

[REDACTED]
OUTLINE: ARGENTINA

I. Introduction

1. This brief will be given to [REDACTED], Commanding Officer, [REDACTED].

2. This brief will be given by GySgt Ranstadler, MMCC (Maintenance Material Control Chief), [REDACTED].

3. This is an unclassified brief.

4. This brief is designed to provide a rotary wing squadron commanding officer with the information necessary to plan, coordinate, and execute a DFT (detachment for training) in the country of Argentina.

5. The information disclosed may be considered accurate and current for the next 30 to 60 calendar days.

6. This brief will consist of a 15-minute Microsoft PowerPoint presentation. Pictures, diagrams, and illustrations shall be utilized to emphasize the content of this brief.

7. This brief will address and explore the history, geography, economy, and military of Argentina.

II. Body

1. History

a. Commonly divided into four specific eras:

- (1) Pre-Columbian Period
- (2) Colonial Period
- (3) Nation-Building Period
- (4) Modern Era

b. Pre-Columbian Period spans from prehistory to the colonial period (16th century CE).

(1) First human settlements appeared in Patagonia (southern edge of South America shared by modern day Argentina and Chile) roughly 13,000 years ago.

(2) Patagonia comes from the word *patagón*, coined by the Portuguese explorer Magellan in 1520. Root meaning is "giants." Magellan was describing the tall native people of the region.

(3) Indigenous people were called Tehuelches (tə'welchē), or "fierce people," who were almost completely exterminated following first contact with Europeans.

(4) Many ancient Tehuelche sites have been discovered in Argentina. One example is the *Cueva de Las Manos* (Cave of Hands).

(5) The most famous group of ancient people belonging to this region were members of the Inca Empire (1438-1533). Although based in Peru, the Incas were highly influential throughout the region and played a major role in attempting to repel imperial European invaders.

c. Colonial Period (1530-1810)

(1) During the Age of Exploration, Europeans first arrived in South America in 1502. Among these were several wealthy and famous Italian, Spanish and Portuguese maritime navigators such as Vespucci, Solís, and Magellan.

(2) The Spanish conquistador, Pedro de Mendoza, established the first European settlement near modern day Buenos Aires in 1541. This settlement was later abandoned.

(3) A second conquistador, Jerónimo Luis de Cabrera (1528-1574), founded Córdoba in Northwestern Argentina, during the summer of 1573. Córdoba still stands today and is the second largest city in Argentina.

(4) The Spanish raised the status of this region by establishing the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata in 1776. This viceroyalty consisted of today's Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay, as well as much of present-day Bolivia.

(5) The viceroyalty was short-lived due to the strain placed on the Spanish crown by emerging violence in Europe. These threats included British maritime supremacy and military pressure from the French Empire under Napoleon Bonaparte.

d. Nation-Building Period (1810-1880)

(1) Influenced by the American Revolution and the ever-weakening position of Spain, many South American colonists began to consider not living under Spanish rule. Thus, the May Revolution of 1810 marked the beginning of the Argentine War of Independence.

(2) The *Revolución de Mayo* was a week-long series of events that took place from 18-25 May, 1810, in Buenos Aires, capital of the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata. This Spanish colony included roughly the territories of present-day Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay. The result was the removal of Viceroy Baltasar Hidalgo de Cisneros and the establishment of a local government, the *Primera Junta* (First Junta), on 25 May 1810. Argentina officially declared independence in 1816.

(3) The defeat of the Spanish was followed by a long civil war concerning the organization of the country and the role of Buenos Aires in it. Unitarians thought that Buenos Aires should lead the less-developed provinces, as the head of a strong centralized government. Federalists thought instead that the country should be a federation of autonomous provinces, like the successful States of the United States.

(4) By 1853, the Unitarians had won the civil war, penned the Argentine Constitution (still in place today), and placed into office Bartolomé Mitre, the first president of a centrally unified Argentina.

(5) The presidency of Bartolomé Mitre saw an economic improvement in Argentina, with agricultural modernization, foreign investment, new railroads and ports and an immigration wave from Europe. Argentina joined Uruguay and Brazil against Paraguay in the War of the Triple Alliance (1864-1870), which ended with the defeat of Paraguayan and the annexation of part of its territory by Argentina.

(6) In 1868 Mitre was succeeded by Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, who promoted public education, culture and telegraphs.

(7) Nicolás Avellaneda became president and ran into trouble when he had to deal with the economic depression left by the Panic of 1873. Most of these economic issues were solved when new land was opened for work after the expansion of national territory. Led by his war minister, Julio Argentino Roca, this military campaign took most of the territories under control of natives, and reduced their population.

(8) In 1880 a trade conflict caused turmoil in Buenos Aires, which led its governor to declare secession from the republic. These secession efforts were eventually defeated and Buenos Aires definitely joined the republic, federalizing the city of Buenos Aires and handing it over to the government as the nation's capital city. This action ushered in a new era for Argentina.

e. Modern Era (1880-Present)

(1) After his surge in popularity due to his successful desert campaign, Julio Roca was elected president in 1880 as the candidate for the National Autonomist Party, a party that would remain in power until 1916. During his presidency, Roca created a net of political alliances and installed several measures that helped him retain almost absolute control of the Argentine political scene throughout the 1880s. This sharp ability with political strategy earned him his nickname of "The Fox".

(2) Conservative forces dominated Argentine politics until 1916, when the Radicals (Radical Civic Union) won control of the government through the first national elections under male universal suffrage. As a radical state, Argentina remained neutral through WWI.

(3) During the early 1920s, the rise of the anarchist movement, fueled by the arrival of recent émigrés and deportees from Europe, spawned a new generation of left-wing activism in Argentina. The new left, mostly anarchists and anarcho-communists, rejected the incremental progressivism of the old Radical and Socialist elements in Argentina in favor of immediate action.

(4) On September the 6th of 1930, a military coup led by the pro-fascist general José Félix Uriburu overthrew the standing government and began a period in Argentine history known as the Infamous Decade. Political conflicts, revolutions, and coups continued through WWII where Argentina remained mostly neutral until "declaring war" on Germany in late 1945.

(5) The next four decades were marked by a series of no less than three *coups d'état*. Each of these revolutions was marked by a transfer of power from one end of the political spectrum to the other. Fascists, communists, radicals, and conservative elements all took part in shaping the Argentine landscape. This resulted in Argentina becoming impoverished and isolated.

(6) Serious economic problems, mounting charges of corruption, public discontent and, finally, the country's 1982 defeat by the United Kingdom in the Falklands War following Argentina's unsuccessful attempt to seize the Falkland Islands all combined to discredit the Argentine military regime. Under strong public pressure, the junta lifted bans on political parties and gradually restored basic political liberties.

(7) On October 30, 1983, Argentines went to the polls to choose a president; vice-president; and national, provincial, and local officials in elections found by international observers to be fair and honest. The country returned to constitutional rule, economic conditions improved, and many of the formally nationalized industries were privatized.

(8) The past thirty years have been marked by a more stabilized government. Economic problems still plague the Argentine government but the country, nonetheless, is still highly influential both in South America and across the globe.

2. Geography

a. Argentina is located in southern South America and bordered by the Andes mountains in the west and the South Atlantic Ocean to the east. The neighboring countries of Argentina are Chile to the west, Bolivia and Paraguay to the north, and Brazil and Uruguay to the northeast.

b. In terms of area, Argentina is the second largest country of South America after Brazil, and the 8th largest country in the world. Its total area is approximately 1.1

million square miles (roughly equal to the size of the United States east of the Mississippi River). Argentina claims a section of Antarctica (Argentine Antarctica) but has agreed to suspend sovereignty disputes in the region as a signatory to the Antarctic Treaty. Argentina also asserts claims to several South Atlantic islands administered by the United Kingdom.

c. Argentina is divided into seven geographical zones:

- (1) Argentine Northwest
- (2) Gran Chaco
- (3) Mesopotamia
- (4) Central
- (5) Cuyo
- (6) The Pampas
- (7) Patagonia

d. Land use: 10% is arable, less than 1% is dedicated to permanent crops, and 89% is listed as other. Argentina consist of rich plains in the north, rolling plateaus in the south, jagged peaks to the west, and abundant coastline to the east.

e. Elevation extremes include the lowest point (on the eastern coast), *Laguna del Carbon* (347 ft. below sea level) and the highest point, *Cerro Aconcagua* (22,968 ft. above sea level).

f. Argentina has over 15,600 sq. mi. of irrigated land and has strategic access to a number of maritime shipping lanes. With the exception of the *Rio Paraná* in the north, Argentina does not have any major river networks to speak of. The Las Logos region (also to the north) is home to several lakes and wetlands.

g. Argentina is subject to a variety of climates. The north of the country is characterized by very hot, humid summers (which result in a lot of swamp lands) with mild drier winters, and is subject to periodic droughts during the winter season. Central Argentina has hot summers with tornadoes and thunderstorms (in western Argentina producing some of the world's largest hail), and cool winters. The southern regions have warm summers and cold winters with heavy snowfall, especially in mountainous zones. Higher elevations at all latitudes experience cooler conditions. The hottest and coldest temperature extremes recorded in South America have occurred in Argentina (record high 117.1 °F and record low of -40 °F).

h. Argentina's national capital is the autonomous city Buenos Aires (located slightly inland of the central coast). The rest of the country is broken down into 23 provincial districts that play an integral role in shaping the country's culture and economy.

3. Economy

a. Argentina's standard unit of currency is the Argentine Peso (ARS). The current exchange rate is 5.4 pesos to one United States Dollar (USD).

b. The economy of Argentina is Latin America's third-largest, has a Very High Human Development Index (HDI 0.811- 45th in the world) and a relatively high GDP per capita (GDP \$474.8 billion- ranked 27th globally). It is classified as an upper middle-income economy by the World Bank. Argentina is also one of the G-20 major economies.

c. Argentina benefits from rich natural resources (oil, natural gas, and steel), a highly literate population, an export-oriented agricultural sector (sunflower seeds, soybeans, tobacco) and a diversified industrial base (food processing, motor vehicles, chemicals and petro chemicals). Historically, however, Argentina's economic performance has been very uneven, in which high economic growth alternated with severe recessions, particularly during the late twentieth century, and income misdistribution and poverty increased.

d. Argentina's tourism industry is based upon its cultural offerings and varied natural assets. The country had 5.28 million visitors in 2010, ranking in terms of the international tourist arrivals as the top destination in South America, and second in Latin America after Mexico. Revenues from international tourists reached \$4.93 billion in 2010.

e. Argentina's official language is Spanish and is home to some 41.6 million people. Ethnically, the country is 97% European, 1.5% Amerindian, 0.2% Asian, and 1.5% Other/Mestizo.

f. The labor force consist of approximately 15 million people who earn an average household income of just over \$18,000 annually. Argentina's poverty line is set at roughly \$4,000 annual earned income, of which 30% of the population lives under. Additionally, as of 2010, 15% of Argentina's people were

unemployed. A fraction of Argentina's population seeks voluntary employment in the country's Armed Forces.

4. Military

a. The Armed Forces are controlled by the President and a civilian Minister of Defense. In addition to the army, navy and air force, and Marines there are two forces controlled by the Interior Ministry: the Argentine National Gendarmerie, a national guard used to protect borders and places of strategic importance; and the Naval Prefecture, a coast guard used to protect internal major rivers and maritime territory.

b. Argentina's government is considered a federal presidential constitutional republic. Key players include the President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, Vice President Amado Boudou, Supreme Court President Ricardo Lorenzetti, and the Ministry of Defense Agustin Rossi.

c. The armed forces of Argentina number about 70,000 active duty personnel and 30,000 reserve personnel, one third fewer than levels before the return to democracy in 1983. The age for enlistment in the volunteer military is from 16 to 23 years old.

d. Argentina's military has been one of the best equipped in the region (for example, developing its own jet fighters as early as the 1950s); but recently it has faced sharper expenditure cutbacks than most other Latin American armed forces. Real military expenditures declined steadily after 1981 and though there have been recent increases, the defense budget is now around US\$3 billion.

e. The Argentine government is heavily involved in the non-proliferation of WMDs (weapons of mass destruction). Therefore, Argentina does not currently use, possess, or produce nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons. However, Argentina has started construction on nuclear-powered submarines.

f. Historically, the Argentine military has been involved in several coups and revolts. In particular, the mid-20th century was a period of dynamic change and turmoil. Ernesto "Che" Guevara, for instance, was an Argentine Marxist revolutionary that played major roles in the Cuban Revolution and guerilla warfare.

g. Today, however, Argentina's military is an integral part of the country's democracy. Additionally, the Argentine military is committed to international peacekeeping and is one of the founding members of the United Nations. Internationally, the Argentina military has participated in the 1991 Gulf War, Kosovo, and (most recently) humanitarian relief efforts in Haiti and Chile.

h. Argentina participates in joint operations with the United States on an annual basis. Operation PANAMAX has been conducted nearly every summer since its inception in 2003. The exercise, headed by the United States Southern Command, is one of the largest maritime training evolutions in the world. Over 20 nations practice defensive measures while countering 21st century threats directed at the Panama Canal.

III. Closing

1. Question and Answer Period (RVAV)

a. **Question #1:** Where did Argentina's flag come from?

Answer #1: The tri-brand white and blue was first used by the patriots fighting off the Spanish during the May Revolution and Argentine War of Independence. The sun is a replica of an engraving first used on Argentine currency following the birth of the nation (it's called the May Sun).

b. **Question #2:** If I deploy to Argentina, what kind

of weather should I prepare for? **Answer #2:** This would be entirely dependent on where and when you were to deploy. Argentina's climate is as varied as the United States. While this may present some challenges, it's also ideal for a variety of deployment options.

2. Summary and Concluding Statements

a. **Summary:** During this presentation, we discussed the history, geography, economy, and military aspects of Argentina.

b. **Concluding Statements:** Argentina is a country rich in culture and tradition. While both physically and economically dominant in Latin America, Argentina's recent move towards

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