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<td>[Interviewer] This is an interview with Fred Geruwaga also at the Rabe village taped on the first of April 2017 interviewed by Ann Dickson Waiko, Elizabeth Taulelebo, and Keimelo Gima, and he’s going to talk about firstly, about his father Tiobi Geruwaga and after that his uncle, Allen, Allen Sene who was a medical orderly.</td>
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<td>My father was not war, war did not take place yet. There was no war but only Giligili, KB, Kabule Mission was started. And they planted kokonas (coconuts). OK daddy was with one orphan and he was a boiler. They boiled wine.</td>
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<td>[Interviewer] They were making wine?</td>
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<td>Wine, wow and whisky.</td>
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<td>[Interviewer] True?</td>
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So my daddy and there is another Kwato man. I do not know his name but he works in and he’s an engineer. Mamali. Mamali. Mamali. mm. Mamali, daddy, Tiobi and the cousin brother, Pepei Tarumoi.

They were boilers. They go to Giligili because Giligili was a plantation before and John White was looking after that whole plantation. They boiled wine, wine so many times they boiled and go and sell them at Giligili and then they go to KB and sell them. That, those days were colonial days. Only the whites, white men drink alcohol. They look after plantation, coconut plantation and then go to Samarai, Samarai and then they sold those wines. Then my daddy worked for, I think so many years with these, his two friends, Mamali and Pepei. So one time they went and they were arrested. Because that time Geua and Sinaeda was started. They were government stations.

And then, there they went to court and then they got that white man to Sinaeda and daddy Tiobi, Pepei, Mamali. They went to where Geua and they had court. So when they asked that white man, the white man said, “No, we went to Giligili to build the houses.” And the same story daddy and them told, tell those, what, magistrate too, that patrol officer, patrol officer. And so they ran over and said, no his stories are like this. And he said, “Oh the, the workers here, or Tiobi, Heua and Mamai. They are the same stories so he said, “OK release them.”

They were not boiling wine. And when they go and met the Dimdim (the white man) he was very happy and they, because he was very huge, so he got them on their shirts and then he lift them up. And said, “O I love you very much.” Because they were my father is a boiler and then one day I got drunk and came. You know and then, because he said, “Me, I can boil wine. What did you drink?” I said, “No daddy I drank steam.” “Me, I boil wine and whisky.” He said before, when I was young I was boiling these ones and I am a boiler.

So my father was a boiler. And he’s, he can boil wine. When he said he did that, after that war start, broke out and then dad was, the white man put them, dad was boss boy for those workers, and he was at Balaga where they brought, they built a very, very big barrack and there he looked after [them], the ANGAUs bring kaikai (food), rice, meat, and tinned fish and my father was a very, very big man there those days. Warehouse. That that is during the war? During the war he surprised and then there the Australians came and said, “You are, you are a big boss”, so my father was a very big boss.

And they used to take him around with to Giligili, KB. They go to Ahioma, come back again and he was a boy for, a big boss boy. And when these black people were running away to Suau, he bring them, give them kaikai and then send them. So my father was a very big man. And that time it went, went, went, went and then war was over. War was over and then my father was still, they got back to normal. From Suau he went and brought his relatives, family, families. They come here, was staying here and he got married to a woman called Failigima. Failigima and then in those days it was still a way back, so we went within Kundu at Diwala. And then at Poge, a place called Diwala and when
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he came down he saw a woman called Nita. Central Suau – Eliaba and that time mummy Nita had a baby called Matilda.

Matilda Kilakapiu. OK, his father is a Japanese man because mum was schooling at Kwato, and then when going over to Samarai he met that man. A man was self-man agency. His name was Paul Sigamata.

[Interviewer]
Japanese, or Filipino?

[Interviewer]
He was a mix-race?

No he was, his father was Japanese. OK. Paul. Then mama was going to that man and until mama got pregnant. So they have to sack him off from the Kwato mission. He had to go back to Kainato. So mummy had to come back and stay with his big sister Meiokiagabi. Meiokiagabi got married to a Filipino man, Steven Kilakapiu. They were looking after Kainako plantation. Can you see them? OK. Hm.

So when dad look up and when dad saw that woman he dislike Failigima with his daughter. Failigima was staying for nothing here and my mother got married to Nita – my father got married to Nita, so Merio, Lili Merio had to give this baby away to who? Nita gave the baby to Lili Merio. Lili Merio. (Nita) said, “You look after because you no, you are, you are barren, you got no kids, you have to look after”. So now they adopted that Matilda and Matilda is this Matilda Filiakapi., Matilda Filiakapi. We have the same mother, different fathers. OK. Hm. Our, our father is [unclear]. Now Matilda is in Moresby. is NGO, non-government organization, director, is a big lady. OK. And then. We go back to the war.

The war was bad. They fought here and went, went, went, went, went, went very, very, very, and went very worse. Very, very worse. And then no-one could go through Rabaul because they made the tunnels, a lot of tunnels. From there they have to go down to Konedobu, they sign finish after, they took off. They got on the boat. That time their Commander was Jacob from Taupota. Jacob was using black power. What Lelesi said was true and his uncle a Iauiau, this my cousin brother but the Iauiau told me the same story. What today he tell me but some he missed them out.

[Interviewer]
OK you tell your story.

I’m going to tell you, tell you right now. OK. That passage was closed, no American, no Australian warship used to go because they have a machine gun. The Japanese. So when it goes it was taratat-taratat-taratat and the warship would break. And then they have to tell B company – Milne Bay B company. OK, yes. Only Samarais went. Lainolo from Waima, Lainol Iosep, Uncle Sene, Iauiau, Teteara and the uncle then Niko, Poligai, they all went. Gerald they went. They went in a boat. They had an army boat. They went, went, went and very, very, very close and then Gerald made a black power. That boat was not seen when they went inside. It disappeared. No they only heard the noise but the Japanese is that this boat, there’s a boat. They all got guns, went there on the beach and they were saying they couldn’t see the boat. And then, Jacob told them to go on the reef, so everybody jumped off. They went on the reef and that boat.

It appeared. So they have to shoot it, but they already went. They went off the ship. They went off the ship, they were with the guns, they went up to that tunnel. Jumped off, OK, yes. When they went up to the tunnel, they were sitting down and they pointed guns and then they came clear. There were only blacks. They like sniper. The B company took over that place, they all arrest them, they are on hand-cuffs. And they hand them over to Australians and they tell them the news – another news was Buka is very bad.

Arawa in the middle, there’s a place there and it is a very, very big flat land there. They made power station, they planted rice, everything. And no-one used to go because that place when they go there’s only one track. One track and they had a machine gun. Machine guns everywhere. So, no, no there’s no Australians should go and when, when planes [fly over], they have machine guns there. They shoot planes and like, like how he said, they get very young girls, they cut their breasts off, cook them and eat them.

So they went over there and there’s an army, very big barrack, a long barrack. So they got their guns, they went to, the army boat, B company took went over, to where? Hm, Bougainville. Bougainville and this army barrack here, very, very ... Japanese army barrack. OK, there they all sit down, they start wiping their guns. Cleaning their guns. Cleaning their guns, they will go over that mountain. So there Iauiau was, his uncle – my cousin brother, he was telling me the story up there. And then that long bar..., Iauiau used to, to go because he was, he was a Commander.

He used to go and up, and go up and down, and asking the fighters “I am going to ask you, are we going to fight the Japanese, are we going to win the war?” And he said, “Yes”, the fighter will say yes, yes and he said, “yes, I want you to say yes because we are going to war. So we will go, go up there, come back again and, and ask another one – are we going to fight, win the war, win the war? and they said yes.

Yes, you must talk yes because this is, this is war. Like he was asking their mind positive. He’s making their mind strong positive thinking. He went to my uncle,
Allan Sene. He went to Gerald. He went to Nupe. He went to every fighter and then he was B company, was saying are we going to fight, win the war and this is, then he told them and he said just you must talk, say Yes. Positive.

Then it went, went. One night rain was going down and because the track was very small and then they had gun there and anyone go there they shoot him. It was very, very worse. Those people they got them as like slaves. So and they had a commander, Gerald was second commander. OK, when that dimdim, that commander from Australia, he was confused you know, so he asked Gerald. He said, “Gerald, this is only one track, how can we go?” So Gerald here, so Gerald explained it. He said, “Now try, now if you go tonight and if you go, and a bee bites you, how would you go?” So Gerald said, “we can go another side and then you will get on the coconut and cut the coconut and fall it. This is what we are going to do.”

So the rain was falling down and then Gerald got them off. When they went, they were going inside the bush. Gerald went first. Another one hold on his belt. It was muddy, very, very, very, very dark. They couldn’t see. That commander, Australian was in the middle. So they were going and another one would hold and when he gets his leg off, another one will step. And they were going, going, going, going until they went, went, went, went, went, went, went, went. You see their mountain was like this and they went and a very big what came down. They went in. Storm? Storm. Fog. Fog. Fog. No, no it’s not fog. They went through the rain and it was very dark. They went to the cliff, It’s a cliff – something like that. A cliff, OK. A very, very – it’s a cliff. Now Gerald was walking and they were walking like this and stepping. You know, I mean, very sad.

They had to win the war. This is 1942 and, and, and very, very worse war in the Pacific. Yes. So they were going and then they went, went, went until he see, bumped this big rock and said – he was standing inside – “OK, everybody come.” So they came together. Everybody heap up and they said. Then the commander said, the white man said, “how, how we going?” “You don’t know, you stop it.” So when, when they were saying. This rope fell down. From the cliff, top of the cliff. From the cliff. Yeah. I don’t know, witchcraft sent it down. Jacob’s mother. Because they were using black power. Hm, hm. And I am telling the right story. What Iauiau told me. He said laum we were saying and he agree, a rope fell down. This rope. You see. That’s the rope. This the rope … If I don’t … from Uria, Gominai, he said that he sent the rope and it came down.

We were staying, it bumped on the ground. It bumped on the ground and then, then if we like it. “You just see me, I’ll climb this cliff. If I die, go back again because I’m commander”. So he climbed. So he climbed and he went, he went, he went up there and at the top and then he put his leg like this and he said “OK everybody has to climb”. And that white man said, “I am going to die.” No, you go. Go, go. So the white man climbed up and he couldn’t do it so they swag him. (put him in a swag bag and pulled him up).
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<th>Interviewer</th>
<th>Use them as slaves?</th>
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<td>Yes. OK, yeah. What he was saying, that was the full story. But some of them, he mixed them up but I am telling you right now. They used them as slaves and then they put Gerald there and they ....</td>
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<th>Interviewer</th>
<th>Who did they shoot?</th>
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<td>They made a plan. OK the whole plan was, Gerald was telling me because he was vice commander for the Australians. And then there at the top of the mountain they put Gerald. OK. He was looking after gun. And when they looked down they could see rice fields, a radio station. They could see lights everywhere. They were dragging these Bougainvillians, Bougainvillians. They used them as slaves.</td>
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<th>Interviewer</th>
<th>Oh really?</th>
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<td>And they climbed. OK. They carried him. My uncle Iabute carried him, put him on his back. Like what swag, piggy back, piggy back, piggy back. He piggy backed. Piggy back, piggy back. But they said that he was not heavy. He was not heavy that time when they swag him... (Any umbrella there? Sorry I am mixing it. No that’s good, very good, very good. It’s very good. My umbrella is inside there, big one. I’ll go and get yet. Liz you come. I’ll go and get it. The recorder is here. The recorder is here.)</td>
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<th>Interviewer</th>
<th>They climbed up. They climbed up, everybody heaped up there. They went to that mountain. And they went to that trap where that man was looking after the machine gun, they shot him. They shot him – Japan, the Japan man ye, ye. was looking after the trap. They shot him. Ye, ye, ye. They shot him. He died finish. He died.</th>
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<td>[Interviewer] No, the B company. Samarai, a Milne Bay one, Milne B Company. Yeah, they shot...</td>
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<th>Interviewer</th>
<th>Gerald and that Jacob told him, he said, “When we go down and fight and it goes worse you get this machine gun. Just stand like this ‘tarata – rata, tarata – rata’ and everyone will die. We and Gerald, Japanese will die. You will only stand, only you, you get the message and go. So they put Gerald there and then they went down. Jacob took them with that commander, Australian commander. They went down. You know that field, they made the drainm so first drain, OK the second drain and he made two groups. That commander, Jacob, he made two groups. So those ones at the first line they made their line and the second they came and make their line. OK, they were on standby like this and then he sent two men. He said, “you go up to that gate. You better go up and kill that man – Japanese man.” He was looking after that garden,</th>
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Voices from the War

garden, the entrance. So Billy from Ahioma, and Iauiau, his uncle, they went up. Billy. And Kaoitos, Lalaeta, Kaito, Kaito’s father Lalaeta.

So they went up, they were stepping and he, when he got shocked, he just made like that gun and that Japanese man fire. Because they shot him. He was a guard. They shot him, he died. And then when Japanese heard it they all came down and Billy and Iauiau came. They went to that drain and they slipped even down. The Japanese came and they fired. That, my brother, I am telling you, you see, my cousin brother, I am telling you right now, we were in the drain and when, when we look up that place was jungle. When they fire that place was clear.

He said the trees broke down, they broke them in the middle. The trees were breaking. The trees were breaking and we all, we slept and we were watching like this until the shooting went, went for very long time. After three hours maybe it stopped. Then they stopped all together and then Jacob very slowly, he told the first line. He said, “Get ready.” So, they got ready and when they got up, they open fire. That all place was covered with fight, flames were coming up.

The fighting they shot, they shot them, they just it went, went on when bullet was finishing, they were shooting and then, the second line, another line came then, then took over, they joined, took over. They were shooting and that, that first line they move back and they went to the drain and they start loading, loading. Yeah. That’s what Iauiau was telling me.

In that, there’s another one. They already put it off. He was telling us the story. He said my brother, my cousin brother, the fighting was very, very, very worse. That fight was very bad fight ever held in New Guinea. Now they are going but B Company really made that fight. Milne Bay people. Then they were shooting, shooting it even it went, went, really they were looking. They came; they were taking over the front line. They move back, they loaded, and they came and join together and they… when they went up, that all place was wiped out, wiped out. And what he was saying. I’ll say it in the language because how will I say it in English? English OK. Because when they shoot it, when they will shoot it they will say, ‘inau itaru mai.’ That means my mother land on you. That means that different thing. They use black power. That’s the expression. That’s the expression. Now we are still using Inau itaru mai. That means my father land on you. My mother. No, my mother land on you. My mother land on you. You, you and no gat because you know their mothers look after them by witchcraft.

And so, one of them, like uncle didn’t mention, also is our bubu, Inaowaneke. And so, she just used her head only, she is giving assurance to the people that you don’t have to go on that side, you just have to wait and see which way the bomb is coming. And this is a fact, that she just sat down at her house, her house, her home in the village. Iauna and then she was just nodding her head. This way – which way the bomb is coming. She would do like that and then the bomb would go and land there, land there. When she go like this it will go over
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them. And truly she was exercising her power, powers of witchcraft, witchcraft in front of people, people yeah. And they believe in her, that truly this lady is going to protect us and she was also saying that.

You see if these people, if they shoot something up there and they break that thing then the bomb will come and hit us. But if, we don’t know what she was saying on top of that. She was just telling the people and that’s what our uncle, my uncle Iau, he did not go to war and he saw it with his own eyes. And that’s where he gained his strength. And that time uncle Tamugai was, go ahead there and then uncle Tamugai had a black power string so he tied that on the gun (gun). So when they go, go, go and gun will go like this. So the Commander was looking at him and he said, “Please give me that gun,” and he said, “No, I am not going to give it to you.” The Australian? Hm. The Australian, the Commander, he said give me that gun he said. Please give me that gun. No he said, “I’m not going to give it to you.” The Commander. They said it that but I forgot. He tied the string and around the gun. It used to detect where the enemy is. For it’s the string that, it’s the black power thing. So when they go and when it detects the enemy it will tell you where from, in front, or on the side, or on the side. And so the Australian said, “Can you give me the gun?”

OK like it’s a scanning, it’s a scan and very nice scan. Ye. No, it’s a scan but it’s native scan. What’s the right word? Scan or detector or something? O, ia, ie. Because he used, used to lead the line. When they go, go, and the dimdim, if you will turn like this – fire, fire and even Japanese will die. So the Commander said, “Please give me that gun.” “No this is my gun. I am not going to give it to you.” So it went, went, went, and they destroyed all the radio station, everything. The fighting went, went, went, and everybody died and they broke them and they were dragging them. You know. I mean going out from that field, I mean station, they built. After that it went, went, all the war finish and they, the B company they took their guns.

When they went over, they went up to the top of the mountain they [unclear] They find Gerald and they said, no already, war is over, we saw them all. So they were going down and like how he said. They shot, they throw peace papers because the Americans, the Japanese man he went to school in America. He was the top pilot in fighting. That’s one they came and they were bombing America. They made a mistake and they, they shot Pearl Harbor. So the Americans have to go and got the small bomb like matches box. They went and threw at Tokyo. Atom bomb, atomic bomb, a matches box. Hm. It destroyed that harbour. Tokyo was destroyed. It went, atomic bomb. It burned. It destroyed the place. Yeah. So that’s where the fighting was going on and when they heard half of Tokyo was destroyed already. That Japanese they suicide. They get their planes go down, they smashed on the America, Australian boat and they died. And they start a what a, down at Bougainville, at Bougainville? At Bougainville, here in Milne Bay. True they were doing that? Kamikaze. They were doing that Kamikaze? Suicide. They were suiciding.
Kamikaze they call them. Yeah. They were going because they were going in daylight.

And they were throwing peace papers. And then when they were going down the Japanese man, he saw the fighters were going. B company, so they got his friends what I mean already stink, and the body was very stinky. He went, he rubbed it on his body, and he tricked to sleep, to die, to die. He was tricking, tricking and that B Company went and another, another man went inside, Bili from Ahioma. He went, he went, he went toilet. They were going and that man tricked and he went to open, he went to shoot them all of them and then he was at the side, the Japanese was getting up trying to shoot so he shot that Japan man. Hm. And then when they turn around they saw this. Why are you doing this? No, this man tricked so they have to all come back and start shooting him. And that Commander got up and told them, “No don’t shoot him like this. You, you are spoiling the fighting law. You cannot shoot him like that.” They shot him. It’s there, they went to Bougainville what barrack and peace started, no fight peace, war ended. War ended. THE END. The end of the story.

And then like he said. They were coming and Lainolo Loiai from Waima, he got that news that they married his what girlfriend already. So what he did. He wrote a small note. He got his gun, his bag on his, his swag on his back and he jumped.

[Interviewer]
O sorry, hm into the sea?

Into the sea, they couldn’t find him. Hm. And when they read that newspaper – oh is like this, and like that. He committed suicide because of his wife. His namesake is the councillor for ... Yes his namesake. OK, yesterday I was directed to ask him but... Lainolo Loia, he died already. Is dead. First alive. He was a soldier. B company. But that’s the namesake. That’s the namesake. Waima Company. Waima Company.

OK like what he said. They came to what, and then Jacob’s cousin brother got up and Arima, Arima spoiled his friend. He drank, that’s only the accident they.

[Interviewer]
Did your uncle mention that there were part payments, or what? Lainolo Liodi. It was, it was an accident or he did it, he meant to do it?

He meant to do it. Yeah. Yeah. – killed his brother.

[Interviewer]
The one that fell, fell off the boat, that’s the same one or it’s a different one?

I’ll find out from the Taupota people. Well I think it’s the same story. Because they couldn’t tell us why he fell off the boat but he is telling us the story that he actually committed suicide.
And the note, and the note he wrote, they brought it, they showed it to the girl?

Yeah. Yeah. Aoasuibi, got married to another woman/man. Oasivas is my sister.

[Interviewer]
Who wrote the letter?

Who? Yeah, he wrote the letter and he suicide. Or he heard that – his wife got married, his girlfriend married to another man. The wife was thinking that he would die. He won’t come back. He wouldn’t make it. So she married another man. He was not, he was not patient. So that’s, that’s a very short story. Thank you for – yes it’s a very long story. It’s a very good story.

[Interviewer]
Thank you for the interview.

But it was very, very worse in Milne Bay. Hm. Milne Bay is Giligili. And where Kainako we stay underneath is Turnbull airport – that’s their airport. Where the Memorial is. 76 Squadron OK. OK. Hm.

[Interviewer]
Ae, Fred I really enjoy the story with action, and the action. We need a video, camera. Hm.

But truly it’s ... No but it’s the bloodiest war. Yeah. But also they said that Sikana is from Japan. But he fought without a gun, he used his hand to fight, bayonet and he fought all the way from Waupa down to Giligili. And he was the one that he stood the flag. Hm. He stood the flag but the Australians...

[Interviewer]
The Japanese?

Yeah, The Japanese. Yeah, he is a Japanese man. His name is Sikana. Sikana. But then the Australians they used the guns to shoot him but he used his hand.

See, see this thing. There’s a war, war. You see. This place was full of bullets. Bullets, yeah. Hm. They are still there. There’re plenty. There were so many mines around here inside the, yes it’s dangerous. So you have to be very careful, it’s very dangerous. Like what you said there, who was sitting down over the mine. Oh but Keduma Kaebaka. Yeah. And they used the mine, they thought it was a piece of rock so they put it and they made their fire to cook. E, e. So after they made a fire and they put the pot on top and then the mine exploded and it killed ... . Oh I forgot. Sorry. Waimeta. Waimeta.

It is just over the other side. After the war when they came back. Not Kioma, that Keruna Kaimako was there so, the I should know it, it hit hand and leg, but the other, the other lady died. But Alona, Alona yes, and who else? Alona, Kerusoa, Rimi, Rimi, Rimi. Rimi didn’t die but Arona, Kerusoa they were playing with the cartridge down at Dubumutuna, down at Rabe there. Here, just here, at the wharf. At the wharf and so today they were, they are buried here at the...
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Voices from the War
cemetery. They were playing with the bullets and the bullet fire and it killed them.

[Interviewer]
How old where they?

I was not born yet. Hm.

[Interviewer]
Were they big people or were they children? Were they children?

Big people, Hei, they were young, young men ooi, and Limi didn’t die. All his fingers, all the fingers were chopped off, were cut off with, by the bullet. Like the Waga story

[Interviewer]
Ani bomuo katilidi (hand bomb or cartridge)?

O but that’s a different story.

[Interviewer]
Yeah, that’s a different one? You know what’s this?

That’s over at Waga Waga. Bullets and they say what’s this? They were ye, trying to what – fire it – bullets.

But then also there was a story after the war when the Americans were trying to teach them, teach the old people like karate or judo. I don’t know. And then my father also got angry because ... This is my father’s story. After the war the Americans, Americans blacks were teaching them how to fight so my father, he’s a short tempered man. And he saw this soldier doing it other boys, the other I mean old people. Old people and he said you have to, you people clear and I’ll come and cut him into pieces. So he allowed my father to go up and cut him.

[Interviewer]
Where?

So when he went up my father was throwing the from the bush knife and he hold him here and the bush knife from turn back and he almost cut himself. And that’s where the Americans were doing, like they were teaching them how to, some sort of self-defence or what.

But there is also another good part of it, like Oneli they got him to be a mechanic. Like they were teaching the people here, young men. New skills after the war. After the war they taught Oneli to become a mechanic and they hid Moses and they took him to Americ ... So they took, taught him judo. Judo expert, judo fighter and they brought him back and that Moses and one is Oneli two, too. They taught him that a mechanic and he was very good and they are ones that they open Highlands Highway. They start building Highlands Highway.
But I think this is at Ahioma, Wahuhuba to Giligili is the fighting zone. Yeah, that’s the fighting zone and it really affected this area because the war came and spoiled all war gardens, all our betel nut, all our coconuts. These are new coconuts they plant today. When they were … guns they were cutting you know cut. It really destroyed the trees. It split the trees. Yes. And the cement on the ground. Yes, and most of the cement and … those are the war, war relics, you can see them. This one, those ones there. All the way. The streets are war relics.

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<tr>
<th>Interviewer</th>
<th>So everybody here got war claims. War claims.</th>
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<td></td>
<td>No, our fathers got the war claims. Yeah, they got the money.</td>
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<td>They got the money but I think it was a very small money. it was a small amount and we should get another one. Ha, ha, ha. Ye. Well because the what is still here remain …</td>
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<td>But for my uncle launa, if you want to get more information I don’t know, you may get it more information. I do they call it … Office of Information or something like that.</td>
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<td>It no longer exists. That office … that department may be from the army, may be from your brother or what? Ye, because I think somebody come and interview him, and he wrote something about him. He’s from also Basiliki … Martin Bulu.</td>
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<td>No, he died long time ago. That must be his son. No he died. Yes I know but he died long time ago. No he was here. Really?</td>
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