



## HISTORY

>> Historical Information

### NEW GUINEA

January 24, 1943 - December 31, 1944

Located east of Indonesia and in between the Coral Sea and the South Pacific Ocean, New Guinea is the second largest island in the world. New Guinea was an important strategic military island to both the [Allied](#) and Japanese Imperial Forces during World War II.

For the Americans, New Guinea served as a strategic point in the second stage of their offensive against Rabaul, which was an important Japanese defense base in both the South and Southwest Pacific. New Guinea was also one of the two routes used by the Allied forces to reach the [Philippines](#). Japanese forces on the other hand were attempting to cut communications between the U.S. and Australia. If Japan were successful in controlling New Guinea, it could easily dominate other neighboring islands.

U.S. troops fought alongside Australian soldiers in hopes of halting Japan's advances in the Southwest Pacific.

[MIS](#) soldiers served mostly in the Pacific and Southeast Asia war zones. The intelligence work conducted by the [linguists](#) was considered vital in extracting information from captured soldiers and documents. In addition to their intelligence work, the MIS soldiers also participated in battle. In January 1943, MIS [Nisei](#) participated in the campaign at Buna in eastern New Guinea, which was the first land defeat for Japan that also allowed the Allied forces to push them off the island.

Battles were fought on several islands along the coast, with particularly fierce jungle warfare in western New Guinea. Roughly four MIS linguist teams, approximately 20-30 men, were shipped to New Guinea. They participated in several landings on Aitape and Hollandia. A 10-man MIS team led by Mas Yamamoto worked at Aitape in May 1944. This particular team was awarded 10 Bronze Stars and two Legion of Merit awards. Another team leader, Yunitada Terry Mizutari, was awarded the Silver Star posthumously after he was killed in action.

After two years of battle in New Guinea, Allied forces in both the South and Southwest Pacific were now in position for a final assault on Rabaul. Instead of a direct attack on Rabaul, Allied forces encircled the area. The Allied forces secured other islands along the Admiralty Islands located north of New Britain Island and New Guinea, thus isolating Rabaul. As a result, thousands of Japanese troops were isolated and communications and supply lines were cut off. The offensive against Rabaul was now complete.