

Morotai Island in North Maluku: A Base for Global Military Contestation during the Pacific War in Indonesia 1944-1945

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ABSTRACT

Morotai Island holds a strategic position in North Maluku's history, evolving from a center of local kingdoms into a crucial site in the global military dynamics of the Pacific War (1944-1945). This transformation reflects a shift in spatial function, from a traditional power center to a modern military base contested by Allied and Japanese forces. This study aims to analyze the historical transformation of Morotai Island from the era of ancient kingdoms to its role as a strategic military base during the Pacific War, and to identify the factors that drove this geopolitical shift. This research employs a qualitative historical method, including heuristics (the collection of primary and secondary sources), source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The sources consist of colonial archives, military documents, historical literature, and local oral accounts to enrich the analysis. The findings indicate that, during the era of ancient kingdoms, Morotai was part of the political and economic networks of the Maluku Sultanates, particularly under the influence of Ternate and Jailolo. However, in 1944, the island underwent a significant transformation when the Allied forces established it as a major military base for operations to liberate the Philippines. Morotai Island experienced a fundamental transformation from a traditional center of power into a global military base. This shift highlights the importance of geographical factors in shaping the strategic value of a region, while also demonstrating how global dynamics can significantly reshape local structures.

INTRODUCTION

Morotai Island occupies a strategic position in the historical landscape of North Maluku, characterized by a long and layered trajectory that spans from the era of indigenous polities to its emergence as a focal point of global military contestation during the Pacific War (1944–1945) (Andaya, 1993: 45; Lopian, 2008: 112). Situated along the maritime crossroads between Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific, Morotai has historically functioned as an important node within regional trading and political networks, while also acquiring global significance during moments of geopolitical upheaval (Reid, 1993: 67; Tarling, 1999: 210). This duality between local embeddedness and global relevance renders Morotai an important case for examining historical transformation across temporal scales.

In the pre-colonial period, Morotai was integrated into the broader political and economic sphere of the Malukan sultanates, particularly Ternate and Jailolo, which exerted influence through tributary relations and maritime control (Andaya, 1993: 89; Amal, 2010: 134). These networks were underpinned by the lucrative spice trade, which connected Maluku to wider Asian and global markets (Reid, 1993: 102; Pires, 1944: 215). Within this system, Morotai functioned as a peripheral yet significant maritime space that supported the circulation of goods, people, and cultural practices. Although it did not attain the political prominence of major centers such as Ternate or Tidore, its inclusion in these networks reflects the interconnected nature of pre-modern Southeast Asian polities (Lopian, 2008: 130).

The advent of European colonial powers in the sixteenth century, particularly the Portuguese and later the Dutch, reshaped the political and economic structures of Maluku. Colonial intervention introduced new forms of control, monopolization of spice production, and reconfiguration of local alliances (Ricklefs, 2008: 52; Tarling, 1999: 245). Despite these transformations, Morotai remained relatively marginal within the colonial administrative framework, receiving limited direct attention compared to more economically valuable islands. This marginality persisted into the early twentieth century, when global geopolitical tensions began to elevate the strategic importance of previously overlooked territories (Cribb, 2000: 378; Willmott, 2005: 301).

The outbreak of World War II and the expansion of Japanese forces across Southeast Asia and the Pacific dramatically altered the strategic calculus of the region. As the Pacific War intensified, the Allied forces, under the command of General Douglas MacArthur, adopted a strategy of “island hopping” aimed at reclaiming occupied territories and advancing toward Japan (Morison, 1950: 201; Smith, 1953: 412). Within this framework, Morotai emerged as a critical site due to its geographical proximity to the Philippines and its suitability for large-scale military infrastructure. The Allied landing on Morotai in September 1944 marked a decisive turning point, transforming the island into a major operational base for subsequent military campaigns (Morison, 1950: 225; Drea, 1998: 267). The selection of Morotai was not incidental but rather based on a combination of strategic factors, including its relative isolation, favorable terrain for airfield construction, and the limited strength of Japanese

defenses (Tanaka, 1980: 188; Willmott, 2005: 310). Following its capture, the island underwent rapid militarization, with the construction of multiple airstrips, naval facilities, and logistical hubs that supported Allied operations across the Pacific theater (United States Army, 1944: 25; Allied Forces SWPA, 1945: 40). This transformation exemplifies how global military imperatives can rapidly redefine the spatial and functional characteristics of a locality.

Beyond its military significance, the Allied presence in Morotai also generated profound social and economic impacts on the local population. The influx of foreign troops, the introduction of new technologies, and the restructuring of local economies altered patterns of daily life and social interaction (Dower, 1986: 299; Ienaga, 1978: 142). These changes highlight the intersection between global conflict and local experience, underscoring the importance of integrating social-historical perspectives into studies of wartime transformation. Despite its importance, much of the existing scholarship on Morotai has tended to focus narrowly on military operations, often neglecting the island's deeper historical context and its integration within longer-term regional dynamics (Lapian, 2008: 145; Amal, 2010: 201). Such an approach risks isolating the events of 1944–1945 from the broader processes that shaped Morotai's historical trajectory. In contrast, a more comprehensive perspective that incorporates pre-colonial, colonial, and wartime periods allows for a fuller understanding of both continuity and change.

This study, therefore, seeks to analyze the historical transformation of Morotai Island from its role within ancient and early modern political networks to its function as a global military base during the Pacific War. It emphasizes the shifting meanings and strategic values attributed to the island over time, as well as the interplay between local conditions and global forces in shaping these transformations. By doing so, this research contributes to broader historiographical debates concerning the relationship between periphery and center, as well as the ways in which global conflicts reconfigure local spaces (Cribb, 2000: 380; Willmott, 2005: 315). Methodologically, this study adopts a qualitative historical approach, drawing upon a diverse range of sources, including colonial archives, military reports, historical monographs, and oral traditions. Such an approach enables a multi-dimensional analysis that situates Morotai within both regional and global contexts. Furthermore, it aligns with recent trends in historiography that emphasize the importance of spatial analysis and the interconnectedness of local and global histories (Reid, 1993: 110; Ricklefs, 2008: 60).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The transformation of Morotai Island from a traditional kingdom-based space into a global military base can be examined through several theoretical and conceptual approaches in modern historiography, particularly those related to maritime history, geopolitics, the spatial turn in history, and global war studies. These approaches provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how local spaces are reshaped within broader global dynamics.

One important framework is the concept of maritime networks, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of archipelagic regions within systems of trade and power. In Southeast Asian studies, maritime networks are understood as dynamic structures linking centers and peripheries through the circulation of commodities, people, and ideas (Wade, 2017: 88; Andaya, 2017: 134). In this context, Morotai can be positioned as part of the Malukan maritime network integrated into the global spice trade system. Recent studies suggest that regions often perceived as peripheral may in fact function as strategic nodes within such networks, particularly in terms of logistics and mobility (Gerritsen & Riello, 2021: 56).

Furthermore, the spatial turn in historiography offers a crucial perspective for understanding shifts in the function of space. This approach argues that space is not merely a passive backdrop but a social construct produced through power relations (Withers, 2019: 72; Soja, 2018: 45). In the case of Morotai, its transformation from a traditional maritime zone into a military base demonstrates how space can be redefined by global geopolitical interests. This aligns with the view that strategic spaces emerge from the interaction between geographical conditions and political-military needs (Gregory, 2018: 120). Within the framework of historical geopolitics, geographical location is considered a key determinant in military strategy. Black (2018: 211) argues that island regions in the Pacific held significant strategic value during World War II due to their role in controlling logistical and communication routes. Similarly, the Allied “island-hopping” strategy was based on selecting locations that combined geographic advantages with relatively weak enemy defenses (Symonds, 2018: 302). In this regard, Morotai can be understood as a product of complex geopolitical calculations shaped by wartime imperatives.

Another relevant concept is global war and local transformation, which explains how global conflicts directly affect local social structures. Recent scholarship shows that the presence of foreign military forces often generates economic, social, and cultural changes within local communities (MacLeod, 2020: 144; Lindblad, 2019: 98). In the context of Morotai, the construction of military infrastructure not only served wartime purposes but also triggered changes in production patterns, mobility, and social interaction among the local population.

The concept of center and periphery in global historiography is also essential for understanding Morotai’s historical trajectory. Regions such as Morotai have often been categorized as peripheral in world history narratives. However, recent studies emphasize that peripheral regions can become central under specific historical conditions, particularly during periods of global conflict and expansion (Burbank & Cooper, 2019: 67; Darwin, 2021: 155). This perspective highlights the dynamic nature of spatial hierarchies, which are contingent upon broader geopolitical contexts.

In the Indonesian context, studies of maritime history and eastern regions have developed significantly in recent years. Research by Sulistiyono (2020: 88) underscores the importance of eastern Indonesia within global trade networks, while Widjojo (2019: 134) demonstrates the strategic role of Maluku

in both colonial and global historical processes. Additionally, nationally indexed journals (SINTA) have begun to reassess the position of peripheral regions in Indonesian historiography through more critical and contextual approaches (Rahman, 2021: 45).

Nevertheless, there remains a gap in scholarship that integrates pre-colonial, colonial, and Pacific War histories into a single analytical framework, particularly in the case of Morotai. Most existing studies remain fragmented between maritime and military perspectives. Therefore, this study seeks to bridge this gap by synthesizing the theoretical approaches discussed above to produce a more comprehensive historical analysis. In conclusion, this literature review demonstrates that the study of Morotai can be enriched through the integration of concepts such as maritime networks, the production of space, historical geopolitics, local transformation under global war, and center-periphery relations. This multidisciplinary approach not only enhances our understanding of Morotai's historical transformation but also contributes to the development of a more inclusive global historiography.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative historical research method to examine the transformation of Morotai Island from a peripheral space within traditional political networks into a strategic global military base during the Pacific War (1944–1945). The historical method is particularly appropriate for reconstructing past events and analyzing change over time through critical engagement with sources (Howell & Prevenier, 2001: 17; Tosh, 2015: 25). The research process follows four main stages: heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The first stage, heuristics, involves the systematic collection of both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include military archives such as Allied operational reports, war diaries, and colonial administrative documents (United States Army, 1944; Allied Forces SWPA, 1945). These are complemented by secondary sources, including scholarly books and journal articles on Southeast Asian maritime history, geopolitics, and World War II in the Pacific (Andaya, 2017; Black, 2018).

The second stage, source criticism, is divided into external and internal criticism. External criticism evaluates the authenticity and provenance of documents, while internal criticism assesses the credibility and bias of the content (Gottschalk, 1969: 139). Given that many primary sources originate from military institutions, particular attention is paid to identifying strategic bias and contextual limitations in wartime reporting. The third stage is interpretation, in which the collected data are analyzed using relevant theoretical frameworks. This study integrates concepts from maritime network theory, spatial history, and historical geopolitics to understand how Morotai's geographical position and historical context shaped its strategic importance (Wade, 2017; Gregory, 2018; Black, 2018). Through this analytical lens, Morotai is examined not only as a physical location but also as a socially constructed space influenced by global power dynamics.

The final stage, historiography, involves synthesizing the findings into a coherent historical narrative. This process emphasizes both continuity and change, linking Morotai's pre-colonial integration within regional networks to its rapid militarization during World War II. The narrative also incorporates a multi-scalar approach, connecting local developments with broader regional and global processes (Reid, 2015: 110). In addition, this study adopts a diachronic approach, tracing developments across different historical periods, and a contextual approach, situating local events within wider geopolitical transformations. This combined approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of Morotai's historical trajectory and avoids isolating the events of 1944–1945 from their deeper historical roots. Overall, the methodology and research process are designed to produce a critical and integrative historical analysis that bridges local and global perspectives. By combining rigorous source analysis with interdisciplinary theoretical frameworks, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the strategic transformation of peripheral regions in times of global conflict.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Morotai and the Moro Kingdom

In North Maluku, besides the major kingdoms such as Ternate, Tidore, Bacan, and Jailolo, there are also small kingdoms that can be said to be overlooked in the records of Indonesian historical research, namely: Loloda, Tobelo, Galela, Maba, Patani, Weda, Obi, and Moro. What is now known as Morotai is inseparable from the history of the Moro Kingdom. The Moro Kingdom was located on the eastern coast of North Halmahera, from Cape Bisoa in the north to Tobelo (Baretta, 1917: 30-36). Because it was situated on the land of Halmahera, it was also called Morotia (land of the Moro). Part of its territory was located on an overseas island called Morotai (sea of the Moro). Therefore, the Moro Kingdom encompassed both the land of the Moro (Morotia) and the sea of the Moro (Morotai).

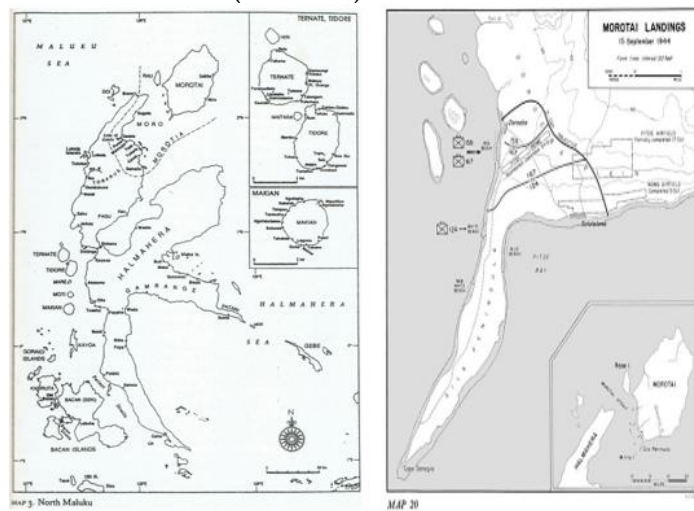


Figure 1. Map of North Maluku (Left); Map of the Allied troop movements during the Battle of Morotai, Pacific War, Part of World War II (Right). Coordinates: 2°19'0"N 128°32'0"E, 2.31667°N, 128.53333°E

The capital of the Moro kingdom was Mamuya, located in Morotia, now part of the Galela District. For the time being, it is not yet known exactly when the Moro kingdom was established and who its founder was. According to A.B. Lopian in Amal (2010:213), in his latest writing about the Bacan Kingdom, the Moro Kingdom is as old as the Loloda Kingdom and the Jailolo Kingdom. The important cities of the Moro kingdom, besides Mamuya, are Sugala, Pune (Galela), Tolo, Cawa, Samafo (Tobelo), Sakita, Mira, Cio, and Rao (Morotai). During the Portuguese period, Moro was under the rule of Tioliza. Some of the inhabitants of the Moro kingdom embraced Islam, others were Catholic, and the rest still adhered to animism. Ethnographically, the inhabitants of the Moro kingdom consist of the Galela and Tobelo ethnic groups, both in Morotia and Morotai. Until the mid-third of the 16th century, this kingdom still existed. Moro is the largest rice producer in Maluku and therefore serves as a food warehouse—rice and sago as well as fish and meat—that supplies the food needs of the city of Ternate. This kingdom faced difficulties because larger kingdoms like Ternate wanted to annex it. Besides Ternate, Moro is also targeted by Jailolo.

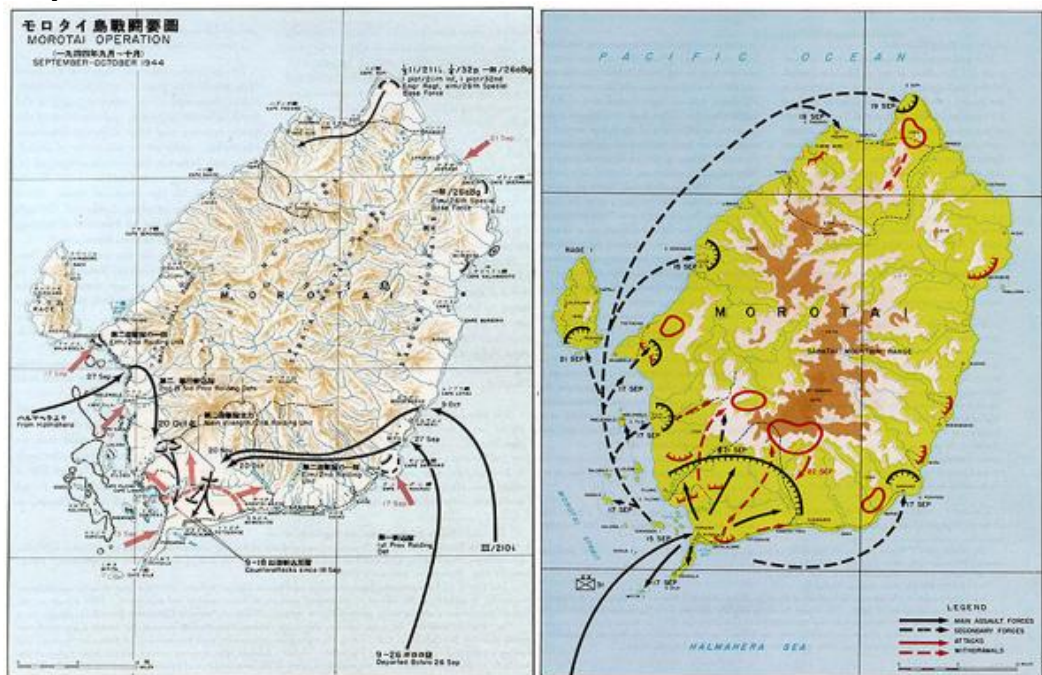


Figure 2. Map of the landing sites of Allied troop transport ships at the Red and White Beaches of Daruba and Cape Dehegila, South Morotai, Morotai on September 15, 1944 (Left). Map of the movement of Japanese occupation troops in Morotai during the Battle of Morotai, Pacific War, Part of World War II (Right). Coordinates: 2°19'0"N 128°32'0"E, 2.31667°N, 128.53333°E

When Baabullah was crowned Sultan of Ternate in 1570, he continued the war against the Portuguese that had been ignited by his predecessor, Khairun. He successfully won this war, resulting in the Portuguese being expelled from most of the Maluku Islands. The Jesuit mission in Moro, which received much support and ease during Khairun's time, began to decline during Baabullah's era. The priests began leaving the Moro kingdom for

Ternate, and in 1574, they left the Moluccas. At the turn of the last decade of the 16th century, Baabullah incorporated the Kingdom of Moro into the territory of Ternate's dominion. He sent a military expedition to Galela, then to Tolo (Tobelo), and to Morotai. Although Baabullah's forces encountered fierce resistance in Tolo, the center of the Jesuit Mission in the Moro Kingdom, the entire Moro region was eventually conquered by the Sultanate of Ternate.



Figure 3. The Allied troop supply fleet landed at Blue Beach (LSTs=Landing Supplies Troops at Blue Beach) in Morotai (Left). Allied troop transport ships landed on the shores of Blue Beach, Morotai (LSTs, landing supplies at Blue Beach, Morotai) (Right).

The existence of the Moro Kingdom came to an end. During the reign of Sultan Mudaffar (1610-1627), several Moro people from Mamuya, Samafo, Kioma, and Tolo were evacuated to Ternate. In 1628, Sultan Hamzah of Ternate decided to bring 800 Moro people to Ternate to strengthen his military forces. Meanwhile, in 1686, several Moro people from Morotai: Cio, Sopi, Sakita, and Mira were relocated to Jailolo and Dodinga (van Fraassen in Masinambow, [ed.] 1980: 91).

Morotai is one part of the former ancient Moro kingdom, which had its capital in Mamuya, North Halmahera. Referred to as Morotai (Moro of the sea) because its island is across the sea from Morotia (Moro of the land), separated by the island of Rao. In subsequent developments, Morotai, as part of the Moro kingdom, came under the rule of Ternate, along with other regions and small kingdoms in North Halmahera (Loloda, Tobelo, Galela). Morotai, located in the northern Maluku archipelago, is now one of the regencies in the North Maluku Province, named Morotai Island Regency. This new regency was formed in 2010, with its capital in Daruba, a town located on the southern coast of Morotai, known as the initial landing site of Japanese occupation forces and Allied troops. Before it was established as an independent regency, Morotai was part of North Halmahera Regency, which had its capital in Tobelo.



Figure 4. Galela's Tribes in Morotai Island.

Economic and Industrial Potential of Morotai. Geographically and geopolitically, Morotai Island is located right on the "lip" of the Pacific Ocean, which has very high global access and can become the Gateway to Eastern Indonesia (KTI) in the future. Morotai Island has its own historical dynamics until the end of the 17th century, which subsequently disappeared and re-emerged during the Greater East Asia War/Pacific War (1942-1945) in the 20th century. Morotai became a military base for both the Japanese and the Allies during that time. The strong reason Japan and the Allies chose Morotai Island as their military base was due to its strategic position considering its geographical, geomorphological, and geopolitical conditions. World economic experts state that the global economy will shift from the "Atlantic Era to the Pacific Era" (BAPPEDA-Pemprop. North Maluku, 2006).

Overview of the Location: Transportation to Morotai Island is quite difficult, as it requires crossing several bays. The journey to get there can be made through the Ahmad Yani Ternate major port. The journey from the major port of Ternate can be continued to the village of Sidangoli on Halmahera Island using a speedboat (fast motorboat) crossing Ternate Bay. The journey is then continued from the village of Sidangoli to the city of Tobelo using public transportation for four hours. From the city of Tobelo to the port to continue the journey to Morotai Island using a sea motorboat for approximately two hours. This sea journey ends at the Daruba Port in the South Morotai District.

The historical research conducted on Morotai Island is based on information indicating that the island contains remnants of war weaponry from both the Japanese army and the Allied forces (under the leadership of the United States) after World War II. On Morotai Island, there is an airport that was built by the Japanese occupation army but was later captured and used by

the Allied forces who opposed Japan. This airport is a military airport with facilities including seven runways in very good condition, which in the future can be developed and reopened as an International Airport to support and serve as the main connection to the Morotai industrial and trade area with other parts of the world.

Morotai is a small island located in North Halmahera, Maluku Islands. Its coordinates are 2°19'0" (N) 128°32'0" (E) / 2.316667° (N) 128.533333° (E). Most of the island's landscape is still covered by dense forests. The Doroeba Plain in the southwest of Morotai is the largest of several lowlands on the island. Before the war broke out, Morotai was inhabited by 9,000 residents and had not yet been commercially developed. This island was part of the Dutch East Indies and was governed by the Dutch through the Sultanate of Ternate. Japan occupied Morotai in early 1942 during the Dutch East Indies campaign, but did not station its troops in Morotai or develop it. In early 1944, Morotai emerged as an important area for the Japanese military as they began to develop the islands of Halmahera as a focal point to defend their southern approach to the Philippines (Smith, 1953:460). In May 1944, the 32nd Imperial Japanese Army Division arrived in Halmahera to defend the island and its nine airfields (Robert Ross Smith, 1953:460). This division had suffered heavy losses when the convoy bringing it from China (the Take Ichi convoy) was attacked by a US submarine (Willoughby [editor-in-chief], 1966: 273). Two battalions from the 32nd Infantry Regiment of the 211th Division were initially deployed to Morotai to develop an airstrip in the Doroeba Plain. However, these two battalions were withdrawn to Halmahera in mid-July when the airstrip was abandoned due to drainage issues (Willoughby [editor in chief]. 1966: 273). Allied codebreakers detected Japanese presence in Halmahera, which led to the weakening of Japanese defenses in Morotai. The Allies then forwarded this information to their relevant combat planning staff (Drea, 1992: 153).

In July 1944, General Douglas MacArthur, commander of the South West Pacific Area, chose Morotai as the location for the airbase and naval facilities needed to support the liberation of Mindanao, which was planned to take place on November 15. Because Morotai was still undeveloped, this island was preferred over Halmahera because the Halmahera region was too large and the island's position was deemed significantly too difficult to secure (Smith, 1953: 450–451). The occupation of Morotai was designated as Operation Tradewind (wind vortex). The landing was scheduled to take place on September 15, 1944, the same day as the landing of the 1st Marine Division at Peleliu. This schedule allowed the main divisions of the United States Pacific Fleet to simultaneously protect operations from potential Japanese counterattacks (Taafe, 1998: 218).

When the expected resistance from the enemy was minimal, Allied war planners decided to land the invasion forces near the airfield site at Doroeba Plains. Two beaches in the southwest of the island were chosen as suitable landing sites and designated as Red Beach and White Beach. The Allies planned to call upon the third infantry regiment of the 31st Division to land on these beaches on September 15 and immediately proceed inland to secure the territory. Due to the lack of military value in the Morotai landscape, the Allies

did not intend to advance facilities beyond the necessary limits to maintain the already constructed airfield (Smith, 1953: 475-477). The planning of airfield construction and other basic installations was also carried out before the landing, and the locations of temporary military facilities were chosen on September 15 (Office of the Chief Engineer, General Headquarters, Army Forces Pacific, 1951: 272).



Figure 5. The Allied Forces Commander, General Douglas MacArthur, with Admiral Daniel E. Barbey, also participated in the landing at Morotai, 15 September 1944. He established his headquarters on Sum-Sum Island, about one and a half miles from Daruba Beach.

The Japanese Army Enters Indonesia and Morotai Island in its effort to build an empire in Asia. Japan has unleashed a war in the Pacific. On December 8, 1941, Japan suddenly invaded Southeast Asia and bombed Pearl Harbor, the largest base of the United States Navy in the Pacific. Five hours after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies, Tjarda van Starkenborgh Stachouwer, declared war on Japan. In its southward movement, Japan also invaded Indonesia (Dutch East Indies). On January 11, their troops landed in Tarakan, East Kalimantan, and the next day the Dutch Commander on the island surrendered on January 12, 1942 (Office of the Chief Engineer, General Headquarters, Army Forces Pacific, 1951: 272; Poesponegoro & Notosusanto *Krijsgeschiedkundige Afdeling, Hoofdkwartier van de Chef van de Generale Staf, Ministerie van Oorlog*, 1954: 104-105). Not long after, on January 24, 1942, Balikpapan fell into the hands of the Japanese army. After successfully occupying Pontianak on January 29, 1942, the Japanese army followed up by occupying Samarinda on February 3, 1942. Upon reaching Kotabangun on February 5, 1942, the Japanese army continued its assault on Samarinda II airfield, which at that time was still under the control of the Dutch East Indies Army (KNIL=Koningklijke Nederlandsch Indisch Leger). With the capture of the airfield, the next day, Banjarmasin was easily occupied on February 10, 1942.

Geographically, the North Maluku region, which directly borders the Pacific region, made the position of Morotai Island very strategic from a political aspect during the Greater East Asia War or the Pacific War. This statement was issued based on the military-political strategy implemented by

Admiral Yamamoto, the commander of the Dai Nippon military forces in the Pacific region, assisted by a Minseifu (civilian government center in the naval occupation area in the Indonesian archipelago) or vise admiral of the navy (kaigun) based in Kao-Malifut, namely Lieutenant General Ishey (Djafaar, 2005: 57-58). From this position, Japan was able to control the course of the Pacific War. Initially, Kao consisted of six people, followed by one battalion (Tanggule, 2007: 26 & 53), who then built an airfield (which is now the location of the SP (settlement unit) 2 transmigration site in Pilowo Village, and consequently, the area has become rice fields). The second airport was built in South Morotai, now known as Dusun MTQ (Desa Darame), where a meeting hall, school building, and housing have been constructed. In Gotalamo Hamlet, the Japanese army consisted of one battalion, but due to weak defenses, they were forced to flee and hide in the forest. Gotalamo Hamlet was used by the Japanese as a base.

In this village, American and Allied forces also built an emergency airfield with a runway made of iron. In Morotai, the Japanese did not build defensive structures, such as buildings, forts, and the like. This is one of the methods used to protect themselves from Allied attacks. Another way is to dispose of their war equipment, such as various types of weapons and ammunition, ships, and aircraft, on the beach or bury them underground. The arrival of the Japanese in Morotai aimed to expand their sphere of influence and sought to dominate areas in the Pacific region (Lapian and Chaniago, 1988:2).

The People of Morotai and the Japanese Occupation Army

In implementing government policies, the Japanese military authorities adhered to three main principles: (1) Striving to gain popular support to win the Greater East Asia War and maintain public order both in Indonesia and in the Pacific region, (2) Utilizing as much of the existing government structure as possible, and (3) Laying the foundation so that the relevant regions could meet their own needs and become a food supply center in the Southern region (Tanggule, 2007:27). Japan intervened militarily down to the grassroots level by forming neighborhood groups as a means to disseminate orders or regulations from above, which significantly affected the daily lives of the people. Indeed, in the early days of the occupation, Japan did not find it difficult to gain the support and sympathy of the local people. The people welcomed the arrival of the Japanese with joy because they were seen as disrupting the Western colonial rulers (the Dutch) who had been entrenched in the archipelago for centuries, and also with the hope that their arrival would soon be followed by Indonesia's independence (Tanggule, 2007:29).

Geopolitically, North Maluku is directly adjacent to the Pacific Region. Its position is very strategic in the event of a sudden outbreak of the Greater East Asia War. This opinion emerged based on the analysis of a Japanese war strategist, Admiral Yamamoto, who was also the Commander of the Dai Nippon War in the Pacific, assisted by his naval units (kaigun) under a Minseifu or vise admiral (Lieutenant General Ishey), stationed in Kao-Malifut. From this position, Japan could control the course of the Pacific War. The Japanese version of the Military Province, with its capital in Kao-Malifut, also

includes the Maluku Islands, Irian Barat, Papua New Guinea, the Talaud Islands, and the Solomon Islands in the South Pacific (Djafaar, 2005: 57-58 & Tanggule, 2007: 31).

Meanwhile, the United States, with its Allied forces under the command of General Douglas MacArthur, took position on Morotai Island as an operation base and consolidation (command post) using the "leap frog strategy." MacArthur achieved success with this leapfrog strategy, meaning he did not attempt to capture every inch of land from Irian to Japan, but his troops advanced by "leaping" forward. Each leap covered a distance of about 300 km, corresponding to the flight range of the American Air Force's B-25 bombers.

The Allied Attack on the Japanese Occupation Forces in Morotai

On September 5, 1944, Allied forces landed in Morotai. Since dawn broke on the eastern horizon, the beaches around the landing sites in Daruba, Gotalamo, and Cape Dehegila were bombarded with cannon fire from warships until nine in the morning. The Allied forces were then landed along the coast, and the island of Morotai was practically under Allied control by that same day. Morotai Island was defended by the Japanese with only two battalions of soldiers, most of whom were Japanese nationals. After intercepting the Allied forces' landing with a brief battle, the Japanese troops retreated to the forests and mountains, and conducted guerrilla movements by attacking Allied military facilities (Amal & Djafaar, 2003: 144-145).

The landing in Morotai marked the beginning of preparations to attack the Philippines, and besides the Philippines, Sulawesi, East Kalimantan, East Java, and Nusa Tenggara were also not spared from the bombing raids of Allied planes based in Morotai. The choice of Morotai as the landing site for the Allies in North Maluku was based on the consideration that by making this island a military base for the Allies, it would also facilitate the United States in attacking and capturing the Philippines. The Allied forces that landed in Morotai consisted of two Australian divisions, namely the 7th Division and the 9th Division, as well as one American division, namely the 93rd Negro Division. Australia then made Morotai its headquarters.



Figure 6. Morotai Military Airport, built by Japanese troop, is an airport that was built by the Japanese occupation army but was later captured and used by the Allied forces who opposed Japan.

The Allied Forces Commander, General Douglas MacArthur, also participated in the landing at Morotai. He established his headquarters on Sum-Sum Island, about one and a half miles from Daruba Beach. Arthur himself did not stay long in Morotai, as his main task was to liberate the Philippines and conquer the Japanese Archipelago to quickly end the war (Amal & Djafaar, 2003: 144-145). When the Allies first landed in Morotai, they immediately built an airstrip measuring approximately 2 x 100 x 200 meters.

The floating airport was only used for three days. After that, the planes that had previously landed on the emergency runway had to be flown back to the emergency airfield on land, which was in the village of Gotalamo. After that, they dismantled the floating airstrip (pontoon) one by one and transformed it into a pontoon bridge with a length of 1 km and a width of 8 m, extending from the Indonesian Air Force (AURI) dock in front of the Danlanud's (air force base commander's) house to the Juanga village (now), which later became known as the Navy area. The workers built the bridge day and night. In no time, Allied ships were able to land on the floating bridge (pier). The emergency airstrip, which was initially used for only three days, was then abandoned and replaced with a new airstrip that had been built on land. The airport was built on land with a much larger size because it has 7, and some even say 14, runways. The construction of this airport was also carried out day and night, so it was completed and ready for use in such a short time.

Before the troops landed with their landing ships, they had already deployed armored tanks (bulletproof), and amphibious tanks of the "sea camel" and "land camel" types. The people of Morotai named these war vehicles "big camels from the sea," of which there were hundreds. They fired along the route that would be taken. Armored tanks (bulletproof) landed with hundreds of troops fully equipped with weapons and ready to fight. The landing ships, fully prepared for war, have already landed on Morotai Island, with preparations made by the Allies 10 to even 15 years earlier. The Allied forces, equipped with complete weaponry and military facilities, were stationed on Sum-Sum Island. According to popular opinion, the area of the Allied headquarters, including their military administration office, measured approximately 10 x 20 meters, with the building's walls extending deep into the ground. The office became General Mac Arthur's command center in Morotai (Amal & Djafaar. 2003: 39). The occupation of Morotai by the Allies had very strategic significance. Since then, the positions of Japanese troops in Central and Northern Halmahera were almost constantly subjected to airstrikes and gunfire from Allied warships. Almost all Japanese military facilities, such as airfields that used to always respond to enemy attacks, are now silent and no longer heard because they have been destroyed by the Allies (Amal & Djafaar. 2003: 146-147).

This is known as stated by the informant:

"After the fall of Morotai to the Allies, the island was found to be occupied by Allied troops and tens of thousands of refugees from various regions in Central, East, and North Halmahera. The refugees crossed to Morotai to save themselves and were accommodated on small islands off the coast of Daruba and in several residential areas, such as Sabatai, Daeo, and its surroundings". Two years after

the war ended, the refugees finally returned to their hometowns... (Tanggule, 2007: 40).

Japanese Occupation and the Socio-Economic Conditions of the People in Morotai The people were forced by the Japanese to work hard for ten hours a day without enough food, which caused them to suffer from various types of diseases, especially kwashiorkor, and to be involved in various accidents due to minimal work protection. The cholera outbreak spread and claimed many victims among the forced laborers, with many also dying because they could not escape during Allied air raids. The people who were previously forced to work are now ordered to evacuate to the forests and mountains along with the other Japanese troops. Upon reaching the forests and mountains, the people are forcibly ordered to dig protective trenches to save themselves from Allied air raids. The danger of famine and disease outbreaks began to spread. As could be predicted, casualties began to fall. When the war ended, the people of Morotai were left with only half of their original number before the war broke out (Amal & Djafaar. 2003: 144-145).

The exploitation of human labor during the Japanese occupation was carried out against all segments of Indonesian society, from the educated to the illiterate. Everyone was mobilized for the war effort. The group that suffered the most during the Japanese occupation was the romusha. Because most of the romusha people came from farming backgrounds, the economic growth of the villages declined further, accompanied by increasing poverty. An economic crisis occurred in the countryside, resulting in the suffering, misery, and poverty of the people. All economic activities were aimed at helping the Japanese Armed Forces win the Greater East Asia War or the Pacific War during World War II. An informant said:

“As a result of the economic exploitation carried out by the Japanese occupation government, the livelihood of the local people became dire. All income was used for the war effort. The people's wealth was completely drained. Finally, poverty spread and hunger broke out in the Morotai community” (Tanggule, 2007: 42).

Farmers and laborers bear a heavy economic burden where the people are forced to work hard and are not paid at all, sometimes given insufficient food, and their health is not guaranteed at all. Many died due to illness, hunger, and being tortured by the Japanese soldiers. The farmers were not spared from extortion; most of their harvest had to be handed over to the Japanese, and they were often forced to surrender everything. Even if there was payment, it was at a very low price. As a result of the extortions carried out by the Japanese military occupation government, it can be said that the suffering of the local people's lives became increasingly dire and lamentable from an economic standpoint. All income was used for the war effort. The wealth of the people was completely drained, resulting in famine in the Morotai community (Tanggule, 2007: 42).

Intellectual life was also restricted in terms of freedom and space to move. The intellectuals were merely used to keep the wheels of daily governance turning in order to assist the Japanese. Most of this group were killed by the Japanese because they were considered spies for the Dutch Government. When the concentration of Japanese troops was not yet high, food production such as rice, sago, and corn was quite abundant. The people did not experience much difficulty in obtaining food. But with the halt of trade with Java Island, food and clothing shortages began to be felt. In relation to clothing, various types of fabric have disappeared from the market and cannot be sold anymore. In various places in Halmahera, the people can no longer find wearable clothing. Many people in Morotai, especially women, can only wear woven sacks and tanned tree fronds as substitutes for sarongs, while men tan the bark of the melinjo tree to make pants and other clothing.

The People of Morotai on the Eve of Independence Shortly after Japan's surrender, the Allied headquarters in Morotai issued an order for the disarmament of Japanese troops. They had to destroy all their military equipment themselves, and unarmed, all Japanese troops in North Maluku, including the Heihos, gathered in Kao, waiting for the ship that would return them to their homeland. Morotai, which was previously just a district, was elevated to the status of HPB (*Hoofd van Plaatselijk Bestuur* = the highest local government) while the Allies were still there. This self-governing status was then elevated to *afdeeling* (sub-district) and became one of the regions under the Residency of North Maluku (Tanggule, 2007: 42).

During the relatively short period of Japanese occupation, the Indonesian nation under the leadership of Sukarno and Muhammad Hatta succeeded in convincing the Japanese occupation government about Indonesia's independence aspirations. To achieve these goals and ideals, this nation was willing to cooperate as long as Japan could understand and appreciate it. Because all of Japan's concentration and thoughts were focused on the effort to win the war, the approach of Indonesian leaders regarding the independence aspiration was met with indifference by Japan. But when Japan began to experience military setbacks on almost all battlefronts, on September 7, 1944, the Japanese Prime Minister, Koiso, made a promise of independence to the Indonesian nation. When this promise would be fulfilled was never determined by him (M.C. Ricklefs, 2004: 310).

With the increasingly deteriorating position of the Japanese military, their military government in Indonesia had to give meaning to the independence promise made by PM Koiso. Japan realized that at some point in the future, they would lose their power in the Archipelago. Therefore, on March 1, 1945, the Japanese announced the establishment of the Investigating Committee for Preparatory Work for Indonesian Independence (BPUPKI), or *dokuritzu tsyumbi cyosakai* (Poesponegoro & Notosusanto. 1993: 67 in Tanggule. 2007: 47).

With the two bombs dropped by the United States on August 8 and 9, 1945, in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Japanese military government capitulated. A few days later, the world heard the announcement from

President Truman (USA) and PM Attlee (UK) that Japan had surrendered unconditionally. This was then reinforced by a Tokyo radio broadcast and Emperor Hirohito's speech, stating that Japan was ending its resistance. This decision was also communicated to the Japanese military commanders in the southern regions, including Indonesia. The Indonesian people successfully took advantage of the event of Japan's defeat. The proclamation news was announced and gradually spread to various corners of the homeland (Lapian & Chaniago, 1988: 127).

The news of Indonesia's independence proclamation also reached the residents of other areas outside Java, including, for example, North Maluku, including Morotai. They learned about the proclamation of Indonesia's independence a few days after it was announced, due to the presence of communication facilities and Allied military radios. In Galela, the proclamation news was known to the people because of information from the Japanese military, as well as the return of refugees from Morotai to their hometowns. The Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI) broadcast began to be heard, and the people diligently followed it. Even the radio broadcast containing Bung Tomo's speech could be received by the people of Ternate and Morotai after some technical manipulations to deceive the Japanese military (Amal & Djafaar, 2003: 164-165). At the time of the announcement of the Proclamation of Independence on August 17, 1945, one of the independence fighters in Morotai, Haji Ahmad Syukur, frequently urged the people to always shout the independence slogan "once free, forever free". Whenever and wherever meetings were held, the people would collectively shout the independence slogan at that place and time, until Haji Ahmad Syukur was arrested and imprisoned, where he eventually died in custody. Several young people who accompanied his struggle in detention included Daeo youths, such as Ibrahim Ismail, Jafar Pawane, Anwar Gorahe, and Taher Rowo. With all his courage, he always fought against the brutality of the NICA-Dutch soldiers who were riding on the coattails of the Allies at that time.

At the time of the proclamation of the independence of the Republic of Indonesia, H. Ahmad Syukur, as one of the independence fighters, was proficient in English, as evidenced by his ability to create announcements and pamphlets in English while attaching red and white symbols and flags to moving cars and to the bodies of planes landing at the airport. H. Ahmad Syukur asked the airplane pilots to spread the news of the proclamation of independence throughout the country, so that everyone would know that Indonesia was already independent.

In the situation of preparing for independence at that time, the two great leaders of the Indonesian nation, Soekarno (Bung Karno) and Muhammad Hatta (Bung Hatta), were invited by the Japanese army commander in Saigon, Vietnam, which subsequently led to the emergence of the Jakarta-Morotai, Hawaii, Vietnam, and Honolulu route. A historical witness from Morotai said that Bung Karno himself once said, "The eyes of the world are always directed toward you, my nation, and this is Morotai on the edge of the Pacific, the

boundary of this country and the boundary of the outside world" (Tanggule, 2007: 49).

The Situation After the Battle and Japan's Response Japan realized that its position and strength were increasingly threatened in the Philippines, where the Allies had successfully built and were using an airbase in Morotai. In an effort to disrupt the Allies' military airfield construction program, Japanese army commanders in Halmahera sent a large number of reinforcements to Morotai no later than between September and November. The troops sent consisted of three units: an assault detachment, the third battalion of the 210th Infantry Regiment, and the main body of the 211th Infantry Regiment (Willoughby [editor in chief], 1966: 350). The commander of the 211th Infantry Regiment, Colonel Kisou Ouchi, assumed that the command of the Japanese reinforcement forces was expected to arrive in Morotai on October 12 (33rd Infantry Division Historical Committee, 1948: 68).

Blockade efforts were immediately undertaken by Japan, but they were detected by Allied radar codebreakers (Drea, 1992: 153), and Allied ships managed to destroy a large number of troop and logistics barges used by Japan from Halmahera to Morotai. However, the Allies were temporarily unable to completely halt Japanese forces (33rd Infantry Division Historical Committee, 1948: 68).

On the next occasion, Japan failed to launch a counterattack. Meanwhile, the Japanese 2nd Assault Unit was attacked on several occasions by forces from the US defense line. The deployment of Japanese reinforcements was unable to repel the larger attacks, let alone thwart the Allies' military airfield development programs. This was caused by an outbreak of disease and a lack of food supplies, medicine, and troop reinforcements that could not be rescued from the United States naval blockade. Japanese troops were withdrawn to the central region of Morotai, where many died from disease and starvation (Hayashi, 1959: 120-121 & Willoughby, 1966: 350-352). The supply of Japanese logistic support barges from Halmahera only arrived in Morotai on May 12, 1945 (Bulkley, 2003: 442).

At the end of December 1944, the US Infantry Division from the 136th Infantry Regiment had departed for Morotai from Papua New Guinea to attack the Japanese 211th Infantry Regiment in the western part of the island. The American regiment moved into Japanese-occupied territory on December 26, with the main objectives being the Japanese positions in the southwest and north, after landing on the western coast of the island. The 36th US Infantry Regiment was supported by the 130th Infantry Regiment battalion with a rapid land movement from the Daruba mainland, while artillery units were stationed on islands off the coast of Morotai with a thousand native porters (33rd Infantry Division Historical Committee, 1948: 68-77). The 3rd Battalion of the 167th Infantry Regiment was also deployed in this operation, and they undertook a difficult long march from the southern coast of Morotai to the inland areas to prevent Japanese forces from dispersing into small groups in the mountainous regions of the island (31st Infantry Division, 1993, [reprint]: 101).

By January 1945, the US armed forces determined that there were two battalions of the Japanese 211th Regiment in the Hill 40 area, about 40 miles north of the Allied defense line. The attack on this position began on January 3 when the 136th Infantry Regiment's first and second battalions advanced from the southwest and faced fierce resistance. The regiment used a large amount of ammunition in this attack and utilized the resupply/reverse flow antennas needed for their replenishment supplies. During this period, the 3rd Battalion of the 136th Regiment, advancing from the north toward Hill 40, succeeded in destroying the 3rd Battalion of the 211th Regiment in a series of battles. This Japanese battalion had positioned itself on the beach to receive supply aid from Halmahera and from several mountainous areas of Morotai but was unsuccessful in attacking the US Coast Guard battalions after its landing in December (33rd Infantry Division Historical Committee, 1948: 74-81).

The 36th Infantry Regiment completed its assault on Hill 40 on January 5. The first and second regiments of the battalion expanded to the west and southwest, and the Allied battalion from the north encountered little resistance. The first and second battalions continued their assault into the northern region to ambush the remnants of Japanese forces until January 14, by which time the regiment claimed to have killed 870 Japanese soldiers and captured at least ten out of 46 killed and 127 others wounded and injured (33rd Infantry Division Historical Committee, 1948: 80-83). The 3rd Battalion, 167th Infantry Regiment, was linked with the 136th Infantry Regiment on January 7 after taking over the main Japanese radio station on the island on January 4 (31st Infantry Division, 1993 [reprint]: 102). In mid-January, the 136th Regiment had withdrawn its troops to subsequently cooperate with the 33rd Division while rejoining the Allied defensive line, which then held a military parade along the coastline of Morotai Island as a landing route for Allied forces, who would subsequently continue their journey to Luzon Island in the Philippines (33rd Infantry Division Historical Committee, 1948: 85-87).

The Aftermath Battle, Air Strikes, and the Allies' Final Resolution

The Subsequent Battles, Air Strikes, and the Allies' Final Resolution. The 7th Japanese Air Division continued its assault on Morotai in the months following the Allies' landing. The air force division conducted 82 attacks on Morotai, along with 179 surprise attacks. The air force was deployed in air strikes from Seram and Sulawesi and landed at the Halmahera military airfield before storming Morotai. Meanwhile, out of the 54 attacks carried out by Japan, none of their fighter planes were damaged. Japan destroyed 42 fighter planes and damaged 33 others, and in addition, there were several accidents that resulted in 19 deaths and 99 injuries. Generally, the night attacks were successful from November 22 when 15 Allied aircraft were destroyed and eight others were damaged. Regular Japanese air raids ended in January 1945, although there were plans for a final night attack on March 22. The US Air Force for nighttime combat achieved success, but it was limited to attacks that could normally be detected within a short period before they entered the defense zone and anti-aircraft weaponry (Craven & Cate [editors], 1953: 315-316).

In the official historical records of the US Army Air Forces (USAAF), it is stated that Morotai “may have been the toughest battlefield ever experienced by US forces operating at night during World War II” (McFarland, 1998: 37). The number of Allied patrol boats (PT=Patrol Boat) in Morotai was reduced to just a single squadron in February 1945 but remained active until the end of World War II. Similar to the patrol duties around Morotai, the Allied patrol boats (PT) were operated in the eastern NEI (Nederland East India=Dutch East Indies) to attack Japanese positions while also supporting Australian forces and Dutch cruiser units. In May 1945, they were also deployed to secure the Sultan of Ternate, his wife and children, and all members of his royal council (Morison, 2002 [1958]: 28–29).

At the end of the war, the Allied patrol boats had conducted at least 1300 patrols and destroyed 50 barges and 150 small warships that were no longer operational, which had previously operated in both Morotai and Halmahera (Bulkley, 2003: 373). The remaining 31st Division was still in Morotai until April 12, 1945 (Stanton, 1984). The 93rd Division was a division with separate units consisting of African-American (Negro) troops, primarily used for security and guard duties at the port during the war (Bielakowski, 2007: 19). For Morotai, a separate division was established with patrols moving intensively to destroy the remaining Japanese forces on the island. At that time, the remaining Japanese forces in Morotai were stationed along the western coast of the island, and generally, they remained there near the plantations of the local indigenous population.

Patrols of Allied forces from the 93rd Division landed along the western and northern coasts of Morotai Island from April onward, and small skirmishes continued to occur everywhere against the increasingly weakened Japanese troops. One of the main objectives of the Allied division was to capture Colonel Ouchi, and this was certainly a remarkable achievement for a patrol from the 25th Infantry Regiment division deployed on August 2. Ouchi was the highest commander of the Japanese occupation forces in Morotai who was successfully captured by the Allies before the war ended (Lee, 1966: 525–527).

The Aftermath of the Battle: The Surrender of the Japanese Occupation Army Commander

Morotai remained an important base for Allied military defense after Leyte was secured. Allied fighter planes from the 13th Air Force and the Royal Australian Air Force's First Tactical Air Force (notably from RAAF's operational group number 10) were based in Morotai and attacked targets in the NEI and southern Philippines until the end of the war. Since April 1945, Australia also made the island a base for the Australian I Corps to launch attacks and conduct war campaigns in the mountainous regions of Borneo (Morison, 2002 [1958]: 25). The development of a base for the procurement of Australian war machine technology facilities was also carried out in Morotai to support the operation. Their arrival in Morotai created a very crowded situation in the Allied camps here, with some Australian army camps having to be located outside the American forces' defensive line (Stanley, 1997:48).



Figure 7. A Japanese volunteer soldier named Teruo Nakamura was confirmed by Japan to have escaped from the Japanese units that surrendered in Morotai without a trace. However, at the end of 1974, Nakamura was successfully captured and secured by the Indonesian Air Force (AURI) (Time, 13 January 1970).

Morotai was the setting for a number of surrender ceremonies, including the unconditional surrender of Japan to the Allies. About 660 Japanese soldiers in Morotai capitulated to the Allied Forces after August 15 (Lee, 1966: 528). The 93rd Allied Division also received the unconditional surrender of 40,000 Japanese troops in Halmahera on August 26 after the commander of the Japanese occupation forces was brought to Morotai aboard a U.S. Navy patrol boat (Bulkley, 2003:442). On September 9, 1945, General Thomas Blamey of Australia accepted the surrender of the second group of Japanese occupation troops in a military ceremony held at the sports field of the Allied Forces' I Corps in Morotai (Long, 1963: 553).

A Japanese volunteer soldier named Teruo Nakamura was confirmed by Japan to have escaped from the Japanese units that surrendered in Morotai without a trace. However, at the end of 1974, Nakamura was successfully captured and secured by the Indonesian Air Force (AURI) (Time, 13 January 1970). Morotai now remained an important Allied base in the months after the war. The headquarters of the Australian armed forces felt responsible for the occupation of the island, and the Dutch military administration (NICA) in the eastern NEI region was headquartered in Morotai until January 1946 when the Dutch colonial government was reestablished (Hasluck, 1970: 602-607). The island was also one of the many locations where the Australian military captured Japanese personnel attempting to commit a series of war crimes (National Archives of Australia, 2003).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Morotai is a battleground island in the modern military history of the 20th century that is forgotten in SNI. Marshall Sahlins mentioned the concept of "Island History and Historical Islands" in addition to "Neglected Island History". This concept, according to the author, is also very suitable for the case of Morotai's history. One more thing that our nation should ponder is that logically there would be no colonization in the archipelago of Nusantara, which was previously said to have lasted for 350 years (before G.J. Resink wrote his book, "Not 350 Years of Colonization," in the review of international legal history), without the existence of the sea area and the Maluku islands, with their spices (cloves, nutmeg, mace) that once became the arena for the struggle for hegemony and monopoly of the West, which caused small and large wars among the European foreign nations themselves (Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, English).

The Dutch East India Company, VOC (Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie), was first established in the Maluku Islands in 1602, and for North Maluku, specifically in Ternate, it was established in 1607. Before the VOC headquarters moved to Batavia, it was previously located in Ternate (1607-1619). Moreover, in the 20th century (1944-1945), Morotai emerged as a battleground for two world military powers (Japan and the Allies) in their quest to dominate the Philippines and the Asia-Pacific region. Morotai is the island where a series of significant modern battles took place in the mid-20th century, during the Pacific War as part of World War II (1939-1945), where several ceremonies of the unconditional surrender of Japanese troops to the Allies under the leadership of the United States also occurred. Morotai is one of the islands on the Pacific rim that determined the end of World War II and shaped the future of lasting world peace. Unfortunately, Morotai Island is still neglected in Indonesian national history books and other historical reading materials/lessons, both local and national.

There is no Indonesian national history without the maritime region and the Maluku archipelago, especially in the northern part (North Maluku), as producers of spice commodities. Moreover, there would be no end to World War II without the defeat and unconditional surrender of the Japanese occupation army to the Allies in Morotai. Morotai is an island on the "Pacific rim" that actually played a significant role in the development of Indonesia's physical revolution struggle for independence, which simultaneously determined the future of everlasting world peace without war after World War II.

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