIT TAPS.ORG/TRIBUTE TODAY!





Finding encouragement and building toward a strong future. Survivors came together at the Women's Empowerment Retreat in Savannah, Georgia.



Good Grief Campers made new friends and reunited with old ones at the TAPS Southern Regional Seminar, Dallas, Texas.



Coffee and conversation. TAPS families enjoying connection at a TAPS Together in Austin, Texas.



Survivors created vision boards at the Women's Empowerment Retreat in Sedona, Arizona, symbolizing the work they did together and their next brave steps forward.



The Southern Regional Seminar in Dallas had a great turnout for Peer Mentor training. We always need more Peer Mentors.



Jeremiah Martin of the Brooklyn Nets helps the Gilles family (Rosa, Gary and Eddie) honor their hero, Marine Sgt. Maj. Steven Ellison, during a Hoops for Troops practice arranged by teams4taps.



Thanks to the National Women's Soccer League and teams4taps, survivors watched the North Carolina Courage take home the trophy in Cary, North Carolina.



Your TAPS Family —



PHOTOS: TAPS ARCHIVES; KRISTA MEINERT; DENNIS KRAFT



2.



4.



3.

Here, There, Everywhere



6.



7.

8.

Cruising the Caribbean. TAPS families find respite, connection and camaraderie on the self-funded TAPS Western Caribbean Cruise.

9.

Adventure, challenge, growth. Lindsey Crain, Rosselyn Kapun, Michael Heisey and other survivors found this and more during the recent self-funded TAPS Expedition to climb Tanzania's Mount Kilimanjaro.

10.

As part of the Stars4TAPS program, survivors were treated to a special night at the National Theatre in Washington, D.C., for the musical "Bandstand."

11.

TAPS families were hosted at a recent screening of the CBS series "SEAL Team" in Los Angeles, California. Families were able to meet and talk with series cast and producers, including actor Max Thieriot.

12.

Survivors enjoying time together during the recent Survivor Experience in Alaska, where Spring did not come early.

13.

TAPS men enjoyed comfort and ease with kindred spirits during the Southern Regional Seminar in Dallas, Texas.

14.

TAPS Together offer connection in your local community. TAPS families enjoyed a tour of the Louisiana State Capitol.



Remember the *Love*,



PHOTOS: TAPS ARCHIVES; KRISTA MEINERT; DENNIS KRAFT



Celebrate the *Life*, Share the *Journey*





800-959-TAPS (8277) ★TAPS.org

The Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors offers comfort, care, and resources to all those grieving the death of a military loved one.



TRAGEDY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR SURVIVORS

3033 Wilson Boulevard, Third Floor
Arlington, VA 22201

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TAPS is a participant organization in the
Combined Federal Campaign, No. 11309

*When it seems that our sorrow is too great to be borne,
let us think of the great family of the heavy hearted into which
our grief has given us entrance, and inevitably, we will feel about
us their arms, their sympathy, their understanding.*

~ Helen Keller