

### **Takagarasu Battery Remains**

Takagarasu Battery was one of 13 batteries constructed on the islands and hills surrounding Kure. Collectively referred to as the “Hiroshima Bay Fortress” or “Kure Fortress,” these batteries were intended to protect the Port of Hiroshima and Kure Naval Port from approaching enemy ships. Takagarasu Battery, which sits atop Takagarasu Hill on the mainland, was completed in 1901. The battery overlooks the Ondo-no-seto Channel, which separates the mainland from Kurahashi Island. Takagarasu Battery was equipped with six pairs of 28-centimeter howitzer artillery guns, but its guns were never actually used in combat.

Kure was designated the site of a major naval base in 1886, and the Imperial Army planned the construction of these batteries the following year. The plan was finalized in 1893, but its implementation was delayed by the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), and actual construction did not start until 1896. Beginning in the late 1920s, battles were increasingly decided by airborne dogfights rather than naval combat, and the military abandoned Takagarasu Battery in 1926 without ever using its artillery. During the prewar Showa era (1926–1945), the Imperial Navy took control of the battery and installed anti-aircraft guns in a nearby field. However, this new installation was completely destroyed during World War II, leaving only the ruins that can be seen today.

After World War II, the occupying Allied Forces dismantled or destroyed any remaining military equipment, and the entire area of the battery was abandoned until 1961, when it was transformed into Ondo-no-seto Park. In 1967, the Takagarasu Battery Powder Magazine was moved from its original position on Takagarasu Hill to the Irifuneyama Memorial Museum. In the same year, a bronze statue of general Taira no Kiyomori (1118–1181) was added to Ondo-no-seto Park to commemorate a legend in which Kiyomori excavated the Ondo-no-seto Channel. According to the legend, he used a folding fan to delay the sun from setting, allowing the channel to be completed in a single day. The park’s observation deck offers a panoramic view of the many small islands of the Seto Inland Sea and the ships that continually travel between them.