

LIFE



RE-CREATING A MIRACLE

The filming of *Crossing the Yalu River*, both the movie and TV series, was epic in its scale and endeavor, doing justice to the heroes they depict, **Xu Fan** reports.

It took Director Dong Yachun more than a year to research the Chinese People's Volunteers in the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea (1950-53) for his project *Crossing the Yalu River*, a 40-episode TV series and a 150-minute film.

"If I pile up all the books that I have read, it might reach the height of an adult," says the veteran film-

maker, stretching his hands to indicate the height just such a "pile" might achieve, during an interview with China Daily earlier this month.

One year on from the first run of the TV series, which has obtained a score of 8.5 points out of 10 on the popular review aggregator Douban, the film — shot simultaneously with the series — was released domestically on Dec 17.

The first feature-length drama presented by China Media Group, the country's largest broadcaster, the movie unfolds from the perspective of Peng Dehuai, commander-in-chief of the Chinese People's Volunteer forces, to chronicle the five most pivotal campaigns fought on the Korean Peninsula. Each of the five campaigns has a 3D-animated map to show the Chinese strategy.

From the battle on Songgu Peak, where Chinese soldiers, vastly outnumbered 20-1, stopped the enemy advance, to the frozen battlefield at Lake Changjin, also known as Chosin Reservoir, the epic film recounts how the fearless Chinese People's Volunteers "created a miracle" to assist the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and, at the same time, safeguard the newly founded People's



From left: Stills from *Crossing the Yalu River*, a TV series and a film: war hero Yang Gensi (second from right) on the frozen battlefield at Lake Changjin during the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea (1950-53) and Commander-in-chief Peng Dehuai (front).

PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Republic of China, says Dong.

Aside from filming the major scenes, which were shot simultaneously with the TV series in Beijing and Tianjin, as well as Hebei, Heilongjiang and Liaoning provinces, it took several months to add heavy visual effects to the movie, which account for 60 minutes, or 40 percent, of all the scenes.

"At the very start, we decided to shoot a movie and a TV series at the same time. But the movie's perspective is more international and its scale is bigger," says Dong.

He adds that the creators also wished to revisit the history from an objective point of view.

Featuring a sizable cast of more than 300 characters, the film brings to life historic figures like Chairman Mao Zedong and then US president Harry S. Truman, and war heroes such as Yang Gensi and Huang Jiguang, both conferred with the title of "Special-Class Hero", the highest honor for Chinese soldiers.

"For the audiences who have limited time, the movie is like a condensed encyclopedia entry, helping them to quickly learn the history," says Dong.

And the film chooses to recount events primarily from the perspectives of the decision-makers, he adds, as this gives a clearer insight into the campaign.

A Beijing native born in 1960,

Dong has helmed a number of military-themed projects, including the award-winning TV series *The Eighth Route Army* (2005) and the World War II film *Ballet in the Flames of War* (2015).

But his interest in shooting a film about the war on the Korean Peninsula, fought 71 years ago, was ignited in 2000, when August First Film Studio pulled out all the stops to produce such an epic, but the project — which recruited Dong as a major creator — was canceled.

Defining *Crossing the Yalu River* as a "duty", finally carried out more than two decades later, Dong says he intends it as a tribute to the martyrs and veterans of the Chinese People's Volunteer forces, and hopes that the movie will help audiences understand more clearly their courage and sacrifice.

Currently grossing an overall box office of nearly 60 million yuan (\$9.41 million), the film has also won plaudits from critics and industry insiders.

Zhang Dexiang, deputy chairman of the China Literature and Art Critics Association, says that the film narrates the whole picture of the war through a panoramic scope, and has gone beyond most similarly themed movies in terms of the ideological value and artistic quality.

Contact the writer at xufan@chinadaily.com.cn

CHTF 2021 showcases tech advancements

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Billed as China's largest tech exhibition, the 23rd China Hi-Tech Fair is themed around advancing high-quality development and fostering a new development pattern.

It attracts world-famous enterprises such as Huawei, ZTE, Shenzhen Investment Holdings, and prestigious universities, such as Peking University and Tsinghua University.

The fair features new-generation information technology, new energy, new materials, high-end equipment, new energy vehicles, smart cities and energy conservation.

The CHTF 2021 goes both physical and digital, which includes exhibitions, forums, roadshows, matchmakings, and business networkings.

The CHTF 2021 Physical displays tech advancements presented by the China's Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, National Intellectual Property Administration, Chinese Academy of Sciences and Center for International Economic and Technological Cooperation of Ministry of Industry and Information Technology. Nine Chinese provinces and 14 Chinese renowned universities are exhibiting their latest tech products and services at the fair.

Enterprises from 25 countries are displaying online, while delegations from 11 countries including Belgium, Brazil, Poland are exhibiting in person at Shenzhen World Exhibition and Convention Center, bringing their most innovative products.

The CHTF 2021 Digital gathers numerous technology-related companies, universities and institutions from around the world.

The Makers Area showcases the creative products and projects by innovative teams and individuals such as college students. Representatives of makerspaces and bases for innovation and entrepreneurship are also invited to the exhibition in a bid to facilitate communication and help turn creative ideas into reality.

The China Hi-Tech Forum 2021, as an important part of the annual event, has invited nearly 50 experts and executives of leading technology companies to share their opinions on



Clockwise from top: This year's CHTF focuses on high-quality development: Belgium's booth at the event. Representatives attend the opening ceremony of the Brazilian Pavilion at the 23rd China Hi-Tech Fair in Shenzhen, Guangdong province. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



high-quality development and the new development pattern.

The key speakers are Wu Hequan, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, Xue Qikun, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and president of Southern University of Science and Technology, and Zeng Yi, general manager of China Electronics Corp.

Business networking events include business-to-business meetings, product and technology launches and business salons etc.

One highlight of the fair is Behavior Atlas, a spatio-temporal decomposition framework for automatically detecting behavioral phenotypes developed by the Shenzhen Institute of Advanced Technology at the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

The system helps the study of the evolution of movement sequences for higher-order behavior and behavioral state transition caused by neural activity.

It has been used on animals such as rats, dogs and monkeys, and has been used in trials on epilepsy patients.

After 40 years of development, Shenzhen has become a world-renowned hub for innovation, Jian Zheng, deputy director of the Shenzhen commerce bureau, said at the opening of the forum.

"We will give full play to the role of the whole-process innovation ecological chain, continuously strengthen basic research and research into key technologies, and accelerate the industrialization of research outcomes.

"Steps will also be taken to further the integration of technology and finance, attract innovative talent, foster advanced manufacturing clusters, and strengthen international cooperation in science and technology, so as to build Shenzhen into a globally influential capital for innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship," Jian said.

The CHTF provides an important platform for Shenzhen to actively integrate into the global scientific and technological innovation network, and serves as a bridge for promoting international cooperation in science and technology, according to Jian.