



# TAPS

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors

1777 F Street, NW, Suite 600, Washington, DC 20006  
800-959-TAPS ★ 202-588-TAPS (8277) ★ [www.taps.org](http://www.taps.org)

## TAPS Fact Sheet & Statistics on Families of the Fallen Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)

### TAPS: Our Mission & What We Do

Our mission is to provide ongoing peer-based emotional support to anyone who is grieving the death of a loved one who served in the Armed Forces. We bring survivors together with other survivors for comfort, healing, and hope through our grief seminars for adults and Good Grief Camps for children. Our services are structured around four core areas:

- peer-based emotional support
- grief and trauma resources
- case work assistance
- 24/7 resource and information helpline

TAPS is committed to providing compassionate care to anyone who is grieving the death of someone serving in the military, regardless of circumstance of death, relationship to the deceased, or geography. Services are provided free-of-charge.

TAPS has worked with more than 35,000 surviving family members, casualty assistance officers, chaplains, and others supporting bereaved military families. TAPS has helped more than 22,000 people since 9/11.

### How many U.S. military service members die? Don't soldiers only die in wartime?

Many people think that military service members only die in wartime. But there has always been loss in the military – through plane crashes, training accidents, and engagement with hostile forces. For more statistics related to death in the military, see the [American War and Military Operations Casualties: Lists and Statistics \(May 14, 2008\)](#) prepared by the Congressional Research Service. Additional information issued by the military lists casualties by service branch and type of loss: <http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/personnel/CASUALTY/castop.htm>

### How many U.S. military personnel have died in Afghanistan and Iraq since the War on Terror began in 2001? Get current OIF/OEF/OND casualty statistics

<http://www.defense.gov/news/casualty.pdf>

These figures are current as of May 1, 2012

Casualties in Operation Iraqi Freedom (03/19/2003-08/31/2010)	4,422
Casualties in Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan)	1,948
Casualties in Operation New Dawn (Iraq 09/01/2010-present)	66
Total Casualties	6,436

***Caring for the families of America's fallen heroes since 1994.***



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**How many families are impacted by military losses in Iraq and Afghanistan?** Bereavement experts tell us that for each active duty military loss, there are 10 people, on average, significantly impacted by the death. They are mothers and fathers, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, fiancés, grandparents, cousins, and other family friends and relatives.

Family members left behind who are significantly impacted:	64,360 people
Number of adults losing a spouse (estimate)	3,540 widows/widowers
Number of children losing a parent (estimate)	4,634 children
Number of parents impacted (estimate)	12,872 losing a child
Number of grandparents losing a grandchild (estimate)	19,308 losing a grandchild
Number of people losing a brother or sister (estimate)	5,277 losing brother or sister

Estimates are based on research done by Scripps-Howard News Service in 2005, US Census Bureau data and the TAPS database of surviving family members.

**How much interaction does TAPS have with families of the fallen?** TAPS has significant interaction with families of our fallen service members.

- In 2010, TAPS received an average of 38 calls per day from military survivors and placed 162 calls per day to survivors. On average, TAPS staff responded to 14 calls from survivors every weekend in 2010.
- In 2010, TAPS intaked 2,864 newly bereaved military survivors. That's more than 7 new people, on average, per day who are grieving a military loss. On average, TAPS intakes 8-10 people per week grieving the death by suicide of a loved one who served in the military (or 1-2 people per day).
- In 2010, TAPS received 10,649 calls to our 24/7 resource and information helpline.
- In 2010, TAPS placed 63,452 calls to survivors to let them know they are not alone, follow up on a case inquiry, or discuss needed services and support.
- On average, in a given year, TAPS has 32 contacts with each survivor, through the magazine, invitations to events, anniversary cards, etc.
- Average time on the phone talking with a new survivor who has called TAPS for the very first time seeking help and support: 96 minutes.
- Since 1994, our 24/7 resource and information helpline has received approximately 184,260 calls from survivors.

**Who works for TAPS? Is everyone on staff a survivor of a fallen service member?**

One hundred percent of our 32 professional staff members are survivors of a fallen military hero or military family members. Ninety-eight percent of our total workforce are volunteers, including active military service members, who have donated 48,000 hours of their time in the last year to be trained in how to companion a child who is grieving and volunteer their time to support the children left behind by our fallen.

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**How is TAPS funded?** TAPS is funded by the generosity of the American public, which provides donations to support the organization's work with grieving families. While we enjoy a close relationship with the military service branches, TAPS receives no financial support from the government or the military.

**How long does it take surviving family members to “move on” or “get over it”?**

Survivors sometimes find the terms “moving on” or “getting over it” as offensive. The expressions “carrying on,” “coping day by day,” “moving through grief,” or “moving forward” are often more comfortable to survivors. Experts tell us that it takes on average, 5-7 years for people who have experienced the traumatic death of a close loved one, to reach their “new normal.” Long-term emotional support, through the years, is very important for people who have experienced a traumatic death.

**When was TAPS founded and what is the basis for your approach to peer-based emotional support?** TAPS was founded in the wake of a military tragedy, after eight soldiers were killed in a C-12 plane crash in Alaska in November 1992. Among the surviving family members from that crash was Bonnie Carroll, who lost her husband, Brigadier General Tom Carroll. The families found comfort in offering support and sharing experiences. Carroll founded TAPS in 1994, after conducting two years of research examining the resources available to support bereaved military families and benchmarking best practices at other peer-based support organizations.

TAPS is structured to help those grieving the death of someone who served in the Armed Forces and was designed to not replicate services offered by other organizations, the military, or the government. The heart of our organization's work is peer-based emotional support. We pair up survivors with other survivors in similar circumstances. Among psychologists and counselors, there is growing evidence in support of the value of “companionship” as a strategy to help those who are bereaved and coping with traumatic grief.

**How can people contact TAPS for more information or to support the organization?** Call us at

202.588.TAPS (8277) or go to [www.taps.org](http://www.taps.org)

TAPS on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/TAPS4America](https://www.facebook.com/TAPS4America)

TAPS on Twitter: [www.twitter.com/TAPS4America](https://www.twitter.com/TAPS4America)

TAPS on YouTube: [www.youtube.com/SupportTAPS](https://www.youtube.com/SupportTAPS)

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