

Veterans Affairs

“So Long as there are Veterans, - The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks Shall Never Forget Them”

The mission of the Veteran’s Affairs Committee (VAC) of the lodge is to provide occasional funding, fraternal activities, and general support for our local Veterans, various Veterans’ programs, and our Military located throughout South-Eastern North Carolina. Included in the Committee’s mission is support for the residents of the North Carolina State Veteran’s Nursing Home and the Veteran’s Hospital in Fayetteville, NC and our Wounded Warrior units located in Fort Liberty and Camp LeJeune.

The activities of the committee are funded by occasional committee sponsored fundraising events, occasional grants from the Elks National Foundation (ENF), and unsolicited personal donations.

The committee and its activities operate under the direction and leadership of its chairmen, John Corbett (since 2016), and vice chairman, John Zschoche, who replaced Jerry Kimble in 2023. Jerry served as co-chairman since 2016 when he and John succeeded Austin Sammon and previous co-chairman George Griffin who passed away in 2015. The chairman and vice chairman have undertaken the duties of operating the day-to-day affairs of the committee, conducting the Committee’s monthly meetings, overseeing the treasurer’s handling of the Committee’s financial records, and scheduling, organizing, and executing the activities to benefit our Veterans throughout any given calendar year. They are assisted by treasurer Kathy Smith and secretary Carol Corbett.

Responsibility for executing “Special Fund-Raising Events” such as the Annual “Mini-Golf Tournament & Charity Auction”, twice annual raffles, and other activities are delegated to other leaders within the ranks of the committee’s membership.

Examples of activities traditionally conducted by the VAC are:

- A “Day-at-the-Lodge” for Senior Veterans in local assisted living homes, which includes a Fishing Adventure at the Sunset Beach Pier, lunch at the Lodge, and some camaraderie and fellowship time

- “Coffee and Donut Day” visits to Veterans and residents of local assisted-living and nursing home facilities
- A Mini-Golf Tournament, luncheon and live “Charity Auction” fundraiser
- Supporting the Lodge’s Veteran’s Day Social & Dinner Dance, and annual golf tournament
- Twice annual fund raising raffles

The VAC has provided over \$130,000 in support of local Veteran and Military programs since 2016; this includes:

- Supporting area programs that assist Veterans such as Brunswick Family Assistance, the Brunswick County Sheriff Office’s “Project Lifesaver,” the Brunswick Community College Partnership for American Veteran Employment (PAVE), The Good Shepherd Center’s SGT Ashley Center for Homeless Veterans, and Lower Cape Fear Lifecare
- Sponsoring two “Tiny Homes” as part of the Veterans Welcome Home & Resource Center’s program to house homeless veterans.

The VAC leaders report to the Exalted Ruler and Lodge Officers, establish and maintain sound working relationships and communication channels with other lodge committee chairpersons, along with District, State, or National Elks’ counterparts, as appropriate; and others in the civilian and military communities necessary to successfully execute the mission of the Committee.