

Naval Arsenal Engineer Training School and Nearby Monuments

The Naval Arsenal Engineer Training School and the Naval Arsenal Factory Worker Training School were both instrumental in securing Kure's legacy in naval technology and construction. The technicians and engineers trained at the two schools continued to serve the country even after World War II, and their contributions helped establish Kure's modern shipbuilding industry. Two large stone monuments, located on a sloping road leading up the eastern foothills of Mt. Kushi, mark the former locations of these two institutions.

The Naval Arsenal Factory Worker Training School was a place for educating young factory workers while they simultaneously gained practical experience by working at the nearby arsenal. The most skilled of these students would then be allowed to continue their education at the Engineer Training School. It was the expertise of these highly trained engineers that made it possible to build battleships of the size, scale, and technological sophistication of the *Yamato*, and Kure's Naval Arsenal was the only place in the country where such ships could be built.

During the latter half of World War II, the Allied Forces began bombing Japan's military facilities, and working at the Naval Arsenal became increasingly dangerous. To protect the students and workers, a Shinto shrine was built on nearby Mt. Kushi, which overlooks the arsenal. Formerly called the "arsenal shrine" (*kōshō jinja*), it was renamed the "industry shrine" (*sangyō jinja*) after the war in order to avoid association with the Imperial Navy. A steep flight of stone steps leads to the shrine, which today consists of little more than a stone platform and the remains of a stone pagoda. The mountain is also dotted with abandoned defensive structures built toward the end of the war, among them an air defense observation post, a concrete pillbox guard post, and ventilation shafts that connect to an underground bunker.

After the end of Kure's postwar occupation by the Allied Forces, the area encompassing the former Naval Arsenal was converted into a modern shipyard that has since produced some of the largest oil tankers in the world. Thanks to Kure's prewar legacy of highly skilled engineers from the Engineer Training School, the city's economy quickly recovered from the postwar depression, and this engineering legacy continues today. Although naval vessels are no longer built at Kure's shipyards, they are sometimes brought to its port for repair.