

AT the session of the Grand Lodge held in Houston, Texas in July, 1940, there was adopted a resolution creating the Elks National Defense and Public Relations Commission to create and supervise plans for the fullest cooperation by the Grand Lodge, the State Associations and the Subordinate Lodges and their members with our national, state and local governments in any eventuality or emergency that might arise. The Commission communicated with President Roosevelt, Secretary of War Stimson, Secretary of the Navy Knox, Director Hoover of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, offering the service of the Order in the National Defense Program and asking for suggestions. All responded most helpfully.

The Commission immediately suggested to the Subordinate Lodges that they conduct and hold patriotic meetings for the citizens of their communities; that they offer the use of their Homes for patriotic purposes; that they hold special affairs in honor of men being called into the armed services, and to contribute to the comfort of boys in army camps.

In the early part of 1941 the then Elks National Defense & Public Relations Commission, conducted a NATIONAL ESSAY CONTEST which was based on a painting of Uncle Sam, composite of a soldier, sailor, nurse, farmer, chemist, and various agricultural and industrial articles. LIFE MAGAZINE was so impressed by this striking painting that they devoted a full page to it in their January 13, 1941 issue.

This poster was offered to the United States Army and was accepted by President Roosevelt in behalf of the War Department and used as a campaign poster.

Three-quarters of a million students of high-school age entered in this contest which included the writing of an essay entitled, "What Uncle Sam Means To Me." The National Committee of Awards was composed of ex-Governor Wilbur Cross of Connecticut, Chairman, Dr. Ralph B. Wagner of St. Louis University, and Rabbi Edgar F. Magnin of Los Angeles. National prizes of \$1,000—\$500—\$250—and \$100—were awarded in addition to state and local prizes.

This contest awakened in these children a new idea of the responsibilities and opportunities that were theirs in this country, and helped develop among them a great appreciation of the rights and privileges of the American citizen.

Representatives from the War Department requested the cooperation of the Elks War Commission in inaugurating a program of cooperation in securing and assisting in qualifying young men desiring to take the aviation cadet training course.

A general program was developed which embraced the cooperation of more than 400 lodges with their nearest recruiting offices, sponsorship of cadet rallies at the lodges' homes, and the operation of special REFRESHER COURSES, educational programs designed to enable potential aviation cadets to pass the educational require-

ments for enlistment in this branch of the service. Through the cooperation of the several hundred lodges, about 9,000 young men were given intensive educational training designed to enable them to pass the entrance examination and prepare them for the rigorous routine of aviation ground school work.

Because of the success of the "Refresher Course" Program, an appeal for cooperation was made by the U. S. Navy and many additional men were obtained for the Naval Air Corps with our assistance.

At the request of the Adjutant General's Office of the U. S. Army in Washington, the Elks War Commission solicited the aid of the lodges in obtaining recruits for the U. S. Army Air Corps Mechanic Personnel. As a result of this many men were obtained for this division of the Air Corps.

When the United States entered the war after the treacherous attack by the Japanese Government on Pearl Harbor, the Elks National Defense & Public Relations Commission changed its name to the ELKS WAR COMMISSION.

With the approval of the War Department, the Elks War Commission sponsored a "WRITE 'EM A LETTER" Program, designed to increase correspondence to men in the armed forces from their families and friends at home. A cartoon contest was conducted in 85 army and navy camps through the medium of camp-unit publications. The theme of the cartoons was "Write 'Em a Letter." First, second, and third prizes of \$300—\$200—and \$100—were offered for the three best cartoons from all camps. Thirteen of these cartoons were published in 550 newspapers throughout the nation over a period of thirteen weeks.

A newspaper syndicate, embracing 4,000 weekly newspapers, also made use of these cartoons. The SATURDAY EVENING POST published a feature article in the June 20, 1942 issue.

On the suggestion of the Elks War Commission which cooperated by providing the necessary material, 70,000 "GIFT BOXES" have been sent by the lodges to their members in the service. Each of these boxes contains cigarettes, candy and personal items valued at from \$2.00 to \$7.00 per box.

The Elks War Commission is financing a program inaugurated by Columbus, Ohio Lodge, whereby house slippers are distributed to disabled and convalescent men of the Army, Navy and the Marines. More than 35,000 pairs of slippers have thus far been distributed.