



HISTORY

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ALEUTIAN ISLANDS

June 3, 1942 - August 24, 1942

In addition to Guadalcanal, other graduates in the first class of the [MISLS](#) were sent to the Aleutian Islands off the Alaskan coast. On June 3, 1942, the day after the Battle of Midway, the Japanese attacked the Aleutian Islands. The campaign was the only land battle in North America during World War II. Strategically speaking, Japan's seizure of the islands was insignificant. However, the U.S. had to consider the possibility of Japan raiding Alaska or even the U.S. [mainland](#) and limiting operations in the North Pacific. If the Japanese succeeded there and at Midway, its forces would have created a defensive perimeter in the North and Central Pacific.

Since U.S. Intelligence had deciphered the Japanese naval code, Admiral Chester Nimitz knew of Japan's intentions early in the war. Although Japan had taken over the Aleutian's westernmost island, Attu and the island of Kiska 180 miles away, American forces would soon overtake them.

The [MIS](#) contributed to the Aleutian Islands campaign in several ways. After Attu was recaptured on May 11, 1943, MIS linguists interrogated the 28 captured Japanese POWs and translated captured documents on the spot. Another small team of MIS participated in the recapture of Kiska that took place on July 29, 1943 while a separate group worked the Alaskan Defense Command headquarters at Dutch Harbor.

With a high number of casualties and others wounded, fighting in the Aleutian Islands was brutal for both the American and Japanese forces. In particular, the cost of taking the island of Attu was very high for the United States. Despite the casualties and struggles in the Aleutians, American troops succeeded in stopping the Japanese advances and secured bases for future [Allied](#) advances on Japan.