



# IL-2 IN MANCHURIA



Hello and thank you for downloading this skinpack

It includes skins for two IL-2 type 3 planes which were used during the campaign of the VVS against the Japanese in Manchuria, in 1945:

- "White 58" of 949 ShAP, with a slogan "Brigade of Maxim Gorky" painted down the side.
- "White 65" of 967 ShAP, flown by Kpt. Vinshikovskiy and S. Szht. Romistrov.

During this campaign, an "Oscar" fighter, the pilot of which had obviously never seen an IL-2 before, attacked this particular aircraft. The rear gunner reported that the Japanese aircraft was flown so beautifully that he was mesmerized and did not think to shoot back.

The gunner watched in amazement as the little fighter looped and turned tightly to bring his guns to bear time and time again, the IL-2 being hit repeatedly but totally undamaged.

The pilot of the "Oscar" must have been close to having used up his ammo when as the IL-2 gunner put it, " Having watched him for a while I grew bored, so I blew him to hell...."

Air operations played a minor role in the August campaign in the far east. The VVS flew 14030 combat sorties and 7427 non-combat missions, partly because of the bad weather between August 11<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>.

About a fourth of the sorties were reconnaissance, but the most important contribution of the VVS to the campaign was the hauling of supplies and men. The transports carried over 2750 tons of POL (Petroleum, Oil, & Lubricants), 16 000 men and 2000 tons of munitions and other materiel.

Gaining air superiority was an easy task for the battle hardened VVS. The Japanese planes were obsolete as the best ones had been sent to oppose the American drive across the pacific. The Nates and Oscars were no match for the Yak-9 and La-7, and the Mitsubishi bombers were much slower than the Pe-2 and Tu-2s.

In addition, the Soviets were fighting a disheartened Japanese Army after the atomic bombs hits.

However, the Red Air Force provided close air support during the breakthrough of the so-called concrete belt in northern Manchuria, and used its IL-2.

Blanks / NoNum / stars only skins are also provided: 8 skins in total

Please put them in your IL-2\_3 folder. They will also fit the M3 version

Regards



*The skins...*



**"White 65" of 967 ShAP**



**"White 58" of 949 ShAP**

## ***A little bit of History, for those interested...***

### **Manchurian Strategic Offensive Operation**

**August 9<sup>th</sup> 1945 - September 2<sup>nd</sup> 1945**

At the Tehran Conference in November 1943 and at the Yalta Conference in February 1945, Joseph Stalin had agreed to declare war on Japan three months after Germany would be defeated.

On April 5<sup>th</sup> 1945, the Soviet Union informed Japan that they would not renew the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact of 1941, which ensured non-aggression between the two nations through April 13<sup>th</sup> 1946.

At 23:00 hours Transbaikal time on 8 August 8<sup>th</sup> 1945, Soviet foreign minister Molotov informed Japanese ambassador Sato that the Soviet Union was revoking the neutrality pact with a declaration of war effective on August 9<sup>th</sup>.

At one minute past midnight on August 9<sup>th</sup> 1945, or 61 minutes after the declaration of war, Soviet troops in three fronts poured into Japanese-occupied north-eastern China, a region known as Manchuria that had been governed by the puppet regime of Manchukuo since 1932.

The Soviet troops were of the Far Eastern Command under the overall command of Marshal Vasilevsky, who envisioned a giant pincer movement:

- The Transbaikal Front under Marshal Malinovsky was to attack from the west across the Inner Mongolian desert and over the Greater Khingan mountain range, with Mukden as the primary target; the attached 36<sup>th</sup> Army was to break off after the initial invasion and head toward Harbin and Qiqihar to meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> Far East Front.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> Far East Front under General M. A. Purkayev attacked in the centre largely in a support role only, with the primary objectives of securing Harbin and Qiqihar, upon the successful completion of which, the front was to move toward Port Arthur after the 1<sup>st</sup> Far East Front completed its primary objectives.
- Finally, from the east over the Lesser Khingan mountain range, the 1<sup>st</sup> Far East Front under Marshal K. A. Meretskov was to capture the cities in eastern Manchuria, including Changchun; its secondary objective was to cut off Japanese escape routes into Korea, and its tertiary objective was to invade and occupy northern Korea.

In total, 1,577,725 men in 89 divisions with the support of 3,704 tanks, 1,852 self-propelled guns, 27,086 artillery pieces, and 3,721 aircraft were utilized in the invasion.

On the Japanese side, General Otsuzo Yamada's Kwangtung Army fielded only 600,000 men organized in 25 divisions (two of which were tank divisions) and six independent mixed brigades; they were further supported by the 40,000-strong Manchukuo Defense Force in 8 divisions and the 10,000-strong Mengjiang militia in Inner Mongolia.

In terms of machines, the Japanese had 1,215 armored vehicles (most of which were light tanks and armored cars), 6,700 artillery pieces, and 1,800 aircraft. In terms of

training, the Kwangtung Army at this time was more so a counter-insurgency force rather than a typical military force, thus it was poorly prepared to defend against such an invasion. Additionally, Japanese intelligence had failed to realize the scale of the Soviet movement toward the east, perhaps not expecting the Soviet Union to tear up the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact.

The attack from the west was a complete surprise to the Japanese, who did not expect the Soviet troops to cross the Greater Khingan mountain range, said to be impassable. In addition to the element of surprise, the greater mobility enjoyed by the Soviet forces, plus the usage of airborne units at key airfields, caused the Japanese lines to completely crumble.

Malinovski's tanks penetrated some 250 miles into Manchuria by August 15<sup>th</sup> and his major problem was not Japanese resistance, but supplying his machines with fuel.

On August 18<sup>th</sup>, several amphibious landings were made in northern Korea, Sakhalin, and in the Kurile Islands, with the latter politically driven for the goal of post-war occupation. Although geographically distant from the Manchurian region of northeastern China, the Soviet Kurile Islands Landing operation was considered a branch of the greater Manchurian Strategic Offensive operation.

By August 19<sup>th</sup>, the Japanese Kwantung Army had arranged surrender terms with the Russians. By August 20<sup>th</sup>, the cities of Mukden, Changchun, and Qiqihar were all declared secure. On September 2<sup>nd</sup>, Japan formally surrendered. On September 8<sup>th</sup>, American troops landed at the port city of Inchon to prevent the Soviet Union from occupying all of Korea.

As a result of the Russians' meticulous planning and bold offensive plan, they took 594 000 Japanese prisoners including 143 generals and 20 000 wounded. The Kwangtung Army suffered over 80 000 men and officers killed in combat which lasted less than two weeks. In contrast, the well-prepared Soviet Army had over 8000 killed and 22 000 wounded..







### The surrender of Japan...

Though most people believe the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were the events that drove Japan to surrender, the atomic bombs were actually only part of the equation. Many historians argued that the Soviet declaration of war was as important, if not more so, in the Japanese decision to capitulate.

The dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima by the Americans did not have the effect intended: unconditional surrender by Japan. Half of the Japanese inner Cabinet, called the Supreme War Direction Council, refused to surrender unless guarantees about Japan's future were given by the Allies, especially regarding the position of the emperor, Hirohito.

Japan had not been too worried about the Soviet Union, so busy with the Germans on the Eastern front. The Japanese army went so far as to believe that they would not have to engage a Soviet attack until spring 1946. But the Soviets surprised them with their invasion of Manchuria, an assault so strong (of the 850 Japanese soldiers engaged at Pingyanchen, 650 were killed or wounded within the first two days of

fighting) that Emperor Hirohito began to plead with his War Council to reconsider surrender. The recalcitrant members began to waver.

During the last months of the war, it had been evident that the Japanese, not knowing the secret agreement for the Soviet Union to declare war on Japan, were seeking Soviet assistance as a neutral power to negotiate surrender terms with the western Allies. With the seemingly neutral Soviet Union suddenly changing face and tearing up the non-aggression pact, Japan suddenly lost its last hope.

On August 10th, just a day after the bombing of Nagasaki, Japan submits its acquiescence to the Potsdam Conference terms of unconditional surrender, as President Harry S. Truman orders a halt to atomic bombing.

At the behest of two Cabinet members, the emperor summoned and presided over a special meeting of the Council and implored them to consider accepting the terms of the Potsdam Conference, which meant unconditional surrender. "It seems obvious that the nation is no longer able to wage war, and its ability to defend its own shores is doubtful."

The Council had been split over the surrender terms; half the members wanted assurances that the emperor would maintain his hereditary and traditional role in a postwar Japan before surrender could be considered. But in light of the bombing of Hiroshima on August 6, Nagasaki on August 9, and the Soviet invasion of Manchuria, as well as the emperor's own request that the Council "bear the unbearable," it was agreed: Japan would surrender.

Tokyo released a message to its ambassadors in Switzerland and Sweden, which was then passed on to the Allies. The message formally accepted the Potsdam Declaration but included the proviso that "said Declaration does not comprise any demand which prejudices the prerogatives of His Majesty as sovereign ruler."

When the message reached Washington, President Truman, unwilling to inflict any more suffering on the Japanese people, especially on "all those kids," ordered a halt to atomic bombing.

He also wanted to know whether the stipulation regarding "His Majesty" was a deal breaker. Negotiations between Washington and Tokyo ensued. Meanwhile, savage fighting continued between Japan and the Soviet Union in Manchuria.

### **Other conclusions...**

The Japanese northern-most home island of Hokkaido was in the invasion plans, but Japan surrendered before Soviet forces were ready to mount such an invasion.

During the Allied occupation of Japan, the Soviet Union repeatedly demanded Hokkaido be occupied by Soviet forces without answering to the Supreme Commander of Allied Personnel, but General Douglas MacArthur sternly opposed the idea, and threatened the Soviet representative General Derevyanko with military action should Soviet forces set foot on the island.

Derevyanko, knowing well that MacArthur was not bluffing, advised Moscow to halt any plans for Hokkaido.

In terms of future consequences, the Russian occupation of Manchuria allowed Mao Zedong's Chinese Communist forces to recuperate and rebuild, eventually winning the Chinese civil war.