

# Social Media Briefing: Senior Spouses

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While your level of participation on social media platforms is clearly an individual decision, you do not need to be an *active content creator* to be on social media. Many prefer to be *content consumers* to stay informed on trending topics of interest and connected with family and friends. Here are some things for you to consider, if you choose to be active on social media as a senior military spouse.

## SOCIAL MEDIA AS A MENTORING TOOL FOR MILITARY SPOUSES

1. Should I set up an official page or personal profile?  
It is recommended you primarily focus on engaging with your command's social media presence, particularly in a Facebook Group or Community, in your personal capacity. Keep your security settings limited to only friends in your network.
2. Start with your desired outcome:  
What are you trying to accomplish with your post and who are you trying to reach? This will drive what you post and where you post it.
  - a. Educate/Inform?
  - b. Drive action?
  - c. Entertain/Feel something?
3. Make it visually compelling and authentic to your voice/personality/brand/values through photos and short video clips. Builds trust and engagement.
4. Keep the message concise but meaningful.
  - a. Provide links to more information/resources for those interested in learning more.
    - i. Bitly.com and go.usa.gov are great resources to shorten long links
  - b. Time is of the essence: Consider messaging efficiencies through a group Facebook message or group text vice email.
5. Not all content needs to be your original content. Sharing existing, user-generated content can help increase the reach of your message and allow you to add a tailored message for your target audience. Also helps drive traffic to the resource page you're sharing.
  - a. Understand whatever you share reinforces your values and helps establish you as an informed and helpful resource for spouses. E.g. self-care, resilience, professional goals (*Keep it apolitical to avoid creating unintended barriers*)

6. Leverage social media and your spouse role to be an empathetic voice, particularly when acknowledging loss/casualties in your command or service.
  - a. Share officially released articles/photos/statements from your command/service and personalize with your condolence message.
7. Don't be afraid to show a sense of humor and use emojis (about as concise as you can get, communicating entire sentences with just a symbol or two). Millennials, in particular, tend to communicate in more familiar way with a less formal tone.
8. Don't miss out on the two-way conversation that is social media. It's not just about "push" but "pull" communication. Does your unit/command have a Facebook group or community page?
  - a. Consider leveraging Facebook Town Halls in coordination with your Family Readiness Officer/Ombudsman/Family Readiness Group to host subject matter experts to discuss and field questions on new programs, opportunities, resources, etc.
  - b. Ask feedback from spouses on a certain topic. Allow them to weigh in. Be mindful of closed versus open venues. In reality, a closed Facebook group ≠ private conversation.
  - c. Respond to family-specific comments and questions posted in your unit/command Facebook group or page to build rapport and trust.
9. Model OPSEC and PERSEC for spouses at all times. OPSEC violations commonly occur when personnel share information with people they don't know well and do not have a valid "need to know" and/or their social media accounts have loose privacy settings. The instant nature of social media can also sometimes cloud one's judgment in this area. Here are some helpful tips:
  - a. Think before you post, particularly with the level of detail you disclose about your work, your spouse's work or when he/she is deployed.
  - b. Limit personal information you provide in your social media profiles that relates to your work, family members, city of residence and birthdate. These small details can be aggregated to reveal significant information that could pose a threat. Note: Privacy settings can be customized for each piece of information you provide in your profile.
  - c. As a general rule, limit privacy settings for anything you post to your network of friends you know and trust as opposed to the general public. It's also good practice to review your connections often.

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## **ONLINE IMPOSTERS AND SCAMS WITH GENERAL/FLAG OFFICERS**

- This is one of the unfortunate issues many GO/FOs and their spouses face.
- You can be a valuable set of eyes and ears in reporting fake profiles to your PAO on Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, LinkedIn and Instagram. Sadly, this is a never ending battle.
- Each platform has its own investigation and reporting process. Check with your PAO who should have a Gov't partner for each social media platform who can expedite these requests. Depending on the nature of the situation, the matter may be referred to NCIS, CID, etc. Unfortunately, little can be done by these agencies to recoup funds lost from the victims of social media fraud.
- In some cases, leaders may need to post a message to clarify/debunk these imposter attempts on their official unit/command pages.
- Report any online scams you are made aware of that use the digital identity of your spouse to: <https://www.cid.army.mil/report-a-crime.html> or your service-specific law enforcement agency.

## **PASSWORD SECURITY/TWO-FACTOR VERIFICATION**

- Choose a password that is unique, complex and difficult to guess for each account. Update it every 6 months.
- You should not share passwords or security questions with anyone.
- It's a good practice to set up two-factor verification for all your online accounts to protect your account from being compromised. This also ensures you are notified if a rogue login attempt is made on your account.