



New Jersey–Republic of Cyprus State Partnership Program enhances inaugural NCO development course



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MOSFILOTI, CYPRUS-- Republic of Cyprus National Guard non-commissioned officers from multiple units met with several representatives of the New Jersey National Guard’s 177th Fighter Wing for training sessions designed to enhance leadership development of NCOs within the two forces. The training sessions, which were held at the Artillery Command of the Cyprus National Guard, Mosfiloti, Cyprus, on July

21–25, 2025, took place as part of the State Partnership Program between the Republic of Cyprus and the State of New Jersey. They also are part of Cypriot’s new NCO development course.

“Together we are building a career-long continuum of learning, where NCO skills and leadership abilities are refined and sharpened through continuous development over their span of service,” said U.S. Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Justin Kelley, 177 FW Staff senior enlisted leader. “The NCO Basic Leadership Course was developed jointly with the members of the New Jersey Air and Army National Guard and representatives from the Cypriot Army, Navy, Air and National Guard team. It is the first step in a series of developmental courses.”

The 177 FW role was to support and refine the first ongoing class of the NCO Basic Leadership course, Class 001. This specific course was modeled after the U.S. Air Force’s own NCO development courses. Plans on incorporating the other branches’ NCO courses were discussed.

“This course is very important; we need to train our NCOs to improve their cognitive and leadership skills,” said Cyprus Air National Guard Warrant Officer Andreas Christoforou, NCO Basic Leadership course lead observer and instructor. “We would like to thank the New Jersey National Guard and Chief Kelley for his help and assistance to reach this goal.”

The week’s events included daily peer-led instruction and physical training led by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. John Raebig, 177 FW alert crew chief, and concluded with a visit by U.S. Army Col. K. C. Evans, U.S. Embassy Cyprus senior defense official and defense attaché.

The focus of the NCO Basic Leadership course was to increase NCO leadership capacity in support of mentoring future NCOs.

“By modeling after U.S. Air Force NCO structure, we are introducing a proven framework that cultivates accountability, initiative and adaptive leadership at every level of the enlisted force,” said Raebig. “As these NCOs grow, they become more than just managers – they become trusted advisors, trainers and role models.”

The State Partnership Program between the Republic of Cyprus and the State of New Jersey began in 2023 and has involved multiple exchanges in both countries that aim to enhance collective security and to improve each country’s capabilities, including disaster response. Through the SPP, the National Guard conducts military-to-military engagements in support of defense security goals. This cost-effective program is administered by the National Guard Bureau, guided by State Department foreign policy goals, and executed by the state adjutants general in support of combatant commander and U.S. Chief of Mission security cooperation objectives and Department of Defense policy goals.

“This NCO development opportunity is very important for me and for other NCOs,” said Cyprus Army National Guard Sergeant Anastasia Giannoukou, NCO Basic Leadership course instructor. “It’s a dream for us to be better as NCOs.”

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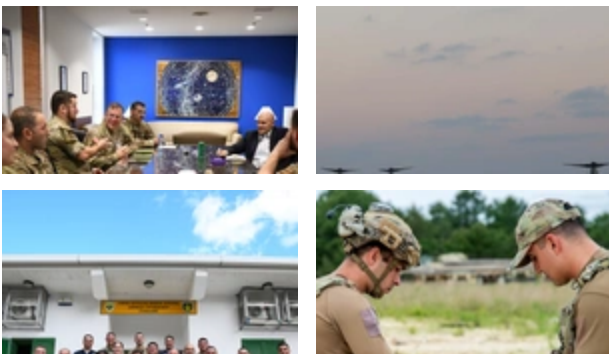
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