

How Many Pieces of Military Flair are on Your Social Media?

Being a member of the United States Air Force should without question be a source of pride. The service you render to the United States is a vital one and retired Air Force members and family members take an equal pride in the service they have and do render to the Air Force. Unfortunately, there will always be people who, for various reasons, wish to bring harm to military members and those affiliated with the military. The wear of the uniform is a badge of honor and sets you apart, but in the wrong setting, can be unwise. Likewise, not just in person, display of the uniform and other Air Force symbolism also draws attention to your online presence – the more military pictures and information, the more attention. As in the movie *Office Space*, there is a difference between 1 or 37 pieces of flair! How much “military flair” is attracting attention to your social media?

Social media web pages can potentially be viewed by anyone with access to the Internet, and this information is easily exploited. One piece of information by itself may not be harmful, but multiple little pieces put together can, like a jigsaw puzzle, present a bigger picture.

Consider:

Jigsaw Piece #1 Post picture of self in uniform

Jigsaw Piece #2 Add location to profile: “Panama City, FL”

Jigsaw Piece #3 Post picture of your car which happens to be parked in front of your house – showing not only what you drive, but possibly a license plate number, possibly the mailbox with address on it, or a street sign, or your house number.

You just made yourself an easy target for anyone wanting to bring harm to a military member or their family.

Also consider the possibilities if your posting or profile has pictures of you; or if it has enough information for a stranger to find your residence. You then “check in” at your favorite restaurant. You just made both yourself and your unoccupied house potential targets. You just became a target to anyone who wants to take action against a military member – they know exactly what you look like and where you are. Your house just became a target for any common thief to break in and take your prized possessions. Is it worth the risk? Consider instead “checking in” as you leave the restaurant if you want to post a withering exposé about the service received, or bring out your epicurean side and rave about the delicious dinner.

Take pride in being a member of the United States Air Force and in the service you render to the United States, but use caution to go along with that pride. Social Networking is as much a part of modern life as breathing, but similar to hyperventilating, too much of it can be a bad thing. Take a few minutes to review your social networking sites: check the privacy settings, the amount of “military flair”, and the sum of the information you have posted – the “jigsaw puzzle” available to anyone surfing the World Wide Web. Are you comfortable with what you see?