

Name:	Timo Deiwili
Date of interview:	8 April 2017
Location of interview:	Kaloi, Milne Bay Province
Interviewer/s:	Anne Dickson Waiko, Elizabeth Taulehebo and Keimelo Gima
Duration of interview:	23:30
Main language of interview:	English
Image:	

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW

TIME	TRANSCRIPT
00:00	[Interviewer] This is an interview with Timo Deiwili dated on April 8, 2017 taped at Kaloi village in Ahiona and interviewed by Dickson-Waiko, Taulehebo and Gima. And Timo is going to talk about his uncle Barnaba Ou.
	He was at least 20 or 21 years old when the war came, that's an estimation. He was selected to be in the squad, it could be with the PIB, took it as Pacific Islands Voluntary ... that's where I mostly think he was taken to assist the Australians and the Americans. He never went for training. His main work was carpentry, building houses. He was trained at Kwato as a carpenter. He was just a carpenter during the war. Before the war he was also a carpenter. I think up at Kwato Church there's a table made by him still remains there for us to see. A little coffee table.
02:41	His mother Dawei was the recruited woman from Ahiona to go up there, to Kwato. And that's where the whole family went up there and they all came together. They went to school and were trained in different areas.

02:59	So 1942 he was recruited to work as a carpenter by the Australians, by ANGAU or the Australian army? I think the ANGAU. He was involved in the constructing buildings before the Japanese invaded. He worked here at Ahiona and also down at Wahuhuba. I think they constructed houses down at Wahuhuba. He was not there at the time of the landing of the Japanese. He was here at Kaloi village living with his sisters and the brother.
04:12	They were preparing to run away go down to Suau where everybody was going there but with him and the family went up to the hill here, Magaiya area there and just stayed there without going anywhere for the whole time during the war time. They built a house in the bush and they stayed there.
04:53	Yes there was awareness of the war done by the Australian Army and ANGAU to the people. They were here telling everybody that safe place is transport you people out but my uncle and the family never went, they stayed here. I don't know why they stayed back here. But I think they loved their home so they didn't want to leave.
05:23	They went up to that place up in the hills. They may have been living on their gardens from previous gardening that they made. But there was a historical issue told by my aunty, Aunty Dora that one afternoon they were trying to cook a packet rice that was supplied by the Army and then somehow the Japanese were coming so they just put the fire out but through the heat the rice got cooked. They ran away into the bushes and when the Japanese were gone they came back, the rice was already cooked. Lucky the Japanese didn't eat the rice. They didn't attack; they were in the plane, air raid so it was alright.
06:33	Yes there were Japanese that came around here. I think there were dozens of them that came through here and went down towards Wahuhuba way trying to damage the airstrip down at Gurney that was their main task I think so.
07:02	My uncle, he actually took part in the war when the Australians and Americans were here, he wasn't with his family. After being with the army and at several times, he sneaked out to see how's the family and go back. He was just coming to see his family whether they were safe or not and then get back, work or what. He was a carpenter working in the army. I wouldn't know if he was paid, they might have made some pay for them. I don't know because it was in the war time. I think they have been paid. Because I was like what I said, I was not that close to my uncle after being up to seven or eight years
08:37	Yes he was awarded with medals for his bravery. I think because of escorting prisoners of war with the Americans. He's been recorded with other five or six bravery awarded Milne Bayans, that was Maiogaru the nurse then after him John Pilacapio, Palemeni and another one I forgot and then uncle Eli Dickson and then himself last one, the thin tall one that's my uncle. If you look in the magazine there, you'll see him, its written Barnaba there. I was in school when I took that photo from the magazine in 1960. It was just written as these bravery awards given to these Milne Bayans locals.

10:17	Yes, my uncle was dealing with the prisoners of war. I think he was guarding them. I heard nothing about his life being threatened or in danger.
10:48	I think the war was bad. I don't want to see the war again. That's what I am saying. My uncle I think he was enjoying his life during the war because young boy and the war was exciting. well I think his younger brother Treesa Ou was the one that staying in the Units said was exciting because he joined up with the sports and he was in the Boxing arena and he punch at the hanging balls and he could explain it to us. I think they were taught to box by both the Americans and the Australians. It was part of their recreation when they are not fighting.
11:59	He thinks they are very bad and cruel people because of what he saw was Japanese coming up and you know cutting our women's breasts and all these and that and he feel bad about them. That happened in Milne Bay, I think down at Cameron plateau and somewhere there because he actually being in there, around Turnbull airport, that's where he was too. He didn't give the number as too how many women because you know war but there were a few with cut breast, bad uh. And they died of course from bleeding. To that I know what the Japanese wanted, they probably say, I'll make a joke out of it, they would just want to drink milk or something so they try to do that but this is only a joke. He didn't actually see any women being sliced but there were words going around that he tells. The villagers whose women were treated that way, they were too scared, they were too frightened to take revenge against the Japanese.
14:17	My mother was still young and I think once upon a time they were hiding and the Americans went up and saw them wearing grass skirts so they got up and ask the four sisters, you know how to make the grass skirts? And my mother got up and said 'we'd know, we'd know' meaning that they know how to make grass skirts. The sisters got on her and said why didn't you people talk but I'm lucky to speak English. My mother wasn't married, she was young.
15:17	My father was in the war too but they took him down to Suau, Gawagawa-awasi, that's an area near Suau. They were there and his mother passed away and buried down there at Gawagawa-awasi. He was living with other Milne Bay people in the next village Gopaia.
16:08	My sisters were young girls but I don't think so they were allowed back then to make friends with the American or Australian soldiers because you know the war was still going on. Otherwise I'll be an American. No I never heard of stories about women having boyfriends with the armies. People were very strict. They just see them and call them dimdimes and that's all and you know runaway. Then the Australians would say we are here to help you but them nothing.
17:05	They supplied them with food. My mum used to tell me about being supplied with navy biscuits in the tin, they enjoyed eating it and they love more and the meat. It could be plenty food during the war. They were supplied with food, it depends on which areas, and some had lots of food and some few. I think

	where it seemed that ones that were picked up to go to safe areas, that's where most supplies went, in the camps. Like refugee camps. Where my aunties and mother and uncles where they were just by themselves. So they were fed by themselves.
18:10	Because uncle was a volunteer person in there so maybe he was working and next minute he said, 'uh I go and see my sisters, they got enough to eat oh? There were so many people living there who hesitated to move out so they were there. Everybody went to the bush. No the Japanese did not find them there.
19:10	No my uncle was not relying on the traditional magic to survive. He knew very well that the mother has been taken in as a leader in Christianity so he believed in God and he really you know helped a lot there. Because they were all Christian people. The villagers I mean to villagers, it's time for war now we fight, I would say that. They know it's bad but what else can they do. All they had to do is go for it; they were caught up although it wasn't their war.
20:17	My uncle would be in that better situation hiding underneath and looking up, looking at them bombing and ... He didn't talk more about them. I wasn't that close with him. 1963 when after grade three, I came back here and I met him just for five weeks and then I went back. And then 1966, I came back, it was a short visit too because I had to go back and then in 1972 when I was at Bougainville Copper working there, my uncle passed away. But actually I love to be on his side to listen to what uncle, the younger Treesa says, 'they love it'. They could tell us about playing pin pong with the Americans and so forth. He was playing both with the white and black Americans.
21:51	I think that he was courageous and he really meant to defend his country, you know beautiful Milne Bay that's all I can say. He didn't want to lose it, I would say that. He was just like uncle Eli Dickson and the other who took part.
22:15	Especially with Maiogaru's story I just don't know what to say in there. About an Air Force man being shot down and wounded and she loaded him in the canoe and paddle down, you know put some coconut on top of it lying down. when they went she was so nervous that they might catch her but nothing when they spear the bayonet in they just shot the coconut out and take the coconut out and said, 'oh okay you go'. They were stopped by the Japanese and checked the boat. But she was a brave woman. She's marvellous. Yeah really brave.
23:15	No, I never heard of the Sikana story.
23:25	[Interviewer] Okay, thank you.