2016-17 Annual Report

ELKS NATIONAL VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSION

Meeting the needs of today’s veterans
Since 1868, we have been part of your community. Since WWI, when we formed the Elks War Relief Commission, we’ve made it our mission to serve this nation’s veterans and military members. In 1946, we officially became the Elks National Veterans Service Commission. Today, our volunteers provide direct service to veterans in more than 330 facilities each month. Through our grants to Elks Lodges, we connect with veterans and military members in their communities, providing them with services where they live. We help veterans rehabilitate and thrive through adaptive sports programs and therapy kits. And our Welcome Home initiative is reaching out to some of our most vulnerable veterans: those who are experiencing homelessness.

Recently, we posted a photo to social media of a Lodge providing free haircuts to veterans in need. People liked and shared the photo, and one person commented, “These guys don’t just talk.” This is perhaps a perfect way to sum up not just the photo, but the Elk’s history serving veterans. Elks don’t just talk. Elks act, and we have been acting to serve veterans for more than 100 years.

We are proud to report on this, another successful year in our long history of service.

Respectfully Submitted,

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

2016-17 AT A GLANCE...

Elks supported 19,682 military members and their families through the Army of Hope.

Elks provided friendship & support to 38,342 veterans through the Adopt-a-Veteran program.

Lodges held an average of 15 events to support local veterans.

$40,815,147 The total value of Elks service in 2016-17 is estimated at.

What are the primary military/veteran groups your Lodge served?

- 23% Homeless veterans
- 17% Veterans with disabilities
- 17% POW veterans
- 10% Military families
- 10% Women veterans
- 8% Other
- 7% Student veterans
- 4% Active-duty military
We serve hospitalized and recovering veterans.

Through the Elks Voluntary Service Program, we serve veterans, military members and their families in VA and other facilities.

In 2016-17, 311 VAVS Representatives and 282 VAVS Deputy Representatives served at 326 facilities to provide services to 323,573 veterans seeking medical and other care.

Facilities included:
- 153 VA Medical Centers
- 115 State Veterans Facilities
- 37 Community Vets Centers
- 9 USOs
- 2 Fisher Houses
- And more!

By the numbers:

311 VAVS Representatives
282 VAVS Deputy Representatives
326 facilities
323,573 veterans served

"The Elks continue to be extremely valuable members of the VAVS team. The support they provide in terms of coordination of Elks activities, volunteer manpower and donations is unparalleled."

Nathan Witt,
Voluntary Service Chief,
Bay Pines VA

Elks make sure veterans in facilities have the supplies they need to be comfortable and know they are valued.

Our volunteers connect directly with veterans, providing individual attention and care.

Elks help veterans relax and enjoy community events.

Elks plan trips to museums and other cultural attractions to keep veterans engaged.
In 2016-17, the Welcome Home Program was able to make a big impact, giving some of our most vulnerable veterans the care, attention and recognition they deserve.

We work to end veteran homelessness.

217 veterans received emergency assistance from the Elks, providing a lifeline for veterans at risk of homelessness and veterans exiting homelessness.

314 veterans exiting homelessness received Welcome Home Kits of supplies, dishes, home goods and more to help them succeed in their new home.

19 lodges in communities with the highest number of homeless veterans received additional grant funds to begin outreach programs for veterans experiencing homelessness.

“I see not only the impact of the personal belongings but also the way in which the Elks have communicated to them that they’re important and that they matter.”

Joel Wenzel, HUD-VASH Social Worker

“It’s a brotherhood. It’s in my heart. I can’t give enough out to make them feel better.”

Wayne Blake, Loudon, VA, Elks Lodge No. 2406
We help veterans rehabilitate and thrive

In 2016-17, Elks in 17 states collected 17,763 hides through the Veterans Leather Program.
Finished leather was used in these ways:

- **Elks donated**
  - 54,279 square feet of leather to Help Heal Vets to manufacture craft kits
  - 8,726 square feet of leather to hospitals and clinics.

- **Elks distributed**
  - 2,885 pairs of free wheelchair gloves to veterans.
  - 2,456 craft kits to recovering veterans.

**TOP CONTRIBUTORS**

1. Missouri
2. Iowa
3. Arkansas

Elks sponsor, volunteer and distribute free wheelchair gloves to veterans at 5 VA adaptive sports and arts events:

- National Veterans Golden Age Games
- National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic
- National Veterans Creative Arts Festival
- National Veterans Winter Sports Clinic
- National Veterans Wheelchair Games
We connect with veterans in their communities to meet their needs.

Watertown, NY, Lodge No. 496
hosts sailing trips and picnics at the Fort Drum rehabilitation center for returning wounded warriors.

San Antonio, TX, Lodge No. 216
runs the San Antonio Fitness Club for Veterans, a running group that provides personal training and 5K race opportunities for local veterans.

Oakmont, PA, Lodge No. 1668
hosts monthly luncheons for residents of 3 local VA hospitals, providing good food, music, regular bingo games and prizes.

Freedom Grants: In 2016-17, 180 Lodges received Freedom Grants to serve local veterans and military members.

Watertown, NY, Lodge No. 496
hosts sailing trips and picnics at the Fort Drum rehabilitation center for returning wounded warriors.

South Kingstown, RI, Lodge No. 1899
provides Thanksgiving and Christmas meal baskets to the families of enlisted military personnel at the Newport, RI Naval Base.

Warrington, FL, Lodge No. 2108
partners with several area veterans’ organizations to coordinate the Pensacola Homeless Veteran Stand Down. Elks provide meals, snacks, and bus passes for the veterans.

Florida Keys, FL, Lodge No. 1872
offers R&R to veterans in need with the Vets on the Water project, which provides fishing, kayaking and other trips for veterans struggling with stress, injuries, disabilities and PTSD.

Community Investments Program Grants:
Lodges used 695 Community Investments Program Grants to serve veterans and military members in their communities.
We are “a mighty army for the service of mankind.”

We are indebted to and thankful for our generous Elks volunteers, whom we depend on to make our programs run.

“It is a personal honor to be able to serve these veterans, and I’m grateful to all my fellow Elks volunteers for their time and contributions.”- an Elks Lodge Veterans Chair

2016-17 VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR

Alaska
Jan C. Jonker & Kathi A. Johns
Arizona
Roger G. Bedell
Arkansas
Martin G. Caldwell Jr. & Evonne Darrow
California-Hawaii
Robert A. Pickett
Colorado
Larry C. Herrera & Joan Verhey
Connecticut
Philip C. Sengle & Denise Johnson
Florida
James Klocke & Lisa Ann Leighty
Georgia
John C. Hunt Jr. & Maureen Ann Manning
Idaho
Ralph F. West & Susan West
Illinois
Stanley K. Hayes & Dolores Tomsheck
Indiana
Robert M. Hill
Iowa
Bob Kirchner & Tasha Welch
Kansas
Gary A. Austin
Kentucky
Mike See & Janet Cartwright
Louisiana
Don Baye
Maine
Henry G. Breton & Sandra L. Anderson
MD-DE-DC
Guy W. Boniface
Minnesota
Richard Peterson & Gretchen Peterson
Nebraska
Jimmie L. Meers & Shirley Meers
New Hampshire
Dennis M. Joy Sr. & Marion Savage
New Jersey
Fred Spages & Kelly Mazzocchi, PER
New Mexico
Allen Semrau & Janice Semrau
New York
William T. Mayer
North Carolina
Frank T. Brady Sr. & Joan K. Breidenbach
Oregon
Robert A. Wymore & Rhonda Brustol
Rhode Island
Pasquale A. Matteo & Lynette Michele Wagner
South Carolina
Robert Block & Jeanette Roveri-Smith
Texas
Roy J. Chambers
Utah
Alan P. Saunders & Judith Cooley
Virginia
Dieter Schneider & Patricia J. Graves
West Virginia
Natale Conti & Carol Bostic

When John F. Malley founded the Elks National Foundation in 1928, he hoped it would “unite the forces of the Order into a mighty army for the service of mankind.”

We toast to our absent members.
We spend our funds wisely.

Financial Information

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. 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.

We partner to accomplish more together.

We partner with Make the Connection and the Veterans Crisis Line to spread the word about mental health resources.

We work with the ENF to bring the Elks family together through service, helping to plan veteran-focused Scholar Service trips and a veterans service event at the Hoop Shoot National Finals.

We partner with Re-Creation USA, which performed 127 shows and reached 5,628 veterans in VA facilities across the nation.

We sponsored Bugles Across America, who works with more than 5500 buglers in all 50 states to perform live Taps at thousands of veterans’ funerals and memorial services each year.

Financial highlights for 2016-17 were summarized from the Financial Statements of the Elks National Veterans Service Commission, with the Independent Auditor’s Report prepared by FKA Advisors. The audit covered the period beginning April 1, 2016, and ending March 31, 2017. Complete financial statements, including all notes, may be obtained by contacting the Elks National Veterans Service Commission.
“The Elks not only provided my family with critical assistance needed for housing, they did it with compassion and unbridled commitment, working outside of business hours to assure our needs were met during a crisis situation. Saying ‘thank you’ is not nearly enough to express my appreciation and gratitude to the Elks organization.”

- Diane, post-9/11 Army veteran

FOLLOW US!

www.elks.org/vets