

Some US towns were untouched by 1918 Spanish flu pandemic. The military wants to know why.

[On 4 June 1919, the Spanish flu] had finally found its way to the remote native Inuit communities that dotted the Alaskan coastline.

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In just a few days nearly 200 people would die from the disease in the Bristol Bay area, leaving dozens of children orphaned. From some places, stories emerged of packs of [stray dogs feasting on the bodies of the dead](#). In some communities, up to 90% of the population died and the mortality rates were some of the highest in the world.

Yet, just a few miles from some of the worst hit areas of Bristol Bay, one community in a tiny settlement called Egegak escaped the disease entirely.

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The lessons [learned] are considered so important that the US Department of Defense's Threat Reduction Agency investigated the handful of the places across the United States that were untouched by Spanish flu in the hope of gleaning some clues about how to keep military personnel safe in the future.

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"These communities basically shut themselves down," explains Howard Markel, an epidemiological historian at the University of Michigan who was one of the authors of the study. "No one came in and no one came out. Schools were closed and there were no public gatherings. We came up with the term 'protective sequestration', where a defined and healthy group of people are shielded from the risk of infection from outsiders."

Read full, original post: [The places that escaped the Spanish flu](#)