



PRESS RELEASE

Sergeant First Class Nicole McMinamin Named TAPS Military Mentor of the Year

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ARLINGTON, Va. — The **Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)**, will name SFC Nicole McMinamin, U.S. Army, the **Military Mentor of the Year** at the **TAPS Honor Guard Gala** on Wednesday, March 20, 2024. Presented annually since 2016, the TAPS Military Mentor of the Year Award recognizes outstanding support of children and teens grieving the death of a loved one who served in the U.S. military. She was chosen from more than 700 Military Mentors who dedicated weekends and holidays to attend TAPS events throughout the year.

McMinamin joined TAPS as a Military Mentor in 2015 after losing four friends to suicide. Her dedication to the TAPS Family is a bright spot in the lives of young children who are processing not only the loss of a loved one, but often the loss of connection to the military community. McMinamin is a positive influence and a lasting connection to the military these surviving children's loved ones proudly served.

“Our extraordinary Military Mentors represent a surviving child's link to their military-connected past and a future that is full of hope,” said TAPS President and Founder Bonnie Carroll. “The comfort Nicole brings to the surviving children she has mentored over the years is a gift they will carry with them for the rest of their lives.”

Ensuring the bond between the military and surviving families remains strong and fallen heroes are always honored and remembered is a passion for McMinamin, not only in service to TAPS, but through her military service. She has served 18 years in the U.S. Army, including deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. She is currently stationed at the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) on Joint Base Harbor-Hickam in Hawaii. There, she oversees worldwide search and recovery missions for the missing in action. In this role, she has carried out missions in Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Vanuatu, and South Korea.

Prior to her current station at DPAA, McMinamin served at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware, where she assisted with the honorable mission of bringing heroes home and caring for their families left to mourn their loss.

“It was tragedy that brought me to TAPS, but through supporting surviving families and honoring the service members no longer with us, I have grown as an individual and as a soldier. I am truly grateful for my family and TAPS and the surviving children who have impacted my life every bit as much as I have impacted theirs,” McMinamin shared.

McMinamin continues to mentor and serve as a group leader at TAPS Good Grief Camps, including the National Military Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp, which is held each year in Arlington, Virginia, over Memorial Day weekend, and regional seminars occurring throughout the year. She also joins TAPS to support surviving children and teens at TAPS Family Camps, sporting events, and through ongoing communication with her mentees and their families.

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TAPS has trained more than 10,000 Military Mentors since 1994. Each mentor must successfully complete extensive background checks and online and in-person training before being connected with a surviving child. TAPS mentors log nearly 18,000 hours each year supporting TAPS programs.

Additional TAPS Military Mentor information is available at: taps.org/militarymentor, and TAPS Military Mentor of the Year Award information can be found at: taps.org/gala/militarymentoraward.

TAPS HONOR GUARD GALA

Funds raised at the annual **Honor Guard Gala** allow TAPS to provide critical, 24/7 support to the families of fallen U.S. military personnel and veterans at no cost to surviving family members. The Title Sponsor of this year's gala is **USAA**. Presenting Sponsors include: **Austability, BAE Systems, Battelle, Oshkosh Defense, Pratt & Whitney, Prudential**, and **Telos**. Patriot Sponsors include: **Health Net Federal Services, Krivo Family Foundation**, and **TriWest Healthcare Alliance**.

The gala begins with a reception at 5:30 p.m., followed by a dinner and program at 7:00 p.m. Sponsorship information is available at taps.org/gala.

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ABOUT TAPS

TAPS is the leading national organization providing compassionate care and survivor support services for the families of America's fallen military heroes. Since 1994, TAPS has offered support to all those grieving the death of a military loved one through peer-based emotional support, connections with grief and trauma resources, grief seminars and retreats for adults, Good Grief Camps for children, casework assistance, connections to community-based care, online and in-person support groups, and the 24/7 National Military Survivor Helpline, all at no cost to surviving families. For more information, please visit TAPS.org or call 202-588-TAPS (8277).