

# **‘We Acknowledged Their Words of Gratitude’**

## **A VFW Post in West Virginia launches a program to feed veterans and their families in wake of the COVID-19 crisis**

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It was a long-time coming, but VFW Post 3522 in Charles Town launched its Veterans Table Program in wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

With origins dating back to December 1999, the program was designed to provide free food for veterans and their families. But it had garnered little interest among Posts since its introduction at a West Virginia’s VFW mid-winter conference.

In the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak, however, Post 3522 revisited the idea of joining the program to help fellow veterans. The Post partnered with non-profit Mountaineer Food Bank out of Gassaway, W.Va., and local businesses around the Charles Town area to launch the program in March.

“Our VFW Post was forward thinking and proactive in getting prepared for any need that we had encountered in the past,” said Wayne Casto of Post 3522. “It was being prepared to address the needs of our community and our veterans during this hard time.”

With the Veterans Table Program in place at Post 3522, its members began supplying fellow veterans and community members in need with a free 40-pound box of groceries and other necessities like toilet paper and soap.

“While the need to express their appreciation and happiness was very present, our members kept their distance to be safe,” Casto said. “We all did acknowledge their smiles and words of gratitude in return.”

Post 3522 plans on continuing to serve the veterans and community by conducting the program once a month for the duration of the year.

### **NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS**

406 W. 34th Street  
Kansas City, MO 64111  
Office 816.756.3390  
Fax 816.968.1157

### **WASHINGTON OFFICE**

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20002  
Office 202.543.2239  
Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org  
www.vfw.org

By Ismael Rodriguez Jr./VFW magazine