

# Kurume History Walks

## No.23 平和への願い－久留米の戦争遺跡(2) War Remains 2

### Army Cemetery at Nonakamachi, Kurume

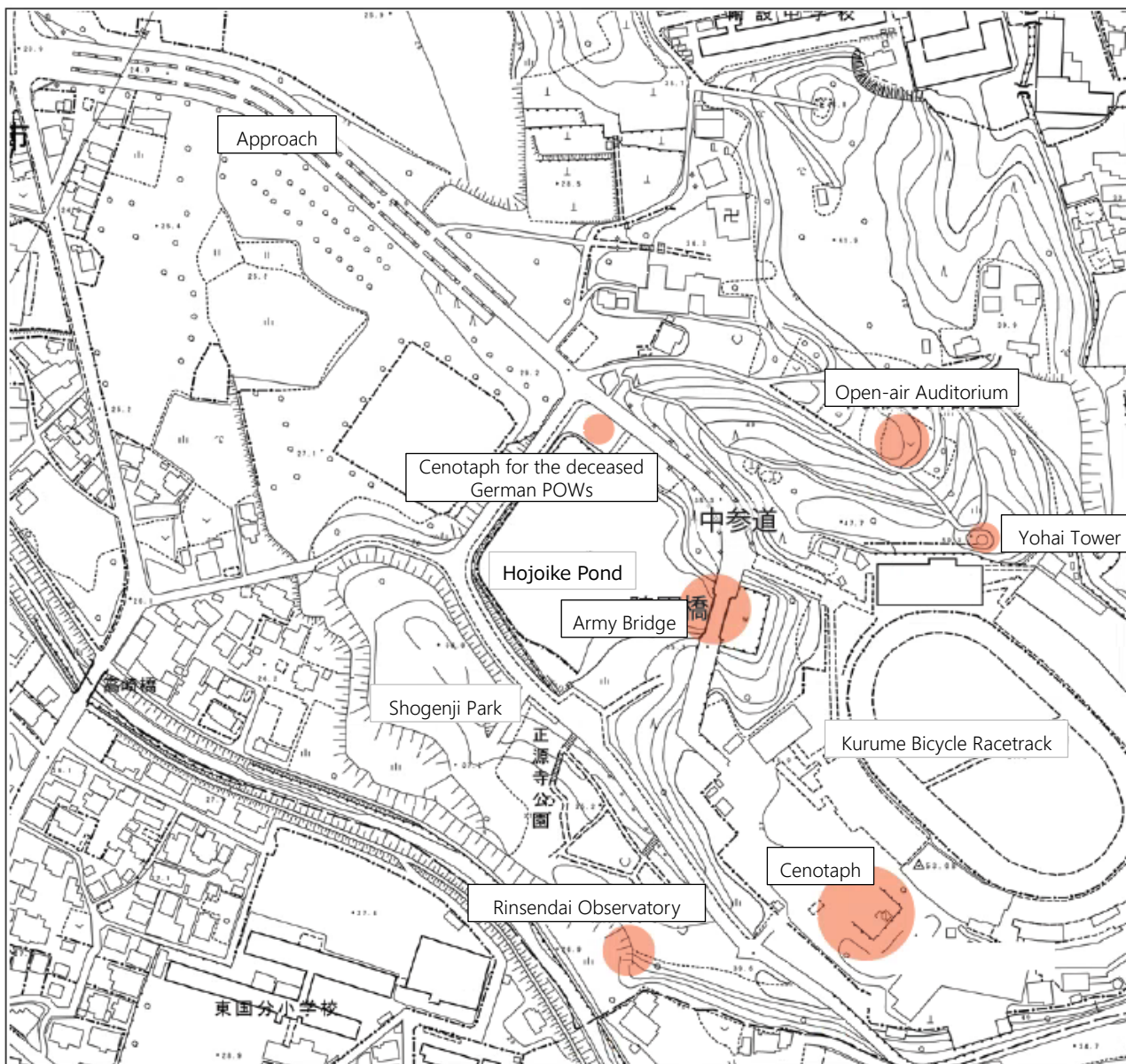
The establishment of the Army Cemetery in Kurume started in 1939 and was accomplished by two years and nine months of work, the total 12,000 people and 250,000 yens of expense. (At that time, a cup of coffee used to cost about 0.15 yen.)

It was about 71,000 square meters. Today, most of the land was converted into the Kurume Bicycle Race Track. However, there are still several remains: a cenotaph, a tower to bow toward the Imperial Court in Tokyo (*yohaidai*), an amphitheater, an Army Bridge, a Hojoike Pond for a Buddhist ritual (*hojoike*), an observatory (*rinsendai*), an approach to the cemetery, etc.

For the construction, the funds and the labor force were provided by several municipal governments of Chikugo province and Saga prefecture. Workers, students, ladies' societies, companies... various organizations were mobilized or some of them voluntarily took part. The city of Kurume also bore 16,413 yens of the construction cost.



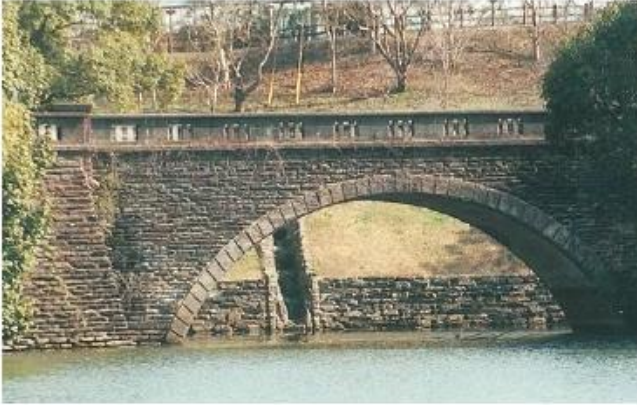
Open-air Auditorium



**Approach (参道)** – The approach continues to the cenotaph today. On either side of the entrance, there is a pair of stone lanterns that were copied from large lanterns of Yasukuni-jinja Shrine in Tokyo. And the road is flanked with camphor trees which were planted by the volunteer activity of members of a department store in 1940, and with chestnut trees, ginkgo trees, bayberry trees bought by Kurume Post Office workers.

And before passing the Army Bridge, there are again the grouped stone lanterns: 21 on the north side of the approach, 15 on the south side.

At the entrance, there is another monument inscribed with “Land for commemorating the war dead”.



Army Bridge over Hojoike Pond



Army Bridge

**Army Bridge (陸軍橋)**– It is constructed of concrete over the Hojoike Pond, and measures 15 meters in height, 8 meters in width, 21 meters in length. At the end of its railings, it was inscribed with “Army Bridge” “Completed in April 1942”.



**Yohai Tower**

**(遥拜台)**– Made of bricks, it measures 4.8 meters high, 6 meters across at the base, and equipped with spiral stairs. On its top, there is a stone pillar inscribed with “Bow to the Imperial Court” on the west side. (Then, when facing the inscription, you are

facing to the east, the direction of Tokyo.)

Left: Yohai Tower

Above: Pillar

**Open-air Auditorium (野外講堂)**– It is 22 meters across and has a seating capacity of 500. Its stage and seats are made of cement brick and surrounded by a clay wall.

Its architectural design seems to be based around the circle: the stage is elliptical; the back wall has a semicircular recess in the center (slightly like a semi-dome of the church); the benches are arranged in a fan shape and its leg parts are arch-shaped... It is so rare that there are not any other remains of the early Showa era.



Cenotaph



Water basin



Cenotaph for the deceased German POWs



Rinsendai Observatory

**Cenotaph (忠霊塔)** – It is a principal facility of the Army Cemetery. Its tower is 17 meters high (from the ground inside of the fence), 3 meters wide. Its underground vault –under the tower – houses the ashes of 5,048 soldiers. At the entrance of this site, there is a water basin that was brought by a tank from Tanushimaru.

**Cenotaph for the deceased German Prisons of War (ドイツ兵俘虜墓)** –In 1914, Japanese forces captured German soldiers in World War I at Tsingtao, China. A part of them were taken into the Kurume POW camp, and 1,319 people stayed there for five years and three months. During that time, eleven died. It was erected by their comrades before their departure to the country.

**Rinsendai Observatory (臨川台)** –It is located currently in Shogenji park. There is a boundary marker between the park and the Kora River which runs under **the observatory**.

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