

At 0345 hours on 21st the Indonesians attacked the convoy but the Gurkhas drove them off. At 1100 hours the convoy moved on, a mined bridge held it up and as darkness fell it was still only two miles from AMBERAWA. Lt. Col. Edwardes of 3/10 Gurkhas decided the only thing to do was to push on in darkness headed by a tank. As they passed a convent they found nine women murdered, and twenty more mutilated but still alive. For the next three days there was desperate fighting to protect the convoy as the relief column fought its way to the rescue. On December 1st the Indonesians fired 95 shells from Field Artillery into the convoy killing 8 women and wounding 20 more; we lost 5 killed and 15 wounded. It was not until 14th December that the convoy reached SEMARANG having had to fight a rearguard action all the way. This operation was only one of many, although the largest and most fiercely opposed.

#### SURABAYA

On 25th October 1945 the advanced troops of 49 Brigade of Hawthorn's 23 Division landed at the Dutch Naval Base of SURABAYA, a large city stretching some seven miles inland from the port. On 27th October the landing was complete and leaflets approved by Mountbatten and printed in SINGAPORE were dropped that day on BATAVIA, SEMARANG, RANDOENG and SURABAYA. These leaflets included an order to hand in all arms. Hoestopo the Indonesian 1 Div. Commander and Atmaji of the Navy hastened to Brig. Mallaby to say they would not obey the order. An inflammatory speech which accused us of being the covering force for the Dutch was broadcast and the city incited to fight and drive us into the sea.

I estimated the total strength of the 1st Indonesian Division and attached troops as 20,000 trained men, but 140,000 untrained fanatical citizens had to be reckoned with. They had tanks, armoured cars, light and heavy artillery, many AA guns and ample transport and supply services. It was called the TKR (Peoples Defence Army) and was based in and responsible for EAST JAVA.

Suddenly about 1630 hours on 28th October the whole city rose against us, 20,000 Jap-trained and armed troops with a mob of 140,000 carrying various weapons surged through the city thirsting for blood and running amok. To meet this 49 Brigade had 4,000 troops mostly in company and platoon posts in key parts of the city and had begun to evacuate RAPWI. The bestial scenes that followed in the name of freedom rivalled the vilest moments of the French Revolution.

Twenty 3-ton lorries of 123 Company RIASC were ferrying women and children, many of them sick to DARMO hospital and Barracks from the large camp. DARMO was at the south side of the city about 6 miles from the dock area. There was an escort of Mahrattas under a Lance Havildar. About 1830 the leading lorry was halted at a road block and Indonesian troops opened fire. At the first volley the Officer in charge of the convoy and several evacuees were killed; some more wounded. At once more troops appeared and hemmed in the convoy though the driver of the rear lorry reversed into the mob and got away under a hail of bullets. Drivers and escort humpered about 60 to try and defend over 400 women and children against TKR troops backed by an armed mob yelling for blood. Inspired by the Indian Subadar and the Lance Havildar as many women and children as possible were got into houses fringing the street, and their defenders who only had 2 Bren guns, their rifles and their courage, fought for 2½ hours to try to save their charges. The street was piled with dead and wounded but still the Indonesians launched attack after attack trampling on the fallen.

It was quickly dark and the mob left the barricades and swarmed into the gardens round the houses uttering blood-curdling screams as they saw their prey now within their grasp. When our ammunition ran out, they broke into the houses, swords, daggers and knives doing their hellish work. The screams of the maimed and mutilated women and children mingled with the cries of triumph of their butchers. Most of the lorries were now set alight but the Lance Havildar's jeep and three lorries were still intact. Seeing the end was near he ran to the jeep and drove at full speed over the pile of bodies and the barricade under a hail of fire to reach a Rajput Rifle post. The subadar followed with 3 lorryloads of women and children neglected while the butchery was going on. Lost in a strange city he took his charges - nearly all wounded - into a house where he dressed their wounds and gave them his rations and water. Now the mob, glutted with their butchery and dismemberment of living bodies left the area and started roaming the city in search of further victims. Some Officers out with patrols were never heard of again. Several Officers bodies were later found hideously dismembered and defaced floating down the KALIMAS. Many gallant deeds were performed. The Havildar Major of 3 Indian Field Regiment RA saved his battery. Caught on the road while moving up to a position the men left their vehicles to fight off the attack. They did not know their Officers had been murdered as they were ahead looking for a position. The WO dashed into the middle of the battle, started the leading vehicle and drove the first gun back to safety. Seven more guns remained but one by one all were hauled out under our covering fire. A lance-havildar gallantly went forward alone to look for his Officer and found him lying severely wounded. As he was lifting him he was rushed by four TRI men all of whom he killed and then got his Officer on his back and brought him safely in.

Next day the situation of 49 Brigade was desperate. All its Units were split up guarding key points in the south of the city. Brigade Headquarters was in the middle of the enemy, and reserves of food and ammunition in the docks could not be brought forward those 6 miles. But these troops, veterans of the BURMA Campaign fought with magnificent gallantry. There were desperate battles all over the city; every detachment was surrounded. When ammunition ran out the enemy swarmed in for bloody butchery. Midnight came with no pause to the fighting. In one case 70 Indonesians fell before a Mahratta platoon post yet hundreds scrambled over the dead bodies only to be mown down by our troops. The sands of time were running out, and to make matters worse Indonesian tanks were brought up. Two tanks attacked a Rajput Rifle Post. The naik threw several grenades at the tracks to no avail so he dashed out, climbed on each tank, one after the other and pushed a grenade into each. Both tanks were abandoned.

When General Hawthorn told me of the desperate situation of 49 Brigade, I decided that as the security of his force is the first duty of a Commander, I must disobey my order not to have anything to do with "President Soekarno" and I sent Colonel Abdul KADIR to bring him to my HQ and I also sent for General Hawthorn, in whose presence I said: "Look here, Dr. Soekarno, you have heard what is going on in SURABAYA. You allege your people owe you allegiance and I hold you personally responsible for the outrages that have been taking place. You will go at once in my aeroplane along with General Hawthorn to SURABAYA and sort things out and stop all fighting. Take some of your red and white flags and wave them from the plane as you approach. I don't want it fired on". Dr. Soekarno was a well-educated man, A PHD, and an Honours Graduate of LEYDEN University. He spoke perfect Dutch, and very good English. A small typical Malay in stature, he had spent years in prison at various times for offences in connection with attempts to gain home

rule. He was interested in music and art, and was no bad painter himself. "I shall carry out your Excellency's orders to the best of my ability", and he went off with General Hawthorn to KOMARIAN airfield en route for SURABAYA. Soekarno and Hawthorn reached SURABAYA on 29th October and proceeded to HQ 6 Mahratta which was under heavy mortar fire. A truck was produced, and waving a red and white flag Soekarno went on into the battle where firing soon died down. He was quite fearless.

About 1600 hours that afternoon, an Intelligence Officer arrived at 49 Brigade HQ with Soekarno. He said to Brig. Mallaby the "President" has come to see you, Sir". They agreed on a truce and went to the Broadcasting Station. Soekarno's broadcast did something to calm the situation, but it did not establish control over the mob that had been backing up the Indonesian troops.

Ambulances were to be granted safe conduct, but as soon as any took to the streets, they were shot at and had to return empty. The wounded suffered badly from lack of attention. All night 29/30 October there was desultory firing and here and there pitched battles took place. The worst instance was the case of a Mahratta platoon commanded by a jemadar. By 1600 hours on the 29th October they had fought all day to hold a four-storey building on the ground floor. They had driven off a series of vicious attacks and put two tanks to flight. Then fresh tanks arrived and their fire set the house ablaze and ammunition was running low. Suddenly the blazing roof fell in and some of the defenders were burned to death or crushed. The survivors took off their burning clothes, and the jemadar collected his men for a last stand. They fought till the last round. Then choked by fumes and smoke in the intense heat the jemadar led his remnant out into the streets where they were called on to surrender. He replied they would die before surrender and charged into the mob with their bayonets and were hacked to pieces in the melee. A few wounded men were later rescued from the ruins of the house alive to tell the tale.

When General Hawthorn arrived at the airfield with Soekarno and Dr. Hatta OC 6 Mahratta said it was doubtful if he could hold it and it had been under attack. It was vital to stop the fighting and retain the airfield, so Hawthorn, Soekarno and Hatta went to the Government building and met the full East JAVA Committee. Soekarno failed to convince them and was obviously nervous and unsure of himself.

As part of the terms of the truce no one was to fire unless attacked. This order was strictly obeyed by us, though our troops had to watch their enemy creeping forward into better positions. Only at one point was the truce broken. A mob rushed in a mass towards D Company of the Mahrattas and quite rightly the Company Commander ordered a salvo of mortars to be put down to stop the attack before it got too close. Those mortar bombs nearly proved disastrous. General Hawthorn had gone to the Conference with a very weak hand to play. He knew that if fighting could not be stopped his forces would be overwhelmed; should this happen, the repercussions all over JAVA, SUMATRA AND BALI were too ghastly to contemplate. On one side were Hawthorn, Soekarno and some elderly and moderate Indonesians; on the other a collection of young hotheads, the dedicated revolutionaries who had already tasted blood. Suddenly the sound of mortar bombs close by shattered the Conference. The local Commander of the TKR rose in fury but was pacified when General Hawthorn told him he need not lay down his arms at this stage. Soekarno then agreed to dividing SURABAYA city into three zones. The British would occupy the airfield, docks area and the RAPWI Camps south of the city; while the city itself would remain in Indonesian hands. This brought Sutomo angrily to his feet. He was a veritable firebrand with fanatical protruding eyes which General Hawthorn told me rolled incessantly with hatred and unreason. He claimed that by this agreement his forces would be enclosed by ours!

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Finally General Hawthorn told him to shut up and that Mountbatten was perfectly ready to send his fleet and airforce to reduce SURABAYA to ruins unless he fell into line and agreed to Conference decisions.

Hawthorn showed great courage. He, Brigadier Mallaby and Lt. Col. Doulton the A/Q were alone and behind the Indonesian lines; and unarmed under only the doubtful security of a flag of truce. All thought they would be murdered in cold blood.

Without Soekarno there would have been no Conference and no hope of success; he strove for peace throughout. But it was Hawthorn's courage, tact and sound judgement which was ultimately decisive and saved 49 Brigade. But even more dastardly happenings were yet to come. As General Hawthorn, Soekarno and Hatta (who had not said a word to back his "President") returned to BATAVIA, OC D Coy signalled that he was being heavily attacked and must return the fire. Half an hour later, about 1430 hours, Brigadier Mallaby, carrying a flag of truce, drove up in a commandeered taxi to the square and got out. He entered the International Bank building, the HQ of D Company and told the OC not to fire as a truce had been arranged unless his position was actually rushed. Firing now stopped on the Indonesian side and things looked better, and Mallaby returned to his Headquarters and sent his Brigade Major and Intelligence Officer to Indonesian Headquarters. They never reached it. Stopped by an angry mob a TKR Officer rescued them and took them into a house for safety; but the mob broke in and hacked them to pieces which they tossed around to each other.

Mallaby returned to Bank Square with two Staff Officers escorted by Indonesian officials. Here he found the two sides almost cheek by jowl the Indonesians calling on the Mahrattas to surrender. The mob would not let Mallaby enter the Bank and he coolly talked to his men at 10 yards range with the mob screaming around him, while Indonesian officials tried to calm the crowd. They stood on the roofs of their cars doing so for half an hour. Suddenly an agitator leapt onto a car roof and harangued the mob, inciting them to violence. The enemy then brought up machine guns to close range and climbed onto the veranda of the Bank, some actually getting inside the building. The OC had no option but to open fire and drive them off. Mallaby, in the taxi and his two Staff Officers lay down on the floor feigning death and muttering "this is it". Then someone called his name and Mallaby sat up. An assassin was on the running-board and fired three shots one of which killed the Brigadier instantly. Both Officers leap out; one had a grenade which he threw, and in the confusion they ran to the KALI MAAS dived in and swam several miles down stream to safety. This murder sated the blood lust of the Indonesians, and after anxious days and much haggling interspersed with minor flare-ups, 49 Brigade reached its appointed areas as agreed at the Conference. By the night of 31st October the military position was sounder. Troops were concentrated re-inforcements and ammunition arrived, and best of all a Squadron of PAVO tanks was unshipped.

I had asked Mountbatten for 5 Division which was in MALAYA to be sent when things looked bad, and for Naval support together with ships to evacuate the 30,000 women and children still in camps. I got 5 Division and the 6th Cruiser Squadron under Vice-Admiral "Hooky". Walker was placed under my direct command.

I now issued an ultimatum. "Unless those responsible for Mallaby's murder were handed over, I would bring the whole weight of my Land, Sea and Air Forces to bear on SURABAYA". The actual assassin was handed over and shot after a summary trial.

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I must record the Stoicism, calm bearing and bravery of the Dutch and Eurasian women which was beyond praise.

I was shocked when Admiral Helfrich accompanied by General Van Oyen again dashed in to remonstrate with me for using Soekarno and Hatta to stop the fighting, and horrified when the Admiral said: "General, I'd rather lose all these women and children in the short term than lose our great Colonial Empire".

On 1st November Mountbatten informed me that the Chiefs of Staff had decided that after the re-inforcing of 5 Division which had already started leaving SINGAPORE for SURABAYA, no further British or Indian troops were to be sent to JAVA.

The Dutch were being pressed to solve the problem by negotiation as the only solution. Luckily Soekarno and Hatta's standing had fallen as a result of their stopping the fighting in SURABAYA and a moderate Sutan Sjahrir, a Christian, staged a coup d'etat and became head of Government, though he retained Soekarno and Hatta in his Cabinet. I at once got in touch with him through my Political Adviser, Mr. Denning, and a meeting was convened under my Chairmanship with Indonesian and Dutch representatives. Sjahrir said "General, your Excellency, we know we cannot yet run our country without the Dutch. We would have settled for Dominion status under Her Majesty, and this we hoped for and were disappointed in the Netherlands determination to re-impose Colonial rule. Now it is clear my people will settle for nothing less than total independence as a Republic but with the closest links with the Netherlands and recognising the Queen as Head of the whole Commonwealth of which we want to be part." Dr. Van Mook felt these were the best terms he was likely to get and that peace and prosperity depended on their acceptance. But when they were known at THE HAGUE, Dr. Logemann, Minister for Overseas Territories, without consulting Van Mook, made a statement making negotiations impossible; we were back at square one.

Mountbatten reported that there were still 147,000 RAPWI to be rescued around SURABAYA alone. He asked the Chiefs of Staff what course he should order me to take. He decided to destroy the 1st Indonesian Division in SURABAYA, rescue the RAPWI in the surrounding area; and then evacuate SURABAYA and SEMARANG entirely, concentrating in the vital area of BATAVIA, BUITENZORG and BANDOENG.

To this end, General Mansergh's 5 Division started to land at the Port of SURABAYA, the Dutch Naval Base on 1st November and in spite of minor disputes was completely ashore by 9th November. The Indonesians had heard that a Dutch Brigade made up of ex POW's was being trained in MALAYA and were convinced 5 Division were covering troops to let Dutch Forces back into JAVA. During this week a large number of RAPWI were rescued without opposition and taken in HM Ships to SINGAPORE. Next day I issued an ultimatum drawn up by my Political Adviser, Mr. Denning calling on all armed resistance to 5 Division's occupation of SURABAYA to cease and the TKR (1st Indonesian Division) and all armed irregulars to leave the city. This was ignored and 5 Division began a slow, methodical advance. They met very strong opposition from regular troops armed and trained (and some actually commanded) by Japanese and Germans. Snipers were everywhere in the city and the defenders were using tanks, artillery, mortars and machine guns, while our aircraft met heavy and light AA fire well directed. Our casualties were heavy and I had to call in the P47s (Thunderbolts) and Mosquitoes as well as the whole 6th Cruiser Squadron to aid the slow advance and bring down fire on troops massing for counter-attacks. I had been ordered to drop leaflets warning of air and sea attack but the enemy paid no heed to them. This allowed our troops to advance more rapidly and about one-third of the city was under our control

by nightfall and we had captured the gaol which held 3,500 RAPWI herded together under appalling conditions. All these were brought safely to the docks. Next day the advance continued sector by sector, street by street, house by house. It took another three weeks before the city was entirely in our hands and the Indonesians completely defeated. This victory smashed for good their position in EAST JAVA. We captured a number of tanks and armoured cars, 64 armoured troop carriers, and no fewer than 131 pieces of artillery including heavy and field guns and light and heavy AA guns. In fact the Indonesian 1st Division no longer existed. Our losses were heavy initially but when we got our tanks ashore and were able to organise Naval and Air support and advance very carefully and methodically our losses were light.

I had flown in on 3rd November and impressed on General Mansergh that the minimum losses must be incurred and he carried out his orders with great skill. As a result a great many more RAPWI were found and rescued, though many were massacred before we could reach them, and others hurt by our bombardment of positions into which they had fled unknown to us.

Now we could evacuate SURABAYA and SEMARANG. Our prestige was now so high we could dictate our own terms to Sjahrir and he now helped us evacuate the remaining camps in the interior.

Dr. Van Mook wrote to me: "I have just read the report on the happenings in SURABAYA. From this and from stories of eye-witnesses, I am deeply impressed by the extremely gallant behaviour of your Officers and troops. I would like to assure you that your sacrifices, which assured the safety of thousands of my compatriots shall never be forgotten and will constitute a lasting claim on our gratitude. The women and children now recovering from what they have been through ask me to express their deep gratitude towards you and your brave Officers and men in rescuing them from the SURABAYA inferno. They feel that if you praise their behaviour during the evacuation such conduct was only possible by the stimulating courage and calmness of your Officers and men never wavering under 'appalling odds'".

It remained to clear up BATAVIA itself and BUITENZORG and BANDOENG from armed extremist guerillas and try and get conditions under which we could hand over to the Dutch and get out. Their NICA (Netherland Indies Civil Affairs) had been evacuated to BRISBANE in QUEENSLAND and now seemed a possible time to get them back, and start running the economy which was rapidly deteriorating. Under Major General Van Straten they duly arrived but I was alarmed to see all wore uniform and carried sten guns slung round their necks. Coolies in TANJONG PRIOK, the port of BATAVIA refused to unload their baggage whereon they opened fire on them and killed and wounded several. This was a bad start. I sent for Van Straten and told him of my extreme displeasure and ordered him to disarm the NICA and put them in civilian clothes. He demurred at first but I gave him no option. Abdul Kadir told Sjahrir what I had done and he agreed that in that case the NICA could operate. As economic chaos continued in spite of NICA so did lawlessness and banditry in BATAVIA increase until it got quite out of hand. I decided firm action was needed, but Denning advised getting Mountbatten's backing first.

It was also unsafe to venture outside BATAVIA, and the country between the capital and BANDOENG swarmed with armed and organised guerillas. In fact every time a convoy of food was sent to the garrison of BANDOENG it took a Brigade with tanks artillery and air cover to get through the passes, and there were always ambushes and sometimes severe fighting to get through.