

NOV 2023 EDITION

**Commander's corner**  
Greetings to all,

This year is flying by, we had a very busy fall. The Post and Aux pulled together for another wonderful Fall Festival and Trunk or Treat for the community kids. November is gearing up to be a busy month as well with our Veterans. day brunch Nov 11 and celebration of Marine Corps Birthday that evening. Along with a Craft Fair in the Hall on Nov 18<sup>th</sup>... Doing all this while the Kitchen remodel is in full swing. Dec 10 is the christmas kids store and Dec 16th is the Post Christmas party. Make sure you sign up by Dec 8. Stay up to date on events with the COZI calendar.

I am grateful for the volunteers that step up when the need arises. Without them we would be at a loss.

I encourage all members to attend Post/Aux meetings which are held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month at 19:00 hours.

Eva Maloney

## BIG RIVER VFW POST 5331

### WORDS FROM OUR QUARTERMASTER

I want to express my thanks to all our volunteers. We are well blessed as a post to have such good folks that are generous with their time and efforts, without our volunteers we could not survive thanks from the bottom of my heart for each and every one of you. Our chicken dinners have become a staple in our post budget, we could not keep the doors open without them.

The work on the kitchen is really starting to take shape, much thanks to all who have helped out. Target date for completion is 22 November, please stop by and take a look at the finished product. I hope that you will be pleased and impressed.

Daniel Brown, Quartermaster, 636-677-2892

### UPDATE FROM ADJUTANT

We're having a great year here at the Big River VFW. Since the beginning of the fiscal year our post has grown by five new members, and we continue to grow. We have donated over \$11000 to programs such as the Missouri Service Officer Support, Patriots Pen, Voice of Democracy, as well as our local Veterans in the Nursing home across the street. We donated our hall and pavilion to large events such as the BackStoppers BBQ and held our annual Fourth of July Celebration with one of the largest fireworks displays around. We've approved about \$3300 in new equipment such as a freezer and ice machine. Big River VFW is here for our members, Veterans, and our community. Thank you all for your support and keep up the great work!

Welcome new members, Anthony Simpson, Thomas Hernandez, Ronald Becher, Sydney Staton, and Ted Hodgson.

The holiday season is here:

Post clubroom will be open  
Thanksgiving Day  
Nov 23 from 1p-4p  
with a Thanksgiving  
potluck Dinner

DEC 2 ACW wrestling

Dec 9 ARMY/NAVY  
game and chicken  
dinner

Post Christmas Party

Dec 16

Starting out in the  
hall 6p-8p for  
cocktails, dinner,  
and live music.

Christmas Party  
continues in the  
clubroom with Live  
music and Christmas  
games 8pm-  
midnight.

\*\*\*Every Saturday  
live music in the  
clubroom 8pm



BIG RIVER VFW POST 5331 1 LYNN LANE CEDAR HIL MO  
(636) 274-5001

COMMANDER EVA MALONEY/SR VISE JP ZIASS/JR JOHN HARRINGTON/QUARTERMASTER DAN BROWN



Nov 2023 EDITION

*Big River VFW Post 5331*

## Meet-a-Member

Greetings VFW Post 5331! It was discussed at a recent meeting that we have many members that don't have the ability or the time to make it to most of our meetings. Reasons vary for each member, sometimes it's transportation, sometimes it's a disability, other times it's simply conflicting commitments. In any case, members at the meeting thought it was a good idea for us to find a way to get to know some of our members. That led to the idea to spotlight a member or perhaps more than one member in each of our quarterly newsletters. We decided to do this under the title: *Meet-a-Member*.

With that in mind I contacted a member, almost at random, to get to know them a little better and to introduce them to you - the rest of our members.

I interviewed member James Blehm on November 8th. The first thing James told me when I asked to interview him was he "was not a hero or anything." I assured him that most of us are not "heroes," but we have all served and we all have a story to tell.

I met James and his wife Tara, at our post. James served in the Missouri Army National Guard from 2001 through 2013. He was a member of the 1137 and the 1175 MP Companies out of St. Clair, Missouri. James had more than one deployment to Iraq including Mosul, and Samarra which he described as the worst place he had ever been. James said the environment and some questionable leadership made it more challenging than it should have been. Even while describing some of the tough parts, James was clearly proud of his service and was able to smile about the deployment.

When asked, James said the best place he had been sent was, by far, Grafenberg, Germany. He was there as part of a training facility. One of his favorite war stories involved his taking responsibility for a young troop intent on visiting some of the common "off-limits" bars and hot-spots just outside the gate. The drunken soldier in James' care did eventually get safely back to the barracks and may have been subjected to non-traditional peer-enforced punitive actions.

James said the "best thing" he was able to do; the thing about which he is most proud, was duty in Recruiting and Retention. He stated he was able to help turn some bravo-recruits into alpha-recruits that went on to serve honorably. This was at least in part to James believing in them and working hard with many organizations to get the recruits accepted into the service.

James stays busy these days as the president of the Missouri Mid-America chapter of the MVPA (Military Vehicle Preservation Association). He also is completing his welding certification at Ranken Technical College. He and his wife Tara own and operate Saving Grace Cleaning Services, as well.

I'm proud to have met James and to have him as a member of our post. I hope you have enjoyed this little peek into the service and life of one of our members. If you would like to be featured in the next VFW Post 5331 Newsletter *Meet-a-Member*,

please contact member Matt Lakin (314-537-0529, mlakin40@gmail.com) Thank You For Your Service!

BIG RIVER VFW POST 5331 1 LYNN LANE CEDAR HIL MO  
(636) 274-5001

COMMANDER EVA MALONEY/SR VISE JP ZIASS/JR VISE JOHN HARRINGTON/QUARTERMASTER DAN BROWN



## IMPORTANT INFO

NOV 2023 EDITION

BIG RIVER VFW  
POST 5331

### From the Post Veterans Service Information Officer:

#### Emergency Medical Care

During a medical emergency, you should immediately seek care at the nearest emergency department (ED).

A medical emergency is an injury, illness, or symptom so severe that a delay in seeking immediate medical attention would be expected to be hazardous to life or health.

**If you believe your life or health is in danger, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.**

**If you are having a suicidal crisis, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department immediately.**

#### Emergency Care Benefit

**VA will provide, pay for, or reimburse emergency care and related follow-on care for certain Veterans** – including ambulance transportation costs, prescriptions, inpatient or residential care for up to 30 days and outpatient care for up to 90 days.

The final element to unlock this benefit must be performed by a trained crisis responder or health care provider. Both your military service and a clinical diagnosis are the keys to this benefit.

**read more about it [CLICK HERE](#)**

[https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans/Emergency\\_Care.asp](https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans/Emergency_Care.asp)

As always, if you need to file a claim or follow up on a claim filed, please call me, or reach out to the VFW Service Officers.

Mark Newton  
636-222-3521

You are covered if you served prior to September 7, 1980, and received a military discharge under a condition that is not Dishonorable or the result of a general court-martial.

if you enlisted after September 7, 1980, or entered active duty after October 16, 1981, and received a military discharge under a condition that is not Dishonorable or the result of a general court-martial after serving 24 continuous months or the full period for which you were called to active duty, you are eligible unless: You were discharged for a disability that was caused or made worse by your active duty service.

If you received Other than honorable discharge you are eligible if: you served one hundred cumulative days in a combat zone or in support of a contingency operation either directly or by operating an unmanned aerial vehicle from another location.

You were the victim of a physical assault of a sexual nature a battery of a sexual nature while serving.