

**Komusan** is a county seat in North Hamgyong Province and lies within the Susong River valley. Its 2006 population was reported to be 12,242. I estimate that by 2020 it had grown to 13,127.

As with many of the large valleys in the country, an ancient fortress (ca. 1300-1600) defended the area. The fort is located about 1.7 km north of the train station at 42.133917° 129.696972°. Unfortunately, during the construction of the railway, the eastern wall of the fort was completely destroyed. Originally, the fort occupied some 50,500 square meters. Today, only the lower stone courses of the remaining three sides of wall exists.

The first train station to be built in Komusan was constructed in 1917 by the Japanese-founded “Chosun Government Railway”. The railway is part of two larger railway lines, the Musan Line (running north) and Hambuk Line (running south). Komusan also lies along the Musan-Chongjin highway.

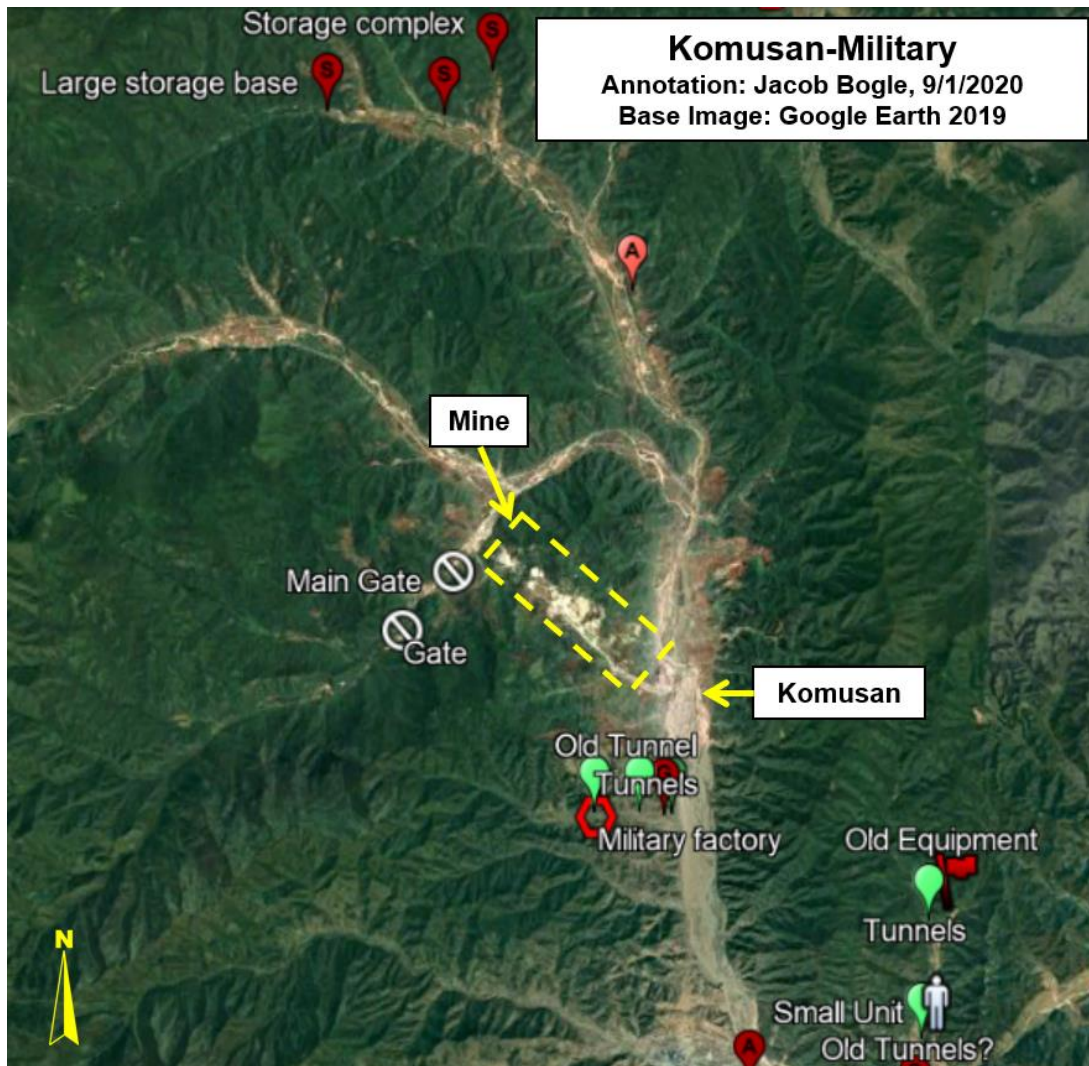
Unlike [Yonsa](#), Komusan and the river valley seems to have been spared the worst of the 2016 flooding.

**Komusan’s economy** is dominated by the Komusan Limestone Mine and cement factory. There is no apparent logging in the area and only limited agriculture positioned along the banks of the river.

The cement plant is within the town and the mine extends 3.8 km northwest from Komusan, across Sungji-bong Mountain, and to a rail loading station in Musu Worker’s District where raw limestone can be transported elsewhere.

Electricity is provided by the Mayang hydroelectric station and a series of smaller generating stations along the Susong River. The Mayang generating station is located 10.7 km east of the actual dam, and water is carried to the station via tunnel.

Komusan has a small and little used stadium (south of town) but it does have several schools, a revolutionary history area, a youth park across from the train station, and an apparent hospital that is fairly large. According to 38 North Digital Atlas, there is also an old Japanese cemetery (42.110467° 129.695286°). Based on satellite imagery, it hasn’t been well cared for over the years.



In terms of **military installations**, the area around Komusan and throughout the Susong River valley is filled with small military sites of various types.

Immediately to the south of the town (42.099849° 129.679765°) is a small factory that I have classified as defense-related due to the presence of a number of tunnels within the complex. Two other tunnels also lie to the east of the factory.

At the northern end of the Susong valley are also three military storage facilities and adjacent to the Musu Worker's District loading station is a vast complex of buildings (42.126817° 129.637033°) that are well hidden by tree cover and protected by two sets of gates. This layout is used exclusively for military purposes or as part of the country's strategic reserves system (storing food, equipment, weapons, and anything else that might be needed in an emergency). Various tunnels and small bases are located downriver until you get to the Chongjin area which itself is surrounded by military sites including a dozen or so air defense batteries.

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Jacob Bogle, 9/30/2020 (updated May 14, 2022)

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