



HISTORY

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NORTHERN SOLOMONS CAMPAIGN **February 22, 1943 - November 21, 1944**

Seen as a natural highway into the South Pacific, the Japanese seized the Solomon island archipelago located in the Southwest Pacific early in the Pacific war. The Americans also recognized the Solomons as a highway, but planned their objective toward Rabaul, the [Philippines](#), and ultimately Japan.

America's goal was to take the chief town of Rabaul located on the island of New Britain, which was viewed as Japan's main base in the Southeast area. Starting with the campaign at [Guadalcanal](#), U.S. forces hoped to secure the surrounding areas of Rabaul and stop Japanese forces from further gaining strength and territory. In this on-going U.S. offensive, other islands along the Solomons chain such as New Georgia and [Bougainville](#) had to be secured.

The [MIS](#) began to arrive in the South Pacific in the middle of 1942. The [Nisei](#) soldiers participated in several battles in the area.

A major MIS contribution in the Solomons campaign was the ambush of Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, the commander-in-chief of the Japanese Combined Fleet and mastermind behind the attack on Pearl Harbor. MIS soldier, Harold Fudenna, intercepted a radio message indicating the whereabouts of Admiral Yamamoto. Although this message was first met with disbelief, other MIS [linguists](#) in Alaska and Hawaii had also intercepted the same message, proving its accuracy. American forces learned of Yamamoto's planned flight to Bougainville and on April 18, 1943, Yamamoto's plane was successfully shot down above Bougainville. There were no survivors. General Douglas MacArthur referred to this incident as "one of the singularly most significant actions of the Pacific War."

Meanwhile in New Georgia in the central Solomons, the main U.S. objective was to take the Japanese air base at Munda. Two teams consisting of five MIS linguists each were present at New Georgia after the U.S. took the island in the summer of 1943. Despite the hardships of the conditions and battle, the MIS worked courageously and two of them, Richard Matsumoto and Shigeo Yasutake, were awarded [Bronze Stars](#).

In the Solomons campaign the MIS was able to prove its worth and affirm itself by working intelligence centers, the front lines and behind enemy lines.