



HISTORY

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TRANSLATION OF THE "Z" PLAN

One of the greatest contributions of the [MIS](#) during World War II was the translation of the captured "Z" Plan. The "Z" Plan contained Japan's strategy and tactics for an all out counterattack against the Allied forces specifically in the Mariana Islands, which was located south west of the Hawaiian Islands and north east of the Philippines.

The "Z" Plan was discovered on March 31, 1944 after two planes crashed into the sea off the southern [Philippines](#) carrying Admiral Mineichi Koga (who became the commander in chief of the Japanese Combined Fleet after the death of Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto) and Vice Admiral Shigeru Fukudome. Admiral Koga perished but Filipino guerrillas in the area picked up Vice Admiral Fukudome who had in his possession a document contained in a waterproof container. Fukudome and the document were turned over to the American forces.

The American forces soon realized the document's importance and sent it to the Allied Translator and Interpreter Section (ATIS) in Indooroopilly, located in Brisbane, Australia. [Nisei](#) translators Yoshikazu Yamada and George "Sankey" Yamashiro, along with officers John E. Anderton, Faubian Bowers and Richard Bagnall, were put to the task of translating the document. Copies of the translated documents were then sent to every American Naval officer in the Pacific. The Japanese did not know that the "Z" Plan, as it was named, had been captured. The "Z" Plan was termed, "the most significant enemy document seized during the war" by military historians.

Thanks to the translated "Z" Plan, when the Marianas were invaded in June 1944, American troops already knew the strategy of the Imperial forces. The neighboring Mariana Islands was strategically located to serve as an air base for the Army Air Corps' long-range bombers to make non-stop strikes on Japan. Because of this, American forces constructed air bases on the islands of Guam and [Saipan](#). In the battle of the Philippine Sea, known as the "Great Marianas Turkey Shoot," the Japanese Imperial Forces suffered a devastating loss of more than 450 planes and 400 pilots. This great victory was due mainly to the translation of the "Z" Plan.

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