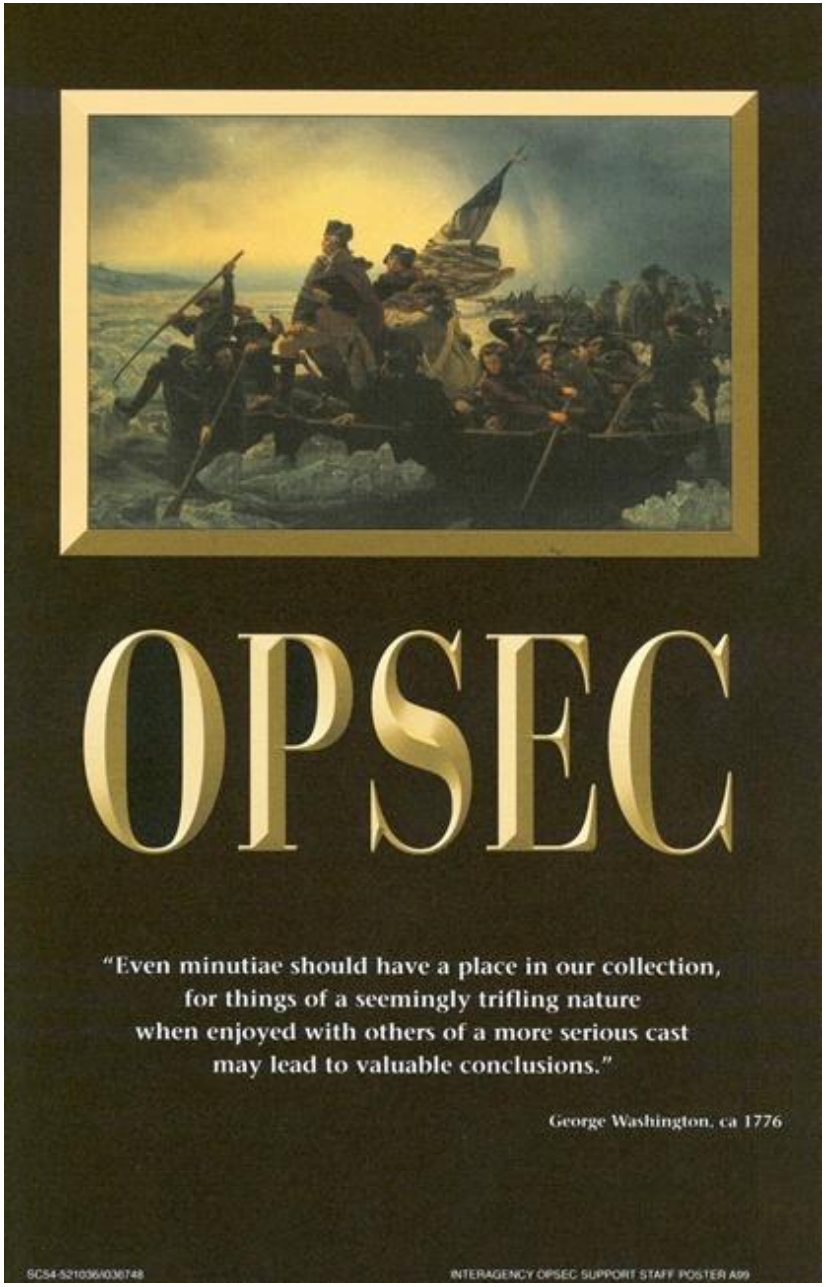
Social Media and Operations Security

…weighing the balance between security and open communication



Overview

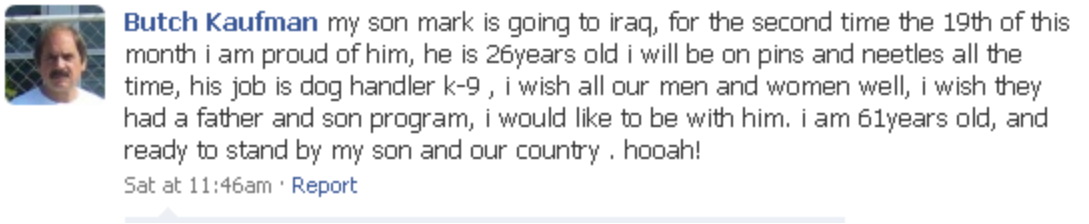
- What is OPSEC
- Balancing OPSEC with public affairs
- Operations Security and what it means to your organization (military or not)
- How social media and open communication can make our Army (and your organization) stronger
- Rules of Engagement

What is OPSEC?

OPSEC = Operations Security

- Protection of classified, sensitive, or need-to-know information
- Proprietary information, insider information, trade secrets, etc.

All organizations have their own form of Operations Security – information that should be protected.

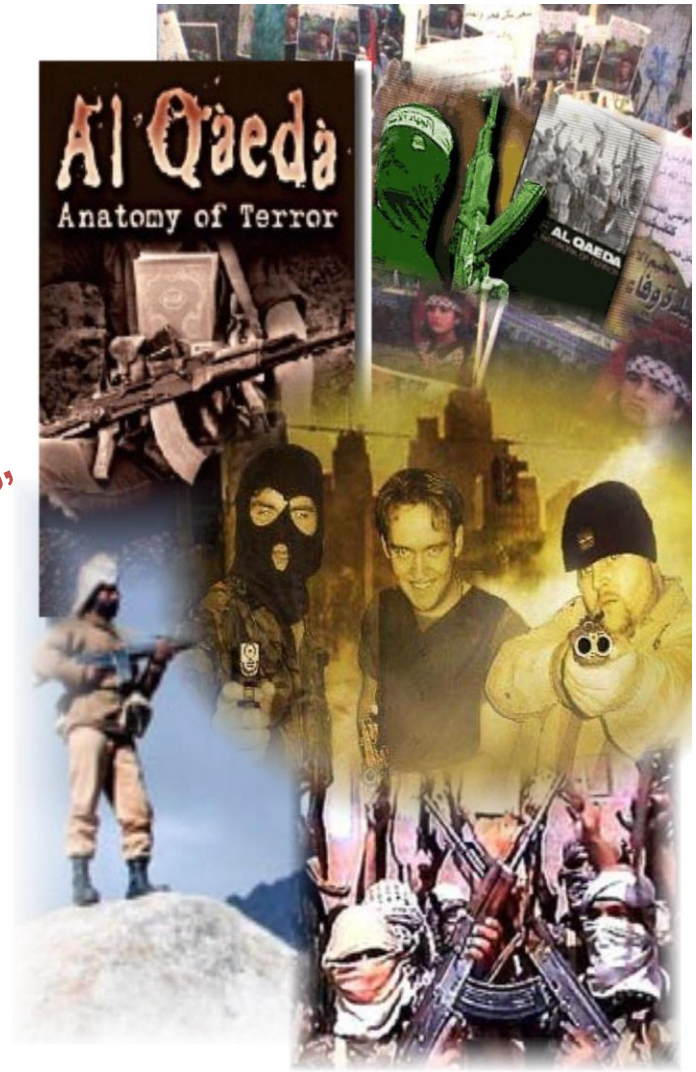


What is OPSEC?

What are they are looking for:

- Names/photographs of important people
- Present and future U.S. capabilities
- Meetings of top officials
- News about U.S. diplomacy
- Important government places
- Information about military facilities:
  - Location
  - Units
  - Weapons used
  - Fortifications & tunnels
  - Amount of lighting
  - Exterior size and shape of buildings
  - Number of Soldiers / officers
  - Ammunition depot locations
- Leave policies
- Brigade and company names
- Degree & speed of mobilization

80% of the intel Al Qaeda collects is from "open source"



* Source: Al Qaeda Training Manual

Balancing OPSEC w/ Public Affairs

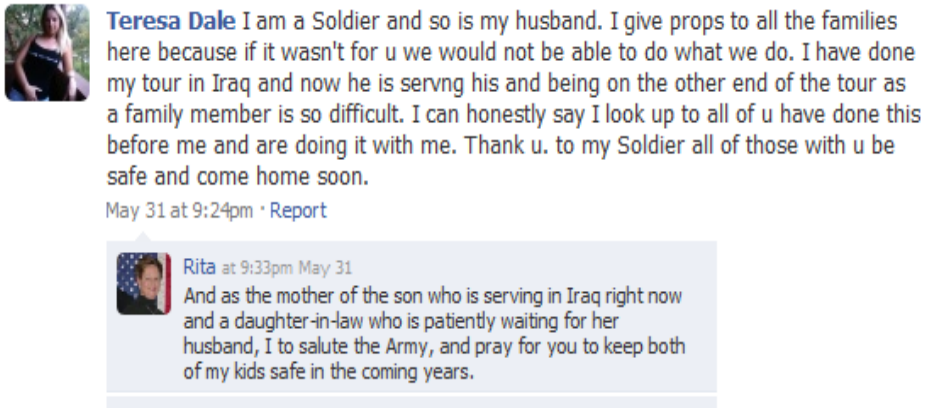
The U.S. Army, and all government organizations, have communications concerns other organizations do not.

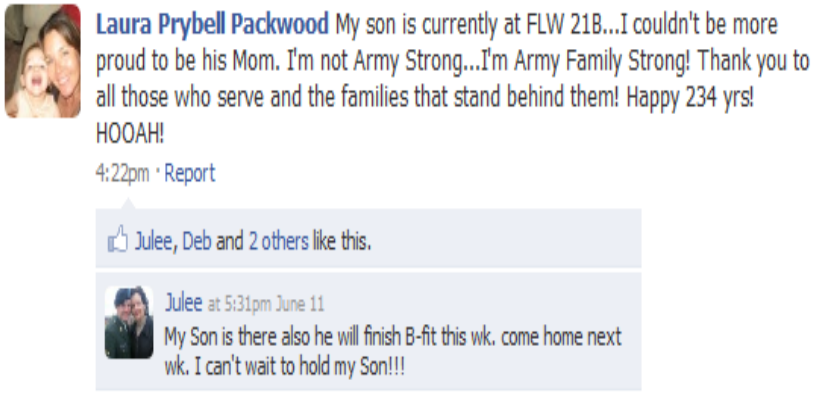
- Release of inappropriate information can result in lost lives.
  - Policies and ROE that govern the use of weapons and electronic or acoustic warfare systems
  - Vulnerabilities of defensive dispositions
  - Vulnerabilities to attack
  - Vulnerabilities / capabilities of units, weapons systems
  - Doctrine for using various weapons
  - New weapons that are available or are being employed
  - Overall bed/treatment capacity
  - Shortages in medical specialties / personnel

OPSEC and what it means to your organization

The objective of OPSEC is to make oneself or organization a “Hard Target”

- Make it more difficult for an adversary to identify and exploit vulnerabilities.
- Don’t post or publish personal or organizational critical information in public venues, including social media sites.





Social media can make your organization stronger

Social media is another tool to get your info out, except this one lets your audience dialogue with you and others.

Teresa S Hill Wood I am an Army Mom and proud to be. Without Facebook and my Army and Army Mom support groups I don't know where I would be. We are a family if you need anything, to talk, advice, anything, we are here check us out. We are here for each other. ARMY STRONG! ARMY MOM STRONG!

5:33pm · Comment · Like · Report

2 people like this.

Mystie McGee at 5:34pm June 2 Report

I second that!

Kaitlyn Gallardo Webb Does anyone know how to find an old Army friend? I have no idea where he could be now. When I knew him he was stationed at Ft. Bliss in the mid 90's. If so can you message me. Thanks!

June 2 at 10:28am · Report

Michael at 10:36am June 2

well if you have AKO access you can look him up in the white pages on there.

Tami Recher glad I found this site, my son Tony is currently serving with the 710th BSB, 3rd BCT, 10th Mountain Div. (FT. Drum NY) in Afghanistan. I pray every day for his safe return along with his fellow soldiers.

June 5 at 6:56pm · Report

Nancy likes this.

Lizeth at 6:45pm June 7

God Bless you and your loves....I know how hard deployments are on Families....Stay strong....

Tina at 7:23pm June 8

God Bless you and your family..and thank you.

Tim McLaughlin For all those serving, thank you and God Bless America

June 5 at 4:04pm · Report

Candyce Kissam I'm a New Army Mom! My son, PFC Kissam, started White Phase at Ft. Leonard Wood, MO, today. We are so proud of his choice to Serve.

June 5 at 3:57pm · Report

Show 2 more comments...

Candyce at 4:29pm June 5

Oh, Lori. I am so sorry. Hang in there.

Candyce at 4:36pm June 5

Is the last time you talked to Bryant was in Maine? Is he in Iraq yet?

Social media can make your organization stronger

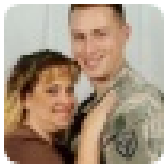
Rules of Engagement

If you aren't comfortable placing this information on a sign in your front yard, don't put it on a Web site.

Rules of Engagement

Educate vs. Regulate

- Mitigate the risk of using social media by educating the Soldiers, not by stopping the dialogue.
- Think about what you post and what people can figure out about you.



Deana Correa I love and miss my soldier. I appreciate all you do and what you give up for your country. Heres a big thanks to all serving right now!

Tue at 6:31pm · Report

Lauren Thompson I love and miss my soldier who is serving in Afghanistan right now!! I have survived 2 weeks of this deployment. Just want to say thanks to all the soldiers for their service and to the families as well for their love and support!!

11:23am · Report

Rules of Engagement

Treat social media sites like the newspaper. If you don't want to see it in print, don't say it!

Stories are written daily about our Soldiers and their families. We are always careful.

Rules of Engagement

Know the rules on what's releasable. Different agencies across the Army interpret rules differently.

– Personally Identifiable Information - any information about an individual which can be used to distinguish or track their identity, or any information linked to an individual, such as employment history.

Rules of Engagement

Trust your people

- No one is going to intentionally divulge information that will harm their fellow Soldiers.
- Soldiers are taught from day 1 not to divulge information that will harm them or their buddies.

Parting thoughts…

Risks and benefits

- The risks outweigh the benefits – we can't afford NOT to communicate.
- If we're not in the social media space to tell our story, someone else will do it for us.

* Over 500 U.S. Army fan pages in existence

And in the end ?

- Be ready to assume some risk, and mitigate that risk as best you can
- Ensure you have senior leader support and understanding
- Moderate and monitor
- Have a plan for crises