

Elizabeth “Betsey” Mercado
Executive Director, Objective Zero Foundation

Betsey Mercado earned a BA in Business Administration from the American Public University System and holds a MS in Human Services from Purdue University. While in college, Betsey was inducted into Phi Theta Kappa and Delta Mu Delta international honor societies for academic excellence.

Betsey is committed to serving Army families and the military community. She has over 20 years of experience volunteering with a variety of Army and military units and various nonprofits, including leading Soldier and Family Readiness Groups for Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team, B Company and Headquarters & Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, and D Company, 2nd Battalion, 11th Infantry Regiment. Betsey also served as a care team member for these units, providing support to families in the event of a service member’s injury or fatality. In these roles she has improved the readiness and quality of life for military families while their service members were deployed on three deployments between Iraq and Afghanistan.

Betsey is a co-founder and Executive Director of the Objective Zero Foundation, a tech nonprofit focused on the social connectedness and wellness of service members, veterans, their families, and caregivers. In this capacity Betsey has trained more than 2,400 suicide prevention peer support volunteers and served more than 20,000 service members using mobile app technology to provide peer support, training, and access to health and wellness resources. Betsey has served as a panelist for the American Association of Suicidology mil/vet pre-conference panel on leveraging innovative data to drive upstream veteran suicide prevention and participated in a roundtable discussion for America’s Warrior Partnership’s 2021 Warrior Symposium with Dr. Deb Stone, lead scientist of the Centers for Disease Control Suicide Prevention Team.

Betsey recently participated in the ‘Digital Dunkirk’ and aided the Evacuate our Allies Coalition helping to evacuate translators during the withdrawal from Afghanistan. Her efforts successfully evacuated several Afghans and was replicated dozens of times by others to help secure the evacuation of numerous Afghans and their families. Since their evacuation, Betsey has continued to advocate for their continued support and welfare.

Betsey is on the Military Officers Association of America’s Currently Serving Spouse Advisory Board where she informs MOAA about issues that impact military families. She is also a member of the Evacuate our Allies Coalition, the Sioux Falls Veteran Suicide Prevention Coalition, is a member of Bunker Labs 22A Cohort, and has the distinction of partnering with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and CDC Foundation’s Veteran Suicide Prevention Evaluation Project.

Betsey is a recipient of the Shield of Sparta, Heroine of the Infantry Award, a finalist for Fast Company’s World Changing Ideas Award, and the Commander’s Award for Public Service. Her mobile app, the Objective Zero App, was a finalist for the Congressional Medal of Honor Society’s Citizen Honors Award, a FourSquare for Good recipient, a Gold Edison Award, and was the ‘Best New Mobile App’ of 2019. The Objective Zero Foundation received the Newman’s Own Award and the CTIA Wireless Foundation’s Catalyst Award.

Betsey is the spouse of active duty Army Officer LTC Chris Mercado and a native of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Betsey and Chris currently reside in Kailua, HI and have two children, Isabelle and Tristan, who are now both in college. Betsey and Chris are preparing to move to the Republic of Korea where Betsey will continue supporting the military community at Camp Humphreys and Chris will command the UN Command Security Battalion – Joint Security Area at Panmunjom.