

Northeast's unsung heroes in World War II now in a documentary

November 26,2015, 01.12 PM IST | | PTI

A feature-length documentary that seeks to unravel a series of unknown stories of courage shown by the soldiers of Nagaland and Manipur who took part in World War II will be hitting the screens soon.

In "Memories of a Forgotten War", filmmaker Utpal Borpujari sheds light on the human aspect of the battles as he feels that a lot of such stories must have remained untold.

Manipur and Nagaland were important frontiers of the war and were collectively called region Burma front. It was in the rough terrain of these states that the Allied Army and its Japanese counterpart fought the decisive battles that stopped the Japanese advance into India.

From India's point of view, these battles were significant as apart from the fact that thousands of Indian soldiers were part of the Allied Army, the Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose-led Indian National Army sought to fight against the British for Indian's Independence by siding with the Japanese.

"My aim to make this film is to capture the memories of these people because they are very old today," says Borpujari.

"After some time, they will not be with us. In northeast, there is a strong tradition of oral storytelling. They use this to pass culture, history and rituals to the next generation. So, I thought to use this treatment in the movie," he told PTI at the trailer launch of his movie's first look here.

"These stories are personal, they are sad memories...People would not have shared with others. They lost their friends and saw others getting killed. So, I thought this is the angle I should take."

According to Borpujari, some European soldiers refused to speak about the war, saying they did not want to remember bad times, though people in the northeast region were willing to share their stories.

"Some felt okay to talk about it now as 70 years have passed, while for many, this was the first time they were sharing something about the war. It was not difficult for me to convince them to share information."

As a part of his research for the film, Borpujari read a lot of books and surfed material online but got his real base after he started shooting, while hearing people's narration of the incident.

"I searched as many veterans I could locate. There were not many... I read a lot online and books. There was a lot of stuff from the military point of view so I decided to stop reading that because that is not what I am showing in the film.

"Then I started shooting and as I kept finding new things, I weaved the story around the people's narration," he said.

Borpujari has tried to make minimum use of the available footage on the subject as he wants to render a new perspective to the battle.

He said he would like to show the movie to state governments as it is a documentary everyone should watch and is important not only from an Indian perspective but also from the point of view of tourism.

The principal photography of the movie, produced by Subimal Bhattacharjee, is expected to get completed by December end. Borpujari will then take it to different film festivals.

Link:<http://www.thehansindia.com/posts/index/2015-11-26/Northeasts-unsung-heroes-in-World-War-II-now-in-a-documentary-189065>