

## **Book Review of Priyono's Infantry The Backbone of The Army**

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### **Abstrak**

Infantry The Backbone of The Army karya tulis Priyono berisi pandangannya mengenai pasukan infantri di Indonesia. Penulis mengulas buku ini untuk mengenalkan pentingnya pasukan infantry dalam dunia militer.

Penulis mengulas buku ini untuk menunjukkan kelebihan dan kekurangan dari karya Priyono. Ulasan ini juga menjelaskan perkembangan dunia militer Indonesia dan organisasi militer yang menjadi tulang punggung di Indonesia.

Penulis berharap pembaca dapat memperoleh sudut pandang baru tentang dunia militer Indonesia. Penulis berharap pembaca dapat bertambah pengetahuannya tentang dunia militer di Indonesia serta perkembangannya dari zaman kemerdekaan hingga saat ini.

### **1.1 Background of the Writing**

Long time ago, before public transportation has been discovered, human only have a pair of legs to move from one place to another place. Consequently, pedestrian forces or now called infantry because the first army troops which was trained and prepared for war in small range area. The word "infantris" derived from "infant" which mean legs. It is used to describe a young army troops who are walking around a knight on a horse or a carriage. Infantry soldier must be able to fight, shoot and struggle in any battlefield in the various weather condition. They were coming by aircraft, ship/boat, truck, armored vehicle or helicopter.

*"Infantry The Backbone of The Army"* is a book written by

Priyono which represent his point of view about Indonesian infantry. The writer chooses this book because it might shows important role of an army in a country. It is a reflection of Indonesian army development which shows how infantry defeat their enemies.

### **1.2 The Purpose of Writing**

The purpose the book review is:

- To show the strength and weakness of Priyono's Infantry The Backbone of The Army;
- To provide more insight and information about the development of Indonesian infantry and the arrangement of a military organization.

### 1.3 The Author's and His Works

Among many history books, we found only a few of them reveals the history of military force. Moreover, only a few of those books were written based on direct interview with the historical figures. Priyono "Infantry: The Backbone of the Army" is use of the history which was written based on his experience of interview many figures related to Indonesia military forces.

Priyono was born in Yogyakarta 19th December 1974, he finished his entire education program from elementary school to his college degree in Yogyakarta. In 1996 he finished his diploma degree in The Faculty of Library in Gajah Mada University. Now, he works at local daily newspaper in Solo, Central Java. He has an online shop that sell various military equipment. He has a lot of military equipment collections, from the classic to the modern. In 1997, Priyono moved to Solo and started to develop his hobby to write a military history since 2007. The book "Infantry The Backbone of The Army" is his debut.

In writing He visited Tentara Nasional Indonesia prisoners, including ex "Tentara Pelajar" to dig more information, explore their experiences, and share ideas. Priyono said that historical experience is only a story if was not documented. A historical experience according to the real actor is more interesting than a history for academic purpose.

As librarian, Priyono has a lot of data to complete his book, he matched the data in library with the

data collected from his direct interview with historical figures. He begins with the text entitled "Jejak Infantry Indonesia", and then he reveals the infantry strengths, the striking force, and the infantry's duties.

## 2. SUMMARY

According to Priyono, Infantry is the oldest force in military history. Before human can tame a horse to be ridden or discover modern transportation, we only have a pair of legs to walk. Therefore, infantry troops become the first forces.

In ancient and middle age, the infantry forces were classified according to the weapons they used. This army was divide into three (light infantry, medium infantry, and heavy infantry). When guns was first introduced, that classification was changed into a new formation. The changes did not occur only in the formation, since today we have the mechanical infantry, the airborne infantry, and the naval infantry or we usually called marine. The naval forces has responsibility to speed up the mobility of the empire military units. Infantry troops was used to reached seaboard , forest, and highland areas.

If we look at the history of our nation, Majapahit kingdom have the strongest naval forces, and also the most powerful infantry troops consisting of naval forces and infantry troops which work together to bring Majapahit as the ruler a many areas in shout east Asia.

In 1945, Indonesia ran into the greatest change in all aspects. It was begun when Soekarno-Hatta proclaimed Indonesia's independence in August 17<sup>th</sup> 1945. It was meant that Indonesia come into a new chapter as an independent country which had a right to make an independent state organization. In August 22<sup>nd</sup> 1945, the government formed BKR (Badan Keamanan Rakyat), a central state organization which was specifically formed to protect the nation's safety.

At the time, infantry battalions (Yonif) did not have any particular name. The amount of this battalions member was much more than the cavalry and the artillery units. because Indonesia has a lot of human resources so that it is easier to form an infantry unit than another military unit. Since then, the newborn infantry unit in Indonesia became the real pedestrian forces. In any military action, the infantry troops at Wehrkreise (bag of resistance) always move by walking. No matter how far the Dutch military post is (their target), the infantry troops must reached it by walking.

In military, the effectiveness of guerrilla strategy has been recognized a long time ago. A guerrilla is someone who fights as part of an unofficial army, usually against an official army. The ability of guerrilla forces to make a surprise attack and then disappear and stay away from the enemies reach became the advantages of this strategy. Besides creating a surprise attack to the enemies, they also have the sympathy from the society a long their operation area. In this case, the society is the important component

from the guerrilla movement. With the support from the society, this forces can get a lot of important things. Colonel Slamet Riyadi said "society is the ocean and the guerrilla forces are the small fishes that can get everything from that wide ocean."

The strength of infantry troops, becomes the main weapon of TNI-AD which have a function as the executor in the a short-distance war. This forces must have the ability to move closer and come near to their enemies by using the movement techniques such as personal movement, group relationship, team, platoon, company, battalion and so on. The infantry troops have individual and group ability to attack a target by using regular shotgun, mortar, up to anti-tank weapon.

Yonif *Batalyon Infanteri* is a basic combat unit that equipped with administration system. Therefore, they are able to create an operation both individual or in a larger unit. Each battalion led by an officer rank of lieutenant colonel, consists of three companies. In each company there are some platoons or group. Ideally, one battalion stays in the same area, to facilitate the forces mobility.

Before 1949, Indonesian military do not have specific unit for specific weapon. Therefore Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI) or Indonesia National Army made a standarization for the weapons they will use to facilitate the maintenance, spareparts supply, exercise patterns, and amunition availability.

Indonesia has four battalions, (1) Infantry Raider Battalion, like Yonif 323/Raider; (2) Infantry Airborne Battalion, such as Yonif Linud 501/Braja Yudha; (3) Cross Field Infantry Battalion like Yonif 413/Bremoro; and regular infantry such as Yonif 403/Wirasada Pratista.

In this part when Banteng Raider (BR) forces were formed, Priyono explained that this forces are ex-Batalyon 426, this forces were became the moral strengths of *Darul Islam/Tentara Islam Indonesia (DI/TII)* in Central Java. They successfull in Klaten on January 1952. Even though there are summary victim in this battle, especially from TNI, the birth of ex-Battalion 426 Forces in Tegal and Brebes give support to DI/TII movement (Page 93).

To win the brutal attack from DI/TII, Indonesia need a special force with special ability that could won a difficult battle in. Lieutenant Colonel Ahmad Yani, who was officiated as a Commander in *Gerakan Banteng Nasional (GBN)*, decided to form a special forces which able to fight in all circumstances. The force was called *Banteng Raiders (BR)*. Those battalions are the strength of Indonesian Army to defend our country for enemy's attack.

### **3. REVIEW**

The writer believes that the author wants to share his idea with the readers and tell them about the infantry forces and the history of Indonesian army. So that he composes this book to give another

information to the readers. The following facts show the strength of this book.

#### **3.1. The Strengths of The Book**

First at all, the topic in this book is really interesting. The writer can say it is interesting because this book was first published in a proper timing. We can feel lately, our country is experiencing interference of politics and security of neighboring countries. Through this book, the reader can open his insights about the strength of our soldiers and they also can be proud of the success of the operation of the Indonesian soldiers.

Second, the book only consists of 4 chapters in 141 pages total length so that readers will not get bored easily when they read this book. The readers also can take the book anytime and anywhere because its size is quite simple. Therefore, the readers are able to bring and read this book wherever and whenever they want. The layout of this book is also very simple so the readers will not find it difficult to understand.

Third, the reader can understand more about the progress of Indonesian infantry since 1945, because Priyono insert many photos both from his private collections or reliable sources. In this book, there are some photos of the military leaders, the weapons used by Indonesian Army, and photos which are taken from operation area. "Infantry: the Backbone of the Army" also explain about the weapons that was used by Indonesian Army from the beginning of

Indonesian independence until now. The lessons that came from the operation area are presented extensively and became an interesting story to read.

On the other hand, the author presents the story in good writing organization. All subtopics are linked to one another and arranged in a very good order so it will not confuse the readers. The author also analyzes the problems faced by the soldiers in the area of operation, and explain the appearance of a soldier in the battlefield or Priyono call it as “the fashion show”. This book is very important and helpful for the readers.

### 3.1 The Weakness of The Book

Nothing is perfect in this world. Neither is the book. Although the author did his best to write this book, it still has some weaknesses. The cover is still far from attractive. The cover should use more attractive colors to attract the reader and reduce the formal image of the army. In choosing the title, the author still uses common words, that is why this book does not enjoy being best-seller after being released. The author should use extraordinary words to highlight the title such as “*Infanteri Gerombolan Pasukan Penghancur*” or maybe “*Infanteri Tentara Pejalan Kaki*” to attract more people to read or buy this book. Moreover, this book are not showing the educational institution military which concentrate on infantry, whereas such information is helpful to readers who want to become a TNI soldier. This book can be also an inspirational guide for young readers who wants to join our national army.

## 4. CONCLUSION

“Infantry The backbone of the Army” is a good book about the meaning and the important role of Infantry in Indonesia. In such a young age (32 years) the Author is able to collect much information about Indonesian army and show them to the reader. This book is excellent to read for people who wants to learn about the history Indonesian Army. By reading this book, the readers are expected to be proud of Indonesian army especially infantry.

## 5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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