

FULL SAIL NEWS & CULTURE

# PROPELLER

MILITARY EDITION



**MILITARY  
STUDENT  
SUCCESS CENTER**

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## About Full Sail University

Full Sail is dedicated to helping creative students follow their dreams. Whether you're passionate about music, art and design, technology, filmmaking, gaming, or the business behind entertainment, an education at Full Sail University can prepare you for a career path doing what you love.



**Yellow Ribbon  
Program Institution**

## MILITARY STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER



The Military Student Success Center (MSSC) at Full Sail serves as a space for military-connected students, grads, faculty, and staff to connect, study, network, and collaborate while on campus. A hub for any military-connected student, the center provides a variety of benefits like free coffee and snacks, access to local and national resources including regular Veteran's Affairs visits, tutoring, lunch and learn seminars, and more.

"We act as a hub for any questions a student has or even just to listen and provide support," says Veteran Student Liaison Drew Bailey. "MSSC promotes camaraderie and collaboration between our students, we share a common bond that removes barriers and helps create a safe space."

**Whether you're looking to connect with fellow veterans, join the Veteran Student Union, or just grab a quick snack on the way to class, the Military Student Success Center is there to support you.**



## VETERAN AND GAME PRODUCER INDUCTED INTO HALL OF FAME



Aaron Hamilton Cook is one of the most recent veterans to be inducted into the Full Sail University Hall of Fame. A dual-degree graduate (Recording Arts in 2012 and Game Design in 2013), Aaron is a U.S. Air Force veteran who began working in the military and medical simulation sector of the industry on contracts for Defense Advanced Research Projects (DARPA), Office of Naval Research (ONR), Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL), and various other agencies. Some of Aaron's notable credits

include *The Witcher 3*, *Dying Light*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Hobbit*, *James Bond*, *Wonder Woman*, and more. Additionally, Aaron has served several years on both the Gaming and Entertainment Business program advisory committees (PAC) at Full Sail and is currently a Producer at Bioware. He was part of the 13th annual class of inductees into the Full Sail University Hall of Fame.



## FROM THE MARINES TO JUSTIN BIEBER'S MIXING BOARD

Full Sail graduate and veteran Josh Gudwin is a strong believer in the importance of a strong work ethic, the benefits of fostering strong interpersonal relationships within the recording industry, and the power of mentorship.

The latter is something Josh knows a lot about — he spent two years working with famed vocal producer Kuk Harrell on projects for artists like Rihanna, Jennifer Lopez, Lionel Richie, and more. It was through his work with Kuk that Josh met Justin Bieber in 2012. Now, Josh handles overall music management for Bieber, including engineering, mixing, vocal production, and A&R for the artist's releases.

Josh served in the U.S. Marine Corps, and credits his time in the service for helping him build skills that he still uses in the studio.

**"Every Marine is taught to be a manager," he says. "How to manage yourself and others. So that helps out a lot. The discipline helps, and just having the intuition to go out and get [a task] done without someone having to ask you to do it."**

After the Marines, Josh enrolled in Full Sail's Recording Arts program. Shortly after graduation, he set out for Los Angeles.

"I started off at Track Records as an intern," he says. "I slept on a couch for a year while I was interning, but I did my time. I lived in the studio, pretty much."

Acknowledging the fact that most artists are their own toughest critics, Josh stresses how important it is to be able to relate to the person in the vocal booth — whether they're a star-on-the-rise or an established hitmaker.

"Everyone, myself included, feels some anxiety [when they get into the studio]. In many scenarios, my job is to make people feel as comfortable as possible. I make sure to take care of everybody involved; I make sure they're hearing themselves right. Once an artist is comfortable, they deliver the best music."

## MILITARY GRADS

### Return for Panel at Hall of Fame Week

During Full Sail's annual Hall of Fame Week, graduates return to campus to share tips with current students during industry panels. At the 12th annual Hall of Fame Week, Air Force veteran and Game Design master's grad Aaron Hamilton Cook and Navy veteran and Game Development bachelor's grad Mark Diaz talked about their time at Full Sail and their post-graduation experiences in the gaming industry during a panel called "Military Grads on Transitioning into the Industry."

"[The grads] talked about how their military experience keeps them driven and focused, but also how it's created some challenges with how they interact with people," says

panel moderator Aaron Hall, an Air Force veteran and Full Sail's Director of Military Student Success. "The military has its own community and its own language. The gaming industry has the same camaraderie, but it's not life and death type stuff. The urgency is different."

Students had a chance to ask the grads more detailed questions during the panel's Q&A portion. "They asked, 'What did you encounter with your military experience that helped you get through?' 'How did you go from the military to doing what you're doing now?'" says Hall.



# COMMUNITY VETERAN EVENTS

Full Sail's Military Student Success Center provides community enrichment for military-connected students with events, panels and presentations, and more. Veterans and military-connected students can look forward to annual events such as the Student Veteran Thanksgiving dinner – held for students and their families – while online student engagement events are held on military bases around the United States throughout the year. Weekly game nights on campus, quarterly game jam sessions, and *Dungeons & Dragons* campaigns invite students to decompress and connect with fellow veterans as they complete their Full Sail journey.

Veteran students have also been able to represent Full Sail in the local sports community, carrying the flag onto the field for Orlando City Soccer.

During panels and presentations hosted throughout the year, military-connected students can network with and hear from veteran grads in the industry including Aaron Cook, Mark Diaz, and Josh Gudwin. For online students, the Virtual Veteran's Center on Discord provides a space to engage with the community, ask questions, and keep up with events.



# WAR GAMES:

## How Simulations are Building a Stronger Military

Over the last few years, the military has sought to leverage the power of video games and simulations for training purposes. **Andrew Rossetter, a 2007 Game Development grad and Senior Software Engineer with Bohemia Interactive Simulations**, has worked on the company's flagship product, Virtual Battlestations Systems (VBS), which shares a common lineage with a first-person shooter. While they may share elements with consumer-based games, simulation games aim for a higher level of fidelity, or the degree to which a simulation

mimics reality. To ensure fidelity, simulation companies employ strident iteration strategies not unlike those found in entertainment gaming.

"Military experience is a plus on the resume," says Andrew, who served in the Army from 1999-2002, and was deployed in operation Iraqi Freedom from 2004-2006. "However, it's not strictly required. We have subject matter experts whose sole job is to make sure we're doing the right thing as far as the application itself."



## NAVY VETERAN Trades Military Contracting for Game Development

The military taught Mark Diaz he could do anything. And after a few years working in contracting for the Army, he decided to turn that mindset into a path to pursue a longtime interest, making video games.

Choosing Full Sail to pursue his education, Mark enrolled in the Game Development bachelor's program. "From the moment I set foot on campus, I was convinced. I told myself I was going to come through the program like a hurricane. I was going to take the school by storm," he says. After graduating, Mark found a successful career as a Lead

Gameplay Programmer with id Software. In this role, he works closely with the design team to code in different gameplay elements like dashboard features, weapons, or character abilities for games in the popular *DOOM* franchise.

"The military put me in the mindset that I could do difficult things and succeed," he says. "It was a four-year commitment, and when you're 18, that seems like a long time. But I came through it, and it taught me I could make long-term commitments and see them through. It really made me believe I can do anything."



## GRAD BUILDS TRAINING TOOLS That Keep Soldiers Safe

**Veteran Daniel Vanallen** was an aviation mechanic for 11 years before he decided to pursue his love of video games with **Full Sail's Game Design bachelor's program**. He continued his education with the Simulation & Visualization degree program, where he learned how to use programming languages like C# and C++, design worlds in Unity, and build microcontrollers using Arduino I/O. Those skills prepared him for his post-graduation role as an XR Developer for Potawatomi Training.

At Potawatomi Training, Daniel is helping develop training simulations for petroleum

supply specialists to teach them how to safely fuel expensive military vehicles.

"We create a 3D world through Unity where [soldiers] can practice fueling. All of the assets, all the art that's inside these 3D worlds, are 100% lifelike. You can zoom in and literally read the warning labels," he explains. "And the soldier manipulates that equipment and goes through a task list like turn the truck on, then go and open up this valve, turn this switch on, open this valve, pull out the hose, do this, do that. And they learn how to use that equipment before they actually touch the physical equipment."

## CREATIVE WRITING GRAD

### Working with Veteran-Led Consulting Agency

Creative Writing grad Rory Zaugg is applying his understanding of delivering a message to audiences as a copywriter for Navazon, a Seattle-based consulting agency that works to help clients maximize their return when selling to massive audiences on ecommerce sites like Amazon.

"You've just got to use the right words that people are going to connect with because the words people connect with are the ones that they search for," he says. "And so it's also going to be the ones that computers connect with."

For Rory, an Army veteran, Navazon had quick appeal. Founded by an Air Force veteran, Navazon has a commitment to hiring former members of the military. "I'd been looking for this kind of job for a while," he says. "I'd been a copywriter, years and years ago before the Army...The CEO wanted to be a veteran-owned, former military-

focused company, so that's what kind of brought me up for him because I was in that situation."

Equipped with the lessons of storytelling and communication gained through his time at Full Sail, Rory has a unique understanding of how to connect with an audience through his words. "[Copywriting] is being able to do more than just write some text that somebody can read online or wherever it's printed, but being able to write for larger-scale communication strategies," he says. "You're trying to create something that people will notice and will convince them to come to look at your stuff."



## Veteran Grad Works for **NASA AND THE ARMY**

Digital Cinematography and Instructional Design & Technology grad **Khalil Nasir** is exploring his passions for photography, videography, and teaching with his work as an Instructional System Specialist for the Army and consultant Multimedia Technical Specialist for NASA.



Khalil spent 14 years in the Army, then pursued a formal education at Full Sail. The hands-on assignments in the Digital Cinematography program taught him lighting and film principles that helped him land a photo and video job with NASA. He also rolled straight into the Instructional Design & Technology master's degree program, where he learned how to create corporate videos and training products.

Khalil currently specializes in NASA's virtual reality content. He plans, shoots, edits, and packages their virtual reality media products. For his work with the Army, he uses technology to help educate soldiers and civilians.

"I specifically am in charge of leveraging distributed learning technologies — such as interactive multimedia instruction, e-learning, video teletraining, and simulation — to support soldiers' and Army civilians' training and education," he explains.

## Navy Veteran Creates Designs for **THE US OPEN**

As the Creative Services Manager for the United States Tennis Association (USTA) National Campus, **Digital Arts & Design grad and Navy veteran Paul Shank** designs visual elements that match the fast-paced movements of tennis.



Paul worked in aviation while he was in the Navy, but designing was his collateral duty. He put his artistic spin on everything from flyers to t-shirts to command coins; he even designed murals for aircraft carriers. He signed up for the Digital Arts & Design program after he left the military, and he's spent the last few years working for USTA.

Paul is responsible for the digital and print assets for the USTA National Campus in the Lake Nona district of Orlando. He works on the campus's signage, digital assets, print campaigns, magazines, and billboards; he also builds designs for special programs like USTA's Tennis on Campus and creates social media graphics for events like the US Open.

"USTA is fluid. We'll have different campaigns; it's not stagnant. So that's probably my favorite part [of my job]. We just brought pickleball and padel to Lake Nona, so we had to create all the assets for that. It's ever-changing, it's always improving, and it's not boring," he says.

## **GAME ART GRAD** Designing 3D Training for the Military



During his formative years, **Jason Hutchins** was led to believe a career in designing games seemed unattainable. "I would look at the game magazines in the grocery store when mom was shopping, and then when we got home, I'd go draw the characters from the game magazine," recalls Jason. "In one of my art classes, I would turn that work in for art projects. I remember the teacher said, 'Well, that's not art, that's garbage. That's video games, just a waste of time.'"

Since at that point he thought he couldn't pursue game art professionally, Jason decided to pursue a military career and enlisted in the Army. After

completing his time in the military, Jason attended **Full Sail's Game Art degree program** which led him to a fulfilling career as a Visual Database Engineer at CAE. With CAE, Jason modifies and designs consequential training modules for Air Force pilots and crew, work he takes pride in.

"I made modifications to a KC-135, and so when [Airmen] get in the cockpit and they look out the window, I made that. So it's just like when you play the game and you look on your screen and you go shoot the other guy or whatever, some people made that. I do the same thing, but it's inside of a plane."

## **MARINE VETERAN** & Graduate Honored

The Florida Association of Postsecondary Schools and Colleges (FAPSC) honored **2014 Music Business grad Valencia Bromell** with the Graduate of the Year Award. Valencia is a former Marine who has served in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Egypt.

During her time in the Music Business program, Valencia was an active participant in Full Sail's Global Professionalism Standards

(GPS) program, which tracks timeliness, respect for peers, preparedness, attentiveness, and compliance for school policies. She regularly volunteers at Harbor House of Central Florida, an organization devoted to providing resources to survivors of domestic abuse. Since graduating, Valencia has worked in radio as an assistant to the promotions manager of ESPN 580, and is learning to produce her own shows on News 96.5.



# MARVIN CORNISH

## on Business, Time Management, and Character Development

**Marvin Cornish, an Entertainment Business master's grad and military veteran**, is currently the Director of Protocol for the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

Marvin was a member of the Army, a radio DJ, and a director with the Department of Veterans Affairs before even enrolling at Full Sail in 2010. At the time, he was looking to get away from radio and into sports management.

Full Sail's Entertainment Business master's program gave Marvin a glimpse into how the entertainment and professional sports industries function, and today he uses that knowledge to help his student athletes prepare for a career in professional sports. He's able to tell them what to look for in an agent, and adversely, what agents are looking for in a potential client.



## **MASTER'S GRAD**

### Pivots from Military to Public Relations

After Lisa Maskey completed her time as a surgical technician in the Air Force, she thought the logical next step would be to jump into a career in medicine. "When I left the service and moved to Orlando, I had initially thought I'd pursue a career in the medical field, but you know, my heart wasn't quite in it," she recalls.

Upon connecting with a VA advisor, Lisa began to consider a career in public relations, a perfect fit for her extroverted personality. While considering where to pursue a degree in public relations, Lisa came across Full Sail's Public Relations master's program.

"I was very fortunate to find that program because what's unique about the program Full Sail offers is that it's more focused on today's PR. It's different than the PR back then, where it was a lot of writing press releases. Today, it's more focused on social media, and that was really important for me," says Lisa.

Hired as an Account Executive, Lisa has experienced rapid growth in her role with her current employer, Raven Public Relations. At Raven, she works with clients both nationally and internationally as an Account Director and Speakers Bureau Director, a position created specifically for her after taking initiative with clients looking for opportunities to engage in public speaking.

## This Mobile Development Grad **BEAT THE ODDS**

During his time at Full Sail, **Mark Filter** drove round trip 80 miles to campus every day for his **Mobile Development classes**, then did his homework in a travel trailer where he lived with his wife and their seven young children. Despite those challenges, the veteran graduated at the top of his class and found mobile development work that changed his family's life.



Mark spent 13 years in military intelligence participating in nuclear weapons inspections and working as a diplomatic Russian interpreter. After he left the military, Mark signed up for Mobile Development and used his military mindset to push through the degree program.

After graduation, Mark found jobs at Family Dollar Corporate and Belk Corporate. He's currently a Vice President Senior iOS Engineer at Bank of America, where he builds and maintains iOS applications and internal frameworks that are used in Bank of America's 4,300 financial centers. His new living situation is a far cry from his days in the trailer.

"I work in my own office now, a room with a door. I can separate my work life from my family life... while I ponder the best way to compose some code or resolve a software bug. It's a stark contrast to [my previous] life," he says.



Are you a veteran?

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Making the right decision about your education is important.

For active duty military, veterans, and dependents, we offer a variety of programs to make starting your creative career path as streamlined as possible. We also honor many Veterans Administration Education Benefits and are an unlimited participant of the Yellow Ribbon Program. And, if you used any of your Post-9/11 GI Bill on a program or institution that has closed, you could be eligible to have those benefits restored.

For more information go to [fullsail.edu/military](https://fullsail.edu/military), email [militaryoutreach@fullsail.com](mailto:militaryoutreach@fullsail.com), or text MILITARY to 88995.

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