



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

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Social Media Overview

Simply put, social media allows people to create, share or exchange information, ideas, and pictures/videos in virtual communities and networks. Creating a social media page allows your Post/District/Department to engage a vast and diverse audience to include members, prospects, donors, potential donors, supporters, etc. It is an online community in which people gather to give and receive information.

Social media is useful to share information about meetings and events, opportunities for support and to strengthen your Post/District/Department's relationship with your online community. It is a place to share success stories and to ask for support if needed.

There are numerous social media sites available for use. The key is finding the site(s) that is a good fit for your presence. When looking into building a profile on a new social media site, be aware of the sites' strengths and weaknesses, the opportunities and the risks.

Facebook:

Facebook is the most popular social media site today. It is a social networking site where registered users can create a profile, send messages, share statuses, photos and videos, and join interest groups.

A Facebook page can act as a mini, pre-formatted website.

You control the look of your page by adding a profile picture and a cover photo. We recommend you use the VFW logo for your profile and cover photos. Other suggested options, for your cover photo especially, include using photos from recent events your Post/District/Department have been involved in.

There are many ways to add content to your Facebook page, but the most common include [status updates](#), [events](#), [notes](#) and [photos](#). Please refer to the [Facebook Help Center](#) for more information about each of these.

NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

Twitter:

Twitter is similar to Facebook but the statuses you share are limited to 140-characters called 'tweets.' You can add photos and links to your tweets to make them more informational and eye catching.

Hashtags are commonly used on Twitter to organize information. For example, if you tweet, "We're hosting a bingo game Friday night to benefit #veterans at 7 p.m., everyone is welcome!" using the hashtag #veterans will categorize your tweet with every other tweet using the hashtag #veterans. To see this, enter #veterans in the search bar at the top of the page and you will see a list of all the recent tweets using that hashtag.

While Twitter has character limitations, with a little creativity you can still share most of the same information with your Twitter followers that you would share on Facebook.

Instagram:

If your Post/District/Department is really active in the community and hosts a number of events, you may be interested in Instagram.

Instagram is a photo taking application, owned by Facebook, where you can edit your photo within the phone applications and share with other Instagram users. Since this app is owned by Facebook, it is incredibly easy to share your photos with your Facebook followers. Sharing photos of events can be an easy way to promote what your Post/District/Department is doing to help the community.

Pinterest:

For Posts/Districts/Departments that host breakfasts or dinners, bake sales, craft sales, or just want to have a place to gather and store creative ideas, Pinterest may be a good site for you.

Pinterest users create and share their collections of visual bookmarks/pins on boards. Boards are a way to organize their pins. They are created through a user selecting an item, page, website, etc. and pinning it to an existing or newly created board. Popular searches on Pinterest include: recipes, DIY projects and how-to's, travel destinations, sites and memorials to see, and inspirational or humorous quotes and photos.

REMEMBER:

* All sites are very different, your social media success is contingent upon ENGAGEMENT and forcing the latest, trending platform could be more of a hindrance than it is helpful.

* You may not be the “owner” of the social media page forever. Be sure to share the information necessary to access the social media account with other Post/District/Department leaders who you trust. This ensures that if you are unavailable at any point or move to a position where you no longer have time to administer the site, others can ensure it is appropriately maintained.

* Remember that your social media page is a very public representative of your establishment and the VFW as a whole. Always ensure the information you post is in keeping with the integrity and ideals of the organization and acts in accordance with organizational by-laws.