

## Crusader Post 1946 History

As of January 2017

The forward looking men created an organization that now has over a million members worldwide. Even though the organization was formed in Pennsylvania, the first Post was chartered in Denver Colorado in 1899. The oldest Post in Connecticut is in Bridgeport which is Post #145. It was chartered in 1919.

Our Crusader Post began with a group of World War I Veterans on December 6, 1930. The last Charter Member Eugene Gladding passed away on February 17, 1998 at the age of 101.

The original Post Home was on South Main Street. When this building was torn down the Post Home was moved to Rubber Avenue which was a two story building that was built in the 1860's for the Goodyear Metallic Rubber Shoe Company which became the U.S. Rubber Company in 1892. This building was purchased by the VFW Building Association on August 2, 1932. The Poyton property (east side) was purchased on March 3, 1961 for \$5,000. On March 5, 1968 the VFW Building Association deeded this property to the Post.

The Poyton Property was torn and an addition was added in 1969, which housed the Canteen and the kitchen area. There was another addition in 1970 which became the Hall.

The McCarthy property was (west side) was purchased on December 28, 1978 for \$35,000. This property was sold on November 19, 1996 for \$35,000. This property was sold on November 19, 1996 for \$76,000. As our active membership kept dropping at the Canteen the Canteen was closed on January 31, 2015. The property was sold on October 19, 2016.

We are now meeting in another building in town and still doing the work required to keep the Charter, including Buddy Poppy, hospital visits, helping Veterans and various other programs.

The Crusader name chosen for the Post. The name was likened to the Crusaders of the Middle Ages. These members traveled to other towns to help form new VFW Posts.

The first Post Commander was James Sweetman who served from 1930 to 1931. The First World War II Commander was Harold Lewis from 1946 to 1947. Frank Semplenski was the first Korean War Veteran Commander. He served from 1972 to

1973. Paul Miller was Commander from 1978 to 1981. He served during the Cuban Missile Crisis. William Rogers was the first Vietnam Veteran to become Commander. Her served from 1981 to 1982.

We had a father and son who both served as Post Commander. They were John Borguis who served from 1963 to 1963 and his father Avanti Borguis who held that position from 1977 to 1978.

The Post had two Members who became State Commander. Frank Burke from 1942 to 1943 and Stanley Borusiewicz Jr. from 2006 to 2007. Stanley was also on the VFW National Council from 2010 to 2013.

As Veterans returned from World War II, they were not welcomed with open arms at this Post. One Memorial Day the older Members locked the building so that the World War II Vets could not enter. There were many hard feelings on both sides.

Some of the World War II Vets would buy a case of beer with their own money and then sell it back to themselves to build up funds for the Post.

Today as in the past, the reasons for continuing the VFW are for strength in numbers. We must still be Crusaders in pursuit of Membership and in the defense of Democracy.