



Original Article

The Role of Kapitan Telukabessy in the Kapahaha War (1973-1946) in Morella Village, Leihitu District, Central Maluku Regency

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Abstract:

This study aims to reveal the background of the Kapahaha War (1637–1646), explain the role of Kapitan Telukabessy in the conflict, and analyze its impact on the people of Morella Village, Leihitu District, Central Maluku Regency. Kapitan Telukabessy was a charismatic and courageous leader who led the resistance of the Morella community against Dutch colonial forces from the steep and strategic Kapahaha Hill. Using historical research methods, the study found that Telukabessy's nine-year struggle had a significant influence on shaping the collective identity and historical awareness of the Morella people. To this day, his contributions are honored and remembered, as seen in the naming of public spaces such as Telukabessy Street in Ambon City. His legacy stands as a symbol of resistance and remains deeply rooted in the collective memory of the Ambonese community.

Keywords: Kapitan Telukabessy, Kapahaha War, Dutch Colonization, Maluku History

Introduction

The Dutch first arrived in Maluku in 1599, led by Admiral Worwyck, who successfully established relations with Hitu, one of the principalities on the Leihitu Peninsula of Ambon Island. In 1601, another fleet led by Admiral Steven van der Haghen arrived in Ambon, followed by a third fleet under Admiral van Heemskerck. Initially, the Dutch were welcomed warmly and treated courteously by the Kapitan of Hitu and its people, who provided food and drink. This atmosphere was in stark contrast to the reception given to the Portuguese, who had settled in the Leihitu region in 1512 at a place called Picapoly between Hitu and Mamala. According to Portuguese records, the Portuguese were not well-liked by locals due to their less friendly demeanor compared to the Dutch. The Dutch sailors were also hostile toward the Portuguese, leading the Dutch to use this opportunity to ally with Hitu to drive them out. This Dutch animosity toward the Portuguese was largely driven by



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competition over lucrative spice trade—cloves and nutmeg—vital commodities at the time.

The harmonious relationship between the Hitu people and the Dutch lasted until around 1634. During this period, Hitu flourished, renowned for its clove and nutmeg trade, especially through its bustling port, which had trading links with Java and Sumatra. Yet, this alliance formed in 1599 eventually dissolved in 1634, culminating in the outbreak of war that lasted until 1646. (Pattikayhatu et al., 1983). European powers had come to the Eastern archipelago primarily to seek profit and natural resources, particularly spices, which led to conflicts between colonists and indigenous peoples over control of land, governance, and natural wealth. In Maluku, both the Portuguese and Dutch initially exhibited amicability, but relations eventually soured due to colonial powers' monopolistic ambitions over indigenous trade.

In response to these encroachments, indigenous communities organized resistance movements aiming to expel the colonizers. Such wars were the indigenous people's tangible resistance against Western domination. Conflicts typically arose from disputes where neither party would relent over political, economic, or social interests. Though war is seldom a desired outcome, under certain conditions political shifts or self-interest conflict can become inevitable as each party aims to assert its will. This environment in Maluku led to multiple conflicts, including the Kapahaha War on the Leihitu Peninsula, especially in Morella (officially known as Hausihu Morella, Leihitu District, Central Maluku Regency). The indigenous resistance was led by a local capitaine from Morella named Kapitan Telukabessy, who led the struggle between 1637 and 1646, in the mid-17th century.

Previous studies, especially Dr. H. J. de Graaf's (1977), detail the collapse of Hitu under VOC control and the subsequent insurgency leading to the Kapahaha War. Heavy pressure from the Dutch on the villages triggered widespread resistance. Kapitan Telukabessy eventually surrendered himself at the Dutch Fort in Ambon. VOC Governor-General Demmer refused to pardon him unless he brought the renowned Hitu leader Kakiali along. Telukabessy negotiated with Kakiali, but the latter refused to negotiate or submit to the VOC. Undeterred, Telukabessy arrived at the fort in Ambon with about 40 rebels seeking amnesty from Demmer. With Wawani destroyed, the rebel stronghold shifted to Kapahaha Fort under Telukabessy's leadership, composed of locals resentful toward the Dutch and survivors from Wawani Fort.

In April 1644, Demmer launched the first attack on Kapahaha Fort, but failed due to its strategic location atop a steep hill. A larger, more heavily armed Dutch force attacked again in October of the same year, but met the same fate. Finally, a carefully planned assault was set for July 25 and 26. That night, Captain Verheyden and 187 soldiers climbed Wawani mountain, surmounted a series of obstacles, and reached the base of Kapahaha Fort undetected. In darkness, they scaled the walls, evading sentries, and advanced up narrow paths to the summit. They were discovered by an old woman whose warning cry, "Hollanda! Hollanda!", was quickly silenced by gunfire—along with nearby huts. In the ensuing chaos, defenders fled over walls, many falling fatally from the cliffs. Few survivors were captured; most perished in the Dutch assault.

Dieter Bartels in *Di Bawah Naungan Gunung Nunusaku* (2017, pp. 616–618) further clarifies the fall of Hitu and forced relocations to coastal areas to ensure Dutch control. The VOC destroyed clove plantations, burned villages, blockaded food supplies, and executed those who harvested food. The 1644 assault on Kapahaha failed, yet holding the fort for prolonged periods was possible—until 1646, when a prisoner revealed a secret path to Demmer. A surprise attack led to widespread panic; many men, women, and children jumped to their deaths down the steep escarpments, while others reportedly wailed in agony through the night. The VOC seized great spoils gold, silk, cloth, Chinese porcelain, 15 heavy cannons, and 1,000 barrels of gunpowder. Afterward, all rebel leaders were executed. Only one, Rijali, escaped to Makassar, later authoring *Hikayat Tanah Hitu*. Telukabessy managed to hide briefly in Hatuhaha, returned to Kapahaha to say farewell, and finally surrendered voluntarily to Demmer. Although he offered to convert to Christianity, Demmer—driven by vengeance—ordered his execution by beheading (Rumphius, 1910).

Sejarah Perlawanan Terhadap Imperialisme dan Kolonialisme di Daerah Maluku, by Jhon A. Pattikaihatsu et al. (1983, pp. 19–42), recounts how Demmer's forces captured Wawani fort, where the Hitu defenders had taken refuge in Kapahaha. Telukabessy assumed leadership, fortifying Kapahaha as the primary defensive site. In 1644, Demmer launched four attacks, all repelled—VOC suffered defeat while Telukabessy's forces prevailed. I. O. Nanulaita's *Timbulnya Militerisme Ambon...* (1966, pp. 66–80) describes the Hitu II war (1643–1646) under Telukabessy and Kakiali's leadership, noting that VOC could not conquer Kapaha due to its sole steep access, firmly held by Hitu forces. On the nights of July 24–25, 1646, however, the VOC finally captured the fort, exploiting unguarded routes that Telukabessy had overlooked—an error costing many lives. Two of his elder brothers were captured, but Telukabessy and Rijali escaped with remnants of their forces. Later, Telukabessy surrendered, exhausted and starving, and was executed by beheading at Fort Victoria on September 3, 1646.

Methods

This study employs a historiographical research method, which is a historical research approach aimed at reconstructing past events in a systematic and critical manner based on authentic sources, with an objective interpretation of historical facts. The research follows four main stages commonly used in historical methodology:

1) Heuristics (Source Collection)

The initial stage involves collecting historical data and sources relevant to the research topic. The sources include:

- ✓ Primary sources, such as ancient manuscripts, Dutch colonial archives, travel records, local chronicles (e.g., *Hikayat Tanah Hitu*), and VOC documents.
- ✓ Secondary sources, including historical books, scholarly journals, academic works, and prior research—such as those by Dr. H.J. de Graaf, Dieter Bartels, Rumphius, I.O. Nanulaita, and J.A. Pattikayhatu.
- ✓ Oral sources, gathered through interviews with local historians, cultural leaders, and residents of Morella Village who have inherited oral traditions related to the history of the Kapahaha War.

2) Source Criticism (Verification)

After gathering the sources, the next step is source criticism to assess the authenticity and credibility of the information. This includes:

- ✓ External criticism to verify the originality and genuineness of documents.
- ✓ Internal criticism to evaluate the content, logic, and consistency of the information presented within the sources.

3) Interpretation

The verified historical data is then interpreted to understand the meaning, background, and socio-political context of the Kapahaha War. This interpretation considers the local conditions of Hitu society, colonial relations with the VOC, and the strategic role of Kapitan Telukabessy in resisting colonial domination.

4) Historiography (Historical Writing)

The final stage is the historical writing based on the results of interpretation. The historical narrative is presented chronologically, logically, and scientifically, adhering to the principles of objectivity. The narrative aims to portray Kapitan Telukabessy's resistance as a significant part of Maluku's local history and its contribution to the broader anti-colonial struggle in Indonesia.

Results

Background of the War

The Kapahaha War, referred to by Rumphius as the Fourth Ambon War, was in fact the third war to occur in the northern part of the Hitu Peninsula, Ambon Island. The main base of resistance led by Kapitan Telukabessy was Fort Kapahaha, a steep rocky hill located between Mount Salahutu and the village of Morella on the northern side of Ambon Island. In addition to this main stronghold, there were several outer defense posts situated in front of Fort Kapahaha, including Nawahata, Yanarota, Nandahulu, and Topane. There was also a women's post (Srikandi post) behind the fort, known as Beringin Makian (Nunu Mainyual), which was located near the public kitchen (lahalaka) used by the people of Kapahaha.

Although historical accounts of Maluku state that the Kapahaha War lasted approximately three years, oral tradition in the form of local kapata (oral literature) proclaims: "Kapahaha kapa ai Kapahaha nala nale siwa", meaning the war lasted nine years, from 1637 to 1646. Telukabessy emerged as the leading figure in the resistance against the Dutch after the capture of Kapitan Kakiali. The VOC (Dutch East India Company) made numerous attempts to conquer Fort Kapahaha, but due to its formidable defenses, all efforts ended in failure.

The primary causes of the war stemmed from the VOC's arbitrary and oppressive policies, particularly their Hongi expeditions, which directly impacted the livelihoods of the Hitu people and the broader Maluku region. Moreover, the VOC sought to infringe upon the dignity and rights of the indigenous population, following in the footsteps of the Portuguese who had earlier imposed religious conversion in Ambon and the Lease Islands.

While the VOC concentrated its efforts on crushing resistance in Fort Wawane and the Huamual Peninsula, Telukabessy and his people fortified Fort Kapahaha. At that time, the Dutch established a military base at Teluk Telepuan (Sawa Telu), led by Admiral Jacob Verheiden of the naval forces, Frans Lein of the ground forces,

and Governor Gerard Demmer, then Governor of Ambon. In response, Kapitan Telukabessy declared a call to arms, urging his people to rise against the VOC.

In one of his statements, Telukabessy proclaimed: “Though we have escaped the grasp of the Portuguese, we are now in the hands of the Dutch,” signifying a shift from one form of colonization to another. The Dutch intensified their land operations and deployed three ships and 35 boats to blockade the Hitu coast from their base at Teluk Sawa Telu. However, they were met with fierce resistance from Telukabessy's forces, prompting the VOC to carry out massive destructive Hongi raids, cutting down clove, nutmeg, coconut, and other essential crops in an attempt to crush the local economy.

Driven by a sense of shared struggle, Kapahaha received food and logistical support from allies in Huamual and the Lease Islands. Admiral Verheiden made persistent efforts to capture Fort Kapahaha, motivated not only by military objectives but also by a personal motive—to retrieve his daughter who had become the wife of Kapitan Telukabessy. This woman, Carolina van der Hagen, was not Verheiden's biological daughter but the daughter of Admiral Steven van der Hagen, leader of the third VOC fleet in 1601. After her father's ship was wrecked near Buano Island, she remained there and later changed her name to Putijah. She ultimately became a warrior (Srikandi) at Fort Kapahaha and was killed in combat in 1646 during the Dutch assault on the fort.

Following Kakiali's death on August 16, 1643, Fort Wawane was suddenly attacked. The Dutch knew that key Wawane commanders, Kapitan Patiواني and Patituban (Kyai Lesi), had disappeared following Kakiali's death. On August 28, 1643, Kapitan Telukabessy issued his second declaration of war. The first had been made on December 27, 1637, after Kakiali was exiled by the VOC. The Dutch continued to entrench their power in the Hitu Peninsula by influencing many of its local kings, further isolating Wawane's fighters and restricting their ability to resist. Fearing VOC suspicion, many villages in Hitu no longer dared to support the Wawane fighters.

Consequently, Kapitan Telukabessy convened a council of Kapahaha leaders (Malesi-malesi) at Balai Toma Siwa Lima, where it was decided that the Wawane fighters would be retrieved from their migration through mountains and valleys, and brought to Waimolong Hitu Messing.

Before the retrieval, Wawane envoys had met with Telukabessy at Fort Kapahaha. He ordered them to accompany the Kapahaha communal boat, Tala Yala, which was tasked with transporting children and those unable to walk long distances. Meanwhile, the men traveled by land through the forests of Mamala and Morella, eventually arriving at a hamlet in Morella village known as Uli Kepala Air Niin, located at the base of Fort Kapahaha. This migration was led by Imam Rijali, Kapitan Patiواني, Kapitan Patituban, Pati Lawarutu, and several Makassarese warriors including Karaeng Tulis, Karaeng Jipang, and Daeng Mangkapa.

Once the entire group had gathered in Dusun Oli Ina, Telukabessy suggested that some Wawane migrants settle in Yalo Uli, near Fort Kapahaha. The migrants began building defensive fortifications there, under the leadership of Kapitan Tomol, of the Hahuman clan from Seith. This area is still known today as Mount Tomolhaha, once the location of a strategic military post. Another strategic site was Mount Ama Seith, above Telepuan Port (Sawa Telu), which belonged to the territory of Morella.

The Outbreak of the War

As the VOC concentrated its efforts on suppressing resistance at Fort Wawane and the Huamual Peninsula, Kapitan Telukabessy and his people strengthened the defenses of Fort Kapahaha. At that time, the Dutch established their military headquarters at Teluk Telepuan (Sawa Telu), under the leadership of Admiral Jacob Verheiden from the naval forces, Frans Lein of the ground troops, and Governor Gerard Demmer, who served as the Governor of Ambon.

In response, Kapitan Telukabessy declared a general uprising, urging his people to take up arms against the Dutch VOC. One of his key appeals was: “Though we have escaped the grasp of the Portuguese, we now face the Dutch,” signifying that although they were liberated from Portuguese oppression, they had now fallen under the domination of the Dutch.

The Dutch intensified their land operations, deploying three warships and 35 boats to blockade the Hitu coastline, with their base in Teluk Sawa Telu. However, these forces were fiercely attacked by Telukabessy’s troops in a series of relentless offensives driven by deep resentment. In retaliation, the Dutch launched large-scale Hongitochten (devastation raids), destroying clove, nutmeg, coconut, and other vital plantations, aiming to cripple the economic and food base of the local population

Due to the shared sense of solidarity among the people, warriors, and their captains in the region, as well as the defenders of Fort Kapahaha, food supplies were sent from all directions to Fort Kapahaha, coming from Huamual and Lease Island. Admiral Jacob Verheiden made relentless efforts to capture the fort, primarily with the intention of returning his daughter, who had become the wife of Kapitan Telukabessy. The daughter in question was not Verheiden’s biological child but rather the biological daughter of Steven van der Hagen—the commander of the third VOC fleet in 1601 whose ship was later stranded on Buano Island—named Carolina Van de Hagen, who subsequently changed her name to Putijah. She ultimately became a heroine (srikandi) of Fort Kapahaha and died in battle against Van der Hagen’s forces in 1646 within the fort’s area.

After Kakiali died on August 16, 1643, Wawane was suddenly attacked. The Dutch were aware that the warriors of Wawane—Kapitan Patiwani and Patituban (known as Kyai Lesi)—had disappeared from Wawane following Kakiali’s death. At that time, Kapitan Telukabessy announced a second declaration of arms on August 28, 1643. The first declaration had been made on December 27, 1637, when the Hitu captain Kakiali was exiled by the VOC.

The Dutch increasingly entrenched their power in the Hitu Peninsula by influencing the majority of its local kings, which further constrained the ability of Wawane’s warriors to resist Dutch control. Due to widespread fear of Dutch suspicion, many kingdoms in Hitu were unwilling to support the Wawane fighters. Consequently, Kapitan Telukabessy convened a council of the Malesi-malesi of Kapahaha at the Balai Toma Siwa Lima to decide on organizing the retrieval of the Wawane warriors who were migrating through the mountains and valleys to gather at Waimolong, Hitu Messing.

Before the retrieval took place, Wawane envoys met with Kapitan Telukabessy at Fort Kapahaha. Telukabessy ordered that those unable to travel long distances be transported using the public boat named Tala Yala, while the men traveled on foot through the mountains and Mamala forest, arriving at the village of Uli Kepala Air Niin at the foot of Fort Kapahaha. This migration group was led by Imam Rijali,

Kapitan Patiwani, Kapitan Patituban, Pati Lawarutu, and Makassar warriors including Karaeng Tulis, Karaeng Jipang, and Daeng Mangkapa.

After all the migrants gathered in the village of Oli Ina, Kapitan Telukabessy proposed that some of the Wawane group settle in Yalo Uli near Kapahaha. The Wawane migrants established defensive posts in Yalo Uli led by Kapitan Tomol from the Hahuman clan of Seith. This area is still known today as Mount Tomolhaha, a strategic guard post for Tomol's forces. Nearby is also Mount Ama Seith or the Seith territory above the Telepuan (Sawa Telu) Harbor, under the jurisdiction of Morella.

Kapahaha Natural Fortress Became the Center of People's Defense

Dutch received information that Captain Patiwani and his group had joined Captain Telukabessy in Kapahaha, prompting the Dutch to strengthen their military operations. A clash occurred between Patiwani's forces and Makassar warriors against the Dutch troops in front of the village of Iyal Uli, where the Dutch forces retreated unconditionally. Under the guidance of Karaeng Tulis, Karaeng Jipang, and Daeng Mangkapa, the Wawane refugees reinforced the defenses by building forts around Yalo Uli, making Kapahaha's defense increasingly strong. Captain Patiwani's prowess was recognized by the Dutch due to his successful resistance in the Hitu and Huamual regions. At that time, a customary institution was also established, involving all captains and traditional leaders from Maluku regions such as Alaka, Huamual, Banda, and Seram Island, as an effort to strengthen regional unity and economy.

At that time, several forts in Maluku had fallen, including Fort Wawane. On August 16, 1643, Captain Kakiali passed away, marking the end of Wawane's struggle. The VOC then issued a proclamation forbidding the mention (haspus) of the captain's name or the names of the four primary traditional leaders (upu-upu) in Hitu. Not long after, Patiwane was involved in a battle on the coast of Rumakai and died from gunfire by the Company (Kompeni). Although Patiwane had died, Kapahaha's defense remained strong. The strength of Kapahaha's defense was symbolized by the motto Kapata: "Lisa e Makanan, Lisa e Haulala," which means fighting to defend and advancing continuously with fiery spirit.

The End of the Kapahaha War Period

The defense of Kapahaha Fortress was very strong, making it difficult for the Dutch (VOC) forces to breach. After repeated defeats, Governor Demmer withdrew his troops to Ambon. However, on July 25-27, 1646, Demmer, Verheiden, and Frans Leindard launched a major attack with a fleet consisting of 3 ships and 35 kora-kora boats, landing at Sawa Telu and Nandaluhu bays. They conducted a seven-day blockade and moved the common kitchen to Laha Laka Hill near the fortress.

The attack began before dawn on July 25, with fierce battles between Kapahaha's troops and the Dutch, including cannon fire from VOC ships and gunfire from the rear by Frans Leindard. Captain Telukabessy instructed civilians to take shelter in caves around the fortress. Kapahaha forces, along with Makassar reinforcements led by Karaeng Tulis, Karaeng Jipang, and Daeng Mangkapa, fiercely defended the fortress.

Casualties fell on both sides during the two-day battle. Captain Telukabessy motivated his troops to sacrifice their lives for independence with a passionate battle cry. Many fighters were moved to tears, mourning the fate of their nation.

However, Dutch attacks intensified, weakening Kapahaha's defense. Kapahaha forces were forced to abandon the fortress. Putijah Leikawa Van der Hagen, Captain Telukabessy's wife and leader of Kapahaha's female warriors, died in the final battle. She urged her husband to escape to continue the struggle for their people.

The struggle at Kapahaha ended on July 27, 1646, after the Dutch captured Yata Pori, who became their guide to the fortress. This marked the end of Captain Telukabessy's fight along with his comrades.

The Fate of Kapitan Telukabessy

At that time, Captain Telukabessy escaped in order to defend the fate of his people. The kapata explained, "Yupu malesi Telukabessy maleya loina salo" (meaning he wandered while staying close to the Kapahaha fortress area). He roamed in the mountains not far from the Kapahaha fortress and went directly to Alaka fortress in Hatuhaha, while waiting for the right moment to regroup and plan a counterattack. However, Demmer carried out cruel actions to capture him. Many community leaders were arrested and tortured. They could be freed only if Telukabessy surrendered.

Unable to bear the sorrow upon hearing about the persecution from envoys who came to meet him Tuheela from the Latukau clan and Mateualoin from the Wakan clan at Alaka fortress he bravely surrendered on August 10, 1646.

He was tried that same year and on the morning of September 3 was sentenced to hang. Due to strong spiritual protection, he survived the hanging. During his escort, the guards urged him to abandon his spiritual beliefs (ilmu ghaib) for the safety of the public. Following this, three shots were fired at Captain Telukabessy in the yard of Victoria Fortress (Latania) in Ambon. He was then placed inside an iron cage and drowned at Namalatu Beach (Labuan Raja). Shortly after, his presence was said to be felt at Ulilima Beach, now the site of Latuhalat village.

The hero of Kapahaha remained loyal to his comrades, especially the people of Hitu, until the end of his life. Before he died, under orders from the VOC officials, he gave his final message to the community, proclaiming in the Kapahaha local language:

"Atumu tapulu himabuku peia maahunia lisa Kapahaha hinia Pamasun ina Luhu runa yana walia, kukirimkan Kakiela Kapa lima Kapa yai Meu rulo molo sahi yana walia,

Sanjungan hormat untuk kaMeu rulo molo sahi yana walia,mpung halamanku serta pejuang-pejuang Kapahaha yang tercinta. Ibuku Ina Luhu dan semua keluargaku kupersembahkan keresehanmu. tetap bertalian kemerdekaan bangsa dan tanah air serta setia kepada rakyat biar korban jiwa dan dilenyapkan bakal ada generasi mendatang.

This call and message, spoken with a brave and fighting spirit, caused concern among the VOC. Therefore, the VOC (Dutch) took new actions, which included

exiling all the community leaders. The Kapahaha fighters involved in the resistance were exiled to Batavia, where many of the prisoners died. Those who were not involved in important matters were kept captive at the VOC headquarters in Teluk Telepuan (Sawatelu) from the defeat of Kapahaha on July 27 until October 27 of the same year, when a day of liberation for the people of Kapahaha was held based on instructions from Governor-General van Diemen in Batavia.

The End of the Kapahaha Wa

Because the defense of Kapahaha Fortress was so strong, it was very difficult for the Dutch (VOC) forces to break through. After repeated failures, Demmer withdrew his troops back to Ambon. These defeats were very disappointing to Captain Verheiden, his commander during the nine years of conflict. Therefore, after reorganizing their forces, Demmer, Verheiden, and Frans Leindard launched another attack to capture Kapahaha from July 25 to 27, 1646.

Governor Demmer appeared with his fleet consisting of three ships and 35 kora-koras anchored at Sawa Telu Bay and Nandaluhu Bay. That night, a Dutch troop led by Captain Frans Leindard landed. They trekked through the forest and climbed mountains to reach the rear of the fortress and established a seven-day blockade. The situation was serious enough that the common kitchen was moved to the top of a hill near Kapahaha Fortress, which is still called Laha Laka (the hill where Kapahaha troops and people eat).

On the appointed day of the assault, July 25, before dawn, the troops managed to enter the fortress. Kapata explained, “Letesi sarele elya kapahaha..... nala putii hee hale fajar heelia.” (This is a traditional expression related to the attack.)

The attack began at dawn. Fierce fighting broke out. VOC ships anchored in Sawa Telu and Nandaluhu bays fired their cannons heavily toward the fortress. From the rear, Frans Leindard and his troops also launched gunfire. The roar of cannons and rifles echoed through the air.

At that time, Captain Telukabessy instructed the residents of Kapahaha who were not armed to seek shelter in the stone caves of Bander-Bander Beringin around the fortress. In Kapata it is explained: “Nunu yambale seli eka pale mahu.” Some of the population evacuated to Ltaela and Yalo Uli. The Kapahaha troops and the Makassar reinforcements led by Karaeng Tulis, Karaeng Jipang, and Daeng Mangkapa fought with brave and fierce determination to defend their fortress and homeland.

Casualties began to fall on both sides over two days, from July 25 to 27. The blood of the warriors soaked their land, fueling the fighting spirit of Kapahaha troops who fought to the death, inspired by the words of Captain Telukabessy to his forces: “Lisa pasalita nitai rula uli rakula kapa-kapa,” meaning “Sacrifice our souls and our homeland for freedom.” The battle cries echoed loudly across the Hitu Peninsula.

At that time, many fighters were emotionally overwhelmed thinking of the fate of their nation and homeland, tears streaming down to the earth. “Elia Kapahaha putu mahalasa,” meaning Kapahaha Fortress had become a sea of fire. “Nahu mata wara waa bumi yane rasa,” meaning they mourned with tears falling to the earth because their absolute rights had been violated by oppressive nations.

The Dutch soldier attacks intensified, causing the fortress’s defense to weaken. Kapahaha forces, trapped and overwhelmed, reluctantly had to abandon the fortress

to save themselves. However, Putijah Leikawa Van der Hagen, the wife of Captain Telukabessy and leader of the Kapahaha female warriors (serikandi), met her death in this final battle. With courage and manly spirit, Putijah advanced toward the enemy to replace her husband, signaling to him to escape to live and later take responsibility for their people.

Unfortunately, the fate of the struggle at Kapahaha Fortress had come to bow down, as decreed by the Almighty, with the capture of Yata Pori by Dutch forces at Nandaluhu Bay near their base. The Dutch cruelly and cunningly forced Pori to guide them to Kapahaha Fortress. Thus ended the struggle of Captain Telukabessy and all his comrades on July 27, 1646. That was the end of their story.

The Impact Experienced by the Local Community After the Kapahaha War (Hitu War II)

Finally, with the spirit of a captain, on August 19, 1646, Telukabessy surrendered to Commander Verheyden. In front of Governor Demmer at Victoria Fortress in Ambon, he aimed to secure the freedom of his people. But before the release took place, the people of Kapahaha held a meeting and wept together because they had fought side by side for nine years against the Dutch. Now they were about to be freed, and those who had helped them would return to their respective regions—such as Kapitan Bessi from Buru, from the Amaiha kingdom, East Seram, Hatuhaha, the Kingdom of Goa, Boi, Ternate, the Kingdom of Tuban, and the Makassar people.

At the farewell, they gave the area the title “Hausihu,” derived from the words Hau, meaning “blaze” or “flame,” and Sihu, meaning “to fly” or “struggle.” Thus, Hausihu means “The Flame of Struggle.” (Interview with Mr. Yusuf Mony, Monday, July 18, 2020, age 45, a teacher at the Hausihu Morella State Madrasah Aliyah).

During the farewell, the Kapahaha people danced and sang war songs (kapata-kapata Perang, lani lisa) and farewell songs (kapata Perpisahan). A group of Kapahaha youth performed the “pukul sapu” — a stick-fighting attraction symbolizing their dissatisfaction with the war waged by the Dutch. They vented their frustration through this stick-fighting, believing the blood shed represented a personal satisfaction tied to their experiences. Even the Kapitans and Malesi (local leaders) were involved in this performance; the bleeding wounds reminded them of the bloody struggle during the Kapahaha war that had passed.

Then they embraced and bid each other farewell. There were three groups led by three Malesi, each using a sawat (traditional canoe) to return to their homelands. One sawat went to Huamual, Buru, and surrounding areas; one went to the Lease Islands, including Hatuhaha in Haruku, Iha Ulu Palu in Saparua, and Hulawano in Nusalaut; and one went to Seram, Kaibobu, Tuhulele, Latu, Tambilou, and Manusela.

There were also Malesi from outside Maluku, known as the Mahu Tribe, including three Karaeng (princes) from the Gowa Kingdom in Makassar and Mataram, as well as Bugis and Makassar people. The day after, they all returned to their respective regions.

The farewell was deeply moving, filled with cries and tears, accompanied by an oath of loyalty with a vow to establish the “Pukul Sapu Lidi” (stick-fighting) attraction as a traditional and cultural practice for all time. Since then, the Pukul Sapu Lidi attraction has been held every year in the village of Hausihu Morella

during the month of Syawal as a moment to commemorate the ancestors' struggle at Kapahaha Fortress.

From this historical event, a folk tale has been passed down: when Telukabessy was shot on September 3 at Victoria Fortress in Ambon, he actually did not die because he possessed invulnerability powers. At the final shooting, he pretended to be dead. A Dutch soldier tied his legs and drowned him at Namalatu Beach, but he transformed into a large fish. It is believed that this fish appears during traditional ceremonies.

In his marriage, Telukabessy had three sons. Two were taken to the Netherlands, while one was hidden in Kapahaha/Old Morella. Because Verheyden wanted to take all of Ahmad Leikawa's (Telukabessy's) children, the people of the village hid one son, whose descendants still carry the surname Leikawa today. The name means "Once raised in war, immediately shines brightly."

Conclusion

From the background and the discussion in this writing, several conclusions can be drawn:

- 1) The Kapahaha War was a conflict between the Dutch and the people of Hausihu Morella that lasted for 9 years, from 1637 to 1646. During this period, the war caused many casualties on both sides because the people's defense was located on the high and steep Kapahaha hill. Initially, this fortress was difficult to conquer due to its strategic position above the Hausihu village, which was situated on a fairly high mountain. The leader of the people's forces on the Hitu Peninsula was Captain Telukabessy, whose real name was Ahmad Leikawa, son of Samu-samu, a descendant of Sepamole, a leader of the Hitu kingdom. The Kapahaha War was a continuation of the Hitu War centered at Wawane Fortress and is also known as the Fourth Ambon War in the history of the VOC in Maluku.
- 2) The direct impact felt by the community after the Kapahaha War was mainly trauma from the cruel actions committed by the Dutch VOC forces against the people, which led to resentment towards foreign nations. This also sparked pride among the people and the Ambon city government, resulting in Telukabessy's name being immortalized as the name of a street in Ambon city. The most popular commemoration today is the "Pukul Sapu Lidi" (stick-fighting) attraction in Morella, which has become widely known even internationally, to commemorate the heroic events of the Kapahaha War against the VOC

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