

ATTU

Written by
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1/12/2026

Based On True Events

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THE CAMERA ZOOMS IN ON AN ISLAND IN THE ALEUTIAN CHAIN. AS IT GETS CLOSER, IT PASSES OVER THE ISLAND OF ATTU. IT CONTINUES CLOSER UNTIL IT IS INSIDE A TENT WHERE A JAPANESE MEDICAL OFFICER IS WRITING IN HIS JOURNAL.

INT. MEDICAL OFFICER'S TENT - NIGHT

The medical officer, Paul Takahashi (male, early 30s), is at his desk inside his tent. The lighting is dim. He is writing in a journal. The sounds of bombs are going off in the distance. There is some shaking of the ground and some dirt falling from the tent ceiling.

The camera zooms in on his writing (written in kanji).

Today at 2000 hours, we assembled at the headquarters tent. The last assault is to be carried out. All of the patients in the hospital were to commit suicide.

(camera zooms into his eyes and we see a flashback)

QUICK FLASHBACK

INT. COMMANDER'S TENT - NIGHT

A medium-sized tent for officers is dimly lit with incandescent bulbs hanging down the center near the tent ceiling. There are 12 Japanese officers standing in a semi-circle around a large map table.

Japanese Colonel Yabuki (male, mid-30s) writes 万歳 (BANZAI) on the map with an arrow towards the U.S. flagged enemy markings on distant hills.

The colonel turns and bows to his officers. They, in turn, bow back and depart.

We follow medical officer Takahashi to the hospital tent. It is organized with rows of cots. It has dim lighting throughout. All soldiers there have bandages or missing limbs. Most have blood soaked clothing. Some patients have IVs.

Medical officer Takahashi hands a small dark vial to the first patient lying in his cot.

His head wound is wrapped with bloodstained bandages. A similar wrap around his leg that has been amputated below the knee.

After Medical Officer Takahashi bows, the patient quickly drinks the vial, with honor. Instantly the patient writhes in pain and dies.

He walks to the next bed, hands the vial, then bows...

END QUICK FLASHBACK

He continues writing.

Only 33 years of living and I am to die here. I have no regrets. Banzai to the Emperor. Goodbye, Taeki, my beloved wife, who loved me to the last, until we meet again, I wish you Godspeed. I feel sorry for you, Takiko, born Feb of this year and gone without seeing your father. Hisaka, who has just turned four years old, will grow up unhindered.

The camera zooms back to the medical officer's eyes, filled with tears.

He writes a little more, closes the journal, and puts it into his satchel. He gets up and walks out.

CUT TO:

EXT. JAPANESE MILITARY COMPOUND - MORNING

Almost a thousand Japanese troops are in loose military formation. Little light filters through the dense fog around them.

We see Colonel Yabuki speaking (we don't hear him from a high overhead angle behind him) to the troops, then he bows three times. He then pulls out his samurai sword and begins to walk into the dense fog, disappearing. All of the troops follow, also disappearing into the fog.

EXT. US MILITARY COMPOUND #1 - CONTINUOUS

Soldiers are grabbing plates and receiving food from a chow line. The air is cold. Each soldier's breath can be seen when they breathe out. Some sit at nearby tables while others go back into the tents. The ground is muddy.

Without warning, a wall of Japanese soldiers, led by Colonel Yabuki, comes pouring out of the fog.

COLONEL YABUKI

BANZAI!

VARIOUS JAPANESE SOLDIERS

BANZAI!

All of them are running towards the U.S. Troops. They are shooting rifles and stabbing soldiers with their bayonets.

Some of the U.S. soldiers come out of their tents and begin shooting or fighting with whatever they have. Everywhere you look, it is a bloody hand-to-hand combat scene.

Colonel Yabuki is using his samurai sword to slash at the enemy, killing them with a spray of blood.

EXT. US MILITARY COMPOUND #2 - CONTINUOUS

This encampment is larger and sits up the hill compared to the first encampment down in the valley below. There is more sunshine on this hill, even in these early morning hours. Over the edge of the hill, the dense fog stops about ten feet below.

We see the same scene of soldiers eating breakfast.

Some of the men begin to hear gunfire and screams.

They walk over to the edge of the hill and look down the slope toward the dense fog. Just then, a U.S. soldier comes running up the hill out of the fog.

US SOLDIER

The Japanese are coming...
thousands of 'em!

Minutes later, Japanese soldiers are pouring out of the fog up the hill toward the encampment. However, this time, the US soldiers are ready with rifles and lay down a lot of suppressive fire.

The Japanese take heavy casualties as men fall where they stand. The ground is muddy, and the soldiers' movement forward is much slower.

Within a short time, the forward movement toward the encampment has been stop. Those that can, begin to retreat back down the slope into the dense fog.

The Japanese soldiers have been fighting a losing battle. Hundreds of them have perished after the first successful portion of the banzai charge. The charge is now coming to an end as they are now flanked in front, both from up the hill and back in the valley encampment below.

As they all huddle in groups, most injured, Colonel Yabuki knows he must make one last push if he has any hope of winning.

He stands up, samurai in hand, and rushes forward. Some of the men follow. Very quickly shots ring out. The Colonel falls dead into the muddy ground. His hand still on his sword.

The next highest ranking officer looks at his men. He can hear the sound of the enemy descending down the hill, firing. He quickly stands in front of his soldiers. The officer pulls a hand grenade from his belt. He holds it in the air. All of the soldiers around him do the same. Then they all put the grenades to their chests and pull the pins. Within a few seconds, all of the grenades blow up, instantly killing the soldiers where they stand. It is a horrific scene of bloody soldiers falling into the mud.

We look at the bloody bodies lying there. The war on this island is over.

CUT TO

EXT. US MILITARY COMPOUND #1 - CONTINUOUS

Medical officer Takahashi is attempting to check on his fallen soldiers. Just then, two US soldiers appear. The medical officer stands up.

MEDICAL OFFICER TAKAHASHI

Wait, I am a doctor.
(in perfect English)

He is shot by one of the US soldiers and falls backward, dead onto the muddy ground. His satchel flies open and his notebook falls out and opens. On the inside cover, which is now visible, is a black-and-white picture of him and his wife.

Fade to black.

(SLOWLY TYPED ON SCREEN)

On May 29th, 1943, one of the largest Japanese "Banzai" charges of World War II happened on the Aleutian Island of Attu. The surprise attack had American soldiers fighting hand-to-hand combat with Japanese soldiers. The battle continued until almost all of the Japanese soldiers were killed either by fighting or suicide, in order not to be captured. Only 28 out of 2,351 Japanese soldiers were captured.

In the 19-day battle for Attu, 549 US soldiers were killed, with more than 1,200 injured, mostly due to cold exposure.

(PHOTO APPEARS OF DR. PAUL NOBUO TATSUGUCHI)

Dr. Paul Nobuo Tatsuguchi, a Japanese medical officer, was trained and received his medical license in California in 1938 before the war. He was later drafted into the Imperial Japanese Army in Tokyo. He kept a journal from May 12th until his last day, May 29th. Also on the island were a couple of his classmates who were US military medical officers.

There are no winners in war.