
Veterans of Modern Warfare

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Chapter Start Up Guide

| | | |
|------|---------|-----------|
| ARMY | MIA/POW | AIR FORCE |
| NAVY | GAURD | MARINES |

*Information and Support for those
involved in and affected by War*

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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 led to many successful combat operations, and the same approach is still needed now to pursue the rightful recognition and recompense for sacrifices made on today’s battlefields. VMW thanks its members and leaders who contributed to, offer encouragement, and provided inspiration.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Veterans of Modern Warfare, Inc, hereinafter referred to as the “VMW”, is to **provide education, advocacy, and support for veterans affected by the complexities of modern warfare.**

VMW Core Values

The primary purposes of the VMW are:

- A. Furthering comradeship among persons who are or have been members of the Armed Forces,
- B. Honoring the memory of deceased veterans and members of the Armed Forces and aiding and comforting their survivors,
- C. Encouraging patriotism, and
- D. Aiding hospitalized, disabled and needy veterans and their dependents.

Any secondary activities of the VMW shall be limited to the following purposes:

- A. promoting the social welfare of the community,
- B. providing entertainment, care and assistance to hospitalized veterans or members of the Armed Forces of the United States,
- C. conducting programs for religious, charitable, scientific, literary, or educational purposes,

To further its purpose, the VMW may distribute funds to organizations assisting in the relief of those affected by all conflicts beginning on or after August 2, 1990 and involving the armed forces of the United States and its allies.

Why Form an VMW Chapter?

By forming a chapter, you are forming a working larger voice in your area that has the backing of a National office. You can network with other Chapters in your state or region. This network can become a greater weapon in helping other veterans. As a chapter, you are also part of a family that has gone through something that only war veterans can share with each other.

Steps in Forming a VMW Chapter

This section provides a systematic approach to organizing a VMW chapter. Steps do not necessarily have to occur in the order presented. As a 501C19, the IRS wants use to prove that the membership are veterans with a better than BCD. That is why we will need a photocopy of one of the following to show the veterans states: current DOD ID card, DD214, DD215 or a NGB Form 22. **NO ONE will be approved without one.**

Step 1 – Interested chapter organizers (minimum of 10) meet to discuss chapter formation requirements and establish coordination and communication strategies to reach their goals.

After you and your fellow veterans' work of spreading the news about your intentions to form a new **VMW** chapter, it is now time to 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. It may take several meetings before you have the commitment, but at each meeting, you will need to demonstrate that you are prepared. Before the end of the first year, a checking account should be established to accept membership payments. At the organizational meeting:

- Call the meeting to order, introduce yourself and other organizers. Thank everyone for coming and ask them to introduce themselves, and if they want, 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 and collect dues.
- Select a chapter name (optional)
- Select Chapter Officers (Pres, VP, Treasurer, Secretary as minimum)
- Determine Committees and their memberships
- Distribute membership applications and promotional brochures to recruit new members.

Step 2 – Assemble and deliver Chapter Petition forms to VMW Headquarters. Petition forms include:

- **VMW** Charter Petition with signatures from a minimum of 10 individual member petitioners.
- Completed membership applications with a photocopy of one of the following to show the veterans states: current DOD ID card, DD214, DD215 or a NGB Form 22. **NO ONE will be approved without one.** with each member.
- The National is not charging dues until 2008, we are taking donation in any amount.
- Chapter Contact Form listing Chapter officers and Snail-mailing addresses & Email of all members.
- Commitment Form indicating intention to comply with VMW Bylaws and other governing documents (signed by Chapter President).

The completed petition and forms should be sent to:

**Attn: Membership Committee
National Gulf War Resource Center, Inc. &
Veterans of Modern Warfare, Inc.
1703 SW 66th Street
Pauline, KS 66619**

Step 3 – Upon receipt and approval of Chapter designation by VMW Headquarters, the chapter will need to incorporate in their state as a non-profit organization. Each state will have an office with all of the paperwork. Most of the time you can call them and they will mail it to you.

For any funding activities, new chapters should employ very simplified bookkeeping procedures such as those found in Quicken software. After chapters are more established they might want to take steps to qualify in a non-profit status with the IRS and file for a 501C19. In such cases, chapter officers should consult tax and corporate attorneys and may contact the VMW for information on the headquarters experience of becoming a 501C19.

How To Operate a Chapter

Finding Members

VMW membership is limited to those who served in the armed forces from 1990 to the present day.

The principle of “strength in numbers” is most important as we work to help veterans coming home today. The following is a partial list of potential sources to search, use, or contact for chapter members.

- Local business owners
- Professional associations
- Service work contacts
- Mortgage records
- Referrals
- Business associates
- Chamber of Commerce
- Reserve centers
- National Guard
- Parades
- Reunions
- Bumper stickers & decals
- Restaurants
- VA facility
- Public officials
- Trade Unions
- Tax records
- Telephone books
- Former members
- Religious groups
- Military bases
- Veterans organizations
- Display booths
- Open houses
- Monthly meetings
- Day-today contacts
- County/State fairs
- 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** – participates, have a voice, and play 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 cognizant of what motivates a particular member prospect and focus on how VMW membership can benefit the needs of the member.

Promotional Tools

The best promotional tool VMW offers currently is our award-winning and very informative website of our National Gulf War Site we use to update all interested parties on relevant developments for Gulf War veterans. VMW is also developing and refining membership application forms and brochures that can not only be filled out on line, but also easily downloaded and faxed to VMW headquarters. Chapter organizers should always carry pocket membership applications and/or brochures at all times. By being prepared, you will be ready to recruit.

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 shoppers, 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.

In recruiting, the five most important elements are to: As of right now we do not have any cups, shirts or stickers; but members can check out the web store of our NGWRC.

1. *Be visible* – Wear **VMW** logo lapel pins, ball caps, jackets, and display **VMW** bumper stickers and license plates.
2. *Be prepared* – Carry applications at all times.
3. *Call for action* – Create a sense of urgency to make a decision and gain a person's commitment.
4. *Always give a person options* – “Would you like to join as annual or life member?” or, “Would you like to volunteer on a committee,” or, “First come and see what we're doing at a monthly meeting.”
5. *Ask* – How would you like to help other veterans?

Chapter Officers and Their Suggested Duties

President: 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.

Vice President: The vice president shall preside at meeting, and represent the chapter president in his or her absence.

Secretary: The secretary is charged with maintaining all records; handling correspondence, routing information and chairing disciplinary code hearings.

Treasurer: The treasurer is responsible for all financial transactions. This includes maintaining the chapter checking and savings accounts. It is suggested that each account require two signatures to withdraw funds, a duty shared with the president.

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.
- Create and distribute an agenda and time limit for meetings.
- Business is conducted using your constitution & By-Laws, and *Roberts Rules of Order*.
- Set a date of officer elections so that the National has the list of new officers two months before the National conference.
- Meeting order typically proceeds as follows:
 1. Call meeting to order
 2. Invocation
 3. Pledge of Allegiance
 4. Roll call of officers
 5. Minutes of previous meeting
 6. Application for membership
 7. Swearing in anyone
 8. Call for bills and communications
 9. Officer and committee reports
 10. Unfinished business
 11. New business
 12. Announcements
 13. Benediction
 14. Adjourn
- 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

To manage the affairs of the chapter, members should select committees that involve areas of their expertise and/or interest. The VMW Bylaws require an Ethical Standards Committee as the only standing committee for the national board, and other national board committees include membership, education, public relations, and fund-raising. Each chapter should form committees that reflect national board committees to establish common priorities and implement programs at the local chapter level.

Membership Committee Functions and Information:

- Manage recruiting efforts and employ techniques described above
- Maintain membership rosters
- Maintain member prospect lists with names, addresses, and telephone numbers
- Communicate as needed with VMW HQ and its Membership Committee
- VMW membership year runs for one year from date member submits dues. This will be the anniversary date for future renewals.
- The national office will mail membership renewal notices to members prior to their anniversary date.
- Membership rosters are printed and mailed to the chapter official contact. Member rosters should be reviewed and file. Alert national membership affairs, preferably in writing of any discrepancies. Chapters may request their rosters by e-mail to the membership chair. Contact VMW at 1-866-531-7183, to initiate this option. Specify if you would prefer the roster in EXCEL or Word and include the chapter's e-mail address.

Education Committee Functions and Information:

- Maintain currency with postings on the VMW website
- Report research, legislative, and benefit developments at meetings
- Liaison with the Public Relations Committee members on outreach projects

Public Relations Committee Functions and Information:

An organized, ongoing public relations campaign is the key to building community awareness and membership. All newsworthy events-meetings, guest speakers, recognition banquets, special events, election results, committee appointments, position statements, etc should be announced. Here are the basic principles to follow in providing such announcements/press releases:

- All releases should be typed on 8 ½ x 11 inch white bond paper.
- Identify the name, address, and telephone number of the person to contact for additional information in the upper right hand corner.

- Distinguish the words “FOR RELEASE” on the date you want the release published in the upper left-hand corner. In most cases, the word, IMMEDIATE is used instead of a release date.
- Always start the text about a third of the way down on the first page. This allows the editor to create a headline, edit, and note any special instructions.
- Provide who, what, when, and where information in the first sentence of the first paragraph, followed by why and how in the second sentence. All facts in the news release should be identified in their order of importance; the most important facts first.
- Verify and proofread your news release prior to sending. This step in the process is extremely important because typos reflect negatively on our organization.
- Today nearly all media outlets expect to receive press releases via fax or, in some cases, email. Probably the only time a chapter should rely on the U. S. Postal Service is when they are sending out general background information in hopes of getting someone to do a feature (not news) piece on the group. Make a follow-up telephone call a few days after you have mailed the release to ensure the city editor received it, and tell him/her you would appreciate coverage.
- Photographs that support the news release may increase your chance of getting coverage. Pictures of special guest, especially if they are well known, may be included. You may send quality photographs from a previous, related event to support you news release. For television, photographs of your event may pique the interest of a program director that sees news stories in terms of visual impact.
- Compile and establish a rapport with newspaper, radio, and television contacts, and update the contact list regularly. With the competition for news coverage and public service announcements (PSA’s), it is important to cultivate rapport with your media contacts and personalities. With a little effort, you will become the resident expert the media calls upon when they need information or a statement.

Note: Local cable access channels provide services to announce upcoming events. These local channels are great outlets because they are always looking for information.

Fund Raising Committee Functions and Information:

A chapter cannot function on membership dues alone. Additional resources are needed to run a chapter, to acquire paper, printing, postage, sponsor programs and activities that keep members informed and VMW’s name in front of the public. Chapters, however, are restricted from all fundraising activities – outside of local membership dues – until you get your **chapter charter** and you have filed as a Non-for profit in your state. The charter is needed so that you will know your chapter number. The rationale behind this simply *liability*, **VMW** national does everything possible to limit the liability of members who join chapters.

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 war. Our experiences before, during, and after deployment are invaluable to the understanding of the 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 member's health policies, and fairness to all veterans. The 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

Dear “Forming” Chapter Officers:

We applaud your decision to form a VETERANS OF MODERN WARFARE (VMW) chapter in your community. After having read 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 Petition (a minimum of 10 or more chartering member signatures required)
- Chapter Information Form
- New Member Transmittal Form
- Chapter Agreement Form

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

**Attn: Membership Committee
National Gulf War Resource Center, Inc. &
Veterans of Modern Warfare, Inc.
3027 Walnut St, KC MO 64108
1-866-531-7183**

VMW will advise the forming chapter that its petition has been approved. We recommend that you identify the chapter as a “forming” chapter until you have received your charter 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 unless the chapter is fully incorporate and chartered. This restriction does not apply to dues collected for membership.

Contact VMW at 1-866-531-7183 for questions on this matter or any other issue.

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 chapter of VMW.

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. _____ | _____ |

Forming Chapter Location: _____ Circle type of membership VMW AVMW

Membership Donation (circle one): Free VMW \$25 AVMW \$50 \$100 Other: _____

Name: _____ DOB _____ Age: _____

Address: _____ Gender: Male _____ Female _____

Preferred Phone #: _____ Alternate Phone #: _____ Email: _____

Payment Method (circle one): Check On-Line Credit Card (VISA, MC, AMEX, DISCOVER) (Circle Type)

Credit Card # _____ Exp Date: _____

Signature: _____

**Original signature on membership application authorizing payment required for credit card payment.*

Forming Chapter Location: _____ Circle type of membership VMW AVMW

Membership Donation (circle one): Free VMW \$25 AVMW \$50 \$100 Other: _____

Name: _____ DOB _____ Age: _____

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Credit Card # _____ Exp Date: _____

Signature: _____

**Original signature on membership application authorizing payment required for credit card payment.*

SAMPLE NGWRC PRESS RELEASE

FDA RULING ON PB IGNORES SCIENTIFIC FACTS

Veterans groups, scientist and citizens outraged.

For Immediate Release

Contact: Steve Robinson

February 06, 2003

(800) 882-1316, ext. 162

The National Gulf war Resource Center (NGWRC), the nations new leading veterans' advocacy organization, today demanded answers from the FDA concerning approval of the Anti-Nerve Gas Pill Pyridiostigmine Bromide (PB) as a pretreatment for exposure to the nerve agent Soman.

"Gulf War veterans and scientist are justifiably distressed at the government decision to ignore the scientific evidence regarding this drug. Documents and scientific studies conducted over the last 12 years have clearly shown this drug is both experimental and harmful," said Michael Woods, President of the NGWRC.

"Citizens and soldiers alike should demand an explanation of this ruling. The Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs have both concluded through previous studies that PB could not be ruled out as a factor in the illnesses Gulf War veterans currently suffer from. While the drug may be approved for civilians who have the neuromuscular disease called myasthenia gravis, it has never been shown to be either effective or safe for the military application against Soman," said Steve Robinson, Executive Director of the NGWRC.

In fact, studies have shown that PB's effectiveness against Soman is questionable. Prescribing PB as a pretreatment is a guess and is not proven effective by scientific fact.

Second, PB's dosing for effectiveness is variable in each individual. This would require individual evaluation due to the genetics and the size of the person receiving the dose.

Third, PB is known to cause muscle damage in the animal studies cited by the FDA with even one dose.

Fourth, PB may be in part responsible for Persian Gulf Illness. This fact cannot be denied and has been emphasized by DOD, the Department of Veterans Affairs, RAND, the Institute of Medicine, the VA Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Illnesses and veterans.

Fifth, PB can increase the effect of Sarin gas on anyone exposed. Thus, in allowing this

use, the FDA, DOD, Congress, the President and ICN Pharmaceuticals are allowing a questionable protection against Soman and increasing the likelihood that troops will be more susceptible to Sarin and possible complications after the war.

It is possible that those who made the decision think they have chosen the lesser of two evils with the troop's protection in mind but ignoring the facts surrounding the risk of PB use is completely irresponsible behavior for all concerned.

It is unfortunate that, on the eve of a potential war with Iraq, the FDA has approved another drug that is known to have harmed veterans of the last Gulf War.

The NGWRC will continue to support the troops of the next Gulf War by asking tough questions when they arise. We will also continue to fight for the rights, treatment and fair compensation of veterans of the last Gulf War. Soldiers will be forced to take this drug if ordered, regardless of the potential damage.

Once again, our government is putting soldiers in another type of "Harms Way," which could have been prevented. This ruling, in combination with equipment deficiencies, is most likely the impetus for soldiers saving their sperm prior to deployment.