



Kimhyönggwön is a county seat in Ryanggang Province with a 2021 estimated population of 40,041.

As with the whole province, the area was first incorporated into Goguryeo (37 BC-668 AD). After Goguryeo's fall, the area belonged to the Chinese Tang Dynasty. It wouldn't become independent Korean territory again until the late 13th century. During both the Joseon and DPRK eras, the region has been used to resettle exiles and less desirable people.

The exact time of the town's founding is unknown; though, the original county administration under Japanese occupation was established in 1914. The town was originally called Pungsan until being renamed in 1990 after Kim Il Sung's uncle and anti-Japanese "martyr" [Kim Hyong-gwon](#).

There are no identified ancient sites in the county. There are a few scattered monuments, likely dedicated to the anti-Japanese struggle, but I haven't been able to find any details about most. One that does have some detail is the Phabal Revolutionary Site which commemorates Kim Hyong-gwon and his exploits. It is located in the village of Phabal (40.662746° 128.181196°) near the Hwangsuwon Airbase.

Pungsan is the namesake of the Pungsan dog, a breed of hunting dog native to this region of Korea. However, it is not recognized by any international kennel club and is generally considered to be just a minor variation of the Spitz Siberian Huskey, whose native range includes Korea, Manchuria, and eastern Siberia.

Economy

The town is not connected to the national rail network and there are only two roads in or out. Over 80% of the county is forested, so timber is an important part of the local economy. Additionally, there are three hydroelectric dams within the county, and the water tunnel of the [Tanchon Hydroelectric Project](#)

flows through the county until crossing into S. Hamgyong Province and reaching the Tanchon generating stations 5 km from the border.

The hydroelectric potential of the Hochon River and its tributaries (which flow through Kimhyŏnggwŏn, Kapsan, Phungso, Samsu, and Hyesan counties) is estimated to be up to 500 MW and could power most of the province if properly harnessed.

Agriculture is limited to farmland immediately around the town and in some scattered areas in the rest of the county. Hops, barley, flax, and potatoes are grown on the 7% of land used for agriculture. Some small mines have operated on occasion, but there doesn't seem to be any sustained mining operations within the county.

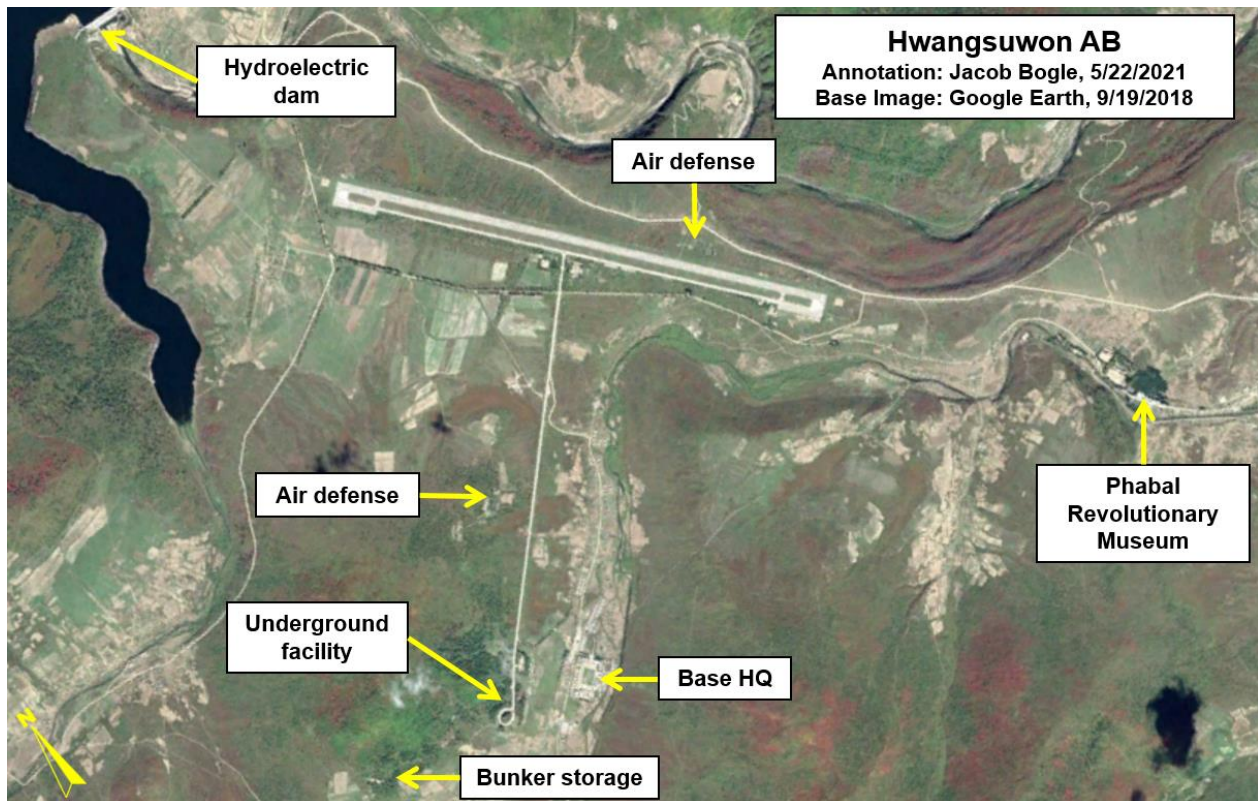
It has a small market (1,460 sq. m.) that hasn't grown since at least 2013, a stadium, two restaurants, at least five schools within the town itself, and a possible university. There is also a food distribution compound and a forestry management station at 40.825630° 128.132877°. Forestry management stations are responsible for growing a range of saplings to be replanted around the county.

A possible [COVID-19 isolation facility](#) was built on the grounds of the forestry management center.

Within the whole county, there are at least 31 schools but only one official market, as well as three identified food distribution centers. Modern communication consists of a set of four cellular phone towers that were installed sometime prior to 2013, and a Cold War-era microwave tower that is used by the government for long-range communications in this mountainous region.

Like Kapsan, very little change has been noted in recent years. I have only been able to locate a few additional houses throughout the county and only three new buildings within the town since 2013.

Military



Kimhyŏnggwŏn is home to the Hwangsuwon Airbase. The airbase is home to a fighter jet regiment of Mig-21s and it includes an underground aircraft complex 2.3 km away from the main runway. Like all major airbases, it had [emergency “crash pads”](#) installed in 2015 and it is defended by multiple anti-aircraft artillery batteries.

Along with Samjiyon to the north, these are the only two airbases in the province capable of handling jet aircraft.

The county is also protected by an S-75 surface-to-air missile base (40.657506° 128.209428°) and there are four smaller military bases throughout the county.

A set of tunnels lie 3.3 km to the south (40.785983° 128.158914°) of the town itself and are likely used for storage or for emergency/reserve purposes.

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Jacob Bogle, May 2021 (updated August 2023)

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