

BLUE BERET

UN Flight Rotations



The start of 2017 saw some significant changes for UN Flight, with outgoing Commander Lt Col Leonardo Gustavo Villegas handing over his responsibilities to incoming Commander Lt Col Hugo Alvarez. As Force Commander Major General Muhammad Humayun Kabir reiterated during his commendation, Lt Col Villegas did an excellent job; under his command, UN Flight successfully accomplished more than 748 sorties over the Buffer zone, reaching in total 25, 600 flying hours without accident.

The new Commander's main goal is to ensure maximum safety and effectiveness during his command of UN Flight. Lt Col Alvarez is no rookie, as this is his third mission in Cyprus; his priority is good teamwork in the unit, which he says is essential for successfully executing its duties. This rotation is the first time that three women – two technicians and one Hughes pilot – are part of UN flight's 26-person team.

Lt Col Alvarez Hugo Alvarez



Lt Col Alvarez was born in Córdoba, Argentina, on 16 June 1971. He graduated from the Air Force Academy in 1995 as an Air Force Officer. In 1997, he successfully completed the Aviator Course and in 1998, the Helicopter Pilot Course. He was then commissioned to the Helicopter Base in Buenos Aires until 2015. Over the course of his career, he has flown Hughes 500, Bell UH1H, Bell 212 and MI-17 helicopters. Most recently, he was the commander in charge of the MI-17 Squadron at Air base 7 in Buenos Aires. He has flown a total of 2,200 flying hours among them around 2,000 with rotary wings, and will fly a Bell 212 during his current deployment in Cyprus.

This is Lt Col Alvarez's third deployment with UNFICYP; he has also served in the UN Peace-keeping Forces in MINUSTAH, Haiti, as well as several summer campaigns in Antarctica and firefighting campaigns in the south of Argentina.

He is a Staff Officer graduate from both the Superior War School and Joint War School in Argentina, gaining a Master's in Aerial Systems and joint military planning. Lt Col Alvarez is happily married to Claudia, with whom he has four daughters: Maria Fernanda, 14, Maria Agustina, 10, Maria Delfina, 3 and Maria Victoria, aged 2.

CPT. Maria Jorgelina Camarzana



CPT Camarzana, the first female pilot to serve with UNFICYP, returned to UNFICYP in 2016 for her third stint as the pilot of a small Hughes 500 helicopter; she was the pilot of the same helicopter during her previous UNFICYP missions in 2012 and 2014. This time round, she was promoted to Captain before her deployment; she is serving in UN Flight along with her husband, CPT Leonardo MARINO, a Bell 212 pilot.

Back in Argentina, CPT Camarzana is also the only woman flying a helicopter, recently co-piloting a Bell 412, similar to the mission's Bell 212. When she started her military career, becoming an aviation officer was just an idea; that all changed with her first gliding lesson, an experience that fascinated her from the very first moment and gave her career a new focus in the skies. She successfully completed a four year Aviator Course in Cordoba, followed by a Helicopter Pilot Course for Hughes 500 and Bell 412.

Two other women are serving as technicians with UN Flight.

LCpl. Marianela Giachero



LCpl Giachero is a flight technician responsible for the Hughes 500 helicopter maintenance, as well as pre-flight and post-flight inspections. Her career choice was inspired by her father, an auto mechanic. Her path has not been easy, and it's always a challenge for a woman work in a male-dominated field, but Giachero says the men around her have been helpful; she feels comfortable and happy to be a part of a unit where good team work and a professional attitude are standard. This is her first mission to Cyprus. Previously, she twice served in Antarctica as the mechanic of an MI-17 helicopter.

LCpl Antonela Rossi



LCpl Rossi has followed in the footsteps of her father, an Argentinian Air Force officer. Aviation is very much a family vocation – her sister is a mechanic for twin otter airplanes and her brother serves as a mechanic for the Argentinian Pucara aircraft. After six years of service in the Argentinian Air Force, LCpl Rossi was selected for deployment in Cyprus as an avionic specialist for the Hughes 500 and Bell 212 UN Flight helicopters. This is actually her first ever mission and, despite the huge distance from home, she is more than happy with her new mission family.

Back at home, LCpl Rossi is based at the Moreno Military Air Base in Buenos Aires, home of the 7th Air Brigade of the Argentinian Air Force. She is a capable avionic specialist with experience with various helicopters, including the Bell 412, Bell 212, Hughes 500 and MI-17. When she started her military career, she was the first and only woman avionic specialist at the air base; she says she has always worked well with male colleagues.



BLUE BERET



www.facebook.com/UNFICYP
www.twitter.com/UN_Cyprus
www.unficyp.unmissions.org

