

THE MAISIN IN THE GREAT WAR, 1942-45

A COLLECTION OF STORIES

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Introduction: The Maisin Experience of World War II

John Barker

The Maisin carriers and labourers, who relate their stories here, played key roles in some of the worst fighting of the Second World War, the Kokoda and Wau campaigns. In this brief introduction, I want to outline the context in which the Maisin worked and suffered, provide some notes on the main figures they mention in their stories, and describe how this book came into being.

The Japanese campaign in Papua

Papua New Guinea provided one of the key theatres of operation for the Pacific war from the time of the first Japanese onslaught in December 1941 to the surrender in August 1945. Many Papua New Guineans lived for much of the period under the occupation of foreign armies — the hundreds of thousands of Japanese, Australians and Americans who poured into the country. Others, like the Maisin, were less directly but no less seriously affected. Stripped of most of their able-bodied men, they provided the backbone of the war effort, serving as carriers and labourers under extraordinarily harsh conditions. The women, children and elders left behind in the villages also suffered as they made do without the helping hand of their husbands, fathers and sons, not knowing if they would return alive. All Papua New Guineans had experienced warfare before the arrival of the Europeans, but no one had ever seen or imagined carnage on the scale of the fighting or the machines the war — the huge tanks, ships and airplanes. The Maisin carried injured and dying men through muddy swamps and over slippery mountain trails. They saved lives with the presence of

death all about them, as they made their way past the festering corpses of slaughtered Japanese soldiers.

Beginning with an assault on Rabaul in December 1941, the Japanese had a series of brilliant successes that left them in control of much of the Bismarck Archipelago and the northwestern coast of New Guinea. In June 1942, Major-General B.M. Morris, who in August of that year assumed control over the Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU), ordered a small group of Australian soldiers, the Papuan Infantry Battalion and about 600 labourers to cross the Kokoda trail. This inadequate force — most of the soldiers were 17 year old Australian youths with no experience of the country — was to spearhead the expansion of the Kokoda airfield and secure the trail from any possible Japanese advances. The officers who directed the Kokoda and Buna campaign made their decisions at army headquarters in Queensland and Port Moresby. Having no idea of the difficulties of the Kokoda trail or of the swampy grounds around Buna and Gona, they made appalling decisions that caused great and, in retrospect, probably unnecessary suffering for both the soldiers and the carriers.

The main body of Maisin labourers appears to have been recruited in June or July of 1942, before the Japanese staged their invasion at Gona. They worked for a brief period of time at a plantation on the Robinson River before being assigned to Uberi at the head of the Kokoda trail. Early in July, Lieutenant H.T. Kienzle of ANGAU, known to the Maisin as Captain Kingsley, was placed in charge of native labourers working on the trail. Kienzle had been a rubber planter in the Yodda Valley

before the war. He stands out among the ANGAU officers who worked with carriers in his concern for their welfare and respect for the importance of the task they were carrying out. It is clear from the accounts in this book that the Maisin felt a tremendous respect for Kingsley-Kienzle.

Beginning in early July, Kingsley broke the native workers into groups and sent them out to build camps and relay rations along the length of the Kokoda trail. On 21 July 1942, the Japanese landed at Gona and began a rapid advance towards Kokoda. The Australian soldiers in the area put up a heroic defense but did not have the numbers or the supplies to withstand the much stronger Japanese force. The Japanese took Kokoda station in early August and quickly made their way up the trail on a drive to take Port Moresby by land. Maisin must have arrived around the time of this retreat for they witnessed the abandonment of Ioribaiwa, the point at which the Japanese came closest to Port Moresby, on the 16th of September.

At the critical moment of this advance, the attention of the Japanese commanders in Rabaul was diverted by an American assault on Guadalcanal and, most importantly, by a sound defeat in an attack upon Milne Bay in late August. Like the Allied commanders, the Japanese had failed to appreciate the difficulties of the Kokoda trail and did not make adequate provision to keep the forward line of soldiers supplied with food and ammunition. The tactical advantage now shifted to the Australians who had been driven back to a point where they were much closer to their own sources of supplies.

Low on ammunition, sick and exhausted from fighting on the trail, and hungry, the Japanese abandoned Ioribaiwa less than two weeks after taking it. As they pursued the Japanese, the Australian soldiers — now mostly fresh troops, including many

with combat experience — encountered fierce resistance, especially at Templeton's Crossing and Eora Creek. The passage of hundreds of feet and heavy rains had turned the track into a quagmire. As the Australians pushed forward, supply lines became hopelessly stretched. When the clouds cleared, planes would attempt to airdrop supplies. But this was a primitive art at best. Many of the crates broke upon contact with the ground and others disappeared over mountain cliffs. Cold, hungry and driven to the limits of their physical endurance, many of the carriers deserted. There is perhaps no greater testimony to the contribution made by Maisin to the war effort that they remained with the Australian soldiers throughout this dreadful campaign.

On November 2, the Australians recaptured Kokoda. Twelve days later, they drove the Japanese across the Kumusi River. General Horii, the capable commander of the Japanese forces, was drowned during the crossing. After reconstructing the cable bridge at Wairopi, the Australians continued their advance towards the coast. As they came along they encountered evidence that Japanese soldiers had become so hungry that some had butchered bodies of their own and Australian soldiers for food.

Determined not to lose their large forward base in the Gona/Buna area, the Japanese literally dug in, constructing an elaborate and nearly impenetrable series of trenches and underground log-lined bunkers. The Supreme Allied Commander, Douglas MacArthur, was determined to take Buna regardless of the cost. Joined now by American troops, the Australian soldiers now began the bloodiest fighting of the entire war. By the time Buna finally fell in January 1943, some 7,000 allied soldiers and about 12,000 Japanese had lost their lives.

Meanwhile the war effort had come much closer to the Maisin villages.

American troops built a large forward base at Wanigela, making use of the inland grasslands to construct an airstrip. Coast watchers were stationed along Collingwood Bay, including on Sesega Mountain behind Uiaku. Desperate for carriers, ANGAU authorized repeated police raids on coastal villagers, capturing some of the men who tell their stories below. These men worked for a time at Wanigela before being shipped around Tufi to the front lines. One boat which had several Maisin labourers among its company was attacked by a plane. At least one Maisin drowned. The others escaped and made their way back to Collingwood Bay.

In January 1943, the allies shifted their effort towards the Japanese stronghold at Salamaua and Lae. A few Maisin accompanied troops through the bush to help in an assault upon the Japanese from the interior. Fighting in the area continued into September. Meanwhile, Maisin left behind at the large labour camps of Dobodura began the long task of rebuilding destroyed villages and constructing airstrips, bases and roads. For the rest of the war, the area around Popondetta would be a major base for the final assault upon the Japanese occupying forces.

Like other carriers, Maisin were impressed by the friendliness of troops, especially Americans. The soldiers willingly shared their food, cigarettes and supplies with their Maisin friends. They worked with them, they often slept beside them. In turn, the Maisin treated the soldiers with great respect and care. It took eight men to carry wounded soldiers back from the fighting lines. The terrain, whether on the Kokoda trail or the coastal swamps, was extraordinarily difficult. A great number of soldiers owe their lives to people like the Maisin. This has never been forgotten.

The Second World War was, to all the Papua New Guineans who lived through

it, a turning point. No longer could their relationship with the colonial masta remain as it had been. Many of the stories related here end with the speech made by General Morris in the aftermath of the Buna campaign. In that speech, Morris acknowledges the hateful and ignorant attitude that many Europeans held of Papuans before the war. He states that the Papuans had demonstrated that such attitudes are wrong. He promises changes — schools, hospitals — and a willingness to work with rather than over the Papuans. The veterans observe that many of these changes have come about. But they also express a strong sense of betrayal. It is to the everlasting shame of Australia that no adequate compensation has ever been offered to these men for the suffering of themselves and their family, suffering that possibly saved Australia itself from foreign attack and invasion.

On the writing of this book

I recorded the stories related here during two periods of residence in the Maisin villages — in 1982-83 and in March 1997. The stories from the earlier period are verbatim translations made on the spot. Unfortunately, I did not tape record these stories so there is no record of them in the Maisin language. In 1997, I recorded stories from elders in Uiaku, Ganjiga, Marua and Airara. Equally unfortunately, I did not have the opportunity to record stories from veterans in other Maisin villages: Uwe, Yuayu, Sinapa, Sinipara and Koinyasi. The record is thus far from complete, but still I hope that it conveys some of the dramatic experience of the Maisin veterans and women who lived through the war years. Copies of the cassettes have been sent back to the villages. Most of the texts in this book are free translations composed while I was staying in Uiaku with the able

assistance of MacSherry Gegeyo, who also helped me with the earlier translations.

When recording these stories, I wrote down most personal and place names phonetically. As much as possible, I have tried to change these to agreed upon modern spellings. In my original manuscript, for instance, I wrote "Yoribaiwa." For this document, I have changed this to "Ioribaiwa." In many cases, however, I am

not able to identify either the place or the person and so I have kept the phonetic spelling.

This is a private publication for the use of the Maisin people. I ask that non-Maisin respect this. These stories and this book should not be reproduced in any way without first informing the editor and securing permission from Maisin leaders.

Adelbert Sevaru

Recorded in Maume Village, 27 May - 18 June, 1983

Translation by George Sevaru, Macsherry Gegeyo, Willie Sevaru and John Barker

The Kokoda Trail

In 1936, George was born. When the Second World War came in 1942, George wasn't grown up - he wasn't a big boy.

Some government officers from Tufi came down here to get us for police or labourers. They came to Uiaku and all the Maisin men got frightened of them and ran into the bush. But I was making sago up where those small mountains are. I was sleeping there when Titus told Georgina to go up there and call me down to come and help the government because all the Maisin had ran away into the bush. Titus knew that I always helped the government, so he sent the word for me. When I came home the government officers took me. Some of the people hiding in the bush heard about me and so they came back and joined in. I was picked to join the Pacific Islands Regiment. But Georgina was complaining because George was still a small boy. She took him out in front of the government officers and they said, "O.k. you won't join as a P.I.R." So I stayed back.

The government asked for labourers again. So I joined again. This was the second time that I did what the government officer said, so Georgina stopped and our names are written down. And then we went down to Reaga and boarded two boats there - the



Giligili and Erevare. And we took those boats to Port Moresby.

All the Maisin, Okena, Yeo, Arifam people got on these two boats and went. While we were going we called in at Dogura and I said "I want to go up and see the Bishop." The rest of the Maisin said, "Why? Do you want to stop us?" I said, "No. I just want to see him." John Hunt was a student at Dogura. He showed me Bishop's House. I asked the Bishop if he would bless up before we went. The Bishop said, "All

right. I'll bless all the carriers before they go." So in the morning he went down and blessed all the carriers before they left.

Some Australian and American soldiers were at Giligili when we went over. When we were going we saw the soldiers at Giligili, so we helped them build houses and cut grass. We stayed there about a month. Then we walked across to Mamai in Central Province and then we went to Abau, a government station. While we were at Abau, the Japanese landed at Buna. When the Japanese landed there, some soldiers and P.I.R. went to Abau. When the soldiers came they spread the news of the landing. All the Maisin people got frightened. They packed up their things and tried to come home in the night. But when they told me I thought of my mother's advice. I was pretending to sleep. They tried to wake me up, but I wouldn't move. So they got tired of trying and sat till daybreak. All the Maisin men were frightened. But I said,

"I've shaken with my wife, I've kissed my son — so I won't get so scared that I must go back. I came to die." So we were staying until the boat came and we went to Port Moresby.

The Japanese were throwing bombs at Moresby when we arrived. The army said, "these carriers won't sleep here because of the bombs. They'll go up to Safai and stay there." When at Safai, the Japanese moved up to Kokoda. Some soldiers came back to Safai and we met them there. When we were there, Mr. Kenelm Smith said that they would all go to Uberi to out the tents and remove all the food from that camp because the Japanese soldiers were coming across from Kokoda. We left all our things at Safai and went up. They thought we would get frightened and stay back, but when they told us we went up. When soldiers were moving back or were wounded, we used to send up new ones from Moresby.

People from Daru right to Mambari, we were the carriers. Kenelm Smith was looking after all these Papuan carriers - an Australian government man. Mr. Smith was looking after them along with Captain Kingsley. There were other generals, but these two men were leading and looking after the carriers. Some PIR and some priests were there too. We carriers took rations of rice, tinned fish, tinned meat, as well as bombs and cartridges, hand grenades - these were the things we carried during the war. And then we carried some wounded soldiers back to the camps. We Maisin went up as far as Uberi when the Japanese came to Kokoda. While they went to Kokoda, the Australian soldiers cut down a bridge at Iliano River. But the Japanese soldiers were using rubber dinghies to come across. When the Japanese were going up, the PIR and

soldiers moved right back to Uberi. We stayed with them there.

The Japanese moved from Kokoda right across to Ioribaiwa - that's the second last camp before Moresby. All of us, the carriers and the soldiers, were at Uberi. That's the last camp. When everybody was there, some of us were sleeping under the trees just in the bush. Everywhere there were soldiers and carriers.

When the Japanese were at Ioribaiwa, most of the carriers were frightened in the night. All the Daru, Kerema, Kokori and Kaiva people left in the night for home. The next day, Captain Kingsley found it difficult. He was sending radio messages to Moresby and other big places. He asked the police to go around to every village and bring those carriers who ran away. But they were really frightened because the Japanese were just at the second last camp. When Captain Kingsley sent these messages, they were saying "Can you find other good carriers there?" "Yes, there are some good carriers here, the Tufi Maisin people and Baniara and some Daru Kikori people - they are here with us in the camp."

Government officers in Moresby sent this message: "Don't let the Maisin stay in the camp, because they might see the other carriers getting frightened. They might run away. So let them stay in the bush by themselves." So Captain Kingsley sent us out and we stayed in the bush by ourselves. They sent a message down to Moresby to say that the Japanese are at the second last camp. "If they come to the first camp they will go to Moresby. So what shall we do? For some of the carriers are running away." The answer was, "We will send a boat up to take the carriers and the soldiers to Australia. So when the Japanese are coming to the last

camp, you can move down to the wharf and there will be a ship there to take all the soldiers and carriers back to Australia.”

When they were sending the boat up, the carriers were worried because if they went to Australia what would happen to their wives and children? They asked Captain Kingsley this question: “Are we going to leave our wives and families to Japanese soldiers?” So all the MaisiNauro camp. Ioribaiwa camp was taken by us - we moved up there with the soldiers. We buried the people who were shot there. We dug a hole and buried them. It was a very steep cliff - the Japanese soldiers had been frightened, jumped down and died. They were smelly. So we got Ioribaiwa camp. When we were there, the soldiers marched to Nauro to fight and the Japanese moved back again. That machine gun at Sogeri - there was no truck road, so the soldiers told us and we carried that machine gun from Sogeri up to Ioribaiwa. In the night, about 10 o'clock they started firing this machine gun at Nauro camp and all of the camp was burnt.

And then we moved down to Nauro camp. While we were moving there, the Japanese camped at Manari. And then we carriers got that machine from Uberi and carried it to Nauro. Then they fought there and the Japanese moved back again. In the night the machine gun fired again and the Manari camp was burnt up.

We started fighting at Uberi and we won about 3 camps. We took over 3 camps, so the Japanese are really losing now. So the England soldiers could chase them right down to the beach and kill them all. We are going to stop there. American soldiers had shot all their warships and they had destroyed everything. So the Japanese didn't have

any food or any more soldiers coming. Because the Americans had shot all the ships with more soldiers and food. So they asked the American soldiers just to wipe out all of the Japanese soldiers left there.

When other soldiers were moving back, most of the officers - the generals - stayed until the war was really over (US soldiers). Some more new troops went up from Moresby to Manari. And the Japanese were at Efogi. They fought there. They fought and the Japanese were moving back and the soldiers took over Efogi. When the Japanese moved back they camped at Myola, while we were at Efogi. When some Japanese soldiers were “mucking around in the bush” all the carriers were up. It was strong there. The soldiers fought hard until the Japanese moved back to Iora.

When the Japanese were at Iora, all their food was finished because the Americans had bombed all their ships. So at some of the Japanese were taken as prisoners.

When some Japanese moved - they went to a small village, I forget what it is called - they camped there. They were really short of food - Biagi camp - they were wandering about in the Koriari people's gardens looking for food. From there they moved back to Kokoda. The Japanese carriers were New Guineans and they brought some horses too to carry things up. When they are short of food they were killing these horses to eat them.

When we moved down to Kokoda, that's where the garment officers pulled up three flags. The first was for us Maisin. The second one was for Baniara and the third was for Daru, because all of the other carriers got frightened and ran away. But we helped the soldiers all along until we reached Kokoda. They gave us knives and

laplaps as presents. But those carriers who ran away were taken back by police and made to join again. We had plenty of carriers after they came back. We were helping soldiers, then we came across this Kokoda trail. So the government officers pulled three flags up for us. But these other carriers who ran away joined us at Kokoda.

Captain Kingsley told me to go down to Australia from Kokoda because all along the Kokoda trail I was telling the people not to run away. And I'm always in front to help any soldier or anybody - the general, whatever they say, I was always there. Captain Kingsley saw this. So when we reached Kokoda he was trying to send me down to Australia. They would send me down so that people could see one of the brave men.

When we were at Kokoda, the Japanese were at Oivi on a very steep hill. They were strong there. We were trying and trying until they moved back. The Japanese moved down to Ilimu camp. They fought there and the Japanese moved to Worofe. At Worofe the Japanese had their stores. So they had enough food and could fight back strongly.

As I have told you, they had too many stores and houses. So they fought hard until we took over. Then they moved back to Sangara. Some of the carriers were coming, but we were first. Captain Kingsley saw this, so when they broke into the Japanese stores they gave us presents of knives, laplaps, tinned meat and fish.

When the Japanese moved to Sangara, they cut the Warafe bridge. So I swam across and took the rubber dinghies over. When Captain Kingsley saw me doing this, he said, "You won't be one of the carriers." So he gave me one of the rifles and he carried the rifle

with me. I carried the rifle and we went across to Sangara. I saw two young Maisin men - Ezekiel and John Gill - they carried a wet tent; it was very heavy. When they came in front of me they cried. I gave back the rifle and started carrying again - I became a carrier.

The Japanese moved from Sangara to Popondetta. Some of the Australian and American soldiers who had walked from Oro Bay met us at Popondetta. From Popondetta down to the beach at Buna, the Japanese had plenty of camps. They had camps at Gona, Sanana, Buna... So all the soldiers from Oro Bay got together. There were lots of troops. So they divided themselves and went to every Japanese camp and there was fighting. The soldiers were fighting. We were the first people to go to the beach - the soldiers and carriers who came across the Kokoda Trail.

When we were going down to Buna beach, one of the generals tried to send a message up to Popondetta and then to Moresby. But the wire had been cut by Japanese soldiers who were hiding in the bush. We pulled the flag up, but they didn't get the message. So while we were on the beach, the American planes came along and threw bombs at us. Some of us were very frightened, so we ran into the bush or jumped in holes while the Americans threw bombs down on us.

When the American planes were dropping the bombs, everybody - even the soldiers and carriers - ran into the bush. The commander general was trying to send a message and couldn't. I was the only one with the general. He was cross and told me to take the radio to Killerton. But was very heavy so I called for some Maisin men to help: Noah, Sylus, Mannie, Coleman. They helped me, and we carried the radio to

Killerton. While we went, the Americans were still dropping bombs. But we hid in the bush under big breadfruit trees and we went across to Killerton. One of the commanders at Killerton saw us and told me to take the aerials up the coconut and climb there. So I did this quickly. Then he sent the message to Moresby. From there the Americans stopped bombing us.

When they received the message, the commander said to us "It's over, the message has been received. So you can walk back along the beach to Gona. In front of the village. You can play and tell stories because the American planes will not bomb you." So we walked to Gona and the commanding officer there said, "Did you do what I told you." I said, "Yes, I took the radio and went. I climbed on the coconut and set up the aerial. The commander at Killerton sent the message, it's finished now - they know we are here." So the commanding officer said, "You were always brave through the Kokoda trail down to the beach. You have done wonderful things. So I will make you a medical. We'll send you over to Moresby and you'll work in the hospital and not do any hard work." But I said, "I don't know how to treat people. I don't know anything about medical - so I don't want to join as a medical." But he said, "I will help you. You just stay in the hospital and you won't do any hard work." So I became a medical.

I worked for three days ... my work was just to sit inside the hospital, which I didn't like so I decided to leave medical and join the carriers again because when I joined the medical life I saw my friends doing hard work while I just sat. So I joined them again.

The War at Gona

In 1943 we went down to Gona. All the Japanese at Gona had moved away. They were at Sanananda and Buna and Joroba. That's on the beach - the Japanese were there. The Japanese had their big machine guns in these villages. When the Japanese were firing their machine guns at us, they went as far as Dobodura, right up to Popondetta. And the Japanese planes came in the night to drop bombs. We didn't sleep very well those nights. When we went down to Gona, the Japanese all moved away so we moved from Gona to Sanananda inland. That's where we camped. At Sanananda the Japanese dug a hole and went right under the ground in the middle of the kunai grass. That's where they were staying. The Japanese made a trick - they went inside the hole, but they put their guns up and were ready. The Australians went along and couldn't find a road. The Australians went along and couldn't find a road. So they made a road through this kunai grass. As they went along, many troops were killed in the kunai grass. When the Australian soldiers went the Japanese were in the ground and hard to kill, so that is where most of the Australians died. We helped by carrying their bombs and bullets and surrounded the kunai grass.

So they were trying. They sent a message to Moresby and Milne Bay for the American airforce to spot the Japanese in the kunai grass. The commander who was there to fight the Japanese - when he was there most of the Australian soldiers were killed. The Australians and Americans at headquarters knew this so they told him to move back and get new troops in and a new commander. When the message was sent to send a new commander, the

Japanese also heard the message. So right when the new commander arrived, the Japanese began firing - he wasn't ready yet. He was in the hole. All the soldiers and carriers got frightened and ran into the bush. The commander told the carriers to cut very big logs - as big as my house posts - to put over the hole to prevent bombs from getting in. When we carried the logs and went near the road, the Japanese were really firing their machine guns at that spot, so we got frightened and threw the logs down.

There was a doctor there - he was a commander too with the Australian soldiers. They tried to stop the carriers but all of them ran away. So the doctor and the soldiers took the logs and put them over the hole where the commander was staying. And they covered the hole with earth. The commander wanted them to dig a drain from where he was staying to the other side of the road so that if the Japanese dropped a bomb on him he could escape. When the carriers ran away I stayed back with one Pogani man and one Samarai man. They saw me so they stayed back too. And then the doctor told us that the Japanese would fire, stop for about five minutes, and then start firing again - because that is the time they used to load their cartridges. So when they were stopping, the Doctor told us to run across quickly to the commander. So we did. We ran across and they started firing again after five minutes. And then we started digging a drain from the commander's hole to the other side of the road. Three of us plus the doctor's troops -we were digging the drain across. We did not reach the other side of the road when the Japanese plane came. They were throwing bombs and this Pogani man, Samari man and the Australian soldiers all went into the drain while I was digging and the

Japanese were still throwing bombs and shooting bullets on us. The Japanese didn't know where the commander was staying so they were dropping bombs all over the place. And then the commander sent a message back to Moresby and the American planes came along. They came along and they started fighting with Japanese planes. Most of the Japanese planes were shot down there by the American planes. Some went down to the sea. Only a few went back. Most were shot down.

While the Japanese planes were dropping the bombs and I was digging the drain, the doctor was looking at me - at what I was doing. I was digging until I reached the road and the doctor stopped me there. He was very sorry for me. So after the Japanese fired the machine gun and stopped, he grabbed me and we ran across to the other side of the road. Then he let me go free to my friends. But those two carriers saw us running across, so they came after us and they went to their friends.

When I went back to our labour camp, one of the commanders there - Mr. Frazer - he asked me whether we have covered the hole where the commander was. I told him about all we had done and he said thank you to me. He had been frightened and had also withdrawn with other soldiers and carriers. That was the same man who told me to become a medical assistant. So he said, "I told you to become a medical assistant, but you didn't want to do that work. And then we came down to Sanananda and you did a good thing again. I'm trying to help you, but you refuse my help." So I said, "It's all right I can be a carrier because I sometimes lead the Maisin people and tell them what to do. I don't want to sit down while my friends do very hard work by themselves."

The American planes were going around that area where the kunai grass is and they sighted the hole where the Japanese were staying and killing all of the Australian soldiers. They knew the Japanese were there, so the American machine guns from Sanananda, Dobodura, Barisari, and Popondetta all fired at that same spot. But the Japanese soldiers went in the ground. The grass was burning and the whole place was spoilt, but the Japanese soldiers were safe in the ground. They tried and tried, but they couldn't. So they sent a message over to Moresby to send them the war tanks. They sent them too and put them up at Oro Bay. So one American general was at Embi and he was sending the message across to the troops who were fighting. "These tanks won't come along the beach because it is too swampy. So the road must go near the hills by Popondetta. I want the Tufi Maisin carriers to come along and make this road quickly." But the troops who were fighting said "Most of the carriers ran away and are staying out of the fighting area. Only the Tufi Maisin carriers are here carrying food and cartridges to the soldiers. So they are very busy here at the moment." There were very many Maisin from Uwe to Marua but they couldn't send us down because most of the carriers from other places had been away. When they carried bombs or food they would get frightened and run away. But we helped the soldiers a lot - taking food to them while they were fighting and taking the wounded soldiers back again to the hospital. They didn't want us to go and build the road.

Mr. Frazer decided that all the Maisin would stay back. He wanted me to go and see the American general and help him with the road. So it was about 3 o'clock. I started to walk from

Sanananda inland. When I was trying to go I asked Mr. Frazer if I could have somebody to help or talk with or go with me. So he told Colman to go and one small boy - Egiboti - as my tea boy, to make tea for me because Mr. Fraser knew that I would work very hard, so Egiboti would be needed to look after my food while I was working. So the three of us left for Embi in the afternoon.

We were walking and it got dark. We went close to Sopuda camp and then we went near the camp and the guards were already there. Luckily, it was one of the Maisin guards - Saul Garandi - with an Orokaiva guard. When we went close to the camp, Saul got his gun up and he was aiming at me. He was just about to touch the trigger when I turned back to Colman and I called out, "Come quickly." When I said that, he just pointed the gun on the ground and said "Who are you?" I said, "It's me. Adelbert." "What are you doing in the night? Who sent you? I thought you were a Japanese soldier and I was trying to shoot you." So he told the Orokaiva guard and they took us to their camp and left us there and he went back again.

The next morning they gave us food to eat and then we started walking. We went to Dobodura camp and all the carriers were there digging, making the road. All the camps right down to Oro Bay were making the road, digging drains - for that tank to go up. When we were digging the drain, we were cutting some big trees too and all the camps right down to Oro Bay had their own areas where they will build the road and stop and leave off for the next camp to start. That's what we were doing.

When we were about to finish the road I got sick. Not myself alone - there were some carriers and soldiers too. We had dysentery. Our food was only a

biscuit and tinned meat. That's why most of the carriers and the soldiers had this sickness in the camps. When I got sick they sent me up to Sopuda Hospital. I left those two Maisin men there and I went back to the hospital. When I went there I met a Maisin man - Anselm Kerorova. He was getting better when I went in. He cried for me because I was so much worse. This sickness dysentery is very bad, so he was crying for me because people were dying - about 10 or 15 a night.

It was war time, so they didn't make separate graves. They dug a big hole and put all the bodies in it. I stayed in the hospital for two nights. On the third night, I was very bad, so they put me where the people stay to die. There were too many of us - maybe about 20 in that house. The doctor came along and when he took our temperature he knew that we were going to die very soon. He was talking to the medical and said, "At 4 o'clock in the morning all of these people lying down will die." I heard him. So they didn't give medicine - they were waiting for us to die and then bury us. I was lying down and then I tried to move my legs but I couldn't. So I felt sorry for myself that I was going to die. It was almost 4 o'clock. I called my mother's name, Kaikira, and I said, "The teaching that you gave me to help people or to do whatever they tell me to do - I was doing that and helping the Christian people in the name of God and I came here and they put me in this place to die. I am waiting to die." I also said, "I am one of the Gorofi men who came here to try to die in a different place."

I was lying down and was very cold from my toe right up to my chest. But I was still breathing. I was lying down and I thought to myself, "My mother was just a human being like me. May I try to pray to God." So I lay down

and I imagined that "I came here as a carrier and I've been talking to people - telling them about God and how I trust in God. I've been doing everything people tell me to do. But if I die, other people might think that it wasn't the real God I was telling them about - telling them to believe. And they won't trust or do what I was telling them to do. They'll just forget and they won't know you." While I was saying that my mouth was closed and teeth stuck together.

After my mouth closed, my ears blocked - I was dead but my heart was still beating. Some of those beside me were doing the same: they were dying. All of us were just lying down there, some died. I was at the end. I was lying down and then just like a dream I saw a man wearing a cassock. I didn't see his face, only the part from the waist down to the legs. When I saw that, my right ear sounded like firing guns - it was open. And then when I tried to move, the left ear did the same. So my whole body moved. Then I started breathing as normal.

When I was feeling much better it was already dawn. I was feeling better and breathing as normal but my teeth were still stuck - I didn't open my mouth. Next morning I opened my eyes and saw the medicals coming to take the dead people out. Beside me there were two people who were trying to die. One rolled over and lay on my chest. Another one lay on my legs. Then they died. I saw them lying on me but didn't know how to move them away, so they were still on top of me.

When medicals came along they were inspecting all of these dead people - touching their bodies and chests to see if they were really dead. When they came to me, my body was still moving and I was still breathing so the medicals went back and told the doctor. The

doctor said, "O.K. leave him and we'll see him at 8 o'clock." The rest were put in the tractor and they were taken to the hole to be buried.

While I was lying down, Anselm was standing above me. He was crying. He thought I was dead. I heard him crying, but my head wouldn't move. I was lying down. I tried to force myself to move my head. When I moved my head, my mouth was open too. So I said to him, "Come and help me - lift me up and I will sit down." And I said, "There's tobacco where I was lying down. Get a lot of it and give it to that Orokaiva lady. She'll give you a taro. Bring it, cook it and I'll drink the soup and eat the taro. Even if it is a small - I need it." So he went and he got a very small piece of taro. He cooked it and when he went to me my mouth was trying to close again. He put the spoon in and tried to open it. He helped me to have the taro and the soup. When I ate and drank I felt much better. When it was 8 o'clock that doctors and the medicals came with a tractor to take me to the hole. They didn't cover the hole. They were waiting for me. When I died they would cover the hole. But by the time they came back I had gotten up and was sitting down.

When the medicals and doctor came along they were very surprised at how I had gotten up and gotten better. I stayed in the hospital until 10 o'clock. I said to Anselm, "Bring my clothes and soap and I'll go and have a wash." And Anselm was scared. I told him again. He went and brought my clothes and soap. I went to have a wash and he followed after. After the wash, I got changed and went back to the house. At 12 o'clock, they rang the bell for lunch. So said to Anselm "Bring my plate and I'll go have lunch." Anselm was still scared and he didn't know whether I was

really better or not. So both of us went up to have lunch. All the medicals and carriers there came along and asked, "How did you get better? You were going to die but you got up again."

The next day I said to Anselm, "I'm going back to my camp again to work. But Anselm said, "No, wait! We'll see the doctors and medicals before you leave." So when the doctors came out they said "We thought you were going to die but you got better again so you go back to your camp." So I went back to Dobodura. That's where I saw the power of God. So I sometimes tell other people this story. I also told Father Kingsley, so sometimes he speaks of this in his sermons in the church too.

The doctors know who is going to die or not going to die. Everytime that they put the patients in this place they all died. But when they put me there, I didn't die and they really trusted me - they knew how I got better. So I'm just telling you how I have felt the power of God during the war,.

That's why sometimes when I tell these stories I weep.

At Sanananda

At the time I left the hospital, one American general was the boss of boats and planes. He was trying to send a war tank up to break down Japanese tunnels and chase them out to kill them. He lined up pegs to make a road. The pegs went to a big tree. The general was worried about which men should cut the tree down. He thought of Maisin men. All the ANGAU used to work with Maisin and knew that they were hard-working people. The ANGAU and knew that they were hard-working people. The ANGAU fellow was Mr. Prince (a Priest) - he sent Egbert, Adelbert and Colman. Egbert was the cook and Colman was the helper. They went to

the general and he showed them the tree to cut down.

Nearly everybody in the army tried that big tree. It was hard. They tried and it was too tough to cut. So the General asked me to go cut the tree. When he asked me to go everyone was waiting to see if I could cut the tree.

That tree was very tough. It had very high roots on both sides. Nearly every tree was cut, but that was left. It was hard to cut, so I built a platform and stood beside it to see if the platform was strong enough. I took one of the very big axes. The axe got stuck in the tree. All the soldiers were sitting saying "He is trying to cut it. We have to see if he will cut it." Then I started cutting it. They wanted another good man. So Mr. Priest got one from Eno camp. Both of us were Tufi men. He was a good man. Both of us threw the axes. Nearly everybody was sitting around the tree. We both were cutting it so the people didn't want to go away. They were laughing as the pieces of wood fell around them.

One army sargeant major said, "I'll go and tell the general that the tree will fall today." I said, "No, I'll try to cut it first then you can go and see it." The Sargeant said, "You are stopping me. But I will tell him you are cutting that tree so he can send boys to have tea ready at ten o'clock". He told the general. He got the tea, sugar, biscuits and sent it up to them. The sargeant took the tea up and told me to come down. I said, "No, I won't come down. I want to finish this tree before 12. So give the tea to all these people around here." They were both cutting it when the sergeant said, "This tree is going to fall today so I'll see the general." "No, it may fall today or tomorrow, we'll wait and see." "Well, then I'll tell the cooks to get the lunch ready." "Oh, but don't

tell him it will fall today. It could be today or tomorrow."

The tunnel was at Sanananda. When the Australian and American soldiers went by that kunai grass on patrol they were killed. So the general wanted that tree to be cut quickly so he could send the tank up to break the tunnel. We kept cutting to 12 when we had lunch. After lunch we felt that we were right inside the tree and it was soft. So I told the sergeant, "I think that it will fall by 4 or 5 in the afternoon." We kept cutting it till 3. The sergeant was going to get tea when the tree fell down. When he was talking to the general they heard the sound of the tree and said, "Oh that tree has fallen now." When the tree fell off we got off from the platform. The sergeant brought the tea up. He said, "Straight after tea I'll take you down. The general will see you and take a photo of you." The general wanted to take the photo because nearly everyone else had failed to cut the tree down. The sergeant didn't let the general know about the Emo man so he didn't come down. I was very sorry for that. The general said, "I'll send your photos to America and you will go to America later. We'll send the photos down. That will take a week. And when the answer comes from America we'll send you down." When they told me I would go to America, they didn't let the Australians know. While he was talking the rain started falling so they took me to the camp at Ambi. One of the ANGAU officers was in the camp with the police. The general's car was used to take me to the camp. He thought it was the general and lined all the police up for a salute. When he saw me come out he was cross. "Why are you in the general's car? You'll be punished tomorrow." Then he put me to work pulling kunai grass out with my hands that very afternoon. The Emo

man and other labourers were also in that car. We all had to do the work.

Next day I went to the general and he said, "You will take a ticket to America next week." I said, "No it's O.K. Everyone did the punishment work but you're only going to send me. So it's no good. I feel sorry for my friends." The general said, "Oh I want you to go down so that the big people in America can see you. You cut that tree down. You can tell them how you cut the tree down." "No. They are my friends. So I don't want to go down." The general was a bit strong because I cut the tree down. The tank had got up and made all the Japanese get out of the tunnel and they were killed. But I didn't want to go to America.

When the tank broke down the tunnel all the soldiers came out. The War was ended there. They burnt the kunai grass and cleared everybody out. The Japanese soldiers on the coast were killed, but the Japanese in the hole were a bit harder. So after the tank went up the fighting stopped there. When they finished they chased the enemies down to Buna. We camped there. All the Buna people were hiding in the bush. We took them out and built their houses up again. When it was 4 o'clock, and time to knock off, I kept helping the old people - most of their young people were out carrying. Then we cleaned up Buna. The Japanese had moved to Sanomo. Now those soldiers who came through Kokoda were sent home for leave and then they came back again. We came and took the boat at Oro Bay. We come to Tufi and then to Uiaku. Nearly all the Maisin come home for holidays.

During the holidays Mr. Marsh was at Tufi. He come down to see the volcano that was smoking. He had come before to see the volcano. But the guides told him lies and took him to the wrong

place. But then I took him up with the council and village police. Mr. Marsh said, "You were a war carrier?" "Yes" "Did you see what work was done during the war?" I said, "Yes I did that work and then came." We went up the next day. Mr. Marsh said, "This work must be done just like in the war, so don't tell me lies. You can show me right up to the volcano." We had two men from here with us. They went ahead to clear the road. I sighted the way. We came to where it was boiling water up. Nearly all the trees were dying from the boiling water. And there was smoke going in nearly all directions. We came close to where it was smoking. Mr. Marsh said, "Look for the footprints of pigs. If the pigs are coming from that side then the smoke is not killing them." Then they saw a bird flying from the volcano smoke area. So he said, "It's O.K. If the bird didn't come from there it would be a bit hard for us to go there." We went close to it. The smoke lay towards the mountain. Mr. Marsh said that it was close to here. Then the smoke changed course again. We were getting close when lightning came and thunder rolled. Then the earth started falling like heavy rain coming down on us. The earthquake came. We were holding on the trees, waiting for the earthquake to go away. The thunder rolled 3 times. Then the D.O. told us to run to see the hole and then to run back from it. Then a flood started coming down. The hole was filled with cold water, so it started to boil up.

So we ran to the hole. Mr. Marsh told one man to put his feet into the water. One police put his foot into the water to see whether it was hot. Then Mr. Marsh said, "O.K. now you must run for your lives." So we ran right away from the hole. Then the fourth thunder rolled again. It was a heavy one with an

earthquake too. We were going to sleep there but the ADO changed his mind and said, "No we'll go down and sleep somewhere else." We came right down to the village. On the way Mr. Marsh shot a pig and we carried it down.

When we came back, during the night I dreamt about the volcano. I saw that when it erupted it would not come to the village, but only to the back of the little mountains. Someone told me that I shouldn't take my wife and kid away because the volcano would not come to the village. So I told my wife.

After a month's holiday I went to Popondetta. While I was there, the volcano erupted. It didn't come to the village. It stopped right behind the small mountains. While we were in Popondetta some of the people in the villages there were sent as labourers to Moresby to work at rubber plantation. Some came to Popondetta to fly across. Some ran away, they didn't want to tap rubber. So some war carriers lined up to replace them. I lined up and so did the rest of the Rerebin clan to go over to Moresby.

When we went to Moresby we found Captain Kingsley. He was a Kokoda planter. He asked why they had come. "All same of the men ran away so we had to take their place." "No you must work in town. You did the hard work during the War. So you will not work on rubber plantations; you will work in town.

At Port Moresby

When we went Moresby, Capt. Kingsley met us and asked us how we came there. "We were out Popondetta. The new recruits for the rubber plantation ran away in the night. So we got in the line. Some of my brothers followed me to go to work at the rubber plantation." Capt. Kingsley said, "You

will go to the town and work. You already did your share in war time."

Our compound was at Kilakila in Moresby. We camped there and worked in town. We were working at Four Mile. We were with some of the Australian soldiers, building houses. We helped the people working in the sawmill. We cut the timbers. We were building at Moresby, Sogare and Magere. Our building boss was a man from England. The soldiers were practising shooting targets in the town. I and my friends used to cut the timber for some of their houses. When we helped those builders, the sergeant who was looking after the sawmill said to me, "You will stop cutting the timbers. You will work in the sawmill." They would mark a log and I and another man would cut them across. An officer, Mr. Bunde, came along and asked me, "Who told you to work here?" I told him and he argued with the sergeant. Mr. Bunde asked, "Who is going to pay him? I pay him so he works for me." Then he said I must have punishment work. So he told me, "You must carry this ice all the way to my house at Kilakila." My shoulder was very cold, I could feel nothing. He said, "That's the last of it. You will not go back again. You took the punishment from me." When I went back to work my friends asked me what was wrong with me so I told them about the ice block. Next morning when I went to work, the army sergeant told me "I heard Mr. Bunde was talking to you. I am cross about this too. You are only allowed to be paid Papuan money. But I think you will come back with me." I said, "No, I have already been punished for working with you. So I will go back to the sectional work." I went back to cutting the timbers.

We worked with some of the soldiers. At 10 a.m. our officer would

tell us to have a cup of tea with the soldiers before going to work again. When we had tea the soldiers and followers used to make fun and laugh. I felt shame that they were making funny words. I used to go out and sit under the tree. Some of my cousin brothers would bring tea and biscuits out to me. All the time the captain watched me because I did this. The captain went for tea at the same time. He would see me sitting away all by myself. One day we went in again for tea. The captain drove up in his car and passed me. He stopped the car there and told his soldiers to go out and line in front of him. They came out and he asked them if they were having enough food and sharing with the labourers. They said that they were o.k. Then the captain got up and said, "What about that fellow over there?" Then he got really angry, "That man is really good, you are eating with dogs." He felt sorry for me and was talking in front of the soldiers. He said, "O.K. go back and have your tea, I don't want to eat with you." When the soldiers back, he waved at me. I looked behind but no one was behind me. But he was waving to me. I was shy to go to him, I had never spoken to him before. The captain said, "I don't want to eat with them. This time again. I saw you sitting but they never see you. I have food in my car. Get all the things out and you'll eat with me. They think you are an ordinary man, but they will see you eating here with me, using all of my eating utensils." After tea he called his soldiers out again. "Did you see this man using my eating utensils?" "Yes, we did see him," they all said. He said, "Look at him using all my things. Take note of this, he will not do extra work. He will do the same work as his mate. He will do the work I order him to do. You will not give him any extra work anymore. I'm putting a rule

that he will do only the work set by me." When we were starting to work he called the European driver and said, "From now on you follow my orders. All these soldiers fool around with this man and his mates. So don't create extra work for these men. If they want to have a wash you can take them away for that, but they are not to do extra work after that. Whenever you go out over tea or lunch time, come back to the cook and take food out to them. Don't waste time by waiting till they're finished and bringing them back." He was probably a missionary - he was originally from England. I forget his name. He talked to me, "I was looking at you. I knew the missionary side, so I felt a bit sorry for you." He gave me the key to look after the store shed. I was a bit frightened because he was giving this to me. "No, I'm doing the job in the army, so I want you to help me. Whenever you need something from the store you can open it and get it."

I didn't use the key he gave me because I was afraid. The driver would bring out our food for us. When we signed on as carriers we promised to work for 18 months only. But I said I would stay to the end of the War. Copland and Didymus had signed on for 18 months, so they had to go home again. But I had promised to stay till the end of the War, so I stayed back. When the other labourers went back, I had no one to stay with me. So I worked as a runner with the Captain in his car. When work would start, the Captain would say to the driver, "I'll take this fellow with me." We would drive around town while he visited his friends and big people. In the afternoons we would return. We used to go to the officer's canteen to have tea or cold drinks. The Captain would urge me to drink with them. I used to go to the Navy and

Army. He said, "You must follow me and do what I do with the officers. Don't be shy before them."

While we were at Moresby, the American soldiers killed the Japanese king Kaiser at Tokyo. Then they ran to the captain, "We killed King Kaiser so we can go around and kill every one in Tokyo?" He said, "Don't kill them. We need to make friends with them." So this time we are friends with the Japanese, not enemies anymore. When they finished the War at Tokyo, they had to put the flag on. That captain told them to put the pole up before they put the flag up, not to use a machine. For this would show that the War was completed with the help of our Lord Jesus Christ. They tried and tried, but they couldn't lift up the flag. So they gave it up. He said, "If you drop this pole and break it, I'll not pay you." So they were frightened of letting the pole down. The next morning they went back to work on line again. He asked those soldiers, "Did you put the pole up?" "No, we couldn't do it." They were cross because they wanted to use a machine. He said, "No, you use your hands as our Lord Jesus Christ lifted the cross. I won't let you use a machine." Our first job in the morning was to cut posts, take them to the place and unload. We were carting the pegs when we heard a car coming. It was the captain's car. All the soldiers lined up. He came right to me, instead of talking to them. "I came to take you." He asked me to lift the pole up. "I won't come. Why can't those soldiers lift it up?" "They couldn't do it. They wanted to do it by winch. They argued with me. So I came to see if you could plant it." I said I would not go. But the captain wanted to take me. The captain got cross, "You think it is you who will lift it up. But it is not you, it is God. Just like Jesus lifted the cross.

Those soldiers want to use a machine. If they are man enough they will find a way to lift that flag pole."

They were working at Seven Mile. He took me up. The other labours came by a big truck. "When you go you must try to lift the pole up. I am praying that you will lift it up in the name of God." While we were going he was praying that I would lift that pole up. We came right in front of the captain's house where the pole was lying. "This pole must be planted right in front of my house." When they went and stopped, he showed me the pole. He didn't speak, he just left me there and went to the house. Then he and another man put this chair on the porch and watched me. The soldiers who had tried to left the pole up were still around the place. When they saw me they were whispering to each other. Their sargeant said, "We couldn't lift it up. No European man could. Look at him." I didn't want to listen to them so I walked away thinking of what to do. While I was walking around I came close to the army kitchen. All the cooks were asking me, "What do you want?" "Oh do your job, I'm marching around!" I saw a big floor plank they were using as firewood. I put that short plank right into the hole. I thought I would lift the pole so that it hits the plank and slips into the hole without breaking the pole. Then I went to the top end of the pole. I asked the driver to reverse the car to the top end of the pole. They opened the rear part of the truck. They put the end of the pole on the truck. As the Australian soldiers watched they whispered, "He is a European man but we are natives of this country." I told my boys to hold the pole up as the truck reversed. Two ropes were pulling it and another two were at the back. The two lines in front pulled until the pole was in the hole. When the pole went into the

hole, they held the four ropes tight and the pole went in straight. Everybody was shouting, hitting the drums. "Papuan win! Papuan win!" Big people came and shook my hand. The captain came down and said, "You come with me. I'll leave you at the place you were waiting. They said, "He brought his European man." "I don't want them to be talking about you."

Work in Moresby

I am the eldest and Copland King is the younger. So I went around with him. He was my witness.

After that we came down and built a lolly water factory in Moresby town. They made pineapple there. They didn't use cement posts but bin - house ports of timber. The soldiers tried to put the posts into the ground. The Government looked for me because the soldiers couldn't get the posts in. So I went to that place. When the Government came, I said "I don't want to go." But the Government said, "You will not do it but the Holy Spirit will." He was an Anglican missionary from England. I forget his name I went with Copland King. We were not many. We held the rope. I stood aside and gave orders in Pidgin. Copland stood where the hole was and made sure the post did not go aside. We put all the ports into the grand and then the Australian carpenters began to build the place. They got all the machinery in and three tanks. The last carried the pipes going into the bottles.

They won the War so they put all sorts of factories in Moresby. They were happy. All the people wanted to enjoy themselves. So they put beer too. Copland was with me. We did this three times. When we finished the last lobby water factory the Government gave him his papers but I stayed back. I said to

the Government, "I'll win or lose during this war." So the war was over but I kept helping the Government.

They gave me a new job. We took steel pegs up into the hills for the new houses. They told me to dig holes for the houses. But it was all rocks and I couldn't dig it down; so I turned face away. The Government got cross. He didn't want to see that. He really wanted to see the Holy Spirit help me to dig those holes. The Government said, "Why are you cross?" "It's very hot!" "Jesus Christ is your shade and there is a good wind. You start digging." When he said that I took a peg and shovel and kept digging. I did one and then went to the others. I did that until I won it. Those holes were not for the new house - I just wanted see that I could do it. So I proved myself to the Government man. So I won it. I won it four times. That was my fourth job.

This was my fifth job: A cargo ship called in at Moresby. That was from the Governm,ent man's place, so he came and took me down there. When the Government was away or if a job was too hard he would get me and I would finish the job. That ship was unloading bags of potatoes. The hook was loose and a bag went into the water. It sank right into the deep water. All the Gosiago tried to dive in and get it but they couldn't. That Government man came and told the big man, "I'll get my car and we'll do it." The Government told me but I didn't want to do it. He scolded and said, "You won't do it. The Holy Spirit will and all the people will see." So he took me down and pointed out the place and said "you must go down here." So when they went down to the wharf. The Gosiago said, "We couldn't get the bag and you won't: You are not fit to drive in." But I went. They tied the rope to the hook. I took the

hook down. I went down until I saw the bag. I had no air and I had to go up. The Government man said, "Will you try again?" "I don't want". But then I decided to try again. The first time I saw the bag. The second time I just went straight in. I went quickly and hooked the bag up. Those American and Australians were really happy. They were beating tins and sticks. I had won it, so they were really happy. The big officers came to shake my hands. One American from a bank shook hands with me and took me to his office. He was going to give me money because I won. The Government came after and said, "What are you trying to do?" "Give him money." "He did this only to show God and the Holy Spirit; don't give him money, just a cigarette." I didn't want the cigarette but they insisted and I smoked it.

He took me to his house at Three Mile. I used to go up there. Whenever people faced difficulties they would take me there.

Once I was staying. The Government man picked me up in this car. We went down and out on his dingy. He said you will get my fish. He threw the dynamite and all the fish died. He told me to go down and get them. They were all very deep on the sand. But I went down and got them, and knew I was winning. I went right to the sand and saw fish on the sand. That's when I knew when I was winning. There were lots there but it was really deep so I only got three. The Government was really happy and said I was winning.

I didn't do this every day. When the Government man wanted me I would go and help him. He wanted me and took me to a house. We got the stove and moved it to another house. I carried it to another. One soldier wanted to fight. So he grabbed me and

jabbed his knee into my spleen. He was playing. When the Government man saw this he got cross. He said, "I gave you a job to do but you wanted to play up with him so tomorrow you will fight." The next morning all the soldiers and I went to parade. This time the Government said, "You will fight with him." He said the same thing to the soldier. But the soldier didn't want him to fight because he was short. So they picked a big man for me to fight. I stood with some Kerema and Abau people. All those people said, "Father, don't go in. It's lose or win." They knew how to box and they were all dancing and jabbing when they said this. "We belong to the club so we know how to box." But the Government said, "No. I want him to challenge." I went in. I knew that the Holy Spirit would help me. Both of us went out. I didn't know how to box. But when the European man came forward he just danced around me and went back again. The European man was red. He swung but missed. I turned around and punched him in the face. I tricked him. Blood was coming from his face and nose. The soldiers carried him off. The Government said, "You come here. You are not in trouble. I told you to do it." So I won and they lost. The Government said to the people, "He won't go to jail because I told him to do it. He won."

We were working with soldiers. They were saying then that it was almost time for us all to go back to our places. So the Government made a big party for the the carpenters, Papuans and Europeans in Moresby. I went to the party. They were cooking all sorts of food and there was plenty to eat. When they finished they took the food outside. A truck unloaded the food there. The Government saw the big officers there but he didn't want them to open the

food, he wanted me to do it - so he sent me to start the serving. When I was going to open the food a different big man who used to always be in the office came to see me. All sorts of groups were there. I got up and went and started to serve them. The Government Man checked the list until he served them all and they were finished. Then I went to the raw food - flour, rice, sugar - all to take home. The shed was really full of food but it was time to go home so they wanted to clear it all out. The people wanted me to prove I was doing it right. I didn't give anything to my own group - not even a bag of rice. They said, "Where is the food for your group?" "Oh, we're all right." That's when the two government men came down and said, "We were testing you. We knew you would do it. The food for your group is in the shed covered with a blanket. That party was only for the soldiers, carpenters and carriers." It was too much food so they sent a note to the Government to let them know that they had really given us this present.

The next day we went to the Army Base. They made a big party at Four Mile to share out all the clothes kept there in a big shed. I went up there too. When they opened that shed all the shirts, trousers, plates and spoons fell out. They threw them up - just like a mountain. They told me to share all these things out. I had done the food so now I was able to do it fast - share out all the things to the people. When I did it, I got nothing - nor my group. They asked, "Did you get anything?" "No." "Well, it's all right. Your things are there. We covered them with a tent and they are staying." We went where the tent was. "You will not share these things," they said. I went in and shared all these things but kept nothing. They gave me a key. They then said, "All your things are

in the trunk - your clothes, spoons, and plates." That big trunk was where they kept money - where the soldiers got money every fortnight. I was winning it, so I got that. I got them home. I kept the key, trunk and a special paper. They said, "Every year you must take this up to the Government station and they will give you money." But I lost the paper. I did hard work and I won but then I lost this.

When I got it down to Moresby and showed them the paper they said, "Oh, it's true - you won every thing." I was keeping that paper. After that we had to say good-bye. All the Europeans and my friends went. I was looking for transport to go home.

Going Home

While waiting for the boat they told me to play soccer. Samarai and the north coast was one team and Central was the other. Our team went from Ioma to Samarai; the other went from Moresby to Daru. There were 11 men in each team. A priest and a sargeant came to watch us play. Sargeant Lawrence was from Wanigela. A man from Mukawa said to the Samarai side, "We won't play - only the Maisin boys will play." I didn't want that so I said there should be one player from each place. He picked one from Mambare and Orokaiva. The Baniara said "We won't play, only the Maisin." Gosiago said the same. They picked one Kwato boy. Some said, "Let the Maisin boys play. They'll lose or win." They told me to be a captain for that team. So the two teams went into the field and started to play. All the people from Central at that small village went up to watch us play soccer. Our goalie was a boy from Orokaiva. I stood full back with a Mambare boy. All these Central players were being cheered because they were

jumping on our boys. A boy from Mukawa called Ambrose started to cry when he saw boys climbing on me because he knew how I could play. The Kerema boys didn't know me so they would bump me. They didn't know I was strong. When I saw Ambrose crying I got cross. Then they kicked the ball and I was playing it. A Kerema man came up. I lifted my knee into his spleen. It was broken and he was unconscious. His friends took that Kerema man out of the field. Then we scored six goals. When they saw that, those Central people became afraid of the Maisin people. From the headquarters they asked, "How are they doing?" "They have six goals" "Tell them to stop there. If they go on the Central boys might get cross and start fighting". So we won the game.

Mr. Humphries was there. He had seen me before. He told the people that I was one of the best people. He knew that the Maisin won the flag. After the game the Central and Abau people wanted to play again so they saw the Government. So the two teams went in to play. A big Central man wanted to beat me so he kicked my knee. I fell down and lay on the grass. I went down quick as soon as I saw the kick coming. I didn't get up quickly. All the girls were upset about me. All the women were crying. Then I stood up and found that my knee was o.k. A Maisin called out, "You go in and we'll find someone else to play." "I'll play." In my mind I was trying to hit that large man. When we were playing, I said "If I give you the ball take it to the goal. So we were playing. Philip scored the first goal. Then we scored a second. I was pushing for a third and kicked the ball up. We scored the third. That was the time to hit the large man. I got the ball. I kicked it up and the large man came in. When we jumped I gave him a knee in the

stomach. He fell down. He lay down on the grass. Then he got up to fight. "Who fought with me?" He came to fight. "I'm a Tufi man. If you want to fight with me you're going to die!" He ran into the bush. I tried to run after him but the other Maisin stopped me. The headquarters heard the story. They said, "They already scored three goals so stop the game." So we won the game.

After that Daru and Kerema wanted to play. We went to Morara and played there. All the Maisin got into the truck and the police man and sargeant took us to that place. We started playing. One Kerema was rough and cross. He would call out in Motu, "I'm the only one. You are all girls. You wear dresses." He would jump on me. When the ball was outside he would cheat and kick it in. It was going that way when Ambrose asked, "What happened to you that this Kerema man is allowed to play so rough?" His tears were coming down. This time we were jumping and I hit him in the chest with my leg and he fell down. He didn't want to fight with me. He tried to fight with Nicodemus from Sinapa. They stopped him. I came out to fight but he walked off to a house. We scored six goals. The sargeant called out, "That's enough. You have won."

So the Government said we could go to the small villages and play there. The village people were afraid to play. The Tufi police kept telling them to play. So the sargeant said, "They are frightened that means you won."

When we played soccer all the Americans came to watch and dance. They didn't play. They watched the dancing and then they went back again. This was Christmas 1945.

In 1946 I wanted to come home so they had a warship to bring me home. A big ship took all the Australian soldiers down. Only the Captain and a

few men come back to Moresby. They told the passengers, "We need more crew after all these people got off at Australia. So all the Buna, Mambare, and Maisin are going to be dropped at Samarai." When we sailed out they were still looking for crews. The labourers didn't want the work. Everyone else wanted me to help the captain. I said, "I don't know how to steer this big warship." But they insisted so I went to help. Some Maisin helped to tie rope; they acted as a crew. "I can't do this. Fighting, but not this." But the officers took me up where I was staying. They gave me mathematics to try. I got it right so they said it was o.k. "Do just this." I took over and was steering. The captain was inside his office and would call which direction to go over the speaker. The ship was really big and I was steering right on top. The captain's officer was there too to make sure for the captain that I did it right. From 12 to 6 I steered the boat. At 6 o'clock the officer took over and I rested. From 6 to 12 midnight I rested and then they woke me up to take over. It was about 4 in the morning when we saw Samarai. The captain said, "Don't go in." When the sea was coming up we went in. All the people were screaming because it was the first time they saw such a big war ship. When we came close to the wharf a European man took over the steering. The captain said, "You won't get your money here. We want to take you down to Australia. We'll pay you there." I didn't want because I had left my family - my children. So I got my things and went to the wharf. So I lost that. I lost my money.

We worked on a cargo ship on Samarai. We worked all afternoon till the night. Some Kerema boys broke a box and stole callico cloth. Maisin boys did this as well. They stole then till

dawn. They cut them and got one each. Kerema got plenty. The police saw them and took everyone to court. So the Maisin got into trouble. The Maisin said in court that they didn't steal and had none. So I took my laplap and put it on the table. "Did you steal it?" "No, I saw it and took it." Michael John was a policeman there then and he told them that I was from his village. So they said we didn't have to go to gaol because I admitted it.

The next day we left Samarai in a small boat. The police sent a message to Tufi. "These Maisin stole something. We took them to court but they didn't tell us; so take them to court." So when we called into Mukawa I said, "You better sell your laplaps for food or they'll arrest us at Tufi." But they didn't want. So we came to Tufi. A sargeant and policeman were waiting on the wharf when we called in. We put our things on the wharf. The police opened them and saw the laplaps. So they got them. When they put up the trunk that the Government man gave me, the police I had stolen it. So they took it up to the station. The sargeant scolded me. I kept the paper in my stringbag. So I got my sleeping things and went up to the labourers house. They wrote down our names and gave us punishment for one week. We slept there. Our wives got canoes and came up to see us. When our wives came up, the Maisin went down, got on the canoes and went home. At that time I stayed back. My trunk was in the office. Those Maisin were chased by police. They brought them back to Tufi from Wanigela. They went to gaol for another week. I stayed with the Mambare, Orokaiva, and Okena. We sang songs. After that week we all came out of goal. They told us to go home. I said I was going to stay back.

I was there. My wife and Maggie's husband (wife's brother) came up to see me. I saw my wife and took my paper to the office. When the government saw that paper he scolded the sargeant for taking the box away. He wanted to put the police to court. But he didn't. He told them not to do it again. I explained that I wasn't cross. I wanted to go home so I was showing my paper. So they carried the trunk down to the wharf and put it on the canoe. I was trying to come and the government said that because they had done wrong he would drop me at Wanigela on his way to patrol. He left me at Wanigela. That was my wife's village. I spent the night with my inlaws while my wife and Hudson came by canoe. The next morning I came to the village. There I finished.

Cecil Siko

Recorded on tape, Uiaku village, March 1997

I finished school in 1937. In 1940 I went to Sagara. There was a Catholic mission and plantation there in Milne Bay. I was there in 1942 when the Japanese invaded. All the *bariyawa* were going away and I returned to the village.

I was in the village when Mr. Wells came. He took us up to Tufi and we signed our names. He said that we would go to Robinson River to work. They told lies. The other place was Babagoin.

We came back to the village, got our things and went to Reaga. They sent two boats, 'Giligili' and 'Elevara'. Iyo Airfama got on one and Maisin got on the other. We were on the Elevara. Iyo Arifama was on the 'Giligili'. We went and spent the night at Mukawa. Then we went to Dogura and spent the night.

In the morning we went to the church at Dogura. The bishop came and gave us his blessing. When he finished, we got back on the boat and went to Punepune. We slept and the next day went to Milne Bay. They put out our things and we carried them to Dago. We stayed there. Father Buckline gave us food to eat. We stayed there for three weeks.

We got on the boat and went to Gibara. We got off, got our things and climbed up the mountain, Duabu. There was a mission station there. Our big man said, "I will spend the night here. The rest of you go down to Aitaiata and sleep



there. There is no food there, so the next morning you must cross to Sagara."

In the morning we waited until he came down. At twelve o'clock we got to Sagara. They gave us food. We cooked it and ate. We slept there and stayed until the next afternoon. Our men said, "Let's go down and get some food." So we went to Sagara and saw the old garden we had made. Philip and Josiah were there. We saw them, got some food and went

back. Our big man told us, "In the morning, get your things and start walking." He said that he himself would follow the river in a boat. "So you carry your things down to Marai village."

We spent a night at Marai. The next morning we went to Gabaisu. We spent the night there. Our big man came and met us there. We spent the night there with him. The next morning, he got on his horse. We carried our things and walked to Baibara. We got there around 12 o'clock. We ate some food and then walked inland. We came to Mamai station.

The next morning they gave us a gun to go out to kill a dog. He said, "When you get it keep the innards for me. The meat you can give to the men." I was with him. So the *bariyawa* man got the intestines to eat. We cut them up, cooked them and had that meat. In the morning he told us to cut grass under the rubber tree. So we went out to clean up the place. In the afternoon we came down.

We spent a night. He said, "Get your things and walk down. I'll get a truck and come later." We came down to Oiniini. We stayed until about three o'clock. We then got on two sailing boats. All the Maisin people got on the big one with the *bariyawa* man. The Io-Arifama people got on the other one.

There was no wind so they used a dinghy to pull the boats. We paddled halfway. Then the wind started to blow and helped us. It was a nice wind. We sailed across to Mongobu station. We spent the night. The next morning we came to Mailu Dimdim Island. We went past the village. The boat was too big and so we went slowly. The smaller boat passed us and pulled in first to Table Point. They went up and slept there. We got there later. It was raining. Everything was wet. We didn't join them. We slept on the boat. The place was very wet. We had no food to eat and we couldn't make a fire. We didn't have water for our food. We took salt water and struggled to make a fire. There was no good place to sleep on the boat. There was no air — it was hot. The place usually held dried copra. Outside of the boat you will feel cold, but inside it was too hot and we were sweating. So we had to go in and out. It was very bad like this until the next morning.

We put up a sail and went across to Dedele Point. We went around and arrived at Abau. We spent the night. The next morning, two sailing boats called in. The government told us to go up to Robinson River. So we got on the two boats and followed the Robinson River up. We spent three weeks there. They sent a boat, 'Niusa,' from Moresby. The boat came to Abau and went up the Robinson River. We were there. Our boss was Mr. Clark. He told us to stand in line as he checked us. He saw that Augustine had a sore leg as did Russell

and I, so he got us. So that is why we stayed back when the other Maisin got on the 'Niusa' and sailed off to Moresby.

We stayed there two weeks. We caught a small boat down to Abau. They sent the 'Larabada' to pick us up. It called into the wharf. My father-in-law's son Romney — Randolph's son — was on that boat [he was from Milne Bay]. He worked with the crew. He saw me and said, "I know those people. They are Maisin." He walked to me and asked, "Where are you going?" "We just came from the Robinson River and are on our way to Moresby." He said, "Tomorrow when you get on the boat go to the back. That is the best place for you to stay."

When the boat was ready we got in line. They called our names and we got on. We traveled down and spent a night at Otomata. We went up to the beach. We cooked our food and ate. They said, "Tomorrow morning we will get on the boat and travel." We went past Gaire, Gabagaba and got to Moresby at 12 o'clock. We looked to see if Maisin were there. But they had all gone up. None were there. I was with a man from Orokololo. I saw him standing and recognized him. I called his name, "Oi!" He turned and saw me. I asked, "Do you recognize me? We were both at Sagara on the plantation." I asked, "What happened to the Maisin when they got here?" He said, "When they arrived they got on six trucks and went up to Safai Creek."

We stayed for a time. A truck came and we went up to Safai Creek. We spent a night. In the morning they gave us biscuits to eat. We then got on the truck and went up to Bistapa where the hospital was. The vehicle stopped. We all got off and stood in line. The big man came and checked us. He saw my sore leg and so I stayed there. That sore was still there. I had had it from Milne Bay on and it didn't heal up. So my two brothers saw me to

the hospital and then went on. I walked across to that house and saw that Frank Davis was there. We both stayed there. He also had a sore on his leg.

When Frank Davis's sore healed up they sent him back to Depo. I stayed there and the Japanese came up to Ioribaiwa. When they were there, they took down the hospital and move it to the coast. We got on a boat and went across to Gemo Island. I stayed at Gemo until my sore had healed up. I came with Sargent Lae back to Moresby and then we went up.

We went to Uberi and spent a night there. In the morning we walked to Sixty-six Mile camp. That is where I saw Russell and the rest of the Maisin people. I stayed there with them. I said to my Sargent, "Sargent, I'm not going to go with you. My brothers are here, so I will work with them." He said, "You can't stay here. You must go with me to the next camp." We carried bombs and ammunition and went on to the foot of Ioribaiwa at Camp 44. We left everything there and turned back.

I gave my mat to my brothers. So when the rest of the men returned, I stayed there. I didn't want to go with them. We went to the camp and spent the night there. My men went to their camp. In the morning the big man called the names. When he came to me, I wasn't there. He knew that I was with my people. So he told Dick Bell, "Go and check that man from Tufi." He came and told us all to stand in line. He came to me and told me to stand forward. I said to him, "I didn't get scared. I turned back because my people are here. I came to work with them." He said that it was all right and I could stay.

I stayed and worked with my people. We left that place and went across to Camp 88 and then returned. We kept doing this. On our return, we

would carry any soldiers who were injured. We did that repeatedly. Other carriers further down would come for the soldiers and take them further down. And that is the way the injured soldiers were taken all the way to Moresby.

We left our camp and went across to Camp 88 at Nauro — where the Koiari land is. We spent the night and walked the next morning to Manari in the Koiari area. Then we went to Efogi for the night. Then we went to Myola. From there we went over the big mountain and camped. The weather was very bad with heavy rain. As the rain fell, we cut trees, cleared the area and put our big man's tent.

We put up our own tents quickly. The other carriers only used their mats and got very wet that night. We stayed there. We then carried our supplies to Iura Creek. The soldiers were frightened at that time. Captain Kingsley said, "You people were scared of fighting. You put down your guns and help the carriers with the supplies." And so they had to help us carry. We did that for a whole month.

After that the soldiers got their guns back and went out to fight. From there we camped at Isilab. There were heavy rains there. We slept. The next morning we continued to Biage. We passed by and went to Kokoda. It was a flat area. We said, "This is our side. We have left the mountains." We walked down to the end of the airstrip and stayed at the labour camp there.

The fighting at that time was going on at Oivi. From there we carried things to 8 Mile and came back. In the afternoon it started to rain. It was a very heavy rain lasting all night and into the next day. The area was flooded. The Japanese had dug themselves into holes. Now they had to come out. Our soldiers started to kill them there. After killing them, our soldiers were very happy. They

had us stand in line and they us tobacco, matches, soap, red and blue cloth and small knives. We were still at Kokoda when they did this.

We got our things. We walked down and spent a night at Oivi. The next morning they said, "Carry the guns and bombs to Goari and leave them there." We did that. When we got back they said, "Pick up your beds and belongings and we will go across there." They gave us the last of the biscuits. That was the end of the food. There was nothing left to eat.

We made our houses at Goari and stayed there. Our men began to call out, "Where is our food?" They said, "There is no food. We must wait for the plane to bring it." A plane came but had to turn back without dropping any food. They said, "Tomorrow the plane will come back. It will drop all the food at Wairopi." We were very hungry that night when we went to sleep.

The next day we got our things to carry. They said, "Those of you who want food must go to Wairopi. If you are too weak to do this, you will be left with nothing to eat." We walked. We saw a big breadfruit tree just before we came to a village. Our men put down their things and started to cut down the tree. We got all the fruit. We made a fire, baked them and ate. Then we continued on our way.

When we got there, the plane dropped the supplies. They said, "Go into the bush and gather all the supplies. Put them together in one place." We collected all the food from the bush, brought them out and heaped them together.

There had been a bridge there. It had been bombed so our soldiers were building a new one. We stayed. All of the carriers from Daru to Milne Bay started to clear an area for planes to land. We started that work, finishing very late in the afternoon. We walked back to camp. They told us that the bridge was

completed. So we carried all the food and supplies to the other side. When we finished we cooked our food, ate and slept there.

The next morning we stood in line. They told us to carry food, guns and ammunition. We walked and came to Isivita. A Milne Bay man, Warnan Deneru, had been a teacher and had stayed there after the war started. When he saw us, he gathered a lot of food and gave it to us. Each of us took that food and then walked to Sangara. We spent the night and then went further to Soputa.

We stayed there. The fighting was on at Sanananda. We worked there for a while. They split the group and Russell and some others went down to Sanananda. Mera ari Kawo people went down to Gona. And then they went to Bakumbari. We stayed and worked at the hospital at Soputa.

While we were there, the Japanese planes came. We put a large Red Cross in front of the hospital. They saw that sign but dropped the bomb anyway. That was where Phineas got injured. He had a very deep cut and the next day they sent him to Moresby. Cornelius and Augustine went down to Sanananda where Russell was. After that bombing we went and built a new camp.

We stayed there. Our boss was a Simboro man name Jefford. He worked there. When the planes dropped supplies we had to go out and bring them in for the soldiers. One morning we got up and went down to stand in line. Bun Davis talked to us. "Tufi No.7, your group will go and join the men working on the telephone line. Go down to Sanananda." Jefford said, "Oh, why are we going there? That is where all the fighting is going on." He told us, "The fighting will end today. In any case, you will be away from it." He told two boys to go back and chop

firewood for the soldiers. They were from Miniafia. We got our things and started. Jefford said, "I'll go back to the boys and leave my bag with them." We left the bag with the boys, he came back and we all went down.

We went to a place where they were firing bombs. When we got there, we watched the soldiers firing their bombs. Then we continued down. We came across a soldier carrying a big gun. He was firing it. We wondered, "The fighting is not over. The soldiers are still firing." Soon after that the Japanese fired at the place we were standing. We said, "If we stay here the Japanese will kill us." We saw that Negro soldiers had put up a wall of sandbags. So we ran over and hid there. They used those bags as a shield. So when we got there we were safe.

From there we carried the telephone wire across. Frank Davis and I carried one of the rolls. Keith and John Hunt were ahead of us. There were many rolls of wire. Two men were needed to carry just one. So all of us did that. There was a soldier leading us. He had two stripes on each arm. He carried a small gun. He had binoculars around his neck. He went ahead and we followed. We could see our soldiers with guns at the side of the road. We greeted them and continued on our way.

The Japanese were ahead of us. Frank Davis and I carried our roll with a wooden stick, so it made no noise. But Keith and John Hunt were using a metal pole and were noisy. There was a Japanese soldier in a truck. He saw us as he was opening the door. He started to run. The soldier took out his small gun and called out, "Stop! Turn around." We all stopped and watched. He cried out again. When the Japanese soldier turned, he shot him in the head. The man was still running around. When he shot him a second time that man fell there.

The American soldiers were all looking for Japanese. When they heard that shot they ran to where we were standing. They ran to the truck. When they checked it, they found another Japanese man underneath. They shot him there.

When they had finished, we got our things and moved on. We went a way when we heard a sound. They told us to get down. All the American soldiers got their guns and waited. They waited a long time until their big man said, "You can all stand up now." They shared their cigarettes and stood smoking them. After we finished we picked up the things and moved on with the soldiers. We heard a gun fire. We put down our things. We stayed there until 12 o'clock. We stayed and at 1 o'clock they told us to move on.

The fighting was still on. They told us to put down our things and wait. While we rested, two soldiers with us found a Japanese bunker. They went inside and took all the things out. They put them in front of us — all sorts of things: shirts and boots. Everyone started to get things out of the bunker. Garfield said to me, "Don't go there. Stay where you go. We'll go back when they tell us." So I said, "I'm not moving. I'll stay here."

John Hunt joined the men doing the collecting. He crossed the road where he saw another Japanese bunker. He went in and got a razor blade packet. He didn't hide this. He brought them back and shared them out. Jefford saw this. He said, "Toma where did you get those things?" "I went across the road and got them there." He said to Jefford, "Don't go yourself. There are plenty here. Let's go back and I'll give you some." But he refused. He asked, "Can you show me where you got those? If I go I'll get plenty for myself."

So John Hunt showed him the place. He went across there. He left the place that John Hunt had pointed out and went to another Japanese bunker. When he got there, he wanted to go in. As he started in a Japanese soldier fired at him. The shot hit him on the chin. The bullet went through his chest and came out the other side. We all heard the gun shot and then him crying out. We started to run away. John Hunt ran to him and held him. Jefford said, "Toma, did they shoot me?" John Hunt saw it but only said, "It is not that bad." We were running away. John Hunt cried out, "Don't run away. Our man is shot." We turned around and ran back. We saw Jefford fall down unconscious.

We carried him across into the shade. An American doctor came down and saw him there. He sat next to him, held his arm and checked him. He then said, "Get a stretcher and carry him." We took him up to the hospital. As we were walking up, we could see that he was running out of breath. He started to cry out. He got up but we gently laid him down and continued to carry him to the hospital. We left him and the doctors came and saw him. One medical man from Hanuabada was among the doctors. They checked him as all of us waited outside. We waited until 4 in the afternoon. John Hunt went in and said, "We want to leave two men here while we go back to camp." But they said that we all had to go back to the camp.

We all walked back. He died and they buried him there. We arrived at camp and Keith said, "I'm going in to get our brother's bag." So he got the bag and then we went to our place.

We were all quiet when we came up to the camp. Jairus looked at us, wondering why we were silent. "Why aren't they moving around, cracking jokes as usual?" He came out and asked, "Why

are all of you so quiet? What happened? People around the camp are happy. What about you people?" All of us started crying. All the Milne Bay people and other carriers came. They all cried. Most of them thought about their own families back at home. We kept weeping. People from Emo and Pongani, Okein and Embetofu cooked food for us. They brought us food and left them along with clothes, shirts and shorts. They said, "From Moresby to Kokoda, you were the really smart ones. No one died. And now you have lost one." They said next to us, comforting us.

When we had stopped crying, Jairus said, "Give some food to those people who joined us and cried." After that we went to sleep. The next morning we went back to work. When we went down Jairus, Jason and Henry went with us to work. Before we had worked at the hospital. Pongani people had now replaced us. So before we went to work we went up to see them. We called into the hospital and told Henry, Jefford's elder brother, to stay there. We went and asked the medical what had happened. He said that they had already buried him. And so Henry started to cry in the hospital. When he finished he asked, "Where did you bury my younger brother? I want to dig him up and see him." The workers at the hospital said that they would not dig up the body. He asked for a knife and they gave it to him. He cut a stick and took it to where his fin was buried. He put up a cross on his brother's grave. Then he went back to our camp.

From there we moved to another camp where we worked on a drain. Japanese planes came — many of them, thirty or forty. That was in the morning around 10 o'clock. We saw them and told John Hunt, "Go see the boss. Are these our planes or the other's, the enemy's?"

John Hunt asked the boss. He said that they were our own planes. Not long after this the planes started dropping bombs there. The bombs landed on the airstrip blowing up planes and oil drums. Everything exploded and the flames shot very high.

We stayed there a few days and then went back to Dobodura. All the Maisin were there. Isivita, Sangara — they all came there as well. The fighting was over, so they came to dance there. Russell Smith told them to come and dance. There was good moonlight that night. Everyone danced. Even the bariyawa joined in. I and my Milne Bay friend wanted to go across and see the people dancing. My toma really wanted to go, but I said, "We'll stay back. The Maisin people want to dance here." When I said that he went off by himself. He went across the Dobodura River to join the rest of the people.

A Japanese plane came up and dropped seven bombs on that place. The bombs destroyed the camp. They destroyed the tents where my friend stayed. Pieces of cloth were just hanging in the trees. We couldn't find most of the bodies — just pieces and blood everywhere. If I had gone with my friend I would have been killed too. The Maisin had wanted to dance and so I waited for them. That is how I survived.

We spent the night. The next day was Sunday. The carriers' tents were on one side, the village was on the other and a field we used for soccer lay in the middle. That morning planes kept coming and dropping bombs. I was frightened and ran across the field. I saw a village man carrying a big stringbag and lime pot. I was so frightened that I didn't see him. I bumped into him, breaking the lime pot. The lime shot out but he didn't stop. He kept running as the lime spread

in the air. We all ran into the kunai grass. Further in, I saw many people hiding in the grass. I was very frightened. I thought I would die that day. I called, "Russell!" He wasn't far away. He answered, "Who are you with?" "I'm by myself." So he told me to go and join him.

We stayed there for a time. Then all of us moved out to the road. From there we could see that the area around the airstrip was still burning. The flames were high from all of the oil drums.

That was Sunday. The next morning they gave us our supplies. They gave us smoke, soap and matches. After that they said, "Leave those things in your tents. Tufi and Baniara people must return. We want you to go and check the area that was bombed." We took spades and blankets and went across. We put all the blankets out and started to collect body parts and leave them there. We wrapped them up, took them out, dug a hole and buried them all.

We stayed there for a time. Then we came home for a rest. Before we left, doctors came across from Moresby. We stood in line as they inspected us. They selected men to fall out. Among them was Henry. They said, "You men, get your things ready to go to Oro Bay. You will get a boat and go to the village." When Henry was ready we told Keith to give him Jefford's bag. We said, "When you get home show them Jefford's bag and tell them what happened."

So they went first and we followed later. When our holiday finished, we returned to Dobodura. From there we went to Boreyo. We stayed there for awhile and then returned to Dobodura. When we came they sent us to Moresby side to work at a rubber plantation. At Moresby the government man saw us and sent us to Kilikila. We stayed there a month. We then got on a boat and went

to Manumanu. We spent a night. The next morning we went up the river to Kanosi wharf. We got our things and carried them up to the place.

The big man saw us, gave us food, blankets and mosquito nets. We stayed there and worked at the rubber plantation. Our boss was a man from Rigo. The big man sacked him and put me in charge. So I was the boss there. We worked there for one year and six months.

When we finished we came to Moresby and stayed there a month. We got on a bat, 'AK94.' We spent a night at Dedele. We came and spent a night on the way. The next night we called into Samarai. We called into the Milne Bay wharf. We stayed at Bukaka labour camp for one month. The next morning we got on a sailing boat. It went into the open sea and we sailed to Kanokope and spent the night there. The next morning we came to East Cape. We spent a night at Taupota. We came past Girumia Point and the other sailing boat went up to Boianai. We sailed across to Baniara. The sea was very rough. We almost died there. All the Baniara people saw us coming. They all thought that we would sink and die. We were frightened but the captain told us not to be afraid. He said that he was used to the rough weather, that it was all right. Some of the Baniara people had climbed coconut palms to sight us. When we went down in the waves, they would call out, "Did they sink?" Then we would come up and they would see us again in the waves.

We kept going. A very big wave swept over the boat. The captain told us to hold on tight and kept going. Everything was wet. That was at Sibiribiri. He turned the boat and we headed towards Menapi. We came close to Diduwo village and then we went to the wharf.

The ANGAU man, the government and others came to the wharf. They asked the skipper, "Is everyone alright?" He said that we were all right.

We went up and spent a night. The next morning a sailing boat came from Boianai. They told us that we would walk from there to the village because the two boats we had been on were turning back. So we stayed. We were thinking to get our things and use the ferry to get to the other side. A short while later we saw a boat calling in. They asked the government for Tufi mail. The government noticed this and told us to get on that boat.

We spent a night at Mukawa. In the morning we sailed across and arrived at Tufi around 1 o'clock. We stayed and worked there for a time. The word went down to the village. My father Cornelius, Michael and his wife got a canoe and came to Tufi. Cornelius came and found us once they arrived. We spent the night there. The next day we got on the canoe. We spent the night at Teremin. From there we returned to the village.

In 1946 I got married. I married my wife in the church that same year. We stayed and built a big church here. When we got our own priest, I helped him serve in the church. I was on the church council. I stayed on but I got old and stopped. This is my medal.

Now we have big hospitals, lots of schools and our own government and Prime Minister. Before we had none of these things. But we went through a hard time. After the war we built a grandstand. General Morris went up and told us, "Before we didn't know you. They told us that you were not good people. Now we are here and we can see that you are good people who helped us win this war. You really helped the Australian soldiers to win. The war is over. You will go home. Later you will see big hospitals and

schools built in your places. They did not teach you in the beginning and so when the war came you could only help the soldiers carry things. After this we will teach you everything so you can run your country.”

Constance Digo

Recorded on tape March 1997, Yamakero Village

My husband Noah, did not go to Tufi with the men to put down their names. He stayed back. When they came to Tufi, Ambrose wrote his name. He stayed back because his father was sick. So when the people came back from Tufi they told him they had given his name.

It was war time. He left his father and went with the people. All the men got their things ready. The men went first. Noah and I followed later. All the men wore new tapa cloth and decorated themselves. They went with their wives and children. Some got on the canoes. The young ones walked all the way to Reaga. The two boats, 'Giligili' and 'Elevara,' called in. The people danced all night. In the morning they got on the boat. All of us were crying. All the women, boys, young girls — all cried and it was very sad. But my husband was very quiet. He didn't join the dance because he was thinking of his sick father.

All the wives and children held the sides of the boat. They couldn't move it. They stopped the engine and told them to take their hands off the boat. When they did that, the boat started to go.

When the boat was going, we all cried. The men on the boat beat the drum and blew the conch shell. They sang the war song, kuwa. When the boat went past Reaga point the people on the canoes followed them. They went as far



as Baimakoroto [at Gegeau]. From there they turned back.

I came back to the village first because my father-in-law was sick. I got on Johnson's canoe and he brought me back to the village. All the women followed us later. They were still crying when they came into the village.

We came back and stayed in the village. We later heard that they went across the mountains and came down to the other side.

So they were busy fighting in the war. This village was very quiet. No men were left here. Only the few left went into the bush and stayed there. I was the only one to stay back to look after my ailing father-in-law. I was still here when the Americans landed at Rainu.

A plane came past here to drop the soldiers. It came very low, almost touching the coconut tops before going on to Rainu. I was staying back looking after my father-in-law. We didn't make fire at night. We would put the fire out and just stay in the dark. Frank Murray was with me, looking after the old man. So the soldiers came. There were plenty of soldiers at Wanigela. All the people had gone to the bush but the villages were full with soldiers to Komabun.

We looked after him until he died. Those men left here with me were Johnson and Ramidges. Together with their wives they stayed back. That morning when he died, the old man had asked for shell fish. He died while I was

out looking. Ramidges took the news to me and I came back to the village. Ramidges also went into the bush and told the people what had happened and they came back to the village.

While this was happening, the planes kept flying very low on their way to Wanigela. So everyone came back and late that afternoon we buried the old man. After the burial it was dark. We had our wash. We couldn't make fire. All of the people who had been in the bush left us and went back again.

\Early in the morning when we wok up my mother-in-law and a few other people got our things and went to the garden house. So we stayed at the garden house at Ginongi. While we were there the police went u and got Frank Murray. They go him and we were left alone.

We stayed. We started to get ripe bananas, papaya to sell to the soldiers. Some Europeans stayed near Bonando Point. They built a house on top of the big trees and they stayed up there. Two soldiers stayed behind at Sesega mountain. During that time the police kept coming looking for carriers. They would take their torches and go into the bush at night. They got most of them. Those that were left were only those who hid themselves very far in.

A few men worked at Rainu. We would visit them and come back. We kept doing that. At Rainu the soldiers were busy digging drains, clearing the area, making houses. So when the American soldiers were there, the boat would come to pick them up and then take them out.

We kept going to Wanigela and coming back. When we came past the

soldiers with our things they would call out "pawpaw," "banana" or "potato!" In return they gave us biscuits, tinned fish and meat. We would do that all the way to Rainu. At Rainu we chopped firewood for the soldiers. When we finished chopping they gave us tinned fish, tinned meat and biscuits. There was too much food so we would put it in the string bag and carry it back to the village.

We kept doing that. The planes came and dropped soldiers and a bomb. That was the first time we saw a bomb — there at Rainu.

We stayed on until our men came back for a break. I had a sore on my leg, so I went to Tufi hospital. The men came. They came by boat, calling in at Tufi. Muriel told my husband that I was there. So early in the morning he came with all the men to visit me. When they saw me the Maisin all went to the village, but my husband stayed back. After holidays they returned. They came up to Tufi and a few of them got married — Lazerus, Zakius, Didymus. They had to go to court there. I was looking after Edmond when Lazerus went to court. After the court they went to Popondetta. I came back to the village.

When I came the volcano erupted. That was the end of the war. That was the time that Jefford was killed. He went looking for things in a hole and was shot. The ANGAU men should have checked it first but he wanted to go ahead. That is how he got killed. When we heard about Jefford's death we cried and mourned for one week. After that the men came home.

Didymus Sagi

Recorded on tape, Maume village, March 1997

The government sent the message and came to get all of us. We didn't know about this bariyawa war. At that time we were frightened. We went into the bush, built houses and hid. While we were there the government came and got all of us. Mr. Wilson was the government man. Mr. Wilson got twenty from Vayova, Maume and Yamakero and then from Ganjiga — that made it fifty. The number they came for was fifty. But people in the village did not know about this war yet. So the elders of the village decided to send five more. One was from Ganjiga, three were from Vayova and Maume and one was from Yamakero. They had five extra and that took it up to fifty-five.

They sent up two boats. One was the government trawler, 'Elevara' and the other was a trading boat, 'Giligili.' They sent those boats from Samarai. Those boats came here, left a message and went on to Tufi. So the village people got on their canoes and went up to Tufi to the government station. They went up to the station to sign their names. They told us that when we got back they would come and pick us up at Reaga. The boats went to Tumari. They picked up Io-Arifama people. I don't know how many of them there were. Korafe and Miniafia didn't get on. They all got on the 'Giligili.' They then called in here at Uiaku, but we had all gone to Reaga. Only the old people were still in the village. All of us were going to the war. All of our mothers and fathers came down to see us off because we were going to die.

When we left, everyone was crying. It was a sad place when we went down. All of us went to Reaga.

When we got to Reaga it was raining. The weather was bad. We arrived



in the night. We covered ourselves with mats to shelter ourselves from the heavy rain. We sat that way until morning. The two boats, 'Elevara' and 'Giligili' called in. The government went down. We all stood and he got our names. He told us that we would leave early in the morning. So when the boat was ready to go our parents were sad. People were in tears as we got onto the boat. We got on the 'Elevara.' The Io-Arifama got on the 'Giligili.' We got on and the boats started for Mukawa.

On our way there was a very bad storm. There was rain and rough seas. We arrived at Mukawa and anchored there. We slept. We went up and slept in the government rest house.

The government officers woke us early in the morning. We didn't have our breakfast. They told us to get on the dinghy and they paddled us to the boat early in the morning. When we were on the boat they gave us each a package of biscuits for breakfast. The storm was still on. A strong wind was blowing that morning. We were heading for Bogaboga when the engine broke down. They worked on the engine as the 'Giligili' continued past Cape Vogel. It passed Sibiribiri and called in at Dogura. They fixed the engine and we arrived at Dogura at 12 o'clock.

We went up there and they cooked food for us to eat. We had a wash and

they told us we would spend the night there. The government officer went up to see Bishop Philip. In the afternoon, the chief man — George's father — went up to see the bishop. He told the bishop why we were going. He was a wise man. So in the morning, the bishop came down. He made the Sacrament at the Wedau chapel. After Mass, all of us went up to have our blessing. When he finished, he told us, "Wherever you go, whenever you sleep, I'll be there." The bishop knew how bad this war was, so he told us this. He told us a short story. "The sheep are going into the bush where wild dogs will chase them. So when you go to the muddy places, the bad places, I will be with you. Whether under the big trees or in the caves, I will be with you." That is what he said.

After this blessing, we went to the entrance and shook hands with the bishop. As he shook our hands he repeated the same words, "I'll be with you." At that time the government people got angry. They were in a hurry to get us on the boat. The boats started their engines and were waiting for us. So we didn't get our breakfast, we had to go straight there. As we went down, the government people hit us with sticks. Io-Arifama got on their boat and we got on ours.

We took off that morning and soon passed Taufota. We called into Punipuni. There was a plantation there. Soldiers were there — Australians and Americans. The Australians had told them not to go to Buna as the Japanese were already there. They sent them to that area so that they could move in later. "Don't call into Rabaul because it is occupied too. Come by the Coral Sea and call in there." That is what they did. And so Milne Bay was packed with Australian and American soldiers. They bay was full of ships — plenty of masts!

We called in and the government officer went up. Some swam in to see the place while others stayed on the ship. Those of us who stayed back were upset because we had left our place. We waited there for the others to come back. When everyone was back on board they started the engine.

Before that time we didn't see white men or war planes. That was the first time we saw American war planes. We were all frightened when the planes flew above us. Some of us tried to jump in the water, but they told us that it was an American plane. When we saw these things we were very scared. We had heard of such things but not seen them before.

We called in at Alotau where all these ships were. We went right in and anchored. The 'Giligili' went first and we followed. All of us got off the boat. They sent a transport down to pick us up. We went up to a Catholic station. I forget the place. The station was bushy. People had been frightened and had left the place. The place was covered with grass. Mary's statue was covered too. So we settled there. The American and Australian soldiers cleaned the buildings so we could settle there. We moved together with the soldiers into that area.

They told us to stay at the village end of the station. Mr. Bucklin was there. He had been a teacher at Sogere. He was a teacher at St. Aidan's teachers college. When this war started he joined the government. He was in charge of the labourers.

We stayed for a week as there were no transports. While there we helped the soldiers build roads. The Ganjiga people stayed on the 'Elevara.' It took them to Samarai and later returned with them. We stayed at the station. When they got back they told us that there was no transport, so we would walk from there.

When we started they told us lies. They said that we would spend one week in Port Moresby to make a road. "When you finish that road you will come back. Only a week and then back."

Early in the morning we stood up for roll call and they got our names. We started walking and crossed a big river. There was a ferryman to take us across. We arrived in a village and waited there. Then the government man told us that we would not stay there. We were going to go up into the mountains and continue.

So we started to walk. We were going to Sagara station. We slept there. We slept in a village called Atata at the rest house. They gave us our food and told us to eat half and save the rest for breakfast. We slept there. Early in the morning some of our men went down to get water for breakfast. But then the government told us to move early without eating. The government wanted us to arrive at Sagara that morning so he wanted us off early. We didn't have a proper breakfast. We wrapped our food with leaves and ate along the way.

When we arrived at Sagara the officer went up to have his breakfast and then came down to see us. We continued to walk from there. We reached the other side as afternoon ended. We arrived at Fife Bay. We got to the coast very late. The sun was setting in the sea. We hadn't seen this before and thought it was the moon. People there told us that it was the sun. So we followed it all the way to the coast and there we saw it go down.

We slept on the beach at Fife Bay. In the morning we walked all the way to Gadaisu government plantation. We slept there. Gadaisu plantation was also overgrown with grass. They gave us food and we slept there. From there we left for Baibara plantation. We slept there. They told us to get coconuts there. From there we moved inland to Mamai plantation.

All the people there had gotten frightened and run into the bush. They told lies to get people from the surrounding villages to work on the plantation but really they were to be war carriers. They gave us a place to stay and we remained for three days. They killed a cow and we feasted on that for three days.

In the morning they put us on two old sailing boats that had not been used for some time. They told us to get on those boats at Onion Port. The weather was very bad. It started to rain. The boats needed wind. But there was no wind with the rain and so we had a hard time making way. We crawled along the river in that rough weather until we came to the coast. We arrived at Mogubu plantation.

Mr. Wilson and the police went up to the station. They saw that the houses were no good so they told us to continue traveling. We slept on the boat. It was too old and when it rained we were soaked. So we sat there until the next morning. That morning we headed to Abau. The weather still was bad. We had to paddle a dinghy to pull the sailing boats. They had to take turns paddling. We went the same distance as Uwe to Kewansasap. We were heading for Abau but didn't reach before night fell. We were very tired from paddling. We slept as if at Kepple Point.

In the morning a land breeze came up. We put on the sail and continued to Abau. The other boat was light and fast. Ours was slow. I don't know why. The first boat was too fast and ended up on the reef at Dedele Point. They were busy trying to pull the boat off. And so we were the first to pull into Abau. We called in. They struggled until the boat was released with the high tide. They called in after us.

We spent the night there. We cooked our food and ate. In the morning,

two boats called in. There were Kiwai people working on those boats. They had come from Moresby. They were bringing food supplies to Abau. They told us to get on the boats and go up the Robinson River. The Arifama people were to go to Babaguna. We were to go up there for one week to clean up the plantation. So we went up while the Arifama went to Babaguna. We called into the wharf and unloaded our things.

We got our things, walked into the station and found Mr. Clark there. He was the manager of the Robinson River plantation. We stayed there working on copra for a week. While we were there, they sent a message to Moresby. They sent a boat called 'Niusa.' It unloaded its cargo at Abau and went up the river to spend the night there. They told us that the boat would take us to Moresby.

They lied to us. They said, "When you get to Moresby you'll go to Sogere to build the Kokoda road for one week." So we packed up our things in the morning and walked down to the wharf. There were a lot of us there from Tufi, Mailu, and Mekeo. We were all in one place, waiting to get on the same boat. Augustine, Cecil and Russell stayed back because they had sores on their feet. They told them to go on the next boat.

We got on the boat and came to Abau. There were many other people waiting there to get on the boat. Those people were waiting with their fathers and mothers. They did as we did at Reaga — they cried. We all got on. There was no space so some had to stand. We traveled and at 4 o'clock we called in at Moresby wharf. We could see that the place had been bombed. The place was a mess. We spent the night at the wharf. They said, "In the morning they will send a transport down from 16 Mile (Sogere)." We cooked our dinner there. They told us to put out our fires at night. We slept there.

The next morning they sent down four trucks. Tufi people used four vehicles and another four took everyone else — eight trucks in all. When we arrived they told us Tufi people where to camp. They also showed the Abau people where to camp. So the Maisin had three tents. One was for Ganjiga and two for Vayova, Maume and Yamakero. We stayed there for two days. In the morning they sent vehicles to pick us up. They told us we would be up for only one week. They told us to leave our mats behind. So we got on the vehicle and went in past Rona falls and then stopped at Bista. That is where we got off. They told us to walk from there. They said that it would not be long — "Four days to a week and you'll come back."

The first camp was at Uberi. The second camp was at Ioribaiwa. The third camp was Naoro. All of us slept at Uberi. The Ganjiga people went and slept at Ioribaiwa. All of the supplies were sent to Viroro from Sogere — food and medicine. There were no proper roads from Viroro onwards so that is where they kept the supplies. From there they had wire cables put across. The supplies were hung from hooks. That is how they sent ammunition across. The battle started from that place.

From there we carried all that ammunition and other supplies to Ioribaiwa. Then we would return to base. There were two groups. We would exchange with them between Ioribaiwa. So all of us did that work. And those already up carried the supplies further — that includes the Arifama people. We stayed there for a long time — I don't know how many weeks or months — but we did that work for a long time.

There was an outbreak of dysentery there. Most of the labourers became very sick with it. They sent the sick ones down to Moresby hospital. They sent Ananais, Joseph, Cyprian,

Hubert, Cyril, and Jepheth down to Sogere hospital. Those who were worse went further to Port Moresby. Among them was Michael John who had gotten a bad cut from a meat can. They didn't return quickly. They stayed there. Augustine, Cecil and Russell who had been left behind at Robinson River came in the 'Larabada' to Moresby and came up to join us.

When they came we stayed there for quite a long time. While we were there we heard that the Japanese were at Kokoda and were heading across. The battle was on. The carriers were bringing the injured ones across to Moresby for treatment. They buried those who were killed on the battlefield.

From there we were told to take our things up to Ioribaiwa. From there we moved further to Naoro. When we got there we could hear the sound of guns firing. We stopped shifting supplies and began to move ammunition — guns and bombs. We pulled the camp down, threw the food on the fire and pulled the buildings down. Captain Kingsley and David Barnum knew Motu and spoke to us. They said to move fast or be killed. "If you are smart, you'll move quickly and be safe. If you are slow you will die." Everyone was in a hurry. They wanted to burn the supplies. We got a few biscuits and began moving out.

From Naoro we started to go back again because the Japanese were coming up. So we moved back very fast. Most of the soldiers moved back. Most were not injured, they didn't even have cuts. We based ourselves at Ioribaiwa. The Japanese stayed at Naoro, the place we had just left.

We threw all of the supplies and food into the river at Ioribaiwa. We went across and slept at Uberi. The Japanese moved up to Ioribaiwa. They stopped there. I don't remember how many days

or months. All of us were now based at Uberi. It was the only camp. That was the last camp. If the Japanese had gotten it they would have taken Moresby. But I don't know what stopped them at Ioribaiwa. It was very difficult there. The fighting was so hard. I don't know how our soldiers did it.

So they were up there. That morning we waited and wondered. They would not have far to go if they decided to leave the top. We waited through the day and then slept. The Japanese waited too. All the soldiers gathered together early in the morning. Lots of them!

So the Japanese were at Ioribaiwa and we were at Uberi. There were lots of us at Uberi, we made a very big crowd. The place was so crowded it was hard to move around, even to find a toilet. To go to the toilet you had to dig in that dig, cover it up and sleep there. It was very very bad. We had to look for firewood, bring it and use it for meals. The Japanese still did not fire on us. We were waiting and waiting for them to start. It was so bad where we stayed. It was muddy and cold. But we had to stay there.

While we went through that hard time, we remembered the advice the bishop had given us. We were going through a hard time and so we remembered his words.

We stayed there for two or three days. Then they advised us not to get frightened. They said that they were going to fire the big machine guns at the Japanese camp. They said that they wanted to blow up the place. So they fire their guns. The sound was like thunder. It was very loud. We could hear the sound shoot past and then blow up at Ioribaiwa. When they exploded the jungle would burn. Only the big tree were left standing. It really destroyed the place. This war was very bad. There was

no place to go and hide. You could not even hide behind a tree trunk. When the bomb lands there it burns the place up. People were burnt too. I think that is why the Japanese decided to turn back. I really don't know. I could be that is dysentery or malaria. Perhaps they ran out of food.

As for us, we had our camp there. One was at Ioribaiwa and the other at Naoro. We had those camps, so we shifted food and ammunition supplies to those camps. Even the soldiers' clothes and boots were included with the supplies. When we ran out of supplies, they sent back a message and a plane brought more food. The planes did not drop the supplies at any one spot. They dropped them anywhere in the bush or swamp. So we had to go out and look for them all over the place. It was war time.

When they did this, they started to run out of supplies because they were dropping them anywhere. So they decided to put out white papers in the cleared camp area so the planes could do their drop in one spot. Even after that we did not get all the supplies. Some smashed when they came down. But there was no enough. They fed the soldiers breakfast, lunch and dinner to keep them fit. The soldiers fought hard but most were down with dysentery and malaria.

We stayed for sometime at Ioribaiwa. Our soldiers kept fighting. The Japanese did not fight back. And so all the fighting was on one side. They moved back because their base was really burned up and they couldn't stay there. When the place was bombed, they had no escape. Many fell over the cliffs because this was in the mountains that is why they turned back. Our soldiers really knew how to make them go backwards.

From there we started walking up the mountains, carrying the things. It

was very steep and we had to go straight up. Before the Japanese moved, they made a fence. They put their guns there and wrote on the fence, "The war is finishing here. We are going back." When our soldiers read that they said to us, "We won't stop here. We will follow them all the way down to the coast. We'll make sure they get the boats and go away." We followed them all the way down. When we got to their camp, the soldiers fired at the houses. When there was no return fire, we continued on.

We followed them all the way down to a creek called Myola. The Japanese were there. When we fired they now fired back. We went past Uberi, Naoro, Efogi, Khaki — all the way to Myola. That is a very cold place. That is where our soldiers camped. There was a big swamp. Our soldiers camped right around the edge of it. That was a very wet place, no dry areas. The swamp was covered in weeds. It was not very good.

They put up a Red Cross there. They buried the killed soldiers there. They took the wounded to the Red Cross camp and sent them on to Moresby for treatment. We stayed there for a week. So that's what we did. We kept carrying injured people to the Red Cross camp. We kept doing that and moving on until we came to Biyoge.

When we reach Biyoge, the soldiers put up their camp. As for us, we took our things down to stay near a small creek. We spent one night and started moving down. From there we came to Kokoda. At Kokoda, they dropped the food supply.

The Wofun clan were the first to come in as we moved. They got the houses. We went in later and got settled with them at Kokoda. They gave us an issue of laplap material and small knives. They gave us those things to make us happy. Sometimes we would collect the clothes that soldiers threw away to wear

for ourselves. We got rid of our old tapas. We threw them in the river and put on the new clothes they gave us.

The Japanese were at Oivi. They had a big battle and so we had to stay there. As we moved down our people ran out of food. Captain Kingsley made five of us walk down for two hours. "When it gets dark we'll sleep there." We were Sylvester, Enoch, Adelbert, Randolph and myself. We went down and slept at Ilimo. We carried the tents. When we got to Ilimo, they put up the tents. We just cut down banana leaves to make ourselves a shelter. There was no food for us when we woke the next morning. We had nothing to eat. They told to go to the Wairopi River. The word means "wire rope." That had a bridge made of wire cable there and so they called it that. But the bridge had been cut during the fighting. So they built a new bridge. All day they worked at it. They put two cables across and laid down planks. We worked on that for a full day. We had no food, so we were very hungry.

So all of the carriers from Daru, Abau and Tufi had no food. They were very weak from hunger. They had to cut sticks to support themselves as they walked down. All of them settled along the Wairopi River. Near the river was a very big breadfruit tree. We had two axes. One belong to Enoch and the other to Pogane people. So we used those axes to cut down that big breadfruit tree. There was plenty of breadfruit, so everyone got enough to eat. While we were doing that, the soldiers and government came and watched us. They knew that we were hungry so they didn't stop us. They got the old fence, broke it up for firewood and started to cook the breadfruit. When we finished baking, a plane flew over with food supplies. Planes kept coming and dropping supplies along the river. When the planes were finished they told us to

get the supplies and carry them back to camp. So when we got the fruit, we cooked it and had food to eat.

That night we couldn't sleep. It was very wet and unlike the place we had just left there were no shelters. The place was very cold. That night there was a heavy rain. There was no roof so we could only rely on small sticks and our own clothes to protect us from the rain.

Early the next morning after waking up we moved to Popondetta. When we got there we found it quiet. There was no one there. We spent the night at Popondetta. The plane brought supplies and dropped them again. They dropped tents too. We built the tents there. We stayed there for awhile. The Japanese were still on the coast at their base of Sanananda. The Japanese dug bunkers to hid there. They made small hills, planting grass and plants around them. You would look and think that no one was there. But the Japanese were all there with their guns at the ready.

The Japanese had a big place there. They had buried many of their people there. That area was all covered with bush. When we walked through it we thought that it was just grass. We did not realize that it was a cemetery. That is at Sanananda.

We moved down and settled at Soputa. We stayed there for three days. The Americans put up their Red Cross. They were in the kunai grass. And the Australians put their Red Cross up by the river. While we were there, the Japanese planes came and bombed the Australian and American hospitals. That is where we saw the bombs land. That is where Simeon had his injury on his arm. He was very lucky that it only cut him there. He might have been killed. The other was Phineas. He wanted to go down one of the holes. He held on the sides trying to go down the hole. That is where he

spoiled his right hand. From then on he learned to use his left hand. So we had two Maisin who were injured.

From there we moved down to Kikiri. Ganjiga and the Wofun clan stayed behind. When we went down, it was not far to the beach. We didn't realize this. We thought that we were still far inland. We had a big battle there. We buried the dead there and carried back the injured. So the Ganjiga and Wofun people carried down supplies and returned to their camp with the wounded. The battle was on.

We kept doing that. But there were many Japanese at Sanananda, Buna and Geroba. As for Gona, it was alright. Our soldiers kept on shooting and it was alright.

There were too many Japanese so they sent in two tanks. When we finished at Gona we returned to Saputa and then went to Sanananda. The fighting was on, so we moved in to carry out the wounded. When the Ganjiga and Wofun brought in the food supply we made an exchange with the wounded. We then carried the supplies to the soldiers. There was a very big battle there. It is very good that they got those tanks in at Oro Bay.

From Oro Bay the two tanks moved up to Kefure mountain. They put big guns and a spotlight up there. From there the two tanks moved down and started destroying the place. As for us, they made a road down to the beach early in the morning. The Japanese were on both sides. We went down the middle. Then the tanks came down. That is where we saw the tanks.

Early that morning the tanks move into where the Japanese had dug themselves in. They started blowing the place up and they moved forward. The two tanks destroyed the place. One got stuck in the mud but the other managed to come back.

When these two tanks went in they didn't slow down but went to destroy the place. After the tank returned, our soldiers had only one spot left to attack. It was very bad. Our soldiers came to do that work. When they finished, they spent the night. Early the next morning they returned to check the site. While we were there they sent the big machine gun down to Sanananda to destroy the Japanese. When it was finished our soldiers moved in.

The took the surviving Japanese as prisoners. Most of them were very weak from hunger. Our carriers put them on stretchers and carried them back to the base.

That was the end of the fighting. When it finished, we moved back. Straight after that a Japanese soldier shot the Simboro man. The soldiers were checking the bunkers for things that were buried. American soldiers found a box in one of those holes. They pulled it out and had a look. While they did that, Frank Davis and the Simboro man saw a bunker and went to look. They found a barricade around the entrance to a hole. There was a Japanese man down there with one last bullet in his rifle. The Simboro man went first with Frank Davis behind. The Japanese soldier fired his last shot. They heard the sound of the trigger. Frank Davis rolled out and so survived, but Jefford was killed. They ran back. Keith and John Hunt were there. That happened at Sanananda. This happened straight after the fighting. Everything was over but they killed one of our men. If he had not checked that hole all of us would have returned home. When it happened, the soldiers ran to the spot. They found the Japanese without more bullets. After Jefford was killed, the Red Cross went down and took his body to the base. They buried him there.

They told us that a Tufi man had been killed when we returned from work. We asked them, "Who was this Tufi man?" We didn't yet know. We carried the Japanese prisoners to the Red Cross. We left them there after getting the message. We went back to our camp to find out. All the Maisin people went to that place. We saw a note on the bed. We looked for someone to read the message written on Enoch's bed. And that is when we found out. So fifty-five of us went to war. We returned with fifty-four.

From there we walked all the way home. When we reached Kavere, my brother-in-law died and so only fifty-three made it back to the village. We lost two during the war. It was bad and it was good.

We went through a hard time. When you talk about it, it is good — but it was very difficult. Our soldiers were good. We had supplies and enough to eat. We were able to sleep and do our job. But the enemies did not have enough food. That is why they lost.

So those areas were all cleared. All that was left was Bukumbari. So we went to Seputa again. From there they told us and we went to Bukumbari. We didn't reach it. We spent a night at Sebage. From there we turned back. But several continued to Bukumbari: Noah, Jakius, Randolph. When they came we just did labour work, clearing the place. We worked on the road. That was with the American soldiers. We all worked together. We dug the drains while they worked on the road. Later they brought in a bulldozer and made the big road.

As for the carriers from Abau and Daru — the planes took them back to Moresby. We came by barge to Tufi and then down to the village. After two weeks we went back. The Maisin people went as far as Bukumbari. We are the ones that really helped the Australians from

Moresby across this way. For the Americans, I don't know. The Wofun and Ganjiga people who stayed at Sananga know about the American soldiers. We knew only the Australians. We had been carrying Australians who were injured until Sanananda. After that we carried Japanese soldiers.

All of us were single then. We came home and started to marry.

The four remained at Bukumbari. When the fighting was over, they sent a PIB boat to Ambasi to let them know it was over. They brought them back. That PIB man was from Kerema. He got two village men. They came and crossed. They painted themselves black with charcoal. He told these men, "I'm alright. I'm in the PIB. If I die I get compensation, but you will not. So we will go to these Maisin men and tell them the war is over." So they went all the way to the beach. They crawled slowly. He would go first, check the place, get his two men and move forward.

While they were hiding and going, an American colonel got three Maisin men — Jakius, Randolph and Copland King. He got them and said, "Let's go and see what is happening at Bukumbari." So they went down. The colonel was using his binoculars to see what was happening. He would tell the Maisin that the fight was still on at Bukumbari.

While they were doing this, the PIB and his companions saw the colonel and the three Maisin men. So the PIB said to the others, "I can see those people there. They must be from Tufi or Baniara. Could you go and have a closer look?" So one of the village men went slowly to look. He came back and said, "It's them." He recognized the beads in their ears as coming from Tufi. The PIB told them to be careful. He himself would hide and go to grab one of the Maisin men. He was going to Jakius, who was small. He

wanted to use him as a shield so the colonel wouldn't shoot him.

The colonel was busy looking and talking about what was happening. The PIB man came in very slowly and grabbed him like a pig. When it happened the colonel dropped his binoculars and pulled out his gun. The PIB man held Jakius tight and called out in Motu, "Tufi Tufi varavara (friend)!" The colonel held his gun and asked the Maisin what he was saying. The Maisin told him, "He is a friend. PIB." So the colonel put down his gun and asked him to say what had happened. The PIB told him that his captain sent him to the Maisin people. He came to see if they were alright. If so he would go back and say they were alright. He wanted to find out if the fighting was over.

When they finished, the two village men painted in charcoal came out from the bush. They went to the base. They washed and the American soldiers gave them clothes to wear and food to eat. While there, the two village men went to a village close by to get betelnut to chew. The village people told them that they would come visit the next day. So those two got their betelnut, lime and food and came back to camp.

The next day the village people got pigs and came down to see them. The men moved to the next camp over. The Maisin wrote a letter and sent it to Ambasi to Vincent Moi, who was the teacher there. At that time, Vincent was not in the village because the war was on. He was out making sago when the letter arrived. When he came back, he read and saw the Maisin names — the parents and clans. He knew the men at Bukumbari. He told his family with him that these were their relatives. By that time the fighting was over, so the Maisin there were helping people build new roofs.

They were building new houses for the soldiers and the people there.

When they finished that they moved back to Killerton. The village people who had been out hiding came back. They worked together with them. A few Maisin men got married there.

So everything finished and we came back here. So those who married brought their wives and they speak the Ewogi language here in the village — that is the memorial. So they were lucky to get married. We just came back as we were, single.

From an interview with Didymus on 2 October, 1982

At the time of the Battle of the Coral Sea, ANGAU sent two barges up the coast. Fifty-three men got on for Uiaku and Ganjiga — about 40 from Uiaku and 10 from Ganjiga. Adelbert, Coleman, Ambrose and Bodger were older, so they took care of the younger men.

On American soldiers: "Americans! They came in big boats with big machines on board. And they came out like ants, like white sand. We had never seen so many white men before. And meat! Sugar! Tobacco! It was everywhere. Not tinned fish because that would rust. But round meat. And they had keys to open them with. We hadn't seen these things before. They had planes. They flew up, turned tail and then came down twisting about. Americans! So clever! How! They brought so much. And they took over this place."

"They saw what we ate and so they gave us some of their food. Sugar! Coffee! They said, 'ANGAU doesn't give you these things?' We said, 'No, Joe.' They always called us Joe or George, so that is what we called them."

"When the war was over they took it all away. We saw a plane flying over, carrying away the food to another

country. We had never seen such things before and so we still talk about it.”

Memories from Gona: We came down to the beach at Gona, my brother and I. That is where we saw the Japanese. They were all over the beach. Some were in the water. As far as you could see. Some were half-buried in sand, others lay on top.

[Did you have to bury them?] Bury them! How? There were so many there and in the bush. My brother saw them too. If the soldiers took their guns and touched the skin, you would see the worms. The Japanese had no food. Some had been eating leaves. Their bodies were very thin and covered by worms. Some had hurt their arms and had them in slings. When you moved them there were worms all over.

We had to dig between the bodies to get our water for drinking and cooking. Everywhere there were maggots. We had to boil the water with these dead men's grease in it. That is why we soon lost our hair and we became weak and old.

We saw American men and women. They were so beautiful. They were tall, strong and fat. We also saw black Americans. They call them 'Negroes'? Oh, they were strong! They had very big arms.

All the time we were there it rained. The mud came up to here [indicates hips]. This was because of all the blood shed by the American, Australian and Japanese soldiers. We

had only a blanket. Only the big officers had tents. Sometimes one of the soldiers would throw away a raincoat. We would us this but ANGAU always came and took them away. When we were sent to clean up a place we would find knives, hammers and other things that the soldiers had thrown away. We took these back and hid them under our blankets. Early the next morning we went off to work. When we came back we found that ANGAU had gone through our things and taken the good ones away. We were very cold but they only gave us a blanket. We made our shelter from bush things. They gave us rice. We would get tobacco once a week. They did help us with that.

We were not paid then. After the war they gave us £6 for each year we had been in. Two years meant £12! We did not know much then, we were just Papuans. Now they are talking about more money. Well, we've been waiting a long time.

We were cold. No shirt or pants like now — just a piece of calico!

One of our jobs was to go up to a wounded soldiers and make a cot out of blankets and some poles. They would lift him on this and crawl out of the firing zone. Once they got to where the bullets only fell, they stood up and moved on.

Once my brother and I saw a long line of Japanese prisoners chained together and marched off. They had no clothes on.

Frank Davis Dodi and Rhoda Binami

Recorded October 1982, Yamakero Village

Frank Davis

At Christmas 1941, we left school. The school closed down. In 1942 the War started. A boat came here to take us. Mr. Wills of ANGAU came. These boats were the Elevara and Giligili. They called in here. From Ganjiga to Yamakero, the men went down to the boats. Mr. Wills did not tell us that we were going to War. He told us to go and sign up as labourers to work at Robinson river at Abau (in the Central Province). He did not want to tell us. We all had to go up to Tufi and sign our names there. Then he said, "You wait and a boat will call in to pick you up." They made the excuse that there was much work to do. They were afraid that if they told us it was War we wouldn't go. The boat started from Pongami and went all along the coast. At Uiaku and Ganjiga, 42 men joined in. They didn't know about the Japanese or the War. We slept at Reaga, then Mukawa and then Dogera. The Bishop blessed us there. We still didn't know we were going to War. Then we went to Milne Bay. There we saw Australian and American troops — so we knew we were going to War. There were big ships and lots of guns. We were surprised. The the officers told us we were going to War. They told us that the War between Japan and our side had started.

We stayed there three months. They said, "People cannot go back to the village — there is no way back. From here you will go to Port Moresby." There we worked with the soldiers, moving things, washing them and setting things up. We all walked with trunks all the way to Gadaiso, along the beach to Onioni. We



got a boat there. We went to Abau. We slept there. Next morning we went to Robinson River. We cut grass at the coconut plantation. We were there one month. A big ship, Niusa, came from Moresby. We came down and slept at Abau. Next morning we went to Moresby. All of us went up there.

Trucks came for us. We went right up to Safaia. The soldiers had a big base there. From that time we saw that we were coming to the War. We stayed there three weeks. From there we went up to be carriers. We camped at Uberi. The Japanese had started at Buna. They got to Kokoda and from there they were heading to Moresby.

Our soliders met the Japanese soldiers. The village people who went took their guns and helped them by carrying food. We would carry the wounded men back after taking up food. In each day we went up two times. The distance was as from here to Yuayu — from the camp to the fighting place. The fighting went right to Yaribaiwa. They blocked them there. That was 1942. From there our soliders started pushing

them back again. They took them all the way to Kokoda. Christmas in 1942 was in Kokoda. From there we started down for the beach. 1943 started. This took weeks and months because there was fighting going on. We had no weekend holiday. Every day was really busy.

From Kokoda we went down to Popondetta. It was really strong so American soliders came to Oro Bay and went up the bush road to Popondetta. The American soliders made that road then. They were fighting with guns — it was strong. In the night time it was still going on. At Popondetta they ordered two tanks. They arrived at Oro Bay. The two tanks came up the Oro Bay road. At Popondetta the two tanks started fighting downwards. The tanks went and really damaged the Japanese base. The Japanese shot one of the tanks down. Only one came back in the afternoon. In the monring it went down again and damaged everything.

The War was not over, even though this big camp (Gewoto) was destroyed. All the soldiers spread out and used guns to spoil everything. The War finished there in 1943. We had Christmas at Dobodura in 1943. They went down and finished at Buna and the rest went to Lae. Some of us stayed at Buna and the rest went to Lae. The ones who came later from Uiaku went to Lae and Rabaul. The rest of us were based at Buna.

At Buna our main job was to collect and clean Japanese and our own weapons. We stayed there for three years until 1946. From there they sent us back to Uiaku. While we were there we built houses, cleaned things, and cooked food. Both Americans and Australians were there.

We would see the Japanese. Sometimes when the War was on we would go forward to get dead and wounded men. We would see Japanese

fighting. Our people came out at Gona. After the War I married my wife at Bona. Actually I was married during the War. We used to run together while the bombs were dropping. Of all the Europeans, only one stayed at Kokoda — he had a business there — Mr. Kingsley. He knew us very well. He knew all of our names. He was in the rubber business. His father had been a patrol officer. Kingsley was born there and so he knew the place. He later started a rubber plantation and cattle farm.

We slept with the soldiers, using their tents. ANGAU looked after us during the War. It was the War so there was plenty of food. All the carriers and soliders got free food. At that time, we didn't go out without food. It was War time.

First time we went in, we were really frightened but later we were not scared. The Central carriers used to run away during the War. Our Tufi side didn't get frightened. We couldn't get back to our villages. But the Central people were closer, so they used to run away at night.

I was with a group of people where the bomb landed. Some had very bad cuts on their arms. Somewent to Moresby and two came back and died. Simeon in Vayova has the scars on his arms. None of the Maisin who went to the War were killed and none got sick except Ernest's father who was shot by the Japanese. People on both sides of the Maisin were hurt, but not the Maisin themselves. We don't know why. It was by God's help. I was with Ernest's father. I held him after he was shot. Both of us stood. We were looking at the hole [bunker]. From there the Japanese soldier shot him.

All the Maisin stayed together all the way down to Buna. The Maisin split at Popondetta. Ernest's father was killed

when the Maisin separated. The soldiers split us.

We were the first selected to go to the War. The other carriers joined in later as we came through. When the War was on, the carriers were following orders and so they didn't fight. But after the War was over they used to go to Samananda and quarrel.

All of us were friends with the American and Austrian soldiers. They took me as a cook. I was with the Americans for two years. They looked after us like brothers, very well. A few of us who schooled at Dogura — John Hunt and Syvester — went around with the Europeans and spoke to them in English. The soldiers gave us clothes, money, and so on.

I had a holiday in 1944. Then we went back for two years. We were really happy to go home. We didn't feel like going back, but they told us to, so we went back.

When the War started we were with our fathers and uncles. Those people who left wives or had parents to look after came back during the War. If three brothers go, one would come back to the village. My elder brother came back home.

We received no payment during the War. Afterwards at Tufi the government gave us our pay. I got £40 or £50, not a great amount. We found it really hard during the War. We never slept well. We were like pigs and dogs. We had big sores on our shoulders but still we had to carry. We were tired and had to walk with sticks all the time. We made crutches and when our shoulders were tired we would take the crutch and rest. It was really bad. At the time we got the money, we didn't know it was not much. We didn't go to school. At that time, we didn't know money. We didn't know if it was big or small. Now all these boys have gone to school. They know money. It's not like us. We don't know money.

It was a bad time. This time if young boys ask us about the War, we don't want to tell them because we find it painful. We never sleep soundly. When it was time for eating you had to eat quickly. If the fighting started, you had to run quickly. In the night when they were dropping bombs, we had to run away into the bush. In the morning we would come back to the camp. Some of the boys who went to the War have died. I was MacSherry's age when I went to War. I was not shaving. The older ones would give us advice, not to run away. Adelbert used to give advice. Others have died: Cornelius, Ambrose — only those three men (gave advice).

Rhoda Binami

I was at Gona. I got a sore on the leg and I was at Buna hospital when the Japanese came. At that time, my parents came to take me back. They didn't know that the Japanese were coming. Two



Japanese ships came to Buna and Samananda. They blocked the roads. My parents were frightened. They went into the bush and made their way back to the village. All of the village people had left for Bakubari. There was no one there. We followed them. We met them at Bakubari. We had spent two days in the bush before going to our village. We stayed at Bakubari for five weeks and then we went to Ambassi. We went up into a bush village. People stayed there with their relatives. Vincent Moi was a teacher at Ambassi. When Frank Davis came down to Gona, Sylvester wrote a letter to Vincent. "If you look this way and see the smoke, don't worry because it is us. We came from Uiaku and this is our smoke." On Sunday, Vincent told all the people about this during his sermon. They had thought the Japanese were fighting, so now all of us packed up and came to the beach and came back to the village. We didn't go to our real village because American soldiers were working there. We stayed at Koro. That's where I met Frank Davis. We didn't go back to the village quickly, not until the soldiers came down and then we went in. There it was that we used to run when the bombs were landing. The Japanese didn't go to Ambassi except for a few who ran away. They were killed on the beach and we used to see their bodies there.

When all the men were away, there were only old people and women left in the village. They were all feeling very hungry. When we went for War, the village people all went into the bush and

made their houses there and their gardens. Nobody stayed in the village. Those men who stayed back would make sago for them to eat. At that time, the volcano erupted. At that time there were Australians and

Americans at Wanigela. When the volcano erupted, the people ran either to Uwe or to Airara. It erupted three times. At the third eruption, I was here (Frank Davis was away working). All of them got frightened. The village was covered with hot rocks and dirty water. All of us went away from the village. On the third eruption, the people didn't run away as they had earlier. We don't know what people thought about it. People were surprised. It was the first time they had seen this, so the people ran away. This was the only important thing that happened [here] during that time.

People living in the village at that time were frightened. They had heard that the War was on and they didn't want to stay in the village, so they ran away. They had come out before I came to the village. When they were in the bush, they heard that our soldiers were winning, so they came out.

When I left school, all the missionaries left and there was no one in the station. When I came here the station was empty. It started again with Frank Davis came back. At that time, Vincent Moi came back home and was the teacher there and looked after the station.

Only the Europeans know why the Japanese came. We were just helping them. Now [the young people] know because you go to school.

John Hunt Vaso

We were in the village. They sent the police down to get us. So people from Ganjiga and Uiaku went up to Tufi. The government officer was Mr. Wills. We signed on there. Then we came back to the village and spent two days and nights. We sang and danced through that time. Early in the morning we took off. Our traditional dress was still on our bodies when we left.

We walked past Sinapa, Airara and came to Reaga. All the Maisin were at Reaga. we got there we got together with our drums and danced until the next morning.

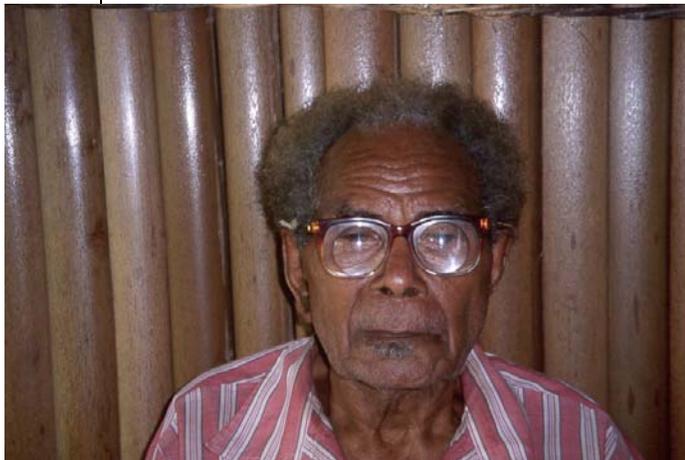
The next morning the 'Elevara' and 'Giligili' called in. Our fathers and mothers were all crying. The women threw themselves into the water and on the ground, crying. Everyone was crying for their husbands and sons were going. We cried too as we got on the boats. All the Maisin got on one boat. We could see our parents crying and throwing themselves into the sea as we pulled out into the ocean. We could see the coconut palms and houses of our village and that made us all cry.

Among us was a Baruga (Saumo) man. He was singing. That made all of the Maisin cry too.

We traveled until it got dark and then we kept going. We got to Wedau and spent the night there. Early in the morning Adelbert spoke to me. "My fin, you must see the bishop so we can have a blessing before we go." So I went and saw Bishop Philip Nigel Strong. He said, "That is very good." So all the Maisin went up there. We went into the cathedral and had our blessing. After the blessing, the bishop said: "When you go, I'll be thinking of you. Day and night, in the church I'll be thinking of you. Until the war is finished and then I will leave

Recorded on tape, March 1997, Ganjiga Village

it." After he spoke to us we returned to the boat.



From there we went all the way to Milne Bay at Alotau. We stayed there and helped the Australian soldiers cut down coconuts and clean the place up. While we were there, they told us to get on a barge and go to Samarai. "When you get to Samarai Island you'll see that Colonel Smith burned down the buildings. You go in and clean it up." So when we got there, Steamships, BP, Bunting — even the good office building — they were all burned down. All the things were burnt up — tin fish, knives, everything. Even saa and wakeke beads. So we cleaned the place up and threw the rubbish into the sea. The only buildings untouched were the government houses up on the hill.

When we finished in the afternoon, we returned to Alotau. From there we got on another ship and went to Fife Bay. We got off at a place call Gedaisu. We spent a night there on the beach. Early in the morning we got up and walked to Mamai. That was Mamai plantation where we spent two weeks. From there we came along the coast. We got to Baibara and then to Onioni Bay. There we got on a sailing boat. All the carriers got on. We traveled all the way to Mungubo. We

spent the night. The next morning there was heavy rain. We traveled to Dedele. From there we went straight to Abau — to the government station. We stayed there one week.

We got on a different boat, the 'Lady Jane.' We went up the Robinson River. We worked on the plantation for one month. From there we got on a boat called the 'Niasa'. We came back to Abau. From there we got the 'Lorebada' and went to Moresby. The place had been burnt down — all of the buildings. We could see some buildings that were still burning. We thought among ourselves, "We are here to clean this place up."

But they sent down four trucks. We got on the vehicles. On the way up our men beat the drums and sang. They sang a war song, kuwa. We went past Koki and then up to Three Mile. We went all the way to Safai Creek. We got off. They gave us a shelter and our food.

We didn't work for two weeks. We just stayed there and ate. After two weeks they sent the trucks back to pick us up. The fifth truck loaded all of the food supply. Before we got on, we left our decorations there — our drums, feathers, arm bands. We put them in the house and locked them up. We got on and started to go. We did the same thing. We sang the war song, kuwa as we left. We said to each other, "Even though we go to war, we have had our blessing so we won't be frightened. Whether for good or bad, we'll go forward."

We traveled up the road to Rona Falls and kept going. We came to the end of the road and got off. The vehicles turned back. We put all the things together and tied them up in order to carry them. From there we walked all the way to the first camp, Uberi. That is where all the Maisin and Tufi people camped. We stayed there. They gave our rations and food supply. Early in the

morning we had our breakfast. They told us to go out and stand in line. They got our names for roll call.

After roll call they put out all the supplies. We got our share, tied them up, and started to walk. We walked all the way to Ioribaiwa. It is a mountain. The Europeans call that place the Owen Stanley Range. We climbed the Owen Stanley Range until late in the afternoon. We got to the top at 5 o'clock. We put all the things down. That was our first experience of carrying.

We stopped there. But the first group went ahead and reached Kokoda. In the morning we walked back. We got to Uberi at 5 o'clock. We kept doing that. We would get the food supply to take to Ioribaiwa, sleep there and go back. The Japanese walked up. They went toward Kokoda and came to a big river called Wairopi [the Kumusi]. They crossed it and reached Oivi mountain. They now continued to Kokoda.

The Japanese were very strong. They moved forward to Efogi. From there they went to Kagi and then to Wanari. From there they went to Nauru. That is where the Ganjiga people were. So the Ganjiga people retreated to Ioribaiwa. As for us, they told us by radio to leave Uberi and move to the place called 44 Mile at the foot of the Owen Stanley Range.

There were thousands and thousands of labourers there from Daru, Kerema, Kekori; all the way to the islands, Misima, Isala ... They stayed at 44 Mile. The place was really crowded. They put a big radio there. They told us to all be quiet. Even people at Ioribaiwa had to leave that place and move down. The Japanese were now at Ioribaiwa.

That is where the battle took place. Our soldiers started firing their guns. The shots all went to the top where the Japanese were. The Japanese were at 88 Mile and kept firing from there. It was

very bad for the Australians. One hundred and seventy-seven were killed. The Japanese killed them. One hundred and thirty were wounded. I was with them so I know the numbers.

We were still at our camp. Captain Kingsley, Ben Davis and Colonel Smith were the big men. ANGAUs there, plenty of them. We stayed there. There was not enough to eat. No rations. We stayed and waited.

The Japanese scouts started coming down. They were coming down to surround us. But our own scouts went up and saw them doing this. When they came down, they made roads and turned back. Our scouts returned to tell us what the Japanese had done. So Captain Kingsley told us, "If we get the message on the radio then we will turn back to Moresby. Is we turn back we must all stay together. I don't want any of you to run and hide in the bush. We have sent the message and a boat will be waiting for us at the wharf."

That night before we went to sleep, the Japanese called on the radio from Killerton to their soldiers at Ioribaiwa. "You are up at Ioribaiwa so you have already captured Moresby. As for us the Americans have bombed our ship. It sank. We lost our ammunition and the food supply is low. Don't try to go further because we don't have enough to supply you. Don't go forward. Turn back from there." We heard this message on our own radio at 44 Mile.

That next morning the Japanese started to build a long fence down and up toward the mountains. They completed it in four days. On the fifth day they cut a very big log. They brought it back to the base. They chopped it into four corners and then placed them in post holes. Then they went and collected five Australian guns as well as their own guns. They broke them up and put them at the foot of

the posts. They then wrote, "The war is finished here." On the front of the post they drew a man. They wrote a letter on that man. It read, "Your land is all the way from here to Daru. Our land goes from Ioribaiwa to the New Guinea side, including Rabaul. All that is mine. Yours goes down to Daru."

In the morning, Captain Kingsley, Colonial Smith, Ben Davis and the ANGAU government man got us and we went up. I was one of them along with Hillarian, Frank Davis and a few others from other places. The scouts went first and saw the fence. They turned back and met us halfway and told us about it. They also told us that the Japanese had pulled back. So we read that letter when we got there. They read it and told us about the land. "Down to Daru is yours. Ours is from Ioribaiwa." They also said, "If you come after us, you will see our dead soldiers under the trees. That shows you that our soldiers are dying from starvation. It does not mean that you are killing us." When Captain Kingsley read that he wept. He held onto the post and cried. He said, "They wrote this letter. But I was born in Kokoda. That is my place. I don't have another place on this side. I will not stop here. I will follow these Japanese down." Colonel Smith agreed.

From there we came back, got our things and returned up the hill to spend the night there. The next morning our soldiers chased after the Japanese. They caught up with them at Efogi. That is where they started fighting. We could hear the sound of guns firing. We followed after. The Japanese carriers abandoned all of their own cases. They left them in the houses. The Japanese even killed their carriers as they retreated. If their carriers were sick, they would just shoot them.

We continued to Maivara. We slept and stayed for two days. The next day the Australian soldiers came back. They were defeated. The Japanese were so strong that the Australians had even abandoned their own guns. Captain Kingsley and Ben Davis told the soldiers, "You can't run away. You promised the Queen to go forward. We won't let you retreat any further. Whether you live or die, you can't turn back. If you die your parents will get a reward."

After saying that, they threw out new guns to the soldiers. They hit any soldier who dropped his gun. When the soldiers had their guns, they told them to go forward and fight again.

They went and started firing but they were already weak. We brought them food but they were too weak to even eat the food.

The next day at about 1 o'clock, 300 Australian soldiers came. They walked all the way from Moresby. When they arrived they asked, "How far are the Japanese?" "They are close to this place," we told them. They put up their tents and we all stayed there. When they had something to eat, the Captain said, "One hundred and fifty soldiers will go first. One hundred and fifty will stay back at camp to stand by." The first group said, "When we go we will move the Japanese backwards. They won't be able to stay where they are." Most of the soldiers were very young men. After they arrived the older soldiers were pulled back. The captain told the old soldiers not to stop and eat there. They should continued walking until they reached Port Moresby. That was their punishment. So they couldn't stay and rest. They had to keep walking. The carriers secretly got tin meat and biscuits to give to these soldiers. They helped them out.

The new soldiers went in and fought until dark. Around midnight, the

Japanese moved. The Japanese went past Mara and Iura Creek.

We slept there. In the morning they told us to pull down the tents and fold them up. "The Japanese are going down so we will follow them." We carried our things and stopped to camp at Maira. While we were there, the soldiers went to Iura Creek. They kept firing until they drove the Japanese out of that place. The fight continued. They fought them. They pushed them backwards. They pushed them as far as Kokoda where the rubber plantation is.

The Japanese hid under the rubber trees and fired on our soldiers as they came in. That was the time that they sent on the second one hundred and fifty soldiers. They went on the other side and hid there. Our soldiers kept firing but said to the others, "When we quit, it will be your turn to fire." They forced the Japanese from the plantation and down the road. We moved in there. From there we all came down and settled at the Kokoda government station. We stayed there for one week. After one week, it was Christmas Day.

There was a big store at Kokoda station. They broke into the store. They got out knives, handkerchiefs, and clothes. They shared them out as Christmas presents for all of the carriers.

The Japanese came down and stopped at Oivi. There was an underground cement building. All the Japanese hid in there. About five hundred Japanese were underground. Our soldiers couldn't get at them easily. They were under the ground firing at our soldiers. So we stayed there for a few days. While we rested, the Pacific Island Battalion got together and said, "We should plan something." They went and told the Europeans. "We would like to do something in the custom way." They started to ask for people who knew how to

make it rain, from Daru around to our area. When they found the right people they asked them to come together. "Let's combine all that we have together so that they will work as one."

They told the fighter plane to survey the area. The planes left from Moresby and flew around Kokoda to Oivi and then turn back again. As some of the planes had turned back to Moresby, the village people used their medicines to cause a very heavy rain. It was very bad. You could not even see the place. There was lightning and thunder. It was very bad, very frightening. We all kept quiet and stayed there. It went until 1 or 2 o'clock. Around that time they sent another plane to check the place. The plane flew very high across to Kokoda. When it reached the top, it dropped right low towards the cement bunker at Oivi. It dropped two bombs and flew up again. When it left, the bombs exploded. They spoiled the place, burning down the trees. The plane circled around and saw that the place was in ruins. It returned to Moresby.

We slept there. Early in the morning they came down to see Oivi. The place was bad. They could see people hanging from the tree branches. We followed later and saw what had happened. We saw the bombed place. We found one Japanese man standing there. The officers said, "Shoot him and throw him in the water." So they shot him and threw him into the water. They checked the place. No one was alive. More than five hundred had been killed.

We went back and got our things. Captain Kingsley, Ben Davis and Colonel Smith asked for a good young man. The Maisin people put forward John Hunt. So John Hunt went to Captain Kingsley. "You are going to stay back here with the government officer," he said. "You will not go down. You will help look after the

place. When they drop supplies or soldiers drop from parachutes, you will check them." That is the job they said to do. He didn't say anything in reply.

So we went and packed up. My uncles and father were all crying for me. So that is where I stayed. All the rest came down. They went to Popondetta and then to Soputa. They camped there. I stayed in Kokoda for six months. So when the fighting happened at Soputa I was not there. I stayed at Kokoda. When they jumped from the planes I could count them. I would get the number as they jumped and confirm it when they came in.

I would tell them when all the soldiers had come down. I took the men up to the government station. They would leave them overnight and then take them to the battlefield. So the soldiers only jumped from planes at Kokoda. That was my job there — I was counting them. I was also in charge of dropped rations. I stayed at the supply depot. Sargent Bageta stayed in the government house.

We stayed there. One morning the plane came to drop the soldiers. The soldiers started to jump. One of the soldiers got caught in a big tree. I saw what happened. He was hanging with his gun, backpack and rations. All those who landed stood in line. I counted them. I then told them, "One short!" So I told the soldiers, "Check yourselves." One soldier said, "My older brother is missing." I told him that I had seen him hanging from a tree. From there I went and told my boss, "All the soldiers are alright except one who is caught up in a tree." The boss asked, "Did you see him?" "Yes, I saw him." So both of us went out. He got out his binoculars and had a look. We came back to the office. He called on the radio. The answer was, "We are coming tomorrow."

In the morning, they came with belts, ropes and a block. They flew these in that morning. I went and joined them and showed them where the man was. So they got on the plane, took off and circled around where the man was and then came back again. We carried all the things after they got off the plane and walked up the mountain. When we got there they tied the rope and block and used it to get the man down. While they were setting up, they called up "This will be your only chance. When we tell you must jump and take your chance." So when they had tied all the ropes from the top down they said, "Use this rope to get down here." So the soldier used the rope to come down. They kept telling him, "Hold on tight. Don't let go." That soldier was very strong. He held on tight and made his way to the bottom. They untied all of the ropes. They made a bed, made him lie down, and prepared tea for him to drink. When he finished his tea they carried him on the stretcher to the station, put him on the plane and sent him back.

So that is where I stayed. We did a lot of things during my time there.

There was an Anglican teacher-evangelist. He went up there. He saw the Orokaiva rape Sister Parkinson and Sister Mavis. They used an axe to chop them up. He saw what happened and made a record that he kept with him. He gave us the record when he got to the government station. The government man read it. He sent a message to Moresby and they sent twelve policemen across including two corporals and a sergeant. The sergeant was Didibu. They got the people and held a court case. The court was on. The government kept demanding answers. He hit the men very hard. They would lose consciousness and fall down. He used a big timber to hit these men. I was there. I would pour a bucket of water on

them so that they could get up again. He kept doing that until the court was finished. Then he knew the truth and ended the case.

He told those men to dig a very deep hole — up there at Kokoda. It was a very big hole, so deep that you could not see the bottom from on top. They used a rope to go down. They got the soil out with buckets. The government man came and looked at it. He told me to come. We got petrol, went to the hole and poured it in. When we finished, he poured fuel in a line to the edge of the hole. He told the four men to go back into the hole and clean it out again. While they were there, I followed the government man to the far end of the hole. He lit the fuel. The fire traveled to the hole and blew up. The flames shot up higher than these coconut palms! The four men were killed inside. The fire kept burning. When it was done, only ashes remained of the four men.

After that we stayed there for three or four days. They went down and cleaned the hole, using a shovel to take out the ashes and clean the place. The government man got another five men and told them to go down. He did the same thing and they were burnt up. There was no record kept of that court case. That was the revenge that they did for the sisters.

I was still there when people from Airara, Marua, Sinipara, Sinapa, Uiaku, Ganjiga and even some Yuayu people came to Kokoda. They came there carrying wounded men. They were asking, "Is there any Tufi man around here?" They asked the policeman who was from Pongani. The policeman said, "Yes, there is one Tufi man staying here." David and Gregory were the ones who asked the policeman. So the policeman went and said to me, "some people have come from your village. They want to see you." When I came out they saw me and

said, "Oh! That's John Hunt!" All of them came and greeted me with tears. When they finished, I went and told the government man that they were there. So he said, "Give them some rations." I took the people to the house and we put out the rations. I was looking after that building so I told the people, "Give out plenty." When I said that they dropped all of the tinned fish and got the tinned meat out. Biscuits too. So they had something to eat. We stayed there for three days and nights.

While we were there, the Maisin carried most of the Australian wounded. The Maisin people started to move down. When I saw them I made up my mind. I didn't want to stay at Kokoda, I wanted to go with them. I stayed there and my government man said, "I'm going to Moresby and then I'll come back." Four days later, he died there.

So Colonel Smith came up. He told me, "You can burn all the things except for a tin box. Don't burn that." In the box is all the money — it was locked. So I went and told Sergeant Bageta that the government man had died. We stayed there until they sent a new government man. He came all the way from Aroma. He came and stayed. But he was a different man. He was not good to me, so I didn't want to remain there. I got up and left the place.

I started to walk down. I came all the way to Gorari. The soldiers were there. They told me to spend the night with them. But I told them, "I must keep going." I kept on walking until I came to Wairopi — a very big place with many soldiers. I stayed there for five days. While there, they told me to work, but I didn't want to remain there. I started walking. I had five tinned meats and five packets of biscuits. I walked down. I ran and ran until I came to a big river. Then I followed the river down. I crossed the

river and looked up to see Orokaiva people. They were building new houses. They called out to their people, "There is a man coming. Go and see him." They spoke in their language. Two young men came toward me. They came and asked me. I told a lie: "I am coming with a government man and the carriers. They are down the river having their wash and they will soon be here. They will spend the night in your village." So the two men turned back and called out, "The government people are coming here. They are washing and will soon come up." While all the people were looking in that direction, I walked past the village.

I went through betelnut trees until I came to the road. Then I started to run. I ran and ran and just kept running and running. I was sweaty and worn out, but still I kept on running. Now I met three men. Among those three was a man who had gone to school with me at Dogura. He said, "Oh Siko! How do I come to meet you here?" So both of us talked. I said, "We can't talk for long. I've got to go. The government people are coming this way. When you go back keep off the road. Hide in the bush. The government is getting carriers and he might get you too." My friend passed this on to his two companions.

I ran again. I ran until 5 o'clock. I arrived in an old village. There was a coconut palm. I climbed up using a rope and pulled some coconuts down. I husked those coconuts and got them. I looked for a place to sleep in that old village. I found a hiding place covered by bush and went under there. I got inside, drank my coconut, ate my biscuit and meat and went to sleep. I slept there.

In the morning when I woke up, Japanese came over the village in a plane. They circled the area. I heard a sound as the dropped bombs around there. They finished and went back. So I awoke and

sat up. I had some coconut, meat and a biscuit. Then I started walking again.

I met two soldiers. They greeted me saying, "Oh! Morning, Joe." So I said, "Morning." "Where did you spend the night?" "In that old village." They said, "You should have kept going because we were here." So I said, "I didn't know you were here. It was getting dark so I slept there." The soldiers told me to have tea with them but I said that I would continue walking. So I started off. The soldiers advised me to be careful because the area was not very safe.

As I came along, I saw some Japanese. They were cleaning the place. I left the road and went into the bush. I went right around. Finally I arrived at Dobodura. I saw a Red Cross hospital there. So I went straight across to it. Wedau people saw me. They said in their language, "There is a man waking down this way." When I heard that I went to them. I said, "I am a Maisin boy. I went to school at Wedau. That is why I could understand what you were saying in your language." So the Wedau people said to me that they had sent one injured Maisin man on the plane to Moresby. That was Phinneas. The bomb blew up and cut him, so they had sent him off.

The Wedau people told me where the Maisin were camping. I kept walking down. I walked past all the camps. The government camps were along the road and the carriers were behind them. So I walked into the Maisin camp. All of the men were out at work so the place was empty. I checked around. I saw the mats. I recognized Cecil's mat — the one that both of us had used all the way from home. I left my small bag on that mat and walked out. When I came outside I saw Hillarian. He was the cook there and he was preparing lunch. He recognized me. He called across to me. "Oh, it is my Rjukan coming." When the Maisin heard

that, they all ran to greet me. They were all crying.

We stayed there. After lunch the men returned to their work. They told me to stay back and have something to eat. I stayed there until 4 o'clock. The Maisin finished their work and came back. At that time, Ambrose was the camp boss. The second boss was Cornelius. The other one was Coleman. We stayed there. Henry and Jairus were there with us also. I came there during the last three days of fighting. I stayed and helped them. We connected telephone lines. We pulled the lines until we could go no further. It was very hot. We left them part way and came back to the camp. We spent the night. In the morning we'd go back. Myself, Frank Davis and few of the ANGAUs — we would pull the line. We didn't walk, we had to crawl on our knees as we pulled the line along. We pulled it all the way down. The war captain told us to stop because the battle was still on. From there, we crawled back. When we got back we could hear the guns. The Japanese were firing from Oro Bay. The place was really spoilt when the Japanese fired. The place was burning, the big tree were all knocked down.

We came back to the Maisin camp. While we were there they dropped a bomb right where we were standing. That bomb didn't explode. I don't know why but it just stayed there. We all ran away when it landed. We thought it would explode but it did not.

The next morning was the last for fighting. We went down to our job, laying out the telephone line. We pulled and pulled until 1 o'clock. They told us to rest. While we were resting, some people went and looked around. They crawled into a bunker. They found a razor blade package — very long ones. So they got them out and shared them. I went down and got one. I then walked

back. On the way, I met my toma, Jefford. He asked me where I got it, and I said, "There are none left. We'll go back to the camp and I'll give you some of mine." But he didn't want to come with me. He wanted to see for himself. That is how he got killed.

I came back with the rest of the Maisin. Jefford went on his own. He saw a building there, so he went in to check it. The building was very dark. There was a barricade at the entrance. He held on this and peered inside. A Japanese man was there. He fired and hit Jefford in the chest. The bullet came out the other side. He cried out, "My mother!" Keith heard him and told the Maisin people. All the Maisin and other carriers ran to see him. I followed later. As for Jefford, he ran out toward the old Japanese camp and came out where I was. I ran to him. I held him on the arm and told him to move fast. He asked, "Do you see my wound? Is it big? Did it come out on the other side?" I didn't tell him but I saw that his back was covered with blood. So I held him and took him up to road. When we got to the road, he felt bad and started crying, "Put me down," he said. I gently put him down and ran back. I went back and told the Maisin people. From there I ran to the hospital, got a stretcher and ran back. Frank Davis was the first man to get there. He tried to carry him but he couldn't move. So he put him down and waited for the rest of us. I brought the stretcher. We put him on it and carried him. The Okeina people helped us. They carried him up to the hospital. The doctors came to see him. They put oxygen into his mouth but he couldn't breathe. So they told the Maisin, "Take him further up to that the big doctor can see him." They took him to that doctor. The doctor saw him. We left him there. It was late in the afternoon. We all walked out of the hospital. On the road, I

said, "If we all go to the camp no one will look after him in hospital. I will go back and care for him there."

I went in and told the doctor, "He is my big brother. If we are all away who will give him water or food or help him go to the toilet? So can I stay here?" The doctor asked, "Who is he?" "He is my older brother." The doctor said, "He is my brother too. I'll help him. I'll give him water and food and help him go to the toilet." That is what the doctor told me. "So you can go back to the camp. You can't sleep here. ANGAU won't allow you to stay here." So I walked out and we all returned to camp.

When we got to the camp we were very quiet. Yeiya Henry was there. He saw that we were quiet. "Why are you all so silent? Every other time you crack jokes, make food and dance around the place. What is different? And where is your brother? You are all here, but where is he?" When he asked us this we all started to cry. We cried and he knew that his brother was dead. He threw himself to the ground and started to cry there. We cried until midnight. So the Orokaiva and Okeina people cooked and brought food for us.

After eating we slept. In the morning we all came down. We called in at the hospital. The doctor told us, "We buried him at 7 o'clock." So we came out and went back to our job cleaning the place. The fighting had now ended.

In that last battle, two tanks came in and cleared the place out. The tanks really destroyed the place. They couldn't figure out the number of Japanese killed since the tanks so devastated the area. The Japanese shot one tank and it blew up but the other came back. So that was the last battle. At Sanananda. I came down from Kokoda and four days later it was all over.

All of us went back to Dobodura. We were there to make drains and new roads. We came down to Inanda and then to Embi. These are the places we were cleaning up.

We stayed at Dobodura. Half of the Maisin people went down to Borio. We stayed at Borio. They told us to work there. From there we went across to Port Moresby and then to Kairuku. That was in 1945. That was when the labour finished. And now it is 1997.

We didn't have a just result. Until now we have received no compensation. All of us who went to war and returned stayed here and now most have died. This was a very bad war. Moresby to Kokoda was very bad. Most of the Australian soldiers were killed in that war. One hundred and twenty-seven were killed; one hundred and thirty were wounded. Some of them died in the hospital. From Kairuku we came home and we are here now. As for the Australians and Americans who returned, they had the good fortune. It is not good for us. So now we are getting old. The young ones are growing up. They are the ones who went to school and carry it on. The very small one will follow after them.

From me I think it is eleven generations back to the emergence from the hole. If I take it back to when the ancestors came, it must be eleven generations. Their names are Yaura — he is the one who brought us down. The others were Dairo, Arima, Janja, Dambi, Viviro and Gebarara — he was a python, a snake. So when the mother threw the snake away it kept coming back to its mother. So they looked after that snake and it few up. When the brothers were around they did not treat Gebarara properly. They were frightened of him. So he couldn't stay there. He went and stayed in the bush.

So that is how they came and settled here. The first to come were Imbure people. They came to Ugara — that is where all the Wor ari Kawo stayed. Imbure stayed at Fatuma. From there they moved to here. They have stayed here until now. We were here until you arrived.

When the fighting finished we all moved to Soputa. We built a big grandstand there. We decorated it with flowers all around. When we finished, all the government men came there. Those at Sanananda and in the bush all came there. Those ones at Oro Bay all came too. General Morris, General MacArthur, Colonel Smith, Captain Kingsley all went and stood on the platform. General Morris was the first to speak. He said, "Very good Papuans. You are the ones who gave us good help. All the way from Daru to Popondetta, you are the ones who helped Australians to carry the supplies. You carried them on your shoulders. That was a very big help to Australia. Even when the planes brought supplies into the mountains and swamps we relied on you to find them and bring them out. That is how our soldiers and carriers had enough to eat. So the war is now over. The soldiers will go back. After some work here, you too will go back to your homes. While here, you can help clean the station and the hospital and then return home."

"When we were in our place we heard that you were not a good people. We also heard that you had tails and were very dirty, with dirty faces. Now we Australians along with the Americans know that you are very good people. You are the ones who helped us win the war. You made it possible. You carried our wounded soldiers to hospital. So now the war is finished. From now on you'll see changes coming to your places. They will

bring schools and other things to this place. You will have your own government, hospitals, and schools in the villages. You didn't have these things before the war, but now that the war is finished you will have these things."

When he finished, the American general got up and said the same thing.

"Australia will help you people and we will help you too."

When it was finished they sent us to Kairuku. That is the last thing the general did. The Japanese killed were 5,000 and the Australians 3,000.

John Usi

All the Maisin people went to the war. I stayed back in the village. The police came and found me. We made our way along the coast to Buna. We stayed at Dobodura. We worked there with the soldiers, cleaning the place. Then we went down to Buna. We stayed there for two months and then returned to Dobodura. We stayed there a very long time. The boss told us to go home for about a month and then we could come back again — Mr. Bunny. So we came for holidays and then returned. Then we went down to Dombada.

The war was still going on at the time. They told us to stay and the boat would pick us up to go to Sanananda. We got on the boat and went to a point called Sainfoin. Two Japanese planes came. No one warned us. We thought that they were American planes and so didn't worry. They came above us, went to Oro Bay and came back again. As the planes came up from Oro Bay, they could see they were Japanese. The Americans cried out, "O.K. We are going to die now!" Those planes went to Sanananda and then back again. They didn't drop bombs on the boat, only along the coast. We watched as this happened. After bombing the beach, they came to Oro Bay again. Then they returned and bombed our boat.

All of us went down into the water. It was about 4 o'clock when they bombed the boat. We swam up to the beach. When we got to the beach, the boat blew up and all the American and Australian soldiers died there. Only two of those swimming died — both were from Sinapa, Christopher and Barrier.

We went up on the beach. It got dark so we walked all the way to Erero. We slept there and the next morning we came to Oro Bay. We kept going,

Recorded 11 November 1982, Yamakero Village

arriving at Pongani the next morning. We slept there. We slept in the bush. Then we came across to Rainu. The government was there. We stayed and were working there. The government man said, "We heard a message that a boat blew up and those Maisin came back. Tell those Maisin people to stand in a line and I'll see them. Are they many?" The line was as long as Cuthbert's house to here. He said, "I won't send you back because this happened during fighting. I'll send you people back to the village for one month and then you can go back again."

We stayed in the village for a month. The police came and we went back to Rainu. The next day the boat called in and took us to Tufi. We stayed there for a month. The boat then took us to Dobodura. The war was still on. While we were there the fighting finished. At first the elders came to the village. Later a boat came and left us at Tufi. A small boat took us to Rainu. We came back to the village. From that time all of the Maisin people came home.

I wanted to go with the others at the beginning. I got on a canoe. My father's brother, Joshua, came down and held me by the arm. He said, "You are not going." He was afraid I might die. He thought we were going to the plantations and he didn't want me to leave.

When people called out, "Police are coming down," we would hide in the bush. We would take our food with us and come out late in the afternoon after the police left. We stayed near Sesega. We came out to the beach to fish. That is when the police came. When we came in with our fish the police said, "We are taking you for labour." Enoch, Cuthbert,

Godfrey, and Godwin were all there at that time. We came straight back here and went to Tufi. Our wives only heard about it after we reached Wanigela. They brought up our things and some food and then went back.

Robertson (John Mark's father), Isaac and Carson were in the boat that got bombed. There were others from Wanigela and Sinapa. The boat was carrying big and small guns and supplies of food too. Only the Papuans walked across to Wanigela. No one gave us food until we got to Pongani. We did not want to go to Eroro because they might kill us with axes and knives. We came straight home.

While at Wanigela, we camped where the old church is now at Rainu. It

was a very large camp. We just called in there so I didn't know what they were all doing. None of the soldiers came down to Uiaku during the war.

I had an American soldier friend while I was in Tufi. He was my namesake, John. He used to give me good food. He gave me money too. I gave him two kerefun, small ones. He gave me £10.

We never received money following the war. I got one war bond and lost it. They gave me a medal. They gave no money with that war bond. Those people who went all the way to Moresby and came across got money, but not those of us who went by the beach.

Margaret Dabira

I took Benson and Rebecca to the end of the village and left them with their grannies, Amy and Copland, before going to the garden. We left Kingsley with his uncle, Eric. We stayed at our Sesega garden house, myself, my husband and our son. Romney went up to Gurea to sleep. We spent the night there. In the morning, my husband went to make sago. When he came back, we cooked the sago and went to sleep.

Romney and my husband went to sleep early. As for me, I couldn't sleep. When I looked up toward the mountain I saw lightening. It was very bright. I was frightened and I couldn't sleep. So I sat up the whole night. I was thinking, "Why is this lightening so bright?" My husband woke up and saw me. I told him about the lightening. He said, "It is only lightening. You should go to sleep." But I couldn't sleep. I sat for a long time and only went to sleep towards morning.

The first to wake was Romney. He woke his father, "Daddy, wake up! Get up!" His father awoke and sat up. He told him about his dream. "I dreamt that my uncle told us to plant our sago and then quickly return to the village." So they got the sago and went out to plant it. I stayed back to prepare sago for breakfast. While we did that, Chrisanda and Constance arrived. They came in and my husband said, "We were about to return to the village when you arrived. That is alright. Eat some. When I finish planting your taro suckers we will go down together."

When they finished eating, Chrisanda went to her garden and

Recorded on tape March 1997, Yamakero Village



started weeding. Constance and I went to the garden. My husband was planting taro suckers. When we finished planting, Romney said, "Mother! I want to have sisira [small red berries]. So he went with Chrisanda, climbed over the fence to get the sisira. My husband finished planting and went down to the river to wash. Constance called

out, "In-law!" When my husband heard this he thought that Constance had cut her leg with a knife and so he ran to see her. Romney too cried out and said, "Daddy! We are going to die now!"

So he ran. When he got there he asked, "What's wrong? What has happened?" They pointed to the mountain. When we saw that, nobody talked. We rushed to get our things but there was no time. We left everything there, even some puppies. All of us ran. We jumped over the fence. Romney ran ahead. He kept crying, "Daddy, daddy" as he ran. So his father called to his sister-in-law saying, "In-law, look after my son. He might run into the bush. Watch out for him."

We moved quickly. My husband asked, "What will we eat when we get there? I'd better get the sago." So he went back to the garden house for the sago. So he got the sago, climbed the fence, and ran back after us.

We ran and ran and ran. On our way we met Wilfed Moi. He was looking for his grandmother's etota. She had thrown it into the bush as they were running down. He was very busy

looking for the etota when we met him. He called up, "My yeise. Take it easy. Don't rush. We won't die now. It is just the beginning." But we didn't listen to him. We kept on running.

We ran all the way. We came past Vincent's house. We came where the kunai grass is. Constance called, "Margaret, turn back and see." I said, "No. I won't look back." I said, "I need to get to the village quickly." So we ran and arrived in the village.

When we got there the village was all quiet. The people were gone. Only pigs and dogs had been left behind. So we went to the beach to check for footprints to see where the people had gone. We saw footprints going one way and the other, toward Sesega and toward Rainu. Some people left on canoes. We saw where people had rushed so much that they had broken the bindings on the canoe. One was just floating out there.

By now the place was covered with smoke. We went up to our house and got our things. I said, "Constance, there is a canoe out there. Go quickly and bring it up." So Constance ran down and swam out to get the canoe. She brought the canoe to shore. She saw that the bindings were broken. So she got some string and lashed it up again. Chrisanda went up to her house and got her stringbag of kerefun. We got all of our things and took them down to the canoe.

We put Romney on the platform and paddled towards Sinapa. But we couldn't cross the Uiaku river. The volcanic ash was too thick on the river. There was flames and smoke everywhere. So we turned back to the village. Now my husband came down from the garden. He put the sago on the platform. "Did you get my limepot?"

"No," I said. So he hurried back into the house to get his limepot.

We paddled some distance when Romney cried out, "What about my grandfather and grandmother? They might die there!" So we called in on the way. My husband got off the canoe and told them to take Romney. He then turned back. So we continued. We met a lady who called out, "Aree! Don't leave me here." It was very bad at that time. People were so frightened. Those who had been beating sago just left everything and ran off. Even the Rerebin people who had been feasting abandoned the cooking pots and ran away. They just left the pots in the varo. All of the people got frightened and ran off. Some men started running but when they thought of their families they turned back.

We went and met Ernest's father. He called out, "Chrisanda! Come this way and get my son. Take him with you. I left my mother in the village so I am going back. You can take my son and go." So we got his son and we went.

We paddled all the way to the Mongassi River. All of the Vayova people were there. When we got there, the Vayova people were beating their drums and dancing. Even as they did this the ashes continued to come down. So we returned to our canoe and sailed on to Rainu.

We called in at the Sebarar clan. We pulled our canoe up there. The big people of that village carried their lime sticks and pots down. They looked up at where that ash and smoke was coming from. They also had a small mat under their arms with the limepot and stick. They kept looking up toward the volcano as we pulled our canoe up there.

When we came up to the house they asked, "Who are you? I said, "I am Louisa." That village was full of Ubiri

people. They had all come there and the houses were full. Even under the houses. So they told some people to come down. We went up to that house and stayed there.

The ashes kept raining down. This continued until the morning. We didn't sleep that whole night. We sat up until the morning. We stayed there while other people went as far as Uwe and Tufi.

So those people at Rainu were directing the smoke toward Uiaku. But when it came this way, my husband was directing it back. So the smoke and ash kept coming and going. So we stayed there. The Ogaiyo people sent down a message. "Is Godwin's wife there?" "She is here." Where is the ? Did he go for labour? where is he?" I told them, "He didn't go for labour. He stayed back in his village." They said, "He shouldn't stay there. That is not his village. He is staying there and every time the smoke goes there, he sends it back. Tomorrow you must go and get your husband.

So early the next morning I came back to Uiaku to see him and get some food. When I arrived I told him what the people had said. I also told him, "This is not your place. You must go back to where the Ogaiyo people are." But he said, "I won't leave this place. I was brought up here and so this is my village. I don't want my place to be spoiled so I will not leave it." That is what he said.

So I went back. I told the Ogaiyo people what my husband said. So they said, "So he wants to stay in his village. He does not want to come here." After that, the man standing there with their lime pots lifted their hands towards the volcano. They also sent a message up to Kereroa. The old man was there [a village man at the foot of the volcano who is charge of the magic there]. they

all lifted their hands towards Goropu. When they did that the smoke and ashes slowed down, going back into the hole. And then it stopped.

We were the first to return to the village. Others followed. When everyone was back, the government man came down. When he arrived, we all came together and he talked to us. After talking to the people he went to Tufi and then returned again. The government man got village people, including my husband, to go up and see the volcano.

When they got to the volcano they tied a rope to Godwin and lowered him down to get water. It was boiling at the bottom, so they had to pull him up again. He had a bucket in his hand. They raised and lowered him, the water and steam was so hot. Eventually he got the water and they pulled him up. When he brought up the water they put it into bottles. That water was like kerosene. So the government man got them and went back.

They stayed. It was finished.

After the government went back, the ashes came out a second time, but not as much as before. Then it stopped. The second time only smoke came out. The third time it started and there was fire. They got in their canoes and ran away. It was very bad. This place was burning. Chrisanda ran after the people but there was no space on the canoe so she had to turn back. My husband stood up and watched the volcano. And so it slowed down and did not come down on this side. But the Vayova people kept beating their drums. It went down there. Even flames broke out on some of the coconut palms. When they saw that, they sent people to get Godwin. But Kikira and Bibiso told them, "He will not go there." They did not agree. "He is looking after our side of the village, so he will not go to your side." So when

they said that he walked to Vayova village.

When he reached the mission station he sent the message to Vayova. "Tell them to stop beating the drums and I will come." So they stopped the drums and he went there. He made the fire stop. Everything came to an end and we slept.

I am finished.

Max Dairo

I was in school when this war started. I was very young when the government police came down. When they arrived here, it was very bad. They went around looking for people, even hitting us. When they got all of us, we went to Wanigela . When we got there, American soldiers were landing. The place was full of soldiers, from Fofu to Sarad. All of Wanigela was covered. When the police came here, they put handcuffs on us and took us up. The government man was at Wanigela when we all went there. We marched with the police up to him. He came out and saw that we had handcuffs on. He scolded the police strongly. He said, “Why do you have to do this? This is war time. If the Japanese attack us, how will these men escape? It was a very bad thing to do.” So he told them and they paid “ten kina, ten kina, ten kina” to the government as a fine.

So we stayed there and started to work. The plane brought in American soldiers with their food supplies. We stayed and worked for one month. As for me, I worked for the government man. He must have been Australian. He was not a good man. He would hit men. He was the one who told me to work for him. So I went in there, the big boys told me that he was very bad. I should not work for him because he might belt me and I might die there. But I said, “It is alright. I will see. I will try to work there.”

So I started to work for him. I cooked his food.

From there we went to Tufi. We stayed two days. One night we got on a boat. The soldiers, Australian and

Recorded on tape, March 1997, Yamakero Village



American, got on the other one. All the soldiers were in uniform. They had their packs and their rifles. We went past Iyo Arifam and Gayavara — places near Ako

and Gobe. We stayed there for awhile. Then we got on a boat again and went. We never traveled during the day, only by night. We didn't want the Japanese to see us.

We arrived at Oro Bay. All of the soldiers got off. We unloaded all of our things and started our work there. At that time the Japanese were at Buna. The Australians and Americans were with us. We stayed there and the American and Australians started fighting with the Japanese. They kept moving the Japanese backwards and so we kept moving on. They kept doing that. They would move them backwards. Where the Japanese were strong, we would have to stop for a time while the soldiers fought.

So the battle kept on. When they moved as far as, say, Ganjiga, we would camp at Yamakero. We kept doing that and they kept moving.

We went towards Buna, Joroba and Sanananda. That is where all the Japanese were. There were plenty of them. We couldn't break through. There were too many of them. We went from here. The rest of the Maisin went around and down by Kokoda. All of us were there. The soldiers kept fighting until they broke down Buna. After that our big man told us to leave the place and follow the Japanese soldiers.

So we didn't waste time. We got our things and started to move. We loaded our things on the truck. The people were beating drums and blowing conch shells as we got on. Before going they told us we were going to Dobodura. But that was a lie. There were six trucks going up. We got to Dobodura but the vehicles didn't stop there. The Maisin people said, "We are in trouble. We are going into the fighting now."

We went until the truck stopped. There was no further road. We unloaded the things, tied them up to carry and started to walk. We arrived at the government station of Ioma. We didn't stay at the station. We continued to walk. We were traveling inland while the Japanese were on the coast. Our big man was Captain Kingsley. The big man said, "the Japanese are traveling along the coast. We are moving inland to surround them."

We kept on walking until we came to War-Baulolo. We were surprised to see the station and roads going up and down. Our truck was waiting there for us. We rested for two days. After two days, the big man said one night, "Tomorrow we will go and meet the Japanese. Don't get frightened." When they finished talking to us, we said thank you and got our things ready to go. The only ones left behind were the sick and those with cuts. They went back to the hospital.

We traveled down until we were close to the Japanese. We camped there, not far from them. That place was not good. It was swampy. Mud and water all around. We built our tents at the top, the only dry place. Everywhere else was mud and water. We couldn't wash. It was very bad.

The next morning our soldiers started fighting the Japanese. We could hear their guns shooting. It was really bad. The Japanese and our soldiers kept

on firing upon each other. The two sides were very strong and so both kept firing. It was very bad.

As for us, we carried the bombs and cartridges down to where our soldiers were. We would walk past the Japanese to get to our soldiers. The Japanese couldn't fire on us, only at the soldiers. And so we kept carrying those things to our soldiers.

So the fighting went on. When the soldiers came back to our camp they couldn't put down their guns. Even when they were eating or drinking their tea, they kept their guns ready.

In the morning, we went down. The soldiers were going to fight again. We crossed the river. They started fighting there and we carried their bombs and guns. Those soldiers used all sorts of guns, from small ones to machine guns. We had a hospital but it was quite a distance away in the bush. After leaving the bombs we would carry injured soldiers back to the hospital. There were eight boys to carry one wounded soldier. We went in turns. The first four would carry the man part way. While they rested, the next four would carry. When we got to the camp, the Red Cross would take over at War-Baulolo. The Japanese also had many killed and wounded, but I do not know what they did about their casualties.

So we fought. We continued to move forward. We came across a Japanese camp. We stopped there while our soldiers went to fight. We kept doing that as we moved down. We were heading towards Salamu.

It got very bad as we neared Salamu. The men fought very hard. A lot of Japanese were dying.

As we came down towards the beach, our soldiers from Buna were chasing the Japanese into Morobe. They would use their radio to let us know

where they were and we would radio them about our own position. So the beach and inland groups were moving closer together.

I don't really know the date, but the day was Saturday around 12 o'clock. We wiped out the Japanese. When the soldiers stopped shooting, they searched the place. They told us to collect all guns. So we found guns in the bush, mountain and caves. We gathered them together. When we finished we walked to the beach to have a look around.

In the afternoon we returned to the camp. We stayed there with the soldiers. The soldiers coming up the beach had not reached us, so they told us to follow the beach down towards them. The Buna soldiers reached Morobe, Natabe and Tabube. That is where they camped. All of the carriers were from Papua, none from New Guinea. They were from Daru, Kerema, Samarai. That camp was really crowded!

This was a hard war. The Australians were not good to us. The Americans helped a lot, but the Australians were bad. They always punished us. ... It was a bad war. If Australia had been alone, I don't think that we would have won this war. The Americans came in and helped. That is how we won. The American Soldiers were kind to us. They shared their meals with us in the mess.

They told us to ret there. That night the soldiers got their things ready, put them on the barge and left us there. When we woke up we found the place was quiet. The soldiers had folded up their tents and left. We were the ones left behind, the Maisin people. We spent another night there. In the morning we started our move back.

Before the soldiers left, we had put up the flag at Salamu beach. We were so close to the Americans, but we could not

get close to the Australians. We would share things, sit with them, play with them. I had a man who looked after me. His name was Bruce. He was a good man. The other was Mr. Max — he was my namesake! Those two men looked after me and gave me things to eat. The other one was Sargent Billy — he was an Australian. They are the ones who looked after me. I also had a government man who was a friend — Wilson. He was a good man. He looked after me.

They gave us a boat and we came back to Buna. They put the flags up on the boat and we came. We called into Buna wharf. The Buna soldiers knew that we had won at Salamu when they saw those flags. They were very happy. We got off at the wharf, unloaded our things, move the flags to the truck and then traveled up. We went up and stayed at Inonda. The fighting was finished. We stayed there a long time.

We were still there when the volcano erupted at the village. Mr. Marsh was at Tufi. He was the government man at Tufi when he came down to Uiaku. He got a few men, including me, to go up to the volcano. He was a good government man ...

So that is the story about the war. It was very bad. During that time when we had nothing to eat we could only wait for the planes to come and dropout supplies. When we got them we could continue. But when they ran out we had to wait for the next to arrive. So we went through a hard time. And then we came to the village. We were never paid. The Australians did nothing for us. They forced us into this war. They chased us, they got us. We won but after that they did nothing to thank us. So nobody was paid until now. That is the end of the story. I won't go any further.

When the soldiers were firing, we kept bringing them bullets and hand

bombs so that they did not run out. When the fighting was on, they would battle and then have tea. During the breaks we would bring in those things for them. When they saw it was about to end, they would tell us to move quickly as it was about to begin again. When they told us, we would run quickly. In the distance we could hear the bullets, guns and bombs. When we got to camp, early in the morning at 5 o'clock we would get those things to take to the soldiers. We would do the same — leave the bombs and cartridges there and come back.

So the fighting continued. They only had short breaks. They couldn't rest on Sunday. The fighting would continue. Only sometimes on Saturday and Sunday we got some rest. Most times they fought on.

That place was very muddy, very bad, but we did our work. We carried the supplies in rough weather, through mud and water. From there we came back to the village.

The Australians punished us. When they gave us orders to work they would belt us. When we completed the work they would belt us again. They would belt us and punish us. Not the Americans — they were good to us. When we went to the Australian camps they would take away anything that the American soldiers had given us. We would use their plates and cups for our meals. They had small canteens around there. They would give us money and ask us to buy their things. We would do that. They had stores under the trees on the beach. We would buy their things and take them back to them. So the Americans were very good, really friendly, but not the Australians.

At that time, the Australians were looking after us. So when we came back to the village, nothing happened. If the Americans had been looking after us, I

think that we would have seen something better. So they were good. After they left we always talked about how good they were to us.

The Tufi government man came down, Mr. Marsh. Before coming to the village we were at Dobodura. We were there when the volcano erupted. So when we returned, we went with Mr. Marsh up to the volcano. He had two Australian scientists with him. Mr. Marsh came down in the boat called 'Katuna.' He got his carriers in this village and we all walked up. When we got to the volcano, we built a shelter. We slept there.

There are three more things I want to talk about.

The first thing is that we would carry dead bodies down. We left them and returned. When we got back, we were so thirsty. We went down to the river. I went down for a drink. I didn't see the dead Japanese soldiers floating there and I drank the water. After I finished I stood up and saw all the corpses. I spit and tried to vomit, but I couldn't get it out. After that we returned to our place.

When we got to the house I told the Maisin people what had happened. We spent a night and the next morning went into the jungle. When we got to the place, they told us to dig holes. We did that. The man who told us had a map and would tell us where to dig. We were digging for corpses. The place smelled terrible. We dug down until we found the bodies. They were soft and the rotting smell was very strong. We couldn't take them out with our hands. The European man told us to cut long sticks and use these to get them out of the holes.

We had a blanket beside each hole to put the pieces. He told us that if we could not get the whole body to get pieces — a leg, a hand. So that is what we did. "If you find only the head," he told us, "get it out and put it there." Each hole

might have seven, eight or ten men in it. We couldn't stand working there. It was very bad and we were very weak. In some of those holes we couldn't get out the whole body — maybe half or just a few parts.

When we finished we put them on the blankets. They told us to carry them. It was so bad. When we carried them, our bodies became wet as the juices flowed out of the rotting corpses. Some of us didn't want to carry them. They didn't force us. They just told us to do it. So we did that work, shifting the corpses from 8 o'clock in the morning until 4 o'clock.

After that they sent six trucks and loaded them with those bodies. When we finished we all came down and they gave us one soap for each of us to wash with. They gave us new towels and trousers. So we had our bath there. Then we returned to our place. Our cooks made all the good food — rice, tinned meat and fish. But we couldn't eat because of the smell. What we saw! What we smelled! We couldn't eat our food. We could only drink tea until the next day.

The next morning was Sunday. All the Maisin went to the beach. We had a picnic there. They cooked all the food. We had our wash. Each Maisin had one hand grenade. We went into the water looking for fish. There was one man from Sinapa, Shelvin. He saw a school of fish coming and threw his hand bomb. But the bomb didn't blow up. Some of us sat down and watched him. I don't know what happened. We sat for a while and saw another school of fish. I had my own bomb in my hand. I didn't remove the pin. Then I took out the pin and threw it. I blew up amongst the fish. After that we went down and collected the dead fish.

We collected the fish near that first bomb. We walked up. We had not gone far when that first bomb blew up. Our men were very angry. The big boys came

down and tried to hit us with sticks. They said, "That was a very bad thing to do. The fighting is finished but you might have died here." They kept talking. We put our heads down and listened to what they said. We were quiet.

After that we sat down together and ate our food. We walked up to the house. They kept on talking us about what had happened. We sat up to midnight. They didn't stop talking. "First and last, don't do it again." So that is what happened. I forgot to tell you before.

Max later added two more stories that were not tape recorded:

1. When the police first came to Uiaku, they took the men to Mongasi and put the handcuffs on them there. Max had to have his hands tied with red cloth as his wrists were too big for the cuffs.

2. During the fighting, carriers stood well back but could still see wave upon wave of Japanese soldiers rushing the Australian/American lines. They were continually mowed down with gun fire. Max recalled one US soldiers in particular lying down with an ack-ack gun. His lines retreated from the Japanese onslaught, but he remained in place. When he noticed that he was by himself, he lifted the heavy machine-gun and fired it into the Japanese lines as he walked backward to his own force. The carriers were most impressed by his bravery as well as his strength. He was not hurt. He was a colonel.

Raymond Yedai

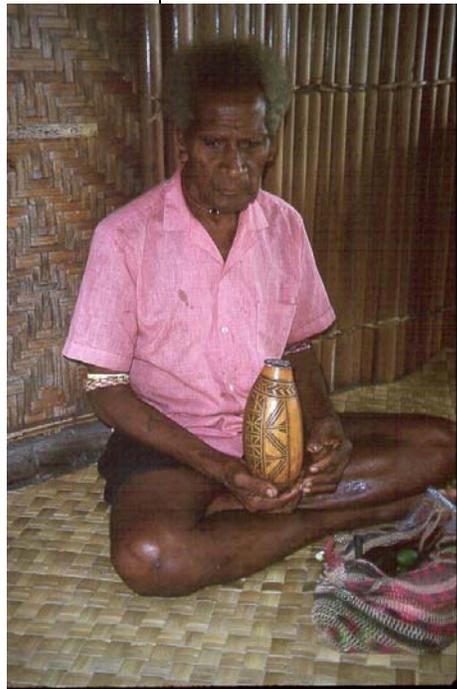
Recorded on tape, Airara Village, March 19, 1997

To Abau and Back

I was putting the roof on my house. The doctor came from Kewansasap. He came and asked, "what are you doing?" "I'm building a house." So he said, "Stop building your house. Come with me to Wanigela and help carry things to Safia." We went to Wanigela, got the things and walked up. When we got to Safia, the coporal said, "We won't turn back. We'll go further into Keveri. That's my place. We'll go there and then return." So we slept and went up the next morning.

We walked all the way there. People cooked food. We ate and slept there. In the morning we asked, "what will we do now?" "We'll keep going up." So we walked and then spent a night in the jungle. In the morning we started out and walked to Amau village. We got there. It was a station, so we stayed there. We stayed in the rest house. They said, "You can get food from the gardens here." So we got our food and cooked it. We spent the night.

The next morning, we started to walk. We went a distance to where we saw some people working. When we saw them, we asked, "Where are we now?" "This is the Abau area. You are nearly to Abau itself." They also said, "We came up from Abau ourselves. When we finish our work we will return there." So we helped the men, cleaning the road down to Babaguna.



We built a wharf there. Two boats went up to pick us up. We got on the boats and traveled down to Abau. When the people saw the place they said, "That's Abau!" We then asked, "Where is Dedele?" The said that it wasn't far. They pointed toward the other side.

We spent a night at Abau. In the morning we were wondering, "why are we here on the other coast? Where are we going from here?" The Gorofi people went ahead of us. We didn't know where they had ended up. And now here we were ourselves.

So we stayed at Abau that Saturday. On Sunday, the Mailu asked to play soccer with us. We played soccer. We scored one goal. We continued playing. My big brother kicked the ball and broke it. They stopped the game and we came back. When we returned to the village, people asked what had happened. "We did not finish. The ball broke so we stopped the game."

In the night we all sat together. We heard the story that the first Maisin were already at Ioribaiwa, going to war. That is when we realized that we were going to the war. They also told us that the Japanese were at Buna and were crossing to Kokoda. So we were to go to

Moresby to help the soldiers. We thought to ourselves, "If they all die, we who follow will be the next ones dead." So we decided that we were not going to this war. We would turn back and return to the village.

Abau is an island. We wanted to get to the mainland. So we all planned to pull down a small boat and use it to get across the channel. The Yuayu people, Marua – all of us went, lifted up that small boat and carried it down to the water. All of us got on. We used the paddles to go quietly until we reached Dedele. When we got there, we pulled the boat up and left it under the coconut palms. We left it there. We thought, "If the government sends the police they will find this boat under the coconuts." So we left it there.

We started walked until we came to Boro village. The village people came. "Where are you people going?" We said, "We came from Abau and we are moving on." We continued to walk until reaching another village. I can't remember its name. We rested. The village people killed a pig for us and we shared it there.

From there we continued to Deba village. The people said, "From here you must climb across to get to Arau and then to Yoyo." So we started climbing up. We got to Mailu village and spent a night there. We then continued to Arau.

We stayed there. The people told us that the police were on their way after us. So everyone, even the village people, ran away and hid in the bush. We stayed there for a time. The people said there were no police. Then we came out of our hiding place. When we came out, we found the police standing there on the road. The village people called out in their language, "The police are here!" Among the Maisin, Pritchard's father knew the language, so he warned the Maisin that the police were waiting.

It was very late in the afternoon. Winter's father, Willington, Stonewigg and Richmond were in front. The policeman got them. When that policeman stopped them, they called out to those behind. So the rest hid in the kunai grass. During that time I was standing at the rest house with my big brother. We saw what was happening. I asked, "What will we do? Our younger brother has been caught. What should we do now?" My older brother said, "You stay back, I'll go." I said, "I can't stay behind. We must all go. This policeman is coming this way. I'm going to grab him. You call our to Nicodemus and John. Let them know that I'll grab him. At that moment they must come and hit him."

So he called to them. When he called, Francis and Elijah answered. The policeman came towards me with the handcuffs. When he saw the men coming up behind me, he turn around. He put the handcuffs on them. He then said to me, "Put out your hands so I can put the handcuffs on." But I said, "You can't put them on. You have already put them on my younger brother." So we argued. The policeman wanted to put the handcuffs on but I wouldn't let him. My younger brother spoke to me, "The handcuffs are loose on me, not tight." With that, I put out my hands and let the policeman put them on. He took us to the rest house and we slept there.

That night my younger brother saw that the moonlight was bright. He started thinking about the first Maisin who had gone ahead. He was sad. I asked him what he was thinking of. He told me. I said, "Get up and we'll go down." So we got up. But we couldn't go down as the policeman was standing there. We watched until the first one went to sleep at the door. The second fell asleep on the

verandah. We walked carefully past them and went down.

We walked out a distance and stood there. We thought about the others in the house. I said, "If it was just the two of us we would escape. We can't do that while our men are sleeping in the house." So we walked carefully back and rejoined them.

As we came in, a policeman woke up. He said, "You should have woken me if you needed to go to the toilet." We said, "We could have escaped if we wanted, but we just went to relieve ourselves and now are coming back to the rest house to sleep." We made a big fire and sat around it. The policeman fell back asleep.

This time we woke Francis and Elijah. When they woke up, they moved out slowly and then ran into the bush. We couldn't see them when we got out ourselves, but we followed them into the bush. The policeman woke up. He woke the other man. "Hey! These men have escaped." They came looking for us.

We ran across to the Arau river. We crossed to the other side and went up. We continued to run. The police followed us as far as Yoyo. When they got there, they looked around. "They should be here but they are not." We climbed up the mountain with our handcuffs still on. My younger brother's were loose, so he was able to get his off.

We had a knife. We used it to open the handcuffs. We left them there and continued walking. We kept walking towards Yoyo. The police got there first. They told the people what had happened. They kept looking around the village. The rain came. A small boy went to the garden house and found us there. So he went back and told the village people that he had found the three men in the garden house. They people got their spears and clubs and came towards us. When they were close, we walked toward them. We

said, "The three of us will die, but so too will all of you."

So the people stood there. My younger brother called to them, "My place name is Wairurun. This clan belongs to the moutain and to the coast. We are from that clan." The big man, who then came up, said, "You can come and leave now." The people asked the big man, "Why are you letting them go past?" "I cannot kill them. We heard what they said about their clan. If you want, you can kill them." But they decided not to kill us.

They followed us. When we got to the village, we went to a house and stayed there. I had a knife with me. I had bought that knife from a Mailu man. I was holding the knife. They made a fire in the house and we rested there. The village men sat around, watching us. I was sitting a little distance from my brothers. The people were saying, "We can hold those two, but what about that man with the knife? He might use it to kill us." The village council walked up. "Where are the three men?" "They are here." When he saw us, he said, "You three must leave this place and go. I don't want you to be killed here. If you die here, I'll be taken to court. So leave this place and keep going. If you die somewhere else, I have no responsibility."

When we got donw, the council said to the people, "Let them leave this place. If they go and camp somewhere, you can kill them there, but not here." So we started walking. We met one man on the road. We asked, "Did you see some men coming this way?" "I just passed them. Are you related to those men I passed?" We said we were and he took us to his garden and gave us food. We took it and started off again. He told us, "Carry this food and use it on the way. Don't steal any food from gardens. They might kill you if they discover you."

We walked until we came to a village. It got dark, so we made a fire and slept there. When we lay down, we could see people carrying fire and moving towards us. We knew that it was the village people coming to kill us. Before they got to us, they called to some people at a garden shelter, "Three men came this way. Did you see them? Are they here?" The men at the garden house said, "We didn't see those three men. Some others have gone this way." So they replied, "We should have killed them earlier. It is dark and now we don't know where they have gotten to." So they turned back.

We slept. We walked out the next morning. We came to a village. They people asked us, "Did you see our men in Moresby?" We said, "Your men are following us." We lied to them. The people got together, killed a pig and celebrated Uwana. They were praying. My younger brother said, "I'll ask these men for some fire to light my smoke." So he called out. But they were busy and did not respond. So he said, "Nobody is bringing fire so I'll go to the house and get it myself." The people were so busy praying with their heads down they didn't notice us. He got the fire and walked back.

We continued walking and came to Eviyara village. We met a man there. We asked, "Where is the road to Bonenau? And which is the road to Irika? Can you show us those roads?" But he only stared at us. So we said, "Oh, forget it." We continued on the government road.

We followed that road to Irikai – number 2 village. There was a big river there with a single bridge. We wondered how to cross that bridge. We said to ourselves, "They might attack us while we are at the middle of the bridge." The people there were cold. They were facing the sun, trying to warm themselves. So

they didn't see us as we crossed the bridge. They only saw us after we crossed. They cried out, "There are people crossing the bridge!" They followed us. They came to us. We said, "Can you help us with food? We are very hungry." They took us to their houses and gave us food to eat.

We got ready to go. A man said, "There are three men ahead of you. One is short and the others are tall. They selt at Irikai number one and are going ahead of you." We knew who they were talking about. The three men ahead met a man called Auri and were staying with him. He was a Biniguni man. So we walked all the way until we reached them.

When we got there, the men were frightened and ran away into the bush. We called out, "Don't be afraid." "Are you men coming on your own or with a policeman?" We told them, "We are alone. There is no policeman." So they came back out of the bush.

We all sat and ate food together. After that, the man said, "Keep wllaking. You will meet my sister, Rorovia, on the way. She lives at the foot of the mountain." He said, "When you reach my sister, leave the dish there and I'll get it later." But I said to my brothers, "Leave the dish. We'll wrap the food in leaves so that we won't need to stop at the sister's."

We kept walking until we reached the village. We saw his sister, Rorovia. When we got close she called out, "Where are you men from?" "We're from Airara." "Oh, I'm from Biniguni." So we asked her, "Which road should we take?" She showed us and said, "You need to climb up this mountain and then go down the other side." The council was there too. They both took us to the road and showed us the way. The road was very faint. Not many people went that way. He said, "Use the road. It is not much used. Don't use the big government road."

We stood for a time. Pritchard's father said to the man, "We'll leave the big road and follow this one." So we followed it in and kept on walking. When we reached the foot of the Papuan mountain, the road went up steeply – straight up. We started upward. It was so steep! We could see the river far below us. The council led the way. We climbed up. We crawled on over on hands and knees. The council told us not to look back but go up straight. It was a bad road. The council said, "After we get to the top, we'll make our way down to a village. Be careful – if one falls, we all fall."

So we climbed. We could only go slowly. We finally reached the top. They had put a log across. The council said that we would use the log to cross to the other side. He said to be careful because the log was an old one. We walked carefully to the other side and then continued on our way. Finally we reached the top. We started going straight down. The man said that the village was Denewan Bubudan. "When we get there we will rest for the night."

We came down to the foot of the mountain. The man said, "We are almost there. It is not far." We came to the village. The people all got together with their food. They stood there and they were praying. All of the villages gathered together. They were praying there. One man saw us and said, "Men are going there." The council said, "Let's go to my house." There he said to his wife, "Hurry up and cook some food for these three men." After eating, the man said, "You men can sleep here. If the police come in the night, don't get up – keep sleeping." The next morning his wife cooked food for us. He said, "When you go you will come to Bibiton village. From there you will go to Pumani village. That is our land. You will then be close to the coast."

So we walked to Bibton village. We walked to the Danewa river. We saw a big mountain, Maniyeva. We went across that mountain to Pumani village. We asked the people, "Did you see any men come past this place?" They said they hadn't, but when we went past the village we saw footprints. We said to ourselves, "Oh, these men are going ahead of us." We went as far as the Borovi road. Then we turned off that road to a smaller one.

We met a young girl on the way. She saw me and asked, "What is your name?" "My name is Raymond." She said, "Oh, do you know me? I was at Airara before." When she said that, I recognized her. She said, "Stay here." She gave us sugarcane. "Chew this sugarcane and wait. I'll go to the garden and come back." She came back from the garden with food, cooked it and we ate there. She then took us and showed us the way. "This is the road. You walk through the jungle. You will come to a small mountain called Maniyeva."

So we walked. We went up the mountain and came to a village. All of the people had left. The village was empty. So we looked around. We called out, but no one was there. We saw a pig coming towards us. It came and stood by us. We said, "We'd better kill this pig and have it." My younger brother said, "No, don't kill it." We argued over this. It went on. Stonewigg had an axe. When the pig came near, he used it to kill the pig. We singed the pig, dug a hole and buried the intestine. We cut the pig into pieces. We got a big pot down from a house and cooked the pig. My brothers went up to another house and took a pot with some potatoes. So we had two pots going.

After we ate, we slept. But it was cold. I said, "It is very cold." So I went to a house and found a *ka embobi*, a bark sheet. I said to the others, "I am very

lucky. I have something to cover myself with.”

The next morning we walked out. We arrived at Bumagi village. We met a man named Manja. He asked, “Where is Randolph?” We said, “Randolph went ahead. We are following them.” So the man said, “I was here and I didn’t see him come this way. People must have killed him on the way. Go into the village. If he is not there, we must go back and fight those people.”

So we walked to the Maiyu River. We started walking down. We saw that the stones on the other side were wet with footprints and so we knew that people were going ahead of us. We came down to Bendogo. When we got there, we saw footprints going down. We said, “Oh, they are not far from us.” So we followed them to Danda. When we got there, they were washing in the river. They called out and said, “There they come. Are they coming with the police or on their own?” Then they saw that we had come without the police. Some were having their wash along the river. Francis still had his handcuffs on. There were sores all over his wrists. They were struggling to get the handcuffs off when we arrived.

When my big brother saw that he said to me, “Give me your knife. I will use it to open the handcuffs.” I said, “I won’t give my knife to them. They got scared and ran ahead. I won’t give my knife to pry it open. Let them use their own knife.” My big brother argued with this and then took the knife from my bag. So they used that knife to cut the handcuffs off. The man said, “If you can’t open them, use the knife to cut my skin” [so that the cuffs would slide off]. They cut so hard they made notches along the knife’s edge. They kept on sawing until finally they came off. He was so happy when they got them off!

From there we came down to the gardens. When we reached our gardens, some of the people crossed to Dura. The Sinapa people went around to their village. We Airara people came down straight. We walked down. We didn’t go straight to the village. We went to a garden house and rested there. Nobody went to that garden. We stayed there for a time. One night we came down to the village. We took knives and axes back to the garden house.

From Airara to Salamo

The police were still coming around, checking the villages, so we didn’t want to come down. We stayed at the garden house. When the police returned to Tufi, the government man would scold them, telling them to return and look for us again. That’s why the police came looking for us so often. The village women were very frightened. They thought, “If they don’t find the men, the police might kill us. We must tell those men to come down.” So Noel came up and told us.

We came down. The police got us and sent us to Rainu. We stayed there. They sent a labour boat to pick us up. All of us got on the boat and sailed towards Tufi. They decided not to call in there but instead go straight to Akko. So we went there. When we got there, *kawera* Clarence’s father Lazerus – his son was there. His wife asked, “Who are these people?” He said, “These are Sinapa, Airara and Marua people.” So this man saw me. He walked across and greeted me. He said, “I am still here. I couldn’t go. The small boy is here, so I am staying.” He wanted me to take the small boy. I said, “It is all right with me, but I am worried about this war. They are using guns.”

So we stayed at Akko and worked there. While we were there they sent a message saying that they wanted us to go to Oro Bay. So we got on a boat and went to Oro Bay. We stayed at Beama village. When we got there, they wanted to send us to Buna. But they did not do this. They told us to build houses there, so we built houses.

We stayed there. Tom was a big man in that place. He had his own house. The next morning we got up and went down to work. I said to Cecil's father, "I am very thirsty. I need water to drink." He said, "There is none here." I replied, "I really want to go to the American soldiers' camp and drink their water." He said, "You can't drink there. Those are *bariyawa* people." But I said, "It is all right. We are all working together." So I went to that place and used their water tank. Cecil's father followed me and had some water too. As we were turning back, a man from Manua asked, "Where are you coming from?" "We were thirsty, so we had some water to drink." So he too went and drank. As he was turning away, a New Guinea policeman saw him. He said, "Who said you could drink that water?" "My friends said that I could." "They are not in charge. They cannot give you permission to drink from there."

So that policeman walked up and hit him with his stick. Albert's father from Manua was there too. We told him what was happening. So they started to fight. Thomas joined in. We went and told Frederick, "The policeman is fighting our man." So they went and joined in the fight with him. Thomas had a ring on his finger. When he swung his fist, he cut the policeman on his face. The blood flowed down over his eyes. When we saw that, we hurried down to the wharf. We were really scared. "What are we going to do now?"

Mamusi said, "We'll go back and find out what has happened." We worked that afternoon. When we returned to the camp, Mamusi went up to see his brother. He woke his big brother to tell him what had happened. "They cut a policeman on the face. What will happen? Are they in trouble?" The brother said, "Nothing will happen. We are in the war." All of the Maisin saw the policeman coming. They said, "That is the man. He is coming this way. So the big brother called out, "Come over here." The policeman came over. He asked him, "What happened today? Why did you hit one of the Papuan men?"

While he was still questioning the man, Winter cried out, "Don't talk to him. Let's knock him down. We'll kill him and toss him away." The policeman asked, "What is that man saying?" David was there with us. He saw a stick. He got it and swung at the policeman's head. He cried out his clan name, "Wor!" When the Maisin heard that, they all rushed in and started hitting the policeman.

The older brother told them to stop. One of the men was husking a coconut. They cried out, "Your little brothers are hitting a policeman." He threw the coconut away, pulled out the stake and struck the policeman with it. The policeman ran away. He went and reported what happened to a government man. The government man said, "Tomorrow we will have the court case." The next morning we all went to the office and stood there. The government man asked, "Who among these men hit you?" David was there, but he didn't point him out, he pointed to his older brother, Timothy. Timothy protested, "I didn't do it. It was my younger brother." But the policeman insisted, "No, I saw you." He kept claiming it was him. Then I said, "It was David. I saw him doing it."

They put Timothy into the gaol for a week. We stayed there and kept

working. We could hear bombs and Japanese gunfire while we worked. Whenever we heard the Japanese planes coming, they let us leave our jobs. We would run into the bush and hide. When it was over, we went back to work.

We were still there when we heard that the soliders who had gone to Salamo with some carriers had not returned. The first lot of soldiers were killed. So they sent a second group. But they also did not return – they ran out of supplies. So they wanted to send a third group. We were all at Oro Bay. One of our men told the government man that the Maisin were fierce people who fought a lot. “They eat together, but if anything goes wrong they will even fight amongst themselves. They refuse to listen when you talk to them.” This report on us was already in the book. So when the government man heard that a third group was needed, he wanted to send the Maisin. That is why the Airara and Marua people were sent.

We all went to Dobuduru. Mr. Barney saw us. He said, “From here we will go to Dobuduru Number 2.” When we got there, they were heaping up rice, tinned fish and meat. We wondered, “What will we do with this?” They put out the food. The boss said, “All of you, stand in line. You must each carry one carton or bag of this food.” The rice bags were not like those today; they were long and large. So all of us, from Airara, Marua and Sinapa, had to carry those rice bags, one each. When we got them onto our shoulders, they said, “You will carry them from here to Ioma.”

We walked to Sangara. From there we walked across to the Mamba River. Our own boss was Selwn. “When you get to the village, put out seven bags of rice, seven cartons of meat, seven cartons of fish and seven bags of sugar so the cook can start quickly. That way, as soon as all

the carriers have arrived we can eat without delay.”

So we put out the seven bags. They cut them open to cook. Coporal Saura came to us. “Hey!” he cried out, “Why are you cutting the bags open?” Selwyn said, “We were told to cut these bags and cook so that is what we are doing.” He said, “This is not fair. They should not take all of the bags from you. We should wait for the other carriers and just take one each. What will you carry tomorrow? You will just walk while the rest of the carriers work.” So they had an argument there. The policeman got cross, “You don’t talk to me. You are a little boy. Do you know me? I am Saura. Don’t talk back to me. When people talk back, I hit them.” Selwyn said, “You can’t come over and talk like this. See this hammer I’m holding? I will use it to kill you.” So that man started toward the Maisin people. When he was close, he turned around and said, “This man is coming close. When he gets here I will throw him down amongst you. What will you do with him?” And they said, “We will finish him off here.”

Saura came close. He was dancing, trying to strike with his fists. Our man did the same. Saura called out, “Are you ready? I’m going to hit you now.” He was about to let go when our big man arrived. “What’s going on?” he cried out. Both of them kept quiet. The big man asked Selwyn, “What is happening here?” The policeman spoke up. “It is not fair. These people got here first and are using the supplies they carried. They should wait. When I told him this, he talked back. That is why we were about to fight just as you came in.”

The government man told us to cook food. We all ate. After we finished, the government man said, “All the police will go back from here. I’m going to move on with just my carriers. If you policemen stay with us, these people will

fight you. I know all about them from their record.”

So we got our things and crossed the Mamba river. We carried the supplies up to a village. The next morning we walked to Ioma. From Ioma, we carried on past a village and then kept going. We then came to Gira village. The big man told us to rest there for two days. On the second day, a man from Konyasi was very sick. That night we did not sleep. We sat with him until daybreak. The next day, the big man said, “Get your things and start moving.” We asked if we could rest another day. “Our man is sick.” But he said, “We can’t stop here, we must move on. Before we left Dobuduru I told you that we would not stop if anyone was sick along the way; we would continue walking. If the young man is still ill, leave him behind. The rest of you must continue.”

There was a woman in that village named Giligili. She said, “I know the Maisin people. I will look after this boy. I’ll care for him. If he dies, you won’t see his face again. If he recovers, I’ll send him back to Dobuduru and you will see him there.”

We left the young boy there. We slept on the way, arriving the next day at Boira village. The people there said, “This is the end of Papua. That is New Guinea over there. People there speak pidgin.” We spent the night and continued the next day to Varia. There was a very big river there. We called to the other side for a canoe. The river was flooded, so they had to take the canoe up high and float down. We did the same – went up the river and floated down to the village. When we got there, we went into the village. They had no coconuts there, only betelnuts. So Maisin and Miniafia people climbed the betelnut palms and got the nuts. They chewed. We spent the night there.

In the morning, they said they would continue to walk. But there was a woman in the village who was from Miniafia. She lived there. None of us knew how she had come to be there. She was married and lived there. She heard that Papuan people were coming that way. She had also heard that Tufi people were going as well. So she had said to her husband, “We must go and see them.” So they came to see us. When she came close, she heard Miniafia words. She said, “Let’s go quickly. Those are my people!” She went in and joined them. She greeted them with tears. When she finished crying, she gave them betelnut and sugarcane.

We continued on to Garaina. We did not have enough food. We stayed there. The government man said, “The plane will bring us food. We will get it and leave tomorrow.” We stayed. The plane brought the food. We got it and started off again the next morning.

We continued on our way. We slept in the jungle. We didn’t get to the village. While we camped, the government man said to a policeman, “Go up into the mountains and see if you can find a village. If there is one, tell the villagers to bring food down for us to buy.” He went to the top. He found a village. But the people wouldn’t talk to him. They just stared. So he said again, “If you have food, take it down. They will pay you with salt.” When they heard that, they came with the food. We gave them salt in return.

The next morning, we walked further in until we came to a river. We spent a night there. The next day we continued. At one o’clock, we arrived at Wau. The first of the line got there early, but the line was very long. Those following us kept arriving until late at night. We all stayed there. We spent the night. The big man said, “We’ll rest here

for two days." But we actually stayed for a week.

Some of us went from there to Bulolo and others went to Salamo. The Japanese were fighting there against the Australians and Americans. We went down. We carried injured soldiers back up to Wau. They also told us to clear roads, so we did that.

From there we went to another camp. It was not far from the Japanese, plenty of them. Our men found it hard to get in. The place was well fortified with cement and guns placed in between. We lost most of our soldiers and carriers there. Our soldiers tried their best to break through, but couldn't. That was a tough battle.

So we remained there. They told us that it was too hard to break through. The Japanese had built their cement bunkers under a village. Our planes could not drop bombs without hurting villagers. So our soldiers were trying to find other ways to get to the Japanese. They needed to send a message to Dobuduru, but how? They wrote a letter. One of them had a small bird. They tied the message to the bird and told it to take the message back. The owner said, "Take this letter to Dobuduru and give it to Mr. Barney." The owner threw the bird up. It went a short way and returned. He tried again and the same thing happened. On the third try, the bird came down. The owner said, "This bird cannot fly now." He tried a last time. This time the bird flew all the way up and kept flying off to Dobuduru.

The bird went straight to Mr. Barney's house. It sat on his verandah. Mr. Barney was it and said, "Come." The bird went to Mr. Barney. He untied the string and got out the letter. He then rang Kokoda, Oro Bay and Buna. He told them what had happened. "We will use the bombs to hit the place. We are losing too many soldiers, so it is best to

bomb it. We are the third group. The first was finished and the second turned back.

When they were agreed, Mr. Barney tied a letter to the bird and told it to take it back to where it came from. When the bird got there, the big man read the letter. He told everyone, "Tomorrow morning four planes will come and bomb the place."

We waited through the night. Early the next morning we heard a plane coming out from Wau. It circled the place and went back. Then the planes returned, coming in very low towards the Japanese. The four planes went up to the village and dropped bombs. They bombed for some time, until all the supplies were used up. Then they flew back to Dobuduru. After that, they told us to go to Salamo. We stayed there.

From there we moved to Nine Post. We stayed and worked there. When we finished, we returned to Salamo. The fighting stopped on Saturday. On Sunday we went down to the beach. That Saturday was the last day. We heard guns firing until late in the afternoon, then everything stopped.

The Japanese had hidden one gun. They didn't see it. They told us to go up to the mountain. So Airara, Sinifara and Marua joined them up on the mountain. That Japanese gun was on that mountain. So we climbed up with the soldiers. When we were halfway, they opened fire. So our big man said, "Fall down and cover yourself!" All of us lay down there. The shots flew above us. The trees were burning. The jungle was all in flames. The firing stopped for a time and then started a second time. We just stayed there. It stopped and all of the soldiers and us went back down to the camp.

The people asked us why we had turned backed. We said, "The Japanese were firing and so we couldn't go. We had

to turn back.” When we came back, a few scouts stayed behind. They moved up and saw where the Japanese were firing from. They returned and told us, “Tomorrow morning we will attack them and get that gun.” So all the soldiers went across and surrounded the mountain. The soldiers went right around. They were told not to fire their guns too early. The big man said, “Wait until I start firing towards the machine gun.”

So they went up. The big man went first. He could see the man who was watching the machine gun. The other Japanese were eating in the mess. He fired the first shot. All the Japanese were shocked. They saw their man were dead. But when they ran for their guns, they were already too late. All of our men started firing from all directions. They kept firing until they had killed all of the Japanese. They moved into the camp, inspected the place, and took the big gun. They told the carriers to take the gun all the way to Wau. After Wau, they sent that gun to Moresby.

Returning Home

So that was the last thing we did on that Saturday. When we finished, we all came down to the beach. The next day was Sunday. We all rested. The beach was filled with soldiers and carriers. We stayed. The soldiers told us, “They will send seven barges to pick us up. When they arrive, we will all get on and go back.”

That night we sat up very late and then went to sleep. When we woke the next morning, the soldiers were all gone. Everyone had left. That morning we had no food to eat. Selwyn said, “I’m going to see the ANGAU man.” We joined him. We stood outside while he went in to see the ANGAU officer. He said, “We have no food to eat, so I came for some.” The

ANGAU man said, “Where are you from? Are you from Papua?” “Yes, we are from Papua.” The ANGAU man said, “There is no food here for your Papuans. The food here is only for New Guinea natives. I can’t give you any food.” Selwyn told us and we all walked back.

We came back and told the Maisin, “There is no food from us here. Look around for coconuts. We’ll eat them. Then get your things and we’ll look for a way to go back.” So we got our things and walked to Double Bay. When we got there, we found the soldiers. We stayed there. The place was very crowded with soldiers.

Gideon came and said, “Maisin! Where did you come from?” We said that we had come from Salamo. “Is the war over?” We said, “It is finished, so we are walking back.” We went and told the people. “The war in Salamo is over. They won and so they have come back here.” They told everyone that we had finished the war at Salamo and that was why we were there.

So the boss came and saw that we were all right. We rested. It was very crowded there. There were more people than were needed for the work. They told us to dig up the dead bodies and put them away. So we did that – we dug up corpses and put them away. After seven days, they sent a boat there. The boat arrived. We woke up. We stood in parade. Those who were sick had to stand on their own. Among Airara and Marua, only Selwyn joined the sick people. He was not really sick but he wanted to get on that boat. So they went first.

We came to Naso Bay. We got a gun there and we spent a night at Morobe. Selwyn was there. They had come first and was there. The next day, the Americans took out dynamite. They threw it into the water and killed all the fish. He went down and dived for those

fish. As soon as he filled his bag, he took it up, left it and then went back diving again. He got firewood, made a big fire and cooked all those fish, along with a pot of rice. He kept waiting for us. He said, "Where are they?" Then he saw our boat coming. When we got off from the boat, we asked where Selwyn was. Then we saw him walking towards us. He called out that he had a lot of fish. We heard him and were very happy! We started making fun. He said, "Don't think I'm a sick man. I came here first to get food ready. And now you have come and there is good food to eat." So he took us to his place. We sat around and ate.

Our big man said that we would leave in the night. "We will travel by night. It is not safe – there is moonlight and the Japanese might see us." So Enoch and Francis said, "We will both make the rain come so that it is dark in the night."

That night we got on the boat. The two men told us not to touch their bags. We traveled into the moonlight. We went. When we looked, we saw the storm coming towards us. We saw the lightning flashing. Thunder! Lightning! We traveled into the storm. The boat captain was frightened. So we went through the storm. Our big man came and asked us about the storm. The men said, "The lightning will stop, but the place will still be covered. There will be no moonlight."

We came close to Ambasi. The guards on land saw the boat coming. They signaled with their torches. We signaled back so that they knew we were not the enemy. We traveled on. It was morning after we passed Ambasi. We came on. The captain said, "We will not call in at Bona or Killerton. We will go straight to Oro Bay or Tufi." When we got to Dobuduru Point, the radioers called us. Mr. Barney said, "Those who are coming

from Salamo must not go to Tufi. They must come here."

So the boat turned around. We went to Buna. We did not land. We anchored and waited. They saw us and told us to go up. They told us not to work. We could rest a few days. They sent trucks down. We all got on. We were all happy. The big man came and asked us, "You must sing like your ancestors did after they won a battle." So we sang the war song as we went up. Francis had a conch shell. He got it from a house in the village. So he blew it and we were all shouting. When he finished, we all went up.

We went up to Dobuduru. Mr. Barney met us there. We unloaded our things. He told us to stand in line. He said, "I'm going to call out your names to see if anyone died or if you all came back. When I call your name, you must say 'Yes, sir!' Say it quickly." We remembered our names but not our numbers. So the number presented a problem. We were trying to work out who was "one", "two" and so forth. Michael from Uiaku came up and asked, "What is going on here? You three Dadumo boys, you are the first three. I can remember that he called your names first at Oro Bay." So the three of us stood first and the rest of the boys joined the line.

So he started calling the numbers. It went and went until it came to the last one. When we called out "yes sir", we would also call out our father's name and village name. Bartholomew was standing there but then moved up two spaces. So when the man came he knew that he was not in the right place and told him to go back. "Whatever I tell you to do, you must obey. If you do not you will be punished." So he told the police and he went to get a big stick. When the police came up and told him to move out front,

we became worried. He knew that he was going to be beaten.

The government man began hitting him with a stick. He hit him until the stick broke. Then the police brought a second stick. He used that. When he finished, he told them to put out all of their things for inspection. They put their things in front of him. But we had knives hidden in the bamboo carrying poles. The man checked our bags to see what we had. He came to Randolph. He checked Randolph's things. He noticed a knife sticking out of the bamboo pole. He pulled it out and asked, "Where did you get this knife from?" Randolph said, "I got it for my wife to use for weeding. The front is broken, so it is really not very good." Mr. Barney was very angry when he heard this. He said, "When I tell you to work, don't go stealing. Where did you steal this knife?" He said to the policeman, "Go and check all of their carrying poles."

When they split the bamboo poles they found knives – plenty of them! They put them all into one place. Mr. Barney started to laugh. "Oh Papuans! You know how to play tricks."

So we stayed and worked there. While we were there, they said that those who had come from Salamo would stay and those who came from Iuribaiwa and went to Buna would go for a rest break in the village. "When you come back, these second ones can go for a rest in their villages."

We worked there. They took us up to work on the Popondetta road. We also cut the grass and cleaned the place. After that, the ones who had gone home returned and it was our turn to go for a break.

We came to the village. My wife went up to the government man and told him, "My children do not have enough food to eat. We want their father to remain behind." So they told me to leave

the work and stay home. So that's what happened after I came to Tufi and returned to the village. So from Salamo, all of us from Airara came home. The Gorofi Maisin went around to Buna. That is how all of the Maisin people went to the war. Most of the carriers got sick and died, but the Maisin did all right. The only man to die from Uiaku was Jefford. He was shot by the Japanese. In my place, only the young man who got sick on the way died. There was no news about him when we returned. Another Marua man was killed when a truck ran over him. There was another man at Sinapa who also got sick and died. Those are the only ones who died during the war.

We came to the village. We have stayed here until now.

Recorded on tape in Marua, 21 March 1997

Rebecca Ifugari

The canoe we took was made from a Siruwa tree. Our boss on the canoe was Bendo. The other man was Abera. We traveled on that canoe all the way to Pongani. We called in and stayed there. A Japanese plane flew above us. We were all frightened. We ran under the house and sat there. The plane went up to Oro Bay to bomb it. They flew past us again and the people said, "It is finished." So we went back into the house and slept there. The next morning we took our things to the canoe and paddled to "Our Bay".¹



cooked them and we stayed there. After work they all came together to eat.

We were at Oro Bay when a Japanese plane came. They told us to go into a hole and stay there. They said that the place would drop bombs. We should not come out. There were plenty of holes about. We all ran to them. They told us to be very careful.

The plane flew over us. Our soldiers had a big gun on the mountains. They fired it and shot down one plane. We saw the plane go down into the sea. After that, they said it was safe to come out from the holes.

We stayed there for one week. The second week we were to leave. My husband and Erastus were at Kofure. When he heard I was at Oro Bay he came down to get me. We went back to Kofure. We stayed there for one week.

Our bosses, Bendo and Abera, went up to see us. They went up and stayed with us. The husband had smokes wrapped up. The two men found them and took them out to smoke. They stayed and then said, "We are going to Oro Bay. We must return on Saturday." So my husband said, "That's alright. I'll bring my wife across and you can go." We stayed until Saturday. My husband went up and saw the big man. He said, "My wife came from the village to see me. I'll now take her down and she will go back to the village." So the big man said, "The war is almost over."

They told us not to go to Oro Bay, so we went into Army Bay. The labour house was there. That is where we stayed. We got our things up there as well as our two men. While there, we sent a message to our husbands. The men came down, saw their wives and took them up to their place. Myself and my big brother Nelson stayed there because his wife had a cut on her leg.

In the morning, everyone went to work. They told me to help the cook chop firewood. After that we went down, got our canoe, and went around the point to Oro Bay. We called in and pulled up our canoe. The men came down. They carried the food and other things on the canoe. Then we went up to their place. The men told me, "Your husband is at Kofure. Get his food and go up to see him." So they left my food on the canoe and I went up to where the rest of the people were staying.

The men were very happy. They went out and caught a lot of fish. They

¹. It was name this by the American soldiers who landed there.

We got on the truck and came down to Oro Bay. That morning we got a canoe and crossed to Our Bay. The husbands got food and rice for the women to take back. All the men walked across to Our Bay. The big man sent a message down: "Tell those men to come back." So all of them went back – camps one, two and three went back to that big man. He told them, "Got cut sticks. Take all of these strong boxes with food, guns and things; tie them up and carry them. Carry them to Wau and Salamaua. So the men were getting things ready. I was among them with Tom's wife.

They carried them back to the camp where they were staying. They got their mats and things. They wrapped them up and added them to the things they were carrying. They finished. They didn't think about their wives. They started going with the soldiers.

I went and greeted them. I shook hands with them and they left. The other ladies then came out to where I was. They asked, "What happened?" "They just left. They got all of the things and they left." The ladies said, "We will go and see them halfway." Abera told them not to go but they said, "We didn't say goodbye so we must do this." The ladies ran after their husbands. They were crying as they ran. I too ran with them.

We ran all the way to Oro Bay beach. When we got there our husbands had already put their things on the truck. We came up and shook hands to say goodbye. They then went. We started crying as soon as the truck started. Others got on a boat.

We saw the boat going down. Those men had also gotten their things and moved out. We turned back from there. We came to the village, got our things and went down. We came to the

beach. We loaded our things on the canoe. I was standing there. Bendo said, "Get on the canoe." I replied, "I'll stay back. You go. I'll still be here. It does not matter if the Japanese drop a bomb and I die. I'll wait for my husband and then come back."

Abera said, "You cannot stay here. You must return to the village." Tom's wife Florence also held back. Bendo came to me again and said, "You must go." "I won't. I'm saying back." So he said, "Alright. You stay back, but we will go."

The ladies I had come with started crying. Florence and I also stood and cried. So they were the ones to go home. Florence and I remained there.

So I stayed with Erastus at Kofure. We were on our own. All of the men had gone to the battle. Stonewigg sitting here with you – he went too. My brothers got on a boat and went. They went. When they got to Jeroba Point, the war planes came.

The planes fired on the boat. People jumped into the sea. My brother Nelson was amongst them. During that time, he was wearing long trousers. He had money for others that he was looking after. His brother Christopher and he dived into the water, came up and started to swim. They almost made the shore when Nelson felt weak. His long trousers were dragging him down. He cried out, "Christopher! The Japanese did not shoot me but I am sinking because of the weight of my long trousers. I am about to drown." His big brother felt weak but he swam over quickly. He took him and tried to carry him in the water. They got to the shore. Nelson had too much water in him. He was weak and only able to lie in the sand.

All of the men that swam in ran for their lives into the bush. They didn't thing for anyone else. He was lying there. Those who saw him thought he was dead. So they didn't worry about him. They left him there and went away. He couldn't move. He just lay there. When at last he opened his eyes, he was very weak. He crawled on his knees up to the bush. He sat down. He didn't see anybody. He said, "Oh, they thought I was dead. So they all ran past and left me here." He rested for awhile. Then he stood and started to walk.

He walked for a long time. He crossed rivers. He didn't worry about crocodiles, he just swam across. When it got dark, he just slept alone. The next morning he got up and walked again. His face was covered with a beard and he was very weak. Finally he made it to camp. Few people were around. Most had gone to work. They saw him coming. "There is someone coming here. Who is he?" They didn't recognize him with his beard. Then Erastus recognized him. He cried out, "That's my brother-in-law coming, Nelson! You people didn't know him because of that beard. But that is his walk." So all of them went out. They got him and cried for a long time.

When they finished, they said, "You stay here. We will finish our work and get back together in the afternoon." After work the men got him and took him to their camp. They said, "You should go up and talk to the big man, Max Humphries." So he told him what had happened. The big man wrote a letter and gave it to him and told him, "You will go back to the village. You can go home. You almost died. So you won't remain here. You go back to your village."

He took his letter and went back to the camp. He got on the first boat that called in. The boat stopped at Tufi. He went up and gave his letter to the government man. When that government man finished he said, "Nelson, you are going back to the village. You almost died. That's why they wrote this letter. So now you must go home."

When the village people heard about this, they said, "You won't go to the village. You must go back to Oro Bay." They kept saying that, so he returned to Oro Bay.

We stayed there. They put up a sign outside saying that the war was over. I came back to the village with my brother.

That's it.

Russell Maikin

I finished school in 1937. I stayed in the village for four years. In 1942, the Japanese invaded Papua and New Guinea in July. They sent two boats from Moresby, the 'Giligili' and the 'Elevara.' So all the Maisin men went to Tufi to sign names. After that they told us, "Go back to the village, get your things and go to Reaga." We did that. We spent a night at Reaga. The next day we got on the 'Elevara.' We spent a night at Mukawa. The next morning we went on and spent a night at Pune pune. The next morning we got on the boat and went to Milne Bay.

The ANGAU man came and saw us. They took us to a labour compound at Maivara, a mission station called Gabugabuna. We spent a month there. We got on a boat and went to Buibui. We got our things and carried them up to Duaba station. From there we went up the mountain to the other side to Atata. We slept there and then went to Sagara. We spent the night. Our boss told us to walk. He would get a boat and come down. So we went down to Marai. He said we would meet him at Gedaisu. We walked to a village called Wanigela and slept there. In the afternoon, about 2 o'clock, a boat came there. Our boss had come from Gadaisu. We all then walked to Baibara plantation.

It was war time, so everyone had abandoned the place. Our big men showed us the boy house and we stayed there. We cooked our food and ate. That was about 10 o'clock. We rested until 2:30 and then went up to Mamai rubber plantation. He said, "We will rest here. Tomorrow is Sunday." So we stayed there. They killed a big cow. We had that cow and rested.

The next day we got our things and walked to Oiniolini. We got onto two sailing boats there. We didn't go very fast as there was no wind. We arrived at Mongabu plantation. We spent the night

Recorded on tape, Ganjiga village, March 1997



there in the boy house. In the morning we put our things onto the boat. There was still no wind. We went slowly and arrived at Table Point. We slept there. That night there was a heavy rain and we could not cook our food. There was no proper place to lie down and sleep. So we all got on the boat and slept there. In the morning there was now a nice wind and so we set off.

We came to Dedele Point and circled it to Abau. We got there at 1 o'clock. We spent the night. The next morning we got on the two boats. They told us that some of us would work at Robinson River and Babaguina — two plantations, one rubber and one copra. And so they told us these lies. They didn't say that we would really be going straight into the war.

We went up the Robinson River while others went to Babaguina. We worked there for one month. I stayed there. A boat called 'Larabada' came. I got on and went to Moresby. Before that we went to Abau, spent the night and then got on the 'Larabada.' Father Randolph Namuri's son Romney was working on that boat. He came to talk to us. Then we got on the boat. We spent a night at Otomata. We reached Moresby at 1 o'clock the next day.

We could see no flowers or trees at Moresby. They had all been destroyed. Bombs and machine guns had spoiled the place. Even the houses were damaged. The place was a 'desert.' When we saw it, we became very quiet.

They told us to wait for a truck to come from Safai Creek. Six trucks came for us. The trucks got there a bit before 4 o'clock. We got on and went up to Safai Creek. It was the place they sent all the carriers. They would leave their things there before going to the war. Again they lied to us. They told us, "You will work on a road to Kokoda. When you are finished you will be returned to your own villages."

We spent a night there. The next morning they said, "Leave all your things here." We did that. We then went up to Bistapo. Medicals and doctors came and looked at the sores on our legs. We were all good, so they sent us onwards. We went to Iroro station and then further in. We went down the river to Uberi, number 1 camp. Mr. Lae told us to stay there. That was for the Uiaku people. Ganjiga people went on to Ioribaiwa.

We stayed there. The war came on so that is where we started carrying the supplies. Every morning we would carry things to Ioribaiwa and come back. After the night, we would do it again. The carriers at Ioribaiwa would then carry those things to the next camp.

The Japanese were strong then. They came destroying camps, all the way up to second station, Ioribaiwa. All of us were moved to Uberi. They were all Australian soldiers there with us. All of the Americans had landed on the other side of the island. The Japanese called and said that they were going to rest. At that time the Americans were destroying their war ships and blowing up their bridges, so they were not able to get food, guns and bombs. The way was blocked.

so they were becoming weak and couldn't go on.

While we were resting our Australian spies climbed the mountain to see if it was true that they were resting. Ioribaiwa is right at the top. You need to pull yourself up with sticks. That day the Japanese cut all the bamboo up there and set up a fence on the road. They wrote a sign there stating, "This is the end of the war. We are turning back from here and going home." The spies saw this and used the radio to call us. After this they decided to go on and follow the Japanese.

So they told us. We picked up the soldiers' things and moved. It was a difficult time for us. It was very bad, very sad. We worked together but sometimes they separated us and sent some to a different place to work. We cried whenever this happened. Sometimes when we were really upset we couldn't eat. We would go to sleep without food. So this was a very bad war. What I'm saying is that at that time you had to be very fit to keep going, carrying all of those things.

We passed Uberi. We passed Ioribaiwa and went on. We passed Naoro and then Menari. We came to the big mountain called Khaki. We walked up. About half past three we came to the top. We spent the night. A heavy rain fell. We couldn't get firewood to cook our food. We struggled to make fire. We found some water, made fire and had something to eat.

The next morning we started carrying the things down. We came to Myola number one. Then we went to Number 2 camp. The big rain came with cold winds. It was very bad. We quickly got sticks. We made a frame and put up the tent. All the big men went in there. It got dark while we were doing that. Myself, Sylvester, Simeon and Jason got our knives and axes. We went into the

bush in the dark searching for dry firewood. It was all water there. We were lucky to come across one piece of dry wood. We cut it down, chopped it into pieces and carried it to the camp. We made a big fire. Our village people sat around it to warm themselves. We cooked our food, ate and slept there. We were there for a week.

From there we carried the things down to Iura Creek. Our soldiers were fighting and then they got frightened. When they came back, Captain Kingsley punished them. He told us to put out all of the supplies there. They had to help us carry supplies for a week. After a week they returned, put their uniforms back on and went back to fight.

From there we moved to Iura No. 1 and then to Iura No. 2. And then we went to Efogi. From Efogi we came to Biage. We slept there. In the morning, after we had eaten, they said, "This afternoon we will walk down to Kokoda." That night we slept at the Kokoda rubber plantation.

In the morning we moved into Kokoda. Bun Davis and Captain Kingsley told all the carriers, "Tufi and Baniara carriers will no longer carry wounded soldiers because they carried the wounded all through the high mountains. Now that we are in the flat area, they will no longer carry the wounded. You will only carry guns, bombs and food to the soldiers and come back."

We spent three months there. The fighting at Oivi was very strong. One afternoon we took the things to the soldiers, left them and came back to the camp. They blew the whistle for us to come in line. We stood as Bun Davis spoke to us. "All of you go back to your places. Build shelters there to sleep on. There is going to be a very heavy rain. The rain will turn the place to water. The water will flood the Oivi area and drive the Japanese out of the ground." We

went back, went into the bush and cut wood for platforms. We quickly cooked and ate. At 5 o'clock the skies clouded up. About 6, the rain started. We took all of our things up into the shelters. The fires went out. It kept raining until the morning. The next morning, our soldiers went down and waited at Oivi Mountain. When the sun came up, they started firing. They exchanged fire with the Japanese. About noon the firing stopped. We kept carrying supplies for them and going back for more.

When all the Japanese had been killed there we got the things and walked to Gorari village and slept there. There was no food left. They only gave us biscuits to eat. So it got dark and we had no food. The Australian planes came with our food supply but they did not drop them. They couldn't find a place to throw them out so they turned back. They called to say that they would come the next day and throw down our supplies at Wairopi. When the plane went back we were all hungry. We went to Bun Davis and said, "Give us food to eat." But he said, "My friends, there is no food." We were all very hungry. Our Maisin men put their cups and plates out before they went to sleep. They said, "If you find any food put it here with our cups and plates." We stayed until 8 at night. There was nothing we could do so we all went to sleep.

Early in the morning, Bun Davis blew his whistle for us to line up. He told us, "Yesterday the plane came with our food supplies but they couldn't drop it here. They will be returning today. This time they will drop all the food supplies at Wairopi near the Kumusi River in the kunai grass. So all of you who are strong must run all the way there. When you get there you will have food to eat. Those who are too weak and hungry --that is your problem. You can die here. It is war

time." We all got together, shouted and started to run — some on the road and some in the bush. We all ran down.

We got to Wairopi. Before we reached it, we Tufi people saw a breadfruit tree. The Maisin men cut it down. We collected the breadfruit. We pulled down an old fence that some Orokaiva had made for a garden and made a fire. We baked all the breadfruit and ate. While we were doing that the planes dropped the supplies. We finished and then went into the area. There was Japanese food storage there. They broke in and took all of the food out. We cooked that food and ate it.

It was about 3 o'clock. The planes had finished. Bun Davis blew his whistle. We all gathered. He said, "The planes dropped the supplies into the bush. Go and get them. Bring them here. Leave any that are cracked or broken. Bring only the good ones." So we went into the bush. We built a shelter and put the food in one place.

We stayed at Wairopi because the Americans had destroyed the bridge there. The Australians were building a new bridge. We stayed there for one full week until they completed the bridge. They made a separate bridge with wire cables. They put two cables across the river. The soldiers would get into a box, swing to the other side and get out. They kept doing that until they were all across. The big bridge was made this way. They put two wire cables across. They cut wood with forked ends and laid them down until they covered the bridge to the other side. When this was done we crossed the bridge.

We all went across the Wairopi River. We came down to Isivita. We met a man there from Boianai named Vernon. He was working for the Anglican mission. When he saw us coming he told his people to give us food. We shared that

food, filled our bags and moved on. We slept at Sangara. There was a big rain that night. The next morning we walked to Dobodura. That is where we first saw American soldiers. We saw them in their uniforms. We had crossed the mountains only with Australian soldiers.

We then came to Popondetta. After a night we walked to Soputa. We spent two weeks there. From there some men went to Gona, Gerara and some went to Buna, some to Joroba, and the rest to Sanananda. I went there. We carried food down to Surirai. We went around the point to Killerton. We left the food and went back to Sanananda camp.

When we got back it was dark. They hurried us and we cook our food. They said, "When you finish put out the fires in case any planes come." There were Japanese soldiers between the places we were walking.

The next day brought on the last of the fighting. We woke up in the morning and walked to where the mangos and coconuts were. We dug a big drain. They told us to do this so we went down and stayed there. The soldiers went to the Japanese and surrounded them, just like at Oivi. We lay there watching our soldiers. They crossed the water and moved on. When the sun rose the fight began. When they fired the place filled with smoke. We were close to where our soldiers were fighting.

The fighting went on for two weeks. We carried food down to our soldiers while they fought the Japanese on the other side. We would carry breakfast down early in the morning. We did the same for lunch and dinner, at 4 o'clock. We went down through the swamps and jungles. There were too many dead Japanese bodies there. There was no good water to drink or for washing. So we couldn't drink or cool our hot bodies. When we went through the

swamps we had to push the corpses aside with sticks and then walk on. When we were in the swamps sometimes the Japanese firing would come too close and we would have to lie upon those corpses.

When we got there we gave the soldiers their food. We carried the wounded on our return. We couldn't stand up. We had to drag the wounded soldiers out of the fighting area. Then we could get up and walk. We would then run a distance. When we got past the dangerous area we walked quickly to camp. The swamp was not shallow — there were some very deep places.

So our soldiers fought there for two weeks. When they finished, we went down to the beach. We looked toward this side and saw the Tufi mountains. It had been a long time since we had seen the salt water. So that was the last battle — from Sanananda down to the beach.

We stayed there two weeks. Our soldiers searched the bush for any remaining Japanese, shooting and killing them. They got some prisoners as well.

After two weeks we went across to Surirai. We put up our camp and stayed there for two weeks. We were there and Corporal Saul Garandi went to Ambasi. He went into the bush there and got out the people in hiding. They were people from Yega and Baffa (Gona people). Those people had gotten frightened and were hiding there. So the fighting ended and Corporal Saul Garandi went and got them all back. When they came back to Gona they saw that their village had been destroyed. So they cried for their houses and land. Some even cried and threw themselves under the coconuts. Others threw themselves into the salt water. We comforted them and took them up.

We made them all sit down. The ANGAU man came and gave them shirts and shorts to wear. They gave us food. We cooked it and gave it to the people to

eat. After that a bariyawa man came and made a 'family list.' Then he asked each person what they had lost — knives, mosquito nets, and so forth. He made a list of the lost things. He asked them, "Did you lose kerefun or *yati*?" When they told him he said that they would be compensated for what they lost. We then gave them food to eat. I went back to Dobodura No.1.

I stayed there for two months before moving to Dobodura No.2 across the river. Those who had gone to Wau and Salamaua finished and returned. We were all happy because the war was over.

They told each village to put on their own dance. We went into the bush, got our decorations and made ourselves ready. They cooked and we ate. There was a Baniara man called Emanuel. He came and asked Cecil and I to go across to the other side. I told him, "You go. We will stay back because we are going to dance here." While we were dancing, Japanese planes came over Dobodura No.1 and dropped seven bombs there. They destroyed the place. All the houses were in pieces. Nothing was left. Bodies were shattered with bits and pieces everywhere, even hanging from tree branches.

The ANGAU man spoke to us the next morning. "Tufi and Baniara men must go across and see the place." He told the other carriers to stay back because they were not used to seeing such carnage. We had gotten used to going in to collect body parts. So we got army blankets and went across. We got there and opened the blankets. We couldn't separate out the bodies so as to place each one on its own blanket. Instead we got the different pieces and put them together on the blankets. After finishing this work we were sent home to the village for a break.

During that break we could see smoke coming from the volcano. After our break we went back to Dobodura and then to Borio. That place is near Joroba. We stayed there. They sent a message from a rubber plantation. So we went on a plane across to Moresby. We got on a truck and went to Konedobu. We went to the government office. The government man sent us to Kilakila labour compound. We stayed there one week and then got on a boat. We went and spent a night at Manumanu.

We couldn't sleep there — so many mosquitoes! So we got up, having to walk around to keep them off. In the morning we took a boat up the big river. We came in at a wharf. A man came out and there was a roll call. From there we went to Kanosi. They told us, "Follow this road up to Dowa." We got our things and walked up. A big man was there, Mr. Moody — Ed Moody. We all went in. He called our names. When he finished he gave each of us a mosquito net and blanket. After that he said, "I'm the one who sent the message bringing you here. I'll treat you like a father. When you don't have smoke or need anything, come to me straight so that I can give them to you."

We stayed and worked there. We had not worked rubber before so we learned how to do that there. He gave us buckets to work on the rubber. We stayed there for six months. I was very smart so the boss told me to give my blanket to a young man named Abel Sabi and made me the tapping boss. I had a book to record the amounts of rubber the boys tapped. So when our boss came, there were six of us who went around with him as he measured the buckets. When we finished our time the boss wanted me to stay on with him. But my big brother Cecil said, "No, we must go. The war has finished and we must go home."

We came to Moresby and waited for a boat. We got on a big boat called 'AK94.' We spent a night at Suau and then Samarai and then to Milne Bay to Ukaka station, a labour camp. We were there for three months. Then we got on a sailing boat. We sailed across past Kanikope as it was getting dark. We called in there. It was a nice small bay. American soldiers were there. We spent the night.

We sailed on around East Cape. We called in at Taupota. They told us, "We will wait until 10 o'clock. When the wind is blowing we will sail across." So we got on the boat at 10 and went across. It was a very rough sea. The other boat stopped at Boianai, but our captain said we would go across to Baniara. Before we reached port, the sea became very rough. Three big waves went right over the boat. The boat was filled with water. We were standing in water. We should have died there, but the captain said to hold tight and we kept going. The government man knew we were to arrive that day. When they spotted the sail, some people climbed coconuts to keep on the lookout. There was so much water in the boat! It came over the top and all our things were soaked. We finally arrived at Baniara wharf. All the people were standing down there. The government man came down and asked, "Are all of the passengers alright?" The captain said, "Yes, they are fine." They showed us where we would stay and we went across there.

That was Tuesday. We stayed until Sunday. There was a boat that came from Milne Bay. It was carrying mail and cargo for Baniara and Tufi. It called into the wharf to unload cargo. The government went down and told them that there were Tufi men staying there. So they said, "O.K., we'll take the boys on to Tufi."

We got on the boat and reach Mukawa at 3 o'clock. The next morning

we left at 6 o'clock and reached Tufi around 1 o'clock. We took our things and walked up to the office. The government saw us. We stayed three days. Then my father came up and took us back to the village.

We stayed. I got married in 1946.

I stayed on. Then I thought, the Lord God looked after me until now, what should I do? I got very sick at that time. I had pains from my head to my neck. It lasted a whole year. I used to dream that I was wearing a long white cassock in the church. I had that dream while I was sick. I wondered about it. So I made up my mind to carry the Bible and work for Him.

I spent four years at Uiaku. Then I went into Sarad and spent four years there. In 1960 I went to St. Aiden's College for a year of Bible class and came back. I went to Sarad for three more years. In 1964, I was transferred to Airara. I stayed there for eleven years. The bishop wanted me to go so I went across to Popondetta. I had ordination training at Jagarata. In 1975 I came home. Then I went back to Popondetta to be ordained a deacon at Resurrection cathedral on Intergesima Sunday. After that they posted me to Uiaku.

My wife died. I was very sad. I told the bishop and went to Rabaul to spend time there. Then I returned to the village to work here. I finished in 1984 and went back to the village. I went to this side to build my house and plant my coconuts. This is my village now. So I'm

staying. Sometimes when they want I help with sermons or assist the priest.

We were all happy when the war ended. We feasted and danced. They told us to build a big platform and decorate it. We did that. General Morris went up there and talked to us. "Here is my message. Whatever I say must stay with you. When the Australians first came they brought in the mission and hospitals. It was not big and then the Japanese came in here. If we had taught you everything before the invasion you would have been able to fight for your own land. But you didn't know. We didn't teach you enough before the Japanese came. You couldn't do it on your own so Australians and Americans came to fight on your behalf. Now it is all finished. The war is over and we are celebrating."

"During the war we sent a message to our country and to the Queen, so they know. Now we know that you really helped us during this war and they you can really take care of yourselves if we only teach you. They sent this message to me, General Morris. I am letting you know this. When you go to your village, tell your people what I'm saying now. Tell them what will happen."

"The doors are now open. You'll have schools built so that the children can all go to school. Tell them that they must all be educated. If they all go to school, they will do big things. The place will change. You will have factories in your country. You will have all that we have in our place — everything that we have in our country. Thank you."

Saul Garandi

Recorded 12-19 July, 1983, Vayova Village
In 1942 the war came and I went as a carrier with Mr. Wills to Port Moresby. From there we went across to Kokoda and I became a member of the Royal Papuan Constabulary. At Mange I became a Lance Corporal. We worked there. The village people had a party. They made a crocodile. People went in to dance. The soldiers took pictures and made speeches. When they finished, I spoke too. General MacArthur was there.

We took General MacArthur to Embi. All the soldiers went on parade and marched. After marching, we stood and he gave us presents. Then we came home. At the time, I knew Captain Kienzle. He told the General and from there I went around all the small villages with the general. When the war ended, they went back to their place I came home.

The missionaries were [at Gona]. They saw the Japanese and ran away. When they came to an Orokaiva village, the people there killed the men and raped the women before murdering them. I came to that village when I was a Lance Corporal. An Orokaiva man from that village, Vesega, was with the Royal Papuan Constabulary. He married a Rigo woman and settled in that place. The Rigo woman saw the murders. When the murders happened, the RPC searched. They found the woman and then the men who did it. They brought them back. They came to court. Those people who didn't cut the heels of the missionaries were sentenced to two years in goal. The murders themselves had their necks cut. Thirty-five were executed. Every Friday they would take four down and cut their necks. The next week they took another four down. They made a big house

surrounded with barbed wire. The guards slept underneath, the rest were on top. Their brothers,



fathers, sisters and children would come to see them and then go back. The family brought them plenty of chicken and pig. They knew that they were going to die.

Everyday they would change their loin cloth and give them new ones to wear.

When execution time came, all of the prisoners marched down. The war labourers, missionaries like Father John Ratamara, and village people came as witnesses to make sure it was never done again. Bill Gordon and John Gordon were in charge. They made a shelf and sat down. A Kiwai sargeant and myself took the prisoners, blindfolded them and led them to a platform. They tied ropes around their necks to break them after they fell through a hole in the platform.

The sargeant asked the people if they would take them back to the village to bury them. And they agreed. Esega and his father Benumba were the last to die. The rope was very hot so when they dropped their heads came right off. This was on the last day. They executed six of them that day.

A doctor, "Bectmeet," was there with medicals. They checked the people who were executed. When the blood was coming out of the last two bodies, they ran and used their medicines to stop the blood coming out.

Two brothers had helped the Japanese in that same village. They killed their own people and burned their

houses, while the people were sleeping. They told lies to the people to lure them out. They would say, "The Australians came and treated us like slaves." When the people came out to hear, they used their guns to shoot them. Embogo and Tafaro. They were at Oiambo near Higaturu.

The Australians took an old woman's son. She told them that they took the wrong boy and named the brothers. So they took them and lynched them from a tree. They tied a thick rope around their waists and raised them up on a breadfruit tree. They tied a card around their necks. The European man cut a thick rope. The men fell and had their necks broken. Their tongues came out. The doctor checked them and sent their bodies back to the village.

The bishop came up and stopped them. I was not good, he said. "God is looking after all of us so we must not cut their necks." He didn't know what they were doing but as soon as he did go got on a plane and came to Dobodura to stop them. At that time, three prisoners were waiting to die. The bishop said that if they did the European officers would also die.

I was there when the bishop came in. He was very cross and was banging on the table. He was shouting at the officers. If he had not stopped them then more of the people would have died, so it is lucky that he came. Mr. *** was the one telling the people to do these executions. He was my commander. He was in charge of all those officers. He was a very young man. The bishop was cross with him and all the other officers. Mr. *** would tell us to do this work along with the Gordons. He was a good man. The big people, General Morris, had ordered him to do this work.

The Maisin and the Okeina had the reputation as the fiercest fighters. Orokaiva and Mambare were under them. They were able to carry all the dead bodies and ammunition when others were too weak. So they used to say, "These Maisin are so strong, they are just like the octopus." Maisin would always run straight to where the bullets were and carry out the wounded.

The Orokaiva still know the Maisin people and always speak of them as strong. And some European officers did as well.

When the war happened, most of the Orokaiva ran away into caves, the mountains and bush. When the fighting finished, the Maisin helped rebuild their villages. The Australians and Americans gave supplies. Most of the gardens were destroyed during the war so all Collingwood Bay sent pigs, taro tops and other things to help them out. Jethro himself took a pig there, taking it up by boat. They sent these to the Orokaiva. When they got there they shared all their things. The American and Australians were good people and so too were the Maisin people.

This happened when Mr. Marsh was at Tufi. He worked at Tufi after the war. He sent a message and a boat so that they could do this. He could speak good Motu.

They used to scold the other people by saying that they were not like the Maisin. They used to put Maisin in with other groups to set an example. There were plenty of Maisin then — 10,000! The Maisin helped out the elders, the mothers and fathers in those villages. They helped them so much that the Orokaiva gave them plenty of wea. There used to be 10,000 Maisin in Uiaku alone. I'm not including Ganjiga. But they used that wea. The place used to be crowded but now it is empty.

It also happened that the Maisin fought and killed many Okeina in the past. So those of people wanted revenge. They too gave away plenty of

wea which ended up here. It is lucky that [when the Okeina raided Wanigela] that there were so many Maisin or else Wanigela would be Okeina today.

Silas Jimati

Recorded on tape, Yamakero Village, March 26, 1997

We went to Reaga. Two boats called in, the Elevara and another. We slept at Reaga. In the morning, all our wives and children were left behind. We shook their hands, got on the boat and set off.

We went all the way to Robinson River. It was a very big boat that took us up.

There were mangroves on both sides of that river. The boat went to the wharf. We got off and spent a night there. Then we came down and went to Moresby. We called in. Our trucks were waiting for us.

We got on and went up to Safai Creek. We made our tents and stayed there. In the morning, we got our things and went to Uberi. They used horses to carry things up. We carried those things up to Ioribaiwa. We left them there. We turned back and came down. There were people going up at the same time. That's how it went.

We kept doing that. We took things up there. From there, they would shift them to the next place.

The Japanese came across. When they came too close, we left Ioribaiwa and stayed at Uberi. All the soldiers and the rest of us crowded in there. The Japanese almost reached Ioribaiwa. Then they turned back. They left a gun there. They tied it there. Then they went back. Our men went up and saw what the Japanese had left. They came back and told us and so we followed them up.

Our soldiers chased after the Japanese. We used to carry back the ones who got injured. They kept fighting. Most were injured and dying. We took food to them and carried them. We did that and came down. We slept on the



way. It was a very cold place. The wind was blowing. We slept there.

We stayed there awhile. The Japanese came

down to Kokoda. From there, the Japanese retreated. We arrived at Kokoda and stayed there. Our soldiers built a new bridge across because the Japanese had cut down the old bridge. First they put a cable across. They had a box hanging from it. They pushed each soldier across to the other side. They did that until everyone was across.

We stayed there for two weeks. We ran out of food. The planes would come around and drop food. And so we got something to eat. We got our things and chased the Japanese all the way down. We camped part way. Soldiers stationed at Wanigela came across. They went to a village station – I forget the name. We were there when they arrived from Rainu.

We stayed there and the soldiers continued to chase the Japanese down, all the way to the beach. They finished it there at the beach. Most of the Japanese had dug themselves into holes around Sanananda. The Japanese dug the holes. From there they could point their guns out and fire. Our soldiers kept firing but they couldn't get at those men. Our soldiers destroyed the place. Some ran away; most were killed. The place was destroyed.

When they had finished, we remained there. From there we went to Gona. We went to the beach and followed

it. An ANGAU man got us and we went. We came to a place. The Japanese saw us coming. They knew that the Japanese were there, so they did not continue. They stayed there. Soon we heard the Japanese firing at us. So we dug into the sand and hid there. When they stopped firing, our soldiers took off. They crossed the river, but the Japanese had already gotten away. The soldiers settled down there. We went across the river and stayed at that camp.

PIB and two men went to see where the Japanese had gone. They were in the bush. The Japanese saw them and fired. They came back and told us that the Japanese were there. In the morning, our soldiers went to fight the Japanese. The ANGAU man asked, "Who is sick?" I put my hand up. Two other men did the same. We turned back from there but the rest went after the Japanese.

We stayed at the camp. The others chased the Japanese. The Japanese kept on retreating. They follow them. When they had killed them all, the fighting ended and the soldiers came back to us.

We stayed together after that. After the fighting, we worked there. I can't remember much of what happened. When we finished working they sent us back to the village. We remained until now. Most of the people I went with have died – all my uncles and fathers, Sylvester, John. I'm the only one left at Yamakero here. Frank Davis ... most have died.

Recorded on tape, Uiaku Village, March 1997

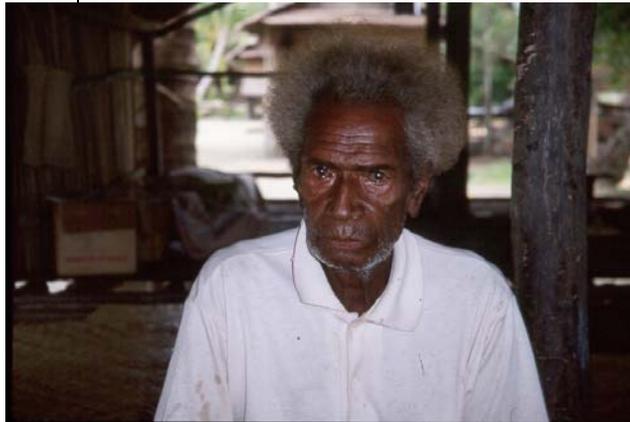
Simeon Wea

We were here in the village. They took our names. And then two boats came, the 'Elevara' and the 'Giligili.' When they called in here they told us and we went up to Tufi. They told us, "when they return from Tufi they will pick you up at Reaga." So we got ready and went to Reaga. They called in at Uiaku but the people told them we had already left, so they continued down to Reaga.

We spent a night at Reaga. In the morning we got on the boat. We sped on to Mukawa. We spent the night there and then sailed swiftly to Giligili in Milne Bay. We worked there making roads, digging drains and cleaning the place. We also built houses. We stayed there for three weeks and then they told us to leave. We got our things and went to Abau, to the government station. They told us to go up to the Robinson River to work. We got a boat and went there.

After three weeks there we returned to Abau. We left three Maisin behind us — Cecil, Russell and Augustine. When we came to Abau station we slept. The next day we boarded a boat. Mailu people were also on that boat. The boat went to Mogobu and then Dedele. We then went inland to Mamai station. There was a rubber plantation at which we worked. We were there a long time, maybe a month or so. From there we walked down to Gedaisu and then Baibara. We stayed there. They sent two sailing boats to pick us up. They dropped us at Onioni. We stayed there. A boat came and picked us up. That big boat took us to Moresby.

We pulled into Moresby wharf. They sent down a truck and we got on. There were three trucks. We got on them and went up. We went to Safai Creek. We stayed there. That is where the Rona



River flows down. We stayed and rested for some time there. It must have been almost a month. They then sent a truck. We got on and went up.

We got to Bistapa. We got off there — that was where all the carriers were. We got the supplies, tied them up and carried them to Uberi. That was the first camp. They gave us food. We cooked it and ate. In the morning we came out and stood in line. That was when the Ganjiga people went on their own. We were left on our own. We were now in two groups. He told us to stay at Uberi. The Ganjiga people were sent straight to Ioribaiwa. So we carried all the things and left them at Ioribaiwa and then returned to our camp. The Ganjiga people stayed there. They carried the supplies further to Nauru, another camp. So we took food to the Ganjiga people and they would carry it to the next camp.

We kept doing that. The Japanese were very strong. They were coming towards us. When they came, they didn't slow down. They came all the way to Ioribaiwa. When they reached the highest mountain, they left their mark. They were already on the other side. They were taking the land. The only place they didn't take was Uberi. They did not come that far. If they had reached our camp, we would have left it and probably

gone to Moresby, but they didn't come that far.

Now the Australian and American soldiers got together at Bistapa and began firing their big guns at Ioribaiwa. That is how they stopped the Japanese. So the Japanese left. Before they left they broke their guns and tied them up with a message. "This is the war's end. We are leaving these guns here and turning back." So they started back from Ioribaiwa.

We followed them. We kept after them for about four months. We were not just walking. They fought with them all the way down. It was a long time before we came to Kokoda. We came past Biyage, Efogi, Manari — those are the places we went through those four months.

We came to Kokoda on Christmas day. After Christmas we left Kokoda and started for the coast. We went through Isivita, Sangara. The Japanese were around. The Orokaiva had been caring for them, giving them food. They gave them food because the Japanese had been cut off from the Wairopi wire rope bridge. The Americans had bombed it. So the Japanese had no food to eat. The Japanese soldiers were weak because of the lack of food. That is why they turned back. Also one of their big ships had been bombed. They lost all their food. Everything went down into the ocean. They did not have enough food to fight our soldiers.

Our soldiers kept fighting. We came to a place called Oivi. There is a gap in the mountains there. It is not wide. The Japanese and our soldiers were on either side exchanging gun fire. We stayed there while our soldiers were firing. There were mountains all the way round. The only way was through that gap. So as long as they fired we had to

stay there. We stayed two or three months.

The white people asked the Papuan carriers, "Do you people know anyway to make the rain come? If you have that medicine we would like you to make it so that we can clear Oivi." John Hunt was there when they asked for this. So the people made it rain heavily. They took advantage of that time and bombed the place.

The Japanese retreated with our soldiers and ourselves following. We went downwards all the way to Dobodura. We stayed and worked there. It was very bad. They wanted to clean the place up. We stayed there. There were six of us Maisin — Russell, Augustine, Hillarian, Justin and myself — we went to Sanananda and stayed there. There were other carriers from other villages who were also with us. We stayed there. We carried things to the soldiers and came back. We gave them food, carried their guns and bombs. They kept fighting and we did our work as carriers.

From there we came to the beach. We had not seen mangroves for a long time, so we got the leaves. We hadn't seen sea plants for a long time. We collected those things and sent them inland to the other Maisin. We cut a mangrove stick and tied all the sea plants and mangrove leaves into a bundle. We sent it up saying, "We have reached the sea. We are sending this so that you will see that we are already there. Our soldiers are strong. They fought all the way and now we have reached the beach." So we sent those plants to the carriers who were still inland. When they saw them they said, "Is it true that they are already at the beach!" Those plants confirmed it.

From there the carriers came together into one place. We stayed together for a long time. The fighting was

going on. Both sides were very strong, very gad. During that short time things were very hard for us. It was very bad for us.

So now you are getting this story. Are you going to do something good for us? This was a horrible experience — we were almost killed. And now you want me to tell you this story. So I'm now telling you. If people listen to this, will they do the right thing?

You have gone to a few people and they have told you their stories. And I have told you how we went and came back. We went to Gona, Garrara and Buna and Sanananda. Those are the places where it finished and we came back. And now I'm talking and you are getting this story. Will we get something good for the story? It is only the bariyawa people who got something from this war, not us! The story is good for our young men growing up to know. They should know what we went through. But we do not have a good government. They promised us and then did nothing. They told lies.

So I won't talk for long. I just have this to say. Thank you.

Stonewigg Rawamin

I was a small boy without a beard when the war came. They sent people here and got us. We didn't know where we would go. We were wondering. We went up to Yuayu. At Yuayu, they said, "You will carry all of these things and walk up." So we got the things, tied them and carried them into the Musa. From there we went to Abau. We stayed there. They told us to wait for a boat.

"When it comes we'll go to Moresby." Some of our people said, "If we go to Moresby we will go into the war. The place is crowded with Australian and American soldiers who came to fight. When we get there, we will be carriers; we will take their things across." We sat together and talked. Then we decided, "Alright, we will not go. We will escape and come home."

In the night, we stayed awake. While others were still sleeping, we got down and pulled out a small boat. We got in quietly and paddled a long way. We paddled to Dedele beach. We pulled up the boat, left it there and started to walk. We walked a long distance. We came to Deba village. We looked out and saw the police coming towards us in a boat. They were after us. When we saw them, we were very frightened. We started off inland. We climbed upwards.

We came to a village and stayed there. The police followed us to that village. When the police were coming, a village man warned us. We ran into the bush. We stayed there awhile and then returned to the village. All of us decided to leave that night. When it got dark, we decided to walk. But the police were waiting up the road and captured the two



Recorded on tape, Marua village, March 26, 1998

boys in front. The policeman got out his handcuffs and put them on the two. We saw what had happened and ran into the bush. We went down to the big river and waited. We then swam across. The dawn was just then breaking. So we walked, continuing upwards.

We were separated. We waited and they kept coming until everyone was gathered. The two boys with the handcuffs were the last to come. When they came to us they got stones and tried to break the handcuffs off. They managed to get one off but the other was too tight; it cut right into the skin. So that man put his hand into a small bag and we continued on our way.

We came across to the Rako river. They got a knife there and used it to pry off the remaining handcuff. From there we came down to the village. Airara went to their village; we went to Marua; and the Sinapa people went across to their place. We stayed. The police knew that we were there, so they came back for us again.

They got us and we all went to Rainu. We got on a boat there and went on to Oro Bay. We stayed there. That was the first time we saw the Japanese planes fly by and heard the machine guns firing. We could stand and watch them fire the big guns. They would fire them and we could see smoke up in the air. We were terrified. We had never seen anything like it! The big people were come and explain why they used those guns. So we stayed and helped them work around there.

When the Australians and Americans went out, we would carry the bombs to them so they could keep fighting. Some of the soldiers at that time got on a boat with some carriers and sailed off. They were going to Joroba and Buna. While they were at sea, we were walking along inland. Just as that boat came up to Buna, the Japanese war plane came. The plane came very low. They saw it and told everyone that it was an enemy plane.

A man from Arifam named Tom was on that boat. He climbed up the boat mast, scouting for reefs. The plane's guns shot him down. When they saw that, the carriers jumped into the water. Everybody abandoned the ship and tried to swim to the beach. When they got to the beach, they walked until they reached some Australian and American soldiers. The soldiers asked, "Where are you people from?" "We are from Papua." From there they kept walking until they reached our camp. We were there when they arrived.

So we stayed there, helping the soldiers by carrying their ammunition and bombs, so they could keep fighting. They took over Buna and Joroba. It was not easy to win that place. It was very hard. Our soldiers were lucky. Two tanks came in and helped them. They ran over the places where the Japanese had dug in. They destroyed everything there. That is how our soldiers took over Joroba and Buna.

When that was over, they came and told us to carry all the things inland. They said the same to the other group, telling them to go and follow along the beach. So we got our things, walked into the jungle and kept going. We came to Garaina. We stayed at Garaina because we had finished all of our food. We waited for a plane to drop supplies. Then we got them and moved on.

We walked all the way to Wau. We camped there. We left the sick ones at the hospital. We didn't stay long. They told us to rest for a week, but after only a few days they sent up to help the soldiers in the battlefield.

We got out things. Some of us came down and the rest went to Bulolo. Once again, we carried bullets and bombs, carrying back the wounded soldiers. We slowly fought our way down to the coast. We came to a village called Skindiwai. We stayed there and helped the soldiers. We saw a Japanese soldier and we carriers grabbed him. He tried to run, but we caught him, tied his hand and legs, and carried him up to the road. A truck came and took him up to Wau.

They kept fighting. They then told us that the Japanese had a big gun up on the mountain. They told us to go up there. The soldiers went first and we carried their ammunition. That was a high mountain. The Japanese camp was right at the top, making it easy to fire downwards. There was only one way up.

We kept going. They saw us coming up. They waited until we got close and then fired that big gun. We threw ourselves down when we heard the gunfire. We just threw down our supplies and let them roll down the slopes. We waited for the Japanese to stop firing.

When it was over, our ANGAU man called out, "Come up! It is finished!" He told us to continue but we were frightened. We went back to our camp. We were not there long when they ordered us to pick up our things and go back. So we walked up.

We came to an open space where the Japanese could see us. Our soldiers told us to be careful. We would have to run very quickly across that open space. We put down all the things with the soldiers. They told us to run back quickly, so that is what we did. We went back to

camp. That night our soldiers encircled the mountain, right around the Japanese camp. They climbed carefully to the top. They reached the top and waited there. Their big man said to wait; they would attack in the morning. "Wait until we shoot the man on the machine gun. Open fire after that."

Early in the morning they waited. When the big man saw the Japanese go and sit down at the gun, he shot him. After that all the soldiers opened fire. The Japanese could not escape. They ran to the other side, but the soldiers were all around, so they were killed there. Our soldiers went forward. They didn't use their guns to fire, they killed them with their bayonets. The big river in the jungle was full of the Japanese dead. We could see the corpses floating down. As we carried things up and down, we couldn't drink the water because of the bodies. When we were thirsty we had to dig holes at the base of the mountain and use cups to get water to drink.

We came back to camp. We spent the night there. About noon they said, "It is finished. We were only worried about the big gun and now we have taken it out. Inland, it is finished. So now we will get our things together and go to the beach."

We came to the beach. All of us were very tired. We slept on the beach. The soldiers said, "We will stay here. Then a boat will pick us up." This was at Salamaua. That night while we were fast asleep the boat came. The soldiers got on and left us behind. A few carriers boarded, but all of the Maisin were left behind. We woke up and wondered what to do.

We said, "We will go and tell the ANGAU man that the boat left us behind." The ANGAU man said, "That is the only boat." He told us to walk to Tabu Bay and see the ANGAU man there. We got our things and walked to Tabu Bay.

We went up and told the ANGAU man what had happened. He said, "Stay here. When the boat comes you can get on."

We stayed there. They sent two boats for us. We got on. The boats were crowded. Some of us had to stand. We called into Oro Bay. We cooked our food, ate and then got back on the boat and went to Buna. We unloaded our things. They sent ten trucks down. We loaded our things and got on. We went up and camped at Dobodura. When we came back from Wau we had collected all sorts of things. We had these with us. We also had a knife each. We hid them in our bamboo carrying sticks. At Dobodura they checked our things. A policeman saw a knife in one of the bamboo poles. So they asked us, "What is in the bamboo?" "It is empty." The policeman said, "No. I see a knife in there." So that policeman told Mr. Barney. We had to put all of the bamboo poles out. They broke them open and took out the knives.

We stayed at Dobodura. The war was over. They told us to clean the place, check the holes, put the rubbish together. Some of our men made gardens for us. So we stayed and cleaned that place. When we finished, we went to the camp and they told us to go to Oivi. We worked on new roads there. They used dynamite and we cut down big trees to make a new road.

A few people at Dobodura got on a boat and came to Tufi, making their way to the village. When we finished the road, we went down to Oro Bay to go home. But there was no one there. They had already gotten on a boat and left. We stayed there and slept on the sand. No boat. We waited there. We really wanted to go home so one of the men said, "We must walk home." We got our things and carried them. We swam across big rivers and continued walking. We came all the way to Tufi. We went to the Government

man. He saw us, spoke to us and paid us. We then went back to the village. And here we have stayed.

I forgot to mention:

While we were at Oro Bay, a Japanese plane flew over us. They flew so low that they almost touched the coconut palms. The Australian-American ship was there. The plane dropped a very large bomb, which blew up the ship. When it exploded, you could see the flames. The ship went down. Some soldiers were killed – they were burned to death. The plane wanted to escape but our soldiers used their big guns to shoot it down. They hit it and it went into the ocean. They sent a torpedo at the plane once it came down, sinking it. Those injured or dead were taken up the hospital. We were there, helping them. They buried the dead there. Most of the fish around that ship also died in the blast. They floated up to the beach. The people wanted to get them and cook them, but they were prevented. So the people did not get the fish – they left them there.

We were still there when a Japanese plane returned to bomb the place. The bombs really spoiled the area. People were injured. We ran and hid under the coconut palms. Our own warplanes came in. They fought in the air and chased the Japanese plane away.

From there we carried our things. There were some who were sick. We just left them there. We couldn't take them, so we just shook hands with them and walked on. So that was what we did. We left many sick men behind. We left one man and then another. We couldn't take them because they were sick. We couldn't do much. When we saw they were sick, we just had to leave them there.

That is how we went to the end. Then we came all the way back to the village. That is the end of my story.

I am going to say the names. Christopher was injured when the bomb hit the ship. The others were James and Tropimus. The ones who got sick when we walked inland were Livingstone and another man from Denewa (near Rabaraba) – I can't remember his name. They got sick and died.