

**Wounded Warrior Project**

The Wounded Warrior Project is a non-profit organization created by and for wounded veterans. Its goal is to provide assistance to veterans who were wounded, both physically and psychologically, in the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Wounded Warrior Project provides assistance and counseling to aid in a wounded soldier's return to civilian life. At the 2009 Elks National Convention, the Elks National Veterans Service Commission presented the Wounded Warrior Project with \$50,000 to launch the [Elks/Wounded Warrior Project](#).

**Army of Hope**

Just as the Elks/Wounded Warrior project assists injured veterans of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Elks' "Army of Hope" assists the *families* of Military Reservists and the National Guard who have been called to active duty during these times of crisis. The response from members and non-Elks has been overwhelming, and government officials at the local, state and national levels have responded favorably to the initiative.

**Adopt-a-Veteran Program**

If you've ever been hospitalized, you know the loneliness and depression you can experience. Think how tough it must be for hospitalized veterans, especially those who are far from home or have no family. With that thought in mind, George Schwarz of Clawson-Troy, Michigan, Lodge devised a simple yet effective solution in 1980: the Adopt-a-Veteran program.

His idea proved so successful that it was picked up by the National Veterans Service Commission in 1983. Last year, Lodges across the nation adopted 47,000 veterans. The Elks visited with them on their birthdays and holidays and showered them with gifts and attention. They took those who could leave the medical centers out to dinner, and brought dinner to those who couldn't. The Elks provided these men and women with comfort, companionship, cheer and understanding, and in the process helped lift some of their loneliness.

The object of the Adopt-a-Veteran program is to take the place of family, to replace loneliness with hope and to let the veterans know we will never forget them.

**Veterans Leather Program**



The Elks National Veterans Service Commission is the major source of hides and tanned leather used for recreational and occupational therapy throughout the Veterans Administration health care system. Elks Leather has become a national by-word among veteran patients everywhere.

Time between visits from friends and families can make hospitalization a drudgery for our

veterans. Leather provides a form of relief by keeping minds active as well as providing exercise for injured and unused muscles. Veterans often enter wallets, clothing, belts and moccasins in Arts and Crafts shows sponsored by the Elks.

Recently, a program was initiated by Elks whereby tanned leather is cut and sewn into specially designed gloves which are furnished to veterans confined to wheelchairs, thereby protecting their hands during movement.

**Veterans Remembrance**

For the Order of Elks, veterans remembrance is a daily proposition. We never have and never will forget the sacrifices these heroes made so that we may be free. But it has been a tradition for the Order to redouble its efforts on behalf of veterans in November, not just for Veterans Day, but for the entire month. For the Elks, November is Veterans Remembrance Month.

The Elks National Veterans Service Commission asks all Lodges to run a special event to commemorate Veterans Remembrance Month and to raise funds for the Lodge's Veterans Service Commission. Many Lodges use the proceeds for special events in the VA medical center during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. Some Lodges even invite those veterans who are able to take part in special programs and functions

**Playing Cards for Veterans**



Playing Cards for Veterans is a program that goes hand in hand with our Adopt-A-Veteran Program. This activity gives a hospitalized veteran something to do rather than just passively sitting and watching television. Through the hard work of some of our members who have made arrangements with several riverboats and casinos, we are now able to offer playing cards for our hospitalized veterans to use. Each deck of cards is checked to make sure all cards are in good condition and the deck is complete. After the decks are checked, a "Playing Cards For Veterans" sticker with the logo of the Elks National Veterans Service Commission is placed on each deck of cards. These cards are free of charge.

To get free playing cards for our veterans, send a request written on Lodge letterhead to:  
Tom Jamison, Chairman  
Playing Cards for Veterans Program  
12102 Chandlerville Road  
Beardstown, IL 62618-7679



**Re-Creation USA**

Since 1986, the Elks National Veterans Service Commission has been partners with [Re-Creation USA](#) in providing entertainment to our nation's veterans housed in VA medical centers. Re-Creation is a group of young men and women between the ages of 18 and 30 who are all volunteers. They have given up a year or more of their lives to

perform this act of love. They travel to all 50 states each year, going from VA medical center to VA medical center, warming the hearts and brightening the lives of hospitalized veterans. And they do so without pay.

As the group tours, local Elks Lodges provide the entertainers (approximately 12 of them) with lodging and a meal before they move on to their next destination.

**Elks Veterans Memorial**



The Elks Veterans Memorial is a tribute to the bravery, loyalty and dedication of the thousands of Elks who have fought and died for our country. It has been described as one of the most magnificent war memorials in the world, but with its monumental architecture and priceless art, the Memorial is more a symbol of peace and of the patriotism of the members of the Elks fraternity.

A monument in the truest sense, the Elks National Veterans Memorial was built in 1926 to honor Americans whose profound sacrifices for the nation can never be recognized by mere words. With its massive dome, heroic sculptures and intricately detailed friezes, the Memorial is a distinctively American interpretation of classical greatness.

**Planning - Framing the dome  
January 17, 1924**

Following World War I, there was a strong desire throughout the Elks organization to erect a fitting memorial to those brothers who had laid down their lives in the name of loyal patriotism and devotion to country which they had assumed at their fraternal altars. At the Grand Lodge session convened in Chicago in 1920, a special committee was created and assigned with the task of planning the design and construction of this new memorial. The Commission invited seven of the country's most distinguished architects to participate in a competition that would determine the design of the new building.

After careful consideration the Commission unanimously decided on a design created by New York architect Egerton Swarthout. Swarthout's design was selected over the competition because it was the most beautifully distinctive, while still fulfilling its practical purpose as both a memorial to fallen Elks and a national headquarters for the organization. After an exhaustive search for the most qualified builder, the Commission entrusted New York's Hegeman-Harris Company with the task of building a monument that would inspire Elks and captivate the public. *God Bless our Troops , God Bless Our Veterans and God Bless America.*