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APVG-CG

8 February 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: 25th Infantry Division (25th ID) Policy Letter #5 – Social Media Use

1. References:

- a. Army Social Media Policies and Resources, <https://www.army.mil/socialmedia/>.
- b. Secretary of the Army Memorandum – Delegation of Authority – Approval of External Official Presences, 2 December 2013.
- c. ALARACT 289/2013, Army Operations Security (OPSEC) Training for External Official Presence (EOP) Site Operators, 29 October 2013.
- d. ALARACT 058/2018 – Professionalization of Online Conduct, 25 July 2018.
- e. Online Conduct of Members of the Army Team, 17 March 2017.
- f. Dept. of Defense Directive (DODD) 1344.10, Political Activities by Members of the Armed Forces, 19 February 2008.
- g. U.S. Office of Special Counsel website, The Hatch Act: Frequently Asked Questions on Federal Employees and the Use of Social Media and Email, January 2018.
- h. Dept. of Defense Instruction (DODI) 1300.18, Personnel Casualty Matters, Policies, and Procedures, 14 August 2009.

2. Background. The Army recognizes the importance of social media in providing information and communicating to the public, Soldiers, and Family Members. The Army and DoD have developed strict guidelines for the official use of social media and good practice guidelines for the Army and DoD personnel on unofficial or personal sites.

3. Purpose. This policy defines social media activities, provides guidance for using official social media sites at the unit level, and provides guidance for unofficial usage by Division personnel. This policy applies to all personnel assigned and attached to the 25th Infantry Division (25th ID).

4. Guidance.

a. Social media and blogs allow Soldiers and Families to communicate during training exercises and combat deployments. They also increase the risk for sensitive information release that puts Soldiers and Families in danger. Below is a basic outline of key considerations in the use of social media.

b. The 25th ID Public Affairs Office (PAO) manages these official social media sites:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/25thid

Twitter: @25thID

Instagram: www.instagram.com/25thInfantryDivision/

Flickr: www.flickr.com/25th_infantry_division

YouTube: www.youtube.com/user/pao25id

c. Brigades, battalions/squadrons, and companies/troops/batteries are authorized to establish official unit social media sites, but must adhere to the following guidelines:

(1) All official social media pages will be reported to the Brigade PAO. Units or special/personal staff sections without a Brigade PAO will report official social media pages to the 25th ID PAO. This includes USARHAW and 25th ID personal or special staff sections.

(2) Commanders are responsible for their unit's social media pages. A commander may delegate management of their social media sites to their PAO or those they charge with the additional duty of Unit Public Affairs Representative.

(a) Social media managers will ideally be a Soldier in the rank of SGT or above, or a DA civilian assigned to that unit. Commanders may waive the rank requirement provided a Soldier in the rank of SGT or above is assigned as an alternate social media manager with administrative rights to the social media sites.

(b) Battalion/squadron/company/troop/battery units or sections wishing to release images or video, must coordinate with their Brigade or Division PAO as they are the sole release authority.

(c) Social media managers are not authorized to speak on behalf of the unit, commander or the Army without release authority.

(d) Social media managers are required to take "Operational Security (OPSEC) for EOP Operators" and "DISA Social Networking Class" training found at <https://www.army.mil/socialmedia/managers/>.

(3) Division and Brigade PAOs will monitor all subordinate unit social media pages. Brigade PAOs will maintain admin rights to all subordinate unit social media pages to assist with OPSEC as well as ensuring compliance with this and other Army public affairs policies and regulations.

(4) In the interest of uniformity, authorization to establish/standardize or alter social media naming conventions and social media profile pictures/icons/badges resides with the Division PAO.

d. The following are guidelines for uniformed personnel operating on personal social media sites or on official government sites in an unofficial or personal capacity:

(1) All Soldiers are allowed to express personal beliefs on issues, including religion and social commentary, as long as they are not contrary to DoD policy in a way that would create disruption to the command or mission.

(2) Soldiers are subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) at all times, on or off duty and to include when using social media. Commenting, posting, or linking to material that violates the UCMJ or basic rules of Soldier conduct is prohibited.

(3) Any information that compromises OPSEC will not be discussed. If a Soldier is in doubt as to whether information may violate OPSEC, he/she should consult with his/her immediate supervisor, S-2, commander, or public affairs office.

(4) Be responsible. Social media posts are instantly available worldwide. If you would not want your loved ones or chain-of-command to see it, you should not post it.

(5) Posting images of dead bodies, casualties, or detainees is prohibited. Posting notification of a casualty prior to next of kin notification is prohibited (combat or non-combat related).

(6) All communication with the media must be coordinated through the first Public Affairs Office in the chain of command; this includes communicating with the media through social media.

(7) Active duty personnel will adhere to ALARACT 058/2018, which outlines professional online conduct. The use of electronic communication to inflict harm will not be tolerated. Examples include, but are not limited to: harassment, bullying, hazing, stalking discrimination, retaliation, or any other type of misconduct that undermines dignity and respect. Leaders must impress upon their subordinates that Soldiers are representatives of the Army, on or off duty, regardless of whether their social media profile indicates they are a Soldier or not.

(8) The Hatch Act prohibits partisan political activity in an official capacity. Specifically, the Hatch Act prohibits Soldiers from engaging in any political activity while on duty or in the workplace, referring to their official titles or positions while engaged in political activity at any time, or suggesting or asking anyone to make political contributions at any time, to include when posting on social media. Soldiers must adhere to DODD 1344.10 when posting political content, which states that they:

(a) Cannot participate in any interview or discussion as an advocate for or against a party, candidate or cause.

(b) Can generally express their personal views on public issues or political candidates via social media platforms much the same as they would be permitted to write a letter to the editor of a newspaper.

(c) Cannot participate in partisan political activity to include posting links to, “share” or “retweet” comments or tweets from a social media account of political party or candidate running for partisan office.

(d) Can “follow,” “friend,” or “like” a political party or candidate running for partisan office.

(e) Cannot communicate contemptuous words against the President, Vice President, Secretary of Defense, Deputy Secretary of Defense, any service secretary, or governor and legislature of any state in which he or she is located or performing duty in. It’s against federal law for commissioned officers to communicate in this manner.

5. This memorandum supersedes previous versions and remains in effect until superseded or rescinded in writing.

6. Point of contact for this memorandum is the 25th ID Public Affairs Officer at 808-787-5850.



JAMES B. JARRARD
Major General, USA
Commanding