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ARNG-PEC-CD

7 July 2026

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Commander's Policy Letter No.17 – Public Affairs and Social Media

1. References:

- a. Title 10, United States Code, sections 7013, 7014, 7064.
- b. Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, section 2635.702 (Use of public office for private gain).
- c. Department of Defense (DoD) 5500.07-R (Joint Ethics Regulation), as amended.
- d. DoD Instruction (DoDI) 5400.17 (Official Use of Social Media for Public Affairs Purposes), 12 August 2022, incorporating Change 2, effective 14 February 2025.
- e. Army Regulation (AR) 360–1 (The Army Public Affairs Program), 8 October 2020.
- f. AR 600-20, Army Command Policy, 15 April 2026.
- g. Army Directive (AD) 2025-25 (Streamlining and Clarifying Army Social Media Use for Organizations).

2. Under the Army's "Think, Type, Post" framework, Soldiers must ensure all social media activity reflects professionalism and security. The U.S. Army defines online conduct as the use of electronic communications in an official or personal capacity in a manner that is consistent with Army values and standards of conduct. Before sharing, consider who will see the message and Soldiers must maintain strict Operational Security (OPSEC) by never posting or speaking publicly about unapproved information.

3. Soldiers must know that when they are logged on to a social media platform, they still represent the U.S. Army. Soldiers using social media must always abide by the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), even when off duty. Commenting, posting and linking to material that violates the UCMJ or basic rules of Soldier conduct are prohibited, along with talking negatively about supervisors or releasing sensitive information.

4. IAW AR 600-20, para. 4-16a(5), "Online Misconduct" is the use of electronic communication to inflict harm. Some examples include but are not limited to hazing, bullying, harassment, discriminatory harassment, stalking, retaliation, or any other misconduct.

5. IAW AR 600-20, para 4-12, Army personnel are responsible for content they publish on all personal and public internet domains to include social media sites, blogs, and other websites. Participation in internet sites sponsored by extremist organizations and activities is inconsistent with the responsibilities of military service. Army personnel who maintain a presence on the internet could be perceived as representatives of the Army. This paragraph identifies prohibited actions by Soldiers involving participation in cyber activities sponsored by or promoting extremist organizations or criminal gangs and the use of social media to promote activities associated with extremism and criminal gangs, discusses the authority of the commander to establish other prohibitions, and that violations of prohibitions contained in this paragraph or those established by a commander may result in prosecution under various provisions of the UCMJ.

a. Participation. Military personnel must reject participation in extremist organizations and associated cyber activities. Extremist organizations and criminal gangs are described in AR 600-20, paragraphs 4–12a and 4–12g.

b. Prohibitions. Soldiers are prohibited from engaging in cyber-related activities in support of extremist organizations or criminal gangs. Penalties for violations of these prohibitions include the full range of statutory and regulatory sanctions, both criminal (UCMJ), and administrative. Examples of prohibited cyber-related activities include:

1) Participating in the promotion of demonstrations or rallies through the use of cyber activities and social media.

2) Promotion of a meeting or activity through the use of cyber activities and/or social media with the knowledge that the meeting or activity involves an extremist cause.

3) Fundraising activities using cyber activity or social media.

4) Recruiting or training members (including encouraging other Soldiers to join) using cyber activity or social media.

5) Creating, organizing, or taking a visible leadership role in such a cyber or social media activity.

6) Promoting information through cyber activity, the primary purpose and content of which concerns advocacy or support of extremist causes, organizations, or activities; and it appears that the information presents a clear danger to the loyalty,

discipline, or morale of military personnel or the distribution would materially interfere with the accomplishment of a military mission.

7) Browsing or visiting internet websites or engaging in cyber activities when on duty, without official sanction, that promote or advocate violence directed against the U.S. or DoD, or that promote international terrorism or terrorist themes.

c. Command authority. Commanders have the authority to prohibit military personnel from engaging in or participating in any cyber or social media activities that the commander determines will adversely affect good order and discipline within the command. This includes, but is not limited to, the authority to order the removal of images, symbols, flags, language, or other displays from social media and internet domains, or to order Soldiers not to participate in cyber and social media activities that are contrary to good order and discipline or morale of the unit or pose a threat to health, safety, and operational security of military personnel or a military installation.

d. Commander's options for dealing with a violation of these prohibitions include:

1) UCMJ action—Possible punitive articles include the following:

a) Art. 92—Failure to obey a lawful general order or regulation.

b) Art. 116—Riot or breach of peace.

c) Art. 117—Provoking speeches or gestures.

d) Art. 133—Conduct unbecoming an officer.

e) Art. 134—General article, specifically, conduct which is prejudicial to good order and discipline or service discrediting.

2) Involuntary separation for unsatisfactory performance or misconduct or for conduct deemed prejudicial to good order and discipline or morale.

3) Reclassification actions or bar to reenlistment actions, as appropriate.

4) Other administrative or disciplinary action deemed appropriate by the commander, based on the specific facts and circumstances of the particular case to include removal of access to government-owned IT systems.

6. Soldiers must exercise prudence when expressing opinions of the political process online and offline, ensuring they are consistent with the Army Values and are not expressed as a representative of the U.S. Army or as a Soldier. Such opinions must be expressed as an individual apart from the military. Soldiers should be aware of the limitations that exist when it comes to participation in political activity as well as DoD

support to political campaigns. Soldiers must adhere to the policy in DoD Directive 1344.10 when posting any political content.

a. Per DoDI 5400.17, para. 6.1.d.(5)(a), Soldiers are prohibited from engaging in political activity on their personal social media while in the federal workplace or while on-duty, including teleworking.

b. Service members must also be careful not to comment, post, or link to material that violates the UCMJ or service regulations. Examples include showing contempt for public officials, releasing sensitive information or posting unprofessional material that is prejudicial to good order and discipline under the UCMJ.

c. Soldiers should be aware of the limitations that exist when it comes to participation in political activity as well as DOD support to political campaigns. Soldiers must adhere to the policy in DoD Directive 1344.10 and AR 600-20, Appendix B when posting any political content.

d. Soldiers who are on duty or in uniform are prohibited from:

1) Participating in any interview or discussion as an advocate for or against a party, candidate or cause.

2) Participating in partisan political activity.

3) Posting links to, "sharing" or "retweeting" comments or tweets from a political party or partisan office candidate's social media account. Such activity is deemed to constitute participation in political activities.

4) Communicate contemptuous words against the President, Vice President, Congress, the Secretary of War, the secretary of a military department, the Secretary of Homeland Security, or governor and legislature of any state or territory in which he or she is located or performing duty in. It is a UCMJ violation for Soldiers to communicate in this manner.

7. Soldiers must not comment, post, link to or speak publicly about material that violates the UCMJ or service regulations. Examples include showing contempt for public officials, releasing sensitive information, or posting unprofessional material that is prejudicial to good order and discipline.

8. The PEC Public Affairs Office is the sole release authority within the organization for coordinating with civilian media. If an individual is contacted by civilian media, the individual will put them in touch with the brigade PAO to coordinate any media engagement. If a Soldier/DA Civilian or family are portrayed in the media in relation to your military service, the individual will immediately notify the PAO.

a. IAW AD 2025-25, Commanders who have table of distribution and allowances (TDA) or modified table of organization and equipment (MTOE) authorizations that include a 46-series Public Affairs Officer, Public Affairs Noncommissioned Officer (NCO), or a Department of the Army Civilian Public Affairs Specialist (Career Program 22/1035) are the only units who may establish and maintain an organizational social media presence.

b. Effective and official communication with the public across local, regional, national, and international levels is essential for achieving the brigade's mission. Army social media accounts should be optimized by improving message synchronization, utilizing resources efficiently, and enhancing the quality of messaging and content to provide a better experience for our audience.

9. Personal Accounts.

a. Personal accounts must be clearly identifiable as personal.

b. Avoid use of DoD titles, insignia, uniforms or symbols in a way that could imply DoD sanction or endorsement of content on a personal page. Also avoid misrepresentation as an official DoD spokesperson on a personal account.

c. Social media plays a very important role in daily life. It helps in sharing experiences with others and staying connected. The Army encourages Soldiers and their Families to use social media to stay connected and tell the Army's story.

d. Many Soldiers and Families are new to the Army, but they are not new to using social media. There are security risks and regulations that Soldiers and their Families, especially those new to the Army, must be aware of before posting.

e. Understanding this dynamic is crucial because, as members of the Army profession and family, Soldiers are expected to live the Army Values, online and offline.

f. Soldiers and their Families are personally responsible for all content they publish on social networking sites, blogs and other websites.

10. Point of contact for this action is the undersigned at (501) 212-5611 or edward.o.ziembinski.mil@army.mil.



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