

JUNE 2023

United

ON THE ROK

INSOOK KIM:
A LIVING
HISTORY OF
WOMEN IN
KOREA



KOREAN
CULTURE
DICTIONARY

*Royal Asiatic
Society Korea*

**THE STRENGTH OF
OUR MILITARY**



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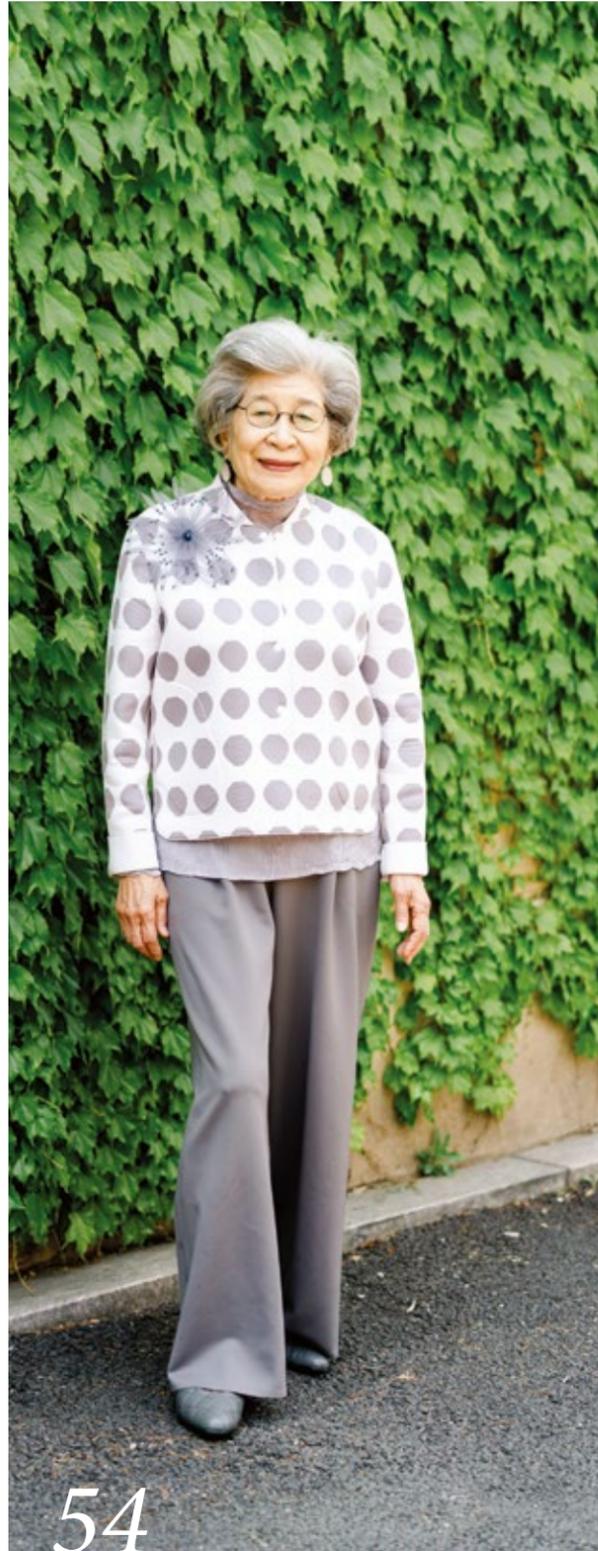


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Insook Kim — A Living History of Women in Korea

Insook Kim was a child during the Korean War and as an adult, dedicated to its rebuilding. She invites us into her home where she shares her fascinating experiences and her next plans.

Cover: Insook Kim
(Photo by Erin Henderson)

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The Strength of Our Military

Master Sergeant Michael E. Branch, U.S. Army shares his perspective on the strength of our military in the Leaders Corner.

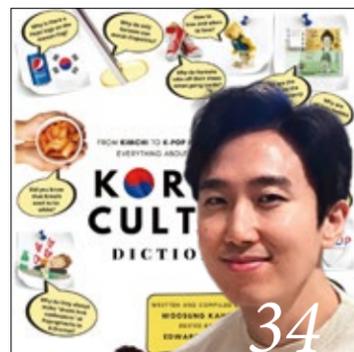
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Royal Asiatic Society Korea

The Royal Asiatic Society Korea Branch is a learned society based in Seoul, South Korea. Read more about this scholarly organization.

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Korean Culture Dictionary

Author Woosung Kang writes about his book, designed to connect communities.

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Summer MENU

PICK UP: JUNE 16TH

BUILD A CUPCAKE BOX

\$4 EACH, HALF DOZEN \$24, DOZEN \$46

MIX & MATCH

RASPBERRY LEMONADE

Luscious lemon cake with fresh raspberries folded in & topped with vanilla buttercream.

ORANGE CREAMSICLE

Orange vanilla citrus cake with a fresh whipped cream frosting & orange slice.

KEY LIME

Refreshing key-lime cake with a vanilla buttercream & zest on top.

PEACHES & CREAM

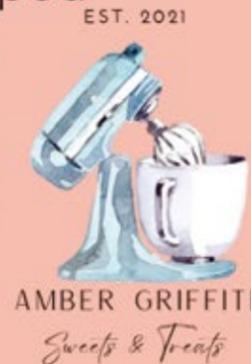
Peach cake with fresh whipped cream frosting.

LUSCIOUS LEMON

Lemon cake topped with vanilla buttercream.

PINEAPPLE UPSIDE DOWN

Classic brown sugar & pineapple cake topped with fresh whipped cream.



Wanna eat my cake?



United ON THE ROK

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Launched in July 2022, *United on the RoK* is a civilian information and lifestyle magazine distributed monthly at all USFK installations. The purpose of the magazine is to enhance connectedness within and across our diverse communities and to help community members adapt to life in Korea.

United on the RoK is monthly publication for members of the United States Forces Korea Community. Editorial content is the responsibility of *United on the RoK*. Contents of the publication are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or Oriental Press.

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Sunrise in the countryside of Boseong
(Photo by Erin Henderson)

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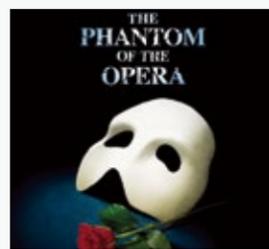
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LIVE MUSIC&ART CALENDAR



JUN17-18
Bruno Mars - Hyundai Card Super Concert 27
 Olympic Stadium (Jamsil, Seoul)
globalinterpark.com



ONGOING - JUN18
The Phantom of The Opera - BUSAN
 Dream Theatre
ticket.yes24.com



JUN19
Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra
 Lotte Concert Hall
lotteconcerthall.com/eng



JUN24-25
Seoul Park Music Festival 2023
 Olympic Park
globalinterpark.com



JUN28
Lucerne Symphony Orchestra
 Lotte Concert Hall
lotteconcerthall.com/eng



JUN29
Mikhail Pletnev and Yekwon Sunwoo
 Lotte Concert Hall
lotteconcerthall.com/eng



JUN30-JUL02
Psy Summer Swag 2023 - Seoul
 Olympic Stadium (Jamsil, Seoul)
globalinterpark.com



JUL06
The 12 Cellists of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra with Sumi Jo
 Lotte Concert Hall
lotteconcerthall.com/eng



JUL10
Gonjiam Music Festival 2023
 Lotte Concert Hall
lotteconcerthall.com/eng



JUL29
2023 MR.BIG Live in Seoul
 Yes24 Live Hall
www.sac.or.kr/site/eng/



AUG04-06
Incheon Pentaport Rock Festival 2023
 Songdo Moonlight Festival Park
globalinterpark.com



OCT17
2023 Sam Smith Gloria The Tour - Korea
 KSPO DOME
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EDITOR'S NOTE

*“We all of us owe, I imagine, far more than we realize to our friends
as well as to the members of our family.”*

— Eleanor Roosevelt

When Seoul-based jewelry designer Insook Kim invited me to her home, she warned me there were beads everywhere. She explained that she had closed her shop after her husband passed away, at the dawn of the Covid-pandemic, and the inventory was all in her home. I envisioned a cluttered space with random boxes full of assorted beads, and autumn tones. Just the opposite, her home is airy, comfortable, and organized.

Inside, my eyes were drawn to the large blue and white pottery on an elegant cabinet against a wall. It reminded me of a ginger jar that my grandmother gave me, which she acquired when my grandpa was stationed in Japan in the 1960s. As I was taking in the room, Kim placed a small comforter on the soft carpet. Just as my own grandmother had done when I brought my first newborn to her home, Kim lowered herself to the floor and doted on my baby.

Kim is beautiful, elegant, genuine, and fiercely independent. She sat with me there, answering my questions, telling me about her family and friends, and recounting instances over the years of collaboration between the U.S. and ROK communities. It was all surreal and yet emblematic of our family's experience in Korea, where we have felt so welcome, especially with our four little ones.

She opened her home and gallery of beads to United on the RoK. She makes jewelry that is atypical in Korea, made for women who are bold and confident like her, and who understand that jewelry is not a useless accessory. Kim is described as a living history of women in Korea. Her story is incredible.

This issue includes information about G.I. Bill Pay Services, I Care Counseling, Seoul Counseling, the Non Commissioned Officers Academy, the Non Commissioned Officers Association, Royal Asiatic Society Korea, and the Youth Exchanging Culture Communicators' Organization. There are articles about the Registration Card, Noncombatant Evacuation Operations (NEO), Status of Forces Agreement



(SOFA), currency exchange, the usefulness of a shower filter, a snapshot of Korea, and more. We also hear from U.S. Army Master Sergeant Michael E. Branch in Leader's Corner, Krav Maga Master Daltan Yang, business owners in the community, and the two individuals based in Korea who were nominated for the Armed Forces Insurance Military Spouse of the Year Award in 2023.

This is the final issue of the first volume of this community magazine. Over the past year, United on the RoK has produced twelve issues, launched a website, built a social media presence, registered on the U.S. Army Volunteer Management Information System, presented the publication at DODEA schools across the peninsula, built a diverse writership and readership that reflects our community, and we are just getting started.

Thank you to all of the writers, readers, contributors, and supporters. The success and impact of this community magazine is because of you and your participation.

Thank you to Charles Chong, CEO of Oriental Press for supporting this concept, publishing this magazine, and distributing print editions monthly, across the RoK. He has supported the USFK community for over thirty-seven years and personifies the ROK-U.S. alliance through his dedication to supporting community wellness, providing cultural experiences, and investing in goodwill endeavors of individuals and organizations in the USFK communities. Thank you Charles.

Thank you Eric Park, it has been and will always be a joy and barrel of laughter working with you. Thank you Erin Henderson for embracing this idea, elevating the product, and expanding the reach. Thank you to my best friend and biggest advocate, Paul Ward. Thank you to my favorite supporters, my four babies.

Thank you to my friends, family, and mentors for believing in, supporting and being part of this community magazine. A special thank you to Janelli Lemon, Daniel Kuehl, Ana Murillo, Janelle Matthews, Jenna Nunez, Brandon Bledsoe, Jetta Allen, Mildret Powell, Kristine Provins, CC Group, Sarah Hoyt, Isabel Hoyt, Lily Hoyt, Angie Donald, Madison, and John Behrend. Thank you Agnes Ko, Insook Kim, Lt. General (Ret.) Inbum Chun, Colonel (Ret.) William Alexander, Sean Kim and Steven Shields. Thank you Lt. Colonel Sunny Kuehl, Colonel Paul Oh, Park Young-sik and the Park family, Command Sergeant Major Benjamin Lemon, Colonel Seth Graves, Steve Hoover, Zach Nelson, the Godfrey family, Anna Lonborg, Colonel Gwen Devera-Waden, Jsun McDowell, Alexandria Jones, Amy Millican, the sororities and fraternities on the RoK, and Team Hager.

Cheers to another year of enhancing, connectedness and sharing information to improve our quality of life and learn more about this beautiful country. I hope you find your tribe, your battle buddy, your best friend, and a support network.

Caitlin Ward
Editor in Chief

*Photo: Erin Henderson, Caitlin Ward and Zoe Evelyn
Ward pictures in Seoul.*

Benefits of Volunteering Your Time

By Kimberley Kephart

Welcome to Korea! Whether you are new to the Peninsula or you have been here for a while, here's some advice that may help you adjust to your new home and get connected—volunteer!

Volunteering is a wonderful way to spend your time while you are here in Korea. Any move can be challenging, but especially overseas, you may feel disconnected from the things you had to give up and leave behind. Whether you are looking for opportunities, that will be due back to your career goals, looking to build your résumé, looking for ways to get involved in the community, or looking for an opportunity to meet people and make friends, volunteering is a great place to start!

My first experience with these challenges was when we moved from Monterey Bay, California to Poland. In Monterey, I had been working in the fitness industry for a better part of my career and I was teaching full-time. When we moved to Bydgoszcz in Poland, I left that all in California. However, I quickly started networking with individuals at the Joint Force Training Center. One day, I mentioned to someone that I was looking for volunteer teaching opportunities, which led to me submitting a business plan for a fitness bootcamp to the board of the Military Welfare Activities Chair. My business plan got approved and I started teaching every Tuesday and Thursday, morning, and afternoon classes. Of course, the benefit of this was that I was able to get volunteer hours and do what I love, all while still being able to travel and finish my MBA. These bootcamp classes were a godsend for me and others. I saw the firsthand effect of what volunteering for the community meant to others. I was inspired and excited that there were resources available to myself and others.



When my husband and I moved to Camp Humphreys at the height of the pandemic in 2020, again, I had to give up what I had invested so much in. But I was heartened when I saw the community rally around a Christmas drop that was done for families and soldiers in quarantine. I thought it was wonderful and it inspired me to get involved in the community. The first opportunity I had here was volunteering with 524 Military Intelligence Battalion Soldier & Family Readiness Group (SFRG). It was a great experience working alongside fellow spouses who wanted to make a difference. Through fundraisers and many hours of volunteering, we did great things for the community such as assembling and sending care packages filled with Korean goodies to family members stateside.

In March of 2021, I began volunteering at USO Sentry Village. I had walked into the center one day and was floored by the service and all the amenities that they offer so I signed up to volunteer. The Center Operations Specialist at the time was a jovial guy named Jamie, who made volunteering fun. It started with him, but it was the whole team! That volunteer experience opened so many doors—I met Caitlin Ward who at that time was the president of the Humphreys United Spouses Club. She encouraged me to attend their events and see if it was for me. I loved it and joined the board, serving as the Real Property Chair, handling event rentals, building the inventory, and raising money for the club's scholarship and welfare projects.



Volunteering led to more volunteering and more friends and connections, but it also led to a job! When job opportunities opened at the USO, I applied. I went from Volunteer to Staff Member with the USO Humphreys and then USO Osan. At the time of writing, I co-manage a team of around 90+ volunteers at USO Osan. I love this job because I am using and developing my skills while also giving back to the community!

So, volunteering with different organizations enabled me to get a job and add experience to my resume. Furthermore, while COVID wreaked havoc on the community, volunteering provided a wonderful way to meet new people, make friends, and cheer people up.

If you are new to the area, I encourage you to get out and volunteer. You never know what connections you will make and how many lives you will impact, even just with a simple hello. Supporting each other does numbers for our mental health. I remember handing over a soda to a service member during Motor Pool Mondays and watching their face light up, or greeting a brand-new spouse in the USO and giving her the reassurance of a friendly face and conversation. It is those moments when we are there for each other that matter.



Benefits of Volunteering

You'll be helping people and organizations who really need it. This is the best part, because there is a level of satisfaction that comes with helping. Now more than ever, non-profit organizations really need the assistance. When you step into a volunteer role, you'll be at the heart of the mission and you will be helping members of your community.

Connection Volunteering connects you to those in the community. If you are new to the area this is a guaranteed way to make friends and establish connections. These connections can sometimes be a stepping stone into a job or a lifelong friendship.

Improved Health According to a recent study from Carnegie Mellon University, "people who volunteer on a regular basis are less likely to develop high blood pressure than non-volunteers." Additionally, the feeling one gets from volunteering boosts serotonin, reduces depression, improves mental and physical wellness.

Expands Perspective When you volunteer you meet people with different backgrounds—this could be socio-economic, ethnic, different age groups, etc. This is incredibly beneficial as you go through life as it expands your perspective and your capacity for empathy.



Jetta Allen & Kimberly Day

Celebrating Armed Forces Insurance Military Spouse of the Year Nominees

By Caitlin Ward

Let's celebrate Jetta Allen and Kimberly Day, the two volunteers in Korea who were nominated for the Armed Forces Insurance Military Spouse of the Year (AFI MSOY) in 2023! The mission of the award is to recognize outstanding spouses at installation, branch and national level for their tireless dedication to improve the collective military spouse and family experience. The purpose of the award is to help those nominees amplify their passion, grow their reach, engage with more military spouses and tell their story.

The recognition comes on the heels of several challenging years, and is a reminder of the impact we can all have in our communities and the importance of getting involved.

Jetta Allen

Jetta Allen is an Army Spouse of fourteen years. She has experienced four deployments and five duty stations, two of which were outside of the continental United States (OCONUS). Jetta and her husband have an eleven-year old autistic son, Joshua, who has attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The Allen family is enrolled in the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) and is familiar with the barriers often encountered by EFMP families such as overseas screenings, availability and ease of connecting with TRICARE, availability of resources, referrals not transferring from region to region, delay of care, and finding their support system amid transitions.

Jetta's passion for service runs in her family. Her grandmother's stance was, "Community means we take pride in the quality of life for the people around us." She grew up in soup kitchens, food banks, and helping the elderly. She understood, at a young age, the life-changing impact of early intervention and family support.

Jetta recalled, "As a teacher in Arlington, Texas, I saw kids registered through the Family Liaison Outreach, receive bags of food through the food bank in the school, which was funded by Hearts & Hands, the local food and clothing center run by different churches each day of the week." This was the same food bank she grew up volunteering at. Jetta's eyes filled with tears when she spoke about community support coming full circle. "I saw that healthy communities are interconnected."

Jetta also saw firsthand that parent outreach in education increased detection of disabilities and developmental needs. Jetta is still tirelessly devoted to community outreach but since having her son, she has shifted her focus from quality of life to disability awareness through ad-



vocacy, inclusion, and connection to community resources. She holds elected positions as the School Advisory Committee (SAC) Chairperson for Humphreys Middle School, the USAG Humphreys Installation Advisory Committee (IAC) Secretary, and is the founder of the Humphreys Diverse Abilities Support Group. Her platform is creating better support for EFMP families transitioning to and from Korea.

Kimberly Day

Kimberly Day is an Air Force spouse of twenty-four years. She has experienced six deployments and nine duty stations, four of which were OCONUS. Kimberly, a former teacher, has always been focused on education and mentoring teens through tutoring and programs to build resiliency and leaders among girls. After Kimberly had kids, she got involved in their classrooms and saw opportunities to help.

She recognized quickly that overseas DODEA schools don't fall under the Department of Education (DE). Instead, they fall under the Department of Defense, which means things like the Every Student Succeeds Act do not apply. Another difference, in schools under the DE, the superintendent is hired by elected officials on the School Board and parents are able to affect change in the schools



through their elected officials. For example, Kimberly raised an issue at a school under the DE. It was dismissed by the superintendent and principal so she brought it up to the School Board at a public forum. They supported her complaint and told the superintendent and principal to make the necessary change, and it was taken care of.

It is not that easy to affect change at DODEA schools, and for this reason, Kimberly has dedicated herself to representing her community and raising issues to education leaders. She holds elected positions as the School Advisory Committee (SAC) Chairperson at Humphreys High School and Installation Advisory Committee (IAC) Chairperson. She has partnered and problem solved with leadership at the installation, district, regional and headquarters levels. Some of her achievements include working with DoDEA leadership to address the lack of equity with dual enrollment funding for high school students in DoDEA schools; creating pathways for our foreign military dependent members to have registration issues resolved; and working toward better advocacy routes for military families in DoDEA schools.

Kimberly is focused on building better education for our students and routes for parents to share the needs and drive education.

She said, "In the military, community means family

- especially overseas. So many of us in our overseas assignments are far away from our blood relatives, so our community becomes our military family. We learn to rely on those around us. We support one another and help carry one another's burdens, because we are each other's families."

Stronger Together

Jetta and Kimberly relentlessly pursue community outreach and advocacy because, as they both said, "we cannot make up these years for our kids." They are grateful for this nomination for giving them a platform to bring the issues at USFK installations to Congress and national organizations to assist in improving education, improve access to support resources, and advocate for parents of military kids to have a seat at the table at every level of government where decisions are made for our military children.

Their advice for other parents is:

- Get in the school
- Know your need
- Gather info
- Craft your ask
- Don't quit

United ON THE ROK

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Memorial Day *MURPH* Challenge

By Erin Henderson



Lieutenant Michael P. Murphy ("Murph") was a Navy Seal who was killed in action in Afghanistan in 2005. He heroically sacrificed his life to call for help in an

attempt to save his four-man team as they came under attack when a group of goat herders gave up their position to the Taliban. For his selfless heroism, he was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor in 2007 and was the first service member to ever receive this honor.

Every year on Memorial Day weekend, people all over the world gather to perform LT. Murphy's favorite workout—it was designated a Hero WOD (workout of the day) in late 2005 after his death. "Murph" if done as written:

With a weighted vest or body armor, complete in order:

- 1 Mile Run
- 100 Pull Ups
- 200 Push Ups
- 300 Air Squats
- 1 Mile Run

There are so many options and variations to complete Murph, the only thing that matters is that you show up and give it your all. Memorial Day is meant to be a day of reverence and reflection in honor of those who paid the



SFC Smith, Kyle
LTC Benson, Ian 5-17 AirCAV Squadron Commander
CSM Cobb, Robert 8Army Command Sergeant Major
SSG Leonhardt, Zahraa Katya 8Army - Operation NCO



Jinho Kyung Lt.Col completes his 300 air squats



Nathan Thibault TACP officer high fiving 1st LT Shannon Hauptage



Amanda King, Lt Becca McBride & Isiah Echevarria
SrA take off for their first mile of Murph



CrossFit Osan Members before Murph

ultimate sacrifice. Completing Murph, or any other Hero WOD is one way to do so. If you have never completed Murph, you can join with other community members across the RoK each year near Memorial Day weekend as they rally together and push each other to complete this grueling test of endurance. CrossFit Osan offers a few dates to complete the workout and Camp Humphreys & Camp Walker SFA has a large gathering for both individuals and families to perform the workout together. Check with your local entities for event dates and hope to see you in 2024!

THE STRENGTH OF OUR ARMY

By Michael E. Branch,
Master Sergeant, U.S. Army

I stepped off the bus in late fall. There was a chill in the air hinting of the South Korean winter to come. I was in Camp Mobile for in-processing before heading to my first unit. A short week later, I was headed across the street to 1-72 Armor Battalion in Camp Casey. The area we occupied was known as "Dragon Valley" and in the valley was 1st Tank. The Crusaders motto was "Everyone Fights, Nobody Quits!" I didn't know it then, but this would be two of my most memorable years in the United States Army. 1st Tank was truly a cohesive and mission-driven unit that had an immense amount of pride in who we were. It seemed as though we were constantly in the field, training hard and growing better with each mission.

It was our collective suffering and desire to win that brought us all together and helped inspire new team members to that same level of pride and devotion. This helped build a cohesive and talented team that was ready to "Fight Tonight!" After serving two years, I left having learned an immeasurable amount of knowledge and skills, and earned the rank of Sergeant. I knew I had made the right choice to join the US Army and I was excited to continue the adventure.

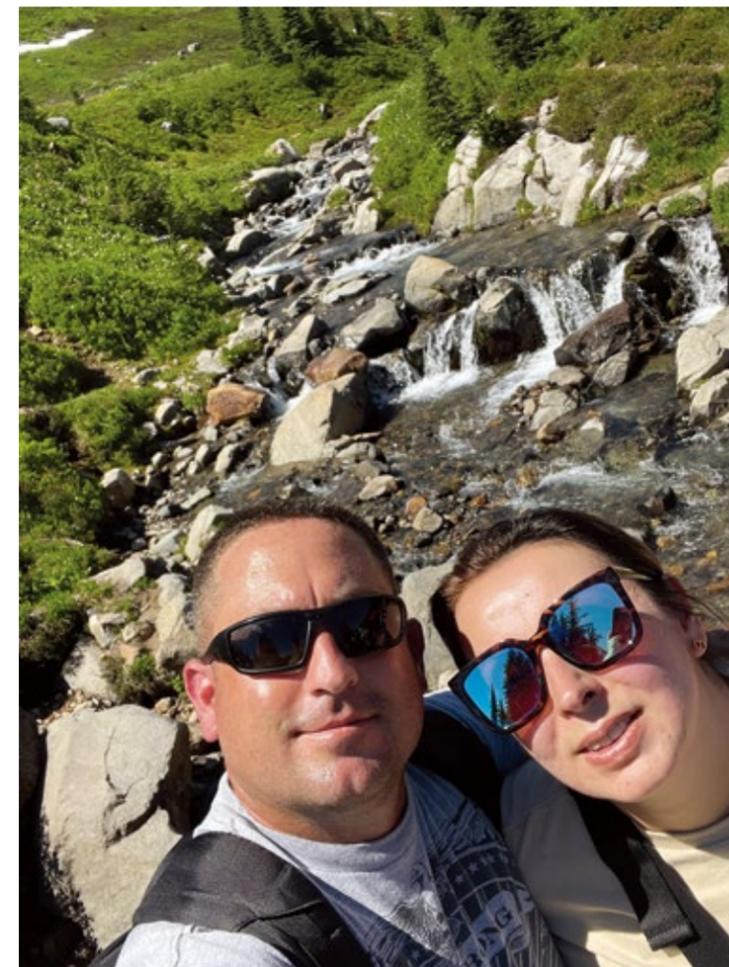
Twenty years later, I found myself in South Korea again. This time at Camp Humphreys as a First Sergeant. I felt extremely blessed that I could make it this far and return to the land of the morning



calm, where it all started. This time I was accompanied by my wife, a beautiful Bulgarian woman, Ivelina and our two sons. My wife and sons enjoyed Korea as much as I did. The people, culture, food, and sites were all an incredible experience. At this point, my wife and I had been married for ten years. She had carried me through so much of my struggles and continued to do so. She and my two sons had been my comfort and peace when things got difficult. So many times, my wife would be the words of encouragement or the quiet listener I needed. My sons were always a joyful distraction from work. I can honestly say that my family has been an overwhelming part of my success.

After all this time, I've known a very strong truth for a while. The strength of our Army is not in the sophisticated strategies, innovative technology, advanced equipment, or our awesome firepower. It's in our people, our families, fellow Soldiers, and civilian workforce. Starting in Dragon Valley and continuing throughout my career, there isn't one struggle or hardship I can recount that I didn't have a battle buddy by my side enduring it with me. Every personal pain I went through, I had family that loved and supported me. The respect and love that we have for each other is what helps us during the toughest times. It's what drives us to be better and go farther. It is hard to say just how grateful I am for my family and fellow Soldiers for always being there with me. Our collective strength will ultimately determine the outcome of our success. Our people are the strength of our nation. We are what truly matters.

Keep your head down and powder dry,
Michael E. Branch
MSG, USA



I Care Counseling Center

By Jenna Kim, Chief Operating Officer

I Care Counseling Center is a top tier mental health facility based in Pyeongtaek. They provide in-person counseling services to U.S. military personnel, their families, and other civilians/contractors stationed in the area, as well as virtual sessions for those who are not near Pyeongtaek. They accept many international insurance plans and have experience dealing with international insurance companies so you don't have to worry about checking for your eligibility and coverage!

Their therapists are U.S. licensed and trained professionals who use evidence-based therapy styles to help clients address a wide range of mental health concerns, including depression, anxiety, autism, ADHD, trauma, relationship issues, and more. Their sessions are aimed to help individuals effectively overcome life challenges with or without focusing on clinical diagnoses; they do not have a psychiatrist on-board and do not provide medications.

They have multilingual (English, Filipino – Tagalog and Cebuano, and Korean) staff members who are very friendly. Their center has the best and coziest rooms for therapy and counseling, as well as a play area for children to stay while waiting for their family!



- ▶ Location: 2nd Floor, 12, Anjeong-ro, Paengseong-eup, Pyeongtaek-si, Gyeonggi-do, South Korea 17984
- ▶ Service Fees:
 - TRICARE Prime – 100% covered
 - Others - varies with your insurance policy coverage.
- ▶ Services they offer (currently WITHOUT any waitlist):
 - Individual Therapy
 - Child (Play) Therapy
 - Family Therapy
 - Individual Counseling
 - Couples Counseling
 - Psychological Evaluation
 - Occupational Therapy
- ▶ Insurance they accept: TRICARE, FSBP, BUPA, Cigna, Blue Cross Blue Shield, and GeoBlue — If you use another insurance company, they can inquire on your behalf!
- ▶ Available Languages for Services: English, Korean, Japanese, Filipino
- ▶ Office hours: Mondays ~ Fridays: 10am to 7pm (subject to change for earlier and later openings)
- ▶ Website: <https://www.icarecounseling.co/>
- ▶ Email: info@icarecounseling.co
- ▶ Phone: 031-656-2273 (Fun fact! 2273 stands for CARE when you type it on the phone number keypad)



Meaningful Connections

By Yeonjoo McDonough

As an Army wife, establishing meaningful connections can be a daunting task due to the constant moves under military orders. However, I was fortunate enough to forge a wonderful friendship with Ms. Jihae Kim, the mother of my daughter's best friend. Her warm welcome and unwavering support made settling down in Camp Humphreys a seamless experience. I am incredibly grateful for the bond we have created and cannot express how much it means to me.

It is truly remarkable how a chance encounter can lead to such a beautiful friendship. Despite the challenges that come with being an Army wife, I am grateful for the opportunity to meet incredible individuals like Jihae. Her kindness and generosity have made a significant impact on my life, and I am honored to call her my friend.

Artillery Punch, from The Queen of Battle Cookbook

By Sarah Anne Hoyt

- 2 cups Catawba wine
- 2 cups strong tea
- 2/3 cups rum
- 1/3 cups gin
- 1/3 cups brandy
- 1/3 cups lemon juice
- 1/2 cups rye whiskey
- 1/2 cups orange juice
- 1/2 cups brown sugar
- 1 bottle champagne

Mix all ingredients except champagne in a large 1 gallon jar at least 1 week in advance of party. To serve, pour mix into a large punch bowl and add champagne. Have designated drivers on hand, or at least the number to the taxi service.

Royal Asiatic Society: A Century-Long Mission to Explore Korea's Culture and History

By Matt VanVolkenburg, Royal Asiatic Society Korea, Secretary
Photos courtesy of RAS Korea



RAS Korea members learn about the history of Gyeonghui Palace in Seoul.

Whether by leading excursions to far-flung temples or gentrifying neighborhoods in Seoul, holding lectures on Korean history and society, or hosting literature clubs and concerts, the Royal Asiatic Society's Korea Branch has a long history of exploring Korea – in fact, it's the oldest Korea Studies organization in the world. The ups and downs of its history have reflected that of the country it set out to study.

The Royal Asiatic Society was founded in London in 1823, but has its roots in India in the late 1700s. When the Royal Asiatic Society's Korea Branch was founded in June 1900 by Seoul-based missionaries and diplomats who wished to study and exchange ideas about Korea, Korea was then known as the Daehan Empire and was being squeezed between its much larger neighbors. RAS Korea was initially active for three years until the outbreak of the



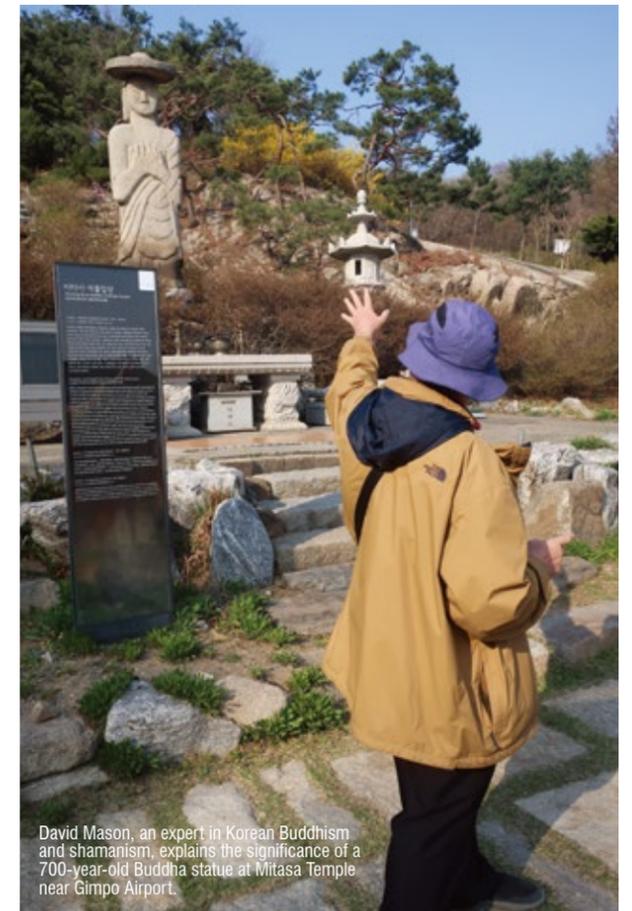
Andrew Salmon, RAS Korea council member and author of "To the Last Round: The Epic British Stand on the Imjin River, Korea 1951," leads an excursion to the battleground featured in his book.

Russo-Japanese War in 1904, a conflict which left Korea under Japanese control, though not without Korean righteous army guerrillas contesting this, which led to instability which continued until Japan's annexation of Korea in 1910.

The next year, RAS Korea reformed, and remained active for three decades, operating in the 1930s under ever-increasing suspicion and sanctions of Japanese authorities until the outbreak of the Pacific War. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, RAS Korea president Horace H. Underwood was among a number of American and British members who were arrested and suffered under Japanese internment before ultimately being repatriated to their home countries.

Reformed again after Japan's surrender, with southern Korea under American occupation, interest in the RAS Korea grew as never before, with a trip to the ancient capital of Gyeongju in April 1950 being the Society's first ever excursion. All of this came to a halt with the North Korean invasion two months later, during which several RAS Korea council members were arrested and, along with hundreds of American POWs, forced on the infamous winter "Tiger death march" in North Korea, which RAS Korea's president at the time, Charles Hunt, did not survive.

RAS Korea's activities resumed in 1956, three years after the end of the Korean War, and by the 1960s it had



David Mason, an expert in Korean Buddhism and shamanism, explains the significance of a 700-year-old Buddha statue at Mitasa Temple near Gimpo Airport.

expanded its lectures to twice a month and offered a variety of excursions to temples and historical sites throughout the country at a time when travel could be quite difficult. RAS Korea sponsored performances of traditional Korean music and screenings of Korean films, and in the 1960s expanded from publishing its annual journal, *Transactions*, to printing books on Korean history and society. All of these activities continue today.

Lectures are usually held on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month and focus on any number of topics related to Korea and are given by people ranging from professors to urban explorers to former generals or ambassadors. They can be seen in person at the venue, KOTE, in Insa-dong in downtown Seoul or online via Zoom. Recent lectures have examined food culture in North Korea, the past and present of the Korean military (given by Chun In-Bum, a retired Lieutenant General of the ROK Army), foreign perceptions of Korean popular culture, the story of two Korean Catholic priests' international travels and martyrdom in Korea in the mid-1800s, and a daughter's research into her father, a Korean mining engineer who was educated in the US, sent to the gulag in Stalin's USSR, and seized by North Koreans during the Korean War.

Those present at the lecture venue have the opportunity to socialize over food and drink afterward. (Former RAS Korea president James Wade's 1971 description of RAS Korea as "a lively and diversified social club that cuts across categories



RAS Korea members visit century-old building foundations which lay under Gwanghwamun Square in central Seoul.



RAS Korea members learn about the architectural features of hanok, or traditional Korean homes, from author and hanok preservationist Robert Fouser.

among both foreigners and Koreans in a way that no other organization comes even close to achieving" is as true today as it was then.)

RAS Korea also hosts a Korean literature club. Participants read Korean novels or short stories in translation and discuss them once a month either in person or via Zoom.

Early issues of *Transactions*, which began publication in 1900 and will see its ninety-seventh issue printed this year, featured some of the earliest ac-

ademic writing about Korea, authored by the pioneers of Korean studies. Today it includes articles on a variety of topics, from history and sociology to religion and popular music. These can be found in RAS Korea's physical library (a collection which suffered during World War II and was almost entirely lost during the Korean War) at its office or online at its website.

Excursions to cultural and historical sites continue today with more of a focus on the capital area. While

RAS Korea was once the "only game in town" for those wanting to gain a better understanding of Korea, today there are a variety of options available for those wanting to explore Korea. Despite this, RAS Korea offers excursions led by people who have a long acquaintance with the country and expertise in the topics they discuss, and who take part because of a passion for sharing their knowledge with others, which offers participants a chance to gain an understanding of Korea they would not find elsewhere. Recent excursions have included a visit to central Seoul's Jeong-dong neighborhood, which is full of century-old school, embassy, and church buildings, to learn about Korea's modern history as seen through the eyes of the foreign community; an exploration of Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910) history seen through museums, a Confucian shrine, and a former mountain fortress in western Seoul; and a visit to Mt. Ansan in Seoul, led by a guide who has spent 30 years exploring the mountain.

Among other traditions that continue into the present is the Founders' Day celebration, the first of which was hosted by Queen Yun, the widow of the last emperor of Korea, in 1959. Since the early 1960s this event has been held alternately in the gardens of the British and American Ambassadors' residences and provides an opportunity for members to mingle and enjoy cultural performances against a historic backdrop.

As former RAS Korea president (and former

South Korean Minister of Education) L. George Paik put it in 1972, "the membership of the Korea Branch was and is open to all who are interested in the program, regardless of their nationality, residence, religion or profession." Membership consists of foreign and Korean residents who in the past tended to come from academic, religious, Peace Corps or military backgrounds, and today include students, diplomats, and businesspeople, among others.

In the 1970s, chapters of the organization were established in Daegu, Daejeon, Gwangju, and Pusan, while today high school students at Dongducheon Foreign Language High School operate their own chapter. To help encourage this next generation of scholars and enthusiasts, the RAS holds an essay competition for students and publishes the winning essay in *Transactions*.

Just as the pandemic shut Korea down three years ago, RAS Korea had organized what was hoped to become a regular on-site, in-person lecture in Pyeongtaek, just outside

the Camp Humphrey's main gate on Rodeo Street. As life returns to normal, we plan to pursue this once again, giving those in the Humphreys community an opportunity to learn about RAS Korea firsthand and meet local and regional scholars and enthusiasts. Our hope is to offer other opportunities for engagement, as interest dictates.

RAS Korea is a membership organization, but for US military community members (active duty, dependent, contractor), who have an APO/FPO address, we offer a two-year "overseas" membership at a reduced rate. The RAS Korea website, raskb.com, has all the information (and more) that you need. Please join us, get onto our mailing list, or visit our Facebook page.

Matt VanVolkenburg is a writer and blogger who has lived in Korea for many years, first arriving in 2001. He is co-author of the book "Called by Another Name: A Memoir of the Gwangju Uprising" and is secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society Korea (raskb.com).



RAS Korea members finish off an excursion by socializing over dinner.

A Profile of Mixed Martial Arts Champion



Kevin Park

By Caitlin Ward

Kevin Park is a professional mixed martial artist and singer, born in a rough neighborhood of Seoul. He is based where his matches are taking place. He has lived in many countries in Europe and Asia, as well as in the U.S. Park will be based in Seoul, South Korea and in Osaka, Japan, June 2023 for his title match. Here Park opens up to United on the RoK about how he went from fighting for survival to fighting professionally, why he retired and then returned to the sport, his favorite people, and his alter ego.

Kevin grew up in a poor, urban area with what he referred to as the uncivilized culture of the old Korean era. His school was very strict and notorious for teachers using corporal punishment. His childhood was filled with violence; he experienced physical abuse from his teachers and other adults.

At age twelve for example, Park defended an autistic student who was being harassed by a bully. The brother of the bully was part of a mob and in retaliation, the gang kidnapped Park and held him for hours while he begged them not to kill him. Eventually, they let him go, but the experience taught him that he needed to develop self defense skills.

Park admired anime characters; he saw them as powerful, cool, hot, fast, unrealistic, and he wanted to be like them. He started to train himself to fight by studying fighting animes, comic books, and the game Tekken. He searched online and found some combat videos, mostly Muay Thai and Jiu Jitsu, which he studied to develop more practical skills. He studied various martial arts and began to combine the techniques.

He found some mixed martial arts fighting events and began

fighting in the amateur league when he was fifteen. He fell in love and picked up martial arts quickly. Seemingly overnight, he became a professional fighter and defending himself

"My parents were not supportive," said Park. "They were strict, Korean style, narrow minded people. They thought, being a fighter is for poor people and barbarians. My dad is an orthopedic surgeon and my mom is a pianist. They are both far from fighting. They were very upset when I took up mixed martial arts and we actually ignored each other for a long time. They finally respected me when I appeared on TV and became a headline in a newspaper.

"My friends were accepting; they knew I was going to be a pro fighter. They saw me doing all the training by myself and I was already teaching many of my friends how to fight."



"I've never thought of being a fighter as a job. It's my special hobby and identity."



“Mixed martial arts is the most powerful way to win a fight without a weapon.”



His closest friends are Yeni and Toku. Yeni and Park met through a mutual friend and the chemistry was immediate. A perfect match, it was not long before the new friends became a couple.

During a fight against World Champion Cleber Luciano, Park met Toku who was working as a corner man for a Japanese fighter. Toku was famous for his taping skills, which protected the fighter's body. Previously, Toku worked as a physical trainer for NFL players in the U.S.

“He’s like twenty years older than me but still a fighter who can beat up young fighters in a match. I can trust him as a brother,” said Park.

Beyond his friends, Park has many adoring fans who have sent emotional letters about how he has influenced their life.

Park’s fans have also impacted him. Park retired in 2020 because he had achieved his goals: to be respected as a champion, to fight like an anime character in a professional match, to fight a world champion, to build an adoring fan base, and to knock an opponent out in the first round—he accomplished the latter goal six times as

a professional. Nevertheless, Park came out of retirement in response to the outpouring of support from his fans.

“Many people moved my heart,” Park explained. “At first I tried to ignore all the people but I realized my fights make some of them genuinely grateful and happy. I’m very healthy with no pain, which is very rare for a pro fighter. After retiring, I was invited to join a pro boxing debut against the Eurasia/Pan Asia boxing Champion. The experience showed that my heart is still on fire.”

Despite his strong fan base, Park said mixed martial arts does not fit in Korean culture.

“Korea is the country of study. We do not have a samurai culture like Japan. Mixed martial arts could build a bridge between Korea and other countries, but it is not a sport Koreans are united over.”

For other people who have an interest in mixed martial arts, or another uncommon passion, Park encourages you to pursue your interests.

“Mixed martial arts is far from mainstream. Not only in Korea, but also in every country. I think every experience is valuable, so I want you

to try without hesitation. If you like it, you can keep doing it and you can always quit if you don’t like it.”

In addition to mixed martial arts, Park is a singer. He primarily performs hip hop, pop and R&B. Years ago he performed live, and at present, he releases his music online.

“I don’t know about my next retirement. Probably it will be the moment when people want my music more than my fight, I guess,” said Park. “Either way, I want to keep expressing my life as an artist.

“Fighting is a different world and different culture. I don’t think it’s an occupation in the current era. It’s a wonderful and special hobby though. I’ve never thought being a fighter is a job. It’s my special hobby and identity.”

Follow Kevin Park
YouTube: <https://m.youtube.com/@kevinparku>
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Korean Culture Dictionary

- A Book to Build Bridges

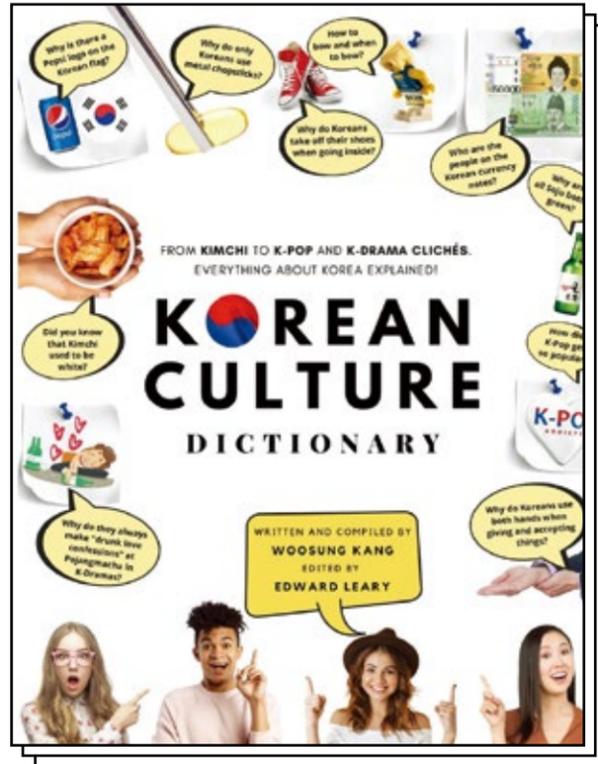


By Woosung Kang

Have you ever wondered why Korean people ask for your age at the first encounter? Why do Korean kids avoid eye contact when getting scolded? And why is there a Pepsi logo on the South Korean flag?

Getting lost in translation can be frustrating, but getting lost between cultures can be even more so. Lucky guesses or chalking it up to "cultural differences" may not always be accurate, and you could be missing out on the chance to gain a deeper understanding of the culture. As an immigrant to the U.S. myself, I understand how overwhelming it can be to navigate a new culture (I still wish I knew what I know now when I first came to the U.S.). Even today, many people who come to Korea leave with unanswered questions and a lot of unexplained surprises, missing out on the chance to get to know their new best friend. That's why I wrote this book – to serve as a guide for those embarking on a journey similar to yours, helping you avoid getting lost between cultures and fully appreciate each other.

And as a 1.5-generation Korean American, I also understand the importance of the rock-solid US-ROK alliance, especially in this time of uncertainty. As an author, my mission and mantra have been building a "cultural bridge" to help people from the US and Korea understand each other better. While I can't bear arms and fight on the frontline like everyone serving in Korea,



I believe I can contribute to the strengthening of the US-ROK alliance by helping US troops understand Korean culture better. This, in turn, can bring harmony and unity among the people, leading to a stronger emotional bond – one of the most important elements of an impregnable alliance. This is how my book came about.

One of the most important topics in the book is the Korean concept of jeong, which involves a direct display of affection that may surprise those unfamiliar with Korean culture. Since it is one of the most complex concepts that even the most experienced professionals have difficulty translating, I dedicated a significant portion of the book to deconstructing it in a more easily understandable manner. Understanding the concept of jeong is crucial to gaining a deeper understanding of Korean culture.

Another important aspect of Korean culture is drinking, which serves as a social lubricant and brings people together. I've always wanted to share the intricacies of

Korean drinking with my non-Korean friends, and I hope readers will find some fun facts to use the next time they treat their friends to the Korean way. At the end of the day, after a few rounds at a noraebang (karaoke room), readers will have learned that while the differences between American and Korean drinking styles may seem vast on the surface, the fundamental similarities bring us all together.

Finally, a big part of the inspiration behind my work is the Royal Asiatic Society Korea, which is one of Korea's best-kept secrets. During Emperor Gojong's reign in the early 1900s, on the brink of losing her sovereignty to Imperial Japan, many people overlooked Korea because they thought it was a feeble nation running out of luck that had nothing significant to offer to the world. However, there were people who begged to differ. The missionaries from the US and UK got together, stood up, and established the world's first Korean studies organization, the Royal Asiatic Society Korea, to introduce people to the beauty of Korea in all its many aspects. The founders, including James Scarth Gale, Homer B. Hulbert, George Heber Jones, and Horace

Grant Underwood, are some of the greatest benefactors who contributed to the modern history of Korea. Yonsei University and the Severance Hospital are some of the greatest legacies they left for us. During the Japanese Occupation, many of them fought together for Korean freedom and some even ended up getting kicked out.

I realized that our shared goal is to promote cross-cultural understanding and facilitate the exchange of ideas between Koreans and foreigners. I hope that my book can play a small role in achieving this objective and contribute to the development of a stronger and more harmonious relationship between the United States and South Korea (and so that you can have all the questions answered and have a suitcase-full of beautiful memories with you when the time comes and you have to bid farewell to Korea). This is partly my way of showing gratitude for what they have done for us in the past, and by working together, I believe we can create a positive impact for future generations, just as those who came before us did.

Katchi Kapshida!



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Download Grab, this app will allow you to request a taxi and order food throughout the island (it's also used in many Southeastern Asian countries including Vietnam) but make sure you have local currency on hand to pay the driver.

Consider hiring a driver for your time on the island. It's not super expensive and the driver will act as a guide and typically you have them for up to eight hours a day for roughly \$40 USD depending on car size. You can also hire one when you arrive, I just found it easier to pre-book one through Bali Hire Drivers online. They will only rent motorbikes or scooters if you have an international driver's license, but if you plan on venturing across the island, a car is your best



to see prior to going to Bali and divided it up by the area on the island where things were located, but was also open to suggestions from locals while I was there. When I hopped in my driver's car, he asked me what I wanted to see that day and I let him know. We had some time so he asked if I had ever seen Balinese dancers or if I would be interested in catching a show that morning on the way out of town—sure thing, let's do it. The show at Barong Tanah Kilap was so much fun, and I was mesmerized by the colorful costumes, movement and traditional Balinese music that was played by a live band sitting off to the side of the stage. After the show we stopped at a beautiful art gallery built into an

My Solo Trip to **BALI**

Written and Photographed by Erin Henderson

In the beginning of April, I embarked on my second international solo trip (my first was to Kyoto, Japan). This time it was to Bali, the beautiful tropical island located in Indonesia, with a population of just over four million people. After weeks of research and one reschedule of the trip due to my gallbladder betraying me, I set out on my solo tropical adventure.

Before You Go:

Apply for your evisa before you arrive to save time at the airport. Make sure you carefully fill out every detail accurately (including your middle name) or they can refuse it at immigration and send you back to the visa desk to have another one created (this happened to several people in front of me in line). Immigration lines there move very slowly so having your visa ahead of time and entertainment while you wait in line is recommended. You can apply for the visa here, and make sure you print it out for your trip: <https://molina.imigrasi.go.id>

option for the longer treks.

Being a devoted Sky team member whenever possible, I flew Korean Air on a direct flight from Incheon into Denpasar and arrived around 11:30 PM. I finally cleared immigration close to 2:00 AM and hopped into the car that had been sent by the hotel I had booked close to the airport, Amnaya Hotel. I immediately crashed into the plush king size bed after a quick shower. Originally, I had grandiose plans to start my first day in Bali at sunrise, but as I stood in line longer and longer at immigration and felt exhaustion overtaking over my body, I messaged my driver for the week and let him know that an 8:30 AM start was a little more realistic.

I had roughly sketched out what I wanted





old temple and I added a small canvas to my growing art collection from around the world.

For the remainder of my week in Bali, I chose to stay in Ubud, which is located centrally on the island and filled with amazing restaurants, art and endless energy. I found the best Air BnB called Wooden Ganeca Villas (honestly there are so many great options out there) on the Tegallalang Rice Fields. It came with an outdoor bathroom and shower, a pool overlooking the rice fields

and top-notch customer service. One of the options while staying there was to have a massage in your room or on your deck, so I happily opted to do so. To be honest, I didn't really look at the price, I just booked it the first day, but after doing the conversion and realizing my 90-minute massage cost \$16, I splurged and booked a second one for later in the week. When in Bali, right?

The week was filled with exploring temples, tasting Luwak coffee, hiking waterfalls and taking in a local



cooking class. I cannot recommend taking a cooking class highly enough, it is truly one of the best ways to immerse yourself in local culture and learn more about their history through cuisine. Because of just having surgery, major hikes were off the table and anything where I would be submerged in water for long periods of time, so I didn't really see any of the beach areas or hike mountains during the trip, but I plan to return next year with a friend.

By far my favorite temple that I visited during the trip was Besakih Temple because of its rich history and deep cultural ties to Bali. Besakih Temple is the largest and holiest temple in Bali: The complex has 23 temples within it and sits on an active volcano (Mount Agung) that last



three gods (Trimurti): Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Brahma, the Creator is represented in red, Shiva the Destroyer in white and Vishnu the Preserver in black.

I visited during the Ida Bhatara Turun Kabeh ritual ceremony, which occurs once a year in the tenth month of the Balinese calendar and lasts 21 days. People come from all over the island to place their offerings and pray during this time. Throughout my week, I saw hundreds of caravans and groups making their way to the temple for the ritual, and even drove past a truck filled with locals in the back casually sitting with a cow. Another day we drove by an older Balinese woman bathing nude in a temple

erupted in 1963. The majority of the lava flowed down the opposite side of the mountain sparing the temple, but they were inundated with intense smoke from the eruption. The sparing of the temple led the Balinese people to believe it was the gods way of demonstrating their power, but a miracle in the sparing of the temple. My guide mentioned that no one lives near the temple anymore due to the possibility of the volcano erupting again.

My guide then explained that within Besakih there are dedicated temples within the complex for people to pray at depending on their livelihood, such as temples for farmers, blacksmiths and of course royalty. There are three different sections of temples and colors representing the





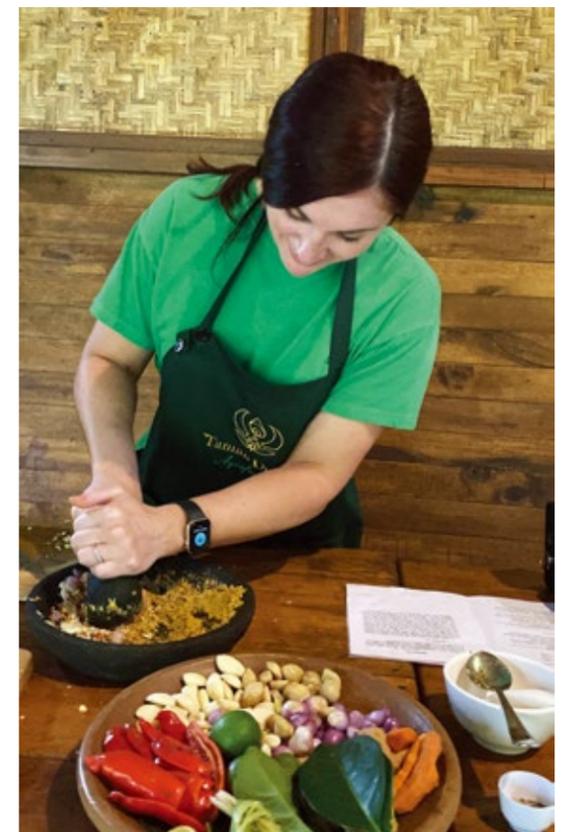
fountain on the side of a very public road. I did a double take while my driver remained completely unphased, so I told myself “Be cool Erin, be cool.”

For women reading this and wondering if it's safe to travel solo, yes, it very much is and if you can, I highly encourage it. Asia is a great place to start if you are interested in venturing out on your own because of how safe it is. I got into solo traveling when we moved here, honestly, because of my husband. We are both avid travelers, and he has lived in Asia before so he has already traveled to many of the nearby countries. I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge that I have an incredible partner who also takes on all the kid's care responsibilities when I go and fully supports me in every way.

Not sure where to start or if solo travel is for you? Start small. There are so many places in Korea you can venture to, even if it's just hopping the train to Seoul solo for a day, visiting a local temple or getting used to going to a restaurant or coffee shop alone. I have found it so empowering to venture out on my own and am growing in ways I couldn't have imagined. Growing up I was considered an extrovert, but as I get older, I am finding solace in the time I have alone to reflect, meditate and reset.

Bali Highlights and Sights to See:

- Barong Tanah Kilap for Balinese Dance (located in Denpasar) (150,00 RP/person)
- Explore the Tegallalang Rice Fields (they have the giant swings you can hop in that swing over the rice fields)
- Besakih Temple
- Tirta Ganga
- Ulun Danu Beratan Temple (75,000 RP per person)
- Leke Leke waterfall
- Nungnung Waterfall (500 steep steps down)
- Tegenungan Waterfall (20,000 RP to enter)
- Luwak coffee tasting (several places throughout the island)
- Pura Tirta Temple
- Monkey Forest (the one in Ubud is the largest and busiest, don't wear a dress unless you want tiny monkeys to scale it)
- Take a cooking class. This was one of my favorite things that I did while in Bali, I took mine from Bali Farm Cooking School. You take a shuttle out to their farm from Ubud, pick your ingredients and then make several Balinese dishes there on site then sit and enjoy your culinary work.
- Do a 30 minute or 1 hour photoshoot with a local photographer through Flytographer
- Explore Ubud on foot



Erin Henderson is the Media Manager, photographer and regular contributor to United on the RoK. You can reach her anytime by emailing media@unitedontherok.com or following her adventures on Instagram @erinhendrsn.

Tips for Solo Travel as a Female

By Erin Henderson



According to a statistic by Gutsy Traveler, women are generally more likely to travel solo than men, as 73% of travel agents have reported. In fact, 26% of millennial women have traveled alone. Thinking about venturing out on your own solo female adventure? Here are some tips to consider.

1. Share your travel itinerary with family, where you are staying and the sights you plan to see prior to traveling.
2. Do your research. What is the language, what is their currency, how do they dress? The more information you can find out about the country you plan to visit, the more comfortable you will be when you arrive. Learning basic greetings in their language is also recommended.
3. Whenever possible, have an international plan or way to use your cell phone during your trip.
4. Don't post stories/photos tagged to your location until you have left that location, or better yet wait until the end of the day. I'd also recommend not tagging the location of where you are staying until you are gone.
5. Don't tell strangers you are traveling alone. Whenever I am asked if I am traveling alone during my travels, I will typically respond with something like "Oh my husband is here for work I am exploring while he is busy". Obviously, this might not always work or be feasible depending on your trip, but the bottom line is not to broadcast that you are alone.
6. Have copies of your birth certificate and passport

7. Be aware of your surroundings. Though solo travel is intrinsically safe, petty crimes such as pickpocketing can occur in some of the more crowded and tourist-dense locations. Make sure your valuables can't be easily grabbed and keep them close to your body.
8. Don't overpack. When it's just yourself you will learn quickly you do not want to haul a heavy suitcase everywhere you go. Packing light will make getting around that much easier.
9. Keep a travel journal. Not sure where to start? There is a fantastic book by Lavinia Spalding titled *Writing Away: A Creative Guide to Awakening the Journal-Writing Traveler*. It's filled with countless ideas and prompts on how to get started in travel journaling, even if it's just jotting down random things from your day. For instance, one sentence in my travel journal from Bali is "naked grandma on the side of the road in a fountain." The travel journal is a fantastic way to document even the smallest details of your trip that you might not recall ten years from now.
10. Enjoy the journey. Solo travel gives you the opportunity to plan your own itinerary, eat wherever you want and explore on your own terms. Take a moment during your trip and really soak it in.

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Overseas Tax Benefits: *Something for Everyone*

By Parker M. Bush, Captain, U.S. Army



“I wish I would’ve known that!” is never a thought someone wants to cross their mind after paying their taxes. However, many Soldiers, Retirees, Dependents, and Contractors are not aware of the array of benefits tax filing services such as the DOD Funded MilTax e-filing program offers or often-missed tax breaks such as the Foreign Earned Income Exclusion found in Section 911 of the United States Tax Code.

First, this article will provide a brief overview of MilTax and its associated benefits. Second, this article will closely examine the often-overlooked Foreign Earned Income Exclusion that many overseas contractors qualify for. Between these two areas, this article aims to equip all taxpayers across United States Forces Korea (USFK) installations with worthwhile information to address their individual tax situation.

MilTax – Services and Benefits

MilTax is a free online tax prep and e-filing program that is specifically designed for unique situations inherent to life in the military. The following categories qualify for MilTax: military personnel from any component, retirees, and military dependents. To use MilTax, new users must create a Military OneSource Account and then tax filers will be able to create a MilTax account and file their taxes. Military OneSource provides step by step directions for creating an account. Additionally, MilTax uses premium tax filing software lauded for excellence across the online tax filing industry.

One of the most valuable services that MilTax provides for free is the use of personalized tax consultants. These tax consultants are certified public accountants or an enrolled IRS agent. Enrolled agent status is the highest credential the IRS awards. Tax filers can schedule an appointment with one of these professionals through MilTax via live chat or phone call.

Another reassuring feature of MilTax is that the calculations provided are guaranteed to be 100% accurate. If they are inaccurate, MilTax guarantees representation until the inaccuracy is fixed or will provide monetary compensation to remedy this inaccuracy.

Additionally, as discussed later in this article, taxpayers should note that the automatic overseas tax filing extension moves the tax filing deadline to June 15. If taxpayers need additional time to use services such as MilTax, then an additional extension can be granted that shifts the tax filing deadline to October 15.

How does the Foreign Earned Income Exclusion affect your taxes?

The Foreign Earned Income Exclusion allows you to exclude up to \$120,000 in foreign earned income for the 2023 tax filing year. The exclusion amount typically increases each tax filing year as adjusted by the Internal Revenue Service. However, if you qualify for the foreign earned income exclusion, you may still owe US taxes on the amount you earn above the foreign earned income exclusion threshold.¹

Taxpayer Qualification

If your income includes any amount paid by the United States or any of its agencies, then you do not qualify. Additionally, if you are a U.S. Government employee paid by a U.S. agency that assigned you to a foreign government to perform specific services for which the agency is reimbursed by the foreign government, your pay is from the U.S. Government and doesn’t qualify for exclusion or deduction.² Because of this, all Servicemembers and Government Service Employees assigned to South Korea do not qualify. Due to these qualification limitations, this primarily leaves overseas U.S. contractors as the taxpayers who may qualify for the exclusion.

Qualifying Income

Fully understanding what constitutes foreign earned income is integral to determining the amount that can be excluded. The term foreign earned income only applies to income earned while you are physically outside of the United States. If you were physically inside the United States while performing the services that earned you money, then that money is not considered foreign earned and will be taxed normally.³

The source of your earned income is the place where you perform the services for which you receive the income. Foreign earned income is income you receive for performing personal services in a foreign country. Where or how you are paid has no effect on the source of the income. For example, income you receive for work done in Korea is income from a foreign source even if the income is paid directly to your bank account in the United States and your employer is in New York City.⁴

Earned vs Unearned Income

The Foreign Earned Income Exclusion applies to wages and salary, bonuses, commissions, self-employment income, professional fees, and rental income (up to 30% of your net rental income can be considered earned income if you perform services in connection with the production of rent). However, this exclusion does not apply to unearned income such as dividends, interest, capital gains, pensions, social security payments, annuities, and rental income (if you use a property manager and do not perform personal services related to the production of rent then rental income is considered unearned).⁵

Legal Requirements

To be able to claim the Foreign Earned Income Exclusion, certain legal requirements must be met. The bona fide residence test or the physical presence test are the two legal routes that allow a taxpayer to claim this exclusion. Tax Courts view the bona fide residence test as a legal standard that has become increasingly difficult to satisfy in the past decade. Because of the uncertainty and complex legal factors courts evaluate under this test, the physical presence test is a more straightforward legal rule to satisfy. This is because this legal test is predicated entirely on time, source of income, and location of the taxpayer.

In order to meet the physical presence test, you must have been outside of the U.S. for at least 330 days in a consecutive 12-month period that begins or ends in the tax period. Due to this time constraint, you can’t spend more than 35 days in the U.S. during a 12-month period. The IRS has clarified that taxpayers don’t meet the physical presence test if illness, family problems, a vacation, or your employer’s orders cause you to be present for less than the required amount of time.⁶

In addition to the physical presence test, you must also maintain a tax home outside of the U.S. The IRS defines a tax home as the “general area of your main place of business, employment, or post of duty, regardless of where you maintain your family home.” This requirement is automatically satisfied if the time requirements of the physical presence test are met along with the source of income being foreign as described above.⁷

Tax Filing Extensions

Another factor to keep in mind that helps alleviate the time requirements under the physical presence test is the fact that all overseas taxpayers receive an automatic two-month extension. Specifically, this extension pushes the filing deadline from April 15 to June 15.⁸

Additionally, overseas taxpayers can then request an additional extension via the IRS Free File system by submitting a Form 4868, Application for Automatic Extension of Time to File a U.S. Individual Income Tax Return. This grants taxpayers an additional extension until October 15. These extension requests are virtually always granted and can help taxpayers who move overseas and need additional time to satisfy the physical presence test for a particular tax year.⁹

Camp Humphreys Client Legal Services

For more complex and substantive tax questions surrounding the Foreign Earned Income Exclusion, individuals who qualify for legal assistance in accordance with Army Regulation 27-3 can schedule an appointment with an attorney at the Camp Humphreys Client Legal Services Office. Additionally, if taxpayers have questions regarding whether they qualify for MilTax or general questions surrounding the benefits of MilTax, the Client Legal Services Office provides this information on a walk-in basis. This office is located at Building 6400, the Maude Hall one stop, on the third floor across from the Housing Office. Please contact Client Legal Services at 050-3357-2621 or usarmy.humphreys.8-army.mbx.osja-clc@army.mil.

Notes

1. Publication 54 (2022), Tax Guide for U.S. Citizens and Resident Aliens Abroad, at 11.
2. *Id.* at 17.
3. *Id.* at 15.
4. *Id.*
5. *Id.* at 3.
6. *Id.* at 15.
7. *Id.* at 12.
8. Publication 516 (2018), U.S. Government Civilian Employees Stationed Abroad, at 2.
9. *Id.*



Non Commissioned Officers Association Korea

By Bobby McKnight

The Non Commissioned Officers Association (NCOA®) is the premier Veteran Service Organization, established in 1960 to enhance and maintain the quality of life for non commissioned and petty officers in all branches of the Armed Forces, Active Duty, National Guard, Reserves, Veterans (separated and retired), widows, and their families. The NCOA® is a 501(c) nonprofit and offers its members a wide range of benefits and services.

The Executive Director of the NCOA® is Joseph Terry, SGM, US Army (Ret). Terry is a 30-Year Army Veteran. As the Executive Director of the NCOA®, he is responsible for overseeing its daily operations and leading a dedicated Headquarters staff that serves nearly 40,000 members worldwide.

Previously, Terry served as the Association Membership Director where he was responsible for membership development, communication and community relations. Prior to that served as the Chapter Chairman of the NCOA® Dragon Hill Chapter Korea and NCOA® International Board of Directors as the Executive Vice President.

NCOA® Korea Chapter #1507

In 1991, the formerly named NCOA® Dragon Hill Chapter #1507 was chartered at USAG Yongsan. The mission of the organization was to contribute awards, monetary donations, and/or promotional items to unit activities, charitable organizations, the Basic Leadership Course (NCO Academy) SAMC, FMWR and BOSS Programs, the NCOA® National and Local DODDs Scholarship Fund, Disaster Relief Fund, and other community programs. Additionally, the Chapter was a Sponsor of the USO Six Star Salute and Military Service Birthday Balls. The Chapter also offered volunteer opportunities in the local community off-base.

The NCOA® relocated to the Humphreys area in 2019. The Chapter President is Bobby McKnight. His focus is on suicide prevention and community improvement. The NCOA® currently oversees operations at Morning Calm Ministries and Grace Stables. Additionally, the NCOA®

has coordinated volunteer opportunities to support local orphanages, homeless citizens, and community outreach as well as feeding the hungry, collecting donations, and delivering clothing to those in need.

Why Should You Join the NCOA®?

There are many reasons to join the NCOA®. As a member of NCOA®, you are adding your voice to those of current, past, and future enlisted members of our Armed Forces and their families. NCOA® is a strong voice throughout the halls of Capitol Hill, inside the walls of the Pentagon, and highly respected throughout the Department of Veterans Affairs. The NCOA® works to ensure the rights and benefits you earned through your service to our Nation are there in the future for you and your family.

As a member, you will receive our Legislative Newsletter and information about advocacy campaigns that NCOA® initiates on Capitol Hill.

You will also have access to a variety of consumer discounts from our affinity partners including college tuition discounts, access to scholarships and grants for your dependents, and so much more. The entertainment discount program offered exclusively for NCOA® members and their families provides discounts, special offers and access to preferred seating and tickets to top attractions, theme parks, shows, sporting events, concerts, movies and much more.

There are many opportunities to volunteer with the NCOA® at events and as an outreach coordinator. Volunteer opportunities are great ways to support service members and the community at large. The volunteer opportunities are open to everyone.

I look forward to seeing you join our ranks!

Strength in Unity!

Mr. Bobby McKnight
CHAIRMAN, KOREA CHAPTER #1507
Email: pmcknight0176@gmail.com
Website: <http://www.ncoausa.org/>

Registering for a Registration Card

By Yeonjoo McDonough

The Residence Card in South Korea is a Korean national identification card for foreigners, equivalent to a social security and ID card all in one in Korea. With the Residence Card, you can sign up for essential services such as cell phone plans, health insurance, Internet, banking, and Korean internet shopping sites. Formerly referred to as the Alien Registration Card (ARC), the title was changed by the Ministry of Justice in response to the criticism over the negative connotation of the term “alien.”

The Residence Card is issued to foreigners who intend to stay in the Republic of Korea for more than 90 days from the date of entry and have completed the resident registration. There are so many benefits of having a Residence Card. The Residence Card could function as one’s official identification in Korea. Under A-3, Status of Forces (SOFA) visa status, you can apply for the Residence Card for free—the fee is waived with a military order. Having this card means you don’t need to fill out immigration paperwork when returning to Korea as all your information is already in the Korean system.

The Registration Card has a color photo size 26 x 33.5 mm on the right side of the card with a QR code, which contains the information displayed on the front of the card, including the foreigner registration number, name, sex, country/region, status, and issue date.

How to Obtain a Residence Card

All foreigners intending to stay for more than 90 days must register and apply for a Residence Card. Holders of A-1, A-2, and A-3 visas are exempt from this requirement.

► Make a reservation online to get the Registration Card via the HiKorea website (one of the parents and the students need to have the ARC): <https://www.hikorea.go.kr/mobile/mMain.pt?locale=en>

●— Required Documents for applying for the Registration Card— it’s your responsibility to make copies of the required documents before the appointment.

- Copy of your ID (back and front)
- Copy of Passport
- A 3.5mm x 4.5mm color passport photo with a white background of individual(s) (you can get a photo at the photo studio in PX)
- Proof of residence (i.e. copy of lease)
- Copy of orders and pinpoint orders
- 30,000 KRW (for Residence Card pick-up in person) or

33,000 KRW (if you want your Residence Card mailed to you) in the exact amount

●— Under A-3 status (SOFA stamp holders), the 30,000 won application fee is waived.

●— Visit the immigration office with your documents and reservation on the designated date and time. Pay the fee using the ATM and submit your paperwork and payment receipt at the designated desk. You will receive a document telling you the day your Residence Card will be ready for pick-up, it is typically about a month, however, it may vary depending on the immigration office and any delays in processing.

► Pick up your Residence Card at the immigration office. No reservation is necessary. Once your number is called, you will receive your Residence Card. The Registration Card must be returned to the Immigration Office before you PCS. Failure to return ARC will result in a fine.

●— If your Residence Card is lost or stolen, report the incident to the nearest police station and obtain a copy of the report. Then, make a reservation at the immigration office and apply for a replacement card—bring your passport, a passport photo, the police report, and a replacement fee of 30,000 KRW.

●— For parents: If you have children between 3-5 who were born between 2017 and 2020, having a Registration Card for them will provide educational benefits. Since March 2023, many provinces in Korea offer subsidized kindergarten tuition for 3-5-year-old students who have a Registration Card. For example, if a parent and a child in Pyeongtaek have a Registration Card, the Ministry of Education, Pyeongtaek & City Hall of Pyeongtaek subsidize off-post kindergarten tuition up to 350,000 won per month. Daycares in Pyeongtaek offer 100,000 won deduction for foreign nationals with the Registration Cards. Previously, non-Korean national students paid up to 545,000 won for monthly tuition. With this new subsidized program, monthly kindergarten tuition for ages 3-5 has dropped to 216,000 won.

For more information related to Registration Cards, contact the Immigration Call Center at 1345 (calling within Korea). They offer English service.

The Filter You Need in Your Shower

By Jsun McDowell

Relocating to Korea is exciting as it provides many opportunities such as exposure to new culture, food, friends, and language. However, adjusting to the Korean environment can be very challenging as we have to deal with bad air quality and hard water. You may have noticed the water in Korea is very harsh for your skin—in this case, the premium shower filter LACTO CLEAN is the solution for you.

I am a native Korean and married to a U.S. Service Member. I left Korea a decade ago and did not return until last summer. When I came back to my own country after being away for so long, I immediately noticed the water in Korea was very hard on my skin and hair. My skin broke out more frequently and my hair became rough and coarse. In search of a solution for myself, I began to use a shower filter called LACTO CLEAN that my sister had been using for over one year and recommended to me.

When I first started showering with the LACTO CLEAN shower filter, I was able to tell that my skin was more smooth, and I really enjoyed the scent. The smell is relaxing and neutral, it is not feminine nor masculine. After a month of use, I noticed a significant improvement in my skin and hair.

I used to suffer from skin irritation, especially increased itchiness every winter when the weather turned cold. It felt like the cold weather was sucking up my moisture. My skin was so dry, I had to apply lotion on top of layers of lotion. However, in the winter of 2022 my dry, itchy, and irritated skin cleared up. Consequently, I began to share the shower filter with my good friends and they experienced the similar results.

A short time later, I discovered that many American women and young children suffered from eczema, hair loss, frizzy hair, thinning hair, skin rashes, skin irritation, or



skin itchiness. Many have been looking for solutions, such as filters that might reduce the impacts of Korean hard water. Adjusting to harsh water can be pretty tough to solve and challenging to live with.

Many children in Korea suffer from eczema, so it is common for Korean households to use shower filters. However, for U.S. Service Members, families, and supporting personnel assigned to Korea, it is difficult to find a good shower filter due to language barriers or knowledge of local resources. For all the people who have difficulty adjusting to the hard water in Korea, I am excited to encourage you to get a LACTO CLEAN shower filter!

For more information, reach out to me by phone, email or through Facebook.

010-9229-9830

jsun@kidsspeakingenglish.com.

@latoclean(shower filter) Camp Humphreys

LACTO CLEAN



Standard filter	VS	LACTO CLEAN FILTER
2-layered filter	Filter Performance	4 layered filter + Antibacterial sphere
Alkaline	pH Balance	Weak acid
Vitamin C	Main Ingredients	Vitamin C, Lactobacillus
None or Low content	Skin Repair	High concentration of tea tree extract
None or Low content	Skin Care	Premium skin care : High concentration of 3 unique ingredients
3rd grade / 4th grade	Scent Additives	Premium 1st grade scent extracts

If you have noticed water in Korea is too harsh for you and you have been looking for a solution, this product is the answer for you.

The foundation of the filter is lactobacillus base. So, it protects your skin. You will experience smoother skin and hair, and it is good for skin irritation and xeroderma.

You will be able to feel a difference right away.

Simply put, just give it a try

To get your hands on this life-changing product, reach out to Jsun at 010-9229-9830.

EIGHTH ARMY WIGHTMAN NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER ACADEMY

*"The Gateway
for Professional
Development."*

By Command Sergeant Major Andrew N. Rehedul,
Commandant 8A NCO Academy, U.S. Army



8A Wightman NCO Academy Basic Leader Course



CSM Rehedul, the Commandant of the 8A NCO Academy with Staff and Faculty



Instructor at Katusa Training Academy Course

Basic Leader Course (BLC)

The Basic Leader Course (BLC) is the first step in the Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development System. BLC trains Soldiers in basic leadership skills, Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) duties, responsibilities, legal authority, and how to conduct performance-oriented training. BLC focuses on leadership training and produces battle-competent junior NCOs who are qualified team/section/squad leaders, train-

course designed for new faculty (e.g., instructors, trainers, facilitators). The learning objectives are based on internationally recognized instructor competencies, preparing instructors to teach, train, and facilitate learning in an adult learning environment. The course introduces new instructors to Army instructor roles and responsibilities, teaching and learning models, professional and ethical requirements, classroom management techniques, the process for building learning objectives and lesson plans, and effective communication

The Eighth Army Wightman Noncommissioned Officer Academy (NCO Academy) at USAG Humphreys delivers professional military education to develop fit, disciplined, and well-educated NCOs capable of leading tomorrow's Army. In addition to the Basic Leader Course and Instructor Course, the NCOA prepares Korean Augmentation for the United States Army (KATUSA) Soldiers to fully integrate into the Eighth Army mission and strengthen the ROK-US alliance in all operations. Additionally, the academy stands ready to conduct Reception, Staging, Onward Movement, and Integration (RSOI) operations in support of contingency operations on the peninsula.

The courses provide Soldiers an opportunity to increase their tactical leadership knowledge and practical skills to lead formations. Soldiers that meet

the course requirements and prerequisites are encouraged to get with their chains of command and seize this professional development opportunity. The NCO Academy at USAG Humphreys is the only location in Korea that offers these courses. It provides Soldiers an opportunity to optimize their time while serving abroad to advance their leadership skills and knowledge to serve in positions of greater responsibility, currently and upon the arrival to their next operational assignment. Soldiers interested in this phenomenal developmental and rewarding opportunity should be recommended by their first line supervisor. Graduates of these courses will gain valuable knowledge and skills that will open doors, develop you as a leader, increase your potential for promotion, and provide the opportunity to maximize your professional education while stationed in Korea.

ers of leader and warfighting skills, evaluators and counselors, conductors/participants in individual and collective training, and performers/teachers of leadership skills, knowledge, and attributes.

KATUSA Training Academy (KTA)

The purpose of the KATUSA program is to augment Eighth Army with ROKA Soldiers, to increase the ROK/U.S. combined defense capability on the Korean peninsula. In the 22-day course, KATUSAs are taught military, customs and courtesies, marksmanship, and much more.

"WE GO TOGETHER!" "같이 갑시다!"

The Common Faculty Development- Instructor Course (CFD-IC)

CFD-IC is a ten-day/80-hour competency-based

techniques. Throughout the course, new instructors will have an opportunity to practice teaching, working from short, simple practicum exercises to increasingly longer and more complex ones, culminating in an end-of-course lesson presentation.

Quality Assurance Office – Army Quality Assurance Program (AQAP)

AQAP is the Army's organization that assesses and enhances the quality of Army training, education, and development by fostering innovation and collaboration through the enforcement of the Army's Enterprise Accreditation Standards.

The NCOA executes the AQAP across the Active Army through accreditation and assessments to ensure Army Enterprise Accreditation Standards (AEAS)

We here at the 8A NCOA are always looking for relevant Small Group Leaders (SSG-SFC) who are passionate about teaching junior NCOs.

are achieved in the development, education, and training of Soldiers and DA Civilians while strengthening the Army's readiness and ensuring the Army's ability to learn, adapt, and innovate. AQAP provides oversight to objectively see ourselves – helps to answer the question, "How are we doing?"

What is the difference between the NCO Academy and NCO Association?

The NCO Academy is an institution of learning where we provide Professional Military Education to junior NCOs through a direct Program of Instruction.

The NCOA is a non-profit organization that supports military service members, organizations, and the broader community through Congressional advocacy and a variety of resources for Ex: military functions, ceremonies, events, and so forth.

NCO Academy directly collaborates with the NCOA regarding functions, and we support their initiatives whenever possible. For example, we supported the NCOA during the Special Olympics at USAG Humphreys in May 2023 through volunteering.

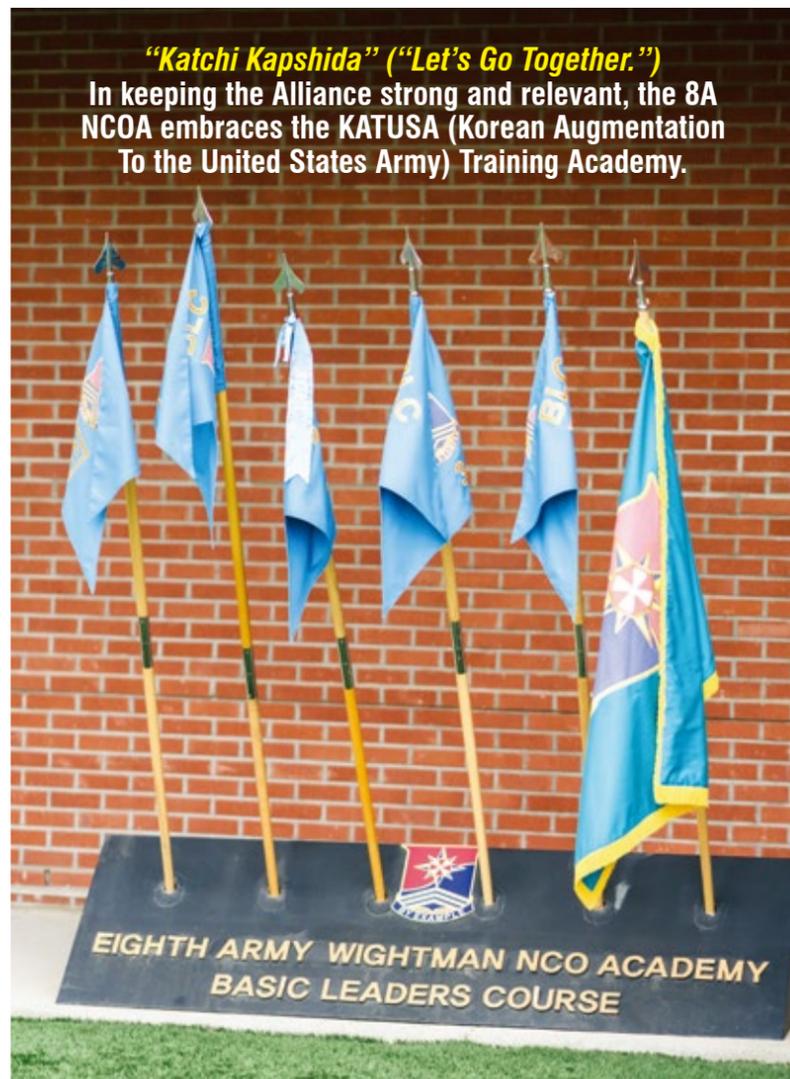
We promote volunteer opportunities and are always looking forward to giving back to the community and contributing to a healthy environment.

NCO Academy

All KATUSA Soldiers, U.S. Soldiers, and Korean employees are one Team through my lens. We are one cohesive team with a 'Fight Tonight' mentality. We are here to support your discipline and initiative and hope to see you soon.



KATUSAs at Katusa Training Academy Course



G.I. BILL PAY SERVICE

By Joseph Plott, CEO, G.I. Bill Pay Service

We serve those who serve us.

This is the mission statement of G.I. Bill Pay Service. This service was founded by a veteran who served our country for more than thirty years in the U.S. Air Force. He also had two brothers who served in the U.S. Army.

G.I. Bill Pay Service started paying the bills of our military personnel, DoD civilians, and contractors, overseas and living off base, in 1999. We are proud to say that, since that time, we have paid bills for more than 96,000 individuals. These bills include rent, water, electricity, gas, phone, cell phone, car payments, day care, private schools, mortgages, child support, alimony, traffic tickets/fines, and any other local bills, for a flat fee of \$7.50 per month.

G.I. Bill Pay Service has eight offices in three countries. And we have had people who have used our services at three different duty locations. Why? Because it makes their lives so much easier. They save time by not having to withdraw money from an ATM. If they are deployed, on leave, or during an exercise, their bills are taken care of. They don't have to worry about it.

The process is simple. G.I. Bill Pay Service withdraws dollars from the customers' U.S. bank account on military paydays (Stateside time). We want to make sure you have the money in your account before we try to take it out. We then convert those dollars to Won, Yen, or Euro (whichever is appropriate). We can then pay your local bills, which we have sent to our local office. If you have money

in your bank account on military paydays, the process is simple.

Once you sign up for our service, our bilingual staff will assist you in many ways. We provide translation services to minimize language problems with landlords, realtors, and local vendors. We guarantee on-time payments for all your bills. We keep your payment records in English and provide online statements so that you can go online and check all your payments for free at www.gibillpay.com.

The monthly statements alone are beneficial. When you PCS back to the States and set up utility payments back there, you would be required to provide one or two previous years of payment history in English or pay deposit fees. Even though you may have collected all the receipts, since they are written in foreign languages, it's hard to prove you made your payments while overseas. And for our DoD civilians (including NAF personnel) and contractors, the monthly statements make your year-end reconciliation so much easier. Our statements make it easy.

We hope you enjoy your time at your duty location and reduce your stress. And even if you don't spend more than thirty years in uniform, thank you for your service.

Benefits of G.I. Bill Pay Service

- You don't have to go to an ATM for three or four days straight just to withdraw money for your rent!
- You don't have to stand in line at the ATM every month to withdraw money for your utility bills!
- We will withdraw your money directly from your U.S. bank account.

- To help protect you, we pull the funds on military paydays, stateside time.
- You can track everything online by reviewing your monthly statements.
- We have over 20 years of experience and more than 95,000 G.I.s and DoD civilians have used our service.

Benefits of G.I. Bill Pay Service Monthly Statements

G.I. Bill Pay Service is great not only while you're using our service, but also when you go back to the States and apply for electric, water, and gas services there.

If you submit your G.I. Bill Pay Service Monthly Statements+

1. To your bank: You could possibly increase your credit scores with proof that you have paid your rent and utilities on time while stationed overseas.
2. To utility companies: Deposit fees could possibly be reduced or waived when you apply to the utility companies for service. Utility companies in the States frequently require you to submit proof of your payment history for the last one or two years' utility payments. Again, this might help reduce your deposit fees.
3. Easy Tax Report and Year-End Reconciliation! Visit our website, www.gibillpay.com, and just print out your monthly statements online for free and submit it. No need to translate it. It's all written in English!

We are conveniently located in the Capitulum Apartment Complex outside USAG Humphreys and Parking is Free!

Insook Kim:

A Living History of Women in Korea



Written by Caitlin Ward
Photographed by Erin Henderson

Insook Kim is a Seoul-based jewelry designer whose pieces have appeared in the pages of National newspapers and magazines, at art shows in Europe and the U.S., and on the wrists and necks of celebrities and foreign dignitaries. She has been collecting jade since the 1960s and is one of few jewelers who work with Oriental materials; she hopes the jewelry is a bridge between the East and West.

The first daughter of the founder of a prominent business group, Kim is from Korea's upper-class society. Her friend Agnes Ko, the owner of Kojeon Antique, describes Kim as a "living history of women in Korea." Following the Korean War, as the country's economy developed and living conditions improved, Korean women achieved higher levels of education. Kim's academic achievements, professional occupations and participation in welfare organizations were ahead of her time, before the Korean government passed the "Equal Employment Act" in 1987 to prevent discriminatory practices against women in the workplace.

Kim describes herself as a Buddhist who believes in sharing joy as well as sorrow with your community. She is very happy and proud of the fact that she has been an active "old lady" who has always supported less privileged people. Here, she talks with United on the RoK about her appreciation for the U.S.-ROK alliance, changing careers to pursue a lifelong passion, and why she makes jewelry for confident women.

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Kim was ten years old when the Korean War broke out on June 25, 1950.

"No one thought the war would be a deadly serious war or that it

would last long," she said. "My whole world changed through the eyes of a ten year old, first with the separation of our family. Our father had to hide from the Communists hunting men. My mother was a target of a Communist execution list so she also had to hide somewhere, with a 6-month-old baby girl. It was a constant fear, not knowing where our parents were.

"Our big house was taken over by a Communist military and they let us use only a small part of the house. At the time, we had a big dog who was a family member. When the Communists took over our house, the very first thing they

did was shoot our big dog. When evening came, one of the military soldiers gave us 'dog soup' to eat. I distinctly remember being so angry and disgusted that they killed our beloved dog and ate the dog soup for their special nourishment. I can never forget that."

After the war broke out, schools were closed. Many Koreans evacuated Seoul and relocated to the southern parts of Korea, such as Daegu and Busan, where the Communists had not taken over. When Kim's family was reunited, they evacuated Seoul and moved to Busan. Her parents, two sisters and brother were relieved to be



together again, under one roof. The children were enrolled in school in Busan and went together to a school building.

“‘School building’ was a temporary tent,” Kim explained. “My sister, brother and I all went to a tent school and there were sixty-one students in one class. Sixty-one is a small number compared to other schools where the classes were packed and had morning and afternoon shifts to accommodate all the students.

“One of the positive outcomes of the terrible war was the strong conviction that education and knowledge are the most important values. The war took our homes, property and whatever materials we valued. The only thing that they could not take away was what was in your brain. The common value across war torn Korean society was a zeal for higher learning. We studied so very hard in that tent school without proper textbooks, notebooks or all the materials that we usually need.”

Kim’s father had a background in business, first in the textile industry and later at a cement plant. His textile factory in AnYang was bombed during the Korean War so during the three years of the war, he did not have any role to play. However, like many Koreans, he and his wife were occupied with taking care of his immediate family and everyone in their clan who had lost their home or job.

“I remember our house in Busan was filled with people,” Kim said. “In Korea, we took care of family members.”

During the family’s stay in Busan, Kim’s father planned for his business after the war; a cement factory, which later became SSangyongs Cement.

He also acquired a press visa in Busan to visit Japan. He was impressed by the quick recovery of the Japanese economy following the terrible damage from World War II. Upon returning to Korea, he bought Korean news communication agency DongYang, which was

Briggs—wife of U.S. Ambassador Ellis O. Briggs—and her daughter Lucy Therina, along with some Korean friends. The group was established to help handicapped orphans after the Korean War, who were often out on the streets of Seoul. The committee is still active



associated with United Press (UP).

When the Korean government moved back to Seoul in 1953, citizens returned as well. Upon their return, Kim’s mother became very active in helping children and was one of the charter members of the Seoul Children’s Welfare Committee started by Lucy Bernard

to this day, supporting children welfare projects to aid children who are economically and physically disadvantaged.

In addition to supporting Korean youth, Kim’s mother was also very active in the first women’s rights movement.

After the Korean War, Kim’s

parents felt she could get a better education in Japan so they sent her there for school. Her parents insisted it was essential for Kim to learn English, Japanese and later French. In Spring of 1953, she began eighth grade at Seijo Gakuen Middle School in Tokyo and continued through Seijo Gakuen High School. At that time, Seijo Gakuen was a very liberal, international school with a diverse student body of youth from various backgrounds and parents with different heritages.

Life in Tokyo after the war was a tremendously eye-opening experience for the 13-year-old girl. She had experienced the terrible destruction of war in Korea, and recognized that the Korean conflict had bolstered the Japanese economy for industries and small businesses.

During her five years at Seijo Gakuen, Kim never experienced any racial antagonism from her classmates. The key to being popular at school was to be successful academically. Good students were not bullied. However, she also knew that being a Korean student, she should not attract attention to herself.

Her best friend in school was Isahi sans, whose father was a Japanese diplomat during World War II in Berlin, Germany.

“Stories I heard from Isahi san were so interesting,” Kim recalled. “After World War II ended, the whole family moved to Japan, including her German mother. I remember the wonderful smell of cookies baking whenever I went to her house.”

Kim received a scholarship in 1958 to study in the U.S. She majored in Journalism at University of Oklahoma in Norman, Oklahoma (OU).

“In the early 1950s,” Kim explained, “most of us knew very little

about the geography of the U.S., with the exception of New York, Washington DC or Chicago. I did not choose University of Oklahoma. A very good friend of my father, Mr. Earnest Hoberecht, the head of the Asia Pacific division of United Press, was a graduate of University of Oklahoma, Norman where he majored in Journalism. Mr. Hoberecht wrote letters and recommended me to his alma mater.

At OU, Kim majored in Journalism. “Journalism was a big, glamorous thing” at the time of the Korean War, she recalled.

“Mr. Hoberecht was one of the most famous graduates of the OU School of Journalism and it was almost natural that I wanted to major in Journalism. Also, I did not want to major in Education which seemed to be a common field for female students at that time. I wanted to major in an area that most female students were not interested in, something unique and different.”

Coming from cosmopolitan Tokyo, living and studying in Norman, Oklahoma was a cultural shock.

“Beside the cultural issue, another problem was not understanding American football. The Sooners and the coach of the football team, Bud Wilkinson, seemed to be more important than anyone else on campus. To me, football was a totally alien subject

“On Saturdays when there was a home game or away game, I found the university library was empty. It almost scared me to be the only girl in that huge library, but the benefit of the empty library was the ability to see all the books in the Reserve section. I found I studied best when the reserve books were all mine and started to look forward to football Saturdays.”

When Kim was a Junior at OU,

she was given an internship at the Oklahoma City branch of UP during summer vacation.

“One weekend, my boss told me that I should be in charge of the office on Sunday morning from six in the morning to noon,” Kim recounted. “Of course this terrified me and I told him that I could not even read the telex, which was how we got news from other places. However, my boss insisted that nothing happens on early Sunday morning so I should not worry about that. Sunday morning came and I was in that office full of fear and praying that nothing would happen.

“At about ten in the morning, all the office phones started to ring and the telex machine started to tick. When I picked up the phone, they told me that there was a huge train wreck between the Oklahoma and Kansas border and that the Oklahoma City bureau should provide news of the accident.

“I remember so clearly being in a state of panic and did not know who to call or what to do. Eventually, my boss and other staff at the office heard of the news through radio or TV so they rushed to the office. That Sunday morning train wreck finished my career in Journalism. I was not cut out for it.”

Kim also realized that she missed living in a metropolitan city so she applied for graduate school at New York University (NYU) where she studied for a Masters in Social Work. She was impressed with her classmates, who already had jobs in various areas of social work.

They were older, more knowledgeable and very sophisticated. Her peers talked about heavy social issues such as the passing of Eleanor Roosevelt, a champion of social justice and equality.

At NYU graduate school, students

were sent out to complete field work. Kim worked with girls living in a Lower East Side housing project.

“My role was helping mostly Black or Puerto Rican girls to build a positive self image and expose them to more cultural events. My group of girls had never met someone from Korea and having a Korean group leader was exciting to them. Once a year, I would take them to the Bronx Zoo. I am deadily scared of animals and could not stomach the smell of all these animals nor enjoy the animal tricks. I remember the girls became my guardians and asked me to sit on a bench while they went around the zoo. Even today, I think about the reversed roles the girls and I played. How kind they were to me in that hot July in the Bronx Zoo.”

Kim’s graduate school experience was also impacted by Dr. Martin Luther King and the civil rights movement.

“I count my blessings for being a graduate student in the early 1960s and witnessing many social changes during that time,” Kim explained.

“I admire Dr. King for stressing not just equality of black people but stressing the equality of all underprivileged people—which includes Black, Asian, women, children, the elderly, and other minorities.

“Other causes, such as the women’s movement, built on the force of the civil rights movement and closed doors started to crack. Universities started to accept more minorities. I firmly believe that Koreans were one of the greatest beneficiaries of Dr. King’s equal rights movement. Koreans are hard working and extremely bright but getting accepted in Ivy League universities was limited. As a result of Dr. King’s messages, I could see more Korean students accepted by the best schools. Companies

that had limited seats open only to White people, started to accept Koreans in important positions.”

Soon after Kim began her studies at NYU, Kim met her husband Hai Young Cho who was studying at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Kim and Cho were introduced by their families; his younger sister was in the same class as Kim’s younger sister.

“When I first met him, I was very impressed by his quiet manners and his academic achievements,” said Kim. “He left Korea during the Korean War. He took a long boat ride to San Francisco, and went to a junior college called Brevard in North Carolina on a scholarship. He finished Brevard Junior college as the most outstanding graduate and was awarded the State Governor’s prize. When his name was called, he was so nervous and hot that when he woke up, he was in bed at the school infirmary. The Brevard President recommended him to MIT where he finished his bachelor’s degree, then graduate school and PhD.”

Their dating was quiet and without drama. The couple married in Boston, August 1964. At that time, it seemed there was a Korean couple getting married almost every weekend so Kim and Cho attended many weddings together.

Following graduation, many MIT graduates were offered good jobs in the U.S. Cho was hired to work at Draper Institute, researching the Apollo Program that sent the first humans to the moon. They stayed in Boston for nine years and Kim gave birth to three children, two boys and one girl.

Kim and her husband returned to Seoul in 1973 to help out her father’s companies. The country was experiencing rapid industrial-

ization and economic growth and her father’s company was in need of U.S.-educated staff. Cho joined a trading company and Kim started teaching as a Professor of Criminology at Kookmin University, a private, co-ed university in Seoul that was founded in 1946; the first private university founded after World War II. Kim’s father inherited Kookmin University when the founder faced financial difficulties.

When she started teaching in the 1970s, only the university president and a few professors had their own cars. Two shuttle buses brought most professors to and from work. They never imagined everyone needing their own parking spot, especially students. Only thirty years later, huge parking lots had to be built to accommodate all the cars.

In the 1970s and 1980s, having a masters degree was sufficient to teach at a university, but Kim felt a need to get a PhD to compete with younger professors. She started her PhD in 1973 at Yonsei University. She studied Sociology with a focus on Female Criminology. As part of her PhD, Kim visited a female correctional facility a few times per year and became concerned about what happened to the women when they got out, how they readjusted and resumed their routines with work and family.

Kim also got involved with the Seoul International Women’s Association (SIWA), the largest and longest-running international women’s organization in Korea. Kim served as President of SIWA from 1973-1975 and subsequently as the Welfare Chair.

During her time with SIWA, Kim met a monk who was helping kids at a juvenile delinquent school in Seoul. The monk asked for her help sponsoring sports equipment for



an athletic activity. Kim agreed to sponsor, gathering money for the school, which was used to buy sports equipment.

The school was moved to Incheon in the 1980s as the capital industrialized. The school expanded its population and programs at the new location. The youth invited SIWA to a performance in Incheon to show their achievements. The members noticed that the instruments were damaged so SIWA raised funds

again to buy new instruments for the kids. SIWA was invited to the school again with some diplomats and they watched a stunning performance by a Boy Scout band, marching and playing trumpets.

When her brother Suk Won Kim was the head of the Korean Boy Scout Organization and the International Boy Scout Organization in 1991, Kim asked him to include the Boys Scout group in the World Boy Scout Jamboree he was planning for August 1991. It was a

risk to take the kids from the special school but she persuaded him, and the Boy Scouts had a marvelous time and they were selected as the model group.

“It showed that we need to show more concern for children in need and give them a chance to prove themselves,” said Kim. “With the right guide, kids can get back on track.”

In the 1980s, Kim volunteered with the USO at Yongsan. As a child during the Korean War, Kim



building in Samgakji.

"The USO Board had a male chairman and I was the vice president. However, the atmosphere of the meeting was very open and equal to both male and female board members, which was unusual in Korean society. The political atmosphere in the 1980s and 1990s between Korea and the U.S. was that of a close partnership, so the support from Korean society was natural and strong.

"USO staff member Lori Claus was a very bright director. She and Yvonne Park started the USO Bride School. Many Korean girls fell in love with G.I.s and went with them to the States where they knew nothing about U.S. culture, way of living, how to manage money, how to write checks, how to cook American meals, how to have a relationship with Korean in-laws, how to use public phones and how to make long distance calls. They had no support system in the U.S. Many of these girls would come back from the U.S. divorced and abused. Some committed suicide. The USO Bride School educated the girls so they were better prepared for life in the States."

One of Kim's favorite memories was when she had the honor of hosting the annual USO Six Star Service Salute, which brings together high-ranking diplomatic, military, and business leaders to honor junior enlisted service members from the US, the ROK, and the United Nations Command.

Another organization Kim joined was the Korea Buddhist Women's Development Institute.

The Institute was one of a number of organizations that provided support to a child from Iraq who was being treated at Seoul National Children's Hospital after suffering burns during a severe fire attack by

the Bagdad Bombshell Terrorists' invasion in 2006.

The Korea Buddhist Women's Development Institute showed their support for Ukraine by supporting Ukrainian students in Korea in July 2022.

"We raised money and checked which Korean universities have students from Ukraine who are studying in Korea," she said. "Since our fund was limited, we selected twenty-six female students and one male student, and provided them with monetary support. The wife of the Ukrainian Ambassador in Seoul came to our Institute and shared the impact of giving scholarships to the students from her country. It was a very moving experience."

While she participated in all of these organizations, Kim continued teaching at Kookmin University. After thirty years of teaching, Kim hung up her hat in 2004 to launch a career in jewelry design.

At first, Kim made necklaces for herself since she could not find her style in markets—bold, unique and big. People started to ask her where she found her pieces so she started to make pieces for her friends and her business developed from there.

"The name of my shop is Beads Garden. I have been collecting beads all my life from literally all over the world. One of the pleasures of my job is to be able to travel and go to antique markets to find old materials, especially beads. There is a Korean proverb that says 'thousands of beads do not make precious jewelry unless they are beaded.' I have thousands of beads from all over the world, and I bead them to make precious jewelry."

Kim makes purposeful accessories for women who have courage and will wear big and colorful jewelry with confidence. Her style is ab-

solutely atypical in Korea. Korean culture, society and business are deeply influenced by Confucianism, which promotes group harmony, respect for elders and authority, tradition, and the importance of familial relations and friendships.

"I want my jewelry to stand out and be showy," she explained, "not demure, tiny pieces. I don't want to make typical pieces that one can find everywhere."

Kim makes jewelry for confident women because it is important to her.

"A woman's choice and confidence is a basic human right. However, for a long time it was denied for women and even today there are many countries where women's rights are oppressed.

"Most of my customers are foreign ladies and my biggest compliments come from people from abroad. I had the pleasure of seeing my necklaces worn by three ex-US diplomats' wives at a reception honoring a Korean President in Wash-

ington D.C on the news. I also had the honor of selling my jewelry to wives of overseas delegates during the PyeongChang Olympic Winter Games in 2018. I see my customers wearing my jewelry everywhere, on the street and on TV by actresses. Hopefully, they feel the uniqueness of my jewelry and wear my pieces with pride."

Kim plans to reopen her store this year, and close her doors in five years.

"Collecting old beads and antique jewelry has been my passion all my life," she said. "I was anxious to start my second stage of life, making jewelry that I love. It worked out so very well. I will be closing up my business in five years. I am 84 years old this year so I will be close to 90 by then. I plan to sell or give away all my creations. I always gave my profit to good causes or foundations when my shows were over. It would be lovely to help out less privileged people through my jewelry."

recalled the aid packages students received in school. Sometimes gifts spread across a stage and one at a time, students were called to the stage, and with their eyes closed, picked one gift from the stage, such as a packet of Rolos or a doll.

The experience of receiving aid packages and scholarships to study in the U.S. is why, Kim explained, her generation has a deep gratitude for the role of the U.S. in Korea's recovery and development.

"Volunteering at the USO was a very moving experience for me

since both my husband and I went to school in the U.S.," she said. "We were grateful for the scholarships and the help we received during our studies in the U.S. We wanted to help the USO.

"At that time, the board members of the USO Korea were some of the most distinguished members of the Korean community, including economic, cultural and other industrial leaders. Most were willing to give economic donations to the USO. For example, our family company donated a wing to the existing



# Basic Information About the SOFA Stamp - *Did you know?*

By Erin Henderson and Caitlin Ward



**We** both had babies in 2022 and had lots of questions about the SOFA stamp, tourist passport, and K-ETA so here we are giving you the basics. You can find this and more information on the Eighth Army and USFK websites. Here we go!

## Basic Points:

- All non-Korean family members, civilians, and even newborns must obtain an A-3 visa, which allows for multiple entries into Korea, and a Standard of Forces Agreement (SOFA) stamp within 30 days upon arrival, unless you are applying for

a different work visa.

- Tourist Passports are required for leisure travel outside of South Korea.
- All tourist passports are processed, in person, through the US Embassy in Seoul; it can take up to 8+ weeks to process a tourist passport.

## SOFA Stamp

All family members, civilians, and even newborns must obtain an A-3 visa, which allows for multiple entries into Korea, and a Standard of Forces Agreement (SOFA) stamp within 30 days upon arrival. The SOFA stamp registers the person, defines the legal

rights and obligations of SOFA-status personnel, and identifies them as having protections and rights under the SOFA agreement. Having a SOFA stamp exempts personnel from the Korean Immigration laws relating to alien registration but does not exempt any person from abiding by the host nation's laws.

Not all U.S. family members in Korea will have an A3 Visa and SOFA stamp. Family members who are Korean citizens do not require a Visa or stamp. Family members who work outside the garrison gates are required to have a work Visa—find out which work visa by reaching out to the Korean Immigration Office. If a service member's spouse plans to work off-post, contact your installation Client Legal Services before employment to ensure compliance with immigration laws.

## Documents Required for SOFA Verification Stamp for EACH Passport to be Processed

1. ROK Ministry of Justice Form 34 (available at A-3 Visa Office, client legal services or USFK Regulation)
2. Valid passport(s) for anyone requiring the stamp (not the active-duty member) and photocopies of the passport(s) that includes the signature and date pages.
3. Photocopy of passport
4. Photocopy of sponsor's identification card (front and back on the same page)
5. Photocopy of dependent's identification card (front and back on the same page). Only applies to dependents 10 years and older.
6. One of the following:
  - a. Original Military Assignment Certification memorandum (for military dependents)
  - b. Original Civilian Employment Certification memorandum (DoD civilian employees and dependents)
  - c. Copy of UFSK Form 700-19-E (invited Contractors and dependents)
7. For newborns: photocopy of Consular Report of Birth Abroad.

## Where to Go

1. USAG Humphreys: Maude Hall (One Stop)-Room 1-201, [usarmy.Humphreys.403-afsb-lrc.mbx.passport@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.Humphreys.403-afsb-lrc.mbx.passport@mail.mil)
2. Osan Air Base AMC Passenger Terminal: MWF 9-13:00, TR 11-13:00.

3. Area IV Legal Offices: Phone: DSN: (315) 763-4423. Location: Camp Henry, Bldg. 1805.

**Note:** A-3 Visa and SOFA Stamp only applies to those working for the US Government. It does not apply to non-working military retirees or U.S. Citizens visiting as a tourist.

## Tourist Passport

Tourist Passports are required for leisure travel outside of your host nation, the Republic of Korea. All tourist passports are processed, in person, through the US Embassy in Seoul; it can take up to 8+ weeks to process a tourist passport.

For more information about passports, reach out to the nearest Passport Office. The USAG Humphreys Passport Office website is <https://home.army.mil/humphreys/index.php/about/Garrison/logistics-readiness-center/passportvisa>

## K-ETA

All travelers coming to Korea from countries/regions eligible for visa-free entry were required to get Korea Electronic Travel Authorization (K-ETA) approval to board incoming flights or ships. This requirement has been temporarily suspended for 22 countries.

Since April 1, 2021 the K-ETA is temporarily exempted for 22 countries, including the United States, until December 31, 2024. Travelers can still apply for a K-ETA and pay the 10,000 Korean Won fee per person if they wish; those with a K-ETA will not have to submit an arrival card at the port of entry. Note: if you choose to apply for a K-ETA and the fee is more than 10,000 Korean Won, you are on the wrong website.

## K-ETA Website:

<https://www.k-eta.go.kr/portal/apply/index.do>

## Country Exemption Notice:

<https://www.k-eta.go.kr/portal/board/viewboard-detail.do?bbsSn=149899&mibextid=Zxz2cZ>

If you already have K-ETA approval, you can use it until it expires. There are no refunds being issued for people who have already submitted a K-ETA application.

## Eighth Army Passports and Visas page:

<https://8tharmy.korea.army.mil/site/newcomers/passports-visa.asp>

# Keeping Current with Currency: A Primer on the Won

By Brandon Bledsoe

**In** 2004, I found myself on an exchange trip to Europe. My school, Chattanooga High School for the Creative Arts in Tennessee, was partnered with a school in Hamm, Germany; Hamm and Chattanooga had become sister cities, and students like myself benefitted. The facilitator of this trip was Karen Claypool — Frau Claypool to us. Frau Claypool was something of a real life Miss Frizzel, and one of the great humanitarians I have had the pleasure to learn from. My first day in her class I called her eccentric. She heard me and leaned down and said, “I think you and I are going to get along famously.”

Frau Claypool made sure that we saw much more than one German town. We went to London and Amsterdam as well! It was in London that I bought a t-shirt featuring one of my favorite bands at the time, the name of which I will be keeping private, for the sake of my dignity. I paid twenty Great British Pounds for that shirt and was very happy with my purchase until I checked my account at the ATM. The shirt had cost me forty American dollars!

This was my first encounter with the exchange rate. I had ignored this detail in life up till then because I had not been to that many places, and the places I had been to, used the Euro, which was comparable to the dollar at that time. The pound on the other hand, was twice the value of the dollar. I have never forgotten to consider the exchange rate since this fiscal lesson.

A few definitions before we proceed. Money is the sum of your resources. To say Korean money or American money is improper. If money is the sum of your assets and resources, currency is usually the medium with which you exchange your resources and assets. Currency is the coins and paper notes that we exchange for goods and services. Some clever souls like to say something along the lines of “money has value because we all agree that it does!” However, the truth is that currency has value because the government, which

regulates the exchange of goods and services within its borders, has agreed that the currency is legal tender, and is backed up by some kind of hard asset and faith in the continued existence of that government.

The idea that currency is backed up by hard currency like gold or silver is outdated and untrue. Our currency is backed up by faith in our economy and markets. It is a system that can crash, but it is real and it works. People invest in foreign currency everyday. People can literally buy United States Dollars because they know they are stable and they have faith that their value will hold. Money is not a one for one with gold, it is a representation in our faith, and the world’s faith in an economy.

All that said, the purpose of this article is to help you understand the mechanics behind exchanging currency in South Korea. So let’s get down to the dollars and cents (or won in this case).

Firstly, you will have to think like Koreans when it comes to numbers. It sounds like a lot at first, but I have found that a little frame of reference simplifies it. Whereas Westerners think in place value with a decimal point to represent fractions (one dollar and twenty-five cents being \$1.25), Koreans think in a form more like numbers on an abacus. They deal mostly in whole numbers in day to day life, and they say the entire place value of a number in their language. Those are minor cultural details I find fascinating and will come in handy when wrapping your mind around the vast numbers that some of their money represents, and then turning it into the much smaller reality of the actual price when you convert won to a stronger currency.

South Korean Currency is in the form of the won. The South Korean won comes in plenty of denominations but the most common I see are the 100 and 500 won coins, and the 1000, 10000, and 50000 won notes. The 1000 won note is somewhere in the neighborhood of a one dollar bill.

The exchange rate is where things get a little tricky. The 1000 won note is not exactly one dollar; at the time



of writing, it is 1384.54 SKW to the USD. I know you see a fraction there, that fraction is a smaller unit, the jeon, of which there are 100 in a won. It rarely occurs in daily life; the jeon is used for currency markets and governments. Generally, the number will be rounded, for example, to 1384, which means the rate is favorable to the USD. Today 1000 won is valued at \$0.72.

The exchange rate changes everyday. The easiest way to keep track of it is to check on your phone, google “won to dollar.” The fields are fillable and it will have up to date currency valuations.

The PX and other facilities on base will post a current exchange, but it is severely ballparked, I believe the PX today posted it as 1300. You can go to the ATM on post and pull out USD or SKW. However, you will not find the ATM to have the most favorable exchange rate when getting won. It is very convenient, and often not too steep of a price, but the currency exchange shops are better.

Why is the exchange not one for one for you? Because currency costs money. Currency is heavy, it takes gas to drive it, and the driver needs currency at the end of the week in their paycheck. Currency has to be protected, counted, and insured. All of that costs you a little money.

Near the bases are various currency exchange shops offering varying rates. The amount they keep is their fee for their service. The way you find the best one is

to ask around, and to go in and ask them what the rate is. I was told that near Camp Walker, the best one is A1 currency exchange, and I have found that to be true. I will not get into the math of how little money they take, but if 1384 SKW makes a dollar for the government, A1 will probably give me 1375 for my dollar. That is not a bad price at all. As an aside, do not take American coins to the currency shops. Due to the weight and such, their price is usually at least fifty percent of the value of those coins.

Most Korean shops have taken my card, but many of the markets and street vendors will prefer won. It never hurts to have 100,000 or so on you in case you like the look of something in the markets. Do not worry about knowing the numbers either, they are written in the same characters as ours — 7000 looks like 7000. If you want to know how much something is, most of the vendors will either type the price on a calculator or hold up their fingers to communicate the costs. I have not had an issue figuring out that a boiled egg with one finger is 1000, and a bag of apples with five fingers is 5000.

I hope this primer on dealing with money while you are in South Korea has been helpful. If you skipped right to the bottom, I will list the top three tips:

1. Keep track of the exchange rate online.
2. Use the currency exchanges.
3. Have at least 50,000 won on hand if you go off post to the markets.

# An Intro to Korean Film

By Urim Liber

Understanding the history and culture of the country you reside in truly enhances your experience living there. If books and museums are not exactly your cup of tea, a little weekend movie night can be an effortless and entertaining way to dive into Korean culture and history.

Living in South Korea, you may have noticed that some of their ways seem so backwards compared to the technological and financial advancements the country has made. Why do we see this contrast? Let's take a step back into history.

Only one hundred years ago, Korea was under brutal Japanese occupation. Over the 35 years of colonization, Korean men and women were slaughtered and thousands-of-years-old artifacts, monuments, and palaces were burned to the ground. Korea was liberated from Japanese occupation in 1945 and soon after, in 1950, war was brought upon Korean soil. What little was left of the country was torn in half during the Korean War and turned into ruins. To put this into perspective, at this same time in history, Americans were jamming to rock and roll, and colored television was introduced.

Koreans made a quick comeback, however, with South Korea becoming the 29th member country of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1996, the second Asian country after Japan. Now in 2022, people all around the globe listen to BTS and watch the Squid Games. Samsung ranks 4th in Forbes' list of world's largest tech companies.

How did Korea do it? What happened in those short 70 years? The post-war generation was desperate for survival, and they were very eager to make up for the time that was lost. Perhaps such fast economic growth resulted in the neglect of certain values. Perhaps those some of those values still remain a luxury to some.

The movie Assassination (2015) and the drama series Mr. Sunshine (2018) are great films to understand what happened during the time of Japanese colonization. These films focus on portraying how the Korean



people fought vehemently against what seemed to be a hopeless and pointless cause. Both films beautifully portray how strongly and bravely the Korean people fought for their country.

The movie Ode to My Father (2014) tries hard to depict the struggles of the Korean post war generation—how that generation built this country back up from the ground. This movie introduced a different perspective to modern day Koreans, helping them understand how this old generation of men and women became so headstrong and noncompliant—and how grateful they should be for that “stubborn old” generation.

No matter what stage of Korean living you may be in—whether you're just beginning to settle or just about ready to move out of the country—there is much to benefit from understanding her history and culture. As any relationships go, living in South Korea and “being in a relationship” with the country takes effort. Put in the effort to be in a good relationship with her; it will be so worth it!

## 환영합니다! Welcome to Korea! A Snapshot of Korean History and Culture for Newcomers

By Kristine Provins

*“In order to know where you're going, you must first know where you've come from.” — Moana*

### A Look Back

This year is the 70th anniversary of the U.S.-Republic of Korea (ROK) bilateral alliance.

On May 22, 1882, representatives from the U.S. and the ROK (at that time referred to as the Kingdom of Choson), signed the Joseon-United States Treaty of 1882 (also called the Shufeldt Treaty). This was Korea's first treaty with a Western nation and set an understanding of mutual friendship and mutual assistance between the two nations in case of attack. The treaty remained in effect until the Japanese annexation of Korea in 1910.

On August 15, 1945, at the end of WWII, Korea was freed from Japanese colonial rule, ending the 35-year occupation. The Soviet Union took the lead on administering control over the portion of Korea north of the 38th parallel and the U.S. in turn did the same for everything south of the 38th parallel. This is similar to arrangements in Germany with different Ally partners taking the lead for administering the pacification of former combatants and assisting in rebuilding.

The Korean War erupted on June 25, 1950, when North Korean troops crossed the 38th parallel, invading the ROK. The Korean War lasted from June 25, 1950 to July 27, 1953 and resulted in the loss of approximately 37,000 UN forces and around 113,000 missing-in-action or injured.

On July 27, 1953, an armistice agreement was reached. Officially, the Korean War has not ended, and currently, the Korean Peninsula remains at war.

### Korean Culture

Korea is one of the oldest cultures in the world. Koreans have passed down their traditions and stories for centuries. Since the split between North and the ROK in 1945, the cultural differences between the two Koreas have increased. The ROK's unique culture is influenced by China, Japan and the West.

The distinctive ROK culture traces back several thousand years. You can see this culture today through traditional garb (like Hanbok), unique language (Hangeul), building styles, ceramics, and social practices (linked to

Confucian principles). While staying true to this culture, ROK has aimed at establishing itself in the modern world and integrated Western culture, to some extent, into its existing culture.

Since the 1950s, the ROK has been on a path towards modernization. In the past few decades, this growth has accelerated. Along with its flourishing economy, the ROK is continuing to establish itself as a cultural powerhouse with trends gaining followers around the world. Koreans are influenced personally and professionally by Confucian principles. Confucianism supports group harmony, respect for elders and authority, the importance of family, friendship and ancestors, and tradition.

Knowing all that, I hope you continue to keep an open mind as you make your way around Korea. The ROK (South Korea) has a lot to offer; no matter your schedule, there's always something to do, day or night.

South Korea is abundant with beautiful Buddhist temples, amazing sites, and a countless array of cuisines. A great way to enjoy Korea is to try understanding its unique culture and use some of its customs and language.

### Korean Holidays

Koreans follow the Gregorian calendar (same as most of the western world), though many Korean holidays are based on the lunar calendar. Korea recognizes eleven fixed public National holidays. While the typical government services, banking, and office jobs operate similar to the Western workweek of working Monday - Friday, most service industries like restaurants and shops operate Tuesday through Sunday (Monday as a day off).

Although the ROK shares many holidays with the rest of the world, a few holidays are unique to its culture. The most popular and widely celebrated are Chuseok (Korean Thanksgiving) and Seollal (Korean Lunar New Year).

During Chuseok and Seollal, many Koreans return to their hometown and, or visit families. Many businesses, offices and government buildings are closed on these holidays. There are also some Korean holidays which are celebrated but not considered public holidays such as Pepero Day, Valentine's Day, White Day and Black Day.

# Seaweed Health Benefits & Recipe for Seaweed Soup

By Kim Jung-kook

Seaweeds are largely classified into three types: kelp, wakame, brown algae, red algae such as seaweed and agar-agar, and green algae such as green laver. Of the 500 or so species of seaweed that live in Korea, about 50 species are used for food. Seaweed that Koreans enjoy eating is wakame, gim, kelp, hijiki, majaban, and miyeok-gwi.

Seaweed, which is an alkaline food, contains a lot of protein, sugar, vitamins, and minerals. In other words, seaweed purifies the blood, suppresses the production of active oxygen, and is rich in dietary fiber, which is good for preventing constipation. Iron contained in seaweed prevents anemia. It also helps to prevent various adult diseases (lifestyle-related diseases) such as high blood pressure and arteriosclerosis and various cancers such as intestinal cancer. Excretion lowers the level of cholesterol in the blood. In addition, alginic acid delays the movement of food from the stomach to the small intestine, preventing a rapid rise in blood sugar. If you mix seaweed with vinegar, it is more effective because carbohydrate metabolism is suppressed. It contains taurine, which acts as an antihypertensive, cardiac, antithrombotic, and anticholesterol. The mucilage from seaweed lowers cholesterol levels through the action of polysaccharide alginic acid, acts as an antihypertensive, and excretes salt or food additives. Seaweed contains a large amount of vitamin A, which is called 'eye vitamin' to protect eyesight and prevent night blindness. In addition, seaweed is effective in reducing blood pressure, excreting cholesterol out of the body, preventing obesity, and preventing pernicious anemia.



## Seaweed Soup Recipe

### Directions

Buy dried seaweed and beef for broth, from a market or supermarket. Seaweed soup is seasoned with garlic and salt or soup soy sauce and anchovy fish sauce.

1. Leave dried seaweed in warm water for twenty minutes. Seaweed swells more than five times its original size in water.
2. Wash the soaked seaweed once, drain the water from the tray,
3. Soaked seaweed should be cut after washing it once.
4. Add sesame oil to the wok and fry the beef together. Stir-fry for five minutes, then stir-fry seaweed together.
5. Pour rice-washed water or bottled water into the seaweed that has been stir-fried for about five minutes and boil it for a long time. I pour about seven times the amount of seaweed and boil it for about 40 minutes.
6. Continue to simmer over medium-low heat.
7. Season with garlic, salt, and a little stock or katsuo soup.

Instead of beef, you can boil seaweed soup with oysters, clam, flounder or abalone. Vegetarians can also make soup with just seaweed and stock. Seaweed soup is a soup that goes well with rice and kimchi.



# A Conversation with Krav Maga Master Dalton Yang

By Caitlin Ward



## Krav Maga

Krav Maga was developed in the 1940s as a combination of techniques and philosophy from various martial arts and fighting styles. Originally taught to the Israeli Army, Krav Maga instruction was extended to civilians in the late 1970s and multiple forms of Krav Maga are taught today. Like other martial arts, Krav Maga training begins with learning basic stances, striking, techniques for falling and getting up safely, and basic defenses against common attacks such as chokes and headlocks. After mastering the basics, students train in complicated situations with multiple attackers and weapons.

## Q&A With Master Yang

### 1. Why did you start teaching Krav Maga?

I want to support the alliance between Korea and the U.S. I think this is the best alliance against Communist North Korea and China. I wish Americans survival on the battlefield and no mistakes. My father and my wife's father were veterans in the Korean War in 1950 so I heard their stories of real combat experiences. My hapkido teacher was also a resistance member during

the Colonial period against the Japanese Army from 1940-1945 and fought against the Communist Party Army of North Korea. All of them died ages ago.

### 2. What is your experience with martial arts?

I am certified in Krav Maga 6Dan from Alain Cohnr, KMF-AC and Commando Krav Maga Instructor L4 Moni Aizik. I trained for ten years in South Korea starting in 2009 and then trained in Israel in 2012, 2014 and 2015 I trained in Krav Maga in Korea for ten years, then in Israel for seven days three times, then in the U.S. at Southern New Hampshire Londonerry University, in 2018 in Serbia, and in Thailand with Russian Special Forces specifically to trained with weapons used by terrorist units such as AK-47 and AK-74, as well as Russian handguns. I have been an instructor of some Special Forces in Korea since 2000.

### 3. Why did you pick Krav Maga over another martial art?

I'm originally 9 Dan of traditional hapkido so I want to complement the strength and weaknesses. This means a kind of synergistic effect for faster skills acquisition for beginners. I compared martial arts close combat techniques to identify the most advanced systems. I studied the Chinese Boxing style Wing Chun Kung Fu, Systema of Russia, Filipino Eskrima Kali, Japanese Jiu-Jitsu, and Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. When I experienced Krav Maga, I felt the uniqueness of the techniques and recognized these were the best tactics for modern combat. The techniques are based on real-world situations.

### 4. How is Krav Maga inclusive?

Krav Maga is inclusive because it does not discriminate. The self-defense and fighting system is designed to be practical and intuitive for people of any age, shape, or size. The techniques expand on our natural instincts to develop skills while developing our ability to respond to attacks. Through training, you will gain increased awareness and instinctive reflexes as well as your ability to de-escalate situations and win by avoiding conflict. Respect for martial arts is to have confidence that you can fight but you don't go out to pick fights. Through martial arts, you build respect for yourself and for your enemy. The objective is to neutralize a threat and stay calm under pressure. Why attack if you can leave with peace?

### 5. Why do you recommend people to train in Krav Maga?

Hippocrates theorized that there are four types of people based on temperaments: Sanguine, Choleric, Melancholic, and Phlegmatic. Krav Maga teaches instinctual techniques, to deal with different types of people and different body types. Terrorists have high mind control, higher than normal people. I believe Krav Maga is the best counter terrorism technique.



### 6. How long does it take for someone to master Krav Maga?

Citizens needed about two months of training to master basic self defense. Service members need six months to a year. Krav Maga is a culmination of multiple martial arts using the best techniques from each one. The techniques require years and multiple attempts to master.

### 7. Why should service members be prepared for close combat?

The purpose of training soldiers for close combat is so they are prepared for a combat situation,



to respond instinctively as quickly and effectively as possible. There are hard targets and soft targets; hard targets are aware that bad things happen and are prepared to do something about it. Terrorists and bad guys are drawn to soft targets; they will exploit vulnerabilities and avoid strengths. Through close combat training, you will become a hard target.

**8. Over the years, what have you observed among your students?**

Across my experiences, the greatest contrast I observed in the style of Krav Maga is between students in the US and other countries. I observed that people in the US enjoyed Krav Maga and approached it from a competitive perspective. In Sri Lanka and the Philippines, I saw students approach Krav Maga with more seriousness and as part of their preparation to join the military.

**9. Who is welcome to train in Krav Maga?**

All individuals, families, and service members are welcome. Class are offered at a monthly rate of \$80 or \$20 for a single class. You will learn basic and professional self defense skills, kickboxing, offensive and defensive handling of weapons, modern traditional combat, jiu-jitsu, dry gun training, and edged-weapons training.

Class are offered Monday and Wednesday from 1730-1900 and on Saturday and Sunday from 1000-1130 at Sitman Fitness Center. You can sign up for the classes at the counter.

**10. What is your contact information?**

Mobile: 010 8863 6440  
Facebook: Camp Humphreys CQB Krav Maga  
Eskrima BJJ

**PRO WRESTLING SOCIETY KOREA**

**THE FIGHT OF JULY**

**SAT 8TH JULY 3PM**

**PWS STUDIO PYEONGTAEK**

**SOCIETYWRESTLINGKOREA**

**PRO WRESTLING SOCIETY**

# Celebrating a Leader of the Pyeongtaek International Exchange Foundation

By Caitlin Ward



**I**n line with USFK's move to Pyeongtaek and the increasing numbers of multicultural families and international students in Pyeongtaek, the Pyeongtaek International Exchange Foundation (PIEF) was established in 2014, to manage Pyeongtaek City's international exchange relations and play a leading role in Pyeongtaek's globalization.

Cha Sangdon led PIEF from 2019 to 2023 as the Executive Director. Under his leadership, PIEF continued to provide various cultural exchange programs, allowing Pyeongtaek citizens and foreigners to learn about one another's culture and language.

Cha was born and raised in Songtan area of Pyeongtaek, near Osan Air Force Base. In his early twenties,

Cha took a civil service exam and thereafter began his career as a civil servant for Pyeongtaek City, which spanned over thirty years in a variety of fields ranging from administrative work to promoting tourism, culture and art.

Since the launch of his career in the 1960s, Cha has witnessed the city's evolution and built an understanding of what Pyeongtaek citizens and USFK families want and where improvements are needed. As the head of PIEF, he put that knowledge to work and did his utmost to create programs that would address the issues.

"The goals of PIEF are to enhance the ROK-US friendship, lead Pyongtaek's international exchange and cooperation, provide support for our city's foreign

residents, and foster global citizenship," said Cha. "To meet these goals, our organization has specialized centers and teams: ROK-US Cooperation Center, International Exchange Team, and English Education Center.

"The ROK-US Cooperation Center offers programs and events to help USFK families get settled in the area, such as Korean language classes, cooking classes, newcomers' orientations, tours, and more. The programs and events are also designed to provide opportunities for USFK community members to interact with the locals such as We Go Together Corps, PIEFriends for Korean and American students, and Korean arts and craft classes with locals. We also provide opportunities to experience Korean culture through various festivals and concerts.

"The International Exchange Team provides a variety of programs and events to globalize Pyeongtaek residents such as the International Art Festival, World Culture Weeks, Overseas Human Network Expansion Program, and more. We offer programs to support the local foreign residents including the Pyeongtaek Foreigner Information Center, Settlement Support Program, and Global Harmony Festival.

"Lastly, the English Education Center offers English education to all ages (from students to adults), free education to the socially disadvantaged, a Language Festival (Korean/English Speech Contest), and more."

Cultural exchange in Pyeongtaek is vitally important because the city has a diverse population and is home to two U.S. military installations, Osan and Humphreys.

"These circumstances give us the perfect opportunity to introduce world cultures to the local residents and Korean culture to the foreigners residing in the area," Cha said. "Through various types of cultural exchange, we are able to benefit all."

PIEF runs two International Community Centers in Pyeongtaek, making it the only city in the country with two centers. The top-notch cross-cultural programs and activities hosted by PIEF are designed to support community building and the ROK-US alliance.

"All types of cultural exchange activities, regardless of event size, are the best way to support community building as they bring people together," explained Cha. "Whether it is bringing foreigners together to learn about Korea, inviting foreign residents to introduce their culture to the locals, or providing interactive programs for a mixed population, these cultural events strengthen communal bonds and promote harmonious coexistence.

"As for supporting the ROK-US alliance, our ROK-US

Cooperation Center operates over twenty programs annually. We do our best to help USFK families get settled in the area and provide exposure to Korean culture, organize volunteer events to visit local social welfare facilities, give back to the community, and organize numerous festivals and concerts to naturally bring everyone together. Through these programs and events, I firmly believe PIEF is playing a pivotal role in enhancing the ROK-US alliance and friendship."

Cha's tenure with PIEF ran through the pandemic and people who were here during that challenging time can attest that PIEF continued to have a positive impact on the community.

"When the pandemic first hit, we thought it would be like the MERS breakout; put a stop to everything for a couple of months," Cha recalled. "For that, we paused programs that had already begun and delayed upcoming events. After several months with no signs of the pandemic coming to an end, we knew we had to find a way to make the best of the situation. Due to the Korean government's prohibition on social gatherings, we made the decision to transition our in-person programs to an online format, ensuring they were conducted non-face-to-face. Additionally, we offered programs on a smaller scale, following the guidelines for social distancing and prioritizing the safety of participants.

"For instance, the majority of our class-like programs and international exchange programs, especially with people from overseas, were conducted on Zoom until about the first half of last year. For other programs, we downsized the number of participants to a number that was in accordance with the government's guidelines. Another approach was providing minimal contact programs. We installed Christmas-related luminaries (LED lights) in the Anjeong-ri Ville and SED to uplift people's moods and give festive vibes. We continuously searched for ways to make the best of the given situation and offered people various opportunities to enjoy."

Cha retired as PIEF's Executive Director on June 19, 2023 after serving a four-year term.

"Since the USFK relocation to Pyeongtaek, many changes have been made, and I expect more support will be needed in the future," said Cha looking forward. "PIEF will continue to provide aid in introducing Korean culture and opportunities for foreigners to meet locals during their stay. I hope the USFK community recognizes our efforts and joins us in strengthening the ROK-US friendship. Also, hopefully PIEF will become a strong link between Pyeongtaek citizens and USFK families and a place where anyone can make pleasant memories."

# The Cottage

By Caitlin Ward

*The Cottage* is a charming café on a corner outside Anjeong-ri gate at USAG Humphreys. Every design aesthetic—the bricks around the fireplace, the antler chandelier, the lace curtains, the stacked shattered bricks, the crafted tables, recycled chairs, spiraling staircase and beautiful pastries—will make you feel just like you are visiting a cottage. On my own, I love to sit in the cozy upstairs with a cup of coffee. Often I am there with my kids, and they walk up the staircase to the same area and pick the children's books off the lower shelf of a bookcase. With their chosen books, they make themselves at home.

The homely cafe located next to Paengseong Park is run by husband and wife, David and Emily, with their friend Alex.

David was born in Seoul, South Korea and grew up in the same neighborhood until he was about fourteen years old, when he moved to the U.S. He came back to Korea to visit his family in the summers but did not come back permanently until September 2016 when he was stationed at Yongsan with the US Army.

Before coming to Korea, David studied at Texas A&M, which is where he met Emily. Emily was born and raised in Texas. They met through a mutual friend who was giving each a ride to a party. They connected when they arrived at the party, when David asked Emily to fix his toga. Emily graduated with a B.A. in English in May 2013 and David graduated with a B.S. in Visualization in December 2014. The pair married that same month, in Bryan, Texas.

While he was a college student at Texas A&M University, David took part time and full time jobs in IT companies around campus. When he decided to join the Army, he branched as a Cyber Officer to continue building his career in IT.

Emily came to Korea six months before David and started teaching English in Seoul. David arrived in September 2016 and was assigned to Yongsan through 2018. His next assignment was at K-16 from 2018 to 2019, and then he was assigned to Humphreys. David



separated from the Army in 2021.

"I've always wanted to open up my own business," David said, "and while I was a soldier, I noticed that there weren't any coffee shops off post that opened early in the morning. I just wanted a coffee that wasn't Starbucks so I decided to open a cafe. And at the time of us opening, there weren't any donut shops in the area."

Emily had experience in retail and she was worried that people would be rude. "I was nervous because there are so many cafes in Korea but I wanted to be supportive."

As they were contemplating the idea, they met Alex.

"I love going to cafes and Alex's cafe 'Pallet' opened soon after we moved into a neighborhood in Pyeongtaek," said Emily. "He's a people person and we had many conversations with him about opening a business here."

"I wanted to create a business with him," said David, "because he is very passionate about sharing great coffee with others. My wife came up with the theme. She really likes English cottages, but it was on me to come up with the design since I have an eye for that, thanks to my degree."

The Cottage, which opened in February 2022, has Korean and non-Korean customers, though the cafe primarily attracts foreigners. David explained, "Donuts are not a new trend in Korea. Dunkin Donuts have been around Korea since the early 1990s and Krispy Kreme came in the early 2000s, but it's not a staple in Korea like it is in America. Especially not as a breakfast item. Non-Koreans are typically more willing to try different coffees (like our specialties) while Koreans typically stick to the basics (like Americanos and Cafe Lattes)."

When the Cottage opened, the cafe and its owners were warmly received in the community. David explained, "The most surprising thing so far was that we had regulars within our first week of opening. We thought we'd get regulars much later."

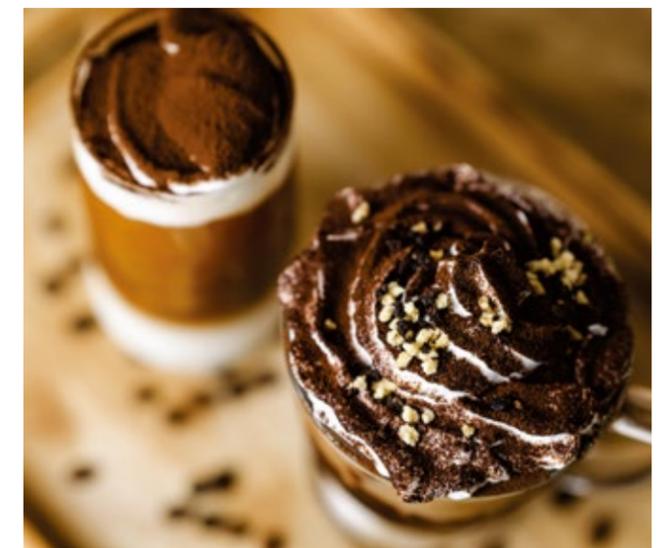
"On the first day of the One Heart festival, my wife was working by herself. Because it was so busy, she didn't have time to eat or take a break. One of our customers went out and bought food for her. It meant a lot to her."

The Cottage is open Tuesday through Friday from 7 AM - 4 PM. On Saturday and Sunday, they are open from 10 AM - 4PM. The Cottage is closed on Mondays.

"When we first opened," David said, "we experimented with our hours and the current schedule has worked out the best, but the most important part was that we opened early on weekdays."



David, Emily and Alex pictured at The Cottage



# Noncombatant Evacuation Operations (NEO): *What You Need to Know!*

By Caitlin Ward

**B**eing stationed overseas on military orders may present many challenges, but your personal and professional development do not have to be one of them.

Noncombatant Evacuation Operations (NEO) is an emergency action used specifically for communities Outside the Continental U.S. (OCONUS). NEO is the ordered (mandatory) or authorized (voluntary) departure of noncombatants and nonessential military personnel from danger in an overseas location to a designated safe haven, typically within the continental United States.

The Department of State recommends an evacuation and the Department of the Army coordinates the execution of NEO. An evacuation could be ordered or authorized in a variety of circumstances including, civil unrest, military uprisings, environmental concerns and natural disasters. For example, in March 2011, military family members and non-essential DoD civilians were evacuated from Japan due to an earthquake and subsequent tsunami.

The following information about NEO, NEO binders, and NEO bags was taken from the USFK and 8th Army websites. It is important to have all your documents in one place (binder) and an emergency bag packed and prepared. The thought of being evacuated can be unsettling and difficult, and it may also be unsettling and difficult to read this. If it helps, think about a classroom and the emergency preparedness items, such as a fire extinguisher, and the drills, such as for an earthquake. These tools ensure everyone is safe and prepared in case of an emergency.

So, let's jump in.

The NEO exercise is a simulation designed to help families understand what an evacuation means and entails and a reminder of what they need to have prepared to leave at a moment's notice. The NEO exercise is also an opportunity to train military members, refine planning and help prepare noncombatant evacuees (NCEs) in the event of a full-scale evacuation order, to ensure noncombatants are evacuated safely and efficiently.

A number of factors are taken into consideration during an evacuation such as the physical safety of evacuees, their pets and property; the logistics of moving large numbers of people on short notice; the food, housing and medical care of evacuees; and the rapid preparation and processing of legal and financial documents, which permit evacuees to receive compensation as

well as psychological and spiritual support.

It is important that everyone understands their role in an event like this. Sponsors and family members are responsible to take an active role in being prepared for a NEO by:

- Preparing and maintaining an updated NEO package
- Maintaining accurate and updated contact information with your command and in all relevant databases
- Knowing where rally points are located and how to get there
- Making a written evacuation plan that includes a plan for pets
- Making a written emergency communication plan in case family members are separated
- Building a NEO kit

During a NEO

- Stay tuned to American Forces Network (AFN) broadcasts for instructions
- If an evacuation is ordered, report to the nearest assembly point as quickly as possible
- Leave with the expectation that you will not return
- Take your NEO kit with you
- Cooperate and comply with NEO personnel
- Remain calm and be flexible
- Assist other noncombatants who need help

### After An Evacuation

Being evacuated can be unsettling and difficult. The goal of the Repatriation Site is to ensure arriving evacuees are processed and moved onward to their final safe haven locations as expeditiously as possible. Upon arrival at their final destination, the nearest installation in the local area is responsible for family support in coordination with the evacuee's sponsoring Service or agency.

### NEO BINDER CONTENTS

The documents outlined in the table below serve the first purpose of the NEO binder: to facilitate the rapid evacuation and repatriation in a crisis while preserving noncombatant benefits. USFK recommends including this table in the binder to serve the second purpose of the NEO binder: to ease an NCE's reintegration and resumption of life in the United States.

| NEO Binder-Documents Common to ALL USFK-Affiliated Noncombatants                                                                   |                                                                                                  |                                       |                                                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Item                                                                                                                               | Purpose                                                                                          | Quantity                              | Distribution                                                                                    |
| Identification Documents (passports, visas, DoD identification, birth/adoption/marriage certificates)                              | Establishes identity, eligibility, citizenship and military affiliation                          | All applicable originals per NCE      | Maintained on person                                                                            |
| USFK Form 197-R-E                                                                                                                  | Prescribes contents of NEO binder and bag                                                        | 2 per family                          | 1 in NEO binder<br>1 for NEO warden                                                             |
| Strip Map from Residence to AP                                                                                                     | Assists NEO Warden in finding NCE's residence                                                    | 2 per family                          | 1 in NEO binder<br>1 for NEO warden                                                             |
| Strip Map from Unit to Residence                                                                                                   | Assists NEO Warden and movers in finding NCE's residence                                         | 1 per family (2 if command-sponsored) | 2 in NEO binder (1 for NEO Warden, 1 for Household goods packet for command-sponsored families) |
| Family Care Plan                                                                                                                   | NCE Preparedness                                                                                 | 1 per family                          | NEO binder                                                                                      |
| Power of Attorney                                                                                                                  | Execute Family Care Plan                                                                         | 1 per family                          | NEO binder                                                                                      |
| USFK Form 178-R-E                                                                                                                  | Provides critical data for registration into NTS                                                 | 2 per family                          | 1 in NEO binder<br>1 for NEO warden                                                             |
| DD Form 2209                                                                                                                       | Veterinary certification                                                                         | 2 per pet                             | 2 in NEO binder (turn in 1 with pet)                                                            |
| DD Form 2208                                                                                                                       | Rabies certification                                                                             | 2 per pet                             | 2 in NEO binder (turn in 1 with pet)                                                            |
| APHIS Form 7001                                                                                                                    | U.S./International certification of pet health                                                   | 2 per pet                             | 1 for NEO Warden<br>1 in NEO binder (turn in at RC)                                             |
| USFK Form 207 Registration/Title of POV                                                                                            | Proves ownership, enables use for NEO                                                            | 2 per POV                             | 5 in NEO binder (turn in 4 at Repatriation)                                                     |
| USFK Form 123-R-E                                                                                                                  | Identifies special skills NCE has - does not imply willingness to volunteer                      | 2 per family                          | 1 in NEO binder (turn in at Repatriation)                                                       |
| DD Form 1610                                                                                                                       | Validates and funds return to the U.S.                                                           | 5 per family                          | 4 in NEO binder (turn in 3 at Safe Haven or Repatriation)                                       |
| DD Form 2585                                                                                                                       | Assists in repatriation                                                                          | 1 per family                          | 1 in NEO binder (turn in at repatriation)                                                       |
| Military-Orders Civilians-Letters of Employment Contractors-USFK Form 700-19A-R-E assigning sponsor to Korea (with all amendments) | Establishes DoD affiliation and assists in determining eligibility for certain military benefits | 4 per family                          | 4 in NEO binder (turn in 3 at Safe Haven or Repatriation)                                       |
| USFK Pam 600-300                                                                                                                   | Provides important NEO information and instructions to USFK-affiliated NCEs                      | 1 per family                          | 1 in NEO binder                                                                                 |

|                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                         |                 |                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------------|
| PHS Form 731                                                                                                                         | Provides record of immunizations, facilitates border crossings                                                                                                                          | 1 per NCE       | 1 in NEO binder                             |
| <b>NEO Binder-Additional Critical Document for Family Members of Military Service Members/<br/>Emergency-Essential DoD Civilians</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                         |                 |                                             |
| <b>Item</b>                                                                                                                          | <b>Purpose</b>                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>Quantity</b> | <b>Distribution</b>                         |
| DD Form 1337 (See Annex E for details) See Note A                                                                                    | “Authorization, Designation for Emergency Pay and Allowances” to dependents of military personnel during an Ordered Departure                                                           | 2 per family    | 2 in NEO binder (turn in upon Repatriation) |
| <b>Family Members of Emergency Essential DoD Civilians</b>                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                         |                 |                                             |
| DD Form 2461 (See Annex E for details) See Note B                                                                                    | “Authorization, Designation for Emergency Pay and Allowances” to DoD civilian personnel and their dependents during an Ordered Departure                                                | 3 per family    | 3 in NEO binder (turn in Repatriation)      |
| <b>Additional Recommended Documents for Command-Sponsored USFK-Affiliated Noncombatants</b>                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                         |                 |                                             |
| <b>Item</b>                                                                                                                          | <b>Purpose</b>                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>Quantity</b> | <b>Distribution</b>                         |
| DD Form 788 POV<br>DD Form 788-1 Van<br>DD Form 788-2 Motorcycle                                                                     | Facilitates VPC processing of POV shipment                                                                                                                                              | 2 per POV       | 1 with family (turn in 4 at AP or RC)       |
| Copy of POV Imports documents                                                                                                        | Establishes eligibility for POV shipment                                                                                                                                                | 2 per family    | 1 with family (turn in 4 at AP or RC)       |
| Command Sponsorship orders                                                                                                           | Establishes eligibility for POV shipment                                                                                                                                                | 1 per family    | Turn in at AP or RC                         |
| DA Form 2402                                                                                                                         | Exchange Tag                                                                                                                                                                            | 1 per NCE       |                                             |
| DA Form 3955                                                                                                                         | Change of Address                                                                                                                                                                       | 2 per family    |                                             |
| Letter of Instruction for POV shipment                                                                                               | Identifies shipping destination and point of contact info in the U.S.                                                                                                                   | 1 per family    | Turn in AP or RC                            |
| DD Form 754                                                                                                                          | Attached to residence key, identifies address and owner                                                                                                                                 | 1 per family    | Turn in AP or RC                            |
| Inventory of Household Goods                                                                                                         | Assists ITO personnel in planning pack-out and shipment, if it becomes possible-also serves as proof of ownership or property and assist in filing claim if property is lost or damaged | 2 per family    | 1 with family (turn in 1 at AP)             |
| Letter of Instruction for HHG Shipment                                                                                               | Identifies shipping destination and POC contact info in the U.S.                                                                                                                        | 1 per family    | Turn in at AP or RC                         |

|                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                           |              |                                       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|
| EA Form 741-E (or other applicable service form)                                                                                                           | Records high-value items and approximate value                            | 2 per family | 1 with family (turn in 1 at AP or RC) |
| Social Security Card                                                                                                                                       | Identifies social security number; hard to replace item                   |              |                                       |
| Financial Records (bank, credit card, brokerage, tax returns)<br>Note: These items may be scanned onto a disc/memory stick for security and space savings. | Critical records                                                          |              |                                       |
| Insurance Policies (may be scanned into a disc/memory stick)                                                                                               | Critical records                                                          |              |                                       |
| Non-temporary property storage documents                                                                                                                   | Allows recovery of property placed in storage prior to move to Korea      |              |                                       |
| Photos/Video/Purchase receipts for high-value property left in Korea (all can be scanned into a disc/memory stick)                                         | Proof of condition, assists in filing claim for compensation if necessary |              |                                       |
| Copy of Medical Records (especially for EFMP enrollees) (may be scanned onto a disc/memory stick)                                                          | Allows for more effective transition of primary care provider             |              |                                       |
| Legal Documents (e.g. divorce decrees, custody orders, wills, powers of attorney, deeds/titles, etc.)                                                      | Critical records                                                          |              |                                       |
| School record, diploma                                                                                                                                     | Allows proof/continuity of education                                      |              |                                       |
| Stock certificates, Savings Bonds, etc.                                                                                                                    | Establishes ownership of investments                                      |              |                                       |
| Precious photos, videos - burned onto CD/DVD/memory stick                                                                                                  | Hard to replace items                                                     |              |                                       |
| List of online accounts User IDs, passwords and websites                                                                                                   | Facilitates address changes and financial transactions                    |              |                                       |
| Address book (US postal address, phone and email)                                                                                                          | Allows contact to continue                                                |              |                                       |
| Back-up copy of critical computer files on disc/memory stick                                                                                               | Allows transfer to different computer                                     |              |                                       |
| Korean transportation “T-money” cards with KRW 10,000 value                                                                                                | Facilitates rapid use of Korean public transportation system              |              |                                       |
| Limited amount of cash (\$100-\$200), credit cards                                                                                                         | Allows purchases of sundry items in Safe Haven or upon repatriation       |              |                                       |

## Notes

- \*DD Form 1337 must be signed by the sponsor, the primary family member, and the unit commander as the authenticating official.
- \*DD Form 2461 must be signed by the employee, the primary family member, and the Civilian Personnel Office (CPO) as the authenticating official.
- A NEO binder contains documents with very personal, private information. NEVER allow anyone to take sole custody of it; the NEO Warden should inspect the contents of the NEO binder in the presence of either the sponsor or adult NCE.
- USFK recommends purchasing a zippered binder to safeguard NEO information documents. If using a regular binder, attach a zippered pencil pouch to store small and critical items such as passports, cash, credit cards, etc. During evacuation, keep the NEO binder in a carry-on bag to prevent loss or theft.

\*Failure to have the appropriate forms may result in inability to receive a predesignated evacuation allowance from the sponsor's pay entitlements. Forms must be filled out and authenticated prior to processing. Forms cannot be prepared and validated during an actual evacuation processing.

## NEO BAG

NCEs should assemble and store NEO bags in an easily accessible location in the home. NEO bags should be inventoried twice a year to replace expired items and adjust clothing contents for the upcoming season and possible sizing changes. Each NCE is authorized to carry up to two pieces of luggage for a combined weight of 66 pounds: one carry-on (up to 25 pounds) and one traditional suitcase or duffel bag (50 pounds). For families with carry-on pets, the pet carrier and pet support items (not the pet) will count as one carry-on bag and against the weight limitation.

During an evacuation, NCEs may walk extended distances, so the lighter the baggage, the better. Issued protective masks and food to be consumed during the relocation do not count against the weight limit. It will likely be the NCE responsibility to load, unload, or haul baggage, pets, pet carriers, and pet food and supplies.

## Tips

- Keep important items in a carry-on bag in case circumstances require abandonment of larger bags during an evacuation.
- Include a small amount of food and water in carry-on bags

## Contents

NEO bags may include the following:

1. A three-day supply of non-perishable, ready-to-eat, lightweight, high-energy food and water (one to two liters per day per person). Water will be available from military forces at APs and RCs.
2. Baby food, formula, diapers and other supplies for ten days (if applicable)
3. A basic first-aid kit
4. A 30-day supply of prescription medication for chronic ailments (if applicable)
5. A blanket
6. Toiletries/hygiene items (toilet paper, soap, toothbrush and toothpaste, feminine hygiene products, wet-wipes, hand sanitizer, small towel, etc.)
7. Jacket/coat (even in summer - it can get cold in military planes)
8. A change of seasonal clothing, underwear and socks
9. Flashlight (dynamo-powered or with extra batteries)
10. Portable radio with extra batteries
11. Airline-approved pet carrier and a 10-day supply of pet food (if applicable)
12. A small sewing kit
13. Trash bags (for trash or emergency rain gear)
14. Protective mask

## Dressing

NCEs are encouraged to wear long pants, closed-toe shoes, comfortable clothing for the season, full-coverage headgear and gloves. High heels, sandals, open-toe shoes and platform shoes are discouraged. In cold weather, dressing in multiple lighter layers instead of one heavy layer will more effectively trap insulating air around the body to conserve heat. The inner layers should wick moisture away from the body, while the outer layers should offer protection against moisture and wind.

## USFK Public Affairs Command Website/Social Media

The following command and social media sites are the official USFK command sites and will provide timely and factual information during all phases of a NEO event.

- A. Command website: [www.usfk.mil](http://www.usfk.mil).
- B. Facebook: [www.facebook.com/myusfk](https://www.facebook.com/myusfk) or search U.S. Forces Korea (Official Page).
- C. Twitter: <https://twitter.com/U.S.ForcesKorea> or search U.S. Forces Korea
- D. YouTube: [www.youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) or search U.S. Forces Korea
- E. Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/USFK> or search USFK

# A Word From the USO at Maude Hall

By Rosa Lindsay, NaTasha Pulver & Danny Morris

The United States military has a long and proud tradition of serving our country both at home and abroad. While military service is a noble calling, it can also be a challenging and sometimes isolating experience, especially for those stationed overseas. That's where the United Services Organization (USO) comes in. We offer a wide range of services and amenities to our patrons. Whether you are waiting for a flight and need a place to relax for a moment, out processing and need to print off important documents to final out, or just need to come in to get you kids a juice box and a quick snack, we are here to provide a sense of relief and familiarity.

One important way we serve our community is by helping to bridge the gap between different cultures. As patrons stationed overseas, you may find yourself facing the daunting experience of learning and adjusting to customs, language, and social norms that are different from your own. This can be especially challenging for those of us who are far away from home and our support networks.

One example of how the USO helps to bridge this gap is through programs such as the "Welcome to Korea" presentation. This program was created to fill a gap within the USAG Humphreys community to educate, empower, and create a more harmonious welcoming environment to South Korea. Our program is open to every new arrival at USAG Humphreys including service members, their families, and our civilian counterparts. We provide a comprehensive introduction to the base, inform patrons of the resources available, facilities and much more.

Additional programs the USO offers are the "Learning Korean Language" at USO Humphreys Maude Hall and the "Get to Know the Korean Language" program at USO Humphreys Sentry Village. Through our interactive classes, patrons can learn about the rich Korean culture, language, history and customs. Our Korean language programs help our patrons communicate more



effectively with our host nation. Learning the local language is not only a practical skill that can be useful for daily life, but also shows a willingness to engage with and understand the local culture. Our program aides in building bridges between the military community and the people of Korea.

We hope our programs help bring support, improve overall morale and well-being, and foster a positive relationship between the military community and our host nation. Please follow us on Facebook at USO Humphreys for our monthly calendar and event registration links. So, stop by at either location and let us welcome you to USAG Humphreys. We are here to serve you!



# Wildlife Conservation, Sustainable Tourism & Friendship in Challenging Times

By Amy Millican

*There is an old saying that you find out who your true friends are when you hit rough times. As we here in the Republic of Korea supported each other during the Pandemic, others also faced challenges and are continuing to rise to the occasion of taking care of friends. An excellent example is South Africa's Shamwari Private Game Reserve.*





Sustainable Tourism was one of the industries hardest hit during the global pandemic 2020-2023. Within the sustainable tourism industry, South Africa Private Game Reserves were impacted by the shortage of visitors as well as challenges unique within the African Safari world.

South Africa's Shamwari Private Game Reserve (Shamwari), for example, has been impacted by energy insecurity, drought and poaching, which has required massive investments. South Africa's electrical grid is run by ESKOM, a state-owned electrical utility. Shamwari, located 75 km outside Port Elizabeth (now known as Gqeberha), in the malaria-free Eastern Cape of South Africa, has seen years of severe drought.

"Shamwari faces many challenges such as energy insecurity as the national grid is very unreliable, as

well as very limited water capacity and the ongoing scourge of poaching," explained Joe Cloete, CEO of South Africa's Shamwari Private Game Reserve.

"We have a 140 km perimeter electric fence that needs electricity to keep poachers out and animals in. The cost of fuel has increased by 54% year on year, and the cost of electricity has increased by 34% over two years. To ensure energy security, we have had to invest in solar projects at a massive cost that will be rolled out in 2023-24. The cost of providing a secure environment for our animals has also increased three fold in the last eight years."

South African Private Game Reserves play a key role in Wildlife Conservation.

"The private game reserve sector, which has to fund itself, plays a very important role in trying to ensure

that biodiversity is maintained and that the protection of threatened animal species such as rhino, elephant and lion, can be facilitated," said Cloete. "This is well documented in recent research conducted by Stellenbosch University. There are massive poaching concerns in central and east Africa where they are largely targeting elephant, lion and rhino, and in the last twelve years, this has now spread to Southern Africa as well. South Africa and Namibia have approximately 80% of the world's rhino populations to protect and this comes at a massive cost."

Wildlife conservation is the focus at Shamwari's Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre. The Centre helps rehabilitate and care for sick, injured, abandoned or orphaned animals, under the care of their professional veterinary team. Once these animals have been nursed back to health,

they are released back into their natural habitat. This is an expensive endeavor.

In addition to the common challenges faced by industries recovering from the pandemic and the challenges unique within the African Safari world, Shamwari factors in expenses from their commitment to Sustainable Tourism.

Shamwari Private Game Reserve defines Sustainable Tourism as a model that encompasses the

by reinjecting funds back into the project, by following environmentally and ecologically sound management practices, and by ensuring that the local community benefits from job creation, skills training, educational projects as well as primary health care.

The third pillar, Social Sustainability, is one of the first pillars to fall during challenging times. The commitment to local communities, for whom the Game Reserves, Safari Camps, and Lodges are often their only source of livelihood, marks the difference between true Sustainable Tourism, and making a quick buck. Cutting staff and social support projects, especially education and health care, is one of the easiest ways to cut costs in the tourism industry. Shamwari's dedication to Sustainable Tourism is an outstanding example of the highest commitment with the best industry practices.

And the most important part of Shamwari Private Game Reserve's success is their friendships.

"We treat all our guests, staff and the environment as our friends because if you do not include all three pillars in your model it will fail," explains Cloete. "Shamwari means 'my friend,' and we like to treat our guests, staff and animals as our friends, because without them, we have no product!"

Shamwari is dedicated to Sustainable Tourism and Wildlife Conservation. The key for their business in these incomparably challenging times, has been maintaining deep bonds of friendship. Enduring friendships creating a wonderful business environment and a better world for all.

# Mental Health: What Now?

By Sandra Durinick, Drew Sung and Dr. Chad Ebesutani

*With* another Mental Health Awareness Month behind us, there is an inclination to think “what now?” Whether you are a civilian employee, active duty service member, or military family member, mental health stress can increase at times, especially when living abroad in an unfamiliar country.

It cannot be denied that lasting improvements are incremental and take small, persistent effort over time. There are many useful strategies and actions that you can use to reduce daily symptoms and negative feelings that come from feeling worried, stressed, anxious or mentally burdened. We focus below on mental health and actions you can take.

## Mental Health Matters

Mental health affects our daily lives and is linked to our physical health, relationships and work-life balance. When we are mentally healthy, we can respond to the daily stressors of military life, make decisions confidently, become more resilient and build stronger relationships with others.

## Strategies for Mental Health Resiliency

Here are some simple daily strategies that you can use to practice good mental health:

### 1. Exercise

Exercise is a great way to boost mood and reduce stress. It releases endorphins, which are natural mood boosters that can help alleviate symptoms of anxiety and depression. Planning an exercise routine puts you in control of your daily routine. Try to incorporate at least 30 minutes of physical activity into your daily routine, ideally combining aerobic exercises (think jogging, cycling or sets of stair walking) and anaerobic exercise (weight training and bodyweight calisthenics).

### 2. Sleep

Whether you are out in the field, burning the midnight oil in the office, or managing a busy family life, sleep plays a crucial role in maintaining good mental health. Lack of sleep can lead to irritability, poor concentration and other mental health issues. Aim to get 7-8 hours of sleep each night to help you feel refreshed and energized. Quick naps during short breaks can also be beneficial.

### 3. Mindfulness & Relaxation

Mindfulness involves being present in the moment and paying attention to your thoughts and feelings without judgment. By actively engaging with your thoughts and seeking out small details in your thoughts or your environment, you can help reduce stress, improve focus, and enhance your overall sense of well-being as you become more aware of yourself.

Relaxation is aimed at physically relaxing muscle tension in your body, such as through Progressive Muscle Relaxation, controlled breathing, or spending time in natural environments. Some other ideas include listening to relaxing music or taking a warm bath.

### 4. Activities & Social Connection

Scheduling engaging, dynamic, and enjoyable activities throughout the week can help to ensure that you are actively engaged in managing your time, planning meaningful events and experiencing mood-elevating leisure activities. These can range from attending local/regional events, to traveling and experiencing Korea, to learning a new hobby. It will come as no surprise that organizations such as the Military & Family Readiness Center can help you explore your available options and services.

Social connection is also essential for good mental health. Spending time with loved ones, joining social groups, or volunteering with local charitable organizations can help reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness, help build your sense of self-worth and help you make connections with people you would not have otherwise



met. It can even be as simple as arranging a regular meeting time with friends/family.

### 5. Problem-Solving & Letting Go

Problem-solving skills allow us to break down larger problems into smaller steps, identify effective solutions, and thereby more easily eliminate problems step-by-step.

Letting go involves understanding and accepting that we cannot solve every problem in life nor have everything we want. We thus often need to find peace by letting go of things we are holding on to too tightly.

Understandably, problem-solving and learning to let go are far easier said than done, and many people are not sure how to accomplish this. Fortunately, the next strategy ties directly into this.

### 6. Seek Professional Help

If you are struggling with mental health issues, seeking professional help is a critical step toward recovery and resilience. There is no shame in seeking help. We are individuals and we do not need to learn or progress alone. Professional mental health services can provide you with

empathetic support, provide new insight and offer strategies/skills/techniques to address your concerns and help you to recover and grow.

Being mentally healthy is essential for military personnel, their family members and civilians working for the military and impacts many aspects of our lives. By incorporating these strategies into your daily routine, you can take proactive steps toward improving your mental health. Remember that mental health is just as important as physical health, and taking care of yourself should be a top priority.

## Recognizing the Signs of Poor Mental Health

It is crucially important to be aware of the signs and symptoms of mental health issues and to take immediate action when necessary. One of the key reasons for this is that mental health conditions are often progressive and can worsen over time without proper treatment. If left untreated, these can affect physical health and have negative spillover consequences at home, work and beyond. In addition, understanding the signs of mental health issues can help individuals identify when they or

someone they know may be in need of support.

Here are some ways to recognize when someone may need professional mental health support:

- Intense and persistent feelings of guilt or worthlessness
- Difficulty making decisions or carrying out daily tasks
- Physical symptoms such as headaches or stomach aches
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Increased use of drugs or alcohol
- Social withdrawal or isolation
- Extreme mood swings or sudden changes in behavior

In addition to the common symptoms mentioned, it's also important to recognize that mental health issues can manifest in many different ways. By recognizing these warning signs, individuals can take steps to address mental health concerns early on, which can help prevent more serious problems from developing down the line.

#### Reaching Out for Support

If you or someone you know is experiencing any of these symptoms, it's important to seek professional help as soon as possible. This can include speaking with a therapist or counselor, reaching out to a support group, or even contacting a crisis hotline. Remember, there is no shame in seeking help, and taking care of your mental health should always be a top priority.

At the Seoul Counseling Center, we are aware of the unique challenges that come with serving in the military. The process of receiving services is simple and confidential. Seeking help is a sign of strength, and we encourage all military service personnel, civilian personnel and their families to prioritize their mental health and seek support when needed. Our counselors are qualified practitioners and importantly, can offer mental health services in English.

#### Seoul Counseling Center in Pyeongtaek

The Seoul Counseling Center in Pyeongtaek collaborates closely with local U.S. military facilities (Camp Humphreys and Osan Air Base, to name a few) to provide professional mental health services to military personnel, families, civilian employees and veterans who are seeking to improve their mental well-being. We offer direct billing services for those covered by TRI-

CARE, AFSPA, or VHA insurance, as well as most other international insurances.

If you would like more specific information regarding your insurance eligibility, coverage and our registration process, you can contact our center staff with the contact information provided at the end of this article. You can also speak to your PCM or a qualified support services staff member, such as the Military & Family Life Counseling program (MFLC) for more information about Seoul Counseling Center.

Our center provides a wide range of mental health services in both English and Korean. These services include individual and family counseling, speech and play therapy, and more. You can find a full list of our services on our website: <https://seoulcounseling.com>

Our Pyeongtaek Branch is located within a 5-minute drive from the Camp Humphreys Main Gate, and we also offer telehealth online services for those who prefer to receive counseling from the comfort of their own home or are located at installations further away such as in Daegu. Our Seoul office is also available for those of you living closer to the capital, and is easily accessible by Korean public transportation.

To schedule an appointment, simply fill out our Schedule Appointment Form on our website, and our Intake Team will assist you with the registration process.

At the Seoul Counseling Center, we prioritize the mental health of military members, civilian employees and their families and we are here to support you on your journey to being mentally healthy and living your best life.

Phone: 031-692-5556

Website: [www.SeoulCounseling.com](http://www.SeoulCounseling.com)

Email: [info@SeoulCounseling.com](mailto:info@SeoulCounseling.com)

Seoul Counseling Center – Pyeongtaek Branch  
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English Speaking  
Community

# Introducing Youth Exchanging Culture Communicators' Organization

By In Young, Choi (Nicole), YECCO, Frontier of Korean Heritage



## YECCO

*The most accurate way to learn about Seoul's heritage is YECCO.*

**YECCO** stands for Youth Exchanging Culture Communicators' Organization. YECCO is a non-profit organization founded in 2018 by passionate college students who love Korean culture and history. This year, more than 100 college students are studying Korean heritage. They are also engaged in various activities. YECCO aims to play the role of a civilian diplomatic mission that attracts communication and sympathy from foreigners visiting Korea, based on its accurate understanding of Korea's history and culture.

YECCO was officially registered as a non-profit organization in 2018, but the organization was initiated in 2016. At that time, YECCO was not registered as a non-profit organization, but about ten college students with a passion for palace commentary gathered and continued to provide commentary at Gyeongbokgung Palace. These efforts continued until 2017. Those who helped found YECCO continue to be involved with the organization.

In 2018, YECCO began to become what it is today by officially registering as a non-profit organization. We planned and carried out volunteer activities for Gyeongbokgung Palace more systematically. To further strengthen this expertise, the members created the Gyeongbokgung Palace tour guide curriculum and annually update the content after attending various lectures given by Korean history majors. YECCO has been able to expand its activities outside the palace. This year, we plan to

conduct various activities with various organizations such as Global Overseas Adoptees' Link (GOA'L), Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE), and the Seoul Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (RAS).



YECCO also organizes activities independently such as the tour of Gyeongbokgung Palace. Every weekend, two or three YECCO tour guides come to Gyeongbokgung Palace to provide tours in English. YECCO's tour guides are experts who have studied Gyeongbokgung Palace for more than a year and watched and conducted the tour for more than a year after passing YECCO's intensive test.

YECCO's tour usually lasts an hour to an hour and a half and includes explanations of most of the buildings in Gyeongbokgung Palace. However, this time is not fixed. If you inform us of your schedule and what you're interested in, YECCO can provide an extended tour with more details. After the tour, you can ask your guide for recommendations of other places to visit. Maybe you can fill the day you go to Gyeongbokgung Palace with the places YECCO recommends!

You can join a tour through instant matching at Gyeongbokgung Palace, or you can make a reservation in advance through YECCO's website. If you reserve the tour guide in advance, you can also reserve the tour for other palaces such as Changdeokgung Palace, Changgyeonggung Palace, and Deoksugung Palace, and you can adjust the tour time according to your schedule. You can make a reservation for a YECCO tour by going to our website.



Another important activity is exchange activities. YECCO cooperates with the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) by providing Korean cultural experiences for foreign exchange students every year. So far, more than 300 exchange students have participated in YECCO's exchange activities. YECCO's exchange activities aim to encourage people to experience and learn about Korean culture. The variety of exchange activities include walking around Gyeongbokgung Palace in hanbok, buying and eating Korean food, experiencing Taekwondo, and visiting historical sites and museums.

Additionally, YECCO conducts a class led by YECCO

members who choose their own topics and study together. The class is an activity that YECCO members voluntarily plan and participate in to improve the quality of tours. To date, classes have been held under more than twenty topics each year, with about fifty YECCO members participating each year. This enthusiastic participation leads to improved quality of the tour.

YECCO also hosts a podcast where you can listen to a tour of Gyeongbokgung Palace and the other four palaces in Seoul.

For those interested in traveling to the palace with YECCO, connect with us via the YECCO website. You can also ask questions through the official Instagram DM and email. YECCO does not operate from an office, but our tour guides are available to walk around Seoul every weekend beside you.

YECCO is open to anyone who wants to learn about Korea and Seoul. Learn about Seoul's heritage with young Koreans in YECCO!

YECCO Website: <https://yecco.notion.site/YECCO-HOMEPAGE-e5bc1aaa37f5469c84f5bb3d31fc1009>  
 Official Instagram: @yecco\_official  
 Email: yecco.official@gmail.com  
 Podcast: <https://audioclip.naver.com/channels/8474>

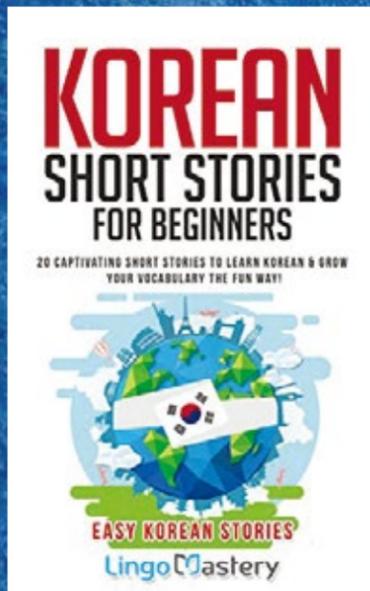


### About the Author

Call me Nicole, the longest-working guide in YECCO. Promoting Korea's palaces and culture has become a daily routine. I joined YECCO in 2018 and I am already a sixth-year guide. I'm making tour guides for our members, recording podcasts, and trying to promote Korea to more people.

# Meet Your Next Favorite Book!

Wondering what to read next?  
Check out these books about Korean history, society, and culture!

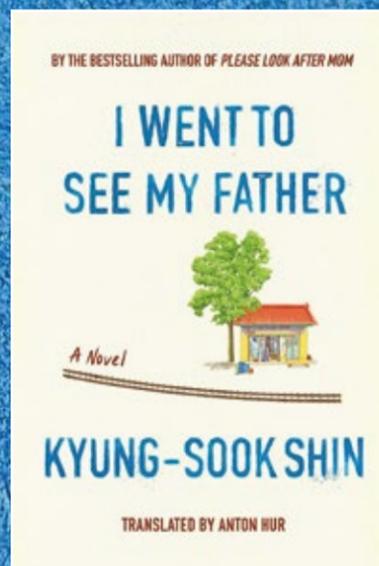


**KOREAN SHORT STORIES FOR BEGINNERS,**  
*Lingo Mastery*

This book contains 20 compelling and fun short stories in English and Korean to help you build your vocabulary as you learn the Korean language

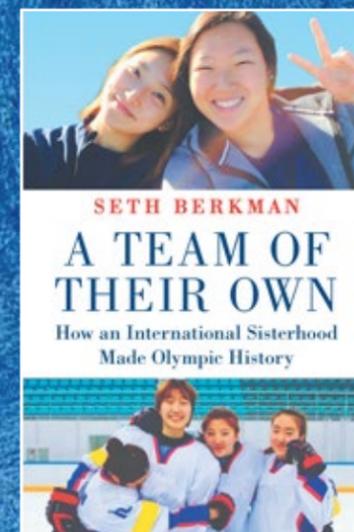
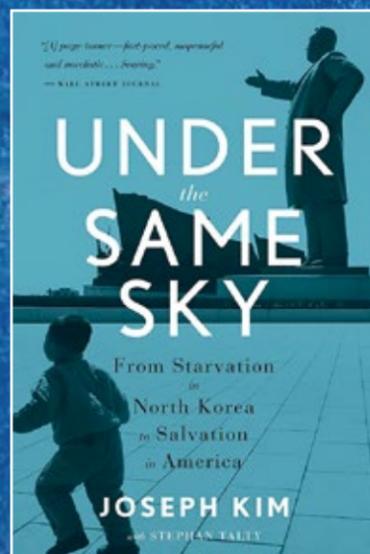
**I WENT TO SEE MY FATHER,**  
*Kyung-Sook Shin*

the novel is a follow up to Please Look After Mom, centering on a woman's efforts to reconnect with her aging father, uncovering long-held family secrets.



**UNDER THE SAME SKY,**  
*Joseph Kim*

The author recounts his childhood in North Korea and his escape from the devastating famine that killed millions, including his father, and sent others, like his mother and sister, on desperate escapes into China. He writes about his own escape to China, the woman who protected him, the network of activists who got him to the American consulate, and his path to achieve the American Dream.

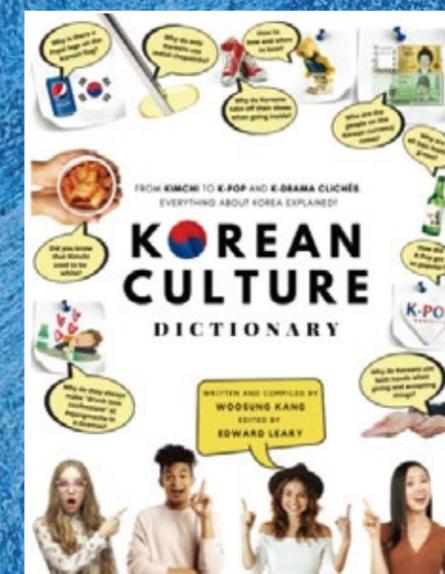


**A TEAM OF THEIR OWN,**  
*Seth Bergman*

Two weeks before the opening ceremony of the 2018 Winter Olympics, government officials and the International Olympic Committee informed the women of the South Korean team that they'd have to make space for players from North Korea to join, forming a Unified women's hockey team.

**MY FIRST TRIP TO KOREA,**  
*Yeonsil Yoo*

Follow Yoona on her first trip to Korea during summer vacation. The book seeks to inspire kids to explore Korea, make new friends and never be afraid to try new experiences.



**KOREAN CULTURE DICTIONARY,**  
*Woosung Kang*

As the title suggests, this book explains everything about Korean culture, from kimchi to K-Pop to K-Drama clichés and more based on essential topics and frequently asked questions.

# Knights of Columbus:

## A Brief History and Overview of Local Organizations

By Brandon Schild

The Knights of Columbus is a Catholic men's fraternal organization. The Knights of Columbus was founded in New Haven, Connecticut in 1882 amidst growing fraternal benefit societies, anti-Catholic prejudice and dangerous factory working conditions that left many families without fathers. The founder, local parish priest, Father Michael J. McGivney, gathered a group of men at the parish and proposed establishing a lay organization that would provide charity for widows and orphans and that represented Catholic beliefs. He created the Order of the Knights of Columbus, which has flourished internationally since its inception.

During that time period, men were the breadwinners of the household. While the father was at work, the mother took care of the children and kept the house in order. In those times, if a Catholic man died, the wife became a widow and without enough income, the children would be taken into state custody and placed into an orphanage. Father McGivney wanted to help support those who were affected in this way and so a founding tenet of the Knights of Columbus was providing a life insurance policy for members.

Today the Knights of Columbus provides one of the best life insurance policies on the market. Only a member of the Knights can purchase this specific policy for himself and members of his immediate household. The Knights of Columbus does more than just provide financial coverage for

loved ones, they serve the community through four core programs: Faith, Family, Community, and Life. Within each council of the Order, there are council leadership and service/program managers that lead these areas.

To become a member of the Knights of Columbus, the applicant needs to be 18 years of age or older, and a practicing Catholic, meaning those who are in full communion with the Catholic Church and who adhere to the precepts of the Church.

Women have their own auxiliary councils called the Columbiettes. The Columbiettes were established in 1939 in New York as a complementary women's group to work alongside the Knights of Columbus. To join the Columbiettes, a woman applicant needs to be 18 years of age or older and a practicing Catholic.

Here in Korea, there are no Columbiettes, but there are two Knights of Columbus districts, which are broken down by U.S. military and the Korean Knight members. For the U.S. members, there are three U.S. Military councils: one in Camp Humphreys, which is Council 14223; the second council is in Osan Air Base, which is Council 16306; and the third council is in Daegu, which is Council 16678. In South Korea, there are five active councils through the peninsula, though the majority are located near Seoul. Each district has their own council and set of programs they focus on. However, the Korean and U.S. Knights come together for

certain community events, which help develop international relations and community building.

In their respective local communities, several of the councils' support orphanages and elderly homes through volunteering as well as donating money and items. The Knights of Columbus are also involved in community events such as walks, pilgrimages, and local community activities. Through the U.S. Councils, the Knights of Columbus have participated in MWR events by having a table set-up that provides baked goods or participate in Trunk-or-Treat events as well as conduct donation drives on the U.S. installations. The Korean councils' activities focus on pro-life events, which include single mother assistance such as the ASAP program (Aid and Support After pregnancy). The Korean councils also assist in refugee support, helping adoption centers and feeding the elderly.

Please feel free to reach out to any of the Knight of Columbus councils in your area if you have any questions or would like to help participants in certain programs or activities. For the Camp Humphreys website to show who the Knights are please visit <http://www.kofc14223.com/> or the Daegu Council Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/kofcdaegu-council.org/> and if you need assistance on reaching out, please contact the U.S. Military District Deputy, Mr. Brandon Schild at [brandonmp2001@yahoo.com](mailto:brandonmp2001@yahoo.com) for further information or questions.

## RESOURCE INFO

### Emergency Numbers

- 119 - Fire and medical emergencies that require an ambulance
- 112 - Police
- 1339 - Korean Help Center for Disease Control (foreigner helpline that provides information about first aid and diseases in English, Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, and Mongolian)
- 1345 - Immigration (for simple immigration-related questions)
- 1331 - National Human Rights Commission of Korea (for questions related to human rights law and social justice in Korea)

### National Suicide Prevention Crisis Line

Commercial: 1-800-273-8255/080-855-5118  
DSN: (315)263-8255/118  
Chat: [www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/chat](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/chat)

### Osan Emergency Room (ER)

A Mental Health provider is always on call to assess mental health emergencies.  
DSN 784-2500, or present to the Emergency Room

### Domestic Abuse Victim Advocate (DAVA)

This is a 24/7 resource for those in need of Family Advocacy support.  
DSN: 784-5010 (business hours) or COMM: 010-9300-8753 (24/7)

### Sexual Assault Response Program (SAPR)

This is a 24/7 resource for those in need of Sexual Assault Response support.  
SAPR Hotline: 031-661-7272; DSN 784-7272  
Osan DSN (during duty hours): 784-2832  
24/7 SHARP Hotline: DSN 158 or 763-5700  
Daegu Local Cell: 0503-363-5700  
From the States: 011-82-53-470-5700  
DoD Safe Helpline: +1 (877) 995-5247  
Safe Helpline Website: <https://safehelpline.org>

### Non-Emergency Resources

Military and Family Life Counselors (MFLC)  
Licensed professionals who can provide problem-focused counseling to service members and their families outside of the medical appointment system. No medical record documentation.  
Camp Walker: 010-6445-9001  
Camp Carroll: 010-5960-3287  
2-1 ADA: 010-5960-3287

### Military & Family Readiness Center

Osan AB: 784-5440 or <https://www.facebook.com/OsanMFRC>

### Osan Chaplains

Chaplains provide 100% confidentiality.  
DSN 784-5000 during duty hours, contact via command post after hours  
DSN 784-7000

### Osan Mental Health Clinic

Active Duty Outpatient Behavioral Health Services: DSN 784-2148  
Behavioral Health Walker: 0503-337-4784 (DSN: 737-4784)  
Behavioral Health Carroll: 0503-337-4236 (DSN: 737-4236)

### Off Base Counseling Resources near Osan AB and USAG Humphreys (TriCare approved)

- Adaptable Human Solutions 02-749-7915
- Mind Care Institute of Korea 010-8263-8277
- Seoul Counseling Center 031-692-5556
- You & Me Psychological and Consultation Services 02-6929-3014

### Military OneSource: 1-800-342-9647

### Families OverComing Under Stress (FOCUS)

Resilience enhancing services for service members and their families. Offers telehealth appointments ("TeleFOCUS")  
[www.focusproject.org](http://www.focusproject.org) or call +1-703-784-0189 or email at [TeleFOCUS@focusproject.org](mailto:TeleFOCUS@focusproject.org)

### Spouse Resilience Toolkit:

[https://www.afpc.af.mil/Airman-and-Family/Spouse-Resilience/9 online, skills-based and self-paced modules to build healthy family bonds and overcome the unique challenges of military life.](https://www.afpc.af.mil/Airman-and-Family/Spouse-Resilience/9%20online,%20skills-based%20and%20self-paced%20modules%20to%20build%20healthy%20family%20bonds%20and%20overcome%20the%20unique%20challenges%20of%20military%20life)

### Holidays - 4 Month Outlook

#### Korean Holidays

- 6 June – Memorial Day
- 15 August – Liberation Day
- \*28 September-October 1 – Chuseok

\* The celebration takes place on the 15th day of the 8th lunar month. Date is adjusted every year according to the lunar calendar.

#### US Holidays

- LGBTQ+ Pride Month, National PTSD Awareness Month, National Safety Month
- 15 June – Flag Day & US Army Birthday
- 18 June – Father's Day
- 19 June – Juneteenth
- 4 July – Independence Day
- 4 September – Labor Day
- 11 September – Patriot Day

### Main Airports

Incheon International Airport is the main airport on the RoK, located on the coast west of Seoul. It is one of the busiest airports in the world and is full of entertainment for travelers with time before, between, or after flights including a spa, a golf course, a casino, an ice-skating rink, and much more.

Other airports include:

- Jeju International Airport
- Gimpo International Airport
- Muan International Airport
- Yeosu Airport



"Bloom where you are planted," photo by Erin Henderson at Million Rose Garden in Seoul.

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