



Combined Forces
Command

MANGUDAI 2024



October 22-25 / United States Forces Korea

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Mangudai 2024
October 22-25



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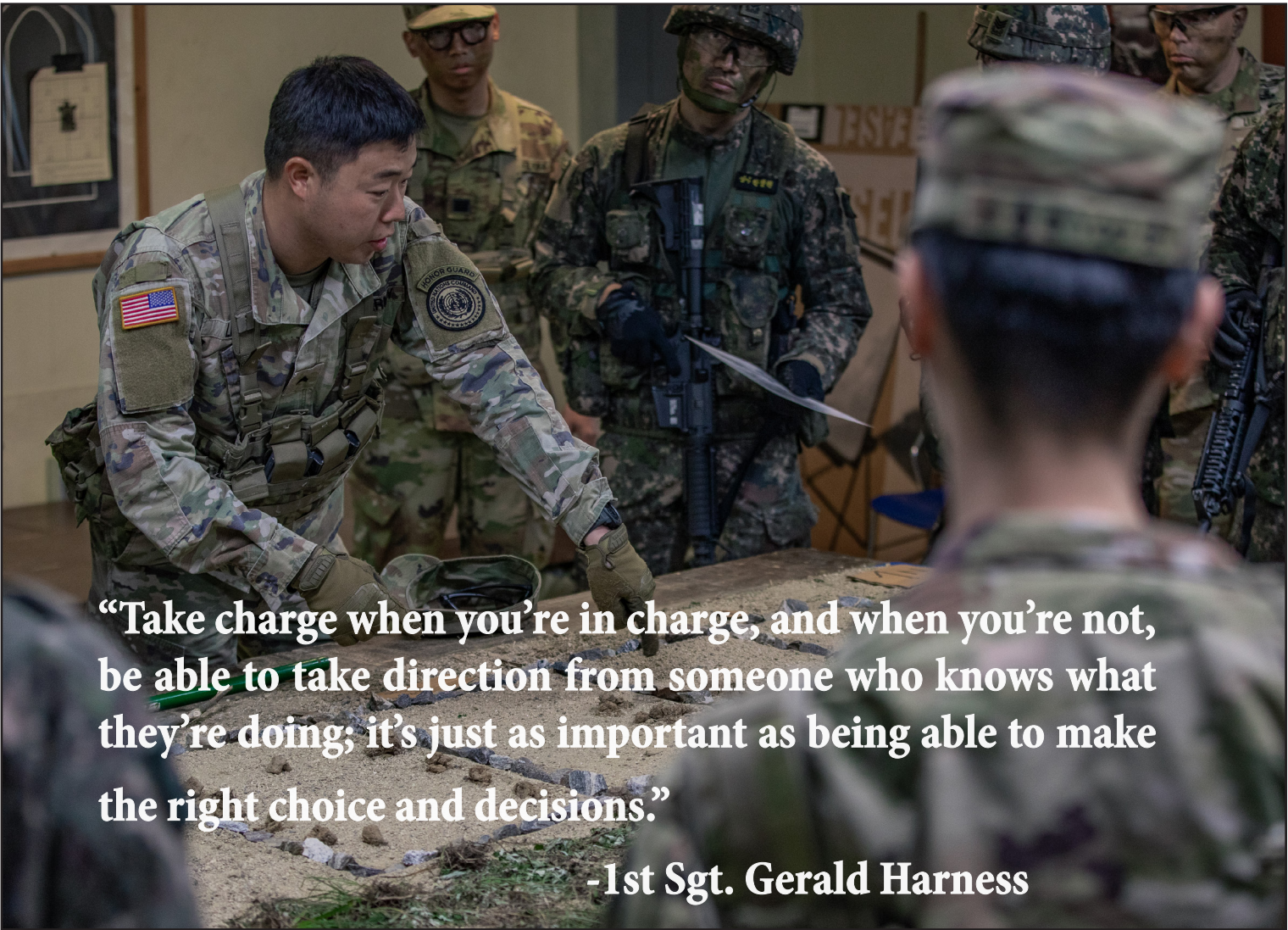
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“Take charge when you’re in charge, and when you’re not, be able to take direction from someone who knows what they’re doing; it’s just as important as being able to make the right choice and decisions.”

-1st Sgt. Gerald Harness

MANGUDAI EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A joint force of 56 Republic of Korea (ROK) and U.S. E-8 level senior leaders led by UNC/CFC/USFK Senior Enlisted Advisor, Command Sgt. Maj. Jack Love, and ROK CFC Command Sergeant Major, Command Sgt. Maj. Hyuk-Il Kwon, participated in Mangudai 2024, a grueling 72 hour test of grit and intestinal fortitude. This year’s participants consisted of 30 ROK Servicemembers, and 26 U.S. including three from Marine Forces Korea, six from the U.S. Air Force and one from Space Force-Korea. Supporting their senior advisors were eight KATUSA

translators and an astounding 110 supporters who were invisible to the participants. The purpose of this 100% NCO-driven event was framed around overcoming shared hardships while honing combat readiness, specifically, hand to hand combat, squad and platoon operations, and weapons proficiency. Together, we overcame physical, mental, and environmental challenges while building mutual trust and understanding of what our junior servicemembers must face. The arduous training areas surrounding

RLFC and Camp Casey proved to be a welcomed challenge over previous Mangudai Challenges. Overall, the strenuous nature of the event lived up to its origin, which dates back to the 13th Century when Mongolian tribes pited only their best against a rigorous selection process to serve in Genghis Khan’s Army. I am confident the grit of these senior leaders would rival that of the Mongolian Tribe’s commitment, and I am honored to have led this team alongside my peers in the ROK-U.S. Alliance.

KATCHI KAPSHIDA

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The participants of Mangudai 2024 take a group photo following a series of hand-to-hand and improvised weapon combat challenges that took place in a mud-pit, testing their endurance after a sleepless night of kinetic patrol base operations.

(Photo by Staff Sgt. Ian Vega-Cerezo)

“Whether you’re in for twenty years or thirty years, you must earn your place in the formation every day. We need to be able to do what we expect our young Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Guardians to do. We may not be able to do it as fast as we used to be able to, but we must be able to train, fight, and win in any conflict, in any environment.
-Command Sgt. Maj. Jack H. Love

A U.S. Service member pulls security during a foot march as part of Mangudai 2024, October 22, at Camp Bonifas, Republic of Korea. Every year, senior enlisted leaders from across the Korean Peninsula take part in Mangudai to build strong bonds and validate their proficiency as enlisted leaders by competing in friendly, squad-based events that challenge their ability to perform skill level 10 Soldier tasks and battle drills. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Ian Vega-Cerezo)



TRAIN AS YOU FIGHT

U.S and Republic of Korea Senior Enlisted Leaders prepare their equipment prior to an M249 and M4 Squad Attack event during the Mangudai Challenge at Story Live Fire Complex, ROK, Oct. 22, 2024. The U.S. and ROK forces united for physically and mentally intense training to validate their leadership under pressure, demonstrating the strength of the 71-year-old ROK-U.S. alliance. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Kelsey Kollar)

Mangudai 2024: Strong Bonds, Stronger Leaders

56 senior enlisted leaders from the Republic of Korea and U.S. Militaries joined forces to tackle the 2024 iteration of Mangudai

56 senior enlisted leaders from the Republic of Korea and United States militaries engaged in Mangudai 2024, which ran from Oct. 22-25, and included events spanning the lengths of Camp Bonifas, Rodriguez Live Fire Complex, and Camp Casey. Mangudai is an annual

three-day training event that evaluates senior enlisted leaders’ mettle in a grueling series of events, testing their physical fitness, adaptability, discipline, and mastery of core Soldiering tasks in an environment where sleep is sparse, and the weather is constantly adverse.

“Mangudai goes back to the 13th Century with the Mongolian Warriors. The leader of that force would select his most elite special forces through a training competition, which was called Mangudai,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Jack Love, Tri-Command Senior Enlisted

Advisor. “The US military has been executing Mangudai since the former U.S. Forces Korea Sergeant Major, Command Sgt. Maj. John Wayne Troxell, started it at Joint Base Lewis McCord when he was the I Corps Command Sergeant Major,” said Love. “I think it’s critically important for all senior enlisted leaders to participate for a number of reasons. First and foremost, we can never forget that we, all of us, whether you’re in for twenty years or thirty years, we must earn our place in the formation every day.”

“We need to be able to do what we expect our young Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Guardians to do,” explained Love. “We may not be able to do it as fast as we used to be able to, but we must be able to train, fight, and win in any conflict, in any environment. And so, this exercise really gets after that, and it tests a lot of grit.” Key events for Mangudai included: live fires, patrol base activities, land navigation, rendering casualty care under threat of mortar fire, hand-to-hand combat in a waist deep mud-pit, and 45 miles of foot-

marching through rain and the frigid cold. “We all got soaking wet from the rain and it was extremely cold to the point we were shivering; However, we were still motivated, which is the most meaningful part to me,” said Republic of Korea-Army Master Sgt. Hyun-Beom Lim, company executive officer, Special Task Infantry. “I think it is fascinating that ROK and U.S. personnel manage to overcome hardships by working as a team, and it made me enjoy all the tough tasks that need to be done through the exercise.”

While the training focuses on pushing competitors to their limits and potentially to their breaking points, it's also an opportunity to build trust and strong relations between partners, according to 1st Sgt. Gerald L. Harness, a competitor hailing from Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 6-52 Air Defense Artillery Battalion.

“Mangudai is a test of intestinal fortitude and of our ability to communicate with our allied partners who we’re teamed up with. It’s all about teamwork. When you’re in charge, be in charge, and when you’re not, be a good follower,” said Harness.

“My biggest takeaways from participating are: understanding my limits and the capabilities of our host nation allies, and expanding my comfort zone and my capabilities to not only lead with my peers, but follow them as well.”

When all is said and done, the core focus of Mangudai, like all military training, is grounded in warfighter readiness and instilling confidence in the tactics, techniques, and procedures Soldiers will employ on the battlefield.

“General LaCamera has four lines of operation and two lines of effort. Line of Operation number three is: Prepare for Combat,” said Love. “We have to be ready on the Peninsula, and though we pray for peace and want to maintain the current armistice state, should crisis or conflict arise, we have to be ready to fight tonight and win, so these skills really are the foundation of everything we do, regardless of your service, whether you’re from the United States or a Republic of Korea Service Member, winning is the only option.”

“When I watch these first sergeants and master sergeants across our combined forces command, and the grit and determination they’re pushing through, I’ve never been prouder,” Love added. “I would go to combat any day, anywhere with any one of them because they’re true warriors.”

A Republic of Korea Senior Enlisted Leader fires an M17 pistol during the Mangudai 2024 pistol qualification at Camp Hovey, South Korea, Oct. 24. The U.S. and ROK forces united for physically and mentally intense training to validate their leadership under pressure, demonstrating the strength of the 71-year-old ROK-U.S. alliance. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Kelsey Kollar)





TOP LEFT

A Squad Automatic Weapon gunner lays down suppressing fire during a situational training exercise during Mangudai 2024, Oct 22, at the Joint Security Area, South Korea. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Ian Vega-Cerezo)

Top Right

U.S and Republic of Korea Senior Enlisted Leaders conduct an 8.6 km ruck march during Mangudai 2024 at the Joint Security Area, South Korea. Oct. 22. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Kelsey Kollar)

Bottom Left

ROK and U.S. noncommissioned officers work together to tackle a land navigation course as part of Mangudai 2024 at the Joint Security Area, South Korea. Oct. 22, 2024.

(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Eric Kestner)

Bottom Right

A ROK Army noncommissioned officer participates in a situational training exercise during Mangudai 2024 at the Joint Security Area, South Korea. Oct. 22. (U.S. Army photo by: Sgt. Eric Kestner)

There are times you'll have little to no intelligence when moving into an operation. You just have to execute. No excuses.



Top Left
U.S. and Republic of Korea Senior Enlisted Leaders carry a litter during an casualty evacuation exercise at Mangudai 2024 at Rodriguez Live Fire Complex, ROK, Oct. 23, 2024.

(U.S. Army photo by Spc. Kelsey Kollar)



Top Right
U.S. and Republic of Korea Senior Enlisted Leaders flip a tire together during a relay race in the Mystery Event at the Mangudai 2024 at Story Live Fire Complex, ROK, Oct. 23, 2024.

(U.S. Army photo by Spc. Kelsey Kollar)



Bottom Left
U.S. and Republic of Korea senior enlisted leaders engage in a combatives event in a mud pit, testing their physical endurance and teamwork during Mangudai 2024 at Rodriguez Live Fire Complex, Oct. 23, 2024.

(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Eric Kestner)



Bottom Right
U.S. and Republic of Korea senior enlisted leaders engage in a mystery challenge which consisted of an endurance run, tire flip, and ammo cans carry during Mangudai 2024, Oct. 23 at Rodriguez Live Fire Complex.

(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Eric Kestner)





TOP

A Republic of Korea Army Soldier pulls security for a wounded team member during a casualty evacuation event during Mangudai 2024, October 23, at Rodriguez Live Fire Complex.

BOTTOM

U.S. and Republic of Korea Senior Enlisted Leaders flip a tire together during a relay race in the Mystery Event at the Mangudai 2024 at Rodriguez Live Fire Complex, ROK, Oct. 22, 2024.

A Republic of Korea Army Soldier patrols his sector during an casualty evacuation event as part of Mangudai 2024, October 23, at Rodriguez Live Fire Complex. Senior U.S. and Republic of Korea service members come together every year to tackle Mangudai, a grueling three day training event with a focus on basic Soldiering tasks such as: combatives, marksmanship, first aid, ruck marching, room clearing and Chemical Biological Radioactive Nuclear operations.
(U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Ian Vega-Cerezo)

You can have a war anywhere, the only things that are going to change are the conditions. If you can execute the basic fundamental tasks like react to contact, react to indirect fire, enter and clear a room, occupy a patrol base, and be disciplined in the things that we do, you can pick that up, plug it in anywhere and kick anybody's tail.
-Sgt. Maj. Jack H. Love



TOP LEFT

U.S and Republic of Korea Senior Enlisted Leaders navigate “The Belly Roller” at the air assault obstacle course, a key event during the Mangudai Challenge at Camp Hovey, South Korea, Oct. 24, 2024.

BOTTOM LEFT

Senior enlisted leaders conduct M17 pistol qualifications as part of the Mangudai Challenge at Camp Hovey, South Korea, Oct. 24, 2024.

CENTER

U.S and Republic of Korea Senior Enlisted Leaders navigate “The Weaver” at the air assault obstacle course, a key event during the Mangudai Challenge at Camp Hovey, South Korea, Oct. 24, 2024.

RIGHT

U.S and Republic of Korea Senior Enlisted Leaders climb the cargo net at “The Tough One” at the air assault obstacle course, a key event during the Mangudai Challenge at Camp Hovey, South Korea, Oct. 24, 2024.





Right
U.S. and Republic of Korea senior enlisted leaders graduate after completing the 2024 Mangudai Challenge at Camp Casey, South Korea, Oct. 24, 2024. The event tests their ability to lead under pressure, focusing on combat readiness and strengthening the ROK-U.S. alliance.
(Photo by Sgt. Eric Kestner)

Below
Mangudai 2024 coverage aggregated over 24,000 views on social media platforms and traditional media products uploaded to DVIDShub were viewed by over 2,000 users during the event's lifetime.



CSM Love's Closing Remarks

We are in the ultimate contact profession, and like General George Patton said, "sweat more in training, bleed less in battle". Mangudai is a very mentally and physically challenging training event, a grueling test of modern-day Warriors that offers us a chance to overcome adversity and shared hardships, all while enhancing combat readiness and strengthening the ROK/US Alliance.
To maximize individual readiness, each participant had to be physically fit and

mentally strong, as we walked 45 miles with a rucksack and kit over the three-day Mangudai, in some very unforgiving terrain. This tough, realistic training is what we ask of our service members across the Peninsula, and it remains the same for our most Senior Enlisted Leaders (SELs).
We focused on the basics; marksmanship, patrolling, combatives, land navigation, medical life saving skills, and field craft. Our goal during the Mangudai was to further develop our senior enlisted leaders, experience shared hardship, and train as a Combined / Joint team amongst SELs, balancing tactical competency, teamwork and trusting our teammates.
We must share hardships and take prudent, calculated risks together, overcome adversity, and demonstrate a willingness to lead, fight, and win. We are contributing to the coalition which pursues peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, in Northeast Asia, and across the Indo-Pacific.
Participating in events like this is important. NCOs are the principal trainers and experts in our fields. We are the Backbone of our Armed Forces. Our Commanders hold us accountable to maximize our individual and small unit readiness so that we can be ready to Fight Tonight; and if or when diplomacy fails, the expectation is that we will fight and win. As General LaCamera has said, training like this, will help us achieve our most sacred trust... to fight and win on the most dangerous piece of ground: The last 100 meters.
Everyone performed exceptionally well, and I am very honored to be surrounded by leaders that participated in this year's Mangudai.



KATCHI KAPSHIDA
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