

# **The Army Reserve and Social Media**

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Webmaster and Chief of Social Media  
November 9, 2009



- ❑ Started slowly in early 2008
  - ✓ Limited presence on Facebook and a blog
  - ✓ Focused on Employer Partnership



**MY ARMY RESERVE**  
A POSITIVE INVESTMENT FOR AMERICA

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2008

### Drive Your Army Reserve Career With the Employer Partnership

Imagine you're driving your "dream" car on a favorite route close to home or somewhere across the country. You're following your road map, controlling the speed and the direction.

Now imagine you're traveling on the road map you've laid out for yourself in your careers - the one in the Army Reserve and the one in the civilian workplace. Always looking for options, you check out the Army Reserve's "job connection" microsite at [http://www.armyreserve.army.mil/ARWEB/NEWS/WORD/Employer\\_Partnership.htm](http://www.armyreserve.army.mil/ARWEB/NEWS/WORD/Employer_Partnership.htm)

At the Army Reserve Employer Partnership site, you'll find a meeting space where you can connect with employers who recognize the value you and your fellow Army Reserve Soldiers bring to the workplace, and are eager to consider you for employment if you meet their requirements. At the "job connection" site you'll find Fortune 500 companies and a host of other businesses in the industries in which professional and experienced Army Reserve Soldiers like you are trained - health care, law enforcement, information technology, telecommunications, intelligence, civil engineering, human resources, and more. Book mark the Employer Partnership microsite, and check back often, because the Army Reserve is constantly adding new employer partners.

If you have any questions, please contact the Employer Partnership team at [ARCareers@usar.army.mil](mailto:ARCareers@usar.army.mil)


POSTED BY CHERYL PHILLIPS AT 5:24 PM  
LABELS: ARMY RESERVE EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIP  
REACTIONS:  like (0)  really like (0)  just okay (0)

MYARMYRESERVE PHOTOS AND VIDEOS

[View Flickr Photostream](#)

THE OFFICIAL ARMY RESERVE WEBSITE

 **ARMY RESERVE**

 **U.S. ARMY RESERVE**  
EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIP

- ❑ Started slowly in early 2008
  - ✓ Limited presence on Facebook and a blog
  - ✓ Focused on Employer Partnership
  
- ❑ Mostly press releases, new partner announcements and links to events like job fairs



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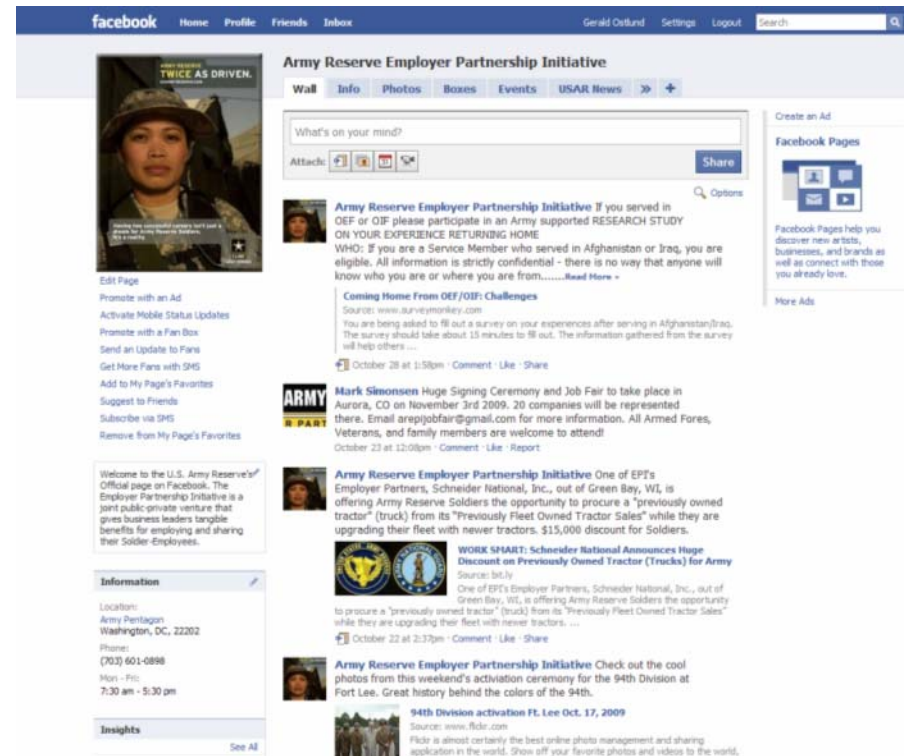
THE OFFICIAL ARMY RESERVE WEBSITE

 **ARMY RESERVE**

 **U.S. ARMY RESERVE**  
EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIP

## □ Early lessons

- ✓ Press releases and third-person stories (what we are used to producing) don't generate discussion



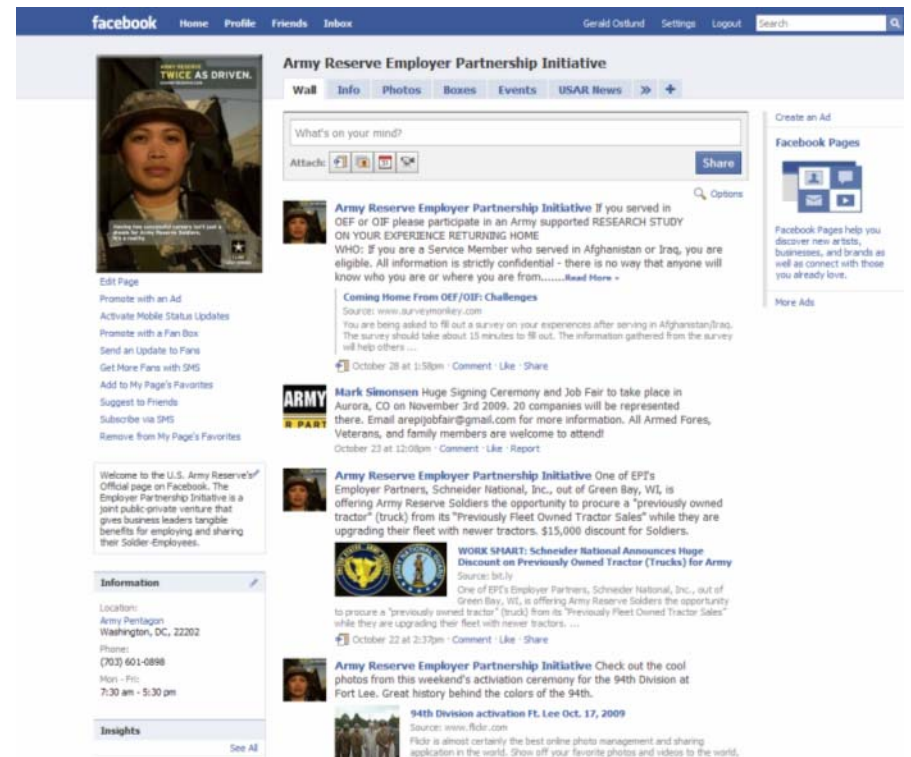
The screenshot shows the Facebook page for the Army Reserve Employer Partnership Initiative. The page header includes navigation tabs for Wall, Info, Photos, Boxes, Events, and USAR News. The main content area features several posts:

- A post titled "What's on your mind?" with a "Share" button.
- A post from "Army Reserve Employer Partnership Initiative" dated October 28 at 1:58pm, titled "Coming Home From OEF/OIF Challenges". The text asks for help with a survey on experiences after serving in Afghanistan/Iraq.
- A post from "Mark Simonson" dated October 23 at 12:05pm, titled "Huge Signing Ceremony and Job Fair to take place in Aurora, CO on November 3rd 2009".
- A post from "Army Reserve Employer Partnership Initiative" dated October 22 at 2:37pm, titled "WORK SMART: Schneider National Announces Huge Discount on Previously Owned Tractor (Trucks) for Army".
- A post from "Army Reserve Employer Partnership Initiative" dated October 17, 2009, titled "94th Division activation Ft. Lee Oct. 17, 2009".

The right sidebar contains a "Create an Ad" section and a "Facebook Pages" section with a "More Ads" link.

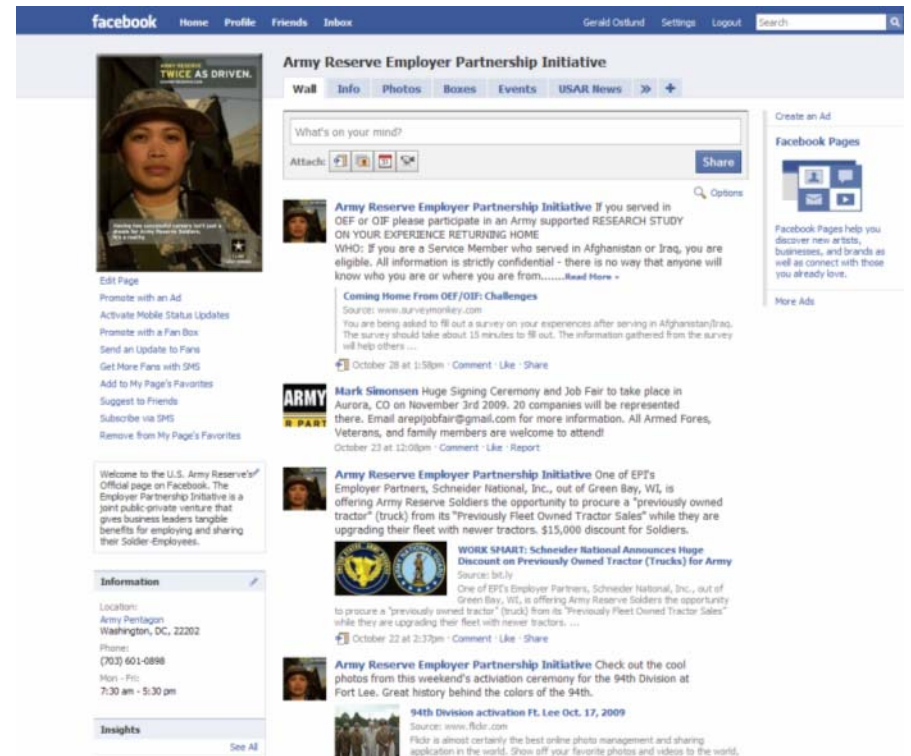
## □ Early lessons

- ✓ Press releases and third-person stories (what we are used to producing) don't generate discussion
- ✓ "Build it and they will come" also doesn't work



## □ Early lessons

- ✓ Press releases and third-person stories (what we are used to producing) don't generate discussion
- ✓ "Build it and they will come" doesn't work
- ✓ Without monitoring, the discussion ends pretty quickly



- ❑ Stop looking at social media as just another outlet for our (stale) content



The Old Way

- ❑ Stop looking at social media as just another outlet for our (stale) content
- ❑ Stop looking at social media as some whole new category with magic powers



The Old Way

❑ Instead

- ✓ How can we better tell the story?



The New Way

## □ Instead

- ✓ How can we better tell the story?
- ✓ How can we put a face on the Army Reserve?



The New Way

## □ Instead

- ✓ How can we better tell the story?
- ✓ How can we put a face on the Army Reserve?
- ✓ How can social media help us extend the reach of our stories?



The New Way

- ❑ Told thru the eyes and experiences of individual Soldiers



The Better Way

- Told thru the eyes and experiences of individual Soldiers
- First person



The Better Way

- Told thru the eyes and experiences of individual Soldiers
- First person
- Real, only semi-filtered language



The Better Way

# Our Revamped Program

- Told thru the eyes and experiences of individual Soldiers
- First person
- Real, only semi-filtered language
- Lots of fast photo and video



The Better Way

# Our Revamped Program

- Told thru the eyes and experiences of individual Soldiers
- First person
- Real, only semi-filtered language
- Lots of fast photo and video
- Bring the story to our followers in real time



The Better Way

- Army Reserve Best Warrior Competition
  - ✓ 30 top Soldiers from throughout the 210,000 strong force



# Our First Big Test Case

- ❑ Army Reserve Best Warrior Competition
  - ✓ 30 top Soldiers from throughout the 210,000 strong force
  - ✓ Five days of grueling competition



# Our First Big Test Case

- ❑ Army Reserve Best Warrior Competition
  - ✓ 30 top Soldiers from throughout the 210,000 strong force
  - ✓ Five days of grueling competition
  - ✓ One storyteller – last year's winner



- The blog was the center of the plan – Staff Sgt. Gutierrez posted from the site of the competition a couple times a day
  - ✓ What was going on
  - ✓ How were the competitors feeling
  - ✓ What were they going thru



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*“It wasn’t an easy task, as they soon found out, walking up and down the hills of Ft McCoy. I remember one steep hill in particular last year. After getting to the top of the hill my legs curled up cramping and I felt I was done at that point. These competitors, I could tell were feeling the same. But they kept moving.” Staff Sgt. Francisco Gutierrez*

- ❑ Gutierrez, using a cheap Flipvideo camera caught the action and the best off-the-cuff remarks
  - ✓ Supported by video and still photography team

The bloody foot and the PX

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- ❑ In addition to blog, used Flickr, Vimeo, Facebook, the .mil site, and email



## Our First Big Test Case

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The bloody foot and the PX

- ❑ In addition to blog, used Flickr, Vimeo, Facebook, the .mil site, and email
- ❑ Traditional media relations and internal communications were integrated into the execution plan

- ❑ The numbers. In five (5) days:
  - ✓ Blog – 18,123 views
  - ✓ Flickr – 70,322 OPENED photos
  - ✓ Vimeo – 2,301 viewed videos
  - ✓ Facebook – 532 interactions
  - ✓ Website – 700% increase in traffic that week



# Only Happens with Big Budget?

- ❑ One Soldier on a Boat with a camera and intermittent email
  - ✓ One storyteller – first person account with lots of anecdotes
  - ✓ Real, personable, funny
  - ✓ Numbers:  
Blog: 6,231  
Flickr: 9,032



## What Works – 10 plus one

- Real speak – not corporate talk
- First person – find a storyteller
- Make the fan part of the story
- Relevance trumps frequency
- A great photo goes a long way
- Raw, real, even messy video
- Don't edit real life (sh!t, d#mn, and bad grammar)
- Monitor and acknowledge
- Robust rules of engagement on all platforms
- Segment if necessary; Coordinate always
- If you are having fun, so will your fans



## How it has helped us

- Bring the public to our operations in real time
- Energized group of fans who put legs on our stories
- A venue for content normally culled from our traditional products
- Ability to keep in tune to what's being said about us on the net – and respond to it
- When someone tweets ‘I just joined the Army Reserve’ we can see it, and welcome them to the family
- A venue to Soldiers, Families, and prospects to ask questions that would normally not be heard
- Energized a stale team of communications professionals – it's dynamic and downright fun



## If we can do it, so can you

- Big organization, small budget (basically \$0)
- Big organization, small team (of one)
- Lots of resistance
- Network “protectors” dug in (and armed)
- Dispersed public affairs community – who answer to their commander, not us
- No expertise when we started (some would argue none now either, but that’s another discussion)
- Anti-social corporate personality
- Robust governance rules



- [www.armyreserve.army.mil](http://www.armyreserve.army.mil)
- [Facebook.com/myarmyreserve](https://www.facebook.com/myarmyreserve)
- [Twitter.com/myarmyreserve](https://twitter.com/myarmyreserve)
- [www.myarmyreserve.blogspot.com](http://www.myarmyreserve.blogspot.com)
- [Vimeo.com/myarmyreserve](https://www.vimeo.com/myarmyreserve)
- [www.dividshub.net/units/usarc](http://www.dividshub.net/units/usarc)



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