

Name:	Stella Harika
Date of interview:	Friday, 23 May 2014
Location of interview:	Kokoda Primary School, Kokoda, Northern Province
Chief interviewer:	Didymus Gerald
Time interview concluded:	3:34 PM
Duration of interview:	12:07:87
Main language of interview:	English
Image:	

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW

Time	Transcript
00:00	[INTERVIEWER]: This is interview number 11. Stella Harika is talking about her dad's Clement Harika's involvement in the war. This is Clement Harika's story as told by Stella Harika.
00:17	Thank you, my dad did not fight or carry in the war. I think it's proper that I'm last because he actually took part in helping to reconstruct after the war. So I think it's proper that I'm talking after the others have given their stories of the war but what took place after the war.
00:44	When the recruitment of carriers was taken in June 1942 by Claude Champion, the ANGAU officer, my dad, being indigenous of this land here, he marched up to be recruited. But in that time when they were doing the selection, they had to size them, the officer had to size them by getting the hand over the ear. Those who had their earlobe touching their hand, past touch the earlobe, were recruited, and in his case, his hand could not touch his earlobe, so he was quite young and he was sent off, but that didn't stop him from wanting to help, he really keen because he was indigenous of this land here.
01:34	So in whatever way he could, he did his best to help look after the Australians, and because some of the battle, heavy fighting was around here, he assisted by helping to supply food gardens when the Australians ran out of food. So the people had deserted their gardens, their villages, and were living in caves and places that were not easily accessible by the enemy. So he would run around, do odd things, making sure the Australians were fed. He would go up to Ebei, where Mr Kienzle's plantation was, pineapple plantation, make sure with the help of people they load pineapples to feed the Australians, even going through the gardens, harvest pawpaw. The people had deserted their villages and their food gardens and had gone. He was not recruited but he did his best to make sure the Australians were fed while here, in this place here.
02:38	Mr Kienzle's plantation, at Ebei, they were deserted, so they would go up and load pineapples, and fruits that they could find, food that they could find to make sure Australians were fed. And they plant there, according to what he has told, I'm telling the story according to what he has told. The Ebei airfield was Mr Kienzle's private airfield and that was the airfield used during the war. Because he was a businessman, he needed his charters coming in from Port Moresby, and he helped build, he was recruited, he was employed by Kienzle at that time. He was quite a very young man, but he was active and very concerned.
03:40	So he helped Mr Kienzle's labourers to build the airfield at Ebei which was his private airfield and after the war, the airstrip here at Kokoda was built, it was after the war, not during the war, but during the war the Ebei airfield was used. After, because of his ability, he was employed by the patrol officer at the time. He was very useful, he was involved in census, he would go up as far as Myola taking stock

	of all the ammunitions that were left, whatever needed to be transported back to base,
04:28	he made sure that he assisted the Australian officers by taking census of whatever ammunitions that were left and even the people that were wounded, the locals, the indigenous, the native carriers, those were wounded, those who, he made sure he recorded them. He also mentioned that it was this was, soon after the war, so he helped to – there was a stage where, he didn't tell me this but he told it to my brother, he only told my brother some of the stories where our dad's need to tell us, he would tell us, certain stories that they need to tell the boys only, so in this instance he told my brother that there were wounded soldiers which he was asked to shoot, and he he couldn't, the locals, the natives, and he said I can't do that, he would take away from the officers and then talk to them and try to get them to escape.
05:38	He didn't want to be responsible for getting rid of the wounded local carriers, so that was one of the stories he told my brother who had told me. Also he helped, he also got up with the patrol officer, and went up as far as Salamaua, Finschhafen, just doing what he could do, taking notes, taking like almost census and collecting back to where the headquarters were, the leftover ammunitions and guns and all that stuff that needed to be noted. My dad actually was involved in helping to reconstruct, bringing the people back to rehabilitation and bring the people back to their communities and also taking responsibility over the rations that were dropped off after the war.
06:30	My grandfather actually had a really big warehouse where all the rations were kept, whatever food that was unloaded by air, they couldn't land, so they were just dropping the food all around this place and they would carry them and he would make sure, because my grandfather was also a village corporal or something, so he made sure that all the rations were taken back to the food store, so from the food store it would be distributed out to the people. And that was my dad's involvement. After, soon after the war, but after the war, because of his ability he also became the laundry boy to the patrol officer and he had a big contribution towards that, this is just a part of the war story that we are collecting, so I'm just putting that down, thank you.
07:28	[INTERVIEWER]:  Was your father alone in this exercise or were there other young men involved in assisting him doing the kind of work that he did? Did he tell you any stories relating to this?
	Yeah, there were other village boys around who helped, but he was the right-hand man to the patrol officer at that time, so he had a lot of trust from the patrol officer and so he ... thank you.
07:57	[INTERVIEWER - JA]:  Just want to ask you one question before you may leave. The ammunitions at that time straight after the war, some might be like live, or still effective. How did they

	plan to dispose of it, or did he tell you something like maybe a person going around and trying to make sure it doesn't blow up and kill them?
	He didn't go on his own, he went with a team. So they made sure that these things were recorded and transported back. The carriers did the carrying but he helped with what he could to make sure the orders were carried out after the war.
08:46	[INTERVIEWER - JA]: My second question. Did he tell you something like some mass burial here or some areas like that?
	This very place we are standing in used to be the war cemetery, the primary school here, the hospital was next to our village, the war hospital, was just next to my village, where I am, part of my village there was the war hospital. The old airstrip site was also a war hospital, the current airstrip site was also a war hospital too. Makeshift army war hospitals, I'm talking about.
09:28	[INTERVIEWER - JA]: I believe that there might be some ammunitions still under the ground and remains in here?
	There could be. Maybe when some heavy construction starts things come up, right now there could be, but tins, we do find lots of empty tins, because when rations were being supplied it was all over the bush, empty tins we still find them. There are packs of hardman biscuits in these big square tin containers and bully beef packed in these big square tins, quite big tins, all these things they came in tins not in parcels and packets as we see now, but all the rations were dropped off in tins.
10:19	[INTERVIEWER]: Stella, according to your father's account of the war, like you said, those seriously wounded, we was asked to shoot them. Is that correct in what you said?
	He told the story to my brother, so this is along the track, he was asked to get rid of them but he refused. He just took them away and told them to escape, and so they did. He didn't actually shoot them.
10:51	[INTERVIEWER]: Were they carriers?
	Carriers.

	[some further discussion, not related to the interview]
11:58	[INTERVIEWER]: Thank you Stella, thank you Stella for your time.