

Name:	Ekonea Malvu
Date of interview:	16 May 2017
Location of interview:	Bol, New Ireland Province
Chief interviewer:	Lalen Simeon
Duration of interview:	13:37
Main language of interview:	Tok Pisin
Image:	

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW

Time	Transcript
0:01	[Interviewer] We are interviewing Ekonea Malvu in Bol village on the 16th of May 2017. Thank you Ekonea. First of all, we would like – you’ve told us you were born in 1942 and you were 6 years old when war came to New Ireland Province, but could you also tell us what you heard about the Japanese or the Australian militaries? And which country came and stayed in your area and what happened?
0:49	Thank you, when I was hiding in the bushes, I had no clothes or lap lap to cover myself. And when the war was about to end we came back and stayed at Point Liumurua... that’s the name of one of our beach points at Fatmela.
1:16	[Interviewer] Yeah, OK.

1:19	During that time we lived with two Japanese soldiers, we all stayed together at Liumurorua beach point at Fatmela. As war was about to end these two Japanese soldiers were already prepared to live, one was named Iskoa and the other Meata. When I first arrived I was like my grandson sitting over there.
2:05	[Interviewer] Oh the one sitting over there.
2:08	<p>It was OK really, we always go down to the beach and they would shoot the sharks that come swimming inside the reef. When we knew they were going to live, they had their belongings packed as they waited for their pickup, then they took my father and our two other elders, one named Rokas and the other was my dad Yamok, they told them to guard their pickup trucks because they had cargos on top of them. As they took care of the trucks the soldiers were settling themselves out, getting prepared to leave because war has finally come to an end. One thing these two did was – they made a little mistake, they use to take the Japanese meat, especially the type that has already being processed and canned. They used to take it and hide it in the nearby bushes, they would also do the same for other building materials such as hammer, nails and chisels or anything that can be used for breaking wood. Soon their time was up, so they serviced all their trucks and did their pickups.</p> <p>Now, I did hear from my sister but not so much, I was small and would only recall few things concerning war, like this person you talked about, what's his name? 'Weptus' – the one I've talked about before. Anyway, I had a grandfather who monitors everyone, he watches those who does wrong and reports them to the kenpeitais which they are later taken to Lakurumau at Luburua where they get their throat slit. My grandfather was lucky this man knew him, they refer to him as Sandri, Sandri which it was very familiar back in the days. He's a watcher, anyone that uses bad verbal language or does wrong to the Japanese such as spying, he will get his name and make reports so he will be taken to Luburua to have his neck chopped off.</p> <p>There was also a white man who lived there... ah John Stefil [?] is his name, he used to live down the beach, during the war; the bombs destroyed all his houses below the shore, as the war came to an end, he then moved inland and is now living further up. John Stefil is a navy, so is his first born son Jimmy. Second to Jimmy is Mrs Pat a lady who got married to man named Pita Mari. His third child is also a lady who married to a guy named Jim Grus. Today you might hear about the oil palms... well, he's last born is now living there together with his children.</p> <p>When the war ended these Japanese left the fields and moved to the plantation. They had a big house that was further up on their other station, there is also a hole on top which Japanese use for the same work. The soldiers at Kuruma always travel this way to see their commander, their commander collects reports which they submit, this was all Japanese territory, and these commanders reside in these plantations.</p>

	<p>The little that I'm telling you is the little that I've heard and known, so to tell you other stories concerning the war, I'm afraid I cannot tell you, those are the few things I've heard when we were moving about during the war. A lot of stories regarding the Japanese are with our people, there was a case where a Japanese soldier got beaten up by two locals, he sent the two men to sell kora number 10; meaning ten coconuts, when these Japanese give such orders they turn to be serious having no mercy. Anyways, he sent them to climb the coconut, when the other climbed and threw down the young coconut, his mate cleaned it and gave it to the Japanese man to drink, while doing so he was struck to death by the other local man. These two men buried this Japanese at Fatmela.</p>
8:03	<p>[Interviewer] So our local men killed him right?</p>
8:04	<p>Yes, the two native black men.</p>
8:06	<p>[Interviewer] Oh, OK.</p>
8:07	<p>Yes, these two naughty boys. One was my half dad, and the other that buried the Japanese was his brother... that is one of the few stories told concerning the war. There is also this guy that goes around with Boaz checking all their stuff... here, here and there. I know there are three of them, and they do this every day of the week ... being out at sea carrying bamboos and salt water, that was their appointed daily task for this Japanese highly respected man.</p>
9:06	<p>[Interviewer] Kabasi, Kabaghasie?</p>
9:10	<p>Kabaghasie is correct, he is the big man, the overall boss right on top. He's in charge of everyone; even the Australians and those that were here. We once argued with him... Navuro... one of the guys' sister, supposed to have a letter of clarification because no one can travel on a truck apart from a policeman and if you are not careful, you will be reported by the spies. Spies normally come here and go, they carry information of every happenings right to the top.</p> <p>Back at base, work there belongs to the three gentlemen given on hand every year, all because they are young. Every morning the three would carry salt water in a bamboo, go drop it off and then go back again, they would do that till dawn. This is the job assigned specifically for the three men. If you were to look now, you'll see a bridge that was built by them, it's still here though as it is restructured from time to time, before there was barely nothing. This bamboo bridge was used by the people, they travel back and forth from.</p> <p>Starting from the bridge there is a garden belonging to the Japanese, it is situated outside but close, maybe later you can have a look. They normally</p>

	would cut it today, clean it today and plant in it until all the spaces are occupied with food. Again when the war planes comes, they don't need to make fire, they only remove the trees, the bushes and they start planting again. That's how the Japanese works.
10:51	[Interviewer] Do both men and women work?
10:52	Yes, both men and women, no misbehaving.
10:55	[Interviewer] And if they disobey or misbehave?
10:58	Then it is the work of the spies to take them down, no one would misbehave during this those time, our law today is nothing compared to the law of the Japanese back in those days. They are so strict, even though it's not a big issue or just a slight mistake, you'll have your neck cut off. They are communists, yes they are... and these three young men, their tiring work ends when the war is over, that's all to it.
11:44	[Interviewer] And this local officer that had his neck cut off, did you bury him or anything? And who is he, a tultul?
11:51	The preferred term would be ah... Weptus
11:53	[Interviewer] Oh Weptus.
11:55	They were known as Weptus back in the days, soon they were joined by tultuls and Luluais.
12:00	[Interviewer] Weptus is like the overall head or boss.
12:01	Correct.
12:06	[Interviewer] So did Weptus do something wrong that got himself beheaded?
12:08	Well, all because of a woman.
12:11	[Interviewer] OK.
12:12	Well Kabaghasie did made a mistake while he was on top. He had an affair with a married woman from New Ireland. Did they mention this to you?

12:24	[Interviewer] Yes they did.
12:25	Yes, that's the story, Titus is from Bol while the women was from Tigak, further down. So that's about it, you know... whenever you disobey then that's what you get.
12:40	[Interviewer] So he cut Weptus up just to get his wife.
12:42	He didn't just cut the guy, he ran away and left the woman with the boss... the woman stayed and did some of his work. These are some of the strong laws of the Japanese, it's not easy as today, we come in a good time and we are happy... before no one breaks the rule. This are some of the little stories I can recall when I was a small boy. Some of these stories you could look for the boss and ask him, he was there when the war started right up till it ended.
13:31	[Interviewer] OK, thank you so much.