

Name:	Meseko Toby
Date of interview:	30 March 2017
Location of interview:	Waema, Milne Bay Province
Interviewer/s:	Anne Dickson Waiko, Keimelo Gima and Elizabeth Taulehebo
Duration of interview:	38:12
Main language of interview:	English
Image:	

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW

TIME	TRANSCRIPT
00:00	[Interviewer] This is an interview with Meseko Toby taped on the 30 March 2017 from Waema village and he is going to talk to us about his father Toby Auhewa Anania, who was a PIB soldier during the war.
	My old man Toby was working at Giligili when he was a young guy. He became as a kuki (cook) or what. He was working as a cook for a white man called Smith. During the war they got him and he became a Colonel Smith. So he was working at Giligili with Smith, I don't know which surname he used, Smith somebody. He was Manager for the Giligili plantation. And then war came. So Smith had to leave the plantation and go back to Australia to join the Force. Then he became a Colonel.
02:12	My old man was recruited at Waema so he became a PIB. He trained at Bomana. Let's say for three weeks, I think. And then he fought at Kokoda Trail for maybe how many months and then they were sent to Bougainville. He went with some other PIBS, some from Rabe, Taupota. He was a jungle fighter. Japanese were trying to walk across from Kokoda to Moresby so they have to go and stand by there to sort of stop them not to walk across. They were

	<p>waiting there and nothing was happening so ... some of the Americans were there, the negroes so they have to move them out to Bougainville because the war was very tight at Bougainville so they have to send them across to Bougainville. The whole Papuan Infantry Battalion.</p>
04:17	<p>Yeah Bougainville, Kokoda he just went at Kokoda for only let's say around two or three weeks or a month. He did take part in the actual war while there. He did fight in Kokoda. But he shot some Japanese or we don't know uh but then ... No, he did not mention this. After that they went to Bougainville and he really do his best to become a Corporal. Oh actually I think they went with some Australians. So when they went and landed at Buna uh Buin, Buin yeah it was like the Japanese were I mean Japanese were already there so they had to jump out the barge so they had to force themselves to the beach. So by the time from the barge they started shooting up and then our PIBs were on the salt water and then while the barge was shooting the enemies, they started jumping out and swimming ashore until they put their leg on the land. That's where they got the ... when they get strong uh. So that's how it happened. And then they have to – they have their own platoon so if like they send Australians up to fight in the bush they have a time limit of the fighting for how many days they have to come to the base and then our own people they move out.</p>
07:35	<p>So our own local people the PIBs actually they were like frontlines uh. When they are in the bush I mean if there's heavy fighting then the Australians like actually they having excuses or what. They have to come down and send these, our own people to go up and fight. This is how they treat them. Nothing, they didn't have other names or nicknames for the PIBs. It looked like they bait them or what. Like a bait, they go first and the Australians are coming behind. That's what my father told me. They do that when there's heavy fighting. They send the PIBs ahead. So they'll kill them first, I hope that's what they were thinking.</p>
09:30	<p>It supposed to be ... Most of our Milne Bay people; they did not have any accident or what. They survived. Only some New Guineas and all these. Because of their using customs or something. Like their parents always bodyguard them, the mother or the father. Like custom side. Some they protect them from enemies to come and attack them. Sure yeah, our Papuans knew that they were being protected.</p>
10:28	<p>So when they arrive there at Bougainville, his old boss Smith he became a Colonel so when Colonel Smith saw my old man he knew him very well. So he told him to go and look after his like clothing and all that become a houseboy during the war. So my father has to say something, he told him he said, "I had enough of that job." Smith said, "Tobby this is war, can you look after my house?" So my old man got up and told him he said, Smith I had enough of all these, that same job. I joined army or PIB to fight. I didn't come to cook or look after you." But then Smith was forcing him, Colonel Smith. He said yeah I know but it's war so anyway he said I'll let you go.</p>

12:00	<p>After you know he went in the Force and then he was fighting and then somehow he succeeded so when they went down back to the Base and then he was in the bathroom when the Colonel called my old man Toby so his friends got up and they said, Toby, Colonel is calling. He already soaped his body and he was trying to rinse it but because of Colonel's order so he had to get the towel and towel himself. Towel the soap out. And then he wore towel and came and he wore his shirt and he walked up to Colonel Smith. By the time he went up the bodyguard was there so he went and knocked and my old man went up and he said Colonel need you. So he went inside, he salute and then when Colonel looked at my old man he said Toby, I told you to look after my house but then you are succeed so he got a medal and put it on his shirt. So Colonel got up and told my father, I mean Smith, he told Toby that he was a hero.</p>
14:54	<p>That's where I'm going to stop. My old man how he got that what (medal) just because of ... before they used to call this ... what do they call, some sort of guns like machine guns and all these. And he used to talk about a woodpecker machine it looks like a machine gun. And my old man was the one who got those from the enemies, the woodpecker and this why he became a Corporal.</p>
15:45	<p>After the war, he got plenty of stories to share them. After the war, they came back to Rabaul so some of his friends came and he was looking after the prisoners, the Japanese. So they made a very big fence and they put all the Japanese here and the boat used to come and get them and take them home. My old man was telling me, how they treat those Japanese too, they used to carry this tinned before they used to say Navy bread uh. Navy bread biscuits. They used to carry the tin up on the ladder, they will just carry the whole tin up and they'll pour the tin upside down. Inside the fence and then these Japanese will rush for the biscuits. Our side won the war so how will they treat them too like prisoners.</p>
17:17	<p>He was very sad too because what my father thought was that's not his war uh, but by force and they just came and got them and they took part in the war. Even though my father shot a Japanese man but then he thought, this is not my war.</p>
18:00	<p>When he first went inside for the war I mean they were chasing the Japanese and shooting them and they came across to a place where they shot the Japanese and some they did not really kill them still alive were breathing and all these wounded. And they just came and stop and that time my father you know he was a bit scared. And he was shaking but he was with his guard and one of the white man came I mean the Sergeant or something like that. He came and said, Toby, what are you doing? So he got my old man's gun he got his hands and while the man was suffering then my father, I mean he forced him to shoot him to death. That's where my father got his strength. But when he first went inside he got, how they treat or shot these Japanese some dead but some are still breathing. And ... so my dad was bit scared but then he got his strength again by shooting that Japanese man.</p>

19:36	But the Japanese were also very clever you know some of those wounded uh they pretended that they were dead and when Australians were or even the PIBs were gone, they will turn around and use the bullet to kill our fellows so that's why the wounded were not left alone.
20:24	He was with these Australian friends, I mean they go together. They were on good terms.
21:00	How Japanese treat Bougainvilleans was really bad because Japanese they ran out of kaikai (food) so what they did they used to cut their breasts of the women and their no kaikai so they have to cut their like bum or hips the meaty parts of their body. The calves of their legs, they just slice them for their meat. They kill the Buka people and then how Yes, my father saw them. That's what my father told me. He didn't see them and what they ate with the human flesh but how No kaikai and ...
22:42	Oh the Japanese are like one, one of his war mates from Wagawaga, his name is Giligili. How he treated the Japanese, he shoot them and cut open their heart, cut them and put them in their mouths so my father has to scold him. One time they were in the house and he talked to Giligili from Wagawaga, he told him he said, "hidomo (mate) that one not our what, this is not our war but they forced us to come and fight. You don't treat people like that, they are human beings like we. He said you might get sick.
23:46	When our old and with his friends, when they shot human being they were like longlong (mentally-affected) or what. They just go forward and in there they just shoot. But when they first went they were scared but they got used to it. My daddy told me, when they shoot those Japanese and took their shoes out, they got ropes under the socks or in the boot where the shoe of the Japanese or some sort of leaves. So when our own people they were trying to get them, my old man used to tell them, "don't get them." because we don't know how to use them and that's their culture, how they use them.
25:19	At the end of the war he did meet up with his friend Colonel Smith. They last met at Bougainville after the war.
25:47	After the war plane went and threw all the papers around Bougainville island so when they are in the bush they got those paper and they said peace so they start walking out. Our own people were a bit okay when they were walking out but the Japanese they tore their trousers, cut their shoes, break their guns and carry them and start walking out. War finished and they are surrender.
26:36	But after the war the Japanese too they were really suffering while they were waiting for boat to come and take them. They moved them across to Rabaul and that's where they were looking after them and the ship comes and load them ...
27:44	I think in their group when they are off the bay area you know like they gave them when they were going one, one man his got his own custom like they give them this power or what so when they kill somebody they go mad and this is where because when Japanese too shoot their own people I mean the

	white people our own people too got mad and they do whatever they want uh.
28:45	When my father joined the PIB, the father died. The father died. I think the bubu died first, my bubu after the war came. He was staying with his uncle and when he took off and went. When he came back he got no parents because there were only two brothers. The mother too died before the war. The father is from Maiwara and mother from Waema. So my daddy is half Maiwara and half Waema. He was recruited at Giligili. That's where he ... those days we don't know how old they were. He was already working, somewhere around early twenties I think.
30:25	After the war they asked him to join Police Force and my father refused. He said I did not come to wear blanket or what. Those days they wear like blankets, black and red edges. He said I don't want to wear like blankets to go to the ... I did not come for police man, I came to fight so I have to go back and stay in the village look after my grandfather ... so some of his friends like Ginipana there from Waema joined PIR (Pacific Islands Regiment). Some Loidi somebody he joined Police Force, from Taupota. I mean most of the Taupotas they joined Police. But only from Waema my old man's cousin Ginipana he join PIR.
32:26	I heard that didn't happen to my old man he was okay but he never talked about his friends' experiences and the effects of how they used to treat the Japanese after the war.
33:19	After the war when they were at Bougainville, they were trying to come back and then King George. King George attend the gathering in Bougainville, that's Queen Elizabeth's father he was at Bougainville so my father saw King George. And this is what he said, I mean King George, "now war is finish, you people have to go back to your place and stay with your parents, make garden, do everything in the village, stay well. The last World War is coming. The last World War. This is what my daddy was telling me. The last World War is coming. This war, when this war comes there's nowhere to escape. And then they got on the boat and they travel. When he came in the village, most of his life was in the village. But then they got him again to go and work kuki again.
35:05	He was sad because all the way from Bougainville to Rabaul, Lae and then this north coast I mean some of his friends dropped off and come all the way that made his sad.
35:36	I am happy to tell my father's story but same time I'm sad. Why I am happy because of my daddy now we Papua New Guineans are sitting for us to like free to go up and down. But I'm not happy with the Government, how they treat these old people because so many times they come and like bubu Maiogaru, government come down and ask us for their histories or how did they ... but then there's no feedback from them. And there's no history for them. So when my father died I put Papua New Guinea flag on his coffin and they have to move him down from Alotau General Hospital, why. Now I am trying to put my ... this year or it might be next year, I'm putting my father's

	monument. It's not in the bush, it's just where Waema Church and at the back because he told me to build that Waema Church, Catholic Church there and then he told me when I die put me near the Church so he's there. Thank you.
38:08	[Interviewer] Thank you very much.