



Photo by Mid-Century Mundane

The American Legion Building, 1608 K Street NW

American Soldier Sculpture

Statue Memorializing the American Veteran



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The American Legion, a non-profit organization of U.S. war veterans, is headquartered in Indianapolis, but has maintained offices in Washington DC at 1608 K Street NW since 1934. Their original building was replaced in 1951 with one designed in the International Style that included an exterior sculpture of a male figure dressed in battle fatigues. The cornerstone of the building was laid in 1950 and the structure was completed and dedicated the next year by President Harry Truman.

The sculpture honors U.S. veterans, is on the upper façade of the building, and carved out of Indiana limestone. It depicts a male figure dressed in a combination of World War I and World War II battle fatigues. His shirt is unbuttoned, dog tags hang around his neck, a rifle is slung over his right shoulder, and he holds a grenade in his left hand. It is not clearly visible from the street, but the figure's right foot is stepping on a snake representing an enemy. The large-scale sculpture was created by Adolph Wolter, a native of Germany who immigrated to the United States in 1922 and moved to Indianapolis in 1933 where he studied at the John Herron Art Institute. During the 1940s and 1950s he designed trademarks, medallions, busts, reliefs, and advertising.