

# What is an Elk

With more than 1.1 million members in more than 2,100 lodges Nationwide, the Elks is one of the largest and most active fraternal organizations in the United States; consisting of American Citizens of the United States and its Territories.

The Order of the Elks is a benevolent organization, not a social or business club. It is dedicated to service to our communities and our Country. The various phases of our work, whether it be with the fortunate or unfortunate youths, care of the needy, Veterans Services, promoting of Americanism, or other benevolent activities, offer you a wide choice from which you may choose your areas of interest.

Upon attaining membership in our Order, you will become part of a National Organization, which has members from every prominent city of our Country, who are respected citizens in their communities and are proud to say that they belong to the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America.

The Order of Elks was formally organized on February 16, 1868, in the City of New York, NY. Its full corporate name is "Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America." Its declared purposes are to practice its four cardinal virtues, Charity - Justice - Brotherly Love - and Fidelity; to promote the welfare and enhance the happiness of its members; to quicken the spirit of American patriotism; and to cultivate good fellowship.

The animal from which the Order took its name was chosen because a number of its attributes were deemed typical of those to be cultivated by members of the fraternity. The elk is distinctively an American animal. The elk habitually lives in herds. The largest of our native quadrupeds, it is yet fleet of foot and graceful in movement. It is quick and keen of perception; and while it is usually gentle and even timorous, it is strong and valiant in defense of its own.

A representation of the majestic head of the male, with its spreading antlers, was adopted as the first badge of the Order; and is still the most conspicuous element of its fraternal emblem.

## **SUBORDINATE LODGES**

Subordinate Lodges of the Order are permitted to be established only in cities which are under the governmental sovereignty of the United States, and have within their respective corporate limits not less than five thousand inhabitants, with certain exceptions under the control of the Grand Exalted Ruler. The name of the Lodge is that of the City in which it is located, with its assigned Lodge number.

## **THE ELKS COLORS**

The Elk colors are Royal Purple and White, a combination deriving its origin from the history of the Clergy, Nobility, and "the People".

Throughout Europe, the Orient, and in Rome the symbolism of colors was associated with the severity of laws and customs. Each color in each pattern was identified as religious, or political, and to change or alter it was a crime of rebellion, a desertion of principles, party, or cause.

White denotes purity and absolute truth. When combined with Royal Purple it signifies the love of truth and the highest degree of virtue. Purple is the badge of Kingship, the color for the robes of Emperors and High Priests, and signifies highest favor. Blending of White and Royal Purple indicates the favor of the people, which bespeaks the status of Elkdom.

### **CHARACTER OF THE ORDER**

The Order of Elks is an organization of American citizens who love their country and desire to preserve its cherished institutions; who love their fellow man and seek to promote his well being; and who love the joyousness of life and endeavor to contribute to it, as well as to share it.

The Order questions no man's religion; nor bars him an account of his creed. It is not concerned with one's political affiliations. And it does not permit either religion or politics to be injected into, or to have any effect upon, its fraternal deliberations, national or local.

It lures no man to its doors by any promised material benefits which might appeal to his self interest. It pledges no support to the furtherance of personal ambitions. It has no insurance feature to appeal to one's sense of economy. It is beneficent, not merely benevolent, and it believes that doing good is better than merely being good. It teaches that it is nobler to serve than to be served; that laughter is better than tears, a kind word more potent than a frown; and that life is all the sweeter for a song.

It therefore seeks to draw into its fraternal circle only those who delight in wholesome associations with congenial companions; who are deeply imbued with the spirit of patriotic loyalty and devotion; and who desire, without the fanfare of the trumpets of publicity, to share with their associates in the endeavor to feed the hungry, to shelter the homeless, to relieve those in distress, and to prove themselves true friends to all in need.

With such a membership, holding such ideals, the Order has grown from a modest but purposeful group of organizers into a great and powerful fraternity, whose patriotic services have won for it a high place in national esteem and whose benefactions have smoothed the pathway of countless thousands.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE ORDER CHARITABLE AND PATRIOTIC SERVICE**

The primary object of the Order is the practice of Charity in its broadest significance, not merely that of alms giving. Its service in this wide field necessarily involves a great diversity of activities which naturally are influenced by local conditions. It therefore early adopted the policy of permitting its Subordinate Lodges to select for themselves

the benevolent endeavors in which they severally desired to engage, rather than to require them to participate in national projects undertaken by the Order as a whole.

However, throughout its history, the Order has endeavored to maintain itself in readiness, as a national body, to extend its aid in cases of major catastrophe and misfortune. Through its official agencies in all parts of the country, it has been able to render such assistance with a promptness, effectiveness and lack of red-tape, which have tremendously enhanced the practical helpfulness of its adopted measures.

For many years the aggregate expenditures of the Subordinate Lodges for charitable purposes have run into millions of dollars each year, covering humanitarian services of infinite variety. Among the most usual of such activities may be mentioned the following:

Food to the hungry.  
Shelter to the homeless.  
Clothing and fuel to the needy.  
Milk for under-nourished babies.  
Medical attention to the sick.  
Baskets to the poor at Christmas & Thanksgiving.  
Outings for underprivileged children.  
Entertainments for shut-ins.  
Education for young people.  
Artificial limbs for the maimed.  
Hospital beds.  
Free clinics.  
Night schools.

All of the State Elks Associations have undertaken important and extensive charitable works within their own several jurisdictions, determined by the particular conditions therein existing and the preferences of their constituent members.

They include:  
Rehabilitation of crippled children.  
Treatment of indigent tubercular patients.  
Provision for scholarships for worthy students.  
Maintenance of orphans.  
Boy's camps.  
Training of the blind.  
Eyeglasses for needy children.  
Cerebral palsy clinics.  
Cancer clinics.

And other state-wide projects of similar character and of equal worthiness which are being carried on as continuing activities. No history of social service in the United States would be complete without an inspiring chapter devoted to the achievements of the Order of Elks in this field.

In the field of patriotic service, the Order of Elks has likewise proved itself an agency of singular force and effectiveness. Organized at a time when the bitterness and rancor of the Civil War

had left their wounds on every heart on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line, the Order patiently taught its members through the years, drawn as they were from all sections of the country, that bitterness ought to be sweetened; that rancor ought to be assuaged; that those wounds ought to be healed.

Through the widening influence of its members, thus bound together by the ties of brotherhood, and thus fraternally schooled, the restoration of national accord was assuredly hastened, and a patriotic service of superlative importance was thus performed.

Never an altar is erected in all its jurisdiction, but that the first emblem to be reverently placed beside it, is the American Flag. No person is permitted to stand in front of that flag and altar and assume the obligation of membership unless he be an American citizen. And, at every Lodge session they attend, they are required to renew his pledge of allegiance to that flag and all for which it stands.

Every Subordinate Lodge of the Order is a patriotic watch tower, in which keen minds are alert to discover insidious attacks upon our countries cherished institutions, and in which loyal and courageous hearts are promptly mobilized for every appropriate defensive activity.

The combined influences of these continuing patriotic activities of the Order, operating upon the minds and hearts of other countless thousands, are beyond calculation.

### **NATIONAL PROJECTS**

The Order has departed from its general policy in a few instances, and has itself undertaken certain extensive projects in which it has sought, or definitely required, the participation of every Elk. In each of these instances the objective was distinctively national in scope and universally appealing to the entire membership.

THE ELKS NATIONAL HOME.

THE ELKS WAR RELIEF COMMISSION - WWI.

THE ELKS MAGAZINE.

THE ELKS NATIONAL MEMORIAL BUILDING.

THE ELKS NATIONAL FOUNDATION.

THE ELKS NATIONAL DEFENSE AND PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMISSION.

THE ELKS WAR COMMISSION - WWII.

THE ELKS NATIONAL VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSION.

THE ELKS NATIONAL SERVICE COMMISSION.

Below is a brief account of these programs:

### **Elks National Home**

The Order has maintained a distinctive policy in the administration of this haven for its elderly members. It has never been regarded as an ordinary charitable institution, to be peopled by inmates who might there receive merely food and shelter, and whose conduct and movements would be rigidly prescribed and hampered by irksome institutional rules and regulations. On the contrary, it has been consistently conducted as a real home, in which each resident brother has the fullest possible freedom of action, with every consideration for

his right of personal privacy, and wherein every effort is made to insure his comfort, well being and happiness as a worthy and esteemed member of the Elks.

The first Elks National Home was established by the Grand Lodge in 1902, at Bedford, VA. In the course of time this building became inadequate to meet the increasing demands upon it; but the geographical location had proved ideal. And, the Grand Lodge, in 1911, authorized the construction upon the same site of a more spacious, modern and suitable home, designed to allow expansion and enlargement as future needs might require.

On July 8, 1916, the new Elks National Home was formally dedicated. From time to time substantial additions have been made, increasing its capacity to care for more than four hundred residents. The Elks National Home is a beautiful structure, most effectively combining classic and mission features of architecture. In its appropriate setting, the first view compels an admiration which grows as the details of its arrangement and its furnishings, and the completeness of its equipment to fulfill its purposes, are more carefully noted.

### **Elks War Relief Commission - WWI**

One of the chief aims of the Order of Elks has been not only to keep alive in the hearts of its own members a realization of the obligations of American citizenship, but also to quicken the spirit of true patriotism among our whole people. It was but natural, therefore, that, upon the entrance of our country into World War I, there was an eager desire on the part of the Order to render such distinctive service as might appropriately attest its patriotic loyalty and devotion.

After conferences with federal authorities, as to the manner in which the resources of the Order might be most effectively employed, and in accordance with their suggestions, the Grand Lodge in session at Boston, MA, on July 11, 1917 by a unanimous vote, appropriated one million dollars to a special war relief fund to be applied to such specific purposes as might, from time to time, be deemed necessary. At that session the Elks National War Relief Commission was appointed, with full power to raise the sum appropriated by assessments upon the whole membership and to control its administration.

The most pressing need, as well as the most humanely appealing, was found to be the adequate care of the sick and wounded fighting men overseas. And the first activity of the commission was to finance and provide the complete equipment for two Base Hospitals: No. 41 - organized from the faculty and alumni of the University of Virginia and No. 46 - organized from the faculty and alumni of the University of Oregon.

Without such timely aid, neither of these splendid organizations would have been available for active service. With it, they were the first base hospital units to reach the battle area in France - where they both rendered notably distinguished service throughout the War.

The ever increasing numbers of the maimed and wounded of our forces who were brought back home, soon overtaxed the then

available hospital, and created an exigent need for additional facilities.

After securing the grateful approval of the government, the commission promptly constructed and equipped a reconstruction hospital, of 700 beds capacity, in Boston, MA. Dedicated and turned over to the government on November 16, 1918, it was the first of such hospitals to be established in the United States. It was operated to its full capacity for several years, until the need for it passed in 1921.

During the summer of 1918 the need became apparent for a community house at Camp Sherman, OH, in which the families of the forty thousand soldiers stationed there might be cared for during their visits to the Camp. The commission met this need by the erection of a 72-room structure, which so effectively served its purpose, particularly during the great flu epidemic, as to merit the grateful acknowledgments of the Commander of the Camp.

In the meantime the Salvation Army was performing a wonderful service among our soldiers in France, but it was severely handicapped by lack of funds. To assist in meeting this exigency and to insure the continuance of this service, the War Relief Commission, and the Subordinate Lodges all over the Country, fostered the campaigns of the Army for the needed funds, in many instances assuming the entire cost of such campaigns.

Because of this nationwide co-operation, attended by a most gratifying success, and because of a large cash donation to its subsequent postwar relief, the Commander of the Salvation Army requested the privilege of addressing the Grand Lodge in session at Atlantic City, NJ, in 1918. In that speech, which touched the heart of every listener, she said:

*"The Salvation Army can never forget, or get away from, its deep sense of indebtedness and gratitude to the grand body of men that is before me this morning... ..I say without hesitancy that our organization could not have achieved its exceptional success in this war, but for the splendid, practical tangible aid that was rendered to us by the Elks."*

It is worthy of note, as indicating the recognition by the government of the Order of Elks as an effective agency for a nationwide service, that it was the first fraternal organization whose aid was sought in the movement for food conservation during the War. The splendid results accomplished by the Elks in this service thoroughly justified the confidence thus imposed.

Perhaps the most distinctive and most helpful service by the Order in war relief work was in connection with the vocational training of our disabled soldiers, a field it had entirely to itself when this work was begun, in accredited association with the Federal Board of Vocational Education.

Unfortunately the restricted terms of the Congressional Enactments had left many disabled veterans unprovided for as to vocational training. The Elks War Relief Commission undertook to care for these exceptional cases, as well as to aid in the publicity campaign necessary to ascertain and locate the many veterans entitled to receive such training and to provide for them until they could avail themselves of

such federal aid.

During this period of training, and in preparation thereof, many of the veterans were in dire need of financial assistance. Realizing that loans to them would be preferable to charitable gifts, the commission created a revolving fund from which such loans could be made, the repayment becoming available for other similar loans. Nearly forty thousand such loans were made. And its interesting to note that every dollar was repaid, except in a few cases where death, or other intervening cause, made it impossible.

In the course of a speech delivered before the House of Representatives commending highly the over all war work of our Order, a Congressman from the State of New York made the following statement regarding the revolving fund:

*"This great order seemed to sense with prophetic vision the frightful consequences of war and proceeded to set in motion and bring to successful fruition or achievement through it's Elks War Relief Commission a service most essential and timely, which had not been anticipated or performed by any other agency."* He quoted, further, these words from another speech delivered before the House by a Congressman from the state of Washington: *"The Elks Fund thus provided is the first instance of the kind in the history of the Country where a great patriotic fraternal organization has come to the aid of the government in so timely, helpful and substantial a manner."*

This unique service, thus performed by the Order, was so conspicuously effective that the Government eventually followed the Order's example, and created a similar revolving fund, and took over this particular activity.

The patriotic services performed by the Order of Elks during World War I, particularly in the administration of its war relief fund, have been subjects of numerous expressions of praise and appreciation. These have come from the highest officials of the government and from the executive heads of other organizations.

### **The Elks Magazine**

For many years the thoughtful members of the Order had felt a growing need for a national journal, to be published by the Order and distributed to its entire membership, to serve as a direct means of communication with the individual members, and as a medium through which the history, traditions, purposes and aspirations of the Order could be taught and through which information of its current activities might be disseminated.

By action of the Grand Lodge at its session at Los Angeles, CA, in 1921, such a journal was established, under the name of "The Elks Magazine", to be published monthly and mailed to every member of the Order to his home address.

From its inception it has been maintained as a magazine of the highest standards, both in physical make up and in literary content. It has achieved its purpose to become a welcome visitor in any home, a valuable addition to and reading table. It has conclusively proved its

effectiveness as a medium for conveying to every member of the Order fraternal information of benefit to him, official communications, news of Subordinate Lodge activities in which he is naturally interested, and other matters of distinctly fraternal importance.

The foremost writers of the country contribute of their best work to its pages. Its illustrations are from the hands of the most noted artists. Its cover designs are of uniform excellence and distinction, comparing favorably with those of the best periodicals of the country.

It has established itself as a desirable publicity medium for national advertisers, which is perhaps the best evidence of its popularity. And from this source it derives a revenue which, with its income from subscriptions, has enabled it to show consistent annual net earnings of substantial sums, which have been available to the Grand Lodge.

### **The Elks National Memorial Building**

More than 70,000 members of the Order of Elks were in the service of our country during World War I. They served in every branch of the military and naval establishments, and in every rank. Over one thousand of them made the last supreme sacrifice in that service, and laid down their lives in the exemplification of that patriotic loyalty and devotion to which they had pledged themselves at the fraternal altars of the Order. It was recognized as a duty, in accord with every tenet, that the Order should provide a suitable memorial to those heroes whose valor and sacrifice had shed over it such a radiance of glory.

The session of the Grand Lodge at Los Angeles, CA, in 1921, that body approved the recommendation of the Commission to which the matter had been referred, and provided for the construction of a great memorial building, itself a stately monument, which should contain distinctive features in fitting commemoration of the service and sacrifice designed to be honored, and in which the administrative headquarters of the Order should be maintained.

The site selected for the memorial is located at the corner of Lake View Avenue and Diversey Parkway, in the city of Chicago, IL. It has a spacious frontage on Lincoln Park, across which one looks out upon Lake Michigan. Upon this site, after five years of intensive but carefully directed construction the Memorial Building was completed and was dedicated on July 14, 1926. The artistic embellishments required another five years. It is impossible to avoid superlatives even in the briefest description of this Memorial. The architectural design is so stately and so beautiful, the material of its construction is so enduring, the setting is so appropriate and commanding, and its memorial features so distinctive yet so artistic, that the attention of all beholders is arrested. It has been acclaimed by competent critics as one of the great memorial buildings of the world.

Nowhere has there ever been such a quantity, and variety of beautiful marbles, from all parts of the world, employed in any one structure. The great frieze belting the exterior of the central rotunda depicting "Triumphs of War" and "Triumphs of Peace", is the most extensive work of its kind in the world. It is the finest example of this type of sculpture in America.

Everywhere the eye turns, as one stands facing the building, there is a work of art of appealing beauty. The great bronze elks, flanking the entrance; the bronze groups, "Patriotism" and "Fraternity" set in the facades of the pavilions; the wonderful bronze door giving entrance to the rotunda; all are masterpieces of famous artists.

Within, one stands in awe, at the beauty of the great mural panels; the statues emblematic of the four cardinal virtues of the Order; the exquisite marble columns of every variety of coloring; the great sweep of the rotunda with its vaulted ceiling high above; the matchless paintings -- "Justice", "Charity" and "Fraternity".

In the Reception Room beyond are other magnificent mural paintings and other works of art, each one appropriate to the memorial character of the structure.

The whole aspect of the Memorial is majestic and commanding. Artists, poets, critics, and laymen alike have acclaimed its perfection. Truly a great dream has been realized in the beauty that has here been wrought.

Truly a great purpose has been achieved, in that all who behold it, and realize its patriotic and fraternal significance, are inevitably inspired to higher and nobler concepts of service to country and to humanity.

The Grand Lodge, meeting at Chicago, IL, in 1944, declared the Elks Memorial Building a tribute to the Elks who served in both World Wars, and directed that it be rededicated at the close of World War II. This directive was carried out with impressive ceremonies, under the auspices of the Elks National Memorial and Publication Commission, on September 8, 1946, in honor of the 100,000 members who served in World War II; and the Memorial has subsequently been rededicated to include the American patriots of Korea and Vietnam.

### **The Elks National Foundation**

The Elks National Foundation is an agency of the Grand Lodge for the furtherance of the charitable, educational, patriotic, and benevolent activities of the Order. It is a permanent trust fund that was established at the Grand Lodge Session at Miami, FL, in 1928, by amendment of the Constitution of the Grand Lodge. The Grand Lodge immediately donated \$100,000 as the nucleus of the permanent fund.

It was planned that this fund should increase continually through voluntary contributions of the state associations, Subordinate Lodges, individual members of the Order, and others interested in the achievement of its purposes.

The administration of the Foundation was placed in the hands of seven Trustees appointed by the Grand Exalted Ruler, subject to confirmation by the Grand Lodge, to serve without compensation. It was provided, also, that the entire expense of administration of the Foundation should be paid by the Grand Lodge. Since the entire income of the Foundation is available for distribution without diminution by overhead expenses, it is recognized as an admirable agency for carrying on good works in perpetuity, and has been and should continue to be the recipient of bequests from those who desire to dedicate part of their worldly possessions to philanthropic purposes.

All contributions to the Foundation are deductible for Federal income and estate tax purposes.

The trustees are clothed with broad powers and duties and a wide discretion. These include the custody, investment and preservation of the funds of the Foundation; the duty to secure and receive accretions thereto; and the authority to apply the income there from as it may become available to such charitable, educational, benevolent and patriotic purposes as they may determine.

As the annual income from the investment of the principal fund of the foundation has increased to substantial proportions, the foundation trustees have made generous allocations to assist state associations in the furtherance of approved programs and to foster other charitable, educational, patriotic and benevolent projects.

It is confidently anticipated that in the course of time the Elks National Foundation will become one of the truly great benefactors of our country, with an ever increasing capacity for the accomplishment of the humanitarian service to which it is dedicated.

### **The Elks National Defense and Public Relations Commission**

When the Grand Lodge met at Houston, TX, in July 1940, the United States was at peace. Throughout the rest of the world, the lights of liberty had been extinguished one by one; Brutality and death reigned over nation after nation of free men from the Atlantic to Asia, from the Arctic to the Mediterranean; and the ever widening pall of war clouds were threatening to spread its shadow across our own country. But our Nation's tremendous potential power lay virtually dormant; most of our people failed to understand that freedom in America was in jeopardy.

A few here and there recognized that democracy thrives not upon privileges accepted complacently, but upon obligations met courageously; that sacrifice, eternal vigilance, and preparedness are the price of liberty.

In the fore ranks of those few who realized that every American must fall in to safeguard his heritage, stood the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. Our representatives gathered at Houston, proved their eagerness to lead the crusade to kindle anew the spirit of patriotism that had animated our forefathers when the convention created, by unanimous resolution, the Elks National Defense and Public Relations Commission for the purpose of formulating a program of practical action in defense of the land and the way of life we love.

For the next 18 months this commission - determined to rededicate the Order to the preservation of American freedom - suggested and supervised numerous plans of action, all designed to contribute to national defense in a manner and to an extent in keeping with our patriotic record. The commission encouraged Subordinate Lodges to arrange patriotic meetings aimed at arousing the general public to the need for proper national defense; it urged the appointment of National Defense Committees by all state associations and all Subordinate Lodges. It recommended, in addition, that each Lodge assign a member who would be responsible for helping a young man entering

the Armed Forces under the Selective Service Act, furnish gratis, such medical and legal aid as the young man's family might require, and also provide dinners and entertainment for all such young men entering the Service.

At the Grand Lodge Session held at Philadelphia, PA, in July, 1941, the War Department offered to the Subordinate Lodges an exceptional opportunity for service to our country - namely, the privilege of participating fully in the Army's "Keep'em Flying" program. To aid the War Department in obtaining and assisting qualified boys who wanted to enroll in the Aviation Cadet Training Course, the Defense Commission began - and its successor, the Elks War Commission continued - a program including: cooperation of individual Lodges with the nearest recruiting offices; sponsorship of Cadet rallies in Lodges with the nearest recruiting offices; sponsorship of Cadet rallies in Lodge homes; and operation of special refresher course educational programs designed to enable potential Aviation Cadets to pass requirements for enlistment in this branch of the Service. As a result of the coordinated efforts of Subordinate Lodges, thousands of young men were recruited and given the intensive training that enabled them to pass the entrance examinations and also prepared them for the rigorous routine of aviation ground school work. Army officials were high in their praise of the pre-pilot training thus offered by the Order.

Then came the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The thunder of enemy bombs was still rumbling was still rumbling across the Pacific when the Grand Exalted Ruler - on that same Sunday afternoon of December 7, 1941 - telegraphed the President of the United States, placing at the latter's disposal the full strength of the Order. Pearl Harbor made us truly "One Nation Under God, Indivisible." It was the spark that set ablaze the full, fiery flame of an awakened people, determined not only to fight, but to win. It was the spur that further stimulated an already aroused Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks to re-illumine with fresh and glowing pages its lustrous annals of patriotic service. Before a week had passed, the Grand Exalted Ruler's office was literally submerged under telegrams and letters from Lodges and individual Elks, pledging whatever assistance might be deemed necessary in the furtherance of the war effort. With the idea of coordinating the offers of help from Elks everywhere, the Grand Exalted Ruler called an emergency meeting of the Elks National Defense and Public Relations Commission for January 4, 1942, at New York City, NY, at which time this Commission became the Elks War Commission - a change in name approved and ratified by the Omaha, NE Grand Lodge Session in July, 1942.

### **The Elks War Commission - WWII**

The Elks War Commission immediately called upon the Subordinate Lodges for contributions to carry on its war work in fullest measure, and the response to this appeal was prompt and generous. Further, the representatives of the Lodges gathered at the next three Grand Lodge Sessions - in 1942, 1943, and 1944 - voted to pledge one dollar per member to enable the Commission to alter and extend its program to meet the constantly changing needs and opportunities for service to our country in the field of patriotic endeavor.

One of the earliest requests made of the War Commission came when The Adjutant General of the Army, impressed by the aid given by the Order in the Aviation Cadet Corps program, asked for assistance in recruiting additional numbers of young men for the ground crews of the Army Air Corps. Complying with this request, Subordinate Lodges first conducted a broad survey to find men qualified for this branch of the Service, and then managed a campaign to enlist them. Proof that the Lodges successfully accomplished this task by means of publicity, rallies, and personal contacts may be found in this fact: The Adjutant General asked the Elks for 45,000 recruits; through the efforts of the Lodges 97,000 men were enlisted in record time.

Aware of the excellent campaign conducted in behalf of the Army Air Corps, the Secretary of the Navy appealed to the Elks War Commission to help obtain recruits for the Naval Air Corps, and again the Subordinate Lodges responded magnificently.

As the war continued, the need for men skilled in the field of construction grew daily more acute, and the Army and Navy embarked on a joint campaign to obtain volunteers. The Order of Elks was the only organization invited by the Secretaries of the Army and the Navy to participate in this campaign. In waging an intensive drive for recruits, the Subordinate Lodges did such a splendid job that the required number of Army Engineers and Navy Sea Bees was obtained three months ahead of schedule.

Another recruitment program in which the War Commission and the Lodges contributed invaluable aid was that to enlist 1,000 nurses to fill the requirements of the Veterans Administration.

In addition to recruitment, the Commission undertook another major project - the establishment of Fraternal Centers by Lodges located in communities adjacent to the larger camps and stations. These Centers solved effectively the problem of furnishing hospitality to men and women in the Armed Services, and at the same time strengthened the interest and pride of individual Elks in their membership in the Order.

This project kept expanding until the total number of centers supported either by the War Commission or by Subordinate Lodges reached 155, including the large one in New York City, for which all Lodges in the metropolitan area assumed the responsibility. The New York center's overnight lodging accommodations consisted of 110 beds; there were laundry facilities and a canteen; and the Lodges provided volunteer hostesses and junior hostesses to assist in entertaining the center's guests. Throughout the country, as in New York City, all fraternal centers looked after the welfare of hundreds of thousands of young men and women in the services by supplying them with refreshments, entertainment and good fellowship.

Still another noteworthy project, that of aid to veterans, came into being when disabled men began to be returned home from the battlefronts to be cared for in government hospitals. Subordinate Lodges cooperated wholeheartedly with the Elks War Commission in providing entertainment and recreation for these unfortunate casualties of war, and many state associations also engaged in this worthwhile work. Patients were supplied with radios, phonographs,

books, magazines, cards, games and musical instruments - as well as with materials with which to work with their hands in creating and producing a variety of items. Some Lodges furnished such things as pool tables, equipment for badminton, ping pong and paddle tennis, boxing gloves, punching bags, skies, toboggans; and paraphernalia for basketball, volleyball, baseball, football, and softball - all this in addition to regularly scheduled entertainment and special gifts at Christmas.

Among the many other activities carried on by the Order, one of the most popular with the boys was the War Commission's purchase of and shipment to far flung battlefields of millions of cigarettes. For example, in one year alone 15,640,000 cigarettes & 700,000 packages of tobacco were shipped.

The Commission also furnished Courtesy Cards, to be used by Elk members' blood relatives who were under 21 years of age at the time of their induction. The purpose of the cards was to insure that the courtesies of all Elks Clubs would be extended to these young nonmembers, wherever they happened to be in training.

It is impossible to record in detail the innumerable activities of the Subordinate Lodges, in response to the plans outlined by the War Commission. Two of the activities most appreciated were the "G" (Gift)

Boxes that were sent by the thousands to Elk members and their buddies in camps and stations all over the world, and the "Write 'Em A Letter" campaign, as a result of which countless letters were written to young service members who wanted news from home more than any other one thing. Many Lodges turned over their homes to the Red Cross or to local patriotic organizations. Virtually all of them engaged in the collection of blood plasma and in the sale of United States Defense and War Bonds, in which Lodges and individual Elks invested millions of dollars, to say nothing of countless additional millions of dollars worth that Elks helped sell to the general public. Lodges sent more than 200,000 pairs of slippers to convalescents in Army and Navy hospitals.

It can be stated without fear of contradiction that every single Lodge of the Order entered enthusiastically and effectively not only into every government project, but also into all community plans related to the War Effort.

### **The Elks National Veterans Service Commission**

After the close of World War II, the Elks War Commission became the Elks National Veterans Service Commission by resolution of the Grand Lodge at its session held at New York, NY in 1946. The first pledge given by the newly created Commission was that, while there was one veteran confined in a veterans hospital, the Elks would never forget him.

This Commission's purpose was to carry out the post-war patriotic work of the Order, in cooperation with government agencies. The main project was the veterans program, including entertainment, recreation, and occupational therapy. In this last field, Lodges and state

associations supplied to veterans hospitals both materials and instructors. In teaching patients useful occupations, instructors planned the work with the individual patient in mind so that - in accordance with his need - he could make items that would:

1. Develop muscle strength.
2. Train him to use artificial hands.
3. Exercise his fingers, elbows, and shoulders.
4. Promote general co-ordination.

Through such means a patient not only made faster progress toward complete recovery, but also mastered skills that would enable him to earn a living after he had been discharged from the hospital.

### **The Elks National Service Commission**

The resolution creating the Elks National Veterans Service Commission provided that the Commission should cover all of the patriotic activities of the Order, in addition to the veterans program. As world conditions became increasingly unsettled, the scope of these activities broadened.

It was, therefore, deemed advisable to change the name to the Elks National Service Commission. This action was taken at the Grand Lodge Session at Cleveland, OH, in 1949.

Emphasis upon the re-opening of Fraternal Centers began with the start of hostilities in Korea in 1950. The Order then Opened and operated these Centers in Elks Lodges located in the vicinity of camps and stations at which boys and girls received training before being sent overseas. Conducted along lines similar to those Centers set up during World War II, these newly established centers furnished a home away from home for the young men and women making every sacrifice that our American way of life might be preserved.

Through the magnificent, coordinated efforts put forth by state associations, Subordinate Lodges, and Individual Elks, the commission has continued all its activities in the name and in the spirit of patriotism. Whenever war clouds hover over us, this outstanding American fraternity will always assume a position of leadership, in an endeavor to bring hope, comfort, and happiness to the young men and women of our Armed Forces.

### **THE ELKS OBLIGATION**

The obligation which is assumed by every member of the Order, as an essential part of his initiation, involves certain duties which are necessarily implied, as well as those which are formally expressed. By that obligation, so assumed, they become a member of the Order of Elks, not merely a member of their own Lodge. The rights and privileges thereby conferred upon them include the right to attend the meetings of any club house maintained by such other Lodge, in accordance with its rules and regulations relating thereto. And, they are as much amenable to the Statutes of the Order as they are to the By-laws of their own Lodge.

They are entitled to participate in the deliberations of their own Lodge; and it is their duty to attend its meetings for that purpose, with proper regard for other duties which may also rest upon them. They share the

responsibility for its acts; and they should, by their vote in Lodge sessions and by the appropriate exercise of their influence, endeavor to have those acts reflect their own views. But, they should, with good grace, yield to the majority will, when it has been duly registered.

The charitable and benevolent activities of his Lodge frequently require the personal attention of members other than its officers. Each member should readily respond to any official call upon him for any fraternal service that may be within his reasonable capacity to render.

It is only by the continued display of such a spirit of fraternal cooperation that their Lodge can maintain itself as the instrumentality of community service it is designed to be. And, it is only by generously putting their individual service into this fraternal association that they will secure for them self the greatest measure of satisfaction and happiness which should accompany membership in the Order.