

With Korea's Olympic thaw, war-split families want reunions

By **Hyung-Jin Kim**
The Associated Press

GANGNEUNG, South Korea — When Kang Hwa-seon married into a family that lived in a thatched house in this eastern coastal city in the early 1940s, she was in essence a mother to her little brother-in-law. She fed him, took him to school, watched him grow into a handsome boy who carried her baby daughter on his shoulder.

Then, during the Korean War, they were pulled apart.

In late 2015, she travelled to the North and tearfully reunited with her brother-in-law. By then, Song Dong Ho was an 81-year-old man with a gaunt, wrinkled face. They met under now-dormant family reunion programs that the two Koreas hold when relations are good. Since then, she's had no word from him.

Recently, however, her hopes for a second meeting have grown. South Korea's first Winter Olympics — unfolding in her neighborhood, of all places — have caused the Koreans to ease animosities and cooperate after a period of heightened



nuclear tension that triggered fears of a second Korean War.

"I just want to see him one last time before I die," Kang, 93, said during an interview at her traditional tile-roof house in Gangneung, on the same site where that thatched house once stood. "He was like

my son or a little brother."

During the 1950-1953 Korean War, uncounted families were completely separated. Only a portion have been allowed to reunite with long-lost relatives, albeit briefly, under humanitarian programs that began in 2000.

REUNION HOPES. Kang Hwa-seon, center, sits with her nephew, Song Yong-geun, left, and her son, Song Young-jin, at her home in Gangneung, South Korea, looking at pictures of a 2015 family reunion she had with her brother-in-law. Kang and her brother-in-law were separated after the Korean War broke out in 1950. They saw each other briefly during the family reunion program in 2015. She hopes the current Olympics-inspired rapprochement could help her to meet him again before she dies. (AP Photo/Johnson Lai)

Reunions are deeply emotional, often pegged to a ticking clock. Most people who apply are in their 70s at least, and they don't know if loved ones are still alive. Both governments prohibit their citizens from exchanging phone calls, letters, or e-mails.

It's not clear if the current inclination toward rapprochement will last after the Olympics end on February 25 and help restart reunion programs.

Animosities could easily flare again once Seoul and Washington launch their delayed springtime massive military drills, which Pyongyang views as an invasion rehearsal.

But some say North Korea is serious about its outreach this time. They cite a

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Tank museum displaying 110 battle-worn tanks opens in Jordan

By **Sam McNeil**
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AMMAN, Jordan — A museum displaying 110 battle-worn tanks from a century of wars in the Middle East and from more distant conflicts has opened in Jordan.

Curators at the Royal Tank Museum collected armored vehicles over the past decade, including some that served on both sides of the Iran-Iraq war and in the conflicts between Israel and its Arab neighbors in the Golan Heights, Jordan, and Jerusalem.

Other contributions came from faraway places, such as Azerbaijan, Morocco, Taiwan, and Brunei. Most of the museum's tanks were made in America, reflecting Jordan's long-running alliance with the United States.

Some pieces reached Jordan in a particularly roundabout way, including a World War II-era German tank used by the Nazis in North Africa. A swastika-in-palm-tree stencil marks it as one of the German Africa Corps' fleet of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel. The Syrians had bought the tank in the 1950s from Czechoslovakia and deployed it against Israel, then gave it to Jordan in 2009.

"The museum is telling the story of the world through the history of tanks," said the museum's general manager, Maher Tarawneh.

The museum, the second in the region after Israel's Yad La-Shiryon, just opened.

On a recent morning, hundreds of Jordanians lined up outside to be led through the museum by guides, many of them army veterans.

The 2,392-square-yard space also includes exhibits of historic battles in Syria, Jerusalem, and Jordan, with loudspeakers blaring gunfire, roars of diesel engines, and fiery patriotic speeches. Life-size replicas of soldiers staff turrets as tank treads menace intricately crafted shrubs.

Dangling from a massive skylight is a Cobra attack helicopter, of the type flown by Jordan's King Abdullah II.

The king decreed the creation of the

museum in 2007, launching the acquisition process led by chief curator Hamdan Smairan. The retired major general who commanded the Jordan military's armored corps began by reaching out to his contacts.

The world's tank museums supported the venture. The Tank Museum in Dorset, England, and the Imperial War Museum in London provided curatorial counsel. Museums in the Czech Republic and France exchanged tanks for Jordanian tanks.

An old friend of Smairan's lobbied South Africa successfully for the museum's World War II-era British Crusader tank.

Russia and Kazakhstan gave tanks to Jordan's king who then added them to the collection, the curator said.

Along with World War II-era Sherman and Tiger tanks, there are also Soviet and Chinese models.

The museum also illustrates Jordan's history.

During World War I, as newly invented tanks battled across Europe, Britain-backed Arab irregulars waged a guerrilla campaign against the German-allied Ottoman Empire. The insurrection, which became known as the Great Arab Revolt of 1917, was led by Abdullah I, the grandfather of the current monarch and eventual founder of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

An armored vehicle used in the revolt rotates on a dais in the museum. It is followed by tank exhibits telling the story of Jordan in subsequent battles, including the Mideast wars of 1967 and 1973.

The museum will eventually open an exhibition field and offer rides on tanks outside on site.

People walk past a tank and a mural depicting a battle scene at the Royal Tank Museum in Amman, Jordan. The museum, which features 110 battle-worn tanks from a century of wars in the Middle East and from more distant conflicts, has opened. Curators collected the armored vehicles over the past decade, including some that served in both sides of the Iran-Iraq war and in the conflicts between Israel and its Arab neighbors in the Golan Heights, Jordan, and Jerusalem. (AP Photo/Sam McNeil)



Minimize your risk to lead in water from home plumbing

Elevated levels of lead in drinking water were found in 18 out of 134 recently tested high-risk homes. These homes are at highest-risk for lead in water since they have copper pipes with lead solder.



Exposure to lead through drinking water is possible if materials in a home's plumbing contain lead. Common materials are copper plumbing with lead solder and brass parts.

Lead can cause health problems, especially for pregnant people and young children.

Follow these tips to reduce your exposure to lead:

1. Test your water for lead. Free kits at www.leadline.org.
2. Run cold water for 30 seconds to 2 minutes to flush out lead.
3. Do not cook, drink, or make infant formula with hot water from the tap.
4. Do not boil water to reduce lead. Boiling water does not remove lead.
5. Clean faucet screens to remove trapped pieces of lead.
6. Install low-lead fixtures or a lead-reducing filter.

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