

Name:	Francis Minu
Date of interview:	2 April 2017
Location of interview:	Madina, New Ireland Province
Chief interviewer:	Lalen Simeon
Duration of interview:	17:43
Main language of interview:	Tok Pisin
Image:	

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW

Time	Transcript
0:00	[Interviewer] The next person whom we'll be interviewing is Francis Minu. And he will tell us stories he heard from his father and others in his village.
0:40	Francis, you told us you were little back then, could you also tell us a bit more about the war and the people that came to New Ireland. Was it only the Japanese and the Americans that were involved? Please tell us your story.

1:00	<p>Thank you! My name is Francis and my father was one of those who fought in the Second World War. His name Iraungi Nogea, when he told me these stories, he explained to me how the war happened and how it went about. During the war the Japanese wanted to take over Kavieng before the Americans and the Australians could do so. However, they were late. When the Japanese came ashore, they offloaded their ships and stationed at Mussau Island while the Americans control most of Kavieng. Americans continued to regroup using their airport which they called Emirau. The bombing soon started between the Allied forces (Australian & American) and the Japanese. Everyone one of us ran for cover in the bushes. Only a few stayed back and hid in caves and in the nearby bushes. The Japanese soon pushed in and further dominated most of our areas. They blocked everywhere making it difficult for people to move around. No one was allowed to walk around. If you are caught, they will see and judge you as an American or Australian spy. And they will beat you, torture you and kill you. Despite their differences, they continued to stay with us in a safe zone. They stayed until their ships arrived and dropped of their cargo supplies. All their supplies had run out that time leaving all the Japanese hungry. As result they forced all men and women in the village to do their huge gardens. They called their gardens 'Nipo' meaning the Japanese garden. They planted Tapiok and sweet potato and had every man and woman working during the war. When someone misbehaves or breaks a rule they would send him to court. To be judged by 'Kenpeitai.' He's a man who is highly ranked and respected in the Japanese army. He has golden knife which he carries around. If you are proven guilty in court, he will send you to a place called 'Limburu' where you will have your neck chopped off by the Japanese soldiers. So everyone is expected to listen, follow orders, stay and work in the 'garden nipo.'</p>
4:57	<p>[Interviewer] Was this law enforced to both men and women?</p>
5:27	<p>Yes! Both are expected to work. During the night they would make fire and cook while being with the Japanese. However, they would normally put their all armory away and do fire in caves for safety purposes. Because if the Americans and Australians sees the fire at night they would certainly drop bombs at us. Yeah! My dad was alive when the Americans stationed at Emirau Island. They use to hide in the bushes whenever the American jet fighters flew over our shores looking for Japanese ships to destroy. Especially ships that carried Japanese supplies. The Allies always cut the Japanese off from their supplies. This is when the Japanese experience shortage in food and ammo. They always become very hungry and furious at the same time. As a result they always beat us locals for no good reasons. They go around and take our pigs by force. When they want our pigs, they say 'putah' or 'yu putah oh' meaning we want to eat your pig. If the owner disagrees they will kill the pig with the owner, but if he agrees... bang! They'll kill the pig and take it away as food. During their shortage of food supply they killed every livestock that belong to the locals. They even belted</p>

	<p>up the locals, chopped their necks off and killed them. Whether the Japanese rules were broken or not they killed people for no good reason.</p> <p>The Japanese also travel back and forth to Tabar Island. There a white man lived among the locals (Sorry I'll take you back again). At one point this white man called the Americans stationed at Emirau base and informed them that he would be executed exactly at 2'oclock by the Japanese. Without anticipation the Americans took their speed boat and headed for Tabar. That was the first time a very fast boat had been seen, we continued to hear its loud engine as it went out of sight. Locals believed that as the engine sound faded, the boat also arrived in Tabar Island. Following the call the Americans were trying to save the white man. Sadly, they never made it in time. He was already executed upon their arrival. They went on to ask the locals about the Japanese. However, their enemies took off before they came ashore. Nevertheless the person which informed the Japanese about the white man is still here. That person was here when the second world war started and he's one of the Japanese' spies. He's a 'manai.' They call him 'Master.' So his dad went inside the island to arrest him. They held a pistol to his head and brought him out. They searched him and asked him to break his safety box to see what was inside, in case he's holding on to some enemy contacts or information etc. With all the evidence at hand he was asked to carry his stuff and go down to the beach. The Americans question him further if he was responsible for informing the Japanese that lead to the white man's death. Malay declined and stood by his word throughout the questioning. He was then taken to the Americans, to Mr Bell and then to the beach. A pistol was then loaded and thrown to his dad. The gun was placed on his head and Bang! He was shot as he fell dead on the beach. They then left him there as they took the boat back. Sadly, Malay's two wives cried over his dead body. Again the pistol was held to the women's head as they were forced to stop crying or else they too will be shot in the head. After that the allied soldiers headed back for base at Emirau Island.</p> <p>When the Japanese were here, we were all here together. My mother was taken by the Japanese and was imprisoned. She was taken to work in their gardens. These gardens were situated far outside Madina, a place called 'Poli.' My mother would do huge gardens for the Japanese and they would literally beat them up badly or kill them when work is not done properly. Even my mother had terrible scars on her back, scars which the Japanese haven't compensated.</p>
11:45	<p>[Interviewer]</p> <p>Were both men and women taken away?</p>
11:46	<p>Yes! Both men and women. Some stayed here to work while others were sent outside.</p>
11:50	<p>[Interviewer]</p> <p>So Japanese had gardens here and outside of Madina right?</p>
	<p>Yes, our people made them huge gardens here at Madina and far out at Poli (Poli Amba). That was around 1945 when 2nd world war was close at end.</p>

	<p>News broke out as planes flew around dropping papers which read 'the war is over.' There was no more fighting. The Japanese had already packed everything. However, they never carried their weapons. No one saw where they hid all their rifles, they must have hid them in the bush, in some cave somewhere or maybe they sank them beneath the sea. As the Japanese were escorted out to Rabaul, no one really knew where they were taken to. Maybe they were executed on their way, no one knows. But what we do know is, this war was one of the dirtiest war Kavieng has experienced. The Japanese killed all our livestock, destroyed our gardens, raped our women and beat us up for no reason. They even made us bleed, spit on us, tortured us, killed our people as they pleased and chopped off our people's neck. Until now you haven't compensated us, not one bit. We were here together and we saw how you destroyed New Ireland. You've done it before just like you did again in World War II. You never compensated me before you came back the second time. Anyways, soon the war was declared over. Some went back to school. Others learned to speak Japanese while others learnt Japanese songs. The Japanese military police collected all the young men and put them back to school. They did all they could to win the heart of the locals to fine favour.</p>
15:00	<p>[Interviewer] Was that during the war?</p>
15:02	<p>Yes, about ah... 1942, 1943 and so on. The II world war ended at 1945.</p>
15:26	<p>[Interviewer] When the war was over all the Japanese left. Later the Australians came back again. Can you still remember? I believe you were a young boy back then. Could you recall why the Australians came back to New Ireland?</p>
16:40	<p>Well, when the Australians came back they took the plantations from the locals and paid for the schools inside New Ireland. Around 1946, 1947 and 1948 I was in school when the Australians were here. They were the ones who brought schools to New Ireland.</p>
	<p>[Interviewer] (Voice unclear)</p>
	<p>No not really, the experience itself was a challenge. However, we the New Irelanders were able to live on because of our customs and customary laws. It has held us together, the only change that came about through our experience was interdependence. We learn to work and depend on each other as a whole. These laws brought positive inputs in-relation to good behaviours.</p>
17:40	<p>Okay, thank you.</p>
17:42	<p>Welcome.</p>

