

Guarding Information Is Everyone's Responsibility

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ON CYBER PATROL

As covered or mandated by AF



It's really very simple. If we keep our information and communications secure lives will be saved. Operational Security (OPSEC) and Information Assurance (IA) are not just Army programs. They are a mindset that requires the constant attention of every Army officer, enlisted soldier, civilian employee, contractors - and their families.

It used to be a whole lot easier to keep a secret when soldiers carried muskets and marched onto open fields in tight formation. You deployed patrols to ward off scouts, you armed and escorted your messengers and you kept your soldiers out of taverns and away from pretty faces. Now it's a little more complicated. Technology has given us great communication capabilities. It has also opened the door to eavesdropping and spying opportunities where the enemy can be half a world away and reading or listening in as if he was seated right next to you. Technology has also given us great capabilities in securing our information flow. Firewalls, encryption and PKI have taken over the jobs of patrols and armed messengers on the networked Army of today. There are those that would tell you that technology is the ultimate answer to any security challenges the Army might have. The fact is that in an open environment that is simply not the case. There is and always will be the human factor.

It's always easy to fall victim to the pressures of deadlines, pressure from higher ranks and civilian leaders. It's faster to cut corners and bypass policies and procedures. It's easy to justify actions because it only happened "just once." The fact is no break in the IA/OPSEC perimeter is justifiable. There's too much at stake.

If all Army personnel from general staff to raw recruits do not follow IA/OPSEC policies and procedures we will remain vulnerable. The enemy is smart, technically able, and very active and if given an opportunity will exploit it. Our cyber and communication defenses are being probed every nano-second from a wide variety of sources; state sponsored intrusions, terrorist activities even little Billy next door. The only true protection is human vigilance and the only person that can ensure that happens is you!