



# BIOGRAPHIES

## UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND

### **Laura J. Richardson**

General, USA  
Commander  
U.S. Southern Command

General Laura J. Richardson is the 32nd Commander of U.S. Southern Command. The general is a native of Northglenn, Colorado and a graduate of Metropolitan State University of Denver, Colorado. She was 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's Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy.

General Richardson previously served as the Commanding General of U.S. Army North (Fifth Army) at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, which is the Army Service Component Command for U.S. Northern Command.

Other assignments as a General Officer include Deputy Commanding General of U.S. Army Forces Command at Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Chief of Army Legislative Liaison to the U.S. Congress in Washington D.C.; Deputy Chief of Staff for Communications at Headquarters International Security Assistance Force in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Kabul, Afghanistan; Deputy Commanding General of the 1st Cavalry Division at Fort Hood, Texas; and Commanding General of the U.S. Army Operational Test Command at Fort Hood, Texas.

Over her career General Richardson has commanded from the Company to Theater Army level. She commanded an Assault Helicopter Battalion in combat in the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), deploying her unit from Fort Campbell, Kentucky to Iraq 2003-04, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. She has also served in numerous staff assignments at a myriad of locations, including Military Aide to the Vice President at the White House in Washington, D.C., the Army's Legislative Liaison to Congress at the U.S. Capitol, and at the Pentagon as an Army Campaign Planner.

General Richardson's awards and decorations include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, Distinguished Service Medal (with Oak Leaf Cluster), Defense Superior Service Medal (with Oak Leaf Cluster), Legion of Merit (with three Oak Leaf Clusters), Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (with four Oak Leaf Clusters), and the Air Medal (with Numeral 7). She also has various unit, service and campaign awards, and numerous badges, including the Combat Action Badge, Parachutist Badge, Air Assault Badge, Senior Army Aviator Badge, Vice-Presidential Service Badge and the Army Staff Identification Badge.

She is married to Lieutenant General (Retired) Jim Richardson and they have one daughter and a grandchild.

