

STORY #1A SYNOPSIS

2d LT John J. K. C. Kim- DOW*

APRIL 12, 1944



Born- Honolulu, Hawaii
25 Years Old

27th FS, 1st FG
P-38 Lightning Fighter

- Fighter Pilot
- Returning from escorting bombers to Bad Voslau, Austria
- Forced to land at Vis for fuel & repairs
- Upon take-off, engine failed & had to land
- Crashed short of runway, pulled from burning plane
- Died two days later on April 14th
- **First American airman to die on Vis in WWII**

*Died of Wounds Received in Action



1st Fighter Group

- Salsola, Italy - January 1944- May 1945
- Three fighter squadrons: 27th, 71st & 94th
- Primary mission- escorting bombers attacking targets in Italy, France, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, Rumania, Yugoslavia and Greece
- Flew P-38 Lightning aircraft
- Flew 1,045 combat missions in WWII





- 1. Mateur, Tunisia 15 Oct. 1943
Djedeida 6 Nov. 1943 (Air eschelon)
- 2. Dittaino, Sicily Sept. 1943 (Detachments)
- 3. Monserrato - Cagliari, Sardinia Oct. 1943
(Ground eschelon)

- 4. Gioia del Colle, Italy Dec. 1943 (Air eschelon)
- 5. Salsola (Foggia #3) Jan. 1944
- 6. Aghione, Corsica Aug. 1944 (Detachments)
- 7. Lake Lessina, Italy Mar. 16, 1945

John Jay Ki Chon Kim

- Born on March 3, 1919 in Honolulu, Hawaii & grew up there and in California
- Hawaii was a U.S. Territory, became a state in 1959
- Son of Korean immigrants Hyung Kak (aka Chang Wha) Kim & Sung Gin Hahn
- Three brothers & two sisters
- Attended Delano CA schools, Bakersfield College & the University of California at Berkeley where he got an Engineering degree



Draft Registration Card – Oct. 28, 1940

SERIAL NUMBER 1886		1. NAME (Print) John Jay Kim <small>(First) (Middle) (Last)</small>			ORDER NUMBER 1945 <small>1945</small>
2. ADDRESS (Print) RT-1 Box 162 Delano Kern Calif. <small>(Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)</small>					
3. TELEPHONE	4. AGE IN YEARS 21 <small>DATE OF BIRTH</small> MAR. 3 1919 <small>(Mo.) (Day) (Yr.)</small>		5. PLACE OF BIRTH WAHIAWA HAWAII <small>(Town or county) (State or country)</small>		6. COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP U.S.A.
7. NAME OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS Mr. STANFORD D. HAHN <small>(Mr., Mrs., Miss) (First) (Middle) (Last)</small>			8. RELATIONSHIP OF THAT PERSON Uncle		
9. ADDRESS OF THAT PERSON RT 2 Box 156 Delano Kern Calif. <small>(Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)</small>					
10. EMPLOYER'S NAME FRANK CURRIE					
11. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS City Hall Delano Kern Calif. <small>(Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)</small>					
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.					
REGISTRATION CARD D. S. S. Form 1 <small>(over)</small>		16-17105 John Jay Kim <small>(Registrant's signature)</small>			

REGISTRAR'S REPORT				
DESCRIPTION OF REGISTRANT				
RACE	HEIGHT (Approx.)	WEIGHT (Approx.)	COMPLEXION	
White	5ft 10in	158	Sallow	
	EYES	HAIR	Light	
Negro	Blue	Blonde	Ruddy	
	Gray	Red	Dark	
Oriental	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazel	Brown	Freckled	
	Brown	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Black	Light brown	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Indian	Black	Gray	Dark brown	
		Bald	Black	
Filipino				

Other obvious physical characteristics that will aid in identification
Bruised mark on Right forearm

I certify that my answers are true; that the person registered has read or has had read to him his own answers; that I have witnessed his signature or mark and that all of his answers of which I have knowledge are true, except as follows:

Registrar for **James G. Hughes**
(signature of registrar)
Columbine Tulare Calif.
(Precinct) (ward) (City or county) (State)

Date of registration **OCT 28 1940**
LOCAL BOARD NO. 9320

Security Natl Bank Bldg.

OCT 28 1940

Tulare, Tulare Co.
California
(STAMP OF LOCAL BOARD)

(The stamp of the Local Board having jurisdiction of the registrant shall be placed in the above space.)

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 16-17105

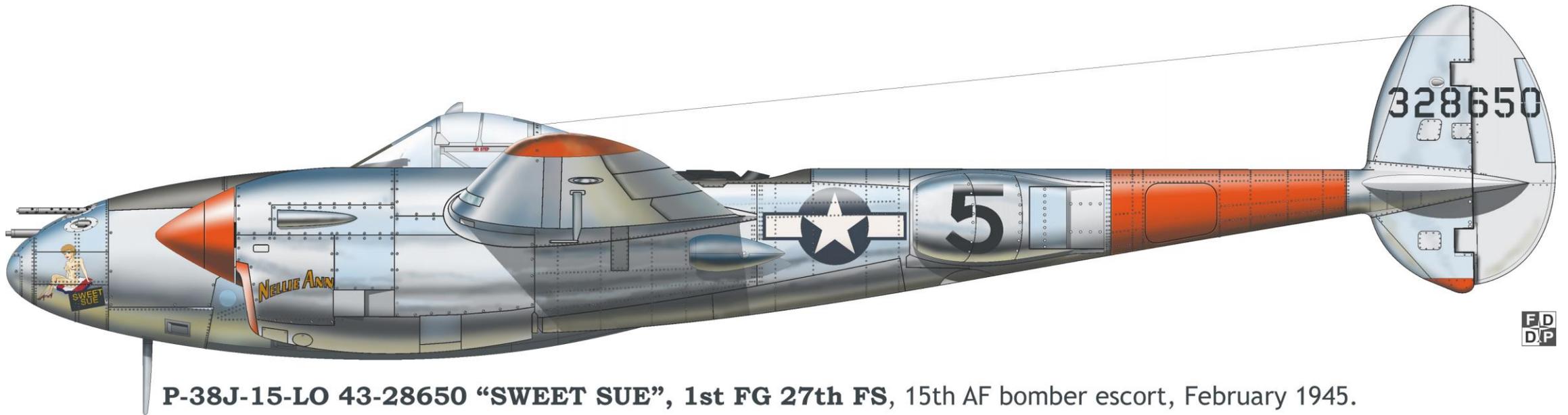
2d LT Kim in WWII

- Moved to Hawaii and worked in Honolulu as a draftsman at the U.S. Engineering Department- 1941-2
- Lived at 929 Green St., Honolulu
- Was there on December 7, 1941, “Pearl Harbor Day”
- Met & married Victoria Sunghye Chai on October 17, 1942
- Enlisted in the Army Air Corps on October 31, 1942
- Trained at Gardner Field, California and Luke Field, Arizona- became a pilot



27th Fighter Squadron

- 2d LT Kim joined the 27th at Salsola on March 31, 1944
- May have seen previous action in Africa
- New P-38Js arrived about this time



P-38J-15-LO 43-28650 “SWEET SUE”, 1st FG 27th FS, 15th AF bomber escort, February 1945.

P-38J similar to 2d LT Kim’s
Source: “Vis-the Last Hope” page 389



P-38 Lightnings of the 27th Fighter Squadron, Late 1944

[\(702\) P-38 formation flight POFAS 2013 - YouTube](#)

April 12, 1944

- Mission to Bad Voslau, Austria, Messerschmitt assembly plant & aerodrome
- Escorting 140 B-24 bombers
- Only Kim's second combat mission- considered an "unusually good" pilot
- 16 P-38 Lightnings from the 27th FS led by 1LT Francis Lawson
- Successful mission – extensive damage to the plant & aerodrome
- On return to base, 2d LT Kim forced to land on Vis to refuel
- Vis airstrip became operational for fighters only a day before

27th FS Mission Report

Penetration escort for B-24s was flown on the 12th by 16 P-38s led by 1st Lieut. Francis R. Lawson, Mathews, Ala., to Bad Voslau aircraft assembly plant and airdrome in Austria. Only five (5) enemy fighters were encountered, three (3) of which were Me 109 Es with Hungarian Air Force markings. No claims, losses or damage were reported. Excellent bomber formation and presence of high flying P-47s over the target resulted in extensive damage to aircraft and installations on the Bad Voslau airdrome. 2nd Lieut. John J. C. Kim of Honolulu, T.H., was forced to land on Vis Island landing strip for fuel enroute to base. In attempting to take off again on the short strip, one engine failed and the plane crashed from 200 feet about $\frac{3}{4}$ th of a mile from the end of the runway, where a group of Yugoslav Partisans were walking. Eight (8) of the Partisans were killed and twenty (20) injured. An R.A.F. Corporal was reported to have pulled Lt. Kim from the burning plane, but he died on the 14th as a result of burns and other undetermined injuries. Lt. Kim was one of two pilots of Chinese ancestry who joined the squadron

on 31 March, 1944, and was considered an unusually good pilot by his comrades. It was his second operational combat mission.

“Vis-The Last Hope” page 104

April 12, 1944-

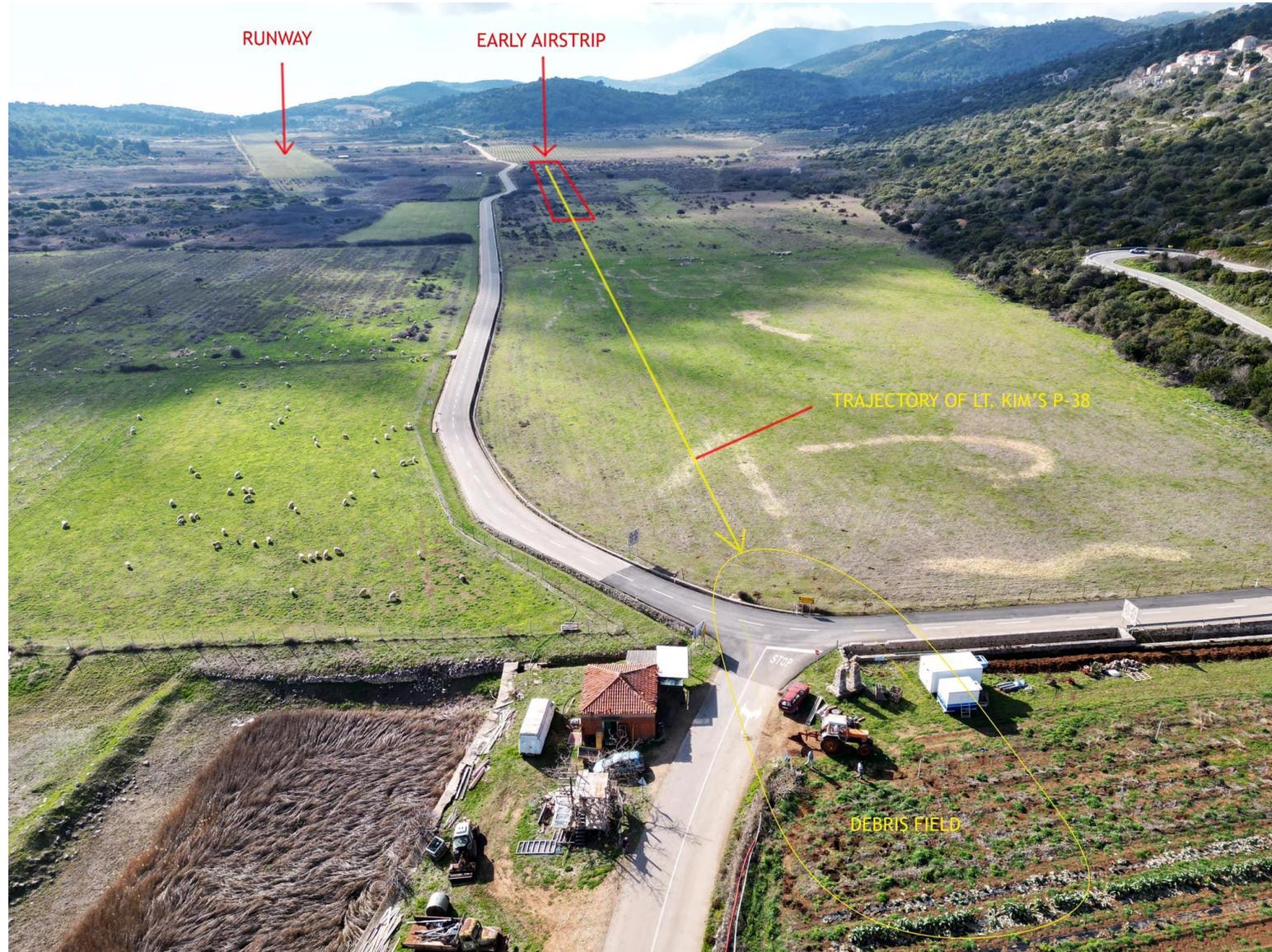
In a large-scale offensive on industrial targets around Vienna, 172 B-17 Flying Fortresses bombed an aircraft parts factory in the town of Fischamend Markt, 140 B-24 Liberator bombers attacked a Messerschmitt factory in the small town of Bad Voslau, and additional 134 B-24s bombed an aircraft factory in the town of Wiener Neustadt. One B-17 bomber and six B-24s were lost. The bombers were escorted by more than 200 P-38 Lightning and P-47 Thunderbolt fighters whose pilots reported downing 17 German fighters.*

At 14.30, one P-38 Lightning fighter of the 1st FG 27th FS force landed on Vis' small strip. It belonged to the group of 10 American aircraft led by 1st Lt. Francis Lawson which had escorted B-24 bombers on a bombing mission of an aircraft factory near Bad Voslau in Austria. The fighters were intercepted by only 5 enemy fighters, three of which were Bf-109s with Hungarian markings. No losses were suffered. The perfect bomber formation carried out its mission undisturbed, leaving the aircraft factory and nearby airfield in ruins. Owing to fuel shortage, 2nd Lt. John J.C. Kim (from Honolulu, Hawaii, but of Korean origin) crash landed on the Vis airstrip.

After refueling he went to takeoff, but immediately on takeoff one engine cut out. The aircraft lost altitude and crashed on the Vis-Komiža road, a couple of meters from an ammunition dump and Partisan positions. An explosion and fire burst out. Seven Partisans were killed and five injured, as well as one British commando. Even though the ammunition kept exploding, a British soldier dragged the burnt pilot (Lt. Kim) clear and he was immediately taken to hospital. Lt. Kim was one of the two pilots of Korean origin in the squadron which he had joined less than two weeks earlier (March 31) and was esteemed as an excellent pilot. It was only his second combat mission.

* Eric Hammel “Air War Europa, Chronology 1942-1945”, Pacifica Press, USA 1994.

P-38 parts recently found by the Croatian Society of Military History (HDVP) at crash site- February 2024



Parts found include hundreds of small pieces of broken, melted aluminum, plexiglass, stainless steel, bushings etc. including 3 pieces that undoubtedly are from that type of aircraft.

Only one aircraft crashed there per "Vis-the Last Hope"

The part above is the P-38 coolant temperature control valve found.

Death of 2d LT Kim

- Treated by British Major Dr. James Rickett at Podhumlje Hospital on Vis
- The field hospital was in the converted house of a priest
- He died of his injuries there 2 days later on April 14th
- He was 25 years old

11 Partisans killed on that fateful day

- The Mission Report is accurate: 8 Partisans were initially killed, but no RAF soldiers
- 20 Partisans were injured- 3 died later
- The names of the deceased Partisans are shown on the next page
- The name of the RAF corporal who pulled Kim from the burning plane is not known

Partisan casualties of the April 12th crash

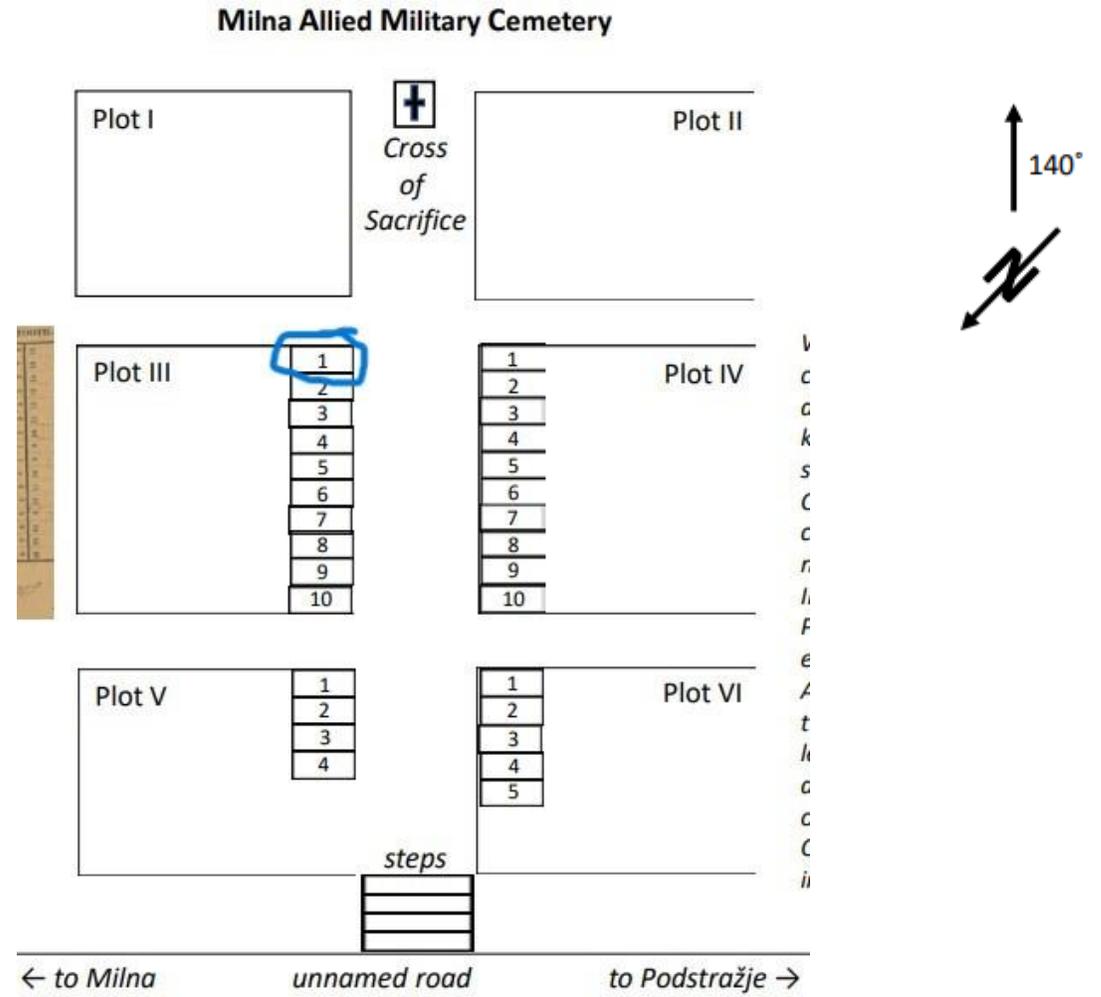
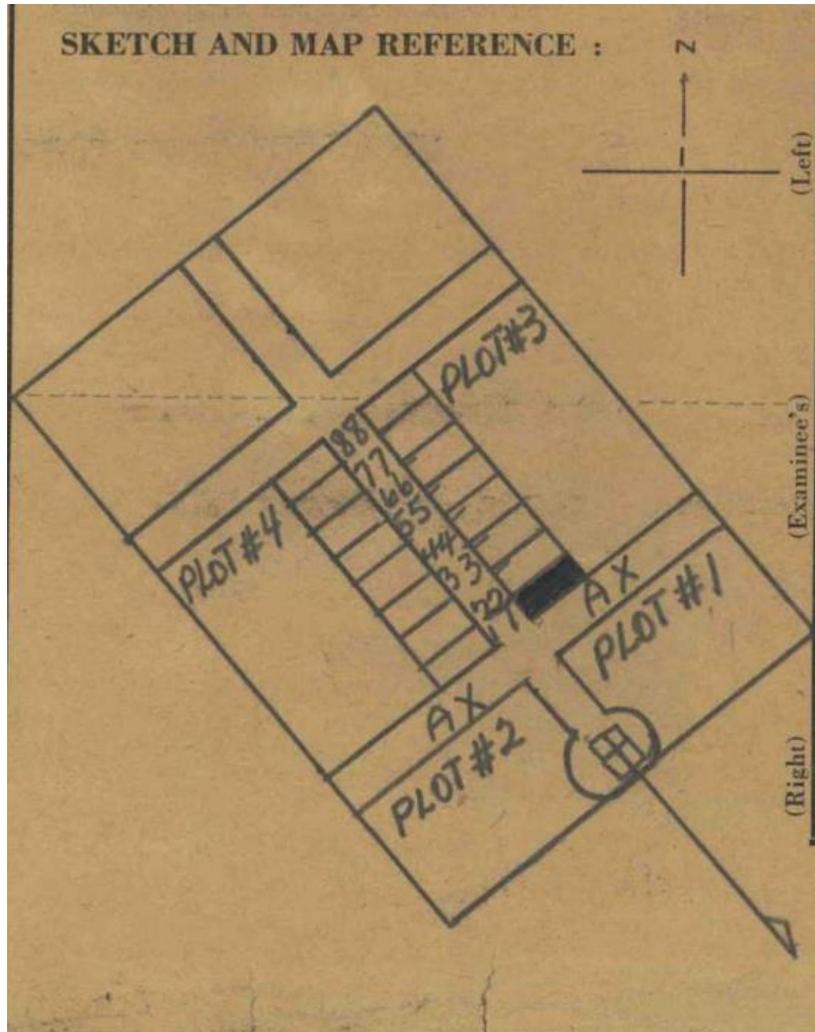
Rest in Peace

Members of the 1st Dalmatian Brigade, most 2nd Battalion:

1. Bohorović Petar, age 44, born in Kaštela - Split,
2. Bukurović Petar, born in Knin,
3. Cular M. Niko. age 31, 1913. born in Danilo – Kraljica - Šibenik
4. Grgantov I. Spiro, age 32, born in Kaštel Lukšić — Split
5. Grigori Pelajnog — Alpolzijevo, born in Armenia- USSR
6. Jukić A. Ivan, age 29, born in Kaštel Štafilić -Split
7. Kalebić M. Slavko age 34, born on island Šolta,
8. Klarić P. Vinko, born in Draga Voda —island Brač
9. Kokeza L. Ivan, age, born in Ogorje — Split,
10. Mladineo P. Pavao, age 20, born in Borovik-island Vis
11. Skorić I. Ivan, age 37, born in Primošten – Šibenik

Note: An elderly resident of Višan told Velimir Mratinic that at least two partisans saved themselves by throwing themselves into a 7-foot deep ditch. One of them was his father Ivan Cvitanović and his comrade called “Mote Mecak” Also, the owner of the neighboring vineyard Ivan Murušić testified in 2015 that a piece of landing gear was sticking out of the ground

2d LT Kim's Grave at Milne Cemetery



Awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross on June 4, 1944

(10 other Medals subsequently including the Purple Heart)



His wife Victoria received his Purple Heart
in Honolulu on September 14, 1944



He was reinterred three times before being repatriated to his hometown

Plot III graves		
1 / AX	<p>2nd Lieutenant John J.K.C. Kim, ASN O-758818</p> <p><i>27th Fighter Squadron, 1st Fighter Group, 12th Air Force</i></p>	<p>Died 14 Apr 44, age 25, in the Podhumlje British Military Hospital (became No. 2 Field Hospital in May '44), Vis, from burns and injuries sustained five days earlier, when his hastily repaired F-5 aircraft (photo-recon variant of the P-38 Lightning) crashed upon take-off from Plisko Polje Airfield on Vis. Originally buried in the "Old Allied" Cemetery, along the road between Komiža and Vis town, his remains were reinterred in Milna Allied Military Cemetery on 20 Jul 44. In January 1946 his remains were again reinterred in the U.S. Military Cemetery Belgrade, Plot B, Row 11, Grave 272. When that cemetery was closed in 1948, his remains were repatriated and permanently reinterred in Delano Cemetery, in his hometown of Delano, California. Son of the Korean immigrants, Chang Wha and Sung Jin Kim, of Delano. Husband of Victoria C. Kim, of Honolulu, Hawaii</p>

- Corrections: 1. He died 2 days after crashing
2. His fighter was a P-38 Lightning- not an F-5 variant

In 1948, Kim's mother Sung Gin received all his medals at Hamilton Air Station, CA

Courtesy of nephew C. Stephen Kim:

From right to left:

1. Dr. Chang Soo Carl Kim, M.D. (my father)
2. Mrs. Helen Kim (my mother, John's older sister)
3. Alice Kim Mau (John's younger sister)
4. Mrs. Sung Gin Kim (John's mother)
5. Officer hosting the ceremony
6. Moon Young Kim (cousin from my father's side of the family)
7. C. Stephen Kim (me in the foreground)

Mrs. Kim is wearing his D.F.C & Purple Heart



In 1948, Mrs. Kim requested return of her son's remains

WESTERN UNION
JOSEPH L. EGAN
PRESIDENT

1201

CLASS OF SERVICE
This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.

RECEIVED
MAY 1948

SYMBOLS
DL = Day Letter
NL = Night Letter
LC = Deferred Cable
NLT = Cable Night Letter
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OA79 SSD290 8 EXTRA= 1948 MAY 16 PM 9 52

O.BEA51767/66 GOVT COLLECT ~~EXTRA~~=DELANO CALIF 16 708P

CHIEF AMERICAN GRAVES REGISTRATION DIVN=
OAKLAND ARMY BASE OAK=

YES I WISH REMAINS OF MY SON SECOND LIEUTENANT JOHN J K C KIM
O-758818 TO BE DELIVERED TO DELANO MORTUARY 12TH AVE DELANO
CALIF AM INSTRUCTING FUNERAL DIRECTOR TO ACCEPT REMAINS AT
RAILROAD STATION UPON ARRIVAL IF AT ALL POSSIBLE PLEASE GIVE
PERMISSION FOR ME TO VIEW REMAINS OF MY SON BEFORE BURIAL
HERE THANK YOU=

SUNG JIN KIM PO BOX 182 631 GLENWOOD ST DELANO
CALIF=

Return

WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS CUSTOMERS

His remains finally arrived on June 24, 1949
A memorial service was held on June 25

SERVICE FOR WAR HERO KIM MAPPED AT DELANO

DELANO—Memorial services for Lieutenant John Kim, who died of wounds received in combat over Yugoslavia in 1944, will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday in the chapel of Delano Mortuary.

He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Kim, 631 Glenwood street, Delano. His mother recently received 11 posthumous awards won by Lieutenant Kim, including the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Purple Heart.

Born March 8, 1919, in Hawaii, Lieutenant Kim attended Delano schools, Bakersfield College, and the University of California at Berkeley. He enlisted in the Air Corps in 1942 while working for the U. S. Engineering Department in Hawaii.

He received his training in Cali-

ornia and Arizona and saw action in Africa, the Pacific, and over Europe. He was fatally injured while running interference for his squadron leader over Yugoslavia when the leader ran out of ammunition.

The Reverend Edwar Lee, Berkeley, superintendent of the California Oriental Provisional Conference of the Methodist Church, will officiate. August Dusserre will sing "Abide With Me" and "Sleep, Soldier, Sleep," accompanied by Wally Snoddy, organist. Interment will be at Delano Cemetery with full military rites.

Surviving Lieutenant Kim are his parents, two brothers, Peter Kim, Berkeley, and Kee Chul Kim, Honolulu; and two sisters, Helen Kim and Alice Kim, both of Oakland.



Note: he wasn't likely stationed in the Pacific & the account of his death is not accurate

Lt. Kim's coffin with his medals

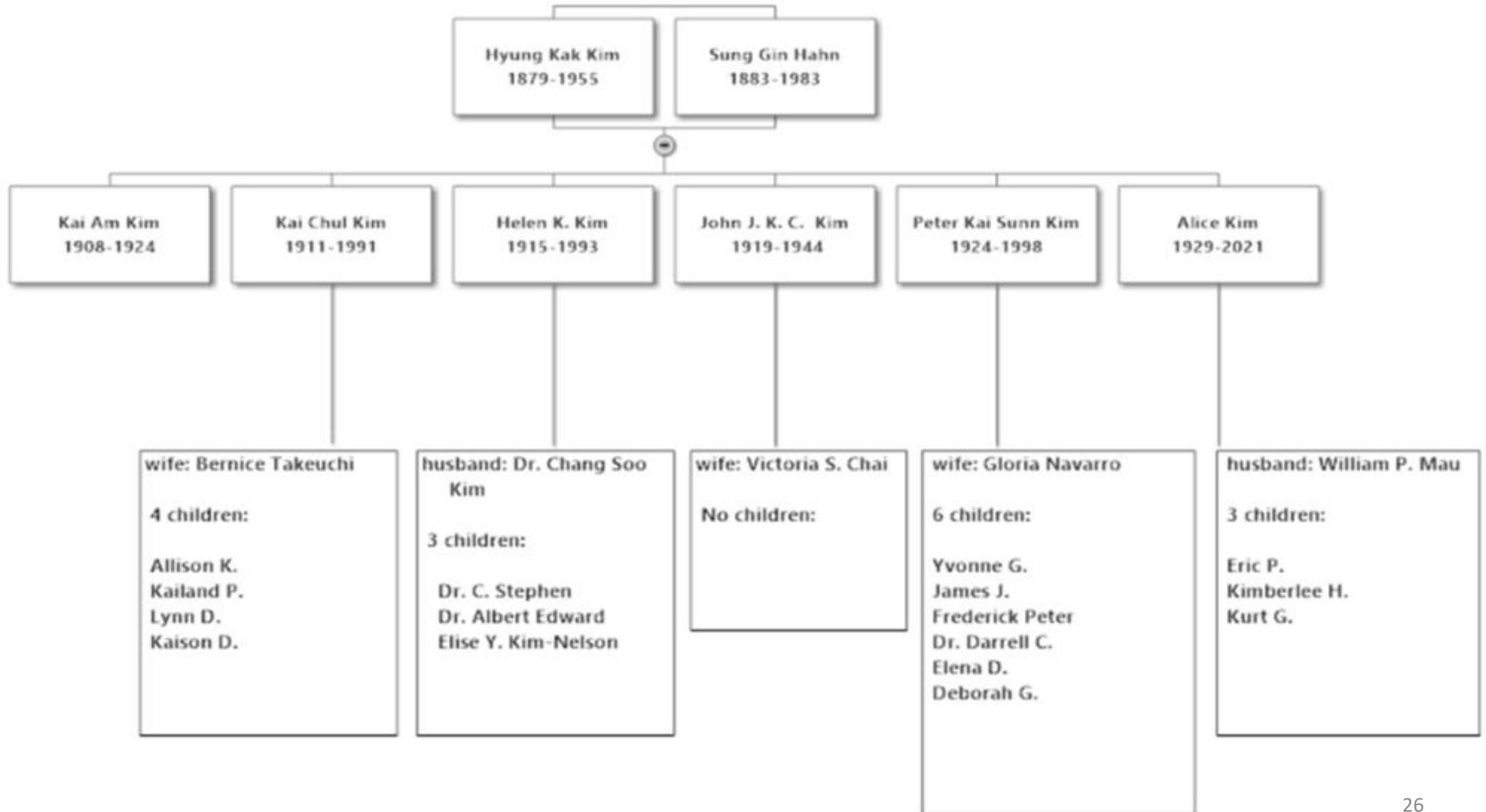


Nephew Stephen Kim: "The framed picture on the casket was always prominently displayed by his mother. I remember my grandmother waking up every morning sighing in recollection of her lost son. "

In 1983. Lt. Kim's remains were cremated and reinterred in the family crypt at Los Gatos Memorial Park in San Jose



Kim Family Tree - 16 Nephews & Nieces



Rest in Peace

