

Veteran Rewrites His Script with VFW Scholarship

'Because of this scholarship, I will graduate as a proud veteran and alumni of SVA'

May 07, 2020

In 2009, Todd Fuerst was unhappy with where his life was headed. After a string of jobs, the Newnan, Georgia, native decided to join the Air Force to provide stability for his family.

Enlistment allowed him to learn a new trade while doing something honorable for his country and those important to him. It also allowed him to be part of something bigger than himself.

"From the beginning, I was dedicated to doing the best I could," said Fuerst.

He graduated basic training with honors. Fuerst also earned the Army Combat Action Badge and other merits while serving in Afghanistan.

During his final deployment, Fuerst discovered the field of visual effects. He instantly knew it was what he wanted as a career and he's now finishing a Computer Art and Visual Effects program at the renowned School of Visual Arts in New York City (SVA).

Fuerst realized his GI Bill benefits would run out and he needed assistance. He researched and found the VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship" and is extremely grateful for the help.

"Without this generous support, my final year would be very difficult," he said. "Because of this scholarship, I will graduate as a proud veteran and alumni of SVA. I couldn't be happier."

Although going back to school at age 38 was tough for Fuerst, he values the challenge. He and his classmates struggle together and succeed together — just like in the military.

Fuerst encourages veterans to apply what they learned in the military to daily life and

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education. Whether it's technical skill, lessons in teamwork and hardships, or something else, he believes the experience sets people up for later achievements.

"I felt so well-equipped to take on the challenges of civilian life," he said. "We learned in the military to excel and manifest our strengths and improve on our weaknesses. Whether active duty or veteran, seeking education and knowledge is a great way we can honor our service to our country, continue to grow, become stronger and represent ourselves and our service brothers and sisters in the best way possible."

One year before Fuerst ended his service, he developed a plan to reach his goals. In May 2020, he will graduate and complete a personal mission thanks to the scholarship.