Chapter 12

Reaching Out

My name is Hideaki Takashi. I have black hair and brown eyes. I was 25 in 1942.

Off in the East, I can see the rising of the sun changing the water from its dark murky color to a lighter blue. This sun is the symbol of hope and honor in my town of Komatsu in Western Japan on one of the main islands. My wife, Tami, would tell the story to our two children off how as long as the sun would rise, the Japanese empire would live and prosper forever. I missed my family, but very soon, the empire would control the entire Pacific and take control of the Americas.

The first step was accomplished with the glorious campaigns during December to establish our strength against all opposition. Being only a private, I do not receive much news on the action, and I am ordered to the worst possible locations to fight for my emperor. However, I fight for him with honor and with honor for my family. I received orders aboard my ship that my division would be heading to the Philippines where a large part of the American forces were. Crossing the seas to reach our battle, reports over the radio came in on January 2 that Manila and the U.S. Naval base at Cavite was captured by our forces.

As we reached our destinations, heavy bombers flew overhead and smothered the port of Bataan. The artillery from the ships further demolished coastal defenses and resistance from the enemy forces. On January 7, we attacked Bataan in the Philippines against the ill-prepared forces under General MacArthur. Our attacks were long and brutal. It was not long before we had penetrated their first line of defense and had them on a slow and desperate retreat down the peninsula. Our attacks lasted for several months.

During the time in between attacks, rumors spread of how MacArthur had concentrated all of his troops to await relief. What foolishness of those uncultured Americans and their Dutch allies in the other battle taking place. At the Dutch East Indies and Dutch Borneo, my friend wrote to me to inform me the defenses posed no significant challenge to our invading troops on January 11. By the 19th, we took control of the northern Borneo air base, and on the 24th, we took control of the East Indies air base. He later wrote in a letter on February 2, our forces invaded Java in the East Indies. The allied forces there, American-British-Dutch-Australian (ABDA), had little chance of stopping us before we gained a significant foothold. All this cost them was two damaged cruisers and forced them to turn back.

Another friend from childhood, who also joined the army, wrote to me how they had invaded Singapore on the night of February 8/9. The British forces there were laughable at best with how they could not beat the might of the emperor’s army. On the 15th, they surrendered without a decent fight.

For another month, I fought in the Philippines, unable to receive any word from the outside besides that of my commanding officers. Never giving the Americans a chance to rest, we push and shoved them back further inland, tearing down defenses and beating their spirits. On February 26, one of the Japanese pilots had greatly boosted our moral but significantly lowered the Americans. We had sunk the USS Langley, the first U.S. carrier by bombers.

Spirits rose further of the reports coming in of the Battle of the Java Sea. From February 27 to March 1, the battle between the two naval powers fought off the coast of Java very close to where my friend is stationed. This ended up being a great Naval Victor with us sinking the U.S.’s largest warship, the Houston. On March 8, the Dutch as Java finally surrendered.

For the month of March, we won on all fronts as we pushed back the Americans and British on whatever battle we fought. On the 7th, the British evacuated Rangoon in Burma, and we invaded Salamaua and Lae on New Guinea. There ended up being absolutely no opposition on Lae and only a small group of Australians opposed our troops on Salamaua. Unfortunately, the USS Lexington and USS Yorktown attacked our landing beaches by surprise on March 10. They destroyed three of our transport ships and other ships. I was 25 years old. I could feel it in the air that this may be it for the Americans.