

## Two police officers, two armed robbers killed in gun battle at Apapa

By Albert Akpor, Evelyn Usman and Austine Anozie

**L**AGOS—A FIERCE gun duel between policemen from Apapa and armed robbers yesterday left two police officers and two robbers dead at Tin Can Island area of Apapa, Lagos.

Police sources said a gang of about eight armed robbers were spotted somewhere around Trebbor junction, Apapa at about 11pm on Tuesday. It was gathered that men of anti-robbery squad who were scattered around Apapa and environs were put on the alert. However, sources said the gang quickly made a U-turn and headed towards Tin Can Island where another team led by the late Inspector were on a pin down point at a black spot.

However, it was learnt that the armed men had earlier spotted the team even before they were noticed. They promptly opened fire on the police, killing the Inspector and a Sergeant. Sources hinted further that while the shoot out lasted, two of the robbers were also gunned down and three others who sustained serious gun shot wounds were arrested.

The deceased police officers (names withheld), until their death had attained the rank of Inspector and Sergeant respectively and were attached to the Apapa Division. They were given certificate of recognition by the Lagos state police commissioner, Mr. MD Abubarka last month for their gallantry after they recovered a cache of arms and ammunition and foiled series of bank robberies in Apapa.

Earlier on Monday night, another gang of notorious armed robbers had invaded a popular recreational spot in Apapa but the prompt intervention by the police saved the situation. Their get away vehicle was demobilized while three members of the gang were arrested. Attempts to get the reaction of the state police public relations officer failed but a competent source close to his office said the dead officers have been deposited in the mortuary for autopsy.

In the same vein, another gang of armed robbers last weekend continued their siege along Mile 2 bridge Otto wharf axis, on the Oshodi Apapa expressway, by unleashing terror on motorists and passers-by on the route.

The latest incident involved Vanguard's Business correspondent, Mr Clifford Amuzo, who was attacked at Otto Wharf bus-stop at about 8.30pm Sunday. The incident which left the reporter with a broken leg and deep cuts over his body occurred when he was going home from work, only to be accosted by two bandits who were operating in an unmarked commercial bus.

According to the reporter who is now receiving treatment at a private hospital, "I mounted a commercial motorcycle after the close of work on Sun-

day night to Mile Two. But on getting to the junction that leads to Vanguard's Corporate headquarters, Kirikiri canal, the motorcyclist refused to continue after sighting some policemen on duty at that point.

So, I decided to trek by crossing the express road to Otto wharf bus-stop. On getting to the bus-stop, a commercial bus blocked my way and someone suddenly jumped out of it, approaching me aggressively with what looked like dangerous weapons. I immediately threw my bag at him with the hope that he would turn back. But he didn't.

"Rather, he kept charging at me and in my bid to escape, I decided to cross to the other side again by taking through the side of the commercial bus. But just then, a truck which was coming with full speed, compressed me to the robbers operational bus, dragging me as it moved on. As I laid on the ground in excruciating pains, I discovered that other members of the gang had come to join their colleagues in the bus and started debating in native dialect whether to leave me or escape.

"At that point, I passionately pleaded in the same dialect that they should, at least, take me to Vanguard office. Two of them eventually agreed and dropped me in front of my office and zoomed off at once".

Clifford's right thigh bone was confirmed to be broken. But he expressed appreciation to God that the truck did not crush him to death. Presently, doctors at the hospital are battling to save his leg from being amputated.

Few weeks back, both the Editor of Vanguard, Mr. Gbenga Adefaye, his Deputy, Mr. Miden Bayagbon, the chairman of Vanguard Editorial Board, Mr. Ikeddy Isiguzor, the Sports Deputy Editor, Mr. Tony Ubani and other top editorial staff fell victims to attacks differently by these bandits. In fact, the Editor narrowly escaped death when the robbers who ambushed his car at the junction in Berger Yard Bus Stop tried to stop him without success and ended up releasing volleys of bullets which miraculously missed hitting him. His Deputy was not that lucky as he was abducted by the bandits, thrown into the booth of his car and taken round the area after which they dropped him at the spot where he was picked. Vanguard's Political Editor Jide Ajani, also survived a car chase with some robbers between Berliet Bus Stop and the Ejigbo area of Lagos.

Last week, speculations were rife that the dreaded trans-border bandits may have returned to wreck havoc in Lagos state and it's environs. The bandits reportedly sneaked into Lagos on Wednesday and grabbed five posh vehicles, one of them, a Toyota Prado Jeep marked Lagos EQ 899 EKY belonging to the Executive Editor, Independent Newspapers, Mr. Ted Iwerre.