

The 3.1 Infantry Regiment in the Korean War

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The 3.1 Infantry Regiment, a “ghost platoon” comprising the 1.5 and 2nd generations of Zainichi (Koreans in Japan), was established on October 5, 1950, by Jimmy Gozawa, a 2nd generation Japanese American officer in the US Army. The unit remained unknown until 1953, when CBS Japan introduced it to the public. It was re-introduced in America in 1977, when Gozawa requested a certificate in the state of California recognizing the volunteers as Korean War veterans. Despite the unit being deactivated within 10 days after its establishment, it became a symbol representing 643 Zainichi Student Volunteers in the Korean war as 2/3 volunteers served in the unit and majority of the volunteers became officers and led major battles such as Wonsan and the Iwon Operation, which was a pivotal point of the Korean War.

In my presentation, I will first outline the background and history of the Zainichi Volunteers, the history of the 3.1 Infantry Regiment, and how they represented the Zainichi Student Volunteers. The literary works from the volunteers in the group will be used to explain how and why the unit was created and what happened to the volunteers in the unit after the war. The 3.1 Infantry Regiment’s history must be reviewed as it is not only the first overseas Korean unit in South Korea, but it also helps us to understand what motivated Zainichi to volunteer for the war and give a voice to a group that war has forgotten.