Homeland Security Minute

No Such Thing as Insignificant Data

The Chapter's November Luncheon honored our 234 deceased Perpetual Members for their service to our nation and our Chapter. Each honored member's name was read aloud as part of the ceremony. When we were planning the event, it was suggested that the Chapter publish the list on names on the Chapter's website (http://www.elpasomoww.org/) to recognize their service. At first blush this seemed like a great idea but after a moment of reflection the idea was rejected.

In these times of social media and internet scammers what could have been the result of posting the names and ranks of our deceased companions? Unscrupulous businesses/scammers often use names of the deceased to send fake bills, past due credit notices and other official looking documents demanding payment from the estate.

But what data does posting the names provide? Legitimate investigators and illegitimate scammers use each bit of information to search for other key data. Here is some of the information that can be obtained from these names without further searching:

1. Name of the Individual
2. The individual is deceased
3. The rank of the individual
4. The individual was a member of MOWW
5. The individual lived at one time in El Paso
6. The individual may have been the spouse of a service member
7. The individual may have banked at a military credit union.

From this information anyone can possibly obtain:
1. Limited Military Service Records
2. Property Ownership records
3. Obituary which may reveal the names of close relatives and the birth and death dates of the individual
4. And much, much more key information

All it takes to build a profile of anyone is one or two key bits of information, an investment of time to search and a basic knowledge of public data bases. A scammer will invest the time and effort if they think they can score a possible payday. Be Careful What You Post!

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