Chapter 24

Red is Everywhere

 My name is Misha Ivanov. I have black hair and green eyes. I was 30 in 1943.

 Tonight was a night of wonder with the sky as clear as I have ever seen once during this bloody war. The stars were shining down upon us and the moon was big and full, as if it wanted the put a spotlight onto this earth. Our Allies down south had not begun to help us in our conquest of the German nation. They were too busy celebrating their independence as a bunch of drunken fools, and generally causing themselves to be targets for attacks. Back at their homes in the States, they just paraded and gave away every position being held with the noises and fireworks in every city on the coast.

 We do not have anything like this back in my Russia, nor would we want anything that could give away where our families were living to the Nazis. However, I do miss my wife and two children that still reside as home. The war has not yet reached my beloved hometown of Konosha in northwestern Russia. They are safe for now, and I no longer fear that they too will be pushed from their home in the wake of this growing war. Finally, we were beating back those Nazi swine with the help of the tank divisions I am a part of. Being a Master Sergeant allows me to command several of the men and helping plan a few tactics with my commanding officer. Tomorrow, we are prepared for whatever is to come.

 Tomorrow did come with such a furiously and determination the Germans’ part that I almost feared for my crew. On July 5, the Germans began their last offensive against Kursk in southern Russia. We have been in a sort of stalemate with their troops for about two years now. Their offensive would come at a price, however, since we received intelligence reports of their attack and planned accordingly. For about a week, we resisted everything they threw at us fiercely, and we managed to slow down the Nazi advances to no more than a crawl. It helped that we had build up strong defenses and plans before their offensive even took place. My tank division took quite a beating just as the Germans’ tank also did. This would be the largest tank battle in history with the Germans losing 60, but we lost 822. Finally, we managed to overcome all remaining troops on July 13, but many of the Nazis withdrew to help Italy. Our allies have finally come through and attack into the heart of the problems. By the end of the battle, the Germans had 200,000 casualties, and we the Soviets had 860,000 casualties.

 I received word later of another glorious victory for the motherland on August 23. The Soviets there had recaptured Kharkov with the Germans in a huge disadvantage. Originally, Hitler had ordered for his troops to never withdraw and to be held at all costs. Many, however, retreated on the 21st before we securely claimed the city.

 Our next objective was to be fairly easy with the decline of all the German powers in the area. For months we prepared for this assault down in the Ukraine. First, we sent heavy bombers over and dropped tons of bombs onto the unsuspecting Nazis until it seemed nothing was left. In the end, it only took two days for us to recapture Kiev on November 6. The cost was high, though, on our citizens. 200,000 of them had been killed with only 80,000 surviving: 20% of the population left. Not wanting the Germans to regroups after this, we launched another offensive on the Ukrainian Front from December 24 to the 26th, ruining the Germans’ Christmas.

 I received more reports of a new invasion and offensive back further west. On January 6, the Soviet troops there advanced again into Poland. On the 27th, more troops came and relieved Leningrad after their 900-day siege of the city. It had begun on September 8, 1941, and this counter offensive pushed the Germans back westward.

 For many months, I heard of no more news, but this is just as likely since we were planning a major offensive to begin shortly. On April 8, it began with the objective of liberating the Crimea. We had 470,000 troops to fight against the Germans meager 195,000 defenders. By the 18th, we managed to retake all of the Crimea except for the city of Sevastopol. The Germans were putting up a game little fight there for almost an entire month before we launched any real attacks there. On May 7, we launched a major offensive that lasted for only about two days. This started with our heaviest air and artillery bombardment we could dare to muster up. From the reports later of some officers, the German men ran into the nearby river to evacuate such intense shelling. On the 9th, we successfully recaptured Sevastopol. On the 12th, the Germans had completely surrendered in the Crimea. I was 30 years old. The Americans, British, and Canadians were about to undergo something real big in less than a month.