



Tarheel Central Chapter



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Bulletin #31-Tarheel Central Chapter – 12 Dec 2025

Subject: Loneliness during the Holidays

TCC Friends:

Like some of you, I also did Next of Kin notifications, casket escorts, and/or funerals during the years I was in the military. None were easy, but all needed done right and I worked hard to ensure it was so. It's one thing to do a NOK and/or casket escort for Marines killed on active duty either by combat or by training accidents, but it's quite another to do a NOK or casket escort, much less the funeral, when it's a suicide. I did two of those assignments. One in particular hit home. There's a reason I'm relaying this story to you...

Christmas and New Year's is almost upon us as is the often-strong tug of emotions--good for most, but not so good for some. Here's a leadership/kindness tip: Check to see, as best you can, if everyone has someplace or something to do over Christmas/New Year. If not, invite them over or meet somewhere for a meal, coffee, something to help ensure they feel wanted and not alone.

Thirty-eight years ago, on Dec 22nd at Quantico, I asked my troops and civil service this annual question before I cut folks loose, "Does everyone have something to do or place to go over the holidays?" I noticed a young NCO in the back shrugging it

off. I had an uneasy feeling, but he assured both his direct supervisor and me that he was "visiting friends in the area and had plenty to do over Christmas." Forty-eight hours later I was in a heavily wooded area having been called to help identify a body (face was gone) that an early morning jogger had come across.

There were some papers stuffed in the deceased's coat pocket. One had my signature on it for a "96-hour" Christmas pass. The base police tracked me down. Beside the shotgun was a handwritten note that read in part "...going to be alone on Christmas Day..." Three days later I accompanied his casket to his mother's town in Pennsylvania, and stayed for Cpl Tracey's funeral. Every December I recall his face. I also remember his mother's sobbing questions as she rested her head on my shoulder.

In our MOAA chapter we have many who are up in years; some who live alone or have little to no family in the area. Seniors can get just as lonely, or much more so, than did 23-year-old Corporal Tracey.

If you know of someone who lives alone or whom you know could probably use some holiday comradery, give them a call, have a cup of joe, a meal, or a visit. We rightfully visit veterans in cemeteries with a wreath over the holidays. Let's also remember those still with us.

"The eternal quest of the human being is to shatter his loneliness." – Norman Cousins

Regards/Barry N. Moore