



Kekeni Misika - Oral History interview recorded on 4 July 2014 at Kagi, Central Province, PNG

AUTHOR(S)

Javith Lowland Abavu

HANDLE

[10779/DRO/DU:22307230.v1](#)

Downloaded from Deakin University's Figshare repository

Deakin University CRICOS Provider Code: 00113B

Name:	Kekeni Misuka
Date of interview:	Friday, 4 July 2014
Location of interview:	Kagi village, Central Province
Chief interviewer:	Javith Abavu
Time interview concluded:	3:18 PM
Duration of interview:	01:02:19:30
Main language of interview:	Kagi
Image:	

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW

Time	Translation
01:30:09:13 – 01:30:29:18	My parents did not hear any story about the war. So they took us to Kokoda and we slept there. A person by the name of Misikani came to Kokoda and moved to Ebei.
01:33:34:08 – 01:33:40:06	Upon arrival at Ebei, Misikani told his parents about the war. He told them to prepare the gears and move out of the house before the war will reach them. However his parents were unable to run away because they were very old. So he made a tunnel and dug through it. After completing it he told his parents to hide there taking only their valuables with them. He left them behind at that tunnel and headed for Kokoda and met us.
01:33:40:06 – 01:33:51:44	Misikani told my dad that the war is coming and where are you taking the families to? My dad replied that we are going to garden. Misikani saw how small we were and told our parents that the war is coming so they have to stop going to the garden and have return to the village. This was when I was 9 or 10 years old.
01:33:54:18 – 01:34:14:22	We heard what he said and my father stopped us from going to the garden. We did not listen to the instructions of Mr. Misikani and continued on to our gardens at Ebei. We managed to cross over Ebei creek and started to flee for our lives.
01:34:14:22 – 01:34:28:07	We ran into the bushes until we came to small creeks and came to a big track and started heading back home now. At Ebei people could not settle down they were all moving out to the higher grounds and preparing their shelters for hiding.
01:34:28:07 – 01:34:37:07	While returning back to our village at Alola we started to meet young soldiers carrying their weapons and their bags walking down to Kokoda station. We were very afraid but they were kind to us and helps us quickly t get home and escape.
01:34:37:07 – 01:34:49:15	My father told us why did we have to go out to the garden, I told you to remain back at home and mum and I will go to the garden. However, we took no notice of his advice and came straight to Alola.
01:34:49:15 – 01:35:13:08	Upon arriving at Alola, we met more soldiers walking down to Kokoda. And then the next group came. My dad told us that this is very serious, so he has to organize and take our valuables out of our homes. He went on to check our pigs and gave food to our pigs and made sure that they ate before we left.
01:35:13:08 – 01:35:24:21	When we left into the bush, my dad came back again to check if our pigs were still in a good condition. However, he noticed that all the house were destroyed, food gardens and our pigs were lashed and killed. He couldn't do much and had to cope with the situation.

01:35:24:21 – 01:35:35:22	Not only our village was destroyed but the next neighbouring villages were in the same situation. While doing that the warplanes were coming down lower to the ground and we could here the sound of it.
01:35:35:22 – 01:35:51:00	My father took me and we came back home again and noticed that this time the warplanes were dropping rations on our villages and into the nearby bushes. People started flocking in to collect their rations and take them to their hiding sites.
01:35:51:00 – 01:35:58:11	I couldn't do much because I was a little girl so my dad alone collected all our rations and took them to our hiding places. Some of our people together with my father wanted to take revenge for the properties which were destroyed but the whiteman told them you can't do anything. This is a war and you must run away from it.
01:35:58:11 – 01:36:04:15	The whiteman instructed our people that you can't say anything and do anything because we don't want to lose you all. You have to cooperate with us and flee into the bush.
01:36:05:22 – 01:36:13:22	The whiteman told us that are not able to do anything right now. We are at war and we beg you all to go hiding now. Some of our people didn't follow the instructions and were left behind. On the other hand others abided by the command and ran for safety into the bush.
01:36:13:22 – 01:36:26:01	So we all went and started building our own shelters and hid from there. By now the war had already reached Kokoda station. We could hear explosions of bombs down the Yola Valley.
01:36:26:01 – 01:36:33:16	The warplanes were now growing in numbers flying above us and soldiers on the ground were firing their guns and throwing bombs at each other.
01:36:34:04 – 01:36:45:11	The commanding officers told the village people that supplies that were dropped in the remote bush are ours. Supplies dropped in the villages or close to the tracks belong to us. The labourers and the carriers will be moving these goods to our campsites.
01:36:45:11 – 01:37:21:18	My biggest sister and our sister-in-law escaped from the other side of the village and were trying to come to us. On the way down to Eora Creek, my sister and our in-law picked some of the dropped supplies and carried them all the way through the bush walking along the banks of the Eora River, when suddenly they saw the group of Japanese soldiers walking towards them.
01:37:21:18 – 01:37:36:14	The Japanese shot our sister-in-law and she fell into the water with her bloodstains all over the rock she was washed away. The Japanese soldiers turned back and fired at my sister by the name of Bedoa and she also screamed and fell into the river with her bilum.
01:37:36:14 – 01:37:45:18	Then the Japanese soldiers went on ahead and picked up the two ladies brought them to the sandy beach and cut their breasts.
01:37:45:18 – 01:37:54:09	They cut the two heads and brought them right up to the track where it joins the two villages and placed them on the centre of the track.

01:37:54:09 – 01:38:06:14	A week later our relatives started searching for them along the tracks where they went. While walking and following the creek up, they found the two bodies lying on the sand without heads and breasts. They were very sorry and took the two bodies and found the two heads lying on the road. After all the bodies were gathered we buried them.
01:38:06:14 – 01:38:22:07	The war was not very good to us. When it reached our villages most of the properties were destroyed. Houses were burnt down, all the pigs were killed and our food gardens were all destroyed.
01:38:22:07 – 01:38:35:24	When we heard the story regarding the death of our sister and our sister-in-law, we were very frightened that we never returned back to the villages. All we could do was to stay in our shelters and wait for the messengers to deliver us information about what was going on.
01:38:35:24 – 01:38:54:03	All our young men were also recruited to do the campaign. The only people that were left behind were only females.
01:38:54:03 – 01:39:00:24	My father carried the young boy.
01:39:01:00 – 01:39:06:03	carried the young boy and took him into the bush. The explosions of the bomb were very big and frightened that he left the young boy behind and ran into the bush.
01:39:06:03 – 01:39:22:13	We came following our dad and yelled back to him to come back and take the little boy. My father called back to us to carry him and bring him to our dad. My father called back to us to take the child to him. We realized that our father wasn't listening properly to us. So we had to get closer and speak loudly to him.
01:39:22:13 – 01:39:33:18	At that time our bigger brother arrived from the bush. He looked at dad and knew that the explosions from the bomb might have damaged his ears and that he had left the boy behind. My brother took control of the child and carried him all the way to our camping site. The child was supposed to die but it was fortunate we were coming back during this terrible day. Our brother managed to save this child.
01:39:33:18 – 01:39:41:02	When my brother arrived at our camping site, he ordered us to leave the campsite because it was so close to the track and the Japanese could hear us and they would attack us. So we climbed up the mountain and moved further beyond the mountain to a place called Manamu. That is our new location.
01:39:41:02 – 01:40:01:19	From there onwards we were able to move to and fro but not further towards the war. We spent the whole three years there making gardens, looking after pigs and building shelters to live in.
01:40:01:19 – 01:40:14:04	We often walk back to the mountains and tried to spy if the war is gone or still it's going on our land. Then we would come back again in the afternoon.
01:40:33:13 – 01:40:40:06	The message of the end of the war reached us. We were very happy and excited about moving back to our own village.

01:40:40:06 – 01:40:50:20	By the time we arrived our village elders told us to join the rest of the team in collecting bombshells, helmets, guns and other stuff. We dumped all these remaining things at Templeton Crossing 1.
01:40:50:20 – 01:41:11:06	We collected bombs, helmets and hid them in one location. We put other unexploded shells in another location. After all these bomb shells and other things were collected, we carried all the remaining things down to Kokoda that is where all these ammunitions were transported to Gona and Buna and were shipped out.
01:41:14:22 – 01:41:25:00	All the same work was done along the track starting from Ower's Corner to Kokoda. Bombs were carried and guns were carried to Kokoda the nBuna and Gona where they were shipped out.
01:41:25:00 – 01:41:34:24	From then on we came and settled at home while our brothers went out to other centres like Popondetta and Port Moresby but we all remained back home. Some months later they all returned home.
01:41:34:24 – 01:41:42:01	My bigger brother told us to prepare the meals for people who have worked on the track in collecting all the bombshells. At Alola village we all made a very big meal to cater for people who have helped clean up the track.
01:41:42:02 – 01:41:56:01	We fed them with yams, taro, kau kau and bananas. We hear that people all the way from Kagi, Naduri, Efogi, Lavai, Menari are coming to do the cleaning, so we had to get the food ready for them.
01:41:56:01 – 01:42:07:18	When they arrived we fed them and they also gave us rice, meat and other stuff which they collected along the road for us to do the cooking for them.