**Kure Maritime Museum (Yamato Museum)**

The Kure Maritime Museum was opened in 2005. Its many exhibits showcase Kure’s history, in particular the advancements in military shipbuilding and steelmaking that were the foundation of the city’s development and representative of the country’s modernization during the Meiji era (1868–1912).

The museum is also known as “the Yamato Museum” in reference to its detailed one-tenth-scale reproduction of the famous World War II battleship *Yamato*. This huge model, which measures 26.3 meters in length, is prominently displayed in the Yamato Hiroba lobby on the first floor. The museum is located close to the former Naval Arsenal, where the *Yamato* was built. Completed in 1941, she was the heaviest and most powerfully armed battleship ever made, and her main battery comprised a total of nine 46-centimeter naval guns, the largest artillery ever mounted on a warship. In 1945, the *Yamato* was sunk south of the island of Kyushu along with most of her 3,332 crew members. A shipwreck was found in the area in 1982, and in 1985 it was officially confirmed to be the *Yamato*. As the symbol of the museum, the *Yamato* model was created both to highlight the potential of industrial technology and to impress upon visitors the importance of peace. The large windows facing the sea behind the model look out on Kure’s harbor, which was once the site of the Naval Arsenal and is now Japan’s leading shipyard, producing some of the world’s largest tanker ships.

The “History of Kure” exhibit on the first floor of the museum details the city’s evolution from a number of small fishing villages to the establishment of the Kure Naval Base in 1889 and the Kure Naval Arsenal in 1903, followed by Kure’s rise as a major naval port, the wartime air raids on the city, and its postwar reconstruction. The exhibit also includes a large collection of detailed scale models of other ships built at the Naval Arsenal, as well as the blueprints for the battleship *Yamato*.

In contrast to the many small models, the “Large Objects” exhibit on the first floor displays a highly valued collection of decommissioned warfare technology, such as actual A6M Zero fighters and trial models of Type-10Kaiten (manned torpedoes), midget submarines (*kōryū*), and various types of disarmed artillery shells, including some manufactured for the *Yamato*’s main battery.

The museum’s third floor contains a hands-on “Shipbuilding Technology” zone, where visitors can learn more about the science behind ship design and play with a test tank to see how model ships interact with waves. In the “Future Prospects” area on the same floor, a short video showcasing the potential of technological advancement plays every 20 minutes in the Yamato Theater.