



## BETWEEN STATE DUTY AND PEACE MISSION: THE OTHER SIDE AND EXPERIENCE OF INDONESIAN PEACEKEEPING FORCES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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### ABSTRACT

*Further research has been conducted on the role of the Indonesian National Armed Forces and Indonesian militias following the declaration of independence on August 17, 1945, and during the revolutionary period from 1945 to 1949. However, after decolonization in the 1950s, military history, including the lives of its members and their personal lives, received less emphasis in historical narratives. Addressing this issue, this research focuses on efforts to reconstruct the experiences of peacekeeping veterans who served in safeguarding the border between Egypt and Israel after the Yom Kippur War in the 1970s. This research's primary sources are peacekeeping veterans currently affiliated with the Indonesian Veterans Legion branch in Jambi City. In reconstructing the experiences of these peacekeeping veterans, this study employs historical methods as the main framework, alongside oral history and private collection documents as the primary sources. The results of the research indicate that although they faced uncertain situations, far from their families, and prepared to confront enemies, there was indeed another side to their experiences, such as meeting colleagues from other countries, language barriers, and other "normal" activities that they were still able to carry out during their service.*

**Keywords:** *state duty, peace mission, daily experiences, peacekeeping soldiers, Indonesia, Middle East.*

## INTRODUCTION

The conflict between Egypt and Israel has been felt since the war between the countries of the Arabian Peninsula and Israel in 1948. In this war, Israel sought to establish a Jewish state within the area of Palestine.<sup>1</sup> The actions taken by Israel this are rejected by most Arab countries, resulting in the occurrence of war.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, Israel managed to win the war due to the disunity among the Arab states, each of which had its interests in the conflict. Israel's victory in this war resulted in Egypt losing territory around the Gaza Strip.<sup>3</sup>

The confrontation between Egypt and Israel was further a problem at the Suez Canal in 1956.<sup>4</sup> Previously, the Suez Canal was managed and controlled by France and England. After their departure, Egypt, under President Gamal Abdel Nasser, subsequently nationalized the canal, which angered both countries. England and France, along with Israel, attempted to seize the Sinai Peninsula.<sup>5</sup> The tension then continued with the Six-Day War in 1967. This war occurred because Egypt prohibited Israeli ships from passing through the Strait of Tiran. The war then lasted for six days, and Israel subsequently occupied the Sinai Peninsula and other areas. This led to Egypt losing control of the Sinai Peninsula.<sup>6</sup> The next was the Yom Kippur War from October 6 to 26, 1973, which began with attacks by Egypt and Syria on Israel. This attack aimed to reclaim the Sinai Peninsula.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Avi Shalim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), pp. 52-54; Hitman Gadi, *Israel and Its Arab Minority 1948-2008: Dialogue, Protest, Violence*. (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2016); As'ad Gharen, *The Palestinian Arab Minority in Israel 1948-2000: A Political Study* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2001); Ilan Pappé, *Britain and the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1948-1951* (Oxford: Macmillan Press, 1993); Alex Woolf, *Living Through The Arab-Israeli War Since 1948* (London: Raintreepublishers, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> Rashid Khalidi, *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood* (Beacon Press, 2006) pp. 47-49; Israel Oron, 'Wars and Suicides in Israel, 1948-2006', *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 9.5 (2012), pp. 1927-38, doi:10.3390/ijerph9051927; Havatzelet Yahel and Ruth Kark, 'Israel Negev Bedouin during the 1948 War: Departure and Return', *Israel Affairs*, 21.1 (2015), pp. 48-97, doi:10.1080/13537121.2014.984421; Meir Zamir, 'The Role of MI6 in Egypt's Decision to Go to War against Israel in May 1948', *Intelligence and National Security*, 34.6 (2019), pp. 775-99, doi:10.1080/02684527.2019.1616389; Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, 'The United States and Israel since 1948: A "Special Relationship"?'', *Diplomatic History*, 22.2 (1998), pp. 231-62, doi:10.1111/1467-7709.00115; Kirsten E. Schulze, 'The Arab-Israeli Conflict, Second Edition', *The Arab-Israeli Conflict, Second Edition*, 2013, pp. 1-177, doi:10.4324/9781315835747.

<sup>3</sup> Benny Morris, *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood* (Yale University Press, 2008), pp. 45-47

<sup>4</sup> The Suez Canal is a very important waterway for world trade routes, connecting the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea. The canal became valuable for England and France after World War II, as it connected their colonial territories and provided access to oil in the Middle East. see more, Anonim, 'What Is The Suez Crisis?', *Imperial War Museums*.

<sup>5</sup> Keith Kyle, *Suez: Britain's End of Empire in the Middle East* (I.B. Tauris, 2011), pp. 57-60

<sup>6</sup> Michael B. Oren, *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Oxford University Press, 2022), pp. 15-18

<sup>7</sup> Chaim Herzog & Shlomo Gazit, *The Arab-Israeli Wars: War and Peace in the Middle East* (Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2005), pp. 271-274; Anonim, 'Perundingan Mesir- Israel Alami Jalan Buntu', *Harian Abadi*, 15 November 1973; Anonim, 'Langkah Mesir 10 Tahun Yang Lalu', *Bali*

The frequent confrontations between Egypt and Israel led the United Nations (UN) Security Council to intervene through the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) II after the event of the Yom Kippur War.<sup>8</sup> The formation of UNEF II involves many countries working together to maintain world peace, including in the Middle East region. In the midst of the conflict in the Middle East, Indonesia has taken on a role by sending the Garuda VI and Garuda VIII Contingents to the Middle East with a mission to maintain world peace. This also aligns with Indonesia's ideals as stated in the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution., *ikut melaksanakan ketertiban dunia*.<sup>9</sup>

The Garuda VI contingent was deployed in April 1973, with a total of 466 military personnel tasked with monitoring the ceasefire between Egypt and Israel following the Yom Kippur War. This force conducted patrols and surveillance and was positioned between the two countries. They were stationed along the border line between Israel and Egypt, in the Sinai Peninsula. The deployment of this force was also expected to help prevent further clashes between Israel and Egypt. The Garuda VI contingent served from 1973 to 1974.<sup>10</sup> Subsequently, the Garuda Contingent VIII was dispatched again from 1974 to 1979 at the request of the UN. This troop deployment was still stationed in the Zoan Buffer area in the Sinai Desert to alleviate the conflict between Israel and Egypt.<sup>11</sup> The task of the Garuda Contingent VIII remains the same as the previous Garuda Contingent VI, which is to maintain peace and monitor the two conflicting countries.<sup>12</sup>

In the historiography of Indonesia's military history, few narratives recount the daily experiences of soldiers outside their military duties. Indonesian military history generally views soldiers as a unified institution tasked with specific missions. Similarly, the writing of the history of the Indonesian peacekeeping forces in international missions has been studied by Martani, W. R., Sumertha, I. G., & Hidayat, E. R. (2020) in *Peran Standby Force Pusat Misi Pemeliharaan Perdamaian Tentara Nasional Indonesia (PMPP TNI) dalam Mempersiapkan Pasukan pada Misi Pemeliharaan Perdamaian*, Firohmatillah, Z. P., & Sudirman, A. (2019). *Peran Korps Wanita TNI sebagai Pasukan Pemeliharaan Perdamaian PBB dalam Humanitarian Assistance di Lebanon*, Maulana, H. (2018). *Peran Pasukan*

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*Post*, 28 November 1988; Anonim, 'Dengan Gencatan Senjata Mesir Menang Politis', *Harian Abadi*, 24 October 1973.

<sup>8</sup> Anonim, 'Middle East - UNEF I: Background', *United Nations*; Michael Harbottle, 'UNEF II—A Step Forward in Peacekeeping', *RUSI Journal*, 119.3 (1974), pp. 18–22, doi:10.1080/03071847409430979.

<sup>9</sup> *Undang-Undang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia (1945)*.

<sup>10</sup> Pia Christina Wood David S. Sorenson, *The Politics of Peacekeeping in the Post-Cold War Era* (London: Frank Cass, 2005), p. 154; Anonim, 'Perang Ke- 5 Mesir-Israel Bisa Meletus', *Harian Abadi*, 8 December 1973; Anonim, 'Dubes Mesir Ali Shawky El Hudidy, Perang Sekarang Perang Pembebasan Seluruh Negara Arab Telah Bersatu', *Harian Abadi*, 10 October 1973; Anonim, 'Mesir Kini Berkemampuan Untuk Menyerang Lagi', *Harian Abadi*, 7 November 1973; Anonim, 'Pertempuran Sengit Berkecamuk Di Sinai & Golan', *Harian Abadi*, 9 October 1973.

<sup>11</sup> Dani Gaida Tera Elgar, 'DASAR-DASAR HUKUM TENTARA NASIONAL INDONESIA IKUT SEBAGAI PASUKAN PENJAGA PERDAMAIAN DUNIA MENURUT HUKUM INTERNASIONAL DAN HUKUM NASIONAL' (Universitas 17 Agustus 1945, 2020)., pp. 133-134

<sup>12</sup> R. M. Sunardi, *ABRI Dan PBB* (Dephan RI, 1995)., p. 72

Perdamaian Indonesia Dalam Misi Keamanan Di Lebanon 2006-2012, and FADHILAH, M. S. (2023). Peran Pasukan Garuda dalam Keikutsertaan Menjaga Perdamaian Dunia di Timur Tengah Tahun 1957-2009. In other words, very few express the daily experiences of peacekeeping soldiers while on duty, such as the processes of adaptation, culture shock, language limitations, and their daily activities and social interactions with foreign troops. The daily experiences of soldiers who are on duty in peacekeeping missions are important to be revealed to provide an alternative narrative of military history with a more humanistic approach.

Starting from the issues of historiography in Indonesia's military history mentioned above, this research aims to present the experiences and daily realities of peacekeeping troops by exploring the memories of the veteran peacekeepers of the Garuda contingent who served in the Middle East in the 1970s within the Indonesian Veterans Legion (LVRI) of Jambi Province. The main question in this research is how the veterans perceive and reinterpret their experiences in peacekeeping missions amidst the conflicts in the Middle East during the 1970s. To this day, several peacekeeping veterans are still active in the environment of LVRI Kota Jambi, whose memories are very valuable for reconstructing the history of the Garuda contingent's peacekeeping mission in the Middle East. Exploring their experiences provides an illustration of the interaction between Jambi and the international community.

## **METODE**

In an effort to reconstruct military history based on the everyday experiences of peacekeeping soldiers, this research utilizes historical methods as its primary framework. The historical method itself consists of a systematic set of efforts to reconstruct the past, including heuristics, criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The heuristic aspects of this research emphasize the excavation of memories from peacekeeping veterans in the LVRI environment of Jambi City. Considering that memory is essential in reconstructing peacekeeping soldiers' experiences, we selected sources who still have strong recollections within the LVRI environment of Jambi City. The sources include Mulyadi, Sudirman, Siswan Affandi, Syamsurizal, Tabi'in, and Mulia Sihombing, who were part of the Garuda Contingent VI, operating from 1973 to 1974 (Moelyadi), and the Garuda Contingent VIII, who carried out their mission from 1974 to 1979 (Syamsurizal, Tabi'in, Mulia Sihombing, and Sudirman) in Egypt. In addition to memories gathered through oral history, this research utilizes personal archives consisting of diaries, newspapers, personal letters, certificates, and photos of the peacekeeping veterans during their service.

The next step is source criticism. The purpose of source criticism is to investigate and obtain the authenticity and credibility of the sources used in a research study. Through this technique, facts can be discovered in those sources. The researcher will then interpret these facts in the form of analysis and synthesis. This research involves the use of qualitative analysis.

The final stage of this process is the writing of history based on the previous steps that have been taken. The process involves presenting data in the form of a descriptive narrative. Thus, the processed data is described in depth and focused, following the principles of causality and chronology.<sup>13</sup>

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The deployment of peacekeeping forces sent by the Government of Indonesia, under the umbrella of the United Nations, is carried out considering various aspects. The most important thing to remember when deploying troops is the limitation that should not diminish the strength to defend one's own country. In addition, the forces sent are solely for the purpose of maintaining peace and do not interfere in the internal affairs of the conflicting countries.<sup>14</sup> Considering this, Indonesia feels capable of fulfilling its duty as part of the world's peacekeepers, which then actualizes the deployment of peacekeeping forces to the Middle East through the Contingent Garuda VI and Contingent Garuda VIII.

### Departure Preparations

As a member of the United Nations (UN), Indonesia plays an active role in maintaining global peace by sending its best youth to various international missions, including in the Middle East. The registration process for participating in this activity is not voluntary for individuals selected to undertake this mission.

In 1977, Sudirman, who was a soldier from the 401st Infantry Battalion/Banteng Raiders, received an important mission to be part of the peacekeeping forces in the Middle East, where he joined the Garuda contingent VIII.<sup>15</sup> The majority of the members of the Garuda Contingent sent to maintain peace in the region come from the Indonesian armed forces, specifically the National Armed Forces of Indonesia (TNI). Several veterans, such as Mulyadi, Sudirman, and Mulia, also share this experience. The selection of TNI members for this mission was based on various considerations, particularly regarding their ability to adapt to foreign environments and cultures while serving outside the Republic of Indonesia in 1977-1978.<sup>16</sup>

However, it was not only the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) that were involved; the Garuda Contingent also included representatives from the Student Regiment (Menwa). Syamsurizal, as a member of Menwa in 1973, had the opportunity to represent Indonesia in this mission. Syamsurizal joined the Garuda Contingent VIII after receiving direct instructions from his rector. He was one of the founders of Menwa (Student Regiment) at Jambi University in 1973 and was part of the first cohort. In early 1979, Syamsurizal participated in a selection process in Palembang to become part of the TNI's delegation to Egypt. He underwent a series of examinations, including heart checks, blood pressure,

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<sup>13</sup> Juraid Abdul Latief, *Manusia, Filsafat Dan Sejarah* (Sinar Grafika Offset, 2015)., p. 86

<sup>14</sup> Anonim, *Dharma Bhakti TNI Dalam Tugas Internasional* (Dinas Sejarah TNI AD, 1982)., p. 47

<sup>15</sup> Sudirman, 'Wawancara' (2024).

<sup>16</sup> Mulyadi, 'Wawancara' (2024).

height, and weight.<sup>17</sup> These various stages must be completed before someone can join the peacekeeping forces, represented by the contingent Garuda VI<sup>18</sup> dan VIII. This selection process is similar to a series of officially announced tests every prospective member must undertake. All this is aimed at ensuring that each peacekeeping candidate is in optimal physical condition before undertaking the demanding and challenging duties.

Before being sent off, the Garuda Contingent VI and VIII members had to prepare many things, both physically and mentally. Physically, the troops from the Garuda Contingent VI and VIII were prepared to be able to face the climate in the Middle East which is different from the climate in Indonesia. These troops were trained to deal with extreme environmental conditions, namely scorching temperatures during the day and very cold at night.<sup>19</sup>

Based on Mulyadi's experience in 1973 as a representative of Contingent VI, he underwent several intensive training sessions. His most memorable experience occurred in the Bromo Mountain area, where the training was conducted considering the terrain similar to the Middle East, known for its deserts. On the other hand, members of the Student Regiment received military training in Lembang and Pandeglang for 2.5 months. After completing the training, they were assigned to practice in Pandeglang, Banten, for 1.5 months before finally being deployed to the Middle East.<sup>20</sup> After going through intensive training and adequate preparation, each of these soldiers was eventually deployed at different times. The Garuda VI contingent operated from 1973 to 1974, while the Garuda VIII contingent carried out their mission from 1974 to 1979 in Egypt.<sup>21</sup>

### **Local Cultural Adaptation**

Being in a foreign area requires these soldiers to be able to adapt to a new environment. The adaptation process must also be carried out quickly, considering the short duration of the mission and the fact that it is in a conflicting area. For Mulyadi, the experience in the Middle East from 1973 to 1974 was less memorable, especially since he did not have the opportunity to interact with the local community. He was stationed at an isolated guard post, surrounded by vast stretches of desert.<sup>22</sup> As a peacekeeping force newly deployed in a foreign territory, this presents a challenge in adapting to the local culture and environment.

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<sup>17</sup> Syamsurizal, 'Wawancara' (2024).

<sup>18</sup> The second wave of 518 troops for the Garuda VI contingent will be delivered on December 1, 1973, along with all necessary weapons, equipment, and vehicles for their deployment in the Middle East. See more, Anonim, 'Kotindo Garuda VI Ke Timteng Diberangkatkan 2 Gelombang', *Harian Abadi*, November 1973.

<sup>19</sup> Amira N. Mostafa and others, 'Past (1950–2017) and Future (–2100) Temperature and Precipitation Trends in Egypt', *Weather and Climate Extremes*, 26 (2019) 1-12, p. 3 <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wace.2019.100225>>.

<sup>20</sup> Syamsurizal, 'Wawancara'.

<sup>21</sup> Wuri Retno Martani and others, 'Peran Standby Force Pusat Misi Pemeliharaan Perdamaian Tentara Nasional Indonesia (PMPP TNI) Dalam Mempersiapkan Pasukan Pada Misi Pemeliharaan Perdamaian', *Jurnal Diplomasi Pertahanan*, 2020, pp. 51–74., p. 64

<sup>22</sup> Mulyadi, 'Wawancara'.

These difficulties include not only the adjustment to the traditions and customs of the local population but also dealing with cultural differences with other foreign soldiers who are also serving as peacekeepers from various countries.

Syamsurizal, who was in Egypt in 1979 as a logistics courier, once experienced a rather funny incident that left a lasting impression. His role as a logistics courier required him to pick up and distribute logistics, where the logistics center was coordinated by Canada which used English. Due to his limited English, Syamsurizal always carried a dictionary in his pocket to facilitate communication while distributing logistics, where he sometimes encountered foreign soldiers such as those from Poland. Although he always had the dictionary with him, he still faced difficulties adapting everyday language to the commonly used formal terms. There was a funny incident when the Garuda Contingent VIII ran out of hair oil. In his hometown of Jambi, hair oil is usually called "*minyak gemuk*." When he tried to ask for hair oil at the logistics center, he was confused because he did not know the standard term in English. When he referred to the dictionary, he used the term "fat oil," which confused the logistics staff. As a result, he returned without the hair oil he needed.<sup>23</sup>

He eventually returned to the logistics center without giving up and brainstorming, carrying a physical example of the hair oil. This approach ultimately bore fruit, and the item was successfully obtained. Based on this difficult experience illustrates how language barriers affect the effectiveness of communication and the success of missions, particularly in international situations involving diverse cultures and languages. As an experience of entering a new region, the peacekeeping forces from Indonesia encountered various difficulties adapting to the culture. This was especially true in terms of language and cultural adjustment with the other foreign soldiers, who represented the peacekeepers from their respective countries.<sup>24</sup>



Figure 1. Syamsurizal & colleague at Egypt, 1979

Source: Syamsurizal's personal archives

<sup>23</sup> Syamsurizal, 'Wawancara'.

<sup>24</sup> Syamsurizal, 'Wawancara'.

A unique process in adapting further is the story of experiences narrated by the Tabi'in during his time in Egypt in 1978. He learned some words in Hebrew since he met, and even conversed with, Israeli soldiers there multiple times. Not only that, he even participated in several other activities with foreign soldiers, such as playing chess, playing in a band, and engaging in other leisure activities. In every activity, he had to communicate in various languages. In building communication, one interaction method was when the Tabi'in was forced to use sign language, as neither party was proficient in English as the international language for communication. This occurred because not all countries under the UN, representing peacekeeping forces, have English as their official language.<sup>25</sup>



Figure 2. Logistic Truck in Egypt in 1978

Source: Tabi'in's Personal Archives

Mulia Sihombing experienced a different story. This veteran, who retired with the rank of Major, has many ways to overcome the cultural gap between the peacekeeping forces of each country. Moreover, he has good English language skills. It is not surprising because before he entered the military, he studied English Literature at a campus in South Sumatra. This ability is what made him also assigned as a language instructor, even though his rank was still Private at that time. During the assignment, he trained his fellow Contingents to speak English fluently. He even trained officers. He was not hesitant or afraid or even cared because, for him, it was an order from his superiors. He carried out his duties as a teacher, not as a soldier. Mulia also used his English language skills to mingle with soldiers from

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<sup>25</sup> Tabi'in Din, 'Wawancara' (2024).



other countries. Coupled with his joking nature, he quickly adapted and built close relationships with anyone.

### Leisure Activities

Carrying out duties as part of the peacekeeping forces under the UN through the Garuda Contingents VI and VIII in Egypt provided many memorable experiences. Carrying out duties with the same daily routine bored these troops. The tasks carried out were only to monitor and report on the situation between the two warring parties, in this case, Egypt and Israel. Their placement in the region *buffer zone and guarding there for months without meeting many people* made the peacekeepers, both from Indonesia and other countries, bored. Therefore, they tried to interact with each other among the peacekeepers and carried out activities to dispel boredom.<sup>26</sup>

During their service in the Middle East, Garuda Contingent members experienced various experiences, both in the context of daily activities and official missions. For example, Mulia, who was part of the contingent, spent his free time playing in a band with his colleagues from various countries. In this case, Mulia served as the keyboard player in the band. This activity not only provided entertainment but also strengthened the bonds among team members amid a high-pressure environment.



Figure 3. Band of Peacekeeping Armies, 1978

Source: Tabi'in's Personal Archives

On the other hand, Tabi'in, while serving as a peacekeeper in the Middle East in 1978, chose to play chess as one way to sharpen his mind and relax between military duties. The game of chess became an effective means to maintain mental alertness as well as a moment for social interaction among the soldiers. During their service, sometimes the soldiers also interacted with foreign troops outside of the UN forces and the Garuda

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<sup>26</sup> Syamsurizal, 'Wawancara'.

contingent, although interactions with warring parties were actually prohibited; however, they engaged in these activities quietly at night. They even played tennis together and shared food. Those soldiers often gave them apples and bread. They frequently chatted with Israeli soldiers, learning that, in reality, Israeli soldiers are civilians forced into mandatory military service. The individual claims that their actual job is a lecturer, but every two years, they are required to live a military life, and even their daughter is a tank driver.<sup>27</sup> He told a story that he and other Israelis do not like war. It is the political elites and those with vested interests who encourage the occurrence of war and even require their citizens to enlist and become soldiers on the battlefield.



Figure 4. Tabi'in doing Umrah while serving in the Middle East, 1979  
Source: Tabi'in's Personal Archives

Meanwhile, while performing the Umrah pilgrimage, Mulyadi and Sudirman had a memorable experience. They carried out this worship just before the end of their term of duty as part of the peacekeeping forces in Egypt in 1979. The opportunity to perform this worship in the Holy Land provided them with tranquility and the spiritual fortitude they greatly needed amidst the challenges of their peacekeeping mission. They performed this worship at the conclusion of their service as part of the peacekeeping forces under the United Nations.

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<sup>27</sup> Yigal Allon, *Shield of David: The Story of Israel's Armed Forces*, (Orion Publishing Group, 1970)., p. 40

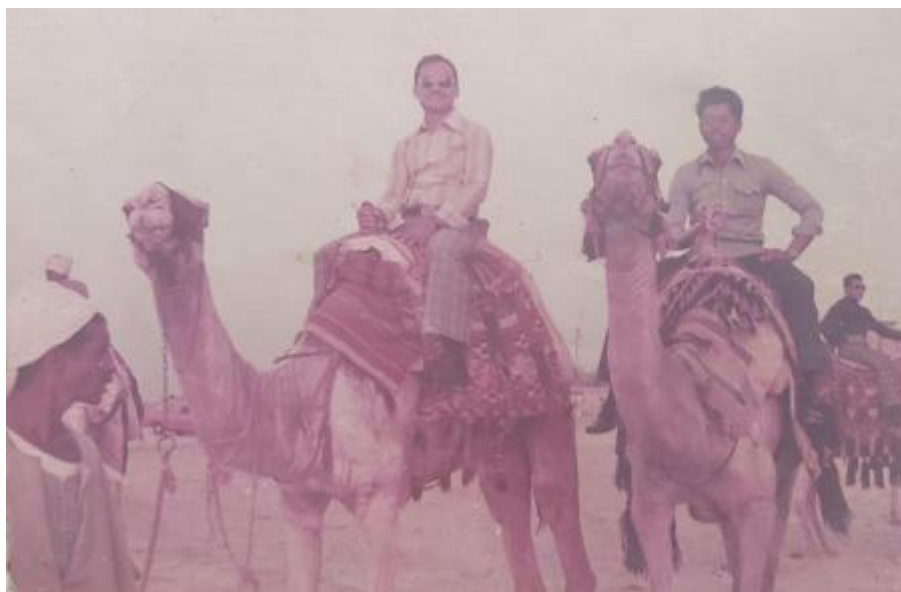


Figure 5. Sudirman on a cruise in Egypt, 1979

Source: Sudirman's Personal Archives

In terms of logistics, Syamsurizal has experience in making the most of his time. He was given the responsibility of picking up fuel, which is crucial for the operational continuity of the contingent. The process of logistical pick-up during his service as a soldier in the Middle East from 1976 to 1979 was often not easy, considering the challenges of communication and coordination with the parties at the logistics center. In fact, while carrying out his duties as a logistics courier, he often drove a white vehicle marked with United Nations (UN) insignia alone. During these tasks, he frequently encountered local residents walking in the sweltering heat of the sun. Rides were not offered because this was prohibited by the UN. His experience highlights how vital the role of logistics is in supporting peace missions, as well as the importance of adapting to the situations at hand.

These activities, although diverse, reflect the efforts of the Garuda Contingent members to build solidarity, even among representatives of other peacekeeping nations, by overcoming mental pressure through various activities to fill their free time and meet their spiritual needs during their deployment in a foreign land. They strive to spend time doing different activities according to their interests while seeking like-minded companions from various other countries.

## CONCLUSION

The experiences of peacekeeping veterans in the LVRI community in Jambi show that the human side and everyday life can be found in an international conflict. This aspect is often overlooked when discussing conflicts at the national and international levels, as the narrative of the conflict is viewed in a bird's-eye *views*, which does not take into account the individual experiences in it. For these veterans, the experience of being a peacekeeper is part of a life journey where they meet Middle Eastern people, from whom they gain many memories and knowledge about how Middle Eastern people and the world really are. In addition, direct contact with the Middle Eastern conflict makes them understand more about

how the conflict resonates for ordinary people or even the soldiers themselves. Exploring this experience not only evokes nostalgic memories of peacekeeping missions for veterans but also provides an understanding that conflict and war have many dimensions of humanity that are often forgotten.

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