Eighth Army
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Eighth Army hosts Korean War veterans, reunited in honor of a sacrifice that shaped history

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — Eighth Army welcomed approximately 30 Korean War veterans from the Korean War Veterans Association Seoul Branch to its headquarters at Camp Humphreys, Nov. 5, for a day honoring their service, sacrifice and lasting contributions to the U.S.-ROK alliance.

Kang Yun-jin, vice minister of the Republic of Korea Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs, accompanied the delegation during the visit, which gave veterans an opportunity to return to the command that served alongside Republic of Korea forces during the Korean War.

The visit was arranged to fulfill a heartfelt wish expressed by the veterans during a meeting with the Korean War Veterans Association Seoul Branch in September, where they shared their desire to visit the unit of the U.S. comrades alongside whom they shed blood and sweat during the war.

The delegation arrived to a welcoming performance by the Eighth Army Band and commemorative photos before attending a welcome ceremony and command briefing at Eighth Army headquarters. Lt. Gen. Joseph Hilbert, commanding general of Eighth Army, welcomed the veterans and recognized their service and sacrifice in defense of the Republic of Korea.

“It was not guaranteed, but it was bought by, and paid for by your courage, sweat, and blood,” Hilbert said. “Frozen winters and grueling summers defending the hills and valleys whose names are now engraved forever in the history of human courage. You endured hardships that modern generations can scarcely imagine. You lost brothers and sisters in arms, yet you never wavered.”

Following the ceremony, the veterans joined Eighth Army service members for lunch at the Talon Café dining facility, where they exchanged commemorative gifts and shared personal experiences from the war. The luncheon provided service members an opportunity to hear directly from members of the generation that defended the Republic of Korea during its darkest hour.

The delegation then toured the Eighth Army Museum, retracing the history of the command they once fought alongside.

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For Kang Gu-gon, a member of the Korean War Veterans Association Seoul Branch, the tour brought back memories of his own wartime service. He recalled volunteering as a student during the Battle of Dabudong after seeing wounded soldiers arrive at a military hospital. He later served for three years with Eighth Army as a combat medic at a field hospital, where his American company commander promoted him from sergeant to first sergeant.

“I still vividly remember wondering why these young Americans came all the way to our small country, sacrificing their lives, getting injured, and dying for us,” Kang Gu-gon said. “That is why whenever I see U.S. service members, I always feel deeply grateful.”

The visit concluded with a windshield tour of Camp Humphreys, the largest overseas U.S. military installation.

More than seven decades after the Korean War, the visit honored the veterans whose courage and sacrifice forged the U.S.-ROK alliance. By bringing Korean War veterans together with today’s service members, Eighth Army reinforced the trust, shared history and personal bonds that have sustained the alliance across generations. Together, the veterans and service members demonstrated that the alliance remains strong because of its people and their enduring commitment to defending two homelands.

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