



Memo

To: Mayor and Hayden City Council

From: Suzanne Cano, Recreation and Community Events Director

Date: October 7, 2026

Agenda Item: Approval of the Veterans Commission's Recommendation for the 2026 Distinguished Veteran Award

Agenda Item Location

Consent Calendar

Recommended Action or Motion

The Veterans Commission requests approval of the 2026 Distinguished Veteran they have recommended to receive this year's award.

Summary

The Veterans Commission had two nominations for the 2026 Distinguished Veteran, and they are recommending approval of Paul Braden for this year's Distinguished Veteran. Mr. Braden will be presented with the 2026 Distinguished Veteran of the Year award at the Veterans Day Ceremony on November 11. For your review, the nomination for Paul Braden is attached.

Functional Impact of Authorizing

Approval of this individual is critical to help complete the Veterans Commission's planning efforts for the 2026 Veterans Day Ceremony being held on Wednesday, November 11 at 11:00 a.m. at McIntire Family Park.

Functional Impact of Not Authorizing

If not approved, the Veterans Commission will need to start the process of attempting to secure a distinguished veteran again, which could prove to be very difficult.

Fiscal Impact

The fiscal impact involves purchasing an award for the distinguished veteran, which costs approximately \$70.00

Budget Funding Source / Transfer Request

The cost of this plaque is paid out of the Veterans Commission budget, GL# 110-111-58008 and is a normal expense for the commission each year.

Attachment

2026 Distinguished Veteran Nomination submitted by Shelley Holloway

September 30, 2026

Distinguished veteran nomination: Duty, Honor, Country

As I was searching for a distinguished veteran nomination by passing out our flyers, I randomly had three people mention the name Paul Braden.

I kind of know this man; he was serving on the same board as me. He never failed when a veteran or staff member in the Post Falls Veterans Home needed something; miraculously, it would appear. He really was like a magical support system. Perhaps, something as small as birthday balloons or as grand as 50k in fundraising for a bus.

Who is Paul Braden, you ask? First off, a husband, dad, grandpa, great-grandpa.

Navy, Chief Petty Officer. Served in the Navy for 21 years, directly out of Coure d'Alene High School.

Idaho Veterans Assistance League President; previous president of Elks in Coure d'Alene; previous commander, Civil Air Patrol composite squadron; Idaho Hunter Education for 40 years,

Elks service commission, which works in community involvement and fundraising.

Owned a business for 23 years: a mobile wash business.

Primary duties in the military were search and rescue and armed helicopter crew chief in Vietnam. He still volunteers with Kootenai County Search and Rescue, the Fair, horse/mule pull, supports Kootenai County Search and Rescue, and supports recruits.

When asked how he can do so much, his response was: "You don't think about it, you just do it." Paul is always bridging the gap when necessary.

If a Veteran or staff member at the home needed something, he found it and provided it. All through his fundraising with the Elks and other organizations, Paul is constantly doing fundraising to help others in our community.

Why did you join the Navy right out of high school?

It was the wind-down of the Korean War, and his history teacher was talking about WW2 and as young Paul watched the documentary movie, he became inspired to help his country.

Young Paul went on to receive 16 combat medals in Vietnam; everywhere he went, he was in a role of leadership and trained people in operations and also the maintenance of

aircraft. He was also on an icebreaker in the Antarctic Expedition Force, Search and Rescue. Paul did what was necessary to support our country and has always been a part of the training for aircrew since the 1960s, and now supports recruits and veterans daily.

At this time, what do you consider to be your most important mission?

Supporting North Idaho veterans home and the Elks Lodge community outreach. Always supporting; gave dictionaries to 3rd graders, built the Elks RV park, community fundraiser for veterans in the North Idaho area, which takes care of veterans and their families in the area. Helped raise \$50k in bus funds by doing fundraisers for transportation for veterans.

Paul is a veteran with finesse that takes a situation or project and makes it work for everyone. I would say he uses the KISS acronym wisely and efficiently.

How does he get so many projects finished with minimal effort?

He rectifies divergent views and just does it. Missions Accomplished.

Give me your definition of country?

Every American in the USA is equal and makes this country. We have to support the individuals in the US to protect them; each individual can work for the betterment of all the people. Our country must be maintained in the Constitution and Bill of Rights, what it was and what it may be. If it wasn't for our military, then this nation would be a mess.

Paul will be retired from the military for 50 years very soon. Wow!

Paul never gives up: "Keep the old friends in mind, make new friends, and help wherever you can. God bless the United States of America."

I just barely touched on some of his career endeavors as a veteran and community philanthropist when I interviewed him. Paul Braden is a man we should all know, and I was sincerely very honored to be able to get to know him better. Lastly, he has a funny sense of humor and a kind, heartfelt personality that just keeps giving.

I believe we should add Distinguished Veteran to Paul Braden's resume. What do you think, The City of Hayden and Board Members?

Thanks,

Shelley Holloway