

Name:	Anna Peter
Date of interview:	24 March 2017
Location of interview:	Gamadoudou, Milne Bay Province
Interviewer/s:	Anne Dickson Waiko
Duration of interview:	26:52
Main language of interview:	English
Image:	
TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW	
Time	Transcript
00:00	[Interviewer] This is an interview with Anna Peter taped on the 24 of March 2017 and we are at Gamadoudou. How old were you when the war came? You were twelve?
00:40	I was twelve when the war came. I was in Primary School up at Bisimarka, Wagawaga. We were there when the war broke out in Milne Bay. And from there, the parents had to come and you know take their children with them because the war was all over Milne Bay. When my parents came I had to follow them and we went over to Sagarai, Siasiada, that's over the range and the other side in the Buhutu valley because that was bit safer than around here in Milne Bay.
01:36	I can't remember when the war came but its somewhere around... at that time I could not remember but its somewhere around '42, '43. Well, we were at Siasiada for only just a year or so, not that long because you know the war ended a bit quicker than it supposed to be, I don't know but we came back after the war or we moved up to the corner right up there when the war was so strong you know bombs and all these coming down at Wagawaga and along

	<p>here along here and then because of the Navy Base here in Gamadoudou and so we stayed there for a while til everything was cleared and then we came back and went back to Kwato.</p>
02:35	<p>We went back to school after the war. When we came back they put up our school again so we started schooling again at KB. That's where the high school was. That's when the Abels: Russel Abel and them. I start in somewhere uh, sorry I remember. Yeah when we went I started off in grade 6 and then I went onto 7. But after that after 7 like that I was asked to help in the hospital as a nurse.</p>
03:25	<p>Anyway this is bit funny but since you interview me I have to come out with it or do you want me to ...yeah, all right. Anyway I was a nurse there and there's a doctor from England, Doctor Todd, I still remember his name, and I think one morning we had some kind of a test so he asked questions to everybody and he asked me a question. At that time we don't have liquid medicines or what do they call them but we had only tablets.</p> <p>The first question he gave me was 'how much tablet do you give to a child, a baby?' and because I was working with him I remember that we usually give them quarter and I answered 'quarter' and he said try again. So I kept quiet and then he went right round the other girls around there, my school mate is Lelegema and then he came to her and she said quarter so he said you are right so I got up and told Doctor that you are one-sided [giggles] and so that's why everybody supported me and I have to walk out from the hospital. I got upset about it because the Doctor has been treating me that way but anyway I've been helping him walking over to Sagarai, Buhutu area up to the Islands treating the people after the war.</p>
05:09	<p>I was about 15 when I return to school after the war. When the war broke out, we walked over to Sagarai. I was at Bisimarka and when the war broke, we walked over to Sagarai but when we came back and went to Kwato the Abel family put up a high school at KB so I attended there.</p>
05:51	<p>During the war as children, young children we go swimming in the river and all this and we just don't think of the war but when the planes are coming over or whatever we hear the bombs and all these you know we were excited to hear and to see what's happening so that's how we were but we were controlled by the parents telling us not to do this and that because the war is on. But as usual children don't listen we just do what we can do. I remember usually we go swimming in the big river.</p>
07:00	<p>I was 13 years old when we moved to Siasiada and 15 when I was taken to help at the hospital.</p>
07:14	<p>My father including the men, they were all helping like they work on these boats, Kwato boats. They call the other one Osiri and Labini and so they were all crews there to help to get the Army or the soldiers out to offload them at the place where they were going to fight because the war was where KB is. What they do is load them from these big ships and bring them to Rabe where the big</p>

	<p>river is, where the boat just push in on top of the sand there because it's a very deep water and that's where they jump out and start walking up to fight. Because the Japanese are from Nigila and coming down while the Americans and the Australians are from Giligili and going up. That's where they have quarters so when they come and unload them there. One thing I still remember the story that when the armies are jumping out some of them just fall and sink because they come out with their packs like bags and army yeah and guns and all these and they just sink and nobody bothers about it because they just go down. It's very deep yeah its deep but that's where all these Kwato men are helping.</p>
09:12	<p>The big ship was anchored in the middle of the bay but not far it's quite close to the island there's a small island out here right across that island there was a ... that's where they anchor. I think there was a big ship that sunk there.</p>
09:44	<p>The men were not paid and that's something I'm glad you asking about because we have done, you know they have done all these and I don't see anything good out of it. Even my father did all these and my late husband too he was still young when he was working too with them. There's nothing good today but I don't know you know what's the whole thing like or where these people are being paid on the other side. According to my understanding I don't see this.</p>
10:31	<p>These men were recruited just for the Mission name by Cecil Abel and Russel Abel who just asked them to help so they just went. But you know, they have to get bit of plenty of men to help because as I said today they just hold onto the ropes there are no time while the navies are jumping across from one ship to other and then walk up to KB area. Their office was at Giligili, the Australian Army. But I say the war was at KB. That was where the battle ground was.</p>
11:23	<p>And then the Turnbull Strip came about, that's where the war ended. That's why they call it the Turnbull Strip. That's where the last Japanese with the flag walking down was killed. I still remember the story. He was shot there. He was going down to Giligili and he was shot there so they call it the Turnbull strip.</p>
12:06	<p>There were some Kwato men who came to work for the Americans at Gamadoudou base and I still remember there were two, I think that usually act like advisors to the Navies. Advisor or like they were showing them what place and how to go like the navy this is the navy base here at Gamadoudou. There's a man he passed away already and yeah, my late husband too I think he came here the two of them. And they were with the navy people so they walked them down and up every now and then just advising them where to go and not to go. The directions or the shortcuts and to Giligili and how to evade the Japanese and all that. My husband was 23 years when he was recruited from Kwato when he was a teacher there.</p>
13:43	<p>I heard that there were some stories but I don't know or see so it's hard to answer that otherwise I give you the wrong story but listening to the stories there were others who were but not that much. But you can find out but sometimes I sit and think and look around Milne Bay area and you see a child growing up there and they are called, at that time they call them half caste</p>

	<p>today is mix race. So I always remember why is it called half caste? Is it just because their caste side? Uh you know I was thinking over that but then those children who were and now they are people of like Milne Bay people so I don't know where and how they got in here. So I don't know but we women sometimes are responsible. I always say that women are responsible because when women say yes it happens and when women say no it won't so don't blame the men all the time. We are the key to all these.</p> <p>There were some stories I heard but most women took their stories to the grave actually they didn't tell their stories about you know what happened during the war.</p>
15:26	After the war we went back to Kwato and we stayed for a while and then I lost my mother.
15:38	There were some Kwato men recruited to work as carriers. I heard about that like they do work for ANGAU but you know I couldn't remember who and who but there were some men who worked for the ANGAU.
16:13	Some stories I heard about the war like the Turnbull Strip down there.
16:29	At KB Mission near the foreshore is under that big tree there's a very big grave but it's not been taken care of like they just dig there and just dump all the soldiers in there. Americans, Australians and whoever is they just dump them in that big pit there and cover them. That's what I heard when we came to stay at KB. They told us that it's a big graveyard there that they dump all the armies. But it's not being recognized now or no sign or whatever to identify it.
17:10	It's not the same place where the Mission had its cemetery. It's down where the wharf is before and there's a big rain tree or whatever there and then you have this little oval well it's just near that tree. So I don't know what will happen but it's sad it's gone. Everything is gone past and whatever didn't work out it couldn't help the people who are being there or the people who helped this work or struggle to do this.
17:50	Like the government have their own, what's their name today, uh, and these people some of them passed away and gone and some of us are still here but we won't be recognised.
18:06	Like I don't mind unless I've done my part for the women and the men of Papua New Guinea. I've been a councillor if I can add this on for twelve years village councillor for Gamadoudou ward then I retired and I joined the Provincial Government. I represent the women in the Provincial government and then after that when I retired and because of National Council Women, I was elected National President and I retire from the Province. But in the Province I hold positions as Minister responsible to the Home Affairs, Economics and the last position is Finance Minister.
18:56	But you know to show the women that you can be there but I don't get them because I want to be somebody but I want to show the women that you can be

	there and you can do this, uh, don't rely on men all the time. That's why I hold all those [positions] but, uh, I get nothing good out of it.
19:20	At Gamadoudou American base, I'm not quite sure of what happened in there such as the jobs of cooks and labourers. One thing I know is the Navy base so everything is set here when they wanted them they just come and get them. You can see in Gamadoudou a lot of pontoons and all these things you see around here. I met up with some of the white people who came there and saw me and interviewed me and I said this is called the navy base and they saw these propellers and what not and tanks and all these. So I said this is their navy base and this is where the navies are and they live here but they go out to work. And a very long wharf along the coast just down here foreshore of Gamadoudou area. That's where the very long wharf is. When I came here to live I saw the old post and all these still standing and they stayed for a while.
20:55	I still remember the bay was full of ships that were anchored throughout the bay. What your father said is true. It was full of ships but I can't remember how many that's the question, somewhere around 90. Plenty of ships. I can't give you the figure cos I don't know or I didn't even try to count [Laughing].
21:33	That's enough because that's how far I know but if you have any questions then ask if I remember then I'll retell.
22:04	My mother was responsible to all those at Kwato who do laundry for the American army. She's been running a laundry what's her name, like laundry service at Kwato. When the army comes in with their laundry and dump them there and then they do the laundry and then they come back to pick up. There's a barge I usually see it coming in with the laundry and you know I was really always surprise to see because they got wheels when they come on the dry land, it's like the truck. I don't know what they call them but they drive them up and put all the laundry in up to the big house. They put all their laundries out and when they come back because at that time they had laundry machines and all these.
22:56	This was after the war or while the war was ending but I think they were still here during the ending period of it and they were still here. But mum usually do that and when I go up to see them. What are you doing? She says essh, we are doing laundry for the army and all that. I think the Kwato Mission was paid for them to do the laundry but I'm not quite sure. You know those things you cannot, they won't tell you what happen.
23:41	The women [Kwato women] were doing laundry during the war.
23:54	While we were living at Sagarai, we had to make gardens for our family to survive. What can we do, that's what you do. The landowners allowed people who came in from other parts of Milne Bay to make gardens and survive, and they do at that time. Some of us, like you know our fathers were working in the war they sometimes come with whatever is provided. If like they can get whatever to come and give to the family too because there were the old lady Galemedi, they run the Aid

	<p>Post at Sagarai, at Siasiada. Bubu Nedi she's the one that runs it. And I'm not quite sure who her assistants were.</p> <p>Uncle Maleko was medical boy at that time but I'm not quite sure and I can't remember. But the old aunty was there all the time and she provides all the service to the people.</p>
25:32	<p>The ordinary village people just, you know, they just entertained whatever is there, uh, they just accept it coming in because what can we do and like around the bay everybody, you know they have to find places like where they can go like hideaway and all these. They were forced to run away because they were told that, you know, the bombs might come down and this and that so they have shelters where they show them people and when this is on you can go into these the hiding areas and all these. And you know people just go along with whatever advice they have but I haven't heard any complain or whatever.</p>
26:35	<p>Thank you but if you need any more whatever then [you may ask].</p>