

‘Defining Legacy’

An Arizona Post renamed itself to honor the memory of James R. “Bob” Currieo, a former VFW commander-in-chief who was lauded as a man who dedicated his life to serving veterans

Sep 21, 2018

James R. “Bob” Currieo was a man who never forgot where he came from.

And to honor his 50-year commitment to VFW, members of VFW Post 9972 in Sierra Vista, Ariz., voted unanimously to rename their Post after him. Currieo joined the Post in 1962 and remained a member until his death last October. During that time, he would become VFW commander-in-chief (1982-83) and later work on behalf of veterans on Sen. John McCain’s (R-Ariz.) staff.

The Post held a renaming ceremony in March. Shay Saucedo, southern Arizona outreach coordinator for McCain, and Currieo’s daughter, Denita, were in attendance.

Post 9972 Commander Glenn Hohman said that naming the Post after Currieo is a “look forward” and gives members an example of someone who is committed to “the ideas and beliefs of VFW.” The rededication was as much a celebration of the Post as it was a way to give current members “something to aspire to,” according to Hohman.

“Quite frankly, in 20 years, there won’t be a lot of people who remember who Bob was, but they’ll still know that he did enough to go on the front of the building,” Hohman said.

Currieo died Oct. 17, 2017, at 83 years old. Hohman said Currieo was the closest to a charter member that the Post has had “in a long time.”

“[He joined] four years after we started the Post,” Hohman said. “But even beyond [his work at the Post], Bob has a lot of accomplishments and did a lot of things both for the VFW and his work with Sen. McCain’s office.”

Then-National Senior Vice Commander B.J. Lawrence said in March the Post renaming

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defines Currieo's legacy as a man, a VFW member and a past commander-in-chief.

"He dedicated over 50 years of his life to serving veterans," Lawrence said. "I think the Post renaming itself in honor of Bob Currieo will forever memorialize him and what he stood for."

Currieo earned his VFW eligibility serving as a gunner with the 3rd AAA (Automatic Weapons) Battalion of the 3rd Infantry Division from February 1952 to April 1953 during the Korean War. He also served with the 91st AAA Battalion in Germany from 1955 to 1958.

After joining VFW, he served as Arizona's District 7 and Department commander (1972-73), before leading the organization at the national level from 1982-83. Currieo also was appointed special assistant to VA Administrator Harry Walters and served on McCain's staff from 1987-89 and from 1996-2013.

Post 9972 Quartermaster Gunner Kent, who served as VFW commander-in-chief from 1994-95 and VFW adjutant general from 2005-2013, said Currieo was a "mainstay" at the Post.

"Back in the '70s and early '80s, he was here quite a bit," Kent said. "He was Post commander twice."

Currieo's philosophy, according to Lawrence, was taking care of veterans.

"To him, I don't think the significance was in positions he might have held," said Lawrence, who was elected VFW's commander-in-chief in July. "I think the significance was as a veteran, he was able to return service to our veterans and our military through his work, and that was evident in the way he conducted himself on a daily basis."

The renaming process, according to Hohman, was "seamless." The final vote took place Jan. 20, Department commanders signed off Jan. 21 and a letter with the Post's new charter was dated Jan. 24.

This article is featured in the August 2018 issue of [VFW magazine](#), and was written by [Kari Williams](#), associate editor, VFW magazine.