

GATOR RECON

University of Florida Association of Military Alumni newsletter for Gator veterans and UF military-affiliated alumni

August 2026

www.gatormilitary.org



Become an official member of UFAMA today!

Joining the ranks of the **University of Florida Association of Military Alumni** is easy! The most convenient options:

- Join the [UF Alumni Association](#) today and specify "Association of Military Alumni" under Groups.
- If you're already a UFAA member, use the UFAA Gator Nation app to 'edit your info' and select "Association of Military Alumni" under Affiliate Group Affiliation.
- Follow us on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) & [LinkedIn](#)!

Put simply, UFAMA is an Affiliate Group of the UF Alumni Association. Your membership in UFAA includes membership in your local Gator Club or any Affiliate Groups of your choosing, like UFAMA.

Membership in Affiliate Groups is open to alumni, students, family members and all persons with an interest in the University of Florida. All Affiliate members must also be a UFAA member. Each member agrees to be bound by the rules of the Affiliate and the rules and bylaws of the Alumni Association.

Dues are established by and paid to the UF Alumni Association.

Join Us! Military Reunion Weekend, Nov. 6-7

Consider yourself invited to reconnect with fellow UFAMA members, friends and family—and share your favorite war stories from your six-month “deployment” to the Sinai—Nov. 6-7 in Gainesville.

This year’s reunion will coincide with the University of Florida Athletics Department’s annual “Saluting Those Who Serve” festivities to honor members of the Armed Forces and first responders.

Join us for the awards dinner at Emerson Hall on Nov. 6, make a weekend of it or simply come cheer on the Gators as they take on the University of Oklahoma (for the first time as an SEC opponent and for the first time in The Swamp!) Nov. 7.

Welcome Back to Campus, Gator Nation!

The University of Florida Association of Military Alumni sends a warm welcome to all University of Florida students, faculty and staff as you return to campus for a new academic year.

With classes beginning Aug. 20, we hope you dive in with energy, curiosity, and purpose.

Here’s to a productive, inspiring, and successful year ahead for every member of the Gator Nation. Go Gators! 🦖💙💛



Expand Veteran & Career Connections on OPLIGN

Among the challenges veterans face after graduation or military service is access to career development. UFAMA is excited to introduce a powerful solution called [OPLIGN](#), a free and automated platform that can help:

- Match members instantly to internships and jobs from 10,000+ employers
- Translate military skills and experience for civilian "consumption"
- Connect alumni and employers online, where 85% of real hiring occurs

This partnership is a new and creative way to help UFAMA members navigate the fog of the job hunt. Visit the OPLIGN office in person (Level 1 of the Reitz Union) or online today!

Gator Spotlight

Travis Horn: From Airborne Infantryman to Gator Advocate

By Amanda Winkle, UFAMA Staff Writer

Like many Gators before him and since, the seed of the idea to attend the University of Florida was planted young for Travis Horn.

Growing up in Kissimmee, Horn was struck by the proud Gator alumni around him, namely his middle school gym teacher Jim Purcell and his wife, Sandra.

“They didn’t know it then, but their loyalty and love for the Gator Nation made a real positive and lasting impression upon me as a child,” Horn said.

“It cemented in me the notion of how great it would be to become one of ‘the boys from old Florida!’”



Before becoming part of the Gator Nation, Horn served our country as an airborne infantryman in the U.S. Army's famed 82nd Airborne Division.

He was recognized for Cold War service recognition during an overseas tour of duty in Germany, and he deployed to the Persian Gulf from there in 1991.

He said those experiences “really helped broaden my knowledge of the world in a meaningful way.”

Once he got to Gainesville, Horn said he sought out fellow veterans who were also going through the shared experience of transitioning from life in the military to student life.



Part of that student life was enjoying Gator “football and the revelry that entails,” Horn said, including seeing Head Ball Coach Steve Spurrier fling his visor along the sideline.

He made his mark on campus, attending law school at UF and helping to found the Military Law Students Association (MLSA).

“Seeing veterans valued across the UF campus communicated that our service mattered to our fellow citizens,” Horn said.

Horn has continued his life of service, helping veterans through his business, Bull Horn Communications in Tampa, and he is Commander of Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 4321 in Tampa’s Historic Hyde Park Neighborhood.

Happy Birthday to the U.S. Coast Guard!

The U.S. Coast Guard celebrated its 236th birthday Aug. 4. UFAMA proudly salutes members of the Gator Nation—past and present—who have served within the Coast Guard’s ranks, from active-duty Coast Guardsmen to civilian professionals and the families who anchor them.

Your dedication to protecting our coasts, safeguarding our waterways, and responding whenever and wherever our nation calls reflects the highest standards of both the Coast Guard and the University of Florida. Whether conducting search and rescue, enforcing maritime safety, supporting operations behind the scenes, or standing strong beside loved ones through demanding missions, you carry the Gator spirit into every watch and every challenge. Thank you for your service, your sacrifice, and your unwavering commitment to our nation. Semper Paratus!



Extended: Alumni Hall of Fame award nominations deadline

We have extended the deadline to submit nominations for the 2026 annual awards to **Monday, Sept. 7!**

Submit your nominations now and help us to recognize Gators who have made a difference for our military, our country and our Gator Nation community! Let's Go Gators!

Check out nomination instructions [here!](#)



2026 AWARDS

SERVICEMEMBER

*UFAA member, Active Duty member
of the Armed Forces*

VETERAN

*UFAA member, honorably discharged
from any of the Armed Forces*

RESERVIST

*UFAA member, Reservist member
of the Armed Forces*

FAMILY MEMBER

*UFAA member, immediate family of
a member of the Armed Forces*

DOW CIVILIAN

*UFAA member, current employee
of a verified Dept. of War agency*

BGen Charlie Dorman, USMC (Ret)

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

*UFAA member, can be Active Duty,
Reservist, or honorably discharged
from the Armed Forces*

HALL OF FAME

*Alumni whose military service,
dedication to UF, and lifetime
contributions have left a
transformational and enduring legacy*

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