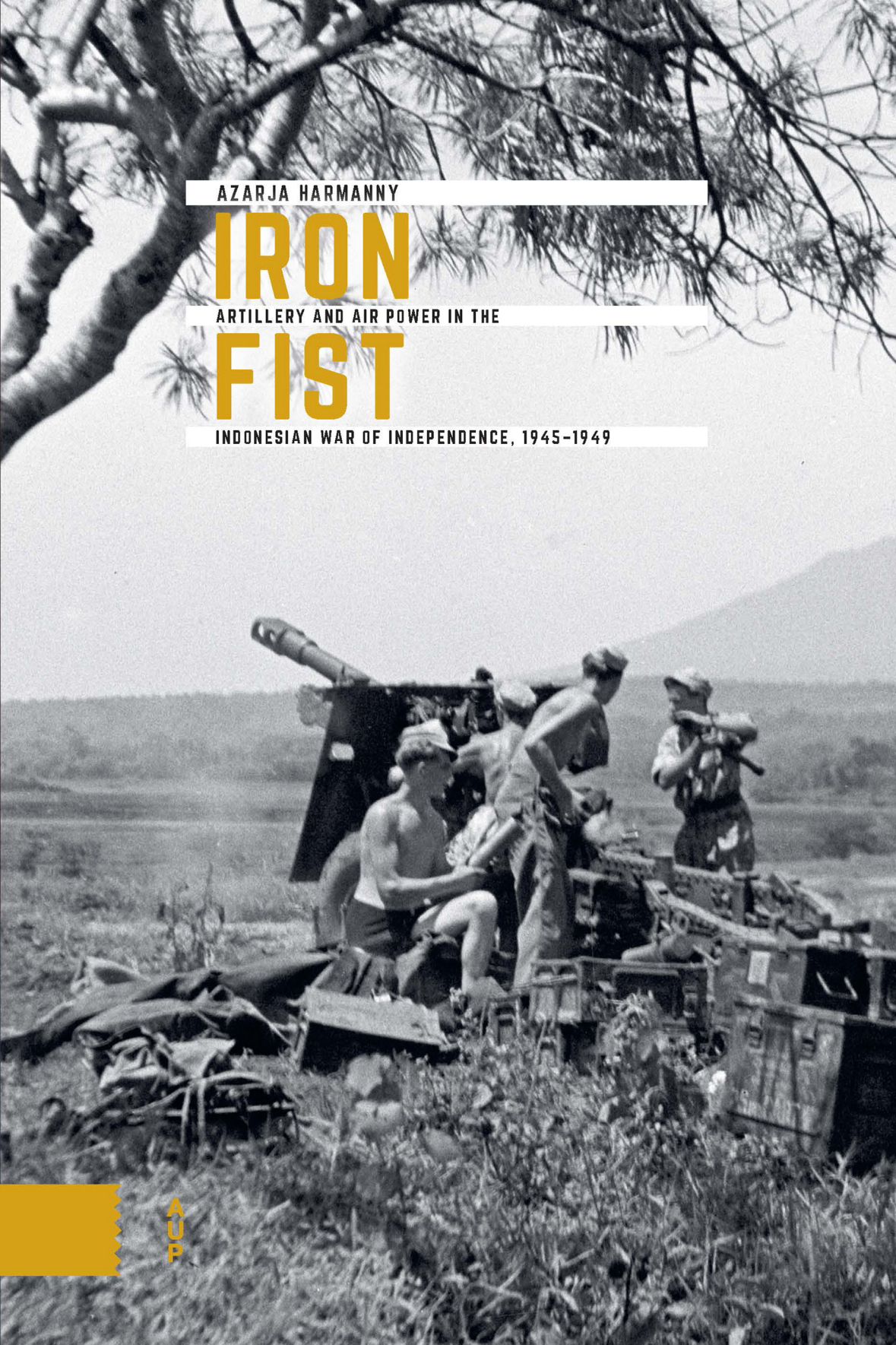




AZARJA HARMANNY

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ARTILLERY AND AIR POWER IN THE

# FIST

INDONESIAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE, 1945-1949

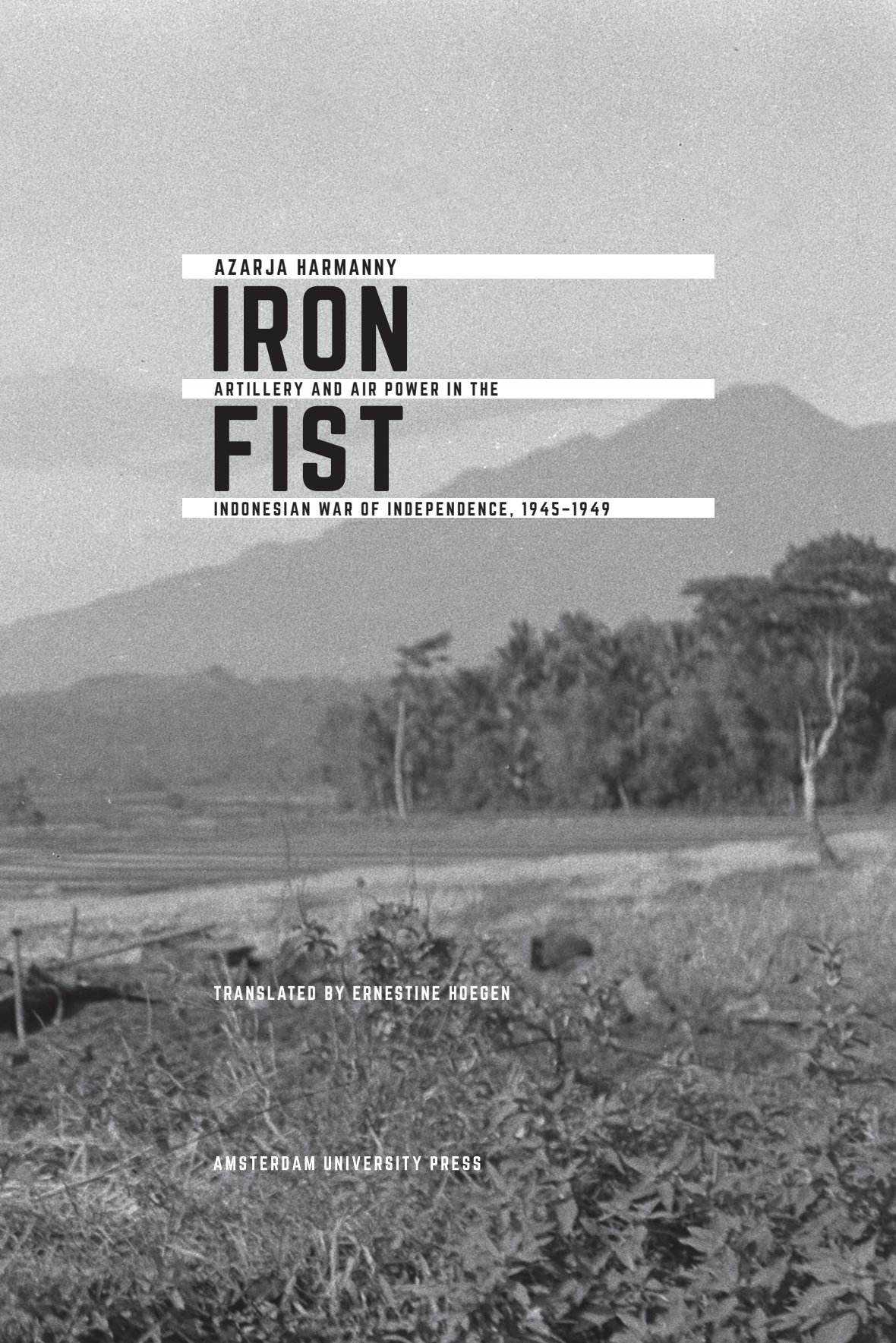
**IRON  
FIST**



INDEPENDENCE, DECOLONIZATION,  
VIOLENCE AND WAR IN  
**INDONESIA**







AZARJA HARMANNY

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INDONESIAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE, 1945-1949

TRANSLATED BY ERNESTINE HOEGEN

AMSTERDAM UNIVERSITY PRESS



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Cover and title page image: 2-2 RVA positioned at Reksosari, Central Java, 23 October 1947. Source: Th. van de Burgt, Nationaal Archief / Dienst voor Legercontacten (Army Communication Service, DLC).

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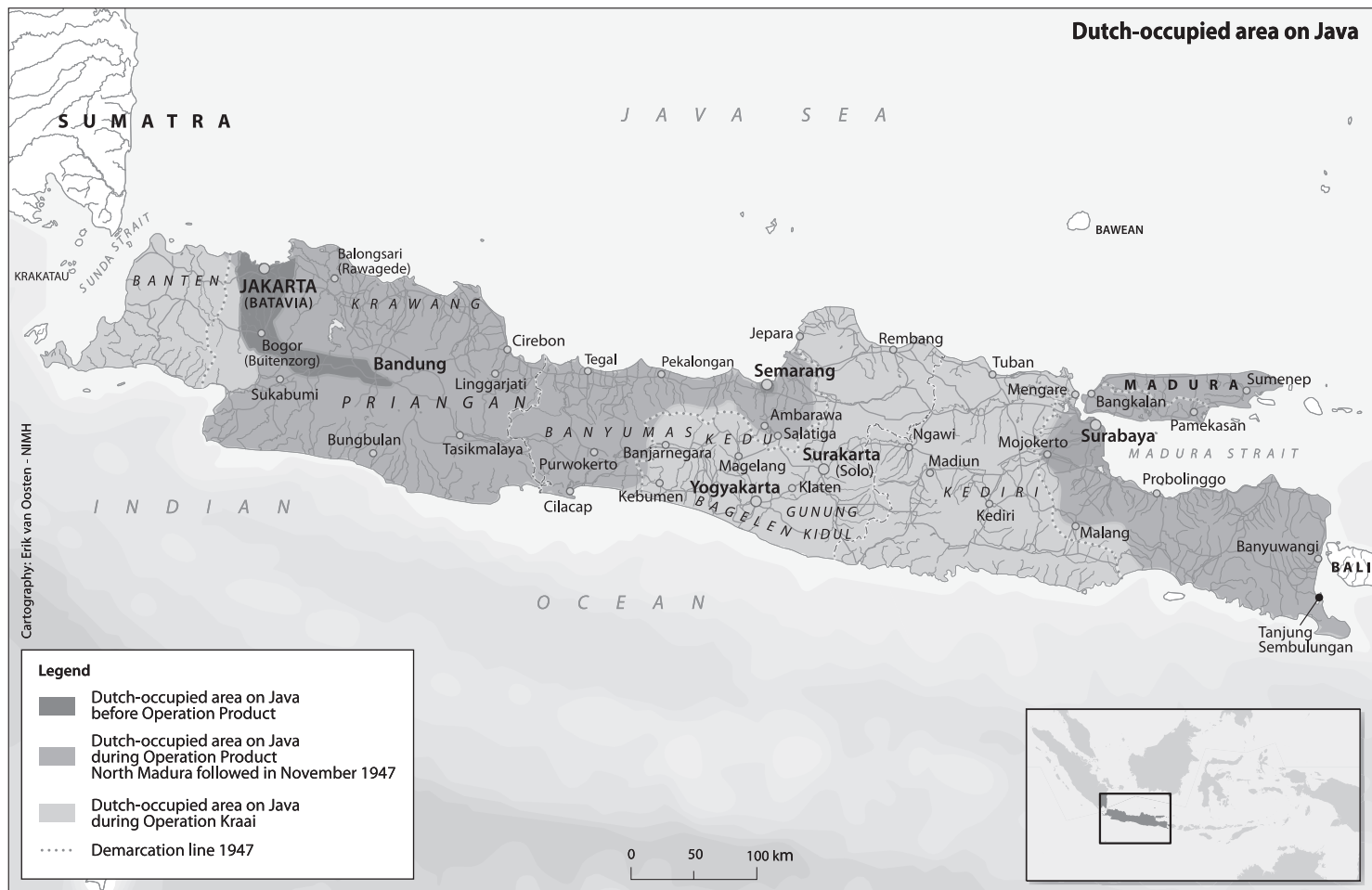
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# Preface

A photograph that is part of a series taken by army photographer Thijmen van de Burgt depicts a nostalgic black and white landscape of Central Java, with rice paddies and in the background the silhouettes of the famous volcanoes Merapi and Merbabu. Nothing unusual there, were it not for the cannon in the foreground, with gun crew. Two of the gunners are holding artillery shells, another is peering through the targeting device. The crew commander has just given the order 'fire!'; smoke billows from the firing tube. The photo is slightly out of focus because of the tremors from the shot. It is 23 October 1947 and the 2nd Battery of the 2nd Field Artillery Regiment (2-2 RVA) of the Royal Netherlands Army (RNLA) is supporting a so-called sweep operation by the 2nd Battalion of the 6th Infantry Regiment (2-6 RI) in the *kampong* (village) complex of Karanggedeh, not far from Salatiga. That day, the artillery will fire a total of 338 grenades at 'enemy centres of resistance'. In the official war journal, the regiment notes about the results: 'enemy positions successfully shelled and advancing enemy dispersed'.<sup>1</sup>

At the mention of the word Indonesia, many will think of the scenery of volcanoes and paddy fields, but it was violence that took front stage during a large part of the Dutch presence there, culminating in a fierce war of independence between 1945 and 1949. The contrast between the scenic beauty and the field gun implies a question that also always features in the

background when analysing heavy weapons: why were such heavy weapons involved in the small-scale guerrilla war fought in those years in Indonesia? This question goes back to a somewhat romanticized representation of that conflict – of going out on patrol in the tropical heat, skirmishes in the jungle and guerrillas armed with bamboo spears –, an image I myself also had, before I started doing this research, and that is also paramount in Dutch and Indonesian literature. Few will be aware that the warring parties themselves were only too happy to use artillery, tanks and other heavy weaponry if the opportunity arose. A blanket term such as ‘police actions’, even nowadays still a term that many people recognize, is unhelpful. It was a brutal war, fought with all available means.

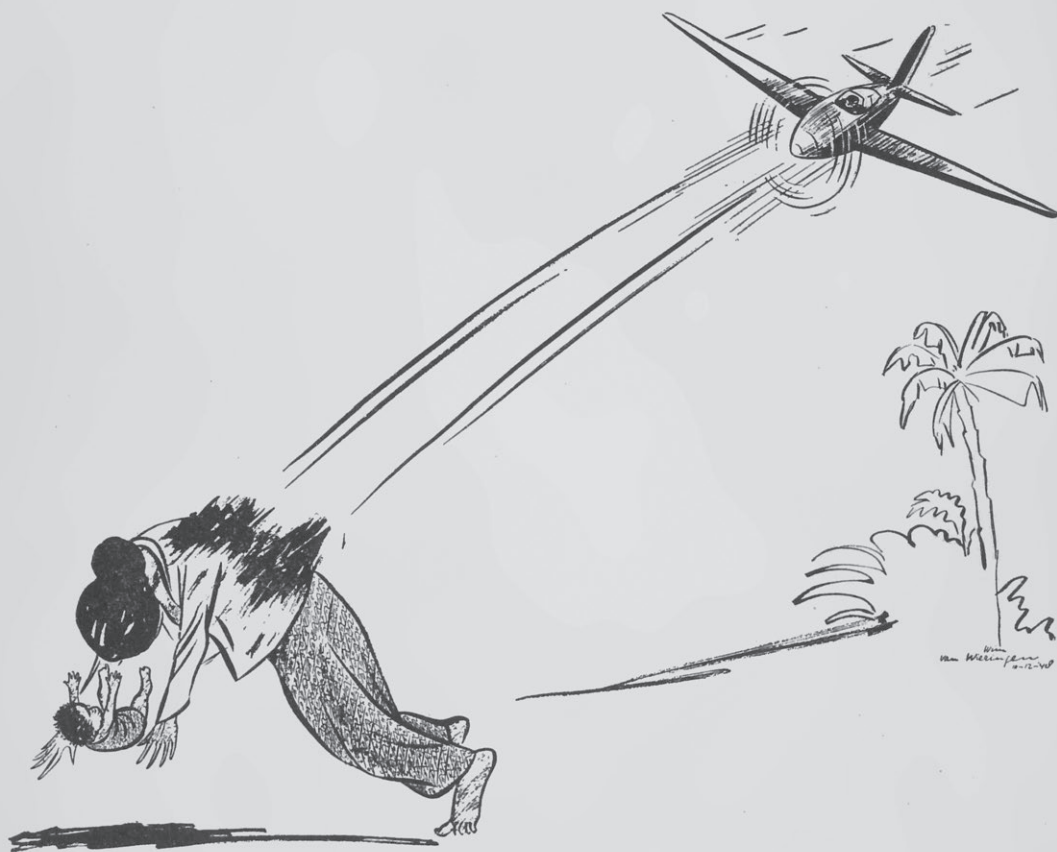
Army photographers such as Thijmen van de Burgt actively contributed to softening the perception of the conflict. Prints of a firing gun in an otherwise empty landscape withstood the scrutiny of the Dienst voor Legercontacten (Army Communication Service). Photos of people who fell victim to such shelling were less desirable. The harsh reality that they saw with their own eyes was only rarely captured by the photographers, or did not reach the Dutch people. Images of a clinical military operation and large-scale aid for the population reassured the public. It was only later, when censored photographs and pictures made by soldiers themselves started appearing in the media, that cracks began to emerge in this image.<sup>2</sup>

My own historical perception developed along similar lines. My personal interest in Indonesia began as a fascination for the fact that a small country had conquered and governed an archipelago approximately eleven thousand kilometres away and immeasurably larger. The first images of this colonial project that I saw were of white men in ditto suits, seated in rattan armchairs on verandas, leading a life of luxury under the tropical sun as agricultural entrepreneurs or administrators. But as the opening sentence of a recent survey on the Dutch presence overseas states: ‘colonial history is military history.’<sup>3</sup> Before long, the images of plantation owners were replaced by studies of military operations, such as the Aceh War (1873–ca. 1913) and later also the campaigns of captain Raymond Westerling and the Depot Speciale Troepen (Special Forces Depot) on Sulawesi (December 1946–February 1947). It turned out that life on the veranda was facilitated by governing with an iron fist.

On 2 December 2016, the second Rutte ministry decided to finance a broad-based study on the use of force by Dutch troops during the Indonesian War of Independence. This became the programme *Independence*,



*Decolonization, Violence and War in Indonesia, 1945–1949* (Onafhankelijkheid, Dekolonisatie, Geweld en Oorlog in Indonesië, 1945–1949, ODGOI), conducted by the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV) and the Netherlands Institute of Military History (NIMH).<sup>4</sup> As a researcher affiliated with the latter institute, I was asked to conduct a study of the use of ‘technical violence’ during that conflict (I will come back to the meaning of this concept further on), and submit it as a dissertation. The aim was to find out how the Netherlands again ruled with an iron fist after the Second World War, not only metaphorically (with harsh repression) but literally: by using a lot of iron. The most significant results of the broader research programme were brought together in the book *Over de grens* (translated in English as *Beyond the Pale*), published in February 2022, which also includes a chapter on heavy weapons.<sup>5</sup> My dissertation, written in Dutch and titled *Grof geschut*, was published in 2023. The current book is the English translation. Beforehand, as someone who regards himself primarily as a colonial historian and only secondarily as a military historian, I did not know whether the research would prove to be a blessing or a burden. As usual with a PhD, it proved to be a bit of both. In any case, during the writing of the book I experienced the contradiction I saw in the cover photo, something that is inherent to the – not very uplifting, but certainly consequential – subject of this study.



Beperkt geweld . . . .

*Drawing depicting Dutch violence, with caption: 'Limited violence...', printed in 5 jaar Indonesia Merdeka, 5 jaar De Vlam, a publication of the socialist foundation De Vonk, 18 December 1948. Source: Wim van Wieringen, private collection C.J. Reumer.*

# I.

## Introduction

### A GENERAL IMPERSONAL HOLOCAUST

‘There are times when human judgments appear to me to be very strange,’ wrote the notorious former Captain Raymond Westerling in his memoirs published in 1952. By his own account, he suddenly found himself ‘described as bloodthirsty, tyrannical, oppressive,’ when he killed four men, ‘all murderers,’ on Sumatra in 1946. Born in Istanbul, Westerling had joined the Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger (Royal Netherlands East Indies Army, KNIL) after the end of the Second World War, and following Special Forces training, he was sent to North Sumatra to prepare the restoration of Dutch rule. Officially, ‘the Turk’ (as he was nicknamed) operated under the auspices of the Allies, but in practice Westerling mostly did as he pleased. Local authorities often resented his shadowy night-time operations. In his memoirs, described by his biographer Jaap de Moor as a ‘web of myth, legend and half-truths,’ he defended himself against the accusation of having overstepped the mark:

I find it difficult to follow the logic of those who condemned me for ending terrorism by executing a few carefully chosen victims who richly deserved their fate, but saw nothing out of the way in a general impersonal holocaust which, because it was impersonal, sacrificed the blameless along with the culprits.

The former captain used the phrase ‘a general impersonal holocaust’ to refer to the torching or aerial bombing of a *kampong* where resistance had been observed. According to him, an airstrike would have led not to four but ‘several hundreds’ of dead, in majority innocent people. This line of defence of Westerling goes to the heart of the debate about the use of heavy weapons in Indonesia, namely the question whether these means did indeed lead to many more civilian casualties than Westerling’s approach, which according to him saved tens of thousands of human lives.<sup>1</sup>

For a man who was personally responsible for the summary execution of many hundreds of Indonesian non-combatants (a crime of war) in places such as South Sulawesi, that was a rather bold statement.<sup>2</sup> Even so, his criticism of the deployment of modern weapons is reflected in the literature on the use of violence by the Dutch armed forces in the Indonesian War of Independence. This debate has focused on the term ‘technical violence’, a concept that was coined by the veterans Jacques van Doorn and Wim Hendrix in their influential and critically acclaimed book *Ontsporing van geweld* (Derailment of Violence), published in 1970. In their view, the term refers to the deployment of naval guns, aircraft, artillery and tanks, and in line with later authors they suggest a strong correlation between the use of technical violence and high numbers of civilian casualties.<sup>3</sup>

However, up until now, extensive research on this violence was lacking. Although there are some partial studies on the history of specific branches or weapon systems of the armed forces in the Indonesian War of Independence, either the use of violence is not the focal point of these studies, or its use is not, or only barely, problematized.<sup>4</sup> Scholarly literature on suspected war crimes of those years began to analyse this violence, but also remarked that more extensive research would be necessary to get a clear picture. For example, the historian Rémy Limpach observed in 2016 that ‘the on occasion disproportionate technical violence [deserves] more scholarly attention’.<sup>5</sup> That was the point of departure for this study on the deployment of heavy weapons. The central question is: how and on what scale did the Netherlands deploy artillery and air power, what were the effects, and how can that deployment be explained and understood?

## HISTORIOGRAPHY OF TECHNICAL VIOLENCE

Before introducing the term ‘technical violence’ as such, Van Doorn and Hendrix observe the following in a section called ‘The Artificiality of the

Barracks': 'the technical branches, such as artillery, the engineers and signal corps, and such like, primarily require a certain level of skill, and only secondarily a focus on the enemy'. According to them this made the interchangeability of many roles within these branches 'evident' and it had three important consequences. First of all, the 'impersonal and mechanical nature' of the violence. This was different for the infantryman, for whom the confrontation with the enemy would be with an armed man. Therefore, secondly, the 'violence technician' could practise realistically in peacetime, because his actions hardly differed from those in wartime conditions. Thirdly, those serving within the technical branches enjoyed a high level of 'functional autonomy', whereas hierarchical relations were much more important in the infantry.<sup>6</sup>

In the section 'Technical Violence', the authors then discuss the violence produced by the technical branches, with the exception of the engineers. This latter omission is due, they argue, to the fact that engineers are 'a technical auxiliary corps, that does not produce technical violence. The navy, the air force, the artillery and tanks do.' With regard to the violence of these weapons and weapon systems they observe:

It is dehumanized because it is mechanical violence, a reflection of our modern society, highly calculable and almost effortlessly successful. They are modern weapons because they require little manpower for operation; there is an underrepresentation of those who employ them, an overrepresentation of those who fall victim to them.<sup>7</sup>

Van Doorn's and Hendrix' great achievement is that their predominately sociological approach resulted in an innovative and provocative reflection, certainly at that time. More than fifty years on, it has hardly lost relevance. However, some reservations can be made regarding their views on technical weapons and technical violence. First of all, their analysis lacks a clear connection to the historiography of developments in warfare. 'Technical violence' is not a concept that is used outside the discourse on the Indonesian War of Independence – except where cyberbullying or the failure of government systems are concerned.<sup>8</sup> Secondly, it remains unclear what weapons the authors include in the concept. Presumably, besides the engineers, the signal corps is also excluded from the definition, as it was only auxiliary to the use of technical violence. The addition 'and such like' after signal corps in the list of technical weapons is remarkable, considering the enormous dif-



ferences in nature, operation and function of, for example, a radio operator who passed on the coordinates of a point on the map, and an air gunner of a B-25 Mitchell aircraft who fired at human targets with a machine gun. Therefore, there is no reason to assume that the functions in operating the technical weapons were as interchangeable as the authors imply, nor that this was the case to a greater degree than in the infantry.

Likewise, the impersonal and dehumanized character of technical violence that the two veterans (and Westerling) mention, is only partially applicable. Although in certain situations that was certainly the case, many servicemen who operated indirect weapons were very much aware of the consequences and some were traumatized by them, as were infantrymen or intelligence personnel. This also qualifies the argument made by the American army psychologist Dave Grossman that artillerymen, pilots and the crews of naval guns are 'largely immune' to the psychological consequences of the violence they commit. He claims never to have come across a case of trauma caused by the operation of this type of violence in his many years of research.<sup>9</sup> Grossman and others point out correctly that distance to the victim makes it easier to kill someone.<sup>10</sup> However, the remorse felt by veterans such as Henk Pézy, discussed later in this study, demonstrates that (ex-)servicemen who operated long-range weapons also developed trauma, and the accompanying feelings of responsibility and guilt. You do not have to see the consequences to be able to understand and feel them.

Paradoxically, in recent decades, the physical distance created by technology between shooter and victim has been reversed by that same technology: today's drone operators can see into the bedrooms of their victims from thousands of kilometres away. Although many factors are involved, the psychological issues they suffer are partly caused by the fact that the personal view they had of the people they were firing at, blurred the imagined clear distinction between friend and foe.<sup>11</sup> The contrast – from the time before drones existed – between the foot soldier who fires at a visible, armed opponent and the artilleryman who fires at an invisible enemy from a technically secure position, is also only partly true. After all, the references in memoirs, interviews and diaries of infantrymen to the 'invisible' and 'elusive' opponent are so numerous, that it has become a stereotypical expression of the guerrilla war in Indonesia and even an excuse for the excessive violence that was committed.<sup>12</sup>

The *Excessennota* (Memorandum on excesses), hastily drawn up by the government in 1969 after revelations by veteran Joop Hueting about

war crimes that had been committed – a year before the publication of *Ontsporing van geweld* –, all but excludes incidents with heavy weapons.<sup>13</sup> Over the next few decades, only a handful of scholarly studies on the military aspects of the Dutch-Indonesian war were published in which the deployment of violence using heavy weapons featured. In 1988, Lou de Jong published the second half of volume 12 of his famous series *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog* (The Kingdom of the Netherlands during the Second World War), on the ‘struggle with the Republic’. He paid little attention to the specific use of violence by different weapons and weapon systems, and did not mention the term technical violence at all. The same goes for the dissertations of Joop de Jong (1988) and that of Petra Groen on the Dutch military strategy (1991), as well as the survey by Wim van den Doel on the decolonization of the Dutch East Indies (2000).<sup>14</sup> Rob Budding, who published his analysis *Beheersing van geweld* (Restraining Violence) in 1996, categorizes artillery and air power separately from the infantry and the intelligence services. Like Van Doorn and Hendrix, Budding notes several characteristics of these weapons systems in his book, which is an elaboration of his student thesis. Besides the distance to the target and the limited discriminatory power, these are the impersonal contact with the opponent and the large destructive capacity, which according to Budding led to the risk of high numbers of civilian casualties.<sup>15</sup>

Stef Scagliola, who obtained her PhD in 2002 with a dissertation titled *Last van de oorlog* (The Burden of the War) offers an entirely different interpretation. First of all, she distinguishes between three categories of violence: 1) Indonesian violence against the population, 2) Indonesian violence against Dutch soldiers, and 3) Dutch violence against Indonesian freedom fighters and the population. Within the latter category she subsequently differentiates between two types of ‘mechanical violence’ (a term derived from the paragraph from *Ontsporing van geweld* cited above, which Scagliola alternately uses in addition to technical violence): ‘mechanical violence from a distance (from an airplane, mortar fire, machine gun)’ and ‘mechanical violence close by (a lightly armed patrol)’. The other forms within that category are retaliation (‘indirect fire at *kampong*, direct fire at male population, burning of houses and/or food supplies’), robbery, the killing of prisoners of war and torture.<sup>16</sup>

In contrast to Van Doorn and Hendrix, Scagliola classifies infantry actions as mechanical violence. The division is not applied consistently

because in the subsequent discussion of the different forms of violence a poignant case of mortar fire is referred to as exemplary for mechanical violence from close by. Furthermore, it is striking that Scagliola on the one hand recognizes the impersonal character of technical violence, by stating that 'a machine in between' creates distance, but that the term 'humane' on the other hand has a different connotation for her than for Van Doorn and Hendrix. According to Scagliola, 'conventional warfare' appears more 'humane' because the soldier who carries out an attack with technical weapons 'is less frequently confronted with the sight of the mutilation caused by his weapon'.<sup>17</sup> Here, it seems that for her technical weapons again refers to weapons such as artillery and aircraft.

But Scagliola's book is not an analysis of military operations, and her descriptions of violence are best understood in a general sense. She focuses on the use of 'technical means' by the Dutch armed forces and contrasts them to the use of 'psychological means' by the Indonesian opponent. In doing so, she placed technical violence on a par with physical violence or use of weapons in general and modern weaponry in particular, which she summarizes with the statement 'that it was not the Indies veterans who were the ultimate victims of the conflict, but the Indonesian population, through the superiority of Dutch technical violence'.<sup>18</sup>

Gert Oostindie's 2015 book *Soldaat in Indonesië 1945–1950* (Soldier in Indonesia 1945–1950) focuses on the experiences of Dutch soldiers in 'The East', with particular attention to descriptions of what the author, like Scagliola, describes as war crimes. To structure these descriptions, Oostindie drew up a 'typology of war crimes', in which 'mechanical violence (bombardment with aircraft and in particular mortar and machine-gun fire by the artillery [sic])' is one of the types of violence.<sup>19</sup> Elsewhere, when he writes about the difficulties in distinguishing between civilians and fighters, he states that the answer was often to:

... use crude, mechanical violence: artillery shelling or bombardments. From a military perspective, it was very problematic that using such large-scale violence lacked precision, almost by definition hit innocent civilians, and thus could have a completely counter-productive effect on the local population.<sup>20</sup>

A year later, Rémy Limpach published his study of the Dutch use of violence in Indonesia, titled *De brandende kampongs van generaal Spoor* (Gen-

eral Spoor's Burning *Kampongs*). Limpach, the first since Van Doorn and Hendrix to subject technical violence to a more extensive analysis, included this in his chapter 'Forms of Extreme Violence'. Limpach is clear about which weapons he counts as technical violence: artillery and mortars, naval guns, air power, and the guns of tanks and armoured vehicles. The common denominator, according to Limpach, is 'firing from a distance'. Although he finds that the Dutch also used technical violence 'in a legitimate way', even then the deployment of heavy weapons was fatal 'mostly for civilians'.<sup>21</sup> The historian Christiaan Harinck uses more or less the same definition of heavy weapons in his 2022 dissertation on the doctrines and operations of the Dutch armed forces in Indonesia, but does not use the term technical violence.<sup>22</sup>

The above overview of the historiography of technical/mechanical violence and heavy weapons makes clear that until now there has been little consensus about what the term entails precisely, what weapons fall within its scope and what those weapons have in common. It does not help that in the historiography of the term 'technical violence' the properties, the type of fire that is produced, the type of weapons that are used, the motives for their deployment, the impact on civilians and the appraisal of this violence are all mixed. Dealing with them separately and placing them within the military theoretical and historiographical context enables the creation of clarity in the subject matter.

## HEAVY WEAPONS, INDIRECT FIRE AND FIRE SUPPORT

One Dutch overview of the order of battle of the Indonesian military forces on Java states that the qualification 'heavy weapons' should be primarily understood as concerning all weapons with a calibre of 12.7 mm (.50 inch) or more.<sup>23</sup> However, with regard to machine guns the designation 'heavy' does not refer only to the calibre, but also to the weight and to the number of soldiers required to operate it. In many cases, the heavy machine guns used by the infantry or armoured forces had a calibre of 'only' 7.6 or 7.7 mm. This also applied to the ubiquitous Bren LMG (light machine gun).<sup>24</sup> The example of the machine guns demonstrates that the term 'heavy weapons' is not very precise and therefore of little help in defining 'technical violence'.

For Van Doorn and Hendrix, neither calibre nor weight are decisive properties. According to them, violence that is not focused primarily on the

enemy and is ‘impersonal’ points more to so-called indirect fire. This concept is also ambiguous and is often understood incorrectly.<sup>25</sup> According to the NATO Glossary, it refers to fire delivered at a target which is not visible.<sup>26</sup> In and of itself, it is not useful to draw a precise distinction between visible and invisible in an irregular war in which ‘invisible’ opponents are often fired at with direct shot (infantry weapons).<sup>27</sup>

But even shot direction is in itself not a comprehensive criterion to make a distinction. Many weapons and weapon systems that fire indirectly (that is to say: with curved or high-angle fire, whereby the projectile lands on the target with an arc) can also produce direct fire (horizontal trajectory). Tanks, for example, mostly fire directly, but were also used by the Marine Brigade in Indonesia as indirectly firing artillery. Attack aircraft fire directly when using their machine guns. Anti-aircraft guns and the field artillery’s howitzers are also capable of producing flat trajectory fire. Conversely, generally flat-firing machine guns have, throughout history, also often been used to fire indirectly over the top of one’s own troops, which in the pre-war Dutch East Indies was even seen as the primary function of the light machine gun.<sup>28</sup>

In a broader sense, next to firing aim, ‘indirect’ can also refer to the method of observation. In that case, the target is viewed from another location than the gun placement, by a field or air observer. Additionally, in military practice, indirect fire is also used to refer to fire support for ground operations. In that case, besides fire direction, the visibility of the target, or the method of observation, indirect relates to the unit or person making the request for supporting fire. Usually that is the infantry. In this context reference is often made to ‘fire support’. The contemporary doctrine of the Royal Netherlands Army defines fire support as ‘the power to bring to bear indirect fire of ground and naval forces, and fire of the air forces and thereby (temporarily) eliminate the military power of the enemy’. The army distinguishes between the following categories of ‘lethal fire support’: a) air support, b) naval gunfire support and c) field artillery and mortar support.<sup>29</sup> The American armed forces use the same categories to define the concept fire support. In English language discourse, the less clearly defined term firepower is also used.<sup>30</sup>

Because ‘fire support’, in contrast to ‘heavy weapons’ or ‘indirect fire’, is an indication of the *function* of the fire that is delivered, it can serve as a more precise definition of ‘technical violence’. Such a distinction based on function is an analytically valuable and useful concept for several reasons.



Irregular or unconventional wars,<sup>31</sup> such as the conflict in Indonesia after the Second World War largely was, are mainly infantry wars. Weapons and weapon systems such as artillery, air power and naval guns serve to support the operations of that infantry. The decision to deploy support weapons, or *hulpwapens* (auxiliary arms) as they were also called in those years, was in most cases taken by infantry commanders. In other words, the use of fire support is based on a choice, a decision, to deploy heavier guns rather than infantry weapons.

Certainly, the Dutch armed forces also deployed artillery, aircraft and warships independently, but even those actions were supportive of land operations in a general sense. As far as the air forces are concerned, there was no strategic bombing in the Indonesian War of Independence. Air power was used either as fire support during combat (close air support) or as indirect air support outside the combat zone (battlefield air interdiction). Both forms of deployment are part of anti-surface force air operations, in support of the ground forces.<sup>32</sup>

Furthermore, for the independent firing orders of artillery, aircraft and navy gunships, a choice was also made to refrain from attacking the respective targets with the weapons of the infantry and armoured units. The motivation for that choice forms the foundation of the principle of proportionality in international humanitarian law, defined as the balance between the military advantage that is gained and the price that is paid in collateral damage and civilian casualties.<sup>33</sup> This balance is strongly related to the role of risk in warfare, because the mode of operation selected affects the danger for civilians.

When this study speaks of technical violence, indirect fire or heavy weapons, it refers to the definition of fire support as described above. The focus lies on the two most important representatives of fire support in the war in Indonesia: artillery and air power. Artillery is often disregarded because of the dramatic effect of aircraft and tanks, but often provides an important part of the fire power in conflicts.<sup>34</sup> During the Russian invasion of Ukraine starting in February 2022, the significance of what Stalin once called ‘the God of war’ was once again demonstrated.<sup>35</sup> Naval guns are basically artillery fire from a ship, but can be seen as a third factor that features in the analysis, albeit on a smaller scale because they were deployed less often during the Dutch-Indonesian war.

The focus in this study is on the above three types of weapons and weapon systems, but this does not mean that other weapons cannot deliver fire sup-

port. Armoured vehicles and tanks can do so, too, but it is not their primary function, which is manoeuvring: reconnaissance and attack.<sup>36</sup> In their light variant, mortars are the appropriate means for additional firepower from the infantry itself, while the heavy types are a means of fire support. Although this makes the mortars interesting for an analysis of the deployment of fire support (when do units use light mortars, and when the heavy ones?), the lack of availability and quality of empirical data on the deployment of mortars is a limiting factor that explains why they play a relatively minor role in this research. Another is that the heavy 4.2-inch mortars were scarce in Indonesia, meaning they were deployed on a limited basis. The troops used 3-inch mortars on a much larger scale, but because these were assigned to the supporting companies, they were, in fact, part of the armament that the infantry had direct access to. Finally, the same factors apply to heavy machine guns.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FIGHTING POWER

Military capability is more than just the number of available firearms, tanks, cannons, aircraft and ships. The Battle of Surabaya, which is the focal point of the next chapter, demonstrates that the available amount of, for example, tanks in itself said little about the combat value of the Indonesians, as none of them had ever driven a tank. The principle of the three components of fighting power is therefore used nowadays to analyse the totality of operational capacities of a force: the physical, the moral and the conceptual component. The first consists of matters such as equipment, training and military capacity, the second of the set of standards, mental preparation, leadership and motivation, and the third of education, lessons from the past, understanding of conflict and context, and ways of fighting.<sup>37</sup> To summarize, what counts is the ability to apply operational capacities successfully, also called 'fighting power' in contemporary military doctrine. This encompasses more than just the fighting strength ('combat power') of a military force, which only consists of the whole of destructive, constructive and informative capacities of a unit.<sup>38</sup>

This principle serves as a guideline for the analysis in this study of the education, training, armament and organization of the Dutch armed forces in Indonesia. Although to varying degrees all aspects of fighting power are covered, the concept is not applied as a straitjacket. This leaves room to address the specific background and circumstances that need

to be taken into account in the Indonesian context. Besides, the components overlap in various areas.

#### A REVOLUTION IN FIREPOWER

A study of the use of fire support in a conflict is a snapshot of a point in time in the historical development of weapons, weapon systems and their integration in tactical doctrines. Between 1860 and 1945, radical changes occurred in the field of weapon technology, doctrine and military organization that together can be described as a revolution in firepower. The most important consequence was that the battlefield became vastly more dangerous than before. The arrival of the machine gun meant that heavy losses could be inflicted on attacking infantry. Although the lethality of this weapon was already well-known in colonial wars, awareness was slow to dawn in Europe, leading to vast slaughter by machine guns in the First World War.<sup>39</sup>

To advance without artillery support became almost suicidal. Artillery (and later tanks and airplanes) largely took over an important task of the foot soldiers: inflicting damage and losses on the opponent. Manoeuvres of the infantry to occupy a space were usually preceded by intense shelling of the point of attack. It became a truism that the artillery conquered and the infantry occupied: *l'artillerie conquiert, l'infanterie occupe*.<sup>40</sup> In the meantime, the arrival of aircraft extended the range of the war to the civilian population, also because cities became an obvious target for air raids.<sup>41</sup>

In his 2006 book *Military Power*, Stephen Biddle states that modern and well-equipped armies had to develop a new system as a solution to the problem of increasingly lethal fire power. In this 'modern system', the number of troops and armaments was just as important as the reduction of exposure to fire power. Armies could achieve this by applying an effective mix of combined action, suppressive fire, cover, operational depth, reserves, concealment and dispersion.<sup>42</sup> The latter aspect, in particular, is an effective way of minimizing the effects of lethal fire power. The theoretically destructive capacity or lethality of weapons (called 'theoretical lethality index' by the military expert Trevor N. Dupuy) can be largely negated by effective dispersion. This is why according to him it is a misconception to assume that where the lethality of weapons increases, the number of casualties rises proportionately. He gives the example of how, contrary to popular opinion, losses of manpower and tanks during

intense battles in the Second World War were comparable to the losses in the Yom Kippur War of 1973, despite the lethality of weapons having increased considerably in the meantime.

In practice, according to Dupuy, this means that the frequently accepted 'corollary that the more lethal the firepower, the more deaths, disruption, and suppression it will cause [...] is false'.<sup>43</sup> According to the medical historian Leo van Bergen, the calculations of the number of grenades the warring parties in the First World War needed to kill one person range 'from a few dozen (...) through several hundred to more than a thousand'.<sup>44</sup> Joanna Bourke even states that, in that war, armies needed 1,400 artillery shells on average to kill one soldier.<sup>45</sup> That ratio can also be completely different: on 5 February 1994, a single 120-mm mortar shell led to 68 civilian casualties on the Markale market in Sarajevo.<sup>46</sup> In short, the lethality of a weapon or weapon system depends to a large extent on the circumstances.

The conventional battlefield, where well into the nineteenth century armies fired at each other from a distance of a few hundred metres, became a place where thinly spread units bombarded each other from a long distance with heavy, indirect fire power. Opponents hardly saw each other anymore. In asymmetric wars<sup>47</sup> such as the Dutch–Indonesian war, the image is more one-sided as regards fire power, in particular where fire support is concerned. But revolutionary and nationalist fighting groups did react to deployment of fire support as conventional, Western armies would: by dispersing. Due to the asymmetry in fire power they also, sometimes only after many bloody lessons, avoided open battle to limit their own losses.

As a result, in irregular wars, the opponent was even less visible than in regular wars, which, in combination with the technological developments described, led to many observations of impersonal, dehumanized wars. According to the psychiatrist Robert Jay Lifton, many American Vietnam veterans spoke of a 'numbed' and 'impersonal' war and unfamiliarity with the victims of violence caused by technology.<sup>48</sup> John Keegan speaks of the 'inhuman lethality' of automatic weapons, due to the focus of the operators on the technological aspects instead of the effects.<sup>49</sup> In this context, the observation of Van Doorn and Hendrix – made at approximately the same time – about the impersonal character of technical violence is also fitting.

The historical development of weapons and their integration in tactical systems for regular warfare to a large extent determined how the Dutch armed forces organized and armed the troops destined for overseas deployment. This background, together with the colonial tradition of violence, determined how these troops were trained and what conceptions of warfare they were taught. The Second World War, which had only ended recently, was an important point of reference. This war had occasioned experiences that many soldiers took with them overseas and created expectations and conceptions of the opponent. The conflict also provided the weapons with which the warring parties went into combat: the Indonesians with seized Japanese equipment, supplemented with foreign and pre-war KNIL weapons, the Dutch with British, Australian and American weapons and also former KNIL weaponry.

#### THE TOOLS OF EMPIRE

In 1981, Daniel Headrick published his influential study *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century*. He contended that European expansion was facilitated by a combination of 'means and motives': new social-economic, cultural and political stimuli combined with new technological resources. He divided these resources, the 'tools' or 'means', into innovations in medical science, communication and weapon technology.<sup>50</sup> Based on his study of the recruitment of European personnel for the Dutch colonial army, the historian Martin Bossenbroek pointed out that Headrick had largely ignored these 'living tools of empire'. This despite the fact that personnel was of paramount importance for the expansion and retention of the overseas assets, especially for the Netherlands, a small country with extensive colonies. Bossenbroek's statement that the means with which a colonial army could expand its influence were conducive to economical use of European manpower is also relevant for this study. Dutch imperialism relied on means rather than motives, given the permanent scarcity of European personnel that plagued the KNIL.<sup>51</sup> Although the conflict between 1945 and 1949 was not about expansion but about reoccupation, it is relevant to see to what extent this pattern was also visible during this war, considering that a shortage of troops also constituted a major restriction at the time. Did the heavy weapons that the Dutch armed forces acquired and used in Indonesia in 1945 indeed allow them to increase the power of their structurally short-handed army?



## EFFECTS

An important difference between regular and irregular wars, certainly in relation to an analysis of the deployment of fire support, is the place of the population. Conflicts such as the Indonesian War of Independence can be described as 'wars amongst the people,' wars that were fought amidst the civilian population.<sup>52</sup> However, that does not mean that civilians are spared in regular, industrial wars. The opposite is often the case, judging by the astronomical numbers of civilian casualties during the Second World War. Rather, the difference lies in how difficult it is to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants in irregular wars, because guerrillas do not always wear uniforms and, inversely, civilians often take up arms. This also makes it harder, when deploying violence, to hit only combatants (in the sense of: people participating in the armed struggle), especially where the 'indiscriminate fire' of artillery and air forces is concerned.<sup>53</sup> Add the fact that guerrilla fighters often seek refuge among the population and Van Doorn's and Hendrix's conclusion that the deployment of technical violence led to 'rather a lot of casualties among the civilian population' during the Dutch-Indonesian war seems justified.<sup>54</sup>

This connection between the deployment of technical violence and high numbers of civilian casualties recurs repeatedly in Dutch historiography. Lou de Jong was still cautious: '[T]he deployment of the heavy weapons sometimes (but it is unknown how often) claimed countless victims among the *kampong* population.'<sup>55</sup> In a 2002 historical overview of Dutch field artillery, the authors take this a step further: 'hardly any concentrations of troops or *kampongs* could withstand artillery fire. The downside of this is that, of all the weapons used on the Dutch side, the artillery probably caused the most casualties among the population.'<sup>56</sup> In the same year, Stef Scagliola wrote that 'numerically speaking,' shelling and other technical violence will have led to more casualties than direct infantry violence and summary executions.<sup>57</sup>

This assumption is supported by Limpach: 'compared to tanks, aircraft and naval gunships, it was the artillery with its protracted fire that caused the greatest number of fatalities, wounded, and the most material damage.' Elsewhere, Limpach further specifies the category of victims as civilian victims, or states that heavy weapons in general claimed the most victims. Limpach concludes: '[t]he number of military and civilian casualties caused on balance by Dutch aircraft fire between 1946 and 1949 will, however, just like other forms of mechanical violence, for ever remain unknown.'<sup>58</sup> Likewise,

Oostindie argues that heavy weapons 'could claim very many victims, per average action in general many times that of all other forms of violence'.<sup>59</sup> In all cases, however, empirical evidence is lacking.

Although Limpach correctly concludes that it will be impossible to establish precisely how many people fell victim to the deployment of technical violence (just like other forms of violence), there is more to be said about the matter. Did the deployment of technical violence indeed lead to the loss of many more human lives than other forms of violence did? Were civilians, among them children and the aged, really affected the most? What is known about the proportion of casualties claimed by fire support in other conflicts?

#### RISK, PROPORTIONALITY AND DISTINCTION

One of the basic principles behind the development of weapon technology and accompanying tactical concepts described above is that, in combat, each party endeavours to inflict the greatest possible losses on the opponent against the lowest possible own losses. By deploying the right weapons at the right time, they attempt to reduce their own risk or danger in relation to that of the opponent. Fire support from the air, from the ground or from water are particularly effective means of reducing risk to one's own troops. The question of the deployment of fire support is therefore strongly related to the willingness to take risks and to expose oneself to danger.

In the characteristic words of the military thinker Carl von Clausewitz, war is 'the province of danger'. It is the element 'in which all activities of War must live and move, like the bird in the air or the fish in the water'. In Clausewitz's opinion, courage is therefore the soldier's first and foremost quality; courage to suppress the urge to avoid danger. When that courage is not strong enough (anymore), the warrior threatens to sink into 'animal nature, which shrinks from danger and knows not shame'.<sup>60</sup> These ideas about personal courage were already manifest in ancient times: according to the historian John Lynn, hoplites considered it morally superior to kill enemies with a spear rather than with a bow from a distance; to charge brandishing a spear implied the greatest bravery.<sup>61</sup>

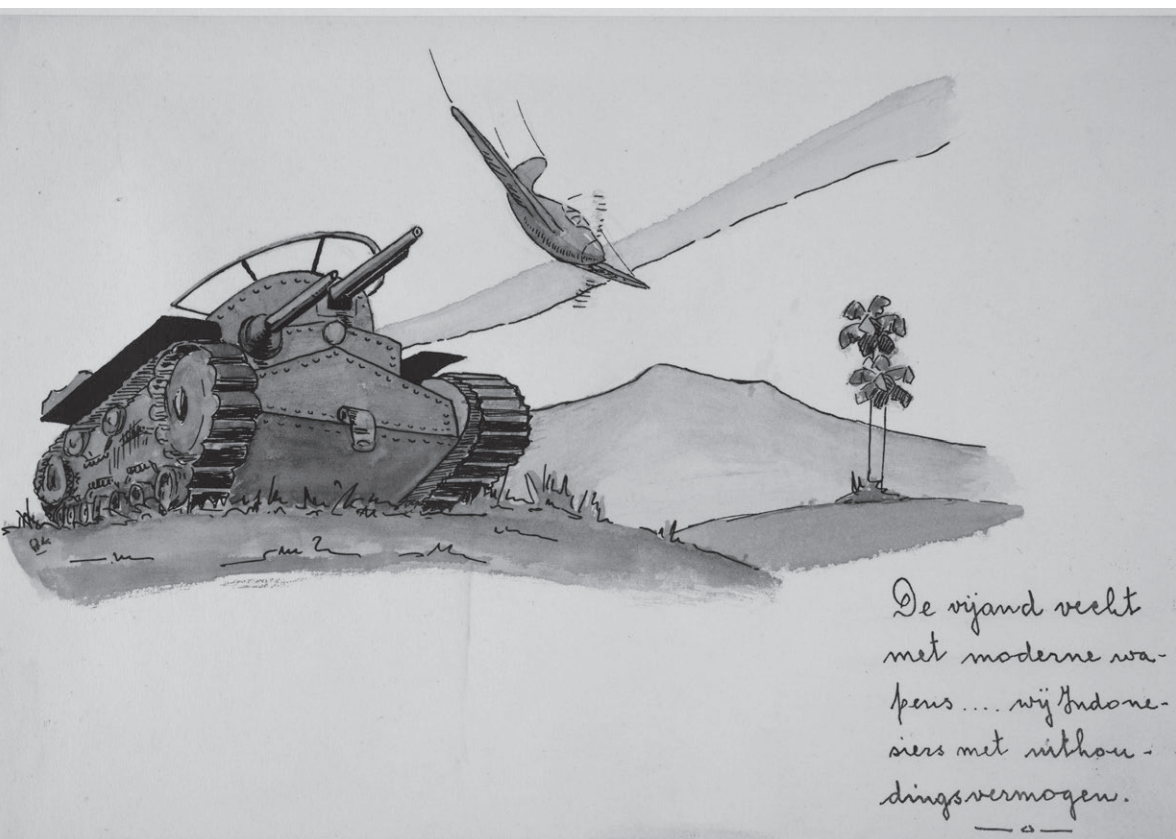
During the First World War, due to the revolution in fire power, courage to face danger and physically attack the enemy (though often achieved with strict discipline and severe punishments for refusal to follow orders), in many cases led to disproportionately large numbers of own losses. This

led to a shift in the tension, somewhat romanticized by Clausewitz, between courage and self-preservation, and increased the importance of minimizing exposure to the opponent's fire power. At the same time, many still considered melee combat the embodiment of personal bravery. In the historiography of the Great War, the courage to start moving was initially still seen as proof of a superior morale, according to Keegan a sort of 'heroic Puritanism'.<sup>62</sup>

Thus, whereas taking great personal risk was still being stimulated in the military culture, the organization and tactics of the armed forces were moving towards reducing personal risk. According to the political scientist Mikkel Rasmussen, the latter is also a consequence of how a modern Western risk society (based on the sociologist Ulrich Beck's concept of a *Risikogesellschaft*) deals with risk. Rasmussen defines risk as the perception of a threat. Identification of a threat is often followed by policies to eliminate it, so that hopefully the threat will not materialize and will remain an abstract and unverifiable reality. A risk society that goes to war also endeavours to eliminate threats in warfare. According to Rasmussen, irregular fighters can defeat modern armed forces by subjecting them to as much risk as possible (and by also accepting a high risk themselves).<sup>63</sup>

Guerrilla fighters do often demonstrate high risk tolerance in battle, but the wish to reduce one's own risk is not limited to modern armies. In turn, irregular fighters often avoid open battle to reduce their own losses, because they cannot respond with comparable fire power. Although the resources they use and the methods to achieve this aim differ, the basic principle of reducing one's own risk in relation to that of the opponent is also valid (for all parties) in asymmetric wars. To the frustration of their oftentimes European opponents, irregular fighters in colonial wars usually did that very successfully and managed to considerably reduce or avoid the destructive effects of weapons such as artillery.<sup>64</sup>

Western armies often regarded the guerrilla tactics of irregular adversaries as cowardly. But in reality, their adversaries were putting into practice some of the same tactics that Western armies used when confronted with lethal fire power: dispersion, cover, camouflage and other methods. Furthermore, in his book *Military Orientalism*, Patrick Porter warns against the clichés of the 'eastern evader' and the "direct" westerner. Irregular fighters accepted a considerably higher danger of being killed and their capacity for self-sacrifice was considerably greater than their opponents', who often took refuge behind their modern weapons.<sup>65</sup> It should therefore



*Drawing by an unknown Indonesian fighter with the initials A. K. The text reads: 'The enemy fights with modern weapons... we Indonesians with endurance.' Source: Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen (NMVW) / Tropenmuseum.*

come as no surprise that the accusation of cowardice was also levelled in the other direction.<sup>66</sup>

This accusation could also be heard within Dutch ranks, especially in the discussions about the actions of Captain Westerling, who claimed that the 'direct method' of the Special Forces (and the KNIL in general) was more targeted and claimed fewer victims than the fighting method of, in particular, the Royal Netherlands Army, which often deployed indirect fire. Stef Scagliola, referring to this discussion in her dissertation, states that there was 'an element of truth' in Westerling's line of defence. Although she recognizes that he used this justification opportunistically, to exonerate himself, Scagliola says that for 'the KNIL soldier' it was, of course, frustrating 'that he was blamed for the excesses' whereas, as has been seen,

according to her, indirect methods claimed more victims.<sup>67</sup> Limpach concurs with Scagliola and writes reluctantly that Westerling was 'not entirely wrong in this case'. According to Limpach, the methods of the RNLA and the Marine Brigade, 'who preferred to avoid risks and whose appetite to fight was usually smaller', resulted in the deaths of relatively more innocent civilians.<sup>68</sup>

Oostindie is even more careful. Although in this context he calls Westerling 'a particularly interesting witness', he states that his rendition of the facts needs to be read very critically. And yet, according to Oostindie, the debate illustrates how complicated the war was, as the Dutch 'conventional approach' was unsuccessful and 'could have a completely adverse effect on the local population'.<sup>69</sup> In short, the suggestion that is made by various scholars is that the direct, risky approach was more targeted than indirect methods with low personal risk. That leads to the paradoxical situation that authors hold Westerling responsible for hundreds of extrajudicial executions, but at the same time imply that his methods (and those of the KNIL) were more selective than those of the Royal Netherlands Army.<sup>70</sup>

However, it is misleading to simply divide military actions into those using direct and those using indirect methods. As explained before, the categories 'direct' and 'indirect' fire are hard to define, and besides, they have limited value in a guerrilla war against 'invisible' adversaries. Moreover, infantry actions and fire support are intrinsically linked. They are both part of the modern system of combined operations, which has been completely overlooked in the debate about direct and indirect methods. Likewise, the KNIL and the Special Forces cooperated closely with army branches such as the air forces and the artillery.

In his influential book *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, Stathis Kalyvas distinguishes between 'selective' and 'indiscriminate violence', which clarifies the issue at hand. Whereas selective violence is aimed at specific individuals, indiscriminate violence implies random violence where no differentiation is made between individuals, and anyone can be a potential target.<sup>71</sup> Both types of violence can be exercised with direct as well as indirect methods. Although aerial bombs or artillery shells by nature have greater destructive power (and therefore less discriminatory power) than for example personal firearms, this does not in itself say anything about the effectiveness or selectivity of the operation. Machine-gunning an enemy concentration from an aircraft is basically selective violence. Shooting with small arms at 'everything that moves' during an infantry patrol is closer to arbitrariness.

To illustrate this point, let me give a hypothetical example of a *kampong* where Indonesian fighters have taken cover. A KNIL division would charge with drawn guns, whereas a platoon of RNLA soldiers in a comparable situation would bombard the *kampong* with artillery before searching it. According to the logic of courageous action, the KNIL soldiers are brave in this case because they are risking their lives to storm the *kampong*, and the RNLA soldiers are not because they are not exposing themselves to danger. But the categories ‘cowardly’ and ‘brave’ obscure the picture, because everything depends on the anticipated resistance. If that is stronger than can be overcome with personal firearms, the RNLA soldiers are only acting sensibly in a military sense by calling in fire support, and the KNIL division is taking unwarranted risks.

The question here is: should troops be prepared to expose themselves to danger if they also have methods that minimize their own risks? This is not only a matter of military culture, but it is also central to the legal concept of proportionality. Proportionality is about striking a balance between military necessity and the level of risk sustained for one’s own troops, versus the level of risk run by the civilian population, and the alternatives available to the troops.<sup>72</sup> The political scientist and philosopher Michael Walzer stated in 1977 that ‘soldiers have to accept some risk (I don’t attempt to say how much) in order to protect civilians from their own deadly fire’. While protecting one’s own troops is a legitimate motive in his view, armies should not always be allowed to get away with simply invoking military necessity or *Kriegsräson*.<sup>73</sup>

Interestingly, Walzer seems to assume that when soldiers accept a certain level of risk, the danger to civilians is reduced. In this line of thinking, infantry actions represent less danger, while artillery fire and air attacks represent more danger: ‘the patrol must be sent out, the risk accepted, before the big guns are brought to bear.’<sup>74</sup> We find the same implication in the argument put forward by the military sociologist Martin Shaw that modern, Western armies not only seek to reduce their own risk, but consciously transfer it to the civilian population by deploying artillery and air power. He calls this ‘risk-transfer war’. His analysis addresses the past decades, during which a shift of regular armed forces towards almost risk-free aerial warfare can be discerned. This follows from the fact that risk has become one of the most important considerations for Western societies that enter conflicts, especially in so-called ‘wars of choice’. The trend continues towards ‘remote warfare’ dominated by drones, missiles



and bombs, although the war in Ukraine demonstrates that ground war is by no means a thing of the past.<sup>75</sup>

To be able to assess whether 'risk transfer' already occurred during the Indonesian War of Independence, the principle of distinction – between friend and foe, fighters and civilians – is also of importance. It is with good reason that William Hays Parks, an expert on the law of armed conflict, called this principle 'the very heart and soul of the law of war'.<sup>76</sup> Finally, the level of distinction – regardless of the means or methods – plays a major part in the danger for civilians and enemy soldiers in the use of force.<sup>77</sup> The International Committee of the Red Cross describes 'distinction' as the cornerstone of international humanitarian law, from which the principles of proportionality and military necessity emanate.<sup>78</sup>

#### MORAL EFFECT

The psychological effect of indirect fire weapons on the opponent was observed even in ancient times. The Greek historian Diodorus Siculus describes the extraordinary impact of a catapult on the morale of the adversary and claimed that this weapon 'caused in fact great consternation'.<sup>79</sup> Dierk Walter, and more recently Tom Menger, among others, point out the great emphasis that colonial armies in the nineteenth century placed on the effect of artillery on the morale of 'native' opponents.<sup>80</sup> With the discovery of air power at the beginning of the twentieth century, Western armies also stressed its moral effect, first with regard to hot air balloons and from 1917 onwards also aircraft. In those initial stages, the material effect of airstrikes was limited, and therefore European armed forces soon fixated on the psychological dimension, argues Tami Davis Biddle. In the interwar period, William Mitchell, the 'father' of the American air force, saw a major role for air power in wars against 'savage tribes or poorly organized levies', against whom attack aircraft would have a 'tremendous effect'.<sup>81</sup> Decades later, this fixation on the aspect of morale influenced the way allied armies attempted to crush the German and Japanese resistance.<sup>82</sup>

This conviction, based on inevitably subjective observations of the psychological effects of indirect fire weapons, was still very much alive in later times. In a 1963 doctrine publication, the American army stated that the importance of artillery was its 'two-prong morale factor; it is both devastating to the guerrilla and reassuring to the counterguerrilla'.<sup>83</sup> Richard Holmes states in relation to aerial attacks that they cause a 'disproportionate amount of alarm' in relation to the actual damage done, and he cites

Tom Wintringham, who wrote: 'aeroplanes are most effective against morale. They frighten; they exhaust; they break nerves. They do not usually in fact kill many men.'<sup>84</sup> Considering these observations on the effects heavy weapons and the traditions from which they arose, the question arises what role these notions played in contemporary Dutch analyses of the effects of the deployment of heavy weapons in the struggle against the troops of the Indonesian Republic.

## OUTLINE

*Iron Fist* has a pyramid-shaped structure. The second chapter discusses the battles between British and Japanese units with Indonesian fighters, which in effect formed the prelude to the Dutch-Indonesian conflict. Although Dutch soldiers fought from the beginning against Indonesian nationalists on a small scale, the Dutch takeover of British positions from March 1946 onwards marked the moment the war really erupted. The primarily quantitative data on troop build-up, weapons, equipment (Chapter 3) and the deployment thereof (Chapter 4) form the foundation of the subsequent, mostly qualitative, analysis. This consists, first, of three case-studies (Chapter 5) of the deployment of naval gunfire, field artillery and air power. Next, the study is narrowed down to a summary analysis of the consequences and effectiveness of, the motives for, and the ethical and legal reflection on that deployment. The conclusion answers the main question and reviews some overarching themes.

## APPROACH

Whereas traditional military historiography habitually focused on the analysis of battles, military campaigns and matters such as strategy, tactics, logistics, organization and technology, the 1960s saw the advent of other perspectives, methods and themes that have become known as 'new military history'.<sup>85</sup> In a 2020 article on the developments in the field, military historian Jan Hoffenaar points out that, now that sixty years have passed since new military history gained ground, the term appears 'rather awkward'.<sup>86</sup> Regard for social, psychological, societal and cultural factors is now commonplace in the field, and there is constant interaction with broader shifts in historiographical approaches, such as postcolonial studies and global history.

Within these developments, this study can be regarded as an attempt to combine traditional and 'new' perspectives. An overview of quantita-

tive data concerning troop strength, armament, expended ammunition, numbers and types of targets, et cetera, is presented alongside analyses of the motives, personal reflections, and ethical and legal dimensions of the deployment of fire support. The objective of multiperspectivity and diversity in angles of approach, for example also taking into account the victims of the violence and Indonesian perspectives, falls within the broader pursuit of 'truthful interpretations'.<sup>87</sup> Stephen Biddle's approach has provided guidance here. He states that many statistical studies are designed too narrowly, whereas holistic studies often lack rigor. According to him, progress in the field requires both rigor and breadth, based on 'a combination of empirical evidence and careful deductive reasoning'.<sup>88</sup>

Until now, that empirical evidence was lacking in many studies on the Indonesian War of Independence. This is understandable, considering the fragmented source material requiring labour-intensive sorting and categorizing, but it is also a pity, because, at least regarding the deployment of artillery and air power, it was almost impossible to reason beyond conjectures based on anecdotal evidence. One exception is Petra Groen's dissertation, which contains a large number of tables on such things as loss of manpower and equipment to substantiate her military-strategic analysis of the conflict.<sup>89</sup> Since 1991, the year her dissertation was published, the use of digital tools to bring together and analyse diffuse and multi-faceted data in an insightful way, has greatly increased. An interesting study in this regard is Gert Oostindie, Jonathan Verwey and Ireen Hoogeboom's endeavour to quantify war crimes committed by Dutch soldiers, based on a digitized corpus of 659 published ego-documents.<sup>90</sup> Although 'digital humanities' (also called 'digital history' within historical scholarship) continue to develop and grow, it is still pioneering work, if only because each research object harbours its own unique challenges.<sup>91</sup> In order to make that clearer, I will now give a short explanation of the approach chosen.

At the start of this study, there were no data on the magnitude of the number of fire missions by the field artillery and the navy. As regards operational 'sorties' (military jargon for flights of one or more aircraft) of the air force, only rough numbers circulated, which not only differed from each other, but were not broken down either according to type and location, and lacked other essential details. In order to concentrate the data on the location of a shelling or bombardment, the executing unit, the

munition expended, the date, the sources and many other variables, it was imperative to create a relational database on the basis of a data model. It was possible through the Indonesia research programme to make use of Nodegoat, an online research environment for the humanities designed specifically for the processing of this type of data.<sup>92</sup>

Besides storage of relational data, this programme also contains options for, among other things, data visualization and network analysis. It was also potentially possible to plot fire missions on a map – potentially, because in practice various obstacles needed to be overcome. The most important was that the maps that the Dutch armed forces in Indonesia used to select targets and calculate distances, with the exception of nautical charts, were drawn up in a projection (the Lambert Conical Orthomorphic Projection) that does not correspond with the present-day World Geodetic System 1984 (WGS84) that is currently used in almost all GPS systems.

The maps of that time were mostly drawn by the US Army Map Service on the basis of prewar maps by the Topografische Dienst (Topographical Service). After an attempt, in collaboration with the Leiden University Centre for Digital Humanities, to find a way to convert the data (all relevant maps are georeferenced in the ‘Dutch Colonial Maps’ online portal),<sup>93</sup> the Geografische Dienst (Geographical Service) of the Ministry of Defence was consulted. This service, which in part still performs the same tasks as the Topographical Service of that time, devised a way to convert the old coordinates into WGS84 points. In order to do so, the maps (several hundred of them) had to be georeferenced by hand, after which a conversion formula had to be calculated. This forms the basis of the maps included in this study, with the exception of the fire missions by the Royal Netherlands Navy (RNLN), which used a universal notation of latitude and longitude.

In a study of the dropping of paratroopers during the French Indochina War, the geographer Gordon Cromley sums up several advantages of such historical GIS methods (GIS stands for Geographic Information System). Not only does GIS provide an opportunity to visualize data, understanding historic events in a spatial dimension can offer new insights. Moreover, visualized data can also in themselves become part of the analysis.<sup>94</sup> This corresponds to the experience in the present study. The dataset has been made available digitally for future research and further analysis.<sup>95</sup>

Empirical evidence can also be collected by researching specific situations, such as the three case studies in Chapter 5. In an exploratory study of micro-dynamics, the historians Martin Thomas and Roel Frakking state that such research presumes both variation and comparability. Explanations for the use of violence at macro level do not always correspond with those at a micro level, but they do reveal patterns that make comparison possible.<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, Stef Scagliola and Nicole Immler suggest that a connection between the micro and the macro level is essential to enable more complex historic interpretations. In this way, research at the local level can reveal the impact of violence, as had been remarked earlier by Martijn Eickhoff.<sup>97</sup>

#### USE OF SOURCES

The comprehensive approach that was chosen for this research is reflected in the use of sources. The sources used can be grouped into five categories: official sources, ego-documents, interviews, literature and on-site research. The official or administrative sources consist of corps and unit histories (also called war diaries), periodic reports, intelligence reports, political and military correspondence, instructions, regulations, operational orders and reports, and so on. Besides organizational and quantitative data, they contain a wealth of qualitative data. The documents mainly originate from the collections of the Nationaal Archief (National Archives) and NIMH, alongside some documents that were acquired via the research programme from Indonesian and other foreign archives, and documents from the Historische Collectie Korps Veldartillerie (Historic Collection Field Artillery Corps) in 't Harde.

The collections of institutions such as the Nederlands Veteraneninstituut (Dutch Veterans Institute), NIMH and Leiden University Library contain many valuable interviews with veterans conducted in the past decades. At the start of this research, a number of surviving artillerymen and members of the air forces were also interviewed. They offered some valuable personal stories, but it soon turned out that ego-documents such as diaries and letters, and to a lesser extent also memoirs, often contained much more detailed information. This is sometimes overlooked by oral history adepts.<sup>98</sup> Flaws in the memories of interviewees are of course hardly surprising given the time that has lapsed, but another, important advantage of diaries and letters is that they were written as events unfolded, leaving the experiences untainted by later social circumstances and shifting moral conceptions. In

this they differ from memoirs. Although memoirs were often written on the basis of diary entries, it is difficult to know what has been omitted. According to the historian Yuval Noah Harari, military memoirs are nonetheless valuable documents for the study of military culture, as they can be used for analysing which subjects veterans considered worth writing about, and which not.<sup>99</sup>

Needless to say, these observations do not by definition mean that oral history is of less value than written sources. No source is neutral or complete, and each needs to be subjected to scrutiny by the historian. Nonetheless, psychologists of law have repeatedly pointed out the fundamental unreliability of the human memory when reconstructing historic events, in particular where it concerns matters that have had a major impact on the life of the parties involved.<sup>100</sup>

It was not just the conflict that was asymmetric, but there is also an imbalance to be found in the availability of sources. In Indonesia, official sources are not as readily available as in the Netherlands, and furthermore they cannot always be accessed everywhere by foreign researchers. However, previous researchers have collected documents from the Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia (ANRI) and the Dinas Sejarah Angkatan Darat (Disjarahad, the historical service of the Indonesian ground forces), which can be found in the collection of the NIMH, and these valuable collections, combined with data collected in cooperation with the Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) in Yogyakarta, could, after all, be included in the research, albeit to a limited extent. The same applies to the collection of the Badan Perpustakaan dan Arsip Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta (the regional archive of the province around the former capital of the Republic), that held extremely valuable information for the case study of the aerial attack on Wonosari in March 1949.

Furthermore, interviews with eyewitnesses of the Revolution were used in order to find out more about local events, in Indonesia more so than in the Netherlands. This proved to be less difficult than previously anticipated, which is in part thanks to the close-knit communities that still exist in many rural places on Java, but also due to the willingness of people to tell their story to a stranger. It proved useful to visit the locations of the case studies researched and to go to museums, monuments and memory sites accompanied by local experts. After a longer stay in 2017, a short visit in 2018 and an exploratory research trip in 2020, the Covid pandemic threw a spanner in the works as far as further research plans on location were concerned. With



the help of an Indonesian research assistant who had acted as interpreter and translator in 2020, it was possible to conduct some additional interviews in 2022.<sup>101</sup>

Moreover, secondary literature formed a very rich Indonesian source. Leiden University Library still houses one of the richest collections of Indonesian historical literature in the world, largely thanks to the endeavours of a subsidiary of the KITLV in Jakarta, which for decades sent nearly all relevant works on the revolutionary period to the Netherlands. In addition, a number of works were acquired from the library of the Pusat Sejarah Tentara Nasional Indonesia (Pusjarah TNI, the counterpart of the NIMH in Jakarta) and the library of UGM, as well as some books that were available online. For the Dutch, British, Japanese and international perspective, much use was made of secondary literature, not just scholarly monographs, theses and dissertations, but also 'grey' publications such as commemorative books and self-published veterans' books and documents.

#### L I M I T A T I O N S

Due to its delineation of the research object, many aspects of the Indonesian revolution are left out of the picture in the present study. One of these is that this research focuses mostly on the islands of Java and Sumatra. As far as is known, field artillery was not deployed outside of these two main islands (although there were guns located on Kalimantan and Bali in the initial phases). It was easier for aircraft and Her Majesty's ships to operate across the archipelago, but in those regions that were known in colonial times as the 'outer provinces', the fighting was often a lot less fierce and the deployment of heavy weapons was rarely considered worthwhile or necessary. However, a few aircraft and navy operations on Bali and Madura will be discussed, as hostilities also flared up there at certain times. We also know of at least two air strikes on Kalimantan.<sup>102</sup> Finally, in 1946–1947, there was a lot of unrest on Sulawesi, but there the army leadership chose a different reaction to the violence: it sent in the Depot Speciale Troepen under the command of Captain Westerling.

Another aspect is the role of children and women in the struggle. In this study, as in many other works on the war, they often feature in citations as victims to illustrate the cruelty of a bombardment or shelling, sometimes in the same breath as the aged.<sup>103</sup> In those instances, they symbolize innocence, the civilians impacted by the violence of war. But besides victims, women and children (and probably the elderly, too) on both sides were also agents:

they were active members of Indonesian fighting groups and supported the struggle in countless ways: as *jongos* (servant) or *baboe* (housemaid) but also as spies, or as Red Cross or field kitchen workers.<sup>104</sup> Young boys also served in combat roles on the Dutch side, such as in the KNIL battalion Infanterie V.<sup>105</sup> In the sources concerning the air forces and the navy, women are mostly visible as part of women's auxiliary corps, but a book about the history of the Dutch field artillery mentions one woman who served in an artillery unit, a first according to the authors: sergeant-major Tjits van Tongeren, quartermaster in the improvised artillery troop of 1-3 RI.<sup>106</sup>

The personal position of the author also has its limitations. Not only is he part in this case of the same social group that formed the dominant actor on the Dutch side in the Indonesian War of Independence, but the research has also been conducted in part by the Netherlands Institute for Military History, which falls under the Ministry of Defence. However, it is important to emphasize that this institute can conduct its research with complete academic freedom. Furthermore, the Dutch government funded the programme, even though there was no interference with the content of the research. I have made an attempt to acquire a wide field of view and to incorporate different perspectives in the study by being aware of this position, exploring other perspectives, consulting a broad range of sources, learning the Indonesian language, doing onsite research on Java, and working together with Indonesian historians.

## TERMINOLOGY AND VOCABULARY

### VIOLENT TRANSGRESSIONS

'It is not appropriate for the historian to act as judge,' writes Budding in *Bebeersing van geweld*. This is one of the reasons why, in accordance, Rémy Limpach speaks of cases of 'extreme violence' instead of war crimes. This is also the term used in the book *Beyond the Pale*, not to deny the existence of war crimes or to trivialize them, but because in many cases almost 80 years after the events took place, and without being able to question those directly involved and with often fragmentary evidence, it is very difficult to establish in which cases war crimes were committed. For the historian, the concept of war crimes then becomes a straitjacket, whereas his or her aim is to analyse and explain events – in this instance the violent conduct of Dutch troops – in a broader sense than potential war crimes.

Much of what is characterized as extreme violence, such as executions, torture and rape, took place in the margins of or outside combat actions.

However, heavy weapons were pre-eminently deployed by the troops during combat operations. Independent deployment, such as coastal bombardments or aerial attacks, were also considered part of the fight and therefore deemed functional. As Bart Luttikhuis remarked in a review of Limpach's *De brandende kampongs*, it is difficult to draw a line between 'normal' and 'extreme' violence, in particular where this category of violence is concerned.<sup>107</sup> The present study uses the concept of violent transgression, not because the dividing line is so clear in the rules of war, but because in certain cases, in the perception of those involved, a moral, ethical boundary was transgressed. Sometimes, as in the case of Karanganyar, heavy weapons were also used to cross a physical border when the infantry could not: the demarcation line. The term is in line with earlier publications of the research programme: after all, the concluding work is called *Over de grens* (literally 'over the line', translated as *Beyond the Pale*). It should be understood as a concept that explicitly includes war crimes. In this study, however, preference has been given to specific terms for specific types of violence, e.g. indiscriminate aerial strafing raid, retaliatory artillery shelling, imprecise naval bombardment. Thus, the reader will find very few references to overarching terms in the present book – however, the fact that the Dutch (and the Indonesians, for that matter) committed war crimes in the 1945–1949 war is beyond any doubt, and several cases described in this book may indeed be qualified as such.

#### MILITARY TERMINOLOGY

The term *politieonele acties* ('police actions'), which will sound familiar to many Dutch people, originally referred to two campaigns of conquest that the Dutch armed forces conducted during the Indonesian War of Independence: Operatie Product ('Operation Product') from 21 July to 5 August 1947, and Operatie Kraai ('Operation Crow') from 19 December 1948 to 5 January 1949. Later, in the Netherlands, this term started referring to the whole conflict, whereas in reality it was merely a propaganda term to avoid associations with a real war – and therefore foreign interference. Seeing as it has now for a long time been an accepted fact that the conflict was a proper war (even though it was never legally declared as such, but that goes for many wars), there is no reason to continue using this misleading term. Many soldiers at the time also spoke of a war in their ego-documents.

In this respect, the term *Agresi Militer Belanda* ('Dutch military aggression'), widely used in Indonesia, is more accurate. However, the word 'ag-

gression' refers in particular to the political and international legal aspects of the attack: aggression is when a sovereign country is attacked. That is why the present study has selected the military term 'offensive' to describe operations Product and Kraai, in its military sense of an attack with the purpose of defeating or destroying enemy troops, and of conquering or occupying terrain, or both, mostly executed at the divisional level with combined arms.<sup>108</sup> This is exactly what both campaigns of aggression were about. The conflict as a whole is referred to as the Indonesian War of Independence or, in line with authors such as Van Doorn and Hendrix, the Dutch-Indonesian conflict.

In this study, the term 'air power' is used to indicate the violent capabilities of the air forces, as distinguished from land and sea forces. The equally common term 'air forces' is used as a synonym, although it formally also encompasses transport and other tasks. 'Air forces' is used in the plural form and without a capital letter, as the Royal Netherlands Air Force was only founded after the end of the Indonesian War of Independence (in 1953) as an independent branch within the armed forces.

According to the definition proposed by the weapons expert Ian Vernon Hogg, 'artillery' refers to crew-served cannons (flat trajectory fire), howitzers (curved trajectory fire) and mortars (high-angle fire) with a larger calibre than infantry weapons.<sup>109</sup> The field gun that was mostly used in Indonesia, the 25-pounder, was a howitzer according to the official definition, but was and is often also referred to as a cannon. This study does so too.

## SPELLING

Modern-day spelling and designations are used for the Indonesian names of places, organizations and people, also – with very few exceptions – when that name is still often spelt with, for example, 'oe' instead of 'u', such as Soekarno/Sukarno. The name Indonesia has been chosen to refer to the archipelago, also in reference to the period preceding the proclamation of independence (the so-called Proklamasi), as is customary in recent literature. To enhance readability, abbreviations in quotations have, wherever possible, been written in full. Original spelling has been retained in citations (when the original citations were in Dutch or Indonesian, these have been translated into English). In the index, the colonial name and/or spelling is listed after the contemporary name wherever relevant.



*The burnt-out car of the late Brigadier Mallaby on the spot where he was killed in Surabaya on 31 October 1945. Source: Desmond Davis and Duncan MacTavish, Army Film and Photographic Unit, Imperial War Museum (IWM).*

## 2.

# The Spirit of Surabaya

In a report drawn up on 15 April 1947, Major Alfonso Nijpels, chief of intelligence of the Marine Brigade, wrote that ‘the troops’ in East Java had been ‘raised in the spirit of Surabaya’. According to the author that meant the soldiers were proud to have turned the city and its surroundings ‘at the cost of blood and sweat, into safe and pure Dutch territory.’<sup>1</sup> Dutch troops were not the only ones whose actions had been influenced by events in the harbour city. The urban war that British and Indonesian fighting groups had waged there for more than a year before – the biggest battle of the whole Indonesian War of Independence – would cast a long shadow over the subsequent course of the war.

This chapter argues that the fighting in Surabaya, but also elsewhere on Java, in November 1945 served as a turning point in the way the warring parties operated, in particular regarding the role of fire support. The period from the end of 1945 to the beginning of 1946, in which Indonesian troops and *pemuda* (young fighters) fought against Japanese and British troops, more or less counts as a prelude to the Dutch-Indonesian conflict. Subsequent fighting methods and attitudes towards risk-taking, also of the Dutch, were strongly influenced by the events of this period. For Indonesian fighting groups, the fighting spirit (*semangat*) of Surabaya was a source of inspiration for the rest of the war.<sup>2</sup>



In the weeks after Sukarno and Mohammed Hatta declared independence on 17 August 1945, two days after the capitulation of Japan, skirmishes between nationalists and the Japanese occupation forces broke out in different places. Until British and Australian troops could take over, the allied South East Asia Command had given the latter the task of maintaining law and order. The first units of the British Indian army did not arrive until the end of September. During the Second World War, which had only recently ended, they had fought both in the European theatre against the Germans and in Burma against the Japanese. Soon, the British, too, became involved in clashes with Indonesian fighting groups.

Dating back to 22 August 1945, the first armed institution that was founded by the young Republic was the *Badan Keamanan Rakyat* (BKR), also known as the 'People's Security Agency'. Slowly but surely, following several name changes and reorganizations, the BKR was to develop into the national army of the Indonesian Republic. In addition, the armed independence movement consisted of a wide range of regular and irregular troops, particularly during the initial phases.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps not wholly surprisingly, differences between Japanese, Dutch, Indonesian and English-language historiography in the portrayal of the events of the time are large. In Dutch publications, the emphasis is on the violence committed against Dutch and Eurasian people (the so-called *bersiap* period) and the diplomatic struggles in relation to the British high command in the region.<sup>4</sup> In Dutch histories, the fighting between *pemuda* and the temporary Japanese peacekeepers is also often described as part of the *bersiap*.<sup>5</sup> This is not to say that they do not contain relevant information on the fighting with the Japanese and the British - on the contrary. The level of attention paid in the Netherlands to this part of history (still insufficient in the eyes of some), has led to the events being described in comparatively great detail in the literature. Moreover, more recent years have seen the publication of an increasing number of Dutch-language studies on the War of Independence that focus on the Indonesian perspective, also for this period.<sup>6</sup>

The initial period also features prominently in Indonesian studies and public memory, but the *bersiap* is mostly absent and there is much more attention for the building of the Republic after the Proklamasi, the social revolution and determining battles such as in Semarang and in particular in Surabaya. A diverse picture emerges in English-language studies: attention is paid to both the Revolution and the struggle of the Indonesians against the Japanese and the British, as well as to violence against the Dutch and peo-

ple of Eurasian descent. Finally, sources of Japanese participants, although scarcer, mostly discuss their own role in events. This chapter tries to strike a balance between all these different perspectives.

#### JAPANESE-INDONESIAN VIOLENCE

After 17 August, Indonesian nationalists were in desperate need of weapons to defend the recently proclaimed Republic, if necessary, with violence. In many places in the archipelago, they managed to acquire these from the Japanese without much loss of blood, but in some cases, violent clashes on a considerable scale broke out. Typical for the violence between Japanese and Indonesian troops in the early phase of the War of Independence (August until October 1945) were infantry operations of comparatively lightly armed Japanese units against hastily organized Indonesian fighting groups. In this phase of the conflict, fire support did not play an important part. Although it was available to the Japanese, they appear to have used it only rarely.<sup>7</sup> Indonesian forces, on the other hand, did not have artillery, tanks and mortars in any significant numbers until later, during the fighting in Surabaya. The high numbers of casualties on the Indonesian side seem to have been caused mainly by Japanese machine-gun fire against inexperienced Indonesian troops, who formed easy targets. Reports of summary executions with handguns, bamboo spears (also by the Japanese) and even bayonets are similarly frequent.<sup>8</sup> This violence played out against the backdrop of the evacuation of prisoners of war and civilian internees and the *bersiap* violence, which is largely omitted here, but was also mostly committed with spears, blades, guns and other small arms.

#### TRAGEDY IN SEMARANG

The Indonesian fighting groups' struggle against the Japanese troops, who had capitulated on 15 August 1945, occupies an important place in Indonesian memory. Above all, this applies to the battle in Semarang between 14 and 19 October 1945, known in Indonesia as *pertempuran lima hari*, the five-day battle.<sup>9</sup> In a museum dedicated to the War of Independence in Yogyakarta, the fighting in Semarang was one of the eight *palagan* (battlefields) of the revolution.<sup>10</sup> In the city itself, where this battle in the memory overshadows all subsequent fighting against the British and the Dutch, the Tugu Muda (monument for the youth) commemorates the fighting, in which *pemuda* played a central part.<sup>11</sup>

In many studies, the actions of Japanese troops during the five-day battle in Semarang are portrayed as a retaliation for the execution of Japanese prisoners in the Bulu prison. During that event, *pemuda* killed between 100 and 150 Japanese. But as proven by Han Bing Siong in his analysis of the events, Japanese operations had already commenced before the massacre. However, it is plausible that the ferocity of Japanese operations increased after discovery of the bodies on 16 October, considering that many accounts report mass executions of captured *pemuda* by Japanese troops after this date.<sup>12</sup> In part, these harsh methods can also be explained by the Japanese war code, which prescribed that a soldier should fight to the death and never surrender, leading to contempt for prisoners of war.<sup>13</sup>

Indonesian troops that participated in the fighting generally possessed little firepower, although there were large differences between them. The *pasukan polisi istimewa* (special police unit) was comparatively well-armed because Japanese police had handed over part of their weapons to this unit. However, most *pemuda* groups hardly had any firearms, and the same applied to units of the recently founded Tentara Keamanan Rakyat (TKR, People's Security Army, the successor to the BKR and the precursor to the later national army) who were still in training. After news of the Japanese operations spread, groups of *pemuda* from the whole of Central Java headed to Semarang to take part in the fighting. According to the Indonesian historian Moehkardi, who, like Han Bing Siong, witnessed the fighting as a child, many of the *pemuda* fought without command, without coordination and without organization, but imbued with a high morale. During the battles, TKR units managed to capture several Japanese machine guns and 'Japanese Brens', and snipers spread out across the city. To counter them, Japanese soldiers nestled themselves on the roofs of high buildings and shot down anyone who ventured onto the main roads.<sup>14</sup>

During the fighting, fire support played only a limited role. Ben Bouman writes that *pemuda* pouring in from the backcountry brought four tanks and six guns with them, but it remains unclear what they achieved with these.<sup>15</sup> Petra Groen states that the Japanese used anti-tank artillery to recapture the office of RAPWI (Recovery of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees). Furthermore, Herman Bussemaker and Han Bing Siong report that they possibly also deployed two pieces of field artillery against *pemuda* who had taken cover in Hotel Du Pavillon, but this is based on rumours the reliability of which cannot be verified. Finally, according to

the former general and chronicler of the revolution Abdul Haris Nasution, Japanese troops were supported by armoured vehicles and mortars.<sup>16</sup>

However, most of the fatalities on both sides were caused by machine-gun fire and the execution of prisoners. T. S. Tull, a British wing commander during operations in Central Java, writes in a report that the Japanese took no prisoners, and captured and shot anyone carrying a weapon or suspected of doing so. According to him, wagonloads of Indonesians were transported out of the city and never seen again.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, Nasution writes that the Japanese battalion under the command of Major Kido Shinichirō encircled a city *kampung*, set fire to it and blindly fired at the population with machine guns, resulting in the deaths of many residents. Apparently, this was a punishment for the refusal of the people to hand in all *bambu runcing* (bamboo spears) which shortly before had been used to impale many Japanese on the *alun-alun* (town square).<sup>18</sup>

It is uncertain how many Indonesians were killed during the fighting, but the figure of two thousand appears in many sources.<sup>19</sup> Japanese troops also suffered considerable losses: during their clashes with the *pemuda* a total of 402 Japanese died and 88 went missing, almost half the number the empire lost during the invasion of Java in 1942.<sup>20</sup> According to Han Bin Siong, this also can be explained by *bushidō*, the Japanese code of honour. He cites the military historian Alvin Coox, who states that 'risk, as a correlate of strategic objectives, stakes and consequences, is not a word that one finds in the ordinary vocabulary of the Japanese military'.<sup>21</sup> Tull, too, writes with a sense of drama that the Japanese 'swept through the town, regardless of dangers or their own losses like one of the Mongolian hordes of Genghiz Khan or Tamerlane'.<sup>22</sup> These observations must be nuanced by recalling that in many places on Java and Sumatra demoralized Japanese troops were prepared to hand over their weapons to *pemuda* without much resistance. But when it came to fights, the Japanese fought hard.

Not only the Japanese, but Indonesian fighting groups too were repeatedly prepared to accept high losses in battles against superiorly armed and trained opponents. In view of later developments this is an interesting observation, because not only the British and Dutch troops would adopt a fundamentally different attitude towards risk-taking; the Indonesian fighting groups did so too in due course, albeit to a lesser extent.

## RANDOM REPRISALS

Tebingtinggi in East Sumatra was another location where, around 13 December 1945, violence was used on a considerable scale. As Esther Capitan and Onno Sinke conclude in their study on *bersiap* violence, it is not easy to reconstruct the precise events. It is clear that Japanese troops carried out large-scale reprisals after *pemuda* had killed a number of Japanese civil servants and a Scandinavian missionary. It is thought that hundreds, maybe even thousands, of Indonesians also perished. Van den Doel states that the Japanese took an 'exceptionally bloody' revenge, and Limpach characterizes the events as 'mass murder' of the Indonesians.<sup>23</sup>

According to the memoirs of Takao Fusayama, a Japanese soldier who was stationed in the locality, not only were dozens of Japanese soldiers brutally murdered, but most of the Indonesian casualties fell during the fighting, in which *pemuda* were beaten by the superior weaponry and combat experience of the Japanese. He states that machine guns, in particular, caused many casualties among the 'group of farmers who were amateur fighters, fighting bravely but 'easily swept aside by Japanese rifles and machine guns'. Furthermore, two tanks helped overcome resistance; they fired their guns at houses from where *pemuda* were shooting, with devastating effect. According to Fusayama, the Japanese did not deploy the artillery that was also on site, 'because the soldiers did not want to injure the general public'.<sup>24</sup> A local Indonesian newspaper does report that after the operation, Japanese troops drove through the city with tanks and field guns in order to intimidate *pemuda*.<sup>25</sup>

However, Fusayama appears to portray his role and that of the Japanese rather too benevolently and he evades the question of the number of Indonesian casualties. Yet he also criticizes the Japanese counterattack, which according to him was a clear act of retaliation. Fusayama: 'What could be done when those with superior arms were burning with the anger to retaliate? I did not think their anger unreasonable. However, retaliation can never be fair. How terrified would the residents be when faced with indiscriminate retaliation by soldiers speaking a foreign language?'<sup>26</sup>

This operation, too, thus appears to typify the early stages of the war in Indonesia: fanatic and brave but poorly armoured and disorganized Indonesian fighters who were killed in large numbers because adversaries were better armed, more experienced and better trained, even when these made only limited use of fire support. The following sections reveal that

in Surabaya the cards were reshuffled and fire support became an important and (in the eyes of the warring parties) essential tool in the fight, not just for the British and the Indonesians, but also for the Dutch, who anxiously eyed the events in Surabaya.

## THE BATTLE OF SURABAYA

*A new God had arrived, and he was known under various names: bomb, machine-gun, mortar.* – Idrus, ‘Surabaja’<sup>27</sup>

The struggle for the East Javanese port city is important not only because it was the biggest battle of the whole revolutionary period, but the fighting also had a large impact on the subsequent war between Dutch and Indonesian troops, which erupted after the departure of the British. The way the battle was fought and the reactions to it in the local and international arena formed a precedent for later armed operations, and the intensity of the fighting greatly influenced the decisions on British, Indonesian and Dutch sides about the subsequent use of violence. Fire support played a pivotal role. Furthermore, the period is relevant because, for the first time, Indonesian troops in Surabaya could deploy substantial amounts of tanks, mortars, heavy machine guns and artillery. Finally, Surabaya set the tone in the perception of the deployment of artillery, tanks and, in particular, the air forces in the war in Indonesia, which still resonates to this day.

For example, Indonesian studies of the battle often emphasize moments in which suicide bombers jumped on tanks, or the arbitrary nature of British bombardments. In Idrus’s narration ‘Soerabaja’, tanks and airplanes are the ultimate symbols of the British fighting method. Tanks feature as ‘Angel of Death’, bringing destruction to the earth, and airplanes as ‘silver-white birds’ dropping their filth over the city.<sup>28</sup> Conversely, some British and Dutch sources speak condescendingly of the mass attacks of Indonesian fighters who ran to their deaths in the British hail of bullets, ‘drunk and half crazed at the sight of blood.’<sup>29</sup> This pattern repeated itself during the subsequent conflict between the Netherlands and the Indonesian Republic, in which both sides regularly accused the other of cowardly fighting methods. The Indonesians were criticized because they did not fight ‘according to the rules’, the Dutch because they relied too heavily on regular fighting methods. This ‘David v. Goliath’ image of a troop of impro-



vised fighters armed with sticks and spears that was up against a modernly organized and armed army was first conceived in Surabaya in November 1945, but would subsequently often recur.

#### WEAPONRY AND FIGHTING POWER

The fighting in Surabaya and elsewhere would not have played out in the same way without the prior acquisition of large amounts of Japanese weapons by the *pemuda* at the end of September and beginning of October 1945. There are different versions of the precise role of the on-site Japanese commanders, the British high command and a Dutch naval officer.<sup>30</sup> It is certain that the weapons were transferred in a generally peaceful way in some places, whereas a lot of violence was involved elsewhere. For example, on 1 October, *pemuda* stormed the Palace of Justice in Surabaya, which until the capitulation had been the headquarters of the hated *Kempeitai*, the Japanese military police and intelligence service. Japanese security forces emptied their machine guns on the attacking mob until they ran out of ammunition, then vacated the building and retreated. The *pemuda* suffered great losses, although it is unclear how many. The Japanese themselves counted 22 dead and 25 wounded.<sup>31</sup>

According to an Indonesian army publication quoted by Bussemaker in his survey of the *bersiap*, the arsenal seized made up half of the armament of the later TNI. This included, among other things, 700 light and 500 heavy machine guns, 148 grenade launchers, 17 Japanese infantry guns, 20 field and mountain guns originating from the pre-war KNIL, 63 heavy mortars, 20 anti-tank guns, 140 pieces of anti-aircraft artillery, 4 howitzers, 16 tanks and many hundreds of other vehicles and thousands of rifles. The Japanese staff officer Miyamoto Shizuo mentions comparable numbers in his memoirs.<sup>32</sup> However, other sources quote different numbers. Earlier in his book, Bussemaker himself, for example, speaks of 16 captured light tanks and later another 23 Marmon-Herrington and Isuzu tanks, which together means a total of 39. Lou de Jong kept the number at 16 tanks. Nugroho Notosusanto, former head of the Pusat Sejarah TNI (also known as Pusjarah), the history service of the Indonesian armed forces, and the historian Anthony Reid both mention just 12 deployable tanks.<sup>33</sup>

However, the exact numbers are of secondary importance, as a lack of trained personnel meant that not all of the material could be deployed. Notosusanto even claims that, had the Indonesian fighting groups been capa-

ble of making optimal use of all the available heavy Japanese equipment, it would have been impossible for the British to drive the Indonesians out of Surabaya with just one division.

Of course, this claim cannot be verified, but the amount of available equipment is certainly not the only factor determining the eventual combat value of a force, in particular when this had only recently been established and consisted of personnel that had for the most part undergone

*A soldier of a British Indian armoured unit inspects a Marmon-Herrington CTLS-4 TA tank seized from Indonesian fighters, which was originally owned by the pre-war KNIL. Source: Desmond Davis and Duncan MacTavish, Army Film and Photographic Unit, Imperial War Museum (IWM).*



basic, non-specialist training. According to Suhario Padmodiwiryo, who took part in the fighting, none of the *pemuda* had ever driven a tank or even sat in one.<sup>34</sup>

Neither was there a centrally organized military force so shortly after the founding of the Republic. An array of fighting groups participated in the hostilities, ranging from TKR troops and cadets from the Military Academy in Yogyakarta, to students, school pupils and hastily recruited young men from the surrounding area of the harbour city and elsewhere from Java, armed with all sorts of melee weapons.<sup>35</sup> However, in Indonesian literature, the *Pemuda Republik Indonesia* in particular have been portrayed as heroes, in part due to their own retrospective myth-making.<sup>36</sup> As far as the total strength of Indonesian fighting groups is concerned, widely divergent numbers have been quoted. According to scholars such as the British historian Richard McMillan, 20,000 fighters trained by the Japanese and a further 120,000 untrained *pemuda* were present. Conversely, numbers ranging from 15,000 up to 300,000 men are mentioned in Indonesian literature. The true amount cannot be established since unregistered fighters from the surrounding regions reported to the front in droves, prepared to give their lives for the *Revolusi*.<sup>37</sup>

By the nature of things, British troop strength and armament is better documented. The 49th Indian Infantry Brigade, commanded by Brigadier A. W. S. Mallaby – initially the only British unit on site upon its landing on 25 October –, numbered 4,000 men. This brigade was reinforced with a cavalry squadron of fifteen Stuart Light Tanks of 11th PAVO (Prince Albert Victor's Own Cavalry, disembarking on 31 October), two squadrons of P-47 Thunderbolt fighter-bombers and a squadron of De Havilland Mosquito fighter-bombers, together with a company of 3 Indian Field Regiment for artillery support.<sup>38</sup> In the first week of November, the first units of the 5th Indian Division arrived in the harbour, together with three destroyers of the 6th Destroyer Flotilla and several heavy cruisers of the 5th Cruiser Squadron (Eastern Fleet), ready to provide naval artillery support. Finally, at the end of November, 21 Sherman tanks arrived, which were better able to withstand grenades and Molotov cocktails than the Stuarts. Historians are nonetheless disagreed on the total British troop strength, because a range of different numbers has been quoted on the size of the 5th Indian Division. Most likely this number lay between 15,000 and 20,000 soldiers.<sup>39</sup>

## ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE

Due to a combination of flawed intelligence about the situation on the ground, indecisiveness of both British high command as well as a Dutch advance party, together with the late arrival of Allied troops, it was almost impossible to prevent the outbreak of large-scale hostilities in Surabaya at the end of October 1945. One major difference with other cities where the Allies arrived was that, by the time the British set foot on shore, *pemuda* already had full control of Surabaya. The latter feared that the British were intending to allow the colonial Dutch to re-occupy the city, and resisted units of the 49th Brigade moving into strategic positions. A show of force by 12 Thunderbolts who flew over from Jakarta led to the nationalists temporarily abandoning their opposition. However, the British severely underestimated the magnitude of the resistance they were yet to encounter.<sup>40</sup>

A misguided leaflet flight from Jakarta summoning Indonesians to surrender their weapons removed the last shred of hope that the evacuation of internees would be accomplished without too much bloodshed. According to Bussemaker, 'all hell broke loose' on 28 October, when all kinds of fighting groups carried out a massive attack on British units spread throughout the city. British Indian troops were caught off guard and suffered high losses. They tried to keep their attackers at bay with overwhelming bursts of fire, but several units ran out of ammunition and were overrun. Knives and bayonets were all that was left for the remaining soldiers to defend themselves with. Whenever they surrendered, they were killed on the spot.<sup>41</sup>

In his history of the 23rd Indian Division (to which the 49th Brigade belonged), A. J. F. Doulton also mentions the use of tanks by Indonesian fighters. It was apparent that they still had little understanding of their tactical deployment. For example, Doulton describes a situation in which two tanks got so close to the British Indian posts that they could not utilize their firepower and became vulnerable to hand grenades and machine-gun fire. The tanks then backed up and the crew took flight. Other tanks were eliminated in a similar way.<sup>42</sup> A very large number of Indonesian fighters were killed during these battles, to all appearances mainly by British Indian machine-gun fire. Mortar shells fired at a crowd of people also led to many casualties.<sup>43</sup>

In the end, superior numbers and the resolve of the *pemuda* proved too much for the isolated British Indian units. The situation became so

precarious that Sukarno was asked to help negotiate a ceasefire, which he achieved on 29 October. Bussemaker even claims that without his intervention, the British would have been driven into the sea.<sup>44</sup> However, the ceasefire could not prevent the occurrence of further violent clashes. During one of these, on 30 October, Brigadier Mallaby, commander of the 49th Brigade, was killed. There has been controversy concerning the exact circumstances under which this happened.<sup>45</sup> In any case, the death of this general sent shockwaves through British ranks and marked a turning point in the attitude of the high command towards the problems in Surabaya. McMillan writes that, paradoxically, Mallaby's death on the one hand fuelled the desire to leave the Indonesian hornet's nest, but on the other hand in the short term unleashed a resolute fighting spirit among the British, who until then had operated cautiously. This was compounded by the horrific stories that troops of the 49th Brigade recounted to reinforcements of the 5th Indian Division, who were disembarking in the harbour at the time.<sup>46</sup>

#### ADVANCE AGAINST A WELL-EQUIPPED FOE

As negotiations with the Indonesian authorities continued, the British made plans for a large-scale military operation to reclaim the city from the *pemuda*. In the meantime, reinforcements tried to disembark unobtrusively in the harbour. On 31 October, the commander of the Allied troops in Indonesia, Lieutenant General Sir Philip Christison, had already issued a widely-cited statement: '[t]hese direct and unprovoked attacks upon British Forces cannot in any circumstances be permitted, and unless the Indonesians who have committed these acts surrender to my forces, I intend to bring the whole weight of my sea, land and air forces and all the weapons of modern war against them until they are crushed.'<sup>47</sup>

In preparation for the counter operation, the 49th Brigade regrouped in order to resolve its scattered positioning across the city, which had proven so fatal. The soldiers also evacuated around 6000 European women and children from internment camps. Although the commander of the 5th Indian Division, Major General Robert Mansergh, did not declare the formal ultimatum of the British high command until 9 November, the decision to take the city had already been made several days before, writes McMillan, including the starting date: 10 November.<sup>48</sup> The British did not seriously count on the Indonesians complying with the ultimatum, which, even if Indonesian leaders had wanted to, would hardly have been feasible



at such short notice. In the ultimatum, which repeated Christison's threat, Mansergh called the Indonesian actions 'crimes against civilizations [that] cannot go unpunished'.<sup>49</sup>

Many Indonesian authors strongly condemn the 10 November operation. Nasution tentatively suggests that the British, before launching their counterattack, should at least have checked whether Mallaby had indeed been killed by Indonesian fire, which according to him was by no means certain. Padmodiwiryo, an Indonesian veteran of the struggle, saw the large-scale deployment of naval gunfire as proof of an act of vengeance: the bombardments could only lead to civilian deaths. He qualifies the offensive as an 'uncivilized attack' which would have been appropriate for a regular war in Europe, but not in a post-war situation of maintaining order.<sup>50</sup>

This view is borne out in a speech given by Sukarno, who spoke out against the British operation on 12 November: 'I vehemently protest against the use of modern weapons aimed at city residents who are not capable of defending themselves. Today, I call the attention of the whole world to this great massacre of women, children and men.' He also argued that 'the retaliation or reprisal is excessive and the world must judge whether the actions of the British are balanced by their reasons'.<sup>51</sup>

Batara Hutagalung, son of Surabaya veteran Dr. Wiliater Hutagalung and founder of the Komite Pembela Hak Asasi Rakyat Surabaya Korban Pemboman November 1945 (Committee for the Protection of the Human Rights of the Citizens of Surabaya, Victims of the Bombings in November 1945), takes it a step further and defines the British operation as an act of military aggression. After all, the Second World War had already ended and the British had not officially declared war on the Republic of Indonesia. He invokes the Atlantic Charter of 1941, which laid down the right to self-determination. Hutagalung also played a part in the British government's public apologies for the occurrences, conveyed by the British ambassador to Indonesia at a seminar in Jakarta in October 2000.<sup>52</sup> However, the question whether the British attack was an act of aggression is a different one (in legal terms *jus ad bellum*) to that of the proportionality of the use of force (which is part of *jus in bello*). In the eyes of Chris Bayly and Tim Harper, this rare gesture of the British government related to the use of force and the subsequent tragic loss of thousands of human lives, and did not comment on the legitimacy of the operation itself.<sup>53</sup>

As far as the latter is concerned, many of those involved, as well as historians, point to the element of retaliation that characterized the op-



eration. For example, in addition to Sukarno and Padmodiwiryo, who have already been discussed, Benedict Anderson calls the attack a 'counterstroke of revenge'.<sup>54</sup> However, avenging the death of Mallaby and retaliation for the losses suffered by the 49th Brigade were not the only reasons for the British use of force. Peter Dennis argues that the British regarded their show of strength as necessary to prevent nationalists from gaining definitive control of the city (and the rest of Java).<sup>55</sup> In addition, David Jordan and William Frederick emphasize the concerns of the British military command about the evacuation of (Indo-) European women and children.<sup>56</sup> According to McMillan, who does not deny that retaliation played a part, these worries were the most important reason for the counteroffensive, and the notion of a 'bloody punitive action' should be qualified. After all, troops encountered a further 3500 women and children during the advance. Another reason put forward by McMillan is that the soldiers of the 49th Brigade were cornered to such an extent that they regarded calling up reinforcements and securing their own positions a military necessity.<sup>57</sup>

The impression that it was mainly an act of revenge is enhanced by the suggestion that the British advance was preceded by heavy bombardments. This image goes back to, among others, the book *Dokumentasi Pemuda* from 1948, which states: '[t]heir military operation was preceded by aircraft, fighter planes and bombers. Without distinguishing between troops or civilians, small children or grown-ups, men or women they attacked by dropping their bombs on every part of the city: they constantly let it rain grenades and machine-gun bullets from the air, from the land and from the sea.'<sup>58</sup> However, Frederick has pointed out that many historians who have used this work as a source were insufficiently aware of the fact that the *pemuda* wanted to glorify their own role with this document and left out certain inconvenient facts.<sup>59</sup>

One of the facts Frederick could be referring to is that much of the shelling and bombing was not carried out until the British encountered heavy resistance in the city. When the advance commenced at 6 a.m. on 10 November, a detachment of Thunderbolts of 60 Squadron stood by to offer air cover. The squadron's air operations book says: '[b]y 0600 they were literally itching to leap into the air and do battle at the word of the army – but no word came. By 0900 the itch had deteriorated to an irritable scratch'.<sup>60</sup> Meanwhile, ground troops encountered heavy resistance during their advance. They were pounded by Indonesian heavy machine guns, mortars, ar-



*Ground crew at Kemayoran airfield in Jakarta prepare a Thunderbolt for operations against Indonesian nationalists in Surabaya, November 1945. Source: Sergeant Woollacott, RAF, IWM.*

tillery and tanks.<sup>61</sup> In a telegram to allied headquarters received at 11 a.m., division command reported that, since the troops were suffering heavy losses, it intended 'to use full support'.<sup>62</sup>

However, according to Peter Dennis, Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander South East Asia Command, was not in favour of deploying air support against Indonesian troops and had therefore set strict limitations on its use. He did, however, regard the danger to the internees as a 'special case'. Four Thunderbolts and one Mosquito, each loaded with two 500 lb bombs, took off and were above the first target at 11:08 a.m., whereupon they began dropping their bombs.<sup>63</sup> Targets were the Palace of Justice, the post office, and a few other buildings where Indonesian fighting groups had set up command posts – 'targets', according to the squadron commander, 'about which fighter-bomber pilots dream, but which they rarely see'.<sup>64</sup> At around 11 o'clock, the destroyers in the harbour, all the 3-inch mortars and the artillery also started firing at predetermined targets in the city. This

is confirmed by Indonesian press reports.<sup>65</sup> It would therefore seem that in addition to the death of Brigadier Mallaby, the heavy resistance and the rumours about the high losses were important considerations in the British decision to carry out the bombings and shelling. Jordan even states that minimizing their own losses was the main reason for the onslaught.<sup>66</sup>

Judging by the execution of the bombardments and their consequences, it is striking that several, notably Indonesian, sources affirm the image that is evoked in *Dokumentasi Pemuda* of a blind barrage. A report in the newspaper *Berita Indonesi* with the headline 'Surabaya Turning into a Second Amritsar. "Gentlemen" Have no Humanity', first of all summarizes the targets also listed in the report of the Royal Air Force (RAF). Although the Air Operations Books only observe that 'results were good', the image of a blood-bath arises from the press report: 'thousands and thousands of civilians have been killed, there are heavily and lightly wounded. Hundreds of women and small children have become victims. The number of civilian casualties exceeds the number of dead fighters fourfold. The public hospital is full.' However, at the time, many Indonesian newspapers adopted an element of exaggeration to support the national cause. Thus, *Berita Indonesia* published the unlikely report that 'imitation Ghurka's' were taking part in the fight: Dutchmen who were said to have blackened their faces.<sup>67</sup> According to a chronicle of the revolution, British units and airplanes had been ordered to fire at the crowd on the ground, thereby injuring women and children. But this work, too, is partly based on newspaper reports and stories of *pemuda*. For example, it states that some 50 airplanes had taken part in the bombing, whereas in reality the number was five.<sup>68</sup>

Then again, the reports of the RAF and the Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies (AFNEI) do not contain impartial representations of the operation either. Instead, the reports draw a picture of a clean war, in which only pure military targets were hit and operations were carried out prudently. The works of some British (military) authors are in the same vein. The veteran Doulton states that 'great care was taken to avoid unnecessary casualties by careful planning and skilful conducting of the operations.'<sup>69</sup> In the official British history, S. Woodburn Kirby writes that air support was used sparingly and only against precisely marked Indonesian centres of resistance.<sup>70</sup> Contemporary British authors such as McMillan and Jordan also judged the course of the operation mildly. Jordan, for example, states that the deployment of artillery, naval guns and airstrikes was not a sign of overreaction, but of a 'cautious advance against a well-equipped foe'.<sup>71</sup>

Dutch authors are more critical. According to Limpach, it is almost certain that British Indian troops used 'mass violence'.<sup>72</sup> Willy Meelhuijsen writes that authors such as Woodburn Kirby stripped the battle of its 'truly destructive nature'. According to him, the air force was not used that sparingly at all, and the naval guns were very active. However, he (and other) authors mistakenly assume that 500 bombs were dropped, likely confusing this with the weight of the 500-lbs explosives.<sup>73</sup> Meelhuijsen also replicates the misconception about the time of the bombardments. But his criticism cannot be simply set aside. After all, he experienced the onslaught himself. In his memoirs of the battle, he writes: 'every day the mortars whistle, the explosions crash, in the distance the rattling of machine guns can be heard, the drumming of the British naval guns and the shrill buzz tones of the diving Mosquitoes and Thunderbolts.'<sup>74</sup>

Part of the answer to this apparent contradiction in the sources lies in the obvious fact that the British experienced the violence very differently to the receiving party. The asymmetry in fighting power also played a part in this. Bussemaker: the fact 'that the British deployed naval guns, artillery and airplanes and tanks against for the most part lightly armed Indonesians must have led to huge massacres, which is confirmed by eyewitnesses'.<sup>75</sup> It should be noted that the Indonesians, as already described, were not really lightly armed, but that their actual fighting power was strongly reduced by their lack of experience and organization. Incidentally, Bussemaker appears to be referring to casualties among the fighters, not civilians.

What do the sources say about the actual scale of the bombing and shelling by British Indian troops? First air support. During a staff meeting on 16 November, General Mountbatten scornfully remarked that the number of bombs that had so far been dropped was the equivalent of just 75% of the bomb load of one B-29.<sup>76</sup> That amounts to 30 bombs of 500 pounds, a number that is indeed mentioned in several places.<sup>77</sup> From the perspective of the British, whose memories of the Burma campaign against Japan were still fresh, that was probably a modest amount. However, Mountbatten conveniently ignored the navy gunships and artillery batteries that had carried out shelling on a much larger scale. One reason for this difference was actually that the bombing missions immediately provoked sharp anti-British and also anti-Dutch reactions in the press, to the point even of comparisons with the bombings by the Nazis.<sup>78</sup> To prevent reputational damage, Mountbatten therefore limited the deployment of airplanes and where possible made use of fire support of the navy, the field artillery and

mortars. Another reason was that airstrikes not only required prior permission, but also had to be accounted for up to the highest level, which was not the case with the deployment of artillery.<sup>79</sup>

However, it is questionable whether the air forces were deployed only for carefully selected military targets. On 14 and 15 November, the RAF was given permission to freely hunt enemy trains and it said itself that it had had 'good sport' with the strafing and bombing of engines and carriages.<sup>80</sup> Yet the effects were disastrous. Padmodiwiryo mentions an airstrike on a train in Gedangan which killed many passengers. Nasution describes a number of airstrikes, including the bombing of a carriage full of refugees at Sidoarjo, to the south of the city. These attacks, 'so terrible', were intended to disrupt the accrue ment of reinforcements.<sup>81</sup>

Possibly as a result of this, deployment of the air forces was further limited from 16 November 1945 onwards. Only positively identified military targets were allowed to be attacked. Therefore, the quality of intelligence played a crucial part. Earlier, it had already been decided to deploy airplanes only for targets outside the range of artillery and naval guns.<sup>82</sup> Meelhuijsen mentions another reason for potentially sparing use of air support. According to him, the Thunderbolts were of little use in the street fighting. In his recollection sometimes their only option was to carry out mock attacks so as not to endanger own troops.<sup>83</sup> This is not inconceivable, but the same would then apply to artillery and naval guns, whereas these, certainly in the early phases, were not deployed with the same prudence. During the smaller fights later that month, deployment of fire support did decrease according to Frank Palmos, because of the risk of hitting own soldiers. One application of the air forces that was very effective, was to neutralize Indonesian mounted guns. Though they were not easy to hit, the attacks greatly jeopardized Indonesian opportunities to carry out bombardments.<sup>84</sup>

Although fewer restrictions were imposed for the deployment of field artillery than for calling in air support, that does not mean that the artillery fire was less destructive. Bussemaker states that due to the light construction of many *kampung* houses, the effect of artillery shelling was 'almost always disastrous'. Then again - as Bussemaker also observes - most *kampongs* had already been deserted by their residents. According to Jordan, artillery was therefore not deployed to cause casualties but to rid the battlefield of civilians and to undermine the morale of the enemy.<sup>85</sup> This latter argument would later also frequently be used by the Dutch.



As evidenced by the memoirs of Padmodiwiryo, the effect on morale was only temporary. At some point, he and his fellow fighters had to leave their machine-gun nests and gun emplacements to seek cover from the devastating artillery fire of the British Indian troops. After a few days however, they got used to the constant roar of the guns and learned how to better evade them (this pattern, too, recurs later on in the conflict).<sup>86</sup> Seeing as it was difficult if not impossible for *pemuda* to carry out attacks themselves when under fire, it would appear that British use of artillery as suppressive fire was in any case effective. In addition, the guns were deployed to take out snipers who were holed up in buildings behind the frontline. This proved to have a clear deterrent effect.<sup>87</sup> Perhaps the fact that General Mansergh was an artilleryman himself also played a part in his preference for that weapon.

Naval guns were also used less reticently than the air force. According to Notosusanto, on 10 November alone, the ships fired 350 grenades spread across 57 volleys.<sup>88</sup> The ships that carried out this shelling were the destroyers HMS Carron, HMS Cavalier and HMS Caesar.<sup>89</sup> Eyewitness reports give the impression that the destroyers continued to have an active role over the following days. Nasution states that the intensity of the naval bombardments decreased from 14 November onwards.<sup>90</sup> Nonetheless, they inflicted 'huge slaughter' according to Bussemaker. He cites an eyewitness report of a Dutch woman who found eighty to ninety bodies in her neighbourhood following several salvos from British warships. It remains unclear if these were fighters or civilians. She does remark that snipers operated in the buildings that were fired upon.<sup>91</sup> McMillan appears to have little regard for the devastating effect of the naval guns when he ascertains that, even though warships were deployed to fire at the city, the guns were not of a particularly large calibre. Anyone who wishes to check this, says McMillan, can see it with their own eyes in the dry dock in Chatham, where HMS Cavalier is on display as a museum piece.<sup>92</sup> Although McMillan is right in naval terms – the destroyers were each equipped with three 155-mm guns, which qualify as medium calibre cannons – the 55-pound grenades they fired were still a good deal heavier than the 25-pounders of the field artillery.

The government in London did appear to realize the destructive power of the naval guns. According to the Dutch Commander of the Armed Forces in the East (BSO, Bevelhebber van de Strijdkrachten in het Oosten), Lieutenant Admiral Conrad Helfrich, a message was received from the capital after the ships had shelled Surabaya, warning that this was forbidden. How-



ever, Helfrich and the rest of the Dutch military command were poorly informed about the situation on the ground, and it is not clear what precisely the reprimand was for. According to Dick Schoonoord, the message came after a destroyer had sailed up the *kali* (river) Mas on 13 November, and had fired at Indonesian anti-aircraft artillery there. These guns had damaged a few airplanes and injured pilots.<sup>93</sup> If this is indeed what this was about, it is not evident from Helfrich's minutes. In any case, the deployment of naval guns did not cease following the alleged message from London.

Tanks, too, played a significant role in the urban battle. Meelhuijsen reports many instances of deployment of British tanks during the fighting, which were capable of causing many casualties with their guns. *Pak* (Sir) Des Alwi, who fought on the Indonesian side, told Meelhuijsen about a 'massacre among pemuda's' near Keputran, where British tanks launched a surprise attack on the 'youngsters' lying in position. Tanks were often used by the army to force a breakthrough for the infantry. In Meelhuijsen's observation, they sometimes fired randomly at the surroundings to break the opponent's morale. Furthermore, he states that the tanks had 'free rein' due to the lack of effective anti-tank guns on the Indonesian side. However, the morale of the *pemuda* was not easily broken, and they also managed to find ways to eliminate the feared tanks. So-called *brani mati* units (literally 'courage to die'), also known as *jibaku* (Japanese for 'self-destruction') stormed the Stuarts of 11th PAVO and attempted to destroy their tracks with explosives, thereby immobilizing the tanks. If successful, fighters threw grenades into the tank turret to kill the crew. In some cases, they then demolished the turret to loot the gun.<sup>94</sup>

According to Suratmin, who writes about the role of Hizbullah during the Battle of Surabaya, forty religiously motivated fighters, as well as others, were sent across the city with a special message: '[d]o not come home. If you die, you go straight to heaven.' Such fatwahs were issued by so-called *kyai*, religious experts held in high regard by Muslim fighters.<sup>95</sup> The *brani mati* fighters were feared by the British Indian troops, who nonetheless killed many of them with automatic fire and mounted guns. Other dangers threatening tanks were hand grenades thrown from buildings, and Japanese *tekidanto*, a simple sort of grenade launcher. In an effort to better protect themselves against these attacks, the British began using the medium-heavy Sherman tanks from 23 November onwards, which were less vulnerable than the light Stuarts.<sup>96</sup> Still, in Padmodiwiryo's memory, the use of tanks gradually diminished as the fighting progressed, because of their vulnerability in

the streets, and the *jibaku* fighters.<sup>97</sup> However, it could also be the case that the necessity of deploying the tanks diminished once the British had gained control of large parts of the city and resistance became less violent.

Finally, KNIL lieutenant Jack Boer, who worked as a translator for a British officer during the Battle of Surabaya, recounted an unusual incident. According to a documentary about him, he was riding a Stuart tank to Werfstraat prison, when he heard that the prisoners held there were about to be killed. Together with ten Gurkha soldiers, he reputedly freed a large number of Dutchmen by blowing a gap in the prison wall. Although the rescue attempt did, in fact, take place, Boer seems to have portrayed his own role a little too heroically.<sup>98</sup>

To summarize, the image of the British deployment of fighter planes, warships, artillery and tanks that emerges from the sources is mixed. The British indeed seem to have used air power with some prudence. Target selection, however, was not always very precise considering the attacks on the train carriages, which, according to several sources, also led to civilian casualties. The reticence seems to have been primarily politically motivated. Because naval guns, artillery and tanks caused less controversy, the same degree of restraint was not applied to those weapons and weapon systems, except when own troops were in danger of being hit. Neither do the British reports explicitly indicate the scale of the shelling, whereas the number of bombs dropped was meticulously recorded.

## GUNS ON GUNUNGSARI

As mentioned above, the impression has been cultivated in Indonesian popular imagery that brave *pemuda* with nothing but krisses (Javanese daggers), matchets and *bambu runcing* stood their ground against the notorious British army, veterans of the Burma front and men hardened in the battles of the Second World War.<sup>99</sup> Bamboo spears in particular soon became the symbol of the heroic struggle of the *pemuda* against opponents equipped with modern weapons.<sup>100</sup> Improvised fighting groups did indeed have such weaponry, and they were also used to commit many *bersiap* murders. David Wehl describes attacks by *pemuda* who jumped on tanks with little more than daggers.<sup>101</sup> Padmodiwiryo states that in some places, success was also achieved with *bambu runcing*.<sup>102</sup>

However, the more organized armed forces were preoccupied with very different matters, such as the question how people with knowledge of artillery could be brought in as quickly as possible. *Bung* (uncle) Tomo made

an appeal via his station Radio Pemberontakan, which was also received in Yogyakarta. In his history of the Indonesian Military Academy, Moehkardi writes how 23 cadets were subsequently given a crash course by a former sergeant of the KNIL who had also been *beiho* (auxiliary soldier) in the Japanese artillery. As early as 11 November, Urip Sumoharjo himself, chief of staff of the TKR, sent them to Surabaya. There, they immediately placed several guns on Gunungsari, a 30-metre-high hill from which the lower part of the city could be covered. Without compass or map, let alone a reliable system of observation, they fired in the direction of Tanjung Perak Harbor, hoping to hit British ships. Unfortunately, the shells landed elsewhere, most likely causing Indonesian civilian casualties, writes Moehkardi. According to him, such 'tragicomic stories' regularly occurred in Surabaya at that time.<sup>103</sup>

Eventually, they acquired a compass and map and more targeted firing became possible. The Indonesian guns on Gunungsari caused the British plenty of problems during the fighting, all the more so because the hill was located at a very strategic point. Although many grenades still landed in the wrong places, important targets were sometimes hit. For example, the war journal of Squadron 60 reports an artillery shelling of the airfield near the harbour. For the soldiers on site the situation became so tense that they ducked under the tables, emerging only just in time for a sudden visit of General Mansergh to the troops.<sup>104</sup> Moehkardi adds that the British warships had to anchor further out from the coast because of the shelling. One ship still docked in the harbour was reported to have been hit and to have burst into flames.<sup>105</sup>

The British reacted to the artillery fire by sending aircraft to Gunungsari for a reconnaissance of Indonesian positions, after which cadets immediately moved all the guns south to Sepanjang, leaving behind just one large malfunctioning cannon. That artillery piece was indeed bombed by the British the next day. Soon after, the pieces that had been moved were likewise attacked with mortar fire, also injuring cadets. However, Gunungsari remained an important post for the Indonesian armed forces. In the eyes of many, the city was truly lost only when British infantry, supported by tanks, airplanes and artillery, finally managed to capture Gunungsari on 28 November.<sup>106</sup>

The artillerymen improvised and were quick learners. Padmodiwiryo recounts how Indonesian troops began to understand the necessity of moving guns around regularly, so that they were less susceptible to air-strikes. They also often used camouflage and built barricades all over against advancing tanks. The author describes a case in which *pemuda*



*Bambu runcing monument on Jl. Jenderal Sudirman in Surabaya, unveiled by the governor of East Java on 5 May 1981. Source: Alvan Remag, Shutterstock.*

aimed an artillery piece upwards with bamboo sticks and used it as an anti-aircraft gun to shoot down light spotter planes. It remains unclear whether they were successful.<sup>107</sup>

Generally speaking, Indonesian anti-aircraft artillery was indeed a weapon that hindered the British in their operations. British reports frequently mention Thunderbolts and Mosquitos being hit in flight. Nasution states that Indonesian fighters destroyed a total of three airplanes on the ground, and shot down another two.<sup>108</sup> A high-profile loss was that of a Mosquito carrying Brigadier Robert Loder-Symonds, commander of the Royal Artillery of the 5th Indian Division, on 11 November. He was the second British general to die in Surabaya, but it is unknown whether the plane was brought down by anti-aircraft artillery. Meelhuijsen writes that another plane was shot down with an anti-aircraft gun in Gumbreng.<sup>109</sup>

Finally, as mentioned earlier, Indonesian fighting groups also used tanks. In particular during the fighting in October, these would appear to have been useful, as the 49th Brigade did not have many support weapons at its disposal at the time. In general, however, results were mixed, mostly due to unfamiliarity with controls and the tactical deployment of tanks.<sup>110</sup> According to Padmodiwiryo, the same inexperience became apparent during the deployment of machine guns, which fighters initially set up in full view in the middle of the road, making them highly vulnerable to British attacks.<sup>111</sup>

Such tactical mistakes and a general lack of fighting experience and organization, combined with the technological supremacy of the British regarding fighter planes and warships, led to the eventual loss of the Indonesian armed forces against the British. The foregoing account does prove that the British did not just use their ships, artillery and aircraft against fighters with bamboo spears, but also against a 'well-equipped foe', who did not yield an inch and was prepared to take huge risks during the fighting. This commanded the respect of the British, who themselves exhibited battle tactics that boiled down to minimizing their own losses and who relied to a large extent on fire support. Despite this fire support, in Petra Groen's words, the city had to be taken from the *pemuda* 'one foot at a time'.<sup>112</sup>

#### PILES OF DEAD

Figures diverge regarding the number of casualties. Many of the British dead fell during the Indonesian attack on 28 October. According to one



colonel, 55 men were killed in the first ten minutes alone.<sup>113</sup> In addition, Schoonoord counts 31 dead, 81 wounded and 194 missing during the first four days of the British counterattack.<sup>114</sup> In Woodburn Kirby's official British military history of the battle, the total number of casualties on the British side on Java up to 22 November is estimated at 295, 'nearly all in Sourabaya'.<sup>115</sup>

The chaotic situation and the limited organization and registration made it very difficult, if not impossible, to count the Indonesian dead. Wehl finds that, despite British restraint, 'rivers of blood' still flowed through the city. 'History in Java,' writes Wehl, 'like history in any other part of the world, is built upon unknown graves.'<sup>116</sup> An AFNEI telegram of 10 November describes it more prosaically, following the first fights and bombardments: 'area littered, unable count, many killed by tanks and MG [machine guns] in fanatical charges against own troops.'<sup>117</sup> Although Indonesian sources mention numbers of up to many tens of thousands of dead, the figure is widely held to have lain between ten and twenty thousand – still an exceedingly high amount. Ruslan Abdulgani mentions a total of 16,000 dead on the Indonesian side, something Meelhuijsen regards as 'not at all exaggerated' considering the ferocity of the fighting and the level of destruction.<sup>118</sup> It cannot be established precisely how many of those were fighters and how many civilians. Jordan estimates that there were 7000 civilian casualties, so just under half of the total amount of victims mentioned by Abdulgani, if that is taken as a starting point.<sup>119</sup>

In their ultimatum, the British had explicitly stated that civilians were allowed to leave the city, but many inhabitants were illiterate and would not have been able to read the notification. However, many people had already fled during and after the fighting at the end of October. According to Bussemaker, the population had evacuated the lower part of the city by 10 November. Many eyewitnesses recount great flows of refugees leaving other parts of the city during the fighting in November. Indonesian sources suggest there may well have been several hundreds of thousands of refugees, a significant number of whom were to die along the way due to various causes.<sup>120</sup>

It is tempting to state, as has often been done, that bombardments and artillery fire claimed mostly Indonesian lives, and that those victims were primarily civilians. However, no evidence supports that claim. High numbers of casualties due to British machine gun and tank fire are reported remarkably often in the sources. McMillan cites a chaotic moment just



before the death of Brigadier Mallaby, described by a British captain. A large crowd had gathered on the square in front of the Internatio Bank and was becoming increasingly threatening:

I got into the Bank and the Coy [company] Commander asked me the form. I told him to place his Coy in the most advantageous position in the building which would give the greatest fire power, and to await my word to fire. I waited for about a quarter of an hour and then the crowd became very turbulent and started to gather around the building. I told the Coy Commander to be ready to fire. The Indonesians brought up a machine gun along the front of the building. The opening burst killed about 200 Indonesians in the square and the rest dispersed.<sup>121</sup>

*Civilians cross over to the quarter controlled by British troops during a lull in the fighting in Surabaya, November 1945. Source: Bert Hardy, Army Film and Photographic Unit, IWM.*



It is impossible to say whether those 200 victims were fighters or stirred-up civilians, as the two categories were fluid in Surabaya at that moment. In addition, Schoonoord describes a fight at the end of November, when the city was already almost entirely in British hands. Here, too, it is not clear whether the victims were purely fighters:

On 26 November, the area around the hospital and the oxygen factory was cleared and the hospital was occupied. Upon discovery, a group of 44 Indonesians was bombarded with artillery. A tank squadron attacked the area around Darmo. Two tanks were hit by fire and one crew was killed. The other tanks killed 162 Indonesians.<sup>122</sup>

Light Bren guns, too, were capable of causing very many casualties, as evidenced by a quote from Douulton: '[t]he Brens continued to speak, the piles of dead at the barricades mounted, but more and more Indonesians came forward trampling on the fallen.'<sup>123</sup> According to Anthony Reid, such scenes and the high preparedness of Indonesians to die that these scenes testified to, can in part be explained by the widely held belief of invincibility (*kebal*) among the fighters. A mystic leader such as a *guru* or a *kramat* could issue a *jimat* (amulet) that would repel bullets and make the *pemuda* invincible. Religious leaders, such as *ulama* and *kyai*, also played an important part in this, states Reid.<sup>124</sup> They declared the struggle a *perang sabil*, a holy war.<sup>125</sup> The suicide bombers mentioned above should be grouped among the same phenomenon. Combined with inexperience, inferior weaponry and poor organization in comparison to the British, this all resulted in enormous numbers of dead and wounded among Indonesian fighting groups.

Finally, there were casualties among the prisoners of war and internees, who fell during, and partly also as a direct consequence of, the fighting. *Pemuda* attacked the British evacuation convoys, leading to the deaths of many people. For example, the Gubeng transport, during which many dozens of women and children were killed, has become notorious in the Netherlands. Incidentally, Bussemaker states that there were also many casualties on the Indonesian side caused by Bren fire from a weapon carrier guarding the convoy: '[a] machine gunner emptied twelve magazines of his Bren into a closely packed attacking crowd at a distance of just 50 meters.' Conversely, several internees actually owed their lives to the TKR, who protected the APWI against a furious attacking crowd

from the surrounding *kampongs*.<sup>126</sup> And finally, there were also internees who died because of British artillery shells landing in the wrong places.<sup>127</sup>

#### LIFELESS BUT EXTREMELY SAFE

‘Soerabaja had been recreated into a heavily damaged and well-nigh entirely lifeless city,’ writes eyewitness Willy Meelhuijsen about the situation after the British had gained control of the city at the end of November.<sup>128</sup> Rear Admiral Pieter Koenraad, at that moment the acting Dutch Commandant der Zeemacht in Nederlands-Indië (commander of the navy in the Dutch East Indies, CZM), visited the city in December and reported to the army high command: ‘[t]he city is very neglected and dirty. Many buildings and *kampongs* have been destroyed. (...) The city is lifeless but extremely safe.’<sup>129</sup> Besides the immediate consequences for the city and its inhabitants, the fighting also had important ramifications for the warring parties, both for the British and the Indonesians and for the Dutch, not only in the short but also the long term. The lessons from ‘Surabaya’ affected the Dutch-Indonesian conflict as the tremors of an earthquake, already lurking in the background and about to erupt.

First of all, the Indonesians discovered that mass attacks and regular fighting yielded little result and at the same time caused high numbers of casualties on their own side. The morale of the Indonesian armed forces was badly shaken due to the losses suffered and the experience that without well-trained and armed troops it was difficult to fight against an experienced opponent armed with modern weapons. The lack of working communications had also become painfully clear.<sup>130</sup> In their revolutionary optimism, says Nasution, the fighters believed that they needed only courage to achieve victory over the colonial armies. ‘How many of our boys died in vain,’ he writes in his classic work *Fundamentals of Guerrilla Warfare*, ‘because of the mistakes of our commanders who urged them to go on hopeless attacks, to fight with bamboo sticks against tanks, to fight with grenades against artillery, etc.’<sup>131</sup>

Wehl concludes that the battle was a ‘tragedy of hysterical ferocity, fanaticism, self-sacrifice, and wasted effort’ for the Indonesians. Besides the tragic loss of human life, the large number of weapons, tanks and artillery captured or destroyed by the British was also a tough blow. Dozens of field guns, anti-aircraft guns and heavy machine guns fell into British hands. Reid, too, emphasizes the waste of people and equipment. According to Nasution, he writes, the Indonesians, with the lost weaponry, could have

raised an army superior to anything the Dutch possessed, but Reid dismisses this as 'idle speculation'.<sup>132</sup>

Yet many Indonesians regarded the battle as a triumph, states the historian George McTurnan Kahin. In his view, it marked a turning point in the independence movement and demonstrated to the British not just the Indonesians' 'fighting strength and the willingness to sacrifice life itself', but also that the Indonesian population had rallied behind the Republican cause.<sup>133</sup> Besides, from a military perspective, Indonesian troops had gained valuable experience with modern weapons and warfare against a western army. They could immediately apply those experiences in the subsequent combat encounters with the British and the Dutch. Indeed, British and also Dutch observers reported that, following the fighting in Surabaya, Indonesians made smarter use of artillery. After a few shots had been fired, they quickly repositioned the pieces to prevent counter-battery fire.<sup>134</sup> Schoonoord writes that in later confrontations with the British they also relied more on snipers to inflict losses on the British, without themselves running too much risk. Gradually, several Indonesian fighting groups did indeed develop tactics that enabled them to hurt the enemy at a lower risk, although they were still regularly tempted into large-scale frontal attacks leading to high numbers of casualties.

For the British, too, the 'inferno' of Surabaya was a turning point. The most important lesson for them was that they wanted to get rid of the 'burdens of occupation' as soon as possible. In the meantime, it was a matter of preventing a repetition of the fighting in Surabaya. In other words, the British wanted to operate in a manner that diminished the risks for their own troops. A training instruction issued by the 23rd Indian Division while the fighting was still ongoing can illustrate how this began to take shape at the tactical level. In the instruction, the commander, Major General D. C. Hawthorn, summarizes some of the lessons the British troops had learnt during the urban battle.

After some disdainful remarks about Indonesian combat tactics, he praised the effect on morale of the deployment of the British artillery and mortars. It had even terrified Bung Tomo and other Indonesian leaders. A caveat with regard to the deployment of artillery in an urban area was, according to Hawthorn, that it was hard to guarantee accuracy if aerial observation was lacking. Should the British again be involved in this type of fighting, the general advised that 'the maximum use of all weapons must be made from the outset'.<sup>135</sup> This typifies subsequent British tactical oper-

ations in a nutshell, which were characterized by heightened attention for the safety of their own troops (but less so for that of Indonesian civilians) and relied more heavily than before on the deployment of artillery and air support to nip Indonesian attacks in the bud and damage the morale of the Indonesian fighting groups in order to prevent new attacks.

Surabaya was not the first time the British had used air power in the archipelago - 'the first air strike of the Java war', in the words of Doulton, occurred at Magelang on 1 November.<sup>136</sup> But after 10 November, the deployment of air support increased sharply. That same month, the RAF carried out airstrikes on at least the following places: on Semarang (17 November), Ambarawa (20, 23, 29 and 30 November), Solo and Yogyakarta (25–27 November) and Bandung (29 November) - all locations, in fact, where former internees awaited evacuation in the camps.<sup>137</sup> 'The month of November has seen a revival of the operational work of the Squadron', the operational report of Squadron 60 RAF states. 'The military situation in Java has necessitated a use of close support tactics much akin to those practiced in the Burma Campaign.' Although political developments had limited the offensive deployment of the Thunderbolts, the squadron had still been able to do 'some very useful work'.<sup>138</sup>

Navy gunships were also involved in several battles, but comparatively speaking it was the field artillery that provided the lion's share of the fire support.<sup>139</sup> The situation was different on Sumatra: it was not until March 1946 that artillery was deployed there for the first time.<sup>140</sup> Limpach states that, in the months following the Battle of Surabaya, the British 'regularly resorted to extreme technical violence, that is to say the excessive use of heavy weapons' during their 'punitive expeditions' on Java and Sumatra. The policy of deterrence that they pursued went back to the lesson of Surabaya. Here, Limpach refers to 'blind artillery shelling' in the work of McMillan. It is true that in his chapters about the British occupation period, a number of cases are mentioned in which fire support was used, but the descriptions do not reveal the extent to which this was 'extreme'.<sup>141</sup> In any case, the change in tactics was a sign that the British realized that, in Indonesia, they had to fight hard against an enemy who was capable of inflicting heavy losses on them. It was fighting in which the British considered it necessary to deploy fire support.

One thing that may have coloured the image of the British deployment of heavy weapons is the criticism of British actions voiced in particular by the Netherlands. For example, the bombing in December of the *kam-*

*pong* Cibadak by the RAF provoked judgmental reactions from the Dutch camp. The British had carried out the airstrike after a British convoy had been ambushed on the Puncak Pass between Jakarta and Bandung. According to P. J. A. Idenburg, director of cabinet of Lieutenant Governor General Huib van Mook, it was a 'drastic remedy' which led to 'the innocent part of the population being hit the hardest'. Likewise, Colonel Simon Spoor, the subsequent army commander, was pessimistic about the 'English method', which he deemed 'overly repressive'. He had more faith in the so-called 'Dutch method', which according to him consisted of primarily small-scale operations with lightly armed units rooted in pre-war KNIL operations in the colony (more on this in the next chapter). Undoubtedly, frustration about the limited leeway Dutch troops were given to deal with the 'extremists' themselves played a part in this and other criticisms of the British actions. After all, criticism of the British became even harsher when the latter adopted a non-interference strategy.<sup>142</sup>

Although the Dutch criticism certainly contained a grain of truth, this and a few other notorious events should not be considered representative of British operations. After all, the airstrike on Cibadak was, according to Doulton, 'the heaviest air strike of the Java "war"'. Nor should it be overlooked that in several places the British were confronted with fierce Indonesian attacks. For example, the attack on a convoy just mentioned, in which Indonesians made good use of snipers and Molotov cocktails, led to 24 British dead.<sup>143</sup> Furthermore, due to the tough mountainous terrain of the Puncak Pass, no counterattacks could be carried out, which is why, says Math Jalhay, the British limited themselves to an airstrike. During the passage of other convoys, the British also suffered high losses in manpower and equipment, partly due to the increased Indonesian use of landmines. Attacks on convoys around Sukabumi, for example, cost the British 17 dead and 88 wounded between 10 and 14 March 1946. A detachment of Sherman tanks of the 13th Lancers which came to their aid was ambushed and needed to be rescued itself. According to Doulton, the Lancers, whose tanks had for the most part been damaged, would have been in grave danger if the RAF had not come to their aid.<sup>144</sup>

During the fighting at Magelang and Ambarawa, the British felt compelled to evacuate the area despite the deployment of air support. The Indonesian forces also used field artillery, which led to casualties among the internees. In Indonesian circles, the British retreat was celebrated as a major victory for Sudirman, who shortly after was promoted to gener-



al and appointed commander-in-chief of the Indonesian armed forces.<sup>145</sup> Such heavy fighting eventually led to the rapid admittance of the Dutch forces to Java, not by chance starting in Surabaya, which the British high command wanted to leave as quickly as possible. Helfrich then suggested directing the well-trained Marine Brigade to the port city in December.<sup>146</sup>

This decision demonstrated one of the lessons that the Dutch armed forces had learnt from the fighting in Surabaya: 'that the strength of the resisting parties on Java far exceeds the expectations they had at the beginning of their operations', as the troop commander on Java, Major General W. Schilling, put it. This general, who had arrived on Java in September 1945 together with the first British troops, immediately signalled a problem, seeing as Dutch troops in the Indonesian archipelago at that time were by no means capable of beating that 'resisting party'. For the 'purging' of Java and Sumatra, he calculated that a total of five divisions would be needed for at least three years, 'well-equipped with mechanized troops and own air assets'. Adding a cautionary reference to the lengthy Aceh War (1873–ca. 1913), he believed the Dutch population could not produce the effort 'required to wage a war of reconquest'. He therefore called for a diplomatic solution.<sup>147</sup>

Helfrich, the Dutch commander of the armed forces in the East, had a much more optimistic take on the situation and demonstrated a combative attitude. He answered that he wanted to fight to the last man. He believed that much could already be achieved with a good air force. If they had a well-equipped base, if necessary outside of Java, he considered it feasible to operate over Java daily with 25 aircraft.<sup>148</sup> Others also advocated a hard line. Colonel J. P. H. Perks, Netherlands liaison officer at the allied command in South East Asia, stated in a memo on 30 November that, 'considering the mentality of the Indonesian races, the use of the most frightening weapons is recommended such as whistling bombs, flame throwers, rockets etc.' Because, so he said, 'it is better to have kill [sic] thousands of terrorists (and probably some innocent spectators) now, than to kill millions of frightened and innocent people later (although without bullets)'.<sup>149</sup>

In hindsight, Schilling was one of the few people who recognized the signs of the times. A potential candidate to be appointed army commander in the archipelago, he was, however, passed over in favour of Spoor, who, just like Helfrich, had more optimistic ideas about settling the struggle.



*A British soldier mans a Bren gun at an outpost of the 5th Indian Division's line of defence in Surabaya, 6 April 1946. Source: Desmond Davis, Army Film and Photographic Unit, IWM.*

What everyone seemed to agree on, was that the Dutch troops needed to be armed with more 'auxiliary weapons' than had been the case until then. The British had already insisted that the Dutch troops should be organized in a larger structure, and that they had to be better armed. Starting to realize this, too, the Dutch government sent a colonel of the general staff, M. R. H. Calmeyer, to Indonesia to make concrete plans for establishing artillery units, regimental staffs, tanks, armoured vehicles and other supporting units. These units would later become known as 'Calmeyer units'. It was also decided to reinforce the artillery itself with anti-tank guns and

mortars. The plans were finalized at a conference in Singapore on 19 December 1945.<sup>150</sup>

Thus, whereas, following Surabaya, the Indonesians increasingly made use of guerilla tactics, by contrast the British and the Dutch decided to reinforce their conventional fighting power. What the warring parties had in common, however, was that they all developed strategies to limit their own risk and to inflict losses on the enemy in a more effective way than had been the case until then – although the lessons learnt were not always applied consistently everywhere.<sup>151</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In the early days of the armed revolution, during fights between Indonesian nationalists and Japanese troops, fire support played but a small part. When it came to fighting, both Japanese troops and Indonesian *pemuda* were prepared to accept high risks, the former as a consequence of the Japanese martial tradition and *bushidō*, and the latter whipped up by the revolutionary spirit together with inexperience in battle. During the first big confrontations with the British, both parties initially suffered high losses, the British not so much due to intrepidity but more because they were taken by surprise by the ferocity of the Indonesian attacks. In Surabaya in October, the units of the 49th Indian Brigade were overrun by fighters, some of whom considered themselves invincible. During the subsequent Battle of Surabaya, the British deployed fire support on a comparatively large scale. In this way, and by other means such as machine guns, the British managed to reduce their own losses considerably, but on the Indonesian side thousands of civilians and fighters were killed.

Opinions differ widely on the proportionality of the British counterattack in Surabaya. Examination of the sources reveals that the British had clear military reasons for the deployment of artillery, air forces and naval guns, although it should be noted that the air force was used with much more restraint than artillery, naval guns and tanks, in particular due to political and publicity dimensions. Different Indonesian fighting groups also used fire support as much as possible. In doing so, improvisation regularly proved necessary, and precision in particular left a lot to be desired. It is certain that neither the British armed forces nor the Indonesian fighting groups did everything in their power to protect civilians, both local inhabitants as well as internees and former prisoners of war, against the violence of war.

The Battle of Surabaya became a reference point for the warring parties, whose later fighting methods can be traced back to the lessons learnt there. Indonesians began to understand the advantages of guerrilla methods (although they would still often try their luck in conventional ways and did not opt for the guerilla on a large scale until mid 1947); the British began to organize their retreat and until that time relied more than before on fire support; the Dutch realized that small-scale lightly armed units were not enough and they began to build a modern armed force organized and trained along the lines of regular warfare.



*During a gathering in Bondowoso on 3rd April 1949, a group of men wearing peci (Islamic headwear) and holding bambu runcing squat on the ground. Source: G. J.*

*Aaldriks/DLC/Nationaal Archief.*



### 3.

# Bombers vs. Bamboo Spears

In this chapter, the focus is on the weaponry, background, education, training and tactical concepts of the Netherlands and Indonesian armed forces. Discussions by military and political leaders about the mental and conceptual preparations for the conflict and the equipment to be purchased offer insight into the struggle that they expected and the way this could best be fought. Furthermore, the context within which troop buildup took place is important, seeing as material, political and personal limitations formed the framework of what was possible and feasible.

In 'classic' military historiography, material factors often feature prominently in the analysis of conflicts, in addition to organization, strategy and tactics. This brings with it a risk of technological determinism. When describing the equipment that the warring parties had at their disposal, we should not become fixated on the iron alone. According to Stephen Biddle, that is where many military historical studies fail: they primarily look at the distribution of resources and how they compare in an armed confrontation. Thus, he writes, 'well-equipped but poorly handled armies' are radically overestimated and 'poorly equipped but well-handled troops' are underestimated. This is precisely what the Dutch did when faced with – in their eyes – primitively armed and ad hoc organized Indonesian armed forces. The way in which fighting power is applied is essential. Of course,



technology plays a major role in the deployment of aircraft and artillery, but it is rarely decisive in itself.<sup>1</sup> Backgrounds, doctrine, training, practice and esprit de corps are also of great influence.

For several decades now, more attention is being paid to conceptual and human aspects as determining factors in warfare.<sup>2</sup> The traditions from which the Dutch forces emerged and the methods the recruits were taught about the role of fire support, to a great extent determined the eventual deployment of heavy weapons during the Indonesian War of Independence. Personal wartime experiences that the soldiers carried with them also influenced those actions. Besides artillery and air forces, other auxiliary weapons are also reviewed in this chapter, to provide insight into the position which artillery and air power occupied in the overall sum of deployed means. The chapter starts with the organization and weaponry of the Indonesian forces, of which only a general picture can be painted due to the lack of a central administration, particularly in the first years of the War of Independence, and unreliable reporting on the Dutch side.

#### INDONESIAN ORGANIZATION AND WEAPONRY FROM BKR TO WEHRKREISE

Reference is often made, also in this study, to Indonesian 'fighting groups' to indicate that, certainly in the early phases, the armed independence movement consisted of a wide range of regular and irregular troops. Over time, the military force of the Republic became better organized. Nonetheless, until the end of the war (and beyond), in addition to the central army, several fighting groups remained active that not only fought against the Dutch but also regularly against each other. This runs like a common thread through the history of the TNI's organization. On 5 October 1945, the BKR was renamed TKR and was no longer a *badan* (organ) but a *tentara* (army), which subsequently evolved into Tentara Republik Indonesia (TRI), until June 1947, when the army assumed the name it bears to this day, Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI). Attempts were made in the form of successive 'rationalizations' to further professionalize and down-scale the army, as well as increase its weaponry.<sup>3</sup>

Prior to the second Dutch offensive in December 1948, the official rationalized strength of the TNI amounted to 205,000 men on Java and another 36,000 on Sumatra. In practice, that number was possibly lower because family members were often also included in the count and local

commanders regularly listed too many people in order to favourably influence the provisioning of their troops.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, besides the official army, many militias and fighting groups remained active even after the rationalizations. At the time the BKR was founded, there were already plans for a navy and an air force, which later materialized as Angkatan Laut Republik Indonesia (ALRI) and Angkatan Udara Republik Indonesia (AURI) respectively.<sup>5</sup> The organization of the artillery of the TKR on Java shared several similarities with that of the prewar KNIL, which is hardly surprising given the chief of staff and several other officers' background in the colonial army. The military leadership appointed artillery commanders at the different divisions, who served operationally under the division commander and ultimately under the army commander. In addition, there was an inspector of artillery, also a KNIL position that had existed until 1942 (renamed army artillery commander after 1945). Just as in the Dutch army, this inspectorate was largely an administrative and technical position, but unlike in the KNIL, it resided under the department of Military Affairs.<sup>6</sup>

In the field, the actual organic functioning of artillery batteries naturally depended on the availability of guns and trained personnel. Gunners (but also members of the navy and air forces) were in practice also used for infantry duties, as was the case with Dutch artillerymen.<sup>7</sup> According to Dutch intelligence, the strength of the Indonesian artillery mid-1946 was 350 men, for the most part with a background in coastal and antitank gun operation in Japanese service. There were hardly any officers among them, because under Japanese command the highest attainable artillery rank had been that of sergeant.<sup>8</sup> In late 1948, all TNI divisions on Java (by then there were four) nominally contained an artillery battalion. On Sumatra, only the 10th Division, stationed at Aceh, had an artillery unit at its disposal, at the strength of a battalion. Other units often had to make do with only a few separate guns.<sup>9</sup> According to Ben Bouman, the total strength of the TNI artillery on the eve of the second offensive was 'no more than one battery of seven troops (three troops field artillery, one troop anti-aircraft artillery, one troop of coastal artillery and a staff troop, totalling eight hundred men spread across different formations).'<sup>10</sup>

At a number of airfields that had fallen into the hands of the Republic after the Second World War, Indonesian troops attempted to set up a functioning air force with airplanes left behind by the Japanese. Maguwo airfield soon became the centre of activities, where Commodore Agusti-



*Portrait of General Sudirman, commander in chief of the Indonesian armed forces.*

*Source: ANP / Elsevier.*

nus Adisucipto, who was later shot down by Dutch fighter pilots, played a pioneering role; as early as 27 October 1945, he claimed the first flight under the Republican flag.<sup>11</sup> It required great improvisational skills to build up the AURI, and to rebuild it following disastrous blows during the two Dutch offensives. Lastly, the AURI also proved crucial to the establishment of civil aviation for the Republic, and was to play an important role during ground operations in setting up and maintaining radio communications.<sup>12</sup>

The process of founding a navy went less smoothly. Rear Admiral Mohammad Nazir established headquarters and set up two divisions, one in West and one in Central Java. Not long afterwards, former fleet personnel from Dutch and Japanese times in Surabaya established a rivalling navy, called Marine Keamanan Rakyat, led by Admiral Atmaji. He also founded two divisions, both in East Java, as well as 'chief headquarters' (*markas tertinggi*). The problems created by this lack of unity in command remained unsolved until the political leaders of the Republic temporarily appointed Sudirman commander in chief of the navy.<sup>13</sup>

Such frictions were characteristic for the initial phase of the TKR, which had the considerable task of setting up a functioning organization under wartime conditions.<sup>14</sup> In broad terms, the Indonesian army basically tried to build and organize itself along conventional lines. However, the conflict gradually developed more and more in the direction of a guerrilla war, which was eventually reflected in the organization of the TNI. The TNI army leadership (primarily Nasution) took inspiration from other conflicts and foreign theorists like Clausewitz. After the capture of the Republican centre of power during the second Dutch offensive in 1948, Sudirman gave the formal order for the organization of a 'total people's war', a situation which in part had already existed in 1947. The TNI organized itself in so-called *Wehrkreise*, military districts in which both stationary and mobile units carried out guerrilla attacks. Division and brigade structures remained intact in the hierarchical sense, but were reorganized in smaller units.<sup>15</sup>

#### A PECULIAR CONGLOMERATE

Prior to the Battle of Surabaya, Indonesian fighting groups had managed to acquire large amounts of Japanese and pre-war KNIL weaponry. Immediately during the urban fighting and afterwards, much of this was damaged or fell into British hands. Numerous authors have studied the ques-

tion how many and what type of weapons were captured or transferred, leading to the conclusion that the estimations are too diverse to provide a reliable indication.

For example, in his memoirs the Japanese Indonesia veteran Sadao Oba counts more than 50,000 rifles, approximately 1800 machine guns, almost 200 guns and 50 tanks.<sup>16</sup> Woodburn Kirby notes 200 guns, 690 heavy and 700 light machine guns and 25,000 rifles.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, in an article on the Indonesian need of weapons, Han Bing Siong reviews a large number of estimations of the total number of firearms, varying from 30,000 to 70,000.<sup>18</sup> Bouman also weighs various sources and suggests 125,000 Japanese and KNIL firearms on Java and a further 65,000 on Sumatra.<sup>19</sup> Although the range of numbers is relatively large, these figures do give an idea of the scale of the arsenal acquired. Also worth mentioning is the fact that, when speaking of 'Japanese weapons', many of these consisted of KNIL weapons captured during the invasion of 1942. Besides this mostly outdated arsenal, the weaponry the Japanese had brought with them was makeshift and in part even crude.<sup>20</sup> Budi-arjo, a veteran of the Indonesian air force, speaks in his memoirs of 'second-hand junk'.<sup>21</sup>

Another source for Indonesian weaponry was trade – invariably called 'smuggling' by the Dutch – with surrounding countries and regions. According to Bayly and Harper, in addition to Bangkok (a 'huge arms bazaar'), Malaya in particular was 'the armoury of the Indonesian republic'.<sup>22</sup> Part of the trade with Malaya and Thailand, but also with Singapore and the Philippines, went via Aceh in North Sumatra, which remained unoccupied by the Dutch for the entirety of the War of Independence.<sup>23</sup> Due to the absence of land connections and the often small ships that were used for weapons trade, the Republic primarily acquired infantry weapons. Still, there are known cases of artillery being brought over. In Tegal (Central Java), an important Republican weapons trade centre, Dutch authorities intercepted a weapons stock in a ship called *Mariam Bee*. Sailing under the British flag, the ship contained 1400 rifles and the full equipment for two infantry battalions, as well as some light guns.<sup>24</sup> Just like the precise amount of originally Japanese equipment, the total number of guns the Indonesian troops acquired abroad remains unknown. In addition to acquisition from the Japanese, and overseas trade, weapons were also acquired from British Indian soldiers during the British occupation in 1945–1946.<sup>25</sup>

A fourth way to obtain weapons was to manufacture them, an activity that primarily took place on Java. To that end, the Republican ministry of defence founded the Pusat Persenjataan Negara, the National Weapon Centre, which ran factories and workshops where, for example, aerial bombs were modified into 'pull bombs' (on which more later). TNI divisions also founded such workshops and designed weapons such as mortars with firing tubes made from telephone poles. According to TNI Colonel Suptandar these proved extremely dangerous as they tended to disintegrate when used. Many production facilities fell into Dutch hands during the first offensive, but they were mostly restarted afterwards at a different location. Apart from mortars and improvised explosives, the lion's share of the weapons production and repairs concerned spears, blades, guns and other small arms.<sup>26</sup>

Due to the events in Surabaya late 1945, the TRI/TNI in East Java was much better armed during the War of Independence than elsewhere.<sup>27</sup> For example, according to Nasution, there were no heavy weapons at all in Banten in West Java. Fighters of the Tirtayasa Brigade, which operated there, had no functioning rifles and often had to make do with spears, knives, swords and *bambu runcing*.<sup>28</sup> In addition to Surabaya, the region around Yogyakarta was also relatively well-armed. Both elite troops of the Indonesian Akademi Militer and the Mobile Brigade, supported by the sultan, operated there.<sup>29</sup> According to Major Ferdinand Musch, commander of KNIL battalion Infanterie I, it even turned out that 'superiority in infantry weaponry lay with the opponent. Bands of 100–300 men were often equipped with Vickers or Japanese heavy machine guns, sometimes also 2-inch or 3-inch mortars'. This was reason for Musch to state that their own infantry had to be supported 'as much as possible' by artillery and/or air power during patrols so as to have technical superiority over the opponent.<sup>30</sup> On Sumatra, the Indonesian troops around Medan, in particular, were equipped with heavy weapons, largely originating from 'free' Aceh.<sup>31</sup> Elsewhere on Sumatra armaments were inadequate, although in some places a number of guns and automatic weapons were sourced with the help of the population.<sup>32</sup>

Dutch sources (and Japanese and British sources) often mention the 'peculiar conglomerate' of the wide array of weapons used by the TNI and the different fighting groups.<sup>33</sup> Shotguns, pellet guns, homemade mortars, wooden or toy guns and improvised hand grenades are just a few examples.<sup>34</sup> Sometimes, extremely old weaponry was involved. In late 1945,



British soldiers captured a number of 'blunderbusses and an antique gun dated 1831'.<sup>35</sup> And during Dutch attacks in North Sumatra in late 1947, fire was incoming from 'a centuries-old muzzle-loading cannon spitting out spark plugs and bicycle chains'.<sup>36</sup>

#### HEAVY WEAPONS

The most common heavy infantry weapons that the troops of the Republic had at their disposal were mortars – in the words of the military historian Shelford Bidwell 'not surprisingly [...] the favourite weapon of guerrillas, being extremely difficult to locate and counter-bombard'<sup>37</sup> – and all types of machine guns. From the 'Japanese Brens' captured in Surabaya to Vickers, Juki, Browning, Lewis, Hodgkiss and Bofors machine guns and 12.7-mm aircraft guns.<sup>38</sup> Another widely used item that can be characterized as a heavy weapon was the landmine, according to Fergal Purcell a dominant tool among irregular fighters and therefore 'the weapon of the weak'.<sup>39</sup> Initially, Indonesian fighters mostly laid regular landmines, including British, Japanese and pre-war KNIL specimens. Later, heavy aerial bombs and artillery grenades originating from Japanese munitions dumps were added.<sup>40</sup> These could be deployed as so-called 'pull bombs' by means of an ingenious but simple system whereby the explosive could be detonated using a draw wire (e.g., a telephone wire) several hundred meters long. The big advantage was that the pull bombs rarely faltered and could be detonated at any given moment – so a vehicle did not need to drive right over it.<sup>41</sup> Another advantage was that, in contrast to heavy equipment, storage places for explosives were not easy to find or to destroy, because they were often located in inhospitable areas.<sup>42</sup>

In the period 1945–1949, the Republican navy hardly possessed any ships for carrying out shellings or effectively attacking Dutch positions. The ALRI did have a large number of motorized canoes and *tongkangs* (coastal vessels) at its disposal for freight and passenger transport, in particular in the sea straits separating Java from Sumatra and Bali. The navy was also involved in the operation of coastal guns.<sup>43</sup> As described in the previous chapter, Indonesian fighting groups had also managed to acquire a number of tanks, some of which were immediately lost during the Battle of Surabaya. During the war, mentions of tanks employed by Indonesian troops regularly surface in the intelligence reports, albeit almost always in East Java. Besides Japanese tanks, these were pre-war Dutch Marmon-Herrington tanks. Just as with artillery, due to their high

mobility, it was difficult to come by reliable estimates of these tanks and armoured vehicles. During the offensives and other large operations, the Dutch troops captured a fair number of armoured vehicles from the TRI/TNI.<sup>44</sup>

For the Dutch troops, it was difficult to get a reliable picture of the size of the Indonesian artillery. An annual intelligence report of the Marine Brigade observed, for example, that reports mentioned ever-increasing numbers of enemy guns in East Java early 1947. According to the author, this was due to the adding-up of the intelligence reports, which by their very nature were always exaggerations, because unreliable reports also had to be passed on. Furthermore, the frequent moving around of the guns gave rise to double counting.<sup>45</sup>

During the war, large numbers of Indonesian guns were destroyed or captured by the British and the Dutch. According to a Dutch report of the second offensive in late 1948-early 1949, Indonesian armed forces at the time lost 36 guns and 291 mortars. The author of the report, Lieutenant Colonel of the Artillery H. L. Hoorweg, staff officer at the *Directoraat Centrale Opleidingen* (Directorate of Central Training, DCO) explained this high number by the fact that personal firearms were much easier for retreating fighters to take along, seeing as 'for guerrilla warfare, heavy weapons (are) only ballast' and were therefore often left behind.<sup>46</sup> Besides field and mountain guns, the troops serving the Republic also had quite a number of coastal and anti-aircraft guns. The coastal batteries were partly of Japanese make and partly older, prewar specimens. Many of them were positioned along important shipping lanes on the North and East coast of Java and Sumatra. Indonesian fighters also made use of all sorts of casemates and bunkers located there.<sup>47</sup>

Unlike with respect to artillery, Dutch intelligence reports about the strength of the Indonesian air force were fairly accurate, as the planes stood in stationary lines and could therefore not easily be double counted. In June 1946 it was estimated that the AURI had 53 serviceable and 73 unserviceable fighter and training aircraft, all of Japanese origin.<sup>48</sup> On the eve of the first offensive, the Dutch estimated the number of serviceable planes at 20 – although almost all of them would be destroyed as part of the operation.<sup>49</sup> Thus, after the ceasefire (which only existed on paper) the AURI had to be practically rebuilt from the ground. However, in order to purchase new airplanes overseas, the air force needed money, which was scarce. Eventually, the AURI succeeded in buying or borrowing

a number of airplanes.<sup>50</sup> However, these were used exclusively for transport purposes, for which foreign adventurer-pilots such as the Americans Bobby Freeberg and James Fleming provided invaluable services to the Republic.<sup>51</sup>

During the second offensive, much of what had been rebuilt was again destroyed by the Dutch air forces. The AURI did not manage to replace this capacity before the end of the War of Independence. Therefore, the Indonesian air force never posed a real threat throughout the conflict, but the AURI was very important to the struggle for independence in the field of logistics, radio contacts and diplomatic efforts. The same was true in its own way for the ALRI. The asymmetry in weaponry between the Netherlands and the Republic during the War of Independence was therefore largest with the naval and air forces. On the other hand, the Indonesians were not just a guerrilla fighting force armed with only krisses and *bambu runcing*. At least a third to half of the fighters had a firearm. In some places and later in the conflict, that percentage was higher.<sup>52</sup> They had guns, heavy infantry weapons and combat vehicles to some extent, although this could not compare to what the Dutch armed forces could muster. However, using improvised fighting means such as pull bombs, the Indonesian fighters did find a way to produce destructive firepower of some scale and to break through the armour of Dutch units.

#### DUTCH TROOP BUILD-UP

During a meeting of the Raad van Oorlogvoering (council for warfare) on 12 November 1945, which decided to send Colonel Calmeyer to Indonesia, Major General Pierre Cox (KNIL) remarked that there was an important difference between 'the native enemy of the present and of the past. We need troops that are properly commanded and properly disciplined. Some artillery will be necessary, as well as automatic weapons and reinforcement with tanks and anti-tank guns'. Johann Logemann, the then minister of Overseas Territories (minister van Overzeese Gebiedsdelen), was more optimistic and suggested that by swiftly taking possession of the heavy equipment of the Japanese, the whole character of the struggle would be reduced to 'the war against the I.V. [*inlandse vijand*, native enemy] and against gangsters'.

Major General Pieter Doorman, deputy chief of the army's General Staff, indicated that three squadrons of tanks or armoured vehicles, twelve troops of artillery (equalling six batteries), four anti-tank guns (*pantser-*

*afweergeschut*, PAG) per infantry battalion and a few supporting services could be realized in the short term.<sup>53</sup> These numbers correspond with the resources Calmeyer promised Miles Dempsey, commander in chief of the Allied Land Forces in South East Asia during a meeting in Singapore. In short, the reinforcement of the Dutch strength based on the events in Surabaya was limited by what could be organizationally and materially achieved in the short term.<sup>54</sup>

The promised auxiliary weapons and services were destined as reinforcement of the ground troops that had in the meantime been assembled. In first instance these entailed infantry battalions consisting of war volunteers (*oorlogsvrijwilligers*, OVWs), of which a total of 24 were to be deployed in Indonesia. Together with a few KNIL battalions already in situ and the Marine Brigade they made up A and B Division. The OVW battalions were initially set up as Light Infantry Battalions (LIB), meaning that they were armed with nothing heavier than Sten guns, light machine guns and 2-inch mortars. They were now turned into full-fledged combat battalions with a support company and a communications unit. A typical supporting company consisted of a command platoon, a carrier platoon, a platoon of 3-inch mortars, a platoon of anti-tank guns and a pioneer platoon.<sup>55</sup>

The first division entirely assembled in the Netherlands, C or '7 December' Division, consisting of war volunteer or regular army officers and enlisted men, was organized from the outset as a 'normal' infantry division: three brigades of three infantry battalions with division artillery consisting of three field artillery regiments (2, 6 and 8 RVA), one anti-tank artillery regiment (1 RATA) and a regiment of light anti-aircraft guns (1 Regt. Li. Lua), two machine gun battalions and supporting services. Furthermore, an artillery measuring regiment was put together. The division first arrived in Indonesia in October 1946. Lua and RATA would not last long: due to the limited options for deployment of these weapons, both regiments were disbanded in mid-1947.<sup>56</sup>

The second division that originated in the Netherlands, D Division 'Palmboom', was also made up of conscripted men. This division also formally set off for the tropics with three artillery regiments, but two of these were disbanded upon arrival in June 1947.<sup>57</sup> According to Lou de Jong, the explanation for this lay in the fighting experience up to that point, which supposedly taught the army that artillery 'was not the first pre-requisite', but the immediate cause was that the six Calmeyer artillery batteries could

stay longer in Indonesia.<sup>58</sup> Together with the three KNIL divisions and the three artillery regiments of C Division, the army leaders apparently considered one additional regiment sufficient. E Division 'Drietand' was intended as relief for the OVW and KNIL battalions and therefore departed without any of its own artillery at all.

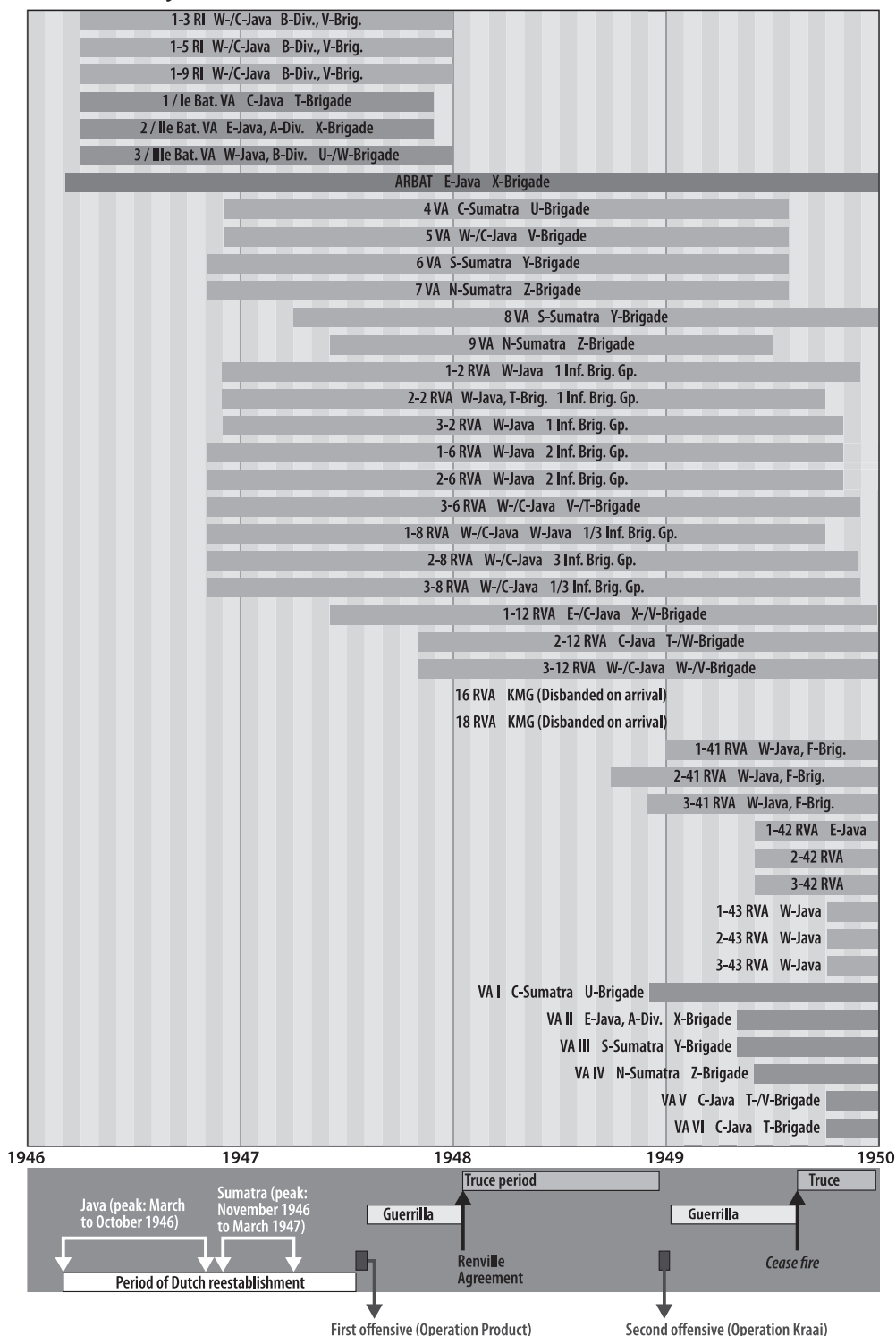
The independent infantry brigades (41, 42 and 43 ZIB), who together officially formed F Division, each included their own artillery regiment. But those regiments served mostly as infantry in Indonesia and relieved a number of other units, so that the actual size of the artillery in reality did not increase significantly.<sup>59</sup> In 1947, on the eve of the first offensive, this amounted to 22 batteries, and at the height of the second quarter of 1949 the number had risen to 24. In the same period, the total troop strength rose from around 120,000 to 150,000, with around 5000 men serving with the artillery. Thus, De Jong was right in the sense that artillery strength did not keep pace with the growth of the infantry. However, this can only partly be explained by a diminished need for that weapon system, or at least much less so than was the case with anti-aircraft and anti-tank guns, considering that the artillery was deployed the most in 1949 (more on this in the next chapter).<sup>60</sup>

#### ARTILLERY BATTERIES

After the start of the Indonesian War of Independence, the first gunners who became available were former KNIL prisoners of war, who were shipped to Balikpapan on Kalimantan (Borneo) after the Japanese surrender. There, the army commander founded the Depot Artillerietroepen (Artillery Troops Depot), consisting of six troops that were later joined together into three batteries (under the flag of the 1e Regiment Mobiele Artillerie [1st Regiment Mobile Artillery], founded on 24 March 1946). The KNIL gun-

*Timeline with the most important episodes in the Indonesian War of Independence, with above it the period that the individual artillery batteries spent in Indonesia. This shows that artillery strength remained low until late 1946 (seven units, three of which were improvised troops), whereas the maximum number of simultaneously present units was reached in 1949 (29). However, the start and end dates of different batteries often overlap, because units were normally trained by the artillerymen they relieved. The maximum number of simultaneously deployable artillery batteries was therefore lower and rose from 22 around the first offensive to 24 in the second quarter of 1949.*

#### 4. Artillery batteries timeline.





ners were able to acquire the equipment of two complete regiments and two separate batteries from the Australian artillery stationed on Kalimantan.<sup>61</sup>

Just like the Australian units, the three batteries of the KNIL regiment were modelled after the British Army, each with a separate staff and two troops of four guns. In practice, both the number of guns as well as the number of troops varied with these units. After acquiring the guns, the three batteries were directed as soon as possible to Semarang, Surabaya and Jakarta, the places where the army leaders believed they were needed most. In East Java, where the fighting was fierce at the time, some of the officers were detached with the 5th Regiment Indian Artillery to familiarize themselves with the local situation and to gain fighting experience. From April 1946 the roles were reversed: with the transfer of command over East Java to A Division, one of the British artillery units temporarily stayed behind under Dutch command.<sup>62</sup>

In the meantime, the artillery in the Netherlands prepared four of the six Calmeyer units for departure to Indonesia. The last two batteries followed later.<sup>63</sup> There was no artillery on Sumatra yet, so after their arrival the units were directed to that island without delay. Just like the KNIL units, they had their own staff so they could be attached to infantry battalions as independent batteries or even troops. They had an organic strength of 204 men, later extended to 215. This was based on a KNIL organization chart for artillery batteries, so it may safely be assumed that this number also applied to the KNIL artillery.<sup>64</sup>

The units of the 7 December Division were also of almost equal strength. The difference with the units mentioned above was that these regiments had been set up as divisional artillery, which meant that they maintained a shared staff at the division headquarters and could therefore only operate together with other regiments.<sup>65</sup> Little account had been taken of the situation in Indonesia, where operations on such a large scale were hardly to be expected anymore. In fact, this remarkable choice had to do with future army formation in Europe, within which the 7 December Division would have to be fitted in the future. 1 RATA and the Lua group had been added for the same reason; when unpacking the gear in the tropics, the soldiers even found snow chains, bulky winter clothing and antifreeze.<sup>66</sup>

It was hardly surprising that the field artillery regiments of C Division were partly spliced off in Indonesia. A regiment of two batteries per infantry brigade group was deemed sufficient. Because these units did not have

their own staff, they had to make use of that of the Calmeyer units, one battery of which had also been attached to each brigade.<sup>67</sup> In the period 1948–1949, a further six KNIL artillery batteries were founded to relieve the demobilized units on Java and Sumatra.<sup>68</sup> The Marine Brigade, stationed, as has been seen, in East Java, had its own artillery battalion, abbreviated as ARBAT. Helped by British equipment acquired through the KNIL, three troops of four guns could be assembled, which is one troop more than was usual for an artillery battery.<sup>69</sup>

Besides all these official regiments and batteries, three OVW battalions independently assembled their own artillery troops, pending the arrival of the 7 December Division. This ‘illegal’ artillery (referring to the ‘illegal’ resistance during the German occupation, in which many of the soldiers involved had served) came into existence after infantrymen had discovered prewar KNIL cannons in a Japanese dump. These guns had been sitting out in the open air for some years and looked ‘like old rust’. The soldiers patched the guns up, with what the artillery commander of V Brigade, Lieutenant Colonel W. A. Schouten, called ‘much praiseworthy initiative’, and against the odds got them serviceable within a few weeks. After seeing action in 1947 including during Operatie Product, the troops were dissolved again in the course of that year.<sup>70</sup>

On 6 June 1946, the Algemeen Hoofdkwartier van de Generale Staf (general headquarters of the general staff) established the position of Leger Artilleriecommandant (army artillery commander, LAC), appointing Lieutenant Colonel N. Waalewijn. Due to this change, the artillery came directly under the command of the chief of general staff and had its own representation within the army headquarters. The LAC was tasked with inspecting the separate batteries, which reported to him on performance every six months. The LAC also advised on matters such as organization, equipment, training and the deployment of artillery, but did not himself have operational authority and is largely absent from the sources.<sup>71</sup> Besides the LAC, the army leadership also appointed divisional artillery commands (DAC) and brigade artillery commanders (BAC).<sup>72</sup> The position of divisional artillery commander was abolished in February 1948 or made ‘dormant’ due to the disbandment of the divisional artillery staff.<sup>73</sup>

#### CAVALRY SQUADRONS

The Calmeyer plan provided for an eventual force of six squadrons of armoured vehicles, although initially only three could be pledged. Just as

with the Calmeyer artillery, these were independent units that did not form part of battalions, but could be added directly to a brigade. According to Captain Marien de Jonge, commander of the 4th Squadron, the squadrons were structured as follows: five armoured platoons, each with two armoured vehicles and two scout cars (armoured reconnaissance vehicles); a supporting platoon of four armoured  $\frac{3}{4}$ -ton vehicles (trucks) and a scout car; and a storm pioneer platoon also with four  $\frac{3}{4}$ -ton vehicles and a scout car. The total strength of one squadron was on paper 178 men, including 10 officers.<sup>74</sup> Besides the Calmeyer units, three reconnaissance regiments were formed and dispatched. A reconnaissance squadron was equipped with light armoured vehicles and – modelled after a British Recce Regiment – consisted of a regimental staff, a command group, a mortar platoon, a PAG (anti-tank gun) troop, a liaison and a medical support platoon.<sup>75</sup>

As Calmeyer was finalizing his plans, a number of tank units were already being set up by the KNIL. Plans also existed for the formation of a tank unit with the Marine Brigade, even though it was as yet unclear what the value of tanks could be in Indonesian territory. A British expert therefore advised sending only armoured vehicles, to which Calmeyer agreed. That is why no Calmeyer tank units were established.<sup>76</sup> Whereas before the Second World War, the infantry organically had tanks, and the cavalry had armoured vehicles, the KNIL on 3 November 1945 founded a new combat arm: the armoured troops. From this, a regiment of four squadrons of *vechtwagens* ('combat vehicles', as tanks had been called since 1937) was formed. These squadrons were able to acquire the equipment of the cavalry of the xvth Indian Corps, 11th PAVO. This probably amounted to 54 Stuart tanks (the precise number is unknown), with which four platoons of three tanks could be formed per squadron.<sup>77</sup>

A salient detail here is that the United States wanted to prevent the transfer of British Stuart tanks to the Dutch. The Americans had issued the tanks under the Lend-Lease programme and could therefore reclaim them after the war. When Dutch diplomats gave their assurance that the Stuarts would not be deployed offensively but only as protection for the civilian population, they were allowed to remain in Indonesia 'for the time being'.<sup>78</sup> In addition to tanks, the combat vehicle squadrons also possessed armoured vehicles, scout cars, supporting infantry, mortars and pioneers, making them 'ready for anything', in the words of Captain J. D. Backer of 8 Squadron Combat Vehicles.<sup>79</sup>

## AIR SQUADRONS

The aftermath of Surabaya already revealed that, despite their different views on the expected opposition and the troops required to deal with that, General Schilling and Admiral Helfrich in late 1945 agreed on one thing: the necessity of a good air force to support ground troops, if they were to have any chance of success. Only an air force could 'neutralize' the shortage of troop strength, wrote Helfrich to the Minister voor Algemene Oorlogvoering van het Koninkrijk (minister of general warfare of the kingdom), Wim Schermerhorn, in December 1945. To clarify he added: '[i]t is not in the first place my intention to use this air force to arbitrarily destroy human lives, but to clear out rebel army supplies with this long arm and to cut off their communications.'<sup>80</sup> The Directeur Binnenlands Bestuur (director of the colonial administration) Charles van der Plas wrote in a note in November 1945 in the same vein that resolute action had to be taken against Indonesian 'vermin', 'supported forcefully by our small air force in particular'.<sup>81</sup> The word small here refers to the fact that the Netherlands at that time did not have much flying materiel: only a bomber, a fighter and a transport squadron, as well as a navy Catalina amphibious aircraft squadron.<sup>82</sup>

For the time being, according to Otto Ward, chronicler of the Militaire Luchtvaart van het KNIL (Royal Netherlands East Indies Army Air Force, NEIAF) the Netherlands was 'tied hand and foot' to the allied supreme command, which would not allow Dutch fighter planes to operate in Indonesia. Only the RAPWI provided assistance with a number of transport aircraft. This was much to Helfrich's frustration, and he repeatedly pressed the British for permission to reinforce the Dutch air forces. During a meeting with Mountbatten in Singapore in December 1945, Helfrich proposed allowing Dutch aircraft to bomb Indonesian supply centres. Mountbatten's prickly reply was that 'nothing could have a worse effect on world opinion than extensive bombing'. He and General Christison emphasized that the currently available British squadrons were sufficient to carry out their assigned task.<sup>83</sup>

Eventually, in January 1946, the Dutch government recalled the optimistic Helfrich to the Netherlands and decided to leave the position of commander of the armed forces in the east vacant. Instead, an army commander was appointed: then-Colonel Simon Spoor. Spoor not only shared Helfrich's optimism, but had also embraced the latter's conviction that a strong air force was crucial for reconquering Java and Sumatra – in

spite of his earlier, idealized preconception of the 'Dutch method', consisting mainly of small-scale patrols. A plan devised by the army leadership in 1946 stated that nine aircraft squadrons were necessary, and these would eventually be established.<sup>84</sup>

In total, the armed forces deployed fourteen squadrons during the conflict with the Republic, although these were not all active at the same time. Seven of these were 'offensive' squadrons, that is, units with bombers and/or fighter planes. In addition, the Militaire Luchtvaart (military aviation, ML) employed two reconnaissance and artillery observation squadrons, four transport squadrons and a photo-reconnaissance unit. Some of these units had been established during the Second World War. The remaining aircraft units were formed between 1945 and 1947 and consisted of both war volunteers and conscripted men as well as professional personnel. The squadrons were subdivided into flights (called 'patrols' or, in the case of fighter planes, 'couples'). Bomber and transport squadrons generally employed three patrols of four manned aircraft, plus four reserve planes. Fighter squadrons had two couples with two manned aircraft and, if possible, kept six in reserve.<sup>85</sup> In theory, at the start of the first offensive, a total of 150 to 175 aircraft could be deployed in fighting and bombing missions, but in practice only a third was actually serviceable.<sup>86</sup>

In Indonesia, the Dutch air forces established a network of around fifteen airfields and airbases spread across the whole archipelago, from New Guinea to North Sumatra. Many of these bases had a name and often also a number (1VB, 2VB, etc.) In addition, during the offensives, Dutch troops captured a considerable number of Republican airfields and air strips. To secure all these airfields, alongside ground crew (air force troops, *luchtvaarttroepen*, LVT), the ML positioned a battery of 40 mm Bofors anti-aircraft guns at six locations. Six batteries thus had to be re-established because the anti-aircraft regiment had in the meantime been disbanded. Five batteries were placed at the most important fields on Java, the sixth was positioned at Medan.<sup>87</sup>

The Indonesian fight for independence took place in the period before the Dutch air force became an independent branch of the armed forces in 1953. But in contrast to artillery and cavalry, neither was it entirely at the disposal of the ground troops. With the exception of the squadrons of the Marine Luchtvaartdienst (Navy Aviation Service, MLD), military aviation had formally been part of the KNIL as an independent 'weapon'

since 1939. Just like the infantry and artillery, the ML had been modelled along British lines, in this case the RAF. This also applied to the Generale Staf van het Algemeen Hoofdkwartier (general headquarters general staff), which in mid-1946 included the air forces, the territorial and troop commanders, the intelligence service and the Central Training Directorate (DCO).

Head of the NEIAF was the Chef Militaire Luchtvaart (army air force chief, CML), who, like the artillery, reported to the chief of staff. The execution of operational orders was left to the CML himself. On 1 November 1946 two regional commands were set up, one on Java and one on Sumatra, commanding the squadrons stationed there. Whenever more than one squadron was stationed at the same airfield, a Commandant Luchtvaart (aviation commander) was appointed. The NEIAF workforce increased from approximately 5000 on the eve of the first offensive to around 7800 in late 1949.<sup>88</sup>

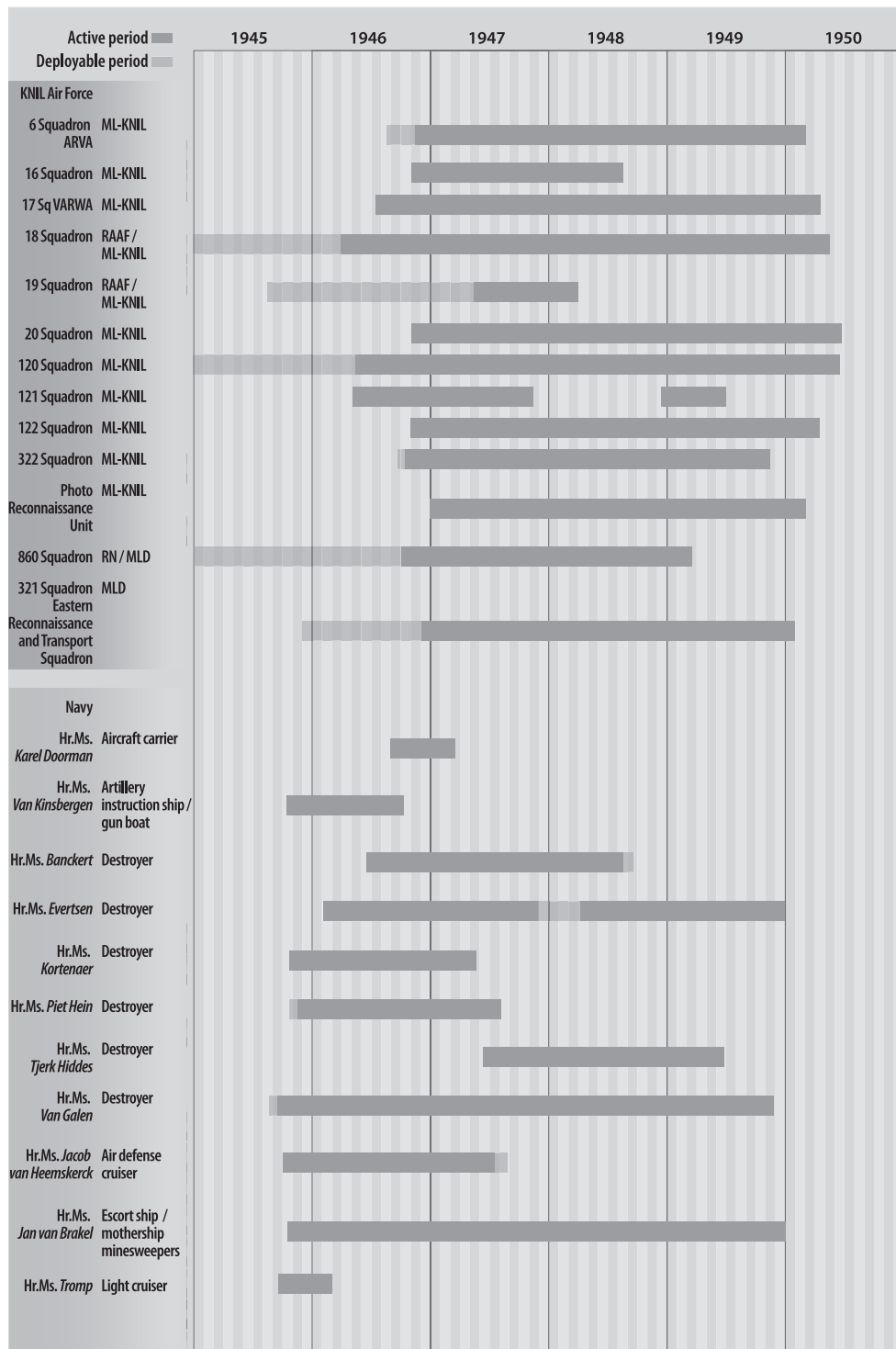
#### NAVY

The discussion about the resources required for the struggle in Indonesia played out differently in the navy than in the air force or army. This was due partly to the internal dynamics within this independent branch of the armed forces (with its own minister), and partly to the variety of tasks that were assigned to Her Majesty's ships. The army leadership considered the navy indispensable in the fight against Indonesian armed forces, not only for direct support to ground troops, but also to remove thousands of Second World War naval mines, to reinforce or reestablish Dutch authority in the outer regions with flag-waving, and to frustrate Indonesian trade assessed as smuggling.<sup>89</sup>

Initially it was Helfrich in particular, first as BSO and later as Bevelhebber der Zeestrijdkrachten (commander of the naval forces, BDZ), who defended the interests of the navy in the East. After his recall, a separate Commandant der Zeemacht in Nederlands-Indië (commander of the navy in the Dutch East Indies, CZM) was appointed alongside the new army commander: Vice Admiral A. S. Pinke. Just like the previous BSO, Pinke was a proponent of the hardline stance against the Republic. According to his biographer Ger Teitler, he preferred to destroy the Republic rather than negotiate with Sukarno and his men. In the four years that he held the position of CZM, Pinke waged a constant battle with his superiors in The Hague to mobilize sufficient resources and prevent budget cuts.<sup>90</sup>



## 5. Timeline aircraft squadrons and naval vessels



It did not help that Helfrich, due to his colonial views about the fighting power of the Javanese (who according to him were 'by nature peaceful'), underestimated how much manpower and resources the fight against them would require. The BSO was not the only one who held such views. Rear Admiral Sir Wilfrid Patterson, commander of the 5th Cruiser Squadron, thought one cruiser and one or two destroyers, as well as several merchant ships, landing craft and patrol boats would be enough to restore order to the archipelago. Pinke, however, realized that multiples of these resources were required for the struggle in the East and therefore sought to cooperate with other branches of the armed forces. The fighting in Surabaya had also led Van Mook, previously of the same view as Helfrich, to change his views.<sup>91</sup>

In March 1946, when the Dutch troops took over the first positions of the British, the Royal Netherlands Navy only had a fleet of very limited size at its disposal. According to Pinke the number of destroyers needed to grow from four to six, and a large number of smaller vessels was required for patrolling shallow waters.<sup>92</sup> Although he largely succeeded, budgetary cuts remained a constant threat to the strength of the navy in Indonesia. The minister of the navy, Jules Schagen van Leeuwen, feared 'total devouring of the Royal Netherlands Navy by the Asian (Indonesian) monster'. Personnel shortages also frustrated the plans. As a consequence, several destroyers returned to the Netherlands in 1947, thereby reducing the number in the archipelago to four again. Their main task, carrying out coastal fire missions, was partly taken over by fighter-bombers of the 860 Squadron MLD, which had arrived late 1946. However, these planes also threatened to be recalled for financial reasons – to Pinke's despair,

*Figure showing the period that the aircraft squadrons of the NELAF and the MLD and the large vessels of the RNLN remained in Indonesia. Especially in the first year after the Proklamasi, aircraft were not permitted to use force. The dark grey lines represent the periods in which the squadrons and the ships were actually deployable for the use of force in support of ground operations. The period in which the squadrons were present but not permitted to take armed action is indicated in light grey. When comparing the timeline of the air forces with that of the large navy vessels, it is striking that the navy was at its strongest in 1946, while aircraft gained the upper hand in 1947. From that time onwards, air squadrons partly took over the fire support task of the artillery ships.*

who had in fact just pushed for additional planes. The Hague also wanted to get rid of the patrol boats, several dozen of which had been kept in service at great cost at their peak in 1947. Pinke had to fight hard to prevent the patrol division from being entirely transferred to the Dienst voor Scheepvaart (navigation service), a civilian agency. In late 1947 he had to back down and phase out several landing craft due to demobilization of some of the personnel. He was also compelled to limit minesweeping activities.<sup>93</sup>

Maritime commands and harbour organizations were set up at many locations in the archipelago, led by an Oudst Aanwezend Zee-officier (senior naval officer present, OAZ), who in practice functioned as a sort of harbour master and local maritime commander. The Territoriaal tevens Troepencommandanten (territorial and troop commanders, TtTCs) had no commanding authority over the vessels and the shore facilities: the army and navy existed alongside each other on an equal footing.<sup>94</sup> Port parties were stationed in the outer regions as early as 1945, including in the Moluccas, Morotai and New Guinea. The navy manned and restored a number of ports on Java and Sumatra with British permission, but as long as authority rested in Allied hands, the OAZs were not permitted to issue operational orders. The authority to do so remained in the hands of a British naval officer in charge (NOIC).<sup>95</sup>

Total navy strength in Indonesia diminished from 7100 navy personnel in 1946 to 6750 in early 1947, which went against the general trend of troop build-up. At the start of that year these men worked on 5 destroyers (around 2000 men), 8 minesweepers with mothership, 9 corvettes, 9 landing craft of various types and 34 patrol boats, although 15 to 18 of these were under repair at any time. After the first offensive, the number of landing craft was reduced to 2 and the number of patrol boats was increased to 38. In addition to the navy crews, more than a thousand men were employed at the shore facilities of the various ports and the navy establishment in Surabaya. Finally, roughly the same number of navy personnel served within the MLD.<sup>96</sup>

## DUTCH ARMAMENTS

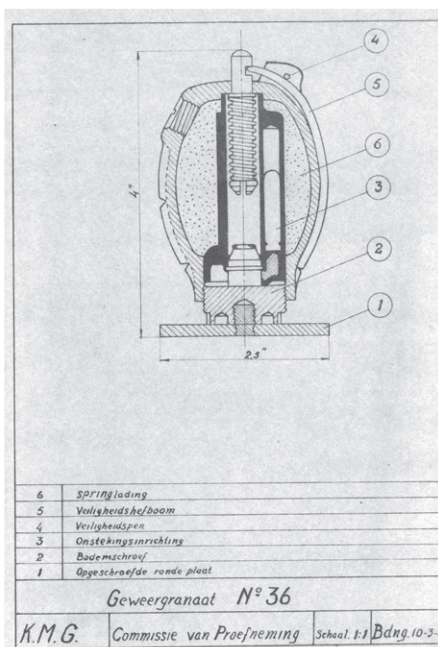
Generally speaking, the purchase and choice of weapons by the Dutch were determined not so much by military and technical considerations but by practical delivery and supply opportunities in Southeast Asia and the Pacific area.<sup>97</sup> This was also the reason why the newest or best equip-

ment was by no means always available – which is not to say that Dutch armaments were inadequate for the struggle at hand. In the words of a mortar gunner: ‘we were poorly armed [...] but in comparison to the opponent we were well armed.’<sup>98</sup> The opportunistic nature of purchase policies probably in part formed the reason why the quartermaster general lamented in September 1946 that the variety of weapons at the different units was so great that the Leger Materieel Dienst (Army Materiel Service) did not have an adequate overview of the current situation. This was partly because units sometimes added captured, mainly Japanese weapons to their own armament. Lieutenant Sjoerd Lapré, company commander of Infanterie v KNIL, describes how he supplemented his unit’s arsenal with captured weapons, including ‘Japanese Brens’ with cooling fins and Japanese knee mortars.<sup>99</sup> Roelf Spreeuwiers of infantry battalion 2-5 RI furthermore writes about the discovery of two Japanese tanks by his unit. Because the battalion ‘was terribly down on rolling equipment’, the soldiers decided to patch up one of the tanks and add it to the force.<sup>100</sup>

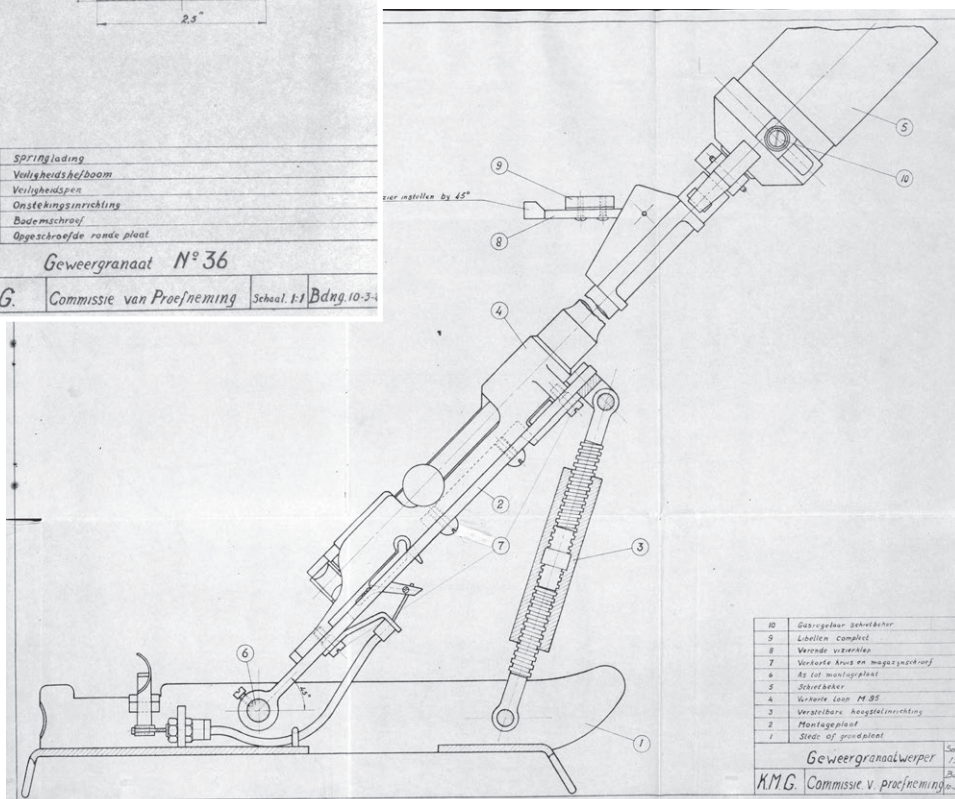
#### BREN GUNS AND STOVE PIPES

The infantry was generally only permitted to ask for fire support if its own weapons were not sufficient. Yet the infantry itself also possessed a number of support weapons, besides the arms the soldiers carried with them. As far as individual weapons are concerned, the regular infantryman was generally armed with a Lee Enfield (a single-shot rifle), a Sten gun (a submachine gun) or another light automatic weapon. By far the most dominant machine gun was the Bren LMG (light machine gun). It only required a crew of two and was therefore easily transportable. The Bren could also be mounted on a tracked weapon carrier, mostly referred to as ‘Bren carrier’. A manual from August 1946 describes the Bren as the ‘main firing power of the infantry’. The weapon was very popular with the fighting units because of its ‘almost unquenchable’ fire.<sup>101</sup>

The light 2-inch mortar, referred to at the time as a ‘mortar of 5 [cm]’ in the Netherlands, was an important weapon for the infantry units and the most commonly used mortar in Indonesia: the 7 December Division alone had 283; each battalion had 26 pieces at its disposal.<sup>102</sup> Just like artillery, mortars can produce indirect or curved-angle fire, albeit that the angle of the shots is greater with mortars (also referred to as high-angle fire). That makes them very suitable for warfare in the jungle or in hilly terrain as a quick-reaction weapon. The biggest drawback of mortars is



*Rifle grenade launcher. Source: NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 579, Rapport van de Commissie van Proefneming (CoP) te Bandoeng betreffende "de geweergranaatwerper", 1948.*



their poor accuracy. The dilemma for designers is that in order to increase accuracy, the weapon has to be made heavier, which seriously jeopardizes mobility. The big difference with the Bren is that much less ammunition can be carried for the 2-inch mortars because of the weight and size of the grenades.<sup>103</sup> Despite its light weight (around 10 kilograms), Jan Willem Buitenweg, mortar gunner at 3-9 RI, still found 'those stove pipes' too heavy for intensive patrolling. He preferred taking along his rifle.<sup>104</sup>

Units also often possessed a grenade launcher (also called bomber). Most often this was a PIAT (Projector, Infantry, Anti-Tank).<sup>105</sup> There were hardly any armoured targets (for which this weapon was designed) in Indonesia and not every unit found them equally useful. Others thought of creative applications. Sergeant Klaas Bruinsma, gun commander at 2-6 RVA, commented on the usefulness of the PIAT in the artillery emplacements in a letter: '[t]he cannon covers  $\frac{3}{4}$  circle and for the bit that is left we have a PIAT, an anti-tank weapon. The bombs that are launched with that have a heavy impact.'<sup>106</sup>

In March 1948, the Commissie van Proefneming (commission of trials) furthermore carried out tests with a 'rifle grenade launcher'. This was basically an improvised light mortar that was designed to compensate for the lack of 2-inch mortars. The base was formed by the barrel of a Lee Enfield or Mannlicher M95 rifle mounted on a baseplate, on which a shooting cup was placed that could fire a regular hand grenade. Although the distance (100–280 metres) did not emulate that of the 2-inch mortar (up to 450 metres), results were surprisingly good. It appears that the weapon was actually deployed, including by the artillery. Earlier, para troops had already obtained a version that could fire a bazooka grenade.<sup>107</sup>

In addition to all these lighter and portable weapons, the infantry also had a number of heavier weapons that were mostly allocated to the support company of a battalion. In the first place, heavy machine guns such as the Vickers.<sup>108</sup> Operation of this machine gun was complicated and required a crew of three. As the weapon could not be transported 'ready for firing' and had to be assembled on location, this often led to a loss of valuable time. Because of its weight, a tactical instruction stated that the Vickers 'could only follow the infantry in the field with great difficulty'. They were often transported with Bren carriers that had to stick to the roads. Therefore, it was more of a defensive weapon (to be used in emplacement in the encampments) than an attack weapon during patrols or multiday actions. However, it proved 'very valuable' for that defence because of its sustained rapid fire thanks to water cooling.<sup>109</sup> Besides the Vickers, several other types of heavy machine guns were in use.<sup>110</sup>

In addition, the support companies of the infantry battalions had 2- and 6-pounder anti-tank guns (*pantserafweergeschut*, PAG). This had been an important weapon during the Second World War, but as has been seen there were few armoured targets in Indonesia. Furthermore, the guns could only fire in an almost direct track (the maximum elevation



was 15 degrees), which was hardly practical in the dense and hilly Indonesian terrain. The ammunition stock was also limited. A number of OVW battalions therefore decided to transform their PAG platoons (normally armed with six guns) into artillery troops, from which the 'illegal' artillery mentioned above originated. However, the guns were not discarded and were still sporadically used.<sup>111</sup>

Finally, medium and heavy mortars were allocated to the infantry. Of those, the 3-inch mortar ('mortar of 8') was the most common: an infantry battalion usually had six. These were allocated to the mortar platoon of the support company, which consisted of four sections: a staff and three mortar sections each with two pieces. The 3-inch mortar was operated by a crew of four. A weapon carrier with a driver was required for conveyance by road, and for transportation in the field specially trained so-called mountain horses were used. One platoon of 3-inch mortars had up to sixteen horses, with a group of 25 Indonesians employed as handlers.<sup>112</sup> In addition, the 7 December Division possessed sixteen heavy 4.2-inch mortars ('mortar of 10'), the only ones used by Dutch troops in Indonesia. Their use was somewhat comparable to the field artillery, partly because they required six soldiers for operation, weighed half a ton and needed drawn transport, but the shooting results lagged far behind. In mid-1948 the commander of the Aan- en Afvoertroepen (logistics troops) reported that all the supplies of ammunition for these mortars were exhausted. Whether they were deployed again later remains unclear.<sup>113</sup>

#### FIELD ARTILLERY

The vast majority of guns used by Dutch field artillery troops in Indonesia were 25-pounders, named after the weight of the shells they fired. According to one of the American artillery instructors of the Marine Brigade, which received training in the United States during the Second World War, this light cannon was 'one of the miracles of the war'.<sup>114</sup> It was rumoured that the guns the RNLA artillery had acquired from the British had been used during the battle of El Alamein in 1942 (the same was said of equipment such as the Stuart tanks and the Vickers).<sup>115</sup> The KNIL artillery units had acquired their guns earlier from Australian troops on Kalimantan. The other Dutch units also got their 25-pounders from the Allied troops, albeit not always through official channels. In one example, men of 7 VA RNLA discovered ten 'magnificent 25-pounders' in a dump in Jakarta that they then apparently appropriated.<sup>116</sup>



*British ML 3-inch mortar (81 mm), also known as 'mortar of 8'. Source: NIMH / Foto-afdrukken Koninklijke Landmacht.*

The Royal Ordnance QF 25-pounder was a light, towed howitzer designed by the British. Because of its calibre of almost 9 cm (87.6 mm), the gun was also referred to as *9 veld* ('9 field') in the Netherlands. The gun owed its success during the Second World War to the comparatively high initial speed and reach of the shells. Because the shell was loaded separately from the propelling charge, it was easy to work with different types of charges, which enabled flexible deployment.<sup>117</sup> Besides the regular type, so-called baby 25-pounders were also used in Indonesia. Originally designed for airborne landings, in theory they were better adapted for use in the tropics. Their narrow wheelbase was supposed to facilitate transport over narrow roads, whereas the tipping carriage increased the maximum angle of fire. Although the latter adjustment did indeed have advantages in mountainous terrain, the narrow wheelbase did not produce the desired effect. During Operatie Product, the baby 25-pounders were found to tip over more often, partly because the wheels drew their own track instead of following in those of the artillery tractor.<sup>118</sup>

A battery could carry around 512 shells for an operation in the field. In addition to limbers (ammunition wagons), trucks (3-tonners) were used



*The 4e Afdeling Veldartillerie (4th Field Artillery Battery, 4 VA) practises positioning Royal Ordnance QF 25-pounders in Siguntur Muda near Padang (Sumatra). Source:*

*NIMH / collection Rups.*

for transportation.<sup>119</sup> The maximum reach differed per charge. Charges II and III were most commonly used and covered a maximum distance of respectively 7800 yards (7132 metres) and 11,929 yards (10,816 metres). The maximum range was 13,400 yards (12,252 metres) using the heavy 'super' charge.<sup>120</sup> This charge did, however, put a lot of strain on the equipment and was therefore not used by all units. During a fire mission of 2 RVA in October 1947, for example, shields were bent, homing beams distorted and targeting devices dislodged. During another action, the window of an artillery tractor was shattered by the enormous air pressure.<sup>121</sup>

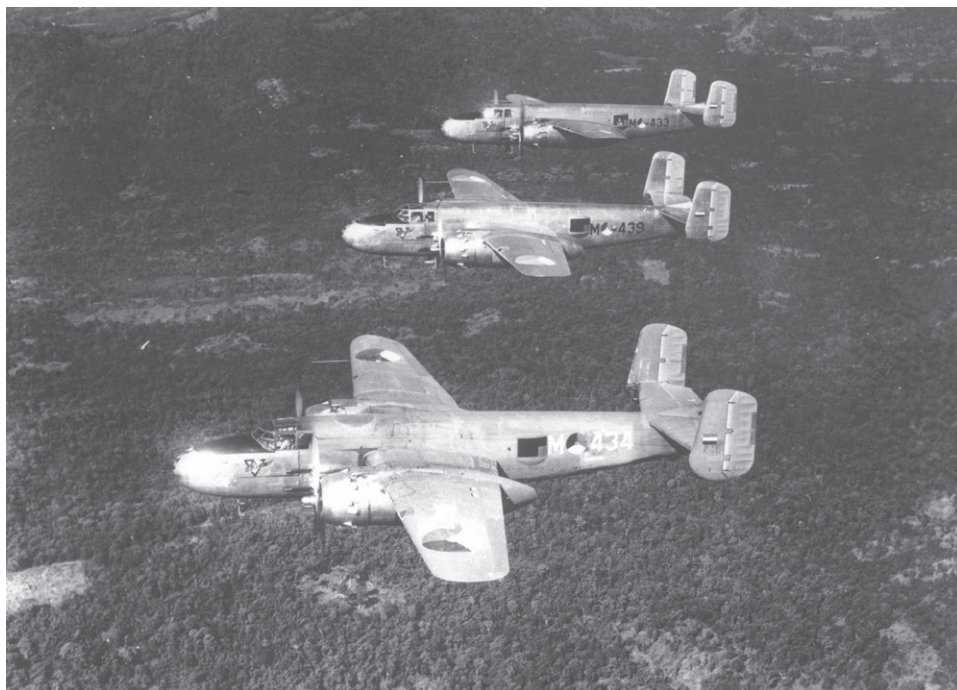
In addition to the 25-pounder, the Dutch troops in Indonesia also employed a number of other types of guns, such as 17-pounders (anti-tank guns) and 18-pounders (a type of gun from the First World War).<sup>122</sup> Better known are the old KNIL guns that the 'illegal' artillery mentioned above

used. 1-3 RI had a battery of 10.5 cm howitzers, 1-5 RI a battery of 7.5 cm field guns, and 1-9 RI a battery of 7.5 cm mountain guns.<sup>123</sup> Even though one artillery tractor driver thought these guns belonged in a museum, the gunners handled them quite easily.<sup>124</sup> One source even claims the 7.5 Veld was more accurate than the 25-pounder.<sup>125</sup> In total the Dutch artillery in Indonesia had a maximum of 178 guns.<sup>126</sup>

#### STRAFERS AND BOMBERS

According to the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army Air Force's tactical manual on fire support (*Tactisch voorschrift luchtsteun van de Militaire Luchtvaart*) used by the troops in Indonesia, fighter planes and fighter-bombers enjoyed an advantage over bombers because they were more nimble and therefore more suitable against an agile opponent. Bombers were especially useful against static targets.<sup>127</sup> For this reason, most aircraft used by the Dutch troops were fighter planes or fighter-bombers. The ML also deployed lighter reconnaissance and artillery observation aircraft when providing fire support.

*North American B-25 Mitchell medium weight bombers with strafing nose of 16 Squadron NELAF over Sumatra, 1946. Source: NIMH / Fotoafdrukken Koninklijke Marine.*



The bombers that the NEIAF used were medium heavy North American B-25 Mitchells, airplanes specially designed to carry out tactical bombardments. Dutch troops had deployed Mitchells since 1942 in the fight against fascist Japan and from 1943 also against Nazi Germany.<sup>128</sup> On 15 August 1945, also called Victory over Japan Day (V-J Day), the ML had a strength of 61 Mitchells. These could carry a maximum of eight 500-pound bombs – the heaviest bombs used in Indonesia.<sup>129</sup> Some of the bombers were not equipped as such but adapted for transport tasks. Others were converted to strafers planes. This meant that besides the standard four fixed 12.7-mm machine guns, a few more of the same calibre were mounted in the nose, delivering what Otto Ward has described as ‘truly deadly fire’.<sup>130</sup> The conversion of the Mitchells can be seen as an adaptation to local circumstances. The Mitchells with strafe nose were better able than the bombers to deal with mobile enemy concentrations located close to own troops. Ground troops could indicate the front line by spreading out white or yellow pieces of cloth and so prevent friendly fire.<sup>131</sup>

At the end of the Second World War, in addition to the Mitchells, the ML also operated a number of fighter-bombers, namely 34 Curtiss P-40 Kittyhawks and 41 North American P-51 Mustangs. The Kittyhawk had already seen better days at the time of the Japanese capitulation. However, the ML could not afford to write them off. Although the Mustangs were intended as replacements, delivery of a series of 51 planes was delayed.<sup>132</sup> The Mitchells, Kittyhawks and Mustangs were all acquired from the United States through the so-called Lend-Lease programme. This allowed Allied countries to borrow American war materiel during the Second World War. Right after the end of the war, the US terminated the Lend-Lease agreement, so that countries such as the Netherlands could no longer simply borrow American war materiel for offensive purposes. In the eyes of the Dutch army leaders, therefore, every serviceable machine was indispensable for the time being.<sup>133</sup>

War volunteer Wil van Abeelen, who served with the groundcrew of 120 Squadron, had a great deal of respect for the members of the air force who continued to do their jobs in the obsolete Kittyhawk. ‘Many a rivet was missing from the wing and the parachutes they took along had not been opened for several years, never mind checked.’<sup>134</sup> The *cocong merah* or ‘red beaks’, as the Indonesians called the Mustangs,<sup>135</sup> could also fire 60-lb rockets, and the effect of this on buildings was comparable to that of a heavy howitzer grenade. The Mustang had become available in the Euro-





*North American P-51D Mustang in flight above Indonesia. Source: NIMH / Fotoafdrukken Koninklijke Landmacht.*

pean war theatre in the course of 1943 and was welcomed as an improvement on the illustrious Spitfire, because it could cover longer distances.

During the Second World War, 322 (Dutch) Squadron had flown Spitfire Mk VIs under the wings of the 2nd Tactical Air Force of the RAF.<sup>136</sup> When it transpired that there was a need for an additional fighter squadron in Indonesia, the Dutch army decided to reestablish the then already disbanded 322nd and dispatch it to the East. There was no money to buy new Spitfires and so the acquisition of second-hand Spitfire Mk IXs from British surplus stocks, at a sixth of their book value, had to suffice. In the end, the army air force designated 26 of these for the war in Indonesia, six of which were kept in reserve in the Netherlands.<sup>137</sup>

The Spitfires were shipped in crates and on their arrival in late 1947 still had to be assembled on location. It turned out that all sorts of things were missing from the aircraft, and they had greatly suffered from corrosion during transport. An accidentally discovered RAF dump near Medan provided a solution. Disabled Spitfires found there were used to complement



the Dutch airplanes. It did, however, take until March 1948 before the technical service delivered the last flight-ready Spitfire. During the ensuing deployment, it turned out that the range was not a problem: the pilots made little to no use of the supplied belly tanks for extra fuel.<sup>138</sup>

In addition to this offensive aircraft capacity, the Dutch government also bought Consolidated PBY Catalina amphibious aircraft, Douglas C-47 Dakota transport planes, and Taylorcraft Auster and Piper L4-J Cubs reconnaissance and artillery observation aircraft.<sup>139</sup> For the Indonesian fighting groups, the Piper Cubs and the Austers, which they both called *capung* (dragonfly), were a favourite target because of their low speed and altitude. The ML cobbled together a solution by adding improvised bomb racks to the Piper Cubs in several places, which enabled the pilots to drop hand grenades by pulling on a chord. Air crew and any passengers also took along small arms or even mortar shells during flights.<sup>140</sup> Some of the Catalina amphibious aircraft also had offensive capacities. In addition to four machine guns, they could carry around 4000 lbs of bombs.<sup>141</sup>

Like the Netherlands Army Air Force, the MLD also dispatched a squadron of fighter-bombers (860 Squadron) to Indonesia to offer air support to the Marine Brigade in East Java. In February 1946, this squadron was equipped with the Fairey Firefly Mk I, a modern torpedo plane.<sup>142</sup> In theory, a total of 150 to 175 aircraft could be deployed for bombardments and fighting missions in Indonesia. In practice, due to a lack of crews and spare parts, only a third to half that number were actually available to participate in operations (see appendix).

#### WARSHIPS

Although Vice Admiral Pinke managed with a lot of effort to free up six destroyers for Indonesia, there were never more than five in Indonesian waters at any time. Other large vessels that the Royal Netherlands Navy directed to the archipelago were an artillery instruction ship, an anti-aircraft cruiser, an escort ship and a light cruiser. This brought the total number of ships available for artillery support to ten, nine of which were in Indonesia at the same time in late 1946.<sup>143</sup>

In addition, the navy wanted to obtain a large number of smaller vessels for patrol duties, troop transport and trade monitoring. Besides the financial and personnel problems described above, there were also political challenges to be overcome for this acquisition. For example, corvettes that

the Royal Netherlands Navy wanted to obtain from Australia had to be borrowed first and could only be acquired under the radar after a circuitous route via Ceylon. It proved easier to buy a number of landing craft tanks and harbour defence motor launches (HDMLs) in Singapore. The HDMLs were allocated as RP (river patrol) boats to the *Kleine Vaartuigen Dienst* (Small Vessels Service). The same applied to the so-called Higgins boats, which, unlike the wooden HDMLs, had a steel hull, and therefore a very shallow draught. The RPs were a clear improvement on what authors R. E. van Holst Pellekaan and I. C. de Regt have described as the 'scraped together and patched up patrol boats' that the navy had had to make do with until then.<sup>144</sup>

The RP boats were a sort of small warships. A booklet issued in 1948 by the Small Vessels Service said that, although they looked like a small coastal motorboat from a distance, when approaching them 'one does realize that this is a warship' and the RP boats were not to be trifled with;

*RP 105 'Panter' patrol vessel (1946–1949). Source: De Vos van Steenwijk, NIMH / Fotoafdrukken Koninklijke Marine.*



they were armed with a 3.7-cm gun. Thanks to their shallow draught, they could get close to the often shallow coast and steam up many rivers on the east coast of Sumatra, their principal patrol area.<sup>145</sup> The navy furthermore obtained a number of minesweepers with mothership to clear up explosives from the Second World War. Initially, the navy also had a number of submarines stationed in Indonesian waters, but they returned to the Netherlands as early as 1946 because the submarines were 'very uneconomical ships' for carrying out inspections at sea.<sup>146</sup> In addition, vessels (among others landing craft infantry and landing ship tanks) of the *Gouvernementmarine* (Governorate Navy) could be called upon for the transportation of troops and equipment. This was a civilian service that, just as before the war, worked closely with the navy and the KNIL.<sup>147</sup>

#### TANKS AND ARMOURED VEHICLES

The Dutch armed forces in Indonesia primarily used two types of tanks: the light British M3 Stuart and the medium M4 Sherman, two of the best-known tanks of the Second World War. This choice was not so much due to a conscious acquisition policy but to the fact that they could be obtained on the spot from the British. Initially, however, tanks were generally expected to be of little use away from the cities because of terrain difficulties.<sup>148</sup> Thanks to their 105-mm howitzers, the Sherman tanks served as 'surrogate artillery' for the marines when their own ARBAT was allocated to X Brigade during the first Dutch offensive. It was even suggested that the Shermans take over the entire artillery task, but it never came to that, even though it turned out that these medium tanks managed quite well in the terrain.<sup>149</sup>

The Stuart, a light reconnaissance tank with a 3.7-cm mounted gun, was more suited to the type of operations expected by the army leadership in Indonesia. According to Carel Heshusius, squadron commander during the War of Independence, this gun was effective against 'live, uncovered targets', but the grenades had a 'very limited effect' compared to field artillery shells. The Stuarts were also equipped with a blaring siren for psychological effect. The tank had been declared obsolete by the British in 1944 and many of them were stripped of their turret in order to be used for transport. The Stuarts that the Dutch troops obtained from the British in Indonesia were partly of this strange, turretless model, referred to as 'recce tank'.<sup>150</sup>

It is not possible to establish the precise number of tanks deployed by



*A Sherman M4A3E8 105-mm howitzer tank of the Marine Brigade leaves the ramp of a landing craft tank (LCT) during a landing exercise, 1 May 1947. Source: J.A. Vrugt, NIMH / Mariniersbrigade.*

Dutch troops, in part because in addition to the Stuarts and Shermans, an unknown (but probably small) number of other tanks from various sources were used as well.<sup>151</sup> In the course of 1946 a delayed pre-war order of Marmon-Herrington tanks did ultimately arrive in Indonesia from Suriname, but it is unknown to what extent these substandard combat vehicles were actually used.<sup>152</sup> As has been mentioned, during the Battle of Surabaya, Indonesian troops also used a number of Marmon-Herringtons delivered before the war.

The armoured vehicles used by the Dutch troops also came from various sources.<sup>153</sup> Most squadrons employed Humber Mk IV armoured vehicles, equipped with a mounted gun of 3.7 cm just like the Stuart tanks, and light scout cars with one or two 7.7-mm machine guns. The 'Hum-fox' was another model: Fox armoured vehicles kitted out with a Humber





*An M3 Stuart tank of the KNIL drives past the wreckage of a Japanese tank (type 89) during a visit of Member of Parliament M. Ruijs de Beerenbrouck to the Dutch troops on Java in March 1947. Source: Photographer unknown, Nationaal Archief / DLC.*

turret. Ford Lynx reconnaissance vehicles were also used.<sup>154</sup> The Marine Brigade had American armoured vehicles, including the Landing Vehicle, Tracked, called Amphibious Tractor or simply Amtrack in daily use. Bigger than the Sherman, this was an imposing and intimidating presence, of which the British had already made use during the Battle of Surabaya.<sup>155</sup>

In part due to these vehicles and its above-average artillery force, the Marine Brigade was the best-armed unit in Indonesia. When less well-armed RNLA units threatened to be 'slotted in' to relieve personnel, army commander Spoor declared that he 'very much appreciated' the armament of the brigade, 'primarily in relation to the great firepower that this unit possesses'. Yet he saw no other way than a partial replacement by RNLA units, to the great dissatisfaction of the navy leadership.<sup>156</sup>

#### MUDDLING ALONG WITH MATERIEL

Both the United States and the United Kingdom, the Dutch armed forces' two most important suppliers, announced arms embargoes during

the Dutch-Indonesian conflict (Washington soon after the capitulation of Japan, London during the first Dutch offensive in July 1947). These not only made it difficult or sometimes even impossible to acquire new equipment, but the delivery of the necessary parts to keep the existing weaponry ready for use was also jeopardized. As has been mentioned, the Americans had terminated the Lend-Lease contract immediately after the end of the Second World War, which in principle meant that all equipment loaned to the Netherlands had to be either returned or purchased. Because the Netherlands had insufficient foreign currency for the latter and the Americans would hardly benefit from the return of second- or even third-hand war material, the Netherlands managed to negotiate a settlement in 1946, definitively acquiring materiel including Lend-Lease armaments transferred from the British to the Netherlands.<sup>157</sup> When Indonesian representatives protested against this during ceasefire negotiations in September 1946, the Netherlands countered by demanding that the Republic should then likewise destroy the Japanese weaponry it had acquired.<sup>158</sup> Although the Netherlands still obtained plenty of parts and vehicles from its Allies 'under the counter', the embargoes during the conflict in Indonesia clearly restricted the purchase of heavy materiel classified as lethal.<sup>159</sup>

Lack of equipment, parts, personnel and ammunition remained a large stumbling block throughout the War of Independence.<sup>160</sup> Minor defects could have major consequences. In mid-1948, Squadron 6 ARVA put flying with Auster reconnaissance planes on hold because it had no spark plugs left in stock. New ones did not arrive until December – just in time for the start of the second offensive.<sup>161</sup> Earlier, the chief of military aviation, Colonel P. J. de Broekert, had already limited flying with Mitchell bombers 'to the absolute minimum' due to a lack of serviceable machines. This was, De Broekert claimed, because the Americans had designed the bombers for the duration of just one year of warfare, and because the Dutch were 'muddling along with materiel sourced from breakdowns and demolitions.'<sup>162</sup> This 'cannibalizing' of airplanes and other equipment was very common.<sup>163</sup>

The problems steadily worsened as the war progressed. During the second offensive in December 1948, 3-6 RVA was missing a quarter of its organic workforce. Because of a complete dearth of air observers, the troop carried out every fire mission with ground observation during sweep operations around Magelang, even though troop commander Major Wim de



Bruyne considered air observation 'imperative' for tracking fleeing opponents with fire.<sup>164</sup> In 1949, 3-2 RVA was also short a quarter of necessary personnel, and only had four radios instead of thirteen (in an ordinary unit, on average half the radios were under repair).<sup>165</sup> During the guerrilla phase after the second offensive, armoured units furthermore lost many vehicles through mines and pull bombs. In January 1949, 7 Squadron Combat Vehicles could 'hardly put 3 tanks on the road' (of the original thirteen) due to wear-and-tear and blast damage.<sup>166</sup>

The navy mainly had to contend with budget cuts from The Hague and demobilization of seafaring crew. As a consequence, Pinke decommissioned a number of landing craft in late 1947 and drastically limited minesweeping activities. Navy minister Schagen van Leeuwen even wanted to abolish the whole Marine Brigade in 1947, a plan that was dropped following fierce protest.<sup>167</sup> In addition, the navy faced the problem that the United States were no longer willing to deliver ammunition for its guns, which the ships had been able to order on requisition basis during the Second World War.<sup>168</sup> With the exception of the Artillery Battalion of the Marine Brigade and 860 Squadron MLD, which had been provided with enough for a year of 'complete warfare', almost all fire support units were faced with such shortages of ammunition.<sup>169</sup> The next chapter discusses the consequences of the limited supplies and shortages for the total ammunition expenditure.

## BACKGROUNDS OF DUTCH TROOPS AN IRON HAND

The KNIL had a long tradition of warfare and conflict in the archipelago. This colonial army had a significant impact on Dutch forces and their fighting methods during the Indonesian War of Independence in matters such as education, training, command and military culture.<sup>170</sup> According to the authors of a recent survey, fire support always played a very important part in Dutch colonial warfare. During the nineteenth century, the KNIL waged many battles against Indonesian opponents, some with the character of a guerrilla war, but also some of what Groen et al. refer to as a 'regulated' war. In many of those conflicts, fire power was a decisive factor.<sup>171</sup>

The 'East Indies doctrine' used by the KNIL during military expeditions was often: first a naval bombardment, then land ground troops. In the early twentieth century, the KNIL applied these tactics during such

expeditions as that to Sulawesi (1905–1906) and Bali (1906 and 1908). The latter campaigns are especially notorious due to their dramatic conclusion, as the Balinese monarchs of Badung and Klungkung, respectively, together with a large part of their entourage committed suicide or died by walking into Dutch fire. It is much less known that prior to the landings, lengthy ‘punishments’ with heavy naval guns were carried out, accompanied in 1906 by a three-day barrage by a battery of howitzers. Risk avoidance was an important motivation for the Dutch troops, as well as the presumed effect on morale of such punishments.<sup>172</sup>

According to Groen et al., ‘extreme violence’ runs through colonial warfare like a common thread, including the bombing of villages and cities. The doctrine of ‘surgical violence’, propagated by General Jo van

*Soldiers of the 1st Battery Mountain Artillery in Cimahi with a 7.5-cm Bofors mountain gun, approx. 1935–1937. This gun could be either drawn or carried (eight loads) by small mountain horses and was introduced in the KNIL in 1924–1925. Source: Photographer unknown, NIMH / Fotoafdrukken Koninklijke Landmacht.*



Heutsz and his political adviser Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, in which the KNIL was to carry out small-scale and targeted operations, was not complied with in practice and was actually no more than a myth. In Henk Schulte Nordholt's words, a 'wave of violence washed over the archipelago' between 1885 and 1910, facilitated by the 'unparalleled arsenal of modern tools of violence' of the Dutch colonial state. Unlike in public debate, few questions were asked within the army's own ranks about the often devastating effects of KNIL and navy ways of warfare.<sup>173</sup>

Remarkably, the European way of thinking about regulated warfare – in which heavy artillery played an important part – remained dominant in the Indonesian archipelago until far into the nineteenth century. For instance, according to Tom Menger, one of the characteristics of the Dutch use of force during the Aceh War (1873–ca. 1913) was 'indiscriminate use of artillery', both on land and from the sea. Although the military effects were doubtful on several occasions, the presumed moral effect of such shellings was an important justification for the KNIL. The limited adaptability of the KNIL and the navy pointed to 'parochialism and orthodoxy', according to Groen et al. In a way, this continued into the Indonesian War of Independence. The first offensive in 1947 reminded the authors of the approach during the Java War (1825–1830), when the colonial army attempted to beat Prince Diponegoro's troops with large 'mobile columns'.<sup>174</sup> Several main characters such as Spoor, Sukarno and Nasution also made comparisons with the Java War, which is moreover reflected in the tactical instructions for the troops.<sup>175</sup> In a 1948 tactics stencil of the Infantry School for Reserve Officers, Colonel V. van Arcken concludes: 'despite the time difference of more than a century – nothing new under the sun'.<sup>176</sup>

In addition to the Java War, the conflict in Aceh was also a historical reference point. Colonel Calmeyer of the Royal Netherlands Army drew a warning parallel with this protracted war in his late 1945 travel report. In his opinion, without adequate support weapons, the Netherlands would remain tied to the key areas occupied by the British, which reminded him of the time of the 'concentrated line' in Aceh, when the Dutch had barricaded themselves behind a chain of posts around the capital city of Kota Raja (now Banda Aceh). He pinned his hopes on Spoor, in whom he saw a third person – after Jan Pieterszoon Coen and Van Heutsz – who could achieve great things in the Dutch East Indies.<sup>177</sup>

The colonial war tradition was strongly anchored in European thinking about regulated warfare. According to Dierk Walter, western armies

always sought a 'decisive coup de grâce in a set-piece battle' in conflicts in the colonies, relying on a combination of 'moral shock' and 'intensive firepower'. In later colonial wars, Walter writes, avoidance of losses came to the fore more and more, as well as the wish to decide the result of a conflict by firepower.<sup>178</sup> The new phenomenon of air power was introduced to the colonies from the interbellum onwards. The doctrine of imperial policing that the British developed relied largely on the offensive deployment of airplanes. Although James Corum and Wray Johnson point out in their book *Airpower in Small Wars* that in practice ground troops also played an important role during such operations, the RAF managed to promote aerial policing as a cost-efficient way of operating at little own risk.<sup>179</sup>

For those directly involved, these backgrounds were a frame of reference for the struggle against the troops of the Republic of Indonesia. This also found its way into the soldiers' training programme for deployment to the East. The regulations on the army's political and policing duties (*Voorschrift voor de Politiek-Politieele Taak van het Leger*, VPTL), published in 1924 as a manual for small-scale counter guerrilla and distributed as a reprint among RNLA soldiers from 1947 onwards, played a large role in this. The manual was mainly based on the final years of the Aceh War, in which the region was brought under Dutch control 'with an iron hand in a velvet glove'.<sup>180</sup> As the codification of the lessons learnt in Aceh, the VPTL was a much used guideline for the actions during the Indonesian War of Independence.<sup>181</sup> For instance, the Indisch Instructie Bataljon (East Indies Instruction Battalion, IIB), taught that the VPTL was to be considered 'still correct', except when 'faced by resistance groups who have modern weapons at their disposal'.<sup>182</sup> The latter addition reveals where the VPTL was in fact inadequate: it proved to be of little value to comparatively large-scale operations with heavy weapons, because it was not designed for suppressing a national uprising.

The arrival of tactical air support, tanks and radios had fundamentally changed the *modus operandi* in the period 1945–1949 compared to the prewar period. Starting in the 1930s, the KNIL had experimented with several types of tanks, but these were mostly bound to the roads. The arrival of the airplanes enabled operations further into enemy territory. Large-scale sweep operations with frequent use of machine guns were also a relatively new phenomenon.<sup>183</sup> The Second World War offered a very recent frame of reference for this type of operation, all the more so as

many pilots in particular, but also artillerymen and naval personnel, had gained ample experience in that conflict.

#### THE AIR IS FREE

According to Bidwell, after the highly mobile opening phase of the Second World War, the tactical use of 'massed field artillery' returned on a scale reminiscent of the First World War. The Russians in particular used field artillery on a large scale. During the final offensive in Berlin in 1945, the Soviets deployed no fewer than 41,000 guns. By contrast, the Wehrmacht preferred tactical air support, in part because the German artillery was too unwieldy and often still horsedrawn.<sup>184</sup> Nonetheless, the 88-mm guns that were originally designed as anti-aircraft artillery were feared in Allied circles because of their high effectiveness against armoured targets.

In his much-discussed book *Brute Force*, John Ellis stressed how much the Americans also relied on fire support. A statement by General William Simpson of the 9th US Army – 'never send an infantryman in to do a job that an artillery shell can do for him' – is telling in that respect. The tactics of the British General Bernard Montgomery, one of the commanders of operations in Northwest Europe, were largely based on risk avoidance for his own troops. The Australian war correspondent and historian Chester Wilmot remarked that the Americans had reversed the old principle of fire and manoeuvre into one of manoeuvre and fire: the enemy was sought out and then destroyed with aerial and artillery firepower.<sup>185</sup>

Ellis's criticism of General Montgomery's operational methods was qualified to some extent by the military historian Stephen Hart. He emphasized that his risk-averse and intensive fire power strategy was the result of an acute troop shortage, meaning that he could hardly afford any losses. He was also attempting to keep up the fragile morale of his conscript army, which lost out in this respect to the fiercely fighting German adversary. Montgomery saw firepower and limiting own losses as the most important means to achieve that goal, which according to Hart was simply 'military common sense'. According to one of Montgomery's subordinate generals, he was 'always very aware of the doctrine, let metal do it rather than flesh. The morale of our troops depended upon this. We always said: Waste all the ammunition you like, but not lives.'<sup>186</sup> The main drawback to this doctrine of Montgomery and other Allied generals was the enormous destruction that it resulted in. But in the eyes

of Montgomery, the advantages far outweighed the disadvantages. He emphasized that the physical damage inflicted on the enemy was proportionally not very severe. It regularly occurred that well-dug-in enemy troops emerged virtually unscathed from a violent barrage.

According to Montgomery, the 'moral effect' of artillery and the power to temporarily 'neutralize' the opponent were much more important. Because of the short-lived effect of this, subsequent exploitation by infantry was of the utmost importance.<sup>187</sup> Air Marshal Arthur 'Bomber' Harris and General Curtis LeMay also regarded breaking enemy morale as the most important aim of the strategic bombing of German and Japanese cities respectively. At the same time, it was also the most efficient way for them to limit losses on their own side.<sup>188</sup>

The Second World War was pre-eminently a combined arms war. During the campaign in Northwest Europe following the landing on the French beaches in June 1944, ground and air forces intensified their mutual cooperation. Allied bombers attacked the hinterland as a kind of 'flying artillery'. In their study of the liberation of the Netherlands, Christ Klep and Ben Schoenmaker write that in the final phase of the war, the German troops were no longer powerful enough to necessitate mass violence. And yet, the Allied forces still deployed overwhelming firepower on Dutch territory, even when the friendly population was in danger of being hit. Klep and Schoenmaker state that it is debatable whether the battle could have been won faster with 'more risk and aggression' (i.e. hiding less behind firepower): 'the German operations, that sometimes exhibited this ferociousness, suggest not.'<sup>189</sup>

The Dutch Prinses Irene Brigade, which participated in the advance from Normandy, was also allocated an artillery troop. In August and September 1944, this troop, organized in British style, saw action on an almost daily basis in support of the infantry. Although most of its soldiers demobilized after the cessation of hostilities, a number of officers and NCOs continued serving to help rebuild Dutch artillery. Their experiences in working within the enormous Allied war machine and their knowledge of British organization and training formed the basis of the postwar Dutch field artillery and therefore also of the troops dispatched to Indonesia.<sup>190</sup>

Part of the personnel serving in the large naval vessels that would later be patrolling Indonesian waters had also contributed to the Allied war effort. During the Second World War, artillery instruction ship *Hr.Ms.*



*Van Kinsbergen*, which later saw action near Semarang (see Chapter 5), patrolled the Caribbean and also escorted convoys there. Other large vessels that were to operate in Indonesia had also carried out sea escorts of convoy ships. *Hr.Ms. Tromp*, a Royal Netherlands Navy light cruiser, had an even longer service record: she had taken part in the battle against the Japanese invasion of the Dutch East Indies in 1942, was then placed with the American 7th Fleet and subsequently with the British Eastern Fleet, making her one of the first Dutch ships to arrive in the archipelago in September 1945.<sup>191</sup> Furthermore, several Dutch vessels took part in attacks on places such as Surabaya and the North Sumatran island Pulau Weh (Sabang) in 1944, and the shelling of Balikpapan in 1945.<sup>192</sup>

As far as the air forces are concerned, many Dutch airmen had participated in the Allied operations in Northwest Europe, also where bombing of Dutch territory was concerned. An interesting fact is that 21 percent of all Dutch pilots who flew for the British air forces originated from the Dutch East Indies. However, many of them left service after the capitulation of Germany. According to Van Loo, it was primarily members of the MLD who went to Indonesia, because they were under contract with the navy for a longer period. In 1947, half of the 860 Squadron MLD still consisted of war veterans.<sup>193</sup>

Just like in the European theatre, the Americans deployed artillery, airplanes and naval guns on a large scale against their Japanese opponents in the Pacific region. The Allies waged a war which the historian John Dower has qualified as a 'war without mercy', in which they hardly differentiated between civilians and fighters, firing at anything that moved.<sup>194</sup> A large number of Dutch pilots took part in the operations, also during the liberation of the Indonesian archipelago.<sup>195</sup> The army leadership was not blind to the influence that the background of the airmen could have on the actions during the subsequent Indonesian War of Independence, as was revealed during the first Dutch offensive in July 1947. In one example, Mitchell bombers of the 18th Squadron had machinegunned several trains and cars, also hitting civilians. In an interview with foreign journalists, General Spoor stated, referring to the pilots involved: 'they still think they are in a war, and that the air is free. This is more a matter of mentality.'<sup>196</sup>

This ties in with Peter Romijn's characterization of the whole period between 1940 and 1949 as 'the long Second World War', a concept he uses to underscore the continuity in mentalities and the influence of the vio-



*Mitchells of 320 (Dutch) RAF Squadron bomb the bridges near Deventer across the IJssel river on 29 November 1944. The damage inflicted was minimal; the Germans were able to make full use of the bridge again after hasty repairs. Source: Photographer unknown, NIMH / *Nederlanders bij de RAF.**

lent war years on subsequent events in Indonesia.<sup>197</sup> More generally, too, the period of violent decolonization following the war of 1939-1945 has been described as the “greater” Second World War: a local continuation of the conflict, largely with the same means, but with different opponents and in different circumstances.<sup>198</sup>

#### TRAINING ON THE DUTCH SIDE

The colonial tradition of violence and the experiences with the Allied warfare also influenced the training of artillerymen, airmen and other personnel that operated heavy weapons. According to Budding, the troops

(in particular the officers) generally received ‘a tough training, attuned to the war against German or Japanese adversaries, in England or the United States of America.’<sup>199</sup> In addition, KNIL instructors and officers on location brushed up the soldiers on what they referred to as ‘East Indies tactics’. Scholars such as Limpach in *De brandende kampongs* often point to the inadequate and poor training of the troops that were deployed in Indonesia.<sup>200</sup> Although this may be valid in a general sense for the troops deployed and in particular for certain OVW and KNIL units, the picture is more diverse and nuanced with respect to heavy weapons.

#### ALL BRITISH

According to an historical overview of the history of the Dutch artillery, it was ‘all British’ for the artillerymen dispatched from the Netherlands.<sup>201</sup> Starting in 1944, hundreds of war volunteers had already gone to Britain to be trained. Together with officers and NCOs originating from the Prinses Irene Brigade, they provided a contingent of the officers of the Calmeyer units. The course was given mostly in Aldershot and Wolverhampton, where some received three, others six weeks of training. Their British instructors were mostly veterans who had fought in Burma against the Japanese or in North Africa against the Germans. In September 1945 a number of Dutch officers who had returned from German captivity also travelled to the United Kingdom and were trained in Glasgow and Tilshhead, before themselves training recruits and conscripted men of the 7 December Division in Wezep in the Netherlands.<sup>202</sup> Instructors of the 9th Australian Division in Balikpapan on Kalimantan gave the officers of the KNIL artillery who had returned from Japanese captivity a refresher course. Later, the army established an artillery school there in order to complete the training of gunners arriving from the Netherlands.<sup>203</sup>

How the artillerymen rated their training programme differed per person and partly depended on where and when they had received it. In 1982, the son of a gunner in Calmeyer unit 4 VA sent a questionnaire to members of his father’s former troop as part of his graduation thesis for the Koninklijke Militaire Academie (Royal Military Academy, KMA). One gunner (the veterans are anonymized in the report) responded by saying, ‘[t]he training in the Netherlands was very poor.’ Meanwhile, another observed: ‘artillery training was adequate.’ But, he added, ‘infantry training was inadequate, especially because this was about a new type of fighting, “the guerrilla war”’. The author of the thesis concluded that the

training programme was too one-sided and specialized and therefore ‘inhibited the multi-faceted task assigned to them.’<sup>204</sup>

Many conscript gunners of the 7 December Division considered the training programme to be inadequate. According to veteran Theo van der Linde of 3-6 RVA, the training in Wezep and at the shooting range in Oldebroek ‘passed by like a shadowy story. There was no time to think about anything.’<sup>205</sup> According to S. Beeksma of 2-6 RVA, the training programme was ‘not only inadequate but also short’. The government had no objections, he stated, because the Dutch faced ‘an impaired opponent’ in Indonesia.<sup>206</sup>

Things were different in the ‘Palmboom’ Division. The artillery peace regiments’ commanders in the Netherlands received information in November 1946 that the division’s conscript training programme was too tough, resulting in too many rejections.<sup>207</sup> In his memoirs, Frans Hazekamp of 1-12 RVA describes how well trained he and his later fellow officers were in the United Kingdom. Their primary training in Brentwood was followed by artillery training in Watchet and basic officer training in Aldershot. His training took a year and five months in total, and during this period infantry training was not neglected either. Upon arrival in Indonesia, he was, by his own account, ‘well taken care of and given additional gunnery schooling according to the highest KNIL norms’. The officers of 2 VA KNIL taught him ‘gunnery tricks’ and ‘wise lessons’ learnt in practice.<sup>208</sup>

Another gunner from the ‘Palmboom’ Division, Rieks Venema of 2-12 RVA, also wrote positively about his training period during ‘three lovely summer months’ in England and the easy-going ‘artillery atmosphere (relax, you’re not in the bloody infantry!)’. Back in the Netherlands, the atmosphere was less relaxed: he received his tropics training in ‘snow and bitter cold’ on the moors of Ede, and the officers rammed in the gun drill until he knew ‘blindly’ what to do: ‘Later, this would prove to be useful because even in a pitch-dark tropical night, you need to be able to deliver targeted fire,’ Venema wrote.<sup>209</sup>

The positive image that Hazekamp and Venema sketched of the training programme can largely be explained by the longer preparation time that the ‘Palmboom’ Division artillery had compared to the 7 December Division, and the fact that, after a chaotic start, training and organization were gathering steam. For example, the Directorate of Central Training was founded in Bandung on 15 March 1946, so that advanced courses

and instruction could also be offered in Indonesia. Even so, artillerymen who were dispatched at a later stage still complained about their training. Major J. van Binsbergen, commander of 3-41 RVA, part of one of the last three regiments sent to Indonesia, considered the training 'much too short' and his men's practical knowledge of guns 'virtually nil'. According to him some officers, after serving for nine months in the Netherlands, 'had only fired five shells and one magazine with a Sten'. In Van Binsbergen's opinion, this 'must truly be considered unacceptable'.<sup>210</sup>

The tone changed upon arrival in Indonesia. Seeing as 3-41 RVA was given hardly anything but infantry tasks, on-the-spot infantry training was commenced almost immediately, and the unit was brought up to speed regarding artillery by the notorious 1-8 RVA battery, which 'had been schooled to the highest perfection by harsh reality'. The gunners were grateful for 'this unique training opportunity'.<sup>211</sup> Other artillery units whose initial training in the Netherlands or England had been inadequate also received additional training in Indonesia. The Calmeyer 8 VA battery, which had encountered difficulties in Aldershot because of the almost total lack of instruction material, briefly received infantry tropics training shortly after arrival in Indonesia. This was followed by a 'very intensive artillery retraining' on location in Boom Baru Camp in Palembang (South Sumatra), where the unit was stationed.<sup>212</sup>

Officers and NCOs of Calmeyer unit 4 VA, who had been trained in Aldershot without a single gun or artillery instrument and had therefore only had foot drill, also received gun drill upon arrival in Indonesia, in this case from the British Indian artillery stationed there. A quiet period in the first half of 1947 was used to further increase the proficiency of the troop and organize specialist courses among others.<sup>213</sup> The same was true for the men of 8 VA, more than a hundred of whom were still taking written or oral courses in 1949.<sup>214</sup>

The stereotypical image of short and inadequate training is therefore only partly true, at least regarding artillerymen. Although a number of them did indeed arrive in Indonesia with incomplete preparation, considerable measures were taken to remedy this on location through additional training and practice. Some, like Venema and Hazekamp, had already enjoyed full-fledged training when they arrived. KNIL instructors then taught them the tricks of the trade.



## A VERY INTENSIVE WEAPONS PROGRAMME

In the literature on and the archives of the air forces, the quality of the courses and training are much less of a theme than for the ground troops, because many aircrews and technicians had already been trained during or before the Second World War within the existing Allied or Dutch training infrastructure (although there, too, not everything went without a hitch). The Royal Netherlands Military Flying School (RNMFS) had been established in Jackson, Mississippi, as early as May 1942, for further training of NEIAF and MLD personnel who had arrived from Indonesia after the Japanese invasion. One consideration for the Dutch government was that the climate in the south of the US was better 'for the East Indies students'. 250 students received certification as observer, pilot, radio operator or gunner at this institution until it was discontinued in February 1944.<sup>215</sup>

The RNMFS made it possible to found three NEIAF units equipped with American materiel in Australia during the war. Airmen who had escaped and were already certified before the war, were taken on by the British air forces. There, they were given further training, also by *Engelandvaarders* (men and women who had managed to reach England from the Netherlands during the Second World War). In addition to pilot training, the RAF also had a signals school and an air gunnery school to train aircraft radio operators and gunners. Airmen still in training at the end of the Second World War were transferred to Indonesia for further instruction at the flying school at Morokrembangan in Surabaya.<sup>216</sup>

Personnel of the MLD who had been trained at the Fleet Air Arm during the Second World War also consisted of servicemen who had escaped from Indonesia as well as *Engelandvaarders*. According to a record of 860 Squadron, the first group of radio operators and machine gunners were a 'mixed bag and consisted for example of a boatman, a stoker, a marine, an enlisted sailor, fishermen from Scheveningen etc.' The men were offered a 'very intensive weapons programme' at a Scottish base in Macrihanish to learn how to fly torpedo bombers. Practice sessions were held both during the day and at night. Before long, the squadron was deployed in combat operations. Several airmen who according to one reporter had 'earned their stripes' in this way with the English squadrons were also active in Indonesia at a later stage.<sup>217</sup>

Generally speaking, the airmen who served in 'war squadrons' like 18 Squadron were very experienced servicemen with a long track record.



The pilot Frederik 'Pulk' Pelder, for example, who was to undertake a daring escape from the Dutch East Indies the day after the capitulation in 1942, had obtained his first certificates in Ypenburg already in October 1938. In March 1941, he received his wings and his observer certificate at the Kalijati airfield on Java. After his escape from the Dutch East Indies, he flew a B-25 from Australia for three years, before being deployed with 18 Squadron in different roles in Indonesia after the Japanese capitulation.<sup>218</sup>

Although Allied training programmes were not always entirely adequate either due to the wartime circumstances, many of the personnel deployed later on in Indonesia had also received extensive practical training due to deployment with operational units. Because of their extensive deployment in the Pacific region and the fact that a large part of the personnel had been trained in the United States, the ML had what Gerard Burgers called 'American characteristics'.<sup>219</sup> Unsurprisingly, preparation time was shorter for the squadrons that were established specifically for the fight against the Indonesian Republic. According to a general headquarters report, new pilots of 17 VARWA Squadron had proven their usefulness in the difficult circumstances of the high mountains of Sumatra despite their 'short preparation time'.<sup>220</sup> Just like the ground troops, the ML frequently organized on-the-spot exercises, practice sessions and training courses to improve flying skills in specific local circumstances.

But here, too, the picture is not clearcut. Lieutenant Leo Hendrikx, who had already flown a Spitfire with the RAF during the Second World War, joined the reestablished 322 Squadron in 1946. From October 1946 until August 1947, he took a fighter plane course with the Spitfire Oefenafdeling (Spitfire Practice Group) at Twente airbase. Hendrikx: 'that was a very good course, I must say, with lots of young pilots who had just had their training in England'.<sup>221</sup> War volunteer D. Veldhorst of 6 ARVA, which was likewise established after the war, in his memoirs describes the thorough training that squadron members had completed before being assigned to the squadron. They first followed the 'initial training wing', then 'grading school' and 'elementary flying training school' in Britain, before travelling to Woensdrecht in the Netherlands to be trained as artillery observers in reconnaissance planes – which was actually rather a letdown after having practiced in Britain on bombers and fighters.<sup>222</sup> This squadron also conducted training in Indonesia: in August 1949, around the time the ceasefire was agreed with the Republic, the squadron or-

ganized a two-week Visual Control Post course (VCP, a liaison officer between ground troops and aircraft).<sup>223</sup> Finally, aircrew trained frequently during quiet periods to prevent boredom and keep personnel motivated. For example, in the second half of 1948 several squadrons practised night flying, aerial combat and enemy airstrikes on airfields, situations that were not likely to occur often in reality, seeing as the ML had already almost entirely eliminated the enemy air fleet during the first offensive.<sup>224</sup>

#### DRY PRACTICE

Preventing boredom through exercise and training was a significant and recurring theme on navy gunships in particular. In April 1947, the commander of the destroyer *Hr.Ms. Piet Hein*, Lieutenant Commander A. Molenaar, summarized the regime as follows: 'exercises are a welcome distraction for officers and men from the daily grind of patrol duties, which are so unappealing to the men, and have a positive effect on the crew's mood.'<sup>225</sup> In some cases these exercises had to compensate for a lack of training. In October 1945, the *Piet Hein* had left for the archipelago with 'almost entirely untrained volunteers', a risk that had been accepted by the commander in view of the 'urgent voyage'.<sup>226</sup>

The advantage for the navy was that there were still plenty of training opportunities on board. Indeed, the *Piet Hein*'s logs and reports regularly reference exercises.<sup>227</sup> According to Molenaar, in April 1947, individual proficiency was 'pretty good', but mutual cooperation left 'still a lot to be desired and in wartime would have been decidedly inadequate' ('wartime' for the commander meant a large-scale regular conflict). When the ship did indeed see action two months later, it turned out that the 'dry practice' on board had not sufficiently reflected reality.<sup>228</sup>

The proficiency of gunships which had actively contributed to the Allied war effort was generally much better. Part of the personnel on those ships had been trained in Britain after having escaped from the Netherlands or having been evacuated from the Dutch East Indies. Officers and other personnel also incidentally took courses with the US Navy to acquaint themselves with new weapon systems. The thousands of war volunteers who had to be trained after the end of the Second World War could also turn to the Royal Netherlands Navy, which provided full cooperation according to Van Holst Pellekaan.<sup>229</sup>

One problem that negatively influenced the proficiency of the navy was personnel shortage. One example of this is the report of a shelling of an

Indonesian coastal battery at Mengare (East Java) on 1 July 1946 by the destroyer *Hr.Ms. Kortenaer*. According to artillery officer Lieutenant 2nd Class R. Hartog, one spotter (someone who adjusted the firing range) was 'absolutely useless due to nerves and fear' during a shelling. This was because there were not enough first-class gunners on board when the ship left Britain, according to Hartog, and so second-class gunners had to be deployed as spotters, a position above their rank. Due to the spotter's anxiety, which caused him to pass on corrections of up to 500 yards, the shells had been distributed across a wide range. Hartog promised to 'improve on this' with further practice. In his view, the crew of the attending Kittyhawks, which were responsible for the sighting, also needed more practice, 'just like it always went' during the Second World War.<sup>230</sup>

#### COMBINED OPERATIONS

A lot of time was invested in the collaboration mentioned above between different branches and weapon systems, so-called 'combined arms'. According to a tactical instruction to the troops, the infantry had to act as the tactical heart due to the adversary's 'elastic and extremely mobile' operations.<sup>231</sup> In the run-up to the first offensive, the Kittyhawks of 121 Squadron and the Mustangs of 122 Squadron on several occasions practiced coordination with infantry and artillery. 860 Squadron also frequently conducted firing, rocket and bombing exercises as a navy unit, not with the infantry but with destroyers. Airstrikes that the Dutch army leadership considered successful during the offensive were due to 'lengthy prior training'.<sup>232</sup>

In the run-up to the second offensive, the ML carried out extensive test runs dropping paratroopers, who had been given an important task during Operatie Kraai, including during the conquest of Yogyakarta. The B-25s also practiced combined operations, and the ground forces experimented with a detachment of *vewart* (*vechtwagens en artillerie*, combat vehicles and artillery), which together conducted several operations in Central Java. The headquarters of the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army Air Force on Sumatra observed that, although cooperation between infantry and navy was 'excellent', the 'combined operations of army and air force could be made more efficient'. The NEIAF subsequently organized all kinds of exercises, demonstrations and training programmes, including a three-week VCP course and a training programme for ground troops liaison officers. After the first week of Operatie Kraai, the headquarters

took stock: 'as far as the execution of air support is concerned, a standard has now been achieved that can easily match all other Army Air Force units.'<sup>233</sup>

#### INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW AND ETHICS

Regarding the legal and ethical mentalities with which the soldiers entered the war, there was little to go on in terms of case law and treaty provisions relating to heavy weapons. There had been a debate about civilian casualties as a result of the greatly increased destructive power of modern weapons, for example in the wake of artillery shellings of Strasbourg and Paris during the Franco-German war (1870–1871), but this did not find its way into codification of the protection of civilians during attacks on cities.<sup>234</sup> Neither did bombardments during the First World War lead to further codification of a framework for aerial warfare. However, the Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land of 1907, an extension of those of 1899, did include an article that prohibited the attack or bombardment of undefended towns, villages, dwellings or buildings. In addition to some other requirements for bombardments, warring parties were also forbidden 'to employ arms, projectiles, or material calculated to cause unnecessary suffering'. According to today's standards, this still left plenty of room for artillery fire missions and, at a later stage, air strikes that posed great threats to civilians.<sup>235</sup>

One such example is the German bombing of Rotterdam on 14 May 1940, which led to hundreds of civilian deaths. According to Wim van den Doel this attack, carried out by at least 54 Heinkel He-III bombers, did not violate international humanitarian law as it stood at the time. Not only because Rotterdam was a defended city, but also because the Germans had informed the authorities of the imminent attack. But in Van den Doel's view, it did violate the preamble of the Convention respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land, which declares that the 'laws of humanity' were to be respected in all cases not included in the treaty. This vaguely worded preamble, often called the Martens clause, should have led to greater reticence on the German side, even though not one warring nation abided by it in 1940 (it was not an official part of the Treaty and therefore not binding).<sup>236</sup>

Such bombings were not examined by any court of law after the Second World War. This was partly due to the fact that the Allied Forces, who had emerged victorious and therefore decided on the administration

of justice, had themselves committed large-scale air strikes on non-military targets, such as the notorious carpet bombing of Dresden. But apart from that, international humanitarian law left little room to punish this type of violence against civilians. When the German Field Marshall Wilhelm Ritter von Leeb was tried by the Nuremberg Tribunal for deploying the artillery to prevent civilians from fleeing besieged Stalingrad in 1942, he argued in his defence that he had only applied the usual treatment of civilians during a siege. Reluctantly the judges had to admit: 'we might wish the law were otherwise, but we must administer it as we find it.'<sup>237</sup>

It was not until after the Indonesian War of Independence that the lessons of the devastating bombings of the last world war found their way into international treaties. Meanwhile, colonial powers ensured that they rarely if ever applied to irregular or 'internal' conflicts.<sup>238</sup> In the 1945–1949 period, therefore, hardly any case law existed on the deployment of the air forces or artillery. Neither did full-fledged 'rules of engagement', such as are used nowadays to regulate armed actions of military forces according to international humanitarian law.<sup>239</sup> During the Indonesian War of Independence, the Dutch argued that international humanitarian law did not formally apply, but in some ways, they did use it as a guideline.<sup>240</sup>

Limpach points out that 'the average soldier, but also the NCO and officer who arrived in Indonesia between 1945 and 1949, knew little to nothing about the legal aspects of war' that applied to their actions.<sup>241</sup> Esther Zwinkels, who researched the military justice system, also states that 'soldiers received poor instruction on the use of violence, law and the law of war'.<sup>242</sup> One influential aspect was that many Dutch people saw the guerrilla as a 'non-legitimate form of war', in Christiaan Harinck's words, meaning that 'guerrilla fighters also lost their legitimacy (to the extent they ever had any)'. Harinck calls this conviction 'so strong that it may be called a paradigm'.<sup>243</sup> Therefore, humanitarian law did not play a significant role with regard to the deployment of artillery and air power during the Indonesian War of Independence.

Regardless of the official legal framework, soldiers did, of course, use their own moral compass to judge events and their own actions. The Second World War and colonial military ethics were the most important historical sources that coloured the soldiers' sense of justice, often mixed with Protestant or Catholic moral views. Colonial mentalities can be found in derogatory, oriental or even explicitly racist manifestations in relation to the adversary or the Indonesian population, reflecting the

pre-war colonial society which was based on inequality. However, contempt and often even dehumanization of the opponent is a widespread phenomenon in warfare, and it is often instrumental in soothing consciences, thus expediting the killing of other people. The Dutch view that international humanitarian law did not apply to the conflict with the 'deficient' Indonesian opponent was rooted in nineteenth-century thinking within the KNIL, but was also supported by The Hague Conventions, which determined that international humanitarian law did not apply to 'uncivilized' (i.e. non-European) people.<sup>244</sup>

In diaries, letters and other ego-documents of Dutch soldiers in Indonesia, the Second World War often emerges as their most recent ethical frame of reference. Comparisons of Dutch excessive violence with German or Japanese methods feature very frequently, often as expressions of guilt or of condemnation of other units' actions, such as the unlawful executions by the Special Forces under Captain Westerling or the torture practised by the intelligence services.<sup>245</sup> But the simplified Second World War moral framework of 'good' vs. 'bad' was also often used to qualify Sukarno's Republic, which many Dutch people saw as a morally reprehensible 'Japanese creation'. The moral and legal-ethical aspects of the deployment of heavy weapons, as well as the personal reflections on this by the soldiers involved, will be examined in more detail in Chapter 6.

### THE EAST INDIES TACTICS

It became clear in the aftermath of the Battle of Surabaya that the Dutch army leadership understood the need to acquire and deploy artillery, air power and warships. During a meeting of the Raad van Oorlogvoering (war council) on 12 November 1945, it also became evident that political leaders and high-ranking military officers recognized that the 'native enemy' was now much better armed and organized than before the Second World War. But how did these facts translate into thinking about the role of heavy weapons within the so-called East Indies tactics?

A speech about the 'combined arms tactics to be applied' given to the advance party of the 7 December Division in 1946 offers a revealing insight. The speaker (who remains unmentioned, but was probably the chief of general staff, Major General Dirk Buurman van Vreeden) could imagine that the recently arrived soldiers felt unfamiliar in their new context. He drew on the history of the KNIL and how it had brought 'law and order' to the archipelago to paint a clear picture of 'the way in which our troops operate



here.' Before the war, the colonial army had in essence been nothing but a police force exercising peacekeeping duties. It was not suited for the fight against a 'foreign enemy', as became clear during the Japanese invasion of 1942. Although the subsequent occupation by the Japanese had militarized and armed the Indonesian opponent, the speaker did not see much difference with before the Second World War with regard to military relations, 'because our weaponry and equipment have also increased and improved, comparatively even to a larger extent than that of the opponent'.

According to the orator, the troops that the Netherlands had sent to Indonesia were geared for combined arms tactics at the divisional level and higher. 'I'm afraid,' he warned, 'that I must bring about a complete revolution in your thinking and orientation.' Actions at the divisional level were unlikely to occur, and commanders were advised to no longer look at their superiors or at their 'neighbour' but to actions in small groups, or 'indeed, the individual soldier'. However, the revolution in thinking that he announced apparently was not all that radical, judging by the recommendation further on in the speech: 'conceive your tactical intentions and plan in the way you have been taught, but apply these in a larger space and shorter time and in the way required by the circumstances'.<sup>246</sup>

Colonel J. M. Sluyter, commander of U Brigade, expressed himself in a similar way in a memorandum of October 1946. 'It goes without saying,' he wrote, 'that a different way of fighting had to be adopted for the struggle in Europe than would have been the case in the desert in North Africa, and that there are different rules again for combat in the forests of Burma. Likewise, it is an imperative requirement that special tactics are applied for the struggle against the Javanese.' Here, too, it is noteworthy that the elements that the colonel subsequently summarized – surprise, an offensive attitude, ample use of fire support – were hardly unique.<sup>247</sup> Tactics instructor Major Van Arcken stated in a textbook for the Infantry Reserve Officers School in Bandung: 'general guidelines for the use of artillery against the Indonesian enemy can hardly be given, seeing as the fighting capabilities of the enemy troops differ so widely'. In any case, firing speed was paramount in the fight against the troops of the Republic, 'in order to strike the enemy before he is gone'. This in contrast to an 'enemy armed with modern weapons' against whom mass deployment and destructive power were much more important. Inevitably, during larger offensive operations in Indonesia, the moment would come when the opponent would run out from underneath the artillery fire. Aircraft then

had to take over the task of the artillery, or the infantry had to deal with it themselves with their own weapons.

The most important applications of artillery during actions were, according to the textbook, 1) preliminary shelling, 2) disruptive fire at enemy targets, and 3) disruptive fire at *kampongs* to 'prevent *rampok* [robbery], arson and killing'. As if to defend himself against the accusation that this last application could lead to civilian casualties, Van Arcken added: 'the damage caused by artillery fire is always much smaller than when the enemy gets the chance to unleash his anger prior to retreating. Practice has shown that the population always manages to find sufficient cover'.<sup>248</sup> This latter quote is telling of the disparaging Dutch attitude to the opponent and the population, but it also reveals a detrimental aspect of 'European' tactics: civilian well-being had similarly lost out to military and tactical considerations during the Second World War.

This is not to say that Van Arcken and other instructors or the army leadership thought that the artillery was allowed to fire randomly. Colonel Sluyter stipulated that artillery was only to be requested 'if one cannot manage with one's own weapons'. According to the colonel, the maxim 'the artillery fires, the infantry registers hits' applied. He ruled out mortar or artillery fire without observation, while artillery without subsequent infantry movement was 'of no use'.<sup>249</sup> Colonel, later Major General (KNIL) Simon de Waal, commander of B Division, condemned such a course of action in even stronger terms in a tactical instruction from 1946. Commanders who were guilty of issuing artillery fire without subsequent infantry action were 'not up to their task'. He added that artillery fire after an operation was also unacceptable: 'this is a very grave error that will not be tolerated under any circumstances'.<sup>250</sup>

These instructions repeatedly stressed the central position of the infantry - and this was the reason why the navy seldom features, because it was the support unit that cooperated the least intensively with the infantry. The ships were assigned an important task in patrolling at sea to check maritime traffic, in addition to incidental support of ground troops by means of artillery support or troop transport. In this sense, their role was more similar to the prewar task of the Indische Militaire Marine (Dutch East Indies Military Navy) than that of the Royal Dutch Navy before and during the Second World War.<sup>251</sup>

The air forces - other than the artillery - often acted independently during the Second World War, in particular with large-scale strategic

bombings. Such mass deployment was not expected during the smaller-scale conflict in Indonesia. Therefore, the aircraft squadrons were first and foremost intended as support for the ground troops. Even though a distinction could still be made between indirect air support (targets such as ports, airfields and headquarters) and direct air support (also called tactical air support, to directly support infantry during operations), the air support instruction stipulated that nearly all deployment of aircraft in Indonesia was to be tactical air support. Colonel C. W. van der Eem, who succeeded Colonel de Broekert as CML, warned, just as with the artillery, against strafing or bombing without ground actions (and on the basis of overrated intelligence, which he believed was still occurring in mid-1949).<sup>252</sup>

The air support instruction included among the requirements for the deployment of aircraft for offensive action against ground targets that the target had to be out of range of the artillery, the infantry was to be beyond the maximum reach of the artillery, and a higher concentration of fire was required than field artillery could provide.<sup>253</sup> Similarly, the commander of Y Brigade, stationed on Sumatra, ordered that air support was only to be deployed 'when all other means have failed, or those means cannot be used against the targets'.<sup>254</sup> The stringent requirements for deployment were mostly a reflection of the scarcity of air support – or, as in the Battle of Surabaya, fear of the political fallout – and not so much a consequence of tactical adaptation to local circumstances. Just as with the artillery, the intended tactical deployment was comparable with that during the Second World War, but then on a smaller scale and in different circumstances. There was no radically different approach here, either.

Finally, during the East Indies tactical training at the School voor Reserve-Officieren Artillerie (Artillery Reserve Officer School, SROA), two factors were stressed that were considered important in the fight against the Indonesian opponent: an 'offensive spirit' and 'high morale'.<sup>255</sup> At the Indisch Instructiebataljon (East Indies Instruction Battalion) the maxim was that an 'indomitable attacking spirit' was needed against the enemy.<sup>256</sup> Battalion commander Major Musch, a strong proponent of the deployment of artillery and air support, went a step further: 'the more hesitant our political course, the more ruthless our troops must act'.<sup>257</sup>

This conviction was strongly related to the emphasis placed in the instructions on the moral effect of the use of heavy weapons. In an instruction for the use of artillery against the 'native enemy', the Central

Training Directorate pointed out that Indonesian troops that had not yet encountered artillery showed a 'lot of fear of the artillery projectile'. In the Directorate's view, the aim of using the field guns had to be to deliver a 'sledgehammer blow' to the opponent. Only then would he have 'sufficient respect for artillery fire'.<sup>258</sup>

Although this attitude echoes the pre-war colonial mentality with regard to 'native' opponents – who were said only to understand the 'language of violence' – it should not be forgotten that offensive action took centre stage also in the European martial tradition. This was given a colonial twist by emphasizing the awe the opponent supposedly had for heavy weapons such as artillery and aircraft – but it is questionable whether this was any different elsewhere in the world.

## COMMAND AND MORALE YOUNG SHOULDERS

Irregular conflicts such as the Indonesian War of Independence are also known as subalterns' wars, wars that, in Ger Teitler's words, 'place heavy responsibilities on young shoulders'. Limpach has advanced this phenomenon, combined with inexperience, inadequate training and arbitrary actions, as one of the explanations for widespread extreme use of violence. Here again, a more nuanced picture must be painted with regard to the use of heavy weapons. Command authority for the deployment of artillery usually rested with the tactical commander (often a battalion commander with the rank of a major or lieutenant colonel), with the territorial commander, or, in case of large-scale sweep operations, with the brigade commander (in both cases a colonel or higher). Such officers had already served considerable time in the army and were generally of a somewhat more advanced age.<sup>259</sup>

Authority for the deployment of naval gunfire and offensive aircraft also rested high up in the chain of command. Brigade commanders had no control over the navy and the ML in their territory. Operationally, the aircraft served under the territorial commanders or the division commanders, but requests for air support could also be made via the regional air force commanders (a lieutenant colonel or colonel).<sup>260</sup> Requests for support of the navy went via senior naval officers (the OAZs) or the regional naval commanders (a lieutenant or lieutenant commander).<sup>261</sup> However, pilots and naval commanders did have a high level of autonomy when executing fire support assignments. In the case of the navy, the young shoulders that

Teitler speaks of were mostly the commanders of small patrol vessels, but as the next chapter shows, these played a modest role as far as fire support is concerned.

#### A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF COURAGE

Another influential factor in how fire support was deployed was the troops' state of mind, in other words their morale. This, the general staff suggested in a tactical instruction for the troops from 1946, was 'the most important side' of warfare. Just as well, because, so the document continued, 'our troops distinguish themselves in the East Indies by a very high morale, that still rises by the day'. This was quite unlike the Indonesian forces, which in the author's assessment, encountered 'great difficulties' due to the 'leaders' pursuing of their own interests, typical for dark forces', so that conflicts continually arose and there was no 'strong one-person leadership'.<sup>262</sup> Perhaps the general staff sought with such words to bolster the troops' confidence, because a less rosy image of the morale of the Dutch soldiers emerges from the sources.

Initially, many Dutch soldiers believed the government propaganda that they were there to bring law and order to the Indonesian population, which had to be liberated from 'extremists', '*rampokkers*' and gangs. But already after the ratification of the Linggarjati Agreement in the spring of 1947, the troop history of Artillery Battery 5 VA reported: '[m]ood: going downhill fast due to the lack of actions and signing of the agreement. [...] They want to go home now and do not see the point of staying here, now that it is all over and there is nothing one can and may do'.<sup>263</sup> Signals were also picked up from other units that morale was deteriorating among the soldiers.<sup>264</sup>

The military success of the first Dutch offensive in mid-1947 improved the mood among the troop considerably, but the ceasefire and the subsequent ban on advancing on Yogyakarta put an abrupt end to that. The guerrilla war that erupted after the termination of the action and the Ren-ville Agreement of January 1948 did not help, either. 'One thing has our attention,' wrote Sergeant Klaas Kloeten of 3-6 RVA in July of that year in a letter home, 'and that is the action; whether or not there will be an action.' Kloeten was referring to the advance on Yogya, as he did again in a letter of late September 1948: '[t]he hope that the action would be continued, was once again not fulfilled. Slowly but surely that stuff is beginning to make you feel sick to the stomach'.<sup>265</sup>

This pattern of deteriorating morale following political disappointments and improvement of morale whenever there was 'action' repeated itself with the Dutch troops during the conflict. A low point in combat readiness was reached in the course of 1949 when it became clear that the soldiers were fighting for what they perceived to be a 'lost cause'. The long service time and the exhausting guerrilla also weighed heavily on the mind.<sup>266</sup> As a result, means of action that reduced risks to Dutch soldiers, such as artillery and air support, became ever more attractive, also because the use of those weapons lifted the morale of the soldiers – we will look more closely at this in chapter 6.

Despite the derogatory remarks in the Dutch tactical instruction, morale and combat readiness among the Indonesian troops was generally high, notwithstanding regional differences and fluctuations over time.<sup>267</sup> Major General W. Schilling, one of the few officers (if not the only one) at the top whose views of the situation at the beginning of the conflict were realistic, observed as early as November 1945: '[t]he morale of the resisting party(/ies) is substantially higher than military experts ever considered possible for the Javanese'.<sup>268</sup> In part it was precisely Dutch prejudice with regard to the Javanese and other Indonesian peoples that led them to underestimate the Indonesian armed forces' morale. An annual Marine Brigade intelligence report dated March 1947 is illustrative of this. According to the author, the Indonesian 'people's army' had been 'thoroughly demoralized by the hits received from the British', but was subsequently brought under control by the TKR/TRI. The report then states, somewhat inconsistently: '[n]ow that we have come to understand the morale of the enemy as extremely low, we are surprised at the way they approached our strong posts right up to the barbed wire, repeatedly suffering substantial losses. After all, a certain amount of courage is required for such actions'.<sup>269</sup>

Dutch rapporteurs also confused the avoidance of open battle – a tried and tested tactic for a technologically weaker opponent – with low morale.<sup>270</sup> Although the confidence of the TNI was considerably dented during heavy fighting and the two offensives, the Indonesian armed forces managed to recover time and again. Much more so than the Dutch troops, they had a clear positive goal to fight for: the defence of the newly acquired independence of the Republic.<sup>271</sup>



## BACKGROUNDS AND TRAINING OF INDONESIAN TROOPS

For the Indonesian armed forces, just as for the Dutch, the pre-war KNIL and the Second World War were the most important backgrounds and training grounds for involvement in the War of Independence, as well as further training and instruction during the latter conflict. At its inception, the TKR consisted primarily of three groups of fighters. The first was formed by former *heiho*, auxiliary soldiers in the Japanese army originating from the prewar KNIL. The second group came from the ranks of the Tentara Sukarela Pembela Tanah Air (PETA, 'volunteer army for the defence of the fatherland', 'Giyugun' in Japanese), a unit in the Japanese army entirely made up of Indonesian volunteers, which amounted to a total of approximately 50,000 men during the Second World War. The third consisted of the *pemuda* who entered the scene in the previous chapter. They had mostly been trained in Japanese paramilitary organizations.<sup>272</sup>

The TKR, which soon began to acquire the character of a national military force, also attracted many former KNIL officers, including Chief of Staff Urip Sumoharjo. However, a former PETA battalion commander from Banyumas in Central Java was chosen as commander of the army (*panglima besar*): Sudirman. This reflected the division within the TKR between more experienced former KNIL officers and soldiers with a PETA service record, with the latter seen as a less controversial background. However, Sudirman's popularity was also due to his successful efforts to acquire Japanese weapons.<sup>273</sup> The rivalry between officers with a KNIL and those with a PETA background is often emphasized in Dutch literature, but according to Purbo Suwondo it should not be exaggerated. Just as with the Dutch RNLA and KNIL, there were controversies, but in practice military skills and professionalism were also appreciated.<sup>274</sup>

## KNIL: IMPORTANT MINORITY

It was of great value to the later TNI that the pre-war KNIL had produced experienced officers, some of whom had also gained expertise in the field of heavy weapons, despite the fact that the colonial army had only opened up the officer ranks to Indonesians reluctantly and after a long time. In total, 64 Indonesian (aspiring) officers transferred to the Republican camp after the Proklamasi and 49 remained on the Dutch side. Unlike many fighters from Japanese paramilitary organizations, the former KNIL officers were used to recognizing government primacy over the army.



*Recruitment poster for service in the PETA. The text says, 'I fight in the army for the defence of the fatherland. Join us!' Source: NIOD.*

Therefore, during a reorganization in May 1946 and with the support of the government, Sumoharjo positioned as many KNIL officers as possible in the policy planning staffs. Consequently, Didi Kartasasmita (detachment commander in the Moluccas who remained in Dutch service until

1942 and who was instrumental in transferring former KNIL soldiers to the Republican camp in 1945) became head of infantry, Suriosumarno (former cadet with the KNIL artillery) head of artillery and *Raden* Suryadi Suryadarma (former instructor at the Kalijati flight school) head of military aviation.<sup>275</sup>

According to Bouman, other plans for reorganization and rationalization also came from former KNIL members (in particular Nasution), who therefore left a significant mark on the way in which the TNI eventually took shape. This mark was especially visible in the AURI, given that the only certified Indonesian pilots on whom the aviation branch could rely had been trained by Dutch instructors. Like Suryadarma, Adisucipto, who is known in Indonesia as *bapak penerbang*, i.e., father of aviation, had received his training at Kalijati airfield. After obtaining his wings and observer certificate there, he subsequently served as a pilot and observer with the tactical reconnaissance unit. Suryadarma had even taken part in the air defence of Kalimantan during the Japanese invasion in 1942 and had been awarded a Bronze Cross for his actions.<sup>276</sup>

During the Second World War, a total of 35 Indonesians who had been evacuated in time enrolled in the Dutch flying school in the United States, the RNMFS. However, many were rejected during the medical examination for pilot training (in Bouman's view because officers were needed for other roles), and only two candidates managed to get their wings. Others were trained as gunners or radio operators and deployed with operational units.<sup>277</sup> In short, although the former KNIL officers were to form a minority within the subsequent TNI, some of them did have important fighting experience in large-scale warfare. Besides, their knowledge of the organization, method and training of the KNIL could be put to good use during the fight against the Dutch. As far as heavy weapons are concerned, the AURI in particular benefited from certified Indonesian members of the ML, even though they could only put their experience to limited use because of the continuing scarcity of means in the aviation branch.

#### PETA: FIGHTING SPIRIT

In comparison to PETA, the names of former Indonesian KNIL members are better known in the Netherlands, partly because some of them, like Nasution and his fellow alumni of the Royal Military Academy, Alex Kawilarang and T. B. Simatupang, subsequently wrote authoritative works

about the fight for independence, which were translated into Dutch and/or English.<sup>278</sup> However, this has distorted the overall picture of the Indonesian army high command in the Netherlands. Many high-ranking military officers with a PETA background have been overlooked in Dutch historiography, even though they outnumbered ex-KNIL officers.<sup>279</sup> In Indonesian historiography and memory, the PETA on the one hand generally plays a more prominent role, because it formed the basis for the BKR. On the other hand, its Japanese origins have always tarnished the reputation of the national army, so that the period of the Japanese occupation is sometimes glaringly absent in works on the struggle for independence.<sup>280</sup>

First of all, the value of the PETA lay in the fact that the Japanese militarization of the Indonesian population (which, in addition to PETA on Java and the Giyugun on Sumatra also included the *heiho*, youths corps and other paramilitary organizations) gave rise to an armed version of the independence movement. Before the Second World War, this movement had primarily manifested itself socially and politically. Contrary to the KNIL, the PETA had instilled a certain degree of national pride in its members. Suwondo notes that Hatta, the later vice president of the Republic, as far back as 1944 had observed a difference in status between Indonesians who were derogatively called *serdadu* (soldiers) in the colonial army, and the members of the PETA and *heiho* who were given the honorific *prajurit*, warriors for the people.<sup>281</sup>

The later Lieutenant General TNI Jatikusumo, a former reserve officer in Dutch East Indies service who had also trained at the PETA Officers School, wrote about the KNIL that it was a truism among officers 'that they learned all about war but not how to fight it'. By contrast, the Japanese, as 'battle-hardened veterans', efficiently and effectively transformed civilians into soldiers. Suwondo explains that Japanese training, with its accent on the defence of coasts and airfields against the Allies, but most of all on preparation for a potential inland guerrilla, 'turned out to be tailor-made to confront the returning Dutch forces'. Furthermore, the training of 900 PETA instructors specialized in guerrilla tactics on Java alone proved of huge value for the build-up of the national army.<sup>282</sup>

A side note to this is that the Japanese considered it too dangerous to equip PETA with armoured materiel and heavy weapons, so that the *prajurit* could hardly gain any experience with these.<sup>283</sup> The Indonesian authors Salim Said and Nugroho Notosusanto downplay the actual combat training somewhat by pointing out that the Indonesians were primarily

trained in military discipline and fighting spirit (in Indonesian: *semangat*) and not so much in professional fighting techniques. According to Said, battalion commanders were 'only mildly exposed to military techniques'. The Japanese did not select them on the basis of military capacities, but mostly on religious or social status within the community they came from. In order to establish close-knit units, they were subsequently reformed into 'father figures for their soldiers'. He quotes Benedict Anderson's thesis, which describes the fighting organizations as 'emerging from the organizational debris of the Japanese period, formed from the bottom up on the basis of common *aliran*, ethnic origin, geographic proximity, or simple friendship'.<sup>284</sup>

Although this system was beneficial to the recruitment of local soldiers, Ben Bouman has observed that 'discipline could suffer irredeemably under this "bapakism"' (*bapak* literally means father, but is also a polite form of address). The PETA had paid little attention to theoretical training. Nasution states that things such as tactics and rational organization were regarded as colonial, which stood in the way of the structured establishment of an army and led to many losses in the early stages of the War of Independence. In his view, this 'guerrilla-mania' created an atmosphere of 'authoritarianism, paternalism and extreme individuality' in which collective decision-making was an almost impossible task.<sup>285</sup>

Despite these tensions and problems, the two backgrounds described above were also highly complementary. Before the Second World War, the Dutch had provided Indonesian cadets and soldiers with an insight into regular military planning, organization and strategy. The Japanese complemented this with crucial fighting spirit, tough discipline and guerrilla tactics.

#### WARTIME TRAINING

Chief of Staff Urip Sumoharjo founded the Akademi Militer in Yogyakarta as early as 31 October 1945 to provide for the much-needed training of officers for the brand-new national army. At the academy, Sumoharjo worked together with Samijo, a former KNIL lieutenant who had been trained in Breda. Soon, a location in Tangerang (west of Jakarta) and officer training facilities in Malang (East Java), Brastagi (North Sumatra) and Bukittinggi (West Sumatra) were added.<sup>286</sup>

Sayidiman Suryohadiprojo, who formed part of the first batch of military academy cadets, relates in his memoirs that instructors used a Dutch



Military Academy tactics book during lessons. Because it was a prewar edition, modern aspects such as logistics and radio communications were missing. It did, however, pay some attention to the rules of war. Suryohadiprojo also writes that the cadets were taught by German instructors.<sup>287</sup> Furthermore, the BKR Udara, the Indonesian Air Force that was being set up, appointed two Japanese flight instructors, who possessed valuable knowledge of the Japanese aircraft left behind on Maguwo airport.<sup>288</sup> The American, Australian and British 'adventurer-pilots' mentioned above also offered valuable expertise. Indonesian radio technicians with a history in the MLD, the NEIAF, and the Vrijwillig Vlieger Corps (Volunteer Pilot Corps, a semi-military flying club) made themselves useful for example by founding a communications department.<sup>289</sup>

Another option, to which the AURI in particular resorted, was to have pilots and technicians trained abroad. The air force sent personnel from the newly established flying schools in Malang, Yogyakarta, Kalijati and Bukittinggi to the Philippines and India for flight instruction.<sup>290</sup> Thus, in 1947, five aspiring pilots obtained their 'License A' in the Piper Cub in India. Another plan, in cooperation with the pro-Republican Filipino Captain Ignacio Espina, alias Igning, to send six cadets to Manilla with the RI-002 to be trained there, was thwarted by the Dutch. They managed to convince the Filipino authorities through diplomatic channels to arrest one or two cadets. Igning was also of great value to the Republic by setting up training programmes in jungle warfare for the Tentara Pelajar (the student army) and the engineers.<sup>291</sup>

Despite all these efforts, the troops of the Republic increasingly lacked equipment to actually carry out offensive air actions during the conflict (with very few exceptions, as the next chapter will show). The same applied to that other important weapon system, the artillery. Although the training of artillerymen was taken seriously from the outset, these could only stand by and watch how much of the equipment was captured or destroyed.

## CONCLUSION

Although the proficiency and training opportunities of the recently founded Indonesian army could not compare with those of the Dutch armed forces, it is nothing less than impressive what was achieved under wartime conditions. After the Proklamasi, Nasution and his compatriots from the prewar KNIL had hoped to build an army that, armed with heavy



weapons, would be able to withstand the colonial occupiers in open battle. The loss of weapons and the resistance within the dominant PETA echelons contributed to the TNI eventually opting for guerrilla warfare as its fighting method in 1947 – not least because of Nasution himself, one of the architects of this turnaround.<sup>292</sup>

Dutch troop build-up and organization right after the end of the Second World War was also a considerable achievement. The discussion above of the backgrounds of soldiers, training programmes and exercises shows that the image sketched in existing literature of the short and inadequate training of the forces in Indonesia does not necessarily apply to soldiers involved in the deployment of heavy weapons. Although enough testimonies of inadequate, short and incomplete preparation for the war can be found in the sources, there are just as many of thorough, lengthy training, intensive fighting experience in the European or Pacific war theatres and extensive practice and instruction on location in the archipelago. Officers of the KNIL were often schooled in the prewar fighting methods of the East Indies army. Certainly as far as fire support is concerned, these methods in turn had strong roots in European thinking about warfare.

The diverse image of the quality of schooling also implies that inadequate training cannot be a generalized explanation for situations in which excessive use was made of heavy weapons. The role that preparation and backgrounds played in operations and the effects of this differed greatly for each situation. The case studies further on in this book confirm this. However, it is possible to understand the frequency of the deployment of heavy weapons from this history, because fire support played an important role both in the colonial period and in the Second World War. Operating with combined arms had become the standard, which means that the backgrounds described had no inhibitory effect on the use of heavy weapons.

The soldiers deployed to Indonesia by the Netherlands were trained in the 'East Indies tactics' both in the Netherlands and in Indonesia, in order to prepare them for the circumstances in the archipelago. The 'revolution' in 'thinking and orientation' announced by the general staff did not come about: although the scale of the actions was much smaller than during the Second World War, the underlying tactical concepts largely remained intact. The predominant reasons for the deployment of heavy weapons in the Second World War and the pre-war colonial era were psy-

chological effect and the wish to reduce risk for the army's own troops, besides retaliation, such as during the 'punishments' by the KNIL and the navy. As we shall see, these were also the main motivations for the Dutch troops in Indonesia in the 1945–1949 years.

In military terms, the Dutch troops had an important advantage regarding equipment, organization and training, whereas the strength of the Indonesian armed forces primarily lay in size, motivation, fighting spirit and adaptability. In a 1948 brochure, the leftwing politician Tan Malaka clarified the overarching importance of the Indonesian fighting spirit: 'although we do not possess tanks, submarines and aircraft, we will [...] with bamboo spears, grenades, carbines, machine guns, mortars and matches, [...] however long it takes and whatever difficulties occur, finally be able, with or without UNO, to establish 100 percent independence.'<sup>293</sup>



*25-pounder guns of the Dutch artillery in Indonesia firing projectiles, 1948. Source: DLC,  
NIMH / Fotoafdrukken Koninklijke Landmacht.*

## 4.

# Bringing out the Big Guns

### INTRODUCTION

The criticism voiced by Spoor and his associates of British methods in Indonesia reflected their conviction that the Dutch would take a very different approach. Small-scale, targeted actions were the hallmark of this. Yet army leaders soon became convinced of the necessity of equipping Dutch troops with sufficient auxiliary weapons to combat the armed revolution, especially after the heavy fighting in Surabaya. With limited means and room for manoeuvre, the army was equipped with second-hand but modern weaponry that surpassed Republican means in both firepower and fighting strength.

How and on what scale did Dutch troops actually deploy fire support from approximately March 1946 onwards, when they first started taking over positions from the British? Historians have already speculated about the nature and scope of that deployment during the Indonesian War of Independence, but so far empirical research has been mostly absent. Rémy Limpach conducted important and innovative exploratory research, but his focus was on cases of extreme 'technical violence'. Christiaan Harinck made a start by including an analysis of the deployment of heavy weapons in his dissertation, but it was not central to his study of Dutch military operations.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter is about the deployment of artillery and aircraft during the war as a whole. It starts with a short overview of the different phases of the conflict and the frequency of the deployment of fire support in it. Subsequently, the formal frameworks of political and military authorities which limited that deployment are sketched in broad terms. This is followed first by a more detailed description of the different periods and the role that artillery and air power played in them, and then by an analysis of operations per weapon system. Finally, some conclusions are drawn about the nature and scope of the use of fire support weapons.

#### DYNAMICS OF THE USE OF FORCE

As many actions as possible of the Dutch field artillery and air forces in the Indonesian War of Independence have been charted for this study. In total, 1480 artillery fire missions and 942 air strikes came to the fore from the broad range of sources that were studied. As far as the Royal Netherlands Navy is concerned, the source material was insufficient to sketch an overall picture, but it is clear that large warships carried out fire missions much less frequently than field artillery batteries or aircraft squadrons. Only a few dozen cases of naval gunfire support are mentioned in the reports.

Figure 6 shows the known fire missions by the artillery and operational sorties of the air force. However, there are gaps in the reporting. To fill these, ego-documents, flight logbooks, memoirs and literature have been consulted in addition to official sources.<sup>2</sup> Air force sorties can mostly be consulted systematically, whereas data about artillery are found spread across individual section reports that vary considerably as regards form and comprehensiveness. Reports of 860 Squadron MLD are fragmentary and have therefore been left out of the statistics.

‘Operational sorties’ refers in this study to sorties of one or more aircraft where the sources indicate that lethal force was used, by employing either bombs, machine guns and/or rockets. The term is defined narrowly: sorties in which no force was used have been omitted. The number of sorties that meet these criteria (942) is considerably lower than many of the estimates in earlier works. However, many of these estimates concern sorties in general (not specified according to task), or are fragmentary and only concern airstrikes in a certain period.<sup>3</sup> Christiaan Harinck lists the most recent numbers, drawn from quarterly overviews of ML headquarters, which contain monthly figures of how often aircraft offered

‘support to infantry’, without specification of the type of aircraft or the nature of support.<sup>4</sup> Although Harinck does not give total figures either, he does arrive at higher numbers. The numbers in figure 6 are a conservative indication. It is impossible to give a precise number, because reports at the lowest level, ‘blues’ or narrative reports, which had to be made after every sortie according to procedures, have only been preserved in a few cases.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, some air raids were intentionally left off the record, as the former liaison officer Wil Grootaarts stated in an interview.<sup>6</sup>

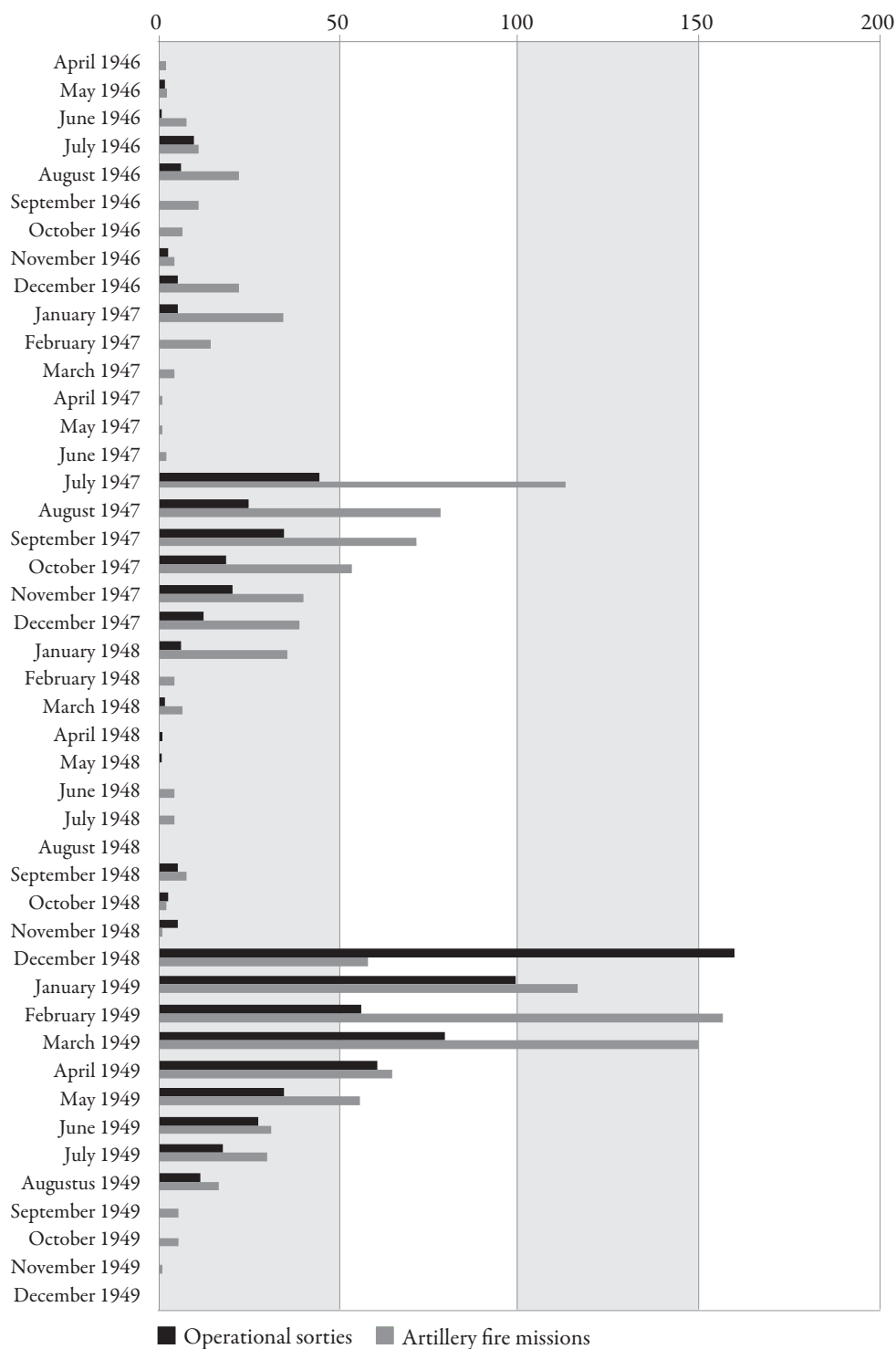
No cumulative figure of the number of fire missions carried out by Dutch artillery existed either, with the exception of the number of 890 ‘action days’ which Harinck mentions in his dissertation, based on several corps histories in the armed forces archives (*Strijdkrachten-archieef*).<sup>7</sup> Various factors explain the difference of almost six hundred with the amount calculated for this study (1480). First of all, the number of ‘action days’ is not the same as the number of fire missions. The latter refers here to fire that is delivered by one or more guns, at one or more targets, during an action. Several actions could take place on the same day, and therefore several barrages, of differing scale and intensity. For multi-day operations, fire missions are counted separately for every time the artillery carried one out.

A second explanation is that there are gaps in the reports of the separate batteries. Basically, each battery was required to send reports including details on each fire mission to the army artillery commander twice a month, but many units did not consistently follow this instruction. Furthermore, no central compilation has been preserved, analogous to the most detailed reporting of the air forces. Some of these two-weekly reports have been included in the regimental histories, but for the rest, reports differ vastly regarding layout, level of detail and comprehensiveness. The sometimes very meticulous diaries or memoirs of individual gunners are therefore important additions, along with commemorative books printed, for example, on the occasion of a reunion. Many fire missions that are missing from the unit histories could be distilled from these. A fire mission often features in several sources containing complementary details. Such crosschecks increase data reliability, but even so, artillery data should also be regarded as indicative and conservative.

Figure 6 shows several peaks in the use of force. The first two, in mid-1946 and at the turn of 1946–1947, occurred during the period of rees-



**6. Bar chart showing artillery fire missions and operational sorties**



tablishment, when Dutch troops were taking over the so-called key areas on Java and Sumatra from the British and steadily expanded them. Two other, significantly higher and elongated peaks occurred during the major Dutch offensives in mid-1947 and late 1948, and the subsequent periods of roughly six months in which an intensive guerrilla war ensued. Clear lulls in the deployment of heavy weapons occurred in the months preceding the first offensive, most of the year 1948 and after the cease fire in August 1949.

Differences in numbers of fire missions clearly show how the two offensives and the two periods of large-scale guerrilla warfare were at the heart of the conflict in the military sense, given that the lion's share of all deployments of heavy weapons occurred during those periods. This primarily says something about the frequency of the use of force and only secondarily about its intensity. The two comparatively modest violent peaks in mid-1946 and late 1946-early 1947 reflect the equally modest size of the Dutch army in Indonesia in those periods. At the time, there was undercapacity as far as artillery and aircraft are concerned, so that available means were deployed comparatively often, mostly during heavy fighting. By contrast, later in the conflict, troop commanders at some locations sent gunners out on patrol, because there was more demand for infantry than artillery duties. The intensity of the use of force is reflected in the diagram in the sense that, during times in which heavy weapons were little used, the Dutch forces did engage in violent action, but then in the lower end of the spectrum of force.<sup>8</sup> Besides the availability of means, this was primarily due to political decision-making and restrictions that limited or, conversely, encouraged the deployment of artillery and aircraft.

#### POLITICAL RESTRICTIONS

Until their departure from the Indonesian archipelago in November 1946, the British high command imposed far-reaching operational restrictions upon the Dutch troops present, in particular limiting the use of heavy weapons. Bombers already on Indonesian territory at the time of the Japanese capitulation were only permitted to be used for transport, convoy operations and shipping control. The commander-in-chief made an exception for situations where internees were in direct danger. The British further tightened the restrictions after a number of incidents in which Dutch troops overstepped the limits of their powers.

For example, the Dutch minesweeper *Hr.Ms. Abraham Crijnsen* machinegunned targets on the north coast of Bali in October 1945, after which General Christison temporarily banned Admiral Helfrich from sending more warships into Indonesian waters than the handful that were already there at that time.<sup>9</sup> Several other incidents also annoyed the AFNEI commander and led to further tightening of the restrictions. Thus, after airstrikes with a B-25 on Bali in March and April 1946, the British insisted the airplane be disarmed.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, in August 1946, General Mansergh expressed his 'considerable displeasure' to Spoor about a Dutch aerial bombing of Bandung. He was not at all convinced that the targets engaged had posed a serious threat to RAPWI or the city, and pointed out that despite the obligatory distribution of leaflets to warn inhabitants, several Chinese civilians had been killed by the airstrike.<sup>11</sup>

It was partly due to this incident that Mansergh, during 'truce talks' that followed in September of that year, demanded a prohibition of all coastal bombardments and airstrikes, whilst field artillery was only allowed to take action on the Dutch side of the demarcation line, 'to break up an actual attack'. Spoor complained to Van Mook that this 'constant one-sided inhibition of our troops' would in time 'badly effect morale'.<sup>12</sup> Following the talks, a truce was reached on 15 October. While this was intended to pave the way for the Linggarjati Agreement a month later, Mansergh nevertheless upheld the restrictions. Informally, however, he let the army leadership know that in case of constant attacks troops were allowed to cross the demarcation line 'to deal with it', provided they kept subsequent reports vague and brief – effectively amounting to recognition of the existing practice. It was not until four months later that TRI commander-in-chief Sudirman ordered a ceasefire under political pressure.<sup>13</sup>

After the departure of the British, Dutch troop commanders issued orders that gave much more leeway for intervention. West Java commander Major General De Waal stated in a command order of May 1947: 'if forced by enemy activities action outside frontline also possible, after report stating grounds'.<sup>14</sup> On the day after taking over command, on 1 December 1946, CZM Vice Admiral Pinke lifted all restrictions on Dutch warships, which the British had banned from coming within three miles of the shore following the infamous bombardment of the eastern Javanese rice port Banyuwangi in July 1946. Various Republican harbours had also been off-limits.<sup>15</sup> Barely two weeks before the British departure, on

19 November, AFNEI had ordered the Dutch navy to break off a bombardment of Lho Nga on the coast of Aceh. On that occasion, a destroyer and two Fairey Fireflies of 860 Squadron had bombarded Indonesian gun emplacements with naval artillery and missiles.<sup>16</sup> According to Teitler, the British had been furious and had threatened to have Vice Admiral Pinke replaced.<sup>17</sup>

After the Dutch unilaterally dissolved the Linggarjati Agreement and carried out a major offensive starting 21 July 1947, a new ceasefire came into force on 5 August under pressure of the United Nations. A Committee of Good Offices monitored observance of the truce, which in almost all cases prohibited actions on the enemy side of the new demarcation line. However, both parties frequently violated the agreement. Veteran Math Jalhay writes cynically that the ceasefire was in fact more like a 'stoke-the-fire' for the warring parties.<sup>18</sup> Artilleryman Henk Knapen of artillery battery 1-6 RVA, stationed in West Java, was surprised that a neighbouring battery did not use its guns even after one of their boys had been killed during a patrol. According to him they said: 'it is not allowed because there is a ceasefire, and that is why we do not do it'. Knapen: '[i]f you reason like that, you might as well shove off, the T.N.I. doesn't give a hoot about the whole ceasefire either.'<sup>19</sup>

The army leadership did, however, allow scattered troops a certain amount of discretion to deploy artillery at the demarcation line wherever necessary. An order dated 14 October 1947 laid out the rules for requesting artillery support from T Brigade (nicknamed Tiger Brigade). It allowed detachment commanders to carry out fire missions 'whenever immediate intervention of the artillery must be considered absolutely necessary as a consequence of a proven, direct and serious threat of the post concerned'. Other requests had to be made to the relevant tactical commander, mostly the commander of T Brigade, Colonel (KNIL) Rein van Langen.<sup>20</sup> In a confidential presentation made in Jakarta in October 1947, an unnamed high-ranking officer stated bluntly: 'if, however, we are also repeatedly attacked in the border areas [...] no one can prevent us from taking action against this'.<sup>21</sup>

Where the deployment of air power was concerned, the Dutch showed more restraint. In November 1947, Central Java commander Major General De Waal incurred the wrath of General Spoor and Governor Van Mook by ordering a retaliation on Banjarnegara without prior consultation, resulting in five dead and four wounded.<sup>22</sup> Possibly as a consequence

of this action and the attack on Karanganyar on 19 October (see Chapter 5), permission of the chief of the general staff was needed for all operations in Republican territory from 27 November onwards. Moreover, the headquarters of the air force continually called for a limited deployment of aircraft, but besides political considerations it would appear this was prompted by scarcity of means.<sup>23</sup>

Army leadership tightened the reins after the conclusion of the Renville Agreement on 17 January 1948. In part this was because the CGD, later renamed the United Nations Commission for Indonesia (UNCI), was given more powers and sent more observers into the field.<sup>24</sup> According to the war volunteer John Ritman of Calmeyer Battery 4 VA in West Sumatra, the commission decided that shooting with artillery was 'inhumane', 'therefore we ought to be retrained as infantrymen'.<sup>25</sup> It is doubtful that the commission really used this qualification, but it is certain that many gunners were indeed used as infantrymen. Airstrikes in enemy territory were also out of the question after 'Renville'. Prior permission was required for orders to bomb territory controlled by the Netherlands. Strafing, in other words machinegunning of ground targets, was only permitted in case of a direct threat to Dutch troops.<sup>26</sup>

Again, the Dutch army tried to maintain some wiggle room. For example, the corps history of 2-8 RVA shows the artillery commander of W Brigade still permitted 'freeing up of patrols'. However, this was not far-reaching enough for the artillery commander, Major F. G. van Ditzhuyzen. In his view, Hizbullah units were making the situation untenable for the local population in the area near Cirebon (West Java). He reported to his commander that he would decline the responsibility for the safety of the population 'if I am not permitted to act'. After Van Ditzhuyzen had convinced the local TNI commander to sign a declaration that none of his troops were present in the region, he finally received permission to deploy artillery 'in emergencies' against Hizbullah concentrations. 2-8 RVA seized this small opening to strike hard, together with infantry, and to carry out the biggest shelling in the battery's history, firing 457 grenades and reporting hundreds of enemy casualties. According to a commemorative book, the region then became a 'pleasant place'.<sup>27</sup> However, this situation in West Java, where Indonesian fighting groups also warred against each other, was an exception. In most places on Java and Sumatra, the guns mostly remained silent and attack aircraft largely stayed on the ground until the second offensive commenced in December 1948.

In broad terms, the truce that was declared after the second ‘police action’ contained the same stipulations as before, but just as in 1947, both parties frequently violated the agreement, so that no real truce existed. The first half of 1949 was in fact the most violent episode of the whole war. Both the Netherlands and the Republic submitted long lists of violations by the adversary to UNCI, leading to all sorts of diplomatic quarrels.<sup>28</sup> A true ceasefire was not reached until the night of 10 to 11 August 1949 – again with the exception of parts of West Java, where fighting continued against the Darul Islam and other groups.

## REESTABLISHMENT

### *Java*

For most of 1946, the occupied territories in the archipelago resorted under British command and Dutch troops had few heavy weapons at their disposal. Besides the handful of aircraft squadrons and a couple of warships, which were barred from offensive action by the British, there were only four official deployable artillery batteries. Three of those were part of the KNIL and were spread over West Java (3 VA), Central Java (1 VA) and East Java (2 VA). Because the infantry was in great need of artillery support, the batteries very frequently carried out fire missions, and certainly 1 VA and 2 VA fired more grenades (respectively ca. 15,000 and 14,000) than all individual RNLA batteries would later in the conflict. In West Java, too, artillery was employed very regularly, in particular in support of operations to extend the occupied area. However, data about 3 VA are incomplete, as they are for the ‘illegal’ artillery, which was deployed in West Java from late April onwards and reinforced the firepower there.<sup>29</sup>

In Central Java, discussed in detail in the next chapter, heavy fighting occurred in August 1946 in particular. In these battles, Indonesian troops supported by heavy weapons carried out conventional attacks against the Dutch-occupied bridgehead in Semarang. In that period – just as in 1945 – the fighting in East Java displayed a somewhat conventional character and the region remained one of the most important battlefields throughout the war. Besides KNIL battery 2 VA, the ARBAT of the Marine Brigade also operated there, together with and under the command of the British artillery. In addition, the Sherman tanks with their 105-mm howitzers were available for fire support operations. In April 1946, Colonel M. R. de Bruijne, commander of the Marine Brigade, explained the need for this



extra firepower to his superior in a letter: '[c]ontrary to what many people think (probably due to consciously wanting to keep hidden what is in fact an existing war situation) there is considerable fighting for Soerabaja. The nature of the opposition is such that this cannot be broken without artillery, tanks including heavy auxiliary weapons. After 5 years of war experience in Burma etc., the British commander General Mansergh will be the first to confirm this.'<sup>30</sup>

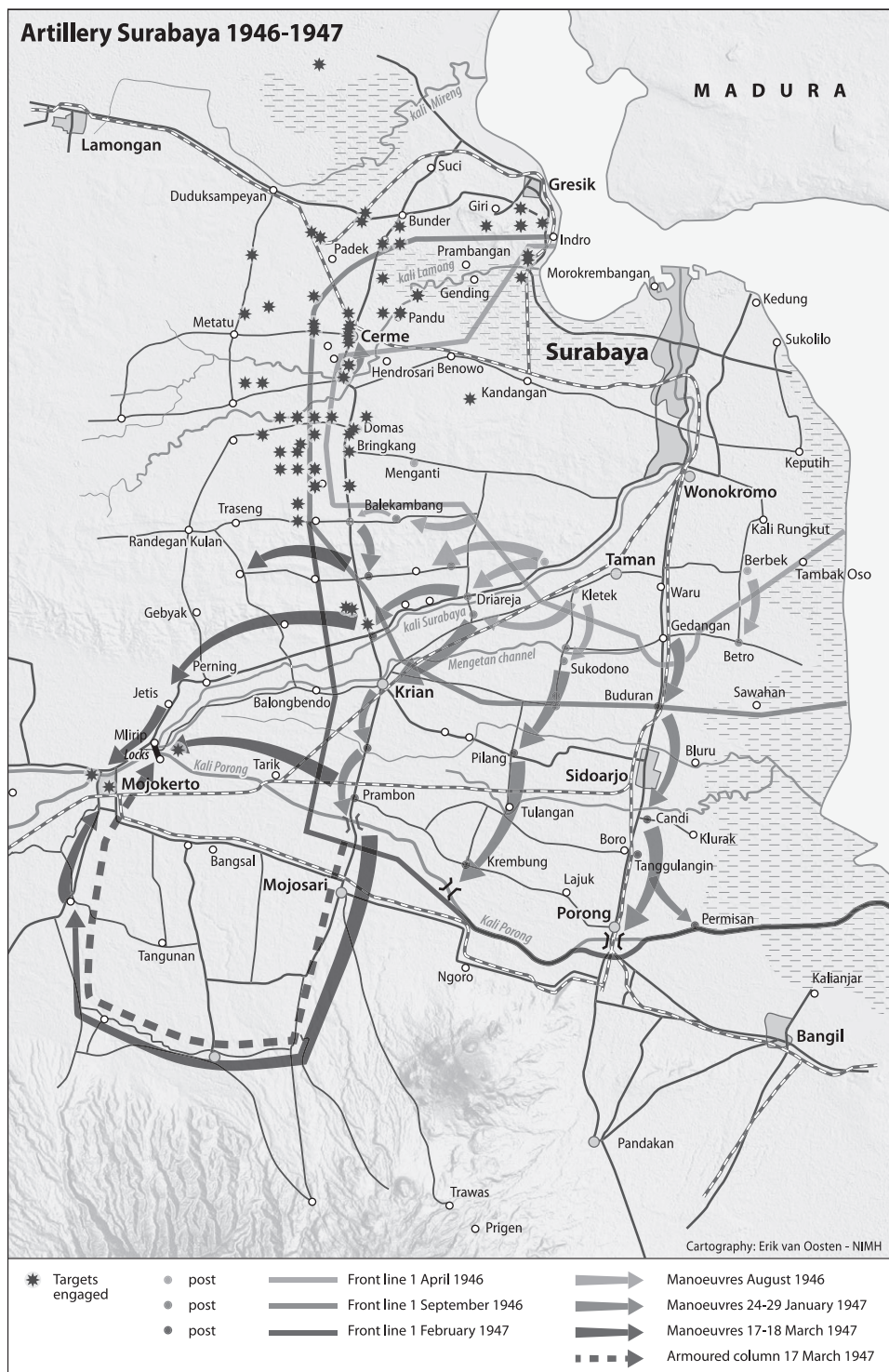
From April 1946, both 2 VA and ARBAT saw frequent action. Initially, under British command, they primarily assisted with the defence of the 'west wall', the defended western edge of the city, including combating Indonesian artillery. In May 1946, a large number of British left Surabaya, but 145 Reg. Field Artillery remained and then temporarily served under the Dutch commander, Colonel C. Giebel.<sup>31</sup> According to C. J. O. Dorren, an 'excellent close cooperation' soon developed with the 'reliable professional gunners' of A Division, first commanded by Giebel and from late 1946 by De Bruijne, which now also took action more often outside the perimeter to attack Indonesian fighting groups.<sup>32</sup>

With the ratification of the ceasefire in October of that year, the troops were ordered to patrol only within the perimeter from that moment on. The marines complained that the TRI, led by Colonel Sungkono, could once again approach the city of Surabaya 'with complete peace of mind' and bombard it with artillery and mortars. In January 1947 the port city was attacked every night. General Spoor wanted action, saying he was not the 'manager of a shooting gallery'. In the first months of 1947, A Division therefore carried out a number of large-scale operations to eliminate 'Sungkono's annoying weaponry' (in part prewar KNIL mountain howitzers).<sup>33</sup> During these operations, troops consecutively occupied the Porong delta, Krian, Sidoarjo and Mojokerto, and thus broke free of the 'ring of steel' around Surabaya.<sup>34</sup>

*Fire missions of the 2nd Field Artillery Battery KNIL (2 VA) in the period from 1 August 1946 to 31 December 1947, projected onto a georeferenced overlay of the map 'Development of the front at Soerabaja 23 March 1946 to 23 March 1947'. The total number of explosive shells fired during these actions was 7144. Comparable data for the ARBAT, which was responsible for the southern front, are not available. Source:*

*NL-HaNA, Mariniersbrigade, 999; Strijdkrachten, 139, 3134; NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1431; National Library of Australia, Maps collection, sheets 54/XL-C Tjermé, 54/XL-D & 55/XL-C Soerabaja, 53/XLI-B Modjokerto, 54/XLI-A Krijan.*

## 7. Map of western front at Surabaya, 1946–1947



Dutch troops used fire support on a large scale in these operations, in particular during the occupation of Mojokerto and the nearby lock complex at Mlirip on 17 and 18 March 1947, which was part of operation 'Voorloper' (Precursor). This campaign concluded the second peak in conflict intensity that can be discerned in figure 6, and took place in a period in which the fighting elsewhere had already died down. Its immediate cause was the fact that Republican armed forces had closed the locks, causing the Sidoarjo Delta to flood and endangering the food supply of Surabaya. An ARBAT commemorative book relates how the Dutch reaction would not have been out of place in the Second World War, with a 'spectacular' advance of an armoured marine unit consisting of 120 vehicles, including Amtracks and Sherman tanks. The commander felt 'just like Patton!'<sup>35</sup>

Sungkono's troops avoided a direct confrontation, but with well-aimed artillery and sniper fire they managed from a distance to cause several fatalities and wounded on the Dutch side.<sup>36</sup> Dutch artillery also took action many times (2 VA fired off 561 grenades during the operation), including to prevent the sluice complex from being destroyed.<sup>37</sup> According to a war volunteer, 'big brother' (KNIL artillery) fired 'sharp as a razorblade again'.<sup>38</sup> In the meantime, Fairey Fireflies of 860 Squadron MLD attacked several Indonesian targets such as casemates, roads, a railway line and various vehicles,<sup>39</sup> provoking subsequent criticism from Van Mook. To him, the Firefly raids seemed to be 'a somewhat excessive assignment, mainly intended to give the airmen something to do'. In a reaction, Spoor pointed out that there had been no bombardment, only shooting with missiles, 'which is preferable, because their accuracy is greater and the potential of hitting innocent civilians considerably smaller'.<sup>40</sup>

Furthermore, the operation 'Voorloper' report stated that targets had been chosen in such a way 'that the population would suffer as little harm as possible'. However, it is debatable whether that aim was achieved. Republican reports stated that aerial attacks were also carried out on villages around Mojokerto, but it is not clear to how many casualties this caused.<sup>41</sup> Sources are ambiguous about the extent to which the population had left the area. A Dutch intelligence report noted that, according to official figures, enemy losses amounted to 450 to 500, a number that seemed 'very high' according to the compiler of the report.<sup>42</sup> Meanwhile, Sungkono, who had moved his headquarters to Kediri, managed to continue his attacks on Dutch posts from there.<sup>43</sup>

### *Sumatra*

Although 'Voorloper' may have been one of the biggest actions on Java preceding the first offensive, heavy fighting also occurred on Sumatra in late 1946 to early 1947. In November, Dutch troops took over the British positions in the key areas of Medan, Padang and Palembang. Indonesian armed forces there did not accept the return of the colonizer and carried out fierce, conventional attacks, during which they also used heavy weapons. According to a report of Dr J. J. van de Velde, government advisor for political affairs on Sumatra, it was 'crystal clear' that the outbreak of large-scale hostilities was triggered by a speech of Sudirman on 26 December, but he also readily admitted that Dutch troops had done things that 'harmed their own interests'. Republican communications spoke of civilian casualties caused by unprovoked airstrikes, including on Aceh. 'Unfortunately, we will not be able to deny all of them,' wrote Van de Velde, 'it would sometimes appear that our airmen cannot stop themselves from handling the machine-gun controls if they see a nice "target"'.<sup>44</sup>

A picture emerges from the sources of a fierce crackdown by Dutch troops in this period, with much deployment of artillery and in particular Mustang fighter planes of 122 Squadron. In Medan, tensions rose right from the handover in November. Indonesian troops regularly pounded Dutch positions, including the airfield. Artillery and other heavy weapons were brought in to that end from 'free' Aceh.<sup>45</sup> In late December, *pemuda* carried out a number of attacks, supported by these guns. On at least one occasion, on 31 December 1946, Indonesian grenades hit their target, killing a Dutch soldier and wounding four others. In the first week of January, the Netherlands reacted with a number of fierce infantry actions and airstrikes. Mustangs bombed several estates, agricultural enterprises around Medan that were regarded as 'hotbeds'.<sup>46</sup>

In the margin of this report, which is remarkably frank, like other reports from the early days of the war, an intelligence officer wrote: 'in view of some "unorthodox" operations far from Medan, which feature in this report, I advise against widely circulating overview No.3'. He was referring to entries in the report of pounding warehouses, factories, but also houses, busses, cars, whole rows of trees and a water tower with missiles and machine guns. On 2 January, for instance, the report states: 'at 376888 (Padang Boelan) a passenger car was hit and caught fire. The Mustangs regularly machinegunned the trees for snipers. At 412908 a house was shot into flames, because it was the source of sniper fire. It was observed

that the Infantry torched kampong houses.' In the margin there is typical military commentary: 'waste of precious ammunition!'<sup>47</sup> The actions offered the Dutch troops temporary respite, but from February onwards Indonesian troops again intensified their armed resistance against Dutch reoccupation.<sup>48</sup>

In Padang, the situation was no less violent. A rough picture emerges from various blunt daily orders of the Central Sumatra commander Colonel Sluyter – which can be found in the restricted archives of the *Excessennota* but are not included in the final report, unlike many other daily orders. At the time command was taken over from the British, Sluyter had told his men to strive for 'restraint and no independent actions'. 'Nothing is easier than to hammer away.' Two months later, the tone had changed dramatically. In December, Indonesian troops hit the enemy hard by laying mines, killing fourteen men in total. According to the colonel, that was the limit and a 'heavy beating' started on 2 January. Mustangs bombed TRI headquarters in Bukittinggi and Padang Panjang. Calmeyer unit 4 VA also took action. According to Sluyter, the biggest blow was dealt on 20 January: 'there we went, like an unstoppable bandjir [flood], driving everything before us, destroying bad people and sparing the good ones.'<sup>49</sup> The latter is doubtful: on 18 or 20 January, Mustangs carried out an airstrike on the *pasar* (market) of the small town of Bandarbat, killing possibly hundreds of people, an event examined by Limpach following the testimony of 2-14 RI veteran Jacky de Lange in a television documentary.<sup>50</sup>

The onslaught was part of extensive actions on 18 and 20 January in which infantry and artillery also played an important part. The aim of the operations was to increase the safety of the captured territory and to punish the adversary for attacks on Dutch troops. In this sense 'Bandarbat' fits into the pattern of violent reoccupation as carried out in several large cities on Java and Sumatra. Little is known about the action on 18 January, but it is clear that four Mustangs were ordered to strafe the *kampongs* of Lubuk Kilangan and Bandarbat to the east of Padang. This led to fire in at least the village mentioned above.<sup>51</sup> Two days later, Dutch troops advanced towards the area around Bandarbat, 'the source of all enemy activity'.<sup>52</sup>

Infantrymen praised the cooperation with artillery and aircraft in the 2-14 RI (Zeeland Battalion) report of that attack. According to the report, all 4 VA artillery fire had been 'very well-aimed and once again gave



the infantry confidence in the cooperation between the two weapons'. The Mustangs had also been 'a big support during the action. With their fire they blocked the eastern direction as it were, and punished the enemy'. The effect on morale of the aircraft was considerable and the troops were 'delighted by their work and their accurate firing and had complete confidence in the cooperation'. During the attack, the strike force counted 80 casualties but 'including the fire of the mustangs approximately 250 bodies were counted, mostly T.R.I., as well as some wounded'.<sup>53</sup> Despite the civilian casualties which were likely included in this number, both Colonel Sluyter and the Zeeland Battalion were very pleased with the results of the action, which had 'severely shocked' the Islamic fighting groups Masyumi and Hizbullah and driven them inland. 'You may all thump yourselves on the chest,' Sluyter concluded his daily order of 28 January. 'I am proud of you.'<sup>54</sup>

In his reaction, Van Mook struck a different tone and once again had to put out a political fire following criticism by the Indonesian minister of foreign affairs, Sutan Syahrir, who accused the Dutch of 'ruthless deployment of aircraft and heavy weapons'.<sup>55</sup> On 14 January 1947, Chief of Staff Buurman van Vreeden had already issued stricter guidelines for the use of airpower on Sumatra. He asked troop commanders to make 'judicious' use of aircraft and to prioritize the deployment of ground forces wherever possible. Airstrikes and strafing of ground targets were still permitted, but from now on the chief of staff expected a written detailed report afterwards. In his view, it could never be the intention 'to simply "make" as many dead and wounded as possible'.<sup>56</sup> Van Mook had to admit to Syahrir that the operations around Padang had not been carried out in accordance with these guidelines and that 'limits set for operations' had been transgressed – a rare confession of Dutch authorities to the Republic, according to Limpach.<sup>57</sup>

Around that time, another controversial battle took place further south in Sumatra, in Palembang. In Indonesian historiography this period is known as *perang lima hari lima malam*, a war of five days and five nights.<sup>58</sup> The events in Palembang also fit the pattern of reestablishment and partial reoccupation of Java and Sumatra by Dutch troops. Indonesian armed forces tried to drive out Dutch troops stationed in a small enclave, relying on a combination of heavy weapons and mass attacks. Dutch marines decided to strike back hard with all available means and material superiority. In order to increase the safety of the occupied area,



they inflicted severe material damage and losses on the Indonesian adversary and the population.

In Palembang, a battle erupted around the turn of the year. To fend off a potential attack, Y Brigade staff led by Colonel Frits Mollinger had prepared a contingency plan (the so-called *Continentenplan*), which was activated after fighting had broken out on New Year's Eve.<sup>59</sup> The Dutch wielded an iron fist: air support by Mitchell bombers, naval gunfire support of a destroyer on the Musi River, field artillery, a squadron of armoured vehicles and heavy mortars, machine guns and anti-tank guns of KNIL *Stoottroepen* (Storm Troops).

Just as in Padang, Dutch soldiers waxed lyrical about all this violence. According to H. Booy of 8 RS 'it was a sight to behold, those big low-flying and fire-breathing birds'.<sup>60</sup> The radio operator Peter Zwanenburg of 7 RS recounted in an interview: 'it was a magnificent spectacle [...], abundant fireworks on the river. The naval guns of the "Piet Hein", the artillery from Bagoes Koenig and the air force were having a pretty good blast.'<sup>61</sup>

*Dutch soldiers on patrol in Palembang, which was severely damaged during the fighting, 5 January 1947. Source: photographer unknown, NIMH/ Stoottroepen Museum.*



Yet Dutch soldiers still experienced some scary moments. According to the storm trooper G. Achterberg, an infantry post near the Java Bank was 'attacked by hundreds of guys and fired at with heavy machine guns' on 2 January. The brigade staff received a distress signal in the middle of the night: 'we cannot hold out help with the utmost urgency s.o.s.' Armoured vehicles were dispatched, and supported by artillery fire, rescued the men.<sup>62</sup> Eventually the days-long Dutch barrage had 'such a disorganizing and demoralizing effect' on Indonesian troops, the report of Y Brigade staff claims, that the Republican authorities got in touch on 4 January.<sup>63</sup> According to one Indonesian historical overview, the 'rain of grenades' that the warship had spread across the city had inflicted huge damage.<sup>64</sup> The Republicans were compelled to comply with the Dutch demand to evacuate a 20-km perimeter. According to Achterberg, the TRI had left 'lots of dead'. 'Despite numbering in the many thousands', the enemy had been taught 'a tough lesson'.<sup>65</sup> However, for Zwanenburg and his fellow battalion members it had also been 'the heaviest action ever'.<sup>66</sup>

Following the hard fighting, peace was restored for Dutch troops in the city on the Musi. In May 1947, the situation was even 'completely calm', according to the reports 'almost suffering from monotony'. In other places on Sumatra, too, the crackdown with heavy weapons had at least temporarily had effect in a military sense. On a political level the actions had caused controversy, but the troops got away with it. In the spring of 1947, the army leadership in Padang assessed the situation as 'hopeful'. Contact with Indonesian officers was unconstrained; apparently a game of football had even been proposed. On Java, it never really calmed down and violations of the ceasefire by both sides steadily increased. Starting around June, tensions also began to rise again on Sumatra, until the moment the Dutch political and military leaders decided to carry out a large-scale offensive on both islands.<sup>67</sup>

## OFFENSIVES

### *Operatie Product / Agresi Militer Belanda I*

On 21 July 1947, large Dutch battle columns transgressed the demarcation line at several places, at the start of what the Dutch called a 'police action'. Observer Corporal Onne Dallinga with his artillery battery 3-6 RVA had been assigned to the storm troop which would advance from Bandung to Yogyakarta, and noted that the term 'police action' did not exactly reflect reality. Far too much equipment was involved for it to be

called that.<sup>68</sup> The military leadership also admitted in its internal correspondence that this was more 'European-style' warfare.<sup>69</sup> Together with 5 VA and two batteries of 'illegal artillery', Dallinga's unit supported the infantry during the advance by providing a so-called creeping barrage during the breakthrough from Bandung. In practice, this meant that the guns covered a large rectangular area (in this case along the Great Postal Road), which was then fired upon line by line.<sup>70</sup> The majority of the large number of shells fired (more than 500) ended up in empty terrain.<sup>71</sup> The TNI had already left and the population had fled. An infantryman even remarked that the Dutch army had been 'too careful' with artillery, because 'the civilian population – the people we were meant to save – was nowhere to be found'.<sup>72</sup>

Artillery supported the break from the bridgeheads at other locations, too. In Semarang, using a creeping barrage, 2-2 RVA and 1 VA 'shot the enemy positions to pulp so that the Tiger battalions [T Brigade battalions] could quickly and without resistance break free from their cage', reported the war diary.<sup>73</sup> Besides carrying out creeping barrages and supporting the infantry during the advance, the troops also fired their guns on cities, such as Purwokerto on 31 July, where they opened fire on the town's access roads. According to a 5 VA artilleryman, the grenades landed 'beautifully on target' despite firing 'on the map' (without observation). Several sources emphasize how gunners had thus saved hundreds of Chinese lives, because the shells apparently hampered the TNI during the execution of members of this ethnic group - thereby suggesting that the Dutch had in fact done a good deed with their violent offensive.<sup>74</sup>

The first task of the air force during the offensive was to destroy the Indonesian air fleet. According to headquarters this operation, called 'Pelikaan', was 'completely' successful. The NEIAF and MLD destroyed the vast majority of Japanese aircraft on Maguwo, Maospati, Kalijati and other airfields, in total 23 to 26.<sup>75</sup> Besides provisioning and transport, other important duties for the airmen were offering air support to ground troops and tracking down and attacking enemy units. The Indonesian armed forces, anticipating danger from the sky, had set up a widespread air defence system and downed two Fairey Fireflies of 860 Squadron MLD during the offensive. Other aircraft also received much fire from the ground.<sup>76</sup>

Indonesian airmen carried out a daring attack on Dutch positions with a number of Japanese aircraft on 29 July by way of tribute to the



mark VT-CLA which turned out to be transporting medicine and other humanitarian supplies. The whole crew barring one was killed, including the Australian pilot, the British copilot and two 'founding fathers' of the AURI, Agustinus Adisucipto and Abdurachman Saleh. The incident led to a diplomatic row because it also turned out that the VT-CLA belonged to an Indian businessman.<sup>78</sup> In official communications the Netherlands desperately tried to insist that the aircraft had crashed after brushing the treetops during flight, whereas internal correspondence spoke of the Kittyhawks 'shooting down' the aircraft.<sup>79</sup> In Indonesian circles there was never any doubt about the actual events and the downing of the VT-CLA is commemorated in several ways – yet the incident has remained largely unknown in the Netherlands.<sup>80</sup>

Other actions of the air force also elicited criticism. Besides the actions of the already mentioned Mitchell bombers of the 18th Squadron, Fireflies machinegunned trucks and passenger cars in East Java.<sup>81</sup> Following an outcry in the press, General Spoor told foreign journalists that he would take disciplinary measures against the pilots, who, according to him, had behaved as if the Second World War was still going on. But the focus on the actions of the air force quickly faded, and no disciplinary action was ever taken.<sup>82</sup> The British had already learned that the use of air power was politically more sensitive than the use of artillery. They had therefore preferred field artillery and naval gunfire support.<sup>83</sup>

During the Dutch offensive, the role of the navy consisted mainly in transporting troops and providing fire support for amphibious landings at Meneng Bay and Pasir Putih in East Java on 21 July.<sup>84</sup> When Cirebon was taken on 25 July, the navy also delivered artillery fire to eliminate enemy positions and frustrate scorched earth tactics, which, according to a war volunteer on board *Hr.Ms. Evertsen*, did not achieve much. However, the civilian population escaped unhurt, in part due to pamphlet flights preceding the naval bombardment.<sup>85</sup> The navy also played a significant role in capturing Cilacap on the south coast of Java, with *Hr.Ms. Tjerk Hiddes* taking out the coastal guns on Nusa Kambangan Island.<sup>86</sup> Generally speaking, however, fire support duties of the navy during the offensive were limited in size in comparison to the field artillery and the air force.<sup>87</sup>

As was the case with the battle for the bridgeheads on Java and Sumatra, the first offensive was an enormous morale boost for the Dutch soldiers. This was the type of warfare many of them had been trained





*Photo of the crashed VT-CLA at Ngoto, south of Yogyakarta, on 29 July 1947. Nowadays there is a replica of the tailpiece at the crash site, as well as a memorial for the crew members who died, including Commodore Adisucipto and Dr Saleh. Source:*

*NL-HaNA, 2.10.62, NEFIS/CMI, 7265, VI, Fotoalbum over diverse gebeurtenissen, 1947-1948.*

for. However, artilleryman Onne Dallinga and his fellow battery members read in the newspapers that the authorities in The Hague thought they had made ‘too much of a real war’ of it. In turn, the gunners – and they were certainly not alone in this – were unhappy about The Hague, which, under international pressure, had decided to stop the advance in the night of 4 to 5 August, just before Yogya could be reached. For the artillerymen, it felt like a defeat.<sup>88</sup> To the indignation of the Republic, the troops did, however, complete the recapture of Madura Island after the ceasefire was announced, unscrupulously deploying heavy weapons in the operation.<sup>89</sup>



*Operatie Kraai / Agresi Militer Belanda II*

The second offensive, which started on 19 December 1948, had been eagerly anticipated by the Dutch troops – however wry that may sound. This was particularly true for personnel assigned to heavy support weapons, who had been largely condemned to inactivity during the Renville period, or sent out on infantry patrol. Again, the most important aim of the offensive, besides capturing large parts of Java and Sumatra, was the Republican seat of government. Due to a combination of airstrikes, para droppings on Maguwo airfield and the advance of an armoured column, Yogyakarta was soon in Dutch hands. According to the Dienst voor Leger Contacten (Army Communication Service), Mustangs and Kittyhawks swarmed above the airfield ‘like wild jackdaws’ early in the morning and pounded it with missiles and machine guns.<sup>90</sup> Lacking the necessary air defences because of the recent suppression of an Indonesian communist uprising in Madiun (East Java), more than a hundred air force personnel and civilian employees died during the attack. The rest were taken prisoner.<sup>91</sup> Yet this time, too, the AURI managed to down two Dutch fighters.<sup>92</sup>

Meanwhile, Dutch fighter-bombers also attacked headquarters and other military targets in the city.<sup>93</sup> Sukarno, who had allowed himself to be captured during the action, later cynically called the hail of bombs a ‘Christmas present’, because of the political advantage the Republic managed to acquire<sup>94</sup> – cynical, because several witnesses reported that fanatic fighter planes had allegedly fired at non-military vehicles and even fleeing people and had therefore caused casualties among the population.<sup>95</sup> Ruslan Abdulgani, Sukarno’s right-hand man and future foreign minister, was also hit by fire from a Dutch fighter plane as he fled on a bike. He describes in his memoirs how bodies of other victims lay scattered around him as he lay on the ground wounded in his hand and shoulder.<sup>96</sup>

The air force showed little restraint during the offensive by offering ‘maximum air support’ to ground troops. In all probability, fighter planes made a considerable number of civilian victims during operation ‘Modder’ on 5 January, when paratroopers of the Korps Speciale Troepen (Special Forces Corps, KST) violently occupied the oilfields at Rengat in Riau on Sumatra. The bloody events at Rengat were described earlier by Anne-Lot Hoek and Rémy Limpach, and led to a judicial investigation at the time, as well as recent damage claims against the Dutch state. However, these mostly pertained to the actions of the para troops.<sup>97</sup>

Other tasks carried out by the air force were to once again eliminate the Republican air force, which had recovered somewhat in the intervening period, to locate and try to destroy Republican radio stations (of crucial importance to the struggle for independence) and to attack all sorts of military targets and gun emplacements.<sup>98</sup> The navy again took part in an amphibious operation ('Zeemeeuw'), west of the harbour city of Tuban, but this hardly yielded any tactical advantage. Van Doorn and Hendrix write that reports of this and other landings give the impression that the navy was keen to use the opportunity to 'once again carry out a "proper" landing operation, even though the military necessity was not apparent'.<sup>99</sup>

In the main, gunners performed the same duties as during the first offensive: creeping barrages, fire support during the advance and support for the consolidation of captured territories. According to Klaas Kloeten, who was assigned to the storm troop heading for the heart of the Republic, the advance was much more dangerous this time. Clearly the TNI was

*Two Yokosuka K5Y Curengs and a Tachikawa KI-55 Cukiu, found by Dutch troops at the Maguwo airfield near Yogyakarta on 19 December 1948. One of these two Curengs may have been involved in the Indonesian airstrike on Semarang on 29 July 1947.*

*Source: Photographer unknown, NIMH / Fotoafdrukken Koninklijke Marine.*



much better prepared and in some places, they turned it into a 'difficult journey' for the advancing troops. Yet Kloeten's unit did not offer fire support until a burning Magelang had been taken, something they would repeat many times in the following days to protect the troops and 'sweep' the surroundings, albeit, according to Kloeten, with 'mixed results'.<sup>100</sup> Thus, the outline of the difficult times awaiting the Dutch troops became clear already during the second offensive, a period of intensive guerrilla, waged even more violently and professionally than after the first offensive. The following section contains an overview of the two episodes of guerrilla war and the role of fire support in them, starting in 1947.

## GUERRILLA

1947

The first offensive had dealt the TNI and affiliated fighting groups a hard and devastating blow, forcing army leaders to switch entirely to guerrilla warfare as a fighting method, a decision that would prove very wise from a tactical perspective. Acts of sabotage, ambushes and an increase in the use of mines and pull bombs proved effective in damaging the adversary and limiting their own losses.<sup>101</sup> Nonetheless, the old but often fatal Indonesian habit of frontal attacks still regularly reared its head.<sup>102</sup> Soon after breaking off the first offensive on 5 August, Dutch troops began consolidating captured territory, which in practice amounted to carrying out so-called sweep operations, often with deployment of artillery and air support. These purges soon proved 'a difficult task,' according to Royal Netherlands East Indies Army Air Force Headquarters, 'because the TNI almost never reveals itself in large and regulated form and furthermore knows the terrain like the back of their hand'. On Sumatra, in particular, the terrain was vast and difficult to access, and Dutch troops were taken by surprise by the large number of opponents.<sup>103</sup>

Just like many other artillery units, 3-8 RVA was allocated its own area where the battery – retrained as infantry – had to carry out patrols and surveillance of objects. However, artillery duties had not faded into the background, because there was always a section on stand-by as an 'alarm battery' to offer immediate support if posts were attacked, or to 'shoot free' patrols stuck in a firefight. The battery found this double responsibility daunting. In November, 3-8 RVA offered artillery support during a major, multiday sweep operation, action 'Limburg' in Bungbunan (West Java). Despite the fact that artillery fired almost eight hundred shells in

three days and Mustangs carried out airstrikes on a well-entrenched opponent in rough terrain, the action turned out to be largely a failure. According to the frustrated battery commander, Major G. Struys, planning mistakes of the brigade staff and provisioning problems caused by wet weather in the rainy season were to blame. At such moments, Indonesian fighters could exploit their advantage in the terrain to the full. The mood among the hungry and exhausted Dutch troops dropped 'below zero'.<sup>104</sup>

Warrant Officer Klaas Bruinsma of 6 RVA also felt increasingly frustrated by the successful guerrilla. Initially, he had been grateful for the cease-fire, but he soon changed his mind. 'Let us pray for proper peace, this is not peace but worse than war,' he wrote to his wife. 'We can't get them. When we arrive, they have disappeared and retreat into terrain that is prohibited to us.' They carried out an action against fighters in a *kampong* on the edge of a forest: 'despite the ceasefire there was constant thunder there and now it was our turn to thunder. We really threw it at them.'<sup>105</sup> In some places, frustrations at attacks with pull bombs and mines led to hard and notorious Dutch actions, such as the retaliatory bombing of Banjarnegara on 4 November 1947, and the shelling of Karanganyar two weeks earlier which features in the next chapter. In this context, Nasution quotes Indonesian newspaper *Buruh*, which concluded that these actions could no longer be classified in terms of 'police actions' or 'sweep operations', but 'actions that amount to violations and cruelties'.<sup>106</sup>

1949

While there had been something of a frontline (albeit a porous one), in the first large-scale guerrilla period, such a line no longer existed on Java after the second offensive. Indonesian fighters operated everywhere.<sup>107</sup> More so than in 1947, they were holed up in pockets in areas occupied by the Dutch. On the instructions of General Sudirman, they carried out attacks from these positions on often remote Dutch posts.<sup>108</sup>

Artillery units were deployed for fire support in all directions, except when UN observers were visiting: 'the gentlemen must get the impression that everything is under control, and after all you don't use artillery against a few rampokkers,' wrote Onne Dallinga.<sup>109</sup>

Yet it was precisely during this period that Dutch gunners carried out the most fire missions. This partly reflected an overall increase in the scale of the use of force, as the number of infantry actions also rose significantly at this time. In addition, the peak in artillery deployment reflect-





*During a sweep operation after the second offensive a marine defuses a 'pull bomb' in the surroundings of Lamongan, 18 Januari 1949. Source: G. Nieuweboer, NIMH / Mariniers-brigade.*

ed the troops' declining willingness to take risks. An indication of this is the number of casualties on the Dutch side, which in this period was actually lower than during the offensive.<sup>110</sup> However, after a peak during the second offensive, the number of operational sorties (again, defined here as sorties of one or more aircraft during which weapons were employed) gradually decreased during this phase. This is striking, because air support was also appealing to the Netherlands due to the low level of risk to its own troops. The air force, however, increasingly suffered from shortages of personnel, spare parts and deployable planes, much more so than the artillery. This significantly hampered its deployment during

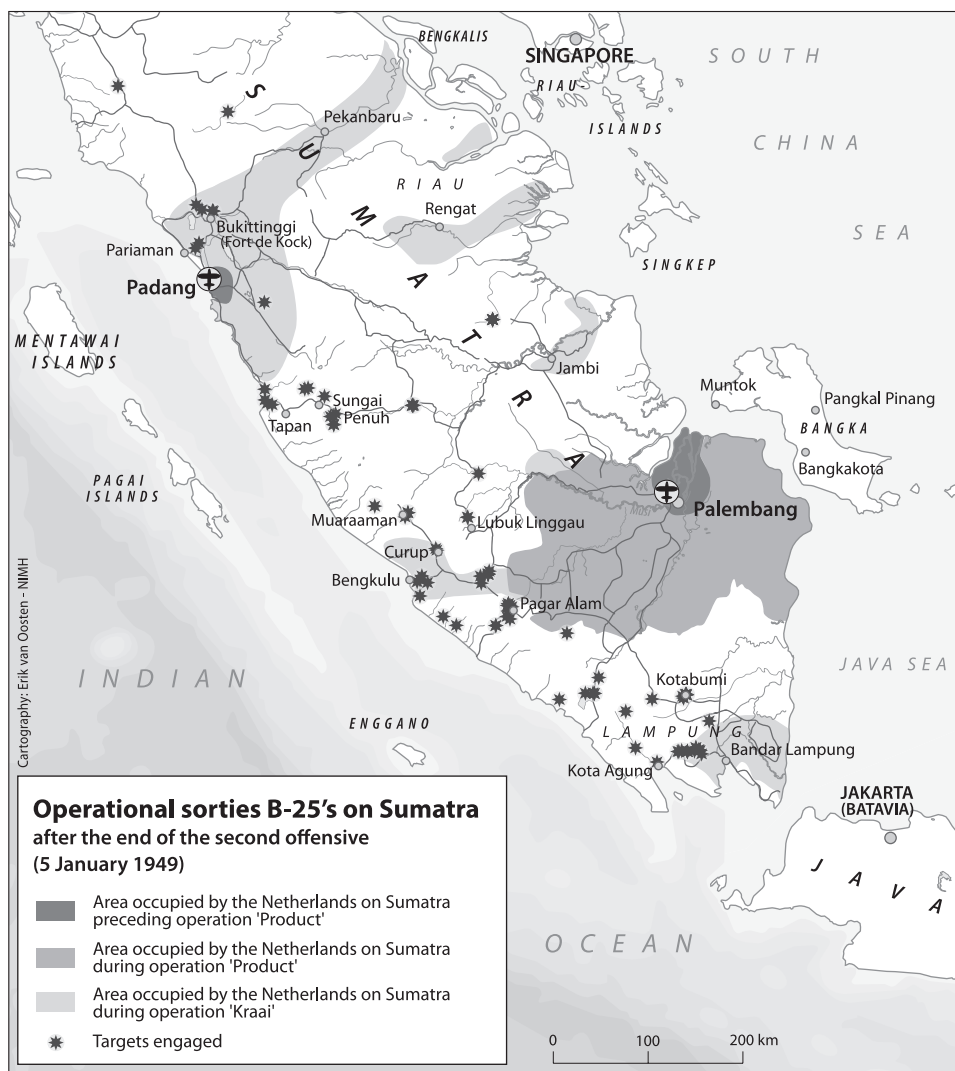
the intensive months of guerrilla warfare. The threat of political repercussions mentioned above constituted another constraint. In this period, aircraft were mainly valuable – from a Dutch perspective – because they could engage targets in remote areas (especially on the vast island of Sumatra) that were beyond the range of the infantry or for which not enough troops could be made available (see map 8). By its own account, the ML acquired a reputation of ‘an “all-over-the-place” army air force’, which found it difficult to provide the right response to the ‘pinprick actions’ of the adversary (although ground troops dictated the deployment of air power).<sup>111</sup> While declining air activity could be observed in most places, until June the Mustangs were still so often in the air on Sumatra, ‘that the allocated number of hours had to be exceeded’. According to headquarters, this could be avoided if troop commanders ‘chose their targets carefully beforehand and only deployed aircraft if no other means are possible.’<sup>112</sup> Nasution states that in the first months of 1949, Dutch troops unceasingly tracked down retreating TNI units, supported by cannonades and ‘aerial guerrilla-hunters’. The Dutch also intensified the number of coastal patrols around Sumatra and navy ships regularly shelled seaside *kampongs*. However, according to Nasution, Sumatra was so vast that the TNI could easily hold out in the ‘pockets.’<sup>113</sup>

Nasution states that after the sudden blow of the second offensive, followed by a ‘harder blow’ in subsequent months – in which the civilian population in particular suffered – the initiative gradually shifted to the TNI.<sup>114</sup> According to Petra Groen, the better-armed Dutch troops who were also assured of artillery and air support could not prevent the opponent from strengthening his position in the flatter parts of the captured areas, ‘but the TNI, in turn, did not succeed in pushing the Dutch troops onto the defensive’. Thus, according to her, a military stalemate arose from around May.<sup>115</sup> The Indonesian armed forces operated in ever smaller units, so that large operations were increasingly a shot in the dark. A widespread Republican warning system ensured that the TNI and associated forces could nearly always get away in time.<sup>116</sup>

The military deadlock paved the way for talks about a political consensus, resulting in the agreements of Herman van Roijen and Mohammed Rum in May and June, and eventually in a total ceasefire on 11 August (Java) and 15 August (Sumatra). For several months already, the intensity and frequency of the fighting had been steadily decreasing, and as a result also deployment of artillery and aircraft. Yet, one of the bloodiest battles



## 8. Map of operational sorties by B-25 Mitchell bombers on Sumatra, 1949



*Operational sorties of B-25 Mitchell bombers on Sumatra, after the end of the second offensive on 5 January 1949 until the ceasefire on 11 August 1949. The air force was engaged to attack remote targets on Sumatra, vast and partly inaccessible. Source: NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 1287-1289.*

of 1949 took place just before the cessation of hostilities, in Solo (Central Java). This attack on 7 August by two thousand fighters was the TNI's answer to the continuing Dutch so-called sweep operations after the Van Roijen-Rum Agreement.<sup>117</sup>

Prior to the action, tank commander Jan Eshuis of 6 Squadron Combat Vehicles described in his diary how hopeless the situation in Solo was. For months now, he and his tank platoon had been involved in many extremely violent situations and still these continued on an almost daily basis. 'It is almost impossible to keep this up,' he wrote on 4 August. 'Ones nerves are shot.'<sup>118</sup> The artillery officer Frans Hazekamp was also in Solo at the time of the attack with his unit, 1-12 RVA. On 7 August, they had just rolled the guns into the hangar, seeing as the ceasefire would commence a few days later, when the attack started. After the Dutch troops had recovered from the first shock, they reacted with all possible deployable means. Hazekamp: 'the Spitfires bomb and machine-gun and we fire at everything that our observers see moving. [...] Everywhere, machine guns rattle and 37-mm tank and combat vehicle guns roar. Everything and everyone is shot off the street.'<sup>119</sup>

Unsurprisingly, the onslaught led to many casualties. According to the Indonesian historians Imran Amrin and Ariwadi, 223 soldiers were killed, including members of the Tentara Pelajar. The number of civilian deaths is unknown.<sup>120</sup> On 11 August, the day the ceasefire came into force, Lieutenant Colonel Slamet Riyadi, commander of Wehrkreis I, visited Dutch commander Colonel J. Ohl. The latter was 'furious' and gave Riyadi an ultimatum which is reminiscent of the one Mansergh gave in Surabaya, almost four years before. 'He is clear,' reports Hazekamp: 'out before tomorrow four p.m., otherwise the full power of the Dutch army will be used to turn Solo "into a cemetery" with tanks, armoured vehicles, artillery, air force, KST and infantry.'<sup>121</sup>

Thus, the war ended as it had begun: with mass attacks of Indonesian freedom fighters, the Dutch raising their iron fist as a counteraction, and a civilian population caught in the crossfire. The scene of the action was now Central Java, heartland of the Republic. However, the eastern part of the island also remained one of the most violent regions until the end of the war. In 1949, Dutch troops there reported the highest number of Indonesian casualties, in part due to tenacious Indonesian resistance. According to the historians Gerry van Klinken and Maarten van der Bent, this was due to the successful mobilization of revolutionary potential during the Battle of Surabaya, which was kept up by the fighters in East Java for four years.<sup>122</sup>

## OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS PER WEAPON (SYSTEM)

### ARTILLERY

#### *Ammunition Expenditure*

Between April 1946 and December 1949, the forty-one KNIL and RNLA field artillery units carried out a total of (at least) fifteen hundred fire missions in Indonesia. This means that Dutch guns were used somewhere on Java or Sumatra on average every day in those roughly three-and-a-half years. There were big differences between units. Some batteries did not fire a single explosive charge,<sup>123</sup> others up to fifteen thousand (1 VA). There are various reasons why some units did not perform artillery tasks. 16 and 18 RVA, both part of Palmboom Division, were relief units which were disbanded and redistributed upon arrival in the archipelago. Batteries 41, 42 and 43 RVA arrived late in the conflict and therefore saw little or no action. It is noteworthy that 3-41 RVA E Troop did not take artillery action until 19 September 1949, more than a month after the ceasefire, against Darul Islam units in West Java.<sup>124</sup> Six KNIL batteries formed in the course of 1949 also served as relief for demobilizing units and hardly fired any shots at all.

Thus, early KNIL artillery units, Calmeyer units and enlisted units of 7 December Division accounted for the bulk of the ammunition fired, together with the remainder of Palmboom Division and the Marine Brigade ARBAT. An important factor that determined the number of grenades fired was the ammunition supply a battery could transport during an operation. Without replenishment, this amounted to about five hundred grenades.<sup>125</sup> The total number of grenades fired remained well below this limit during the vast majority of fire missions. The brigade artillery commanders guarded ammunition expenditure and warned against 'squandering' if units fired more than was considered necessary, but also due to imminent shortages.<sup>126</sup>

Initially, ammunition supplies were usually sufficient, although the charges were sometimes useless due to humidity and heat. However, during the first offensive in July 1947, the supply lines dried up and some batteries lacked explosive charges for the 25-pounder.<sup>127</sup> Supply problems worsened in the first half of 1949, when guerrilla warfare took off. In March, 1-41 RVA reported it could not carry out its task due to a complete lack of charges for explosive shells. The territorial commander then issued a ban on firing exercises and disruptive fires due to 'THE EXTREMELY



*Marine Brigade artillery delivers fire during a 'sweep operation' near Tanjungsari (East Java) on 10 April 1946. The six-man gun crew is positioned around a 25-pounder of the artillery battalion (ARBAT). Source: Hugo Wilmar, NIMH / Marine Brigade.*

SCARCE situation of this ammunition.<sup>128</sup> It goes without saying that such limitations in available ammunition supplies was a significant restriction on the potential for the use of ground fire support.

Overall, a certain dilution of artillery fire can be observed as the conflict progressed: the number of grenades per target and the number of grenades per fire mission decreased significantly, as can be deduced from the bar chart in figure 10. In 1946 and 1947, 1 VA, 2 VA and 3 VA fired an average of 47 grenades per target and 127 per fire mission. For the in-

*9. Table with indicative figures of artillery fire missions*

|                                  | Average per unit | Total for all units |
|----------------------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| No. of fire missions             | 58               | 1.480               |
| No. of targets engaged           | 179              | 4.122               |
| Total no. of grenades fired      | 5.791            | 133.191             |
| No. of grenades per fire mission |                  | 90                  |
| No. of grenades per target       |                  | 32                  |
| No. of targets per fire mission  |                  | 2,78                |

*The total number of targets engaged and grenades fired in this table is partly based on extrapolation. If no data on the number of targets during a fire mission or the number of grenades fired per target were available, the average for that unit was used. If there were only limited data for that unit, the average of all units was used. For some units (VA II, 6 and 8 VA, ARBAT and the 'illegal' artillery) the data were very incomplete or unavailable altogether; they have been excluded. The figures should therefore be seen as a conservative tally. The data originate from unit corps histories, supplemented and corrected by memoirs, diaries, letter collections, commemorative books and literature. Sources are listed for every fire mission in the Nodegoat database (deposited at DANS Data Station Social Sciences and Humanities).*

dependent infantry brigade artillery, which only took action from late 1948, this had dropped to 23 grenades per target and 68 per fire mission – roughly a 50 percent reduction. At the same time, the number of targets per fire mission increased from 2.3 to 3. These trends are in keeping with the growing size of the occupied area and the increasing fragmentation of both Dutch and Indonesian units.

Whether the total amount of at least 133,191 artillery grenades fired (see table above) in more than three-and-a-half years should be considered much or little depends on comparable data, but this is available only to a limited degree. The comparisons that are possible do not indicate that this figure stands out as above average. The French fired a total of 250,000 grenades in Indochina in 1951 alone. During the two-month battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954, expenditure even amounted to 300,000 shots fired from three hundred guns. Furthermore, averages per battery suggest that the Dutch deployment in Indonesia was not exceptionally large. A British battery which took action during the Mau Mau Uprising in Kenya (an irregular decolonization conflict, just like in Indonesia) spent 23,977 shells in a year's time. During the Allied advance in Western Europe, the Dutch Prinses Irene Brigade Artillery fired 17,400 grenades



in nine months' time. During the Vietnam War, American batteries with seven guns often spent 100,000 shells per year. It is problematic to compare such figures because of differences in scale and intensity, especially if conventional conflicts are taken into account (during the Battle of Stalingrad, the Soviet artillery fired 700,000 grenades in one day, many times the number fired by Dutch guns during the entire Indonesian War of Independence), but it does give an indication of the bandwidth of ammunition expenditure of an artillery battery in a range of conflicts.<sup>129</sup> Dutch deployment in Indonesia stayed well within that bandwidth.

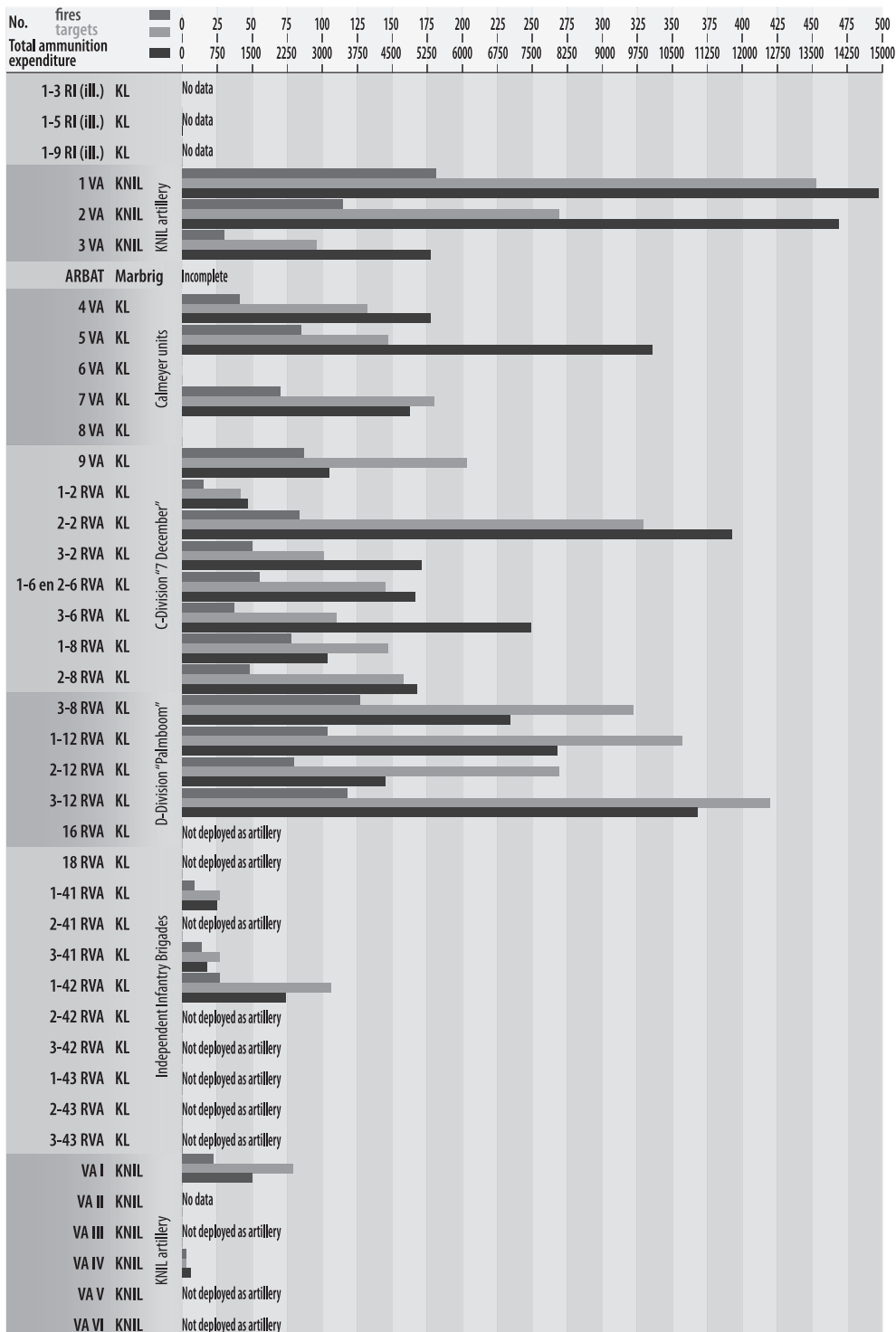
### *Types of Fire and Targets*

The way the Dutch artillery carried out fire missions in the war in Indonesia varied. Preliminary fire with the frequently applied technique of the creeping barrage has already been mentioned. Above all, artillery delivered these types of fire during operations of some scale, such as battles in bridgeheads, both large offensives, and 'sweep operations'. An example of the function of a creeping barrage during the latter type of operation is described concisely in the war diary of 2-12 RVA: 'action with 8 platoons. Enemy driven out of kampongs by artillery fire and ran into the arms of the infantry.'<sup>130</sup> Although in fact people were fired at during this particular operation, the goal was not primarily destruction but expulsion. Cordoning off the combat area, a task performed here by infantry, could be taken over by artillery, by laying a 'wall of fire' along the edge of the field of action.<sup>131</sup> It appears that artillery fire was also occasionally used to set fire to a *kampung*; one example of this can be found in the war diary of 8 RVA: 'machine gun and rifle fire from kampung Tjikembong. Fire neutralized and then experimented with setting fire to kampung with smoke grenades. Partial success.'<sup>132</sup>

If infantrymen got 'stuck' during patrols or were pinned down by well-aimed enemy fire, artillery often came to their rescue with tactical fire support. A typical example occurred just before the final ceasefire in Central Java, where already demoralized Dutch troops were thrown 'to the lions at the very last moment'. During the combined, multiday operation near Sinduraja (Central Java), the troops unexpectedly came under very heavy fire and several soldiers were killed. It was not until – what one soldier present at the scene described as – the 'sorcerers' of 2-12 RVA shelled enemy positions that some relief arrived, and the units were able to withdraw.<sup>133</sup>



## 10. Artillery fire missions per battery



Shooting with a direct line of fire at visible adversaries, this time to cause destruction (but also deterrence); for the opponent, this was a terrifying way of firing. Just a few of such shots (that is, straight at the target and not in an arc) could already have a large effect. In March 1949, an observer of 8 RVA saw 'groups of sabils' (Darul Islam fighters) through a scissor telescope.<sup>134</sup> In consultation with the local *wedana*, the district head, the battery fired eleven grenades directly at the 'concentration'; 'observed direct hits, groups fled in panic in all directions.'<sup>135</sup> The 2-6 RVA commemorative book also contains a description of how a few direct shots put an immediate end to a heavy mortar attack on a Dutch post in West Java.<sup>136</sup>

Battery 3-41 RVA was active also in West Java after the August 1949 ceasefire. In October, a group of Darul Islam (DI) fighters attacked the E battery position, but was 'driven away by its direct fire, the enemy suffering no fewer than 250 dead and wounded according to subsequent messages from informers'. Remarkably, most reports of direct fire originate from West Java, possibly because of the frontal attack strategies of radical fighting groups there.<sup>137</sup> Moreover, in Central Java, anti-aircraft guns were used as flat-trajectory guns in open landscapes with rice fields. According to troop command, this way of firing had 'a lot of success', as the high firing rate and accuracy had a 'very demoralizing' effect on the adversary.<sup>138</sup>

'Enemy concentrations', as they are often called in war diaries, were frequently targeted by artillery. Cooperation with infantry was of the utmost importance. After all, when the first grenades fell, the enemy evidently sought refuge as quickly as possible. Infantry could then deal with fleeing

*This bar chart shows per battery how many fire missions were carried out, the total number of targets shelled and the number of grenades fired (total amount of ammunition fired), as far as these data are known. Notable in the first place is the above-average activity of KNIL batteries IVA and 2 VA (this may also apply to 3 VA, but the data for this battery are incomplete). In relation to the number of fire missions, these units fired more grenades than the conscripted RNLA units of C and D Division, which carried out the lion's share of the total number of fire missions. Batteries deployed later were mostly designated as relief and saw significantly less action. The same goes for KNIL batteries VA I to VA VI, which did not relieve the conscripted units until mid-1949, when the fight was already over in many areas. ARBAT was a very active unit, but only a few records of fire missions have been preserved.*

opponents. If an 'enemy concentration' was located in a *kampong*, or if fire had been delivered from a *kampong*, that *kampong* and any residents still in the village were also targeted by artillery fire. Moreover, there were occurrences of artillery firing shells at a *kampong* because a pull bomb had gone off in the vicinity or because acts of sabotage had been committed in the area. In such cases, artillery fire took on the character of collective punishment.

A less destructive way of firing, which was not directed at individuals either, was so-called disruptive fire at certain points (often along roads) to prevent the opponent from taking territory or from burying of mines or pull bombs. During the first months of 1949, in particular, some units (again mostly in West Java) delivered disruptive fire at set points almost every night. In January, Klaas Bruimsma wrote to his wife: '[l]ittle to do except deliver disruptive fire at the roads at night. Every day we play cards for hours.' In another letter that same month, he wrote: 'slept, played cards in the canteen, a shout "at your posts", fire and shortly after King, Nine of clubs, Ace again.'<sup>139</sup>

Besides delivering the modes of fire described above, other artillery duties consisted of such things as infantry protection, surveillance of positions and camps, patrolling, and detection and elimination of enemy guns. ARBAT and KNIL artillery, in particular, were adept at gauging and neutralizing cannons, because in East Java and in the early stages of the war, the Indonesian armed forces still had comparatively many cannons. The so-called 'flash bang' method was frequently used: artillerymen tried to determine the location of the gun with light metring of the muzzle flash, sometimes combined with sound locations, a compass and even Japanese aiming devices. TRI reacted by moving the cannons often and quickly, so that they appeared to be 'ghost cannons' in Dutch eyes and were difficult to eliminate. Sungkono's troops also often simultaneously fired from various locations. Despite this 'annoying tactic', as the Dutch described it, Indonesian artillery fire caused little damage to them, because precision was inadequate due to a lack of aiming devices.<sup>140</sup>

Stationary targets such as gun emplacements, casemates and bunkers were generally left to the air force. However, in regions with many Japanese or former KNIL reinforcements, artillery also fired at such targets, for example in North Sumatra, where Calmeyer Battery 9 VA regularly delivered fire at casemates and fortified positions. However, these were not infrequently located in *kampongs*, as evidenced by the war diary of

the battery. Once, on 18 December 1947, after test firing, a section of S Battery refrained from firing for effect, 'because there were civilians in the vicinity of the target'.<sup>141</sup> In Mojokerto, ARBAT was faced with a dilemma when it received fire from a mosque. The commander had doubts about responding, because 'returning fire at a mosque was not in line with expectations'. Eventually he ordered a tank grenade to be fired, which was not intended to explode in the place of worship but 'only to drill a hole in the mosque'. When the men went to have a look afterwards, there was no longer anyone there.<sup>142</sup>

## AIR POWER

### *Ammunition Expenditure and Bombload Dropped*

Data on the air forces' ammunition expenditure are not available to the same extent as for the artillery. The vast majority of narrative reports (reports at the lowest and most detailed level) has not been preserved. Moreover, available data are fragmentary, in particular on larger operations. During the first offensive, NEIAF aircraft together dropped 499 bombs with a total weight of almost 100 tonnes (kg).<sup>143</sup> They also fired 428 missiles of 60 lbs.<sup>144</sup> During the second offensive, Fireflies of 860 Squadron MLD fired another 500 such missiles. For 1949, the numbers were 1399 missiles (totalling 38,000 kg) and 26 bombs of 500 lbs (5900 kg).<sup>145</sup>

The total missile and bombload expenditure must be sought in the range of hundreds to at most several thousands of tonnes. Supplies did not allow for more. Just before the offensive, CML Colonel De Broekert had warned of an imminent shortage of aircraft bombs. At the same time, 'very many bombs' could well be needed during the offensive for the elimination of targets such as railway tracks, due to a combination of poor bomb sights and small targets.<sup>146</sup> De Broekert, and later also army commander Spoor, therefore instructed airmen to exercise 'extreme economy'.<sup>147</sup> The CML's warning proved correct: during the offensive, aircraft dropped 180 bombs on just four rail lines, with 'very little result' according to the chief of arms. During the offensive, he said, supplies 'dwindled very quickly and only an extremely small amount was left'.<sup>148</sup> The number of operational sorties is also an indication of the bandwidth described above.<sup>149</sup> The substantial expenditure of machine-gun rounds still needs to be added to this. During the two phases of heavy guerilla following the offensives, aircraft often used their onboard machine

guns instead of bombs in support of ground operations. Furthermore, as observed above, political restrictions limited the use of bombs in many periods.<sup>150</sup>

Again, comparing the bombload dropped with French operations in Indochina, a decolonization conflict that took place during roughly the same period, an image emerges that is similar to that of artillery. According to Michael Clodfelter's statistics, the French dropped 761 tonnes of bombs in 1949 alone. In the last seven months of the war, this number rose to 11,611 tonnes, almost certainly many times the tonnage dropped in Indonesia (but still only a fraction of that which the Americans later dropped in former Indochina: 1.9 million tonnes on Laos and 2.4 million tonnes on Cambodia, more than during the entire Second World War).<sup>151</sup> The probably significantly higher tonnage that the French spent in Indochina should, however, be seen in the context of that conflict: their adversaries also had significantly more heavy weapons at their disposal (especially during the last phase of the conflict) than Indonesian troops.

### *Deployment and Targets*

Aircraft carried out a whole range of tasks, by no means all of which involved direct use of force, although often they did involve providing support for this. In its reports, the ML broke the sorties down into the categories of operations, leafleting flights, convoy protection, artillery fire control, reconnaissance, infantry support, photo assignments, mapping, transport, training and incidental purposes such as show of force, parade flying and relocation.<sup>152</sup> Put together, the sorties that are the focus of this study only amount to a minority of the total number of sorties. The most important combat task of the ML, as the infantry's 'long arm', was to attack targets beyond the range of artillery or that the guns could not eliminate for other reasons.<sup>153</sup> However, army leaders repeatedly noted: 'if [our] own infantry does not capitalize on [air action] by occupying enemy positions, then no air action against enemy ground troops is ever of lasting value.'<sup>154</sup> In practice, this capitalizing on air action was sometimes omitted, in particular in 1949, when aircraft increasingly acted as a substitute for ground operations, or bombed targets in remote areas or inaccessible terrain.

The targets attacked by the ML varied just as widely as its tasks. Depending on the nature of the target, the mandate and the circumstances, the air forces had different kinetic tools at their disposal: light and

heavy bombs, rockets and machine guns. Rockets were often selected for stationary targets requiring a high degree of precision. MLD Fireflies, in particular, which were specifically equipped for this, regularly attacked casemates, gun emplacements and 'pillboxes' (concrete fire positions), not only in their 'home base' of East Java, but also in places such as Aceh, where many of such reinforcements existed. Aircraft also carried out air-strikes on Aceh from neighbouring Medan, such as on 12 July 1949, when four Mustangs together with the navy attacked guns at Kutaraja (Banda Aceh), 'which had given the Navy a lot of trouble'.<sup>155</sup>

Headquarters, barracks, encampments and radio stations formed other stationary military targets. The ML often tried to destroy such targets with bombs or missiles, or to riddle them with machine-gun bullets. Airstrikes also regularly targeted houses or even entire *kampongs* if shots had been fired from there, or if 'enemy concentrations' were suspected. The frank and disconcerting early report from the Medan area discussed above contains many such examples. But this practice was by no means limited to Sumatra. A weekly overview of ML headquarters sets out how, in February 1949, *kampongs* in various places in Central Java were 'the primary targets' in the reporting period. 'Many of these kampongs were attacked with heavy weapons, with Spitfires, P-40s and B-25s acting together'. Here, too, 'enemy concentrations' were the reason for the airstrikes, but as with artillery fire directed at opponents in *kampongs*, the majority of casualties inflicted by ML were caused by attacking this type of targets in populated areas.<sup>156</sup>

As for means of transportation, obviously only military vehicles and ships were legitimate targets for fire. During the first offensive, Spoor and others had already reprimanded the air force for attacking road vehicles and trains that were possibly not used by military personnel. It seems the ML showed more restraint after Spoor's reprimand, but until the end of the conflict, reports mention attacks on vehicles of which it was difficult to determine from the air whether they were being used for military or civilian transport.<sup>157</sup> However, there are known cases, also during the first offensive, in which airmen held their fire because they discerned civilian activities. On 22 July, for example, when two Kittyhawk fighter planes were ordered to locate three trains carrying troops which had departed from Semarang. The pilots, Captain Broers and Sergeant Major Erkelens, reported: 'observed only one train. 500 lbs. near miss on railway line. No further shots fired, as most probably civilians on train.'<sup>158</sup>





*Cilacap on the south coast of Java, heavily damaged by fighting and by fires lit by retreating Indonesian troops during the first offensive, 28 July 1947. Women and children return to the city after Dutch troops have retaken the city using artillery and naval guns. Source: Hugo Wilmar, Nationaal Archief/ Spaarnestad.*

The ML did try to destroy railway lines more often, but, like bridges, this type of infrastructure was difficult to destroy because of their narrow width and, as mentioned before, this required plenty of ammunition. According to CML De Broekert, it took nine bombing sorties to sever one railway track, amounting to 72 bombs of 500 lbs.<sup>159</sup> Even if such operations were successful, railway lines were relatively easy to repair. For example, 860 Squadron reported that a section of railway that Fireflies had bombed on 29 July 1947 had already been repaired the next day.<sup>160</sup>

#### NAVY GUNSHIPS

##### *Number of Fire Missions*

The number of fire missions of Dutch naval ships cannot be quantified in the same way as that of artillery and air force operations. Several naval gunfire missions by large warships, in particular destroyers, can be

established on the basis of combat and patrol reports of major actions prepared by commanders. The archives of the navy staff, the Commandant Zeemacht (navy commander) and the Royal Netherlands Navy after 1945, together with a few separate reports in scattered collections, collectively yield a few dozen fire mission reports. The archives do not appear to hold a report of every coastal bombardment in the archives, but it is unlikely that there are many that have not left a single trace in the archives. Ships often cooperated with other branches of the armed forces during such actions, and no indications have been found in those reports that a large number of fire missions are missing from navy archives. This is confirmed by samples from the extensive archive of handwritten ship's logs.<sup>161</sup> In short, fire support from larger warships was limited compared to that of field artillery and air force.

It is more difficult to get an idea of the use of force by corvettes and the far more numerous RP boats. Reports of only a fraction of naval gunfire missions were prepared or have been preserved, even though it is certain that more incidents occurred. On 1 July 1947, there was a brief report in the newspaper *Het Dagblad* that, two days earlier, RP 115 had received fire from the Central Javanese city Jepara and had decided to return fire. A fire subsequently broke out in the harbour.<sup>162</sup> A more detailed picture arises from a novel based on true events by the mother of patrol boat commander Sub-Lieutenant Kees Bottema. According to this book, an enraged RP 115 tore 'twice along the full width of this small city, spewing fire from all its weapons; the gun thudded its staccato's, Oerlikons and machine guns rattled incessantly'. That was not the end of the affair: the boat had ventured into waters prohibited to the Netherlands, and the Republic of Indonesia raised objections. Bottema was summoned by his superior in Jakarta. After a reprimand, he was ordered to keep silent about the incident. There is no trace in the archive of the action report that Bottema sent to the Oudst Aanwezend Zeeofficier (senior naval officer, OAZ) in Semarang.<sup>163</sup>

### *Tasks and Deployment of Ships*

From the perspective of research into the use of force, providing fire support to ground troops was an important task of large warships, but for the navy itself, such actions were, in Teitler's words, 'no more than a short break from the actual work: continuous patrolling'.<sup>164</sup> Due to the large load and destructive power of naval guns, they could be an important

factor during fights. Destroyers and other large warships also had an intimidating effect on local craft running the Dutch 'blockade'.<sup>165</sup> For this reason, ships often sailed along a stretch of coast in a show of power or appeared in a harbour somewhere. Occasionally, an aeroplane flew along above the ship, to make even more of an impression on local craft.<sup>166</sup>

In a number of cases, the navy actually sank ships suspected of 'smuggling', for example in an incident that drew plenty of attention near Cirebon in January 1947. On that occasion, *Hr.Ms. Kortenaer* opened fire at an ALRI ship which was shielding a Chinese vessel from Dutch checks. The previous day, the Dutch commander, Lieutenant Commander G. B. Fortuyn, had already interpreted an intercepted Indonesian signal as an indication that ALRI intended to attack.<sup>167</sup> The next morning he therefore fired a shot across the bows, whereupon the ships dispersed and *Kortenaer* pursued the lead ship. After shooting at and setting fire to it, the Dutch pulled 23 men from the water. The commander and first officer did not survive. The Republic protested because the Dutch ship had been within the prohibited three-mile zone. However, according to CZM Pinke, in a letter to Van Mook which characterized his uncompromising attitude, grounds for protest had been 'entirely on our and not their side', because ALRI had attempted to escort a ship with a potentially 'undesirable cargo'.<sup>168</sup>

In addition to artillery fire support for ground troops, transportation of personnel and equipment during amphibious operations and control of shipping, the navy also carried out independent coastal bombardments, such as at Jepara. This was a port from which fire had originated. In many other cases the navy took action against coastal guns. In the Bali Strait, in particular, there were many confrontations. Well-camouflaged guns which Indonesian fighters used to fire at passing Dutch ships were positioned on a sparsely populated and densely wooded headland called Tanjung Sembulungan. Partly thanks to these guns, ALRI units managed to cross from the headland to Bali to strengthen the resistance there.<sup>169</sup>

Reports of several attempts to eliminate the cannons from the sea demonstrate how difficult it was for ships to hit such artillery, and how closely the navy cooperated with other weapons and branches in such situations. After a first attempt by *Hr.Ms. Piet Hein* in cooperation with some Fireflies in February 1947,<sup>170</sup> the navy carried out a series of actions between 1 and 5 June to destroy the guns. Two destroyers, two RP boats, several Fireflies, Auster and Piper Cub reconnaissance aircraft and a

Catalina amphibious aircraft took part in the operations. However, according to the commander of 860 Squadron, Officer Pilot 1st class G. Volkersz, the result was 'very unsatisfactory'. The Fireflies had fired a considerable number of missiles, but to no avail, 'as the target was very small and inconveniently positioned'. Perhaps dive bombing would have been a solution, but the necessary bombsights were lacking. Nevertheless, the operation had been 'excellent exercise' for the squadron.<sup>171</sup>

Surabaya maritime commander, Lieutenant Commander H. P. Siegers, considered the target 'entirely inappropriate' for elimination by naval guns, also because the ships had to fire from a relatively large distance to prevent being hit themselves. During the first offensive, *Hr.Ms. Evertsen* and *Hr.Ms. Banckert* once again shelled the entrenched guns, without destroying them. Eventually, on 11 August, a Marine Brigade landing division (not to be confused with an organic division) succeeded in destroying the pieces, 15-cm calibre Japanese guns.<sup>172</sup>

Although destroyers and RP boats often operated in such combined formations, naval ships as well as NEIAF and MLD aircraft were also a means of maintaining some form of military presence in remote areas. Due to their shallow draft and greater manoeuvrability, RP boats in particular were suited to patrolling the east coast of Sumatra, a popular area for 'blockade runners'. An illustrative case occurred in May 1948, when the minesweeper *Hr.Ms. Jan van Gelder* encountered great difficulty in forcing an Indonesian motor launch, which she was pursuing in Amphitrite Bay in East Sumatra, to stop, only to find that the large ship first had to stop and turn in order to fire. Subsequently, the commander, Lieutenant Commander J. B. Reiche, put in a request for permission to mount a 3.7-cm gun on the foredeck, in line with RP boats.<sup>173</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The effects that the deployment of heavy weapons had on the population and the adversary, and the highly variable military effectivity, are examined in the next chapter on the basis of three extensive operations, with an overarching analysis in Chapter 6. Artillery and air power were comprehensive and essential parts of Dutch warfare in Indonesia, as is demonstrated by the above analysis. Although the number of bombardments and airstrikes and the total ammunition usage should not be minimized, these were by no means above average in relation to more or less comparable conflicts. The navy saw much less action than artillery and air force.

Limited resources and supplies were an important impediment to deployments; political restrictions also curtailed the use of heavy weapons. However, both parties frequently violated the conditions of the ceasefire and in practice Dutch commanders gave their troops ample room to use fire support to protect their own men. Moreover, actions were regularly carried out without prior authorization, to the annoyance of political and military leaders. In a number of cases, artillery fire or air attacks led to international political upheaval, which the Netherlands tried to nip in the bud as much as possible.

Fire support had various functions during and outside combat situations. The aim was by no means always destruction, but often also expulsion or deterrence, and in some cases revenge or retaliation. Furthermore, artillerymen saw action as infantry or security troops, which was sometimes a heavy burden on top of their regular tasks. Aircraft frequently bombarded targets beyond infantry and artillery range. They also regularly took action to destroy infrastructure such as bridges and railway lines, a task that could by no means always be carried out successfully. Besides exercising the use of force, the air forces carried out a broad range of tasks in support of ground operations, to which they contributed greatly. For the navy, fire support was merely a secondary function compared to intensive patrolling and upholding the 'blockade'.

During the period of resettlement and reoccupation in 1946–1947, Dutch armed forces carried out a number of relatively large-scale actions, often in reaction to, or to prevent Indonesian attacks, but regularly also to enlarge occupied territory. Troops showed little restraint and deployed all means to maintain military superiority, even if that went against political conditions or tactical instructions. During the two major offensives (Product in 1947 and Kraai in 1948–1949) artillery fired a creeping barrage in several places and offered tactical fire support to assist the advance. The air force also offered the latter, and twice destroyed the AURI air fleet.

Artillery and aircraft helped limit losses on the Dutch side during the phases of heavy guerrilla war, in particular during large-scale 'sweep operations'. Many of those involved observed that such operations usually had little effect, because the adversary, warned in time, proved elusive. Frustrations about this and about assaults with mines led to retaliatory actions, not seldom carried out with heavy weapons. While in 1947 there was still a demarcation line between the warring parties, in 1949

this hardly existed anymore anywhere and Dutch armed forces gradually lost control of the situation. In this period, artillery and aircraft took action most frequently, increasingly in lieu of infantry operations and in desperation at the crippling guerrilla.



Ik heb niet val in om het ondergeschikte te blijven van een  
slag mensen, waarvan je wilt dat ze allen in de plomets de  
meerdere zijn.

Ik heb bedacht voor het vel papier. Gelukkig heb ik mijn  
koffer met vijf meter ontbong en dus ben ik de eerste maand  
in de hoo. Boven die heb ik een opslagplaats van  
spoor weg mentels en groot bureau gebouwd, in welks gelaten  
sack nog met prima papier nat. Het bureau is groot 1,50-1,20 m.  
Nu ik heb na verloop van tijd al weer midden in de drukte.

Ik ben zoo'n beetje van alles. Zorg voor de werkverdeling, nieuwe  
werkobjecten enz, zorg voor de verdelingen betaling van de  
maandrombancen, zorg voor de verloopregeling. Het was erg lastig  
is omdat het was 3 met verloopkenners. Het is erg lastig om  
3 bij elkaar passende personen te vinden. Het is ook heel er, over  
en die loopt dan vervuld in Randang rond. En het slot  
heeft nog de wachtregeling en het beheer over de munten.

Op 20e van mijn verjaardag heb ik we nog een aardig rubberfig  
geacht.

De laatste weken werden doorlopend mijn gelagd met het  
geval dat erg is volgens de lucht in mijn. Sinds elke dag een  
de overste van de 1e natuurgel. Brigade. Een op waakt.

Waar de kolonel. Het eind van het lied was een Brigade actie  
op zondag nachten morgen. Totaal 3 bliften actierie in schelling  
en 3000 man af in de hoo. We stonden ergens in de buurt.

Ik heb veracht die dag per Rijk op 2 doelen resp. 160 en 480 granaten  
Ik heb noord roud hevig mel vuur ruit geven. Resultaat: Sterke  
T.R.T. schelling benad met Brits-Indies zonder meer overgegeven en de stad  
Karanganyar (zie kaart) volledig vernietigd. Het is de kust.  
kolonel werd in door T.R.T. in brand gestoken omdat we dachten  
dat we naar Djohjagijne. Maar we hebben weer terug.  
Ik heb ben dus veel gelagd.

Van de louterghegraten

van

Klaas

Letter from Sergeant Klaas Kloeten to his parents, brothers and sisters, dated 23 October 1947, in which he writes about the attack on Karanganyar four days beforehand, and about his daily duties. Source: NIMH, Sweep, 445.

## 5.

# A Closer Look at Three Cases of Fire Support

In the historiography of the use of violence during the Indonesian War of Independence, the focus has mainly been on transgressions. This is also true for the deployment of heavy weapons. As a result, to this day, little attention has been paid to the three largest operations (besides the two offensives) of artillery, air force and navy. These are the Indonesian attack at, and subsequent Dutch naval bombardment of Semarang in August 1946; a sweep operation with large-scale artillery shelling of Karanganyar in October 1947; and an airborne operation in the Gunungkidul area in March 1949. Whenever authors do address these operations, they often do so in the margins of better-known events. This provides an important rationale for a detailed examination of these three cases in a study that aims to understand and explain the deployment of fire support in the Indonesian War of Independence.

The three violent episodes show several parallels. In addition to their scale and the understudied nature of the events, they all took place in Central Java. This area differed from other regions in the sense that it was the heartland of the Republic, and therefore to a certain extent also of the war. In other respects, the cases are dissimilar. A different type of fire support is central to each operation and as far as periodization is concerned

they each represent one of the three most important war years: 1946, 1947 and 1949 respectively. The attack on Semarang occurred during the first peak of violence, in the period of retaking of Java and the battle for the bridgeheads. This fight had a totally different character to the attacks on Karanganyar and Wonosari, which both unfolded during the intensive periods of guerrilla warfare following the large-scale offensives.

When considering these similarities and differences, a number of patterns can be discerned that confirm the image of the use of heavy weapons on an aggregate scale. But the three cases discussed here do not symbolize all instances of deployment of fire support during the Dutch-Indonesian conflict. After all, they concern a certain type of situation of extensive use of force. In addition, all three events took place in the same region. Therefore, the case studies should not be seen as evidence of the general conclusions about the deployment of heavy weapons in this study (which are based on much broader research); rather, the aim here is to highlight some distinctive aspects of the kinds of operations in which fire support was employed and to provide insight into local dynamics of the use of force. A connection between the smaller and the bigger story is made by switching between the macro and micro level. The overarching themes that will be analysed in the next chapter take centre stage: first of all, the consequences of the use of force, the effects on the adversary and the population, and military effectiveness; secondly, the explanations for the employment of fire support: minimizing one's own risk, moral effect and retaliation; and finally, personal reflections and explanations of military personnel involved in the violence.

#### GENERAL ATTACK ON SEMARANG

An inscription on a weathered stone above a mass grave in the Indonesian war cemetery of Giri Tunggal in Semarang says: 'here lie 26 heroes. [...] Fallen during the general attack in the year 1946'.<sup>1</sup> The words are barely legible, and likewise, the attack, which occurred in August 1946, has also faded from public memory. Indonesian literature on the revolution in Semarang focuses almost exclusively on the five-day battle against Japanese troops between 14 and 19 October 1945.<sup>2</sup> But peace was not restored in this Central Javanese port city at the end of this tough urban war. British troops arrived on the final day of the battle, and they, too, soon became embroiled in hostilities with Indonesian fighters.<sup>3</sup> The fighting was at its most ferocious between 18 and 27 November. According to the Dutch li-

aison officer with the British commander on Java, Cavalry Lieutenant K. Kooy, this second battle began when Indonesians killed three RAPWI officers. The British reacted by quickly occupying key positions and blocking entry to the city, but 'large masses' of Indonesians surrounded troops of 49 Indian Brigade Group and destroyed communications between the different posts. The British, with memories of events in Surabaya fresh in their minds, reacted with a bombing flight by six Thunderbolts, which, according to Kooy, had a clear 'demoralizing effect' on the besiegers.<sup>4</sup>

Meanwhile, TKR, *pemuda* fighters and other auxiliary forces from many places in Central Java poured in, even including suicide bombers from Kudus and Demak.<sup>5</sup> A joint force of around fifteen hundred men carried out a new attack on British positions on 3 November. This, too, was repelled, this time using naval guns and field artillery, which had arrived together with additional troops from Surabaya. The Indonesians suffered heavy losses, but precise numbers are lacking.<sup>6</sup> The unrelenting British counterattack ensured the end of the mass attacks, but also led to many people leaving the city.<sup>7</sup>

The Indonesian journalist Rosihan Anwar, visiting Semarang in January 1946, described how the city was still suffering from the fighting. Neither the Indonesian police nor the British army could ensure safety, *rampok* was widespread, and chaos reigned.<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, Indonesian troops continued putting pressure on the city, for example by bombarding the Semarang airfield, Kalibanteng, with artillery and mortars. These had 'great nuisance value' for the British and regularly provoked a return of fire, not least from warships at anchor in the roadstead.<sup>9</sup> From an Indonesian perspective, these bombardments were nothing less than retaliatory attacks, with the secondary aim of keeping Indonesian forces at bay so the Dutch could disembark unhindered in the city.<sup>10</sup>

#### A MOUSE CAUGHT IN THE TRAP

Indeed, from March 1946 onwards, T Brigade units continually arrived at the port. The entire force had disembarked by the time the British left Semarang in May, and the individual units had taken up the positions of the departing 5th Paratroop Brigade, which had trained them on location. They encountered Semarang in a 'dreadful state', and according to a commemorative brigade book felt like 'a cat in a strange warehouse', i.e. uneasy in their surroundings. Jot Polman of 1st Battalion Storm Troop Regiment (1 RS) described the city as a deserted stronghold, and the

Dutch as prisoners of the area they themselves occupied. From his position on Old Candi hill, he had a good overview of the terrain on the other side of the western Banjir canal. The turmoil of the previous months had turned it into a no man's land. Beyond, Indonesian troops kept the city under siege. According to the commemorative book, the men therefore felt as if they were 'not only cat but also mouse, but then a mouse caught in the trap'.<sup>11</sup>

KNIL Artillery Battery 1 VA, consisting of former prisoners of war of the Japanese, arrived on 18 April. Barely recovered from the hardships, the gunners relieved the British at the 'head' at New Candi, a hill providing a good overview of the entire Semarang sector.<sup>12</sup> T Brigade had already carried out the first of many larger operations. It started on 1 April with operation 'Primeur' in the direction of Pedurungan, in cooperation with British artillery. T Brigade commander, Colonel Van Langen, expressed satisfaction in his report of the operation. According to him, it had been carried out with 'dash' and a 'British officer with combat experience' had qualified the Dutch soldiers as 'fine fighters'. He took particular note of the actions of the artillery: 'enemy actions or concentrations in neighbouring kampongs were countered with artillery fire, thus avoiding having to send in infantry units, with all its negative consequences.' In part because the risks had been reduced in this way, Dutch losses were limited: two dead and three wounded, against '93 counted dead' among the enemy (mown down in a *sawa* according to Polman), 'and probably more due to artillery fire at groups of Indonesians that were observed'.<sup>13</sup>

Operation 'Primeur' was followed by eleven larger operations ending in late July, all with their own codenames such as 'Mars' or 'Draak' (dragon).<sup>14</sup> The reports show that fire support played a significant part in each, and that the Dutch steadily refined its deployment. After action 'Grotesk' on 4 July, Colonel Van Langen remarked that too static a use of artillery delayed operations. Instead of set times and prepared fire, artillery had to be tactically deployed upon request, provided that good communications were available. Following another action on 7 July, a staff member of Van Langen's warned against waste of ammunition by the artillery. Too often, troops requested fire for targets which infantry could 'clean up' themselves, or which had been inadequately surveyed.<sup>15</sup>

This picture of almost unrestricted deployment of artillery and other means of fire support by T Brigade in this period is even more pronounced in Indonesian sources. According to the historian Wiyono,





*Army commander General Spoor (third from right) visits 1 VA artillery position on the 'head' of New Candi in Semarang on 1 July 1946. Fifth from right Colonel Van Langeren, Tiger Brigade commander, far left Captain Julius Tahija, Spoor's aide-de-camp.*

*Source: Photographer unknown. Nationaal Archief/DLC.*

the Dutch used 'modern weapons such as cannons, mortars and rockets blindly'. Nasution writes about 'an enemy airplane that began randomly wasting machine-gun bullets' during an attack on 18 July, and a historical overview of Kodam VII of Diponegoro Division states that it 'rained shells' and residents began to leave the city 'in droves', because they 'suffered continually from the arbitrary and lawless Dutch terror'. In mid-July, several *kampongs* around the city had already been abandoned. Schools, offices, *pasars* and businesses closed down.<sup>16</sup>

The fighters were also forced to retreat and moved their defensive positions to the city's fringes. From there, TNI batteries pounded the city almost every day, and at night *pemuda* fighters attacked Dutch positions. In the west, in particular, they increasingly pushed forwards, so that Kalibanteng airfield came within range of Indonesian heavy machine guns.<sup>17</sup> On 3 July, using the Mitchell stationed there, Lieutenant A. Verhulst of 2-6 RI participated in an airstrike to chase off 'extremists'. It was his job to identify *kampongs* where *pemuda* were holed up. In his memoirs he wrote:



We dived several times with our machine guns spitting fire and the pilot and gunners shooting at anything that moved. However, I think such a dive only has a psychological effect, I don't believe such an action results in many hits, the targets are too small. But the enemy now knows the Mitchell can be a formidable weapon and that they are therefore advised to keep a safe distance from the airfield.<sup>18</sup>

But *pemuda* could also be dangerous a long way from the airfield. On 10 July, they managed to hit the Mitchell bomber during a reconnaissance flight across the southeast front of the city. Two crew members, both 2-6 RI officers who were in the front turret for observation, were killed. That same afternoon, the Dutch took countermeasures with an attack on Mranggen and Srandol, to destroy anti-aircraft emplacements. An airplane directed artillery fire at the target. The intelligence overview reported: 'all grenades hit the target and when the aircraft was shot at from the ground during flight, the scoundrels' fire was immediately answered'.<sup>19</sup>

According to Nasution, the Dutch fire resulted in 'a lightly injured citizen, a burned house and some dead animals'. Such aerial attacks also led to the flight of even more residents.<sup>20</sup> Sujariah Notohamijojo describes how she and her family headed south, in the wake of the battalion commanded by her fiancé, whom she married on the way. It was an exhausting trip, full of fear of bombings and enemy fire. According to Widodo, the refugee situation was the reason to carry out the attack on 4 August: 'the pitiful situation of the refugees filled the hearts of our young fighters with vengeance, until their fighting spirit really ignited'.<sup>21</sup> Bung Tomo also incited the fighting spirit; just as during the Battle of Surabaya, he promised the *pemuda* in rousing radio broadcasts that a parade would be held in Bojong in the heart of the city after the Dutch soldiers had been driven into the sea, and that they would carry their bloody heads stuck on *bambu runcing*.<sup>22</sup>

#### THE BATTLE FOR THE CITY

On the night of 3 and 4 August, Indonesian troops launched an attack, initiated by a bombardment with mortars and artillery, with around fifteen hundred men, 'including very young troops, who attacked with loud shouts of "MERDEKA"' – according to a Dutch announcement about the attack.<sup>23</sup> According to Polman, the Indonesian artillery fire was directed at Dutch headquarters, although this was not hit by the shells. 'But the

impact with which they hit the ground rocked through the garrison: this is it, the battle for the city, reconquest.<sup>24</sup> The airfield, Gombel Hill and Jatingaleh also came under artillery fire. Despite the deployment of these heavy weapons, the attacking *pemuda* themselves were strikingly poorly armed. Some carried no more than a wooden gun with a spearpoint attached.<sup>25</sup> The Dutch troops were well dug in and repelled the assault with little effort using mortar fire and Bren guns. Lieutenant Verhulst noted scathingly that ‘all the enemy achieved was to wake us up early’.<sup>26</sup>

But that was not the case for everyone. A B-25 Mitchell of 18th Squadron, the same airplane that was hit on 10 July, took off under enemy fire and received more hits during flight. The Mitchell crew themselves in turn machinegunned ground targets. The aircraft returned to Kalibanteng, where it was repaired and took off again. But before the wheels had been retracted, the plane once more came under attack, catching fire and crashing. All six crew were killed, a sad event for the Dutch troops, but a ‘highly appealing success’ for the attackers.<sup>27</sup>

Meanwhile, T Brigade had already begun carrying out ‘countermeasures’. Following the silencing of Indonesian artillery fire by targeted 1 VA fire, infantry units launched raids supported by Stuart tanks and 3-inch mortars. The lightly armed *pemuda* could not withstand this and retreated. In the counterattack, ‘artillery and combat vehicles most definitely had a say!’, wrote Lieutenant Colonel N. J. Kronig, deputy commander of T Brigade.<sup>28</sup> The fire support had indeed been an important boost to the infantrymen, as Polman’s report of the next day stated:

Yesterday, artillery delivered 360° fire. The battery was a merry-go-round and the shells howled like blows to the high striker. For us, the rhythm of muzzle flashes and impact, rolling around Semarang like a thunderstorm drifting by all afternoon, was hopping street organ music. The sound of guns in the back effects the infantryman as a tankard of beer after a patrol.<sup>29</sup>

In addition to 1 VA, which covered the area inland, *Hr.Ms. Abraham Crijnsen* also appeared at the roadstead to protect the coast. On the orders of Colonel Van Langen this minesweeper opened fire with her 3-inch cannon at a point where ‘an enemy battery was presumed’ to be located, invisible from the ship. CZM Pinke responded critically to the action report: ‘I consider shelling of a so-called battery without obser-

vation a waste of ammunition.' The following day, *Abraham Crijnsen* also opened fire at two observation posts, a lookout tower with a machine-gun post and a 'place where many armed people (probably TRI-LAUT) were gathering'. Later, the Republic reported a different version to AFNEI headquarters: 'on August 5th, a Dutch warship shelled some open villages in Semarang, e.g. Moro, Mergolindoeck and Poerworedjo, in consequence of which 3 innocent children were wounded and 8 houses totally damaged'.<sup>30</sup>

In total, Indonesian losses during the general attack on Semarang ran into the hundreds. Lieutenant Colonel Kronig wrote that 'in the areas where attacks had occurred, no fewer than 280 dead enemies (were) counted and buried'. He added: 'seeing as we all know the enemy takes with them as many of the bodies and wounded as possible, combined with information received by other means, we can confidently establish their total losses at +/- 400 men, more than 25%. This says it all!'<sup>31</sup> Elsewhere, 800 casualties are mentioned, a rough estimate.<sup>32</sup> These figures refer to soldiers killed by Dutch machine-gun fire and other infantry weapons during the onslaught. It is possible that the 3-inch mortars and artillery, which were able to hit more distant targets, also killed civilians, but little information is to be found on this. Meanwhile, a patrol report of infantry battalion 1 RS confirms that multiple civilians were killed; based on statements of the population it notes that a total of eleven residents lost their lives in three different *kampongs*.<sup>33</sup> Abandoned *kampongs*, fleeing civilians and large tracts of no man's land may have limited the number of civilian casualties.

In addition to the six bomber crew members, the Dutch suffered four more dead and eleven wounded. Lieutenant Colonel Kronig commented: 'however much we regret these losses, it is still satisfying to have achieved a great success, and to have shown the enemy, who for the first time here launched a major attack, that we can "eat" him.'<sup>34</sup> Despite this bravado, Captain Lieutenant Commander J. F. W. Nuboer, commander of *Hr.Ms. Van Kinsbergen*, which arrived later, noted that the soldiers 'in Semarang were still very shocked and clearly affected'.<sup>35</sup> The moral support that artillery fire offered Jot Polman and others may thus be seen as counterweight to the fear of being overrun by *pemuda* loudly screaming *merdeka* ('freedom') like in Surabaya in October 1945.<sup>36</sup> Widodo states: 'the courage and perseverance of our troops was truly remarkable and confused the morale of the enemy'.<sup>37</sup>

This is confirmed by an incident on 7 August. On that day, Indonesian fighters brutally repelled a counterattack by Dutch troops, which had a 'negative effect on troop morale'. It was therefore an immense relief for the Dutch when the artillery instruction ship *Hr.Ms. Van Kinsbergen* appeared off the coast the next day to offer fire support to the troops, who feared fresh onslaughts. According to CZM Pinke 'the presence of a warship gave the troops the feeling that they had not been forgotten, and a sense of great security.'<sup>38</sup>

#### BOMBARDMENT OPERATIONS

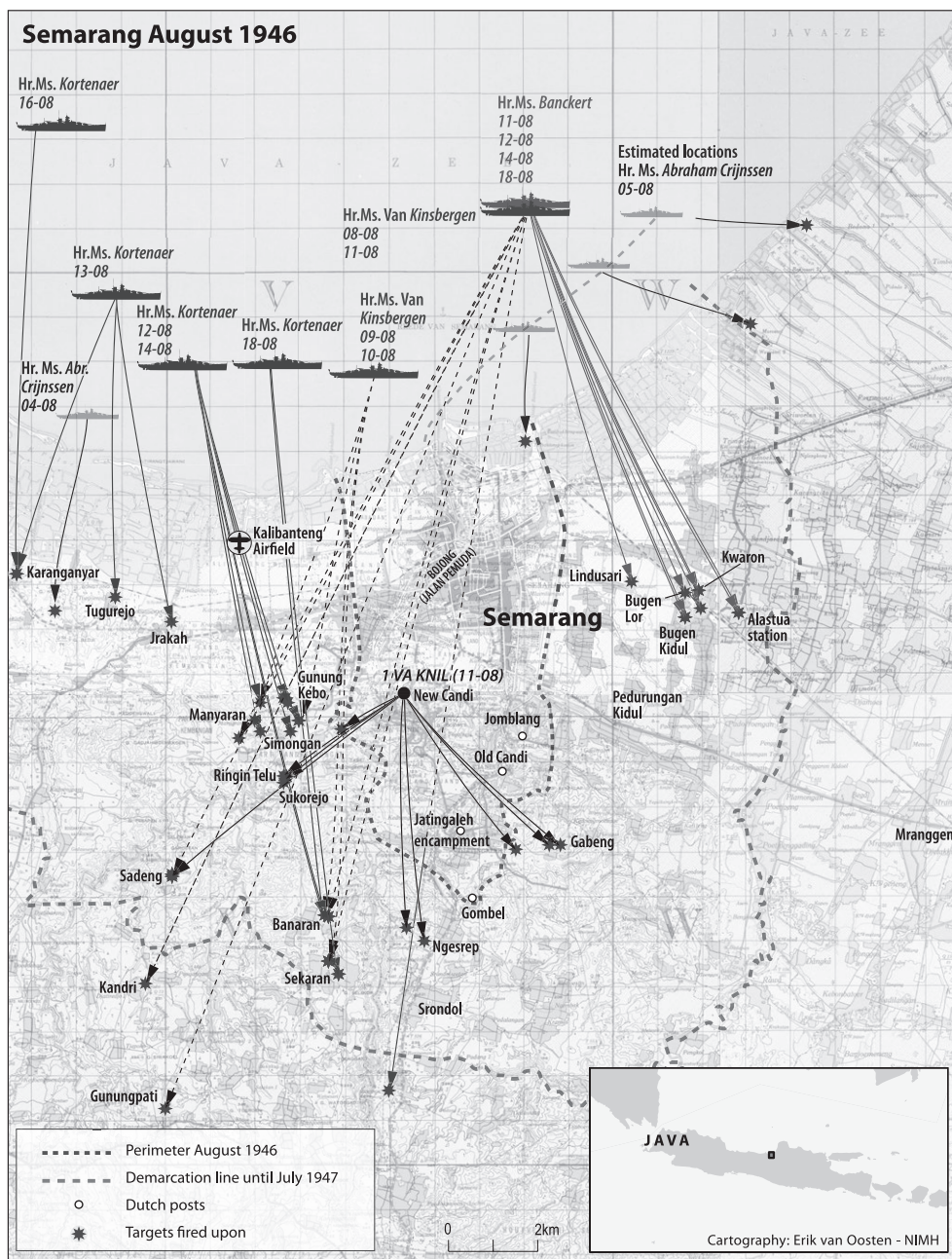
After the ship's arrival, two artillery officers disembarked for consultation with OAZ Semarang, Lieutenant Commander J. B. J. M. Maas, and deputy brigade commander, Lieutenant Colonel Kronig (Van Langen was in Jakarta for a conference).<sup>39</sup> Kronig indicated that the ship should shell targets 'that K.N.I.L. artillery could not reach' or that required too much movement. However, observation was going to prove difficult because many of the targets were located beyond the observers' field of view due to the hilly terrain. 'There were no objections,' the artillery officer wrote in his report, 'as long as the shots were fired in the direction of, and with some probability of landing in, the designated area. That would cause the enemy enough trouble and the moral factor weighed heavily.'<sup>40</sup>

That same day, once the officers were back on board, the ship took action. Limpach discusses what went wrong during this bombardment. He outlines a situation in which the 'bombardment could only be inaccurate', not just because of the 'primitive observation' but also because the first target, Gunungpati, lay almost beyond the maximum range of the cannons, and because communications with the Forward Observation Bombardment Officer were poor. According to Limpach, who relies on Nuboer's report, twilight was also to blame for the problems, as was faulty compass navigation of the naval guns.<sup>41</sup>

Communications between ground troops and the navy show that they had already factored in inaccurate fire in advance. Yet Kronig still wanted to enlist the help of the *Van Kinsbergen*, not only because of the aforementioned 'moral factor' (which should be understood as both increasing own morale and damaging that of the enemy), but also because of the perilous tactical situation of the troops. According to CZM Pinke, the area occupied by the Dutch had 'the shape of a very pointed triangle' and the territory lacked depth to intercept attacking opponents, which made



## II. Map of bombardments Semarang front August 1946



*Anchorage and a number of targets are recorded in the ships' logs in latitudes and longitudes. Other coordinates from the action reports refer to staff maps used in 1946. The locations of Hr. Ms. Abraham Crijnsen are an indication, only the targets engaged*

and the route are known. No data are available of artillery fire by 1 VA on 4 August. The map shows how Hr.Ms. Bankert covered the east front and Hr.Ms. Van Kinsbergen and later Hr.Ms. Kortenaer the south(west) front, while 1 VA concentrated on the south sector. The dotted line indicates the area occupied by T Brigade. Kalibanteng airfield, an exclave in Republican territory, was added to the area occupied by the Dutch in the months following the fighting in August 1946. Source: NL-HaNA, *Strijdkrachten*, 1208 (perimeter); *Marinestaf*, 212, 216, 473, 700; *Cdt. Zeemacht*, 2161, 2165, 2168, 2218 (targets); *Scheepsjournalen*, 372, 1623, 1986, 2461 (anchorages); National Library of Australia, Maps Collection, map sheets 47/XXXIX-D Semarang and 47/XL-B south Semarang.

the defenders vulnerable. However, British orders did not allow for the extension of the perimeter.<sup>42</sup> Therefore Dutch troops attempted to keep Indonesian troops at a distance and to demoralize them with bombardments with heavy weapons. In addition, following hits to the Mitchell on 10 July and 4 August and damage to the airfield caused by Indonesian shells, use of the airfield had become risky. If attacked from all sides, KNIL artillery had to literally fight on all fronts.

In addition, fears of a fresh attack proved justified: another general attack (*serangan umum*) followed on 11 August. As a precaution, Dutch troops had already reinforced their positions in the days following 4 August. They had brought in sandbags, chopped down trees for a better line of fire and blown up ruined houses. Thus, T Brigade repelled the second onslaught without much trouble. However, this was also due to the fact that in addition to field artillery, mortars and Stuart tanks, the troops now had naval gunfire support at their disposal. Following the first, problematic bombardment on 8 August, the *Van Kinsbergen* had carried out several more fire missions; as a result, a better starting position had been achieved at the time of the attack, and targeted fire could be delivered faster. Although precision and observation were still often inadequate, from a military perspective the navy also carried out some successful bombardment operations. During the second fire mission on the 8th, disruptive fire of twelve grenades at Karanganyar *kampung* (not to be confused with the place central to the next case study), landed ‘razor sharp on [the] spot KNIL wanted’.<sup>43</sup>

The next day, 9 August, ground troops had requested naval gunfire on Gunung Kebo, a small hill to the southwest of the city. But nightfall threw a spanner in the works. Besides lack of light, the target was ‘very small and difficult’ according to the observer. Gunung Kebo was



successfully shelled by the artillery ship in daylight the next morning, as well as three other targets. This time, according to the observer, the aim was 'excellent'.<sup>44</sup> That day, a second war ship, *Hr.Ms. Banckert*, arrived at the roadstead. While the ship had been sent to Semarang to relieve the *Van Kinsbergen*, this was postponed for a day so both ships could take part in the defence of the port city. According to intelligence, an Indonesian attack could already be expected that day or the next. On 11 August, *Hr.Ms. Kortenaer* also arrived, so the *Van Kinsbergen* could sail for Surabaya for repairs after all. Although stationing two artillery ships was a heavy burden for the RNLN, according to a telegram sent by Pinke, 'military situation at Semarang serious so presence two large ships suitable for bombardment desired'.<sup>45</sup>

During a meeting at T Brigade headquarters, Van Langen, back from Jakarta, proposed that the *Banckert* would offer fire support on the east flank and the *Van Kinsbergen* on the west flank, while the 'K.N.I.L. serves the southern front with its own batteries'. An officer from both ships was to accompany the KNIL spotters as a liaison officer, as they were unfamiliar with the navy's bombardment procedures. Despite these arrangements, things still went wrong on the day of the attack. Firstly, a

*The destroyer Hr.Ms. Banckert. Source: Photographer unknown, NIMH / Fotoafdrukken Koninklijke Marine.*



reconnaissance aircraft could not find the target, then the liaison officer was not on location, and there was miscommunication with the KNIL observer. On board, the central pivot turned out to have been set wrongly. According to the commander of the *Banckert*, Lieutenant Commander G. Koudijs, the latter was due to 'teething troubles'. Such mistakes, he assured, were 'a great exception'.<sup>46</sup>

In the days following the attack, T Brigade continued to request fire support from the guns of the warships on an almost daily basis. The 'teething problems' turned out to be more persistent than Koudijs had imagined. On the 12th, the firing seemed to be going 'exceptionally well', but an observer passing on corrections to the *Banckert* measured from a previous pin-point caused every subsequent volley to land further off target. The spotter passed on corrections of up to a thousand yards.<sup>47</sup> The same happened to the *Kortenaer*, who tried to hit two pillboxes on the disputed hill of Gunung Kebo. 'Due to faulty corrections all shots fell increasingly to the right,' the commander, Lieutenant Commander J. K. Kempees, noted in his report. Kempees explained this error by the fact that there had not yet been any opportunity to train the crew (70 percent of whom were war volunteers). Furthermore, the artillery officer had received a rushed training. Neither did the absence of bombardment maps help much; neither the Dutch nor the British had any.

BDZ Helfrich was not impressed by Kempees's arguments. 'I presume,' he wrote to Pinke, 'that on your part all is being done to train, as much as possible, the ships receiving operational bombardment tasks.' However, Helfrich had to admit that bombardment maps were indeed lacking, as were instruction manuals for carrying out fire missions. He was working on it.<sup>48</sup> When army commander Spoor read the reports of both ships, he requested their 'direct stencilling and distribution' among all destroyers, 'seeing as the others need to know about this experience as soon as possible'.<sup>49</sup> One of the lessons contained in the reports was a recommendation by Kempees, who by his own account had been impressed by the American way of shelling during the Second World War. They used considerably fewer grenades than under the British system (which had been adopted by KNIL artillery), which was also less accurate. The trick was to lead the corrections directly to the target already during the test shots. According to Kempees this was 'a system that I used on board the "Tromp" with great success during the war'. In this way, shots could land on target already with the third salvo.<sup>50</sup>

Although wrong corrections and aiming mistakes were mostly the result of the fact that ground troops and navy were not well-attuned to each other, observation also remained a problem in the following days, and therefore inaccuracy. The impact and the results of many bombardments could not be established, because observation was impossible due to darkness, the terrain, or the lengthy distance between the observer and the target. Corrections of 500 yards were regular occurrences, with outliers of up to 900 yards. Sometimes this led to naval gunfire resembling a shot of hail, such as during the bombardment on 18 August. This time, according to the artillery officer, the corrections to distance in the report were not caused by errors, but by spreading the grenades too widely: 'by constantly moving the fire, the grenades were spread over entire kampongs, which are sprawling'. Here too, however, the results remained unknown but the *kampongs* were 'probably completely covered by fire'.<sup>51</sup>

That same day, the destroyers *Hr.Ms. Piet Hein* and *Van Galen* arrived at the roadstead. Although they were intended as relief for the other two ships, extensive bombardments were no longer deemed necessary. For the time being Rear Admiral Pinke, who personally came to assess the situation, considered the presence of one artillery ship 'certainly desirable, the 2nd ship can be missed'. However, it was decided to very gradually withdraw the ships, 'with regard to the morale of both [our] own troops as well as that of the enemy', wrote Pinke. '[Our] own troops had been in position constantly and still needed to rest.'<sup>52</sup> To offer the tired soldiers of Tiger Brigade a distraction, they were allowed to come aboard to view the ships, which they greatly appreciated, if only because they were at last given something decent to eat. Conversely, the ships' crews took a 'tour of the front' to have a look at the work of their comrades on shore.<sup>53</sup> The navy took advantage of the unique opportunity of four destroyers being in the same place at the same time by holding regular exercises in a divisional context.<sup>54</sup> Such a concentration of Dutch warships had not been seen since the Second World War and as far as is known would not occur again in Indonesian waters.

#### A SENSE OF DEJECTION

Military casualties of the actual assault on 11 August were primarily caused by infantry weapons (mortars, machine guns and small arms), just like during the assault the week before. The number of Indonesian casu-

alties during the second assault is unknown, but according to the Tiger Brigade commemorative book, Dutch soldiers could not suppress 'a sense of dejection' when they 'saw the young lads, who had just been sent to their graves without the least chance of success...'<sup>55</sup> At Giri Tunggul war cemetery, in addition to the mass grave, there are eight individual graves of 'heroes' (*pahlawan*) killed on 4 August 1946. There are a further 59 graves of soldiers who died in 1946 (without dates), but it is not known if all fighters who perished are buried at this war cemetery.<sup>56</sup>

Little information can be found in Dutch sources about field artillery and naval gunfire casualties, which can be largely explained by the problematic observation and firing at locations beyond reach and view of the infantry. According to Limpach it is crystal clear that navy ships caused 'inevitably (presumably multitudes of) civilian victims', but no specific evidence has been found to support this claim, not even in Indonesian sources.<sup>57</sup> However, the imprecise bombardments, coupled with poor observation, clearly posed great risks to the population. When shells landed in the expansive no man's land, there were few civilian casualties. The same goes for deserted *kampongs* that had been turned into military positions. Fire at more remote targets such as Gunungpati is more likely to have harmed the local population. As it turns out, this is precisely where many residents fled the violence, as interviews with eyewitnesses reveal. However, these accounts offer little clarity on the question of civilian harm.

During *gegeran* (the 'turmoil', as older residents call the revolutionary time) Mbah Samiran helped the TKR by taking rations across the river at Simongan. When Dutch troops attacked (it is unclear when precisely) he fled with his family to Gunungpati.<sup>58</sup> Simongan was one of the targets shelled from the sea. Another survivor, Mbah Setu Kirno, was about twenty years old during the revolution. He lived in Manyaran, which at the time was still covered by thick forests and cassava plantations, but has nowadays been swallowed up by the expanding metropole. He, too, fled to Gunungpati when it became too dangerous. There he heard that TKR headquarters had been bombarded by the Dutch with shells 'as big as a lower leg'. Later, when he returned home from Gunungpati, he saw the bodies of three killed TKR soldiers lying beneath the trees in Manyaran. Shocked, he ran home.<sup>59</sup>

On 14 August, the *Kortenaer* carried out a shelling of Manyaran *kampung*. Partly this was illumination fire to offer ground troops an overview,





*Graves of fighters fallen on  
4 August 1946. Giri Tunggal  
Heroes Cemetery, Semarang.*

*Source: Azarja Harmanny.*

but at the request of KNIL the ship also fired shells that burst high above the ground to maximize shrapnel effect. According to the observer this fire hit the target, and the report states that it was later found that 'as a consequence of this bombardment a hundred extremists were killed'.<sup>60</sup> Manyaran was part of the region that had by now been largely abandoned

by civilians. However, the report does not mention how reliable the intelligence was assessed to be, and who had provided it.

#### THE 'MORAL FACTOR'

Altogether, the ships fired 1426 shells at 57 targets during a total of fourteen naval gunfire missions between 8 and 18 August. How influential were these bombardments for the battle in Semarang in August 1946? Were the aims – to keep the enemy at a distance and to damage morale – achieved? The Republican newspaper *Kedaulatan Rakyat* did not think so. The *pemuda* attacks had instilled fear and anxiety in the Dutch, it wrote. 'To quell that fear, they go to great lengths to demoralize our pemuda, who are fearless', with 'cannon shells which are casually released almost every day from sea and land'. However, according to the article, the Indonesian fighters remained 'full of confidence day and night and tirelessly carried out their duties, motivated by the desire to immediately recapture Semarang, the beloved city'.<sup>61</sup>

Although Dutch military reports do indeed mention continuous Indonesian fire on the city following the fighting in August, large-scale attacks did not recur. Whether that was due to the limited impact of the assault and the devastating machine-gun fire of the defenders, or to the heavy shells of the naval guns, cannot be established in hindsight. In any case, the 'moral factor', which Lieutenant Colonel Kronig had already cited as the most important reason at the start of the bombardments, weighed especially heavily for the Dutch troops themselves.

The Dutch also saw few other options to repel the Indonesian attacks. From the outset, it was known that the bombardments would be relatively inaccurate. Yet the most obvious alternative – fire support by attack aircraft – was difficult due to the elimination of the B-25 and the Indonesian threat to the airfield. In addition, the British maintained restrictions on the deployment of Dutch bombers over Republican territory, and these bombers in any case were scarce. In that sense, the Dutch followed the British example: already in Surabaya, the British had preferred the politically less sensitive warships – the heaviest weapon at their disposal after aerial bombs – over attack aircraft. The artillery ships took over the role of bombers also in relation to morale, as evidenced by Lieutenant Verhulst's remark about the effect of the guns during the flight on 3 July. From a legal perspective, the warships' inaccurate bombardments are questionable at the least – if only because the lack of accurate obser-



vation made it uncertain that only military targets were being hit, especially since fire was regularly directed at entire *kampongs*. However, the sources show no traces of concerns about this issue on the part of those involved.

From a Dutch perspective, the extension of the perimeter, in some places up to twelve kilometres beyond the city, which was realized in the period after the attacks by T Brigade, probably had a larger impact on the security of Semarang than the bombardments. The area around the airfield, which previously had been a threatened enclave in Indonesian territory, was also annexed.<sup>62</sup> This enabled ML to station a squadron of fighter planes at Kalibanteng in December, making the 'necessity of naval bombardments low' according to OAZ Maas.<sup>63</sup> As the conflict progressed, this also became true in a wider sense for the deployment of ships for fire support. Starting with the first major offensive in mid-1947, combat shifted away from the cities and became smaller in scale. As a consequence, the deployment of naval guns was often no longer expedient during fire-fights, with the exception of a sporadic preliminary battering of the coast preceding an amphibious landing.

After the battle for Semarang, the Indonesian armed forces licked their wounds. Although the battlefield had been abandoned, the army still occupied locations outside the perimeter and reinforced these.<sup>64</sup> A debate arose whether Semarang should now be considered lost, or whether renewed attempts should be made to drive the 'Nica soldiers' into the sea.<sup>65</sup> If, at that time, such conventional thinking was still commonplace within the ranks of the TRI, that was to change after the first major Dutch offensive, when the Indonesian army decided to engage in guerrilla warfare.

#### THE 'CANNONADE' OF KARANGANYAR<sup>66</sup>

On *Wage*, the fourth day of the Javanese week, the war came to Karanganyar, a town in Republican territory not far from the demarcation line in Central Java. That morning, dated Sunday 19 October 1947 in Dutch sources, resident Ahmet Suwito saw a reconnaissance plane circling above the houses. At that same moment, artillery battery 3-6 RVA was positioning its guns on the other side of the demarcation line, near Gombang. It was market day, and the *pasar* was full of people. Suddenly the shells started hitting, Suwito recalls. 'Dung, dung-dung-dung, it sounded. I was hit by shrapnel and was severely wounded in my arm.' He grabbed his *kris* (dagger) from his house and fled to the hospital in Kebumen.<sup>67</sup>

According to a present-day monument at the site of the *pasar*, the ‘canonade’ on that day resulted in ‘786 [...] innocent victims of the atrocities committed by the Dutch army’.<sup>68</sup>

This event was possibly the largest Dutch artillery shelling in the 1945 to 1949 period in terms of expended ammunition, as evidenced by the almost fifteen hundred actions inventoried and analysed for this study. Together with J Troop of 5 VA, 3-6 RVA fired a total of 1920 shells from twelve mounted guns (25-pounders).<sup>69</sup> Despite this scale and the presumably high number of casualties, the shelling of Karanganyar has not received much attention until now.<sup>70</sup>

#### PRELUDE: ARTILLERY BATTERY 3-6 RVA

In the run-up to the events, we follow artillery battery 3-6 RVA on their journey. This battery played a central role during the action at Karanganyar. Part of 7 December Division, the unit was largely made up of conscripts from the east and north of the Netherlands. Three of them are followed more closely in this chapter: instructor Sergeant Major Klaas Kloeten, a former resistance member; observer Corporal Onne Dallinga, a farmer’s son from the north; and the metalworker Private 1st class Henry (or Henk) Pézy, who was also an observer.<sup>71</sup> Their ego-documents, interviews, and television appearances provide insight into the military-tactical, ethical and personal considerations concerning the violence they were directly involved in as perpetrators. These sources therefore serve to complement the official documents, which primarily show the considerations of the commanders and the formal decision-making process that preceded the deployment of artillery fire.

According to Dallinga, upon their arrival in the artillery encampment in Oldebroek, the recruits of the 6th Field Artillery Regiment were instructed on fighting methods during the war in Aceh in order to familiarize them with their future posting. Dallinga: ‘When we asked what the benefit was in learning about a war fought in the last century, we didn’t get a satisfactory answer.’ Pézy, too, was critical. In Indonesia, he first had to learn how to shoot before he was allowed to stand guard. ‘I did not even know how to hold a gun,’ according to Pézy, possibly with some exaggeration. Later, by his own account, he would prove to be one of the best marksmen.<sup>72</sup>

Upon arrival in Indonesia late 1946, 6 RVA initially operated in a regimental context. It was split up prior to the first offensive.<sup>73</sup> The first and



*Ahmet Suwito in front of his house in Karanganyar in 2017. He is showing the scar on his arm from pieces of shrapnel, 'as big as coins'. Suwito died in July 2022. Source: Azarja Harmanny*

second batteries remained in West Java, while the third was assigned to the storm troops heading for Yogyakarta. During the advance, 3-6 RVA supported the infantry together with two troops of 5 VA and two of the improvised troops of the volunteer battalions. V Brigade, the combat unit to which 3-6 RVA belonged, thus possessed 24 artillery pieces (four per troop). At the start of the offensive on 21 July 1947, 3-6 RVA provided a creeping barrage to destroy pre-located field fortifications and to keep the opponent at a distance.<sup>74</sup> The *kampongs* through which the endless column passed were deserted. According to Klaas Kloeten, most of the *tani* (farmers) had already been evacuated by the Indonesian army, which was moreover out of firing range. 'Not many TRI soldiers were killed,' wrote Kloeten.<sup>75</sup>

During Operatie Product, Colonel Jan Meijer (KNIL) performed a risky feat by directing V Brigade over the inhospitable eastern slope of the Slamet volcano, earning him the nickname 'Hannibal' as well as the Military Order of William, the highest Dutch military decoration. By the time the column had reached the road to Yogya after the long detour, a ceasefire was imminent. At the last moment, the Dutch troops quickly occupied Gombong, a town 100 kilometres away from the Republican capital. 3-6 RVA also went into position there. The artillerymen had 'eerie memories' of their entry into Gombong.<sup>76</sup> Retreating Indonesian units, mainly Laskar Rakyat (people's militias) and Hizbullah, had taken the population with them and had set the town on fire as part of the *bumi hangus*, the 'scorched earth' tactic.<sup>77</sup> Not long thereafter a ceasefire line was established, dividing the area into a Dutch and a Republican side. These and other demarcation lines, which cut through large parts of Java and Sumatra, became the main front lines and battlegrounds for the next year and a half. All the while, only one thought dominated the minds of Klaas Kloeten and his comrades-in-arms: to continue the push towards Yogya.<sup>78</sup>

As in many other places, Dutch troops consolidated their positions in Gombong following the cessation of the offensive on 5 August 1947 by almost immediately carrying out 'sweep operations' in all directions. Indonesian troops equally consolidated their positions and brought in reinforcements from other parts of Java and the archipelago. Besides regular units of Batalyon 64 (belonging to XXth Regiment of Divisi III Diponegoro), commanded by Major Rachmad, the Tentara Pelajar (TP) and ALRI, these included combat organizations such as Angkatan Umat

Islam, Barisan Pemberontakan Rakyat Indonesia, people's army troops and Hizbullah. Officially, the troops in Karanganyar were commanded by 1st Lieutenant Muryuni of the 64th, but frictions arose between the factions, partly caused by a shortage of weapons.<sup>79</sup> Surprisingly, TP units of Persatuan Pelajar Indonesia Sulawesi, in short Perpis, led by Maulwi Saelan, were also present. Presumed dead following the massacres by Captain Raymond Westerling and his Special Forces in South Sulawesi, he had actually escaped to Java, where he now fought against Dutch troops at the demarcation line.<sup>80</sup>

In October, Klaas Kloeten began to notice that the Indonesian forces were changing their way of fighting: they began laying more and more mines on roads used by the Dutch troops. It was part of the turn to a large-scale guerrilla that was being implemented across Java and Sumatra, TNI having lost to the modern Dutch army in conventional warfare.<sup>81</sup> V Brigade sought ways to counter this, but was not allowed to cross the demarcation line. Observers from the United Nations Committee of Good Offices monitored the agreements that had been made. Dallinga: 'We stick to the rules of the game, which are: "Don't shoot until you get shot at." We call this: "Don't shoot until you're dead."' <sup>82</sup> When the observers were not in the vicinity, the Dutch troops often did take action, preferably using their artillery, which could fire more than ten kilometres into enemy territory without having to cross the demarcation line.<sup>83</sup>

According to Wedy Utomo, the Netherlands in that period carried out 'ever more desperate and blind attacks, using weapons that were classified as modern at the time'. These attacks led to many casualties, as during a battle on 18 August. On that occasion, KNIL battalion Infanterie V (nicknamed 'Andjing Nica', NICA dogs, an insult adopted as a badge of honour) asked 3-6 RVA to bombard desa Petahanan with artillery fire, also hitting the mosque. Just that day it was *hari* Idul Fitri (Eid-al-Fitr) and therefore many Muslims at prayer were also killed in the shelling, Utomo wrote.<sup>84</sup> In its war diary, Infanterie V KNIL briefly notes (in military staccato): 'own losses None. Enemy Losses +/- 155 Laskar Kakjat, 1 T.R.I.' The only thing noted about the results in the action report of E Troop is that the air force observer was 'enthusiastic' and reported 'at least 7 worthwhile hits'.<sup>85</sup> During intense fighting on 2 and 3 September in Sidobunder and Puring, 3-6 RVA delivered 'predicted fire' (fire without observation) at their opponents, who were then surrounded by infantry. This enabled the latter to wipe out the Indonesian troops. According to Dutch sour-



ces, Indonesian TP units suffered 50 to 150 dead. Indonesian sources cite 20 to 23 TP in addition to circa 10 civilian casualties. Two men were killed on the Dutch side.<sup>86</sup>

#### THE STATE OF THE ENEMY

The Andjing Nica sought revenge; after fifteen of their vehicles had been hit by pull bombs and mines over a period of two weeks, battalion commander Van Santen was 'fuming', according to Klaas Kloeten. He therefore asked Colonel Meijer for permission for a brigade operation to Karanganyar. According to intelligence reports, this town was the site of large quantities of stored explosives and a regional command post of the TNI (Comando Operasi Pertempuran or COP). In order to encircle Karanganyar and 'sweep' the surrounding terrain, an operation was prepared involving approximately 3000 infantry supported by three artillery troops. Like Van Santen, Meijer was known to be 'very fiercely anti-Republican' and probably did not have to think long about this request. Earlier, Major General Simon de Waal, commander of B Division in Central Java, had already stated in a command order that he would allow operations outside the demarcation line if they were 'forced upon us by enemy acts'. The date was set for 19 October 1947, not by chance a day on which UN military observers would be elsewhere.<sup>87</sup> A month previously, a British observer had visited Karanganyar to examine Republican accusations of atrocities committed by Dutch soldiers, but had deemed the available evidence for this insufficient.<sup>88</sup>

During an interview in 2017, Ahmet Suwito, still visibly scarred on his arm, points to where the field kitchen, the military logistics centre, and the COP used to be located in Candi, a *desa* (village) on the eastern edge of Karanganyar. While these were all legitimate military targets, the market (*pasar*) was located in the middle of them. According to another resident at the time, Edith Sapumo, the market had been moved out of the city centre because Karanganyar had been burned to the ground during the first Dutch offensive.<sup>89</sup> Although an intelligence report from V Brigade gave a detailed overview of the 'state of the enemy', it made no mention of the *pasar*. As a result, the decision-makers did not consider any civilians Dutch military personnel might face during the operation, as was the case in many other major campaigns. However, Dutch troops did seem to have a reasonably accurate picture of the different fighting groups operating in the region.





3-6 RVA batik cloth. A sawa landscape is depicted in the middle; top left the RNLA lion; bottom left the V Brigade crest; top right the crest of the Expeditionary Force, 1 Division '7 December'; bottom right the artillery crest with the crossed cannons. Many Dutch units had such cloths made to commemorate their service in Indonesia. Source: National Military Museum (NMM).

The leader of the operation, as commander of V Brigade, was Colonel Meijer himself. The artillery also fell under his command. Lieutenant Colonel W. A. Schouten was attached to his staff as brigade artillery commander, coordinating the requests for observation and fire direction by reconnaissance aircraft. In addition to KNIL Infanterie II and V battalions, other participating troops included components of three RNLA battalions of war volunteers (1-3, 1-5, and 1-9 RI).<sup>90</sup>

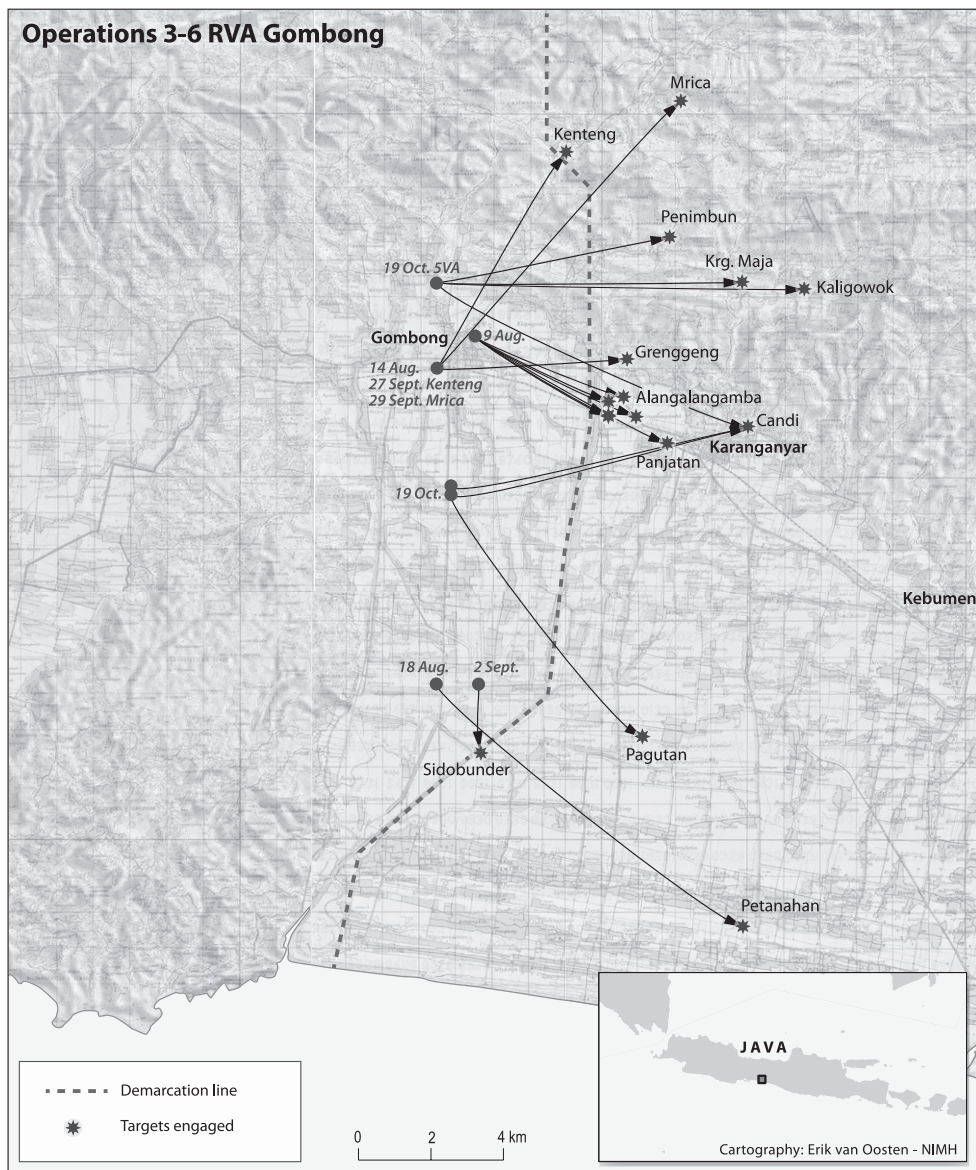
## THE CANNONADE

According to the operation plan, the troops were to take up positions at night and, after a creeping barrage in the early morning, comb the entire area between Karanganyar and the south coast. But monsoon rains threatened to throw a spanner in the works. According to Commander Van Santen, there was severe weather 'such as I had never experienced before. [...] The path that we followed was so slippery that we advanced falling, sliding, but not walking.' The torrential rain also led to confusion among the TNI. During the advance, several Indonesian soldiers made themselves known to the Dutch troops by crying out *merdeka* ('freedom') in the assumption that they were dealing with fellow TNI. 'Since no shooting was allowed, these men were captured and made to lighten the load of the coolies who were heaving the 22 sets around.'<sup>91</sup> These field radios slowed down the advance considerably due to their size and weight but were indispensable for communication between the troops.<sup>92</sup>

Thanks in part to the rain, which had kept the Dutch advance hidden, the night-time infiltration was completely successful according to the report of the operation. However, this was only partly true. A slightly premature opening of artillery fire had alarmed the opponent before the encirclement of Karanganyar had been completed. A train full of people and equipment managed to escape towards Kebumen. Dallinga: 'It was difficult for the sloggers to watch the train pull away after a long night of lugging.'<sup>93</sup> In other respects as well, the artillery operation was not perfect. The first creeping barrage that was carried out – on troop concentrations in Kampong Pagutan – had been cut short because 'the Frisians' (1-9 RI) reported that the grenades had landed among own troops. 'Thanks, repeat, thanks,' was their sarcastic reaction over the radio.<sup>94</sup> According to the commander of 3-6 RVA, Major W. de Bruyne, this was due to a defect in one of the aiming devices.

After Pagutan, the firing shifted to Karanganyar. Here too, a creeping barrage was used in which the guns shelled fifteen firing lines, one by one, at 100-metre intervals. This allowed for an area to be covered from Candi to the centre of Karanganyar, with the aim of driving 'enemy concentrations' into the hands of the advancing infantry.<sup>95</sup> A book written about the 20th Regiment of the Diponegoro Division describes how the first creeping barrage on Karanganyar descended on the people like a hail of grenades. Utomo also describes how 'the Netherlands spewed its artillery shells over the pasar without any sense of compassion.'<sup>96</sup> Edith Sapumo

## 12. Map of artillery fire, Gombong region, Aug.–Oct. 1947



*Fire missions carried out by 3-6 RVA and 5 VA, projected on maps used by the troops, based on coordinates and target data found in various sources. It shows clearly how each time artillery fired across the demarcation line from territory occupied by the Netherlands. Source: NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1441; NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 2277; HCKVA 106-1; National Library of Australia, Map Collection.*



and her sister tried their best to hide under a small table in their house, which was not far from the *pasar*. She was unharmed, but her sister was injured in her thigh, which had been protruding from under the table.<sup>97</sup>

On the orders of Colonel Meijer, this barrage was carried out once again, which partly explains the exceptionally high number of rounds fired. It is not clear from the reports why he decided to do so. When the first barrage ceased, the people rushed from their hiding places to flee the violence, but just then the guns began to roar again. In a letter to his parents, brothers and sisters, Klaas Kloeten remarked: 'I have never seen such heavy quickfire being commissioned.'<sup>98</sup>

#### THE RIVER TURNED RED

Almost fifty years after the 'cannonade', Henk Pézy stands at the *sawa* dike behind which the guns had been positioned. 'All those years I've wanted to know', he says, 'what is left of those people? How many people died here?' The unknown victims had haunted his dreams for years.<sup>99</sup> Pézy's question is not easy to answer. Little is known about the origin of the monument and the number 786 written on it. A simpler and older monument (unveiled in 1950) stands not far from the *pasar* in a front yard, but it only mentions the date of the event. The current memorial site may have been placed there in the 1970s or 1980s, when war cemeteries and monuments were erected throughout the country in memory of the 1945–1950 years. But given that thirty or forty years had passed since the events, it was not always possible to trace exactly what happened. A memorial stone in nearby Karanggayam shows that the information on such monuments cannot be accepted at face value. The plaque, which commemorates a battle on 19 August of the same year, states that no fewer than 60 Dutch soldiers were killed during the battle, whereas in fact the unit involved (Infanterie v KNIL) suffered no losses that day.<sup>100</sup>

What do Dutch sources tell us about the victims of the attack on Karanganyar? The action report of Infanterie v KNIL mentions 94 deaths on the Indonesian side, with the caveat that the casualties caused by the artillery were not included – a rather exceptional clause in such military reports.<sup>101</sup> One of the participating artillery troops noted in its war diary: 'more than 300 TRI killed.' However, Republican Radio Djokja stated a few days later that 500 people had been killed, while an official protest at the United Nations Security Council against the violation of the cease-fire was also announced. This set off alarm bells in the higher echelons

of the army. Spoor made inquiries, as the number of 500 seemed to him 'fantastically high'. A week later, Lieutenant Colonel Pieter Six, a member of the Army Commander's cabinet, reported to Spoor that there were '124 deaths counted on the side of the opposing party', leaving the cause of these deaths unspecified.<sup>102</sup>

Remarkably, Indonesian sources often do not mention the number of victims. For example, Nasution mentions the action against Karanganyar without addressing the number of casualties. Wiyono, who wrote an overview of the struggle in Central Java, only notes that Karanganyar was 'occupied' and that there were 'many casualties among our army and also among the people' during that period.<sup>103</sup> Some Indonesian sources do mention or give an indication of the number of victims of the shelling on 19 October 1947, and these are for the most part considerably lower than

*Karanganyar monument, shown here in 2017. The text on the monument reads: 'You did not die in vain but as a sacrifice for independence. Innocent people, victims of the atrocities of the Dutch army during the cannonade on 19 October 1947.' Source: Azarja Harmanny.*



those given in Dutch archives. A history of the independence struggle in Kebumen states that the attack caused much grief in the Gombong area ‘for causing all those human casualties’. At the Ketek River, for example, ‘as many as 15 people died, while in the market at Candi as many as 60 people died in a gruesome manner’. The river Ketek flows one kilometre south of the city, the same area where the infantry began its advance, so this could also refer to the violence they used. Other sources cite similar numbers of victims in the marketplace.<sup>104</sup> A more general picture emerges from an Indonesian weekly overview of the battlefield in Central Java. This document, which was confiscated by the Dutch intelligence service, and is now in the National Archives in The Hague, reports 300 deaths in addition to 300 wounded around Karanganyar, which are said to have occurred during various battles in October. The document does not mention whether they were military or civilian deaths, but it does state that Karanganyar was ‘the biggest attack since the “cease fire order”’.<sup>105</sup>

The memories of those who witnessed the events in Karanganyar are also inconclusive, but they do provide a glimpse into the human suffering caused by the shelling. Some of them were interviewed by a Dutch television crew in 2013. Abdullah Djaeni could still recall the river turning ‘red with blood. Women, men, children – everyone was dead.’ Among the victims was his nine-year-old sister, whom he had tried to save. Another interviewee, Mad Sopyan, was injured in the hip and saw hundreds of casualties, both soldiers and civilians. Ahmet Suwito said a woman took shelter in his house but was then killed by shrapnel. The testimonies also reveal that most of the victims were buried in mass graves, anonymously and without a headstone. Others were carried off by the river and never found again.<sup>106</sup>

All in all, the available sources offer little guidance with regard to the question of exactly how many people died on 19 October 1947. The numbers in the Dutch military reports, although seemingly very precise, are but a few among many figures representing the possible death toll. Indonesian sources also offer little guidance. In addition, it is just as risky to make statements about what kind of violence inflicted the most casualties and what the ratio was between civilian and combatant deaths. After all, other than what the local monument suggests, the Karanganyar ‘cannonade’ was more than just an artillery shelling. The effects of the violence perpetrated (including the number of casualties) were determined by the totality of the resources deployed, which reinforced each other.



The reported figures of enemy casualties in the actions of artillery battery 3-6 RVA in support of the Andjing Nica and other infantry units are impossible to analyse on the basis of the type of violence used, as they were the result of the joint use of direct and indirect violence. Soldiers from the battalions involved often emphasized the complementary nature of the units. The artillerymen of 3-6 RVA were impressed by the Andjing Nica and their commander Piet van Santen, who in their eyes was the 'legendary leader of the most feared fighting team in Central Java'.<sup>107</sup> Onne Dallinga was grateful for the protection the KNIL soldiers gave them: 'We, the totoks [soldiers from the Netherlands], appreciate their actions but are ourselves not yet able to do what they do. As long as the opponent is at a distance, we can participate, but we wouldn't be able to handle a klewang [an Indonesian cutlass].' Without Van Santen's 'indigenous troops', Dallinga was sure that the Dutch troops would have suffered many more losses.<sup>108</sup> Another artilleryman recalled that when shots were being fired, Major De Bruyne, commander of 3-6 RVA, said to his men: 'That's for the infantry, you're going the other way.'<sup>109</sup>

Indeed, there is a great contrast between the losses suffered by Infanterie v battalion, which suffered one of the highest number of casualties (63 dead) of all the infantry battalions, and artillery battery 3-6 RVA, which survived the war almost unscathed with just one fatal casualty.<sup>110</sup> The KNIL battalion in turn was grateful to the artillerymen for the protection they offered. According to Dallinga, Van Santen saw the artillery as 'a weapon that you should use a lot'.<sup>111</sup> His deputy commander first lieutenant Sjoerd Lapré considered the fire support provided by 3-6 RVA to be 'outstanding'.<sup>112</sup> He described 3-6 RVA as 'the big brother', and he was full of admiration for the way troop commander Captain Kees Kolff could lead 'his artillery fire [to the target] with the precision of a watchmaker', which meant 'substantial support' for Infanterie v during actions. The 'direct methods' of the KNIL were therefore partly dependent on the 'indirect methods' of the artillerymen. Indeed, one of the largest artillery fires of the entire War of Independence was requested by the KNIL battalion Andjing Nica.

#### PSYCHOSIS OF FEAR

The Dutch attack on Republican territory on 19 October 1947 had a major impact on both the military and civilians. Kloeten writes that during the action, the TNI had set fire to nearby Kebumen, a sign that they

thought the Dutch advance on Yogya had resumed. 'But we withdrew again. So they were unlucky.'<sup>113</sup> According to Indonesian eyewitnesses, many residents fled to the mountains, where people hid for months in caves and other temporary shelters.<sup>114</sup> Schools and *pasars* in the region were closed. A report by the Republican Military Police (MP) refers to a 'psychosis of fear' among the residents and 'demoralization' on the part of the TNI. Because the army withdrew to Kebumen and a power vacuum ensued, 'occasional *garong*' (robbers) originating from East Java, Kalimantan, and even Aceh had free rein.<sup>115</sup>

In November, the Dutch army received a request from a number of *lurah* (village heads) to evacuate the residents of their *desa* on the Republican side of the demarcation line, now that the TNI could no longer offer protection. When the Dutch army indicated that it wanted to honour this request, the UN Committee of Good Services protested, because it interpreted the message as a warning for 'imminent action' in Republican territory.<sup>116</sup> Spoor expressed his annoyance to Van Mook. 'So there will never be any vindication of the Dutch side in Lake Success [the seat of the United Nations at that time], even if so many Chinese are still being murdered, even if more and more factories are set on fire and the population is terrorized even more than is now the case.'<sup>117</sup> Spoor was right that the Chinese population was being heavily hit in many areas. Chinese mass graves were discovered even in the Gombong region. In his indignation, Spoor did not mention that much of this suffering was indirectly caused by Dutch artillery barrages and other violence at the demarcation line, which meant that Republican authority in the border areas was weakened or even completely undermined and the ensuing vacuum partly filled by criminal groups, which then forced the residents to appeal to the Dutch.<sup>118</sup>

However, the army leaders seemed primarily interested in the short-term military effectivity. They regarded the attack on Karanganyar above all as a 'great success' – one that 'substantially raised the morale of the troops'. Battalion commander Piet van Santen, two years later the recipient of the Military Order of William 4th class, largely owed this to his performance during the attack on Karanganyar, despite all the civilian casualties. During this and other actions around Gombong he had shown 'particular audacity' in 'accepting huge risks'.<sup>119</sup> In a supporting statement, his deputy commander Sjoerd Lapré wrote: 'taking no notice of the fairly well-aimed enemy fire that hit close to him and ignoring the enemy bul-

lets that were ricocheting dangerously from the chopped tree trunks, the commander gave the orders to neutralize the enemy with curved-trajectory weapons'.<sup>120</sup>

The leaders of the operation were pleased with the curved-trajectory fire, that is, the creeping artillery barrage, as it had driven part of the enemy concentrations into the hands of the soldiers who were cordoning off the combat area. During the short-lived occupation of Karanganyar, large quantities of airplane bombs (used as mines), incendiary bombs, hand grenades, and other explosives were also confiscated or destroyed. It turned out that the local mosque had served as storage place.<sup>121</sup> A month later, Klaas Kloeten noticed that the troops were encountering pull bombs far less frequently than before. This situation was short-lived, however, because a week later the tone in his correspondence had once again changed: 'The TRI is asking for a beating again,' he concluded his letter of 25 November. 'And a taunted dog is very dangerous. For now, warm greetings from Klaas.'<sup>122</sup>

Onne Dallinga also observed that the military situation was once again deteriorating rapidly. At one point, informants reported that a train with new aircraft bombs had arrived in Kebumen. 'An operation like Karanganyar is not possible there because the artillery cannot reach Kebumen,' he wrote. 'The city is too far from the demarcation line.'<sup>123</sup> During the guerrilla phase in 1949, long after 3-6 RVA and the Andjing Nica had left for Magelang and other units had taken their place, the region was more unsafe than ever. The route connecting Gombong and Kebumen was known to the troops at the time as the 'pull bomb road'. An artilleryman of 2-12 RVA battery described the atmosphere in the last year of the war in 'terrible' Kebumen as follows: 'the daily confrontation with danger, living with death as your neighbour – bleached skulls in burned-down houses, graves in the backyard ...'<sup>124</sup> The aftermath of the attack on Karanganyar is typical of the effects of major 'sweep operations' and the use of fire support. They could be very disruptive to the Indonesian armed forces and the population, and they often provided only temporary respite for the Dutch forces.

#### RE M O R S E

How did the men of 3-6 RVA themselves reflect – then and later – on the fact that civilians also became victims of the violence they perpetrated? During a group discussion of the Association for Dutch Military War



*Troops of 3-6 RVA cool an overheated 25-pounder during the 'cannonade' of Karanganyar on 19 October 1947. Source: photographer unknown, Historische Collectie Korps Veldartillerie (HCKVA).*

Victims in Doorn in 1989, Henk Pézy spoke publicly about the events in Karanganyar for the first time. He spoke with difficulty, not only because of the gunshot in his jaw he had received forty years ago, but also because of his 'war syndrome'. '[I] feel a mild sense of guilt,' he declared, 'even remorse.' In addition to mistreating old people during patrols, the shelling of Karanganyar was one of those things 'you can't justify,' according to Pézy. With a broken voice, he stated: 'Not a soul came out alive.'<sup>125</sup>

Although other veterans of 3-6 RVA thought it was brave of Pézy to talk about the events of 19 October 1947, they preferred to remain silent. But a former driver-signaller did state in general terms: 'When the artillery started to scatter and spread, firing the shells in rows, it was not always pleasant for the areas affected. But,' he added with a classic phrase to put things into perspective, 'a war is never clean and there are no winners.'<sup>126</sup>

Former resistance member Klaas Kloeten, who described himself to his family as ‘moderately indifferent’ and someone who ‘enjoyed’ the rugged life in the military, did not mention civilian casualties in his letters. But when the daughter of the *djongos* [boy servant] suddenly died of a high fever, he wrote: ‘strange that such a death ends up affecting you while TRI soldiers who are killed mean completely nothing’.<sup>127</sup> Onne Dallinga was on leave during the attack on Karanganyar, and does not comment in his memoirs on the ethical side of artillery fire. What he did describe is an ethical discussion that arose after dissatisfaction with a failed operation led to one or more soldiers firing their Bren gun at a random *kampong*. The artillerymen had differing opinions on whether it was permissible simply to shoot at a *kampong*, given that it would put the civilian population at risk (to be clear, random fire at undefended civilian areas was and is a war crime). ‘There are idealists who think it’s bad, but the majority don’t worry about it. There are worse things and greater dangers for the population imaginable than firing a Bren from a great distance,’ wrote Dallinga, possibly referring to artillery fire. ‘Besides, shots at night have a preventive effect. It makes the enemy realize that we can pop up anywhere. They are not safe anywhere, and they should be aware of that.’<sup>128</sup>

To summarize, these reflections attest to the fact that the men of 3-6 RVA were aware of the risk of civilian casualties resulting from the violence they used. Pézy’s statement and the silence of his former comrades-



*Instructor Sergeant Major Klaas Kloeten of 3-6 RVA. ‘I never saw such heavy quick-fire being commissioned’, he wrote to his family in the Netherlands about the bombardment of Karanganyar. Source: photographer unknown, Kloeten/Schlimme family.*



in-arms are also an indication that the shelling of Karanganyar was considered to be excessively violent, or even a violation of the laws of war, by those directly involved. Nevertheless, the majority of these veterans, who mainly had operational roles, seem to have had little difficulty, just like their superiors, with the way in which the artillery was deployed.

In hindsight, the Karanganyar ‘cannonade’ is very likely to have caused a disproportionate number of civilian casualties and the use of the creeping barrage in such a populated area hardly differentiated between military and civilian objects. Possibly the Dutch troops also crossed a legal line, although if a case had been brought, it cannot be ruled out that military necessity might have been successfully invoked. The exact reason for the high number of artillery shells fired remains unknown, although there are several indications that reprisal was a motive. It is reasonable to assume that the decision-makers were aware of the risks to civilians, although this cannot be verified in retrospect. In any case, civilians were not warned about these and other bombardments of places on the Republican side of the demarcation line, so Indonesian authorities had no opportunity to evacuate civilians. Earlier, the TNI sector commander had already complained about this to the British observer who visited the front in Karanganyar in September.<sup>129</sup>

#### PURE FOLLY

In the period following the bombardment of Karanganyar, part of artillery battery 3-6 RVA was temporarily ‘lent out’ to various battalions in Central Java to offer fire support to sweep operations, sometimes involving a lot of violence (once, at Negla *kampung*, this once again led to political upheaval; see the next chapter). The situation in Gombong changed when the Renville Agreement came into force on 17 January 1948. Seeing as support weapons could not be placed at posts adjacent to the demarcation line (which had now become a demilitarized zone), the guns fell silent and artillerymen were sent out on patrol. That year, Infanterie v was compromised due to torture by its intelligence service and executions without trial on a bridge over the Kemit river, which functioned as demarcation line.<sup>130</sup> Dallinga wrote that he and his fellow artillerymen were convinced that “‘stuff’ does sometimes go on at Andjing Nica but we also know we’re safe here because the Andjing Nica men are cracking down’<sup>131</sup> Due to the patrol work, the men of artillery unit 3-6 RVA themselves also became more involved in the ‘direct’ violence of the guerrilla war –



although, as with artillery fire, the enemy remained largely invisible and elusive. Pézy: 'We never knew who the enemy was. You didn't see them, and when you did see them, well... they had hidden their weapon in the bushes. Until you get past them, and then they shoot you in the back.'<sup>132</sup>

On 19 December 1948 the Netherlands eventually launched a second offensive. 3-6 RVA was once again assigned to the assault group, now as part of W Brigade. This time it was not a 'military walk in the park', as the first offensive had been described.<sup>133</sup> Fierce fighting broke out at Kebumen, and Republican troops set the town on fire. During the advance, 3-6 RVA did not come into action. The second offensive ended for the artillerymen in burnt-out and deserted Magelang, north of Yogya. The battery provided fire support for the first time during the operation when this former KNIL garrison town was taken. In those final days of 1948, the artillerymen carried out regular fire missions in support of actions by KNIL Infanterie v battalion in the vicinity of Magelang.<sup>134</sup>

There was no longer a front line and therefore the unit offered fire support in all directions. Infanterie v became dispersed over the area it had to control, which was more than 2,500 km<sup>2</sup>, an area comparable to the country of Luxembourg and larger than the average battalion area.<sup>135</sup> 'Not possible to deal big blows,' noted Lieutenant Colonel Van Santen in the war diary. Losses mounted, and with them frustration. According to Kloeten, the actions taken by the Dutch troops were 'pure folly. We achieved nothing.'<sup>136</sup> The artillerymen remained in Magelang until the unit was relieved in late 1949, not long before the transfer of sovereignty. But for Henk Pézy, it was the memory of this one bombardment in Karanganyar in particular that would haunt him for the rest of his life.

#### THE WONOSARI 'OPERETTA'<sup>137</sup>

Upon his departure from Gunungkidul, the mountainous terrain south-east of Yogyakarta that was entirely in Republican hands, Colonel Simatupang saw dozens of planes crossing the sky early in the morning of 10 March 1949. At that moment, the Dutch were unleashing a large-scale attack on Wonosari, the capital of the regency, also known as Gunung Sewu, or Thousand Mountains. The colonel, who at the time held a high staff position at TNI headquarters, shrugged his shoulders, 'because I had seen for myself, that Wonosari was deserted and already largely destroyed due to scorched earth tactics'.<sup>138</sup> That same day, when he was further to the north in Ngawen, Simatupang had to seek cover from strafing planes.

He continued:

It was mainly the common people who suffered from such Dutch attacks. All along the way from Gelaran to Ngawen and on to Tjandiroto, that day, there were casualties among the people who had been strafed from the air. In some places where markets were crowded at the time of the raids, the casualty figures were quite high. Did the Dutch hope systematically to demoralize the people? In general, however, the spirit of the people seemed quite unbroken.<sup>139</sup>

Simatupang's account, based on his diary entries from that period, raises a number of questions. Does his description of the population falling victim to aerial attacks refer specifically to the attack on Wonosari, or to aerial attacks in general, or both? And how does this relate to his observation that Wonosari was already deserted? At the same time, based on Simatupang's version, this attack has been cited in Dutch literature as an example of Dutch extreme 'technical violence' causing many civilian casualties.<sup>140</sup> This, together with the scale of the operation (the largest Dutch individual airstrike) and the fact that the action has not been integrally studied before, was reason to reconstruct the offensive.

#### YOGYA UNDER FIRE

One of the main reasons why the Dutch armed forces decided on a large-scale airstrike was an event that occurred ten days before in Yogyakarta. On 1 March 1949, Indonesian troops led by later president Lieutenant Colonel Suharto carried out a general attack on the Republican seat of government which was occupied by the Dutch. They succeeded in occupying part of the city for six hours. That same day, after some fierce fighting, the besieged T Brigade commanded by Colonel Van Langen managed to recapture the entire city, at the cost of fourteen dead on the Dutch side and an estimated 300 on that of the TNI.<sup>141</sup> This general attack, known in Indonesia as *Serangan Umum 1 Maret 1949*, often abbreviated to *SOIM*, has become an iconic moment in the history of the revolution for several reasons.<sup>142</sup> First of all due to the symbolic importance of Yogyakarta, which had been captured by Dutch troops during *Operatie Kraai* in December 1948. Following the occupation of the capital and the arrests of Sukarno, Hatta and Syahrir, General Spoor and others invariably spoke of the 'former Republic' after the second offensive.<sup>143</sup>

SOIM was therefore the ultimate proof by the TNI that the Republic and its armed forces were not yet defeated. Even though Dutch soldiers scornfully remarked that the attack did not amount to much, it was of great psychological significance.<sup>144</sup> Wim van den Doel even calls the attack 'a sort of Tet offensive' and a 'severe blow' for the Dutch.<sup>145</sup> The role of Suharto, the then commander of Sub-Wehrkreis (SWK) 106, contributed to the reputation of the attack. Under Suharto's New Order rule (1966–1998), the event took on almost mythic proportions, and the role of the president himself was strongly magnified. He was said to have personally thought of the idea of the operation. After his death, cracks appeared in this story, and the roles of Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX and Suharto's commander, Colonel Bambang Sugeng instead began to appear decisive. However, the discussion continues to this day.<sup>146</sup>

A vital link that connects events on 1 March with those on 10 March is a radio station in Plajen, a small town not far from Wonosari. In early 1949, the AURI communication service set up a base there to maintain communications between the scattered army units and the hastily installed emergency government in Bukittinggi. This network of approximately thirty radio stations was essential to the continuation of the struggle after the tough blow of the second Dutch offensive. By his own account, Budiarjo, the then head of the communication service, together with his brother switched on his radio every night and strung an antenna between two palm trees. This enabled them to connect to one of the other stations spread across the archipelago. During the day, they took refuge in a house and there was nothing to be seen.<sup>147</sup>

The news of the Serangan Umum emerged from this simple base. Simatupang, who was in Plajen a day before the attack, had given Budiarjo a note with instructions for transmission if the attack were to succeed. The next day, the news travelled like a relay race via Bukittinggi, Aceh and Burma to All Indian Radio, a station with worldwide coverage. The Indonesian representation to the Security Council of the United Nations was accordingly informed and drew attention to the event. According to Irma Hadi Suwito et al., 'that broadcast debunked the Dutch reporting, which kept saying the TNI had been dispersed and that the Republic no longer existed'.<sup>148</sup>

Such transmitters were a thorn in the side of the Dutch and they had already made several attempts to take out the radio station in Gunungkidul by bombing it, without any success, however. Based on intercept-

ed messages, the Centrale Militaire Inlichtingendienst (Central Military Intelligence Service, CMI, the successor to NEFIS) suspected there was a transmitter in Gading, a small airfield close to Plajen.<sup>149</sup> 18 Squadron first bombed the site at the start of the second offensive on 19 December 1948, but did not hit the transmitter.<sup>150</sup> A few weeks later (16 January) Spitfires of 322 Squadron made a second attempt.<sup>151</sup> Once again, the station was soon back on air, with news of the Dutch airstrike no less. According to an intercepted message dated 20 January, the fighter planes had killed two civilians and wounded three with machine-gun fire. The Spitfires (mistaken for Mustangs) later returned and killed another two residents: according to the radio transmission a pregnant woman and an eight-year-old child in a shelter. 'I am still in the vicinity of the base,' reported commander Gading to AURI in Bukittinggi. 'Strength always and MERDEKA.'<sup>152</sup>

According to a telegram of the CMI commander, Colonel J. M. Somer, to the intelligence service in Yogya, ML received the information necessary for target selection from agents on the ground. In the message, sent on 14 February, Somer ordered his subordinate to discontinue – for the time being – this 'agent action' pending the results of an intended ground operation. Colonel Van Langen, who saw the telegram, immediately sounded the alarm to B Division commander Major General De Waal. The action referred to had in fact been cancelled 'until further notice', something that Somer was apparently unaware of.

Van Langen felt that 'all coordination' of the planned operations of the air forces and ground troops was lacking, especially given that Meijer, now promoted to major general and TtTC of Central Java, knew nothing of the plans. The same was true for Chief of Staff Buurman van Vreeden and his deputy chief. Van Langen considered it 'not only incorrect, but even dangerous' that such operations were ordered without coordination, and furthermore that 'apparently this is done by non-operational chiefs (in this case the DCMI [Somer])'. He did, however, conclude his letter to De Waal with the remark that he had 'no objections whatsoever' against a possible attack against the Gading transmitter, 'as long as this is timely reported to me beforehand'.<sup>153</sup> The combined ground and air action was delayed until 10 March. On that day, however, it would transpire that – despite Van Langen's warning – things had again gone wrong in the coordination between various army units.

To summarize, the Dutch had two clear motives for an attack on Wonosari: revenge for the attack on Yogyakarta and elimination of the of-



*Map of Gading airfield, made by Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsgroep van de T-Brigade (the T Brigade Intelligence and Security Group). Dutch troops used military ordinance survey maps of the US Army Map Service, based on prewar maps of the Topographical Service. These did not depict the airfield. Source: NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 1749.*

fending radio transmitter. A third motive can be added. The intelligence services suspected that several high-ranking Republican officials were present in the area around Wonosari, seeking refuge there after the conquest of Yogyakarta. Figures such as Sudirman, Simatupang and the head of the intelligence service on Java, Colonel Zulkifli Lubis, had reportedly been spotted, as well as some ministers. The inhospitable terrain was also a haven for units evading Dutch sweep operations following SOIM.<sup>154</sup> Furthermore, a few sources state that the Dutch were after the natural riches of the area, but that does not seem very plausible, and there is no specific evidence for this.<sup>155</sup>



## SITUATIONAL TARGETS

A large-scale combined operation was planned to achieve the goals set. The core of the operation plan – carried out as such – consisted of an airborne operation at Gading airfield, with 300 paratroopers jumping from eighteen Dakotas. Fighter planes (six Kittyhawks and six Spitfires) and bombers (two Mitchells) offered ‘maximum support’ by securing both the drop zone and attacking potential threats in the area. The aircraft were given a broad mandate and authority for independent target detection, as the operational order drawn up by Colonel Van Langen shows: ‘during offensive reconnaissance on 10 March firstly all vehicles, of any kind, will be destroyed.’ Furthermore, the order stated that aircraft were to bomb and strafe ‘ad hoc targets’ in the vicinity of the drop zone.<sup>156</sup>

To prevent fleeing TNI from escaping, the plan envisaged infantry units entering the area from different sides the previous day – 5 RS and 5-5 RI from the direction of Yogya and 5-6 RI from Baturetno in the east.

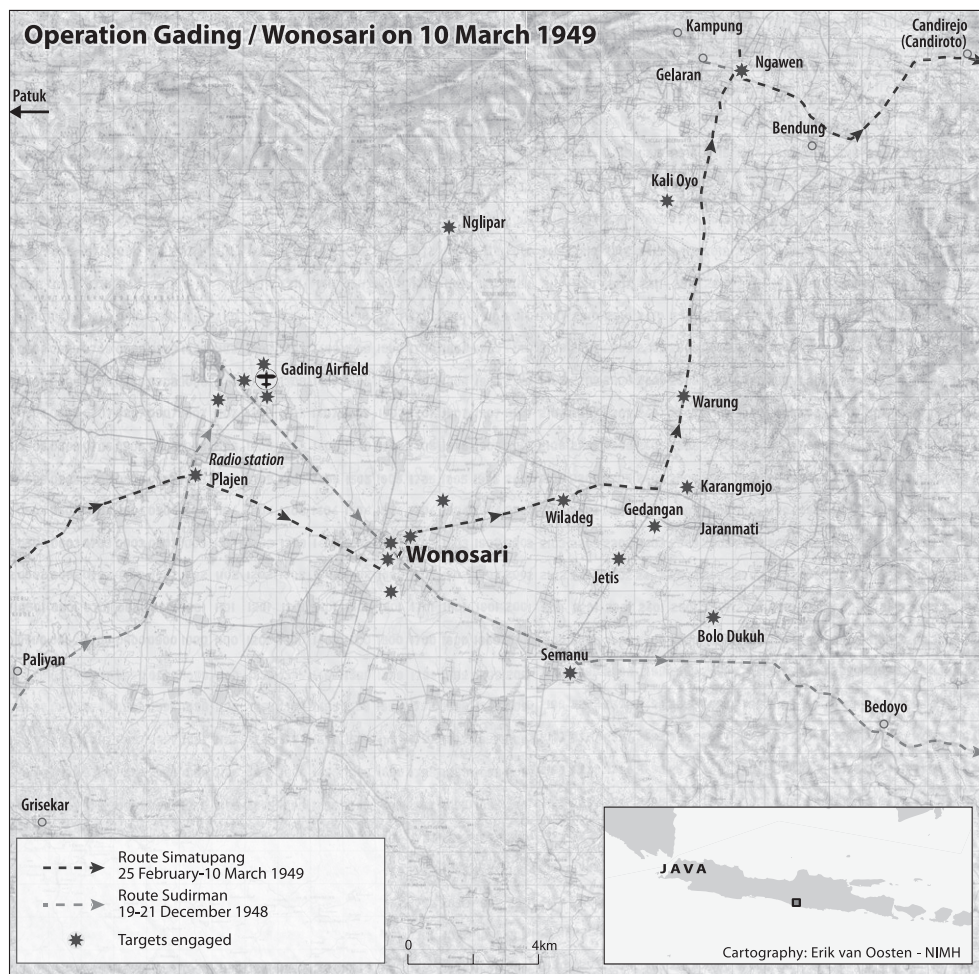
*Paratroopers are dropped from Dakotas over Gading airfield, 10 March 1949. Source:*

*NL-HaNA, 2.13.132, 1749.*





### 13. Map of air attack on Wonosari, 1949



*Targets engaged by NELAF during the airborne operation against Wonosari and Gading on 10 March 1949. Source: National Library of Australia, Maps Collection, Java & Madura series 1:50.000, US Army Map Service 1943; NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 1288, Dagelijkse gevechtsrapporten van operationele vluchten op Java en Sumatra; Simatupang, Report from Banaran (route Simatupang); Soemarsono, Mengenang almarhum Panglima besar Jenderal Sudirman (Yogyakarta 1977) 57-80 (route Sudirman).*

These units then swept the surroundings in cooperation with the paras and supported by the guns of 2 RVA. Due to the scale of the operation, NELAF temporarily moved its Java headquarters from Bandung to Semarang. Major General Meijer took on the role of action leader, Captain W. D. H. Eekhout led the paratroopers and the commander of Lucht-

vaartcommando Java (Air Command Java), Lieutenant Colonel W. M. Leyder, coordinated the aerial activities.<sup>157</sup>

#### MUFFLED ROLLS

Well before the Dutch came to the Thousand Mountains, the *pamong desa* – village officials – had advised the local population to build shelters. So, when police officers shouted that the *londo* – the Dutch – were approaching, Kabul Waluyo fled to his hiding place, hidden in the woods near the small town of Bunder. He watched planes machinegun his village from the air. From his hiding place between the rocks, Mbah Sugeng also saw aircraft bomb the area north of Gading and strafe it with machine guns. Then paratroopers jumped from the Dakotas. After landing, the paras combed the area and set fire to the houses in the villages with flamethrowers. It was a traumatic experience for Sugeng.<sup>158</sup>

The Dutch infantry, which had moved out on 9 March to ‘open up’ the access roads to Wonosari, noticed that the region they were passing through had already been largely abandoned. Along the way the soldiers constantly heard the sound of ‘the terrifying tong-tong’ [wooden gong] in the *kampongs*: ‘so the tidings of our arrival travel far ahead of us,’ wrote one of them. According to Jan de Golde (a pseudonym for Jan Janssen) of 5 RS, the Thousand Mountains were awful to pass through. They saw nothing, not even civilians. The wanted men, if they had ever been there, had disappeared. There was palpable tension, but hardly a shot was fired, and so morale dropped. ‘You curse your powerlessness,’ a 5-6 RI soldier wrote, ‘this unstoppable crippling guerrilla. Standing there in the mountain passes, with all the futility of your modern gear, you feel so small.’<sup>159</sup>

So for the infantrymen it was a relief when the planes appeared on the horizon: ‘the fighter planes were all action, they roared over the *tjot-tjen* [hill tops], mowed with muffled rolls, dived and climbed again.’<sup>160</sup> Nasution remarks that despite the absence of Indonesian armed forces, the Dutch ‘dropped scores of bombs and spewed thousands of bullets from their planes and with infantry weapons [...]. It rained bullets on all the *kampongs* and groups of people, merely civilians’.<sup>161</sup> The paratroopers, who had hoped to ambush the TNI with the airborne operation, were surprised to encounter almost no one. They learnt the reason during questioning of a local priest called Wijoto from Wonosari. Wijoto testified that the city and the airfield had already been attacked the previous weeks, after which concentrations of TNI had left for safer places.

Indeed, earlier airstrikes can be traced in army air force reports, starting on 21 February. On that day, Spitfires, Kittyhawks and Mitchells bombed and machinegunned the presumed location of the Gading transmitter, which according to the pilots could be regarded as destroyed. 'Unfortunately,' the operation report continues, 'the "pin-point" was incorrect, which became all too clear that evening when the transmitter once again came on air with its false reports.' Limpach states that this earlier attack

*A soldier takes a break during the advance on Gading and Wonosari on 9 March 1949. The original caption reads: 'When you can sit at ease like this it's nice to take in the views of the beautiful landscape, but if you have to struggle through it?' Source: Van Krieken, Nationaal Archief / DLC.*





possibly caused 'a large number of civilian casualties,' but that it 'is difficult to verify' this.<sup>162</sup> Nasution, however, writes that the attack cost the lives of five civilians and that forty houses were burned.<sup>163</sup> Another attack occurred on 3 March, after which the troops that had diverted to the Thousand Mountains following SOIM, also abandoned the region.<sup>164</sup>

Father Wijoto confirmed that several high-ranking TNI members had passed through Wonosari during their wanderings. At that time, they were possibly in Ngawen. Paratroop commander Captain Eekhout, unaware of the earlier bombardment, immediately sent the news via VCP connection to Colonel van Langen, who had by then travelled by plane to Gading. Van Langen ordered Eekhout to carry out a sweep operation in Ngawen and nearby Kampung in two days' time. There, to his frustration, it turned out that once again he had not been informed of an attack, this time carried out by the ML, which had bombarded Ngawen on the 10th. This was the bombardment from which Simatupang had sought shelter. Local residents confirmed that 'at night a few days before, a TNI troop had passed through, with much barang [goods], carried by the population. It is unknown where they were heading'.<sup>165</sup> Sudirman had passed through the region already three months ago, and had sought refuge in east Java.<sup>166</sup>

Also, Father Wijoto revealed, there had indeed been a radio station in Gading, but this had been moved to Plajen. Eekhout sent a detachment out to Plajen to look for the transmitter, but that, too, had disappeared, leaving only the charred remains of a few Philips radios.<sup>167</sup> Budiarto writes that he had indeed already left carrying the communication devices when the attack was launched. Along the way he passed dangerously close to Dutch ground troops on their way to Gading, but by his own account managed to avoid them because he was familiar with their habits from the time when he himself had been a KNIL soldier. He set up a new station southwest of Yogyakarta, from where he acted as radio courier sending messages to and from Colonel Simatupang.<sup>168</sup>

#### TERRORISTIC TACTICS

Several of the messages sent by Budiarto were about the attack against Wonosari. They included an – intercepted – message on 15 March, in which Simatupang states (translated by the intelligence service):

The paratroopers were brutal to the population. In every kampung

they entered all men were ordered to come out of their houses and many of them were shot without any form of trial. From 06:00–17:00 the attack aircraft machinegunned all the large kampongs in the Wonosari regency. In DJATI kampung the pasar was crowded, so the machinegunning caused many casualties among the population.<sup>169</sup>

On the same day, the Chinese-Indonesian newspaper *Keng Po* also published a news report about the attack. Both reports reached Mohammed Rum, head of the Republican delegation to the United Nations, who sent a telegram to the head of UNCI requesting the launch of an investigation into the matter as soon as possible.<sup>170</sup> Perhaps to strengthen the appeal, a week later Colonel Nasution sent a message to all stations that the attack against Wonosari had caused 100 dead among the population, that an army commander had been seriously injured and 500 houses burnt to the ground. The Java commander concluded with the call: ‘request to publish the above.’<sup>171</sup>

This request was carried out by the head of the Indonesian delegation to the Security Council, Nico Palar, who sent out a communiqué the next day, 25 March. In this piece, referenced in several works on the independence struggle, Palar offered not only a rendition of Nasution’s accusations against the Dutch, but also an estimate of the number of civilian casualties since the rekindled Dutch aggression had started in December 1948. According to him, the ‘terroristic tactics of the Dutch Army Units’ had already caused 150,000 dead in the past months. In view of these matters Palar vehemently supported Rum’s appeal for an investigation, which was granted by UNCI the next day.<sup>172</sup>

In the meantime, however, a local observation team of the Military Executive Board (MILEX, part of UNCI) had already travelled to Gunungkidul on 24 March under Dutch guidance, in order to examine the events. They found ‘very little noticeable damage to villages along the route’, with the exception of Patuk village, ‘which is completely demolished’. Gading and Wonosari appeared undamaged. Next the team talked with several witnesses. First of all, Father Wijoto, who said he was not aware of any casualties in Wonosari or the surrounding area. Then a representative of the Chinese community, who reported that one person had been killed and ten people wounded in Wonosari, all by Dutch airplane fire. Lastly an Indonesian woman who had come from Semanu and recounted that



in that place around thirty people, mostly women, had been killed by mortar fire. Based on the visit and the testimonies, the MILEX team concluded that Simatupang's radio broadcast 'regarding this action is slightly exaggerated by the alleged Republican forces.' Likewise, the head of UNCI reported to the Security Council 'that the importance of the incident has been exaggerated'.<sup>173</sup>

#### REGRETTABLE BUT INEVITABLE

In the literature, the 'Wonosari incident' has been portrayed as a textbook example of disproportional 'technical violence'. Although the air forces showed little restraint in target selection and attacked a great number of locations, interviews with witnesses and reports of the Republican military administration suggest that it was not the air forces that caused the greatest number of casualties among the population. Suwitorejo, aged ten at the time, lived in Ngawen, the place where Simatupang sought refuge from the airstrike. In the afternoon, the planes arrived and fired at a school, which caught fire. But the *pamong praja* (village council) had warned the villagers and everyone managed to find shelter in the bunkers. He remembered that shortly before, the 'Batak General' (Simatupang) had indeed passed by. Another interviewee, called Wartono, survived the attack against nearby Gelaran, where according to him a military base (Komando Onder Distrik Militer) was located. The pilots strafed the *pasar*, killing one market tradeswoman.<sup>174</sup>

This victim is named in a report of the Republican military administration: she was called Salijem, was fifteen years old, and according to the report, the only fatality. A man called Paiman was injured but recovered. The report also confirms the arrival of the 'red berets', the KST paratroopers who swept the area for five days. The names of fifty people briefly held captive by the paras are all listed. According to a resident called Gito Sumito, the Dutch also attacked Candirejo, the third place reached by Simatupang on 10 March. He was twelve years old and watched the whole village being torched. Here, too, no one was wounded, because all the villagers had already headed north, Sumito testified.<sup>175</sup>

The report discussed above is part of a series of investigations into the damage suffered in each place that had been attacked, launched by the Republican military administration after the attack, when the Dutch had already left the area. Together, the reports of the investigations form a unique source with detailed descriptions of the Dutch use of force. In

addition to enumerations of burnt houses, financial damage and livestock killed, they also contain rare mentions of women who were raped by the *Belanda*. The reports also include tables of dead and wounded, listed by name, age, profession and cause of death, equally rare data. On 10 March 1949 and the period immediately after, a total of 140 civilians were reportedly killed across ten *kapanewon* (administrative subdistricts) in the Thousand Mountain Range. Thirty-five of those were listed as casualties of the airstrike of 10 March, whereas 86 people had been shot by the paras (referred to as *baret merah* and *paratrup*) and infantry ('Tikerbrigade') on the 10th and the following days. The cause of death of nineteen people could not be determined. Most victims were *petani* (farmer) by profession – in other words ordinary civilians, aged between 15 and 70 years old. According to the reports they included a village policeman or civil servant, and only two soldiers had been killed. Djati village, where there were many casualties in the *pasar* according to Simatupang, does not feature in these reports either. However, one casualty occurred in a *kampung* with a comparable name: Jati Ayu, northeast of Wonosari and part of Kapanewon Karangmojo.

Since the lists are described as 'data on the loss of property and human life as a consequence of the Dutch brutality', the aim of the inventory seems to have been to quantify the adverse effects of the Dutch actions.<sup>176</sup> According to the historian Peter Keppy, who researched war damages and legal redress in Indonesia, such registration of damage was possibly intended to demand reparations from the Dutch government – which, according to the author, came to nothing. Notwithstanding small differences between them, the lists leave a solid impression due to the level of detail.<sup>177</sup> It is no coincidence that such reports were drawn up in the area around Yogyakarta: bureaucracy was the most developed in the Republican region around the capital, in particular later on in the conflict. Compared to the statements of Simatupang and Palar, the numbers of casualties are not very high, but higher than the one hundred dead Nasution writes about (so his tally was not exaggerated). Although 35 dead due to an airstrike is a regrettable number, according to the rapporteurs, ground and para troops killed many more people. Dutch military sources and interviews with Indonesian witnesses confirm this perception.

The paratroopers reported forty of the enemy killed as a result of their operations in and around Wonosari. In Gelaran *kampung* they came across a dead TNI major, 'presumably killed by aircraft strafing'. By their

own account, the flamethrowers which the paratroopers had brought with them, as observed by Mbah Sugeng, were used to combat local hotbeds of the plague (in addition to vaccinations).<sup>178</sup> Artillery battery 2-2 RVA, which supported the advance of the infantry from the west, fired a total of 974 shots in six days' time. Considering the artillery encountered a largely abandoned region, the shells probably caused mostly material damage, such as in Patuk, the same 'completely demolished' village the MILEX observers came across. Yet on 12 March, the battery claimed to have made 69 kills and wounded Commander Suharto during the 'dispersal' of a 'gang'.<sup>179</sup> However, none of the literature on the later president mentions that he was wounded during this period. The subsequent inventory of the Republican military administration does, however, state that a total of 26 deaths occurred in Patuk at the hands of Dutch patrols.<sup>180</sup>

Several local residents who witnessed the operation all testified that they had found timely refuge from the airstrike. Warsito Rejo could see Gading airfield from his house and hid in a shelter in the ground, covered with stones, which was still in place in his garden at the time of the interview. According to him, no one was killed by the bombardment. Kabul Waluyo hid in a hole which had been camouflaged with leaves. Machine-gun bullets slammed into nearby durian trees, but no people were hit. Later, someone was wounded by mortar shrapnel. Mbah Sugeng knew of no casualties due to bombs and machine guns of Dutch airplanes, either. He recalled one bomb landing in a *sawa*. A rice farmer who was there at the time survived, to the surprise of villagers who had come running.<sup>181</sup>

In late April, following publicity surrounding the attack, Chief of Staff Buurman van Vreeden enquired from troop commander Meijer whether the ten injured civilians identified by UNCI had been treated by the Dutch troops. Meijer passed the question on to Van Langen. In a response letter, the latter indicated that the paratroopers were not under his command, but that 'Combat Group 5-RS of "T" Brigade, which had taken over the occupation of Wonosari on 12 March, stated that they had seen a few civilians, who had been treated by the PARA troop Doctor'. In the same letter, he also wrote:

Finally, it may be noted that – despite preventive measures – it is regrettable but inevitable that during such actions, civilians fall vic-

tim to combat operations (and/or houses are damaged), since as a rule enemy gangs mingle with the civilian population and involve the population (whether or not using pressure) in their warning and security system and finally have no objections to exploiting civilians to cover their retreat.<sup>182</sup>

Groen and Limpach, who mistakenly attribute this quote to Meijer, cite it in relation to the events in Wonosari, suggesting the remarks concern victims of the air forces.<sup>183</sup> However, Van Langen is primarily referring here to another incident which Buurman van Vreeden was enquiring about, namely a sweep operation at Sentolo near Yogyakarta on 18 March. This was carried out in a populated area, and the battalion involved reported 104 enemy dead. According to Van Langen, there had been 'short but violent fighting at close range', and in addition to artillery and infantry fire, 'the white weapon [bladed weapons] had also been deployed'.<sup>184</sup>

It is beyond dispute that the violence in Wonosari and other operations caused casualties among the civilian population, as admitted by Van Langen. This was partly due to the reasons given by Van Langen and partly due to the inability or unwillingness on the Dutch side to distinguish between fighters and civilians. Although the damage caused by the attack on Wonosari was substantial, the significance for the war turned out to be limited. Veteran M. A. P. de Lange of 5-6 RI battalion attributed 'a certain "operetta nature"' to the whole operation, according to him 'a typical characteristic of large operations'.<sup>185</sup> Jaap de Moor calls the action a 'complete fiasco', attributable to a combination of erroneous and outdated intelligence and poor communication between the different army units. Indonesian sources are also unanimous in their verdict that the operation yielded nothing.<sup>186</sup> In that sense, the UNCI chairman was also right to state that the significance of the operation had been exaggerated by Republican circles.

However, the attack caused great fear among the population.<sup>187</sup> Mbah Sugeng, together with other inhabitants of the region, was displaced for at least three months and only returned when the Dutch troops had left the area, late June.<sup>188</sup> In the intervening months, the situation had become virtually untenable for the isolated Dutch units, who were constantly harassed and had to be resupplied by air. 5-5 RI battalion alone lost fourteen men in the Wonosari period, in addition to four missing and eighteen wounded.<sup>189</sup> The Van Royen-Rum Agreement forced the Dutch to vacate

the entire Yogyakarta residency, to which Gunungkidul belonged. The Republican troops which entered the area on 25 June (undoubtedly in high spirits) were commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Suharto. 'When asked about the mood of the Dutch soldiers, who had left Wonosari, Col. Van Langen said they were depressed,' according to a news report.<sup>190</sup> The evacuation of Yogyakarta itself began a few days later, heralding the final retreat of the Dutch from Indonesia.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of the airstrike against Wonosari, but also of the two other cases, leads to the conclusion that, first of all, reports on numbers of victims caused by fire support often diverge strongly, but even more frequently are completely absent. In addition, the fact that the deployment of different weapons and branches was often inextricably connected makes counting problematic. Thanks to the exceptionally detailed reporting at the behest of the Republican military authorities, it is possible to reconstruct the figures for the attack against Wonosari with some degree of certainty. Numbers for the fighting in Semarang remain entirely unknown, whilst in the Karanganyar case, at most a bandwidth can be indicated. Some of the artillerymen involved in the bombardment of Karanganyar experienced the shelling as excessive and were aware of the potential consequences for civilians.

Until now, measures taken by the civilian population itself to protect itself from the violence of war have been somewhat overlooked. Depopulation of the region played an important part during both the fighting in Semarang as well as the attack against Wonosari. Besides, in the Thousand Mountains surrounding Wonosari, the population had had several years of preparation for the arrival of the Dutch, as the region had remained Republican until March 1949. In Semarang, earlier fighting with the Japanese and the British had already led to flight of part of the population. This was different in Karanganyar, where the population only left the area following the large-scale sweep operation in October 1947. This may partly explain the possibly hundreds of deaths there.

The lesson many soldiers drew from their experiences at Wonosari was that major actions had little effect. This is an often-heard commonplace which clearly held true, particularly in periods of large-scale guerrilla activity. However, during mass attacks such as in Semarang in August 1946, where Indonesian troops operated in a 'conventional' way, the picture is



different and heavy firepower could be beneficial from a Dutch military perspective. A significant limitation here was the inaccuracy of shelling distant targets without good means of observation. However, the 'moral factor' weighed heavily, as did the desire to limit one's own losses. Echoes of the Battle of Surabaya sound during this period in the way large war-ships carried out bombardments and the fear of being overrun.

In Gombong in 1947, mass attacks had been replaced by guerrilla activities, and Dutch soldiers were especially fearful of being hit by a mine or pull bomb. Using sweep operations and a large-scale reprisal shelling, Dutch troops attempted to deliver a severe blow to the 'elusive' opponent, but the population also came under heavy fire in the process. Despite rumours of hundreds of dead, the army leadership considered the sweep operation a great success which had buoyed the mood of the troops. In 1949, the Indonesian adversary in Gunungkidul proved almost completely untraceable and according to those involved, the airstrike was little more than a military show. In this case, declining morale of the Dutch soldiers in 1949 could only be raised briefly by the offensive aerial action. For the ground troops, the march through inaccessible terrain was no less than an ordeal.

Other explanations for the *modus operandi* lie in the legacy of the prewar KNIL and the Second World War. What stands out in the three cases discussed is the dominance of the colonial army in operations. The KNIL asked the navy ships for assistance and dictated the targets, KNIL commanders ordered the shelling of and the attack against Karanganyar, and the KNIL led the airstrike in the Thousand Mountains. In operations, the RNLA was mostly executive, like the RNLN. The legacy of the Second World War is particularly visible in the way the operations were carried out. Not only is this reflected in the scale of the navy bombardments, artillery fires and airstrikes, but also for example in the fact that, in 1949 at the height of the guerrilla, the Dutch armed forces carried out such a large airborne operation to eliminate a hidden radio transmitter and destroy roaming groups of Indonesian soldiers. The freedom in target detection allowed to the aircrews is strongly reminiscent of Spoor's remark in July 1947 about the mentality of the pilots who thought there was still a war going on. Apparently this mentality was tenacious and was even stimulated from above.

The most direct influence of training and proficiency can perhaps be detected in the naval bombardments near Semarang in 1946. Kempees's

reference to the British and American way of firing during the Second World War shows that that war was an important frame of reference for operations in Indonesian waters. Although the low-precision bombardments from Dutch naval ships anchored at Semarang demonstrate that there was still a lot to learn, the main problems arose in the still unfamiliar process of cooperation with other army units. Mutual communication problems also plagued operations in and around Wonosari. Finally, during the Second World War, the lack of consideration for collateral damage and civilian casualties on all fronts was widespread, but this was equally a typical aspect of colonial warfare.



*Patrol boat RP 133 carries out a fire mission using its 3.7-cm cannon. Presumably this was the bombardment of Sungai Bela kampong on the east coast of Sumatra on 17 November 1947. A fire broke out in the harbour and a number of Chinese houses were damaged. Source: A. T. Bezooeyen, NIMH / Fotoafdrukken Koninklijke Marine.*

# 6.

## Live Longer, Shoot First

Following an examination of the historical background that influenced the deployment of heavy weapons during the Indonesian War of Independence, an analysis of their use, and a closer look at three large-scale fire support cases, the current chapter provides a more overarching discussion of the consequences of the use of force, the motives and explanations behind it, as well as a reflection on ethical and legal aspects.

### E F F E C T S

#### L E T H A L I T Y

The assumptions voiced by Dutch historians about the contribution of artillery and air force to the numbers of victims on the Indonesian side are based on the notion that the destructive potential of these weapons is considerably larger than of light weapons. Actual destructive power, however, depends on the circumstances. Other factors determining lethality are the function and aim of the use of force as well as the type of fire. Thus, it does not hold that ‘technical violence’ per se caused high numbers of casualties.

As far as artillery is concerned, the sources contain many examples of the disastrous effects of explosive shells, with the Karanganyar market cannonade as one of the most tragic instances. Unit histories also contain

many passages that illustrate the destructive power of the guns. The war diary of Calmeyer Battery 7 VA mentions a shelling during the first offensive on Sumatra of 25 July 1947. Despite the fact that the gunners fired only two smoke grenades and six explosive grenades, these caused 'many dead and wounded among the enemy, the rest dispersed into the woods or retreated in small groups across the kali [river]', according to the report. Three days later, a section again delivered fire at the request of the infantry commander, this time at enemy concentrations, machine-gun emplacements and a trench system in the area to the west of Medan. The artillerymen fired 72 shells, using aerial observation. 'Following the occupation of these points,' the war diary says, 'it turned out in the afternoon that the destruction of the engineering structures and the number of dead as a consequence of this fire were very substantial.'<sup>1</sup> More precise data are lacking, but these examples show that in certain circumstances artillery fire had a major impact.

Other types of grenades could also cause a lot of damage. According to a weekly military intelligence report of the Dutch troop command in West Java, six children were killed and two wounded in March 1949 in Pangkalan when a 3-inch mortar dud they had found exploded.<sup>2</sup> In a letter to his wife of 17 January 1949, Klaas Bruinsma of 1-6 RVA describes a similar and equally distressing incident. A grenade launcher dud that some children had found and taken with them exploded in their *kampung*, in the middle of a crowd of onlookers. Bruinsma:

I won't tell you what it was like. I carried off children with their little hands and legs shattered. I have children of my own. The crying and screaming were unbearable, but I am tough. [...] This morning one of those damn things landed on a village hut, a woman was slightly injured and we treated her. [...] I now see even more what effect our heavy shells have.<sup>3</sup>

Eighteen people were injured in the incident, six of whom did not survive. With shells, it was often the shrapnel that proved disastrous, as observed by later Lieutenant Colonel Wiliater Hutagalung, who worked as a doctor in a hospital in Mojokerto (East Java) at the beginning of the struggle for independence. In his autobiography he writes about a stream of victims (*banjir korban*) who were brought to the hospital one day. Hutagalung saw that people who had been hit by bullets usually had





*Dead and wounded as a result of friendly artillery fire during a Marine Brigade operation at Samoibulu (East Java) on 4 July 1946. A captain/observer and a marine were killed. Source: Hugo Wilmar, NIMH / Mariniersbrigade.*

just one wound, whereas the wounds of people who had been hit by mortar fragments ‘were generally numerous and mixed with mud’.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, testimonies can also be found that downplay the destructive power of shells. The TRI regiment commander Suhud Prawiroatmojo, who had been taken prisoner early 1947, declared that in his view the impact of Dutch artillery fire on Indonesian buildings was small. Onne Dallinga of 3-6 RVA states in his memoirs that the damage to bamboo houses caused by artillery grenades was limited, ‘because during the explosion the air pressure can escape through the walls. The bilik [plaited bamboo] walls are also flexible so they expand. The fragments do go through them but that doesn’t amount to much, either’. He is referring in this passage to material damage. Later, he also downplayed the risk of coming under friendly artillery fire. If the soldiers knew when the gre-

nades would drop, they could 'seek cover in time, leaving only the danger of a direct hit. And there's hardly any chance of that'.<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, in many situations Dutch soldiers remained unscathed by friendly fire of field guns or mortars.<sup>6</sup> However, Frans Hazekamp does describe two cases where an observer accidentally passed on his own position as target coordinates and was killed.<sup>7</sup> Veteran Jan van Dijk remarked scornfully about such incidents: 'oh well, that often happened with our own fire.'<sup>8</sup> Just as with artillery, airplanes did on occasion open fire at own troops. Miraculously, the soldiers survived more than one such incident.<sup>9</sup> It may well be that such experiences led soldiers to presume that deploying heavy weapons had a mainly moral effect, as their destructive potential could by no means be fully used in all circumstances.

#### COUNTING THE DEAD

As the three case studies in particular show, determining death rates is a perilous undertaking, often yielding at best a range. In some situations, a more accurate reconstruction is possible. However, the Dutch often did not know what the impact of their artillery or airplane fire was, and if they did know, the reporting cannot be relied upon. The latter is illustrated by the memoirs of Frans Hazekamp, who often flew in an Auster as an aerial observer during sweep operations. 'From above, you can see the results of such a sweep of the sawas. Dead bodies, escapees, own troops.' During one of those flights, he saw corpses scattered across the paddy fields: 'in the end there were at least 150, although officially 14 were registered, otherwise it looks too much like a real war.'<sup>10</sup> Such under-reporting occurred regularly, just like over-reporting.<sup>11</sup>

More often, the enemy and enemy losses remained hidden from view.<sup>12</sup> Klaas Bruinsma, for example, observed this after an operation in August 1947: 'it's a shame that we can never see what we're firing at, we fired across 7 to 8 km. It's as if we're just shooting at random. Later we heard that our fire was accurate, the infantry was delighted. We didn't hear how many prisoners or dead there were, or if they found any weapons.'<sup>13</sup> By his own account, John Ritman of 4 VA did not once experience Indonesian fighters entering into open battle. 'At the most you saw smoke plumes where the fire was coming from, that was all you saw.' Sometimes they passed through *kampongs* they had shelled in the Padang region in West Sumatra, but 'usually the bodies had already disappeared'.<sup>14</sup> According to mortar gunner Corporal Jan van Beurden, it was uncommon that 'we

arrived in the kampong and that the bodies were there for the taking, but we also knew, that's what we heard later, that they carried off as many bodies as possible, of course'.<sup>15</sup>

Infantry regularly passed on reports on enemy losses, but these reports were also usually quite unreliable. In one example, an attempt by 3-9 RI to assess the impact of air support during a battle in February 1949 was thwarted by sustained enemy fire.<sup>16</sup> Another way to find out the results was by ex-post intelligence, using informers, spies and interactions with local residents. On 20 April 1949, the artillery unit 2-12 RVA came to the rescue of a patrol of Infanterie I KNIL. The unit history briefly states about the results: '[i]nform. report: 100 men killed.'<sup>17</sup> A quarterly report of the sister battery 1-12 RVA states that 'according to intelligence I.V.G. [*inlichtingen- en veiligheidsgroep*, intelligence and security group,] as a result of artillery fire at Kertosono dd. 30 May, 40 dead and severely injured' had been caused.<sup>18</sup> In some instances, a distinction was made between civilians and fighters killed, but most reports contain only general statements such as the ones above.

The question can of course be raised how reliable such intelligence was, and sometimes the author of a report did exactly that. Soldier C. Reijnoudt of 3-3 RI wrote to his parents about nighttime enemy artillery fire to which the Dutch artillery replied with two salvos. Reijnoudt: 'later, a Chinese said that one had landed on a mounted gun and another on a house where a group of extremists were holding a meeting. I have my doubts about the latter, though.'<sup>19</sup> Klaas Bruinsma of 1-6 RVA concluded: 'the reports of the casualties aren't always correct, that's the case in any war.'<sup>20</sup> In some after-action reports, the author provided an appreciation of the reliability of the intelligence according to a NEFIS/CMI evaluation scheme.<sup>21</sup> In short, intelligence was not necessarily a reliable source for identifying numbers of Indonesian casualties any more than personal observations of observers, ex-post military reports and infantry communications. Ego-documents, interviews, memorials and cemeteries can provide additional details about casualties of specific acts of violence, as demonstrated by the case studies, but only rarely can definitive figures be established.

#### CIVILIAN CASUALTIES

As previously observed by historians, Dutch soldiers often classified all the casualties on the Indonesian side as 'enemy losses', without distin-





*Wounded or dead Indonesian. Drawing from a series by S. Schram de Jong, made during the Indonesian War of Independence. Source: NIMH.*

guishing between fighters and civilians.<sup>22</sup> This was no different for artillery and air power, nor was it limited to official reports. On 24 January 1949, artilleryman Henk Knapen of 1-6 RVA wrote in his diary that on that day the guns ‘calmly crackled, whereby a couple of hundred extremists became ex and ended up in the next world.’<sup>23</sup> Sporadically though, civilian casualties were explicitly mentioned, for example as a result of a shelling of fighters holed up in a *kampung*. Following an operation of 2-12 RVA in Central Java in January 1948, where the battery had fired at an encampment and troop concentrations in Kaloran *kampung*, sources reported: ‘20 dead among TNI. 6 civilians killed.’<sup>24</sup> The unit histories and ammunition expenditure reports contain many mentions of such artillery fire on enemy targets in *kampongs*, but a comparable breakdown into TNI and civilians is rare.

Sometimes a passage suggests civilian casualties occurred, without this being explicitly stated. In August 1947, 3 RS company commander J. G. H. Kootker was involved in fighting around Garut in West Java. Dutch troops pounded a *kampung* from where they had received fire with rockets and aircraft guns. When the fighting had ended a 'small group' turned up, wrote Kootker in his diary, whose commander 'said that in a particular kampung there had been many dead and severely wounded due to the aircraft action'.<sup>25</sup>

It is not the case that fire at *kampongs* targeted non-combatants by definition, as revealed by a 3-2 RVA fighting report. On 3 January 1948, F Battery fired 69 artillery shots at 'enemy concentrations' in Cikupa *kampung* in the Paminkis River Valley (West Java). The *kampung* 'proved to be a meeting and starting point of these gangs', the report states, while 'intelligence received showed that this kampung wasn't used as a place to live, but purely as markas [headquarters or army post]'.<sup>26</sup> The many Indonesian observations about abandoned or evacuated villages around places where there was heavy fighting also counsel prudence in this respect. According to the Indonesian historian Moeckardi, the numbers of civilian casualties in the Yogya area were not always as substantial as the Dutch thought, seeing as the population had often already fled.<sup>27</sup> Nonetheless, there is no doubt that fire at supposed troop concentrations or positions in *kampongs* was a major cause of civilian harm.

Still, sources containing information on the part of heavy weapons in the death toll are rare. One of those is the unit history of 1-42 RVA. Between 1 and 15 June 1949, this battery offered fire support during an operation to the north of Kediri (East Java). The result that is given: '84 men killed by artillery fire.' The unit history also records heavy losses during other operations in June and July, often reported by the Intelligence and Security Groups or IVG, but it is guesswork what part the artillery guns played.<sup>28</sup> Vice versa, at other times (but likewise sporadically) only the dead caused by the infantry were mentioned, such as during the operation against Karanganyar, where the report states explicitly that casualties due to artillery fire were not included.<sup>29</sup>

An analysis by DCO staff officer Lieutenant Colonel Hoorweg in a report he wrote about the second Dutch offensive is worth mentioning in this context. According to the Dutch account, the TNI had lost 10 percent of its rationalized strength (10,199 dead). The author presumed that this included non-military losses, but still thought that 'the number of mili-



tary victims will at the very least equal this', because it was not possible during many operations to report the number of dead. 'One needs to take into account', Hoorweg concluded, 'that for a large part the losses must be attributed to M. L. air support.' However, it remains unclear what he based this on – in the introduction, the lieutenant colonel indicates that he had encountered 'substantial difficulties' in 'forming a complete and clear picture of the course of the various operations but even more of the subsequent consequences'.<sup>30</sup>

His deathrate conjectures appear to be based on too much confidence in the Dutch reports – the same goes for the number analyses of Harinck. Both assume that the Dutch tallies should be seen as a minimum and ignore the possibility of over-reporting.<sup>31</sup> The incentive for the latter was strong, as Remco van Raben and Peter Romijn also write: 'body counts were an integral part of the reporting and an instrument often used in colonial wars to prove one's effectiveness.'<sup>32</sup> Indeed, cases of evident over-reporting have been documented.<sup>33</sup>

Indonesian losses are conspicuously absent in many published Indonesian sources. These works mostly focus on the military aspects of operations, and the actions of the enemy.<sup>34</sup> In that sense they hardly differ from Dutch commemorative books and memoirs, which also focus mainly on their own operations. In Indonesian sources, references to airstrikes and artillery fire generally serve to illustrate Dutch atrocities or violations of political agreements. According to Simatupang, the 150,000 estimated civilian deaths between December 1948 and March 1949 (also mentioned by Palar, see the case study about Wonosari) were the result 'of the savagery of the Dutch, the bombardments, machine-gunning and "cannonades" aimed at *desas* and busy passers [markets], as well as random murdering'.<sup>35</sup> In addition, the Indonesian press office calculated that the ratio between civilian and military casualties was '12:1 since 1 March'. According to the report, however, this was not only due to aerial bombing and artillery fire, but also to the 'terror' exercised during patrols, when soldiers shot 'at every male person they saw'.<sup>36</sup>

Such reports had an obvious publicity objective, and it remains unclear what the figures were based on. Just like Dutch casualty reports, Indonesian figures were not always reliable. Nasution's work contains several passages with demonstrably incorrect Dutch death rates against remarkably low Indonesian losses. Examples are an attack on a train that was said to have cost 35 Dutch soldiers their lives with no Indonesian losses, and

an attack against Gurah with once again 35 Dutch killed, this time versus 8 TNI members.<sup>37</sup> In reality, the largest number of Dutch soldiers killed in a single combat operation was twelve men.<sup>38</sup>

A striking number of Indonesian lists of civilians affected concern the region around Yogya in 1949.<sup>39</sup> In this area, many high-ranking TNI members were active, who left sources and later wrote about their experiences. But it was also one of the most intense battlegrounds of the war. A seized diary of a TNI member in the Yogya region, Jack Rontokau, which was not written for publicity purposes, gives a seemingly accurate impression of losses on the Indonesian side, but not on the enemy side – the same pattern as in Dutch sources. Rontokau was killed late February 1949 battling Dutch troops.<sup>40</sup> On 1 February he noted: ‘in Karang Lor it rained cannon shells. Victims 2 people. The father died whilst his little son was hit in the spine by a shard. His belly is swollen, but he is not unconscious.’ Ten days later he described an attack with a pull bomb against a Dutch infantry section north of Yogya. ‘The pull bomb was detonated killing 10 Dutchmen.’<sup>41</sup> The reports of T Brigade and subordinate units state that there was indeed an incident five kilometres north of Yogya that day, in which two carriers of 1-15 RI hit a mine. However, only one soldier was killed and another wounded.<sup>42</sup>

Occasionally, Dutch troops took precautions to prevent civilian casualties. There are the frequently quoted daily orders of General Spoor in which he called for his men to act ‘humanely’ and not to increase the already considerable suffering of the population.<sup>43</sup> Prior to the first offensive, the T Brigade operations office issued instructions, ‘whenever tactical circumstances allow’, to move the civilian population to ‘certain assembly areas or rayons, which are located as much as possible beyond the direct battleground’. Staff officer Major E. J. Beck emphasized in capital letters that all commanders must be aware ‘THAT THE CIVILIAN POPULATION MUST BE SPARED’.<sup>44</sup> In October of that year, T Brigade units did indeed evacuate the residents of Cuntel *kampung* in Central Java, ‘in connection with the easy encampment and nestling of enemy’. The next day it was rumoured that Indonesian troops numbering around 400 men had occupied the *kampung* that same evening.<sup>45</sup> It is not known on what scale such evacuations were organized. In short, just like Dutch sources, Indonesian sources generally do not offer solid data on enemy and Indonesian losses nor on civilian casualties. Specific information, such as in Rontokau’s diary, is fragmentary and rare.

## RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER FORMS OF VIOLENCE

At first glance, estimates on battlefield death causes in the two world wars offer support for the assumptions by both Dutch and Indonesian contemporaries and historians about the role of artillery and air power in the number of Indonesian (civilian) casualties in the war of independence. Many historians state that during the First and Second World War, artillery fire and aerial bombs together claimed the majority of the victims. Percentages of Allied military losses due to these weapons vary from 53 to 75 percent. However, such figures should be regarded with caution, because calculation methods differ from conflict to conflict, and even within one and the same war.<sup>46</sup> According to Leo van Bergen, it is almost impossible to establish causes of death on the battlefield with any certainty. This is because numbers are often based on 'soldiers who were injured, were brought in and then died anyway'.<sup>47</sup> Likewise, Stathis Kalyvas states that it is almost impossible to make reliable estimates of the share of each individual type of violence in the overall number of casualties.<sup>48</sup> Another important factor that complicates the comparison is that the two world wars were conventional conflicts in which incomparably larger amounts of heavy weapons were used.

As far as the Indonesian War of Independence is concerned, Dutch historians mainly refer to the studies of Simatupang and Nasution, which in a general sense regularly mention Indonesian casualties due to airstrikes or shelling, but lack specific substantiation. The deathrate quoted by Nasution due to infantry operations and summary executions in the most violent episode of the war, the first half of 1949, was in fact equally high.<sup>49</sup> In a discussion of the number of casualties, Christiaan Harinck gives some examples which may point to a substantial part played by heavy weapons, but – by his own account – this does not go beyond anecdotal evidence and concrete data are lacking.<sup>50</sup>

Moreover, it is not difficult to find examples of high numbers of casualties due to infantry violence. A report of around two hundred combat operations of X Brigade in East Java recounts the highest 'enemy losses' during infantry operations without fire support. According to the report, the highest number of casualties occurred during an infantry operation on 16 November 1947 (80 dead). The highest number due to artillery fire was during the occupation of Tumpang on 12 December of that same year (30 dead, intelligence appreciation C3: possibly genuine report, fairly reliable source).<sup>51</sup> However, in many reports and records it is simply

not possible to discern which weapons caused the casualties, because they were the result of jointly used direct and indirect violence.

Moreover, a focus on theoretical lethality and the low discriminatory power of heavy weapons threatens to obscure massive and often equally indiscriminate infantry violence. An oft-cited course of action was for troops to fire at anything that moved during patrols.<sup>52</sup> In a study of artillery regiment 6 RVA, in which he himself served, the later Brigadier Ben Bouman describes a large sweep operation in West Java on 4 December 1948. In a few hours' time, the artillerymen operating as infantry fired 35,000 rounds from small arms weapons and reported 179 enemy dead. Whereas a week later, an operation with artillery and attack aircraft turned into a major disaster: 'when [...] our shells and bombs began pouring down, the enemy had already left. It was a fiasco.'<sup>53</sup>

Jan de Golde of 5 RS writes that they often returned enemy fire 'with all we had'. The infantry bullets flew through the thatched houses 'like wasps'. In these situations, it was mainly automatic firearms such as the ubiquitous Bren light machine gun that caused substantial damage. De Golde: 'in case of a heavy attack, machine guns are crucial. It is a great comfort if a few of those things begin to rattle during an attack.' If Indonesian fighters fled the *kampong* during a sweep operation, he wrote, and 'were unlucky enough to end up between about eight machine guns, then everyone knows what happens, there are never many survivors. And [...] not to forget the dead civilians – who are always there in a war like this.'<sup>54</sup>

The scale of fire support in relation to other forms of violence is another factor that determines the share of artillery and air power in the total number of casualties. There are no cumulative data available of the numbers of infantry combat operations in Indonesia. However, it is certain that the scale of the force used by – at their peak 150,000 – infantrymen was (much) larger than that of artillery and air forces. Moreover, all infantry battalions had mortars, guns, hand grenades, submachine guns, machine guns, grenade launchers and anti-tank guns and other weapons at their disposal. In addition, compared to other conflicts, artillery and air force were not deployed excessively, as has been observed in Chapter 4. Artillery units also operated as infantry many times, further increasing the part of 'direct violence' in the total application of violence. However, an independent quantitative and qualitative study of infantry violence (in conjunction with the actions of other weapons and branches) is called for to acquire a more complete picture of its effects.

## INDIRECT CONSEQUENCES AND POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS

An obvious consequence of civilian casualties caused by heavy weapons was that in many regions any goodwill the population may have felt turned into resentment against, or hatred of, the *Belanda* – the Dutch occupier – expressed in all kinds of support for the armed resistance. In many places, Indonesian witch-hunts against potential spies or traitors emerged, as described by Rémy Limpach in his analysis of the intelligence war. Not infrequently, this was directed at Chinese residents. For example, an Indonesian report describes that the TNI arrested spies following each Dutch airstrike in West Java, often Chinese carrying mirrors or weapons which aroused suspicion (mirrors could be used to signal airplanes).<sup>55</sup>

Another consequence of the deployment of heavy weapons was that the Netherlands became vulnerable to criticism in the political arena. Following the first offensive, the Republican delegation appealed to the Committee of Good Offices:

During their ‘police action’ the Dutch have used all kinds of arms which are usually used in all-out warfare, and used without any restrictions at that. Troops were landed after heavy naval bombardment. Troops and civilians were machinegunned from the air. Bombs were dropped and in the ground operations extensive use was made of heavy and light artillery. Paratroops were dropped in several instances.<sup>56</sup>

The use of heavy weapons served here as evidence of the evil intentions of the Dutch. The Republic also regularly used the deployment of artillery or air power to illustrate allegations of ceasefire violations. According to a telegram from Nasution, the Dutch ceasefire after the end of the second offensive amounted to ‘nothing more than hollow words’ because they continued to use ‘army, navy and air force’ in subsequent operations. ‘So, the implementation of the ceasefire order by the Dutch consisted of bombing, machine gunning, cannonades and the relentless day and night bombardment of all military districts, to which the population always fell victim.’<sup>57</sup>

The political sensitivity of the deployment of air power had already been shown during the Battle of Surabaya and later with the downing of



the VT-CLA and several other violent incidents. General Spoor was well-aware of this and during the first offensive he warned in a telegram: 'no unnecessary attacks on enemy houses cars trains etc. This causes serious political difficulties and is against principles [of] current struggle.'<sup>58</sup> Indeed, shortly afterwards, *Pandit* Jawaharlal Nehru – the first prime minister of India – was among those who criticized the Dutch 'for bombing defenceless people'.<sup>59</sup> In certain cases, the risk of a fall-out did limit the deployment of aircraft. However, troop commanders generally made eager use of air support and the army leadership chose a policy of denial, attenuation and blaming the adversary whenever that deployment led to consternation.

An example of the denial and attenuation came after an airstrike on a ferry, carried out a day before the notorious naval bombardment of Banyuwangi. On 4 July 1946, a B-25 Mitchell sank the Indonesian ferry *Kangean* in the Madura Strait, killing 82 civilians, according to newspaper *Merdeka*. Following the resulting controversy, the navy press office denied all allegations and tried to shift the blame for the sinking to pirates or the crew. Lieutenant Colonel R. E. Jessurun (NEIAF), who had possibly been a passenger on the flight according to Limpach, admitted in an internal report that the pilots had definitely fired at the ship after being shot at by light machine guns. However, this report stayed largely under the radar, and the Dutch denial proved fruitful: in his 1948 book *The Birth of Indonesia*, David Wehl writes of the incident: '[of] the *Kangean*, neither British nor Dutch knew anything at all, and a floating mine was probably the culprit'.<sup>60</sup>

Field or naval artillery fire only sporadically generated controversy, as in the case of the shelling of Karanganyar – and even then, it remained rather limited. Another incident in which the use of artillery was disputed occurred to the southeast of Cirebon on 16 January 1948. On that day, infantry battalion 3-II RI carried out an operation with 25 men against the *kampongs* of Negla and Karangjunti, preceded by a creeping barrage of 3-6 RVA. According to a message from the TNI commander of the Cirebon region to Republican headquarters, intercepted by NEFIS, the Dutch entered the villages after the bombardment and 'forced the people to line up on the bank of the river, and subsequently shot them with submachine guns'. Allegedly, people had also been stabbed with bayonets. According to the TNI message, 285 people died in the event. The Republican authorities filed a complaint with the ceasefire committee. In this report,

knowingly or unknowingly, the incident was mistakenly dated ten days later – on 26 January – in other words after the signing of the Renville Agreement on the 17th of that month.<sup>61</sup>

Shortly after, the *Associated Press* reported from Jakarta that the Committee of Good Offices intended to launch an investigation into the matter. This news also reached the American State Department, which asked the Netherlands for clarification. The Americans were particularly worried by a remark of an – unnamed – member of the Dutch delegation to the United Nations, that the incident seemed like ‘a second Rawagedeh’. This hinted at a possible war crime. An alarmed chief of staff, Buurman van Vreeden, asked the responsible commander to immediately inform him of the true course of events during the operation. Lieutenant Colonel J. F. Bastiaanse, commander of 3-11 RI, instantly tried to downplay the case by pointing out that the attack had really been carried out prior to the signing of the Renville Agreement, that the number of dead was ‘only 92’ and that the operation had taken place ‘in the interests of the population’. A number of ‘enemy markasses [headquarters or army posts]’ had been destroyed with artillery fire.<sup>62</sup>

The chief of staff was not satisfied with this answer and inquired by telegram why ‘such ample’ use had been made of artillery, ‘due to high risk of many victims among villagers’. Why had not more infantry been used, so that the deployment of artillery could perhaps have been ‘unnecessary or limited to just a few shots’? He also wanted to know the truth about the accusations of ‘atrocities ascribed to Dutch troops’. This time it was Bastiaanse’s boss, TtTC Central Java Major General De Waal, who replied. The *kampongs* involved had been ‘completely under the influence of TNI and there had been no well-meaning population left anymore’, he reported to headquarters. De Waal admitted that the number of shells fired ‘must be considered very large’ for this operation, but due to a lack of infantry it had been necessary to deploy artillery ‘to prevent casualties among [our] own troops’. In addition, he was ‘not aware’ of any excesses committed by advancing infantry. Buurman van Vreeden dismissed the whole line of defence as ‘weak’, and noted that De Waal did not explicitly deny the atrocities.<sup>63</sup>

The precise events remain unclear. The 3-11 patrol report states that artillery had fired at three military encampments in Negla *kampung*. Apparently, a party had been held in one of them.<sup>64</sup> This seemed to indicate that the patrol commander put the blame for the victims on artillery,

whilst simultaneously emphasizing that legitimate military targets had been fired at. However, the troops that searched the *kampongs* seized only a few weapons.<sup>65</sup> Again, in his memoirs gunner Onne Dallinga stressed the role of the infantry in this incident, which according to him had taken harsh action 'as usual', causing 'substantial human and materiel' losses to TNI.<sup>66</sup> Based on the cumulative sources, it seems plausible that people were killed during both the creeping barrage and the subsequent 'purge'.

Apart from the exact course of events, there are a number of striking aspects to the Negla case. First of all that De Waal defended the use of artillery on the grounds of infantry safety, despite the danger of civilian casualties. A few months before, he had justified using aircraft against Banjarnegara by claiming that artillery would have cost more civilian casualties (a claim that had not convinced Van Mook, either).<sup>67</sup> Secondly, it is striking that the chief of staff asked whether the gunners could not have just fired a few shots, whereas brigade artillery commander Lieutenant Colonel Schouten had warned troops against doing so, because the enemy would then 'get used to artillery fire and learn how to successfully evade it'.<sup>68</sup>

It is even more remarkable that the use of artillery on 16 January was judged to be 'ample' and the number of shells fired as 'very large', even though the number (88) was almost exactly the same as the average of all artillery fire missions (90, see figure 9). The *modus operandi* at Negla – a creeping barrage followed by a sweep of the area by infantry – can safely be called the standard operating procedure for sweep operations by Dutch troops in Indonesia. Hence, the reason for the controversy about this operation was evidently not the manner of fighting, but the Indonesian report of extrajudicial executions and other violent transgressions.

In the war diaries of the units involved, the actions of 16 January 1948 are portrayed as any other operation. 3-6 RVA only listed the coordinates of the targets and the number of explosive shells fired. The handwritten diary of F Troop did note that the Republicans filed a complaint about the operation with CGD, but this remark was not repeated in the printed version.<sup>69</sup> In its unit history, infantry battalion 3-II RI merely states that the operation was carried out, without divulging any further details. Although a separate patrol report was drawn up ten days after the operation, there is no mention of it in the battalion's commemorative book. On the contrary, only territorial commander Major General De Waal's

expression of satisfaction, which he had presented to 3-11 RI a week prior to the operation, was printed with the report. This is reminiscent of an incident that took place at Cilacap eighteen months later, where the same battalion was involved in the so-called blood wedding at Gunung Simp-ing. To the annoyance of the legal experts who later investigated events, staff of 3-11 RI no longer possessed any record of that incident.<sup>70</sup> It is unknown how the Negla affair ended.<sup>71</sup> In any case, it does not seem to have prompted the Dutch to adopt great caution. Hardly a month later, 2-8 RVA carried out a large-scale shelling (already described in Chapter 4) in the same, still troublesome area, despite the Renville Agreement.

#### PROTECTION OF THE POPULATION

In areas where demarcation lines existed or intense fighting occurred, the use of indirect, long-range firepower had another effect: many places became depopulated, as seen near Semarang in 1946. The approach of airplanes or large materiel typically signalled the arrival of Dutch troops and in many cases ensured the population could leave in time.<sup>72</sup> In contrast, unexpected firing could have devastating consequences. Nasution describes how in June 1946 the Dutch delivered extensive artillery fire at Banjaran, south of Bandung: 'this was the first time for the population there, which at the time thought it was safe and was overwhelmed by shells from 25-pounders. As many as 14 civilians were killed, 125 people were injured, and many houses around the alun-alun [town square] were destroyed.'<sup>73</sup>

In the course of the conflict, people learned how to protect themselves against such violence. The hideouts constructed by the people of the Thousand Mountains in anticipation of the arrival of Dutch airplanes in 1949 have been discussed in the previous chapter, as well as the caves where the population of Karanganyar sought refuge after the violence in the second half of 1947. *Kampung* residents also used pre-war or Japanese bunkers where available. As early as August 1946, KNIL artillerymen found many 'expertly constructed hideouts' in an area that they had previously shelled. Provision had even been made for livestock.<sup>74</sup> In addition, Major Van Binsbergen of 3-41 RVA describes that during operation 'Breda' in late June 1949, 'several kampongs were discovered, where reinforced dwellings had been built beneath the houses, enabling the residents to sit out even the heaviest artillery battering underground, and as soon as the firing stopped, stick their heads out above ground again!' An

‘ingenious trench system’ and an escape route to a nearby *kali* were part of this.<sup>75</sup>

There is an interesting Indonesian document in the collection of Pieter de Kam, battalion commander of 8 RS in Indonesia, titled ‘Regulations for Protection from Danger from different Weapons’. First of all, the document – which was translated into Dutch – contains an explanation of the different forms of danger that Indonesians could expect to be exposed to in the war with the ‘colonial extremists’, both from the air and from the ground. (The information about the trajectory of various weapons is remarkably accurate.) ‘For the population to feel safe and know they are protected from mortal danger’, the booklet prescribed, ‘it is best for all residents to build effective hideouts in the vicinity of their homes and in public areas just like in wartime.’ (The author was most likely referring to the Japanese occupation here.)

In addition, the hideouts had to be well camouflaged and provided with a ‘fire coverage of earth of at least ½ m. thick’. The document also gives instructions for the best cover against artillery and mortar fire (vertical cover) and aircraft fire (horizontal cover) respectively.<sup>76</sup> It is unknown in which year the document was written, but it underscores that Indonesian non-combatants did not wait passively to be hit by Dutch fire – an impression that impersonal lists of casualty rates may give. The TNI and its associate forces also used the population to protect themselves from indirect Dutch fire. Infanterie I KNIL battalion commander Ferdinand Musch noted that in 1949, *kampongs* to the north of Yogyakarta often contained field reinforcements, foxholes and other shelters. According to Musch, the population had been forced to build them ‘and they are the reason the guerrillas can better withstand artillery fire and aerial attacks’.<sup>77</sup>

#### ADAPTATION BY INDONESIAN ARMED FORCES

The most significant change to the Indonesian armed forces induced by Dutch dominance in fire power and fire support – besides other factors such as education, training and ways of operating – was the official transition to guerrilla as a fighting method, in mid-1947. In the initial phase, during the battle for the key areas, *pemuda* had attempted to drive the British and later the Dutch into the sea with regular tactics, but they suffered such huge losses that they gradually adopted guerrilla tactics. Sabotage operations, mining roads, snipers and hit-and-run actions be-

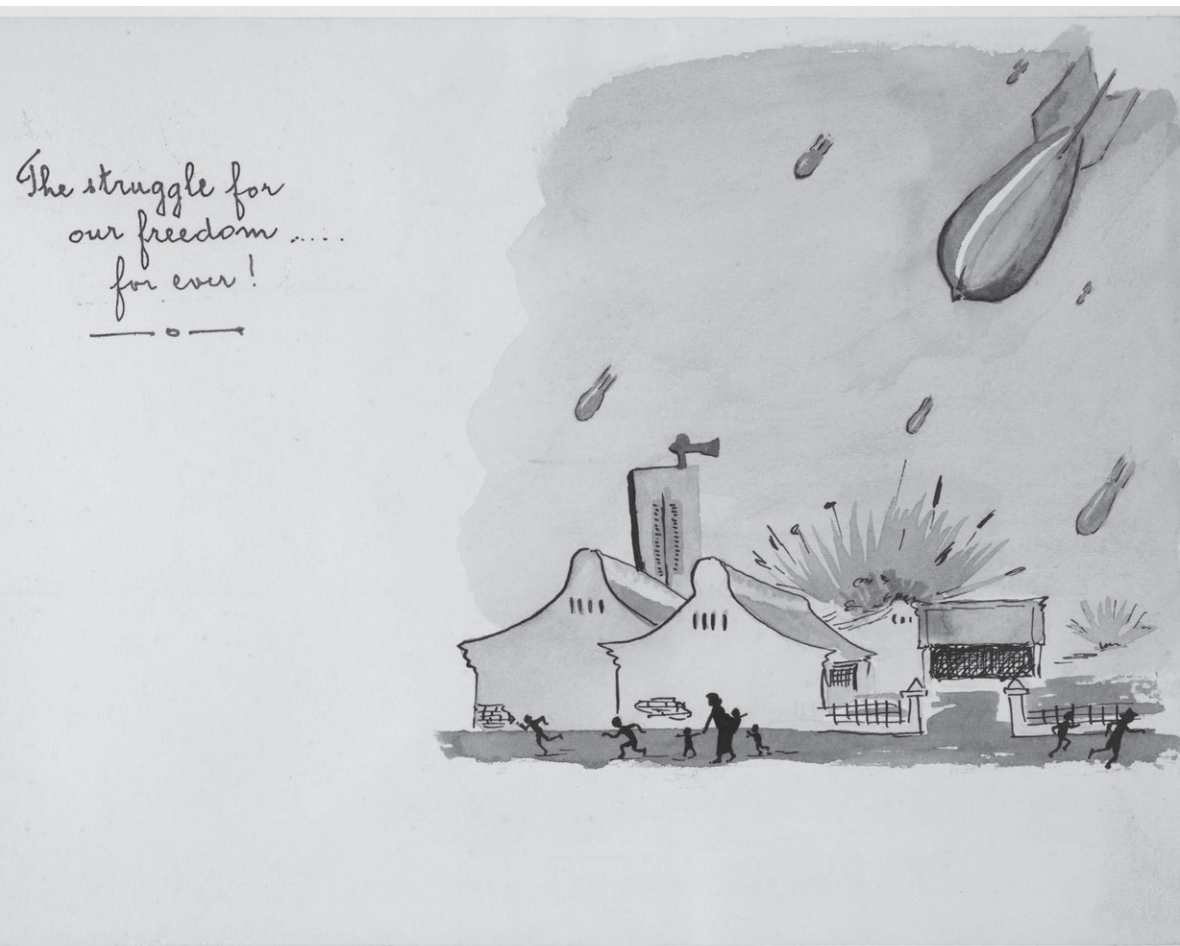


came increasingly common. Yet at the start of the first offensive, the TRI still applied the principle of 'linear defence'.<sup>78</sup> However, this could not withstand the Dutch armoured column, preceded by large-scale creeping barrages and provided with 'maximum air support' during the advance.

Following the offensive, which he experienced as a defeat of the strategy followed up to that point, Nasution issued orders to carry out full-scale guerrilla warfare. In June 1948 this was followed by a formal order of commander-in-chief General Sudirman to wage a total people's war in preparation of a possible 'surge' of the Dutch in the direction of the Republican capital city. 'As long as the TNI weaponry is still on a technically very basic level, defence by the Republican side will have to be based on totalitarian people's defence', read the tactical order *perintah siasat No.1/48*, oft-cited in Indonesian historiography.<sup>79</sup> Sudirman's caveat regarding inadequate armament reflects the ideas that the strategist Nasution had also already nurtured for a long time. In his view, the ultimate victory in an irregular war could only be achieved with a regular army in a conventional struggle – a generalization that is 'of doubtful value' according to guerrilla expert Walter Laqueur.<sup>80</sup> Nasution's philosophy is part of the explanation why the TNI continued to carry out massive – and always catastrophic – attacks until the end of the War of Independence in Indonesia, demonstrated by the battle of Solo days before the final ceasefire.

The best means Indonesian armed forces had against Dutch heavy firepower was dispersion. As early as during the first Dutch offensive, TRI reports stated that in several places larger units had split into smaller groups in order to fight the Dutch more effectively.<sup>81</sup> Airstrikes were the greatest fear of Sayidiman, commander of a company of the Siliwangi Division which infiltrated Dutch-occupied West Java after the second offensive. In his memoirs, he describes how another battalion was subjected to an airstrike along the way. As the soldiers' families travelled along with them, the number of casualties was high. By his own account, he kept his unit so small that they could not be discerned by Dutch airplanes.<sup>82</sup>

Even such small units had to stay out of sight as much as possible to evade Dutch fire. In February 1949, Klaas Bruinsma wrote to his wife about two Siliwangi members who surrendered their weapons. 'During questioning it transpired that they had had enough. [...] They move regularly for fear of artillery fire and airplanes.' According to Bruinsma, many of the units passing through had 'the greatest respect' for the cannons.



*Picture from a series by the unknown Indonesian fighter with initials A. K. Source: NMVW / Tropenmuseum.*

“That’s why during the day they take refuge as much as possible, and move on at night.”<sup>83</sup> General Spoor saw the dispersion of the Republican armed forces under pressure of Dutch violence as a sign that the ‘final phase of the pacification work has begun’, he reported to The Hague in April 1949. At this time, many ministers and officials had already lost faith in the optimistic Spoor. Indeed, the army commander had to admit that it would still require ‘the greatest effort’ to ‘entirely suppress this endless and widespread “small resistance”’.

Consequently, in Petra Groen’s words, a ‘paradoxical situation’ had arisen, in which the apparent success (the fragmentation of TNI and asso-

ciated forces) also formed the Netherlands' Achilles' heel.<sup>84</sup> It was almost impossible to catch the remaining Indonesian units, and heavy weapons therefore made little impression. This is reflected in the 3-6 RVA first quarterly report of 1949:

Several times, 3-6 RVA participated in operations supporting Infanterie v [...] These artillery fire missions were intended to break the morale of the adversary and therefore enable [our] own infantry to achieve the set goals with as few losses as possible! However, these artillery fires are becoming more sporadic, as the enemy has disintegrated into a number of smaller gangs in this district!<sup>85</sup>

There were other tactics usually associated with guerrilla warfare that also helped limit the effect of Dutch heavy weapons and frustrate their use. The roadblocks that Indonesian troops erected all over Java and Sumatra on roads on which heavy material depended are well-known. This included chopping down hundreds of trees and letting them drop across the road, tank traps and digging 'coupures' (passages or trenches) in the roads, destroying and weakening bridges, and laying tree trunks or bamboo poles on landing strips. During the two offensives, in particular, Dutch convoys were greatly hindered by these obstacles.<sup>86</sup>

In some places TNI also spread straw on the road and torched it from the trees when Dutch tanks or armoured vehicles drove across, to thwart the enemy.<sup>87</sup> Elsewhere, the Indonesians experimented with straw and tar to jam tank tracks, but in practice, tank operators were often wary when they saw a carpet of straw and stopped.<sup>88</sup> In 1949, Indonesian fighters also spread out yellow groundsheets when enemy aircraft were approaching, to convince them they belonged to the Dutch forces.<sup>89</sup> Guerrillas sometimes evaded artillery by not firing at Dutch patrols until the cannons had returned to camp and no longer posed a threat.<sup>90</sup>

#### ADAPTATION BY DUTCH TROOPS

Guerrilla tactics caused problems for the Dutch troops, who were mostly educated in the European ideology of regular war, or in any case only minimally equipped for large-scale irregular warfare. Units often made small changes on location, such as putting sandbags or steel plates in all vehicles to deal with pull bombs, or having infantry precede armoured vehicles to first check the roads for mines.<sup>91</sup> Dutch troops could not avoid the 'split-

ting phenomenon,' as one gunner called it, that is, the splitting of divisions into brigades, battalions into companies, batteries into sections, et cetera.<sup>92</sup> However, various authors have pointed out that no overarching and adequate answer to the guerrilla was ever provided. In Schoonoord's words, Dutch military leadership thought 'sometimes strongly in terms referring to the European theatre and did not give enough consideration to the tenacious fighting of a revolutionary army'.<sup>93</sup>

In his study of the learning capacity of the Dutch armed forces in Indonesia, Christiaan Harinck concludes that although lessons were learnt on paper, these were mostly developed too late to put them into practice. Neither did the army leadership establish a modified doctrine truly adapted to local circumstances.<sup>94</sup> In this respect, the many references made by contemporaries to the Second World War are telling. Methods used by the Dutch reminded them of the Germans, of the Japanese, and of the Allies.<sup>95</sup> As Leendert Giesing, forward observer at 3-41 RVA remarked in November 1949: 'did we do anything different to the English and American armies back then? [...] This is not a European front. That is the big difference.'<sup>96</sup>

A February 1949 analysis of the situation that had developed on Java and Sumatra by NEIAF pilot August Deibel is similarly illustrative. The tactic of eliminating 'gangs' by means of large operations had 'proven fruitless' because the adversary had greater knowledge of the terrain and maintained an excellent warning system. Airplanes also threatened to lose their 'moral effect' on the enemy because they could not act effectively enough. In addition to a proposal to use cluster munitions and incendiary bombs, he therefore suggested there should be airborne special forces (*luchtmarechaussee*). A well-maintained flight service would allow paratroopers would to pop up in any *kampong* within ten minutes to deal with local resistance. According to Deibel, this would 'have such an impact on the morale of any gang, that the region would soon be quiet'.

ML headquarters were not enthusiastic about this plan. Deibel was said to have exaggerated the problems. Furthermore, the material and political situation did not allow for it to be carried out. Navy chief of staff in Indonesia, Commander A. de Booy, suggested that the new 'hélicoptère' weapon might perhaps form part of the solution. HKML assistant head of office operations, Sub-Lieutenant Pilot M. H. G. Vermin pointed out that fighter planes had achieved good results on Java with constant patrolling and 'the order to shoot at anything that was recognized as an

enemy'. Still, as far as he was concerned, the best way to combat 'gangs' was the 'experienced bushwalker' with local knowledge.<sup>97</sup> According to Harinck, who elaborates on the discussion initiated by Deibel, the limitations of military operations were recognized in these and other debates. Yet 'in their search for solutions for the guerrilla problem, the military ultimately found mainly military, technical solutions'.<sup>98</sup> The deployment of heavy weapons was continuously viewed as essential, and faith in a romantic concept of prewar 'policing' operations never wavered. Essentially, an effective population-centric and politically motivated approach was lacking.

To summarize, Indonesian troops adapted more extensively to the circumstances than Dutch troops did. TNI and associated forces felt compelled to do so because it was almost impossible for them to fight the occupying forces in open battle. By contrast, the Netherlands could afford to adopt a conservative stance and apply regular tactics, perhaps precisely because the exact impact of the violence remained obscure. Although Dutch troops alienated themselves from the population with such operations, and the use of brute force occasionally elicited political repercussions, they generally got away with it. However, the sources studied offer no support for the contention that artillery and air force caused the majority of (civilian) casualties. The lethality of fire support depended very much on the situation, not least because the Indonesian opponent and the population took all kinds of measures to mitigate its effects. Retrospectively – as in many conflicts – it has proven difficult to count the dead and civilian victims can hardly be distinguished from military casualties.

### E F F E C T I V E N E S S

The above relates to the effects of fire support as a means, whereas effectiveness refers to the goals that the military aimed to realize with the use of force, and whether they were able to achieve those goals by employing artillery and air power. In the right circumstances, fire support could increase troop strength and act as a force multiplier, but its effectiveness was influenced by a wide range of factors.<sup>99</sup> The *modus operandi*, the quality of intelligence and communications, observation, the nature of the target, weather and terrain circumstances, technical precision, fire discipline, command and control, troop training and proficiency, and the condition of materiel – each of these factors could play a decisive part in the success or failure of artillery and airplane deployment.



## THE ROAR OF APPROACHING WAR MACHINES

As shown by the analysis of the operation against Wonosari, Dutch troops often did not achieve the desired results with extensive sweep operations in combination with artillery and air power – in particular in the period after the end of the first offensive, when TNI and associated forces operated in an ever more dispersed way. Gunner Klaas Bruinsma did not beat about the bush in his long letters to his wife. ‘If there’s such a big patrol on the move,’ he wrote after an infantry action following a bombardment by two airplanes in November 1947, ‘you can be sure that you’ll be walking through sawas, woods and kalis for nothing.’ The patrol had to first drive 130 kilometres to track down a TNI group of reportedly a thousand men in a *kampung*. ‘Anyone still in the kampung had, of course, sneaked off. There were only chickens left when we encircled it.’<sup>100</sup> Bruinsma commented likewise on other large-scale operations.<sup>101</sup>

If infantry advanced following a barrage with indirect fire, there was often ‘nothing left to sweep, because the people concerned had long since made off’, wrote mortar gunner Van Beurden. He states that those encountered were mostly civilians who had been left behind, such as the elderly, children and the sick.<sup>102</sup> This is also confirmed by Nasution: ‘our men could usually escape to safety by playing “cat-and-mouse” (*berkucing-kucingan*). It was just many civilians who were killed.’<sup>103</sup> Following a large operation at Tretes, East Java, in February 1949 (with Fireflies firing rockets and dropping bombs, and artillery laying a creeping barrage on the centre of the resistance) battery officer Hazekamp remarked: ‘the results don’t amount to much, actually. The peloppors [fighters] disappear as soon as they realize we mean business, which is of course very sensible of them.’<sup>104</sup> The meagre results of larger operations meant that the use of cannons and airplanes was ineffective in those situations.<sup>105</sup> After all, the enemy forces who had fled but had not been eliminated could resume their activities later or elsewhere.

In addition to large-scale troop movement, the noise and visibility of heavy materiel often cancelled out the element of surprise. Marines already experienced this during operation ‘Trackman’ on 10 August 1946, the first time that the brigade used Amtracks and Shermans on a large scale. ‘The enemy,’ stated the report, ‘warned from kilometres away by the roar of the approaching war machines, managed to escape in time.’<sup>106</sup> This could also be a problem during smaller operations, for example during a Marine Brigade operation at Kencong in January 1948, when the artillery

positioned its guns too early. '[This] raised the awareness of the enemy, that something was going on, so that they had ample opportunity to escape at nighttime.'<sup>107</sup> Even a battery spending the night somewhere could lead to evacuation of an area with the circumference of the firing range by TNI.<sup>108</sup>

Airplanes also often gave away an operation. Jaap de Moor observes that TNI troops within the operational area of the special troops on Sumatra usually diverted in time, 'often alerted by Dutch aerial observations and preparatory aerial operations'. As a result, KST troops often encountered a 'totally depopulated' field of action.<sup>109</sup> In the same vein, Nasution states that Dutch aircraft were often a signal for him and his troops. 'The arrival of a spotter plane ('capung') implied preparations for an advance. [...] The flight circle of the mustang showed us the size of the area that was to be swept. The descending parachutes beyond revealed the resting places of the enemy to us.' Artillery and air force deployment was therefore primarily effective if the troops managed to exploit the element of surprise. Speed and close cooperation with infantry were extremely important. However, according to Nasution, infantry also often gave away their location. Wasteful use of ammunition by the Dutch was often a signal for villages further away, and 'their custom to burn civilian houses' was an indication of the route they were taking.<sup>110</sup>

#### ARTILLERY OR AIR POWER?

For the Dutch it was, therefore, a case of choosing the right combination of weapons and services for the right circumstances. As described earlier, commanders and staff members in their instructions and orders often warned against issuing cannon and aircraft fire without subsequent infantry movement. Conversely, infantry was not keen on patrolling without being able to request fire support. Close cooperation was supposed to lead to the best results. Basically, artillery was intended for situations where infantry could not manage with its own weapons, and air support only if artillery also proved insufficient. In practice, commanders often deviated from this maxim. Besides, views differed as to what means were the most effective in what circumstances. Major General Willem Baay, commander of A Division in East Java, did not really believe in the usefulness of air support for the clearing up of the remaining Republican troop concentrations after the second offensive. Airplanes scattered the adversary but did not destroy them, while there was the risk of causing many civilian casual-

ties. He considered sending out offensive, multi-day patrols, supported by artillery if necessary, as a better way of neutralizing the enemy.<sup>111</sup>

Then again, Major General De Waal justified the airstrike on Banjarnegara by pointing out that in his view an artillery barrage would have caused more civilian casualties, as mentioned earlier. De Waal's opinion is supported by a letter TtTC North Sumatra Piet Scholten wrote in early 1947. In this letter, he summarizes a number of reasons for his preference for the air forces to bombard plantation companies in the region. First of all, artillery supposedly caused more damage to buildings than aircraft did (presumably he was referring to the use of aerial machine guns and not 500-pound bombs). Secondly, warehouses, buildings and sheds could be hit more precisely and faster with bombs. According to Scholten, a third disadvantage of artillery fire was that TRI concentrations 'as proven many times, ran off after the first artillery shot', so that it was better to strafe 'enemy concentrations' with machine guns.<sup>112</sup>

In practice, the most effective means mostly depended on the nature of the target and the desired result. After all, in different circumstances, the latter disadvantage of artillery mentioned by Scholten could also be an advantage. In the Sukabumi region, Indonesian troops had pounded the Dutch with heavy machine guns for days in August 1947. Light mortars and light machine guns had not succeeded in silencing the Indonesian fire, but 'as soon as the artillery began shooting the enemy ceased firing'.<sup>113</sup> Elsewhere in West Java, aircraft made the difference. At Cilimus, infantry was involved in heavy fighting in November of that year. According to Colonel Harry Lentz, commander of 3e Infanterie Brigadegroep (3rd Infantry Brigade Group), the resistance offered could not be broken with their own artillery, and therefore air support was requested. 'Thanks largely to' the exceptionally fast response of the NEIAF fighter planes, Lentz acknowledged, 'the great pressure of the enemy was broken and the fire of the enemy's heavy infantry weapons was silenced'.<sup>114</sup>

In other areas, neither mortars, artillery nor airplanes could offer relief, such as in Batu (East Java), during a battle in August 1947. Indonesian fighters grouped together in a number of 'excellently camouflaged' bunkers built by the Japanese, on which the weapons just mentioned had no effect and which were almost impossible to hit. Perhaps mountain howitzers could have achieved a result, but these were unavailable. Eventually, a sneak attack behind the opponents' positions proved successful in this situation.<sup>115</sup>

## PREVENTIVE EFFECT

Another aspect that the above hints at is the effective deterrence of the use or even just the presence of heavy weapons. Onne Dallinga of 3-6 RVA observed with regard to the situation in Gombong in 1947: 'because the adversary knows that artillery is standing by, he does not take action.'<sup>116</sup> Wil Dofferhoff of 5 VA noted during an operation with tanks, armoured vehicles and artillery in East Java in February 1949: 'The men of J Battery did not need to fire, because due to this show of force the enemy had already fled before they could shoot.'<sup>117</sup> Veteran Wim Jansen of 1-2 RVA said in an interview that he and his fellow artillerymen positioned a cannon in the garden of the artillery encampment, because they were often shelled from the foreland at night. They did not use the cannon, but the nighttime shelling ceased abruptly.<sup>118</sup>

The presence of warships often also had a deterrent effect on the adversary. This was the case not only for destroyers. In September 1949, minesweeper *Hr.Ms. Abraham Crijnsen* was urgently dispatched to Banjarmasin (South Kalimantan) due to fighting between KNIL and Indonesian fighters. 'Cannon and machine guns were constantly deployed,' Van Holst Pellekaan wrote about the patrol, but 'apparently the presence of the small warship was sufficiently daunting. There was no more shooting from the shore.'<sup>119</sup> The air forces could have a similar effect. During the capture of Garut (West Java) during the first offensive, two Mustangs of 121 Squadron circled over the city. According to the monthly unit report, this ensured that 'not a single attempt at arson or destruction' was made by TNI.<sup>120</sup> So, wielding an iron fist could not only – in certain cases – be effective during operations, but many of those involved were also convinced it prevented violence by the adversary.<sup>121</sup>

The actions of 6 RVA in the Karawang and Subang regions in West Java present an interesting case in this context. In his study of the regiment, Bouman writes that Siliwangi units moving west in 1949 did not dare to pass through these areas for fear of artillery concentrations. According to him, this was evidenced for example by the papers of a dead TNI lieutenant.<sup>122</sup> In the same vein, gun commander Klaas Bruinsma stated that TNI 'lacked courage' to come within range of the guns. 'Not that we're such tough guys,' he wrote to his wife, 'but the mere presence of cannons has the effect of a bogeyman.'<sup>123</sup> But this is not the complete picture. Other factors also contributed to the avoidance of the area by Indonesian fighting groups. 6 RVA had set up an improvised special fighting group led

by Lieutenant Tivadar Spier, which acted ruthlessly. Both Bouman and Limpach list examples of extrajudicial executions and civilian casualties at the hands of this Speciale Troepen Groep Spier ('Spier Group Special Forces').<sup>124</sup> In addition, the area contained an above-average concentration of artillery pieces. Furthermore, the flexibility of the regiment, which often operated as infantry, and the accessible terrain between the mountains and the sea contributed to the effectiveness of the regiment, as the commemorative book notes.<sup>125</sup> The preventive effect of heavy weapons was therefore not always an independent factor and was also determined by local circumstances.

### PRECISION

The precision with which a shell or bomb could be placed on the target was also decisive for the effectiveness of fire support. In general, troops spoke highly of the accuracy of the 25-pounder in Indonesia. A Marine Brigade ARBAT experiment resulted in a dispersion of only 50 to 100 metres at a range of 11,000 yards (10,058 metres), just a third of what was listed in the gun's ballistic properties.<sup>126</sup> According to one author, ARBAT fire was 'so accurate, that the infantry did not hesitate to [...] request fire up to 75 m in front of the patrol'.<sup>127</sup> Other sources also report a high degree of accuracy of the guns.<sup>128</sup>

A certain degree of dispersion due to differing circumstances was inevitable – Bidwell lists fourteen points that influence artillery precision, varying from rotation of the earth to air density – but it was the gunner's job to incorporate the 'known influences of the day' into the calculations and to minimize dispersion when firing test shots.<sup>129</sup> Mortars were much more inaccurate, which is why the advice was not to fire them over one's own troops (see the victims of friendly mortar fire described above).<sup>130</sup> In the words of a 3-inch mortar gunner: 'you can't fire a mortar accurately at a target. A second shell never lands in exactly the same spot, but results in dispersed fire.'<sup>131</sup>

For airplanes, accuracy depended on such things as the way of firing and the weapon chosen. The army leadership saw rockets as precision weapons with a smaller chance of causing innocent victims than bombs, which were dependent on flawed aiming devices.<sup>132</sup> Many aircraft were fitted with prewar bombsights, which according to Wil Grootaarts were theoretically perfect, but in practice proved worthless. Pilots therefore often chalked a line or stuck a piece of chewing gum on the cockpit wind-



screen. As Grootaarts recalled, due to the 'conservative mentality' of the NEIAF, it took a lot of persuasion before newer RAF bombsights were installed.<sup>133</sup>

The accuracy of target selection was a problem related to technical precision. According to a report drawn up at the order of Major General De Waal, fighter pilots were sometimes given 'whole map squares' by infantry commanders during the first offensive. The pilot then had to find the target by himself within such a square kilometre, and without further information was 'bound' to attack 'the wrong mark'.<sup>134</sup> Sometimes no detailed and recent maps were available. Those of Sumatra, in particular, tended to be of relatively poor quality. This was also observed by Captain Deibel, former commander of Luchtvaartcommando Sumatra (Aviation Command Sumatra). In his view, this often caused pilots to identify their targets 'with considerable difficulty'.<sup>135</sup> After-action reports do indeed reveal that NEIAF attacked several targets on Sumatra in 1949 that are not marked on the maps used at the time.<sup>136</sup>

Artillery needed more detailed maps than airplanes to calculate target coordinates.<sup>137</sup> These were not always available and also not always up to date. Limpach describes how 9 VA had to operate with thirteen-year-old maps in North Sumatra and later even with hand-drawn maps. Furthermore, Corporal D. Bavius of 9 VA's Sumatra Troop was scathing about the map-reading skills of the warrant officer, leading to chaotic scenes and inaccurate fire.<sup>138</sup> The Dutch armed forces worked at aerial mapping with the Photo Verkenning Afdeling (Photo Reconnaissance Division, PVA), and modified several Mustangs into a 'photo fighter' (*foto-jager*).<sup>139</sup> However, this was a labour-intensive procedure, which could not prevent the effectiveness of indirect fire being negatively influenced in some places by a lack of maps (such as in Semarang in August 1946) or by a lack of precision weapons and targeting devices (such as with the guns at Tanjung Sembulungan in June to August 1947). In short, even though Dutch soldiers were generally positive about the accuracy of fire support weapons, the precision of bombardments regularly left plenty to be desired due to weather conditions, outdated bomb aiming devices, human errors and flawed maps.

#### TERRAIN

In *Krijgsmacht en kolonie*, Petra Groen and her coauthors state that heavy weapons such as artillery and tanks had 'limited value' in the guerrilla

war 'with its terrain that was difficult to access for wheeled and tracked vehicles'. This view is voiced in much of the literature on guerrilla and other unconventional wars, but it deserves qualification. In an article for the *Militaire Spectator* in 1947, Captain (KNIL) W. J. Scheepens admitted that the Indonesian landscape did indeed cause 'great difficulties' for the Dutch troops 'due to its vegetation and vastness'.<sup>140</sup> There are many examples of such problems to be found in the sources. Often artillery was not able to follow infantry because the roads were too bad. Guns could not cross *kalis*, 'clumsy' artillery tractors proved useless on some routes, and guns fell into ditches and had to be winched out.<sup>141</sup> The 'baby 25-pounders', which had been specially designed for tropical circumstances with an extra narrow wheelbase, proved so instable that they capsized on more than one occasion.<sup>142</sup>

If infantrymen had to transport weapons across the terrain themselves, then logically they preferred the light variety, if available. For the transport of 3-inch mortars in undulating landscape, the infantry used small mountain horses, but these were sometimes sent back if the terrain became too inhospitable. In 1949 Infanterie V KNIL hardly used 3-inch mortars because transporting them was 'a great hindrance' to speed.<sup>143</sup> For patrols in densely vegetated or mountainous terrain, light Bren guns were preferred to heavy Vickers or Schwarzlose machine guns.<sup>144</sup> Significantly, the war diary of 42 Zelfstandige Mitrailleur Compagnie (42 Independent Machine Gun Company) for the third quarter of 1949 states: 'technical machine gun knowhow deteriorated [d]ue to the limited opportunities for tactically sound use of heavy machine guns. In the one or two cases in which the Vickers was used, we could just as well, or better, have used a Bren.'<sup>145</sup> Some types of radio sets, such as the 38 and 48 sets, fell 'far short' in undulating terrain. Signallers therefore resorted to 'very old' 22 sets, which were hardly considered suitable, either, due to their weight. In 1948, newly arrived American 284A sets were an improvement, not least for artillerymen, for whom good communications were after all crucial.<sup>146</sup>

All these problems clarify why Scheepens believed small-scale, silent patrolling had the most chance of success. But that is not to say that fire support had limited value for him. As far as Scheepens was concerned, the use of 'mortar or artillery support' was 'self-evident' in order to limit Dutch own losses with such risky operations. In his words, such an attack had 'an entirely European character', despite its small scale.<sup>147</sup> Airplanes

were another way to overcome terrain difficulties, because they could also attack targets in hostile and densely wooded areas; however, weather conditions often prevented this, or it was impossible to make contact with ground troops. In addition, unlike artillery, airplanes could only operate in daytime.<sup>148</sup> In other words, although there was certainly no solution for every situation, part of the challenges raised by the terrain for military operations could be addressed with small-scale operations ensured of fire support.

#### OBSERVATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

Observation and communication are of vital importance when offering fire support. In the view of V Brigade artillery commander Lieutenant Colonel Schouten, aerial observation was the ‘most ideal form’ of observation for artillery fire against the ‘indigenous enemy’, who often hastily retreated. According to the brigade artillery commander, another advantage of aerial observation was that reconnaissance airplanes had better radio reception than observers on the ground, who were often hampered by ‘the Indies terrain with its many screens of kampong peripheries’.<sup>149</sup> Onne Dallinga of 3-6 RVA did indeed complain that all too often ground communications malfunctioned, so that observers like him regularly moved in the infantry front line ‘for nothing’. The division therefore focussed as much as possible on aerial observation from a Piper Cub or Auster, whereupon Dallinga grumbled that he had now been completely ‘decommissioned’. As aircraft capacity became ever scarcer following the end of the second offensive, gunners were compelled to once again regularly use ground observation, leading to a number of challenges when the enemy took flight.<sup>150</sup>

In most situations, ground observation was still preferable to predicted fire (*kaartvuur*), in other words fire without observation. Not only was there a greater risk of collateral damage and civilian casualties, but it was also difficult to measure the results – reason why several commanders discouraged or even prohibited this course of action.<sup>151</sup> A report evaluating the effectiveness of artillery during the first offensive and the subsequent guerrilla mainly attributed this to infantry commanders, who generally had a poor understanding of the potential of artillery: ‘[k]ampongs, which were difficult to reach and where concentrations were reported or suspected were dusted from time to time (in imitation of the English), preferably with predicted fire, obviously without visible result.’<sup>152</sup>

3-6 RVA, Dallinga's battery, appears to have offered predicted fire only on a limited scale. Of the 37 fire missions that the unit carried out between 1947 and 1949, only four are known to have been executed without observation. Three of these took place during the Dutch offensives and were prepared fires, the targets having been reconnoitred at an earlier stage. In the fourth fire mission in support of an action by infantry battalion 3-11 RI, the reconnaissance aircraft was too late to observe one of nine prepared targets.<sup>153</sup> 3-12 RVA, one of the few units of which these data are fully available, fired more often without observation, in up to a third of the fire missions. However, this frequently was prepared or disruptive fire at previously reconnoitred locations. The creeping barrages at the start of the two large-scale offensives were also to a large extent prepared predicted fire.<sup>154</sup>

Artillery fire delivered without observation had a strong non-discriminatory character. This mode of firing must have regularly hit civilians and other non-military targets. Yet under certain conditions, predicted fire could be carried out effectively and in a selective manner. In the first months of 1949 in West Java, for example, the gunners of 6 RVA laid so-called disruptive fires along the access roads in the area they controlled almost every night after curfew, in order to prevent the enemy from burying pull bombs and mines in the dark.<sup>155</sup> Such shelling had a preventive purpose, and the risk of civilian victims was relatively small.

Communication with ground troops was of vital importance when offering aerial support. Communications generally ran via radio stations (VCP) in jeeps or other vehicles. When 322 Squadron took over 120 Squadron's task in January 1948, the pilots practised cooperating with the ground troops by communication with the VCP many times. The exercises were a success, but 'the weather often proves to be a big handicap', noted the overview of ML activities of that month.<sup>156</sup> The weather not only deprived pilots of visibility, but also often disrupted radio contact. The terrain and the quality of the radios also caused pilots problems. VCPs were confined to the roads, whereas portable radios could only make contact with airplanes when these flew directly above the means of communication. Improvisation with signal patterns, message bags and tubes, and the laying out of signs on the ground were regular occurrences.<sup>157</sup>

In short, circumstances were often far from ideal for good observation and communication for artillery or air force operations. This inhibited deployment of these means and also had a detrimental effect on their ef-

fectivity. However, improvisation and use of alternative modes of communication could in part remove these obstacles. In addition, fire without observation could be effective in certain circumstances, which puts the image of 'blind' shelling sometimes sketched in the literature into perspective.

## MOTIVES

Friction caused by the adversary, the terrain and other circumstances, together with the material limitations and political restrictions described earlier, essentially curbed the deployment of heavy weapons and therefore restricted violence. On the other hand, the motives of the Dutch armed forces for deploying those weapons may be considered factors conducive to the use of force. A number of clear reasons for the deployment of artillery and air forces emerged in the above, such as preventative effect, increasing firepower of often scarce infantry, greater destructive power and attacking remote targets beyond the reach of ground troops. Another important function of artillery, in particular, was the protection of units, encampments, bridges and other objects and infrastructure.

Two overarching motives for using fire support are regularly and emphatically raised in the sources studied: the effect on morale and reduction of risk to the Dutch troops. These two factors were strongly related and interacted in different ways. Territorial and troop commander of North Sumatra Scholten aptly summarized the Dutch philosophy in a January 1947 letter discussing the operations of the past month: 'One thing that has become abundantly clear during these actions, is that the Indonesian armed forces have incredible fear and sacred awe for the effect of airplanes, also in terms of morale. [...] Using airplanes guarantees achieving the military objective in minimum time, with minimum losses on our side and maximum result.'<sup>158</sup>

## RISK

A database of unpublished ego-documents shows that in most cases of 'technical violence' where the author provides a reason for using those means, the most important motive is to reduce the risk to Dutch troops.<sup>159</sup> Protection of one's own troops also emerges many times in academic literature as an explanation for the deployment of heavy weapons.<sup>160</sup> After the devastating Battle of Surabaya the British had already adopted a more cautious attitude to the protection of their troops and often deployed



fire support to realize that aim. Dutch troops also learnt that lesson and largely copied the British in their approach.

However, the attitude of Dutch troops towards risk also evolved on its own. Early in the conflict, Infanterie v KNIL 'Andjing Nica' lost five men after an 'extremely unlucky encounter with extremists' in February 1946. 'This loss urged our boys to be more careful. They weren't so reckless anymore,' reports the battalion history. Later, 'Andjing Nica' was to enter into a close collaboration with 3-6 RVA and it strongly believed in deploying as much firepower as possible, as the analysis of the cannonade of Karanganyar in the previous chapter shows. According to company commander Sjoerd Lapré, Infanterie v's creed was: 'small groups, great firepower'. Meanwhile, the enemy taught them the principles of guerrilla warfare: 'be as quick as hares and as careful as virgins'.<sup>161</sup>

After the first offensive, when TNI began a large-scale guerrilla war – not least to limit its own losses – the Dutch attitude also hardened. Mortar gunner Van Dijk of 5-5 RI recounted the widespread feeling following a pull bomb attack: 'we became extremely alert to everything. We fired at the slightest thing. We didn't take any risks anymore.'<sup>162</sup> After the second offensive, when morale decreased because it became clear slowly but surely that the soldiers were fighting for a 'lost cause', the willingness to take risks diminished further. One indication of this trend is the number of dead on the Dutch side: it was lower in this period than during the offensive, even though conflict intensity and the related deployment of artillery were at their peak.<sup>163</sup>

Sources confirm this image, for example in the 4 VA unit history of the second quarter of 1949: 'the mood of the troops was good in this period, although hardly any fighting spirit was left; since it had been made known that repatriation had been resumed, the slogan was: "No more risks now!"'<sup>164</sup> On 31 March 1949 in Solo, tank commander Jan Eshuis wrote in his diary that 'everyone has just about had enough' and no one intends to 'run excessive risks for a lost cause'.<sup>165</sup> The commander of 2-2 RVA remarked: 'every drop of blood that flows for this – politically – lost cause is indefensible'.<sup>166</sup> The decreasing risk tolerance of the Dutch troops eventually also diminished their fighting power. According to Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, platoon commander Barth Hoogstraten of 3-1 RI considered his troops 'unable to withstand the enemy anymore' in the territory they had to control, "that is if the desire not to suffer any losses themselves is so paramount".<sup>167</sup>

A common form of risk avoidance adopted by infantry units was to request fire support when they encountered resistance. John Ritman of 4 VA: 'if there was enemy fire from a village, and the infantry came under attack [...] they requested artillery support to clear out those beds, those hotbeds in that kampong, where they had holed up. Well, the end justifies the means, we did that with artillery.' According to Ritman, the shells too often hit not only fighters, but also civilians.<sup>168</sup> During actions against large Indonesian concentrations, infantrymen were loath to leave the protective umbrella of gunfire.<sup>169</sup> In a letter, 2-6 RVA post commander Lieutenant G. L. Schim van der Loeff wrote that at one point the patrol area was decreased because there was no artillery available yet in the front line.<sup>170</sup> The air forces had a similar role. In the view of General Spoor, the ML was 'the dome, beneath which our military position is safe and the reason why our ground troops can fulfil their difficult task'.<sup>171</sup>

Military encampments were also safeguarded in a similar way. Nasution writes that Dutch bivouacs protected themselves at night 'with machine-gun fire, mortars and relentless cannon fire in all directions to prevent us [TNI and associated forces] from undertaking any action.' Every night one could hear the sound of bombardments and cannonades around the big cities, and 'aerial guerrilla-hunters' terrorized the villages during the day.<sup>172</sup> Hazekamp describes that his battery prepared enclosing fire in the daytime to provide relief to small, remote infantry posts manned by just five to ten men at night, 'a great psychological but if necessary also real support for those boys'.<sup>173</sup>

It is not always clear where to draw the line between excessive risk avoidance and what is called 'force protection' in military terms, but it is certain that the danger for Dutch soldiers was generally not imaginary. In an article about risk and courage, Jan van der Meulen and Sjo Soeters state that the sacrifices made by Dutch soldiers (around 5,300 dead, of whom about half were killed in action) during the Indonesian War of Independence, would be considered 'outrageous' by contemporary standards and were comparatively higher than the losses of the United States in Vietnam.<sup>174</sup>

'I will take good care of my people,' Spoor had said in a radio speech to families of soldiers in Indonesia at the start of the first offensive.<sup>175</sup> Yet the general could not prevent Dutch losses from rising later in the conflict, in particular during the second offensive and the period of total people's war that followed. Losses that, according to Lieutenant Colonel Hoor-



*A Sherman tank has hit a boobytrap of two Japanese aerial bombs during a Marine Brigade operation to Driyorejo on 13 June 1946. Source: Hugo Wilman, NIMH / Mariniersbrigade.*

weg, would ‘deeply affect not only the army itself, but also the Dutch population’.<sup>176</sup> These losses and home front considerations impelled troop commanders to take even better care of their men. While courage and fearlessness were officially rewarded with honours and decorations, informally the same went for prudent actions that saved soldiers’ own lives and those of other Dutch soldiers – but emphatically not those of the Indonesian population.

As the conflict progressed, personnel shortages on the Dutch side increased, in particular after the large territorial expansion following the second offensive. And the scarcer the manpower, the more economically it was used. This is why artillery and airplanes were increasingly deployed to replace infantry actions in the period after the second offensive. The opposite was the case for the Indonesian troops: they had a great shortage of weapons but not of personnel. The population formed an almost inexhaustible reservoir for the influx of fighters, as long as the population supported the fight.

This fact cannot be seen entirely separately from the much larger risk tolerance that Indonesian troops displayed. Even after many tens of thousands of casualties among their own forces and the civilian population, TNI and associated forces continued the struggle unabated. Subagijo is among those to praise the self-sacrifice of the *pemuda* in his work.<sup>177</sup> However, this 'asymmetry in the willingness to make sacrifices' (as Budding called it) was also a consequence of the total war waged by the Republic of Indonesia, whereas the military actions of the Netherlands had a limited number of political and economic goals.<sup>178</sup>

#### M O R A L E

The 1946 training guidelines for the Indisch Instructie Bataljon (Indies Instruction Battalion), had already noted 'the enemy's awe' for artillery and the 'very significant moral effect' of the use of the air forces.<sup>179</sup> Likewise, according to a NEIAF tactical guideline on air support, the moral effect of an airstrike on ground troops could be 'extremely great and disproportionate to the losses caused to personnel and materiel'. The guideline claimed that rockets, in particular, had that effect 'with their spectacular launch, the thunderous noise of the effluent propelling gasses, their precision and proportionally major impact'.<sup>180</sup>

The moral effect of artillery and aircraft fire on the opponent was regularly mentioned not only in guidelines and instructions but also in combat reports.<sup>181</sup> Following a three-day operation in which a battery came into action twenty-three times, the commander of 1-2 RVA noted in the war diary: 'in my opinion, one of the aims for the deployment of the battery, which was to crack enemy morale, was certainly achieved.'<sup>182</sup> But in practice, it did not always work out like that. Following a battle on 18 January 1949, a T Brigade intelligence report stated: 'enemy morale was extremely high, after four airstrikes by fighter planes and direct firing by



2 guns the enemy stayed in their positions.’ This direct fire had consisted of 77 shells fired by D Troop of 2-2 RVA at Padokan, a place south of Yogyakarta.<sup>183</sup>

This resilience of the TNI is in line with the trend that, as the conflict progressed, the Indonesian troops learnt how to better avoid and endure Dutch artillery and aircraft fire. Already in 1947, ‘a smaller reaction to the psychological effect of enemy artillery fire’ was observed in the Surabaya area, where fighting had been intense since late 1945.<sup>184</sup> In December 1946, Wil Dofferhoff of 5 VA remarked that as soon as the guns began firing in the Bandung area, the enemy retreated. Just over two years later, that effect was sometimes completely lacking. During artillery fire and simultaneous pursuit by infantry on 11 February 1949 in the Solo region, the enemy continued firing. Dofferhoff: ‘even under artillery fire they carried on and even fired at the Auster.’<sup>185</sup>

These experiences led the Directoraat Centrale Opleidingen (Central Training Directorate, DCO) to warn against firing ‘a few shots’ at an enemy concentration. According to the directorate, this was a wrong course of action because it offered the enemy the opportunity to retreat ‘practically unshocked’ – a warning comparable to that voiced by Lieutenant Colonel Schouten. In DCO’s view, the aim of a fire mission should be destruction, because ‘without losses artillery has less effect on morale, therefore inurement’. For the same reason, the directorate considered it undesirable to fire test shots at the target, to ensure that Indonesian soldiers would keep ‘a certain amount of respect for artillery fire’.<sup>186</sup>

The boost that artillery and air force deployment gave to the Dutch troops themselves was perhaps even more important than the (alleged) moral effect on the enemy. The air support guideline was clear about this: ‘For ground forces, the presence of friendly aircraft increases [our] own morale, whereas their absence causes morale to drop.’<sup>187</sup> The often lyrical descriptions of soldiers about the ‘mighty sound’ of the screaming shells, a ‘tremendous sight’, an ‘extravaganza’ and a ‘nice feeling’, et cetera, say it all.<sup>188</sup> For the crew of Dutch naval ships, in particular, fire missions provided a welcome change from monotonous patrolling. When the escort ship *Hr.Ms. Jan van Brakel* made a tour along the south coast of Sumatra on 30 July 1949, ten days before the ceasefire began, the crew tried to ‘provoke a little fireworks’. This was because, in the words of then naval officer Math Verstegen, ‘we would like to use our cannon and the Oerlikon machine guns again, it is war after all!’<sup>189</sup> All remained calm that evening, but

the example demonstrates that the availability of heavy guns created the temptation to use them.

The downside to their use was that – just as the moral effect on the enemy decreased with abundant deployment of heavy weapons – the willingness of one's own troops to fight could also fall. 'Artillery shoots the morale out of the infantry,' the instructors of IIB warned, 'and eventually the opponent will lose respect for artillery.'<sup>190</sup> In this light, the strong increase in the use of cannons and aircraft in the first half of 1949 can be seen as a sign of falling morale on the Dutch side. According to the military analyst Robert Scales, it has been the case since the days of Napoleon that 'shaken or green soldiers' needed more artillery. The fact that the French used more and more artillery in the later stages of the Indochina war was, therefore, a 'classic sign of unit fatigue'.<sup>191</sup>

Not only did the need for fire support of the Dutch soldiers – disappointed in politics and frustrated by the elusive guerrillas – increase, but fire discipline also suffered. A 1947 training document of the Infantry School for Reserve Officers stated that a lack of this had already caused 'much misery'. Resorting too quickly to defensive fire gave the enemy a 'sense of superiority', in addition to the ammunition problems that arose. 'If fired, every shot must be on target,' reads the document.<sup>192</sup> Likewise, the DCO stated in a guideline on artillery fire discipline: 'experience shows that there is a tendency to spread and scatter fire AT ANY OCCASION.' As a result, shells risked being spread too thinly and without direction, making their firing almost equivalent to wasting ammunition.<sup>193</sup>

The command structure also contributed to a high use of explosive shells. In this context Harinck quotes Captain M. C. Schram de Jong, commander of I VA: 'despite all the objections of the artillery commander, the infantry commander determines the number of projectiles, so that fire is delivered that is irresponsible from an artillery perspective and unnecessary ammunition is wasted.'<sup>194</sup> None of these warnings discussed potential adverse effects of wasteful use of ammunition and undirected fire for civilians. In late December 1948, T Brigade staff did warn against the 'disastrous consequences' of deteriorating fire discipline, but here, too, their only concern was the 'extremely limited supply'.<sup>195</sup>

Indonesian armed forces were aware of the fact that the enemy wanted to intimidate them with their use of heavy weapons. In a report on East Java, the Republican ministry of defence warned that the enemy 'tried to break the spirit of the people', not least by carrying out 'blind shelling



from a distance with heavy weapons' and 'airstrikes against the population and refugees'.<sup>196</sup> In the communiqué of 25 March 1949 mentioned above, Palar also states: 'the ruthless behavior of the Dutch soldiers are aimed at breaking the spirit of resistance amongst the Indonesians. It has brought about' – so he assured the Security Council – 'a completely reversed result. The hatred amongst the population towards the Dutch is mounting'.<sup>197</sup>

In their belief in moral effect, the Dutch military overlooked such opposite results. Tom Menger suggests that the frequent use of artillery by colonial rulers was perhaps a way of masking military ineffectiveness and to suppress a feeling of imperial anxiety.<sup>198</sup> The fear of the Dutch that the enemy would lose its awe for heavy weapons if these were used too wastefully and in an undirected way supports this. If the cannons and airplanes lost their intimidating effect, how were the Dutch then to protect themselves? How could they keep the enemy at bay?

#### REPRISAL AND REVENGE

Revenge was often a result of poor discipline and a dwindling morale, but also a motive in itself. It was a clear rationale during the bombardment of Karanganyar and the attack against Wonosari. There are very few legal grounds for 'revenge' in international treaties, but 'reprisal' and/or 'retaliation' is not categorically considered unlawful if defined as an armoured reaction to an infringement of the rules of war by the adversary, with the aim of stopping that infringement. Direct attacks against civilians were already prohibited during the Indonesian War of Independence, but an explicit prohibition of reprisals against civilians and their property followed only after the end of the conflict.<sup>199</sup> In practice, it is difficult to distinguish clearly between reprisal and revenge. Furthermore, the terms are often used interchangeably. However, just as with use of force during regular hostilities, the key questions when judging reprisals are whether the countermeasure is proportional and whether it differentiates between military and civilian objects.<sup>200</sup>

For a number of Dutch reprisals, it was questionable to say the least whether that was the case. Two striking examples are the airstrike against Banjarnegara on 4 November 1947, labelled as a reprisal by the Dutch army leaders (literally a 'punitive raid', elsewhere also a 'warning' and 'correction'), and the actions east of Padang in January 1947, when Mustangs machinegunned the Bandarbat market.<sup>201</sup> These violent acts were reac-

tions to attacks with a buried explosive, just as in Sukabumi in January 1949, where a Red Cross vehicle had hit a mine, killing four. KST units carried out a punitive expedition in the area, executing dozens of people and shelling a *kampong* with mortars. Nasution rightly spoke of a 'blind counterattack', which according to an Indonesian report claimed 104 victims, including a nine-year-old child.<sup>202</sup>

Ceasefire violations, bombardments or gruesome accounts of the supposed fate of Dutch soldiers made prisoners of war frequently served as justification for Dutch soldiers to 'punish' a *kampong* or region.<sup>203</sup> As Klaas Bruinsma wrote almost casually in a letter of January 1949: 'last night directed a little punitive fire with two cannons at a kampong, a military vehicle had been shot at from there.'<sup>204</sup> Revenge was a factor on all sides of the conflict and was not unique for heavy weapons either (as demonstrated by events at Sukabumi), but like the British before them, Dutch troops did regularly use artillery and air forces to underline the collective element of a punishment. In this regard, their deployment was to a certain extent comparable to arson, which often did not serve a military goal but was mostly used as reprisal or deterrent.<sup>205</sup>

It is clear that feelings of revenge often featured in requests for artillery and air support. It is impossible to calculate the exact part that revenge played in their total deployment, because it usually was not listed as a motive in official reports. Yet it was evidently such a structural phenomenon that T Brigade more or less formalized it in 1947. In an order for requesting artillery support of October of that year, the chief of staff explicitly required that applications for 'so-called reprisal fires' in future be submitted to the tactical commander.<sup>206</sup> The Commandant Zeemacht (commander of the naval forces) adopted a more careful wording in a memorandum for the operation of Dutch naval ships in March 1947: '[i]n principle no "retaliatory measures" will be taken, except with permission and at the order of high-ranking commanding officers.'<sup>207</sup>

## ETHICAL AND LEGAL ASPECTS REFLECTION

In their letters, diaries and memoirs, many soldiers of that time showed awareness of the fact that civilians could become victims of the deployment of artillery and the air forces. This puts the impersonal character that several authors ascribe to this violence into perspective, and is relevant for legal and ethical questions concerning responsibility and intent.

What is striking is that risk avoidance, the belief in moral effect, and to a lesser extent revenge and other motives not only served as explanations for the violence used, but also as justification. In September 1947, during the period of guerrilla warfare following the first offensive, Klaas Bruinsma wrote to his wife:

After the last skirmishes we do not take any risks anymore and shoot immediately. That means that sometimes innocent victims are hit. You cannot see on the outside whether it is a TNI member or a well-meaning kampong resident. It's a shame but there is nothing to be done. We have to make short work of it and stay one beat ahead of the TNI. For us, ten innocent natives is better than one of us. More than enough have already been killed as of late.<sup>208</sup>

Others appeared indifferent. Fokke Dijkstra, mortar gunner with 3-9 RI, wrote in his diary on the day of the bloodbath at Rawagedeh (he himself fired six mortar shells during the operation): 'I have noticed that the life of a native leaves our boys including myself cold. We can't take any risks and that says it all.'<sup>209</sup>

However, the violence and the victims it caused continued to gnaw at some veterans such as Henk Pézy of 3-6 RVA or John Ritman of 4 VA. The latter said of the shooting by his unit of a civilian who had operated a pull bomb: 'I didn't find that half as difficult as when, as part of infantry that we had to support, who had to sweep a certain area, that houses of civilians were destroyed with artillery shells [...], and were also killed by that, well that's a lot worse.' Later in the Netherlands, just like Pézy, he had been temporarily unable to work due to his experiences in Indonesia. A lieutenant of his unit had even 'suffered a breakdown' according to him and had been treated in a clinic in Amsterdam for years.<sup>210</sup>

The subsequent manifestation of this remorse is consistent with what is nowadays called moral injury in psychology, which is caused by a systematic deviation from one's own moral compass. Even though at the moment itself a soldier can feel compelled by circumstances to carry out certain actions, once home this justifying context is lost, leaving the veteran with doubt, guilt and a sense of self-betrayal.<sup>211</sup> Awareness of having crossed ethical boundaries and its justification go hand in hand in the diaries and letters of soldiers. Tank commander Jan Eshuis wrote in his diary in February 1949: 'I cannot figure out if we're going about it in the

right way. Sometimes you think we're too brutal and another time you think: not one should be left alive here.'<sup>212</sup>

Bruinsma, too, was candid about his way of dealing with this paradox in his letters home. After the incident with an unexploded grenade launcher in January 1949 which killed six kampong residents, he wrote that their artillery shells 'often [affect] innocent people as well. It's then that this whole messy business appals you, Jank. And yet I know the next time I will again just as easily command Fire!!! Without worrying much about where the shell ends up. I would hate to see all the dead we have caused here with all our bombardments.'<sup>213</sup>

#### RISK AND PROPORTIONALITY

For Bruinsma, the effects of the artillery fire on civilians were a tragic but unavoidable consequence of the war. A situation during the second offensive narrated by battery officer Frans Hazekamp in his memoirs aptly describes how this attitude can be explained. On that occasion, his unit fired at a *kampong* from which enemy mortar fire had been received. When dogs started barking in another *kampong*, the commander of the action believed that the Indonesian fighters had fled there, and hence a creeping barrage was laid on that village as well. Later it turned out that there had been 'quite a few deaths and injuries among women and children', partly because one grenade had landed in a hideout. Hazekamp looked back in 2008:

I wrote in my diary: 'Unfortunately, there was no other way given that the attackers were among those civilians. The protection of our own people had to be prioritized in that case.' Nevertheless, firing based on barking dogs would probably be unacceptable to ethicists and the judiciary in the Netherlands these days and possibly lead to criminal prosecution. It is noteworthy, that the A troop commander is a lawyer whose name [Edu Droogleever Fortuijn] is even today well-known and respected in legal circles! Where do you draw the line? For us, they were clear at the end of 1948: don't wait, don't take any risks. 'Live longer, shoot first' is the motto of many in response to the often-elusive enemy. Poor civilians!<sup>214</sup>

Although Hazekamp concluded in retrospect that a legal line may have been crossed with the shelling, the diary entry suggests that at the time

he saw it as a situation of military necessity, driven by self-preservation and the actions of the 'elusive enemy'. There is no clear-cut answer to the question of whether these and other bombardments violated international humanitarian law (besides the question of its applicability) and if these should be considered war crimes. Earlier it was pointed out that international humanitarian law was in a transitional phase and left much room for artillery shelling and airstrikes that claimed civilian lives.

The restrictions that applied to the use of heavy weapons in the 1945–1949 period – especially during ceasefires – do provide us with criteria for determining what was and what was not allowed, but as has been seen

*Picture from a series of an unknown Indonesian fighter with the initials A. K.  
Translation of the text on the picture: 'The consequence of the Dutch bombardments.... the population suffers.' Source: NMVW / Tropenmuseum.*



Het gevolg van de  
Hollandse bom-  
bardementen....  
het volk lijdt.



they also contain clauses that made it possible, under certain circumstances, to operate across the demarcation line. As the historian Robert Cribb rightly points out, much of the Dutch bombing and artillery fire could therefore be justified on the basis of military necessity.<sup>215</sup> It is indeed doubtful, however, whether such a justification is likely to have been successful if the reason for the shelling was the barking of dogs.

#### RESPONSIBILITY

The descriptions given by Hazekamp and other soldiers involved reveal that they considered some of the bombardments they carried out to have been excessive. Their reflections, moving between remorse, self-justification and indifference, show they were aware of the impact of their guns, also among the civilian population. This puts into perspective Van Doorn and Hendrix's view on the 'dehumanized' character of 'technical violence', a view also defended by authors such as Joanna Bourke, Robert Jay Lifton and Dave Grossman. Although distance to the target made killing easier, this did not mean that no one was concerned about the consequences. Imagined victims can also gnaw at one's conscience. This gives the soldiers who were directly involved in the use of force responsibility, too, albeit to a lesser extent than their more high-ranking commanders, who after all took the decisions about the use of heavy weapons. Michael Walzer states that the primary responsibility for aerial bombing and artillery fire rested in first instance with the 'far-seeing commanders', who routinely reassure the pilots and gunners that all targets are "legitimate military objectives".

In Walzer's eyes, it is different for cases of direct violence. According to him, the bloodbath of My Lai on 16 March 1968 in Vietnam shows where the ignorance of ordinary soldiers ends: Captain Calley, who was in charge, and his men knew that the villagers they were killing were innocent.<sup>216</sup> The journalist Neil Sheehan also remarks that personal killing made the difference in this case. If Calley's troops had pounded the village with bombs, napalm and rockets, they would simply have followed 'the normal pattern of American military conduct' – an echo of what Captain Westerling called 'the normal order of things': bombing and shelling Indonesian villages.<sup>217</sup> The historian and journalist Nick Turse writes that 'matter-of-fact mass killing that dwarfed the slaughter at My Lai normally involved heavier firepower and command policies that allowed it to be unleashed with impunity'.<sup>218</sup>

The same pattern can be discerned at Rawagedeh, also called ‘the Indonesian My Lai’. An investigation by the United Nations described the mass executions in this western Javanese village (now called Balongsari) on 9 December 1947 as ‘deliberate and ruthless.’<sup>219</sup> Most of the other cases of possible war crimes that led to outrage involved comparable direct and personal violence. Stef Scagliola explains this as follows: ‘norms relating to the permissibility of violence are in first instance based on the direct relationship between perpetrator and victim. A machine in between creates distance, making the violence seem less cruel, even though the result – killing people – is the same.’<sup>220</sup> This is in line with what Martin Shaw remarks about ‘risk-transfer war’: violence with indirect, less visible consequences which are harder to quantify is more accepted than suffering that is directly and visibly caused.<sup>221</sup> Contemporary drone attacks have the same effect: they offer the necessary physical and psychological distance to make the killing of people seem acceptable.<sup>222</sup>

However, it should be noted that the remorse of artillerymen such as John Ritman and Henk Pézy and the moving quotes of, for example, Klaas Bruinsma make it clear that the results were not necessarily less cruel. It is the intentionality of the deployment of artillery and air power that is often difficult to prove, and this is one of the main reasons for the fact that this form of violence is comparatively speaking problematized so little. In an article about sexual violence, Jonathan Verwey remarks: ‘[w]hereas in the heat of the battle gun and artillery fire can lead to unintentional casualties, that is not the case with sexual violence: that is always intentional.’<sup>223</sup> It is true that in conventional military operations, civilian casualties could almost always – rightly or wrongly – be classified as unintended collateral effects, and only occasionally resulted in diplomatic or political controversy.

An airstrike against Penanggungan in Central Java on 16 January 1949, previously mentioned briefly by Van Doorn and Hendrix, can illustrate this. W Brigade had requested an airstrike against this remote mountain *kampung* because it was believed that large concentrations of the Siliwangi Division were present there, en route to West Java. A Dutch airplane had been brought down by an anti-aircraft gun earlier in that region, but no patrol had ever set foot in the *kampung*. It was therefore not known that TNI had been holding 340 Chinese in Penanggungan for four weeks, and the airstrike caused a bloodbath among them. When a patrol of 3-11 RI entered the *kampung*, they counted 38 dead and 59 injured, three of

whom died of their wounds later. When the news reached Major General Meyer, troop commander of Central Java, he immediately started an investigation, with Van Doorn and Hendrix raising the question 'whether this would have been initiated if the victims had been Indonesian civilians' – meaning that Chinese casualties potentially created more political difficulties.<sup>224</sup>

An ML captain who investigated the incident concluded that nobody could be held responsible for the occurrence, because the presence of the Chinese had not been known. He thus disregarded the responsibility of the Dutch troops to collect reliable intelligence about the targets they intended to bomb or shell, and to protect civilians against the violence of war. Lieutenant Colonel Bastiaanse, commander of 3-11 RI, went even further and laid the blame on the victims. When the *wakil betua* (senior representative) of the Chinese in the area appeared before him for an explanation, he retorted with the question: '[a]re you yourself in retrospect not under the impression that the accident that has befallen you would never have occurred if some of your people had warned the Dutch soldiers, something for which you had four weeks' time?' According to Bastiaanse, the *wakil betua* answered: 'saja sala sendiri (it was I who made a mistake)' – despite his earlier statement that he had tried to warn the Dutch authorities several times. Meyer, who passed the file on to Batavia/Jakarta, concluded that as far as he was concerned the incident had to be ascribed 'to a fateful combination of circumstances', which was endorsed by headquarters. That was the end to it, and the military judicial authorities were not involved.<sup>225</sup>

#### COMPENSATION AND LEGAL APPROACH

Investigations such as into events at Penanggungan were rare. Simon de Waard, sergeant of the Regiment Speciale Troepen (Special Forces Regiment), complained about the one-sided focus on acts of violence of his unit in November 1949. He told Cees van Rij and Wim Stam, the two lawyers who had come to Indonesia to examine the 'claimed excesses', 'I have noticed that investigations into excesses have been repeatedly initiated against our unit, the Special Troops; why does that not happen against, for example, the Airforce, who repeatedly swept roads, causing countless civilian casualties.'<sup>226</sup> Captain Westerling had previously spoken in similar terms. However much remarks such as these served to divert attention from the violent transgressions committed time and again by the

Special Troops themselves, it is true that the military judicial authorities had a 'blind spot' for the actions of artillery and the air forces, as Lim-pach rightly observes. But in fact, that blindness refers primarily to the military commanders, on whose reporting the judicial authorities largely depended for initiating investigations into possible violent crimes.<sup>227</sup>

The concepts of proportionality and distinction, which are central to international humanitarian law, hardly appear to have been the basis for assessing artillery fire or air raids. The archives contain only shreds of investigations into the deployment of heavy weapons.<sup>228</sup> To give one example, the archives of the Marine Brigade contain a report filed by two Marine Brigade officers following an airstrike against Sembayat, near Gresik (East Java) on 9 January 1949. To the surprise of a member of the Veiligheidsdienst Mariniersbrigade (Marine Brigade Security Service, VDMB), two Fireflies had carried out an airstrike with machine guns and rockets, even though an intelligence operation into Indonesian military activities there was still ongoing. It was thought that there was a headquarters at the *pasar* and also gun emplacements and an ammunition storage in Sembayat.

However, during the airstrike the pilots hit 'neither the HQ [headquarters], nor the ammunition dump, nor 3 houses occupied by TNI'. Instead, according to the VDMB member, the victims were almost exclusively civilians. 21 to 25 people died and around 50 were injured. A police inspector at Gresik confirmed the report, as did the commander of the patrol sent out on inspection. Informers reported that the TNI had sought refuge at the approach of the airplanes, and the Republican army had therefore suffered no losses. It is not clear from the file how the case was dealt with.<sup>229</sup>

The Marine Brigade archives also contain correspondence about ARBAT firing at a 'wrong target' at Kesambenwetan, west of Surabaya, on 3 May 1946. According to the unit commander, this incident, which occurred just after the start of Dutch combat operations in East Java, was caused by inexperience of the artillery observer. The commander, Major P. B. M. ten Bosch, wrote to his superior: 'The mistake was made because the observer, acting too diligently, after delivering the predicted fire ordered [on Kesambenwetan], began firing of his own accord at Petiken kampong, where he thought he saw activity. He was certain there was no own infantry in that kampong, but did not know that it was a friendly kampong.' Later it turned out that the artillery fire had caused four dead and seven injured among the population.<sup>230</sup>

Subsequently, the commander had 'severely reprimanded' the officer involved 'and made clear to him that such actions are absolutely intolerable'. Still, he decided not to punish him because according to Ten Bosch the officer 'otherwise shows such ardour and devotion'. He did, however, wonder if there was anything that could be done for the stricken *kampong*. The shelling of the actual targets in Kesambenwetan had 'not resulted in any objections'. Even though this *kampong* had been both fired at by artillery and set on fire by tanks using phosphor ammunition, the complex had been completely deserted by civilians and transformed into a military barracks according to Ten Bosch.<sup>231</sup>

It is not known if the Marine Brigade compensated the 'friendly' *kampong* Petiken for the suffering inflicted. There are, however, other known cases where the Netherlands offered forms of compensation for damage caused by artillery shelling or airstrikes. Sometimes that was the result of political pressure, such as the purchase of a Dakota for India to replace the VT-CLA shot down during the first offensive. The Netherlands also paid out compensation for a British-Chinese trader-owned motorboat shelled by the navy in January 1947, by transferring five thousand Straits dollars to the British authorities in Singapore eighteen months later. The owner of the boat, however, regarded this amount as much too low.<sup>232</sup>

In other cases, retaining the goodwill of the population was the decisive factor, such as with the incident at Kesambenwetan. Another example was the organizing of a *slamatan* (ritual festive meal) by the artillery in July 1946 to compensate for chopping down a 'holy' tree in the line of fire near Benowo, north of Surabaya. Battery 2 VA had also considered it necessary to demolish a number of houses, allocating 700 guilders by way of compensation. In West Java, by contrast, Regiment 6 RVA had refrained from chopping down a number of sacred trees that obstructed the line of fire, because according to Klaas Bruinsma 'half the Indies' would have turned against them, 'including the friendly ones'.<sup>233</sup>

These examples of compensation may be seen as a form of acknowledgment of responsibility by the Netherlands for civilian harm. Generally speaking, the size of such indemnities remained small, however; compensation for damage and victims did not occur on a large scale; in that regard the artillery was no different from the infantry or other branches of the armed forces. Thus, the difference in acceptance between 'direct' transgressions such as in Rawagedeh and 'indirect' transgressions of artillery or the air forces are not explicitly manifested in the field of compensation.



The differences in the social processing of violent transgressions that took place during the Indonesian War of Independence are more visible. After the conflict had ended, the use of heavy weapons was only rarely problematized, in contrast to for example extrajudicial executions. As mentioned in the introduction, the *Excessennota* (the 1969 Memorandum on excesses) almost exclusively focuses on direct violence. In more recent years, descendants of victims of Dutch violence have submitted a large number of claims to the Dutch state. Mostly these were filed in the context of a ministerial regulation implemented in 2013, two years after widows of men summarily executed in Rawagedeh had won a court case against the state. The regulation was intended to ensure that similar cases could be settled in the future without the involvement of a judge. Other claims were nonetheless brought to court. Of the more than one hundred cases filed, only two referred to the use of heavy weapons: one related to the air raid on the market of Bandarbat in January 1947 and the other to the occupation of Rengat two years later. Both cases (discussed in Chapter 4) concerned victims of Dutch airstrikes. Both claims were rejected because apparently they were not ‘of comparable severity and nature as Rawagedeh and South Sulawesi’ – something that Liesbeth Zegveld, lawyer of the claimants, contested.<sup>234</sup>



*An Amtrack (Landing Vehicle, Tracked, also called Amphibious Tractor) of the Marine Brigade, with a .50-inch machine gun mounted in front, enters the mountain village of Batu, west of Malang, on 31 July 1947, during the first Dutch offensive. Source: H. Hakens, NIMH/Mariniersbrigade.*

# Conclusion

If the Proklamasi of 17 August 1945 is taken as the starting point of the Indonesian Revolution, then November of that year may be considered the moment when the revolution turned into a war. Previously, improvised Indonesian fighting groups had fought against lightly armed Japanese units, but on 1 November the RAF by its own account gave the freedom fighters at Magelang 'the first taste of modern warfare'.<sup>1</sup> In the following weeks and months, many more tastes were to follow, not least during the devastating Battle of Surabaya. During this urban battle, the British widely used fire support from field artillery, warships and aircraft, with the *pemuda* and population suffering high losses. The Dutch, who at the time were working on plans for building a force to restore 'peace and order' to the archipelago, concluded that heavy weapons would be indispensable in that endeavour. Artillery batteries, aircraft squadrons and warships were hastily dispatched to Indonesia by the army high command. Meanwhile, weapons embargoes, political restrictions, financial and personnel shortages limited the Dutch military ambitions.

Spoor, together with several high-ranking officials, criticized some of the British bombing and shelling and took pride in the so-called Dutch method of small-scale operations with light armament. However, Dutch troops did not hesitate to use heavy firepower themselves when they be-

gan taking over key areas on Java and Sumatra from March 1946, meeting heavy Indonesian resistance during their advance. This changing Dutch attitude cannot only be explained by the circumstances at the time but was also rooted in both colonial fighting methods as well as the recently ended Second World War.

#### BACKGROUNDS

Many of the key players during the Indonesian War of Independence placed themselves in a tradition of 'pacification' and 'policing' actions. This tradition also found its way into the training of the troops sent to Indonesia and the instructions they were given, including the renowned *Voorschrift voor de Uitoefening van de Politiek-politionele Taak van het Leger* (Regulations on the army's political and policing duties, VPTL) of 1924. Those regulations were of little value for large, coordinated operations with combined arms. In addition, despite the romanticized perception of colonial 'pacification' as small-scale patrols applying 'surgical violence', the pre-war KNIL had relied heavily on (naval) fire support during many of those conflicts. Its actions were based on European conventional military traditions; the rhetoric was colonial. The prevailing view was that the peoples of the archipelago had a 'wholesome fear' of bombardments and heavy weapons. In later colonial wars, the wish to limit the colonial army's own losses increasingly became paramount. The air forces were embraced as a welcome innovation, in particular by the British during the interbellum, followed by the Netherlands in the 1940s.

During the Second World War, fire support assets also took centre stage. During the operations in the European and Asian theatres, the Allied forces deployed aircraft and artillery on an unprecedented scale, not least in order to break enemy morale. Dutch artillery, air force and navy personnel who left for Indonesia after the war carried those experiences with them. Postwar training for recruits and staff was modelled along British or American lines. In this way, lessons and tactical concepts from the Second World War found their way to Indonesia. The post-1945 war in that sense formed part of the 'long Second World War' (Peter Romijn): a continuation of that conflict, fought largely with the same means, but with different adversaries and in a different context.

It has often been contended that the training of Dutch troops was poor and inadequate. For artillery, air forces and navy, things were more nuanced than for infantry, which dominates historiography. In particular the

units that were deployed first lacked thorough preparation, but additional training by British and KNIL artillerymen on location made up for much. Later units had more time to prepare and received relatively good artillery training. A future task as infantry was not always factored into the training programme; by their own account, some had not fired a single shot before their arrival in Indonesia. Others, including many KNIL gunners and pilots, had already received specialized training during the Second World War. Navy ships were not always well-prepared when they left for the archipelago, but there was plenty of time on board for additional instruction, even though 'dry practice' did not always realistically reflect reality. Especially cooperation with other branches was something that the navy could best train in action.

The great responsibilities that a guerrilla war put on the shoulders of young officers and NCOs has been put forward as an explanation for violent transgressions in Indonesia, but this moral factor was less significant in relation to fire support, because this had to be requested high up in the chain of command. However, pilots in particular were given much room for 'free hunting' of worthwhile targets when carrying out their duties, and the actions of the air forces were discredited the most. Many soldiers possessed little knowledge of international humanitarian law; the Netherlands did not consider it applicable, although in a general sense the Dutch did use it as a guideline. As international treaties or case law provided very few explicit frameworks regarding the actions of artillery and air forces, international humanitarian law did not play a large part in relation to the use of those weapons, at least not in a restrictive sense.

Indonesian fighting groups armed themselves with anything they could lay their hands on. Tanks, field artillery, anti-aircraft guns and mortars formed part of the inventory which they had acquired mostly through the Japanese. They also made grateful use of former KNIL materiel. Republican troops tried to maintain or even improve their armaments by trading with surrounding countries, but that was not easy for lack of a land connection to the Asian continent, as well as stringent Dutch coastal patrolling. In addition, much materiel was captured or destroyed by the British and later the Dutch. Although shortages in all imaginable areas plagued the TNI and associated forces until the end of the war, they very occasionally achieved superiority in weaponry in some regions, in particular later on in the conflict.

Service in PETA and other Japanese auxiliary corps had fuelled pre-existing nationalist sentiments of Indonesian fighters and infused them with a



strong fighting spirit. PETA, therefore, was a significant driving force of the armed independence movement. The KNIL, where many TNI members had served before the war, yielded important knowledge, not just about how to organize a modern army, but also about the way their Dutch adversary operated. One problem in operating heavy weapons was that few soldiers had experience with them, which hampered their effective use. The Indonesian armed forces tried to improve the level of training by offering courses at the Akademi Militer, founded as early as October 1945, as well as at several other training centres and schools. Student pilots received instruction in India and the Philippines, and foreign 'adventurer-pilots' helped the Republic with all sorts of services and expertise. Despite all that was achieved in wartime conditions, the proficiency, professionalism and armament of TNI and associated forces lagged behind that of the Dutch – one of the main reasons why it ultimately largely opted for guerrilla warfare as a fighting method.

#### DEPLOYMENT

During the conflict with the Republic, which lasted roughly three-and-a-half years, Dutch artillery saw action at least 1,480 times, which amounts to an average of a fire mission a day against one or more targets somewhere on Java or Sumatra. RNLA, KNIL and RNLN batteries fired a total of at least 133,191 shells. However, there were great differences between units, regions and periods. Some batteries acted only as infantry; others fired up to 15,000 shells. The air forces supported the infantry at least 942 times with machine guns, bombs and/or rockets; large warships carried out several dozen fire missions against targets in the coastal regions. Compared to other, more or less comparable wars, the total deployment of these fire support systems was not exceptionally large. Limited stocks and ammunition, political pressure and upheaval, and the nature of the guerrilla restricted the use of heavy weapons. Nevertheless, the deployment of artillery and air forces in particular formed an integral and inseparable part of the Dutch war effort.

Fierce fighting erupted as early as during the battle for the bridgeheads on Java and Sumatra in 1946–1947, during which Dutch troops had no hesitation in requesting the assistance of fire support units. It was in this period, during the fighting for Semarang in August 1946, that the Royal Netherlands Navy carried out its largest fire missions. Destroyers, in co-operation with KNIL artillery, carried out extensive and often inaccurate



bombardments in reaction to mass Indonesian attacks. Despite the great number of *pemuda* killed during the battle, in Indonesian memory this episode stands completely in the shadow of the fierce five-day battle against Japanese troops in October 1945.

During the two large-scale Dutch offensives (Operatie Product in July 1947 and Operatie Kraai in December 1948), artillery laid a creeping barrage in many places and supported the advance together with the air forces. NEIAF and MLD aircraft twice destroyed the air fleet of the Indonesian Air force, the AURI. The navy carried out preliminary bombardments during coastal landings. Following the offensives, a period of intensive guerrilla began that lasted for months, and during which heavy weapons saw action more than in any other period. During a sweep operation in October 1947, three artillery batteries fired almost two thousand shells at the small town of Karanganyar in Central Java, also hitting a busy *pasar* and killing a disproportionate number of civilians. Just like the battle in Semarang, this operation had not been studied integrally to date, despite its scope. One of the motives for the cannonade was revenge for a series of Indonesian attacks with pull bombs and mines.

Largely in reaction to the attack on Yogyakarta on 1 March 1949 – which has become iconic in Indonesian historiography – the Dutch carried out an airstrike nine days later in the Thousand Mountains (Duizendgebergte) east of the Republican capital city. Several TNI figureheads and an important radio transmitter were thought to be located there. Neither the transmitter nor any high officers could be traced during the very extensive operation, which proved to be a shot in the dark. Such disasters were depressing for Dutch morale, which was already waning in this most violent period of the struggle. Ever more frequently, the guns and airplanes served as replacement for scarce personnel – signalling future conflicts in which air power increasingly was to replace manpower. In Solo, both parties fought a bloody battle just before the final ceasefire in the night of 10–11 August 1949. In West Java, artillery units saw action even until November of that year, firing at Islamic fighters who were also battling against the TNI there.

#### IMPACT

The impact of the deployment of heavy weapons could be substantial, although the destructive potential did not always equal the damage that was actually caused. The extent of the impact cannot be precisely reconstructed. Dutch figures regarding losses on the Indonesian side are demonstrably

unreliable, as are Indonesian figures regarding Dutch casualties. All too often, the adversary and their dead remained invisible. It is even more problematic to break down casualty figures according to type of violence. In the two world wars, bombs and shells appear to have caused the majority of the losses, but the deployment of these means during those conflicts was on an incomparably greater scale. It is not plausible therefore to assert that artillery and air forces together caused the majority of casualties in Indonesia. The lion's share of troops deployed during the Indonesian War of Independence were infantry, and they were responsible for the vast majority of the use of force. Heavy weapons played a supporting role and in those cases the impact of combat operations was often the result of the combined deployment of various weapons. Comparisons between different sources at the micro level show that Dutch estimates at the macro level cannot be considered a reliable indication of the total number of Indonesian casualties. Indonesian sources sometimes provide higher, and sometimes considerably lower numbers.

Although it is therefore impossible to calculate the number of dead, it is beyond doubt that heavy weapons claimed thousands of victims, including among the civilian population. A major reason for this was that fighting often took place in populated areas, with Dutch troops regularly pounding *kampongs* with all available means whenever they came under fire from villages or suspected enemy presence there. An indirect consequence of this was that the population often lost any goodwill towards the Dutch, while support for the Republican cause increased. The Dutch also made themselves vulnerable to criticism in the diplomatic theatre, where attacks with howitzers and bombers were regarded as striking illustrations of the colonizer's evil intentions. Clearly, the Dutch did not adhere to their own framework of 'police actions' and frequently violated ceasefires with heavy means, despite the consequences for the population.

The population was not passive and during the conflict increasingly learnt how to protect itself better against Dutch violence, in particular by evacuation and the creation of shelters. However, this could not prevent civilians from being hit on a considerable scale to the very end. The TNI and associated forces also adapted, and in 1947 largely switched to guerrilla warfare as a fighting method – a direct consequence of the asymmetry in firepower. The European-inspired Dutch fighting methods did not achieve enough success against dispersed Indonesian fighting groups. Alternatives were sought, but insufficiently found, and only put into practice in a limit-

ed way. In practice, the most effective means in any given situation depended mainly on the nature of the target and the desired result.

Within that dynamic, the effectiveness of heavy weapons was strongly situation-dependent. In the right circumstances, artillery and air forces were a force multiplier. In addition, they functioned as a deterring force. Just as the tools of empire had been indispensable for a European power to assert authority overseas in the nineteenth century (Headrick's thesis), they continued to be essential for the Dutch during the Indonesian War of Independence to stand their ground against the numerically stronger Republican forces. The addition to this thesis by Bossenbroek, who concludes that the means were more influential than the motives in the Dutch colonial project, has gained renewed traction. After all, it took a huge effort for a small country such as the Netherlands to deploy such a large force. This was no different during the War of Independence than in the prewar colonial period.

Warships, bombers, fighter planes and field artillery enabled the efficient use of scarce 'human means'. Cooperation was essential in this regard. When fire support was used without accompanying infantry action or without observation, the military results were mostly disappointing, as was the case during large sweep operations which moved through the landscape with great fanfare. The terrain, the friction caused by the adversary, inaccuracy, faulty communications, inadequate maps and problems with observation, as well as limitations to materiel and political restrictions, were all factors that limited the effectiveness of heavy weapons, and partly also restricted their deployment. Conversely, the motives of the Dutch forces for their use can be considered factors conducive to violent action.

#### EXPLANATIONS

Protection of the Dutch troops was an oft-cited and recurrent reason for the deployment of fire support and explains its significant rise in the most violent periods of the conflict. This was augmented when, in the last year of the war, the soldiers in the field felt that the war was lost and morale plummeted. Troop shortages also significantly contributed to this. Artillery and airplanes were a much-loved antidote for diminishing morale, and remained attractive to Dutch soldiers because of their supposedly negative effect on the adversary's morale. In this way, the moral factor worked in two directions. Reprisals with heavy weapons also served to intimidate the opponent. Army leaders and staff officers warned that the moral effect

threatened to be lost with improper use of fire support assets. However, in discussions about the overuse of heavy weapons, they appeared to be more concerned about waste of ammunition than about potential collateral damage and civilian casualties. The Dutch focus on the psychological effect of fire support was clearly rooted in the colonial tradition of violence and the European, conventional thinking that had been expressed more strongly than ever during the Second World War. Through training and experience, that conflict influenced warfare in the unravelling colonies.

In the final phase of the struggle, a phenomenon developed that – in line with Petra Groen's observation that the success of the Dutch approach was also its Achilles' heel – may be described as a 'risk paradox'. The deployment of artillery and air power increasingly forced Indonesian fighting groups to disperse and operate in small groups. Dutch soldiers complained that the enemy became even more elusive and invisible than before, and that the effectiveness of heavy weapons decreased. Large-scale violent action was increasingly a shot in the dark. In order to 'engage' the adversary, units were forced to locate and follow the independence fighters deep into inhospitable terrain. In practice, this soon meant running more risk, something that had been caused, at least in part, precisely by risk-averse tactics. Alternative methods, such as forced relocation of the population in order to isolate fighters and cut off their lifeline, were rarely if ever used by the Dutch armed forces. Moreover, other than the British in Malaya or the French in Algeria, they did not have the means to do so.

This corresponds with Rasmussen's thesis that the best strategy against risk-averse western armies is to force them to take risks. In addition to dispersion and fragmentation, attacks with mines and pull bombs were effective ways for the Indonesian forces to achieve that goal. The phenomenon of 'risk transfer' observed by Martin Shaw – the transferral of one's own risk to the opponent and the population – also occurred in Indonesia, albeit to a limited extent. Compared to the late-twentieth-century conflicts that Shaw refers to, losses on the Dutch side in 1946–1949 were very high.

Furthermore, the extremely violent and often highly indiscriminate actions of infantry units in Indonesia show that the intensity of the use of force, and the extent to which soldiers distinguished between combatants and non-combatants, played as significant a part in the danger for civilians and enemy soldiers as the type of weapon used. No one demonstrated this more clearly than the notorious Captain Westerling, who was personally responsible for the deaths of hundreds of non-combatants. But Westerling

is an extreme example. In many cases, disproportional damage and civilian casualties were the result of collective and complementary violence of infantry and fire support units, of KNIL, RNLA and navy together.

While personal documents and self-testimonies of military personnel who operated heavy weapons show ethical awareness of the consequences of fire missions, soldiers also clung to the necessity of the violence they used in order to limit losses on their own side. Military personnel acknowledged that in certain fire support actions – regardless of whether or not international humanitarian law applied – they had crossed a line, and sometimes they suffered from long-term psychological issues after their military service. For even though many of them had been sent by the government, even though the commanders issued the firing orders, and even though it is difficult to prove that there was any intention to cause suffering, as the ones carrying out the orders they still felt jointly responsible. Soldiers cannot be blamed for wanting to protect themselves and their comrades, but they can be held accountable for intentionally risking civilian lives during their operations – in essence the classic dilemma of military necessity versus humanity.

Those involved rarely problematized artillery fire and airstrikes on legal and ethical grounds. Thus, the deployment of heavy weapons remained out of view of the military judicial authorities. Very occasionally, the Netherlands compensated damage caused by bombardments or shelling, but always on a small scale and often under political pressure. This type of violence has also largely remained under the radar in recent Indonesian damage claims. Nevertheless, this study shows that the Dutch armed forces at war with the troops of the Indonesian Republic wielded an iron fist as often as circumstances allowed; that they could or would not differentiate between combatants and non-combatants; that they were prepared to accept high numbers of civilian casualties; and thereby regularly transgressed ethical and moral boundaries – not just in the eyes of Indonesians but also according to their own judgement.





*Landscape with rice terraces and a volcano near Reksosari, 23 October 1947. Source: Th. van de Burgt, Nationaal Archief / DLC.*



# Epilogue

For decades, veterans have been saying that ‘when sweeping the stairs, one needs to start at the top’.<sup>1</sup> On 17 February 2022, the day the results of the project Independence, Decolonization, Violence and War in Indonesia, 1945-1949 were presented, Prime Minister Mark Rutte made a start with sweeping the first step by offering ‘a deep apology’ to the population of Indonesia and to ‘everybody in our country who has had to live with the consequences of the colonial war in Indonesia’. He also named the next steps down; the authorities of the time, parliament, the armed forces as an institution and the judicial authorities.<sup>2</sup> It is debatable how meticulous the cleaning has been – in a speech at the National Indies monument on 3 September 2022, while repeating the previously offered apologies, Rutte simultaneously removed all responsibility from the bottom step, the individual enlisted servicemen<sup>3</sup> – but the debate is part of the process. Once swept, the stairs can be climbed again, creating room for new insights, new questions. Also for compassion for all the suffering caused by this history that continues to affect next generations. Earlier, David van Reybrouck had argued that once society has come to terms with the long-obscured Dutch atrocities in Indonesia, a new phase of historical awareness can be achieved. Using a metaphor derived from the Borobudur temple as the step pyramid of historical awareness, he describes how

in the final stage 'the level of great compassion' arises, something he calls 'a form of silence'.<sup>4</sup>

That compassion can be expressed in different ways. The silence mentioned by Van Reybrouck is sought during commemorations, a historical process free of language, ironically enough often surrounded by much talk about who or what should be commemorated. In my mind's eye, the word silence again evokes that black-and-white *sawa* landscape at Rekso-sari, captured by army photographer Thijmen van de Burgt, against the timeless backdrop of volcanoes. On a different photo in the series that he made on 23 October 1947, the same landscape is shown in shades of grey, but the artillery piece has now disappeared.

Following the transfer of sovereignty in December 1949, the Dutch handed many heavy weapons over to the Indonesian armed forces, who subsequently used them in internal conflicts that plagued the young Republic.<sup>5</sup> As silent witnesses to the past, the tanks and cannons now sit at museums and barracks, together with stone monuments and memorials at the locations where the violence occurred. In the Netherlands, too, the old guns can be seen in several places. One field gun is flaunted at the National Military Museum in Soesterberg. A Mitchell that once soared over the *sawas* in Indonesia is silently suspended from the ceiling, although strangely enough a misleading sign below the aircraft suggests it was used against Nazi Germany.<sup>6</sup> One of the warships is now on display in Den Helder, but the museum remains silent about its use after the Second World War.<sup>7</sup> Nonetheless, anyone who wants to can still hear the firing of artillery deployed in Indonesia at the Koekamp in The Hague, where the 25-pounders break the silence every year on Prinsjesdag (the Dutch Budget Day) – with blanks, of course.

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Despite the contribution of all who helped to create this book, as the author I remain responsible for its contents.

# Appendix



### *Artillery batteries<sup>1</sup>*

| <i>Cluster</i>                            | <i>Battery</i>            | <i>Branch</i> | <i>Location / Command</i>            | <i>Period deployed in Indonesia</i> | <i>Remarks</i>            |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b><i>KNIL artillery</i></b>              | VA I                      | KNIL          | C. Sumatra<br>U Brigade              | Dec 1948–Dec 1949*                  |                           |
|                                           | VA II                     | KNIL          | E. Java, A Div.<br>X Brigade         | Apr 1949–Dec 1949*                  |                           |
|                                           | VA III                    | KNIL          | S. Sumatra<br>Y Brigade              | Apr 1949–Dec 1949*                  | Not employed as artillery |
|                                           | VA IV                     | KNIL          | N. Sumatra<br>Z Brigade              | May 1949–Dec 1949                   |                           |
|                                           | VA V                      | KNIL          | C. Java<br>T / V Brigade             | Sep 1949–Dec 1949                   | Not employed as artillery |
|                                           | VA VI                     | KNIL          | C. Java<br>T Brigade                 | Sep 1949–Dec 1949*                  | Not employed as artillery |
|                                           | 1 VA / Ic<br>Bat. VA      | KNIL          | C. Java<br>T Brigade                 | Apr 1946–Nov 1947                   |                           |
|                                           | 2 VA / Iie<br>Bat. VA     | KNIL          | E. Java, A Div.<br>X Brigade         | Apr 1946–Nov 1947                   |                           |
|                                           | 3 VA                      | KNIL          | W. Java, B Div.<br>U / W Brigade     | Apr 1946–Dec 1947                   |                           |
| <b><i>Calmeyer units</i></b>              | 4 VA / AVA<br>/ A 4 Field | RNLA          | C. Sumatra<br>U Brigade              | Dec 1946–Jul 1949                   |                           |
|                                           | 5 VA / AVA<br>/ A 5 Field | RNLA          | C. Java<br>V Brigade                 | Dec 1946–Aug 1949                   |                           |
|                                           | 6 VA / AVA<br>/ A 6 Field | RNLA          | TtTC S. Sumatra<br>Y Brigade         | Nov 1946–Aug 1949                   |                           |
|                                           | 7 VA / AVA<br>/ A 7 Field | RNLA          | TtTC N. Sumatra<br>Z Brigade         | Nov 1946–Aug 1949                   |                           |
|                                           | 8 VA / AVA<br>/ A 8 Field | RNLA          | S. Sumatra<br>Y Brigade              | Apr 1947–Dec 1949                   |                           |
|                                           | 9 VA / AVA<br>/ A 9 Field | RNLA          | N. Sumatra<br>Z Brigade              | Jun 1947–Jun 1949                   |                           |
| <b><i>C Division<br/>'7 December'</i></b> | 1-2 RVA                   | RNLA          | W. Java<br>1 Inf. Brig. Gp.          | Dec 1946–Nov 1949                   |                           |
|                                           | 2-2 RVA                   | RNLA          | W. Java, T Brig.<br>1 Inf. Brig. Gp. | Dec 1946–Sep 1949                   |                           |
|                                           | 3-2 RVA                   | RNLA          | W. Java<br>1 Inf. Brig. Gp.          | Dec 1946–Oct 1949                   |                           |
|                                           | 1-6 RVA                   | RNLA          | W. Java<br>2 Inf Brig. Gp.           | Nov 1946–Oct 1949                   |                           |
|                                           | 2-6 RVA                   | RNLA          | W. Java<br>2 Inf. Brig. Gp.          | Nov 1946–Oct 1949                   |                           |
|                                           | 3-6 RVA                   | RNLA          | W. / C. Java<br>V / T Brigade        | Nov 1946–Nov 1949                   |                           |

|                                         |                          |      |                                      |                       |                                          |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------|------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------------|
|                                         | 1-8 RVA                  | RNLA | W. Java<br>1/3 Inf. Brig. Gp.        | Nov 1946–Sep<br>1949  |                                          |
|                                         | 2-8 RVA                  | RNLA | W. Java<br>3 Inf. Brig. Gp.          | Nov 1946–Nov<br>1949  |                                          |
|                                         | 3-8 RVA                  | RNLA | W. Java<br>1/3 Inf. Brig. Gp.        | Nov 1946–Nov<br>1949  |                                          |
| <b><i>D Division<br/>'Palmboom'</i></b> | 1-12 RVA                 | RNLA | E. / C. Java<br>X / V Brigade        | Jun 1947–Dec<br>1949  |                                          |
|                                         | 2-12 RVA                 | RNLA | C. Java<br>T / W Brigade             | Nov 1947–Dec<br>1949  |                                          |
|                                         | 3-12 RVA                 | RNLA | W. / C. Java<br>W / V Brigade        | Nov 1947–Dec<br>1949  |                                          |
|                                         | 16 RVA                   | RNLA | Quartermaster<br>General             | n.a.                  | Disbanded<br>upon arrival                |
|                                         | 18 RVA                   | RNLA | Quartermaster<br>General             | n.a.                  | Disbanded<br>upon arrival                |
| <b><i>Ind. Inf.<br/>Brig. (ZIB)</i></b> | 1-41 RVA                 | RNLA | W. Java, F Brig.<br>1 Inf. Brig. Gp. | Jan 1949–Dec<br>1949  |                                          |
|                                         | 2-41 RVA                 | RNLA | W. Java, F Brig.<br>2 Inf. Brig. Gp. | Oct 1948–Dec<br>1949* | Not employed<br>as artillery             |
|                                         | 3-41 RVA                 | RNLA | W. Java, F Brig.<br>3 Inf. Brig. Gp. | Dec 1948–Dec<br>1949  |                                          |
|                                         | 1-42 RVA                 | RNLA | E. Java<br>G Brigade                 | Jun 1949–Dec<br>1949  |                                          |
|                                         | 2-42 RVA                 | RNLA | 42 ZIB                               | Jun 1949–Dec<br>1949* | Not employed<br>as artillery             |
|                                         | 3-42 RVA                 | RNLA | 42 ZIB                               | Jun 1949–Dec<br>1949* | Not employed<br>as artillery             |
|                                         | 1-43 RVA                 | RNLA | W. Java                              | Oct 1949–Dec<br>1949  | Not employed<br>as artillery             |
|                                         | 2-43 RVA                 | RNLA | W. Java                              | Oct 1949–Dec<br>1949  | Converted to<br>infantry upon<br>arrival |
|                                         | 3-43 RVA                 | RNLA | W. Java                              | Oct 1949–Dec<br>1949  | Administra-<br>tive<br>deployment        |
| <b><i>Marine<br/>Brigade</i></b>        | ARBAT                    | RNLN | E. Java<br>X Brigade                 | Mar 1946–Jun<br>1949  |                                          |
| <b><i>'Illegal'<br/>artillery</i></b>   | 1-3 RI (10.5<br>Hw)      | RNLA | W. / C. Java<br>B Div., V Brig.      | 1946–1947*            |                                          |
|                                         | 1-5 RI (7.5<br>Field)    | RNLA | W. / C. Java<br>B Div., V Brig.      | 1946–1947*            |                                          |
|                                         | 1-9 RI (7.5<br>Mountain) | RNLA | W. / C. Java<br>B Div., V Brig.      | 1946–1947*            |                                          |

\* Exact dates unknown

### *Air force squadrons<sup>2</sup>*

| <i>Squadron</i>    | <i>Branch</i>   | <i>Aircraft</i>                                       | <i>No. of planes (operational)</i> | <i>Armament / task</i>                                                                 | <i>Period deployed</i>                                                                   |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6 Squadron<br>ARVA | NEIAF           | Taylorcraft<br>Auster                                 | 38 (19–17)                         | None / artillery<br>fire direction                                                     | Established 16<br>Aug 1946; arrival<br>12 Nov 1946, dis-<br>banded 1 Mar 1950            |
| 16 Squadron        | NEIAF           | North American<br>B-25 Mitchell                       | 9–8 (5)                            | Strafer planes<br>with 10–12 x 12.7<br>mm MG                                           | Established 1 Nov<br>1946;<br>disbanded Aug<br>1948                                      |
| 17 Sq VAR-<br>WA   | NEIAF           | L4-J Piper Cub                                        | 28 (18–12)                         | Some with hand<br>grenade system<br>/ reconnaissance<br>and artillery ob-<br>servation | Established<br>1 Nov 1946;<br>disbanded<br>Aug 1948                                      |
| 18 Squadron        | RAAF /<br>NEIAF | North American<br>B-25 Mitchell<br>(several versions) | 31–8 (5–13)                        | Max. bomb load<br>4,000 lbs; 4 x<br>12.7 mm MG /<br>bombers                            | Established<br>Apr 1942;<br>active in ID.<br>1 Apr 1946; dis-<br>banded<br>15 May 1950   |
| 19 Squadron        | RAAF /<br>NEIAF | Douglas C-47<br>Dakota                                | 45 (37)                            | n.a. / transport                                                                       | Established<br>15 Aug 1945;<br>active in ID.<br>5 May 1947;<br>disbanded<br>1 Apr 1948   |
| 20 Squadron        | NEIAF           | North American<br>B-25 Mitchell                       | 13 (6)                             | n.a. / transport                                                                       | Established<br>1 Nov 1946;<br>disbanded<br>20 June 1950                                  |
| 120 Squad-<br>ron  | RAAF /<br>NEIAF | Curtiss P-40N<br>Kitty Hawk<br>(later P-51)           | 34–12<br>(10–9)                    | 6 x 12.7 mm MG;<br>max. bomb load<br>1,000 lbs / fight-<br>er-bombers                  | Established<br>10 Dec 1943;<br>active in ID.<br>5 May 1946;<br>disbanded<br>10 June 1950 |

|                                                                     |             |                                                 |                                                    |                                                                                                  |                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 121 Squadron                                                        | NEIAF       | North American P-51 Mustang                     | 20-12 (8-6)                                        | 6 x 12.7 mm MG; max. bomb load 2,000 lbs / fighter-bombers                                       | Established 1 May 1946; Temporarily disbanded 15 Dec 1947-16 Dec 1948; disbanded 6 Jan 1949       |
| 122 Squadron                                                        | NEIAF       | North American P-51 Mustang                     | 17-9 (8-9)                                         | 6 x 12.7 mm MG; max. bomb load 2,000 lbs / fighter-bombers                                       | Established 1 Nov 1946; disbanded 15 Apr 1950                                                     |
| 322 Squadron                                                        | RAF / NEIAF | Supermarine Spitfire Mk IX                      | 20-18 (10)                                         | 2 x 0.50-inch MG / max. bomb load 1000 lbs                                                       | Established 12 June 1943; Re-established 27 Sep 1946; arrival 7 Oct 1946; Back to NL Nov 1949     |
| Photo Reconnaissance Unit (PVA)                                     | NEIAF       | Several types                                   | 11                                                 | n.a. / photo mapping, reconnaissance                                                             | Established 1 Jan 1947; disbanded 1 Mar 1950                                                      |
| 860 Squadron                                                        | RN / MLD    | Fairey Firefly Mk I                             | 15-10 (6)                                          | 4 x 20 mm guns; max. 860 lbs rockets; max. bomb load 1,000 lbs / fighter-bombers, torpedo planes | Established June 1943; arrival Oct 1946; Back to NL 18 Mar 1950                                   |
| 321 Squadron / Eastern Reconnaissance and Transport Squadron (OVTs) | RAF / MLD   | Consolidated PBY Catalina / Douglas C-47 Dakota | 8-4 (type A)<br>16-15 (type B)<br>15-14 (Dakota's) | 3 x .303-inch MG; 2 x .50-inch MG; max. bomb load 4,000 lbs / transport and reconnaissance       | Established 1 June 1940; Transfer to MLD Dec 1945; change to OVTs Dec 1946; disbanded 1 Febr 1950 |

### *Artillery ships<sup>3</sup>*

| <i>Ship name</i>             | <i>Ship type</i>                         | <i>History</i>                                           | <i>Armament</i>                                                                                                    | <i>Period in Indonesian waters</i>                                                                                |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Hr.Ms. Karel Doorman</i>  | Aircraft carrier                         | 1943 <i>Nairana</i><br>1943 RN<br>1946 RNLN              | 2 cannon 10.2 cm;<br>4 x 4 40 mm MG;<br>2 x 8 20 mm MG                                                             | 1 Sep 1946 departure to ID;<br>18 Feb 1947 back in NL                                                             |
| <i>Hr.Ms. Van Kinsbergen</i> | Artillery instruction ship / cannon boat | 1939 launch, Rotterdam;<br>1940–1945 Allied service      | 2 cannons 10.5 cm;<br>3 x 40 mm MG;<br>2 x 20 mm MG                                                                | 14 Oct 1945 departure to ID;<br>Oct 1946 back in NL                                                               |
| <i>Hr.Ms. Banckert</i>       | Destroyer                                | 1943 launch, UK;<br>ex <i>Quilliam</i> RN;<br>1945 RNLN  | 4 cannon 12 cm;<br>4 x 40 mm MG;<br>6 x 20 mm MG;<br>2 quadruple torpedo tubes                                     | 22 June 1946 departure to ID;<br>18 Aug 1948 departure to NL<br>20 Sep 1948 back in NL                            |
| <i>Hr.Ms. Evertsen</i>       | Destroyer                                | 1942 launch, UK;<br>ex <i>Scourge</i> RN;<br>1946 RNLN   | 4 cannon 11.9 cm;<br>6 x 40 mm MG;<br>2 quadruple torpedo tubes;<br>2 depth charge racks; 4 depth charge launchers | 18 Feb 1946 departure to ID;<br>Dec 1947 departure to NL for maintenance                                          |
| <i>Hr.Ms. Kortenaer</i>      | Destroyer                                | 1942 launch, UK;<br>ex <i>Scorpion</i> RN                | 4 cannon 12 cm;<br>6 x 40 mm MG;<br>2 quadruple torpedo tubes;<br>2 depth charge racks; 4 depth charge launchers   | 28 Oct 1945 departure to ID;<br>May 1947 back in NL for maintenance;<br>Apr 1948 departure to ID; 1950 back to NL |
| <i>Hr.Ms. Piet Hein</i>      | Destroyer                                | 1943 launch, UK;<br>1943 <i>Separis</i> RN;<br>1945 RNLN | 4 cannon 11.9 cm;<br>6 x 40 mm MG;<br>2 quadruple torpedo tubes                                                    | 22 Oct 1945 departure to ID;<br>17 Nov 1945 arrival in ID;<br>Aug 1947 departure to NL                            |
| <i>Hr.Ms. Tjerk Hiddes</i>   | Destroyer                                | 1941 <i>Non Pareil</i> RN                                | 6 cannon 12 cm;<br>4 x 40 mm MG;<br>6 x 20 mm MG;<br>10 torpedo tubes                                              | 2 June 1947 departure to ID; mid-1949 departure to NL                                                             |

|                                    |                                      |                                                                               |                                                                              |                                                                                                        |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Hr.Ms. Van Galen</i>            | Destroyer                            | 1941 <i>Noble</i> RN                                                          | 6 cannon 12 cm;<br>4 x 40 mm MG;<br>6 x 20 mm MG;<br>10 torpedo tubes        | 23 Aug 1945 departure to ID;<br>12 Sep 1945 arrival ID;<br>Dec 1949 voyage home                        |
| <i>Hr.Ms. Jacob van Heemskerck</i> | Air defence cruiser                  | 1938 RNLN;<br>1941-1944 Allied service, sea escort, Eastern Fleet             | 10 cannon 10.2 cm;<br>8 x 40 mm MG;<br>8 x 20 mm MG;<br>2 depth charge rails | Oct 1945 arrival ID;<br>22 July 1946 departure to NL;<br>29 Aug 1946 arrival NL                        |
| <i>Hr.Ms. Jan van Brakel</i>       | Escort ship / minesweeper mothership | 1936 RNLN;<br>1940-1944 Allied convoy service                                 | 2 cannon 7.5 cm;<br>1 cannon 3.7 cm;<br>4 x 12.7 mm MG;<br>60 mines          | 10 Oct 1945 departure to ID;<br>1951 back to NL                                                        |
| <i>Hr.Ms. Tromp</i>                | Light cruiser                        | 1937 RNLN;<br>1942 Japanese inv.;<br>1942 US 7th Fleet;<br>1944 Eastern Fleet | 6 cannon 15 cm;<br>2 x 40 mm MG;<br>4 x 12.7 mm MG;<br>2 x 3 torpedo guns    | 16 Sept 1945 arrival ID;<br>11 Feb 1946 departure from ID;<br>3 May 1946 arrival in NL for maintenance |



# Notes

## Preface

- 1 Netherlands Institute of Military History (Nederlands Instituut voor Militaire Historie, NIMH), 509, Collectie Dekolonisatie van Nederlands-Indië (1945–1950), inventory number 1437, Verslagen en overzichten afkomstig van de 2e afdeling 2e Regiment Veldartillerie onder bevel van majoor der Artillerie A.A. Bril en kapitein M.C. Schram de Jong en A.J. Huurman betreffende de inzet van de eenheid op West- en Midden-Java o.a. te Buitenzorg, Semarang, Djokjakarta, Pekalongan, Poerworedjo en Koetoardjo, 17 oktober 1947–1 oktober 1949. The photograph taken by Thijmen van de Burgt can be found in the National Archives (Nationaal Archief, The Hague, NL-HaNA), 2.24.04.02, Fotoarchief van de Dienst voor Legercontacten Indonesië (DLC), 1946–1950, and is part of a series of several dozen pictures that he took that day.
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- 3 Petra Groen, Anita van Dissel, Mark Loderichs, Rémy Limpach and Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, *Krijgsgeweld en kolonie. Opkomst en ondergang van Nederland als koloniale mogendheid* (Amsterdam 2021) 13.
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## 1. Introduction

- 1 Raymond Pierre Paul Westerling, *Challenge to Terror* (1952; Kindle 2018) 850–963; Jaap de Moor, ‘Van vrije jongen tot ratu adil. De memoires van kapitein Raymond Westerling’, *Indische Letteren* 8 (1993) 171–179, 176.
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- 3 Jacques van Doorn and Wim Hendrix, *Ontsporing van geweld. Het Nederlands-Indonesisch conflict* (4th edition, Zutphen 2012) 209.

- 4 See for example for the air force Otto Ward, *De militaire luchtvaart van het KNIL in de na-oorlogse jaren 1945–1950* (Houten 1988); for the artillery Jan Hoffenaar, Joep van Hoof, Jaap de Moor and Christ Klep, *Vuur in beweging. 325 jaar veldartillerie, 1677–2002* (Amsterdam 2002); for the cavalry C. A. Heshuisius, *KNIL cavalerie 1814–1950. Geschiedenis van de cavalerie en pantsertroepen van het Koninklijk Nederlands-Indische leger* (The Hague 1978) and for the navy R. E. van Holst Pellekaan and I. C. de Regt, *Operaties in de Oost. De Koninklijke Marine in de Indische archipel (1945–1951)* (Amsterdam 2003). In addition, there are many commemorative books and corps histories of specific units.
- 5 Rémy Limpach, *De brandende kampongs van generaal Spoor* (Amsterdam 2016) 780. The observation that additional research of this theme is necessary or desirable can also be found also in G. Teitler, *Vlootvoogd in de knel. Vice-admiraal A.S. Pinke tussen de marinestaf, Indië en de Indonesische revolutie* (Assen 1993) 10–11; R. P. Budding, *Beheersing van geweld. Het optreden van de Nederlandse landstrijdkrachten in Indonesië 1945–1949* (Amsterdam 1996) 54; Judith Lizé, 'De lucht boven de sawa's' (MA thesis Universiteit Utrecht 2015) 39, 54–56; Bart Luttkhuis and Christiaan Harinck, 'Voorbij het koloniale perspectief. Indonesische bronnen en het onderzoek naar de oorlog in Indonesië, 1945–1949', *BMGN – The Low Countries Historical Review* 132, 2 (2017) 51–76, at 71; Martin Hoekstra, 'De Republiek in een wurggreep. De Nederlandse marineblokkade tijdens de Indonesische Onafhankelijkheidsoorlog (1945–1949)' (MA thesis Universiteit Leiden 2018) 10; Bart Luttkhuis, 'What Makes Violence Extreme, and Who Is Responsible?' in 'Debate on *De brandende kampongs van Generaal Spoor* by Rémy Limpach, with Bart Luttkhuis, Abdul Wahid, Robert Cribb, Harry Poeze', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde / Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia* 173, 4 (2017) 559–561, 560.
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- 8 Azarja Harmanny and Brian McAllister Linn, "'The Normal Order of Things': Contextualizing "Technical Violence" in the Netherlands–Indonesia War', in Thijs Brocades Zaalberg and Bart Luttkhuis (eds.), *Empire's Violent End: Comparing Dutch, British, and French Wars of Decolonization, 1945–1962* (Ithaca, NY 2022) 120–140, at 121, note 4.
- 9 Referred to in Rebecca A. Adelman and David Kieran, 'Introduction: Rethinking Killing at a Distance', in *ibid.* (eds.), *Remote Warfare: New Cultures of Violence* (Minneapolis, MN 2020) 1–30, at 6.
- 10 Joseba Zulaika, *Hellfire from Paradise Ranch: On the Front Lines of Drone Warfare* (Oakland, CA, 2020) 112–113.
- 11 Ibid., 116–123; see for other factors at play Alaa Hijazi et al., 'Psychological Dimensions of Drone Warfare', *Current Psychology* 38, 5 (2017) 1285–1296.
- 12 Petra Groen, *Marsroutes en duaaalsporen. Het Nederlands militair-strategisch beleid in Indonesië 1945–1950* (The Hague 1991) 209; Gert Oostindie, with the cooperation of Ireen Hoogeboom and Jonathan Verwey, *Soldaat in Indonesië. Getuigenissen van een oorlog aan de verkeerde kant van de geschiedenis* (Amsterdam 2015) 224, 251; Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 99, 337, 418–419, 435, 457, 701–703, 713, 726, 742. Interview author with H. (Harie) Geraets, 5 October 2017 (with Florine van Berne).
- 13 *Nota betreffende het archiefonderzoek naar de gegevens omtrent excessen in Indonesië begaan door Nederlandse militairen in de periode 1945–1950* (1969, hereinafter: *Excessennota*). See for more information Oostindie, *Beyond the Pale*, 13.
- 14 L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, vol. 12: *Epiloog: Tweede Helft* (Leiden 1988); J. J. P. de Jong, *Diplomatie of strijd. Een analyse van het Nederlands beleid tegenover de Indonesische Revolutie, 1945–1947* (Meppel 1988); Groen, *Marsroutes en duaaalsporen*; Wim van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indië. De val van het Nederlandse imperium in Azië* (Amsterdam 2000).
- 15 Budding, *Beheersing van geweld*, 51–54.
- 16 Stef Scagliola, *Last van de oorlog. De Nederlandse oorlogsmisdaden in Indonesië en hun verwerking* (Amsterdam 2002) 79.
- 17 Ibid., 56, 80.
- 18 Ibid., 80–89.
- 19 Oostindie, *Soldaat in Indonesië*, 163.
- 20 Ibid., 146.
- 21 Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 389.
- 22 Christiaan Harinck, *Zoeken, aangrijpen en vernietigen. Het Nederlandse militaire optreden in Indonesië, 1945–1949* (Amsterdam 2022) 34.

- 23 NL-HANA, 2.13.132, Ministerie van Defensie: Strijdkrachten in Nederlands-Indië (Strijdkrachten), 326, *NEFIS bulletin nr. 20: De artillerie van de TRI op Java, 1947*.
- 24 G. de Vries and B. Martens, *Nederlandse vuurwapens. KNIL en militaire luchtvaart, 1897–1942* (Amsterdam 1995) 94–95.
- 25 Shelford Bidwell (ed.), *Brassey's Artillery of the World* (London 1977) 9.
- 26 AAP-6, *NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions* (2018 edition) 64.
- 27 Azarja Harmanny and Brian McAllister Linn, “‘Technisch geweld’ in de Nederlands-Indonesische Oorlog. Zware wapens in de periode van dekolonisatie,” *BMGN – Low Countries Historical Review* 135, 2 (2020) 93–110, at 108.
- 28 De Vries and Martens, *Nederlandse vuurwapens*, 95.
- 29 *Leidraad vuursteun* (Doctrinecommissie Koninklijke Landmacht 2002), 15. See also G. E. Jansma and M. R. C. van Ockenburg, ‘Ontwikkelingen bij de grondgebonden vuursteun van de Koninklijke Landmacht,’ *Militaire Spectator* 187, 2 (2018) 110–122, at 110, note 1.
- 30 *Joint Publication 3-09, Joint Fire Support*, United States Government US Army, 10 April 2019, III-4, GL-6; *FM 3-09, Fire Support and Field Artillery Operations*, Headquarters, Department of the Army, April 2020, 1-1; Robert H. Scales Jr., *Firepower in Limited War* (Novato, CA 1994) ix–xi; J. B. A. Bailey, *Field Artillery and Firepower* (Oxford 1989) 15.
- 31 In this study, regular or regulated refers to ‘according to the rules of European art of war’, as described in Groen, *Krijgsmacht en kolonie*, 15.
- 32 P. W. W. Wijninga, ‘Airpower-strategie,’ in G. Teitler et al., *Militaire strategie* (Amsterdam 2002) 165.
- 33 Judith Gardam, *Necessity, Proportionality and the Use of Force by States* (Cambridge 2004) 3.
- 34 Bidwell, *Artillery of the World*, 9; Lance Boothe, ‘King no More,’ *Military Review* 93, 3 (2013) 72–78.
- 35 ‘Artillery Key as West Rolls out Big Guns in Ukraine,’ *The Economist*, 3 May 2022; Andrew E. Kramer, ‘A Whistle, then a Deadly Barrage: Ukraine’s Soldiers Are under Relentless Fire,’ *The New York Times*, 1 June 2022; Stieven Ramdharie, ‘In de Donbas is een artilleriestrijd gaande. Wat zijn de kansen daarin voor Oekraïne?,’ *de Volkskrant*, 8 June 2022; Randy Noorman, ‘The God of War,’ *OVT*, NPO Radio1, 12 June 2022; Michael Peck, ‘Ukraine War Proves Big Guns Are Back,’ *National Defense Magazine*, 16 September 2022.
- 36 J. F. C. Fuller, *Lectures on F.S.R. II* (London 1931) 13; Bailey, *Field Artillery and Firepower*, 15.
- 37 *Doctrinerepublicatie Landoperaties* 3.2, 1–14.
- 38 *AJP 3.2, Allied Joint Doctrine for Land Operations*, 2–13.
- 39 Harmanny and McAllister Linn, “‘The Normal Order of Things’,” 122–124; Trevor N. Dupuy, *The Evolution of Weapons and Warfare* (New York 1990) 292; Stephen Biddle, *Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle* (Princeton, NJ 2004) 2–10; Richard Gabriel and Karen Metz, *A Short History of War: The Evolution of Warfare and Weapons* (Carlisle Barracks, PA 1992) chapter 6; Barton C. Hacker, ‘The Machines of War: Western Military Technology 1850–2000,’ *History and Technology* 21, 3 (2005) 255–300, 255–260.
- 40 John Keegan, *The Face of Battle: A Study of Agincourt, Waterloo, and the Somme* (New York 1976) 292–294; Biddle, *Military Power*, 10; Hoffenaar, *Vuur in beweging*, 67.
- 41 John Buckley, ‘Air Power,’ in Matthew Hughes and William J. Philpott (eds.), *Palgrave Advances in Modern Military History* (London 2006) 153–171, at 168; Andrew Barros and Martin Thomas, ‘Introduction,’ in *ibid.* (eds.), *The Civilianization of War and the Changing Civil-Military Divide, 1914–2014* (Cambridge 2018) 1–20; Dierk Walter, *Colonial Violence: European Empires and the Use of Force* (New York 2017) 152–153.
- 42 Biddle, *Military Power*, 3–4, 29.
- 43 Dupuy, *Weapons and Warfare*, 287–289, 332.
- 44 Leo van Bergen, *Zacht en eervol. Lijden en sterven in een Grote Oorlog* (The Hague 1999) 363.
- 45 Joanna Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing: Face-to-face Killing in Twentieth-Century Warfare* (London 1999) 6.
- 46 Hans Blom, Peter Romijn et al., *Srebrenica: een ‘veilig’ gebied. Reconstructie, achtergronden, gevolgen en analyses van de val van een Safe Area* (Amsterdam 2002) 1145.
- 47 Although asymmetry occurs in all wars, in this study ‘asymmetric war’ refers to situations in which one of the parties deploys the modern system as defined by Stephen Biddle, whereas the other does not. Needless to say, it should be noted that the ‘stronger’ party does not necessarily have a better chance of winning the war. Many factors come into play, such as the political situation, support from the population and the will to fight.

- 48 Robert Jay Lifton, *Home from the War. Vietnam Veterans: Neither Victims nor Executioners* (New York 1973) 349–350; also cited in Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing*, 14.
- 49 Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, 230.
- 50 Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (New York and Oxford 1981).
- 51 Martin Bossenbroek, *Volk voor Indië. De werving van Europese militairen voor de Nederlandse koloniale dienst, 1814–1909* (Amsterdam 1992) 12–13; also in *ibid.*, ‘The Living Tools of Empire: The Recruitment of European Soldiers for the Dutch Colonial Army, 1814–1909’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 23, 1 (1995) 26–53, at 27–28, 48.
- 52 The term originates from Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World* (London 2005) 3–10. In his view, all conflicts since 1945 are effectively ‘wars amongst the people’. See also Martijn Kitzen, *Oorlog onder de mensen. Militaire inzichten uit Atjeh en Uruzgan* (Amsterdam 2016) 14–15.
- 53 The term is found for instance in Groen, *Marsroutes en dwaalsporen*, 212.
- 54 Van Doorn and Hendrix, *Ontsporing van geweld*, 212.
- 55 De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, vol. 12, *Epiloog*, 1037.
- 56 Hoffenaar, *Vuur in beweging*, 127.
- 57 Scagliola, *Last van de oorlog*, 56.
- 58 Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 390, 395, caption photo 48, 414, 768.
- 59 Oostindie, *Soldaat in Indonesië*, 163.
- 60 Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (1830–1832; English edition, e-book 2010) 103, 112, 176.
- 61 John A. Lynn, *Battle: A History of Combat and Culture* (Boulder, CO 2003) 7.
- 62 Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, 275.
- 63 Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen, *The Risk Society at War: Terror, Technology and Strategy in the Twenty-first Century* (Cambridge 2006) 9, 44 ff.
- 64 Walter, *Colonial Violence*, 50.
- 65 Patrick Porter, *Military Orientalism: Eastern War through Western Eyes* (London 2009) 81.
- 66 See for example G. J. Burgers, *Het 6 ARVA Squadron in Nederlands-Indië 1946–1950* (The Hague 2002) 62, who took the following statement from former Tentara Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Armed Forces, TNI) ensigns: ‘[t]he TNI did not have aircraft and so the chances were uneven. That was considered unsportsmanlike.’
- 67 Scagliola, *Last van de oorlog*, 81.
- 68 Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 113, 391.
- 69 Oostindie, *Soldaat in Indonesië*, 146–148.
- 70 Scagliola, *Last van de oorlog*, 153, 213.
- 71 Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge, MA 2006) 142.
- 72 Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (London 1977) 144.
- 73 *Ibid.*, xix, 144; Gardam, *Necessity, Proportionality and the Use of Force*, 1–22.
- 74 Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, 155.
- 75 Martin Shaw, *The New Western Way of War: Risk-transfer War and Its Crisis in Iraq* (Cambridge 2005); Ben Schoenmaker, ‘Vredesoperaties en de terugkeer van de oorlog’ (inaugural lecture Leiden University, 2012); Christopher Fuller, ‘The CIA’s Drone War and the Civilianization of Warfare’, in Barros and Thomas, *The Civilianization of War*, 221–239; Jolle Demmers and Lauren Gould, ‘The Remote Warfare Paradox: Democracies, Risk Aversion and Military Engagement’, in Alasdair McKay, Abigail Watson and Megan Karshøj-Pedersen (eds.), *Remote Warfare: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (Bristol 2020) 34–63, at 37–38.
- 76 Quoted in Timothy L. H. McCormack and Helen Durham, ‘Aerial Bombardment of Civilians: The Current International Legal Framework’, in Yuki Tanaka and Marilyn B. Young (eds.), *Bombing Civilians: A Twentieth-century History* (New York 2009) 215–238, at 220.
- 77 Tamar Meisels, *Contemporary Just War: Theory and Practice* (New York 2018) 78–82; Cornelius Friesendorf, ‘British Operations among the People and Civilian Risk’, *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 30, 3 (2019) 615–640.
- 78 See casebook.icrc.org/law and the literature references listed there. The principle of distinction is covered by Supplementary Protocol 1 of the Geneva Conventions of 1977, which can be consulted at ihl-databases.icrc.org.

- 79 Garrett G. Fagan and Matthew Trundle, *New Perspectives on Ancient Warfare* (Leiden 2010) 42.
- 80 Walter, *Colonial Violence*, 30; Tom Menger, *The Colonial Way of War: Violence and Colonial Warfare in the British, German and Dutch Empires, c. 1890–1914* (Cambridge 2025) 151, 155.
- 81 Michael Zeitlin, “An Entirely New Method of Conducting War at a Distance”: The First World War and the Air War of the Future’, in Adelman and Kieran, *Remote Warfare*, 31–52, at 42.
- 82 Tami Davis Biddle, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare: The Evolution of British and American Ideas about Strategic Bombing, 1914–1945* (Princeton, NJ 2002) 13–14, 37–39, 221, 240–241.
- 83 Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 31–22: U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Forces* (November 1963) 54, as quoted in Harmanny and McAllister Linn, “The Normal Order of Things”, 130.
- 84 Richard Holmes, *Firing Line* (London 1985) 210.
- 85 Joanna Bourke, ‘New Military History’, in Hughes and Philpott, *Modern Military History*, 258–280, at 258.
- 86 Jan Hoffenaar, ‘Militaire geschiedschrijving in de 21e eeuw’, *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 133, 4 (2020) 687–705, at 690. See also *ibid.*, “New” Military History’, in A. M. Sookermy (ed.), *Handbook of Military Sciences* (e-book 2020) 1–14.
- 87 Frank van Vree, *Termen, stemmen en perspectieven. Enkele uitgangspunten van het onderzoeksprogramma onafhankelijkheid, dekolonisatie, geweld en oorlog in Indonesië 1945–1949*, 30 oktober 2020.
- 88 Biddle, *Military Power*, 2.
- 89 Groen, *Marsroutes en dwaalsporen*, appendices 1–17.
- 90 Gert Oostindie, Ireen Hoogbeem and Jonathan Verwey, ‘The Decolonization War in Indonesia, 1945–1949: War Crimes in Dutch Veterans’ Egodocuments’, *War in History* 25, 2 (2018) 254–276.
- 91 One of the advocates of the integration of digital humanities in the Indonesia research is Stef Scagliola, who organized several workshops about this during the course of the ODGOI programme. See also Annemieke Romein et al., ‘State of the Field: Digital History’, *History* 105, 365 (2020) 291–312.
- 92 Pim van Bree and Geert Kessels, ‘Nodegoat: A Web-based Data Management, Network Analysis & Visualisation Environment (LAB1100 2013)’, to be consulted via [nodegoat.net](http://nodegoat.net).
- 93 ‘Dutch Colonial Maps – Leiden University Libraries’, to be consulted via [ubl.webattach.nl](http://ubl.webattach.nl). A collection of 11,000 maps and 250 atlases of Dutch colonies available from the former library of the Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen (Royal Tropical Institute, KIT) has been available since 2016. These can be searched using place names (both old and contemporary).
- 94 Gordon Cromley, ‘Designing a Military Event Gazetteer: The Case of Parachute Operations during the French Indochina War’, *The Professional Geographer* 68, 2 (2015) 249–260, at 251.
- 95 DANS, DOI: 10.17026/dans-z5-j5nfn.
- 96 Roel Frakking and Martin Thomas, ‘Windows onto the Micro-dynamics of Insurgent and Counter-insurgent Violence: Evidence from Late Colonial Southeast Asia and Africa Compared’, in Brocades Zaalberg and Luttikhuis, *Empire’s Violent End*, 49–70, at 49.
- 97 Martijn Eickhoff, ‘Weggestrept verleden? Nederlandse historici en het Rawagededebat’, *Groniek* 194 (2012) 53–67, as cited in Nicole L. Immler and Stef Scagliola, ‘Voorbij een nationale geschiedschrijving. De massaexecutie in Rawagede verteld als “vervlochten geschiedenis”’, *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 133, 2 (2020) 169–203.
- 98 See for example David van Reybrouck’s – well-written – book *Revolusi. Indonesië en het ontstaan van de moderne wereld* (Amsterdam 2020), which makes little use of this category of sources.
- 99 Yuval Noah Harari, ‘Military Memoirs: A Historical Overview of the Genre from the Middle Ages to the Late Modern Era’, *War in History* 14, 3 (2007) 289–309, at 308–309.
- 100 See for example Willem Albert Wagenaar and Hans Crombag, *The Popular Policeman and Other Cases: Psychological Perspectives on Legal Evidence* (Amsterdam 2005) 123 ff.
- 101 All interviews conducted in the Netherlands were recorded. Only a written report was made of the interviews held in Indonesia. These latter interviews were usually short conversations in several languages. All those concerned granted oral or written permission. It was made clear beforehand for what aim and purpose the interview was held.
- 102 Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 400–401, 408; Lizé, ‘De lucht boven de sawa’s’, 46–47.
- 103 See for example Jonathan Verwey, “‘Hoeveel wrekt de bruidegom de bruid’”. Seksueel geweld en de Nederlandse krijgsmacht in Indonesië, 1945–1950’, *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 129, 4 (2016) 569–592; Stef Scagliola and Natalya Vince, ‘The Places, Traces, and Politics of Rape in the Indonesian and the Algerian Wars of Independence’, in Brocades Zaalberg and Luttikhuis (eds.), *Empire’s Violent End*, 96–119; Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 460–466, the section ‘Geweld tegen vrouwen en kinderen’.

- 104 Susie Protschky, 'Home at the Front: Violence against Indonesian Women and Children in Dutch Military Barracks during the Indonesian National Revolution', in Katherine McGregor, Ana Dragojlovic and Hannah Loney (eds.), *Gender, Violence and Power in Indonesia: Across Time and Space* (New York 2020) 59–83, at 67; Tashadi, *Sejarah Revolusi Kemerdekaan (1945–1949) di Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta* (Jakarta 1991) 97–98; Susan Blackburn, 'Suyatin Kartowiyono: A Nationalist Leader of the Indonesian Women's Movement', in Susan Blackburn and Helen Ting (eds.), *Women in Southeast Asian Nationalist Movements* (Singapore 2013) 75–97, at 88; Galuh Ambar Sasi, 'The Meaning of Independence for Women in Yogyakarta, 1945–1946', in Bambang Purwanto, Roel Frakking, Abdul Wahid, Gerry van Klinken, Martijn Eickhoff, Yulianti and Ireen Hoogenboom (eds.), *Revolutionary Worlds: Local Perspectives and Dynamics of the Indonesian Independence War, 1945–1949* (Amsterdam 2023) 35–45.
- 105 Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 66.
- 106 Hoffenaar, *Vuur in beweging*, 104. There are no further details about her.
- 107 'Debate on *De brandende kampongs*', 560–561.
- 108 See for example US Army Doctrine Publication 3–90, *Offense and Defense* (Washington, DC, 31 July 2019), 3–15: 'Attack'.
- 109 Ian Vernon Hogg, 'Artillery', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, [britannica.com/technology/artillery](http://britannica.com/technology/artillery).
2. **The Spirit of Surabaya**
- 1 NL-HaNA, 2.13.126, Mariniersbrigade in Nederlands-Indië (hereinafter: Mariniersbrigade), 999, Inlichtingen-jaarverslag over de periode 22 maart 1946–22 maart 1947 van het Hoofdkwartier Mariniersbrigade van het Korps Mariniers, 1947.
- 2 Amrin Imran and Ariwadi (eds.), *Peranan Pelajar dalam perang kemerdekaan* (Jakarta 1985) 90–91; Nyoman Dekker, *Sejarah Revolusi Nasional atau Perang Kemerdekaan (1945–1949)* (Malang 1975) 74; Abdul Wahid, *Bung Tomo: hidup dan mati pengobar semangat tempur 10 November* (Yogyakarta 2019) 45–6, as cited in Gerry van Klinken and Maarten van der Bent, 'East Java, 1949: The Revolution that Shaped Indonesia', in Purwanto et al. (eds.), *Revolutionary Worlds*, 129–155, at 130.
- 3 G. Ambar Wulan (ed.), *Sejarah organisasi TNI 1945–1965* (Jakarta 2014) 6–53; Oostindie et al. (eds.), *Beyond the Pale*, 70–71.
- 4 The following ODGOI publication deals with the *bersiap*: Esther Captain and Onno Sinke, *Het geluid van geweld. Bersiap en de dynamiek van geweld tijdens de eerste fase van de Indonesische revolutie, 1945–1946* (Amsterdam 2022), translated as *Resonance of Violence: Bersiap and the Dynamics of Violence in the First Phase of the Indonesian Revolution, 1945–1946* (Amsterdam 2025).
- 5 Bea Brommer, S. Setiadi and J. R. van Diessen, *Semarang. Beeld van een stad* (Purmerend 1995) 64; Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 142–158.
- 6 Martin Bossenbroek, *De wraak van Diponegoro. Begin en einde van Nederlands-Indië* (Amsterdam 2020); Van Reybrouck, *Revolusi*; Henk Schulte Nordholt and Harry Poeze, *Merdeka. De strijd om de Indonesische onafhankelijkheid en de ongewisse opkomst van de Republiek, 1945–1950* (Zutphen 2022).
- 7 According to the Japanese veteran Sadao Oba, the British did order the Japanese artillery on 30 November to carry out a fire mission on Lembang near Bandung. Following complaints by the Soviet Union in the United Nations, it was decided that Japanese units would no longer be deployed for such combat operations. Sadao Oba, 'Recollections of Indonesia, 1944–1947', in Ian Nish (ed.), *Indonesian Experience: The Role of Japan and Britain, 1943–1948* (London 1979) 1–34, at 27.
- 8 Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 244–245.
- 9 The fighting did not last exactly five days, but this number has strong symbolic value in Indonesian culture. See Wiecher Hulst, *Van Sabang tot Merauke. Indonesische ontmoetingen* (Amsterdam 1992) 152.
- 10 Museum Dharma Wiratama in Yogyakarta, visited on 26 February 2020. The other *palagan* are Medan, Palembang, Bandung, Ambarawa, Surabaya, Margarana and Makassar. 'Only' three of the eight *palagan* pertain to the struggle against the Dutch.
- 11 Panitia Penyusunan Sejarah Pertempuran Lima Hari di Semarang, *Sejarah pertempuran lima hari di Semarang* (Semarang 1977) 239; Syamsur Said, *Pertempuran lima hari di Semarang* (Jakarta 1984) 59–60; Moerwanto, *Jiwa Patriot. Pertempuran lima hari di Semarang* (Jakarta 1992) 66 ff. emphasises 'the forgotten sacrifice' of the Indonesian Navy (ALRI); Imran and Ariwadi, *Peranan Pelajar*, 95, briefly discusses the role of a student battalion in the fighting, two members of which perished.
- 12 Brommer, Setiadi and Diessen, *Semarang*, 70. However, there are also eyewitness accounts that report Japanese atrocities prior to the Bulu executions.



- 13 Han Bing Siong, 'The Secret of Major Kido: The Battle of Semarang, 15–19 October 1945', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde / Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia* 152, 3 (1996) 382–428, at 391.
- 14 Mochkardi, *Revolusi nasional 1945 di Semarang* (Jakarta 2012) 208–216; interview author with Mr Mochkardi, Yogyakarta, 23 February 2020.
- 15 Ben Bouman, *Ieder voor zich en de Republiek voor ons allen. De logistiek achter de Indonesische Revolutie, 1945–1950* (The Hague 2006) 71.
- 16 Petra Groen, "Patience and bluff". De bevrijding van de Nederlandse burgergeïnterneerden op Mid-den-Java (augustus–december 1945)', *Mededelingen van de Sectie Militaire Geschiedenis van de Land-machtstaf* 8 (1985) 91–154, at 117; Han Bing Siong, 'Captain Huyer and the Massive Japanese Arms Transfer in East Java in October 1945', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde / Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia* 159, 2 (2003) 291–350, at 313; H. Th. Bussemaker, *Bersiap! Opstand in het paradijs: de bersiap-periode op Java en Sumatra 1945–1946* (Zutphen 2005) 163; Abdul Haris Nasution, *Sekitar Perang Kemerdekaan* (hereafter: SPK), *Jilid 1: Proklamasi* (Bandung 1977) 353.
- 17 Cited in Groen, "Patience and bluff", 117.
- 18 Nasution, SPK, *Jilid 1: Proklamasi*, 352–354.
- 19 Osman Raliby, *Documenta historica. Sedjarah dokumenter dari pertumbuhan dan perdjuaan negara Republik Indonesia* (Jakarta 1953) 67; Panitia, *Pertempuran lima hari di Semarang*, 234; Bouman, *Ieder voor zich*, 72.
- 20 Ken'ichi Goto, 'Caught in the Middle: Japanese Attitude toward Indonesian Independence in 1945', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 27, 1 (1996) 37–48.
- 21 Han Bing Siong, 'The Secret of Major Kido', 421–422. According to Japanese reports, own losses amounted to 42 dead, 43 wounded and 213 missing.
- 22 Groen, "Patience and bluff", 117.
- 23 Captain and Sinke, *Resonance of Violence*, 129–131; Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indië*, 135; Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 244; see also S. L. van der Wal, *Officiële bescheiden betreffende de Nederlands-Indonesische betrekkingen, 1945–1950. Derde deel: 1 januari–30 maart 1946* (The Hague 1973) nr. 6, Rapport van Sumatra No.1 by LTZ.1 KMR.SD C.Brondgeest.
- 24 Takao Fusayama, *A Japanese Memoir of Sumatra 1945–1946: Love and Hatred in the Liberation War* (Ithaca, NY 1993) 72–83.
- 25 NIOD, Newspaper archive, *Soeloeh Merdeka*, 15 December 1945.
- 26 Fusayama, *A Japanese Memoir of Sumatra*, 83.
- 27 Idrus, S.U. Nababan and Ben Anderson, 'Surabaya', *Indonesia* 5, 5 (1968) 1–28, at 1.
- 28 Ibid., 3–5; Frank Palmos, 'Surabaya 1945: Sacred Territory. Revolutionary Surabaya as the Birthplace of Indonesian Independence' (thesis University of Western Australia 2011) 395–399, determines that Idrus was not in Surabaya at the time; Palmos is critical of the use of the novella as a de facto historical source by scholars such as Anderson and Reid. However, the narration is useful as a reflection of the perception of the battle.
- 29 A. J. F. Doulton, *The Fighting Cock, Being the History of the 23rd Indian Division, 1942–1947* (Aldershot 1951) 256.
- 30 See for an overview Han Bing Siong, 'Captain Huyer'.
- 31 Nugroho Notosusanto, *The Battle of Surabaya* (Jakarta 1970) 14; De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, vol. 12: *Epiloog: tweede helft*, 712.
- 32 Miyamoto Shizuo, *Jawa shusen shoriki* (Tokyo 1973) 347, as quoted in W. G. J. Rummelink, 'The Emergence of the New Situation: The Japanese Army on Java after the Surrender', *Militaire Spectator* 147 (1978) 49–66, at 60.
- 33 Bussemaker, *Bersiap!*, 208; Notosusanto, *The Battle of Surabaya*, 14; Anthony Reid, *The Indonesian National Revolution, 1945–1950* (Hawthorn 1974) 51; H. Wagner, 'Hoe kwamen de Indonesische strijdkrachten in de jaren '40 aan wapens?', *Militaire Spectator* 156, 11 (1987) 488–495, at 489.
- 34 Notosusanto, *The Battle of Surabaya*, 14; Suhario Padmodiwiryo, *Revolution in the City of Heroes: A Memoir of the Battle that Sparked Indonesia's National Revolution*, translated by Frank Palmos (Singapore 2016) 52.
- 35 A. H. Nasution, *10 Nopember 1945* (Bandung 1976) 49; on the role of students see A. Radjab, *Trip dan Perang Kemerdekaan* (Surabaya 1983).

- 36 W. H. Frederick, "The Killing of Dutch and Eurasians in Indonesia's National Revolution (1945–49): A "Brief Genocide" Reconsidered," *Journal of Genocide Research* 14, 3–4 (2012) 359–380, at 362.
- 37 Richard McMillan, *The British Occupation of Indonesia 1945–1946: Britain, the Netherlands and the Indonesian Revolution* (London 2005) 44; De Jong, *Diplomatie of strijd*, 129; Padmodiwiryo, *Revolution in the City of Heroes*, 107.
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  - 56 J. K. M. Bottema, 'De Nederlandse artillerie in Nederlands-Indië. De artillerie van de 7 December Divisie', *Sinte Barbara* 26, 2 (1974) 35–41, 35; Alfred van Sprang, *Wij werden geroepen. De geschiedenis van de 7 December Divisie, met zweten en zwoegen geschreven door twintigduizend Nederlandse mannen* (The Hague 1991) 38, 51; NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 4083, Stukken betreffende de organisatie, aankomst, legering en sterktestaten van de '7 December' Divisie; Erwin van Loo, Sven Maaskant, Dirk Starink and Quirijn van der Vegt, *Vereenigd op de grond, daadkrachtig in de lucht. Een eeuw grondgebonden luchtverdediging, 1917–2017* (Amsterdam 2017) 147.
  - 57 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 2700, Verslag van de vergadering met de commandanten artilleriebrigades, commandanten vredesregimenten artillerie, aangewezen oorlogscommandanten en afdelingshoofden Staf II Divisie op 30 oktober 1946; Frans Hazekamp, *Twee broers*, 64.
  - 58 Groen, *Krijgsgeweld en kolonie*, 357, reports that the Calmeyer units stayed longer, but repeats the misconception also found in De Jong, *Koninkrijk*, vol. 12b, 824, that the Palmboom Division was dispatched without artillery.
  - 59 R. W. Hoksbergen and J. Kroon, *De Nederlandse artillerie vanaf 1945* (n.p. 1998) 22.
  - 60 Groen, *Krijgsgeweld en kolonie*, 364.
  - 61 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1430–1432, korpsgeschiedenis artillerie KNIL; J. K. M. Bottema, 'De Nederlandse artillerie in Nederlands-Indië. De artillerie van het KNIL', *Sinte Barbara* 26, 3 (1974) 22–31, at 24.
  - 62 This was 145 Field Artillery Regiment. Historische Collectie Korps Veldartillerie (HCKVA), 9–2, korpsgeschiedenis 1 VA; NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 139, Rapporten over de uitgevoerde artillerie-opdrachten over 1946 en uittreksels van dagboeken van de 1, 2 en 3 Batterij Veldartillerie, 1946; *ibid.*, 163, Stukken betreffende de korpsgeschiedenis van III Batterij Veldartillerie KNIL alsmede de oprichting van 1 Regiment Mobile Artillerie en de functie van Legerartilleriecommandant, 1946–1947; *ibid.*, 2914, Overzicht mei 1946 van afdeling ID der hoofdafdeling Generalen Staf.
  - 63 Hoffenaar, *Vuur in beweging*, 101–103; NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 2780, Brief van het HKAG in Nederlands-Indië met de oprichtingsdatum van acht afdelingen Artillerie die is vastgesteld op 2 januari 1946, 1948.
  - 64 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 3289, korpsgeschiedenis 5 VA; 268, Verslag van luitenant-kolonel W.A. Schouten inzake de werkzaamheden van de brigade-artillerie, behorend tot de V-Brigade, juli 20–oktober 1, 1947; *ibid.*, 2686, Stukken betreffende de organisatie van de zogenaamde Calmeijer-afdelingen

- Veldartillerie, 1947; *ibid.*, 2856, Stukken betreffende organisatie van de 'Calmeijer'-Afdelingen Veldartillerie en afdelingen van het 12 Regiment Veldartillerie, 1948.
- 65 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 2701, voorlopige oorlogsorganisatie 2 Regiment Veldartillerie; NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1438, korpsgeschiedenis 3-2 RVA.
- 66 Hoffenaar and Schoenmaker, *Blik naar het oosten*, 13; Van Sprang, *Wij werden geroepen*, 25; M. Onnen, *De Luchtdoelartillerie Groep Militaire Luchtvaart 1947-1949* (Lochem n.y.) 24.
- 67 Bottema, 'De artillerie van de 7 december divisie', 38.
- 68 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 2856, Organisatie 12 Regiment Veldartillerie, 1948; Bottema, 'De artillerie van het KNIL', 28-31.
- 69 NL-HANA, Mariniersbrigade, 151, Ingekomen en minuten van uitgegane stukken van de commandant van het Artilleriebataljon (Arbat), 1946-1947. Cdt NMB aan Cdt Korps Mariniers, Soerabaja, 5 april 1946; See for the views of De Bruijne also Schoonoord, *De mariniersbrigade*, 24-28.
- 70 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 268, verslag Schouten; also found in W. A. Schouten and H. B. Evers, 'Het gebruik van de artillerie, ingedeeld bij de v-Brigade gedurende en na de politionele actie', *Militaire Spectator* 4 (1949) 225-236; Database dagboeken NIMH, 057, Losse Stukken, 3239, Dagboek getiteld *Ik was een O.V.W.* met foto's en persoonsgebonden documenten van korporaal A. Hendriksen, ingedeeld bij het 1e bataljon van het 3e Regiment Infanterie op Java nabij Soemeding, Cheribon en Tjilatjap tijdens de politionele acties.
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- 72 Bottema, 'De artillerie van het KNIL', 28.
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- 74 Jhr. M. W. C. de Jonge, *Mijn ruiters. Ervaringen als commandant van het 4e Eskadron Huzaren van Boreel, tijdens de Politionele Acties (1947-1949) in toenmalig Nederlands-Indië* (Zierikzee 2008) 29-30; NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 577, Vademecum van het Territoriaal tevens Troepencommando Midden-Java, 1948. Schema D: Organisatie Brigade; J. A. C. Bartels, *Vier eeuwen Nederlandse cavalerie*, deel 2 (Amsterdam 1987) 22-23.
- 75 Bartels, *Nederlandse cavalerie*, 23-26, 132.
- 76 NIMH, 509, Dekolonisatie, 127, Organisatie voor de gezamenlijke landstrijdkrachten van het Koninkrijk in Nederlandsch-Indië.
- 77 G. H. O. de Wit and Bas de Jong, *Binnen 20 minuten gereed. Het 6e eskadron vechtwagens KL/KNIL 1947-1949 en LTD 716/III* (The Hague 1977) 1-4; Bartels, *Nederlandse cavalerie*, 157; Heshusius, *KNIL-cavalerie*, 81-83.
- 78 *NIB*, Deel VI, nr. 85. Minister van Overzeese Gebiedsdelen (Jonkman) aan lt. gouverneur-generaal (Van Mook), 11 Nov. 1946; Emma Keizer, 'Under the counter. Brits-Amerikaanse materieelvoorziening voor de Nederlandse krijgsmacht in de Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsoorlog 1945-1949', in Jeroen Kemperman, Emma Keizer and Tom van den Berge, *Diplomatie en geweld. De internationale context van de Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsoorlog, 1945-1949* (Amsterdam 2022) 95-129, at 117-118.
- 79 J. D. Backer, *Rapport uit Porrong. Met het 8e Eskadron Vechtwagens naar Oost-Java* (Baarn 1950) 55.
- 80 *NIB*, Deel II, nr. 194. Bevelhebber der strijdkrachten in het Oosten (Helfrich) aan minister voor algemene oorlogvoering van het koninkrijk (Schermerhorn), 15 Dec. 1945.
- 81 *Ibid.*, nr. 51. Nota van fd directeur van binnenlands bestuur (Van der Plas). Analyse van de politieke situatie op Java op 18 November 1945 en de eventueel daaruit voortvloeiende Nederlandsche politiek.
- 82 Groen, *Marsroutes en dwaalsporen*, 19.
- 83 Ward, *Militaire Luchtvaart*, 49-52, 96; *NIB*, Deel II, nr. 161. Verslag van de 301ste bijeenkomst van de geallieerde opperbevelhebber in Zuid-Oost-Azië (Mountbatten) op 6 Dec. 1945.
- 84 Groen, *Marsroutes en dwaalsporen*, 80.
- 85 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 4749, Stukken betreffende beschikkingen tot oprichting en opheffing van diverse onderdelen in Nederlands-Indië. 1946-1950; *ibid.*, 1762, Voorlopige Handleiding Militaire Luchtvaart, 12.
- 86 Harmanny and McAllister Linn, "Technisch geweld", 101.
- 87 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 1739, Algemeen Hoofdkwartier Militaire Luchtvaart, overzicht Aug. t/m

- Oct. 1947, 28; Van Loo, *Vereenigd op de grond*, 150–159. Besides defending the airfields, the anti-aircraft artillery was regularly deployed to increase firepower during infantry actions.
- 88 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 1762, Voorlopige Handleiding Militaire Luchtvaart, 5; Ward, *Militaire luchtvaart*, 101–110; P. C. Boer, *De jachtvliegtuigen, Army Co-operation- en lesvliegtuigen van de Militaire Luchtvaart KNIL 1945–1950. De geschiedenis van de vliegende eenheden en hun North American P-51D/K Mustangs, Curtiss P-40N Kittyhawks, Piper L-4J Cubs, Taylorcraft L-2M's, North American AT-16 Harvards en Commonwealth CA-6 Wacketts* (Amsterdam 2009) 23.
- 89 Groen, *Marsroutes en dwaalsporen*, 80; NIB, *Deel 3*, nr. 363, Memorandum van commandant der zeemacht in Nederlands-Indië (Pinke) aan lt. gouverneur-generaal (Van Mook), 29 March 1946.
- 90 Teitler, *Vlootvoogd in de knel*, 2–3.
- 91 *Ibid.*, 66, 69.
- 92 R. E. van Holst Pellekaan and I. C. de Regt, *Operaties in de Oost. De Koninklijke Marine in de Indische archipel (1945–1951)* (Amsterdam, 2003), 87; Teitler, *Vlootvoogd in de knel*, 61.
- 93 Teitler, *Vlootvoogd in de knel*, 90, 121–123, 154, 161, 165. In June 1949, the patrol boats were transferred to the Dienst voor Scheepvaart after all, see F. C. Backer Dirks, *De Gouvernements marine in het voormalige Nederlands-Indië in haar verschillende tijdsperiodes geschetst*, III, 1861–1949 (Houten 1986) 250.
- 94 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 663, Beschikkingen, circulaires en instructies van het hoofdkwartier van de adjudant-generaal betreffende personele en organisatorische aangelegenheden. Bevat tevens een voordracht over 'de organisatie van het KNIL in de in Nederlandsch-Indië toe te passen tactiek der verbonden wapens' betreffende het 'joint'-optreden van de c-Divisie '7 December' (1e Divisie). Beschikking No. 9201/G.S.03 tevens instructie voor de Territoriaal- tevens Troepencommandanten op Java, Batavia, 20 December 1946.
- 95 Van Holst Pellekaan and De Regt, *Operaties in de Oost*, 28–30.
- 96 *Ibid.*, 135; Teitler, *Vlootvoogd in de knel*, 121; *Patrouilleboten in actie: de Kleine Vaartuigen Dienst der Koninklijke Marine in Ned.-Indië jaarboekje 1947–1948* (The Hague / Soerabaya 1948) 12.
- 97 Schoonoord, *De Mariniersbrigade*, 24.
- 98 Leiden University Library, Archief SMGI, DH 1529, 1639.2 Van Beurden, track 12.
- 99 Sjoerd Lapré, *Het Andjing Nica Bataljon (KNIL) in Nederlands-Indië (1945–1950)* (Ermelo 1999) 327.
- 100 Roelf Spreuwers, *De lange weg* (Stadskanaal 1980) 48, 61.
- 101 NIMH, Sweep, 59, Staf 'W' Brigade, kantoor operatiën, Tactische aanwijzingen nr. 7, gebruik van automatische wapens. NL-HANA, Indisch Instructie Bataljon, 6, An Infantry Battalion, War Establishment, II/233/3 (Notified in A.C.Is. 29th November 1944, Effective date 12th November 1944); Lapré, *Andjing Nica*, 312.
- 102 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 4083, Stukken betreffende de organisatie, aankomst, legering en sterktestaten van de '7 December' Divisie.
- 103 *Ontwerp-voorschrift voor den 2-inch mortier*, no. 1506, te velde, 11 August 1945.
- 104 NIOD, Collectie Getuigen & Tijdgenoten, IN18001, interview Jan Willem Buitenweg, 27 February 2018.
- 105 Shelford Bidwell et al., *The Encyclopedia of Land Warfare in the 20th Century* (London and New York 1977) 122.
- 106 'Taboe in het theemeubel – brieven van Klaas Bruinsma', blog 58 – first half of January 1948, ww.puntaal.nl/blog-58; NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 2931, C-3-1-AAT maj. W.C. Houdkamp aan C-AAT, te Velde, 17 September 1948.
- 107 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 579, Rapport van de Commissie van Proefneming (CVP) te Bandoeng betreffende 'de geweergrenaatwerper', 10 March 1948; *ibid.*, 4741, Staf DCO, Wapenkantoor Paratroepen (organisatie, opleiding en tactisch gebruik), Batavia, 22 November 1946; Ben Bouman, *Succes in een verloren oorlog. Het 6e Regiment Veldartillerie en zijn Speciale Troepen in de onafhankelijkheidstrijd van de Republiek Indonesië, 1946–1949* (Nijmegen 2015) 38.
- 108 The Vickers M23 was a water-cooled medium machine gun with a 7.7 mm calibre and a firing speed of 600 shots per minute. Against 1298 Brens, the 1st Division had only 36 Vickers, partly assigned to two machine gun battalions and partly distributed across support companies and other units. NIMH, Sweep, 59, Tactische aanwijzingen nr. 7, gebruik van automatische wapens; NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 4083, Stukken betreffende de organisatie, aankomst, legering en sterktestaten van de '7 December' Divisie.

- 109 NIMH, Sweep, 59, Tactische aanwijzingen nr. 7, gebruik van automatische wapens; *ibid.*, 737, Foto's, documenten en dagboek afkomstig van dpl. sld. W.G. Kehrens ingedeeld bij de 42e Zelfstandige Mitrailleur Compagnie (42 ZMC) in Nederlands-Indië, 1949–1950.
- 110 For example the Colt Browning 12.7 mm (.50 inch) and Schwarzlose heavy machine guns. NIMH, Sweep, 59, Tactische aanwijzingen nr. 7, gebruik van automatische wapens; Bouman, *Succes in een verloren oorlog*, 38.
- 111 Ivo van der Spoel, 'De V-brigade in Operatie Product. Van de "race naar Cheribon" tot "Meyer's grote omweg", Java 1947' (Bachelor's thesis Leiden University 2019) 33–34; NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 4083, Organisatie '7 December' Divisie; Bidwell, *Artillery*, 159; NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 777, 'Ervaringen politionele actie', Hoofdstuk III. Artillerie, 7; also in Van Santen, 15.
- 112 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 4083, Organisatie '7 December' Divisie; Van Boeijen, *Zij werden geroepen*, 226, 232–233.
- 113 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 2931, Commandant Aan- en Afvoertroepen – Voorraden, verpakkingen en verstrekkingen. Brief C-AAT C-Div kap.adj H.F. Kramer, Bandoeng, 17 June 1948; *ibid.*, 4083, Organisatie '7 December' Divisie; Bidwell, *Artillery*, 92.
- 114 NL-HANA, Mariniersbrigade, 1598, Verslag over de Artillerieafdeling van de Mariniersbrigade over de periode van 1 maart–1 november 1946.
- 115 Wim Dussel, *Dat was jij, marinier! De geschiedenis van de Mariniersbrigade 1945–1949* (Amsterdam 1950) 206; Spreeuwiers, *De lange weg*, 175; A. M. Brouwer et al., *Tussen Sawahs en Bergen. Het leven van de soldaat in de Tijger-Brigade* (Semarang 1948) 35; C. Visser, G. J. Smeitink and K. Schaap, *Logboek 1-41 RVA: verhalen en wetenswaardigheden* (n.p. 1992) 7.
- 116 Frans Hazekamp, *Twee broers*, 64; Willeumier, *7e Afdeling Veldartillerie*, 18.
- 117 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 412, Circulaires, instructies en syllabi afkomstig van kornet J.I. Bril, ingedeeld bij de 3e batterij, 12e Regiment Veldartillerie (3-12 RVA) betreffende zijn opleiding tot officier bij het Wapen der Artillerie aan de School voor Reserve-Officieren Artillerie (SROA). Beknopte beschrijving van het materieel van 9-veld. According to the instructions, a firing rate of ten rounds per minute could be achieved (40 per battery), but trained crews achieved higher rates. Battery officer Frans Hazekamp of 1-12 RVA claims that he achieved 60 or more rounds per minute with his battery. Hazekamp, *Twee broers*, 61.
- 118 Bidwell, *Artillery*, 34; J. K. M. Bottema, 'De Nederlandse artillerie in Nederlands-Indië. De ovw-afdelingen artillerie. Calmeijer-eenheden', *Sinte Barbara* 26, 1 (1974) 73–81, at 75; NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 268, report Schouten. J. Albarda and F. L. Kroesen, *Nederlands geschut sinds 1677* (Bussum 1978) 62.
- 119 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 2686, Stukken betreffende de organisatie van de zogenaamde Calmeijer-afdelingen Veldartillerie, 1947; *ibid.*, 2701, 2 R.V.A. Voorlopige oorlogsorganisatie; NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1435, 2e Regiment Veldartillerie. Toestand automaterieel op 13 juni 1947.
- 120 *Voorlopig voorschrift nr 2274, Schootstafels vuurmond 25 pr*, Ministerie van Oorlog, 22 juli 1951.
- 121 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1438, korpsgeschiedenis 3-2 RVA, 2 Aug 1947; *ibid.*, 1435, Gevechtsbericht van actie gevoerd door F. Batterij 3-2 R.V.A. van 13 tot 17 Oct. 1947; Hazekamp, *Twee broers*, 90.
- 122 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 4083, Stukken betreffende de organisatie, aankomst, legering en sterktestaten van de '7 December' Divisie. NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 3289, 5 Afdeling Veldartillerie (5 AVA), 1946–1949.
- 123 Hoffenaar, *Vuur in beweging*, 104; NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1447, Verslagen en overzichten afkomstig van de 3de afdeling, 12de Regiment Veldartillerie onder bevel van reservemajoor der Artillerie A. Lammers, 21 October 1947–19 October 1949. Korpsgeschiedenis 3-12 RVA van 1 juli 1947 t/m 30 sept. '47.
- 124 Marinus Muller, *Mijn tijd in Indië* (n.p. 1999) 10.
- 125 HCKVA 102–5, A. Raaimakers, Dienstplichtige artilleristen in 1947 in Nederlands-Indië omgeschoold van de 25-ponder naar de 7½-veld.
- 126 This figure is based on information from NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, Collectie onderdeelverslagen in Nederlands-Indië, 1945–1950 and NIMH, Dekolonisatie, Collectie Militaire eenheden, supplemented with information from ego-documents, memoirs, commemorative books and literature.
- 127 NIMH, 512, Antoniëtti, 158, *Tactisch voorschrift luchtsteun van de Militaire Luchtvaart* and 'korte inhoud van de eerste voordracht over Indisch tactische training', 1946–1948.
- 128 Van Loo, *Eenige wakkere jongens*, 151.
- 129 Instead of 500-pounders, twelve 40-lb., twelve 50-lb. or ten 250-lb. bombs could be carried. NIMH, 512, Antoniëtti, 158, *Tactisch voorschrift luchtsteun*, bijlage III.

- 130 Boer, *Jachtwliegtuigen*, 22; Ward, *Militaire Luchtvaart*, 185. According to Ward, eight machine guns were mounted in the dome, but the *Tactisch voorschrift luchtsteun* mentions seven fixed or six movable machine guns. NIMH, 512, Antoniëtti, 158, *Tactisch voorschrift luchtsteun*. Then again, an instruction for requesting air support in the Y Brigade states that all B-25s of the 16th Squadron were armed with seven machine guns of 12.7 mm. NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 3142, Stafkwartier, 1946–1947, Aanvraag luchtstrijdkrachten voor directe steun van grondtroepen, 30 January 1947.
- 131 NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 3142, Aanvraag luchtstrijdkrachten voor directe steun van grondtroepen.
- 132 Boer, *Jachtwliegtuigen*, 22, 27–29, 365.
- 133 Ibid., 24–29; NIMH, 512, Antoniëtti, 158, *Tactisch voorschrift luchtsteun*, appendix III.
- 134 NIMH, Sweep, 145, Memoires van oorlogsvrijwilliger Wil van Abeelen betreffende zijn diensttijd bij het 120e Squadron in Engeland, Australië, in Soerabaja en Semarang in Nederlands-Indië en in Merauke en Biak in Nederlands Nieuw-Guinea, 1945–1947, 17, 37.
- 135 Daud Sinjal, *Laporan kepada bangsa. Militer Akademi Yogya* (Jakarta 1996) 115; Nasution, *SPK, Jilid 10: Perang gerilya semester 2*, 102.
- 136 NIMH, 512, Antoniëtti, 158, *Tactisch voorschrift luchtsteun*; Christ Klep and Ben Schoenmaker (eds.), *De bevrijding van Nederland, 1944–1945. Oorlog op de flank* (The Hague 1995) 57; NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 1739, Algemeen Hoofdkwartier Militaire Luchtvaart, overview Aug.–Oct. 1947, 22.
- 137 Harry van der Meer, *Nederlandse Spitfires in cijfers en letters* (Emmen 2016) 77–80.
- 138 Wim Lutgert and Bart Sordedraeger, 322 Squadron. *Sporen van zijn verleden, lijnen in zijn geschiedenis* (The Hague 1993) 87–88; Filip Appeldorn, Henk den Belder and Ton Krechting, *50 jaar 322 squadron: 1943–1993* (Leeuwarden 1993) 40.
- 139 Van der Meer, *Spitfires*, 78; Ward, *Militaire Luchtvaart*, 158–161; NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 1739, Algemeen Hoofdkwartier Militaire Luchtvaart, overview January–February 1947.
- 140 Nasution, *SPK Jilid 10*, 33, 100, 242; Ward, *Militaire Luchtvaart*, 189; Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 364; NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 1739, overview January–February 1947; interview Martin Babeliowsky, Geldermalsen, 16 May 2017; Martin Babeliowsky, ‘De Piper Cub als bommenwerper’, *De stuurkolom. Officieel orgaan van de militaire luchtvaart, uitgave van de vereniging reünies ML-KNIL* 27 (2009) 37–38.
- 141 Van Holst Pellekaan and De Regt, *Operaties in de Oost*, 32–33, 262–63; Bart M. Rijnhout, *Kruisvaarders van de archipel. Catalina vliegtuigen van de Marineluchtvaartdienst, 1941–1957* (Emmen 2010) 23, 146–147, 186, 192.
- 142 W. Geneste (ed.), *Squadron 860, 1943–1993. In 50 jaar van ‘Stringbag’ tot ‘fly by wire’* (Leeuwarden 1993) 17–18; Van Holst Pellekaan and De Regt, *Operaties in de Oost*, 82.
- 143 A. J. Vermeulen, *De schepen van de Koninklijke Marine en die der gouvernementsmarine, 1814–1962* (The Hague 1970) 114–115, 148–151, 174, 192–197.
- 144 *Patrouilleboten in actie*, 8; Van Holst Pellekaan and De Regt, *Operaties in de Oost*, 79–82; Backer Dirks, *De Gouvernements marine*, 241, 246.
- 145 NL-HaNA, 2.13.72, Commandant Zeemacht Nederlands-Indië, 2228, Patrouillerapporten Hr.Ms. ‘RP-schepen’, 1946–1949; *Patrouilleboten in actie*, 47–56; Van Holst Pellekaan and De Regt, *Operaties in de Oost*, 81.
- 146 *Patrouilleboten in actie*, 8; Van Holst Pellekaan and De Regt, *Operaties in de Oost*, 37; Teitler, *Vlootvoogd in de knel*, 121.
- 147 Backer Dirks, *De Gouvernements marine*, 243–244.
- 148 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 127, Organisatie voor de gezamenlijke landstrijdkrachten van het Koninkrijk in Nederlandsch-Indië; Schoonoord, *De Mariniersbrigade*, 105.
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- 150 Bidwell, *Land Warfare*, 157; Heshusius, *KNIL-cavalerie*, 82; *ibid.*, ‘Het gebruik van tanks in Nederlands-Indië’, deel III, *Militaire Spectator* 1 (1947), 557–569, 557, 567; Bartels, *Nederlandse cavalerie*, 159.
- 151 Database diaries NIMH, Losse Stukken, 3239, Dagboek Hendriksen.
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  - 179 James S. Corum and Wray R. Johnson, *Airpower in Small Wars: Fighting Insurgents and Terrorists* (Lawrence, KS 2003) 51–66, 85–86.
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- 272 Groen, *Krijggeweld en kolonie*, 320.
- 273 Agoeng Wijaya, Arif Zulkifli and Wahyu Dhyatmika, *Soedirman: seorang panglima, seorang martir* (Jakarta 2012) 1-12.
- 274 Purbo S. Suwondo, 'Some Highlights on Indonesia's Struggle for Independence', in Purbo S. Suwondo

- and Alwin Nurdin, *The PETA Army and the Struggle for Independence of Indonesia, 1908–1950* (Bogor 2009) 1–21, at 12–13.
- 275 Ben Bouman, *Van driekleur naar rood-wit*, 218–231, appendix X.
- 276 Bintoro, *Fly to fight*, 316; Bouman, *Van driekleur naar rood-wit*, 232–233, appendix X.
- 277 Bouman, *Van driekleur tot rood-wit*, 203.
- 278 Nasution, *Fundamentals*; Simatupang, *Report from Banaran*; A. E. Kawilarang, *Officier in dienst van de Republiek Indonesië (ervaringen 1942–1961)* (Breda 1993).
- 279 Nugroho Notosusanto, *The PETA Army during the Japanese Occupation of Indonesia* (Tokyo 1979) 180, 184.
- 280 William H. Frederick, 'Weerspiegelingen in stromend water. Indonesische herinneringen aan de oorlog en de Japanners' in Remco Raben (ed.), *Beelden van de Japanse bezetting van Indonesië* (Zwolle 1999) 16–35, at 34.
- 281 Suwondo, 'Indonesia's Struggle for Independence', 9.
- 282 Suwondo, 'The Genesis of the Indonesian National Army and Some Political Implications', in Suwondo and Nurdin, *The PETA Army*, 1–58, 18–20; Joyce C. Lebra, *Japanese-trained Armies in Southeast Asia* (New York 1977) 109–111.
- 283 David Jenkins, 'Soeharto and the Japanese Occupation', *Indonesia* 88 (2009) 1–103, at 80–82.
- 284 Salim Said, *Genesis of Power: General Sudirman and the Indonesian Military in Politics, 1945–1949* (Singapore 1991) 9; see also Van Klinken and Van der Bent, 'East Java, 1949', 134–135; on the term *semangat* see Schulte Nordholt and Poeze, *Merdeka*, 63.
- 285 Bouman, *Van driekleur tot rood-wit*, 224–225; Nasution, *Fundamentals of Guerilla Warfare*, 31–32.
- 286 Mochkardi, *Akademi Militer Yogya*, 3–7.
- 287 Sayidiman Suryohadiprojo, *Mengabdikan negara sebagai Prajurit TNI*, 34–38.
- 288 Bouman, *Ieder voor zich*, 68.
- 289 Boediardjo, *Siapa sudi saya dongengi*, 33; Pusat Sejarah TNI, *Sejarah TNI Jilid I*, 92–94.
- 290 Soewito, *Awal kedirgantaraan di Indonesia*, 149–151.
- 291 Boediardjo, *Siapa sudi saya dongengi*, 34–41.
- 292 Besides KMA and KNIL training, Nasution also had experience as a military instructor in Seinendan, a Japanese youth organization. Said, *Genesis of Power*, 27.
- 293 UNO is the abbreviation of United Nations Organization, as the UN was then still called. NL-HANA, 2.22.2.1, Afscheid van Indië, 990, Arsip Nasional Indonesia, Yogya Dokumen, 5278, Brochure written by Tan Malaka: *Gerilya dan Berpolek*.
- 4. Bringing out the Big Guns**
- 1 Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 398; Harinck, *Zoeken, aangrijpen en vernietigen*.
- 2 Official sources: NL-HANA, *Strijdkrachten*, 1287–1289, Daily combat reports of operational flights on Java and Sumatra, 1947–1949; *ibid.*, collection unit reports in Dutch East Indies, 1945–1950; NIMH, *De-kolonisatie*, *Collectie Militaire eenheden*; *ibid.*, 806, ML-KNIL. Special thanks to Bas Smeets (data entry) and Gosevinus van Oorschot (data on operational sorties). Ego-documents: NIMH, Sweep; *ibid.*, diary project Dutch soldiers in Indonesia, 1945–1949; the memoirs and commemorative books listed in the bibliography at the back of this book were partly derived from the 'Soldaat in Indonesië' database, made available digitally by Leiden University Library. Dataset accessible via [ssh.datastations.nl](https://ssh.datastations.nl). DOI: 10.17026/dans-z55-jsnf.
- 3 Ward, *Militaire Luchtvaart*, 297 and 326, counts 832 operational sorties of fighter and bomber squadrons for the start of the first offensive up until 30 September 1947 and 1035 for the second offensive, but does not differentiate between cases in which force was or was not used; Groen, *Marsroutes en dwaalsporen*, 211, refers to 862 supporting actions and 382 offensive reconnaissance flights alone between January and May 1949; a comparable tally (1200) can be found in Louis Zweers, *De gecensureerde oorlog: militairen versus media in Nederlands-Indië 1945–1949* (Zutphen 2013) 122, and Hagen, *Koloniale oorlogen*, 760; De Moor, *Generaal Spoor*, 273, alludes to 1039 operational sorties during the first offensive (up to 26 July); a figure that does, however, also include transport, leafleting and reconnaissance flights and photography missions; Groen, *Krijgsmacht en kolonie*, 366, adopt this number and reports a figure of 2412 for the second offensive, derived from Ward and likewise referring to transport flights etc.; these figures can also be found in Oostindie and Limpach, 'The War in Indonesia, 1945–1949: The Military-Historical Context', in Oostindie, *Beyond the Pale*, 69–106, 85, without attribution and incorrectly described as 'combat flights'.

- 4 Harinck, *Zoeken, aangrijpen en vernietigen*, 145, 201, 211. He has counted 664 combat operations and 500 cases of tactical support for 1947, but it is unclear to what extent these figures overlap with the total number for the period starting at the end of the first offensive until the end of the war that is mentioned further on in the book: 1579 times support for infantry, including 1040 times 'fire support' in 1949.
- 5 See for the template NIMH, 804, Elias (ML-KNIL), 21, narrative report. Examples of preserved battlefield reports in *ibid.*, ML-KNIL, 614, Narrative report of the 16th Squadron, 29 November 1946–4 February 1947; *ibid.*, 646, Combat reports of the 120th Squadron during the First Police Actions 21 July–4 August 1947.
- 6 Interview author and Rémy Limpach with Wil Grootaarts, Bennekom, 23 May 2017.
- 7 Harinck, *Zoeken, aangrijpen en vernietigen*, 144, 201.
- 8 Spectrum of force relates to the intensity of military operations. From low to high, a distinction is made between such things as peacekeeping, intervention, peace missions, irregular warfare and major or conventional combat operations. See Richard Pedersen, 'Irregular Warfare: Operational Theme or Full-spectrum Operation?', *Small Wars Journal*, 4 July 2009.
- 9 Van Holst Pellekaan and De Regt, *Operaties in de Oost*, 33, 42; R. E. van Holst Pellekaan, *Hr.Ms. Abraham Crijnsen. Van mijnneveger tot museumschip* (Zaltbommel 2006) 40.
- 10 Anne-Lot Hoek, *De strijd om Bali. Imperialisme, verzet en onafhankelijkheid 1846–1950* (Amsterdam 2021) 259. Hoek describes a number of airstrikes, but confuses Piper Cubs with Mitchells and incorrectly states that the B-25 fired with mortars. See also Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 205, 364; Groen, *Krijggeweld en kolonie*, 315; Geoffrey Robinson, *The Dark Side of Paradise: Political Violence in Bali* (Ithaca, NY 1995) 135.
- 11 NL-HANA, 2.10.14, Algemene Secretarie, 2320, File on bombardments around Bandung, 1946; Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 207.
- 12 NL-HANA, Algemene Secretarie, 2320, cipher telegram to The Hague, Spoor to Van Mook, no place, no date.
- 13 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 1208, Documents concerning ceasefire negotiations and the establishment of a demarcation line; De Moor, *Generaal Spoor*, 225.
- 14 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 1298, Command order TTTC West Java (Generaal De Waal) May 1947, valid from March.
- 15 Teitler, *Vlootvoogd in de knel*, 73; Hoekstra, 'De Republiek in een wurggreep', 30; Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 206.
- 16 NL-HANA, Marinestaf, 542, Rapporten betreffende patrouilletochten Hr. Ms. Piet Hein, Oostkust en Westkust Sumatra, 1–23 november 1946.
- 17 Teitler, *Vlootvoogd in de knel*, 74.
- 18 Jalhay, *Allen zwijgen*, 200.
- 19 NIMH, 495, Knapen, 7, Correspondentie (Nederlands-Indië), mei–december 1947, 10 November 1947.
- 20 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 2259, Order for request artillery support, Salatiga, 14 October 1947, Brigade commander, o/l Chief of Staff J. G. Smit, Major GS.
- 21 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 297, Confidential address to the troops, Batavia, 27 October 1947.
- 22 Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 674; Lizé, *De lucht boven de sawa's*, 42–43.
- 23 Budding, *Beheersing van geweld*, 53; NL-HANA, 2.05.117, Code-archief Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 1945–1954, 26982, Draft general instructions regarding the use of aircraft in connection with paragraph G no. 23 of the general regulations under the Truce Agreement of 17 January 1948, Batavia, 5 February 1948; Document III, Operational order 'Wehrkreise' IInd Division, 8 November 1947.
- 24 Lee, *War and Diplomacy*, 215.
- 25 Leiden University Library, SMGI, Interview 1529.1 – Ritman, J. A. (John).
- 26 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 469, TTTC Midden-Java, kantoor operatie, Algemeen bevel (voor de statische toestand), Semarang, 16 March 1948.
- 27 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1444, korpsgeschiedenis 2-8 RVA, 7–13 February 1948; Commissie Gedenkboek 8 R.V.A., *Artillerievuur in de tropen. Het boek met zijn herinneringen aan het 8e Regiment Veldartillerie ingedeeld bij de 3e Inf.Br. Gr.-C Divisie 7 December* (The Hague n.y.) 83–84; H. J. Neuman, *De W van Willem. Kroniek van een Brigade* (Semarang 1950) 82.
- 28 See for example NL-HANA, 2.05.63, Archief van de Nederlandse Delegatie bij de Security Council Committee of Good Offices on the Indonesian Question, 1946–1949; NL-HANA, 2.22.21 Afscheid van



- Indië, o.a. onderzoeksarchief dr. Frances Gouda; UN Archives, S-0681, Good Offices Committee and United Nations Commission for Indonesia; ANRI, RA.13 Delegasi Indonesia.
- 29 NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 139, 1 2 and 3 Batterij Veldartillerie 1946; *ibid.*, 3134, 2 Veldartillerie, 1946-1948; NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1431, Ite Afdeling Veldartillerie; *ibid.*, 567, Collectie Cats, 38, Stukken en documentatie betreffende de regimenten Veldartillerie in Nederlands-Indië, 1946-1950.
  - 30 NL-HaNA, Mariniersbrigade, 151, Cdt NMB to Cdt Korps Mariniers, Soerabaja, 5 April 1946.
  - 31 NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 2914, Overzicht May 1946 van afdeling 1D der hoofdafdeling Generalen Staf.
  - 32 C. J. O. Dorren, *Onze Mariniersbrigade. De veelbewogen episode in de Korps-geschiedenis van 1945-1949* (n.p. place 1954) 85-86.
  - 33 NL-HaNA, Mariniersbrigade, 999, Inlichtingen-jaarverslag over de periode 22 maart 1946-22 maart 1947 van het Hoofdkwartier Mariniersbrigade van het Korps Mariniers, 1947, 10-15; De Moor, *Generaal Spoor*, 241; on Sungkono see Van Klinken and Van der Bent, 'East Java, 1949', 154. Before the war, Sungkono had been a mechanic at the Surabaya naval base, and in the time of the Japanese a company commander in PETA.
  - 34 HCKVA, 283, Verhalenreeks ARBAT, deel I, 9; See for a detailed description of events Schoonoord, *De Mariniersbrigade*, 143-164.
  - 35 *Ibid.*, Part I, 9; part III, 16; Part V, 6, 21.
  - 36 NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 3389, Dagboekfragmenten van J.P. Schulz, sergeant, later vaandrig van de Inlichtingendienst van de X Brigade, 1-12 RI, 1946-1947, report action to Mojokerto. Although Schoonoord states that the action met with little resistance, a different, more violent image arises from this report. Likewise in Spreeuwers, *De lange weg*, 106-120, who experienced heavy fighting and states that six Dutch soldiers died and twenty were wounded.
  - 37 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1431, Ite Afdeling Veldartillerie.
  - 38 Spreeuwers, *De lange weg*, 117.
  - 39 NIMH, 065, Militaire Luchtvaartdienst (MLD), 537, Verrichtingen 860 Vliegtuigsquadron, 1947-1949.
  - 40 NL-HaNA, Algemene Secretarie, 2320, XXI. Bombardments by Royal Netherlands Airforce, 1946-1947.
  - 41 ANRI, RA.24, Kementerian Pertahanan (Kemenhan), 1231, telegram Goebornoer Djawa Timor, Kepala Bagian Oemoem Sockarto to Menteri Pertahanan Djokjakarta, 18 March 1947; *ibid.* 1293, Turunan 1, Laporan Penjerboeah moesoeh oentoek mengoesai kota Mojokerto dan pintoe air Mlirip, 25 March 1947.
  - 42 NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 1999, preliminary intelligence report concerning action 17/18 March 1947; preliminary report Operation Voorloper II 17, 18 and 19 March 1947; Schoonoord, *De Mariniersbrigade*, 143, 145, 147.
  - 43 Irna H. N. Hadi Soewito, *Rakyat Jawa Timur mempertahankan kemerdekaannya, jilid 1* (Jakarta 1994) 174-175.
  - 44 *NIB, Deel 7*, nr. 54. Political report Sumatra from government adviser for political affairs on Sumatra (Van de Velde) for Dec. 1946 and Jan. 1947.
  - 45 Arifin Pulungan, *Kisah dari pedalaman. Sebuah epos perang kemerdekaan ri di daerah Sumatera Utara dan Aceh* (Medan 1979) 26-27.
  - 46 NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 1735, Regionaal Luchtvaart Commando Sumatra, weekly overview No. 2, period 17-30 December 1946; *ibid.*, 1738, Overview HKML Dec. 1946, 10; *ibid.*, 1739, Overview HKML Jan-Feb 1947, 4; Willeumier, *7e Afdeling Veldartillerie*, 1, 19-20.
  - 47 NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 1736, Rapporten met een overzicht van de uitgevoerde operationele vluchten van het Regionaal Luchtvaart Commando Sumatra van het Militaire Luchtvaart (ML-KNIL), Weekly overview Intelligence No.3, 1-6 January 1947. According to an Indonesian article, an Indonesian fighting group consciously drew fire to trees by making them shake, then catching the cartridges in a net and refilling them with gunpowder. Nur Janti, 'Barisan Srikandi dalam Perjuangan Kemerdekaan', *Historia*, 17 July 2018; See also Rémy Limpach, *Tasten in het duister. Inlichtingenstrijd tijdens de Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsoorlog, 1945-1949* (Amsterdam, 2023).
  - 48 NL-HaNA, 1739, Overview HKML Jan-Feb 1947, 4.
  - 49 NL-HaNA, Defensie / Wandaden, 4, daily orders kol. J.M. Sluyter, TTC Central Sumatra, Padang, 28 Nov. 1946 and 28 January 1947.
  - 50 Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 401-405; Gérard Bueters, 'Bevrijding of Merdeka', NPS, 20 July 2010.
  - 51 NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 1736, Regionaal Luchtvaart Commando Sumatra, Overview nr. 5, 14 January-22 January.

- 52 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 3043, OOT nr. 5, 16-1-1947 t/m 23-1-1947.
- 53 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1321, korpsgeschiedenis 2-14 RI, verslag 4e compagnie II-14 RI, afsluitingsgroep actie op 20-01-1947, verslag cdt. aanvalsgroep bij actie d.d. 20 januari 1947, maj. P. De Kam, and verslag van de actie naar Padangbesi en omgeving dd. 20 januari 1947.
- 54 NL-HANA, Defensie/Wandaden, 4, dagorder 28 January 1947.
- 55 Marlies ter Borg, *Pré-politionele actie in Palembang* (self published 2017) 128.
- 56 NIMH, ML-KNIL, 506, Instructies afkomstig van de Chef Generale Staf (CGS) en de Commandant Militaire Luchtvaart (CML) betreffende het gebruik en de inzet van de Nederlandse Luchtstrijdkrachten (LSK), January–February 1947.
- 57 Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 404.
- 58 Anne-Lot Hoek, 'De verzwezen moorden van Palembang', *Vrij Nederland*, 4 August 2017; Ter Borg, *Pré-politionele actie in Palembang*; Nanda Julian Utama, *Pertempuran lima hari lima malam di Palembang 1947. Latar belakang dan dampaknya bagi perjuangan mempertahankan Kemerdekaan* (Jakarta 2018); Marsono et al., *Palagan Palembang: pertempuran lima hari lima malam Wong Kito Galo* (Bandung 2012). As already mentioned in Chapter 2, the number five is symbolic; the same designation is also used for the fighting in Semarang in October 1945 and in Solo in August 1949.
- 59 According to Pusat Sejarah TNI, *Sejarah TNI Jilid I*, 129, the Dutch were the ones to provoke and fire blindly on New Year's Eve. According to NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 3142, korpsgeschiedenis staf Y-Brigade over periode bezetting van Palembang, the 'undisciplined gangs of Lasjkar Rakjat' were the guilty ones.
- 60 NIMH, 510, Collectie De Kam, 114, Diary of H. Booy, stafcompagnie 8e bataljon Regiment Stoottroepen. Gosewinus van Oorschot calculated that in total, Mitchells spent 14,125 cartridges from the 12.7-mm guns during 67 runs. Ter Borg, *Pré-politionele actie in Palembang*, 130.
- 61 Van Boeijen, *Zij werden geroepen*, 98. See also J. Staleman, *2 jaar 6e Afd. Art.KL.* (Palembang 1948) 1–11, on the role of artillery.
- 62 NIMH, De Kam, 114, Diary Booy; *ibid.*, 115, Diary of G. Achterberg, I-8e bataljon Regiment Stoottroepen.
- 63 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 3142, korpsgeschiedenis staf Y-Brigade.
- 64 Pusjarah, *Sejarah TNI Jilid I*, 129. According to Van Holst Pellekaan and De Regt, *Operaties in de Oost*, 141–142, *Hr.Ms. Piet Hein* fired a total of 49 salvos with two cannons.
- 65 NIMH, De Kam, 115, Diary Achterberg; *ibid.*, 120, Diary of Sergeant P. van der Neut, stafcompagnie 8e bataljon Regiment Stoottroepen, also mentions 'very many dead'. The estimates of the numbers of casualties on Indonesian (military and civilian) and Chinese residents sides vary from several hundreds to 2,800. This last figure can be found in the caption of a photo of a soldier of 8 RS, NIMH Beeldbank, Objectnummer 2002-374-1; an overview of Indonesian estimates can be found in Utama, *Pertempuran lima hari lima malam*, 150–158.
- 66 Boeijen, *Zij werden geroepen*, 112.
- 67 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 1739, Overzicht HKML March–April 1947, 3, and May–July 1947, 5–8.
- 68 NIMH, Sweep, 162, 'Mannen van 3-6 R.V.A.', 29.
- 69 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 777, Publication entitled 'Ervaringen Politionele Acties' from Territoriaal tevens Troepencommando Midden-Java onder bevel van generaal-majoor S. de Waal RMWO, 23 February 1948, Chapter III – Artillerie, 5; also in NIMH, Van Santen, 15.
- 70 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 268, Report Schouten.
- 71 HCKVA 106-1 Actieverslag E-batterij 3-6 RVA starting 21 July 1947.
- 72 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1240, Diary of 2nd Lieutenant (KNIL) P.E. van Mourik, 1-3 RI.
- 73 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 2260, 2 RVA.
- 74 NIMH, Sweep, 155, Memoires opgesteld door oorlogsvrijwilliger W. Dofferhoff betreffende de verichtingen van de 5e Afdeling Veldartillerie (5 VA), gebaseerd op onder andere de dagboeken van P.J. van Veen, L.P. Legierse, J.P.M. van Betuw en G. Flaming en het boek getiteld *Meijers grote omweg*, 2002; *ibid.*, 528, Collectie Aan- en Afvoertroepen (AAT), 36, Dagboek van L.P.J. Dijkema, over zijn tijd in Nederlands-Indië, part I, 1945–1948; *ibid.*, Dekolonisatie, 1254, Korpsgeschiedenis 1-5 RI, states that artillery fire did not cause losses; NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 268, Verslag van luitenant-kolonel W.A. Schouten inzake de werkzaamheden van de brigade-artillerie, behorend tot de V-Brigade, juli 20–oktober 1, 1947.
- 75 NIMH, ML-KNIL, 646, Gevechtsrapporten afkomstig van het 120ste Squadron tijdens de Eerste Poli-

- tionele Actie van 21 July–4 August 1947, cites 23 aircraft; *ibid.*, 676, Weekoverzicht Hoofdkwartier Militaire Luchtvaart 20-7 t/m 26-7-1947; *Documenten betreffende de eerste politionele actie. Uitgegeven en ingeleid door drs. H.L. Zwitzer* (The Hague 1983) 126; and Jos Heyman, 'De vliegtuigsterkte van de Indonesische luchtmacht, 1945–1950', *Spinner* 19 (2006) 8–14, 11 cite 24 destroyed aircraft; NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 1739, Overview HKML May–July 1947, 11–22, cites 26.
- 76 Indonesian plans for air defence: NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 1739, Overview HKML May–July 1947, 4–11. Fireflies: NL-HaNA, Marinestaf, 209, Verslag van de door de Marine Luchtvaart Dienst (MLD) in Nederlands-Indië in het tijdvak 21 July–7 August uitgevoerde operaties, 1947.
- 77 NIMH, ML-KNIL, 646, Gevechtsrapporten 120 Squadron; Brommer, *Semarang*, 83; *Het Parool*, 29 July 1947; Van Loo, *Verenigd op de grond*, 152.
- 78 Diplomatic correspondence about the matter in NL-HaNA, 2.05.44, NL Gezantschap in GB, 2117. The aircraft had been made available by Indian businessman Bijū Patnaik.
- 79 The crash file is preserved in a restricted public archive of Rijksluchtvaartdienst and could only be viewed after a long wait and following a personal check by a civil servant of the Ministerie van Infrastructuur en Waterstaat, even though it can largely be consulted on the web page [www.hdekker.info/diversen/vtcla.htm](http://www.hdekker.info/diversen/vtcla.htm); NL-HaNA, 2.16.5240, Ministerie van Verkeer en Waterstaat: Directoraat-Generaal van de Rijksluchtvaartdienst (RLD), 3835, Indonesië, Djokjakarta, Dakota (VT-CLA), 29-07-1947, 1947–1951, see message New Delhi (Lamping) to min. BZ, 18 March 1948, and telegram of Boetzelaer to DIRVO and New Delhi, 12 March 1948. See also the file in NIMH, ML-KNIL, 535, Stukken betreffende het 'Dakota c-47 incident' waarbij twee Nederlandse vliegtuigen op 29 July 1947 nabij Jokjakarta een Indiaas c-47 Douglas-vliegtuig van het Rode Kruis neerschoten, September–October 1948. In this file, the 120 Squadron commander states in a telegram: 'fired at a bogey flying low over the ground type unknown'. Gevechtsrapport in *ibid.*, 646, 120 Squadron.
- 80 At the crash site in Ngoto, there is a large monument and a replica of the tail piece, as there is in Museum Pusat TNI AU Dirgantara Mandala in Yogyakarta. Furthermore, to this day, 29 July is *hari bhakti* (dedicated day) of AURI. See for Indonesian descriptions, Soewito, *Awal kedirgantaraan di Indonesia*, 104–113; Nasrudin and Joehanda, *Palagan Maguwo*, 74–111; Boediardjo, *Siapa Sudi saya Dongengi*, 60; I. N. Soebagijo, *Pengalaman Masa Revolusi* (Jakarta 1982) 68; Nasution, *SPK, Jilid 5: Agresi Militer Belanda I*, 234–239. Dutch views in Boer, *De jachtvliegtuigen*, 66–67; Ward, *Militaire Luchtvaart*, 291–292, who copied the Dutch narrative of that time. A more extensive and correct account can be found in Louis Zweers, *De crash van de Franeker. Een Amerikaanse persreis naar Nederlands-Indië in 1949* (Amsterdam 2001) 17–22.
- 81 NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 1172, Overview of operations of the Headquarters MLD, 1947 July 21–August 7; also in *ibid.*, 1742.
- 82 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 331, Interview with Luitenant General S.H. Spoor; NL-HaNA, 1288, Spoor to Buurman van Vreeden, 22 July 1947 and Spoor to Van Mook, 25 July 1947; NIMH, 513, Collectie Spoor, 180, letter 22 July 1947; NIMH, ML-KNIL, 678, OOT's 2 December 1946–24 October 1947; Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 405–406; Groen, *Krijgsmacht en kolonie*, 325.
- 83 Dennis, *Troubled Days of Peace*, 126, 134.
- 84 Dussel, *Dat was jij Marinier*, 137, 145–146.
- 85 NIMH, 149, Oorlogsvrijwilligers KM 1944–1950, 12, A.A. Hooijdonk; NIMH, AAT, 36, Diary Dijkema, Part I; ANRI, Kemenhan, 1293, Zainal Abidin, Ketoea Oemoem Masjoemi daerah Tjirebon and A.J. Sultan, Kepala Staf Oemoem Divisi Hizboellah Tjirebon, Laporan sekitar djatoehnja kota Tjirebon, Djokjakarta, 26 Djoeli 1947; *ibid.*, 1353, Major A. Abdul Riffai, Laporan pendek tentang daerah Tjirebon, sesoeatoe tempat, 20 October 1947.
- 86 Tico Onderwater, 'Vuurdoop in de archipel. De MARID in Indonesië van 1946–1949', *Marineblad* 130, 8 (2020) 24–28, at 26–27.
- 87 Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 206–207.
- 88 NIMH, Sweep, 162, 'Mannen van 3-6 R.V.A.', 33.
- 89 Frances Gouda, with Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies/Indonesia: US Foreign Policy and Indonesian Nationalism, 1920–1949* (Amsterdam 2002) 209.
- 90 Dienst Legercontacten T-Brigade, *Wij waren in ... Jogja!* (Semarang 1949) 4–8.
- 91 Nasrudin and Joehanda, *Palagan Maguwo*, 311, name 107 people and also count 25 anonymous graves in the local heroes' cemetery; Pusjarah, *Sejarah TNI Jilid I*, 174.
- 92 NIMH, Sweep, 445, letter 26 December 1948.

- 93 M. Heijmans-van Bruggen et al., *Djokja en Solo. Beeld van de Vorstensteden* (Purmerend 1998) 81–82.
- 94 Hagen, *Koloniale oorlogen*, 752.
- 95 Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 407, 629–630.
- 96 Pierre Heijboer, *De politionele acties* (Haarlem 1979) 131.
- 97 De Moor, *Westerling's oorlog*, 328–332; Anne-Lot Hoek, 'Ook op Sumatra richtten de Nederlanders een bloedbad aan', *NRC Handelsblad*, 13 February 2016; *ibid.*, 'Rengat 1949', *Inside Indonesia* 125 (2016); Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 663–669. See also Chapter 6.
- 98 NIMH, ML-KNIL, 677, Weekly overview HKML 19 until 26 December 1948.
- 99 Van Doorn and Hendrix, *Ontsporing van geweld*, 213; Schoonoord, *De Mariniersbrigade*, 320–322.
- 100 NIMH, Sweep, 445, letters of 26 December 1948 and 7 January 1949.
- 101 Nasution, *Fundamentals*, 20–21.
- 102 Robert Cribb, 'Military Strategy in the Indonesian Revolution: Nasution's Concept of 'Total People's War' in Theory and Practice', *War & Society* 19, 2 (2001) 143–154, at 150.
- 103 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 1739, HKML Aug.–Oct. 47, 5–6.
- 104 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 2322, War diary 8 Regiment Field artillery; Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 97–98; NIMH, 463 Collection Sas, 69, Report of Major G. Struys Jr. of 3–8 R.V.A. concerning the 'Limburg' action, relating to the suppression of the uprising in West Java (Boengboelan); details about grenades fired in NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1442, 8 RVA, War diary 20–23 November 1947. Action also mentioned in Commission commemorative book 8 R.V.A., *Artillerievuur in de tropen*, 86.
- 105 Hilma Bruinsma, 'Taboe in het theemeubel', blog 53; original in NIOD, 247 Collection Correspondence, 1148, letter 18 August 1947.
- 106 Nasution, *SPK Jilid 6: Perang Gerilya Semesta I*, 140, 164.
- 107 Lapré, *Andjing Nica*, 99.
- 108 Wijaya, Zulkifli and Dhyatmika, *Soedirman*, 30–31; NL-HANA, Afscheid van Indië, 990, Perintah Siasat Nomor 1/1948.
- 109 NIMH, Sweep, 162, 'Mannen van 3–6 R.V.A.', 83.
- 110 See graph in Groen, *Krijgsgeweld en kolonie*, 327.
- 111 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 1749, Weekly reports of the Intelligence service of the HK-ML in the Dutch East Indies with an overview of the operations carried out by the ML, Weekly overview operations 27 February until 13 March 1949, Nr. 8.
- 112 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 1741, Overview HKML second quarter 1949.
- 113 Nasution, *SPK Jilid 10: Perang gerilya semesta 2*, 146, 269, 274, 675.
- 114 *Ibid.*, 114–115.
- 115 Groen, *Marsroutes en dwaalsporen*, 232.
- 116 See Limpach, *Tasten in het duister*.
- 117 Heijboer, *De politionele acties*, 154.
- 118 NIMH, Sweep, 597, Eshuis diary, 4 August 1949. With thanks to Jan Foppen († 19 December 2021), also a veteran of 6 Esk Vew, for donating this diary.
- 119 Hazekamp, *Twee broers*, 176–178.
- 120 Imran and Ariwadi, *Peranan Pelajar*, 125.
- 121 Hazekamp, *Twee broers*, 186; see also *ibid.*, *Het laatste grote gevecht in Indië. Tweeduizend guerrilla's vallen Solo aan, 7–10 augustus 1949* (Soesterberg 2011). However, according to Murdijo Djungkung, *Mengenang pertempuran empat hari di kota Solo Agustus 1949: dengan semboyan 'gugur satu tumbuh seribu'* (Solo 1988) 31–32, it was the Dutch who continued firing on the 11th, so that the battle actually lasted five days.
- 122 Van Klinken and Van der Bent, 'East Java, 1949'.
- 123 Such as KNIL batteries VA III, V and VI, RNLA units 16 and 18 RVA and 2-41, 2-42, 3-42, 1-43, 2-43 and 3-43 RVA.
- 124 L. Giesing, *Brandlucht en bloedspoor. Dagboek van een Indiëganger* (Sittard 2008) 147.
- 125 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 139, Summary of diary III By. V.A. period 1–15 juni 1946. The daily supply was 576 shots per section (battery).
- 126 Bottema, 'De artillerie van het KNIL', 28; NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 268, Instructions use of artillery during sweep operations, Cdt. v Brigade to subordinate units, Banjoemas, 2 Oct. 1947.
- 127 Bob Cats, *Logistiek onder de tropenzone. De verzorgende diensten van KNIL en KL in Nederlands-Indië 1946–1950* (Amsterdam 2003) 104; Herman Roozenbeek (ed.), *In dienst van de troep. Bevoorrading en*

- transport bij de Koninklijke Landmacht* (Amsterdam 2008) 91; NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 777, 'Ervaringen politionele actie', Chapter III. Artillerie, 1; the same in NIMH, Van Santen, 15.
- 128 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 2931, Commandant Aan- en Afvoertroepen (incl. Staf), voorraden, verpakkingen en verstrekkingen, 1946–1949. Capitals in original.
- 129 Scales, *Firepower in Limited War*, 52–53; Bailey, *Field Artillery and Firepower*, 26, 262; Michael Clodfelter, *Warfare and Armed Conflicts: A Statistical Reference to Casualty and Other Figures, 1500–2000* (Jefferson, NC 2002) 776; Hoffenaar, *Vuur in beweging*, 93.
- 130 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1446, 2–12 RVA, Firing report 3rd quarter 1949, 29 July 1949.
- 131 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1435, 2 RVA, 31 March 1949 (cordon); *ibid.*, 1444, 2–8 RVA, 20 and 23 January 1948 (cordon); *ibid.*, 1451, 5 VA (walls of fire).
- 132 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 2322, 8 Regiment Veldartillerie, 12 August 1947. The kampong in question was Cicembong, currently Cikondang.
- 133 Hans Gerritsen, *De hinderlaag bij Sindoeradja* (Baarn 1988) 123–134; Marcel Messing, *Toen had je de politionele acties* (Franeker 2008) 92–98; Anton P. de Graaff, *De heren worden bedankt. Met het vergeten leger in Indië, 1949–1950* (Franeker 1986) 60–66; Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 504.
- 134 A scissor viewer is a double periscope where the viewing tubes are opened like scissors.
- 135 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 2322, 8 Regiment Veldartillerie, 13 March 1949. Direct fire also mentioned on 21 August and 29 September 1947.
- 136 Beeksmas, *Gedenkboek 2-6 RVA*, 15.
- 137 Van Binsbergen, 3–41 RVA in de tropen, 125; see Spreeuwens, *De lange weg*, 158, for a case in East Java.
- 138 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 777, 'Ervaringen Politionele Acties', Chapter III – Artillerie; see also Van Santen, 15; see furthermore Van Loo, *Verenigd op de grond*, 150–159, for more non-organic deployment of anti-aircraft artillery.
- 139 Hilma Bruinsma, 'Taboe in het theemeubel', blog 90; original in NIOD, Correspondence, 1361, letters 20 and 23 January 1949.
- 140 HCKVA 283, Verhalenreeks ARBAT, part I, 22 (ghost cannon); NL-HANA, Mariniersbrigade, 151, Wnd Cdt Arbat to CMB, 8 November 1946 (light metring); *ibid.*, 1598, Verslag over Artillerie Afdeeling der Mariniers Brigade van 1/3/46 tot 1/11/46 (annoying tactic); *ibid.*, Strijdkrachten, 139, 1, 2 en 3 Batterij Veldartillerie (sound locations); NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1453, 7 VA (Japanese aiming devices).
- 141 NIMH, 482 Collection De Wit, 36, War diary 9 VA, 10, 13, 18, 25, 28 and 29 Sept., 1 and 10 Oct., 26 and 29 Nov. and 2, 13 and 18 Dec. 1947 (civilians).
- 142 HCKVA, 283, Narratives ARBAT, part I, 28.
- 143 NIMH, ML-KNIL, 676, Weekly overview operations, from the Intelligence Office of HKML, July–September 1947. The bombs in question were 396 bombs of 500 lbs, 74 of 250 lbs and 9 of 110 lbs, together 217,490 lbs or 98,651 kg.
- 144 NIMH, Spoor, 171, Weekly overview HKML 27 July–3 August 1947.
- 145 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 550, Operaties uitgevoerd door de Marine Luchtvaartdienst (MLD) in Indonesië, 1948 December 15–1949 January 6; NIMH, MLD, 537, Rapporten verrichtingen 860 Squadron 1947/1950; Hans van der Kop, *Terug van weggeweest. Herinneringen aan Soerabaja, 1947–1949* (The Hague 2002) 131.
- 146 NIMH, ML-KNIL, 1033, Brieven afkomstig van de Commandant Militaire Luchtvaart (CML) betreffende de aanschaf van bommenrichtkijzers en de aanvulling van munitie- en bomvoorraden op de vliegbases in Nederlands-Indië, 1947, says that the bomb supply on the eve of the first offensive amounted to 212 tonnes (kg). Furthermore, there was a further supply of 4,500 tonnes (lbs) of bombs in total across the archipelago, although their usefulness was unknown because they had not been pyrotechnically approved. Hans van der Kop, artillery staff officer at Morokrembangan – and in that capacity supply manager of MLD aircraft ammunition – states in his memoirs that, a further 3,000 tonnes (lbs) of bombs and 4,500 missiles of 60 lbs were available at his navy base in Surabaya, but it is unclear whether these were also at the disposal of NEIAF. Van der Kop, *Terug van weggeweest*, 37.
- 147 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 1288, Spoor to Van Mook, 25 July 1947.
- 148 NIMH, Spoor, 171, Weekly overview HKML 27 July–3 August 1947.
- 149 If the maximum bomb load had been dropped during all 942 tallied operational sorties (223 bomber sorties, 719 fighter sorties), the total would amount to 730 tonnes (kilogram). Although the actual number of sorties was higher (for one thing because MLD sorties were not included, see the explanation at figure 6), aircraft actually only dropped bombs during part of their combat support missions.

- 150 120 Squadron alone spent 21,030 cartridges of 20 mm during the first offensive. NIMH, ML-KNIL, 535. During the second offensive, 860 Squadron spent 30,470 cartridges. NL-HANA, *Strijdkrachten*, 550.
- 151 Clodfelter, *Warfare and Armed Conflicts*, 681 (Indochina, 839 and 12,800 tonnes respectively in the avoirdupois system); Fred Branfman (ed.), *Voices from the Plain of Jars: Life under an Air War* (2nd edition; Madison, WI 2013) ix (Laos and Cambodia, 2.1 and 2.7 million tonnes respectively in the avoirdupois system).
- 152 See HKML overviews in NL-HANA, *Strijdkrachten*, 1739–1741.
- 153 Ben Bouman, *Succes in een verloren oorlog. Het 6e Regiment Veldartillerie en zijn Speciale Troepen in de onafhankelijkheidsstrijd van de Republiek Indonesië, 1946–1949* (Nijmegen 2015) 105; NIB, *Deel 2*, 194, Helfrich to Schermerhorn, 15 December 1945 (long arm).
- 154 Lizé, 'De lucht boven de sawa's', 25; NL-HANA, *Strijdkrachten*, 282, Richtlijnen voor de Troepencommandanten voor het gebruik van luchtstrijdkrachten, 1947.
- 155 NL-HANA, *Strijdkrachten*, 1741, HKML Overview July–August–September 1949, 5.
- 156 NL-HANA, *Strijdkrachten*, 1749, HKML Weekoverzicht Operatiën from 13 to 27 February 1949, Nr. 7.
- 157 See for example NL-HANA, *Strijdkrachten*, 1288, No.829, 23-5-1949, Volgnummer 7849.
- 158 NIMH, ML-KNIL, 646, Gevechtsrapport Nr. 94, 120 Squadron, Semarang, 22 July 1947.
- 159 NIMH, ML-KNIL, 1033, brief afkomstig van de Commandant Militaire Luchtvaart (CML) betreffende de aanvulling van munitie- en bomvoorraden op de vliegbases in Nederlands-Indië, 18 July 1947, appendix I.
- 160 NL-HANA, *Strijdkrachten*, 1742, Rapport van het HK-MLD in Nederlands-Indië met een overzicht van operaties uitgevoerd door die dienst van 21 July–7 August 1947, 1e Politie Actie.
- 161 NL-HANA, *Marine/Scheepsjournalen*, 372, Banckert, 21-11-1945–11-11-1946; 1623, Galen, Van, 30-6-1946–8-10-1946; 1986, Hein, Piet, 24-9-1945–7-9-1946; 1988, Hein, Piet, 26-5-1947–26-6-1947; 2461, Kortenaer, 18-7-1946–6-9-1946.
- 162 *Het Dagblad*, 1 July 1947; also in NIB, *Deel 9*, Nr. 320.
- 163 Fenna Feenstra, *Langs eigen wegen* (Amsterdam 1953) 320–323. The story was confirmed in correspondence with their son Cees Bottema in Augustus 2019. In NL-HANA, *Scheepsjournalen*, 3766, 15-3-1947–7-11-1947, 'Poema', part of the facts could also be verified, including the runs past the harbour, the report to the OAZ Semarang and the departure of the commander to Batavia. In NIMH, *Losse Stukken*, 2225 en 2226, patrouillerrapporten RP 115; NL-HANA, Cdt. Zeemacht, 1679, Rapporten OAZ Semarang 1946–1947, and 2228, Hr.Ms. 'RP-schepen', no information found.
- 164 Teitler, *Vlootvoogd in de knel*, 182–183.
- 165 The navy maintained a control policy of Republican ports and ships that amounted to a (partial) coastal blockade and led to shortages in Republican regions. See Hoekstra, 'De Republiek in een wurggreep'.
- 166 NL-HANA, *Marinestaf*, 547, Rapporten betreffende patrouilletochten Hr. Ms. Piet Hein, 110°/114° Oosterlengte - 6° Zuiderbreedte, 1–15 April 1947.
- 167 NL-HANA, *Marinestaf*, 474, Rapport actie vernietiging ALRI-vaartuig Cheribon ingevolge telegram CZM NI 0108-01252, 8 January 1947. Fortuyn understood the signal 'Sekarang harap moelai ngetok' as 'we hope to start the attack now', but it can also mean: 'hopefully the shooting starts now', which may imply that, instead, the ship wanted to draw Dutch fire.
- 168 *Ibid.*, CZM to Lt. G-G, Batavia, 11 January 1947.
- 169 Santosa and Wanhar, *Pasukan-M menang tak dibalang gugur tak dikenang*, 223; NL-HANA, *Marinestaf*, 536, Stukken betreffende de beschietingen uitgevoerd op Indonesische Republikeinse geschutsofstelling bij Tandjong Semboclangan op 1–2 June 1947.
- 170 NL-HANA, *Marinestaf*, 544, Rapporten betreffende patrouilletochten Hr. Ms. Piet Hein, war diary 2 February.
- 171 NL-HANA, *Marinestaf*, 71, Rapport betreffende de actie bij Tg. Semboclangan, opgesteld door Cdt. 860 Sq, Tijd. Off Vlieger 1 G. Volkersz, Soerabaya, 10 June 1947.
- 172 NIMH, *Oorlogsvrijwilligers KM*, 12, A.A. Hooijdonk (naval gunfire mission of *Hr.Ms. Evertsen* on 22 July and together with *Hr.Ms. Banckert* on 26 July); NL-HANA, *Mariniersbrigade*, 1480, Operatief rapport Nr. 1, 4–17 August 1947; Dussel, *Dat was jij, Marinier*, 147. Remains of the cannons can still be visited. See Agus Mursidi et al., 'Implementation of Community Service in the Introduction of History in the Sembulungan Peninsula, Banyuwangi Regency, East Java Province, Indonesia', *Gandrung: Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat* 2, 2 (2021) 276–291.
- 173 NIMH, 051 Collectie I.C. de Regt, 7, file 18, 14-230548, Jan van Gelder. Amphitrite Bay is located at the mouth of the Indragiri River and is now called Teluk Kualacenaku.



## 5. A Closer Look at Three Cases of Fire Support

- 1 The original text reads: 'Isi 26 Pahlawan [...] Gugur Serangan Umum Th. 1946'.
- 2 Studies of that battle often end abruptly after the end of the fighting in October. See for example Said, *Pertempuran lima hari di Semarang*; Moehkardi, *Revolusi nasional di Semarang*; Moerwanto, *Jiwa patriot. Pertempuran lima hari di Semarang* (Jakarta 1992). Wiyono, *Jawa Tengah*, and Panitia, *Sejarah pertempuran lima hari di Semarang* do briefly pay attention to the battle against the British.
- 3 Brommer, *Semarang*, 70–76.
- 4 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 1038, Weekoverzicht inlichtingen-rapport No.1, 25-11-1945, by Lt. Cav. K. Kooy, liaison officer with the British commander on Java; also in Bussemaker, *Bersiap!*, 169.
- 5 Wiyono, *Jawa Tengah*, 85; NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 66, 5 Parachute Brigade, Dossier of information of situation in Semarang to be issued to all officers of 'T' Regimental Group Dutch Army.
- 6 Groen, "Patience and bluff", 139–140; Panitia, *Sejarah pertempuran lima hari*, 232.
- 7 Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 158.
- 8 Rosihan Anwar, *Sejarah kecil, petite histoire Indonesia jilid 7: kisah-kisah zaman Revolusi Kemerdekaan* (Jakarta 2015) 107–108.
- 9 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 1043, Weekly situation reports 23 Ind Div, Ned. liaison with the British commander West and Central Java, kol W.P. van Veen, No. 7, 4-jan-46; *ibid.*, 1045, Daily operational situation reports of Headquarters 23th Indian Division, entries for 31 December 1945, 4 January and 5 January 1946.
- 10 Widodo, *Sejarah TNI-AD Kodam VII/Diponegoro. Sirnaning Jakso katon gapuraning Ratu* (Semarang 1968) 72.
- 11 A. M. Brouwer and M. F. A. Brok, *Tussen sawahs en bergen. Het leven van de soldaat in de Tijgerbrigade* (Semarang 1948) 8–9; Jot Polman, *De brutale reis. De eerste tocht naar een nieuwe wereld* (Meppel 1947) 104, 122.
- 12 HCKVA, 9-2, War Diary 1 VA; Bussemaker, *Bersiap!*, 175; Brouwer and Brok, *Tussen sawahs en bergen*, 13.
- 13 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 1094, Gevechtsrapport betreffende de actie tegen kpg PANDORANGAN KIDDOEL op 1 april 1946, Semarang, 13 April 1946; Polman, *De brutale reis*, 119.
- 14 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1316, 2-13 RI.
- 15 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 1094, Aantekeningen van den Brigade-commandant betreffende de actie 'Grotesk' op 27 juni 1946; *ibid.*, Gevechtsrapport betreffende de actie tegen kampong Banjoemanik 1 op 27 juli 1946, aantekeningen opv. Cdt T-Brigade, lkol N.J. Kronig.
- 16 Wiyono, *Jawa Tengah*, 90; Nasution, *SPK Jilid 3: Diplomasi sambil bertempur*, 532; Widodo, *Kodam VII/Diponegoro*, 74.
- 17 Widodo, *Kodam VII/Diponegoro*, 72–73.
- 18 Van Boeijen, *Zij werden geroepen*, 148.
- 19 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 1734, Intel. Overzicht No.8, 8–14 juli 1946; Van Boeijen, *Zij werden geroepen*, 150–159. The sources are inconclusive about whether it was Lua guns or .50 machine-gun fire that killed the officers.
- 20 Nasution, *SPK Jilid 3: Diplomasi sambil bertempur*, 532 speaks of naval gunfire, but based on Dutch sources it appears to have been 1 VA artillery fire.
- 21 Ny. Rr. Soedjariah Notohamidjojo, 'Kehidupan dan keluarga dalam masa perjuangan 45', in Angkatan 45, Dewan Harian Nasional, Pusat Dokumentasi Sejarah Perjuangan 45, *Letusan di balik buku* (Jakarta 1976) 135–156, at 141–142; Widodo, *Kodam VII/Diponegoro*, 74.
- 22 Brouwer and Brok, *Tussen sawahs en bergen*, 15.
- 23 HCKVA, 9-2, Bekendmaking over den vijandelijke aanval op Semarang op 4 augustus 1946.
- 24 Polman, *De brutale reis*, 146.
- 25 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 80, Rapport van de commandant T-Brigade over de Indonesische aanval op Semarang op 4 August 1946.
- 26 Van Boeijen, *Zij werden geroepen*, 159 (quote Verhulst); Bussemaker, *Bersiap!*, 175; Brommer, *Semarang*, 80.
- 27 Widodo, *Kodam VII/Diponegoro*, 75; NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 1734, Intel. Overzicht No. 11, 31 juli t/m 6 augustus 1946, Para 'B', Eyewitness report Lt. Weynschenk about N5-230; *ibid.*, 80, Report 4 August 1946; Brommer, *Semarang*, 80 (quote); Van Boeijen, *Zij werden geroepen*, 159. Information about the downed crew can be found at oorlogsgravenstichting.nl, by searching for the plane's registration number, N5-230.

- 28 HCKVA, 9-2, Bekendmaking over den vijandelijke aanval op Semarang op 4 augustus 1946.
- 29 Polman, *De brutale reis*, 151.
- 30 The places listed refer to present-day Morodemak, Margolinduk and Purworejo respectively. NL-HaNA, Marinestaf, 212, Rapport met bijlage betreffende de beschieting uitgevoerd tijdens de actie op Semarang op 4-5 augustus; *ibid.*, 216, patrouilletochten Semarang – Japara, 29 juli–15 augustus 1946; *ibid.*, Cdt. Zeemacht, 2161, Stukken betreffende bombardementsactie's van Hr.Ms. schepen tijdens de algemene aanval op Semarang op 4 en 5 augustus 1946 (quote Pinke and report AFNEI). The part played by *Abraham Crijnsen* at Semarang is only briefly mentioned in Van Holst Pellekaan, *Hr.Ms. Abraham Crijnsen*, 68.
- 31 HCKVA 9-2, Bekendmaking over den vijandelijke aanval op Semarang op 4 augustus 1946.
- 32 Bussemaker, *Bersiapi!*, 175; Groen, *Krijgsgeweld en kolonie*, 315, says that some of the casualties were caused by artillery fire from *Van Kinsbergen*, but this ship did not arrive at the roadstead until four days later.
- 33 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1133, 1 RS, August 1946.
- 34 HCKVA 9-2, Bekendmaking over den vijandelijke aanval op Semarang op 4 augustus 1946.
- 35 NL-HaNA, Cdt. Zeemacht, 2165, Verleening van artillerie-steun te Semarang, 8-11 augustus 1946.
- 36 A passage comparable to Polman's can be found in, for example, a letter from soldier Jan Tippel to his girlfriend in Brouwer and Brok, *Tussen sawahs en bergen*, 188, where he writes that artillery fire 'is the most beautiful music you could have when positioned opposite a heavy machine gun'.
- 37 Widodo, *Kodam VII/Diponegoro*, 75.
- 38 NL-HaNA, Cdt. Zeemacht, 2161, CZM to BDZ, 'Steun der Marine aan het front te Semarang', omstreeks 4 september.
- 39 Van Holst Pellekaan and De Regt, *Operaties in de Oost*, 75 (OAZ Semarang); NL-HaNA, Cdt. Zeemacht, 2161, CZM to BDZ.
- 40 NL-HaNA, Cdt. Zeemacht, 2165, Artilleristische verslagen van de beschieting vanaf de reede van Semarang op 8 en 9 augustus 1946, Officier van Artillerie Luitenant ter Zee der 2e klasse, N.J.A.C. Swellengrebel, at sea, 16 August 1946.
- 41 Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 416.
- 42 NL-HaNA, Cdt. Zeemacht, 2161, CZM to BDZ, Steun der Marine aan het front te Semarang.
- 43 NL-HaNA, Cdt. Zeemacht, 2165, Report Swellengrebel.
- 44 *Ibid.*
- 45 NL-HaNA, Cdt. Zeemacht, 2161, CZM to MTCS, 10 August 1946.
- 46 NL-HaNA, Cdt. Zeemacht, 2218, Patrouillerrapporten Hr.Ms. 'Banckert', steunverleening landmacht Semarang, at sea, 20 August 1946, Commandant Luitenant ter Zee der 1e klasse G. Koudijs.
- 47 *Ibid.*, Report Koudijs.
- 48 C. J. M. Kretschmer de Wilde, 'Commandant Luitenant ter Zee der eerste klasse J.K. Kempees vertelt over Hr.Ms. Kortenaer en zijn ovw-ers', *Wapenbroeders* 8 (1990); NL-HaNA, Marinestaf, 473, torpedo-bootjager Hr.Ms. Kortenaer, Stukken betreffende de beschietingen uitgevoerd op het Westfront van Semarang in het tijdvak 12-16 augustus; *ibid.*, 540, Rapporten betreffende patrouilletochten Hr.Ms. Piet Hein, Noordkust Java 3-17 september 1946, states that the *Piet Hein* sent a launch to shore to collect a bombardment map on 4 September.
- 49 NL-HaNA, Cdt. Zeemacht, 2168, Rapporten van bombardementen door Hr.Ms. 'Kortenaer' nabij Semarang in augustus 1946.
- 50 NL-HaNA, Marinestaf, 473, Kempees to CZM, 19 August 1946.
- 51 *Ibid.*
- 52 NL-HaNA, Cdt. Zeemacht, 2161, CZM to BDZ.
- 53 *Ibid.*; *ibid.*, 2224, Patrouillerrapport Hr.Ms. 'Kortenaer' over het tijdvak 10-8-46-20-8-46; Polman, *De brutale reis*, 155.
- 54 NL-HaNA, Scheepsjournalen, 1986, Hr.Ms. *Piet Hein* (torpedobootjager), 24-9-1945-7-9-1946; *ibid.*, 1623, Hr.Ms. *Van Galen* (torpedobootjager), 30-6-1946-8-10-1946; *ibid.*, 372, Hr.Ms. *Banckert*, 21-11-1945-11-11-1946; *ibid.*, Marinestaf, 700, torpedobootjager Hr.Ms. *Galen* (II), november, december 1945 en januari-december 1946.
- 55 Brouwer and Brok, *Tussen sawahs en bergen*, 16; NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1317, War Diary 2-13 RI notes enemy casualties on 11 August as: 26 dead, 39 dead or wounded and 14 prisoners, of whom 9 wounded. Probably this only relates to the sector wherein this battalion was active.

- 56 Data as encountered during a visit by the author in February 2020.
- 57 Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 416.
- 58 Interview with Mbah Samiran, Simongan, Semarang, 29 February 2020 (translation: Bambang Widyonarko).
- 59 Interview with Mbah Setu Kirno, Manyaran, Semarang, 29 February 2020 (translation: Bambang Widyonarko).
- 60 NL-HANA, Marinestaf, 473, torpedobootjager Hr.Ms. Kortenaer, Verslag van het bombardement nabij Semarang op 14 August 1946, officier van artillerie R. Hartog, Luitenant ter zee der 2e klasse (quote); NL-HANA, Scheepsjournalen, 2461, Kortenaer, 18-7-1946 – 6-9-1946.
- 61 Perpusnas, *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, 24 August 1946.
- 62 Van Boeijen, *Zij werden geroepen*, 162.
- 63 NL-HANA, Cdt. Zeemacht, 1679, Rapport van de Oudst Aanwezend Zeeofficier betreffende de verichtingen van de marine afdeling Semarang over de maand december '46.
- 64 Toer, Toer and Kamil, *Kronik, Jilid 2, 1946*; Raliby, *Documenta historica*, 371.
- 65 Nasution, SPK *Jilid 3: Diplomasi sambil bertempur*, 538. NICA stands for Netherlands Indies Civil Administration, the Dutch administrative body established during the Japanese occupation. Despite a name change in early 1946, Indonesians continued to use 'Nica' as the name for the Dutch administration.
- 66 An earlier version of parts of this text appeared previously (in Dutch) in *Oostindie, Over de grens*, 241–273, and (in English) in *Oostindie, Beyond the Pale*, 241–271 (translated by Vivien Collingwood and Gioia Marini).
- 67 Interview with Ahmet Suwito, desa Candi, Kecamatan Karanganyar, kabupaten Kebumen, 19 August 2017 (translator Ravi Ananda); NIMH, 509, 1441, Oorlogsdagboek 3-6 RVA.
- 68 Author's translation, the original text reads: 'untuk para korban kanonade / 786 korban [...] rakyat tak berdosa korban kekejaman tentara Belanda [...]'.  
69 HCKVA, 106–1, Actieverslag E-batterij 3-6 RVA vanaf 21 juli 1947; NIMH, Sweep, 445, Brieven van K. Kloeten; Kloeten, Trueman-Kloeten and Smith-Kloeten, *His Story*, 154–155.
- 70 The shelling was recently highlighted by Ravi Ananda, who wrote about it on his weblog, *Wahyu Pancasila*, 20 May 2013, [kebumen2013.com/mengenang-peristiwa-canonade-candi-karanganyar-kebumen-1947](http://kebumen2013.com/mengenang-peristiwa-canonade-candi-karanganyar-kebumen-1947), and Conrad Woldringh, *Roeien & Reizen*, 20 December 2016, [woldringh-naarden.blogspot.com/2016/12/the-cannonade-of-candi-indonesia-on.html](http://woldringh-naarden.blogspot.com/2016/12/the-cannonade-of-candi-indonesia-on.html); the operation was subsequently briefly mentioned in Harinck, Van Horn and Luttikhuis, 'Wie telt de Indonesische doden?', *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 30 July 2017.
- 71 NIMH, Sweep, 445; *ibid.*, 162, 'Mannen van 3-6-RVA in Indonesië, 1946–1949'; Ton Schilling, 'Brug naar de zon. "Het Eiland" van het Leger-Hospitaal in Batavia', *Katholieke Illustratie*, 23 June 1949.
- 72 Smits, 'De dingen waar je over zwijgt', 46; NIMH, Sweep, 162, 'Mannen van 3-6-RVA', 3.
- 73 *6-R.V.A. Ons Regimentsdoel* 13 (1950) 22–23.
- 74 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 268, Verslag van luitenant-kolonel W.A. Schouten inzake de werkzaamheden van de brigadeartillerie, behorend tot de V-Brigade, juli 20–oktober 1, 1947.
- 75 NIMH, Sweep, 445, Letter 3 August 1947; HCKVA, 106–1, Actieverslag E-batterij 3-6 RVA vanaf 21 juli 1947.
- 76 Smits, 'De dingen waar je over zwijgt', 49; Hazekamp, *Het laatste grote gevecht in Indië*, 38.
- 77 Darto Harnoko and Poliman, *Perang Kemerdekaan Kebumen tahun 1942–1950* (Yogyakarta 1986) 36.
- 78 NIMH, Sweep, 445, Letters of 2 September and 28 October 1947, 2 July, 1 August and 30 September 1948.
- 79 ANRI, Kemenhan, 1352, Laporan Singkat Keadaan Kebumen dan Karanganyar, sampai tanggal 29-9-1947; Fuad Yogo Hardyanto, 'Perang mempertahankan kemerdekaan di Kebumen tahun 1945–1950' (Thesis, Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta 2010) 64–68; Harnoko and Poliman, *Perang Kemerdekaan Kebumen*, 39; NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 1739, Overview HKML Aug.–Oct. 1947, 3 (weapon shortages).
- 80 Imran and Ariwadi, *Peranan Pelajar*, 154–155, 223–226; Bonnie Triyana, 'Maulwi Saclan yang saya kenal', *Historia*, 10 October 2016. NL-HANA, 2.10.29, Koloniën/Rapportage Indonesië, 715, Zuid-Celebes, January 1947 (Saclan 'put down' on 31 December 1946 near Malino); *ibid.*, Algemene Secretarie, 3654, Tweewekelijkse overzichten over de politiek-militaire ontwikkelingen in Borneo en de Grote Oost opgesteld door het Hoofdkwartier KNIL te Makassar, jan.–mei 1947; overview Nr. 1, 2–16 January, 10; overview Nr. 2, 16–30 January, 14.

- 81 Nasution, *Fundamentals*, 20–21; NIMH, Sweep, 445, letter 15 October 1947.
- 82 NIMH, Sweep, 162, 'Mannen van 3-6 RVA', 37.
- 83 Dallinga provides a number of examples of this. *Ibid.*, 35–38, 43.
- 84 Utomo, *Kisah-kisah perjuangan*, 132; Harnoko and Poliman, *Perang Kemerdekaan Kebumen*, 40, also states it was hari Idul Fitri, but places it in September. However, the feast fell on 18 August that year. The same date in NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1441, 3-6 RVA; NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 2277, 3-6 RVA.
- 85 HCKVA, 106-1, Actieverslag E-batterij 3-6 RVA; NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1053, Infanterie V.
- 86 HCKVA, 106-1, Actieverslag E-batterij 3-6 RVA; NIMH, Sweep, 445, letter 2 September 1947 (50 to 150 dead); NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1053, Aanvulling kort overzicht van de geschiedenis van Infanterie V, 3e kwartaal 1947 (65 dead); Imran and Ariwadi, *Peranan Pelajar*, 154-156 (20 TP members); Soenarto, *Kisah beberapa pertempuran*, 30 (23 TP members); Hardyanto, *Perang mempertahankan kemerdekaan di Kebumen*, 64–68; Harnoko and Poliman, *Perang Kemerdekaan Kebumen*, 41 (both list 23 TP members, 10 civilians); Lapré, *Andjing Nica*, 48–49, 317.
- 87 NIMH, 532, Van Santen, 67, Bevelschrift voor de zuivering van Karanganjar e.o.; NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 1298, Commandementsorder Nr. 14, Bandung, 1 mei 1947; NIMH, Sweep, 445, letters 23 October 1947 and 16 March 1948.
- 88 TNA, WO 208/3941, 1947 Sept.–Oct, Report on observations in Java, includes 4 photographs depicting four victims of atrocities. To the observer, the mutilations on the bodies of the victims seemed to be 'of Muslim character', i.e., inflicted so that the deceased would be damaged upon entering the afterlife. 'At all events,' concluded the (unknown) observer, 'I feel that such mutilations could not possibly have been committed by European troops.' This related to fighting on 18 September near Petanahan. According to Republican soldiers, artillery had also been deployed, but that is not confirmed in Dutch sources. Furthermore, the notes of battery commander De Bruyne report 'no particularities' that day. It may have been mortars. Artillery did bombard Petanahan on 18 August. Private collection G. J. Fetter.
- 89 Interview Ahmet Suwito, 19 August 2017; Ikatan Keluarga Resimen XX, *Gelegar di Bagelen. Perjuangan Resimen XX Kedu Selatan, 1945–1949 dan pengabdian lanjutannya* (Purworejo 2003) 165; Thom Verheul, *Tabee Toe'an. Op patrouille in Nederlands-Indië* (1995).
- 90 NIMH, Van Santen, 67.
- 91 *Ibid.*; *ibid.*, 71, Gevechtsverslag zuivering Karanganjer.
- 92 Lapré, *Andjing Nica*, 99.
- 93 NIMH, Sweep, 162, 'Mannen van 3-6 RVA', 40; NIMH, Van Santen, 71.
- 94 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 3064, Gevechtsverslag van de actie op 19 okt. 1947, Chronologisch-verslag, 07.40; see for the critical report of the company concerned NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1288, 1-9 RI, Actie-rapport colonne E. J. Beeksmas, Res.kapt.v.Alg.Dienst.
- 95 HCKVA, 106-1; NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 2277, War Diary 3-6 RVA; NIMH, Van Santen, 67, Artillerie-bevel.
- 96 Ikatan Keluarga Resimen XX, *Gelegar di Bagelen*, 166; Utomo, *Kisah-kisah perjuangan*, 137.
- 97 Verheul, 'Tabee toean'.
- 98 NIMH, 445, letter 23 October 1947.
- 99 Verheul, 'Tabee toean'.
- 100 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1053, 3rd Quarter 1947; interview Ahmet Suwito; Verheul, 'Tabee toean'. The number 60 can be found also in R. Soenarto, 'Kisah beberapa pertempuran dalam perang mempertahankan kemerdekaan Republik Indonesia di daerah kabupaten Kebumen' (unpublished manuscript, Kebumen 1998) 9.
- 101 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 3064, Gevechtsverslag Ve Bataljon Infanterie, A. van Santen, Luit.Kolonel Inf. KNIL, Gombong, 21 oktober 1947; also in NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1053, War Diary Infanterie V.
- 102 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 1298, handwritten note on memo Lt.Kol. Six to CLG, Batavia, 29 oktober 1947; *ibid.*, memo Lt.Col. Six to CLG, Batavia, 3 November 1947; *De Nieuwsgier*, 24 October 1947; see also *ibid.*, 3078, Bevel voor het zuiveren van het terrein tusschen de verticaal 00 en verticaal 05 op Zondag, 19 Oct. '47, handwritten note; HCKVA 106-1, Actieverslag E-bty 3-6 RVA, 19 October.
- 103 Nasution, *SPK, Jilid 6: Perang Gerilya Semesta I*, 163; Wiyono, *Jawa Tengah*, 102; Perpusnas, *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, 22 October 1947.
- 104 Harnoko and Poliman, *Perang kemerdekaan Kebumen*, 40; T. Wedy Utomo, *Kisah-kisah Perjuangan Perang Kemerdekaan 1945–1949, Jilid 1* (Semarang 1985) 137; Ikatan Keluarga Resimen XX, *Gelegar di Bagelen*, 166.

- 105 NL-HaNA, 2.10.62, NEFIS/CMI, 7248, Kementerian Pertahanan V.
- 106 Piet de Blaauw and Harry van de Westelaken, 'Reportage: de oorlogsmisdaden van Nederland in voormalig Nederlands-Indië', *Altijd Wat* (NCRV, 19 November 2013); correspondence Ravie Ananda. See also Saefur Rochmat, Warjan and Ravie Ananda, *Kebumen berjuang: perjuangan rakyat kabupaten era tahun 1945-1949* (Kebumen 2020) 93-96.
- 107 Smits, 'De dingen waar je over zwijgt', 47.
- 108 NIMH, Sweep, 162, 'Mannen van 3-6 RVA', 38, 46.
- 109 Smits, 'De dingen waar je over zwijgt', 48.
- 110 NIMH, Van Santen, 3, Verlieslijst Infanterie V; Kolff, *Belevenissen*, 92. In addition, 3-6 RVA counted 12 wounded according to Kolff, 'compared to other units, a very favourable percentage'.
- 111 NIMH, Sweep, 162, 'Mannen van 3-6 RVA', 67.
- 112 Lapré, *Andjing Nica*, 106, 323.
- 113 NIMH, Sweep, 445, letter 23 October 1947.
- 114 Interview Ahmet Suwito, 19 August; De Blaauw and Van de Westelaken, 'Oorlogsmisdaden'.
- 115 ANRI, RA.6, Sekretariat Negara, 400, Laporan dari Kebumen, 11-11-1947 (psychosis of fear); *ibid.*, Kementerian Penerangan, 86, Kekatjauan dibelakan Front Kebumen, 12-11-1947; Utomo, *Kisah-kisah Perjuangan*, 132; Wiyono, *Jawa Tengah*, 115.
- 116 NIB, *Deel 11*, Nr. 354, Lt.-G.G. to Minog, 18 November 1947.
- 117 *Ibid.*, *Deel 12*, Nr. 110, Legercommandant to Lt.-G.G., 15 December 1947; also in Mans Spoor-Dijkema, *Achteraf kakelen de kippen. Herinneringen aan generaal KNIL S.H. Spoor, legercommandant in Nederlands-Indië 30 januari 1946-25 mei 1949, opgetekend door zijn weduwe* (Amsterdam 2004) 236.
- 118 *Ibid.*, Part 11, Nr. 53; Jonkman to Beel, 12 September 1947; *ibid.*, Nr. 260, Report October 1947; see also Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 222.
- 119 Lapré, *Andjing Nica*, 11; also in R. M. Smulders, *Een stem uit het veld. Herinneringen van de ritmeester-adjutant van generaal S.H. Spoor* (Amsterdam 1988) 103.
- 120 NIMH, Van Santen, 68, Verklaring van de commandant van 1-Inf. V, eerste luitenant der Infanterie S.A. Lapré, over de verrichtingen van luitenant-kolonel A. van Santen tijdens de zuivering van Karanganjat op 19 oktober 1947; see also, 69, Rapport van eerste luitenant der Infanterie J.K. Anten over de verrichtingen van luitenant-kolonel A. van Santen tijdens de zuivering van Karanganjat op 19 oktober 1947; and *ibid.*, 70, Verklaring van reserve luitenant der Infanterie C.L. Trieling over de verrichtingen van luitenant-kolonel A. van Santen tijdens de zuivering van Karanganjat op 18 oktober 1947.
- 121 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1053, Oorlogsdagboek Infanterie V; *ibid.*, Van Santen, 71, Gevechtsverslag Actie Karang-Anjer; NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 3064, Gevechtsverslag van de actie op 19 Oct. 1947; *ibid.*, 224, Verzamelrapport veiligheidsgroep TC Midden-Java, 24 October 1947; Lapré, *Andjing Nica*, 51.
- 122 NIMH, Sweep, 445, letters 16 and 25 November 1947.
- 123 NIMH, Sweep, 162, 'Mannen van 3-6 RVA', 43.
- 124 Venema, *Losse flodders*, 53, 97; NIMH, Sweep, 162, 'Mannen van 3-6 RVA', 43.
- 125 Ariane van der Eerde and Almar Tjepkema, 'In oorlog met onze kolonie', *Het sprookje is uit* (NOS, 12 December 1989).
- 126 Smits, 'De dingen waar je over zwijgt', 48.
- 127 NIMH, Sweep, 445, letters 7 August, 7 and 25 November 1947.
- 128 NIMH, Sweep, 162, 'Mannen van 3-6 RVA', 88.
- 129 TNA, WO 208/3941, 1947 Sept.-Oct, Report on observations in Java.
- 130 Harnoko and Poliman, *Perang Kemerdekaan Kebumen*, 39; *Excessennota*, appendix 5, 27-28; Rémy Limpach, 'Information Costs Lives': The Intelligence War in Indonesia, 1945-1949', in *Beyond the Pale*, 203-240, at 230-231.
- 131 NIMH, Sweep, 162, 'Mannen van 3-6 RVA', 70.
- 132 Petra Spaan and Henriëtte van Reijnsing, 'Tweede generatie Indië-gangers', *2Vandaag*, TROS, 21 December 1996.
- 133 Nasution, *SPK, Jil. 6: Perang gerilya semesta 1* (Bandung 1978) 140; Groen, *Krijgsmacht en kolonie*, 322.
- 134 Wiyono, *Jawa Tengah*, 115; NIMH, Sweep, 445, letters of 18 Dec. and 26 Dec. 1948; *ibid.*, Dekolonisatie, 989, Staf T-Brigade, Gevechtsverslag 3-6 RVA; also in *ibid.*, 990 and 1204; Bottema, 'De artillerie van de 7 December Divisie', 40; NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 692, gevechtsverslagen van de commandant v-Bataljon Infanterie W- en T-Brigade aan de Colonne IV, 4 Genie Veldcompagnie en 3-6 Regiment Veldartillerie op Midden-Java, 19-22 december 1948.

- 135 NIMH, Sweep, 162, 'Mannen van 3-6 RVA', 46, 83; Groen, *Krijgsmacht en kolonie*, 339.
- 136 Kloeten, Trueman-Kloeten and Smith-Kloeten, *His Story*, 193; NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1053, 2nd Quarter 1949; also in NIMH, Van Santen, 1 and 2.
- 137 Condensed versions of this case study were published previously in Harmanny and Linn, 'Technisch geweld', 105-108, and *ibid.*, "'The Normal Order of Things'", 137-139.
- 138 T. B. Simatupang, *Report from Banaran: Experiences during the People's War* (Ithaca, NY 1972) 71-72.
- 139 *Ibid.*, 72.
- 140 Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 408; Hagen, *Koloniale oorlogen*, 774; Budding, *Beheersing van geweld*, 53-54.
- 141 J. F. Scheers, *Djocjakarta* (n.p., 1949) 90-93; A. W. Reijgwart, *1-15 R.I. De blijvertjes. Onbewust voorloper van de Mobiele Luchtbrigade* (Hengelo 2002) 109.
- 142 *Serangan Oemoem 1 Maret* in the spelling of the time.
- 143 De Moor, *Generaal Spoor*, 341.
- 144 Onnen, *De luchtarilleriegroep militaire luchtvaart*, 163; De Moor, *Generaal Spoor*, 351; Zweers, *De gecensureerde oorlog*, 116-117.
- 145 Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indië*, 304.
- 146 An important book about this from the *Orde Baru* time is Sekolah Staf dan Komando Angkatan Darat (Seskoad), *Serangan umum 1 Maret 1949 di Yogyakarta: latar belakang dan pengaruhnya* (Bandung 1990). Suharto similarly claims all the credits in his – generally far from modest – autobiography: Soeharto, Ramadhan Karta Hadimadja and G. Dwipayana, *Mijn gedachten, woorden en daden* (1989; Dutch translation Franeker 1991) 58-61. See for an overview of the discussion Lembaga Analisis Informasi (Yogyakarta), *Kontroversi serangan umum 1 Maret 1949* (Yogyakarta 2000) 37-50.
- 147 Boediardjo, *Siapa sudi saya dongengi*, 43-45. Nowadays, the house is a museum.
- 148 Soewito, *Awal kedirgantaraan di Indonesia*, 226-227.
- 149 NL-HANA, Algemene Secretarie, 3932-3935, Rapporten uitgebracht door de Afdeling VIII van het Hoofdkwartier CMI bevattende gedecodeerde afschriften van onderschepete en buitgemaakte (telegrafische) berichten tussen republikeinse instanties in en buiten Indonesië; regionaal en onderwerp-gewijs ingedeeld. Stencil. These inventory numbers contain many intercepted messages of the transmitter at Plajen, referred to by CMI als 'stn AURI Wonosari' and 'stn Gading'.
- 150 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 1740, Overzicht HKML okt.-dec. 1948, 18 Squadron December 1948.
- 151 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 1741, Overzicht HKML jan.-mrt. 1949, 322 Squadron January 1949.
- 152 NL-HANA, Algemene Secretarie, 3932, 16-31 jan. 1949.
- 153 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 3018, Telegram No 69, DCMI to CMI Djokja, 14 February 1949; C-T-Brigade to C-B-Divisie, 15 February 1949.
- 154 Dekker, *Sejarah Revolusi Nasional*, 74; Toer, Toer and Kamil, *Kronik Jilid 5, 1949*, 10 Maret; Groen, *Marsroutes en dwaalsporen*, 210; Heijboer, *De politionele acties*, 150; De Moor, *Westerling's oorlog*, 351; NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 951, Bevelen en instructie voor de uitvoering van de actie 'Gading', maart 10-20, 1949; Bevel No. 210/o, Luchtlandingsoperatie 'Gading', Batavia, 3 March 1949, drawn up by Stafofficier Luchtvaartzaken van de Commandant Militaire Luchtvaart, lt.kol. J.W. Gerharz; J. Blom et al., *Awas, pijp-pijp datang! Gedenkboek geschreven door en voor de manschappen van 5-5 R.I.* (Deventer 1950) 119; Baha Uddin et al., *Masyarakat pedesaan dan Revolusi kemerdekaan di Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta* (Yogyakarta 2020) 135.
- 155 See Nasution, *SPK Jilid 10: Perang gerilya semesta 2*, 105, who draws on *Buku Gerilya Wehrkreise III* (Yogyakarta n.y.).
- 156 NIMH, 512, Antoniëtti, 61, Bevelen (voorbereidingsbevelen, operatieve bevelen en verbindingsbevelen) voor de vermeerstering en bezetting van Gading op 10 maart 1949, 3-8 maart 1949; *ibid.*, Dekolonisatie, 792, Bevelschriften, instructies en kaarten afkomstig van het Territoriaal tevens Troepencommando Midden-Java o.a. betreffende de dislocatie van de Nederlandse eenheden na de Tweede Politionele Actie, de actie bij Gading, actie 'Caro' en de Soevereiniteitsoverdracht; NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 951, Bevel voor de actie 'Gading'; *ibid.*, 2260, 2 RVA, Cdt T-Brigade, Bevel tot vermeerstering en bezetting Gading op 10 Maart 1949, Djocja, 5 March 1949.
- 157 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 1292, Voorbereidingsbevel NR 61/o (voor CL Smg en C 6 VB), drawn up by Regionaal Officier Luchtvaartzaken, res. kapt. vlg. wnr ml J. Preinier, Bandoeng, 5 March 1949; De Moor, *Westerling's oorlog*, 351; NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1262, 5-5 RI, Verslag over het eerste kwartaal 1949; *ibid.*, 1156, 5 RS, Verslag over het eerste kwartaal 1949; J. de Golde, *De prijs van de macht* (n.p.



- 2001) 86–89; J. G. M. H. Corbeij and P. Vroemen (eds.), *Vijf-zes. Hoe het reilde en zeilde* (Echt 1950) 133.
- 158 Interviews author with Kabul Waluyo, Patuk, Gunung Kidul, and Mbah Sugeng, Jompong, Gunung Kidul, 27 February 2020 (translator: Bambang Widyonarko).
- 159 Corbeij and Vroemen, *Vijf-zes*, 276–277; Golde, *De prijs van de macht*, 86–89.
- 160 Corbeij and Vroemen, *Vijf-zes*, 278.
- 161 Nasution, *SPK Jilid 10: Perang gerilya semesta 2*, 106.
- 162 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 1749, Weekoverzicht operatiën van 13 tot 27 Februari 1949, Nr. 7; *ibid.*, 951, Dagboek Actie Gading van 10 t/m 20 Maart 1949; also quoted in Lizé, ‘De lucht boven de sawas’, 45; Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 408.
- 163 Nasution, *SPK Jilid 10: Perang gerilya semesta 2*, 104.
- 164 De Moor, *Westerling’s oorlog*, 352.
- 165 NIMH, 512, Antoniëtti, 62, Dagboek cdt. 2-1 Para KST; Dagboek Actie Gading van 10 t/m 20 Maart 1949, 1c Bataljon Para RST, kapitein W.D.H. Eekhout.
- 166 Soemarsono, *Mengenang almarhum Panglima besar Jenderal Sudirman*, 57–80.
- 167 NIMH, 512, Antoniëtti, 62, Dagboek Actie Gading.
- 168 Boediardjo, *Siapa sudi saya dongengi*, 46–47.
- 169 NL-HANA, Algemene Secretarie, 3936, Kol Simatupang (via stn AURI ex Solo) aan Noodreg Sumatra en vert RI in New Delhi, 15-3-1949.
- 170 UN Archives, Subject Files – Good Offices Committee and United Nations Commission for Indonesia 1940–1951 (GOC/UNCI), S-0681-0011-07 Wonosari Incident. Telegram Mohamed Rum, Chairman Republican Delegation to chairman UNCI Batavia, 21 March 1949.
- 171 NL-HANA, Algemene Secretarie, 3936, Kol Nasution, cdt co Java aan Noodreg, New Delhi, alle stations, 22-3-1949.
- 172 UN Archives, GOC/UNCI, S-0681-0027-04, L. N. Palar, Chief of the Indonesian Delegation to the Security Council to the President of the Security Council, Lake Success, 25 March 1949; number of 150,000 cited by Nasution, *SPK, Jilid 10: Perang gerilya semesta 2*, 106; subsequently also in Groen, *Marsroutes en dwaalsporen*, 212; Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indië*, 303.
- 173 UN Archives, GOC/UNCI, S-0681-0011-07, MILEX to UNCI, Special report on the Wonosari Action, 1 April 1949; J. A. Romanos, Principal Secretary, United Nations Commission for Indonesia to Security Council, 1 April 1949.
- 174 Interview Bambang Widyonarko with Suwitorejo, dusun Candi, desa Ngawen, 13 June 2022; *ibid.*, interview Wartono, Gelaran.
- 175 Interview Bambang Widyonarko with Gito Sumito, dusun Trukan, Candirejo, Semin, Gunungkidul, 13 June 2022; Dinas Perpustakaan dan Arsip Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta (DPAD), T. Multi Subyek (MS) 702, Data kerugian baik harta benda maupun nyawa manusia akibat keganasan Belanda di Kapanewon Ngawen, 1949, Nama orang yg. ditembak dibunuh.
- 176 DPAD, MS 697, Data kerugian baik harta benda maupun nyawa manusia akibat keganasan Belanda di Kapanewon Playen, 30-8-1949; MS 698, Semanu, tanggal 10 maret s.d. 18 maret 1949; MS 699, Wonosari, 19-8-1949; MS 701, Karangmodjo, 25-6-1949; MS 702, Ngawen, 1949; MS 703, Surat nomor Sos/2/1963/49 dari Bupati Pamong Praja Gunung Kidul kepada Jawatan Praja DIY tentang pengiriman daftar pembakaran rumah rumah dan pembunuhan penduduk oleh Belanda dari masing masing kapanewon se Gunung Kidul, 14 October 1949; MS 713, Klasan, 21 April 1949.
- 177 Peter Keppy, *Sporen van vernieling. Oorlogsschade, roof en rechtsherstel in Indonesië, 1940–1957* (Amsterdam 2006) 80. Keppy dismisses a list of damages of the Kapanewon Bantul (DPAD, MS 130), south of Yogyakarta, as ‘unreliable and incomplete’, but does not say what this conclusion is based on. He does not refer explicitly to the damage lists of Gunungkidul.
- 178 NIMH, 512, Antoniëtti, 62, Dagboek actie Gading; De Moor, *Westerling’s oorlog*, 352.
- 179 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 2260, 2 RVA (bundle VII–XII), notes in handwritten notebook; NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1437, 2-2 RVA, 9–18 March 1949.
- 180 O. G. Roeder, *Anak desa. Biografi presiden Soeharto* (1969; fourth edition Jakarta 1982) 207; Soeharto, Ramadhan and Dwipayana, *Mijn gedachten*, 60; Robert Elson, *Soeharto. Een biografie* (2001; Dutch translation Utrecht 2004) 72–73. According to his autobiography, he was in the Wonosari region and carried out several attacks on Dutch posts in that period.
- 181 Interviews author with Mbah Sugeng and Kabul Waluyo, 27 February 2020; interview with Warsito

Rejo, desa Gading, kecamatan Playen, kabupaten Gunungkidul, 27 February 2020 (translator: Bambang Widyonarko).

- 182 NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 719, UNCI-rapport en gevechtsverslagen inzake de zuivering van Wonosari en omgeving aangeboden aan de Veiligheidsraad, 1949.
- 183 Groen, *Marsroutes en dwaalsporen*, 212; Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 408.
- 184 NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 719, Gevechtsverslag van de zuivering van het gebied, begrensd door Z. rijweg Djocja-Sentolo, o-Vert-88, N-rijweg Djocja-Godean, w-vert-79 op 18 maart '49.
- 185 NIMH, Sweep, 101, Memoires getiteld 'Dienstplichtig tussen macht en onmacht. Notities omtrent eigen- en andermans belevenissen in de jaren 1945-1950' van M.A.P. de Lange [...], 65; Correspondence Mr. De Lange with author, 26 June 2019. Report based on comrades from his 5-6 RI battalion, which participated in the ground operation.
- 186 De Moor, *Westerling's oorlog*, 351-352; Groen, *Marsroutes en dwaalsporen*, 210; Dekker, *Sejarah Revolusi Nasional*, 74; Lembaga Analisis Informasi, *Kontroversi serangan umum 1 Maret 1949*, 91; Nasution, *SPK, Jilid 10: Perang gerilya semesta 2*, 105; Pusjarah, *Sejarah TNI Jilid I*, 212; Seskoad, *Serangan umum 1 Maret 1949*, 255.
- 187 Baha Uddin, *Masyarakat pedesaan*, 41.
- 188 Interview Mbah Sugeng, 27 February 2020.
- 189 Blom, *Awas, pipj-pipj datang!*, 121.
- 190 *Maasbode*, 25 June 1949; quoted by Suryadi, 'Keppres nomor 2 tahun 2022 dan amnesia sejarah', in *Sumbarsatu*, 6 March 2022, [sumbarsatu.com/berita/27563-keppres-nomor-2-tahun-2022-dan-amnesia-sejarah](http://sumbarsatu.com/berita/27563-keppres-nomor-2-tahun-2022-dan-amnesia-sejarah).

## 6. Live Longer, Shoot First

- 1 NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 547, Aanbiedingsbrief van de commandant 7 Afdeling Veldartillerie inzake verslagen van de 1e Politionele Actie van bovengenoemde afdeling op Medan, met bijlage, 1948.
- 2 NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 2914, WMIR No.3, 24 March 1949.
- 3 Bruinsma, 'Taboe in het theemebel', blog 89; original in NIOD, Correspondentie, 1361, letter 17 January 1949.
- 4 Hutagalung and Hutagalung, *Autobiografi*, 44.
- 5 NL-HaNA, Mariniersbrigade, 999, Inlichtingen-jaarsverslag over de periode 22 maart 1946-22 maart 1947, interrogation Soehoed; NIMH, Sweep, 162, 'Mannen van 3-6 RVA', 29, 75. Harrewijn, *Uitdaging en antwoord*, 44, also writes that according to the 4 VA battery commander, 'the material damage caused [...] generally did not amount to much'.
- 6 See the 'friendly fire' incident during the shelling of Karanganyar in the previous chapter; Henk Hoekstra, *Wij waren ingedeeld bij het 4de Bataljon Garde Jagers op Oost-Java en Madoera* (The Hague 1988) 76; Netherlands Veterans Institute (Nederlands Veteraneninstituut, NLVI), Interview Collectie Nederlandse Veteranen (ICNV), 875, Pieter van den Wijngaard.
- 7 Hazekamp, *Twee broers*, 78; *ibid.*, 192 *zware klappen*, 173.
- 8 NIOD, Collection Getuigen & Tijdgenoten, IN18001, Jan van Dijk, 5 juni 2018.
- 9 NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 547, 21 juli 1947; Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 409, 678; Scheers, *Djocjakarta*, 42; NLVI, ICNV, 1391, Van Noort. Although no systematic research was done on 'friendly fire' incidents in general for this study, sources suggest that a personal weapon was involved in the majority of cases described where there were casualties. Fatal incidents with friendly mortar or artillery fire: 1) mortar fire on 21 July 1947 at Porong, in Hielke Speerstra, *Op klompen door de dessa. Indiëgangers vertellen* (Amsterdam 2018) 170; Thea van Leeuwen, *Een Hollandse jongen in Indië* (Soest 2012) 68; G. J. M. de Hoogh, *Mijn Indische Mariniers jaren. Naar herinnering van B. J. van Gils* (Zeist 1975) 49-50; 2) a 2 VA artillery observer who passed on his own position on 23 January 1947 in Spreeuwiers, *De lange weg*, 99; Frans Hazekamp, *192 zware klappen in Indië. Overzicht van alle incidenten met drie of meer eigen doden en/of vermisten tijdens het Nederlands-Indonesische conflict, 1945-1962: opdat zij niet vergeten worden* (Baarn 2014) 173; 3) mortar fire and accident on 21 July 1947 at Medan in *ibid.*, 105 and 172; 4) an observer and a marine on 4 June 1946 from own artillery fire in Samoibulu, East Java in *ibid.*, 173; Dorren, *Onze Mariniersbrigade*, 326, 337 and 341.
- 10 Hazekamp, *Twee broers*, 151-152.
- 11 More on this in Azarja Harmanny, 'Asymmetric Warfare in Central Java, 1947-1949', *Buku pedoman seminar mengenang peran Akademi Militer Yogya dalam perang gerilya di wilayah Yogyakarta, 1948-1949*

- (Yogyakarta 2020), cited in Rémy Limpach, “Ze vielen als gemaaid koren.” Een beschouwing over de verliescijfers in Indonesië, 1945–1949, *Militaire Spectator* 191-1 (2022) 32–49, at 38.
- 12 Remarks about the ‘invisible’ and ‘elusive’ enemy can be found for example in Henk Buurkes, *‘We hebben het samen beleefd’: 40 jaar 9e afd. veld artillerie, 1946–1986* (n.p. 1986) 35; Hazekamp, *Twee broers*, 49; Venema, *Losse flodders*, 74–75.
  - 13 Bruinsma, ‘Taboe in het theemeubel’, blog 53; original in NIOD, Correspondentie, 1148, letter 18 August 1947.
  - 14 University Library Leiden, SMGI, 1529.1 – Ritman.
  - 15 University Library Leiden, SMGI, 1639.2 – Van Beurden.
  - 16 Database diaries NIMH, Dekolonisatie 1295, C. W. van Bijsterveld.
  - 17 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1446, 2-12 RVA, Verschietingsrapport over het 1e kwartaal 1949.
  - 18 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1445, 1-12 RVA, korpsgeschiedenis 2e kwartaal 1949.
  - 19 Database correspondence NIMH, 499, Reijnoudt, 2, Dagboek van Reijnoudt, staf III – 3 R.I..
  - 20 Bruinsma, ‘Taboe in het theemeubel’, blog 29, date unknown, between October 1946 and January 1947.
  - 21 The evaluation schema consisted of a letter (A–F), which indicated how reliable the source was, and a number (0–6), that indicated how reliable the report was. NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 1685, Leidraad voor het stellen van vragen bij het verhoren van gevangenen c.q. informanten omtrent infiltratie groepen in Nederlands gebied, 1948, Evaluatieschema.
  - 22 Harinck, Van Horn and Lutikhuis, ‘Wie telt de Indonesische doden?’; Groen, *Marsroutes en dwaalsporen*, 214.
  - 23 NIMH, Knapen, 7, 24 February 1949.
  - 24 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 3297, 2-12 RVA, Verschietingsrapport over het 1e kwartaal 1948; also in NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1446, 2-12 RVA.
  - 25 Database diaries NIMH, Sweep, 579, Vier dagboeken van J. G. H. Kootker betreffende zijn militaire loopbaan als oorlogsvrijwilliger in Engeland en zijn verblijf in Nederlands-Indië als commandant van 3e Compagnie ‘7 December’ Regiment Stoottroepen (3-III R.St.).
  - 26 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1435, 2 RVA, Gevechtsrapport F-Batterij 3 January 1948.
  - 27 Mochkardi, *Akademi Militer Yogya*, 253.
  - 28 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1449, 1-42 RVA. Giesing, *Brandlucht en bloedspoor*, 170, gives another example: during the shelling of a concentration of Darul Islam in October 1949, 250 were reportedly killed, of whom 110 civilians.
  - 29 Another example is the report of 4 VA between December 1948 and May 1949 in West Sumatra. The report repeatedly lists the number of dead ‘due to infantry action’ (between 15 and 35), adding that the losses ‘due to Artillery fire (were) not known’. NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 3288, 4 VA. Also cited in Christiaan Harinck, “Bloodshed on a Rather Large Scale”: Tactical Conduct and Noncombatant Casualties in Dutch, French, and British Colonial Counterinsurgency’, in Brocades Zaalberg and Lutikhuis, *Empire’s Violent End*, 141–161, at 155.
  - 30 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 421, Verslag afkomstig van luitenant-kolonel der Artillerie H.L. Hoorweg gericht aan het Directoraat Centrale Opleidingen betreffende de Tweede Politie Actie op Java en Sumatra, 5 januari 1949, Inleiding en I.G. Overzicht van eigen en vijandelijke verliezen aan personeel en materieel t/m 18/1. Also cited in *NIB*, deel 17, Nr. 215, ‘Appreciatierapport nr. 2 over periode 26 Januari t/m 7 Februari 1949’ van legercommandant (Spoor) aan gecommiteerde van de C.M.I. bij het kabinet van de minister van Overzeese Gebiedsdelen (Kiës), 353–354, note 4.
  - 31 Harinck, *Zoeken, aangrijpen en vernietigen*, 14–17.
  - 32 Remco Raben and Peter Romijn, ‘Silence, Information and Deception in the Indonesian War of Independence’, in Oostindie, *Beyond the Pale*, 311–350, at 320.
  - 33 Harmanny, ‘Asymmetric Warfare in Central Java’; Limpach, ‘Ze vielen als gemaaid koren’.
  - 34 Hugo Klooster, *Bibliography of the Indonesian Revolution* (Leiden 1997) 46–51. In a general sense, too, the military perspective predominates in Indonesian historiography, in part as a result of the post-war political constellation. See Katharine E. McGregor, *History in Uniform: Military Ideology and the Construction of Indonesia’s Past* (Leiden 2007) 61ff.
  - 35 NL-HANA, Algemene Secretarie, 3936, Kol. Simatupang to Interim Government and Representation in New Delhi, 25 March 1949.
  - 36 Ibid., Maj Harjono, Hoofd Voorlichting / Documentatie Staf Weermacht to all stations, 23/3.

- 37 Nasution, *SPK, Jilid 10: Perang gerilya semesta 2*, 134, 145. More examples on those pages and on pages 162 (31 dead) and 166 (30 dead).
- 38 Hazekamp, *192 zuware klappen*, 110–111; Limpach, ‘Ze vielen als gemaaid koren’, note 45.
- 39 See for example Nasution, *SPK, Jilid 10: Perang gerilya semesta 2*, 90, 104.
- 40 Scheers, *Djocjakarta*, 85, says that he was killed on 9 February, but the diary entries continue until at least 24 February.
- 41 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 4754, Dagboek van Jack Rontokau. Translated into Dutch; the incident on 1 February also in Scheers, *Djocjakarta*, 83–84, although Scheers himself seems to have sanitized it.
- 42 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 643, OOT Territoriaal Commando Midden-Java 17 t/m 25 februari 1949; Scheers, *Djocjakarta*, 88; Reijgwart, *De blijvertjes*, 170, 219.
- 43 For instance in Groen, *Marsroutes en dwaalsporen*, 213; De Moor, *Generaal Spoor*, 271, 335–336; Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 601; Maurice Swirc, *De Indische doofpot. Waarom Nederlandse oorlogsmisdaden in Indonesië nooit zijn vervolgd* (Amsterdam 2022) 136.
- 44 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 2259, Operatieve aanwijzingen, Semarang, 5 Juli 1947, E. J. Beck, maj. art. I. Behandeling burgerbevolking.
- 45 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1147, Inlichtingenofficier 1 RS aan Hfd. Brig. I.V.G., Sitreps 22 and 23 October 1947.
- 46 Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing*, 6; Holmes, *Firing Line*, 210; Clodfelter, *Warfare and Armed Conflicts*, 583–585, 780.
- 47 Van Bergen, *Zacht en cervol*, 99, 359.
- 48 Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence*, 147.
- 49 Nasution, *SPK, Jilid 10: Perang gerilya semesta 2*, for example 45, 90, 128, 145, 161, 253, and appendix 8.
- 50 Harinck, ‘Bloodshed on a Rather Large Scale’, 154–155.
- 51 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 1999, Operatief Overzicht X Brigade 16 Nov t/m 15 Dec 1947, No. 2.
- 52 See for example Raben and Romijn, ‘Silence, Information and Deception in the Indonesian War of Independence’, 321 and 323; Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 640, 726, 731; the same held for the use of heavy weapons: NIOD, 400, Indische Collectie, 2019, Brieven Achter het Nieuws, brief 039 – P. A. Kerstens, officier-vlieger, 23 Januari 1969: ‘Hueting is right that in general the rule applied shoot at anything that moves’.
- 53 Bouman, *Succes in een verloren oorlog*, 79.
- 54 Golde, *De prijs van de macht*, 56, 83, 90. See also *ibid.*, *Mijn leven. Autobiografie* (n.p. 2000) 181, in which he writes: ‘when ten or so machine guns begin to bang away, it’s as if the sky is falling. Women and children are spared as much as possible but that often goes wrong too’.
- 55 ANRI, Kemenhan, 1290, Rapport Warmana, 26 juli 1947; Limpach, ‘Information Costs Lives’, 226–228.
- 56 NL-HANA, Afscheid van Indië, 388, 48/255\_PART\_2 Committee of Good Offices – Records, 1947–1948. Original in National Archives of Australia (Canberra Australia), Agency Number CA 2743 Serie Number A4357, inventory number 48/255\_PART\_2, Annex II, Statement by the head of the delegation of the Republic of Indonesia.
- 57 NL-HANA, Algemene Secretarie, 3897, Telegram 6 April 1949; see also Groen, *Marsroutes en dwaalsporen*, 212.
- 58 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 1288, CLG Spoor to LGG Van Mook, cc CGS, 25 Juli 1947.
- 59 Wehl, *The Birth of Indonesia*, 175.
- 60 Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 206–208; Wehl, *The Birth of Indonesia*, 126.
- 61 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 454, kapt. Supartha, wnd. cdt. TNI Mil Terr Cheribon (Stn AOri Kopeng bij Goenoeng Soebang) to Lt. Kuswondo, Liaison Dienst I Div. AHK, Te Stn AOri Djokja, 30-1-1948; *ibid.*, CGSLEG (Buurman van Vreeden) to TRC TPC Midden Java (De Waal), 9 February 1948.
- 62 *NIB, deel 12*, nr. 389, Ambassador in Washington (Van Kleffens) to Foreign Affairs Minister (Van Boetzelaer van Oosterhout), 6 February 1948; NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 454, Co Tegal (Ikol J.F. Bastiaanse) to CGS LEG (Buurman van Vreeden), info C M Java (De Waal), 9 February 1948.
- 63 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 454, CGS LEG to TRC/TPNC Midden-Java, 15–2; TRC/TPNC Midden-Java to CGS LEG Batavia, Semarang, 20 February 1948.
- 64 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1307, Verslag van de patrouille van de res. Elt. der Inf. E.E.H. Breton van Groll op de 16e Januari 1948, te velde, 26 January 1948; *ibid.*, korpsgeschiedenis 1e kwartaal 1948; Reüniecomité 3-11 R.I., *Regiment Limburgse Jagers, Gedenboek Bataljon 3-11 R.I. ‘De Geschiedenis van een Zwerfbataljon’ 1946–1996* (Roermond 1996).

- 65 According to the report 1 flare gun, 3 hand grenades, a few *bambu runcing*, 11 Molotov cocktails and 4 boobytraps. NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1307, Breton van Groll report.
- 66 NIMH, Sweep, 162, 'Mannen van 3-6 RVA', 45.
- 67 Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 406, 673-675; Lizé, 'De lucht boven de sawa's', 42-43.
- 68 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 268, Schouten report.
- 69 Private collection G. J. Fetter, Documents of W. de Bruyne, diary F Battery 3-6 RVA, 16 January 1948; NIMH, Dekolonisatie, Actieverslag 'F'-3-6 RVA, batterijcommandant C. Kolff, te velde, 18 January 1948; *ibid.*, 1441, korpsgeschiedenis 3-6 RVA, 1e kwartaal 1948.
- 70 Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 355. About this case see also *ibid.*, 353-356; Marc Lohnstein, 'Bloedbad in Goenoeng Simping 1949', [museumbronbeekblog.nl/?p=330](http://museumbronbeekblog.nl/?p=330); the report of the legal experts in *Van Rij en Stam. Rapporten van de commissie van onderzoek naar beweerde excessen gepleegd door Nederlandse militairen in Indonesië, 1949-1954, ingeleid en bezorgd door Maarten van der Bent* (Amsterdam 2022) 33-40.
- 71 The notification of the incident and the request for an investigation were all that was found in the archives of the Committee of Good Offices. NL-HANA, Afscheid van Indië, 389, Committee of Good Offices Records, 1948, scan 46-47; *ibid.*, 908, UN Archives dag 13-2.0.0., box 4, map 9, scan 3; UN Archives, GOC/UNCI, S-0681-0021-03-00003, Dr J. Leimena, Chairman of the Truce Committee of the Delegation of the Republic of Indonesia to Mr Glenn Abbey, Chairman of the Truce Committee, Jakarta, 3 February 1948, list of incidents which have taken place after 17 January 1948.
- 72 Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, 'In de Oost, 1946-1950', in Ben Schoenmaker (ed.), *200 jaar Koninklijke Landmacht* (Amsterdam 2014) 139-159, at 148.
- 73 Nasution, *SPK, Jilid 3: Diplomasi sambil bertempur*, 415.
- 74 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 139, 2 VA, Verslag uitwerking afgegeven kaartvuren in tijdvak 1 t/m 15 augustus 1946.
- 75 Van Binsbergen, *3-41 RVA in de tropen*, 52.
- 76 NIMH, 510, De Kam, 77, Stukken betreffende de organisatie, strijdwijze en uitrusting van het Nationaal Indonesisch Leger (TNI), 1945-1949, Voorschriften inzake bescherming tegen het gevaar van verschillende wapens.
- 77 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 804, Cdt. Inf. 1 KNIL, De guerrilla en haar bestrijding, 26 March 1949.
- 78 Surjohadiprojo, *Mengabdi negara*, 44; Nasution, *SPK Jilid 10: Perang gerilya semesta 2*, 260; Pusjarah, *Sejarah TNI*, 142.
- 79 ANRI, Kemenhan, 1791, Perintah Siasat No.1. For a Dutch translation see NL-HANA, Afscheid van Indië, 990, 5319. Operatie order No.1/stop/48 [Perintah siasat], 12 juni 1948, Van Generaal Sudirman.
- 80 Walter Laqueur, *Guerrilla: A Historical and Critical Study* (London 1977) 368; Nasution, *Fundamentals*, 70, 79, 83.
- 81 ANRI, Kemenhan, 1290, Warmana report, 26 July 1947.
- 82 Surjohadiprojo, *Mengabdi negara*, 44; correspondence author with lt-gen. TNI AD b.d. Sayidiman Suryohadiprojo, 16 July 2019.
- 83 Bruinsma, 'Taboe in het theemeubel', blog 89; Original in NIOD, Correspondentie, 1361, letters of 7 and 11 February 1949.
- 84 Groen, *Marsroutes en duwaalsporen*, 219; De Moor, *Generaal Spoor*, 357-358.
- 85 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 2277, 3-6 RVA, Verslag over het 1e kwartaal 1949.
- 86 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 3093, 6 Vew, Dagboek 13 dec t/m 31 dec 1948, 17-1 t/m 23-1 1949 and 21-2 t/m 27-2-49; *ibid.*, 3114, 6 Esk Paw, 3 Aug. '47; *ibid.*, Mariniersbrigade, 1480, Operatief rapport Nr.7, 1 t/m 15 november 1947; NIMH, De Graaf, 25, Weekblad van de 9e Afd. Artillerie no. 25, 31 December 1948, 4; *ibid.*, ML-KNIL, 646, Gevechtsrapporten 120 Squadron, for instance No. 109, Semarang, 29 July 1947; 510, De Kam, 121, C. W. van Leuven's diary (8 RS), 23, 26 and 27 July 1947; *ibid.*, Dekolonisatie, 421, Verslag Hoorweg betreffende de Tweede Politie Actie op Java en Sumatra.
- 87 Heshusius, 'Het gebruik van tanks', deel III, 563.
- 88 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 2914, Inlichtingenrapport No.1 van de 1e Divisie, 30 June 1946.
- 89 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 1101, TTTC Midden-Java, WMIR nr. 14, afgesloten 9 juni 1949 te 14.00.
- 90 NIMH, Sweep, 162, 'Mannen van 3-6 RVA', 90.
- 91 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 1101, Verzamelrapport Veiligheidsgroep nr. 1. Afgesloten op 31 Januari 1949; *ibid.*, 469, TTTC Midden-Java, Algemeen bevel (voor de statische toestand), 16 March 1948.
- 92 Venema and Meeusen, *Losse flodders*, 13.

- 93 Schoonoord, *De Mariniersbrigade*, 322; Groen, *Marsroutes en dwaalsporen*, 290–291; Groen a.o., *Krijgsmacht en kolonie*, 348–349.
- 94 Harinck, *Zoeken, aangrijpen en vernietigen*, 236–244.
- 95 Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, 'The Forbidden Nazi Metaphor: Dutch Soldiers' Reflections on Role Reversals from German Occupation to Imperial Reconquest in Indonesia, 1945–1949', *The International History Review* (18 January 2026), doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2025.2601843; Limpach, 'Information Costs Lives', 208, 215; Raben and Romijn, 'Silence, Information and Deception', 341; Thijs Brocades Zaalberg and Bart Luttkhuis, 'Beyond Colonial Guilt Ranking: Dutch, British and French Extreme Violence in Comparative Perspective, 1945–1962', in Oostindie, *Beyond the Pale*, 377–403, 379, 381; Gert Oostindie, 'Conclusions', in ibid., 439–470, 469; Swirc, *De Indische doofpot*, 178–179.
- 96 Giesing, *Brandlucht en bloedspoor*, 176.
- 97 NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 731, Voorstellen en commentaar inzake de instelling van Luchtmarcheaussee, 1949.
- 98 Harinck, *Zoeken, aangrijpen en vernietigen*, 232.
- 99 Steven Paget, 'A Sledgehammer to Crack a Nut'? Naval Gunfire Support during the Malayan Emergency', *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 28, 2 (2017) 361–384.
- 100 Bruinsma, 'Taboe in het theemeubel', blog 62, second half of November 1947; original in NIOD, Correspondentie, 1150.
- 101 Ibid., blog 91, first half of February 1949, original in NIOD, Correspondentie, 1361, letter 12 February 1949; ibid., blog 94, 1 until 19 March 1949, original in ibid., 1505, letter 18 March 1949.
- 102 Leiden University library, SMGI, 1639.2 – Van Beurden.
- 103 Nasution, *SPK Jilid 10: Perang gerilya semester 2*, 33.
- 104 Hazekamp, *Twee broers*, 147.
- 105 More examples in E. H. M. Vallen and P. Heurter (eds.), *Gedenkboek 402 Bataljon Infanterie* (Maastricht 1951) 40, 54, 189.
- 106 NL-HaNA, Mariniersbrigade, 999, Inlichtingen-jaarslag over de periode 22 maart 1946–22 maart 1947 van het Hoofdkwartier Mariniersbrigade; Schoonoord, *De Mariniersbrigade*, 114–115.
- 107 NL-HaNA, Mariniersbrigade, 1480, Operatief rapport Nr. 11, 1 t/m 22 januari 1948.
- 108 NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 1999, Rapport betreffende actie Zwerver, 15 July 1949.
- 109 De Moor, *Westerling's oorlog*, 339–341.
- 110 Nasution, *SPK Jilid 10: Perang gerilya semester 2*, 33.
- 111 Schoonoord, *De Mariniersbrigade*, 293–294; Groen, *Marsroutes en dwaalsporen*, 212; Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 409; Groen, *Krijgsmacht en kolonie*, 366.
- 112 NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 1739, Overzicht HKML, januari–februari 1947, 15.
- 113 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1438, 3-2 RVA, 4 Aug. 1947.
- 114 NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 1739, Overzicht HKML, november–december 1947, 15–16.
- 115 NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 3389, Schulz diary, 1-12 RI.
- 116 NIMH, Sweep, 162, 'Mannen van 3-6 RVA', 37.
- 117 NIMH, Sweep, 155, Dofferhoff memoirs, 23 February 1949.
- 118 Interview author with W. T. J. Jansen, Soest, 18 October 2017. See also NIMH, Sweep, 135, W. T. J. Jansen memoirs, 244.
- 119 Van Holst Pellekaan, *Hr.Ms. Abraham Crijnsen*, 44.
- 120 NIMH, ML-KNIL, 638, Maandrapporten van het 121ste Squadron, december 1946–september 1947.
- 121 See further G. Hoeks, *Berchse saldaote in Indië* (n.p. 2005) 97; Hazekamp, *Twee broers*, 87; NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 2259, 2 RVA, Overzicht van de eigen en vij. activiteiten gedurende de laatste weken t/m 31 juli 1948 en de daaruit te trekken lessen.
- 122 Bouman, *Succes in een verloren oorlog*, 87, 114; see also Beeksmas, *Gedenkboek 2-6 RVA*, 34.
- 123 Bruinsma, 'Taboe in het theemeubel', blog 100, eerste helft juni 1949. Original in NIOD, Correspondentie, 1506.
- 124 Bouman, *Succes in een verloren oorlog*, 70–71, 97, 103, 108; Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 107.
- 125 Beeksmas, *Gedenkboek 2-6 RVA*, 12.
- 126 NL-HaNA, Mariniersbrigade, 1598, Verslag over Artillerie Afdeling der Mariniers Brigade van 1/3/46 tot 1/11/46, V. Vuurleiding, 5. Indirect vuur; *Voorlopig voorschrift nr 2274, Schootstafels vuurmond 25 pr.*
- 127 Dorren, *Onze Mariniersbrigade*, 85–86.
- 128 NL-HaNA, Mariniersbrigade, 999, Soehoed interrogation; Schoonoord, *Nederlands-Indië onder Ameri-*



- kaans, *Australisch en Brits geallieerd militair gezag*, 229; NIMH, Sweep, 162, 'Mannen van 3-6 RVA', 33; Dussel, *Dat was jij, Marinier!*, 99, 207; Lapré, *Andjing Nica*, 323; Muller, *Mijn tijd in Indië*, 33; Visser, Smeitink and Schaap, *Logboek 1-41 RVA*, 12.
- 129 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 3376, VA IV, juli 1949; NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 412, leerschrift SROA; Bidwell, *Artillery*, 27.
- 130 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 2931, KMH/LMD to all TRC/TPCS, Batavia, 1 June 1949.
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- 160 Schoonoord, *De mariniersbrigade*, 125; Scagliola, *Last van de oorlog*, 80-100; Oostindie, *Soldaat in Indonesië*, 220-229; Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 113, 391-399, 700-703; Bart Luttikhuis and Christiaan Harinck, 'Voorbij het koloniale perspectief: Indonesische bronnen en het onderzoek naar de oorlog in Indonesië, 1945-1949', *BMGN - Low Countries Historical Review* 132, 2 (2017) 51-76, at 74.
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- 202 Nasution, *SPK Jilid 10: Perang gerilya semesta 2*, 214; report in NL-HaNA, Algemene Secretarie, 2320, XVII Excessen, Soekaboemi; also cited in Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 490; Roel Frakking and Martijn Eickhoff, 'Revolutionary Worlds: Legitimacy, Violence and Loyalty during the Indonesian War of Independence', in Oostindie, *Beyond the Pale*, 177-201, at 194, write that 116 residents were killed, based on a different source. See also Frank van Vree, 'Houd vast aan excuses voor Indonesië', *Trouw*, 18 mei 2024.
- 203 See for example NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 2322, 8 RVA, 2 July 1947; NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1446, 2-12 RVA, verschietingsrapport over het 4e kwartaal 1947; Database dagboeken NIMH, *ibid.*, 1295, Dagboek Van Bijsterveld, 6 February 1949; Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 392-393; Van der Kop, *Terug van weggeweest*, 65.
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analyse van extreem geweld tijdens de inzet van het 3e Bataljon 9e Regiment Infanterie in Indonesië" (MA thesis, Leiden University 2021) 12 ff.

- 210 Leiden University Library, SMGI, 1529.1 – Ritman. See also *ibid.*, 1095, W. van Breen.
- 211 See Tine Molendijk, 'Soldiers in Conflict: Moral Injury, Political Practices and Public Perceptions' (Doctoral dissertation, Radboud University Nijmegen 2020) 74–80; Francesca Hooft, 'White Coats, Green Jackets: Physicians and Nurses in the Dutch Armed Forces, Professional identity & Agency, 1990–2010' (Doctoral dissertation, Utrecht University 2022) 46–47.
- 212 NIMH, Sweep, 597, Eshuis diary, 6 Esk Vew, Solo, 12 February 1949.
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- 216 Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, 313.
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- 218 Nick Turse, *Kill Anything that Moves: The Real American War in Vietnam* (New York 2013) 22.
- 219 Limpach, *De brandende kampongs*, 323, 326.
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- 221 Shaw, *The New Western Way of War*, 89.
- 222 Zulaika, *Hellfire from Paradise Ranch*, 113.
- 223 Verwey, "Hoeveel wrekt de bruidegom de bruid", 570.
- 224 Van Doorn and Hendrix, *Ontsporing van geweld*, 212.
- 225 *Ibid.*; NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 792, correspondence referring to the bombing of Penanggoengan, 17 January–6 February 1949; bombing also mentioned in NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 1288, No.701A, 16-1-1949, volgnummer 1516.
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- 232 Keppy, *Sporen van vernieling*, 95–96. For the VT-CLA, see Chapter 4.
- 233 NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 3379, Weekrapport Inlichtingendienst 1-12 RI, 16 July 1946; Hilma Bruinsma, 'Taboe in het theemeubel', blog 31, januari 1947.
- 234 Bekendmaking van de Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken en de Minister van Defensie van 10 september 2013, nr. MinBuZa.2013-256644, van de contouren van een civielrechtelijke afwikkeling ter vergoeding van schade aan weduwen van slachtoffers van standrechtelijke executies in het voormalige Nederlands-Indië van vergelijkbare ernst en aard als Rawagedeh en Zuid Sulawesi, *Staatscourant van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*, 10 September 2013, No. 25383; Hoek, 'Ook op Sumatra richtten de Nederlanders een bloedbad aan'. The Rengat case was then brought to the Hague district court, which rejected all claims due to the statute of limitations by judgment of 23 January 2019. See [uitspraken.rechtbank.nl](http://uitspraken.rechtbank.nl), ECLI:NL:RB-DHA:2019:500.

## Conclusion

- 1 TNA, AIR 40, Air Ministry, Directorate of Intelligence and related bodies: intelligence reports and papers, 1417, Indonesia: Far East daily summary, 1945 Aug.–Nov., Java, Sum. No. 179, 2.11.45.

## Epilogue

- 1 See for example Marius A. P. de Lange, *Het oordeel van de tijd* (Soesterberg 2021); Maurice Swirc, 'De sneeuwbal rolt dan verder', *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 7 November 2019; *ibid.*, *De Indische doofpot*, 17.
- 2 Mike Corder, 'Study Says Dutch Troops Used 'Extreme' Violence in Indonesia', *AP*, February 17, 2022, [apnews.com/article/europe-netherlands-mark-rutte-847d84b6b8a38b286e739713386c7635](https://apnews.com/article/europe-netherlands-mark-rutte-847d84b6b8a38b286e739713386c7635); Daniel Boffey, 'Dutch PM Apologises for State's Role in Abuses in 1940s Indonesian War', *The Guardian*, 17 February 2022, [theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/17/dutch-state-condoned-extreme-violence-in-indonesian-war-inquiry-concludes](https://theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/17/dutch-state-condoned-extreme-violence-in-indonesian-war-inquiry-concludes).
- 3 The speech can be read on the website of the National Indies monument 1945–1962, [nim-roermond.nl/toespraken/rutte2022.html](https://nim-roermond.nl/toespraken/rutte2022.html). The literal text reads, translated: '... the responsibility must be placed where it belongs: with the authorities of the time – the government, the parliament, the army leadership and the judicial authorities. So certainly not with the individual conscripts'.
- 4 David van Reybrouck, 'Tijd om eens over dat Indië in Nederlands-Indië te schrijven', *De Correspondent*, 3 September 2015.
- 5 Audrey R. Kahin and George McT. Kahin, *Subversion as Foreign Policy: The Secret Eisenhower and Dulles Debate in Indonesia* (New York 1995) 170–171; G. J. Tornij, *De Nederlandse 'Mitchells'. De geschiedenis van de B-25-bommenwerper in Nederlandse dienst* (Amersfoort 1999) 46.
- 6 This Mitchell (the N5-264), actually has a fascinating history. It was transferred to the AURI in 1950, was gifted to the Dutch government during a visit of Prince Bernhard and shipped to the Netherlands in crates. 'De North American B-25-J 'Mitchell' bommenwerper met registratienummer M-464, Constr. Nr. 44-31258', [collectie.nmm.nl/nl/collectie/detail/471160](https://collectie.nmm.nl/nl/collectie/detail/471160), in keeping with Tornij, *De Nederlandse 'Mitchells'*, 47–48, 103.
- 7 This is *Hr.Ms. Abraham Crijnsen* at the Navy Museum (Marinemuseum). See [marinemuseum.nl/nl/collectie/museumschepen](https://marinemuseum.nl/nl/collectie/museumschepen), where its 'heroic past' is discussed.

## Appendix

- 1 NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, Collectie onderdeelverslagen in Nederlands-Indië; NIMH, Dekolonisatie, Collectie militaire eenheden; *HB 6-00, Het wapen der artillerie. Geschiedenis en traditie*, vastgesteld door Commandant Opleidings- en Trainings-Commando Koninklijke Landmacht, 26 mei 2003, 2-2-32 t/m 2-2-37; Hoffenaar, *Vuur in beweging*, 100, 106, 124; Petra Groen and Dirk Staat, *Inzet in Nederlands-Indië, 1945–1950* (Amsterdam 1992) 82–83.
- 2 Ward, *Militaire Luchtvaart*, 154–213, 279, 310–311; Boer, *Jachtvliegtuigen*, 9–32, 362; *ibid.*, *Army co-operation bij de Militaire Luchtvaart in Indië, 1946-1950* (Den Haag 2004) 22–27; Nico Geldof and Luuk Boerman, *Fairey Firefly, Marine Luchtvaart Dienst / Royal Neth. Naval Air Service: History, Camouflage & Markings* (Zwammerdam 2016) 7–9; Lutgert and Sorgedragter, *322 Squadron*, 87–88; Appeldorn, Den Belder and Krechting, *50 jaar 322 squadron*, 40; N. J. Nieuwland (ed.), *65 jaar 322 squadron (juni 1943–juni 2008). Niet praten maar doen...* (Leeuwarden 2008) 15; Van der Meer, *Nederlandse Spitfires*, 77–80; Rijnhout, *Kruisvaarders van de archipel*, 23, 146–147, 186, 192; Van Holst Pellekaan and De Regt, *Operaties in de Oost*, 355. The numbers of aircraft are indicative, authors mention different figures.
- 3 Vermeulen, *De schepen van de Koninklijke Marine*, 114, 148–151, 174, 192, 196–197; Van Holst Pellekaan and De Regt, *Operaties in de Oost*, 356; NIMH, *Losse Stukken*, 2681, Memoriaal van I. C. de Regt.

# Abbreviations and acronyms

|         |                                                                                          |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AAT     | Aan- en Afvoertroepen (Logistics Troops)                                                 |
| AFNEI   | Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies                                                    |
| AKMIL   | Akademi Militer (Military Academy)                                                       |
| ALFSEA  | Allied Land Forces in South East Asia                                                    |
| ALRI    | Angkatan Laut Republik Indonesia (Indonesian Navy)                                       |
| Amtrack | Landing Vehicle, Tracked / Amphibious Tractor                                            |
| ANRI    | Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia (National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia)       |
| APWI    | Allied Prisoners of War and Internees                                                    |
| ARBAT   | Artilleriebataljon Mariniersbrigade (Marine Brigade Artillery Battalion)                 |
| ARVA    | 6 Squadron Artillerie Verkenningsafdeling (Artillery Reconnaissance squadron)            |
| AURI    | Angkatan Udara Republik Indonesia (Indonesian Air Force)                                 |
| BAC     | Brigade Artilleriecommandant (Brigade Artillery Commander)                               |
| BDZ     | Bevelhebber der Zeestrijdkrachten (Commander of the Naval Forces)                        |
| BSO     | Bevelhebber der Strijdkrachten in het Oosten (Commander of the Armed Forces in the East) |
| BKR     | Badan Keamanan Rakyat (People's Security Agency)                                         |



|            |                                                                                                                                              |
|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CGD        | Commissie van Goede Diensten; in Indonesian: Komisi Tiga Negara (KTN); in English: Good Offices Committee (GOC)                              |
| CMI        | Centrale Militaire Inlichtingendienst (Central Military Intelligence Service)                                                                |
| CML        | Chef Militaire Luchtvaart (Army Air Force Chief)                                                                                             |
| COP        | Comando Operasi Pertempuran (Combat Operations Command)                                                                                      |
| CVP        | Commissie van Proefneming (Commission of Experiments/Trials)                                                                                 |
| CZM(N)     | Commandant der Zeemacht in Nederlands-Indië/Indonesië (Commander of the Navy in the Dutch East Indies/Indonesia)                             |
| DAC        | Divisie Artilleriecommandant (Divisional Artillery Commander)                                                                                |
| DCO        | Directoraat Centrale Opleidingen (Central Training Directorate)                                                                              |
| Disjarahad | Dinas Sejarah TNI Angkatan Darat (Indonesian Army History Department)                                                                        |
| DLC        | Dienst voor Legercontacten (Army Communication Service)                                                                                      |
| DST        | Depot Speciale Troepen (Special Forces Depot)                                                                                                |
| GIS        | Geographical Information System                                                                                                              |
| HDML       | Harbour Defence Motor Launch                                                                                                                 |
| HKML       | Hoofdkwartier Militaire Luchtvaart (Army Air Force headquarters)                                                                             |
| IIB        | Indisch Instructie Bataljon (Indies Instruction Battalion)                                                                                   |
| IVG        | Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsgroep (Intelligence and Security Group)                                                                          |
| KITLV      | Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, Leiden (Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies, Leiden) |
| KL         | Koninklijke Landmacht, see RNLA                                                                                                              |
| KM         | Koninklijke Marine, see RNLN                                                                                                                 |
| KMA        | Koninklijke Militaire Academie (Royal Military Academy)                                                                                      |
| KNIL       | Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch/Indonesisch Leger (Netherlands East Indies Army)                                                               |
| KST        | Korps Speciale Troepen (Special Forces Corps)                                                                                                |
| LAC        | Leger Artilleriecommandant (Army Artillery Commander)                                                                                        |
| LSK        | Luchtstrijdkrachten (Air Forces)                                                                                                             |
| Lua        | Luchtafweergeschut (Anti-Aircraft Artillery)                                                                                                 |

|              |                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| LUCOJA       | Luchtvaartcommando Java (Java Air Command)                                                                                                                                 |
| LUCOSU       | Luchtvaartcommando Sumatra (Sumatra Air Command)                                                                                                                           |
| LVT          | Luchtvaarttroepen (Air Force Troops)                                                                                                                                       |
| Marbrig      | Mariniersbrigade (Marine Brigade)                                                                                                                                          |
| MILEX        | Military Executive Board (part of the UNCI)                                                                                                                                |
| ML-KNIL      | Militaire Luchtvaart van het Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch/<br>Indonesisch Leger, see NEIAF                                                                                |
| MLD          | Marine Luchtvaartdienst (Navy Aviation Service)                                                                                                                            |
| MP           | Militaire Politie (Military Police)                                                                                                                                        |
| NEIAF        | Royal Netherlands East Indies Army Air Force                                                                                                                               |
| NICA         | Netherlands Indies Civil Administration, established during<br>the Japanese occupation and renamed Allied Military<br>Administration Civil Affairs Branch (AMACAB) in 1946 |
| NIMH         | Nederlands Instituut voor Militaire Historie, Den Haag<br>(Netherlands Institute of Military History, The Hague)                                                           |
| NIOD         | Nederlands Instituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie, Amsterdam.<br>Since 2010 NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide<br>Studies                                          |
| OAZ          | Oudst Aanwezend Zee-Officier (Senior Designated Naval<br>Officer)                                                                                                          |
| OVW          | Oorlogsvrijwilliger (war volunteer)                                                                                                                                        |
| PAG          | Pantserafweergeschut (anti-tank gun)                                                                                                                                       |
| PAVO         | Prince Albert Victor's Own Cavalry                                                                                                                                         |
| Perpis       | Persatuan Pelajar Indonesia Sulawesi (Indonesian Students<br>Association Sulawesi)                                                                                         |
| PETA         | Sukerela Tentara Pembela Tanah Air (Defenders of the<br>Homeland)                                                                                                          |
| Pusjarah     | Pusat Sejarah TNI (Indonesian Armed Forces History Centre)                                                                                                                 |
| PVA          | Photo Verkenning Afdeling (Photo Reconnaissance Unit)                                                                                                                      |
| RAAF         | Royal Australian Air Force                                                                                                                                                 |
| RAF          | Royal Air Force (UK)                                                                                                                                                       |
| RAPWI        | Recovery of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees                                                                                                                          |
| RATA         | Regiment anti-tankartillerie (Anti-Tank Artillery Regiment)                                                                                                                |
| Reg. Li. Lua | Regiment licht luchtafweergeschut (Light Anti-Aircraft Artillery<br>Regiment)                                                                                              |
| RI           | Regiment Infanterie (Infantry Regiment)                                                                                                                                    |
| RN           | Royal Navy (UK)                                                                                                                                                            |
| RNLA         | Royal Netherlands Army (Koninklijke Landmacht, KL)                                                                                                                         |

|        |                                                                                                                    |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| RNMFS  | Royal Netherlands Military Flying School                                                                           |
| RNLN   | Royal Netherlands Navy (Koninklijke Marine, KM)                                                                    |
| RP     | River Patrol                                                                                                       |
| RST    | Regiment Speciale Troepen (Special Forces Regiment)                                                                |
| RVA    | Regiment Veldartillerie (Field Artillery Regiment)                                                                 |
| SEAC   | South East Asia Command                                                                                            |
| SOIM   | Serangan Umum (Oemoem) 1 Maret 1949, general attack against Yogyakarta                                             |
| SROA   | School voor Reserve-Officieren Artillerie (Artillery Reserve Officer School)                                       |
| SROI   | School voor Reserve-Officieren Infanterie (Infantry Reserve Officer School)                                        |
| SWK    | Sub Wehrkreis (Military Subdistrict)                                                                               |
| TKR    | Tentara Keamanan Rakyat (People's Security Army)                                                                   |
| TNI    | Tentara Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Armed Forces)                                                      |
| TP     | Tentara Pelajar (Student Army)                                                                                     |
| TRI    | Tentara Republik Indonesia (Army of the Republic of Indonesia)                                                     |
| TtTC   | Territoriaal tevens Troepencommando/-commandant (Territorial and Troop Command/Commander)                          |
| UGM    | Universitas Gadjah Mada                                                                                            |
| UNCI   | United Nations Commission for Indonesia                                                                            |
| VA     | Veldartillerie (Field Artillery)                                                                                   |
| VARWA  | 17 Squadron Verkennings & Artilleriewaarnemings Afdeling (17 Squadron Artillery Reconnaissance & Observation Unit) |
| VCP    | Visual Control Post                                                                                                |
| VDMB   | Veiligheidsdienst Mariniersbrigade (Marine Brigade Security Service)                                               |
| Vewart | Vechtwagens en artillerie (combat vehicles and artillery)                                                          |
| WGS84  | World Geodetic System 1984                                                                                         |
| ZIB    | Zelfstandige Infanterie Brigade (Independent Infantry Brigade)                                                     |

# Glossary

|                      |                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>bakser</i>        | instrument used to set the firing range, also used to refer to the spotter using the device                                                                 |
| <i>banjir</i>        | flood, deluge                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>bambu runcing</i> | bamboo spear                                                                                                                                                |
| <i>Bapak</i>         | father                                                                                                                                                      |
| <i>battery</i>       | artillery unit (Dutch: <i>afdeling</i> ) typically consisting of two troops                                                                                 |
| <i>Bersiap</i>       | ‘watch out’ / ‘ready for action’, Indonesian battle cry used in the Netherlands to refer to the violent period in the first months following the Proklamasi |
| <i>bilik</i>         | wall or partition of plaited bamboo, also a room                                                                                                            |
| <i>b(e)rani mati</i> | ‘courage to die’                                                                                                                                            |
| <i>bumi hangus</i>   | scorched earth tactics                                                                                                                                      |
| <i>Bung</i>          | uncle, form of address                                                                                                                                      |
| <i>bushidō</i>       | ‘way of the warrior’, samurai code of honour                                                                                                                |
| <i>cocong merah</i>  | ‘red beak’, p-51 Mustang                                                                                                                                    |
| <i>Darul Islam</i>   | Islamic resistance army that fought against both the Dutch troops and the forces of the Indonesian Republic                                                 |
| <i>desa</i>          | village, hamlet                                                                                                                                             |
| <i>jongos</i>        | (house)servant, boy                                                                                                                                         |

|                         |                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>fatwa</i>            | Islamic legal advice                                                                                                              |
| <i>Giyugun</i>          | volunteer army serving Japan                                                                                                      |
| <i>gunung</i>           | mountain, hill                                                                                                                    |
| <i>Guru</i>             | teacher                                                                                                                           |
| <i>hari</i>             | day                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Heiho</i>            | Indonesian auxiliary soldier, serving Japan                                                                                       |
| <i>Hizbullah</i>        | 'army of God', armed branch of Masyumi, an Islamic political party                                                                |
| <i>jibaku</i>           | self-destruction                                                                                                                  |
| <i>jimat</i>            | amulet                                                                                                                            |
| <i>kali</i>             | river                                                                                                                             |
| <i>kampong</i>          | village                                                                                                                           |
| <i>Kapanewon</i>        | administrative subdistrict in Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta (Special Region Yogyakarta), comparable to a Kabupaten elsewhere on Java |
| <i>kebal</i>            | invincible                                                                                                                        |
| <i>Kempeitai</i>        | Japanese military police                                                                                                          |
| <i>kota</i>             | city                                                                                                                              |
| <i>kramat</i>           | ordained, holy person or object                                                                                                   |
| <i>Kyai</i>             | teacher, Islamic religious leader                                                                                                 |
| <i>laskar rakyat</i>    | people's militia                                                                                                                  |
| <i>Londo</i>            | Dutchman                                                                                                                          |
| <i>Lurah</i>            | village head                                                                                                                      |
| <i>markas</i>           | army encampment, post                                                                                                             |
| <i>markas besar</i>     | headquarters                                                                                                                      |
| <i>markas tertinggi</i> | highest headquarters                                                                                                              |
| <i>Mbah</i>             | Javanese form of address (m/f), literally: grandfather or grandmother                                                             |
| <i>Pak</i>              | sir                                                                                                                               |
| <i>palagan</i>          | battle, battlefield                                                                                                               |
| <i>pamong desa</i>      | village official(s)                                                                                                               |
| <i>pamong praja</i>     | regional or village council, also village police                                                                                  |
| <i>pasar</i>            | market                                                                                                                            |
| <i>pemuda</i>           | youth, young fighter                                                                                                              |
| <i>perang sabil</i>     | holy war                                                                                                                          |
| <i>pillbox</i>          | concrete firing bunker                                                                                                            |
| <i>prajurit</i>         | warrior, fighter                                                                                                                  |
| <i>Proklamasi</i>       | proclamation, the declaration of independence on 17 Au-                                                                           |

|                      |                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                      | gust 1945                                                                                                        |
| <i>Raden</i>         | Javanese noble title used in colonial times                                                                      |
| <i>Revolusi</i>      | revolution                                                                                                       |
| <i>sawa(h)</i>       | rice or paddy field                                                                                              |
| <i>semangat</i>      | spirit, fighting spirit                                                                                          |
| <i>serangan umum</i> | general attack                                                                                                   |
| <i>serdadu</i>       | soldier                                                                                                          |
| <i>tani</i>          | farmer, peasant (Bahasa Indonesia: <i>petani</i> )                                                               |
| <i>tekidanto</i>     | Japanese grenade launcher                                                                                        |
| <i>tentara</i>       | army                                                                                                             |
| <i>tongkang</i>      | inland and coastal vessel                                                                                        |
| <i>troop</i>         | Artillery battery sub-unit (Dutch: <i>batterij</i> ) typically equipped with four guns divided over two sections |
| <i>Ulama</i>         | Islamic religious leader                                                                                         |
| <i>wakil betua</i>   | senior representative                                                                                            |
| <i>wehrkreis</i>     | military district                                                                                                |



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## Overview of publications resulting from the research programme Independence, Decolonization, Violence and War in Indonesia, 1945-1950

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