

Is that person you met online really a military servicemember...or a scammer?

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If you meet someone on social media or a dating website or app, how can you tell if their profile is real? They say they're in the military — but scammers especially like to pose as military servicemembers stationed overseas. What's the best way to spot a fake?

The short answer is this: if your online friend asks for money, for any reason, they're a scammer. Everything about their posts and profile is designed to seem real. These scammers often steal **real** military servicemembers' names and photos for their fake profiles. Their online chats can feel real and quickly turn to talk of love or even marriage. But they have reasons they can't meet in person or on video. And the story ends with needing your "help" (= money) urgently. Which, you know, means this is a scammer.

Spot these signs of a scammer posing as a military servicemember:

- **Their photo is in several profiles in different platforms.** Check out who you're talking to. Do a reverse image search of the profile picture. Search the name online with the words "scam" and "imposter" to see what comes up. If the details don't line up, it's a scam.
- **They ask you for money.** As soon as an online love interest asks for money, the scam bell rings. And if they ask for money through gift cards, a wire transfer, payment apps like Apple Pay, CashApp, PayPal, and Zelle, or cryptocurrency, **all** the scam bells ring.

If you think someone is a scammer, cut off contact. Tell the social media platform, dating website or app, and then tell the FTC at [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://www.ftc.gov/ReportFraud). Share this post to alert your friends and followers to this scam.

**“We met online. I’ve
never seen them.
Now they want money.”**

That’s a scam.



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