

Name:	Vavaga Marina
Date of interview:	Friday, 4 July 2014
Location of interview:	Kagi village, Central Province
Chief interviewer:	Javith Abavu
Time interview concluded:	12:12 PM - No
Duration of interview:	16:57:07 - No
Main language of interview:	Kagi
Image:	

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW

Time	Translation
00:03:13:10 – 00:03:29:10	When the war started at Buna our fathers told us the story. We were very frightened about where to go and hide.
00:03:29:10 – 00:03:43:08	Our fathers started moving us to the caves and they started building shelters for us.
00:03:43:08 – 00:03:50:11	When the war reached us we were already out of the village hiding in the prepared shelter and caves. Our fathers came to check up on us.
00:03:50:11 – 00:03:58:23	They came to check us and informed us that the war has already started so no one can go back to the village. While coming out and checking us during the war the fathers were informed by the Australian soldiers to collect the rations and supplies at Myola 1 to feed their families.
00:03:58:23 – 00:04:05:17	Our fathers sometimes hide secretly and steal these supplies and bring them to us to store for future use.
00:04:05:17 – 00:04:14:20	When the war came not only us but the nearby villages also ran off into the forest to hide themselves in the caves.
00:04:14:20 – 00:04:19:19	The fathers left all the mothers with the children at the caves and came to check the villages every now and then.
00:04:19:19 – 00:04:33:24	They usually go back informing us that our houses, gardens and other properties are no longer existing. All these properties were destroyed by the Japanese soldiers and most of the houses were burnt down. We felt very sad for our belongings.
00:04:33:24 – 00:04:43:15	The Japanese came in destroyed our gardens and cut all the bananas, sweet potato and all the other gardens had been chopped down and destroyed. Not only were our gardens destroyed but our garden houses and animals were also destroyed. From our hiding spot we could clearly see smoke coming out of the gardens and the villages.
00:04:43:15 – 00:04:56:18	When the Japanese came in they threw bombs, they used machine guns and destroyed all the properties. We were very scared to hear the noise and couldn't go out to help anyone but our immediate families.
00:04:56:18 – 00:05:04:20	That made everyone flee in all directions. Men started looking for supplies because the supply was now getting low. All the men walked to Myola 1 collecting supplies for the families when the supplies got low. It was a very terrible day for us. Brave men were able to collect supplies, whereas less courageous men were unable to collect as much for their families.
00:05:04:20 – 00:05:15:21	The warplane threw in not only food supplies but other war equipment such as bombs, hand grenades, and bullets bringing them to the Australian soldiers for fighting.

00:05:15:21 – 00:05:25:19	Our fathers regularly did these activities carrying these supplies to us and some of the food supplies came from the swamps where they usually use sticks as spades to dig up the ground to get food supplies.
00:05:25:19 – 00:05:34:11	In that period of the war, we were very very poor people. We didn't have things like clothing to wear, beddings to use at night and utensils to cook with. However we survived through making use of natural resources from the bush.
00:05:34:11 – 00:05:47:16	Today in this modern generation you are so lucky to have all these resources. You find life very easy and enjoyable. In our time during the war we helped our parents to survive.
00:05:47:16 – 00:05:58:22	Our fathers usually return to our hiding caves reminding us to be very wise in using the supplies because the war is very devastating and all the food houses and gardens were burnt down. We could see this at nighttime, flames coming up from the houses and smoke coming from the garden houses.
00:05:58:22 – 00:06:26:06	This war came through here and continued onto Ioribaiwa. When the war reached Ioribaiwa ridge, the commander's son by the name of Italy from Japan was shot dead. Italy from Japan contacted the war operations in PNG especially the stations along Kokoda to Ioribaiwa informing them that I need the body of my son to go back to Japan. However, he commanded that as of today I will be stopping the supplies of war equipment, food rations or any other kind of support will stop because my son has been killed. Then the war retreated.
00:06:26:06 – 00:06:43:14	When the war retreated, so many young men from Kaiva and others from the coastal side came along through small tracks helping and at the same time killing innocent people that they have never known.
00:06:43:14 – end	The Orokaivas did not follow the main track but used garden tracks, hunting tracks, streams and rivers to walk up killing our own Koiari people that made us very very frightened to go out on our own. At that time, no-one cared about us.
00:06:55:15 – 00:06:58:24	Seeing the situation, our very own young men retaliated chasing the Kaivas and others who have helped the Japanese. From Kagi to Buna.
00:06:58:24 – 00:07:09:12	When the war retreated back to Buna, people like Lomola Melia, Ilua Melia, Moi Melia took part in the war as carriers. Out of these three brothers Moi was given the duty as a medical officer.
00:07:16:09 – 00:07:24:14	Mr Moi Melia is referred to ask a medical boy assisting the Australian doctors dressing the wounded and reporting them to the carriers to carry them to the hospital base if the soldier had been seriously wounded by bullets or the gun.
00:07:24:21 – 00:07:42:00	That is the story about my husband's family members. My father and his brothers were also involved in the war campaign but they regard themselves as local informers getting information from the soldiers and carriers and reporting back to us what was going on. Also in that event, the soldiers used horses where he transports supplies, ammunitions or any other elated equipment that has to be used in

	the war. The local carriers use sticks, iron bars and spades to make a pathway for the horse to move up and down from Buna to Ioribaiwa.
00:07:42:00 – 00:07:48:02	The horses were used sometimes as the main transport in shifting things from one location to another during the war. While the labourers or carriers following at the back.
00:07:48:02 – 00:08:11:16	The horses were basically used to carry cargo for the Japanese. These horses were used from Buna to Ioribaiwa and when the war retreated they all came back using the same horses back to Buna again.
00:08:11:16 – 00:08:19:04	When the war went retreated back to Buna, a person by the name of Dairi Emue and Sihare Emue and his brother.
00:08:25:17 – 00:08:37:01	Sihare Emue, Dairi Emue and their younger brother Euki took part but unfortunately was killed at Buna by the Japanese soldiers. When the war hit this area all the women folk were uneasy with their children and couldn't sleep properly thinking that would they ever find their beloved husbands from the war. Many cried for days and nights fearing the explosions and bombs thinking everyday would they ever see their husbands return again because they were exposed to the enemy and had nowhere to hide.
00:08:37:01 – 00:08:50:15	Our fathers' parents who have helped and supported during the war used to tell us the terrible story of what they have seen during the war. They all have passed away without no proper recognition but the children of today we are still living and would want to share this story to you now what has happened in the past.
00:08:50:15 – 00:09:05:13	Even though the war has been won by the Australian soldiers but we are still living and struggling in the traditional way as our parents have endured.
00:09:05:13 – 00:09:14:17	At this stage of living, we are uncertain that will there every be services provided for us. Our life is uncertain and we will be dying very shortly and we don't know how the future will treat our children and grand children.
00:09:28:20 – 00:09:44:12	During the war the people from Kagi were separated into two locations. The first group of people went to a place called Edu and hid there. The second lot of people followed them up further into the mountains to a place behind a village called Manamu.
00:09:44:12 – 00:09:53:22	In addition, during a heavy explosion, in shock one of the mothers accidentally pushed her babies hand into the ash and the baby lost five fingers.
00:09:53:22 – 00:10:09:15	When the war retreated back to Buna we received the message from our fathers informing us that the war was over now. So everyone hiding in the caves or wherever had to return home. The same message was also received by people living at Manumu village and they all returned back home to Kagi.
00:10:09:15 – 00:10:27:06	When we all returned home, we could not believe what had happened to our homes and gardens. There were no food gardens or

	things to eat to survive. Life at that stage was very hard. Our parents worked very hard to restore the food and houses for us.
00:10:37:23 – 00:10:44:11	When the war was over, one of the Australian administrator came here. He asked my dad to become his police officer. My dad replied that 'I don't have a good proper communication skill in using Motu dialect'. Then he asked the administrator if he could walk to Kokoda to bring his elder brother by the name of Kekeve Selu to take the job as a policeman because he is a good Motu speaker.
00:10:44:11 – 00:10:51:09	He explained further that Mr Selu is a good man. He knows how to speak Motu and he can be able to wear that police uniform to do your work.
00:10:51:09 – 00:10:58:01	By explaining this to the officer, the whiteman agreed to let my dad go and bring Mr Selu at Kokoda. Upon arrival the whiteman met with Mr Selu and discussed why he was here and the duty for Mr Selu. Mr Selu accepted the offer and conducted his duties straight away.
00:11:05:05 – 00:11:34:01	The young Kagi brave men who were recruited for the war were namely Dairi Emue, Sihare Emu, Lomola, Ilua moi, Matama and Selu. My father was appointed to look after all the women in Kagi. In finding and bringing food for the women catering for the mothers.
00:11:34:01 – 00:11:48:03	Out of these young men, who were recruited from Kagi only one of them was killed and the rest all returned back home. Upon arrival they shared the stories in informing the relatives of late Euki's family that he was killed. Because the distance of carrying his body to Kagi was so far, we all made a decision to bury him at Buna. His people together with us cried very bitterly but our bitterness was gone because we could not forget what has happened.
00:12:12:06 – 00:12:19:01	In addition, there are still so many airplanes being shot by the Japanese up in the mountains and their remains are still there. There are also things like bombs, cartridges, bayonets, helmets and many other relics are still found up in the bush of Myola.
00:12:19:01 – 00:12:40:00	However, just recently some of these warplanes were taken away by the helicopter to Port Moresby. Moreover, the old wartime track leads from Kagi village down to Efogi creek up the Mission Ridge to Brigade Hill.
00:13:05:09 – 00:13:35:19	The war at Ioribaiwa was pushed back because the Australian soldiers use a technique of sawing a very big tree by laying their big machine firing very often where the bomb hits the Japanese commanders son. The remains of the tree is still there now.
00:13:35:23 – 00:14:01:08	During the war, the local people around the Ioribaiwa ridge thought that the war will be easily won by the Japanese. The mountain of Imita ridge overlooking Sogeri plateau is the only final mountain for the Japanese to climb and the message reached back to us that there was a very hard battle in which so many casualties were found including the commander's son from Japan.

00:14:01:08 – 00:14:38:07	So the people thought is the Japanese win it will turn our very bad for them. When the war came here there were so many carriers. These carriers came all the way from Kerema, Kiwai, Rigo, Orokaivas and many others that we didn't know came to also support the campaign. Some of these people follow rivers, streams and end up in the hands of the local people where they fight against each other without knowing that they were only serving the whiteman and the Australian soldiers. Our local people often killed some and hid them in the caves thinking that they were the enemies.
00:14:38:07 – 00:15:01:03	These are people which have been recruited by the Australian soldiers to become carriers and labourers. Once such job was the digging of ground and clearing of bushes for the horse to go through. Due to language barriers our men thought some of these foreign labourers were enemies and mistakenly killed them. But we were all brought together to serve one master.
00:15:01:03 – 00:15:20:20	Then the local people suddenly knew that they were killing their friends, so they brought one of the bodies to the village and formerly buried him where all the people became aware that such behaviour is bad. When the body was buried they planted a steel iron on his graveyard.
00:15:20:20 – 00:15:34:09	The place Kagi was previously located at Desidavu.
00:15:36:20 – 00:15:54:00	After the war the village was shifted to where we are living now.
00:16:14:00 – 00:16:20:07	When the war came people were very frightened because it came with so many different people. Also the people were afraid to contribute their service to the Australians. The bombs and the sound of the bullets made the people more frightened that none of our locals never went closer to them. The area from the track was all filled with soldiers, carriers and labourers.
00:16:20:07 – 00:16:31:12	For this reason, some of them escaped and returned back to their hiding spots and moved further inland to places like Edu and Daoi mountains to hide.
00:16:31:12 – 00:16:50:13	The destruction of the houses and gardens were not only done in one particular area but throughout the whole track from Efogi to Menari, Naoro.