

<b>Name:</b>	Moki Malaila Assisted by Lediwa Dickson
<b>Date of interview:</b>	3 April 2017
<b>Location of interview:</b>	Ahioma, Milne Bay Province
<b>Interviewer/s:</b>	Anne Dickson Waiko, Elizabeth Taulehebo and Keimelo Gima
<b>Duration of interview:</b>	29:07
<b>Main language of interview:</b>	English and Tawala
<b>Image:</b>	

**TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW**

<b>TIME</b>	<b>TRANSCRIPT</b>
00:00	[Interviewer] An interview with Moki Malaila and he's going to talk about his father who was a PIB soldier, Nehemiah Malaila. It is taped on the 3 <sup>rd</sup> of April 2017. The story was recollected by Lediwa Dickson.
	His father was adopted into my family so my father and his brothers treated him as their blood brother and they all lived together. So as I was growing up I heard stories from my father, his brothers and him as well on how he participated in the war.
00:58	When the Japanese were still fighting the war elsewhere, the Australians came along here to do recruitment for local men to go for training to assist them. One white man, an officer I forgot his name but he came here and did the recruitment. And the first recruit was this one (Moki) father. They were taken to Moresby. This one (Nehemiah), Enoka from Divinai, Willie from Divinai and Kalebom from Naura or Gumini. They were taken down for training in Moresby. They were trained for not quite long and may be not enough men so

	<p>his (Moki's) father was sent up here for the second recruitment. He came and did the recruiting again and more men were taken, and one of them was my father. He was going to go but he was already employed in another job so he was advised that only those men that were doing nothing will go for the training to join the army. So my father remained and his father returned with the other men to Moresby and they were all trained.</p>
02:17	<p>From there they were sent to Bougainville to fight. He was already a young man so he should be between the ages of 21 to 25 years like that. He was mature enough to handle a gun and fight in the war. He voluntarily offered to go and also it was the government's law so he had to join. Also he was big in build and masculine and a fast learner so he was recruited. His parents were not aware of him joining in the Army and had left.</p> <p>What I know is that they were trained in three weeks only. Those ones who were recruited earlier on had another three weeks training. After that they were sent out to Bougainville. They were trained not to become officers or some of them should take on the office jobs, they were purposely trained on how to use the gun, hide from the enemies and track them down. They were taught only the basic rules. They went to Bougainville by ship.</p>
03:47	<p>That's the men from Milne Bay, some from Gulf and Central were shipped there to help in the war. General MacArthur was already transferred here so he was the who escorted them to Bougainville. He came to look after the Pacific region. he was their General and they sailed to Bougainville and were deployed.</p> <p>His father told me and also my brother in-law, Bala that when they were sailing to Bougainville, they saw very huge ships that were loading the landing barges. There were fourteen landing barges loaded into one ship and inside one landing barge there were hundred men loaded. The landing barges loaded them soldiers, their food supplies and ammunition and other equipment they needed. So whatever that was loaded inside in the barges and loaded on the ship remained as they are during the voyage. When the ships landed, the barges were removed and they started their engines and sailed up to the shores and landed.</p>
05:04	<p>The landings on the shores were however dangerous because the Japanese were well guarding the shorelines (beachheads) but they went up to the shores and jumped out and opened fire and were running all over the place. Some of them were jumping out in the sea and shooting as they swam up to the shore. They were smart even though the Japanese were guarding the beach very well and pushed back the Japanese who retreated. They forced their way up and cut the barbed wires and broke through the enemy lines. The Japanese were retreating and they were moving in to overtake their positions. It was really challenging and dangerous for them as well. He said that, all the black local men that went to fight there were very strong and brave. Those men that went to fight there, none of them was killed. All of them returned home alive. Only one of their friends, they were travelling on the sea and he</p>

	<p>was nervous or afraid and he fell into the sea and they never found his body. He was from Kerema. All the other men from Central to Milne Bay were not shot and killed by the Japanese until the war ended.</p>
06:12	<p>Many of the Australian men were shot and killed. But for us the black people I don't know why and how they fought that none of them got shot or even killed during the war. He said that, they did not fight a normal war, like the white men know about wars and how they are fought but we the local men we did not know anything about such wars. Our men who went fight did not adhere to the requirements of war; all they cared to do is how to kill a man and that is how they fought in the war. They were not afraid of the enemy but they did not die. I was told that the gun my brother in-law was using was a Bren gun which is not meant to be handled with an individual's hands, this type of gun is very heavy and the parts are carried by three people and is used when it's planted in one location. But for my tambu (brother in-law), whenever he's shooting and is overexcited, he used to carry that big gun which is only handled by three men and starts running and shooting at the same time. Several times the officers had to stop him and remind him that that's not how we handle and use that gun. Your job is to stay in one location and shoot with it, not to carry it and shoot. He was an extraordinary man because of his unique way of using the gun. Very big, masculine and aggressive man who went to fight. The local men were really fearless and brave, and fought the war using their own tactics.</p>
07:50	<p>He said that he was scared when he first shot a man, but their commander advised them that they have to be brave and smart, and not give the enemy a chance to kill them. You either kill or will be killed by the enemy. The commander said, 'do not think twice whenever you see the enemy, thinking whether to kill him or not because if you have pity on the enemy and respect him as a fellow human being then you will be the one killed.' So as they killed more men, they gained confidence and the strength to continue killing more. They were no longer afraid or felt weak. But they felt sad at the first time they shot a man.</p> <p>They were walking with their sniper and they did not see the Japanese on the trees who were preparing their guns to shoot and somehow their commander heard the sound so he signalled them to lie on the ground and he shot the Japanese men with his pistol and they fell to the ground, then his men carried them to a clearing spot. He advised the sniper and scouts to move some distance away and observe the trees so they did that. They left and the local soldiers that came behind decided to write their names or graffiti on the dead Japanese soldiers' bodies with their bayonets. The white soldiers returned and scolded them for what they were doing. The leader said, 'that's not what we do in the war, when an enemy is killed, he is already dead so let him be.' His father was one them among the group who was doing that to the dead Japanese soldiers. Their commander really scolded them and told them never to commit the act again. They were using the bayonets to write their marks on</p>

	<p>the bodies. However, they stopped after their commander found out and scolded them.</p>
09:57	<p>The local men went to war by using some of our cultural practices. They were fighting with sorrow in their hearts. They were trained to fight like the white men but the natives were to fight with anger. They did not care when to stop fighting and there was no timing in their way of fighting. There was no pause or rest to them. They wanted to continue fighting.</p>
10:16	<p>But their war with the Japanese was a bit unusual. The war they fought was very unusual for them. It was very difficult and hard work. But I was told that these men were very brave and strong-witted.</p>
10:48	<p>According to his father, most of them did not understand about the war and why they had to join to fight, you know during those times most of them did not attend any formal education and their knowledge was limited so they did not understand why there was a war. They only knew that the war had reached their land so they had to join the Australians and British to fight the enemy and defend their land. That was their main understanding of the war. However, while they were away fighting and by associating with other men, they then began to have some good knowledge of the war like, 'oh we are fighting this war on behalf of our families and our land so we have to protect them.' As their understanding of the war expanded so as their anger to fight aggressively against the enemy, because you know they left their homes in order to fight. They were worried about their families and whether they were okay, had enough food to eat or sleeping well in proper shelters. Such thoughts like these worried them, and also they were worried whether they will return home alive or not. Because they began to realise that it was not their war to fight but another man's war that reached their home land so they had to support them. They were becoming more aggressive and bloodthirsty to continue fighting. There was no thought of retreat in them even when they encountered heavy fighting. All they wanted was to continue fighting and for the war to end soon. That is why one of them decided to single-handle the big gun and run while shooting. That shows how fearless they were.</p>
12:14	<p>The relations between the local men, Papua New Guineans and the Australians was not something pleasing to talk about after the war because we know that there were other white men that came here and the Japanese as well, and now with tourism, we tell some of those stories to the tourists. The Australians did not look after us well, especially the army veterans, they were not appreciated well compared to what the US government did. I don't agree with the Australian government's actions.</p> <p>There were some Australians that came around asking for information like this and the war remains and they ask me what I think of the war so I told them that I am not happy because the war was not ours, it was your war but it was fought on our land instead and we faced the effects of it; our lands have been destroyed, too many cement blocks and pitches that we find difficulties when making gardens on the land. But so far there has been nothing good done for</p>

	<p>us. We are not happy with you (Australians). Some US men and Japanese also asked me so I shared my thoughts with them as well. We are not happy because our government is doing nothing much with your governments to assist us. we are not satisfied. We did not do anything wrong but we felt the pain and its impacts.</p>
13:39	<p>After the war, his father returned home and he was awarded some medals. I think he was given four medals. Yes, four medals. They were given only medals. His sister is keeping the medals after he died.</p>
14:38	<p>They were writing their names and marks on the dead Japanese bodies because they were filled with anger. They were not happy ... because you know they were filled with sorrow so they treating them very badly.</p> <p>Similar acts were done during tribal fights, but it was more different because our enemies come and fight us and at a different date we go and fight with, so ... but we don't inscribe names on the enemies' bodies, instead had their hands pierced and bush canes are used to tie their hands and legs and left hanging while a fire is lit below them. While hanging, their legs start burning up towards the other body parts until the person is dead. That's how our enemies were treated by our ancestors during the old times.</p>
16:22	<p>The Australians did not like trust us nor took good care of them. They were kind of racist towards them. Even the New Zealanders were used especially the Kiwis that we recruited by the ANGAU to help were not treated well here. I mean the New Zealanders because they were well-built, strong and hardworking. They employed them as securities or something like that. They used to treat them badly and people like my father saw them and was not happy. Because it's their duty to dump food and leftover stuff from the war but the Australians were not concerned about giving the food to the black people, they used to dump the food and pour petrol to destroy them so the village people will not have the chance to collect them. They destroyed the food so the natives will not have access to them. That was happening during the war. Many of the village people were not happy with them like my father and other men so sometimes they used to shoot the securities and collect the leftover food and things. They were shooting the Australians, the securities who were mainly New Zealand men because they were destroying the food instead of leaving the food for the local people to come and collect. After shooting them, their other friends used have the chance to come and collect food.</p>
18:10	<p>I heard that the Americans were very kind and good towards the local people. The Australians had no camp, their camps were down towards the town area but here is where the Japanese started to surrender ...</p> <p>(Suau language)</p> <p>Here from Alotau town all the way up to Divinai was all concentrated with US soldiers, not Australians. There were blacks, whites, Chinese and there were</p>

	<p>also some Indians, they were all living with the US soldiers. The Yankees were here.</p>
19:15	<p>Their relationship was on good terms and they were not associating with the white soldiers and fighting. Whoever their commander that selects black skin men is all, they have to remain in their group or battalion. The Australians were also on their own. The PIBs had Australian commanders. They were not mixing together I think because of communication barriers that's why the black skin local men were separated from the white men or we know that Australians are proud people so they would not lower their status of associating with the locals and this separation was strongly maintained during the colonial times.</p>
20:41	<p>They had very big mess house so all of them eat together. But when it comes to fighting then they go into their own groups. The black skin men who joined the PIB had separate camps away from the white soldiers' camps. The Australians were also fighting in separate areas from the black local soldiers.</p> <p>The Americans who were here when the war were really good people. War ended here but their relationships with the local people was very good. They associated well with the locals in terms of living together, sharing food and eating and drinking together. Even the local men visit their camps and live in them. The Americans had also black skin men among them. A good number of black Americans were given positions to hold and there were some of them who held high ranking positions in the Army. They all work together because black Americans came here but my father hardly mentioned about the Aborigines in the Army. But the black Americans were living here and they held similar ranks like the white soldiers. They worked together. They were very nice people because some of my uncles and fathers (father's brothers) were working and living together with the black Americans. They (local men) were issued with army uniforms and some of the village people saw them and thought they were really black Americans. They used to speak English together and to sell some local things to them (local men) without realising that those were their wantoks and some of them were their relatives. The black Americans were good people and they are not racist and jealous.</p>
24:00	<p>His father and other local soldiers had Khaki uniform, army uniform and short laplap, khaki also. During the war none of them was killed. One man from Gulf when they were traveling on the ship and he jumped off somewhere in the middle of the sea, I think he was afraid or not confident in himself. Otherwise the other men from Gulf, Central and Milne Bay came home alive.</p>
25:25	<p>I asked them if they used some form of custom things to fight but none of them was willing to talk about it. I think all they thought of was to fight and win the war, and also Christianity was already here, the Kwato Mission, Minister Abel, was here so prayer was the central part of their lives. They did not use any form of magic to help them fight. another problem was they knew about custom things or magic power but they did not have the time to</p>

	prepare them. But prayer was their only strength and they believed that while they are fighting, their relatives and families were praying for them.
26:16	After the war they all returned home but I do not know if the Australian government showed some form of appreciation or not, I am not really sure what happened next. I don't know.
26:54	<p>My mother was schooling at Kwato. I think she was in her late teen age. When the war, they had to run away to Duabo, there on the mountain. They were staying there and watching the war going on in the Bay area. She was also a Vercular teacher at that time for the Prep. So she was also looking after the Mission and living with the Missionaries. She did not come here.</p> <p>For his mother, they were here when the war came so they had to run away to Suau. Food was provided by the people they were living with there. They had to make their own gardens and provide for their food afterwards. They lived there like it was a home to them. They were living on Suau mainland somewhere at Modewa side. some of them were transported by the Australians to go there while others like his mother and her family had to walk all the way there. They walked up to Dawadawa and then short cut over to their destination.</p>
28:56	<p>[Interviewer]</p> <p>Thank you.</p>