



**2025 KDVA & KUSAF Honorees
Honors Category: U.S. Civilian
Insung Shim**

PURPOSE: KDVA & KUSAF Honors recognize outstanding members for their contributions to the ROK-U.S. Alliance and to inspire making a difference for the Alliance’s future.

CRITERIA:

Accomplishments or support for the ROK-U.S. Alliance:

Sergeant Insung Shim is a distinguished veteran of the Republic of Korea Army, having served for nearly eight years in the elite 21st Infantry Division, known as the Baekdusan Unit. His military career is marked by exceptional leadership and combat readiness. In 2014, during joint training with the U.S. 2nd Infantry Division, he earned the prestigious Expert Infantryman Badge (EIB)—a rare achievement among Korean soldiers. He later adapted the EIB program for the Korean Army, implementing realistic combat training at the 21st Division’s Recruit Training Center and instructing both officers and NCOs. Selected as a BCTP (Battle Command Training Program) instructor, Sergeant Shim conducted numerous missions and played a vital role in joint exercises such as UFG (Ulchi Freedom Guardian), enhancing operational coordination between U.S. and Korean forces and supporting commanders in executing realistic training scenarios. After honorably separating from the military, Sergeant Shim moved to the United States, where he became the first ROK Army Sergeant to graduate from UC Santa Barbara with a degree in Statistics and Data Science in June 2025. Sergeant Shim is currently preparing to publish his memoir, “Sergeant Shim: Don’t Give Up, Move Forward,” which aims to share the history and significance of the U.S.–ROK alliance with broader audiences. Looking ahead, he aspires to serve as a public diplomacy envoy—connecting generations and nations through service, storytelling, and unwavering commitment to shared democratic values.



Volunteer efforts:

Sergeant Shim has actively participated in numerous military and veteran-related events across the United States, exemplifying the spirit of service, remembrance, and diplomacy. He has led the national anthems of both Korea and the United States at official ceremonies, honored veterans, and engaged with youth to promote the values of freedom and alliance. His efforts exemplify grassroots diplomacy in action. Through these efforts, Sergeant Shim continues to serve by honoring the past, empowering the present, and inspiring the future of the alliance.

Short biography:

Sergeant Shim is a model of integrity, leadership, and service. His military career and post-service contributions reflect a rare combination of discipline, compassion, and vision. He earned trust not through words, but through consistent action, always leading by example and inspiring

respect from both peers and commanders. His passion for the U.S.–ROK alliance and democratic values is evident in his tireless efforts to educate and engage younger generations. Sergeant Shim is not only a veteran of distinction but also a servant-leader whose actions continue to inspire and uplift those around him.

Statement from the nominator about the nominee's qualities: selfless service, passion for the Alliance and Veterans, and how the nominee might use this Honor to contribute further to the Alliance:

Sergeant Insung Shim is a true leader forged in service and resilience, exemplified by his unwavering dedication during his military service, earning recognition as an elite warrior in the Republic of Korea Army's 21st Infantry Division. His exceptional sense of responsibility and combat readiness led to his selection as a top-performing soldier. He earned the deep respect of both peers and commanders through his integrity, initiative, and tireless commitment. His passion for the U.S.–ROK alliance and liberal democratic values has been proven not through rhetoric, but through consistent action. Sergeant Shim is a genuine leader who never retreats in the face of adversity and always steps forward for the good of the community. If honored with this award, he will continue to connect generations and nations as a public diplomacy envoy—amplifying the legacy of the U.S.–ROK alliance. Widely trusted within the Korean American community, he is a rising next-generation leader. I wholeheartedly support his dream of becoming the first Korean American Governor of California within the next 15 years.