



2014-15 ANNUAL REPORT

The Elks National Veterans Service Commission was established in 1946, immediately after World War II, with the sole mission of serving our nation's veterans. Though much has changed since then, the Elks' dedication to serve veterans and military members in need has never wavered. In VA clinics, veterans' homes, USOs, homeless shelters and more, thousands of Elks volunteers give generously of their time, energy and resources to serve veterans and military members each year.

The Elks are committed to their mission, "So long as there are veterans, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will never forget them." The ENVSC takes that pledge one step further, and promises service to our nation's veterans and military members, with a special focus on service to those in need.

As the needs of today's veterans changed, so have the Elks' programs. Today, the ENVSC has many exciting programs and partnerships catering to veterans and military members and their families.

The cornerstone of our success is our army of dedicated volunteers. From our local Lodge, District and State Veterans Chairs, to our VAVS Representatives and VAVS Deputy Representatives and everyone in between, we are indebted to and thankful for our generous Elks volunteers.

ELKS NATIONAL VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSION

Office and Committees

MARY K. MORGAN, *National Director* (773) 755-4736
2750 N. Lakeview Ave., Chicago, IL 60614-1889

SILVIA L. HOLMAN, *ENVSC Programs* (773) 755-4846
2750 N. Lakeview Ave., Chicago, IL 60614-1889

HANNAH J. GRABER, *ENVSC Programs* (773) 755-4844
2750 N. Lakeview Ave., Chicago, IL 60614-1889

Department e-mail: vets@elks.org
Department phone: (773) 755-4736
Department fax: (773) 755-4736

STEWART G. ISRAEL, *Chairman* (734) 455-4567
Adopt-A-Veteran Program stigbew@gmail.com
40225 Newport Drive, Plymouth, MI 48170-4739

TOM JAMISON, *Chairman* (217) 323-2224
Playing Cards for Veterans Program tjamison@wildblue.net
12102 Chandlerville Road, Beardstown, IL 62618-7679

DENNIS MC ALEESE, *Chairman* (870) 488-5786
Veterans Leather Program kdmc@mtnhome.com
384 County Road 852, Elizabeth, AR 72531-9603

CHARLES E. MUDGE, *Vice-Chairman* (573) 547-8909
Veterans Leather Program chuckmudge1@yahoo.com
870 PCR 718, Perryville, MO 63775-8524

PROGRAMS

FREEDOM GRANTS

For the fourth year, the Elks National Veterans Service Commission offered Freedom Grants to individual Lodges for projects designed to serve veterans, military members, and their families. One hundred forty \$2,000 grants were awarded in 2014. Elks used these grants to provide food and clothing for homeless and hospitalized veterans, participate at Stand Downs, hold holiday meals for veterans in need, hold social events at VA hospitals, and more. Here are a few examples of this year's grant projects.

- Sandpoint, Idaho, Lodge No. 1376 created backpack supply kits full of necessities for homeless veterans and provided blankets to veterans in hospice care.
- Salem, Illinois, Lodge No. 1678 partnered with This Able Veteran to provide service dogs for veterans with injuries and PTSD resulting from their service.
- Hastings, Nebraska, Lodge No. 159 provided bedding and food vouchers, and household items for veterans in transitional housing.
- Huntington, West Virginia, Lodge No. 313 used a Freedom Grant to support an annual adaptive winter sports clinic for wounded veterans and their families.

Congratulations to all the Lodges that received Freedom Grants in 2014-15!

VETERANS LEATHER PROGRAM

Occupational and recreational therapy is an important part of the care and treatment of long-term patients. Elks provide a variety of materials for this therapy, and the most popular item is leather.

National Leather Chair Dennis McAleese and Vice-Chair Charles Mudge supervise the collection, transportation, tanning and virtually every facet necessary for this program to be a success. We thank them for sharing their time and expertise.

This past year, 20 states donated 15,271 hides for tanning to the national program. The following State Associations took top honors in the collection of hides in 2014-15.

1st Place	4,205 hides	Missouri Elks Association, Inc.
2nd Place	2,654 hides	Iowa Elks Association
3rd Place	1,995 hides	Wyoming Elks Association

At the 2015 Grand Lodge Convention in Indianapolis, Ind., all three winners received a beautiful bronze plaque commemorating their achievement. We thank all of the states that participated in this program. Every contribution was vital to its success.

11,882 square feet of crafting leather was sent to veterans' medical facilities throughout the United States. Veterans with the tools and the ability to use them fashion intricate works of arts and crafts from the leather, some of them so fine that they are exhibited in local and even national shows.

Leather from the program was also used to make 2,870 pairs of fingerless leather gloves for veterans who use wheelchairs. The gloves are distributed to VAVS Representatives throughout the country, and also to veterans in wheelchairs at national events sponsored by the VA.

Through the non-profit organization known as Help Hospitalized Veterans, or HHV, the Elks distributed 10,429 leather craft kits at no charge to hospitalized veterans and those recovering at home. HHV manufactures the kits from donated Elks leather, at no other cost to the Elks. These kits enable patients to become involved in a satisfying, creative activity, which greatly improves their morale, aids dexterity, and improves concentration.

The total value of all products produced by our Veterans Leather Program last year was approximately \$184,929.50.

Instructional videos, brochures and promotional materials are available on the Veterans Leather webpage at www.elks.org/vets/leather.cfm.

PLAYING CARDS FOR VETERANS

Begun in 1997, Playing Cards for Veterans is a national program designed to offer veterans in hospitals, homes and other facilities social opportunities and help them stay sharp and engaged.

Local casinos donate decks of playing cards to the Elks to be distributed to VA homes and hospitals. Led by Program Chair Tom Jamison, volunteers collect, check, package and mail cards to veterans across the country. Last year we distributed an estimated 33,000 decks of playing cards valued at more than \$66,000.

Elks volunteers can request that cards be sent to local veterans facilities using the Playing Cards for Veterans Order Form on the Volunteer Resource page of the ENVSC website, www.elks.org/vets/volunteers.cfm.

VETERANS AFFAIRS VOLUNTARY SERVICE (VAVS)

The Elks National Veterans Service Commission relies on 617 VAVS Representatives and VAVS Deputy Representatives from our ranks to provide comfort, relief, and recreation to veterans at 338 VA Hospitals, clinics, and state-run facilities across the country. Last year, the Elks National Veterans Service Commission distributed \$564,542 to this network of volunteers to administer this important program.

The terms "VAVS Representative" and "VAVS Deputy Representative", which originate from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, refer to Elks volunteers officially certified through the Elks VAVS program to volunteer in VA facilities.

Representatives are recommended for appointment by the Grand Lodge Sponsor of their state, and certified by the Chicago office. Once they are trained by their local VA facility, they are ready to begin.

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES AND STATISTICS

During the last year, over 124,704 Elks and 69,908 family members and friends contributed 902,884 hours of service to veterans. In the process, they drove 4,079,382 miles.

Government data values service at \$21.79 per hour and mileage at .55 per mile, putting the Elks' equivalent dollar value of service was over \$19,673,842. These volunteers worked in both state and federal hospitals, nursing homes, outpatient clinics and beyond the facilities themselves. They cooked meals at the Lodge, sponsored trips, and gave comfort and care in a thousand ways to veterans of all ages.

In addition to their time, Elks donated \$10,455,382 dollars in cash and merchandise for the benefit of veterans. The total value of service, mileage, cash and non-cash donations last year is estimated at \$32,372,824.00.

VETERAN VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

The Elks National Veterans Service Commission continues to recognize our volunteers in each state for their work with our nation's Veterans.

Winners are determined from entries submitted to committees headed by each State Association's President and National Veterans Service Chairman.

We salute all our volunteers who, by their commitment, dedication, and unselfishness, have greatly enriched the lives of our veterans.

<u>STATE</u>	<u>MALE</u>	<u>FEMALE</u>
ARIZONA	Al Vesterdal	Cheryl Lynn Oertwig
ARKANSAS	Randle Oxford	Sharon S. Kelsay
CALIFORNIA-HAWAII	Gary F. Platz, ER	Donna Donovan
COLORADO	Edward J. Utsch	Janet Van Eps
CONNECTICUT	Robert Bruce Fagan	Janet H. Vergason
GEORGIA	Roger S. Decker	
IDAHO	Robert M. Shaw, PER	Linda Tatlock
ILLINOIS	Glenn A. Johnson, PER	Sande Skinner
KENTUCKY	Donald Beiting	Ruby Hicklin
LOUISIANA	Thomas Victor McGinty	Maryann Yelm
MAINE	David K. Anderson, PER	Lottie A. Ireland
MINNESOTA	James L. Keller	Bonitta R. Keller
MISSOURI	Darrell Quinley	Amy Baum
NEBRASKA	Richard E. Hansen	
NEVADA	Thomas Zogorski, PER	
NEW HAMPSHIRE	George F. LaBonte, PER	Sandra M. Shene, PER
NEW MEXICO	Edward M. Earing	Marie Earing
NEW YORK	Roland C. Abare	Robin Merante
NORTH CAROLINA	H. Lee Littiken, PER	Shirley Drake
OHIO	Butch Bost, ER	Mary Beaston, ER
OREGON	Robert L. Van Voorhis	Alta Lynch
RHODE ISLAND		Anna Deschamps
SOUTH CAROLINA	Patrick E. Tyler, PER	Elizabeth J. Marangelli
TENNESSEE	Albie Fleetwood, PER	
TEXAS	Jimmy C. Yates, PDDGER	Billie M. Yates
UTAH	Dan R. Johnson, PER	Mary Alice Johnson
VERMONT	Granville A. Paine, PER	
VIRGINIA	Donald W. Delap, PER	Linda Gardner
WEST VIRGINIA	Edward P. Duffy	Gloria Delbrugge

PARTNERSHIPS

VA PARTNERSHIPS

The Department of Veterans Affairs works to address all the needs that veterans have, offering veterans the chance to express themselves through art, improve their health through sports, learn new skills and socialize with other veterans. Read about some of these programs that exist with the help of the Elks National Veterans Service Commission!

Held in Snowmass, Colorado, the **National Veterans Winter Sports Clinic** serves more than 350 veterans with disabilities each year by offering sports like skiing, snowmobiling, sled hockey, fencing, volleyball and more. This clinic helps veterans with disabilities realize their full potential, which can aid recovery by improving physical and mental health, and self-esteem.

Veterans with visual and physical disabilities develop new skills like golfing, bowling and more at the **National Veterans TEE Tournament**. This event offers veterans camaraderie, relaxation and the knowledge that fun activities are still available to them.

Through the **National Golden Age Games**, senior veterans participate and compete in adaptive sports aimed at improving health and increasing quality of life. It includes multiple options for sports and includes veterans of all abilities.

Veterans can express themselves through art, creative writing, acting, music and more at the **National Veterans Creative Arts Festival**. The annual competition recognizes the progress toward recovery and offers a chance for veterans to display their talents. Learn more.

The **National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic** offers adventure sports and recreational activities such as sailing, surfing, kayaking and cycling to recently injured veterans. Designed to be paired with therapy, this week-long event allows veterans to improve their health and overcome obstacles.

A multi-sports competition for veterans with physical disabilities, the **National Veterans Wheelchair Games** lets veterans show off their skills, improve health and build camaraderie. The event offers opportunities for healthy competition as well as learning new sports.

INDEPENDENT PARTNERSHIPS

Bugles Across America believes that every veteran deserves to have live taps played after his or her funeral. By actively recruiting, training and organizing buglers across the country, this organization provides veterans and their families with appreciation and recognition of their service to America.

Founder and Elk member Tom Day has been credited with over 65,000 hours of service to the VA, and was awarded the prestigious George Washington Medal from the Freedom Foundation.

The Hospitalized Veterans Writing Project utilizes therapeutic writing to rehabilitate veterans and offer a means of creative expression. Veterans' submissions are gathered and published in the Veterans Voices magazine several times each year.

Re-Creation USA is a performance group dedicated to providing entertainment for veterans in VA medical centers. This group of volunteers travels around the country, putting on patriotic shows for veterans and offering a chance for social engagement and recreation with friends.

Last year, Re-Creation, USA travelled 38,072 miles from coast to coast, stopping in 31 states, and staging 132 performances at VA and State Veterans facilities. 6,323 veterans attended the shows.

In an effort to streamline our support of the Re-Creation touring group, all housing costs for the group are billed directly to the ENVSC offices in Chicago. Lodges no longer need to provide any housing support to Re-Creation at the local level. Lodges are encouraged to use all funds previously earmarked for this cause to support veterans in other ways.

To learn more about all our partnerships, visit www.elks.org/vets/partnerships.cfm.

COMBINED FEDERAL CAMPAIGN

Last year was the eleventh year the Elks National Veterans Service Commission participated in the Combined Federal Campaign. This is the Federal Government's equivalent of the United Way and the ENVSC received \$4,248.28 from this program. We have been chosen to again participate in this campaign during the upcoming year. Federal employees interested in contributing should contact the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) for further details.

FINANCES

The Commission has maintained complete records during the last year. They recorded income from the Elks National Foundation and our investments. They also documented expenditures which primarily centered on hospital service programs. The accounting firm of Diehl & Associates audited the accounts. The audit covered the period beginning April 1, 2014, and ending March 31, 2015. Please reference the attached audit for details.

CONCLUSION

We are proud to report on this, another successful year. We owe thanks to our dedicated volunteers across the country, from Lodge Veterans Chairs to VAVS Representatives, to State Veterans Chairs and everyone in between.

We extend special thanks to Grand Secretary Bryan R. Klatt and the Grand Lodge staff, as well as to the Grand Lodge Sponsors for their assistance.

The Elks National Veterans Service Commission operates thanks to a generous grant from the Elks National Foundation. We are very grateful to the ENF for their continued and generous support.

For more information, please visit the ENVSC website, www.elks.org/vets, or contact the ENVSC by e-mailing Vets@elks.org or calling 773-755-4736.

Respectfully Submitted,

James L. Nichelson, PGER, Chairman
David Carr, PGER, Vice-Chairman
John Amen, PGER, Secretary/Treasurer
Paul D. Hesel, PGER, Past Chair
Louis J. Grillo, PGER, Member

**IN LOVING MEMORY
2014-2015**

In Vain We Call

ROBERT W. ALLEN	Bellflower/ Long Beach, CA Lodge No. 888 VAVS Dep. Rep., Long Beach VAMC
GLENN A. JOHNSON, PER	Kankakee, IL Lodge No. 627 VAVS Rep. IL Veterans Home – Manteno
JACK J. JONES	Wilkes-Barre/Scranton, PA Lodge No. 109 VAVS Rep., Wilkes-Barre VAMC & Northeast Pennsylvania Vet Center-Scranton
CHARLES JORDAN	Roanoke, VA Lodge No. 197 VAVS Rep., Roanoke VAMC & VA Veterans Care Center
ALEX S. KANKULA	Huntington, NY Lodge No.1565 VAVS Dep. Rep., Northport VAMC
DONALD J. MOCCIO, PER	Augusta, GA Lodge No.205 VAVS Dep. Rep., Augusta VAMC
JOHN E. McGEHEE	Marshalltown, IA Lodge No.312 VAVS Dep. Rep., IA State Home-Marshalltown
JOHN F. OCHANPAUGH	Des Moines, IA Lodge No. 98 VAVS Rep., Des Moines VAMC
GILBERT PARRY	Alhambra-San Gabriel, CA Lodge No. 1328 VAVS Rep., Los Angeles VAMC
JACK SPELLACY	Lakewood, OH Lodge No. 1350 VAVS Rep., Cleveland (Wade Park) VAMC
BOBBY J. WHITE	Cleburne, TX Lodge No. 811 VAVS Dep. Rep., Waco VAMC
RAYMOND VALDEZ	Midwest City, OK Lodge No. 1890 VAVS Rep., Norman Veteran Center