The question you may have is "HOW DO WE DO IT?" Here is the answer in 6 easy steps:

1. Which Veterans are adoptable:
   - Individual Veterans in Veteran hospitals
   - Groups in the hospital, such as nursing or hospice care units
   - Veterans in assisted care facilities, nursing homes, convalescent homes, retirement and senior living centers
   - Any Elk who is a Veteran in one of these facilities
   - Any Veteran with limited, or no family contact who is lonely or shut in, or does not drive
   - Veterans in homeless/transitional shelters, and hospital domiciliary programs. Adopt the whole facility.
   - Veterans can be adopted by more than one Lodge, feel free to adopt from afar.

2. Where to find Veterans to adopt:
   - VA Hospitals have strict privacy laws. You may have to physically visit the hospital and make up your own list.
   - V.A. Hospital nursing and hospice units may be adopted as a group.
   - Nursing homes, assisted living and some senior living facilities have an Activities Director or Social Services representative who can give you the names of the Veterans in their facility.
   - Churches, Veteran groups, American Legions, or VFW’s may give you names of veterans who are shut in or lonely.
   - In your lodge! The Veteran member who doesn’t come out to the lodge anymore, who doesn’t drive, or who has physical disabilities and limitations. Ask the secretary or an older member.
   - Domiciliary and homeless shelters have a continuous drive for comfort items and clothing. If the individuals there are not all Veterans, count the number or percent as determined by the staff of the facility as being adopted.
3. How to get your Lodge to support an Adopted Veteran:
   - Have an Adopt-A-Vet Chairman
   - Assign Veteran names to volunteers and committee members
   - Ask members to support the program. This can be done at meetings, dinners or parties.
   - Have a "Veterans Party” and ask attendees to take the names of those Veterans who would like to be adopted.
   - Get schools, churches, and other civic and Veteran groups to collaborate with your Lodge to Adopt-A- Veteran by contributing items, letters, or room decorations.
   - Speak to the Ladies, PERs or other groups in your Lodge about adoption.
   - Involve teenage children of Elks, Antlers program and Scout groups.
   - The Exalted Ruler can create and appoint an Adopt-A-Vet Chairperson and Committee.

4. Activities to do with adopted Veterans:
   See our separate listing of over 60 ways you can adopt a veteran. The list is not all inclusive—use your imagination!

5. How much will this cost?
   - Maybe nothing! The costs of the program are usually picked up by the individual doing the adopting. This would include cards, postage or small comfort gifts. Larger gifts can be funded through parties, raffles, 50/50's, donations by individuals or Lodge groups such as the PERs or Ladies.

6. Additional help or more information:
   - Adopt-A-Veteran chairman Stew Israel - 734-455-4567
   - Elks National Veterans Service Commission Manual

   GENERAL THOUGHTS, IDEAS AND NOTES

   Don’t be concerned with individual Veteran names, be concerned with numbers. Privacy laws prevent printing and distribution of names. A nursing home or a unit at the VA could be reported with numbers rather than individual names.

   Some Lodges have individuals or visiting committees go periodically to the hospital or nursing home. How many of your members or spouses go to a nursing home on a regular basis anyway to see a family member or even work at a facility? Ask them to pop in and say hi to the adopted Veteran.

   VA hospitals don’t want glass, alcohol or sharp items as donations. Check with the Hospital Chairperson if you are unsure about an item.

   Say ‘Thank You’ to the Adoptee for guaranteeing our freedom and way of life. Remember the 5 minute rule: ask “how are you doing?” and be prepared to listen for at least 5 minutes. You may have to ask more than once. This shows you care to invest the time. This should be a labor of Love. Love of God, Love of Country, and Love of the Elks.