

Name:	Muyawa Basinauro and Ruth (Basinauro) Kalo
Date of interview:	2 April 2017
Location of interview:	Rabe, Milne Bay Province
Interviewer/s:	Anne Dickson Waiko, Elizabeth Taulehebo and Keimelo Gima
Duration of interview:	34:53
Main language of interview:	English
Images:	 <p>Muyawa Basinauro</p>
	 <p>Ruth Kalo</p>
TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW	
TIME	TRANSCRIPT
00:00	<p>[Interviewer]</p> <p>This is an interview with Muyawa Basinauro held at Rabe village on the 2 April 2017. Also her sister is here, Ruth Kalo and we are interviewing them about</p>

	<p>their father Giliu Basinauro. This interview is conducted by Anne Dickson-Waiko, Elizabeth Taulehebo and Keimelo Gima.</p>
	<p>When Charles William Abel came to Kwato Island, he went around collecting village people from the bay. First of all, he did the collection at Suau island and Bonarua and then later he came to Alotau and he collected all the students or people to go up and be trained up there. So while they were training up there, dad was trained as a carpenter and my mother Violetta Basinauro was trained as a teacher in 1938.</p>
01:50	<p>During their stay at Kwato, the Allies came and some went to Samarai they went first to start their Base at Samarai and then some went across to Kwato Island. And because Jeffry Basket and Cecil Abel were there, they helped those Allies to come around the bay to set up their bases. These are the Americans, both Europeans and the negroes, black Americans. And my dad was taken by Cecil Abel to work with his other friends on the small vessels that went around the bay, you know helping to set up or helping during the World War Two. On the MV <i>Osiri</i>.</p>
03:01	<p>On the 25th of August 1942, all small supply vessels were sent from Giligili to get provisions and fuel supplies from the ANGAU store's depot at Ahioma. ANGAU is – those are the initials, but it is an Australian New Guinea Administration Unit – at Ahioma. One of the boats, 48 foot <i>Osiri</i>, actually disobeyed orders and went to spend the night at Wagawaga on the south of the bay. So these orders were sent by the Army officers at Giligili. Alright at 11 pm that night, the crew on the <i>Osiri</i> heard the sounds of heavy bombardment on the other side of the bay. Next morning when they returned to Giligili they learnt that the three boats that had gone to Ahioma for supplies had run into the Japanese fleet who had just arrived and were destroyed. The <i>Osiri</i> was now the only available small vessel to patrol the coast at night, taking fresh troops to the Front, picking up the wounded and delivering ammunitions and rations all the time under enemy fire.</p>
05:17	<p>One of the crew, and stretcher bearer on the <i>Osiri</i> was our father Giliu Basinauro. During the travel from the boat, they had to wash a lot of blood, you know every minute they wash blood and the bullets were all the time firing at the boat. But yeah they managed to escape those bullets that were coming. So they were busy along this bay going up and down. And the other men that were included on that boat were Lato Sisa, Merari Dickson, Mahuru Mark and Habona Tariowai, my mum's brother.</p>
06:20	<p>On the evening of 26 August 1942, eleven Japanese landing barges went ashore at Wahuhuba about five kilometres east of Alotau by mistake. They were actually aiming for Giligili but sea haze and heavy rain limited visibility. If they had landed at Giligili, they would have bypassed Turnbull Airstrip number three and Turnbull No.3 Airstrip at Kainako. And easily taken Gurney number one Airstrip and the results might have been quite different. The Japanese Forces then had to proceed on foot and with two tanks.</p>

07:28	<p>There was continuous heavy rain which made the tracks very muddy and progress for the troops was very difficult. The fighting was often arm to arm combat especially around KB Mission and at Rabe and the Japanese managed to push the Australian troops all the way back to Turnbull airstrip. This Strip had only just been cleared, the Strip, Turnbull Airstrip. It ran roughly north from the coast for nearly two kilometres (2km) and was one hundred and twenty metres wide (120m). Clearing of the field was complete but the surface was boggy near the bay making it difficult for tanks to cross. The Australians had broad and clear field of fire with the hills at one end and the sea at the other. A barbed wire fence ran down the middle of the strip and mines had been laid along the eastern edge. The Japanese could not advance without crossing this open space and it was here that the Australians were waiting.</p>
09:11	<p>So they had a very big fight down at Kilabou side. Thus the Japanese Force was finally defeated at Turnbull Airstrip on the 3rd of September. On the Turnbull Airstrip it was written 18th but that was incorrect. It was on the 3rd of September and not the 18th of August. 18th of August was incorrect. It was in 1942.</p>
09:54	<p>Alright um while when they were our dad was working on the boat, they were told by Cecil Abel to also do burials like they dug ... because there was this heavy combat up at KB Mission and then there were a lot of dead bodies lying there so they were put off the boat to come to KB Mission and they worked on digging. They became grave diggers. Both for the Australians and the Japanese. So they would be told by the Australian officers to use ropes to tie the dead bodies and drag them down to the beach. So some were doing the dragging while others were doing the digging and burying. So my father was digging and burying. So I asked him, "dad how many men were inside a hole? And he said, six Japanese to a hole. Mass burial. He said six to one hole. So I said, how did you manage to ..., he said we had to work hard. And one person to you know digging a hole and you have to bury the own soldiers by yourself. So our dad was digging and also burying the Japanese at the same time. And then his other friends were dragging the soldiers down using a rope. Only six of them were doing all that. Some were dragging and some were digging so probably three were digging Because those other boats were bombed so no other boats. <i>Osiri</i> was the only Mission boat that was doing all that work. So they were burying all these Japanese, all along the beachfront of KB Mission. He did not tell us how many bodies. I asked him but he said there plentiful, thousands. Because some they die on trees and coconuts. They have climb up there and bring them down. True. Yeah. They did really hard work and nothing was give. They were shot on the trees, others and you know some were on the trees I mean coconut trees and mango trees or raintrees so they have to tell them to go and climb the trees ... yeah, they Japanese climbed up the trees and were hiding on the coconut trees.</p>

	<p>No, no they fell down from the planes and they got stuck, they got caught. But some climbed. Yeah so they had to take those ones down and bury them at KB.</p>
13:13	<p>Dad was burying Japanese soldiers. The Australian soldiers were giving instructions to the natives to do the all these things. My father didn't like the work because it was too much and it was really a nasty job like blood everywhere and smell as well. Odour, it was very bad. But they obeyed orders to do that. I did not ask if they were given gloves to use. I did not ask him about that. I should have. No he wasn't affected after the war because of what he was doing. All of them were not affected. All of them grew old and they died. But they did the burial, they did the mass burial at KB Mission and then they went back again onto the boat MV <i>Osiri</i> to do</p> <p>It took them a week or probably two weeks to bury the dead soldiers. It was so many people, yeah. It was at KB Mission. They work in the morning until night. They worked during night times. They worked. Sometimes of course it was raining because it was raining season at that time. He said during the rain we dug and buried. He has to bury you know one hole and jump on to another hole. Dug and buried and the friends were pulling the soldiers down and lay them close to the ... you know pile them up. They had to pull them, ready to ... so what daddy did was he tied their hands together and legs together and then one, two, three, four, five, six in a hole buried and then he had to cover the hole and dig up a hole again. It was a very messy job and I thought my dad and the other friends did.</p>
16:15	<p>One Japanese man came and we were staying here up here at Rabe, that was in 1970 or no, no '69. He came and asked our dad if he could go and dig up one of the Japanese graves so he could get a bone. So he went with my daddy and they went up to KB Mission he dug one of the graves and he got a bone out and he gave it to him and he carry it to Japan. And he gave my daddy only a mosquito net and I don't know money, how much was it, he gave to my dad. K500. And then he said thank you and he left went back to Japan. Just one bone. We don't know it was a hand or. He didn't know it was his relative or not. It was just a bone. He just got it and went.</p>
17:23	<p>All the boats are still there. Some were washed out because you know erosion waves coming and they were washed away.</p>
17:40	<p>Kainako, we wouldn't know. We don't want to make up otherwise but we don't know which people (dead soldiers' bodies) are there. But that was a mass burial as well. It was a very big hole and they put all the bodies inside. It was not done in a way that.... those Japanese came and they asked us if we could give them a piece of land to put up their plaque, memorial. But you know it's a family land so we have it in the meeting and ... one of the ladies came one time but sorry I didn't get the date. She just asked if you know because they said when we come like we see only Australians and no Japanese. And we feel bad, you know. Because our relatives did fight and</p>

18:33	All these men that worked very very hard, the natives like Milne Bay really helped to help the soldiers the Americans and the Japanese soldiers like not Japanese, the Australians and the American soldiers like they did a lot of good work. And one thing I am not you know happy about is that their stories were not written like you know were not collected and you know what you are doing here, I think I am really happy that you came to interview although we were not in action during the war but our parents were. So I am really happy with Dr Waiko and Mr Gima for coming along and Elizabeth.
19:54	I asked about the Australians but dad was saying that they were loaded on the barge or what they took them to Bomana or plane. That's what they took them to Bomana. I didn't ask him about them (natives, if they were killed also and buried at KB). But the PIBs that were all working along here were sent to like what Lelesi was saying, they were sent to Bougainville and wherever Rabaul, Buin, Buna to help out there.
20:54	He was very very scared and he didn't like it because you know the bullets were all the time going to the ship because they were fighting near, they were carrying, during the war like they were fighting, firing bullets, they were carrying soldiers and ammunitions and whatever provisions down to Giligili. They didn't stop. But probably they hang up first Red Cross or something, flag so they were working but then at the same time they were carrying ammunitions down to Giligili. Their major job was carrying all those, you know carriers uh of ammunitions and provisions taking them down to Giligili. So they get their orders from Giligili and they would go up to Ahioma and take them down there wherever they sent them to go you know the captain would obey orders and that night they didn't obey orders so Cecil told them, no we will go to Wagawaga so they went across.
22:16	Like he was, Cecil told them that, he said I have a very strong feeling; I will not obey that order. So he told our daddy and all those other men that were with them. Mahuru or your uncle Merari. I do not know who was the captain. Merari Dickson was never a captain. I think uh that must be Mahuru. Mahuru Mark. There was a local captain. Cecil Abel was like their boss, supervisor or what. So he was telling them what to do, advising them. So when the officer, commander said, at Giligili give orders to Cecil Abel then he would go with those men.
23:19	Dad didn't like the work on the boat because they also loaded dead people. Food everything and dead people and blood. My father could swim even the other locals. He was a very, he was a tough man. Hardworking man. So he worked with his friends like all of them were very good and they obeyed orders and but one sad thing is that you know Cecil Abel didn't even ... write about their contributions too. He did promise them but nothing. It was a Kwato Mission boat. The other boats that were bombed were also Kwato Mission boats. I forgot the names of the other boats. Dad was on <i>Osiri</i> .

24:19	Mum and the two children, our first born and the second born were sent to Buhutu, Gelemalaia. They ran away. The Kwato people ran away to Gelemalaia, that's at Buhutu. So they were all there while the war was here.
24:47	Yeah my father was all the time working on the boat during the war. That MV <i>Osiri</i> . So when the war was over he went back and joined my mother because my mother was a teacher so when they post them wherever, you know my mummy was posted, dad would you know follow. But he just cannot forget you know those experiences that he has faced during the war. You know dead bodies and especially smelly bodies because it was too much for them. More than a day old. After the war, we wouldn't know if he was having nightmares because he's sleeping with our mother, and we don't know. No, no she was somewhere else. They ran away to Buhutu. We are born after the war, two of us.
26:02	So Cecil Abel was actually working for ANGAU with Jeffery Basket. That Jeffery Basket was like a patrol officer was going around checking. So actually your father and the other men were working for ANGAU. Yes, yes. They were working for ANGAU. Day and night. I already told A stands for Australia, New Guinea Administration Unit. That's ANGAU.
26:45	Only our grandmother was taking part, Garoinedi, my mum's mother, Garoinedi Tariowai was also helping at the Red Cross Hospital. She was a Sister. They were helping out at the hospital for wounded soldiers. That was at KB. They had another Hospital, a Base there for the hospital. She was ... army hospital. Where we stayed first at KB, the bakery that's where the army hospital was. So you know the tourists come and ask us, where's the hospital? Where's the army hospital? Or it's gone. They built houses and we can't tell but its where the guava tree, that's where the hospital was. So I told Elein and them to put the Red Cross flag, to hang it so the tourists will know that where the old American hospital but they never did. So that cement, they use the cement there to push trolleys because the hospital, from Aunty Bomaketa's house to that hospital and yeah that was another hospital there.
28:05	My grandmother was a trained nurse. Trained by Dr Vaughan from England at Kwato. And she was working with Dr Vaughan so she was really experienced during the war she was used to supervise those other nurses that were ... and Maiogaru was one of them, another nurse, helping my grandmother. I do not know about saving lives but she really worked on those wounded soldiers that were taken to the hospital and she was supervising and helping out with the wounded. For Japanese I do not know because she didn't tell us. But for Australians and Americans, yes she was also helping there. She helped at Kwato. She came down to KB she also worked at KB Mission. I wouldn't know what was that she was working at KB. It was during the war, it was in 1942.
29:50	So KB was also another Base there. The Japanese didn't bomb the hospital because they have that Red Cross flag, sign. Another thing was that, that was the heaviest one at KB. Heaviest fighting. They used their bayonets. Hand to hand. And that was the heaviest. That's the time when Uncle Eli rolled down

	and ran away. He was taken by the Japanese. Um like he was ... No that one Anne will story. We don't know otherwise, we make up.
30:44	My grandmother worked well with the nurses. They were happy with their duties and they obeyed duties and they worked well with the ... They fed them well. Good kaikai. Their kaikai was plentiful. We don't know whether they paid them or not.
31:04	<p>End of the war our daddy was burying those leftover war things at Kainako. The relics. He worked there so when we go to him he give us this big tin of bully beef with big tin of peanut butter with very big hardman (biscuit), you know those war kaikai, he give them to us because he was helping. They were still good and they were his rations. He was working burying those things so he give to us. so we tell our children about the bully beef they couldn't believe us that we ate that very big tinned- six pound meat. That was with Mr Pollard. We were up at Gehua when I (Muyawa Basinauro) was ...</p> <p>Our daddy worked with the war and then he went and buried the war things and he died nothing. He didn't get the claim. War claim was not given to those who worked.</p> <p>Because he was working with Cecil Abel.</p>
32:22	Gehua. There was this Administrative station there. ANGAU station. And the Patrol officers after the war, the patrol officers were staying at Gehua or DCs (District Commissioners) were staying up at Gehua. And then we had a police station up there. We stayed up at Gehua because dad was helping with Mr Pollard. We had Aid Post up at Gehua. That was before Alotau was established in 1968. There were war things or some other thing they were burying. And now they are putting all the rubbish there. Alotau rubbish is all put there at Gehua where they buried those things. Maybe they don't want people to know about those things that were buried there.
33:20	I saw daddy they were burying all the dump and I went and told my mum, "mummy, daddy is burying all the bells." I was telling my mummy. Probably empty bombs used up ones. I said, "daddy is burying all the bells. Because I would go up to Mr Pollard's son, his name was Graham and I was all the time playing with him and we would run down to see what our daddies were doing. So I was telling him, there are a lot of war things loaded them from Kaloi too and they would come to Nigila. That's why I was telling the tourists we hardly see any war relics because of them burying all those war things. And now the tourists coming, they asking to see the old war things but how will we dig those things out. They are all buried. Only people making gardens in the bush and they find like what bullets or medals and some of their necklaces, the soldiers' necklaces, the soldiers' tags with their IDs.