Meeting the needs of today’s veterans.
Coming Together for Veterans

As Chair of the Elks National Veterans Service Commission, I spend my time seeing, learning and working to do more for veterans on a national level.

But it all starts at the local level, with Elks members coming together to serve the veterans in their community. I am involved locally as well, assisting the veterans in my community for more than 30 years. I do this because without these men and women who have served America so well, we would not be able to enjoy our freedom to live in this great country.

I became involved with Veterans programs at my Lodge to try to thank veterans in any way I could. I help cook the Veterans’ Day dinner that our lodge puts on. I assist with projects like building wheelchair ramps and hosting fishing outings and boat rides for veterans. My lodge brings home-baked goods to the VA Hospital every December. My lodge is involved in our regional Veterans Stand Down, where we serve food and provide clothing and other services to homeless and near-homeless veterans.

I do these things because I believe all the veterans that Elks have served truly appreciate our efforts. I am so proud to be a part of the Elks programs for veterans, and to share this year’s Annual Report with all of you so you can see the outstanding things Elks Lodges everywhere do to serve our nation’s veterans.

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

148,859 Elks volunteered
704,121 hours in service to veterans through ENVSC programs, bringing thousands of friends, family and community members to join in.

12,000 free decks of playing cards were provided to thousands of veterans in facilities by the Playing Cards for Veterans program nationwide.

7,786 Elks assisted 31,139 military families with the Elks family through the Army of Hope.

5,321 Elks offered friendship and comfort to 15,067 veterans through the Adopt-a-Veteran program.

18 events were held by Lodges on average to serve veterans and/or military members in their community.

“By providing resources and support, including emotional support, we can help our veterans cope with life’s challenges, put a smile on their face, take them to another place, or sometimes, all we have to do is be there with them and listen. Just being in the same room with a veteran is an honor, and by sharing time with them, we not only add value to their lives, but we add value to our own lives.”

– Ron Hicks, PGER, Secretary of Elks National Veterans Service Commission

Sincerely,

David R. Carr, Chair
John D. Amen, Vice-Chair
Ronald L. Hicks, Secretary/Treasurer
Paul D. Helsel, Past Chair
James L. Nichelson, Past Chair
Voluntary Service

Through the Voluntary Service program, our Representatives and Deputy Representatives provide vital, reliable support to hundreds of thousands of veterans across the country. Elks serve veterans at local VA Medical Centers, State Veterans Homes, and whenever veterans gather. We partner with these facilities because together, we all have one goal: to help our veterans receive the services and treatment they need to be healthy, and to offer these veterans the chance to live full and engaging lives.

22,214 ELKS MEMBERS
Elks Representatives volunteered more than 23 hours each month, and Elks Deputy Representatives volunteered another 13 hours each month.

343 FACILITIES
Elks were stationed in more than 340 facilities, providing consistent, ongoing support for veterans across the nation.

636,865 VETERANS
Elks Representatives visited veterans at these facilities an average of 5 times each month, reaching hundreds of thousands of veterans.
300 Lodges received Freedom Grants in 2018-19! Lodges use Freedom Grants to meet the needs that only local community members could recognize. These grant funds give Elks members the resources they need to provide active, essential support to veterans, military members and their families in the communities where they live.

For example, Vacaville, Calif., Lodge No. 2638 used its Freedom Grant to help host a military family night at a local food pantry. Each Monday night, Lodge members helped stock and run the pantry, meeting with local military families who stopped by for a little help from the Elks.

Lake Oconee, Ga., Lodge No. 2849 used its Freedom Grant to launch an art therapy program at the Georgia War Veterans Home to help veterans with PTSD express themselves.

East Stroudsburg, Pa., Lodge No. 219 hosted veterans from the Wilkes-Barre VA Hospital.

Fayetteville-Springdale, Ark., Lodge No. 1987 hosted veterans from local nursing homes for two fishing derby events with lunch and prizes.

Through creative and responsive projects, Elks made a huge impact this past year.

7,000+ 300 48,674
ELKS LODGES HOURS

Altogether, these projects served 42,416 veterans and military members, meeting needs that might otherwise go unfulfilled.
The Elks have pledged to help end veteran homelessness. One of the ways we help is by partnering directly with VA Social Workers to provide emergency assistance to veterans to help them prevent homelessness. This year we've helped 778 veterans by providing timely assistance with things like rent, utilities or security deposits. A small amount of assistance at the right time can make a world of difference for veterans.

“We While the VA can and does provide actual housing for Veterans, they do not have the wherewithal, funding, boots on the ground, etc., to actually move a Veteran into a home within a community with all the necessities (like a bed, furniture, supplies) needed to make it a functioning household.”

- Paul Helsel, PGER, Past Chair of Elks National Veterans Service Commission

We’ve also helped veterans who are exiting homelessness and finding new homes. Elks in Lodges across the country have helped 1,437 veterans establish their new homes by providing Welcome Home Kits full of home supplies.

Lodges in the 8 areas of the country with the most veterans experiencing homelessness have stepped up to the plate in a big way, using Focus Grants to directly serve 621 veterans with projects like weekly meals at transitional centers, job training programs for veterans re-entering the workforce, and beds and furniture for recently housed veterans.

Redlands, Calif., Lodge No. 583 combined a Focus and Freedom Grant to provide home supplies for 28 veterans leaving Loma Linda Veterans Village and moving into permanent housing.

Cocoa Beach, Fla, Lodge No. 2387 has provided hundreds of veterans with kits of home supplies! Elks partner with Volunteers of America to help veterans leaving the shelter set up their new homes.
This year, the Veterans Leather Program volunteers were as impressive as ever, bringing the community together and inviting others to join in our mission of serving veterans. Our Veterans Leather Program could not work without Elks recruiting volunteers and hunters to join in this mission.

Altogether, Elks in 17 states donated 19,283 hides. Elks across the country distributed 3,460 pairs of gloves and handed out 8,378 craft kits. Because of the dedication of our Elks and volunteers, we were also able to donate more than 68,000 square feet of leather to Help Heal Veterans to create even more craft kits distributed to veterans in facilities across the country.

Missouri again donated the most hides, contributing 9,648!

Iowa followed in second place, contributing 4,350.

Arkansas followed them with 2,437.

Veteran Roosevelt H., a patient in the Spinal Cord Injury and Disorders Unit, tries on his new leather gloves donated by Elks at the Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center.
Adaptive Sports/Partners

Through targeted partnerships with veterans service organizations and nonprofit organizations, Elks are able to meet more of veterans’ diverse needs.

**Bugles Across America**
recruits, trains and organizes buglers across the country in support of their belief that veterans deserve a live rendition of Taps by a real bugler at their funeral.

**The VA Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee**
brings organizations together to improve service and resources for veterans seeking care at VA facilities.

**Re-Creation USA**
provides live, therapeutic entertainment to veterans in VA Medical Centers, State Veterans Homes and other facilities across the country.

**The James H. Parke Memorial Fund**
awards college scholarships to outstanding students who have served 100 hours or more at a VA facility.

**Elks sponsor 6 adaptive sports and arts events to help veterans rehabilitate, recover and thrive.**

- National Veterans Golden Age Games
- National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic
- National Veterans Creative Arts Competition and Festival
- National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic
- National Disabled Veterans TEE Tournament
- National Veterans Wheelchair Games
Volunteers of the Year

ALASKA
Jack Greenhalgh

ARIZONA
Mary I. Shaffer

ARKANSAS
Donnie Golden
Katherine Carey

CA-HI
Robert L. Evans
Isabel D. Good

COLORADO
Alec Jay Parker
Donna Kay Rowlands

CONNECTICUT
Bill Currlin
Linda S. La Fauci

FLORIDA
Troy L. Hughes
Charlene K. Fisher

“Charlene’s fierce commitment to service does more than make the lives of veterans better, it also manages to lift the lives and spirits of her fellow members.”

GEORGIA
Margaret S. Klein

IDAHO
William John Muirhead
Traci Roberts-Marmo

ILLINOIS
Chris Ord
Amy Whitley

INDIANA
Raymond Brown

IOWA
Corey Kimmet
Pam Caboth

KANSAS
James C. Lilleston
Nancy A. McEachern

KENTUCKY
Brian L. Kinney
Sulena Bryant

“Brian has put countless hours into helping veterans. He is always ready to make someone feel special. I truly can’t say enough about Brian’s dedication and drive to the veteran community.”

LOUISIANA
Warren Hoffmann, Jr.
Sonya Ann Belgard

MAINE
Peter J. Reny
Jacqueline S. Reny

MD-DE-DC
Joe L. Lancaster
Joseph E. Mornini

MASSACHUSETTS
Jesse Harvey
Assunta Palomba

MICHIGAN
Franklin L. Campbell

MINNESOTA
James Van Duyn
Ruth Mickelson

MISSOURI
Charles G. Cantrell II

NEW HAMPSHIRE
Norman G. Sanborn, Sr.
Barbara A. Allard

NEW JERSEY
George Tencza
Patricia Green

NEW YORK
Anthony J. Specchio
Justine Crowley-Duncan

NORTH CAROLINA
Robert (Shorty) Dennany
Kathleen M. Smith

OREGON
Todd Lund
Faye L. Clemens

 PENNSYLVANIA
Norman Alan Johnson

“The emotional support Mr. Johnson provides to these men and women is immeasurable as he treats each and every veteran he meets with the utmost respect. He is always available to provide a sympathetic ear, hot meal or kick in the pants-whichever is needed.”

RHODE ISLAND
William Kennedy
Lori Eaton

SOUTH CAROLINA
Thomas L. Hilton
Tabitha Lewis

TEXAS
James H. Stansbury
Christine Stansbury

UTAH
Ray Croxen
Mary Croxen

VIRGINIA
Joseph P. Handerhan, Jr.

WASHINGTON
Leonard Mills

“At a moment’s notice, Mills will rearrange his schedule when he’s notified of a homeless vet who is transitioning into an apartment. He has such empathy and compassion for these vets. This is his labor of love.”

WEST VIRGINIA
Charles H. Buzzard
Deaonna M. Crowe
In Memory of the Volunteers We Lost

2018-2019

CLARENCE BAGBY JR.
Marion, IL Lodge No. 800
Representative, Marion State Home

FREDERICK BLACK
Staten Island, NY Lodge No. 841
Representative, Brooklyn VAMC

HERBERT R. DUPONT
Chicopee, MA Lodge No. 1849
Deputy Representative, Holyoke Veterans Home

ALBIE FLEETWOOD
Gallatin, TN Lodge No. 2547
Past State Veterans Chair & Past Representative, Murfreesboro VAMC

H.R. GUESS
Blue Springs, MO Lodge No. 2509
Deputy Representative, Cameron State Home

RONALD W. HOLLOWAY
Livermore-Pleasanton, CA Lodge No. 2117, Representative, Livermore VAMC

MARK D. JURMU
Rock Island, IL Lodge No. 980
Deputy Representative, Rock Island USO

ROBERT MCQUISTION III
Coraopolis, PA Lodge No. 1090
Past State Veterans Chair

PATRICIA E. OPINSKY
Rogers-Bentonville, AR Lodge No. 2144
Deputy Representative, Fayetteville VAMC

THOMAS E. PROCTOR
Dublin, GA Lodge No.1646
Representative, Dublin VAMC

JANET RENKOWSKY
Bridgeport, CT Lodge No. 36
Deputy Representative, West Haven VAMC

HERBERT D. RETTKE, SR.
Midwest City, OK Lodge No. 1890
Past State Veterans Chair & Past Representative, Oklahoma City VAMC

A. JOHN SULLIVAN
Mesquite, TX Lodge No. 2404
Deputy Representative, Dallas VAMC

KENNETH C. VALENTINE
Auburn, WA Lodge No. 1808
Past State Veterans Chair

DANA VAN
Bremerton, WA Lodge No. 1181
Deputy Representative, Bremerton State Home & Retsil State Home
“Veterans have served for us and deserve our best efforts to plan, budget and fund programs for them. What better project is there than to help veterans?”

– Jim Nicholson, PGER, Past Chair of Elks National Veterans Service Commission

Financial highlights for 2018-19 were summarized from the Financial Statements of the Elks National Veterans Service Commission, with the Independent Auditor’s Report prepared by FK Advisors. The audit covered the period beginning April 1, 2018 and ending March 31, 2019. Complete financial statements, including all notes, may be obtained by contacting the Elks National Veterans Service Commission.

Revenue and Support

$3,730,576 appropriation from The Elks National Foundation, Inc.

$47,601 other contributions

$3,778,177 total revenue and support

Elks Total Impact

The Elks National Veterans Service Commission works with the Elks National Foundation, Elks State Associations and local Lodges to combine resources and do more for veterans.

In 2018-19:

Elks Lodges used 867 Elks National Foundation Grants to serve veterans and military members, amounting to an approximate additional $1.54 million dollars to serve veterans and military members in need.

The Elks National Foundation awarded a total of $693,755 to Elks State Associations to fund veterans programs.

States, Lodges and Elks from all over also contributed to their local projects. Altogether, 236,803 Elks and friends volunteered 1,177,837 hours. The value of this service, both in time, in-kind and fiscal donations equals $50,542,017.

The Utah Elks Veterans Program hosts an annual Little Warrior Camp for children who have lost a parent in action or have suffered a loss related to PTSD.

McAlester, Okla., Lodge No. 533 uses its Beacon Grant to partner with the Oklahoma Veterans Center, providing toiletries, socks, clothes and other needed items to veterans and their families.
Do you have an hour to two to give? It only takes a small amount of your time to give back.

– John Amen, PGER, Vice-Chair of Elks National Veterans Service Commission

Join us in service to our nation’s veterans! Visit elks.org to find an Elks Lodge near you.

www.elks.org/vets

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