

Name:	Ian I Bali
Date of interview:	Wednesday, 3 September 2014
Location of interview:	PNG National Museum and Art Gallery, Port Moresby
Chief interviewer:	Lepsy Koia
Time interview concluded:	11:44 AM
Duration of interview:	13:02:09
Main language of interview:	English
Image:	

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW

Time	Transcript
00:00	[INTERVIEWER] This morning on 3rd of September we are interviewing Ian Bali, at the National Museum, and we talking about his grandfather. Thank you.
	Thank you I'm Ian Bali, from the Upper Sogeri, up at Sirinumu. I'll be talking about my grandfather, who participated in the war, just a brief story about him -how he ended up in the war, and then back again. My grandfather, he's from Sirinumu Dam up at Sogeri. There was a very big village before the dam was built, there was a village which was called Gebada [?], that's where all the people, the clans gathered together and lived there just before the dam was built.
01:09	And then from there, as a boy, a young boy, my grandfather's name is Orogu, and like nowadays the young ones want to roam around and he ended up down in Moresby. At that time there was no Moresby, or something like that, but he was going around and then he was employed by the army. Recruiting the army to you know getting that team to just do general duties. And he was employed as a cook, as a cook. So it was around ... 1939, they were getting all these boys to come down.
02:23	So he was employed as a cook, and then the wars was coming down from up at Kokoda, so we know, there was an announcement made that they were running out of soldiers, they were going to use Papua New Guinea soldiers, people to assist in the war, so my grandfather was one of them who took part, he was employed as one of the PIB, so he was a gunman, at that time. And it was at that time when he left all of his, at the time he was not married he was a young boy, and he went up, he joined the army and he went fighting up along the Kokoda track, up to Buna, and there were very interesting stories he was telling me when I was sitting with him along by the fire.
03:25	He was telling the story about how you know he was taking in the war. So one of the very interesting stories, he told me about how he was in the field. It was very sad, and interesting, very sad and frightening, because all these dead bodies lying here and there, drinking the same water the bodies were in, full of blood, but there was no way to get fresh water, so the only thing they could do was drink that water to survive, and it was one of the stories he was telling me, the family about that war, the war, how the war was really ugly. It was no good you know. And they were fishing hard life there, frightened, because all the frightened about enemies coming, charging with them.
04:19	But he was assisting the Australian armies at that time, and he was one of the good soldiers, where he was cooperating with the soldiers, and while fighting along the Kokoda trail, he went right up to Kokoda, Buna, and then that, there, he was thinking of coming back to this place, so there, when the war was going like bit slowing down, his only thought was to go back, all of these struggles, all of this hardship that was in the battlefield, so he thought of going back so he just left. He got only his gun, and headed back towards Mountain Koiari, heading along the Kokoda track coming back.

05:19	So he told me about a story there was no supplies, there was no food, nothing to take because he left the group and he was coming back. Only thing he was thinking was to follow the track to where he shad tarted, with only one gun where he started back again to the place where he started over again.
	[INTERVIEWER] How old was he?
	He was in his 20s when he was employed as one of the army, when the armies were going around getting boys to join them, in his early 20s. And then he spent the rest of the time during the war like 30, 30 years old, but he told me the families that he was in his mid early teens, and adulthood, it was in his adulthood, in his adulthood when he was participating in that war, taking in that time, in the battle.
06:33	[INTERVIEWER] Did he tell you anything about his trip back? He was alone, from Buna?
	He was alone. From Buna, coming back alone. He told me about how he was coming back. He has nothing to eat, the only thing he has was to drink water only, has to survive on water and then come back again. And when he was coming back again, he had one of the corporal or somebody like that was working with him, he gave him an advice. He said when you go for war you don't trust your friend. He said you don't trust your friend because your friend will betray you.
07:23	When he was coming back he met some of the Papua New Guineans but he wouldn't cooperate with them because he only took that advice from the sergeant who he was working along with, so he wouldn't trust them or stick around with them, he was only himself. So that's how he came back safely, and then ended up at Laloki.
	[INTERVIEWER] So no one chased him after that, soldiers, the sergeant? They just let him go?
	He just ran off. He was worried about his family and his own life, so he has to take off.
	[INTERVIEWER] Did he tell you any further stories about hardship? Was that the thing that made him come home?
08:17	Yes, that was the story because he was facing a lot of, you know, problems like sickness, seeing in his own eyes, there were dying bodies, you know, all these things, you know he couldn't, you know, stand any further, all those situations, all he has to do was just run away and come back. The only thing he brought back with him, the rifle he was holding, so he came back with that.
	[INTERVIEWER - JR] So he left from Buna, but the PIB went on to fight along the coast and then Bougainville, he was not part of any of that?
	He was not, he was along the Kokoda trail and then he came back.
	[INTERVIEWER - JR]

	So did the Australians, did the army try to, did he get into trouble because he had done this, or they didn't follow up?
	They didn't follow up because he came back.
	[INTERVIEWER - JR] But he'd seen enough of war.
09:32	He'd seen enough. Cos like he said, there was the bodies lying there, he wouldn't, you know...
	[INTERVIEWER - JR] So he'd been originally recruited as a carrier, is that right?
	Yes
	[INTERVIEWER - JR] Did he talk about how he was picked out to become a carrier?
	Well he was a cook at the time, he was a cook, when the war is coming down along the Kokoda trail. They were running short of carriers and all this so they help them in war, so they got some of the boys from Papua New Guinea, especially from Papua, they chose those boys, so he was one of those who was chosen, so he took part with them and he went up.
	[INTERVIEWER - JR] He didn't say he wanted to be, he was chosen to be.
10:25	Because the war was coming down, and they were running short of the carriers to assist those soldiers, so they gave them the guns and then send them.
	[INTERVIEWER - JR] When did your grandfather pass away?
	It was in 1989, in the 80s.
	[INTERVIEWER - JR] You obviously remember him well?
	I was a small boy and we were sitting along with him and he was telling us the stories about how he was in the war, the hardships and all this, and when he came back he was residing around Laloki River, the village now currently is Haima village. He returned with all his uniform, all his ... but he was in the groups where who were, who were taking part along the trail.
	[INTERVIEWER - JR] What happened to the uniform and his rifle? Did he return them?
11:38	No the uniforms were brought back, he kept them, and when he passed away they dressed him up with the uniforms. They dressed him up in the uniforms. The rifles, he was using it. After that the was one of the gun makers. He makes his own guns and parts and all this. Around Sogeri, relatives up at Sogeri, they normally come down to him to make the parts of the guns, he was a skilled man in making the guns. Not making them but you know, helping putting, fixing parts and others. When he passed away they dressed him out with all his uniform, and then they bury him.

12:35	[INTERVIEWER - JR] Thank you. Did you have anything else you wanted to say about your grandfather?
	I would like to say that he was one of those brave guys that supported the Australian soldiers to fight for Papua New Guinea and he passed away. I am very grateful and I really appreciate what he had done for Papua New Guinea especially.
	[INTERVIEWER - JR] Thank you very much.