

Zainichi Student Volunteers in the Korean War: War, Diaspora, and Memory

Yuki Gabriella Minami
(Victoria University of Wellington)

Date: Tuesday, 26 May 2026

Time: 3 pm - 4 pm (NZST)

Venue: Building 303-Room G01 (UoA City Campus)

Online available via Zoom: Registration required



Abstract

Between 1950 and 1953, 642 Zainichi Student Volunteers served in the Korean War, participating in fourteen major battles, including Operation Chromite, the Chosin Reservoir, and Operation White Horse. Yet their history has remained largely overlooked, in part because many entered the war without formal ranks or serial numbers, leaving only fragmentary traces in the archive. This presentation examines the historical background of the volunteers and the conditions that shaped their participation in the war by tracing the sites, routes, and battlefields connected to their service. I will first introduce the volunteers and the 3.1 Infantry Regiment, known as the "Ghost Platoon," and then explore how their wartime experiences can be reconstructed through military records, historical publications, and site-based research. By combining archival materials with the tracing of place and movement, this presentation highlights the intersections of war, diaspora, and historical invisibility in Korean History.



About Yuki Gabriella Minami

Yuki Minami is a PhD candidate at Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington, researching the history and memory of Zainichi Student Volunteers in the Korean War. A former U.S. Marine and U.S.–Japan Fulbright Scholar, She holds degrees from Kyushu University and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Her broader interests include minorities in war, diaspora, and memory.

All are warmly welcome to the seminar room. Online joining is also available, but registration is required. Please scan the QR code above. For any inquiries, please contact ch.song@auckland.ac.nz.