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APVG-CG

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MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: 25th Infantry Division Policy Letter #4 - Social Media Use

1. References:

- a. Directive-Type Memorandum (DTM) 09-026-Responsible and Effective Use of Internet- Based Capabilities.
- b. The United States Army Social Media Handbook, April 2016.
- c. The Standardizing U.S. Army Social Media memo, 10 January 2014.
- d. Secretary of the Army Memorandum - Delegation of Authority - Approval of External Official Presences, 2 December 2013.
- e. Directive Type Memorandum DTM 09-026, Responsible and Effective Use of Internet Based Capabilities, 9 May 2012.
- f. CIO/G6 Memorandum, Responsible Use of Internet Based Capabilities, 2010.
- g. ALARACT 289/2013, Army Operations Security Training for External Official Presence Site Operators, October 2013.
- h. Secretary of the Army Memorandum, Transition and Political Activities Familiarization and Training, 5 July 2016.

2. Background: Social media (social networks and blogs) are an integral component of how the Army and other DoD agencies provide information and communicate to the public, Soldiers, and Family Members. As a global form of communication, 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 the proper implementation of official government sites at the unit level, and provides guidance for unofficial usage by Army and DoD personnel. This policy applies to all personnel assigned and attached to the 25th Infantry Division (25ID).

4. Guidance:

APVG-CG

SUBJECT: 25th Infantry Division Policy Letter #4 - Social Media Use

a. Social networking sites and blogs are popular means of communicating. They open doors for Soldiers and their 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, networks, and computing.

b. The only official 25th ID social networking sites are Facebook: www.facebook.com/25thid and TWITTER: @25ID, Flickr: www.flickr.com/25th_infantry_division and Youtube: www.youtube.com/user/pao25id. These sites are managed and monitored by the Division Public Affairs Office (PAO).

c. If brigades/battalions elect to use social media sites they must adhere to the following guidelines:

(1) Official pages must be primarily administered by a Soldier in the rank of SGT and above. Soldiers or civilians not in the rank of SGT or above are at the discretion of the Battalion Commander but must have a SGT or above admin assigned for page oversight.

(2) Pages must be reported to the BCT PAOs and registered on the "external official presences list" in accordance with DTM 09-026.

(3) Official pages will be monitored by the BCT PAO. The brigade PAO will maintain admin rights to battalion pages to assist with OPSEC, for emergency page lock down purposes (Soldier fatality, KIA/ WIA, etc.), and to ensure compliance.

(4) Social media pages (other than Facebook) at the battalion level are subject to battalion commander discretion but must follow the same guidelines and stipulations as the unit Facebook page.

(5) Unit social media pages below the battalion level (e.g., company, platoon, etc.) are NOT authorized. Pages below the battalion level will be deleted upon receipt of this policy letter. Family Readiness Group pages (FRG) are not considered official unit pages and therefore should only use their official battalion Facebook site.

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

(1) Social media has become a way for many to express beliefs on a variety of topics. Whether or not to participate in social media activities is an individual decision. All Soldiers are allowed to express personal beliefs on issues, including religion and

APVG-CG

SUBJECT: 25th Infantry Division Policy Letter #4 - Social Media Use

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 using social media must abide by the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) at all times. Commenting, posting, or linking to material that violates the UCMJ or basic rules of Soldier conduct is prohibited. Soldiers are subject to UCMJ even when off duty, so talking negatively about supervisors or releasing sensitive information may be punishable under the UCMJ. It is important that Soldiers know that once they log on to a social media platform, they represent the Army. Failure to abide by the regulations could result in punishment.

(3) Any Soldier making statements on a public forum that identifies him or herself as affiliated with the Army must make it clear that his/her statements are their own and do not represent an official Army stance.

(4) Operational Security (OPSEC) is paramount. 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 brigade public affairs office.

(5) Be responsible. Information posted to social media is instantly available worldwide. If you would not want your loved ones, 1SG, CSM, or any commander to see it, you should not post it.

(6) Posting photos of dead bodies, casualties, or detainees is prohibited. Posting notification of a causality prior to next of kin notification is prohibited (combat or non-combat related) and must be vetted through the brigade PAO office.

(7) If you encounter a site or post from another Soldier that brings discredit upon your unit, our leaders, or the Army, you have an obligation to report it to your chain of command.

(8) All communication with the media must be coordinated through the BCT PAOs; this includes communicating with the media via Facebook, Twitter, or other forms of social media.

(9) Per longstanding DoD policy, active duty personnel may not engage in partisan political activities and all military personnel should avoid the inference that their political activities imply or appear to imply DoD sponsorship, approval, or endorsement of a political candidate, campaign, or cause. Members on active duty may not campaign for a partisan candidate, engage in partisan fundraising activities,

APVG-CG

SUBJECT: 25th Infantry Division Policy Letter #4 - Social Media Use

serve as an officer of a partisan club, or speak before a partisan gathering. Active duty members may, however, express their personal opinions on political candidates and issues, make monetary contributions to a political campaign or organization, and attend political events as a spectator when not in uniform.

(10) Civilian and military personnel may generally express their personal views on public issues or political candidates via social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, or personal blogs, much the same as they would be permitted to write a letter to the editor of a newspaper. If, when expressing a personal opinion, personnel are identified by a social media site as DoD employees, the posting must clearly and prominently state that the views expressed are those of the individual only and not of the Department of Defense.

(11) As previously noted, active duty military members are prohibited from participating in partisan political activity. Therefore, while these employees may "follow" "friend" or "like" a political party or candidate running for partisan office, they may not post links to, "share" or "re-tweet" comments or tweets from the Facebook page or twitter account of a political party or candidate running for partisan office. Such activity is deemed to constitute participation in political activities.

(12) This policy is not all-inclusive. For more official Army guidance concerning social media reference the United States Army Social Media Handbook published by the Office of the Chief of Public Affairs (OCPA) located here:
https://www.army.mil/e2/rv5_downloads/socialmedia/army_social_media_handbook.pdf.

5. This memorandum supersedes 25th Infantry Division Policy Letter #12, dated 20 January 2015 and remains in effect until superseded or rescinded in writing.

6. Point of contact for this memorandum is the Division Public Affairs Officer at 655-6350.



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Major General, USA
Commanding

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