



HISTORY

>> Historical Information

AUSTRALIA - Allied Translator and Interpreter Section (ATIS)

The Allied Translator and Interpreter Section (ATIS) in Australia was of great importance in the Pacific theater during World War II. Major General Charles Willoughby, General Douglas MacArthur's Chief of Intelligence in the South West Pacific during WWII, first conceived the idea for ATIS in 1942. ATIS was originally established in Melbourne and later moved to Indooroopilly in Brisbane, Australia.

More than 3,000 [MIS linguists](#) were sent to Australia to translate documents and interrogate Japanese prisoners. Australian intelligence and American intelligence personnel, a majority of who were Japanese Americans, worked at ATIS. MIS soldier Gary Kadani, the first graduate of the [MIS Language School](#), is known to have interrogated the first Japanese POW in Brisbane.

Several notable events occurred at ATIS such as the translation of the captured "Z" Plan during the Philippines campaign. The "Z" Plan contained Japan's strategy and tactics for an all-out counterattack against the Allied forces specifically in the Mariana Islands in the North Pacific Ocean near Hawaii and the Philippines. Recognizing the importance of the "Z" Plan, ATIS worked day and night to translate it. Key personnel involved in the translation were Yoshikazu Yamada, George "Sankey" Yamashiro and three Caucasian officers.

In January 1944, while serving in Australia, MIS soldier, Sergeant Rusty Kimura was assigned to the 7th Brigade of the 3rd Australian Division in Bougainville. There he discovered an enemy document, which indicated the date, time and location of a Japanese attack set to begin 20 hours from the time he found it. Kimura immediately notified an Australian intelligence officer who notified the Australian troops to take a defensive position. The battle, known as "The Battle of Slater's Knoll," was won with minimal casualties to the Australian troops due to Kimura's significant findings. Kimura was awarded the [Bronze Star](#) and recognized by the U.S. government in 1997 for his services.