



Changjin (Jangjin) is a county seat in east central South Hamgyong Province. Its 2008 population was 64,681 and its 2022 estimated population is 69,358 based on an estimated 0.5% annual growth rate.

Changjin is situated among the Rangrim and Pujölyong mountain ranges and has an approximate elevation range of 1,035 m to 2,150 m. The town of Changjin itself sits within a bowl that is surrounded by mountains.

Historically, Changjin was not located along a major transportation or invasion route, and I am not aware of there being any historic fortresses nearby. However, the settlement of Jangjinchaek was established here in 1667.

In 1935 the Changjin River Dam was constructed by the Japanese, creating a reservoir nearly 20 km long. Also in the mid-1930s, the Changjin Rail Line was laid.

During the Korean War, the Battle of Chosin Reservoir (the Japanese word for Changjin) was fought in the area between Chinese and United Nations' forces, leading to the defeat of UN forces (primarily from the United States) despite the Chinese suffering greater losses. This battle enabled central North Korea to be reclaimed by the communist forces and it remained in their hands throughout the rest of the war.

The UN retreat followed roads leading south of the reservoir and passed through the town of Changjin as well as the village of Hagaru-ri which is now the location of the Changjin Airbase.

Economy

The economy of Changjin is based on timber and mining, with additional activities including hydroelectricity, low-level regional trade, and agriculture.

Timber is often transported down the Changjin River and then transported via truck and rail to lumberyards across the region.

Mining produces a range of minerals including gold, graphite, and jade. The mines are relatively small, and occasionally the riverbed is dredged up to uncover minerals that have been washed down during heavy rains.

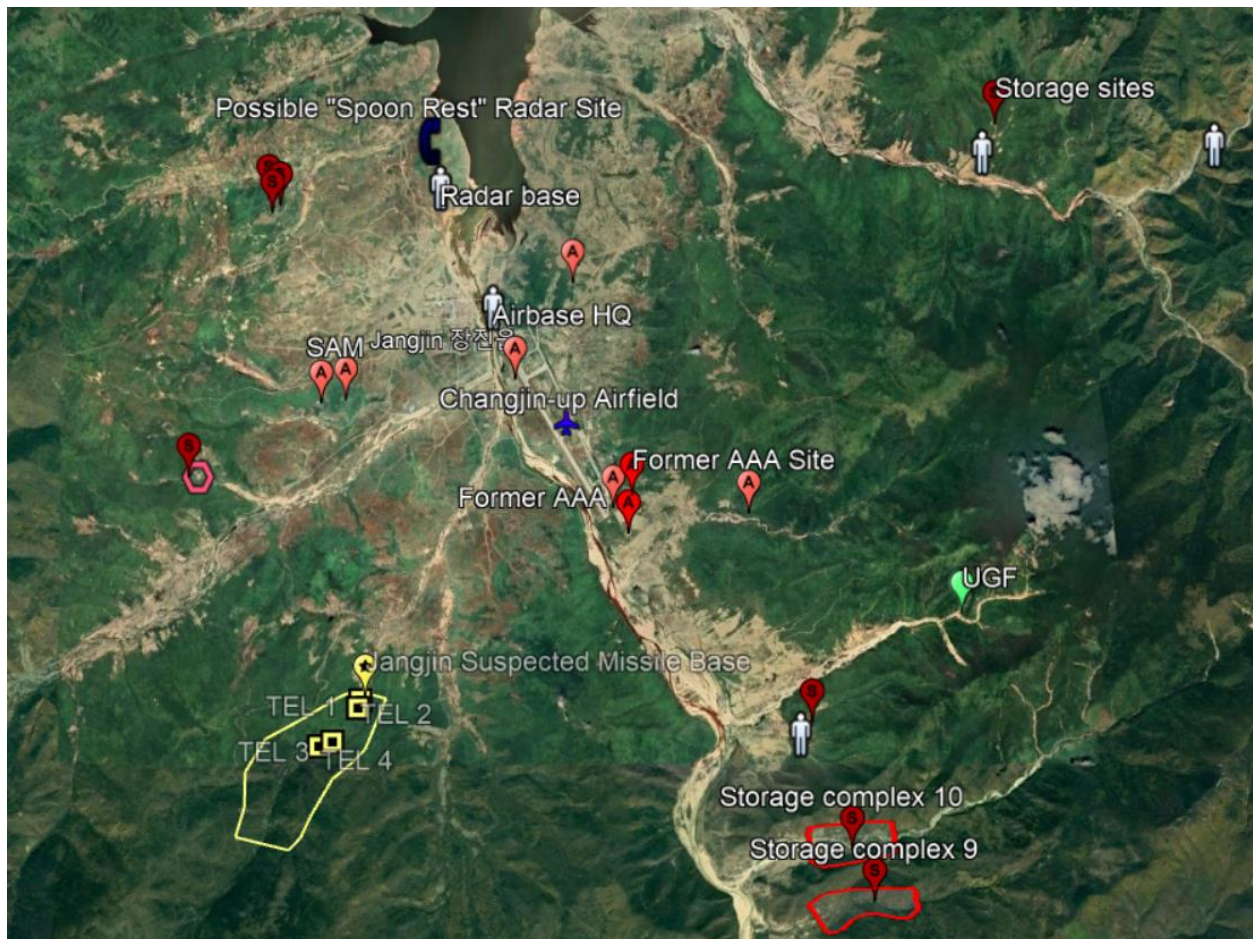
Changjin's location limits the types of crops that can be grown, but potatoes, barley, oats, and soybeans are grown in the low hills that surround the town.

The town's market is 3,230 sq. meters in size and was moved to its current location in 2017/18. It is roughly double the size of the former market.

In terms of recent construction, in 2016 twenty-six new houses were built and between 2017 and 2021, seven apartment blocks were constructed and at least 12 existing ones were renovated. Construction in the outlying villages has been minimal.

Lake Changjin National Park is also located within the county, but it doesn't have any substantial visitor facilities and seems to simply be a moderately-sized nature preserve, perhaps no larger than 30 sq. km.

Military



Military sites around Changjin via the AccessDPRK Pro Map, 2021.

Changjin is home to the Changjin Airbase. It is home to the 25th Air Regiment (bomber) with Il-28/H-5 bomber aircraft, and it is home to a fighter regiment as well that stations MiG-21s. The airbase has a large underground facility for aircraft storage and maintenance.

The area around Changjin has a surface-to-air missile base (40°22'11.31"N 127°13'29.44"E) and five anti-aircraft artillery batteries. There is also an early warning radar base at 40°24'8.51"N 127°14'25.21"E.

There is also a [possible](#) ballistic missile/TEL training base located at 40°19'40.84"N 127°13'41.92"E, 6 km away from the air base. It's the only facility of its exact type in the country.

Changjin also has several military storage facilities in the area with the two largest being located at 40°18'25.41"N 127°19'3.91"E and 40°18'0.31"N 127°19'18.27"E.

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--Jacob Bogle, originally published June 2022 (edited April 2024)
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