Navy Public Affairs Guide

Navy Family Members

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The Navy's policy is to protect the privacy of its personnel and family members, especially in times of crisis. The Navy does not give out names of spouses or their addresses as this would be an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy and also may indicate the Sailor's absence from the home.

While it is the right of all Americans to talk to the news media if they desire, as a Navy family member, you should never feel pressured into giving an interview. If you are contacted by the media, you do not have to respond or give an interview. You can refer the reporter to the nearest public affairs office. If you do want to give the media an interview, the nearest Navy public affairs office is available to you for advice and guidance.

THINGS FOR YOU TO CONSIDER BEFORE GRANTING AN INTERVIEW

It is ok to say no

You are not required to grant an interview. If you do, you may be considered a reliable source and may be contacted for future stories by that reporter or by others once the initial story airs.

Be mindful of the situation

If you decide to talk to a reporter, you need to watch what you say. It's ok to talk about topics such as personal experiences like how you feel and your reaction to the news. However, information such as internal privileged command information like a ship's scheduled port visits, command policy, hypothetical situations or speculation on the cause of the accident or incident must be avoided. You must avoid repeating stories or rumors and offering an opinion on how something could have been done differently. Please consider that you may have only part of a story, but if all the parts from different sources are assembled, just like a jigsaw puzzle, the complete picture can be "seen," and it might be classified.

> The media always will consider Navy family members as sources to provide a good human interest element to round out Navy-related stories. It is your choice whether or not to be a source.

You can set the terms of the interview

To maintain family security and privacy, you may request beforehand as a condition of granting an interview that certain information not be used, such as your full name, home address, city of residence, or the command's or ship's name. This may seem impractical, but many news people will honor the request. If they don't agree to reasonable ground rules, think twice about granting the interview.

If you do not use the Public Affairs Office

If you choose not to have the public affairs office assist you, the interview MUST be conducted off of federal property. Any interviews arranged solely between family members and a reporter, without Navy public affairs support, must take place off base and away from military housing and other government facilities.

YOUR safety and security comes first

You do not owe the news media any details about your life.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE NAVY FAMILY

Social media sites allow Navy families and their Sailors to keep in contact like never before. It is a wonderful way to feel close to someone who is far away. Enjoy the connection that social media offers and be sure to keep operational security and the risks of sharing information in mind with every post.

Navy family members all know some bits of critical information. It may not be classified, and it may even seem insignificant. But, to the potential adversary, it is a piece of the puzzle. The power of emerging media tools is a two-edged sword: It makes information exceptionally accessible when posted -- for anyone who is interested, including potential adversaries and others who would do you or your Sailor harm. Do not volunteer any information that could unnecessarily put you or your Sailor in harm's way.

WHEN POSTING INFORMATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA SITES IT IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND:

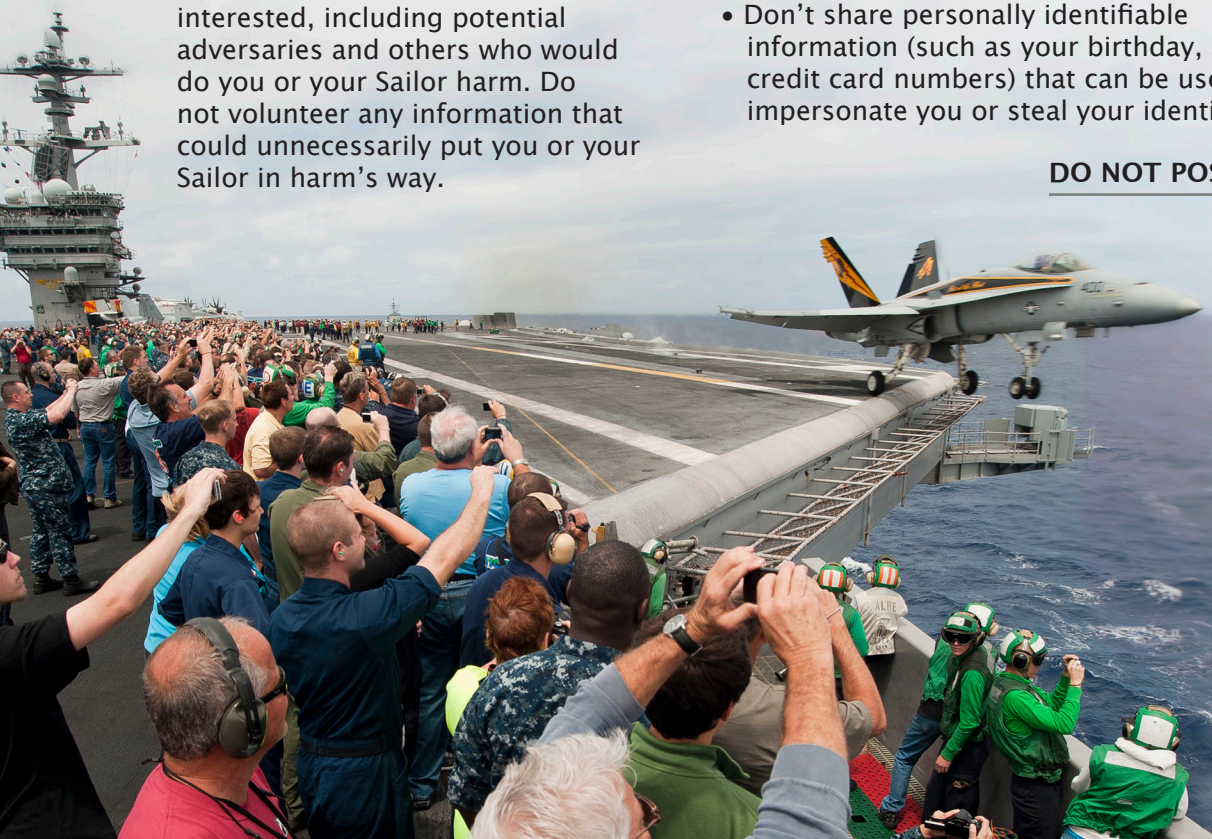
Everything online is potentially available to everyone in the world, including co-workers, adversaries and criminals.

Information posted online can remain there - forever. It can then be used in ways its originator never intended.

You are personally responsible for what you post online.

WAYS TO REDUCE THE RISKS IN USING SOCIAL MEDIA:

- Even if you aren't using social media, others can still post information or photos of you. Be aware of this. Let your friends and family know if you would prefer your information and photos to remain private.
- Use recommended privacy settings for Facebook and other social networking sites.
- Don't "friend" strangers.
- Never discuss information online that could jeopardize operations security (OPSEC).
- Don't share personally identifiable information (such as your birthday, SSN, credit card numbers) that can be used to impersonate you or steal your identity.
- Don't click on links that go to unfamiliar sites.
- Choose applications wisely. Many applications share information with marketers and others.
- Use anti-virus and anti-spyware at home.
- Use a different, strong password for each online account.
- Don't share any passwords with third-party sites.
- Carefully consider sharing your location, because it indicates when you're not at home and vulnerable.
- Don't share Navy information that hasn't been officially released to the public by the Navy. Err on the side of caution.

DO NOT POST THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA SITES:

- Exact deployment dates or return dates. This applies to ships, subs, squadrons and individual augmentees.
- Dates or location of a ship's upcoming ports of call.
- Detailed information about a mission.
- References to trends in crew's morale or an individual's personal problems.
- Details concerning security procedures, response times or tactics.
- Information about equipment readiness (technical, weapons, etc.)
- Speculation about future operations.
- Descriptions of overseas bases or areas frequented by service members overseas.
- Meeting times and places.
- Names and relationships (do not tag individuals, even if you know them!)