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HOW THE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD CAN LEVERAGE SOCIAL MEDIA TO INCREASE VISIBILITY AND RECRUTING

by

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A Research Report Submitted to the Faculty

In Partial Fulfillment of the Graduation Requirements

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16 February 2016

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Biography

LTC Tyson Y. Tahara is assigned to the Air War College, Air University, Maxwell AFB, AL. He is a member of the Hawaii Army National Guard with 30 years of service, 13 of which have been as a full time technician in the ground maintenance division. He has held multiple logistical, operational and command positions within the 29th Brigade Support Battalion. His duties have taken him on two deployments in support of Operation IRAQI Freedom in 2004 and 2009.

Abstract

The military's budget is decreasing but the number of new accessions is increasing to maintain the force structure. The services recruiting commands should leverage social media to increase exposure, tell their story, and increase brand recognition. This is equally important for the National Guard to continue to be relevant to the nation and states. This paper will research how each branch of service is using social media platforms to reach the desired audience and have a recommendation for the National Guard on how best to use social media to increase new accessions.

The fiscal constraints on the military with decreasing budgets requires the services to do more with less. This is the case with recruiting, with the Department of Defense (DoD) annual budget decreasing but the number of new accessions increasing. For example the US Army's new recruit goal for fiscal year (FY) 2015 was 59,000 and the goal for FY 2016 is 62,500. This will require the services and more importantly the National Guard to leverage every resource possible to spread their message, brand and organization to as many potential recruits as possible. One way to do this is through the use of social media (SM). According to an 8 Oct 2015 Pew Research Center report on social media usage, 90 percent of individuals aged 18-29 use SM as a way to get and share information about health, civic life, news consumption, communities, teenage life, parenting, dating and even their level of stress.[1] Social media's acceptance and use among the general public "Is that it helps connect people with each other in ways that are valuable, meaningful, and convenient, on their own terms, and on an unprecedented scale."[2] Eighty-two percent of online adults age 18 to 29 use Facebook, exactly the demographics that the services are trying to recruit.[3] The Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines social media as: forms of electronic communication (such as Web sites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos).[4] This research paper evaluates current recruiting social media operations of the different branches of service to analyze if the National Guard is properly sourcing and leveraging social media to improve the recruiting effort. Since the

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[1] Perrin, Andrew, "Social Media Usage: 2005-2015," 8 October 2015,
http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/10/08/social-networking-usage-2005-2015/.
[2] Blanchard, Oliver. *Social Media ROI: Managing and Measuring Social Media Efforts in Your Organization.* Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc., 2011, pp 4.
[3] Duggan, Maeva, "The Demographics of Social Media Users," 19 August 2015,
http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/08/19/the-demographics-of-social-media-users/.
[4] Merrim-Webster Online Dictionary, s.v. "social media," accessed 22 December 2015, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/social%20media.

National Guard plays a significant and growing role in the current defense structure, it may need even more special attention in this area.

In FY 2015, the Army had a difficult time reaching its recruiting goals. During the 3rd quarter of FY 2015, the United States Army Active Component had an accession rate of 89.2 percent and the Army National Guard Component had an accession rate of 90.3 percent.[5] Moreover, all of the other services were at 100 percent accession rates or higher during the same period.[6] However, according to the Chief of Public Affairs for the United States Army Recruiting (USAREC) command Kelli Bland, the Army exceeded its FY 2015 goal of 59,000 accessions by 170 at the years end.[7] Surprised by the end of year performance, the Army could not explain the surge of recruits during the 4th quarter to meet its overall accessions goal for FY 2015.

In retrospect, two possible reasons may have caused the recruiting increase during the 4th quarter. The first reason may have been due to an increase of recruits from high school graduates looking for an option to attend and pay for college. The second and most probably reason may have been the robust decentralized social media presence maintained by Army recruiting brigades, battalions, companies and centers. This approach of having localized recruiting Facebook pages that are administered by specific commands, units, ranks, military occupational specialties, city locations, and countries, empowers the Army recruiting community to hyper-target content and messaging. This enables Army recruiting units and organizations to use social media platforms to talk to their respective communities in a personal and meaningful way. Potential recruits are able to receive localized news and

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[5] US Department of Defense, "DoD Announces Recruiting, Retention Numbers Through June 2015," US Department of Defense, http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/612742.
[6] Ibid
[7] Vanden Brook, Tom, "Army Hits its Target for Recruits in 2015," *USA Today*, 1 Oct 2015, http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2015/10/01/army-recruiting/73166250/

information about recruiting events and activities near them. Overall, this helps to ensure that pertinent content is delivered to the right people, at the right time, and on the right platforms.

Moreover, the Army Facebook page has been verified and has approximately 3.8 million "Likes" which post news, stories, current events and information regarding the Army. Pages that are verified signifies that the Facebook Pages are operated by legitimate companies, organizations, and persons. The verification and annotation is represented by a blue circle with a white check mark in it, beside profile names on timelines, in search results and elsewhere on the social network.[8] Currently, representatives of the Army do not respond to comments posted on the Army Facebook page. Instead, the Army Facebook page has links to the goarmy.com web page and a "Joining the Army frequently asked questions" site. Overall, the Army may be missing a great opportunity to start dialogues with followers on their pages to increase awareness, connectivity, and accessions.

To improve recruiting using social media one concentrated voice is better than many. Through an exploration of the Facebook pages of the different services, it is obvious that each service has many varied recruiting pages. The Marine Corps and Air Force are the only services that have one official government recruiting Facebook page that is verified by Facebook. The Marine Corps and Air Force recruiting pages have almost 4.3 million and 800,000 "Likes" respectively, no other service comes close to those number of "Likes." The Navy has zero verified recruiting pages and no page with any significant amount of "Likes."

All services each have a Facebook page but just for their respective service, not specifically for recruiting. There are numerous recruiting Facebook pages but they are at the operational and tactical levels for units, for units located in cities, or by branches or career fields. For example the Army has an official US Army Recruiting Korea, US Army Medical

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[8] Facebook, accessed 23 December 2015,
https://www.facebook.com/help/196050490547892?sr=1&query=what%20is%20a%20verified%20page&sid=0
1vdpKvK05ghvvYYG

Recruiting Center - Landstuhl, Germany Facebook page, Warrant Officer Recruiting, and US Army Atlanta Recruiting Battalion pages. When you search for "U.S. Navy Recruiting," there are about a hundred Facebook pages to choose from.[9] A possible recruit may be overwhelmed by the choices and may not feel confident that the information he gets from sites that have less than 1,000 "Likes" or even many less than 100 "Likes." The same can be said for the Marine Corps Recruiting at the tactical level, there are about a 100 different pages besides the official government US Marine Corps Recruiting Facebook page when a search for "US Marine Corps Recruiting" was conducted. Fifty-five of them did not seem to be actively publicly managed and stated "Details not shared publicly." According to the Marine Corps Social Media Action Officer, this most likely means they are for closed groups of recruiters so they can privately share information among members of the group.[10] Communication is another important use of social media, especially during times of crisis or during natural disasters in the homeland. This paper will not discuss this important aspect of social media. There were 76 pages that didn't even have a profile picture for their page, but some still had "Likes," probably from the administrator and other Marines that work at that recruiting station. None of the search results listed a page with more than 5,000 "Likes" or any pages that were verified. There was a total of 27,257 "Likes" combined from the tactical level pages based on the search of "US Marine Corps Recruiting." There is a divide between the national Marine Corps Recruiting Facebook and the tactical recruiting Facebook pages. All of the "Likes" are not being flowed to the tactical recruiting Facebook pages.

The National Guard recruiting offices that use social media are handled at the state level. It is up to the Adjutant General or the Army and Air Guard Commanders of each state, to

[9] Facebook, accessed 20 January 2016, https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?init=quick&q=Us%navy&tas=0.799521024338901.

[10] Schroeder, Capt. Amber, Social Media Action Officer, United States Marine Corps Recruiting Command, Marine Corps Base Quantico, VA. To the author. E-mail, 2 February 2016.

determine if and how states use social media to assist in recruiting. In most states there are at least one Army and one Air Guard recruiting Facebook page. For larger states they have multiple pages for cities and areas within the state. When a Facebook search of "National Guard Recruiting" was done, there were 276 active Facebook pages, with the total number of "Likes" from all of the pages combined was just short of 545,000.[11] But these responses are very unbalanced. For example one page from the Florida Army National Guard had almost 105,000 "Likes," almost 20 percent of the total "Likes" from the search.[12] This led to research on why this page was so successful. A recruiter for the Florida Army National Guard (FLARNG) stated they require new recruits to "Like" and "Share" the FLARNG Recruiting Facebook page with their friends. This helps to spread the message of the FLARNG, which generates leads and questions on their Facebook page that another member of the team responds to. This team works in conjunction with the Recruit Sustainment Program (RSP) for access to the new recruits to spread the FLARNG's message. The recruiter also stated that the FLARNG is also looking to increase their social media presence in Snap chat since the younger demographics are increasing the use of this platform. Unfortunately, I was unable to speak or correspond with the Marketing Account Executive from CACI Integrated Communications the contractor for the FLARNG Recruiting and Retention office and administrator for the FLARNG social media platforms to provide further insight.

   The current strategy of decentralized execution of recruiting and the use of social media is more labor intensive but better linked to the community in the area of the recruiting center. This type of effort relates to the local community better than a national recruiting Facebook page. With decentralized execution there is no consistency of recruiting Facebook pages.

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[11] Facebook, accessed 26 January 2016
https://www.facebook.com/search/str/national%2Bguard%2Brecruiting/keywords_pages.
[12] Facebook, accessed 26 Jan 2016, https://www.facebook.com/FLArmyNationalGuard/?fref=ts.

There are too many pages that are not being monitored as closely and effectively as they should be. With the numerous different pages, in order to properly maintain and respond to posts or questions in a timely manner, it requires resources that most recruiting offices don't have. Either offices contract out this resource, taking money out of their budget, or task a recruiter or support staff as an additional duty to respond. According to the former manager of the Army's Facebook page,

> "On the micro-level, Army recruiting brigade, battalions, companies and centers maintain social media presences. This approach of not having one official recruiting page empowers the Army recruiting community to hyper-target content and messaging to ensure that content is delivered to the right people at the right time and on the right platforms. We empower Army recruiting units and organizations to use social media to talk to their respective communities in a personal, meaningful way. With this approach, potential recruits will receive localized news and information about recruiting events and activities near them."[13]

The Army also has an office called the Army Marketing and Research Group (AMRG) that falls under the Assistant Secretary of the Army, Manpower and Reserve Affairs that assists the Army with branding, marketing, and analysis.[14] AMRG conducts national marketing, market analysis, and accession analytics to develop best-value strategies and tactics to motivate the best qualified young ladies and men to consider serving in the Army on either active duty or in the National Guard and Reserves. Some of the key responsibilities that AMRG has are the branding and marketing of the Army, developing performance metrics to determine the return on investment of marketing efforts, and maintaining or enhancing the Army's brand and messaging to increase public recognition and acceptance.[15] According to Karen A. Herbert a member of the Research Integration Team of AMRG,

> AMRG provides the oversight of the advertising agency under contract to do all Army advertising. The agency performs the full functions of advertising,

[13] Brown, Brittany, Social Media Manager, Army Marketing & Research Group, VA. To the author. E-mail, 25 January 2016.
[14] The Assistant Secretary of the Army, Manpower and Reserve Affairs, accessed 27 January 2016, http://www.asamra.army.mil/org_amrg.cfm
[15] Ibid

media buys, production, and some research that directly supports specific creative or their understanding of market that relates to their production. Either the agency, or in some cases other sub-contractors, perform various other parts of the advertising & marketing package, such as tracking of advertising results, focus groups that give feedback to potential marketing ideas, etc. The ad agency also uses the results of research findings from other sources on the youth market, influencer markets, or specialty markets. The AMRG conducts in-house analysis of operational data and provides oversight of non-agency contracted research that feeds into the knowledge base of both AMRG staff and the advertising agency staff. The AMRG shares with and obtains research from external sources, such as the Joint Advertising and Marketing Research (JAMRS). The Army Studies Program is run from the Sec Army level, and sponsors research across all levels of DA, with some of their topics covering areas of interest to marketing and recruiting efforts.[16]

The Army's approach is in direct contrast to the method applied by the Air Force. During an interview with the Deputy Chief of Public Affairs, Ms. Annette Crawford, she established that the Air Force contracts a large well established advertising agency that handles advertising, marketing, development of social media platforms, and website development and design. The advertising agency works with the Air Force Recruiting, Public Affairs and Marketing sections before any material or ideas are released to the general public. There is censorship for operational security and tastefulness before release. The advertising agency also develops their own metrics to measure the effectiveness of each element of the campaign to ensure the Air Force is reaching the right demographics for their target audience. The Air Force Recruiting Facebook page reflects what the advertising agency developed and the content of what is posted on the page is managed by the Air Force Recruiting office. The agency has created a systematic approach to posting by incorporating different themes. For example the Facebook page has "Throw Back Thursdays" where they post a picture of combat, operations, bases, places and Airmen of the past and they post "Today in Air Force History" pieces denoting significant events that mark Air Force tradition and pride. They also post practice ASVAB questions every Saturday, and display action videos of a specific

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[16] Herbert, Karen, A., Research Integration Team, Army Marketing and Research Group. To the author. E-mail, 8 February 2016.

career field that the Air Force has. Additionally, there are posts about current events affecting the Air Force or how the Air Force helped shape a current event. For instance on Martin Luther King Day, the Air Force Facebook page posted a video on the Tuskegee Airmen and how they helped break racial barriers.   The recruiting team plans most posted content out at least one month in advance. An item of interest stated by Ms. Crawford was that the purpose of the Facebook page was to "Inspire and Engage" individuals that visit or follow the Air Force Recruiting page. It was not necessarily "join the Air Force for the training and benefits."

The most important factor that differentiates the Air Force Facebook page from the other services is a three person team called "Chatters," made up of former award winning retired Air Force recruiters. This team is contracted and paid for by the Air Force marketing department. They work closely with the policy and operations section to ensure they have the most current information or access to sites that can help to research the most accurate and effective answers that may affect potential new recruits. The Air Force posts pictures, videos, or stories about airmen or jobs on the page and when an individual posts a question one of the contracted "Chatters" provides a thorough and accurate answer in a timely manner, usually within an hour. This is what differentiates the Air Force Recruiting Facebook page from that of all the other services. Looking at the posts on the Air Force Facebook page approximately 25 percent of all comments are questions regarding joining the Air Force. From personal observation of viewing the official Air Force Recruiting Facebook page for the past few months about 25 percent of posts were from civilians or members of a different service who had questions about joining the Air Force. However, not all interested individuals would qualify for entrance in the Air Force. Some individuals were not citizens of the US and currently living in foreign countries; some were still on active duty with another service or didn't meet the requirements for the field they were interested in. But the

key was the "Chatters" providing accurate and proper advice to the individuals interested in the Air Force. With the honest, quick and accurate response from the "Chatters" this added credibility to the Air Force Recruiting Facebook page. The "Chatters" did not provide false hope; they just gave straightforward advice of what the requirement was and wished the individual luck in attempting to meet the requirements.

Similarly, the Marine Corps has one verified Facebook page for recruiting, which has almost 4.3 million "Likes." According to the Deputy Director of Advertising, the Marine Corps works with the J. Walter Thompson advertising firm, to build and monitor the recruiting Facebook page, and handles all aspects of advertising and messaging. The difference between the Marine Corps and Air Force recruiting Facebook pages is the way the Marine Corps monitors and responds to posts. According to the Deputy Director of Advertising, he stated that they allow followers of the page to answer any questions and respond to potential recruits. Also, this is where the region, state, unit, and local level recruiting Facebook pages can communicate with potential recruits. I believe there is a disconnect between the national recruiting page and the local or "Tactical" level recruiting Facebook page. There is no link from the Marine Corps Recruiting Facebook page to any other Facebook pages, but there are links for recruiter's addresses, a 1-800 number, and a link to the Marines.com web page. The Facebook page is more of "self-policing or crowd source monitoring,"[17] since most of the followers are current or former Marines. The Marine Corps administrator will provide oversight if responses get inappropriate or grossly misleading. The Marine Corps believes a metric to evaluate the effectiveness of the recruiting Facebook page besides the number of "Likes," is the number of "Shares." They believe the "Shares" will promote awareness and spread the strategic message of the Marine Corps. According to the Deputy Director of Advertising, the Marine Corps only spends a very small fraction of

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[17] Interview with a Deputy Director of Advertising, US Marine Corps, 29 Jan 16

their advertising budget on social media. The office considers social media an "Earned" advertising source, like any positive news coverage both in print or television, since they do not pay for the coverage and exposure. This is why the marketing firm that the Marine Corps contracts, track the number of "Shares" on posts, as one of the metrics they use to measure effectiveness.

The different services have different views of Facebook and other social media platforms. Because the services are competing against each other for the limited number of qualified applicants, during research and interviews service didn't want to share information with other services. For example one service felt that Facebook was being used by an older demographics to keep in touch with colleagues and friends and wasn't as useful anymore. They were planning to shift their focus to a different social media platform that had a younger market share. When I brought up that topic to another service, they confirmed with a meeting at Facebook headquarters in Menlo Park California that this was untrue. The Facebook representative stated that younger adults don't realize they use Facebook because they are on it so much.

The Department of Defense contracts a team to help all the services by conducting studies to assist and ensure advertising dollars are being used in the right platform to reach or expose their message to the maximum number of possible recruits. In correspondence by phone and email, Brad Terrill, from the Defense Manpower Data Center of the Joint Advertising, Market Research and Studies (JAMRS), stated their program "Eliminates redundancies and fosters efficiencies for the Department of Defense. Across DoD, the Services require the same basic information and resource needs regarding recruiting markets and information about the youth population from which the All-Volunteer Force is drawn. JAMRS' goal is to

ensure that the shared needs of military recruiting are performed one time for the entire

Department rather than once per Service or program."[18]

Mr. Terrill also stated,

> "JAMRS ensures that the shared information needs required for military recruiting are met and that duplication of efforts is minimized. This includes conducting tracking studies to monitor the propensity to serve and the attitudes and behaviors of specific populations essential for recruiting success (i.e., prospects, educators, parents, recruiters). Specifically, these studies include youth propensity polls (an effort conducted at the joint level since the advent of the All-Volunteer Force), influencer likelihood to recommend service polls, and the new recruit survey. JAMRS also tracks the effectiveness of all DoD recruitment advertising campaigns so they can optimize their marketing resources, and helps to ensure hundreds of millions of dollars of advertising is spent. JAMRS conducts limited outreach efforts that are distinct from—yet integral to—those of the Services. JAMRS creates a receptive recruiting environment by building awareness and advocacy for the value of military service through Joint-level outreach. These efforts include two brands: Today's Military and My Future. Digital components include Todaysmilitary.com, Myfuture.com, and Medicineandthemilitary.com (a medical recruiting site). JAMRS also annually publishes FUTURES Magazine, the Department's only Joint Military Recruiting publication which is sent to 86 percent of all American public high schools and all Department of Defense Education Activity schools worldwide. JAMRS also has maintains a small footprint of social media engagement through Facebook, Twitter and YouTube"[19]

JAMRS and services do not have data or metrics that show either a positive or negative

correlation between the use of social media platforms and recruiting. According to JAMRS

"this has never been calculated."[20] They never tested correlation to that general broad sense

but they do know the importance of social media in the recruiting process (e.g. awareness,

branding, etc.).[21] But the advertising and marketing firms that the services contract analyze

data and establish metrics that measure effectiveness of social media. Unfortunately the

advertising and marketing firms did not respond or services didn't know or couldn't share the

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[18] Terrill, Brad. Defense Manpower Data Center, Joint Advertising, Market Research and Studies. To the author. E-mail, 3 February 2016.

[19] Terrill, Brad. Defense Manpower Data Center, Joint Advertising, Market Research and Studies. To the author. E-mail, 3 February 2016.

[20] Ibid

[21] Ibid

metrics used. From observation of the Facebook pages of the Marine Corps and Air Force, there have been numerous posts that indicate individuals would like to join either of the respective services. On the Air Force page the "Chatters" will respond to the individual and direct him to contact a recruiter in their area or click on the link that will take them to the Air Force.com web page so they can contact a recruiter. Both the Marine Corps and Air Force Facebook pages have links on their page to their respective .com web page.

Training

The training requirements for each of the services are similar. All the services require operational security (OPSEC) for social media sites training. This is computer based training that covers general OPSEC on what you can and cannot post on social media, as well as some recommended do and don'ts. This is an annual requirement for all service members who use computers that are on Department of Defense networks. The Army requires the administrators of official Army External Official Presences (EOPs) (aka social media sites) to complete "Army OPSEC Training for EOP Operators" and the "Defense Information System Agency's social networking class" annually.[22] The Army defines administrators of EOPs as any Soldier, DA Civilian, or Contractor who publishes, administers, or moderates information or documents for an official page, site, or account.[23]

The Army Public Affairs Specialist/Officer Training is a special career field for both enlisted and officer. Public Affairs Soldiers assist commanders on spreading their message through print, media and web. They also provide news releases, articles, and photographs on

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[22] US Army, Department of the Army SOP on Standardizing Official U.S. Army EOPs, 10 Jan 14
[23] US Army, ALARACT 289/2013- Army Operations Security (OPSEC) Training for External Official Presence (EOP) Operators, October 2013

Army personnel and activities.[24] With the exponential growth in social media they have become administrators of pages, sites and accounts for units and commands.

The Navy Public Affairs Officer's job description includes responsibility for "News releases, interviews, and controlling the media message. These are all important aspects to presenting America's Navy to the world spotlight in a positive way. Public Affairs Officers are among the key decision makers who manage the Navy's image every day."[25]

The Air Force Public Affairs Officer key tasks include "preparing information for news releases and other media channels, develop a strong working relationship with media representatives, and review materials for security and integration with Air Force objectives."[26] According to Annette Crawford the Air Force online advisors or "Chatters" receive extensive training from both the Air Force and their company, because they are not chatting from computers that are on the Air Force network, they are not required to take the required Air Force computer-based training.

The Marine Corps recruiters receive a block of instruction on the use of social media in recruiting and how to understand the functions and operations of different social media platforms in the recruiting course for new recruiters. For recruiters already in the field who did not receive the social media training, it could be conducted at the monthly unit level training sessions.[27] At the district level recruiting office a representative from the advertising department also attends the monthly training sessions to provide additional training on the

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[24] US Army, Careers and Jobs, Public Affairs Officer, http://www.goarmy.com/careers-and-jobs/browse-career-and-job-categories/arts-and-media/public-affairs-officer.html

[25] US Navy, News, Media and Public Affairs, https://www.navy.com/careers/arts-media/news-media.html#ft-key-responsibilities

[26] US Air Force, Public Affairs Officer, Communicate Our Mission, http://www.airforce.com/careers/detail/public-affairs-officer/

[27] Interview with a Deputy Director of Advertising, US Marine Corps, 29 Jan 16

use of social media and information on the metrics that they use to measure the effectiveness of social media.

The use of social media can be a force multiplier that not all services are using, to its maximum potential. As demonstrated by the Iraq and Syria Islamic State (ISIS), "ISIS has established a new kind of terrorism, using marketing and digital communication tools not only for "socializing terror" through public opinion as previous terrorist groups did, but also for making terror popular, desirable, and imitable"[28] In the US more than 90 percent of individuals aged 18-29 use some form of social media platform to get information, receive the latest news, to keep in touch with friends and relatives, and to show people what they do or ate. The Air Force does the best in leveraging social media to assist with recruiting. They don't have a large overhead cost to operate their social media recruiting platforms, they provide timely and accurate information for potential recruits, and training from the Air Force is minimal. With the decreasing recruiting budgets and increase accessions of new recruits, all the services need to leverage social media. While conducting the research it was obvious that all the services are competing for similar demographics. In the end this is a competition and sharing of best practices among services is not done. In some cases it is a trade secret of how they measure success and information garnered by outside sources and marketing firms.

The National Guard should establish one official National Guard Recruiting Facebook page with links to the pages and websites of the 54 states and territories. A study completed by JAMRS indicated that the National Guard needs to sell the uniqueness of staying home and working in a normal civilian career, while still serving the country and state. Forty-five percent of individuals aged 17-35 were not aware they could serve in the military part-time.[29]

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28 Lesaca, Javier; *On social media, ISIS uses modern cultural images to spread anti-modern values*; The Brookings Institution; http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/techtank/posts/2015/09/24-isis-social-media-engagement
29 Joint Advertising, Marketing, and Research Studies, National Guard Study, August 2012.

The National Guard should incorporate what the FLARNG does in their state on the national level. They could have all the new Soldiers who are in the RSP program "Like" and "Share" the National Guard Recruiting Facebook page. The National Guard will need to contract or hire individuals to respond to monitor and respond to all post in an accurate and timely manner. Responses could range from just a thank you for your post, up to providing a recruiter's phone number for the particular state or territory. This could exponentially share the uniqueness of the National Guard. The difficulty in completing the social media circle will be at the state and territory level for the National Guard. The states and territories will have to ensure they have an individual to monitor and answer any questions on their recruiting Facebook page. Filling this requirement should be handled at the local level by either contracting an individual or developing an additional duty for an onboard staff member. Once the national page is established, the key will be at the local level; this is where the National Guard will get the accession. The National Guard should do a cost estimate to provide three individuals to establish, monitor and respond on the national level National Guard social media platforms and one individual per state and territory to do the same at the local level. If the budget can support this activity, I believe this will definitely increase the new accessions for the National Guard.

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