

Name:	Daniel Periwa
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Location of interview:	Kokoda Primary School, Kokoda, Northern Province
Chief interviewer:	Didymus Gerald
Time interview concluded:	3:14 PM
Duration of interview:	19:15:60
Main language of interview:	English
Image:	

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW

Time	Transcript
00:00	[INTERVIEWER]:  This is interview number ten, Daniel Periwa Lelewa [?] is talking about his father, Periwa Lelewa who was a policeman and he was from Papuan Waria. This is his story.
00:13	Thank you. I am Daniel Periwa Lelewa, the successor and the blood biological child of late Periwa Lelewa, who was the former sergeant after going to the war. He was actually recruited as a private constable before the war, the colonial days. And he came through certain situations like tribal wars at a time when civilisation did not take place. At it came to the stage when the war was coming up here.
00:57	And since he was already trained as a policeman and he knew how to use firearm, there was no question about him getting involved in war. So he was considered. But what actually, I asked my dad, and he told me, was the part that he was actually involved in was in supervision of the carriers in transporting the wounded and injured Australians, in supervising them and taking charge of the war prisoners, being a policeman. He was in charge of the prisoners of war, which were the Japanese prisoners taken by the Australian forces and also in transporting them.
01:48	According to my dad, he said, to his experience, one of the most serious parts where he came to realise and he said, even though he did not actually want to tell stories about war, he said it was something that and to his experience he did not want to share with us. It was so awful, and it was not something he wanted to share with us but because I kept insisting, telling him 'no dad, you have to tell me'. So he said 'well son, from my experience, the worst thing I ever saw and I ever experienced was carrying or supervising the carriers to carry the wounded Australians through explosions and machine gun fire'.
02:41	'Very, very risky, we risked our lives, carrying the wounded Australian soldiers among machine gun fire and explosions taking place. Sometimes our life or the wounded soldiers we were carrying'. And one of the most, the part where he got so serious again was combat fighting. When the commander stopped, gave instructions for the gunfire to stop, and they exchange fight, in a place along the track called Nauro, Nauro valley. He said that was most serious when the enemy from the other side and Australian from the other side would exchange sword fight.
03:29	From that experience he said, when he saw the wounded people about to die, biting on tree roots because of the pain, because of the bayonet wounds, and the screams that men would make before they die was so serious; but, he said, that was only the beginning of the terrible war that was taking place. But I kept insisting to 'tell me more', so my dad said it came to the stage when they were still shifting the Australian soldiers, and mostly usually where there were terrible war zones, they were always there, ready to transport the wounded out.
04:17	And it did not even end up in here. He also ended up in Wewak, but a person, he never left this particular commander, and his commander was Ivan Champion. Ivan

	<p>Champion was his commander, this is my dad with Ivan Champion here. And this particular photograph was taken in 1926, way before the war. And even it came up until the time of war, he never left Ivan Champion. And he became the bodyguard of Ivan Champion, and, imagine, he spent sleepless nights in order to safeguard his commander. He even escorted Ivan Champion all the way to Wewak, and it came under very heavy battle again at Wewak, where the machine gun post was up on the hill, and Australians were struggling to go up and destroy that machine gun post.</p>
05:21	<p>And that was where my dad was among, and beside his commanding officer, to run up and destroy the machine gun post. I felt, at this time, when my dad at a time when he would hardly understand English, how did he cooperate with taking instructions. It could have been me. That is what I thought to myself. At this stage when I can understand English, I can understand what the white man tells me to do. But my dad at that time, how did he understand English, how did he communicate with the white man, even he was never killed, was a question. I wish it was me, at this time, being a young man, brave and confident to run into war, but my dad did it. It hurts me, even today.</p>
06:17	<p>And my mother tells me again, that on his way again, because my dad, being a policeman before war, it is obvious that they usually travel from Buna to Kokoda to Salamaua to carry mails. They were mailmen at the time, and by walking along all this track they already knew the track, so when war came he knew exactly which place he would go, he had a fair idea, and that's why he was used along this track and along the war, and it came to the stage when he and his master and the rest of his colleagues were on their way back to Kokoda, along the track when a Japanese that time they were, they ran short of food supplies.</p>
07:14	<p>They had to go into the local people's food gardens, and there was one Japan[ese soldier] who went up a pawpaw tree. The team came, and upon seeing him they acted like they did not see him, and they put their packs down. And they sat and they were waiting for him to go down but he realised what was happening at the bottom so he did not get down, he kept holding to the tops and waiting there until the commander told him, 'can you come down', they told him, they made actions, but the Japan[ese soldier] did not want to come down. He said they made action, 'if you don't come we will shoot you'. So he came down slowly. And the commander was fair and just and he told this particular Japanese man 'we will have a fair fight. I lay down my gun, and you can use this bayonet, I will use this bayonet, and let's try and fight. If you kill me, well and good, you will go free. If I kill you that's the end of you'.</p>
08:30	<p>So while everybody sat round and watching, this Australian commander and the Japan started fighting. It was so exciting, we all sit around and they were cheering, expecting their commander to kill him, but this Japanese man was also a matured man. He almost killed the Australian commander. Until it came to the stage where this Australian commander was so strong that he pushed the bayonet right through the Japanese throat. And upon putting the hands through his pocket, they pulled out some of the Japanese – what you call this, their money, Yen, out, and some photographs of his wife and a little child in his wallet.</p>
09:28	<p>So some of the natives cracked jokes about the Japanese man and said, 'if you thought about your wife and your children you should have been staying home'. Anyway, he was killed and his body was laid along the side, and he came to the stage where a Japanese crept up slowly, and because my dad was the bodyguard of this</p>

	commander, he told me he never had time to rest his eye. And I personally believe, that upon my dad telling me this story, the success of Ivan Champion was through my dad's sleepless nights.
10:18	Just imagine, only it came to one stage where before the war came, my dad and his colleagues never ever saw a Japanese before. And they may make mistakes to kill one of the Australians, so a Japanese was drawn on cardboard, and especially his eye, his eye was drawn on the cardboard, a smaller eye to make the soldiers realise and identify a Japanese soldiers so they will not make mistake to shoot an Australian. So they were trained and taught on how to hate the Japanese man by swearing, spitting at the cardboard and even stabbing at the cardboard, so they were trained to hate the Japanese.
11:08	And at least they identify the eye, the smaller eye of the Japanese. Anyway my dad was trained about seeing or identifying a Japanese, and it came to the stage where a Japanese crept and came at the back, and somehow when he lifted his gun up to shoot my dad's commander, luckily my dad was still awake when he saw this happening, he pulled his gun up and killed the Japanese instantly, was when his commander was shocked and turned around to see the Japanese soldier falling off. And he came, grabbed my dad and hugged him.
12:00	In another point where I am so serious and so concerned about my dad, was whilst supervising the carriers along the trail, and through this serious explosions going on, it affected his eyes... He remain with glasses and his eyes being almost blind all his life, until he died. And that is witnessed by many of my family members been affected by explosions. It continued. Actually like I said, he never wanted to tell us any such things of war, but because I kept insisting he told me this.
12:54	OK. Him and Ivan Champion who travelled from here to Wewak and from Wewak back to Kokoda and they continued throughout the war until, like I said, my dad wasn't like the other PIBs who were in the frontline or fighting but he was actually engaged in the part of supervising the carriers to transport the wounded and injured Australians back. That was exactly what my dad was involved in, not in the fighting the frontline, no, just in transportations. What him and Ivan Champion did in Wewak was also transporting the Australian soldiers, and Ivan Champion who was a patrol officer at that time became captain of that ship. Wherever he went he took Periwa with him. And my dad at that time was a private constable.
13:54	Only after the war he was promoted to be a sergeant, while Ivan Champion was promoted to another position he held, could be in the records or history, and what actually my dad was awarded at the time, he was not rewarded in any such way such as gratitude payments, no, it was just that he was awarded with this medal. But one sad thing, after he has been awarded with this medal, just one sad thing about it is another load is lost, that I wish that maybe in future through your assistance, you look into the records, I might recover some new medals. This is what he achieved, and was promoted to be a sergeant after his time in the colonial days and during the war. So sergeant Periwa is survived by me, and other family members, we are about seven in the family, the rest are not here today, it's only I, myself. If only I had time, I could write up everything and give you.
15:17	[INTERVIEWER - MH]:

	You can still do that.
15:21	If you could give me time. Because by looking up in histories, in the records, books I had read, my dad tells me something different which is not in the books. I am not satisfied with the author James Sinclair. Because my dad's book is written by James Sinclair. You see this one here, this is my dad in the front cover of <i>The Last Frontier</i> . He's also in the book titled, <i>To Find a Path</i> , volume 1. So according to what my dad tells me, I feel that there is slightly discrimination, when all the stories are written of others while the carriers, the fuzzy wuzzy angels, their histories are not mentioned so much, and to our expectations.
16:21	This is how I see it as slightly being discriminated. Should there be such opportunities like this, we want, the people want fair informations, there has to be information about fuzzy wuzzy angels, the carriers, the cooks, all those who participated. There has to be fair information that our next generation need to know. Otherwise, in my research now, there's not much written about carriers, not much written about cooks, those who actually participated. If you give me time, I'll write up something good and give you all of my dad. This is exactly what I keep of my dad, and I make a special plea. If you could give me time to write up something of my dad and give it to you. Thank you, I think that is all I can say.
17:24	[INTERVIEWER]:  One of those remarkable stories that has been told now, that is coming out of this exercise. Are you proud of your father's achievements during the war?
17:44	That's right. I am so proud but one thing that hurts me is when my dad tells me, 'son, see how beautiful Mt Hagen is today, when I am pioneer, when Southern Highlands was first Papuan patrol post. And I am the pioneer of that. See how beautiful Mt Hagen is today. See how beautiful Papua New Guinea is today. And I'm going to go back to my grave unrewarded'. This really breaks my heart. And I feel that this has been so privileged to express my pain before the nation. You know that gives me the pain. And my dad who could have been, the state could have been shown a bit of respect when he closed his eye, just like any other, or all his comrades. And many, I can assure you that there are many still hidden, many histories still hidden, and through this program I am so privileged, through this program there are a lot more more stories yet to come out, yet to be exposed, there's a lot more information that you are going to pick up, and you are going to make a great difference for the near future.
19:10	[INTERVIEWER]:  Thank you Daniel for talking to us. Thank you for your time.