

Category G: Command Blog

Wisconsin National Guard Public Affairs Office



Background

In March of 2011, the Wisconsin National Guard (WING) launched the WisGuard LIVE blog, the official blog of the Wisconsin National Guard. Previously, the WING Public Affairs Office (PAO) had created and maintained an official website, service member support website, Facebook page, and a Twitter account to deliver its message to the community, veterans, service members and families. The blog was designed to be a combined effort amongst WING leadership and key individuals in personifying the organization and delivering a community/family voice for the guard. Though the blog is a great tool for leadership to deliver information, the blog posts are not limited to only leadership.

Blog posts are developed and written by individuals or groups such as the Adjutant General, the Chaplain Corps, Safety Office, Equal Opportunity Office and the Family Program etc. The benefit of utilizing many contributors is that the material and subject matter are diverse and plentiful. The blog posts are planned and scheduled around key times and events of the year. The administration and posting approval is handled by the WING PAO, to ensure content is appropriate, and posts are uniformed for consistency. The blog platform allows the WING the ability to reach key audiences with information, which we were unable to properly convey in the past. This WisGuard LIVE blog has received an active and positive response, and moving forward it is an exciting medium for our organization. For the month of December 2011, our blog averaged 680 page views a day and 188 visits, with a peak of 1,760 page views and 390 visits in a single day.



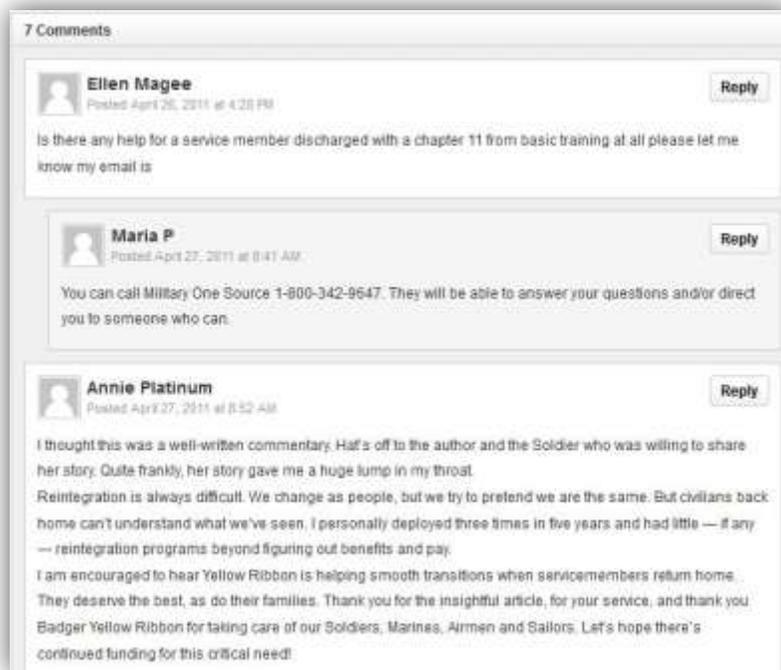
These stats are from December 2011, for visits to the blog. The peak is 390 visits in a day, only 10 months after launch.



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How it accomplishes local installation strategic objectives

The WisGuard LIVE blog allows WING leadership the ability to express personalized and candid messages to followers of the blog that our other media outlets were not postured to deliver. The WING official website is dedicated to official news releases, but not open for organizational or social commentaries. The 2-way conversation is another main objective of the blog. Getting unfiltered feedback from the WING community allows for leadership to monitor, and evaluate reactions to specific subject matter. The volume of comments on a particular post is another gauge on interest, also how quickly the posts are shared over Facebook. This real-time feedback and ability for our leadership to address concerns and issues is one of our primary focuses.



This is an example of our ability to provide quick and direct feedback to an issue for someone in the community who is searching for help, but didn't know where to go.

How it dovetails with traditional media outreach

Currently WisGuard LIVE is integrated with the official WING website, dma.wi.gov. Not only does the blog refer, and link to dma.wi.gov, but the website itself displays the most recent blog posts on its main page. With the integration of all the official web-facing media outlets, the blog has been able to draw viewership in through social media and the official WING website. In the inaugural year from March to January, we have received 144 comments to the blog posts, not including the many Facebook comments on the posts. The blog's success in creating a conversation with followers is due to this integration and accessibility from our main webpage, as well as sharing our posts on our Facebook page.

Traditional media outreach was pivotal in reaching our audience, and marketing during our initial launching of the blog.

Marketing Summary		wisguard.dodlive.mil 3/15/2011 - 1/8/2012			
Top 5 Sources		Visits	%±	G1/Visit	%±
1.	(direct)	26,302	↑ 100%	0.00%	— 0%
2.	(not set)	10,709	↑ 100%	0.00%	— 0%
3.	facebook.com	2,214	↑ 100%	0.00%	— 0%
4.	google	1,938	↑ 100%	0.00%	— 0%
5.	dma.wi.gov	1,544	↑ 100%	0.00%	— 0%

Items 2, 3, 5, illustrate the benefit of integration with our other media outlets. Item 2 refers to our blog roll widget on our main webpage.

Target audiences or communities

WisGuard LIVE is a public-facing site, and the content is designed to be open for all audiences who are interested in WING content. The main target audience the blog aims to reach is service members and families. Content of the posts are designed to reach specific audiences related to subject matter, which may not be identifiable normally. Such as; we are able to post information about suicide in the ranks, in which we are targeting specific audiences that may not be identifiable.

Short and long-term objectives

The short-term objectives are to continue to develop and improve the integration of the blog with other social media, web-facing outlets of the WING PAO. In the short-term we hope to invoke a constructive 2-way conversation with our audiences, and continue to expand, strengthen and grow our audiences. Marketing of the blog and the other WING web and social media presence is imperative in meeting this objective.

Long-term objectives

The long term objectives are to establish the WisGuard LIVE blog, as a recognizable brand to the WING community, and become a staple for the WING audience. We plan to continue our efforts to expand strengthen and grow.

Describe the specific content available

The main categories that we have separated the blogs posts into are Air Guard, Army Guard, emergency management, and service member support. The content is themed around subject matter related to community side of the WING or topics that affecting the WING. Posts address issues with policies that affect families and service members.

WisGuard LIVE Blog Exhibits – <http://wisguard.dodlive.mil>

Exhibit A: Politics is out of uniform – Posted January 4, 2012

url: <http://wisguard.dodlive.mil/2012/01/04/politics-is-out-of-uniform/>



Exhibit A is an excellent example of how the WING leadership is able to use the blog to convey important information on issues that are facing the WING community. This blog post was posted in reaction to a national news story of a soldier making political statements in uniform. In this instance, we are able to get information out, before potential mistakes are made by service members.

Exhibit B: Giving grieving families an opportunity to retreat to serenity – Posted October 7, 2011

url: <http://wisguard.dodlive.mil/2011/10/07/giving-grieving-families-an-opportunity-to-retreat-to-serenity/>



Exhibit B illustrates how the blog can be used to build the community of the WING. Events and programs such as Camp Serenity show how the WING and supporting organizations are involved, not only in active service member's lives, but veterans and our fallen heroes. This format also allows for content on a more personal level, which also promotes a conversation.

Exhibit C: Believe it – the military's posture toward PTSD has changed – Posted May 25, 2011

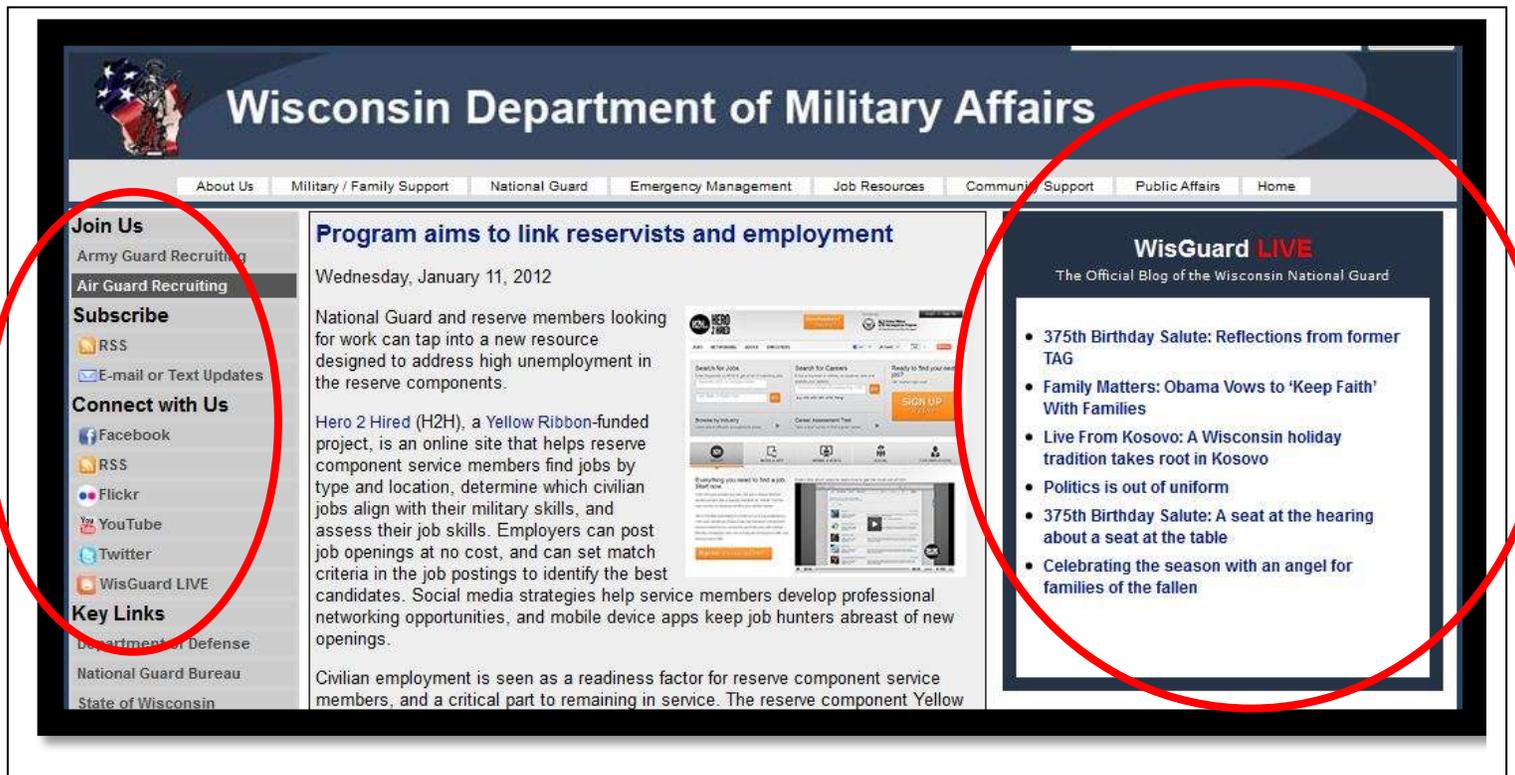
url: <http://wisguard.dodlive.mil/2011/05/25/believe-it-%E2%80%94-the-militarys-posture-toward-ptsd-has-changed/>



Exhibit C highlights the ability for discussing a serious issue that is facing our organization in a personal format. In this blog post, a senior officer opens up on his personal struggles in an area we know is troubling members of our force. This candid format allows his message to reach individuals on a larger scale.

Overview

Though the WisGuard LIVE blog is a new tool for our organization, it has been well received. The WisGuard LIVE blog is an exciting outlet for reaching out and building a stronger bond within our organization and community. The blog has opened a channel of communication, in which soldiers, families and the community are able to voice their opinion to the highest level of the WING and that makes it invaluable. It is a goal of the WING PAO to continually improve and expand the reach and brand of the blog, to ensure we are strengthening our force inside and out.



This figure shows the integration of the blog on our official website. We also share every post on our Facebook page, drawing a strong connection between all of our web-facing media sources.