



VETERANS FOR PEACE UK
HANDBOOK 2018

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Veterans for Peace (VFP) was founded in the United States of America in 1985. VFP has over 100 chapters in the USA and a growing number of international chapters.

Veterans for Peace UK (VFP UK) was founded in London in 2011. We are a voluntary, open and democratic ex-services organisation of men and women.

Our oldest members served in the Second World War and in total our members have deployed to every war that Britain has fought since.

As a result of our collective experiences we firmly believe that “War is not the solution to the problems we face in the 21st century”.

We are not a pacifist organisation, we accept the inherent right of self-defence in response to an armed attack.

We work to influence the foreign and defence policy of the UK, for the larger purpose of world peace.

This handbook is the governing document of VFP UK. For further information including contact details please visit our website vfpuk.org

SECTION 2: VFP UK STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

We, veterans of the armed forces, having dutifully served our nation, do hereby affirm our greater responsibility to serve the cause of world peace.

To this end:

- a. We will work toward increasing public awareness of the costs of war.
- b. We will work to restrain our government from intervening, overtly and covertly, in the internal affairs of other nations.
- c. We will work to end the arms race and to reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons.

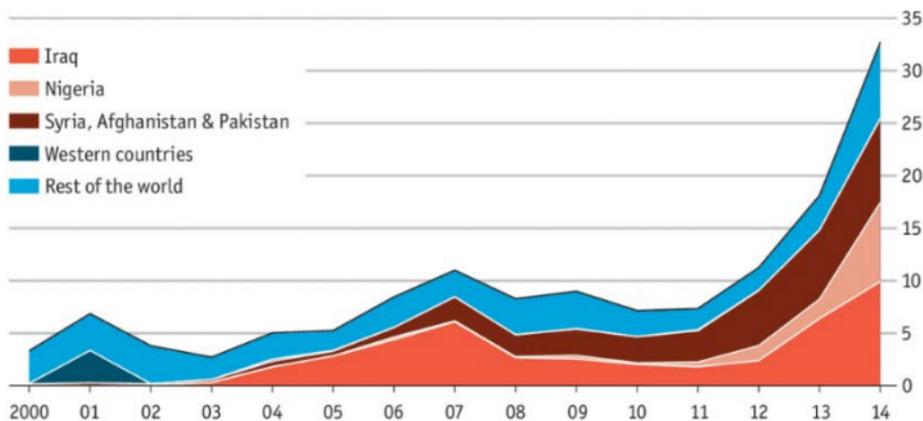
To achieve these goals, members of Veterans for Peace pledge to use non-violent means and to maintain an organisation that is both democratic and open with the understanding that all members are trusted to act in the best interests of the group for the larger purpose of world peace.

We urge all veterans who share this vision to join us.

SECTION 3: VFP UK STATEMENT OF CONDUCT

1. We will use our anger at injustice as a positive, nonviolent force for change.
2. We will not assault, verbally or physically, in person or online, those who oppose or disagree with us, even if they assault us.
3. Our attitude, as conveyed through our words, symbols and actions, will be one of openness, friendliness, and respect toward all people we encounter.
4. We will follow the directions of the designated coordinators during public actions.
5. We use consensus-based decision making within our groups.
6. We reject military clothing and symbols.
7. We speak as members of VFP UK but not for VFP UK, unless designated as a spokesperson.
8. Rank, unit, combat experience, age, gender, race, wealth, education, class, religion and nationality carry no status within VFP UK.
9. Sexist, racist, homophobic and other discriminatory language and actions are common within the military; they are not acceptable within VFP UK.
10. Our words and actions will maintain the political and financial independence of VFP UK.

SECTION 4: UK CONTEXT



Global deaths from terrorism 2000-2014. [Source](#)

Since 2001, the UK has prosecuted a Global War on Terror. The public are aware of some elements of the war; other elements are concealed from view.

Air strikes, drone strikes, missile strikes, night raids, torture, internment, terrorist attacks, chemical attacks, sieges, invasions, and occupations are the tactics of this war.

If the aim is to defeat terrorism, then it is an ongoing and spectacular failure, as the above graph illustrates.

The current foreign and defence policies of the UK are a considerable obstacle to world peace.

SECTION 5: PRIORITY CAMPAIGN



NEUTRALCOUNTRY.UK

Due to the ongoing aggressive nature of UK foreign and defence policy, permanently restraining our government from intervening, overtly and covertly, in the internal affairs of other nations, will be a considerable and practical step forward in the pursuit of world peace.

We intend to build support across the political spectrum for the UK to become a permanently neutral country.

A working group will be appointed by the Policy Group to develop this campaign for launch in November 2018.

Participation in the campaign will be open to those outside of VFP UK.

VFP UK Regional Groups and individual members are asked to promote this campaign at every available opportunity and sign up members of the public to the campaign via the website neutralcountry.uk

SECTION 6: MEMBERSHIP

6.1 Eligibility for membership

- a) Veterans of the Armed Forces of the United Kingdom.
- b) Veterans of the Armed Forces of other countries.

6.2 Definition of a veteran

We use the official UK government definition; "Everyone who has performed military service for at least one day and drawn a day's pay is termed a veteran".

6.3 Conditions of membership

- a) Members will provide proof of military service.
- b) Members will comply with the VFP UK Handbook.

6.4 Record of membership

The Policy Group ensures the maintenance of an accurate record of the VFP UK membership.

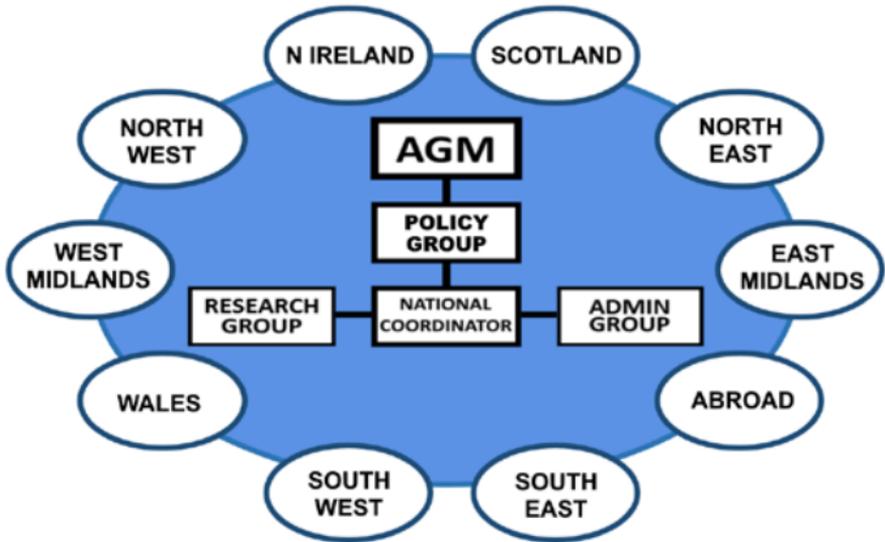
6.5 Restrict or expel from membership

The Policy Group has the authority to admit, restrict or expel to and from VFP UK.

The Policy Group shall state their reasons for any action taken under this section to the Annual General Meeting.

Any action taken under this section may be appealed at the Annual General Meeting.

SECTION 7: STRUCTURE



Organisational structure of VFP UK

7.1 Annual General Meeting

VFP UK is governed by the Annual General Meeting (AGM). The AGM is held in November.

Proposed changes to the Handbook are discussed and decided on during the AGM.

Priorities for the following year are discussed and decided during the AGM.

The Policy Group is elected as last item of the AGM.

The authority of the AGM is delegated to the Policy Group in between AGMs.

SECTION 7: STRUCTURE

7.2 Groups

VFP UK is organised into the following groups:

7.2.1 Policy Group

Comprises five members elected at the AGM.

Responsible for maintaining the integrity of VFP UK.

Responsible for decision making on behalf of the AGM.

Develops VFP UK policy and strategy.

7.2.2 Admin Group

Maintains the financial records of VFP UK.

Maintains the membership records of VFP UK.

Technical maintenance of the website and social media.

Coordinator appointed by the Policy Group

7.2.3 Research Group

Conducts research that informs and supports our work.

Maintains the archive held at The Bishopsgate Institute.

Coordinator appointed by the Policy Group

7.2.4 Regional Groups

Operate in geographical areas within the framework of the Statement of Purpose and Statement of Conduct.

Work to further the VFP UK priority campaign (Section 5).

Regional coordinators report to the National Coordinator.

SECTION 8: ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

8.1 Qualification

To stand for election to the Policy Group candidates will:

- Be a member of VFP UK for two years.
- Commit to being present at Policy Group meetings.
- Commit to taking part in day-to-day communication.

8.2 Election

Candidates will submit by 15th of October for the election at the AGM in November. A list of candidates will be published before the AGM. Each candidate may speak for two minutes at the AGM. Members will vote at the AGM by choosing five candidates on the ballot paper. The five candidates with the most votes will be elected to the Policy Group.

8.3 Term of office

Members shall have a term of office lasting one year and be able to stand for re-election.

8.4 Appointments

The Policy Group shall appoint:

- A Chair to coordinate the Policy Group.
- A National Coordinator responsible for day-to-day business of VFP UK, who reports to the Policy Group.

SECTION 9: INDEPENDENCE

9.1 Financial

VFP UK does not apply for funding or accept donations from individuals or organisations deemed to speak or act in any way contrary to our Statement of Purpose.

The most effective way for VFP UK to maintain financial independence is through regular donations from our own members.

9.2 Political

VFP UK does not:

Subscribe to any specific ideology or religion.

Endorse any political party or politician.

Enter into coalitions.

Endorse other groups.

Work for governments.

9.3 Infiltration

We are an open and nonviolent organisation. We have no secret communications or secret meetings. Our intentions are clearly stated on our website and in this Handbook.

SECTION 10: LEGAL STATUS

10.1 Type of organisation

VFP UK is an Unincorporated Association.

10.2 Regulations

VFP UK have no legal obligation to any regulatory body.

10.3 Financial obligation

VFP UK have no legal obligation to submit financial accounts or reports to anyone outside of VFP UK.

10.4 Contracts

VFP UK cannot enter into contracts, own property, rent premises or employ people.

10.5 Liability

As an unincorporated association VFP UK cannot sue, or be sued.

SECTION 11: FINANCES

11.1 Accounts

Policy Group shall ensure that annual financial accounts are published in accordance with standard accounting practices.

11.2 Transparency

Copies of the annual accounts review shall be available on request.

11.3 Fiscal year

The fiscal year of Veterans for Peace UK shall be from April 1 through March 31 of the following year.

11.4 Dues

VFP UK does not collect membership dues.

11.5 Grants

Applications from members and groups should be made in writing to the Policy Group.

11.6 Expenses

Wherever possible hosting organisations should pay members expenses. Members of VFP UK who have incurred costs on VFP UK business can apply to the Admin Group for reimbursement if required.

SECTION 12: REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY

Date: Remembrance Sunday.

Time: After the official state parade has finished.

Location: The Cenotaph

Meeting point: Whitehall Place, SW1.

The walk to The Cenotaph:

Never Again banner at the front, wreath carried directly behind. Remainder in threes, bugler in the last row. VFP UK banner at the rear. All supporters follow behind the VFP UK column.

The Ceremony:

Line up facing The Cenotaph.

Designated member sings the song “1916”.

Designated member reads the poem “Suicide in the Trenches”.

Lay the wreath of white poppies.

Bugler plays “The Last Post”.

All observe one minute of silence.

Bugler to play “Reveille”.

The walk back to Whitehall Place:

VFP UK banner at the front. Remainder in threes, bugler in the last row. Never Again banner at the rear. All supporters follow behind the VFP UK column.

SECTION 12: REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY

Dress:

VFP members: VFP UK sweatshirt, shirt, black tie, dark trousers / skirt, dark shoes.

Followers: Dressed as though attending a funeral.

Equipment:

Never Again banner carried at the front.

Wreath of white poppies.

Megaphone.

VFP UK banner, carried at the rear.

No other banners, placards or megaphones allowed.



SECTION 13: AMENDMENT OF HANDBOOK

13.1 Proposed amendments

Amendments to the handbook should be submitted before the 15th of September to be considered for the AGM in November. Submissions can be made by completing the form on the VFP UK website; vfpuk.org/handbook-amendments/

13.2 Additions

Proposed additions are in green italics.

13.3 Subtractions

Proposed subtractions are in red italics and struck through.

13.4 Approval

Amendments must be approved by two thirds of verified VFP UK members in attendance at the AGM.