



**By Jan Schultz**

***The Imperial Republican***

Members of the Imperial VFW Post 4688 came home from last weekend's state convention in Omaha with a couple of firsts.

The Imperial Post and its 103 members earned the Charles G. Klingman Memorial Award, given to the best all-around Post among 147 VFW Posts in Nebraska.

In addition, its local commander, P.J. Pajerski, earned the title of All State White Hat Commander, which signifies him as the most active among commanders based on a point-system.

It was the first time Imperial won both the top Post and Commander awards.

In addition, local quartermaster Bud Statz was second overall in the All State Post Quartermaster White Hat Awards, based on a similar point system as the commander.

Pajerski and Statz represented the local Post at the convention, and were unaware they'd be going home with the awards.

"It's quite an honor," Pajerski said of the top Post award.

"We've always been an active Post locally and in the district."

That involvement beyond the community can be seen when considering that five District Commanders in recent years have come from the Imperial Post.

According to John Liebsack, state Adjutant Quartermaster and a past State Commander, the Charles G. Klingman Memorial Award goes to the best all-around Post in Nebraska.

The State Commander travels across Nebraska each year and visits Posts, looking at their accomplishments compared to VFW goals. Membership and involvement in state programs on the local level are key, Liebsack said.

"Imperial has a facility and a strong presence in the community," Liebsack said.

The local Post is involved in the Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen programs, the Citizenship Teacher Awards, contributes to the state scholarship program, awards a local scholarship each year and participates in the Buddy Poppy Program with the auxiliary.

Volunteer hours in other local projects are also considered in the award, and Imperial has hours in many areas.

Members organize the annual Memorial Day Service at Mt. Hope Cemetery, provide proper flag burning at the 4th of July Fireman's Fun Day, participate in the school's Veteran's Day Program and provide its Color Guard at numerous funerals and other events.

And, not all Posts send members to district and state meetings like Imperial does, Liebsack added.

Membership is also key. A Post must be at 100 percent membership compared to the previous year to be considered for the top Post award. Imperial actually gained three members the past year, Pajerski noted.

The Charles G. Klingman Memorial Award is named for a former Nebraska State Commander

who served in that position in 1943-44.

Both of Pajerski's and Statz's individual White Hat Awards also take into consideration many of the same activities, but with their personal involvement. Also considered are timely submission of reports to the state.

Pajerski earned a special plaque for being the All State White Hat Commander. It was his fourth time in the top 12 group, which are announced at convention each year.

Statz has been in the top 12 for All State Post Quartermaster eight times.