

Rotation 6 of the CAF Assumes Command of Operation Unifier

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Lieutenant-Colonel (LCol) Pierre Leroux took command of the Joint Task Force – Ukraine (JTF-U) from LCol Fraser Auld during a transfer of command authority ceremony held on September 24, 2018. This is the sixth rotation of personnel for the JTF-U, Operation UNIFIER, which began in 2015. This rotation is composed mostly of members of 5 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group and personnel from units in Quebec and Canada.

Major-General (MGen) William Seymour, Deputy Commander of the Canadian Joint Operations Command, presided over this ceremony. MGen Seymour emphasized the importance of the mission, as well as the excellent work done by Rotation 5 personnel. He invited Rotation 6 to “continue the work and push the mission forward.”

The invited guests included Roman Washuk, the Canadian ambassador to Ukraine, Rostislav Zamlynsky, the First Deputy Chairman of the Lviv Regional State Administration, as well as Lieutenant-General Pavel Tkachuk, Commander of the National Army Academy. The ceremony was a tangible example of the integration of Canadian Armed Forces members with our Ukrainian allies during which Ukrainian Armed Forces medals were bestowed to several members of Rotation 5 to commemorate their extraordinary efforts.

The mission’s evolution was mentioned by everyone throughout the ceremony; Canadian and Ukrainian commanders spoke of transition from the tactical level to the operational and even strategic levels. During the press briefing after the ceremony, LCol Leroux stated that one of the key means of making these changes was through the systemic learning approach. “This involves working on the system underpinning the training in order to improve it,” said LCol Leroux. Implementing this approach will be a priority for the new commander.

During his speech, LCol Leroux also elaborated on the mission’s motto – “culture, cooperation and credibility”. Steeped in its long history, Ukraine has a rich and varied culture. “That is why it is essential that the mission be carried out with a high level of cultural acuity,” stated LCol Leroux.

Operation UNIFIER is being carried out as part of an international effort. Several countries have a presence in Ukraine, including Denmark, the United States, Lithuania, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Poland. “Continued cooperation with our Ukrainian partners, as well as with our friends and allies, is essential,” pointed out LCol Leroux.

“Lastly, we will continue to build upon the existing credibility of the Canadian soldiers, sailors and aviators who are part of our mission,” concluded LCol Leroux. After three years of work, Rotation 6 of Operation UNIFIER is ready to continue the mission – Let’s go!