

# ARMED FORCES



# MERIT AWARD

For release, 11:30 a.m. (CT), November 10, 2021

## Jackson named 2021 Armed Forces Merit Award Recipient

FORT WORTH, TEXAS - University of Nebraska linebacker and military veteran [Damian Jackson](#) has been selected as the 10th recipient of the [Armed Forces Merit Award](#) presented by the [Football Writers Association of America \(FWAA\)](#).

Coordinated by the staff at the [Lockheed Martin Armed Forces Bowl](#), the [Armed Forces Merit Award presented by the FWAA](#) was created in June 2012 “to honor an individual and/or a group within the realm of the sport of football.”

Brant Ringler, executive director of the Lockheed Martin Armed Forces Bowl, and Heather Dinich, FWAA president, announced Jackson as the recipient Wednesday during a teleconference. Jackson was selected from a list of 31 nominations (28 individuals and three programs) as the 2021 recipient by a nine-person committee made up of FWAA members and Bowl officials.

“Damian has distinguished himself as a collegiate football player after serving four years in the Navy,” said Ringler. “Damian’s off-the-field involvement at Nebraska has been remarkable and we have followed his progress in Lincoln for the past three seasons since he was also a finalist for the Armed Forces Merit Award in 2019.”



Dinich added: “Jackson joins a list of remarkable individuals and programs that have been recipients of the Armed Forces Merit Award. With so many deserving individuals and programs, it is difficult to honor only one recipient annually.”



Jackson has been a valuable producer for the Husker defense in 2021, serving as a backup linebacker for the Blackshirts after moving from the defensive line. He played in Nebraska’s first nine games, totaling a season-high two tackles and a quarterback hurry in the win over Northwestern.

Jackson, who did not play high school football, was a Navy SEAL for four years before walking on to the Husker program in 2017. He has played in the Huskers’ last 15 games dating back to the 2020 season.

Off the field, Jackson is a Child, Youth and Family Studies major who is on track to graduate this December and has been on the Nebraska Scholar-Athlete Honor Roll seven times. He has been involved with the Nebraska Football Road Race and a Day of Service, while also participating in local hospital visits.

Earlier this fall, Jackson was featured in a remembrance video on the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. He will also be featured this Saturday on ESPN’s GameDay telecast.

“It is an honor to have Damian be a part of our football team and a representative of Nebraska Football, said head coach Scott Frost. “Damian has brought accountability, leadership and toughness to our team and helped instill those same qualities in his teammates. His incredible drive and tenacity have allowed him to become a contributor to our football team despite not playing high school football. His impact on our program, combined with his service and sacrifice for our country make him a worthy recipient of the Armed Forces Merit Award.”

## Jackson named 2021 Armed Forces Merit Award Recipient, Page 2

Created in June 2012, the award honors an individual and/or a group with a military background and/or involvement that has an impact within the realm of college football.

The [Armed Forces Merit Awards](#) selection committee is comprised of seven FWA members and two representatives from the Lockheed Martin Armed Forces Bowl. A total of 28 individuals and three programs were nominated for the 2021 award.

Past recipients of the Armed Forces Merit Award presented by the FWA include [Nate Boyer](#) of the University of Texas (2012), [Brandon McCoy](#) of the University of North Texas (2013), [Daniel Rodriguez](#) from Clemson University (2014), [Bret Robertson](#) of Westminster College (Fulton, Mo., 2015), [Steven Rhodes](#) from Middle Tennessee State University (2016), [Dr. Chris Howard](#) from Robert Morris University (2018), Army West Point assistant coach [Mike Viti](#) (2019) and [Collin O'Donnell](#) of Bluefield College of Virginia.

[Kansas State](#) and its football team were honored in November 2017 as the sixth recipient of the Armed Forces Merit Award for the university's partnership with the United States Army that created a bond between the school's athletic department and the Iron Rangers at Fort Riley.

[ESPN Events](#), a division of ESPN, owns and operates a portfolio of 34 collegiate sporting events nationwide. The roster includes five early-season college football games, 17 college bowl games, 11 college basketball events and a college softball event, which accounts for 400 hours of live programming, reaches 64 million viewers and attracts over 800,000 attendees each year. With satellite offices in more than 10 markets across the country, ESPN Events builds relationships with conferences, schools and local communities, as well as providing unique experiences for teams and fans. For more information, visit the official [website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [YouTube](#) pages.

Founded in 1941, the **Football Writers Association of America** (FWAA, <http://www.sportswriters.net>) consists of journalists, broadcasters, publicists, photographers and key executives in all areas of college football. The FWA works to govern media access and gameday operations while presenting awards and honors, including an annual All-America team.

### Media Contacts

- Tim **Simmons**, Armed Forces Merit Award Coordinator, 720/244-6580, [bfishinc@aol.com](mailto:bfishinc@aol.com)
- Steve **Richardson**, Football Writers Association of America, 214/870-6516, [tiger@fwaa.com](mailto:tiger@fwaa.com)
- Drew **Harris**, Lockheed Martin Armed Forces Bowl, 254/716-8573, [drew@firstpitchpr.com](mailto:drew@firstpitchpr.com)
- Keith **Mann**, Associate AD - Communications, Nebraska, 402/472-2263, [kmann@huskers.com](mailto:kmann@huskers.com)
- Shamus **McKnight**, Senior Associate Communications Director, Nebraska, 402/472-7772, [smcknight@huskers.com](mailto:smcknight@huskers.com)

### PAST ARMED FORCES MERIT AWARD RECIPIENTS

