

Terror In A Java Jungle: By A Man

"Cease-Fire" | Who Survived An Atrocity
ONE OF THE GRIMMEST ESCAPE STORIES EVER TOLD

One of the most grimly fantastic one-man adventures of the Java campaign has been revealed. It concerns three Englishmen—Captain J. Mockler, a medical officer, Mr. Treveroe, former British internee, and the narrator, Captain J. W. Smith, R.A.—who were on an errand of mercy to inspect hospitals and stores at Benkolen, Java. Two of the three were killed by natives; Captain Smith survived, with ten wounds, after a terrible ordeal. Here is his dramatic story:

By Captain J. W. SMITH, R.A.,
as told to

LADY LOUIS MOUNTBATTEN,
Superintendent-in-Chief of St. John Ambulance

We ran into a large road block, with about 100 natives gathered round it.

I pulled up and Mr. Treveroe stepped out to talk to the natives. Captain Mockler opened his door and left the car. Then he turned back, presumably to pick up cigarettes. The first indication I had that anything was wrong was when the doctor suddenly yelled, "Oh, gee."

I saw him turn away from the car. A spear was stuck in his back! As I grabbed my gun I felt a searing pain. A knife had cut my thumb to the bone. I dropped my gun. I fought my way through the spears and left the car by the nearside door.

A. I left the car the doctor went down—the natives still stabbing him. He was dead. I fought my way round to the front of the car, where Treveroe was making a gallant stand. By the time I reached him he, too, lay dead.

HIS HEAD A TARGET

I was completely ringed with spears. I decided to make a breakaway. It was ironical. I was close to the natives, but their bristling spears and knives were so densely packed they were useless. Desperation gave me strength. I hit out where I could and, in the screaming confusion, managed to break through the ring and dash in among the native houses.

Ahead of me was the sea—my sanctuary. I splashed into it for about 70 yards, until the water came up to my chin. The water swayed me—comfortingly. The natives gathered menacingly on the shore and little fountains plopped around me as bullets spouted into the water. The natives were using my head as a target for my gun.

ARMS BOUND

For ten hectic minutes I remained there—undecided whether to swim to Benkolen or return in case the doctor was still alive. By now the natives seemed calmer; I risked coming out of the sea.

I was immediately seized. My arms were bound and I was stripped of all personal goods; led up the road to where the fighting had broken out. The bodies of Captain Mockler and Mr. Treveroe lay huddled, naked. Once more I was ringed by

threatening groups. Excited chattering subsided to a hush as the leader slowly advanced. With his ugly face an inch or so from mine, he suddenly shouted, "Nica," (Netherlands Indies Civil Administration). This was a sign for the rest to howl in chorus.

A car approached from the direction of Benkolen. A native, who seemed to have some authority, approached me.

SWORDSMAN THWARTED

I asked him to free my hands and take me back to Benkolen to the so-called Indonesian Resident-Tjaija. He gave no reply, but walked on to where the leader of the gang was standing.

He pointed to the bodies and then to me, then came back. I again asked him to release me. His reply was to point to the bodies and say: "This must be kept quiet." I answered: "You are a bigger fool than you look." He went.

"The gang then led me back to the beach, and the remainder of the rope tying my hands, 20ft. long, was wrapped several times round me to ensure that I was securely bound. Luckily they only bound the upper part of my body, and by straining against the rope, I managed to keep it reasonably slack.

"To my horror others began to dig a hole. It was to be my grave. Then a native tightened his grip on a vicious-looking sword and walked stealthily towards me.

DASHED INTO SEA

"For the second time within an hour it was a case of now or never. So I bowled the native holding the rope into the nearest spearmen, and dashed into the sea. This time I did not hesitate, but, shed of rope and clothes, started swimming to Benkolen, two miles away.

"Almost half-way I noticed an outrigger coming in my direction. I swam under water for as long as possible three times, and the last time I surfaced I came up under the bows of a second boat, of whose approach I was unaware.

"In it were two Indonesian policemen who invited me on board. I was dubious of their intentions and insisted on hanging on to the outrigger only. They seemed harmless on closer inspection, and eventually I climbed on to the stern of the boat. They invited me to the middle, but I refused. I insisted they should take me to Benkolen, which they agreed to. I was handed over to the Indonesian Commissioner of Police. I was found to have ten wounds. They dressed them and made me comfortable."