

**Brigadier General Irene M. Zoppi (Rodríguez)**  
**United States Army Reserve – Retired**  
**Canóvanas, Puerto Rico**



On 25 December 2020, with over 35 years of service in the U.S. Army, both Active and Reserve, **Brigadier General Irene M. Zoppi retired as the [first female Puerto Rican General in U.S. Army Reserve History](#).**

From humble beginnings, the second of five siblings, BG Zoppi was born and raised in [Canóvanas, Puerto Rico](#). Her military career started on 11 December 1985 when she enlisted as a Private First Class (E3), Military Police Corps. In 1988, she received her commission as a Second Lieutenant, Military Intelligence, after graduating from the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus, as a Distinguished Military Student and Graduate. As a native Spanish-speaker, she was selected and graduated from the renowned Defense Language Institute (DLI), English Language Military Program, English as a Second Language Speakers (ESL), which prepared her for success.

BG Zoppi is a subject matter expertise on Strategic Intelligence, Humanitarian Assistance, Unity of Nations, and Diplomatic Military Affairs. Her distinguished service reflects her passion for the Western Hemisphere and the Caribbean, at the following key assignments: (1) **U.S. Army South (ARSOUTH)**, Deputy Commanding General & Director, U.S. Army Reserve Engagement Cell (AREC) for Mobilization, Fort Sam, Texas; (2) **200th Military Police Command**, Deputy Commanding General for Support, Fort Meade, Maryland; and (3) **U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM)**, Commander/J2, Army Reserve Elements, 76th Operational Response Command, Doral, Florida; therein, serving with Distinguished Senior Level Officials throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

Her numerous leadership assignments are, but not limited to: Deputy Commander for Readiness, Mission Support Element under the 200th Military Police Command; Deputy Commander & Chief of Staff, 1st Mission Support Command; Group/Brigade Commander, Strategic Intelligence Group; Battalion Commander, 203rd Military Intelligence Battalion (Technical Intelligence); Assistant J2, Chief Intelligence Officer, Joint Task Force, National Capital Region, NORTHCOM; Battalion Commander, 11th Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 104th Division (Leadership Development) and other critical joint assignments including a deployment with the 3rd Armored Division (SPEARHEAD) under her mentors MG Paul Funk and CSM Joe Hill during the Gulf War – OPERATION DESERT SHIELD, STORM, and CALM.

BG Zoppi is a graduate of numerous prestigious military institutions: the U.S. Army War College, Advanced Joint Professional Military Education, the Command and General Staff College, the Combined Arms Service Staff School, and Airborne School. Hereto, she is also branched qualified in Military Intelligence, Civil Affairs, Public Affairs, and Military Police. She holds a Doctorate in Philosophy from the University of Maryland, a Master of Strategic Studies Degree from the U.S. Army War College, a Master of Business Administration, and a Master of Science in Business, Marketing from Johns Hopkins University. BG Zoppi received a Women's Leadership Certificate from Harvard Business School. She also holds a Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages: Spanish, Italian, French, and German from the University of Puerto Rico.

BG Zoppi's military awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal (with 3 oak leaf clusters), the Army Commendation Medal (with 6 oak leaf clusters), the Southwest Asia Service Medal (with 3 bronze stars), the Kuwait Liberation Medal (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia), the Kuwait Liberation Medal (Government of Kuwait), the U.S. Army Parachutist Badge, and Medal of Valor, Republic of Columbia, Bogota, South America. BG Zoppi also received the Knowlton Award for Excellence in Military Intelligence.

As a civilian, Dr. Zoppi serves as the Chief, Executive Branch & Non-Title 50 Agencies serving under the Customer Outreach and Advocacy, National Security Agency. She is the former Program Director for the National Intelligence University, Bethesda, MD. Moreover, Dr. Zoppi serves as an Adjunct Faculty Member for the U.S. Army War College, Distance Department of Education, where she pioneered the first course on “*Latin America, Central America, and the Caribbean: U.S. National Interests.*” Likewise, she is an Adjunct Professor for the College of Business, Strayer University. She is a preceding visiting Adjunct Professor for the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC), Fort Benning, Georgia.

Her teaching, mentoring, coaching, motivating, and public speaking skills reach out to others while making a difference in Academia. Dr. Zoppi is a former Adjunct Professor from various higher education institutions such as College of Notre Dame, ROTC Bowie State University, and Research Associate for the Maryland Institute of Minority Achievement and Urban Education, University of Maryland, College Park; and Howard University. Moreover, she was selected for admission to two international academic honorary societies, Phi Kappa Phi and Kappa Delta Pi.

Currently serving as a volunteer as a Member of Directors and Advisory Board in the Prestigious [Blue Star Families](#), Washington, DC, and Member of Board of Trustees, [Anne Arundel Community College](#), Arnold, MD. Formally, Dr. Zoppi was nominated by the Governor of Maryland and appointed by Maryland State Senate to: (1) Maryland State Board of Education, Ethic Committee, Baltimore, MD; (2) Maryland Board of Trustees, Education of the State of Maryland; and (3) Co-Chair and Commissioner for the State of Maryland on the Commission on the Establishment of [Maryland’s Women in the Military Service Monument](#) and (4) Member of Maryland Workforce Corporation Board, Annapolis, MD.

Her civilian awards, certifications, and decorations include the Latina of the Year, Latina Style Inc (2020), Latina of Influence Award by the Hispanic Lifestyle (2015); Faculty of Excellence Award, Strayer University, 120th Commencement, Baltimore, Maryland (2012); Maryland’s Top 100 Women (2009), Kentucky Colonel, Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels (2000).

In military heritage, BG Zoppi is a member of the American Revolution’s Daughters, #845972, with ancestry to former [President Abraham Lincoln](#).

BG Zoppi is married to Sergeant Thomas J. Zoppi, who serves as a Law Enforcement Officer at, County Police. They have four fully-grown offspring with four grandchildren. Her mantra is simple: “*Culture is the heart of an organization. Without a heart, there is no pulse. Therefore, take care of PEOPLE, and MISSION will be innovatively VICTORIOUS.*”

