

How to Start and Sustain a Weekly Veterans Club Chapter



1. Why We Exist

The Veterans Club exists to reduce isolation among veterans and first responders.

We believe connection saves lives.

We are not a therapy program.

We are not a political organization.

We are not a debate club.

We are a weekly gathering of men and women who served — military and first responders — who understand each other without needing long explanations. We gather weekly around coffee, food, and conversation — because connection happens best around a table.

If a chapter keeps people connected, it is succeeding.

That is the mission.

2. The Weekly Meeting — Our Non-Negotiable Core

Every chapter must host a weekly gathering.

Same place.

Same day.

Same time.

Every week.

Consistency builds trust.

Trust builds attendance.

Attendance builds community.

The weekly meeting is simple by design.

Coffee should be available at no cost whenever possible.

Food is encouraged. Members may purchase their own meals locally or chapters may coordinate light food options when practical.

Food matters.

Breaking bread lowers barriers.

It gives people something to do with their hands.

It eases first-time nerves.

It turns a meeting into fellowship.

We gather around coffee, food, and conversation. That rhythm matters.

If everything else falls away but the weekly coffee remains, the chapter is still healthy.

Protect the rhythm.

Simple Weekly Format

- Arrive early.
- Greet people by name.
- Open with a brief welcome.
- Conduct introductions (name, branch or agency, and when they served).
- Offer a short prayer or reflection.
- Recite the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Share announcements from TheVeteransClub.org/events.
- Introduce a discussion topic.
- Let conversation flow naturally.
- Close with encouragement.

No complicated agenda.

No mandatory speakers.

No heavy programming.

The welcome builds familiarity.

Introductions build respect.

The prayer grounds us.

The Pledge reminds us what we served.

The announcements keep us aligned.

The discussion builds relationships.

Protect the coffee. Protect the room. Protect the rhythm.

3. Leadership Structure — Three Roles

Every healthy chapter has three defined roles. No one person should carry everything.

This prevents burnout.

This prevents control.

This protects longevity.

A. Chapter Manager

Role: Stability & Logistics

The Chapter Manager protects continuity.

Responsibilities:

- Secure and maintain the meeting location.

- Coordinate with the facility.
- Confirm weekly availability.
- Send simple reminders.
- Serve as liaison with The Veterans Club national leadership.
- Ensure clarity around food arrangements (members may purchase their own meals or chapters may coordinate simple options as appropriate).

The Chapter Manager ensures the meeting happens.

They are not required to lead discussion or manage personalities.

They protect stability.

B. Facilitator

Role: Tone, Flow & Inclusion

The Facilitator protects the culture of the room.

Responsibilities:

- Start the meeting on time.
- Lead introductions.
- Introduce discussion topics.
- Keep conversation respectful and balanced.
- Gently redirect if discussion drifts into politics, hostility, or negativity.
- Intentionally engage those who are quiet or hesitant to participate.

The Facilitator does not dominate.

They do not lecture.

They create space so every member feels seen and included.

A healthy chapter is one where even the quietest member feels like they belong.

C. Chaplain

Role: Spiritual Anchor

The Chaplain brings a brief moment of God into each gathering.

Responsibilities:

- Offer a short prayer or reflection.
- Provide spiritual encouragement.
- Be available privately if someone requests prayer.

The spiritual element should be present but not overpowering.

We respect different faith backgrounds and avoid theological debate.

The Chaplain protects the heart of the chapter.

4. Culture & Guardrails

The Veterans Club is built on respect and shared service.

We expect:

- Respectful speech.
- No personal attacks.
- No political campaigning or candidate promotion at official meetings.
- No shaming.
- No diagnosing others.
- No turning meetings into therapy sessions.

We are friends — not therapists.

If someone needs professional help, we encourage them to seek it. We can support, but we do not replace licensed care.

Our job is connection.

We gather as equals around the table. No one is pressured financially, socially, or spiritually.

Connection reduces isolation.

Isolation increases risk.

Keep the room safe.

5. Growth Comes After Stability

Do not rush expansion.

Before adding:

- Lunches
- Dinners
- Family events
- Service projects
- Partnerships

Ensure the weekly meeting is:

- Consistent
- Stable
- Healthy
- Growing naturally

The weekly gathering is the root system.

Strong roots. Then branches.

6. Communication with National Leadership

Chapters operate locally but remain aligned nationally.

Chapter Managers should:

- Provide occasional updates.
- Communicate challenges early.
- Seek guidance when needed.

National leadership exists to support chapters — not control them.

Healthy chapters are locally led and nationally aligned.

7. If You're Starting a Chapter

You do not need:

- A large budget.
- A formal board.
- A perfect plan.
- A crowd on day one.

You need:

A place.

A time.

Consistency.

A welcoming spirit.

Ten steady people are better than fifty inconsistent ones.

Fifteen who care about each other will change more lives than a hundred names on a list.

8. Final Word

Do not overcomplicate this.

The Veterans Club works because it is simple.

Veterans and first responders gather.

We pray.

We stand for the flag.

We talk.

We build friendships.

Week after week.

Keep it steady.

Keep it respectful.

Keep it human.

Connection saves lives.

The Veterans Club

National Leadership

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