

## Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)

*Submitted by Jane McKnight, Southern Division Chairman*

TAPS (Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors) is a national nonprofit VSO that is not part of, or endorsed by, the Department of Defense; it provides compassionate care and comprehensive resources to those grieving a death in the military or veteran community since 1994.

TAPS provides a variety of programs nationally and worldwide to survivors, through regional survivor seminars, retreats, and expeditions that offer counseling in your community and assist in available benefits and resources.

In 2025, TAPS expanded its programs to support more families and welcomed over 9500 new survivors, reached out to military spouses and their families who were experiencing the great loss of their loved ones (4187 active-duty deaths). Notable stats: 2025 TAPS survivors by duty status: 43% Active Duty, 30% Veteran, 12% other, 10% Retired, 3% National Guard, and 2% Reserves.

I personally reached out to TAPS and asked for a brochure to circulate to my local funeral homes. I went to five funeral homes and asked if they had ever heard of TAPS; two had, but really never knew exactly what they did. I gave all of them the brochure to print and place in the family folders upon the death of a veteran (active duty receives information from Casualty Assistance on the military installation). Please consider doing this in your community, either big or small; this program could make a difference in a grieving loved one's pathway to closure.

If you or a loved one in the military or veteran community is suffering a loss, TAPS is available 24/7 at 800-959-TAPS (8277).

More resources are available at <http://www.TAPS.org>

## June Dates to Remember

- **June 14<sup>th</sup> Flag Day**
- **June 14<sup>th</sup> Army Birthday**
- **June 23<sup>rd</sup> Coast Guard Auxiliary Birthday**
- **June 27<sup>th</sup> PTSD Awareness Day**

## THANK YOU

Give yourself a pat on the back for a year of service spent raising up the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary through the National Security Program. In reading the Year-End Reports, there are many wonderful things happening throughout the country.

As I am not allowed the entire National Convention agenda, only a small portion of what happened this year will be reported at the convention. If your department does not get recognized, remember that it was simply that I did not have enough time to share everything. YOU have all done some amazing things and I know you will continue to support the national security program.

As I write this message there are only a couple of departments that have not sent in their Year-End Report. I am hopeful that it will be completed soon. Remember that the reports are due on May 15<sup>th</sup> of each year. That means that anything that happens in May should be reported the following year. Each department should have a deadline for reports to be sent to the department chairs. Units should not be reporting things that are happening in May when the reports are requested.

So, you have sent in your report – DONE??? Absolutely not. Our servicemembers are on 24/7 and we should not drop the ball until our replacement is ready to continue the program.

Keep track of what has happened after the due date of the reports. Share this information with the next chair for national security and they will have a head start on their report for next year. We always should want the next chair to improve on what we started. This mindset will allow the American Legion Auxiliary to continue the motto "Service not Self." Harry Truman said, "It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit."

In closing, give yourself credit for what you have accomplished this year and remember that you have made a difference in the lives of our service members and their families. Thank you for your dedication to the National Security Program.

Norma Tramm, National Chair of the National Security Committee