

Powder Magazine of Takagarasu Battery

The Takagarasu Battery was built in 1901 on Takagarasu Hill, about 4.5 kilometers to the south of the Irifuneyama Memorial Museum. This all-stone powder magazine was erected nearby to store gunpowder and ammunition for the battery's emplacement of six 28-centimeter howitzer artillery guns. In 1967, the powder magazine building was moved from Takagarasu Hill to its current location.

After the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), the Imperial Army began establishing batteries of artillery on islands and mountains surrounding Kure Naval Base in order to protect it and the port of Hiroshima from approaching enemy ships. However, in the late 1920s, the focus of warfare shifted from naval bombardment to pitched airborne dogfights. Most of the batteries, including the Takagarasu Battery, were never used in battle.

The powder magazine's construction reflects the delicate nature of gunpowder preservation. Its architects had to consider both the ideal conditions for storing the ammunition as well as how to mitigate damage in case of an accidental explosion. Gunpowder becomes unusable when wet, and several aspects of the magazine's design are for keeping its interior dry. The building itself is raised above the ground, which creates airflow below the battery, helping to maintain a constant temperature and protecting the gunpowder from rain runoff. The walls were built to be as airtight as possible to prevent humidity from reaching the gunpowder. The magazine's heavy stone walls are contrasted by its lightweight truss roof. In the event of an explosion, the walls would direct the blast upward, and the light, unsecured roof would blow off, limiting the damage caused to the building and its surroundings.

Due to these characteristics, which demonstrate the high technological level of Japan's military architecture at the time, in 2011 the powder magazine was designated a national Tangible Cultural Property.