

TESTIMONY TRANSCRIPTION

SOEJONO

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“Crave for the independence of motherland”

Written by

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Foreward

Thanks to the guidance and encouragement of my colleagues: Commodore (navy) J. Soelamet as a former commander of “L” troops, Colonel (navy) Oesman Rachman as the director of the Directorate of History and Libraries of the Navy of the Republic of Indonesia, as well as all my colleagues, with full of gratitude to God, then I present a short history of “L” troops entitled:

“Crave for the independence of motherland”

The title was deliberately chosen, to commemorate and honour all the services of colleagues who are now not with us anymore, because have already killed in action, missing in action, have passed away, in order to fulfil their promise of devotion.

If in my explanation, this is more as autobiography of myself as author, but actually the content in this account, I got and collect from the experiences of my colleagues, as my comrade-in-arms at that time.

Because to recall my memory about the incident in detail and chronologically is very difficult, to reconstruct some detail data of the incident that took place a quarter of century ago, then I use some books as reference (guidance) as follows:

1. Dr. H. Roeslan Abdulgani book entitled “Api Revolusi di Surabaya” [The fire of revolution in Surabaya].
2. Soetomo (Bung Tomo) book entitled “Pertempuran Surabaya 10 November 1945” [The battle of Surabaya 10 November 1945]
3. Major (navy) R.S.S. Maserin book entitled “Seperseratus sejarah dan perkembangan Pasukan L” [One hundredth history and the development of the L troops]
4. And other sources.

It is certain that this paper is far from perfect, so that the correction and criticism of the readers, especially former members of L troops, are very much appreciated.

My gratitude also goes to: Admiral (navy) Marwidji, Commodore (navy) M. Wibowo, Commodore (navy) R. Soehardjo, Colonel (navy) L.Askandar, Colonel (navy) Wijono, Lieutenant Colonel (navy) Hartono, Lieutenant (navy) Oemarsaid and other colleagues, which has helped data collection, so I can finish this short paper, I would like to say thank you very much.

Hopefully this article can add to the collection owned by the unit or troops under the banner of the Navy of the Republic of Indonesia.

“Jales Veva Jaya Mahe” [Indonesian naval slogan, which means “In the ocean, we are victorious”]

Jakarta, 21 May 1971

Author

Signed

SOEJONO

Lieutenant Colonel (Navy) NRP 642/P

Chapter I

Introduction

The beginning of history

The dark clouds were often paraded over the city, but the rain never arrived, it was approximately in mid-September 1945 in Surabaya.

The barren widespread due to the heat of the sun, and no wind blows, as if there will be a dark storm, in that dark city.

The shadow becomes real.

“Typhoon of revolution” came burning Surabaya, and burning the spirit of “Freedom or Death” echoed throughout the Indonesian archipelago.

Surabaya is really a city of “*Sura ing Baya*” [dare in danger], “The City of Heroes” unrivalled city in Indonesia.

At that time a physical revolution was underway, and to secure the course of the revolution, by the President Sukarno, promulgated the establishment of BKR (People Security Organization) on 22 August 1945.

Our youth welcomed it immediately, and in droves they established groups of struggle as if mushrooms grew in the rain, full of sincerity and selflessness, armed with any weapons but with a burning spirits.

The motherland called

But the Dutch orthodox colonist did not want to realise of the determination of the Indonesian nation.

The bitter memories when curled up inside the prison of war camp during the Japanese occupation, had not awakened them from the dream of “*terug naar de geode oude tijd*” [back to the good old time].

They began to undermine us, some of the Dutch Indo-European who have been expelled from the prison of war, they force to buy goods in Blauran market with NICA money [Netherlands Indies Civil Administrator], on goods belong to Indonesian merchants.

The first incident has occurred, and ended with an incident by tearing the NICA money.

Even though since then there have been frequent clashes in various places, but there was a lively afternoon market at the Surabaya Zoo to celebrate the birth of the Republic of Indonesia, as if the people Surabaya did not care, that the danger was coming.

A few days before August 31, 1945 (the birthday of the Queen Wilhelmina), the Dutch leaders have made a request to our authorities to be allowed to commemorate their holiday by flying the Dutch flag.

Given that at that time the people of Indonesia was still in joy atmosphere to welcome the independence of their homeland, then the request was rejected by the Resident of Surabaya (Mr. Soedirman).

Probably because they were angry, then led by Mr Ploegman and Mr Spit, suddenly they raised the three colour flag on September 18, 1945, at the top of the right wing corner of the front of the hotel.

Because the protest of thousand people who demanded the flag lowered, were ignored, then there was a mass fight.

By using empty bottles, stones, and any weapons we raided the hotel.

In the midst of the riots, a car driven by Dutch Indo-European passing by, causing chaos in the outburst of angry masses.

The fight ended with a victory on our side. There was a victim on our side, a driver who got injured. While on the Dutch side, Mr Ploegman and several of his colleagues were killed.

I, which was involved in the incident, also wept with full of emotion, when we were successfully seized the Dutch flag and then throw off the blue colour. Finally, the red-and-white flag, which was not proportionate in size, can fly in proud accompanied by relentless shouts from people “freedom! ...freedom!”

The incident was just over, after Bung Tomo invited us together to sing Indonesia Raya song (old version), which echoed from the mouth of thousands of audience, in various attitude to respect the Indonesian flag.

According to my feelings, I have never felt before or since, that our national anthem sung in melodic and solemn way, as happened at that time.

(Note: this event is known as the flag incident)

Yamato Hotel was the name of the hotel on the Japanese occupation era, meanwhile on the Dutch East Indies its name was Oranje Hotel, and now its name is LMS Hotel [1971].

According to the information I have received, the young man who did a tear on the three colours flag, so the rest of the flag was red and white, and flew the flag again, was Praseno Sisworo (Older sibling of the Commodore (navy) R.P.Poernomo).

If this information is true, then Praseno Sisworo has died in front of sugar factory in Candi, when British troops attacked Sidoarjo in December 1945.

His body was buried in Hero Grave “Surapati” in Malang.