

**TRAGEDY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR SURVIVORS**

# T★A★P★S<sup>®</sup>

Comfort and Support Since 1994

**MAGAZINE**

**FOR THE LOVED ONES OF THOSE WHO SERVED & DIED**



**VOLUME 17 • ISSUE 4**

TAPS Magazine is dedicated to the brave men and women who died while serving in the Armed Forces, and to their survivors. The magazine is written by surviving family members, friends, and care-giving professionals. We hope you will find comfort, support, information, inspiration, and a sense of connection within its pages.

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★ **About TAPS Magazine** ★

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) is a national nonprofit 501(c)3 Veterans Service Organization which publishes TAPS Magazine in furtherance of its mission to provide support services to the survivors of servicemembers who have died while serving.

TAPS Magazine is published quarterly and sent free of charge to survivors, their friends and family, servicemembers, and professionals who work with U.S. military survivors.



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# TAPS®

## Comfort and Support Since 1994

TAPS offers immediate and long-term emotional help, hope, and healing to anyone grieving the death of a loved one in military service to America, regardless of their relationship to the deceased or the circumstances of the death.

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

**Call us at 800-959-TAPS**  
**Or visit us at [www.taps.org](http://www.taps.org)**

## TAPS

**SUPPORTS** the bereaved survivor through a network of Peer Mentors. Mentors are trained volunteers who have also lost a loved one in the Armed Forces and are now standing ready to reach out and support others.

**PROVIDES** a national toll-free help and information line 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 800-959-TAPS (8277). Support is available from leading experts in the field of grief and trauma.

**HOSTS** the TAPS Online Community of survivors, providing secure chat rooms, message boards, peer group discussion sites, and an extensive website at [www.taps.org](http://www.taps.org).

**SPONSORS** Military Survivor Seminars for adults and Good Grief Camps for young survivors in locations across America, giving survivors the opportunity to share, grow, and help each other heal.

**CONNECTS** families to resources in their local communities and provides grief and trauma resources and information.



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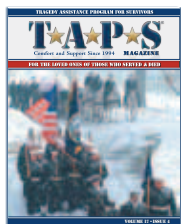
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**COVER PHOTO BY**  
**Robert Knudsen**

Photo courtesy of Robert Knudsen from: *A Living Treasure: Seasonal Photographs of Arlington National Cemetery*, published by Potomac Books, Inc. [www.potomacbooksinc.com](http://www.potomacbooksinc.com)



# Let Us Hear From You



We want to know your thoughts, perspectives, and opinions on TAPS programs and publications. Tell us what you think, send ideas for future topics, or submit an article. Submission Guidelines can be found online at [www.taps.org](http://www.taps.org). Your TAPS family is waiting to hear from you. ✧

## Volunteer Battle Buddy

I have had a great time working with TAPS and you have no idea how much I brag your organization up. Anytime anyone asks, "What I can donate to?" the first word out of my mouth is TAPS. You guys are so wonderful and we are so lucky to have your services to go to. Our families learn how to communicate better, cope, and heal the best they can.

**Janet Masseth, North Dakota**

## Regional Seminar

Had such a nice time with all of you at Fort Gordon this weekend. It's the first time I felt like I fit in somewhere since my husband's passing. Looking forward to many more events with my new TAPS family.

**Sharron Stidfole, Virginia**  
Surviving spouse of  
CW4 James Stidfole

## Run and Remember

Hello TAPS friends! I just registered for the 2012 Fargo Marathon (it is going to be my first full marathon) and I am so excited to run with TAPS at this great event! TAPS has been a great support for me since I lost my husband last summer and I am so excited to raise money and give back. Thank you everyone for all of your support!

**Rachael Hill, Alaska**  
Surviving spouse of  
Captain Jeffrey Hill

## Survivors of Suicide

Thank you cannot express what TAPS means to my family. Thank you for making it okay to talk about suicide. We all need to educate ourselves and get the word out that it can be prevented. Our military need to know that it takes a strong person to admit they need help and that it is not a weakness to seek it.

**Christine Hensley, Maine**  
Surviving mom of  
SPC Cassandra Cassavant

## TAPS Retreat

I cannot tell you how much the widow retreat helped me. I was not sure of what to expect, but left with more than I could ever want. To meet other women like me, to talk with them and hear their stories, might have been the best part of it all. I have to say Sunday was probably the most emotional; I have never participated in a 5K race. Seeing everyone in their TAPS shirts with the pictures of their loved ones was unbelievable, and to cross the finish line arm in arm with about seven other women...amazing! I think all of us wanted to cry but rejoiced in the moment instead.

**Rachel Hall, California**  
Surviving spouse of  
SSG Bryan Hall

## TAPS Retreat

So in trying to capture my experience in just one word, it would have to be "fantastic." I literally didn't have single "not okay" moment the whole trip, and as much as I missed my family, I absolutely loved connecting with all the women! It totally gave me a taste for more, and I will try with all my might to go again next year, no matter where TAPS decides to be!

**Sara Werner Clark, Washington**  
Surviving spouse of  
GYSGT Michael Clark

## Ready to heal

I read Darcie Sims' article "Star Light, Star Bright" [Summer issue TAPS Magazine] with tears streaming down my face. I had put my grief on hold for a while but when I read Darcie's thoughts of when life was simple, I felt she was talking to me. I still struggle and thankfully have finally opened TAPS Magazine again to read it through. There is so much of it that I need to know right now as I am ready to heal. Thanks for being there.

**Sheryl Wallace, Minnesota**  
Surviving mom of  
PFC Richard Wallace, Jr.



[editor@taps.org](mailto:editor@taps.org)



# TAPS Saturday Message

Dear TAPS Family,

I live in the northern part of the country. Up here, as the weather turns colder, our plans tend to take on a tentative flair. When we make plans with someone, we generally add, "...if the weather is okay." Last year our bell choir was planning the Christmas concert, and the discussion revolved around what would happen if it snowed—or worse, if it rained and the roads got icy. We needed an alternate plan.

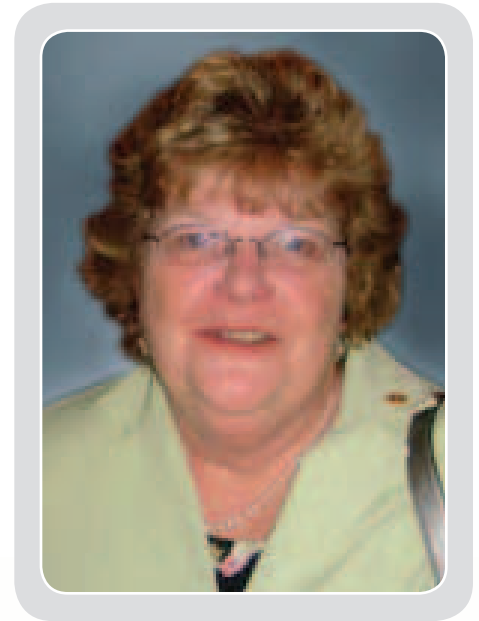
It occurred to me that these plans are very much like grieving. When we are grieving, we often make plans with someone and when the day comes, we just can't do it. What do we do then? We tell the other person that we just can't go. Do they understand? Probably not. Since everyone is not grieving, it differs from the snowstorm where everyone's experience is the same, a shared understanding that it is frightening to go out.

For the grieving, the holiday season can be overwhelming. There are ads on TV, old movies that seem to rip your heart out, holiday music everywhere, and the mandate to shop, shop, shop. Everything you do seems to be a reminder of what you

don't have. Just as you would do during winter in the north (where you start your car slowly or simply stay home when the weather is really bad), allow yourself the same alternatives with your grief.

The death of a loved one, whether it was sudden or expected, is a shock that lasts a lot longer than friends may think it should last. You need time to pick up the pieces and decide what you want to do now. Eventually, you may want to enjoy some of the things that you liked to do before. On the other hand, this life change may take you in an entirely different direction. Give yourself the gift of time to figure things out. At this season, that may be the gift that means the most to you.

Someone once told me that every person you meet has a gift for you. I have found that to be true of our TAPS family. You have told me your stories, talked about the memorials that you plan for your loved ones, and have been available to me when I needed a friend. Together we can look at this season as a time to reflect on the gifts that others have given to us, gifts that don't have a price tag.



Look for the little things. Take time each evening to reflect on something that brought comfort during the day. Maybe a friend gave you a call or you found something that brought a small piece of joy to your heart. Look for small things to bring that sense of joy even if it is just for a moment.

The spring will come, and as time passes, you will put the pieces together and a new "you" will emerge. Let the people at TAPS help you with the support that you decide you need. In TAPS, you will find friends who won't rush you, regardless of the season. \*

Carol Lane

★ Saturday Morning Message ★

**SIGN UP INFO** » Carol is the author of the TAPS weekly message of support and encouragement. If you would like to subscribe to this interactive email group, go to [www.taps.org](http://www.taps.org) and click on Online Community to get started. Once you have registered you can click on Subscribe to Saturday Message.





# Thanksgiving

By Orson Scott Card

For many survivors, Thanksgiving is a difficult day because it accentuates the fact that we can no longer gather all of our family together. It helps to know that we have the support and gratitude of our fellow Americans. This essay was written November 21, 2004 and was first published by Rhino Times and hatrack.com, the official website of Orson Scott Card. It is excerpted and reprinted here with permission.

Gratitude is one of the hardest emotions to maintain or express. On the one hand, we easily give thanks for the most trivial services, trading the empty phrases “thank you,” “no, thank you” with store clerks. The gratitude becomes a bit less perfunctory when we thank people who give us directions or hold open a door or wait to let us go by, but still the words come easily to our lips.

On the other hand, those who have given us the most important gifts often hear nothing of thanks from us. Perhaps it is because such gifts come to us as if by right; they surround us like air, which we scarcely think of unless it's gone.

And when we do thank those who have surrounded us with gifts all our lives—

loving parents, kind and honorable friends and teachers, even strangers who work for the public good—we become tongue-tied and express our gratitude in generalities:

“Thanks for everything, Mom!”

“Keep up the good work!”

“Thanks for... for... all you do.”

What lips are shy to say, we can write down.

This Monday night before Thanksgiving, our family will sit down and each write a thank-you letter. Not for a birthday or Christmas gift, but to someone who has earned our gratitude in the ordinary course of life. The thank-you will be very specific: not “thanks for everything,” but thanks for *this* thing you did.



This Thanksgiving there are thousands of people I have never met, to whom I owe a debt that cannot be repaid.

To you, Marine, still weary from the battle house to house in Fallujah, whom we called upon to overcome your natural fear and go into combat in our cause: What went through your mind and heart in those days of fighting is between you and your fellow soldiers and the God who knows your heart as no mortal being can. All I can see is the outward deed—the courage to act on someone else's orders, in protection of someone else's life, at risk of your own.

To all you Soldiers, Sailors, Pilots, Marines who have served under fire, at risk of life, volunteers in the American cause: You carry with you painful memories so that countless civilians back home will not have such memories; the vast majority of your fellow-citizens remain innocent of the agony of war precisely because you have been willing to immerse yourselves in it.

This Thanksgiving  
there are thousands  
of people I have  
never met, to whom  
I owe a debt that  
cannot be repaid.



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Andrew Simon



foreign and domestic, and from our own foolish mistakes: Each day at work you don't expect to risk your life, but that risk is always there; and your constant vigilance is our protection. Thank you.

And to you, the American soldier who has been torn by bombs or bullets, who came home maimed in body or in spirit by this war: I cannot restore to you what you have lost, but I will try to show you by my personal treatment of you, by contributions I make and the votes I cast in support of meeting your needs, by the honor that I give to you, and by the free and decent society that I will try to maintain, that the country you served was worthy of the price you paid and will continue to pay all the days of your life.

Thank you.

On Thanksgiving Day, family and friends will gather around a table in my home and give thanks to God for all the good things in our lives. Our home, our neighborhood, our city will mostly be at peace; there will be laughter and pleasure in our house, as well as solemnity and prayer.

Yet we will not forget you, none of you who have served us in this struggle. I promise that we will remember: You have been the hands of God in bringing *this* much more freedom, *this* much more hope of peace and justice to God's children, not only in your native land, but also among strangers.

No one has greater love than this: to lay down your life for your friends.

For that love, for *your* love, I give thanks. \*

You create and maintain the safe haven in which I live. Thank you.

To you in the Reserve and National Guard, who came when you were called and set aside your lives and left behind your families for months and sometimes years of service you did not hope for...

To you whose military service is not in combat, yet who labor to make sure that our troops are well supplied, well trained, and only put at risk when there is a goal to achieve that is worthy of the sacrifice of life...

To you civilians who, unarmed, have braved the dangers of war in order to help rebuild Iraq and Afghanistan and restore their ability to live in peace and plenty...

You make our nation possible, our whole world safer. Thank you.

To you policemen and firemen here at home whose vigilance protects us from dangers natural and deliberate, from barbarians

You, the family whose child did not come home alive; you who have buried the hopes and dreams you had for that child's life; how can I comfort you? Except to tell you that the lives of all the children who have *not* died, whose future was *not* broken off by war, belong in part to you, because of the sacrifice you made.

I may not have known your lost sons and daughters, but I know why they died, and I love them for their sacrifice, and will not forget them; nor will I forget you, and the constant ache that will be with you for the rest of your lives.

I believe that in the eyes of God you are all held in honor; I know that in my own eyes, your suffering and sacrifice are gifts to your neighbors, to your nation, to all civilized people, whether or not they understand. I hope it helps sustain you, to know that I and many others like me are grateful to you and to the loved one you have lost.

#### About the Author



Photo by Bob Henderson,  
Henderson Photography, Inc.

Orson Scott Card is the bestselling author best known for the classic science fiction series including *Ender's Game* (1985) and *Speaker for the Dead* (1986). Both novels won Hugo and Nebula Awards, making Card the only author to win both of science fiction's top prizes in consecutive years. Most recently, he was awarded the 2008 Margaret A. Edwards Award for lifetime achievement in Young Adult literature, from the American Library Association. Card has written sixty-one books, assorted plays, comics, essays, and newspaper columns. In addition to science fiction novels, Card writes in several other genres as well as teaching writing and literature at Southern Virginia University.



# The Holidays Are Here Again

By Jill Harrington-LaMorie, LCSW, DSW

For survivors who have experienced the death of a loved one, the shadow of grief often darkens the weeks from Thanksgiving through New Year's Day. The holidays can be a less than welcome time of year for those who have lost a loved one, sometimes one of dreaded anticipation and relieved conclusion. Because they have lost a loved one, grievers find themselves dreading the holidays.

## ❖ SUGGESTIONS FOR MANAGING THE SEASON ❖

**Do only what feels right.** Understand there is no right or wrong way to celebrate the holidays after a loved one has died. Hold a family conference to discuss what would be the best way to celebrate this year. You can do it the same as always, or you can change your traditions. Stay flexible, do not set plans in stone, and let things change or evolve when necessary.

**Find peer support.** Talk with others who have been through the holidays while grieving. Do not forget that others have been down the grief path during the holidays. Find them and seek out their support, because what they have learned can help you. In his book, *A Decembered Grief*, author Harold Ivan Smith says all grievers need a safe place to grieve. Sometimes that might not be within a family or within a circle of close friends, because they have not been grievers. He strongly recommends finding other grievers or participating in a bereavement self-help group to find like-minded people. Doing so can lead to holiday "grief relief." You will

*You will discover that you are not alone, find a safe place with others who have been down the same path, and share season-coping skills that work for others.*

discover that you are not alone, find a safe place with others who have been down the same path, and share season-coping skills that work for others.

**Nurture yourself.** Do what you need to do during the holidays to maintain balance in your life. If you need to rest, then rest. If you need to get away for a few days, then get away. The holidays are often a stressful time, even for those not dealing with death. Respect your body during the holiday by staying focused on taking care of yourself physically. Eat properly, drink water, exercise, and rest as often as you need to.

**Get rid of unnecessary stress.** Try to find the balance between overextending yourself and completely isolating yourself. Resist the temptation to escape into loneliness by avoiding people, events, and holiday parties. Retreating into loneliness can prevent you from facing the new challenges of life ahead of you. At the same time, don't overload yourself with too many commitments.

**Ignore the critics.** Everyone has an opinion and you should expect some criticism, or at least commentary, on how you handle your grief and the decisions you make during the holidays. Find and do what is best for you and your family. You are the only one walking in your shoes; you will know how to fill them. It's not always easy, but try your best to ignore the critics and their criticism.

## Surround yourself with supportive people.

It has been said that grief rewrites your address book. The death of a loved one can bring profound changes to your family and social

relationships. It may be a time to determine the best people to spend time with. The holidays are a difficult time, so try to be with supportive, comforting people. Identify family members, friends, and relatives with whom you feel comfortable and who will allow you to be yourself. Spend a lot of time in their presence. Keep a safe distance from those who frustrate you, are toxic, or who just do not understand grief.

**To shop or not to shop?** That is the question. Hearing the holiday music in a store can be painful to anyone going through a loss during this season. It is your decision whether you feel you are up to or can afford to shop. You can always simplify your gifts and remember it is the effort and thought that counts. Even though the holidays may be different for children, it is always kind to remember that this is a special time of year for them. Online or catalogue shopping as well as gift cards can be very helpful if you cannot face the stores.

**What's in a name?** Everything... and don't forget to say it. Deliberately say the name of the person who died. Sometimes, family and friends will avoid talking about your deceased loved one for fear of further upsetting you. Be the one to bring up his or her name. That way you let others know you want and need to talk about him or her.



**Guilt: tread lightly.** As you begin to enjoy parts of the holidays, you might also experience guilt because of that enjoyment. Remind yourself that having those moments of pleasure is not a betrayal; it is a natural part of living life. So soften those feeling of guilt. Give yourself permission to encounter joy whenever it comes.

### ❖ THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HONOR YOUR LOVED ONE ❖

**Give a memorial gift.** You can donate to a charity or other organization in memory of your loved one. Another suggestion could be to take the money you would have spent on your loved one and buy a gift to donate to his or her favorite charity. You can also find organizations that sponsor needy families or children.

**Give of your time.** Volunteering during the holidays is a wonderful way to help others. Nonprofits, civic organizations, and shelters always need more help during the holidays.

*Grief changes us; hopefully it can change you for the better - make you more insightful, more understanding of what life is all about and what is important to you*

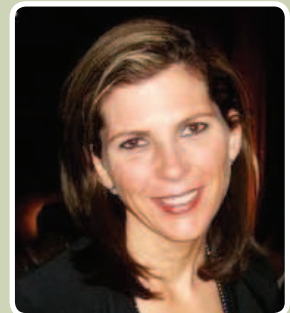
**Give to children.** You can continue to buy and give children a special gift in memory of their loved one.

**Do something symbolic.** Come up with rituals that symbolize the memory of your loved one. After their son died in military service, one family developed three rituals in his memory. First, they lit a candle at Thanksgiving. After a brief moment of silence and remembrance, each person shared a memory. Second, they purchased a new Christmas ornament and placed it on the tree in his memory. Finally, the family planted a tree on New Year's Day.

**Write a letter to your loved one.** This suggestion comes from authors Susan Zonnebelt-Smeenge and Robert De Vries, in their book, *The Empty Chair: Handling Grief on Holidays and Special Occasions*. To help you write that letter, they offer these sentences to jump-start your thinking: When I think of this holiday without you, I feel...The thing I will miss most on this special day without you is...The things that you gave me that were important were...

**Cultivate hope.** Plant a seed of hope and watch it grow. Hope matters. Even though you have experienced tremendous loss and change in your life, make a list of the positives and review them. "Grief changes us; hopefully it can change you for the better—make you more insightful, more understanding of what life is all about and what is important to you," state De Vries and Zonnebelt-Smeenge. "Take hold of your life. Believe your life is not over. You still have reasons for being here. Begin to find out what those reasons are." Cultivate hope and be open to accepting it in your new journey through all the seasons. \*

#### About the Author



Dr. Jill Harrington-LaMorie is the surviving spouse of Navy Lieutenant Commander Andrew LaMorie and proud mother of their children, Madeline and Alexander. She served as the TAPS Director of Professional Education for more than two years, as well as being a peer mentor, group facilitator, and workshop presenter. Jill completed her doctorate in social work at The University of Pennsylvania, and currently works at USUHS Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress. She brings more than sixteen years of experience in working with people living with life-challenging illness, trauma, grief, and loss.



# Gold, Commonsense, & Mirth

By Michele Hiester Marcum ☆ Surviving sister of Master Sergeant Michael Hiester

Underwear.

Yes, I said *underwear*. Very few holiday traditions grab your attention as quickly as the mere mention of men's shiny gold sateen underwear. But before I can impart our newest family secret, I must bring you up to speed with how we arrived at this quirky tradition.

One of my fondest childhood memories of Christmas mornings is the stocking tradition. Every year, it was a race among my sister, my brother, and me to see who could get to sleep first on Christmas Eve. This was quickly followed by a race to see who would awaken first to discover Santa's loot. I can

say with absolute certainty that while I may have won that first race quite often, it was my "little" brother Michael who always won the latter. Just seventeen months younger than me, but five years older than our sister, Michael always loved winning any race, and we girls were no real competition for him.

The rule at our house was that we could open whatever was in our stocking whenever we wanted, but nothing else could be unwrapped until the entire family was gathered together, bleary-eyed parents with coffee in hand and three kids huddled by the heap of gifts. Every year, long before the sun had even considered rising on Christmas morn, it was Michael who would sort and organize the gifts, stacking them by recipient, arranging them just so. And it was Michael who would personally deliver each of our stockings to our bedrooms, where we'd tear through the contents, nestled in the warmth of our own beds.

Eventually, we all married and had kids, and the stockings multiplied. For every new addition to the family, up went another stocking. In fact, it was a new stocking, wrapped in a box, which announced the pending arrival of Michael's second child.

Every stocking reflects the personality of the family member. Michael's includes a trumpet in the design for his high-school devotion to the instrument and his adult commitment to the cavalry. Mine is patchwork plaid in honor of my love for old quilts, Americana, and traditions. No two stockings are alike, just as no two of us are alike.

Over the years our stocking tradition has evolved, and every adult in the family buys an inexpensive stocking stuffer for every other family member, children included. Sometimes the gifts are useful, maybe a snow scraper or some girly lotion. And sometimes they are fun, like a scratch-off lottery ticket or your favorite candy. And then there are times they are just plain useless, like a regifted whatchamacallit you received the year prior from a coworker and have yet to determine its identity.

But one year, my dad and my husband each found something a little more outlandish buried in the toes of their holiday socks: men's shiny golden sateen bikini underwear, irreverently selected and given by my brother Michael. We all had a good laugh about that, but time passed (as it does) and we all kind of forgot about it.

*That first Christmas  
was painful and raw.  
The ache was bone-deep,  
but we soldiered on.*



A few years later, Michael was killed, and none of us really wanted to celebrate anything at all, much less a holiday designed to remind us of all our blessings. The gift I'd been so excited about giving him remained buried in the back of my closet, never to be given. I felt like a traitor for not wrapping it and putting it under the tree that year, as though I was somehow accepting that he wasn't coming home. Now, seven Christmases later, his gift remains in my closet, a sacred reminder that the best gifts are the people we hold close...even after they're gone.

That first Christmas was painful and raw. The ache was bone-deep, and even now, it hurts to attempt a brief description. But we soldiered on and did what Michael would have wanted us to do, not necessarily because he would have wanted us to do so, but because we didn't know what else to do. We had the kids to think about. They didn't understand that mourning would diminish Santa's holiday spirit or that it would shatter the sanctity of such a precious day. They needed the safety of those annual traditions we'd built over the years. I didn't realize at the time how much I needed the comfort of those traditions, too.

So we kept the stocking tradition, and on that first Christmas morning, everyone arrived with fake smiles and watery eyes, gifts in hand. And when we took the stockings down, there was Michael's stocking still hanging...empty. We went about the business of distributing the others for opening. But I couldn't enjoy the moment, and my eyes kept going to that lonely stocking there on the mantle, to the little bear blowing that trumpet, and all I could hear was the sadness. Without thinking, I crossed the room and lifted that stocking from its hook and laid it reverently beneath the tree. There was a collective sigh among the adults, and that's when I understood that all of us were feeling the loneliness.



*We're learning  
to allow laughter  
back in, to allow the  
mirth to meld with  
the sorrow.*

A few months later, I was cleaning our basement when I came across a box of belongings that should have been pitched long before. As I sorted through the toys and books and clothes, I was appalled that such useless items had taken up residence in my home for so long. But just as I was about to throw it all back in the box, something caught my eye. Could it be? Yes! There at the bottom of that box, was a pair of men's shiny gold sateen underwear, with the price tag still attached. I laughed out loud and knew immediately what I would do with them.

The following Christmas arrived with a little more pageantry and less trepidation than the one prior, and I couldn't wait for our annual stocking tradition to commence. When it did, it was my dad who was shocked speechless to find himself regifted with Michael's prank from all those years before. He didn't quite know how to react, and neither did anyone else.

Slowly the memory spread throughout the room, and as each remembered the origin of the gift, we all cherished the memory. The atmosphere ignited, and we felt the warmth of Michael's love and humor and wit.

New traditions emerge, and old ones evolve. The stockings are still hung on the mantle with care, but Michael's is always there in the middle now, front and center, not further down where it used to hang to the right of mine, in chronological order. And each year, his stocking gets moved to its rightful place beneath the tree, where the trumpet winks at us beneath the twinkling lights. I usually put something in there, to fill the void and as a way of remembering. One year it was a little plastic army guy. One year it was an engraved coin. Who knows, maybe this year it will be the underwear...

I am well aware that gifting skimpy unmentionables that will never be worn ignores all boundaries of decency and common sense, but for our family it has become a joyful part of our family celebration. Every year, I regift that same pair of shiny gold underwear on Christmas morning. And every year, we savor the memories we have of our time with Michael. We're learning to allow laughter back in, to allow the mirth to meld with the sorrow. It's the way Michael would have wanted it. Underwear and all. \*





# A Visit to Arlington Walking Among the Familiar

By Pamela A. Henne

My letter began,

*You don't know me, but you knew my father when you both served in Europe during World War II. My mother has told me how she hears from you at Christmastime and you always speak fondly of Dad and your days together as soldiers. My father was a great man; gracious, patient and most importantly a hero. Of course he never saw himself this way, but I certainly did. He taught me by his actions, more than words, how to stand for the right things in life—honor, service, and love of country. I came to learn what those words mean more than I ever could have imagined when I was in Afghanistan and more recently in Iraq as an advisor to the Third Infantry Division, Rock of the Marne, Hooah!*

As I read through the letter I had drafted to my father's Army buddy, I began to think about what it means to be a hero. My thoughts

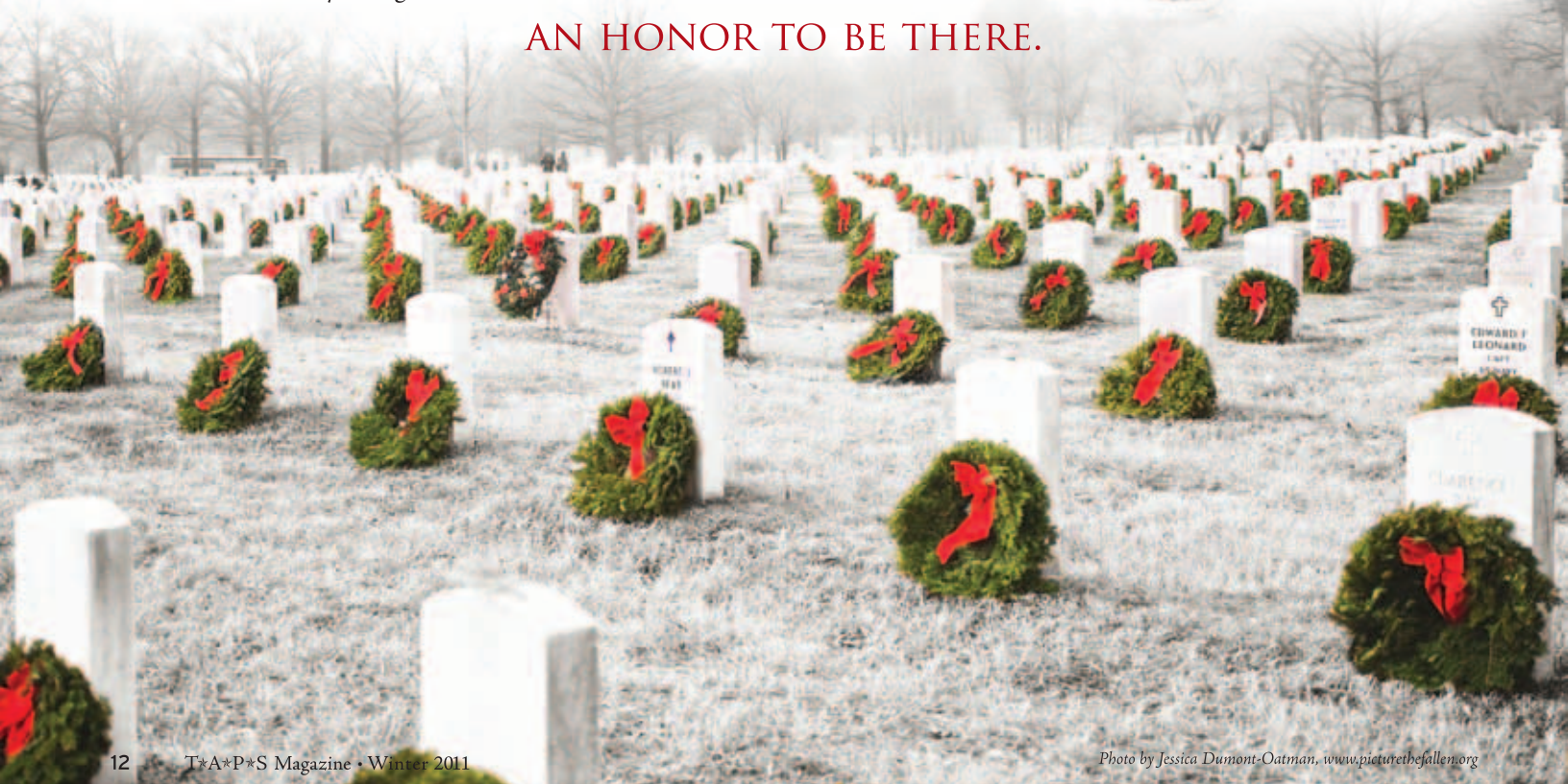
drifted back to an overcast December day a few years earlier when gray clouds gathered and the weather was uncertain. A storm was brewing and you could smell it in the crisp air.

I had come to Arlington Cemetery that day to help place holiday wreaths at headstones. I felt tremendous pride to take part in the Wreaths Across America program that places holiday wreaths at Arlington, as well as other military cemeteries across our nation. I anxiously waited in line to receive my wreath and noted the pride and reverence on the faces of those around me. The respectful excitement was contagious.

Finally, with my single wreath in hand and a mission in my heart, I began to make my way solemnly through a sea of white marble headstones. A wispy fog hung heavy in the air with every breath I exhaled, and suddenly I became aware of the sounds around me. I had walked far enough from the crowd to be alone with my task and the experience. As I walked among rows and rows of the fallen, listening to my own steady breathing, I was struck by the deep sacrifice they all had made and I considered it an honor to be there. There were soldiers of low rank and officers of the highest. Their headstones stood tall and proud and reflected the meticulous care for which Arlington National Cemetery is known.

My intention that day had been to find the headstone of a fallen World War II veteran in order to honor my now-deceased father who had served in WW II as

**I WAS STRUCK BY THE DEEP  
SACRIFICE THEY ALL HAD  
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AN HONOR TO BE THERE.**



a young Army private. I felt my father's approving eyes watching over me and it warmed me in the chill. As I walked through groves of hardwood, heavy branches gently welcomed me, and I listened to the wind in the trees. Dry brittle oak leaves rustled overhead and murmured their own long-standing dirge for the heroes buried below. In the distance, crows called out and suddenly I felt the chill of the harsh wind cut through me. It was an unusually bitter day for December, and an ice storm was imminent. I prayed I could complete my task before the first pellets would fall.

Lost in thought, I had wandered far from the main areas busy with others laying wreaths, and found myself in a more remote part of the cemetery. My feet were numb and my legs chilled through my jeans, but that was little sacrifice compared to that made by those whose names I read as I walked along.

Just then, the bells of the Netherlands Carillon struck. Startled, I turned to hear the chimes count out the hour. *Time*, I thought to myself, *what is time to those who lie here?* It already has passed them by and has no real meaning to the heroes who sleep beneath this hallowed earth. The carillon completed its duty and I stood enjoying the sound of the bells as it drifted and faded through massive, ageless trees. It felt as if time had personified itself in the drifting sound of the bells and now walked a solemn vigil through this place of *no time*.

I renewed my search and thought it best to try a path to my right as I started to see dates reflecting my father's WW II contemporaries. As I walked toward a section with possibilities for my day's intention, I stopped in my tracks.

A headstone near one of the roads to the left suddenly caught my eye and diverted my attention. I saw that there were no flowers and wondered if it was because there was no family near enough to visit. I read the name, his unit and location, and the date he died. I knew this was the one. My wreath would find a place, and I knew Papa wouldn't mind.

## I SLOWLY STOOD, SALUTED SILENTLY IN MY MIND, AND WHISPERED, "REST EASY, BRAVE SOLDIER. WELCOME HOME."

This young man, barely past 20, had fallen within the first week of the assault to take Baghdad. I knew his type because he was like those I had served alongside: young and brave, hardly old enough to vote or buy a beer. But they were always eager and willing to do what it took to get the job done. I flashed back to my own time in Iraq, lying in a bunk and listening to incoming rockets and helicopters overhead, wondering if I would make it home in one piece. I had, but this brave warrior had not.

Now, as I knelt in front of the headstone with a name I didn't know, the damp, fragrant earth soaked into my knees and I realized that although we had never met, I recognized in him and every other soldier like him, that same level of honor and service my father had modeled. This young man was an Army soldier like my father who at 21 had served as a communications technician in France in 1944. Also like my father, this young man was my hero.

I propped the wreath tenderly against the white marble as hot tears began to streak my cheeks. They were the kind of tears that come from deep inside your soul when emotion lies too near the surface. My memories of Iraq, the loss of my beloved father, and the awesome and humbling experience known as Arlington; it was all so fresh. I pressed two fingers to my lips and then touched the engraved name of this stranger. I slowly stood, saluted silently in my mind, and whispered, "Rest easy, brave soldier. Welcome home."

The first pellets of ice began to clink softly against the headstones, sounding out a rhythmic urging that prompted me to realize it was time to go.

The bittersweet memory of that icy December day warmed my cheeks as my thoughts returned to the letter I was

drafting. I ended my letter with an expression of gratitude to my father's unit buddy, a stranger to me—but then, was he?

I had walked among the familiar, his comrades-in-arms, Arlington's champions of valor. As my pen finalized its mission, I told him how grateful I was that he had served, had been my father's friend, and had made sacrifices that I would never know. And, if he would forgive my familiarity, I would also like to say, *You too, are my hero.* \*

### About Wreaths Across America

Wreaths Across America is a nonprofit organization founded to continue and expand the annual wreath laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery begun by Maine businessman, Morrill Worcester, in 1992. Its mission, Remember, Honor, Teach, is carried out in part by coordinating wreath laying ceremonies on the second Saturday of December at Arlington, as well as veterans' cemeteries and other locations in all 50 states and beyond. In December 2011, Wreaths Across America will be placing wreaths on every gravesite at Arlington National Cemetery.

More information is available at [www.wreathsassamerica.org](http://www.wreathsassamerica.org)

### About the Author



Pamela Henne is the surviving daughter of World War II Veteran, Private First Class Glenn R. Barrall. She served in Iraq and Afghanistan as a private sector advisor in 2004 and 2005 and currently lives in the Washington, DC area. Ms. Henne is an independent writer of historical fiction, mystery, and humor.

# Getting through the Holidays

## Advice from the bereaved

By Camille Wortman, PhD

The signs of the holiday season are ubiquitous: holiday decorations in the stores, piped in Christmas carols, holiday displays at the malls, TV programs focusing on selecting the perfect gift, holiday parties, and gift exchanges at work. In many cases, this bustle of activity contrasts markedly with the emptiness and despair of grief. As one grieving person expressed it, "I wanted to crawl into a hole and come out after the holidays had passed." Drawing primarily from my conversations with the bereaved, I describe commonly experienced difficulties and ideas that may be useful in dealing with them.

### *Dilemmas Associated with the Holiday Season*



**1) The Requirement of Cheerfulness.** There is an expectation during the holidays that people should be cheerful. One mourner explained that she hated going to holiday gatherings. "I could not be cheerful and I did not want to bring other people down by being sad. Going to such gatherings is like having to eat liver and pretending you like it," she said.

**2) The Mine Field of Social Exchanges.** On many occasions, the innocent remarks of others may put a knife through the mourner's heart. Shortly after the death of their son, the parents attended a holiday dinner hosted by the boy's grandparents. The host began the meal with a blessing, "Thank you for bringing the whole family together." The father was so distressed by this remark that he left the table. "Then I felt even worse," he said, "because I had disrupted the gathering for everyone else." Mourners can be thrown off guard by the remarks of complete strangers—for example, being admonished by a store clerk,



"I hope you and your family have a wonderful holiday." As one bereaved husband indicated, "You think of many responses, but you keep them to yourself."

**3) The Complexity of Decisions.** Bereaved individuals must navigate a difficult path in deciding how to handle decisions about family activities and rituals. As one mourner indicated, "I was not sure whether I should hang my son's stocking or not. I decided to hang it, because after all he is my son. But my husband thought that this was not a good idea. He told me that I was in denial."

**4) The Ambush.** During the holidays, mourners are often hit by powerful feelings that are evoked by some reminder of the loss. Consequently, they experience what Brook Noel and Pamela Blair in their book, *I Wasn't Ready to Say Goodbye* (2000), have called "the ambush." As one mother explained, "I was taking out the Christmas ornaments and I came across an ornament that Tim had made in kindergarten... It had his hand print on it. I dissolved

into tears." These events, which are unexpected and unpredictable, are also called "blindside reminders," "zingers," and "grief attacks." Although natural and normal, such experiences are often frightening in their intensity. They literally can take the mourner's breath away and bring about heart palpitations and other symptoms.

### *Mourner's Suggestions for Things to Try*



**1) Plan Ahead.** Don't allow the holidays to just happen. Also, try to use a Plan A/Plan B approach to the holidays. Plan A might involve spending Christmas or Hanukkah with relatives; Plan B might mean having a simple dinner and watching a movie at home. Having a Plan B can be comforting even if you don't use it.

**2) Arrange a Family Meeting.** Use a meeting or a conference call to discuss how you would like to spend the holiday season. Let everyone in your family have a say, even the children.

**3) Consider Changing Your Routine.** If you always prepared the family meal, you may want to consider having dinner with relatives or friends. Or you may want to leave town altogether, heading for a cabin in the woods or an excursion to the mountains or the shore.

**4) Take Charge of Your Social Life.** Although you may not feel like getting together with anyone, consider accepting a few invitations to be with close family or friends. Choose to be around people who make you feel comfortable and safe. Avoid social events that seem more like obligation.

**5) Scale Back.** Because grief robs us of our emotional and physical energy, consider

cutting back on such holiday tasks as sending cards, baking, decorating, or putting up a tree. Some of these activities may be painful to execute in light of the loss. One woman stated, "It broke my heart to write three names on the holiday cards instead of four, so I stopped sending cards." Let others know that you may not be able to do things that you have done in the past.

**6) Be Gentle With Yourself.** Accept that feelings of anguish are difficult to avoid during the holiday season. Do not expect too much of yourself, and recognize that you are doing the best you can.

**7) Have an Exit Strategy.** In many cases, it is difficult for mourners to be around a lot of people. If they do go to a social gathering, they may not want to stay very long. This problem can be dealt with by developing an exit strategy in advance. For example, a widower may tell the hostess that, "I may need to leave early because I get tired easily."

**8) Honor Your Loved One's Memory.** Some people have maintained that coming up with ways to do this can bring a positive focus to our grief. There are many ways to remember the person who died: share your favorite stories about him; light a candle in remembrance; make a donation in her name. You might also consider making a list of positive qualities that your loved

one brought into the world. Another idea is to spend time working on a goal or value that was important to the deceased. If your father was very involved in conservation efforts, for example, you might volunteer your time to a group working towards conservation, or consider making a donation to this cause.

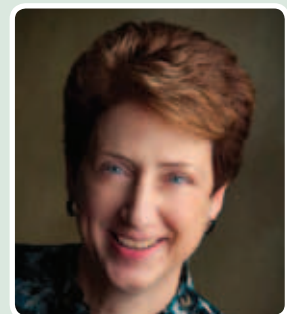
**9) Find People Who Will Provide Support.** When people are already experiencing the great stress of grief, the additional strains of the holiday season can create distress that is almost unbearable. Thus it is important to identify those relatives and friends whom you feel are good listeners, and share your feelings with them. It may also help to recruit support for specific tasks that are particularly difficult. For example, a bereaved father found it heart-wrenching to go Christmas shopping alone because it upset him to encounter presents his daughter would have enjoyed. He asked a neighbor to accompany him to the mall so that he could purchase presents for his surviving children. "John helped me to focus so that I could get the job done," he said.

**10) Consider Attending a Support Group.** At this time of year, it can be particularly useful to interact with people who have experienced a loss that is similar to yours. Such individuals are likely to understand exactly what you are going through. In many

cases, members will also be able to share strategies for dealing with the challenges of the holidays. As Barbara Rosof has indicated in her book, *The Worst Loss* (1994), those who have experienced a similar loss can also help us to understand that our feelings and fears are normal under the circumstances.

Because of the difficulties inherent at this time of year, it is easy for mourners to feel that they are making little headway in dealing with their loss. Noel and Blair have suggested that mourners may be moving forward even when they are unaware of it. According to these authors, "Wherever you are in the grief process...we know it's hard—and we also know it gets less hard. The next time a special occasion, anniversary, or holiday comes around you will feel a little more in control, a little less pained, the situation will be a little less difficult, and you will begin to celebrate life again—one day." \*

#### About the Author



Camille Wortman is an expert on grief and bereavement and has published more than 100 articles and book chapters on this topic. She conducted a large study on spousal loss that followed respondents for 7-10 years to identify the predictors of successful adjustment. Her main area of expertise concerns how people react to the sudden, traumatic death of a loved one. Dr. Wortman has been working to develop more effective mental health treatment approaches for this population.





# TAPS VOLUNTEER

## ★ Barb Christie ★

*Volunteers are a very important part of the TAPS family. We are grateful for the countless hours they donate and the part they play in supporting the TAPS mission. Volunteers, we salute you!*

Barb Christie knows the military. She began her 20 year career in the Air Force as an air traffic control officer. And while she spent the last four years of her career doing program and budget planning at the Pentagon, along the way she served as Executive Officer to a number of general officers, held the post of squadron section commander and filled the role of Base Director of Administration.

Barb retired as a Lieutenant Colonel and began her second career as a full time Marine Corps wife to Colonel Richard A. Christie and although she enjoyed her time in the Air Force, Barb says it was in this role that she found real meaning. "There's just something special about mentoring young wives— helping them find their footing, discover their talents, strengths and abilities, and grow into confident, self-assured women making amazing contributions to their communities," she said. "I loved every minute of it!"

Barb's world changed in 2003 when she lost Rick to a long battle with cancer. "It was not a traditional warrior's death, but his own private war, nonetheless—one well-fought, without complaint." Barb wanted to do something meaningful in Rick's memory. To honor his commitment to education, she established the Colonel Richard A. Christie Memorial Fund. When the New GI Bill was passed a few years ago, Barb decided that the bill's provisions more than filled the gap between benefits and college costs. She redirected her efforts. By then, the fund had helped five Marines through college.

"I don't remember when I first heard about TAPS," Barb said. "Like most survivors I didn't remember much of anything in the



## Thank You Barb!

fog of that fresh, raw grief." It was several years before Barb came across the TAPS materials as she was going through some old paperwork. She decided to see what the national seminar was all about. "I was blown away!" she recalled. "The TAPS staff had thought of everything!" It was then that Barb knew she wanted to be involved with TAPS.

Over the years, Barb has been a true TAPS champion. She became a Run and Remember Team member when she ran the Marine Corps Marathon's 10K a few

years ago and has reached out to other survivors to help them navigate their own grief journeys. Barb continues to be a source of inspiration to those who know her.

This past spring, Barb called to volunteer at the 17th Annual TAPS National Military Survivor Seminar. "I had already heard great things about Barb when she called me," said Natalie Milani, TAPS Director of Volunteer Services. "It didn't matter what the task was. She just wanted to help, and I could tell it was an offer from the heart." Natalie had just the job for her. Barb was asked to manage the TAPS Boutique during the seminar. She embraced her mission and, with the help of a number of wonderful volunteer assistants, managed to make this the most successful TAPS store in its 17 year history.

Barb was thrilled with her assignment. "Everybody's good at something," she said. "I just happen to be annoyingly organized, so this job was a good fit for me." She especially enjoyed the opportunity it gave her to meet fellow TAPS survivors as they stopped by to pick up remembrances of their time in Washington.

TAPS has already invited Barb back to run the store next Memorial Day Weekend. Stop by and say hello and when you do, let her know there's nothing annoying about her organizational skills. ★

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**TAPS welcomes new volunteers. Email us at [volunteer@taps.org](mailto:volunteer@taps.org) or visit us at [www.taps.org](http://www.taps.org). Click on Volunteer Central to explore volunteer jobs, sign up, and take our online training course.**





*You are cordially invited to attend*  
**T\*A\*P\*S** 18th Annual  
**NATIONAL**  
**Military Survivor Seminar &**  
**Good Grief Camp for Young Survivors**

Memorial Day Weekend

May 25 to 28, 2012  
Washington, DC

*Please join us in the nation's capital as we bring leading professionals in the grief and trauma field together with survivors from across the country to share a weekend of understanding, hope, courage, and love. An atmosphere of care and support awaits you in a safe and supportive environment. Meet other survivors and share the journey, as we honor our loved ones.*

*Remember the Love ☆ Celebrate the Life ☆ Share the Journey*



2012 National Military Survivor Seminar  
& Good Grief Camp for Young Survivors

# Please Join us

**Please join us for our 18th year of bringing survivors and caregivers together to “Remember the Love, Celebrate the Life, and Share the Journey.”**

TAPS extends a warm invitation for you to experience a weekend that will touch your heart and strengthen your spirit. Since our first national seminar in 1995, TAPS has welcomed all who are grieving the loss of a loved one who died while serving in the military, providing a full weekend of events for adults and children alike. At the seminar you can connect with others who have suffered a similar

loss, learn coping strategies, and hear how others find the strength to live again.

Workshops, support groups, activities, and events—all are structured to provide you with resources and information to help you begin to heal. You will receive support and training from nationally known grief experts. Equally important, you will receive the precious gift of spending time with hundreds of other

survivors, all walking a similar journey through grief. The four-day event in our nation's capital begins with registration and opening sessions on Friday and ends with attendance at Memorial Day services at Arlington National Cemetery.

For anyone faced with the traumatic loss of a loved one serving in the Armed Forces, TAPS offers comfort and healing, while making time for us to honor our loved ones during the Memorial Day weekend. In Washington, DC, we are surrounded by the monuments of our nation that honor the service and sacrifice of our loved ones and remind everyone that “Freedom is Not Free.”

Start planning now to join us for a powerful time of support, care, and hope. Whether it is your first visit or you are returning for our annual “family reunion,” a friendly smile, an understanding heart, and open arms await you. Join us as we Remember the Love, Celebrate the Life, and Share the Journey...together!

## ★ REGISTRATION ★

Your registration fee assists TAPS in covering the cost of selected meals, workshop materials, TAPS shirt and tote bag, and ground transportation to all special events during the four day conference. The registration fee for children attending the Good Grief Camp for Young Survivors assists with the costs of meals, transportation, two Good Grief Camp shirts, a TAPS backpack, and other camp materials.

Along with these tangible items, you will take home the priceless experiences of the weekend and join with others to form vital connections that last a lifetime. This single investment in yourself provides dividends long after you depart! The time we spend with each other and the memories we take home are important to us as we face each new day and take each new step in our own personal journey of grief.



## ★ ACTIVITIES ★

### WORKSHOPS FOR SURVIVORS & PROFESSIONALS:

Our carefully chosen topics include understanding complicated grief; coping with new family dynamics; special issues facing children, parents, siblings, and significant others; and recognizing post traumatic stress.

### SPECIAL EVENTS:

The seminar is held in Washington, DC, where we attend special ceremonies at the Marine Barracks, the Capitol, and Arlington National Cemetery. There is also plenty of free time for relaxing and visiting with your newfound friends.

### PEER MENTOR TRAINING

If you are 18 months beyond your own loss and ready to be there for others, we offer a full day of training on Thursday, May 24, 2012. You will learn more about grief and trauma, gain basic helping skills, and become part of our TAPS Peer Mentor Team. Register for the Peer Mentor Training as part of the general registration.

### SUPPORT GROUPS

We offer gentle, supportive discussions that allow you a chance to share with others who are facing similar experiences.

### GOOD GRIEF CAMP:

The TAPS Good Grief Camp for children and teens is America's first established program for children who have lost a parent, sibling or loved one in military service to America. Our youth have a chance to share, heal, and have fun in a loving, supportive environment. The Good Grief Camp allows your child to be surrounded by others of their own age who have experienced a similar loss. Childcare is offered for those under four years old.



Register Online at  
**WWW.TAPS.ORG**



## 2012 National Military Survivor Seminar & Good Grief Camp for Young Survivors

# Start Planning

**Start planning now to attend TAPS 18th Annual National Military Survivor Seminar. Registration opens on December 15, 2011. Go to [www.taps.org](http://www.taps.org) and click on National Survivor Seminar for more information and link to registration.**

### ★ LOGISTICS ★

- All events and workshops for the 2012 seminar take place in (or depart from) the comfortable and inviting Crystal Gateway Marriott on Jefferson Davis Highway in Arlington, Virginia.
- The Gateway offers complimentary airport shuttle service to Ronald Reagan National Airport. (Flights into Dulles or BWI require transportation by taxi or SuperShuttle with fares ranging from \$45 to \$65.)
- The Marriott Crystal Gateway boasts two restaurants in addition to a fitness center, indoor and outdoor pools, and access to the Crystal City Shops and eateries. Room amenities include TV, telephone, clock radio, hair dryer, iron and ironing board, and coffeemaker/tea service.
- For information about free airfare through Fisher House Foundation's Hero Miles program, please check the seminar information pages on the TAPS website.
- The seminar registration fee of \$195.00 includes selected meals, workshop materials, ground transportation to all special events, and a TAPS shirt and tote bag.
- The Good Grief Camp registration fee of \$75.00 per child assists in paying for selected meals, transportation for field trips and events, two Good Grief Camp shirts, a TAPS backpack, and other camp materials.
- A limited number of scholarships are available if you are facing financial challenges. Please call TAPS at 800-959-TAPS(8277) for more information.
- To make your hotel reservation, sign up as soon as possible. Visit the seminar webpage at [www.taps.org](http://www.taps.org) to get our special conference rate of \$119.00 per night.
- Events begin with registration on Friday morning, so plan to arrive before noon on Friday, May 25 for attendance at the opening session. Departures should be scheduled after 3 p.m. on Monday, May 28, to allow for our return from Arlington National Cemetery. Should your plans require that you return home to participate in local Memorial Day ceremonies, you may wish to schedule your departure Sunday evening, May 27, after our last session ends at 4 p.m. ★





# T★A★P★S Guide to Benefits & Finance

By Melissa LoFaso, Manager, TAPS Casework Assistance

Following a tragic loss, it is common to experience emotional numbness, temporary short-term memory loss, and difficulty understanding even basic things. A death in the military can further complicate grief. When this is coupled with having to make important decisions concerning money and benefits, the results can be overwhelming and confusing.

TAPS recognizes how difficult it can be to navigate through all the paperwork following a death in the military, so we have developed a Quick Series® Guide to Benefits and Finance for those who have experienced a military loss and are looking for guidance on how to balance their grief in the midst of a shift in their financial situation. The TAPS Benefits and Finance guide can help survivors take a deep breath and think through the financial options amid the chaos and confusion.

## WHAT IS IT?

A Quick Series® guide compiles essential information into a concise and interactive format. The easy-to-carry pocket guide is a spiral bound 4" X 6" laminated booklet that fits easily in a pocket or purse. The unique format allows readers to rapidly find pertinent information with the use of color-coded tabs.

## WHAT TOPICS ARE COVERED?

The TAPS Benefits and Finance guide examines available benefits following a military death, as well as addressing some of the concerns that are often not discussed, such as the feeling that you are expected to use the money to buy happiness or the idea that the money feels like a payoff for your loss. The guide also has a

section on investing to help you understand options for safely saving your money. Resources and important numbers are included that can come in handy when you are trying to sort through each type of benefit.

Tabbed sections of the TAPS Benefits and Finance guide include: Welcome, About TAPS, Emotions and Money, Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance, Death Gratuity, Benefits, Budgeting, Investing, Money Terms, and Resources.

## HOW DO I GET ONE?

TAPS is pleased to be able to supply the TAPS Benefits and Finance guide at no cost to survivors. To receive a copy, write to [info@taps.org](mailto:info@taps.org).

For those who are not military survivors, the guide can be purchased directly through QuickSeries® at [www.quickseries.com](http://www.quickseries.com). \*



# Winter Wallowing

By Darcie D. Sims, PhD, CHT, CT, GMS

Though winter seems to have more than its share of less than wondrous days, occasionally we have an especially down day.

Some days aren't too bad. They start out kind of slowly, like a reluctant first grader, but gather momentum as the hours flow by. Some days get a jump-start on me. By the time I hit the shower, I'm functioning

without feeling, so much like those early foggy days of grief. Those are the days when hot cocoa and a bowl of steaming oatmeal are the only way to fly. A hot breakfast will make most days seem almost civilized.

Winter days sometimes bring more than cold rain or gloom, and for those days, more than chocolate is needed. Even the sound

*Wallowing - a moment of reflected pain that speaks so truly of the depth of love.*

of the radio is too cheerful a beginning, and shoveling snow or dashing through rain puddles is not the ideal aerobic exercise. It only serves

to remind me of my lost youth.

Even before I open my eyes, I can often sense it just might be one of *those days*. They can mean only one thing to those of us who are struggling through the snowy landscape of The Valley of Grief. Those days are for *wallowing*.

I do not want to get up and be cheerful. I don't even want to get up; who cares about being cheerful? I do not want to eat right (give me chocolate and fat and calories on those days), and I definitely don't want to do anything that might make me feel better! Feeling better is not what I have in mind for the wallowing days of winter.

When a wallowing day hits, all I want to do is hide. I want to stay in bed drawing the covers over my head, snuggling down deep under the quilt, and pretending today isn't happening. And I don't want the radio, the television, the calendar, or anyone to tell me differently.

I don't want a cheery phone call.

I don't want a sympathetic hand on my shoulder or an understanding nod of the head either. I don't want anyone to even acknowledge me. I want to be left alone. On

the wallowing days, I just want silence and aloneness—the only source of comfort on a wallowing day.

Too many people will try to talk us out of our wallowing mood, but when I'm in one, that is exactly what I don't want. I want to wallow. I want to grieve. I want to cry and yell and worry and hate. I want to have a temper tantrum and throw things (although I rarely do either). I want to come to a complete stop on my journey and sit down on the curb and cry. Too many people want to love us out of our pain, and I don't even want them to touch me!

It is terribly hard to see someone you love in such distress, but sometimes I think we just might need a day or two of wallowing. It's not so bad, this wandering around in the gloom of the past if we can allow ourselves permission to do so. If we could just relax into the despair we might find it not as bad as we feared.

It is the fear that makes those days so much worse than they really are. We add guilt to our gloom and bring along the anger and impatience of grief to create an even worse day for ourselves. We "should" all over ourselves, almost as punishment for not having a good day. "I should be better by now," and "I shouldn't be feeling this way anymore." Who says so?

The rest of the world might say so, but as long as we are breathing, there will be more than a few of those days waiting for us, waiting to catch us off guard. Just as we are getting settled into a really good wallow, here comes someone to shake us out of our mood. Somebody calls, or we get a note in the mail: "Just thinking of you and wishing you a good day" is enough to make us sick! I want to wallow, please. Not often, but sometimes it is the only thing to do.

We can wallow with the scrapbooks or with the radio playing *The Song*. We can wallow with cookies or carrots (you've got



to be kidding!). We can wallow with our memories or with a movie. We can wallow alone or, as a special treat, with a friend. Wallowing with a friend is truly one of life's little perks.

Wallowing doesn't mean getting lost in the gloom or sinking into despair. It doesn't mean thinking of driving a little too fast or standing a little too close to the edge. It doesn't mean finding the pills or drowning in the bottle. In fact, all of those things keep us from wallowing, just as surely as does the sympathetic but poorly timed pat on the hand.

What we need on wallowing days is understanding, acknowledgment, tolerance, patience, and to be left alone. Sometimes the grief—the pain—is simply too much to bear in the company of others, and I run out of energy to make sure you are okay in the presence of my pain. Sometimes I just have to run headlong into the hurt, embracing it all, because it is all I think I have left of my love. Sometimes wallowing can be the door to sanity as I face squarely the intensity of my pain.

*Sometimes I just have to run headlong into the hurt, embracing it all, because it is all I think I have left of my love. Sometimes wallowing can be the door to sanity as I face squarely the intensity of my pain.*



Love sometimes hurts, and to deny that is to deny the joy of being loved. We can't have only half a picture. We need all sides and all dimensions in order to fully understand and embrace the life we are living. Knowing we are alive when our loved one is not is perhaps one of the most difficult steps to be taken in The Valley—to forgive ourselves for living when our loved ones did not live is truly worth a moment or two of wallowing. Since grief is the price we pay for love, and I have been billed for my affections, please allow me the space to repay the debt.

Wallowing is neither dangerous nor easy, but sometimes it is necessary to get in touch with the pain and the despair so we can breathe through it to find the light. Wallowing does not allow for shields or the wearing of a mask. When one wallows, one goes straight into the hurt, claiming it all. Sometimes I just have to indulge my sadness and embrace my pain so I can learn to live beyond it. That's when we can begin to let the joy of our loved one's life begin to take the place of the hurt and pain of their death.

As long as wallowing doesn't get to be a way of life, we're safe to indulge ourselves once in a while. As long as I don't find myself contemplating the height of the bridge or the depth of the valley, then I can

allow a day or two of wallowing, especially in the winter when the snow piles deep and the wind brings only a bitter tune.

Wallowing—a moment of reflected pain that speaks so truly of the depth of love. If we had not loved, we would not despair. Sometimes it brings tears, but always it brings memory, and memory isn't such a bad place to dwell in the winter time. \*

#### About the Author



Darcie Sims is a bereaved parent and child, long time friend and keynote speaker for TAPS, author, thanatologist, pastoral bereavement specialist, licensed psychotherapist, and president and co-founder of GRIEF, Inc. For more information visit: [www.griefinc.com](http://www.griefinc.com)



# The Importance of Hope

By Alan D. Wolfelt, PhD

*“Today... I open my heart’s hand to allow the touch of hope.” ~ Julia Cameron*

Someone you love has died. In your heart you have come to know your deepest pain. Your grief has brought challenges that seem beyond your own capacity to survive. Grief creates chaos, and your soul cries out. You naturally experience a sense of helplessness and, at times, you feel the depths of hopelessness. It all feels so incredibly overwhelming. And as you live in this painful place, you come to learn that you must surrender to your grief, sit in your wound, and make space for your lost self.

If your experience is in any way like my own and those of the thousands of mourners I have had the honor to walk with and learn from, you are feeling abandoned and alone right now. You may instinctively be questioning the meaning and purpose of life. You recognize that so many things in your daily life have changed—your plans, your dreams, your concerns, and your roles. You may discover yourself searching for a reason to go on living in the face of this loss and asking countless “How?” and “Why” questions.

How can this be happening?  
How am I going to make it through this?  
Why did this happen now, in this way?  
Why am I feeling so lost?

When we experience a loss, whether it is the death of someone loved, a divorce loss, the loss of a job, or a significant change in health, loss reminds us of how little control we really have over some things about life and living. Naturally, these kinds of losses (among many others) can leave us feeling incredibly powerless, seemingly helpless, and deeply hopeless at times.

When we lose someone we love, it changes us. The person who died was a part of you and part of your life. This death means you must mourn a loss not only outside yourself, but inside yourself as well. At times, overwhelming sadness and loneliness may be constant companions to you on this grief journey. You may feel that when this person died, part of you died with him or her. And now you are faced with finding some sense of meaning at a time when you may be feeling empty and alone.

Your loneliness and emptiness are often present, even in the midst of family and friends. When others try to help by saying, “I know just how you feel,” they usually do not. They cannot. They are not walking this walk for you. Your pain, your questions,

your doubts, your fears are unique. No one can know exactly how this feels for you.

While your grief is unique, some of the questions you may be asking are universal. The fears, doubts, and questions that come when we experience grief have been with us since the beginning of our awareness that loss is part of the cycle of life. Loss truly is an integral part of life. You are asking questions that others before you have raised. Questions that have been raised to God. Questions that have been asked about God. Like others who have been where you are, you may be feeling distant from your God, perhaps even questioning the existence of God. These kinds of questions have been preserved in time because they belong to and are asked by most everyone who experiences the pain of loss.

You may discover yourself searching for a reason to go on living in the face of this loss and asking countless “How?” and “Why” questions.





## Hope is the vital ingredient that helps us reignite our divine spark after loss breaks our hearts and touches our souls.

So, like your fellow travelers on this grief journey, you are faced with sitting in the wound of your grief. When you sit in the wound of your grief, you surrender to it in recognition that the only way to the other side of the pain and hopelessness is *through* the pain and hopelessness. You acknowledge that you are willing to do the work that mourning requires. Paradoxically, it is in befriending your wound that eventually you will restore your life and reinvest in living.

### LOSS OF YOUR DIVINE SPARK & THE ROLE OF HOPE IN YOUR HEALING

People in grief often come to see me on the sacred grounds of the Center for Loss and Life Transition. When they begin their grief journey, they often start by expressing their sense of hopelessness by saying, “I feel so hopeless,” or, “I am not sure I can go on living.” Like you, the losses that have touched their lives have naturally muted, if not extinguished, their divine spark. Their divine spark is that internal energy that gives meaning and purpose to life. Your divine spark or life force is the keeper of your mind, your body, and your soul.

I discovered some time ago that a central part of my helping role is to gently and quietly bring hope to those in grief. Hope that encourages them to discover a renewed divine spark and a desire to reenter life with meaning and purpose. Each and every one of us as humans has a divine spark. We are each the keeper of our own spark or life force. My personal life losses and my role as a caregiver to others have taught me that hope is the vital ingredient that helps us reignite our divine spark after loss breaks our hearts and touches our souls.

### MY PRAYER FOR YOU

May you continue to discover hope—an expectation of a good that is yet to be.



May you continue to find new ways to renew your divine spark and to believe that meaning, purpose, and love will come back into your life. No, you did not go in search of this loss. But it has come to you, and you have discovered the importance of sitting in your wound on the pathway to your healing. If you give up, the essence of who you are will die or be muted for the rest of your life. Hope can and will keep this from happening.

May you never give up and may you consciously choose life! May you turn your face to the radiance of joy every day. May you live in the continued awareness that you are being cradled in love by a caring presence that never deserts you. May you keep your heart open wide and receptive to what life brings you, both happy and sad. And may you walk a pathway to living your life fully and on purpose until you die.

Blessings to you as you befriend hope and choose to celebrate life. May your divine spark shine brightly as you share your gifts and your love with the universe. \*

### About the Author



Alan D. Wolfelt, PhD, 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, Department of Family Medicine. Dr. Wolfelt is known for his compassionate philosophy of “companionship” versus “treating” mourners. This article is excerpted from his book *The Mourner’s Book of Hope: 30 Days of Inspiration*, available at bookstores and [centerforloss.com](http://centerforloss.com).



# Books to Help Your Child

By Andrea Hug, MaPC, MPS, LCPC

When your child faces the death of a loved one, his or her primary support system is profoundly impacted. Your family must find new ways to communicate as you all move through the loss. Sharing your feelings and experiences is really important, and while a direct conversation is good, you may not get as much information as you'd like. You might get only brief answers without thoughtful consideration about how your child really feels.

A "back door" way of addressing a child's loss is to use story books to allow your child to enter his or her story. Your child can engage the characters in the book and share how a character is "just like me." Books can offer a comprehensive exposure for your child, giving a wider explanation of the need to tell the story, share feelings, learn about legacy, and capture memories.

Reading stories also expands a child's vocabulary and allows them to express themselves better. At the same time, you gain insight to what is going on underneath an exterior that doesn't always divulge the

depth of pain. Helping your child understand that he or she is not the only one who feels this way is a gift that has no measure. Each of us needs to know that we are not alone. Reading stories normalizes the chaos of your child's new situation.

And besides, it's fun.

With the holiday season upon us, you might consider the following books as gifts for young survivors who are between three and nine years old.

## **To start a discussion:**

*Children Also Grieve:  
Talking about Death and Healing*  
• BY LINDA GOLDMAN

Written to be read by adults to children, this book helps open a dialogue about death. The story section about a grandfather who dies provides an opening for the parent and child to examine feelings of fear, anger, and sadness and allows the child to explore what happened in his or her life. Many facets of grief can surface as children share their story while answering questions pertaining to their loss.

## **To recognize unconditional love:**

*How Do I Love You?*  
• BY MARION DANE BAUER

Conveying our love for another when we are grieving can be challenging. Yet in this story comparisons are made and metaphors used to express the depth of love the reader has for the person who hears the story. As you read this to your child, you will feel the love between you grow. To extend the story, play a game with the child to find new ways to express love.

*The Invisible String* • BY PATRICE KARST

This is an endearing story that reminds us that we are never really alone. When we face fear, grief, loneliness, or separation we only have to recall our invisible string joining us to those we love. With simple pictures and soothing colors, the author delivers the message that we are connected to everyone by the invisible string of love. This powerful story touches the heart and reminds all ages how our love binds us together.

*The Kissing Hand* • BY AUDREY PENN

This story gives children a practical reminder that they are loved and missed in every moment, even when they are apart from the one who loves them. Chester the Raccoon is going to school for the first time and wonders how he will manage without his mother. His mother gives him a gift to help him remember that he is always loved, even when they cannot be together. A story like this helps a grieving child remember that love is always with them in their heart.

## **To explore feelings:**

*The Rain Came Down*  
• BY DAVID SHANNON

When something unexpected happens that we don't like, it can affect everything else in life. In this book, a storm comes and triggers one bad thing after another from bad moods to messes that cause people to do things they wouldn't usually do. This story can help explain how our mood can be affected by unexpected events in our lives. Brainstorming with your child will help build their problem solving abilities. Use the question, "What is another response to this that would make it better?" as you read this story to your little one.



*My Many Colored Days* • BY DR. SEUSS

Dr. Seuss does a remarkable thing in this book: he connects children's feelings with colors so there is a visual experience that a child holds with each color. The pictures are fluid and nondescript just like feelings. This gives your child the opportunity to assign meaning to the colors and connect memory, experiences, and feelings to colors. It is a quick read but can easily be extended through your questions for your child.

**To explain life cycles:**

*Saying Goodbye to Daddy*  
• BY JUDITH VIGNA

When she is picked up early from school by her grandfather, Clara doesn't understand that something terrible has happened to her father. This story tells about her father's death and what happens afterward. Written by one of the leading writers for children's books, the story unfolds through the initial grieving and confusion that ensues. The pictures are drawn and colored in soft, gentle strokes giving comfort through key moments of the grief journey.

*I Miss You: A First Look at Death*  
• BY PAT THOMAS

This is a very good book about all that a child faces when a loved one dies. The life-cycle is gently explained and normalized; the process of grieving, funerals, and feelings are explored in an effort to guide a child through his or her own experience. Throughout the book, the author gives the child an opportunity to share about his or her loss by asking the question, "What about you?" Use this book to learn more about what a child is thinking or feeling in the days, weeks, and months after a loss.

**To appreciate memories:**

*Always and Forever* • BY ALAN DURANT

Mole, Hare, Otter, and Fox live together in the forest. When Fox dies, Hare, Otter and Mole grieve his death and cannot find anything to help them through their sadness. One day, Squirrel comes for a visit, and as he talks with them, they remember their special memories of Fox. They laugh again at the special times they shared. In the end, they realize that Fox will always and forever be with them in their hearts.

*Chester Raccoon and the Acorn Full of Memories* • BY AUDREY PENN

Many young children lose a loved one and need to be taught how to gather their memories to ease their heartache when it becomes especially painful. In this story, Chester's good friend Skiddil dies. When Chester learns of this, his mother encourages him to make memories so that he will never forget Skiddil. She leads Chester and his friends through the process of recalling special times so that these memories will offer comfort during the times of missing the ones he loved.

**To consider as you help your child:**

*Healing the Bereaved Child*  
• BY ALAN D. WOLFELT, PHD

This is a wonderful resource that offers an overview of a child's grief journey and the developmental issues that a child faces. It provides information for anyone who is in a position to spend time with a child affected by the death of a loved one. Interspersed within the book are key points that help caring adults companion a bereaved child and ultimately grow through grief. \*





# Running and Remembering

## All across the USA

Because we often focus on our major running events for the TAPS Run and Remember Team, TAPS survivors might not be aware of other events. We have a major presence in the Army Ten Miler and the Marine Corps Marathon, both held in October in Washington, DC. But our TAPS team is actually a year-long, run-anywhere, run-anytime effort. Recently we combined a retreat with a running event.

This summer dozens of TAPS survivors traveled to Alaska to attend the TAPS Widows and Widowed Significant Others retreat titled Alaskan Adventure, Part II.

The retreat gave them a safe place to connect and bond through peer-based emotional support while enjoying hiking, biking, and white water rafting.

The retreat also gave them an opportunity to be part of the TAPS Run and Remember team and raise funds for TAPS through the Big Wildlife Runs. Nearly seventy surviving spouses, fiancées, and significant others ran and walked five kilometers in memory of their loved ones. The funds they raised will be used to help TAPS provide programs for other surviving families of our fallen military heroes.

While in Alaska, the runners were privileged to meet former Olympian runner, author, and trainer Jeff Galloway. A world-class athlete, Jeff was a member of the 1972 Olympic team and broke the U.S. 10-mile record (47:49) in 1973. Since then Jeff has coached more than 300,000 runners and walkers. He is the author



of North America's best selling running book, *Galloway's Book on Running* and a monthly column for *Runner's World* magazine. His focus is on helping people to establish lifelong friendships, have fun, and stay injury free. To get started as a runner, check out Jeff's "Five Steps to Getting Started" on the facing page.

Jeff took questions from our Run and Remember team members in Alaska and imparted advice and running tips. He has also offered to continue answering questions from our Run and Remember team members by email. If you have any

questions for Jeff, add TAPS in the subject line when you send an email from his website, [www.jeffgalloway.com](http://www.jeffgalloway.com).

**Run in memory of a fallen hero while raising funds and awareness for TAPS in a city near you!**

Anyone can become a member of the TAPS Run and Remember Team. Sign up as a participant, volunteer, sponsor, or cheerleader. Any runner can enter any event in any place and work with Team Director Marie Campbell to support TAPS as a fundraising team member.

Pick an event in your area, register for that event at that event's website, and then set up your fundraising page at our Friends of TAPS website. TAPS team members proudly wear their TAPS signature singlets all across the USA.

Because our Run and Remember Team is coast to coast, we offer support in vari-

ous ways. After runners register, TAPS provides a website to post a photo of their fallen hero and keep track of their fundraising. We also provide support through emails and a monthly chat session. The chat session gives runners the opportunity to meet fellow teammates and receive training tips and advice.

Check our website for upcoming events. If you don't see an event listed near you, find one in your community! Participating with the TAPS Run and Remember Team is truly a rewarding experience. Join us in 2012. For more information, email us at [run@taps.org](mailto:run@taps.org). \*



# Five Steps to Getting Started

By Jeff Galloway, TAPS Supporter and former Olympic runner

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This holiday season is the perfect time to make a New Year's Resolution and commit to a healthier and more meaningful New Year. Join the Run and Remember Team, honor your loved one, and do something healthy for your body. Buy those running shoes and set yourself a goal! The TAPS Run and Remember Team fields a wide variety of runners. Many of our participants are novices. Some run, some walk, and some do both. As with any exercise program, consult your physician before beginning.

## 1) Start by Walking.

Everyone needs to feel comfortable and successful right from the start. Begin by walking for 30 minutes. Keep doing this until it feels easy.

## 2) Walk Briskly.

When normal walking becomes easy, walk briskly for 30 minutes and monitor your heart rate every 5-8 minutes. If it seems below the target zone, pick up the pace. Many people will never want or need to go beyond a brisk walk, provided they can maintain their target pulse rate.

## 3) Insert a Few "Jogs."

When you are comfortable walking briskly and want to step up the pace, simply insert 3-4 "jogs" of 100 yards or so (about the length of one football field or a city block) into your 30-minute walk. Warm up by walking slowly, build into a brisk walk, and

then do the short jogs when you feel ready.

## 4) Increase the Running as Desired.

Increase the running segments as you feel stronger, always avoiding discomfort. You may eventually fill in the 30 minutes with slow running or you may keep your walking breaks. You're using the running to push the heart rate above the threshold and the walking to keep from getting uncomfortable.

## 5) Step It Up.

Increase the time to 40 minutes three times a week. Work up to 60 minutes for one of these weekly sessions, which will increase the cardiovascular as well as mental benefits.

Don't underestimate the effect of rewards. Small regular rewards for specific accomplishments will often spark interest when motivation is down. Promise yourself something—a dinner out, a new pair of

shoes, a good book—for finishing each of the five steps above, for when you finally put in your first hour-long session, etc. If you feel "down," find yourself a positive experience or see someone who will bring you up. Look for something good in every run.

When you're in shape, you begin to think differently about yourself and your life. It's always hard to shake off the sedentary lifestyle, and the adjustment period—once you do—is difficult. But if you make it through this period, an addiction often occurs which makes the activity self-sustaining. So have faith! Better times are coming. Be patient and enjoy yourself. \*

### About the Author



Jeff Galloway served in the US Navy before he competed in the Munich Olympics in the 10,000 meters and is a strong supporter of TAPS. Over the past 40 years he has coached over 300,000 to their running or walking goals. His run/walk/run method has reduced injuries to virtually zero and opened the finishing of 5K, 10K, Marathon and Half to almost anyone. Sign up for his free newsletter at [www.JeffGalloway.com](http://www.JeffGalloway.com) where you'll find a lot of free information and books that make the training journey more enjoyable.





# T★A★P★S Board of Advisors

*They also serve...*

In order for an organization to grow and move forward, it needs the support of many individuals. Over the years, TAPS has enlisted the aid of professionals whose expertise is vital to our mission. These professionals are knowledgeable, compassionate, and caring. Together they form the TAPS Board of Advisors.

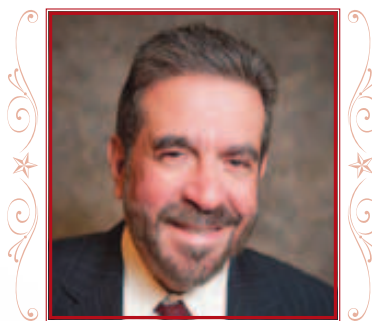
The TAPS Board of Advisors provides us with the support and guidance of some of America's leading experts in grief and trauma. They are the respected professionals who speak at the TAPS National Military Survivor Seminar, contribute articles to *TAPS Magazine*, lend their expertise when families have complicated situations needing special help, present webinars for our Professional Education Series, and partner with TAPS on research efforts.

Many of our Board of Advisors are past presidents of the Association of Death Education and Counseling (ADEC) and authors of important books on bereavement. Several also have their own programs that are doing great things to bring comfort around the world. We have medical experts, military specialists, researchers, children's grief experts, and those who work with survivors of suicide loss.

TAPS is very fortunate to have the support of this highly qualified and diverse Board of Advisors to help us meet the needs of caring for those who grieve the death of a loved one who died in military service.

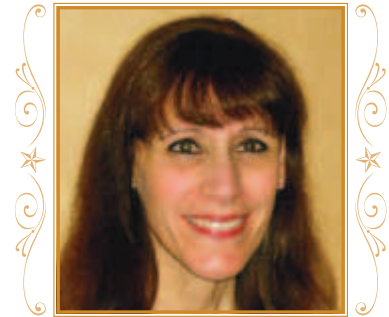


**TINA BARRETT, EdD, LCPC**, is the Co-founder and Executive Director of Tamarack Grief Resource Center in Missoula, Montana. Dedicated to providing top quality grief support programs outdoors, Dr. Barrett has specialized in grief camp development, implementation, and staff training since 1996. As a nationally respected specialist in outdoor-based grief support programs, she has led over 40 grief camps and retreats for kids, teens, and adults. Her doctoral research focused on participant perceptions of bereavement camp benefits.

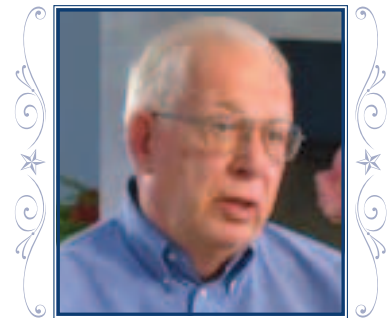


**ALFONSO R. BATRES, PhD, MSSW**, is the Chief Officer of Readjustment Counseling Service, Department of Veterans Affairs. He has direct oversight of the 300 Vet Centers, 50 Mobile Vet Centers, and over 1,900 Vet Center staff providing readjustment services to war zone veterans and their families across the United States. Dr. Batres drafted the policy change that allows unlimited bereavement counseling to the families of the fallen and has been

recognized as an international leader in pioneering services for combat veterans with combat-related trauma.



**JUDITH COHEN, MD**, a board-certified child psychiatrist, is the Medical Director, Center for Traumatic Stress in Children and Adolescents at Allegheny General Hospital in Pittsburgh. Since 1983 Dr. Cohen has been funded by more than a dozen federally-supported grants to conduct research related to the assessment and treatment of traumatized children. She is co-developer of Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and a consultant to Sesame Workshop's *Talk, Listen, Connect*.



**CHARLES A. CORR, PhD**, has been teaching and writing in the field of death, dying, and bereavement since 1975. He is a prolific contributor to this field, having been author, co-author, or co-editor of 30 books and more than 80 articles and chapters. Dr. Corr's professional work has been recognized by awards from ADEC (in 1988 and 1996), as well as by Children's Hospice International (1989)

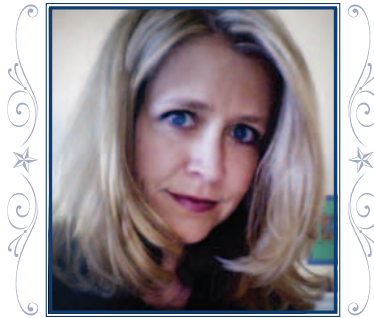
and through the establishment in 1995 of the Charles A. Corr Award for Lifetime Achievement.



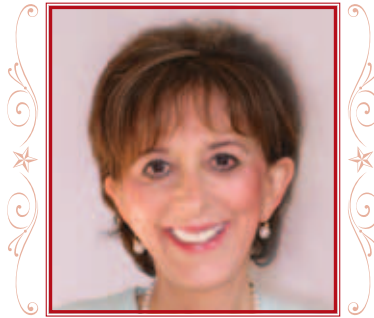
**STEPHEN J. COZZA, MD, COL, US ARMY (RET.)**, is Professor of Psychiatry at the Uniformed Services University where he serves as Associate Director, Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress. He is a graduate of West Point and received his medical degree from George Washington University. Dr. Cozza retired from the US Army in 2006 after 25 years of military service. His professional interests have been in the areas of clinical and community response to trauma and the impact of deployment and combat injury, illness, and death on military service members, their families, and their children.



**KENNETH DOKA, PhD, MDIV**, a past president of ADEC, is a Professor of Gerontology at the Graduate School of The College of New Rochelle and Senior Consultant to the Hospice Foundation of America. He is a prolific author publishing numerous books on grief, loss, and end-of-life care. In addition to books, he has published over 100 articles and book chapters and is the editor of both *Omega: The Journal of Death and Dying* and *Journeys: A Newsletter to Help in Bereavement*. Dr. Doka has received numerous awards for outstanding contributions in his field.



**RAYNA VAUGHT GODFREY, PhD**, is a licensed psychologist in private practice in Denver, Colorado. She works with adolescents and adults facing a range of issues and complexities in life, with a focus on grief and loss. Her research has focused on sibling loss, particularly in adulthood. Dr. Godfrey has presented workshops for TAPS for several years.



**LINDA GOLDMAN FT, MS, LCPC, NBCC**, works with children, teenagers, and grieving adults, having taught and counseled in the school system for more than twenty years. Long time TAPS contributor, speaker, advisor and volunteer, Linda was with the TAPS team in the Pentagon Family Assistance Center following the 9/11 attacks. She has authored a number of books and also teaches as adjunct faculty in the Graduate Program of Counseling at Johns Hopkins.

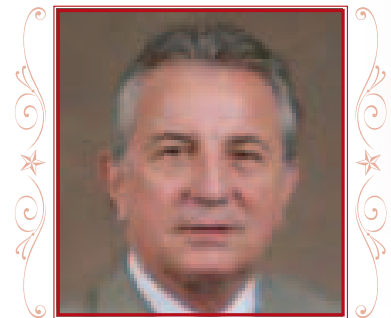


**ROBIN GOODMAN, PhD, ATR-BC**, is Director of A Caring Hand, consultant

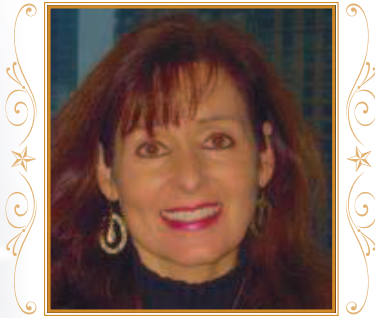
to Allegheny General Hospital Center for Traumatic Stress in Children and Adolescents, and maintains a private practice as a psychologist and art therapist with a specialty in trauma, illness, and grief. Dr. Goodman has lectured and taught throughout the country on treatment for trauma and bereavement in children.



**JAMES GORDON, MD**, is the founder and director of the Center for Mind-Body Medicine in Washington, DC. A graduate of Harvard Medical School, Dr. Gordon is a clinical professor in the departments of psychiatry and family medicine at the Georgetown University School of Medicine, and author of *Unstuck: Your Guide to the Seven Stage Journey out of Depression*.



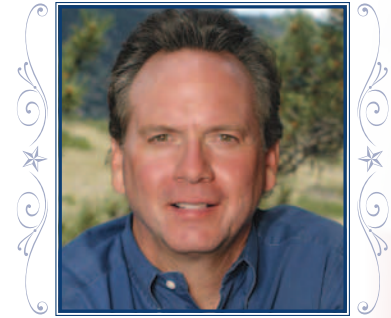
**CHARLES R. FIGLEY, PhD**, Distinguished Chair in Disaster Mental Health and founding member of the Disaster Resilience Leadership Academy, was recruited to Tulane University in New Orleans to help organize new doctoral and research programs reflecting the knowledge gained from Hurricane Katrina. This is the culmination of a career that has spanned more than 35 years as a trauma scholar whose work has led to many innovations in psychology, psychiatry, and social work including the development of the diagnosis of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.



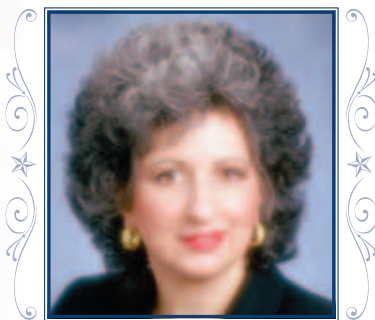
**HEIDI HORSLEY, PsyD, LMSW, MS**, is a bereaved sibling and a licensed psychologist and social worker. Dr. Heidi is the Co-Founder and Executive Director of the Open to Hope Foundation and an adjunct professor at Columbia University. She has a private practice in Manhattan, NY specializing in grief and loss. She is also author of *Open to Hope: Inspirational Stories of Healing After Loss*, *Teen Grief* and *Real Men Do Cry*.



**DAVID RUDD, PhD**, past president of the American Association of Suicidology, is Dean of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Utah, where he also serves as Scientific Director for the National Center for Veterans Studies. Dr. Rudd has served as a consultant to the US Air Force and Army, the Department of Defense, and the Beijing Suicide Prevention and Research Center.



**ALAN D. WOLFELT, PhD**, is a noted author, educator, and grief counselor. He is the Founder and 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, Department of Family Medicine. Dr. Wolfelt is known for his compassionate philosophy of “companioning” versus “treating” mourners.



**THERESE A. RANDO, PhD, BCETS, BCBT**, is Clinical Director of the Institute for the Study and Treatment of Loss in Warwick, Rhode Island. She is also part of a team researching a 20-week treatment for survivors of 911 World Trade Center victims. Since 1970, she has consulted, conducted research, provided therapy, written, and lectured internationally. With more than 70 written works pertaining to thanatology, she has also served as co-editor of the Trauma and Loss Book Series for Brunner-Routledge Publishers.



**DARCIE D. SIMS, PhD, GMS, CGC**, is a bereaved parent and child, nationally certified thanatologist, certified pastoral bereavement specialist, and licensed psychotherapist and hypnotherapist. She is president and cofounder of Grief, Inc.; Director of the American Grief Academy in Seattle, Washington; and Director of Training and Certification for TAPS. A prolific writer, Dr. Sims has authored seven books as well as numerous chapters in professional textbooks and articles for *TAPS Magazine*.



**PAUL TSCHUDI, EdS, MA, LPC**, has more than 25 years experience working with people experiencing life-challenging illness, grief, loss, and life transitions. His interest in end-of-life issues was born out of the experience of serving as a medic in Vietnam. Currently, Paul is a professor in the GWU School of Education and Human Development in addition to maintaining a private practice.



Each of our advisors is well-known for the expertise and dedication he or she brings to helping people cope with grief. We are grateful to them all for being on our team, and we look forward to seeing them at our events and on the pages of TAPS Magazine. ★





# National Military Family Bereavement Study

## ★ Partnership with TAPS

Although the study of bereavement in the civilian population is extensive, to date there has been a lack of research on the impact of the death of a family member serving in the military. While similarities between civilian and military bereavement exist, distinctive characteristics of a military death can affect the bereavement process and experience of loss. The need to study individual and family bereavement when a service member dies is critical to understanding the grief experience of our unique survivor population.

TAPS, along with National Military Families Association, Military Child Education Coalition, and Army Survivor Outreach Services, has been invited to collaborate on a landmark, national research study as a principal community partner. The “National Military Family Bereavement Study,” funded by the Congressional Directed Medical Research Program, is the first national research project to study the impact of a service member’s death on surviving family members.

The research is being conducted by Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS) Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress (CSTS) and is a five-year, multi-level project. Last year TAPS partnered with CSTS and Sesame Workshop for a national project titled “When Families Grieve.” We look forward to this new opportunity to partner on a study that is in alignment with the mission of TAPS.

The research team will be led by Dr. Stephen J. Cozza, Associate Director of CSTS. TAPS Founder and President Bonnie Carroll has been asked to serve on the advisory board. Dr. Jill Harrington-LaMorie, former director of Professional Education at TAPS, will lead the team’s field research as the Senior Field Researcher.



The study will explore the impact of a service member death on both the family of origin (parents/step/adoptive; siblings/step/adoptive) and families of procreation (spouses/ex-spouses; children/step/adoptive). In addition, given the unique nature of military family life, the study will investigate community support and services for the bereaved as well as how the available resources impact resilience or vulnerability in surviving families. Finally, this study will build on the growing evidence regarding the intersection of grief and trauma as it affects a military survivor’s bereavement process.

Throughout the five-year study period, TAPS will be consulting with the research team in order to share information with TAPS survivors and bring subject matter expertise and survivor sensitivity to the study. We are proud to be a major supporter and community partner of this study. ★

### WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY?

Those who are eligible to participate include parents, step-parents, adoptive and custodial parents, in loco parentis, siblings, step-siblings, spouses, ex-spouses, children, and step-children (including adult children over the age of 18) whose service member has died (whether by accident, combat, illness, homicide, or suicide) in active duty status in the United States military (Active, Guard, and Reserve components of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines) on or after September 11, 2001.

For more information, visit [www.militarysurvivorstudy.org](http://www.militarysurvivorstudy.org).





# Holiday Shopping from Home

## TAPS Online Store

Whether it's a Baghdad Bracelet or coffee and a good book to curl up with, the TAPS Online Store offers a variety of items suitable for your gift-giving needs this holiday season. Each of the items in the store provides additional funds for TAPS programs. Start your shopping at [www.taps.org](http://www.taps.org) and click on the Online Store link. Here are a few of our available items:

### Baghdad Bracelets

When TAPS Founder Bonnie Carroll served in Baghdad, Iraq, she was moved by the love and care of the Iraqi women and their overwhelming appreciation for the sacrifice of the Americans serving there. It was common for the women to give away jewelry to their friends, and they often wore many beautiful beaded bracelets for just this opportunity. TAPS found a source in the Middle East for these bracelets, which make very special gifts.

### God Bless America Download

Boston's premier rock band, Sunchunk, is donating a portion of the proceeds to TAPS from the digital download of their very patriotic and special rendition of "God Bless America". Coming from different musical backgrounds, Sunchunk's positive energy, fan interaction, and unique sound has made them a favorite for live shows and quality entertainment.

### Klinger: A Story of Honor & Hope

Awarded gold medals by Military Writers' Society of America, Moonbeam Children's Books, and Young Voices Foundation, this beautifully illustrated, full color, hardback children's book tells the story of a young horse whose life is disrupted when he must leave his parents and start a new life. Based on a real horse that serves in the Caisson Platoon in Arlington National Cemetery, this book was written in honor of all our beloved fallen heroes.

### Restrepo DVD

Winner of the 2010 Sundance Film Festival Grand Jury Prize for documentary, *Restrepo* chronicles the deployment of a platoon of US soldiers in Afghanistan's Korengal Valley, one of the most dangerous postings. The movie focuses on 15 soldiers based at Outpost Restrepo. For each DVD purchased, \$2 will be donated to TAPS.

### Surviving the Folded Flag

Award winning author and Gold Star mom Deborah Tainsh gathered essays from more than twenty-five parents whose child died in military service. These stories show how today's military families are surviving the folded flag and give a glimpse into the lives of fallen service members and their families. Also includes advice for other Gold Star families, their friends, and family members.

### TAPS Organic Special Blend Coffee

Green Beans Coffee developed this special premium organic blend for TAPS and will contribute a portion of your purchase price to help TAPS in their mission to care for the loved ones of our brave military men and women who have given the ultimate sacrifice in service to our country.

### The Buckle

Sixteen-year-old Tyler Roland learns that his father, an Army NCO, has been killed in Afghanistan. Having no idea what his future will hold he starts his life over at a new school where he is introduced to vocational agriculture. Influenced by memberships in both the FFA and 4-H, Tyler starts on his journey to earn a buckle and becomes a man along the way. \*





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*Thank you to the Friends of TAPS whose personal gifts, memorial tributes, grants, event sponsorships, and planned gifts continue to uplift, comfort, and care for the loved ones of those who served and died.*



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