
Veterans of Modern Warfare

#33107 P.O. Box 96503 Washington, DC 20090-6503

www.vmwusa.org

Toll-free: 888.445.9891



Veterans of Modern Warfare Chapter Start-Up Guide

*Information and support for US Armed Forces, veterans,
and their families affected by wartime service*

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Preface

A positive, proactive attitude is essential in forming any new organization and must be carried forward during ongoing chapter operations. Chapter organizers must be prepared to lead, work as a team, and be eager to learn and share. This combination of “can do” attitude and teamwork displayed by the U.S. Armed Forces around the world has contributed to our country’s well-being. The same approach is needed now to pursue the rightful recognition and recompense for veterans’ service and sacrifices made on today’s battlefields. **VMW** thanks its members and supporters who have offered encouragement, provided inspiration and contributed to the formation of the organization.

Mission Statement

The mission of **VMW** is to provide education, advocacy, and support for veterans affected by the complexities of modern warfare.

VMW Core Values

The *primary purposes* of **VMW** are:

- Furthering comradeship amongst those who are or have been members of the Armed Forces of the United States
- Honoring the memory of deceased veterans and members of the Armed Forces and aiding and comforting their survivors
- Encouraging patriotism
- Assisting hospitalized, disabled and needy veterans and their dependents overcome issues associated or attributed to their service in the Armed Forces of the United States

Any secondary activities of **VMW** are:

- Promoting the social welfare of the community
- Promoting entertainment venues, assuring that the proper care and assistance to hospitalized veterans or members of the Armed Forces is provided
- Conducting programs for charitable, scientific, literary, or educational purposes

Why Form a VMW Chapter?

By forming a chapter you are creating a voice in your area that has the backing of a National organization. You can network with other Chapters in your state or region. This network can become a greater force in helping other veterans who have served our country.

Who can join VMW?

Any veteran or member of the Armed Forces of the United States is eligible to join VMW, as long as they have one or more days of “*qualifying*” military service on or after August 2, 1990. Military service “*must*” be characterized as having never been discharged under other than honorable conditions or, still serving honorably in the armed forces of the United States of America. New members “*must*” submit a copy of one of the following to show veteran status:

- (1) DD-214
- (2) DD-215
- (3) NGB Form 22
- (4) Valid military or VA ID card
- (5) Other proof of qualification for membership. Certification of Military Service (NA Form 13038) from the National Personnel Records Center is the equivalent of a DD-214.

Steps in Forming a VMW Chapter

This section provides a systematic approach to organizing a VMW chapter and the steps do not necessarily have to occur in the order presented. **All parts of the chapter kit *must* be completed before it is forwarded for review and approval.**

Step 1 – Interested chapter organizers need to meet to discuss chapter formation requirements and establish coordination and communication strategies to reach their goals.

After you and your fellow veterans have completed the work of spreading the news about your intention to form a new VMW chapter, set a date for your first meeting. You will want to get the word out to everyone in your area, and here are some ways to do it:

- post cards to prospective members
- public service announcements on the radio, TV and newspaper
- announcements on blogs and websites frequented by veterans from your area

It may take several meetings before you have the commitment of the 10 members required to form a chapter, but at each meeting, you will need to demonstrate that you are prepared. At the organizational meeting you should:

- Call the meeting to order, introduce yourself and other organizers. Thank everyone for coming and ask them to introduce themselves and, if they choose, share their military experience with the group.
- Describe **VMW** as to their aims and purposes, the organizational makeup, benefits, programs and services
- Hold a question and answer session
- Ask for membership commitments
- Fill out membership applications
- Select Chapter Organization Committee Officers (Pres, VP, Treasurer, Secretary, etc)
- Determine other Committees and their memberships
- Distribute membership applications and promotional brochures to recruit new members

Step 2 – Assemble Chapter Petition forms for VMW Headquarters. Petition forms to be included in Charter kit include:

- **VMW** Charter Petition with signatures from a minimum of 10 or more individual member petitioners
- Completed membership applications with a photocopy of one of the following: current DOD ID card, DD214, DD215 or a NGB Form 22 (please black out all social security numbers). Completed membership applications must meet the requirements stated in “Who can join Veterans of Modern Warfare (VMW)” section of chapter kit for each member.
- Dues: VMW HQ is not charging organizational dues for the 1st year of membership.
- Chapter contact roster listing Organizing Committee officers and both street/rural route addresses and Email addresses of all members.
- Commitment Form indicating intention to comply with **VMW** Bylaws and other governing documents (signed by Chapter Organizing Committee Chair or President).

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Step 3 – Receive Charter, elect Chapter Officers.

Once the VMW National Office approves your charter and notifies you of your chapter number, you have 90 days to elect the chapter officers. These are the officers of the chapter itself, who will take over the functions done by the chapter organizing committee officers. You must have 10 members present to elect your first chapter officers, and you must elect and certify these officers before VMW National may assist you with Step 4.

Step 4 – IRS Compliance

Once the chapter officers are elected, VMW National will assist the chapter with IRS compliance within its state jurisdiction. Individual states have their own specific laws regarding 501(c)(19) veterans service organizations.

How To Operate a Chapter

Finding Members

VMW membership is limited to those who served in the Armed Forces of the United States during the period from August 2nd, 1990 to the present day as outlined in the “Who can join Veterans of Modern Warfare (VMW)” section.

The principle of “strength in numbers” is most important as we work to help veterans coming home today. Ten veterans, plus their families and supporters, working together for a common objective, are far more effective than the same ten individuals doing the same amount of work separately. The following is a partial list of potential sources to search, use, or contact for chapter members.

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------------|----|------------------------|
| 1 | Local business owners | 15 | Public officials |
| 2 | Professional associations | 16 | Trade Unions |
| 3 | Service work contacts | 17 | Tax records |
| 4 | Mortgage records | 18 | Telephone books |
| 5 | Referrals | 19 | Former members |
| 6 | Business associates | 20 | Religious groups |
| 7 | Chamber of Commerce | 21 | Military bases |
| 8 | Reserve centers | 22 | Veterans organizations |
| 9 | National Guard | 23 | Display booths |
| 10 | Parades | 24 | Open houses |
| 11 | Reunions | 25 | Monthly meetings |
| 12 | Bumper stickers & decals | 26 | Day-to-day contacts |
| 13 | Restaurants | 27 | County/State fairs |
| 14 | VA facility | 28 | Vet Centers |

People join for a variety of reasons. The most common reasons include being asked and wanting to support something they believe in. Other reasons may be more complex, such as:

- *Altruism* – support of the organization in order to help others.
- *Information* – receive specialized information that is not available elsewhere.
- *Involvement* – participation, having a voice, and playing an active role in policymaking and activities of the organization.
- *Networking* – meet people, learn new ideas and skills; promote your interests or business.

Chapter organizers must be aware of what motivates a particular prospect and focus on how VMW membership can benefit the needs of that person.

Promotional Tools

Most members have found that personal contact is by far the best and most effective way to recruit members. It works well in an organized setting or while meeting people in personal and business travels. We also encourage chapters to submit public service announcements and advertisements for publication in your local newspaper and on radio and television to promote membership recruitment efforts.

Getting to “Yes”...

If prospective members believe in **VMW**'s causes and programs and want to be kept regularly informed about their issues, they should belong to **VMW**. The **VMW Record of Achievement** is an excellent way to share our programs and services with a prospective member and reinforce that message throughout the new member orientation process.

Five Talking Points for recruiting new members:

- **VMW** provides a direct voice for veterans of our generation. Veterans of OEF, OIF, GWOT, DS/S and the other conflicts of the “modern era” hold all the votes in **VMW**, and we elect our leaders to represent our views and priorities to the nation.
- **VMW** has an institutional history making us an established, recognized, and trusted source of information and policy input for media and elected officials.
- **VMW** is young enough as an organization to be agile, able to adapt quickly to address emerging needs and priorities of veterans and current US Armed Forces.
- **VMW** promotes equality of participation and membership benefits for all eligible individuals, regardless of any gender, ethnic, racial, religious, reserve/guard/active duty history, or other status they may hold. Everyone who serves our country in uniform in the current era is equally deserving of a place and a voice in our organization.
- **VMW** is a veterans' service organization, not a social or foreign policy advocacy group. We do not take positions on socially divisive issues that are secondary or unrelated to our purpose. Our purpose is to assist veterans and current Armed Forces, to grant them the opportunity to speak for themselves regarding the care and benefits they have earned.

Chapter Officers and Their Suggested Duties

President / CEO: The president is the presiding officer at all meetings. The president oversees all activities of the chapter, including those of other elected and appointed officers, directors and committees. Together with the treasurer the president shall be responsible for all monies received by the chapter. It is customary for the president to be the spokesperson representing **VMW** at all public functions, i.e., memorial and commemorative services, special activities, award presentations and community events. The president is accountable for accurate record keeping and all officer responsibilities.

Vice President / COO: The vice president shall preside at meetings and represent the chapter president in his or her absence.

Secretary / CCO: The secretary is charged with maintaining all records, handling correspondence, routing information and chairing disciplinary code hearings. The secretary must keep monthly meeting minutes in a defined location. Accurate records must be kept in the case of audit.

Treasurer / CFO: The treasurer is responsible for all financial transactions. This includes maintaining the chapter bank accounts. It is suggested that each account require two signatures [e.g. president and treasurer] to withdraw funds. Accurate records must be kept to be ready for a future financial audit.

Chapter Administration

To promote growth and participation, Chapter organizers, members, and officers should:

- Establish a permanent meeting place and time for membership and board meetings (if there is a local Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter (VVA), they are typically willing to assist with this).
- Create and distribute an agenda and time limit (one hour or less) for meetings.
- Business is conducted using your constitution & bylaws, and Roberts Rules of Order.
- Set a date for officer elections so that National has the list of new officers two months before the National conference.
- MEETINGS:

Meeting order typically proceeds as follows:

Call meeting to order

Invocation

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll call of officers

Minutes of previous meeting

Application for membership

Swearing in new members

Call for bills and communications

Officer and committee reports

Old business (carry over from past meetings)

New business

Announcements

Benediction

Adjourn

Additionally:

- Establish ideas for community projects and fundraising.
- Establish a permanent location for files and historical chapter information.
- Maintain good rapport with the local business community and the media.
- Plan a schedule of interesting speakers, films, panel discussions and other activities as part of your monthly chapter membership meeting.
- Encourage participation of family members and other prospective members
- Adopt procedures to resolve disagreements “in-house” using the chapter structure.
- Maintain contacts with the National office for assistance in areas where the chapter leadership or members have questions.

Committees

By forming committees, the local chapter helps manage its affairs, by selecting members for each committee who have interest or expertise in that committee’s function. The VMW National committees, as of this writing, include; Chaplaincy, Economic Opportunities, Environmental Exposures, Government Affairs, Justice Involved, Health Care Services, Native-American Veterans, Student Veterans, Veteran Services and Women Veterans. Each chapter may choose to form committees that reflect one or more national committee to establish common priorities and implement programs at the local chapter level.

Conclusion

VMW believes that today’s veterans can and must make a difference for themselves in obtaining proper recognition, diagnosis and treatment for conditions they incurred during their service to our country. Our experiences before, during and after deployment are invaluable to the understanding of national defense issues. Without continued strong advocacy of our causes, our military will have inadequate force protection and future generations of service members will suffer needless health consequences. Thus, creating local chapters is one important mechanism to ensure greater preparedness, better service members’ health policies and fairness to all veterans. VMW stands ready to assist with chapter formations and we will faithfully facilitate the long-term viability of these chapters.

VMW New Chapter Formation Package:

The following must be completed and submitted as a packet to VMW HQ.

Dear Chapter Formation Committee Officers:

We applaud your decision to form a VETERANS OF MODERN WARFARE (VMW) chapter in your community. After reviewing the chapter start-up guide, you are ready to begin the paper work portion of chapter formation. Please type or print legibly as you complete the following forms:

- **VMW** charter petition with signatures from a minimum of 10 or more individual member petitioners
- Completed membership applications with a photocopy of one of the following: current DOD ID card, DD214, DD215 or a NGB Form 22. Completed membership applications must meet the requirements stated in “Who can join Veterans of Modern Warfare (VMW)” section of chapter kit for each member.
- Dues: VMW HQ is not charging organizational dues for the 1st year of membership..
- Chapter contact roster listing chapter formation committee officers and both street/rural route addresses and Email addresses of all members.
- Commitment form indicating intention to comply with **VMW** bylaws and other governing documents (signed by chapter formation committee president/chair).

Double-check all information for accuracy and completeness prior to mailing. These papers become part of your Chapter's permanent file. Once completed send the petition package to:

Veterans of Modern Warfare
Attn: Membership Department
#33107 PO Box 96503
Washington, DC 20090-6503
Tel: 888.445.9891

Completion of the Charter Process:

Upon receipt of the completed VMW Charter packet, we will inform the petitioning chapter that it has been approved and we will assign your Chapter Charter Number. Until this process is complete, we recommend that you identify the chapter as a “forming” chapter to avoid any misunderstanding or confusion about your status.

The chapter may not solicit funds nor receive donations for tax deduction purposes from companies, corporations, or the public until the chapter is fully chartered. However, the chapter may always collect for membership dues and donations which are made out to and deposited by VMW National. Contact VMW at 1.888.445.9891 for questions on this, or any other matter.

Veterans of Modern Warfare New Chapter Agreement Form

We the undersigned officers of the Veterans of Modern Warfare Chapter Formation Committee in (city, state) _____ acknowledge and agree that we:

- 1) Have fully read and will abide by the VMW By-Laws.
- 2) Will not solicit funds nor receive donations for tax deduction purposes from companies, corporations, or the general public until the chapter is fully chartered by the National VMW. Further, we understand that civil and/or criminal penalties may result if we engage in improper fund raising.

We understand that failure to abide by the above documents and restrictions may result in our VMW charter being denied or withdrawn.

PRESIDENT

Printed Name _____ *Signature* _____ *Date* _____

VICE PRESIDENT

Printed Name _____ *Signature* _____ *Date* _____

TREASURER

Printed Name _____ *Signature* _____ *Date* _____

SECRETARY

As VMW chapter formation committee secretary in (location) _____

I hereby certify that at a meeting held on _____ (date), at which sufficient voting members were present and approved the adoption of the VMW By-Laws.

Printed Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Subscribed and sworn to before me this ___ day of _____ 20__

Name of Notary Public _____

My Commission Expires _____

VMW New Chapter Petition Form

We, the undersigned current and former service members, do hereby petition the Veterans of Modern Warfare (VMW) board of directors to recognize us as a “forming” chapter.

We also certify that we have reviewed the VMW By-Laws and agree to conform to the principles and guidelines set forth by the corporation and its members. Further, we attest that the following information is accurate and legal, to the best of our knowledge.

	<i>Printed or Typed Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
1.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____
7.	_____	_____
8.	_____	_____
9.	_____	_____
10.	_____	_____
11.	_____	_____
12.	_____	_____
13.	_____	_____
14.	_____	_____
15.	_____	_____