



Survivor Outreach Services



Edited by Janine Smith & Hallan "Hal" P. Batts, SOS Coordinators

December
2010

Transitions & Farewells



Yvonne Leible, previous SOS Coordinator, Italy

I just wanted to say goodbye to the SOS community in Italy. I am leaving as the SOS Coordinator because my husband has a new assignment and we are PCSing to Germany. Though this is a wonderful new experience I am very sad to leave the wonderful people that have blessed my life in ways I never expected. They have shown me what true strength, courage and love looks like.

Thank You for letting me into your lives and sharing your stories and challenges. My hope is to still be an active volunteer with the SOS community in Germany. I hope to meet many new people and hopefully cross paths with old friends. Until We See Each Other Again!

Hallan "Hal" P. Batts, new SOS Coordinator, Italy

My name is Hallan P. Batts, but everyone calls me "Hal". I am a proud mother and a military spouse. I am excited to be given an opportunity to serve as the new Survivor Outreach Services Coordinator in Vicenza area, the home of the modularized and expanded 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team and a deployable two star headquarters. I volunteered in several programs of Army Community Service, Ft. Jackson, South Carolina for over 3 years. I participated in Tree Dedication Ceremony in honoring our Fallen Heroes in conjunction with Wall of Remembrance in Ft. Jackson. I can help guide Survivors in accessing services that are of importance to the Survivors and assist in revolving issues that may arise. I am available to assist you and your Family with any support that you may need. My office is located at Army Community Service, Davis Hall Building at Caserma Ederle. Feel free to contact me I am here to serve our dedicated Army Families. Thank you.

Respectfully,
Hallan "Hal" P. Batts, LBSW
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Consulate & Citizenship News



If your Soldier died before October 31, 2008 you have until October, 2011 to apply for US Citizenship. Filing the paperwork for this must be done in person at your local US-CIS office.



More information is available at:
www.uscis.gov



WEBSITES OF INTEREST

- ◆ [TAPS WEBSITE](#)
- ◆ [ARMY LONG TERM FAMILY CASE MGMT](#)
- ◆ [VETERANS ADMIN SITE](#)
- ◆ [SNOWBALL EXPRESS](#)
- ◆ [MILITARY CHILDRENS EDUCATION COALITION](#)
- ◆ [AMERICAN WIDOW PROJECT](#)

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SOS VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

By Janine Smith, Marianne Wieber & Judy Drews



Marianne Wieber volunteers with the SOS program and other programs at ACS Stuttgart. Marianne was born and raised in Ulm ; she met her husband in Neu Ulm, when she worked for the Army. She married Mike in 1976 where they continued to live in Germany. In 1979 they moved to the states together, after being apart for sometime in between moves and transitions. In 1985 she moved back to Germany after being in the United States (she moved 6 times in 2 ½ years!). Marianne has a son, who also lives in Germany, but she sees him so seldom: this is a reason for her to volunteer, so she can meet people and not feel so alone at home.

USAG Stuttgart



Judy Drews is the Outreach Coordinator at Stuttgart and also the Survivor Outreach Services Liaison. Judy enjoys having Marianne here and working with the program. She sees a side of Marianne that she does not see herself; she sees that Marianne is a bit shy and now she has come out of her shell a bit. Marianne argues that this is her personality. Judy has seen a big difference in Marianne and sees that she is taking an active role and a lead on some of the Make a Difference Day when it comes to survivors. There are a variety of things that Marianne has helped with in ACS, not only with the SOS program but with other programs. Judy says that Marianne knows everyone in the office and she has even greeted some people as they come to the building. All in all, the match here with Marianne and Judy and the ACS is a fantastic combination. I had the pleasure to come to Stuttgart to meet with Marianne again, it had been a couple of months since she and I had seen each other so it was great to take a minute to catch up and hear the great things that Marianne has accomplished.

Judy Drews: How long have you been volunteering?

Marianne Wieber: Since April 14, 2010. I started after we had our SOS get together but the first time I came in to ACS was January and I was interested in volunteering as a proof reader for letters which are translated from English to German, so I could proof-read the German.

Judy Drews: What kind of volunteer things have you done so far?

Marianne Wieber: I have helped with writing the letter for Make a Difference Day for Survivors of retirees. I also attend the Make a Difference Day meetings to listen. I helped Judy with a list for the CARE Fair with the committees. I have helped other people like Danielle putting information into the computer. Judy added that Marianne is a quick learner and that she has picked up on some of the computer programs like excel.

Judy Drews: What do you like about volunteering?

Marianne Wieber: I like to get out of the house and be able to speak English. I have a book where I write the new words down and look them up in the dictionary, this way my English gets better.

Judy Drews: Marianne commented on how fast I speak English, she shared a story with me about a 3 day Bus tour to Bad Toelz where she sat by a woman who spoke English; and she told Marianne that she had never met a German woman before who spoke English so fast.

Judy Drews: What types of activities do you think survivors would enjoy doing?

Marianne Wieber: I would like to do another lunch get together. The first one was very nice. The classes like computers and windows and office, I would like to learn the new Microsoft programs. Maybe have a coffee or something, I think it would be nice to get together and talk about what I went through 23 years ago. Maybe this would be good for the forum.

If you know of someone in your community who is a volunteer or would just like to tell their story, please contact us. We are more than happy to conduct interviews or help you tell your story!

Gifting Organizations

There are many wonderful organizations that are available to provide support and material gifts to the Families of the Fallen from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. We will spotlight these organizations in each SOS newsletter.

Children of Fallen Soldiers Relief Fun: www.cfsrf.org They provide college grants to children of the Fallen.

Freedom Quilts: www.freedomquilts.net Provides a quilt to honor the memory of a loved one.

Fallen Patriot Fund www.fallenpatriotfund.org Established for Families that have lost a loved one in Iraqi Freedom to provide financial assistance.

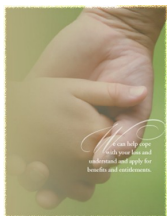
Beaumont Foundation of America www.bmtfoundation.com Awards laptop computers to Families of the Fallen from conflicts in Iraqi and Afghanistan.

Angels for Hope www.angelsforhope.org/fallensoldier.html Sends crocheted angels and butterflies in memory of a Fallen Soldiers.

Soldiers Angels www.soldiersangels.org Provides support and resources to wounded soldiers and families as well as those Families of the Fallen.

Snowball Express: www.snowballexpress.org December event date December 8th-13th (see page 6 for more info!)

The U.S. Army does not endorse these organizations. The U.S. Army does not guarantee the goods or services provided by these organizations and does not promise that these organizations are still provide the relevant goods and services. Issues with these organizations must be addressed through these organizations and not the Army.



SOS Annual Conference

Janine Smith, SOS Coordinator, Germany

In August 2010 the Survivor Outreach Services Annual Conference took place in Arlington, Virginia. I was able to attend and bring back some wonderful information and resources. The weeklong conference provided an opportunity to meet and greet over 320 other SOS Coordinators worldwide, including support organizations, gifting organizations and other non governmental agencies who exist to support our Survivors. Some of the comments from the SOS Europe Liaisons who attended are below:

ACS SOS Mannheim "It provided the SOS Coordinators the opportunity to come together and network, learn about best practices and meet other survivors who shared their stories; which validated the importance of the SOS program. Having the full support of the senior leadership and hearing from LTG Lynch his vision and expectations of the program brought it all together for those who attended."

ACS SOS Schinnen "I felt it was important for Europe-based SOS staff to attend this conference to ensure that our Survivors' unique needs and challenges were addressed. It is great to be able to help a program begin to flourish and to be a part of writing regulations and policies. "



Fort Hood's SOS Center's Hall of Remembrance was used as a best practice.

Tips for Handling The Holidays

1. DECIDE WHAT YOU CAN HANDLE COMFORTABLY AND LET FAMILY AND FRIENDS KNOW. Can I handle the responsibility of the family dinner, etc. or shall I ask someone else to do it? Do I want to talk about my loved one or not? Shall I stay here for the holidays or go to a completely different environment?
2. MAKE SOME CHANGES IF THEY FEEL COMFORTABLE FOR YOU. Open presents Christmas Eve instead of Christmas morning. Vary the timing of Chanukah gift giving. Have dinner at a different time or place. Let the children take over decorating the house, the tree, baking and food preparation, etc.
3. RE-EXAMINE YOUR PRIORITIES: GREETING CARDS, HOLIDAY BAKING, DECORATING, PUTTING UP A TREE, FAMILY DINNER, ETC. Do I really enjoy doing this? Is this a task that can be shared?
4. CONSIDER DOING SOMETHING SPECIAL FOR SOMEONE ELSE. Donate a gift in the memory of your loved one. Donate money you would have spent on your loved one as a gift to charity. Adopt a needy family for the holidays. Invite a guest (foreign student, senior citizen) to share festivities.
5. RECOGNIZE YOUR LOVED ONE'S PRESENCE IN THE FAMILY. Burn a special candle to quietly include your loved one. Hang a stocking for your loved one in which people can put notes with their thoughts or feelings. Listen to music especially liked by the deceased. Look at photographs.
6. IF YOU DECIDE TO DO HOLIDAY SHOPPING, MAKE A LIST AHEAD OF TIME AND KEEP IT HANDY FOR A GOOD DAY, OR SHOP THROUGH A CATALOGUE.
7. OBSERVE THE HOLIDAYS IN WAYS WHICH ARE COMFORTABLE FOR YOU. There is no right or wrong way of handling holidays. Once you've decided how to observe the time, let others know.
8. TRY TO GET ENOUGH REST -- HOLIDAYS CAN BE EMOTIONALLY AND PHYSICALLY DRAINING.
9. ALLOW YOURSELF TO EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS. Holidays often magnify feelings of loss. It is natural to feel sadness. Share concerns, apprehensions, feelings with a friend. The need for support is often greater during holidays.
10. KEEP IN MIND THAT THE EXPERIENCE OF MANY BEREAVED PERSONS IS THAT THEY DO COME TO ENJOY HOLIDAYS AGAIN. THERE WILL BE OTHER HOLIDAY SEASONS TO CELEBRATE.
11. DON'T BE AFRAID TO HAVE FUN. Laughter and joy are not disrespectful. Give yourself and your family members permission to celebrate and take pleasure in the holidays.

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Survivor Outreach Services

Survivor Needs Assessment

Please take just a moment and fill out this confidential needs assessment.

Please mail to: Unit 21602, Attn: Army Community Service Survivor Outreach Services (SOS), APO , AE 09703

You may also email it to: acs-schinnen@eur.army.mil

Full Name _____

Local (or APO) Address _____

E-mail Address _____ Phone: _____

Preferred method of contact: E-mail Phone Mail

Please select the services you are in need of:

- SOS Financial Counseling:** Provides assistance and education in investments, insurance, debt management, checking and savings, estate planning, mortgages, garnishments, foreclosures and credit repair.
- SOS Support Coordination:** Provides supportive counseling, life skills education, and coordinates free counseling services from agencies such as Military Family Life Consultants, VA Grief and Bereavement Counseling, Military OneSource, Army Family Life Chaplains, Social Work Services, Army Substance Abuse Program, and other community agencies.
- U.S. Army Benefits:** Death Gratuity, Survivor Benefit Plan, DEERS, TRICARE and Legal Assistance (SJA).
- VA Benefits:** Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, Servicemen's Group Life Insurance, Veterans Group Life Insurance, National Servicemen Life Insurance, Improved Pension for Non-Service Connected Death, Burial Expense and Education benefits.
- Long Term Family Case Management:** Provides assistance in obtaining Service Records and Reports (such as awards, citations, CID, LOD, etc.)
- Child and Youth Programming:** Counseling, free respite care, lower childcare rates, SKIES *Unlimited* instructional classes, New Parent Support Program, School Liaison Services, playgroups, grief camps and other surviving child activities.

Survivor Events

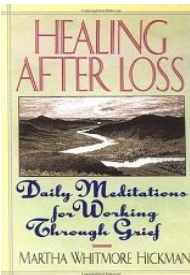
December 2010 Snowball Express Event in Texas

The Snowball Express Event in Texas on will occur December 8-13, 2010 with 5 families from Europe attending the event. We are looking forward to seeing the pictures and hearing about the adventures in the next newsletter. For more information you can visit the website at www.snowballexpress.org.



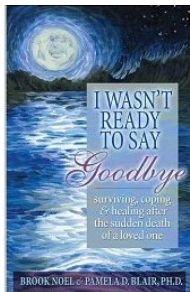
Resources

The following grief and resiliency resources have been recommended by our non-profit groups and other Survivors. Research them to see if they might meet your needs.



3x Military Widow: A Survival Guide By Joanne M. Steen, M. Regina Asaro

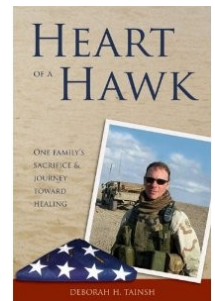
When there Are No Words: Finding Your Way to Cope with Loss and Grief By Charlie Walton



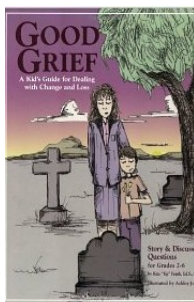
Healing After Loss: Daily Meditations For Working Through Grief Martha W. Hickman

I Wasn't Ready to Say Goodbye: Surviving, Coping and Healing After the Sudden Death of a Loved One (Book & Companion Workbook) By Brook Noel

Heart of a Hawk: One Family's Sacrifice & Journey Toward Healing Deborah H. Tainsh

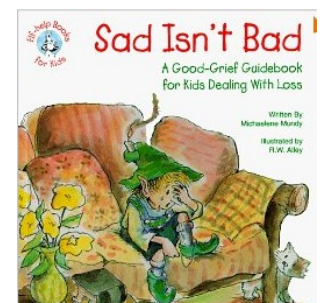


For Children



Good Grief: A Kids Guide for Dealing with Change and Loss By Kim Frank

Sad Isn't Bad: A Good-Grief Guidebook for Kids Dealing With Loss (E If-Help Books for Kids) By Michaelene Mundy, R. W. Alley



Check with your local Army Community Service Survivor Outreach Services for more information. You can also visit Army One Source to get additional information:

www.myarmyonesource.com



The screenshot shows the Army OneSource website. At the top, there is a search bar and navigation links. The main heading is "Survivor Outreach Services". Below this, there is a paragraph stating: "Our Fallen Warriors have paid the ultimate sacrifice. The Army has a commitment to their Families. Families deserve our respect, gratitude and the very best we can provide. The purpose of SOS is to deliver on that commitment." This is followed by three bullet points: "By providing access to support, information and services", "Closest location to where the Survivor resides", and "When and for as long as they desire". Below this is a call to action: "Please contact INCOM FHWRC Survivor Outreach Services for additional information or to provide suggestions as to what you would like to see on this site." To the right, there is a "Services Locator" box with a search field and a "Go Advanced" button. Further down, there is a "2010 Military Family Forum" section with registration information and a "Helpful Links" section listing various resources like "Army Long Term Family Case Management" and "Army Well-Being - Survivors Home Page".

Support, Trust, Strength, Understanding... Survivor Outreach Services is here.

SOS Point of Contact:

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