

Kurume History Walks

No.43 War Remains 4 – Kurume, a Military Town

平和への願い・久留米の戦争遺跡(4) 軍都久留米編

The city of Kurume was established in 1899 with other 31 cities in Japan when the Municipal Government Act was enforced for the first time. At that time, being one of the smallest among the others, Kurume chose the way to become a military town for its development.

As a result of the municipal and public sectors' vehement efforts to attract the government army, it was decided to station a division and regiments in Kurume. The local economy grew with the boom of building military facilities and roads.

But after the city burned down in a US air-raid on August 11th, 1945, a military town finished its role as a military town. Because of this history, there are many stone monuments regarding the war today.

1. Memorial of the Kurume Division Headquarters

Erected on February 9th, 1961 within the ground of Kurume Tax Office

In 1907, the 18th Division Headquarters was installed in Kurume and was abolished for the disarmament policy of the government in 1925. But, the city invited the government again to establish a base, and the 12th Division Headquarters moved to Kurume from Kokura. Then, the city was a center of military affairs in northern Kyushu.

2. Commemorative Monument of the Midday Cannon Battery

Erected in 1910 in Tenjinmachi

Artillery of the 18th Division Headquarters fired a cannon at noon. City people called it “*don* (it is an onomatopoeia which expresses the sound of launch.)” The monument might be erected to commemorate the construction of the battery for the midday cannon.



1. Memorial of the Kurume Division Headquarters



2. Commemorative Monument of the Midday Cannon Battery

3. Memorial of the 18th Division
Erected on April 30th, 1925 at the
Doumeki-ike Pond, Suwanomachi

The abolition of the 18th Division Headquarters was decided in 1925, and a monument was built in the area where military institutions were centered under the support from the city of Kurume and the troops which remained.



3. Memorial of the 18th Division

4. Memorial of the Kurume Military Engineer Troops Remains
Erected on October 7th, 1965 within the ground of the National Kyushu-Okinawa Agricultural Research Center

There were two military engineer troops: the 18th Battalion established in 1909 and the 56th Regiment established in 1941. When World War II ended, both were dissolved.

Former military engineers from these troops gathered volunteers and money, and constructed the monument at the site where troops had stationed, for wishing the lasting peace in the future and also for praising the achievement during the war, praying for the repose of the deceased soldiers and not forgetting the army life in this place.

5. Memorial of the Koshin'en
Erected on October 1958 within the ground of the National Kyushu-Okinawa Agricultural Research Center

This monument was built for the 10th anniversary of the agricultural research center and was inscribed with Koshin'en (literally tilling the mind garden). But its pedestal was originally constructed for a sculpture of three soldiers who were called "Three Human Bullets" for their heroic death in the battle with China in 1932. Local people built that sculpture for carrying down the valor, although it was lost during World War II.



4. Monument of the Military Engineer Troops Remains



5. Monument of the Koshin'en



6-1. Yamakawa Shokon-sha Shrine



6-2. Memorial for "the Three Human Bullets"

6. Yamakawa Shokon-sha Shrine

Established in 1869 at Yamakawamachi

The history of the shrine began in 1869 when Arima Yorishige, the last lord of Kurume Domain ordered to establish a site for consoling the dead in conflicts from 1853. Since then, several monuments related to wars were constructed.

- A grave for martyrs to the national affairs, such as Maki Izumi no Kami (a Shinto priest and an imperialist, 1813-1864: featured in No. 40), and other 37 people.

- A grave for Inatsugu Inaba Masanori (a chief retainer, 1829-1853) who suicided due to righteous indignation.

- A shrine and a hall were built in 1873. The former was the predecessor of today's Yamakawa Shokon-sha Shrine and the latter was dedicated to the soul of Takayama Hikokuro (an imperialist retainer known as one of three excelling men in the late 19th century, 1747-1793).

- An army cemetery, relocated to Nonakamachi in 1942

- A cenotaph for martyrs in the civil wars in 1874 and 1877.

- A tomb for German soldiers: There was a German POW camp during World War I close to the shrine, and 11 soldiers were dead because of the ill.

- A memorial for "the Three Human Bullets"

- Memorials for the dead soldiers in the Pacific War



6-3. Memorial for the dead soldiers in the Pacific War



6-4. Memorial for the dead in the Pacific War

7. Memorial of the 56th infantry regiment

Erected in May 1965 within the precincts of the Sasayama-jinja Shrine

The 56th infantry regiment was established in 1905 and rendered distinguished services in the war for capturing Qingdao, while it was abolished with the 18th division in 1925. But it was reformed as the main



7. Memorial of the 56th infantry regiment

troop at the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War and was sent to China, then to Singapore and Myanmar during World War II.

This memorial was built by the survivors of the regiment to pray for the repose of their comrades and the permanent peace.

8. Former Togo Heihachiro's study house

Moved to Kurume in 1926 within the precincts of the Sasayama-jinja Shrine

Marshal-Admiral Marquis Togo Heihachiro (1848-1934) was one of Japan's greatest heroes. Ogura Keishi, a businessman who was from Kurume bought Heihachiro's study house, and moved it to Kurume and reconstructed it.

It is open to the public as Togo Kinenkan (Togo Memorial House: reservation required).



8. Former Togo Heihachiro's study house

9. Monument of the Former site of the Imperial Headquarters

Erected in November 1931 within the ground of Meizen High School in Jonanmachi

The maneuver under the command of the Meiji Emperor was conducted in the countryside of Kyushu from November 11th to 15th in 1911. The Imperial Headquarter was placed at Chugaku-Meizenko (today's Meizen High School) and a temporary palace was newly constructed.

This monument was erected by Ogura Keishi on the occasion of its 20th anniversary in 1931.



9. Monument of the Former site of the Imperial Headquarters

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