

Captain Risa B. Simon
United States Navy, Retired



CAPT Risa B. Simon retired from the U.S. Navy in August, 2025 following over 27 years of active duty service as a career Naval Intelligence Officer. She is Founder, CEO, and Director of Leashes End Senior Pet Sanctuary & Rescue, which she operates out of her home on 26 acres of paradise in Perry, Florida.

Risa and her former husband Asher Weinberg originally established Leashes End in Rockville, MD. The couple had been adopting senior pets since their marriage in 2005. In 2017, upon returning home from a deployment to Iraq, Risa discovered that Asher had taken in a few too many senior cats for their small town house in Silver Spring. Risa and Asher sold their home and bought a 3-acre property in Rockville in order to accommodate their ever growing number of senior pets. Leashes End was born and would operate out of this loving home from 2017 to 2025! In February, 2025, Risa and a handful of dedicated volunteers drove 30 senior pets in three vehicles down to Leashes End's new home on 26 beautiful acres in Florida's Big Bend. With her retirement from active duty, Risa is able to focus her time, resources, and leadership skills, honed over a career of military service, to nurture and develop Leashes End.

A native of South Florida, Risa is a member of the 1990 graduating class of Pine Crest School in Fort Lauderdale. She went on to graduate Magna Cum Laude from Vanderbilt University in 1994 with a Bachelor of Arts degree with Honors in Modern European Studies. She earned a Master of Arts degree in Modern Middle Eastern Studies in 1997 from the University of Michigan and a Master of Military Studies degree from Marine Corps University in Quantico in 2013. Risa has also completed coursework at the University of London, the University of Regensburg, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the American University in Cairo, Middlebury College, Georgetown University, and the Joint Forces Command and Staff College. Risa is fluent in Hebrew, Arabic, and German.

Risa joined the Navy in 1998 and is a veteran of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Over the years, she has served across the Middle East, Africa, Europe, the Asia-Pacific, and the United States. With operational tours in Naval Aviation, Naval Special Warfare, Carrier Operations, as well as multiple Joint Service tours, Risa's personal awards include a meritorious Bronze Star Medal for service in Iraq in 2008. Risa was selected as a 2012 recipient of the RADM Edwin T. Layton Award for leadership and mentorship in Naval Intelligence and her writing has been published in the Marine Corps Gazette.