



HISTORY

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PHILIPPINES CAMPAIGN April 1944 - July 1945

In hopes of reaching Japan, [Allied](#) forces had to secure the Philippines. The island would be used to stage a major attack against Japan. Japanese Imperial Forces had seized the Philippines immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbor, gaining new territory and power. The Philippines campaign was crucial because the victor could very well end up winning the Pacific war. Japan put up a good fight, as it needed to protect food and critical raw materials transported from the East Indies and Southeast Asia to the Philippine islands. Given a second chance at defending the Philippines, however, Allied forces could not falter.

The battle in the Philippines was long and hard. The Allied forces island hopped their way to victory by moving in closer to Japanese homeland. The battle at Leyte, a Philippine province located in the Eastern Visayas region, was key to the Allies' war strategy. American troops, including hundreds of [MIS linguists](#), landed on Leyte on October 20, 1944. Fighting went on for a few days and the MIS were part of the action as interrogators and also battlefield soldiers. The MIS gained vital information through POW interrogations and translating captured documents. Due to the translation of the "[Z" Plan](#), U.S. troops were already aware of the Japanese offensive.

MIS soldier Stanley Shimabukuro extracted significant information from captured documents and aided in the completion of the victory at Leyte. The Japanese fleet was nearly destroyed and in a desperate move the Japanese launched [kamikaze](#) attacks all around the Philippines; however their decision proved unsuccessful in thwarting the Allied forces. Weak and outnumbered, the Japanese fleet practically ceased to exist. The Battle of Leyte Gulf was one of the greatest naval battles of all time. For the rest of the war, Allied naval forces were in virtual control of the Pacific.

In December 1944, U.S. troops were deployed to the northern Philippine island of Luzon. The main objective was Manila, which would become one of the bases for the [B-29s](#) that would later bomb Japan. Dominating the island also made it difficult for the Japanese to attack the Allied forces. The MIS soldiers at Luzon took part on the battlefield as well as conducted linguistic work. Some translated captured documents and maps while others participated in the surrender of General Tomoyuki Yamashita, commanding general of the Japanese Imperial Army in the Philippines.

The hard work and devotion of the MIS in the Philippines campaign, from the translation work to POW interrogating proved significant for this allied victory. Several MIS soldiers received Silver Star and [Bronze Star](#) commendations.