

its founding on February 16, 1868, and in World War I, known as the "Great War," our Order had one of its proudest moments. In 1918, to rehabilitate our Veterans returning from the horrible gas attacks in Europe, the B.P.O.E. gathered the resources of its Lodges, as we still do, and built, equipped and paid for a huge 700 bed Veterans Medical Facility in Massachusetts. Our Order also financed and staffed two Field Hospitals in France, then donated the Massachusetts Hospital to the Government; America's first Veterans Hospital!

When the controversial "Korean Conflict" reared its head in the early 50's, the B.P.O.E. quickly took charge of the situation and managed to gather 600,000 pints of blood for the men and women who fought against the Communist regime in Korea.

As Vietnam's "police action" escalated into a full-blown war, the Elks found that one of the biggest non-military problems was the availability of suitable writing material for the G.I.'s. This was resolved quickly by the Elks donation of more than a quarter of a million complete letter-writing sets, paper and envelopes included.

Today, many of Pennsylvania's 115 Lodges have adopted many otherwise lonesome Veterans, and the Lodge members hold picnics, parties and other events for them in the Veterans Medical Centers across Pennsylvania.

Elks Crafts Competition provides important occupational therapy for many Disabled Pennsylvania Veterans, and our Leather Program utilizes hides from the burgeoning White Tail Deer

Herd in our Commonwealth.

Free phone communications for Medical Center residents are maintained by some of our State Lodges, and others have Bingos, Thanksgiving Dinner and huge Christmas Parties. Fishing trips are popular summer events as are all day boat excursions at places like Raystown Lake and Erie.

Since that Winter Day in 1868, February 16th, our great Order has never turned its back on any of its responsibilities to the community, the state or the nation, and this is especially true where our Veterans are concerned. The little 1943 Elks Brochure reprint tells you what we did for our Veterans when they were young, strong and willing to die so their country, and this Order, could remain free. Now these men and women need us more than ever; the ravages of that war have left many crippled and unable to fend for themselves.

It has been 53 years since the little Elks Brochure was printed, and most of the Elk members who were involved in the WW II programs have passed on. Unfortunately, the servicemen and women these dedicated Elks served so faithfully are now among the nation's growing elderly population, and many of today's Elks weren't even born when this information was passed out. But your commitment, and the Pennsylvania Elks commitment to our States Disabled Veterans hasn't diminished one bit. When America needed THEM, they served without thinking about the consequences; now they need ALL Americans, and Pennsylvania's Elks are here to let them know we will never forget.