

# Tualatin Heritage Center to Screen New Documentary On Oregon-Based 41st Infantry Division in World War II

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Our well-known Sunset Highway, traveled daily by thousands, carries that name in honor of a famous National Guard division that has its roots in Oregon. A documentary featuring oral histories of 41st Infantry troops from Oregon in World War II will be shown on Veterans Day, Monday, November 12 at Tualatin Heritage Center. Times are 2 and 7 p.m. The new release is sponsored by the Tualatin VFW Men's Auxiliary and Tualatin Historical Society. A \$10 suggested donation for adults will help support veteran families and distribution of the DVD to Oregon schools. Bob Lenneville of Tualatin, one of the veterans featured in the documentary, is planning to attend.

After the United States entered the war in December 1941, the 41st Division conducted coastal defense duty from the Canadian border south into Oregon. In early 1942, the division, now the 41st Infantry Division, sailed for Australia as one of the first U.S. Army divisions sent overseas. Australians welcomed the 41st; most of Australia's troops were in Europe and the Middle East, and Japan was threatening from the north.

Titled "Jungleers in Battle" the documentary focuses particularly on the men's involvement in the Pacific. The

41st Division completed jungle and amphibious training in Australia before heading into the combat zone at Papua, New Guinea, in December 1942. In April 1944, the division made amphibious landings at Hollandia and Aitape, where resistance was minor. It was part of the U.S. military's "island-hopping" campaign, attacking or bypassing Japanese-occupied areas as it pressed west and north across the South Pacific.

***"This is one of the oldest and proudest divisions. Its achievements have been of the first order. I have the greatest affection for and pride in the 41st Division."***

***Gen. Douglas MacArthur,  
June 15, 1945***

Japan when the U.S. dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Japanese surrendered. The division performed occupation duty in the Kure-Hiroshima area of Japan until December 31, 1945.



Tualatin resident Bob Lenneville was a Technical Sergeant in the 41st Division and is one of several veterans interviewed for the Jungleers documentary

In 1946, the 41st reorganized as the Pacific Northwest's Army National Guard division. In the 1960s, it was given a national defense mission of protecting Alaska, and the troops trained in northern operations. When the division was deactivated in 1968, its heritage and insignia passed on to the 41st Infantry Brigade of the Oregon Army National Guard which continues today based at Camp Wythecomb.

The shoulder-sleeve insignia of the 41st is a red half-disk with a yellow setting sun over a blue baseline representing the Pacific Ocean. It is the basis for the name "Sunset Division." On January 17, 1946, U.S. Highway 26, from Portland to Seaside, was named the Sunset Highway in the division's honor.

The 2012 documentary was directed and produced by Alisha Hamel and edited by Greg James of Blue Couch Media. Copies are available for \$25 at [www.historicaloutreach.com](http://www.historicaloutreach.com) or \$20 at the showing. A brigade of the 41st Infantry based in Oregon was recently notified it needs to be prepared for one of the last operations in Afghanistan.



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Daniel Payne volunteers as the President of the VFW Men's Auxiliary, Post 3452. He also owns Tualatin Web, a web development company.

