

Name:	Robert Mamaga
Date of interview:	2 April 2017
Location of interview:	Alotau, Milne Bay Province
Interviewer/s:	Anne Dickson Waiko, Elizabeth Taulehebo and Keimelo Gima
Duration of interview:	40:59
Main language of interview:	English
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TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW	
TIME	TRANSCRIPT
00:00	[Interviewer] This is an interview with Robert Mamaga and he's from Fergusson island and it's been taped on the 2 nd of April 2017 at Alotau. And he's going to talk about his father Masewa Ubwaubwa and his uncle Ebenesi Nuwauya.
	His father's story: A PIB soldier during the war He was recruited from the village in Fergusson. He was with a number of people from Fergusson. There were five men from my village, Fagululu who joined also. Their names were Jack, Saiyalala, Igamate, Bonebone and my daddy Masewa. That's my first born daddy, my father's first born brother. He was a young boy when he joined. They recruit them and got them down to Moresby and trained them at the barracks at Taurama. I don't know how long they train them. After the training they post him to Bougainville. The whole lot of them in that group were post to Bougainville.
03:58	They went by ship and then when they arrive, they were out at the sea and then they had to swim down to the beach, swim ashore with their packs. It's not really far. And then when they reached the shore they carried bags with guns and went into the bush. They went into the bush and then they made their camps in the bush with their boss from Australia. They usually call him Left hand Kay because his right arm was cut off (amputated) so they usually call Left hand Kay. They set up camp and then after a day they went to challenge the Japanese at Buin. He said that, after a month, they went across to Kokoda.
05:46	They came back to Popondetta and they fought at Kokoda Trail. During the fighting there, my daddy was shot on the chest. And their boss Left hand Kay

	<p>when he saw that my daddy was shot, he came and carried him and took him to the Red Cross and left him there for treatment. And he was there for treatment until when his wound was healed and he join his friend and they went back and when they went into the bush he said that Japanese wrote notice loaded them in the bag and then flew them up by plane and they just open the bag and it capsize all the papers in the bush. That means no more war. War was finished. When their scout master was the first man to get the notice. When he got the notice, he made mark so when the troops came they stopped there and he show them the notice that war is finish. But still they continued.</p>
07:26	<p>They went all around checking the Japanese and they caught five Japanese men. They brought them to the camp as their prisoners and they looked after them. My daddy looked after one as his prisoner. And all the prisoners were looked after there until everything was finished; they send them back to their country. And from there my daddy came home. When he came home, he got married. He got married and stayed all his life until he passed away.</p>
08:26	<p>He didn't tell me how they were at Kokoda. He just told me the story that it was not until war ended and peace was declared. At Bougainville, they were there for two months. He said he shot few Japanese.</p>
09:29	<p>He was shot because their boss Mr Left hand Kay told them to move back but he was late. He was late so when he got up to move, they shot him. And when he felt that they shot him, he fell on the dead body and later his boss came and carried him away. There were three (his Fergusson island mates), two wounded and one died, that's James Mabubu. He was shot dead at Kokoda. And he was buried down in Moresby. And the other man Saiyalala was shot in the ear. The Japanese cut this one out. The scar on my father's chest, very big mark.</p>
11:08	<p>No. He didn't tell me about the Japanese mistreating the people in Bougainville or in Kokoda. When he saw the Japanese he was scared but also brave too because there were many soldiers so he was brave to be with them to fight against them.</p>
11:47	<p>He said that they use our customary ways to fight against the Japanese. They used black charcoal to colour their body black with white people. They show white people how to dress in our traditional ways and they fight against the Japanese. The Australians and the Americans too. And they gave them native ginger and they chew it. When they chew native ginger, they are very well to fight against the Japanese. Left hand Kay too he was with them and was chewing the ginger.</p>
13:07	<p>When he came back home and during his stay, he used to think back that he should become a soldier again. But he was already old. And then he was telling us, he said if any time war starts, you are not fit to go for war. He became friends with one of these Japanese, that time when they got them as prisoners. He looked after him, very young fellow. and that Japanese said that</p>

	<p>he was going to come with him home but it was law that they must bring Japanese back to their place so they sent all of them back.</p>
14:34	<p>He told us many stories. He told me many stories about people lying everywhere. They were killed and they were lying everywhere. He said when we go in and no water, masky people lying there but we have to drink. He said if we get scared of drinking then we will be shot so we have to drink whether smelly but still we have to drink. They found very big snakes but when they want too ... when their boss say, lie down, they sleep on the snakes. In Bougainville. Nobody was bitten by a snake. I don't know why.</p>
15:54	<p>They carried food around. They wore shirt and then laplap. They wore green laplap and were fighting. That's what my daddy said. No shoes, bare foot. Single shot (gun), all of them were using the single shot (guns) not like nowadays, these high powered guns.</p>
16:57	<p>No. No. There was no fighting on Fergusson and the Japanese or Australians were not there at Fergusson fighting. The Australians came around to recruit in the islands. When they came to Fagululu, they recruited five of them. They told them that there is a war so we around to recruit people so they volunteered to join the Force (PIB). They parents didn't want to stop them because already they have given their names. And when they stop them and if they go for war they will be killed so they have to allow them to go. And when they went. Their parents did not do anything, no arguing, no fighting. They just live peacefully until they came back.</p>
18:20	<p>From Fergusson, I think our traditions also helped to protect them. One old lady from Bogaboga, that's at Rabaraba, was the one who support them. She's not from my place but from Bogaboga. She was supporting them because her son was with them. Because of him, he supported the son and everybody. Her son was not hurt. She was supporting them by visiting them. And then one time, got one of their high powered guns from their camp and the son sent word to Bogaboga and his mother went and he told her about the gun. She told him that, tonight she will get the gun back. So that night she went and got the gun back. When my father was with him. My father was with him in the same tent and the gun was taken back from Japanese. That old lady got the gun back. My father was with the guy, that Bogaboga man. His name is Billy but I forgot his surname. Well he was you know that type of person so he just sent the word ... they have a certain way of communicating. My daddy said that when he sent the word in the night when they were quiet in the tent okay that old lady came and flew down as a bird. And then not long she came and walk in person and then that Billy told my father he said, "your bubu is here." And then he saw Billy and the mother talking about that high powered gun. No the Australians didn't see her. He was in a different tent. They were in a different tent. Billy showed everybody the gun that was already returned in the morning. He told them about the old lady he said that old lady went and brought our gun back. And they have to believe him and the Colonel was</p>

	happy because that was the only high powered gun they had and it was stolen by the Japanese.
22:20	He saved his friend Saiyalala. He saved him by shooting one Japanese man on the tree. The Japanese man was right up on the tree and Saiyalala was rolling down the hill. When he was rolling down the hill and the Japanese was aiming his gun at him and when he came there was a big log so when he rolled on top of the log the Japanese man shot and then he took his ear off. And my daddy was right down with his friends, from there he looked up and saw the Japanese and shot him down from the tree.
23:13	He was given medals, three medals. He brought them home and my elder brother lost them. he took them to Esa'ala office that time they were ... people were saying that you get the medals to the office and then you'll receive payments for ... and then those medals went missing. Some officers came from the Army came from Moresby and asked us to take the medals to receive war payments. The officers were Papua New Guineans. That was in 1976.
24:34	My father and his friends came back together as a group and they were dropped off at Mwapwamoiwa government station in Fergusson and then their relatives went and brought them home. There was a very very big welcome home party and those PIBs, they marched around to show their people that they returned from the war with their uniforms and flag raised up they marched whole day. They were still wearing green laplaps as their uniform.
25:39	The local man that was shot was from the same village with my father. It was his fault because when they recruited all of them, that man was married and he got his wife's armlet so when he went he always wear that armlet so that's why he was killed. That's what our people said when they returned from the war. Because it's our custom that when you go for fighting, you cannot get anything that belongs to the women, anything belonging to a woman. And that's why he was killed but if not all of them would be returned home safely. He was the only one who was killed and the others were just injured. He was the only one who was shot dead during the war.
27:09	My father didn't tell me stories about the Japanese starving and looking for kaikai.
27:23	For my uncle he was recruited as a war carrier but he didn't go too far because war came to Goodenough. And then they recruited him and took him across to Goodenough and he was carrying their things around there only for one year. When I say my father, I was referring to my father's brother and when I say my uncle I am referring to my mother's brother. So this is my mother's elder brother I am talking about as my uncle because I am from the patrilineal side. He carried patrol boxes, food supplies, medicines and they were traveling around on Goodenough Island. The Australian army base was there. So he was basing at Vivigani. An airstrip was built at Vivigani during the war. From my village only my uncle was recruited as a carrier but from other

	places like Goodenough and some parts of Fergusson there were plenty men recruited. They looked after well. They were supplied with food and clothes. The men recruited preferred to be carriers rather than join the PIB to fight.
30:20	The war came to Vivigani. The Japanese landed there and the Australians were also there. The Japanese came from Tufi, Popondetta, Buna and they were going after the Australian air base to take it.
31:13	My uncle enjoyed carrying things around during the war and he saw what the war was like. They carried heavy things like the patrol boxes loaded with stuffs. And they used sticks to attach the boxes and carry. The Australians carried only packs, their guns and not the heavy loads. All the heavy things were carried by the carriers. The war in Vivigani was only one year and finished and they moved back. The Japanese were chased off the Island. Some Japanese were trying to cross over to Fergusson Island so the Australians had to come and block them so they went off the Island. Some Japanese were killed on the Island and buried there.
33:23	When they left they dug holes, cemented them and loaded all the war things and now they are there. They buried the war things in one big hole. If you go around Goodenough Island, there are plenty of holes loaded with saucepans, plates, cups and everything buried after the war. Guns also. The village people dug up one of the holes and broke the cement and got all the kitchen utensils out. These careless boys dug up plenty of the holes and got guns out. And there are more holes with war things inside on Goodenough Island. They use the guns to do silly things like rascal activities on Goodenough Island, Fergusson Island.
35:10	There are a lot of dumps and they spoilt the land for gardening activities and for people to build houses.
35:22	All the Goodenough people were transferred across to Kalokalo village that's in the Fergusson Island to live there during the war. And then people from my place Fagululu and Yamalele used to bring food and greens to help them. The Australians also supplied them with food. So when my people come and give them local food, okay these Goodenough people give them rice, tinned fish, tinned meat-six pound meat. People from Kalokalo helped to build shelters for them to live in. They stayed there for a year. And when they returned to their places, their land was spoilt and even today they are having hard time gardening.
37:03	I am happy telling my father's and uncle's stories. I am happy because I want the news of my father and uncle so that other people will know that my daddy joined the PIB as a soldier and uncle joined as a carrier. They used to call my uncle by his village name. My father too was not given a new name during the war. One time I checked for my father to confirm if my father's name was recorded and kept at Taurama. I checked and found out that my father's name was recorded there.

39:06	Some soldiers did make friends with the village women. Some respected the women but some didn't respect them. Especially the Japanese didn't respect the village girls and women. Some raped them and threatened them. When the Japanese run away from Goodenough and come across to Kalokalo, they do silly things. They did this one, one time. The parents of the girls didn't do anything to the Japanese they were scared because they had guns. The Australians were okay. They respected the women. And the Americans too respected the women. No black Americans were there, only the white Americans.
40:54	[Interviewer] Thank you very much.