Establishment of the Kajo Regiment

From the Meiji period onward, rapid modernization policies brought forth the strengthening of the military armament. In effect, military forces were stationed within the former Yamagata Castle grounds. This caused Yamagata to become involved in national policies and the wars that accompanied them.

The First Sino-Japanese War in 1894 ended in Japan's victory and the negotiation of the Treaty of Shimonoseki. Through this treaty, Japan acquired new territory and large indemnity payments. However, due to the Triple Intervention, Japan was forced to return the Liaodong Peninsula to China. Taiwan remained under Japanese rule but was separated from the mainland. Therefore, Japan needed to urgently strengthen its domestic military.

Against this background, it was decided that a regiment would also be established in Yamagata Prefecture. In response, Yamagata City resolved to purchase the former sites of the main and second enclosures of Yamagata Castle and donate them to the state. The invitation of the regiment succeeded, and in 1897, the 32nd Infantry Regiment under the 8th Division (commonly known as the Kajo Regiment) was stationed in Yamagata Castle.

With the stationing of the regiment, nearly 2000 young men from within Yamagata Prefecture gathered in Yamagata City, greatly stimulating the city's economy. The regiment was active in the Russo-Japanese war, and afterward was dispatched to Korea, Sakhalin, and Manchuria, and was also stationed along the Manchurian border. Toward the end of the Pacific War, it was ordered to move from Manchuria to Okinawa, and after fierce fighting, the war came to an end.