This is an interview with Mrs Freda Naembo of Sanananda village. She is going to tell us of what she had seen during the World War II. Freda Naembo.

Greetings to you, my name is Freda Naembo, I am a girl from Buna and I grew up at Buna. I came and got married at Sananada and gave birth to twelve children and seventy-two grand-children. I have thirty great-grandchildren. I am going to talk.

My mother and father went to the garden and I stayed in the village and war came. The Japanese boats arrived and the people got scared and all ran away and Australians got the message and quickly came and bomb their boats.

When Japanese boats and barges arrived on the beach at Kesada, their men walked on the road and Australians met them and fought with them at a place called Ingababari. At Ingababari they fought against each other so badly.

We were very small so our mothers took us and ran to the bush. We stayed in the bush while the big fight took place in the bush. Our mothers had nothing to cover us at night so they used leaves from the trees to make bed on the ground for us to sleep on, so as our grandparents and fathers too. We were still in the bush and the Australian governor Mr Smith came, at that time I was small and my grandfather told me the story.

We were still in the bush when Australian governor, Mr Smith, came but the people were still looking for the Australians and at last they caught up with the Australian governor. The Australian governor Mr Smith met with our
people and said ‘we have been looking for you people all this time, how did you come?’ ‘We have been staying in the bush, thinking that you are somebody else.’ ‘Bring everybody to me.’ The governor sent two people and told them, ‘go and bring everyone to me’. They brought everyone to the governor. When the people came, the governor made a feast to them, by giving them food supply. The governor also said, ‘these people have been in the bush so give them food to eat and stay.’ The governor told his labourers to stay away from these people but just help them, not to interfere, but to help them to build their houses for them to live in.

0:05:24 Until one year, the people lived in the care of the Australian governor and he told them, ‘do not go anywhere or move around, you stay here in my care until the war ends and we will take you down.’ The governor sent a truck and picked us up and took us to Inonda care centre and we stayed there. The fight continued and got worse at the place called Gerua. We stayed for three years and the governor did everything for us and took the Buna and Sanananda people down.

0:06:55 We were taken down to Buna and our fathers and grandfathers made new gardens for us and planted taro and we were eating our custom food and that’s when the Australians stopped their food supply to us. After three years we came back to Buna and we grew up there, and the Sanananda and Buna population grew. The story that I told you is what I saw when I was small.

0:07:52 Lord, everything happened and you saw everything, and it happened in your care. It happened, but no trouble happened at Buna and Sanananda. The only trouble that happened was the Japanese killed one of our Sanananda man, that was the only mistake that they did. That’s all.

0:08:26 [MT] Thank you Freda Naembo for your story, thank you.