

# LEONARD C. BARNES POST 450

## QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



### HOMESLESSNESS VETERANS

As of 2023, the percentage of homeless veterans in the U.S. increased by 7.4% compared to the previous year. On a single night in January 2023, 35,574 veterans were experiencing homelessness. Despite this increase, veteran homelessness has declined by 52% since 2010 due to ongoing efforts to provide housing and support.

There are many inspiring stories of homeless veterans overcoming challenges and finding stability. Here are a few examples:

- **Veterans Village in Houston:** A nonprofit transformed a former hotel into an apartment complex for homeless veterans, providing housing and support. One veteran, Orlando Camacho, shared how the program saved his life, giving him a place to live and the resources to rebuild.
- **Cooking Skills for Independence:** In Gloucester, a program teaches homeless veterans essential cooking skills, helping them regain independence and confidence. Many veterans in the program struggled to get hot meals before, and now they are learning to prepare nutritious food.
- **Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans:** This organization has helped thousands of veterans find housing and stability. However, proposed budget cuts could threaten these efforts, potentially increasing veteran homelessness in the state.

Each of these stories highlights the resilience of veterans and the importance of community support in helping them rebuild their lives.



In Shreveport, LA, there are several programs and organizations dedicated to helping homeless veterans find housing, support, and stability. Here are some key initiatives:

- **Volunteers of America Veterans Services** – Provides emergency shelter and housing assistance for veterans in need.
- **Hope Connections** – Works to create safe, affordable housing for those experiencing homelessness, including veterans.
- **Shreveport-Bossier Rescue Mission** – Offers shelter, meals, and recovery programs for homeless individuals, including veterans.
- **Elle Foundation** – Provides supportive services for veterans and their families, helping them transition out of homelessness.
- **Shreveport Vet Center** – Offers counseling, mental health support, and connections to VA resources for veterans.
- **VA Shreveport Health Care** – Provides specialized care for homeless veterans, including housing assistance, job training, and addiction recovery programs.

These organizations are working to ensure that veterans receive the help they need to regain stability and independence.



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### BIRTHDAY WISHES

**MAY**  
“NONE”

**JUNE**  
**ROBERT NEWMAN**  
**MELVIN HEARD**  
**WILLIE WYNN**  
**V.W. MAYS, JR.**  
**SHELBY JOHNSON, III**





## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME

The American Legion membership renewal process is open for 2025 renewals, with options for multiyear memberships covering 2025, 2026, and 2027. Members can renew online through [legion.org/renew](https://legion.org/renew) or set up automatic renewal for convenience.

Renewing your American Legion membership is crucial because it helps sustain the organization’s mission of serving veterans, military families, and communities.

Your renewal:

- ◇ Supports Veteran Programs – Ensures continued funding for advocacy, healthcare, and assistance for those who served.
- ◇ Strengthens Local Community Efforts – Helps Post 450 provide scholarships, JROTC programs, and community outreach.
- ◇ Preserves Patriotism & Tradition – Keeps American Legion’s legacy alive through events, flag advocacy, and mentorship.
- ◇ Maintains Your Membership Benefits – Grants access to exclusive resources, discounts, and fellowship with fellow members.

Staying engaged strengthens the impact of the American Legion’s mission. Let me know if you need help with the renewal process!

### JOKE OF THE MONTH

Three grizzled veterans eyed the new recruit with contempt

“Son, I served multiple tours as a Marine in Afghanistan and killed 40 men!”

“That’s nothing! My hummer hit an IED, and I still have pieces of it in my leg!”

The third smiled and simply said “I was a member of SEAL team six.”



“What have you, in your eighteen years accomplish that we could respect?”

“I went to public school in the US.”

“Yes Sir, Lead the way!”

### 2025-2026 POST OFFICEERS

#### COMMANDER

Riley Young, Jr.  
318-636-0852

#### 1ST-VICE COMMANDER

W.J. Nelson  
318-773-6644

#### 2ND-VICE COMMANDER

Joan Welch  
225-229-5553

#### ADJUTANT

Wilma Draughn-Davis  
318-617-0997

#### ADJUTANT ASSISTANT

Linda Jones  
501-952-8965

#### FINANCE OFFICER

Orlisa Johnson  
318-5184399

#### HISTORIAN

Margaret Mims  
318-987-3701

#### CHAPLAIN

Frank Taylor (Deceased)

#### SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

Johnnie B. Allen  
318-686-8937

#### JUDGE ADVOCATE

Willie Wynn  
318-683-4035

#### SERVICE OFFICER

V.W. Mays, Jr.  
318-635-6870

# JROTC AWARDS

## Booker T. Washington High School and Green Oaks Performing Arts Academy

In heartwarming ceremonies held at Booker T. Washington High School and Green Oaks Performing Arts Academy in Shreveport, Louisiana, the Leonard C. Barnes Post 450 honored outstanding Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) cadets with Excellence and Scholastic Awards. This annual event, which took place on April 16 and 22, 2025, celebrated the dedication, hard work, and achievements of young cadets who have demonstrated exceptional qualities in both their academic and military training.

The American Legion Leonard C. Barnes Post 450 has a long-standing tradition of supporting the JROTC programs at Booker T. Washington High School and Green Oaks Performing Arts Academy. Each year, the post awards two \$300 stipends per school for Military Excellence and Scholastic Excellence. These awards are a testament to the post's commitment to fostering leadership, discipline, and academic achievement among the youth in the community.

These cadets represent the future of our nation. Their dedication to excellence in both academics and military training is commendable, and Post 450 is proud to support their journey. The Military Excellence Awards were presented to Cadet LTC Jermesia Turner from Booker T. Washington High School and Cadet CPT Demetric Jackson from Green Oaks Performing Arts Academy. This award is given to cadets who have demonstrated outstanding qualities in military leadership, discipline, character, and citizenship. Both cadets were in the top 25 percent of their class in academic and ROTC subjects.

The Scholastic Excellence Awards were presented to Cadet MAJ Janiya Hopkins from Booker T. Washington High School and Cadet MAJ Z'Marry Gobert from Green Oaks Performing Arts Academy. This award is given to cadets who are in the top 10 percent of their class in academic subjects and the top 25 percent in ROTC classes. These cadets have also demonstrated qualities of leadership and actively participated in student organizations, community activities, and sports.

The ceremony featured inspiring speeches from school principals, JROTC instructors, and community leaders. Leonard C. Barnes Post Officials can only expressed their pride in the cadets' achievements. "These awards are not just about recognizing excellence; they are about inspiring all our students to strive for greatness," Post Adjutant Draughn-Davis stated. She further stated, "The recognition these cadets receive today is a reflection of their hard work and dedication," and that "It is also a reminder to all other cadets that excellence is achievable with perseverance and commitment."

The ceremonies was attended by proud parents, teachers, and community members who came together to celebrate the achievements of the cadets. The American Legion Leonard C. Barnes Post 450's commitment to supporting the JROTC programs extends beyond the awards ceremony. The post actively participates in various community events, including the Veteran's Day Parade and the Veteran's Celebration Committee, to promote patriotism and national security while supporting youth and advocating for veterans and active-duty military.

Post 450's dedication to recognizing and supporting young leaders in the JROTC programs at Booker T. Washington High School and Green Oaks Performing Arts Academy is a shining example of how community organizations can make a difference in the lives of young people. Through their commitment to excellence, these cadets are well on their way to becoming the leaders of tomorrow.

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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## 01 MAY 2025

- ◆ Be the ONE Day
- ◆ Child Well-being Foundation Grant Application Opens
- ◆ Columbia Protocol Suicide Prevention Training (1430-1600 hours)

## 02 MAY 2025

- ◆ Sons of The American Legion Spring Meetings in Indianapolis, Indiana

## 05 May 2025

- ◆ American Legion Spring Meetings begins in Indianapolis, Indiana

## 08 MAY 2025

- ◆ V-E Day (1945)

## 13 MAY 2025

- ◆ Columbia Protocol Suicide Prevention Training (1730-1900 hours)

## 14 MAY 2025

- ◆ 100% Membership Target Date
- ◆ National Convention Housing Cutoff
- ◆ Department Commander of the Year Award
- ◆ Department Recruiter of the Year
- ◆ District Commander's New Post Achievement Award
- ◆ District Commander Achievement Award and District Honor Ribbon
- ◆ Post Membership Retention Award
- ◆ Columbia Protocol Suicide Prevention Training (1430-1600 hours)

## 17 MAY 2025

- ◆ American Legion National Oratorical Contest in Hillsdale, Michigan
- ◆ Armed Forces Day

## 23 MAY 2025

- ◆ National Poppy Day

## 26 MAY 2025

- ◆ Memorial Day

## 31 MAY 2025

- ◆ End of Child Well-Being Foundation Award Year



STAYING FIT

- 1. Who was the first Black woman to win an Olympic gold medal?
- 2. Who founded the Tuskegee Institute?
- 3. Who was the first African American to win a Nobel Peace Prize?
- 4. Who was the first African American billionaire?

JROTC AWARDS (cont.)

The awards ceremony at Booker T. Washington High School and Green Oaks Performing Arts Academy was a memorable event that highlighted the achievements of outstanding JROTC cadets. The American Legion Leonard C. Barnes Post 450's support and recognition of these cadets' hard work and dedication serve as an inspiration to all students to strive for excellence in their academic and military pursuits. As the community continues to come together to celebrate and support its youth, the future looks bright for these young leaders.



INSPIRATIONAL

Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase.  
~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS  
continues

- 01 JUNE 2025
  - American Legion Baseball Final Day to Register Teams, Purchase Insurance and Pay Fees
- 02 JUNE 2025
  - Legion Baseball Lou Gehrig Day (to raise ALS awareness)
- 14 June 2025
  - Flag Day
  - Army Birthday
- 19 June 2025
  - Korean War starts (1950)

NEW MEMBERS

Robert F. Conway (Transfer)  
Unknown

Roger Mairon  
United States Air Force

Aaron Ragster  
United States Navy

Richard W. Thomas (Transfer)  
United States Army

Congratulations on joining this esteemed community. Your commitment to service, camaraderie, and shared values is truly commendable. As new members, you are now part of a legacy built on dedication, respect, and a deep sense of responsibility.

We look forward to seeing the impact you will make as you bring your unique skills, experiences, and perspectives to Post 450. Together, we will continue to uphold the principles that make this organization strong and meaningful.

thank you for stepping up to be part of something great!

WELCOMNE TO POST 450



# Pines Road Area Business Association

## VOCATIONAL EXPO

# JOB FAIR



- Caddo Parish Commission HR
- Caddo Parish School Board
- U S Army Recruiting Center
- Shreveport Police Department
- City of Shreveport Human Resources Department
- Shreveport Fire Department
- Shreveport Job Corp Center
- Southern University-Shreveport
- Caddo Parish Sheriff Department
- Caddo Community Action Agency
- and more

Point of Contact:  
Kenneth R. Epperson, Sr. President  
prabainc2022@gmail.com  
(318) 773-2654

Point of Contact:  
Veronica Bell, LVER  
Vbell@lwc.la.gov  
(318) 676-7748



**MAY 1, 2025**  
**10:00 AM - 2:00 PM**

**Gracepointe Church of the Nazarene**  
**6825 Pines Road**  
**Shreveport, La. 71129**



## Honoring the Memory of Our Departed Members & Family

Frank Taylor  
Renessa Winn

Willie B. Welch  
(Mother of Joan Welch, 2nd Vice-Commander)

Irene Bradford Williams  
(Wife of David Williams, Past Commander)

It is with deep sorrow that we acknowledge the passing of our beloved members. Their dedication, service, and presence within our community have left a lasting impact, and their contributions will never be forgotten.

May you find comfort in the memories and the legacy they leave behind. As we honor their lives, we remain grateful for the time we shared and the lessons they imparted. Their spirit will live on in our hearts and in the traditions of Post 450.

May they rest in peace.

Staying Fit Answers: 1. Alice Coachman; 2. Booker T. Washington  
3. Ralph Bunche; 4. Robert Johnson