

American Legion Post 352 Building built in 1954.

King and Queen of Hearts, 1953 Thomas Oliver, Eleanor Allen lower elementary, Sandra Cunningham and Otto Fernsel Jr. High School

The American Legion Post at First and Pennsylvania Avenues is named after Paul Clark and Edmund Eliason, both killed during World War II. Clark served in the Navy and Eliason was a flyer.

The Somers Point American Legion was started in 1946 by returning World War II veterans that included Charles Gray, Al Ewing, and Alan Risley. Risley served as a Seabee in the Navy in the South Pacific Theater building roads and runways from Guadalcanal to the Philippines.

"We had a VFW meeting, called an intermission and went and signed the American Legion charter," recalls Risley, who served as a Somers Point policeman from 1952-1979.

Risley and his wife Jeanne, recall Oscar Schmidt, a medal of honor recipient who was originally from Philadelphia and retired to a bungalow on Gibbs Avenue in Somers Point.(4th house from Bay Avenue on the North side of the street).

"He came to retire in the 60's. He was a big fisherman, a kind person, who was involved with the veterans associations, the VFW, the American Legion, Medal of Honor Society, and Legion of Valor. He was active in local community affairs, very cooperative, and took part in activities.

As an organization, the American Legion was founded in Paris, France, March 15-17 by United States war veterans, delegates from combat and service units of the American Expeditionary Forces assembled in response to a call from LT. Col Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. Congress granted a national charter on Sept. 16, 1919. It is a non-political and non-sectarian organization. The only requirement for membership is honorable service and honorable discharge. Its annual conventions are of the largest volunteer group meetings in the United States. Its major special interest is the care of disabled and sick veterans and it was instrumental in establishing hospitals and care for veterans. They also sponsor Boy Scout troops and baseball teams.

The American Legion was chartered by Congress in 1919 as a patriotic veteran's organization. Focusing on service to veterans, service members and communities

1919

March 15-17

Members of the American Expeditionary Force convene in Paris for the first American Legion caucus.

May 8-10

St. Louis Caucus. "The American Legion" is adopted as the organization's official name. The Legion's draft preamble and constitution are approved

1920s

Aug. 9, 1921

The American Legion's efforts result in the creation of the U.S. Veterans Bureau, forerunner of the Veterans Administration. Today, the Legion continues to lobby for adequate funding to cover medical, disability, education and other veterans benefits

Five Pillars of the AL

The American Legion was chartered and incorporated by Congress in 1919 as a patriotic veterans organization devoted to mutual helpfulness. It is the nation's largest veteran's service organization, committed to mentoring and sponsorship of youth programs in our communities, advocating patriotism and honor, promoting a strong national security, and continued devotion to our fellow service members and veterans.

The American Legion is a nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization with great political influence perpetuated by its grass-roots involvements in the legislation process. Legionnaires' sense of obligation to their community, state and nation drives an honest advocacy for veterans in Washington. The Legion stands not behind politics, but the issues and people that institute progress by focusing on veteran's rights and quality of life.