

Appropriate Social Media Usage and Maintaining OPSEC



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As our brigade prepares to deploy, we wanted to pass on these guidelines on general social media use and maintaining OPSEC.

Soldiers, we encourage you to share this information with your families and loved ones.

Families and loved ones, we encourage you to share this information with your Soldiers.

OPSEC means operations security. When you hear someone say to maintain OPSEC, they are telling you to withhold certain pieces of information that adversaries could use against you. In essence, maintaining OPSEC keeps Soldiers and their families safe.

But OPSEC isn't the only thing you should consider when it comes to social media use. Something you post could end up hurting you or your reputation even if nothing violates OPSEC.



Importance



THINK ABOUT WHAT MESSAGE IS BEING
COMMUNICATED AND WHO
COULD POTENTIALLY VIEW IT.

TYPE MESSAGES THAT ARE
CONSISTENT WITH OUR
U.S. ARMY VALUES.

POST IF THE MESSAGE DEMONSTRATES
DIGNITY AND RESPECT
FOR SELF AND OTHERS.

Should you stay off social media altogether? Of course not. Social media is a great tool for networking and staying connected to loved ones.

Social media is a big part of society. As a culture, we depend on social media. **But social media use can be extremely dangerous if you're not careful.**

Social media has been around for a little over 20 years, and currently Facebook still leads by a pretty wide margin. The 28th ECAB has an official Facebook page because it is a free and effective way to get our messages out quickly.



Social Media Guidelines



SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH EVERYONE YOU KNOW, NOT JUST IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBERS

OPSEC should always be a primary concern.

Posting sensitive information can be detrimental to Soldier safety.

Ensure that information posted online has no significant value to the enemy. Always assume that the enemy is reading every post.

Seemingly innocent posts about a family member's deployment or redeployment date can put them at risk.

Security items to consider

- Take a close look at all privacy settings. Set security options to allow visibility to "friends only."
- Do not reveal sensitive information about yourself such as schedules and event locations.
- Ask, "What could the wrong person do with this information?" and "Could it compromise the safety of myself, my family or my unit?"
- Geotagging is a feature that reveals your location to other people within your network. Consider turning off the GPS function of your smartphone.
- Closely review photos before they go online. Make sure they do not give away sensitive information which could be dangerous if released.
- Make sure to talk to family about operations security and what can and cannot be posted.
- Videos can go viral quickly, make sure they don't give away sensitive information.

It's really not Soldiers and their immediate family members who are at high risk of sharing sensitive information. It's our parents (if they're not reading this), our aunts and uncles, our neighbors, BFFs, coworkers at our civilian jobs. People that don't receive social media guidelines like this.

Soldiers and their significant others should know what can or cannot be posted, but your extended loved ones probably don't. So really what you all should do is talk to your loved ones, tell them what cannot be shared and let them know the consequences if they do share them.

The fact of the matter is not ALL our loved ones hear this guidance. My wife knows not to share when I'm leaving, coming home or where I'm going on social media. But she may talk about it with her best friend or our neighbors, who may not know to not share it on social media. And that's where the biggest problem is.

Soldiers, learn these dos and don'ts. Spouses, learn these dos and don'ts. But we need to take some responsibility and make sure these dos and don'ts are shared with everyone who cares about us enough to post about us on social media.



Social Media Guidelines



OPSEC for Military Families

- DO NOT disclose
 - Unit mission or the number of personnel assigned to the unit
 - Deployment dates, times, locations
 - Port call dates or special shore deployments
 - Unit morale or personnel problems
 - Troop movement
 - Military intentions, capabilities or operations
 - The location of family during deployment
 - The planned return date for service members


- Share these guidelines with ALL loved ones (extended family, neighbors, friends, etc.), not just immediate family members




Print this page out. Whenever you post about your loved ones, refer to this before hitting the submit button.

We don't want to discourage you from using social media. On the contrary, many of us want to see how things are at home, so please keep using social media. But we also want you to be careful so we can stay safe and come home as soon as possible. There are stories of units being held up at deployment locations because a Soldier or their family posted about their departure time.

Make sure older children with social media accounts know this stuff too. Children are actually becoming a target for our adversaries, because children think the only people looking at their posts are their friends or classmates. So they share anything and everything. Our enemies know this. Even if your teenagers have a Finstagram (google it), those are not always safe from adversaries.




Social Media Guidelines



OK

Family member adhering to OPSEC
Yesterday at 4:45am · 🌐

Proud of my wife, serving our country overseas in one of these. Can't wait until she gets home...



👍❤️🔥 36 21 Comments 10 Shares

[Like](#) [Share](#)

[View more 4 Comments](#)


Stupid Neighbor Like you told me earlier, just 9 more days until they fly out of Baghdad. You got this bro!

[Like](#) [Reply](#) 1h

NO

Official Government Page
Yesterday at 4:45am · 🌐

Our Soldiers are hard at work protecting U.S. interests in the CENTCOM region. These Soldiers in Afghanistan recently received new IOTVs.



👍❤️🔥 36 21 Comments 10 Shares

[Like](#) [Share](#)

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Uncle who never got OPSEC training Niece is part of this deployment. She's with A Co, 4-7102nd Kandahar Airfield flying Black Hawks. Got there two months ago. They are in my prayers!

0

NO

Some common mistakes we see are parents commenting on Army posts saying something like “my daughter or my son is part of that deployment. He or she is gonna be stationed at this base in Iraq.”

Or a lot of times a spouse or partner says something like “So excited! My girlfriend flies home from Iraq on May 27th.”

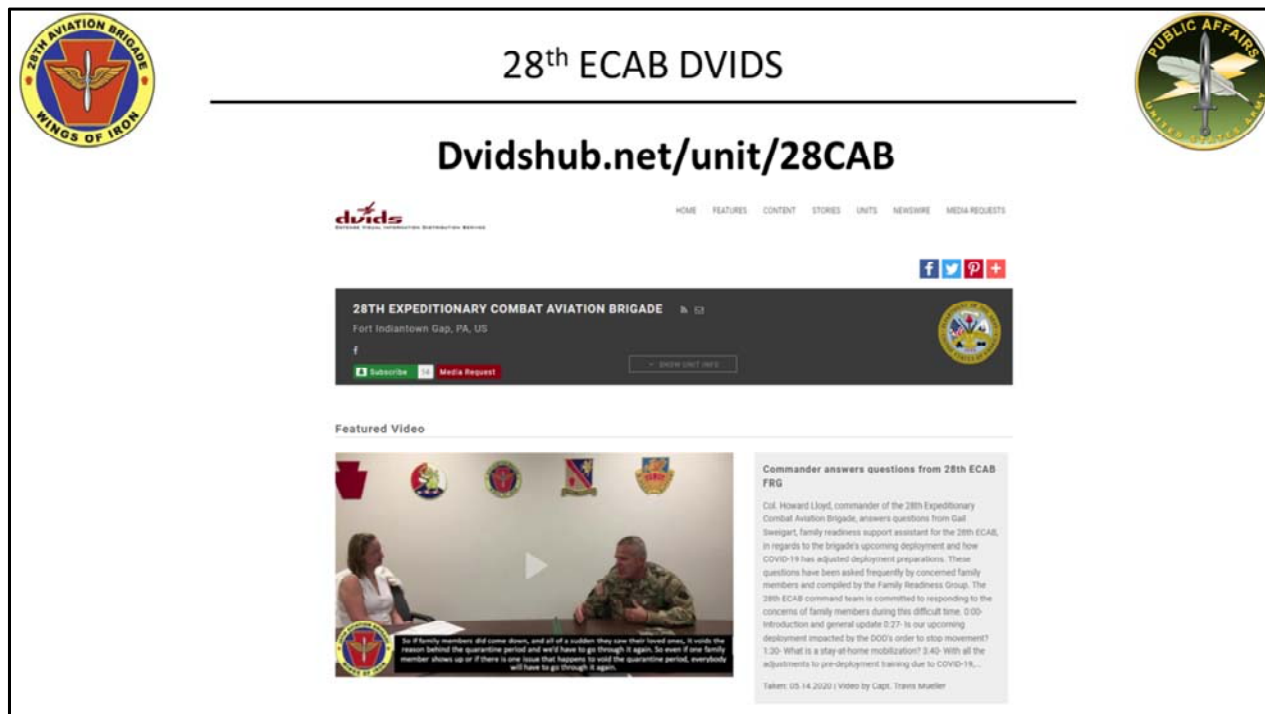


<https://www.facebook.com/28ECAB/>

Go to Facebook, find the 28th ECAB's official page and "Like" the page if you haven't already. Then invite any and all loved ones or your whole friends list. This is different from FRG pages or internal unit groups (that you should also be a part of, if you're not already). This page here is the official public social media presence for the 28th ECAB. You will get daily updates on our deployment through this page. You may even see your Soldier featured. Also if you're unsure what is releasable and what isn't, you can use this page as a guide. If you don't see us posting any specifics, then you should not either. Even if we are, it's not always a good idea for you to.

If we post or publish something here, it has been cleared for release. However, if you think something is not releasable DO NOT post a public comment about it. If it actually is an OPSEC concern you don't want to bring further attention to it. Send a direct message to the page or contact the FRG.

However, there are a lot of hands on this page and it's controlled by the brigade so you can trust that things posted there have been reviewed.





<https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/28CAB>

Bookmark and subscribe to the 28th ECAB's DVIDS page as well. This is a DOD-run portal of all imagery and articles produced by PAOs across the military. This is where news outlets, magazines, elected officials, and anyone else get their photos and videos of the military. Whenever we publish or release something, we do it through DVIDS. If you subscribe to this page, you will get an email whenever we publish something.

Here you can get updates as soon as we post them, and if you create a free account you can download hi-res versions of any photos or videos on there. So if you see some picture of your Soldier you can download it in the highest quality, get it printed, framed and be able to hang it on your wall or fridge.

We wanted to share the brigade Facebook and DVIDS with you all so you know what is official communication and what isn't. Those two pages will have official information.



www.army.mil/socialmedia

DO

- Talk to your Family about OPSEC, so they know what can and cannot be posted.
- Turn off geotagging and location-based social networking on phones and digital cameras.
- Maximize your **security settings** on social platforms and include two-step verification, if available.
- Closely review photos or videos before posting to ensure sensitive or personal information is not released (e.g., troop locations, equipment, tactical unit details, and numbers of personnel).

DON'T

- Use copyrighted media.
- Post details about your assigned unit's mission or security procedures.
- Announce locations and times of your unit deployments.
- Release information about **the death of a Service member** before the next of kin is notified and the information is released by the **DOD**.
- Post images of damaged equipment and gear.
- Share large personnel transactions (e.g., pay information, power of attorney, wills, or deployment information).
- Post unit morale or personnel problems.

There is a whole interactive website the Army has on the topic of social media. Go to that site, find the “Soldiers and Families” tab and review it with your loved ones.

Do not release information about deaths or injuries of service members if you aren’t the next of kin. It’s not your place.



Be:

- ✓ Short
- ✓ Simple
- ✓ Positive

If you are going to be active on social media, be short, simple and positive in your messaging. But don't lie- if you're not happy don't say you're happy- but be positive.

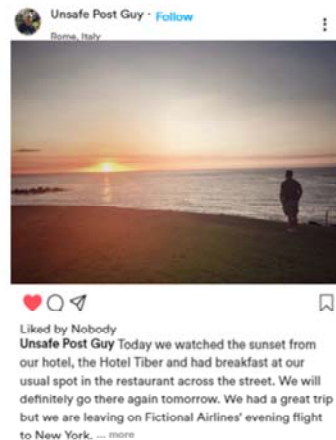
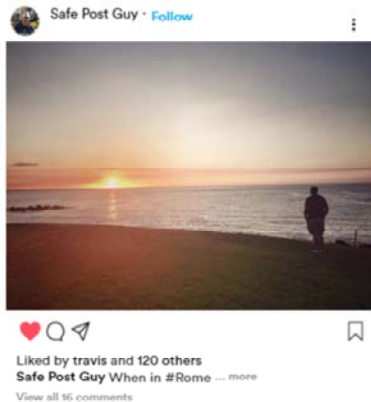
Lying will damage your credibility. This deployment will be tough on everyone, but don't dwell on that. Share the positive things, talk about how proud you are to serve.

Say how you wish you could celebrate Thanksgiving at home but you're proud to be sharing a meal with your brothers and sisters in arms. Talk about how proud you are of your Soldier and how much you miss them.

Don't lie. Keep your family and friends informed but be short, simple and positive.



Short, Simple, Positive



On the left is a pretty good post. Safe Post Guy went to Rome and took a nice positive picture and included a short, simple caption.

On the right, Unsafe Post Guy took the exact same picture. He has a geotag on the top which he probably didn't even know about. And he included all this information that doesn't need to be said and that, frankly, nobody cares about. He said the exact hotel they're staying at in Rome. Where they'll eat breakfast tomorrow, and his flight information. All no-gos.



Short, Simple, Positive



Liked by travis and 120 others
Safe Post Spouse Thinking about him a lot today. Proud of him. Happy Thanksgiving everyone. ... more
[View all 16 comments](#)



Liked by Nobody
Unsafe Post Spouse I'm going to my parent's house (a 230 mile drive, ugh!) for Thanksgiving weekend, leaving Monday morning. I wish CPT Mueller was home but he's been busy being a PAO for the US Army at FOB Specific in Iraq. Just one month left though! He flies home two days before Christmas! ... more
[No comments, this post is whack](#)

On the left is a good post. Safe Post Spouse just posted a little Thanksgiving shout-out about her husband who's overseas. It's short. Even though it's kind of sad, she's being positive.

On the right, Unsafe Post Spouse included the geotag which CPT Mueller here probably forgot to even turn off, or his wife just posted it herself. Either way, not good. She mentioned she's leaving the house and how far she's going. Mentions what CPT Mueller's job is, what he's doing there, where specifically he is and when he's supposed to fly out. All no-gos.

A common theme with both of these unsafe posts is that they just talk too much. They're not short and they just keep going, saying everything they shouldn't. The safe ones just say a quick simple caption.

Again- be short, simple and positive.



Takeaways



- 1) Visit www.army.mil/socialmedia and review the information so you and your families stay safe.
- 2) Like the 28th ECAB Facebook page. Subscribe to the 28th ECAB DVIDS.
- 3) Be short, simple, positive in what you post.
- 4) Review social media OPSEC guidelines and **SHARE THEM WITH EVERYONE WHO COULD POTENTIALLY POST ABOUT YOU WHILE WE'RE GONE.**

Please be safe, be wise, but please continue to use social media so we can be updated on everything back home while we are over there. Likewise, follow the brigade page so you can be updated on us as well.

Brigade families are the public affairs team's most important audience and keeping them informed is our number one concern during the deployment. We are going to do everything we can to keep families informed and updated daily and we will highlight the great work your Soldiers do.