At the Tehran Conference in November 1943 and at the Yalta Conference in February 1945, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin had agreed to declare war on Japan three months after Germany would be defeated. On 5 April 1945, the Soviet Union informed Japan that it would not renew the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact of 1941, which ensured non-aggression between the two nations through to 13 April 1946. At 2300 hours Trans-Baikal time on 8 August 1945, Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov informed Japanese ambassador Sato that the Soviet Union was revoking the neutrality pact with a declaration of war effective on 9 August. At this point, the neutrality pact was still six months from its natural expiration.

At one minute past midnight on 9 August 1945, or 61 minutes after the declaration of war, Soviet troops organized in three fronts poured into Japanese-occupied northeastern China, a region also known by its historical name of Manchuria. Northeastern China had been governed by the Japanese-sponsored puppet regime of Manchukuo since 1932. The Soviet troops were of the Far Eastern Command under the overall command of Marshal Aleksandr Vasilevsky, who devised a giant pincer movement against the unprepared Japanese troops. In Vasilevsky's plan, the Trans-Baikal Front under Marshal R. Y. Malinovsky was to attack from the west across the Inner Mongolian desert and over the Greater Khingan mountain range, with Mukden (Shenyang), Liaoning Province, China as the primary target; the attached 36th Army was to break off after the initial invasion and head toward Harbin and Qiqihar to meet the 2nd Far East Front. The 2nd Far East Front under General M. A. Purkayev attacked in the center 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 the port of Lushunkou (Russian: Port-Artur; Anglicized: Port Arthur) of the city of Dalian, Liaoning Province after the 1st Far East Front completed its primary objectives. Finally, from the east over the Lesser Khingan mountain range, the 1st Far East Front under Marshal K. A. Meretskov was to capture the cities in east, 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 armored 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 militia force of the puppet state of Mengjiang in the Inner Mongolia region of China. In terms of heavy equipment, the Japanese had 1,215 armored vehicles (most of which were light tanks, tankettes, and armored cars), 6,700 artillery pieces, and 1,800 aircraft. In terms of training, the Kwangtung Army at this time was more of a counter-insurgency force rather than a typical military force, thus it was poorly prepared to defend against a full-scale invasion. Additionally, Japanese intelligence had failed to realize the scale of the Soviet movement toward the east, perhaps not expecting the Soviet Union to betray 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. Fighting continued despite the Japanese foreign ministry having expressed Emperor Hirohito’s wish to end the war on 10 August 1945. On the Soviet side, the commanders received explicit orders to push forward. Meanwhile, some of the Japanese commanders ceased fighting after hearing of the Emperor’s edict, while some were determined to fight until the very end. On 14 August, Soviet troops reached the Yalu River vicinity but stiff Japanese resistance prevented them from reaching the river itself in great numbers. On 18 August, several amphibious landings were made in northern Korea, Sakhalin island, and in the Kurile Islands, with the latter politically driven for the goal of post-war occupation.

Although geographically distant from northeastern China, the Soviet Kurile Islands Landing operation was considered a branch of the greater Manchurian Strategic Offensive operation. The Soviet 87th Rifle Corps and elements from other units landed on various islands, largely overrunning defenses manned by the Japanese 91st Infantry Division (at the islands of Shiashkotan, Paramushiro, Shumshu, and Onekotan), the 42nd Division (at Shimushiro), and the 89th Infantry Division (at Iturup and Kunashiri). Japanese troops surrendered on 23 August 1945, but pockets of resistance continued until the very end of the Pacific War.

Back in northeastern China, by 20 August, the cities of Mukden, Changchun, and Qiqihar were all declared secure. On 2 September, Japan formally surrendered. On 8 September, American troops landed at the port city of Inchon, Korea to prevent the Soviet Union from occupying all of Korea.
At the end of the campaign, the Soviet Union suffered 12,031 killed and 24,425 wounded. Japanese forces suffered somewhere between 21,000 and 60,000 killed. A very large number of Japanese were taken prisoner by the Soviets. A large number of Chinese and Japanese civilians suffered atrocities at the hands of the invading Soviet troops, not unlike the fate suffered by German civilians in eastern Germany months earlier.

**EPILOGUE**

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 administered by Soviet forces independent of the Supreme Commander of Allied Personnel, but General Douglas MacArthur sternly opposed the idea, and threatened the Soviet Representative General Kuzma Derevyanko with military action should Soviet forces set foot on the island. Derevyanko, knowing full well that MacArthur was not bluffing, advised Moscow to halt any plans for Hokkaido.

Though most westerners believed that 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. Historians argue that the Soviet declaration of war was as important a factor, if not more so, in the Japanese decision to capitulate. 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, which affected the Japanese psyche tremendously.
The Nivkh and Orok peoples, native to Sakhalin island, were deported by the Soviets as a collective punishment for some having worked for the Japanese as spies. The fact that equally many of them spied for the Soviets against Japan was ignored.

In terms of future consequences, the Soviet occupation of northeastern China allowed the Chinese Communist forces to recuperate and rebuild, eventually winning the Chinese civil war.

In 1983, United States Army Historian Lieutenant Colonel David Glantz coined the name Operation August Storm to describe this Soviet operation against Japan, and this American name had since been used in some western literature instead of the original Soviet name of the Manchurian Strategic Offensive.

**M’44 SCENARIOS FOR AUGUST STORM: SOVIET INVASION OF MANCHURIA**

The August Storm: Soviet Invasion of Manchuria campaign includes 13 scenarios: 11 standard scenarios and 2 Breakthrough (BT) maps. These scenarios chronicle the major engagements of the campaign, and include only the best available in the Scenarios from the Front (SFTF) files section on the DoW website.

No campaign rules are included; not all M’44 players have access to the Campaign books. Instead, simply tally up the number of medals won in each scenario after playing both sides. A medal tally table is included below.
AUGUST STORM:

1. AUG 09: Fortress Hutou
2. AUG 09: Operation August Storm
3. AUG 09 – AUG 18: The Fortified City of Hailar BT
4. AUG 10: Battle of Hailar
5. AUG 11: Russian Assault on Sakhalin Island
6. AUG 11: Poronai River
7. AUG 11 – AUG 13: Landing at Fuchin
8. AUG 12 – AUG 16: Battle of Mutankiang
9. AUG 13: Matanchiang
10. AUG 14: Landing at Seishin
11. AUG 16: Landing at Port Toro
12. AUG 18: Soviet Landing on Shumshu BT
13. AUG 20: Mukden

There are a total of 186 medals if all scenarios are played, and 142 medals without the 2 Breakthrough maps.

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<td>13. Mukden (14)</td>
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**Final Medal Tally**

Acknowledgments to the authors of the scenarios that make up this campaign compilation:

jdrommel  *player491292
Brycie35  *player26469
*player279058

This August Storm: Soviet Invasion of Manchuria campaign booklet was compiled by Semba