Name: Naris Baiko
Date of Interview: 14 June 2017
Location of Interview: Salama, Morobe Province
Interviewer/s: Bao Waiko
Duration of Interview: 00:13:32:00, 00:01:57:00, 00:02:07:00, 00:02:59:00, 00:01:12:00, 00:01:32:00, 00:01:42:00, 00:01:14:00, 00:01:45:00, 00:01:13:00, 00:02:59:00
Main Language of Interview: Tok Pisin

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PART 1</td>
<td>[Interviewer]: OK sir we are starting now.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>OK</td>
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<td>[Interviewer]: is it OK we take a film of you? Say yes if you agree.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Yes.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>[Interviewer]: You can start by telling us your name and where you are from and we will begin our story.</td>
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<td>00:02:08-00:03:02</td>
<td>I’m from a place called Laguwe. I was born in August 18th, 1936 and I’m 81 years old now. I was 7 years old when the war came to Salama. I will tell the story of when the war came to Salama. Salama was not like how it is today. It was a big station where we had our big office building and the Morobe provincial headquarters building. But the Second World War changed everything. So now if you see a picture of Salama before the war, it looked bigger than now it is.</td>
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<td>00:02:08-00:03:02</td>
<td>OK I will tell the story about how Salama got bombed during the Second World War. During the Second World War, the Japanese were occupying and</td>
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An oral history collection recording the memories and stories of Papua New Guineans about World War Two

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<td>00:03:02-00:03:40</td>
<td>Before the bombs came, there were two police officers who came to our village in the night. They travelled up the river by boat. They told everyone in the village not to stay. They told them to evacuate and flee to the forest early in the morning. Faraway, because America will bomb Salamaua.</td>
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<td>00:03:40-00:04:41</td>
<td>And so, everyone woke up early in the morning and left for the forest and in the daytime, the Americans bombed Salamaua. They bombed the Japanese who were camping at Salamaua. It was a terrible time for us. We didn’t go far. We stayed close by and watched our village get destroyed by the bombs. After the bombs hit our village, we came back in the afternoon only to find our village burned down to ashes. We were all silent and speechless. We only slept for that night and woke up the next day and went to hide in the bushes again, for our home, Salamaua, had been destroyed. Because of this our parents moved to the bush in the territory of Kaiva people.</td>
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<td>00:04:41-00:05:14</td>
<td>We stayed there and after some time, we went down to Boaine. While at Boaine, the war got worse and we were having a hard time because we brought nothing with us, like food. Early in the morning when the place was still dark, the mothers cooked a little food and we ate. At 6 o’clock in the morning we moved up to the bushes. We stayed in the bushes till America took over this place.</td>
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<td>00:05:14-00:05:33</td>
<td>At that time, looking down to the sea shore you could see the navy boats of the Americans and Australians. From over there to here, there were navy boats all over this place.</td>
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<td>00:05:33-00:05:34</td>
<td>So, we were moved by these navy boats to a place called Laukanu. I wouldn’t know how many metres away that place was, maybe it wasn’t far. We stayed there but the war continued here.</td>
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<td>00:05:34-00:06:25</td>
<td>We saw the Japanese. We saw how they moved about. They had two groups. One is called ANCA and the other SAR. And they really destroyed us. We didn’t have good food to eat and good clothes to wear and we only travelled by canoe.</td>
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<tr>
<td>00:06:25-00:06:47</td>
<td>Because of this, we stayed at Laukanu for how long I couldn’t remember because I was just a small boy. So, we stayed here till they brought us to Morobe.</td>
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<td>00:06:47-00:07:16</td>
<td>They took us to a place called Boanzin. We stayed at Boanzin. They took the fathers, one child and some young men onto a truck and the police and army drove off.</td>
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<td>00:07:16-00:07:36</td>
<td>We the children and mothers were sent back to Boanzin. On our way the (Japanese) soldiers fought towards us so we pulled back and the soldiers (Australians) took us from the bush that same day and brought us to Morobe.</td>
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<tr>
<td>00:07:36-00:07:53</td>
<td>On our way to Morobe, just like my other friend has mentioned, two navies came to us at a place called Nazlbai, in Lababia. They escorted us to Morobe.</td>
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<tr>
<td>00:07:53-00:08:18</td>
<td>In the night and early in the morning, five Japanese aeroplanes landed. They wanted to bomb us, so they took the men up to the place called Kanaka. Over there we didn’t know what happened, they must have wanted to attack us.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
So, the navy boats fired their motor and shot two aeroplanes. The aeroplanes fell on an island in Morobe. So, we arrived at Morobe.

We stayed at Morobe, and were well taken care of by the Americans. They separated the sick from the healthy so those who were sick were sent to the army clinic and those who were healthy were sent to a new camp they made for us. They built the camps in the forest of Morobe. So, we went there. We travelled by truck and car and sailed on the sea.

So we went, and stayed there, and they gave us land to cultivate. We cut the bushes, planted gardens, stayed for a while and then they brought us back. Our garden wasn’t ready yet, so we had to harvest only corn and aupa (greens). But the army gave us plenty of food to eat.

From Morobe they posted us to Salamaua. They divided us into twenty people per boat. The boats left Morobe at 8 o’clock and arrived in Salamaua at 2 o’clock or 3 o’clock in the afternoon. When we arrived at Salamaua, we went straight to the Angau office. One kiap officer whose name was Master Tom saw us and brought those who were sick to the hospital and others who were healthy walked us around and showed us the bridge the Japanese had built over the water.

We walked around and went to that mountain (pointing). We went to our home land and saw our gardens. Our gardens looked great. The foods in the garden were plentiful. The wild pigs roaming around in the night were being shot by the police and chased away from the gardens. We saw lots of food still growing in our gardens and we harvested them. Some were over-ripe and rotten. In 1945, the army started a school for the children.

They set up a make-shift canvas classroom for us. After school, the army took us home, to the village. We saw the Japanese leaving. The Japanese left, and the Americans took over this place, Salamaua. When they took over Salamaua, the Australian troops came down from Hidden Valley.

We witnessed the Australian take over Salamaua. The pilot and soldiers waved their hands at us and we went, and they gave us sweet biscuits, chocolate and cigarettes to the fathers and said goodbye to us and let us go.

The American set up schools for the children. They made makeshift classrooms from tents in the bush and taught the children how to read and write.

There was a time we heard a loud motor sound and saw big smoke coming from an aeroplane as it went crashing into the place called Boanzin. Luckily no one got hurt by that crashing aeroplane. We believed it was through God’s blessing that kept us safe.

When the Japanese came, our fathers helped carry their cargoes to Hidden Valley. But Australian soldiers came down and fought with them. Our fathers carried the bodies of the Japanese to Salamaua Hospital.

The Japanese were good to us. But when they ran out of food, they would go up to our gardens and steal taro and banana. They would cut the banana tree down and remove the outer skin and take the inside white flesh out and boil it. They also ate bamboo shoots, the inside white parts they used to boil and...
They were nice people, they gave us food like tuna, flour, biscuits. They gave it to everyone.

And they did not harm any of us. They were good to us. They didn’t stay long because the Australians took over and moved them out. They must have gone to Wewak and back to their place. The Australian and American soldiers were also good to us. They built schools for us and gave us education.

When the bombs fell into the sea, it killed many fish and marine creatures. There were dead fish everywhere, small and great, and they smelled terrible. We were afraid to eat them, we knew they were poisoned. Some of the fish came up to the shore and died.

The Japanese threw dynamites anywhere on the sea and killed a lot of fish. We used to run and hide when we saw America throwing bombs. The Japanese, unlike us, were fearless. They didn’t mind getting killed by bombs or shot by guns. No. They didn’t last long here because the Australians and Americans seized them away and they fled to Moresby and back to their place.

When Japan occupied Salamaua, a Master (white man) was seen at the top of that mountain. There’s a tree planted at the spot where he was standing and that tree is called Master Tree. I’ll show it to you in the morning when we go up there. He held a telephone and sat at the mountain top. He was sending information about the Japanese troops to Australia. He saw the motor (war aeroplane) at Boanzin, gave direction and they threw the bomb. It made a really loud noise.

That part of Salamaua had no trees growing. Salamaua has red soils and no trees grew because the bomb destroyed the land completely and was deserted. But in Laukanu, trees and bushes grow. Today there’s at least few trees growing.

Another story is about three men, namely Domado, Aquilla and John. They saw that we had no way to tell the Americans and Australians that they were destroying us and our land and so they swam all the way from here to Boanzin. They arrived at an island in Laukanu and sat there till morning. They left their shirts there and the Australian saw them and came out from their hide and took them away.

They discussed and planned about the safe route the motor would take to avoid killing the people. If the three men did not go to see the Americans, I think our place would be destroyed and we would all be killed by the bombs. These three men joined the army. One was a soldier and two were carriers. They went to Manus and came back. They passed away already.

Japan came here first but did not stay long enough because Australia and America seized them away. The American and Australian soldiers stayed long enough to build new houses.

We did not face any harm. But our home and everything we had was destroyed by the bombs and bullets fired. The coconuts trees were destroyed. We hid until the war ended.

Yes, I thought it was the end of the world when I heard bomb blasts and ground shaking at the same time. There were multiple bombs going down,
bombing the same place, Salamaua. They wanted to get Salamaua. It was a
terrible time for us. Fire was burning everywhere and the place looked so
deserted. It looked as though people didn’t exist, but some of us still lived
there despite the bombing. We heard war planes flying above us, we were so
frightened we didn’t even get to have good night’s sleep. We didn’t sit around
like this, when the war planes come dropping bombs, we ran to hide in the
bush.

00:00:54-00:01:32 At the time when Australia and America were busy fighting to remove Japan,
many of us were starving because we had nothing to eat. We were caught in
the middle of the war. Some of the children died from hunger and sickness,
there was no medication to treat them. Later when Japan was moved out,
America and Australia took care of us, they brought us to the aid post, and the
army doctor administered medicine and made us well.

PART 7 When the Americans got injured, our fathers helped carry them to the aid
post. The soldiers gave our fathers plenty of food from their mess. They gave
our fathers food and our fathers helped carry the wounded soldiers to the aid.
There were two aid centres. One for the navy and the other for the soldiers at
Salamaua.

00:00:33-00:01:06 Our fathers carried their cargoes, their food and brought them who were
injured back. They did not get cross or argue, no. They were happy to help and
so they carried the cargoes to and fro in the bush. They also carried bullet
cartridges, bombs or hand grenades. They would carry these cargoes to the
bush but when they heard bombs exploding, they would leave everything and
run back.

00:01:06-00:01:42 And some men who hid in the bush would carry those that were injured back.
Most Japanese soldiers were injured and wounded. So the Australians and
Americans fought the Japanese and moved them out of Salamaua. Salamaua
was destroyed and they moved the town to now we call Lae.

PART 8 We usually have plenty Japanese visitors coming here and visiting the site.
Those whose fathers and grandfathers had fought in the war. They usually
come and do memorial services for their fathers. Every year they would come.
The Americans and Australians, we don’t see them come here often, only a
few would come and see the place where their grandfathers or great grand
fathers have been killed and buried during the war. We see them going up to
Wau Kaiva, at the top of that mountain.

00:00:51-00:01:14 The Japanese usually visit every year. They usually come to collect the remains
(bones) of their relatives died and were buried here.

PART 9 There was a time during the war, the Australian and American troops came
this way and saw Japanese troops patrolling this area, blocking the road.
There was no way to escape so they headed for the sea and swam across to
the point on the other side. The soldiers and the carriers, all swim together.

00:00:39-00:01:44 It was a very long distance, but they managed to swim across. I heard people
telling stories about that. They came here and some of them swam to Buakap,
Kela Asing. Some soldiers climbed those mountains and came here and fought
with some Japanese. There was a big fight from morning till dusk and they
removed all the Japanese. This is what I heard my parents and some other people told me about. But what I saw with my own eyes, I’ve told you.

**PART 10**

When the bombs came down, they landed on two cargo ships carrying supplies, and everything burned. The wreck of one of these ships was up at the mountain over there but it rained and tides carried it down to the sea shore. Kotaku Mauru is the name of the ship. The other one is in Lae. They have the same name. These are Japanese cargo ships. Kotaku Maru, Osaka, the name of the ships.

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**00:00:47-00:01:13**

Everything including motorcycles, bicycles and other things were burned and they were unable to retrieve anything. And the sea waves brought the wrecked ship to the sea shore. The other one is at Markham or Lae.

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**PART 11**

At other places I did not see, but in my village here, I’ve seen with my own eyes the Australian and American armies fighting with the Japanese armies. The Japanese troops were trying to go up to Wau but all the roads were blocked by the Australian and American armies. So they fought up at the mountain. My fathers also told me. It took the Japanese soldiers 7 to 8 months to move up to Wau but they cannot.

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**00:00:57-00:01:34**

There were large group of American and Australian soldiers up there and the Japanese were trapped. Some of our fathers who carried Japanese cargoes and food supplies were unable to come back to the village because there was a big fight going on. Other places I heard was okay, but here, it was a tough fight.

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**00:01:34-00:02:59**

Luckily my fathers didn’t get any gun shot wounds. When they returned to the village they told us about what they saw in the war. It was a really tough fight. The Australians and Americans fought and they defeated the Japanese. There was a plane called Geniawe, it was a plane belonging to a company. This plane was loaded and was about to depart to Wau but unfortunately, the Japanese bombed it. And it burned at the airport.

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**00:02:23-00:02:59**

The Japanese also bombed the aviation including three workshops and some planes. Sadly some soldiers lost their lives in the fire caused by the bomb explosion. Others were badly injured. I saw it with my own eyes and also my fathers told me.