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Vietnam veteran returns to Fitzgerald for diploma

Would-be 1965 graduate finally closes chapter on his high school days

WARREN, Mich. — Paul Jordan hadn't been back to **Fitzgerald High School** since he dropped out in 1965 – only one semester and one government class shy of graduating. After many twists and turns in life that included a combat tour in Vietnam, he decided he wanted to go back and get his diploma.

On March 17 at the age of 71, Jordan finally got what he wanted.

“I want to thank Fitzgerald for coming through and giving me the diploma,” **Jordan** said. “I always wanted it because it was the school I went to. I went to **Mound Park** and that's where I went to high school. I am glad they offered this to me. This completes some things that have been in the back of my mind.”

Jordan was eligible to get his Fitzgerald diploma through a **Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency** program. Jordan qualified because he was drafted before he could go back to finish his high school degree and he was honorably discharged after serving in combat in Vietnam.

Jordan completed his GED while he was in the service and he went on to take several college courses over the years, he said. He spent most of his working years as a truck driver for the *Detroit News/Detroit Free Press*. He retired from that job in 2009, yet he continues to drive truck part-time. He likes to play racquetball on his days off.

After all these years, the diploma from Fitzgerald was one piece of unfinished business that kept coming back into his mind, so he contacted **Fitzgerald Public Schools Superintendent Barbara VanSweden**. Once she could verify Jordan's military credentials, VanSweden was free to award Jordan's diploma, which he received at a senior citizen luncheon at the high school.

“It is an honor to award Paul with his diploma,” **VanSweden** said. “He served our country and risked his life. I am grateful that, belatedly, we could add Paul to the list of Fitzgerald alumni.”

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