



**General (retired) Laura J. Richardson recently completed her tour as the 32nd Commander of United States Southern Command. She is a native of Northglenn, Colorado and a graduate of Metropolitan State University of Denver. She commissioned into the U.S. Army and trained as an Army Aviator. She holds a Master of Science in National Resource Strategy from the National Defense University.**

**Over her 38 year career, General(R) Richardson has commanded from the Company to Combatant Command level, the highest command level in the Department of War (DOW), and she served as the Army's first woman combat arms general officer.**

**As Commander of U.S. Southern Command, one of the six DOW geographic warfighting combatant commands, she worked directly for the President of the United States and the Secretary of Defense from 2021 to 2024. In this position she was responsible for all military operations, contingency planning and partnerships across South and Central America, and the Caribbean, which included 31 countries, to promote regional stability, keep America safe, strengthen governance, counter illicit trafficking, and support disaster preparedness and response efforts.**

**Prior to taking command of USSOUTHCOM, she served as the Commanding General of U.S. Army North (Fifth Army) which is the Army Service Component Command for U.S. Northern Command. She commanded an Assault Helicopter Battalion in combat in the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) 2003-04, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and deployed to Afghanistan as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Communications Headquarters International Security Assistance Force in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. She has also served as the Military Aide to the Vice President at the White House in Washington, D.C., and the Army's Legislative Liaison to Congress at the U.S. Capitol.**