

AUGUST 2025

UNITED ON THE ROK

**THE PUSAN
PERIMETER**

*From Petra to
the Borderlands*

*Boots, Bonds, and
Battle Buddies*

**How 292 Lu Bakery
Stole My Heart**

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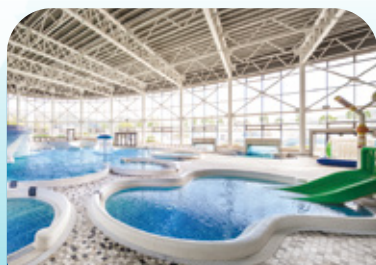
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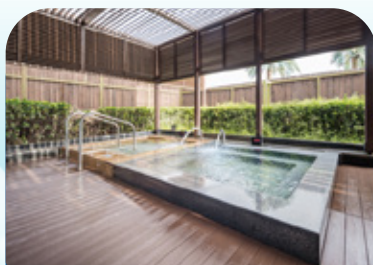
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English website



Korean website



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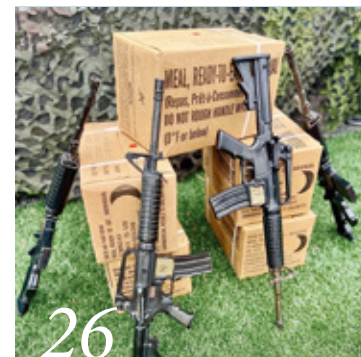




Cord Scott's The Pusan (Busan) Perimeter

A Pivotal Korean War Defense Line explores how a desperate defense in southeast Korea became a vital turning point in the Korean War.

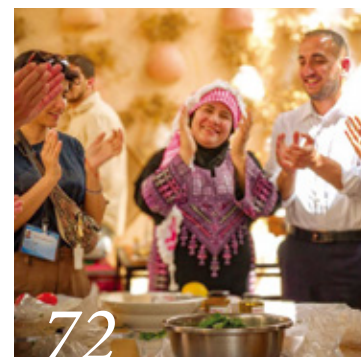
Cover photo: The Chonghontap (Loyalty Tower) in Chilgok-gun. (Captured by Ashley Courts)



Boots, Bonds, and Battle Buddies



Tastes Like Home: How 292 Lu Stole My Heart

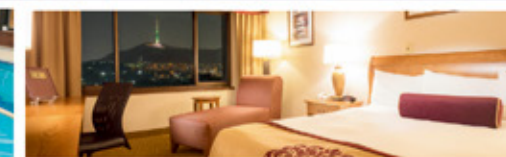


From Petra to the Borderlands: How Jordan Opened My Eyes



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UNITED ON THE ROK

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United on the RoK Magazine is a magazine with a military community focus that is distributed to United States Forces Korea installations within the Republic of Korea. This magazine aims to connect readers to the diversity of our communities and showcase what South Korea has to offer from culture and travel to food and family, and more. Contents of *United on the RoK* are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the United States Government, the Department of Defense, or Oriental Press. All content within *United on the RoK Magazine* is written by non-paid, volunteers within the military-connected communities across the RoK. Articles within *United on the RoK* are written independently and non-sponsored, with no monetary compensation or products received in exchange for the author's opinions, reviews, or mentions in the magazine.
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In a world that keeps changing, their bond stays the same. They might be far from home, but they will never be far from the heart.
Captured by Ysamar Gómez at Chimsan Mountain.

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Sowing
the Seeds of
Sustainability



Casting
the Net for
a Sustainable Future



Setting
the Table for
a Sustainable World



Sustainable

K-
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EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Readers,

As we turn the page to the heart of summer, I would like to extend a heartfelt welcome to all of you who have recently arrived in Korea. Whether this is your first tour or your fifth, we're so glad you're here. The summer PCS season brings fresh faces, new adventures, and a reminder of how constantly evolving and vibrant our community truly is here in Korea. If you're still finding your way around your installation or learning how to say "annyeonghaseyo" (안녕하세요) with confidence, trust me, you're in good company.

For over five years now, the Allen Family has had the honor of calling Korea home. During that time, we've not only discovered the richness of Korean culture but also the personal growth that comes with living abroad. More than anything, this journey has taught us the importance of respect and gratitude, values we've seen deeply embedded in the way our host nation lives and leads.

Respect for one another, for history and heritage, for tradition and service. Gratitude for friendships formed across cultures, for the freedoms we cherish, and for the futures we're building together for ourselves, our children, and our communities. These aren't just lessons; they're the heartbeat of life here in Korea.

This month's issue is packed with stories that honor those values. We reflect on service and sacrifice at the United Nations Memorial Cemetery in Busan and celebrate the strength and resiliency of military spouses navigating life far from home. We explore Korea's deep cultural roots in places like Jeonju, revisit powerful moments in history at the Pusan Perimeter, and uncover eerie legends.

You'll also find stories that capture everyday life, such as how military kids build lasting friend-



Powerful rhymes at Haemiupseong
Fortress, Seosan



The Allen family in Jeonju



Summer lotus flowers in Asan

ships on the move, how a small bakery made a significant impact, and how families are finding creative housing solutions during their PCS. From Korea's growing whisky scene to a spotlight on the playful rise of some crazy little monsters, there's something for everyone. And, of course, we couldn't forget comfort food, this time in the form of cozy, delicious mandu jeongol.

Each of these stories reflects the small moments that shape our experience here, moments that remind us of what truly makes a place feel like home. Because home isn't just a location on a map. Home is where the memories we make and the connections we share fill our hearts and minds.

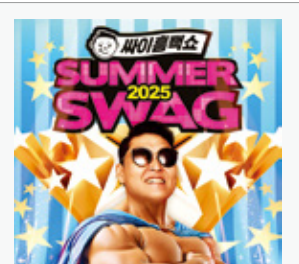
No matter how long your stay, Korea has a way of leaving a lasting mark. It certainly has on mine.

Warmly,

Jetta Allen, Editor in Chief
United on the RoK Magazine

LIVE MUSIC&ARTS

Events & Festivals



AUG15-16

PSY Summerswag 2025 - BUSAN

Busan Asiad Auxiliary Stadium
globalinterpark.com



AUG26

2025 Hic et Nunc! Music Festival - Sejong Soloists & Gil Shaham and Adele Anthony


Concert Hall, Seoul Arts Center
sac.or.kr/site/eng



SEP03-27

Notre-Dame de Paris French Original Tour - the 20th Anniversary


Sejong Center for the Performing Arts
globalinterpark.com



SEP06-07

2025 Let's Rock Festival

Nanji Hangang Park
globalinterpark.com



SEP13-14

2025 Tyler, The Creator

KINTEX Exhibition Center 2,
Halls 10
globalinterpark.com



SEP21

Yefim Bronfman Piano Recital

Lotte Concert Hall
lotteconcerthall.com/eng



ONGOING -SEP21

Marc Chagall Exhibition: BEYOND TIME

Hangaram Art Museum
Gallery 1, Gallery 2
sac.or.kr/site/eng



OCT11-DEC28

Cirque du Soleil KOOZA


Big Top in Jamsil Sports Complex
ticket.yes24.com



OCT17-19

The 22nd Jarasum Jazz Festival

Jarasum
ticket.yes24.com/eng



OCT21

OASIS Live '25

Goyang Stadium
globalinterpark.com



OCT21-22

Gustavo Dudamel & LA Philharmonic

Seoul Arts Center, Concert Hall
ticket.yes24.com/eng



ONGOING -OCT26

Musical <WICKED>

BLUE SQUARE Shinhancard Hall
globalinterpark.com



AUG08-14

Tongyeong Hansan Battle Festival

- Venue: Area of Hansan Daechep Square and Tongyeong-si
- Address: 267 Tongyeonghaean-ro, Tongyeong-si, Gyeong-sangnam-do
- Inquiries: +82-55-646-1592
- Website: www.hansanf.org
- Fees: Free

The Great Battle of Hansan was a war in which Admiral Yi Sun-sin and his naval forces fought against the Japanese and won a great victory off Hansando Island in Tongyeong. The Great Battle of Hansan Festival commemorates the victory and Yi's spirit of patriotism. The Turtle Ship and local fishing boats are set afloat off Hansando Island, lining up in the shape of a crane's wing, which was the famous military tactic of the Great Battle. Visitors can enjoy a splendid view of fireworks over the dark sea and join in the Turtle Ship rowing competition, a popular activity that requires team effort.



SEP06-14

Muju Firefly Festival

- Address: 326-14 Hanpungnu-ro, Muju-eup, Muju-gun, Jeonbuk-do
- Website: www.firefly.or.kr
- Inquiries: +82-63-324-2440



AUG13-17

2025 Jeonju Int'l Sori Festival

- Venue: Sori Arts Center, 14 Cities and Counties of Jeonbuk State
- Website: sorifestival.com/en/
- Inquiries: +82-63-232-8398



SEP12-OCT11

Yeongdong Nangye Korean Traditional Music Festival

- Address: 33 Gugak-ro 1-gil, Simcheon-myeon, Yeongdong-gun, Chungcheongbuk-do
- Website: www.ydhan-gye.co.kr
- Inquiries: +82-43-745-8912
- Performance time: 10:00-22:00
- Fees: Free

The Yeongdong Nangye Traditional Music Festival is held in Yeongdong, the hometown of the brilliant Korean musician Park Yeon (pen name: Nangye). This festival celebrates his legacy and contributions to traditional Korean music. In addition to gugak (traditional Korean music) performances, visitors can enjoy gugak performances fused with contemporary music, a Jongmyo Jeryeak dance, and a demonstration of the Royal Family's promenade. Festival activities include playing traditional instruments at the main hall or making and playing traditional instruments at the booths.



SEP04-07

Goesan Red Pepper Festival

- Address: 113 Imkkeokjeong-ro, Goesan-gun, Chungcheongbuk-do
- Website: spicy-fe.kr
- Inquiries: +82-43-830-3463



SEP19-28

Geumsan World Insam Festival

- Address: 30 Insamwang-jang-ro, Geumsan-gun, Chungcheongnam-do
- Website: insamfestival.co.kr
- Inquiries: +82-41-750-2319
- Performance time: 10:00-22:00
- Fees: Free

The Geumsan World K-Insam Festival is a well-being event that promotes the excellence of ginseng, an herb that strengthens the immune system against cancer and other diseases. Visitors can take part in health-related programs, including the red ginseng foot bath, Korean medicine therapy, and traditional massage at the Health Experience Hall. Visitors can also try foods made with ginseng and check out the various shapes that the medicinal plant comes in and its uses, including makgeolli (unrefined rice wine) and fries. Geumsan ginseng can also be purchased at a cheaper price.



SEP05-14

Hyoseok Cultural Festival

- Address: 157 Ihyoseok-gil, Pyeongchang-gun, Gangwon-do
- Website: www.hyoseok.com
- Inquiries: +82-33-335-2323



SEP24-28

Cheonan World Dance Festival

- Address: 208 Beonyeong-ro, Seobuk-gu, Cheonan-si
- Website: cheonanfestival.com
- Inquiries: +82-41-900-7020



SEP26-28

Bupyeong Pungmul Festival

- Address: 60 Bupyeong-daero, Bupyeong-gu, Incheon
- Website: portal.icbp.go.kr
- Inquiries: +82-32-509-7516



Standing watch over sacrifice, the Chonghontap (Loyalty Tower) in Chilgok-gun overlooks the Nakdong River, honoring 540 local soldiers and police who fell during the Korean War. Its presence near Waegwan marks the region's crucial role in the defense of the Pusan Perimeter. Captured by Ashley Courts.

The Pusan (Busan) Perimeter:

A Pivotal Korean War Defense Line

By Cord Scott, UMGC Okinawa

A Desperate Early War Situation

By early August of 1950, the war on the Korean peninsula was in desperate straits. ROK and UN troops were being pushed further south, along with thousands of civilians, as people were trying to get away from the fighting. The situation was so dire that the ROK Army was pulling in teenagers to serve.

Forming the Pusan Perimeter: A Last Stand in the South

Eventually, a defensive position was formed in South-east Korea. It is colloquially known as the Pusan Perimeter. It stretches from Pohang along the East coast to the Daegu area and then runs south to the southern coast.

This general position was what was reinforced throughout the month of August when the situation became desperate.

Strategic Importance of Busan

Busan was important, as it was the site of the ROK government after it was forced to evacuate Seoul. President Rhee was requesting US intervention which was offered mostly at this time in the form of the remainder of the 24th Infantry Division, plus any available forces from Japan such as the 25th Infantry Division, and any available US Army or US Marine units, the US Navy patrolling off the coasts, and most importantly USAF air strikes from Japan. This is not to mean that the ROK



Standing near Camp Carroll, Hill 303 is a solemn landmark known for the tragic 1950 massacre of U.S. POWs by North Korean forces, an enduring reminder of the sacrifices made during the fierce battles to hold the Pusan Perimeter. Captured by Ashley Courts.

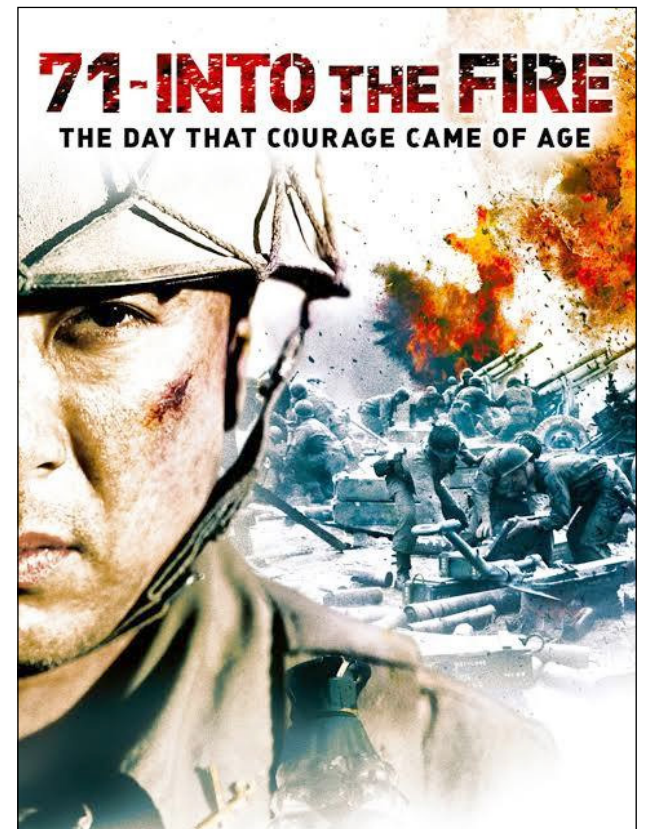
forces or other countries or branches of the US military did not contribute, as they very much did.

Reinforcements and International Support

By August, the first UK forces arrived from Hong Kong (the first battalion of the Argyll and Sutherland regiment, and the first battalion of the Middlesex Regiment, which now comprised the Twenty Seventh Brigade), where they were put into the perimeter. Elements of the First Marine Division were placed at the southern end of the Pusan perimeter and became known as the "fire brigade" for their ability to go where they were needed most.

Holding the Line at Daegu

The Daegu area was where the two sides met, as Korean forces held the northern part of the perimeter line. Elements of the US Army, as well as the ROK units, were held in this area. The key to all of this was to keep the port of Busan open so that supplies could arrive from the sea. It was



Released in 2010 and directed by John H. Lee, 71: Into the Fire recounts the little-known yet poignant story of seventy-one South Korean student soldiers who, during the early days of the Korean War, were ordered to defend a key position at Pohang-dong. Based on real events, the film captures the desperation and courage of these young men as they faced a vastly superior North Korean force, turning a makeshift defense into an enduring symbol of sacrifice. Photo credit: Taewon Entertainment.



Near the banks of the Nakdong River, the Dabu-dong Memorial honors over 200 police officers who gave their lives alongside R.O.K. and U.N. forces in the defense of the Pusan Perimeter—a pivotal stand that helped prevent a full North Korean occupation of South Korea. Captured by Ashley Courts.

also kept open if the ROK government had to go into exile.

Harsh Conditions and the Human Cost

During this month of intense fighting, the temperatures soared, and many units were lacking rest, supplies, and mostly water. As US and Allied units frantically came onto the line, they were met by an ever stronger and emboldened North Korean Army. The Allies held, and this key defensive position allowed time for a counterstrike.

Legacy and Memorials of the Pusan Perimeter

Within the historical perimeter area, there are several monuments to the battles from this time. The most important, however, is the UN Cemetery in Busan. It is here that members from all 16 contributing nations are buried.

The bases in the Daegu area are also there as a reminder of the battles of August. Camps Carroll, Henry, and Walker are in the vicinity of the fighting that occurred from that time.



With wings of peace and a silent embrace, the white monument at the UN Memorial Cemetery in Busan honors the members of the United Nations forces who gave their lives in the Korean War, a lasting tribute to international sacrifice between 1950 and 1953. Captured by Jetta Allen



About the Author

Cord A. Scott has a Doctorate in American History from Loyola University Chicago and currently serves as a Professor of History for the University of Maryland Global Campus for Asia. He is the author of *Comics and Conflict*, *Four Colour Combat*, and *The Mud and the Mirth: Marine Corps Comics of WWII*. He has written for several encyclopedias, academic journals such as *The International Journal of Comic Art*, *The Journal of Popular Culture*, *The Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, and several books on aspects of cultural history. He has lived all over the Pacific and currently resides in Okinawa, Japan.



Meet Labubu

The Mischievous Toy Taking Over My Life and Social Media

By MaryAnne Clark

Who (or What) Is Labubu?

What's a Labubu, you ask? Let me introduce you to the cheeky little character who has totally stolen my heart and the hearts of collectors around the world.

Labubu is a character created by Hong Kong-born artist Kasing

Lung, who's also known for his work as a children's book illustrator and author. Back in 2015, Lung published a trilogy called *The Monsters*, inspired by Nordic fairy tales, and inside that world, Labubu was born.

The Monsters series features several characters, including Zimomo, the leader of the Labubu tribe and

essentially a boy version of Labubu. Zimomo is larger and identified by its tail. Then there is Tycoco, Spooky, Pato, and, of course, Labubu herself.

Labubu is a mischievous little forest creature with big twinkly eyes, wild fuzzy hair, and a toothy grin that's equal parts spooky and

adorable. She looks like a goblin-elf hybrid, always up to no good, and that’s exactly why people are obsessed with her. She’s cute, she’s chaotic, and she’s become a total pop culture darling.

**Why Is Labubu So Popular?
What’s All the Hype About?**

The hype around Labubu has exploded in recent years, especially in the designer toy and streetwear scenes. What started as a collectible figure has turned into something much bigger. Labubu is now considered a **cult icon**, showing up on luxury fashion accessories and even inspiring major celebrity fans. Celebrities like Rihanna have been spotted with a Labubu bag

charm hanging from their designer bags. Lisa from BLACKPINK has openly shared her love for Labubu, and her enthusiasm has fueled even more attention and popularity. As a content creator, I literally couldn’t escape Labubu. She was all over my social media feed! I fell in love with her first because of her fashion accessory fame, but then... the collecting bug bit me hard. There are over 30 series of Labubu figures, each with six color variations. That adds up to more than 300 Labubus you can hunt down, each with different furs, eye colors, and themes. Some Labubus come dressed in limited-edition outfits, and some collectors even personalize and dress up their own figures to make them extra unique.

Where Can You Get a Labubu? Here’s where the fun, and maybe a little frustration, begins: Labubu figures are typically sold in blind boxes, meaning you have no idea which design you’ll get until you open it. Rare “secret” editions drive up demand and make some Labubus especially valuable on the resale market. In South Korea, you can find Labubu figures at *Pop Mart* stores, both in person and online. Starfield Malls often have *Pop Mart* locations, though not all. My favorite store is the *Pop Mart* store at Starfield Mall in Anseong. If you want to stay on top of new releases, check out their Instagram at @**popmart_korea**, that’s where I get most of my updates.



Labubu’s Big Money Moment

Turns out, I’m not the only one who fell head over heels for this cheeky little gremlin. In 2024, *Pop Mart* pulled in a jaw-dropping **\$1.79 billion** in sales, more than doubling what they made the year before. Their profits shot up, leaving analysts in the dust. Proof that even in the age of TikTok trends and digital everything, a tiny, toothy troublemaker in a blind box can still steal the show and the market. *Pop Mart’s* global presence, slick marketing, and fun in-store experiences have helped push Labubu into the spotlight, right alongside other hit collectibles like Molly, Cry Baby, Dimoo, Skull Panda, and more.

Final Thoughts: Why Labubu Captured My Heart

In the end, Labubu represents the perfect mix of artistic design, fashion flair, and pop culture magic — no wonder she’s become such a standout in the booming designer toy world. Whether you’re a die-hard collector, a fashion lover, or just someone curious about the latest hype, Labubu’s charm is hard to resist. But be warned... once you open that first blind box, you might find yourself falling down the Labubu rabbit hole — just like I did!



About the Author

A proud Army wife, devoted mother of two, and seasoned medical professional, MaryAnne Clark is also a passionate digital content creator with a love for travel. Her journey has taken her family across the globe—first to Germany and now to South Korea—where each new duty station fuels her sense of adventure. Inspired by life overseas, she launched a YouTube channel to document the unforgettable places the Army sends them. Whether she’s exploring hidden gems or sharing the realities of military family life, MaryAnne brings heart, humor, and authenticity to every story she tells.

Follow her here:
Instagram: [b3ing_maryanne](#)
YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@Clarkvlogz>

PCS LODGING HACKS: How Agoda and Airbnb Fill the Housing Gap in Korea

By The Editorial Team

PCS Season in Korea: Why Lodging is a Major Stress Point

Permanent Change of Station (PCS) season in Korea can be equal parts exciting and stressful. Between clearing quarters, household goods shipments, travel plans, and coordinating travel logistics, finding a place to stay during those in-between days often feels like an afterthought. Then it hits you, smack dab in the face! There are sometimes very few options for places to stay during the in-between days, especially near installations like Camp Humphreys, Osan Air Base, and Camp Carroll.

Limited On-Installation Lodging at Camp Humphreys, Osan, and Camp Carroll

While on-installation lodging is convenient, it's no secret that rooms fill up fast during PCS season, exercises, and holidays. That's where online platforms like Agoda and Airbnb can be a game-changer for service members and their families.

How Agoda and Airbnb Help Military Families in Korea

Both apps offer a range of accommodations, from short-term apartments and family-friendly villas to budget-friendly guesthouses, often right outside installation gates.



Agoda has a powerful presence in Korea, with extensive listings in Pyeongtaek, Osan, and Daegu, offering many accommodations that provide military discounts or free cancellations.

Airbnb adds a more personal touch with hosts who are often familiar with the needs of incoming or outgoing military families.

Top Benefits of Using Agoda and Airbnb for PCS Lodging

- Wide range of price points and styles
- Options close to the base



- Flexible cancellation policies
- Listings that often include amenities like kitchens, laundry, and internet
- Potential for military or long-stay discounts

Military PCS Travel Tips for Booking Agoda and Airbnb in Korea

- Book early during peak seasons (summer and winter PCS cycles).
- Look for listings with self-check-in options for late arrivals.
- Use filters to find pet-friendly stays if traveling with your furry family members.
- Check proximity to base gates — traffic patterns in places like Pyeongtaek can turn a short distance into a long commute.
- Don't hesitate to message hosts about military-friendly rates or longer-stay discounts.

Pet-Friendly and Family-Ready PCS Housing Options

If you're traveling with kids or pets, both Agoda and Airbnb have filters to help you find accommodations

that meet your needs. Many hosts are understanding of military timelines and can offer flexibility.

Pro Tips to Save Money and Stress During PCS Moves

Whether you need a one-night stay after clearing quarters or a two-week buffer while house-hunting, these platforms give you flexibility and peace of mind during one of the most hectic times of military life.

Final Thoughts: Plan Ahead and PCS Smarter in Korea

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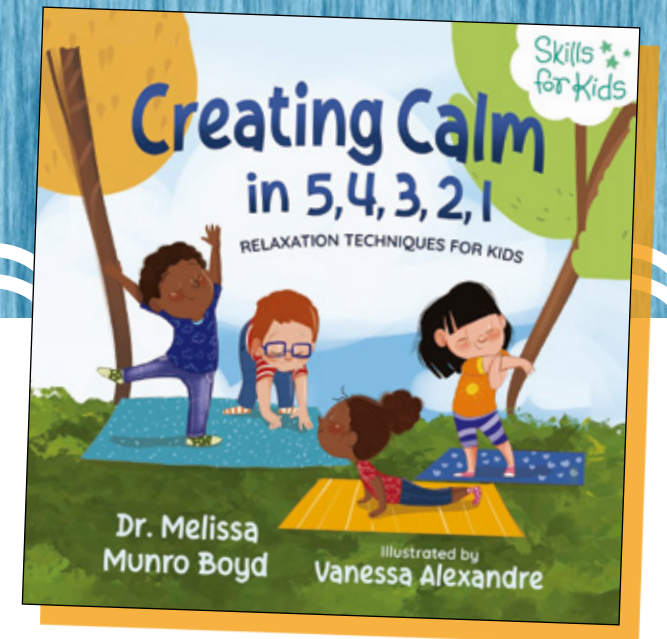
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Are You Ready to Write a Children's Book?

By Dr. Melissa Munro Boyd



Writing a children's book entails more than just having a great story idea and appealing images. It takes several steps to develop a fascinating story that kids will enjoy.

Steps to Writing a Children's Book

- Target the right age group
- Be familiar with book categories (i.e. picture book, young reader, middle grade, young adult)
- Create characters that are appealing and relatable
- Keep the story engaging and exciting
- Use age-appropriate language
- Create a catchy title
- Use an illustrator
- Edit your book thoroughly

When writing a children's book, your first draft will most likely not be your best. It is important to check for spelling and grammar mistakes and to ask friends and family you trust to review your work. It can also be helpful to join a writing community (online or in person) and to reach out to fellow writers to ask for advice and tips. Be open to suggestions and correction of errors; however, it is important to stay true to your story amidst the feedback process.

After proofreading and finalizing your story, the next step involves publishing your book. Options include traditional publishing or self-publishing if you don't want to publish your book conventionally.

Publishing

As a self-publisher, I use Amazon's self-publishing platform called KDP- Kindle Direct Publishing and Ingram Sparks. KDP prints paperbacks and Ingram prints both paperbacks and hardcover. Ingram Sparks also allows for expanded distribution to stores like Walmart, Target, and Barnes and Noble. They are both free platforms and have helpful customer service representatives to assist with questions and concerns.

Illustrations

I develop the concept and send draft descriptions of each page to the illustrator. I have found my illustrators by looking at other children's books, reviewing portfolios online, and reaching out to inquire about cost and availability.

ISBN

Purchase an International Standard Book Number (ISBN) which is a book identification number that is unique and found on every single book. Some publishers and other services might offer to provide an ISBN, but it's safer to get your own ISBN/barcodes so that nobody owns them but you.

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As a psychologist, I write storybooks to engage children in gaining insight into their feelings and teach helpful ways to practice healthy coping skills. Prior to my family and I PCS'ing to Korea in 2019, I published my first children's book titled B is for Breathe: The ABCs of Coping with Fussy and Frustrated Feelings. I have since published Skills for Kids, which was created to provide children with tools and skills to better understand topics related to feelings, emotion regulation, calming strategies, friendship, and kindness and are wonderful resource for children, parents, educators, counselors, and more.



Skills for Kids Book Series

- **B is for Breathe:** The ABCs of Coping with Fussy and Frustrating Feelings
- **Better Together:** The ABCs of Building Social Skills and Friendships
- **Keeping it Cool:** Skills for Coping with Change
- **Creating Calm in 5, 4, 3, 2, 1**
- **Kindness is Cool**
- **Hair Day**
- **Pool Day**
- **Color my Hair Coloring Book**

Books can be purchased online at Amazon and Barnes and Noble in addition to many local book-stores in the United States. Follow Dr. Boyd for more information on Instagram and Facebook.

Website: <https://www.skillsforkidsbooks.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/melissamunro.boyd>

Instagram: @melimunro



About the Author

Dr. Melissa Munro Boyd is a wife, mother of 3, clinical psychologist, and officer in the United States Army. Dr. Boyd has spent much of her clinical career treating military service members with behavioral health disorders and she currently serves as the Deputy Chief for the Division of Behavioral and Social Health Outcomes Practice at the Defense Centers for Public Health-Aberdeen. Dr. Boyd was also stationed at USAG Humphreys in South Korea. Prior to the Army, Dr. Boyd worked in the Philadelphia School District where she completed her dissertation on the impact of community violence on children. She is a proud graduate of Hampton University in Virginia, where she earned her Bachelor's in Psychology and of La Salle University in Philadelphia, where she earned her Master's and Doctorate in Clinical Psychology. Her professional interests include the impact of mental health on families, suicide prevention and awareness, and promoting healthy emotions and coping skills through children's literature. Through it all, God and her family have been a constant source of strength and motivation.

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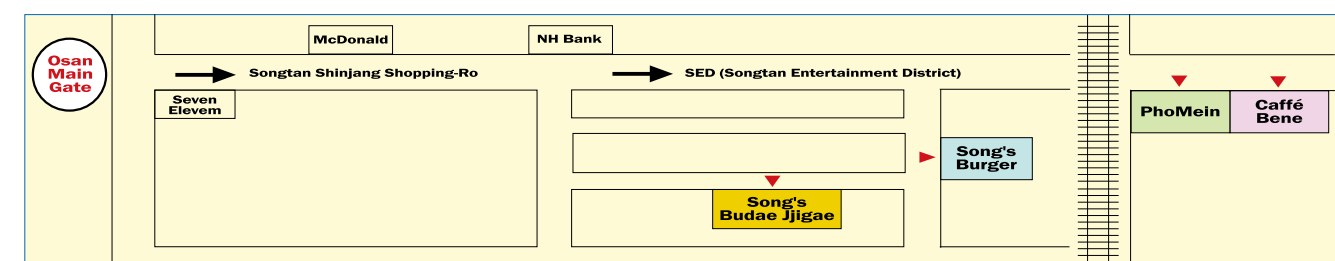
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BOOTS, BONDS, AND BATTLE BUDDIES

Military Spouses Go All-In at Combat Spouses Day

By Jetta Allen

Photography by Jetta Allen and Anton Giese, courtesy of 4-2 Attack Battalion



Ready to Test Your Grit?

Think you've got what it takes? 4-2 Attack Battalion invited military spouses from across the USAG Humphreys community to step into the action and experience a glimpse of what their service members face in the field.

This time, the battlefield belonged to the spouses. Teams geared up and took on a timed, ten-event course filled with physical challenges and military trivia. From grenade tosses to 200-pound LMTV tire flips, participants pushed their limits, testing strength, strategy, and determination under pressure. To add even more spirit to the competition, organizers threw in a bonus challenge: come up with a creative team name and rock a coordinated costume. The best-dressed squad

walked away with extra points and plenty of bragging rights, and the team to place first walked away with four gift certificates for a one-night stay at the Dragon Hill Lodge at USAG Yongsan in Seoul. The stakes were high, to say the least.

What Is Combat Spouses Day?

Combat Spouses Day mirrors challenges like the Army's famed Best Warrior Competition and Murph Challenge. Instead of service members, Combat Spouses Day is open to spouses of every branch, an intentional move that turns a sprawling garrison into one cohesive community. Timed events, performance-based deductions, and penalty seconds for rule violations keep the competition tight.

Before the Whistle Blew: What Spouses Were Saying

Before stepping onto the course, competitors were full of energy, nerves, and team pride.

"This event is a great way to challenge ourselves and see what our spouses go through, just challenge ourselves, have fun, and it's probably only half of what they actually go through."

— Special Ops Spouses

"Super pumped and excited." — Choppers and Chalk

"Going to kill this!" — Death Dealers Attack Squad

"Looks like a lot of fun." — Duck and Cover

Inside the Course: Ten Tests of Strength and Smarts

At Collier Gym's Soldier Field, spectators filled the stands. Children were cheering for their parents, friends were capturing every stumble and victory, and service members were rooting for their spouses. Each event was more than just a competition; it was a personal challenge, a chance for spouses to prove to themselves that they had what it takes and to have fun while they tried!

Gas-Mask Familiarization Challenge

In a nod to one of the most dreaded parts of Basic Training, the gas chamber, spouses took on the Gas-Mask Familiarization Challenge. For many soldiers, the gas mask portion of training is unforgettable, with burning eyes, coughing fits, and the difficulty of staying calm in a cloud of CS gas. While this event was far less intense, it captured the urgency, discomfort, and skill required to wear the Army's M50 protective mask properly. Competitors raced to open, wear, and seal their masks, offering a fun yet eye-opening glimpse into the challenges soldiers face during military training.



Combat-Gear Relay

Spouses went head-to-head in a high-energy relay, racing to gear up in an Advanced Combat Helmet, an Improved Outer Tactical Vest, a leg-mounted gas mask carrier, and a rubber M4 rifle. Once fully suited, each participant sprinted down the lane and back before shedding their gear and grabbing a kettlebell for a final down-and-back run. The clock stopped when the last teammate crossed the finish line. Team members were encouraged to work together, helping each other carry kettlebells or remove gear to get across the line faster.



Grenade Toss

In this precision-based event, competitors aimed to toss dummy grenades into a designated target zone or, better yet, directly into the crate. Accuracy was key: each successful toss into the crate earned valuable time deductions to lower the team's overall score. The clock stopped once all four team members had each thrown two dummy grenades into the target area.



Combat First Aid

This event put competitors' medical training to work as they tended to simulated wounds. Teams worked to properly pack, wrap, and treat injuries, demonstrating knowledge and care under time constraints.



Litter Carry

Mixing comedy and cardio, this event was a favorite of both competitors and spectators. Here, teams worked together to take care of "Rescue Randy," a 180-pound dummy representing a wounded soldier. First, secured him to the litter, then raced down the field and back, trying not to drop poor Randy. It was a true test of teamwork, strength, communication, and endurance.



Slip-'n'-Slide Low Crawl

Who doesn't love a slip-"n"-slide! Competitors dove headfirst into a slippery challenge where water, mud, and speed combined to create a punishing low crawl. It was a messy, fast-paced scramble that demanded both determination and agility.



Obstacle Gauntlet

Named the gauntlet for its boldness, this obstacle course was a series of tough physical trials, including weighted sled drags, flipping massive 200-pound LMTV tires, clearing hurdles, and heaving medicine balls over their heads, all designed to push every muscle and test your grit.



Combat Supply Relay

In this strength and teamwork-driven event, teams of four tackled a supply mission in a relay-style format. At the starting line, two team-

mates geared up with fully packed rucks and each carried two 5-gallon water jugs approximately 75 feet to a designated drop zone. There, they swapped the jugs for 30mm ammo cans and hauled them back to the start. The second pair then took over, carrying the ammo cans down and returning with the water jugs. Once both pairs completed the circuit, they finished the relay, testing their endurance, coordination, and giving them a small taste of what supply runs look like in the field.



Military Trivia

Military trivia events were scattered throughout the course, giving competitors breaks between daunting events. This event proved to be one of the biggest time traps, as these quizzes challenged teams on their knowledge of U.S. and Korean military facts, ranging from ranks and equipment to branch-specific details.



Command Perspective: Families First and Logistics Support

During the awards ceremony, Lt. Col. William Carrion, Commander of the 4-2 Attack Battalion, emphasized the importance of honoring families alongside service members. "Soldiers always get thanked, but families need to be appreciated and celebrated just as much as us," he told the crowd.

He extended his gratitude to the volunteers who helped set up, test, and run the event and gave special recognition to Collier Gym. Their flexibility in allowing multi-day access to the field played a critical role in the event's success, supporting setup, course testing, and ensuring a smooth execution on game day. "The Collier staff were a central force behind the logistics that made Combat Spouses Day possible," he noted.

Lt. Col. Carrion also acknowledged support from the USAG Humphreys Department of Public Works, which provided essential course supplies like cones and hurdles. He gave special thanks to Dragon Hill Lodge at USAG Yongsan for sponsoring the grand prize for the first-place team.

Best of all, he confirmed plans to bring Combat Spouses Day back next year, promising more mud, memories, and meaningful moments for the military community.

Why Events Like This Matter

With frequent relocations, unpredictable duty hours, and the challenges of living overseas, many military spouses face isolation. Events like this help bridge the gap where shared sweat builds instant friendships turning months of small talk into moments of camaraderie on a single obstacle course lane.

Army veteran Autumn McGuffey shared she "signed up looking to meet other spouses and put myself outside of my usual comfort zone. I'm pretty introverted, so connecting with other people can be difficult. I knew that taking the leap to be put on a team would help me meet other amazing people, and it truly did! I had an incredible team and made friends in the process."

One spectator shared a touching moment: a young boy running along the fence, cheering for his mom.

"As military spouses, we don't often get to be in the spotlight where our kids see us accomplish greatness, but today, that boy was beaming with pride seeing his mom's perseverance and strength."

Real Talk After the Course

When the last obstacle was cleared, and the clock stopped ticking, the stories didn't end at the finish line. Here's what some participants had to say about the experience—from the hilarious to the heartfelt:

"Harder than we thought but fun, especially with our group of friends." — Courtney Cintron, Duck and Cover

"I feel accomplished and proud of our team—and of every spouse who powered through." — Erin Thompson, Spousal Forces

"The litter carry was the best and most hilarious to watch." — Rachel Couchey

"It also made me feel like a kid back in BCT again." — Autumn McGuffey

The event "helps understand and experience what they (service members) do." — Team Hooah Honeys

"Great way to challenge ourselves and see what our spouses go through." — Special Ops Spouses

So... Who Crushed the Competition?



Best-Dressed Squad: Duck and Cover



First Place: Spousal Forces with a time of 13:21



Second Place: Hooah Honeys with a time of 19:08



Third Place: Death Dealers Attack Squad with a time of 19:41



Fourth Place: Duck and Cover with a time of 21:28



Fifth Place: Seoul Survivor with a time of 22:07

Other Fierce Contenders



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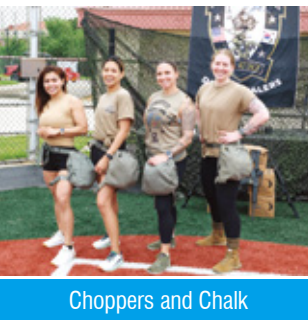
Battle Baddies



M&Ms



Special Ops Spouses



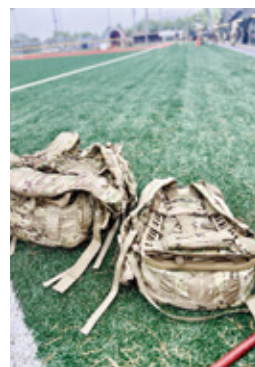
Choppers and Chalk





1st Lt. Preston Kerlegrand, the visionary behind Combat Spouses Day, welcomed all competitors with a smile. ◀

Every top-three finisher claimed a 30 mm Apache shell engraved with the event date and the 4-2 Attack Battalion's insignia. ▶



Mark Your Calendars And Start Brainstorming Team Names

Combat Spouses Day is more than a challenge; it's a celebration of boots, bonds, and battle buddies, where military spouses go all in. They put trust in their team and face each challenge with courage and power that only a military spouse can bring. Whether you're part of "Chopper and Chalk" and ready to board an aircraft or planning to show up as "Duck and Cover" in neon feathers, the event proves that when spouses stand together, the entire installation becomes stronger, prouder, and a little muddier at times too. Think you've got what it takes? Start training, get creative with those costumes, and we'll see you on the field.

For more updates on events and activities from the 4-2 Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, follow them at 4-2 Attack Battalion on Facebook.

For more stories about military life in South Korea, follow us on social media and visit our website for full magazine downloads, exclusive editorial articles, and special blog content you won't find anywhere else!

About the Author

Jetta Allen is a proud Army spouse and Editor in Chief of *United on the RoK* Magazine. Since arriving at USAG Humphreys in 2019, she has channeled her experiences into storytelling, community building, and advocacy for military families. Her journey from volunteer contributor to published author and creative leader reflects the resilience, adaptability, and heart of military spouses everywhere. Named the 2025 Armed Forces Insurance Military Spouse of the Year for USAG Humphreys, Jetta is passionate about amplifying the voices of those who serve behind the scenes. Whether she's writing, photographing, or cheering from the sidelines, Jetta believes in the power of connection to help military families thrive—no matter where they're stationed.



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Judge Advocate (Major)

United States Air Force Reserves (1995-2006)
Served as a Judge Advocate in the Air Force Reserves, retiring in October 2006.

Judge Advocate

United States Air Force (1983-1995)
Active Duty Judge Advocate, practicing all areas of military law

Law School Professor

University of the Ryuky Law School
Okinawa, Japan

Practice Areas

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Soldiers from Camp Humphreys and Osan Air Base join members of Knights of Columbus Assembly 3348 and Council 14223 to lay wreaths at the UN Memorial Cemetery in Busan on May 25, 2025.

Honoring Faith and Sacrifice

Knights of Columbus Lead Memorial Day Tribute at UN Memorial Cemetery in Busan

By Rufino Bartolome Flores, Jr

Memorial Day Pilgrimage to the UN Memorial Cemetery in Busan

The Knights of Columbus from both the Bishop John J. Kaising Council 14223 and Bishop Joseph W. Eastabrook Assembly 3348 at Camp Humphreys planned, prepared, and conducted a Memorial Day Remembrance Trip to the United Nations Memorial Cemetery in Busan, South Korea. The event took place on Monday, 26 May 2025, in honor of Memorial Day. This particular Patriotic Tribute not only included the Knights of

Columbus from Camp Humphreys, Korea, but also the Knights of Columbus from Osan Air Base, as well as families from the Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Community who attend Mass regularly at both Camp Humphreys and Osan Air Base.

Honoring Heroes at the UN Memorial Cemetery: A Tradition of Remembrance

To understand the deeper significance of this tribute, it's important to reflect on the role and history of the UN Memorial Cemetery in

Busan. This trip was not the first time the Knights of Columbus have conducted this Patriotic Tribute to the United Nations Memorial Cemetery in Busan, South Korea. Since its establishment in 2007, members of the military council on the Korean Peninsula have paid tribute there annually. The significance of paying homage to this cemetery lies in its status as the only United Nations Memorial Cemetery outside the Continental United States of America; in fact, it is the only one in the world. There are approximately 2,300 military service



◀ The UN Memorial Cemetery in Busan. (Photo Korea - Oh Gyungtaek.)

40,896 names engraved on the Wall of Remembrance that pays tribute to the Service Members who fought and died under the United Nations umbrella in defense of the Korean Peninsula. Securing an etching of his name for display in the newly dedicated Kapaun Chapel at Camp Humphreys was a key task for the Council.

Planning a Memorial Tribute to the UN Memorial Cemetery

In preparation for this Patriotic Tribute, three months of detailed coordination ensured broad participation and smooth execution. As the largest Catholic Community overseas, securing dates and times for the entire Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Community is challenging. Therefore, having a detailed plan that included a concept with a series of events leading to the Patriotic Tribute was essential. The plan was approved by U.S. Army Chaplain (Maj.) Bernardino Yebra, and delivered to the Religious Support

members laid to rest in the cemetery that participated in the Korean War from 22 different countries. For American Service Members serving on the Korean Peninsula, there are 40 Korean War Veterans buried at the United Nations Memorial Cemetery. Of the 40 American Veterans, 13 were Catholic, and one was a Knight of Columbus. The United Nations Memorial Cemetery pays tribute to all nations participating in the Korean War. There are over twenty-nine memorials, of which the most prominent is the Wall of Remembrance, which contains all the names of the fallen Service Members who sacrificed their lives for the freedom of the Korean Peninsula.

The Legacy of U.S. Army Chaplain (Capt.) Emil J. Kapaun

The significance of this year's event was also driven by the renaming of the Freedom Chapel at Camp Humphreys, Korea, to the Emil Kapaun Chapel on Thursday, 05 June 2025.

"I believe it's absolutely fitting to memorialize this chapel in

his honor, where our Catholic congregation gathers to worship. Chaplain Kapaun's story is one of personal courage, faith in God, and love of his fellow Soldiers."

~ Col. Ryan Workman shared at the renaming ceremony.

U.S. Army Chaplain (Capt.) Emil J. Kapaun served during the Korean War and died in a North Korean prison camp. Known for his heroic deeds both in combat and as a prisoner of war, Kapaun was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor in 2013. In 2025, Pope Francis declared him Venerable on the path toward canonization. At the UN Memorial Cemetery, his name is one of



▲ Faithful Navigator, Command Sgt. Maj. Jim Lowery, assists Army Chaplain (Maj.) Bernardino Yebra in obtaining an etching of Chaplain (Capt.) Emil J. Kapaun's name at the Wall of Remembrance.

◀ Chaplain (Capt.) Emil J. Kapaun celebrating Mass during the Korean War using the hood of a Jeep as his altar, Oct. 7, 1950. Less than a month later, Chaplain (Capt.) Emil J. Kapaun would, without regard for his own life, save a fellow soldier from certain death. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Raymond Piper.

Office of Camp Humphreys two months before the event to facilitate resourcing.

One month before the event, we began promoting it to Catholic Families from both Camp Humphreys and Osan Air Base to attend. Attendance included transportation, one night at the Commodore Hotel in Busan, and a Prayer Breakfast before the Patriotic Tribute. Eighty-seven Catholics from the community signed up for the trip to Busan, Korea, and over one hundred and ten Catholics across the peninsula participated in the Patriotic Tribute at the UN Memorial Cemetery.

The Journey to Busan and Arrival at the UN Memorial Cemetery

The United Nations Memorial Cemetery in Busan is a four-and-a-half-hour bus ride from Camp Humphreys. Movement from Camp Humphreys commenced at 2:00 PM on Sunday, 25 May, allowing Catholic families to attend Mass at both Camp Humphreys and Osan Air Base. Following the conclusion of Mass at Osan, families made the approximately forty-minute drive to Camp Humphreys. After regrouping, the group departed for the Busan area to begin the Memorial Day pilgrimage.

The group spent one night at the Commodore Hotel in Busan, then gathered the next morning for a Prayer Breakfast before traveling to the UN Memorial Cemetery. Following breakfast, the group made its way to the UN Memorial Cemetery to begin the formal remembrance activities. Upon arrival at the UN Memorial Cemetery in Busan, the participating members of the Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic



◀ Knights from the Council 14223 and Assembly 3348 greeted those who attended the Prayer Breakfast at the Commodore Hotel in Busan.

point of the cemetery, where all the nations' flags stood tall together. It was there that one of the long-standing Knights, Sir Knight Mark Smith and his wife, Seo Kyung Smith, respectfully laid the first of two wreaths at the base of the flag of the United States of America.

Upon conclusion of the formal wreath-laying ceremony, participants began the second key task. They placed American Flags at the gravesites of the American Service Members. Once complete, the group paused for the first of two group photos and conducted a procession to the American Monument at the base of the hill, where Army Chaplain (Maj.) Bernardino Yebra conducted the third key task and blessed the second wreath and the children before the wreath was placed at the base of the monument. The second group photo was taken at the steps near the American Monument overlooking

Community were met with kindness by the United States representative at the UN Memorial Cemetery, who invited the group into the Memorial Service Hall. Inside the Memorial Service Hall, participating Catholics received an orientation and introduction to the UN Memorial Cemetery.

Key Tasks of the Memorial Day Tribute at the UN Memorial Cemetery

The Patriotic Tribute had four key tasks for the Knights of Columbus and Catholic Family members. The first of four key tasks was a formal Wreath Laying Ceremony at the highest



▲ Soldiers from Camp Humphreys and Osan Air Base join members of Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Community for a second group photo at the UN Forces Monument.



▲ Army Chaplain (Maj.) Bernardino Yebra blessing the second wreath and Catholic Children prior to laying the wreath at the American Monument.



▲ Faithful Navigator for Assembly 3348 Command Sgt. Maj. Jim Lowery, Grand Knight from Council 14223 Lt. Col. Rufino Flores, Army Chaplain (Maj.) Bernardino Yebra, and Council Lecturer Navy Cmdr. Sam Trassere gathers for a photo upon conclusion of the formal wreath-laying ceremony at the base of the American Flag, the highest point of the UN Memorial Cemetery.

the UN Forces Monument, where the Unknown Soldiers buried at the UN Cemetery are honored.

After completing the group photo near the American Monument, participants turned their attention to the next solemn task, placing American Flags at the remaining American Service Member gravesites. Next, the group of Catholics made its way to the Wall of Remembrance to complete the fourth key task of finding U.S. Army Chaplain (Capt.) Emil J. Kapaun's name is inscribed on the monument. Using tracing paper,

they carefully made an etching of his name in preparation for the upcoming renaming of the home chapel at Camp Humphreys, Korea. The group then made its way to the United Nations Memorabilia Hall before the conclusion of this Patriotic Tribute.

From the UN Memorial Cemetery to the Emil Kapaun Chapel Dedication

The mission did not end with the conclusion of the Patriot Tribute but rather with the renaming Ceremony of Freedom Chapel to the Emil

Kapaun Chapel on Thursday, June 5, 2025. The U.S. military recognizes Chaplain (Capt.) Emil J. Kapaun as one of nine service members to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor. More importantly, to Catholics, he is one step closer to Sainthood. The chapel's dedication marked a fitting conclusion to the Memorial Day trip, underscoring its themes of remembrance, reflection, and faith.

Source: United Nations Memorial Cemetery in Korea. (n.d.). United on the ROK. United Nations Memorial Cemetery in Korea. <https://www.unmck.or.kr/eng>

*The appearance of U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement.

About the Author

Rufino Bartolome Flores, Jr. is a Lt. Col. in the United States Army and the current Grand Knight for the Bishop John J. Kaising Council 14223 at Camp Humphreys, Korea.

◀ Council 14223 Chaplain (Capt.) Ben Letran, who was instrumental in resourcing the Patriotic Tribute, stood with Army Chaplain (Maj.) Bernardino Yebra and Chaplain (Capt.) John Reuterman, also a member of Assembly 3348, at the renaming ceremony of Freedom Chapel to the Emil Kapaun Chapel on Thursday, 05 June 2025.



Friendships on the Move:

How Military Kids Make and Keep Friends

By Marie Chardon, PhD, Pediatric Psychologist and Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Adaptable Human Solutions



▲ Moving personal belongings during a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) move can be a significant undertaking, especially when crossing international borders during peak PCS season. Captured by the 405th Army Field Support Brigade - Europe & Africa.

While “resilient” is the term most often used to describe military children, it barely scratches the surface of the remarkable individuals we, as active-duty parents, have the honor of raising. Military families often have to move every two to three years, requiring children and adolescents to navigate changing social groups, school settings, and even countries. These transitions often coincide with the start of a new school year, making back-to-school season an especially complex and emotionally charged time for military kids.

While many children and adolescents surprise us with their flexibility and adaptability, helping to ease their distress and foster a smooth transition into their new school and community remain top priorities for parents during a Permanent Change of Station (PCS).

The back-to-school period can heighten stress for military children and adolescents who are already managing the challenges of relocation. Parents can help their children navigate this transition by focusing on four key areas: understanding expected adjustment reactions, encouraging school and community engagement while building friendships in a new place, helping maintain long-distance friendships,

and recognizing the signs that additional support may be needed.

Expected Adjustment Reactions

As with any major life change, it is natural for children and adolescents to experience emotional and behavioral changes throughout the PCS process, especially during back-to-school season. They may express sadness about leaving their old friends and teachers or worries about fitting in at a new school. Some children and adolescents might direct frustration or anger toward their parents for being the reason they have to move again. Conversely, others may feel excited about the opportunity to reinvent themselves or explore a new place.

These reactions—whether sadness, frustration, anxiety, or excitement—are all expected and normal during the acute phase of a PCS (i.e., the months leading up to the move and the months soon after). Allowing children and adolescents space to be vulnerable and express these feelings is integral to supporting them. It's also important for parents to remember that their own feelings about the move can influence their children, making self-awareness and open communication as a family even more critical.

Encouraging School and Community Engagement While Building Friendships in a New Place

Peer connections play a crucial role in helping children and adolescents feel a sense of belonging at a new duty station and school, which has been linked to children's well-being and academic performance. As children grow into adolescents, these relationships become even more important.

Parents can be proactive in creating opportunities for connection by:

- Researching and identifying opportunities for your child to get integrated into their preferred extracurricular activities (e.g., sports teams, art classes, music classes).
- Connecting with the larger community through social media to find other families with similarly aged children who may be interested in meeting up.
- Attending on-installation events geared towards families (e.g., back-to-school nights, school orientation events, Labor Day events).

Maintaining Long-Distance Friendships

Frequent moves give children and adolescents the unique opportunity to develop skills in maintaining long-distance friendships. These consistent friendships can provide a sense of stability and emotional grounding, especially while they build new, proximal friend groups within their new school and community.

Parents can encourage and facilitate these long-term connections by:

- Providing the time and space for video calls and chats with friends from previous duty stations (with appropriate levels of privacy).
- Organizing virtual activities or shared games that allow children to interact from afar (e.g., virtual Pictionary or collaborative creative projects).
- Giving access to age-appropriate multiplayer games that foster peer connections which can be a surprisingly effective way for them to bond and communicate.

- Facilitating traditional pen-pal exchanges or collaborative projects like shared journals.

Recognizing the Signs That Additional Support is Needed

While some mood and behavioral changes are expected during both a PCS and back-to-school, certain signs may indicate that a child or adolescent would benefit from additional professional support.



A student and assistant participate in the Humphreys Unified Special Olympics Track & Field Event at Humphreys Middle School track on Camp Humphreys, South Korea, April 17, 2025. Captured by Pfc. Seu Chan.



Humphreys High School's Beckett Babb takes batting practice at the 10th Annual Far East All-Stars and Pro Scouting Combine June 1, 2025, at Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka's (CFAY) Berkey Field. Captured by James Kimber.



Students gather for a group photo during a Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) event hosted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Far East District at Central Elementary School on Camp Humphreys, South Korea, on May 15, 2025. Capture by Yohan An.



A local military family enjoys an outing in Korea's famous pink muhly grass fields. Snapped by Kate Nelson.

These may include:

- Persistent avoidance of social situations or activities that they previously enjoyed.
- Excessive worry about peer interactions, reluctance to form new relationships, or noticeable distress when facing social situations.
- Persistent marked changes in behavior, such as acting out, engaging in risky behaviors, or experiencing mood swings.
- Physical symptoms (e.g., headaches, stomach-aches) that began around the time of the move.
- Excessive use of electronics (e.g., TV, gaming, YouTube) as a way to avoid social engagement.

If you notice any of these signs or have other concerns about your child's adjustment, reaching out for

professional guidance can provide valuable support. School counselors or psychologists are an excellent first resource. Additionally, organizations specializing in the needs of military families, such as Adaptable Human Solutions, offer individual and family therapy to help children and adolescents navigate these challenges and build confidence in their new environment.

*The appearance of U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement.

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About the Author

Dr. Marie Chardon is a licensed clinical psychologist specializing in clinical child and pediatric psychology, currently serving clients at Adaptable Human Solutions in Pyeongtaek, South Korea. Dr. Chardon uses a patient-centered and collaborative approach, working with her clients to establish clear goals that honor their unique needs, culture, and environment. Dr. Chardon is a proud military spouse and lives in South Korea with her husband and young daughter, where she enjoys the beautiful countryside and delicious local cuisine!



For more information about mental health services at Adaptable Human Solutions, please feel free to connect with us!

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Website: www.ahskorea.com
Email: welcome@ahskorea.com

Crosswords



By
Kate Nelson

in Korea

Characters

Across

- [2] famous tower
[5] landform of Korea
[8] the little penguin with an aviator's cap

Down

- [1] character on the right swing
[3] character on the left swing
[4] Korean word for boy
[6] capital of South Korea
[7] Korean word for girl

* Answer Key on Page 53.

USAG Daegu Bids Farewell to Trusted Leaders, Welcomes New Command Team

By *United on the RoK* Editorial Team
Photography by Ysamar Gómez

U.S. Army Garrison Daegu held a Change of Command and Change of Responsibility Ceremony on July 9, 2025, marking a new chapter in the garrison’s leadership. Garrison Commander Col. Dave Henning relinquished command to Col. Jeffrey Noll, and Command Sgt. Maj. Asgar Kamaludeen transferred responsibility to Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Hopkins.

The former command team of Area IV served the community with distinction, embodying what it means to lead with purpose, care, and professionalism. Their steadfast dedication to service members, civilians, and their families alike has left a meaningful and lasting impact, not just on mission success but on the spirit of the community itself. *United on the RoK* is especially grateful for their commitment to community connections, outreach, and their signature “Make a Difference” philosophy that guided all they did for the garrison. Special appreciation is also extended to Mrs. Michelle Henning and Mrs. Melanie Kamaludeen for their dedicated service to the Area IV community, including their leadership on school advisory committees and volunteer organizations that directly enriched the lives of military families.

The community now welcomes Area IV’s new Garrison Commander, Col. Jeffrey Noll, who arrives from his previous role as Chief of Staff of Army Cyber Command, Fort Gordon, Georgia,



From all of us at *United on the RoK* Magazine, we wish you a fond farewell!!



Col. Henning and his wife Michelle, alongside Sgt. Maj. Asgar Kamaludeen and his wife Melanie, share smiles and reflect on cherished memories from their time in Daegu.



Director of Installation Management Command-Pacific (IMCOM-Pacific) Brenda Lee McCullough oversaw the change of command and change of responsibilities, thanking all four individuals for their service and leadership.

and Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Hopkins, formerly Command Sgt. Maj. for USAG Fort Belvoir, Virginia. Both bring a wealth of experience and fresh perspectives. We look forward to continued excellence and community-building under their leadership.

Together, the USAG Daegu Command Team will continue the vital mission of sustainment, support, and defense, while fostering an environment where service members, civilians, and their families can thrive in Area IV.



Garrison Commander Col. Jeffrey Noll and Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Hopkins assumed command leadership and responsibilities of USAG Daegu.

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Tastes Like Home

How 292 Lu Bakery Stole My Heart

By Anna Lonborg
Photos by 292 Lu Bakery and Photos by Annie Lou

Walking into 292 Lu Bakery for the first time felt like coming home, like visiting family you didn't know you had. The cozy, laid-back vibe invites you to sit, relax, and enjoy good food with good company. The staff greeted me with genuine kindness, welcoming not just me but my dogs too, as if we were already part of something special.

When they opened just around the corner from my home, I stopped by out of curiosity. But it is the incredible food, the comforting atmosphere, and the joy that fills the space that keeps me coming back. As I prepare to PCS and leave this chapter behind, I know I'll miss 292 Lu Bakery deeply and if I could pack it up and take it with me, I would in a heartbeat.

Before I share what makes this place so special to me, let me tell you about the incredible woman who started it all.



Lina's homemade sourdough bread.



292 Lu Bakery in Paengseong.

Baking Joy: The Heart Behind 292 Lu Bakery

For Lina Kim, the path to opening 292 Lu Bakery began with a simple, sweet memory: her grandmother's love for madeleines. That cherished inspiration eventually led her to study at Kokusai Culinary School in Japan, where she deepened her passion and skills for artisanal baking.

After opening her first shop in Sosabeol, Lina decided to relocate to Paengseong, seeking the peace of the countryside and a slower rhythm of life. "I love being able to see the sky," she says with a smile, reflecting on the sense of calm that now surrounds her bakery.

"The first time we went, Lina greeted us with so much warmth and made us feel like our limited Korean was far better than it was. We couldn't help but try every delicious pastry she had to offer. It was definitely love at first bite, and we returned frequently—not only for the amazing pastries but for the warmth of friendship Lina extended every time we walked in the door."
— Chad Card

At the heart of 292 Lu are Lina's favorite things to make: sourdough and croissants, baked fresh and with intention. But what truly brings her joy isn't just the bread. It's the people. The families who return week after week, the laughter of children, and even the wagging tails of neighborhood dogs who stop by for a treat.

"I do this to make people happy," she shares. And in every bite, you can taste the happiness she bakes into her craft.

"From the moment we first stepped into 292 Lu Bakery and took that first bite and sip, we knew we had discovered somewhere truly special. Whether



Children play and create art in the kids' corner at 292 Lu Bakery.

she's behind the counter or busy in the kitchen, Lina is always there—smiling, working, and sharing her joy through every dish she serves. Her love and care shine through in everything she does, and she's constantly finding new ways to make the café feel even more welcoming and accessible. Every visit feels like coming home. We love it so much, we recently moved just down the street."
— KimchiRednecks, local content creators

But Lina's impact goes far beyond the food—it's about the connections she's built and the little moments of joy that fill every visit.

A Bakery Built on Love and Community

More than just a place to pick up your favorite croissant or sourdough loaf, 292 Lu Bakery has become a vibrant hub of community connection where Korean roots and international flavors blend into something uniquely welcoming. For many in the Pyeongtaek area, the bakery feels like a warm meeting point between Korea and America, a little melting pot where everyone feels at home.

Lina has gone beyond baking to create a space that truly nurtures. Children are encouraged to play and create in a cozy corner designed just for them, and their drawings proudly decorate the walls, reminders of the joy and creativity that fill the space. “It’s all about happiness,” Lina says. “And that comes from the people.”



Lina Kim, Baker and Owner, and Vicky Cheviet, Manager, holding their first Best of Pyeongtaek Award.

“When we moved to South Korea and settled off-post, we never imagined that just a few houses down, 292 Lu would open and become such a special part of our lives. From day one, Lina and the entire team welcomed us like family—they love our kids as if they were their own. We feel so blessed to have 292 Lu not just as our favorite bakery, but as our neighbor and part of our community.”
— The Ching Family

That warmth hasn’t gone unnoticed. 292 Lu Bakery has become a beloved local favorite, earning multiple honors in the South of Seoul Best of Pyeongtaek poll—including Best Tiny Bakery (2023 & 2024), Best Cold Sandwiches (2023), and Best Cozy Neighborhood Coffee Shop (2023 & 2024).

Lina’s support for the community extends beyond her doors. She championed a local young artist by featuring their whimsical artwork on T-shirts that were sold at the bakery, with proceeds going to Rebel Rescue Korea, a nonprofit animal welfare group. And during holidays, regulars find a sweet surprise—custom-decorated cookies with their names lovingly written in icing.

“From the moment I met Lina, there was instant love. She is the most authentic human being, and that love and authenticity goes into everything she makes. You can taste the love.”
— Brian Rich

Of course, what keeps people coming back just as much as the kindness is the food—seasonal, nostalgic, and crafted with care.

A Taste of Home in Every Sip and Bite

Lina’s menu is ever-evolving, guided by fresh ingredients of the season and the stories of her customers. She delights in creating seasonal drinks that not only refresh and comfort but also spark memories of home. Regulars often mention flavors they miss from the U.S., and Lina listens with care, researching recipes, testing ingredients, and recreating those nostalgic tastes in her cozy corner of Paengseong.

From drinks to dishes, 292 Lu Bakery is filled with menu items that customers can’t get enough of. Seasonal favorites like Lina’s homemade American apple cider in the fall, the ever-popular pumpkin spice and gingerbread lattes in winter, and the tangy, creamy American Frosted Lemonade Milkshake in warmer months keep the drink menu fresh and nostalgic. This summer, she’s introducing a playful new addition: a sweet and tart Cherry Limeade that’s already becoming a hit.

On the food side, several items have earned cult-favorite status. The homemade chicken salad is a customer favorite—fresh, flavorful, and perfectly balanced. The chicken sandwich, stacked on Lina’s signature bread, is another must-try. Breakfast regulars rave about the



American Frosted Lemonade



292 Lu Bakery's brownies



Homemade chicken salad



Fan favorite chicken sandwiches



Avocado Toast



Bacon Egg Bun



My dog, Harper, on a coffee run

bacon egg bun, while the avocado toast remains a beautifully crafted staple. But be warned—if you’re hoping to grab a loaf of sourdough or one of her coveted croissants, come early. They often sell out fast, and for very good reason.

Always Something New to Savor

At 292 Lu Bakery, the menu is always evolving—just like Lina’s creativity. As the primary baker, she enjoys experimenting with new recipes and flavors, keeping the offerings exciting and seasonal. While some regulars occasionally mourn the disappearance of a beloved cookie or pastry, Lina gently encourages them to step out of their comfort zone and try something new. Her passion for baking is fueled by curiosity and a desire to surprise and delight her customers. So, if your favorite treat happens to disappear, take it as an invitation—you just might discover a new favorite waiting in the display case.

Behind every perfectly baked treat is a team that puts just as much heart into service as Lina does into her recipes.

A Team with Heart

The warmth of 292 Lu Bakery isn’t just baked into the goods, it’s embodied by the incredible staff who bring the space to life every day. Kind, attentive, and endlessly welcoming, the team works hard to support Lina’s vi-



Zoey enjoying one of our visits to 292 Lu.



Cherry Limeade

sion and ensure every customer feels at home. From the manager to the baristas and kitchen staff, each person plays a role in creating the cozy, inviting atmosphere that regulars have come to love. Their dedication, teamwork, and genuine care are part of what makes 292 Lu more than just a bakery, it’s a place where hospitality is just as important as what’s on the menu.

Gratitude in Every Bite

For Lina, the success of 292 Lu Bakery is rooted in the unwavering support of the community. She often

shares how eternally grateful she is for her regular customers, the families, friends, and food lovers who return week after week. “I’m thankful to be able to share what I make,” she says. “It brings me joy to see people smile.” That gratitude shines through in everything she does, from the thoughtfully prepared food to the warm, welcoming atmosphere. It’s clear that for Lina, baking isn’t just a profession, it’s a way to give back to the people who make her dream possible.

Still, if you’re planning a first visit—or your tenth—here are a few customer favorites you shouldn’t miss.

Personal Favorites (But Honestly, You Can’t Go Wrong)

If I had to pick a go-to order, it would definitely be the brownie—rich, fudgy, and perfectly satisfying—and whatever seasonal drink Lina’s crafted that week. From pumpkin spice to gingerbread to her dreamy frosted lemonade milkshake, the flavors are always spot on. But truly, you can’t go wrong here. Everything is created with love, and you can taste it in every single bite and sip. It’s like Lina knows exactly what your soul needs before you even order.

Welcoming for All—Accessibility and Outdoor Comfort

292 Lu Bakery strives to be a welcoming space for everyone. The café is wheelchair and stroller accessible, making it easy for families, pet parents, and anyone with mobility needs to enjoy a visit. While the parking area is unpaved and can get a bit muddy during rainy weather, that doesn’t stop guests; it’s common to see single and double strollers, both for children and pups, rolling through the doors. There’s also a charming outdoor seating area for those who prefer to soak up the fresh air. Dogs are more than welcome, but just like their human companions, they’re expected to follow a few house rules, most importantly, staying on leash or in a stroller to ensure a peaceful experience for all guests.

And that welcoming spirit extends into every corner of the café—from the menu to the environment itself.

More Than a Bakery—A Place to Belong

Whether you’re meeting friends for a leisurely coffee, grabbing lunch with family, or simply taking a quiet moment for yourself, 292 Lu Bakery is the perfect place to pause and savor. With its freshly baked pastries, hearty sandwiches, crisp salads, seasonal drinks, and comforting atmosphere, every visit feels like coming home. It’s

even dog-friendly, welcoming furry companions with the same warmth they show every guest. It’s not just a bakery, it’s a community built on care, connection, and the simple joy of sharing good food. And once you’ve experienced it, you’ll understand why so many of us keep coming back, again and again.



Visits with friends at 292 Lu Bakery are the best.

Follow 292 Lu Bakery on social media where they share updates on additions to the menu, changes in their business hours, and more:
<https://www.facebook.com/292lubakery>
https://www.instagram.com/292lu_bakery/

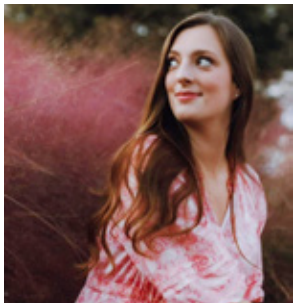
Hours of Operation:
 Tuesday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.
 Saturdays and Sundays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
 Last order, 4:30 p.m.

292LU Bakery
 42-49 Dongchang-ri Paengseong-eup Pyeongtaek-si Gyeonggi-do
<https://naver.me/FLe6e1bo>

About the Author

Anna Lonborg is a versatile creative with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC). Previously, Anna worked as a fashion designer specializing in product development, where she collaborated on designs and oversaw the production process from concept to completion. As a military spouse, she lived in Korea for nearly five years, where she worked full-time as a career counselor but pursued her love of creating through photography (@Photos_by_Annielou).

In addition to her professional pursuits, Anna is a full-time stepmom to an upcoming college freshman who will be attending UCCS and a wife to her active-duty Army husband. In her free time, she enjoys painting, traveling, and spending time with her family. Her experiences as a military spouse and her travels have shaped her perspective, making her a strong advocate for adaptability and growth in both career and life.





Girl Scouts in Jeju

Beyond Borders, Beneath the Stars

Inside USA Girl Scouts Overseas Camps

By Sarah Symbolist

When

you think of summer camp, images of tents pitched in the woods, canoeing on a lake, marshmallows by a campfire, and songs sung beneath starry skies likely come to mind. Now imagine adding in a dolphin and cave boat tour in Portugal, whitewater rafting an hour outside of Tokyo, and day trips to Taipei City to that mix. Welcome to the world of USA Girl Scouts Overseas Camps, a unique blend of traditional camp fun and global exploration.

A Sisterhood Without Borders

Girl Scouts is a leadership development organization dedicated to empowering girls in grades K-12 through hands-on experiences, skill-building, and community involvement. With a focus on courage, confidence, and character, Girl Scouts encourages girls to explore their interests from STEM and the outdoors to entrepreneurship and service, while forming lasting friendships and making a positive impact on their world.

What Makes USA Girl Scouts Overseas Camps Unique

USA Girl Scouts Overseas (USAGSO) is a branch of Girl Scouts specifically designed for American girls living abroad, whether they're military families stationed in Korea, diplomats in Beijing, or expatriates in Italy. With strong networks on U.S. military installations around the world, including our very own Osan Air Base, USAG Humphreys, and USAG Daegu installations, this program gives girls a taste of familiar scouting traditions while embracing the unique culture and community of their host country. It's a safe, supportive space to grow as leaders, explore local cultures, and connect with other military-connected girls who understand what it's like to live life on the move. With over 10,000 members in more than 60 countries, USAGSO is more than a youth program; it's a lifeline of connection, leadership, and identity for girls navigating life outside the United States.

A Familiar Tradition, Far From Home

For many military families stationed overseas, summer is a time of transition, such as PCS moves,

new schools, and new friends. It's also a chance for connection, discovery, and adventure. One of the most enriching aspects of the overseas program is its summer camps. These camps are set in various countries around the world and run in the spirit of American Girl Scouting. USAGSO offers girls a rare opportunity to explore new cultures while celebrating the values that tie them back to their home country. And they're open to all registered USAGSO Girl Scouts living abroad.

Blending Tradition with Adventure: Camps Around the World

The camps are designed to be inclusive and bilingual where needed, BUT only open to Girl Scouts from overseas, creating a space for rich cultural exchange. Campers engaged in everything from kayaking and STEM workshops to local service projects and International Day celebrations. While fun is at the heart of the experience, USAGSO Overseas Camps emphasize the same core values as stateside camps: confidence, courage, and character.

Camp locations vary from year to year, and this year, USAGSO offered three camp

opportunities for scouts of all ages. Mini Camps were three-night experiences, held in places like Nuestra Cabaña, Mexico, and Schmitten, Germany, designed to prepare Girl Scouts—from Daisies to Cadettes—for longer, week-long overnight camps. Adventure Camps, also three nights long, were held in Portugal, Slovenia, and South Korea, focusing on outdoor activities unique to each destination and welcoming Girl Scouts from Juniors through Ambassadors. For those seeking the classic camp experience, Week-Long Overnight Camps offer six nights of traditional Girl Scout fun in distinctive overseas settings, open to Girl Scouts from Brownies



Girl Scouts River Tracing



High Rope Walking



Camp Taiwan Grounds



Girl Scouts Checking Out Views on Jeju Island

through Ambassadors. This year, the week-long overnight camp was held in Taipei, Taiwan.

Summer Camps that Build Confidence, Courage, and Character

Keeping Traditions Alive, Globally

Despite their far-flung settings, USAGSO Camps stay rooted in the timeless traditions of American Girl Scouting: opening and closing night campfires, S'mores nights, SWAPS (Special Whatchamacallits Affectionately Pinned Somewhere), and sing-alongs are all part of the package. They also serve as a bridge between worlds, where girls light friendship fires and share stories from life in places like Mongolia, Germany, and Japan. In a world where connection across cultures is more important than ever, the Girl Scouts' campfires represent more than just a physical flame—they symbolize unity, shared experiences, and the passing of values that transcend borders.

Tips for Parents Sending Kids to Overseas Camps

When I first mentioned the idea of camp to my daughter, London, earlier this year, she was hesitant. The thought of going without knowing anyone made

her nervous, so we compromised: she'd go if her friend went too. Luckily, her friend's parents had the same idea, and we were able to send them to both the adventure camp in Jeju and the week-long overnight camp in Taiwan. Having a built-in buddy by her side made all the difference. It eased her homesickness, gave her the confidence to try new things, and helped turn both camps into unforgettable, shared adventures.

Prepping for camp with my daughter was also a collaborative process. We reviewed the packing list together, checked for any special themed days, shopped together to find the perfect hiking shoes, and made sure she had time to break them in before camp. To stay organized, we packed each day's outfit in labeled gallon-sized ziplock bags in hopes that getting ready each morning at camp would be easy and stress-free. We weren't the only family preparing this way either. When asked for tips for future camp parents, Nadia's mom, Shams, shared, "Definitely pack with them so they know where everything is."

For many parents, sending their child to camp for the first time is both exciting and nerve-wracking, especially when it's in a different country. Parents can rest assured that the camp directors and volunteers, many of whom are military spouses themselves, are trained not only in

first aid and badge facilitation but also in intercultural awareness and sensitivity. Safety, structure, and communication are top priorities, with thorough emergency plans and culturally aware programming that meets Girl Scout standards worldwide. When my daughter was sick overnight, we were immediately informed and kept up to date with texts and pictures of her. Another benefit I truly appreciated as a parent was the no-electronics policy at camp. It forced the girls to unplug, be fully present, and connect face-to-face, without the constant distractions of screens, and in doing so, made more meaningful memories.

How Overseas Camps Benefit the Whole Family

Whether it's your daughter's first overnight away from home or simply her first time camping outside the U.S., you can feel confident knowing she'll be supported, challenged, and surrounded by caring mentors and new friends. For many families, camp becomes a turning point, where girls return home more independent, more confident, and eager for what comes next. Nadia's parents shared that their biggest hesitation was how she'd manage on her own. Still, she thrived in the experience and handled the separation with confidence.

When we returned home from Camp Taiwan, I asked

my daughter if she wanted to attend again next year, even if her friends couldn't join her, and her answer was an enthusiastic YES. My husband didn't hesitate to show his support, offering to take her to next year's camp, as long as it meant he could cash in on a week-long solo vacation.

I wasn't a Girl Scout growing up, and seeing everything my daughter gets to experience now—traveling, learning new skills, and making friends from all over the world—it honestly moves me. This is the kind of opportunity I only dreamed about as a kid. Watching her grow more confident and adventurous with each camp reminds me that I'm giving her something I never had. And while a part of me wishes I could've done it too, an even bigger part is just so grateful that she can.

Although the camps are designed for the girls, they also create meaningful opportunities for parents and families. From solo vacations to family trips, each family found their own way to spend time while their camper was away. My husband and I took our youngest daughter on a memorable trip to Jeju, giving her our full attention while her sister was at camp. In Taiwan, another mom and I enjoyed a week-long "momcation." One dad used the quiet time to catch up on much-needed sleep, while another family, juggling multiple children and busy schedules, arranged for a fellow Scout's family to serve as



Girl Scouts River Tracing in Taiwan



Osan Girl Scouts in Taiwan

guardians and take their daughter to Camp Taiwan.

Of course, camp comes with costs, and for many families, it's a significant investment. Between the packing list, plane tickets, and accommodations, expenses can quickly add up. USAGSO understands this and is proud to offer financial aid to help make these life-changing experiences more accessible to families.

From Jeju to Taiwan: Camp Highlights from Asia

Island Adventures Camp on Jeju Island

In March 2025, 11 girls from around Asia headed to the island of Jeju for a weekend adventure camp. Known for its volcanic landscapes, lush forests, and coastal beauty, Jeju offered the perfect backdrop for adventure and cultural exploration. For most of the girls, including my daughter, it was their first time experiencing the island's rich blend of nature, culture, and community, all while strengthening friendships and earning new badges along the way.

Scouts hiked to the top of Seongsan Sunrise Peak (성산일출봉), explored the Jeju Folk Village (제주민속촌), and even had the chance to visit Jeju Aqua Planet - the largest aquarium in Asia. One thing that set Jeju apart from Taiwan was the food. The counselors shopped locally on

Jeju-do, and every meal had a distinct Korean flair - from Korean BBQ and triangle kimbap to bulgogi tacos, a recipe shared by volunteer (and Camp Humphreys local) Monica Hoffmann. The girls also ended the evenings in true Korean fashion - by singing noraebang, also known as karaoke.

Not only did my daughter form friendships she's eager to keep up, but she also connected with leaders who encouraged and inspired her. One even reinforced something my husband and I tell her almost daily—that she'd make an excellent lawyer someday.

Week-Long Overnight Camp: Camp Taiwan

In June 2025, 40 Girl Scouts from across the Asia-Pacific region gathered for an unforgettable overseas camp in the lush, mountainous countryside of northern Taiwan. Held at the renowned Camp Taiwan facility, the program offered a dynamic blend of outdoor adventure and cultural exchange. The theme of Camp Taiwan was Space is the Place. Each day brought a new intergalactic twist—from dressing up as your favorite female STEM role model to choosing sides in a "Light Side vs. Dark Side" Star Wars showdown. Other themes included Stars & Galaxy Day

and a playful Cowgirls vs. Aliens dress-up day, adding a fun, imaginative spark to the camp experience.

Scouts participated in rock climbing, archery, and river tracing while also enjoying classic camp favorites such as tie-dyeing and bead crafts. Each activity—such as practicing CPR on dummies or building solar-powered racers—was tied to specific badge requirements. At the end of each camp, the girls were sent home with a checklist outlining which badge steps they had completed. On one special day, the local Girl Scouts of Taiwan troop visited to share dinner, exchange SWAPS, and build new friendships across cultures. Evenings were filled with campfires, glow parties, hide-and-seek, and movie nights, adding a touch of magic to each day's adventures.

Voices from Camp: What Girls and Volunteers Say

Nadia, Age 11 (Junior)

"My favorite activity was river tracing because it involved water that was refreshing and super fun. I learned that cicadas are crunchy and I also learned first aid. For example, they taught us about extreme allergies. The thing I will miss most about camp was all the friends we made. I wonder when I can see them again!"

London, Age 10 (Junior)

"Making friends and meeting new people was my favorite part of both camps. Visiting Aqua Planet in Jeju was my favorite activity because I like visiting aquariums and I liked learning about knot tying in Taiwan. Oh, I also liked learning all the songs! The one thing I will miss most about camp is all the friends I made."

Monica Hoffmann, Gold Award Girl Scout and Camp Jeju Volunteer

"I was a Girl Scout since kindergarten and I had a full circle moment in Jeju. I learned how to crochet on a Girl Scouts Wider Opportunities trip to New Zealand years ago and I was able to teach the older girls how to crochet in Jeju. Hopefully it's something they remember!"



Nadia Rock Climbing



London Keeping Cool

How to Join USA Girl Scouts Overseas and Start the Adventure

USA Girl Scouts Overseas may be thousands of miles from home. Still, they create something close to magic. In this place, American values meet global adventure, where girls discover not only who they are but also who they can become. Behind every meeting, badge, and campfire moment are dedicated troop leaders who show up with heart, encouraging the girls to be brave, kind, and unapologetically themselves. As the new school year approaches, you'll likely hear more about local Girl Scout troops gearing up for another exciting year. If you're stationed in South Korea and have a daughter in grades K–12, please find your local contact below and get her started on this incredible journey!

- Daegu (Camp Walker / Camp Carroll): Ashley Courts acourts@girlscouts.org
- Osan Air Base: Ashton Little osangirlscouts@usagso.org
- Camp Humphrey's: Izzy Vorsteg humphreysgirlscouts@usagso.org

To learn more and find your local troop, visit the USA Girl Scouts Overseas website <https://www.usagso.org/>



About the Author

Sarah earned her bachelor's degree from the University of North Texas in Fashion Merchandising. She is married to her high school sweetheart and raising two fearless daughters. When she's not busy managing family life, you can find her browsing thrift stores, biking or hiking to discover new coffee shops, planning her next vacation adventure and writing about it all on her blog at www.sarahsymbolist.com

Crossword Answer Key (from Page 39):

1. Hechi
2. Lotte
3. Metamong
4. Namja
5. Peninsula
6. Seoul
7. Yeoja
8. Pororo



Jeonju Hanok Village is alive with art—from murals to hidden gems around every corner



The entrance to the village is written in Hangeul, Japanese Kanji, and English.

SLOW DOWN AND SOAK UP TRADITION IN JEONJU

By Jetta Allen

Looking for a getaway that feels like stepping back in time? Pack your walking shoes and head to Jeonju, one of Korea's most culturally rich destinations and a must-visit for anyone stationed on the peninsula.

As you stroll through the city, the details jump out right away. Walls aren't just functional; they're works of art lined with roof tiles in patterns of grids, lines, and even flowers. It's like wandering through an open-air gallery made of clay and stone.

The heart of it all is Jeonju's Hanok Village, home to over 700 preserved hanok (traditional Korean houses). It was even designated an International Slow City in 2010. What's a "Slow City," you ask? Think of it as the oppo-

site of fast-paced Seoul. It's all about preserving culture, slowing down, enjoying life, and making connections to the environment around you.

Jeonju is more than picturesque. It's a city with deep historical roots, dating back over 500 years to the Joseon Dynasty, and a symbol of Korean resilience during the Japanese occupation. History here isn't confined behind velvet ropes; you'll find it in the strains of Pansori (traditional musical storytelling), the scent of simmering street food, and the creak of wooden hanok floors.

Make sure to stroll down Taejo-ro, the bustling village's main street, famously featured in several Korean dramas and films. Swing by Gyeonggijeon Hall, where the portrait of King Taejo — the founder of the Joseon Dynasty, still watches over his beloved city.

While Seoul might be the nation's administrative capital, Jeonju is proudly known as Korea's capital of traditional culture. Its commitment to fully embracing sustainability, local happiness, community, and cultural preservation has earned it national recognition and more than a few return visitors.

Gyeonggijeon Shrine: Where History Lives On

No trip to Jeonju Hanok Village is complete without visiting Gyeonggijeon Shrine, one of the city's most treasured historical landmarks. Built in 1410, this shrine was established to honor King Taejo, the founder of the Joseon Dynasty. During the Joseon period, five portrait shrines were built across Korea for the veneration of King Taejo, but today, Jeonju's shrine is the only one that remains.

The name Gyeonggijeon means "Hall of Celebrating the Basis (of the Dynasty)," reflecting Jeonju's significance as the ancestral seat of the Yi Clan. While the shrine complex was destroyed during the Japanese invasions in the late 1500s, it was carefully rebuilt in 1614, with additional structures added over the years. Though much of it was again lost during the Japanese Occupation, efforts to restore it in the 1990s and early 2000s have brought this historic site back to life.

Behind the shrine, you'll find the Royal Portrait Museum, home to portraits of Korea's kings, including the only remaining one of King Taejo. The original, created in the 1400s, was too fragile to survive, so the version you see today is a careful reproduction from 1872, with later copies made to preserve the likeness. It's a fascinating glimpse into royal imagery, with King Taejo depicted in regal attire, marked by distinct features like his tall stature, large ears, and a small wart on his right



Not just a wall. It's a canvas of clay, earth, and tradition.



Portrait of King Taejo.



eyebrow. All these details were recorded in historical documents of the time.

The museum also features a portrait of King Sejong the Great, the visionary king who created Hangul, Korea's native alphabet. While no original image of King Sejong exists, the version on display was painted based on historical descriptions and was officially recognized in 1973.

Jeonju on Screen: K-Drama Filming Locations

Jeonju's historic charm has made it a go-to location for K-drama directors. Hagindang House, a beautiful Joseon-era hanok, was famously featured as Kim Hee-sung's home in Mr. Sunshine. Its classic design and rich history made it the perfect setting for the period drama.

Gyeonggijeon Shrine itself has also appeared in popular dramas like Love in the Moonlight and The King's Affection, thanks to its picturesque bamboo groves and centuries-old gates. Fans can even spot scenes filmed



▲ K-drama collage of 3 photos: Lights, camera, history — Jeonju's hanoks set the scene for countless K-dramas.

at Jeonjuhyanggyo Confucian School, another peaceful and history-filled spot often featured in sageuk (사극) (historical) dramas.



Flavors of Jeonju

Jeonju is a food lover's paradise, best known for its iconic bibimbap (비빔밥), a colorful mix of seasoned rice, fresh veggies, spicy gochujang, and sometimes tender beef tartare or sweet bulgogi in a sizzling hot pot (돌솥비빔밥). Don't miss local favorites like smoky tteok-galbi (grilled pork patties), crispy seafood pancakes, and refreshing hwangpomuk (황포묵 - mung-bean jelly salad).

For dessert, try Jeonju's famous choco pie, a rich, soft twist on the Korean classic, or explore other traditional sweets. Pair it all with makgeolli (막걸리 - sweet rice wine), baekseju (백세주 - herbal wine), or the ever-popular soju (소주). Let's not forget there are cafes, restaurants, and convenience stores scattered throughout. Whether you're after comfort food or bold new flavors, Jeonju delivers something for everyone!

How to Plan the Perfect Hanbok Experience in Jeonju

Don't miss the unforgettable experience of wearing a hanbok while strolling through Jeonju Hanok Village. The village is a picture-perfect neighborhood of traditional homes and cobblestone streets that bring Korea's heritage to life.

As a plus-size woman, I wasn't sure what to expect

when it came to finding a hanbok that would fit comfortably and still capture that timeless, elegant look. I'm happy to share that my experience was not only easy but also incredibly welcoming and fun. The hanbok rental shops in Jeonju are inclusive and thoughtful, going out of their way to help you feel confident and beautiful in your chosen outfit.

Where to Rent Hanboks in Jeonju: You'll find hanbok rental shops lined up near the entrance of Jeonju Hanok Village and throughout the village. Most open around 9–10 AM and stay open into the early evening. No reservation is usually needed; just walk in and let the friendly staff guide you. Head there earlier in the day for the best selection, especially on weekends and holidays when shops fill up quickly.

What to Expect: Inside, you'll be greeted by rows of gorgeous hanboks in every color and style imaginable, from classic, historical designs to modern, princess-style versions. The staff will help you select a design, color, and accessories that suit your personal style and body shape. If you don't find what you like or what will match other people in your group, it is okay to thank the staff and try another shop.

Plus-size tip: Many shops carry hanboks in extended sizes or adjustable designs with generous wrap skirts and tie closures. I found several beautiful options that fit comfortably, and the staff ensured I felt confident, offering plenty of accessories to match. If you're concerned about sizing, just ask upfront; most shops are happy to accommodate.

Accessories & Hair Styling: Once you've picked out your hanbok, you can choose optional accessories like hairpieces, embroidered clutches, decorative fans, and matching purses. Many shops also offer simple hair styling with braids and hairpins for a small extra fee, and it's well worth it to complete the look! For those looking to wear something other than a dress, there are traditional hats and even swords.



Pricing: Most hanbok rentals range from ₩15,000 to ₩30,000 (about \$12–\$25) for 2–4 hours, depending on the style and extras. Some packages include accessories and hair styling, while others charge a modest additional fee for these services. Make sure to bring cash (won) with you on this trip to pay for hanbok and other items from vendors on the street.

Our Family's Hanbok Experience

I wore a delicate, pastel blue-green hanbok with floral embroidery, while my husband, TJ, looked distinguished in a traditional male hanbok with a flowing overcoat and a classic gat hat. Our son Joshua proudly donned a warrior-style hanbok with silver detailing and a toy sword, feeling like a hero from a historical drama.

We spent the day exploring alleys, tasting street food, and soaking up Korea's rich culture. Locals and visitors complimented our outfits, making the experience even more special.

If you've hesitated about trying a hanbok because of size or comfort, don't—Jeonju's rental shops accommodate all body types with beautiful options for everyone. It's a memorable way to connect with Korean heritage, whether solo or with loved ones.

A Night in the Heart of History: Our Hanok Stay

After spending the day getting lost in the winding alleys of Jeonju Hanok Village and finding the perfect places for photos, we knew there was only one way to truly make this the perfect trip. We had to stay in a hanok ourselves. Pungnamheon Old House did not disappoint.

Tucked right inside the village, this beautiful traditional house has been standing tall since 1934. Over the decades, it has had a couple of owners, each adding their own touch while preserving its graceful, timeworn beauty.

What makes this place stand out is how beautifully it balances history with warmth. During its renovation, large amounts of heartwood were used in the roof tiles to preserve their perfect, graceful curve. The house



Jetta and husband TJ pose for photos while exploring the Gyeonggijeon Shrine.

still showcases natural materials, such as clay walls, olive wood, and hanji Korean paper on its doors and windows, giving every room a cozy, earthy feel. It's one of those places where you immediately slow down, breathe a little deeper, put your feet in the grass, and feel like you've stepped back to a simpler time.

The history runs deep here, too. Pungnamheon's roof tiles were crafted by Lee Geun-bok, a legendary



The entrance to the Pungnamheon Old House Hanok.

artisan recognized as a National Intangible Cultural Heritage. He's the same master who worked on the Sungnyemun Gate in Seoul. The attention to detail is everywhere you look, from the sturdy crossbeams to the intricate eaves.

Set on a 200-pyeong (about 661 square meter) lot, the layout includes one main building and two charming auxiliary houses, all arranged around a central courtyard and serene little garden. No matter where you stand, this place radiates a calm, noble elegance that makes even casual passersby pause for a photo.

While Pungnamheon honors tradition in its design, it's thoughtfully updated for modern travelers. Guests can choose between ondol-style rooms with cozy heated floors for sleeping or more contemporary options featuring single or double beds, as well as a small couch for lounging. Every room comes equipped with hot water in the private restrooms, air conditioning for those steamy Korean summers, and a mini fridge to keep your snacks and drinks chilled. It's the perfect blend of old-world charm and modern-day comfort.

Hanok Charm and Coffee Bliss at Tirol Café

While you're in the area, don't leave without stopping by Tirol Hanok Café, also known as Soyang Hanok Tirol, just a short drive from Jeonju Hanok Village in nearby Wanju. This charming café is situated within three traditional hanok buildings, offering a peaceful setting to enjoy freshly brewed coffee and flaky croissants that locals rave about. With its authentic wooden furniture, lattice windows, and serene outdoor pond complete with a small wooden boat, the café feels like stepping into a scene from a Korean drama, making it perfect for relaxation and capturing memorable photos.

Open daily from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. (closed Sundays), Tirol Hanok Café is a perfect little retreat after exploring Jeonju's bustling streets. It offers a mix of seating options, ranging from chairs and benches to traditional floor seating, and is generally accessible, with ramps into the main building (although some outdoor areas have steps). Visitors will also appreciate on-site parking, making it an easy and refreshing stop on your cultural adventure.

What Are You Waiting For?

So, if you're looking to swap the hustle and bustle of base life for hanboks and hanok rooftops, street food, stories of ancient kings, and gorgeous cafes, Jeonju is calling your name. Slow down, savor the moment, and make some memories you'll be talking about long after



Tradition meets comfort at Pungnamheon.



The warm wood interiors of Tirol Café create a cozy, welcoming space for visitors.



Discover beautiful hanji paper, art, and journals in Jeonju — perfect souvenirs that blend culture and creativity.

your tour in Korea ends.

Plan your visit easily and dive deeper into everything Jeonju has to offer! You can find a guide to hassle-free parking, NAVER location pins, and a full list of cultural sites, must-see attractions, and handicraft shops mentioned in this article and more on our website: unitedontherokmag.com

Jeonju Hanok Village, where history isn't just remembered — it's lived.



Mrs. Lopez is helping Capt. Jacqueline Lieberman fabricates a same-day CAD/CAM crown.

The American Red Cross Dental Assistant Program: *A Pathway to Purpose*

By Sierra Beaton and Sarah Masters

On a Friday morning in mid-June, 8 months after they began their rigorous training, two participants, both military spouses, graduated from the American Red Cross Dental Assistant Program at Osan Air Base, joining the ranks of a growing number of veterans, retirees, and dependents utilizing the free technical career training programs facilitated by the Red Cross. One of the day's graduates, Mrs. Jiyoung Kim Seong, says: "Volunteering with the Red Cross, as a dental assistant, has provided me with stability, purpose, and community. It gave me a sense of identity beyond just being a military spouse."

Sarah Masters, a Lead Volunteer at the Military Treatment Facility (MTF) and Korea Region Volunteer Partner for American Red Cross Osan Air Base, states: "The Red Cross Dental Assistant Program is more than a training course—it is a lifeline for military spouses seeking professional development and career mobility amid the challenges of military life. At a time when portable and practical careers are more essential than ever for military families, this program delivers rigorous, hands-on experience that prepares participants to pursue state certification in dental assisting and radiology."

Indeed, the Dental Assistant Program is a unique way for military spouses to gain a significant advantage in a career field that is stable, flexible, portable, and financially rewarding. In exchange for free training, applicants commit to 40 hours per week for 5-6 months—logging a minimum of 600 classroom and clinical hours.

This intensive program takes place entirely within a military Dental Treatment Facility (DTF), where active duty dental personnel serve as instructors, mentors, and supervisors—taking on these responsibilities, in addition to their standard duties, to support the career goals of the broader military community. Mrs. Kim applauds the dental team at Osan Air Base for keeping her encouraged throughout the program: "They were patient, took the time to explain procedures, and made sure we felt confident as volunteers learning a new field."

The Dental Assistant Program dates back to the mid-1970s when a military dental clinic in Nurnberg, Germany, recognized that it would need additional staffing to support the increased demand for dental readiness during the buildup of U.S. forces. A successful collaboration between the installation's dental clinic and the Red Cross led to the creation and implementation of a



Mrs. Jiyoung Kim is helping Capt. John Namgoong extract wisdom teeth under IV sedation.

basic curriculum, which gradually spread to other US installations. The program's model was also duplicated to create additional training programs in pharmacy tech and medical assistant programs (not currently offered at USFK locations). While long-term records have not been maintained, recent accounts show the program has benefited 105 people at 27 sites worldwide.

Although the Dental Assistant Program is not new to USFK, it floundered during COVID-19 restrictions. Having seen the mutually beneficial outcomes for both a base DTF and the program participants at past installations, Lt. Col. Wonil "Will" Chong, Chief of Dental Services at Osan Air Base 51st MDG, championed its reestablishment at Osan Air Base, creating space and resources within the clinic to support up to 4 volunteers per session.

Working alongside Staff Sgt. Judylyn Wacan and Master Sgt. Erwin Barzaga to adapt and write the program materials for this location, Lt. Col. Chong explains: "For the Osan dental clinic with such high ops tempo, Red Cross volunteers have always been indispensable as force multipliers to make sure that the clinic surpasses the mission goals despite constant struggles



Lt. Col. Chung presents Mrs. Jiyoung Kim with her Dental Assistant Program Certificate of Completion at the graduation ceremony held on June 13, 2025. Captured by Miranda Cornett, representing the 51 OMRS.

with manning and resources. Despite its challenges, restarting the program was one of my top priorities, and the success of the program would not have been possible without the dedication and the hard work of Capt. Jacquelyn Lieberman and Staff Sgt. Judylyn Wacan. I truly hope that the tradition will continue for years to come.”

Following the successful revival of the program at Osan Air Base, efforts are also underway to stand up the Dental Assistant Program training at USAG Humphreys at the Brian D. Allgood Army Community Hospital.

As a collaborative effort, the Dental Assistant Program, with the support of installation Military Treatment Facilities, Dental Treatment Facilities, the American Red Cross, and families, empowers dependents, veterans, and retirees with training, confidence, and a clear path to employment in a highly mobile lifestyle. Active duty personnel are given an opportunity to train participants and deepen or develop working relationships within the community. Red Cross volunteers bolster existing DTF services, allowing for better service and improved readiness. Mrs. Kim reflected eloquently that the Dental Assistant Program “helps turn the challenges of military life into opportunities for service, growth, and connection.”

Stop by your local American Red Cross office or follow their Facebook page for additional information on this and other programs offered.

Recruitment for the 2025-2026 Dental Assistant Program at Osan Air Base will begin soon.

Osan Air Base Red Cross Office
Bldg 924, Room 102
Website: osan@redcross.org
Phone: 010-7450-4017
Facebook: American Red Cross at Osan Air Base, Korea

USAG Humphreys Red Cross Office
Bldg. 3030 BDAACH (4th floor)
Website: humphreysmtf@redcross.org
Facebook: USAG Humphreys American Red Cross

USAG Daegu Red Cross Office
Soldier Support Center, Camp Walker, Bldg 330, Room 302
Website: DaeguTS@redcross.org
Phone: 0503-363-5987
Facebook: American Red Cross - Daegu Area IV



Families, Osan Air Base Dental Treatment Facility personnel, and American Red Cross volunteers congratulate graduates of the Dental Assistant Program on June 13, 2025. Captured by Miranda Cornett, representing the 51 OMRS.



About the Authors

Sierra Beaton is a prolific reader, writer, and memory keeper. She enjoys capturing daily life through photography, regularly subjecting her family to new recipes, making friends out of strangers, and is easily distracted by plants. As a military spouse, mom to three kids, and generally curious individual, she's had the opportunity to learn a lot of things she never knew she needed to know. She enjoys sifting through her lived experiences and sharing her observations with others.



Over the past 15 years as a proud military spouse and volunteer, Sarah Masters has worked to create meaningful change. She served as a docent for the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, led more than 40 mass food distributions during COVID, and deployed with the Red Cross to Kuwait and Iraq in support of our military. In times of disaster, she serves with Team Rubicon, and when it's time to decompress, she helps build homes and hope with Habitat for Humanity. Her motto is: Could be better, could be worse. She tries to be like Crush from Finding Nemo—just go with the flow.

Raven Atwood's Veil of Shadows: Korea's Most Chilling Legends

The Gumiho: Korea's Enigmatic Nine-Tailed Fox

By Raven Atwood



For centuries, South Korea has whispered of a creature both beautiful and terrifying—the Gumiho (구미호), the nine-tailed fox spirit. Unlike its counterparts in Chinese (Huli Jing) and Japanese (Kitsune) folklore, the Korean Gumiho is often depicted as a deceptive and predatory being, capable of great cruelty or tragic longing.

Legends tell of Gumihos stalking travelers, devouring human hearts, or attempting to become fully human by resisting their dark instincts. But among all the tales, one story stands out for its chilling imagery and sense of impending doom—the legend of The Blood Moon Hunt.

The Origins of the Gumiho

The story of the Gumiho dates back to Korea's ancient texts, particularly the Samguk Yusa (Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms), which contains early references to shape-shifting fox spirits. According to legend, when a fox lives for a thousand years, it gains the ability to take human form, often appearing as a breathtakingly beautiful woman.

Unlike other spirit foxes in East Asian mythology, which may act as protectors or tricksters, the Korean Gumiho is often seen as a predator, cursed with an insatiable hunger for human hearts or livers. Some legends claim it must consume these organs to sustain its transformation, while others say that if a Gumiho can resist



its bloodlust for 100 days, it will become fully human. However, few succeed—most give in to their hunger, reverting back to their fox form, doomed to roam forever.

The Blood Moon Hunt: A Tale of Terror

Long ago, in a secluded village nestled within the Korean mountains, the townspeople lived in dread of the blood moon. They believed that on the night when the moon turned red, the Gumiho descended from the hills to hunt.

The village elders warned the children never to venture out after dark, for the Gumiho could take any form—perhaps a lost maiden

pleading for help, a wounded traveler in need, or even a loved one calling your name from the shadows.

The Vanishing of Min-Seok

One fateful year, as the blood moon rose high over the mountains, a young man named Min-Seok ignored the warnings. He was brave, skeptical, and eager to prove the elders wrong.

That night, a woman appeared at his door. She was unlike any he had ever seen—her hair long as flowing ink, her skin pale as moonlight, and her eyes... strange, yet mesmerizing.

"Traveler, you must be lost," Min-Seok said, stepping forward. She only smiled.

The next morning, Min-Seok's family found his door wide open, his room undisturbed, but he was nowhere to be found. Search parties combed the forests, but there was no trace of him—only fox tracks leading away from his home.

The villagers knew what had happened.

He had been taken by the Gumiho.

That year, and every year after, whenever the blood moon returned, the villagers bolted their doors, shuttered their windows, and prayed that the Gumiho would not choose them next.

Other Chilling Tales of the Gumiho

The legend of the Gumiho has taken many forms throughout Korea's history, with regional variations adding to its mystique. Here are some of the most well-known stories:

The Fox Bride

A young scholar married a woman of extraordinary beauty, but soon noticed strange behaviors—she never slept, avoided dogs, and her gaze seemed almost too intense. One night, he followed her into the woods and discovered her feasting on a fresh corpse.

She turned to him, blood dripping from her lips, and whispered: "You weren't supposed to see this."

The Cave of Shadows

Near the mountains, a hunter found a hidden cave filled with

human bones. Before he could flee, a woman appeared at the entrance, her long hair swaying in an unseen breeze. "You weren't supposed to find this," she said.

The hunter barely escaped, but he fell ill within days, and the cave was never found again. Some say that on foggy nights, a lone woman can be seen walking toward the mountains, her shadow stretching unnaturally long behind her.

The Gumiho in Modern Culture and Popular Adaptations

Once seen as purely a monstrous creature, the Gumiho has been reimagined in modern Korean media, often portrayed as a tragic or misunderstood figure trying to balance its human desires with its supernatural instincts.

"My Girlfriend is a Gumiho" (2010) – A romantic drama that humanizes the Gumiho, depicting it as a loving but dangerous being struggling to become human.

"Tale of the Nine-Tailed" (2020) – A fantasy series where the Gumiho is a protector rather than a monster.

Numerous horror films and webtoons continue to explore the darker side of the legend, keeping its eerie roots alive. The Gumiho remains one of Korea's most enduring mythological figures, symbolizing the duality of beauty and danger, trust and deception.

Fact or Fiction?

While the Gumiho is firmly a part of myth and storytelling, its legend still influences supersti-

tions and ghost stories in Korea. Some believe that strange occurrences in remote areas—such as inexplicable disappearances or eerie sightings—could be linked to this ancient being.

Whether seen as a predator, a tragic spirit, or a misunderstood creature, the Gumiho continues to be an icon of Korean folklore, its legend serving as a reminder that appearances can be deceiving, and the line between myth and reality is often thinner than we think.

Would you trust a stranger with unnaturally sharp teeth and glowing eyes? And if you find yourself outside on the night of a blood moon, you might want to stay inside—because you never know who, or what, is watching.

Have You Heard of the Gumiho?

Do you believe in the legend, or have you encountered a similar folklore tale? Share your thoughts with *United on the RoK Magazine*.

About the Author

Raven Atwood is an author dedicated to bringing history to life through the excitement of mystery for young readers. With a captivating storytelling style, Raven crafts tales that explore historical events and figures, blending suspense and intrigue to inspire curiosity and learning. Known for turning history's secrets into adventures, Raven's books, available on Amazon, have quickly become favorites for young readers and parents alike.

**Images within were generated using artificial intelligence and do not depict a real person or event.*





KI ONE DISTILLERY: Crafting Korea's Whisky Legacy

By Melissa Edwards-Whittington
Photos by Ki One Distillery and Melissa Edwards-Whittington

Nestled in the scenic hills of Namyangju, just east of Seoul, a quiet revolution is taking place. At Ki One Distillery, formerly known as Three Societies Distillery, copper stills hum with promise, barrels breathe in the changing seasons, and a new chapter in Korea's cultural story is being written one dram at a time. This is more than a distillery; it's a pioneering force determined to put Korean whisky on the global map while honoring the traditions, ingredients, and soul of its homeland.

A New Beginning for Korean Spirits

Whisky has long been the domain of Scotland, Japan, and the American South, until now. With Ki One Distillery, Korea has boldly entered the global whisky scene, creating not just a new label but an entirely new category: Korean single malt. Born from the vision of serial entrepreneur and craft beverage pioneer Bryan Do and brought to life under the craftsmanship of seasoned Scottish distiller Andrew Shand, Ki One is redefining what whisky can be. Here, their whiskey is rooted in Korean identity, refined by international expertise, and recognized around the world.

From overcoming a non-existent whisky infrastructure

in Korea to experimenting with native oak and seasonal extremes, Ki One's story is as bold and layered as its spirits. This is more than a tale of fermentation and barrels—it's a story of innovation, cultural pride, and a mission to reshape Korea's drinking culture from consumption to appreciation.

Whisky as a Cultural Statement

For Bryan Do, Ki One is not just a brand, it's a mission to reclaim and reframe Korean identity through premium spirits. "We didn't just want to make whisky in Korea," Bryan says. "We wanted to make Korean whisky."

This distinction is crucial. Whisky has traditionally represented prestige, celebration, and craftsmanship in Western cultures. In Korea, where soju and beer have long dominated the alcohol landscape, introducing a premium product like single malt whisky is both a challenge and an opportunity to elevate Korean drinking culture.

Ki One whisky is intentionally Korean, from its locally sourced ingredients to its cultural packaging. The name itself, "Ki One" (기원), means "beginning" or "hope" in Korean, symbolizing both the birth of Korea's whisky era and a more profound cultural shift. Labels are printed on traditional hanji paper, while bottle designs draw



Chuck and Melissa with Bryan Do at an event at Nom Beer Company

from hanbok colors. Together, they are turning every detail into an homage to heritage.

Creating a Korean single malt was also about expanding the narrative of Korean craftsmanship. As Bryan explains, "Soju may be our most recognized spirit, but it hasn't historically represented premium Korean craft. Whisky allows us to elevate our national identity in a new way."

Preserving Tradition, Pioneering Innovation

At the helm of Ki One's production is Master Distiller Andrew Shand, whose decades of experience in Scotland and making Japanese whisky help ensure the highest standards in each step. Yet, what makes Ki One special is its Korean soul.

"If Japanese whisky is like miso, subtle and refined, then Korean whisky is more like cheonggukjang," Bryan notes. "Bold, intense, and unforgettable."

This boldness is evident in their use of Korean oak, extended fermentation times of up to 150 hours, and local climate-driven aging, which brings out deep complexity. "The weather here is extreme, and it turns out that's a blessing," Andrew says. "The heat and cold create a rapid but sophisticated maturation process that gives our whisky a sense of age beyond its years."

Ki One doesn't just borrow tradition; it challenges and evolves it. The distillery experiments with specialty beer malts, native Korean yeast, and even cask exchanges with local breweries. Among their standout innovations is the All-Korean Batch, crafted entirely with Korean ingredients and aged in Tteokgal oak, a homage to terroir that can only exist in this part of the world.

A New Cultural Experience: Whisky Tourism in Korea

Wanting to explore the intersection of Korean culture and whisky firsthand? In that case, Ki One offers guided



Founder, Bryan Do, and Master Distiller, Andrew Shand

tours. They are the perfect opportunity to see up close how this whisky is crafted and to taste it at various stages. Tours are available in both Korean and English, making them accessible to domestic and international visitors alike.

The tours walk guests through the entire whisky-making process—from grain to glass—while highlighting how Korean ingredients, climate, and cultural philosophy shape the final product. Visitors can sample various expressions, learn about the use of Korean oak, and see how traditional design and modern innovation coexist in every detail of the distillery.

"We wanted to create a place where people can experience whisky through a Korean lens," Bryan says. "It's not just about the drink. It's about where it comes from, how it's made, and what it says about who we are."

These tours aren't just educational, they're cultural, inviting guests to rethink Korean spirits and appreciate how one bottle can hold centuries of tradition, climate, and craftsmanship.

Local Roots, Global Recognition

Despite being young in whisky years, Ki One has already earned international recognition. Their awards include a Double Gold at the San Francisco World Spirits Competition and a high commendation from the Icons

of Whisky 2025. The distillery was even named one of the Top 10 Most Anticipated New Whisky Distilleries in the World by The Drinks Business.

"We believe the judges recognized that we're not mimicking Scotch or bourbon," Bryan shares. "We're creating something new, something Korean."

These accolades have not only validated the brand but also helped redefine Korean craftsmanship for a global audience. "People no longer ask, 'Why Korean whisky?'—they ask, 'Where can I get it?'" Bryan laughs.

A Cultural Legacy in Every Bottle

More than a brand or a distillery, Ki One is becoming a cultural movement. As Korea builds its identity in the global whisky world, Ki One stands at the forefront, blending heritage, environment, and innovation.

"Whisky, for me, is nostalgia," Bryan reflects. "It's not just a drink. It's who you were with, why you drank it, and what you felt. We want Ki One to be part of those moments, in Korea and around the world."

Andrew Shand adds, "I've seen people completely surprised by how complex our whisky is. They don't expect something this rich and layered to come from a young distillery in Korea. That reaction means we're doing something right."

Shaping the Future of Korean Whisky

As the first mover in a growing industry, Ki One carries the responsibility of shaping not only its future but that of Korean whisky as a whole. Bryan and Andrew believe this is just the start of a broader movement, one that will see more distilleries, deeper infrastructure, and global appreciation for Korean flavor profiles.

"In 10 years, we want Korean whisky to be its own respected category, just like Japanese whisky became in the early 2000s," Bryan says. "Ki One will continue to innovate, but we also hope to inspire a new generation of Korean distillers."

Their advice for aspiring whisky makers? "Start with purpose. Know your 'why,'" Bryan says. "It's not just about making alcohol. It's about storytelling, tradition, and the kind of legacy you want to build."

Andrew echoes the sentiment, emphasizing craft over shortcuts. "Whisky takes time. But when you do it right, that time becomes part of the story in every bottle."

As the world takes its first sip of Korean single malt, one thing is clear: this is only the beginning.

Their Award Winning Whisky

Three distinct expressions are currently offered, each with its own story and flavor profile:



Experimenting with fermentation in Korean traditional vessels



Ki One batches and awards



The copper stills used for distilling

Ki One Tiger Edition – A vibrant, fruit-forward whisky aged in red wine and sherry casks. Expect flavors of honeyed plum, dried fig, and warm spice. This expression captures the boldness and energy of Korea's transformation into a whisky-producing nation.

Ki One Eagle Edition – A richer, more traditional profile aged in virgin American oak and bourbon casks. With notes of vanilla, banana, toasted oak, and a touch of cinnamon, the Eagle embodies strength and heritage with a Korean twist.



Founder, Bryan Do



Master Distiller, Andrew Shand



Ki One Whisky: L to R Eagle Edition, Tiger Edition, and Unicorn Edition

Ki One Unicorn Edition – A rare peated single malt for those who enjoy a smoky finish. The Unicorn blends soft layers of citrus, smoke, and earthy depth, offering a uniquely Korean take on a globally beloved style.

Whether you're discovering Ki One for the first time or collecting each edition, these whiskies are crafted to be savored—and remembered. To learn more about these expressions or explore future releases, visit <https://kione.co.kr/eng>.

Ki One. The first. The beginning. The spirit of Korea.

Where to Find Ki One Whisky

For those ready to experience the bold character of Korean single malt, Ki One is now available on USFK military installations across the peninsula at local AAFES stores and shopettes. It is also available at

select local retailers throughout Korea.

Check here for more details on where to purchase: <https://blog.naver.com/ki-one/223712198331>

How to Book a Tour

Ready to experience Ki One up close? Booking a distillery tour is easy. Simply visit the Ki One website and click the reservation link, which will direct you to their official Naver booking page. From there, you can select your preferred date and language (Korean or English) for a guided experience through Korea's first single malt whisky distillery.

Book your visit here: <https://booking.naver.com/booking/6/bizes/448865>

Accessibility at Ki One Distillery is partially limited due to the layout of the facility. The main tour includes visits to the fermentation and tasting areas, both located on the second floor, which unfortunately are not wheelchair accessible. However, guests who require accessible accommodations



Chuck is ready for the distillery tour.

can still enjoy the warehouse portion of the tour, which is located on the ground level and does not require the use of stairs. The full tour experience lasts approximately two hours, and the team at Ki One is happy to assist in making the visit as comfortable and informative as possible for all guests.

* This article is intended for readers of legal drinking age. Please drink responsibly. The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and interviewees and do not constitute an endorsement of alcohol consumption by United on the RoK magazine or any affiliated organizations. Always follow local laws and military regulations regarding the purchase and consumption of alcohol.

KI ONE

THE FIRST CRAFT SINGLE MALT DISTILLERY IN KOREA Our distillery is nestled in the Namyangju mountains, north-east of Seoul. In summer, our spirits are baked in the Korean sunshine and the heat allows the spirit to penetrate deep into the wood. In winter the sunlight doesn't rise above our neighboring Baekbong mountain, casting a long winter shadow over our spirit, while the extreme cold pushes it out into the cask, having extracted an array of aromas. We hope to showcase how the distinct local four seasons help the unique maturation and dynamic flavors of Korea's first single malt whisky.

Follow Ki One here and stay informed:
Instagram: [kionedistillery](https://www.instagram.com/kionedistillery)
Website: <https://kione.co.kr/eng>
YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/@KI-ONE_KoreanSingleMaltWhisky

[NAVER Map]
KI ONE WHISKY DISTILLERY
384-20 Nokchon-ri Hwado-eup Namyangju-si Gyeonggi-do
<https://naver.me/Fswf1dGK>

Traces of the Past in Busan

By Lee Dain
Photography courtesy of Photo Korea

Have you ever heard about a city that saved an entire country? From 1950 to 1953, Korea faced a difficult time due to the Korean War. During this period, several cities were under attack, and only one city remained undefeated—Busan.

Busan is a city located in the southeastern part of South Korea. It is the nation's largest port city and serves as the main hub for international trade through Busan Port, one of the busiest ports in the world. With its beautiful views, bustling markets, and unique culture, Busan today is full of energy and beauty. But behind the crowded travel destinations lie a deep and meaningful story that shaped our nation's future.

Since I was young, I have visited Busan every summer and winter vacation. Mainly because my grandparents lived there, but also because I loved traveling to Busan. I would always walk barefoot along the beach holding my Grandpa's hand, and would breathe in fresh sea air. Even now, when I feel distressed or tired, I close my eyes and imagine myself walking along the shore. The sound of the waves, the smell of seafood on the streets, and the warmth of my Grandpa's hand relaxed me. Whenever I went, the beautiful view of the mellow sunlight shining on the glistening ocean, and the long horizon meeting the bright blue sky greeted me.

Busan was, and still is, my sanctuary place that gives me peace and happiness. But long ago, Busan was a sanctuary for all the people in South Korea. Not only me, but everyone in our country had to rely on this one city during the Korean War.

In August of 1950, all the other cities were invaded, and only Busan remained unconquered. Busan became the provisional capital, and thousands of refugees fled there for survival. In those desperate



The vibrant blue waters of Busan meet a stunning skyline of modern skyscrapers, reflecting the city's dynamic blend of natural beauty and urban growth. (Photo Korea - Live Studio)



The United Nations Memorial Cemetery in Korea honors UN soldiers who gave their lives during the Korean War (1950–1953). Maintained by the Commission for the UNMCK, it stands as a lasting tribute to their sacrifice and welcomes visitors from around the world to pay their respects. (Photo Korea - Korea Tourism Organization Jeon Hyeongjun)



The Provisional Capital Memorial Hall served as Korea's provisional government during the Korean War. Built in 1926, it now showcases Busan's wartime history—highlighting everyday life, politics, and culture during this pivotal era. (Photo Korea - Busan Tourism Organization)

times, Busan needed an official place for the government to continue functioning. That place has been well preserved and now stands with the name Busan Provisional Capital Memorial Hall.

The 'Busan Provisional Capital Memorial Hall' is a historical site that served as the official residence of President Syngman Rhee. Here, President Rhee conducted official meetings and made political and military decisions. This place became a symbol of hope for the citizens, showing that the government was still functioning despite the war.

While the government continued its work in Busan, people from other countries also fought for South Korea. Their sacrifice is remembered and honored at the United Nations Memorial Cemetery in Busan. The United Nations Memorial Cemetery is the only United Nations Cemetery in the world. This cemetery is the final resting place of over 2,300 soldiers from 22 countries who fought for South Korea's freedom in the Korean War. This honorable place holds monuments, gardens, and flags that represent every country that helped South Korea.

To us Koreans, this place is a symbol of international friendship and gratitude. Many people visit the United Nations Memorial Cemetery to again thank the brave soldiers who have enabled us to live in the present day.

These places in Busan are more than ordinary travel destinations. They are traces—marks left by the people of the past. Busan is a living memory. A place where the past still whispers. So why not visit Busan someday, not just to see, but to hear the story Busan tells us?



About the Author

Lee Dain is a youth writer from Sejong City, South Korea. On June 11, 2025, she was awarded the Overall Grand Prize from the Korea Tourism Organization, presented by their CEO, at Korea Tourism Senior High School 23rd National Middle School Foreign Language Speech Contest for her speech titled "Traces of the Past in Busan."

She delivered her speech before a packed auditorium, with judges from Korea, Japan, China, and the United States, and an audience of fellow students, teachers, parents, and distinguished guests from Korea Tourism Senior High School. As Lee Dain stepped onto the stage in her traditional hanbok, it was clear she had a message to share—one steeped in history, identity, and cross-cultural memory.

The contest, themed around introducing domestic and international cultural heritage and tourist attractions, and topics such as personal travel experiences and tourism products. Lee Dain's heartfelt reflection on the enduring traces of the Korean War in Busan deeply resonated with both the audience and the panel of international judges.

Sincere thanks go to the dedicated judges from Korea, Japan, China, and the United States for their time and thoughtful evaluation, and to the many sponsoring organizations that made the event possible. These include the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, the Ministry of SMEs and Startups, Korea SMEs and Startups Agency, Korea Tourism Organization, Korea Tourism Association, Gyeonggi Tourism Organization, Gyeonggi Tourism Association, Korea Tourism Interpreter Guide Association, Hana Tour Co., Ltd., and Kookmin Ilbo. Appreciation is also extended to the Embassy of Japan, the Embassy of China in the Republic of Korea, and the Japan Foundation Seoul Cultural Center for their international support and cultural cooperation. Special thanks to Korea Tourism Senior High School in Pyeongtaek for graciously hosting this inspiring event.



President Syngman Rhee at his wartime desk in Busan's Provisional Capital Memorial Hall—a symbol of leadership, resilience, and hope during Korea's darkest hours. (Photo courtesy of Korea Tourism Organization)



Step inside the preserved President's Office at the Provisional Capital Memorial Hall in Busan, where Syngman Rhee led the nation during the Korean War. This historic room, with its original 1950s furnishings and archival photo of a pivotal moment, offers a powerful glimpse into South Korea's leadership at a time of crisis. (Photo Korea - Busan Tourism Organization)



The chapel at the United Nations Memorial Cemetery in Busan stands as a solemn tribute to the service members and offers a quiet space for reflection and remembrance of the sacrifices made for peace and freedom on the Korean Peninsula. (Photo Korea - Korea Tourism Organization Jeon Hyeongjun)

From Petra to the Borderlands: How Jordan Opened My Eyes

By Kimberly Kephart

The first view of Petra from the Siq.

It all started one quiet summer evening in my kitchen, a moment that seemed ordinary at the time but ended up shifting something deep within me. I had “Going Places” by Yulia Denisyuk playing in the background—one of those podcasts that speaks right to your curiosity—and her guest, Amelia Bilbeisi, was sharing stories about producing world-renowned olive oil in Jordan. I paused mid-stir at the stove, just listening. Her words painted more than just a place; they painted people. Real lives. Deep roots. Purpose.

I’d known about Jordan, sure—Petra, the rose-red city; Wadi Rum, with its sweeping Martian landscapes. But this was different. This was human. That podcast lit a spark.

Not long after, my husband—who must have caught wind of my growing fascination—surprised me with a solo birthday trip to Jordan through G Adventures. He doesn’t always do grand gestures, but this one landed. I felt seen. And I was stoked.

This wasn’t just a trip. It was a reminder of why I travel: not to collect places, but to connect with people. I’m sharing my itinerary with you because Jordan isn’t just beautiful—it’s bold, layered, and full of quiet lessons that unfold when you take the time to notice.

When I shared my location on Google Maps, my dad texted: “WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING THERE?” I got it. Jordan, like much of the region, is often misunderstood. But that’s precisely why I want to talk about it.

Because we, the travelers, the wanderers, the ones lucky enough to go—we are the ones who can rewrite the narrative. We get to say: There is more here than conflict. There is life here. And it’s beautiful.

Let’s start at the beginning:

Fast Facts About Jordan

- Major Airport: Queen Aliah International Airport, Amman
- Currency: Jordanian Dinar (JOD) 1 JOD = 1.41 USD (as of 2025)
- Language: Arabic, but English is widely spoken at popular sites
- Visa: U.S. citizens qualify for Visa on Arrival. Many nationalities can apply via the Jordan Pass (group trip travelers may not need this).
- Best Time to Go: Spring (late March–May) and Fall (September–November)
- Flights: Etihad Airways offers connections from Amman to Seoul on most weekdays.



Mohammed is playing a Rababa—a one-stringed instrument passed down through generations.

Itinerary Snapshot

Route: Amman—Jerash—Ajloun Castle—Beit al Khayrat (Souf)—Umm Qais—Dana—Petra—Wadi Rum—Aqaba—Dead Sea

Hotel on Arrival: Hotel Myna Tysche, Amman

Day 1: Jerash, Ajloun Castle, Beit Khayrat in Souf, and Umm Qais

We began our journey heading north from Amman, starting at the ancient Roman ruins of Jerash. Its colonnaded streets and amphitheater felt like a step back in time. The city of Jerash is one of the best-preserved examples of a Greco-Roman city outside of Italy. You can still walk along colonnaded streets, see ancient fountains, step into amphitheaters with near-perfect acoustics, and marvel at temples that have stood for over two millennia. Unlike many other Roman sites, much of Jerash’s original layout is intact, making it feel like a living museum.

For lunch, we headed to the village of Souf and Beit Khayrat Souf, a women-owned café and social enterprise in a 19th-century home. Founded to combat female unemployment, it’s supported by the Planeterra Foundation and creates economic opportunities for local women.

We were taught how to make Maqluba, which is translated to “upside down” in Arabic. It’s named for the dramatic moment at the end of cooking when the pot is flipped onto a large tray or serving dish, revealing a layered, savory “cake” of rice, vegetables, and meat. That flip is the moment—and it’s often met with applause, gasps, and camera phones.

Then we visited Ajloun Castle, a 12th-century fortress with sweeping views and history tied to Crusader defense. Ajloun Castle was built in 1184 by Izz al-Din Usama, a general in the army of the famed Muslim



Ancient city of Jerash, view of the forum.

leader Saladin (Salah ad-Din al-Ayyubi). It was part of a defensive network to protect the region from Crusader incursions and to guard important trade routes between Damascus and the south.

That alone makes it powerful—it wasn’t just a royal residence or decorative fortress. Ajloun was built with purpose, to resist invasion and protect people.

Tip: stop for “Bedouin Starbucks” outside—coffee for 1 JOD served by the friendliest man.

We stayed that night at Beit al Baraka in Umm Qais, a guesthouse run by Baraka Destinations. Locals cooked our meals, told stories, and showed us how sustainable tourism can uplift an entire community.

Day 2: Hiking with Farag in Umm Qais

Umm Qais, near the Golan Heights, was one of my favorite stops. We hiked with Farag, a storyteller and guide who once hosted the King of Jordan. Our trail was the start of the Jordan Trail near the Wadi Arab Dam.

Because of its location, we brought our passports. At any moment, we could be checked by Border Patrol. The peaceful landscape of rolling hills and farmland was cinematic. We lunched overlooking Wadi Arab Dam while Farag brewed tea over a fire.

That night, he welcomed us into his home for dinner. I asked him what he wished travelers knew about hiking in Jordan. He said, “That it’s safe. We are ready to welcome people back.”

Day 3: Dana Biosphere Reserve

Dana is Jordan’s largest nature reserve, spanning four ecological zones. We hiked part of the Wadi Dana Trail, which descends from Dana Village through stunning canyon landscapes.

We only went a couple of miles down but were



Wadi Arab Dam, while Farag brewed tea over a fire, our guide Feras is pictured.



Fadi and Shadi, our goat herders in Wadi Dana.



Kimberly Kephart in front of the treasury in Petra.



Camel in Wadi Rum.



Beit Khairat Souf, Cooking Class with local women.

rewarded with sweeping views. The uphill return nearly did me in, but a lemon mint smoothie from a village vendor saved the day.

We stayed at Dana Eco Lodge—highly recommend for the views alone.

Day 4: I Became a Shepherd in Dana

Two brothers, Fadi and Shadi, led us through their backyard—goat herding paths along Dana's cliffs. We walked for 3 miles to a spot, with goats next to us. Learned how to milk and shear a goat. We had a shepherd's lunch: fire-roasted potatoes, onions, hummus, and pita. Rustic. Delicious. Unforgettable.

It was here that we learned about how shepherds thrive on the land. It was remarkable to be let in like this!

Goats and sheep are essential sources of income, food, and self-sufficiency. In regions like the Dana Biosphere Reserve, Umm Qais, and Wadi Rum, families rely on these animals for:

- Milk (to make yogurt, labneh, jameed)
- Wool
- Meat
- Even manure for fuel or fertilizer

When someone gets their first goat, they're not just getting an animal—they're starting a micro-economy. It's the cornerstone of a small, self-sustaining enterprise, especially in areas where formal jobs may be scarce or seasonal.

Day 5: Petra – The Rose-Red City

We arrived early to beat a storm and entered Petra through the Siq. That first glimpse of the Treasury? Absolutely surreal.

Petra was the capital of the Nabateans—expert traders who carved their city into the cliffs more than 2,000 years ago. We hiked the back trail to the Monastery with falafel wraps in hand. It was quiet, scenic, and the vendors along the way were kind and respectful.

The view from the Monastery was a highlight. We continued to Little Petra and encountered Bedouin families who would stop us to talk to us. They were so excited to meet us.

This hike gave us sweeping views over the Jordan Valley. I kept thinking, "I'll remember this forever."

Day 6: Wadi Rum – Martian Landscapes and Bedouin Traditions

Wadi Rum looks like Mars with camels. After checking into Harb Eco Camp, we explored by 4x4, stopping at old railway tracks and rock formations. We stopped at a Bedouin camp and learned all about their lives.

As the sun dipped below the red cliffs of Wadi Rum, one of the Bedouin hosts, Mohammed, pulled out a Rababa—a one-stringed instrument passed down through generations. He played a slow, mournful melody while we looked on. The sound floated over the sand like wind. It wasn't a performance. It was memory in motion.

We packed up to leave, and as we did, our guide told us to pay attention to the birds, it's often that you'll find the Sinai rosefinch fluttering around. Just then, one landed on the rocks in front of us. It was quite a beautiful moment.

Dinner was Zarb—meat and veggies slow-cooked underground, and what a grand way to eat a dinner. Watching this meal come out of the desert sand was something else. The team at our camp had let this cook

for 8 hours underground.

Afterwards, we went on a starlit hike and built a campfire to make our tea. Sammi, our guide and hotel manager, shared his journey from Egypt to the desert.

Day 7: Aqaba, Bedouin Lunch, and the Dead Sea

In Aqaba, a coastal city on the Red Sea, we learned about Jordan's strategic role in the Arab Revolt. We were able to see the Arab Revolt flag on the shores of Aqaba, and it happens to be one of the tallest flags in Jordan. On our way north, we stopped at The Halfway Stop and Bedouin Kitchen.

Mohammad, a local guide and chef, served one of the best meals of the trip. The pride he took in hosting travelers was heartwarming. If you're ever between the Red Sea and the Dead Sea—stop here. I think we made his family's day. It was perfect.

We ended the journey floating in the Dead Sea. No crowds. No chaos. Just silence and stillness.

How You Can Help Jordan's Tourism Recovery

Jordan is safe, welcoming, and deeply enriching. But too often, headlines overshadow its story. Despite political stability and low crime, it's dismissed due to regional fear.

I left Jordan inspired. So inspired, I'm planning a women's group trip there for April 2026. Not just to visit, but to bring others into Jordan so they can form their own opinions about this wonderful country. I want YOU to see the beauty of Jordan and feel the hospitality.

If you're living abroad, especially as a military family or spouse, you have a unique opportunity to travel deeper and help reshape the story of places like Jordan.

Support the women at Beit Khayrat Souf. Book hikes through Farag and Baraka Destinations. Stay in ecolodges like Dana. Your presence sustains families, preserves traditions, and keeps cultural narratives alive.

In a deeper sense, this isn't just about Jordan. It's about how we travel.

Be intentional. Choose community experiences. Stay local. Eat local. Listen more than you speak.

When we travel with heart, travel gives back.

Organizations to Support

- Baraka Destinations: www.barakadestinations.com
- Planeterra Foundation: www.planeterra.org
- Jordan Trail Association: www.jordantrail.org

Travel Resources for the Military Connected Community

Understanding Travel Visas for Jordan
https://jordan.gov.jo/EN/Pages/Travel_Visas
Aircraft and Personnel Automated Clearance System
<https://apacs.milcloud.mil/>
Theater Travel Requirements, Travel Tracker/Individual Antiterrorism Plan (TT/IATP)
<https://www.pacom.mil/Resources/Travel-Requirements/>
US Department of State: Bureau of Consular Affairs
<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/Jordan.html>



About the Author
Kimberly Kephart is a freelance travel writer and destination content creator, collaborating with global brands and destination management offices. Formerly based at Camp Humphreys, she now lives in Vicenza, Italy, and shares her travel stories at kimberlykepharttravels.com and on Instagram @kimberlykepharttravels

Beneath the Surface

How I Fell in Love with Scuba Diving

By Kymbirly Bernett

How It All Began: A Snorkel in the Dominican Republic

My lifelong love affair with the ocean truly began during a mission trip to the Dominican Republic. One unforgettable day at the beach, my fellowship group and I discovered the magic of snorkeling. The water was so incredibly clear, it felt like you could see for miles into the shimmering depths. As I floated, mesmerized by the vibrant underwater world, a new dream solidified: to explore the ocean's hidden wonders through scuba diving.



Kymbirly, an underwater adventurer who is always up for the next splash, enjoyed diving in Hawaii.

The Dream of Scuba Diving Becomes Reality

For years, I dreamt of that first breath underwater, finally making it a reality in 2022. As a complete novice, I worried about the prerequisites, especially whether I needed a certification.

Do You Need a License to Try Scuba Diving?

To my delight, I discovered that a full scuba license isn't always necessary for introductory dives! However, it's crucial to prioritize safety and ensure you don't have any underlying lung or ear conditions. This newfound knowledge filled me with excitement, and I booked my first dive while on a cruise in Mexico.

My First Dive: From Nerves to Learning the Basics

Upon arrival, the dive shop guided me through a beginner's video and a short quiz. They patiently ex-

plained the equipment, showing me how to use the regulator and air gauge. Before we even entered the water, they ensured I was comfortable with essential skills like clearing my mask and using emergency air. Descending into the ocean, I learned to equalize the pressure in my ears, just like on a plane or driving through mountains. My first dive was exhilarating, but it was just a taste of what was to come.

A Hawaiian Dive to Remember

This year, my underwater adventures reached new heights during a dive in Hawaii! My instructor made this experience truly unforgettable. After another beginner video and quiz, we reviewed our gear and expanded on crucial underwater hand signals. As we descended once more, my heart swelled with pure joy. I marveled at a giant crab, schools of vibrant fish, and the pristine natural coral seafloor. Then, the most incredible sight: sea turtles gracefully swimming towards us! They were



Gliding effortlessly through the crystal waters of Hawaii, this sea turtle embodies the spirit of aloha: peaceful, graceful, and free.



A vibrant coral kingdom thrives undisturbed beneath the waves, where schools of fish dance through nature's masterpiece.

so serene and beautiful, casually passing by as if to say "Hello". I was so moved, I nearly teared up.

The Octopus Encounter I'll Never Forget

The highlight of the dive, however, was an encounter I never imagined: holding an octopus! This magnificent creature, a rich red hue, felt incredibly smooth and slippery on top, while its suction cups gently cradled my arm. We observed each other for a quiet moment before it gracefully swam back to its ocean home. This extraordinary memory, thanks to Greg at Big Kahuna Water Sports in Honolulu, Hawaii, is one I will cherish forever.



About the Author

Kymbirly Bennett is a military spouse residing in the Daegu area. She finds joy in a variety of interests, including metal detecting, motocross, crafting, and maintaining faith in God's plan for her life. Exploring new places and connecting with fellow enthusiasts are some of the things that fuel her sense of adventure and purpose.

◀ Kymbirly and Greg smiling for a picture, remembering to make every day memorable! Greg Hense aka "Big Kahuna" is the owner of Big Kahuna Water Sports and Aloha Scuba Diving.



This curious octopus wrapped its arms around mine, reminding me of the ocean's quiet intelligence and wonder.



Changing Command, Continuing Heart: Welcome Wagon of Korea Ushers in New Leadership

By The Editorial Team
Photos by Daniel Jean-Charles and Lorenzo H. Ranches

The Welcome Wagon of Korea (WWoK) recently celebrated a heartfelt Change of Command as outgoing President Kelly Karwel passed the torch to incoming President Nicole Keen. The ceremony, marked with emotion and gratitude, recognized not just a transition in leadership but the spirit of service that defines this volunteer-driven organization.

WWoK welcomes over 10,000 service members and their families annually to South Korea, many arriving wide-eyed and uncertain at Incheon Airport or Osan Air Base through the passenger terminal. One-third of these soldiers are between the ages of 17 and 25, and for 75%, it is their very first PCS. The

majority, about 87%, come from the continental U.S., often facing their first overseas move. WWoK volunteers meet them daily, six buses from Incheon and six buses monthly from Osan, with a warm smile, toiletries, snacks, comfort items, and above all, a message: You are not alone.

Kelly Karwel's leadership helped transform this grassroots effort into a cornerstone of community support at Camp Humphreys and beyond. In her farewell remarks, she expressed profound appreciation: "To all our volunteers, the dedication each of you has to this



Eric and Kelly Karwel at the change of leadership ceremony.

'You're not alone. You're part of something now.' And that message right there can make all the difference. As President, my hope is simple: to be there for others the way I once needed someone to be there for me. I aim to help newly arriving soldiers and families feel seen, supported, and part of a community from the moment they arrive. Whether it's answering questions, offering a warm smile, or providing a simple snack, it matters."

Nicole's energy and heart have already made an impression. Kelly shared, "You came in full force... I knew that God had placed you in my path to take over this special mission. You will be an amazing President."

The ceremony also honored the invaluable contributions of volunteers, expressed gratitude to leaders for their steadfast support and guidance, and recognized the generous financial donors and sponsors whose backing makes the mission of WWoK possible.

Becoming a volunteer with the WWoK means becoming part of something bigger—a mission of connection, kindness, and com-

munity. Whether you're handing out welcome bags, offering a smile, or helping answer questions on day one, your presence makes a lasting impact. With just a little time and an open heart, you can be the reason someone feels at home from the moment they arrive in Korea. President Nicole Keen gave these words to those considering volunteering with WWoK:

organization fills me with gratitude and joy. I took an idea and made it grow, but it's all of you that are the heart of it. We will grow more and go through changes, but our mission will always be the same: to be the first impression to all those coming to S. Korea by giving information, a welcome bag, and most importantly, a warm smile. Thank you for choosing to volunteer for the Welcome Wagon of Korea."

She also paid a moving tribute to her family:

"Eric, you let me take this idea from Germany and spread my wings here in Korea. You encourage me to grow it worldwide... Thank you for being my rock and my partner in life."

Taking her place is Nicole Keen, whose own journey to Korea began in 2018 and shaped her commitment to making every arrival feel like a homecoming.

"Becoming the President of Welcome Wagon of Korea (WWoK) is deeply personal for me. When my husband, Scott, and I first PCS'd to Korea in 2018, it was



Kelly and Nicole share a touching moment as the responsibilities of the organization were passed over.



Col. Workman, Col. Towler, Lt. Gen. In Bum Chun, Gen. Laughman, Kelly Karwel, Nicole Keen, Alexis Gonzalez, Samantha Phelps, Capt. Bukky Yusuf



USAG Humphreys Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers with Kelly and Nicole



munity. Whether you're handing out welcome bags, offering a smile, or helping answer questions on day one, your presence makes a lasting impact. With just a little time and an open heart, you can be the reason someone feels at home from the moment they arrive in Korea. President Nicole Keen gave these words to those considering volunteering with WWoK:

"If this mission speaks to you,

I invite you to join us. We're always looking for volunteers with open hearts and a little time to give. Even the smallest gesture can make someone feel welcome, and sometimes, that's exactly what they need."

Website: www.welcomewagonkorea.org

Become a Volunteer: <https://www.welcomewagonkorea.org/volunteer>

About the Photographer

BOSS Secretary, Pfc. Daniel Jean-Charles is a dedicated and goal-oriented individual originally from Miami, Florida. At 20 years old, he demonstrates a strong commitment to personal and professional growth. He is an avid reader with a deep appreciation for literature and a passion for exploring diverse culinary techniques.

Currently serving in the United States military, Daniel is actively working toward his short-term objectives, which include obtaining a promotion to the rank of Sergeant and completing his associate's degree. His long-term aspirations reflect both ambition and vision: to travel to at least 15 countries, gaining a global perspective, and to retire from military service as a commissioned officer by the age of 39.

With a foundation built on discipline, intellectual curiosity, and a clear sense of direction, Daniel Jean-Charles exemplifies the qualities of a future leader and lifelong learner.

MANDU JEONGOL

The Cozy Korean Hot Pot You'll Want All Year Round

By Melissa Edwards-Whittington and South of Seoul



Have

you ever eaten at a restaurant in Korea and wished you could find a recipe for the dish? Or did you realize you were leaving Korea and will miss your favorite dishes? Chuck and I know that one day, we will leave the beautiful country of Korea and we will miss our favorite foods.

Since it was doubtful that I could take a Korean chef back home with us to the States, we started learning how to cook our favorite Korean dishes. However, I will never be entirely on the level of the excellent chefs here that we have cooking for us. But I can do my best to learn these delicious dishes and be able to enjoy our favorites still when we eventually return stateside. Let's learn about jeongol and mandu jeongol before we dig into the dish!

Jeongol (전골): A Royal Feast in a Simmering Pot

Korean cuisine is rich in flavors, textures, and history, and one dish that embodies all these elements is jeongol (전골). This communal hot pot celebrates variety, bringing together an assortment of ingredients in a single, simmering dish enjoyed at the table. Unlike jjigae (찌개), which usually centers around one main ingredient, jeongol combines a medley of vegetables, meats, seafood, rice cakes, and noodles in a flavorful broth.

Historically, jeongol was reserved for royalty and the upper class, while the general population more commonly enjoyed jjigae. A traditional jeongol is cooked in a jeongol naembi (전골냄비), a wide, shallow pot designed to distribute heat evenly and allow for easy serving.

A Hot Pot of Endless Possibilities

One of the best aspects of jeongol is its versatility. It can easily be tailored to suit any dietary preference, including vegetarian options. The choice of ingredients varies widely, from seafood-based jeongol to meat-laden varieties, making it an endlessly adaptable dish enjoyable year-round.

Mandu Jeongol (만두 전골): A Flavorful Hot Pot Experience

Mandu jeongol is a comforting and hearty hot pot centered on mandu (Korean dumplings), complemented by fresh vegetables, meat, and a rich broth. It's a perfect dish to serve family and friends, as it requires minimal preparation yet delivers incredible flavors.

Unlike budae jjigae (army stew), which often includes Spam, ramen noodles, and sausages, mandu jeongol is a fresher, healthier alternative. It typically features mushrooms, napa cabbage, zucchini, carrots, and green onions, creating a nourishing and well-balanced meal. Another advantage of making mandu jeongol is its practicality. It's an excellent way to use leftovers, making it an easy go-to dish when you have an assortment of fresh vegetables, tofu, and dumplings.

Our First Encounter with Mandu Jeongol

Chuck and I first experienced mandu jeongol at Jaha Son Mandu, a renowned restaurant in Jongno-gu,

Seoul. The jeongol was bursting with rich, complex flavors, and the restaurant's freshly made mandu elevated the dish to another level. Our friend even purchased some of their frozen mandu for us to take home, which made our first homemade attempt at mandu jeongol even more special. Since then, we've refined our method, learning valuable lessons along the way—one of the most important being not to overfill the pot!

Nestled in a quaint Buam-dong home with sweeping views of Inwangsan, Jaha Son Mandu earned a Bib Gourmand designation in the 2025 Michelin Guide, awarded for "good quality, good value cooking." The restaurant's signature is their traditional family-style dumplings—handed down through three generations—served in a delicate, homemade soy-sauce broth. This cozy, unpretentious eatery has been a Bib Gourmand mainstay since the guide's Seoul launch in 2016. It's no wonder our mandu jeongol experience there was unforgettable.

Jaha Handmade Dumpling

Seoul Jongno-gu Buam-dong 245-2
<https://naver.me/GKbMvdHK>

The Challenge of Cooking Mandu Jeongol

The key to mastering mandu jeongol lies in achieving the perfect cooking temperature. Cooking at too high a heat can result in overcooked, tough mandu or cause them to fall apart. Conversely, a low temperature may leave the broth underdeveloped in flavor and cause it to fail to cook the vegetables properly.

To get the best results:

- Bring the broth to a boil over medium to medium-high heat.
- Once simmering, increase to high for a rolling boil.
- The dish is ready when the mandu is fully cooked and the vegetables are tender.

Selecting the Right Ingredients

Balancing the textures and thicknesses of your ingredients is essential for a well-cooked jeongol. Since mandu can overcook and disintegrate if left in the broth for too long, it's crucial to ensure that other ingredients, like tofu and rice cakes, are also cut appropriately to match the cooking time.



Key indicators of doneness:

- Mandu: A fully cooked mandu should have a translucent wrapper and a slightly chewy texture. Overcooked mandu becomes rubbery, while undercooked mandu remains raw and doughy.
- Rice Cakes (Tteok): Properly cooked rice cakes should be tender, chewy, and opaque. Some may puff up somewhat after absorbing the broth. Avoid a crunchy or hard texture.
- Vegetables: Cut them into bite-sized portions. Slice harder vegetables like carrots and zucchini thinly for quicker cooking.

Recipe: Mandu Jeongol (based on Seonkyoung Longest's recipe)

Ingredients:

- a handful of bean sprouts
- 2 cups napa cabbage, chopped
- 1 zucchini, cut into half-moon slices
- 1 carrot, cut into half-moon slices
- 1 bunch of green onions, cut lengthwise and into 2-inch pieces
- a handful of your favorite mushrooms
- 1 medium or firm tofu, sliced into 1/2-inch pieces
- frozen dumplings of your choice
- rice cakes of your choice (all ingredients can be adjusted based on your preferences)

Sauce Ingredients:

- 5 to 7 cloves of minced garlic
- 3 to 4 tbsp gochugaru (can be omitted or reduced due to spice preference)
- 2 tbsp Yondu
- 2 tbsp Korean soup soy sauce
- 1 tbsp maesil cheong (Korean preserved green plum extract)
- 4 cups vegetable stock

Instructions:

1. Arrange the bean sprouts at the bottom of a wide, shallow pot. Layer the vegetables, mandu, rice cake, and tofu neatly.
2. In a mixing bowl, combine garlic, gochugaru, Yondu, soy sauce, and maesil cheong. Thin it out with 1 cup of vegetable stock, then pour it over the ingredients in the pot. Add the remaining vegetable stock.
3. Place the pot on a portable gas stove at the table for an interactive dining experience.
4. Bring the broth to a boil over medium to medium-high heat. Once simmering, increase to high for a rolling boil.
5. Cook for about 5 minutes, or until the dumplings are fully cooked and the vegetables are softened.
6. Serve immediately and enjoy!

A Dish to Share and Savor

Mandu jeongol is a delightful hot pot that brings warmth, comfort, and togetherness. Whether you're gathering with family or hosting friends, this dish is a



fantastic way to share the joys of Korean cuisine. So gather your ingredients, set up your hot pot, and enjoy the rich flavors of mandu jeongol!

Recommended Videos to Learn How to Cook Mandu Jeongol

We wrote a series for South of Seoul called "A Year to Learn Korean Cooking." We loved creating videos of the dishes cooked by a Korean, a Korean in America, and Americans in Korea. For a step-by-step visual guide, check out these informative videos:



Founded in 2015, the South of Seoul team consists of volunteers on three continents working together to support English-speaking people traveling or living in South Korea. South of Seoul volunteers work with organizations and individuals across South Korea to improve equitable access to information across South Korea. Much of South of Seoul's information focuses on Pyeongtaek, Gyeonggi-do, South Korea. Blogs published under the authorship of "South of Seoul" include blogs compiled by multiple volunteers to improve access to standardized information unrelated to individualized personal experiences.

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About the Authors

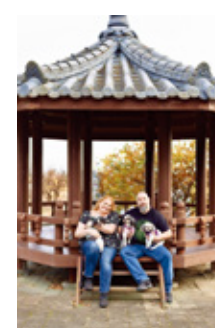
Melissa Edwards-Whittington has been in Korea for over 7 years. She and her husband have a YouTube channel, "KimchiRednecks", where they share about life in Korea, places to eat and visit in Korea, and cooking. They also have a YouTube channel, Shining With KimchiRednecks, dedicated to their hobby of making whiskey and brandy at home. They are also parents to three precocious senior Shih Tzu daughters, Minion, Sookie, and Mayhem who are featured often in their social media.

As Social Media Marketing Manager for *United on the RoK* Mag, Melissa brings her passion for the military community to life through compelling digital content. Her expertise spans content creation, social media marketing management, and community engagement through connectedness.

Melissa further extends her community impact through the South of Seoul, a local organization enhancing expatriate life in Korea. Through her online media management with South of Seoul, original content, established blog presence, and fostering multiple groups for language exchanges and content creators, she offers unique insights into life in South Korea. She has also volunteered for Pyeongtaek Insight as part of their content creation team. Her work consistently bridges cultural gaps while fostering connections within the international community.

Follow Melissa and her family here:

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